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Need Not Necessity: Purgatorial Torment and Healing in Medieval and Early Modern Drama

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NEED NOT NECESSITY: PURGATORIAL TORMENT
AND HEALING IN MEDIEVAL
AND EARLY MODERN DRAMA

A Dissertation

Submitted to the McAnulty College
And Graduate School of Liberal Arts

Duquesne University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

By

Nicole M. Andel

April 2008

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Nicole M. Andel

2008

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AND HEALING IN MEDIEVAL
AND EARLY MODERN DRAMA

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ABSTRACT

NEED NOT NECESSITY: PURGATORIAL TORMENT AND HEALING IN MEDIEVAL AND EARLY MODERN DRAMA

By

Nicole M. Andel

April 2008

Dissertation Supervised by Dr. Anne Brannen, Associate Professor of English

Seeking to expand on the work of Jacques Le Goff in *The Birth of Purgatory*, this dissertation examines Purgatory and purgatorial suffering on the early modern stage in Britain. Le Goff asserts in *The Birth of Purgatory* that “Purgatory, though a prominent if elusive feature of Christian thinking about the afterlife, seems to have been a perishable rather than an enduring idea” (358). I choose to look for those places in the British early modern dramatic imagination where the idea of Purgatory, even when used as a dramatic device or metaphor, managed to endure, even if it never quite flourishes. While it is a dominant belief in medieval Britain, Purgatory serves to bring together a community of believers, strengthening their ties to dead ancestors and to one another (Chapter 2). When belief in Purgatory wanes in Britain and its attendant practices are purged from religious expression during the Reformation, the kinetic energies and symbolic systems

that tied together the community of believers does not so easily die away (Chapter 1). All through the Reformation, invective diatribes against Purgatory can be found on stage at the same time that contemporary playwrights are employing Purgatory in ways that connect it to expiation of sin and suffering for love (Chapters 3 and 4). In many instances, ideas about Purgatory are being translated by dramatists, particularly Shakespeare, into dramatic structures that support a specifically Judeo-Christian articulation of Aristotelian catharsis (Chapter 5). Purgatory, as a literary and cultural metaphor, continues to demarcate not only areas of cultural upheaval and uncertainty, but also areas where delimiting practices, of this world and the next, are evolving or being reorganized within dramatic culture.

The Lovers' Purgatory and the Cuckold's Purgatory, for example, focus cultural anxieties about fidelity and Reformation anxieties about divorce (Chapter 4). The application of metaphors of purgatorial suffering to both male and female anxieties about romantic relationships provides limits on the social consequences of infidelity and provides a patient coping strategy which in some respects forestalls domestic violence. As metaphor for the love relationship, Purgatory focuses complex discussions about sin, sex, and the heavenly and earthly political structures which regulate intimate relationships. Purgatory's liminal but positive orientation towards heavenly reward focuses representations of suffering so that suffering becomes communal rather than isolating. While they are punished according to their own culpability, no one is alone in either the earthly or otherworldly Purgatory.

DEDICATION

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord. And let perpetual light shine on them.

Amen. May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen. November 1, 1976.

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The generosity of my friends and colleagues at Duquesne who shared their time and knowledge made my graduate experience exemplary. I am forever thankful to Dr. Brannen and Dr. Michele Butler for drawing me into the founding moments of the Duquesne University Medieval and Renaissance Players. Having directed the final section of *The Castle of Perseverance* with William Racicot, I began to formulate an opinion about the purgatorial perspective of its staging. I want to thank Dr. Labriola for passing me notes suggesting my dissertation topic at a presentation on *Hamlet in Purgatory*. Thanks to Dr. Beranek for directing me towards books that had the answers to my oddest questions. Thank you to Dr. Kurland who served on my exam committee and provided his expertise on those weird and wacky seventeenth century plays. Dr. Zbozny shared with me his love of teaching and his stories, particularly Leon's story; he also fed me when I was poor.

Thank you to my dissertation buddies who have supported me during the writing process including William Racicot who yelled, "Just write it already!" and Rose McTier who listened to me read pages of prose to her over the phone.

I thank my colleagues and the administrators at Penn State Schuylkill who have supported me: Dr. Steve Couch, Dr. Anita Vickers, Dr. Pam Preston, Dr. Judy Stevens, Dr. Keith Duffy, Dr. Mary Bonowitz, Dr. Harold Aurand, Dr. John Sinisi, Dr. Camila Kari, Dr. Steve Andelin, Cathy Fiorello, Jackie Runkle, and Bim Angst. You shared your own stories and experiences in academia and made my own journey easier. I would also like to thank the Penn State librarians who have fulfilled my many ILL requests.

A final thank you to my mother, Peg, and my brother, Joseph, for patiently listening to me explain my project over and over again. My grandfather still thinks I only work-part time! To a coal miner what a professor does every day does not seem to be work. But it is, it has been, and was a blast because of the great people I have had with me along the way.

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Introduction

Situating the Study of Purgatory on Stage within Literary and Cultural Studies

In the conclusion of *The Birth of Purgatory*, Le Goff says that while he ends his work on the philosophical history of Purgatory at the close of the middle ages, “further work remains to be done before we can hope to understand how death and Purgatory were related from the fourteenth century to date” (358). Le Goff concludes his historical and doctrinal discussion of Purgatory’s history at the dawn of the Reformation, by which time Purgatory becomes an embarrassment in the abuse of indulgences and an easy mark for Reformer polemics; in many European reformed communities, Purgatory as a theological and cultural force becomes the straw-man at which attacks are launched and does not continue to enjoy the cultural and literary vibrancy that it once did. Because they are connected with cultural practices which lie outside his interest in the genesis of the idea and institutionalization of Purgatory, Le Goff does not delve too deeply into the literary portrayals of Purgatory. When he does, he does so quickly and then only uses literary sources as examples of the larger historical changes in ideas about Purgatory. For Le Goff to continue the history of Purgatory after the fourteenth century in an exhaustive a fashion would be outside the limits of his study as well as nearly impossible.

Nevertheless, though he does not continue to explore it further in his work, Le Goff confidently asserts that:

The history of Purgatory did not end with the beginning of the fourteenth century. Purgatory insinuated itself into the deepest recesses of Christian and later Catholic belief. The most fervent, most 'glorious' moments in the history of Purgatory belong to the period between the fifteenth and nineteenth centuries. Besides the traditional means of publicity, such as sermons and pamphlets and, later, books, images played an important part in propagating the new doctrine. Frescoes, miniatures, engravings, chapel and altar decorations all served to crystallize the images surrounding the idea of Purgatory. Deprived of the possibilities inherent in all the literary frenzy that all but overwhelmed certain visions of the other world, architecture, sculpture, and painting provided Purgatory with the means to entice the onlooker with a direct vision, culminating the process that had evolved for Purgatory a location, a substance, and a content of its own. (356)

In listing the "traditional means of publicity" of disseminating the idea of Purgatory, including books, sermons, pamphlets, engravings, and altar decorations, Le Goff does not mention drama (356). This is a notable absence; by its very nature, drama, and its theatrical presentation, brings together a community in a consideration, questioning, and/or celebration of its most deeply held mores and beliefs. By examining early modern British dramatic portrayals of Purgatory, from *The Castle of Perseverance* to *The Insatiate Countess*, as they display themes of judgment, sin, and sex, I seek to continue and add to the work of Le Goff. My intent in this study is to trace those places where a metaphorical and cathartic Purgatory demarcates areas on the early modern British stage where human behavior is being regulated and criticized, even after the theological and otherworldly Purgatory becomes a casualty of the Reformation.

Work on Purgatory, and its connections to post-mortem judgment, to cultural practices associated with the process of dying, and to individual agency, sin, and desire in English literary and dramatic works has been incomplete at best for the following reasons:

- Critics have misunderstood or misrepresented Roman Catholic rituals and beliefs associated with Purgatory, death, and dying which are intimately interconnected; misunderstanding any part of the system can warp a view of the whole¹;
- Biased historical and literary critics have often ignored or downplayed the study of Purgatory and its cultural practices;
- More recent critics have been concerned with economic or post modern criticism of Purgatory and cultural conceptions of death and dying and have largely left unexplored the coping strategies belief in Purgatory provides; these coping mechanisms for grief are transferred to the realm of married and romantic love in the Lovers' and Cuckold's Purgatories of the Tudor, Elizabethan, and Jacobean stage;
- Critics have neglected the literary subsuming of Purgatory into love relationship stereotypes drawn from Dante and Chaucer. No one has traced how Purgatory functions as a theological, metaphorical, and dramatic marker of individual and group sinfulness, that is, where Purgatory manages to endure on the British stage.

DIFFICULTIES WITH ROMAN CATHOLIC PRACTICE

The theology behind the concepts associated with Purgatory is difficult not because of overly byzantine doctrine, but because by the late medieval period Roman Catholic cultural institutions associated with death, judgment, and punishment are

¹ Here, I differentiate between death and dying; dying is considered to be a process that an individual and his/her social network undertake before death. Death is the physical end of life. Purgatory, a post-mortem experience, is anticipated and highlighted during early modern practices associated with dying.

intimately interconnected. Le Goff reinforces this position when he writes that “purgatory was one component of a system—the system of the hereafter—and meaningless unless viewed in conjunction with the other elements of that system” (7). In order to understand Purgatory, the researcher has to grasp the multifarious ways that it is connected to other Church beliefs (This is the focus of Chapter 1 of my study). Additionally, not all practices involved with, or portrayals of, Purgatory are necessarily sanctioned by the Church; the emotional comfort provided by Church rituals and beliefs during the process of grieving and the alleviation of fear found within the belief in Purgatory takes on a cultural life of its own in the early modern era. The place of Purgatory in Reformation culture is further complicated as reformers reform, retract, and refine their own ideas about Christianity; often, though, they take their cues from Luther’s attacks on indulgences when discussing Purgatory. Luther’s reticence in abandoning the idea of a third place is often felt in early reformer discussions of Purgatory.

BIAS IN LITERARY/HISTORICAL PRACTICE:

Historically, the criticism of British literature, dominated by critics of a Protestant background, has been biased against Roman Catholic concepts. They have been ridiculed as backward, ignored, or treated as a niche specialty. The editor of the EETS 1869 edition of *The Revelation to Monk of Evesham*, a vision of Purgatory, even goes so far as to claim in his preface that Purgatory “is an elaborated lie” (Arber 9). This bias has been complicated by a myopic historical outlook favorably prejudiced towards study of how culture changes and becomes reformed or revolutionary as opposed to study of places

where cultural belief and tradition manages to endure. Partially blaming Roman Catholics for encouraging this phenomenon, O'Malley in the preface of Bellarmine's works touches on this historical prejudice as it has influenced the study of Roman Catholicism, particularly the Counter Reformation:

Protestant traditions long dominated the intellectual life of the English-speaking world and naturally focused on persons and issues consonant with those traditions. Catholics insisted, for their part, that their Church represented an unbroken continuity... Thus they promoted the idea that, although the Catholic Church reformed abuses in its practices and structure in the wake of the Reformation, it had not otherwise significantly changed. Since historians have conventionally been more interested in changes than in continuity, they received unwitting warrant from Catholics to turn their attention elsewhere. (Bellarmine 4)

O'Malley continues that a new school of historical criticism highlights not only changes in culture but also continuity in cultural practices and institutions. The Annales school of historical criticism founded in Paris has "stressed that it is just as important to understand how and why certain historical realities continue somewhat impervious to change as to understand how and why they are transformed or even cease to exist"(Bellarmine 4). The study of the literary and dramatic Purgatory as a cultural rather than theological force in Europe fits well with this historical vision that studies static periods of practice as well as its change. Though the belief in Purgatory had been largely purged from religious expression, and Purgatory itself does not appear as a location on the British stage during the later Reformation, it continues as both a social metaphor which focuses suffering and as a structuring principle for dramatic space and time; while changes in its literary expression are evident, the concept of Purgatory and the concept of purgatorial suffering are not easily discarded even after the Reformation in Britain. Instead of presenting Purgatory as a suburb of Hell or waiting room of Heaven as medieval dramatists sometimes do, Tudor, Elizabethan and Jacobean playwrights use

Purgatory as a pejorative marker of suspect Roman Catholic belief or clip Purgatory's otherworldly wings and ground it firmly on earth in metaphors of love and marriage and the sins associated with them. What remains consistent in the presentation of purgatory and purgatorial suffering on stage is its connection to the sinfulness of the individual with relation to his or her functioning within a social group.

Today, there has been renewed interest in the study of religion and religious institutions; Jackson and Marotti, in an article entitled "The Turn to Religion in Early Modern Studies," argue that,

interpretation of religious material and contexts never really ceased in early modern literary study but rather ... had just been pushed somewhat to the side by most New Historicists and cultural materialists, who pursued other topics and, when they dealt with religious issues, quickly translated them into social, economic, and political language. (167)

Many contemporary critics view Purgatory and other rituals associated with dying from a decidedly cynical economic or post modern perspective that diminishes the comfort fostered by communal connections which Purgatory supports and later comes to represent for the grief stricken. For an economic analysis of Purgatory that is perverse in this imbalance, see "Product Innovation in a Doctrinal Firm" in *Sacred Trust: The Medieval Church as a Economic Firm* (Ekelund). This article ignores any social value attached to indulgences and Purgatory; instead, it myopically argues that the Church uses beliefs and practices associated with Purgatory exclusively for their fundraising potential. Critics of Purgatory have argued that it is no more than a way for theological authorities to capitalize on the fear of death and damnation by demanding money and ritualized behavior in exchange for remission of sin. Because of a focus on cultural change and institutional abuse, these critics tend to ignore how religious concepts are absorbed or

subsumed into literary and cultural frameworks. Positing a withholding of judgment of belief as neither a positive nor a negative cultural force, the Terror Management Theory (TMT) of psychology suggests that afterworld beliefs associated with death are meant to provide relief from the fear of the unknown and the surety of death for human beings (Navarrete and Fessler). This type of analysis, though, is sometimes given to a hard edged cynicism which downplays positive social outcomes of such practice and which treats as enfeebled and enfeathered the minds that developed such sophisticated modes of coping with death and dying.

While otherworldly belief systems are routinely picked over as examples of cultural hegemony by literary, cultural, and psychological critics, this line of examination can only take the critic so far. A more profitable exploration of how human beings deal with death and dying can be found if we examine the ways in which beliefs and cultural rituals surrounding death serve as building blocks of community life, lending to the process of dying a shared and continuing communal focus; religious expression for persons in the early modern period was, as Jackson and Marotti write, “a deep psychological and emotional experience, a core moral commitment, a personally and socially crucial way of transvaluing human experience and desire, a reality both within and beyond the phenomenal world”(169). The positive effects of the bond created by religious post-mortem communities have not escaped the notice of evolutionary psychologists. Dunbar, Barrett and Lycett in *Evolutionary Psychology* conclude that

religion (and by extension, story telling) plays a crucial role in creating a sense of community and bondedness. That effect acts for the benefit of members, through a group-level effect, because the members of well-bonded groups have higher fitness than those of poorly-bonded groups, making religion a trait that has been selected at the group level. (143)

Evolutionary psychology, strangely enough, offers a more balanced, though overly scientific, way of discussing religion and literature. But there is a dialogue about the balance of arguments in this field as it navigates its place among cultural studies, psychology, and sociology². Blending religious cultural studies with evolutionary psychology could benefit greatly those critics interested in the emotional and social bonding provided by the belief in Purgatory in the early modern period. In Chapter 2, we show how deeply held communal bonds are reinforced by the progress of the Soul in *The Castle of Perseverance* as he moves from his human form, the Church Militant, into a purgatorial form, the Church Suffering, and finally into a heavenly form, the Church Triumphant. After this late medieval instance of the otherworldly Purgatory on stage, we get fewer intrusions of the otherworldly Purgatory into the world of everyday men on the British stage. Narratives detailing visitations by ghosts from Purgatory are the few examples of the intrusion of Purgatory's space into the natural world. The space and time of this intrusion is limited, though, to the appearance of the ghost who asks the living to amend their sinful ways.

Recently, Greenblatt has analyzed the ghost of Hamlet's father in *Hamlet in Purgatory* and to some extent has extended Le Goff's work on Purgatory, but he has done so in many ways from the Protestant reactive perspective, from a negative reaction to Purgatory focused almost exclusively on fear of punishment. Le Goff writes that "purgatory dramatized the end of earthly existence and charged it with an intensity compounded of mingled fear and hope" (358). Greenblatt, taking Hamlet's side too

² Navarrete and Fessler, for example, are offering a critique of the more traditional TMT as myopically applied to the events of 9/11. I have yet to find an evolutionary psychological analysis of Purgatory, and hope to do one of the medieval Purgatory in a future study.

often in my estimation, plays up the fear and not the hope engendered by the belief in Purgatory³. The ghost of Hamlet's father, a confused ghost by any measure, is one abruption of the space of Purgatory onto the stage and is not a very convincing one at that. It is just as relevant and valuable to mine the literary and dramatic instances that suggest the continuation of and positive social outcomes from belief in purgatorial suffering as well as its continued uses in literary expression as a locus of narrative or dramatic control. In Chapter 2, we argue a positive social reinforcement of the belief in Purgatory in *The Castle of Perseverance* which draws together a community of believers; later artists use Purgatory as a source of structure for their narratives, dramas, and/or group relationships among characters. In many dramas, negative group outcomes of infidelity--such as domestic violence--are mitigated by the cultural reinforcement of the need for the cuckold to bravely bear his Purgatory.

There seems to be at least two threads of argument in the theological discourse of the Reformation--either the "truth" is being rescued from the ruins of the Roman Catholic Church or dogma is being redefined in answer to Church abuses. Dramatists writing for reformed audiences, generally less interested in arguing the dogmatic issues of Purgatory⁴, are transforming Purgatory to act as a marker of upheaval brought about by the dismantling of the social service system, the inconstancy of love relationships and the revolutionary nature of the possibility of divorce (the Lover's Purgatory), and the break-up of the accepted process for grieving during the Reformation (Purgatory ghost stories).

Le Goff asserts in *The Birth of Purgatory* that "Purgatory, though a prominent if elusive feature of Christian thinking about the afterlife, seems to have been a perishable

³ In the first chapter of *Hamlet in Purgatory*, Greenblatt calls Purgatory a prison at least six times.

⁴ See the Chapter 3 on pejorative uses of Purgatory for the few examples of apologetically motivated examples of Purgatory on stage.

rather than an enduring idea” (358). I choose to look for those places in the British early modern dramatic imagination where the idea of Purgatory, even when used as a dramatic device or metaphor, managed to endure, even if it never quite flourishes. Belief in Purgatory and its various representations in drama from the medieval period to the seventeenth century are of primary interest to me in this study because the use of Purgatory by dramatists continues to create and reinforce social bonding and individual culpability, even in Reformed communities. I will work from the premise that while it is a dominant belief in medieval Britain, Purgatory serves to bring together a community of believers, strengthening their ties to dead ancestors and to one another. This is especially true of the purgatorial torment of the Soul in *The Castle of Perseverance*, treated in Chapter 2 of this study, during which the audience first empathizes with Mankind’s frailty as a sinner and then sympathizes with the Soul’s torment.

When belief in Purgatory wanes in Britain and its attendant practices are purged from religious expression during the Reformation, the kinetic energies and symbolic systems that tied together the community of believers does not so easily die away. All through the Reformation, invective diatribes against Purgatory can be found on stage at the same time that contemporary playwrights are employing Purgatory in ways that connect it to expiation of sin and suffering for love (Chapters 3 and 4). In many instances, ideas about Purgatory are being translated by dramatists, particularly Shakespeare, into dramatic structures that support a specifically Judeo-Christian articulation of Aristotelian catharsis (Chapter 5). Purgatory, as a literary and cultural metaphor, continues to demarcate not only areas of cultural upheaval and uncertainty, but also areas where delimiting practices, of this world and the next, are evolving or being

reorganized within dramatic culture. In Shakespeare's presentation of Purgatory, the suffering of souls in Purgatory can be viewed as mirroring the suffering of his characters and the audience who undergo a cathartic experience. While souls in Purgatory are purged of sin and dramatic characters and audiences are purged of emotions, Renaissance philosophies often tie together sin and emotion and sometimes without significantly differentiating between the two. The Lovers' Purgatory and the Cuckold's Purgatory, for example, treat the moral, legalistic, and affective problems of romantic relationships by regulating and seeking to alleviate cultural anxieties about fidelity and Reformation anxieties about divorce (Chapter 4). The application of metaphors of purgatorial suffering to both male and female anxieties about romantic relationships provides limits on the social consequences of infidelity and provides a patient coping strategy which can forestall domestic violence. As metaphor for the love relationship, Purgatory focuses complex discussions about sin, sex, and the heavenly and earthly political structures which regulate intimate relationships. Purgatory's liminal but positive orientation towards heavenly reward focuses representations of suffering so that suffering becomes communal rather than isolating. While they are punished according to their own culpability, no one is alone in either the earthly or otherworldly Purgatory.

Because drama is a communal event that, when successful, can call into question social mores and behavior and provide audience catharsis of fear and pity, Purgatory is not only critiqued on stage but also is adapted into the very fabric of dramatic itself—to elicit fear and pity and to expunge them in the due course of the play. Purgatory is suited to dramatic presentation and drama is suited to the metaphor, time, and action of Purgatory because they both expose and alleviate human suffering.

CHAPTER SYNOPSES

Saint Catherine of Genoa exclaimed “Purgatory—What a grand thing!”(Le Goff v) Indeed, Purgatory is a grand thing. In dealing with drama and purgatorial concepts in this study, it will be helpful in Chapter 1 to offer an overview of this grand thing, Purgatory, as a part of Christian, particularly Roman Catholic, eschatology and its cultural history and connections to Confession before moving on in Chapters 2 through 5 to literary uses of Purgatory and to its specific uses in medieval and renaissance British drama. Here we will see how and to whom it came to be so very grand and what happened when the grandness wore thin for many in Britain during the late medieval through the Jacobean period. What follows is a summary of the specific topics of the Chapters for this study:

Chapter 1 – This chapter contains the cultural background and history of Purgatory in the late medieval period. Le Goff’s *The Birth of Purgatory* provides much of the background; the attributes of Purgatory, including fire and monsters, are demonstrated through literary examples from the medieval period in Europe. The chapter concludes with Purgatory’s retraction during the Reformation, when a hole is left in the phenomenological understanding of eschatology that is only slowly filled in. Cultural institutions supported by monetary donations linked to indulgences are weakened by Purgatory’s rejection. Some of these institutions never recover.

Chapter 2 - Purgatory is not often staged in the surviving drama of medieval Britain;

there are two extant examples, the Chester “The Last Judgment” and *The Castle of Perseverance*. There has been some critical discussion about whether *The Castle of Perseverance* includes a purgatorial torment of the character, the Soul, but I believe that the play presents ample evidence of purgatorial suffering. Using religious, cultural, and philosophical works on Purgatory, I show that the Soul does indeed suffer in Purgatory during the play. That suffering is complicated, though, by its conflation with Particular Judgment. The play’s dramatization of Mankind’s human time on earth and the Soul’s post-mortem judgment and punishment for his sins, though unique among the complete extant morality plays from Britain, provides an excellent example of the dramatic display of Roman Catholic eschatology and its relationship to human time. Without the possibility of purgatorial suffering of the Soul in *The Castle of Perseverance*, the suggestion of a non-orthodox rescue from Hell deflates the effect of the pity and fear engendered in the audience through the Soul’s punishment.

Chapter 3- This short chapter focuses on the use of Purgatory in a pejorative manner on the British stage. These pejoratives are consistently used to denote Roman Catholic abuse of power. The office of the pope, pardons, and Purgatory appear together in alliterative succession in diatribes against Romish abuse. By the Jacobean period, the abuse of Purgatory is being enacted on stage and the horrifying results displayed for the audience in *The Devil’s Charter*.

Chapter 4 – In this chapter, I explore the ways that the Lovers’ and the Cuckold’s Purgatories are staged in Tudor, Elizabethan, and Jacobean drama. These Purgatories are

not new to British culture. An overview of Continental and British authors is provided of the Lovers' Purgatory; the Cuckold's Purgatory on stage can be connected to the traditions exemplified by Chaucer's Wife of Bath and her querulous relationship with her fourth husband and the humorous relationship of January and May. As female characters gain a full voice on stage, they begin to employ the concepts of the married Purgatory themselves lending a more heterogloss representation to the dialogues about romantic relationships.

Chapter 5--While the origin of the ghost of Hamlet's father has been amply explored by literary critics, dramatizations of Purgatory and purgatorial suffering in Shakespeare have been neglected. The most interesting and fully developed Purgatories in Shakespeare are found in *Romeo and Juliet*, *Othello*, and *The Tempest*, where Shakespeare uses Purgatory uncharacteristically to elaborate on the dramatic potential for an emotional purging of characters and/or the audience. A Lover's Purgatory which turns into a Hell is entertained in the metaphors of Romeo in *Romeo and Juliet*; in *Othello*, the Cuckold's Purgatory which cuckolds are told to bear patiently is turned into a Hell through the machinations of Iago. Iago suffers the Cuckold's Purgatory and seeks to bring Othello into it with him. Because both men have highly imaginative mental capacities and are trained to react when threatened, neither bears his Purgatory patiently. Both act to turn it to a Hell.

While purgatorial imagery is found in *The Winter's Tale* and *Measure for Measure*, the most developed romantic comedic Purgatory in Shakespeare's canon is found in *The Tempest*. In *The Tempest*, the last act of Prospero on stage begging that the

audience release him through the indulgence of their clapping seems an odd exit from the stage as Purgatory is never mentioned in the play. Prospero's exit though is not unusual if the critic considers that he is experiencing a metaphor for Purgatory that is found infrequently on stage: the Servant's Purgatory.

Appendix

The appendix contains the script from "The Four Daughter's of God" that I directed along with William Racicot for *The Duquesne University Medieval and Renaissance Players* in 1998. I feel it was important to include it as it is evidence that, in Chapter 2 of this study, I have tried to explore not only the symbolic, but also the physical positioning of the characters in the play. Theatre is the script in performance. While medieval drama and theatre critics been somewhat ambivalent about the value of modern production of medieval drama, I was able to gain a much richer understanding of "The Four Daughters" section of *The Castle of Perseverance* by directing it. Seeking out a playable translation of the play that modern actors could articulate, researching positional and iconic representations of the Daughters in the Pitt Fine Arts library, translating Middle English into a playable script, and finally directing it in performance informed my critique far more than reading the pay script could ever do. To see a play in production is to see the decisions made about its presentation in space and time. Directing "The Four Daughters of God" was a process during which I had to deal with purgatorial torment of the Soul, a concept that deals with space and time from human and divine perspectives.

Chapter 1

“The som party of helle and som partie of hevyn⁵”: The Medieval Purgatory, Le Goff’s Work, the Literature of Purgatory and Its Critics

Recently, the critical exploration of Purgatory has experienced a renaissance as a topic of study for historical, literary, and cultural critics. In *The Birth of Purgatory*, Jacque Le Goff details the development and institutionalization of Purgatory in the medieval Roman Catholic Church. Working on traditional religious practice in England from 1400-1580, Eamon Duffy in *The Stripping of the Altars* describes the fear and hope that Purgatory produced in believers and its connections to other cultural institutions. Takami Matsuda in *Death and Purgatory in Middle English Didactic Poetry* analyzes the place of Purgatory in Middle English didactic literature including visions and homilies. Matsuda believes that this literature spanning the 12th through 16th centuries, served to provide a pragmatic and an optimistic outlook on death and dying. Numerous critics over the years have also contributed rich work on Dante’s *Purgatorio* and the various versions of St. Patrick’s Purgatory. Stephen Greenblatt continued a long history of criticism concerning the ghost of Hamlet’s father with his *Hamlet in Purgatory*. The interest in Purgatory has even begun to filter down to the classroom level; a recent edition by

⁵ In *A Revelation of Purgatory by an Unknown Fifteenth-Century Woman Visionary*, Margaret, a soul tortured in Purgatory, tells her audience that to speak of Purgatory is to “tel the som party of helle and som partie of hevyn” (Harley 219-220).

TEAMS, entitled *Three Purgatory Poems*, contains “Sir Owain,” “The Vision of Tundale,” and “The Ghost of Gy” (Foster). Nevertheless, much work remains to be done. In this study, I will focus on British dramatic use of Purgatory onstage in the early modern era. Early modern drama, by its very immediacy, its communal and social focus, and its physical embodiment of suffering, provides a powerful and unique presentation of Purgatory. To understand how ideas about Purgatory develop and change during this time, we need an overview of what it is, how it works, and how it came under fire during the Reformation, but managed to survive in extra-theological cultural venues.

WHAT IS PURGATORY?

Purgatory is best described in Christian, particularly Roman Catholic⁶, theology as a middle state of otherworldly existence to which certain human souls, who will eventually enter Heaven, go after death. Heaven is for those who die in a perfect state of grace and who enter a state of everlasting bliss; Hell is for those egregious sinners who die unreconciled to God and who dwell in an infinite state of torment, the absence of God. While those who dwell in Purgatory often experience torments akin to the torments of Hell, these souls are more closely related to those in Heaven: after a series of finite trials designed to expunge their remaining faults souls in Purgatory eventually enter Heaven. *The Catholic Encyclopedia*'s short definition of Purgatory is:

Purgatory (Lat., "purgare", to make clean, to purify) in accordance with Catholic teaching is a place or condition of temporal punishment for those who, departing this life in God's grace, are, not entirely free from venial faults, or have not fully paid the satisfaction due to their transgressions. (Hanna "Purgatory")

⁶ Three Church councils, Lyon (1274), Florence (1439) and Trent (1563), spell out the dogma of the Church concerning Purgatory. At the earliest of these conferences, Lyon, “the Church declared its faith in a place of purification and in the value of the suffrages of the living for the dead” (Harley 5).

This place or condition of temporal punishment has a long history in the Church. Jacques Le Goff has written the most influential and comprehensive work to date on the history of Purgatory, entitled *The Birth of Purgatory*. In it, he details Purgatory's history with special emphasis on the 12-14th centuries. Le Goff asserts that the ideas behind Purgatory begin in the second century when the early Church ponders what happens to the soul between an individual's death and the Last Judgment and is further elaborated in the fourth century when Church Fathers, including Ambrose, Jerome, and Augustine, formulate the idea that some sinners are saved through a trial. The place, specifics, and time of these trials mature into the 12th century conception of Purgatory which is his focus⁷. Le Goff ties the flowering of the belief in Purgatory in Christian civilization to the use of the word *purgatorium* in the noun form which, he argues, corresponds to the "spatialization" of thought that is "one of the most important episodes in the history of ideas and *mentalités*" (4). Belief in Purgatory, according to Le Goff, implies the following interconnected ideas for Western Christianity:

- belief in immortality and resurrection
- belief that immortality can be achieved in a single lifetime
- belief in Judgment: specifically particular and Final Judgment
- belief in individual responsibility and free will
- belief in the unique type of sin called venial
- a clear understanding of the relation between body and soul (4-6)

⁷ Le Goff contends that the 12th century marks the birth of Purgatory because "until the end of the twelfth century the noun *purgatorium* did not exist: *the* Purgatory had not yet been born" (3). One of the most remarkable arguments in Le Goff's tracing of the history of Purgatory is his insistence that while anyone tracing the history of an idea knows placing an exact date of the genesis of the idea itself is absurd, finding dates when landmarks jump in the development of the idea is not impossible.

In the following pages, I will treat in more detail the different portions of *The Catholic Encyclopedia* definition and Le Goff's list of the ideas which help solidify the belief in Purgatory, concentrating on who dwells in Purgatory, how Purgatory is viewed as a place or a condition, and how it came to be a focal point of later medieval Christian belief.

STATE, PLACE, OR CONDITION

Early Church fathers usually describe purgatorial torment rather than a location called Purgatory, and the later medieval Church vacillates between a focus on a state of torment and a place of torment. Descriptions of Purgatory, though, because of their reliance on a visual imagination, generally give Purgatory and purgatorial torment a materiality which lends itself to a location. Le Goff discusses otherworldly precursors of Purgatory that provide many of the motifs and geographical elements common to its depiction. Asserting in a chapter entitled "Ancient Imaginings" that the association of Purgatory with earlier images of the otherworld is "a historical rather than a genealogical one" (17), Le Goff addresses early concepts of hellish and paradisiacal afterworlds with the idea that they are not necessarily predecessors of the Roman Catholic Purgatory, which gains prominence in the 12th century, but similar in design, not always due to cultural borrowing, but to similar cultural answers to the questions of death and dying. Belief systems that posit immortality of the soul, Le Goff writes, generally address the post-mortem condition of the souls of believers. Religions and cultures may share elements, but a direct connection between them may not be drawn just because they display similarities.⁸ Some belief systems, though, have more directly influenced the

⁸ Tolkien, in "On Faerie Stories," rails against this sort of reasoning among folklorists and anthropologists who see all stories about dragons as the same story. Literary scholars, he maintains, are looking for an

Church's articulation of Hell, Heaven and Purgatory. Notably, in Judaism, there are the concepts of the Bosom of Abraham, Sheol, Gehenna, and Eden to explain the endpoint of physical human existence and its continuation in the next world(s). In Greek and Roman culture there are Hades and the Elysian fields. As Le Goff points out, in many of these afterworlds, Heaven is oriented towards the sky and Hell is contained in the bowels of the earth. Depictions of Purgatory share both these orientations; Purgatory is often underground, but surrounded by ministering angels who carry redeemed souls heavenward. Other common topographical motifs for infernal or temporary abodes of the dead in antiquity, including fire, rivers and bodies of water, a mountain, and a bridge (Le Goff 17-50), are also found in depictions of Purgatory in the medieval period. Allusive descriptions of tormenting fire lead to comparisons with hellfire and Hell; the demons and monsters contained there become part of Purgatory's torments; Le Goff argues that in the art of the Middle Ages the state of punishment eventually achieves a location with a complete topography, climate, and citizenry.

In searching for the genesis of a Purgatory with a defined topography, Le Goff pays special attention to *The Apocalypse of Paul*, written in the middle of the third century and copied through the sixth, because he sees in it many of the motifs common to 12th century and later medieval descriptions of Purgatory (35-37). Version five of *The Apocalypse of Paul* details an upper Hell, where souls await the mercy of God, and a

aesthetic that values the varieties: "They are inclined to say that any two stories that are built round the same folk-lore motive, or are made up of a generally similar combination of such motives, are 'the same stories'... statements of that kind may express (in undue abbreviation) some element of truth; but they are not true in a fairy-story sense, they are not true in art or literature" (45-46). Fairy-stories, Tolkien maintains, are very ancient and their generation more complex than the physical history of the human being; the same applies to the imaginative art of Purgatory. The debate becomes one of "independent evolution," "inheritance from a common source," and "diffusion at various times from one or more centres" (Tolkien 47). Le Goff, in his history of Purgatory, is interested not in tracing an evolutionary family tree for the belief but in centering it in a dialectic of the afterlife that includes predecessors of the idea but does not posit direct links between them.

lower Hell, containing souls of the eternally damned. In the upper Hell, sinners are divided into classes and the various punishments inflicted on them are described in great detail. Le Goff writes that Paul sees sinners punished in many ways:

He sees a horrible river traversed by a bridge across which all the souls must pass: the damned are thrown into the water and sinking up to the knees, or the navel, or the lips, or the eyebrows. He sees a dark place where usurers (men and women) eat their tongues. He sees a place where young girls, black from head to toe, are delivered to dragons and serpents: these are the girls who have sinned against chastity and caused their infant children to die. He views naked men and women, persecutors of widows and orphans, in an icy place where they are half-roasted, half frozen. Finally (to abridge the account somewhat), when the souls of the damned see one saved soul pass by, wafted by the archangel Michael to Paradise, they beg him to intercede on their behalf with the Lord. The archangel invites the damned, along with Paul and the angels who accompany him, to beg God in tears for a modicum of “refreshment” (*refrigerium*). This sets off a tremendous concert of tears, which causes the Son of God to descend from heaven to remind the sinners of his passion and their sins. (36-37, Le Goff’s parentheses preserved)

Many of the elements in this vision--torture in fire, ice, and water, devouring dragons and serpents, and solacing angels--become common in medieval depictions of Purgatory.

Additionally, the souls in Purgatory, in this and other visions, while destined for Heaven, are consigned to neither Heaven nor Hell but to an intermediate state or place in which they wait and are cleansed. Souls in Purgatory suffer for a period of time determined by the egregiousness of their sins or their lack of proper satisfaction or contrition.

While it may seem that Purgatory is situated as a halfway point between Heaven and Hell, Le Goff argues that Purgatory assumed its own place in the otherworldly hierarchy and like most medieval systems was not truly balanced; it was not in the middle either spatially or ideologically (6). In the medieval imagination, Purgatory exists on a sliding scale between Heaven and Hell, a distinction not lost on medieval authors of works depicting Purgatory; in *A Revelation of Purgatory by an Unknown Fifteenth-Century Woman Visionary*, Margaret, a soul tortured in Purgatory, tells her audience that

to speak of Purgatory is to “tel the som party of helle and som partie of hevyn” (Harley 219-220)⁹. Which part of Hell and which part of Heaven Purgatory belongs to is decided by the author who depicts Purgatory.

Many times the fire of Purgatory makes it look like contemporaneous depictions of Hell. Whether Purgatory is conceived of as a state or a location, fire is a common element leading to theological comparisons of the transitory fires of purgatorial torment with the eternal fire of Hell (Le Goff 43-44). The ubiquity of fire in depictions of Purgatory, according to Le Goff, is drawn from a widely held cultural belief in fire as “purifying,” “punitive” and “probative” and, particularly in medieval Roman Catholicism, on the scriptural passage in Paul’s 1 Corinthians 3: 11-15 that “the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is”¹⁰(Le Goff 8, 43). Unlike Hell’s fire, which is only punishing, the fire of Purgatory has an added judgmental and purifying dimension. Paired with the concept of punishing fire common in the infernal afterworld is the concept that “a man’s fate in the hereafter depends on his quality as a man” and therefore “each man must undergo a trial which determines what his ultimate fate will be” (Le Goff 43); Purgatory’s torments sometimes amount to a trial by fire¹¹. Truly, from its early descriptions, Purgatory feels like Hell to its sufferers. In most depictions after it achieves

⁹ All references from Harley’s edition are line and not page numbers.

¹⁰ Those in Purgatory’s torments also may move between fire and ice (Le Goff 9). In *The Revelation to the Monk of Evesham* (written in 1196, published in English in the 1480’s), the visionary accompanied through Purgatory by St. Nicholas sees souls who “are drowned in the stinking pool; thence having been taken up and cast into the fire, they are swept up on high into the air by the force of the fiercely raging flames, as sparks from a burning furnace, and so are let down on the other side of the hill into the piercing cold of the snow and hail and driving storms” (Paget 108). The intense extremes of the elements add to the punishment of the souls.

¹¹ Many purgatorial works replicate trial by ordeal: fire, water dunking, and combat. For the medieval reader of such works, this type of torture reinforces its judicial aspect which is to find out the quality of the individual’s soul. It is not guilt or innocence that is judged but fulfillment of repentance.

the location Le Goff describes, Purgatory itself begins to look like Hell, but unlike hellfire the work of the fire in Purgatory is punishing, judgmental, and finally purifying.

This difference in the tortures of Purgatory is evident in Dante's *Purgatorio* arguably the most famous literary depiction of Purgatory. Because the late 13th century *Divine Comedy*¹² is meant to be read as a whole, Dante's Purgatory need not resemble Hell as much as other stand-alone medieval descriptions. The faithful reader has already followed Dante through Hell and so the differences in Purgatory are magnified, not the infernal quality of its torment. Writing of Dante's Purgatory, Duffy, in *The Stripping of the Altars*, argues that "Purgatory is unequivocally a place of hope and a means of ascent toward Heaven. It thus has nothing in common with Hell" (343). While suffering on their journey through Purgatory, souls pass by Dante singing liturgical songs or psalms; they are protected from punishing devils by angels (Duffy 343). Unlike souls in Hell, while Dante's souls in Purgatory suffer, they remain hopeful and their punishment is healing. Yet Dante does not escape infernal imagery altogether; he describes mists, smoke, gloom, and fire in the *Purgatorio*. At the end of Canto 15 and into Canto 16, Dante encounters

a smoke dark as night, rolling toward us; nor was there room to escape from it: this took from us our sight and the pure air. Gloom of hell... never made a veil to my sight so thick nor of stuff so harsh to the sense, as that smoke which covered us there, so that it did not let my eye stay open. (15.141-145, 16.1-7)

After Statius explains to him that the shades in Purgatory assume a sensate form, though removed from their bodies¹³, so that they may feel the pain of torment and hasten their

¹² Since I am exploring late fourteenth to seventeenth century occurrences of purgatorial torment, it will suffice here to show examples of 13th-15th century infernal descriptions of Purgatory.

¹³ Statius tells Dante:

progress through Purgatory, Dante moves through a fiery region where he witnesses this pain:

The bank flashes forth flames, and the edge of the terrace sends a blast upwards which bends them back and sequesters a path from them; wherefore it behooved us to go on the side that was free, one by one, and on the one side I feared the fire, and on the other I feared I might fall off.... ‘*Summae Deus clementiae*’ I then heard sung in the heart of the great burning, which made me no less eager to turn; and I saw spirits going through the fire. (25.112-128)

Admittedly, Dante’s fire and torture in Purgatory are less intense than most later medieval visions, which are much “less coherent or at least less carefully nuanced and altogether grimmer” than their Italian predecessor’s vision (Duffy 344). For example, the tortures of Margaret, in the fifteenth century Middle English *A Revelation of Purgatory*, are intensely hellish; the visionary tells us that Margaret is tormented by devils for her vanity:

And it seemed I saw seven devils around her. And one of them clothed her in a long gown with a long train following her and it was lined with sharp hooks. And it seemed the gown and the hooks were all red fire. And then that same devil took worms, pitch, and tar and made curls and set them upon her head, and he took a long, large adder and wound it about her head, and it seemed it hissed on her head as though it were hot, burning iron in cold water. And it seemed she cried when she was dressed in this way so that all the world, it seemed might have heard her... (Harley 247-259)

Though red hot hooks, snakes, burning pitch, and tar are common medieval instruments of torture, Margaret maintains a hopeful stance. Margaret’s tortures in the fiery Purgatory full of devils continue until she is eventually released after a priest intercedes to God on her behalf, saying Masses for her release. Even though Margaret is punished

... it is called a shade and therefrom its forms the organs of every sense, even to the sight. By this we speak and by this we laugh, by this we make the tears and sighs which you may have heard about the mountain. According as the desires and the other affections prick us, the shade takes its form; and this is the cause of that at which you marvel.” (25.95-108)

severely, she receives a modicum of the *refrigerium*, which Le Goff details as part of Purgatory's hope, through the intercession of the visionary and the priest.

While the Church does not assert any specifics about the punishments or location of Purgatory, imaginative descriptions of fiery punishment abound. A Middle English example of St. Patrick's Purgatory¹⁴, found in the Auchinleck manuscript, "Sir Owain" (c. 1330-1340), is an outstanding example of these elements (Foster 109-178). Owain sees gluttons punished:

... men and wimen that ther lay
That crid, 'Allas!' and 'Waileway!'
For her wicked lore.
Thilches soules lay upward,
As the other hadde ly downward,
That Y told of bifore,

And were thurth fet and hond and heved
With iren nailes gloweand red
To the erthe ynailed that tide.
Owain seighe sitt on hem there
Lothli dragouns alle o fer,
In herd is nought to hide.

On sum sete todes blake,
Euetes, neddren, and the snake,
That frete hem bac and side.
This is the pain of glotoni: (Foster lines 409-424)

As in "Sir Owain," the many devils who torture souls in Purgatory are often accompanied by monsters, dragons, newts, and snakes which bite, rend, and consume hapless souls. Didactically speaking, Purgatory is a place meant to be avoided. While they may seem small, the differences between Purgatory and Hell, though, remain significant; those in Purgatory have hope of eventual entry into Heaven; the presence of ministering angels

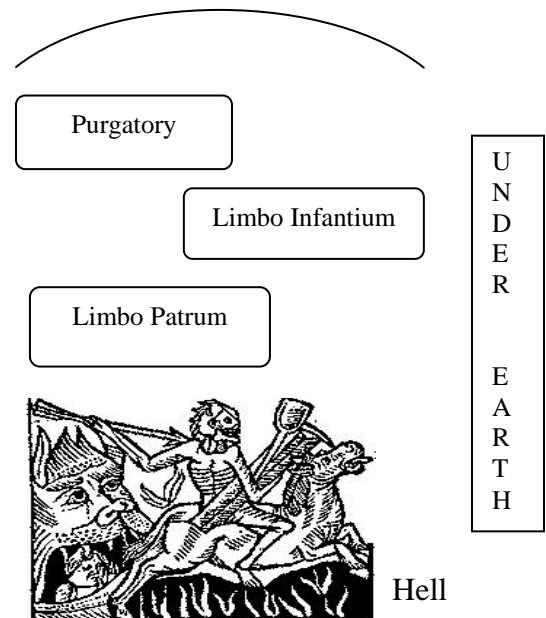
¹⁴ Originating in Henry of Saltrey's *Tractatus de Purgatorio Sancti Patricii*, the story of St. Patrick's Purgatory details the journey of a penitent man who enters a holy cave to experience the pains of Purgatory while still alive. It was extremely popular and was "translated into English, German, Italian, Welsh, Bohemian and many other languages in the course of the Middle Ages" (Curley 2).

who bring succor to the souls in Purgatory or who are seen carrying them towards Heaven as those souls finish suffering provide those visionaries who glimpse Purgatory with a most fervent hope of Heavenly reward for the faithful (Duffy 343, 345). While Purgatory may be painful and punishing, it purifies souls contained there and prepares them for entrance into Heaven.

WHERE IS IT EXACTLY?

If Purgatory has a location, as Le Goff has pointed out, it must exist somewhere. Purgatory seems to be either in the indeterminate heavenly arena or, as is often the case with Hell, under the earth. Indeed, while Roman Catholic theology does not specify a location for Purgatory, medieval theologians launched searches for and mapped out places on earth where entrances to Purgatory could be found. Notable examples of places where entrances may be found include Mont Aetna and the Irish St. Patrick's Purgatory on Lough Derg (Le Goff 9). Richard Rolle of Hampole, details in Book 4 of *The Pricke of Conscience* (1534) Purgatory's otherworldly geography:

The place there / that purgatorye is holde
 Is vnder erth / as clerkes men tolde
 About the same place / as clerkes men telleth
 There that deed chyldren / vnchrystened dwelleth
 That from the fayre syght / of goddes face
 Ben put for euer / without any grace
 And that place / is euen about hell pyt
 Betwene purgatorye / and hell is it
 And so is the place / of purgatorye sette
 About them both / thyther soules be fette
 That must nedes / theyr payne there haue
 And after that payne / Ihesus wyll them saue
 Yet about that stede / is that fayre place
 That god after his deth / vysyted through his grace
 And all that were there / with hym he toke



Nor from that tyme / as clerkes can tell
Come neuer no soule / there for to dwell
Ne neuer none hereafter / therin shall fall
For that place is Lymbo / as clerkes it call
That is a fayre pryson / as telleth the boke
where oure forne fathers / were in yloke (Rolle) ¹⁵

Rolle's vision of Purgatory is one in which it is conceived of as a suburb of Hell, located under the earth along with the Limbo of the Patriarchs and the Limbo of the unbaptized infants¹⁶. While Rolle is more specific than most in his description, he is in line with the general artistic and theological sensibility of his time.

The specifics of Purgatory's hellish torment, its place, or the state of its occupants, are largely dependant on the imagination of the theologians and artists who depict it. The editor of *A Revelation of Purgatory*, for instance, tells us that "while the exaggerated details—the snakes, the iron hooks in the heart, the vats of boiling pitch—are certainly without Church authority, the general conceptions of the afterlife do reflect broad beliefs of the Church" (Harley 7). The editor of "Sir Owain" says that "the tendency of commentators between St. Augustine and the *Tractatus* has been towards a 'place,' although the Church was not definitive on the topic even at the Council of Trent in the sixteenth century" (Foster 111). Whether Purgatory is a state or place is not

¹⁵ I have devised this rendering of Rolle's "geographical" Purgatory and Limbo as suburbs of Hell. The picture of Hell, from *EEBO*, is called "Death Leaving the Mouth of Hell" and is found in *The Boke Named the Royal*, 1507 translated by William Caxton (Laurent).

¹⁶ There are two Limbos, the Limbo Patrum (of the Patriarchs) and the Limbo Infantium (of un-baptized infants). The Limbo Patrum is empty. When Christ harrowed Hell three days after his Resurrection, He carried to Heaven all those righteous men and women who could not have been baptized because they lived before the coming of Christ, but whose deeds deserved the everlasting reward of Heaven. Un-baptized infants are held in Limbo because, while it is assumed they could not commit any sins, they have also not been fully accepted into the community of believers that is the Church and hence still have the Original Sin. Limbo, unlike Purgatory, is not painful; it is simply a place of waiting for unfortunate souls. Like Purgatory, the understanding of Limbo moved from a theological to a cultural one and is seen in Milton and Shakespeare in this usage (Toner "Limbo"). For a discussion of the theological arguments surrounding Limbo, see Toner's article "Limbo" in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*.

defined in the dogma of the Roman Catholic Church in the early modern period, but the visual dimension of artistic and literary portrayals has generally lent it a location¹⁷, a definite setting for its punishing fires.

THE TIME OF PURGATORY

While depictions of Purgatory are as individual as the artists who do the depicting, the one absolute commonality in medieval descriptions of Purgatory is that it ends. Because of its finite nature, it fits in well with human timeframes; because of its connection to the General Judgment when all souls remaining in Purgatory will go to Heaven, Purgatory connects well with divine timeframes as well. Dante emphasizes this point for his readers, explaining that however difficult the punishments of Purgatory, it will end:

‘But reader, I would not have you turned from the good resolution for hearing how God wills the debt shall be paid. Heed not the form of the pain: think what follows, think that at the worst beyond the great Judgment it cannot go’ (10.106-111).

The time of Purgatory, in the divine cosmology, does not have the static and eternal quality of the time of Heaven or of Hell. Instead, it only will exist until the General Judgment. Richard Rolle is careful to highlight this belief about the time of Purgatory:

 Betwene the payne of hell / certaynly
 And betwene the payne / of Purgatorye
 Is no dyfference / but certes that one
 Shall haue an ende / and that other none
 For the paynes of hell / shulde neuer cease
 Ne the soules therin / haue neuer release
 But in purgatorye / the soules dwelleth styll
 Tyll they ben clenysyd...

¹⁷ The Second Council of Lyon had to address Purgatory because the Greek Churches reject the notion of a tormenting fire for those in the intermediate state. The Orthodox Churches do not see Purgatory as a location or punishment; in general, they view sin as a sickness to be healed (Le Goff 284-288).

Because it “shall have an end” (Rolle), the temporal nature of Purgatory’s existence lends itself to expression in years and millennia, not infinities.

Individuals who dwell in Purgatory before the General Judgment are consigned there for a time determined by God during the Particular Judgment of the Soul; the time they spend there, like the punishment inflicted upon them, is dependant on the nature of their individual sins. The time a soul spends in purgatorial torment is long enough to ensure that he is fully prepared for entrance into Heaven. Therefore not all souls consigned to Purgatory stay there until the General Judgment; many may go to Heaven before then. To understand the time accorded to Purgatory in the human and divine cosmology, it may be helpful to give a timeline of the general events in the late medieval Roman Catholic’s life and show how they relate to eschatological time:

Man is born with **Original sin**;

It is expurgated in **Baptism**.

Man sins;

Man **confesses** and repents (as many times as necessary).

Man receives the other sacraments and makes an effort to live a Christian life (again repeatedly).

Man receives **Confession**, **Eucharist**, and **Extreme Unction** during the process of dying;

Man dies.

Man undergoes post-mortem **Particular Judgment** of his soul by God and is consigned to Heaven, Hell, or Purgatory;

If Man is assigned to Purgatory, any venial sin left on the soul will be burned away.

Man's soul may ascend to Heaven if suffering has been sufficient and healing complete;

General Judgment is made which is the end of human time and also the end of Purgatory.

It is important to note that the Particular Judgment of the soul, which McHugh defines as when "the eternal destiny of each separated soul is decided by the just judgment of God," is individual in nature and takes place immediately after death; each soul is judged according to the way it conducted itself in its life on earth. There are then three locations to which a soul who undergoes Particular Judgment may be assigned: Heaven, Hell, or Purgatory. Souls who go to Hell or Heaven receive eternal punishment or reward; souls consigned to Purgatory, because they did not expunge debt owed for sin in the human life, are in a transitional state of cleansing or healing on their way to eternal reward in Heaven.

WHO IS IN PURGATORY?

In addition to representation in didactic art and literature as admonitions against sin and imperfect contrition and/or penance, souls in Purgatory provide exemplars, not as saints do of perfect models of Christian character, but of imperfect, though not damned, ones. Everyman characters whose faults and foibles mirror the sins and faults that most people commit, these souls are often depicted according to type--the Sailor, the Usurer, or the lecherous Nun¹⁸--to amplify the specific punishment due for the sins committed by each type; but even these types serve an instructive purpose tying together the living sinner with post-mortem examples of hopeful, though suffering, Christians.

¹⁸ See "The Last Judgment" from *The Chester Cycle* for souls in Purgatory depicted as types: Queen, King, Sailor.

THE QUICK AND THE DEAD

The Catholic Encyclopedia entry on Purgatory details the relationship of souls in Purgatory to those still alive and to those who have reached Heaven. Souls in Purgatory are generally referred to as the Church Suffering¹⁹. Christians on earth are the Church Militant; those in Heaven are the Church Triumphant (Joyce). While the punishments of the souls in Purgatory mirror those in Hell, the sense of hope of souls in Purgatory is most akin to that expressed by the Church Militant. They differ from the Church Militant in one important aspect: their agency in aiding their release from Purgatory or in offering a personal recompense for their sins is severely limited; they are constrained to asking others for help, to suffering fully, and in some instances to praying for the living (Hanna “Purgatory”). They may be allowed to warn others who have committed or are committing similar sins and lacking perfect contrition to mend their ways; these instances make up sub-genres of ghost stories and visions in the medieval period that survive into the Renaissance, even in Reformed Communities where they are suspect. Mostly didactic in nature, descriptions of souls in Purgatory focus on the finite, though serious, nature of their torment, their individual sins, and their connection to sinners still on earth.

Souls in Purgatory may receive remission of their fault through different avenues. They may suffer torment at the hands of devils or monsters in order to purge remaining penalties; they experience relief through contributions from friends on earth or from holy persons praying for their release and offering suffrages and good works on their behalf (Le Goff 4). The authorization of these practices is fully realized by the Constitution of

¹⁹ Looking for wider governance over souls, medieval churchmen sometimes argued the similarity between the suffering of those on earth and those in Purgatory in a bid to co-opt souls in Purgatory into the Church Militant (Le Goff 12).

the Second Council of Lyon (1274) which describes the help offered by the Church

Militant to those in Purgatory:

...for the alleviation of these penalties, [the dead] are served by the suffrages of the living faithful, to wit, the sacrifice of the Mass, prayers, alms, and other works of piety that the faithful customarily offer on behalf of others of the faithful according to the institutions of the Church. (Le Goff 285)

PRAYING FOR THE DEAD

Those souls who have been consigned to Purgatory may receive help from the Church Militant through prayer for the dead²⁰. Prayer for the dead begins in the Early Church; requests for it are found in catacomb inscriptions and in liturgies. Hanna, in his history of prayers for the dead, concludes with the statement that for the Christian Church the tradition of praying for the dead is instituted in the practice of the Apostles and by the end of the fourth century:

- not only were prayers for the dead found in all the Liturgies,
- but the Fathers asserted that such practice was from the Apostles themselves;
- those who were helped by the prayers of the faithful and by the celebration of the Holy Mysteries were in a place of purgation;
- from which when purified they 'were admitted unto the Holy Mount of the Lord'. ("Purgatory")

Prayer for the Dead from an early period is seen as aiding those, not completely good and not completely bad, who are in a state or place of purgation (Hanna "Purgatory," Le Goff 171).

Medieval theologians find dogmatic justification for Purgatory in early Church teachings about praying for the dead and from an especially poignant part of 2 Maccabees, in which people are told to offer prayers for fallen Maccabee soldiers. Judah

²⁰ The Church Triumphant needs the prayers of neither the Church Suffering nor the Church Militant; the Triumphant acts to aid both.

Maccabee is not sure of their place in the Bosom of Abraham because they have worn the good luck charm of a pagan deity, but he believes in their goodness and worthiness because they fought for the right reason: “It is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from sins” (2Macc 12:46 quoted in Harley 4, Toner “Prayer”). In medieval typology, the Maccabee call to pray for the dead is often connected to a comment in Matthew 12:32 about forgiveness in the afterworld: “And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but he that shall speak against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, nor in the world to come.” It is inferred from these scriptures that the dead can benefit from the prayers of the living on their behalf and that certain sins (except the one unforgivable one) may be discharged in the next world.

Prayer for the dead was so common in the late medieval Church that the insistence on it borders on the obsessive. The Office for the Dead, for example, was always placed at the end of a Book of Hours (Wieck 508). Wills often outline how many masses are to be said for a person after they are deceased, and sums of money are left to institutions that supported prayer for the dead. Guild charters may include provisions for prayers, alms, and works to aid those members who have died and are presumably in Purgatory. Analyzing English wills of the later medieval period, Duffy points out that this obsession with setting one’s souls to rights and providing for help in the afterlife was done in a businesslike manner which does not reveal a hysterical fear of the afterlife (346). While medieval people were preoccupied with death and preparation for dying, they generally had a more immediate experience with the process of death and dying and

their preparations do not reveal an abject fear of the pains of Purgatory, but a practical acceptance of the possibility of their own suffering there (Duffy 346-347).

INDULGENCES

Prayers by the Church Militant for those in Purgatory include and are linked to the Mass for the dead, the Office of the dead, and the burial service itself; generating a steady flow of these services and prayers in the late medieval period is the application of personal indulgences to those in Purgatory. As all Christians are part of the Communion of Saints, they have access to the Treasury of the Church, the storehouse administered by the Church on earth, through the pope and bishops, of the superabundant merits of Christ and the saints. Indulgences are gifts from that Treasury made to individual Christians for the remission of “temporal punishment due... to sin that has been forgiven” (Kent). Indulgences are a way for the penitent sinner to discharge punishment owed in Purgatory for sins committed in this life.

But indulgence “presupposes the effects obtained by confession, contrition and sacramental satisfaction” (Kent); in other words, the sinner must have made a good Confession with a contrite heart and have performed sufficient satisfaction through penitential acts in order to be granted an indulgence. Kent demonstrates how indulgences are applied to those in Purgatory: “Each good action of the just man possesses a double value: that of merit and that of satisfaction, or expiation. Merit is personal, and therefore it cannot be transferred; but satisfaction can be applied to others.” Those on earth, who can still acquire merit, can only apply it to themselves; the satisfactions and suffrages they gain from prayers and works may be applied to those in Purgatory. An earned

indulgence can be offered for souls in Purgatory, whose time of suffering may then be shortened through the mercy of God and the superabundance of the merits of the Treasury of the Church. Applied to those souls in Purgatory, these graces serve not to absolve their sin but function as an offering applied to their suffering in the hope of alleviating it (Hanna “Purgatory”). An indulgence offered for a soul in Purgatory does not judicially absolve the sin; only God sitting in judgment can do this (Hanna “Purgatory”). Instead, drawing on the Treasury of the Church, the Pope offers the suffrage and satisfaction earned by the penitent to God, in the hope that it may help to cancel or lighten post-mortem temporal punishment (Hanna “Purgatory”).

The offering of indulgences became quite popular in the medieval period. Trying to rally support for and participation in the Second Crusade, St. Bernard offered this indulgence to crusaders: “Receive the sign of the Cross, and thou shalt likewise obtain the indulgence of all thou hast confessed with a contrite heart” (Kent). Indulgences were also given to those who were present at the dedication of new churches, went on pilgrimages to holy shrines like Compostela and Canterbury, and attended ceremonies for the canonization of saints.

ABUSES OF INDULGENCE

Unfortunately, the abuse of indulgences became quite common in the medieval period. Kent, lamenting those “abuses which unhappily have been associated with what is in itself a salutary practice,” points to many of these abuses including medieval bishops who gave plenary indulgences in addition to those indulgence granting powers given to them by the pope. John XXII had a whole order of brothers from a hospital in France

imprisoned when they claimed the grants of indulgence made to them exceeded what was provable in documentation (Kent). The street level dealer in indulgence, in order to enrich himself, could be found making extraordinary and false claims for the power of the indulgence. Most students of English literature encounter the abuse of indulgence in the form of Chaucer's Pardoner; in the prologue to his tale, he boasts of the money he makes from his relics and his papal writs of indulgence:

By this gaude have I woone, yeer by yeer,
An hundred mark sith I was pardoner.
I stonde lyk a clerk in my pulpet,
And whan the lewd peple is doun yset,
I preche so as ye han herd bifoore,
And telle an hundred false japes moore.
Thanne peyne I me to strecche forth the nekke,
And est and west upon the peple I bekke,
As dooth a dowve sittyng on a berne.
Myne handes and my tonge good so yerne
That it is joye to se my bisynesse.
Of avarice and of swich cursednesse
Is al my prechyng, for to make hem free
To yeven hir pens, and namely unto me.
For myne entente is nat but for to wynne,
And nothing for correccioun of synne. (lines 389-404)

Chaucer's Pardoner baldly discusses the falsity he spreads from the pulpit that makes lewd men give him pence; he claims that his preaching is motivated strictly by avarice. Additional information about his larceny has been revealed when the narrator, in the "General Prologue," writes that in one day the pardoner can make more than a common man does in two months, and that he can sing beautifully when it benefits him in silver (lines 690-710). Pointing out the ubiquity of maleficent pardoners, the editor of *Chaucer's Major Poetry*, Albert Baugh, writes that "there were many dishonest pardoners ... The class was often satirized and condemned, even by the most devout members of the Church" (253, note 669). Decried for their abuse of the power of

indulgences, greedy pardoners manipulated spiritual practice for their own ends and often became the stereotype of Church misappropriation of funds in the late medieval period.

In addition to the performance of sacramental duties required to be granted an indulgence, a good work was also necessary; often this came in the form of a monetary donation to fund a church, a hospital, or a crusade (Kent). When the donation was erroneously claimed as a payment for the remission of sin, instead of a good work performed as part of penance, trouble ensued. Those who granted indulgences, if evilly intended like Chaucer's pardoner, could use the promise of an indulgence as a way to pocket money. Corrupt officials within the Church, their agents, and preachers often distorted the power of an indulgence so that it seemed those who sought indulgence could simply pay for absolution of sin and punishment. Because of their continued abuse in the late medieval period and into the Renaissance, the Council of Trent severely limited any financial transactions attached to indulgences and abolished the position of traders in indulgences; instead, bishops were to bestow indulgences gratuitously so that it was understood that they were "dispensed for the sake of piety and not of lucre"(Kent).

PURGATORIAL SOCIETIES

Some cultural institutions associated with Purgatory contributed more positively to cultural growth in the late medieval period. Cultural organizations sprang up offering suffrages and indulgences for the dead in medieval Europe including Christian brotherhoods of monks, priests, nobleman, and laymen organized for the benefit of the deceased members of the Church. In the West, these were called confraternities, fraternities, and societies; medieval guilds also often had special devotions prescribed in

their charters that mandated their participation not just in secular business affairs but also in spiritual and corporal works of mercy²¹ which were offered for the refreshment of deceased members in Purgatory (Hilgers). In many of these fraternities or associations of the dead, members' names were enrolled and after their death a certain number of masses, prayers, and good works would be offered for the repose of their souls. The Guild of St. Anthony at Norfolk outlines these rules pertaining to its deceased members:

Also what broþer or sistir of þis fraternite dye, þe Aldirman shal weten þe dene to seye, and þe Dene hastiliche bryngyn þe waxe to þe Derige, wt outen any lettyng, and sythen warnyn þe brethren and sistren to come to þe derige and gon wt þe Cors to þe kirke; and eueriche broþer and sistir shal offren *ob.* for þe soule. And also, what broþer or sistir of þis fraternite dye, he shal haue, of þe clene katel of þe Gilde, xx. messes songyn for his soule. (“Guild of St. Anthony”)

The Guild of the Blessed Mary in Chesterfield asks that its members not only pray for dead members but offer money in their wills so that masses may be said for these members:

Each brother shall bequeath, in his Will, towards masses for the souls of the bretheren, twelve pence out of every pound of his chattels; but he need not bequeath more than forty shillings in all. If he have less than twenty shillings, let him do as he likes with it.

On the death of any brother, xiiij. wax lights shall be found by the gild, to set round his body, and shall be kept burning until he is buried; and each brother shall either pay a penny at the time of burial, or else make offering afterwards for the soul, as the Alderman thinks best. (“Guild of the Blessed”)

These types of societies persist into our modern times in much the same way with specifics outlined in Society charters. Found in a manual printed in Boston in 1897, this

²¹ Burial of the dead, of course, is a prominent corporal work that shows up in these guilds' and fraternities' charters. Spiritual counseling of the ill also is a prominently mentioned feature of their call to works.

list of the types and frequency of Masses was offered by a purgatorial society of the Redemptionist Fathers:

Advantages

1. A High Mass will be celebrated daily at 7 o'clock for all members living and dead of the Purgatorial Society.
2. The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass will be offered after death for the repose of the souls of those members whose Certificate of Membership has been returned, provided they have made at least two yearly payments.
3. For Perpetual Members, a special High Mass will be offered after death if their Certificate of Membership has been sent in.
4. Deceased relatives and friends may also be enrolled as members of the Purgatorial Society. (Manual of the Purgatorial Society)

The rules and assignments are very specific and mirror the rules laid out in the medieval guilds. The aims of the purgatorial society serve spiritual as well as practical corporal purposes. Surges in purgatorial belief and devotion, especially purgatorial societies, show up during times of great stress in Roman Catholic and Christian societies. There was a great surge in the work and activity of purgatorial societies in medieval Europe after various plagues ravaged the population (Platt 102-103); guild and confraternities counseled the sick, buried the dead, fed the poor, and later provided for remembrance Masses²². In the medieval period, when there is large loss of life or loss of young life, times when families are closest to despair and the social fabric stretches to the ripping point, the belief in Purgatory and social practices attached to it wax. It is therefore a marker of grief both for communities and for individuals. Purgatorial societies and the

²² There is a vast and wide ranging body of historical and cultural studies of how societies evolved, failed, and/or flourished during plagues in the medieval period. See Platt's *King Death* for an overview of how the plague affected late-Medieval England. For an interesting historical survey of Florentine practices during plague years, see Henderson's "Charity, the Poor, and the Aftermath of the Black Death, 1348-1400" in *Piety and Charity in Late Medieval Florence*. Henderson provides an elaborate picture of institutional and communal struggle over disposition of funds and the place of confraternities and guild in managing the social upheaval caused by the plague.

belief in Purgatory itself in particular reinforce social bonds between the living and between the living and their beloved dead²³.

Purgatory, therefore, is intimately connected to rituals associated with death and dying in Roman Catholic belief: prayer and Masses for the dead, granting of indulgences, belief in Particular Judgment, and the exercise of the sacraments of Extreme Unction and Confession. In discussing late medieval attitudes and beliefs about Purgatory, it is important to understand that from the 12th century and afterwards Purgatory had become anchored to and dependant on other core beliefs of the Church from which it would be difficult to separate it.

Purgatory and Confession become tied together as the Church elaborates its understanding of sin and judgment. Coming at roughly the same time as the Council of Lyon's statement about Purgatory, the most important statement about Confession's importance in the medieval Church was made in 1215 by the Fourth Lateran Council²⁴. This Council specifies not only that Confession be a secret affair between an individual, a priest, and God, but also that each Roman Catholic seek out Confession at least once a year before Easter (Lateran IV). In the late 12th and early 13th centuries, these changes in

²³ Today, outgrowths of purgatorial societies include Catholic fraternal benefit societies which provide life insurance to bury the dead. Mutual aid and benefit societies also work according to the same sort of rules.

²⁴ See *Lateran IV: Select Canons* on the *Internet Medieval Sourcebook* for examples of the canons concerning confession. There is much debate about the importance of 1215 in the practice of Confession. According to Biller, those historians who research Confession divide themselves according to those that do pre-1215 work, those that work after 1215, and those who look from the Reformation back at the practice of Confession. The most promising work Biller sees being done by those who can bridge the artificial boundaries imposed by an over reliance on the importance of 1215 as a definitive marker of change. The year 1215 is prominent here only because Le Goff sees the birth of Purgatory (with a location) in 1170; the elaboration of ideas about the afterworld and an individual's agency and place in it are significant as they are so interconnected through the late medieval. Critics argue about the change in Confession made by the Lateran Council; public penance went on after the council; it seems, though, that the council gives preference for non-public confession of sin.

the Church demarcate a time when the understanding of an individual sinner's place and agency within the human world and the divine cosmology expanded greatly.

Confession, as practiced in the late medieval Church, was a sacrament during which contrite sinners sought forgiveness of sins committed after Baptism; they receive absolution through a priest and then make satisfaction for those sins. Those who do not make a "perfect" confession and offer complete satisfaction in this life will suffer in Purgatory in the afterlife; there may therefore be a lingering uncertainty in the confessed about whether their feeling of contrition was true and the quality of satisfaction made sufficient. Only the person making the Confession can make that determination with the help of God and a spiritual guide. Three elements that must be present in Confession are the contrition, the confession, and the satisfaction. Without these, a confession is considered invalid (Hanna "Sacrament").

Confession was practiced by individuals seeking remission of their sin through the sacramental form. A sinner examines his conscience for times when he has sinned against God and Man either by his action or inaction; he understands the error of his actions and its connection to his subsequent separation from God. A sinner approaches the priest, confesses his sins, is absolved, says an act of contrition, and is given counsel and ways to offer satisfaction for those sins confessed to the priest. Both venial (lesser sins) and mortal sins (those which will earn a soul eternal damnation) may be absolved through Confession. Yet absolution through a priest is not complete without the full participation of the sinner. Through ignorance or imperfect contrition, a sinner may not make a full, clear, and true confession or complete proper penance for his/ her sins. As a result, an individual sinner may continue to offer satisfaction and seek indulgences to

reduce any punishment not properly atoned for; even when a sinner dies in a state of grace, some fault may still need to be expunged in Purgatory (Hanna “Sacrament”).

The increasing agency accorded sinners in medieval Roman Catholicism after the Fourth Lateran Council by individual repeated confession not only bolsters the need for continued reflection and admission of guilt, but also reinforces the process of making reparation that the Church highlights as the way to salvation. Le Goff’s placing of the nascence of Purgatory at 1170, only 45 years before the Fourth Lateran Council’s elaboration on private yearly confession, highlights the Church’s more systematic and straightforward articulation of the agency of the individual and his connections to the community of believers in this world and the next.

THE END OF PURGATORY IN BRITAIN

But this system of belief was open to abuse and to attack. Leo X’s indulgence sale in 1517 caused many to question the practice, including a German monk, Martin Luther, who ultimately rejected the Church’s use of indulgences (Jardine 336-337)²⁵. Thus began the death knell of Purgatory and Confession in much of Europe. This was not the first or last time that the institutional interests of the Church were seen as superseding a more spiritual and positive influence on its believers. As part of the intellectual discussion of Church law, rite, and practices in the medieval period, reformatory movements sprang up and many were squelched. But the Protestant

²⁵ Leo himself had decimated the papal coffers through lavish spending and then had to seek funding to continue the building of St. Peter’s Basilica (Kittelson 104). Unfortunately, the sale of indulgences in this time was degraded to a base financial transaction by many of its purveyors. The great indulgence salesman, John Tetzel, a Dominican monk, coined the jingle, “Once the coin into the coffer clings, a soul from purgatory heavenward springs!” (Kittelson 103-104).

Reformation began just as the printing press caused the Church to lose its grip on channels of the dissemination of information. Prelates, priests, and intellectuals could publish to a wide audience and ideas could catch on more quickly and were harder to quash through the normal means of law courts, both ecclesiastical and lay, and the burning of banned and troublesome material. Through the efforts of German prelates and printers, Wittenberg became a locus for Protestant theological reform and for dissemination of information (Wallace 69-77). Associated with avarice and rapacious institutional practices of the early modern Roman Catholic Church, the ideological practice of Purgatory became a casualty of the Protestant Reformation in reformed communities.

While popular discussions of money issues and ecclesiastical fundraisers through the sale of indulgences undermined the authority of local prelates, the idea of discarding Purgatory as part of the attack on indulgences did not at first take hold. Purgatory was only renounced by Luther in 1530²⁶. By 1563, the 39 articles of the Anglican Church pronounced a complete renunciation of the doctrine of Purgatory: “The Romish Doctrine concerning Purgatory ... is a fond thing, vainly invented, and grounded upon no warranty of Scripture, but rather repugnant to the Word of God” (“The Thirty Nine”). Luther and other Reformers, though, were reticent about abandoning Purgatory because Purgatory was a powerful concept beyond its ability to raise money for the Church hierarchy to sustain building projects, lavish lifestyles, and politicking. It provided the money for charitable hospitals and sanctuaries and keeps the connection between the living and the dead, dare I say, alive. It prompted the wealthy to support the poor through constant

²⁶ In 1520, Luther was still clinging to a notion of intermediate suffering; by 1530, he had completely renounced the idea of Purgatory (Greenblatt 34). Luther does maintain a belief in soul-sleep after 1530.

reminders of their shared, flawed humanity. It was an idea, a tie that bound together the often disparate worlds of the wealthy and the poor, the robust and the ailing, in this world and the next, through a shared vulnerability as inheritors of the original, and any subsequent, sin.

Chapter 2:

The Doom Deferred in *The Castle of Perseverance*: Torment, Time, and Judgment in the Suburbs of Hell

Peas I hier a voice saith man thou shalt dye
Remembre the paynes of Purgatorie
--Anonymous Lyric,
“Beware the Pains of Purgatory”

Quia in inferno
Nulla est redemptio

--Richard Rolle

Pamela King describes *The Castle of Perseverance* as “an extremely elaborate and expansive play” which “offers a package of orthodox biblical doctrine as armament against the sin of covetousness” (244). Her synopsis of the play boils down the four thousand lines to a manageable few sentences:

Mankind (*Humanum Genus*), accompanied by his Good and Bad Angels, is subjected to various temptations by the forces of the World (*Mundus*), the Flesh (*Caro*), and the Devil (*Belial*). Backbiter eventually persuades him to join Covetousness, but he is retrieved by Penitence and Confession and enters the Castle of Perseverance. The forces of evil lay siege to the Castle, where Mankind is defended by an array of seven Virtues. Although the Virtues win, Covetousness tempts Mankind to leave the Castle, offering him material success in the form of possession of the now vacant Castle. Death comes and Mankind's riches are seized by the enigmatic I-wot-nevere-Whoo, **while his Soul is carried to Hell. The Four Daughters of God- Mercy, Peace, Righteousness and**

Truth- hold a debate, which Mercy wins, freeing the Soul to ascend to Heaven. (244) (my bold)

The judgment sequence in *The Castle of Perseverance*, the piece from the time the Soul is carried toward Hell until its ascension to Heaven, has long been argued to contain inconsistencies in theology, including an impression that the Soul is saved from Hell, the question of whether the Soul suffers in Purgatory, and the seemingly nonsensical rhetorical strategies employed by the Daughters of God²⁷. The Four Daughters' episode is the most controversial of the play, both because of the question of why God saves the soul even though the Soul has not made full restitution for his sins, and the more practical problem of a lost leaf in the manuscript at the beginning of the section²⁸. The most serious eschatological problem, as some of the critics of the play and some of the scripts with stage directions indicate, is that the Soul, the post-mortem representative of Mankind, seems to be carried to Hell and then rescued from it by the Four Daughters of God²⁹. From the standpoint of orthodox medieval Roman Catholic doctrine, there is no salvation from Hell.

Therefore the play has often been considered theologically flawed and sloppily composed, though alternately, these inconsistencies have been explained as “dramatic” devices. Any critical opinion about the theology of the play and decisions made about its staging by directors and producers must be informed by an analysis of the medieval

²⁷ See Diller, Chew, Lomborg, and Davidson whose assertions will be treated in the latter part of this chapter.

²⁸ EETS editors estimate that the missing leaf results in the loss of between 90-100 lines since the scribe averaged about 48 lines per page (Eccles ix).

²⁹ Bevington in *Medieval Drama* may have inadvertently added to this misunderstanding by adding the stage direction for the Bad Angel that “He takes the Soul to Hell” (885). The EETS version does not contain this stage direction, nor is it present in the manuscript facsimile and translation in Bevington's Folger facsimile edition (Eccles).

theatrical and theological elements which inform its composition³⁰. The otherwise orthodox theology presented by the playwright in *The Castle of Perseverance* is a bit more subtle than “God is so great that He allows Christian sinners to be rescued from Hell;” it is a complex dramatic portrayal focusing on the mercy of God as an extension of Particular Judgment and purgatorial torment; its message stresses the interconnectedness of the real and phenomenal world through the experiences of the allegorical character Mankind/ Soul, who in his life represents the Church Militant, in his purgatorial torment represents the Church Suffering, and in his Heavenly reward represents the Church Triumphant. Mankind’s sins and the Soul’s need to answer for them engenders in the audience pity and fear for the character and for their own condition as sinners; these emotions are expunged and replaced with joy as the Enthroned God (*Deus in Trono*) provides a final cathartic experience for the audience, culminating with the Soul’s assumption into Heaven at the hands of the Four Daughters of God.

TIME IN THE MORALITIES

The portrayal of the post-mortem condition of the soul is directly connected in this instance to genre. *The Castle of Perseverance* is the earliest English morality surviving in its entirety (Eccles xxiv). In general, morality plays employ allegorical characters of vice, who lure a Mankind figure into sin, and characters of virtue, who lead him into penitence. Describing the time schemes of the morality relative to those of the cycle plays, Pamela King writes that

³⁰ I became interested in these issues when in 1998, William Racicot and I directed “The Four Daughters of God,” the last section of *The Castle of Perseverance*, for *The Duquesne University Medieval and Renaissance Players*. See the appendix for a copy of the script and a discussion of the aims of the productions and playing conditions.

the action [of the morality] concerns alienation from God and return to God, presented as temptation, fall and restitution of the protagonist. The story of man's fall and redemption presented in a cycle of mystery plays as an epic historical narrative is thus encapsulated in the morality play. (240)

Covering millennia, the action and the time of the cycles, including the fall of Adam and Eve, the birth, death, and resurrection of Christ, the lives of the apostles and Mary, and the final answerability of all men, are compressed in and echoed by the faults and foibles of the single representative Christian in the morality. The time of Man in the moralities is furthermore understood to be sandwiched between historical events portrayed in the cycle play; this relationship may be made clearer by the following diagram:

		GENRE	MATTER
HUMAN AND DIVINE TIME	Cycles	Old Testament Events	Creation Adam and Eve sin Time of the Patriarchs
		New Testament Events	Jesus is born Jesus dies, harrows Hell, and rises Jesus ascends to Heaven Marian Themes – Pentecost, Assumption
	Moralities		Man is born with Original Sin It is expurgated in Baptism Man sins Man confesses and repents
	Select Moralities		Man Dies Debate of the Body and the Soul Post-mortem judgment of Man's Soul Any remaining sin may be cleansed in Purgatory
	Cycles		Christ Conducts the General Judgment

Illustration 1 – Time and the matter of medieval English play genres

The cycle play covers events from the Old Testament through the New Testament, and ends with the General Judgment, the end of all human time. Left out is the life of medieval Man, encompassed in the moralities, which occurs after the events of the New Testament but before the General Judgment. In medieval Roman Catholicism, Old Testament events are tied to events in the New Testament through prophetic and typological equivalency. For example, Samson's birth, foretold to his parents by an angel, is viewed as a prophetic precursor of the Annunciation. Additionally, deeds of Christ represented in the cycles can be viewed as redressing wrongs done to or by Old Testament figures. The Fall of Adam is redeemed by Christ's suffering, death, and resurrection. The Harrowing of Hell releases those righteous patriarchs who merit salvation but who have been confined to Limbo.

In morality plays, these typological and prophetic equivalencies are absent; instead, they are replaced by the personal interaction of Mankind with virtue characters, focused on the recognition and reformation of sin through Confession, which magnifies the power of Christ's gifts of grace to humankind instituted through the sacraments. There are two distinct types of moralities: those that end with this call to repentance and a stress on sacramental intervention, and those that in addition treat the post-mortem condition of the soul. *The Castle of Perseverance* falls into the latter category because in addition to his human sinfulness, Mankind dies on stage, emerges as the Soul, and is judged. In this post-mortem period, the judgment of an individual soul done at the moment of death, the playwright has chosen to conflate the time of Particular Judgment

and Purgatory, commenting on the eventuality of General Judgment, rather than dramatizing it³¹.

ALLEGORY AND POST-MORTEM MANKIND

Moralities that do not deal with a staged death of Mankind, like *Wisdom* and *Mankind*, end with neither a Particular Judgment nor the General Judgment, but with a reinforcement of the need for sacramental grace and a call to a less sinful way of living. In the conclusion of *Mankind*³², Mercy warns Mankind, who has fallen into sin through the temptations of New Guise, Nowadays, Nought, and Mischief to:

Remember how redy I was to help yow; fro swheche I was not dangerus;
Wherefore, goode sunne, abstenyne fro syn evermore after this.
Ye may both save and spyll yowr sowle that is so precyus.
(Coldewey 134; lines 891-893)

Through the lessons of Mercy, Mankind is presumably able to move ahead, having learned the harm caused by his own transgressions. Mankind's experiences will shape the way he makes decisions about sin from that point on. While Mercy does not guarantee that Mankind will not lapse into sin again, he reminds him that he now has the tools to avoid sin, confess those sins he does commit, and live a Christian life.

Death and judgment are likewise forestalled in *Wisdom*³³ where the Soul falls prey to Lucifer's temptation and becomes disfigured. The Soul is able to drive "out the

³¹ Particular Judgment is God's judgment of an individual soul commenced at the moment of his or her death. The soul is consigned to Hell, Heaven, or Purgatory at this judgment. General Judgment commences at the end of all human time; God gathers together all human still alive and releases those souls still left in Purgatory. He judges and divides the souls and human time ends.

³² All quotes from *Mankind* are from Coldewey's edition of the play in *Early English Drama: An Anthology*.

³³ The text of *Wisdom* quoted from here is found in Coldewey's *Early English Drama: An Anthology*.

devils of deadly sin with contrition” (Coldewey 68-69), ending the play with a call to all Christian souls to renew their grace with God, eschew vice, and end their lives in a perfect state of contrition: “Nowe ye mut every soule renewe/ In grace, and vycys to eschew, / And so to ende with perfeccyon” (Coldewey 104; lines 1159-1161). This is quite a different message from the Soul’s in *The Castle of Perseverance*³⁴ when he wins Heaven by calling out for “mercy” at the moment of his death: “I putte me in Goddys mercy!” (line 3007). With a call to regular reflection on the state of the soul, the Soul in *Wisdom* admonishes humankind to avoid the uncertainty of deathbed contrition that besets the Soul in *The Castle of Perseverance*.

Because *The Castle of Perseverance* bridges the time between the death of an individual and the General Judgment, it introduces a more subtly nuanced array of allegorical characterizations than do other moralities, which do not include the post-mortem treatment of the soul. While human faults and virtue are represented in the cycles through faithful and deceitful representatives of man--including Adam, Simon, Peter, Judas and Pilate--in the moralities, Mankind is represented by an individual character--*Humanus Genus*, Mankind, or *Anima*--who is tested by vice and virtue characters. Cataloging the defining characteristics of allegory in the morality genre, King writes that,

Although the action of a morality play is frequently described as allegorical, the term is used loosely to describe how action, character, space and time are related to the real world through a tissue of metaphor. The use of *prosopopoeia*, or personification, in creating dramatic characters involves a fundamental rhetorical separation between the play world and the real world, as players take on the roles of qualities, e.g. Mercy; supernatural beings (Good Angel); whole human categories (Fellowship) and human attributes (Lechery). The original audience’s perception of reality was in any case different to that of a modern one, and it is

³⁴ All lines quoted from *The Castle of Perseverance* are from Bevington’s edition of the play in *Medieval Drama*.

not always clear what is an outside agent sent by God or the Devil and what an internal motive. (241)

In the *Castle of Perseverance*, characters like *Humanus Genus* and *Mundus*, act according to expected allegorical norms. But not all characters in the play should be understood to fit into this allegorical characterization. Explaining further the role of allegorical characters in moralities and their apprehension in the medieval mind, King continues that

Each role, as actualised in a theatrical context, is presented as a distinct consciousness and is, therefore, a dramatic character. The action can be seen securely only in terms of its own mimesis, as an instance imitating an eternal reality. What may seem abstract was, for the period when the plays were written, representative of true reality, transcending the ephemeral and imperfect world of everyday existence (241-242).

The performance of allegory in medieval moralities is fraught with internal and external, temporal and representational tension as the phenomenal world is encapsulated within vice and virtue characters, devils, and angels. Because *The Castle of Perseverance* enacts the post-mortem judgment of the Soul, that allegory becomes even more stretched as the phenomenal world of the Soul's post-mortem judgment fully intrudes into the "world of everyday existence" (King 242). This difference is highlighted in the interactions of the characters Enthroned God (*Deus in Trono*), the Soul (*Anima*), and the Four Daughters: Truth, Mercy, Peace, and Justice at the conclusion of the play.

POWER AND THE NON ALLEGORY OF GOD

Unlike other extant English moralities, *The Castle of Perseverance* has one notable non-allegorical character, the Enthroned God. King's "eternal reality," which the morality usually imitates by way of particular "instance," is interrupted quite dramatically

by the appearance of Enthroned God in *The Castle of Perseverance*. While poems like *Piers Plowman* and plays like *Mankind* freely mix their allegorical characters with contemporary named individuals or with specifically named devils (*Titivillus*, for example), God is not as easily subsumed into the allegorical framework; the power that results from the intrusion of God into a morality, though, works, in the dramatist's favor in *The Castle of Perseverance*. The Enthroned God, who names Himself in the Old Testament "I am who am," is not a pretended allegorical character. God appears on stage in cycle plays as the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, but, in English moralities that do not feature the death of Mankind, God's power and majesty are almost exclusively represented through virtue characters. God's appearance on stage in *The Castle of Perseverance* is powerful because it transcends the usual allegorical use of virtue agents in the morality.

Rather than creating problems of representation over which the Protestant iconoclastic stage frets, Enthroned God's appearance creates an opportunity for easing adjustments in divine and human time frames at the end of *The Castle of Perseverance*; medieval dramatists generally avoid the problems of presenting God by demarcating special representational space for God on stage through use of gesture, position, and address³⁵. While Enthroned God may resemble the judging Christ from the climax of the cycle plays, *The Castle of Perseverance's* God does not actually carry out the General Judgment; He only gives the audience the promise of an unforeseen future one.

Enthroned God is not the General Judgment God, because the time of this morality does

³⁵ While he treats the allegory in the play differently than I do here, Bevington notes the problems of allegorical dramatization in the following way: "In his task of visualizing the judgment of Mankind, the dramatist of *The Castle of Perseverance* faced a central artistic problem... that of illustrating in concrete dramatic forms the abstractions of allegory" ("Man, Thinke" 150-151).

not overlap the time of the cycle. The play's message and action fit into the time frames normal to the morality, the time of humankind before the General Judgment.

PARTICULAR AND FINAL JUDGMENT IN DRAMA AND LITERATURE

If the play is not showing the General Judgment, what judgment is God making? *The Castle of Perseverance* shows not only Mankind's penitence and death but also his Particular Judgment, which temporally and dramatically differs from General Judgment³⁶. In non-cycle drama, the Mankind or Soul characters may meet Death and die onstage, but only one other medieval English example, *The Pride of Life*³⁷, promises an onstage Particular Judgment. The Prologue gives an overview of the play, and a fragment of text follows during which "the King of Life challenges Death to a battle." Unfortunately, the text ends at the point where Death is to respond to this challenge (Coldewey 26). The Prologue indicates that the King of Life will be judged onstage with an intercession made for him by Mary; he tells the audience that Death:

... him drivith adoun to grounde,
He dredith nothing his kniytis;
And delith him depe dethis wounde
And kith on him his miytis.

Qwhen the body is doun ibrogt
The soule sorow awakith;
The bodyis pride is dere abogt,
The soule the fendis takith. (Coldewey 31; line 89-96)

³⁶ This emphasis on the Particular Judgment in *The Castle of Perseverance* reflects the mindset of the medieval Christian, who dwells on his own individual judgment while contemplating the future General Judgment. In later Protestant interpretation of eschatology, individual Confession and Particular Judgment disappear and this dual focus on the Particular and General Judgment collapses, especially in Calvinism, into a focus on the sinful race of humanity that will be judged at the General Judgment. The imminence of the Apocalypse is highlighted in this later eschatology.

³⁷ The text of *The Pride of Life* quoted here is found in Coldewey's *Early English Drama: An Anthology*.

This soul suffers in sorrow for the sins of his sensuality and as a result is taken into custody by devils. This death scene mirrors closely what happens to the Soul in *The Castle of Perseverance*, who is killed by death's dart and grabbed by devils that drag him toward Hell (lines 2840-3128). *The Pride of Life* Prologue, though, continues that the play will contain a bid by Mary to save the soul:

And through priere of Oure Lady mylde
Al godenisse scho wol qwyte.
Scho wol prey her son so mylde,
The soule and body schul dispyte;

The cors that nere knewe of care,
No more then stone in weye,
Schal wit of sorow and sore care
And thrawe between ham tweye. (Coldewey 31; 97-104)

To ascertain guilt, Mary asks for a debate between the body and the soul, a common motif in medieval literature. The body as the vehicle of sensuality, it is argued, should have more suffering of the two. The Prologue continues that the soul shall be weighed to determine its final destination:

The soule theron schal be weye
That the fendis have ikayte;
And Oure Lady schal therfor preye
So that with her he schal be lafte. (Coldewey 31; lines 105-108)

This description resembles other scenes of just judgment featuring Mary and the Archangel Michael in literature, lyrics, and cycle plays³⁸. Mary or the Archangel Michael often presides as spokesperson of God in Particular Judgments to weigh a soul's

³⁸ Coldewey in *Early English Drama*, note 105, p. 31, gives a list of sources which comment on the weighing of the soul, called psychostasis. This propensity of the Virgin to speak on the part of the sinful or to aid those who do her work is also found in the 13th century French tales of the Virgin of Gautier De Coinci. De Coinci demonstrates how popular the idea of Purgatory and Particular judgment aided by the intercession of Mary were at this early date in the theological development of Purgatory (Kemp- Welch).

worth (Davidson “Fate” 50). Scales are brought forth, or the angel holds them while devils argue for damnation and Mary argues for salvation.

These characters and plots are also commonly found in visions of Purgatory. In the fifteenth century *A Revelation of Purgatory*, a soul named Margaret is released from Purgatory after she has burned long enough, and the Scales of Judgment no longer tip in favor of the need for continued punishment (Harley). Margaret needs to be weighed not only at her Particular Judgment, but repeatedly as she is gradually cleansed in Purgatory:

And it seemed soon after there came a fair lady and with her a fair young man, who seemed about twenty years old. And he brought a pair of scales in his hand, and he was clothed all in white. And it seemed the lady was clothed all in white, with gold stars on her garment, a royal crown on her head, and a scepter in her hand, on the end of which was a little cross. And then she spoke to the man in white: ‘Son,’ she said, ‘take this woman and let her be weighted.’ (lines 827-838)

A devil introduces the worm of conscience as evidence that Margaret is still weighed down by guilt and should remain in Purgatory (lines 850-854), and Margaret reports that the Virgin Mary interceded on her behalf: "my son and I have given this woman mercy. And fie on you, Satan! You and the worm of conscience will not defy her further" (lines 856-859). Margaret is eventually deemed worthy of Heaven and released from Purgatory. This example shows that the weighing of a Soul at its Particular Judgment can be imagined to continue periodically until it has achieved enough grace to raise it to Heaven.

The *Early English Versions of the Gesta Romanorum*, “Of an Argument Between the Virgin and the Devil,” shows a similar release of the soul of a woman from the clutches of the devil. Mary comes to argue the woman’s case by asking Jesus to make the devil answer all of her questions truly. Mary asks the Devil if the woman has any

contrition. He answers, “she hathe now contricion in here mynde for the synnes that she hathe done, and grete wepyng, and purpose neuer to do so more such synnes, but wil amende here, also mych as she may.” After asserting that there is still room for virtue in the woman’s soul, Mary asks the devil whether the vices or the virtues should leave her soul; the devil answers that the vices should leave. Mary asserts that, “therefore the way to helle is shytte to hire, and the way to heuyn is opyn to hire” (“Of an Argument”).

Though not mentioned as Purgatory or a Particular Judgment, the woman in this tale is in an indeterminate judgmental phase of existence. Like *The Castle of Perseverance*’s Soul, the woman has had contrition in her heart and, through the debate of Mary and the pain of the devil’s possession, has the grace to achieve Heaven.

Mary is a common interlocutor for troubled and suffering souls. In the penitential lyric, the “Hail Holy Queen,” recited by the penitent sinner, petition for aid ostensibly for those suffering on Earth and in Purgatory is made:

Salve Regina, mater misericordie	Hail Holy Queen, Mother of Mercy
Vita Dulcedo et spes nostra	Our life, our Sweetness and our hope
Salve Ad te clamamus Exules filii Eve	To thee do we cry, banished children of Eve
Ad te suspiramus gementes	To thee do we send up sighs of
Et Flentes in hac lacrimarum valle	Mourning and weeping in this valley of tears
Eya Ergo advocata nostra	Turn then most gracious advocate
Illos tuos misericordes oculos ad nos converte	Your eyes of mercy towards us and after this our exile show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb Jesus
Et Ihesum Benedictum fructum ventris tui	
Nobis post hoc exilium ostende Benignum	
O Clemens	O clement
O pia	O loving
O dulcis	O sweet
Maria salve. (Saupe 133-134)	Holy Mary (my translation)

This prayer connects the banishment of Adam and Eve with the banishment of Christians who sin after Baptism; all sinners mourn and weep. Supplication to Mary in the prayer names her as a merciful advocate for suffering sinners who aids them in ending their exile from God.

These motifs of Mary, Christ, and angels (particularly Michael) being present at judgment also occur in the Chester cycle's "The Last Judgment." There is a shift in time frames at the General Judgment, though, and the intercession of Mary fails to help souls. At the Chester "The Last Judgment," Jesus, speaking to the damned souls, reinforces the fact that the mercy that came with Particular Judgment is now past,

And though my sweete mother deare
and all the sayntes that ever were
prayed for you right nowe here,
all yt were to late. (lines 620-624)³⁹

Like the preceding examples of Particular Judgment, Mary, the Queen of Heaven and Empress of Hell, may at the General Judgment plead for mercy for those souls left in the deepest recesses of Hell, but she has no more power to aid them. Those left in Hell at the time of General Judgment will remain there, damned eternally.

PARTICULAR JUDGMENT IN *THE CASTLE OF PERSEVERANCE*

That the judgment in *The Castle of Perseverance* is a Particular Judgment has been overlooked by critics because it differs somewhat from the Particular Judgments in the preceding literary and dramatic examples. The debate of a punishing devil arguing in favor of damnation and Mary as a merciful supplicant is missing in *The Castle of Perseverance's* judgment scene; instead the Daughters of God argue for and against

³⁹ This section is followed by a catalog of the corporal works of mercy like that echoed by the Enthroned God at the conclusion of *The Castle of Perseverance*.

salvation in the manner of Mary or devils. During the debate of the Four Daughters, Truth makes an allusion to soul weighing or psychostasis:

I am evere at mans ende.
Whanne body and sowle partyn a-twinne,
Thanne wey I his goode dedys and his sinne;
And, w[h]eyder of hem be more or mine,
He schal it ryth sone finde. (lines 3183-3189)

Peace arrives and tells her that she cannot damn a soul, “Lete no man by you dampnyd be,/ Nor deme ye no man to helle,” and announces that she and Mercy will approach the high throne of God to ask for a proper judgment (lines 3205-3220). Unlike other representations of Particular Judgment, which rely on common figures and tropes, the particularity of judgment in *The Castle of Perseverance*, as Peace declares, is focused by the special dramatic power of the non-allegorical God who commands the space and time of judgment in the play. Christ in Chester’s “The Last Judgment,” who declares to the damned,

Rightuouse doome may you not fleene,
for grace ys put awaye.
When tyme of grace was endurynge,
to seeke yt you had no lykinge (lines 614-617),

is radically different from Enthroned God, whose time placements and tenses in *The Castle of Perseverance* indicate that he is still dispensing grace to the Soul when he pronounces his judgment:

My mercy, Mankind, geve I the[e].
Cum, sith at my ryth honde!
Ful wel have I lovyd the[e],
Unkind thow[gh] I the[e] fonde.
As a sparke of fire in the se,
My mercy is sinne-quenchand.
Thou hast cause to love me
Abovyn al thinge in land,
And kepe my comaundement.

If thou me love and drede,
Hevene schal be thy mede;
My face the[e] schal fede—
This is mine jugement. (lines 3598-3609)

Though he has been sinful, the Soul is admitted to Heaven to sit at God's right hand. In giving his judgment of the Soul, God here is literally the dictator of the time and the space of mercy, showing the immediacy of His Mercy toward a soul at Particular judgment. He speaks to the Soul as "thee" and "thou" and then extends the example of the Soul to the species, the plural. He speaks of the individual and the species, not as critics have viewed them interchangeably, but, in series. Echoing the Chester Christ's roll call of the saved and damned classes of human beings who include representative characters of Pope, King, Queen, Sailor, and Merchant, God in *The Castle of*

Perseverance then begins to speak of the General Judgment:

King, kaiser, knyght and kampioun,
Pope, patriark, prest, and prelat in pes,
Duke dowtiest in dede by dale and by doun,
Lityl and mekyl, the more and the les,
All the statys of the werld is at min[e] renoun;
To me schal they geve acompt at my digne des. (lines 3611-3616)

He uses the personal singular pronoun and tense for the particular case of the Soul, who is being judged; using the plural personal pronoun "they" (3611), He then extends it to the generic case for all states, "King, kaiser, knyght and kampioun"⁴⁰. Additionally, the General Judgment He speaks of is in the future:

Whanne Mihel his horn blowith at my dred dom,
The count of here conscience schal putten hem in pres,
And yeld a rekninge
Of here space whou they han spent,
And of here trew talent
At my gret jugement

⁴⁰ Burrow and Turville-Petre's *A Book of Middle English* shows the forms of the personal pronouns common to Middle English (24).

An answer schal me bringe. (lines 3617-3622)

The greatest difference between the Chester and *The Castle of Perseverance* judgments is that *The Castle of Perseverance* does not enact the General Judgment; it only warns of its future inevitability. The Chester Christ dispenses no such mercy because for Him, as He tells the damned,

Loe, you men that wycked have benne,
what Sathan sayth you heren and seene.
Rightuouse doome may you not fleene,
for grace ys put awaye.
When tyme of grace was endurynge,
to seeke yt you had no lykinge.
Therefore must I, for anythinge,
doe **rightuouesenes** todaye. (lines 612- 619) (my bold)

The damned, according to the Chester Christ, will be ruled by Justice or “rightuouesenes.” In *The Castle of Perseverance*, the allegorical character Justice loses the Four Daughters’ argument determining the Soul’s final destination to Mercy for “grace ys” not yet “put awaye” (“The Last Judgment” line 615).

While the Enthroned God makes the verbal statement usually associated with the General Judgment that the good sit at His right hand and the bad to His left, the didactic purpose of this statement, at the conclusion of *The Castle of Perseverance*, is more merciful and positive because there is only one human, the Soul, judged on stage and he is going to the right; in the cycle doom, God judges multiple souls (damned and saved), sending them to the right or to the left. While the allegorical representation of the Soul on the surface seems to conform to the usual notion of allegory, its message in *The Castle of Perseverance* goes above and beyond the usual dramatic use of allegory, and a different theological position of judgment in *The Castle of Perseverance* emerges, since only one soul has died and only one soul has been judged and punished. Like other

allegorical characters, Mankind (*Humanus Genus*) in *The Castle of Perseverance* represents the shared sinfulness of all human beings; but his later incarnation, the Soul (*Anima*) is judged singularly for his sins. Because neither God nor one of his representatives divide and judge all Man as happens in the end of the cycle, the Last Judgment, the Soul is a moral example to be avoided rather than a true moral representative of all Christian souls; this is a powerful message and a clear one: in *The Castle of Perseverance* there is above all individual answerability at judgment because human time frames and the time of forgiveness have not ceased.

The Castle of Perseverance is a morality in intent and purpose with an additional Particular Judgment appended to the end. The rhetoric of the General Judgment found in the cycle plays is present, but not the action. *The Castle of Perseverance* is doing what it is supposed to do as a morality; it dramatizes the life of individual medieval Man left out of the cycle and stops before the end of human time. In this way, the life cycle of *The Castle of Perseverance*'s humankind is finite, but infinitely repeatable; it is repeatable in number, though not in time. In moralities the repeated injunction of virtue characters is that "the time of Man is finite"; each human being only has so much time to repent before being called to account for his behavior. The experience of the Soul is infinitely repeatable because each soul has the chance to redeem itself and each one will be judged individually; it is not repeatable in time because human time will end.

PARTICULAR JUDGMENT AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO PURGATORY

Even for imperfectly repentant sinners like the Soul in *The Castle of Perseverance*, grace and mercy can still be granted at Particular Judgment if a soul

suffers in Purgatory. The final episode of judgment in the play, “The Four Daughters of God,” played as part of the whole of *The Castle of Perseverance*, contains a conflation of human and divine timeframes, a blending of and a statement about the time of Man and the time of God. The way the playwright has accommodated these two timeframes is to have the soul undergo a simultaneous Particular Judgment and purgatorial torment; the torment is meted out at the hands of the devils that beat him and Justice and Truth who berate him as they argue for his damnation. The key to understanding how the Soul is “released from Hell” in *The Castle of Perseverance* lies in the dramatic relationship between Particular Judgment and Purgatory as they function in the spatial, temporal and visual medieval imagination to magnify the mercy of God. By the time *The Castle of Perseverance* was written, Roman Catholic belief held that the time between the Particular Judgment and the General Judgment would be filled with purgatorial torment for those who died in doubtful circumstances and who had not immediately been assigned to Heaven or Hell. Duffy writes that almost everyone would suffer punishment in Purgatory after the Particular Judgment:

though every Christian might hope for Heaven, only the saints could hope to go there directly. All who died in a state of venial sin, all who had forgotten or concealed such sins in confession, all who had not yet fulfilled every part of the penance imposed in confession for sins repented, confessed, and absolved, all who had had insufficient penance imposed on them by over-indulgent confessors, all who fell short of that fullness of charity which lay at the root of salvation... all these were bound to spend some time in the pains of Purgatory (341).

The final section of *The Castle of Perseverance* is fraught, not as literary critics often have been, with anxieties about whether the Soul is saved from Hell, but with tension and anxiety about the uncertainty of salvation and the largesse of the Enthroned God’s mercy, played out in Particular Judgment and purgatorial torment.

Many critics of British literature have ignored Purgatory as a trifle, a thing of the past, a memory of the Dark Ages. The editor of the old EETS edition of *The Revelation to the Monk of Evesham* contends in his introduction that “Purgatory has no existence. It is an elaborated lie” (Arber 9). For these critics, Purgatory was a piece of popish nonsense, a belief to instill fear in the uneducated superstitious peasant. And so it was critically ignored or discounted.

While belief in Purgatory is related both to questionable fundraising by the Church and to cultic remembrance of the dead, its functions are more wide ranging in terms of spiritual connections among believers, the Church Suffering, the Church Militant, and the Church Triumphant, and for the power of forgiveness and mercy on the part of God. It is not only a prison house of souls⁴¹, but also a state of cleansing and healing to which the overwhelming majority of believers will be subjected.

In contemporary criticism of medieval drama, Purgatory has largely escaped exploration in scholarship because in iconography Purgatory is almost indistinguishable from Hell. On medieval pictorial exhortations concerning the effects of good works and the inevitability of judgment, souls in Purgatory, if depicted at all, are suffering torments much like those suffering in Hell; Hell and Purgatory both contain fiery torment, but only Purgatory features water torture. The visual differences between Hell and Purgatory lie in the appearance of angels near Purgatory who deliver the souls to Heaven or succor

⁴¹ This aspect of Purgatory is played up by Truth, who torments the Soul greatly, claiming that if Mankind be judged righteously, “In presun Man schal by pynynd” (line 3261). Mercy and Peace stress forgiveness and healing.

them⁴²; Hell is surrounded only by devils who work to shove souls into the abyss and then torture them.

Study of the iconography of Heaven and Hell is vast, and iconographical study by drama scholars, as Davidson argues, “has done as much to illuminate the medieval drama as scholarship which has focused on the text alone” (“Positional” 66). The Early Drama, Art, and Music Series of the Medieval Institute have published anthologies entitled *The Iconography of Heaven* and *The Iconography of Hell* but not an anthology of the iconography of Purgatory or other middle states (Davidson). Perhaps it is in the works. All in all, though, the iconography of Purgatory would largely resemble that of Hell.

The argument that Purgatory is represented in *The Castle of Perseverance*, then, will be difficult to substantiate. There are few if any pictures I can point to where the actors in the play strike a pose wholly reminiscent of an iconic representation of Purgatory. Few support a visually analogous relationship between the judgment scene in *The Castle of Perseverance* and contemporary visual depictions of Purgatory, because for this dramatist and other artists, Purgatory does not capture the imagination purely in terms of its spatial relationship to the cosmos. The medieval conception of Purgatory is imaginative and visual, with graphic descriptions of its topography, gradations of punishment, and the appearance of the sufferers and their torturers, but these descriptions are not consistent in literary or religious tracts. Some people burn; others freeze; others drown (Le Goff 43-44, Duffy 345).

⁴² Le Goff has a group of illustrations showing souls in purgatory being succored by ministering angels (208). Matsuda includes illustrations of souls in Purgatory on pages 95,99, 101,104, and 155. *The Iconography of Hell*, an anthology edited by Davidson, also offers illustrations of salvation and damnation (Davidson).

The one commonality in medieval descriptions of and belief about Purgatory is that it ends. Because of its finite nature it fits in well with human time frames; because of its connection to the General Judgment when all souls left in Purgatory will be saved, Purgatory connects well with divine time frames also. The temporal properties of Purgatory then are more complicated than those of either Heaven or Hell, which are static; so too is the situation of its denizens. Purgatory relates to delimited periods that simultaneously mirror both human and divine time schemes. By doing so, it powerfully connects the Church Militant, the Church Suffering, and the Church Triumphant.

Critics of *The Castle of Perseverance* have often dismissed the possibility of purgatorial torment for the Soul because Purgatory is not accounted for in the manuscript's diagram of the playing space, or they argue that it is unclear whether the Soul has suffered purgatorial torment. Lomberg, for instance, dismisses the question of the Soul's sojourn in Purgatory and insists that what happens at the conclusion of *The Castle of Perseverance* is a non-orthodox rescue from Hell, a type of rescue she argues often depicted in medieval works. This line of reasoning for dismissing Purgatory misses the point, however. In the medieval imagination, Purgatory is considered to be part of the upper recesses of Hell. The iconographic likeness between depictions of Purgatory and Hell and a theological exposition of their differences are treated by medieval thinkers. Richard Rolle, in the popular 14th century *The Prick of Conscience*, describes Hell as fourfold in construction:

The place there / that purgatorye is holde
Is vnder erth / as clerkes men tolde
Aboue the same place / as clerkes men telleth
There that deed chyldren / vnchrystened dwelleth
That from the fayre syght / of goddes face
Ben put for euer / without any grace

And that place / is euen aboue hell pyt
Betwene purgatorye / and hell is it
And so is the place / of purgatorye sette
Aboue them both / thyther soules be fette
That must nedes / theyr payne there haue
And after that payne / Ihesus wyll them saue

Limbo and Purgatory serve in Rolle's description as the high suburbs of lowest Hell and he is specific about how they have come to be called altogether "Hell":

where oure forne fathers / were in yloke
And of all these foure / men maye one hell make
And eueryche of them / for hell maye be take
And therefore holy church / that for soules prayth
Calleth purgatorye hell / and thus therof sayth.
Domine Ihesu christe / libera animas omnium fidelium defunctorum de manu
infernī / et de profundis aquarum. &c.
¶Lorde Ihesu chryste / delyuer out of hell honde
All chrysten soules / that ben there vnder bonde
That is from that place / in to heuen blysse
For moche pyne / haue soules there ywysse

While to modern critics it may seem overly apologetic for Rolle to make these claims for the suburbs of Hell, Rolle is in line with a late medieval Roman Catholic cultural understanding concerning the topography of Purgatory, Limbo, and Hell. Rolle expressly forbids the belief that the souls can be redeemed from the lowest Hell, ending with the statement he attributes to Job that "there is no redemption from Hell":

But from the lowest hell / without any doute
Maye no soule thens / be delyuered oute
Of mercy to haue / is no hope ne truste
As holy Iob telleth / that the soth wyste.
Quia in inferno / nulla est redemptio.

This topographical view of the afterlife with Purgatory as infernal suburb is not unique to Rolle. Not only does Purgatory look like Hell in many medieval literary works; it feels like Hell so much so that the denizens in some descriptions may think they are in Hell. In *The Stripping of the Altars*, Duffy delineates these kinds of purgatorial torment; some

souls in Purgatory do not know where they are and may assume they are in Hell (345). Not knowing they are in Purgatory compounds their suffering, ultimately making it shorter in duration; Duffy asserts that while this belief ran counter to much of the tradition of Purgatory, it did persist for quite some time (345). The Soul's torment in *The Castle of Perseverance*, it can be argued, is only infernal so long as he believes that he is in Hell and that it will never end; in the play, though, the torment does end and Mercy wins the debate of the Four Daughters of God.

In *The Castle of Perseverance*, Mankind's Soul and the audience may believe that he has been taken to Hell by the Bad Angel. Both the Good and Bad angels tell him that he will go to Hell. The Bad Angel (*Malus Angelus*) announces:

Therfor he schal, withoutyn doowte,
With me to helle pitt. (lines 3030-3033)

The Good Angel (*Bonus Angelus*) is almost as negative as the Bad Angel but does point out that the Soul has a chance if Mercy will speak for him:

Ye, alas, and welawo!
Ageyns Coveitise can I not telle.
Resun will I fro the[e] goo,
For, wretched sowle, thou must to helle.
Coveitise he was thy fo;
He hathe the[e] schapyn a schameful schelle.
Thus hathe [he] servyd many on[e] mo,
Til they be dyth to dethys delle,
To bittyr balys bowre.
Thou must to peyne, by ryth resun,
With Coveitise, for he is chesun.
Thou art trappyd ful of tresun,
But Mercy be thy socorwe.

....
Alone now I the[e] lave,
Whilist thou fallist in fendys folde,
In helle to hide and hille. (lines 3034-3059)

In mentioning Mercy, the Good Angel serves to offer some succor to the Soul and keep his hope alive. In a passage full of references to the tortures common to both lowest Hell and to Purgatory, the Soul answers that he was wrong to follow covetousness and that he will assuredly hang on Hell's hooks (lines 3060-3072). Interspersed with the repeated hope-filled "But Mercy" lines of both the Soul and the Good Angel, these references to infernal tortures emphasize the uncertainty of the Soul's destination. The Bad Angel taunts the Soul further:

I schal the[e] brewe a bittyr jous:
In bolninng bondys thou schalt brenne;
In hye helle schal be thine hous!
In picke and ter, to grone and grenne,
Thou schalt lie drenkelyd as a mous. (lines 3075-3079)

Later, after further taunts, the Bad Angel announces to the Soul that:

we schul to hell, bothe t[w]o,
And bey in inferno.
Nulla est redemption
For no kinnys thinge. (lines 3095-3098)

Since Mercy has not appeared to plead for and offer succor to the Soul, the Bad Angel beats and taunts the Soul as he leads him to Hell. The Bad Angel does slip up in two places in his taunts. He tells the Soul that "thou schalt lie drenkelyd as a mous" (line 3079) implying a water torture; water torture is only found in Purgatory, not in Hell. While taunting "nulla est redemption" (line 3097), none shall be redeemed from Hell, the Bad Angel did add that he was bearing the Soul to "hye" hell (line 3077); in Rolle's visualization of the infernal suburbs, Purgatory is higher in Hell than the lowest Hell from which there is no redemption: "But from the lowest hell/ without any doute/ maye no soule thens/ be delivered oute" (Rolle). Though the Soul is not yet aware of it, Purgatory is the "hye" hell toward which Bad Angel bears him.

This ambivalence of place is not unique to *The Castle of Perseverance*. It is also a part of verbal descriptions of Purgatory, many of which are almost indistinguishable from those of Hell. Focusing on homiletic and didactic works featuring Purgatory, Matsuda writes that in general “homiletic and didactic writings on Purgatory combine aspects of pseudo-hell and the place of hopeful waiting” but are reticent about a description of place. Instead, “equal emphasis” is given “to the harshness of punishment and the efficacy of intercession”(93). In the conclusion of *The Castle of Perseverance*, purgatorial punishment is dealt by the devils beating the Soul and by the damning arguments of Justice and Truth, who inflict psychological torment on him; the efficacy of intercession is found in Mercy and Peace’s ability to successfully argue in the Soul’s favor. All of the actors and debates common to purgatorial and Particular Judgment scenes are found in *The Castle of Perseverance*, except for the presence of Mary and Michael.

The transitional torments and pleasures of Purgatory are understood by reference to the time frame of human existence; as such, they are often described in human time frames. Rolle, in Book 4 of *The Prick of Conscience*, writes of the pains suffered and the limited time of Purgatory in relation to human time frames⁴³:

For the payne there / is more ferse and fell
Than herte maye thynke / or tonge maye tell
Betwene the payne of hell / certaynly
And betwene the payne / of Purgatorye
Is no dyfference / but certes that one
Shall haue an ende / and that other none
For the paynes of hell / shulde neuer cease
Ne the soules therin / haue neuer release

⁴³ Describing how cartographic and scientific discoveries had changed the doctrine of Purgatory by the late fourteenth century, Le Goff writes, “time is the element in the doctrine of Purgatory most susceptible to measurement. This was a great novelty: time could now be measured in the hereafter” (229).

But in purgatorye / the soules dwelleth styll
Tyll they ben clenysyd / of all maner yll
And as moche ben there .xl. dayes tolde
As here .xl. yere / be a man neuer so olde
So that a payne there / one daye to se
Is as moche / as a yere tolde here maye be

Descriptions of Purgatory, by their very nature of trying to capture divine time frames in terms of human understanding, must accommodate the dilations and contractions of divine time. This medieval imaginative flexibility of the temporal and spatial properties of purgatorial torment in *The Castle of Perseverance* conflates the dramatic space and time of Particular Judgment and of Purgatory; represented in the space enclosed by the circle staging for *The Castle of Perseverance* is not just the Church Militant, in this case the audience of the play, who empathize with Mankind's temporal struggles before his death, but also the Church Suffering with whom the audience sympathizes during the Soul's purgatorial suffering; finally, as the Soul ascends the Heaven Scaffold, he becomes the representative of the Church Triumphant, eternally blissful⁴⁴.

Critics have struggled with the problems of *The Castle of Perseverance*, particularly Mankind's calling out for Mercy with his dying breath, and his acceptance into Heaven at the hands of Mercy, but they have rarely tied his salvation to the Soul's sojourn in Purgatory. Dramatic presentation of a Soul in Purgatory is not unique to *The Castle of Perseverance*; easily identifiable souls in Purgatory do appear in the extant medieval drama, but they are found in the general judgments of cycle plays when human time has ended. Chester's "The Last Judgment" provides a good example of the fate of souls in Purgatory in the cycle. A Saved Pope (*Papa Salvatus*) as he is raised from his

⁴⁴ See Chapter 1 of this study for an explanation of the relationship between the Church Militant, the Church Suffering, and the Church Triumphant.

grave at the general judgment claims that while God had granted him the papacy, he abused his title on earth,

When I in yearth was at my will,
this world mee blent, both lowed and styll;
but thy commandment to fulfill
I was full negligent.(lines 65-68)

He continues that he has suffered in Purgatory for these sins and hopes that he will be allowed into Heaven,

But purged yt ys with paynes yll
in purgatorye that sore can gryll....
Yett thy grace I hope to come tyll
After my great torment. (lines 69-72)

Like the Soul in *The Castle of Perseverance*, the Chester Doom's Saved Pope asks for mercy. But he does so at the general judgment, after his own death and after he has endured the pains of Purgatory:

And yett, lord, I must dread thee
for my great synne when I thee see;
for thou art most in majestie,
Of mercye nowe I call.
The paynes that I have longe in bee,
as hard as hell save hope of lee,
agayne to goe never suffer mee
for ought that may befall. (lines 73-81)

In addition to this Pope's testimony in the Chester doom, a Saved Emperor, King and Queen all give similar arguments before God, asking for mercy and describing their pains in Purgatory. Unlike the Soul in *The Castle of Perseverance*, their Particular Judgment and their purgatorial torment are not witnessed by the audience.

While some critics have been quick to dismiss or downplay the possibility that Purgatory or purgatorial torment are assimilated into the judgment in *The Castle of Perseverance*, in addition to the Bad Angel's mention of "hye" hell, the extant text of the

play contains two places in which Purgatory is explicitly mentioned and one where it is implied. The first, the Banns of the play, announced seven days before it was to be performed, specifically mention that the Lady, as in *The Pride of Life*, will bring the Soul from the pains of Purgatory to the bliss of Heaven. Vexillator 2 announces:

Whanne Manys spirit is past, the Badde
Aungyl ful fell
Cleymith that, for covetise, Mans sowle schuld ben his,
And for to bere it ful boistowsly with him into hell.
The Good Aungyl seyth "Nay! The spirit schal to blis,
For, at his laste ende, of mercy he gan spell,
And therefore, of mercy schal he nowth misse.
And oure lofly Lady, if sche wil for him mell,
By mercy and by menys in purgatory he is,
In ful bitter place. (lines 117-126)

Notably, the extant play text does not include this intercession by "oure lofly Lady," who is presumed to be Mary (line 124). Mary's intercession for mercy is replaced by the argument among the Four Daughters, a popular motif, as Traver, Diller, and Chew suggest in their work on the Four Daughters' debate in literature. The Virgin's place as defender and advocate of the Soul is taken by Mercy and seconded by Peace⁴⁵.

Substituting the allegorical Mercy and Peace for the non-allegorical characters of the heavenly hierarchy, Mary and Michael, who usually preside over Particular Judgment and purgatorial torment, *The Castle of Perseverance's* author is making a different statement about these torments. The mercy of God, evident through his allegorical emissaries, is illuminated and magnified in this sequence, not the power of Mary and Michael.

While this reference to Purgatory in the banns is dismissed by Lomberg as an accident or a vestige in a manuscript edited to erase references to Mary, the second

⁴⁵ See Bevington "Man Thinke" for a discussion and footnote on how the substitution of Mary for the Daughters can be explained (155-156).

reference to Purgatory survives in the text of the play itself. During her arguments for saving the soul, Mercy contends:

For werdly veynglory
He hathe ben ful sory
Punchyd in purgatory
For all the sinnys sevene. (lines 3336-3339)

Answering Mercy's claim of sufficient punishment, Justice and Truth play devil's advocate, arguing for the damnation of the Soul. Lomborg sees Mercy's reference to Purgatory as accidental, a holdover from the promise in the Banns, and does not think it is made "to sound very convincing" (119). Considering the unique time considerations in *The Castle of Perseverance* and the tradition of the Queen of Mercy, Mary, as interlocutor in scenes of Particular Judgment and purgatorial torment, we can confidently assert that Mercy's reference to purgatorial torment is more than accidental, and the Soul's torture more than, as Davidson declares, merely "a quasi-purgatory" ("Fate" 41). Mary may have been dismissed from the play, or more likely incorporated into the character Mercy, but the lines from the banns, "By mercy and by menys in purgatory he is,/ In ful bitter place"(lines 125-126) are dramatically represented at the very point in the play when Mercy mentions Purgatory and purgatorial torment. The psychological and physical punishment of the Soul as he waits for judgment has become very intense. The three elements that Davidson highlights to establish meaning for medieval drama in performance, text, gesture, and iconographic tableau ("Positional" 67, 74), are present in Mercy's textual reference to Purgatory, in the beating the Soul sustains at the hands of the devils, and in the pain brought about by the traditional argument of the daughters of God, conforming to medieval ideas of both purgatorial torment and Particular Judgment.

While it does not mention Purgatory specifically, the third place in the manuscript where Purgatory is featured is in line 3547a, “*Et Tuam, Deus, deposcimus pietatem, ut ei tribuere digneris lucidas et quie[tas] mansiones.*” Bevington translates the prayer in his note as “And we earnestly entreat your pity, O God, in order that you may deign to grant him shining and peaceful abode” and tells us that this is “a liturgical prayer for souls in purgatory” (*Medieval Drama* 897). Peace speaks this prayer and then in her *coup d’grace* of the debate pairs it with a description of the pains of the Passion,

Lord, for thy pité, and that pes
Thou sufferist in thy Pascioun—
Boundyn and betyn, without les,
Fro the fote to the croun;
Tanquam ovis ductus es
Whanne *guttae sangu[in]is* ran a-doun;
Yit the Jues wolde non ses,
But on thin[e] hed they thrist a croun,
And on the cros the[e] nailyd—
As petously as thou were pinyd,
Have mercy on Mankind,
So that he may finde
Oure preyer may him availe! (lines 3548-559)

Peace argues that the torture Christ endured during the Passion is akin to the Soul’s torment. Both pains serve to expiate any repentance owed for sin committed during the Soul’s life; Christ’s pays for the Original Sin and grants Mankind, in this case, the Soul, extra grace from the Treasury of the Church; The Soul’s punishment also helps to pay for those sins he committed but did not properly atone for while alive. This last argument of Peace wins the day for the side advocating salvation as it folds together the experience of the Soul and the experience of Christ in the Passion; at this point, Enthroned God comes forward to speak his judgment of the Soul and announces that the Daughters should,

“Goo to yone fende/ And fro him take Mankind!” (lines 3576-3577)⁴⁶. Transformed into ministering angels wafting a purgatorially cleansed soul to Heaven, they descend to and bring him to the Throne of God⁴⁷, lifting him out of his purgatorial torment.

CRITICS OF *THE CASTLE OF PERSEVERANCE*

Critics of the conclusion of *The Castle of Perseverance* view it generally as composed in a rather slipshod fashion, though the intricacies in the temporal, spatial, and visual elements unique to the play prove otherwise. Arguing in favor of the Four Daughters debate as an essential part of the play as a whole, the editor of the EETS edition writes that while the end has been criticized as weak and actionless as compared to the earlier sections, medieval people seemed to like imagining the heavenly debate about the salvation or damnation of Man (Eccles xviii). While it looks so on paper, the EETS editor argues “the debate is not actionless, for the Four Daughters ascend to the Throne of God, secure a decision, and act upon it when they rescue Mankind from the Bad Angel who is bearing him to Hell” (Eccles xviii). Though the EETS editor does not point specifically to the action of judgment, the overall dramatic purpose of the verbal debate is to cause the Soul to be bodily tormented by the devil and experience a spiritual reflection on sinfulness and its potential consequences. It is also a time for the audience to relate to the Soul as the Church Suffering, whose agency is limited to asking for prayer and intercession and warning others about the seven deadly sins, and to understand their

⁴⁶ Each Daughter addresses Anima as she frees him from the clutches of the Devil. Mercy says to him as she presents him to Enthroned God: “Lo here Mankind,/ Lyter thane lef is on linde,/ That hath ben pinyd./ Thy Mercy, Lord, lette him finde!” (lines 3594-3597) This is an interesting comparison. The linden or ash tree has golden leaves in the fall. One of the dominant metaphors for a soul from Purgatory advancing to Heaven is that they are as Catherine of Genoa relates like rusted gold burned clean (72). They have a golden shininess and a flexibility and lightness of spirit.

⁴⁷ See Le Goff’s example of these angels (36-37).

own sinfulness and their own future position during Particular Judgment and purgatorial torment in this context.

Diller has dealt most fully with the debate of the daughters of God in the text and reached his own conclusions about what is going on in the play (95-101). While he accepts a purgatorial torment of the Soul, Diller calls into question whether the dramatist understands of the differences between General Judgment and Particular Judgment: “the relationship between individual and general judgment confused even more trained minds than that of our dramatist” (97). This dramatist, though, does understand the differences between Particular and General Judgment and is juggling, very adeptly, the time frames and characterization problems of the allegorical Soul and solving them via the power of the non-allegorical Enthroned God. The dramatist balances the elements of divine and human time frames to make the point that while the two salvation time tables are running concurrently, the human one will end. Like *Mankind*, this play, though on a much larger scale, teaches that the time of Man is finite and will not last.

Touching upon the awkwardness of the argument made by the daughters in which Mankind is viewed alternately as a representative of all Mankind and then as a specific sinner, Diller points out that “such talking at cross-purposes seems incomprehensible to the modern reader” (97). Smoothing over this difficulty, Diller argues that the dramatist’s “main concern was probably to demonstrate the magnitude of God’s mercy” (97). If that were true, then the soul could have simply called out “mercy” and been transported directly to Heaven. Instead, the audience and the Soul endure the debate of the Four Daughters. The Four Daughters’ debate is unique because it is not a

psychomachia of a human mind, but of the mind of God. As such, it should not be readily comprehensible to medieval or modern audiences.

Diller misses the dramatic connection made between Particular Judgment and Purgatory. Instead, he settles for the view that there is something sort of unorthodox about the play. Misunderstanding the way of piety for the medieval Christian or magnifying too greatly one aspect can lead to overstatement about how that belief in practice can affect the pious; conversely, leaving out pieces can have just as deleterious an effect; few contemporary critics, for example, write about Particular Judgment. Diller thinks it is too subtle for this playwright to have comprehended: “perhaps the distinctions between species and individual ... was a matter for theological specialists which did not concern the average believer” (97). The ability to confess and exercise agency in expurgating sin turns Mankind (*Humanus Genus*) into an ego (I), private individual. The stunted agency of the Soul at judgment and in torment, demonstrated by his complete lack of lines in the debate and judgment section of the play, complicates the matter of the Soul more than just a distinction between species and individual.

SUFFERING INDIVIDUALLY

This is not a problem new to the depiction of Mankind in medieval drama alone. Gray, in *Themes and Images in the Medieval English Religious Lyric*, writes about the flexible nature of the first person narrator in poetry whose voice can speak at once from both an individual and a plural vantage point:

The medieval poet speaks not only for himself, but in the name of the many; if he uses the poetic 'I' it will be in a way which may be shared by his readers. It is a poetic stance which cannot be accurately described either as 'personal' or as 'impersonal' (quoted in Saupe 13)

This paradoxical blending of the personal and impersonal may derive from a concern with the audience's recognition of their own sinfulness in the lament of the first person speaker. The lyrics offer the "I" position as one to be shared. The sharing of a sinful nature is common to all human beings, as Roman Catholics acknowledge their own part in Original Sin and expunge future transgression through Confession; but making recompense through penance, answering for sin at Particular Judgment, and suffering in Purgatory are not communal events. Sacrament is communal, but aspects of it are individual. The post-mortem purgatorial torment is undertaken individually, but not alone, because intercession of the Church Militant for those in Purgatory mitigates their pain.

They do suffer singularly, however. Many medieval descriptions of purgatorial punishment either feature named individuals or classes of individuals who suffer particular torment for specific sins. Adulterers are pierced through the genitals; those who covet clothing wear burning gowns; vain persons are covered in honey and feasted upon by stinging bees. But more often than not real named individuals appear in visions of Purgatory where they are punished for their individual sins and lack of proper penance. While the tortures are particular to the sin, the time of endurance of that torture and the ferocity with which it is meted out is calculated according to the individual debts of the sinner. The individuality of the sinner is amplified and highlighted by the agency accorded sinners through Confession and penitence and by souls in Purgatory who can request prayer and send out cries for help.

The individual understanding of the Soul's position during Judgment does become problematic when one considers the plural dimension of the Soul in *The Castle of*

Perseverance, who serves as a representative of all Mankind; this playwright, though, is not working from the normally accepted allegorical perspective. He is working from the theological perspective of individual answerability at judgment trying to convey a publicly shared belief that focuses on the individual agency of the sinner. It is a shared belief, but a singular experience and therefore difficult to undertake from an allegorical perspective.

CONCLUSION

For *The Castle of Perseverance*, the Particular Judgment of the Soul and his punishment for an imperfect contrition without proper satisfaction are enacted in his torture and his waiting for judgment. As the judgment and the pains of Purgatory are happening simultaneously, there is no space for Purgatory, nor is any indicated in the layout of the scaffolds found in the manuscript's diagram. It remains the "hye" hell as Rolle describes it, a transitory infernal suburb, and there is time if not space for Purgatory in *The Castle of Perseverance*. The circle of eternity encompassed by the playing space in which Mankind dies and the Soul is punished brings together and fosters a dramatic intimacy between the Church Militant (in this case the audience) and the Church Suffering (the Soul); the Soul enters the Church Triumphant (beyond the need for the audience's sympathy) only when he ascends the Heaven Scaffold.

Purgatory, the middle state, becomes located in the platea at the foot of the Hell scaffold; it is enacted in the Soul being carried away by the devils toward the Hell scaffold and his torment there. The audience, who occupies the platea, then directs its sympathy to the Soul, feeling his pain as if it is their own. The time of Purgatory is

confined to the time it takes to argue the fate of the soul, that is, in its conflation with Particular Judgment. The role then of the Soul is more complex than critics have previously thought, as his suffering provides a cathartic release of anxiety for an audience made up of members of the Church Militant who will most likely also become members of the Church Suffering⁴⁸. The mention of Purgatory in the Banns and the reference to it by Mercy are not mistakes, but aids to the conflation of the purgatorial torment and the Particular Judgment in the play. *The Castle of Perseverance* dramatizes the end of Mankind in the moralities; uniquely, it conflates the time of Particular Judgment with the time of Purgatory; finally, it subtly assimilates an admonition that the time of mercy will eventually end. In the end, the play's message is not about the end times; it is about an end time – with special emphasis on the now.

The compression of time in *The Castle of Perseverance*, along with Enthroned God's final speeches facilitates the conflation of the judgment and purgatorial torment. God's final speeches meditate on the need of the living to do good works and then expand the Particular Judgment of the Soul to the larger General Judgment through allusions to the Book of Revelation. He says,

And I schal inquire of my flok and of here pasture,
Whou they have levyd, and led here peple sojet.
The goode on the ryth sid[e] schul stond ful sure;
The bade on the lyfte sid[e] ther schal I set. (lines 3624-3627)

He then lists the Corporal works of Mercy:

The seven dedys of mercy, whoso hadde ure
To fille—the hungry for to geve mete,
Or drinke to thirsty; the nakyd, vesture;
The pore or the pilgrim, hom[e] for to fette;
Thy neybour that hath need;
Whoso doth mercy to his myth

⁴⁸ As Duffy argues, most late medieval Catholics believe that they will spend time in Purgatory (341).

To the seke, or in presume pyth,
He doth to me—I schal him quyth:
Hevene blis schal be his mede. (lines 3628-3636)

If time were finished, the Enthroned God would not need to make an exhortation to good works. The audience of Man to whom He is talking has not undergone the Particular Judgment or the pains of Purgatory, and the Soul with whom they have sympathized has moved on. The exhortation to good works is notable because once again God changes from the plural pronoun to the singular; men will be judged singularly on these efforts. Also, his tenses remain future conditional. Switching back to “they,” He finishes His speech about the coming General Judgment when the time of Purgatory will have passed and only two places of eternal assignment for souls exist:

And they that wel do in this world, here welthe schal awake;
In hevene they schal heynyd [be] in bounté and [in] blis.
And they that evil do, they schul to helle-lake
In bitter balys to be brent: my jugement it is.
My vertus in hevene thane schal they qwake;
Ther is no wyth in this world that may skape this.
All men example hereat may take
To maintain the goode and mendyn here mis. (lines 3637-3644)

As is suitable and necessary in *The Castle of Perseverance*, Enthroned God, not confined by temporal matters and outside the allegorical framework, is the mouthpiece of judgment; the purgatorial torment of the soul is enacted by his allegorical emissaries, Peace, Justice, Truth, and Mercy. In the cycle play, the time of medieval man is removed from the dramatic time sequence and General Judgment is not forestalled. For this morality, the time of Man continues and so too does his own individual culpability; the General Doom is deferred.

Chapter 3:

Purgatory as Anti-Catholic Pejorative on Stage

Although British medieval stage productions seldom depict Purgatory, many of the extant moralities hint at it when Mankind is exhorted to do good works and properly repent before death or face a post-mortem torment. Souls in Purgatory are found in the Chester “The Last Judgment” and, as I have argued, in *The Castle of Perseverance*.

While they do not represent the predominate use of Purgatory or purgatorial suffering on stage, certain later Tudor and Elizabethan pro-reformer dramatic texts, that border on staged polemics, do deride Purgatory as popish invention or use Purgatory’s abuse to critique Church practices. Since reformers attacked the abuse of indulgences, used to offer suffrages for souls in Purgatory at the very beginning of the Reformation, it is understandable that Purgatory often comes to be used pejoratively on the Tudor and Elizabethan stage. In the following British post-Reformation dramatic examples, Purgatory loses its otherworldly association, as characters in interludes, satires, and moralities employ it as a negative token of Roman Catholic practice. In the Jacobean period, this pejorative use changes subtly as Roman Catholic characters themselves wield Purgatory and the practices associated with it to gain power and money. The abuse of Purgatory is not just talked about; it is also acted out.

DRAMATIC PEJORATIVES

The following dramatic examples employ Purgatory to denigrate the Pope and the clergy, arguing that a corrupted Church hierarchy uses indulgences, the practice of the Mass, and sacramental observance to gain money and power over the laity. In these examples, Purgatory has ceased to function as the link between the world of the dead and the world of the living and has instead become a symbol of clerical exploitation of the laity. The theology of Purgatory is generally not attacked in early reformed drama; instead, the abuse of it is employed as an invective against the clergy. Many of these plays as a result have a strong polemical tendency. Accusing the priesthood of inventing Purgatory for the enrichment of its own coffers, the character Trifo, in Cheke's *Freewyl* (1561)⁴⁹, offers an analogy in which Purgatory serves as a toll booth on the road to Heaven:

Fratry, do possesse a certayne castle standyng in the way which leadeth to paradise, called purgatorie, beyng a strayght and narrowe passage, the custome wherof yeeldeth dayly such great gaine, as the tongue of man is not able to expresse. For the most part of those whiche wyll goe to heauen, are forced to passe by that place, and to pay tol for their passage before they passe away: wherfore, as some suppose, it is called purgatory, as it were pagatory, whiche name agreeth very wel with the thyng it selfe, for in very deede it purgeth mens purses. (2.2.1325-1330)

The well-known and well-rehearsed abuses of the Church must have made *Freewyl*, with its long argumentative speeches, and little action or character development, somewhat pedantic, but the visual description of the Castle of Purgatory is particularly vivid and the joke at the end of the speech about purging men's purses is well-timed. Reformist prose with an apologist agenda seems to influence the play's carefully constructed iconoclasm and anti-Catholicism; the long stretches of dialogue in *Freewyl* lend themselves more to

⁴⁹ This is an interlude translation of Negri's Italian original.

the style of reformist prose works than to dramatic presentation. In this drama, where Purgatory is associated with a post-mortem picking of the believer's pockets, the audience never actually sees that thievery performed on the stage.

In the interlude, *New Custom* (1573), more a morality play than a staged dialogue, the character New Custom indicts the Roman Church for falling away from the primitive Church's type of worship, blaming it on a loss of piety. When questioned by Perverse Doctrine about this speech, New Custom replies:

To recite them agayne, I am not afrayde:
I sayde that the Masse, and suche trumperie as that,
Popery, Purgatorie, pardons were flatt
Against Goddes woorde, and Primitiue Constitution,
Crept in through Couetousnesse, and superstition,
Of late yeres, through Blindenes, and men of no knowledge,
Euen suche as haue ben in euery age. (1.2.132-138)

New Custom's preaching uses Purgatory and pardons as emblems of clerical abuses of doctrine, but he does not elaborate on them; his character is much more interested in arguing with the vice characters in the play than in catching them in the act of abusing doctrine. New Custom adds blindness and ignorance to the usual indictments of Purgatory's attachment to covetousness and superstition.

The use of Purgatory as an emblem of Church abuse and excess exists alongside and is largely later replaced by a playing out of the abuses of Purgatory described in earlier interludes. Bale's *King John*⁵⁰ (1538) is a vibrant example of a middle ground in

⁵⁰ Mattson in *Five Plays about King John* writes that, "Bale tried to promote and establish the Reformation in two ways. First, he adapted chronicle-writing to the new ideas... As part of their polemical writing he and his friends wrote about Protestants persecuted for their faith. In a way they created the Protestant martyr. Secondly Bale wrote propaganda plays to arouse anti-Catholic feeling.... He is the first playwright to use drama for propaganda in the Protestant cause" (4-5).

Peter Happé categorizes *King John* as a saint play allying it with Bale's interest in Protestant martyrdom (207). According to Happé, "King John modifies the saint's play in two ways. It offers a narrative which is

this transition which draws on the saints play tradition and uses chronicle material to establish the ideas of the new reformatory political order in a twofold manner: “to illustrate the new theories of kingship, commonweal, and obedience,” and to show the “working of divine justice in human affairs,”⁵¹ (Armstrong viii-ix). The allegorical characters in *King John*, especially the vice characters, openly recite the Church’s sins and disobedience to God’s law. In a self revealing, meta-dramatic moment, the character Sediton claims that he often plays the part of the corrupt clergy using the example of Purgatory priests, cardinals, and the Pope:

Sumtyme I can play / the whyght monke, symtyme the fryer,
The purgatory prist / and every mans wyffe desyer.
This cumpany hath / provyded for me morttmayne,
For that I myght ever / among ther sort remayne.
Yea, to go farder, / sumtyme I am a cardynall,
Yea, sumtyme a pope, / and than am I lord over all,
Bothe in hevyn and erthe, / and also in purgatory,
And do weare thre crownes / whan I am in my glorye. (1.201-210)

Sediton claims to creep into the mantle of the Purgatory priest who spirits away men’s money and sometimes their wives. He claims to go even so high as to play the Pope and Cardinals. Employed twice in this speech, Purgatory highlights Sediton’s evil acquisition of power without actually performing it on the stage. In the play, King Johan is exhorted to act heroically against vice characters such as Sediton; at their hands, he will die a martyr’s death for reformed Christianity. His martyrdom takes center stage, not abuses of doctrine.

tantamount to a martyrdom, and it provides opportunity for vigorous satiric comment upon the Catholic idea of a saint, thus by denigration advancing the cause of the virtuous King Johan” (217).

⁵¹ Armstrong offers a third way not germane to my argument: to utilize “‘mirror’ scenes” to cast light on contemporary political matters.

The use of Purgatory as a satiric token of Roman Catholic abuses of doctrine never fades entirely in early modern reformed British drama; an indictment of Purgatory and its abuses persists into the Jacobean era, but Purgatory is most often mentioned by Roman Catholic characters who act out its abuse on stage. In Barnes' *The Devil's Charter* (1606?), Pope Alexander the Sixth employs Purgatory to exert his authority over his servants; when Cardinals come to challenge him after he has taken sanctuary at Castle Angelo, Pope Alexander exclaims:

Forbeare your blasphemies, what know yee not
Christes Vicar generall chosen on earth?
Haue not I power to binde and loose mens sinnes,
And soules, on earth, in hell, and purgatory? (2.1.242-245)

Echoing Sedition's use of the titles of the Pope, Alexander in this speech actively threatens those who would challenge him. Unseemly as it may be, Pope Alexander has gone even further in abusing Purgatory and the practices attached to it by doctrine. The Pope's minion, Bernardo, poisoner of Astor and Philipppo, outlines the Pope's ability to subvert Church sacraments to achieve his political ends:

Were it not that my conscience hath bene fyer'd,
With flames of purgatory by this Pope,
I neuer could endure such villany,
The best is he doth pardon all my sinnes. (4.5.20-23)

The Pope's promise to forgive Bernardo's sins ensures him of his eventual salvation. The promise of purgatorial suffering in *The Devil's Charter* fires Bernardo's conscience in all the wrong ways. Alexander inverts the motivation for bestowing pardon through sacramental forgiveness so that it presupposes Bernardo's willingness to commit the crimes asked of him. Ultimately, Bernardo is perversely consoled rather than frightened

by the fires of Purgatory. He will not go to Hell for participating in the murder; he will only be consigned to purgatorial torment because of the Pope's abuse of power.

While much more grisly, exciting, and dramaturgically interesting than earlier interludes, the derision of the papacy in this tragedy is not new; its enactment of the abuse of Purgatory is, however, novel. The abuse of spiritual power for gaining money remains consistent in plays which use Purgatory to vilify Roman Catholic practice. But in this revenge tragedy, the Pope does not just use Purgatory as a token of his malignant power-mongering; the abuse of Purgatory is played out for the audience in the murders of Astor and Philippo. The evil intentions and actions of the Pope are not subsumed under a dialogue which foregrounds an indictment of the Roman Church; the abuse of Purgatory and sacramental observance attached to it becomes tragically dramatized in *The Devil's Charter*.

Unlike *The Devil's Charter*, which indicts a Pope abusing Roman Catholic practices in an Italian setting, in plays set in Britain, Roman Catholics are more likely to be shown as charlatans, fortune tellers, or underworld characters. As an extension of the indictment of Purgatory, indulgences, and pardons common in Tudor and Elizabethan British reformed culture, the dramatic character of the pardoner appears on stage to enact corrupt Church practice. Corrupt pardoner stereotypes persist for quite some time and, unlike the characterization of Pope Alexander in *The Devil's Charter*, have their roots in medieval satirizing of their class. In Lindsay's *Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis* (1602), a stock pardoner tries to make money by selling pardons while lying about his product. The Pauper who has handed over his last coin demands, "Sall I get nathing for my grot" until after I have died? (line 2188). The Pardoner replies that he has made it plain that the

Pauper will receive post-mortem reward for the money. The Pauper demands his money back complaining that the Pardoner thinks it is acceptable to “mak me na payment till I be dead” (line 2194). Rather than simply tell unwary Protestants about the dangers of pardoners, Lindsay’s *Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaits* shows its audience what tactics pardoners employ to swindle the poor and naïve; the Pauper’s witty defense and highlighting of the financial transaction in granting a pardon educates an audience in how to be effective reformed apologists. The Pauper in *Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaits* argues in a way that makes the Pardoner’s claims look ludicrous. More didactic than previous staged presentations of pardoners, including the Pardoner in *The Playe Called the Foure PP*⁵², this Pardoner’s tricks are revealed in his onstage gulling of the Pauper (Heywood); the ways that a man may answer them and avert a picking of his pockets in the name of God is furthermore offered through the Pauper’s defense.

A very late example enacting thievery through the collection of money or favor to reduce suffering in Purgatory occurs in *The Puritan*⁵³ (1664) in which a character named Pye, a fortune teller, informs the widow that her deceased husband is imprisoned in Purgatory because she has vowed to never marry again. He claims that while he does not know the family: “I truly know by certain spiritual Intelligence, that [your husband] is in Purgatory.” The widow answers as any reformed women should: “Purgatory? tuh; that word deserves to be spit upon; I wonder that a man of sober tongue, as you seem to be,

⁵² *The Playe Called the Foure PP*’s satirizes the Pardoner’s poor rhetorical skills, and not the belief in Purgatory (Heywood). While the Pardoner claims to dupe the unwary, he does not win the lying contest he enters into. He tells the tale of a female friend whom he tries to rescue from Purgatory only to find she is in Hell instead. The devils release her to his custody because women are too troublesome to them. Because he is such a bad liar, the Pardoner loses the lying contest and the satire of the piece is shifted to the misogynistic portrayal of the woman released from Hell.

⁵³ Often, this play is titled *The Widow of Watling Street*.

should have the folly to believe there's such a place." Pye then gives a speech arguing for the existence of Purgatory and continues to deceive the family:

Well Lady, in cold blood I speak it, I assure you that there is a Purgatory, in which place I know your husband to recide, and wherein he is like to remain, till the dissolution of the world, till the last general Bon-fire: when all the earth shall melt into nothing, and the Seas scald their finny labourers: so long is his abidance, unlesse you alter the property of your purpose, together with each of your Daughters theirs, that is, the purpose of single life in your self and your eldest Daughter, and the speedy determination of marriage in your youngest.

This late example is tied to both the ways in which wary reformed persons can avoid being duped by charlatans and to anxieties about marriage and the social control of women.

While *The Chester Cycle*, which portrays souls being released from Purgatory at the General Judgment, continues to be played well into the Tudor period, after the Reformation, Purgatory is most often consigned to staged reformer dialogues and apologist presentations that view Purgatory as an instrument of papist clerical money grubbers. In the previous examples, which sometimes overlap ones more favorably disposed to Roman Catholic belief in Purgatory, the abuse of Purgatory is indicted as it is used as a negative marker of Roman Catholicism. In addition to lingering stereotyped pardoners, whose satirizing is not a reformer invention but a medieval Roman Catholic one, the presentation of the abuse of Purgatory in Tudor and Elizabethan drama is at first limited to linguistic attacks against the abuse of Purgatory; on the Jacobean stage, that abuse is fully dramatized in both thieving pardoners and demented Popes. From a linguistic tokenized use in interludes which ally it with Reformation anti-Catholic polemics, to *King John* which realizes a more fully dramatized portrayal of Purgatory's

abuses in the character of Seditio, to its full dramatization in the murders of Philippo and Astor in *The Devil's Charter*, we see a negative, though infrequent, presentation of Purgatory persisting in drama.

Chapter 4:

“There is” usually “no other Purgatory but a woman”⁵⁴: The Embodiment of Purgatory on the Jacobean Stage

As a negative marker of Roman Catholicism, the dramatic use of Purgatory survives well into the Jacobean period; yet Purgatory and purgatorial torment are also found onstage in extra-theological presentations. After the anchor which tied it securely to Roman Catholic eschatological belief is cut away, Purgatory's use as a metaphor or marker of social and individual inadequacy on the early modern stage continues to thrive in discussions of the female body and sexual desire. Purgatory's dominant presentation on the British Reformation stage is not therefore found in the derision of Roman Catholic practices. From the medieval period on, relationships between men and women come to be expressed in metaphors of purgatorial suffering and this is capitalized on by dramatists from the Tudor through the Jacobean periods. Due to anxiety about infidelity and divorce, female characters in these depictions of Purgatory can suffer Purgatory themselves, literally embody it, or bring about purgatorial suffering in their lovers and husbands.

⁵⁴ Beaumont and Fletcher's *The Scornful Lady* 3.1.280

MEDIEVAL LOVERS' PURGATORIES

To better understand how love relationships as dramatized on the early modern stage have become tied to purgatorial torment, I will provide an overview of the ways in which infidelity, promiscuity, and domestic violence and discord come to be tied to a purgatorial suffering grounded on earth, which may eventually be carried over into the afterworld. Purgatorial suffering is often tied in medieval literature to issues of female chastity. Examples include conduct manuals for young women, visions of Purgatory in which suffering souls chide nuns for the sin of lechery, and even an unique male lover's argument that idleness in love is a sin punishable in Purgatory. The Lovers' and Cuckold's Purgatories have a long cultural history in Europe and are explored in many literary genre from the serious to the sarcastic. These include love sonnets, satires about the fidelity of both husbands and wives, and lovers' laments of unrequited desire.

In medieval tales of the otherworldly Purgatory, both men and women are punished for the sin of lust. Purgatorial torment can be described as the finite otherworldly torment of the sexual sinner, or it can become a torturous earthbound experience of the lover. In many medieval visions of Purgatory, women suffer for supposed "women's" sins of vanity, lechery, and anger. Asking for prayers and Masses to be said in order to lessen her own torment, the soul Margaret in the Middle English *A Revelation of Purgatory* (1422) warns her friend about the egregious punishment suffered by those who committed the seven deadly sins, especially the punishments for lechery (Harley). Margaret reveals to her sister nun that she, friars, priests, married and single men and women who have committed lechery are all punished in Purgatory in extreme

ways. Lecherous priests and nuns are punished in an especially harsh manner because they had taken a vow of chastity:

for they were cast onto cruel wheels and turned about with intense fire, and adders, snakes, and devils were always around them. And the devils turned the wheel so fast that I could not see them, but very horribly they cried, as if all the world had cried at once” (lines 445-456).

Purgatorial torment of women is also attached to issues of women’s chastity in the fifteenth-century English translation of *The Book of the Knight of La Tour-Landry* (1371-1372, published by Caxton 1484), when Geoffroy de La Tour-Landry advises his daughters against lechery within marriage. He tells the tale of a certain knight, wedded for a second time, who asks a hermit how his first wife is situated in the afterlife:

And so the holy man the Eremyte praied to God that he might haue knowlage how it stode with her. And anone by reuelacion she was sheued hym there she was in purgatori, and that she shulde be saued, but she shulde abide in the brennyng fere an hundred yere, forto clense her of sertaine fauutes that she had done in her mariage; for she had lete a squier lye bi her, and brake her mariage, notwithstandinge she hadde ofte be shriue therof; and yef she had not, she had be dampned. ... (Tour-Landry)⁵⁵

The narrator moralizes further, adding details about how, though it was not a priest, a married man, or a friar with whom she had sexual relations, the wicked wife still must be kept in Purgatory for one hundred years because of her sinful delight. The tale ends with, “and therfor, faire doughtres, here ye may see that fals delite is atte the last dere bought with payne” (Tour-Landry).

⁵⁵ Both the *A Revelation* and *The Book of the Knight of La Tour-Landry* connect vanity and pride in having fine clothing with the sin of lechery. The Knight’s tale of purgatorial torment ends with a comment on the first wife’s love of clothing:

And also that it is synne to haue so mani diuerse clothes, and to do so moche coste to pare the foule body to haue the lokes and plesaunce of the worlde, the whiche, as it ys foresaid, causithe to fall into pride and into lechery, the whicho is .ij. of the synnes that God hatithe most. And takithe hede of the knightis furst wyff, how she was loste and dampned for her array. (Tour-Landry)

Yet it is not only sorry nuns or worried fathers who tell tales of Purgatory. Ironically, in the medieval literary tradition, the “Purgatory of Cruel Beauties,” purgatorial torment can be inflicted upon women for sins against courtly love. The “Purgatory of Cruel Beauties,” including examples in Gower’s “Tale of Rosiphele”⁵⁶ (1386-1390), Andreas’ “de Amore” (1181-1186?), and the *Lai du Trot* (1184-1267), exhibit the *carpe diem* argument of poets and troubadours who seduce by emphasizing the fleeting nature of youth and vitality; women in this argument are chided for coldness and cruelty in courtly love relationships (Battles 238-239). An example from this tradition that “illustrate[s] the importance of loving well” (Battles 241), Andreas’ ‘De Amore,’ contains a tale in which a male narrator encounters a procession of three groups of ladies:

The first, preceded by a crowned man later identified as the god of love, consists of well-attired ladies on ambling horses, each being served by three knights. In the second group, the ladies have so many knights clamouring for their attention that they are unable to accept any service at all. The third troop is clothed in foul and hot garments, rides horses that trot in a bone-jarring way, and has no attendants at all. As the cavalcade passes, the narrator speaks with a straggler from the third group, and she explains the nature of the procession: the first party consists of women who loved well while they were alive, neither avoiding love nor being too amorous; the second, of those who loved too liberally; and the third, of those who rejected love entirely. (Battles 242)

The moral of the “Purgatory of Cruel Beauties” tales is that “Women should not reject love... because they will be punished in the afterlife if they do, whereas they will be richly rewarded if they enter ‘love’s service’” (Battles 238); from the male lover’s point of view “the underlying purpose of the story is to frighten reluctant women into agreeing to a relationship” (Battles 245). In Gower’s “Tale of Rosiphele” the protagonist is a woman who has refused the *carpe diem* arguments of male suitors and who upon

⁵⁶ This tale is found in the fourth book of the *Confessio Amantis* (Gower). See Battles’ article for editions of these works and notes about their dating.

encountering the procession of ladies sees the experience of her guide as mirroring her own; she is convinced by the experience of the women tormented in Purgatory that she should love well and not commit the sin of idleness in love. The guide tells her at their parting:

Now have ye herd al myn ansuere:
To godd, ma Dame, I you betake,
And warneth alle for mi sake,
Of love that thei ben nocht ydel (Gower 4.1430-1432)

As Battles argues, Gower more so than the other examples emphasizes that the seemingly saintly women who refuse love entirely are guilty of the vice of idleness in love (245-247). Unlike the nun's or the father's tale of Purgatory, the men who tell these tales have an incentive to "illustrate the terrible things that happen to women who reject love" (Battles 245). In all of these cautionary tales, lovers are chided for their behavior, or in this case, lack of it, in the love relationship. Loyalty, fidelity, and obedience to the laws of marriage or courtly love are impressed upon the impressionable women in these visions.

One of the most influential visions of the otherworldly Purgatory is found in Dante's *Divine Comedy* (1310-1321) where it is not the female lover who suffers for her faults in love but the male lover, Dante; at the end of Dante's purgatorial torment in the *Purgatorio*, Beatrice reveals herself and explains the reason for his torment in Purgatory:

For a time I sustained him with my countenance: showing him my youthful eyes I led him with me turned toward the right goal. So soon as I was on the threshold of my second age and had changed life, this one took himself from me and gave himself to others. When from flesh to spirit I had ascended, and beauty and virtue were increased in me, I was less dear and less pleasing to him and he turned his steps along a way not true, following false images of good, which pay no promise in full. Nor did it avail me to obtain inspirations with which, both in dream and otherwise, I called him back, so little did he heed them. He fell so low that all means for his salvation were now short... (30. 121-138).

Beatrice claims that after she died, she tried to turn Dante back to her, but he turned to the flesh and an earthly existence. To cleanse any remaining guilt which would bar him from entering the edenic paradise, Dante is drawn through the waters of Lethe in order to forget his sins against Beatrice; the *Purgatorio* ends with Dante's arrival in the edenic paradise, reuniting the lovers, cleansed of sin and guilt, redeemed antitypes of the fallen Adam and Eve.

In medieval and early renaissance works, women can also be characterized as Purgatorial tormentors causing the suffering of men with whom they have a romantic relationship or to whom they are married. During the late medieval period and through the Reformation in reformed circles, Purgatory's associations in literary works move out of the heavenly hierarchy of Dante and Beatrice and become more dominantly associated with its medieval address as a suburb of Hell located under the earth. This is an easy elision as Purgatory in many medieval eschatological visions is viewed as part of Hell, above Hell, or under the Earth. When Purgatory becomes closer to the earth's surface or becomes an experience on earth, the image of women associated with it becomes more earthy; while Dante's Beatrice, who so dutifully meets him in Eden at the end of his own voyage through Purgatory and berates him for his failings as a human, may be the archetype on which punishing purgatorial women have generally been built, Beatrice's purgatorial progeny are never as pure of motivation as she is and for the most part are alive and well enough to inflict both psychological and physical pain on their earthly lovers.

In poetry, prose, and drama wherein a woman becomes a Purgatory--as the Wife of Bath says, "in erthe I was his purgatorie"--or a man declares that marriage or being in

love is Purgatory, a sense is conveyed that the pains of Purgatory exist on earth and instead of the otherworldly position it once occupied, Purgatory has been relocated squarely in the heart of domestic discord. In the antifeminist satire, “The De Coniuge Non Ducenda” or “Gawain on Marriage” (c.1225-1250), Lawrence of Durham, Peter of Corbeil, and John Chrysostom advise the Arthurian hero Gawain against marriage by emphasizing the problems marriage presents not to clerics or scholars, but to the ordinary working man (Rigg). John, the third speaker and concluding voice of the poem, says,

In brief, to sum up marriage well,
It's either purgatory or hell.
In hell there's neither rest nor peace —
A husband's pain has no release.” (Rigg J20)

For the cynical poet of “Gawain on Marriage,” marriage is ultimately a Hell; at best, it is a Purgatory. Perhaps the most famous example, Chaucer's Wife of Bath proudly declares that she has been an earthly Purgatory to her fourth husband,

But certainly, I made folk swich chere,
That in his owene grece I made him frye
For angre, and for verray Ialousye.
By god, in erthe I was his purgatorie,
For which I hope his soule be in glorie. (lines 486-490)

With a wink and a grin, the Wife hopes that the pain she gave her fourth husband in his jealousy has led him to the joys of Heaven. Not an uncommon motif, this torment in love or marriage interested a Jacobean commentator on Chaucer, Richard Brathwait⁵⁷, who in 1615, wrote the following about the Wife of Bath's fourth Husband:

It seems she was good for something, if it were but to become her Husband's Purgatory; more properly the Touchstone of his Patience. By this means she thinks he had his Purgatory on Earth, and consequently, without any Rub or Stay in his way, he may go directly to Heaven. Afflictions being Exercises, he needed

⁵⁷ Braithwait seemed to be an aficionado of Chaucer as he is the author of “Chavcer's Incensed Ghost” in which Chaucer laments the use of his stories by tobacco parlor poets.

not suffer his Body to rust for want of them⁵⁸, having both at Bed and at Board such plenty of them. (107-108)

Whether these comments on the married Purgatory are satiric or serious, they display a common message; men are told that then they should enjoy fewer sufferings in the afterlife if not immediate acceptance into Heaven because of the difficulties imposed on them in this life by women or through the suffering they endure as a result of their own prurience and jealousy.

Commentaries on a widow's social and sexual freedom and the way their emotions may swing remarkably from grief to joy at the death of a husband also often betray an anxious if not downright misogynistic undercurrent. This anxiety shows up in Sediton's comments about Purgatory priests in Bale's *King John*,

Sumtyme I can playe / the whyght monke, symtyme the fryer,
The purgatory prist / and every mans wyffe desyer.
This cumpany hath / provyded for me morttmayne,
For that I myght ever / among ther sort remayne. (1.201-204)

A woman may desire a visit from the Purgatory priest and dally with him while her husband is at work; a woman may also greet with joy the arrival of the Purgatory priest who accepts bequests after the death of a spouse. The desire for the Purgatory priest springs either from a wife's lasciviousness or greed, and the Purgatory priest, from a husband's point of view, is never a happily greeted guest, as his arrival may mean the husband's cuckolding or death.

May in Chaucer's "Merchant's Tale" seems to inspire these anxieties in the senile January. When January settles on marrying May, a young and beautiful woman of small estate, he is suddenly struck with a moral conundrum: if he is too happy on earth in this

⁵⁸ Catherine of Sienna describes the soul in Purgatory as a lump of gold which needs to be purified, by burning off rust.

marriage, there will be penance to pay in the afterlife that he would like to avoid. His friend Justinus, who had earlier cautioned him against an overhasty marriage, tells January, in a half-joking fashion, that while marriage looks like Heaven on earth, January will not think so for long:

Ye may repente of wedded mannes lyf,
In which ye seyn ther is no wo ne stryf.
And elles, god forbede but he sente
A wedded man him grace to repente
Wel ofte rather than a sengle man!
And therefore, sire, the beste reed I can,
Dispeire yow noght, but have in your memorie,
Paraunter she may be your purgatorie!
She may be goddes mene, and goddes whippe;
Than shal your soule up to hevene skippe
Swifter than dooth an arwe out of the bowe! (lines 1663-1673)

Justinus continues that as long as January tempers his lust there will never be so much happiness in marriage that it will become sinful. In an odd meta-narrative comment, Justinus seems to know what the Wife of Bath has said before of marriage, tying together the moral of the two stories:

The Wyf of Bathe, if ye han understonde,
Of mariage, which we have on honde,
Declared hath ful wel in litel space.
Fareth now wel, god have yow in his grace. (lines 1685-1688)

Chaucer provides the same warning through the jocularity of the Wife and the sad and somewhat disgraceful, though fabliauxtastic, state of the Merchant's January, duly warned by Justinus. The Wife of Bath has been her own husband's Purgatory implying that he needed it; Justinus believes that May will prove to be the Purgatory that counterbalances January's lust. May does trick January and cuckold him; thus from the standpoint of the earthly Purgatory of lovers, she aids him in repenting for his own sins of agéd intemperance.

TUDOR TO JACOBEAN PURGATORIES

Male distrust of wives and female lovers in satires and fabliaux is transferred in their translation from continental antecedents and from lovers' complaints in poetry. These satirical jests of Purgatory and hellish women are not uncommon in early modern culture. For example, Robert Tofte's 1611 translation of Ariosto's *Seven Planets* includes "The Fourth Satire," a story about a painter who has painted Lucifer so well that the Devil seeks to reward him for the favor. He appears to the Painter while he is sleeping and assures him that he will grant anything that the man requests. The man, who has a beautiful wife "whose beauty brought his iealous braines vnrest," asks to be relieved of this jealousy (line 592). The devil gives him a ring and puts it on his finger saying that as long as he wears the ring, the Painter will be assured of her fidelity. The man was happy for his fortune and woke, "But scarcely had he opened both his eyes, / Before he felt his wife starke belly naked: / and found his finger hid betweene her thighes" (lines 602-604). While the man believes that the Devil has deluded him, the narrator of the tale asserts that this is not the case as a woman will cuckold her husband freely even if he has as many eyes as he has hairs on his head (line 611). The narrator tries to conclude on a positive note comparing the single life's lust and sinfulness to the married state and the Purgatory of a wife's infidelity:

My Lord, few married men do liue content,
Their wiues as crosses vnto them are sent:
So must I say the single life is ill,
Sith in the same dwels many troubles still.
Yet better tis in Purgatory dwell
A little space, then alwayes liue in hell.
What my best strength of reasons are you see,
And therefore your owne caruer you may be.
T'is all but one resolute, who e're is borne
To marry, likewise must possesse the horne. (lines 619-628)

Purgatory here seems to be the married state that quenches desire, but provides lawfully enough penance for any intemperance. Backpedaling a bit, the narrator finishes on a joke about the possibility of chastity for either sex:

Yet I but merrily do write and iest;
The married mans estate of all is best:
And they who cannot chastly leade their liues,
May in the world finde many worthy wiues.
One of the best of which I wish to you,
One that is louing, loyall, wise and true. (lines 629-634)

The best that can be hoped for marriage in this narrator's fabliaux is a loving, loyal, wise, and true spouse. Unlike John Donne's narrator who claims in "Song- Goe and catch a falling star," "No where/ Lives a woman true, and faire" (lines 17-18), this narrator tempers his misogyny with a less bitter and more jovial stance.

The trope of the Purgatory wife who tortures her husband or of the demented purgatorial lover driven mad for love, has long run parallel to a belief in a purgating afterworld; its roots reach back to Dante climbing toward his Beatrice, the worldly and otherworldly lover. This unique articulation of purgatorial torment, which often derives from Continental antecedents such as Ariosto, Dante, and Bocaccio, continues in the love poetry of the Elizabethan and Jacobean period. Purgatory is most often the punishment of those with lecherous inclinations who act upon them, but this punishment is often tempered by a pragmatic balance and grudging acceptance of the perils of human nature.

In Tudor, Elizabethan, and Jacobean love poetry, the idea of Purgatory appears in some unexpected works, but with little change from its Continental inspiration. Spenser in "The Foure Hymns" (1596) explores earthly love, earthly beauty, heavenly love, and heavenly beauty. In his dedicatory epistle, he writes to Margaret, Countess of

Cumberland, and Marie, Countess of Warwick, that having written the poems “Earthly Love” and “Earthly Beauty” and being inspired by these ladies, he wants to write like poems of love and beauty again, but has been unable to do so. Instead he has “resolved at least to amend, and by way of retractation to reforme them, making in stead of those two Hymnes of earthly or naturall love and beautie, two others of heauenly and celestiaall” (586). The first hymn which he seeks to reform, with a contrasting theme of heavenly and Christian beauty, deals with earthly love, Heaven and Hell, and catalogs those antique men who were tormented for love like Orpheus who dared “to prouke the yre/ of dampned fiends, to get his loue retyre” (lines 234-235). Jealousy and envy can make the life of the lover a Hell or a very Purgatory. In “Earthly Love,” envy, fear, and distrust “doe make a louers life a wretches hell” and are only eclipsed by

one more cursed... That cancker worme, that monster Gelosie,
Which eats the hart, and feedes vpon the gall,
Turning all loues delight to miserie,
Through feare of loosing his felicitie” (lines 266-270).

The narrator moves from Hell to Purgatory claiming that envy, fear, distrust, and jealousy:

By these, O Loue, thou doest thy entrance make,
Vnto thy heauen, and doest the more endeere
Thy pleasures vnto those which them partake,
As after stormes when clouds begin to cleare,
The Sunne more bright and glorious doth appeare;
So thou thy folke, through paines of Purgatorie,
Dost beare vnto thy blisse, and heauens glorie. (lines 273-279)

Purgatory here is the natural result of the lover’s state, an outgrowth of jealousy, and preferable to an additional Hell which may be suffered whether that Hell is an earthly infernal torment or the eternal damnation of the mortal sinner. Most of the lovers and husbands in the preceding works seem to be able to enter Heaven because of their

suffering for love here on earth⁵⁹. The weight of the offenses taken and given in the love relationship may differ among the Tudor, Elizabethan, and Jacobean poets who write of the Hell and the Purgatory of love and marriage, but the terminology is consistent. Being in love is not enjoyable and neither is being married; lechery and jealousy are sins of love and marriage that must be repented, reformed, or retracted.

Some literary offerings on the Purgatory of love and marriage, though, are a bit eccentric. Henry Constable in the sonnet “To The Queene: Touching The Cruell Effects Of Her Perfections” first likens the love caused by gazing at Queen Elizabeth, the lover’s torturer by her very existence, to Hell: “Thus sin thow caus’d, (envye, I meane, & pride)/ Thus sin and darknesse doe proceed from thee; / The very paynes which men in hell abide” (lines 9-11). He then amends his statement to “Oh no; not hell, but purgatorie this,/ Whose sowles some say by angells punish’d be, / For thou art shee from whome this torment is”(lines 12-14). Constable claims Elizabeth is not a devil (Who would dare call the queen a devil, even in jest?); instead, he transforms her into an angel. This elevation of the loved woman to the angelic is not broached at all in Alexander Garden’s “A Wanton Woman” where Purgatory is likewise derived from the love of a woman whose wiles make the male lover miserable. This woman is neither devil nor angel; she inflicts the tortures of the teasing whore. After spending thirty lines listing the properties of the wanton woman, her lips, her eyes, her words, her feet, her shape, her heart, Garden concludes the poem dramatically with:

⁵⁹ This idea persists for quite some time; Margaret Cavendish in *Wits Cabal, part ii* (1662) writes “the Purgatory of Mariage doth purifie Souls, and make them fit for Heaven.”

To catch, and cozin Men, is all her Care,
Her House, an Hell, and all's vnholie there.
Her VVayters on, are Bauds, for Beasts and Bables:
Her Friendship false, and her Discourses Fables.
She is the Plague of Youth, Repentance Storie,
Th' Abuse of Tyme, and Ages Purgatorie. (lines 31-36)

The distrust an old man would certainly have of such a woman inflicts upon him a purgatorial suffering on earth, “Ages Purgatorie” (line 36). Like many of the poetic Lovers’ Purgatories, his Purgatory is grounded firmly in the point of view of the male lover who endures the torment.

From the Tudor through the Jacobean period, influences on the way Purgatory is used in literature and drama come from three interconnected strains of cultural discourse:

- Reformation polemics are finding their way into drama in a less didactic and discursive fashion; the abuse of Purgatory is first characterized in thieving Pardoners and then in demented Popes;
- Fabliaux and Satires provide fodder for comedic and tragic relationships in drama; Chaucer remains popular and the Wife of Bath’s Purgatory becomes the subject of comedic subplots; translations and editions of continental literature and travel to the Continent put writers in touch with these ideas;
- Love poetry, including Dante, casts women as purgatorial tormentors of male lovers.

PURGATORY IN DRAMA

With so many images of the state of purgatorial suffering in discussions of love, desire, domesticity and marriage, it is no wonder that references to Purgatory in this vein continue to show up on the Tudor, Elizabethan, and Jacobean stage. But they change as

they absorb non-literary, non-poetic usages and incorporate a heterogloss discourse which meets head-on with cultural upheaval surrounding marriage, statute, sin, and sickness. While the medieval otherworldly Purgatory staged for an audience of believers becomes a casualty of the Reformation, the metaphor of Purgatory continues in dramatic culture, as the idea of it, still connected to sinfulness, is amplified in other realms of cultural discussion beyond the purely eschatological or theological⁶⁰. Essentially, Purgatory, the state or place of purgation of post-mortem sin, assumes a new place on the Tudor, Elizabethan, and Jacobean stage. Recalled as a place of expiation of sin well into the Jacobean era, Purgatory becomes attached overwhelmingly to metaphors of women's behavior, marriage, and madness as they relate to sexual desire and jealousy. In the most grotesque pieces, purgatorial torment is likened to the use of purgatives and to purging of illness.

Through the early modern period, Purgatory becomes literarily expressed in love relationships and marriage in the following ways:

- Women vex men to reduce post-mortem purgatorial torment and help men get to Heaven; this is the general earthly Purgatory all men endure
- Before marriage, men suffer for love with fires of desire that are described as both a medical disease and a purgatorial torment; this is the Lovers'

Purgatory

⁶⁰ The idea that a man should suffer for his own sins of sexual prurience and jealousy in this world as opposed to the next, comic as it may be, has a grounding in medieval ideas about penance and purgatorial suffering. Duffy notes that that "the thrust of late medieval teaching on the subject" of purgatorial torment was that penance should be done on earth: "the natural school of charity and the proper place for purging was not Purgatory, but here on earth, now in the time of grace, for after death would be the time of justice: penance for sins was far more easily done in life than after death" (Duffy 342). That this suffering is called a Purgatory is more than simply incidental.

- A husband, who is jealous and suspicious of his wife's fidelity, can suffer purgatorial torment on earth and in the afterlife; this is the Cuckold's Purgatory
- A wife who suffers jealous and badly behaved husband can have her time in Purgatory reduced because of her suffering on earth
- A woman may suffer purgatorial torment for indulging her own lecherous inclinations

In dramatic action and dialogue, the types of Purgatory employed generally fall into two of these categories: the Lovers' Purgatory and the Cuckold's Purgatory. Purgatory, therefore, is personified in a woman's behavior during courting and after marriage and enacted in the domestic violence and the illicit sexuality of female characters or the sexual burning of the sick-at-heart male lover; it is placed on the stage and becomes irrevocably tangled up with some of the most acute concerns of British Reformation drama: marriage, desire, women's bodies, sickness, and sin.

In this chapter, we will first explore how the metaphysical suffering for love, described as a purgatorial or physical burning is unsuccessfully medicalized in Rastell's *Calisto and Melebea*. Next, the problems of the married state with specific reference to jealousy, domestic violence, and cuckoldry will be explored in "The Mumming at Hertford," *Johan Johan*, and *Eastward Hoe*. Later examples that complicate the Cuckold's and Lovers' Purgatories, *The Insatiate Countess* and *The Scornful Ladie*, will be shown to further subsume the purgatorial suffering of lovers into the general discourse of romantic love. A mixture and blending of both the Cuckold's and the Lovers' Purgatories is a result of lovers' reluctance to wed and their determined and humorous

insistence on providing or causing their own obstacles to love. Finally, we will explore the very few instances where women characters either experience Purgatory for their lechery or have Purgatory visited upon them by romance or courtship gone awry.

THE LOVERS' PURGATORY IN *CALISTO AND MELEBEA*

John Rastell⁶¹ handles the condition of the Lovers' Purgatory in *Calisto and Melebea* (1527), translated from de Rojas' Spanish play *Celestina*⁶². Beginning with a snide reference to Petrarch and Heraclitus, the female love interest, Melebea complains of the lovers, who pursue her,

Franciscus petrarcus the poet lawreate
Sayth that nature whych is mother of all thing
w^lout stryff can gyue lyfe to nothing create
And Eraclito⁶³ the wyse clerk in his wrytyng
Sayth in all thynges create stryff is theyre workyng
And ther is no thing vnder the firmament
with any other in all poyntes equivalent.

And accordyng to theyre dictys rehersyd as thus
All thynges are create in maner of stryfe
These folysh louers then that be so amerous
Fro pleasure to displeasure how lede they theyr lyfe
Now sory now sad now Ioyous now pensyfe

⁶¹ It is interesting to note here that Rastell is the brother-in-law of Thomas More and was involved in a long public debate about Purgatory with Frith. See Peter Herman's "Early English Protestantism and Renaissance Poetics: The Charge is Committing Fiction in the Matter of Rastell v. Frith" and Mother Marie Joseph Rogan's dissertation "More, Fisher, Rastell and the Dispute Concerning Purgatory, with an Edition of John Frith's Disputacion."

⁶² The Spanish original from which Rastell adapted *Calisto and Melebea* is *La Celestina* by Fernando de Rojas. A recent edition has been produced by Jose Luis Garcia Moran. For an English modern edition of *La Celestina*, see Eric Bentley's edition adapted from a 1631 English translation by James Mabbe. Rastell has removed or shortened speeches in order to streamline his adaptation of de Rojas.

⁶³ Heraclitus, influencer of Socrates and Plato, claimed that the nature of everything was change itself.

Alas I pore mayden than what shall I do
Combryd by dotage of one Calisto.⁶⁴

This opening monologue by Melebea sets up the theme of the whole play, an exploration of the male lover's pain and larger social problems brought about as a result of his leisure; in this case, they are explored specifically through the "dotage of one Calisto" as Melebea explains to the audience. The changeable psychological realms of the lover, whose arguments about love range from the metaphysical to the carnal, are evidenced in dialogues between Calisto and his servant Sempronio. Lamenting his love of Melebea that causes a physical burning in his chest, Calisto is challenged by Sempronio's pagan comparison of it to Nero's frustrated burning of Rome:

Behold nero in the loue of tapaya oprest
Rome how he brent/old and yong wept
But she toke no thought nor neuer the less slept.

Calisto's short response is that "Gretter is my fyre and less pyte shewd me" by Melebea. Sempronio asserts that he will not mock Calisto's love because it will anger him and cause him more physiological and psychological distress, but Sempronio does ask him,

... how can that fyre be
That tormentyth but one lyuyng man gretter
Than that fyre that brenyth a hole cyty here
And all y^e people theri.

Trying to dispel Calisto's angst, Sempronio gives pragmatic counterarguments, but Calisto continues to wallow, insisting on a description of his pain that locates it in the metaphysical realm:

And gretter is the fyre that brenyth one soule
Than that whych brenyth an hundred bodyes
....

⁶⁴ Unless otherwise indicated, all quotes in this section are taken from Rastell's interlude. This speech does not appear as the prologue to either de Rojas' play or the seventeenth century translation of it by James Mabbe. It appears to be Rastell's own creation.

And yf the fyre of purgatory bren in such wyse
I had leuer my spirete in brute bestes shuld be
Than to go thydyr and than to the deyte

Claiming that if Purgatory is as bad as he feels, he would rather be a brute beast and abjure his own humanity, Calisto is admonished by Sempronio who calls him a heretic and adds a charge of idolatry: “For ye speke lyke no crystyn man /I wold thou knewyst melebea worshyp I /In her I beleue and her I loue/.” Calisto’s blatant idolatry, “in her I believe,” and suffering for love likened to a Purgatory is drawn from romantic notions taken out of love poetry and centers on an unachievable woman. Resisting the moderating arguments of Sempronio, Calisto in his morbid self-absorption has magnified his desirous burning to a degree that it seems more than the burning of Rome by Nero and as bad, if not worse than, the fires of Purgatory.

Sensing his inability to dissuade Calisto from his melancholic disposition, Sempronio tries to contextualize Calisto’s desire for Melebea as love-sickness or the full blown fires of lust, a sin and, according to medieval physicians, an illness; trying to move the conversation out of the metaphysical realm where sinfulness can be assigned to carnality, Sempronio readily casts himself as physician to Calisto’s ailment: “But furst for to hele a man knowledge must be/ of the sekenes than to gyff counsell thereto.” Ultimately, it falls to Sempronio to help Calisto, as Solomon writes, “remedy the physical and psychological ills of his sexual frustration” (42) due to Melebea’s rejection of him. Unfortunately, as servant and counselor, Sempronio cannot be very effective in such a capacity.

While Calisto’s sighs and idolatry seem to modern readers like a common literary conceit of the lover’s anguish, “Calisto’s symptoms, and the context in which his ailment

arises, would have prompted fifteenth-century physicians to identify his lovesickness as a cerebral disorder of the imaginative faculty known as *amor hereos*” (Solomon 42)⁶⁵ or as another sexual disorder known as humoral superfluity. The cures for *amor hereos* usually focus on the psychological treatment of the problem, including distracting the lover by taking him hunting or having him play a lute; failing these cures, the physician is told to beat the lover senseless or frighten him into relinquishing his fixation on the woman. The treatment of humoral superfluity, an accumulation of semen in the body which upsets the humoral balance, is to expel the semen in either the desired woman, or barring her seduction, in any other who is at hand. Solomon explains that Sempronio’s engagement in an argument about Melebea with the love-sick Calisto is accurate for both diagnoses since

the major sexual disorders of the Middle Ages were both linked to the imaginative faculty. On the one hand *amor hereos* was caused by excessive erotic or amorous imagination which produced a humoral imbalance in the brain. On the other hand, treatment of humoral superfluity, an excess of semen, depended on erotic cogitation to facilitate the cleansing effects of coitus. (51)

Sempronio tries to persuade Calisto to give up his fixation on Melebea, or he can try to convince Calisto to procure sexual release. Sempronio initially seizes on the symptoms of *amor hereos*, but unable to disabuse Calisto of his desires, he begins to lean toward a treatment for humoral superfluity, which he is better equipped to provide with the aid of the bawd Celestine.

⁶⁵ Tracing the development of the term “*hereos*,” Livingston Lowes lists the English medical writers of the early modern period who included *amor hereos* in their work: Savonarola (1390-1472), Foresters (1522-1597), Sennertus (1572-1637), Burton *Anatomy of Melancholy*, and Ferrand who is translated into English. He sums up that the heroic love described in early modern culture is not always heroic but *hereos* and this medical diagnosis should be looked for more often in literature.

Viewing Melebea as a corruptible human being, Sempronio argues on the side of carnality, castigating Calisto for giving his soul to his love: “For thou settyst mannis dignite in obeysanus/ To the imperfeccion of the weke woman.” Calisto predictably says that she is no woman but a goddess: “ye and as a goddes I here confesse / And I beleue there is no such sufferayn / In heuyn though she be in yerth.” Sempronio, using the prescribed “harsh words and sober arguments” which distract the sufferer of *amor hereos* (Solomon 51) and moving toward offering to procure sexual release for Calisto, reproves Calisto for his idolatry by carefully saying that to God Melebea is a villain, a low person, a sinner; therefore, in Sempronio’s mind--and if he is successful, in Calisto’s--she is sexually corruptible; unlike Renaissance poets, Sempronio stops short of calling Melebea a devil and thereby bringing her into the heavenly or infernal hierarchy as he balances his arguments by contextualizing women as human beings: “A woman a god nay to god a vyllayn / Of your sayeng ye may be sory.” He does not say devil, but villain. Sempronio would rather not talk of otherworldly suffering for sin and tries his best to reject as sinful one of the major symptoms of Calisto’s *amor hereos*, his exaggerated esteem for Melebea which would cause him to deify her (Solomon 45); as a god she is unattainable, but as a “weke” woman she is. The balance between metaphysical longing and lust continually collide in this dialogue; Calisto takes the side of metaphysics while Sempronio takes the answer that lies in a medical diagnosis of bodily desire and finally in the carnal release of humoral superfluity through purging of semen. The purgatorial nature of Calisto’s suffering is left largely unexamined as Sempronio is the one who offers an easy “medicalized” way to end it.

Seeing a profit in it for himself, Sempronio's answer to Calisto is to seduce Melebea with the help of Celestine the bawd⁶⁶. The bawd is sent to seduce Melebea in part because she is better able to argue in tricky metaphors of carnality, sickness, and sin than either Sempronio or Calisto, and she can deflect the counterarguments of Hell and Purgatory which Melebea might offer⁶⁷. Celestine continues Sempronio's work contextualizing Calisto's problem as an illness, but she adds a religious dimension in which Melebea can reduce his suffering through good works. Wanting to be pious, Melebea asks Celestine what she needs and Celestine claims that it is not for herself that she asks:

The infyrmyte is not myne though that I grone
It is for a nother y^t I make mone
And not for my self it is a nother way
But what I must mone where I dare not say

Working on her guilt about helping the ill, Celestine cannily changes tactics shifting into a religious metaphor of good works (associated with Purgatory through penitential observance), "Of one that lyeth in daunger by sekenes. / Remyttyng hys langour to your getyllnes." She continues to speak of sickness:

I laft one in daunger of sekenes
Drawyng to deth for ought that I can se
Now chose you or no to be murderes
Or reuyue hym w^t a word to come from the.

Celestine argues that she wants Melebea to visit the sick. When Celestina starts to speak of Calisto as the patient, she is interrupted as Melebea erupts in a fury and rants against his desires. Celestine pretends to be frightened by the outburst and claims that she did

⁶⁶ Sempronio needs Celestine to aid him in seducing Elicea. He may share in a portion of Celestine's profit for talking Melebea into an illicit affair with Calisto.

⁶⁷ In de Rojas' original, Celestine is a witch, midwife, widow, bawd, and trickster. Rastell drops the witch and midwife characteristics in favor of a focus on Celestine's rhetorical and theatrical skill.

not mean that Melebea should sexually service Calisto. Celestine argues that Calisto wants to touch her girdle because he has heard that it has touched many holy relics and may thereby heal him. Melebea falls for the good works argument and offers Celestine the girdle. While she does waver in her constancy by giving her girdle to the bawd, in the end Melebea⁶⁸ resists Celestine's snares and ultimately is not corrupted by Celestine's argument that she has a candidate who could benefit from Melebea's spiritual and corporal works of mercy. In Rastell's adaptation, the employment of the medical metaphor for curing Calisto's lovesickness through coitus becomes largely parodic through its failed use by the corrupt Celestine and Sempronio. Calisto's own wallowing becomes pathetic and lazy, and when he succumbs to the bawd, sinful and devious.

In de Rojas' *La Celestina*, Calisto is able to seduce Melebea, and both die in the play's tragic conclusion. Calisto, in Rastell's *Calisto and Melebea*, fails in his seduction and coitus is postponed indefinitely. For the world of de Rojas' *La Celestina* and Rastell's *Calisto and Melebea* intercourse is not in and of itself bad; as Solomon claims,

for medieval physicians, intercourse was never categorically good or harmful to the body; its beneficial or prejudicial nature depended entirely on the patient's humoral state and bodily composition. Old men, sick men, and men with dry and cold bodies were advised to avoid intercourse completely because it tended to dry out the humors, leaving these men debilitated, depressed, and unable to digest their food. Other men, after taking necessary precautions (regulating the body with baths, foods, and hot cloths) could enjoy coitus with little damage (49-50).

Instead in both plays, male authority figures regulate the circumstances of intercourse and judge its context. It is up to Melebea's father to make this point about sex in Rastell's

⁶⁸ Melebea may be a precursor of Milton's Lady in *Comus* in her ability to resist the bawd Celestine's advances with the help of her elders.

adaptation. The medical metaphor is dropped in the conclusion of Rastell's adaptation in favor of a return to the metaphysical realm⁶⁹.

But it is a metaphysical metaphor controlled not by the love-sick Calisto, but by Melebea's father, Danio. Apart from its tie to the burning desires of Calisto, the metaphor of purgatorial torment, as opposed to Purgatory itself, as it relates to otherworldly realms and to sickness, appears significantly at the conclusion of the play when purgatorial torment of the lustful is re-contextualized by Danio, who reports a highly suggestive dream vision of Melebea's downfall. The dream: Two castles stand in an orchard; one has a boiling hot bath which purges sickness; the other has only foul stinking water. Melebea is heading toward the purging one and then a bitch comes cavorting over the land and coaxes her to head toward the foul palace. The father and daughter interpret the dream; Melebea makes an act of contrition; and Danio discourses on the evils of the idle and the need to bring up children correctly. While Melebea contends that the foul castle is vice and the other virtue, there is a hint of the purgatorial tortures of sinners in lakes of fire or cauldrons of oil which purge lust. Danio's handling of his daughter's seduction within a dream of two castles also suggests an inversion of the locus amoenus that Andreas Capellanus provides for his tormented women in the "Purgatory of Cruel Beauties;" women who are open to seduction in Danio's dream world can be consigned to the stinking bath. Unlike Gower's "Tale of Rosiphele" which advances a moral imperative to resist idleness by giving oneself into love's service, Danio's dream interpretation makes the point that it is the idle, in this case the bawd and

⁶⁹ In the Spanish original of the play and Mabbe's seventeenth century translation, Calisto seduces Melebea, meeting her in her garden for sex; he dies in a fall from the top of Melebea's garden wall. Melebea despairs and throws herself from the top of a tower. Rastell replaces this horrific ending with a forestalling of tragedy through the intervention of Danio.

the equally culpable courtly lover Calisto, who are committing sin in trying to seduce young women. At the conclusion of *Calisto and Melebea*, Danio gives young women the message that they must be vigilant in order to avoid falling into sickness and sin; they should seek the proper reduction of desire through marriage. Entering into an illicit romantic relationship in Danio's world leads only to a palace of foul stinking water.

By ending with the interpretation of Danio's dream and its statement about control of sexuality, the focus of Rastell's *Calisto and Melebea* is put squarely back in the metaphysical realm of sin, and not the medical healing of *amor hereos* or humoral superfluity, as the characters of Sempronio and Celestine had sought to contextualize it for both Calisto and Melebea. The baths which Danio has seen in his dream vision mirror the otherworldly baths and lakes in which souls in Purgatory are purged in the afterlife for their sins, not the baths used by medieval physicians to regulate and moderate desire in humorally unbalanced lovers. The theological, courtly, and medical explanations, causes, and cures for lovesickness all collide in Rastell's *Calisto and Melebea*, but in his adaptation Rastell ultimately chooses to magnify obedience to parents and God and rejection of idleness; in this way, he forestalls the tragedy of his Spanish counterpart de Rojas, in which Calisto falls to his death while jumping over Melebea's garden wall, and Melebea subsequently commits suicide. While Rastell in a reforming Britain may have had to handle purgatorial suffering carefully in his art, he is able to use purgatorial torment and sexual purging to critique the ways in which desire is moderated in this play.

CUCKOLDS ON THE EARLY STAGE

The problems of courting lovers are not the only relationship decried in purgatorial terms on the early stage. The pained cries of men who live with tormenting wives is heard in Lydgate's "A Mumming at Hertford" (1430)⁷⁰, an early dramatic example of antiuxorial purgatorial torment, which connects power relations between the genders and between commoners and the King. The husbands' complaint of the discord and strife of marriage includes domestic violence inflicted upon them and by which they may gain Heavenly reward:

I mene þus, whane þe distaff is brooke,
With þeyre fistes wyves wol be wrooke.
Blessed þoo men þat cane in suche offence
Meekly souffre, take al in pacyence,
Tendure suche wyfly purgatorye.
Heven for þeyre meede, to regne þer in glorye,
God graunt al housbandes þat beon in þis place,
To wynne so heven for His hooly grace.

This complaint is addressed to the King who is asked to judge the case and either release the men or punish the women. When the wives answer the husbands' complaint, they immediately refer to the Wife of Bath's comments on marriage as Purgatory:

And for oure partye þe worthy Wyff of Bathe
Cane shewe statutes moo þan six or seven,
Howe wyves make hir housbandes wynne heven,
Maugre þe feonde and al his violence.

They argue that they are protected by statute, provide a form of penance that helps their mates get to Heaven, and therefore are sovereign in their marriages because they confound the Devil; in other words, it is better that the wives beat the husbands now, than

⁷⁰ Lydgate's "Mumming at Hertford" picks up on and extends purgational imagery found in some of the popular Trials of Joseph and Mary from cycle plays. For an article discussing the playability and dramatic quality of Lydgate's mummings, see Robert Epstein's "Lydgate's Mummings and the Aristocratic Resistance to Drama." Epstein connects "A Mumming at Hertford" to domestic discord in *The Second Shepherd's Play* and the *Play of Noah's querulous Uxor and Noah*.

that the husbands suffer at the hands of devils in Hell or the otherworldly Purgatory. Predominating in this and other dramatic purgatorial torments is the image of the woman who bringing about sin and torment embodies an earthly Purgatory. Hell and Purgatory jointly occur in dramatic representations as female characters serve, from the male character's viewpoint, as punishing devils, delivering or scourging angels, or castigating cuckolding bitches. Underlying many of these depictions is disgust with the damage inflicted on the psyche and the soul by lust; later examples focus even more on the grossness and sickness of the human body.

JOHAN JOHAN'S PURGATORY

An early play in which characters ruminate on married love as purgatorial torment, and in which desire becomes an earthly Purgatory is Heywood's *Johan Johan* (1533?), an interlude translated from the French *Farce du Pasté* (Bevington *Medieval Drama* 970), which details the frustrations of the cuckolded husband Johan as he deals with his wife, Tib, and her lover, Johan, the priest. After the priest arrives and begins to eat the husband's food, Johan is dismissed from the table by his domineering wife. Tib demands that instead of eating, Johan plug a hole in a bucket with candle wax, "Go chafe the wax/and here no lenger tary;" Johan tetchily replies:

And is not this a very purgatory
To se folkes ete/and may not ete a byt
By kokkes soule/I am a very wodcok
This payle here/now a vengauce take it
Now my wyfe gyueth me a proud mok (lines 504-508)⁷¹

⁷¹ All *Johan Johan* quotes are from Bevington's edition in *Medieval Drama*.

Tib, eating and flirting with the priest, responds to the grumbling aside with a curt “What dost?” Johan, dismissed, diminished, and cuckolded⁷², continues to stroke the wax by the fire to plug the hole in the bucket. Tib and the priest eat and kiss. What develops into the animating metaphor of the interlude, Johan’s earthly Purgatory, is more than his physical hunger for food or his self-proclaimed “roasting by the fire” (line 535). It lies in his multi-faceted impotence; he does not throw the priest out; he cannot eat his own food; he cannot plug the hole with the wax; he can neither satisfy nor control his wife. His Purgatory is embodied in his drone-like state, serving the needs of Tib and even the priest with no social recompense whatsoever. Johan’s Purgatory is earthly and likely to continue unless he is able to overcome the dominance of his wife and the poaching of the cuckolding priest.

In addition to the one in which he specifically mentions Purgatory, two asides reveal Johan’s imaginative musings on purgatorial torment. In lines 146-149, he answers Tib’s complaints that she is too sick to see to the housework or to Johan’s care: “Nowe wolde to God, and swete Saint Diric]k,/ That thou warte in the water up to the throte,/ Or in a burning oven red hote,/ To se and I wolde pull the[e] out!” Johan alludes here to more than the physical earthbound torments he would subject his wife to; burning and boiling alive are two of the most common punishments for those who suffer in Purgatory for lechery and other sins of the flesh. Johan contends that he would not aid his wife if she found herself in such a predicament. The second allusion to purgatorial torment happens when the priest tells ribald stories about miracles of childbirth he has “helped

⁷² Johan is not entirely sure either at the beginning or the end of the play of his cuckoldry: “But than my wife so ofte thither resorte/ That I fere she will make me weare a fether” (lines 94-96). At the end he declares, “For, by God, I fere me/ That they be gon together, he and she,/ Unto his chamber. And perhappys she will,/ Spite of my hart, tary there still./ And peradventure, there he and she / Will make me cuckold” (lines 669-674). Nevertheless, to the audience, that he is being systematically cuckolded is obvious.

along”; the priest claims to know a man who wedded and then went to sea for seven years. When he came home, the husband found that his wife had had seven children in that space of time. The priest proudly and slyly declares, “Yet had she not had so many by thre/ If she had not had the help of me. / Is not this a miracle” (lines 547-549). Johan, the husband, still standing by the fire roasting away and rubbing the wax, says in a mumbling aside: “Now, in good sooth, this is a wonderous/ miracle/ but, for your labour, I wolde that your tac[k]le/ Were in a scalding water, well sod!” (lines 552-555). Johan’s wish that the two lovers burn in scalding water relates to the one they shall suffer post-mortem and to his own purgatorial state; he is consoling himself with the wish that while he suffers now, they should suffer later.

Unlike *Calisto and Melebea*’s philosophical discussions about burning lovers, *Johan Johan* threatens to actualize Johan’s imaginative burning of Tib and the priest. After the Wife and priest deprive Johan of any supper, he takes a shovel full of coals from the fire and threatens to throw them into Tib’s face. He will burn her himself and become the punishing devil he had promised to be in the opening monologue of the play when he threatens repeatedly to beat her⁷³. Johan’s punishment of Tib is halted when Tib commands the priest to attack her husband.

At the play’s conclusion, Johan and the priest fight and Johan is left alone to worry about his cuckoldry in a speech to the audience. This is the same Johan from the beginning of the play, who boasts of the beating he is going to give his wife for tarrying too long in town, and, who deflates magnificently upon Tib’s arrival:

⁷³ Johan brags to the audience in his opening monologue: “Bete her, quod a? yea, that she shall stinke!/ And at every stroke lay her on the grounde,/ And traîne her by the here about the house rounde./ I am evyn mad that I bete her not nowee./ But I shall rewarde her hardly well inowe:/ There is never a wife between heven and hell/ Whiche was ever beten halfe so well” (lines 12-18).

Johan: For I shall order her, for all her brawling,
That she repent to go a catter-wawling.

[Tib has entered during his speech]

Tib: Why, whom wilt thou beate, I say, thou knave?

Johan: Who, I, Tib? None, so God me save. (lines 109-112)

For Johan, who in speaking directly to the audience should elicit some of their pity, there is little character development. After the two lovers have left his house at the conclusion of the play, Johan says:

For, by God, I fere me
That they be gon together, he and she,
Unto his chamber. And perhappys she will,
Spite of my hart, tary there still.
And peradventure, there he and she
Will make me cuckold. (lines 669-674)

In an odd voyeuristically motivated exit from the stage, he follows them, telling the audience he hopes to catch them in the act. It is evident to the audience from the double entendres of the priest and Tib's embracing of the priest while calling him her lover that Johan's cuckolding is certain. Part of the purgatorial torment he suffers is his vacillation between knowledge of the cuckolding and denial of it. Johan, the husband, is still in Purgatory at the end of the play and there is no end in sight to his pitiable and masochistic, though comic, behavior. Unlike hellish torment for which there is no end, Johan's torment is episodic in nature, is relieved by his own imaginings of the lover's future purgatorial torment, and can only end with the death of either himself or Tib.

EASTWARD HOE - A JACOBEOAN CUCKOLD IN PURGATORY

This problematic state of the cuckold and its purgatorial connotations is also evident in the Jacobean *Eastward Hoe* (1605) by Chapman, Jonson, and Marston. Although the play itself is scattered and tempestuous, at its conclusion the cuckold is reabsorbed into the social fabric, realizing a shared but individually borne nature to his suffering. In the play, Security, a usurer, meets the dubious knight Petronel and Quicksilver at a tavern to help them sail away to Virginia with stolen goods and another man's wife. Security, believing that he is helping to cuckold Bramble, a lawyer who has shown up at the tavern, makes double entendres enjoying immensely the game of cuckolding the man right under his own nose. Known to Petronel, Quicksilver, and the audience, though, is that the disguised woman whom Security believes to be Bramble's wife is actually his own wife, Winifred. Security only recognizes his cuckoldry when he arrives home to find his wife gone. Winifred, Petronel, and the others who had set out for Virginia are washed up on the shores of the Thames in a shipwreck; Winifred is rescued by the Tavern Drawer, puts on dry clothes, and assures Security that she has been home all the while. Ironically, he apologizes for suspecting her.

After he is imprisoned for helping Petronel to launch the plan to steal away to Virginia, Security becomes even more ridiculous as cries out to Bramble for forgiveness:

For my Sinnes, for my Sinnes Sir, whereof Mariage, is the greatest. O, had I neuer married, I had neuer knowne this *Purgatorie*, to which Hell is a kinde of coole Bathe in respects My wiues confederacie Sir, with olde *Touchstone*, that shee might keepe her *Iubilæe*, and the Feast of her *New-Moone*. Doe you vnderstand me Sir? (4.1.271-274)

Security here mentions most of the associations of the Cuckold's Purgatory: baths, burning, Hell, and lechery; ironically, he claims marriage as his worst sin, failing to

mention his own past usury and bawdry. Insane with jealousy, Security in this speech even accuses Touchstone, the most compassionate and moral character in the play, of trying to cuckold him. Security's shame is brought to its zenith as he begs Touchstone for release from prison by singing a song of his own cuckolded state.

Released from prison through Touchstone's mercy, Security remains a prisoner of his own cuckoldry. There is no remedy for his state, though Touchstone tries to comfort him:

Why, Master Security, that should rather be a comfort to you than a corrosive. If you be a cuckold, it's an argument you have a beautiful woman to your wife; then, you shall be much made of; you shall have store of friends; never want money; you shall be eased of much o' your wedlock pain; others will take it for you. Besides, you being a usurer, and likely to go to Hell, the devils will never torment you; they'll take you for one o' their own race. Again if you be a cuckold, and know it not, you are an innocent; if you know it, and endure it, a martyr. (5.5).

Security reunites with his wife and is resolved, albeit a bit unconvincingly, to being a cuckold. Characteristic of a Jonsonian lesser social transgressor who has received his comeuppance, Security is absolved and absorbed back into the social fabric at the end of *Eastward Hoe*; the same cannot be said of Johan, the husband, in Heywood's *Johan Johan*. Even after Johan banishes the two lovers from his house, he is alone and chooses pathetically to follow them. Both Security and Johan's Purgatories continue because they keep their wives; they are wretched and utterly funny because of it. Johan is more pitiable because we know little of how his situation came to be; the author seems to take no sides in the quarrel; Bevington describes this balanced parody, commenting that "the author's lampooning of the cuckolded husband is as merciless as that of the sexy wife and the libidinous priest" (*Medieval Drama* 970). Security has been a usurer and bawd, revealed

in cuckolding his friend Bramble, and, because he has so often caused it in others, deserves his own cuckoldry, jealousy, and suspicion in a way that Johan does not seem to. The genre of the plays and their distance in time does much to change their context; both are comedic, but only *Eastward Hoe* presents a social reabsorbing of the cuckold. The Cuckold's Purgatory does persist at the conclusion of *Eastward Hoe* and *Security* may remain pathetic, but in a true Jonsonian style play as this is, he has others next to him at the conclusion that are just as pathetic. Unfortunately, the remedy to Johan's Purgatory, removing his wife from his life, leaves him alone and probably lonely⁷⁴. He must choose at the conclusion of the play which he prefers, the torments of Tib's Purgatory or solitude; he chooses an impotent, jealous, and suspicious, though never lonely or boring, Purgatory.

Over time, whether they be angels, devils, or human beings, the characterization of females in British Reformation drama undergoes a subtle change in plays about love; generally consigned to leading roles in comedic plots or horrific tragedies, female characters are verbally strong, exert more control over the love relationship, and speak for themselves in ways not open to Heywood's stereotyped Tib or Rastell's biddable Melebea, over whom social control is the end desire of the male characters in the plays and to whom they succumb. In comedies that contain a Cuckold's Purgatory, women's sexuality and that of their husbands (especially those in the middle classes) is normalized and accepted when women express their desires and moderate, but do not dominate, the desires of their husbands. While there is still the impetus in male characters to control the

⁷⁴ There is a long discussion in the play about the baking of the pie that Tib and the priest eat. They have both met at a mutual friend Margery's house and spent the day making the pie and socializing. Because he has to work Johan is not part of this social circle and seems not only to be jealous of his wife's sexual transgression but also of her social companionship.

sexuality and sensuality of women, an understanding of social balance for both genders is advanced in some Jacobean comedies where women are not just punishing devils or purging angels, but also everything in between, that is, human. Through their embodiment on the stage and their appropriation of the metaphor of Purgatory, female comedic characters purge male lovers and deftly handle romantic relationships. While love poets may also employ female narrators who speak of their own desires, the plays' embodiment of female voices, and the exchange of an exclusive coterie audience for a multi-classed one, changes the context of the discourse so that it becomes more dialogic in nature⁷⁵. Not only is the Lovers' and Cuckold's Purgatory spoken of on stage, it is also acted out for the delectation of the audience; like the Wife of Bath, female dramatic characters can claim the term as their own and furthermore manipulate the purgatorial situations of men and their own tormenting agency to their own profit.

THE INSATIATE COUNTESSE

An excellent example of both the comedic tempering of desire by women and the tragic misfortune of those caught in the clutches of an insatiably desirous woman is found in Marston, Barksted, and Mackin's *The Insatiate Countesse* (1601?), which contains a main plot of Hell and a sub plot of Purgatory. In the main plot, the countess buries one husband, and marries another, only to leave him before the marriage is consummated for yet another lover. She is eventually put to death for her insatiable desires. The monk who accompanies the Countess to the gallows does little to comfort or correct her as she and her accomplices (in a plot to kill her former lovers) are executed on stage and

⁷⁵ Marlowe's *Shepherd*, Raleigh's *Nymph*, and Marvell's shepherds and shepherdesses exemplify this type of dialogue in poetry, but it is the dramatic embodiment of the sexually powerful purgatorial woman that enlivens the context of drama.

temporal justice is served. This main plot is infernalized through repeated uses of the word Hell, as the Countess brings about a Hell on earth for the men she courts and who court her.

The women of the comedic sub plot, Lady Lentulus, Abigail and Thais, on the other hand, bring only a Purgatory to the earth of their loves: Mendosa, Claridiana, and Rogero. In the sub plot, Thais marries Rogero, and Abigail marries Claridiana; the two husbands are mortal enemies and each seeks to punish the other by cuckolding him. These couples live near Lady Lentulus, a chaste widow being pursued by Mendosa. Mendosa woos Lady Lentulus, but while trying to climb up a rope ladder into her house at night, he falls and is caught by the night watch. At the same time, the two husbands have switched houses thinking that they are bedding their enemy's wife. The women, having figured out the men's' plans, have also switched houses, so that they are sleeping with their own spouses. The night watch comes to the houses of Claridiana and Rogero, who both, to avoid the infamy of being cuckolded, claim to have murdered the only slightly injured Mendosa. After enjoying the suffering of the men, the women, Lady Lentulus, Abigail, and Thais, consent to save them from punishment by the authorities; Lady Lentulus says to her female cronies,

Come madcaps leaue iesting, and let's deliuer them out of their earthly purgation⁷⁶; you are the spirits that torment them: but my loue and Lord, kinde Mendosa, will loose his life, to preserue mine honor, not for hate to others. (4.1.409-411)

⁷⁶ In *The Wisdom of Doctor Dodypoll* (1600), a similar reference, but to a Lovers' Purgatory, occurs when Motto exclaims to a woman loved by one of his friends:

Madam dispatch him then; rid him out of this earthlie purgatorie; for I haue such a coile with him a nights; grunting and groaning in his sleepe; with O *Hyanthe*; my deare *Hyanthe*; and then hee throbs me in his armes, as if he had gotten a great iewell by the eare.

While this comment by Lentulus does not mention Purgatory by name, “out of their earthly purgation,” its inflection suggests a purgatorial punishment for the husbands’ planned cuckolding of one another. While Claridiana and Rogero have sought to bring the Cuckold’s Purgatory to one another, the women, by controlling the conditions of their own sexuality (switching beds), have against type inverted and somewhat squelched the vituperative wailing of the cuckold in this gentle example of the Cuckold’s Purgatory. Whatever type of “tormenting spirits” they may be, the women of the comedic plot will save the kind Mendosa, who, unwilling to explain why he was crawling through Lady Lentulus’ window, has been convicted of trying to burgle her house. They will also save Claridiana and Rogero, who have been doubly shamed for trying to cuckold one another and for falsely confessing to the murder of Mendosa. It is the women in this play who, with the exception of the insatiate Countess, are smarter than the men, and who ultimately contextualize the suffering of the men in the comedic subplot, not as infernal, but as purgatorial. Through their own wits Abigail and Thais are able to purge Rogero and Claridiana of the sin of jealousy and establish a friendship between their husbands.

THE SCORNFUL LADIE

Beaumont and Fletcher’s *The Scornful Ladie* (1616) is a Jacobean example which mixes the Lover’s and Cuckold’s Purgatory to point out the ridiculous complexity of love relationships manipulated by lovers who fabricate obstacles to love. In it, Lovelesse, mired in a state of affianced turmoil, exhibits a cultural absorption and application of the terminology of both the Lovers’ and the Cuckold’s Purgatory; he is not a courtier afflicted with the disease of love like Calisto; he is nominally engaged to his love and is

reasonably assured of her fidelity; also, he is actively seeking marriage unlike the cuckold who is stuck in his marriage or the libertine who wants never to be caught.

Lovelesse informs his brother and butler that he is to take a voyage to France because his love is demanding it as a condition of marriage. He leaves and then has it reported that he has died at sea. Returning in disguise, he finds that his love is encouraging the attentions of a suitor, Welford. Lovelesse visits the Lady in disguise. When asked if she would desert Welford if Lovelesse were still alive, she replies that she would; Lovelesse reveals himself and she testily replies, “Alas I knew it Sir, and for that purpose prepar'd this Pageant: get you to your taske. And leaue these Players tricks, or I shall leaue you, indeede I shall. Trauell, or know me not.” Reprimanding him for his disguise, she refuses to relent and demands that she will only marry him if he fulfills her condition for marriage: a man who has traveled. He asks: “Will you then marry?” and is told “I will not promise, take your choyse. Farewell.” Completely confounded by her behavior, Lovelesse in defeat declares “There is no other Purgatory but a woman. I must doe something” and leaves the stage (Act 3).

The Scornful Ladie, concerned with the faithfulness of both Lovelesse’s love and also that of his younger brother who is a wastrel libertine, does not contain the sustained medical metaphors of *Calisto and Melebea* or the multiple references to burning of *Johan Johan*; in Lovelesse’s frustrated musing, the cure for lovesickness lies not in the conventional methods used to help the man be rid of desire, but to be rid of the “hot continuall plagues” of women altogether. Dismayed by his love’s continued rejection of him and her illogical behavior, Lovelesse ironically applies this metaphor to his love and extends it to all women:

I would twere lawfull in the next great sicknesse to haue the dogs spared; those harmelesse creatures, and knocke ith head these hot continuall plagues, weomen, that are more infections. I hope the state will thinke on't (Act 4).

Completely undone by his situation, he, like the husbands in “Mumming at Hertford” pathetically looks to the state for aid; nevertheless, it is not physicians, bawds, or kings who can cure Lovelesse’s lovesickness.

While neither lustful nor lecherous, Loveless is just as culpable as the lady for their Purgatory as he forestalls the marriage in refusing to fulfill her condition; instead, he pretends to travel and pretends to die. Lovelesse’s protestations of his love’s assumed infidelity, her aberrant behavior and demands, and her claims to love him but her refusal to marry him, mark Lovelesse’s vexed position; he embodies aspects of the love-sick courtier, the cuckolded fiancé, and the verbally lambasted lover who against type will eventually get the woman. Neither he nor his love really fit the traditional characterizations of the Lovers’ or Cuckold’s Purgatories. Instead, Lovelesse employs the tropes we have seen to shape and give meaning to the vagaries of his middle class love relationship and its manufactured obstacles.

THE FEMALE PURGATORY: WHO, WHEN, AND IF TO BED/WED

For all men’s torment in the Lovers’ and Cuckold’s Purgatory, there are dramatic examples not of husbands and jilted male lover’s but of women who describe their love experiences as purgatorial. We have not seen any women’s purgatories in the drama presented so far. So where is the purgatorial torment of the cuckolding woman which Johan wishes on Tib and the Knight of de La Tour-Landry warns his daughters of? It is

found in poetry and on stage but in far fewer numbers than the male purgatorial suffering of cuckolds and courtiers.

AN EARLY PARDONER ON FEMALE "SPIRITS" IN PURGATORY

Competing in a lying contest with an Apothecary, a Peddler, and a Palmer, the Pardoner, in John Heywood's interlude *The Playe Called the Foure PP* (1543-1547?), is not depicted for his abuse of Purgatory so much as for his unbelievable tale of a woman suffering for lechery. The Pardoner relates the story of his friend who died suddenly, without benefit of clergy; he goes to Purgatory to look for her, but the souls there tell him that she is not there:

...they sayd she came nat here
Then ferd I muche it was nat well
Alas thought I she is in hell. (lines 810-812)

When the Pardoner goes to Hell and tells Lucifer that the soul he wants is female, Lucifer tells him to take her because,

...all we deuyls within thys den
Haue more to do with two women
Then with all the charge we haue besyde
Wherfore yf thou our frende wyll be tryed
Aply thy pardons to women so
That vnto vs there come no mo. (lines 939-944)

The Pardoner makes his way to Hell's Kitchen where he finds the woman turning a spit. She joyfully leaves Hell with him, yet no one seems happier than the devils themselves:

.... all the deuyls for ioy how they
Dyd rore at her delyuery
And how the cheynes in hell dyd ryng
And how all the soules therin dyd singe. (lines 965-968)

Instead of roaring in indignation at her release, the devils roar in pleasure that a troublesome woman has been released from Hell through the intervention of the Pardoner. While on the surface the Pardoner in *The Playe Called the Foure PP* is a stereotypical medieval pardoner, Heywood combines the drama of the corrupt pardoner with the lascivious tale of a woman so querulous that even the Devil does not want her in Hell. The abuse of Purgatory here is not as important as the comedy of devils troubled by complaining women in Hell. The encapsulation of Purgatory, in a story that from the beginning is told in a lying contest, reduces the impact of the Pardoner's deceptions. This humorous example of a woman released from Hell because of the intercession of the Pardoner and because even the Devil cannot stand her delineates a tormented and tormenting woman, and connects her in the early modern dramatic imagination with concerns of women's fidelity, desires, and domestic behavior.

WOMENS' PURGATORIES IN POETRY AND DRAMA

In John Davies "A Contention Betwixt a Wife, a Widdow, and a Maide" (1602)⁷⁷ a maid, a widow, and a wife discuss the nature of their states and offer metaphors of Purgatory, Heaven, and Hell to describe female experience. Wife declares that Maid really cannot speak of the "comforts" and ioyes" in marriage (line 202) and Maid replies pertly that indeed she can: "Yes, yes; though blessed saints in heauen do dwell, / They doe the soules in Purgatory see" (lines 203-204). Widow pipes up that it is the widows who are in Heaven and not maids:

⁷⁷ No date of composition is provided in *Literature Online* for this poem. See Luminarium article "The Life of Sir John Davies" for the date of composition of this poem: <http://www.luminarium.org/renlit/daviebio.htm> (Jokinen).

If euery wife do liue in Purgatory,
Then sure it is that Widdowes liue in blisse,
And are translated to a state of glory;
But Maids as yet haue not attain'd to this. (lines 205-208)

While witty, literary examples where women speak of their love relationships as purgatorial are few and far between.

So too are dramas where women experience the Lovers' Purgatory. In *The Wit of a Woman* (1604) Isabella is told by her schoolmistress, Balia, of a rich gentleman "of some yeares" who "loues the ground the better where [she] goe" who if she will but love him will provide riches beyond belief; unfortunately, the man happens to be her best friend's father. Seemingly obedient, Isabella replies that though such a marriage may be considered a Purgatory by others, she could accept such an arrangement:

Yes, I thinke I could loue him a little, but if I should cast my liking vpon him, what would the world say? a young faire sweet wench, mary such a grimme, Sir she surely married his purse and not himselfe, and she wil haue a gallant in a corner, that shall and so foorth: why he must bee but a countenance: alas his date is out, hee may pray for them that may: **and for her it is pittie shee should bee put to such purgatorie**, and thus with a great deale of like stuffe I should bee held a good minion. (my bold)

While Isabella puts the term Purgatory into mouths of those who would gossip about such a relationship, immediately after the schoolmistress leaves, she declares to her friend the unsavouriness of such a union: "Is not this a prettie world? *Ianuary* and *May* make a match? it cannot be, the yeare will not suffer such vnnaturall coniunctions." Again, when Purgatory is mentioned its association with the troubles implicit in May-December unions, like Chaucer's January and May, is made clear. The play itself agrees with this opinion on Isabella's part; the four young women friends, each being pursued by much older men, conspire and successfully marry the men's sons.

CONCLUSION

The use of Purgatory early in the Tudor interludes comes from their translation from continental sources in countries where Purgatory is still authorized and Purgatory is still being debated; *Calisto and Melebea* is based on a Spanish play; *Johan Johan* is based on a French farce. An elaboration of the love poetry of Elizabethan England (and its Continental influences) and of Chaucer's purgatorial characters, the Jacobean dramatic use of the purgatorial torment of lovers has few examples with arguments about an authorized belief in or Reformer rejection of Purgatory. Usually contained within the comedy and thereby limited in power, the Lovers' Purgatory functions as an elaboration of a love motif or a medical diagnosis of *amor hereos*; it is not a dogmatic usage, and is therefore not suspect as Roman Catholic. Because it is more heterogloss, the Jacobean dramas' purgatorial torments do not approach the oddness of Henry Constable's sonnet in which he calls Queen Elizabeth a devil. Women are devils; women are angels; in some examples, like *The Insatiate Countess*, *The Scornful Ladie*, and *The Wit of a Woman*, women are also characterized as fallible, flawed, and funny human beings.

As the genre of city comedy and city tragedy with a comic sub plot develops fully on the Jacobean stage, the cuckold's and the lovers' problems continue to be handled in purgatorial terms. The relationships between men and women in drama do not change substantially over time, and remain as tempestuous as ever; the metaphor of purgatorial torment endures in comic sub plots, along the lines of its early use in Lydgate's "A Mumming at Hertford," in which the King judges the complaints of the husbands and the wives, as an emphatic reminder of the finite nature and triviality of the love problems of

the middle and lower classes; in *The Insatiate Countess*, the authorities, who pass a death sentence on the Countess, laugh over the ridiculous machinations of Claridiana, Rogero and Mendosa. The comic male apprehension of women in the Jacobean comedies differs from the singular viewpoint of the male narrators of the love poems; in its middle class interest in wealth and fidelity, it approaches more closely the problems of “The Merchant’s Tale”’s January and the jocularly of the Wife of Bath. There is a real Hell on earth to be found in Jacobean plays; it is usually the sub plots that house a comic and earthly Purgatory.

Drawn from literary genres as opposed to theological tracts, the staged Lover’s and Cuckold’s Purgatories, firmly grounded on earth and not in Heaven or Hell, are not threatening. While they may critique legal and political power structures that regulate intimate relationships, they do so from a comic perspective in which the society is preserved as individuals bear their suffering at the hands of others because of their own human frailty. The hand of the audience member who points at the cuckold and laughs at him contains four fingers pointing back at him. Because it functions as a metaphor for social upheaval and the management of relationship dynamics and lacks theological apologetics, the Purgatories of the Lovers’ and the Cuckold’s remain unchallenged on stage.

Chapter 5

Shakespeare's Other Purgatories: The Torments of Romeo, Othello, and Prospero

Loue, is a smoake made with the sume of sighes,
Being purg'd, a fire sparkling in Louers eyes

--Romeo, *Romeo and Juliet*, Act1

And I will purge thy mortall grossenesse so,
That thou shalt like an airie spirit go.

--Titania, *Midsummers Night Dream*, Act 3

Exploring how Shakespeare uses Purgatory in *Romeo and Juliet*, *Othello*, and *The Tempest*, will entail showing how the imagery and enactment of the eschatological/theological Purgatory, the earthly Lovers' and Cuckold's Purgatories, and finally the Servant's Purgatory serve to tie together powerful strategies which shape dramatic time, focus the relationship dynamics of characters, and provide either character or audience purgatorial cathartic experiences. Shakespeare's Purgatories are unique in their overt, and many times meta-dramatic, connection to catharsis of character, plot, and social systems. In "The Purgation Theory of Catharsis," Leon Golden summarizes the traditional concept of Aristotelian catharsis as "represent[ing] a process of purgation in which the emotions of pity and fear are aroused by tragic dramas and then somehow

eliminated from the psyche of the audience...” (Golden 473). How, why, and under what circumstances, they are eliminated was a main concern of Renaissance dramatists and theorists; as Stephen Orgel asserts catharsis was “the mainstay of most Renaissance theories of tragedy” (116). Humoral theories of purging connected both to unbalanced desire and to drama become a factor as the metaphysical Purgatory of the lover is connected to bodily purging of excess or bad humour. Sixteenth century examples of the purgation theory of catharsis are found in Minturno’s *De Poeta*, which argues that “the principles of the homeopathic theory of medicine (which require for the elimination of a disease the application of a therapeutic agent similar in nature to that disease) are also applicable to mental afflictions” (Golden 473) and in Milton’s *Samson Agonistes*:

Tragedy is ... said by Aristotle to be of power, by raising pity and fear, or terror, to purge the mind of those and such-like passions... Nor is Nature wanting in her own effects to make good his assertion; for so in physic things of melancholic hue and quality are used against melancholy, sour against sour, salt to remove salt humours. (qtd in Golden 473).

Because Aristotle is not accurate about who is purged or what, there has been much critical discussion about Aristotle’s means of purging fear and pity and whether it is commenced through the action of the plot, the purging of the tragic character, or the purging of the audience. In most instances, Renaissance commentators define the genre of tragedy “by its therapeutic effect on the audience” (Orgel 117); characters in Renaissance drama may also be likewise purged of fault and iniquity. The purgation of place and by extension of society is also a possibility for catharsis; Gerald Else maintains that “the effect Aristotle is describing takes place entirely within the play’s action... it is Thebes or Athens that is purified, not the audience” (Orgel 117). During the English Renaissance, the discussion of what type of catharsis may be achieved, who may be

purged, and what dramatic structures are needed to achieve catharsis are multifarious. While Renaissance playwrights may produce classical catharsis and tragedy which conform to the Aristotelian formula, they also deviate from it in innovative ways. Shakespeare, for example, employs characters on stage who themselves are meta-dramatically aware of the dramatic generic norms; they employ them in an attempt to bring about a cathartic effect in others, themselves, or in society as a whole.

To arrive at how Shakespeare's use of Purgatory connects to catharsis, we should provide an overview of the ways in which Renaissance playwrights deployed catharsis in their drama. In "Three Type of Renaissance Catharsis" O.B. Hardison "is concerned not with what was thought and said of *catharsis* as such, but with effects and designs in general" (Clayton 93). Hardison's overview of the practical application of catharsis through the lens of Renaissance Humanism will aid us in connecting it to purgatorial and purging acts and imagery in Shakespeare⁷⁸.

O.B. Hardison breaks Renaissance theories of catharsis into three types, moral, religious, and literal, which he argues are all "self consciously used by Shakespeare"(Hardison 3). In the moral theory, a dramatic episode evokes a confession from a guilty audience member with "beneficial results": a criminal is punished and confession brings relief to the sinner (Hardison 5). Hardison observes that "moral catharsis achieves purgation of guilt and fear through the device of presenting a dramatic imitation of truth to the guilty party, who then reveals truth itself *via* confession" (19-20). *The Murder of Gonzago*, the play-within-the-play in *Hamlet*, is an excellent, though failed, example where Hamlet tries to irritate Claudius into a morally cathartic

⁷⁸ While Hardison is dated as a source, there have been few additional contribution to discussions of Renaissance catharsis which do not rely heavily on his discussion.

confession. More complex than moral catharsis, according to Hardison, is the religious catharsis, found in dramas which conclude with a poetic justice in which characters are “rewarded and punished according to their virtues and vices” (Hardison 8). The poetic justice of such a purging is at its core a “conscious or unconscious imitation of ideal justice,” in which an omniscient judge delivers a perfect judgment; as Hardison observes, essentially, it “is not a legal but a religious concept” (9). Little pity can be elicited for the tragic villain in these circumstances because the “spectator sees the dramatic world as [angelic] beings see the human world looking down on it from Paradise” (11). Poetic justice is not the right formula for tragedy, Hardison asserts, because it leads to a melodrama of “they got what they deserved” (13); instead comedy is the rightful place for a religious catharsis (Hardison 14). The third type of Renaissance catharsis, which Hardison calls literal,

does not require a happy (or sad) ending, a spontaneous confession, or the completion of poetic justice. It requires only that the play be experienced exactly as presented and asserts only that when the play is experienced in this way the spectator emerges with a deepened – and hence – pleasurable – understanding of its events. (16)

The end result of the literal catharsis is that “the disturbing and frightening singulars of history have been replaced by the universals of poetry” providing, as is called for at the end of *Hamlet*, a calming of men’s minds and the prevention of new plots and errors (Hardison 19).

All three types of Renaissance catharsis as defined by Hardison involve calming the mental faculty, and “depend on various ways of using or expressing truth” (19). The truths they express, which may seem inconsistent to a modern secular audience, are well integrated in the mindset of Renaissance Christian Humanism. From a surface

consideration, to reconcile religious and literal catharsis, for example, would seem to necessitate contextualizing them not as relatives but as antitheses (Hardison21). But Hardison does not see this as an answer; instead, dealing with opposition to their reconciliation, Hardison says that

the fact is that poetic justice claims to be a clarified vision of reality, not an escape for it, while – by the same token—the literal level of drama is not a copy of history but something more universal and more philosophical. We are dealing not with antitheses but with ideas that converge. (21)

The catharses of the eschatological world of poetic and divine justice and the world of the literary literal, as Hardison asserts, “are not antagonistic in terms of the Christianity of Renaissance Humanists” (21) because:

The morally coherent world is not a fiction but an imitation of a world that faith tells us actually exists. Unless we dismiss eschatology as true superstition (which Renaissance humanists most certainly did not) we must admit with Sidney that it is truer than history. In other words, to a Christian humanist, the play based on poetic justice is not the world as we would like it to be (sentimentalism) but the world as it is or would be if we could penetrate the dark glass that clouds the vision of all but inspired makers. (Hardison 20)

The literarily literal world of the tragedy is not a gross imitation of history, but an elaboration of it. The punishment of sin and social discord is not a facsimile of an illusory divine justice. Purgation theories of catharsis, and their connection to Christian eschatology and theories of sinfulness, by extension, cannot be dismissed or ignored when dealing with drama of the early modern period and in Shakespeare in particular⁷⁹.

In the Renaissance mind, Purgatory and purgatorial experience come to be aligned with a cathartic experience of the moral and religious faculty, which in romantic relationships and in servant/master relationships, has been moved to the earth and

⁷⁹ Additional connections made by dramatists to humoral purging add an incarnational dimension to the process of allaying sinful desires and impulses within characters.

therefore made more consonant with the literal catharsis as Hardison describes it. The Roman Catholic post-mortem Purgatory, in which sinners suffer for sins they did not atone for properly, has much in common with the spiritual and emotional purging of characters in Aristotelian cathartic drama. In early modern Roman Catholic practice, a soul in Purgatory is meditated on by believers who act to aid him through prayer and good works. The soul in Purgatory provides an example of an imperfect Christian whose human frailty and subsequent fate should be avoided; prayerful contemplation, personal reflection, and the action of penance and the partaking of the Sacraments can help the living reduce the time of punishment in Purgatory. Similarly, the audience of an Aristotelian catharsis may be purged of emotional and behavioral inclinations, spiritually and intellectually, through seeing the actions and downfall of the tragic hero and the accidents by which they occur. Sounding like early church fathers who asserted that Purgatory provided a place for men who were not entirely good and not entirely bad (Hanna "Purgatory," Le Goff 171), Allan H. Gilbert writes that "the Aristotelian pity or fear can be felt only with respect to a man like ourselves, not preeminently good, and not a monster of iniquity, but yet one whose misfortune is the result of some errors of his own" (309). Both souls in Purgatory and cathartic dramatic characters spark pity and seek similar social outcomes: a better understanding of individual and group behavioral norms and a stronger sense of communal responsibility with a potentially religious connection to a supernatural power. When early modern poets move purgatorial experience to earth in the lover's, cuckold's, and servant's laments, they provide the access point for dramatists to capitalize upon the shared cultural and social and dramatic outcomes of the purging experience.

In chapter 2, we have seen Purgatory enacted on the late medieval British stage in *The Castle of Perseverance*. The audience has sympathy with the Mankind/ Soul figure as he progresses through human existence (pre- and post-mortem), representing first Christians in the Church Militant, then as a soul in Purgatory as the Church Suffering, and finally in his assumption to Heaven, the Church Triumphant. As his culpability and his agency change, the audience's empathy and sympathy with his plight changes until finally he is assumed into heaven and is beyond their need for empathy or sympathy. In this way, the audience's own anxieties, fear, and pity for their own state as individual sinners who must undergo an individual judgment is expunged, or at least alleviated with a call to individual social action in the form of good works.

In the comedic examples of the Lovers' and Cuckold's Purgatories in Chapter 4, male and female anxieties about fidelity and trust in romantic relationships are moderated by human forces – spiritual ones which provide a purgatorial suffering which must be borne, or medical ones which seek to purge bodily and intellectual excesses. The purgatorial nature of the love relationship in these examples is expressed as a metaphor, serves as description of the experience of love, and in some unique examples is acted out. The experience of such lovers and cuckolds is described as purgatorial and the audience's sympathy and empathy for their suffering is lost in the comic castigation of the cuckold. As Hardison points out, the comedy is the best place for the religious catharsis of poetic justice to be meted out (14). The cuckold in a comedy, for example, "gets what he deserves," whether that is further purgatorial punishment or marital bliss; very few comedic cuckolds are pulled into Hell or tortured without warrant. While an audience may be brought to a cathartic release, to an intellectual understanding over who has been

punished, who will be punished, and who is still to be punished, the cuckold character is rarely released from purgatorial torment; his anxiety and fear continue, but the audience pity for him is expunged as they watch his downfall from an angelic perspective of the religious catharsis as Hardison describes it. The cuckold's anxiety, fear, and jealousy is ridiculed and any pity for and fear of him dissolves in the laughter at his predicament.

For many of the dramas treated in this study, catharsis and Purgatory are connected because in Christian societies the tragic flaw is often criticized as sinful. The connection of Aristotelian catharsis to examples of humoral, emotional, and social purging of malignant behavior become integrated in the early modern British dramatic imagination, providing a place where relationships between the living and the dead and the living to one another are critiqued. Some aspects of these relations change during the Reformation and others remain relatively static. In *The Castle of Perseverance*, Mankind has committed the sin of covetousness and his dramatization as the Soul suffers in Purgatory as a result. The pity and fear elicited in the audience through the suffering of the Soul is purged in his eventual assumption into Heaven. In purgatorial comedies of cuckolds and lovers, there is a moral lashing out against sins of the flesh and sins of the intellect involving inordinate desire for knowledge. The communal sins found in these comedies are sins of domestic violence and discord, which are flushed out and moderated by the purgatorial suffering of lovers or married people. While divorce is a possibility in Reformist communities, bad marriages would have been endured⁸⁰. The social price of divorce for the cuckold, including his own admission that he is unable to satisfy or control the sexuality of his wife, precludes him from seeking divorce and keeps him in

⁸⁰ While divorce is legally available after the Reformation, it is too expensive and too time consuming for any but the very rich and very connected to pursue. The idea of divorce is widely circulated, but the real possibility of obtaining one is almost nil.

Purgatory. The legalities, but not the day-to-day realities of marriage, have changed. In order for their post-mortem suffering to be reduced or eliminated, husbands and lovers must still suffer and be purged of their sins on earth. Both plots and characters may be purged in these comedic examples. In *The Insatiate Countess*, the main plot achieves a religious cathartic purge with the Countess' death; the subplot is purged and finds cathartic release of the husbands fear and anxieties of cuckoldry through the wives' elaborate bed trick. In their awareness of the dramatic presentation as potentially purging, Shakespeare's Purgatories, I will argue, are much more nuanced than these examples and reach beyond the expected cathartic effects of tragedy and comedy.

SHAKEPEARE'S PURGATORIES

John Hankins, an early commentator on Milton's and Shakespeare's use of Heaven, Hell and Purgatory, writes that, "since Milton makes no use of purgatory, he does not distinguish it from hell; but the distinction is made by Shakespeare—though not always clearly—and plays a significant part in his references to the Afterworld"(487). Hankins, generally concerned with the topographical descriptions of the otherworld in Shakespeare, a conflation he claims of pagan and Christian hells and purgatories, does not do an in-depth analysis of the dramatic functions of Shakespeare's Purgatory as it used in opposition to Hell. Purgatory does play a significant part in Shakespeare's references to the afterworld, and, adding to Hankins' work, I will show how Shakespeare uses Purgatory as a focusing element to shape dramatic time and emotional characterization in order to align group relational dynamics through purging and potentially cathartic experiences.

In addition to Hankins' early criticism of Shakespeare's use of Purgatory, there are few critiques besides those of Shakespeare's "purgatorial" ghost in *Hamlet*, long argued as evidence of Shakespeare's alleged Roman Catholicism or his guilty postmodern angst⁸¹. But Hamlet's father is not the only Shakespearian character who experiences Purgatory or contextualizes human experience in terms of purgatorial suffering. The Purgatory of the lover, husband, or cuckold, explored in Chapter 4 of this study, can be found in *Othello* and *Romeo and Juliet*; additionally, the Purgatory of the servant, formerly ignored in literary criticism, is the dominating metaphor of Prospero's torment at the conclusion of *The Tempest*⁸². The Purgatories found in these dramas, grounded in real human experience as opposed to the experiences of the post-mortem afterlife, serve to focus and guide the dramatic development of the tragic downfall of Romeo and Othello and the social and spiritual renewal of Prospero. Though entertained by characters in the tragedies *Romeo and Juliet* and *Othello*, the possibility of a cleansing and cathartically purgatorial experience is rejected in favor of infernal damnation; in *The Tempest*'s romantic-comedy, purgatorial suffering is an earthly experience of the islanders which they inflict and have inflicted upon them. Instead of being released after they have been judged worthy (not the religious catharsis as described by Hardison), the characters in *The Tempest* are released after they have been judged by other members of society as fit to re-enter the world of their former lives⁸³. While Prospero has been

⁸¹ I choose not to treat the ghost in this chapter as it has been thoroughly critiqued and I have nothing new to add. I believe the ghost to be a hybrid of pagan, revenger, and Christian purgatorial spirits. In its bid for revenge, it excludes any hope for a categorization as truly purgatorial ghost.

⁸² All references to Shakespeare in this chapter are from Bevington's *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*, Updated 4th ed., 1997. I do wonder if Jonson's lost play *The Ile of Dogs* was not an elaborate metaphor of the Servant's Purgatory.

⁸³ Miranda and Caliban will be shown to be special cases of this re-entry into the world.

critiqued as a godlike character, who controls or seeks to control others in the drama, even he, at the end, must beg mercy of the audience. Above all, as he provides a cathartic experience of character, plot or audience, Shakespeare makes a comment in *The Tempest* and *Romeo and Juliet* about the division between divine and human authority. His purgatories in these plays are grounded ones and the suffering of the characters earthly. Emilia's, Iago's and Othello's Cuckold's Purgatory is one in which catharsis is extremely complicated because of Iago's insistence on an amoral purge of his own anxiety and fear. The religious and literal catharses described by Hardison, therefore, meet in Shakespeare's Purgatories because of their grounded nature.

THE LOVER'S PURGATORY IN SHAKESPEARE

Love, as we have shown in Chapter 4, can be viewed alternately as a tormenting Purgatory, damned Hell, or blissful Heaven in the early modern period. Love, and especially desire, can be a positive social force when properly moderated or a destructive illness when not purged properly. Shakespeare employs these commonplaces in his poetry and his drama. Sonnet 45, "The Other Two, Slight Air, and Purging Fire," employs an elaborate metaphor where a lover's desire, seen as elemental purging fire, is sent to the lady:

The other two, slight air and purging fire,	1
Are both with thee, wherever I abide;	
The first my thought, the other my desire,	
These present-absent with swift motion slide.	
For when these quicker elements are gone	5
In tender embassy of love to thee,	
My life, being made of four, with two alone	
Sinks down to death, oppressed with melancholy;	
Until life's composition be recured	
By those swift messengers returned from thee,	10

Who even but now come back again, assured
Of thy fair health, recounting it to me.
This told, I joy; but then no longer glad,
I send them back again and straight grow sad.

When the narrator sends the elements of air and fire from his body, he “sinks down to death,” incompleteness, and melancholy (line 8). The lover only regains physical and metaphysical wholeness when the lady sends back the elemental air and fire to him; compelled by his love and desire, he immediately sends them to her again. In this way, the narrator of Sonnet 45 purges and renews a never-slaking desire; he is emptied and filled with it continually through the instigation of thought and desire on both his and his absent lover’s part.

Percolating in Shakespeare’s and his contemporaries’ imaginations is an additional necessary purging of overwhelming desire and obsessive love from the bodily and spiritual system through medical rather than metaphysical means. In Sonnet 118, “Like as to Make Our Appetites More Keen,” Shakespeare uses a medical/ alimentary purging metaphor⁸⁴, applying it to the purging of desire:

Like as to make our appetites more keen
With eager compounds we our palate urge,
As to prevent our maladies unseen
We sicken to shun sickness when we purge: 5
Even so, being full of your ne’re-cloying sweetness,
To bitter sauces did I frame my feeding
And, sick of welfare, found a kind of meetness
To be diseased ere that there was true needing.
Thus policy in love, t’ anticipate 10
The ills that were not, grew to faults assured,
And brought to medicine a healthful state
Which, rank of goodness, would by ill be cured.
But thence I learn, and find the lesson true:
Drugs poison him that so fell sick of you.

⁸⁴ This sonnet, paired with the recurring gustatory and purging metaphors in *Othello*, gives some insight into Emilia’s comment that men “eat us hungerly, and when they are full/ They belch us” (3.4.107-108).

While Shakespeare is able to put a new spin on old metaphors, he displays conformity with the understanding of love's effect on the body and mind in his purging metaphors; in Sonnet 118, preventative purges, like those for gastric illnesses, fail to cure the lover of his obsession. Shakespeare, like other Elizabethan and Jacobean authors, combines metaphysical metaphors of love with the grossness of the physical body and humoral theories which contextualize love as illness⁸⁵; this combination of humoral and metaphysical realms reaches its zenith in later writers like Donne, "Aire and Angels," who contextualize love as a part of the common sewer of bodily functions while simultaneously amplifying its heavenly attributes.

In Elizabethan and Jacobean comedic drama, love is a communally celebrated event, and a purging of sin and sickness often takes place for it to flourish; in the tragedies, the attempt to alleviate desire and obsessive love can cause communal discord, if not outright disintegration, and the self-purgation sought by tragic characters is rarely brought about. The Lovers' Purgatory and the Cuckold's Purgatory are presented in comedies or farces; in the late Jacobean period, they also play a part in tragic-comedies, though Purgatory and purgatorial suffering are usually confined to the comic plot. Shakespeare ties love and the purging of it to illness, judgment, sin, and otherworldly encounters, but unlike his contemporaries, his metaphors of purging are more likely to be found in his tragedies than his comedies⁸⁶. Uncharacteristically, the Lovers' and Cuckold's Purgatories appear in two of Shakespeare's tragedies, *Romeo and Juliet* and

⁸⁵ See the treatment of love as a medical problem to be cured in the discussion of *Calisto and Melebea* in Chapter 4. Peter Lewis Allen in *The Wages of Sin* discusses humoral purging of love.

⁸⁶ *The Winter's Tale*, technically a comedy, uses purging as a metaphor. But it is a problem play with many tragic and unresolved bad decisions on the part of Leontes. *Measure for Measure* also contains a purgatorial torment. Neither play uses purgatorial torment to comment or expand on dramatic catharsis, so we do not treat them in this Chapter.

Othello. Depicting lovers as existing in an otherworld between life and death, *Romeo and Juliet*'s metaphors of Purgatory, while employed by a *married* Romeo, are more closely linked to Petrarch's and Dante's metaphors of suffering for love; in *Othello*, the purging of desire and obsessive love is more closely linked to purging of humoral imbalance and its relationship to the cognitive faculty. While Shakespeare's lovers in *Romeo and Juliet* and *Othello* are not especially apt to express their dismay in love relationships in terms of purgatorial suffering, when they do so, the mention of Purgatory, occurring at the end of the third or beginning of the fourth act, ties together powerful metaphorical and temporal dramatic strategies developed over the course of the play to demarcate the psychic and phenomenal positioning of tragic characters and their compatriots.

ROMEO'S BANISHMENT AND JULIET'S SUFFERING

Marilyn Williamson, in "Romeo and Death," asserts that throughout the play Romeo is convinced that "his destiny is beyond his control, that he can do little to change the course of his life" and "that he will meet an early death" (129). While she does not analyze Romeo's banishment speech, it is a pivotal moment during which Romeo renounces all hope of a life in which his decisions are not shaped by "the violence and guilt with which the feud has surrounded him" (Williamson 137). At the end of Act 3, Romeo describes his separation from Juliet after the death of Tybalt as a Purgatory, but tragically chooses to reject an earthly purgatorial suffering for himself and Juliet; in the course of his lamentation over his separation from Juliet, Romeo, who believes in the

imminence of his own death as Williamson has shown, chooses to characterize the separation as hellish; ultimately, he acts with this assertion in mind.

Though married to Juliet, Romeo suffers like an amorous suitor because of their separation. Unlike Antonio in *The Duchess of Malfi*, who refuses to call marriage Purgatory, “I take't, as those that deny purgatory; / [Marriage] locally contains or heaven or hell; / There's no third place in't” (1.3.100-102), Romeo, because of his banishment, does entertain the possibility of a married Purgatory. Like Antonio, who has also married against the wishes of his wife’s family and the state⁸⁷, Romeo does not blame the married state itself for his suffering (or happiness), but the state in which he finds himself because of his secret marriage and his banishment from Verona. Indeed, Romeo continues to act and speak like a suffering suitor even after he has married Juliet. When told by Friar Lawrence that he is banished from Verona, Romeo laments:

There is no world without Verona walls
But purgatory, torture, hell itself.
Hence “banishèd” is banished from the world,
And world’s exile is death. Then “banishèd,”
Is death mistermed. Calling death “banishèd”
Thou cutt’st my head off with a golden ax
And smilest upon the stroke that murders me. (3.3.17-23)

In his pique, Romeo describes Verona as the world of the living and anything without as the world of the dead: “world’s exile is death” (3.3.20). He and the friar, therefore, are among the dead. In the cosmology of *Romeo and Juliet*’s Roman Catholic Verona, there are three states the dead can occupy: infernally tormented and damned; purgatorial tormented but hopeful of future heavenly bliss; or heavenly blissful. In the play’s tragic unfolding, the only two positions in which Romeo situates himself are the otherworldly

⁸⁷ The Duchess, widowed and alone, asks her steward Antonio to marry her. Her brothers oppose the marriage vehemently and eventually murder the Duchess, Antonio, and their children. While the obstacles to love for Romeo and Antonio differ, they both experience marriages contested by family feuding.

metaphors of the damned dead and the purgatorial dead. Romeo can foresee no Heaven on earth for himself; there is only the world of the living, Verona, and everywhere else, Purgatory and Hell. The metaphor of the earthly Lovers' Purgatory, a Purgatory dictated by emotional and time-bound limitations, is rejected by Romeo, who divides the world into topographical extremes dictated by the category of banishment.

Friar Lawrence castigates the complaining Romeo for his ungratefulness, explaining that the authorities have not pronounced a sentence of death on Romeo; they have only issued an order of banishment. Abandoning the purgatorial metaphor, Romeo peevishly replies,

'Tis torture, and not mercy. Heaven is here
Where Juliet lives, and every cat and dog
And little mouse, every unworthy thing,
Live here in heaven and may look on her,
But Romeo may not.⁸⁸ (3.3.29-33)

Romeo's argument and metaphor change: Verona becomes Heaven. Shifting phenomenal metaphors of Verona and Mantua, Romeo tries to find a fit for his state, but despairing, he chooses the absolutes of Hell and Heaven. Like a child who has never had to wait for anything in his life, or like a deprived overdramatic lover, he complains over every minute of separation from Juliet:

And sayest thou yet that exile is not death?
Hadst thou no poison mixed, no sharp-ground knife,
No sudden mean of death, though ne'er so mean,
But "banishèd" to "kill me"? "Banishèd"?
O Friar, the damnèd use that word in hell;
Howling attends it. How hast thou the heart,

⁸⁸ In the lines between this quote (3.3.29-33) and the next quote (3.3.43-51), Romeo entertains the metaphor of the carrion flies, both eaters of the dead and hapless consumed victims of the taper in Petrarchan love poetry (3.3.33-42). On two separate occasions, characters in *The Tempest* are concerned with flies eating their carcasses. The metaphor of flies eating the dead, it seems, springs up around grosser purgatorial metaphors. Here it highlights Romeo's morbid absorption with his physical distance from Juliet.

Being a divine, a ghostly confessor,
A sin absolver, and my friend professed,
To mangle me with that word “banishèd”? (3.3.43-51)

As he concludes, Romeo chooses to amplify the metaphor of Hell, completely dropping the possibility of a purgatorial Mantua and an earthly Verona, for the hellish Mantua and the heavenly Verona. Even the friar is cast as a torturer devil who mangles the damned Romeo with the term banished (3.3.51).

Romeo is mistaken in contextualizing his situation in this way, since the banished position he occupies is not like that of the eternally damned dead in Hell; if it was, he could never be at rights with God or man. Romeo’s banishment is subject to earthly authority, with which Romeo has no patience and denies by turning Verona to Heaven as opposed to Earth. Appealing to the friar as a sin absolver, confessor, and friend, Romeo looks for mercy where the friar is able to provide none. In his lamentation about his banishment, Romeo expresses his position at first as purgatorial, but in his despondency, he re-contextualizes it as hellish. If initially he entertains the possibility of a life in Mantua hopefully waiting for Juliet, Romeo ends thinking of his waiting there as the damned abnegation of life.

In his position both of religious counselor and healer, it is up to the friar to provide options for Romeo’s reentry into Verona, but he fails to do so. Lawrence responds to Romeo’s suicidal ideas when the Nurse enters to give him a message of Juliet:

Hold thy desperate hand!
Art thou a man? Thy form cries out thou art;
Thy tears are womanish, thy wild acts denote
The unreasonable fury of a beast.
Unseemly woman is a seeming man,
And ill-beseeming beast in seeming both! (3.3.109-113)

Instead of saying that the Nurse bears an angelic message from Heaven or a prayer from Earth to ease Romeo's torment, Friar Lawrence hybridizes Romeo into a beastly half-man, half-woman. Telling him that he must have misjudged Romeo's temper, Friar Lawrence should be able to turn Romeo from his despair and tantrum about banishment who "like a mishavèd and sullen wench/ Thou pout'st upon thy fortune and thy love"(3.3.143-144), and convince him that the banishment is not Hell but Purgatory. The Friar may see a bargaining place in the situation, so that when it is safe to cry openly the news of Romeo and Juliet's marriage, the authorities may pardon him and allow him to return to Verona, chastened but reabsorbed into the community. This conception of civic versus divine authority (which Romeo refuses to separate) is what the Friar could have capitalized upon⁸⁹. The Friar may hope to mend the rift between the Capulet's and Montague's with the marriage announcement; barring that he can spirit away Juliet⁹⁰.

While the word "Purgatory" only occurs once in *Romeo and Juliet* and is found alongside starkly infernal imagery⁹¹ in Romeo's lament, Shakespeare also uses imagery of purgatorial suffering in Juliet's worldview as an antidote to Romeo's growing absolutism. Friar Lawrence is more successful in convincing Juliet, who has been commanded by her father to marry Paris, telling her that she does not have to kill herself as she plans and giving her the vial to induce a death-like sleep. The Purgatory of

⁸⁹ This is the same earthly authority that laughs at the ridiculous husbands in *The Insatiate Countess*, and to whom the men in "The Mummie at Hertford" and *The Scornful Ladie* look for help in ridding them of tormenting women. Here the metaphors are inverted and earthly authority is mistakenly viewed by Romeo as absolute as that of divine authority.

⁹⁰ Romeo and Juliet's Purgatory has been treated by Maxine Kumin in a sonnet about it entitled "Purgatory" in which she asks: "suppose they cheat the crypt, what next?"(line 2).

⁹¹ Romeo insists on the alignment of Purgatory with Hell. This is not an uncommon tographical comparison because, in the medieval imagination, Purgatory is often described as a suburb of Hell.

separated or suffering lovers, which Romeo in his absolutism chooses to see as Hell, erupts in Juliet's thoughts about her plan to escape Verona; her speech is filled with images which align her situation with Purgatory as it intersects with earth: churchyards, stench of dead bodies, and the ghost of Tybalt⁹². Juliet, taking out the vial Friar Lawrence has given her, muses on the state she may find herself in if she wakes in the vault before Romeo and the friar arrive to free her. She mentally entertains the paths of failure and lays by the dagger if Friar Lawrence's potion should fail; she is cold; she is doubtful,

What if it be a poison, which the Friar
Subtly hath ministered to have me dead,
Lest in this marriage he should be dishonored
Because he married me before to Romeo?" (4.3.24-27).

She fears suffocation: 'Shall I not then be stifled in the vault, / To whose foul mouth no healthsome air breathes in, / And there die strangled ere my Romeo comes?' (4.3.33-35). Though she has reservations, Juliet decides to venture death to make a life with Romeo. To drink the contents of the vial will be to enter into a liminal existence, but the existence she imagines is not damned and infernal. She imagines purgatorial indeterminacy where ghosts wander between worlds:

Where bloody Tybalt, yet but green in earth,
Lies festering in his shroud; where, as they say,
At some hours in the night, spirits resort--(4.3.42-44)

At the conclusion of her speech, Juliet imagines Tybalt's ghost looking for Romeo; she does not specify if it is a revenger ghost or a purgatorial one:

⁹² Comparing it to contemporary emblems of love and death, Clayton MacKenzie points out that Juliet's liminal position, as an image of death and sex, "creates borderlands of meaning" in *Romeo and Juliet* (23). MacKenzie claims that Juliet in her seeming death "transcends specifics of time, place, and being to emblemise the entombed pathos of the youthful dead" (40). He is making the same claim about Juliet's liminal position, but he does it through another mirror of meaning used in Shakespeare's time, the emblem.

O look! Methinks I see my cousin's ghost,
Seeking out Romeo that did spit his body
Upon a rapier's point. Stay, Tybalt, stay!
Romeo, Romeo, Romeo! Here's drink--I drink to
thee. (4.3.55-59)

Juliet's seeming death, her liminal existence as Romeo's wife and Paris' fiancé, and her doubt, are eclipsed, as they are for all souls in Purgatory, by hope. As she turns away from Tybalt toward Romeo and drinks, Juliet imagines not Hell but hopeful resurrection from a land of ghosts.

Romeo's dangerous swing from purgatorial hope to infernal despair, hints at, however obliquely, the final tragic resolution of the play: the double suicide of Romeo and Juliet⁹³. Purgatory is only once mentioned in *Romeo and Juliet*, and, because of the friar's inadequacy, not capitalized on and sustained as a metaphor after Romeo employs it. Because of bad timing and childish perversity, Romeo and Juliet descend from a temporary purgatorial separation of earthbound lovers into damned and eternal separation through their suicides. The purgatorial tormented lover Dante went from Hell, to Purgatory, to Beatrice who welcomes him to edenic paradise; in his imagination, Romeo has gone from Juliet, to Purgatory, to Hell, but in his immaturity he never can contextualize his experience in a way that satisfies him. All sense of time and space is lost to Romeo's despair, which gains full tragic momentum in his rejection of purgatorial suffering, waiting, and hope for himself and Juliet.

⁹³ MacKenzie picks up on the inadequacy of heavenly and infernal imagery and argues that by the play's conclusion "there is very little suggestion that any kind of postmortal paradise, be it for lovers or not actually, exists.... No religious *gravitas* is accorded to the scene [in which Juliet's death is announced]; no inference of eternal life or heavenly compensation. Juliet's death is entirely secularized, bestialised even, denied any semblance of religious substance and précised as yet another example of the blind degradations of death" (31).

Is cathartic release through the purgation of a character a possibility here? Yes; the Lovers' Purgatory is a possibility, but it is rejected. The divine collides with the literal in Romeo's imagination and in his immature misunderstanding of the connections and agency of earthly and divine justice. As Hardison argues, attempts to read the plays as homiletics have been inadequate: *Romeo and Juliet* is not a homiletic against disobeying one's parents...and all of the readings of the plays as such "seem rather inadequate beside the plays themselves" (13). At the play's conclusion, the Prince castigates Capulet and Montague for their enmity and gives the judgment that because he himself has neglected their hate, and they have maintained it for so long, "all are punished" (5.3.295); if this is the religious catharsis of "they got what they deserved," it falls flat. All are punished in a world where Romeo's friends and lovers are continually taken from him and finally he himself is ousted from Verona. Sin against one another is not forgiven in Romeo and Juliet's Verona. Religious catharsis is not a possibility, as we have seen in Romeo's choice of absolutist metaphors for his world; Juliet's risking of the liminal world and her sojourn through it do nothing to change her condition, and finally the literal catharsis of the play in which all are punished never tells us how, but simply provides an intellectual example to avoid (Hardison 13). The problem in *Romeo and Juliet* is that while the characters understand the world in the terms of comic lovers, the conditions of their everyday reality do not mirror the social reabsorbing into the community that confession of sinfulness provides or the social cohesion which their married state portends. Banishment for Romeo, as a category in his experience of Verona, is forever. Drenched in the tropes and commonplaces of Renaissance romantic

love, which fail to account for the world as he experiences it, Romeo's world becomes a Hell (and not a Purgatory) which provides no cathartic purge, only damnation.

OTHELLO AND IAGO, CUCKOLDS BOTH

Stephen Orgel in "Shakespeare and Drama" writes about the ways that *Romeo and Juliet* and *Othello* are presented as if a comic resolution is possible which, he argues, reveals something important about how these tragedies work. Much of their dramatic force derives from the way they continually tempt us with comic possibilities. We are told in a prologue that Romeo and Juliet are star-crossed, but if inevitability is a requisite of tragedy, neither play will qualify for the genre: they are the most iffy dramas in the Shakespeare canon. At innumerable points in both plays, had anything happened differently, the tragic catastrophe would have been averted (122).

This iffiness and teasing of the possibility of a comic resolution is also apparent in *Othello* where the cuckold's search for truth often becomes the audience's own interrogation of the play. Because it invites interrogation of "truth" from the point of view of Iago, the play continually stifles a religious catharsis of poetic justice: "they got what they deserved." Shakespeare, McDonald argues, "created Othello in the image of the popular comic figure, the 'imaginary cuckold'" (51). In agreement with McDonald, Ronald St. Pierre writes that *Othello* "show[s] how cuckoldry once engrained in the male imagination can overwhelm and lead to tragedy" (1). While they provide an excellent discussion of the imaginary comedic cuckold in relation to the portrayal of Othello as a tragic cuckold, McDonald and St. Pierre do not connect the Cuckold's Purgatory to the dominating purgative and otherworldly metaphors in the play. As a guiding metaphor of the experience of male anxiety about satisfying or controlling the sexuality of wives, the Cuckold's Purgatory both connects to the quest for truth in *Othello* and makes a

statement about the efficacy of purging and the cathartic experience in the many senses the play explores⁹⁴.

While in *Romeo and Juliet* it is the suspended state of their marriage caused by Romeo's banishment from Verona that precipitates the Lover's Purgatory, and ultimately their descent into Hell, in *Othello*, the purgatorial suffering of the cuckold, not the lover, is found in Iago's propensity to narrate, dramatize, and therefore externalize his internal conflicts. Ultimately, Iago rejects the traditional Cuckold's Purgatory in favor of Hell as he tries to purge his own anxiety and intellectual excess and seeks revenge on Othello and Cassio. In trying to bring Othello into a shared intimacy through their cuckoldry, he purges neither himself nor Othello of jealousy; instead, he infects them both. The tragic tangling of time and space motivated by the machinations of Iago from early in the play is marked by metaphors of Hell, Heaven⁹⁵, and Purgatory as Iago hastens Othello's descent into insanity. Where Romeo and Lawrence's downfall is bad timing and phenomenal indeterminacy, Othello's is succumbing to the imaginative manipulation of Iago, who, unwilling to bear the Cuckold's Purgatory, launches a campaign to make others cuckolds.

Like the ghost of Hamlet's father, who asks for both revenge and remembrance, Iago's own need to revenge himself on Othello, whom he has accused in his mind, destroys the possibility of a purgatorial cathartic experience in which his jealousy, fear,

⁹⁴ Clayton in "Catharsis in Aristotle, the Renaissance, and Elsewhere" lists the effects of catharsis as the "(1) medico-physiological, (2) psychotherapeutic, (3) religious-purificatory, and (4) didactic pedagogical, or some combination of these" (91). Iago explores all of these but is unable to get pleasure without a tragic revenge and its murderous reality.

⁹⁵ I am not going to explore the metaphors of Heaven except to say that they are spoken almost exclusively by or about Desdemona: "by this heavenly light." In killing Desdemona, Iago and Othello kill innocence and the metaphor of Heaven.

and anxiety are purged; like the lover in Shakespeare's Sonnet 45 who is purged and refilled with his desire for the lady, Iago is purged and continually refilled with his malignant emotion. While Iago tries to both revenge and heal himself through the manipulation of Othello, he fails. Iago provides a play for himself, a drama in which he watches the cuckold, but the cuckold is Othello who is not able to bear the comedic Purgatory. In trying to create and dramatize a Cuckold's Purgatory with Othello, so as to simultaneously purge himself and get revenge, Iago misapplies ideas about medical purging, dramatic catharsis, and the purging of sin as they are understood in Renaissance drama.

THE CUCKOLD'S PURGATORY

In an address to the audience, Iago does not claim that he lusts after Desdemona, but he does claim to "stand accountant for as great a sin" (2.1.294), the sin of the cuckold's jealousy. David George sums up Iago's suspicions and plan well: "Iago's masochistic notion that Emilia has been in bed with Othello gives rise to his sadistic idea of making Othello believe Desdemona has been in bed with Cassio" (81). Iago seems to be successful in manipulating others into the Cuckold's Purgatory because he himself is all too familiar with it:

... I do suspect the lusty Moor
Hath leaped into my seat, the thought whereof
Doth, like a poisonous mineral, gnaw my innards;
And nothing can or shall content my soul
Till I am evened with him, wife for wife,
Or failing so, yet that I put the Moor
At least into a jealousy so strong
That judgment cannot cure.

....

For I fear Cassio with my nightcap too— (2.1.296-303, 308)

It is not only jealousy, but also revenge that Iago claims as his motivation. While little of the past relationships of the characters are clear to the audience, undoubtedly Iago has made his suspicions of cuckoldry known, accusing Emilia of infidelity. She chides him for his accusation as both she and Iago counsel Desdemona on what to do about Othello's strange behavior:

O, fie upon them! Some such squire he was
That turned your wit the seamy side without
And made you to suspect me with the Moor. (4.2.152-154)

Divulging his suspicions of Michael Cassio to Othello, Iago further reveals his own knowledge of jealousy and cuckoldry:

Oh, beware, my lord, of jealousy.
It is the green-eyed monster which doth mock
The meat it feeds on. That cuckold lives in bliss
Who, certain of his fate, love not his wronger;
But O, what damned minutes tells he o'er
Who dotes, yet doubts, suspects, yet fondly loves!(3.3.178-183)

In this speech, Iago touches on many of the points he uses to manipulate Othello; jealousy mocks the cuckold it feeds on, besmirches his reputation, and causes doubt and mistrust in intimates. The cuckold, certain of his cuckoldry, can reject those who have cuckolded him; when he is not sure, he counts the time, doting and doubting, suspecting and loving. This is the position Johan, the husband, occupies in *Johan Johan*; unsure of his wife's fidelity or lack thereof, he vacillates between suspicion and self-doubt to the delight of the audience. Acting like a typical cuckold of the comedy, Iago "having identified his wife as a whore, ... begins to regard all men as suitors and all women as bawds" (McDonald 53). The stage cuckold, never certain of his cuckoldry, is always caught in the Cuckold' Purgatory of sometimes real, but usually imagined, infidelity.

The problem in *Othello*, then, is that Iago and Othello both seek to end their purgatorial indeterminacy.

In the comedies, this indeterminacy is humorous, as the cuckold's plight becomes contextualized as a purgatorial suffering due to his own sins of prurience and jealousy. Iago, who characteristically uses infernal imagery, though, turns the traditional phenomenal alignment of the cuckold with Purgatory to one of Hell when he calls this time of doubt and disbelief damned: "O, what damned minutes tells he o'er" (3.3.182). Usually the comedic cuckold's state is purgatorial in nature, and the torment of doubt, disbelief, and loss of reputation is believed to reduce his post-mortem torment in Purgatory⁹⁶. There are only three ways in which the cuckold's torture can be ended:

- his own death,
- the death of his wife,
- or the discovery of "the truth."

McDonald asserts that the cuckold is given to "jumbling the real and the unreal," in which he "reconstructs his experience into a fictional world offering a variety of comforts: both familiarity and particularity, self-pity, dignified superiority, and dramatic importance" (53); because of this jumbling which is necessary to sustain the cuckold's ego, "the truth" cannot be uncovered. Iago's extremely fertile imagination means his cuckoldry can only end with his wife's or his own death as he continually creates new

⁹⁶ In "The Mumming at Hertford," the wives claim that the wife of Bath is their exemplar who,

Cane shewe statutes moo þan six or seven,
Howe wyves make hir housbandes wyne heven,
Maugre þe feonde and al his violence.

Wives help their husbands into Heaven by torturing them on earth. This earthly torture reduces a husband's post-mortem penance for sins and either erases entirely or reduces the time he will spend in Purgatory.

opportunities and new faces which have cuckolded him: “I fear Cassio with my nightcap too” (2.1.308).

McDonald writes that in comedies where the vain imaginings of the clown figure, in this case the cuckold, become ridiculous as they become more overblown, “the audience is insulated by the comic point of view” because they know “the rules of comedy and the facts of the case” (56). As Hardison describes it in his discussion of the religious catharsis common to comedies, the audience in this case sits in judgment above the transgressing comedic cuckold. But the audience of *Othello* does not have the cushion of belief on which to rest and can only depend on appearances and the assurances of Iago, which are constantly shifting and therefore stymie the possibility of the comic resolution. The audience of *Othello*, because they are invited to question knowledge and motivation, joins Othello and Iago in their Purgatory. But the audience only watches the tragic descent into Hell, left behind as first Iago and then Othello act to end their cuckolded states.

Instead of a comic resolution in which the cuckold accepts his fate and his self-importance and superiority are deflated, Iago’s own cuckoldry and his “imaginative” cuckolding of Othello causes the death of Emilia, Desdemona, and Othello. Unlike comedic dramatizations of the cuckold, in which his purgatorial state continues even at the conclusion of the play, two of the traditional ways for the cuckolded state to end--his own death and the death of his wife--are tragically unfolded in the conclusion of *Othello*. Othello, the cuckold, and his wife Desdemona die on stage. While Iago is alive at the conclusion of the play, Emilia is dead.

As in comedies about cuckolds, “the truth” can never be known and indeterminacy prevails; but at the conclusion of *Othello*, the only cuckold left on stage, Iago, is not reabsorbed into the community⁹⁷ but marked as a thing anathema to it. At the conclusion of the play, Lodovico commands Iago to view those he has murdered: “look on the tragic loading of this bed” (5.2.374). He then tells Cassio, the new governor, that he shall be the one to censure Iago properly and will name “the time, the place, the torture” (5.2.380). Though Iago may have escaped his own Purgatory through the murders of Othello, Desdemona, and Emilia, he has not escaped to an earthly Heaven, but has been condemned to an earthly Hell where Cassio judges him and dictates his torture.

PURGATORY TURNED TO HELL

While Iago calls the cuckold’s time damned, Emilia calls it purgatorial. Serving as a middle ground between Desdemona’s naiveté and Iago’s malignancy, Emilia’s comments and actions add to the understanding of the tragic turn in the love relationships in the play. But she is not able to moderate male behavior in the same ways that women in comedies which employ the Cuckold’s Purgatory do. The gentle Cuckold’s Purgatory of *The Insatiate Countess* provides a basis of comparison for the failed agency, wit, and manipulative skill of Emilia as purgatorial tormentor. In *The Insatiate Countess*, the husbands Claridiana and Rogero, mortal enemies whose wives are best friends, seek to cuckold one another. Having attempted to cuckold one another, the men are thwarted by their wives who reverse the bed trick and forestall the cuckolding. The men, still tormented by the belief that they have been cuckolded, are made to look ridiculous in

⁹⁷ The trope of the imaginary cuckold from the comedies, McDonald argues, is used by Shakespeare not to elicit the normal response of laughter to the cuckold’s plight; it is turned to the tragic and makes the cuckold’s suffering “odious” (67).

front of the state's authorities. While their reputations are sullied, they are not cuckolded; their wives only torment them for their past jealousy and hatred. They may remain suspicious, but, by the conclusion of the play, they have become friends through the instigation of their wives. The wives save their husbands after their friend Lentulus says to them: "Come madcaps leaue iesting, and let's deliuer them out of their earthly purgation; you are the spirits that torment them..." (4.1.409-410). The women in this drama are not in complete control, but they do have the wit to manipulate their relationships to avert tragedy.

The opposite of these happy accidents can be seen in *Othello*, where the suspicions of Iago may have been fed by Emilia, who tells Desdemona that a woman might cuckold her husband if to do so would make him a monarch. But Emilia is not a wife in a cuckold comedy. Like the Wife of Bath, who has revenged her cheating fourth husband, "By god, in erthe I was his purgatorie,/ For which I hope his soule be in glorie. (486-490), Emilia may court Purgatory, but she does so with a more bitter tone than the Wife's. Emilia, who has previously chided Iago for his own suspicions of cuckoldry, says to Desdemona while they prepare for Othello to come to the bedchamber,

By my troth, I think I should, and undo't when
I had done. Marry, I would not do such a thing for a
joint ring, nor for measures of lawn, nor for gowns,
petticoats, nor caps, nor any petty exhibition. But for
all the whole world! Uds pity, who would not make
her husband a cuckold, to make him a monarch? I
should venture purgatory for 't. (4.3.74-80)

Of which Purgatory is she speaking? The otherworldly one of the sinful woman who has been unfaithful--and probably the only one Desdemona is aware of--or the Cuckold's

Purgatory that Emilia and Iago experience when he believes that she has been unfaithful? Whether she is referring to one or both of these Purgatories, the Cuckold's Purgatory is not controlled by Emilia; Iago externalizes and dramatizes his inner doubt, transferring it to Othello and Desdemona; this turn to Hell is beyond anything which Emilia can imagine, until she realizes what Iago has done in the conclusion of the play⁹⁸. Emilia certainly understands the jealousy for which she had chided Iago earlier, and she claims that she and Desdemona are not guilty of causing their husbands Purgatories. Emilia and Desdemona discuss Othello's aberrant behavior and supposed jealousy:

Emilia: Pray heaven it be
State matters, as you think, and no conception
Nor no jealous toy concerning you.

Desdemona: Alas the day! I never gave him cause.

Emilia: But jealous souls will not be answered so;
They are not ever jealous for the cause,
But jealous for they're jealous. It is a monster
Begot upon itself, born on itself. (3.4.156-163)

According to her own argument, Emilia's actions, as well as Desdemona's, may not matter, as she claims jealousy and a cuckold's belief in his cuckoldry do not depend on the action or inaction of his wife. In "In Defense of Emilia," Thomas Bowman details the character of Emilia and the tradition of her detractors among the critics. Generally, Emilia is critiqued for giving the lost handkerchief to Iago and speculation centers on whether she is aware of or can foresee the tragedy that her (in)action has wrought.

Emilia seems to tread a middle ground in arguing a wife's agency in light of a husband's

⁹⁸ Abrahams argues that "what marks both Desdemona's and Emilia's responses to their husbands is their reticence to believe that their husbands are capable of acting with malice toward them... Emilia is reluctant to acknowledge her suspicions of Iago's intentions. Indeed each woman is so measured in her response to her husband's malignance that she fails to prevent her own destruction at her husband's hands" (181).

jealousy; the choices wives make are guided by the same political and emotional concerns as husbands in *Othello*. The foresight the critics wish Emilia had is as inadequate as protestations of innocence in the face of the cuckold's jealousy.

Emilia does not understand or foresee the full tragic import of her husband's manipulative gifts. The waiting and indecision of the cuckold in *Othello* ultimately is not purgatorial as Emilia thinks it may be; Othello and Iago, in Emilia's and the audience's view, both seem to suffer the Cuckold's Purgatory as depicted in the comedies and the later tragicomedies. But Iago's need to dramatize the Purgatory, his desire to not be alone in it and to pass it on, and Othello's imaginative heroic error (McDonald 67) which allows the perversion of his imagination⁹⁹, infernalize the cuckold's existence. Emilia may have told Desdemona that some women may venture Purgatory so that their husband's become monarchs; but some husbands, hers and Desdemona's, in particular, because of their mental gifts are not happy to bear it and do not react according to the expected comic stereotype. In their impatience and as a result of their martial training, which rewards decisiveness, both choose to actively abolish their Purgatories instead of patiently and penitently bearing them.

PURGING THE IMAGINATION

In addition to their treatment in courtly, theological, and medical works from the medieval period through the renaissance, the vagaries of the romantic relationship are

⁹⁹As McDonald argues, Othello is not a clownish cuckold who has fallen for Iago's lies, but a profoundly gifted intellect who has been perverted in his thinking and creative capacity (59). Othello's intellectual gift is the source of his "heroic appeal" (he is an eloquent speaker, a poet, and a military strategist) and its perversion by Iago is the source of his downfall.

seized upon, critiqued, and often parodied by playwrights portraying lovers' foolishness and folly. In *Othello*, Shakespeare elaborates and comments on a folding together of the cuckold's purgatorial existence and theories of purgation of unregulated desire in gustatory, digestive, and laxative metaphors. Because they act to purge their excess and imbalanced emotions, the play's two cuckolds bring about the deaths of Emilia, Desdemona, and Othello, and, as we shall show, neither receives the purge they so desperately seek.

Emilia, complaining, that women have as much humanity and humor as men, argues:

Why, we have galls, and though we have some grace,
Yet have we some revenge. Let husbands know
Their wives have sense like them. They see, and smell,
And have their palates both for sweet and sour,
As husbands have. (4.3.93-99)

Drawing on Galenic medical practice, gustatory, digestive, and intestinal images which are tied to purging reveal in Iago and Emilia a need to purge the fear of inadequacy, anxiety, and jealousy common to those confined by the Cuckold's Purgatory. Ben Saunders has explored Iago's gross anal and purgation metaphors in "Iago's Clyster: Purgation, Anality, and the Civilizing Process" arguing that Iago has an "attraction to verbal figures of purgation, evacuation, and oral/anal substitution and displacement"¹⁰⁰ (150). Addressing Iago's answer when asked by Desdemona to speak in praise of womankind:

¹⁰⁰ In this article, Saunders connects Iago's anality with racial cleansing in which are exposed "the civilized impulses toward order, control, and cleanliness, impulses that provide one linguistic matrix for modern racism" (176).

I am about it, but indeed my invention
Comes from my pate as birdlime does from frieze--
It plucks out brains and all. But my Muse labors,
And thus she is delivered: (2.1.127-130)

Saunders argues that Iago often envisions his brains being pulled from his body, as his

cathechresis thus associates the generation of epideictic rhetoric (“invention”) with stained cloth and sticky viscuous fluids; but then, in an unexpected extension of this tacky metaphor, the limed fragments morph into brains. For a second we are invited to visualize Iago’s gray matter sucked from his skull in one smooth, cleansing motion” (152).

Iago’s purgative imagery is further tied to his own recurrent images where verbal creativity is a monstrous birth that “resembles a kind of radical evacuation” (Saunders 153). Iago’s metaphors of purging demonstrate that he is preoccupied with a purge of the mental faculty through a process of evacuation of humor. As Saunders asserts, “If Iago associates sin with unruly sexuality, he also associates unruly sexuality with unruly digestion” (Saunders 157). Though he seems aware of Galenic humoral theory, Saunders does not explore or connect his discussion of purgation and anality to the diseases of humoral superfluity or *amor hereos*. Influenced by descriptions of medieval post-mortem purgatorial torments of the lecherous, the physical and mental anguish of lover’s desire is contextualized as an earthly purgatorial torment implying a certain sinfulness of unregulated desire. This desire is furthermore accounted for as a medical condition of the upper classes, *amor hereos*, or a humoral imbalance caused by retention of excess semen which must be purged. In the early modern period, the medical community treated obsessive love, and by extension obsessive jealousy, as a humoral imbalance (See Chapter 4 discussion of *Calisto and Melebea*). *Amor heroes*, usually affecting noblemen, could be cured through proper exercise such as riding and hunting; if the proper enjoyments of the nobleman failed, a doctor could speak harshly of the beloved or beat

the lover to frighten him into relinquishing his mental obsession (Solomon 51, 53). Humoral superfluity was a build-up of excess semen in the body that must be expelled or else a man would become insane. Erotic expulsion of humor or its taming through activity was therefore tied to better cogitation; the retention of semen was tied to mental illness (Solomon 51). Iago's meditations in which his brains are purged become clearer if we view them as his conscious desire to alleviate his own mental imbalance. Influenced by Galenic traditions of the medieval period still current in the renaissance, Iago employs figures of medical purging in his attempt to diagnose and cure the unregulated, unnatural, and sinful desire which plagues him. But, as Solomon relates, "if words can distract and purify the mind, conversely, they can also agitate and excite it" (51).

PHYSICIAN, DO NO HARM?

Instead of psychically purging his illness (his jealousy), Iago infects Othello and the medicine goes awry. If Iago is attempting to purge his bad humor through erotic cogitation (mental masturbation) through a mastery of Othello's imagination, he fails miserably as the tragic potential inherent in Cuckold's Purgatory reaches its zenith dramatized in the infected fantasy of both Iago and Othello and only purged through the murders of Desdemona, Emilia, and Othello. Unwilling or impotent to carry out the seduction of Desdemona himself¹⁰¹, Iago brings Othello into the Cuckold's Purgatory, cuckolding him in a shared imaginative experience. Writing of the transference of the imaginary cuckold in *Othello*, David George asserts that "Iago passes the jealous monster

¹⁰¹ While Iago himself does not seem to have designs on Desdemona and does not seem to want to even "him, wife for wife," by sleeping with Desdemona, he does entertain the concept of getting someone else to bed her in the form of Roderigo. The question of Iago's potency is often brought up by critics in this context and may be connected to a diagnosis of humoral superfluity. Iago settles for the imaginary seduction with Cassio as imagined love object, not through the body but the mind.

from his mind to Othello's" (83). To do so, Iago has to manipulate and capitalize on Othello's imaginative capacity only. Like a bad episode of a crime drama, Iago produces the handkerchief in Cassio's hand to give Othello the ocular "proof" he desires and the overheard conversation of Bianca for the aural "proof." This proof brings Othello into a shared imaginary cuckoldry with Iago. Yet why does Iago do this? Is it simply to purge jealousy or get revenge?

While revenge and jealousy have their place in Iago's scheming, it must be remembered that there is an abject loneliness to the Cuckold's Purgatory. Though they moderate it through audience sympathy for the cuckold's plight, the comedies cannot mask the solitary nature of the suspicious and jealous cuckold. Johan, the husband, at the conclusion of *Johan Johan*, pathetically follows the lovers, his wife and the priest, so that he will not be alone; Security, in Ben Jonson's *Eastward Hoe*, who finds out that his wife has unsuccessfully tried to run away with another man, is consoled in a half-hearted manner that being a cuckold:

should rather be a comfort to you than a corrosive. If you be a cuckold, it's an argument you have a beautiful woman to your wife; then, you shall be much made of; you shall have store of friends; never want money... (5.5).

While Security is reabsorbed into the social fabric at the conclusion of the play, he, as a usurer and a bawd, has deserved his horns and remains isolated in his continuing distrust. Iago chooses to deal with the loneliness of his jealousy by creating others to join him in his Purgatory. Yet Iago, and Othello through his instigation, find no solace in their shared cuckoldry. Othello claims he would not mind the seductions of hundreds of soldiers, yet he vividly imagines it at the same time:

I had been happy is the general camp,
Pioners and all, had tasted her sweet body,

So I had nothing known. O, now, forever
Farewell the tranquil mind! Farewell content!
Farewell the plumèd troops and the big wars
That makes ambition virtue! O, farewell!
(3.3.361-366)

Othello tries to offer himself solace and stave off suspicion, but he fails as his imagination, perverted and fed by Iago, takes over. Once that suspicion takes root, though, Othello's jealousy is begot on Iago's jealousy, and thence adds to itself; Othello only deludes himself by believing that it is the absence of knowledge and not the jealousy itself that poisons him. Once planted, jealousy pulls Othello into Purgatory with Iago.

PURGING, INFECTION, CATHARSIS?

Santayana writes of the catharsis of Othello that

When a man knows his life is over, ... he will impute to himself a kind of vicarious immortality by identifying himself with what is eternal. He speaks to himself as he is, rather than as he was. He sums up, and points to his achievements. This I have been, says he, this I have done.

This comprehensive and impartial view, this synthesis and objectification of experience, constitutes the liberation of the soul and the essence of sublimity. That the hero attains it at the end consoles us, as it consoles him, for his hideous misfortunes. Our pity and terror are indeed purged; we go away knowing that, however tangled the net may be in which we feel ourselves caught, there is liberation beyond, and an ultimate peace." (quoted in Gilbert 313-314)

This is the classical take on catharsis in *Othello*. The liminality of the cuckold does not remain solitary as it has been imagined in *Johan Johan*, *Eastward Hoe*, and other comedic examples¹⁰², because Iago draws Othello into a shared experience; cuckoldry is the state of all men who love women in Othello's and Iago's imagined world of horned cuckolds on every corner of every city. Unfortunately, Iago cannot purge his anxieties;

¹⁰² The women in *The Insatiate Countess* are extremely successful because they actually make their husbands less lonely. Once enemies, they become friends.

he can only infect others, Othello and to a lesser extent the audience, with them. Othello is easily infected, because as many critics have pointed out, Iago has capitalized on his creative gifts and Othello's vulnerabilities including his age, his race, and his own fear of impotence¹⁰³. Could Iago have effected a cure himself and been delivered from the Cuckold's Purgatory? Iago, seeking to expel excess emotion and humor by watching Othello go through the same process, is trying to cathartically exorcize himself. His purge has potential medical and cathartic benefits which from the time of Aristotle have been connected in the dramatic imagination. Lucas writes that Aristotle understood the cathartic effect in relation to humor theory:

an excess of bile involves an increase of emotional pressure. An emotional orgy brings release in the same way as blood-letting relieves the over-sanguine.... The Greek doctrine of humours implies that each man has an emotional capacity directly related to his physical make-up, and an excess of one humour can cause an undue generation of emotional pressure, which will need an outlet. If the imbalance of humours is marked, the emotional congestion can become serious, and the pleasure, when it is relieved, proportionately greater. So the release of accumulated pity and fear by pity and fear experienced in theatre presents no problem. (quoted in Clayton 93)

A problem does develop, though, with the release of fear, which Iago undertakes in his imaginative cuckolding of Iago. Consumed by the need to purge the excess anxiety of the cuckold and seeking a cure in the transference of it to Othello, Iago creates a drama for himself and for the audience who views his manipulations. A medical purge or dramatic catharsis of himself is the aim of Iago in bringing about Othello's tragic downfall. There is evidence that Iago's purge has been somewhat successful in his claim

¹⁰³ Philip D. Collington provides an excellent analysis of how anxiety about the vulnerability of advancing old age often prompts anxiety about marital fidelity in male characters whose power is questioned as they age. Collington argues that "underlying Othello's fear of cuckoldry is a dread of abandonment in old age" (194).

that he will speak no more: “From this time forth I will never speak a word” (5.2.312)¹⁰⁴.

Throughout the play, Iago has continually purged himself through a verbal mechanism venting spleen, gall, jealousy, and fear. To put it bluntly, Iago’s verbal diarrhea has come to an end with the deaths of Emilia, Desdemona, and Othello. He is empty; his purge has worked, but it has done so to the detriment of the community.

Iago fails because he is unable to purge his imbalance without deleterious effect. He tries to purge through the pleasure that the voyeuristic display of Othello’s cuckoldry gives to him. In doing so, he is unable to heal himself, and instead of purging himself, he infects those around him. In discussing Aristotle, Plutarch recognized the delicacy of the purgation mechanism and the possibility that it would infect rather than cure:

Hellebore, before it purges, disturbs the body; but if too small a dose be given, it disturbs only and purges not at all; and some taking too little of an opiate are more restless than before; and some taking too much sleep well. Besides, it is probable that this disturbance into which those that are half drunk are put, when it comes to a pitch conduces to that decay. For a great quantity being taken inflames the body and consumes the frenzy of the mind; as a mournful song and melancholy music at a funeral raises grief at first and forces tears, but as it continues, by little and little it takes away all dismal apprehensions and consumes our sorrows. Thus wine, after it hath heated and disturbed, calms the mind again and quiets the frenzy; and when men are dead drunk their passions are at rest. (quoted in Birney 148)

The pity and fear elicited in drama to purge like emotions, a purge which Iago seeks for himself can backfire if not properly balanced. Pechter writes that as he refuses the role of cathartic exorcised villain: “Iago is not merely washing his hands of the matter, he is passing it back to us. As Burke says, he provides us our ‘filthy purgation’ which is not

¹⁰⁴ Pechter views these last lines of Iago as stifling to the catharsis of the audience, but he does not analyze the effect on Iago:

The character’s offer of catharsis is the play’s way of withholding the same offer. Iago simply will not die for our sins; indeed, he won’t die at all. His final speech, “From this time forth I never will speak word,” is a way of refusing the satisfaction we seek; it suggests his fundamental invulnerability and his unavailability for the assigned cathartic role.... (162-163).

purgation at all” (162-163). Pechter further exclaims that: “I cannot imagine any spectator leaving *Othello* feeling cleansed” (note 18, 225). No spectator expecting a dramatic catharsis for himself can be completely released at the conclusion of *Othello* because the purge (medical, sinful, dramatic) that Iago has sought is his own and not for the audience’s benefit. The audience is invited to participate as voyeurs and while he is caught and thereby constrained by the authorities, Iago’s impulses have partially become ones we recognize in ourselves as viewers of the drama he has provided. As a result, we have become infected with the incurable disease, the cuckold’s suspicion. While he may have purged himself in the deaths of Othello, Desdemona, and Emilia, we cannot feel at ease with their murderers, and so we continue without an available cure for what ails us.

Viewing the end of the play and looking for its cathartic effect, Pechter argues that,

Clayton is surely right to say that the Christian references meant more to Shakespeare’s audience than to us, but in the play’s final moments as throughout, the references that dominate are to guilt, sin, and hell. (167)

A complete catharsis and purging of unbalanced emotion according to Aristotelian and Renaissance Christian Humanist norms are not a possibility at the conclusion of *Othello*. Because of Iago’s use and abuse of the purgative process (Aristotelian, Christian, and medical), it becomes suspect and can be questioned as it has functioned on the metaphorical level and as enacted in the love relationships between husbands and wives.

In his identification with Othello as a fellow cuckold, Iago has tried to work a cure, a medical-cognitive purge and a dramatic-cathartic one for cuckoldry. Because the fault of Othello is that he has succumbed to the manipulation, he releases himself, as Santayana has described it, by taking the fractured aspects of his personality and

cobbling them together before he acts to end his life asking that the Venetians “speak of me as I am” (5.2.348-366). Othello is released, but pleasure gained by the cathartic release is stymied at the play’s conclusion because we have watched the deaths of Emilia, Othello, and Desdemona along with Iago. Pechter disagrees with Santayana’s earlier take on the final speech and act of Othello as cathartic, writing, “We can’t say that the lovers have entered into the peace that passes understanding, only that they no longer occupy a world controlled by Iago’s understanding” (167); I agree with both critics’ reading of the play’s cathartic effect. The audience’s catharsis is presented through Othello’s suicide according to Renaissance norms, but not perfected because their vision has been clouded as Iago’s co-voyeurs.

PROSPERO’S PURGATORY THE UNCERTAIN EYE OF THE BEHOLDER

The Tempest is often fruitfully explored from the post-colonial perspective, which critiques the power structures implied in social, racial, and ethnic upheaval brought about by medieval and renaissance exploration of the world¹⁰⁵. But it often discounts or seeks to dismantle the power structures it critiques without a statement of why those power structures are accepted and persist; these critics rarely mention the Purgatory and purgatorial experience of Prospero’s island or look for a critique of the abuse of power from within the Renaissance Christian perspective. Jan Kott in “*The Tempest*, or Repetition” explores *The Tempest*’s island from the unique perspective as a locus of exploration and conquering and also as a place of purgation and penitence, declaring that

¹⁰⁵ While he adds to colonial criticism in his account of the island itself, Michael Yogev points out that post-colonial criticism has had some blind spots, and “in focusing on the disturbingly apt conception of Prospero as colonizer, these critics have not interrogated the function of the *island* itself as a constituent of his character and a factor in the power dynamics of the play...” (56).

Prospero's island "is the providential island of metamorphosis and penitence, and a plantation on the coast of America" (10). Kott's dual analysis of the nature and function of the island is broken into two sections which suggest that the two perspectives have little in common. I will show that Kott's dual perspectives have much in common in that they both serve to critique the abuse of power. Though there are limitations to exploring the island from just one of these perspectives, an analysis of the island as Purgatory and Prospero as reconciled master and willing servant, tormenting devil and ministering angel, is valuable, though largely ignored in current critical inquiry.

In analyzing the purgatorial nature of the island, Kott views *The Tempest* as "the most bitter of Shakespeare's plays" where history and staging repeat and where no one is purified: "the three hours on the bare island are passed in a Purgatory, but this new Purgatory of the late Renaissance differs from the Virgilean and the Dantean one: everything is repeated here, but nothing purified" (21, 36, 29). Having described Reformation drama's movement of purgatorial imagery and Purgatory itself from the heavens to the earth in the preceding chapters, I find more hope implied in the somewhat satisfying catharsis of character provided as a result of the island inhabitants' purgatorial suffering. Any imperfection in the purification process implied by the Lovers' and Cuckold's Purgatories can be blamed on the human torturers themselves; this is also true of the torments of the servant in *The Tempest*.

In *Othello*, Iago seeks to infect those around him with his malignant will and suffers not the Cuckold's Purgatory but Hell as a result; unfortunately, he succeeds in pulling those around him into Hell as well. Because he is unable to tear himself away from his studies long enough to attend to his people, in other words, the responsibility of

his dukedom, Prospero in *The Tempest* suffers the Servant's Purgatory on his island; as part of his own suffering, he carries out a purgatorial(not infernal) torment of those around him. Though the time period of suffering on the island remains open and can be repeated,¹⁰⁶ it never devolves to an eternal damned suffering. Therein lies the hope in Prospero's Purgatory and its potential comedic cathartic purge of himself and the other bad servants under his care.

The Tempest is infused with purgatorial imagery, which, though muted, works its way to the surface in projections of uncertainty about death, and descriptions of phenomenal placement of the shipwrecked souls; the action of the play, though, is only fully realized as a Servant's Purgatory in Prospero's eloquent epilogue. Reminiscent of Dante's enclosed, multi-leveled, and repetitious Purgatory, purgatorial imagery in *The Tempest* is found in the overwhelming buffets of the wind, water, and fire during the shipwreck, the torturing devils of Prospero's unseen spirits, and the ministering angels of recompense and reward. As he fully recovers his ducal manner and responsibility, Prospero himself serves as both a ministering angel, who forgives trespasses and rewards others for their service and loyalty, and a torturing devil, which purges their fault through purgatorial torments¹⁰⁷. While his suffering is little-explored as a Purgatory, Prospero's

¹⁰⁶ The suffering of the lover, the cuckold, and the servant is of an indefinite though finite period.

¹⁰⁷ In discussing the types of Renaissance dramatic catharsis, O.B. Hardison says Prospero uses the tools of the *deus ex machina* but hesitates to call one in principle:

At the end of *The Tempest* Prospero is so much the *deus ex machina* that he has been equated with God by at least one allegorizing critic; and if this interpretation commits the error of converting a symbol into a sign, it remains true that Prospero resolves the problems of *The Tempest* in the manner of the *deus ex machina*—with magic and the assistance of a supernatural agent. (14)

In not addressing the purgatorial nature of Prospero's work as torturer, too many critics have called him an instrument, *deus ex machina*. In doing so, they have discounted his dual status as tortured and torturer and the emphasis on his own accountability.

earthbound Purgatory in *The Tempest* is the most complete staged example of the Servant's Purgatory, a Purgatory heretofore not explored in contemporary literary criticism. Undoubtedly drawing on that traditional social arrangement, the Great Chain of Being (Tillyard 34), the Servant's Purgatory in *The Tempest* reinforces power structures through the punishment of sinful servants including the base servants: Stephano, Trinculo, and Caliban; the courtiers who serve the King: Antonio, Sebastian, and Prospero himself; and the servants of love: Ferdinand and Miranda. Prospero's tormenting and tormented Purgatory does not turn to Hell because it is one from which all characters in the play are released through the instigation of the audience's applause¹⁰⁸.

PURGATORIAL IMAGERY IN *THE TEMPEST*

Purgatorial imagery in Shakespeare, as we have demonstrated, is not confined to *The Tempest*; but with the exception of Hamlet's father's ghost, Shakespeare usually limits himself to the earthly Lover's and the Cuckold's Purgatory and not to outright dramatization or descriptions of the purgatorial afterworld. Uncharacteristically describing post-mortem possibilities of torment in the otherworld, Claudio in *Measure for Measure* touches on the very situation that the ship's crew and passengers find themselves in when they are swept up into the tempest. The first scene of *The Tempest* dramatizes and externalizes Claudio's vision of uncertainty and fear of death which coincidentally permeates *The Tempest*. Having been apprehended by Antonio and sentenced to death, Claudio in *Measure for Measure* is told that Antonio has offered to

¹⁰⁸ Kott doubts the release and hope engendered by this earthly Purgatory and he is correct in his doubt. Earthly Purgatories, unlike the otherworldly one, promise continuation of sin and punishment that only ends with death. While they hold out hope, those in an earthly Purgatory may continue to suffer.

free him if Isabella offers herself to him; the chaste Isabella has flatly refused to save her brother by sacrificing her virtue. In turn, Claudio laments the uncertainty of his otherworldly fate in the next life:

Ay, but to die, and go we know not where,
To lie in cold obstruction and rot,
This sensible warm motion to become
A kneaded clod, and the delighted spirit
To bathe in fiery floods, or to reside
In thrilling region of thick-ribbèd ice;
To be imprisoned in viewless winds
And blown with restless violence round about
The pendent world; or to be worse than worst
Of those lawless and incertain thought
Imagine howling—'tis too horrible!
The weariest and most loathed worldly life
That age, ache, penury, and imprisonment
Can lay on nature is a paradise
To what we fear of death. (3.1.119-133)

Claudio's musings on his own death and his purgatorial or hellish torment in the next life are analyzed by Hankins through the lens of both the pagan and the medieval visions of purgatory where "purgation is accomplished in three ways: by wind, water, and fire." (489). Hankins is content, in his overview of Hell and Purgatory in Shakespeare, to catalog and compare his metaphors and imagery with medieval and pagan visions. Hankins does not take the next step of analyzing the character of uncertainty which such musings on the otherworld expose in Shakespeare's characters.

THE TORMENTS OF FIRE, WIND, AND RAIN

The uncertain purgatorial experience which Claudio describes is akin to the one that the mariners, King Alonso, and his courtiers experience in the opening scene of *The Tempest*. Torments of wind, water, and fire, which Hankins associates with the pagan

Purgatory, but which are common to the medieval Christian one as well¹⁰⁹, afflict the sailors as they brave the storm. While the tempest is an earthly, created Purgatory, it foreshadows the uncertainty and torture that Alonso and his men will experience at the hands of Prospero on the island. The men are blown by tormenting winds which toss the ship unsteadily; the Boatswain cries out to the storm, “Blow till thou burst thy wind, if room/ enough!” (1.1.7-8). He continues to lament the noise of the storm and complains about the howling of the men below decks, “A plague upon this howling,” which is “louder than the weather or our office” (1.1.37-38). While the mariners and courtiers do not mention tormenting fire along with their torments of water and wind in the first scene of the play, it is there. When Prospero asks Ariel: “performed to point the tempest that I bade thee?” (1.2.195), he is given the report of the success of the tempest:

I boarded the King’s ship. Now on the beak,
Now in the waist, the deck, in every cabin,
I flamed amazement. Sometimes I’d divide
And burn in many places; on the topmast,
The yards, and bowsprit would I flame distinctly,
Then meet and join. Jove’s lightening, the precursors
O’ the dreadful thunderclaps, more momentary
And sight-outrunning were not. The fire and cracks
Of sulfurous roaring the most mighty Neptune
Seem to besiege and make his bold waves tremble,
Yea, his dread trident shake. (1.1.197-207)

The New Folger Library edition of *The Tempest* notes that the fire Ariel causes on board the ship is St. Elmo’s fire, a symbol of the men’s uncertainty and of supernatural intervention in their voyage. He is also responsible for the lightening that flashes across the sky and leaves behind it the smell of sulphur often associated with a demonic presence. The tempest’s wind, rain, and fire that Ariel has provided terrify the crew and Alonso’s courtiers into a belief that these torments portend their deaths; but the storm

¹⁰⁹ See Le Goff, *The Birth of Purgatory*, pages 7-11.

delivers them to the earthly purgatorial torment of the Servant's Purgatory on Prospero's island, and not to the post-mortem judgment of God.

SOCIAL UPHEAVAL AND THE SERVANT'S PURGATORY

In Act 1.1, the crew and courtiers suffer in the tempest, the social fabric disintegrates as the danger intensifies, and they despair. Under the blowing winds and raging waters is a strong subtext about the social stations of men and their relations to craft and duty. *The Tempest* opens with a storm, literally and socially punishing. When Alonso's courtiers come above decks to speak to the sailors, the Boatswain responds to Gonzalo's admonition that the sailors should work harder to save the king with a biting comment about the uselessness of authority in the face of death: "You are/ a councilor; if you can command these elements to/ silence and work the peace of the present, we will not/ hand a rope more. Use your authority" (1.1.21-24). The Boatswain points out the inadequacy of the King's men in this position even as he and his compatriots struggle against the storm; the sailors do not struggle for the king but for their own lives.

He dismisses Gonzalo and the other men, telling them to "make yourself/ ready in your cabin for the mischance of the hour, if it/ so hap." (1.1.25-27) Uncertainty rules the day and the only advice the Boatswain can offer to Gonzalo in the face of their imminent demise is prayers. The necessity of these prayers is only intensified by the mariners who enter in a confusion, yelling "All lost! To prayers, to prayers! All lost!" (1.1.52). They have lost all confidence in their own craft and skill to steer the boat against the storm. Miserable and terrified, the sailors and Alonso's courtiers only have prayer for help in the

storm or prayerful readying of oneself for death left to them; what they pray for depends on their sense of hope in earthly rescue or divine mercy.

The Boatswain, as a figure of naval culture and its authoritative structures, prizes craft and authority on the sea, but also understands that when all seems lost these crumble to despair and disorder. In his first lines, he encourages his men: “Heigh, my hearts! Cheerly, cheerly, my/ hearts! Yare, yare! Take in the topsail. Tend to the Mas/ter’s whistle” (1.1.5-7). It is his hope to sustain the social order for as long as possible, thus ensuring a better chance of survival. Though fire, wind, rain, and waves rage about him, the Boatswain¹¹⁰ maintains his place and weathers the torments of the sea.

MINISTERING ANGELS AND TORMENTING DEVILS

The second purgatorial motif repeated in the play is the casting of characters as either ministering angels or tormenting devils. In medieval depictions of Purgatory, Purgatory differs little from Hell except for the presence of ministering angels who bring succor to the tormented souls and who also can be seen bearing them to Heaven when the soul’s torment has expunged in it any remaining fault; souls in Purgatory and damned ones in Hell are both depicted as tortured by devils.

When he is describing their voyage in the husk of a boat in which they have been set adrift, Prospero says that Miranda had been an angel to him, relieving his despair with her smiles,

O, a cherubim
Thou wast that did preserve me. Thou didst smile,
Infusèd with a fortitude from heaven,
When I have decked the sea with drops full salt (1.2.152-155)

¹¹⁰ Incidentally, he is not tortured by Prospero, because of his adept leadership.

The small boat that they have been abandoned in serves as Prospero's first Purgatory. In it, he finds Miranda to be his ministering angel, who brings to him hope or at the very least inspires perseverance.

The attendant angel who helps hapless souls is also called upon repeatedly by Gonzolo and Alonso during the course of their torment on Prospero's island. When Ariel whispers Sebastian and Antonio's plot to assassinate Alonso into Gonzolo's ear, he awakens saying "Now, good angels preserve the/ King!"(2.1.309). When Ariel and other spirits bring the phantom banquet to Alonso, Gonzalo, Antonio, and Sebastian, Alonso frightened by their sudden appearance calls on his guardian angel, "Give us kind keepers, heavens!" (3.3.20). Immediately before Prospero appears as the wronged Duke of Milan, Gonzolo again calls out to guardian or succoring angels, "All torment, trouble, wonder, and amazement/ Inhabits here. Some heavenly power guide us/ Out of this fearful country!" (5.1.104-106) Gonzolo, the most trustworthy and trusting character in the play, and Alonso and Prospero, both fathers who want their children to be happy, address and recognize the need for succoring angels to ease their torment. Because of the circumstance and their experiences, they seem more apt to depend on heavenly intervention and prayer to ease the troubled world in which they must be responsible leaders and fathers.

The mentions of torturing devils or devils walking the island fall into three categories in *The Tempest*. The first group is dominated by naming-calling of servants, particularly Caliban. Much has been made of the repeated calling of Caliban "monster," but the references to him as a devil are odd because after Stephano calls him devil, he usually revises his determination and instead chooses to call him monster. Coming

across Caliban crouching under his cloak and crying that Prospero's spirits are tormenting him, Stephano exclaims "What's the matter? Have we devils here? (2.2.57). When he is pouring liquor into Caliban's mouth and hears his name called by Trinculo at the other end of the cloak, Stephano exclaims again, "Mercy, mercy/ this is a devil, and no monster!" (2.2.97-98). Not only is Caliban as a monster easier to manipulate, he is also made beastly, and therefore Stephano in denigrating him can justify his lordship of the "puppy headed monster" (2.2.152-153). Prospero also calls Caliban a devil; finding out about the plotting of Caliban, Trinculo and Stephano, Prospero calls Caliban,

A devil, a born Devil, on whose nature
Nurture can never stick; on whom my pains,
Humanely taken, all, all lost, quite lost;
... I will plague them all,
even to roaring (4.1.188-193).

Caliban's devilish attribution in the play is not as the torturer devil or the torturer monster¹¹¹ sometimes found in Purgatory. He is turned to a simple monster and a trickster, but does not become truly demonic.

The second group of identifications with devils demonstrates the men's uncertainty about what they see. When an invisible Ariel plays on the tabor, Stephano inquires of him, "If thou beest a man, show thyself in thy/ likeness. If thou best a devil, tak't as thou list" (3.2.130-131). Sebastian, after Alonso says he has thought he heard the name of Prospero spoken in the wind, characterizes Prospero as a devil "But one fiend at a time, / I'll fight their legions o'er" (3.3.102-103). He characterizes the possible survival

¹¹¹ Torturer monsters include dragons and other beasts devour souls guilty of the seven deadly sins in medieval purgatorial visions. Tundale sees souls in Purgatory being consumed by monsters: "For strong bytyng thei had withyn/ With wood edderys and odur vermyn/ That was withynne hem gnawng ay./ As thei among snakys lay" (Foster 215). The snakes and other vermin continue to consume the souls' bodies until nothing is left.

of Prospero, a difficulty in his acquisition of power from Alonso, as demonic and envisions himself fighting legion.

The third group of demonic imagery and naming occurs on the ship, the locus of the initial purgatorial torment of the crew and the courtiers during the storm. Ariel tells Prospero that as Ferdinand jumps overboard with his hair standing on end, he cries out “Hell is empty/ And all the devils are here!” (1.2.215-216). The final infernal mention of tormenting devils is made in Act 5 by the Boatswain, who along with the crew has been confined below the ship’s hatches. He says of the crew’s awakening,

with strange and several noises
of roaring, shrieking, howling, jingling chains,
And more diversity of sounds, all horrible,
We were awaked; straightway at liberty;
Where we, in all her trim, freshly beheld
Our royal, good, and gallant ship, our Master
Cap’ring to eye her. (5.1.234-240)

Prospero promises to make known to the Boatswain that what he has seen and heard has all been an illusion. These allusions to purgatorial torment through fire, water, wind, and devils and succor from angelic beings serve to support the earthly Purgatory endured and executed by Prospero in the course of the dramatic narrative.

THE SERVANT’S PURGATORY

It is not only wives, husbands, and lovers who suffer from the post-Reformation earthly Purgatory. Though relational gendered violence is a sustained constant in these depictions, there are also instances of servants who suffer Purgatory on earth, not for love or lust, but through abuse for dereliction of duty or simple sadism on the part of their masters. This Purgatory which does not appear in love poetry of the early modern foregrounds the problems of servants with bad masters: “It is a proverbe in France that

England is the paradice of woman, the purgatory of seruants, and the Hell of horses¹¹²,
(Healey). The Servant's Purgatory mentioned in Healey's aphorism is dramatized in
Haughton's *Grim the Collier of Croyden* (1600?). A character named Robin, so abused
by his employer that he plans to escape his bond, exclaims in a soliloquy:

The Devil himself take all such Dames for me
Zounds, I had rather be in hell than here; (3.1-2)

According to Robin, his mistress has yelled at him, boxed his ears, hit him with a staff,
and generally, "laid her anger's load upon [his] limbs" for little or no reason (line 10).

Robin's experience has become more than Hell in his opinion. He declares openly to the
audience that he wants to escape his beatings:

But I'le no longer serve so curs'd a Dame,
I'le run as far first as my leggs will bear me:
What shall I do? to Hell I dare not go!
Untill my Master's Twelve months be expired.
And here to stay with Mistress *Marian*,
Better to be so long in purgatory.
Now farewell Master, but shrewd Dame fare il
I'le leave you, though the Devil is with you still. (3.14-21)

Robin is caught between breaking his bond of a year to his Master and probably being
imprisoned, or enduring the punishments of the Mistress and thereby experiencing a sort
of purgatorial torment; he exclaims that his Mistress is so terrible that she is the Devil and
therefore able to punish him beyond the limits of his employment with her, to punish him
so much that it were better to be in Purgatory. In this example, not only the punishment
but the time of his contract is perceived to be purgatorial as Robin decides which is
worse: imprisonment for breaking his bond, continued torture at the Mistress' hands, or
purgatorial suffering in the afterlife.

¹¹² In Healey's *The Discovery of the New World*, this proverb is given in defence of the narrator who is captured and tried for the crime of lechery by a band of Amazon-like women. The narrator is acquitted because he is from England and must naturally be good to women.

The Servant's Purgatory is generally spoken of by lesser servants¹¹³, but in *The Tempest* it is extended to humans who owe service to others, that is, in the Renaissance mindset, to all humanity. Even Caliban, who would like to escape his servitude, does not want to be alone. The Servant's Purgatory becomes in the recurrent purgatorial images of fire, wind, and water torment, in images of tormenting devils and ministering angels, and in Prospero's final Epilogue, the guiding metaphor of *The Tempest's* dramatization of the guilty servitude all men endure to one another. Prospero suffers the Purgatory of not having been a good servant to his people¹¹⁴. Having neglected his duty, Prospero has to fulfill it over and over in managing the island's inhabitants. Prospero cleanses his own sin at the same time he instructs, cleanses, punishes and forgives others on the island. This element of the torturer being tortured, while not exclusive to Prospero, is unique in Shakespeare's deployment of the earth-bound Purgatory¹¹⁵. Prospero's punishments work in the same degree as the fires of purgatory; they are punitive, probative, and purifying (Le Goff 10). The nature of the torment seems to be a function of the souls' culpability in Prospero's ouster. Some need to be punished for their treason: Antonio and Sebastian. Others for their lack of self-control: Stephano, Trinculo, and Caliban. Some need to be tested: the King and Gonzalo to a certain extent. While they all need purification, the most in need is Prospero.

¹¹³ De Flores in *The Changeling* seems to suffer some combination of the Lover's and the Servant's Purgatory, a highly unpalatable mix.

¹¹⁴ The Duke in *Measure for Measure* is problematic for this reason. He may or may not be derelict in his duty to his people in his guising.

¹¹⁵ Iago tragically begins as tortured cuckold and then becomes the torturer demi-devil; he is both tormented soul and devil, but his dual dramatization is brought to a tragic outcome.

SERVANT PROSPERO OR THE BAD DUKE

Prospero's own consignment to Purgatory is due to dereliction of duty. He himself reveals it during Act 1.2 when he tells Miranda how they came to be on the island:

My brother and thy uncle, called Antonio—
I pray thee, mark me—that a brother should
Be so perfidious! – he whom next thyself
Of all the world I loved, and to him put
The manage of my state, as at that time
Through all the seignories it was the first,
And Prospero the prime duke, being so reputed
In dignity, and for the liberal arts
without parallel; those being all my study,
The government I cast upon my brother
And to my state grew stranger, being transported
And rapt in secret studies. Thy false uncle—(1.2.66-77)

Prospero, a frustrated academic, spent his time in the pursuit of knowledge and left the management of state affairs to Antonio. In some measure, Prospero's wish for time to study is granted when he is transported to the island; but only partially so, for he has to assume the lordship of Caliban and Ariel and the care of Miranda. He is given a new starter kingdom from which he will learn why his past transgressions have been so grievous. Prospero had tried to live the life of More's Utopian scholars who

are relieved from all other tasks and assigned to scholarship alone, that is to say, the individuals in whom they have detected from childhood an outstanding personality, a first-rate intelligence, and an inclination of mind toward learning, (More 89-90)

Like Gonzolo, who later details an utopia he would like to see realized on earth, Prospero has tried unsuccessfully to cast off the responsibilities of his dukedom to devote himself to learning:

I, thus neglecting worldly ends, all dedicated
To closeness and the bettering of my mind
With that which, but by being so retired,
O'erprized all popular rate, in my false brother
Awaked an evil nature; and my trust,
Like a good parent, did beget of him
A falsehood in its contrary as great
As my trust was, which had indeed no limit,
A confidence sans bound. (1.2.89-97)

As a duke, Prospero does not have the luxury of More's scholars; he has neglected his people and his social station, and misplaced his trust in his brother, Antonio, who seeks out the power of the dukedom not to protect others, but to garner more power for himself. In More's *Utopia*, Hythlodæus points out the responsibility that a king bears to his people arguing that that a ruler's safety and continued rule,

rests on the people's resources rather than his own. Suppose I should show that they chose a king for their own sake and not for his—to be plain, that by his labor and effort they may live well and safe from injustice and wrong. For this very reason, it belongs to the king to take more care for the welfare of his people than for his own. (More 45-46)

As he explains to Miranda how they came to the island and who caused their exile, Prospero contrasts his own bad stewardship and the untrustworthy machinations of his brother to the steadfast and sympathetic Gonzalo's actions. Prospero says that the good servant Gonzolo gave Miranda and him food, fresh water, and "rich garments, linens, stuffs, and necessaries,/ Which since have steaded much... /Knowing I loved my books, he furnished me/ From mine own library with volumes that/ I prize above my dukedom" (1.2.165-168). In the course of his journey to and time on the island, Prospero finds what it is to have no servants, and then to have only Ariel and the surly Caliban to be master of. Prospero himself is a servant in the Great Chain of Being: he is servant to God, to the king and to his own people as duke. He has fed clothed and cared for the education and

physical health of Caliban, whatever his grouching¹¹⁶. In this respect, he has been a good servant to his servant. He is also in a more familiar capacity a servant to his daughter. In making Caliban work, Prospero serves the interest of his daughter and protects her from unwanted advances. Miranda rightfully so is the only character who does not suffer as a bad servant. Though she suffers a lack of society because of the weaknesses of the King, Prospero and Antonio who have caused her exile, Miranda is served until she expresses her servant relationship to Ferdinand: “To be your fellow/ you may deny me, but I’ll be your servant/ Whether you will or no” (3.1.84-86).

As the different groups of men fan out over the island and will eventually converge at Prospero’s cave, different classes and nature of servitude and purgatorial torment are expressed in the character groupings. Antonio and Sebastian are punished for seeking to overthrow the power structure; they are cutthroat murderous courtiers. Trinculo and Stephano are punished because they are drunk low class ruffians; Caliban, in his idiocy, punishes himself by choosing Trinculo and Stephano to follow, ready to lick their feet and call Stephano king, if only they will murder Prospero. Finally the servants of love, Miranda and Ferdinand, must be tormented through the obstacle of Prospero making Ferdinand a servant. The King and Gonzalo are tested to see if they can be true servants to one another and to their own people. The final servant is, of course, Prospero who reassuming his social standing bows before the king in Act 5. Despite the

¹¹⁶ Caliban does have real reason to grouch. According to him, Prospero sends him pinches and side-stitches when he does not do his work properly. He is tormented and in pain. Prospero tells him: tonight thou shalt have cramps, Side stitches that shall pen thy breath up. Urchins shall forth at vast of night that they may work All exercise on thee. Thou shalt be pinched As thick as honeycomb, each pinch more stinging/ Than bees that made ‘em” (1.2.389-394). It should be noted that this is the same scene when Prospero says that Caliban “didst seek to violate the honor of my child.” (1.2.417-418)

King's past acceptance of Antonio's plots, Prospero renews a relationship with him because of the alliance begot through the betrothal of Ferdinand and Miranda.

In "Catharsis in *The Tempest*" Briggs points out that "in title, form, and substance, the play draws attention to the processes of exciting and allaying mental and physical torment" (118), but he does not connect that torment to Purgatory. "Aristotle's well-known and enigmatic definition of catharsis in the *Poetics*," according to Briggs, "does not specify whether the phenomenon occurs within audiences, characters, or plots, or within some combination of all three" (115). In his epilogue, Prospero is both servant to and supplicant of the audience, and there is a cathartic purging of plot, character, and audience in his begging for understanding. Prospero's epilogue brings together his exit from the stage as an actor and servant of the audience and his servant position with the king and to his people:

Now I want
Spirits to enforce, art to enchant,
And my ending is despair,
Unless I be relieved by prayer,
Which pierces so that it assaults
Mercy itself, and frees all faults.
As you from crimes would pardoned be,
Let your indulgence set me free. (Epilogue 13-20)

Prospero in giving up his magical art accepts the limitations of his own humanity. He has transgressed and he is forgiven; he has been transgressed against and he has forgiven.

Whereas Othello sadly gathers together the fragments of his identity in his death speech, Prospero drops his art and reassumes the mantle of his dukedom as he leaves to applause. In assuming the mantle of the duke, in forgiving and being forgiven, in torturing and being tortured, Prospero does not escape his Servant's Purgatory; he acts to accept it, problematic though it may be. The power dynamic to which he has been subject and to

which he subjects others continues, but Prospero has gained from his experiences in the starter kingdom that the island provides him. Prospero will continue to suffer as both servant and master, tortured and torturer. His sin and his crime are reduced through the complex interaction of the audience's applause which serves as an indulgence, a prayer, and also a reaffirmation of the social hierarchy.

Briggs asserts that "from its first lines, the play explores the reach of a certain kind of cathartic cure effected by dramatic art" (118), "but *The Tempest*, which Shakespeare's contemporaries placed first among the Folio's comedies, does not obviously turn upon" (115) the pity and fear purged in tragedies. Unlike the tragic purging of malignant emotion, *The Tempest* provides acceptance and resignation.

Hardison observes that,

The qualities of the golden world emerge most explicitly, however, in Shakespeare's romances, which provide the supreme instances of religious catharsis in English drama. It seems quite possible, moreover, that Shakespeare understood both the effect and its religious basis, for in the romances he consistently emphasizes the interplay between supernatural or divine forces and the destinies of characters. (14)

If *The Tempest* ends on a "they got what they deserved" message, Prospero's twelve year ordeal has been just, though harsh. The sins of the Servant's Purgatory are sins against the earthly master, and because God tops the Great Chain of Being, against the heavenly one. It is Gonzalo who wishes for the utopia of no masters and is chided in a rare moment of clarity by the other men who claim that without masters all would be whores and bawds:

I' the commonwealth I would by contraries
Execute all things, for no kind of traffic
Would I admit; no name of magistrate;
Letters should not be known; riches, poverty,
And use of service, none; contract, succession,

Bourn, bound of land, tilth, vineyard, none;
No use of metal, corn, or wine, or oil;
No occupation; all men idle, all,
And women too, but innocent and pure;
No sovereignty— (2.1.150-159)

No sovereignty. The ideal boiled down to two words; the problem of no sovereignty in the Renaissance is its impracticality. As Antonio and Sebastian point out there is still a king of this utopia: “[Gonzolo] would be king on ‘t’” (2.1.159). No matter what he wishes, the power structures of sovereignty and servitude of the culture that Gonzolo has been formed by and which he perpetuates are inescapable. The power relations he wishes to escape, those that he dreads, such as giving food, water, clothes, and books to a man and his three year old daughter who will be set adrift, also provide the comforts of his life at court. It is understandable that Gonzolo is weary of power, but his ideal world is a fantasy. There is no earthly edenic paradise of innocents in *The Tempest*, even if the painters of the New World paint it so.

Prospero has the burden of ensuring that the social order is set to rights, a social order he himself once abjured in his neglected dukedom. In order to be released from the island, Prospero, like an addict, had to break his staff and bury his books, so that his sin may not be repeated once he returns to Milan. Power itself is not indicted in *The Tempest*, except mayhap by Gonzalo and his indictment is foolish; it is the abuse of power that is indicted in the sins of commission, “thou didst seek to violate the honor of my daughter” and the sins of omission “the government I cast upon my brother” of the island servants.

CONCLUSION

Love and servitude are the most commonly critiqued human arrangements on the Renaissance stage. Using their traditional depiction as the purgatorial suffering of the lover, the cuckold, and the servant, Shakespeare turns them to an unsatisfying Purgatory and in a few examples to a Hell. In *Romeo and Juliet*, *Othello*, and finally *The Tempest*, we see Shakespeare exploring the nature of purgatorial suffering of the Lovers', Cuckold's, and Servant's Purgatories found in early modern literary and dramatic works. Shakespeare's most innovative use of these Purgatories occurs in his tragedies. In *Romeo and Juliet*, Romeo's rejection of the Lovers' Purgatory during his banishment in Verona is a pivotal point in which he chooses to think of his separation from Juliet as an infinite one. In his youthful impatience, Romeo rejects the temporary nature of purgatorial suffering; instead, he chooses to see his banishment in terms of the static tortures of Hell.

In *Othello*, two cuckolds, Othello and Iago, on the surface resemble comedic cuckold's patiently suffering in the Cuckold's Purgatory. But their Purgatories become Hell when they act to end their own suffering. Othello ends his misery by killing Desdemona and then himself. Believing that Cassio and Othello have both slept with Emilia, Iago mistakenly believes that he can successfully rid himself of both his jealousy and his imagined rivals for Emilia's affections. In doing so, he contextualizes his jealousy as an overflow of emotion and also as a humoral excess. In trying to purge himself, Iago seeks a cathartic and a medical purge. The cathartic purge he has sought by orchestrating and watching Othello's decline, while successful, backfires because it requires the deaths of three people. Iago also seeks a medical or humoral purge of the bad humor associated with his jealousy. In his impotent state, he seems unable to effect a

purge through an erotic cogitation, which would clear out his system, including his mental faculty. Iago uses oral, aural, and visual simulation to try to purge himself, but, in doing so, he infects Othello with his humor rather than purging himself. The Cuckold's Purgatory can only end with the cuckold's own death, with the death of his wife, or with the discovery of "the truth." The truth in Othello cannot be discovered, in part, because the audience views it through the jaundiced eye of Iago. In some respect, Iago does escape the Cuckold's Purgatory because his wife is dead at the conclusion of the play. While the dramatic, medical, and metaphysical purge Iago has sought have been accomplished, the audience of the drama that should also experience the Aristotelian excitement of fear and pity and the likewise cleansing of both can only be infected with Iago's own suspicion. In Shakespeare's tragic turn of a Cuckold's Purgatory to a Cuckold's Hell, the purge does not work on the audience. The Cuckold's Purgatory of doubt and disbelief is passed on to us.

The audience does experience a purge at the conclusion of *The Tempest*, a staged example of the critically unexplored Servant's Purgatory. The catharsis, which Prospero seeks, is found in the audience's acceptance of him as restored Duke, given through their applause at the conclusion of the play. Prospero, as the bad servant, is punished on his island Purgatory until he can again accept and assume the mantle of power and all the responsibilities that go along with it. The frustrated academic, who abjured his dukedom for selfish ends, has by the play's conclusion accepted that power cannot be cast away. A servant in the Great Chain must balance responsibility with freedom. During Prospero's exit from the stage, the applause of the audience provides an indulgence for his sin, a

prayer for his continued well-being, and an acceptance of his place and their own places within the power structure. Prosper himself has also accepted this place.

While eloquently connecting cultural associations of purgatorial torment in early modern culture, Shakespeare advances the use of Purgatory on stage beyond what his contemporaries accomplished. In *Romeo and Juliet*, Shakespeare shows in Romeo's rejection of purgatorial torment the immature Romeo's tragic tendency toward absolutism and his troubled situation in the warlike Verona; in *Iago*, Shakespeare demonstrates the potential tragedy inherent in the misapplication of medical, metaphysical, and dramatic theories of purging. When the Lovers' and Cuckold's Purgatories are not patiently borne, tragedy is the result. In *The Tempest*, Shakespeare shows the positive cathartic potential for patiently borne purgation. All three plays are concerned with patience and the management of emotions over time. Shakespeare connects purgatorial torment and suffering to his own unique articulation of the potential for not only a traditional Aristotelian catharsis of emotion, but also a newer application of catharsis to Christian philosophies of sinful inclination and action.

Conclusion

The Enduring Purgatories on the Early Modern Stage and Further Considerations

In this study, I have explored those places in the British early modern drama where Purgatory and purgatorial suffering manages to endure, even after its theological expression has been called into question. The study of Purgatory in drama is important because drama, more so than other art forms used to advance the idea of Purgatory in the late medieval period and beyond, amplifies the emotional response to purgatorial suffering by presenting it in the present time and space of an audience; by doing so, plays like *The Castle of Perseverance*, *Othello*, and *The Tempest*, foster a dramatic intimacy between those who suffer purgatorial torment and those who watch it and fear that their own frailty may cause them to endure such a purgation themselves. In addition to its connection to the purging of sin, the staging of purgatorial torment is also connected in the early modern dramatic imagination to other means of purging, including medical purges of humor and cathartic purges of emotion.

During and after the Reformation in Britain, Purgatory and purgatorial torment on stage tends to be grounded, that is, the post-mortem suffering of souls in Purgatory is moved from its traditional orientation in the upper realms of Hell nearest the Earth to Earth, the realm of human interest and interaction. While the theological, otherworldly,

and post-mortem Purgatory is used to call into question Roman Catholic practice in some drama with an apologist agenda, Purgatory and purgatorial torment continue to be connected to the expiation of sin throughout the Renaissance. These torments are tied, though, to specific sins associated with romantic love and dysfunctional marriages. Those who sin against love are purged for an indefinite, but finite term, after which they may gain a heavenly reward for their patience; as Margaret Cavendish, in *Wits Cabal, part ii* (1662), writes “the Purgatory of Mariage doth purifie Souls, and make them fit for Heaven.” The endpoint of this earthly purgation is still Heaven. The most common and persistent dramatizations of Purgatory are found in the Lovers’ and Cuckold’s Purgatories of early modern farces, interludes, city comedies, and city tragedies. These works such as *Johan Johan*, *Calisto and Melebea*, *Eastward Hoe*, and *The Insatiate Countess* depict the Lovers’ and Cuckold’s Purgatories to achieve various dramatic effects, but the message of these comedic purgatories is essentially the same: love and marriage are difficult, but they must be endured.

Shakespeare, in his tragic articulation of the Lovers’ and Cuckold’s Purgatories turned to Hell, does not simply provide the traditional Aristotelian cathartic purge or comment on the need to patiently bear the torment of love and marriage. In the characters of Romeo and Iago, Shakespeare offers characters, who in their impatience choose to act to abolish their Purgatory. Instead of the cultural reabsorption they seek, both enter a damned existence and are marked as perpetually anathema to their societies. Iago, in trying to purge himself by making Othello a cuckold like himself, causes the deaths of Othello, Desdemona, and Emilia. Iago may have achieved a purge of his humoral excess, his jealousy, through aural and oral means in the cuckolding of Othello.

Additionally, he has also sought a purge by watching the drama of Othello as he suffers the Cuckold's plight. In drawing Othello into the Cuckold's Purgatory and in addressing the audience and thereby drawing them into his suspicions, Iago has further infected rather than purged his world.

The final Purgatory of Shakespeare explored in this study is found in *The Tempest*. Prospero, who suffers the Purgatory of the bad servant, can only be released through the audience's indulgent, prayerful, and accepting applause at the conclusion of the play. While many critics have analyzed the power dynamics of the play, the audience's applause at its conclusion is an acceptance of the rights and responsibilities of servants and masters in the Great Chain of Being. Prospero can only be released when he fully accepts his place and the responsibility for other servants who suffer along with him. The Island Purgatory provides a place and time for his suffering.

While purgatorial suffering is a possibility for all souls in these staged examples, no one suffers Purgatory alone. From its full realization by the Roman Catholic Church in the late 1100's, Purgatory, the middle state of suffering for souls who have made incomplete satisfaction for their sins, provides examples of suffering, connections between the living and the dead, and through the practice of indulgences the funds to care for the vulnerable by way of charitable institutions. When used in drama, even after its theological mooring has been cut after the Reformation, Purgatory continues to serve as a marker of sinful behavior and to amplify the need for patient and kind acceptance of the vagaries of human relationships.

FURTHER STUDY

Le Goff, in *The Birth of Purgatory*, asserts that much work remains to be done on the history of Purgatory in Europe. I have chosen a small but consequential niche; this study provides a foundation for future projects on the Lovers', Cuckold's, and Servant's Purgatories in early modern dramatic works. To date, I can find no evolutionary psychological approach to Purgatory and to the social effects of dramatic Purgatories. A discussion of how Purgatory contributed to group cohesion in the early modern by providing positive coping strategies and a shared culture expression of hope and social and familial cohesion beyond death is needed. I have not completely explored Iago's madness as it relates to his impotence and to his obsession with purging his malignant jealousy. While some critics treat catharsis as a general theatrical concept and others have written about catharsis in particular plays of Shakespeare, Judeo-Christian catharsis in the Renaissance has been little explored except by O. B. Hardison. A complete update of how catharsis works and how catharsis is put into practice, and, in some instances, how it is critiqued by early modern playwrights is needed. Finally, while I have not included it here, I have begun work on the relationship of Purgatory to two Jacobean plays, *The Changeling* and *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*. Both have characters who seek purging of sin and emotion. In *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, the Lovers' Purgatory is connected to syphilis, to the crumbling of charitable hospitals and the inadequacy of medical care for venereal disease; the purging and purgatorial tropes in the play are mediated by the odd medievalism of the Knight's quest through the suburbs of London.

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APPENDIX

“The Four Daughters of God”: Staging God for

The Duquesne University Medieval and Renaissance Players

Rarely do the directors or actors of, for example, *Lysistrata* question whether they should or should not perform it when they plan a performance. But this type of question has become de rigeur when mounting a performance of medieval drama; medieval drama scholars, when not questioning the historical authenticity that can be achieved in modern production, relate anxieties about the value that such drama holds as entertainment for a modern audience. This, it seems, has to do more with the religious subject matter of the plays than anything else.

These anxieties and attitudes are not new as evidenced in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Theatre* (1994). Marshall in “Modern Productions of Medieval English Plays” describes contemporary revivals of medieval plays as encompassing an array of purposes, audiences, and motivations and warns about the potential pitfalls of modern performance. The professional quality of the actors, the amount of money to be spent on staging, the venue, and a host of other considerations can all influence the success or flat out failure of a contemporary performance of a medieval play. Further complicating matters, Marshall declares, are impediments to approval and appreciation of a drama grounded in a specific religious experience generally alien to contemporary audiences (294-302). Recognizing the somewhat anxious roles that we cast medieval drama in as we study it as a historical document or for theatrical purposes, Phillip Butterworth (2004) has recently rehashed these problems in *RORD* with an

additional call for more stringent statements of research goals and methodology of academics who propose to use contemporary staging of drama for research purposes; he has provided examples of documents with these clarifications (1-11).

The group I worked with while in graduate school, *The Duquesne University Medieval and Renaissance Players (DUMRP)*, worked from the premise that we staged medieval through Jacobean drama to give the public access to early English drama, to learn more about audience reaction by reviving early modern plays, and most importantly to give students of drama a more practical understanding and in-depth study of a play than would normally be available in a classroom setting. These aims are neither grandiose nor overly humble. By participating in the reproduction of medieval drama, my ability to see the play as more than the text was broadened in ways that I had not anticipated.

The “research” purpose of *DUMRP*’s 1998 staging of the “Four Daughters of God” was no more than to inform, entertain, and afford graduate students more direct contact with the mental maneuvering required to read *The Castle of Perseverance* through the eyes of a director and an audience. These aims were made with the best of intentions, but not with a naïveté about the problems of reviving a six hundred year old play. The complicated questions brought about during my directorial debut with “The Four Daughters of God,” a truncated version of the judgment scene in *The Castle of Perseverance*, led to a more detailed research question involving genre, text, iconography and cultural reinforcement of eschatology in English medieval drama which I explored in Chapter 2. Initially, my research into the judgment scene in *The Castle of Perseverance* was focused on the depictions of the Four Daughters of God—Mercy, Truth, Justice, and

Peace—and their representation in other medieval works. Ultimately, my research questions, which would not have developed along these lines if I had only read the bald play text in class¹¹⁷, became centered on the physical staging of the play and its relationship to larger patterns of time and space in Christian eschatology, particularly Purgatory.

Text of “The Four Daughters of God”

William Racicot and I adapted this script, using Bevington’s notes and translations of the Middle English and Latin text of *The Castle of Perseverance*. We began “The Four Daughters” script at about line 2970 in Bevington’s edition; we took out the dying scene of Mankind, the debate of the Good and Bad Angel, and the appearance of the character, “I wot never who.” Editing in this way cut down on the time needed to play “The Four Daughters” and on the number of actors in the cast. The Good and Bad Angels were replaced by one non-speaking devil that torments Mankind during the debate of the Four Daughters. A tape of the performance, from which this transcription was made, is available from Duquesne University’s Gumberg Library.

¹¹⁷ See Davidson “Positional” for a discussion of how we should understand medieval plays performed through text, gesture, and iconographic tableau.

List of Players

Mankind
Soul
Enthroned God
Mercy
Justice
Peace
Truth
Devil

Mankind:

Now am I sorry for my life!
I have spent many days and great wealth
To purchase land and rents;
I have purchased forests and fields,
Parks and ponds, and blissful bowers,
Good gardens and beautiful groves,
For my children and my wife when I should die.
I may be woeful of my purchases,
For it is not as I thought.
A thankless upstart has taken everything 10
that the world promised me.
Now, alas, my life is lost.
Bitter sorrows begin to brew.
Certainly I find a verse that David
Spoke in the psalms quite true:
“*Thesaurizat, et ignorat cui congregabit ea.*”

Treasure, treasure!--it has no permanence.
It is other men’s, both before and after.
All my goods go all to ruin.
Long may Mankind rue. 20
God keep me from despair.
Without fail, all the goods
Which I have gathered with great labor
The world has taken away.
[*to audience*] Good men, take example from me:
Provide for yourself while you have the time!
For men are treated thus,
In many places throughout the world.
(*Coughs*)

I swell and pale;
My face fades like a flower. 30
I shall surely go to Hell
Unless God grants his grace.
I die, certainly!
I have lost my life.
My heart breaks.
I put myself in God's mercy!

(Dies) (Bells rings signaling the shedding of Mankind's clothing as he dies and his Soul and Body part. The Soul continues.)

Soul:

"Mercy" that was the last tale
That ever my body was concerned with.
The soul will be damned. 40
[Addressing the body] And I will pay for your deeds
With grievous blows,
And all because of guile.
You brewed a bitter drink for me. Alas!

(Here the manuscript contains a speech in which the Soul speaks to his Good Angel. Immediately after this speech, a leaf is missing in the manuscript. We choose to eliminate the discussion among the Good Angel, the Soul, and the Bad Angel because of its fragmentary nature.)

[Calling on Mercy] Alas, Mercy, you wait so long
And I must now sing of sadness.
Holy writ it is full wrong;
Unless Mercy surpasses all things,
I am doomed to strong pains.
My place is prepared in woe; 50
In Hell, on hooks, shall I hang
Unless Mercy well like a fountain.
The devil will have me bourn away; welaway!
I was completely mad to stay with Covetousness
Until the day that I died.
[cries in despair] "Mercy!"

(In order to reduce the playing time, we also choose to take out the hauling away of the Soul to the Hell Scaffold by the Bad Angel. Instead, we have substituted a non-speaking Devil which pelts the Soul with gold chocolate coins to remind him of his sin of covetousness. The devil also pokes the Soul with a pole and kicks him from time to time.)

Mercy:

I heard a cry for “mercy.”
A voice began to cry and call out to me;
Unless it have Mercy,
Sore I shall grieve. 60
For otherwise, it shall fall to Hell.
Righteousness, my chief sister,
You heard it, as we did all.
For we were made friends,
When the Jews offered Christ vinegar and gall
At Good Friday.
God granted that remission,
In virtue of His Passion,
Mercy and absolution should be denied to no man.
Righteousness, Peace, and Truth, 70
I say to you:
When a Man cries “Mercy” and will not cease,
Mercy shall be his fountain of cleansing,
Holy church witnesses.
For even the least drop of that blood
That Christ shed on the rood
Would be full satisfaction
For all mankind’s sins.

Justice:

Sister, you tell me truly
That Mercy surpasses man’s misdeeds; 80
But whoever will receive Mercy,
Must ask for it with love and fear.
And any man who will fulfill
The deadly sins and foul misdeeds,
To grant him mercy, I think that unreasonable.
And, therefore, sister, I advise you,
Let him pay for his misdeeds.
For though he lie in Hell and stink
It shall never trouble me.
As he has brewed, so let him drink! 90
The devil shall give him his reward:
“*Unusquisque suum onus portabit.*”

You know that when Man dies,
Though he asks mercy then,
Shall he receive mercy at once?
Nay! Nay! So Christ save me.
“*Non omne qui dicit ‘Domine, Domine’ intrabit regnum caelorum.*”

If Man should do no virtue all the days of his life,
But hope instead to be saved by the rood,
War and strife would result 100
Causing great grievance.
Whoever, even in hope of redemption,
Commits a deadly sin
And will not cease until the end of his life,
Rightfully, he has earned Christ's great vengeance.

Truth:

Righteousness, my noble sister,
I think in good faith
Your judgment is right and true.
Let him rue his own deeds. 110
I am truth and will be true
In word and work to old and new.
No man was ever damned or saved
Through my absence unless it were due.
I am ever at Mans' end.
When body and soul part in two,
Then I weigh his good deeds and his sin.
And he shall then soon find
Which of them is more or less.

For I am Truth, and Truth will tell, 120
As great God himself bade us.
Nothing may harm the dear soul,
But sin that the body did.
Since he died in that covetous sin,
Then, I, Truth, desire that he go to pain.
He did not cease that sin
Therefore he shall lose his soul
To the pit of Hell.

Otherwise, we, Truth and Righteousness, 130
Should both be put to great distress.
And every man should be the worse
That might hear of it.

Peace:

Peace! My sister Verity!
I pray you, Righteousness, be still!
Let not Man be damned by you.
Doom not man to Hell;
He is kin to us three
Though he has now not all his will.
For the love of Him that died on the tree,

Let mankind be saved from all peril. 140
Shield him from mischance!
If you two should put him to distress,
It would cause great heaviness
Between us two, Mercy and Peace.
And that would be a great grievance.

Righteousness and Truth, do by my advice
You too Mercy. We will go to yonder high place;
We will inform the high Godhead,
And we will pray Him to judge this case.
Righteousness and Truth, 150
You must tell Him your intent
And we shall pray that His judgment
May pass by us, Mercy and Truth.
Now, let us all four go quickly to the Trinity.
You shall soon know his judgment without any appeal.

Truth:
Hail God Almighty!
We come, Your daughters in sight
Truth, Mercy, and Right,
And Peace, peaceably disposed to fight.

Mercy: 160
We come to determine
Whether Mankind
Who was full dear to You
Will attain to Hell or Heaven.

Justice:
Let, me, Righteousness
Your daughter, as I believe,
Be included in Your judgment.

Peace: 170
Peaceable king,
It is I, Peace, Your youngest daughter;
Hear my praying Lord when I pray You of a thing.

Enthroned God:
Welcome together My four daughters!
Brighter than blossoms,
Come forth and stand near Me.

Truth:

Lord, as You are King of kings, crowned with crown,
As You love me, Truth, Your dear daughter,
Let me, Truth, never fail.
My Faithful Father, *saunz pere!*
“Quoniam veritatem dilexisti”
For in truth stands all Your renown,
Your faith, Your hope, and Your power. 180

Now at Your judgment, Lord,
Let it be seen that I may have my true prayer
To do truth to all Mankind.
For if Mankind be judged by Righteousness,
And not by most powerful Mercy,
Here I plight my troth,
In prison man should be punished.
Lord, how can Mankind be saved?
He died in deadly sin
And desecrated all Your commandments 190
And did not cease his sin of covetousness.

“Aurum sitisti; aurum bibisti.”
The more he had, the more he craved.
Meanwhile, the life within deserted him.
Unless he is damned, I am ashamed
That Truth should come of Righteousness kin
And that I am your daughter Truth.
Though he cried “Mercy” *moriendo,*
Nimis tarde paenitendo,
Talem mortem reprehendo. 200
Let him drink as he brewed.

If late repentance should save man now,
Whether he wrought good or wickedness,
Every man would be bold to trespass in trust of forgiveness
I hold that sin committed in hope of forgiveness is damnable.
His trespass is never forgiven;
He sins greatly against the Holy Ghost.
You would not forgive that sin, lord,
In this world or the next.

Quia veritas manet in aeternum, 210
Tendit homo as infernum;
Numquam venit ad supernum,
Though he were my brother.

For Man on earth holds wealth and weal,
Pleasure and liking all his life,
Teaching, preaching, in every season,

Yet he forgets the Lord quickly.
 He is high of heart, fortune and pride,
 Gold and silver, child and wife,
 Dainty drink at meat and meal, 220
 Yet he scarcely shows You thanks in anything.
 When Man's wealth begins to waken
 Full soon, lord, You are forsaken.
 As he has brewed and baked,
 Truth wills that he drink.
 For, If Man has mercy and grace,
 Then I have no place at Your judgment,
 And will be put back by wrong duress.
 Let me never be absent from your fair face
 Or make my power any less. 230
 I pray You, Lord, as I have space,
 See that Mankind has due distress
 In hell fire to be burned.
 See that he is in pain perpetually,
 If it be your will
 Or else, I have no ability
 To be Your true judgment.

Mercy:

*"O Pater misericordiarum et Deus toitusconsolationis,
 qui consolatur nos in omni tribulatione nostra!"*

O Father of most Power, 240
 Merciful God in Trinity
 I am Your daughter, well You know,
 And You brought mercy willingly from Heaven.
 Show me Your grace in every region;
 My comfort is in this case.
 Let me, Lord, never be lost
 To Your judgment,
 Howsoever, it be of Mankind.
 If man's sin had not come into question
 Then I, Mercy, should not have had place on earth. 250
 Therefore, Lord, grant me your grace
 That Mankind may find me.

But, Lord, have mercy on this man;
 According to Your mercy that is great,
 That he be taken unto Your grace,
 And that he not miss of Your mercy.
 As You descended from Your throne
 And alighted in a maiden's womb,

As You were incarnate in blood and bone,
Let Mankind come to Your bliss, 260
For You are King of Heaven!
He has been full sorry for his worldly vainglory,
Punished in Purgatory for all the seven sins.
*“Si pro peccato vetus Adam non cecidisset,
Mater pro nato nunquam gravidata fuisset.”*

Had not Adam sinned before
And broken Your commands in Paradise
You would never been born of Your mother,
Never have been sent from Heaven to earth.
But after thirty winters here, and more, 270
Bound and beaten, and greatly harmed
Scorned and scourged, sad and sore,
On the rood grievously torn.
Passus sub Pilato Pontio.

As You hung on the cross,
The Gospel says that on high
You spoke aloud for man’s health,
When you said, *“Sitis”*
“Scilicet, salute animarum.”
Then the Jews who were angry
Prepared You a drink of vinegar and gall. 280
You could not avoid tasting it,
But said, *“Consummatum est.”*
And nothing more.

When You forgave Your servile foes,
A knight stung you unto the heart
With a spear so sharp that water and blood began to run out.
“Aqua baptismatis et sanguis redemptionis.”
The water of Baptism, the blood of redemption,
Ran down from your heart
“Est causa salvationis.”

Lord, although Man has done more sin than good, 290
If he dies in true contrition,
The least drop of Your blood
Makes satisfaction for his sin.
As You died on the cross, grant me my petition.
Let me, Mercy, be his food and grant him Your salvation
“Quia dixisti ‘Misericordium servabo’.”
“Mercy” shall I sing and say,
And “*Miserere*” shall I pray
For mankind ever and always
“Misericordias Domini in aeternum cantabo.” 300

Justice:

Righteous King, Lord God Almighty,
I am Your daughter, Righteousness.
I know you have always loved me day and night,
As well loved as the others.
“Justitias Dominus justitia dilexit.”
If you release Mankind from punishment,
You act against your own law.
I beg you as a boon,
Let him be put in prison for his sin and wickedness.
Full oft he has forsaken You, Lord, 310
And betaken himself to the devil.

Let him rot in the pit of Hell,
Damned forever and always,
“Quia Deum, qui se genuit, dereliquit.”
For when Man was born into this world,
He was brought to Holy Church,
Devoutly baptized in the font,
And cleansed of Original Sin so dark.
He forsook Satan as his foe, and his pomp, and all his works,
And promised to serve You alone. 320
He should not hesitate to keep Your commandments.

“Sicut justi tui.”
For when he was come to Man’s estate,
He then forgot all his promises.
He deserves to be damned for them.
“Quia oblitus est Domini creatoris sui.”

He has forgotten God who created him;
He has forgotten You who created him.
And formed him in Your own face;
And bought him with Your precious blood;
And gave him space in this world. 330
He set all Your gifts at nought,
And betook himself to the devil’s course.
The flesh, the world, was most in his thoughts
And he tried to please them in every place so greatly on the earth.
I pray You, dear Lord, have no mercy on Man;
But let him lie, dear Lord,
Let him be bound in Hell!

For He has forsaken the King of Heaven
And his good angels governance
And sullied his soul with the seven sins 340
By his bad angels’ temptation.

He dismissed virtue completely
When Covetousness advanced him.
He thought he should have lived forever,
Until Death tripped him in his dance.
He lost his five wits!
Too late he made confession!
Too little was his contrition!
He never made satisfaction!
Damn him to Hell quickly! 350

For if contrary to Your Righteousness,
You take Man's soul to Yourself,
You do wrong Lord to Truth and to me,
And You deny us our due.
For Righteousness stands ever sure
To judge Man as he deserves.
To be damned is his natural fate.
I cry vengeance on Man!
"Laetabitur Justus cum viderit vindictum."

Mercy:

Mercy, my sister, Righteousness! 360
You allow Mankind no shame.
Beloved sister, let be your severity!
Let us desire to save Man;
For if Man be damned to the darkness of Hell,
Then I must wring my hands,
Because my freedom would be diminished
And bound in chains.
Mankind is of our kin!
Because I, Mercy, surpass all things
That God made at the beginning 370
And am his young daughter,
Let be your noise, dear sister
"Et Misericordia eius super omnia opera eius."

Ask never vengeance on Mankind
By day or by night.
For God Himself has been his healer
Through His merciful might;
God entrusted him to me
Against all His Justice. 380
I and my sister, Peace, will pray for him
And preach to get him respite,
Because Mercy is without beginning

It shall be without ending,
As David says, that worthy King,
There are no lies in scripture,
“*Et misericordia eius a progenie in progenies...*”

Truth:

Mankind is not worthy of Mercy
Though you recite and read David,
Mankind has neither clothed the naked, 390
Nor fed the hungry,
Nor give drink to the thirsty,
Nor help poor men in need
Since he has done none of these
He deserves no reward in heaven.
So says the Gospel.
He was unkind to the lame and the blind
He will be punished in Hell
Such is right and reason.

Peace:

Peaceable King in majesty, 400
I, Peace, your daughter,
Request a boon for Man,
Howsoever, it be.
Lord, grant me my asking soon
So that I may evermore dwell with You
As I have ever yet done.
And let me never be absent from You,
Specifically at Your judgment
Of Mankind, Your creation.
Though my sisters, Right and Truth, 410
Have no pity for Mankind,
Mercy and I move ourselves full sore
To take him to our care.

When you made Heaven and Earth
Ten orders of angels truly were in bliss,
Until Lucifer brighter than lightening
Sinned and fell.
To restore that place,
To fulfill that place, that I have mentioned, 420
You made Mankind.
Lord, God Almighty, if Your will be reason,
Grant that it is
In peace and rest
That your bright angels worship You.

So I hold it best.

For, Truth, my dear sister,
You argue that man should dwell in woe.
And, Righteousness, with her power
Wishes that it were soon and fast.
But I, Peace, and Mercy would never, 430
In faith, agree to that
And then we would argue here forever,
And stand here debating
For friend or foe, forever enemies.
Therefore I counsel,
Let us four sisters kiss
And restore Man to bliss
As God has ordered,
“*Misericordia et Veritas obviaverunt sibi;*”
“*Justitia et Pax osculatae sunt.*” 440

For if you, Right and Truth, should have your will,
I, Peace, and Mercy would always be thwarted .
And there would be such great strife between us
That our joys in Heaven would be made inferior.
Therefore, gentle sisters, consent to my proposal
Or else between us there shall always be strife
Where there is love and charity
Let there come no ill.
[*The Daughters kiss*]

See our joys are perfect, and I hold the best,
In Heaven’s bliss.
For there is peace without war. 450
There is rest without fear.
There is charity without injury.
That is our father’s will.
“*Hic pax, hic bonitas, hic laus, hic semper honestas.*”

Therefore gentle sisters, at one word,
Let us stand at one accord,
At Peace without end.
Let love and charity be at our gathering
Let all vengeance vanish to Heaven
So that Mankind may be restored. 460
Let us all be his friends before our Father’s face.
And we shall dutifully pray
At that the dreadful doomsday
And I shall say for us that Mankind shall have grace.

“Et Tuam, Deus, deprecemur pietatem, ut ei tribuere digneris lucidas et quietas mansiones”

Lord, for your pity and that Passion
That you have suffered,
Bound and beaten truly
From foot to crown 470
“Tanquam ovis ductus es”
When *“guttae sanguinis”* ran down;
Yet the Jews would not cease,
But thrust a crown on you,
And nailed you to the Cross.
Lord, as mercilessly as You were hurt,
Have Mercy on Mankind,
So that he may see how our prayers can aid him!

Enthroned God:

“Ego cogito cogitationes pacis, non afflictionis”
May fair befall you, Peace, my fair daughter. 480
I think of you and of Mercy.
Since you are agreed together,
I will give you My judgment:
Not according to what is deserved;
Not to do harshness
or damn Mankind to torment;
But to bring him clear within My bliss
To dwell forever in Heaven
According to your prayer,
To make My bliss perfect, 490
My greatest strength,
I mingle all my Peace, some Truth,
Some Right, and most of all, my Mercy
“Misericordia Domini plena est terra. Amen.”

My gracious daughters, lovely and joyful to consent,
Go to yonder fiend and take mankind from him.

Bring him to me.
And set him here by my knee,
To be in Heaven in bliss with mirth and joy.

Truth:
 We shall fulfill your command 500
 As is reasonable
 And bring Mankind to you
 From yonder horrid spirit.

Peace:
 Ah, you foul creature!
 Let that soul go quickly!
 He shall soon be set in the light of Heaven

Justice:
 Go to Hell, bold devil!
 To dwell and boil
 In brass and brimstone.

Mercy:
 Lo! Here is Mankind. 510
 That has been in pains.
 He is brighter than the linden leaf.

Enthroned God:
"Sicut scintilla in medio maris"
 Mankind, I give you my mercy.
 Come, sit at my right hand.
 I have loved you full well,
 Unkind, though I have found you to be.
 As a spark of fire in the sea,
 My mercy quenches sin.
 You have reason to love me above all things in land 520
 And to keep my commandments.
 If you love and fear me,
 Heaven will be your reward.
 My face will feed you.
 This is my judgment
*"Ego occidam and vivificabo, percutiam et sanabo; et nemo est qui de manu mea
 possit eruere"*

King, Kaiser, knight, and champion
 Pope, Patriarch, priest, and prelate in peace
 Dukes everywhere, humble and mighty, 530
 The more and the less.
 All the states of the world are under my control;
 They all must give account to me at my worthy throne.
 When Michael blows his horn at my great judgment,
 The account of their conscience will put them in difficulties.

All will yield a reckoning of how they spent their time
And of their true talents at my great judgment

“Ecce, requiram gregem meum de manu pastoris”

And I will inquire of my flock and their pastors
How they have lived and led their people. 540

The good will stand with confidence on the right side;
There on the left side I will set the reprobates.

Whoever is able to must fulfill the seven deeds of mercy:

To give food to the hungry,

Or drink to the thirsty,

To the naked clothes,

To invite into their home the poor and the pilgrim

The neighbor who has need.

Whoever does mercy to the extent of his ability

To the sick, or those in prison 550

He does mercy to me.

I will requite him

Heavenly bliss will be his reward

“Et qui bona egerunt, ibunt in vitam aeternum;”

“qui vero mala, in ignem aeternum”

And they who do good in this world,
their wealth will awaken them in Heaven.

In Heaven, they will be exalted in bounty and in bliss.

But those who do evil, they go to the pit of hell

In bitter bales to be burned. 560

This is my judgment.

In Heaven, my powers will tremble.

There is no one in this world who may escape it.

All men may take example here

To maintain their good and amend their sins.

Soul: *[to the audience]*

Thus ends our games.

To save you from sinning,

Ever at the beginning,

Think on your last ending!

[sings] Te Deum laudamus. 570

[sings] Amen.