Rethinking Ghosts in World Religions

Edited by

Mu-chou Poo

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Numen Book Series

Studies in the History of Religions

VOLUME 123

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BRILL

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PREFACE

Just as many scholarly projects that expand from personal interests into larger issues shared by other colleagues, this volume originates in my initial investigation into the popular religious mentality in early China. After *In Search of Personal Welfare: A View of Ancient Chinese Religion*, I began to look into a particular aspect of daily religion—the belief in ghosts and spirits. As a religious phenomenon, the realm of ghosts has been less studied than the realm of the divine. Some of my colleagues in Taiwan and abroad were attracted to the idea of looking at the main cultural discourse from a bottom-up angle, thus a research group was formed in 2003 to investigate the phenomenon of ghosts in Chinese society from various perspectives: art, literature, and social life. The publication of a collection of articles[1] encouraged me to venture further in the direction of comparison, as the belief in ghosts is almost a universal phenomenon in human society. In December 2005 I organized a conference and invited scholars from different fields and time periods to sit down and reconsider the idea of ghosts in different religious traditions. The articles presented in this volume are selections from the papers delivered at the conference, plus two invited pieces. Although not a comprehensive coverage of all the important religious traditions, the papers collected here represent the latest reflections on the subject of ghost by some of the accomplished scholars in their own fields. The central theme of this volume is to question the received concepts and images of ghost in various religious cultures ranging from the Ancient Near East and Egypt to the periods covered by the Old Testament, the Classical era, Early Medieval and Early Modern Europe, Early India, and Medieval China. Through a re-examination of the idea of ghosts, this volume proposes a multi-cultural approach to construct a wider and complicated picture of the phenomenon of ghosts and spirits in human societies and to have a grasp of the various problems involved in understanding and explaining the phenomenon of ghost. Thus it is

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[1] Pu Muzhou 蒲慕州 (Mu-chou Poo) ed., *Guimei shenmo: Zhongguo tongsu wenhwa cexie* 鬼魅神魔:中國通俗文化側寫 (*Ghosts, Sprits, Deities, and Mara: A Side View of Chinese Popular Culture*) (Taipei: Maitian Publishing, 2005).

hoped that this volume can provide readers who are interested in the religious mentality and its embodiment in the figures of ghosts with some comparative material for further reflection. Lastly, I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to all the participants of the conference who either wrote or commented on the papers.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABBREVIATIONS

CIL   Theodor Mommsen et al. eds., *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*. Berlin: George Reimer, (1863–1986).

CT   Adriaan de Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts*, 8 vols. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, (1935–2006).

Daozang   *Daozang*, Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, (1988).

DNB   Henry Colin Gray Matthew and Brian Harrison eds., *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography: from the Earliest Times to the Year 2000*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, (2004).

GM   *Göttinger Miszellen*, Göttingen, (1972–).

JARCE   *Journal of American Research Center in Egypt*, Boston, (1962–).

PL   J. P. Migne ed., *Patrologiae Cursus Completus series Latina*, 221 vols., Paris, (1844).

Pyr   K. Sethe, *Die Altaegyptischen Pyramidentexte*, 4 vols., Leipzig, (1908–22).

SAK   *Studien zur Altaegyptische Kultur*, Hamburg, (1974–).

Taishō   *Taishyū Shisyoū Daizōkyō* 大正新修大藏經. Taipei: Xinwenfeng chuban gongsi, (1983–88).

Urk   G. Steindorff ed., *Urkunden des Ägyptischen Altertums*, 8 vols., Leipzig/Berlin, (1904–61).

ZÄS   *Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde*, Leipzig/Berlin, (1863–).

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

JERROLD S. COOPER (Ph.D. Chicago, 1969) is W. W. Spence Professor in Semitic Languages Emeritus, The Johns Hopkins University. Recent Publications include "Babylonian Beginnings: The Origin of the Cuneiform Writing System in Comparative Perspective," in T. S. Houston ed., *The First Writing: Script Invention as History and Process* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 71–99; "A Mittani-Era Tablet from Umm el-Marra" (with G. Schwartz and R. Westbrook). *Studies on the Civilization and Culture of the Hurrians* 15 (2005): 41–56; "Right Writing: Talking about Sumerian Orthography and Texts," *Acta Sumerologica* 22 (2000 [2005]), 43–52; "Origins, Functions, Adaptation, Survival," in S. Sanders ed., *Margins of Writing, Origins of Cultures* (Chicago: Oriental Institute, 2006), pp. 83–87; "Prostitution," *Reallexikon der Assyriologie* vol. 11. (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 2006), pp. 12–22; "Genre, Gender and the Sumerian Lamentation," *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 58 (2006): 39–47; "Divine Kingship in Mesopotamia, a Fleeting Phenomenon," in N. Brisch ed., *Divine Kingship in the Ancient World and Beyond* (Chicago: Oriental Institute, 2008), pp. 261–65.

CHRISTOPHER J. EYRE (D.Phil Oxford, 1980) is Professor of Egyptology at the University of Liverpool. Among his numerous publications are *The Cannibal Hymn: a cultural and literary study* (Liverpool UP, 2002); "The Adoption Papyrus in Social Context," *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 78 (1992): 207–21; "The water regime for orchards and plantations in Pharaonic Egypt," *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 80 (1994): 57–80; "How relevant was personal status to the functioning of the rural economy in pharaonic Egypt?" in B. Menu ed., *La dépendance rurale en Égypte ancienne dans l'Antiquité proche-orientale* (IFAO, Cairo, 2004), pp. 157–86; "Judgement to the satisfaction of all," *Droit et Cultures* 47 (2004/1): 91–107; "The evil stepmother and the status of the second wife," *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 93 (2007): 223–43.

SZE-KAR WAN (Doctor of Theology, Harvard, 1992) is Professor of New Testament, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas. His publications include *Power in Weakness: Conflict and Rhetorics in Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians*. The New Testament in Context. (Valley

Forge: Trinity Press International, 2000); *The Bible in Modern China: The Literary and Intellectual Impact*. (Editor with I. Eber and K. Walf) (Sankt Augustin: Monumenta Serica, 1999); *On Genesis: Allegorical Interpretation*. (Chinese translation of Philo's *De opificio mundi* and *Legum allegoriae I–III*) (Editor and part translator) (Hong Kong: Institute of Sino-Christian Studies, 1998); "Ecstasy and *Exousia:* Religious Experience and the Negotiation of Social Power in Paul's Letter to the Galatians," in M. Foskett and W. Allen eds., *Between Experience and Interpretation: Engaging the Writings of the New Testament* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2008). "Coded Resistance: A Proposed Rereading of Romans 13:1–7," in C. B. Kittredge, E. B. Aitkin and J. A. Drapper eds., *The Bible in the Public Square* (Minneapolis: Augsburg/Fortress Press, 2008), pp. 173–84.

STEVEN SHANKMAN (Ph.D. Stanford, 1977) holds the UNESCO Chair in Transcultural Studies, Interreligious Dialogue, and Peace at the University of Oregon. He is also Distinguished Professor of English and Classics in the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Oregon and Director of the Oregon Humanities Center. Before coming to Oregon, he taught at Princeton, Columbia, and Harvard. Recent books include *The Siren and the Sage: Knowledge and Wisdom in ancient Greece and China* (co-authored with Stephen Durrant) (London; N. Y.: Cassell, 2000); *Plato and Postmodernism* and *In Search of the Classic: Reconsidering the Greco-Roman Tradition, Homer to Valéry and Beyond*, and an edition of Pope's *Iliad*. Other publications include "'Art with Truth Ally'd': Pope's *Epistle to a Lady* as Pindaric Encomium" and "Poetry and the In-Between: Pindar and *Valéry*."

CHARLES W. KING, (Ph.D. Chicago, 1998). He is currently Associate Professor of History at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. His most recent major publication was "The Organization of Roman Religious Beliefs," *Classical Antiquity* 22 (2003): 275–312. He is currently attempting to publish a book-length study, "The Ancient Roman Afterlife: Beliefs and Variations in the Cult of the Dead."

ALAN E. BERNSTEIN (Ph.D. Columbia, 1972) was educated at Wesleyan University and the Sorbonne. He has taught at Stanford University and the University of Arizona, where he is Emeritus Professor of Medieval History. He is the author of *The Formation of Hell: Death and Retribution in the Ancient and Early Christian Worlds* (Cornell University Press, 1993). He now lives in Oakland, California.

FERNANDO VIDAL (Ph.D. University of Geneva 1988, Habilitation, Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, Paris, 2001). He is presently Senior Research Scholar at the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science, Berlin. Recent publications include *Les Sciences de l'âme, XVIe–XVIIIe siècle* (Paris, 2006) and *Believing Nature, Knowing God*, a special issue of *Science in Context* (September 2007, ed. with B. Kleeberg).

SHANG-JEN LI (Ph.D. University of London, 1999) is Associate Research Fellow, Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica. Recent publications include "Natural History of Parasite: Patrick Manson's Philosophical Method," *Isis* 93.2 (2002): 206–28; "The Nurse of Parasites: Gender Concepts in Patrick Manson's Parasitological Research," *Journal of the History of Biology* 37.1 (2004): 103–30; "Eating Well in China: British Medical Men on Diet and Personal Hygiene at Nineteenth-Century Chinese Treaty Ports," in Angela Ki Che Leung and Charlotte Furth eds., *Health and Hygiene in Modern Chinese East Asia* (Durham: Duke University Press, forthcoming).

PO-CHI HUANG (Ph.D. Harvard, 2001) is Assistant Professor at the Institute of Religious Studies, National Cheng-chi University, Taipei. He is the author and translator of two books and various articles in the field of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Religious Studies in both Chinese and English, most recently, "How to deal with Aboriginal Culture—Ancient Champa as an example (in *Bulletin of Department of Ethnology*, National Chengchi University, 2007). He is finishing a monograph on early Indian social-intellectual history and will start on a research project concerning the transformation of Theravada Buddhism in South and Southeast Asia.

MU-CHOU POO (Ph.D. Johns Hopkins, 1984) is Research Fellow at the Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica, Taipei. His publications include *Wine and Wine Offering in the Religion of Ancient Egypt* (London: Kegan Paul, 1995); *In Search of Personal Welfare: A View of Ancient Chinese Religion* (State University of New York, 1998); *Enemies of Civilization: Attitudes toward Foreigners in Ancient Mesopotamia, Egypt, and China* (State University of New York, 2005).

YUAN-JU LIU (Ph.D. National Cheng-chi University, 1996) is an Associate Research Fellow at the Institute of Chinese Literature and Philosophy, Academia Sinica, who specializes in the *Zhiguai* (Accounts of Anomalies) of the Six Dynasties period. Recent publications include *Shenti*

Xingbie jieji: Liuchao zhiguai de changyi lunshu yu xiaoshuo meixue (*Body, Gender, and Class: The Narrative of Normal/Non-Normal and the Aesthetics of Fiction in Six Dynasties Zhiguai Tales*) (Taipei: Academia Sinica, 2002), as well as articles such as "*Songbo gancen: Weijin Nanbeichao zhiguai zhong de muzang xisu yu wenhua jiedu* Graves amid Cypresses: Cultural Interpretation of Burial Customs in Wei, Jin, Southern and Northern Dynasties," and co-edited *Kongjian diyu yu wenhua* (*Writing and Interpretation on Space, Regions and Culture*) (Taipei: Academia Sinica, 2002).

P. STEVEN SANGREN, (Ph.D. Stanford, 1980) is Professor of Anthropology and Asian Studies, Cornell University. Important publications include *Chinese Sociologics: An Anthropological Account of the Role of Alienation in Social Reproduction* (London: Athlone Press, 2000); *History and Magical Power in a Chinese Community* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987); *Myth, Gender, and Subjectivity* (National Tsing Hua University, Hsin-chu, Taiwan, 1977); "'Discursive Productivity' and Its Resistances in Michel Foucault's *The History of Sexuality*: Lessons for Anthropology," *Ethos* 32,1 (2004): 1–14; "Fate and Transcendence in the Rhetoric of Myth and Ritual," in Christopher Lupke ed., *The Magnitude of Ming: Command, Allotment, and Fate in Chinese Culture* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press 2005); "Separations, Autonomy, and Recognition in the Production of Gender Differences: Reflections from Consideration of Myths and Laments," in Charles Stafford ed., *Living with Separation in China: Anthropological Accounts* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), pp. 53–84.

INTRODUCTION

Mu-chou Poo

Death: An Enduring Source of Imagination

Where are we headed after death? This question has provoked endless speculations and emotional responses throughout human history. There are those who do not believe that there is another existence after death, whether human or animal. The ancient Daoist philosopher Zhuangzi, for example, regards life as a chance congealment of the *qi* in the universe, and when life ends, the *qi* will disperse into the universe. Life and death thus never meet, and all speculations about the hereafter are vain. The ancient Greek philosopher Democritus of Abdera would have agreed with this view, except he would have substituted the atom for *qi*. Yet such rationalistic or materialistic views of life seem to have contradicted human common sense and emotions, appealing only to a minority.

For most modern people, death cannot be viewed as something natural or desirable, at least for ourselves or those close to us. Yet the claim that this sentiment is a universal human response toward death is just that, *a claim*, that needs to be substantiated. Philip Ariès' formulation regarding the psychological response toward death, though based on European society since the Middle Ages, may be instructive in a more general sense. His thesis is that there was a time when people did not fear death, as it is such a common phenomenon in the life of people whose living condition dictated a brief life span. This he calls "the tame death." Then, approaching the end of the Middle Ages, the consciousness of death caused the awareness of the self, and this cruel fact in turn prompted society to defend itself against untamed nature, i.e., by containing death within ritual so as to place the dead in an appropriate position in relation to the family and society.[1] Ariès' observation may not be shared by every other expert in the field,[2] yet

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[1] Philip Ariès, *The Hour of Our Death* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), pp. 602–5.
[2] Michel Vovelle, "L'histoire des hommes au miroir de la mort," in Herman Braet and Werner Verkeke eds., *Death in the Middle Ages* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1983), pp. 1–19; esp. pp. 3–4, where Vovelle disagrees with Ariès.

there should be little doubt that in general psychological responses to death and emotional attachment to the dead provide a fertile ground for a plethora of speculations and reactions. If the idea of non-existence after death cannot be accepted, a certain kind of existence after death in another realm has to be assumed. Here there are two key, interrelated concepts: a continuing but manifest existence in a different form; and the removal to another realm. Particular types of afterlife realms imply particular types of existence after death.

Scholars since the late Nineteenth Century have long noticed the importance of understanding the ideas concerning death and afterlife in the study of human society. Anthropologists such as James G. Fraser and Edward B. Taylor established the modern interpretation of the development of religion in general and beliefs about death and afterlife in particular by presenting a rationalistic view of the "primitive" people: it was because the early humans' effort in trying to explain the cause of death and "deathlike" state such as sleeping and dreaming that the concept of soul and thereafter all kinds of "religion" were born.[3] With the rise of the Durkheimian school, followed by the structuralists, death is seen as a part of the social structure, which creates all sorts of social behaviors that shape the relationship between the individual and society. Thus the attention was mostly on the structural function and meaning of death and death ritual, while the fate of the individual dead in various cultures was less noticed.[4]

In the same vein, sociologists are interested in the social representations of death and the social implications of death and dying,[5] while psychology as well as neuroscience-informed interdisciplinary studies of the emotional basis of religion have yet to offer a whole new dimension to our understanding of the impact of death on society and culture.[6]

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[3] James G. Frazer, *The Belief in Immortality and the Worship of the Dead* vol. I (London: Macmillan, 1913), pp. 13–34; Edward B. Taylor, *Primitive Culture* vol. I (Nondon: John Murray, 1923), pp. 426–27.

[4] For an account, see Richard Huntington and Peter Metcalf, *Celebrations of Death: The Anthropology of Mortuary Ritual* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), pp. 1–20. See also Franke E. Reynolds and Earle H. Waugh eds., *Religious Encounters with Death: Insights from the History and Anthropology of Religions* (University Park and London: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1977).

[5] For example, Glennys Howarth and Peter C. Juppe eds., *Contemporary Issues in the Sociology of Death, Dying and Disposal* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996).

[6] John Corrigan ed., *Religion and Emotion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

It was the historians of religion who paid more attention to the fate of the dead and the after world that the dead are supposed to reside in. In a collection of essays on death and afterlife in various religions, evidence from various cultures, literate as well as non-literate, Western as well as Eastern, are examined.[7] The meaning of death and its impact on society was the major theme in this collection. The editor of the volume, Hiroshi Obayashi, made a general observation on the difference of this impact on Western (Judaism, Christianisty, Islam) and Eastern (Hinduism, Buddhism, Daoism) religious traditions: the vision of reality shared by the Western religions is essentially personalistic and historical, while that of the Eastern religions is basically nonpersonalistic. In the West, death is conquered by establishing a meaning of the afterlife in the Kingdom of the God, as a salvation from the sin that people committed while alive and that ended by death; in the East, death was a path out of the transient world into the absolute and nonpersonal reality.[8] Another collection of essays that covers ancient Egypt, Greece, Israel, Islam and the Latin world purports to give evidence to how different cultures expressed a universal need to gain a degree of certainty about the hidden future that death brings.[9]

For Graco-Roman antiquity, there is a rich mine of scholarly discussions of the various aspects of death and afterlife, beginning from the classic work by E. Rohde[10] and followed by many important investigations. Some study the artistic and literary representations of death,[11] some concentrate on archaeological material,[12] others emphasize inscriptions and non-literary texts,[13] while collective efforts probed all sorts

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[7] Hiroshi Obayashi ed., *Death and Afterlife: Perspectives of World Religions* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1992).

[8] Obayashi, *Death and Afterlife*, pp. xviii–xxii.

[9] Jan M. Bremer, P. J. van den Hout, Rudolph Peters eds., *Hidden Futures: Death and Immortality in Ancient Egypt, Anatolia, the Classical, Biblical and Arabic-Islamic World* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1994).

[10] Erwin Rohde, W. B. Hills trans., *Psyche* (London: Routledge, 2001, reprint of 1950 ed.).

[11] Emily Vermeule, *Aspects of Death in Early Greek Art and Poetry* (Berkeley: University of California, 1979); Jasper Griffin, *Homer on Life and Death* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980).

[12] Robert Garland, *The Greek Way of Death* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985).

[13] Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood, *'Reading' Greek Death* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995); Sarah Iles Johnston, *Restless Dead: Encounters between the Living and the Dead in Ancient Greece* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); Daniel Ogden, *Greek and Roman Necromancy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

of issues related to death, providing exciting insights.[14] Death and the dead are examined not only as ideas and symbols but are also seen as evidence to document changing social values and politics.[15] Historians of Medieval Europe likewise studied death ritual and its representations[16] as well as the impact of Christianity on the belief system of the European people.[17] The problem of death becomes the focal point of several studies,[18] while the ghost and its social and cultural significance in the Medieval period was explored.[19]

All these studies have provided with us rich information and insights regarding the significance of death, the afterlife, and the dead in the contexts of various cultural systems. General observations of the shared significance of death across the world have been commonly acknowledged, yet cross-cultural comparisons, in general, are less attempted, or mostly done for informative purposes. Also noticeable is the fact that, with a few exceptions,[20] the subject of the "ghost" has not received separate attention, mostly because when ghosts are mentioned it is in the context of the discussion of the concept of death and the afterlife. Even when "the dead" becomes the center of attention, it is still conceived more as part of this world than as belonging to a completely different mode of existence. The present volume, in a way, is an attempt at taking up the subject of the "ghost" and approaching it from a cross-cultural perspective.

Simply put, a ghost is a kind of post-earthly existence of a dead individual, which can be perceived by those still alive in a variety of different forms. How people imagine and deal with ghosts is conditioned by the social and cultural context in which the conception of death and afterlife is nurtured. Thus the conception of the ghost can

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[14] Gherardo Gnoli and Jean-Pierre Vernant eds., *La mort, les morts et les sociétés anciennes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

[15] Johnston, *Restless Dead: Encounters between the Living and the Dead in Ancient Greece.*

[16] Paul Binski, *Medieval Death: Ritual and Representation* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996).

[17] Alan E. Bernstein, *The Formation of Hell: Death and Retribution in the Ancient and Early Chirstian Worlds* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993).

[18] Ariès, *The Hour of Our Death*; Herman Braet and Werner Verkeke eds., *Death in the Middle Ages* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1983); Danièle Alexandre-Bidon and Cécile Treffort eds., *A Réveiller les morts: La mort au quotidian dans l'Occident medieval* (Lyon: Presses Universitaires de Lyon, 1993).

[19] Jean-Claude Schmitt, *Ghosts in the Middle Ages* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

[20] E.g., Schmitt, *Ghosts in the Middle Ages.*

be examined as a social imaginary. Moreover, the result of this social imaginary cannot be anything fixed. As Peter Berger and others have expounded, culture, being man-made, and lacking the biological structure of the animal world, is inherently unstable.[21] It follows that the idea of the ghost, being part of cultural structures concerning life and death, is necessarily highly variable. On the other hand, one also needs to take note of the influence of the idea of death and afterlife on social behavior, religious belief and collective imagination. There is therefore a reciprocal interaction between ideas and society. As Clifford Geertz points out, death and the rituals associated with it not only reflect social values, but are an important force in shaping them.[22] If people in each culture imagine, create or inherit their own ideas of the afterlife and ghosts, then these ideas could also haunt, terrify, preach, or entertain in distinct ways. On this view, death, afterlife, and ghosts constitute a kaleidoscopic phenomenon, with a profound influence on human history in general and religion in particular.

Since any given social phenomenon such as religion is likely to have come into being gradually, we can assume that religious ideas, such as those of ghosts and the world of the dead, could have been first formulated by certain elementary conceptions and later enriched by subsequent additions and attachments that only history can explain. In other words, the social imaginary is an ongoing, constantly changing process. For practical purposes, however, we can only choose to deal with a section of this process, acknowledging that what we study is neither the earliest phase of the phenomenon, nor the full picture.

Regarding the concept of the ghost, for example, we may detect several basic elements: the idea of supernatural ability, the idea of certain physical attributes, the idea of immaterial existence, and the idea of a certain realm of existence that no living person could enter. Thus when people try to describe the ghost and the world of the dead, they

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[21] Peter L. Berger, *The Sacred Canopy* (New York: Doubleday, 1967), p. 8. See also Jonathan Z. Smith, *Map is not Territory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978); Daniel Dubuisson, *The Western Construction of Religion: Myths, Knowledge, and Ideology* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 2003); Michael R. Leming, "Is Faith a Social Construction?" in Michael R. Leming, Raymond De Vries, and Brendan F. J. Furnish eds., *Divine Passions: A Value-Committed Introduction* (Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1989), pp. 155–67; Russell T. McCutcheon, *Manufacturing Religion: The Discourse on Sui Generis Religion and the Politics of Nostalgia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

[22] Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), pp. 94–98.

cannot but depend upon what they can gather from the repertory of socially sanctioned conceptions that delineate the idea of "existence" or "being." That is to say, when imagining a kind of existence, even for that of the dead, people would have to come up with some basic conceptual elements that can pass as valid qualifications that define the very concept of being or existence. Thus a ghost needs to be given specific physical attributes or non-physical abilities in order for people to imagine that there exists "something" that is physically "there" or is functionally "powerful," and there a place needs to be identified where the ghost can dwell. To formulate a kind of existence after death is therefore to exercise socially and epistemologically conditioned collective imagination. Each culture would formulate its own version of the ghost by using their own collective imagination to connect a selection of those basic elements. One can therefore regard collective imagination as the cement that binds socio-cultural phenomena. More appropriately, however, imagination should perhaps be seen as a kind of enzyme that is also able to enhance the fermentation of ideas. Once a certain cultural phenomenon comes into being, the subsequent change and development propelled by collective imagination may be as unpredictable as the fermentation of yeast in dough. It is tempting, therefore, to compare the formation and growth of a socio-cultural phenomenon to the development of an organism, which, once coming into being, gains a life of its own. A living organism sustains its own existence by absorbing appropriate nutrients from the surrounding environment. A socio-cultural phenomenon sustains its existence and development by absorbing elements produced by the cultural context. When new elements are added, old ones may fall out, as the adhesive, the collective imagination, loosens its grip on certain elements.

Exactly how social imagination produces each specific cultural phenomenon is a vastly underexplored area. Since the concept of the ghost can be considered as the result of social imagination, it follows that if we wish to analyze how the idea of the ghost develops in a cultural system, we can approach this from the angle of social or collective imagination.

Similar to collective memory,[23] collective imagination is a social act through which people's imaginations congeal or converge through a

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[23] For collective memory, the classic study is Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992). See also Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 37–83.

particular socio-cultural context that works as a filter to extract a more or less congruent consensus. In a way, the study of ghosts gives us an opportunity to examine how collective imagination works in different societies. The fact that each cultural system produces its own version of the world after death, and its own kinds of ghosts, suggests that although the need to imagine might be similar among all societies, the actual imagined result may differ according to specific cultural/local conditions.

Cross-cultural Typologies of Ghost

The previous section has argued for the concept of death and afterlife as the product of collective imagination. We have, for convenience's sake, often referred to the dead as "ghosts." However, in different societies the status or forms of existence of the dead could have been imagined in different fashions. It is crucial, therefore, to delineate more clearly conceptions related to the afterlife existence of the dead. When we consider the terminologies used in various religious cultures about the state of human being after death, it becomes clear that there are certain limits to the application of the English term "ghost." For example, for the modern English user, the term ghost usually refers to the spirit or soul of a dead human being; yet, for Christians, it can refer to the Spirit of God, the Holy Ghost. It is necessary, therefore, to make a distinction at the outset between the modern English term "ghost" and various forms of the spirit of the dead that we encounter in other cultures.

In ancient Mesopotamia, the nearest equivalent of ghost is *eṭemmu*, which originates from the flesh of the god, resides in human beings, and is released after death, therefore suggesting a certain connection between human beings and the god. This divine element makes human beings different from all other creatures.[24] The *eṭemmu* is often imagined to have human shape and lead a shadowy life in the underworld. Yet because the evidence we have is basically literary texts, there is hardly any consensus regarding the exact nature and power of the ghosts.

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[24] For a general account, see Bendt Alster ed., *Death in Mesopotamia* (*Copenhagen Studies in Assyriology* 8) (Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1980); Jerrold S. Cooper, "The Fate of Mankind: Death and Afterlife in Ancient Mesopotamia," in Obayashi ed., *Death and Afterlife: Perspectives of World Religions*, pp. 19–34.

For the ancient Egyptian, *akh*, the spirit separated from the body after burial, can be seen as the best equivalent to the idea of "ghost," since it is the *akh* that interacts directly with the living, and can remain a part of human society, at the margins. However, there are two other ambiguous (to us moderns) concepts of spiritual existence after a person is dead, the *ba* (with the faculty of free movement between the visible and the invisible worlds inhabited by the living and the dead) and the *ka* (the life force of the body, to which the offerings are made). All are, however, envisaged as particular spiritual manifestations, characteristic of gods as well as of the dead, which cautions us just how different the Egyptian imagination of "ghost" is from other cultures.[25] Since imagination is a mental process that plays on memory, forgetfulness, and elaboration according to a trajectory, when the ancient Egyptians imagine a kind of existence after death, e.g. the *akh*, what is remembered is the ability to communicate with the living, while other life forces of a person when he/she was alive are attached to the *ka* and the *ba*.

For the ancient Israelites, the Hebrew term *'ôb* narrowly refers to the ghost of the ancestors, but not the spirit of the demons or animals. The term *rĕpā'îm*, on the other hand, refers to the dead Canaanite lords who are trapped permanently in Sheol, the realm of the dead.[26] Thus there is no one single term that could express all the dead in general. When and if they are mentioned, however, the common description is that they are shadowy figures, weak and powerless, confined and contained in Sheol. Though this is similar to the Mesopotamian idea of ghosts, and rightly so because of the cultural connection between them, the ghosts in ancient Israel are not known for their malevolence or vengeance against the living.

The situation with the ancient Greeks is somewhat different. Instead of differentiating categories of the dead, the Greeks used a number of terms to refer to the condition of the deceased, among them *eidōlon* (image), *psychē* (soul) and *phasma* (manifestation). Each of these terms refers to certain aspect of the person, yet their common character is the lack of wit and life power, or *phrenes*. In the classical period, *phasma*

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[25] A classic study of the Egyptian conception of death and afterlife is Hermann Kees, *Totenglauben und Jenseitsvorstellungen der Alten Ägypter* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1926, 1956). A study treating all aspects of death-related phenomena in Egypt is Jan Zandee, *Death as an Enemy* (Leiden: Brill, 1960).

[26] See Jon Davies, *Death, Burial and Rebirth in the Religions of Antiquity* (London: Routledge, 1999), pp. 92–93.

may have played the role of "evil ghosts" that could somehow interact with the living in a tangible way.[27]

The Romans seem to have made some distinction between different categories of the dead: *anima* (soul), *umbra* (shade) *manes/lemures* (ghost in general), *lares familiares* (ancestral ghosts), and *larvae* (threatening ghost). Yet exactly how different these are is debatable.[28] The Roman *manes* is an example that shows the inadequacy of the use of the term "ghost/*manes*" as something opposed to "god," since the difference between *manes* and god is not their nature, but their power and influence. As a contrast, the Greek ghost would never be able to become divine, since divinity by Greek definition is immortal, while the ghost— be it *eidōlon, psychē,* or *phasma*, is the residue of the dead.

Similar to the Roman manes, the ancient Chinese term *gui* 鬼 could be considered as the equivalent of the English term ghost, that is, the spirit of the dead person; but not always. Often *gui* could also refer to the spirit of divine beings, or non-human demons. Thus we may say that the sphere of the concept of *gui* is larger than "ghost." In fact the Chinese understanding of the nature of spiritual beings has always had a similar ambiguity as the Roman *manes*: the difference between a ghost/ *gui* and a god/*shen* is not their nature or power, but whether or not they can perform certain benevolent or miraculous deeds that could prompt the people to revere and worship them. Those ghosts that could demonstrate their power by performing worthwhile deeds stand a good chance to be apotheosized. Those that could only do harm, however, remain to be evil ghosts. Yet even the so-called *guai*—goblin, animal spirit, or demon—may not be totally evil. The difference between *gui* and *guai* in the Chinese conception, though relatively distinct—*gui* refers mostly to the ghost of the dead while *guai* refers mostly to the spirits of non-human agents—has always retained a certain degree of overlapping ambiguity. To complicate the matter further, there are two Chinese terms, *hun* 魂 and *po* 魄, that also refer to the spiritual existence of the dead. Although still a subject of debate, *hun* seems to refer to the soul of the dead which rises up to the heavens, while

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[27] For an account of the conception of the "ghost" in Classical antiquity, see Jan N. Bremmer, *The Early Greek Concept of the Soul* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983); and Ronald C. Finucane, *Ghosts: Appearances of the Dead and Cultural Transformation* (Amherst, New York: Prometheus Books, 1996), pp. 4–28.

[28] See Ogden, *Greek and Roman Necromancy*, pp. 219–30.

po seems to refer to the more physical aspect of the dead that tends to remain in the tomb underground. It is fair to say that *hun* and *po* refer to two difference aspects of *gui*/ghost, perhaps analogical to the Egyptian *ba, akh* and *ka.*

Another example of the ambiguous meaning of spirits is the Tantric demon/ghost Vetāla, which inhabits a corpse and talks to the living, but is also considered a sort of divine being. The fact that the Chinese translation of the name Vetāla contains the character *gui* (ghost)—*qishigui* 起尸鬼 (meaning "the ghost that could raise a corpse")—indicates that there is some ambiguity in the Chinese understanding of the "status" of Vetāla: is he considered a god, or a ghost? Is this simply a translation problem, or does it convey a certain property of Vetāla?

Despite all the nuances of the different types of "ghost"—if we may still use the term, there are certain important similarities among them that could exemplify the kind of social need that prompted people's imagination of the fate of the dead, and the relationship between the living and the dead. As the articles in this volume demonstrate, there are some common types of ghosts that can be found in various religious cultures: evil ghosts who are harmful to humans, benevolent ghosts who might help particular people of their choosing, vengeful ghosts who feel mistreated by the living and seek for justice, distressed ghosts who need help from the living because of their own impotence, and playful ghosts who might have a certain message to convey to the living, and so on. These various types of ghosts can be seen as embodiments of various kinds of social needs, since the behavior of ghosts and their relationship with the living are conceived mostly in the contexts of solving certain problems confronting social values and ethical systems. From the typology of ghosts, therefore, there is a chance to see what a society needs in terms of handling the relationship between the living and the dead, as the need is somehow fulfilled by the idea of the ghost. It is important to note that, having come from our modern cultural milieu, we may never get rid of our modern biases. We may see the needs of the people in other societies according to our own needs, and ask questions about ghosts that are meaningful to our modern sentiments and reasoning. Thus to contextualize our own predilections and intentions is important and useful for the analysis of our sources.

Overview of the Articles

The articles collected here address the issues concerning ghosts in various cultural and religious traditions. Each article, of course, develops its own subject in the scholarly tradition that the author is most familiar with, and thus we expect to find a rich variety of related issues addressed in addition to the main themes.

In Jerrold S. Cooper's opening article we find the ancient Mesopotamian idea of ghost, the *eṭemmu*, as being part of the divine essence in the human body, reflecting the early Mesopotamian cosmology that human beings are created by the gods using clay mixed with blood and flesh of a god. Thus the idea of the ghost has from the beginning been intertwined with the most important cultural construct—the creation cosmology. Yet when people began to develop a fuller picture of ghosts, various elements were attached. These elements often reflect practical needs. For example, the malevolent ghosts might be the source of various kinds of troubles and misfortunes for the living because somehow they died an unfortunate death or did not receive proper burial and sacrifice. The social need is clear: people desire a safe and peaceful life on earth, and proper burial and offering after death. The malevolent deeds of the ghosts, though imaginary, reflect the popular mentality: they are what dissatisfied or angry people will do. As E. Cassin points out, the Mesopotamians realized that there is a clear interdependence between the living and the dead: the living owe their existence to the dead, while the dead depend upon the offerings of the living.[29] As for the place where the ghosts dwell, or the fate of the ghost in the world of the dead, we find a collective imagination of a kind of existence modeled on that of the living, only to depict the worst possible scenario: the dead possess no physical substance, and lead a miserable and shadowy life in the netherworld, a dark, cold, bleak and utterly uncomfortable place. There is no hope whatsoever for the dead to leave this place; it is an afterlife dungeon.

As Christopher Eyre points out, the way in which a spiritual entity is imagined may provide a key to understanding the culturally and environmentally conditioned differences between societies. In the case

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[29] Elena Cassin, "Le mort: Valeur et representation en Mésopotamie ancienne," in Gnoli and Vernant eds., *La mort, les morts et les sociétés anciennes*, pp. 355–72; esp. 364.

of ancient Egypt, unlike Mesopotamia, when existence after death was imagined, it was informed by what the Egyptians considered as essential characteristics of "life," i.e., a manifestation focused essentially on the physical faculties of the dead, encapsulated in the faculty of movement, the *ba*; the life form and energy associated with the visible statue, that takes the offerings, the *ka*, which in Egyptian is etymologically connected with "food" and "sustenance"; and the ability to be part of the community of both the living and the gods, the *akh*. Thus we may say that the Egyptians formulated or constructed their idea of what we may call "ghosts" in a fragmented way by dividing what they thought was essential to human life into three parts. What is interesting is that these three faculties of the living are equally present in the gods, which means that, in a way, the difference between divine beings and deceased humans lies not in their nature, but in the power they possess.

Besides the more narrowly conceived faculties of life, the realms that *ba, ka*, and *akh* are supposed to dwell in (whether the unfriendly Island of Fire, or the more blissful Field of Rushes) are also the result of collective imagination, embodying the fears and aspirations of the Egyptians. This imagination can be described as gradational, in accord with the faculties that *ba, ka*, and *akh* represent. Thus the tomb was the first place to be considered, since it is the place where the *ka* receives its offering, and its form—the *ka* statue—can be viewed by the descendents. The tomb is also the contact point between the world of the dead and the living, the gate where the *ba* could go in and out, but never far away, to have a nostalgic glimpse of the world where it used to dwell. When the deceased somehow reaches the final destination in the form of *akh*, it, on the one hand, haunts the tomb as an immaterial spirit, still able to intervene in the material world, yet, on the other hand, it travels to a place in the sky, more fantastic than the tomb itself, filled with dazzling images, sounds, and creatures.

That the concept of ghost and the realm of the dead represent a compromise between the socio-politically and culturally conditioned expressions of the relationship between people and their belief system can also be illustrated by the Hebrew Bible. According to Sze-kar Wan, there is a reason why few ghosts are recorded in the Hebrew Bible. In the few cases where ghosts are mentioned, they are mostly weak and powerless. The common expectations—to us moderns anyway—about what ghosts are supposed to do, such as various acts that either terrorize the living, or avenge their own bitter death are not fulfilled in the pages of the Bible. Is this due to the lack of imagination on the part of

the authors/redactors of the Hebrew Bible?[30] Wan points out that this should be understood as the result of the victory of Yahwism when the biblical authors won over those segments of Israelite society in which the ancestor spirits are worshipped. Yahwism and the spirit-cult, according to Wan, must have been tapping into the same cultural psyche regarding the dead and their spirits. The ideology of Yahwism dictates that God is the only power outside of the human sphere, and any other forms of spiritual existence would be a challenge to the primacy of Yahwism. Wan further explains that the rise of Yahwism is concomitant with the unification of the Israelite tribes into a unified kingdom, and the need of the biblical authors or the advocates of Yahwism to construct a self-identity by differentiating the Israelites from the surrounding peoples who shared similar kinds of religious life: ancestor worship, sacrifice, magic, necromancy, etc., in which the Israelites actually took part. The forbiddance of the ancestor cult and communication with the dead was therefore not merely a religious act, but an ideological program to pre-serve political unity and to forge an unambiguous ethnic identity—the chosen people. Wan Sze-kar's article gave a convincing explanation of the omission of ghosts in the Hebrew Bible: it reflects the social and political need of the postexilic leaders to construct an ethnic identity based on a clear distinction between the monotheistic Yahwism on the one hand, and the polytheistic Canaanites and all foreigners who worship gods, demons, and ghosts on the other.

Looking from a comparative angle, Steven Shankman inquires about the reasons why the spirit-cult is strictly prohibited in the Old Testament and about the relationship between this prohibition and the notions of holiness and responsibility. He then examines the significance of this prohibition in light of similar passages in Confucius and Plato. Shankman argues that, for the Israelite authors, to worship a ghost is an act of defilement, since God was holy, and all other spirits or demons are thus unholy. It is also an act of moral degradation, since to divine the future from the spirits would amount to abandoning one's responsibility to create one's own future and to serve the elders in society. Shankman then draws our attention to what Confucius once said, "Not yet being able to serve others, how can you serve ghosts?" Although the points

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[30] As Nico van Uchelen concurs, a concept of "afterlife" is lacking in the Hebrew Bible, "Death and the Afterlife in the Hebrew Bible of Ancient Israel," in Bremer, Hout and Peters eds., *Hidden Futures*, pp. 77–90.

of departure differ—for the Israelite author, Yahweh was the ultimate source of power and the object of service; for Confucius, the wellbeing of humanity was the ultimate concern of a gentleman—both Confucius and the biblical author discourage the worship of ghosts and spirits because of the strong ethical sense that eschews practices that inhibit responsibility. For Plato, despite the background of Homer's portrait of the grim fate of the dead, there is something worse than death, i.e., living a life that is unjust. Thus Plato rejects some traditional models of the afterlife and denounces the practices of sorcery, of consulting with ghosts, because he believes that such activities corrupt the soul. However, Plato still talks about ghosts, for the ghosts in his narrative behave in a way that encourages the readers to take responsibility for their life. Shankman's examples suggest how ethical considerations might shape ideas and attitudes toward ghosts. It is interesting to note that neither Confucius nor Plato denies the existence of ghosts, or their possible influence on the life of human beings. Their ethical considerations do not aim at undermining the popular conception of the ghost. On the contrary, their arguments are based on the premise of popular conceptions, except that they propose a better, or at least a more rational, approach.

Charles King's article confronts one of the most tenacious problems in religious studies, i.e., how to discover our modern or cultural biases and presumptions in understanding ancient, or "other," religious traditions. His example is the Roman concept of *manes*. King points out that the reason why modern scholars usually regard *manes* as "ghosts" with evil connotations is because they are influenced by Christian models of death and the afterlife. In the Christian model heaven and hell are two separate locations that define the moral character of the dead; the good go up to heaven and the evil go down to hell. Moreover, ghosts and gods are thought to be of different natures, since "gods" are not formerly living humans. All these, King argues, arise from modern scholars' misinterpretation of Roman material according to the Christian way of thinking, and the lack of attention paid to the abundant evidence of the role of *manes* in Roman religion. King's point is that the *manes* were in fact like deities that the Romans invoked to address major issues in their lives. They were not just hostile spirits, but could also be considered as divine beings who held an important place in the religion of Rome. King stresses that the Romans had a broad view of "god" or "divinity": as long as they had the power to affect humans and answer prayers, and engage in a reciprocal relationship with humans,

they could all be gods: *manes, lares*, temple gods, or deified emperors. Yet the worship of *manes* was centered on two points: that the *manes* have the power to prolong life, and that they could know the future of a person. Although it is often said that *manes* are worshipped by family members, especially the financial heir, King points out that in fact *manes* could be worshipped by those with or without financial inheritance relations, as the obligation to worship might not be determined solely by financial ties. In the end, the Roman conception of the reciprocal relationship between the worshipper and worshipped dictates the kind of ghost that they could imagine: for the living, worshipping the dead could bring longer life; for the dead, it is to their benefit if they could prolong the life of the worshipper who provides votive offerings. King's article forcefully exemplifies how modern scholars understood an idea of the ghost by implicitly following the Christian ideology, and how the Romans conceived their idea of ghosts under the constraint of their received tradition and according to their need of a reciprocal principle between the living and the dead.

The Roman worship of the *manes* continued into the early medieval period, although in different guise. Integrating them into the Christian theological opposition between heaven and hell became one of the major tasks of church theologians. As Alan Bernstein points out in his article, when the church writers failed to eradicate Roman, Germanic, or Celtic pagan traditions that considered the dead to be active in the world, they tried to incorporate these older, more general ideas, such as that of the Ghostly Troop, into their own mental framework, while demonizing those that resisted assimilation. Bernstein gives examples of texts from various periods and regions to demonstrate that the ancient idea of the troops of the dead and associated female ghosts continued to appear in folklore, and that church writers waged a continuous battle to try to domesticate these pagan ghosts. In the process, the imagination, or the deliberate prescription, of a specifically Christian fate of the dead reflects the needs of Christian writers: their imaginations are directed to the preaching of postmortem fates that would reinforce moral values that the church endorsed. They sought to contain the pagan beliefs under the moral umbrella that the church could tolerate. Thus, where pagans showed ghosts avenging wrongs done to them, medieval theologians transformed them into ghosts correcting or expiating the wrongs they committed while alive. Such a conception of the ghost, in the context of the popular ghost lore and the ecclesiastical writings, therefore, reveals two parallel trends. For the church writers, they had

a more or less clear goal, i.e., to contain as much as possible the threat of the pagan idea of the porous ghost, for it is in direct contradiction to the Christian idea of distinct containers for the dead. When it became impossible for them to achieve their goal, they sought to appropriate ghost lore as much as possible by injecting the moral teachings into the ghosts' actions. In the popular mentality that survives in scattered written texts, we see an enduring need to imagine a close tie between the living and the dead, or the need to imagine that the dead could still be active and powerful in the world of the living. These two trends, according to Bernstein, persist in the modern world.

The realization that faith and reason need to find a balance and the belief in the revenant, with the capacity to communicate with the living, helped to sustain the teachings of the Medieval Church. Fernando Vidal further explores the problem that Bernstein points out regarding the authority of the church and the popular conception of ghosts. Vidal discusses the eighteenth-century Benedictine Dom Calmet's "*Treatise on the apparitions of spirits.*" Calmet, influenced by Enlightenment thought, tried to conceptually and "scientifically" deal with the tenacious appearance of ghosts, revenants, and vampires. In order to conduct a rigorous examination of the evidence, Calmet employed medical knowledge and the scientific method. Yet because the Church had to allow the possibility of miracles, given that the examples in the Bible could not be denied, such examinations of the reports about ghosts and vampires cannot but be wrought with ambiguities and difficulties. Sometimes the extraordinary appearance of ghosts or vampires could be explained away by psychological or pathological theories, yet there are cases that no theology or philosophy can explain. In a sense, outright denial of the existence of ghosts or of the possibility of resurrection is not advisable, since this would come very close to denying the truth of the Biblical records. Calmet's argument is aimed at striking a balance between reason and faith, trying to find an epistemologically sound position, while not contradicting Christian theological assumptions. For Calmet, the existence of ghosts cannot be doubted, but those incidences that can be verified as true must be approved by the doctrine and examination of the church; that is, the story must play a role in the Church and have a certain influence on salvation.

The example of Calmet shows the influence of the modern scientific method: rigorous verification of each reported case and consideration of every possible explanation. The scientific mind developed further in the nineteenth century. As Li Shang-jen argues, in some English

ghost novels of this period, the authors' interests in the minor details and physiognomy of the apparitions were related to their scientific background. The general consensus revealed in novels about ghosts and other supernatural beings is that they did not conform to the temporal order. It is very difficult to identify and record the presence of a ghost with any known scientific measures. Li Shang-jen discusses in detail the origins and applications of some of these scientific measures and their relevance to the detection of ghosts in nineteenth-century ghost novels. In the end, however, no sure result emerged from the mechanical objectivity that the scientific methods vowed to pursue. The gulf between supernatural apparition and material evidence could not be bridged. Any possible detection of ghosts, therefore, lies in the extraordinary capacity—even the pathological nature—of individuals who, because of such unusual capacities, could somehow come into contact with the immaterial ghosts. The epistemological difficulties encountered by Nineteenth-Century psychical researchers demonstrate once more that, in the battle between scientific naturalism and spiritualism, both sides tried to construct an idea of ghosts, or their non-existence, according to acceptable ideological assumptions. The nineteenth-century scientific background provided both camps with the intellectual tools to argue their respective case. The ghost novels that Li discusses, though products of the imagination, are nonetheless ramifications of contemporary social and intellectual concerns about the tug of war between science and religion, all under the spell of the scientism that prevailed in Nineteenth-Century Europe.

Given the extremely complex situation in Indian religion, Huang Po-chi's article highlights only one aspect of Indian ideas of death and the dead: a cult related to the worship of the strange deity/demon Vetāla. Simply put, Vetāla are a kind of spiritual being, usually evil, who were believed capable of inhabiting corpses. It was thought that they possessed the power to know human destiny, and people thus worshiped Vetāla, or tried to control them through exorcistic methods in order to gain their power. In Chinese Buddhist texts, Vetāla is translated as *qishigui*, meaning, literally, the ghost that can raise a corpse. Thus, Vetāla were not welcoming spirits/ghosts in Indian popular thought. However, literary creations sometimes built on the special nature of certain spiritual beings and let imagination perform its magic. Huang Po-chi studies *Vetālapañcaviṃśatikā* in the *Kathāsaritsāgara*, a collection of fantasy tales, which uses the cult of Vetāla as its frame story. This frame tells about a mendicant who asked a king to help him

perform cult worship of Vetāla in order to gain wisdom and power. This involves having the king carry a corpse to the cremation ground, as a Vetāla resides inside that corpse and tells stories to the king. These stories are thrilling legends about people—men, women and lovers and their fantastic deeds. The image of Vetāla in the stories is lively and witty, unlike that of a pale ghost or ferocious demon that terrifies people. The stories contain elements from the popular religious cult of the cemetery that involves Vetāla and other demons/deities, as well as stories such as *Vetālapañcaviṁśatikā*, which, though literary texts originally, were later used in religious circumstances. The end of the tale states that the collection of stories itself can be used as text to ward off the attack of various demons and serves as a tool for the adepts to reach spiritual liberation. Thus literary imaginations were mixed with popular religious ideas.

Turning to China, the changing nature of ghosts finds another extensive example. From the earliest written sources of the Shang dynasty ghosts are represented as malevolent forces that could cause damage to human life. With the progress of time into the more hierarchical Zhou society, the idea of ghost began to become the subject of discussion in the intellectual discourses, as the Confucians kept a reverential attitude toward ghosts but would rather turn people's attention to morality and humanity, and the Daoist thinkers made allegorical use of the concept of ghost to support their natural philosophy. The population at large, however, continued to believe in the power of ghosts, and most religious sacrifices imply an anthropomorphic imagination of the nature of ghosts, which reflected a primordial belief in the physical similarity between humans, animals, and their corresponding spiritual beings. The development of the idea of the ghost is also related to the development of the idea of the netherworld. During the social and political transition from the Zhou to the Han period, a netherworld that is more and more like the world of the living emerged, and the fate of the ghosts became part of this imagined world. We see more and more elements become attached to the idea of the ghost as time moves on into the late Han and the Six Dynasties period. Mu-chou Poo's article deals with the development of the concept of the ghost in this period, when a special literary genre, the "anomaly stories," which emerged at the end of the Han dynasty and flourished during the subsequent Six Dynasties period, made ghost stories one of the central themes. The idea of the ghost received literary embellishment and conceptual refinement and had great influence on the idea of ghosts in Chinese religion and

culture. More significantly, it is also during this period that Buddhist and Daoist religious movements began to prevail in society, and the idea of ghosts became a proselytic tool, since the popular demand of the time requested that religions or religious personnel be able to deal with ghosts, whether warding off the evil ones, or pacifying the harmless. Thus the case discussed by Poo demonstrates the development of the concept of the Chinese ghost from a simple idea of a malevolent spirit to the very complex, humanized literary ghost that was imbued with rich social and intellectual significance, yet at the same time retained the core elements that would satisfy the needs of the common people. Ghosts are either to be blamed for people's disasters, or to be revered for their power to bring good fortune. The literary ghost, moreover, became a kind of received cultural tradition as well as social memory in the subsequent eras, so that people's conceptions and further imaginations of ghosts were guided by the composite image constructed during the Six Dynasties.[31]

Given the larger picture that Poo's article gives, Liu Yuan-ju's contribution concentrates more on a narrative model represented by the anomaly tales of the Six Dynasties period, which she calls "guiding the deviant towards the norm." These narratives attempted to resolve problems presented by the anomaly, so that the anomalous could in the end be guided back to the norm. The anomaly tales, however, are not merely traditions inherited from the past. They are in a sense creative works that reorganize the categories by which the world is ordered and evaluated. Using as evidence three sets of Six Dynasties narratives representing traditional, Daoist, and Buddhist tales of the strange, Liu demonstrates how this narrative form attempted to solve the troubled relationship between the human and the spirit worlds through rituals informed by shamanistic, Daoist and Buddhist practices, and how it symbolically expressed a dialectic relationship between the normative and the anomalous in an age of upheavals. Many of the stories were viewed by the Buddhist practitioners as proselytizing about the idea of retribution. Others could be seen as demonstrating the supernatural power of the Daoist priests. The anomaly stories made use of what educated and uneducated alike delighted to hear: extraordinary stories

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[31] The latest exposition of Chinese literary ghosts is Judith Zeitlin, *The Phantom Heroine: Ghosts and Gender in Seventeenth-Century Chinese Literature* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2007).

of ghosts and demons that created excitement and proposed surprising solutions. Thus Liu's discussion concurs with the observation that the idea of ghost demonstrates a collective need of the time: people needed to see a world back to the norm, and a society in which injustice could be eliminated, even though only in the imaginary tales.

Finally, from a more theoretical approach, P. Steven Sangren looks at the problem of ghosts in Chinese culture in light of psychoanalytic and structuralist/Marxian perspectives. Sangren argues that previous anthropological discussions of the nature of Chinese attitudes toward their ancestors, their family ghosts so to speak, mostly agree that it reflects the socially and culturally defined filial piety toward one's parents.[32] While some argue that Chinese ghosts/ancestors are benevolent, others argue that they are far less so. Sangren thinks that these discussions focus attention on filial sentiments as the ultimate source of ideas about the spirits of the dead, yet they are based on largely unquestioned assumptions that projecting one's sentiments about parents upon their "ghosts" is all but transparently intelligible. Sangren points out, if we take into consideration Freud's arguments regarding guilt and ambivalence of the feelings of children toward their parents, i.e., both resentful and grateful, the seemingly contradictory images of the ancestral ghosts could easily be reconciled. From this perspective—despite Freud's pitfall in assuming the universality of late nineteenth-Century European patriarchal family forms, the formation of the image of ghosts—or the ghosts of the ancestors in this case—can be traced one step further back than the socio-cultural context of family ethics and filial piety, and into the deep psychological need of individuals and their ambivalent feelings toward the dead. The collective need of such feelings was the invisible motor behind the formation of social practice.

Sangren further discusses how a practice-oriented theoretical approach might accommodate both structuralist and psychoanalytic interpretations of Chinese ethnographic materials. From a structuralist point of view, the contrast between order and disorder, *yin* and *yang*, underlies Chinese popular cosmology, which could accommodate the fact that gods or ancestors can appear quite differently in different contexts, depending upon whether they "mediate" order and disorder

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[32] For example, Author Wolf, "Gods, Ghosts, and Ancestors," in Arthur Wolf ed., *Religion and Ritual in Chinese Society* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974), pp. 141–76.

or whether they serve as symbols for either order or disorder—as embodiments of *yin* or *yang*. According to this line of argument, the ancestors, remembered by means of tablets on domestic and lineage alters, are icons of social order in the abstract, and basically benign and positive. In contrast, the ancestor's spirit in the grave is more problematic, likely to exercise both negative influence and, less predictably, positive fertility upon descendants and others. It can be seen that the Freudian concept of ambivalence toward the ancestor/ghost finds an expression or converging point with the structuralist view. Sangren's observation on the Chinese case can be valuable for our further reflection of similar phenomena in other cultures.

As the essays in this volume demonstrate, the idea of ghost can be approached from various cultural contexts as an example that embodies social values and reflects social needs. Although each may address only certain aspects of the idea of the ghost, collectively we may still argue that the essays provided a venue to rethink the idea of the ghost in world religions with fresh angles that see ghosts as a cultural phenomenon propelled and built by a collective imagination that dealt with the relationship between the living and the dead, and reflected certain social needs. The fact that different imaginations of that intangible yet powerful existence of deceased humans (sometimes other beings too) could be articulated and set side by side in this volume gives us a greater chance to appreciate not only how human cultures and religious beliefs have developed similar ideas based on certain fundamental properties of social psychology and ethics, but also how each society in its own socio-cultural trajectory of development produced its own kind of "ghost" that is neither unique nor universal but one amongst equals. The benefit of comparative perspectives represented by these articles will provide rich opportunities for scholars working in different religious traditions to take a step back and see what other societies and cultures have to offer to their understanding of a very human and universal yet locally specific phenomenon.

WIND AND SMOKE:
GIVING UP THE GHOST OF ENKIDU, COMPREHENDING ENKIDU'S GHOSTS

Jerrold S. Cooper

The *Epic of Gilgamesh* is the best known work of literature from ancient Iraq, and rightly so.[1] Its 3,000 or so lines relate the story of the legendary king of Uruk and his friendship and adventures with his close companion Enkidu, whose subsequent death initiated the grieving Gilgamesh's vain quest for immortality. The tale ends where it began, at the city walls of Uruk, where a wiser Gilgamesh has implicitly accepted his mortality and is ready to resume the duties of kingship. The Akkadian epic is loosely based on a group of earlier Sumerian stories about Gilgamesh, but includes as well much that is not known from the Sumerian tradition. The Sumerian stories are relatively short, ranging from just over 100 lines to just over 300, and have been transmitted as independent compositions. The Akkadian epic is a well integrated work of over 3,000 lines in length, framed, as already stated, by nearly identical scenes at the great wall that Gilgamesh had built to protect his city, Uruk. Versions of the Akkadian epic are known from at least 1800 B.C., but it attained its canonical form around 1200. Then, sometime, probably, in the early first millennium B.C., a scribe in a position to make an authoritative change in a canonical work added a twelfth tablet to the end of the eleven tablet epic.[2] This extra tablet was, strangely, a verbatim translation of the second half of one of the Sumerian Gilgamesh stories,

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[1] Two excellent translations into English are Andrew George, *The Epic of Gilgamesh: A New Translation* (London: Penguin, 1999) and Benjamin Foster, *The Epic of Gilgamesh: A New Translation* (New York: Norton, 2001), both of which include the earlier Sumerian Gilgamesh stories. See also the scholarly edition of Andrew George, *The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic: Introduction, Critical Edition and Cuneiform Texts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

[2] George, *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, pp. 47–54, discusses Tablet XII and the possible reasons for adding it. His conclusion, that it was the work of the author/editor of the canonical eleven-tablet epic, cannot be correct, for reasons he himself spells out. See also E. Frahm, "Nabu-zuqup-kenu, das Gilgames-Epos und der Tod Sargons II," *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 51 (1999): 73–90. The best introduction to the languages and cultures of ancient Iraq remains Jean Bottéro, *Mesopotamia: Writing, Reasoning and the Gods* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

Gilgamesh, Enkidu and the Netherworld.[3] Stranger still, this new ending to the epic opens with Enkidu fully alive, even though he has long been dead according to the preceding Akkadian narrative.

In the Sumerian story, the super-strong Gilgamesh has been forcing his male subjects to play grueling matches of a ballgame, a kind of hockey or lacrosse, and in response to his people's complaints the gods caused his ball and stick to fall into the netherworld. The Akkadian translation begins with Gilgamesh mourning the loss of his equipment, and his servant Enkidu offering to go to the Netherworld and retrieve the ball and stick (in the Sumerian tradition, Enkidu is a servant of Gilgamesh, though he is in rare instances also called a friend; in the Akkadian tradition, he is never a servant, but the equal of Gilgamesh, his companion and friend. This difference will be important further on.).

Gilgamesh instructs Enkidu in how he must behave to avoid being held captive in the netherworld, but Enkidu proceeds to do the very opposite, offending the ghosts and powers that be in the netherworld, who detain him there.[4] Gilgamesh prays for Enkidu's release, and the god of wisdom and magic, Ea, instructs the Sun God, also powerful in the netherworld, to open a small hole so that Enkidu can escape. Reunited with his friend, Gilgamesh quizzes him about the condition of the ghosts of people who died in various circumstances, and Enkidu answers, detailing a variety of ghostly conditions, from plush to wretched, and, like its Sumerian original, the story ends abruptly with the last of these ghosts.

For us, the use of this story to end the Akkadian epic destroys the epic's unity and structure. For the ancients, who accepted the addition, the new information was relevant to the broader theme of the epic—human mortality and what (not) to do about it—and the instruction of Gilgamesh in the ways of the netherworld and its denizens would

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[3] See the forthcoming new edition of the story by Aaron Gadotti (based on A. Gadotti, "Gilgamesh, Enkidu and the Netherworld and the Sumerian Gilgamesh Cycle," unpublished dissertation, Department of Near Eastern Studies, Johns Hopkins University, 2005). For now, see the translations in George, *The Epic of Gilgamesh* and B. Foster, *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, George's edition of the second half of the story in George, *The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic*, the Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature text and translation (www-etcsl.orient.ox.ac.uk), and the earlier edition of Asron Shaffer, *Sumerian Sources of Tablet XII of the Epic of Gilgamesh.* (University of Pennsylvania dissertation, 1963. Ann Arbor: UMI Dissertation Services.)

[4] See the interesting interpretation in Dina Katz, "Sumerian Funerary Rituals in Context," in Nicola Laneri ed., *Performing Death, Social Analyses of Funerary Traditions in the Ancient Near East and Mediterranean* (Chicago: Oriental Institute, 2007), p. 170.

have foreshadowed his role, after his own death, as a netherworld deity. But modern scholars have also had difficulty with the text on its own terms, because the conditions of the ghosts as described by Enkidu seem so very different from the usual portrayal of the netherworld in cuneiform literature, a

> gloomy house…the house that none leaves who enters…whose entrants are bereft of light, where dust is their sustenance and clay their food. They see no light but dwell in darkness, they are clothed like birds in wings for garments, and dust has gathered on the door and bolt.[5]

The usual portrayal of ghosts' situations is uniformly dreary, but some of the ghosts seen by Enkidu were doing very well indeed, especially those who had had many children. Best off of all were the ghosts of still-born children, who, in the Sumerian version at least, "enjoy syrup and ghee at gold and silver tables."[6]

To understand what Enkidu found, and reconcile it with the otherwise dreary image of netherworld existence, we must first understand how the ancient Mesopotamians understood ghosts.[7] According to one Babylonian creation account, man was created from clay that had been mixed with the flesh and blood of a god.[8] The divine materials were needed, the text tells us, to provide man with consciousness or reason,

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[5] From the *Descent of Ishtar to the Netherworld* (Benjamin Foster, *Before the Muses: An Anthology of Akkadian Literature* (Bethesda: CDL Press, 2005), p. 499). See also Dina Katz, *The Image of the Netherworld in the Sumerian Sources* (Bethesda: CDL Press, 2003). C. Barrett, "Was Dust Their Food and Clay Their Bread? Grave Goods, the Mesopotamian Afterlife, and the Liminal Role of Inana/Ishtar," *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religion* 7 (2007): 7–65, argues that sumptuous grave goods suggest that the Babylonians could not have believed the afterlife to be so dreary. Either the goods were for the use of the deceased themselves in the netherworld, or were gifts to the netherworld gods in order to get favorable treatment there. She also points to what she calls Inana/Ishtar-Dumuzi imagery on the goods in several rich graves, which she thinks suggests the possibility of escape from a dreary afterlife. But her net may be cast too wide here, since the floral and faunal imagery interpreted as having such allusions encompasses most Mesopotamian ornament. Do rosettes always imply Inana/Ishtar, herds and flocks Dumuzi?

[6] Line y in the ed. of Gadotti; line 299 in the George and ETCSL editions; line r2 in George, *The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic*.

[7] See also T. Abusch, "Eṭemmu," in Karel van der Toorn, Bob Becking and Pieter W. van der Horst eds., *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), col. 587–94, and Tzvi Abusch, "Ghost and God: Some Observations on a Babylonian Understanding of Human Nature," in Albert I. Baumgarten, Jan Assmann and Gedaliahu A. G. Stroumsa eds., *Self, Soul and Body in Religious Experience* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), pp. 363–83.

[8] The Akkadian story of *Atrahasis*; see Foster, *Before the Muses*, p. 235f.

ṭēmu, and there inhered in man a ghost, *eṭemmu*, originating from the flesh of the god, which was a sign of man's godly components—animals, after all, don't have ghosts, at least, not in Babylonia. The ghost signaled its presence through the heartbeat while the man lived; implicitly, death released the ghost.[9]

The ancients were very concerned about the ghost that was released after death. The deceased's family was responsible to see to a proper burial and funerary offerings, both upon interment and at regular intervals throughout the year.[10] Well tended family ghosts were benevolent; it is the ghosts of those who did not receive proper burial, or did not receive the regular offerings (and were left to survive on the dirty food and water of the netherworld) who were dangerous. A supplicant offering a libation to his family ghosts asks them to have his illness removed from him and banished to the netherworld:

> O ghosts of my family, progenitors in the grave,
> My father, my grandfather, my mother, my grandmother, my brother, my sister
> My family, kith and kin, as many as are asleep in the netherworld,
> I have made my funerary offering,
> I have libated water to you, I have cherished you,
> I have glorified you, I have honored you.
> Stand this day before the Sun God and Gilgamesh,
> Judge my case, render my verdict!
> Hand over to Fate, messenger of the netherworld,
> The evil(s) present in my body, flesh, and sinews![11]

But ghosts who have not been properly cared for, whether neglected family dead, or others that have not been properly buried and/or ritually provisioned, are a great danger:

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[9] The reason/ghost pun works with the Sumerian equivalents *dím-ma/gidim* as well, though it is never made explicit in Sumerian texts. The Sumerian is certainly the source of the Akkadian words, but the etymology of *gidim* is murky, and the solution suggested by G. Selz, "Was bleibt? [II]. Der sogenannte 'Totengeist' und das Leben der Geschlechter," In Ernst Czerny et al. eds., *Timelines: Studies in Honour of Manfred Bietak* (Leuven: Peeters, 2006), p. 88, seems fanciful. Katz, "Sumerian Funerary Rituals in Context," p. 172f., postulates an *im*, which she translates "breath, spirit" (usually *zi*), which upon death becomes the *gidim*. The Ur III materials on which she bases her argument are difficult and require further study.

[10] See chaps. 2 and 3 in Karel van der Toorn, *Family Religion in Babylonia, Syria and Israel* (Leiden: Brill, 1996); Katz, *The Image of the Netherworld in the Sumerian Sources*; A. Tsukimoto, *Untersuchungen zur Totenplege (kispum) im Alten Mesopotamien* (Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker, 1985).

[11] Foster, *Before the Muses*, p. 658.

O Sun God, a terrifying ghost has attached itself to my back for many days, and does not release its hold,It harasses me all day, terrifies me all night,
Always at hand to hound me, making my hair stand on end,
Pressing my forehead, making me dizzy,
Parching my mouth, paralyzing my flesh, drying out my whole body.
Be it a ghost of my kith or kin,
Be it a ghost of someone killed in battle,
Be it a wandering ghost,…
Drive it from my body, cut it off from my body, remove it from my body!…
Remove the sickness of my body, that the one who sees me may sound your praises,
Eradicate the disease of my body!
I turn to you, grant me life![12]

These malevolent ghosts were the source of a wide array of illnesses, material and social misfortune, and nightmares;[13] a whole repertoire of incantations and rituals existed to exorcise them.[14]

As early as 2000 B.C. or so, the ghost was included in the extensive repertory of evil demons who can cause harm to humans, but only the malevolent ghost, and not the other demons, was considered to be the spirit of a human,[15] one who died in circumstances that made a burial or funerary cult problematic: the improperly buried, youths who died before they could reproduce, those who died alone in the desert and remained unburied, the drowned and unrecovered, and those who died from animal attacks or accidents, either because such deaths damaged the integrity of the corpse, or the ghost was angry due to a premature or violent death.[16] These categories of ghosts are also found in Enkidu's description of netherworld denizens, as we will soon see.

Ghosts have a now-you-see-'em-now-you-don't kind of visibility, appearing and disappearing on their own volition, but capable of extended interaction with the living mainly in dreams. They are impalpable,

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[12] Foster, *Before the Muses*, p. 650ff.

[13] J. Scurlock, *Diagnosis in Assyrian and Babylonian Medicine* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2005); Sally Butler, *Mesopotamian Conceptions of Dreams and Dream Rituals* (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1998), p. 59ff.

[14] Jean Bottéro, "Les Morts e L'au-delà dans les Rituels en Accadien contre L'action des 'Revenants,'" *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie* 73 (1983): 153–203.

[15] For a more complex characterization, see G. Selz, "Was bleibt? I. Ein Versuch zu Tod und Identität im Alten Orient," in Robert Rollingerrd., *Von Sumer bis Homer: Festschrift für Manfred Schretter zum 60* (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2005), pp. 577–94.

[16] Markham Geller, *Forerunners to Udug-hul: Sumerian Exorcistic Incantations* (Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1985), p. 39.

that is, they can touch you but you can't touch them, and they are able to intervene in human affairs for good or for ill. They consume the food and drink offered to them, and can even be consulted.[17] They must perforce be able to leave the netherworld, whether to receive offerings from their families or to haunt those who have neglected them or are simply unfortunate enough to be the victim of a hungry spirit. The ghosts don't return as living persons, of course. Death is final, "the bane of mankind…the darkest day…the flood-wave that cannot be breasted…the battle that cannot be matched…the fight that shows no pity."[18] The netherworld is the place of no return only in the sense that once dead, a person can never return to the living, and should a living person (or a deity who does not belong there) manage to reach the netherworld and be found out, there is no way back. This was the predicament of Enkidu: He disobeyed Gilgamesh's injunctions, attracted the attention of the denizens of the netherworld, and was detained there.

Gilgamesh instructed Enkidu to enter the netherworld in a drab, affectless manner, in order to blend in and not be found out:[19] No fine clothes or fragrant unguent, no expressions of love or anger. When Enkidu does the opposite, and is held there, Gilgamesh, in his pleas for Enkidu's release, is very clear that he died neither a natural nor a violent death; he is, rather, a captive in the netherworld, implicitly, an undead captive. And so, when Enkidu escapes from the netherworld, it is the living Enkidu that returns to tell Gilgamesh about the conditions down below. The Sumerian text is clear: "He (the god) opened a chink in the Netherworld; by means of his (the god's) gust of wind, he sent his (Gilgamesh's) servant up from the netherworld."[20] The Akkadian translation, however is different: "He opened a chink in the Netherworld, and the ghost of Enkidu emerged from the netherworld

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[17] For necromancy, see Joseph Tropper, *Nekromantie: Totenbefragung im Alten Orient und im Alten Testament* (Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker, 1989).

[18] George, *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, p. 203, from the Sumerian story *Death of Gilgamesh*.

[19] Cf. Katz, "Sumerian Funerary Rituals in Context," p. 170, for an intriguing alternative interpretation.

[20] Gadotti, "Gilgamesh, Enkidu and the Netherworld and the Sumerian Gilgamesh Cycle" lines 242f.; cf. George, *The Epic of Gilgamesh*; idem, *The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic*. See now the somewhat different interpretation of J. Keetman, "König Gilgameš reitet auf seinen Untertanen: Gilgameš, Enkidu und die Unterwelt politisch Gelesen," *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 64 (2007): 23f.

as a phantom."[21] The reasons for the Akkadian mistranslation will be discussed elsewhere,[22] but suffice it to say here that the word "ghost" in the Akkadian is a misreading of the Sumerian word "servant," probably because Enkidu is never a servant of Gilgamesh in the Akkadian tradition.[23] That the Akkadian is erroneous becomes clear from what happens next: "They hugged and kissed each other" (Akkadian) or "He (Gilgamesh) hugged and kissed him (Sumerian)." Mesopotamians might have been able to hug and kiss ghosts in their dreams, but this kind of mutual contact was not possible while awake.[24]

After their embrace, Gilgamesh interrogates Enkidu about conditions in the netherworld. Enkidu warns Gilgamesh that he won't like what he hears, and begins his description—in a difficult passage whose meaning is nonetheless clear—by underlining the impossibility of sexual pleasure after death: "The penis is like a rotten beam, termites devour it…The vulva is like a crevice filled with dust."[25] This fits perfectly with everything else we know about the netherworld and the conditions of ghosts, but why should it be the first thing out of Enkidu's mouth? Perhaps, because the long list of ghosts and their fates that follows begins with the ghosts of men who had one to seven sons, followed by the ghosts of people who, for various reasons, never had children. The best off was the man with seven sons: he sat among the minor gods. The man with only one son was not happy, and those without children were uniformly wretched.[26] The moral: for a happy afterlife, have lots of children! The initial description of the atrophy and decay of the sexual organs demonstrates that there is no after-the-fact

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[21] George, *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, p. 194; George, *The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic*, p. 327f. My translation differs slightly.

[22] Gadotti, "Gilgamesh, Enkidu and the Netherworld and the Sumerian Gilgamesh Cycle."

[23] Similarly, the Sumerian "gust of wind" becomes "phantom" in Akkadian because of a misapprehension of the semantic range of the Sumerian word.

[24] See now also Keetman, "König Gilgameš reitet auf seinen Untertanen: Gilgameš, Enkidu und die Unterwelt politisch Gelesen," p. 8, and cf. Katz, "Sumerian Funerary Rituals in Context," p. 171, n. 19, who would have Enkidu appear to Gilgamesh in a dream.

[25] These lines were not completely known in George, *The Epic of Gilgames*. Cf. George, *The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic*, p. 760, lines 250–53 as interpreted in Gadotti, "Gilgamesh, Enkidu and the Netherworld and the Sumerian Gilgamesh Cycle."

[26] For the word-play in this section, see Gadotti, "Gilgamesh, Enkidu and the Netherworld and the Sumerian Gilgamesh Cycle," and Karen Radner, *Die Macht des Namens: Altorientalische Strategien zur Selbsterhaltung* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006), pp. 81–85.

remedy for the failure to reproduce while alive; there can be no coupling among the dead.

The Akkadian text is broken for most of the rest of the catalogue of shades. The Sumerian text continues by enumerating the unhappy lot of those denied proper burial or killed violently, a list that overlaps considerably with the cast of malevolent ghosts from the incantation cited earlier. The text nears its conclusion with three fates that for the only time in the listing have a moral dimension: the ghosts of the person who was cursed by his parents or took his god's name in vain roam around or eat and drink bitter bread and water, but the ghost of a person who died in god's service lies on a divine couch. The main Sumerian recension ends with the following:

> Did you see my small still-born who never were aware of themselves?—I saw them.—How do they fare?
> They are enjoying syrup and ghee at gold and silver tables.
> Did you see the man who was burnt to death?—I saw him—How does he fare?
> His ghost is not there, his smoke went up to heaven.[27]

A strange way to end the story; what happened to Gilgamesh? To Enkidu? One manuscript from Ur continues the narrative after a break: that text ends with Gilgamesh returning to his city, Uruk, and performing proper funerary rites for his parents. This seems rather fitting, since the whole emphasis of the netherworld description has been on the importance of having heirs to perform those rites.

The privileged position of the still-born must lie in the fact that never having achieved consciousness (*ṭēmu*), their ghosts (*eṭemmu*) had never entered into the cycle that made them dependent on funerary offerings; perhaps some notion of the innocence or purity of the unborn is also being expressed. The still-born would also not have names, and calling the dead by name was an important part of the funerary cult.[28] The man who burns to death has no corpse to bury, but likewise no corpse to remain uncared for. The absence of a corpse implies the absence of a ghost, and hence, for the person concerned, complete exclusion from the rites that integrate ghosts of the departed into the family

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[27] George, *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, p. 189; George, *The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic*, p. 768; see Gadotti, "Gilgamesh, Enkidu and the Netherworld and the Sumerian Gilgamesh Cycle," lines x–zz.

[28] van der Toorn, *Family Religion in Babylonia, Syria and Israel*, p. 52ff.

structure,[29] and for the family itself, it implies the lack of a potentially benevolent spirit who could be called on in time of need. Cremation was not practiced in ancient Mesopotamia, and there was some nexus between bones and ghosts: "O dead people, why do you keep appearing to me, people whose cities are ruin heaps, who themselves are just bones?"[30] Assyrian kings would punish rebellious vassals by scattering or pulverizing their bones or the bones of their ancestors.[31]

The "ghost" of Sumerian and Akkadian sources, then, seems to be something akin to an immortal soul,[32] an integral part of the living person that takes on an independent role only after death. Its salvation seems to have depended less on moral qualities than on reproductive success (very Darwinian!).[33] Consciousness, *ṭēmu*, exits upon death together with the ghost, *eṭemmu*, and pursues a rather drab, eternal existence in the netherworld,[34] coming out only to accept the occasional funerary offering, or, if none is forthcoming, to haunt the living. The ghost, in its ability to move about invisibly and affect mortal lives, and

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[29] Cf. B. Alster, "The Paradigmatic Character of Mesopotamian Heroes," *Revue d'Assyriologie* 68 (1974): 59, where this "total annihilation of both body and soul in fire" is seen as liberation from the "eternal cycle" in which "men must have children who can provide them with funeral offerings after they death, and they must also have children, and so forth." See also Bendt Alster, *Wisdom of Ancient Sumer* (Bethesda: CDL Press, 2005), p. 340f.

[30] Foster, *Before the Muses*, p. 991.

[31] E.g. T. Abusch, "The Socio-Religious Framework of the Babylonian Witchcraft Ceremony," in Tzvi Abusch ed., *Riches Hidden in Secret places: Ancient Near Eastern Studies in Memory of T. Jacobsen* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2002), p. 18. Note, too, the behavior of Merodach-Baladan, fleeing from the Assyrian king Sennacherib: "He gathered the gods of his entire land, together with the bones of his forefathers from their graves, and his people, loaded them onto ships and crossed over to…the other side of the Persian Gulf" (Daniel Luckenbill, *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia II: Historical Records of Assyria from Sargon to the End* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1927), p. 153.)

[32] Cf. Pirjo Lapinkivi, *The Sumerian Sacred Marriage in the Light of Comparative Evidence* (Helsinki: Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 2004), p. 139f.

[33] A person with strong moral qualities would be rewarded with a good reputation that translates into what we might call a "blessed memory" among the living, which was the counterpart of the ghost that perdured in the netherworld. In the words of a funerary inscription: "May the good deed he has done be requited him. Above, may his name be in favor, below, may his ghost drink pure waters!" (Foster, *Before the Muses*, p. 286).

[34] The eternal existence of the ghosts of anyone who had ever lived lies behind the threat of Ishtar and Ereshkigal to bodily resurrect somehow all of those ghosts so that "the dead outnumber the living." (Foster, *Before the Muses*, pp. 499, 420.) The threats worked; the gods could do the math. Cf. Bernstein's discussion of the ghostly hosts in this volume.

in its dependence on offerings from the living, is very much like a god, though deprived of most divine pleasures.[35] Gilgamesh, according to the Sumerian story of his death, and agreeing with his position in the Mesopotamian pantheon, becomes a divine judge in the netherworld, as does the prematurely dead king Urnammu of the Third Dynasty of Ur (ca. 2100 B.C.).[36] So Gilgamesh did find a kind of immortality after all, and so might we, if we don't go up in smoke.

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[35] Note that when Shukaletuda first sights the goddess Inana in the sky, he is said to see "a solitary god-ghost," referring to the appearance of the god, not wholly visible, as well, perhaps, to the return of Inana from the netherworld (note the different interpretation of Selz, "Was bleibt? [II]. Der sogenannte 'Totengeist' und das Leben der Geschlechter," p. 88. See Jeremy A. Black et al., *The Literature of Ancient Sumer* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 200. The Sumerian writes the sign *gidim* "ghost" here preceded by the determinative for god; the determinative appears nowhere else with *gidim* in Sumerian texts of this period. Interestingly, the divine determinative is used with *gidim* in one Ur III text (MVN 10 172) where the ghost in question is the ghost of a recently deceased deified king, but not used otherwise in that period.

[36] See Esther Flückiger-Hawker, *Urnamma of Ur in Sumerian Literary Tradition* (Fribourg: University Press, 1999); Antoine Cavigneaux and Farouk Al-Rawi, *Gilgameš et la mort* (Groningen: Styx Publications, 2000).

BELIEF AND THE DEAD IN PHARAONIC EGYPT[1]

Christopher J. Eyre

There are two extreme poles in the enterprise of writing the anthro-
pology of a religion, which is to say the study of an exotic—or a least
an other—religion. One is essentially archaeological; a descriptive and
ideologically objective account of the factual evidence, which is to say
the objects buildings, art, ritual practice and textual record.[2] A religion
does not need to be dead to approach it in this way. The other pole is a
theological or philosophical approach that attempts, or even claims to
comprehend, describe, and explain a belief system. Both approaches can
equally well present a negative or a positive evaluation, or can simply
claim to present a neutral phenomenological account. Yet however
sensitive to the variety of modes for interpreting the data, it is difficult
to avoid presenting a travesty of the religion, through a mixture of
gross over-simplification and the application of one's own prejudices.
The particular danger is to look for a logical coherence in religion.
That is, in reality, a negation of the enterprise of understanding how a
society—a religion—conceptualises individual or group contact with the
unknowable and invisible. It is particularly difficult to avoid superficial-
ity in the application of any sort of universalising perspective, explicit
or implicit; in the assumption that one can make immediate sense of a
particular practice or belief because it seems to fit with one's personal
socialisation into religion.

Put in a cruder way, it is perhaps worth phrasing the current topic
in a fairly positivist way: are ghosts real. That is to say, is a collection
of primary experiences of ghosts—primary accounts of sightings, like
sightings of UFOs—able to sustain what I described as an archaeological

    [2] For a recent survey of the state of the art in interpretation of the Egyptian archaeo-
logical record see John Baines and Peter Lacovara, "Burial and the dead in ancient
Egyptian society: respect, formalism, neglect," *Journal of Social Archaeology* 2 (2002):
5–36, and see also Janet Richards, *Society and Death in Ancient Egypt: mortuary land-
scapes of the Middle Kingdom* (Cambridge: University Press, 2005), especially chapter
4 "People, death, and the "tomb problem" in ancient Egypt," pp. 49–74.

approach. This, of course, is the natural approach to the religion of a society studied through archaeology, even if most of its practitioners find it difficult to reconcile the archaeology of religious belief—that they regard as the real archaeology of an ancient fiction—with the concrete archaeology not just of monuments but also, say, of social behaviour.

Methodologically it is reasonable to use a comparative method to define what a real, universal thing a ghost is. If a ghost does exist, a Chinese ghost is not going to be materially different from an Egyptian or an English ghost. Even if we are dealing with psychological, or perhaps more accurately socio-psychological phenomena, we may be dealing with human norms. Even if descriptions of ghosts are not proper sightings—culturally and environmentally conditioned descriptions of sightings—they may be visualisations that allow us to distinguish between common psychological norms and culturally conditioned metaphors. That is to say, the way in which a spiritual entity is imagined may provide a key to understanding the culturally and environmentally conditioned differences between societies. That is to say, are we studying real ghosts through different sets of smoke, or is the focus on a fantasy of ghosts actually more interesting in the way it might allow a study of the different forms of smoke.

For much of the history of Egyptology the main academic enterprise has been that of collecting and ordering the evidence for religion—tombs, temples, art and iconography, ritual and magical texts, ritual objects—on the premise that this is exotic, primitive; perhaps of interest in a study of the evolution of religion, but not itself of any theological value, and of limited value for writing the sociology—the 'everyday life'—of ancient Egypt. It is a curiosity show. The Egyptians had funny beliefs, dismissed successfully as pernicious by the early Christian fathers, and anyway the record is not of the right sort to provide the evidence for a real piety that one might wish to hypothesise. The historical perspective to Egyptian religion is readily buried in the evaluation of so-called survivals. Specifically native themes in the indigenous practice of religion in the Christian and Islamic periods—distinctively Egyptian Christianity and Egyptian Islam—are dismissed as superstitious popular practices, heresies, and not as anti-dogmatic, or rather extra-dogmatic reality. The interesting point here is that the practices most disapproved of by dogmatic Christianity and Islam are precisely practices connected with the cult of saints and the dead.

Obviously the traditionally negative evaluation of Egyptian religion is both biased and unsatisfactory. Modern academic Egyptology is

more willing to address the underlying cultural and theoretical issues in a more sympathetic way, but even here the best work can rarely be regarded as free from personal agenda and specific frames of theological reference. And of course Egyptology as a subject is peculiarly pestered, not simply by the eccentricities of the lunatic fringe, but more perniciously by the gross over-simplifications of the popularising *précis*, asserting *ex cathedra*, in a few sentences 'what the ancient Egyptians believed' as an explanation for description of what they did.

We do not know what 'the ancient Egyptians' believed. The concept of simple beliefs, lasting over a couple of thousand years, is simply nonsensical. The nature of belief is too complex a matter: literal dogma seems to require written dogma as a source of reference, and Egyptian religious texts do not express themselves in that fashion. It is vital to stress that the written corpus of religious texts from Egypt is ritual, not theological, in its conception. This is not to deny the existence of theology, but only the absence of theology expressed as logical discourse. The absence of questioning of the apparently self-evident is therefore impossible to investigate on the basis of evidence from Egypt. It is necessary to apply an approach of extreme relativity to mythological statements that are apparently highly specific statements of theological fact; to stress the metaphorical nature of the mythological assertions that make up ritual texts. These were used in highly contextualised ways—usually performative contexts—which allow regular self-contradiction in statements that at first sight appear to represent 'beliefs' about individual gods and the cosmos. The characteristic assertion made in modern accounts of ancient Egyptian religion—that disbelief was not possible—is simply misconceived. The assertion that atheism is not possible in pre-modern, or at least pre-Greek societies derives from an essentially cultural evolutionary argument, that the necessary critical-intellectual approach is an historical-evolutionary stage, necessary to be able to reject an emotional and functional address to the unknown through belief. This produces significant misunderstandings of belief and practice at any single period.

The reality of the invisible and the unknown is neither simple nor comprehensible, but both the individual and the society have to come to terms with it. The exercise, therefore, is to consider what the surviving evidence actually attests in Egypt. In this respect we have also to confront the standard, but highly distorting division that is characteristically applied to Egyptian religion; the false dichotomy that is drawn between official/state cult and private and personal religion. This is

based on the distortions of the archaeological record, where huge cult temples survive, in which the core ritual was of restricted access, and where the emphasis of priesthood was focussed on the service of god. The priest is a ritual expert. The contrast with the great monotheisms, where the focus of priesthood is on the role of theological teacher—a focus on man and not god in the organisation of ritual—has created a gulf of understanding that is difficult to overcome.

An Egyptian did not say that he 'believed'; in religious contexts he needed to 'know'. Religion focussed on the desire to acquire, and the assertion of a knowledge of the unknowable, however partial and inchoate that knowledge might be in reality. The dead wished to 'know' how to deal with what they would meet when they passed to the state of ghost. In dealing with the invisible in whatever context, an assertion of knowledge gave the basis for successful negotiation and passage. It is characteristic, for instance, of both medical texts and ritual texts (such as the *Book of the Dead*) for individual procedures to be qualified by statements of experience—'found a million times true'—so that the knowledge of the unknown was both empirical and potentially revisable without major or systematic theological crisis. In the end, the way an Egyptian behaved under crisis provides a key to particular beliefs in context, and a sort of core belief system, but this has to allow for extreme complexity and contextualisation.

On the one side there is the question of what is the purpose of religion. To do what god wants is not explicitly the purpose of Egyptian religion, although it is a key for the individual in recognising correct practice: to do what gods 'love' or 'favour', and reward. This is again a marked contrast in emphasis with the normative teaching of the great monotheisms, that forms another major gulf for understanding. What we have to try and do, therefore, is examine the Egyptian modes of interaction with the unseen. The weight of evidence deals with ritual, but in practice this interaction is likely to appear in, even to permeate, all practical activity and all physical and social life, where causation is a concern for the process of life and its activities.

A characteristic feature of Egyptian religion is, therefore, the variety of forms in which the unseen intervenes; the variety of manifestations—*ḥprw*—that each and any god can take. Polytheistic god is scalar, and not monophysite. A major deity has an omnipotence, which does not necessarily restrict the omnipotence of other gods, since that is the nature of god, who is characterised but not limited by his individual iconography and mythology. In context a god may be transcendental, but he

may equally be immanent, and then the manifestation of the greatest god, as encountered by man, is envisaged in essentially the same way as any lower category of the spiritual world. The classic manifestations of the supernatural—the *ba*, the *ka* and the *akh*—are equally manifestations of major gods, or of the dead, or are simply manifestations of the spiritual world of no very clearly defined origin, but which may impinge on the human and visible world.

At the core of Egyptian religion is the concept that divine powers take various forms—*ḫprw*—manifestations. Characteristically this is expressed as a form of inhabitation. The ritual in the temple invokes the deity to inhabit his image. Explicit statements of this inhabitation are few but very clear. However this is the context of the core ritual of the Opening of the Mouth: to vivify a god's images, by in effect calling on him to inhabit, to manifest himself, in his statues and temple reliefs; at invocation he flies down and inhabits his temple reliefs. The same ritual invokes the dead in his tomb, but also crucially reintegrates the dead as part of his funeral, invoking his reinhabitation of his body. Ritual, cult and prayer invoke the presence of the spirit world, in ways that do not differ greatly in their techniques. The core ritual of Opening the Mouth is to be understood as this invocation of god, but also in a tomb context invocation of the dead, to become manifest in statue or relief, to accept offerings and interact with the living.

The characteristic form of prayer addresses god with the phrase "Come to me,…." The response is found particularly clearly in New Kingdom royal inscriptions that present the speech of god as a promise of success to the King: "I have come to you, in order that I may…." Invocation of the divine is then characteristic of magical, and particularly magico-medical, material. The dangerous manifestation of the supernatural is most explicit in the form of divine retribution; the *baw* of god are said to descend on the offender. The term is at root a plural of the term *ba*, as a manifestation of the divine that does not have the same connection with invocation, but represents a more independent divine intervention. The dead have a *ba*, at least from the Middle Kingdom onwards; the term is only attested with gods and dead kings in the Old Kingdom. Typically it is conceptualised as a bird, or human headed bird—the relevant hieroglyph is a bird-sign, and it is not clear whether some deeper image or metaphor lies at the core of this iconography— and the essence of a *ba* is its faculty of free movement throughout this and the other world. The *ba* is not a key form for interaction with man, but a way in which individual manifestations of the divine take place:

sacred animals are the *ba* of god, and the multiplicity of such animals—
the flocks of sacred ibis, for instance, contrasted to the uniqueness of
the Apis bull—simply underlines the complexity of the overlapping
imagery for how one meets the ghost or the divine.

There is a current theoretical fashion in archaeology to mobilise the
material record in order to recover what is called an Archaeology of
Identity. It is interesting that this characteristically does not address
personal spiritual identity very thoroughly, where in many ways this
is the most obvious approach in Egypt. Death is, by definition, disin-
tegration. Resurrection in Egypt is explicitly reintegration: physically,
spiritually, and socially. As an example, a short *Coffin Text* spell, no.
392, appears to address a nebulous group of deities involved in, or likely
to obstruct, the passage of the dead:

> Not taking the *ḥk3w* of a man from him in the necropolis:
>
> O *mtwtyw*, those of the mounds*, powerful ones (*sḫmtyw*)ᵃ, (and?) son
> of the sailor, whose rope is made fast;
> I have come to you, so that I may break your pens, that I may rip up your
> books (*nšnš md̠3wt≠k*), because of this great pain (*mr*) you have done to
> me over my property (*išt*).
> My head has been brought to me; my bones have been assembled for
> me;º my limbs have been made sound for me; my great *ḥk3w*-power has
> been brought with it for me; the offering is repeated for the mouth; the
> hair has been completed.[3]
>
> *var. those of the horizon
> ᵃquery: in two cases it is determined with a land sign
> ºvar. my *kas* have been assembled for me

A corrupt little spell, but it allows key points to be made. Much of
the religious literature—much of the data on which we have to base
discussion—belongs like this to a funerary ritual. It is concerned with
fear of the transition. One theme is to assert that the arrival of the
dead is a threat to the powers already there; the dead is not destroyed,
but takes his power—asserted in both his physical and his spiritual
integrity—and so asserts his place and authority in the necropolis. It
is a long observed motif, almost a cliché of writing about Egyptian reli-
gion, that in a crisis—in what we would call applications of magic—the
Egyptians threatened their gods. The fear of death is destruction. The
hope of death is an eternal personal integrity, physical, spiritual and
social. The physical is obvious in this spell; the spiritual power, as ḥk3w,

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[3] *CT*, vol. V, p. 66.

is clear. Normally translated as 'magic', the man's individual ḥk3w is his spiritual power to control the material and immaterial worlds. The theme of social reintegration is restricted in this spell to the aim of protecting property, but the spell is related to a wider group of Coffin Texts in which the restoration of a man's family to him is associated with the restoration—specifically the swallowing—of his ḥk3w.

This approach means that, at least superficially, it is possible to list the parts into which the dead feared disintegration. The clearest explicit statement comes in the eighteenth dynasty tomb of Amenemhet at Thebes. Rows of offering bearers approach the tomb owner and his wife, bringing the offerings necessary for the ritual at his offering place, at his stela. One row offers:

> for his *ka*, for his stela [which is in the necropolis, for] his [*ba*], for his *akh*, for his corpse (*ḫ3t*), for his shadow, for all his manifestations (*ḫprw*).

The other row:

> for his *ka*, for this his stela which is in the necropolis, for his *fate* (*š3y*), for his lifespan (*ꜥḥꜥw*), for his *meskhent*, for his *renenet*, for his *khnum*.

The first sequence, although partly restored, provides the core list of an individual's integrity: the three forms that are normally translated as 'soul', together with the physical body preserved in the tomb, the shadow integral to that physical existence, and then whatever other physical or spiritual forms he might take. Missing from here is his *sꜥḥ*, a term that is usually translated by the rather meaningless 'noble dead', but that is the nearest word in Egyptian for what we mean when we say 'mummy', and that is perhaps at this period a sort of physical counterpart to the *akh*, as a physical form that might conceivably be encountered.

The second list is a group of forms that personify his temporal existence and lifetime experience. Apart from his lifespan, they are all themselves independent deities, closely associated with birth and fate, sometimes the subject of independent cult, but also personal genii of the individual, or probably better personalisations of his individuality.[4] His ḥk3w would characteristically also appear with this group.

It seems to us characteristic of Egyptian discourse of every sort that concepts—and metaphors—are presented in ways that seem to us not abstracts but personifications envisaged in concrete form. Deities and

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[4] Nina de Garis Davies and Alan H. Gardiner, *The Tomb of Amenemhet (No. 82)* (London: EES, 1915), pl. XIX–XX and XXIII; pp. 98–100.

ghosts, when they manifest themselves, are essentially visualised as taking a concrete rather than an ethereal form. This personification is most clearly exemplified here in the *meskhent*, whose iconography is that of a personified birth brick: sometimes a brick with human head, and sometimes a woman with a brick on her head. The beginning of life, as part of the identity of the person, is personified by a physical object associated with birth, and a goddess and a personal genius which protect it. If, then, we are talking about ghosts, the question is which of these personifications are the part with which the living world has communication, when the reintegration still leaves the dead in another world. In practice the compartmentalisation of the key parts that we translate crudely as 'soul' seems complete. That disintegration is made explicit in the statement in a pyramid text:

> *akh* to the sky, corpse to the earth.[5]

Eighteenth dynasty variations have:

> corpse to the earth, *ba* in the underworld (*dȝt*),[6]

Or:

> *ba* to heaven, corpse to the underworld.[7]

The complexity of the disintegration of a person is presented not only in the variety of forms, but also in their varied locations. The *ka* is closely associated with the tomb; it is always the *ka* which receives the offerings, as the passive recipient of cult. The invocation of the *ka* is that of the life form and power that takes the offerings. It is envisaged or depicted as a recognisable image—double—of the person, that is created with his physical person, at the beginning of his life. Conceptualised as a pair of raised arms, which write the word as a hieroglyph, these are also placed on top of a human image to provide iconography for relief or statue; they stress the human imagery. The form is equally valid for a god—gods have a *ka* or even multiple *ka*s—and indeed in the case of the living king, his *ka* is envisaged as the manifestation of his divine force; the divinity that inhabits and manifests itself in him.

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[5] *Pyr*, p. 474.
[6] Nina de Garis Davies, *The Tomb of Two Sculptors at Thebes* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1925), pl. XV.
[7] *Urk*, vol. IV, 481, 5; 484, 14.

The *ba* seems to belong entirely in the spiritual world. That is not to say that it is not envisaged in a material form; characteristically depicted as a bird with the human head of its person, it provides the connection between the corpse and existence in the other world. It is the *ba* that goes out by day; the primary title for the *Book of the Dead* is the *Book of Going Out by Day*. The *ba* outside the tomb is free from the body but never to be separated fully from it, and performs the physical functions of the dead, both around the tomb and in the underworld. It does not, however, communicate with this world.

For real interaction with the living, the dead appears in the form of an *akh*. This is the supernatural form with which the living potentially have everyday, pressing and immediate interaction. This is the form, the word that is properly translated as 'ghost'. Indeed, it is the word that comes down into Coptic as ⲓϧ 'demon'. In that context it is worth remarking that the 'demons' with which the Coptic monks and ascetics were in constant struggle were in reality personifications of their own desires and emotions, envisaged in physical form to tempt and torment them. The *akh*—and not the *ka*—is what you actually meet in the necropolis; this is what a person will find lurking among the tombs;[8] this is what demands attention from you; this is what will haunt you personally, and threaten you, but can genuinely help you, and specifically offers to do so in return for the offering ritual. This is the form of the dead takes as *ꜣḫ iqr ꜥpr* 'equipped effective *akh*', with the requisite knowledge and power to help the living in and from the necropolis; the form the dead characteristically claims to have, at the end of his address to the living in his inscriptions; the form in which he will help the person who makes his offerings. This is seen clearly, at a personal level, in the well attested habit of writing letters to the dead. The surviving examples, apparently left at the tomb with offerings, often conjure up the image of a person haunted by a deceased relative; blaming misfortune on the ill-will of the deceased, claiming lack of guilt in the treatment of the dead, and demanding assistance from the dead over illness, material misfortune, or personal misery. However erratic, unpredictable, irregular the cult of the dead may be,

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[8] As in the fragmentary New Kingdom ghost story, Alan H. Gardiner, *Late-Egyptian Stories* (Bruxelles: Édition de la Fondation égyptologique Reine Élisabeth, 1932), pp. 89–94; Jürgen von Beckerath, *ZÄS* 119 (1992): 90–107; latest discussion, Serge A. Rosmorduc, "À propos du conte du Revenant," *GM* 195 (2003): 81–86.

the habit of visiting the necropolis, and maintaining cult, is a personal and not simply a public ceremony.

The dead are always individually approachable, and need and expect that contact. The role of individual dead as intermediary is very marked in evidence from the Ramesside period, although it is by no means an innovation of that period. For that reason I deliberately quote an earlier example. The statue of a ḫrp-srqt-priest of the reign of Sesostris II provides a nice example; the function can be classified in simplistic way as that of a magico-medical specialist. This private statue, set up in a public temple, carries texts which express the belief and faith of the individual, and document his personal apotheosis and his result-ing role as intermediary with the divine world.[9] In the inscription on the left side of the statue he asserts that he is a sˁḥ, at the side of god (r-gz nṯr), who will not make life bad, but will help the one who offers to him. On the right side of the statue is an unusual variation on the characteristic address to the living, specifically addressing the priests of the temple (pr pn), who want their children to be secure in (employ-ment in) the temple (ḥwt-nṯr tn):

> I am an *akh* (3ḫ) equipped with his magic-powers (3ḫw); I have been initiated (bs) with the great god; I know everything effective, by which one is *akh* (ḫt nb 3ḫt 3ḫ<t>.n(y)); I know every initiated secret (bs nb št3); I am in the following of the great god. I will carry out your petition in the necropolis, in exchange for your saying, "Welcome, ḫrp-srqt-priest Tjermet, son of ?? into this chapel (ḥwt-nṯr) of Hut-Ra-wati."

The normal meeting place for the dead is the necropolis; in crude terms one normally visited the dead at their home—the tomb—although their statues and stelae might also be found in temple compounds. However, as with the god, the material form of statue, relief sculpture or even corpse, is not the totality, or even the most important form of the dead, but only the point of interaction.

The continuing presence of the dead, and interaction with them, is central to Egyptian categorisation of the habitants of the cosmos. Your own dead are therefore an important part of your family, for dealing with the invisible. In that sense it is reasonable to talk in terms of an ancestor cult in Egypt, although it is a term that is not normally used.[10]

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[9] H.-W. Fischer-Elfert and A. Grimm, "Autobiographie und Apothese. Die Statue des Sš(š)n S3-Ḥwt-Ḥw im Staatlichen Museum Ägyptischer Kunst München," *ZÄS* 130 (2003): 60–80 and plates.

[10] For a discussion of the Egyptological discussion, with particular reference to

One finds the same crucial social connection with 'proper' gods as with family dead; in earlier periods the connection between the individual and his 'local god' is strongly emphasised, and by the New Kingdom one finds occasional examples of individuals who strongly emphasise—to the point of proseletisation—the value of personal loyalty to and patronage from a specific deity. There is an underlying motif that such a connection of kinship or patronage ties the living to the dead and divine, giving protection against threats at an invisible and spiritual level.

Fear of the dead is expressed in direct, but not very elaborate form. They simply come among the immense range of invisible but immanent dangers to the health, life and prosperity of the living. Characteristically any form of protection spell lists the different forms such dangers may take, the *akh* and the male and female dead simply being parts of a long list of more or less obscure 'demonic' dangers.[11] A small section of an oracular protection decree, of the Third Intermediate Period exemplifies a theme that appears in a wide variety of contexts:[12]

> Thoth, Lord of the Two Lands, the great god.... has said, "I will save (*šdỉ*) Nesankhefemmaat.... I will nullify (*wsf*) every divine visitation (*pḥ-nṯr*), every bad..., every bad word (*mdt bỉn*), which has been done to Nesankhefemmaat....; I shall turn them back on those who did them. I shall turn them back on those who said 'Do them!' I will not allow that they have *akh*-power (*bn ỉw⸗ỉ dỉt ȝḫw*) over him, again and again for his entire span of life. I will save him from every male dead, every female dead, every male *akh* and every female *akh*, every..., every fear (*snd*), every dread (*ḥryt*), every..., every misfortune (*ỉyt*), and every.... I will save him from every illness (*mr*), every.... I will not let [them happen to him]."

The vocabulary of such a text is practically untranslatable, the fears and dangers being so detailed, and so extensive and the precise sense of the words often so obscure. The threat from the dead is, however, characteristically associated with the danger from classes of divine

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the family context of continuing cult of the dead, and with some reference to a comparative Africanist perspective, see M. Fitzenreiter, "Zum Ahnenkult in Ägypten," *GM* 143 (1994): 51–72.

[11] For a collection of such addresses see p. 26, n. A in Robert K. Ritner, "O. Gardiner 363: a spell against night terrors," *JARCE* 27 (1990): 25–41.

[12] P. BM 10587, rt. 85–107 = Iorwerth E. S. Edwards, *Oracular Amuletic Decrees of the Late New Kingdom* (*Hieratic Papyri in the British Museum* 4) (London: The British Museum, 1960), pp. 39–40 and pl. XII.

or ghostly ill-will, and with disease and personal misfortune. Divine protection counters divine ill-will. The point, really, is that anything that is not visibly explicable is envisaged as an immaterial manifestation; a theme that is particularly characteristic of magico-medical texts. These envisage a physical result, characteristically from a physical manifestation of divine intervention. So, for instance, there is a particular danger of attack by spirits or ghosts by night, as an uninvoked visitation that contrasts to the desired invocation of prayer; the particular danger is that ghosts 'enter', and occasionally this is expressed in sexual terms—the danger that the ghost or demon might perform a sexual act.[13] The continuation of sexual potency in the afterlife is asserted as part of reintegration, but it provides an occasional theme of danger; ejaculation into their bodies provides one of the ways in which the ghost or demon is liable to infect them with harm. The expression of danger is characteristically given a physical metaphor, although in fact the vision of danger is essentially inchoate; the multiplicity of forms is not an explicit statement of belief, but a mixing of metaphors that in fact avoids the explicitness of uncontradictable dogma.

The image of the proper place for the ghost is varied, complex and poorly defined, but essentially it should be liminal. The passage of the dead is characteristically visualised as a passage through the margins of the cosmos; for instance, the 'Island of Fire' where the sun is reborn. It is the sky where stars can be visualised as visible ghosts. It is the night-world—the underworld—where the sun passes from setting to rising. It is a parallel world to this—the field of reeds—where crops are rich and never fail. It is the halls of Osiris, in the image of a royal court surrounding the dead god.

The contradictions of the state of death are brought into explicit discourse in the songs of harpers, depicted in the tomb. The song of Papyrus Harris 500, said to come from the tomb of a King Antef, is explicit. To quote Miriam Lichtheim's translation:

> None comes back from there,
> To tell of their state,
> To tell of their needs,
> To calm our hearts,
> Until we go where they have gone! [14]

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[13] Ritner, "O. Gardiner 363: a spell against night terrors," pp. 25–41; and esp. 33–34.

[14] P. Harris 500, VI, c. 7–8; Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature I* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973–80), pp. 194–97.

The immanence of the dead does not result in real communication about the afterlife. Here, of course, the scepticism is a literary conceit: a call to enjoy life, unconcerned by ignorance of the unknowable, and not a dogmatic atheism.[15] Despite the concrete imagery of the appearance and events of the invisible world, and the acquisition of specific—initiated—knowledge about it, that knowledge is expressly lacking an evidential base. Despite the extremely concrete nature of the narrative, Egyptian belief about the immaterial world, and the fate of the dead, remains an inchoate and contradictory metaphor, best categorised by the clichéd phrase as a 'repeating of life'.

The literary motif of the living hero descending to the underworld does not appear in Egyptian material until the Late Period, although this can simply be a matter of chance. In the story of P. Vandier the hero is asked to descend to the underworld to arrange the salvation of the king, and extension of his life; the hero is not allowed to return, but can send a 'man of clay' to punish the king when he does not keep his promises. The theme is seen earlier in the New Kingdom story of the Contendings of Horus and Seth; the dead Osiris, now confined to his realm in the underworld, threatens to send out his fierce-faced envoys to drag down any god who does not comply with his judgement. In the Second Setna Romance in Demotic, from the Ptolemaic period, the hero is taken to visit the underworld by his miraculous son—a god in disguise—to learn the truth about the judgement of the dead. This motif of the judgement of the dead is found in clearer and more developed narrative form the later one goes in Egyptian history. In Old Kingdom tomb inscriptions the tomb dead threaten, not only to throttle those who desecrate their tombs, to wring their necks like a bird, but to sue them before 'the great god'. The image is that of prosecution before the king during this life, in an overlap of action between the living and the dead. In contrast, the appeal the inscriptions of the dead make to the living, to carry out their cult, is based on a moral imperative: the claim that they have been beneficial to the living during their life. The ethical justification for their continuing cult is expressed as a return for their actions in life, as well as their promises in the form of a ghost. The moral

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[15] The songs in the New Kingdom Theban Tomb 50 of Neferhotep seem specifically to reject the scepticism of this song, in a more orthodox declaration of the eternity of the afterlife contrasted to this life as a temporary dream; cf. Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature* II, pp. 116–117; Mansour el-Noubi, "A Harper's Song from the Tomb of Roma-Roy at Thebes (TT 283)," *SAK* 25 (1998): 251–55, provides an updated bibliography.

judgement of the dead, by god, for their actions in life, is however also found, implicit and explicit, from the earliest periods. Such judgement as a motif potentially compartmentalises the dead, securely separating them from the living into another world. While the motif of a secure separation of the dead, and restriction of their ability to intervene may have obvious advantages to the living, as an image it only provided a very limited feeling of security. The normal theme in Egyptian material is the immanence of the dead in this life, as the most accessible spiritual form, and their participation as one of a whole range of supernatural and invisible influences on the life of the individual.

Egyptology is full of clichés. That Egyptians believed in silly animal headed gods. That Egyptians are supposed to have been obsessed with death; an obsession that is excused, in another cliché, by the assertion that this was because they loved life so much they wanted to extend it for ever in the same form. Another crude cliché—a rather primitive form of social-evolutionary explanation—is the assertion that they never replaced one idea by another, but only added, so that everything became more and more complex: more and more forms of soul. Another key cliché is that Egyptians were intensely practical people, who cared in no way for abstracts or theory or dogma, but dealt with everything in the concrete.

The nature of a cliché is that it has some truth in it, but grossly oversimplifies. The problem is better understood as one of the *ad hoc*, often personal, resolution of individuals living in a world that is both material and immaterial. The Egyptological community has tradition- ally been less happy with the idea that it is actually better to try and understand these themes in the vocabulary of social anthropology—shall we say Levi-Strauss's *bricolateur*—than in terms of dogmatic theology. Egyptology is uneasy with the idea that Egyptian knowledge might not be definitely superior, and not coherent. I don't know whether that does anything to resolve the question of what a ghost really is, but in Egypt soul, ghost, demon, god are not distinct categories, but contextualised manifestations of the non-material; that are personified by men, or that manifest themselves of their own accord, in highly contextualised ways. They are points of contact, desired or undesired, and mostly unpredictable.

WHERE HAVE ALL THE GHOSTS GONE?
EVOLUTION OF A CONCEPT IN BIBLICAL LITERATURE

Sze-kar Wan

What is puzzling about ghosts in biblical literature is why there are so few of them. Like all ancient religious texts, the Bible is of course suffused with what moderns call the paranormal, the preternatural, the supernatural, the magical, or what some would call the numinous. Its pages are populated with goblins and gods, sprites and spirits, demons and deities, beings that made up an irreducible part of every biblical writer's mental map of reality. As for the spirits of the dead, though, it says hardly anything substantial at all. The majority of references to ghosts in the Hebrew Bible are found in prohibitions and maledictions. None save one—that of Saul summoning Samuel's ghost for one last, postmortem prophecy (I Samuel 28)—describes any significant interaction with human beings. All ghosts, if they are mentioned at all—with again the exception of Samuel's—are seen as weak, powerless, otherwise confined and contained. There are no reports of malevolent ghosts terrorizing the living, no wandering spirits looking to avenge their bitter death, no hungry ghosts suing for offering and comfort. By the time of the New Testament, ghosts have all but vanished. One made it into the Gospels, but it turns out to be Jesus walking on water (Mark 6.49 and parallels).[1] Even conceding the final triumph of monotheistic Yahwism in biblical Israel that eliminated all competing religious and numinous expressions, and even taking into account of the apocalypticism of New Testament writers who habitually believed the dead would repose in God until the general resurrection, the disappearance of ghosts from the biblical records is more than a little disconcerting—unique, really, from a cross-cultural perspective.

The silence of the Bible on ghostly matters is even more surprising if we compare it to its *Umwelt*.[2] The Egyptians had an optimistic view of

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[1] Many English translations of Luke 24.27 have the disciples mistaking the resurrected Christ as "ghost." The Greek is in fact πνεῦμα ("spirit") not φάντασμα, the usual word for "ghost."

[2] For survey of Ancient Near East beliefs on the dead, see Theodore J. Lewis, "Dead,"

the afterlife in which the dead had the same need of hunger and thirst as the living but could also grant favors in exchange for the right offerings. Thus, communication with the dead was not only thought possible but in fact encouraged through letters written to them. The dead were mostly benevolent, but some letters do refer to their malevolence. By contrast, the Mesopotamians were much more pessimistic about death. Death was thought to be the appointed lot of all human beings, according to the *Gilgamesh Epic*, and the dead traveled to a land of no return where they lived and consumed their own filth. Evil ghosts were everywhere and must be appeased with proper offerings or exorcized with proper incantations. The Canaanites also had a rich ghost culture, first fueled by their fallen great kings of old and the great funeral feasts celebrated in their honor, then continued as they became popular among the people. The dead were not thought to be cut off from the living but exist in the underworld. Their ghosts could be invoked and, given the right incentives, even grant favors to the living. The Greeks thought it a reality that the dead would become ghosts and continue to participate in the affairs of the living. Hesiod thought what he called "good demons" were ghosts of long-dead heroes. Clothed in mist, they were said to roam the earth to keep justice and maintain order. Plato democratized the idea and applied it to all good humans who would turn into good demons upon death. The Greeks also believed in evil ghosts: they were humans who became "bad demons" after a violent death. In this milieu, the Bible stood alone in its slim documentation of ghosts.

This, however, was not always the case. The biblical records reflect the writing culture of the winners, especially that of the Deuteronomists, but amulets for the purpose of warding off ghosts and demons found at burial sites might tell a vastly different story.[3] Indeed, buried in the sediment of biblical traditions themselves, vestiges of the belief in ghost can still be unearthed. Two terms are found in the Hebrew text for ghost or spirit of the dead—*rĕpāʾîm* (always in the plural and often simply "Rephaim") and *ʾôb* (often "spirit of the dead" or "ancestral spirit"). The history of the two terms is complex, but its very complexity might afford us a glimpse into the evolution of ghosts and spirits from Ancient Israel to early Judaism and early Christianity.

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in K. van der Toorn, B. Becking and P. W. van der Horst eds., *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible* (Leiden/Grand Rapids: Brill/Eerdmans, 1999), pp. 224–28.

  [3] Elizabeth Bloch-Smith, *Judahite Burial Practices and Beliefs about the Dead* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992).

The Rephaim in Biblical Israel

The term *rĕpā'îm* appears twenty-five times in the Hebrew Bible and has two distinct meanings: it might mean "spirits or shades of the dead," but it can also refer to a race of giant inhabitants of southern Syria and Transjordan before the conquest, hence the frequent Septuagint translation of γίγαντες ("giants").[4] The background for these two vastly different meanings might be found in the Ugaritic *rpum*, which according to Conrad L'Heureux, might be an epithet of El when used in the singular, and when used in the plural refer to a guild of aristocratic warriors who would gather for a sacred meal under the patronage of El. As kings of yore, they were remembered in the biblical records as giants in stature, but in death they passed on as "shades of the dead," numbered among fallen nobles.[5] Thus, a term originally referring to living kings and nobles came to mean "spirits of royal ancestors" by process of historical remembrance.[6]

Both senses of giants and shades are found in Isa 14.5–20, a dirge composed to mock the imminent death of the Babylonian tyrant. In anticipation of his death, v. 9 says,

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[4] The literature on the Rephaim is enormous and is stimulated by the 1941 publication of the so-called Rephaim Texts in Ugaritic by Charles Virolleaud. Conrad L'Heureux, "The Ugaritic and Biblical Rephaim," *Harvard Theological Review* 67(1974): 265–74; Theodore J. Lewis, "Dead, Abode of The," in D. N. Freedman ed., *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* vol. 2 (New York: Doubleday, 1992), pp. 101–5); Lewis, "Dead," pp. 226–27; H. Rouillard, "Rephaim," in van der Toorn, Becking and van der Horst eds., *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, pp. 692–700, all posit some kind of relationship between *rĕpā'îm* and *rpum*; Brian Schmidt, *Israel's Beneficent Dead: Ancestor Cult and Necromancy in Ancient Israelite Religion and Tradition* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1996), pp. 267–73, however, denies any connection at all.

[5] Lewis's summary of the matter is representative of the position taken in this paper: "Perhaps the oldest substratum of the term referred to an ancient people, especially the royal heroes of old…. As time went on, the term perhaps became democratized to refer to the dead in general." (228–29)

[6] L'Heureux, "The Ugaritic and Biblical Rephaim," pp. 272–73; cf. Rouillard, "Rephaim," p. 698. L'Heureux suggests in a footnote (1974: 273–74 n. 28) that a simi-lar process went on with regard to ἥρως, which Homer used to designate the heroic figures of his poems but which Hesiod later took to mean *dead* heroes of a bygone era. (See also J. C. de Moor, "Rāpi'ūma-Raphaim," *Zeitschrift für Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 88 (1976): 323–45; for contrary view, see Schmidt, *Israel's Beneficent Dead: Ancestor Cult and Necromancy in Ancient Israelite Religion and Tradition*, p. 269.) In this con-nection, one might propose also the honorific title 公 in China, whose use for sages of the past became so fixed that it became the epithet of an honored dead ancestor. See, however, the dissenting view of Schmidt, *Israel's Beneficent Dead: Ancestor Cult and Necromancy in Ancient Israelite Religion and Tradition*, pp. 267–73.

> Sheol beneath (*šěʾôl mittaḥat*) is stirred up
> to meet you when you come;
> it rouses the Rephaim (*rěpāʾîm*) to greet you,
> all the leaders of the earth (*kōl ʿattûdê ʾāreṣ*)
> it raises from their thrones
> all the kings of the nations (*kol malkê gôyim*).[7]

Here the Rephaim are parallel to the "kings of the nations" and "leaders of the earth," two designations that are not intrinsically connected with the dead but are clearly royal.[8] The Rephaim, denizens of Sheol (also vv. 11, 15, 19), must therefore have belonged to the same royal class. So concludes H. Rouillard: "Every dead monarch is one of them, whether his end be glorious or ignominious, and whether he rest in a grave or on a 'bed of maggots' (v. 11). Transcending the boundaries of time, space, and morality, the community of the Rephaim embraces all the royal dead."[9]

While Rouillard understands the Rephaim as a collective term for *all* dead monarchs, there is reason to believe that biblical Israel reserved the title primarily for wicked kings. The Rephaim are described as weak in v. 10, with the implication that they are unable to break the imprisonment of Sheol. They might have been powerful lords in life; in death they are subjects of Sheol, obeying its every beckon call, their only pleasure that of welcoming other disgraced royalties like themselves, such as the Babylonian king, into their miserable midst. The derision put in the mouths of the Rephaim in vv. 12–20 is ostensibly directed at the dying despot, but the Rephaim might as well be speaking about themselves. They were mighty in life, challenging the "Most High," arrogating to themselves the place of heaven (vv. 12–14, 16b–17). Now, they are cut down, "going down" to Sheol. Just as in life they refused to let prisoners go free (v. 17b), so now Sheol would not let them go but holds them prisoners with the all the might of the underworld, from which there can be no escape. Indeed, Sheol is said to be equipped with gates (Isa 38.10; Ps 91.14; 107.18; Job 38.17 cf. Jer 15.7; Wis 16.13; *3 Macc* 5.51)

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[7] Modified from the NRSV. Unless otherwise noted, I am responsible for all translations.

[8] Although *ʾereṣ* could be a synonym of Sheol; see Lewis, "Dead, Abode of The," p. 104.

[9] Rouillard, "Rephaim," pp. 695–96.

and bars (Jonah 2.7; Job 38.10), so that "he who goes down to Sheol does not come up" (Job 7.9).[10]

That is why Isaiah 14 makes a distinction between being properly buried with other dignified rulers of the earth and being sent down to Sheol (vv. 18–19). While "All the kings of the nations lie in glory, each in his own tomb," the evil-doer of Babylon will not join the great kings in burial but is "cast out, away from [his] grave, like loathsome carrion" and goes down to the stones of the Pit, another name for Sheol.[11] This is the ultimate sentence handed down to the tyrant: to be denied a proper burial so that his corpse lies exposed on a bed of maggots (v. 11), to be trampled underfoot (v. 19) and denied a union with his kin in the afterlife. The punishment in this case fits the crime period. Inasmuch as he has destroyed his own land and killed his own people (v. 20), a denial of burial with his ancestors constituted a destruction of his ancestral land, his own people, and ultimately his own immortality.[12] Such a view accords with what we know of how the dead were treated in biblical Israel. Natural or "good" death led to proper burial and union with kin, but the evil dead were banished to Sheol, deprived of being reunited with their own people.[13] The Rephaim are spirits of evil kings now imprisoned in the strongholds of Sheol.[14]

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[10] Sheol is frequently equated to darkness and personified as having an insatiable appetite (Isa 5.14; Hab 2.5; Prov 27.20; 30.15b–16).

[11] "Pit" (Hebrew *bôr*), which appears also in v. 15, is a common synonym for Sheol. For the abode of the dead being called the Pit, see Isa 5.14; 38.18; Ezek 31.16; Ps 30.4; 88.4–5; Prov 1.12. Another common synonym for Sheol is ʾereṣ ("land or earth"), which also appears in v. 9. For other synonyms for Sheol, see Lewis, "Dead, Abode of The," pp. 102, 104.

[12] See below for the relation of land and descendants to the notion of immortality in Ancient Near East.

[13] The "fallen warriors" (*gibbôrîm nopĕlîm*) of Ezek 32.27—οἱ γίγαντες οἱ πεπτωκότες ("the fallen giants") in the LXX, or "Nephilim warriors" (following Gen 6.4 to repoint the text as *nĕpilîm*)—likewise "fall" (*n-p-l*) into Sheol deprived of the chance to be buried with their ancestors. More on the Nephilim giants in the discussion of Gen 6.1–4 below.

[14] Though Sheol cannot be separated from the grave, the two are not synonymous here or elsewhere. Johannes Pedersen, *Israel: Its Life and Culture* 2 vols. (London: 1926), pp. 461–62 (cited in Lewis, "Dead, Abode of The," p. 103) thought Sheol to be a collective of all graves with no judgment: "The ideas of the grave and of Sheol cannot be separated…The dead are at the same time in the grave and in Sheol…Sheol is the entirety into which all graves are merged…Sheol should be the sum of the graves…The 'Ur'-grave we might call Sheol…Where there is grave, there is Sheol, and where there is Sheol, there is grave." Ruth Rosenberg, "The Concept of Biblical Sheol within the Context of Ancient near East Beliefs," Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1981: 178–252, however, after surveying texts on grave and Sheol, concludes that in texts where one

The Rephaim appear twice in Isaiah 26, and both times the best interpretation appears to be the royal dead who had opposed Yahweh. In v. 14, the Rephaim are placed in a synonymous parallel with the dead, "The dead do not live // The Rephaim do not rise." That the Rephaim dwell in the underworld with the dead is confirmed by the use of *q-w-m* ("to rise"), the same imagery used in Isa 14.9. Just as before, the Rephaim are held prisoners, in and by death with the dead, with no hope of breaking free, since the possibility of resurrection is denied them. The Rephaim are identified in v. 13: "Other lords (*ʾădonîm*) besides you ruled over (*b-ʿ-l*) us // but we acknowledge your name alone." These "other lords" are none other than the Canaanite Baals, since they are contrasted to Yahweh.[15] In spite of the attraction these gods had on the Israelites, according to the prophet, Yahweh defeated these Canaanite lords and gods and blotted them out from the Israelites' memory, as a result of which the nation becomes great, its borders enlarged, and God is glorified (vv. 14–15). If so, the prophet is making a bold claim that the Rephaim are the defeated Baals who will not be resurrected again, for Sheol holds them in its death grips. The Rephaim were considered wicked, it follows, because they were Canaanite. Ideology played a part in the Israelites' attitudes towards the dead.

Later in the same chapter, the Rephaim appear again, but this time, in direct contrast to the earlier verses, in a context of resurrection:

> Your dead shall live, their corpses shall rise
> O dwellers in the dust, awake and sing for joy!
> For your dew is a radiant dew,
> and Eretz will make the Rephaim fall (v. 19).

This resurrection image is similar to the vision of the valley of dry bones in Ezek 37.1–14. The fecundity of the renewal under the rule of Yahweh is contrasted to the Israelites' futile and infertile attempts at giving birth to a new people to populate the earth and securing victories (v. 18). Thus Yahwism is again the controlling ideology of the treatment of the dead here.

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is said to be "gathered to his or her kin" at death, Sheol is never jointly mentioned as destination. On the other hands, Sheol is never described as an ancestral meeting place, only where one ends up after an evil death. For an account of debate, see Lewis, "Dead, Abode of The," pp. 103–4.

[15] Rouillard identifies the Canaanite god Baʿlu, the annual dying-and-rising god, as the referent here, based on "the association (or analogy) between the Ugaritic *rpum*— the deified royal ancestors—and the god Baʿlu" (Rouillard, "Rephaim," p. 696).

The last line where the Rephaim appear is troublesome. The Hebrew reads *wāʾāreṣ rĕpāʾîm tappîl*. The NRSV translates it as "And the earth will give birth to those long dead" (with "shades," Rephaim, as an alternative translation for "long dead"), somehow taking *n-p-l* as "to give birth." The LXX reads ἡ γῆ τῶν ἀσεβῶν πεσεῖται ("And the earth of the impious will fall"), thus reducing the causative of the hiphil (*tappîl*) to an active but preserving the imperfect in the future.[16] It then takes *rĕpāʾim* as "the impious" (οἱ ἀσεβεῖς) modifying ʾ*ereṣ*, resulting in ἡ γῆ τῶν ἀσεβῶν ("the earth of the impious"). The Peshitta takes *rĕpāʾim* at face value and translates it as "giants," a perfectly legitimate rendering given the background of the term, and preserves the causative hiphil by reading, "You will make the land of the giants perish." Rouillard takes the line to mean, "the underworld will reject the dead," understanding ʾ*ereṣ* as Eretz the synonym of Sheol and *rĕpāʾim* as dead Israelites.[17] In that case, the line would be a continuation of the resurrection theme of the first three line of the verse, but now modulated by a hint at immortality. On balance, given the warring imagery that exercises interpretive control over everything going back to v. 16 including the resurrection, it seems more consistent to take ʾ*ereṣ* as Sheol with Rouillard but, against him but with the Peshitta, to take *rĕpāʾîm* as the dead Canaanite lords. The Israelites ("your dead") shall rise, but the Rephaim, the dead lords of yore, will not. Sheol will make them fall, that is to say, to keep them imprisoned in the underworld just as it has done in the past and to prevent them from restaging a comeback by revivification. Even though some interpreters do not see the Rephaim here as the royal dead,[18] therefore, there is strong indication that in a continual war between tribes, they represent the forces that opposed Yahweh and the Israelites. What had been a reference to the royal person was transformed into a reference to the whole tribe.

This democratizing tendency, if one could call it that, is documented in the other Rephaim texts in the Hebrew Bible as well. While the explicit connection to the Canaanite lords is no longer in evidence, the Rephaim still represent the dreadful state of separation from the living and the even more dreadful state of being forsaken by God. In Psalm 88, an individual lament, the psalmist compares his isolation from friends and

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[16] The future, πεσεῖται, is a deponent but is erroneously identified as a passive in the Kraft-Tov MT/LXX parallel (http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/gopher/text/religion/biblical/).

[17] Rouillard, "Rephaim," p. 696.

[18] So Rouillard, "Rephaim," p. 697.

neighbors (vv. 9, 19 [8, 18]) to the dead being banished to Sheol (v. 4 [ET 3]) and pitched down the depths of the Pit (vv. 5, 7 [4, 6]). Indeed, he is like the slain in the grave whom God has forsaken and has forgotten (v. 6 [5]). This prepares him in vv. 12–13 (11–12) for his quadruple description of Sheol as grave-Abaddon-darkness-land of forgetfulness, all well-known synonyms.[19] It is in this context of hopelessness that the psalmist speaks of the Rephaim: "Do you do wonders for the dead? // Do the Rephaim rise up and praise you (v. 11 [10]; modified NRSV). *Rĕpāʾîm* here being constructed as a synonymous parallel to *mêtîm* ("the dead"), and the same use of *q-w-m* ("to rise up") to describe their movement as we saw earlier in the two Isaiah texts (14.9; 26.14), indicate that we are dealing with a stock imagery. The Rephaim are to the psalmist a perfect figure for his melancholy, because as the dead they are condemned to a permanent separation from God.

The other passages (Job 26.5; Prov. 2.18; 9.18; 21.16) do not add anything new except to reinforce this unbridgeable gulf between God and Rephaim, so much so they now appear as mortal enemies of God but are utterly powerless against Yahweh. In Job 26.5, the Rephaim are under the waters. They tremble at the sight of God's power, just as Sheol and Abaddon are stripped naked before God and Zaphon and Eretz are reduced to nothing (vv. 6–7).[20] The three passages from Proverbs place God and Rephaim at moral opposites in the moralist's two-way theology, according to which Lady Wisdom is a formal contradiction to the foolish woman. The way of Wisdom leads to understanding and prudence, while the way of Folly (NRSV: "loose woman") leads to death and to the Rephaim (2.18). Likewise, the house of Wisdom offers maturity, while that of Folly houses the Rephaim. To enter the house of Folly is to become guests of the "depths of Sheol" (9.18). Thus, "whoever wanders from the way of understanding will rest in the assembly of the Rephaim" (21.16). And so it goes. The phrase *qāhāl rĕpāʾîm* is rich

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[19] For Abaddon (from *ʾ-b-d*, "to destroy") as the mythical land of destruction, see Joachim Jeremias, "Ἀβαδδών," in G. Kittel ed., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), p. 4; M. Hutter, "Lilith," in van der Toorn, Becking and van der Horst eds., *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, p. 1. The noun became a proper name in Rev. 9.11.

[20] Zaphon (*ṣāpôn*) in the sacred geography of biblical material is the sacred mountain where the gods are. For both Zaphon and Eretz (*ʾereṣ*) as seat and symbol of power, see Isa 14.9, 13; 26.19 in the discussion above, as well as the fuller discussion by Niehr, "Zaphon," in van der Toorn, Becking and van der Horst eds., *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, pp. 927–29.

with mythological connotations and might well have a background in Canaanite cult. Here it serves at least as a synonym of Sheol.

The Ancestor Spirit in Biblical Israel

While the Rephaim represent ancestors in royal court, we are in the realm of popular culture with our second term for spirit of the dead, ʾôb. The word, literally "ghost" or "spirit," occurs sixteen times in the Hebrew Bible and in all but one instance is used in the context of necromancy. Subsequently, it acquires the derivative meaning of "medium" or "necromancer," even "necromancy." As the practice of necromancy was uniformly condemned under a penalty of death under monotheistic Yahwism, the term carries with it overwhelmingly negative connotations.[21]

The one independent usage in Isa 29.4 suggests Sheol is where spirits of the dead belong. As we have seen time and again, Sheol does not disgorge its inhabitants. Describing a siege against Jerusalem, the prophet in a double synonymous couplet compares the cries of the city to a ghost underground silenced and made impotent:

> Deep from Eretz you will speak, and from dust will come your words, Like a ghost from Eretz your voice will be, and from dust your words will whisper.

So profound are the despairs of the besieged city and so smothered are the voices of the cries that they are compared to whispering from dust and voices from Eretz. This is the same image of Jerusalem's exile described as being swallowed up by insatiable Sheol (Isa 5.14–15). The point here is not ghosts could be heard from underground but its very opposite: Just as dust could not form words, neither could the voice of the dead be heard. Sheol is an impenetrable barrier separating the living from the dead. Worse, Yahweh does not hear the cries of the dead.

Formidable as Sheol's impenetrability is, or perhaps because of it, evidence suggests that it did not prevent the people from seeking communication with the dead. The widespread popularity of necromancy made

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[21] See William Gesenius, E. Robinson trans., *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament with an Appendix Containing the Biblical Aramaic* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1951), p. 15.

it necessary to impose so severe a punishment as death in an attempt to curb the practice. An extensive account of necromancy is found in the Deuteronomistic I Sam 28.3–19.[22] The passage is an unlikely source of information, because it was the Deuteronomists who most strenuously opposed necromancy.[23] One purpose of the passage is certainly to show what a bad king Saul was who, as did other bad kings in the history of Israel, consulted a medium. Manasseh was considered a "bad" king, because he allowed the ʾôb-cult and related practices to thrive and was an adherent himself (II Kings 21.6; II Chron 33.6). Josiah, on the other hand, who put away mediums and wizards in favor of Yahwism was a "good" king (II Kings 23.24). Saul was similarly judged. The Chronicler explicitly links Saul's death to this passage in I Samuel and concludes that Saul's "unfaithfulness" consisted of not only his disobedience of the commands of the Lord but also his having sought out a medium and not the Lord (I Chron 10.13–14).

   The central narrative purpose of I Samuel 28, however, is clearly to show how much Yahweh was in control, even of ghosts and spirits, who were powerless to thwart the pre-ordained purpose of the Lord. The passage begins with the explicit statement that "Saul had expelled all mediums and wizards (ʾobôt wěʾet-hayyidděʿonîm[24]) from the land" (v. 3), a statement repeated a few verses later for emphasis, this time in the mouth of the medium (v. 9). Thus Saul is seen as one who was initially devoted to Yahwism but who later fell away. Samuel had died and the Philistines were assembled at Gilboa. Despite entreaties to the Lord, Saul no longer received answers through approved channels—i.e.,

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[22] This famous passage has been the subject of intense study and debate. See summary of issues and bibliography in Schmidt, *Israel's Beneficent Dead: Ancestor Cult and Necromancy in Ancient Israelite Religion and Tradition*, pp. 201–20. Suffice to say, for the limited scope of the present study, while I agree with Schmidt that the passage contains late redaction, I do not think it is post-Deuteronomistic.

[23] Of the sixteen references to ʾôb, thirteen are found in Deuteronomistic sources: Lev 19.31; 20.6, 27; Deut 18.11; I Sam 28.3, 7 [*bis*], 8, 9; II Kings 21.6; 23.24; I Chron 10.13; II Chron 33.6. Three other occurrences of the term are found in Isa 8.19; 19.3; and 29.4.

[24] *Yidděʿonî* appears eleven times in the Hebrew Bible and is variously translated as "familiar spirit" (e.g., NRSV Isa 8.19; 19.3), "soothsayer" (so Gesenius, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament with an Appendix Containing the Biblical Aramaic*, p. 396), and "wizard" (Joseph Tropper, "Wizard," in van der Toorn, Becking and van der Horst eds., *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, pp. 907–8). Given the intensive formation, it might mean something like "one who is extremely knowledgeable" or "the all-knowing one"; see Tropper, "Wizard," p. 907. The term always follows ʾôb in biblical material and is likely an established synonym.

by dreams, lots, or prophets (v. 6; cf. v. 15)—because he had disobeyed the Lord (v. 18). Besieged and frightened, Saul turned to a medium. At this point, the story takes an ironic twist.

The silence of Yahweh drove Saul to a medium. For the narrator, this is both effect and cause of Saul's faithlessness. Because Saul had displeased Yahweh, Yahweh fell silent, and because Yahweh fell silent, Saul consulted the medium, thus compounding his faithlessness. Since Saul no longer belonged to the ranks of Yahweh, so reasons the Deuteronomist, Yahweh had abandoned him to the opposition. In the words of Samuel the ghost, "Because you did not obey the voice of the Lord, … therefore the Lord has done this thing to you today" (v. 18b NRSV). "The Lord has turned from you and become your enemy" (v. 16b NRSV). That Saul turned out to be successful in rousing up the ghost of Samuel was further evidence of Saul's total capitulation to the other side (cf. I Chron 10.13–14). Even so, the narrative shows that Yahwism had emerged victorious, for even though the medium was successful in bringing up the ghost of Samuel for Saul, the delivered message predicts a triumph for Yahweh's will and a total defeat for Saul and his army: "The Lord will give Israel along with you into the hands of the Philistines …; the Lord will also give the army of Israel into the hands of the Philistines" (v. 19 NRSV). Yahweh remained firmly in control, the story concludes, even over the underworld and its priests and priestesses.

Unwittingly, however, in the process of trumpeting the superiority of the Yahwism, the Deuteronomistic writer might have left us clues in the story pointing to the parallel nature of Yahwism and the ʾôb-cult. In the lives of ordinary people, Yahwism and the ʾôb-cult might well have represented two live, competing options, equally efficacious for access to the other world. The two cults must have existed on parallel course for much longer than the Deuteronomists would have us believe. First of all, it seems laughably easy to locate a woman-medium in a land that had supposedly eradicated necromancy.[25] Even given an economy of language, the narrative tells us that Saul knew there were woman-mediums in the land, and his servants were quick to tell him where (I Sam 28.7). "Woman-medium" (ʾēšet baʿălat-ʾôb, literally "mistress of ʾôb") appears twice in 28.7. According to J. Tropper, the title is analogous

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[25] The verb used in 28.3 for the eradication of mediums and spirits is ḥ-s-r, which in the piel has the causative sense of "to cause a lack," "to deprive," "to remove"; see Gesenius, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament with an Appendix Containing the Biblical Aramaic*, p. 341.

to the Sumero-Akkadian name for necromancers, "master of the spirit of the dead." If so, this would point to the antiquity of a longstanding profession that required special knowledge of rituals to master the spirits of the dead.[26] Saul's proscription had not stamped out the practice; it might even have been tolerated, if so unofficially, to hedge against exactly the kind of situation in which Saul now found himself. Once Saul thought he had lost favor with Yahweh, he quickly turned to the other side. If one side refused your inquiries, it was time to try the other.

Phenomenologically, therefore, the narrative preserves several parallels between the two cults. In vv. 13–14, when Saul asks the woman-medium what she sees, she replies, "I see a god (*ʾĕlohîm*) coming up from Eretz."[27] Upon knowing that Samuel has been summoned, Saul "bowed down on his face and worshipped him."[28] So far as Saul the seeker and the medium the practitioner were concerned, therefore, the results of her actions were indistinguishable from those obtained through the approved channels of Yahwism. In v. 6, "Saul inquired of the Lord" (*wayyišěʾal šāʾûl bāyhwāh*), using *š-ʾ-l*, a well-known *terminus technicus* for "to inquire through divination," in connection with Yahweh. In Deut 18.11 and I Chron 10.13–14, the formula (*š-ʾ-l + bě + ʾôb*) is used for the *ʾôb*-cult. In the latter passage, which recounts the sins of Saul responsible for his downfall with a reference to the episode in I Samuel 28, the *ʾôb*-cult and Yahwism are dramatically contrasted in an antithetical parallelism: Saul "inquired of *ʾôb* (*lišěʾôl bāʾôb liděrôš*), but he did not seek the Lord (*loʾ-dāraš bāyhwāh*, I Chron 10.14)." Thus, when the same term (*š-ʾ-l*) is used in I Sam 28.16, but in the context of querying the ghost of Samuel that had been roused by the woman-medium, it shows that Saul was treating Samuel, as well as the other prophets approved by Yahwism, no different from the woman-medium.

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[26]   See J. Tropper, "Spirit of the Dead," in van der Toorn, Becking and van der Horst eds., *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, p. 808.

[27]   Cf. Isa 8.19 where *ʾôb* is also parallel to *ʾĕlohîm*. Whether *ʾĕlohîm* here should be identified as Samuel is the subject of intense debate. Schmidt, *Israel's Beneficent Dead: Ancestor Cult and Necromancy in Ancient Israelite Religion and Tradition*, p. 210, comes out on the negative; but Theodore J. Lewis, *Cults of the Dead in Ancient Israel and Ugarit Harvard Semitic Monographs* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), pp. 115–16, regards the designation a means by the narrator to convey the preternatural nature of the ghost. The problem is related to deification of the dead in Ancient Israel and its neighbors. See below for further discussion.

[28]   *š-ḥ-h*, "to bow down," "to prostrate oneself before a superior," is a common verb to express obeisance to a king, to God, or before other gods; Gesenius, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament with an Appendix Containing the Biblical Aramaic*, p. 1005.

For Saul, both represented a source of extraordinary power that gave them privileged access to extrahuman dimensions. His mistake, from the vantage point of the narrator, was that he mistook prophets' channeling skills for their source of power, which was in Yahweh. Indeed, the narrator would agree with Saul that Samuel was no more or less a medium than the woman of Endor, only that Yahweh was the more potent deity than whatever spirit she served.

I Samuel 28 is one of the few places in biblical literature that include such an extended account of ghost encountering. It is therefore all the more disappointing that it says rather little about the ghost itself. Samuel the summoned spirit was little different from Samuel the prophet, in appearance or in power, so much so that Saul had no difficulty recognizing him right away (v. 24). The dead Samuel possessed the same features as before, the same memory to which he made reference, the same speech he gave Saul. He even acted like the same emissary of Yahweh dead as he was alive. Neither did Samuel the ghost possess any greater, or less, power than the prophet while he was alive, although he did seem to know the latest news about Saul. The story has him reiterating prophecies from before (cf. I Sam 15.28–30), but does not claim that he knew more dead than alive.[29] Even the prediction that Saul and his sons will die the next day (v. 19) is not presented as prophecy but as a logical conclusion of an earlier one (chapter 15). From this we can see that in biblical Israel, the dead was thought to have a continued existence, albeit in a different mode than before and situated in a different realm (Sheol). Communication between the living and the dead could be carried out only with great difficulties. In secret and outside the strictures of official Yahwism, one could engage the service of a medium to perform the correct rituals to summon the dead, but one did so at one's own risk, for such practices were prohibited with the harshest penalties.

Ancestral Spirits and Immortality

But was ideological control the only cause for critique and eradication of the ʾôb-cult? Since political motivations and religious sensibilities were inextricably bound up in Ancient Israel, what was the religious

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[29] In fact, many recognize that chapter 28 was intended to be a literary continuation of chapter 15. See especially 15.35, "Samuel did not see Saul again until the day of *his* [i.e., Saul's] death."

dimension of a political prohibition? More to the point, what factors were responsible for the self-perpetuated distinction between Yahwism and the ʾôb-cult that led to the condemnation of the latter? Mere differences do not get at the heart of the matter—competition for the devotion of the Israelites—unless those differences were negotiated on a common ideational platform that supported them in the first place. As we could gather from the episode with Saul and Samuel, necromancy was proscribed not because it was ineffective but precisely because it was efficacious.[30] Yahwism and the ʾôb-cult must have been tapping into the same cultural psyche regarding the dead and their spirits. In other words, similarities between Yahwism and the ʾôb-cult are as important as their differences in understanding the Israelites' construction of ghosts. What was in fact shared by the two cults? The answer is ancestor worship, the veneration of ancestors through ritual and institution.

Ancestor worship most likely informed the religious life of Ancient Israel and underlay much of the continual fascination with the ʾôb-cult during the monarchical even down to the prophetic period.[31] The etymology of ʾôb itself points to ancestor worship. It might well be related to the Ugaritic ilib, literally "god-father" but best translated as "deified ancestor," and one might posit a connection between ʾôb and ʾāb ("father" or "ancestor").[32] Indeed, much of necromancy in the Ancient Near East took place in the context of the ancestor cult. The invocation and interrogation of the dead was primarily for the purpose of getting information or seeking help from one's dead ancestors.[33] Because ancestor worship implies to a certain extent the deification of the ancestor,[34] it was inevitable that it clashed with emerging monotheistic Yahwism. But in its interaction with Yahwism, it might also have influenced much of its later development.

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[30] Herbert Brichto, "Kin, Cult, Land and Afterlife—a Biblial Complex," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 44(1973): 7–8, citing Yehezkel Kaufmann.

[31] Theodore J. Lewis, "Ancestor Worship," in D. N. Freedman ed., *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* vol. 1 (New York: Doubleday, 1992), pp. 240–42; Joseph Tropper, "Spirit of the Dead," in van der Toorn, Becking and van der Horst eds., *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, pp. 806–09. Schmidt, *Israel's Beneficent Dead: Ancestor Cult and Necromancy in Ancient Israelite Religion and Tradition*, however, argues that all references to ancestor worship in biblical literature are late, even post-Deuteronomistic; see 274–93.

[32] Tropper, "Spirit of the Dead," p. 807.

[33] See Lewis, "Ancestor Worship," pp. 240–41; Tropper, "Spirit of the Dead," p. 807.

[34] But see Schmidt, *Israel's Beneficent Dead: Ancestor Cult and Necromancy in Ancient Israelite Religion and Tradition*, pp. 274–93.

To better understand the antagonistic relationship between Yahwism and the ancestor cult, it is instructive to examine the notion of immortality in Ancient Israel.[35] In Patriarchal times, the notion of immortality was expressed through the continuation of progeny and maintenance of ancestral land. Immortality was understood in the context of as well as in terms of clan solidarity. When a patriarch died, he was said to be "gathered to his kin" (*neʾšap ʾel ʿammāyw*) or "sleeping with his fathers" (*šākab ʿim ʾăbôtāyw*)—in the ancestral land where his ancestors had been buried and which his descendants will maintain and preserve.[36] For Abraham, for example, the archetype of immortality in Ancient Israel, land and descendants were promised to him in his covenant with Yahweh. At Sarah's death, Abraham haggled at length with Ephron the Hittite for the cave of Machpelah (Genesis 23), and the negotiation concluded with the pronouncement that "the field and the cave that is in it passed from the Hittites into Abraham's possession as a burying place" (v. 20). While the death of Sarah merits one verse in the account, the passing of the land from the Hittites into the possession of Abraham as a *permanent* burial place—for Abraham and his children—occupies the bulk of the chapter, for that is the focal interest of the story.[37]

On the other side, a curse literally worse than death in biblical Israel was a death deprived of proper burial, for it would mean being kept out of family land and not being able to be buried with one's ancestors. Such was the manner of death with which Ahab and Jezebel were threatened: to have every male in Israel (i.e., every legitimate descendants)

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[35] On much of my ensuing discussion of immortality, I depend on Brichto, "Kin, Cult, Land and Afterlife—a Biblial Complex," pp. 1–54.

[36] Lewis, "Ancestor Worship," p. 242.

[37] So concludes Brichto, "Kin, Cult, Land and Afterlife—a Biblial Complex," pp. 48–49: "We believe that the evidence deduced from earliest Israelite sources through texts as late as the exilic prophets testifies overwhelmingly to a belief on the part of biblical Israel in an afterlife, an afterlife in which the dead, though apparently deprived of material substance, retain such personality characteristics as form, memory, consciousness and even knowledge of what happens to their descendants in the land of the living. They remain very much concerned about the fortunes of their descendants, for they are dependent on them, on their continued existence on the family land, on their performance of memorial rites, for a felicitous condition in the afterlife. Such a belief is not to be confused with 'immortality only in their posterity,' a phrase which usually reflects the modern notion of the transmission of ancestral genes; nor with a vague hope that the dead continue as individuals or names in the memory of later generations. Nor is it to carry in its train such conceptual baggage as Paradise, Elysian Fields, Resurrection, etc. This belief on the part of biblical Israel is not repudiated, nor are the basic practices attendant to it proscribed by the authoritative spokesman of normative biblical religion."

cut down and to have one's corpse eaten by the vilest of animals (i.e., to be denied a burial) (I Kings 21.21, 23–24). Likewise, the exchange of insults between Goliath and David—"to make a carrion of you" (I Sam 17.44, 46)—would have to be seen in light of the complex burial-ancestral land-immortality equation. Thus, in the prophetic pronouncement against the nations of Isa 34.2–3, the slaughter of their hordes is to be followed by exposure of their corpses. In Isa 14.18–19, a passage discussed earlier in connection with the Rephaim, the tyrant of Babylon is judged upon his death for his cruelty, and the punishment is to be cast out of his ancestral grave—thus being denied immortality. This is such an extreme form of punishment, because it entailed permanent separation from one's ancestors and children.

Death was therefore not isolation from or termination of life but a different mode of living in Ancient Israel. The dead still dwelled in the company of their clan, so long as the viability of the clan was strengthened and maintained. Communication between dead ancestors and their living descendants was possible. The dead must be cared for by those remaining behind, since ancestors depended on the living for shelter and food; in turn, the well-cared-for ancestors provided blessings to their descendants in times of need. By contrast, loss of ancestral land or deprivation from it as a result of an evil death (e.g., not buried in the ancestral plots with one's forebears) was functionally the same as not leaving behind any descendants to care for the dead and the ancestral land. Both meant dissolution of the clan and loss of immortality. The line between the living and the dead was fluid and porous, which made it possible to appeal to ancestor worship as the means of promoting and strengthening clan solidarity. In this regard, Ancient Israel shared much in common with its Near Eastern neighbors.[38]

If so, what hardened the separation between the realm of the living and the realm of the dead? And what role did normative Yahwism play in the process? The ascendancy of monotheistic Yahwism went hand in glove with the unification of the divided tribes into a federated kingdom. It was therefore a requirement to gather the cults of different ancestors in diverse tribes under Yahweh, who oversaw the land and its distribution among the patriarchs. The ancestor cult, if allowed to continue, would have fragmented the clans and localized authority and loyal in the clan and not in the federated creation of monarchical Israel. Monotheistic Yahwism, in other words, was a theological articulation

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[38] Lewis, "Ancestor Worship," p. 242.

of what was at heart a political program. Consequently, all of Israel were now the ʾam of Yahweh, whom the people must venerate and worship. Yahweh's "immortality" (if one could still use the term), an unquestioned assumption from the start, was then tied organically to the continual existence of the people ("I am your God and you are my ʾam"), the descendants (the children of the covenant), and their maintenance of the ancestral land (The land "promised" by Yahweh to the Patriarchs). The loss of land would have meant dethroning Yahweh and extirpating the people of Israel.

A correlative, perhaps even coordinated, development was the calcification of the once-fluid separation between descendants and ancestors, between the living and the dead, between the people and Yahweh. The sociopolitical reality responsible for the development was Israel's self-definition in contradistinction from its surrounding neighbors. For example, in Deut 18.9–14, a list of "abhorrent practices of the Nations (haggôyim)" (v. 9) are retrofitted into the religious profile of the Canaanites: child sacrifice, augury, and sorcery, the ʾôb-cult (šoʾēl ʾôb wĕyiddĕʿonî), casting of spells, consultation of ghosts and spirits, and seeking oracles from the dead (vv. 10–11). All these means of communicating with the gods and with the dead are now taboo, for the simple reason that they are "Canaanite." The "Canaanites," called haggôyim twice in this passage (vv. 9, 14), thus function as a metonym for all foreigners in biblical literature. The ʾôb-cult could not be practiced and communication with the dead must be closed off, in order to preserve the fragile political unity between tribes and to forge an unambiguous ethnic identity constantly under the threaten of assimilation.

Other references to the ʾôb-cult confirm this observation. The ʾôb-cult is used to deride foreign rulers, because this is what they do in times of desperation. So, e.g., Ahaz consulted the "dead on behalf of the living," with "the dead" parallel to "his gods" (Isa 8.19). Thus also the Egyptians, who according to Isa 19.3, sought their idols, their ʾiṭṭîm ("ghosts" a hapax legomenon in the Hebrew Bible), ʾobôt, yiddĕʿonîm, and ʾĕlîlîm ("gods" or "idols"). But Yahweh would thwart their plans nonetheless by "draining, laying waste of, emptying of their spirit of the Egyptians" (nābĕqah rûaḥ-miṣĕrayim).[39] "Spirit" here could mean just courage, since it is parallel to "plan," but in a context redolent with references

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[39] For b-q-q in the niphal as "to be made void," "to be emptied," see Gesenius, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament with an Appendix Containing the Biblical Aramaic*, p. 132.

to divination and necromancy, it might be more appropriate to take it to mean the collection of gods and spirits that inhabited Egypt. The promise here has to do with Yahweh triumphing over the deities of a foreign land and casting them out. In other words, the rigid distinction between the living and the dead ancestors was necessitated by the hardening of the border between Israel and her neighbors.

In this connection, the theoretical anthropology of Mary Douglas might be helpful in conceptualizing the transition from ancestor worship to monotheistic Yahwism. According to Douglas, taboos serve a social function of clarifying group boundaries and strengthening group solidarity. This is accomplished by means of constructing the outside space as "polluted" and the inside as "pure." This notion of purity and taboo is needed the most where identity is at its most ambiguous and therefore the weakest. Beliefs of the uncleanliness of the others are designed to protect the "most vulnerable domains, where ambiguity would most weaken the fragile structure."[40] The kosher food laws, for instance, function in Judaism for the purpose of maintaining boundaries between insiders and outsiders.[41] Indeed, the Levitical prohibition against the ʾôb-cult places the matter in a realm of purity and pollution as defined by normative Yahwism. Turning to ʾobôt and yiddĕʿonîm would render one ritually unclean (ṭ-m-ʾ; Lev 19.31), thereby risking separation from Yahweh and the covenantal people (Lev 20.6). Penalty for people who practice such an art, mediums and wizards, was death (Lev 20.27). In thus maintaining the hard distinction between Yahweh and the ancestral spirits of the foreign lands, the center of Yahwism was safeguarded and ethnic identity of Israel preserved.

This exoticization of the ancestor cult may provide an answer to the absence of malicious ghosts in the biblical records. Part of the answer can readily be found in monotheistic Yahwism. If veneration of ancestors became the foreigners' ritual, if consulting the dead characterized those who were outside the Yahwistic circle, and if veneration of ancestor was replaced by veneration of Yahweh, it was but a small step to conclude that all spirits that troubled human beings must be of foreign

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[40] Mary Douglas, *Implicit Meanings: Essays in Anthropology* (London: Routledge & Paul, 1975), p. 58; see the general theory of purity and pollution in Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (New York: Praeger, 1966); and her application of theory to Leviticus in Mary Douglas, *Leviticus as Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

[41] Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo.*

origins. Furthermore, these ghosts could not be spirits of dead people, for the dead either rest in the ancestral land that is Yahweh's or are safely locked up in Sheol. These spirits, one might conclude, must be independent demons.

In terms of Douglas's theory of purity and pollution, Yahwistic monotheism tabooized all other deities and spirits, safely ensconcing friendly spirits (including those of ancestors) in the ancestral land (*sc.* Israel), while consigning hostile spirits to foreign lands or, in the case of the Rephaim, to the underworld. Thus, the Israel-*versus-haggôyim* correspondence was mirrored by the one between Yahweh and "other" foreign gods. Just as hostility by definition could come only from the other nations, hostile spirits likewise could only originate from those beings outside Yahweh. In other words, the taboo-purity boundary was drawn primarily along cultural and political lines, and the divide was sufficiently broad to have included even hostile spirits.

Δαίμων *and Demon in Judaism and Early Christianity*

One of the linguistic devices available to biblical writers, as noted above, for purpose of proscribing ancestor worship and marginalizing the ancestral spirits was to compare ʾôb to foreign gods and idol-worship. In their hands, a term with positive connotations was transformed into a pejorative one. During the Hellenistic period, Greek-speaking Jewish writers in the diaspora, for whom daily contact with Gentiles was a (op)pressing reality, used a similar device, this time in the service of translating from the Hebrew into Greek: They called Canaanite deities δαίμονες. Without changing the denotations of these terms but by merely placing them in an anti-Yahwistic context, the translators made δαίμων demonic—literally and etymologically. In so doing, they transformed the way the West looked at "demons" forever.

In classical usage, δαίμων or its diminutive δαιμόνιον meant deity in general without referring to any one particular divine being, but the term gradually became a god or goddess through usage. Athena was called a δαίμων in Homer (*Il.* 1.206), as was Aphrodite (*Il.* 3.420), and Hesiod famously called spirits of dead heroes from the golden ages δαίμονες (*Works* 110–39; also 252–55, 314).[42] They served as subordinates

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[42] Plutarch's report in *Obs.* 10–15 (*Moralia* 415a–18d).

to higher gods, but were sometimes appointed to watch over human affairs or to guard the safety of human beings, so that δαίμονες gradually became intermediaries between the gods and humans. They were thought to be entrusted with responsibilities such as inspiration, enlightenment, and mediation. Thus, the genius of Socrates was attributed to the famous δαιμόνιον (Plato, *Apol.* 24b, 40a), which Plato later called a θεός ("god") and, perhaps tongue in cheek, a lesser god.[43] All this formed the background of the adjective εὐδαιμόνια ("happy, fortunate, prosperous"). After dinner, a toast would be drunk to the ἀγαθὸς δαίμων, the Good Genius (Arist., *Wasps* 5.525). Δαίμων was also the common word for Τύχη, the goddess Fate (*Od.* 5.396; 10.64, among others), and is the equivalent of *Fortuna* in Latin (Plautus, *Capt.* 4.2.54, etc.).[44]

This last meaning is evidently what is meant in the LXX translation of Isa 65.11, the only use of δαίμων by the Greek translators. The postexilic author pronounces judgment on Israel, because it has forsaken the Lord and "set a table for Gad (*lagad*) // and filled cups of mixed wine for Meni (*laměnî*)" (NRSV modified). Gad and Meni were two of the many Ancient Near Eastern gods of fortune or fate.[45] Meni appears nowhere else in biblical literature but Gad might well be behind Gen 30.11. There the writer perhaps tried to avoid any confusion between the tribal name Gad with the Canaanite god by basing it on Leah's alleged exclamation *bāgād!* (LXX ἐν τύχῃ).[46] The imagery of setting table and filling up cups of wine, coupled with the forsake-forget parallelism in the first two lines of the verse, places us in the context of an anti-Yahweh cultic meal. Here *měnî* is translated in the LXX by τύχη, and *gad* by δαίμων.

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[43] Literally, "the bastard children of gods either from nymphs or others" (*Apol.* 27cd). Plato hastened to qualify, however, "…as alleged by some."

[44] For a more comprehensive study of δαίμων in Greek usage, see Werner Foerster, "Δαίμων, κτλ," in G. Kittel ed., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), pp. 2–9.

[45] See S. Ribichini, "Gad," in van der Toorn, Becking and van der Horst eds., *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, pp. 339–40; S. D. Sperling, "Meni," in van der Toorn, Becking and van der Horst eds., *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, p. 567.

[46] The suspicion that there once had been a connection persists, however. See S. Ribichini, "Gad," p. 341. See pp. 340–41 for a list of possible related deities: *Baʿal-gād*, possibly "Gad is the Lord," "Baal is fortune," or "Baal of (the clan of) Gad" (Josh 11.17; 12.7; 13.5); *Migdal-gād*, possibly "Tower of Gad," "Tower of Fortune," or "Tower of (the clan of) Gad" (Josh 15.37). If these titles are related to the Gad of Isa 65.11, the god of Fortune probably had a far greater role in the life of Israel than heretofore realized.

The more common term for demon in the LXX is δαιμόνιον, which in Greek usage was a subordinate deity to δαίμων but was used as a close synonym by the Jewish translators. In the LXX δαιμόνιον is uniformly pejorative, properly translated as "demon" in modern English. In Isa 65.4, the prophecy discussed above, δαιμόνιον translates an underlying reading of *šěd* Shed.[47] Shed was the calf-shaped god of Babylon and Assyria, to which the children of Israel were said to have sacrificed their sons and daughters (Deut 32.17; Ps 106.37 [LXX 105.37]).[48] Δαιμόνιον also translates *śāʿîr*, which should be identified as Satyr, the hairy goat-demon.[49] Leviticus 17.7 and II Chron 11.15 both describe a cult devoted to the veneration of goat-demons among Israelites, which the biblical writers denounced *post eventu*.[50] The other two uses of *śāʿîr*, in Isa 13.21 and 34.14, both translated by δαιμόνιον, describe Babylon and Edom as being destroyed and turned into an uninhabitable world, like Sodom and Gomorrah. There only wild animals roam and *śěʿîrîm* dance. In Isa 34.14, furthermore, *śāʿîr* is paralleled by the only appearance of *lîlît* (Lilith) in biblical literature. Lilith was the young, ever-sexually-unfilled seductress of men.[51]

The use of δαιμόνια in Ps 96.5 [LXX 95.5] to translate *ʾělîlîm* ("idols"), the only such instance in the LXX, is the most revealing of all because of the inanimate nature of idols. The intent of the translators can be readily understood in the context of monotheistic Yahwism. The Hebrew text denigrates the foreign gods by contrasting them to Yahweh the creator. While Yahweh shows forth power, the foreign gods are but lifeless idols—i.e., visible but inanimate figures with no inherent power. By calling these idols δαιμόνια, the LXX actually grants the *ʾělîlîm* life, but by turning *hāʿammîm* ("the peoples") into τὰ ἔθνη ("the Gentiles"), the Greek text makes demons out of these *gentile* deities.[52] Such a move

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[47] Based on a reconstructed *šědîm* following the LXX; the MT reads *yošěbîm*.

[48] G. Riley, "Demon," in van der Toorn, Becking and van der Horst eds., *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, p. 237; N. Wyatt, "Calf," in van der Toorn, Becking and van der Horst eds., *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, p. 181.

[49] B. Janowski, "Satyrs," in van der Toorn, Becking and van der Horst eds., *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, pp. 732–33.

[50] The LXX in both places has οἱ μάταιοι or τὰ μάταια, "the empty ones or things."

[51] Hutter, "Lilith," p. 521.

[52] The expression τὰ ἔθνη, of course, does translate "the peoples" literally. By the third and second centuries B.C.E., however, it had already become the *terminus technicus* for "Gentiles."

presupposed a decisive separation between Jews and Gentiles that attributed the worthlessness of the idols to their gentile origins.

The passage that gathers all the elements we have discussed so far and was likely the starting point for Hellenistic-Jewish and later on Early Christian speculation on demons is LXX Gen 6.1–4, the transgressive story of the Nephilim issuing from the sons of God mating with the daughters of men. In the LXX, it has become a passage explaining the origins of the giants. The term γίγαντες ("giants") is used to translate both the *nĕpilîm*, often left untranslated as Nephilim, and the *gibborîm*, "heroes" or "giants" (v. 4). Though the Hebrew text makes no mention of the Rephaim, the fact that the Rephaim are regularly translated by γίγαντες in the LXX created a platform for speculating on the origins of spirits and demons. In dualistic apocalyptic Judaism, in which God and Satan were engaged in a cosmic battle, this passage was especially handy, since it gathers all supernatural beings hostile to God under the category of δαίμονες.

Several Second Temple Jewish works took advantage of this new category, but none took the matter as far and as systematic as the *Book of Jubilees*, a mid-second century B.C.E. extensive rewriting of Genesis from the perspective of law observance.[53] So, e.g., it goes to great lengths to tout the importance of the sabbath (2.17–24), circumcision (15.25–32), purification after childbirth (3.8–14), and so on. These and other ordinances must be kept because they are written on heavenly tablets (e.g., 3.31; 4.32; 15.25, etc.). The sabbath must be strictly observed, because even angels keep it with God in heaven (2.18). The book's interest in the law raises an obvious question: Why only Israel has the law and the Gentiles do not? To answer because God has elected Israel only pushes the question back further: Does that not make a benevolent and omnipotent creator God unjust? What have the Gentiles ("the nations") done to merit abandonment? If it is something they did, what or who led

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[53] A consensus is achieved on the date of *Jubilees;* see O. S. Wintermute, "Jubilees: A New Translation and Introduction," in J. H. Charlesworth ed., *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* vol. 2 (Garden City: Doubleday, 1985), pp. 43–44; James VanderKam, "Jubilees, Book Of," in L. Schiffman and J. VanderKam eds., *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 434–35. It is also fairly certain that the author given his strict interpretation of the law, his abhorrence of all things gentile, and his knowledge of the 364-day calendar probably came out of the Hasidic circle. That so many copies and fragments of the work are found in Qumran suggests that either he belonged to the Essene branch of the Hasidim or that the work was subsequently adopted by the Essenes.

them astray? One of the purposes of *Jubilees* in rewriting Genesis is to deal with the problem of theodicy.

The answer *Jubilees* provides is that extrahuman agents, namely demons, caused the proliferation of evil in the world. Expanding on the Nephilim story of Gen 6.1–4, the author asserts that demons were not created by God nor were they spirits of dead people; rather, they issued from the angels of the Lord who disobeyed their master's commands and mated with the daughters of men. In 5.1, 6–10, where Gen 6.1–4 has been reworked, the demons do not make their appearance, but in 7.20–33, the narrative makes clear that demons had misled Noah's descendants astray in the same way that the evil angels and giants have wrecked havoc on earth. Three vices caused the flood: fornication, pollution, and injustice (7.20–21), and all three were caused by the evil spirits and the giants (7.22–24).[54] For this reason, the Lord destroyed them all in the flood, leaving only Noah and his sons (7.25–26). At this point, Noah addresses his sons:

> For I see, and behold, *the demons have begun to mislead you and your children.* And now I fear for your sakes that after I die, you will pour out the blood of men upon the earth. And you will be blotted out from the surface of the earth. *For all who eat the blood of man and all who eat the blood of any flesh will be blotted out, all of them from the earth.* And no man who eats blood and sheds the blood of man will remain upon the earth; and *neither seed nor posterity will remain alive* for him under heaven. For they will go down into Sheol, and into the place of judgment they will descend. And into darkness of the depths they will all be removed with a cruel death (7.27–29; emphasis supplied).[55]

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[54] *Jubilees* here most likely depends on the Book of the Watchers (I Enoch 1–36), according to which evil spirits came out of body of the giants. In I Enoch 15.8–12: "But now the giants who are born from the (union of) the spirits and the flesh shall be called evil spirits upon the earth, because their dwelling shall be upon the earth and inside the earth. Evil spirits have come out of [the giants'] bodies.... And these spirits shall rise up against the children of the people and against the women, because they have proceeded forth from them"; tr. Isaac 1983: 21–22. In *Jub.* 7.21, the evil spirits are called Watchers. In 10.5, the Watchers are explicitly identified as the fathers of the polluted demons. On the source of *Jubilees*, see James VanderKam, "The Demons in the Book of Jubilees," in A. Lange, H. Lichtenberger and K. F. Diethard Römheld eds., *Die Dämonen/Demons: Die Dämonologie der Israelitisch-Jüdischen und führchristlichen Literatur im Kontext ihrer Umwelt/The Demonlogy of Israelite-Jewish and Early Christian Literature in Context of Their Environment* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), pp. 349–50. Other sources for the same myth: Justin, *II Apol.* 5; cf. Jude 6.

[55] Translation of *Jubilees* found in Wintermute, "Jubilees: A New Translation and Introduction," pp. 33–51.

What is remarkable about this passage is that, for the author of *Jubilees*, being misled by the demons meant principally shedding blood and eating blood; if Noah's children were to follow suit, it would lead to the death of "seed and posterity."

The reverse is also true: keeping the kosher food law and obeying the law of God would be the same as not being led astray by demons, and that would lead to life and the increase of posterity. This, in fact, *Jubilees* states explicitly in 10.1–14. The passage begins by telling us that "polluted demons began to lead astray the children of Noah's sons" even while Noah was still alive (10.1–2). Upon hearing this, Noah offers a prayer:

> Great was your grace upon me, and great was your mercy upon my soul. Let your grace be lifted up upon my sons, and *do not let the evil spirits rule over them, lest they destroy them from the earth.* But bless me and my sons. And let us grow and increase and fill the earth (10.3–4; emphasis supplied).

Noah's prayer for being fruitful and multiply follows Gen 9.1–7, but its fulfillment is contingent on his descendants' not being misled by the polluted demons. On the contrary, just as stated in 7.27–29, following the demons would mean death and oblivion. The same causal relationship between following the demons and the threat of death to the descendants is found once again in Abram's prayer two chapters later:

> Save me from the hands of evil spirits which rule over the thoughts of the heart of man, and do not let them lead me astray from following you, O my God; *but establish me and my seed forever, and let us not go astray henceforth and forever* (12.20; emphasis supplied).

Not to be led astray from God is again contrasted to God's establishing Abraham's seed forever.

What exactly is the connection between being led astray by demons and the survival of the descendants? The exegetical justification is readily found in the text of Genesis. The birth of the giants (Gen 6.1–4) is immediately followed by the indictment of human wickedness, the direct cause for destruction by flood (vv. 5–7). But the author of *Jubilees* exploits that exegetical observation by making it into a warning not to Noah's generation but to *his descendants.* The demons would lead to an annihilation of Noah's race if his children were to follow them. "Being led astray by the demons" is the same as idolatry. In 11.2–6, the author describes the world's descent into sin and chaos that started with the sons of Noah fighting with each other "in order to take captive and to kill each other, to pour the blood of man upon the earth, to eat

blood…. And they began to take captive a city and to sell male and female slaves" (11.2). In conjunction with these evil deeds, "they made for themselves *molten images, and everyone worshiped the icon which they made for themselves as a molten image.* And cruel spirits assisted them and *led them astray* so that they might commit sin and pollution" (11.4; emphasis supplied). The passage makes clear that Mastema, the head demon who later is identified as Satan (10.8, 11), played a leading role in all this by sending other spirits to assist in the effort. Indeed, this was already announced in 1.7–11, where Moses was told by his angelic guide to write down the prophecy that the descendants of Abraham would turn to strange gods: "They will make for themselves high places and groves and carved idols. And each of them will worship his own (idol) so as to go astray. And they will sacrifice their children to the demons and to every work of the error of their heart" (1.11).

Child-sacrifice is familiar to us from prohibitions in the Hebrew Bible (e.g., Deut 18.10–11; 32.17). As discussed above, Manasseh was evil, because he *inter alia* practiced child-sacrifice (II Kings 21.6; II Chron 33.6). As a close parallel to *Jub.* 1.11, Ps 106.34–37 [LXX 105.34–37]:

> [The Israelites] did not destroy the peoples,
> as the Lord commanded them,
> but they mingled with the nations
> and learned to do as they did.
> They served their idols,
> which became a snare to them.
> They sacrificed their sons
> and their daughters to the demons;
> they poured out innocent blood,
> the blood of their sons and daughters,
> whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan;
> and the land was polluted with blood.
> Thus they became unclean by their acts,
> prostituted themselves in their doings (*NRSV*)

This psalm is likely the basis for Abraham's warning to Jacob to be separated from Gentiles in *Jub.* 22.16–18: "Do not eat with them and do not perform deeds like theirs…, because their deeds are defiled…. They offer their sacrifice to the dead, and to demons they bow down,… and where they wander astray, saying to the tree 'you are my god,' and to a stone 'you are my lord, and you are my savior.' They have no mind."[56] The

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[56] Wintermute modified; cf. also VanderKam, "The Demons in the Book of Jubilees," p. 347.

move first started by the biblical writers now comes full circle: there is now identification of foreign deities with δαίμονες. In line with the emphasis on strict observance of the law, then, the idol-worshiping Gentiles are governed by demons, while Israel is ruled by God. This was already foreordained in God's choice of Esau over Ishmael:

> And he sanctified [the people of Israel] and gathered them from all the sons of man because (there are) many nations and many people, and they all belong to him, but over all of them he caused spirits to rule so that they might lead them astray from following him. But over Israel he did not cause any angel or spirit to rule because he alone is their ruler and he will protect them and he will seek for them at the hand of his angels and at the hand of his spirits and at the hand of all of his authorities so that he might guard them and bless them and they might be his and he might be theirs henceforth and forever (15.31–32).[57]

How would this constitute the demise of Noah's descendants? What this division of the nations makes clear is that it is the loss of ethnic identity about which the author of *Jubilees* is most concerned. Being led astray by demons goes hand in hand with shedding and eating blood, the worship of idols, and mingling with Gentiles. Such assimilation would spell the end of the Jewish people as an ethnically distinct group. Thus, warning against demons was really a warning against an ethnic death, and fear of demons was at heart a fear for the death of an *ethnos*.

Jubilees represents the final stage in the evolution of the biblical ghost, a stage that also led to its disappearance. The language hereafter focuses more on angels and demons, rather than on the living and the dead. These two were seen as competing forces in Rabbinic Judaism. The "spirit of defilement" (*rûaḥ tum'āh*) might rest on a human being, causing him or her bodily harm and moral depravity, but the rabbis were confident that God and his angels, often just "the holy spirit" (*rûaḥ hakkadeš*), through the study of the Torah, could protect the faithful from the demons' harm. The focus was thus squarely on personal and legal matters.[58]

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[57] The logic of this division of nations is laid in 10.7–9, 11, 13, where Mastema negotiated with God for a tenth of the evil spirits to be spared of destruction so that humanity might be lead astray by them; see VanderKam, "The Demons in the Book of Jubilees," p. 343.

[58] Though there was much variety in Rabbinic demonology, belief in demons was widespread, though the Jews never felt as threatened by them as their gentile neighbors. As for the origins of demons, some followed the *I Enoch-Jubilees* trajectory in attributing them to the Nephilim of Gen 6.1–4. Others thought the Tower of Babel was responsible. Some even thought they might have been a special creation of God.

The same division between angels and demons pervades the New Testament and other early Christian writings. The New Testament, especially the Gospels, is full of exorcism stories, but these are presented in a dualistic, apocalyptic world in which Satan and God's emissary, Jesus the "strong man," are engaged in a cosmic battle.[59] In this presentation, the cosmic dualism is encoded in a terminological dualism, reserving "angels" (ἄγγελοι) for spirits of God and "demons" (δαίμονες or δαιμόνια) for spirits of Satan. This further reinforced the strict separation between God and the human, a separation observed even on the other side of death.

Early Christians followed the practice of the Jewish writers and designated pagan gods "demons" (Justin, *I Apol.* 5.2; Tatian, *Oratio* 8; Clement, *Protr.* 2.41.1–4). In an attempt to adopt Greek thoughts more constructively, some Christian writers divided the Greek δαίμονες into angels and demons. So Justin suggested that the fallen angels of Genesis 6 produced *demonic* offspring who must be responsible for the subsequent wars and bloodshed (*II Apology* 5). Origen, on the other hand, praised angels for the things they did on our behalf in his argument with Celsus. It would only be right, according to Origen, to imitate them so far as we are able. Celsus countered that since both demons and angels came down from heaven to confer benefits to humanity, and since both are different species from the gods, they should be considered the same. To this Origen offered this rejoinder: "the name of 'demons' is not a term of an indifferent meaning, [but rather,] the term demon is always applied to those wicked powers, freed from the encumbrance of a grosser body, who lead men astray, and fill them with distractions, and drag them down from God and supercelestial thoughts to things here below."[60]

See the short discussion in H. Bietenhard, "Demon, Air, Cast Out," in C. Brown ed., *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* vol. 1 (MI: Zondervan, 1975), p. 451.

[59] Literature on this is enormous; see most recently Gerbern Oegema, "Jesus' Casting out of Demons in the Gospel of Mark against Its Greco-Roman Background," in A. Lange, H. Lichtenberger and K. F. Diethard Römheld eds., *Die Dämonen/Demons: Die Dämonologie der Israelitisch-Jüdischen und führchristlichen Literatur im Kontext ihrer Umwelt/The Demonlogy of Israelite-Jewish and Early Christian Literature in Context of Their Environment*, pp. 505–18; Thomas Söding, "'Wenn Ich Mit dem Finger Gottes die Dämonen Austreibe.' (Lk 11,20): Die Excorzismen im Rahmen der Basileia-Verkündigung Jesu," in Lange, Lichtenberger and Römheld eds., *Die Dämonen/Demons: Die Dämonologie der Israelitisch-Jüdischen und führchristlichen Literatur im Kontext ihrer Umwelt/The Demonlogy of Israelite-Jewish and Early Christian Literature in Context of Their Environment*, pp. 519–49.

[60] Origen, *Contra Celsum* 5.5. See the shifting meaning of δαίμων in early Christian

Summary and Hypothesis

While there is contradictory evidence that ancient Israel might have had
an ancestral cult, postexilic literature, likely under the influence of the
Deuteronomistic redactors, uniformly rejected all forms of veneration
of dead ancestors and condemned necromancy. Reason for the condem-
nation might well be both nationalistic and religious. In rejecting rites
that maintained a form of continuity between the living and the dead
and in drawing definitive boundaries that separated the realms of the
living from those of the dead, emerging Judaism decisively rejected a
form of polytheistic Yahwism in favor of monotheistic Yahwism. Hence,
the persistent injunction in biblical and postbiblical records, put back
into the mouths of Moses and Joshua, that ancestral veneration and
necromancy be regarded as "foreign" and "Canaanite" and that those
who practiced such arts be put to death.

The consequence was a much clearer demarcation between the living
and the dead than other Mesopotamian and Mediterranean cultures.
Popular Greek beliefs, by contrast, thought demons and heroes to be
spirits of the disinherited and those who met violent death. The continual
presence of spirits and demons in the realm of the living thus blurred its
distinction from the realm of the dead. The basis for such thinking was
animism: the dead were thought to be different from the living only by
degree not in kind, and the living might be seen as a tamer type of death.
By contrast, a unique feature in postexilic and later Judaism—with the
notably exception of Hellenized Jews like Philo and Josephus—is that it
regarded demons as evil spirits that are distinct and disconnected from
spirits of the dead. The dead were thought to repose in God, until the
resurrection if such was available as a conceptual option, but demons
were evil spirits thought to live an independent existence that were in
no way connected or had access to God. Only prophets possessed by
the spirit of God could speak on God's behalf, not demons. Demons
had only derivative authority and stayed under the rule of some head
demon. Demons were the cause of human miseries, but they issued

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writers in Anders K. Petersen, "The Notion of Demon: Open Questions to a Diffuse
Concept," in Lange, Lichtenberger and Römheld eds., *Die Dämonen/Demons: Die
Dämonologie der Israelitisch-Jüdischen und führchristlichen Literatur im Kontext ihrer
Umwelt/The Demonlogy of Israelite-Jewish and Early Christian Literature in Context
of Their Environment*, pp. 27–37.

not from vengeful humans but from Satan. The alleviation of human miseries thus involved exorcism, magic, and other esoteric rites.

Mu-chou Poo recently wrote:

> The idea of ghost is a culture-specific concept. It could have originated in a need to imagine the fate of human beings after death and may be viewed as a reflection of people's fears and anxieties with respect to the unknown world of the dead. It may also be a reflection of the relationship between the living and the dead, since the treatment of the ghost invariably reveals the attitude of the living toward the dead. The problem of ghosts and spirits, therefore, is not only or simply a religious problem in the narrow sense. It is intimately related to broader cultural attitudes toward life, daily customs, cosmology, and all sorts of literary and artistic activities. It touches upon certain hidden parts of human life which in one way or another may have a profound influence on human history in general and religion in particular. As a cultural phenomenon, the idea of ghosts is also a piece of collective memory, containing a cluster of images, imparting to different recipients different appearances on different occasions.[61]

Ghost, or demon or angel, as my survey of the concept shows, does indeed function like a collective memory of a tradition that stretches from the Ancient Israel to early Judaism and through Judaism to early Christianity. Encoded within the concept are meanings, cultural ideals, ethnic self-definition, and the like. These layers of sediment, once excavated and their evolutionary patterns properly identified, would lend diachronic thickness to our understanding of a complex attempt, an unabashedly *human* attempt, to negotiate the relationship between the living and the dead. More broadly, though, the attention goes beyond, to the relationship between the mortal and the putatively immortal, the human and the divine, the natural and the preternatural. But since such negotiation takes place never in the abstract but always in the context of social and political orders, the relationship between the human and the extrahuman necessarily reflects the larger social and political negotiation. Emerging Judaism and later early Christianity were no exception. While their interpretation of the extrahuman realm reflected their emerging self-identity and their understanding of the human relationship to the divine, the results speak equally eloquently about the construction of their social and political world.

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[61] Mu-chou Poo, "The Concept of Ghost in Ancient Chinese Religion," in J. Lagerwey ed., *Religion and Chinese Society* (Hong Kong/Paris: The Chinese University Press/École française d'Extrême-Orient, 2004), pp. 185–86.

Appealing to Mary Douglas's taboo-purity model, we might see that at a time of extreme uncertainty, or ambiguity, with regard to their ethnicity identity and survival as a culture, Judaism during the late Hellenistic period transposed the boundary separating the living from the dead to the boundary separating Jews from Gentiles. The living-dead boundary had been firmly fixed by the Deuteronomists using categories available to them in Yahwism. Then the concern was separation from foreign cultures as well, but emerging Yahwistic monotheism also meant having enough confidence to admit to the existence of ghosts and spirits of the dead—although these needed to be strictly controlled, even proscribed if necessary. In the aftermath of the Maccabean Revolt, however, Judaism seemed much less convinced of its standing in the world. While the eventful triumph of God might not be in doubt, it must be deferred until another age or realm. The rise of Apocalyptic Judaism and other forms of dualism thus went hand in hand with such a loss of ethnic confidence. It provided Jewish exegetes like the author of *Jubilees* the necessary tools to explain the standing of the Jews in the hostile theater of Hellenistic cosmopolitanism, but it also maintained a steadfast hope for a monistic resolution of all current conflicts, albeit in some distant, unknown time or land. Apocalyptic Judaism was but one example of dualism among others, but they all provided the necessary categories to define and redefine the Jewish *ethnos* in opposition to gentile hostility, perceived or real. The gentile world outside the Jewish borders was simply too powerful to withstand but also too attractive to ignore. The safe strategy was to assign demons to be their gods.

GHOSTS AND RESPONSIBILITY:
THE HEBREW BIBLE, CONFUCIUS, PLATO

Steven Shankman

Emmanuel Levinas (1906–1995) is one of the greatest Western philosophers of the twentieth century on the subject of ethics, and surely *the* most influential philosopher of ethics in the continental tradition. Levinas wrote in the tradition of phenomenology. He was a student of both Husserl and Heidegger and the teacher of such well-known 'postmodernist' thinkers as Jacques Derrida and Luce Irigaray. Alarmed by the apparent complicity of the most sophisticated modern philosophical speculations on the nature of 'being' with ethical turpitude and indifference, as evidenced by Heidegger's association with Nazism, Levinas sought to rethink the relationship between philosophy and ethics. He argues that ethics must precede ontology, which is always in danger of betraying ethics. By ethics Levinas means the face-to-face, concrete encounter with a unique human being for whom I am personally and inescapably responsible.

Plato was central to Levinas's assertion that ethics must precede ontology. Indeed, the subtitle of Levinas's second and last *magnum opus*, *Autrement qu'être, ou au delà de l'essence* (*Otherwise than Being, or Beyond Essence* [1974]), is a direct and literal translation of what Socrates says about the good in Book 6 of the *Republic*. The very existence and essence of objects of knowledge is dependent upon the good, Socrates asserts, although "the good itself is not essence but is still *beyond being or essence* (ἐπέκεινα τῆς οὐσίας), exceeding it in dignity or age (πρεσβείᾳ) and in power" (509c). The good, for Plato, is more venerable than—that is, comes before—ontology, the science of being. 'Beyond being:' a demonically hyperbolic expression (δαιμονίας ὑπερβολῆς), Glaucon remarks. But there we have it, 2500 years before Emmanuel Levinas, in his own sometimes hyperbolic prose, often referred to as 'postmodern,' made this insight the cornerstone of his extraordinarily original rethinking of both phenomenology and of the entire tradition of Western thought. Plato, by Levinas's own consistent acknowledgement, was there long before Levinas himself.

Part III of this article will explore responsibility in Plato's *Republic*, and how believing in ghosts, particularly Homeric ghosts, blocks our access to the good beyond being. I shall begin, in Part I, by discussing analogous passages in the Hebrew Bible and then, in Part II, in Confucius, before returning to Plato. Lest the global scope of this study appear somewhat excessive and irresponsible, please allow me to try to comfort the reader with the notion that the three principle texts for this study on ghosts and responsibility—Leviticus, the *Analects* of Confucius, and Plato's *Republic*—can be dated within less than a hundred years of each other.

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Part I

"*Thou shalt not consult ghosts and spirits*": *The Hebrew Bible*

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In the space of two chapters of Leviticus—all contained within the single *parashah* (i.e. portion of the Torah) entitled Qedoshim—God speaks to Moses and tells him to convey to the Israelites the following command, which they must follow if they are to make themselves holy. If you follow these commands, God says, "you shall be holy [*qedoshim*], for holy [*qadosh*] am I, the Lord, your God" (Leviticus 19:2):

> Do not turn to the ghosts [*ha ʾovot*], and of the familiar spirits [*ha yiddeʾonim*] do not inquire to be defiled of them. (Leviticus 19:31, trans. Alter)
>
> And the person who turns to the ghosts [*ha ʾovot*] and to the familiar spirits [*ha yiddʿonim*] to go whoring after them, I shall set My face against that person and cut him off from the midst of the people. (Leviticus 20:6)
>
> And any man or woman who has a ghost [*ʾov*] or a familiar spirit [*yiddeʿoni*] is doomed to die. They shall be stoned, their bloodguilt is upon them. (Leviticus 20:27)[1]

The Israelites are urged not to turn to *ʾovot*, singular, *ʾov*, i.e. a "prophesying spirit of the dead"[2] and to *yiddeʿonim*, singular *yiddeʿoni*, i.e. a

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[1] The Hebrew in all the passages from the Torah will be cited from Rabbis Nosson Scherman and Meir Zlotowitz eds., *The Chumash* (Brooklyn, N.Y.: Mesorah Publications, 1993; rpt. 2004). English translations from the Torah will generally be cited from Robert Alter, *The Five Books of Moses: Translation with Commentary* (New York: Norton, 2004). The later books from the Hebrew Bible will be cited from Rabbi Nosson Scherman ed., *Tanach* (Brooklyn, N.Y.: Mesorah Publications, 1996; rpt. 2003). I have occasionally taken the liberty of modifying the English translations.

[2] Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2001), I: 20.

"spirit of divination" or "one in whom that spirit dwells," a "sooth-sayer."[3] With each successive repetition of the command to refrain from turning to ghosts [ʾovot], the consequences of failing to heed the command are made both more explicit and more dire. In the first instance, turning to ghosts leads to defilement, uncleanness—in short, to the reverse of holiness. In the second, this breach will result in the offender's being isolated from his community. In the third instance, the person who turns to ghosts will be stoned. Why does the text of Leviticus so harshly disapprove of consulting or turning to ghosts? What is the relation of refraining from turning to ghosts to the notion of holiness which the text is articulating? What is the relevance of these passages for understanding similar passages in Confucius and Plato that were composed at roughly the same historical moment?[4] And what does all this have to do with responsibility? To these questions we shall return, but first we need to ask precisely what the Hebrew text means by the word often translated as "ghost," ʾov (in the plural, ʾovot).

Let us turn to the Talmud (Babylonian Talmud: Tractate Sanhedrin 65a). In the Mishna (the oral teachings collected in writing by Rabbi Judah Hanassi towards the end of the second century C.E.), we read:

> A *baʾal ob* [or "*ov*"] ("the master of the ghost," the person well versed in necromancy) is the pithom [a ventriloquist or necromancer] who speaks from his armpit. The *Yiddeʿoni* ["a wizard"] is one who speaks from his mouth. These two are stoned; whilst he who enquires of them transgresses a formal prohibition.

The Gemara (the oral teachings of the period following the writing down of the Mishna; recorded in writing by Rav Ashi and Ravina towards the end of the fifth century C.E.) comments as follows:

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[3] Koehler and Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, I: 393.

[4] Alter (*Five Books of Moses*, p. xii) speculates that the final redactions of the Torah may have been made soon after the Judeans returned from the Babylonian exile (after the destruction of the first Temple in Jerusalem in 586 B.C.E.) in 458 B.C.E. Leviticus is made up mainly of the Priestly strand (P as opposed to J [the Yawhist strand], E [the Elohist strand], or D [Deuteronomy]) of the Torah and was very possibly composed during the exile from 550–500 B.C.E. Confucius's traditional dates are 551–479 B.C.E., although the *Analects* were probably compiled by the disciples of Confucius as late as the end of the fourth or the beginning of the third century. Plato's *Republic* is dated c. 390 B.C.E. Hence, as I mention in the body of this paper, it is possible that the three principle texts for our discussion of ghosts—Leviticus, the *Analects* of Confucius, and Plato's *Republic*—can be dated within less than a hundred years of each other.

> Our Rabbis taught: A *Baʾal ob* is one who speaks from between the joints of his body and his elbow joints. A *yiddeʿoni* is one who places the bone of a *yidoa* [the name of a bird, according to Maimonides] in his mouth and it speaks of itself.

In a later passage in this tractate, we read that the person who consults ghosts "conjures up the dead by means of soothsaying."[5] The person who turns to ghosts is a necromancer who, in order to predict the future, conjures the dead who speak through his armpit, through other joints of his body, or who conveys messages from the dead through making sounds the medium utters by placing the bones (perhaps the skull) of a bird in his mouth and blowing out air. The distinct sense conveyed by this Talmudic passage is that necromancers are hucksters. They are not to be believed and not to be trusted.

The Hebrew Bible consistently condemns turning to ghosts. In Deuteronomy 18:11, Moses reminds the Israelites of God's commands and tells them that "There shall not be found among you one who passes his son or daughter through fire, a speller of charms, a soothsayer, or a diviner or a sorcerer, or a chanter of incantations or an inquirer of a ghost (*ʾov*) or familiar spirit (*yiddeʿoni*) who seeks out the dead." In 1 Samuel, Samuel's son Saul at first banishes necromancers (*ha ʾovot*, 28:7) but then, to his disgrace, vainly seeks out a woman who practices necromancy (*ʾov*) when it appears that Saul's kingship is doomed as a result of the king's own ethical failings. According to 1 Chronicles 10.13–14, "Saul died for the trespass that he had committed against the Lord in not having fulfilled the command of the Lord; moreover, he had consulted a ghost (*ʾov*) to seek advice, and he did not seek advice of the Lord; so He had him slain and the kingdom transferred to David son of Jesse." In 2 Kings 21:6, the disastrous Israelite King Menasseh "passed his son through fire, practiced astrology, read omens, and performed necromancy (*ʾov*) and conjured up spirits (*yiddeʿonim*); he was profuse in doing what was evil in the eyes of HASHEM, to anger [Him]." The charge is repeated in 2 Chronicles 33.5, where we hear that Menasseh "performed necromancy (*ʾov*) and conjured up spirits (*yiddeʿonim*)." Of the admirable King Josiah, we read, in contrast (2 Kings 23:24): "the necromancers (*ha ʾovot*) and conjurers of spirits (*ha yiddeʿonim*),

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[5] The passages from the Talmud are cited from Jacob Schachter and H. Freedman trans., *Hebrew-English Edition of the Babylonian Talmud* (London: The Soncino Press, 1994).

the teraphim, the execrable-idols and all the abominations that had been seen in the land of Judah and Jerusalem, Josiah removed in order to uphold the words of the Torah that were written in the Scroll that Hilkiah the Kohen found in the Temple of HASHEM."

The prophet Isaiah, who passionately urges the Israelites to live up to their responsibility to others, strongly disapproves of consulting ghosts. In Isaiah 8:19–20 we read:

> Now, should people say to you, "Inquire of the ghosts (*'ovot*) and familiar spirits (*yidde'onim*) that chirp and moan; for a people may inquire of its divine beings [i.e. the shades of the dead]—of the dead on behalf of the living—for instruction and message," surely, for one who speaks thus there shall be no dawn.

In 19:3 Isaiah prophecies that there will come a righteous day when God will confound Egypt's plans so that the Egyptians "will consult the idols and the shades (*'ittim*)/And the ghosts (*'ovot*) and the familiar spirits (*yidde'onim*)." Should Israel fail to be righteous, Isaiah says, God will lay siege to Jerusalem and the voice of Israel will then speak "from lower than the ground." "Your voice," Isaiah envisions God as saying to the Israelites, "shall sound like that of a ghost (*'ov*) from the ground" and it shall "chirp" (*tetzaftzef*) from the dust. The Israelites' consulting ghosts, in Isaiah's prophetic vision, is a clear sign of their moral bankruptcy.

What is wrong with conjuring ghosts (*'ovot*) who speak through a medium's armpits as he flaps his arms about, or through the air the medium blows out of his mouth through the bones of a bird? The biblical text associates such practices with an idea of the sacred which stands in opposition to notion of the holy which the text is articulating and from which it is attempting to distinguish and separate itself.[6] The God who characterizes himself as holy (*qadosh*) and those who follow Him as *qedoshim*, says in an early passage in Leviticus (18:3), "Not like the deeds of the land of Egypt in which you dwelt shall you do, and not like the deeds of the land of Canaan into which I am about to bring you shall you do, and according to their statutes you shall not walk." Those who aspire to the holy are commanded to reject religious practices that amount to cruelty to others. This becomes especially clear from the context of the second of our three passages from Leviticus that

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[6] See Emmanuel Levinas, *Du sacré au saint: cinq lectures talmudiques* (Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 1977).

command those aspiring to holiness not "to turn to the ghosts [or to whore after the familiar spirits]." Just before issuing this command, in the immediately preceding verse, God says that anyone—including any Israelite—"who has given of his seed to Moloch" has thereby defiled God's sanctuary (*miqdash,* a word cognate with *qadosh*, meaning 'holy') and profaned His holy (*qadosh*) name (Leviticus 20:3). To give your seed to Moloch, that is, to sacrifice a child, no matter how religiously venerable—i.e. how imbued with the 'sacred'—the custom, is to defile the holiness of God's sanctuary (*miqdash*).

The defilement of the holy in the name of the sacred is precisely what, in the next verse, characterizes the person who 'turns to the ghosts.' Turning to ghosts is to abandon holiness, to engage in acts that will result in cruelty, to evade your responsibility to others. But why does the Hebrew Bible, initiated by the passages we have been discussing in Leviticus, find it morally repellent to engage in practices of conjuring the spirits of the dead, practices whose aim is to divine the future? Here we have the crux of the matter, which is the very nature, in Judaism, of the future and its relation to ethics. What is the nature of the future? What is the relation of the future to the present? Is the future something to be divined as if it were predetermined—apart from the righteous actions of individual men and women—by some impersonal force of nature?[7] Or is the future, rather, created by our responsiveness to and responsibility for others? The context of our first quotation from Leviticus suggests that a preoccupation with communing with ghosts

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[7] Even the Hasidic tradition, which flirts more openly with the "sacred" dimension of Jewish thought than does, say, the more sober reflections of Lithuanian Talmudists such as the Gaon of Vilnius (1720–1797), is cautious on the issue of astrology. See, e.g., the *Likutey Moharan* of Rebbe Nachman of Breslov (1772–1810), eds. Moshe Mykoff and Ozer Bergman (Jerusalem and New York: Breslov Research Institute, 2003). In an addendum on "Astrology in Traditional Jewish Teaching," the editors remark, "The Torah teaches us to look at the wisdom of astronomy/astrology more for the insights it provides into one's personality and the potentials…that each time period holds, than for predicting the future. In the *Laws of Star Worshiping*, Ramban [Maimonides] states: A fortuneteller is someone who attempts to predict auspicious times, employing the principles of astrology and saying, 'This day will be a good day,' or, 'That day will be a bad day'…'That year' or 'That month is a bad time to undertake such-and-such' (*Yad HaChazakah, Milkhot Avodat Kochavim* 11:8). It is living our lives deterministically, based on predictions such as these, that the Torah forbids" (Vol. 7 [Lessons 58–64], p. 279). I wish to thank Dolfy Freinquel for drawing my attention to these passages. On what he perceives to be the thin line between soothsaying and prophecy, see Yair Hoffman, "Prophecy and Soothsaying," *Tehillah le-Moshe: Biblical and Judaic Studies in Honor of Moshe Greenberg* (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1997), pp. 221–43.

may discourage us from learning what we can from—and from truly serving—the elderly who are actually still living amongst us. You must fear My sanctuary (*miqadesh*), God says, and not turn to the ghosts and be contaminated through them. Rather, the text urges, "Before a gray head you shall rise, and you shall defer to an elder and fear your God" (Leviticus 19.32).

<div style="text-align:center">

Part II
"Not yet being able to serve others, how can you serve ghosts?":
Confucius

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Let us turn now to the famous passage from the *Analects* in which Confucius speaks about ghosts (鬼 *gui*), a subject he says he would rather not discuss:

> Zilu asked how ghosts and spirits (鬼神 *gui shen*) are to be served. The Master replied, "Not yet being able to serve others, how can you serve ghosts?" Zilu asked, "May I ask about death?" The Master replied, "Not yet understanding life, how can you understand death?"
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> <div style="text-align:right">

Analects 11.12[8]

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The sense of this passage and its implication for ethics is not all that far from that of the passages from Leviticus and from the Hebrew Bible that we have been discussing. I have been arguing that the portion Qedoshim is attempting to distinguish the holy (*qadosh*) from the sacred; that holiness manifests itself as one's experience of a command to assume responsibility for others; and that the sacred, from which the holy is being distinguished, for all its religious and spiritual aura (indeed, precisely because of it), is now seen as inhibiting one's responsiveness to and responsibility for others.

Confucius does not break as radically as does Leviticus from what I have been calling the order of the sacred. In *Analects* 6.22, for example, Confucius recommends that one should "show respect for (敬 *jing*) ghosts and spirits (鬼神 *gui shen*)." Practices that involve communicating with ghosts and spirits should not be banished altogether, as the passages from the Hebrew Bible fervently urge. Confucius rather

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[8] The Chinese text is that provided by Roger T. Ames and Henry Rosemont, Jr., *The Analects of Confucius: A Philosophical Translation* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1998). English translation is based on Ames and Rosemont, with considerable modifications.

more moderately, but still with strict caution, urges his disciple Fan Chi to keep these ghosts and spirits at a distance (遠之 *yuan zhi* ["distance them"]). The reason for keeping them at a distance has an ethical motivation. This particular *Analect* begins with Fan Chi asking Confucius about the nature of wisdom (知 *zhi*). The Master replies, "To work for the things that it is just (義 *yi*) for the people to have, and to show respect for ghosts and spirits while keeping them at a distance can be called wisdom." As with the Hebrew Bible, so here wisdom (*chokmah* in Hebrew) requires the primacy of ethics to knowing, or to what Western philosophy refers to as ontology. 'Wisdom' (知 *zhi*) subordinates knowing—including, Confucius is perhaps suggesting, acts of divination that would attempt to predict the future by communing with ghosts and spirits—to a concern for others, i.e. to justice, to what is right (義 *yi*).

The humanism of Confucius consists, in large part, in this thinker's insistence on the dignity of ethical responsibility. As Deborah Sommer writes, "Confucian spirituality was not an experience of escape from the mundane world, but on the other hand was an experience of connection and communication with people and beneficent forces both seen and unseen."[9] The goals of these communications with spirits, Sommer goes on to remark, was "to develop…a sense of responsibility."[10] The Confucian emphasis on ethical responsibility at times results in the Master's downplaying the more mystical elements of one's participation in nature. The revelation on Mt. Sinai, similarly but more radically, breaks with the pantheism of ancient Egypt and Canaan. Confucius is not normally known as a thinker who has much to say about the natural world, which is why so many readers have been puzzled by *Analects* VI. 21, in which the sage remarks: "the wise delight in water, the benevolent delight in the hills."[11] Water imagery is something we tend to find in Laozi, not in Confucius, who is principally concerned not with nature but with the necessity of socially responsible, willed action. For Confucius, reality is something in which we participate,

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[9] Deborah Sommer, "Ritual and Sacrifice in Early Confucianism: Contacts with the Spirit World," in Tu Weiming and Mary Evelyn Tucker eds., *Confucian Spirituality* (New York: Crossroad, 2003), p. 210.

[10] Sommer, "Ritual and Sacrifice in Early Confucianism: Contacts with the Spirit World," p. 211.

[11] See also Ames and Rosemont, *The Analects of Confucius: A Philosophical Translation*, 18.6: "I cannot associate with birds and beasts. If I do not associate with human beings, with whom would I associate?"

especially through ritual, but it is also experienced as external to the consciousness, as objectively present. As Emmanuel Levinas has powerfully argued in works such as *Totality and Infinity*, the notion of a mystic "participation" in a cosmic whole—particularly as understood by the ethnologist Lucien Lévy-Bruhl (1857–1939)—poses the danger of blocking our perception of the transcendent otherness of the other person, of the face-to-face encounter, where the face of the Other demands my responsibility. Such a notion of mystic participation in the sacred also blocks my understanding of my own uniqueness as a subject who is responsible for the well-being of that other person. In a fully mythic universe, for Levinas, we see the other person not as transcendently other, but as a mere and indeed expendable part of a whole in which we both participate. In the world of myth and of an unforgiving ritualism that is not based on humaneness, for Levinas, the other person is never experienced as objective or exterior enough.[12]

There are similarities, then, between the ethical thrust of Judaism and of the sayings of Confucius that have been gathered together in the *Analects.* And the injunction against consulting ghosts and spirits, in both traditions, arises from the strong ethical sense, in both traditions, that eschews practices that inhibit responsibility. We find a confirmation of this insight of the similarities between the ethical nature of

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[12] The Huang-Lao daoism so prominent in the early Han, and articulated in parts of the *Han Feizi* itself (see particularly chapters 20 ["Interpreting Laozi"]) and 21 ["Illustrating Laozi"] as well as chapters 5 ["The Way of the Ruler"] and 8 ["The Grand Total"]), illustrates this unholy alliance between seeing man as a mere and expendable participant in an impersonal process of reality (the *dao*), on the one hand, and cruelty towards individual human beings, on the other. On the relation between legalism and the *Laozi*, see A. C. Graham, *Disputers of the Dao: Philosophical Argument in Ancient China* (La Salle, Illinois: Open Court, 1989; rpt. 1993), pp. 285–92. According to Sima Qian (*Shi ji* 63: 2156), Han Feizi "carried cruelty and harshness to extremes, and was lacking in kindness." These formulations (as well as those of Zhuangzi and Xunzi), Sima Qian continues, "sprang from the idea of 'the Way and its virtue,' but Lao Tzu was the most profound of them all" (William H. Nienhauser, Jr. ed., Tsaifa Cheng, Zongli Lu, William H. Nienhauser, Jr., and Robert Reynolds, with Chiuming Chan trans., *The Grand Scribe's Records, vol. VII. The Memoirs of Pre-Han China* ([Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994], p. 29.) Proponents of Huang-Lao daoism see, in the Yellow ("Huang") Emperor, an example and an anticipation of their own ideas that fuse the daoism of Laozi (hence the "Lao" of "Huang-Lao") with legalism. On Huang-Lao thought, see Tu Weiming, "The Thought of Huang-Lao': A Reflection on the *Lao Tzu* and *Huang Di* texts in the Silk Manuscripts of Ma-wang Tui," *Journal of Asian Studies* 39 (1979), pp. 95–110, and Jan Yünhua, "Tao, Principle, and Law: The Three Key Concepts in the Yellow Emperor Taoism," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 7 (1980), 205–28, as cited by Nienhauser, ed., *The Grand Scribe's Records* VII, p. 25, n. 30.

Judaism and Confucianism in the remarkable inscriptions found, in Kaifeng, on the stelae that were originally placed on the grounds of the synagogue there. Jews, probably of Persian origin, came to Kaifeng around the beginning of the Northern Song period (960). The Kaifeng Jews constructed a synagogue, the first in China, in 1163. It was rebuilt in 1489. At this time, the first stela was erected by the Kaifeng Jewish community. In 1512, the reverse side of this stela was inscribed with Chinese characters. It is to the inscriptions on these stelae that I would now like to turn. The stelae record the rebuilding of the synagogue, describe some of the tenets of Judaism, and point out similarities between Judaism and Confucianism.

In regard to the similarities between Judaism and Confucianism, on the 1489 stela we read: "The Confucian religion and this religion [Judaism] agree on essential points, differing only on secondary ones…these principles do not go beyond the Five Relationships (of Confucianism)." And on the reverse side of this stela we find inscribed, in 1512, the following: "Although the written characters of the Scriptures of this religion are different from the script of the Confucian books, yet on examining their principles, it is found that their ways of common practice are similar."[13] The 1663 inscription is even more emphatic about the essential similarities between the Torah and the Confucian classics:

> The composition of the Scriptures, although written in an ancient script [Hebrew] and of a different pronunciation, is in harmony with the principles of the six classics [of Confucianism], and in no case is there anything not in harmony with them.[14]

And elsewhere on the 1663 stela, similarities between Judaism and Confucianism are emphasized yet again:

> ……in their main focus of ideas and established practices both [Judaism and Confucianism] are exclusively concerned with honoring the Way of Heaven, venerating ancestors, valuing the relations of ruler and subject, obedience to parents, harmony within families, correct ordering of social hierarchies, and good fellowship among friends: nothing more than the 'five cardinal relations' of mankind.

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[13] Donald Daniel Leslie, *The Survival of the Chinese Jews: The Jewish Community of Kaifeng* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1972), p. 102.
[14] Xu Xin, *The Jews of Kaifeng China: History, Culture, and Religion* (Newark: Ktav Publishing House, 2003), pp. 120–21.

> Although it [Judaism] differs from Confucian texts in its writing system, if one scrutinizes its basic principles he will find that it is the same, as it contains the Way of constant practices.[15]

Given this sentiment, we should not be surprised to find that the injunction against consulting ghosts and spirits which we have cited from the Hebrew Bible is found, by the Kaifeng Jews, to be in harmony with the Confucian injunction, expressed in *Analects* 11.12, against the futile and wasted effort of consulting ghosts (鬼 *gui*) and spirits (神 *shen*). The 1489 Kaifeng inscription reads:

> Abraham (*A-wu-luo-han*), the Patriarch who founded the religion of Israel (*Yi-ci-luo-ye*), was of the nineteenth generation from Pan-gu Adam (*A-dan*). From the creation of heaven and earth, the patriarchs handed down successively the tradition which they had received. They made no images, flattered no *spirits and ghosts* (神鬼 *shen gui*), and they placed no credence in superstitious practices. At that time *the spirits and ghosts* (神鬼 *shen gui*) could not help men, idols could afford them no protection, and superstitious practices could avail them nothing.

In the 1663 inscription, we similarly read:

> Concerning the origin of the religion of Israel, it has come from a distant past...... Abraham comprehended the purpose of the union of Heaven and man, as well as the principles of moral cultivation and of human destiny. He also knew that the Way of Heaven "has neither sound nor smell," and is very mysterious and profound, and that from it creatures are endowed with movement and with life, and are transformed and nourished in an orderly manner. That is why he modeled no images, nor did he allow himself to be deluded by *ghosts and spirits* (*gui shen* 鬼神). He made the honoring of Heaven as the only principle, leading man to "develop completely their minds," and to conform to Heaven, so that they could follow their minds and see the Way.[16]

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[15] Xu Xin, *The Jews of Kaifeng China,* p. 138.

[16] Chinese text and translation of the Kaifeng stelae are cited from William Charles White, *Chinese Jews: A Compilation of Matters Relating to the Jews of K'ai-fên Fu* (New York: Paragon, 1942; second edition, 1966), pp. 8, 35, 58, 80. On the rapprochement between Judaism and Confucianism in the Kaifeng inscriptions, see Andrew Plaks, "The Confucianization of the Chinese Jews: Interpretations of the Kaifeng Stelae Inscriptions," in M. Patricia Needle ed., *East Gate of Kaifeng: A Jewish World Inside China* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota China Center, 1992), pp. 29–38. Plaks rightly, in my view, argues against those who engage in "overstatements of the conceptual incompatibility of theistic and nontheistic philosophical systems...which...misunderstand both the eschatological character of Judaism and the religious dimension of Confucianism" ("The Confucianization of the Chinese Jews," p. 38.)

The biblical injunctions against consulting ghosts and spirits that translate the Hebrew words ʾovot and yiddeʿonim are rendered into Chinese, in these inscriptions, with the very words—鬼 gui and 神 shen—from Analects 11.12 which express the Master's concern that ethics will be betrayed by useless and harmful speculation about what cannot be known.[17]

<center>

Part III

Shades of Homer, Plato's Myth of Er, Responsibility

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In the tenth book of the *Odyssey,* Odysseus, who has recently washed ashore on the island of Phaeacia, narrates his trials and sufferings to King Alkinös. He tells Alkinöos about how Circe had informed Odysseus that, if he is to return home safely, he must journey to the house of Hades and of Persephone—that is, to the Underworld—to consult with the soul (ψυχῆ, 10.492) of the blind Theban prophet Teiresias. Alone of the shades or ghosts in Hades, Teiresias has been granted the privilege of intelligence (νόος, 10.494) after death. The rest flit about as shades (σκιαὶ ἀΐσσουσαν, 10.495). In the following book, Odysseus makes the journey to the underworld. He and his men travel to the dark and foggy place to which Circe had directed Odysseus, who now draws his sword and digs a pit in which he pours drink offerings for the dead. Odysseus then promises the dead that, upon his return to Ithaca, he will slaughter

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[17] As P. Jérôme Tobar—who translated the inscriptions into French—writes, "神鬼 *Chen-koei* peut signifier ici soit les esprits en général, soit les esprits et les âmes des morts" (*Inscriptions Juives de K'ai-fong-fou* (Imprimérie de la mission catholique: Shanghai, 1912), p. 36. In the 1663 inscription, 鬼 *gui* appears to be a direct translation of the Hebrew ʾov. The Hebrew word, according to Koehler and Baumgartner, is cognate with the Arabic "ʾwb come back, = revenant" (*Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon*, I: 20). The parallel association of 鬼 *gui* with the idea of a "revenant" is suggested by the *Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字 (*Explaining Simple Graphs and Analyzing Compound Graphs*), which was written by Xu Shen 許慎 ca. 100 C.E. This earliest extant "dictionary" of Chinese gives invaluable information both on meaning and on character formation. Xŭ typically presents a short definition, sometimes with a word-play, and then explains the structure of the character. His definition of *gui* 鬼 is as follows: 人所歸爲鬼. "A person who has occasion to return (*guī*) is a ghost (*guǐ*)." The word-play here is on the near homophones "return" and "ghost." The commentary to *Shuōwén* notes several other early texts that play on this homophony. I am grateful to Stephen Durrant for this reference to the *Shuowen jiezi.*

a barren cow, the finest he owns, load the funeral pyre with treasures, and sacrifice a black ram to Teiresias. He then cuts the throats of the sheep he had brought with him for sacrifice, their blood pours down into the pit he had dug, and "the souls (ψυχαί) of the perished dead out of Erebos" (10.37) suddenly swarm around the pit and around him, making him turn green with fear (δέος, 11.43). Odysseus listens to the shade of his companion Elpenor, who had fallen from a rooftop earlier in the poem and who now—still unburied—requests a proper burial. He is then approached by the shade of his mother, whom he painfully refuses to encounter until he questions Teiresias, who drinks of the sheeps' blood so that he can speak truthfully to Odysseus. Teiresias then offers Odysseus advice about the necessity of his restraining any impulsiveness and predicts his homecoming to Ithaca and the time and nature of his death.

Odysseus's trip to the underworld provides the frame for Plato's dialogue *The Republic*, which is haunted by Book 11 of the *Odyssey*. The very first word of the *Republic,* κατέβην ("I went down [to the Piraeus yesterday with Glaucon,]" Socrates says), echoes what Odysseus had told Penelope, towards the end of the *Odyssey,* about his journey to the underworld: κατέβην δόμον Ἀϊδος εἴσω ("I went down into the house of Hades," 23.252).[18] And the *Republic* ends with the trip to the underworld by Er the Pamphylian ("Everyman"), who died in battle. I mentioned earlier that it was to the Phaeacian King Alkinoös that Odysseus narrated his tale of suffering in the *Odyssey*. Plato, with his characteristic punning, alludes to that same Alkinoös in the Myth of Er at the conclusion of his *Republic*. Socrates observes that he has now made his argument that the life of the just person is preferable to the life of the unjust person. But the benefits of living justly during one's earthy life, Socrates says, pale before the rewards that the just person gains when dead. Socrates' interlocutors are anxious to hear about these things. "I will not, however," Socrates says, "tell you a story of Alkinoös (Ἀλκίνου γε ἀπόλογον, 614a) but rather of a strong

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[18] The Greek of Homer's Greek is cited from the Stanford edition, 2 vols. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1967). The English translation is by Richmond Lattimore (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), with modifications. The Greek text of Plato's *Republic* is cited from Paul Shorey's Loeb Library edition, 2 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1935; rpt. 2000). The English translation is by Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1968; rpt. 1991), with some modifications.

man (ἀλκίμου μὲν ἀνδρός)." Homer had told of Odysseus's telling a
tale to Alkinoös. Plato tells a tale of Socrates telling a tale to Glaucon.
Socrates says that Er's corpse lay on the battlefield for ten days and,
when his comrades retrieved it, they found that it was remarkably well
preserved. Er's body is brought home, placed on a funeral pyre, and
then suddenly comes back to life. Er is then able to tell the story of
what he saw when he was dead. What he witnessed, he says, were the
souls of men who had died and who were now choosing new lives. The
last person to choose a new life is Odysseus. Plato's *Republic* begins
and ends with allusions to the Odysseus of Homer's *Odyssey.* Plato is
haunted by the ghost of Homer. And what did Plato, in the *Republic,*
have to say about ghosts?

   In Book 3 of the *Republic*, Socrates is discussing the education of
the future guardians of his ideal republic. It is important, Socrates
says, for these guardians to be brave, but they will be fearful of death
if they are allowed to hear what Homer has to say about Hades and
the ghosts who inhabit that realm. In the passage we discussed from
Book 11 of the *Odyssey,* Homer says that Odysseus—even the brave
Odysseus!—turned green with fear when, after pouring the sacrificial
sheeps' blood into the pit he had dug, the shades he had summoned
from Hades suddenly rose up from the depths and enveloped him. It
is precisely this fearfulness that Socrates worries will be stirred in the
souls of the young future guardians of the state if they are permitted to
hear these passages from Homer. Socrates goes on to cite a number of
passages from Homer—including from Book 11 of the *Odyssey*—which,
he says, must all be expunged, beginning with the following verses that
describe the speech of the shade of Achilles, who encounters Odysseus in
the underworld. Achilles is surprised to see Odysseus in Hades, he says,
"where senseless/ dead man dwell, mere imitations (εἴδωλα, 11.476) of
perished mortals." Achilles responds with the lines that Socrates will
later quote in the *Republic*:

> O shining Odysseus, never try to console me for dying.
> I would rather follow the plow as thrall to another
> man, one with no land allotted him and not much to live on,
> than be a king over all the perished dead.
>
> *Odyssey* 11.487–91

The third passage cited by Socrates is from the twenty-third book of
Iliad where the ghost of Patroclus appears, in a dream, to the sleeping
Achilles, urging Achilles to arrange for his (Patroclus') proper burial.

Achilles then refers to the shade of Patroclus as a mere "phantom" (εἴδωλον, *Iliad*. 23.104) with no real life in it at all.

These ghosts, then, are mere phantoms, εἴδωλα, that inspire fear in the souls of those who become transfixed and paralyzed as they listen to how horrible it is to be a phantom or a ghost. But is death truly to be feared? Is there anything worse than death? These passages from Homer about ghosts, Socrates suggests, certainly create the impression that, as the great and fearless hero Achilles says, it is better even to be a slave than to die. But there is something worse than death, Plato argues, and that is living a life that is unjust. Plato begins the *Republic* with the tale of the Ring of Gyges. If you wear this ring and turn the gemstone towards you, you will become invisible and are thus able to murder or take advantage of anyone you wish, and no one will ever be able to testify against you, since you were invisible when you committed your crimes and you left no incriminating traces behind. Through this parable of the Ring of Gyges, Plato asks the central question posed by the *Republic*: is it preferable to be a person with a stellar reputation who is in fact guilty of the most heinous crimes; or to be someone who is viewed by society as a guilty and opportunistic wretch but who is in fact innocent and virtuous? In the *Republic*, Plato argues—stunningly, in the context of the heroic legacy of traditional Greek culture, with its heroes striving for honor (τιμή) and glory—that it is in fact preferable to be someone who is truly just, regardless of what others think. What is most important, for Plato in the *Republic*, is that we act in accordance with what he calls "the good" (τὸ ἀγαθόν) which exists, as he says, "beyond being" (ἐπέκεινα τῆς οὐσίας, 509c), i.e. which transcends essence.

Plato doesn't banish ghosts, as do the authors of Leviticus. The ghosts reappear, but in a manner that encourages rather than discourages a sense of personal responsibility. The myth of Er is, after all, a ghost story. Er himself makes a trip to the underworld, like Odysseus, and encounters ghosts there, as Odysseus had done. But here is the catch. Homer's ghosts inspire fear of death, purely and simply, from Socrates' perspective. Plato's ghosts, however, behave in a way that encourages the reader to take responsibility for his or her life. Er reports how a soul who had been insufficiently schooled by previous suffering freely chooses to become a despot, but then—realizing that this choice will bring along with other less dazzling accoutrements (such as the outcome that he will devour his own children!)—beats his breast and loudly laments his choice (619c). Odysseus, in contrast, although the last to choose his next life, has little trouble finding a lot that the other ghosts,

searching for something more glamorous, had neglected to choose. Because of the trials he experienced as a famous hero, Odysseus has now "recovered from love of honor" (φιλοτιμία) and chooses "the life of a private man who minds his own business" (620c).

We recall that, earlier in the myth of Er, the herald had announced:

> Souls that live a day, this is the beginning of another death-bringing cycle for the mortal race. *A numinous power* (δαίμων) *will not select you, but you will take demonic forces into your own hands* (ὑμεῖς δαίμονα αἱρήσεσθε). Let him who gets the first lot make the first choice of a life to which he will be bound by necessity. Virtue is without a master; as he honors or dishonors her, each will have more or less of her. The blame belongs to him who chooses; god is blameless (617e).

We learn, in the myth of Er, that humans choose their own futures. They are responsible for themselves and for others. Indeed, those who have committed unjust deeds suffer—during the thousand- year journey that separates their next lives from their previous ones—ten times over for each wrongdoing.

The authors of the Hebrew Bible and Confucius, as we have seen, discourage the practice of conjuring and actively seeking the consultations of ghosts. Plato similarly disparages these practices of sorcery because he believes that they corrupt the soul. "Beggar priests and diviners (μάντεις) go to rich men's doors," Adeimantus tells Socrates in the second book of the *Republic*, to convince them that they can expiate their misdeeds through spells and incantations. These sorcerers also can perform "rites for those who are dead," and they promise their prospective clients that these rites will deliver them "from the evils in the other place" no matter how heinous their behavior (*Republic* 364a–365a).

In the third book of the *Republic*, Plato remarks on the deleterious effects on young souls of hearing Homeric tales of ghosts in the underworld. Homer, as we have seen, often refers to the shades of the dead as εἴδωλα, unsubstantial phantoms, "idols." The word εἴδωλον is often used by Plato to refer to poetry, to mimetic representation which, Socrates argues at the beginning of Book X of the *Republic*, exists at a third remove from reality, from being. Poetry, for Plato, has a ghostly ontological status at a third remove from truth, and for this reason, Socrates argues, the poets must be exiled from the city. Poetry, for Plato, is nothing short of sorcery (γοητεία, *Republic* 602d), an art that, according to Sarah Iles Johnston, was used to communicate with the dead. As Johnston remarks, in Plato's late dialogue the *Sophist*, the Athenian Stranger "describes sophists as using *goêtia* to bring to light

'verbal ghosts'—*eidôla legomena*—with their words, and in the *Republic*, that which does not really exist but only seems to is called a *phantasma* produced by means of *goêtia*,"[19] i.e. of sorcery.

But Plato's dialogue the *Republic* is itself a *phantasma,* an example of mimetic representation produced by poetic sorcery. It is a poem, albeit a poem in prose. It is a prose-poem that, however, contains within it an antidote (φάρμακον, 595a) to poetry's dangerous powers of bewitching the soul and blinding it to its responsibilities to others. That antidote is a commitment to philosophy, i.e. to a life of inquiry, but to a life of inquiry that subordinates knowing to ethics, to what Plato calls the good (τὸ ἀγαθόν) that is beyond being (509b). The *Republic* is a poem in prose that, as one of Socrates' interlocutors says in Book 2 of the *Republic,* represents an image of what justice is "in itself, by its own inherent force," an image which "no one has ever adequately set forth in poetry or prose" (367a). The Myth of Er is an εἴδωλον within the larger εἴδωλον that is the *Republic*, a work that is haunted by the ghost of Homer and by the ghosts which Homer had conjured up. But the *Republic* is an εἴδωλον that is meant to inspire its listeners to assume responsibility for their own lives and for the lives of their neighbors. The Myth of Er is an εἴδωλον that—like the passages from the Hebrew Bible and from Confucius with which we began our inquiry—attempts to banish idolatry so that its listeners, we included, will live up to our responsibility to others.

In order to banish ghosts, to banish idols, Plato indulges in the idolatry of creating—in the myth of Er and in the *Republic* as a whole—a poem that conjures ghosts. But does not Plato do so in order to urge his readers to assume responsibility for their actions, to live their lives in response to the good that is beyond being? Does not Plato indulge in poetic sorcery in the interests of ethics, i.e. in order to *teach*? To return to the Hebrew tradition with which we began this enquiry, we should perhaps view Plato's conjuring of ghosts, Plato's sorcery, as permissible insofar as it is an act of true teaching in the spirit of Rabbi Eliezer who, as we learn from the Talmud, was suspected of sorcery. As we read in a slightly later passage of the tractate Sanhedrin from which we quoted earlier:

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[19] Sarah Iles Johnston, *Restless Dead: Encounters Between the Living and the Dead* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), p. 103, citing *Sophist* 234c5–6 and *Republic* 584a9–10.

But how could he (Rabbi Eliezer) have acted thus? Haven't we learned: he who performs the act [of sorcery] is subject to penalties? It is different when it is in order to teach. For it has been said, (Deuteronomy 18:9), "You should not learn to do abhorrent deeds;" but you must learn to do everything in order to understand and to teach (*l'horot*).[20]

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[20] Trans. Emmanuel Levinas (*Nine Talmudic Readings*), whose French is translated into English, in turn, by Annette Aronowicz (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), p. 159. I have taken the liberty of modifying the translation printed in the book just cited.

THE ROMAN *MANES*: THE DEAD AS GODS[1]

Charles W. King

In ancient Rome, the words "*manes*" or "*di manes*" referred to the deified dead. The Romans worshipped their dead in a variety of contexts, perhaps most visibly at the *Parentalia*, a nine-day festival held in the public cemeteries each February, but also on other occasions throughout the year when they would make offerings to the dead at their graves or through private rituals within the home. As a phenomenon, the Roman worship of *manes* is of interest for illustrating a view of the dead that is far more deistic than that found in later European religion and which thereby challenges conventional western categories of "ghosts," "gods," and the "afterlife." It is also a somewhat neglected phenomenon within modern studies of the Roman religion and thus worthy of further investigation.

The relative neglect of the *manes* in modern scholarship is not due to lack of evidence, for Roman references to the *manes* are numerous. Almost every Latin-language tombstone inscription from the period of the Roman Empire—both at the city of Rome itself and in most provinces where Latin was widely used—carries a dedication at the top of each stone, *dis manibus*, "to the divine *manes*," or some slight variation of that wording. Although inscribed tombstones of this (or any other) type are relatively rare for Romans before the beginning

of the Imperial period, the worship of *manes* did not arrive with the emperors. There is other evidence that the practice began in a much earlier period of the Roman Republic. When discussing the rules that the college of pontiffs, one of Rome's major priesthoods, had developed to determine who owed worship to which dead persons, the Roman author Cicero attributed those rules to the pontiff Scaevola (late second/early first century B.C.) and to the still earlier pontiff Coruncanius (third century B.C.). As there is no significant quantity of written sources for Rome that date before the third century B.C., the evidence for the worship of the dead stretches back in time as far as our literary sources for Rome will go. Moreover, in the period from which Roman Pagan literature is particularly abundant, the first century B.C. through the second century A.D., almost every Roman author mentions the *manes* in some capacity, and there are fairly detailed descriptions of the festivals for the dead in Ovid's poem *The Fasti* and descriptions of household rituals in Statius' collection of poems, the *Silvae*. Although many of the references to *manes* are individually quite terse, the overall body of evidence is fairly large.[2]

Despite the availability of evidence, however, the *manes* have received relatively little scholarly attention. In part, the reasons for this involve a conflict between ancient Roman practices and the religious categories of modern scholars, who tend to be influenced by specifically Christian models of death and the afterlife. There is a pronounced tendency to define "afterlife" in terms of the location and condition of the dead, focusing upon resemblances to Christian models of Heaven and Hell rather than on the potential intervention of the dead in the living world. Likewise, even when they do postulate a role for the dead in living society, scholars of Rome tend to assume that any such role could only be negative. Thus, they characterize the *manes* as "ghosts" in a specifically pejorative sense of the word "ghosts," as something the living would want only to avoid. The word "ghosts" thus becomes incompatible with

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[2] It is fairly easy now to do a word search on *manes* and related terms, either using the (pre-computer) reference work, the *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* (1900–1990), or various computer databases like *Pandora* that allow one to search the whole corpus of Latin literature. Most inscriptions can be found in the massive multi-volume *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, which began publishing in 1863. The *dis manibus* dedication is often abbreviated to *DM*, but that should not minimize the importance of the phrase's presence, for most terms indicating family relationships are also abbreviated in epitaphs, and the abbreviations show only that the words were highly familiar. For Cicero's pontifical material, see *De Legibus* (2.45–49 and 52).

the idea of "gods," which, again under Christian influence, they define as something other than ordinary formerly living humans. I will argue here, however, that such characterizations of the *manes* misrepresent their role in Roman religion. The *manes* were deities that the Romans invoked to address major issues in their lives. They were not just hostile spirits, but gods who held an important place in the domestic religion of Rome, and, in a few contexts, in the state religion as well.

Problematic Models

When a historian examines a society different from his or her own, the challenge is always to describe and interpret that society without interjecting too much of the scholar's own religious framework into the interpretation. Too often, though, the Roman "afterlife" has been defined in terms of specifically Christian concepts. The standards by which scholars compare afterlife scenarios often depend on treating Christian priorities as normative, even to the point of forming a negative or dismissive judgment of religious concepts that differ from those of Christianity.

Consider the following quotation from Gregory Riley, in which the author is attempting to argue that Christian models of the afterlife would have held a superior appeal to worshippers in contrast to Pagan models of the Roman era:

> By 30 C.E., the approximate date of the culmination of the ministry of Jesus, by far the majority of people both in Israel and in the Roman Empire in general still held to the old traditional views that humans were mud-creatures with air in them, destined for annihilation after death or a shadowy (non)existence in the underworld.[3]

Even if one puts aside the quotation's reference to Israel and focuses strictly on the Romans, the way this passage frames its issues is significant. When Riley says that people in the Roman Empire believed in a "shadowy (non)existence in the underworld," he is setting forth criteria for an afterlife scenario with a Christian model in mind. For Riley, the important questions one should ask about an afterlife are (1) where do the dead reside?—in contrast to the Christian Heaven and

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[3] Gregory J. Riley, *The River of God: A New History of Christian Origins* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 2001), p. 201.

Hell—and (2) do the dead have solid corporeal bodies?—in contrast to the Christian concept of bodily resurrection. He presents annihilation, that is, the total denial of an afterlife, as the only alternative that Romans might have to an afterlife that stressed those variables. In a different chapter, he also notes the failure of the Pagans to develop a Christian-style concept of "salvation."[4]

Riley was writing about the history of early Christianity, but it is not hard to find similar framings of the issue among classicists studying Paganism. For example, when Ramsay MacMullen asserted that the Romans lacked an interest in the afterlife, his arguments were that the Pagan Romans did not put much stock in their own models of a future located in a place called Elysium, that they rejected the resurrection of the flesh, and that they had no concept of salvation.[5] The formulation is similar to Riley's and again quite Christian. The lack of an idea of posthumous salvation, for example, is only significant if one assumes that negative posthumous fates are always normative without the intervention of a deity, in other words, that everyone *needs* to be saved. Christianity has such a doctrine, but it is hardly an essential or universal aspect of every afterlife scenario. MacMullen's analysis notably does not include the *manes* among the options for a Roman posthumous existence.

This focus on the *place* where the dead reside, or on whether the dead have tangible bodies, moves the discussion of the Roman afterlife away from the subject of deification and any potential role of the dead as gods in the lives of the living. It thus moves the subject away from the *manes*, allowing discussion only of those elements of the Roman afterlife that appear most similar to Christianity, like the idea of the dead residing in an underworld divided into zones of reward (Elysium) and punishment (Tartarus). As such underworld models are overt Roman borrowings from the religion of Greece, a focus upon Roman references to Tartarus and Elysium can allow scholars to dismiss the Roman afterlife as entirely derivative or ephemeral.[6]

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[4] Riley, *The River of God: A New History of Christian Origins*, pp. 170–85.

[5] Ramsay MacMullen, *Paganism in the Roman Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), pp. 53–58.

[6] J. Gwyn Griffiths, *The Divine Verdict: A Study of Divine Judgment in the Ancient Religions* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1991), p. 95, wrote that it was unnecessary for him to discuss Roman ideas at any length, for he had just discussed the Greeks. Other scholars, like R. M. Ogilvie, *The Romans and Their Gods in the Age of Augustus* (New York: Norton, 1969), p. 86, have dismissed Roman interest in the underworld models of Elysium

In an argument like that of Riley above, where the goal is to show the superiority of Christian concepts, it is of course easy to show that no religion can surpass Christianity when the standards of the comparison derive exclusively from Christian thought. The omission of the *manes* distorts any such comparison, however, by ruling out the possibility that worshippers might possess or prefer an alternative approach to the afterlife. Indeed, one has to ask whether everyone would really prefer Christian promises of Heaven or bodily resurrection to the Pagan option of becoming a god.[7]

Another common approach in scholarship is to focus primarily on the speculations of philosophers about the afterlife. Even the work of Franz Cumont, which does discuss the *manes*, treats their worship as being simply less interesting (to Cumont) than philosophical speculation.[8] Roman philosophical treatments of death drew their ideas from pre-Roman intellectual movements in Greece, most commonly arguing either for a posthumous reunion with the divine will (in Platonism and Stoicism) or for complete oblivion after death (in Epicureanism). Philosophy is of course one aspect of Roman intellectual activity, but one should be careful of treating any of the philosophers as normative of the Roman general population's views of the afterlife. Certainly, the philosophers never presented themselves as normative. Both Lucretius in his Epicurean poem *De Rerum Natura* and Cicero in his predominantly Platonic model of the afterlife in *The Tusculan Disputations* present their writings as a correction to widespread misconceptions among non-philosophers.

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and Tartarus as being mere literary concoctions with no religious significance. When such an argument is combined with a dismissal of a role for the *manes*, the resulting conclusion is that the Romans had no interest in the afterlife at all. Thus, Jon Davies, *Death, Burial and Rebirth in the Religions of Antiquity* (London: Routledge, 1999), pp. 139–66, presents the Roman view of death as primarily secular.

[7] Similar problems occur in the recent but highly Christianized analysis of N. T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003) and Peter G. Bolt, "Life, Death, and the Afterlife in the Greco-Roman World," in Richard N. Longenecker ed., *Life in the Face of Death: The Resurrection Message of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), pp. 51–79. A section of my forthcoming book will argue at more length that the afterlife was unlikely to have been a main focus of Christian evangelical efforts in the Roman Empire. That discussion has no corresponding section in my earlier dissertation.

[8] Franz Cumont, *Afterlife in Roman Paganism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1922); Franz Cumont, *Lux Perpetua* (Paris: Librairie Orientaliste, 1949).

Moreover, because so much of Roman-era philosophy is an extension of the philosophical schools of pre-Roman Greece, the borrowed Greek ideas are not going to address elements of specifically Roman culture, like the *manes*, who had no exact Greek equivalent. It is revealing that Cicero, who strongly endorses the worship of *manes* in *De Legibus* when he is discussing the regulations of Rome's priests, does not mention *manes* at all when he is expounding Platonic views of death in the *Tusculan Disputations. Manes* have no place in Greek philosophy, but they do in Roman ritual practice. One should not take the most overt endorsements of Greek philosophical concepts as an indication of what went on in the day-to-day beliefs and rituals of Roman religion.

One should likewise be cautious in attempting to assert rigid boundaries for the Roman category of "gods." In the context of this particular edited anthology, which contains several discussions of "ghosts" in situations of worship elsewhere in the world, this point may seem less controversial, but scholars of Roman history have generally shown reluctance to acknowledge the possibility of a general deification of ordinary dead people of the sort that appears outside of "Western Civilization" in parts of modern Asia and Africa.[9] It is more common to see scholars treat the Roman concept of deification as if it applied only to emperors.

Thus, for example, Simon Price can present dead emperors as a form of gods, but specifically deny that *manes* are deities.[10] Price's argument

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[9] There have been only a few attempts to explicitly compare Roman practices to cults of the dead in the modern world. The best such study is probably John Karl Evans, "The Cult of the Dead in Ancient Rome and Modern China: A Comparative Analysis," *Journal of the Hong Kong Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 25 (1985): 119–51, which compares Rome to modern China. More widely cited, but less competent, is Meyer Fortes, "Pietas in Ancestor Worship," in Meyer Fortes ed., *Time and Social Structure and Other Essays* (New York: Humanities Press, 1970), pp. 164–200, who argued that Roman worship of the dead was similar to the "ancestor cult" among the African Tallensi people that Fortes was studying. Unfortunately, many of his arguments linking Roman worship to inheritance depended on an inaccurate description of Rome from Fustel de Coulanges' 19th century *La cité antique*. As a result, Fortes seriously misrepresented Roman inheritance law, which neither required primogeniture nor excluded women as Fortes thought, and his comparison of the Romans with the Tallensi is thus often misleading. See King, "The Living and the Dead: Ancient Roman Conceptions of the Afterlife," pp. 259–67. For criticisms of Fortes' misuse of the Roman term *pietas*, see also Richard P. Saller, "Pietas, Obligation and Authority in the Roman Family," in Peter Kneissl and Volker Losemann eds., *Alte Geschichte und Wissenschaftsgeschichte: Festschrift für Karl Christ zum 65. Geburtstag* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1988), pp. 393–410.

[10] Simon Price, "From Noble Funeral to Divine Cult: The Consecration of Roman

defines gods by their degree of similarity to the major gods of Rome's temples, like Jupiter and Mars. Thus, real Romans gods should live in the sky, be worshipped in public temples by state priests, and have other features typical of the major temple gods. As the *manes* do not meet these criteria as well as the deified emperors, the emperors are gods and the *manes* are not. The difficulty with an argument of this type is that it ignores the fact that Rome had a number of categories of gods that had different attributes. For example, one would also have to exclude the household gods like the domestic *lares* and *penates* if one applied Price's same criteria to them. Moreover, the Romans themselves did not make the distinction that Price alleges, for they regularly used the terminology of gods to describe *manes*. Although it can be omitted in literary texts, inscriptions almost always modify the word *manes* with the adjective *di*, "divine." There are also texts that simply refer to *manes* as "gods" (*dei*) without qualification, as does Ovid in his description of both the *Parentalia* and *Lemuria*, festivals at which Romans presented the *manes* with offerings (*Fasti* 2.536 and 5.431).

Rather than arbitrarily trying to define the "real" Roman gods, it is better to acknowledge the broad nature of the category "god" in Roman society. The various types of Roman gods shared a few basic features, notably the power to affect humans, the ability and willingness to answer prayers, and the desire to receive worship from humans in return for granting benefits. Other specific attributes could vary substantially. A metaphor that I have used in the past is that of the modern English term "bird."[11] The word "bird" is a general label for creatures that share a few general features, but in practice it is broad enough to include species that display great diversity in their specific forms, like penguins, eagles, and parakeets. So, too, Roman gods could be *manes*, or *lares*, or temple gods, or deified emperors, none of which are exactly the same.[12]

Emperors," in David Cannadine and Simon Price eds., *Rituals of Royalty: Power and Ceremonial in Traditional Societies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 56–105.

[11] King, "The Living and the Dead: Ancient Roman Conceptions of the Afterlife," p. 233.

[12] King, *The Ancient Roman Afterlife: Beliefs and Variations in the Cult of the Dead* (forthcoming) will discuss these issues further. For the value of discussing the diversity of Roman religious concepts in terms of polythetic sets of ideas, i.e., as sets that group diverse ideas through overlapping points of resemblance, see King, "The Organization of Roman Religious Beliefs," pp. 275–312. For the distinction between *manes* and deified emperors, see also note 31 below.

Unfortunately, scholars have far too often adopted the alternate approach of excluding *manes* from the category of gods, instead invoking an inappropriate equation of *manes* with modern western conceptions of "ghosts" that define "ghosts" as hostile or potentially troublesome spirits who have nothing positive to offer the living. According to this view, the worship of *manes* was simply apotropaic, so that the purpose of Roman rituals and festivals for the *manes* was only to keep the dead in their graves and away from the living.[13] When discussing the *Lemuria*, a festival in May during which Romans offered beans to the dead within their homes at night, R. J. Littlewood described the ceremony as "black magic."[14] Perhaps it would be "black magic" if a similar ceremony took place in modern America or England, but the *Lemuria* was an official ceremony on Rome's religious calendar, and Ovid (*Fasti*, 5.431) describes the dead who appear during the festival as "gods." It is inappropriate to cast Rome's dead as "ghosts" in the style of modern American horror films.[15]

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[13] Some advocates of this apotropaic view include Joan P. Alcock, "Classical Religious Belief and Burial Practice in Roman Britain," *Archaeological Journal* 137 (1980): 50–85; John A. North, "The Afterlife: Rome," in Michael Grant and Rachel Kitzinger eds., *Civilization of the Ancient Mediterranean: Greece and Rome* vol. 2 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1988), p. 998; Robin Lorsch Wildfang, "The Vestals and Annual Public Rites," *Classica et Mediaevalia* 52 (2001): 223–55; Ignatius R. Danka, "De Feralium et Lemuriorum Consimili Natura," *Eos* 64 (1976): 257–68. All of them (and particularly Danka) have useful insights on other issues.

[14] R. J. Littlewood, "Ovid Among the Family Dead: The Roman Founder Legend and Augustan Iconography in Ovid's Feralia and Lemuria," *Latomus* 60 (2001): 925.

[15] To the degree that the Romans had a concept that one could describe as "black magic," it was defined in terms of invoking supernatural powers to harm others, which is clearly not what is going on in the *Lemuria.* On magic, see the papers collected in Bengt Ankarloo and Stuart Clark eds., *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: Ancient Greece and Rome* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999). The *Lemuria* seems to bring out scholars' strongest apotropaic interpretations. See also Dario Sabbatucci, *La religione di Roma Antica, dal Calendario Festivo All'ordine Cosmico* (Milan: Mondadori, 1988), pp. 164–66; J. M. C. Toynbee, *Death and Burial in the Roman World* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1971), p. 64; and Daniel Ogden, *Greek and Roman Necromancy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), p. 76. The latter claims that the dead "looked to steal away the living from their homes," a view nowhere to be found in Roman sources. Many of the other arguments depend on an assumption that a different group of dead appeared at the *Lemuria* than at the *Parentalia* in February, but Ovid uses almost identical terminology to describe both ceremonies. See discussions by Ignatius R. Danka, "De Feralium et Lemuriorum Consimili Natura," and King, "The Living and the Dead: Ancient Roman Conceptions of the Afterlife," pp. 453–63.

The Cult of the Manes

To illustrate the problems with the strictly apotropaic view of the cult of the *manes*, one has only to consider a passage like the following one from Statius' *Silvae*. The poet is describing the worship that a man named Claudius Etruscus will perform for his dead father of the same name. He presents the younger Etruscus as saying to his dead father:

> Here I will hold your *manes*, here within the home. You are the guardian and lord of the home; everything of yours will obey you. Always lesser and rightfully second, I will offer ever-present meals and drinks to your sacred *manes* and worship your effigies. Shining stone and lines of ingenious wax recall you to me; now ivory and yellow gold will imitate your features.[16]

The same poem (3.3.21–24) earlier portrays the dead Etruscus as arriving in the land of the dead where other *manes* greet him. What the above quotation is asserting is that, through regular offerings at his home shrine, Etruscus will entice his dead father to leave the usual home of the dead and reside instead within his home in the world of the living. The younger Etruscus could thereby appeal to the power of his father, for the dead Etruscus could both extend the lifespan of his still-living son (3.3.28–30), and send messages of advice to the living through dreams, which the younger Etruscus says he will expect (3.3.203–204).

Statius alternates between having Etruscus refer to his dead father as "you" and "your *manes*." The alternation stresses both the pre-existing familial connection between father and son and the religious connection between the newly created deity and his living worshipper. A Christian could make a similar sort of alternation in wording between saying

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[16] *Silvae*, 3.3.197–202, my translation from the text of Edward Courtney ed., *P. Papini Stati Silvae* (Oxford, Clarendon, 1990).

> …*hic manes, hic intra tecta tenebo:*
> *tu custos dominusque laris, tibi cuncta tuorum*
> *parebunt: ego rite minor semperque secundus*
> *assiduas libabo dapes et pocula sacris*
> *manibus effigiesque colam; te lucida saxa,*
> *te similem doctae referet mihi linea cerae,*
> *nunc ebur et fuluum uultus imitabitur aurum.*

The use of the term for household gods, *lares*, as a word to mean "home" is a fairly common usage. Ovid (*Fasti*, 3.242) could even use it of a bird's nest. So, translating *dominus laris* simply as "lord of the home" seems legitimate, though one cannot rule out the possibility that something more is meant and that the *manes* of the father will supervise the other household gods.

that "you" or "your soul" will "go to Heaven," but Statius is not talking about placing the *manes* in an afterlife separate from the living world, but rather about the *manes* being available to help the living.

Statius' text does not portray the *manes* as a hostile force to be kept at a distance, and instead shows an attempt to increase the level of interaction between the living and the dead, even within the home of the living. The *manes* of the dead Etruscus is a god to be worshipped on the altar of his son's home-shrine and a resource whose power and guidance a worshipper could invoke. The apotropaic interpretation of the cult of the *manes* is simply not sufficient to explain such a text. A different model is necessary.

To help develop that model, it will be useful to look more generally at how the Romans portrayed *manes*. One source of potential confusion is the Latin word *manes* itself, which has only plural forms. Many scholars have leaped to the conclusion that the lack of a singular form for the word meant that Romans could not conceive of singular *manes*. A number of modern studies—even quite recently—have asserted that the Romans thought that *manes* were only a collective group of spirits that they did not worship individually.[17] If inferring that a plural-only noun refers to a plural-only concept has a certain logic, it does not appear to be correct. Indeed, plural-only noun forms are fairly common in Latin and do not interfere with the Romans' ability to discuss singular forms of the same concepts.[18] In the case of the *manes*, Romans

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[17] Influential earlier works asserting the collective view of *manes* include Georg Wissowa, *Religion und Kultus der Römer* (Handbuch der klassischen Altertumwissenschaft. Second Edition. Munich: Beck, 1912), pp. 238–39; Franz Cumont, *Afterlife in Roman Paganism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1922), p. 72; Franz Bömer, *Ahnenkult und Ahnenglaube im alten Rom* (Beihefte zum Archiv für Religionswissenschaft 1 Leipzig-Berlin: Teubner, 1943), pp. 48–49; and Toynbee, *Death and Burial in the Roman World*, pp. 35–36). Recent examples include Mary Beard, John North and Simon Price, *Religions of Rome* vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 31; Hugh Lindsay, "Death-Pollution and Funerals in the City of Rome," in Valerie M. Hope and Eireann Marshall eds., *Death and Disease in the Ancient City* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 168; and Clifford Ando ed., *Roman Religion* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2003), p. 366.

[18] See further in King, "The Living and the Dead: Ancient Roman Conceptions of the Afterlife," pp. 116–24: "It is not extraordinarily rare for Latin nouns to be 'defective in number,' possessing only plural forms. Gildersleeve and Lodge list eighty-three examples. Those who argue that the plural form of *manes* requires a collective understanding of the dead should consider whether the nouns *liberi, antae, cunae, indutiae, minae*, and *renes* prove that the Romans were unable to conceive of an individual 'child,' 'door-post,' 'cradle,' 'truce,' 'threat,' or 'kidney'." (p. 120, citing B. L. Gildersleeve and Gonzalez Lodge, *Gildersleeve's Latin Grammar* (London: Macmillan, 1895), p. 35).

would either just use the word *manes* in a singular sense, allowing the context to clarify the word's number, or they would shift to another term for the dead, like *umbrae, animae,* or *silentes,* all of which have singular forms. When Ovid describes the festival of the *Parentalia* (*Fasti* 2.533–541), he switches from *manes* in the plural to *umbra* in the singular, but elsewhere (*Metamorphoses* 6.566–570), when telling the story of how Procne mistakenly held a funeral for a sister who was not really dead, the same author says that she sacrificed to "false *manes.*" Although *manes* is a plural form, the context shows that it is a singular, for the *manes* are "false" only because one individual is not really dead. Thus, Romans had no difficulty in discussing or conceiving of singular dead persons as *manes*.

That Roman worship of the dead involved individual dead and not just groups of collective ancestors is important to understanding the practical form of the cult of the dead. There were certain specific ceremonies in which Roman state priests invoked the help of Rome's whole community of *manes* to assist Rome's armies or Rome's agriculture.[19] Most of the forms of worship, though, focused on the private worship of specific dead individuals who were directly linked to their worshippers by familial or social ties. One can see this in the above quotation from Statius, where Etruscus is making offerings to his dead father alone, not some collective grouping of the dead. Likewise, the nine-day festival of the *Parentalia* in February required participants to take offerings to individual graves.[20] These sorts of rituals at individual graves began at the funeral, when participants performed a ceremony to make the grave into sacred space and sacrificed a male pig to the newly deceased person as a new *manes*.[21]

The criteria determining who worshipped which dead persons also linked the individual dead to individual worshippers by reason of

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[19] See King, "The Living and the Dead: Ancient Roman Conceptions of the Afterlife," pp. 338–57, on military rituals and the agricultural rite of the opening of the *Mundus*.

[20] Ovid, *Fasti*, 2.533–70. Cf. 5.423–28, where Ovid is arguing that the *Lemuria* once had a form like the *Parentalia* has in Ovid's own time.

[21] There was also a female pig sacrificed to the goddess Ceres to purify the family of the pollution of handling the corpse. For a discussion of the evidence, see King, "The Living and the Dead: Ancient Roman Conceptions of the Afterlife," pp. 403–11, though for a reconstruction of the funeral as a whole, I (in *The Ancient Roman Afterlife: Beliefs and Variations in the Cult of the Dead*) will add some important refinements to the model presented in my earlier dissertation "The Living and the Dead: Ancient Roman Conceptions of the Afterlife."

the specific connections that they shared. One important factor was inheritance. Rome's college of pontiffs, the priests who supervised ritual procedure, asserted rules governing the obligation to worship on the basis of inheritance (Cicero, *De Legibus*, 2.45–68). I have discussed these rules in detail elsewhere.[22] Briefly, one can say that the obligation to worship followed the flow of money. The rules were designed to pass the obligation primarily to the natural heirs, i.e. to the people who would have an automatic claim to inherit even in the absence of a will. Normally, the natural heirs would be the children of the deceased. If natural heirs were lacking, however, or if the dead person had left a major proportion of the estate to non-relatives by means of a will, the obligation would follow the inheritance. Indeed, in the absence of any heir, the obligation would pass to the estate's largest creditor.

The rules obligated worshippers to worship because of their individual financial ties to the dead person. The most common pattern was an obligation for children to worship their parents, but note that the rules did not restrict the obligation to relatives, and it could pass to someone whose linkage to the dead person was purely financial, even to a creditor whose ties to the new *manes* might have been fairly distant. Note too that the rules did not exclude women, who could both worship and be worshipped according to the financial obligations that the pontiffs outlined. This point is worth stressing, for some scholars have denied the participation of women. The worship of *manes* was not some all-male cult in which only sons worshipped dead fathers.[23]

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[22] King, "The Living and the Dead: Ancient Roman Conceptions of the Afterlife," pp. 268–78. A revision of this material will appear in King, *The Ancient Roman Afterlife: Beliefs and Variations in the Cult of the Dead.*

[23] Cf. King, "The Living and the Dead: Ancient Roman Conceptions of the Afterlife," pp. 260–67. The idea that the Roman cult of the dead involved only men worshipping other men derives from the speculations of Numa Denis Fustel de Coulanges in his *La cite antique*, written back in 1864. For a translation, see *The Ancient City: A Study on the Religion, Laws, and Institutions of Greece and Rome* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980). Fustel's ideas have received periodic revivals that do not address the lack of support from the pontifical rules, for examples, Meyer Fortes, "Pietas in Ancestor Worship," in M. Fortes, *Time and Social Structure and Other Essays* (New York: Humanities Press), pp. 164–200, and Hugh Lindsay, "The Romans and Ancestor Worship," in Matthew Dillon ed., *Religion in the Ancient World: New Themes and Approaches* (Amsterdam: A. M. Hakkert, 1996), pp. 271–85. Lindsay goes much farther even than Fustel in trying to restrict deification only to those who qualified to display wax funeral masks (*imagines*) at public funerals, that is, only to male holders of high political offices. The multitude of tombstones at the graves of women, shopkeepers, freed slaves, etc., all dedicated "to the divine *manes*" (*dis manibus*) of the dead person, make such a male and aristocratic limitation impossible. Indeed, Harriet I. Flower, *Ances-*

The ties between *manes* and inheritance were only one category of connection that could motivate rituals for the dead. There were others that the pontiffs did not explicitly require, but which the Roman authors who write about *manes* treat as commonplace. Perhaps a good way to generalize about the non-financial criteria for worship would be to say that they were a mechanism to express which relationships were most important to the worshippers. People would assume the obligation to worship the *manes* as an expression of familial or personal loyalty, even when inheritance was not an issue.

Important in encouraging this worship, regardless of inheritance, was the idea of *pietas*. *Pietas* was a central Roman concept in defining both family ties and relationships with the gods. One can define *pietas* as the obligation to fulfill one's side of a reciprocal on-going relationship. The Romans used the term to express the bonds that linked the members of families to each other. *Pietas* was the idea that, even though the power in the family might be unequal and, for example, parents would have more power than children, nevertheless every member of the family was tied to every other by bonds of mutual interdependence.[24] *Pietas* linked family members together through obligations to provide mutual support when needed, including the obligation to make offerings to each other once dead. So, even when there was no inheritance tie, Romans worshipped the dead of their families on the basis of *pietas*.

Thus, one can find examples of children assuming the religious obligations to worship dead parents even when they explicitly rejected the financial inheritance, so that the obligations would stay within the family even if the property went elsewhere. One can also find husbands and wives worshipping their dead spouses as an expression of their marital ties, even when inheritance was not an issue. One can even find parents worshipping dead children, a situation where inheritance is extremely unlikely to be the issue, for Roman children could not own property while their fathers were alive. Ties between children and parents, ties between spouses, and a range of other non-financial familial ties were all covered by the obligations of *pietas*. So, too, were

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tor Masks and Aristocratic Power in Roman Culture (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996) has argued that the wax masks at funerals were intended only for social and political advertisement and were not the same as the effigies used in the cult of the dead.

[24] Richard P. Saller, "Pietas, Obligation and Authority in the Roman Family," in Peter Kneissl and Volker Losemann eds., *Alte Geschichte und Wissenschaftsgeschichte: Festschrift für Karl Christ zum 65. Geburtstag* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1988), pp. 393–410.

ties to non-relatives that derived from affection, friendship, or even
political alliance. Romans worshipped the people with whom they had
the closest associations in life as an expression of *pietas* that extended
beyond the grave.[25]

Pietas is also a word that Romans used to describe relationships
between humans and gods.[26] Gods were more powerful than humans,
but they were still part of an ongoing reciprocal relationship with their
worshippers. Gods needed worshippers, just as the worshippers needed
the benefits that the gods could provide, and that religious sense of
pietas would include the *manes*. Indeed, when describing the *Parentalia*,
the annual festival for the dead, the poet Ovid (*Fasti*, 2.533–536) says
that what the *manes* really wanted from the living were expressions of
pietas. So, in a sense, the cult of the *manes* was a blending of familial
pietas with divine *pietas*. Both the older ties of *pietas* that connected
relatives during life and the religious *pietas* owed to the newly deified
god would combine to obligate the worship of the dead person as
manes. Family ties and ties to the gods thereby intertwined, for the
boundary between family and gods was entirely porous, and relatives
would regularly cross the line.

One implication of the heavy emphasis on *pietas* in the cult of the
dead is the extreme inclusiveness of the resulting model of the afterlife,
for *pietas* would link far more people with the obligation to worship
than just inheritance alone. The combined ties of *pietas* and inheritance
created a web of obligations that would have included almost everyone
in some capacity. So far, this paper has discussed the question of who
worships whom from the perspective of the worshipper, but consider it
now from the perspective of someone who is still alive and is consider-
ing his or her mortality. That person would have every reason to think
that his or her death would result in one or more persons having the
obligation to perform worship. It was not just a theoretical possibility
of becoming a god, but the practical reality that one would have wor-
shippers on the basis of *pietas*, inheritance, or both. The Roman cult of
the *manes* was not simply about the deification of the Roman elite or
of specific political leaders or of the male heads of household or even

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[25] For examples and evidence, see King, "The Living and the Dead: Ancient Roman
Conceptions of the Afterlife," pp. 278–319; further in King, *The Ancient Roman Afterlife:
Beliefs and Variations in the Cult of the Dead.*

[26] King, "The Organization of Roman Religious Beliefs," pp. 301–7.

just of the adults. This was worship based on the idea of deifying the dead in general.

This worship of the *manes* included prayers requesting benefits from the dead, and thus part of the attraction of the idea of becoming *manes* after death would be the potential to dispense those same benefits to the living. For what sort of benefits did the Romans pray? What powers did they think the dead had to intervene in the lives of the living? There were a variety of answers to those questions and variations in the way they played out, for the Roman religion did not have any authority issuing orthodox doctrines. Rome's priests standardized ritual procedures, not beliefs, and, as a result there was a fair amount of variation in existing Roman beliefs about what any given god could do.[27]

Still, there are patterns in the surviving examples of Roman appeals to the *manes* regarding the basic powers that Roman authors attributed to them. In particular, there are two general powers that the Romans attribute to the *manes* quite consistently, and from which most prayers to *manes* are variations. One of these is the power to control the duration of life and the conditions under which death occurs. In other words, the *manes* could both prolong life through their protection and initiate death at their discretion. The second power is that the *manes* could monitor the actions—both present and future—of the living, so that they were aware of the lives and the destinies of their worshippers.

The first of these powers—the control over death—explains why one of the main prayers that the living made to the *manes* was for the extension of their lives. The lexicographer Festus says that Romans worshipped the *manes* as suppliants "because of a fear of death."[28] And it does seem to be the case that Romans prayed to the dead to extend their lives.

Sometimes, prayers for additional life took the form of a *votum*, a conditional vow, in which the worshipper would give a promised offering to a deity if and only if the deity grants the prayer. In this case, the deity has to keep the living alive in order for the worshipper to make the offerings. For example, a tombstone portrays a husband addressing his dead wife, whose name is now lost. The husband vows to give offerings to the wife for as long as she will sustain his life: "Spare, I ask, spare your husband, girl, so that for many years, with wreathes, he can

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[27] King, "The Organization of Roman Religious Beliefs."
[28] Festus, *De verborum significatu*, 132L: *propter metum mortis*.

give the due offerings that he promised."[29] The ability of the worshipper to fulfill the vow is entirely dependent on the dead wife granting the extension of her husband's life span. The prayer is formulated to stress that it is in the god's own interest to keep her former husband alive.

Similar formulas can be found elsewhere. An inscription that a freedman erected to a dead child of his former master's family tells the dead girl to "spare" her sister and parents, so that they can give her offerings in the future (*CIL* 6.13101). Even the great poet Virgil put such a prayer into the mouth of his hero Aeneas in his epic poem the *Aeneid*. Aeneas does not just promise to give annual offerings to his dead father Anchises, but prays that Anchises "be willing that I may offer these sacred rites to him every year"[30] That the *manes* of Anchises has to be "willing" in order that Aeneas sacrifice year after year shows again that Aeneas' capacity to fulfill his vow to sacrifice annually depends on the dead man keeping his worshipper alive. Statius advances similar ideas in his poem about the dead Etruscus and again in a poem about the death of a woman named Priscilla, the wife of an imperial secretary (*Silvae*, 3.3.28–30 and 5.247–262).

If the dead could postpone death, then, by implication, neglect of the worship of the *manes* would remove their protection and thus would hasten death. That all the worshippers—faithful or not—eventually died might therefore seem to present difficulties, but probably it did not. Clearly, everyone died eventually. The power of the *manes* was the power to postpone death, not to grant immortality in the bodies of the living. As *eventual* death was inevitable for all, the death of dutiful worshippers need not mean that the *manes* had failed to grant their worshippers' prayers, merely that they had reached the limit of the period during which they were able or willing to postpone deaths beyond what fate had decreed. Remember that there is no way to test for divine intervention. However prematurely people might seem to have died, one could always believe that they would have died even sooner were it not for the *manes* responding to their worshippers' prayers.

Romans might also invoke the *manes*' power over life and death in very different ways. One state-sponsored ceremony that called upon the *manes* as a group was the opening of the *Mundus*, an underground

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29 *CIL* 6.30099: *parcas, oro, viro, puella parcas,*
    ut possit tibi plurimos per annos
    cum sertis dare iusta quae dicavit.
30 *Aeneid.*, 5.59–60: *haec me sacra quotannis…velit…sibi ferre.*

chamber where priests performed rites that called upon the *manes* to protect the community's seed corn for that year. The *manes*' ability to ward off death could extend to the community's seeds, making the *manes* the guardians of the fertility of the seeds on which Rome's agriculture, and thereby the lives of Rome's citizens, would depend.[31]

The idea that the *manes* could control the occurrence of death could also take a more direct form, by appealing to the *manes* to kill others. Individuals could do so through so-called "curse tablets" through which they might invoke *manes* (sometimes together with other powers) to strike down personal enemies. The state could make the same request on a larger scale. In a ritual called the *devotio hostium*, Roman generals pledged the lives of enemies in a besieged city to the *manes* as an offering, provided that the *manes* helped the Romans destroy the city and thus supply their own offering.[32]

The second of the main powers of the *manes*, the ability to monitor the living is a prerequisite for many of the uses of the *manes*' power over life and death. For the *manes* to sustain the lives of the living, for example, would require them to be able to monitor any and all potential causes of death that their worshippers might encounter and then intervene accordingly. Likewise, a military scenario like the *devotio hostium* would require the ability to observe and influence a situation far from Rome. Such examples are a useful reminder that the Romans

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[31] King, "The Living and the Dead: Ancient Roman Conceptions of the Afterlife," pp. 350–57. That a priest performed this ceremony to invoke the *manes* as group is worth noting for another reason. It helps to illustrate one of the differences between *manes* and the special class of gods that were the deified emperors (*divi augusti*) of the imperial era. *Manes* were formerly living humans who were worshipped as gods individually by private persons, but only worshipped as a group when the celebrant was a priest, whereas emperors were formally living humans who were worshipped individually by public priests. This distinction helped to establish the idea that dead emperors were supposed to be more important than other dead people, but, since most worship of *manes* was done in a private familial context, not by public priests, it does not alter the overall point that *manes* were normally worshipped individually. Obviously, another distinction between *manes* and *divi augusti* was that only select members of the imperial family could receive worship as *divi augusti*, in contrast to the broad inclusiveness of the cult of the *manes*.

[32] The *devotio hostium* should not be confused with the *devotio ducis* in which the Roman general pledges his own life in return for victory, though that ritual also involves the *manes*. On both, see H. S. Versnel, "Two Types of Roman Devotio," *Mnemosyne* ser. 4.29 (1976): 365–410. On curse tablets, see John G. Gager, *Curse Tablets and Binding Spells from the Ancient World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992) and the studies in Christopher A. Faraone and Dirk Obbink eds., *Magika Hiera: Ancient Greek Magic & Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

did not view the influence of the *manes* over the living as confined to the physical vicinity of their graves, nor was it limited chronologically to the period of the annual festivals like the *Parentalia*.

The *manes*' capacity to watch their worshippers also underlies other occasions for invoking their power. Romans sometimes invoked the *manes* to witness and enforce oaths, so that the dead would punish anyone who swore falsely. This idea of calling upon divine powers as witnesses was in no way limited to the *manes*, and Romans appealed to a wide range of gods for the purpose, including even their most prominent gods like Jupiter and Mars. The reason for choosing the *manes* as witnesses, rather than different gods, seems to be mainly a matter of invoking witnesses with a perceived interest in the matter at hand. Thus, Silius Italicus (*Punica*, 6.113–116) presents a soldier accused of cowardice as swearing an oath to the contrary on the *manes* of his dead comrades, who would have an obvious vested interest in punishing him if he lied. That *manes* were supposed to be able to bring about death in humans may have added to their deterrent value as enforcers of oaths.

The observational abilities of the *manes*—including even an ability to see their worshippers' futures—factored into another area where Romans invoked *manes*, as sources of guidance and advice for the living. The *manes* could appear in dreams and impart advice. The idea that Romans might actively expect such messages is not as odd as it might seem initially. It is common for the living to dream about dead family members, and the classification of such a dream as a specific message would inevitably be a subjective matter for the dreamer to interpret. Certainly Statius thought dream-messages from the dead were important, and he not only portrays Claudius Etruscus as specifically requesting them from his dead father, but he himself requests them from his own dead father (*Silvae*, 3.3.203–204 and 5.3.288–293). A recent study by Gil Renberg has analyzed a large number of inscriptions that assert that a human received and obeyed a command from a god that came from a dream.[33] As in the case of witnessing oaths, there are several gods involved, as many gods could appear in dreams. The gods in the inscriptions included *manes*, though, showing that (perceived) dream messages from the dead were not just a literary motif and could

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[33] Gil H. Renberg, "Commanded by the Gods: An Epigraphical Study of Dreams and Visions in Greek and Roman Religious Life." Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 2003.

motivate religious actions. Worshippers could also actively seek out messages from the dead, and there were several sites available for the practice of necromancy.[34]

If the various powers and applications of powers that the Romans attribute to the *manes* are considered together, it becomes extremely difficult to present the worship of *manes* as being a minor or marginal part of the Roman religious experience. On the contrary, the benefits that Romans prayed to the dead to receive were central concerns—life, health, food, military success, and even guidance for their day-to-day lives. The worship of the *manes* was a significant component of Roman domestic religion in general, of interest not just for those considering their own posthumous fate, but also for those concerned with survival and success in the world of the living.

The Romans did also have other scenarios about the afterlife, most obviously the traditions that they borrowed from the Greeks about posthumous judgment and the idea that the dead would be divided between Elysium (a place of reward) and Tartarus (a place of punishment). Still, even the most famous Roman depictions of Elysium combine it with the cult of the *manes*, so that Elysium becomes the base from which the *manes* operate in their role in the world of the living. Thus, Virgil's hero Aeneas may journey to the underworld to meet his father in Elysium in the sixth book of the *Aeneid*, but not until after he has worshipped his dead father as *manes* in book five, invoking his aid in the living world.

I am not suggesting that Romans never attached importance to models of posthumous judgment in the underworld, for I have argued the reverse myself elsewhere. Some Romans clearly found such ideas meaningful.[35] Tartarus and Elysium were always a subordinate tradition, though, an option that Roman authors could include as a moral expansion of the idea of *manes*. It was a way to suggest that fully functional *manes* must pass some kind of judgment before they could operate freely from Elysium and, thus, to imply that full godhood had to be earned. Still, in the ritual practice of Roman religion, there was little if any reinforcement for these ideas of posthumous judgment,

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[34] Daniel Ogden, *Greek and Roman Necromancy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

[35] King, "The Living and the Dead: Ancient Roman Conceptions of the Afterlife," pp. 115–223, and also in King, *The Ancient Roman Afterlife: Beliefs and Variations in the Cult of the Dead.*

and quite a lot for the worship of *manes* without reference to such ideas. There were multiple festivals devoted to the worship of *manes*, and home shrines to them, and rules issued by the college of pontiffs governing their worship. It is worth noting too that it is the dedication *dis manibus*, "to the divine *manes*," that appears on tens of thousands of Roman tombstones, not references to Elysium or hopes of going there, which, while occasionally present, appear on a proportionally tiny fraction of the stones.

The worship of *manes* and the expectation of becoming *manes* at death was the main focus of Roman conceptions of the afterlife. Thus, to return to an earlier point, it would be misleading for modern scholars to focus merely on the Roman models of Tartarus and Elysium as if they were the main representatives of Roman thought about the afterlife. Likewise, it is misleading to compare the Roman afterlife to Christian or even ancient Greek ideas without making reference to the Roman *manes*. For the Romans, the afterlife was always less about where the dead resided than it was about what the dead could do when they functioned as powerful gods in the world of the living.

THE GHOSTLY TROOP AND THE BATTLE OVER DEATH: WILLIAM OF AUVERGNE (d. 1249) CONNECTS CHRISTIAN, OLD NORSE, AND IRISH VIEWS[1]

Alan E. Bernstein

One of history's most persistent themes is the belief that bands of the dead display themselves to inspire or frighten the living. The power of this ancient idea has propelled it to the present.

Modern Manifestations

The resurrected dead were encouraged, early, to enlist in nationalistic causes.

1. The hymn of Garibaldi's Red Shirts assures his Thousand that throngs of their martyrs fight alongside them.

> The tombs open wide, the dead awaken
> Our martyrs now all rise again!
>
> Si scopron le tombe, si levano i morti
> i martiri nostri son tutti risorti![2]

2. During the early days of World War I, an English journalist invented a comforting fiction to reassure his readers after British troops suffered disastrously at Mons in Belgium from an overwhelming German offensive on 23–26 August, 1914. The soldiers pray to Saint George who brings the dead archers of Agincourt to help the besieged English riflemen. The English defeated the French at Agincourt on 25 October, 1415, five hundred years before. The newspaper story, by

[2] By Luigi Mercantini, 1859. Italian text at: http://ingeb.org/songs/innodiga.html. The translation is mine.

Arthur Machen, was published 29 September, 1914, in the London
Evening News.[3]

Others reacted differently to the same war.

3. In his film "J'Accuse," Abel Gance's protagonist invokes the dead
of World War I. "I summon you: airmen, infantry men, artillery men!
I summon you French, Germans, Italians, Russians!" They rise from
their graves and march *en masse* to the cities where industrialists already
crave their profits from the immanent World War II.[4]

4. In his 1936 play, "Bury the Dead," Irwin Shaw enacts a mutiny by
the corpses of six American soldiers who, refusing burial, "stand up"
to protest the injustice of their deaths.[5]

5. In the American South, plantation owners and their successors
attempted to exploit what they assumed to be African-American super-
stition by dressing as ghosts and terrorizing the houses of their slaves
or laborers. The practice survived slavery. Gladys-Marie Fry exposed
this effort by interviewing witnesses or their descendants.[6]

6. In what must be the theme's most revolting application, the Third
Reich prepared the following song to indoctrinate the Hitler Youth. The
Nazis projected fantasies of children longing for a precocious adulthood
marching with their heroic ancestors.[7]

> A young people arises, ready for the storm.
> Comrades, raise the banner higher!
> We feel close to our destiny,
> The destiny of young soldiers!
> Ahead of us march, with storm-tattered banners,
> The heroes of the young nation,
> And over us [march] the ancestral heroes!
> Germany, Fatherland, we are already on our way!
>
> Ein junges Volk steht auf, zum Sturm bereit.
> Reisst die Fahnen höher, Kameraden!

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[3] David Clarke, "Rumors of Angels: A Legend of the First World War," *Folklore*
vol. 113.2 (October 1, 2002): 151–73.

[4] Cited in Mark Dollar, "Ghost Imagery in the War Poems of Siegfried Sassoon,"
War, Literature and the Arts vol. 16, issue 1/2 (2004): 235–45.

[5] New York: Dramatists Play Service, 1936. Cited in Dollar, "Ghost Imagery in the
War Poems of Siegfried Sassoon," p. 245.

[6] Gladys-Marie Fry, *Night Riders in Black Folk History* (Athens, GA and London:
University of Georgia Press, 1991).

[7] I am indebted to the late Heiko A. Oberman, my former colleague at the University
of Arizona, for the tip that Nazi propaganda included the notion that all the German
dead fought with their troops.

Wir fühlen nahen unsere Zeit,
Die Zeit der jungen Soldaten!
Vor uns marchieren mit sturmzerfetzten Fahnen
Die toten Helden der jungen Nation,
Und über uns die Heldenahnen!
Deutschland, Vaterland, wir kommen schon![8]

A related, but less literal allusion to ghosts of the dead marching along with Nazi forces comes in.

6a. the Horst Wessel Lied (1927), the Nazi party anthem

Die Fahne hoch	Banners High,
Die Reihen fest geschlossen	Ranks tightly closed,
S. A. marschiert	Storm Troopers march.
Mit ruhig festem Schritt.	With calm, steadfast step.
Kam'raden die Rotfront	Comrades the Reds
Und Reaktion erschossen	And reactionaries shot
Marschier'n im Geist	March along in spirit
In unsern Reihen mit.	Within our ranks.[9]

7. The myth of the Wild Hunt took another direction in postwar America with "Ghost Riders in the Sky" by Stan Jones (1915–2001), published in 1949. Far from just a cowboy song, the lyrics draw on themes from the medieval sources considered below, explicitly using the motif of the hunt and the unending task as punishment. A horseman rests on a ridge and sees a herd of "red-eyed cows" pass in the sky above him. In pursuit come exhausted cowboys one of whom addresses the watching rider.

If you want to save your soul from hell a' ridin' on our range
Then cowboy change your ways today or with us you will ride
A-tryin' to catch the Devil's herd across these endless skies.[10]

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[8] My translation. German text: http://ingeb.org/Lieder/einjunge.html. Note the violence implicit in the banners being shredded.

[9] My translation. I wish to thank Professor Daniel F. Melia for alerting me to this song. For the text, see the website: http://ingeb.org/Lieder/diefahne.html. For extensive analysis of how Nazi propaganda developed a cult of dead heroes, see Sabine Behrenbeck, *Der Kult um die toten Helden: Nationalsozialistische Mythen, Riten und Symbole 1923 bis 1945* (Vierow bei Greifswald: SH-Verlag, 1996). Joseph Goebbels exploited the theme of resurrection implicit in the notion of the dead revived to fight, see Behrenbeck, pp. 231–32 and, for other religious parallels, pp. 135–37.

[10] The hooves of the cows are steel. Thanks to Tom DeMayo for internet research locating these lyrics. For the lyrics, see: http://ingeb.org/songs/anoldcow.html; for the music, see http://www.secretspain.org/ghostriders.html. Walter Felscher's website considers similarities between these two songs. http://www.youth.net/memories/hypermail/0720.html.

Following the pattern of disillusionment employed by Gance and Shaw, Frank Bidart wrote in 2006:

> I dreamt I saw a caravan of the dead
> Start out again from Gettysburg....
> Risen disconsolate that we
> Now ruin the great work of time,
> They roll in outrage across America.
> *You betray us* is blazoned across each chest.
> To each eye as they pass: *You betray us.*[11]

These motifs can be traced back to Greco-Roman antiquity, when indications from the first to the sixth century C.E. document its pervasiveness.

Classical and Early Medieval Thought

Within the Roman Empire, many peoples, including the Romans, accepted cosmologies that included active roles for the dead. Roman, Celtic, and Germanic mythologies featured voyages to the land of the dead (*Nekyia*), wandering hordes of the dead (the Ghostly Troop), and individuals who improve their deaths by returning to undo the misdeeds of their lives. Ancient writers intimate widespread belief that armies of the dead fight in the air or on the ground.

1. The earliest example is in Herodotus (d. c. 425 B.C.E.), who explains how the Phocians, cornered in a mountain pass, covered a picked troop with whitewash (gypsum) and sent them to attack the Thessalian camp at night. The sentries mistook the disguised warriors for dead men and spread panic throughout the camp.[12]

2. In his *Germania*, Tacitus (c. 56–117 C.E.) makes this tactic a habitual stratagem of the Harii, who "inspire terror by evoking the dread shadow of an army of the dead, and no enemy can withstand an appearance so unexpected and seemingly infernal."[13]

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[11] Frank Bidart, "To the Republic," *The New Yorker* (April 24, 2006): 93.

[12] Herodotus, *The Histories*, 8.27 tr. Aubrey de Sélincourt (London and New York: Penguin Books, 1972), p. 533. This instance and many others are collected in Karl Meisen, *Die Sagen vom Wütenden Heer und Wilden Jäger* (Münster in Westfalen: Verlag Aschendorff, 1935). Meisen includes the original languages.

[13] *Germania*, 43: "Truces insitae feritati arte ac tempore lenocinantur; nigra scuta, tincta corpora, atras ad proelia noctes legunt, ipsaque formidine atque *umbra feralis exercitus* terrorem inferunt, nullo hostium sustinente novum ac velut *infernum* aspec-

3. Also according to Tacitus, the approach of Roman armies, too, could provoke supernatural wonders. Before Titus stormed Jerusalem, armies were seen fighting in the sky. "Contending hosts were seen meeting in the skies, arms flashed, and suddenly the temple was illumined with fire from the clouds."[14]

4. Pliny the Elder (d. 79 C.E.), relates the aftermath of the Cimbrian Wars, when Marius defeated the Teutones and Ambrones in 101 B.C.E. He still hears reports of troops in the sky, the clash of arms and the sound of the trumpet from sunrise to sunset.[15]

5. In the mid-second century, Pausanias evokes the dead of Marathon as he describes the grave of Miltiades. "Here every night you can hear the noise of whinnying horses and of men fighting. It has never done any man good to wait there and observe this closely, but if it happens against a man's will the anger of the daemonic spirits will not follow him."[16]

6. According to the mid-third century C.E. Athenian Philostratus, in his *Heroica*, the warriors of the Trojan War still appear on the fields around Troy and protect farmers who propitiate them.[17]

7. After Roman and Gothic forces intercepted Attila and the Huns at the Catalaunian Fields, their dead fought on as spirits for three days and nights, according to Damascius in the sixth-century. He cites other examples of phantom armies in aerial combat.[18]

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tum." Cited by J. Grimm, James Steven Stallybrass trans., *Teutonic Mythology* vol. 3 (London: George Bell & Sons, 1883), p. 950. Grimm's italics.

[14] Tacitus, *Historiae* 5.13; tr. Clifford H. Moore. Loeb Classical Library (London: Heinemann; Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1956), p. 196: "Visae per caelum concurrere acies, rutilantia arma et subito nubium igne conlucere templum."

[15] *Naturalis Historia* 2.62: "Armorum crepitus et tubae sonitus auditos e coelo Cimbricis bellis accepimus, crebroque et prius et postea; tertio vero consulatu Marii ab Amerinis et Tudertibus spectata arma coelestia ab ortu occasuque inter se concurrentia, pulsis quae ab occasu erant." Quoted in Grimm, *Teutonic Mythology* vol. 3, p. 950.

[16] Pausanias, *Guide to Greece*. 1.32.1 (Harmondsworth, Eng.: Penguin, 1971), vol. 1, p. 93. I thank Charles King for this reference.

[17] Flavius Philostratus, *Heroikos* §§ 18.2 and 21 tr. Jennifer K. Berenson Maclean and Ellen Bradshaw Aitken (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2001), pp. 48–51 and 56–59. Cited in Lacy Collison-Morley, *Greek and Roman Ghost Stories* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1912; rept. Chicago: Argonaut, 1968), p. 25. The heroes appear, but it is not clear that they engage in battle.

[18] Cited in Collison-Morley, *Greek and Roman Ghost Stories*, p. 24. For the Greek: Damascius, Clement Zintzen ed., *Vita Isidori* 63 (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1967), p. 92. A facing translation in: Damascius, Polymnia Athanassiadi trans., *The Philosophical History* 50 (Athens: Apamea Cultural Association, 1999), p. 143: "[W]hen the combatants fell, their bodies having failed, they still stood there fighting with their souls for three whole days and nights without in any way being inferior in battle to the living

8. Procopius (fl. 527–562) describes an island called Brittia, divided by a north-south wall. East of this barrier everything tends to prosperity; west of the barrier, it tends to pestilence and death. It is to this western area that the dead are ferried from the land that faces this island across the ocean. Certain men, although subjects of the Franks, are free from any tribute save one obligation. Each night, one of their men must rise and ferry a small boat, which sinks in the water to the gunnels, despite the fact that it appears to be empty. At night, on these errands, the voyage takes an hour, though normally the crossing takes a night and a day of rowing. After discharging their "passengers," as they depart, they hear a voice enumerating the persons they have ferried across. On the return trip, the boat is very light, the keel barely cuts the water, and the trip is a quick one.[19]

In connection with these accounts of spirit hordes, it is important to make one crucial point. Whether in the air or on the ground, these souls are present on earth. Except for the boatloads destined for the West of "Brittia," they are not forgotten in some land of the dead as if banished, but were allowed back across the frontier between life and death to influence the living: to deter or instruct them. The title of this paper refers to this tension between a segregated land of the dead and an interaction of the dead with the living. It will appear that strong popular currents of many kinds and from many sources made death *porous*. It protracted personal and familial ties right through the putative boundary between life and death. The opposing force in this "battle" is the notion of *moral* death: the idea that the dead are sorted according to the moral quality of their lives on earth and remain eternally fixed in their corresponding punishment or reward.[20] The capacity of these shades to penetrate the boundary between life and death and to render it porous, or rather, the tenacity of the living in imagining them

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in physical strength or courage. The phantoms of the souls could indeed be seen and heard confronting each other and rattling their weapons. He says that many such ancient apparitions of wars have appeared up to the present day and their actions are in no way inferior to those of living men in war, except that they do not utter the slightest sound." Three other examples follow. Damascius was a neo-Platonist philosopher who was teaching in Athens when Justinian closed the Academy in 533. Isidorus was a late teacher of neo-Platonism.

[19] Procopius, H. B. Dewing trans., *De Bello Gothico* 8.20.42–58 in *History of the Wars* vol. 5 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1928), pp. 264–69.

[20] For the historical origins of these concepts see Alan E. Bernstein, *The Formation of Hell* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993).

doing so, directly challenged the eschatological structure of the early Catholic Church.[21]

Early Christian Belief

Because, in Christian belief, resurrection defeats death, the afterlife of the saved seemed to transcend the affairs of this world. Indeed, the early church leader Augustine of Hippo declared flatly: "The souls (*animae*) of the dead do not engage themselves in the affairs of the living."[22] Augustine stated, further, that "the time that intervenes between the death of a man and the final resurrection confines the souls in hidden receptacles."[23] They may be in heaven or in hell, or depending on their merits, some may advance either from punishment to bliss, others from harsher to lighter punishment. These categories, then, form a polar organization of total bliss or total suffering with a middle ground capable of limited improvement, sometimes achieving total relief, sometimes not. It is important to see in Augustine's schema a clear expression of "moral death," that view of the dead which separates them from the living and assigns them reward or punishment according to how they lived their lives.

The theological norm of moral death, this compartmentalization of the dead, though strongly endorsed by theologians and by ecclesiastical authority, never prevailed completely.[24] Even Christian authorities needed their own dead. As saints returning to the living, they performed miracles, taught the faithful, and converted the heathen.[25] Spirits with

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[21] So as not to make the entire weight of "the early Christian Church" fall on Augustine's shoulders, one might consider Tertullian's similar insistence, in Tertullian, *De Anima, PL* 2, cols. 641–752, that souls do not exit the underworld before the Resurrection.

[22] The statement occurs as a rubric in *De Cura pro mortuis gerenda, PL* 40, cols 591–610 at 604: "Mortuorum animae non intersunt rebus viventium."

[23] Augustine, *Enchiridion* 29.109 Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina, 46 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1969), p. 108: "Tempus autem quod inter hominis mortem et ultimam resurrectionem interpositum est, animas abditis receptaculis continet…."

[24] Jean Claude Schmitt, *Ghosts in the Middle Ages: The Living and the Dead in Medieval Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998 [1994]), p. 26: "…… the Augustinian theory continued to be contradicted throughout the entire Middle Ages." Augustine's scruples were "definitely discarded" by the ninth century, Schmitt, *Ghosts in the Middle Ages*, p. 34.

[25] Saints are the community's heroes still dedicated to community service, though dead. In Merovingian and Carolingian times, they were ancestors who had been made into saints by their own benefactions to monastic houses and by the political pull of their

unpaid debts or incomplete penance appear to the living to request
help in expiating their misdeeds. Other revenants report on the nature
of the otherworld. These souls may do Christian business, but they are
not in "hidden receptacles." As Christian writers began to employ the
motifs of their pagan neighbors, the result was a complex but clearly
discernable syncretism.[26] Thus, returning spirits beg for intercessory
prayers. Dante's *Nekyia* (for so one may view the *Divine Comedy*) leads
to Christ. Spirits following the Ghostly Troop endure either infernal or
purgatorial torments wandering through the forest. Expiation achieved,
some souls ascend to heaven before astonished witnesses.

No short paper could do justice to all the nuances and qualifications
that this introductory sketch requires. To provide a more limited focus
for the present investigation, I would like to examine the phenomenon
that Tacitus called the "umbra feralis exercitus" (see note 13) "the shades
of a troop of the dead." The Ghostly Troop, as I shall call it here, has
many names, each with advantages and disadvantages, each stressing
one aspect or another of this polymorphous phenomenon.[27] All these

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descendants. But saints, being saints, do not aid only their own descendants. With some
reservation, Augustine himself applied the pagan term "hero" to the Christian martyrs
(*City of God* 10.21). For the Merovingians, see Friedrich Prinz, *Frühes Mönchtum im
Frankenreich* (München—Wien: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1965). He calls the process
"self-justification" if not "self-beatification" (Selbstheiligung) and "Self-sanctioning"
(Selbstsanktionierung).

[26] Some definition of "pagan" is required. The term implies no value judgment. In
Roman Europe, administrators distinguished between the cities (*civitates*) and the sur-
rounding countryside, the *pagus*. Then, as now, change occurred more rapidly in urban
environments. Thus, when Christianity spread through the urban networks of ports,
emporia, and administrative centers, where bishops became established, the people least
exposed to the new religion were the *pagani*, or pagans, the residents of the *pagus*. In
Western Europe, pagan ideas, therefore, are those of the surviving Roman aristocracy
living on country estates and the residents subjected to them, farmers and their servants
or other dependant cultivators. Whether these people adhered to Roman, Germanic, or
Celtic religious belief systems or, more likely, a complex, shifting mixture, is extremely
difficult to determine. A scholarly debate rages over how long pagan beliefs or motifs
endured in European history.

[27] The difficulty with "Wild Hunt" is that only a few occurrences actually show
the dead hunting. "Furious Host" fails because many of the apparitions are seen as
lugubrious processions, devoid of fury. William of Auvergne's "Night Army" (to be
discussed below) fits imperfectly even some phenomena important to him. Other
instances include women and occur during the day. "Ghostly Troop" highlights the fact
that the participants are a group—not necessarily a military formation—of the dead.
Abandoning the more common names unfortunately sacrifices visibility in keyword
searches and indices. A broad spectrum of possible terms is in Stith Thompson, *Motif-
Index of Folk-Literature,* Revised and enlarged edition, 6 vols. (Bloomington: Indiana
University Press, 1955–58), motifs: E490 (Meetings of the dead), E491 (Procession of
the dead), E500 (Wild Hunt).

variations matter, but in this paper, I shall consider the common denominator of them all: they are groups of dead humans on earth.

The motif of the Ghostly Troop, the Wild Hunt, the *Wütende Heer* (Furious Host), the *Mesnie Hellequin* (Family of Harlequin), to pick just a few of its many names, is a prime example of a folkloric motif that contradicted normative Christian eschatology. It existed in cultures that Christians came to dominate, however imperfectly. Christians attempted two main strategies to lessen the threat of these rival ideas. On the one hand, they tried to incorporate them within a Christian frame of reference. On the other hand, they tried to marginalize, stigmatize, demonize aspects they felt were too threatening. Christian efforts notwithstanding, the myth of the Ghostly Troop survived intact into the modern period, as the instances presented at the beginning of this paper show.

As sketched so far, the story is not a new one. From Jacob Grimm[28] to Norman Cohn[29] to Carlo Ginzburg,[30] and Jean-Claude Schmitt,[31] scholars have understood how Christian writers of the central Middle Ages (i.e. 11th–13th centuries) modified and appropriated these pagan themes. I hope in this paper to make two contributions. First, I wish to call attention to sources in which the depth of Christian appropriation is clearer than in those usually cited. Second, I will introduce some Irish tales (one in detail) alongside the more commonly examined Germanic examples to consider the Ghostly Troop within the complex of popular ideas churchmen sought to contain. One conclusion to be drawn from the addition of these passages to the evidence for the Church's domestication of popular ghost lore is that ecclesiastics were fully aware of motifs that entered the mix from both Germanic and Celtic sources.

One writer who will figure prominently in this paper is the bishop of Paris, William of Auvergne, who died in 1249. Since Jacob Grimm, scholars investigating this issue have understood his central importance. He provides an explicit account of the Ghostly Troop. He is also famous for his description of Lady Abundance (also considered to be the goddess Diana, and dubbed variously Herodias, Frau Hölle, Perchtha, and

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[28] Grimm, *Teutonic Mythology*.

[29] Norman Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons: an Enquiry Inspired by the Great Witch-Hunt* (New York: Basic Books, 1975).

[30] Carlo Ginzburg, Raymond Rosenthal trans., *Ecstasies: Deciphering the Witches' Sabbath* (New York: Penguin Books, 1991 [1989]). See also Carlo Ginzburg, John & Anne Tedeschi trans., *The Night Battles: Witchcraft and Agrarian Cults in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (New York: Penguin Books, 1985 [1966]).

[31] Schmitt, *Ghosts in the Middle Ages*.

other names) the supernatural leader of female groups who travel (some say, through the sky) at night. This notion contributed to the charges that would be made against women accused of witchcraft. In re-reading those famous passages having to do with the supernatural flight of demonic apparitions, or ghosts, or entranced women, depending on one's point of view, I became convinced that the range of popular errors William was condemning included themes from not just Germanic paganism, as usually stated, but from Irish ideas, too.

Germanic Ideas

Sources in Old Norse preserve copious evidence for cavalcades of dead warriors, primarily Odin's *Einherjar*. The most plentiful evidence for the Ghostly Troop in Germanic literature comes from *The Prose Edda* of Snorri Sturluson, written about 1220, and its appendix, *The Poesy of Skalds*, which catalogues a series of "kennings" or riddles that permitted poets to refer, by indirection, to everyday objects and mythological figures. The value of Snorri's work is that he intended it to preserve older poetic (and mythological) traditions that he considered in danger of fading away under the influence of Christianity. Despite the lateness of his record, Snorri explicitly drew on older poems, the *Elder*, or *Poetic Edda*, that date, in some cases, from the ninth century. Because so many interpolations have been detected in the *Poetic Edda*, it is difficult to know how much of the surviving text actually dates back that far. Nonetheless, it is reasonable to assume that these poems are written testimonies of older, oral traditions. Regardless of the precise age of the written sources, it is clear that non-Christians of the Germanic language group attributed identifiable activities to the dead and to groups of the dead. Most information concerns the heroes who fell in battle. Each day, Odin, chief among the Aesir race of gods, sends the warlike maidens, the Valkyries, through the air to battlefields, where they revive and collect the fallen, and lead them to Valhalla.[32] The goddess Freya,

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[32] *Helgakviða Hundingsbana* I, strophe 54, Lee M. Hollander, tr. as *The First Lay of Helgi the Hunding-Slayer* in *The Poetic Edda*, 2nd ed. rev. (Austin: University of Texas, 1962), p. 189. With the exception of Eiriksaga (see below) all references to the *Poetic* or *Elder Edda* are to this edition; *Helgakviða Hundingsbana II*, prose section opening part II, between str. 5–6; p. 192. *Voluspá* 30, an interpolated verse, quoted by Snorri Sturluson in the *Prose Edda* cap. 36; tr. Jean I. Young (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973 [1954]), might have them ride over the battlefields, but on the ground, to bring them back to life and conduct them to Valhalla.

picks half, the remainder are Odin's.[33] There, the Valkyries serve them roast boar and beer at table.[34] Daily they fight each other to the death. They are resurrected again, conducted anew to Valhalla, and reconciled amidst magically replenished food and drink. The cycle will repeat itself until Ragnarok, the world-ending cataclysm that occurs when Fenrir, the wolf imprisoned beneath the earth, devours the sun, and the Aesir gods battle their opponents into mutual self-destruction.[35] There is an ambiguity in the text at this point. The fighting is said to take place in Odin's courtyard (*Odins tunom*), but afterwards, the warriors ride from battle (*rida vigi fra*). Here, clearly, is a host of dead warriors, that rides daily between Valhalla and the battlefield. Meanwhile, warriors on earth continue to slay one another, and those who die in battle are added to the heavenly troop. Naturally enough, the resurrected warriors do not account for all the Germanic dead. Those who die natural deaths dwell far away, across a bridge, in a damp, shadowy, Northern land of neutral death under the rule of the goddess Hel.[36]

Another of Snorri's tales, this one in the *Poesy of Skalds* (cap. 49), anticipates the mythic theme of the self-renewing warriors. It tells how Hedinn abducted Högni's daughter Hildr. In the expedition to recover her, the forces met at Hjadningar, where both kings' men fought to the death. Later, Hildr revived the warriors, so that the next day they renewed the battle.[37] In this version, the battle will go on each day (with nightly intermissions) until Ragnarok, though there is no commute to Valhalla and no service under Odin. Yet the combatants live on in the minds of many—in the sound of thunder and the viciousness of storms. Indeed, Snorri tells the story to explain the expression "Storm- or Snow-shower of Hjadningar" as a kenning for "battle." As compared to the "mere" association of the warriors' melee with the brutishness of nature, the Valkyries' collection of the fallen warriors, and the maintenance of the Einherjar centralizes the activity of the valorous dead. By virtue of the Valkyries' selection, the battlefield-dead, no longer merely fight, they fight under a leader against the forces of chaos. In the political sense of the word, an order has been imposed on

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[33] *Grímnismál*, str. 14; *The Poetic Edda*, p. 56.

[34] *Grímnismál*, str. 37; *The Poetic Edda*, p. 60.

[35] *Vafþrúðnismál*, str. 41; p. 49, quoted in Snorri, *Prose Edda*. cap. 41; Young p. 65.

[36] Snorri, *Prose Edda*, cap. 34; Young, p. 56. In the *Poetic Edda*, see "Baldr's Dreams," Hollander, pp. 117–19.

[37] Snorri Sturluson, *Poesy of Skalds*, XLIX in *The Prose Edda*, tr. Arthur Gilchrist Brodeur (New York: The American-Scandinavian foundation, 1916.), pp. 89–240.

this myth.[38] Moreover, in the promotion of a warrior elite, a fusion of mythology and socio-political propaganda, the Einherjar are presented as earning their position by merit. They are not descendants of Odin, but worthy, proven followers. Not kin, but comrades.[39]

An older tale from the *Poetic Edda* shows another occurrence of an airborne troop. In The Second Lay of Helgi the Hunding-Slayer (*Helgakviða Hundingsbana II*), the dead warrior hero Helgi returns to earth through the sky accompanied by his retinue. He seeks his widow Sigrún, sister of the man who killed him. A servant woman mistakes the procession of "dead men riding" for the "doom of the gods," preparation for Ragnarok. Helgi informs her that it is not the end of the world, nor is she dreaming: she does indeed see them, though they may not return permanently (str. 40–41). This ninth-century (?) tale contains many aspects of concern. The dead hero Helgi has some form of continuing life that permits a temporary return to earth. He travels on horseback through the air with his retinue—clearly, a ghostly troop. It is important to note that the story of Helgi and Sigrún is exceptional in dealing with two individuals, shortly after the death of one. Generally, Germanic ideas about the postmortem life of the dead focus around Ragnarok. One source in particular, the *Voluspá*, or the *Prophecy of the Seeress*, foretells the event in detail, and Snorri incorporated this account into the *Prose Edda*. The other poems of the *Elder Edda* simply allude to the threat posed by The Wolf and the day when Odin and his forces will die in the battle that will end the world.[40]

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[38] Hans Plischke also sees Odin's leadership of the Wild Hunt as the result of a long development. It begins, for him, with an animistic interpretation of the wind or the danger of storms, moving to a procession of souls led by a lord of the dead, taking on a military cast, and finally, especially in the North, moving to Odin's lordship of these forces. *Die Sage vom wilden Heere im deutschen Volke*. Diss. Leipzig (Eilenburg: C. W. Offenhauer, 1914), pp. 79–80. Otto Höfler, *Kultische Geheimbünde der Germanen* (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Moritz Diesterweg, 1934), p. 340, stresses two aspects of Odin, his social or functional role in uniting male associations and, simultaneously, the "inscrutable, mysterious, enigmatic and limitless" aspects of his power. He is, therefore, "the god of ecstatic male society" whose freedom and power manifests itself in storms and moves in the direction of his leadership of the Furious Host, the Wild Hunt.

[39] Speaking of living, not mythical, Germans, Tacitus called these followers the chief's *comitatus*. Tacitus, *Germania*, 13, 3–4.

[40] The Lay of Erik in *The Elder Edda, A Selection*, tr. Paul B. Taylor and W. H. Auden (New York: Random House, 1967), pp. 95–96; *Grímnismál* str. 24; p. 58 also quoted by Snorri in *Prose Edda* 40, *Vafþrúðnismál* 53; p. 52 and again *Lokasenna* str. 39, 41; p. 98; Snorri, *Prose Edda* 86. Edda 51; p. 86. *Balder's Dream*, str. 14; p. 119 calls it the time when Loki will be free and places the allusion, ominously, in the last strophe.

Since the time of Jacob Grimm, Odin's leadership of the Einherjar has seemed a fundamental element in understanding the belief referred to here as the Ghostly Troop. It would be anachronistic to allow the subsequent development of this belief to force these scant references into a pattern that would not become clear for centuries.[41] It is important, therefore, to trace the formation of the idea. Helgi's airborne riders indicate a concept of post-mortem activity for warriors, serving their chief after death as they had in life. "It must be noted, however, that these groups are not composed of all the spirits of the dead but only the warriors among those spirits. They are thus a subset within the broader group of the dead."[42]

Long before the close of the Middle Ages, however, statements concerning hosts of the dead, associated with the sounds of natural disruptions (storms, wind, etc.) traveling sometimes in the air, were not uncommon. These ideas were known in the Mediterranean area, as the quotations at the beginning of this paper indicate. Further, Greek and Latin authors of late antiquity attributed similar beliefs to the cold, windy, forested north. Early sources in Old Norse show these Greco-Roman attributions, though often mistaken about details, were not entirely fabricated. What emerges from these considerations is that during the same centuries as those that saw the rise of the early medieval church, both the literate descendants of Greco-Roman paganism and the still illiterate Germanic peoples accepted notions of post mortem activity by spirits removed from their bodies—in other words, ghosts.

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[41] According to Claude Lecouteux, the first explicit connection of Odin to the head-ship of the Infernal Hunt occurred only in an anti-papal polemic by Nicholas Gryse in 1593. Claude Lecouteux, *Chasses fantastiques et cohortes de la nuit au moyen âge* (Paris: Imago, 1999), pp. 195–96.

[42] Bruce Lincoln, *Priests, Warriors, and Cattle: A study in the Ecology of Religions* (Berkeley: University of California Press; 1981), p. 129. Lincoln describes the Maruts, the retinue of Indra in ancient India, and distinguishes between the *márya-* of heaven and the *márya-* of Rudra. "The Rudrās in India are the broader group of all the dead. There is a solidarity between the earthly and the heavenly warriors, and together their strength secures the well-being of the total society." The parallel Lincoln proposes between the Maruts and the Germanic warrior bands is bolder than what Dumézil himself endorsed. Even allowing for the ecstatic brotherhood proposed by Höfler, he saw the Maruts as closer to the Valkyries than to the Einherjar. See Georges Dumézil, "Vísnu et les marút à travers la réforme zoroastrienne," *Journal Asiatique* 241 (1953): 1–25 at 24, note 2.

The job of the Church would be to gather these souls into the recep-
tacles their theologians considered consistent with Christian doctrine.
Nonetheless, considering the tremendous variety of ideas current among
the peoples who surrounded them, and whom they were, in some
cases and with varying success, converting to Christianity, who would
be surprised if ecclesiastical writers borrowed (if, indeed, they didn't
already share) some of these premises? Before assimilation, however,
came opposition.

Central Medieval Christian Evidence

The Canon Episcopi

The first surviving ecclesiastical attacks on these pagan ideas about
troops of the dead do not engage them directly, but these texts must
be considered because they introduce a gender-based inequality. The
troops who clash in the sky are formed of dead men. Their leader, most
frequently, is Odin. In some contexts, such as for those who die a violent
death or for infants who die without baptism, other mythical figures
lead the company, for example Herodias, Holda, Berhta, or Abundia.[43]
Nonetheless, a more sinister tradition developed that made the retinue
of these leaders a crowd of demonically deluded, living women, accused
of slipping back into paganism. Depending on the version, they were
said to believe that they participated in or witnessed throngs of women
following "a crowd of demons," or Holda, or "the pagan goddess [of
the hunt] Diana."[44] First Regino of Prüm (d. 915), then Burchard of

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[43] Grimm, *Teutonic Mythology*, vol. 3, pp. 920, 932–50.

[44] Medieval writers reported Greco-Roman mythological ideas with little fidelity and
often stressed minor aspects of ancient cults. It is nonetheless possible to reconstruct the
associations by which Diana (Artemis) came to be the divinity from classical antiquity
most closely linked to this function. According to Callimachus (third century B.C.E.),
as Artemis, she won from Zeus the right to carry a bow and arrows, remain a virgin,
and to have a suite of 100 nymphs (female divinities connected to water, mountains,
trees). Thus she is associated with the hunt and, more particularly, with women. She
protects women in childbirth and oversees the rearing of children, particularly girls.
One epithet of Diana, "Tifata," means "holm-oak groves" and, along with her activity
as a huntress, this connects her to the wilderness. In his *De Correctione Rusticorum*,
159–203, Martin of Braga (second half of the sixth century C.E.), says that the fallen
angels (demons) deceived humans into worshipping them as gods and took up resi-
dence in the sea, rivers, springs, and woods, where non-Christians, who cannot protect
themselves with the sign of the Cross, call them Neptune, lamias, nymphs, and (my
emphasis:) *dianas*. (*Opera Omnia*, ed. Claude W. Barlow [New Haven: Yale University

Worms (d. 1025) identified these delusions as popular errors in need of eradication. Their efforts took on quasi-legal force when Burchard adapted Regino's description and Gratian later inserted it in his twelfth-century collection of canons, the *Decretum*. The text is referred to as "the canon *Episcopi*," because, in its most authoritative form, it is an order to bishops. "Let bishops use care" to eradicate these errors! Here is how Burchard expressed the dangerous error. Some

> believe and put forth that they ride astride certain beasts with Diana the goddess of the pagans and with an innumerable multitude of women and that they traverse great stretches of the earth silently in the dark of night and that they obey her orders as lady and that they are called out on certain nights to do her service.[45]

So to believe is to fall back into paganism. This shift to a focus on the beliefs of living women meant that, when the witch hunts began in the fifteenth century, these "demonic deceptions" could be imagined to exist among the population of the living, and those who confessed them could be persecuted. The canon *Episcopi*, which would at first glance appear to be an attack on the old beliefs in the airborne companies of the dead, actually shifts the focus from the mythical female leaders of the troop and the reclassification of the dead to living earthbound women accused of harboring demonic delusions. The next sources to consider move in the direction of assimilating the Ghostly Troop to Christian purposes.

Press, 1950], p. 188). Regino, Burchard, and later, William of Auvergne (below) seem aware of these associations. See also Robert Graves, *The Greek Myths* vol. 1 (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1955), pp. 83–86; *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 3rd. ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996) under "Artemis" and "Diana." According to Jean-Louis Backès, "Artemis," in Pierre Brunel ed., *Companion to Literary Myths, Heroes and Archetypes* (London and New York, 1992 [1988]), pp. 128–34, her epithet *hekatēbolos*, which is homonymous with Hecate and which means far-throwing or far-darting, evokes the distance she shoots her arrows. From antiquity, she was considered the same as Hecate, who is also Trivia, the goddess of the crossroads. "The name Hecate, or an allusion to the triple form of Diana, immediately conjures up associations with the dead, with subterranean power and perhaps even with chaos" (131). If one take *hekēbolos* (far shooting), as her epithet, as opposed to the synonymous *hekatēbolos*, the association with Hecate diminishes, as Phyllis B. Katz of Dartmouth observes in a personal communication. In sum, as understood in the Middle Ages, Diana appears to have been a goddess of the hunt, leader and protectress of women.

[45] Jeffrey Burton Russell, *Witchcraft in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1972), p. 292 (my translation). See also Russell, *Witchcraft in the Middle Ages*, pp. 75–82.

The Siege of Antioch

The warriors who set forth in 1095 to retake Jerusalem from the Muslims endured many hardships before they reached their goal. One outstanding adversity occurred after their conquest of Antioch, because a Muslim army besieged them within their newly won redoubt. Suffering extreme deprivation, the French forces were comforted by apparitions seen by various soldiers and recorded by the chroniclers Raymond of Aguilers and Fulcher of Chartres. Both had been eyewitnesses and both wrote their accounts before 1105.[46] Though each chronicler attributes this encouragement to a different informant and each informant claims inspiration from a different source, the idea is the same: the depleted forces would be reinforced by the crusaders who had already died on the campaign.

According to Fulcher of Chartres, a soldier attempted to flee from the besieged city. As he descended a rope from the wall, he "envisioned his dead brother standing near and saying to him: 'Whither do you flee, brother? Wait; fear not; for the Lord will be with you in your battle; and your comrades who have already died on this journey will fight with you against the Turks.' He, astonished at the words of the dead man, stopped and recounted to the others what he had heard."[47] In this case a ghost appears to reassure a near-deserter with the prediction that the army's casualties—a troop of ghosts—will arise from the dead to fight with them and so relieve the siege.

According to Raymond of Aguilers, it is a youth who had seen an apparition of Saint Andrew who reports these words from the apostle: "'All your brothers who died since the beginning of the expedition are present with you in this fight. You have only to storm the tenth part of the enemy, because they will assail nine parts in the might and command of God.'...When all our fighting men had left the city, five other lines appeared among us. For, as has already been said, our princes had drawn up only eight, and we were thirteen lines outside the city.... God so multiplied our army that we, who before seemed fewer than the enemy, were in the battle more numerous than they."[48]

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[46] Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The First Crusade and the Idea of Crusading* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986), p. 61.

[47] Edward Peters ed., *The First Crusade: The Chronicle of Fulcher of Chartres and Other Source Materials* 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998), p. 78.

[48] Edward Peters, *First Crusade*, pp. 225, 227–28. It should be noted that Raymond of Aguilers also reports another encouragement for the troops, the lance that pierced

Though they may challenge Augustine's categories, the warring hosts of the dead in these accounts support the crusading warriors. They represent a new stage in popular conceptions of the Christian dead. Even if literacy was still rare among laymen around 1100, it is not the membership of the chroniclers in the elite that is significant in these stories, but their belief that the dissemination of these visions, with the promise of ghostly reinforcements, would encourage the troops.

The next apparition attains another stage. Although it is purported to have taken place prior to the events on the first Crusade, it was not recorded until afterward. It reflects a different level in the Christianization of the ghostly troop. Here, though, the lesson is not that the risen dead will fight on the Christian side against Muslims; instead, individuals in the procession teach the system of divine retribution.

Orderic and Walchelin

The first example of teaching participants in the troop of ghosts comes from a chronicle written in England in about 1130 by Orderic Vitalis.[49] In 1091, a Norman priest of Bonneval visited a sick man at the fringes of his parish on the night of January 1, in pagan times, an occasion for the festival of the New Year. Making his way home, Walchelin penetrates a forest where he hears "a sound like the movement of a great army." The moon is shining and Walchelin sees a mace-bearing giant guiding a long procession of people from all ranks and occupations. Some are mounted, some on foot. Some are in groups, others stand out as individuals. Using red hot prods, demons goad the troop. The terrible wind lifts a group of women on horseback up in the air, then drops them back on saddles studded with burning nails as punishment for their "seductions and obscene delights" (239). Knowing no one in Bonneville will believe he has seen this *phalangem Aethiopicum*,[50] this

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the side of Christ at the Crucifixion found in the crypt of an Antioch church. Raymond himself, he says, carried this relic as a battle standard when the troops rallied to end the siege.

[49] Ordericus Vitalis, *The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis*, (ed. and tr. Marjorie Chibnall, 13 vols.) Book VIII, chap. 17 (Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1969–80), vol. IV, pp. 236–51.

[50] I.e. a black battalion. In Europe in the Middle Ages "Ethiopians" were held to be black skinned. Archaic English used the term "Ethiop." In reference to nocturnal phenomena such as this, "Ethiopian" functions metaphorically by comparing these shades (!) to the night and "therefore" adding supposedly sinister connotations.

familia Herlechini,[51] he tries to ride off with a horse, but is prevented by four knights, one of whom speaks to him. It is William of Glos.

> I have committed more sins than I can tell. But most of all usury torments me. For I lent my money to a poor man, receiving a mill of his as a pledge, and because he was unable to repay the loan, I retained the pledge all my life and disinherited the legitimate heir by leaving it to my heirs. See, I carry a burning mill-shaft in my mouth, which, believe me, seems heavier than the castle of Rouen. Therefore, tell my wife Beatrice and my son Roger that they must help me by quickly restoring to the heir the pledge, from which they have received far more than I ever gave (245).

When Walchelin refuses to carry so highly fraught a message, the knight tries to strangle him with a grip that feels like fire. Another knight rescues the priest. It is Walchelin's brother, Robert. Robert says he has died and is enduring "severe punishment for the great sins with which I am heavily burdened."

Robert explains "the system." The arms they bear are red-hot, they stink, they are intolerably heavy, and burn with inextinguishable fire. When Walchelin was ordained a priest and sang his first mass for the faithful departed (*pro fidelibus defunctis*), their father escaped from his punishments and Robert's shield, which had caused him great pain, fell from him. Walchelin notices what appears to be a pool of blood around his brother's feet and asks about it. That is fire, and it burns him through his spurs because he used them to commit his crimes.[52] Walchelin's brother can speak no longer, as he must hasten after the miserable host (*agmen miserabile*). Orderic Vitalis says he heard this story from Walchelin himself, who lived for another fifteen years after

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[51] This is the Mesnie Hellequin, one name for the Ghostly Troop. On the origins of this term see H. M. Flasdieck, "*Harlekin*. Germanischer Mythos in romanischer Wandlung," *Anglia: Zeitschrift für englische Philologie* 51.3–4 (1937): 225–340 and H. M. Flasdieck, "Nochmals *Harlekin*" *Anglia* 66 (1942): 59–69. Philippe Walter, "Hellequin, Hannequin et le Mannequin," in Philippe Walter, *Le Mythe de la Chasse Sauvage dans l'Europe Médiévale* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1997), pp. 33–72. Brent Holm considers the mace-bearing giant to be Hellequin himself. "The Hellequin Figure in Medieval Custom," in Thomas Pettitt and Leif Søndergaard eds., *Custom, Culture and Community in the Later Middle Ages: A Symposium* (Odensee: Odensee University Press, 1994), pp. 105–24, at 107.

[52] On Walchelin's vision, see Elisabeth Mégier, "Deux exemples de 'prépurgatoire' chez les historiens: À propos de *La naissance du Purgatoire* de Jacques Le Goff," *Cahiers de civilisations médiévales* 28.1 (1985): 45–62.

this event and whose neck always bore a scar where William of Glos had grasped him.

As Walchelin sees the army of thousands shuffle by, he perceives them as "the spirits of the dead" (*manes mortuorum*). In ancient Rome, the "manes" were the divine departed of the community, evoked three times annually in the opening of the Mundus. They are also the individual parents and ancestors venerated at specified festivals, the Parentalia and the Lemuria, held at the grave and in the home, respectively, as an aspect of piety. As in Walchelin's vision, the link between the living and the *manes* transcends the boundary between life and death—strengthening family bonds. According to Charles King, the successors' prayers urge the older *manes* to help the newer ones find a favorable home as they enter the otherworld. In return, the survivors can hope that, when they die, these same spirits will do for them what they have prayed that the older *manes* do for the recently deceased. "Shepherding the newly dead to a better world was one of the services that the Romans desired from the *manes* they worshipped regularly."[53]

Though his terminology is Roman (*agmen, phalangem, manes*), Walchelin's story bears the marks of Christian categorization. He distinguishes paradise, a purgatorial function, and a concept of unending torment. He begins to recognize among the suffering souls recently dead people whose reputations he considered good. He thus reflects on the difference between human judgment and divine knowledge. He contrasts "the kingdom of eternal blessedness" to the "unseemliness of which base humanity is guilty" and which must be burned away in "purgatorial fire" so that the soul may be purified before being led into paradise (241). The dark troop is undergoing this purgatorial suffering in the Norman forest. The deeds the spirits requested the living to perform on their behalf were generically called "suffrages."

Walchelin's reference to hell is more ambiguous. A certain Landry of Orbec haughtily ordered Walchelin to have his family pray for him, but other spirits in the host shouted him down. Walchelin reflects on the justice of stifling the man's pleas. Landry had been a corrupt lord who perverted justice for bribes. "Because he had stopped his ears to the cries of the poor as long as he was able, now in his torments he

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[53] Charles King, "The Living and the Dead: Ancient Roman Conceptions of the Afterlife." Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1998, p. 365. For more on the *manes*, see King's article in this volume.

was judged beneath contempt, not even worthy of a hearing" (243). With his appeals unheard, no one could intercede for Landry and, one infers, his march in the gloomy procession would endure indefinitely. Indeterminate suffering in return for sin suggests the eternity of hell.

Walchelin refers to this suffering troop of souls as the "familia Herlequini." Orderic Vitalis provides the first appearance of this name, whose etymology is unclear. If the Ghostly Troop of warriors without a leader, such as those resurrected by Hildr, belong to the same mythological theme as those with a leader, the concept is older than the name Herlequin/Harlequin. Furthermore, over the centuries, the name Herlequin appears in several different forms, among them "Hellequin" and "Hannequin" to be discussed later.[54] As for the other term, it is important to understand that, in the social structure of Orderic's day, a lord's "familia" is his retinue. It comprises, however, not just those who accompany him in battle, but all who support him politically and administratively, and their blood relatives. These then are the followers of Herlequin. If this army is the *familia* of this leader, then he is the leader of the suffering dead.[55] As the head of an involuntary troop of ghostly followers, there is a functional parallel with Odin and the Einherjar, and, as will become clear, with Lady Abundance, Dame Satia, Diana, Frau Hölle or Perchtha and her cortège, though in these cases the women follow willingly.

Walter Map and the Family of King Herla

In Orderic's account, it is the tale's protagonists who supply its moral lesson. By contrast Walter Map's tale of King Herla seems independent of any explicit lesson. It describes a horrible occurrence; the narrator supplies the moral. It dates from slightly later than the text to follow, but I insert it first because its resemblance to Orderic is so clear.

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[54] Walter, "Hellequin, Hannequin et le Mannequin," pp. 36–38.

[55] This image is explicit in Bourdet's poem of the second half of the thirteenth century about Luque, a witch near Rouen, whom "Helekin" abducts to hell with the aid of all its residents (*tuit cil d'enfer*), whom he rouses as a general would an army. Karl Meisen, *Die Sagen vom Wütenden Heer und Wilden Jäger*, pp. 62–69, at p. 64, cited by Holm, pp. 107–8. Schmitt, *Ghosts in the Middle Ages*, devotes Chapter 5 to "Hellequin's Hunt," pp. 93–121. See also the extended discussion of Hellequin in Claude Lecouteux, *Chasses Fantastiques et Cohortes de la Nuit au Moyen Age*, pp. 81–124.

In 1181–82 in Southern England, Walter Map composed the bulk of *De Nugis Curialium* (Courtiers' Trifles).[56] This collection of frequently satirical stories opens with a dramatic image. Whereas the Hydra had a hundred heads, the court of King Henry II (reigned 1154–1189) resembles a giant with a hundred hands. No matter how much the personnel of the court changes, the hundred hands are always there. In fact, the madness and blindness of this monster can be compared to nothing less than the seething torments of hell.[57] Walter extends his parallel by examining hell's most famous inmates: Tantalus, Sisyphus, Ixion, allegorically interpreting the punishment of each as an inner suffering inflicted by the guilty courtier's own flaws.[58] Sisyphus rolls his boulder up the "hill of riches," but it falls back into the "valley of greed."[59] Immediately following this parallel with the Tartarus of classical literature, comes the story of King Herla (1.11 and a complementary reference in 4.13). In this context, Herla appears to be a native (rather than a Mediterranean) exemplary sufferer of endless torment for his vices.

The Briton, Herla, is an ancient king, who would have ruled a presumably indigenous population before the Romans or the Saxons invaded England. Unexpectedly, a pigmy (*pigmeus*), no taller than a monkey and resembling the ancient god Pan, visits him and invites himself to Herla's wedding to the daughter of the king of France on the promise to reciprocate in a year. The pigmy king introduces himself: "I am the king of many kings and princes, of an innumerable and infinite people. Sent by them, I come freely to you, though you do not know me" (26). The king's rank and the immense number of his subjects suggest he is the king of the dead. Further, this king, given no name, knows the future, since Herla had been unaware of any preparations for his own marriage. At the wedding, the pigmy king magically feeds himself and his retinue, so he does not drain Herla's resources. After a year, the

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[56] Walter Map, *De Nugis Curialium: Courtiers' Trifles*, 1.1–10; ed. and tr. by M. R. James, revised by C. N. L. Brooke and R. A. B. Mynors (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), pp. 2–25.

[57] Laurence Harf-Lancner, "L'Enfer de la cour: la cour d'Henri II Plantagenet et la Mesnie Hellequin (dans l'oeuvre de Jean de Salisbury, de Gautier Map, de Pierre de Blois et de Giraud de Barri) in Philippe Contamine ed., *L'État et les aristocraties* (Paris: Presses de l'École normale supérieure, 1989), pp. 27–50.

[58] This interpretive strategy also occurs in Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things* (3.830–1091).

[59] Walter Map, *De Nugis*, 1.4; p. 8.

pigmy king comes for Herla and leads him to a cave in a very high cliff where they celebrate the anticipated nuptials. Brilliant light illumines the palace deep within the cave. In contrast to the behavior of the pigmy king, who consumed nothing of Herla's and left with nothing, after the wedding, the pigmy king gives Herla and his men a large quantity of gifts such as would outfit hunters splendidly, including a toy greyhound, with the instruction that neither Herla nor any of his retinue descend from their horses until the greyhound has first leapt to the ground. After exiting the cave and regaining his own lands, Herla encounters an old shepherd, from whom he sought news of his wife. The shepherd replies that such a queen had been married to an old, Briton king Herla, who disappeared into a cave on that cliff some 200 years ago. As Herla believed himself gone for only three days, this statement startles him. The unequal passage of time in the otherworld is a frequent folkloric motif.[60] It is also common in folklore to let a confrontation between humans and strange, little folk who live underground represent the opposition between an earlier defeated, and a presently dominant ethnic group. The theme of ethnic difference emerges here as the shepherd further observes, "I can barely understand your speech, since I am a Saxon and you are a Briton." This difference between Herla and the shepherd refracts the difference between Herla and the pigmy and suggests, further, that the pigmy is king of the Briton dead or of some long vanished, aboriginal population. Hearing this conversation, some of Herla's followers imprudently dismount and they instantly turn to dust, for the greyhound had not yet descended. Nor will it ever. Indeed, over the years, many had seen "king Herla on his endless wanderings (*errore…infinito*) always holding to his mad rounds followed by his army (*exercitus*), knowing neither pause nor peace."[61]

To this point, the story appears to explain how Herla and his men became trapped in an eternal hunt. Such an interpretation, however, would not take Walter Map's satirical purpose into account. Thus, Herla's hunt only *seemed* endless; it appears now to have ended. It was last seen in the first year of King Henry, in the western areas of Hereford and Wales, when it rode into the River Wye. "His fantastic ridings ceased at that time, as if he had transferred his wanderings to

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[60] This and other excellent observations in Schmitt, *Ghosts in the Middle Age*, pp. 111–13. For the general fit of this tale with other manifestations of the Ghostly Troop, see Ginzburg, *Ecstasies*, pp. 100–4.

[61] Map, *De Nugis*, 1.11; p. 30: "[I]llum Herlam regem errore semper infinito circuitus cum exercitu suo tenere uesanos sine quiete uel residencia."

us (courtiers) and so acquired peace for himself." This final remark recapitulates Map's major theme, the vanity of Henry's court. Indeed, Map resurrects this apparently ancient tale to denounce the courtiers' greed. He suggests unrepentant courtiers, burdened with the paraphernalia of hunting (that is, pursuit), re-enact, or will re-enact the wanderings of King Herla and his men. The hunters constitute squadrons (*cetus*), companies (*phalanges*), which are military terms. Most important, using a term parallel to Orderic's "familia Herlequini," Map calls them the "familia Herlethingi" which gains added force through its near redundancy, since, in Old English and in Old Norse, the root "thing" means "assembly;" it all but doubles "familia."[62] Between these "families" of Herlequin and Herla however, there are important differences. The sins of Orderic's *familia Herlequini* are more diverse, and its members can be removed from the procession by suffrages, other people's prayers. In Walter Map's view, then, the courtiers of his day are avatars of Herla's men.

The pigmy king's link to death is clear despite the fact that, at the literal level, Herla and his men are alive both when they enter and when they leave the cave. The "cave on a very high cliff" leads into a mountain that functions like an ancient Celtic burial mound, so prominent in the Irish literature of the twelfth century (below). The light and luxury in the cave evoke the pleasures of the Irish "Land of Promise." If this is so, then Herla and his men die when they enter the cave, but their bodies remain intact while at the wedding, as if a marriage in the land of the dead could have the life-giving effects of a fertility rite. This re-animation continues after leaving the cave, but ends immediately for whoever breaks the prohibition against dismounting. Like the gift of the hunting equipment, this boon turns to curse when the hunters find they cannot stop. The nature of Herla's troop is clear for those who wish to heed Walter's lesson. For, within Herla's hunting expedition, onlookers notice "many whom they knew to have died."[63] Thus, those who grasp for riches and accept undue gifts will find their quest extended beyond death in an endless pursuit of an unattainable quarry. To this chase, some are already addicted.

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[62] I offer this approximation for heuristic reasons only. The scholarship on the etymologies of Herlequinus and Herelethingus and many other variations is technical and controverted. See: Flasdieck, "Harlekin. Germanischer Mythos in romanischer Wandlung," pp. 225–338 and Flasdieck, "Nochmals *Harlekin*," pp. 59–69.

[63] Map, *De Nugis*, 4.13; p. 370.

Herbert of Clairvaux

Herbert was a Cistercian, trained at Clairvaux, who became Abbot of
Mores, then Archbishop of Sassaria or Porto Torres on Sardinia, and
collected three books of miracles in 1178, and died in 1180.[64] Herbert's
narratives resume Orderic's practice of having protagonists of the tale
provide its moral. One of Herbert's tales carries the rubric "Concerning
him who saw the Family of Herlequin." Zachary, a monk of Vauluisant,
attributes his monastic conversion to his encounter with "that fantastic
folk, which is called the family of Herlequin by the people."[65] A spirit
on the cavalcade gives Zachary a ram and begs him to return it to the
widow from whom he had stolen it. This restitution would ease his
progress in the cavalcade. Despite the value of this tale, with its specific
nomenclature and the act of transferring a material object from a ghost
to a living person, I would like to call attention to another, hitherto
unnoticed one. The subdivisions of the souls in this apparition provide
the best evidence to that time of the overlay of Christian categories of
heaven, purgatory, and hell upon the older and more widespread motif
of the Ghostly Troop. This tale portrays Christian ghosts not on a hunt,
but in a procession. These souls suffer both temporary and eternal post
mortem punishment. The tale may be paraphrased as follows.

> Troubled by an accident with the sacramental Host, a certain good priest
> of Sardinia went behind his church to collect his thoughts. A great com-
> motion disturbed his spirit, the hair on his neck stood up, and he was
> rooted to the spot. Soon he saw a huge multitude of people on foot and
> on horseback crossing before him. The people were of both sexes of dif-
> ferent ages and social standing. Some of them, when alive, had been of his
> acquaintance. He was able to converse with one of these, an old friend.
> He learned that these were souls who had been assigned punishments
> for all the varieties of sins and so, they must always wander about in the
> world, far and wide. "Some of them were to be liberated sooner, others
> later, but many of them would endure inescapable punishments."[66] With

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[64] See Michael Casey, "Herbert of Clairvaux's Book of Wonderful Happenings,"
Cistercian Studies Quarterly 15 (1990): 37–40; Gaetano Raciti, "Herbert de Mores,"
Dictionnaire de Spiritualité, ascétique et mystique, doctrine et histoire 16 vols. (Paris:
Beauchesne, 1932–1995), vol. 7, part 1(1995): 268–70.

[65] Otto Driesen, *Der Ursprung des Harlekin* (Berlin: Alexander Duncker, 1904), pp.
236–37: "gentem illam fantasticam quae vulgo dicitur familia Herlequini." Meisen, *Die
Sagen*, p. 60. Schmitt (*Ghosts in the Middle Age*, p. 115 and p. 251, note 48) attributes
the tale to Herbert. Lecouteux translates it into French (*Chasses*, p. 114). This tale does
not appear in Migne's *Patrologia Latina* (see note 55).

[66] Herbertus Turrium [that is, of Torres], *De Miraculis Libri Tres* 3.31; *PL* 185.

the help of his friend, the priest was able to learn about three souls in the march. First he saw Baldwin, the Archbishop of Pisa, a former Cistercian monk, whose brothers assumed he was already in heaven. In fact, because the people of Pisa and Lucca had begun a war over him, he was not permitted entrance into heaven until that war should end. Then he saw a soul burdened by a great weight of silver. He was a crusader who had collected money for the ransom of his fellows but not delivered it and committed other frauds "and therefore he is assigned to everlasting punishments."[67] Finally, he saw the soul of Constantine, Lord of Torres, who had spent the nine years since his death expiating his faults exposed to the weather in the catch basin of his house, promoted to heaven by angels in a column of light. The priest's informant then warned him that he would die within a year. Having uttered these words, the friend vanished along with the whole apparition. In the time that remained to him, the priest lived more prudently than before and when he died a year later, he was "well confessed."[68]

This text presents heaven, hell, and purgatory in turn. Baldwin, Archbishop of Pisa, is prepared for heaven except for one taint. The fraudulent knight will know endless torment. Constantine, Lord of Torres, had faults to expiate, yet, because he was merciful and generous to the poor and rendered justice to those who had been injured, his suffering was limited, and indeed came to an end right before the priest's eyes. Purgatory is the focus of this procession, since Baldwin, though bound for heaven, is still part of the march. Constantine's promotion is the climax of the incident (except insofar as the presence of the troop provides its own raison d'être) and, even more than Baldwin's assurance, it is Constantine's ascent that offers true hope to those who hear the story.

The warring armies in unending battle, the female cavalcades riding to nocturnal appointments have experienced a metamorphosis. Instead of an unruly mob of ecstatic women, the windy rush of Odin's troop, or the compulsive hunting of Herla's men, the imposition of theological categories—despite the initial horror of a Walchelin or a priest like the one known to Herbert—tames the countless thousands. If these categories do not reconfine the dead in the receptacles posited by Augustine, they group them in a comprehensible order, an order, moreover, that supports a repentance offered by the clergy, who tell the tale. From a

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cols. 1375B–1377A at 1376A: "Quidam ex eis citius, quidam tardius liberandi erant, multorumque nihilominus poenae insolubiles permanebant."

[67] Herbert, col. 1376C: "ideo sempiternis deputatus est poenis."
[68] Herbert, col. 1377A: "in bona confessione migravit."

Wild Hunt of a fury comparable to the strongest winds, the Ghostly
Troop has moved to a procession of the dead with a ritual stateliness
that can be channeled into penitential casuistry.

William of Auvergne as Ethnologist

The first systematic and extended discussion of the Ghostly Troop
known to me is by William of Auvergne, Master of Theology at the
University of Paris, and bishop of that city from 1228 until his death
in 1249. Ghostly apparitions were a special concern to William because
of the urgency he felt, as theologian and bishop, to refute Catharism,
the widespread heresy of the late twelfth and early thirteenth century.
William and his allies considered Catharism a later variant of the
Manichaeism combated centuries earlier by Augustine of Hippo. The
Cathars saw the visible world of matter as the creation of the Devil,
opposed to the invisible world, the only creation of God. To refute these
notions, William wrote his encyclopedic treatise, *De Universo*, to explain
the nature of matter, the nature of spirit, and how they interact.[69]

   The Ghostly Troop first comes up in William's discussion of the vari-
ous demons, gods and goddesses, who, he said, survived from Roman
antiquity.[70] After itemizing those with classical names, he turns to "the
night riders, who are called 'hellequins' in French (*vulgari Gallicano*) and
'the ancient army' in Spanish (*vulgari Hispanico*)."[71] Beyond Orderic's
use of the same term in a chronicle, the use of "familia Herlequini"
by Herbert of Torres in a tale of wonders, and Walter Map's "familia
Herlethingi" in a manual for courtiers, William's use of vernacular
expressions to convey his thought marks another epoch in the history
of the Ghostly Troop, promoting the term into theological discourse. In
fact, William does not examine the name "hellequin" further. Instead,
his generic term for these group apparitions is "the massive army of

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[69] William states this purpose explicitly. William of Auvergne (Guilielmus Alvernus),
De Universo Part I, chapters 1–2 in *Opera Omnia* 2 vols. (Paris: Pralard, 1674; rprt.
1963); Vol. I, pp. 593–1074.

[70] William of Auvergne, *De Universo*, Part 3, Chap. 12 in p. 1036b H. All subse-
quent references to William are in Part III of *De Universo* and in Vol. I of the 1674
edition.

[71] William of Auvergne, 1037a B: "De equitibus vero nocturnis, qui vulgari Gallicano
hellequin et vulgari Hispanico exercitus antiquus vocantur."

the night" (*exercitus ibi nocturni multitudine*), or Night Army.[72] The term "army" (*exercitus*) is significant because it recalls the Einherjar, though in William's view, it includes some apparitions of women, too. These companies frequent the well-travelled and polluted roads, which accommodate thieves and robbers and every type of evildoer. In contrast to the highways, the fields repel what he calls "evil spirits" (*malignis spiritibus*).[73] "Evil spirits" is not a casual expression; William refers specifically to demons. Indeed, some of William's contemporaries attribute to demons the power of "assembling from the four corners of the world, each under its respective king, with his own army and a great following."[74] But these are delusions (*ludificationes*) caused by the demons.[75] Demons have a *facultas pingendi*, the ability to "paint" ideas in the imagination and so penetrate the human intellect.[76]

There are apparitions of males and of females. Males appear as Armies of Dead Men; when in groups, females appear as Night Women, who form the cortège of Lady Abundance (though the leader of the females has many names). William treats individual female apparitions separately. They seem to be either alluring girls (*puellae*) or women (*matronae*) or threatening witches (*stryges* or *lamiae*). As was already clear in the canon *Episcopi*, there is a significant difference in how one regards the gender of these troops. In contrast to the Army of Dead Men, the females, whether followers of Lady Abundance or individual apparitions, were seen to be alive. This difference had tragic consequences. It exposed females, as living women, to persecution.[77]

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[72] William of Auvergne, 1067a A.

[73] William of Auvergne, 1067a B. In this connection it is important to recall the association of Diana-Artemis-Hecate with the crossroads. See note 44, above.

[74] William of Auvergne, 1037a B–C "…quatuor reges daemonum a quatuor mundi partibus, *cum exercitibus suis & comitatu magno*, convenientes & ab ipsis quator mundi partibus…" (my italics). I thank Tom DeMayo for this reference. On William and demons, see Thomas B. DeMayo, *The Demonology of William of Auvergne: By Fire and Sword* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2007).

[75] William of Auvergne, 1066a G.

[76] William of Auvergne, 1061b D. Dyan Elliott brings out the force of this colorful term. *Fallen Bodies: Pollution, Sexuality, and Demonology in the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), p. 44. Beyond the quotation Elliott gives, consider: "Quapropter facile est in virtutibus interioribus animarum nostrarum malignis spiritibus pingere cogitata quaecunque voluerint…. Hoc videtur mihi declaratio ludificationum istarum" (1062a E). See also: "pingere signa vel imagines rerum, quas illis voluerint apparere" (1037b C).

[77] Nancy Caciola, *Discerning Spirits: Divine and Demonic Possession in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2003), p. 147 shows the use of William's theories by the inquisitors of the fifteenth century, Johannes Nider, Heinrich

William first takes up the Armies of Dead Men, which consist of "those apparitions in the form of riders and warriors running into battle as innumerable armies, but also, sometimes, as a few riders."[78] Later, he says they come "in the form of dead men, but they also appear, terrible, in a multitude, with arms and horses, and they appear with large or small torches or other forms of fire."[79] The men, however, are not merely dead, they are specifically those who have died by the sword.[80] The jousts (*hastiludia*) or exercises in which these armed men engage are illusory.[81] Why should these illusions exist?

William's answer, in brief, is that they appear in this form to promote the penance of those who see them. In fact, says William, the common people refer to the men in the apparitions as the "disgladiati" (those undone by the sword) "and they are believed to perform penance in arms, because they sinned in arms."[82] This theory would accord, William notes, with the biblical book of Wisdom, which says "One will be tormented through that by which one has sinned" (11:16). Here William appears to reflect beliefs such as those captured by Orderic, Walter, and Herbert. Part of these apparitions, indeed, consist of penitents urging their family members (*charos suos*) to offer them suffrages (prayers, alms, or Masses) to hasten their liberation from the punishments they are suffering (1067aD). Indeed, the personalities who appear in these experiences often relate their sufferings and explain what offenses they are being punished for.

Kramer, and James Sprenger. For William's discussion of the Ghostly Troop see Schmitt, *Ghosts in the Middle Age*, pp. 119–20 and notes.

[78] William of Auvergne, 1065b B: "Post haec consequenter de substantiis apparentibus in similitudine equitantium et bellatorum in praelium currentium et in similitudinem exercituum innumerabilium interdum autem et in similitudine paucorum equitum."

[79] William of Auverge, 1066aG: "…[Q]uia ludificationes daemonum interdum non solummodo sunt in hac manerie, ut apparent, in similitudine hominum mortuorum, sed apparent terribiles magnitudine armis et equis, apparent etiam cum facibus, seu faculis, seu aliis ignibus." Augustine uses the expression "ludificationes daemonum" to mean "delusions" in *De Genesi ad litteram libri duodecim*. Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum 28,1 (Vindobonae, F. Tempsky, 1894), 7, 11. Cf. *De Civitate Dei* 8, 23.

[80] William of Auvergne, 1067aC: "They appear in the image of men, of dead men, I say, and particularly those killed by the sword." They are figures "in similitudine hominum,…mortuorum, et maxime gladio interfectorum."

[81] William of Auvergne, 1066aF: "Ubi nec veri equi sunt, nec vera arma, nec veri armati, ludum armorum verum, vel hastiludium verum impossible est esse. Quapropter totum, quod ibi vel esse, vel agi videtur, in visione, sive illusoria, sive fantastica sollummodo est, et agitur."

[82] William of Auvergne, 1067aC: "Creduntur autem poenitentiam agere in armis, quoniam in armis peccaverunt."

This earth is therefore the location of purgatory (*locus purgatorii*), a place of purgation, and is even designed for that, because the function of purgatory is the completion of penance begun in life. It follows, similarly, that purgation should occur on earth, in the same place as the offenses (1067a D). The purpose of the apparitions of the armed troop, then, is to deter the beholders from similar misdeeds (1067a D).[83] Thus, the appearance of the fighting warriors is false, the result of demon-inspired delusions, yet God permits the demons to create these illusions because they inspire penance. The apparitions are *signs* of these phenomena and appear as if in visions "to cause men to be emotionally moved and deterred from the aforesaid evils and to appeal to them to perform suffrages for the souls of the dead."[84] These apparitions make future retribution visible and inspire terror in those who do the deeds that are punishable by those penalties.

Domina Abundia

In addition to these apparitions in the form of male warriors, demonic delusions can also be female.[85] Of these there are several quite different forms.

As opposed to the Night Armies of males are the Night Ladies (*dominas nocturnas*), also called "Good Women" (*bonae dominae*).[86] William ridicules the notion that these apparitions could remotely be considered good. Rather, he derides the name "Good Women" as part

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[83] See Alan E. Bernstein, "Esoteric Theology: William of Auvergne on the Fires of Hell and Purgatory," *Speculum*, 57 (1982): 509–531, at pp. 511–512 for similar points about the deterrent value of purgatory. Cf. William in *De Universo*, Part I, chapters 60–62, pp. 676b–679b and *De Moribus*, chap. 5, pp. 210b–211a.

[84] William of Auvergne, 1067bA: "…ad commoveri faciendos homines et deterrendos a malis praedictis et ad sollicitandos eos de suffragando animabus defunctorum."

[85] It is necessary to mention a quirk in William's discussion. In this analysis (1066aG), he mentions three types of ludifications: the armed troop, the females who use candles in stables, and the suite of Lady Abundance. Later (1068aF), he blends in the last two ("illa, que in stabulis et arboribus frondosis apparere dicuntur"). Thus William sometimes sees three categories, sometimes two. In this discussion, I consider only two: the male armies, and the suite of Lady Abundance, because these appear as groups of dead humans.

[86] Carlo Ginzburg, *Ecstasies*, p. 105 and notes 66 and 67. Ginzburg's view of the female troop brings out a difference with Schmitt's interpretation of the Ghostly Troop. For Schmitt (see note 24, above) the ecclesiastical authorities consider the ghostly troop, without distinction by gender, the result of demonic activity. Ginzburg explains how the authorities turn the female cortège into witches. See also Ginzburg's *Night Battles* (Chap. 2, Processions of the Dead).

of the superstitious, residual paganism preserved by old women and spread to the younger generation, even down to his own day.

> This lack of wisdom on the part of our old women has, in spectacular fashion, spread and promoted this detestable belief that they have maintained and fixed almost ineradicably in the minds of other women. And, similarly, both the great benefits which they bestow on the homes that they visit and the practically unanimous agreement on the remnants of idolatry have most powerfully persuaded them that these "Women of the Night" are "Good Women." This old-ladies' foolishness has not ceased to preserve and promote nearly all the remains of idolatry almost unanimously until the present day.[87]

William's negative judgment aside, he reports the notion spread by old women that these female apparitions, as a group, visit people's homes at night under the leadership of Lady Abundance.[88] They therefore compose a host of females parallel to the Army of Dead Men. William's chief concern is that the people of his day set aside offerings for these nocturnal visitors, on the sills of open windows, for example, or exposed on tables in unlocked houses. The Night Ladies, if satisfied with the sacrifice, provide fertility in children, herds, or crops for their devotees. If not, infertility in bed, or stable, or fields may follow. William regards these offerings as idolatry—a direct threat to the exclusive worship of his God. What credulous people offer the Night Ladies should be dedicated instead to the Creator (1068a G)![89]

Others, whose relationship to the Night Ladies is unclear, are threatening, and for these apparitions William uses the classical, Latin names for certain kinds of frightening figures, *stryges* and *lamias*, each of which evokes a rich folklore in ancient Rome.[90] These figures come

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[87] William of Auvergne, 1066b G–H: "Vetularum autem nostrarum desipientia opinionem istam mirabiliter disseminavit et provexit atque animis mulierum aliarum pene irradicabiliter infixit. Similiter et de dominabus nocturnis, quod bonae dominae sint, et magna bona domibus quas frequentant, per ea praestantur, mulieribus potissimum persuaserunt, et ut ad unum dicam, pene omnes reliquias idolatriae retinuit, et reservavit, et adhuc promovere non cessat anilis ista fatuitas."

[88] "…[E]t principem earum vocant dominam abundiam" (1066aH). Another thirteenth-century author who connects the Good Women to the cortège of Dame Abundance is Jean de Meun, the continuator of the *Roman de la Rose*, lines 18425–18444, ed. Daniel Poirion (Paris: Garnier-Flammarion, 1974), p. 491.

[89] Tom de Mayo emphasizes William's anxiety about the threat of idolatry in "William of Auvergne and Popular Demonology," *Quidditas* 28 (2007): 61–88.

[90] William does not group the others, the alluring females, the waxers of horses' manes, the *stryges* and *lamiae* as followers of Lady Abundance. They seem to operate independently.

in the form of old women believed to devour children. This is a deep-seated superstition, William warns (1066b G). They do not really eat children, which would be physically impossible for a spiritual apparition, but they do kill them to punish their parents for loving them excessively, i.e. to the exclusion of God. The members of a far more appealing category of female apparitions seem to appear singly. "There are also deceptions of malign spirits, which they perform sometimes in woods and 'loci amoeni'[91] or trees heavy with leafy boughs, where they appear in the likeness of girls or matrons glowing in feminine beauty."[92] Others appear in stables and tend the manes of horses with wax they drip from candles (1066a G). I postpone these "glowing" women who appear in enticing environments, to the next section of this paper. For now it is sufficient to observe that William blames human credulity for these beliefs and practices. He does not reproach each gender equally. He considers women more receptive to these imaginings than men, because their souls are softer and more impressionable (1066b H).[93] Nonetheless, his cure for both the foolishness of men (*stultitia hominum*) and the irrationality of old women (*insania vetularum*) is the same; those who fall prey to it should be exterminated by fire and sword.[94] William's editorial remark and his policy recommendation evince the very real difference between popular culture and the religion of theologians and bishops.

The thesis that the ecclesiastical hierarchy demonized the residually pagan, folkloric figures of the populace receives strong support from the next aspect of William's discussion. He consistently characterizes these apparitions as *similitudines* (likenesses) which "appear." The issue

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[91] The "locus amoenus" is a cliché from the classical eclogue or pastoral literature in general referring to a charming landscape, but in the context of forest and trees, it would mean a grove or bower, a love nest.

[92] William of Auvergne, 1066a G: "Sunt et aliae ludificationes malignorum spirtuum, quas faciunt interdum in nemoribus et locis amoenis et frondosis arboribus, ubi apparent in similitudine puellarum aut matronarum ornatu muliebri et candido.…"

[93] In *Discerning Spirits* (146–163), Nancy Caciola discusses this point. She treats William's association of women with the cold and moist humors, therefore melancholy, openness, proneness to demonic penetration, credulousness, etc. See also Barbara Newman, "Possessed by the Spirit: Devout Women, Demoniacs, and the Apostolic Life in the Thirteenth Century," *Speculum* 73.3 (July, 1998): 733–71.

[94] William of Auvergne, 1066bF: "…manifesta est contumelia et injuria intolerabilis creatoris, impiissimaque idolatria, igneque et gladio exterminanda." Cf. Part I, p. 594b E on Catharism in general: "quapropter [errorem] ipsum etiam gladio et igne persequi et exterminare.…" William is not sparing of his cure by fire and sword.

for William is how to categorize these imaginings. The apparitions are not real and they do not have the ability to do what people say they can do. If they had bodies, they would be in the grave. If they were souls, they would be either in heaven and would not deign to return to this earth or they would be in places of punishment (purgatory, hell), prisons that they cannot leave (1069b B–C). In this passage, William clearly acts as an ecclesiastical leader, who redistributes the active souls (ghosts) of pagan folklore into the receptacles demarcated by Augustine and adopted by Christian theology. Church leaders needed these dead to be in their, Christian, categories. Hence, the forms that delude people cannot be real. The apparitions are illusions created by demons, but they signify spiritual truths.

Medieval Irish Ideas

Although Orderic's account of the ghastly procession suggests that dead women ride along with the men and Herbert of Clairvaux also includes dead women alongside dead men, William treats women differently. As noted above, William observes that females can appear alive and as individuals, sometimes in seductive, enchanting environments, such as the classic *locus amoenus*, where lovers meet. Although it will temporarily seem like a detour, it is necessary now, in order to complete this examination of the Ghostly Troop, to pursue the path William has indicated and, like many a hero (or, rather, like many a reader), follow the fairy maiden to a land where ghostly male forces exert themselves in combat.

William himself was acutely aware of Celtic folklore. At the literary level, Chrétien de Troyes had already brought its themes to the court of Champagne, and Marie de France had disseminated her lays (particularly the "Lai of Lanval," which Marie calls "Breton,")[95] from the English court of Henry II and Eleanor of Aquitaine, previously Queen of France. More important, Celtic folklore continued as an indigenous tradition with roots dating from before the Roman conquest of Gaul, and, in the late twelfth century, remained easily discernable in Brittany, Cornwall, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland. Indeed, it is important to remember that the origins of Celtic culture in Western Europe go

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[95] Marie de France, "Lanval," lines 1–4, in *Lais*. Ed. A. Ewert. Blackwell's French Texts (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1965), pp. 58–74.

back to the Halstadt period in Austria (c. 800–c. 500 B.C.E.) and the La Tène period in Switzerland (c. 600 B.C.E.–c. 100 C.E.). Therefore its history ran parallel to, and cross-fertilized with, the better known history of Rome. What makes it difficult to appreciate this point is the fact that, with few exceptions, in contrast to the rich literary tradition of ancient Rome, written evidence of Celtic beliefs only began to emerge, in Ireland at least, in the eleventh century.

To understand the mythological framework of medieval Ireland, I shall draw on the three oldest surviving vernacular manuscripts containing Irish tales: (1) The Book of the Dun Cow, compiled before 1106; (2) the Book of Leinster, compiled after 1150; and (3) the Yellow Book of Lecan, datable to around 1390.[96] As in using the *Poetic* and *Prose Eddas* for information on pagan, Germanic ideas, depending on these manuscripts carries important risks. There is general agreement that the tales, and especially their plots, far precede the written versions. Because they opposed paganism, scribes modified pagan traditions in the light of their own, Christian, ideas, either toning down what they found objectionable or exaggerating details as a form of stigmatization. Moreover, the shaping of these tales offered political advantage within their own context.[97] Still, provided these layers of construction are kept distinct, these manuscripts are the best written record of how centuries of tale-tellers, their audiences, and the scribes conceived of their historical and ethnic identities. In the following discussion, I shall sketch some fundamental background and then examine one text in detail.

Whereas the porosity of death was one target of Augustine's authoritative statement in the *Enchiridion* about the consignment of the dead, between death and resurrection, to hidden receptacles, in Irish sources, the avenues from the present world to the world of the dead were broad and frequently traveled. Indeed, on the feast of Samhain, modern Hallowe'en, the burial mounds were opened, re-establishing communication with the otherworld, a practice similar to the Roman custom of opening the *mundus*, a portal to the underworld, three times a year. (It is not impossible that the Roman festival derived from the Celtic.)

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[96] Dates are from James MacKillop, *Dictionary of Celtic Mythology* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

[97] Kim McCone, *Pagan Past and Christian Present in Early Irish Literature* (Maynooth: An Sagart, 1991), esp. pp. 65–72.

The Irish dead lived in no grey Sheol or Hades, but rather in a para-
disal place whose character varied from text to text, but with two basic
options: a timeless utopia frequently called "The Land of Promise" (also
"The Land of the Living") dominated by ancient clan-heads (patriarchs)
or a community of free women charged with female energy, frequently
called "The Land of Women." Manannán son of Lir, said of his own
kingdom, the Land of Promise: "There is naught [here] save truth, and
there is neither age nor decay nor gloom nor sadness nor envy nor
jealousy nor hatred nor haughtiness."[98] In "The Voyage of Bran, Son
of Febal," an island called "The Land of Women" resembles a love nest
(C&S, 595). These two types of lands, however, were not fully distinct.
The woman in unfamiliar dress who appears in "The Adventures of
Connla the Fair," states that her land was ruled by Boadach, "a king in
whose realm there has been no weeping and no sorrow since he began
his rule" (C&S 488), thus fitting it into the patriarchal model, yet she
invites Connla to "the fairy-mound of Boadach," saying "No other sex
lives there / Save women and maidens" (C&S, 490).

The Irish Otherworld, then, seems to have two basic types of residents.
The first consists of a clan of gods thinly disguised, under the pressure
of Christianity, as legendary ancient rulers and ancestors. These "ances-
tors," former gods, came mostly from the Tuatha Dé Danann, one of
the bands whose exploits the *Book of Invasions* relates.[99] The second is
a class of alluring females who often, on their own initiative, exit the
otherworld to approach Irish heroes and affect their lives inalterably.
It is best to consider these types of residents one at a time.

The Book of Invasions, preserved in the manuscript Book of Leinster,
recounts the legends telling how the Tuatha Dé Danann, one of several
waves of immigrant conquerors, divided Ireland into its provinces and
established its principal fortresses, which functioned as capital cities
and as burial sites for the dynasties they founded, such as those at Brug

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[98] "Cormac's Adventures in the Land of Promise," in Tom Peete Cross and Clark
Harris Slover eds., *Ancient Irish Tales* (New York: Henry Holt & Co, 1936, reissued
1969), p. 503. Henceforth abbreviated as C&S.

[99] Even the hostile and partisan Gerald of Wales (Geraldus Cambrensis, c. 1146–
1223), educated at Gloucester and Paris, but intimately related to the ruling elite of
Wales and to the English conquest of Ireland, knowingly reports (probably in 1188)
that the Irish regarded themselves as descended from bands of conquerors, sometimes
united under a single king. See Gerald of Wales, *The History and Topography of Ire-
land*, trans. John J. O'Meara (London: Penguin, 1982 [first in 1951]) Book 3, sections
84–91; pp. 92–99.

and at Tara. The eleventh- and twelfth-century writers who composed *The Book of Invasions*, created a pseudo-history, a series of etiological myths, for the Irish on the model of the Hebrew Bible, the *World Chronicle* of Eusebius of Caesarea, and the *Etymologies* of Isidore of Seville. The pseudo-historians blended the Tuatha Dé Danann with the older gods of the pre-Christian, and even pre-Roman, Celts.[100] Typical of the compilers' intervention is their creation of the term "Tuatha Dé Danann" itself. Prior to the *Book of Invasions*, this wave of newcomers was called only the "Tuatha Dé," (the People of the God). (Irish scribes applied the same term to the biblical people of Israel.) The authors of *The Book of Invasions* added "Danann," as if to make them the people of a particular goddess (The People of the Goddess Dana). This revision amounts to a virtual coup d'état by the pseudo-historians, who were dedicated to tarnishing the older traditions and the peoples they celebrated—e.g. by labeling these pre-Christian peoples as subject to a female divinity. This excessively neat summation should show no more than the Christian scribes' insertion of a screen between the older, oral traditions and the earliest, written attestations of key terms. The significance of both names is still open to debate.[101]

Another important example of the compilers' synthesizing activities comes in their presentation of the ancient Celtic god Lug, whose name forms the etymological root of Lyon, Lugano, Leiden, and other cities, as a king of the Tuatha Dé Danann, buried under a cairn beside Loch Lugborta, also named for him. Lug is also said to be buried, together with Cú Chulainn, his son by Deichtine, beneath the mound at Síd Truim, or at Brug, located on the Boyne River, whose castle housed a dynasty that figures prominently in *The Death of Muirchertach mac Erca* (below).[102] After the Milesians defeated them, Lug and the other Tuatha Dé Danann retreated into the barrows or burial mounds called

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[100] R. Mark Scowcroft, "Leabhar Gabhála: Part I: The Growth of the Text," *Ériu* 38 (1987): 79–142 and, *idem*, "Leabhar Gabhála: Part II: The Growth of the Tradition," *Ériu* 39 (1988): 1–66. Scowcroft analyzes the construction of the text and the premises that influenced its compilers. He shows how the history of the invasions of Ireland is a product of literary invention, serving contemporary needs of the 9th–12th centuries.

[101] John Carey, "The Name 'Tuatha Dé Danann'," *Éigse: A Journal of Irish Studies* 18.2 (1981): 291–294.

[102] MacKillop, 271b. Kaarina Hollo, "Cú Chulainn and Síd Truim," *Ériu* 49 (1998): 13–22. His head and right hand are at Tara (Hollo, 18). The division of the body suggests the rivalry between Brug and Tara.

sídhe (plural of *síd* or *sídh*, pronounced: *shee*), where they continue to live underground.[103] A touching example of how mythology shapes the layering of generations in *The Book of Invasions* occurs in the *Tain*, when the invisible Lug reveals himself to his son Cú Chulainn as "your father from the *síd*."[104] The connection between the dead, residing in the *sídhe*, and their progeny, ruling on earth, has ideological overtones. Beyond mere dynastic continuity, Thomás Ó Cathasaigh identifies the connection in the "semantic nexus between two denotations of síd": (1) "Otherworld hill or mound," and (2) "peace." It roots kingship in the Otherworld, whence peacefulness can confer legitimacy to a regime.[105] This connection would also promote loyalty to ancestral norms.

Some tales clearly illustrate the collective action of these founders of a people: "The Tuatha Dé Danann went into the hills and fairy places, so that they spoke with the fairy folk underground."[106] According to the *Book of Invasions*, the Tuatha Dé Danann were experienced in dealing with death even before they arrived in Ireland. They had earlier allied with the Athenians and served them by resurrecting their fallen warriors on the field (C&S, 12). The leader of the great horde of warriors who run wild over Ireland in "The Intoxification of the Ulstermen" is "the Dagda," a long-dead leader of the Tuatha Dé Danann. As the ancient and modern examples which began this essay would implicitly make possible, he leads a troop of his descendants, most of whom were deceased (C&S 228–229). Similarly, in "The Fate of the Children of Tuirenn," to resist other invaders, the Fomorians, Lug himself seeks support from the king at Tara, only to be refused. In reaction, he asks his followers "to assemble the men of the fairy-mounds to me from all the places in which they are" (C&S, 54, cf. p. 51). Dead warriors would form his army.[107] Moreover, according to "The Second Battle of

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[103] "The Intoxification of the Ulstermen," C&S, 215. Cf. *The Book of Invasions* C&S, 23. Scowcroft, "Leabhar Gabhála: Part II: The Growth of the Tradition," p. 40.

[104] Thomas Kinsella trans., *The Tain, from the Irish epic Táin Bó Cuailnge* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 142. Cited by Elizabeth A. Gray, "Lug and Cú Chulainn: King and Warrior, God and Man," *Studia Celtica* 24–25 (1989–90): 38–52, at p. 50. Cited similarly by Hollo, "Cú Chulainn and Síd Truim," p. 13. Though not part of *The Book of Invasions*, *The Tain* (or *The Cattle-Raid of Cooley*), occurs in the Book of the Dun Cow and the Yellow Book of Lecan.

[105] Thomás Ó Cathasaigh, "The Semantics of 'Síd'," *Éigse: A Journal of Irish Studies* 17.2 (1977–78): 137–55.

[106] "The Intoxification of the Ulstermen," C&S, 215.

[107] The foreign observer Gerald of Wales, brother of one of the invading knights, noted the frequent activities of phantom armies in Ireland. During the invasion of Leinster in 1169, as the Norman-Welsh forces (Robert fitzSteven, a follower of Richard "Strongbow" of Clare, earl of Pembroke, supporting Dermot MacMurrough) occupied

Mag Tured," during the climactic encounter against the Fomorians, the Tuatha Dé restored their mortally wounded warriors by immersing them in a well at night and retrieving them, ready for battle, the next morning (C&S, 42). Clearly, the Tuatha Dé Danann were intimate with death.

Before moving to the second group of residents of the *sídhe*, it is necessary to address the similarity of Tuatha Dé Danann to the dead warriors already encountered in Germanic sources, such as the troops who fought at the bidding of Hildr and, in a more centralized version, the Einherjar under Odin. What exactly causes this resemblance? Answers vary greatly.

One school of thought considers the Celtic roots primary. This theory builds upon the name invented, as noted above, by the compilers of the *Book of Invasions*, the "Tuatha Dé Danann," which means, literally, "the people of the goddess Dana."[108] The tenth-century *Glossary of Cormac*, names a goddess, Ana, who is the daughter of death and the mother of the gods. The entry reads: " 'Ana,' that is, the mother of the gods. It is indeed she who nourished the gods (from whose name we get the word 'ana,' that is 'wealth')."[109] For Philippe Walter, the name "Ana" and "Dana" are the same and they share the root of one variation of the term "Hellequin," namely "Hannequin." He therefore sees a direct link between the Germanic tradition of ghostly hordes (Hellequin/Hannequin) and the "People of the Goddess Dana."[110] Moreover, he observes, the root "Hanne" which means "rooster" and "the second root, "quin," which in some French dialects means "dog," points to a ritual (rather than a narrative) origin for the term. Indeed, in one of the best known accounts of the obsequies of a Germanic chief, he discovers the practice of adding a dog, a rooster, and a hen to other sacrificial objects (including a slave woman, whom Walter omits) and finds the combination of "rooster-dog" associated with the death of a

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Osraighe (Ossory), the sound of a thousand men filled the night sky "as if in a furious charge" sending the foreign troops into a panic. Only the resolute leadership of Robert de Barri, Gerald's brother, rallied the men. The impact of "Irish" specters on the invaders' imagination is curious. Giraldus Cambrensis, *Expugnatio Hibernica* 1,4. ed. James Dimock in *Opera* (London: Longmans, Green, Reader, and Dyer, 1867); vol. V, p. 235, cited in Schmitt, *Ghosts in the Middle Age*, p. 109. Here, incidentally, is another instance of *popular* credulity; only the noble leader held firm.

[108] Carey, "The name Tuatha *Dé Danann*," pp. 291–94.

[109] Françoise Le Roux, "La Mythologie irlandaise du livre des conquêtes," *Ogam*, 20 (1968): 381–404 at p. 398, note 113.

[110] Walter, "Hellequin, Hannequin et le Mannequin," pp. 42, 49.

Germanic chief.[111] By linking "Helle/Hanne," to "Ana/Dana," Walter returns to a Celtic origin for the idea of the Mesnie Hellequin. Indeed, he concludes, the Irish Tuatha Dé Danann seem to be "the mythic precursors for the family of Hellequin."[112] However, in favoring the root "Hanne" over "Helle," Walter appears to deprive the term "Hellequin" of associations with the Germanic goddess Hel, guardian of the neutral land of all the dead except the Einherjar. In so doing he amputates important connotations, which, if they did not give rise to the myth of Hellequin's family (the Mesnie Hellequin), they must surely have helped disseminate and prolong it. Resisting this fusion, John Carey insists that early references, such as the *Glossary of Cormac*, call the Tuatha Dé Danann simply the Tuatha Dé, and observes that the first time "Danann" is appended is in *The Book of Invasions*. He considers the link Ana/Dana erroneous and prefers a derivation for this people from Domnann/Donann, which *The Book of Invasions* applies to "an anomalous tribal group," who lack the prominence of the Tuatha Dé.[113] Another opponent of Walter's synthesis is Jean-Claude Schmitt, who downplays the search for origins of the Mesnie Hellequin, but ascribes them "to Germanic traditions."[114] Schmitt does not mention Hildr's warriors, Odin, or the Einherjar, even though, in my opinion, they would seem to be the best grounds for his assertion that the origins of the Mesnie Hellequin are Germanic.

The links between the Celtic and Germanic traditions may also derive from their common ancestry—the solution proposed by another school of researchers drawing on the work of Georges Dumézil, who pioneered in proposing origins for European mythology that parallels the dissemination of the Indo-European languages themselves. This contact with Indian antiquity works both ways. Thus, as noted above, Bruce Lincoln uses the Maruts, the retinue of Indra, to shed light on the Einherjar, while, in another study, he uses Germanic and Celtic evidence to confirm his reconstruction of Proto-Indo-European

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[111] Walter, "Hellequin, Hannequin et le Mannequin," p. 51. An English translation of Ibn Fadlan's Arabic account from 921–2 (and therefore probably older than any of the surviving, Western, written sources) is in Gwyn Jones, *A History of the Vikings* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1984, Second ed.), 425–30.

[112] Walter, "Hellequin, Hannequin et le Mannequin," p. 50.

[113] Carey, "The Name 'Tuatha Dé Danann'," pp. 291–94.

[114] Schmitt, *Ghosts in the Middle Ages*, p. 248, notes 14 and 15.

mythology.[115] His method implies that, in deriving from P-I-E origins, the later mythologies reflect light back on it.

From this comparative excursus, it is necessary now to move beyond the Tuatha Dé Danann to the other principal residents of the mounds: the fairies, females, whose Irish name, *sídh* (plural, *sídhe*) is identical to that of the mounds themselves. (I use the term "fairy" to designate only the protagonists of the tales to be analyzed here, the residents of the *sídhe* or "fairy mounds," as understood in the literature cited here. I am not referring to modern variations which give fairies wings, miniaturize, romanticize, and commercialize them. It will become clear that these medieval fairies are quite human in appearance and singularly germane to a study of ghosts.) Like the Tuatha Dé Danann, the fairies are also referred to as "people of the mound." When Connla meets the otherworld woman who will fatally affect his life, she introduces herself to him as follows: "I come from the Lands of the Living, where there is neither death nor want nor sin. We keep perpetual feast without need for service. Peace reigns among us without strife. A great fairy-mound (*síd*) it is, in which we live; wherefore we are called 'folk of the fairy-mound' (*aes síde*)."[116] This statement dramatizes the strong connection between fairies and the legendary ancestors, though I know of no authoritative assertion that fairies are either ancestors or dead persons. It is best to judge each tale individually and to rank sociological function over the narrator's label. Fairies can declare themselves children of human parents and yet possess paranormal abilities. They occupy a middle ground between the living and the dead, human in the attraction they hold for living males, yet more than human in their prowess at magic.[117]

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[115] Bruce Lincoln, "The Lord of the Dead," *History of Religions* 20 (1981): 224–41 from 237 to the end. For this approach to mythology see C. Scott Littleton, *The New Comparative Mythology: An Anthropological Assessment of the Theories of Georges Dumézil*, 3rd ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982); Georges Dumézil, *Gods of the Ancient Northmen* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973 [1959]); and for two excellent, brief re-statements of Dumézil's theories along with constructive revision: Dean A. Miller, "Trisecting Trifunctionality: Multiplying and Dividing Dumézil," *Shadow: the Newsletter of the Traditional Cosmological Society* 9 (1992): 13–22 and Dean A Miller, "Who deals with the Gods? Kings and Other Intermediaries," *Miscellanea Indo-Europea* 33 (1999): 261–74.

[116] "Adventures of Connla the Fair," (C&S, 488). Heinrich Wagner, "Origins of Pagan Irish Religion," *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* 38 (1981): 1–28, esp. at 1–4. Ó Cathasaigh, "The Semantics of 'Síd'," pp. 137–55.

[117] L. Harf-Lancner, *Les Fées au moyen âge* (Paris: H. Champion, 1984), p. 25 distinguishes two types of fairy, the first is prophetic, the second, erotic. The prophetic

The beauty of fairies and their ability to delude men (cultural themes of immense consequences for perceptions of gender and the stereotyping of women) become clear in many stories. One example illustrates both the collective action of the Tuatha Dé Danann and the seductive power of fairies in eyes of their male discoverers. In "The Adventures of Art Son of Conn," the Tuatha Dé Danann "were gathered in council in the Land of Promise" to discipline Bé Chuma (Becuma) for adultery. They banished her from all fairy mounds. To enter exile she boarded a boat that needed no rowing and came to the island of Ben Etair where the recently widowed king, the despondent Conn, lived in melancholy. After considering her great beauty, Conn agreed to banish his son, Art, for a year, as a price for her love (C&S 491–93). This bargain is a typical interaction between a woman from the fairy mounds and a human male tempted into wrong in order to mate with her. It is this ability of the alluring female to entice love-struck men into the exploration of a world they would otherwise avoid, that is, the world of the *síd/sídh*, that causes Lisa Bitel to emphasize its aspect as a "Land of Women"—sometimes explicity so-named, "the Tír inna mBan." In this land, female solidarity, sexual appeal, and mystery, with decadent and morbid overtones, displaced the social conventions of patriarchal society: property, war, and death. Bitel's theory inverts Ó Cathasaigh's: instead of an Otherworld that assures political legitimacy and peace, the Land of Women threatens the strength required to maintain them.

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fairy, which she derives from the Latin "fata," is a diminution and continuation of "The Fates," who, in classical mythology, determine the length of a person's life, among other things. The other, with which we are concerned here, is the erotic type, closer, in antiquity to the nymphs of Roman literature and mythology. Harf-Lancner (pp. 52–55) traces this distinction to none other than William of Auvergne, who discusses the prophetic fairies (*fatae*) under the heading of "fate" and the erotic fairies under the heading considered above, "demonic illusions." Though she demonstrates how widespread, indeed global, is the theme of the supernatural woman who seduces a human male (204–213), she detects a break in this tradition in the European early Middle Ages. When it reappears in twelfth-century French literature, she traces it to contemporary Irish parallels (214–219), which seem not to her to have indigenous (Irish), but Greco-Roman origins. Still, Western Europe recovered this fundamental theme from Ireland. "[B]ien des thèmes folkloriques universels ont été transmis aux romanciers français par la littérature celtique écrite et orale" (214). It is at this time that fiction writers developed themes in opposition to the clerical establishment and drew on popular culture and Celtic folklore (p. 433). (I wish to thank Elisabeth Mégier for calling this book to my attention.) See also Michel Stanesco "Du démon de midi à l'Éros mélancholique," *Poétique* (1996) 131–59, who offers an excellent catalogue of the encounters, in medieval French literature, between men and these *femmes fatales*.

Therefore male writers made it as distant and menacing as it was sensual and enervating.[118]

In "The Wooing of Étaín" (*Tochmarc Étaín*) the protagonist's great beauty twice inspires Midir, a king of the fairy mounds, to superhuman labors that function in an etiological myth behind the geography of Ireland. On the first occasion, he performs these feats to win her from her father Ailill. In another incarnation, a thousand years later, he performs them as part of a strategy to take her from her husband, Eochaid.[119] Eochaid's companions regarded her as a fairy, yet she herself performs no magic and seems more an object to be won in the competition between Midir and his rivals than an active force. Her beauty is a great attraction, but there is nothing sinister about her.[120]

Sín and Muirchertach

Isolated from his fellows in the midst of a hunt (and thus in the forest?—the text does not say), Muirchertach rests on a grassy mound and finds alongside him a beautiful young girl whom he asks to accompany

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[118] Lisa Bitel, *Land of Women: Tales of Sex and Gender from Early Ireland* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), at pp. 24–27, 161–65.

[119] A "contents list" from the now missing book of Druimm Snechtai of the first part of the eighth century indicates that it once contained the *Wooing of Étaín*. This text is incomplete in the Lebor na huidre (The Book of the Dun Cow) of the twelfth century. It is complete in The Yellow Book of Lecan (c. 1390) Jeffrey Gantz trans., *Early Irish Myths and Sagas* (London: Penguin Books, 1981), pp. 20–21. T. M. Charles-Edwards sees in Étaíne a "sovereignty goddess." "Tochmarc Étaíne: a literal interpretation," in Michael Richter and Jean-Michel Picard eds., *Ogma: Essays in Celtic Studies in honour of Próinséas Ní Chatháin* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002), pp. 165–81. The conflict between Étaíne and Eochaid thus becomes one between gods and mortals. By winning the love of the local "sovereignty goddess," a male legitimizes his rule over a territory. See Máire Bhreathnach, "The Sovereignty Goddess as Goddess of Death?" *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* 39 (1982): 243–260. This article discusses "The Death of Muirchertach mac Erca," analyzed below. For a tale that represents the myth of the sovereignty goddess less ambiguously, see "The Sons of Eochaid Mugmedon" (C&S 508–513) or Part 30 of the Metrical Dindshenchas, in which Lugaid Laigde wins the kingship from his brothers and rivals by mating with a hag who then announces herself the sovereignty of Ireland. The motif appears also in "The Wooing of Emer (C&S 153–171).

[120] In a fragment from Egerton 1782, a later manuscript dated 1517 (Robin Flower, *Catalogue of Irish Manuscripts in the British Museum*, vol. 2 [London, 1926], p. 262), when Eochaid asks her, she identifies herself as "Étain the daughter of the king of Echrad out of the fairy-mounds" (C&S, 84). Eochaid forsakes all other women for her and pays a bride-price of seven bond slaves [to whom, her father, a fairy?] See also in Christian J. Guyonvarc'h tr., "Textes mythologiques irlandais I," *Celticum* vol. 11.1 (1980) La Courtise d'Étain (Tochmarc Étaíne), pp. 253–57.

him. In return for her love, Sín imposes three conditions. Muirchertach must reject his wife, Duaibsech, and children, avoid the clergy, especially the bishop Cleitech, and he must never pronounce her name. When Muirchertach slips and says her name, Sín brings about his downfall and achieves the vengeance she has planned.[121]

The Death of Muirchertach mac Erca shows a pronounced demonization of the fairy, which suggests that it may be later in creation than "The Wooing of Étaín," but the centrality of vengeance as the fairy's motive implies a narrative core of great antiquity. In this tale a woman named Sín (pronounced *Sheen*), from a fairy mound, promises love, but delivers vengeance.[122] Muirchertach had killed Sín's father, a descendant of Niall of the Nine Hostages, and part of the ruling house of Tara. In order to bring about his downfall, Sín manages the repeated apparition of armed troops who either battle each other or induce Muirchertach into exhausting combat with them. I paraphrase.

> Muirchertach establishes Sín in his castle at Brug on the Boyne, the ancient "otherworldly residence" of major figures of the Tuatha Dé, especially the Dagda, who, in an affair with the River Boyne, conceived Angus Óg.[123] After Muirchertach excludes his wife and children from the household, Sín prepares a feast with drugged wine, and from then on the story concerns Muirchertach's diminishing ability to retain his strength and to tell the real from the unreal. He asks Sín to explain who she is. Although, she says, she is a normal "daughter of a woman and a man," she claims the power to turn the water of the Boyne into wine, stones into sheep, and ferns into pigs. Most important, she can "create impetuous

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[121] The version of C&S, 518–532, is based on the edition of Whitley Stokes, "The Death of Muirchertach mac Erca," *Revue Celtique* 23 (1902), pp. 395–438, which omits much of the poetry inserted within the narrative. The poetry, however, is a parallel, if not an older tradition, and so should be retained. Lil Nic Dhonnchadha has preserved the poetry in a new edition, the *Aided Muirchertaig Meic Erca* (*Mediaeval and Modern Irish Series* XIX) (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1964). My analysis is based on the translation of this more recent edition by Christian-J. Guyonvarc'h, "La mort de Muirchertach, fils d'Erc. Texte irlandais du très haut moyen Âge: la femme, le saint et le roi," *Annales: économies, sociétés, civilisations* 38.5 (1983): 985–1015. The original text appears in the Yellow Book of Lecan (c. 1390) and in a fifteenth-century codex in Trinity College, Dublin. My references to sections are from the translation by Guyonvarc'h.

[122] Bhreathnach, "The Sovereignty Goddess as Goddess of Death?" pp. 248–49, cites this encounter as the first of several indications of Sín's connection with Sovereignty. But Muirchertach is already king, husband, father of sons, and lord of a castle and territory firmly linked to his dynasty's dead. Sín's status as a "person of the mounds" and as a descendant of Niall of the Nine Hostages is adequate to explain her powers and her behavior.

[123] MacKillop, p. 54b.

men [who] charge each other with equal force" (§16). Once challenged, Sín does exactly that, causing two bold and beautiful battalions to fight each other in the plain. At different times, she summons more "troops," who wage imaginary battles that gradually cause Muirchertach to lose his mind. Sín conjures up blue men who fight goat-headed men. Unable to see that they are imaginary, Muirchertach fights them all. Everyone he kills stands up again and continues to fight until he becomes exhausted (§21). Soon blue men fight headless men. Then Muirchertech fights stones, clods of earth, and bundles of grass (§23). As Muirchertach's grasp of reality begins to slip, Cleitech's priests intervene asking, "Why are you striking stones, O Muirchertach, who has lost his mind?" (§25) Seeing in Cleitech the possibility of help, Muirchertach confesses to him and receives communion (§26–28). For her part, Sín derides the priests, because "they sing only what is irrational" (§30). As Muichertach's madness deepens, he remembers the prophecy that he will die as his grandfather did, not in battle, but in a fire (§35). He imagines himself attacked by the lineage descending from Niall of the Nine Hostages, legendary founder of the rival dynasty that ruled from Tara (§35). It will emerge (§49) that Sín's loyalty is to this dynasty.

Having charmed Muirchertach to sleep after a premonitory nightmare that accurately predicted that what she would cause him to believe would happen, Sín arranges the lances and spears of armies in battle at the doors and windows of the house, all pointing inward. Then, she formed a host of men around the fortress. She set fire to the house and came to bed with the king. He awoke and exclaimed correctly: "A phantom army has appeared to me burning the house on my head and massacring my people right up to the door." Sín replied soothingly, and accurately, "No harm will come from that except that it has appeared." (§§38–39). As the fire seems more menacing, Muirchertach (losing track of the fact that this is all appearance) asks, "Who is that all around the house"? (§40). Sín replies with the list of Muirchertach's Tara-based enemies from his earlier nightmare (§35) and she adds that their leader has come "to avenge himself on you for the battle of Granar" (where, we learn later—§49—Muirchertach had killed Sín's father). The text states objectively: "He did not know that it was not true and that there was no flesh-and-blood army surrounding the house" (§40). This is the final illusion. Believing himself surrounded by his enemies, his house ablaze, fated to die in a fire as his grandfather did before him, Muirchertach takes refuge in a wine barrel he believed to be empty and drowns. The house falls in on him (§42). Duaibsech dies of grief for Muirchertach (§46). After the funeral, Sín appears magically alongside the proceedings. It is clear she is of the *sídhe,* and the priests realize who she is. She bargains with them, a confession in return for paradise. In her confession she admits that she has exacted revenge for Muirchertach's victory over her father and all his clan, for having exterminated the ancient tribes of Tara (§49). Then, Sín, too, dies of grief for Muirchertach (§49). Cairnech prays Muirchertach out of hell and into paradise (§51).

Sín's character fits the description in William of Auvergne. A beautiful woman discovered during a hunt when separated from his attendants attracts a man to his destruction. Sín's ability to conjure up troops of combatants exemplifies the theme of the Ghostly Troop. Moreover, the combination of the alluring female, as described by William, with the ghostly combatants makes this tale particularly germane to our subject. In *The Death of Muirchertach*, Sín functions like Hildr, who is able to make dead men fight involuntarily at regular intervals for ages. Sín brings warriors to the fields before Muirchertach's castle who successively lure Muirchertach into exhausting himself combating them. Yet they themselves fight, die, and resume fighting (§21). Again, William is well informed: Sín connects two of William's categories of demonic deceptions. Because of her ability to conjure up warrior battalions, she links the theme of the alluring woman to the cohorts of dead men.

Who and what is Sín? Is she a fairy, some supernatural being, and not a ghost, or is she human enough to be considered a ghost? Has she died and come back to life? Is it her father's influence that drives her to revenge? In this case, she would be a delegate of the dead, carrying out vengeance on behalf of a dead man, restoring the honor of her kin. The means at her disposal are superhuman. She told Muirchertach that she was the daughter of a human father and mother, yet clearly she works magic. She applies her magic to conjure up illusions (William would call them *ludificationes demonum*), and manipulate Muirchertach, to cause his hallucinations, and drive him to madness and death. Two observations seem clear. (1) Murichertach believes he sees troops which he combats, even, at the end, troops of his dead enemies. Those can only be ghosts. (2) Muirchertach's residence, Brug na Bóinne, the scene of his undoing, was, in some traditions, the ancient "otherworldly residence" of Lug and Cú Chulainn and other major figures of the Tuatha Dé, especially Angus Óg, the child of the Dagda and the River Boyne (MacKillop p. 54b). Thus, Brug na Bóinne, itself an opening to the otherworld, can supply battalions of dead warriors. Further, the forces Muirchertach sees arrayed against him are the descendants of Niall of the Nine Hostages, who, in legend, ruled from Tara. They would come forth in battle array from the burial place of *their* clan. Both observations lead to the conclusion that the risen warriors in *The Death of Muirchertach mac Erca* have their role not by selection, like the Einherjar, but by kinship. Indeed, the dead that Lug summons to oppose the Fomorians are his descendants, that is, his relatives. This

is not to deny that they are heroic, but they are there primarily as his kin. There is no screening; no Valkyrie selects them. As dead kindred they go to their appropriate *sídh*, and from the family burial mound, the *aes sídhe* emerge to fight. The enticing Síd's vengeance makes no sense without this kinship bond. *The Death of Muirchertach mac Erca* is a conflict between the dead of Tara and the living champion of Brug.

This story illustrates with remarkable fidelity the process William of Auvergne analyzed for demonic deceptions. Sín causes Muirchertach to believe that the phantom troops are doing battle, and he combats them; she causes him to believe his dead enemies are attacking him, and he drowns seeking refuge in a wine barrel. These are beliefs "painted" on the imagination by a numinous figure from the fairy mounds, herself acting on behalf of her deceased father. If not herself dead, because she appears to be a living woman able to lure, and keep, Muirchertach in bed, Sín is clearly of the fairy mounds and, unlike a normal, living woman, able to perform magic and summon phantom hosts to battle. In short, she functions like a ghost and on behalf of the dead. She is a supernatural force from the Irish otherworld, a delegate of the dead, who enters human affairs fatally.

Conclusion

The efforts of Christian theologians, whether of the patristic or medieval period, to assign the dead to hidden receptacles failed to eradicate pagan traditions (Roman, Germanic, and Celtic) that considered the dead active in the world. Consequently, church writers incorporated these older, more general ideas, such as that of the Ghostly Troop, into their own mental framework, while demonizing those that resisted assimilation. William of Auvergne's *De Universo* provides crucial evidence for this thesis, because he explains in so much detail the popular ideas he condemned. Through him it is possible to see how the Ghostly Troop had both a male and a female aspect, and how the feminine apparitions he feared, at least when considered as individual women, show a stronger influence from the Irish than from the Roman and Germanic paganisms he also combated.

Yet the Germanic and Irish concepts have important features in common. The parallel between Síd and Hildr is crucial. Both women have the ability to summon dead men in troops. Here is where the detour behind William's alluring females rejoins the main road. In Irish tales

such as *The Death of Muichertach mac Erca*, as in Old Norse, armies of the dead fight at the behest of women with supernatural powers. On the Germanic side of this comparison, the prominence of the Valkyries adds an important complication. The Valkyries select the fallen from the battlefield and devote half of them to service at Valhalla, for membership in Odin's troop. These warriors are elites. The followers of Lug, the Tuatha Dé Danann, however valorous, are a clan constituted over many generations. Their bond is not their profession of arms, but their shared ancestry. This difference between manner of death, in the Germanic sources, and blood relationship, in the Irish tales, does not obscure the fundamental link between the Germanic and Irish manifestations of the Ghostly Troop, what William of Auvergne called the "massive army of the night" and Tacitus, centuries before, "the shades of a troop of the dead."

The question then becomes: why should these different cultures share such important folkloric themes? I am not prepared to say, with Philippe Walter, that the Tuatha Dé Danann serve as *the* mythical origin of the Mesnie Hellequin, that is, of the Ghostly Troop.[124] Conversely, the quantity and profundity of the Irish evidence precludes a premature dismissal, like Jean-Claude Schmitt's, of Celtic data.[125] Is it necessary to choose between the two roots? Cannot two peoples call a key idea by two, different but related names, each population wishing to preserve the associations most meaningful to it?[126] They would then be two branches of the same, older tradition.[127] Put differently, they would each serve to evoke otherworldly reinforcement for functions crucial to each society. In the examples considered here, these functions would be to promote a distinct warrior class, to dignify the founders of the clan, and, considering Hildr and Sín specifically, to dramatize female power to summon dead warriors to battle, to defend honor, and conclude blood feuds.

Further, it is not necessary to go as far back as a possible common source in the Maruts of ancient India.[128] Indeed, one must ask not just about origins, but also about the continuity, application, and function

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[124] Walter, "Hellequin, Hannequin et le Mannequin," p. 50.

[125] Schmitt, *Ghosts in the Middle Age*, p. 248, note 14.

[126] See Flasdieck, "Harlekin. Germanischer Mythos in romanischer Wandlung," p. 271.

[127] Walter is indeed aware of this possibility, p. 46.

[128] See above, notes 42 and 114.

of the mythic theme. Why, in the thirteenth century were these ideas still current? Why is the motif still current today? This much is certain, the Ghostly Troop has no role in the doctrine of Christianity and contradicts its eschatology. Nonetheless, despite the undeniable success of Christian leaders during the Middle Ages and Early Modern times in organizing the religion and political ideology of Europe as a majority community, they did not, even over centuries, eliminate the driving force and popular endorsement (sometimes, as in the case of the Nazis, to tragic effect) of this elemental idea. It is important, as historians, to note that the Parisian bishop with his ear to the ground, William of Auvergne, knew the beliefs of his subjects well enough to link the dead warriors of the Germanic peoples to the enticing females who delude men into seeing them. But it is far more important, as citizens, to see in this centuries-old, transcultural, complex theme one dynamic force productive of militaristic fantasies and misogynist stereotypes.

GHOSTS OF THE EUROPEAN ENLIGHTENMENT

Fernando Vidal

> It is wonderful that five thousand years have now elapsed since the creation of the world and still it is undecided whether or not there has ever been an instance of the spirit of any person appearing after death. All argument is against it; but all belief is for it.
>
> —Samuel Johnson, quoted by James Boswell.

> Abandonner absolument la créance des Apparitions, n'est-ce pas donner atteinte à ce que le Christianisme a de plus sacré…?
>
> —Dom Augustin Calmet, *Traité sur les apparitions des esprits.*

In 1746, in the middle of an era often glorified as having seen the triumph of reason and the demise of superstition, the French Benedictine erudite Dom Augustin Calmet (1672–1757) published a *Dissertation on the apparitions of angels, demons, spirits, and on the revenants and vampires of Hungary, Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia*. The "revised, corrected, and enlarged" edition of 1751 was newly entitled *Treatise on the apparitions of spirits, and on the vampires or revenants of Hungary, Moravia, etc.*[1] The volume on apparitions was largely a compilation of earlier cases, the one on vampires focused on recent events. Both manifest Catholic apologists's attempts at elaborating a reasonable response to the opposite extremes of scepticism and popular credulity, or loss of faith and excessive devotion, by means of such intellectual tools as probabilistic thinking, historical criticism and the appeal to the natural sciences. They thereby contributed to the decline of the Devil, and restricted the extension of the preternatural and supernatural, while at the same preserving, in their view, the possibility of miracles. The way in which Calmet discussed ghosts and apparitions represents a particular moment in the emergence of the modern Christian sense of what is possible and impossible, and participates in early Enlightenment

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[1] Dom Augustin Calmet, *Traité sur les apparitions des esprits, et sur les vampires, ou les revenans de Hongrie, de Moravie, &c.*, 2nd ed. (Paris: chez Debure, 1751), 2 vols. Vol. 2, on vampires, has been reprinted with a presentation by Roland Villeneuve as *Dissertation sur les vampires* (Grenoble: Jérôme Millon, 1998). Volume and page numbers will be given in the text; page numbers of vol. 2 refer to Villeneuve's edition. Full titles of several early-modern works are given only in the Bibliography.

developments in the history of Christianity and Christian theology, psychology, epistemology, and historiography.[2] At the same time, the Benedictine's work illustrates the difficulties of using the critique of "superstition" to defend Catholic tradition and promote "enlightened" forms of religion and piety.

Calmet was chiefly a historian, and it is as such that he approached the question of ghosts. In addition to the *Treatise on apparitions*, his oeuvre includes such works as a "sacred and profane" universal history in the spirit of Bossuet, an "ecclesiastical and civil" history of Lorraine, and a "literal, historical, and moral" commentary of the Benedictine rule. In the eighteenth century, his fame rested on a *Dictionnaire historique, critique, chronologique, géographique et littéral de la Bible* (*Historical, critical, chronological, geographic and literal dictionary of the Bible*), which was reprinted and translated several times, and especially on a monumental *Commentaire littéral sur tous les livres de l'Ancien et du Nouveau Testament* (*Literal commentary on all the books of the Old and the New Testament*; the first edition, 1707–1716, is in twenty-three quarto volumes).

In the exegetical domain, Calmet wished to uncover the original meanings of Biblical texts. Scrutinizing the testimony of historical actors for their accuracy and trustworthiness was crucial for that purpose, and also played a central methodological role in the scholar's approach to apparitions and vampires. Calmet gave the impression of reporting stories indiscriminately, and of placing Biblical episodes which he considered unquestionable alongside incidents he saw as problematic or false. This actually resulted from his desire to preserve the truth of Biblical apparitions and the notion of God's omnipotence. The combination of an apologetic purpose with the challenge of ascertaining the truth of apparitions explains why, in the end, Calmet kept his reader in a state of doubt. We shall return to this last point, which is a central feature of his work, and is particularly revealing of what was at stake in Enlightenment discussions of ghostly beings.

Calmet's universe of spirits included not only ghosts, or souls of the dead manifesting themselves under an embodied appearance, but also a variety of other phenomena. From apparitions (chs. 1–6), the first volume of the *Treatise* moves on to magic (chs. 7–14), oracles (chs.

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[2] Fernando Vidal, *Les Sciences de l'âme, XVIe–XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Champion, 2006).

15–17), sorcerers and witches (chs. 18–22), possession (chs. 19–28), various spirits (e.g. those that keep treasures, predict the future or haunt houses, chs. 29–37), the "prodigious effects of the imagination on those who believe they have intercourse with the Devil" (ch. 38), revenants (chs. 39–44), and the "apparitions of living men to other living men who are absent and very far away" (ch. 45). The last chapters review arguments about the reality, ways and causes of apparitions, and reply to objections against their existence (chs. 46–48). They are followed by a discussion of how "the secrets of physics and chemistry" are sometimes considered supernatural (ch. 49). After the conclusion (ch. 50), Calmed added two chapters, on "the manner to explain apparitions" and "the difficulty" of doing so (chs. 51–52). The second volume of the *Treatise* focuses on vampires, but also deals with some kinds of ghosts, the fate of excommunicated individuals, the action of the devil, incantations, and cases of people buried alive, drowned or mistakenly considered dead.

These entities and phenomena were interconnected by similar questions and challenges: Can the dead return, why, in what form and under what circumstances? What are the powers of the devil and of angels, and how do they interact with human beings? How does God intervene in human affairs? What are the relations between the soul and the body? What defines personal identity? What are the effective powers of the imagination? How does one distinguish the natural from the supernatural, the demonic from the divine? Like the related manifestations of witchcraft and the miraculous, ghosts functioned in the early Enlightenment as a microcosm of key metaphysical, ontological, theological, epistemological, and even political anxieties of the era.[3]

In the eighteenth century, vampires were newcomers into this universe. Originally, Calmet intended to discuss only the recent vampire debate. Yet, he explained, while collecting materials for that purpose, he encountered so many ghost stories that he decided to write a separate work about them (1:vii). In both cases, he planned to approach the matter as a historian, in order to establish whether the reported facts are true; as a philosopher, in order to examine their causes and circumstances; and as a theologian, in order to draw consequences

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[3] On the political dimension, see Claire Gantet and Fabrice d'Almeida eds., *Gespenster und Politik. 16. bis 21. Jahrhundert* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 2007).

relative to religion.[4] Calmet differentiated reported facts from the way in which they had happened since, as he put it, "the fact may be certain, and the manner totally unkown" (*le fait peut être certain, & la maniere très-inconnue*, 1:ix). Such a methodological strategy was consistent with the Roman Catholic criteria for evaluating miracles in beatification and canonization processes. In the case of a proposed miraculous cure (the most common events involved in saint-making), it was necessary to establish, on the basis of testimonies, the fact and manner of the healing. After that, jurists and expert witnesses, mainly physicians, had to determine whether or not the now-established fact had a natural explanation; if not, then the cure could be declared miraculous.[5]

Testimony was central to Calmet's arguments. First of all, Calmet considered that Biblical apparitions remained indisputable even if one managed to remove from them the "marvelous" features most shocking to enlightened people.[6] Calmet went as far as admitting that if the subject of vampires "were purely philosophical, and if it were possible, without harming religion, to reduce it to a problem," he would have tried to show that vampire stories were simply false (2:265).[7] Had he been able to follow only reason and "the rules of philosophy" (2:306), he would have been inclined to consider vampires impossible. Thus, the mere existence of Biblical testimony gave his inquiry an extremely powerful limit; and Voltaire's mocking depiction of Calmet as a "his-

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[4] "Je vais donc examiner cette question en Historien, en Philosophe, en Théologien. Comme Historien, je tâcherai de découvrir la vérité des faits; comme Philosophe, j'en examinerai les causes & les circonstances; enfin les lumières de la Théologie m'en feront tirer des conséquences par rapport à la Religion" (1:vii–viii).

[5] Fernando Vidal, "Miracles, science, and testimony in post-Tridentine saint-making," *Science in Context* 20.3 (2007): 481–508; Fernando Vidal, "*Tel la glace d'un miroir*. Le témoignage des miracles dans les canonisations des Lumières," *Dix-huitième siècle* 39 (2007): 77–98.

[6] "L'Ecriture nous raconte certaines Apparitions d'Anges & d'Ames séparées du corps: ces exemples sont indubitables, & fondés sur la révélation des saintes Lettres" (1:ix). "…pour les Apparitions rapportées dans les saintes Ecritures, elles empruntent leur autorité infaillible des Auteurs sacrés & inspirés qui les ont écrites…" (1:xix). "Je déclare que je tiens pour vraies toutes les Apparitions rapportées dans les Livres sacrés de l'Ancien & du Nouveau Testament, sans prétendre toutefois qu'il ne soit pas permis de les expliquer, & de les réduire à un sens naturel & vraisemblable, en retranchant le trop grand merveilleux qui pourroit choquer les personnes éclairées" (1:xxi–xxii).

[7] "Si la matière des apparitions était purement philosophique, et qu'on pût, sans donner atteinte à la religion, la réduire en problème, je m'y serait pris autrement [than an author Calmet is quoting] pour la détruire et j'aurais donné effort à mon raisonnement et à mon imagination."

toriographer" of vampires who treated them "as he had treated the
Ancient and the New Testaments" was actually right.[8]

Purely historical testimonies were a different matter. Calmet defended
himself against the reproach that he quoted unreliable pagan authors
(*des Poètes & des Auteurs peu accrédités*, 1:x); for him, their testimony
demonstrated the ancient Greek and Roman belief that souls were
immortal, subsisted after death, and had an afterlife of reward or pun-
ishment (1:xi). Calmet could present stories about events he regarded
as false or doubtful because, in his view, they did not negate the
immortality of the soul, life beyond death, or the truth of apparitions
reported in the Bible or confirmed by "good testimonies" (1:xiv). The
ungainly mixture of compilation and scepticism was supposed to teach
his readers that "[i]t is wise to suspend one's judgment until reaching
a well-established truth" (1:xvi). In his desire "to see to what extent
this matter was certain or uncertain, true or false, known or unkown,
clear or obscure" (1:iii), Calmet was critical not only of credulity and
superstition, but also of those who questioned miracles and, in general,
events that seemed to be above the laws of nature.[9]

In 1751, the abbé Nicolas Lenglet du Fresnoy (1674–1755), an erudite
and incisive historiographer who contributed to Diderot's *Encyclopédie*
and authored an influential *History of hermetic philosophy*, published a
*Historical and dogmatic treatise on apparitions, visions and particular
revelations* that included observations on Dom Calmet. In his reply,
Calmet worried that Lenglet's critique of saints's visions could turn
against Scriptural visions and revelations (2:302).[10] As a rejoinder to

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[8] "Calmet enfin devint leur historiographe, et traita les vampires comme il avait
traité l'ancien et le nouveau Testament, en rapportant fidèlement tout ce qui avait
été dit avant lui." Voltaire, *Dictionnaire philosophique*, art. "Vampires." Voltaire was
indebted to Calmet's works and to the library of the abbey of Senones, of which he
was the abbot (he spent three weeks working there in 1754). On Voltaire's satirical and
polemical usages of Calmet's oeuvre, see especially his *La Bible enfin expliquée* (1776),
and Arnold Ages, "Voltaire, Calmet and the Old Testament," *Studies on Voltaire and
the Eighteenth Century* 41(1966): 87–187.

[9] "…je blâme & désapprouve la critique outrée de ceux qui nient tout…& générale-
ment tout ce qui tient du miraculeux, & ce qui paroît au-dessus des loix ordinaires
de la nature" (1:xxi).

[10] "Lettre du révérend père Dom Augustin Calmet, Abbé de Sénones, à M. de Bure
l'aîné, Libraire à Paris" discusses Lenglet's *Traité historique & dogmatique sur les
apparitions, les visions & les révélations particulières* (Avignon: Chez Jean-Noel Leloup,
1751). At the same time as his *Traité*, Lenglet published a mainly documentary com-
panion in four twelvemos, entitled *Recueil de Dissertations, anciennes et nouvelles, sur
les Apparitions, les Visions et les Songes*.

Lenglet's reproach that he assumed "the fact of apparitions" without verifying it, Calmet explained his "method and intention." Since his goal was "to prove the truth, the reality, and consequently the possibility of apparitions," he began by giving "a large number of authentic examples" from the Old and the New Testament. The examples themselves, Calmet claimed, constitute "a complete proof" since "the certainty of the facts" entails "the certainty of the dogma" (*car la certitude des faits emporte ici la certitude du dogme*, 2:304).

According to Calmet, the incidents found in Hebrew, Muslim, Greek and Latin authors proved that all peoples have always believed in the immortality of the soul, its persistence after death, and its possible return (2:304). While Lenglet found the demonstration weak, Calmet judged it convincing, and more accessible than philosophical or metaphysical arguments (2:305). To Lenglet's reproach that Calmet did not prescribe a method to discern apparitions, the latter replied

> that I am totally convinced that the manner in which they happen is absolutely unkown to us; that it implies insuperable difficulties; and that if I consulted only reason and the rules of philosophy, I would be more inclined to think them impossible than to safeguard their truth and possibility. But I am held back by the respect of the Holy Scriptures, the testimony of the whole of antiquity, and the tradition of the Church.[11]

Calmet, therefore, had got himself into a corner: if he treated apparitions *en pur philosophe*, he would contribute to destroy belief in them; but since that would lead to questioning Biblical narratives, as well as Church doctrines and practices, he was obliged to somehow give them an otherwise unsubstantiated support (2:257–258).

Vampires

Calmet's universe of ghosts included a category that was new at the time: that of embodied revenants. Vampires were the favorite Enlightenment undead, and Calmet's *Dissertation*, which remains a major source of vampire legends, certainly helped popularize them.[12] The modern figure

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[11] "Ce qui m'a principalement détourné de donner des regles & de prescrire une méthode pour discerner les vraies des fausses apparitions, c'est que je suis très-persuadé que la maniére dont elles arrivent, nous est absolument inconnue; qu'elle enferme des difficultés insurmontables; & qu'à ne consulter que la raison & les regles de la Philosophie, je serois plus porté les croire impossibles qu'à en assurer la vérité & la possibilité. Mais je suis retenu par le respect des Saintes Ecritures, par le témoignage de toute l'Antiquité & par la tradition de l'Eglise" (2:305–306).

[12] See Klaus Hamberger, *Mortuus non mordet: Dokumente zum Vampirismus*

of the vampire is recent. Phlegon's first-century *Book of Marvels* told the story of Philinnion, a dead young woman who visited by night a guest staying in his parents's home, and died definitively after being discovered by them.[13] By the end of the eighteenth century, Goethe had transformed her into the blood-sucking "bride of Corinth."[14] Calmet's vampires opened the way for the transformation of Philinnion's maiden into Goethe's bride.

Between the 1710s and the 1770s, with a peak around 1730–1735, Central Europe was affected by epidemic waves of vampirism, in which embodied revenants were reported to cause troubles and deaths. The Spanish Benedictine Benito Jerónimo Feijóo (1676–1764), a notable sceptic, observed in 1753 that if those incidents were true, then more resurrections would have taken place in Central Europe since the late seventeenth century than in the whole of Christendom since the birth of Christ.[15] At the time, vampires were not the lascivious aristocrats that literature and cinema would make familiar, but humbler, and not always blood-sucking, inhabitants of rural villages. The remedy against their deeds was to pierce the living corpse's heart, behead it, and burn it.

By the middle of the eighteenth century, several reports, memoirs and treatises had discussed the cases. The theological stakes of vampirism were high. Contrary to most earlier apparitions, vampires were embodied; they were, as Calmet put it, *revenans en corps*.[16] For the Church, it was indispensable to be able to differentiate vampiric phenomena from authenticated cases of bodily incorruptibility and

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1689–1791 (Vienna, Turia & Kant, 1992); Antoine Faivre, "Du vampire villageois aux discours des clercs (Genèse d'un imaginaire à l'aube des Lumières)," in *Les vampires. (Colloque de Cerisy)* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1993). Marie-Hélène Huet relates eighteenth-century vampire literature to concerns with the state of cemeteries and the place of the dead among the living: "Deadly Fears: Dom Augustin Calmet's Vampires and the Rule Over Death," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 21 (1997): 222–32.

[13] *Phlegon of Tralles' Book of Marvels*, trans. with an introduction and commentary by William Hansen (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1996), pp. 25–28.

[14] Says the bride: "Aus dem Grabe werd ich ausgetrieben, / Noch zu suchen das vermißte Gut, / Noch den schon verlornen Mann zu lieben / Und zu saugen seines Herzens Blut." Johann Wolfgang Goethe, "Die Braut von Korinth" (1797), lines 176–79.

[15] Benito Jerónimo Feijóo, *Cartas eruditas y curiosas* (Madrid: Imprenta Real de la Gazeta, 1774), vol. 4, Carta XX (Reflexiones críticas sobre las dos Disertaciones, que en orden a Apariciones de Espíritus, y los llamados Vampiros, dio a luz poco há el célebre Benedictino, y famoso Expositor de la Biblia D. Agustín Calmet), § 29, p. 278.

[16] On the embodied nature of vampires, see Jean-Claude Aguerre, "Résistance de la chair, destitution de l'âme," in *Les vampires*. Aguerre correlates it to the Enlightenment "secularization of the soul" and to phenomena of bodily resilience and convulsion. On earlier apparitions, see Jean-Claude Schmitt, *Les revenants. Les vivants et les morts dans la société médiévale* (Paris: Gallimard, 1994).

resurrection. That is why vampires are discussed in the fundamental work on beatification and canonization published in 1734–1738 by cardinal Prospero Lambertini (1675–1758), archbishop of Bologna and future Pope Benedict XIV.

For two decades starting in 1708, Lambertini was the so-called "Devil's advocate" in charge of challenging arguments favorable to an individual's canonization. For the cardinal, who was an enlightened patron of the arts and sciences, medicine and the natural sciences were major sources of objections. Following established Church practices, extraordinary cures or such bodily phenomena as the incorruptibility of corpses could be declared miraculous only after a rigorous examination of evidence ruled out natural explanations. On that basis, Lambertini dismissed belief in vampires as an effect of fear and the imagination.[17] Nevertheless, to the extent that vampirism involved the administration of justice and the maintenance of public order, it also had political implications.

The 1755 report on Silesian cases by empress Maria Theresa's sceptical *protomedicus* Gerhard van Swieten prompted the enlightened despot of Austria to decree that vampirism was a natural result of the imagination, to prohibit religious orders from making decisions in vampire cases, and to transfer to Vienna the authority to judge in the domain.[18] In a letter to a Polish archbishop, Benedict XIV referred to van Swieten and

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[17] Lambertini wrote of *deceptae phantasiae figmenta*, and emphasized the agreement of authors "who regard the resurrections of vampires and the actions imputed to them as pure imaginations, fear, and terror" (*qui Vampirorum resurrectionem, & actiones illis impictas meris accensent imaginationibus, metui, atque terrori*). Prospero Lambertini, *De servorum Dei beatificatione, et beatorum canonizatione* (1734–1738, expanded ed. 1743), in *Benedicti XIV……Opera omnia* (Prato: Typographia Aldina, 1839–1856), vols. 1–7. Book IV, Part I (De miraculis), ch. XXI (De revocatione Mortuorum ad vitam, seu de resuscitatione), § 4.

[18] Gerhard van Swieten, *Vampyrismus*, Piero Violante, ed. (Palermo: Flaccovio, 1988); also includes Violante's useful "I Vampiri di Maria Teresa" and a translation of the Empress's decrees. For the original text of the first decree, dated 1 March 1755, see Klaus Hamberger, *Mortuus non mordet: Dokumente zum Vampirismus 1689–1791* (note 10 above), pp. 85–86. Van Swieten, a Dutch Catholic disciple of Hermann Boerhaave, wrote his brief report in French (*Remarques sur le vampyrisme de Silésie de l'an 1755*, never published) on the basis of information provided by a doctor and an anatomist who had been sent to Silesia to investigate the cases. The title of Violante's edition echoes that of the German version (1768); the text, however, reproduces (with corrections) the 1787 edition of the Italian translation by Giuseppe Valeriano Vannetti, *Considerazione intorno alla pretesa magia postuma per servire alla storia de' vampiri* (first published 1756).

Maria Theresa, recalled his own conclusions about the conservation of bodies, and recommended prohibiting vampire trials.[19]

In addition to Benedict XIV, Feijóo, professor of theology at the University of Oviedo, Giuseppe Davanzati, archbishop of Trani, and the Jesuit authors of the *Dictionnaire de Trévoux* thought vampires were a mere effect of the imagination, spread by contagion and even wilfull deception.[20] On these points, Catholics and Protestants could be in complete agreement.[21] In contrast, Calmet argued that since apparitions of the dead are attested in the Bible, admitted by the Church Fathers, and incorporated into approved devotional practices, they should not be dismissed in principle nor systematically explained away as natural phenomena.

Calmet's attitude earned him the accusation of gullibility and lack of rigor. In the article Vampire of Diderot's *Encyclopédie*, the chevalier Louis de Jaucourt, a medically-trained deistic Protestant, ironized that the abbé's treatise proved the extent to which the human mind is predisposed to supertition (*sert à prouver combien l'esprit humain est porté à la superstition*). "Superstition" appears in Calmet's treatises as a source and expression of certain beliefs and practices. But the very fact that he was himself accused of being superstitious, his disclaimer, *Je ne compte aussi guérir les Superstitieux de leurs erreurs, ni le peuple de ses préventions*, and the difference between his position and that of other Catholic authors, underline the ambiguities characteristic of Catholic antisuperstitious discourse.[22]

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[19] Louis Antoine de Caraccioli, *La vie du Pape Benoît XIV Prosper Lambertini: Avec notes instructives, & son portrait* (Paris: Rue, et Hôtel Serpente, 1783), letter on pp. 192–93.

[20] Feijóo, *Cartas eruditas*, XX; Giuseppe Davanzati, *Dissertazione sopra i vampiri* (published 1774), ed. Giacomo Annibaldis (Bari: Besa, 1998), ch. XV (Che l'apparizione de' Vampiri non sia altro che puro effetto di Fantasia). Finished by 1742, the dissertation circulated in manuscript, and was first published in 1755. Benedict XIV praised its "doctrine" and erudition in a letter to Davanzati of 12 January 1743 ("Vita di Giuseppe Davanzati," in *Dissertazione*, p. 141). For the *Dictionnaire de Trévoux* (6th, and last ed., 1771, vol. 8), "le prétendu Vampirisme n'est qu'une imagination frappée," and "une espèce de fanatisme épidémique" (art. "Vampirisme"). Under "Vampire, Wampire, Oupire & Upire," the *Dictionnaire* highlighted the absence of reliable testimonies, and dismissed vampire stories as "des bruits populaires, des traditions qui se transmettent, comme nos historiettes de lutins et de revenants."

[21] See Johann Heinrich Zedler, *Grosses vollständiges Universal-Lexikon aller Wissenschaften und Künste* (1732–1750; Graz: Akademische Drück- und Verlansganstalt, 1962), vol. 46, art. "Vampyren."

[22] "In addition, I do not hope to cure the superstitious of their errors, or the people of their prejudices…" (1:viii). On the history of Catholic antisuperstitious discourse,

Calmet assumed that true resurrections could only be the work of God, and must serve His glory and the truth of Christianity—two purposes, he remarked, that vampirism does not fulfill (2:38, 46, 50). In addition, revenants usually talk about their otherworldly habitat. Since vampires do not, "they are not really resurrected nor their bodies spiritualized and subtilized" (2:216). In the absence of reliable testimonies, vampires's appearance and conduct must be diagnosed as effects of prejudiced and impressionable imaginations (2:240). But the imagination, Calmet added, does not explain why alleged vampires protest, yell, and bleed when unearthed, transperced and decapitated.

Calmet explained that people thought to be dead may sometimes revive thanks to medical assistance or the spontaneous action of nature. When, as in poisonings, death is caused by a "coagulation of the blood, which freezes and solidifies," then only "an evident miracle" can bring the person back to life. In contrast, if death results from an excessive "boiling of the blood," as in drowning, then, he claimed, a resuscitation is possible (2:208). The natural possibility of resuscitating (as distinguished from resurrecting) therefore depends on whether death was, as it were, hot or cold. This, noted Calmet referring to Jacques-Benigne Winslow's epoch-making dissertation on the uncertainty of the signs of death, made vampirism less incredible (2:169).[23] Indeed, if vampires were merely fatal victims of "hot maladies," then their bodies would retain a rest of life, and would be able to revive in a way similar to hibernating animals (2:209). They would therefore be persons buried alive, and that would account for their growing nails and hair (2:242), as well as for their forceful resistance to their execution (2:246).

The pattern of Calmet's argument is typical of Enlightenment portent-criticism: a detailed presentation of the alleged phenomena is followed by a fairly quick *reductio ad naturam*.[24] In the end, however, Calmet wavered. He complained about the unreliability of testimonies and the incompleteness of investigations and reports, and he trusted

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see Fabián Alejandro Campagne, *Homo Catholicus, Homo superstitiosus. El discurso antisupersticioso en la España de los siglos XV a XVIII* (Buenos Aires: Miño y Dávila, 2002), esp. chs. 4 (on ambiguity) and 9 (on a new sense of the impossible).

[23] Winslow's *Dissertation sur l'incertitude des signes de la mort, et l'abus des enterremens, & embaumemens precipites*, translated from the Latin, was published in 1742. See Claudio Milanesi, *Mort apparente, mort imparfaite. Médecine et mentalités au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Payot, 1991).

[24] Feijóo, Davanzati, van Swieten follow the pattern; Zedler devotes five columns to the cases, and two to natural explanations.

medicine to account for the state of the vampire's body. At the same time, he presented the cases as if they were valid, and wondered, for example, how to explain that a corpse's feet appear muddy the day after it was seen as a vampire.[25] Calmet could simply not do away with this problem because of its connection to the biblically-attested fact that the dead may return among the living with their own bodies.[26] He was convinced that some people saw and were disturbed in many ways by what they believed to be revenants, and thereafter testified in good faith under formal juridical circumstances. But their testimonies, he thought, concerned experiences produced by the imagination (2:239–240). Nevertheless, since not all cases could be attributed to pathologies of the imagination, Calmet could describe the incident of a child allegedly killed and revived by the Devil as "one of those extraordinary and almost incredible facts,…that neither Theology nor Philosophy know how to explain" (2:247).

In the end, the hardest problem for Calmet was empirical: how to explain that vampires leave their tombs, get dressed, move and eat, and return to their graves without leaving traces of having displaced any earth (2:181–182, 211–212). This difficulty cast doubt on the purported imaginary nature of vampirism. Indeed,

> If all of that is merely an imagination of those who are bothered [by vampires], how come vampires are found in their tombs incorrupt, full of blood, supple and easy to handle…? Whence the fact that they do not return nor infest after they have been burned or impaled? Is it once again the imagination of the living and their prejudices that reassure them after those executions? (2:181–182).

If vampires are not real, then what exactly appears to the living? Ghosts, souls, some demon with corporeal appearance? And if they were merely imaginary bodies (*corps fantastiques*), how could they suck somebody's blood? Faced with such challenges, Calmet could only acknowledge that "We always fall again in the difficulty of knowing if those apparitions

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[25] "Si tout cela n'est qu'imagination de la part de ceux qui sont molestés, d'où vient que ces vampires se trouvent dans leurs tombeaux sans corruption, pleins de sang, souples et maniables; qu'on leur trouve les pieds crottés le lendemain du jour qu'ils ont couru et effrayé les gens…? D'où vient qu'ils ne reviennent plus et n'infestent plus quand on les a brûlés ou empalés? Sera-ce encore l'imagination des vivants et leurs préjugés, qui les rassureront après ces exécutions faites?" (2:181–182).

[26] Similar reasons explain Calmet's perplexity vis-à-vis reports about excommunicated dead, buried in churches, who were said to come out of their tombs and leave the church building during the Eucharist (2: chs. 28–31 and 61).

are natural or miraculous" (2:212). He thus accepted a state of almost blissful ignorance, in which "we way as well be consoled for our ignorance" concerning the Devil's powers, "since there are so many natural things that take place in our bodies and around us whose cause and manner are unkown to us" (2:214–215).

   Calmet's resignation results from his commitment to the truth of Biblical apparitions.[27] Hence his critique of *The world bewitched* (1691), a work where the Dutch Reformed pastor Balthasar Bekker attacked belief in magic, sorcery and possession, and even questioned the existence of the Devil.[28] If Bekker were right, Calmet asked, why should Scripture prohibit consulting magicians and report apparitions (1:458)? Thus, he concluded, "It is not allowed to question the truth of apparitions related in the Old and the New Testament; but it is allowed to explain them" (1:443). For example, since the Bible sometimes uses "angel" to designate a prophet, some Biblical angels must in fact have been divinely inspired humans (1:445). In short, denying the existence of vampires implied rejecting authenticated apparitions and resurrections, and the same thing applied to the Devil. In Calmet's view, to claim that Satan had been inactive since the coming of Christ undermined "the faith of the Church, the Holy Scriptures, the most sacred practices, and not only the opinions of the Church Fathers and the best theologians, but also the laws and edicts of princes, and the decisions of the most respectable parliaments" (2:258).[29] Under such circumstances, only suspension of judgment appeared safe.

Ghosts

In his discussion of the *Treatise on apparitions*, Feijóo dissected the structure of Calmet's discourse. In a typical passage at the end of the first volume, the abbé wrote:

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[27] On the psychologization and medicalization of ghost-seeing: Wolfgang Neuber, "Die Theologie der Geister in der Frühen Neuzeit," in Moritz Baßler, Bettina Gruber and Martina Wagner-Egelhaaf, eds., *Gespenster: Erscheinungen, Medien, Theorien* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2005).

[28] English translation: Balthasar Bekker, *The world bewitch'd, or, An examination of the common opinions concerning spirits, their nature, power, administration and operations, as also the effects men are able to produce by their communication* (London: printed for R. Baldwin, 1695).

[29] On Calmet on the Devil, see Nadia Minerva, *Il diavolo. Eclissi e metamorfosi nel secolo dei Lumi: Da Asmodeo a Belzebù* (Ravenna: Longo, 1990), part 2, ch. 1.

> My reader will say that I leave him in doubt, and that instead of elucidating the apparitions of spirits, I spread doubts and uncertainty on the matter. I agree; but I would rather doubt prudently, than assert what I ignore. And if I limit myself to what my religion teaches about the nature of souls, angels and demons, I shall say that, since they are purely spiritual, it is, except by a miracle, impossible that they appear with any body whatsoever—assuming, however, that God did not create them naturally capable of such operations [of embodiment, operations that remain] subordinate to His sovereignly powerful will, which allows them only rarely to exert this faculty of appearing as bodies before mortals.[30]

"It is remarkable," Feijóo comments, "that in so few lines [Calmet] takes three different directions." At the beginning, he appears doubtful; he then says that spiritual beings cannot assume a visible body; finally, he asserts that God may nevertheless give such beings the power to become embodied, and thereby calls his own earlier statements into doubt.[31]

Calmet's inconsistency results from his methodological emphasis on the epistemic dimension of the problem of ghosts. Evaluating testimony was for him a necessary step towards reaching the right balance between credulity and scepticism while respecting both reason and faith. He thus avoided the earlier polemics between Protestants and Catholics. Calmet had an apologetic goal, and his *Traité* contains vestiges of older debates. His main purpose, however, was not to polemicize, but to evaluate the reported ghost or vampire stories, examine their causes, and draw conclusions relevant to religion. His compilation therefore functioned less as an agent of controversy than as an apologetic phenomenology.

The ultimate object of the sixteenth-century ghost controversy was the doctrine of purgatory.[32] In 1563, the Council of Trent (session XXV)

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[30] "Mon lecteur dira que je le laisse ici dans l'embarras, & qu'au lieu de lui donner des lumieres sur les Apparitions des Esprits, je répands des doutes & de l'incertitude sur cette matière: j'en conviens; mais j'aime mieux douter prudemment, que d'assurer ce que je ne sçais pas. Et si je m'en tiens à ce que ma Religion m'enseigne sur la nature des Ames, des Anges & des Démons, je dirai qu'étant purement spirituels, il est impossible qu'ils apparoissent revêtus d'un corps, quel qu'il soit, à moins d'un miracle: supposé toutefois que Dieu ne les ait pas créés naturellement capables de ces opérations, avec subordination à sa volonté souverainement puissante, qui ne leur permet que rarement de mettre en exécution cette faculté de se faire voir corporellement aux mortels" (1:484–485).

[31] "Es muy de notar, que en tan pocas líneas tres veces toma movimiento hacia distintos términos…" Feijóo, *Cartas eruditas*, Carta XX, §8, p. 269.

[32] Ronald C. Finucane, *Appearances of the dead: A cultural history of ghosts* (Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1984), esp. ch. 4 (Reformation controversies: Demons and ghosts); Peter Marshall, *Beliefs and the dead in Reformation England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), ch. 6 (The disorderly dead: Ghosts and their meanings in Reformation

reaffirmed the existence of a place or condition of temporary punishment for the souls of the dead. Since the doctrine implied that the living could help these souls, it authorized alms, prayers and masses for the dead, as well as the papal granting of indulgences. Conversely, although the Church did not reach a formal decision on the matter, it implicitly allowed the faithful to pray to those souls for their intercession. It followed that, when ghosts did not result from disturbed imaginations, they could have an angelic or demonic origin, or be souls of the dead allowed by God to leave purgatory temporarily.

Protestants, in contrast, denied purgatory and believed that the dead, immediately consigned to heaven or hell, are unable to return to the living. Ghosts could therefore only be imaginary, angelic or demonic. The English translator of the Swiss Protestant theologian Ludwig Lavater's 1570 treatise on ghosts and spirits attributed the "doctrine of the appearyng of dead mens soules" to "popishe Monkes and Priestes," and termed if "deceiptfull," "wicked" and "deuyllishe."[33] Lavater accepted the existence of visions and spirits, but considered them to be "not the souls of dead men, as some men haue thought, but either good or euill Angels, or else some secrete and hid operations of God."[34] Although God allowed spirits to appear to the "reprobate" as a punishment or warning, and to the faithful as an expression of "Fatherly affection," seeing ghosts often resulted from melancholy, madness, weakness of the senses, or fear.[35]

In addition to giving numerous examples, Catholic treatises defended the doctrine of purgatory, offered elaborate psycho-medical and theological considerations, and formulated rules for judging the nature of visions and apparitions, as well as for discriminating good and evil spirits. The doctrine and procedures of the *discretio spirituum*, or discernment of spirits, were since the Middle Ages essential for exorcism, canonization, and witchraft trials.[36] Late sixteenth-century works

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England); May Yardley, "The Catholic position in the ghost controversy of the sixteenth century, with special reference to Pierre Le Loyer's *IIII Livres des spectres* (1586)," in Lewes Lavater, *Of ghostes and spirites* (1572), ed. with an introduction and appendix by J. Dover Wilson and M. Yardley (1929; repr. Whitefish, MT: Kessinger, 2003); P. G. Maxwell-Stuart, ed., *The occult in early modern Europe: A documentary history* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999).

[33] Lavater, *Of ghostes*, "To the Reader," unpaginated.

[34] Lavater, *Of ghostes*, "The Authours Epistle," unpaginated.

[35] Lavater, *Of ghostes*, p. 175; "The first parte," chs. 1–5, treats the psychopathological mechanisms of ghost-seeing.

[36] Nancy Caciola, *Discerning spirits: Divine and demonic possession in the Middle Ages*

used in those contexts, such as the Jesuit Petrus Thyraeus's writings on demonic possession, hauntings by demons and spirits of the dead, and apparitions of various sorts, or Martin del Rio's (another Jesuit) summa on magic,[37] treated ghosts in detail.

These references, and others such as the 1588 *Psychology* by the Capuchin father Noël Taillepied (largely an anti-Lavater polemic) or the *Treatise of specters* by the lawyer Pierre Le Loyer,[38] illustrate how the existence of purgatory made it possible to consider some ghosts as apparitions of the dead and how, in turn, to the extent that they were recognized as returning souls, these apparitions functioned as evidence for purgatory. Yet, like early-modern portent and demonological literature, they also highlight the fact that Catholic and Protestant treatises included much of the same material, and dealt with many of the same questions—about the nature of ghosts's bodies, the possibilities of embodiment, the powers of the devil on the body or the imagination, possible natural explanations for seeing ghosts, or God's purpose in letting spirits manifest themselves. Both parties agreed that ghosts existed, but Protestants questioned one of their possible origins. Beyond that, both lived in a world permeated by preternatural and supernatural signs and powers.[39] In such a world, the experience of ghosts revealed a large common ground between Christian religious denominations.[40]

(Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003); for a later period, Moshe Sluhovsky, *Believe not every spirit: Possession, mysticism, and discernment in early modern Catholicism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).

[37] Petrus Thyraeus, *Daemoniaci* (2nd ed., Cologne: G. Cholinus, 1598); *Loca infesta* (Cologne: G. Cholinus, 1598); *De apparitionibvs* (Cologne: G. Cholinus, 1600). Martin del Rio, *Disquisitiones magicarum libri sex* (1599–1600), esp. book II; *Investigations into magic*, abridged trans. by P. G. Maxwell-Stuart (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2000).

[38] Noël Taillepied, *Psichologie, ou traité de l'apparition des esprits, à sçavoir des âmes séparées, fantosmes, prodiges et accidents merveilleux qui précèdent quelquesfois la mort des grands personnages ou signifient changement de la chose publique* (1588); the word "psychology" disappears from later editions. I used *A treatise of ghosts*, trans. with an introduction and commentary by Montague Summers (1933; reprinted Whitefish, MT: Kessinger, 2006). Pierre Le Loyer, *IIII Livres des spectres* (Angers: Pour Georges Nepueu, 1586); the first book had been translated as *A treatise of specters or straunge sights, visions, and apparitions appearing sensibly unto men, wherein is deliuered the nature of spirites, angels, and diuels: their power and properties: as also of witches, sorcerers, enchanters, and such like* (London, 1605).

[39] Lorraine Daston and Katharine Park, *Wonders and the order of nature, 1150–1750* (New York: Zone Books, 1998).

[40] See Introduction, as well as Peter Marshall, "Deceptive appearances: ghosts and reformers in Elizabethan and Jacobean England," in Helen Paris and William G. Naphy, eds., *Religion and superstition in Reformation Europe* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002); and Neuber, "Die Theologie der Geister."

Calmet assumed the existence of purgatory, but did not enter into confessional controversies. He sometimes mentioned purgatory in passing.[41] Refering to Jean Bodin's *De la démonomanie des sorciers* (1580), he observed the devil sometimes takes on the appearance of a dead criminal, and asks the living for masses "in order to make believe that his soul is in purgatory, and needs prayers" (1:394). As for the purgatory controversy, Calmet merely hinted at it. Thus, Luther's denial of purgatory (1:375) prompted no direct response; rather, Calmet noted that Luther believed in apparitions, reported the fatal debate between Satan and the Swiss reformer Johannes Oecolampadius, and recounted his own encounters with the Devil: "Après de tels aveux que peut-on penser de la doctrine de ce Chef des Novateurs?" (1:376). That is as polemical as the tone gets. Purgatory is not even mentioned in the chapters devoted to the "return and apparition of souls after death" as proved by Scripture and history (chs. 39–40).

As we saw in connection with vampires, Calmet worried about the consequences that disallowing apparitions could have on religious doctrine, but his solution consisted in combining prudence with Catholic doctrine. The following passage makes this perfectly clear:

> Would giving up the belief in apparitions entirely not undermine the most sacred elements of Christianity, the belief in another life, in a Church that subsists in another world, in rewards for good actions, and punishments for the evil ones; the usefulness of the prayers for the dead, the efficacy of exorcisms? In these matters it is therefore necessary to steer a middle course between excessive credulity and extreme incredulity: one must be wise and enlightened moderately, *think soberly* [Romans 12, 3]; one must, according to Saint Paul's advice, test everything, examine everything, bow only before evidence and known truth; *Test all things; hold fast what is good* [1 Thessal. 5, 21].[42]

Calmet hoped that soberly examining empirical materials would keep open the possibility of apparitions. As he saw it, refusing purgatory

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[41] "Saint German…trouva Paschase…, mort depuis quelque tems,…lui disant qu'il faisoit là son Purgatoire pour avoir favorisé le parti de Laurent Antipape…" (1:316).

[42] "Abandonner absolument la créance des Apparitions, n'est-ce pas donner atteinte à ce que le Christianisme a de plus sacré, à la créance d'une autre vie, d'une Eglise subsistante dans un autre monde, des récompenses pour les bonnes actions, & des supplices pour les mauvaises; l'utilité des prieres pour les morts, l'efficace des exorcismes? Il faut donc dans ces matieres garder le milieu entre l'excessive crédulité & l'extrême incrédulité: il faut être sage & éclairé modérément, *sapere ad sobrietatem*; il faut, selon le conseil de S. Paul, éprouver tout, examiner tout, ne se rendre qu'à l'évidence & à la vérité connue; *omnia probate, quod bonum est tenete*" (1:459)

entailed denying the existence of returning souls, and that in turn implied destroying basic beliefs about the afterlife.

Calmet's juxtaposition of supposedly indisputable Biblical episodes with later doubtful stories sometimes developed into lessons in the morality of inquiry and belief. For example, after telling several ghost tales, he remarked that many more could be given, "yet if one embarked upon a critical inspection of them, there would hardly be any that turns out to be certain, and resists a serious and deep scrutiny" (1:299–300). He then proceeded to tell the story of a luminous specter that appeared at night to a French count. "If this specter is something natural," he wrote, "nothing is more difficult than discovering it, even finding some conjecture to try to explain it" (1:302). Three years later, the story goes, the count's wife admitted that the phantom was a trick she had played on him with the help of a maid. Yet, Calmet noted, when consulted on the case, the seventeenth-century French philosopher Pierre Gassendi did not doubt the apparition could have a divine or a natural cause, and suggested several naturalistic explanations. Hence the need to examine such episodes with utmost care (1:305).[43]

Not only single cases, but also the accumulation of stories could work in favor of scepticism. In the case of ghosts that haunt houses, alleged facts, "instead of confirming each other, and establishing the reality of those specters," call them all into doubt. So, Calmet concluded, "There is good reason to think that all these sorts of apparitions, all these stories are false, and that we must totally reject them, as more apt to foster the superstition and vain credulity of peoples, than to edify and instruct them" (1:321). Together with the juxtaposition of narratives that look alike, yet have contrary truth values, the use of the conditional was one of Calmet's chief strategies, his method to express doubt, suspend judgment, and leave possibilities open. For example, if the incidents reported by ancient and modern authors were real, then they must have been the work of the Devil—but, Calmet added, those reports are largely made up of lies and illusions (1:285). A ghost that appeared to the Persian king Xerxes in his dreams encouraged him to attack the Greeks. Given the catastrophic outcome, if the apparition was genuine (*véritable*), it could have only been a spirit "sent by God

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[43] The story comes from a *Life* of Gassendi. In an essay on goblins, Feijóo noted that the apparition had a natural cause—though not of the sort Gassendi proposed. Feijóo, *Teatro critico universal* (Madrid: A costa de la Real Compañia de Impresores y Libreros, 1778–1779), vol. 3, Discurso IV (Duendes y Espíritus familiares).

to dispose events in conformity to what was predicted by the prophets, and to the succession of the great empires predestined in the decrees of the almighty" (1:419).

Calmet's treatment of the story of the Pied Piper of Hamelin is also typical. According to the well-known legend, in 1384, the German town of Hamelin was invaded by rats. A musician in a variegated garment rid the town of the animals by leading them with his piping to the river, where they drowned. After the authorities refused to pay him the promised reward, the piper disappeared with all the town children under the age of fourteen into a nearby mountain. Calmet claimed that he would not have recounted such "extraordinary example" had it not been attested "by numerous authors, or recorded in the public monuments" of the city. Thus, he concluded, "If this story is not entirely fabulous, at it seems to be," then the piper must be considered as a specter or evil genius who, with God's permission, punished Hamelin's citizens through their innocent children (1:289).

"If the story is not fabulous…" The conditional was Dom Calmet's way of allowing for the truth of some ghost stories. Although he gave absolute credence to Biblical narratives, even Scriptural apparitions could be sometimes "explained," as in the cited instance of the "angel" standing for a human prophet. Yet, the revenants reported in saints' lives were for Calmet "genuine apparitions of souls separated from their bodies" (1:347). The confirmed holiness of the visionaries, especially early saints and Church Fathers, ranked as historical proof.[44] The case of later saints was more delicate; Calmet even suggested that Lenglet Du Fresnoy's criticism of revelations (*A peine fait-il grâce à celles de sainte Thérèse*) had some justification, and recommended disregarding narratives about visions that play no role in the Church or in individual salvation (2:301–302). "Devotion, and a spirituality that is too rigid and inclined to excess also have their disorders of the imagination (*déréglements d'imagination*)," the treatment of which does not require the Inquisition, but "wholly simple and natural remedies" (1:329, 330). In short, Calmet remarked that the return of souls "is infinitely rarer than common people believe; and the same applies to alleged magical operations and to the apparitions of the Devil" (1:456). Genuine apparitions occur under the most exceptional circumstances; the oth-

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44 *Traité*, ch. 40, "Apparitions des Esprits prouvées par l'Histoire."

ers, when not fraudulent, are to be explained essentially by the action of the imagination.[45]

Scriptural and historical proofs, however, leave open questions about the causes, means and reasons of genuine apparitions. Ultimately, these boil down to a miraculous intervention of God:

> …no apparition can take place without a sort of miracle, and without the extraordinary and supernatural participation of God, who commands, or makes, or allows that an angel, or a demon, or a soul separated from the body appear, act, speak, walk, and perform other functions that belong only to an organized body.[46]

With few options left open, Calmet proposed a linguistic trick: "When a living man appears to another man in a dream, we do not say that his body or his soul appeared, but simply that so and so appeared." Similarly, when dead people appear, why should we not simply say "that their form presents itself to the mind (*esprit*) and imagination of the living person?" (1:409).

According to Calmet, if spiritual substances had the "natural power" of making themselves visible, then miraculous and supernatural factors would be superfluous. But since they do not have it, another explanation is necessary. Calmet conceptualized the union of body and soul, and by extension, the relation between physical matter and created spiritual substances, in occasionalist terms. The soul has no direct power over the body, but is only the occasional cause of its voluntary movements; God remains the "first, necessary, immediate and essential cause," and the same should apply to angels and demons (1:433, 437–439).

Since, like the soul, angels and demons are purely spiritual substances, they lack the natural power to produce a body, and can assume corporeal form only by God's will. As Calmet underlined, we do not know how they do it; but since they do, we cannot say all apparitions are fraudulent

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[45] As a mental faculty of representation, the imagination also plays a non-pathological role in the perception of genuine visions: "…Dieu…fait souvent que les personnes qui se font les Apparitions, voyent en songe ou autrement ces Esprits, qui leur parlent & les avertissent, qui les menacent, qui leur font voir des choses comme présentes qui réellement ne sont pas devant leurs yeux, mais seulement dans leur imagination, ce qui n'empêche pas que ces visions & ces avertissemens ne viennent de la part de Dieu…" (1:338).

[46] "…nulle Apparition ne peut se faire sans une espece de miracle, & sans un concours extraordinaire & surnaturel de Dieu, qui ordonne, ou qui fait, ou permet qu'un Ange, qu'un Démon, ou qu'une Ame séparée du corps apparoisse, agisse, parle, marche, & fasse d'autres fonctions qui n'appartiennent qu'à un corps organisé" (1:433).

or imaginary. Moreover, some apparitions are proven genuine by the witness who related them, the accompanying circumstances, the realization of predictions, or the accomplishment of supernatural effects contrary to the interests of the Devil; "these apparitions are certified by the belief, the prayers, and the practice of the Church who authorizes them, and presupposes that they are real" (1:439). Those who want to explain apparitions naturalistically actually "put themselves in a more difficult position than those who simply accept the apparitions that take place by God's order or permission" (1:439). These principles about the existence and genuineness of ghosts coexist in Calmet's *Treatise* with the assertion that most apparition stories contain "nothing real, extraordinary, supernatural." But ruling all of them false would be misguided: *c'est conclure qu'on se trompe toujours, parce qu'on se trompe souvent* (1:467).

Calmet's basic position concerning ghosts was consistent with the attitude of the Catholic church towards miracles. He accepted them within the limits of moral certainty and probability, in the context of attempts to regulate devotion with the help of medicalizing and psychologizing considerations about visionary and mystical experience. While the abbé's use of juxtaposition and the conditional were informal tools of probabilistic thinking, his expressions of doubt and accumulations of problematic cases leave an impression of ambiguity. Moreover, his reasoning was vitiated by an inversion of premise and conclusion. The certainty of the facts, he claimed, proved the certainty of the dogma; but since those "facts" were said to be authentic because reported in Scripture, the dogma of Scriptural revelation actually functioned as a premise. Calmet's goal was to demonstrate, as he said, "the truth, the reality, and consequently the possibility of apparitions." Yet he postulated such possibility on the basis of the assumed truth of Biblical narratives. At a time of widespread scepticism about ghosts among the enlightened elites, Calmet strove to restrict the domain of the genuinely ghostly so as to give what remained as much plausibility as was politically, philosophically and theologically necessary. His attempt might have been an epistemic failure, yet helped maintain ghosts alive in the largely secularized imagination of Western societies.

GHOST, VAMPIRE, AND SCIENTIFIC NATURALISM: OBSERVATION AND EVIDENCE IN THE SUPERNATURAL FICTION OF GRANT ALLEN, BRAM STOKER AND ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE

Shang-jen Li

Still, it must be borne in mind that unless an apparition had been scientifically observed as we two independent witnesses observed this one, the grounds for believing in its existence would have been next to none. And even after the clear evidence which we obtained of its immaterial nature, we yet remain entirely in the dark as to its objective reality, and we have not the faintest reason for believing it to have been a genuine unadulterated ghost. At the best we can only say that we saw and heard Something, and that this Something differed very widely from almost any other object we had ever seen and heard before. To leap at the conclusion that the Something was therefore a ghost, would be, I venture humbly to submit, without offence to the Psychical Research Society, a most unscientific and illogical specimen of that peculiar fallacy known as Begging the Question.

—"Our Scientific Observations on a Ghost," Grant Allen[1]

Do you not think that there are things which you cannot understand, and yet which are; that some people see things that others cannot? But there are things old and new which must not be contemplated by men's eyes, because they know—or think they know—some things which other men have told them. Ah, it is the fault of our science that it wants to explain all; and if it explains not, then it says there is nothing to explain.

—*Dracula* (1897), Bram Stoker[2]

In this paper I investigate the relationship between literary imagination and scientific investigations of the supernatural in the context of the rise of scientific naturalism and popular religious revival in Victorian Britain.[3] I analyse supernatural stories by Bram Stoker (1847–1912),

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[1] Grant Allen, *Strange Stories* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1885, 2nd Ed.), p. 340.
[2] Bram Stoker, *Dracula*, edited with an Introduction and Notes by Maurice Hindle (London: Penguin Books, 1993), p. 246.
[3] On the complicated relations between scientific naturalism and Christian revival in Victorian Britain, see Frank Miller Turner, *Between Science and Religion: The Reaction to Scientific Naturalism in Late Victorian England* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1974).

Grant Allen (1848–1899) and Arthur Conan Doyle (1859–1930) and argue that they can be read as an expression and discussion of the epistemological difficulties encountered in scientific research on spiritual phenomena. The choice of Allen, Doyle, and Stoker is not arbitrary. All three had scientific backgrounds. Allen was a popular science author with the aspiration of becoming a scientist yet he never fulfilled his dream;[4] Stoker studied mathematics at Trinity College, Dublin;[5] and Doyle received M.B. and MD degrees from Edinburgh University and had been a practicing ophthalmologist before becoming a full time writer.[6]

Their attitudes towards scientific naturalism and Spiritualism differed from each other, but Allen, Doyle, and Stoker were all interested in the occult. Doyle was an outspoken supporter of Spiritualism and had composed unabashedly apologist writings in defence of spirit photography.[7] Allen was a popularizer of Darwin's theory of evolution. He had recourse to Herbert Spencer's evolutionary philosophy to provide naturalistic accounts of the origins of religious sentiments and aesthetic feelings.[8] But Allen was also interested in the occult and had attended, with the biologist Edwin Ray Lankester, the businessman Andrew Carnegie and the writers Edmund Gosse and Oscar Wilde, the telepathic performance of the famous thought-reader Stewart Cumberland.[9] Although Stoker was not directly associated with Spiritualism, supernatural stories occupied a large proportion of his oeuvre. He was interested in folklore

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[4] Peter Morgan, *"The Busiest Man in England": Grant Allen and the Writing Trade, 1875–1900* (New York and Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

[5] Paul Murray, *From the Shadow of Dracula: A Life of Bram Stoker* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2004), p. 33.

[6] See the entry on Arthur Conan Doyle in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (*DNB*).

[7] Arthur Conan Doyle, *A History of Spiritualism* (New York: Arno Press, 1975) [originally published in 1926]; idem, *Case for Spirit Photography* (New York, NY: George H. Doran Co., 1923). On Victorian spirit photography, see Jennifer Tucker, "Photography as Witness, Detective, and Imposter: Visual Representation in Victorian Science," in Bernard Lightman ed., *Victorian Science in Context* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997), pp. 378–408, on pp. 395–402.

[8] Grant Allen, *Charles Darwin* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1885); Grant Allen, *The Evolution of the Idea of God: An Inquiry into the Origins of Religions* (London: Grant Richards, 1897); Grant Allen, *Physiological Aesthetics* (London: Henry S. King & Co., 1877).

[9] "Muscle-Reading by Mr. Stuart Cumberland: A Reception at the 'Pall Mall Gazette' Office," *Pall Mall Gazette* (24 May 1884), p. 2, cited by Roger Luckhurst in idem, *The Invention of Telepathy, 1870–1901* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 64–65.

and mythology, and devoted considerable time to reading medical and anthropological theories.[10] More importantly, the supernatural stories of Allen, Doyle, and Stoker were considerably informed by contemporary debate on psychical research and Spiritualism.

<div align="center">I</div>

British historian of science David Knight has described the nineteenth century as "the age of science." The status and importance of the natural sciences were elevated significantly.[11] As scientific research became professionalized towards the end of the century, the influences of scientific naturalism increased. The proponents of scientific naturalism argued that humanity was part of nature and obeyed the same natural laws. As the philosopher and psychologist James Ward claimed, the goal of scientific naturalism was to construct a worldview that "separates Nature from God, subordinates Spirit to Matter, and sets up unchangeable laws as supreme."[12] In addition to natural phenomena, mind, religion and human behaviour could and should be investigated by the same scientific methods and explained by the same laws.

On the other hand, the Victorian period also witnessed a religious revival. Between 1851 and 1881, the number of Anglican priests increased from 17,320 to 21,663. The non-conformist churches also made significant inroads. John Morley, the editor of *Fortnightly Review*, where naturalistic writers often published their articles, lamented that "our age of science is also the age of deepening superstition and reviving sacerdotalism."[13] Not only was orthodox Christianity experiencing a boom, but there was also a surge of popular interest in the occult as

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[10] David Glover, *Vampires, Mummies, and Liberals: Bram Stoker and the Politics of Popular Fiction* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996), pp. 59–99; Paul Murray, *From the Shadow of Dracula: A Life of Bram Stoker* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2004), pp. 165–97. See also Daniel Pick, " 'Terrors of the Night': Dracula and 'degeneration' in the late nineteenth century,' " *Critical Quarterly* 30 (1984): 71–87.

[11] David Knight, *The Age of Science: The Scientific World-View in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986).

[12] James Ward, *Naturalism and Agnosticism* vol. 1 (London: A. and C. Black, 1899), p. 186, quoted in Turner, *Between Science and Religion*, p. 15.

[13] John Morley, *The Struggle for National Education* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1873), p. 63, quoted in Frank Miller Turner, 'The Victorian Conflict between Science and Religion: A Professional Dimension," *Isis* 69 (1978): 356–76, reprinted in Frank Miller Turner, *Contesting Cultural Authority: Essays in Victorian Intellectual Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 171–200, on pp. 192–193.

shown by the craze of Spiritualism. Spiritualism, a movement originating in the United States, became popular in Great Britain in the 1850s and soon attracted diverse groups of followers. Working class people, literati, and intellectuals attended séances and were fascinated by uncanny phenomena such as levitation, disembodied spirit-hands, thought reading and communication with the deceased.[14]

At the same time, the British scientists who espoused scientific naturalism sought to seize the power of interpreting and directing important "practical" matters from the clerics, leaving the latter jurisdiction only over spiritual matters. The ambition of the scientific naturalists was most explicitly articulated by the physicist John Tyndall in his notorious Belfast Address. At the meeting of the British Society for the Advancement of Science in 1874 Tyndall, a close ally of Darwin and Huxley, proclaimed: "All religious theories, schemes, and systems, which embrace notions of cosmogony, or which otherwise reach into its domain, must, in so far as they do this, submit to the control of science, and relinquish all thought of controlling it."[15] The aspiration of the scientific naturalists inevitably led them to conflict with the clergymen. The famous confrontation between T. H. Huxley and Bishop Wilberforce over Darwin's theory of evolution was merely one of the more famous episodes of the so-called "conflict between religion and science," a conflict described by Turner as a contest for cultural authority.[16]

"Warfare" was only one aspect, albeit a conspicuous one, of the complicated relationship between science and religion in Victorian Britain. It would be a mistake to neatly divide scientists and clergymen into two opposing camps. There were clergymen who argued for the Church to focus its energy on spiritual matters and abandon the natural theological tradition that had held sway in Britain. There were eminent scientists, most notably physicists from North Britain such as William Thomson (Lord Kelvin), the third Baron Rayleigh, and James Clerk Maxwell who

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[14] On Spiritualism in Victorian England, see Janet Oppenheim, *The Other World: Spiritualism and Psychical Research in England, 1850–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Alex Owen, *The Darkened Room: Women, Power and Spiritualism in Late Victorian England* (London: Virago, 1989). On working class participation in Spiritualist activities, see Logie Barrow, *Independent Spirits: Spiritualism and English Plebeians, 1850–1919* (London: Routeldge, 1986).

[15] John Tyndall, "Belfast Address," *Nature* 10 (20 August, 1874), p. 318.

[16] Frank M. Turner, *Contesting Cultural Authority: Essays in Victorian Intellectual Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

adhered to natural theology and were antipathetic to what they perceived to be an atheist and materialist outlook of scientific naturalism.[17] Perhaps one of the most awkward matters faced by the scientific naturalists was the fact that many scientists, some of them quite prominent, were interested in psychical research or even converted to Spiritualism. Noble prize winners such as Lord Rayleigh, Joseph John Thomson, and William Ramsay were members of the Psychical Research Society. So was the president of the Royal Astronomical Society and the discoverer of Neptune, John Couch Adams.[18] The co-discoverer of the theory of natural selection and erstwhile staunch proponent of scientific naturalism, Alfred Russell Wallace, changed his view on human evolution and claimed that natural selection could not apply to the human mind after he converted to Spiritualism. Wallace's pronouncement greatly embarrassed his former allies. Darwin wrote in a letter to Wallace that "I differ grievously from you and I am very sorry for it."[19]

Instead of personal idiosyncrasy or religious sentiments, many of the scientists' interests in spiritual phenomena originated from intellectual curiosity. Their sentiments were perhaps best described by the following words of Frederic W. H. Myers: "just as the old orthodoxy of religion was too narrow to contain men's knowledge, so now the new orthodoxy of materialistic science is too narrow to contain their feelings and aspirations…"[20] J. J. Thomson, the discoverer of the electron, supported research on telepathy between the living and claimed that "the investigation of short-range thought transference is of highest importance." He lamented that "little has been done on this short-range thought transference between living people" because "attention was at first directed to thought transference between the living and the dead, which raises

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[17] On North British physicists' hostility to scientific naturalism, see Crosbie Smith, *The Science of Energy: A Cultural History of Energy Physics in Victorian Britain* (London: Athlone Press, 1998); for Lord Kelvin's scientific assaults on Darwinism, see Joe D. Burchfield, *Lord Kelvin and the Age of Earth* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1975). The scientific naturalists' views on religion, however, were probably more complex than their critics assumed. See Ruth Barton, "John Tyndall, Pantheist: A Reading of the Belfast Address," *Osiris* 3 (1987): 111–34.

[18] Oppenheim, *The Other World*, pp. 330–38.

[19] Adrian Desmond and James Moore, *Darwin* (London: Penguin, 1991), p. 570. On Wallace and spiritualism, see Malcolm Jay Kottler, "Alfred Russel Wallace, the Origin of Man, and Spiritualism," *Isis* 65 (1974): 145–92.

[20] E. Gurney, F. W. H. Myers, and Podmore, *Phantasms of the Living* vol. I (London: Turbner & Co., 1886), p. liv, quoted in Turner, *Between Science and Religion*, p. 2. For an account of Myers' Spiritualist theory, see Turner, *Between Science and Religion*, pp. 104–33.

much deeper and more important questions." Thomson agreed with Lord Rayleigh that "telepathy with the dead would present apparently little difficulty when it is admitted as regards the living."[21] Augustus De Morgan, Professor of mathematics at University College London, stated in the preface to a book written by his Spiritualist wife:

> Thinking it very likely that the universe may contain a few agencies-say half a million-about which no man knows anything, I cannot but suspect that a small proportion of these agencies-say five thousand-may be severally competent to the production of all the [Spiritualist] phenomena, or may be quite up to the task among them. The physical explanation which I have seen are easy, but mistakenly insufficient: the spiritual hypothesis is sufficient, but ponderously difficult. Time and thought will decide, the second asking the first for more results of trial.[22]

While J. J. Thomson and Lord Rayleigh merely expressed their support of psychical research without committing themselves to it, several nineteenth-century scientists devoted considerable effort and time to researching Spiritualism.[23] The chemist William Crookes, the electrician Cromwell Fleetwood Varley, the physicists William Fletcher Barrett and Oliver Lodge employed elaborate experimental designs and sophisticated laboratory apparatus in their investigation of spiritual phenomena. They emphatically claimed that their experimental works conformed strictly to the methods of science and were aimed at broadening scientific understanding of an important subject.[24] They claimed to have

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[21] Sir J. J. Thomson, *Recollections and Reflections* (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1936), pp. 147–58, on 154, 158. See also Luckhurst, *The Invention of Telepathy*, p. 81; Oppenheim, *The Other World*, pp. 334–35.

[22] [Sophia E. de Morgan], *From Matter to Spirit: The Result of Ten Years' Experience in Spirit Manifestation*. By C. D. with a Preface by A. B. [August de Morgan] (London: Longmans, Green, 1882), pp. v–vi, quoted in Oppenheim, *The Other World*, p. 335.

[23] Lord Rayleigh served as the president of the Society of Psychical Research and Thomson served as its vice-President though the positions were mainly honorary. As Noakes points out, it is important to note that not all "North British Physicists" and Cambridge physicists were sympathetic to psychical research. William Thomson was hostile to it. Although James Clerk Maxwell was interested in psychical phenomena, he refused to associate himself with such research because of his suspicion of the mediums' pecuniary motives. On various positions of late-Victorian British physicists with respect to psychical research, see Richard Noakes, "Ethers, Religion and Politics in Late-Victorian Physics: Beyond the Wynne Thesis," *History of Science* 43 (2005): 415–55.

[24] See, for example, William Crookes, *Research into the Phenomena of Spiritualism* (London: J. Burns, 1874); William F. Barrett, *Psychical Research* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1911); William F. Barrett, *On the Threshold of the Unseen* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1918). On Barrett see Richard Noakes, "The 'Bridge Which Is between

proven the existence of supernatural phenomena through scientific research and caused great commotion in the scientific community. Great controversies arose at the meeting of the British Association for the Advance of Science, when Barrett was invited to read a paper on Spiritualism and thought-transference at a session chaired by Wallace in 1876. The eminent physiologist William Carpenter protested strongly and the Association did not allow the abstract of Barrett's paper to be published in its report.[25]

The scientific naturalists, unsurprisingly, were skeptical towards spiritual research. Francis Galton, an expert on anthropometrics who coined the term "eugenics", concluded that Spiritualist phenomena were simply a hoax after he had attended a few sessions of séance. T. H. Huxley was also unconvinced, and Darwin accepted the verdict of his trusted lieutenant. Tyndall and the naturalistic psychiatrist Henry Maudsley launched vehement attacks on psychical research.[26] Carpenter, a Unitarian, who had some reservations with regard to the more extreme claims of scientific naturalism but who was close to Darwin and Huxley, proposed the concept "unconscious cerebration" to explain spiritual phenomena. According to Carpenter, sensory impressions were transmitted from the nerves through the cerebrum to the center of consciousness, which subsequently commanded muscular action. However, the center of consciousness occasionally failed to detect such impressions because they were postponed or repressed in the process of transmission. As a result, the muscular movements were perceived to be involuntary. According to Carpenter, peculiar bodily movements such as levitation, rapping and the "spirit-hand," were nothing but instances of "unconscious cerebration."[27]

Physical and Psychical Research': William Fletcher Barrett, Sensitive Flames, and Spiritualism," *History of Science* 42 (2004): 419–64; on Crookes, see Richard Noakes, "'Instruments to Lay Hold of Spirits': Technologizing the Bodies of Victorian Spiritualism" in Iwan Rhys Morus ed., *Bodies/Machines* (Oxford: Berg, 2002), pp. 125–63; on Varley, see Richard Noakes, "Telegraphy as an Occult Art: Cromwell Fleetwood Varley and the Diffusion of Electricity to the Other World," *British Journal for the History of Science* 32 (1999): 421–59.

[25] Luckhurst, *The Invention of Telepathy*, pp. 51–53.

[26] See, for example, John Tyndall, *Fragments of Science for Unscientific People: A Series of Detached Essays, Lectures and Reviews* (London: Longman, Green, 1871, 2nd ed.), p. 435; Henry Maudsley, *Natural Causes and Supernatural Seemings* (London: Kegan Paul, 1887); Luckhurst, *The Invention of Telepathy*, pp. 31, 41–42, 58; Oppenheim, *The Other World*, pp. 290–96.

[27] For Carpenter's definition of "unconscious cerebration," see William B. Carpenter, *Principles of Mental Physiology, with Their Applications to the Training and Discipline*

The involvement of prominent scientists in psychical research was particularly irksome to the scientific naturalists. This kind of research was highly subversive to the project of scientific naturalism because it assumed the appearance of scientific investigation and appropriated the authority of science to endorse "superstition." It could inflict damage to their efforts to make professional science a respectable career and their attempts to seize cultural authority from religion. Some scientists also considered psychical research as contradictory to their premise with regard to the proper domain of scientific inquiry and as a threat to their newly constituted discipline based on such shared premise. A detailed discussion of the controversies over Spiritualism and psychical research, which have been studied by several scholars, is beyond the scope of this paper.[28] Instead, this paper focuses on how Victorian scientists' fascination with spiritual phenomena and ambivalent attitudes thereof are vividly captured in the supernatural fiction of Allen, Doyle, and Stoker.

<div style="text-align:center">II</div>

Both biological and physical scientists were involved in the controversy over research on the supernatural, but Victorian supernatural fiction usually alluded to the medical and human sciences rather than the physical sciences.[29] Their narrative often consisted of a series of peculiar events that led to the main character's awakening to the fact that he or she had encountered some supernatural being. The way the supernatural being was detected often followed what the historian Carlo Ginzburg

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of the Mind and the Study of Its Morbid Conditions (New York: D. Appleton, 1884, 4th ed.), p. 517. For a discussion of Stoker's use of the concept, see Glover, *Vampires, Mummies, and Liberals*, pp. 76–81. Both Doyle and Stoker quoted Carpenter's concept of "unconscious cerebration" in their stories in which the concept turned out to be an inadequate explanation of the supernatural phenomena encountered by their characters. See Arthur Conan Doyle, "The Brown Hand," in E. F. Bleiler ed., *The Best Supernatural Tales of Arthur Conan Doyle* (New York: Dover Publications, 1979), pp. 43–60, on p. 49; Stoker, *Dracula*, p. 94.

[28] See, for example, Oppenheim, *The Other World*; Luckhurst, *Invention of Telepathy*; Noakes, "Ethers, Religion and Politics," idem, "The 'Bridge Which Is between Physical and Psychical Research'."

[29] This perhaps had more to do with the backgrounds of these writers as physicists constituted a larger proportion of psychical researchers than practitioners of any other branch of science. See Noakes, "Ethers, Religion and Politics."

calls a "presumptive" or "evidential" paradigm, which became prevail in the late nineteenth-century human sciences such as art history, criminology, psychoanalysis and paleontology. These disciplines were characterized by their reliance on the investigation of "infinitesimal traces" that led to the understanding "of a deeper, otherwise unattainable reality." According to Ginzburg, the representatives of the new paradigm were Freud, Morelli, and Doyle. They all had medical backgrounds and in their works "the model of medical semiotics is evident: that discipline which permits the diagnosis of diseases inaccessible to direct observation based on superficial symptoms, sometimes thought to be irrelevant to the eyes of the layman…"[30]

The same paradigm can be seen not only in Dolye's Sherlock Holmes series but also in his ghost stories in which the identity of a ghost was often revealed by the details of its dress, though the characters in the stories sometimes failed to grasp their import. When the young pugilist in "The Bully of Brocas Court" (1921) was challenged by the ghost of a legendary boxer, the first thing he noticed about the provocative stranger was his "very old fashioned and eccentric" dress.[31] Similar description of the importance of minor details in the identification of ghosts can also be found in Allen's stories. In "Wolverden Tower," for example, when Maisie Llewelyn encountered the specters at a Christmas party, the first unusual thing which she noticed about the two girls were the flowers they wore in their bosoms.

> Yolande's was an orchid with long, floating streamers, in colour and shape recalling some Southern lizard; dark purple spots dappled its lip and petals. Hedda's was a flower of a sort Maisie had never before seen—the stem spotted like a viper's skin, green flecked with russet-brown, and uncanny to look upon; on either side, great twisted spirals of red-and-blue blossoms, each curled after the fashion of a scorpion's tail, very strange and lurid.

The antiquarian style of their dress and ornaments, moreover, were often a sign of something sinister. Maisie was attracted by something "weird and witch-like about flowers and dress" and "they affected her with the half-repellent fascination of a snake for a bird; she felt such blossoms

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[30] Carlo Ginzburg, "Clues: Roots of an Evidential Paradigm," in *Clues, Myths, and the Historical Method* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), pp. 96–125, on pp. 101–2.

[31] Arthur Conan Doyle, "The Bully of Brocas Court" in Bleiler ed., *The Best Supernatural Tales of Arthur Conan Doyle*, pp. 1–15, on p. 7.

were fit for incantations and sorceries."[32] There were other traces that
served as clues to the spectral identity of Yolande and Hedda. When
Maisie took a walk with the girls to Wolverden Tower, the place where
they intended to lure her into committing suicide, she noticed that only
her footprints were left on the snow.[33] Yet Maisie remained oblivious
to the signs. Her ancestral blood of ancient Celtic royalty enabled her
to see the ghosts invisible to other guests at the party; however, she
did not possess the knack for observation of a perceptive naturalist, a
competent physician or a great detective.

It took keen observation and astute judgment to comprehend the sig-
nificance of crucial minor details. "Knowledge of this sort" as Ginzburg
points out, "was richer than any written codification; it is learned not
from books but from the living voice, from gestures and glances; it
was based on subtleties impossible to formalize, which often could not
even be translated into words…" Medicine was one of the fields where
this kind of skill was highly valued. Prominent English physicians in
the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries often emphasized the
"incommunicable knowledge" that made up their diagnostic skill.[34] One
of the most pertinent examples in Conan Dolye's supernatural stories
that illustrated such perspicacity, unsurprisingly, was a medical man
with exceptional diagnostic skill. Dr. Hardacre, the hero of Doyle's
"The Brown Hand" (1899), was a young neurologist and a member of
the Society of Psychical Research. He not only possessed an intimate
knowledge of spiritual phenomena but also had the skills necessary for
their investigation. His observational acumen was revealed at the very
moment he met his rich uncle, an eminent surgeon recently retired
from India. Hardacre noticed that

> His figure was the framework of a giant, but he had fallen away until his
> coat dangled straight down in a shocking fashion from a pair of broad
> and bony shoulders. All his limbs were huge and yet emaciated, and I
> could not take my gaze away from his knobby wrists, and long, gnarled
> hands. But his eyes—those peering, light-blue eyes—they were the most
> assertive of his peculiarities. It was not their colour alone, nor was it the
> ambush of hair in which they lurked; but it was the expression which I

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[32] Grant Allen, "Wolverden Tower," in *Twelve Tales* (London: Grant Richards,
1899), pp. 91–126, on p. 106.
[33] Grant Allen, "Wolverden Tower," pp. 106–7.
[34] Ginzburg, "Clues: Roots of an Evidential Paradigm," pp. 114–15; Christopher
Lawrence, "'Incommunicable Knowledge': Science, Technology and the Clinical 'Art'
in Britain, 1850–1910," *Journal of Contemporary History* 20 (1985): 503–20.

read in them. For the appearance and bearing of the man were master-
ful, and one expected a certain corresponding arrogance in his eyes, but
instead of that I read the look which tells a spirit cowed and crushed,
the furtive, expectant look of the dog whose master has taken the whip
from the rack. I formed my medical diagnosis upon one glance at those
critical and yet appealing eyes.

It turned out that the retired surgeon had been tormented by the ghost
of an Indian patient whose hand he had removed. The ghost haunted the
surgeon for his lost hand, which had been in the surgeon's collection of
pathological specimens but was destroyed by a fire. After he accurately
diagnosed the underlying condition of his uncle, Dr. Hardacre speedily
reached an effective therapy. With the help of his medical colleague, he
was able to procure for the grudging ghost a "brown hand" of an Indian
sailor, who died of accidental causes, from the morgue of the Seamen's
Hospital.[35] In the story it was obvious that Indian commoners did not
possess the skill of differentiating minor physical features.

   The importance of minor details and physical features received
no less emphasis in Stoker's fiction. At their first meeting, Jonathan
Harker provided a detailed description of Dracula's "very marked
physiognomy":

> His face was a strong—a very strong—aquiline, with high bridge of the
> thin nose and peculiarly arched nostrils; with lofty domed forehead, and
> hair growing scantily round the temples, but profusely elsewhere. His
> eyebrows were very massive, almost meeting over the nose, and with
> bushy hair that seemed to curl in its own profusion. The mouth, so far
> as I could see it under the heavy moustache, was fixed and rather cruel-
> looking, with peculiarly sharp white teeth; these protruded over the lips,
> whose remarkable ruddiness showed astonishing vitality in a man of his
> years. For the rest, his ears were pale and at the tops extremely pointed;
> the chin was broad and strong, and the cheeks firm though thin. The
> general effect was one of extraordinary pallor.

At first sight, the Count's hands "seemed rather white and fine," but
looking closely "they were rather coarse-broad, with squat fingers"
and more strangely "there were hairs in the centre of the palm." The
underlying threat was also revealed by the nails, which "were long and
fine, and cut to a sharp point." Even with his sharp observation of the
Count's physical features, Harker failed to recognize that the driver of
the calèche that took him to the castle was the Count himself, though

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[35] Doyle, "The Brown Hand," on p. 46.

he noticed that the astonishing strength of the Count's handshake was very similar to that of the driver and he suspected "if it were not the same person."[36] The full import of the Count's physiognomy would only become clear with the unfolding of the terrifying events.

Doyle also paid great attention to physiognomy in some of his stories. In "The Leather Funnel" (1900) the French occult investigator Lionel Dacre's character and disposition could be read from his face. "Dacre's appearance was enough to show that his deep interest in these psychic matters was intellectual rather than spiritual. There was no trace of asceticism upon his heavy face, but there was much mental force in his huge, dome-like skull, which curved upward from amongst his thinning locks, like a snow-peak above its fringe of fir trees. His knowledge was greater than his wisdom, and his powers were far more superior to his character. The small bright eyes, buried deeply in his fleshy face, twinkled with intelligence and an unabated curiosity of life, but they were the eyes of a sensualist and an egotist."[37]

All three authors' interests in minor details and physiognomy are related to their scientific background and research interests. Sherlock Holmes was modeled on Doyle's medical professor at Edinburgh University, Joseph Bell, who was renowned for his keen observation and acumen in diagnosis.[38] Allen was interested in human evolution and racial differences. He was also a man of great observational power who was proud of being able to recognize some forty thousand plants by memory and naked eye.[39] Three of Bram's four brothers were medical men. His elder brother William was a successful surgeon who eventually became the president of the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland and Bram often asked him about medical matters while gathering material for the writing of *Dracula*.[40] Stoker, moreover, was a great enthusiast of physiognomy. In his letter to the American poet Walt Whitman, Stoker introduced himself by a description of his physical appearance. He wrote that

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[36] Stoker, *Dracula*, pp. 26, 28.
[37] Arthur Conan Doyle, "The Leather Funnel" in Bleiler ed., *The Best Supernatural Tales of Arthur Conan Doyle*, pp. 60–73, on p. 61.
[38] "Arthur Conan Doyle," in *DNB*.
[39] Morgan, *The Busiest Man in England*, p. 4.
[40] Glover, *Vampires, Mummies, and Liberals*, p. 10.

...I know you from your works and your photograph, and if I know any-
thing about you I think you would like to know of the personal appear-
ance of your correspondents. You are I know a keen physiognomist. I
am a believer of the science myself and am in an humble way a practicer
of it. I was not disappointed when I saw your photograph-your late one
especially. The way I came to like you was this.[41]

In addition to their personal interests in physiognomy, the meticulous
description of bodily features in the fiction of Allen, Stoker, and Doyle
could also be placed in a common social context: the Victorian anxiety
about recidivism.

III

As Ginzburg points out, the human sciences that turned to "the con-
jectural or divinatory paradigm" often conducted "divination directed
towards the past." A typical example is Darwin's theory of evolution
"which combined history, archaeology, geology, physical astronomy, and
paleontology: namely the ability to forecast retrospectively."[42] Detective
fiction was certainly a form of retrospective divination, as were many
ghost stories of the same period. Mina Harker stated that Dracula was
"a criminal and of criminal type," and "qua criminal" the Count was
"of imperfectly formed mind." In difficult situations he had "to seek
resource in habit." As result, his history provided "a clue" that would
lead to his apprehension.[43] Such statements were closely related to the
development of criminology in the nineteenth century.

   With industrialization, urbanization, and the legal elevation of the
bourgeois concept of private property, a great fear of crime arose in
nineteenth-century Western Europe. Working class uprisings, political
and social disturbances, and the reverberations of the Paris Commune
further heightened the anxiety about crime in great urban centers. Many
people believed that there was a "criminal race" living amongst ordinary
people in big cities. Members of the "race" could not be easily put under
control as they were constantly slipping through the nets of the law.
The authorities were not able to identify them although they had been

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[41] "Appendix A: Bram Stoker's Correspondence with Walt Whitman," in Stoker,
Dracula, pp. 487–97, on p. 494.
[42] Ginzburg, "Clues: Roots of an Evidential Paradigm," on p. 117.
[43] Stoker, *Dracula*, p. 439.

in and out of prison many times. The fascination with the possibility of criminals and ex-convicts assuming respectable appearances and living amongst ordinary people was dramatized by novels such as *The Count of Monte Cristo* (1844), *Les Miserables* (1869) and *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886). Medical men, anthropologists, and biologists devoted considerable efforts to the study of criminal behavior. New methods and techniques of recording physical features were devised for the registration and identification of criminals. Galton invented the technique of "composite photography," which could fuse the images of several criminals, with the aim of identifying the facial features of the "criminal types." The French criminologist Alphonse Bertillon devised an elaborate anthropometric system that measured various body parts of the suspects. The use of fingerprinting as a method of identification was another product of these efforts.[44]

Similar to a criminal investigation, the history of the suspect was crucial to the disclosure of a supernatural being. In "The Leather Funnel," the inquiry into the provenance of a mysterious antique not only relied on matching the accounts of historical documents with inscription and traces of biting left on it but also on deciphering the content of a dream. One of the story's main characters, Dacre, had been studying "the psychology of dreams" and espoused the theory that "any object which has been intimately associated with any supreme paroxysm of human emotion, whether it be joy or pain, will retain a certain atmosphere which it is capable of communicating to a sensitive mind." In a story published in the same year as Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams*, the mystery was solved by sleeping with the funnel besides the hero, and the dream that ensued threw "a curious light upon its use and origin."[45] "The Leather Funnel" could be read as a story about a method of identification that bore some resemblance to the methods of Morelli and Freud. In Allen's ghost story "Wolverden Tower," the woman "Old Bessie" who always lingered around the Tower was "full of dreadful stories about Wolverden Church—stories...compact with

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[44] Simon A. Cole, *Suspect Identities: A History of Fingerprinting and Criminal Identification* (Cambridge, Mass.; London, England: Harvard University Press, 2001); Ginzburg, "Clues: Roots of an Evidential Paradigm," pp. 119–23; Daniel Pick, *Faces of Degeneration: A European Disorder, c. 1848–1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 163–65; Stephen Jay Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1981), pp. 113–45; Chandak Sengoopta, *Imprint of the Raj: How Fingerprinting Was Born in Colonial India* (London: Macmillan, 2004).
[45] Doyle, "The Leather Funnel," on pp. 63, 65, 66.

old superstition and murders, and so forth." She held the clue to a series of strange events, but most people were afraid of her because her style was of "a sort of modern ghoul, a degenerate vampire." The only person who was very fond of her was the antiquarian Mr. Blaydes who said she was "the sole living repository of the traditional folklore and history of the parish."[46]

The fascination with the past in Victorian supernatural fiction had a biological background. At a time when various theories of evolution and the fear of degeneration induced heated discussions, some British intellectuals such as Galton and his followers held that a person's biological past, to a large extent, determined his or her fortune. No one, they argued, could escape from the influences of origins and family history. Allen firmly believed in the power of biological inheritance in shaping a person's destiny. In "Janet's Nemesis," the swapped viscount raised by a poor woman nevertheless eventually showed his mettle, and won a studentship at Christ Church College, Oxford University.[47] In "The Reverend John Creedy," the intelligent black clergyman who graduated from Oxford University, after having been rescued from a slave trader at the age of nine by missionaries and brought up in England, eventually abandoned his evangelical duties and relapsed to "savagery and heathendom" after he returned to Africa.[48] Addressing the theme of "the war between the races," Doyle provided us with no less vivid descriptions of the forces of heredity. In "J. Habakuk Jephson's Statement" (1884), Septimius Goring was an educated, rich "half-caste gentleman, from New Orleans." This polite person who spoke in "a soft, melodious voice, and in well-chosen word" eventually revealed himself as a merciless avenger who "warred against the whole white race" and had a grand design for the regeneration of the black race. By means of an elaborate conspiracy, Goring was able to become a chief of an African tribe. But it was not just any tribe. "There was no hope of regeneration in the slave-dealing Soundanese [Sudanese], the debased Fantee, or the Americanized negroes of Liberia," according to Goring and by chance he was brought "in contact with this magnificent tribe" and with it he threw in his lot.[49]

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[46] Allen, "Wolverden Tower," pp. 96–97.
[47] Allen, "Janet's Nemesis," in *Twelve Tales*, pp. 129–50.
[48] Allen, "The Reverend John Creedy," in *Strange Stories*, pp. 1–20.
[49] Arthur Conan Doyle, "J. Habakuk Jephson's Statement" in Bleiler ed., *The Best Supernatural Tales of Arthur Conan Doyle*, pp. 112–48, quotations on pp. 114, 120, 145.

Many nineteenth-century scientists and medical researchers held that recidivism was a biological phenomenon. The Italian criminal anthropologist Cesare Lombroso claimed that most crimes had hereditary causes. The "born-criminals" were products of atavism and their latent criminality could be recognized by biological markers such as the forms of their ears, the shapes of their jaws, their facial angles, and the distance between their pupils. Some theorists of degeneration argued that many criminals were in fact degenerates. They were not only a danger to the present society but they also posed a threat to the future if they were allowed to spread their hereditary defects through breeding.[50] This was a belief held by several fictional characters created by Stoker and Conan Doyle. Mina Harker, Dr. John Seward, and Van Helsing considered Dracula to be an atavist and a degenerate. He had a "child-brain" and was like the "man-eater" in India who, having "once tasted the blood of the human, cares no more for other prey." Both Nordau and Lombroso, asserted Harker, would classify the Count as a criminal type. Indeed, he came from a land of degeneration. When Harker traveled near Dracula's land, he "noticed that goitre was painfully prevalent." In the nineteenth century, goiter was considered a disease that resulted from physical degeneration.

Degeneration was a reversal of the evolutionary process and atavism a reversion to one's biological past. Similarly, the vampire was not only a historical figure but also a creature from geological deep time. The un-dead lived in a place that "for all these centuries, is full of strangeness of the geological and chemical world. There are deep caverns and fissures that reach none know whither. There have been volcanoes, some of whose openings still send out waters of strange properties, and gases that kill or make to vivify."[51] For Allen, Stoker, and Doyle, ghosts or other supernatural beings were entities that did not conform to Nature's temporal order. They were not only things from the past but were also evolutionary anomalies.

The inherited qualities of degeneration and atavism, however, could not easily be detected. In the works of fiction, there was always anxiety concerning the reliability of individual identification. In Allen's baby-swapping story, the father Lord Remenham "had taken a first class

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[50] Pick, *Faces of Degeneration.*

[51] Stoker, *Dracula*, pp. 15, 411–12, 439. On geological depictions of "deep time" in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, see Martin J. S. Rudwick, *Scenes from Deep Time: Early Pictorial Representations of the Prehistoric World* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992).

in law and modern history" and was a person who "would not have done dishonour to half a century." The mother was a daughter of the "neighouring country squire," and "a lawn-tennis-playing, cross-country-riding, good looking young woman." There was no physical feature, however, that marked the baby viscount's superior hereditary endowment. The child of English noble blood could even be mistaken as a member of a "lower race" or as a degenerate:

> …his appearance in no way suggested his exalted station. On the contrary, his face was marked by that comparative absence of any particular nose and that unnecessary prominence of two watery big eyes, which suggest our consanguinity with the negro and the monkey.

When the wet-nurse, moved by her desire to nurse her own child and to provide him with a brighter future, swapped the viscount for her illegitimate baby of similar age, neither the Count nor the Countess detected her misconduct. This was particularly ironic since Lord Remenham had strong convictions on "the necessity for keeping up the standard of the race in general, and our old nobility in particular…"[52] Physical identification was so difficult a task that even the parents had difficulty recognizing their child.

In addition to the difficulty in physical identification, there were other obstacles to the detection of a supernatural being: physical features could serve as clues, but they were not always reliable. Dracula, for example, could change his appearance. He could "grow and become small" and "at times vanish and come unknown." The vampire could even turn himself into a dog or a bat. He was an atavist and degenerate but he was also an aristocrat from a lost golden age who had "more iron nerve, more subtle brain, more braver heart, than any man." But his virtues and noble qualities displayed medieval battlefield were irretrievably lost in a modern world dominated by bureaucracy and commerce. There was something ambiguous about Dracula's qualities, so that Van Helsing described the Count to Mina in the following way: "Doubtless, there is something magnetic or electric in some of these combinations of occult forces which work for physical life in strange way; and in himself were from the fist some great qualities."[53] It took more than excellent diagnostic skill to detect a supernatural entity endowed with occult forces.

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[52] Grant Allen, "Janet's Nemesis," in *Twelve Tales*, pp. 129–50, on pp. 129–30.
[53] Stoker, *Dracula*, pp. 108, 114, 143, 305, 411. On the ambiguous qualities of Dracula, see Pick, *Faces of Degeneration*, pp. 167–75.

IV

In Victorian fiction, investigators had to be methodical and precise in order to capture a supernatural entity such as a vampire or ghost whose appearance was often changeable. They often had to have recourse to what Peter Galison and Lorrain Daston called "mechanical objectivity" to guarantee the authenticity of their observation. Galison argued that late nineteenth-century scientists "celebrated the values associated with precision, accuracy and self-abnegation" and that "mechanical objectivity" was closely connected to contemporary "bureaucratic European liberalism."[54]

The opening sentence of *Dracula* is about Harker's travel plans to the Castle Dracula to arrange the Count's purchase of a house in London. Harker was not able to find the precise location of the castle because there were "no maps of this country as yet to compare with our own Ordnance Survey maps..." It also seemed to him that "the further East you go the more unpunctual are the trains." As the story unfolds, it becomes clear that the theme revolves a contest between the speed and precision of modern science and technology on the one hand, and demonic cunning and magical forces on the other. When the vampire suffered his first defeat in London and tried to escape to his homeland to recover his strength, the hunting party put forth great efforts into organizing the schedule of their travel in order to intercept the vampire. Mina Harker turned out to be a great help. She admitted that she was "the train fiend" who "used to make up timetables" to help her husband organize his business trips.[55]

The contest between the vampire and its hunters was also a contest of information-gathering ability. Harker was surprised by the fact that Dracula spoke perfect English and had intimate knowledge of England when he met him for the first time. In the Count's library he found "a vast amount of English books" including "magazines and newspapers," as well as books "of the most varied kind-history, geography, politics,

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[54] Lorrain Daston and Peter Galison, "The Image of Objectivity," *Representation* 40(1992), pp. 81–128; Peter Galison, 'Judgment against Objectivity,' in Caroline A. Jones and Peter Galison eds., *Picturing Science, Producing Art* (New York and London: Routledge, 1998), pp. 327–59, on pp. 332, 335.

[55] Stoker, *Dracula*, pp. 7–9, 435. On speed in science and literature see also Simon Schaffer, "Time Machine," in Liba Taub and Francis Wilmoth eds., *The Whipple Museum of the History of Science: Instruments and Interpretations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 345–66.

political economy, botany, geology, law-all relating to England and English life and customs and manners." There were "even such books of reference as the London Directory, the 'Red' and 'Blue' books, Whitaker's Almanack, the Army and Navy Lists and…the Law List." Van Helsing, on the other hand, had recourse to the British Museum, an unparalleled institute of information storage, to look up "some authorities on ancient medicine" and to search for "witch and demon cures." They were able to track down Dracula's route of escape by checking the lists of ships that sailed in the *Times* and Lloyd's. The ability to communicate information swiftly was as important as the capacity to gather intelligence. A crucial factor that enabled Van Helsing and his friends to get an upper hand over the vampire was their use of modern technology such as the telegram, phonograph, and typewriter to store, classify and communicate relevant information.[56]

Among the main characters in *Dracula*, Van Helsing and John Seward were medical men and Jonathan Harker was a solicitor. Commentators have noticed that *Dracula* was "a quasi-legal narrative" in which doctors and lawyers played a central role in making "sense of a bizarre and initially inexplicable set of incidents."[57] By poring over the "bundle of letters relating to the purchase of the house," Jonathan Harker's diary, the typescripts of Seward's phonograph and the newspapers kept by Dr. Seward relating to a series of strange events, Mina and Jonathan Harker were able to knit "together in chronological order every scrap of evidence they have" and to "show a whole connected narrative." Similarly, Van Helsing scrutinized "the record prepared by the Harkers" and seemed "to think that by accurate knowledge of all details he will light upon some clue." Dr. Seward was confident that "we had enough clues from the conduct" of his psychiatric patient Renfield, who became Dracula's servant.[58]

Stoker had firsthand experience with this kind of methodical way of working. After graduating from Trinity College with an honorary degree in Pure Mathematics, he followed his father's career and served as a clerk to the civil service in Dublin Castle until he moved to London to work for the Lyceum Theatre in 1877. While working in the civil service he had written *The Duties of Clerks of Petty Sessions in Ireland*, a manual for civil servants which was published in 1879. Stoker, an

[56] Stoker, *Dracula*, pp. 30–31, 184–85, 199, 353, 407.
[57] Glover, *Vampires, Mummies, and Liberals*, pp. 10, 43.
[58] Stoker, *Dracula*, pp. 288–89, 347.

Anglo-Irish and a political liberal, was a qualified solicitor who entered the Bar of the Inner Temple in 1890.[59] With such background, Stoker was able to dramatize in a memorable manner the ideal and workings of "mechanical objectivity" in his most famous novel.

In *Dracula*, the professional men were optimistic that they would prevail because they had "the resource of science," "a power denied to the vampire kind." Dracula "cannot go where he lists" said Van Helsing, because "he who is not of nature has yet to obey some of nature's laws—why we know not."[60] In real life, the battle between the power of science and supernatural forces also flared up from time to time in Victorian Britain. The controversy over the physical efficacy of prayer that raged in the 1870s amply demonstrated the vehemence of the conflict. When the Prince of Wales was infected by typhoid, a life threatening disease, in December 1871, the Archbishop of Canterbury ordered the cleric to pray for his recovery. Prince Edward eventually recovered and many clerics claimed that this was due to their prayer. The medical profession was furthered dismayed by the fact that in the thanksgiving service at St. Paul attended by Queen Victoria and the Crown Prince, some fifteen hundred churchmen were present while only eight medical men were present. The next year, the renowned London surgeon Henry Thomson challenged clerics to submit their claim to experiments to test the effectiveness of prayer for the sick. Though no experiment was actually conducted, Galton claimed that according to his statistical study, prayer had no influence whatsoever on the outcome of disease.[61] In fiction, the contest was dramatized so that at stake in the battle was not merely the cultural authority of science but the lives of the people involved in the contest. For example, in *Dracula* if the vampire could not be defeated, in London "for centuries to come he might, amongst the teeming millions, satiate his lust for blood, and create a new and ever-widening circle of semi-demons to batten on the helpless."[62]

In supernatural stories, the power of science could not easily prevail over supernatural forces. Adherence to operational procedures and

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[59] Glover, *Vampires, Mummies, and Liberals*, p. 62; Stoker, *Dracula*, pp. xxii, xxxvi–xxxviii.

[60] Stoker, *Dracula*, pp. 306, 308.

[61] Frank M. Turner, "Rainfall, Plagues, and the Prince of Wales," *Journal of British Studies* 13 (1974): 46–65.

[62] Stoker, *Dracula*, p. 71.

employment of modern technologies could greatly facilitate the investigation, but their combined forces were not always sufficient to defeat so menacing a supernatural power. In Stoker's highly acclaimed ghost story "The Judge's House" (1891), the young college student Malcolm Malcolmson inadvertently rented a haunted house when he was looking for a quiet place to prepare himself for exams. Warned by a local resident against moving into the house, Malcolmson briskly brushed asides the advice by stating that "A man who is reading for the Mathematical Tripos has too much to think of to be disturbed by any of these mysterious 'something,' and his work is of too exact and prosaic a kind to allow of his having any corner in his mind for mysteries of any kind." At night he was persistently disturbed by noises made by "rats" hiding behind the wainscot. Among them, an "enormous rat" that often sat on "the great high-backed carved oak chair" by the fireplace and glared at him steadily "with baleful eyes" annoyed Malcolmson particularly. When he threw his "book of logarithms" at the rat, it missed the target. Using his books as missiles, most of the strikes were dodged by the rat. "At last, as he stood with a book poised in his hand to throw, the rat squeaked and seemed afraid. This made Malcolmson more than ever eager to strike, and the book flew and struck the rat a resounding blow. It gave a terrified squeak, and turning on his pursuer a look of terrible malevolence..." After the rat disappeared with lightening speed Malcolmson discovered that the only book that successfully hit the target was the Bible that his mother had given him. Using the mathematical books he studied as projectiles against the rat, which turned out to be the specter that haunted the house, Malcolmson's accuracy failed. The missiles that contained recondite knowledge of precision could not accurately hit their target. Despite his ability to concentrate and his talents in calculation and problem solving, Malcolmson eventually fell under the uncanny mesmerizing power of the ghost.[63]

The inadequacy of relying only on mechanical objectivity in the detection of the supernatural was perhaps most vividly depicted in Allen's "Our Scientific Observations on a Ghost," a story that he wrote to demonstrate "the impossibility of a man's being able to recognise a ghost as such, even if he saw one, and the impossibility of his being

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[63] Bram Stoker, "The Judge's House," in Bram Stoker, *Best Ghost and Horror Stories* (New York: Dover Publications, 1997), pp. 113–31, on pp. 117, 119, 122.

able to apply any test of credibility to an apparition's statement."[64] Two Oxford medical students spent their holiday at a "farm house on the coast of Flintshire" with the aim of conducting histological research on "a peculiar sea-side organism" that had been first identified by Ernest Haeckel, an organism "from whom the Professor himself and the remainder of humanity generally are supposed to be undoubtedly descended." At night they bumped into the ghost of the original owner of the house Algernon Egerton, an aristocrat who was beheaded on the order of King James II. Henry Stevens, the more skeptical of the two students, was not convinced the phenomenon they saw was really a ghost. Since they were equipped with ample scientific instruments, they decided to conduct a scientific examination of the "specimen of the common spectre, which had so long eluded the scientific grasp." Their investigation turned out to be futile. The weighing machine failed to detect the ghost's weight. A chemical analysis showed that "the apparition had no proper chemical constitution of its own, but consisted entirely of the same materials as the surrounding air." When they applied the spectroscope to the ghost, they "obtained a continuous band of pale luminosity, clearly pointing to the fact that the apparition had no known terrestrial element in its composition." Finally, their attempt to vivisect the phantom came to no avail. "The two halves of the body reunited instantaneously behind the instrument" after the scalpel cut "right across the sternum."[65]

True to the bureaucratic ethos of mechanical objectivity, in the story there were also legal arguments about the status of the ghost. When the ghost introduced himself as the owner of the house, they protested: "This is a most illegal and unconstitutional proceeding. The house belongs to our landlord, Mr. Hay." The ghost wryly replied "but you can't eject a ghost…You may get a writ of *habeas corpus*, but the English law doesn't supply you with a writ of *habeas animam*." Before they attempted to dissect the apparition, the two investigator also made sure that they could not possibly violate the Vivisection Act because the ghost was not a "living animal." At the end they were still not convinced of the existence of ghosts. Harry formulated the crucial reason: "Even men, whose habits and constitution I familiarly understand, cannot always be trusted to tell me the truth: and how then can I expect implicitly

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[64] Allen, *Twelve Tales*, p. vi.
[65] Allen, "Our Scientific Observations on a Ghost," on pp. 322, 324, 332, 335.

to believe a being whose every existence contradicts all my previous experiences, and whose properties give the lie to all my scientific conceptions—a being who moves without muscles and speaks without lungs?"[66] The problem of trust and credibility were at the heart of the controversy over research on supernatural phenomena.

V

Procedural rigor and precise measurement did not always guarantee the defeat of the ghost. Spirits, by definition, were immaterial and this posed a dilemma to the materialist epistemology of scientific naturalism. In the exploration of supernatural phenomena, moreover, human agency and subjective judgment could not be dispensed with. An additional difficulty was that a person had to be endowed with extraordinary sensitivity to be able to perceive supernatural entities. Following Galison's classification of visual regimes, it seems that the protagonist in Victorian supernatural fiction often fell back on the eighteenth-century concept of the ideal observer, the Genius. The genius, according to Galison, was not simply a well-trained observer who could perceive the crucial details neglected by ordinary people, but was someone with "qualitatively different sensibility" that enabled them to discover the truth beneath the appearance.[67] In the nineteenth century, however, the idea of genius was sometimes medicalized and pathologized by some continental authors and medical men such as Lombroso, Nordau and the French psychiatrist Jean Jacques Moreau (1804–1884). The extraordinary intellect or talent of a genius, according to them, was often accompanied by, or even the product of, some mental conditions or physical defects.[68]

In Victorian supernatural fiction, those who were most perceptive of the supernatural were often persons whose unusual sensitivity had

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[66] Allen, "Our Scientific Observations on a Ghost," on pp. 326, 332, 337.
[67] Galison, "Judgment against Objectivity," pp. 352–53.
[68] Caroline Essex argues that French psychiatry had forged the connection between genius and insanity from the 1830s and the idea was further popularized by Lombroso. She also points out, however, that such connection was rejected or ignored by the mainstream of British psychiatry. Henry Havelock Ellis, who translated and revised Lombroso's *The Man of Genius*, was a prominent exception. See Caroline J. Essex, "In Pursuit of Genius: Tracing the History of a Concept in English Writing, from Late Enlightenment to the Dawn of the Twentieth Century," Ph.D. dissertation, University of London, 2002, pp. 169–236. However, it was often these Continental authors that Stoker drew on.

placed them on the borderline between genius and madness. One of Doyle's early ghost fictions "Captain of the *Polestar*," (1883) offers an example of this type of character. Captain Craigie, who had been in pursuit of his beloved's spirit in the artic circle, was certainly a man with great intelligence and extraordinary perspicacity. During a discussion on the nature of the soul, the ship's surgeon discovered that he had "a learning for metempsychosis and the doctrines of Pythagoras" and was capable of an exposition of "the view of Aristotle and Plato upon the subject in a masterly manner." The surgeon, however, also harbored the belief that the captain could hardly contain his "latent lunacy" even though he could discuss philosophy "with the most critical acumen and coolest judgment."[69] In "Wolverden Tower" Maisie was able to see "two very graceful and spiritual-looking girls," Yolande and Hedda, while no one else at the dinner party were able to see them. Her unusual sensibility was divulged by her physical features. She was a

> tall slim girl…with rich black hair, and ethereal features, as became a descendant of Llewelyn ap Iorwerth—the sort of girl we none of us would have called anything more than 'interesting' till Rossetti and Burne-Jones found eyes for us to see that the type is beautiful with a deeper beauty than that of your obvious pink-and-white prettiness. Her eyes, in particular, had a lustrous depth that was almost superhuman, and her fingers and nails were strangely transparent in their waxen softness.[70]

In Dracula, the first person to perceive the approaching vampire was Renfield, a "peculiar kind" of "homicidal maniac" locked up in Dr. Seward's private lunatic asylum. Renfield ate all sorts of creatures, anything that he could lay his hands on, including a "blow-fly" and a kitten. Seward had "to invent a new classification for him, and call him a zoophagous (life-eating) maniac." Renfield wanted "to absorb as many lives as he can, and he had laid himself out to achieve it in a cumulative way."[71]

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[69] Arthur Conan Doyle, "The Captain of the *Polestar*," in Bleiler ed., *The Best Supernatural Tales of Arthur Conan Doyle*, pp. 15–42, on pp. 31–33. The story obviously was derived from Conan Doyle's experience serving as a surgeon on a whaler.

[70] Allen, "Wolverden Tower," pp. 92, 100.

[71] Stoker, *Dracula*, pp. 92–96, 132–36, on p. 95. Renfield was an interesting counterpart to both Dracula, who had an unlimited appetite for blood and the vampire hunters, who again and again consume hearty meal portions during the pursuit in order to sustain their energy and, on one occasion, to transfuse their blood to Lucy to save her life. See, Stoker, *Dracula*, p. 194.

Even a professional man with "strong nerves" could be affected by the presence of supernatural beings. After his first encounter with the specter, the ship surgeon, M'Alister Ray, Jr., jotted down the following words in his diary: "I can hardly believe I have not been dreaming, or suffering from some hideous nightmare, as I write these things down."[72] In *Dracula*, the vampire's victims were constantly in a state of trance. Several times the men who set out to destroy him, moreover, found themselves in a mesmeric state or on the brink of emotional breakdown. Several members of the pact had moments of doubt about their own as well as their friends' sanity. More than once Dr. Seward believed Van Helsing had gone mad, and on one occasion he thought that "we must be all mad and that we shall wake to sanity in strait-waistcoats." Harker was often in a dreamy state and felt himself being hypnotized. Even Van Helsing, the leader of the pursuit who had "iron nerves," became hysterical after Lucy's death. When Van Helsing and Dr. Seward returned from her funeral in the carriage, the former "gave way to a regular fit of hysterics…He laughed till he cried." Dr Seward "had to draw down the blinds lest anyone should see us and misjudge; and then he cried till he laughed again; and laughed and cried together; just as woman does."[73] However, it seems that it was precisely such sensibility that enabled the men to defeat Dracula. When Mina questioned Van Helsing about the necessity of pursuing the Count, the Professor "answered in growing passion, at first quietly. As he went on, however, he grew more angry and more forceful, till in the end we could not but see wherein was at least some of that personal dominance which made him so long a master among men."[74]

Human agency could not be easily exorcised from the investigation into the supernatural.[75] Jonathan Crary argues that in the nineteenth century "physiological optics" replaced the "geometrical optics" of the previous two centuries. With the recognition of the observer "as the

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[72] Arthur Conan Doyle, "The Captain of the *Polestar*," in Bleiler ed., *The Best Supernatural Tales of Arthur Conan Doyle*, pp. 15–42, on p. 39.

[73] Stoker, *Dracula*, pp. 25, 63, 225, 353.

[74] Stoker, *Dracula*, p. 410. Glover argues that the depictions of "hysterical males" in *Dracula* were Stoker's response to the English stereotype of the Irish as an "emotional" race. Although the vampire-hunters occasionally lost control of their emotions, they were nevertheless intelligent, manly, and heroic. See Glover, *Vampires, Mummies, and Liberals*, pp. 45–49.

[75] On Crookes' attempts of designing and using instruments to replace medium in his investigations of "psychic force" and the dispute that ensued, see Noakes, "'Instruments to Lay Hold of Spirits'," pp. 140–48.

active, autonomous producer of his or her own visual experience," the calibration and control of the observer's body became a desideratum in various institutions. Following Crary's argument, the mechanized objectivity and its associated "bureaucratic form" of operation, as described by Galison, was indeed a means to discipline and standardize the observer upon whose body the accuracy of the vision depended.[76]

The exceptional individual with the ability to perceive the supernatural, however, could not be disciplined and "standardized" as easily as factory workers or laboratory technicians. "The most complicated physical apparatus," as J. J. Thomson argued, "is simplicity itself compared with a human being." The medium was both instrument and witness in the procedure of proving the existence of the supernatural beings. The observations on supernatural phenomena relied on the individual's performance and testimony to guarantee his or her reliability and authenticity. The medium was, however, also a highly unstable instrument.[77] As Thomson pointed out, mediums "are very psychic and impressionable, and it may be as unreasonable to expect them to produce their effects when surrounded by men of science armed with delicate instruments, as it would for a poet to be expected to produce a poem while in the presence of a Committee of the British Academy."[78] The American philosopher William James also argued that supernatural experiences were "capricious, discontinuous, and not easily controlled," and that they required "peculiar persons for their production."[79] The success of

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[76] Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer: on Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1995), p. 69. On calibrating the observers in the nineteenth-century physical sciences, see Simon Schaffer, "Astronomers Mark Time: Discipline and the Personal Equation," *Science in Context* 2 (1988): 115–45; Graeme Gooday, "Spot-watching, Bodily Postures and the 'Practised Eye': The Material Practice of Instrument Reading in Late Victorian Electric Life," in Morus ed., *Bodies/Machines*, pp. 165–95.

[77] On the medium's body as "instrument" of researching spiritual phenomena, see Noakes, "'Instruments to Lay Hold of Spirits'"; on Barrett's use of peculiarly sensitive persons to detect the elusive phenomenon of "the magnetic luminosity" see Noakes, "The 'Bridge Which Is between Physical and Psychical Research'," pp. 446–50. Regarding attempts to use the human body as a sort of "instrument" or "laboratory" in scientific research in Victorian Britain, see also Alison Winter, "A Calculus of Suffering: Ada Lovelace and the Bodily Constraints on Women's Knowledge in Early Victorian England," in Christopher Lawrence and Steven Shapin eds., *Science Incarnate: Historical Embodiments of Natural Knowledge* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), pp. 202–39.

[78] Thomson, *Recollections and Reflections*, pp. 152–53; Oppenheim, *The Other World*, p. 334.

[79] William James, "Presidential Address to the Society for Psychical Research, January 31, 1896," in *Presidential Addresses to the Society for Psychical Research, 1882–1911*

the experiment could not be easily replicated since it depended on an idiosyncratic individual.[80] As Noakes points out that while spiritualists strove to "create the séance environment in which mediums could work best" their critics "held that these were the very conditions that were designed to prevent fair enquiry." Moreover, the reliability of the psychical investigator was also imperiled by their association with the medium. The physicist Stewart Balfour suspected that Crookes had been under the "electro-biological" influence of the famous medium Daniel Douglas Home. Both the medium's body and the experimenter's body were rendered problematical in the controversy over psychical research.[81]

The detection of the supernatural depended upon individuals with unique endowment and hypersensitivity. Cesare Lombroso, the strident exponent of scientific naturalism and the criminologist who has been credited as the pioneer of a research orientation that enables the recognition that Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde "might inhabit a single body" and that "the body itself was stable and inescapable",[82] towards the end of his career devoted himself to studying telepathy, clairvoyance and communication with the dead. Through painstaking research, he was convinced of the veracity of such phenomena. Interestingly, most of the cases he reported were women and many of them had mental conditions such as hysteria.[83] Indeed, many mediums in Victorian Britain were women or persons whose sensitivities were elevated by illness.[84] Mediums, sensitive women, the telepathic and the hysterics were indispensable instruments in the detection of the supernatural. However, they were usually deemed unreliable witnesses.[85]

(Glasgow: The Society for Psychical Research, 1912), p. 84, quoted in Turner, *Between Science and Religion*, p. 23.

[80] On the importance of replication in scientific experiment and the difficulties of achieving it, see Harry M. Collins, *Changing Order: Replication and Induction in Scientific Practice* (London: Sage, 1985).

[81] Noakes, "'Instruments to Lay Hold of Spirits'," on pp. 130, 143.

[82] Cole, *Suspect Identities*, pp. 1–24, on p. 2.

[83] Cesare Lombroso, *After Death–What?: Spiritistic Phenomena and their Interpretation*, rendered into English by William Sloane Kennedy (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1909).

[84] Noakes, "The 'Bridge Which Is between Physical and Psychical Research'," p. 435; Noakes, "'Instruments to Lay Hold of Spirits'," p. 129.

[85] Noakes, "'Instruments to Lay Hold of Spirits'," pp. 127–32; Noakes, "The 'Bridge Which Is between Physical and Psychical Research'," pp. 451–54. On witness, trust and the scientific credibility, see Steven Shapin and Simon Schaffer, *Leviathan and the Air-Pump: Hobbes, Boyle and the Experimental Life* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985); Steven Shapin, *A Social History of Truth: Civility and Science in*

Many of the Victorian supernatural tales were narrated through the diaries, memoirs and letters of their characters. The narratives assumed the nature of personal testimony that underlined the precariousness of their credibility. Towards the end of "Captain of the *Polestar*," it was revealed that the ship's surgeon never ventured to publish the journal documenting the crew's encounter with the ghost. It was instead published by his father Dr. John M'Alister Ray, Senior, who emphasized that he had "fullest confidence" in his son because he knew him to be "a strong-nerved and unimaginative man, with the strictest regard for veracity." Moreover, M'Alister Ray, Sr. only decided to publish the journal after he met in Edinburgh during "a meeting of the British Medical Association" an old college mate "Dr. P—," who supplied him with corroborative details with regard to the past of Craigie.[86] The problems of trust were also highlighted at the end of *Dracula*. Seven years after the downfall of Dracula, Jonathan Harker wrote that he and his friends "were struck by the fact, that in all the mass of material of which the record is composed, there is hardly one authentic document; nothing but a mass of type-writing, except the later notebooks of Mina and Seward and myself, and Van Helsing's memorandum. We could hardly ask anyone, even did we wish to, to accept these as proofs of so wild a story."[87] What these stories described was a predicament that dogged psychical researchers in the Victorian period and still haunts scientific investigations of the paranormal today.[88] The epistemological difficulties encountered by nineteenth-century psychical researchers were described in a dramatic manner in the supernatural fiction of Allen, Doyle, and Stoker.

Seventeenth-Century England (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994). There is a substantial amount of literature on the exclusion of women from science and its "scientific justification." See, for example, Ornella Moscucci, *The Science of Women: Gynecology and Gender in England, 1800–1929* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Cynthia E. Russet, *Sexual Science: The Victorian Construction of Womanhood* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1989). In the nineteenth century, women often played a greater role in unorthodox sciences than in orthodox science. See, for example, Alison Winter, *Mesmerized: Power of Mind in Victorian Britain* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998). For the significant role of women in the Spiritualist movement, see Owen, *The Darkened Room*. For the plebian use of spiritualism as a means of empowerment, see Barrow, *Independent Spirits.*

[86] Doyle, "The Captain of the *Polestar*," p. 42.

[87] Stoker, *Dracula*, p. 486.

[88] Harry M. Collins, "Some Experiments in the Paranormal: The Experimenter's Regress Revisited," in idem, *Changing Order*, pp. 113–28, see esp. pp. 119, 123.

THE CULT OF VETĀLA AND TANTRIC FANTASY*

Po-chi Huang

Vetāla: (A kind of spirit, ghost, ghoul, vampire, or zombie, residing in a corpse. In Chinese: 起尸鬼, 起屍鬼, 起死屍鬼; or transliteration in Chinese characters: 毘陀羅, 迷怛羅, 吠多拏鬼, 毘多荼.)

New Intellectual Milieu and Tantra

Before investigating the cult of Vetāla as a Tantric ritual, we should explore the intellectual climate of medieval India. Tantrism, as the new Zeitgeist in medieval India, offers a glimpse on a new synthesis of religious thinking as well as a new definition of *pouvoir*. Tantrism shifted away from *tapas* (ascetic austerity) to *śakti* (Tantric power). Its emergence represents a remarkable religious transformation in India, also reflecting Pan-Asian intellectual concerns.[1]

From the perspective of its two main contributors-the Hindu and Buddhist Tantras,[2] this Zeitgeist shows a dramatic reversal of early

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[1] David White, "Tantra in Practice: Mapping a Tradition," in David White ed., *Tantra in Practice* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), p. 7: "Tantra has persisted and often thrived throughout Asian history since the middle of the first millennium of the common era. Its practitioners have lived in India, China, Japan, Tibet, Bhutan, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Korea, and Mongolia as well as in the 'Greater India' of medieval Southeast Asia: Cambodia, Burma and Indonesia. No form of medieval Hinduism, Buddhism, of Jainism...has been without a Tantric component...In Hindu India, the Pañcarātra...GauḍīyaVaiṣṇava, Sahajiyā, Kāpālika, Śaiva Siddhānta, Siddha Kaula, Yoginī Kaula...Śrīvidyā...and Tamil Nāyaṉār and Āḻvār traditions...have all been Tantric or heavily colored by Tantra."

[2] For Tantric Buddhism in Tibet and East Asia, see David L. Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism: Indian Buddhist and Their Tibetan Successors* vol. 1 (Boston: Shambhala, 1987), and Michel Strickmann, *Mantras et Mandarins: Le bouddhisme tantrique en Chine* (Paris: Gallimard, 1996) respectively; for a general introduction to Hindu Tantrism, see Teun Goudriaan and Sanjukta Gupta, *Hindu Tantric and Śākta Literature* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1984); for a concise survey of Śaivism, see A. Sanderson, "Śaivism and the Tantric Traditions," in Stewart Sutherland, L. Houlden, P. Clarke and F. Hardy eds., *The World's Religions* (Boston, Mass.: G. K. Hall, 1988), pp. 660–704. The relationship between Buddhist and Hindu (especially Śaiva) Tantras is an intriguing

Śramaṇism. This new religious adventure combined two initially irreconcilable entities: asceticism and worldly enjoyment. A *Tāntrika* (Tantric practitioner) needed to overcome dualistic opposition to gain spiritual realization. But this union of two originally irreconcilable conditions for a higher quest was not unique to Tantrism—the paradox is found in Buddhist Mādhyamika philosophy too:

> The truth of the highest meaning takes its reality only through being projected onto the screen (*samvṛti*) of conventional truth. Recognition of the strictly contextual or pragmatic significance of the thoughts and objects that populate our mental and material world renders meaningless any search for a transcendental ground behind these phenomena. But paradoxically, by stripping away the tendency to reify the screen of everyday affairs, this same recognition simultaneously lays bare the intrinsic nature of all things, which is their "suchness" (*tathatā*), their quality of being just as they are in reciprocal dependence. What is immediately given in everyday experience is indeed all that there is, for the inherently interdependent nature of the components of this experience *is* the truth of the highest meaning; both the means to the goal (*mārga; upāya*) and the goal itself (*nirvāṇa*).[3]

I regard this paradoxical thinking as central to medieval India's paradigmatic intellectual climate because this persuasion mode is shared by the Hindu side. The idea of beyond-dualism (*parādvaya*) articulated in Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad parallels medieval Buddhism.[4] Indeed,

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question. Sanderson suggests that Buddhist *siddhi* literature like Yoginī Tantras have drawn heavily from Śaiva Kāpālika scriptures. (A. Sanderson, "Vajrayāna: Origin and Function," in Dhammakaya Foundation ed., *Buddhism into the Year 2000: International Conference Proceedings* (Bangkok and Los Angeles: Dhammakaya Foundation, 1994, pp. 87–102) One the other hand, Davidson argues: "Buddhist-Kāpālika connection is more complex than a simple process of religious imitation and textual appropriation…the influence was apparently mutual…Thus the influence was both sustained and reciprocal, even in those places where Buddhist and Kāpālika siddhas were in extreme antagonism." (Ronald Davidson, *Indian Esoteric Buddhism: A History of the Tantric Movement* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), p. 218.) Looking from the perspective of similar historical development, Strickmann contends: "Je suis convaincu que les āgama śivaïsme médiéval et les tantra du bouddhisme médiéval représentent simplement différentes versions, différentes rédactions d'une seule et même chose." (Strickmann, *Mantras et Mandarins: Le bouddhisme tantrique en Chine*, p. 24.) This intricate problem remains to be untangled.

[3] C. Huntington, *The Emptiness of Emptiness: An Introduction to Early Indian Mādhyamika* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1989), pp. 39–40.

[4] According to Lehren von Richard Hauschild ed., *Die Śvetāśvatara-Upaniṣad; eine kritische Ausgabe mit einer Übersetzung und einer Übersicht über ihre Lehren* (Leipzig: Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft, 1927), p. 74, the date of Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad is around 100 B.C.E.–100 A.D.

Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad shows the intellectual transition from cosmic homology in early Upaniṣads to Tantric contemplation. Silburn and Padoux called Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad "śivaïsme non tantrique" or "pré-tantrique."[5] However, the Upaniṣad's Rudra-Śiva, who is the Great Master (maheśvara) and power (śakti) embodied, smacks strongly of Śaivism/Śāktism. Ruminations on one self-sufficient (ātmastha) and supreme great master among masters (īśvarāṇāṃ paramaṃ maheśvaram) are so prominent in it, as to make clear its connection to later Śaivism and Bhakti movements. Flood is correct in maintaining that this Upaniṣad is "a theology which elevates Rudra to the status of supreme being, the Lord (Īśa) who is transcendent yet also has cosmological functions, as does Śiva in later traditions."[6] Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad's exposition of paradoxical statement can be regarded as "the systematic philosophy of Śaivism."[7]—for example:

> Verily, he [Rudra] is the God who pervades all regions. He was born before and he is within the womb. He was born and he will be born. He stands opposite all creatures, having his face in all directions. (2:16)[8]

The ubiquity of paradoxical thinking in Hinduism and Buddhism makes it the common denominator of medieval Indian thought, involving discourse and praxis. Bhattacharyya's view that Buddhist Tantra-Vajrayāna "was a direct development of the Yogācāra philosophy of Mahāyāna Buddhism,"[9] though imprecise, closely links Vajrayāna and Mahāyāna.[10] An esoteric transmission like Tantrism demands philosophical validation.[11] The Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad says:

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[5] Lilian Silburn et André Padoux, *La lumière sur les tantras: chapitres 1 à 5 du Tantrāloka* (Paris: Collège de France: Dépositaire exclusif Edition-diffusion de Boccard, 1998), p. 12.

[6] Gavin Flood, *An Introduction to Hinduism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 153.

[7] Mahadev Chakravarti, *The Concept of Rudra-Śiva through the Ages* (Delhi: Motial Banarsidass, 1986), p. 9.

[8] *eṣa ha devaḥ pradiśo'nu sarvāḥ pūrvo ha jātaḥ sa u garbhe antaḥ /*
sa eva jātaḥ sa janisyamāṇaḥ pratyaṅ janāṃs tiṣṭhati sarvatomukhaḥ//

[9] Benoytosh Bhattacharyya, *An Introduction to Buddhist Esoterism* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1980), p. 35.

[10] One would point to Mādhyamika as the possible candidate rather than Yogacāra here.

[11] This position is exemplified in the relationship between philosophical knowledge [*jñāna*] and ritual action [*kriyā*] in Śaiva tradition. Davis argued that "the 'distinction' between philosophical knowledge and ritual action, while useful and necessary as a starting point for the study of Śaiva worship, becomes increasingly indistinct as we delve into it, much as the Śaiva philosophers themselves speak of the division between

> You [Rudra] are woman. You are man. You are youth and maiden too. (4:3)[12]

Although the first half of this passage is from the Atharva Veda (10, 8:27), it is reminiscent of Śiva as *ardhanārīśvara* (the master who is half female [and half male]). It is directly related to Tantric representation of Śiva and his Śakti. Śiva, as a man, is the cosmic person (*puruṣa*), the master of immortality (*amṛtatvasyeśāna*), and as a woman, is Śakti, the female personification of divine energy. This Upaniṣad harbors other esoteric verses even more closely linked with Tantric ideal of reconciliation of all opposites as manifested by Śiva:

> The one unborn female, red, white, and black who produces many creatures similar in form.
>   There lies the one unborn male, taking his delight; another unborn male leaves her with whom he has had his pleasure. (4:5)[13]

A striking Tantric metaphor is instantly recognizable here. As reiterated, Tantrism is a conspicuous reversal of early ascetic religious culture. It blurs the distinction between householder and renouncer by not disallowing the ideal ascetic's worldly pleasure. He does not renounce carnal desires, but carries them out with total detachment to realize genuine celibacy. Śiva, embodies two mutually conflicting ideals: asceticism and eroticism. He practices the most severe austerity while being a notorious paramour.[14] Zaehner's observations on Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad are pertinent here:

> Both the one and the other male are Śiva for he is forever involved in *saṃsāra* and forever unaffected by it; he is the exemplar of the human soul both when it is "fettered" and when it is "liberated." In him there is no distinction of persons, male and female coalesce into wholeness.[15]

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knowing and acting as only an 'apparent' dichotomy of a fundamentally unified human capacity of consciousness." (Richard Davis, *Ritual in an Oscillating Universe: Worshiping Śiva in Medieval India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), p. xii.) See also H. Brunner, "Jñāna and Kriyā: Relation between Theory and Practice in the Śaivāgamas," in Teun Goudriaan ed., *Ritual and Speculation in Early Tantrism: Studies in Honor of André Padoux* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1992), pp. 1–59.

[12] *tvaṃ strī tvaṃ pumān asi tvaṃ kumāra uta vā kumārī/*

[13] *ajām ekāṃ lohitaśuklakṛṣṇāṃ bahvīḥ prajāḥ sṛjamānāṃ sarūpāḥ/*
   ajo hy eko juṣamāṇo 'nuśete jahāty enāṃ bhuktabhogyām ajo 'nyaḥ//

[14] Cf. Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty, *Śiva, the Erotic Ascetic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981).

[15] Robert C. Zaehner, *Hinduism* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 108.

Tantrism's rejection of asceticism rehabilitates the enjoyment, *bhoga*. However, it is characteristic that *yoga*, or the discipline, is maintained at the same time. Tantra claims to transcend the opposition of *yoga* and *bhoga*. Snellgrove pointed out that in Vajrayāna a perfected yogin "learned the secret of the absence of passion by means of the passions."[16]

This novel religious experience is evident in the concept of body. The body, as a symbol of impurity in early Śramaṇic traditions, is to be tormented and disciplined, especially the five senses (*indriyas*) so that the ascetic power (*tapas*) can be acquired. As the higher goals are achieved by satiating the five senses with pleasures, the Tantric body is a sanctified cosmos.[17] Moreover, the experience of bliss in higher worlds of liberation through enjoyment (*bhuktimukti*) becomes the practitioner's spiritual journey. Indeed, this journey is undertaken and conceptualized as a passage of the *kuṇḍalinī* (the rising of a corporeal energy) through the body.[18] Also, an essential rite in the Tantric cult of Śrī Vidyā, *pañcatattva* (five realities) or *pañcamakāra* (five Ms-the initial letter of each being the letter 'M'), consists of the sacramental gratification of what is forbidden or despised in ordinary life: meat (*māṃsa*), fish (*matsya*), alcohol (*madya*), parched grain (*mudrā*) and sexual intercourse (*maithuna*).[19]

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[16] Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism: Indian Buddhist and Their Tibetan Successors* vol. 1, p. 160.

[17] D. Wujastyk, "Interpréter l'image de corps humain dans l'inde pré-moderne," in Véronique. Bouillier and Gilles Tarabout eds., *Images du corps dans le monde hindou* (Paris: CNRS Editions, 2002), p. 73: "[L]e corps tantrique est une réplique en miniature de l'univers, le véhicule d'énergies mystiques qui permettent l'éveil de la conscience."

[18] Kailāśa Pati Miśra, Kashmir Śaivism: The Central Philosophy of Tantrism (Portland: Rudra Press, 1993), p. 369: "In the Tantric tradition, the sexual energy is symbolized by a coiled serpent (*kuṇḍalinī*)...Tantric practice is aimed at awaking this *kuṇḍalinī*, causing it to raise its face upwards and ascend through the chain of *cakras* in the body, finally reaching union with Śiva in the *cakra* at the top of the head (the *sahasrāra cakra*). The ascension of *kuṇḍalinī* is a metaphor for the process of *transmutation* of sex energy from the level of gross enjoyment to the level of divinity."

[19] David White, *Kiss of the Yoginī: "Tantric Sex" in Its South Asian Contexts* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), p. 84: "It is also useful to note that the term *pañcatattva* is frequently used as synonym for the *pañcamakāra* in both Hindu and Buddhist Tantra. *Tattva* may be read in many ways. In its most abstract sense, it means "essence" or "category," while in more concrete terms, it simply means "substance." Many Tantras characterize the substances denoted by the first four M-words as aphrodisiac preparatory stages or substances for the culminating *maithuna*, which is also a substance to be ritually consumed." The practice of five Ms later became associated with 'left-handed practice' (*vāmācāra*)—a transgressive practice of using impure lifestyle, as opposed to the 'right-handed practice' (*dakṣiṇācāra*), based on way of purity.

In Tantrism, both Śaiva and Vajrayāna, the goal of a Tantric prac-
titioner (*yogin* or *mantrin* in Buddhism, *sādhaka* on Hindu side) is to
attain magic or supernatural power (*siddhi*, worldly achievement) i.e.
to be a *siddha* (the accomplished one). The Tantras are concerned with
the practice of *sādhana* (accomplishing anything by charms or magic).
Snellgrove explicates:

> The word "adept"…translates fairly well the Sanskrit term *siddha*, which
> is the perfect participle of the root *sidh*…meaning "to succeed" or "to be
> accomplished."…Thus the particular success that is achieved is known as
> a *siddhi*, and in our present context…as a supramundane or a magical
> power…Also connected with the root *sidh* is the term *sādhana*, mean-
> ing the act or the means of being successful, and this comes to mean in
> our context the ritual of incantation or evocation, or whatever particular
> means may be employed to win over the chosen divinity.[20]

Tantric Ritual Scheme

Tantric ritual, either Śaiva or Buddhist, integrates fundamental ingre-
dients like *mantra, mudrā*,[21] *maṇḍala*[22] visualizations and others like

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Brooks argued: "In non-Tantric Hinduism the domain beyond the dichotomy of pure/
impure is that of the renouncer-ascetic who, unlike in-caste Hindus, is neither pure
nor impure. Tantrics also wish to transform themselves by going beyond the ordinary
boundaries of purity and impurity and beyond caste…The Tantric method is not
renunciation of distinctions and worldly involvements but rather *transgression* of them.
In this way, Tantrics resemble the renouncer-ascetics but do not adopt their style or
their methods." (Douglas Renfrew Brooks, *Auspicious Wisdom: the Texts and Tradi-
tions of Śrīvidyā Śākta Tantrism in South India* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1992), p. 155;
italics mine).

   [20] Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism: Indian Buddhist and Their Tibetan Successors*
vol. 1, p. 130.

   [21] Stephan Beyer, *The Cult of Tārā; Magic and Ritual in Tibet* (Berkeley and Los
Angeles: University of California Press, 1973), p. 146: "We can distinguish two func-
tional categories of ritual hand gestures [*mudrā*]. The first, comparatively few, are
stereotyped gestures of reverence, threat, welcome, or farewell…The second category
includes the ritual hand gestures that accompany the presentation of offerings, and
these are explicitly intended as *mimetic representations* of the objects being offered-
simulacra that controls the transmission of worship to the god, just as the mantras of
offering enjoin its acceptance and response."

   [22] Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism: Indian Buddhist and Their Tibetan Successors*
vol. 1, p. 198: "In normal Sanskrit usage *maṇḍala* simply means 'circle' or any form of
circular array, precisely as we might speak of a circle of attendants. In magical arts, with
which the tantras have so many connections at their more popular level, it is used in
the sense of 'magic circle,' while in a more elevated sense it may refer to an enclosure,
not necessarily circular, which separates a sacred area from the everyday profane world.
Thus it represents the special domain of any particular divinity."

meditation into a scheme of distinct procedures. This is manifested clearly in three rituals. The first one is known as *dīkṣā* (initiation) in Śaiva and *abhiṣeka* (consecration) in Buddhist Tantra. This ritual transforms an acolyte into an adept, modeled after ancient India royal consecration (*rājasūya*).[23] Aspirants are tested by divination. They take secret vows, and are blindfolded before being led in front of horizontal maṇḍala to which they throw a paper flower. If it touches the deities inside, they obtain their tutelary divinities and their mantra. In conclusion, the master sprinkles their head with "the water of five oceans." For the Śaiva Siddhānta, the master (*ācārya, guru* or *deśika*) is one who has undergone a special consecration called *ācāryābhiṣeka* and becomes Śiva initiating the aspirant.[24] In Buddhist Tantras, those who are consecrated become the universal monarch of the dharma of the Buddha.[25]

> Fit vessels of dharma should be chosen scrupulously. [The following are the ideal candidates:] Those who have firm conviction in three treasures [Buddha, dharma and saṃgha]; those sentient beings who reside in

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[23] Cf. Davidson, *Indian Esoteric Buddhism: A History of the Tantric Movement*, pp. 123–31.

[24] Gavin Flood, *The Tantric Body: The Secret Tradition of Hindu Religion* (London, New York: I. B. Tauris, 2006), pp. 132–33; for the details, see Davis, *Ritual in an Oscillating Universe: Worshiping Śiva in Medieval India*, pp. 83–111.

[25] Strickmann, *Mantras et Mandarins: Le bouddhisme tantrique en Chine*, p. 50. Generally speaking, in Śaiva Siddhānta, two initiations must be undertaken. The pledge initiation (*samaya-dīkṣā*) initiates an aspirant into the shared scriptures and rituals of the cult. The liberating initiation (*nirvāṇa-dīkṣā*) safeguards the soul's ultimate release. (H. Brunner, "Le sādhaka. personnage oublié de śivaïsme du Sud," *Journal Asiatique* 263 (1975): 411–43; cf. also Flood, *The Tantric Body: The Secret Tradition of Hindu Religion*, pp. 131–43.) "The general initiation (*samaya-dīkṣā*) provides entry into the tradition, while the liberating liberation [sic] (*nirvāṇa-dīkṣā*) ensures final liberation at death…Thus one who has undergone the *samaya-dīkṣā* is called a *samayin* and one who has undergone the *nirvāṇa-dīkṣā* is a *putraka*, a son of Śiva." (Flood, *The Tantric Body: The Secret Tradition of Hindu Religion*, p. 133.) For Buddhist Tantra, Snellgrove said: "[T]antric practice offers success (*siddhi*) to all and sundry, if only their senses are keen enough and they are prepared to submit to the discipline imposed by their preceptor…If he is unworthy at this stage, he will not even see the maṇḍala…the pupil is led to the maṇḍala blindfolded, and thus to see the maṇḍala in any constructive sense would be difficult when one takes into account the secrecy which is continually enjoined in these tantras…such secrecy must have been seen limited to certain consecration rites, and that there were many others that by their nature were made public. Thus the same ritual of calling upon a particular set of divinities to take possession of their symbolic representation or "pledge" (*samaya*) provides the main subject of liturgy…Having thus manifested themselves and received their due praise and the conventional sets of offerings, they bestow their "empowerment" (*adhiṣṭhāna*) in return." (Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism: Indian Buddhist and Their Tibetan Successors* vol. 1, pp. 145–46.)

Bodhicitta; …those who hold monks and the Ācārya in reverence; those who are well endowed with five senses and place their deep faith in the mantra dharma…those who are eager to sacrifice themselves to acquire this dharma. The Ācārya, on seeing earnest request from these aspirants, should ask them to prepare for the necessities of the maṇḍala…He should enjoin them to purify themselves and abstain from meat. He then asks them to take vows of *triśaraṇa-gamana bodhicitta*. After leading them to the maṇḍala, he asks them to throw the flower on the Buddhas, bodhisattvas, Nārayaṇa (Viṣṇu) Garuḍendra and other deities. Anyone who is capable as a fit vessel of dharma, would hear proper response [from the deities] as suitable for receiving this dharma. If the flower did not hit any of these deities, then one cannot share the *siddhi* of this dharma. Having completed this, one has the root mantra empowered with perfume three times in front of the altar and utters an oath of secrecy…Having pronounced the oath, the neophyte is enjoined to drink water by which the oath was taken.[26]

The second procedure is the oblation through fire, generally called *homa*. Fire had been the divine messenger since the Vedic time. In Tantrism, both Buddhist and Śaiva, burnt offering is the means to cajole the divinities or spirits with the prospect of making a good deal. The spirits or divinities are forced to accommodate the Tāntrika's request. They are to be satiated so that a Tāntrika can easily "manipulate" them into doing what one desires. One Buddhist Tantra states:

Among the rituals of muttering mantras (*japa*?),[27] the ritual of burning fire is superior. The heavenly deities are satisfied to be filled and like human beings, will feel comfortable in being satiated. Therefore, in all scriptures concerning the ritual of *japa* by the Buddha, this ritual is the superlative.[28]

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[26] *Wen shu shih li pu sa ken pen ta chiao wang ching chin ch'ih niao wang p'in* 文殊師利菩薩根本大教王經金翅鳥王品 (*Garuḍapaṭalaparivrata*), in *Taishō*, v. 21, no. 1276, p. 329a: "此法門應須揀擇法器。淨信三寶者。住菩提心深愍有情者…尊重和上阿闍梨。諸根圓備深信真言法…深生渴仰勤求此法。不惜身命者。阿闍梨若見如是等人慇懃求請。則令辦曼茶羅資具…令弟子清淨齋戒。授與三歸菩提心戒。引入曼茶羅。擲花著佛菩薩及那羅延金翅鳥王諸天等。是人堪爲法器。應合得聞。合受此法。若擲花不著聖眾。於此法亦無成就分。既得著已。則於此壇前以根本真言。加持香水三遍。作是誓言…既發如是誓已。令飲誓水。"
[27] Cf. Lilian Silburn et André Padoux, "Un japa tantrique:Yoginīhṛdaya, III:171–190," in Michel Strickmann ed., *Tantric and Taoist Studies in Honor of R. A. Stein* vol. 1 (Bruxelles: Institut belge des hautes études chinoises, 1981), pp. 141–54.
[28] *Wo fo ting san mei t'o lo ni ching* 五佛頂三昧陀羅尼經, in *Taishō*, vol. 19, no. 952, p. 273a: "念誦法中燒火法勝。天神喜滿。譬人飽食歡喜充適。是故佛說一切念誦品法中。此法爲最。"

Homa offering is integral to consecration rites. In certain rituals, it is discretely practiced in accord with basic rules. However, preparing *homa* could be a laborious work if it is the central concern of a Tantric ritual as argued by Strickmann:

> On décrit souvent le homa comme une cérémonie d'envergure par elle-même, se déroulant (comme la consécration) sur sept jours pleins: six jours de préparation avant l'allumage du feu, au septième seulement. Mais le homa se retrouve aussi à plus petite échelle, comme composante indispensable de rituels dont le centre d'intérêt se trouve ailleurs. Par exemple, durant les cérémonies de consécration, on exécute un homa dans un coin juste derrière le maṇḍala central.[29]

The third procedure is possession (*āveśa*). In Tantrism, voluntary possession by a spirit or divinity empowers one to act like that spirit or divinity. If the possession is involuntary, rituals can disentangle the practitioner from that spirit or divinity. This links possession to exorcism:

> Si la consécration trouve son point culminant dans l'eau, et si le homa se concentre sur le feu, le troisième rituel tantrique omniprésent semble plus particulièrement associé au royaume de l'esprit; c'est l'*āveśa*, la possession par les esprits, ou plus exactement la possession spirite volontaire, induite. L'officiant invoque directement un être de l'au-delà dans le corps d'un médium volontaire, souvent un enfant. L'esprit peut être un assistant divin, qui entre dans un corps humain afin de fournir des informations ou des conseils: prophéties, mises en garde, diagnostics et pronostics. Ou encore il peut être un démon qui a pris possession de quelqu'un par force et que le maître tantrique contraint à quitter son hôte involontaire pour qu'il décline son identité et qu'il soit exorcisé.[30]

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[29] Strickmann, *Mantras et Mandarins: Le bouddhisme tantrique en Chine*, p. 50. For a detailed description of an elaborate preparation of home ritual, see *Tsui shang mi mi na nu t'ien ching* 最上祕密那拏天經, in *Taishō*, vol. 21, no. 1288, p. 363b–c.

[30] Strickmann, *Mantras et Mandarins: Le bouddhisme tantrique en Chine*, pp. 50–51. For a discussion of possession in broader South Asian religious and cultural contexts, see Frederick M. Smith, *The Self Possessed: Deity and Spirit Possession in South Asian Literature and Civilization* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006). In possession and exorcism, we clearly see the assumed power of coercing spirits into one's exploitation. "All tantras claim the power to coerce divinities, for it is by coercing them into an image or symbol that one is enabled to worship them and make them suitable offerings, and it is by coercing them into oneself that one is enabled to act with their assumed assurance…and thus achieve the objective in view." (Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism: Indian Buddhist and Their Tibetan Successors* vol. 1 p. 235) Here, we also perceive the different intellectual concerns between the early and medieval religious climate in India. In early period, as witnessed from Buddhism, to defeat Māra (death personified or the Wicked One) is the uncompromising endeavor of a mendicant. On the other hand, the yogin or yoginī is to *make use of* the spirit, be it a *vetāla* or *preta*, to become a *siddha*.

Corpse and Cremation Grounds: The Cult of Vetāla and other
Ferocious Deities

I have discussed basic rituals integral to Tantric path. They are detectable in Śaiva and Buddhist Tantric practices. We now turn to the cult of Vetāla. This Tantric cult needs corpses to conduct hair-raising ritual and some components are indispensable to it. Most important, it always takes place in cremation grounds on one night of the dark fortnight (*kṛṣṇapakṣa*), preferable the 14th—the darkest hours. The Tantric associations with cremation grounds and hours of darkness are worth noting. As Slusser says:

> Imagery of the cremation ground is an important aspect of tantrism and operates on many levels, real and symbolic. The aspiring *sādhaka*, for example, was enjoined to perform his meditations at the *śmaśānas* [cremation grounds], if possible seated upon a corpse or its remains…Such a one, wrapped in meditation…thus confronted death in its most gruesome form…As his skills improved, the tantrist's association with the dead and their flaming pyres might become metaphorical. But it was no less a real and basic aspect of his route to spiritual success…At the *masān* [*śmaśāna*], in the gloom of a night illuminated by the lurid flicker of the funeral pyres, surrounded by rotting corpses, bleached bones, repulsive scavengers, cavorting demons, and *ḍakinīs* in frenzied dance, the *sādhaka*-yogins, siddhas…—serenely pursue their individual paths to salvation.[31]

As Śiva is the lord of the cremation ground, the cults at cremation grounds are Śaiva/Śākta practices. Moreover, the practices of Śaiva Kāpālika, resembling the conducts of Buddhist Siddhas,[32] exemplify these highly polluting activities associated with the "cemetery cult." As suggested by Lorenzen, seen from the *Harṣacarita*, the solicitation of the Vetāla (*āmardaka*) with the offering of human skull (*muṇḍopaha*) is performed by the Kāpālikas who reside in cremation grounds.[33] The legend of Śaṅkara's meeting with a Kāpālika named Ugra-Bhairava in the *Śaṅkaradigvijaya* represents this sect's distinctive features:

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[31] Mary Shepherd Slusser, *Nepal Mandala: A Cultural History of the Kathmandu Valley* vol. 1 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), p. 332.

[32] Cf. Davidson, *Indian Esoteric Buddhism: A History of the Tantric Movement*, pp. 169–235.

[33] David Lorenzen, *The Kāpālikas and Kālāmukhas: Two Lost Śaivite Sects* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1991), pp. 17, 21; see P. V. Kane ed., *Harshacarita of Bāṇabhaṭṭa* (Bombay: Nirnaya Sagar, 1970), pp. 76, 443–44.

When Krakaca, the foremost of the Kapālin teachers, learned of Śaṅkara's arrival, he came to meet him.

Smeared with ashes from a cremation ground (*pitṛ-kānanabhasman*), carrying a skull-bowl (*karoṭi*) in his hand, wielding a trident (*śūla*), and accompanied by many whose appearance matched his own, that conceited and proud (Kāpālika) spoke thus:

'Although probably ashes are worn (by you), for what reason do you hold that impure (clay) bowl and renounce this pure and fitting human skull (*śiraḥkapāla*)? Why is not Kāpālin worshiped (by you)?

If He (Kāpālin-Śiva) does not receive Bhairava with liquor (*madhu*) and blood-smeared lotus where the human heads are, how can he attain joy when his body is embraced by the lotus-eyed Umā, who is his equal?'[34]

This striking portrayal makes Kāpālikas, the "skull men" the most notorious practitioners even among Śaiva sects. They carry a skull-topped staff (*khaṭvāṅga*) and a begging bowl made from the brainpan. They undertake the 'great vow' (*mahāvrata*), atonement for Brahmanicide. As the residents of the cremation ground, the Kāpālika practitioners appease their fierce deities with offering of the most impure stuffs to exploit these deities' power through manipulated possession.

A corpse is needed for this cult, and the offerings of human flesh and blood are integral components. By and large, fierce spirits have to be satiated with human sacrifice. The efficacy of the rituals is insured when a Tāntrika dons the garments of the dead (*pretavāsana*), consciously mimicking the dead. The *argha* offering to deities mostly consists of rice, Dūrvā grass, flowers or often only water. In some extreme cases certain human organs like tooth are respectfully presented.[35]

There are other distinguishing features in the cremation-ground cult of the corpse. Wilson was one of the first few Western scholars

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[34] Mādhava, *Śaṅkaradigvijaya* (Dvārakā: Śrīśāradāpīṭha-Prakāśanam, 2004), 15: 11–14; translated in Lorenzen, *The Kāpālikas and Kālāmukhas: Two Lost Śaivite Sects*, pp. 40–41:

> *atha tīrthakarāgraṇīḥ pratasthe kila kāpālikajālakaṃ vijetum/*
> *niśamayya tamāgataṃ samāgāt krakaco nāma kapālideśikāgryaḥ//*
> *pitṛkānanabhasmanā 'nuliptaḥ karasaṃprāptakaroṭirāttaśūlaḥ/*
> *sahito bahubhiḥ svatulyaveṣaiḥ sa iti smā ''ha māhmanāḥ sagarvaḥ//*
> *bhasitaṃ dhṛtamityadastu yuktaṃ śuci saṃtyajya śiraḥkapālametat/*
> *vahathāśuci kharparaṃ kimarthaṃ na kathaṃkāramupāsyate kapālī//*
> *naraśīrṣakuśeśayairalabdhvā rudhirāktairmadhunā ca bhairavārcām/*
> *upayā samayā saroruhākṣyā kathamāśliṣṭavapurmudaṃ prayāyāt//*

[35] Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism: Indian Buddhist and Their Tibetan Successors* vol. 1, p. 165: "For the fierce divinities who are central to so many tantric rituals, the best offerings…are flesh and blood and other bodily substances. By partaking of these consecrated items, one absorbs the nature of the divinity."

to connect them with Śaiva/Śākta practices. Some of their observances are breaking social taboos and can be understood only within Tantric contexts. Wilson's descriptions may smack of Victorian bigotry but remain pertinent. They provide a glimpse of Tantric rituals related to the cremation-ground cult:

> Where the object of the ceremony is to acquire an interview with and control over impure spirits, a dead body is necessary. The adept is to be alone, at midnight, in a cemetery…seated on the corpse he is to perform the usual offerings, and if he does so without fear, the Bhūtas, the Yoginīs, and other male or female goblins become his slaves.
>
> In this, and many of the observances practiced, solitude is enjoined; but all the principal ceremonies comprehend the worship of Śakti, and require…the presence of a female as the living representative and the type of the goddess. This worship is mostly celebrated in a mixed society, the men of which represent *Bhairavas* or *Vīras*, and the women *Bhairavīs* and *Nāyikās*. The Śakti is personated by a naked female, to whom the meat and wine are offered, and then distributed amongst the assistants, the recitation of various Mantras and texts, and the performance of the Mudrā…accompanying the different stages of the ceremony…terminated with the most scandalous orgies [sexual intercourse] amongst the votaries.[36]

Use of corpses in the cult of fierce deities or demonic goddess is a reiterated theme in Śaiva/Śākta practices. Thus, Kinsley points out that cremation grounds and corpses are indispensable components in the cult of Kālī, Tārā and other ferocious female deities grouped as Mahāvidyās. Examples from Tantric texts related to the worship of unruly powers in general are:

> Corpses are remarkably often associated with the Mahāvidyās, and cremation grounds seem to be highly favored as places in which to worship them. Kālī, Tārā…are all said to stand on or sit upon corpses…often described or pictured as dwelling in cremation grounds.…In discussing the empowerment or perfection of mantras, which is accomplished primarily by repetition, the *Mantra-mahodadhiḥ* says: "A Sādhaka who, sitting on a corpse, performs one lakh (100,000) [repetitions] of this mantra, his mantra becomes potent and all his cherished desires are soon fulfilled." …The *Tantrasāra*, a text devoted primarily to the Mahāvidyās, has detailed descriptions of both *śavā sādhanā* (spiritual endeavor with a corpse) and *citā sādhanā* (spiritual endeavor on a cremation pyre). These rituals are not described as applicable to a particular goddess among the

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[36] Horace Hayman Wilson, *Essays and Lectures on the Religions of the Hindus* vol. 1 (London: Trüber & Co., 1861–62), pp. 257–58.

Mahāvidyās, so probably both techniques are appropriate in the worship of any, or at least several, of Mahāvidyās.[37]

This illustration suggests that the worship of ferocious spirits or deities like Bhūtas or Mahāvidyās is inevitably connected with the "cemetery cult." As this cult employs filthy rituals which involve bloody sacrifices, it always takes place in a cremation ground and in the darkest hours of the dark fortnight. Do these horrifying textual descriptions depict actual practices? As part of Kāpālika's practices, the cult of Vetāla is closely linked with worship of Śaiva as Bhairava (The Terrible One). Slusser infers from Wright's notes that up to the nineteenth century, Kālabhairava (the Black Terrible One, an epithet of Śiva) of the Kathmandu Darbar Square "was the occasional recipient of *human sacrifice*."[38] Speaking of "several huge and hideous figures of Hindu gods and goddesses" of Darbar Square, Wright added:

> During my residence in Nepal, l have twice heard of people having committed suicide on the steps in front of these images. The suicide always takes place at night, and the body is found in the morning, with its throat cut from ear to ear, and its limbs decorously arranged, lying on one of the steps![39]

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[37] David Kinsley, *Tantric Versions of the Divine Feminine: The Ten Mahāvidyās* (Berkley: University of California Press, 1997), pp. 233–34. In Buddhist Tantric cult of Vināyaka (Gaṇeśa), it is said that the temple of Maheśvara (Śiva) could be used to conduct rituals. In this cult, an intact corpse of a Mātaṅgī (untouchable woman) has to be acquired and the corpse should be well-decorated. The *vidyādhara* (possessor of magic power) is supposed to be naked with disheveled hair and seats himself to the left of that Mātaṅgī. He eats human flesh and black mutton and drinks alcohol. He should stay calm even if the corpse is restored to life and confronts him. (*Chin kang sa to so p'in na ye chia t'ien ch'eng chiou yi kuei ching* 金剛薩埵說頻邢夜迦天成就儀軌經, in *Taishō*, vol. 21, no. 1272, pp. 318c–320b) However, the cult of corpse is not confined to the attainment of magical power. In Buddhist Tantras, the worship of the corpse could be simply for material gain like earth treasure (nidhi in Sanskrit and sa gter in Tibetan). See, Pu-kong chuan-so t'o lo ni tsu tsai wang tsou ching (Amoghapāśakalparājasūtra) 不空羂索陀羅尼自在王咒, in Taishō, vol. 20, no. 1097, pp. 425b–c; Ta fang kuang pu sa wen shu shih ken pen yi kuei ching ([Ārya] mañjuśrīmūlakalpa) 大方廣菩薩藏文殊師利根本儀軌經, in *Taishō*, vol. 20, no. 1191, pp. 889b–c. Nevertheless, the acquisition of magic power is still the main concern of a Tāntrika in the cult of a fierce spirit/deity.

[38] Slusser, *Nepal Mandala: A Cultural History of the Kathmandu Valley* vol. 1, p. 237, italics name.

[39] Daniel Wright ed., *History of Nepal* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1877), p. 11, n. 1.

Obviously, this is a human sacrifice made on Śiva's altar. Śiva, the most awesome deity in Kathmandu Valley has to be appeased with flesh and blood. In portraying the image of this wrathful deity as different Bhairavas in the Valley, Slusser also points out that Śiva "tramples underfoot a nude goblin (*vetāla*), and with his many arms draped himself with a flayed human skin, grasps a clutch of severed human heads and the ritual skull cup, and brandishes a sword, shield, and trident."[40] Regarding another Śiva shrine in Kathmandu she concludes that *vetāla* trampled by Śiva is the mediator through which Bhairava receives blood sacrifice. She said:

> Pacali Bhairava's principal shrine, or chief seat (*pīṭha*)…surrounded by nonriverine cremation *masāns*…in the raised forecourt, lies a copper repoussé *vetāla*, the goblin-like "*beṭal*" who receives the copious blood sacrifices offered in Bhairava's name.[41]

Vetāla, as the messenger of Śiva, is what an aspirant of *siddha* or *vidyādhara* has to appease in order to acquire the magic power from Śiva. As a mediator, he is not simply a ferocious spirit but a witty personality. In him we see an astute messenger rather than a pale ghost. This is also evident in his clothe quick-witted behavior, in the Vetāla stories to be explored next.[42]

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[40] Slusser, *Nepal Mandala: A Cultural History of the Kathmandu Valley* vol. 1, p. 237.
[41] Slusser, *Nepal Mandala: A Cultural History of the Kathmandu Valley* vol. 1, p. 238.
[42] It is hardly surprising that the cult of Vetāla or *vetālasiddhi* is also found in Buddhist Tantra. For example: "On siddhi. One should use corpse's bones to make an image of Vīnayaka whch has eight long fingers, four arms and three eyes. The first hand on the right should make the *mudrā* of varada. The second hand should hold the blood of that skull. The first hand on the left should hold a *khaḍga* sword. The second hand should hold a severed head. Having finished that image, one should use extremely spicy and poisonous *sarṣapa* (mastard) salted with seeds of *mādāra* tree to plaster that image. Make a triangle *homa* and burn *khadira* wood. One should use human flesh as *homa* to ignite that image. Immediately all foes will be dispersed and annihilated. One should use poison to smear that image, ignite it with the fire of the corpse and invoke the name of the enemy. One then acquires *vetālasiddhi*, and the rival will suffer greatly."「復次成就法。用屍骨作頻那夜迦天像。長八指四臂三目。右第一手作施願印。第二手執滿髑髏血。左第一手執羯樁誐。第二手執人頭。如是作像已。用三辣毒藥芥子鹽曼陀羅子。同和如埞,塗彼天像。作三角護摩爐。燒佉儞囉木火。以人肉作護摩。於此火上炙彼天像。不久之間所有他軍。自各馳走悉皆除滅. 復用前像用毒藥塗像。以屍火炙稱彼名字。得吠多拏鬼執魅。彼人受大苦惱。」(*Chin kang sa to so p'in na ye chia t'ien ch'eng chiou yi kuei ching* 金剛薩埵說頻那夜迦天成就儀軌經, in *Taishō*, vol. 21, no. 1272, pp. 312c–313a) On the other hand, it is a real surprise that the cult of Vetāla is recorded in the Vinaya texts. To give an instance: "What is Vetāla?

Harṣacarita, Kathāsaritsāgara *and* Vetālapañcaviṃśatikā

The most famous literary expression about the cult of Vetāla prior to *Vetālapañcaviṃśatikā* is in the *Harṣacarita*, a mid-seventh-century masterpiece by Bāṇa. In this exceedingly stylistically ornate work, the Vetāla story (*The Harshacarita of Bāna*: 44–55) not only possess great cultic significance[43] but also narrates a dramatic Tantric duel between the king and the heretic. Most important, the sequence of events in the *Harṣacarita* provides the basic mode of storyline for the later Vetāla story literature in which the crucial but intricate relationship between king, Tantric practitioner and Vetāla is firmly established.

In the story, a Śaiva practitioner named Bhairavācārya seeks to acquire magic power of the *vidyādharas* (*vidyādharatvatṛṣṇa*) through the backing of King Harṣa's legendary ancestor Puṣpabhūti. To instigate him into assistance, first, he presents the king five silver lotuses each time when he goes to see him and finally, bestows upon him an extraordinary sword named *aṭṭahāsa* (Śiva's laughter). In the end, he requests the monarch's assistance for the time to come when he performs a powerful Śaiva ritual called Mahākālāhṛdaya which culminates in the subduing evocation of Vetāla (*vetālasādhana*). They agree to meet

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A certain bhikṣu on the fourteenth of *kṛṣṇapakṣa*, having acquired a corpse and having chanted mantra, he enjoined the corpse to stand up. Having washed and clothed him, he placed a knife in his hand. He then muttered: 'I will make you a vetāla.' Then, he started to chant mantra. This is called *Vetālasiddhi*. If the foe already entered *samādhi*, or attained *nirvāṇa*, or accomplished *karuṇāśayasamādhi*, or was rescued by the mantra of a powerful mantrin, or was protected by a powerful tutelary, then he would not be harmed. As a result, the bhikṣu who started the mantra should first provide a sheep like it was a plantain. If he could not slay the above-mentioned person, he should exterminate the sheep like the plant was destroyed. Things would be fine if this were done. Otherwise the bhikṣu would be annihilated instead. This is called Vetāla."「毘陀羅者。有比丘以二十九日，求全身死人，召鬼咒，尸令起。水洗著衣著刀手中。若心念若口說。我爲某故作毘陀羅。即讀咒術。是名毘陀羅成。若所欲殺人。或入禪定。或入滅盡定。或入慈心三昧。若有大力咒師護念救解。若有大力天神守護。則不能害。是作咒比丘。先辦一羊。若得芭蕉樹。若不得殺前人者。當殺是羊若殺是樹。如是作者善。若不爾者還殺是比丘。是名毘陀羅。」(*Shih song lü* 十誦律 (*Sarvāsitivāda Vinaya*) in *Taishō*, vol. 23, no. 1435, p. 9b–c).

[43] Kane, *Harshacarita of Bāṇabhaṭṭa*, p. 50: "When the day came to a close, a ruddy hue spread over the regions, as if someone has made an offering of blood oblation to ensure the success of the ritual. The sun's rays hung down like the tongues of Vetāla are covetous for the offering of blood." (*tataḥ pariṇate divese kenāpi karmasādhanaya kṛtarudhiralividānāsviva lohitāyamānāsu dikṣu, rudhirabalilampāsu ca vetālajihvāsviva lambamānāsu ca ravidīdhitiṣu*.)

in the empty house near the great cremation ground on the fourteenth night of the dark fortnight.

When the agreed time finally arrives, the king goes to the cremation ground to meet Bhairavācārya. Dressed entirely in black-with black unguents, black amulet and black garment- (*kṛṣṇāṅgarāga, kṛṣṇapratisara, kṛṣṇavāsas*), Bhairavācārya sits on the chest of a corpse, undertaking a fire ritual (*agnikārya*) in the mouth of a corpse and evokes the dead. Then a Nāga named Śrīkaṇṭha appears on the scene. After a marathon fight, the king defeats the Nāga Śrīkaṇṭha with his bare hands, only to find the Nāga is a twice-born with sacred thread. Eventually the evil person disappears and the goddess Śrī appears on the center of his sword. She bestows on Bhairavācārya the paraphernalia of a *vidyādhara*-special hair lock, diadem, pearl necklace, armlet, belt, hammer and sword. He then becomes a *vidyādhara*. She also confers on Puṣpabhūti a boon of a strong line of royal lineage, which in the long run leads to the poet's own patron, the king Harṣa.[44]

The above story describes circumstances in which Vetāla rituals are performed by a Tāntrika to acquire *siddhi* and become a *vidyādhara*. However, the Tantric practitioner requires the king's extraordinary assistance to complete the rituals, as the rival practitioner is a dangerous and formidable competitor equally covetous of magic powers. The Tāntrika has to eliminate his adversary in a tough and deadly ritual contest to guarantee success. In this story, the king as a true *vīra* (hero), not only guards for the Tantric practitioner, but also combats his ritual contender. His fervent devotion and daring deeds guarantee his future royal descendent universal kingship. (*cakravartī tribhuvanavijigīṣu*)

As mentioned above, the interaction between the king, Tantric practitioner and Vetāla found in the *Harṣacarita* provides the frame theme for the later narratives called the Vetāla stories.[45] While the breathtak-

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[44] Cf. Vasudeva S. Agrawala, *The Deeds of Harsha: Being a cultural study of Bāṇa's Harshacharita* (Varanasi: Prithivi Prakashan, 1969), pp. 82–85.

[45] As argued by both Davidson, *Indian Esoteric Buddhism: A History of the Tantric Movement*, pp. 171–76, and White, *Kiss of the Yoginī: "Tantric Sex" in Its South Asian Contexts*, pp. 104–47, that the relationship between kings and Tāntrikas in medieval Indian literary narrative is one of the most prominent features. Davidson argues: "The clear expression of many of these romantic novels is that the realm of the divine sorcerers (*vidyādhara*), whose spells empower their thaumaturgical ability, is directly approached through the cremation and charnel grounds at the margins of civilization, wherein are found outcastes (*mātaṅga*) and tribal people. The ethical nature of the siddhas attempting to secure these supernormal abilities is at best dubious, however, and at worst constitutes the most excessive form of criminal. Thus it takes a king or

ing scene of the Tantric duel provides a dramatic climax, the tales related by the Vetāla before the final showdown afford an interesting amusement (*vinoda*). These hilarious tales and a bloody Tantric fight brought the Vetāla stories worldwide fame as they gradually spread throughout Asia.

The Vetāla stories consists of twenty-four marvelous tales narrated by a Vetāla for King Trivikramasena's (or Vikramāditya) amusement and a thrilling climax in which the Vetāla recedes, the king kills the evil mendicant and becomes the sovereign over the *vidyādharas* (*vidyādharāṇāmadhirāja*). This collection is usually called the *Vetāla-pañcaviṃśatikā*. In India, five Sanskrit recensions are extant. One important recession is by Kṣemendra in his *Bṛhatkathāmañjarī* (Blossoms of Great Stories), which consists of 1203 *ślokas*. Another equally important one is by Somadeva in the *Kathāsaritsāgara* (Ocean of Streams of Stories), which consists of 2196 *ślokas*.[46] The other three are: Jambhaladatta (in prose), Vallabhadāssa (prose and verse mixed) and Śivadāsa (prose and verse mixed).[47] Versions of these popular tales also exist in Hindi, Bengali, Marathi, Tamil, Telugu and almost every Hindu vernacular.[48]

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great warrior to ensure the stability of the law (*dharma*) in the face of such powerful and self-absorbed individuals." (Davidson, *Indian Esoteric Buddhism: A History of the Tantric Movement*, p. 176.)

[46] These two versions may represent two different renderings of the *Bṛhatkathā* of Guṇāḍhya. For the related issues, see Arthur B. Keith, *A History of Sanskrit Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1928), pp. 266–88. Emeneau compares literary style in these two important recensions and points out the main difference between them: "The large number of ornamental passage for which Somadeva has no equivalents shows…that Kṣemendra's chief was *kāvya*, while Somadeva's was narrative." (M. Emeneau, "Kṣemendra as *kavi*," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 53.2(1933): 141.)

[47] Moriz Winternitz, Subhadra Jha trans., *History of Indian Literature* vol. 3 (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1985), pp. 365–68; see also K. Kamimura 上村勝彦 trans., *Siki-nijugowa: Indodenkishu* 屍鬼二十五話:インド伝奇集 (Tokyo: Hebonsha, 1978), pp. 294–96. "Jambhaladatta and Śivadāsa provide a second and a third independent version. The shadowy Vallabhadāsa version is…nothing but a sub-version of Śivadāsa, if it may be dignified with even as much independence as this." (M. Emeneau, "A Story of Vikrama's Birth and Accession," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 55.1 (1935): 59)

[48] Outside India, we have Nepali and Newari versions of Vetāla stories in Nepal. There is also a Tibetan version: *Ro langs gsera sgrub kyi sgrung*, and a Mongolian version: *Siddha-kür*. In Tibetan and Mongolian versions of Vetāla stories, the contents are modified because of the influence of Buddhism. There are also different recensions in these two languages and considerable variation exists among them. The protagonist becomes Prince Nāgārjuna, (after the Mādhyamika philosopher) who carries the corpse (with Vetāla inside). Vetāla narrates stories to the prince but the motif of question and

Among these recessions, the most renowned version is the one in the *Kathāsaritsāgara* (probably finalized between 1063–1083 A.D.), which becomes the most famous portion of the book.[49] There are 18 *lambakas*, 124 *tanaṅgas*, 21388 *ślokas* in the *Kathāsaritsāgara*. The *Kathāsaritsāgara*, attributed to Somadeva, is famed for its spirited and entertaining narrative. Story after story and sometime stories within a story, displays the identifying features of Indian narrative literature. From Guṇāḍhya's *Bṛhatkathā* (*Great Narrative*) the *Kathāsaritsāgara* of Somadeva is said to have been adapted and abridged. Somadeva recounts his rendering of the *Kathāsaritsāgara*:

> This book [*Kathāsaritsāgara*] has been faithful to its original, not even the smallest is transgressed at all. Merely the voluminous text is abridged, and the language is altered [from original *Bṛhatkathā* written in Piśāca to Sanskrit]. The fitness and logical connection of words are carefully preserved to the utmost of one's power. The portion of poetics is joined so long as it does not hurt the essence of a story. This endeavor of mine is not to obtain the fame of dexterity, but to bring about the easy accessibility [for the reader] in remembering woven structure of stories various in kind.[50]

Somadeva's style is fluent and crisp. The harmony between sound (*śabda*) and sense (*artha*), as present in his gripping narration, is a rarity in Sanskrit literature. In quest of excellence, his work has become one of the

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answer does not surface. However, the prince cannot help uttering his own comments on the incredibility of the plot. Like what happens in the Sanskrit version, the Vetāla returns to its original abode repeatedly. The relationship between different Tibetan and Mongolian recensions remains to be unraveled. (Kamimura, *Sikinijugowa: Indodenkishu* 屍鬼二十五話:インド伝奇集, pp. 297–98)

[49] Durgāprasad, Pandit and Kâśînâth Pândurang Parab eds., *The Kathāsaritsāgara of Somadeva Bhaṭṭa* (Bombay: Nirnaya Sagar Press, 1889; Reprinted, Motilal Banarsidass, 1970). *Vetālapañcaviṃśatikā* in the *Kathāsaritsāgara* is from *Aṣṭamastaraṅga* to *Dvātriṃśastaraṅga* (chapter 8 to 32 in vol. 12 of the *Kathāsaritsāgara* pp. 405–67.) Kamimura provides a good deal of valuable information and an extensive bibliography of secondary sources on Vetāla and Vetāla stories in his Japanese translation of the *Vetālapañcaviṃśatikā*. (Kamimura, *Sikinijugowa: Indodenkishu* 屍鬼二十五話: インド伝奇集, pp. 280–311)

[50] *yathā mūlaṃ tathaivaitanna manāgapyatikramaḥ/*
granthvistarasaṃkṣepamātraṃ bhāṣā ca bhidyate//
aucityānvayarakṣā ca yathāśakti vidhīyate/
kathārasāvighātena kāvyāṃśasya ca yojanā//
vaidagdhyakhyātilobhāya mama naivāyamudyamaḥ/
kiṃ tu nānākathājālasmṛtisaukaryasiddhaye// (1, 1: 10–12)

few notable classics of Sanskrit Indian culture. Indeed, his work is one
of the best in the world's narrative traditions.[51] According to Speyer:

> He [Somadeva] display in a high degree *l'art de faire un livre*. His narra-
> tive captivates both by its simply and clear, though very elegant, style and
> diction and by his skill in drawing with a few strokes pictures of types and
> characters taken from the real every-day life. Hence it is that even in the
> miraculous and fantastical facts and events that make up the bulk of the
> main story and of a great deal of incidental tales the interest of the reader
> is uninterruptedly kept. His lively and pleasant art of story-telling…is
> enhanced also by his native humour and the elegant and pointed sentences
> strewn about here and there with a good taste.[52]

The incorporation of the *Vetālapañcaviṃśatikā* into the general frame-
work of "romantic tale"[53] in the *Kathāsaritsāgara* makes sense. As the
motif of the *vidyādhara* in the *Kathāsaritsāgara* is widespread, the
frame story of the *Vetālapañcaviṃśatikā* develops this overriding theme
well. Speyer points out that phantasmal imagery of the *vidyādhara* is
omnipresent in the *Kathāsaritsāgara*:

> In short, the Kathāsaritsāgara is an assemblage of fairy tales. Devas,
> Asuras, Nāgas, Yakṣas, Rakāṃsi etc., but most of all, the Vidyādharas
> abound in them; the magic arts, the intuitive omniscience obtained by
> men possessing miraculous powers, their flying through the air and
> commanding of spirits, their transformation of men into animals and
> inversely, the hideous occult rites of magicians and witches as well as
> *divine intercession and divine protection* are dealt with, as if they were
> the most natural things in the world.[54]

I call the *Vetālapañcaviṃśatikā* a Tantric fantasy because of the fantastic
features of the *vidyādhara*'s realm. Winternitz already observed this
Tantric connection and said that the *Vetālapañcaviṃśatikā* "originated
on the soil of Tantrism, so much as that they can [*sic*] be associated with
religion."[55] He also suggested that Vetāla-cult "certainly belongs to the
Śaiva-Tantrism, whence in any case it might have been taken over to
Tantric Buddhism."[56] But the plight of the evil mendicant (*ku-bhikṣu*)

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[51] Cf. Kamimura, *Sikinijugowa: Indodenkishu* 屍鬼二十五話:インド伝奇集,
pp. 284–86.

[52] Jacob S. Speyer, *Studies about the Kathāsaritsāgara* (Amsterdam: Johannes Mül-
ler, 1908), pp. 23–24.

[53] Keith, *A History of Sanskrit Literature*, p. 288.

[54] Speyer, *Studies about the Kathāsaritsāgara*, p. 4, italics mine.

[55] Winternitz, *History of Indian Literature* vol. 3, p. 367.

[56] Winternitz, *History of Indian Literature* vol. 3, p. 367, footnote 6.

in the last story indicates that this monk must be a Buddhist yogin as he was mocked by Śiva as a "violent lover of the universal kingship over the *vidhyādharas*" (*vidyādharamahācakravartitāhaṭhakāmuka*) and was slain by the king. The *cakravartin* is a familiar Buddhist usage, and the name Kṣāntiśīla smacks of Buddhist ascetic qualities. The antagonism between Buddhist and Śaiva Tantric practitioners is displayed here.

The whole sequence of events of the *Vetālapañcaviṃśatikā* in the *Kathāsaritsāgara* runs as follows:

Bhikṣu Kṣantiśīla desired to attain *siddhi* through the cult of Vetāla and King Trivikramasena was targeted for achieving this goal. Thus, each day he gave king precious gems disguised as fruit. The king remained ignorant for ten years while the patient mendicant waited for the next move. One day, when King Trivikramasena found out what happened, he readily promised him help. Kṣantiśīla then asked him to go to a nearby cremation ground on a moonless *kṛṣnapakṣa* night to assist him in performing a magic spell (*mantrasādhana*). The king went and the mendicant was pleased. He asked him to take down the hanging corpse on the trunk of a *śiṃśapā* tree nearby and bring it back.

Eventually, Trivikramasena carried the corpse (Vetāla within) the whole dark night near that cremation ground, listened to engagingly eccentric tales recounted by the Vetāla and answered all the bizarre questions raised by the Vetāla at the end of each story except the last one. Here, Vetāla as a master of gripping narration appears to be uncanny. However, as he is occupying a dead body, the Vetāla's stunning stories make sense. In fact, Vetāla uses different skillful means to check the courage, intelligence and resolution of the king.

These twenty-four exquisite tales, narrated by Vetāla for a king's amusement, are mostly intricate love stories. Nonetheless, they are also a series of tests of a future *vidyādhara*. The last episode (the twenty-fifth) as the later part of the frame story is the climax of the Vetāla stories. This breathtaking scene ends in a glorious triumph of virtue over vice. Heresy cannot overthrow the orthodoxy.[57]

Carrying the corpse on his shoulder, King Trivikramsena approached the mendicant Kṣantiśīla. He saw that the mendicant was alone at the foot of a tree near cremation ground which was inauspicious (*raudra*) in the dark night of the black fortnight, eagerly awaiting the king's arrival. He was inside a circle (*maṇḍala*) made with the yellow powder of bones (*gaureṇāsticūrṇena*) the inside ground smeared with blood (*asṛjliptastale*).

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[57] My rendering here is partly based on Tawney's faithful translation.

The pitchers, full of blood, (*vinyastapūrṇaśoṇitakumbhaka*) were placed in the direction of the cardinal points. The ground was illuminated with candles of human fat (*mahātaila*), and near it was a fire fed with oblations (*hutapārśvasthavahni*). The necessary preparations for a sacrificial ritual were fully furnished, and the mendicant was worshiping his favorite deity (*sveṣṭadaivatapūjana*).

The king went up to the mendicant. The mendicant then praised the king for his unbending courage and generosity. Whereupon, the mendicant, thinking he had gained his end, took the corpse down from the king's shoulder. He bathed and anointed it, threw a garland round it, and placed it within the circle. The mendicant then smeared his limbs with ashes, and put on a sacrificial hair thread (*keśayajñopavītabhṛt*). He clothed himself in the garments of the dead (*pretavasana*), and thus equipped, continued to meditate. Then, the mendicant summoned the mighty Vetāla by the power of spells (*mantrabalāhūta*),[58] made him enter the corpse, and proceeded to worship him. He offered the Vetāla an oblation of perfectly pure human teeth (*sunirmalanaradantās*) in a skull by way of an *argha* vessel (*kapālārghapātreṇārghya*), and presented him flowers and fragrant unguents. He then gratified him with aromatic vapor of human eyes (*manūṣanetrairdhūpa*), and made an offering of human flesh (*māṁsairbali*) to him. When finishing worship, he said to the king: "King, fall on the ground, and do obeisance with all your eight limbs to this high sovereign of spells (*mantrādhirāja*) who has appeared here, in order that his bestower of boons may grant you the accomplishment of your heart's desire."

Then he asked the king to lie down on the ground. But the king, remembering what the Vetāla told him, requested the mendicant to show him how to do it. When the mendicant was throwing himself on the ground, the king cut off his head with a sword, dragged the lotus of his heart out of his body and offered his heart and head as two lotuses to that Vetāla.

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[58] In *Bṛhatsaṃhitā* of of Varāhamihira, we find the following description on Vetāla mantra:

The term *vetāla* means that act of infusing life into a dead body with the help of the *mantras* (*śava-śarīrasya mantraiḥ punar utthāpanaṁ vetālaḥ*, on LXVIII.37). Mention is made of those well-versed in the doings of *vetāla* (*vetāla-karmajña*, XV.4). It was believed that if a *vetālīya* rite was wrongly performed, it spelled the ruin of the doer himself (*vinihanti tad eva karma tān vetāilīyam iv-āyathākṛtam*, CIII. 59). (Ajay M. Shastri, *India as Seen in the Bṛhatsaṃhitā of Varāhamihira* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1969), pp. 188–89.)

At this moment, the delighted hosts of spirits uttered shouts of applause on every side, and Vetāla said to the king from inside of the corpse: "King, the sovereignty over the *vidyādharas* (*vidyādharendratva*),[59] which this mendicant was aiming at, shall fall to your lot after you have finished the enjoyment of your earthly sway. Because I have given you much annoyance, choose whatever boon you desire." After Vetāla spoke, the king responded: "Since you are pleased with me, every boon that I could desire is obtained; nevertheless, as your words cannot be uttered in vain, I crave this boon of you: may these twenty-four questions and answers, charming with their various tales, and this conclusion, the twenty-five of the series, be all famous, be all honored and renowned on earth!" Vetāla agreed with the royal request and answered: "The twenty-five stories of a Vetāla should be famous and honored on earth! Whoever reads respectfully even a *śloka* of it, hears it read he should immediately be freed from their curse. And *yakṣas, vetālas, kuṣmāṇḍas, and ḍākinīs, rākṣasas* and so forth have no power where it is recited." He then abandoned the corpse, using his supernatural deluding power (*yogamāyā*), went to his desired habitat.

At this point Śiva, supreme Lord of the Universe, being pleased, appeared, together with the gods, and said to the king as he bowed before him: "*sādhu, sādhu*, my son, today you have killed this hypocritical mendicant, who was such a violent lover of the universal kingship over the *vidyādharas*. I created you as a heroic king to defeat an audacious evildoer. So you will bring your sway to the earth with the islands below, and become the supreme ruler over the *vidyādharas*."

Śiva seems to be pulling strings behind the scenes. But as King Trivikramasena is his ardent devotee, his brave deeds and brilliant exploits deserve a reward. The king survived severe tests with noble

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[59] Strickmann, *Mantras et Mandarins: Le bouddhisme tantrique en Chine*, pp. 42–43: "Disposant de toutes ces ressources, il n'est guère étonnant que les maîtres tantriques aient exercé un tel degré de fascination sur les monarques à travers l'Asie tout entière. Outre les avantages de la civilisation indienne, les rituels tantriques mobilisent des forces divines d'une puissance formidable, et les rendent visibles ici-bas de façon spectaculaire. D'une manière ou d'une autre, ils se concentrent sur le *pouvoir*, et s'offrent donc comme véhicules propices à l'exaucement de toutes sortes de vœux. Loin de confirmer la vieille idée selon laquelle le tantrisme était de quelque manière associé aux parias ou aux basses classes, les témoignages en provenance de toute l'Asie médiévale montrent qu'll était en fait la province des *plus hautes classes*, des souverains (et des prétendants à la souveraineté). À telle enseigne que le ritual tantrique est rapidement devenu l'un des mystères contraux de la royauté, et, s'il faut ici déceler un mouvement social net, c'est encore und fois vers le bas et vers l'extérieur, des cours vers les provinces et le peuple."

heroism and generous remuneration was his. One day he will surely become the world's most powerful king. But in fact, it is the Vetāla's uncanny shrewdness that saves the king. Furthermore, his fantastic stories will become ambrosia (*amṛtarasa*) for future generations, as the king well knew. Long live Vetāla and Vetāla stories!

Another appealing story of a Vetāla appears in Book 12 of the *Kathāsaritsāgara*. Śrīdarśana heard that with the help of Vetāla mantra, king Śrīsena's disease would be healed. He therefore made a prior arrangement with a magician (*mantravādī*). On one dark night of fortnight, Śrīdarśana, armed with a sword, went to a cremation ground. A magician asked him to get a corpse from a *śiṃśapā* tree. When he arrived there, someone else was carrying the corpse. The two people started fighting which frightened the Vetāla inside the corpse, who thereupon cried out. The Śrīdarśana's rival was shocked by that cry and died of a heart attack. Śrīdarśana then carried the corpse (with Vetāla) and was about to leave when another dead body (also resided in by a Vetāla) stood up thwarting Śrīdarśana. They both claimed to be friends of the corpse. The disputed corpse said: "Whoever gives me food is my friend." But when Śrīdarśana thought of cutting the meat from his rival, the rival's dead body disappeared. He then cut his own fresh and gave it to Vetāla. The pleased Vetāla made his body whole again. At last, Śrīdarśana was able to carry the corpse with Vetāla to the magician.

The magician started to worship Vetāla with *argha,* garlands and incense. He used the ash powder from human bones for encirclement, placing a vessel with blood on one side. He burned human fat to illuminate the place, and disposed of the corpse facing upwards. Thereafter, he ascended to the chest of the corpse, and using ladles made of human bones, offer *homa* to the corpse's mouth. At this moment, a flame suddenly burst from the corpse's mouth. The frightened magician tried to escape. However, Vetāla ran after him and eventually swallowed him (*too bad!*). Śrīdarśana thought to kill Vetāla and drew his sword. Vetāla, astonished by his courage, then gave the mustard-seeds to Śrīdarśana to heal the king. He also predicted in the future, Śrīdarśana would become a king of the whole earth. The king recovered his health and was very pleased with Śrīdarśana. Śrīdarśana was made a prince and married the king's daughter *Padmiṣṭhā*.[60]

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[60] *Ṣaṣṭhastaraṅga* in Durgāprasad, Pandit and Kâśînâth Pândurang Parab eds., *The Kathāsaritsāgara of Somadeva Bhaṭṭa*, pp. 392–93.

Finally, what does a Vetāla look like? In a later tale, it is said that while meditating on *Vetālasiddhi*, Mṛgāṅkadatta saw a ghostly apparition in his visualization:

> The Vetāla has the color of black antelope's skin, is camel-neck high and has the face of the elephant, the leg of the buffalo, the eye of the owl and the ear of the mule.[61]

Conclusion

This paper begins by examining the implications of religious transformation from Śramaṇism to Tantrism. Tantrism, as a common denominator of medieval Indian intellectual climate, reverses early dualistic thought and ascetic practice. The paradoxical thought embedded in Mādhyamika philosophy and Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad presages for later Tantric development. Dichotomy between this world and other-world, purity and impurity becomes blurred and transcended. Further ideational developments impact practices, and when eroticism mingles with asceticism, Tantrism as religious movement, is fashioned. The cult of Vetāla is an extreme Tantric ritual. It belongs to Śaiva Kāpālika, whose distinctive features are shared by Buddhist Tantras. The Kāpālikas, the "skull men", practice rituals in cremation grounds, offering meat, alcohol and other impure foods to the deities in order to harness their power.

The worship of Vetāla is one of the most horrendous Tantric practices, performed in the darkest hours of the month and requiring a corpse for the ritual's efficacy. In general, "cemetery cult" is inherent in the worship of ferocious spirits or deities. Thus, the cult of Mahāvidyās, Pretas, Bhūtas and other unruly powers often takes place in cremation ground. It is a Śaiva/Śākta ritual.

The cult of Vetāla is found not only in text but also in real life. In Nepal, it is said that as late as the nineteenth century that human sacrifice is furnished for Śiva and Vetāla receives the blood sacrifice offered in Śiva's name.

The *Vetālapañcaviṃśatikā* is a fascinating literary development of the cult of Vetāla. Important themes in the *Vetālapañcaviṃśatikā* of the *Kathāsaritsāgara* like the close relationship between king and

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[61] *sa api kṛṣṇacchviḥ prāṃśuruṣṭragrīvo gajānanaḥ /*
mahiṣāṅghrirulūkākṣo vetālaḥ kharakarṇakaḥ// (12,35:19)

Tāntrika and the aspiration of the *vidyādhara* are already found in Bāṇa's *Harṣacarita*. In the *Kathāsaritsāgara,* the Vetāla cult provides the frame story, while narrative dexterity and dramatic plot climax in a battle of wits between a king and a mendicant for magical power. The stories exhibit the prolific imagination of Indian author(s). Imagine a Vetāla narrating weird love stories inside a corpse to a king in the darkest hours of the month next to a fearsome cremation ground!

Vetāla is not only a storyteller but also the focal point of a cult materialized at the end. In this breathtaking climax, his voice retreats from of the scene. He becomes a silent observer and appears again only in the finale, conferring the immortality of Vetāla stories. His position as Śiva's messenger and stories' transmitter is brilliantly fulfilled. The stories also assume a bitter antagonism between the Śaiva and the Buddhist. The Buddhist mendicant represents the evildoer. The Hindu king is a man of his word. Śaiva cult is true religion and the Buddhist is a charlatan. In India, literature provides is a delightful detour to religious truth. It is safe to argue that literature in the broad Hindu context, even as belles-lettres or *kāvya*, is never devoid of its religious link, nor is it entirely *laukika* (worldly) in this premodern universe.

THE CULTURE OF GHOSTS IN THE SIX DYNASTIES PERIOD
(c. 220–589 C.E.)

Mu-chou Poo

The Development of the Concept of the Ghost in Early China

In early China the term *gui* 鬼 can roughly be equated with the term "ghost" in modern English, although other terms such *hun* 魂, *po* 魄, *ling* 靈, *mei* 魅, *wu* 物 and *guai* 怪, can all have the connotation of ghost in certain contexts.[1] The most common conception regarding the origin of *gui*-ghosts is that they are the spirits of deceased humans. Oftentimes, however, people in ancient China believed in the existence of ghosts or spirits of animals and even inanimate objects such as trees and rocks, just as E. B. Taylor pointed out long ago in *Primitive Culture*. It is noteworthy that although non-human spirits constitute a special category of beings in the Chinese belief system and folklore, and can rightly be treated separately,[2] in this article I prefer to include them in the category of *gui*-ghost, since during the Six Dynasties period, which is the period discussed here, it is often difficult to treat them differently from human ghosts, given their images, their behavior, their interaction with human beings, and their anthropomorphic nature in general.

Our understanding of *gui*-ghosts in early China is naturally limited and shaped by the available evidence. For the Shang (c. 17–11 century B.C.E.) period, the oracle bone inscriptions provide the main source of evidence. The *gui*-ghosts mentioned there are usually those deceased ancestors who caused certain diseases, especially to the kings

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[1] Mu-chou Poo, "The Concept of Ghost in Ancient Chinese Religion," in John Lagerwey ed., *Chinese Religion and Society* vol. 1 (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2004), pp. 173–91.

[2] For a discussion of the concept of *wu*, see Du Zhengsheng 杜正勝, "Gudai wuguai zhi yanjiu 古代物怪之研究," *Dalu Zazhi* 大陸雜誌 104, 1 (2001): 1–14; 104, 2 (2001): 1–15; 104, 3 (2001): 1–10. For the idea of *mei*, see Lin Fu-shih, "Shi mei: yi Xian Qin zhi Dong Han shiqi de wenxian ziliao weizhu de kaocha 釋魅: 以先秦至東漢時期的文獻資料爲主的考察," in Pu Muzhou 蒲慕州 (Mu-chou Poo) ed., *Guimei shenmo: Zhongguo tongsu wenhua cexie* 鬼魅神魔: 中國通俗文化側寫 (Taipei: Maitian, 2005), pp. 109–34.

and nobles. The information provided by these texts basically relates to what the ghosts did, but not the reasons why they did it, or where they came from. Nor is there any information on the appearance of the ghosts. For the Zhou dynasty (c. 1046–256 B.C.E.), the persona of *gui*-ghosts gradually takes shape, as more textual evidence related to ghosts gradually appears. In general two views of *gui*-ghosts can be deduced from the textual and iconographical evidence of this period. The view represented by certain elite-intellectuals, later known for convenience sake as the Confucians, regards ghosts as formless and invisible beings. As such, they could not have possessed any concrete image. Yet it is perhaps against human cognitive instinct to imagine a "being" that could exert power and influence on people's lives yet without having a form. Thus this view belonged to the minority even amongst the elites. Instead, most people in our sources tend to take the position that ghosts, despite their illusive nature, are a kind of tangible existence perceptible by human senses.

In fact, most religious sacrifices of this and the previous period imply a belief in the concrete nature of ghosts and spirits. One passage in the *Zuozhuan*, the major source for the history of the Eastern Zhou (c. 770–256 B.C.E.) period, mentions that even ghosts needed to be fed, which is a clear indication of the anthropomorphic imagination of the nature of the ghost.[3] It is unlikely that the author of the *Zuozhuan* would have fabricated an idea that was not already accepted in the common mentality, since presumably he is striving to convince his audience. Thus the passage could serve as an indication of the general religious mentality of the time. In the book of *Mozi*, written during the early fourth century B.C.E., the author uses a common-sense approach to prove the existence of ghosts by quoting incidences where people claimed to have seen ghosts.[4] Regardless of the logical problem inherent in *Mozi*'s argument, it is undeniable that the author's words are representative of the common conception of ghost in his time.

Since they are regarded as concrete beings, it follows that *gui*-ghosts must have possessed certain physical attributes. Of course, exactly how a ghost should look can vary greatly from one instance to another. The general impression is that ghosts could possess certain strange

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[3] *Zuozhuan* 21: 21, Mu-chou Poo, *In Search of Personal Welfare* (Albany: State University of New York Pess, 1998), p. 55.

[4] Wu Yujiang 吳毓江, *Mozi jiaozhu* 墨子校注 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1993), p. 337.

or ferocious features, either in human or in animal form, although not completely beyond imagination. This accessibility of ghosts to the human senses formed the basis of the subsequent development of the culture of ghosts in Chinese history.[5]

The Intellectual and Social Milieu of the Era of Disunity

The second half of the Second Century C.E. saw the beginning of the disintegration of the Han empire. The reasons are multifarious: fierce court politics between official literati, royal relatives and inner court eunuchs; the rise of local powers in the northern, southern, and western provinces; the rise of the Yellow Turbans, a collection of distressed and armed cult groups who propagated the coming of a new era; and the warlords who, by subduing the Yellow Turbans, developed and expanded their own military power and finally brought down the unified state and created the Three Kingdoms. From the rise of the Yellow Turbans in 184 until the reunification of the country under Emperor Wu of Jin dynasty in 280, therefore, China had undergone a century of political, social, and intellectual turmoil. Confucian tradition was challenged by Buddhism and Daoist philosophy; ordinary citizens tried to search for a way of getting around the harsh life, whether through traditional worship of spirits and deities, or through the new teachings of Daoist masters or Buddhist monks.[6]

A partial view of the general mentality of the late Eastern Han can be illustrated by Ying Shao's (c. 165–204 C.E.) description of the contemporary customs. He mentions that during the year 125 C.E. when a great epidemic was raging in the Luoyang area, a rumor had it that there was a malicious plague ghost by the name of Youguang. No one has ever seen this ghost, but he caused the plague to occur year after year. The way to ward off this ghost, as Ying Shao reports in his *A Penetrating Account of Manners and Customs* (*Fengsu tongyi*), is to tie a piece of newly woven silk cloth on the doorway.[7] A similar custom

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[5] Poo, "The Concept of Ghost in Ancient Chinese Religion," pp. 173–91.

[6] For the historical background of the Later Han, see B. J. Mansvelt Beck, "The Fall of Han," in Denis Twitchett and Michael Loewe eds., *The Cambridge History of China vol. I The Ch'in and Han Empires, 221 B.C.–A.D. 220* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 317–76.

[7] Wang Liqi 王利器, *Fengsu tongyi jiaozhu* 風俗通義校注 (Taipei: Mingwen 1988 reprint), p. 605.

of decorating the door with red string and a five-colored stamp made of peach wood is said to be able to create a certain apotropaic effect of warding off *gui*-ghosts or evil spirits.

The fact that this exorcistic method was practiced widely and transmitted to the later generations indicates that there was a certain sense of anxiety in society, an anxiety that was connected not only with the current plague, but even more with the almost unknown factor of the ghosts that caused the plague. Thus according to *A Penetrating Account of Manners and Customs*:

> By custom, [the people of] Guiji favored excessive cults and preferred divination. Everyone sacrificed by offering cattle. Shamans exacted money and gifts (from the people), but the people did not dare to refuse for fear that they be cursed by the shamans. Thus people's wealth was spent on ghosts and spirits, and their properties were consumed by sacrifices. Some poor families who were unable to make timely sacrifice did not even dare to eat beef. [It is said that] a person about to die from illness would make the mooing sound of cattle. That is how they fear (the shamans).[8]

In a sense, people were controlled by the local shamans because they believed that they were threatened by various ghosts, and only shamans could save them from the attack of ghosts and evil spirits. A collective mentality that betrays a deep anxiety can be felt here.

In the "Rhapsody on the Eastern Capital" (*Dongjing fu* 東京賦) by a famous scholar Zhang Heng 張衡, the ritual of the Great Exorcism (*dano* 大儺) performed at the years' end was described in a most vivid fashion. The main concern of the ritual was also the expulsion of the evil spirits that caused illness to the people.[9] As a form of regular ritual activity with a long history in society, it is an expression of a constant apprehension of unknown misfortune.

The plague was not to go away easily, and took many lives regardless of social position. A late Eastern Han physician by the name Zhang Zhongjing wrote in the preface to his medical treatise the following words:

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[8] Wang Liqi, *Fengsu tongyi jiaozhu*, p. 401.

[9] Poo, *In Search of Personal Welfare*, pp. 132–33; Derk Bodde, *Festivals in Classical China* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), pp. 117–27; Lee Fengmao 李豐楙, "Daozang suoshou zaoqi daoshu de wenyi guan 道藏所收早期道書的瘟疫觀," in *Zhongguo wenzhe yanjiu jikan* 中國文哲研究集刊 3 (1993): 417–52; esp. 420–22. Also Mu-chou Poo, "Ritual and Ritual Texts in Early China," in John Lagerwey ed., *Early Chinese Religion, Part I: Shang through Han* (Leiden: Brill, forthcoming).

> My family had more than two hundred members, yet not more than ten
> years passed since the Jian-an era and two-thirds have died, and seven
> out of ten of them died of coldness.[10]

The Jian-an era that Zhang referred to was actually the year 196 C.E.
when a plague broke out in the capital. During the final years of the
Eastern Han, the raging plague was still a subject that deeply troubled
many people, as Cao Pi 曹丕 (187–226 C.E.), later Emperor Wen of
Wei, said in a letter to his friend:

> During the plague of that year (i.e., 217 C.E.), many friends and relatives
> fell victim, and Xu Gan, Chen Lin, Ying Yang, and Liu Zhen all passed
> away together.[11]

Cao Zhi 曹植 (192–232 C.E.), the younger brother of Cao Pi, also wrote
an essay "On the Qi of Infectious Disease" in which he mentioned the
current belief in the ghost of the plague:

> In the twenty-second year of Jian-an (217 C.E.), the infectious disease
> roamed about, every family experienced the pain of death, and every
> household was mourning with sad outcry. Some families died out com-
> pletely, other clans perished altogether. People thought that the disease
> was caused by ghosts and spirits.... This is because *yin* and *yang* are dis-
> located and hot and cold weathers missed their proper time. This is why
> disease comes about. And yet foolish people hang talismans to exorcise
> it, which is quite laughable.[12]

Cao Zhi's rebuttal referred to a common belief that it was ghosts who
caused the plague. In the same spirit, early Daoist texts such as the
Taishang dongyuan shenzhoujing often mention the raging ghosts of
plague and the widespread destruction they brought:

> The Dao says: There are great ghost lords in the country: Deng Ai, Zhong
> Shiji, Zhao Shan, Wang Mang, Li Ao, Du Zhou, ...etc. There are these
> great ghost-lords. Some people nowadays worship Emperor Wu and King

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[10] See Zhang Zhongjing's preface to his work, in Chen Yiren 陳亦人 ed., *Shang-hanlun yishi* 傷寒論譯釋 (Shanghai: Shanghai kexue jishu chubanshe, 1995).

[11] Yan Kejun 嚴可均, *Quan Shanggu sandai Qin Han Sanguo Liuchao wen/ Quan Sanguo wen* 全上古三代秦漢三國六朝文/全三國文 (Taipei: Shijie shuju, 1982), 7: 5b. For the date of the plague, see Chen Shou 陳壽, *Sanguozhi* 三國志 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1971), p. 602, also, *Sanguozhi*, p. 51. For a detailed list of all the recorded epidemics and natural disasters in Chinese history, see Satō Taketoshi 佐藤武敏, *Chūgoku saigaishi nempyō* 中国災害史年表 (Tokyo: Kogushu kankōkai, 1993).

[12] Yan Kejun, *Quan Shanggu sandai Qin Han Sanguo Liuchao wen/ Quan Sanguo wen*, 18: 8–9.

> Wen, whose shrines continue to be supplied by the people, and who each commanded troops and haunted people everywhere, and killed people with diseases year in and year out, and cause to circulate tens of thousands of kinds of diseases. Some cause bodily fatigue, cold, fever and diarrhea, swelling with water in the stomach, or the black disease with pain in the head and eyes, and fever in the chest and on the back. Others cause yellow sickness, loss of voice and difficulty swallowing.[13]

Diseases, according to such an understanding, were therefore caused by the ghosts of the deceased people, emperors and soldiers alike.[14] The purpose of the *Taishang dongyuan shenzhoujing* was to prepare the Daoist adepts to perform various ritual incantations to exorcise the disease-causing ghosts. Although probably written in the Fifth century, the text could very probably have reflected the social reality of an earlier period. Thus we see a connection between people's fear of plague and of the attack of ghosts, as confirmed also by the ghost Youguang reported by Ying Shao.

Moreover, the general anxiety might have been caused not only by the plague, but equally, if not more, by the incessant warfare at the end of the Eastern Han. In 184 C.E., the Yellow Turban uprising caused great turbulence in the country, which affected the lives of millions of people. The uprising was suppressed within one year, yet immediately afterwards a serious plague broke out, which might have caused the destruction of people's daily life by the wide-spread warfare of the previous year.[15]

The suppression of the Yellow Turbans did not mean the end of warfare. On the contrary, in addition to numerous local rebellions, a series of civil battles began to be waged between several powerful military leaders; some claimed to be the remnants of the Yellow Turbans, but some used other appellations.[16] The incessant warfare finally set off the downfall of the Han Dyansty. The disastrous aftermath of the civil wars was noted in more than one passage in the *History of the Later Han*:

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[13] *Daozang*, 6: 25, *Taishang dongyuan shenzhoujing* 太上洞淵神咒經 7: 5b.

[14] See Lin Fushih 林富士, "Donghan wanqi de jiyi yu zongjiao 東漢晚期的疾疫與宗教," *Lishi yuyan yanjiusuo jikan* 歷史語言研究所集刊 66, 3 (1995): 695–745. See also Li Fengmao 李豐楙, "Dongyuan shenzhoujing de shenmoguan ji qi kezhishuo 洞淵神咒經的神魔觀及其剋治說," *Dongfang zongjiao yanjiu* 東方宗教研究 (new series) 2 (1991): 133–54.

[15] *Houhanshu* 後漢書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1971), 8: 351.

[16] *Houhanshu* 71: 2301.

> At the time bandits and thieves roamed about in Changan without restriction and pillaged during the day. Therefore Li Que, Guo Fan and Zhou divided the city into three parts, each guarding his border. Still, the situation could not be controlled. Yet their subjects were abusing power and taxing the people. At the time the price of grain was one bucket for half million coins, and the price of bean and barley was two hundred thousand coins. People were eating each other, white bones gathered in piles and filthy refuse filled the road.[17]

It is notable that Ying Shao, the author of *A Penetrating Account of Manners and Customs*, was one of the local officials who fought with the Yellow Turbans.[18] His account of the local custom of shamanistic activities should therefore be viewed in the context of a time of social unrest and widespread disease and anxiety.

Ying Shao's experience was not unique. Throughout the Eastern Han there was a constant confrontation between local officials and the magicians (*fangshi* 方士) who were known to be able to wield supernatural powers in various ways, many of which directly related to the livelihood of ordinary people.[19] The fact that stories about the magicians were preserved in the written as well as oral tradition indicates that the society as a whole was not regarding the magical stories as all nonsense but something worth reporting and even aspiring to. The underlying mentality was one that craved for the extraordinary in a time of seemingly endless distress. A type of bronze mirror current in the late Eastern Han period has the following inscriptions:

> The Royal Workshop made this mirror so that the barbarians would be subdued, the country blessed and people rested, the barbarians destroyed and all under heaven rejuvenated, the seasons in tune and the five grains ripened.[20]

Here is a personal but also collective prayer voiced at a time when barbarians from the northwest were invading, and the domestic situation was in deep trouble. This is in glaring contrast to another type

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[17] *Houhanshu* 72: 2336.
[18] *Houhanshu* 9: 372.
[19] See Poo, *In Search of Personal Welfare*, chapter 8. For *fangshi*, see Kenneth J. DeWoskin tr., *Doctors, diviners, and magicians of ancient China: Biographies of fangshih* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983).
[20] Kong Xiangxing 孔祥星 and Liu Yiman 劉一曼, *Zhongguo gudai tongjing* 中國古代銅鏡 (Beijin: Wenwu, 1984), p. 97; cf. Michael Loewe, *Ways to Paradise: The Chinese Quest for Immortality* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1979), pp. 194–95.

of mirror inscription, current since the Western Han that describes a future life among the immortals:

> The Royal Workshop made this mirror and truly it is very fine. Upon it are immortal beings oblivious of old age. When they thirst they drink from the spring of jade, when they hunger they feed on jujubes. They roam at large throughout the world, wandering between the four oceans. They rove at will on the well-known hills plucking the Herb of Life. Long life be yours, like that of metal and stone, and may you be protector of the land; eternal joy without end; as is fit for nobleman or king.[21]

The change of mood from the hope for a happy personal future life to a better this-worldly condition speaks of a different social atmosphere. The general depredation of social life during the latter half of the Eastern Han can also be gleaned from *The Canon of Great Peace* (*Taipingjing*), dated as early as the Eastern Han, and could have been connected to the uprising of the Yellow Turbans and the Way of the Heavenly Master, one of the earliest knowable Daoist religious sects.[22] It is stated plainly that there are four great evils in the world: war, plague, flood, and fire.[23] Numerous passages in the *Canon of Great Peace* expounded the miseries caused by these evils and emphasized the need for a true Way to save the world.

   In view of this general background, an investigation of the concept of ghost in this period, as revealed through various media, might be helpful for our understanding of the continuity and change of popular religious mentality. Where did ghosts come from? What was the image of the ghost? How did Daoists and Buddhists understand the nature of ghosts, their relationship with human beings, and what were the actions taken to deal with them?

The Origin of Ghosts

Ever since the pre-Qin era, similar origins of ghosts, i.e., deceased human beings or animals, are suggested by different genres of evidence. Regarding the human ghosts, while most of the people simply assume

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[21] Loewe, *Ways to Paradise*, p. 198.
[22] Barbara Hendrischke, *The Scripture on Great Peace: The Taiping jing and the Beginnings of Daoism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).
[23] Wang Ming 王明, *Taipingjing hejiao* 太平經合校 (Bejing: Zhonghua shuju, 1960), p. 3.

their existence, it is also implicitly agreed that if a person received proper burial and sacrifice, the ghost of this person will not come back to harm people. One explanation is to see this as the outcome of a communal need to take care of the dead members of society, and to ensure the proper transition of a member from the society of the living into the realm of the ancestors. Thus anxiety would rise if a member is not buried properly, which could be the reason for the return of the revenant.[24] For the non-human ghosts, however, their affective power is probably prompted by a primordial fear of the unknown that resides deep within the human psyche.

By far the most important source concerning the idea of the ghost in the literature of the Six Dynasties period are the so-called *stories of the anomaly* (*zhiguai*), a genre of short stories about ghosts and spirits and supernatural events.[25] The reasons for the prevalence of such stories during this period are more than one: the rise of private writing, the increase in literacy, the change in the political, economic and intellectual situations, even the increased use of paper. All these contributed to the development of literary activities in general, and at the same time conditioned the character of its content.[26] The fashion of "pure talk," that is, private gatherings of intellectuals for the purposes of either commenting on current political and social problems, or engaging in literary and philosophical debates, provided another venue for the exchange of the stories.[27] Various legends and ghost stories were thus dispersed

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[24] Jean-Claude Schmitt, *Ghosts in the Middle Ages: The Living and the Dead in Medieval Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), pp. 5–7. See "Introduction" to the present volume.

[25] See a study by R. Campany, *Strange Writing: Anomaly Accounts in Early Medieval China* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996); Mu-chou Poo, "The Completion of an Ideal World: The Human Ghost in Early Medieval China," *Asia Major* 10 1/2 (1997): 69–94; Liu Yuan-ju's article in this volume.

[26] For a general account of the intellectual atmosphere at the beginning of this period, see C. Holcombe, *In the Shadow of the Han* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994). For the relationship between the rise of the anomaly stories and the contemporary society, see Lu Xun, *Zongguo Xiaoshuo shilue* 中國小說史略 (Taipei: Ming-lun, n.d. rpt); Wu Hung-i 吳宏一, "Liuchao guishen kuaiyi xiaoshuo yu shidai beijing de guanxi 六朝鬼神怪異小說與時代背 景的關係," *Zongguo kudian wenxue yanjiu congkan: xiaoshuo zhibu* (1) 中國古典文學研究叢刊—小說之部(一) (Taipei: Juliu, 1977), pp. 55–89; Wang Guoliang 王國良, *Wei-Jin Nanbeichao zhiguai xiaoshuo yanjiu* 魏晉南北朝志怪小說研究 (Taipei: Wen-shi-zhe, 1984), pp. 13–36.

[27] For reference, see Poo, "The Completion of an Ideal World: The Human Ghost in Early Medieval China," pp. 69–94.

amongst the literati, who then could have collected them into books.[28] The rise of the Daoist and Buddhist religions brought about a massive production of religious literature on a scale unprecedented in China, which also accounted for the increased interest in the issue of ghosts and spirits, since they were what needed to be exorcised.

The literary accounts of ghosts in the anomaly stories usually would reveal the identity and origin of the ghosts, as it is a necessary part of the narrative strategy. The common feature of these ghosts and spirits is that they are basically anthropomorphic, but would resume or be forced to reveal their original forms somewhere in the story, either as dead humans, animals, or even inanimate things such as trees or rocks,[29] thus creating certain surprising and entertaining sensations for the readers.

For the early Daoist texts, a different purpose is required of the accounts about ghosts and spirits. *The Canon of Great Peace* (*Taiping-jing*), for example, has its own explanation of the origin of ghosts based on the theory of Yin-yang balance:

> The living person is *yang*; the dead person is *yin*. One should not serve the *yin* more than one serves the *yang*. *Yang* is the sovereign and *yin* the subject. One should not serve the subject more than one serves the sovereign. If one serve the *yin* more than *yang*, it will cause the adverse ether to arrive, … the harm would be that the *yin* ether conquers the *yang*, the subjects deceive the overlord, ghosts and gods and evil things flourish greatly, and they ride together on the road, and often walk in the daytime and do not avoid people. If diseases cannot be extinguished, the many ghosts will not stop to appear…. The living persons are *yang*, ghosts and spirits are *yin*, the living belongs to day, while the ghosts and spirits belong to night…. When *yang* rises, it will overcome the *yin*, so that *yin* will be hidden and does not dare to appear at will. As a consequence ghosts and spirits become hidden. If *yin* rises, it will overcome *yang*, and when *yang* is hidden, ghosts and spirits could be seen in daylight. Thus when *yin* overcomes, it means that ghosts and spirits will cause harm.[30]

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[28] Li Jianguo 李劍國, *Tangqian zhiguai xiaoshuoshi* 唐前志怪小說史 (Tianjin: Nankai daxue chubanshe, 1984), pp. 238–40. For a general account of the intellectual atmosphere at the beginning of this period, see Holcombe, *In the Shadow of the Han*.

[29] For a story about tree spirit, see Lu Xun, *Guxiaoshuo gouchen* 古小說鉤沉 (Taipei: Tangshan, 1989 reprint), p. 134; for a jade fairy, see Lu Xun, *Guxiaoshuo gouchen*, p. 146; for a rock fairy, see Lu Xun, *Guxiaoshuo gouchen*, p. 192; for the spirits of a pillow and a shoe, Lu Xun, *Guxiaoshuo gouchen*, p. 394.

[30] Wang Ming, *Taipingjing hejiao*, pp. 49–51.

This deliberation of the nature and mutual relation of *yin* and *yang*, of course, does not replace the idea that ghosts are dead humans, only that their appearances are regulated or conditioned by the balance of the *yin* and *yang* forces. Moreover, in accordance with the ancient Daoist philosophy that everything in the universe is the gathering of ether or *qi*, the evil ghosts and spirits can also be explained as originating from evil *qi*. As the *Nüqing guilü* 女青鬼律, an early Daoist text, has it, there was no evil ghost when heaven and earth were first created. Yet because people did not believe in the Dao, the evil *qi* began to rise and became myriads of ghosts.[31] There is also the "old ether (*gu qi* 故氣)" that could somehow congeal into powerful beings, assume official titles, and become leaders of the ghosts of the dead soldiers and generals. One text has the following paragraph:

> The old ether of the Six Heavens claimed to be officials and assumed titles and associated with hundreds of spirits and the five harmful ghosts. There are also the dead generals of defeated armies, the dead soldiers of the disarrayed troops, those men who called themselves generals, and those women who called themselves ladies; they led the ghost soldiers and followed the army and roamed the world, acting in a whimsical way that threatened the people and took away their fortune. They disturbed the temples and demanded sacrifice.[32]

This view may have reflected the sorry situation of a time of incessant wars and plagues since the end of the Eastern Han. The explanation of the ghost as a product of *qi*, though indeed a special kind of understanding of the origin of ghost, still falls into a form of early Chinese cosmological thinking from the pre-Qin era. In fact, even in the Daoist tradition, the range of the origins of ghosts extended far more than the *qi* and those who died in military action. The *Canon of Great Peace* itself provided another view of the origin of some evil ghosts:

> There often existed in the world ferocious ghosts, evil spirits, brutal diseases, guilty corpses and people who died of criminal acts. When they come to attach to people, it was like the poisonous weapons and arrows that struck the body—the pain was unbearable.[33]

The *Taishang zhengyi zhouguijing* 太上正一咒鬼經, another early Daoist text composed probably during the Six Dynasties period, also

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[31] *Daozang* 18: 239, *Nuqin guilu* 女青鬼律.
[32] *Daozang* 24: 779, *Lu xiansheng daomen kelue* 陸先生道門科略.
[33] Wang Ming, *Taipingjing hejiao*, p. 295.

provided several extravagant lists of ghosts that indicate their origins.
One of the lists reads as follows:

> Ghosts and Spirits: There are…ghost of thinking, ghost of disabilities,
> ghosts of Wang-liang, the ghost of the constellation Ying-huo, ghosts of
> roaming and exorcism, ghosts of mouth disease, ghosts of dead bodies,
> ghosts of those who died of abscess, ghosts of those who died of sexual
> excess, ghosts of those who died of old age, ghosts of the official residence,
> ghosts of travelers, ghosts of the army camp, ghosts of the prisoner, ghosts
> of the publicly executed, ghosts of those who frightened people, ghosts of
> those who died of wood, ghosts of those who died of fire, ghosts of those
> who died of water, ghosts of those who died when traveling, ghosts of the
> unburied, ghosts of the road, ghosts of those killed by weapons, ghosts of
> those who died because of their constellation, ghosts who died because of
> blood, ghosts of those who died of hasty prayers, ghosts of the beheaded,
> ghosts of the hanged, ghosts of the offended, ghosts of those who killed
> themselves, ghosts of those who are afraid of people, ghosts of those who
> died unnaturally, two-headed ghosts, horse-riding ghosts, chariot-driving
> ghosts, mountain ghosts, godly ghosts, earth ghosts, mountain peak ghosts,
> water ghosts, ceiling-beam ghosts, road ghosts, ghosts of the Qiang and
> Hu barbarians, ghosts of the Manyi barbarians, ghosts of prohibitions,
> ghosts of animals, ghosts of spirits, ghosts of various insects, ghosts of
> wells, stoves, ponds, and marshes, ghosts of ten thousand roads, hidden
> ghosts, the Not-efficacious ghosts, false ghosts, and all the hundreds of
> great and small spirits and ghosts.[34]

It can be seen that although many of the ghosts listed belong to the
category of unnatural or premature death, there are also those that died
of natural causes such as old age. It is remarkable that the author of this
text deemed it necessary to name as many as possible of ghosts that
originated from human beings, as well as a host of other non-human
ghosts that are thought to have existed in all manner of places: ghosts
of ceiling beams, roads, animals, various insects, wells, stoves, ponds,
and marshes. It is tempting to see in this an ancient concept of animism
which is already visible in the *Daybook* (*rishu* 日書) of the late Warring
States period.[35] Remarkably, even abstract "thinking" can also become
a "ghost of thinking."

  The investigation of the origin of ghosts, however, reminds us of the
conceptual ambiguity between deified human beings and ghosts. As
early as the Western Han, Emperor Wu allowed the cult of a certain

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[34] *Daozang* 28: 370, *Taishang zhengyi zhouguijing.*
[35] Donald Harper, "A Chinese Demonography of the Third Century B.C.," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 45 (1985): 459–98.

Divine Lady to be set up in the palace. This Divine Lady, however, was originally no more than a ghost who is said to have appeared to Emperor Wu's mother and was subsequently worshipped as a divine being.[36] The famous general of King Xuan of Zhou, Du Bo 杜伯, worshiped in the capital Changan area, was referred to in the early Han as "the smallest ghost that was efficacious."[37] Du Bo was known as a vengeful ghost in the pre-imperial texts, yet he was later elevated to the status of a deity because of his allegedly extraordinary power. The *Taishang dongyuan shenzhoujing* mentions a number of famous people, such as Deng Ai, Wang Mang, Du Zhou (i.e. Du Bo), Xiahou Ying, Xiao He, and Han Xin, as "great ghost-lords." They were apparently historical figures deified after death and worshiped by the people. However, what they did as deities was not necessarily beneficial to the people. Under special conditions they could become hostile ghosts that plague the world. In the Daoist language, they had under their command numerous "soldiers" who could send all kinds of diseases to harm the people:

> The Dao says: There are great ghost lords in the country: Deng Ai, Zhong Shiji, Zhao Shan, Wang Mang, Li Ao, Du Zhou, ... etc. There are these great ghost lords. Some people nowadays worship Emperor Wu and King Wen, whose shrines continue to be supplied by the people, and who each commanded troops and haunted people everywhere, and killed people with diseases year in and year out, and caused to circulate tens of thousands of diseases; some causing bodily fatigue, or cold and fever and diarrhea, or swelling with water in the stomach, or the black disease causing pain in the head and eyes, or fever in the chest and on the back, some with yellow sickness, lost of voice and difficulty swallowing, and all sorts of diseases that kill people without number. The Dao says, all these people used to be great generals and men of important positions; after they died, each was worshiped by the people and continue to be worshiped. Now it is said that there are hundreds of ghosts attached to them, forming a great crowd, while they still assume human shape, and go off to kill the people, and cause all sorts of disasters. These disasters came to kill many people from different places. Now I send giant guardian soldiers of the Red Hut, who are a hundred thousand feet tall, eight hundred thousand strong. Each commands three hundred million soldiers and comes down to arrest these ghost kings, and kill them right away without any mercy.[38]

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[36] *Shiji* 28: 1384.
[37] *Shiji* 28: 1375.
[38] *Daozang* 6: 25, *Taishang dongyuan shenzhoujing*, 7: 5b.

Similar lists of ghosts with specific names are also found in the *Nüqing Guilü*. Thus it is clear that Daoist texts often offer elaborate accounts of various kinds of ghosts, stating their specific origins: dead humans, the ethers of the universe, or all sorts of animals or inanimate materials and objects. In other words, the origin of ghosts was an important and sensitive subject in the Daoist tradition. This might have to do with the development of Daoist activities in Chinese society, as the primary function of the Daoist priest was to perform exorcism of all sorts in order to expel evil ghosts and guard the safety of people's households, as shown in the last passage quoted above. Knowing the origins of various ghosts became important for the Daoist priests, since to know the names of the evil ghosts was the first step to have power over them. An exorcistic spell of the second century C.E., found in an Eastern Han tomb, confirms the importance of knowing the name of the ghost to be exorcised:

> He who died on the *yisi*-day has the ghost-name "Heavenly light." …Quickly go away three thousand miles. If you do not go immediately, the (monster?) of the South Mountain is ordered to eat you. Hurry, as prescribed by the law and ordinance.[39]

In the early Chinese Buddhist sutras, repeated mention of the term *gui*/ghost is made. However, there is the problem of translating the original Indian concept into Chinese. Some of the ghosts, such as "*yecha gui* 夜叉鬼 (Sanskrit *Yaksa*)" and "*luosha* 羅刹 (Sanskrit *Raksasa*)" are generic terms for man-eating demons, while "*egui* 餓鬼 (Sanskrit *Preta*)" are those suffering hunger in hell for their sins on earth.[40] Thus to become a hungry ghost, that is, to be hungry forever instead of gaining satisfaction, is a punishment for the wrongdoings of the greedy. This, however, is somewhat different from a type of hungry ghost that existed in China long before the coming of Buddhism. According to the tradition preserved in the *Daybook*, for example, when a person died of hunger, he could become a hungry ghost, constantly asking for

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[39] Jiangsusheng wenwu guanli weiyuanhui 江蘇省文物管理委員會, "Jiangsu gaoyou shaojiagou Handai yizhi de qingli 江蘇高郵邵家溝漢代遺址的清理," *Kaogu* 考古, 1960.10: 18.

[40] Examples are numerous. *Taishō* vol. 2 no. 151, p. 883c; *Taishō* vol. 1, no. 23, pp. 297b, 302c. For a study of the ghost festival, which involves the subject of the hungry ghosts, see Stephen F. Teiser, *The Ghost Festival in Medieval China* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), pp. 124–29.

food.[41] This has nothing to do with the moral behavior of the ghost when he/she was still alive on earth. It is also further evidence to support the view that before the onslaught of Buddhism, Chinese popular conceptions of ghosts were not related to any strong moral or ethical values. The fact that the early translators of the sutra use the Chinese term "*gui*—ghost" as a designation for these beings indicates that in their mind these are more or less equivalent to the Chinese concept of *gui*, the spirit or soul of the dead or of other animals and sprits, in that their images are usually extremely ferocious and terrifying, and that they tend to harm people when they appear. However, the origins of these ghosts, especially with regard to *Yaksa* and *Raksasa*, are rarely mentioned in the Buddhist texts.

Images of Ghosts

As mentioned above, the images of ghosts, just as their origins, are multifarious, as they could assume a human shape, in an animal form, or even in the form of non-animate things.[42] By the late second century C.E., literary mentioning of ghosts in general continued the consensus reached by the early Western Han (late third century B.C.E.).

During the third century, Ge Hong 葛洪 (c. 283–363 C.E.), a most important writer in early Daoism, purported to have advocated the idea that when living creatures died, they would in general become ghosts, but could be in a changed form. Thus the ghost of a horse looks like fire, the ghost of a goose looks like a woman, yet the ghost of a monkey simply looks like a monkey.[43] The assumption behind this is that ghosts of animals could assume any form, whether human or non-human.

Literary texts of the Six Dynasties period portray a number of fearsome looking ghosts, such as the one Ruan Deru met in the toilet one night: "the ghost was about 10 feet high, with black skin and big eyes, wearing a white dress and a flat headdress."[44] Another ghost in a story about Yu Liang also appears in the toilet, and is described as "having the shape of Fang Xiang (demon-expelling deity in the Great Exorcism

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[41] Poo, *In Search of Personal Welfare*, p. 80.
[42] Poo, "The Concept of Ghost in Ancient Chinese Religion," pp. 173–91.
[43] Yan Kejun, *Quan Shanggu sandai Qin Han Sanguo Liuchao wen/Quan Jin wen* 全上古三代秦漢三國六朝文/全晉文, 117: 11.
[44] Lu Xun, *Guxiaoshuo gouchen*, p. 115.

ritual), with two red eyes and shining body, emerging slowly from the earth."[45] The idea is that the ghosts are basically human-like, yet with certain exaggerated physical features. Of course the ghosts could also be perfectly human-like, such as the female ghost in the Tan Sheng story who lived together with Tan and even had children with him.[46]

Turning to the the early Daoist text, one passage in *Taishang dongyuan shenzhoujing* provides a number of descriptions of the images of ghosts:

> The Dao says: In the year of Xuyin, there is a giant ghost with a red nose whose name is Fuzi. His height is nine feet, and he has three faces and one eye. There is another ghost who has two heads and one body, three feet tall. They all have red eyes. There is again another ghost whose name is Daye, with three heads and one body, seven feet tall. They go together carrying white knives, roaming the world to take the lives of small children. They fly about in the clouds and produce red *qi* and cause people to suffer cold and heat and vomit blood, with swelling heart and discomfort in the chest. At this time, if one could have the master of the Three Caverns come and recite the scripture, then the sick will be healed and trouble with the government will be resolved. If the sickness is not healed, the ghost-king shall be held responsible.[47]

The vivid descriptions of the various ghosts concentrate on their images and acts, i.e., their ruthless slaughtering in the world. In fact, the entire text of *Taishang dongyuan shenzhoujing* contains seemingly endless lists of malicious ghosts that betray the rich imagination of the author. It seems that the text becomes a place where the author demonstrates his talent for ghost-painting, and that there is a certain entertaining effect for the readers: the myriads of life-threatening, ferocious-looking, blood-thirsty demonic soldiers and ghost-generals are like players of a horror drama in an imaginary world. Different from the literary ghosts found in the *zhiguai*, the evil ghosts described in the Daoist texts have the following characteristics: their numbers are astronomical, and it seems that people at this time are trying to account for every disease and disaster in the world by detailing a corresponding number of evil ghosts:

> The Dao says, Now there are eight thousand black-bodied ghosts. [Such] ghosts are six inches tall. They clinch on the birds and fly into the water, or they could come with wind and rain, and when they touch people,

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⁴⁵ Lu Xun, *Guxiaoshuo gouchen*, pp. 156–57.
⁴⁶ Lu Xun, *Guxiaoshuo gouchen*, p. 144.
⁴⁷ *Daozang* 6: 28, *Taishang dongyuan shenzhoujing*, 8: 2b.

people will die. Then there are thirty-nine thousand Barbarian ghosts of the desert. They are three inches tall, their color is red-white, and they will attach to the people with the rise of the flood. Then there are eight hundred thousand giant wet ghosts. The name of such ghosts is "Heavenly Head." Their leaders also like violence and each commands thirty thousand ghost thieves who enter people's houses and cause the houses to catch fire with flames that cannot be extinguished.[48]

The ghosts are described as appearing in groups and with certain generic names:

> The Dao says: Now there are Eighty-nine thousand black-faced giant ghosts. The name of [such ghosts] is Red Beard, and the height is seventy feet.... They came into people's houses and take away every man and woman, old and young, and cause everyone under heaven to become sick. There are dead people everywhere and also in every household. The ghost soldiers stationed in people's neighborhood, snatched people and animals, enacted their vicious deeds, and caused people to be arrested by the officials, charged with crimes, put into jail without discrimination, having no harvest, and everything was ruined.[49]

It is worth noticing that the colorful ways that the ghosts are described in the texts must have emanated from a popular mentality that is in favor of the fantastic and the extraordinary, in order to impress the audience. Yet it is also undeniable that the obsession with such multifarious ghosts reflects deep fear and anxiety originating in the miseries of the world in these apocalyptic times.[50]

In contrast to the Daoist texts, the Buddhist sutras offer less explicit descriptions of the images of ghosts and spirits, although the term *gui*/ghost appears repeatedly. Yet one can still occasionally find in the sutras stories aimed at impressing the adepts, such as one passage in *Puyao jing* 普曜經, when the demon king Mara commands his "ghost soldiers" to threaten the Bodhisattva:

> Each of them changed into the shapes of lion, bear, tiger, rhino, elephant, dragon, bull, horse, dog, pig, monkey, and so forth, some with insect's head and human body, or snake's body and turtle's head, or one face with six eyes, or one neck with multiple heads...[51]

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[48] *Daozang* 6: 37, *Taishang dongyuan shenzhoujing*, 10: 78b.
[49] *Daozang* 6: 38, *Taishang dongyuan shenzhoujing*, 10: 8b.
[50] Cf. Christine Mollier, *Une apocalypse taoïste du Vᵉ siècle: Le livre des Incantations divines des grottes abyssales* (Paris: Institut des Hautes Etudes Chinoises, 1990).
[51] *Taishō* vol. 3, no. 186, p. 521.

The Exorcistic Rituals

The desire and need to exorcise ghosts has a long history in Chinese society, as has been discussed often.[52] The early Daoist writer Ge Hong mentions in his *Baopuzi* many exorcistic methods against all sorts of dangerous spirits and animals for people who intended to go into the mountains.[53] These exorcistic methods resemble what one finds in the *Daybook* of the third century B.C.E. For example,

> If you encounter an official, but only hear his voice without seeing any shape as it keeps shouting to you, throw a white stone at it, and it will stop. Another way is to make a reed spear and prick the creature with it; then everything will be fine. If you meet a ghost coming and shouting continuously to you for food, throw a white reed at it and it will die instantly.[54]

Similarly, according to a section of exorcism in the *Daybook*,[55] white sand, white reeds and other materials are used to ward off evil ghosts and spirits. It seems clear that the Daoist exorcism of the Six Dynasties inherited a long tradition of the earlier period.

During the early years of the development of Daoist religion, Daoist advocates often have to confront the so-called "lascivious cults" and forbid their followers to worship local ghosts and spirits with blood sacrifices. An often quoted paragraph clearly indicates this situation: "The vulgar teachers beat the drums and worshiping the gods, they kill pigs and dogs and chicken as three kinds of sacrifice over grass and water. They call for the hundred ghosts and worship the wild deities."[56] Drum beating is certainly one method often used in exorcistic rituals, as well as the killing of animals and spreading of blood over grass and water. A story preserved in the collection *Lu Yi Zhuan* mentions a certain Ni Yansi of the Wu dynasty who encountered a ghost at home. He then invited a Daoist priest to come and expel the ghost. After the offering of wine and meal, the priest began to beat the drum and called for various

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[52] Poo, *In Search of Personal Welfare*, chapter 3.
[53] Wang Ming 王明, *Baopuzi neipian jiaoshi* 抱朴子內篇校釋 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1985), pp. 299–314.
[54] Wang Ming, *Baopuzi neipien jiaoshi*, p. 304; translation is from James R. Ware, *Alchemy, Medicine, Religion in the China of A.D. 320: The Nei P'ien of Ko Hung (Pao-p'u tzu)* (Cambridge: The M.I.T. Press, 1966), p. 288.
[55] For a discussion, see Poo, *In Search of Personal Welfare*, chapter 4.
[56] *Daozang* 6: 30, *Taishang dongyuan shenzhoujing*, 8: 8a.

deities to drive away the ghost.[57] Disregarding the arguments concerning whether the Daoist religion is different from the "popular cults" only in the degree in which they worshiped ghosts or in a more fundamental way,[58] it is evident that exorcism is one of the most important subjects in the daily operations of the Daoist priests and adepts.

There are various ways to expel the unwelcome ghosts, but reciting spells is the most common method. A "Northern Emperor's Method of Killing Ghosts (*Beidi shagui fa*)," recorded in Tao Hongjing's *Dengzhen yinjue* reads as follows:

> One should first grind one's teeth thirty six times and chant:
> Heavenly tent, heavenly tent, nine elements that kill the child, the commander of five soldiers, the high knife and the northern elder, seven righteous [ones] and eight spirits, the supreme and great villain, long-headed monster, holding the cup of the emperor, the three gods of the white owl(?), whose spirits ride on the dragon, who bravely kill the divine king, with purple *qi* rise up to heaven as red clouds gush forth, swallow Mara and consume the ghosts. The Red Emperor will drain the blood and the Big Dipper will burn the bone. The Four Luminaries will break the skeleton, and the Heavenly General[59] will extinguish their ilk. As the divine knife strikes, myriads of ghosts will desist.[60]

One way to put the exorcistic text into effect and be saved by the ghost kings is, for example, to recite it in a fasting ritual for one day and one night, and to practice the Dao at all times, giving alms to the poor and performing meditation.[61] The *Nüqing Guilü* also lists a long string of names of ghosts, and provides various methods to exorcise the ghosts: pronouncing the names of the ghosts, carrying talismans written with

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[57] Lu Xun, *Guxiaoshuo gouchen*, p. 413.

[58] For arguments from both directions, see Rolf A. Stein, "Religious Daoism and Popular Religion from the Second to Seventh Centuries," in H. Welch and A. Seidel eds., *Facets of Taoism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), pp. 53–81; Lai Chi-tim, "The Opposition of Celestial-Master Taoism to Popular Cults during the Six Dynasties," *Asia Major* 11, 1 (1998): 1–20; Lin Fushih 林富士, "Shilun liuchao shiqi de daowu zhi bie 試論六朝時期的道巫之別" *Guoshi fuhai kaixin lu: Yu Yingshi jiaoshou rongtui lunwenji* 國史浮海開新錄—余英時教授榮退論文集 (Taipei: Lianjing 2002), pp. 19–38.

[59] Tianyou zhenjun 天猶真君 is one of the four heavenly generals (sisheng zhenjun 四聖真君) in the Taoist pantheon. See Hu Fushen 胡孚琛 ed., *Zhonghua daojiao dacidian* 中華道教大辭典 (Beijing: Zhonggou shehui chubanshe, 1995), p. 1466.

[60] *Daozang* 6: 613, *Dengzhen yinjue* 登真隱訣.

[61] *Daozang* 6: 929, *Taishang dongyuan shenzhoujing*, 7: 12b.

the names of the ghosts, or hanging talismans over the doorway,[62] which is probably what Cao Zhi was referring to in his essay on the plague.

There are, moreover, specific exorcistic rituals for the Daoist adepts who might encounter evil spirits in their daily lives or during their meditation practice:

> Whenever a Daoist travels and sleeps alone in a place with demons and evil ghosts, he should clap his left teeth 36 times, hold his breath, and pray in a low voice: "The Supreme Emperor who possesses the power of yang and who could snare a thousand ghosts, if the myriads of poisonous creatures dare to stop in front of me, giant beasts with huge mouth will devour their body, the emissary of the deity and the guards, those soldiers dressed in yellow, will kill the ghosts and destroy the myriads of demons....." When finished, again clap the teeth 36 times.[63]

The spells are basically built upon the idea that the spiritual world is a form of celestial government and all the Daoist priest has to do is to invoke the proper celestial officials to deal with the demons and ghosts. The Daoist priest can also assume that he himself is the heavenly official, as seen in a ghost expelling spell: "People who know the names of the palace gates of the Six Heavens of Fengdu city, will not be harmed by the hundred ghosts. When one intends to sleep, one should face north and recite three times in low voice." The spell goes on:

> I am the disciple of the Supreme Lord, overseeing the Six Heavens. The palace of the Six Heavens is under my control. Not only it is under my control, it is by the command of the Supreme Lord. I know the palace of the Six Heavens, therefore I have acquired immortality. Anyone who dares to offend me, the Supreme Lord, should cut your body (in half).[64]

In other words, the evil spirits and ghosts exist in the same spiritual world together with the most esteemed heavenly emperor, and are subject to the rule of the celestial officials, just as the bandits and thieves of the human world are supposed to be subject to the rule of secular government. This indicates the extent to which the Daoist idea of the structure of the world of the immortals is influenced by and modeled on the mundane world.

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[62] *Daozang* 18: 239–52, *Nüqing guilü*.
[63] *Daozang* 32: 564, *Shangqing xiushen yaoshijing* 上清修身要事經, 5b–6a. For a discussion of spells in the Daoist texts, see Michel Strickmann, *Chinese Magical Medicine* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), pp. 89–122.
[64] *Daozang* 20: 579, *Zhengao* 真誥, 15: 1b–2a.

The actual procedures of the exorcistic rituals are often described in the texts. One such text, the "The Method of Performing the Divine staff," shows what is going on in the mind of the Daoist priest who performs the ritual.[65] The text indicates that the priest is to imagine the coming of the Jade Ladies as representatives of the Five Emperors in helping him to pronounce the exorcistic spells and perform the necessary ritual acts. Some of the exorcistic spells can be employed in a wide variety of situations. The *Jade Emperor's Supreme Spell of Exorcising Ghosts and Protecting Spirits* in particular uses the method of clapping the teeth.[66] The method of clapping one's teeth is thought to be particularly useful for expelling ghosts and evil spirits, as stated in another text:

> When traveling in the night one should often clap one's teeth, and there is no particular limit as to how many times (one should clap). Malicious and evil ghosts always fear the sound of teeth clapping; therefore they would not attack people. If one adds to the clapping by rinsing his mouth with saliva, it will be even better for the pronouncement of the spell.[67]

The expected result achieved by the exorcistic spells, according to the *Taishang zhengyi zhouguijing*, is to fulfill people's wishes to practice the Dao, to cultivate one's self, to cure illness, to prolong life, to deliver one from disasters, to ascend to heaven in daylight, to ask for peace in the household, to ask for successful harvest, to gain profit in business, to have many slaves and servants, to be promoted to high office, to win litigation, to have longevity for men and women, to protect offspring, and to have safe pregnancy for women.[68]

When the great Daoist scholar Lu Xiujing 陸修靜 was trying to reform Daoist rituals and worship, he claimed that he had "Issued one thousand and two hundred official edicts and ten thousand talismans to attack the temples and to kill the ghosts, so that the people are cleansed and the universe is illuminated with justice, and so that the entire world be no more haunted by lascivious ghosts."[69] The "edicts" and talismans are no less than various exorcistic spells to drive away the ghosts.

Despite all the efforts, it seems that the Daoist masters were engaging in a self-defeating business—that is to say, their exorcistic rituals could

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[65] *Daozang* 32: 566, *Shangqing xiushen yaoshijing*, 9b–10a.
[66] *Daozang* 32: 566, *Shangqing xiushen yaoshijing*, 10a.
[67] *Daozang* 20: 548, *Zhengao*, 10: 8a.
[68] *Daozang* 28: 368, *Taishang zhengyi zhougueijin.*
[69] *Daozang* 24: 779, *Lu xiansheng daomen kelue.*

never expunge all the evil ghosts and spirits from the world, because
they allowed the belief in the existence of ghosts in the mind of the
people. One suspects that the elaborate rituals had probably achieved the
opposite goal: the confirmation that evil spirits will continue to haunt
the world. It may be exactly the case: evil could never be expelled from
the world, therefore religious personnel are always needed. This seems
to have been prophesized by the Great Exorcism discussed elsewhere.[70]
That the Great Exorcism needs to be performed each year indicates
that evil also belongs to the cosmic cycle, which could never be rid of,
but, thinking positively, could serve as a reminder to the people to be
constantly alert and perform benevolent deeds.

   As I suggested before, when rituals are performed by the Daoist
priests, what draws people together is not simply their wish to have a
blessed life, but also the attraction of the complicated and mysterious
language of the spells, the enchanting music, the splendid costume,
and the physical actions such as the "Pace of Yü" that the priests act
out. Separately the spells are serious exorcistic texts, yet when they
appear in ritual context, they assume a more entertaining role to the
participating audience.[71]

   In the Chinese Buddhist sutras, the idea of ghost/spirit (*guishen*)
is often mentioned as one of the most impertinent ideas that needs
to be expunged from people's mind. As one passage in the *Banzhou
sanmeijing* 般舟三昧經 puts it:

> The Buddha says: You who wish to learn (the way of Buddha) should
> uphold the five commandments and succumb to the Three. What are the
> three? To succumb to the Buddha, to succumb to the law, and to succumb
> to the monk. You should not serve the other sects. You should not wor-
> ship Heaven, should not make sacrifice to ghosts and spirits, should not
> look up the auspicious days, should not flirt and act lasciviously with the
> thought of women, and you should not have covetous ideas.[72]

Similar warning is also given in the *Foban nihuanjing* 佛般泥洹經:
"The Buddha says, … people in general have eight evil characters. What
are they? To make sacrifice to the ghosts and spirits, and cast divina-
tions and kill in vain, this is the first evil character…."[73] Typically, the

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[70] See Poo, "Ritual and Ritual Texts in Early China."
[71] For a general overview of the Daoist ritual procedure, see John Lagerwey, *Taoist
Ritual in Chinese Society and History* (New York: Macmillan, 1987).
[72] *Taishō* vol. 13, no. 417, p. 901 b.
[73] *Taishō* vol. 1, no. 5, p. 172a.

Buddhist sutras argue that the idea of ghosts is nothing but illusions of the mind, and thus non-existent:

> Where did ghosts and spirits come from? There are those inner ghosts and spirits that numbered hundreds and thousands. Those from outside are the same. If there is no fear inside, there should be no apprehension outside. If there is no sadness within, then there should be no tear to shed. If one begins to think about ghosts and spirits, there will be many hundreds and thousands of ghosts and spirits from outside. They all come to him, which is the cause for sickness, and some ended up dead and suffered numerous hardships. All these are because the heart is not upright. The Bodhisattva realizes the emptiness of void and the non-existent of ghosts and spirits, as everything arises from the mind.[74]

While on the one hand the fundamental Buddhist conception is to expound the "emptiness" of everything perceptible from the human point of view, with the existence of the ghosts and spirits still emphasized in the sutras, on the other hand, ghosts are evil opponents of the followers of the Buddhist teaching, and so should be expelled by all sorts of methods. The *Fahua jing* 法華經, one of the most important Chinese Buddhist texts, assures the readers that by the power of Avalokitesvara, the omnipresence of ghosts and demons will be curtailed:

> As for all the ghosts and spirits of the three thousand worlds and those evil demons who wish to harm people, if one concentrates on calling the name of Avalokitesvara, they will naturally be subdued and cannot make wanton offence. Malevolent intention will not rise, and there shall be no evil perspective.[75]

One way, or the only way, to drive away the ghosts is to follow the Buddhist teaching. When one follows the way of the Buddha, no ghosts or spirits could do any harm: "When ghosts and spirits and beasts wanted to come and harm people, they could not succeed. Why? Because people followed Buddha and obtained the Way."[76] There are, however, concrete or tangible ways to achieve similar goals. To make oneself clean, for example, is efficacious in preventing the harming of the ghosts and spirits.[77] One can also rely on certain sacred objects that could deter the encroachment of ghosts and spirits: "If a man or a woman takes the

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[74] *Taishō* vol. 11, no. 315a, p. 772.
[75] *Taishō* vol. 9, no. 263, p. 128.
[76] *Taishō* vol. 8, no. 224, p. 431c.
[77] *Taishō* vol. 8, no. 224, p. 435c.

Mani-bead and wears it, ghosts and spirits will immediately run away. If one is hit by fever, takes the Mani-bead and wears it, the fever will be gone immediately."[78]

Yet all these are still mostly passive ways to avoid the attack or influence of the ghosts and spirits. The more aggressive action would be to cast spells to the evil ghosts. A special section of the *Biographies of Eminent Monks*, the first collection of the biographies of some eminent monks in the early phase of the spread of Buddhism in China, is termed "thaumaturgy," which clearly shows the importance of supernatural power for the monks in their effort to convert the Chinese people.[79] For example, in the *Biography of Dharmaraksa* (Tanwuchen 曇無讖):

> Tanwuchen once told Mengxun (the leader of one of the northern dynasties): There are ghosts coming into the settlement, and disasters and plagues are due to occur.... It is better that we should purify ourselves and fast and use divine spells (*shenzhou* 神咒) to expel them. Then he recited the spells for three days and told Mengxun: "The ghosts are gone." At the time, people at the border saw ghosts and reported that a few hundred plague ghosts scurried away from the district.[80]

Telling evidence can be found by looking at a catalog of early Buddhist texts compiled in the early Sixth Century, *Chu sanzang jiji* 出三藏集記, which lists a number of spell books amongst the sutras. This confirms the assertion that spell casting was a well established practice in early Buddhism.[81]

Not only spells, however, but Buddhist sutras themselves could be used as effective apotropaic tools. The monks themselves, moreover, are thought to have possessed exorcistic power, as the ability to recite sutras and to cast spells is internalized and becomes part of the essence of a monk. One story in the *Biographies of Eminent Monks* records:

> Lady Liu, the wife of Xiao Sihua, was sick and often saw ghosts coming to haunt her, and she was frightened. At the time, they happened to invite Zhiyan to give a lecture on the Dharma. As soon as Zhiyan arrived at the outer hall, Lady Liu saw a flock of ghosts scurry away.[82]

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[78] *Taishō* vol. 8, no. 224, p. 435c.

[79] John Kieschnick, *The Eminent Monk: Buddhist Ideals in Medieval Chinese Hagiography* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1997), p. 67ff.

[80] Hui Jiao 慧皎, Tang Yungtongw 湯用彤 ed., *Gaosengzhuan* 高僧傳 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1992), p. 78.

[81] Kieschnick, *The Eminent Monk*, 84–87.

[82] Hui Jiao, *Gaosengzhuan*, p. 99.

Other than the sutras, a number of the anomaly tales of the Six Dynasties period were written or edited by Buddhist adepts to propagate Buddhist teachings. An example of the competition between Daoist and Buddhist proselytes is a story in *Shu Yi ji*.[83] The main point of the story is to convey the idea that a Buddhist sutra is more efficient than the Daoist exorcistic rituals and spells.

Another story is even more explicit about which is more powerful:

> Shi Juan was a learned person who followed the Dao and despised Buddhism. He often told people: "The Buddha is a small god who is not worthwhile to follow." Whenever he saw a statue of the Buddha he would ridicule it. Later he was sick and his leg swelled up. Various ways to pray for a cure were all useless. His friend Zhao Wen said to him: "You can try to build the statue of Avalokitesvara." Since Juan was suffering greatly, he decided to follow the advice and built a statue. When the statue was finished, he dreamt of Avalokitesvara, and indeed he soon recovered from the illness.[84]

In doing so, however, the Buddhist proselyte has to accept the premise that ghosts do exist, and the Buddhist monks and Daoist masters are competing with each other to gain the trust of the people. The story quoted just above gives us a vivid example of the confrontation and competition between the Daoists and the Buddhists in their attempt to gain the trust of the Chinese people.

Ghosts and Morality

One kind of argument in early Daoism sees ghosts as the instrument of the just celestial court, sanctioned by the Heavenly Emperor:

> Whenever people daily practice evil or good deeds, the heaven and earth all know about the details. When one murders a life, the deity can see his form, and when one has something in mind or speaks, the ghosts can hear the human voice. When a person has committed a hundred forbidden things, the ghosts will take away his spirit; when one has committed a thousand forbidden things, the earth will record the human shape and when he commits evil deeds in the daytime, the cuffs will appear immediately. Such is the retribution of *yin* and *yang*.[85]

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[83] Lu Xun, *Guxiaoshuo gouchen*, p. 177.
[84] Lu Xun, *Guxiaoshuo gouchen*, p. 438.
[85] *Daozang* 3: 445, *Chisongzi zhongjiejing* 赤松子中誡經, 4a.

Here the attack of ghosts and spirits on humans is explained as a punishment inflicted upon people with deficient moral character. The Daoist texts, not infrequently, also try to spread the message that the harmful ghosts are under the command of a number of ghost-kings (*guiwang*), and that the ghost-kings ordered a series of actions carried out by their ghost soldiers. In other words, the action of the ghosts is not arbitrary but with a purpose. This is connected with the idea of *kalpa* or *jie*, that great disaster that is destroying human kind because people had committed all sorts of crimes. As *Taishang dongyuan shenzhoujing* states, the crime might be that the people did not adhere to the teachings of the Dao and in turn worshiped improper deities and ghosts:

> The Dao says, you people of later generations are not observing the great Dao. The vulgar teachers beat the drums and worship the gods. They kill pigs and dogs and chicken as three kinds of sacrifice over grass and water. They call for the hundred ghosts and worship the wild deities. This is all preposterous and wicked.[86]

This paragraph points out the confrontation between the early Daoist religion and the so-called popular religion: the Daoist adepts despise those "vulgar teachers," probably local shamans, who worship all sorts of ghosts and spirits. What is ironic is that, by denouncing the activities of the ghost worshipers, the Daoists themselves in a way confirm the existence of the ghosts and spirits. The difference, then, is that the Daoist priests claim that they are able to recognize and control the myriad ghosts, often using exorcistic rituals. A typical passage describing the carnage carried out by the evil ghosts reads as follows:

> The Dao says: The great disaster is coming, the government is not in order, people are in distress, the wind and rain do not come in time, and the five grains do not mature. People have hatched evil intentions and become rebellious. Fathers and sons and brothers try to take advantage of each other and cause their death. Angry bandits will roam about and kill innocent people. During this time, plagues permeate the world and there are ninety kinds of illnesses that kill evil people. There is also the Red-headed "ghost-killing Ghost King," a hundred thousand feet tall, who leads thirty six hundred million "ghost-killing ghosts," each carrying a red club and traveling around the world, with the special intention of taking the lives of people.[87]

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[86] *Daozang* 6: 30, *Taishang dongyuan shenzhoujing*, 8: 8a.
[87] *Daozang* 6: 3, *Taishang dongyuan shenzhoujing*, 1: 4a–4b.

All these ghosts, to be sure, could be destroyed by the Daoist priest when proper rituals are performed. This gruesome picture of the world seems to have originated from a deep anxiety or disillusion of the current social and political injustice. Whether we could further substantiate this observation, however, needs to be dealt with in another context.

On the other hand, however, it is also true that the free actions of the evil spirits and ghosts in early Daoist texts often lack any recognizable moral ground, as has been shown in some of the quoted passages in section three above. In other words, there are two kinds of ghosts: those that are the agents of the heavenly court, and those that act according to their own initiative, which could cause senseless destruction.

Not surprisingly, Buddhist texts also see the attack of ghosts as a form of punishment for the wrong doings of people. It is announced in the *Foshuo manfa jing* 佛說慢法經 that those who do not abide by the teaching of the Buddha but instead seek all sorts of devious ways to serve evil ghosts and spirits are to be afflicted by the ghosts.[88] For another example, in the *Anan wen shifo jixiong jing* 阿難問事佛吉凶經 it is said that

> If the sick people still have doubts and do not believe (in the teaching of Buddha), call for shamans and make divinations to ask for solutions, and make sacrifice to the evil spirits, then the heavenly gods will be far away and they will not be well protected. Demons and ghosts will daily approach them, malicious ghosts will fill their doorway and cause them to become weak and exhausted.[89]

Thus the harming demons and ghosts are still somehow recognized as having power over people. In other words, only the Buddhist teaching could help the people to fight back the encroachment of the evil spirits. The Buddhist proselytism therefore does not really deny the existence of the traditional concept of ghosts and evil spirits. Instead, it tries to utilize these concepts and make them a useful deterrent that could somehow encourage or cajole the people to accept Buddhist teachings as the true way toward salvation.

It is only in the literary works, such as the anomaly stories, that we see a more nuanced take on the relationship between ghosts and humans. In a story preserved in the *Zhenyi zhuan* 甄異傳, a certain

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[88] *Taishō* vol. 17, no. 739, p. 543a.
[89] *Taishō* vol. 14, no. 429, p. 754c.

Zhang Kai was due to be summoned away by the underworld mes-
senger who was referred to as a ghost. Because of Zhang's kindness to
the ghost, who pretended to be a man in need of help in order to test
his personality, the ghost decided, under the plea of Zhang Kai after
he learned that the ghost was to summon him to the underworld, to
take the life of another person by the name of Huang Kai. The ghost
did this unjust deed and left these words with Zhang Kai: "You have
a physiognomy of high position, so I feel sorry for you and help you
by unjustly bending the principle. But the way of the deities is a secret
that should not be revealed."[90]

The story reveals that people's imagination of the world of the dead is
a world similar to the human world in its pitfalls and vices. The theme
that people could be wrongly summoned to death by the underworld
officials, which is already a theme in a third century B.C.E. text and in
some of the Han dynasty tomb quelling texts,[91] further evolves into a
type of story in which negotiation is made with the summoning official
so that a person of the same name, even only the given name, could be
seized by the official to substitute for the one that he is originally after.
That this deceitful and unjust act is possible at all in people's imagination
indicates a common mentality concerning how a bureaucracy works, a
skeptical attitude that is deeply ingrained in the people's perception of
the world they live in. In the story quoted, although Zhang Kai might
be a kind person, this does not justify the taking away of the life of
another innocent person.

A similar story has it that a certain Song Qingbo was visited by three
officials from the underworld, obviously intended to summon him to
his death. Song pleaded to the officials and they agreed to withhold the
death call under the condition that he would offer them a banquet, and,
of course, not to reveal the truth about this. Yet Song's wife suspected
that the officials were ghosts who intended to cheat them. Song was
compelled to tell her the fact, but soon the officials appeared to him,
blaming him for not keeping his promise. Song consequently died of
sudden illness.[92] Again, the fact that the death call could be withheld as
a secret personal favor indicates how the world of the ghost is imagined
on the model of the world of the living. The morality of the ghosts, in

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[90] Lu Xun, *Guxiaoshuo gouchen*, pp. 155–56.
[91] Donald Harper, "Resurrection in Warring States Popular Religion," *Taoist
Resources* 5, 2 (1994): 13–28.
[92] Lu Xun, *Guxiaoshuo gouchen*, pp. 183–84.

such context, also shows the unfortunate yet perhaps realistic picture of corruption and injustice.

Since the subject of the character of ghosts in literary texts has been discussed elsewhere, suffice it to say that the purpose of these texts was mainly to provide the reader with certain entertainment, though inevitably they would also carry various reflections on human morality, social justice, and ghostly retribution. They could, therefore, be seen as a means to address certain anxieties that people encountered in their daily life, a form of catharsis that could relieve the fear of the known.[93]

Conclusion

In the Song dynasty (420–479 C.E.), a monk by the name of Baolin wrote a treatise in the form of an official communication to Mount Tai, specifically to the Record Keeper of the Palace of the Eastern Mountain (東嶽都錄使者). The treatise begins by adopting the usual Daoist discourse on the origin of the universe. The Five Mountains all inherited the pure ether of the cosmos and occupied the central position in the world, reaching upward to the ultimate void, and downward to nurture the myriad of creatures. He even says that the Eastern Emperor and Western Queen (Queen Mother of the West) exist in the far away world of purity, which is not connected to the human world. However, Baolin continues, there are evil ghosts who pretended to be the officials of Mount Tai and fabricated sacred cannons and statues to deceive the foolish people. Baolin further quotes from several works, presumably Daoist texts, and demonstrates that those "deities" who committed crimes against humanity are not true deities but evil ghosts:

> Those who call themselves mountain gods must be pythons. Those who call themselves gods of river and sea must be turtles and fish. Those who call themselves gods of heavenly father and earthly mother must be wild cats and raccoons. Those who call themselves gods of generals must be bears, tigers and leopards. Those who call themselves gods of gentlemen must be monkeys and orangutans. Those who call themselves gods of the house must be dogs, sheep, pigs, calves, doors, wells, stoves and broken

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[93] Mu-chou Poo, "The Completion of an Ideal World: The Human Ghost in Early Medieval China," idem, "Ghost Literature: Exorcistic Ritual Texts or Daily Entertainment?" *Asia Major* 13,1 (2000): 43–64; Mu-chou Poo, "Justice, Morality, and Skepticism in Six-Dynasties Ghost Stories," in Alan Chan ed., *Philosophy and Religion in Early Medieval China* (Albany: State University of New York Press, forthcoming).

vessels, and the like. These are ghosts and demons who in their pretension all call themselves gods. They frightened the people and emit the ether of lascivious ghosts. These facts have been recorded in the cannons and have been transmitted and proven true.[94]

The Record Keeper that the communication is directed to, in fact, is also a false god, since he could not demonstrate any power to benefit the country and remove the diseases. Baolin thus proclaims that

> You are a minor ghost. If you dare to touch the three lights, it would be like a feather of the crane that is thrown into the fire, or like a fish that is swimming in hot soup. It would be like pouring the water of the river to extinguish a fire, or like the morning dew that sees the sun. I have a kind heart and pity what you have done, and divined for this perilous situation which upon consideration would be sorrowful. You should immediately resume your original form before me and return to the far away sea shore, and retard no more. You should accept and obey this command.[95]

Otherwise, the Buddhist gods together with the divine army will be summoned to exterminate the evil ghosts. Thus Baolin adopts a strategy of attacking the popular beliefs on the one hand, but still trying to draw support from the people by acknowledging some basic premises of the traditional cosmological concepts on the other. He does not declare directly that the traditional belief system is wrong. He even admits the legitimacy of the Daoist deities, but only that the deities that appeared to the people are false gods. From his enumeration of the ghosts, it can again be confirmed that in the popular mentality of that time, evil ghosts originated from all sorts of animals or even objects. These had to reflect the contemporary popular beliefs to a certain degree. Since Baolin's aim is to persuade people of the falsehood of the "gods" who are in fact evil ghosts and spirits, these have to be part of the religious vocabularies that people can relate to or believe in.

    The example of Baolin, therefore, gives us a vivid view of the intellectual and religious atmosphere of the Six Dynasties period. Buddhist proselytes and Daoist adepts both tried to demonstrate their ability in dealing with the attack of ghosts. The ordinary people from whom Buddhists and Daoists tried to solicit confidence could choose from either of the two faiths. The literary texts, though potentially fictitious,

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[94] Yan Kejun, *Quan Shanggu sandai Qin Han Sanguo Liuchao wen*/Quan Song wen 全上古三代秦漢三國六朝文/全宋文, 64: 1–2.
[95] Yan Kejun, *Quan Shanggu sandai Qin Han Sanguo Liuchao wen*/Quan Song wen, 64: 3.

provide a mental background or stage for us to understand the activities of the Buddhist and Daoist adepts. There is certainly compromise between their ideas and the indigenous conception of ghosts shown in the literary texts. The compromise is reached differently, though. The Daoists basically accept the traditional conception of ghosts in terms of their origins and images. They give various explanations of the reason why ghosts appear, and assign the exorcistic duty to the Daoist priests. The Buddhists, on the other hand, do not retain the traditional conception about the origins of ghosts. Although the sutras often mention the term *gui*/ghost, they are either those demons in the original Indian context, or evil spirits with vague origins, such as the "ghost soldiers" mentioned in the passage quoted above, or of simply unknown origin. However, on a more mundane level, the Buddhist monks could not but try to demonstrate their ability to expel the "indigenous ghosts" that people encounter in their lives. When the forces of Buddhism and Daoism play out, as shown in the case of Baolin and a number of the anomaly stories, we see both sides trying to use the framework of the popular conception of the ghost to further their own cause. Both, of course, claim to be able to handle the problem of ghosts for the people. Yet without really breaking away from that traditional framework by admitting the existence of ghosts, the idea of ghosts handed down from the pre-imperial period is never completely replaced, thus leaving open the possibility of the later development of "popular religion."

ALLEGORICAL NARRATIVE IN SIX DYNASTIES ANOMALY TALES: GHOSTLY SIGHTINGS AND AFTERWORLD VENGEANCE

Yuan-ju Liu[1]

Tales of the anomalous (*zhiguai* 志怪) contain valuable clues to the conceptions of death and the afterlife in the Six Dynasties (c. 220–589 C.E.). These tales synthesized traditional viewpoints,[2] integrated and echoed the advent of Buddhist and Daoist teachings, and addressed issues prominent in contemporary philosophical debates, such as discourses about the existence (or non-existence) of ghosts and the relationship between a person's body and spirit.[3] Of the over one hundred extant tales, many they drew from a variety of non-official traditions (*zazhuan* 雜傳 and *zaji* 雜記). Within narrative literature, this constitutes an aesthetic of the strange that serves as a model for subsequent ghost stories. Encompassing a broad range of motifs, tales of the anomalous are similar to the tales of transformed spiritual beings (*jingguai* 精怪) and gods, all of which are based on a narrative model which I call "guiding the deviant towards the norm (*chang* 常)." These narratives unfold by attempting to resolve problems presented by the anomaly. Not only did sophisticated readers, narrators, and compilers of the anomaly tales such as Gan Bao 干寶 (276?–336) use this narrative model with great skill, ordinary readers also read with the expectation

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[2] For research concerning the earlier ghost culture, see Ikeda Suetosh 池田末利, *Chūgoku kodai shūkyūshi kenkyū: seido to shisō* 中國古代宗教史研究: 制度と思想 (Tokyo: Toukai Daigaku Shuppankai, 1981), pp. 155–289, which discusses ancestors, ghosts, *hun* and *po* souls from an etymological viewpoint; in Western languages, consult Anthony C. Yu, "Rest, Rest, Perturbed Spirit! Ghosts in Traditional Chinese Prose Fiction," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 47.2 (1987): 398–99, particularly note 3; in Chinese, see Pu Muzhou 蒲慕州 (Mu-chou Poo), *Muzang yu shengsi: Zhongguo gudai zongjiao zhi shengsi* 墓葬與生死: 中國古代宗教之省思 (Taipei: Lianjing Chuban Gongsi, 1993), pp. 205–25; also Mu-chou Poo, *In Search of Personal Welfare: A View of Ancient Chinese Religion* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998), pp. 165–76.

[3] Lin Lizhen 林麗真, "Wei-Jin qingtan zhuti zhi yanjiu 魏晉清談主題之研究," Ph.D. diss., National Taiwan University, 1978, Chapter 6, pp. 339–41.

that the anomalous would in the end be guided back to the norm. The anomaly tales, however, are not merely conventions inherited from the past. They are in a sense creative works that reinvent the categories by which the world is ordered and evaluated.[4] Using as evidence three sets of Six Dynasties narratives representing traditional, Daoist, and Buddhist tales of the strange, I shall demonstrate how this narrative mode attempts to solve the troubled relationship between the human and the spirit worlds through rituals informed by shamanistic, Daoist and Buddhist practices, and how it symbolically expresses a dialectic between "normative" and "anomalous" in an age of upheavals.

Even if this narrative mode is traditionally regarded as a kind of "minor way" (*xiaodao* 小道), i.e., a trivial literary pastime, it is nevertheless able to reflect serious worldviews. The more outlandish the narratives seem, the more keenly they reveal attitudes and beliefs regarding the ultimate questions about the afterlife. Issues such as the separation of the living and the dead and the continuity of life and death ultimately aim at "guiding the deviant back to the norm" and thus embody the collective psychological demands of normality and order.

Basic Concepts of Ghost Narrative

The Realms of Life and Death

Differentiating the spaces of the living and the dead in terms of "the norm," coordinated with burial practices, created a "representational space"[5] for the realm of the dead. For example, the hundreds of large tombs of the Yangshao (仰韶) culture, dating from the Neolithic period, are public graves for one clan. As the space of the dead, these graves, while usually located in the vicinities of the villages, are clearly

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[4] For the narrative model of "guiding the deviant towards cosmic constants (*chang* 常)" see Liu Yuan-ju, *Shenti, xingbie, jieji—Liuchao zhiguai de changyi lunshu yu xiaoshuo meixue* 身體・性別・階級—六朝志怪的常異論述與小說美學 (Taipei: Institute of Chinese Literature and Philosophy, Academia Sinica, 2002), pp. 18–19, 195.

[5] According to Lefebvre, representational space is the combination of both spatial practice and represented space. For a discussion of how this concept can be applied to a spatial analysis of cityscapes, see Edward Soja, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-imagined Places* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 1997).

differentiated into separate locations from the living areas.[6] While these realms do not overlap, they are nevertheless still tied together by the concept of the clan or family.[7] Later, anomaly tales prominently feature the concept of family bonds that last even after death.

The separation of the residential and burial areas took another step forward in the Han Dynasty during the process of codifying ritual regulations, as we see in an important court discussion:

> Why should burials be outside of the city walls? The beginning that is life and the end that is death should be placed separately. The *Book of Changes* says: "Parents are buried outside of the residential area." The filial son sets a limit for his grief by this means.[8]

This explanation of burial outside of the city walls expounds a boundary between the living and dead as well as a properly delineated set of obligations of the living towards the dead. To explain this normalized separation of tombs and residential domains, we can invoke iconographic evidence from Han dynasty tomb reliefs. A number of illustrations show funerary procession wherein the deceased is placed in the coffin and sent to the grave site under the protection of family members and servants. The illustrations also show stone gates and grave trees, which may symbolize either the road of no return taken by the dead, or the entrance to the lineage graves.[9] Further support comes

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[6] Xu Jijun 徐吉軍, *Zhongguo sangzangshi* 中國喪葬史 (Nanchang: Jiangxi Gaoxiao Chubanshe, 1998), p. 7.

[7] See Xing Yitian 邢義田, "Handai de fulao, dan yu juzu liju—'Han shili fulaodan maitian yueshushiquan' duji 漢代的父老、僮與聚族里居──「漢侍里父老僮買田約束石券」讀記," *Hanxue Yanjiu* 漢學研究 1.2 (1983): 355–77; idem, "Cong Zhanguo zhi XiHan de zuju, zuzang, shiye lun Zhongguo gudai zongzu shehui de yanxu 從戰國至西漢的族居、族葬、世業論中國古代宗族社會的延續," *Xinshixue* 新史學 6.2 (1995): 1–41.

[8] Ban Gu 班固 ed., annotated by (Qing) Chen Li 陳立, *Baihutong Shuzheng* 白虎通疏證, in *Zhongguo zixue mingzhu jicheng* 中國子學名著集成 (Taipei: Zhongguo zixue mingzhu jicheng bianyin jijinhui, ming o, 1978), v. 86, p. 660.

[9] Hayashi Minao 林巳奈夫, "GōKan jidai no shaba györetsu 後漢時代の車馬行列," *Tōhō gakuhō* 東方學報 37 (1996): 183–226; Hayashi Minao 林巳奈夫, "Kandai kijin no sekai 漢代鬼神の世界," *Tōhō gakuhō* 東方學報 46 (1974): 223–306; Sofugawa Hiroshi 曾布川寬, *Konronzan e no shōsen* 崑崙山への昇仙 (Tokyo: Chūou Kouronsha, 1981); Sofugawa Hiroshi 曾布川寬, "Kandai gazouishi ni wakeru shōsentsu no keifu 漢代畫像石にわける昇仙圖の系譜," *Tōhō gakuhō* 東方學報 65 (1993): 23–222; Xin Lixiang 信立祥, *Chūgoku Kandai gazouishi no kenkyū* 中國漢代畫像石の研究 (Tokyo: Heifansha, 1991). The usual explanation often takes the gate as the entrance to the world of celestial beings, while the grave tree is a tree for the ascension of the immortals.

from written materials such as land purchase contracts found in some tombs. For example:

> Life and death have different roads. They may not obstruct one another. The dead return to Haoli. At the date *wuyi*, those above and below the earth cannot interfere [with its return].

Another example shows clearly the separation of the living and the dead:

> In life, he belonged to Chang'an. In death, he belongs to Mt. Tai. The living and the dead are placed differently; they may not interfere with one another.[10]

This passage betrays how a worldly bureaucratic idea penetrated into the conception of the realm of the dead. It deals with the problem of where to register one's residence after death. Just as Emperors of Chang'an governs the world of the living, so also God of the Mt. Tai (泰山) is to rule over those in the underworld. This change in residential registration means that the deceased is prevented from returning and disturbing the living.

The Continuity of Life and Death

Besides the spatial separation of the dead and the living in lineage regulations and burial practices, what is most noteworthy in Chinese views of death is the continuity of life and death. Chinese society during the Han period could be described as a lineage society, as seen in the lineage enterprises in life and the lineage burials at death.[11] Officials in the Han Dynasty extolled the filial principles and ceremonial regulations of the Confucian tradition: while the parents are alive, one serves them ritually, and when dead, one also serves them with proper ritual.[12] Ritual regulations were carried out throughout the family and its lineage, showing that these principles sufficed to coalesce the entire clan. Seasonal offerings, as an expression of lineage piety, were attempts to settle the spirits of ancestors. Although their "physical body" is no

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[10] Ikeda On 池田溫, "Chūgoku rekidai boken ryakukō 中國歷代墓券略考," *Tōyō Bunka Kenkyūjo Kiyō* 東洋文化研究所紀要, 86 (1981): 193–278.

[11] Xing Yitian 邢義田, "Cong Zhanguo zhi XiHan de zuju, zuzang, shiye lun Zhongguo gudai zongzu shehui de yanxu." For lineage society, see Zhao Pei 趙沛, *Handai zongzu yanjiu* 漢代宗族研究 (Jinan: Shandong Daxue Chubanshe, 2002).

[12] *Lunyu zhushu* 論語注疏 (*Shisanjing zhushu* ed. 十三經注疏), p. 16.

longer present, they are nonetheless present as "cultural bodies"[13] to be venerated.[14] The continuous strengthening of such a view of lineage offerings brought ghosts and family members into a state of harmonious relations.

During the Han-Tang transition, religious piety gradually placed greater emphasis on the securing of family fortune through ancestral worship. Prayers to the ancestors are not just for protection but also to gain wealth and happiness for the living. Views about inherited responsibility (*chengfu* 承負) appeared already in the late Han text *Canon of Great Peace* (*Taiping jing* 太平經), and further developed against this background, that is, the belief that crime and fortune were shared in common by the entire family. Therefore, during the Southern and Northern Dynasties, Buddhist and Daoist tenets promoted the very popular custom of praying for merit and "netherworld fortune" (*mingfu* 冥福) for both the living and the deceased family members. In the north, erecting devotional stelae at Buddhist rural devotional communities (*sheyi* 社邑) were public ritual acts for obtaining the fortune of an entire village and region. Privately erected devotional stelae in turn ask for the fortune of an entire family.[15] Ancestor worship manifests an awareness of retribution (*bao* 報),[16] that is, what is done shall be repaid accordingly; praying for the good fortune for the ancestors is performed in hope of receiving reciprocity from them. This conception of reciprocity, in the eyes of some cultural psychologists, is a basic mentality of the Chinese in handling the grave affairs of life

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[13] Elaine Scarry, "But yet the Body is His Book," in Elaine Scarry ed., *Literature and the Body: Essays on Populations and Persons* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988), p. 76.

[14] (Han) Cui Shi 崔寔 ed., *Simin yueling* 四民月令, redacted by Tang Hongxue 唐鴻學, in *Suishi xisu ziliao huibian* 歲時習俗資料彙編 (Taipei: Yiwen Yinshuguan, 1970), p. 3. Moriya Mitsuwa 守屋美都雄, *Chūgoku kodai saijiki kenkyū* 中國古代歲時記研究 (Tokyo: Teigoku Shoen, 1963), pp. 11–23.

[15] Hou Xudong 侯旭東, *Wu liu shiji beifang minzhong fuojiao xinyang* 五、六世紀北方民眾佛教信仰 (Beijing: Zhongguo Shehui Kexue Chubanshe, 1998); Zhang Zexun 張澤珣, *BeiWei Daojiao zaoxianbei yishu* 北魏道教造像碑藝術 (Hong Kong: Mingshi Wenhua Gongsi, 2002); Zhang Zexun 張澤珣, "BeiWei Daojiao zaoxiangji yanjiu: diyu de zongjiao wenhua yu yishi huodong—fu zaoxiangbei wenlu jiaodian 北魏道教造像記研究: 地域的宗教文化與儀式活動—附造像碑文錄校點." Ph.D. diss., Chinese University of Hong Kong, 2003.

[16] Qu Tongzu 瞿同祖, *Zhongguo falü yu Zhongguo shehui* 中國法律與中國社會 (Taipei: Liren Shuju, 1984), pp. 338–46.

and death.[17] In sum, within the lineage system, the living and the dead form a continuous community sustained by various ritual acts.

Guiding the Deviant to the Norm

In most circumstances, bringing mutual peace between life and death, humans and ghosts, means the establishment of a normal state that is stable and secure. Yet because of the existence of irregularities such as abnormal death, and transgressions such as improper treatment of the dead, it induces all kinds of monstrosities; ghosts and other strange phenomena are themselves a kind of abnormal and deviant state of affairs.[18] The ritual regulations of the Han Dynasty had been taken up and preserved by the elites of the Six Dynasties. They also continued to be followed by less prestigious lineages and families. However, this was also a time of political chaos and social upheaval that resulted in massive refugee movements and the death of innocent victims. Thus for a wide variety of reasons the regulations were not always followed observed. This is frequently reflected in the narratives of the anomaly tales, such as the following story:

> Prime Minister Sun Jun of Wu killed Princess Zhu and had her buried on Mount Shizi. When Guiming succeeded to the throne, he wished to have the princess reburied, but all the graves on the hill were indistinguishable from one another. However, some palace servants still remembered what the princess had been wearing. Two shamans were thus stationed at two different places on the hill to watch for her ghost—they were only to observe and not to approach it.
> Some time passed before the two reported to have seen a young woman around thirty moving about on the upper part of Mount Shizi. She was wearing a green embroidered headdress, purple and white robes, and crimson pongee-silk slippers. With her hands in her lap, she sighed long and deeply. She paused for a while and then approached a tomb. She stopped, hesitated again for quite some time, and shortly thereafter disappeared. The accounts of both shamans matched without prior con-

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[17] Yang Guoshu 楊國樞, *Zhongguoren de xinli yu xingwei: bentuhua yanjiu* 中國人的心理與行為: 本土化研究 (Beijing: Zhongguo Renmin Daxue Chubanshe, 2004); Huang Guangguo 黃光國, "Renqing yu mianzi: Zhongguo de quanli youxi 人情與面子: 中國的權力遊戲," in *Zhongguo de quanli youxi* 中國的權力遊戲 (Taipei: Juliu Tushu Gongsi, 1988), pp. 7–56. See also the article by Steven Sangren in this volume.

[18] Lee Fongmao 李豐楙, "Taiwan minjian Lisuzhong de shengsi guanhuai 台灣民間禮俗中的生死關懷," *Zhexue zazhi* 哲學雜誌 8 (1994): 32–53.

sultation, so the tomb they indicated was opened. The clothing on the corpse was just as they had described.[19]

This is an example of the murder of an innocent victim. The moral of the story is that the innocent dead could somehow be redeemed by showing her apparition and henceforth receiving proper burial. What was abnormal thus became regulated. Or, consider another example:

> During the civil disorder of the Yongjia period (307–313) of Jin, there was no stable government in the prefectures or counties. The strong dealt with the weak violently. In Yiyang County there was a woman, named Peng E. Her family members include her father, mother, elder and younger brothers, in all more than ten people. They were attacked by the brigands from Changsha. Peng E was carrying a container out to get water from the creek when she heard the raiders arrive. She fled back and saw that the village defensive walls were already destroyed. She could not control her grief and fought with the brigands, who tied her and forced her to the side of the creek and were about to kill her. There was a large mountain at the edge of the creek, with a rock cliff over a hundred meters high. Peng E looked up to the sky and shouted: "Does August Heaven have gods or not? What crimes have I committed that I should come to this?" With this, she took off running towards the mountain. A large vertical opening appeared in the wall, about a dozen meters wide, and with a path going through it as smooth as a whetstone. The band of brigands pursued Peng E into the mountain, but the mountain collapsed back together without seams just as before, and the brigands were all crushed in the mountain, with their heads sticking out. Peng E went into hiding and never came out again. The water container Peng E carried to get water changed into a rock shaped like a chicken. The locals thus called it "Stone Chicken Mountain"; the pool there became "Lake E."[20]

The background to the story is the chaotic period of the Yongjia reign (307–312). The parents and brothers of Peng E are killed through no fault of their own, which makes the story an example of abnormal death. That Peng E is able to escape and miraculously traps the brigands in the mountain, if one perceives it as a literary strategy, is a case of guiding the deviant (the death of her family members) to the norm (her family tragedy found justice in the death of the brigands). The goal

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[19] Ge Bao 干寶, *Soushen ji* 搜神記 (Taipei: Muduo Chubanshe, 1987), p. 26. This translation is based on the translation of Kenneth J. DeWoskin and J. I. Crump, *In Search of the Supernatural: The Written Record* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), pp. 25–26.

[20] *Youming lu* 幽冥錄 in Lu Xun 魯迅 ed., *Guxiaoshuo gouchen* 古小說鉤沈 (Taipei: Tangshan reprint, 1989), p. 254.

and motivation to narrate the anomaly stories, if one may venture a speculation, is, in many cases, to allow the reader to find peace when normality is recovered in the stories.

As has been demonstrated, souls of the innocent victims of unjust death would often come back to take their vengeance and influence the fate of the living.[21] Early Six Dyansties Daoist works, such as the *Nüqing guilü* 女青鬼律 and *Taishang Dongyuan shenzhou jing* 太上洞淵神咒經, often mention that the victims of violent deaths could become plague demons and ghosts of epidemics in "spreading pestilence."[22] It would be necessary to employ Shamans or Daoist masters to carry out rituals and remove the interference or avert the vengeance of the threatening ghosts, thus guiding the deviant back to the norm. In sum, early medieval ghost stories generally contain the three basic elements discussed above.

Angry Ghosts and Wronged Ghosts

The anomaly tales of the Six Dynasties are not only of literary interest for their narrative style, but may carry other messages tied to religious mentality and social criticism.[23] They impart a special intention, and their ironic barbs and criticisms embody their projected aim. Ghosts are like costumed and masked actors who preserve the person's most striking features before death. When their behavior becomes anomalous, the spectators are given a chance to speculate on the symbolic meaning contained therein.

Consider the following story:

> The wife of Wang Chengzhi of Langye was of the Xie family of Chen Prefecture. She had given birth to a son named Nuzi. After some years, he made his wife's maidservant Zhaoli his concubine. Xie died of illness in the eighth year of the Yuanjia period (431). The Wang family's tombs

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[21] See the article by Mu-chou Poo in this volume.

[22] For details, see Lee Fongmao 李豐楙, "*Daozang* suo shou zaoqi Daoshu de wenyiguan—yi *Nüqingguilü* ji *Dongyuan shenzhou jing* xi weizhu:《道藏》所收早期道書的瘟疫觀—以《女青鬼律》及《洞淵神咒經》系爲主," *Zhongguo Wenzhe Yanjiu Jikan* 中國文哲研究集刊 3 (1993): 417–54.

[23] Besides my view that anomaly writing guides difference to normalcy as a social discourse and aesthetic structure, Robert F. Campany in his *Strange Writing: Anomaly Accounts in Early Medieval China* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996) sees the anomaly tales as cosmological texts that mixed cosmological conceptions and religious beliefs of the time; see also, Mu-chou Poo, "Ghost Literature: Exorcistic Ritual Text or Daily Entertainment?" *Asia Major* 13.1 (2000): 43–64.

were in Kuaiji, so he made expedient use of a plot in the eastern hills of Jiankang to bury her. Having placed the coffin in the grave, he returned to settle her spirit on the ancestral tablet. Having brought her earth soul into the room, he leaned on a stand, when the tablet suddenly was thrown through the air to the ground. [The ghost of Xie said] with an angry tone: "Why did you not perform the elegy? Do you want to leave me to set on the path in loneliness?" Cheng said, "Not all the proprieties were performed simply because it is not a permanent burial."[24]

As the Wangs and the Xies were the most prestigious families at the time, all the funerary ritual details were expected to be respectfully followed and the burial properly located. Since the ancestral tombs of the Wang family were at Kuaiji, a time should have been chosen to return the deceased to the ancestral cemetery in accordance with common customs. However, perhaps hampered by the political and social circumstance, there was no way to return the body immediately for burial at Kuaiji. At the time of the funeral procession to the grave, moreover, Wang Chengzhi did not follow the contemporary custom to perform a funeral elegy.[25] This is why his wife complained about being alone when she set off for the netherworld. Furthermore, after the burial, when he returned to settle her soul on the ancestral tablet, by custom he should have carried out the ritual terminating the weeping,[26] but Wang Chengzhi merely leaned on the stand, having brought her earth soul into the room. This oversight betrays his casual and uncaring attitude during the mourning process. Rather than saying that his behavior is ritually improper, we might say instead that it shows his lack of inward sincerity. Even if he had followed the external ritual forms of the time, if he had lost his inner feelings, as far as the anomaly narratives are concerned, his case would still be considered as "deviant." All these "irregularities" may have contributed to the plot in the story regarding the expression of his wife's anger, since she would have the reason to feel that she was abnormally or unjustly treated.

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[24] Liu Jingshu 劉敬叔 (comp.) and Fan Ning 范寧 (annot.), *Yiyuan* 異苑 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1996), 9.58.

[25] *Jinshu* 晉書, p. 626.

[26] *Liji zhushu* 禮記注疏, p. 171: "In this month change the site of the memorial to the home shrine and terminate weeping to complete the duties. On this day use an auspicious offering in the course of the funeral ceremonies."

The genre of ghost stories represented by this text seems to be a means to criticize those who lack inward feelings in ritual practices.[27] Did the ghost really make her husband realize his faults? Or did the wrath of the angry spirit shake and frighten her husband into submission? The succinct narrative in this text keeps an open space for imagination. Wang Chengzhi's reply to the inquiry of the ghost of his wife was straight forward and did not show much remorse, for his excuse for not performing the elegy was because it was not a permanent burial. This means that the burial would be moved to the ancestral cemetery eventually, a promise made to assuage the angry spirit, and to guide the deviant situation back to normal.

The following story tells about the grievance of a man for his sorry death, and his success in seeking justice at the heavenly court.

> In the Jin, Xiahou Xuan, courtesy name Taichu, was a great talent of the time. Sima Shi, King of Jing, was jealous of him, and had him beheaded. His lineage sacrificed to him, and they saw Xuan come and sit in the spirit seat. He took off his head and placed it on the spirit seat, and took all the fruit, food, fish and meat he could get, and stuffed them into his neck. When finished, he put his head back on. At this, he stated: "My case has been taken up by the Supreme God. The King will have no heir." Shortly thereafter, when the army returned from the campaign of Yongjia, the king ended with no sons to inherit his property. Subsequently, a shaman saw the soul of Emperor (Wu of Jin), who said, weeping: "The country's downfall began at the time when Cao Shuang and Xiahou Xuan petitioned their grievances (to the Superme God) and were granted permission." Shuang was executed for having a powerful lineage and Xuan was beheaded due to his potential [for creating unrest].[28]

This story chronicles the revenge of the famous Xiahou Xuan (209–254) against the Western Jin Dynasty (265–317). During the struggle for power at the end of the Wei Dynasty, Xiahou Xuan, who was a supporter of the Wei, was arrested and executed by his opponent Sima Shi, later Emperor Wu, the founder of the Western Jin Dynasty. Story has it that as he was to be beheaded, he did not turn pale, and his comportment

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[27] As early as the *Zuozhuan* 左傳 and *Guoyu* 國語, the performance of proper ritual was used as a criteria to judge the reciprocal returns of individuals and states, and thus whether a person was to be praised or blamed. See David Schaberg, *A Patterned Past: Form and Thought in Early Chinese Historiography* (Cambridge: Harvard East Asia Monographs, 2001), pp. 207–21. My thanks go to Scott Davis for noting this. However, the concept of *bao* or reciprocal return in the Six Dynasties, other than its ritual standard, also makes requirements in terms of *qing* 情 or emotions.

[28] *Yiyuan* 異苑, 6.52.

was relaxed and natural. He was thus highly praised by some literati at the time.[29] Unlike other ghosts resulting from executions, who seem woefully encumbered by their shackles, or were ashamed of the marks of their punishments,[30] Xuan's ghost was still as his contemporaries had described him: "illustrious and magnanimous as if encompassing the sun or moon in his breast,"[31] expressing a graceful manner.

The point of the narrative is the indefatigable efforts of Xiahou Xuan to exact revenge. According to the story, he waited almost sixty years before bringing his case to the heavenly lord and won. The end of the Western Jin Dynasty was predicted by Emperor Wu himself, thus Xiahou Xuan's grievance was addressed, and the deviant returned to normal. Reading from a historical point of view, the story was most likely written as a postfacto pseudo-prediction of the downfall of Western Jin, probably written by a sympathizer of Xiahou Xuan. For there could be no real justice in the struggle for political power, and Xianhou Xuan's revenge would logically become the source of injustice from the point of view of the Jin court.

Intermediaries between Ghosts and Humans

From the wealth of Daoist works in the collections of the anomaly stories of the Six Dynasties period, I draw here on stories related to the magicians and Daoist masters in order to briefly explore the function exercised by the Daoist tradition.

The "magicians" (also known as *fangshi* 方士 or *shushi* 術士) are those who possess a broad range of techniques about such matters as medicine and the occult. In the following story, the magician uses a special technique to allow the dead and living to meet.

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[29] These events are found in material such as *Wei Shu* 魏書, "Xiahou Shang 夏侯尚," *Wei Shu* 魏書, "Xiahou Shang zhuan, with appended zhuan for son Xuan 夏侯尚附子玄," that quotes *Weilue* 魏略, *Wei Shu* 魏書, *Shishuo* 世說, etc. Also see Cao Jianghong 曹江紅, "Lun Xiahou Xuan yu zhengshi gaizhi 論夏侯玄與正始改制," *Guizhou Shifan Daxue Xuebao* 貴州師範大學學報 (*Shehui kexueban* 社會科學版), 1 (1998): 24–26.

[30] One can often find those having died of punishment appearing in the anomaly writing of the Six Dynasties; they are documented as appearing with the shackles on them or as unwilling to manifest their forms due to their injuries. For instance, *Youming lu* 幽明錄, "Guanglingsan 廣陵散," p. 298; *Yi yuan* 異苑, "Li jian 李謙," 6.53.

[31] See *Shishuo xinyu* 世說新語, "Rongzhi 容止," p. 609.

During the Han Dynasty, there was a Magician from Yingling in Beihai commandery capable of arranging meetings between the living and the dead. In the same commandery, there lived a man who had lost his wife some years earlier, and when he heard of the Master's skills, he went to see him.

"If you could let me speak to my wife again, I would die with no remorse," said he. The Master instructed him as follows: "You can be sent to visit her, but when the drum sounds, you must leave her at once! Do not tarry a moment!"

The Master then recited his formula for "meetings," and in a trice the man was with his wife. They immediately fell to conversing, feeling the whole range of joy and sorrow and the profound affection they shared while alive. In this manner did much time pass until suddenly he heard the drum sound *lang-lang*. He could not linger, but as he left, his garments caught in the doorway. He hastily ripped himself free and fled.

A little more than a year later, the man himself passed away. When his survivors opened the family crypt to bury him, they discovered, caught beneath the cover of his wife's casket, a piece of his robe.[32]

The magician of Beihai broke down the boundaries of *yin* and *yang*. This border is not simply a spatial barrier, but requires traversing between the body and its absence. Because of the growing influence of the Daoist religion, accounts of this ability in the anomaly narratives were seen by contemporaries as credible reality. The Beihai Magician "could arrange meetings between the living and the dead." But how can one rationally conjoin the worlds of *yin* and *yang* in a narrative? What method can the narrative deploy for it to be convincing and believable for the reader? The narrative depicts the man's contact with the netherworld under the casket beyond anyone's view. It seamlessly combines details about the everyday and the occult so that the events seem natural and factual. In the story, the man was explicitly told before he entered the nether-world: "When the drum sounds, you must leave her at once! Do not tarry a moment!" Obviously, when humans and ghosts communicate, it should be in the dark of night, which is the time of *yin*. How could one secure the objectivity of the narrative to make it credible?[33] The robe left

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[32] Gan Bao 干寶, *Soushen ji* 搜神記, pp. 25–26, this translation is based on the translation of Kenneth J. DeWorskin and J. I. Crump, *In Search of the Supernatural: The Written Record*, pp. 24–25.

[33] Some scholars point out that the anomaly literature is a kind of "historiographical style of narrative," in that it displays a documentary principle of "without proof there

behind in the hasty exit of the "door" must be called upon to testify. In this way material evidence is revealed under the coffin lid, supporting what the plot tells us about the man's entrance into the netherworld. It suggests that the inextricable meeting of the two took place inside the wife's casket. The conclusion of the story was only known after the grave was opened. As the family opened the tumulus and sent the man to join his wife, they finally discover the secret of the couple's meeting after traversing these boundaries. The depth of emotion in the anomaly tales is often like this; although the story is simple, there is abundant space left for the imagination. This is an aesthetic property of the genre, as its romantic style lies close to poetry.

This story conveys how the living can cross boundaries and enter the world of the dead but it was necessary to rely upon the extraordinary skill of a magician to do so. This kind of border crossing by the living was something of which the Confucians "did not speak." However, the separation between life and death gave rise to the psychological need to cross it. One needed only to have a strong willingness to believe it, and the door to the tomb, the door to the realm of death, would open accordingly. The special arts of the shamans and Daoist masters provided unusual services to ordinary people in need, and created an expectation of their success. It is a resistance to the disappearance of the bodily form: even after death one wishes that the soul could continue to talk, be conscious, and express emotions. Again, the basic concept of guiding the deviant back to the norm, that is, crossing the boundary of death and bringing back the moment of life, underlies the story.

Another story tells of the way Daoism gradually became more familiar to the common people as its concepts permeated folk culture. In the Daoist view, the afterworld was replete with an extensive bureaucracy and feudal positions just as in the human world.

> Xu You dreamed that an official dressed in black presented him with a lacquered tray, on which were six documents of appointment. He knelt. The statement read: "You, governor, will be the Lord of the Big Dipper in the seventh month of next year." There was another tray upon which were four documents, saying, "Chen Kang will be the Registrar." After he woke up, Kang was just arriving. He said, "I have arrived for an audience!"

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is no belief." See Wang Ping 王平, *Zhongguo xiaoshuo xushi yanjiu* 中國小說敘事研究 (Shijiazhuang: Xibei Renmin Chubanshe, 2001), pp. 10–19.

Hearing this, You was even more terrified. He asked Kang, who said, "I am a Daoist Master. After death, I am no more than a village's tutelary god (*shegong* 社公). Now I hear I am to be the Registrar for the Lord of the Big Dipper—I am certainly unworthy!" In the seventh month of the next year, both died on the same day.[34]

Xu You was an advisor for Cao Cao (155–220), the founder of the Wei Dynasty. According to the official histories, Xu was put to death for being unduly arrogant.[35] This story asserts that before Cao Cao executed Xu You, he had had a remarkable dream about becoming the Lord of the Big Dipper, which, according to Daoist cosmology, is only one rank below that of the Emperor of the North who holds the highest position. No matter if the story was created after Xu You's death, it could be read as intentional praise of his merit and criticism of Cao Cao's failure to honor talented men.

The story makes it clear that a Daoist master after his death could usually become one of the local gods, the village tutelary god. Under special circumstances such as the one in the story, he may be promoted to a higher position. The assumption behind this narrative was that the world after death was essentially a bureaucratic society, which was reflected in the early Daoist work *Zhenling weiyetu* 真靈位業圖. There was of course a long tradition for the development of such a world view. Quite a number of newly excavated texts from the Han dynasty testified that there were various underworld officials that the deceased were supposed to encounter in their respective capacities.[36] In our story, the promotion of Xu You after death to the position of the Lord of the Big Dipper was certainly a way to compensate for his unfortunate death, thus again resonating with the underlying theme of guiding the deviant to the norm.

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[34] See *Youming lu* 幽明錄, pp. 292–93.

[35] See *Xinjiaoben Sanguozhi* 新校本三國志, *Wei Shu* 魏書, "Cui Yan 崔琰," 12.370.

[36] For a complete examination in this respect see Pu Muzhou, *Muzang yu shengsi: Zhongguo gudai zongjiao zhi shengsi* 墓葬與生死:中國古代宗教之省思, and Mu-chou Poo, *In Search of Personal Welfare*; also see Liu Yi 劉屹, *Jingtian yu chongdao: zhonggu jingjiao daojiao xingcheng de sixiang beijing* 敬天與崇道: 中古經教道教形成的思想背景 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 2005).

Aspects of Reincarnation

The entrance of Buddhism into China may have been a "conquest of China";[37] however, in the process of development it was also conquered by China. The concept of the Six Realms (*liudao* 六道) introduced by Buddhism—namely of the gods in heaven, *asuras*, demons, beasts and souls in hell—deploys a multi-leveled view of life that enriched Chinese religious culture. The concept of the hungry ghost/demon (*egui* 餓鬼; Skt. *preta*) introduced by Buddhism has several characteristics: one, it depends on others for food;[38] two, it is weak and frightened;[39] three, even if it lives longer than humans,[40] it still dies and migrates through the Six Realms. From Buddhist doctrine, we know that all living beings require food and shelter; and, life is an endless continuum that spans death.[41] Did this kind of view of life and death "conquer" the Chinese knowledge of life and death? Outside of the concept of hungry ghosts, there are also other demons like *rākṣasa* that eat humans, lustful fiends, fast-moving demons, and baby-eating monsters. Due to their bad karma, they are reincarnated in the world of demons; they often are active in mountains, forests or swamps, and are often mixed with Chinese traditional or indigenous legends of supernatural beings in those areas.

While Buddhism enlarged the concept of ghost into including certain demons, that is, non-human evil spirits, the demon never displaced the ghost because Chinese culture placed the most importance on human beings.[42] In the concept of the continuity of life and death whereby life

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[37] See the preface in Eric Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China: The Spread and Adaptation of Buddhism in Early Medieval China* (Leiden: Brill, 1997).

[38] Zhen Di 真諦 trans., *Lishi apitanlun* 立世阿毘曇論, in *Taishō*, v. 32, no. 1644, p. 866: "Among the five drives there is no drive that hopes more to obtain satisfaction from other sentient beings; due to such causality, the drive is described as ghostly."

[39] Dao Shi 道世, *Fayuan zhuli* 法苑珠林, in *Taishō*, v. 53, no. 2122, p. 311b: "Ghosts (*gui* 鬼) are fear (*wei* 畏). It means they are weak and full of fear, thus are called ghosts."

[40] Shi Qin 世親 (Skt. Vasubandhu) annot., Xuan Zang 玄奘 trans., *Abhidharma storehouse treatise* 阿毘達磨俱舍論, in *Taishō*, v. 29, no. 1588, 11.6: "A month in the human world for a ghost is like a day, so doing the math, the lifetime of a ghost is 500 human years."

[41] *Dasheng yizhang* 大乘義章, in *Taishō*, v. 44, no. 1851, 7.613: "Many lives on a continuum is the multitude of living beings." Ghosts belong to the three worlds and the six levels of existence. Causal effects have fixed limits of effectiveness in time, and this is just what *Cheng weishilun* 成唯識論 calls the separation into sections of lives and deaths. *Taishō*, v. 31, no. 1851, 7.613.

[42] For further discussion of ghosts in Buddhist texts, see Mu-chou Poo, "The Culture of Ghost in the Six Dynasties," in this volume.

and death are one, ghosts are simply just another form of life. For this reason, even if Buddhist theoretical discourse about demons dazzled, it was merely redacted to become a part of the discourse about body and spirit. At the same time, ghosts became an important medium for the teaching of the Buddhist ideas of the other world such as heavens, hells and so forth. Now the Confucian ritual system and Daoist asceticism mixed with and complemented each other institutionally, liturgically and conceptually. In particular, the internal organization of the lineage and family system still tied the fortunes of a family to the ancestral ceremonies. To come to terms with this kind of situation, Buddhism made accommodations to gain the acceptance of the Chinese people. In constructing a world after death, Buddhist doctrinal expression remained similar to the original Indic version. But lay and popular Buddhism were really indigenized or Sinicized Buddhist beliefs. Works such as what Wang Yan 王琰 recorded in *Mingxiang ji* 冥祥記 or other works such as *Xuanyan ji* 宣驗記, *Guanshiyin yingyan ji* 觀世音應驗記, *Ganying zhuan* 感應傳, *Yuanhun ji* 冤魂記, *Jiling ji* 集靈記, *Jingyi ji* 旌異記, and so forth were considered as "teaching books that furthered the efforts of Śākyamuni." These texts emphasized basic principles from *sūtra, vinayas* and *sastras* that were Indic in origin yet adapted to the existing Chinese customs. My discussion selects a few narratives that had to do with the phenomenon of reincarnation of ghosts.

Reincarnation from the Realm of Hungry Demons

Six Dynasties *zhiguai* about ghosts mainly follow indigenous traditions concerning body and spirit; when ghosts appear after death, they preserve their appearances as in life, with the same clothing, expression and disposition. In some cases, they even preserve the condition they were in at death. Even if a ghost in this kind of indigenous narrative is resentful, most petition their case and only a few directly resort to malice or deliberate injury of the living. However, the newly introduced Buddhist idea of hungry demon brought changes. The realm of hungry demons was one of the Six Realms of reincarnation, which along with beasts and hell belonged to the realm of evil. Those who in their lifetimes had flattered others, been perverse, lied, slandered, cheated, were stingy, or avaricious—once they fall into hell after death, they would be punished and then join the realm of the hungry demons. After becoming demons, they are still unable to rid themselves of their wicked habits and previous karma. They hide during the day and come

out at night, roaming about scrounging for food; or they change their bodily form at the snap of a finger, frightening the living; or they take the opportunity to demand that the living offer them incense. The story about An Shigao gives an example of an eminent monk who encounters a demon who behaves very differently from human ghosts.

> Lord An Shigao was the Prince of Anxi (Parthia). He left home to become a monk together with an Elder's son. They studied and lived in the [city of] Sravasti. When they begged, some people did not treat the monks well, and the great man's son was often furious about it. Shigao always cautioned him about it. After twenty eight full years, he remarked that he ought to go to Guangzhou, but just then revolt broke out.
>
> A man confronted Shigao; the man spat on his hand and pulled out a knife saying, "I have really got you now." Shigao laughed heartily and said, "I owe you from my previous life, so I have come from afar to repay you." The man then killed Shigao. A child said, "This was a foreigner from afar who spoke my country's language; in such distress he didn't lose his composure. Is this perhaps a celestial?" Everybody laughed at him with apprehension.
>
> Shigao's spiritual consciousness returned to life in the kingdom of Anxi and again was the prince, named Lord Gaoan 高安侯. At age twenty, he once again renounced the kingship and cultivated himself. After a dozen or so years, he said to his fellow monks, "I should go visit Kuaiji and pay back what I owe." Shigao passed by Mt. Lu and visited a friend there. He then passed through Guangzhou and saw the man who was still there [that is, the boy who witnessed his death in his previous life]. He stayed at his house and spoke to him about the past. They enjoyed each other's company immensely, and then the man accompanied Shigao to Kuaiji.
>
> When they passed by the temple at Mt. Ji, they called to the spirit to talk to Shigao. The temple spirit took the form of a python that was more than a dozen meters long, and wept tears. When Shigao drew near to speak to it, it went away. Shigao, for his part, returned to his boat.
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> Then a young man got on the boat, he knelt and received the incantation prayer and then disappeared. [Gao spoke to] the man from Guangzhou, saying, "That youth was the temple spirit who had been freed from his evil form. He was an Elder's son [whom I knew from the previous life]." Later the keeper of the temple noticed a foul odor; they found a dead python. After this, the temple spirit no longer was spiritually effective. They continued on to Kuaiji. When they entered the marketplace gate, they encountered men fighting. Shigao was accidentally hit in the head and died. The man from Guangzhou then devoted his life to the Buddha.[43]

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[43] The version I use here includes emendations by Zheng Wanqing 鄭晚晴, *Youming lu* 幽明錄 (Beijing: Wenhua Yisu Chubanshe, 1998), p. 167, notes 3 and 4.

The important lesson of the narrative of this text has to do with the fate of An Shigao in connection with the past, the present and the future. In Shigao's second life, he and an Elder's son left home to become monks; but in response to humiliations and disrespectful treatment while begging for food, the latter was often full of rage. This bad karma led to his being reincarnated into the realm of demons as the temple spirit on Mt. Ji. He took the form of a python, but this does not mean he had fallen into the realm of beasts. According to the *Lengyan jing* 楞嚴經 (*Sūraṃgama-sūtr*), those beside themselves with rage and hatred who do evil will atone for the crimes and become "venomous demons" (*gudu gui* 蠱毒鬼).[44] At the same time, demons can metamorphose and have extraordinary godlike abilities; men have to make offerings to them for this reason. Reborn as an animal, one is stupid and without self-awareness; a beast could not meet an old friend and weep as this python spirit did. Moreover, he was willing to leave the bad karma of the demon and undergo rebirth. In addition, the story imparts the idea that those who become monks possess the ability to tame ghosts and subdue demons, thus reinforcing the proselytizing power the story.

Many stories about hungry demons omit Buddhist teachings and instead emphasize their avarice and demonic behavior such as scaring and threatening others. For example, while walking alone at night, a man who fears demons welcomes a companion, but his companion suddenly turns into a vicious demon with protruding tongue and bulging eyes, or perhaps has become a rabbit with eyes as large as hand-held mirrors.[45] There are also cases where demons attack people with axes, spread pestilence, or rob people of their "essence."[46] There are also hungry demons who play unpleasant tricks on people and want food,[47] or who break into a house to steal food.[48] Some stories attempt to encourage religious belief; many stories satirize aspects of humanity such as suspicion of others, lust, arrogance, and deception.

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[44] See *Dafoding rulai miyin xiuzhengliaoyi zhupusa wanxing shoulengyan jing* 大佛頂如來密因修證了義諸菩薩萬行首楞嚴經, in *Taishō*, v. 19, no. 945, p. 150a.

[45] As in *Soushen ji* 搜神記, "Gu Pipa 鼓琵琶," p. 197; "Dunqiu guimei 頓丘鬼魅," p. 211.

[46] As in *Soushen houji* 搜神後記 (Taipei: Muduo chubanshe, 1982), "Yiwu ru niao 異物如鳥," pp. 41–42; "Fuzhonggui 腹中鬼," p. 43; *Soushen ji* 搜神記, "Ruyang guimei 汝陽鬼魅," pp. 205–206.

[47] As in *Youming lu* 幽明錄, "Xingui Mishi 新鬼覓食," pp. 312–13.

[48] As in *Youming lu* 幽明錄, "Guidao Zhugeshi Liang 鬼盜諸葛氏糧," p. 289.

All these show that although Buddhism was respected as a rather different religion in form and content, the ordinary Chinese tended to select those aspects of the Buddhist teaching that were most familiar to the indigenous culture. The core principles of Buddhism required a longer period to be assimilated.

Reincarnation in Seven Lives

The mourning and sacrificial ritual associated with Confucianism extended family relations from the third to the sixth generation, and even to the hundredth generation. At the outset, such views of life and death were incompatible with Buddhist views, which stressed the transient nature of all phenomena, comprised as they are of the Five Aggregates (*skandha*s).[49] The gentry society of the Southern Dynasties was very particular about filial piety, and stressed the unbroken continuity of sacrificial and incense offerings to the ancestors. There was therefore an obvious conflict between the belief in ghosts represented by ancestor worship and the realm of the demons in Buddhist lore. At the folk level, however, this problem was more easily handled by appealing to the emotional content of stories.

The following story about Dong Qingjian serves as an example of how, under the influence of Buddhism, funeral customs and sacrificial ceremonial at that time gradually changed. Dong Qingjian epitomized the life of a disciple to an official of the Southern Dynasty period. From his birth, early career, last words before dying of disease, tomb construction and ascetic sacrifices, to the dispersal of his body and seven souls and the ascension of his soul—this entire narrative emphasizes his temporary return home, his description of his circumstances after death, and his foretelling his parents' death and future lives. He personally narrates the destiny of seven generations and further expounds about the principle of the Six Realms of karmic reincarnation to encourage his father to draw nearer to Buddha and make spiritual progress and avoid the three realms of bitterness: to be born as a ghost, beast, or in hell. This repeatedly emphasizes the retribution of karmic justice, and discriminates between and compares similarities of ghosts and other *yin* phenomena (in the after-death state or *antatrā-bhava*), as well as the secrets of reincarnation. The story is constructed according to

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[49] 1. 色 *rūpa*, form, matter; 2. 受 *vedana*, sensation; 3. 想 *samjñā*, discernment; 4. 行 *samskāra*, judgments of like and dislike, good and evil, etc.; 5. 識 *vijñāna*, cognition.

various Buddhist concepts: dependent origination; the inconstancy of birth and death; the continuation of thoughts and desires; the intermediate state between death and rebirth (*zhongyin* 中陰); and the power of karma and retribution. Below, I focus on excerpts that relate to these Buddhist concepts.

> On the 16th day of the seventh month of the second year, he was sick in bed. He said, "There will be no recovery." By the 18th, he was nearing the end. He sat up and said to his mother: "My expiation is over and fortune awaits. My karmic entanglement will be broken forever. I hope, mother, you will cut yourself off from me; there is no need to worry." With seven sobs, the sounds ceased and he was dead....
>
> They were preparing to put the body into a coffin in the front of hall, when, that night, his spirit spoke: "The living and the dead should be separate; don't put my body in front of the hall. A monk who carves icons should come to help in the funeral." The next day, indeed a monk named Tanshun arrived. They told Tanshun just what the spirit had said. Tanshun said, "Your humble monk lives in Nanlin Temple, where I have just completed an icon of a height over four meters high. Your son responded to this. To the west of the temple there is a small open plot of land; this would be a good place to bury him to rest in peace." Therefore, they buried him to the west of the temple. Three days later, his mother went with around ten other relatives to make offerings at the grave. She saw Qingjian standing to the east of the tomb just as in life, and he said, "I hope, mother, you will cut yourself off from grief and go back. I am still living in the temple now." So his mother stopped crying and returned home. She prepared the family's vegetables in order to practice abstinence. At the 11th day of the intercalary month, [his father] Xianming had a dream of Qingjian, who said, "I would like you, father, to go to the eastern hall." So Xianming bathed in fragrant water and went to the eastern hall. By the night of the 14th, in his sleep he heard Qingjian calling, which shocked him awake. Qingjian was there in front of the hall, looking as he did in life. His father asked him, "Where are you staying now?" Qingjian said, "From the time I died, I stayed at the Palace of Training Spirits; after 100 days, I should be reborn in Trayastrimsa Heaven. I cannot bear to see my parents and brothers crying and hurting. When the seven-day cycle had reached the third round, I performed a rite for the Buddhas and Boddhisatvas and requested the four Kings of Heaven, to allow me to return temporarily. Please, in the future, do not cry and offer sacrifices to me again.[50]

The Buddhist view sees death as a transition, so that life is a continuous birth-death-rebirth process rather than having a decisive end. The

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[50] Lu Xun, *Guxiaoshuo gouchen*, pp. 526–27.

intermediate phase between death and rebirth is called *zhongyin*; the transitional stage for the soul before reincarnation. The notion of the Six Realms makes clear that humans are not the only ones who take this itinerary through life, death, *zhongyin*, and rebirth; demons and animals also traverse these stages.

What exactly is the situation of the person in the intermediate *zhongyin* stage? This would be a question of great concern to the living. According to the information in the *Storehouse Treatise*, the continuation of karma over long periods of habituated attachment to the self (*woai* 我愛; Skt. *ātma-sneha*) ties the person to the Six Faculties (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body surface, and thought) even after death. One continues to see and hear things, to love and hate and desire things just as in life. Therefore, while one still craves food, one can only enjoy (the scent of) incense. At the same time, as a ghost, one can teleport to wherever one desires; however, one can only be seen by other ghosts, or those endowed with the Eyes of Heaven, and not by those with ordinary, biologically based powers of vision.[51] From this, we learn that Qingjian, as a ghost, felt great pity for his grieving parents, family and friends and was worried about their future. It was of course highly extraordinary that his ghost appeared.

Qingjian himself explains: after the third seven-day cycle, he asked the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas and four Kings of Heaven to allow him to return temporarily. With their help, he returned to his former home and ordinary people could see his form. He asked his father to fast and bathe because the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas would come to escort Qingjian. The narrative arranges this trip to show the place where one goes after death. Qingjian says, "Following my death I stayed at the Palace of Training Spirits; after 100 days I was able to be reborn in Trayastrimsa Heaven." This statement involves two important points: one is the duration of the intermediate *zhongyin* stage. Buddhist sects vary in their opinions as to how many cycles must occur before one is reborn, but most agree that each cycle is comprised of seven days. In this story, the Chinese tradition of a hundred days is followed. The second problem is the soul's destination after death. The Training Spirit Palace cited by Qingjian is a notion influenced by traditional Chinese concepts. According to Daoist beliefs, ghosts must cultivate themselves

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[51] See *Abhidharma storehouse treatise* 阿毘達磨俱舍論本頌, in *Taishō*, v. 29, no. 1560, p. 314a.

in the afterlife.[52] When the story continues, Buddhism adds another element: karma decides the soul's destination.

> Dong Qingjian says to his father, "Mother has already petitioned to see me. Before long, Mother will die and be with me. You will enjoy seventy-three years of long life, after which you will have to undergo three years of penance for your misdemeanors; but if you work hard to cultivate yourself you can obtain deliverance." Father asked, "You come at night, but where does all your light come from?" Qingjian said, "I am now together with Bodhisattvas and all of heaven, and this is just the light from them!" He asked again, "Who do you know in heaven?" Qingjian said, "I have seen Wang 王, General of Chariots and Cavalry; Zhang 張, Governor of Wuxing 吳興; and the maternal grandfather Zong 宗, Governor of Xihe 西河. I have not only had re-birth in this realm, but from the forty-seventh year until now, I have had seven births and seven deaths. I had already achieved the results of the four ways and had previously made seven vows; I had vowed to be born in the human realm and to undergo birth and death for that reason. Now this process is eternally complete. I will leave behind the seven bitter qualities of life. As I was nearing my end, I saw my seven places of birth and death and so I cried loudly seven times for my seven families that I had to take my leave of." His father asked, "What families were you born into?" Qingjian said, "I was born into the families of Jiang 江, Director of Personel (吏部); Yang 羊, Governor of Guangzhou 廣州; Zhang, Governor of Wuxing, General Wang; Xiao 蕭, Governor of Wuxing; the Honorary (給事) Liang 梁; Dong 董, Colonel of the Picked Cavalry, and others. Only here was I alive for 17 years; in the other places I lived only five or three years."[53]

According to the *Storehouse Treatise*, karma controls the transitional state after death; those going to heaven will ascend with the head pointing up and the feet pointing down. Those going to hell will be inverted, with the feet up and the head down. In other words, those entering the intermediate *zhongyin* state not going to heaven directly to receive their happy rewards will first be punished in hell before they proceed to rebirth. Dong Qingjian himself along with his mother went directly to heaven; as for Wang Cheji (Wang Xuanmou 王玄謨),

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[52] There is no trace of an idea such as "Palace of Training Spirits" (*Lianshengong* 練神宮) in the Buddhist canon. According to the *Zhen gao* 真誥, there is a "Southern Palace" (also called Vermillion Fire Palace) provided for those who are freed from their corpse yet must "refine their qualities" (*lianzhi* 鍊質) or "temper their forms" (*lianxing* 煉形) to become an immortal. See Kamizuka Yoshiko 神塚淑子, *Rokuchō Dōkyō shisō no kenkyū* 六朝道教思想の研究 (Tokyo: Sobunsha, 1999), pp. 44–45.

[53] Lu Xun, *Guxiaoshuo gouchen*, pp. 526–27.

Zhang Wuxing (Zhang Yong 張永), and the maternal grandfather Zong Xihe, while we do not know for sure if they were punished or not, they probably ascended together with them. Other than this, according to his prophecy, his father Dong Xianming would have descended to hell after death to be punished for three years.

Passage through the Netherworld

In Buddhism, hell (Skt., *naraka*) is the most bitter of the Six Realms, and is described in more detail than the other realms, such as that of heaven or hungry demons. One of the most interesting stories is about a certain Liu Sahe. It relates the state of his body and spirit while touring the afterworld. This is a very long story; below, I quote only the material relevant to the issue of the soul's final destination.

> Huida was a Jin dynasty monk, whose original name was Liu Sahe.... At age thirty one, he suddenly died of illness. His corpse remained warm and pliant, [so] his family did not place him in the coffin. After seven days, he came back to life. He said, "At the moment I died, I saw two people with ropes who took me away. We headed northwest.... [Someone] asked Sahe, 'Do you have the papers?' and Sahe handed some documents to them. A woman got some other documents and compared the two sets. At once, two monks appeared, saying, 'Now please devote yourself to the Buddha Śākyamuni.' He accepted the creed as stated, and went with them. Far away he saw a city that resembled Chang'an; it was extremely black and seemed to be made of iron.... A person holding a writing brush stood facing north, and said to Sahe, 'Why did you kill a deer when you were in Xiangyan?' Sahe knelt and answered, 'Somebody else shot the deer. I only wounded it and that is all. Furthermore, I did not eat the meat. For what reason should I be punished?' At that moment, he immediately saw the place at Xiangyang where he had killed the deer: flora, trees, mountains and gulleys suddenly filled his vision. The black horse, along with the other animals, all could speak. They testified about the year, month, day and time in which Sahe killed the deer. Frightened, Sahe could not respond. Not long after that, people with pitchforks stabbed him and threw him into a cauldron of boiling water. Sahe could see his four limbs being boiled and breaking apart. A wind blew on his body so that it amassed together at a small bank. Then he suddenly lost consciousness, and his body was restored as a whole. The one who held the brush asked again, 'You also shot a pheasant, and you have killed a goose.' When he finished speaking, Sahe was [again] stabbed, tossed in the cauldron, and boiled just as before. After receiving this punishment, Sahe was led away. He entered a large city, where people lived. The two monks told Sahe, 'You have received light punishment and are able to return to life. Your good karma has afforded this protection. Hereafter,

will you ever commit crimes again?' A man was sent to accompany
Sahe. From afar, Sahe could see his old former body. He did not want
to return, but was dragged there by the man accompanying him. After a
long time, he reattached to his [bodily] form and came back to life. He
devoted himself to the Dharma and cultivated himself, and later became
a monk known as Huida.[54]

Stories about journey through the netherworld often describe a mis-
taken situation: someone was wrongly summoned to the netherworld
before he has finished his allotted lifespan. As a result, the visitor must
be sent back to the world of the living. The purpose of such stories
about a mistaken journey is that the visitor functions as a messenger
who brings back information about the other world. We note that in
this story, the experience of the person coming back to life is different
from the Buddhist notion of the soul's transmigration. We see that Sahe
undergoes interrogation and suffers corporal punishment, yet he never
crosses over into another realm (of the Six Realms) as retribution for
bad karma that still remains. Instead, unlike Buddhist transmigration,
Sahe returns to his former body and life. It is through his coming
back to life that he is able to bring back the lesson of retribution to
the world of the living.

   According to the causal law of karma, a cause must have an effect, and
karma must have retribution. However, can one's karma be changed?
Dong Qingjian himself had said he was going to cultivate four things:
the way of application (Skt. *prayoga-mārga*), the instantaneous way
(Skt. *ānantarya-marga*), the way of liberation (Skt. *vimukti-mārga*), and
the way of triumphant progress (Skt. *viśesa-mārga*).[55] He had already
achieved *nirvāna*. However, he had made seven vows in previous lives
in which he vowed to be reborn as a human. In the story, his purpose is
not directly explained. However, in terms of Mahayana Buddhism, the
personal vow of the Bodhisattva (*pūrva-praṇidhān*) is a vow about the
ultimate desire to realize and establish a Buddhist Pure Land. There are
also auxiliary vows, which are relevant to teaching the masses. Because
Bodhisattvas and Buddhas have different and special attributes and
proclivities, their vows are naturally not the same. Moreover, due to the
infinite weaknesses of an infinite number of living beings, the rescue

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[54] Lu Xun, *Guxiaoshuo gouchen*, pp. 478–80.

[55] Kātyāyanīputra 迦多衍尼子 trans., *Xuanzang, Treatise of the Great Commentary on
the Abhidharma* 阿毘達磨大毘達婆沙論, in *Taishō*, v. 27, no. 1545, p. 843b. Hirakawa
Akira 平川彰, *Shoki Daijou Bukkyou no kenkyū* 初期大乘佛教の研究 (Tokyo:
Shunjuusha, 1989), p. 408.

strategies of the Bodhisattvas are also various.[56] Dong Qingjian also made a vow to aim at the karmic effects brought about by individual previous lives.[57] As he was about to die, he suddenly saw all his previous lives and learned about karmic bonds formed with seven families; among them, his bonds with the Dong family were stronger than with the others. However, in heaven, he saw only members of three families. Since he had already fulfilled his vow and did not need to return yet again, he loudly cried seven times to cut off his karmic ties with them. It is noteworthy that Liu Sahe had returned and resuscitated before receiving unusually light punishment; from the merit of having been a Buddhist novice in a previous life, he was able to (again) affirm that he would find ultimate rest with Śākyamuni Buddha.

From the above analysis, we see that human ghosts and hungry demons each belong to their own different domain. In the abnormal event that these ghosts manifest, although they are not the same as demons, they illustrate various cultural traits. The details encapsulated in these narratives reflect a dialectical fusion of indigenous belief and Buddhist doctrine.

Conclusion

Six Dynasties ghost stories reflect a time of upheaval and contact with non-Chinese ethnic groups.[58] While they appear to be about anomalies, they are actually allegorical expressions of norms. While their plot undergoes reversals and bizarre turns, they ultimately return to affirm the *Dao*. The *Dao* is not a fixed constant but a principle that evolves and adapts to the times. However, within any particular time and its circumstances (environmental, institutional, psychological, etc.) the *Dao* is clear to those living in that period. Some of the anomaly tales, echoing popular topics of the time, incorporated debates about body and spirit to comment on the phenomena of ghosts; they employed

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[56] Hirakawa Akira 平川彰, *Shoki Daijou Bukkyou no kenkyū* 初期大乘佛教の研究, pp. 318–68.

[57] Concerning the relation between karma and vows of a Buddha or bodhisattva, see Kashio Jikaku 樫尾慈覺, "Gyōsetsu no hongan shisō 業說の本願思想," in Nihon Bukkyō Gakukai 日本佛教學會 eds., *Bukkyō ni okeru jōdo shisō* 佛教における淨土思想 (Kyoto: Nairakusi Shoten, 1989), pp. 33–49.

[58] See Yu, "Rest, Rest, Perturbed Spirit! Ghosts in Traditional Chinese Prose Fiction," p. 406.

concrete narratives to implement philosophical discourses. Others used ghosts to resolve unfinished business. *Bao* 報, or retribution, was a core issue of human relationships in Chinese cultural psychology. The retributive acts of ghosts were transgressive and abnormal phenomena that aimed to solve injustice in the human world. The ultimate goal of the various kinds of retribution/reciprocity (*bao*)—revenge, requital of favor, and karmic effects—may be described as an attempt to restore order by guiding abnormality back to the norm.

The relation between body and spirit was from the beginning a topic of philosophical discourse among Daoists and Buddhists. Devotees of Buddhism maintained that the body disintegrates but the spirit persists. In the important public debate between Fan Zhen 范縝 (450–507) and Xiao Ziliang 蕭子良 (460–494) about body and spirit,[59] the body (*xing* 形) was compared to the candle and the spirit (*shen* 神), to fire. Just as a fire must rely on a candle to burn, so also the spirit must be attached to the body to exist. This argument about the existence of the spirit directly relates to the problem of whether ghosts exist or not, which was an important issue for philosophical debates of the time.[60]

The anomaly tales provide a timely response to this problem, which preserves the traces of such intellectual debates in the narrative form. In the story of Xiahou Xuan, even though his ghost that his family saw was one whose head was severed from the body, Xiahou's manner remained easygoing and carefree. In the story of Wang Chengzhi's wife, family members heard the anger of her cry but did not see her form; the cry nevertheless clearly expressed the woman's emotional state. In these stories, the writers are not so much concerned with "manifesting form" as with conveying a person's spirit, i.e., his/her personality and manner. One's personality is what is preserved when the soul continues to exist.

In the story of Liu Sahe, Liu's spirit enters the intermediate *zhongyin* state once it leaves its form. Due to the influence of previous karma, he was able to preserve his appearance and memories from his previous life; therefore, in the *zhongyin* state, he talked, behaved, and reacted to

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[59] From Hu Shi's 胡適 early period, *Zhongguo gudai zhexueshi* 中國古代哲學史 (Taipei: Taiwan Shangwu Yinshuguan, 1961) to Hou Wailu's 侯外廬 *Zhongguo sixiang tongshi* 中國思想通史 (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1956), all are concerned with this.

[60] For relevant discussion see Lin Lizhen 林麗真, "Wei-Jin qingtan zhuti zhi yanjiu 魏晉清談主題之研究."

the pain of punishment just as he would have in life. He later returned to the world of the living and reattached to his form.

Another example is the story of Dong Qingjian, who appeared to his family members because of his karmic attachments to his family. Through the appearance of his ghost, his family comes to understand the workings of karma. In the stories of both Dong Qingjian and Liu Sahe, the protagonists overturned their attachment to physical form in favor of valorizing the spirit that can never be extinguished.

The anomaly tales of our period include many incidents of ghost sightings. A characteristic feature of these narratives was their detailed depiction of these sightings. The rationale for this was to convince the reader of the actual occurrence of such events. In order to gain credibility with the families and the larger public, ghosts looked as they did in life, and they displayed emotions and sentiments just as they did on earth.

When psychologists discuss regional psychological differences, principles of human sensibility are the first item of discussion.[61] Discussing human feelings in terms of cultural mentality, one foregrounds the performance of feelings. The emotional background of the Six Dynasties was that people felt the world was coming to an end and sought to find an escape. In this emotional setting, human feelings and human ethical order were constantly confronted by serious tests such as disasters caused by wars and natural calamities. The anomaly stories made use of what educated and uneducated alike delighted to see and hear: extraordinary stories of ghosts and demons that excite all kinds of feelings and propose unexpected solutions. Many of the stories could be viewed by Buddhist practitioners as proselytizing about the idea of retribution.[62]

The idea of retribution in the anomaly tales reflected collective resentment of injustice. Xiahou Xuan's ghost appeared to his family at the solemn ritual offerings to inform them that he had obtained justice as a result of a petition he submitted explaining his grievance. The spirit tablet of Madam Xie that made angry sounds revealed her discontent. As for the underworld punishment of Liu Sahe, and Dong Qingjian's

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[61] Huang Guangguo 黃光國, "Renqing yu mianzi: Zhongguo de quanli youxi 人情與面子: 中國的權力遊戲," pp. 7–56.

[62] Yang Liansheng 楊聯陞, Duan Changguo 段昌國 trans., "Bao—Zhongguo shehui guanxide yige jichu 報一中國社會關係的一個基礎," *Shihuo yuekan* 食貨月刊 3.8 (1973): 377–88.

seven lives of fateful encumbrance, these expressed the Buddhist concept
of the retributive effects of karma. Through the strange itinerary of the
travels in the land of the dead, the stories advocated moral principles
to the audience. What was expressed was a Buddhist version of "the
filial way" and "the way of compassion."

The Buddhist concept of retribution for karmic effects gradually per-
meated folk culture partly by utilizing the anomaly tales to articulate its
teachings. The break-through here was an elaboration of the originally
simpler consciousness of retribution in China. Moreover, compared
to the ancient folk tradition of the *yin* and *yang* realms, material that
mentions the netherworld judgment hall in Buddhist teachings is an
even more intense articulation of the view that people receive their just
punishment or reward after death. The account of Liu Sahe's entrance
and itinerary through the underworld starts by showing punishments
in hell for one's wrongdoings, and then shows how cultivation of merit
requires many lifetimes of effort. Dong Qingjian's story directly points
out the just rewards of seven lifetimes of religious training, as he was
reborn in Trayastrimsa Heaven. These new views of death all depart
from the simple folk version and popularized Buddhist doctrine: hell
and heaven directly correspond to good and bad karma. These examples
are easily found in Buddhist narratives about resonant response and
testimonials. It is quite true that, compared to ghost stories of requital
and revenge from the early Chinese tradition, this new idea of retri-
bution facilitated the imagination of a strange new map of the world
after death. It assuaged the fear of death and urged people to devote
themselves to Buddhist practice. In the Six Dynasties, many of the elite
accepted this new religious consciousness and encouraged the people
to follow this view of retribution in the netherworld. The theory of
retribution, through popular proselytizing, eventually merged into
traditional ghost culture.

During the chaotic Six Dynasties period when Confucian teach-
ings had declined and ceded social and cultural space, the Daoists
and Buddhists promptly entered and subsequently incorporated their
newly created teachings into ghost narratives. While the core moral
principles remained the same, they were presented through the genre of
the anomaly tales, which "transgressed but ultimately joined the Dao."
Transgression was the cause of the many bizarre and far-fetched stories,
and joining the Dao" refers to the way of guiding the deviant back to
the norm. The Six Dynasties saw continual struggle for political power

and wide influence of powerful gentry families over government matters. While the official histories may criticize those who brought about disorder, the ghost stories provided both the elite and the commoner alike another venue to express their grievances. In the new vision of the Daoist underworld, good people with talent and virtue could acquire merit, just as Xu You was promoted to the honorable post of Lord of the Big Dipper, and the Beihei resident reunited with his dead wife.

Examining the anomaly stories from the narrative structure of guiding the deviant back to the norm, abnormal deaths often find a solution in the end. Xiahou Xuan obtains a favorable ruling on his petition before the Lord on High and attains peaceful rest; Madam Xie too rests in peace, having received perpetual burial in the ancestral tombs. After the death of the man from Beihai, he was buried with his wife, so his faithful emotions were rewarded. The happy conclusion for people of religious faith is an alternative arrangement. Chen Kang is given the position of Registrar for the Lord of the Big Dipper, and Dong Qingjian achieves *nirvāna* and exhorts his family to devote themselves to the Buddha. Thus, both Daoist and Buddhist accounts conclude with the perfection of merit; "perfection" is precisely what the wronged and the unrewarded souls all want.

It seems that, regardless of their religious inclinations, people are given multiple options when facing the important juncture of life and death. Lineage burial may be the best choice in a clan and lineage society. However, to go to rest in a temple or to ascend to the side of the Big Dipper may also be ideal for the Buddhist or Daoist adepts. In the end the narratives almost always conclude that everything has reverted to the norm, just as in the popular novels and plays of later periods that always conclude with a happy reunion. This mentality reflects the perception that the world is always imperfect, yet this imperfection may somehow be compensated by the ghost stories. From this we learn that although literature and religion are two different kinds of cultural forms, in the tales of the anomaly, these two are combined as a unity that expresses an abiding wish: to revert to normality from abnormality, to return to order from disorder. This is the perfect Dao or the middle way. Therefore, in response to new and old theories about ghosts, souls, form, spirit, the underworld, and the world of death, this period inherited past ideas but also created a new resource for later ghost culture. Thus, this seemingly insignificant literary genre has a great implication; within it is an allegorical assessment of a chaotic period.

CHINESE GHOSTS: RECONCILING PSYCHOANALYTIC, STRUCTURALIST, AND MARXIAN PERSPECTIVES

P. Steven Sangren

General Issues

Whatever one's disposition with respect to Freud's psychoanalytic project, it would be difficult to deny him at least one essential insight—that our relations with other people are laced with ambivalence. Freud emphasizes filial relations as the model of this ambivalence, of course, but I suggest that this ambivalence can be linked to an existential problem that manifests across the entire spectrum of human, that is to say, social, relations. In *Totem and Taboo*, Freud famously elaborates ambivalence toward deceased parents, especially fathers, arguing that "The taboo upon the dead arises, like the others, from the contrast between conscious pain and unconscious satisfaction over the death that has occurred."[1] Whatever objections one might harbor with respect to Freud's delineation of the Oedipus complex, I contend that his emphasis on ambivalence and its connection to interpersonal affect remains an important consideration for any anthropology that aspires to connect culture and individual experience.

Although I shall depart somewhat from the trajectory of inquiry I had envisioned when I wrote the abstract for this paper, I still intend to address what I perceive as a problem in anthropological analyses of, specifically, Chinese beliefs regarding ghosts and/or the "soul."[2] In more general terms, I have in mind some reconsiderations of anthropological attempts to understand the relationship between culture and affect. I suggest that neither anthropology nor psychoanalytic theory has wholly succeeded in bridging an important gap—a gap that can be located variously in distinctions between logic and affect, structuralism and

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[1] Sigmund Freud, *Totem and Taboo* (New York: Norton, 1950).

[2] For the purposes of this paper, I had originally in mind to launch my reflections from Totem and Taboo. However, prompted by my colleagues, Dominic Boyer and Andrew Willford, I have recently read Freud's "The 'Uncanny,'" and (predictably) it has inspired me to venture in unanticipated directions.

psychoanalysis, and even (perhaps) mind and body. To what degree can logic—be it the logic of culture, cognition, biophysiology, philosophy, or "the subject"—account for affect? Of course, this is a perduring if not intractable question, and I aspire here mainly to draw attention to how it might figure more explicitly in orienting further inquiry.

Allow me to begin by elaborating a bit more autobiographically upon what brings me to frame things in this fashion. Like many anthropologists of my generation currently drawn to psychoanalytic thinking, I was trained in a milieu in which psychoanalysis was largely dismissed. My first articles and book on Taiwanese religion drew mainly from structuralist and practice-oriented theory in an attempt to show how Chinese categories of thought—*yin* and *yang* and, especially, *ling* or magical power attributed to supernatural entities—are both products and producers of Chinese social institutions—including family structure, gender, and community.[3] My second book pushed beyond institutional analysis to investigate linkages between individual concerns and the production of collective representations and institutions.[4] Proceeding further in this direction, my most recent writing has focused on "patriliny"—understood not only as a matrix of kinship forms, ancestor worship, and gender institutions, but more broadly as what I term a "mode of production of desire."[5]

In this trajectory, it is not surprising that my thinking would be drawn to psychoanalysis—including, of course, the massive academic enterprise (mainly in the humanities) exploring the interface between structuralism and psychoanalysis, focusing on what is usually termed "agency." "Psychoanalysis" in this context refers as much to Lacan as to Freud, largely because (at least this is my impression) Lacan offers the promise of "de-essentializing" Freud's arguably residual biologistic assumptions regarding libido by refiguring desire as at base a sort of existential philosophical problem consequent upon the "subject's entry into language" rather than as a difficulty stemming from "natural" libido's battle with "civilization."[6]

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[3] P. Steven Sangren, *History and Magical Power in a Chinese Community* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987).

[4] P. Steven Sangren, *Chinese Sociologics: An Anthropological Account of the Role of Alienation in Social Reproduction* (London: Athlone, 2000).

[5] P. Steven Sangren, "Filial Obsessions: A Chinese Mode of Production of Desire," (Unpublished).

[6] I am aware that Lacan might be defended on the grounds that his psychoanalytic practice shows a filiality to "the real" that might be less than evident in his more abstract

I am largely persuaded by the loose consensus among—let us call them—the "human sciences" to the effect that Freud's insights are diminished insofar as his framework supposes the existence of instincts of a biological sort distinguishable from desire understood as what becomes of instincts once civilization (Freud's term for what we might call "culture") gets hold of them. Better to emphasize Freud's discovery that desire comes into being as a consequence or effect of the socializing process. I hasten to add that, unlike more orthodox Lacanians, I resist the notion that this process should be conceived primarily as a matter of the logic of representation or *langue*. And this brings me back to one of the points of this paper, there remains something irritatingly abstract, even philosophically detached, in the contemporary conventional wisdom that converts affect into a philosophical problem of logic or representation. One might agree with Lacan (against the Anglophone "ego-psychologists") that a "return to Freud" would foreground an existentially darker "real" of desire than the chimera promised by the "healthy" ego. But must we really believe that a few intriguing, almost mythical, crises—the "mirror stage," seeing one's mother naked," etc.—"cause," implicitly instantaneously, fundamental, retroactively efficacious transformations in the entirety of our being—transformations largely explained with reference to existential problems understood in the abstract, quasi-algebraic terms of a linguistically defined "subject"? At some level what we cannot *not* take ourselves to be—autonomous agents with authentic, that is to say, irreducible desires and intentions—is assumed by "the consensus" to be a delusion to which we are allegedly committed for purely neurotic reasons.

In other words, in the spirit of "returning to Freud," might we aspire to recuperate the felt "presence" of desire that inhabits Freud's work while avoiding the pitfalls of essentializing it as grounded in biological instinct? I emphasize again, if it needs to be said, that the issues as I have introduced them are too encompassing to aspire to resolve here; instead, I remind you that my intention is to draw attention to how framing inquiry with these issues in mind might advance psychological anthropology. To this end, note two recurrent motifs in Freud's writings—ambivalence (more precisely, Freud's important insight that people's affective relations with others, especially parents, typically

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theoretical writings. Although I concede that this grounding is evident in his ouvre, to point this out does not address the issue I shall attempt to outline.

involve both love and resentment) and what Freud sometimes terms "primary narcissism"—which I take to mean not so much self-love as what amounts to a delusion of grandeur, a desire to imagine oneself as in control of essentially everything, including our own being. In a word, what Freud sometimes characterizes as belief in "the omnipotence of thoughts"—a belief he discerns in what he terms the "animistic" thinking of primitives—lies very much at the core of our "primary" or "unrestricted" narcissism.[7]

Freud points out that, even in adults and in "modern" societies, this primary narcissism is never eliminated, only sublimated. By the same token, this narcissism cannot avoid disappointment, most prototypically in the discovery that one's thoughts are, in fact, *not* omnipotent, and that one must accommodate not only to the disciplining authority of reality—manifesting in the first instance as the socially constituted world defined by one's relations with one's caregivers—i.e., parents. Parents, in this reading, are an insult or embarrassment to the fantasy of omnipotence. We learn to accommodate to this embarrassment, but never without resentment. And, as Freud emphasizes, we love our parents or other caregivers for the care they give us, but resent at some level the fact that we require it—hence, ambivalence. Implicitly, Freud treats these circumstances as human universals. And, although Freud is rightly criticized for assuming the universality of late 19th century patriarchal family forms, in the terms outlined above, a case can be made at a more abstract level for their generality.

The Debate Over Chinese "Souls"

With the foregoing in mind, I turn now to a long-standing interest among anthropologists and other observers of Chinese religion in Chinese notions of the soul's career after death. Within this broader domain, there are two issues in particular that invite reflection in psychoanalytic terms. The first has to do with the fact that in many parts of China the soul is said simultaneously to inhabit the grave, the ancestral tablet, and to embark upon a journey through a bureau-

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[7] See, among other writings, Sigmund Freud, "The 'Uncanny'," in J. Strachey ed., *Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* vol. 4 (London: Hogarth Press, 1925 (1919)), pp. 368–407; Sigmund Freud, *Totem and Taboo* (New York: Norton, 1950); Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents* (New York: Norton, 1961).

cratically conceived underworld. Accounting for these apparently contradictory notions—at least from the vantage of a Judeo-Christian or (arguably) generally "Western" notion of a person's/soul's/subject's unity—has occasioned a broad spectrum of commentary. I shall not rehearse this scholarship at length here, other than to suggest that, although sometimes insightful, it generally misses Freud's important point that imaginary forms—dreams, myths, cosmologies—perform a kind of "work." Freud, of course, emphasizes, among other things, the work of repression. But also *apropos* here are his frequent observations regarding "splitting"—"splitting," for example, of the ambivalence we feel toward parents into benign and malevolent figures.

This observation brings me directly to the second, more specific, debate in the anthropology of Chinese religion involving well-known China anthropologists Maurice Freedman and Emily Ahern.[8] Maurice Freedman set the agenda by disputing Meyer Fortes' employment of Chinese data in an argument linking beliefs in punishing ancestors (mainly among African peoples) to social systems in which sons remain firmly under their fathers' control until their fathers' deaths.[9] Freedman does not so much dispute Fortes' logic as he does his reading of the Chinese situation, which (according to Freedman) is characterized by a less antagonistic, more gradual, transference of authority to sons prior to a father's death. As a consequence, Freedman argues, Chinese ancestors are, in the main, benevolent.

Ahern takes issue with both Freedman's logic and ethnography, arguing that (at least in her Taiwanese village), Chinese ancestors are far less benign than Freedman supposes. Ahern also raises questions about what she terms the "inheritance-guilt-fear" hypothesis associated with British anthropology (especially Jack Goody, Meyer Fortes, and Maurice Freedman) by proposing that ideas about ancestors combine respect for their authority as well as fear spawned by memory of harsh punishments in childhood.

Others have taken up these and related issues in broadly similar terms,[10] and the virtue of these discussions (at least from the vantage

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[8] Emily Martin Ahern, *The Cult of the Dead in a Chinese Village* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1973); Maurice Freedman, *Lineage Organization in Southeastern China* vol. 18 (London: Athlone, 1958).

[9] Meyer Fortes, *Oedipus and Job in West African Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959).

[10] Myron Cohen, "Souls and Salvation: Conflicting Themes in Chinese Popular Religion," in J. L. Watson and E. S. Rawski eds., *Death Ritual in Late Imperial and*

of the argument I shall make here) is that they focus attention on filial sentiments characteristic of Chinese family life as the ultimate source of ideas about the spirits of the dead. Still, when one surveys this literature, one comes away with a sense that a variety of quite disparate, even ad hoc, arguments are advanced—united by the largely unquestioned assumption that projecting one's sentiments about parents upon their "ghosts" is all but transparently intelligible. Oddly, Freud's arguments regarding "guilt" and ambivalence seem to have had minimal influence on the discussion despite the fact that even cursory reflection suggests that apparently contradictory images of ancestors could be easily reconciled as "splitting" children's resentful and grateful sentiments.

This observation raises the larger issue surrounding the apparent presence of the soul of a single person in putatively different "places." Cohen, for example, notes a contradiction between the distant and abstract hope for salvation in the Buddhist notion that one might achieve "Western Paradise" and any of the more immediate ritual emphases of popular funerary practices—including providing for the soul's journey in the underworld, situating the decaying corpse safely in the grave, and venerating its tablet on the ancestral altar. This contradiction is not, of course, recognized as such by most native informants mainly, I propose, because the imagery associated with "Western Paradise" constitutes a narcissistic fantasy with respect to one's own desired state of being whereas ambivalent feelings toward one's parents seem to motivate the nexus of tablet, grave, underworld beliefs—issues much more immediately of concern in funerary rituals.

Although it would be a useful exercise, I shall refrain from a more detailed demonstration of how a more or less orthodox Freudian interpretation might make sense of the complex and fascinating ethnography of Chinese ancestor worship, funerary practices, etc. To do so, I suspect, would not produce insights surprising to readers. Instead, allow me to step back a bit to the topic I proposed in my original abstract for this conference—how a practice-oriented theoretical approach might accommodate both structuralist and psychoanalytic interpretations of Chinese ethnographic materials.

Modern China (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), pp. 180–202; Stuart Thompson, "Death, Food, and Fertility," in J. L. Watson and E. S. Rawski eds., *Death Ritual in Late Imperial and Modern China* (Berkeley: University of California, 1988), pp. 71–108.

Inspired in part by Levi-Straussian structuralism, my first book, *History and Magical Power in a Chinese Community*, proposed reframing the issue of varying notions of souls with reference to an underlying symbolic framework built around the contrast of order and disorder—*yang* and *yin*—as providing a contextually dependent and flexible framework capable of encompassing not only a variety of disparate beliefs about the souls of departed ancestors, but also about powers attributed to other supernatural entities including gods and demons.[11] Magical potency or power, *ling*, is attributed to supernatural entities—gods, ghosts, ancestors—in contexts in which these entities are conceived to mediate between relatively yin and yang—that is, disorder and order. Subsequently, I elaborated this notion of mediation to encompass production—that is to say, power or agency in the context of Chinese cosmology is associated with production (a kind or ordering) or destruction (disordering).

I shall not rehearse the details of this analysis here, but I note that its emphasis on relational contrasts, on the one hand, and attribution of potency to imagined agencies, on the other, has at least the virtue of accommodating a wider range of the symbolic milieu of Chinese popular cosmology than the theoretically eclectic and ad hoc discussions that have characterized much of the anthropological speculation to date. It can also accommodate the fact that gods or ancestors can appear quite different in different contexts, depending upon whether they "mediate" order and disorder or whether they serve as symbols for either order or disorder—as embodiments of yin or yang. For example, in the case of ancestors, I argued that as tablets on domestic and lineage alters, ancestors are icons of social order in the abstract—nearly purely yang in the grammar of Chinese cosmology—and in this capacity are attributed little effective agency. In contrast, the corpse and, later, the decomposing body in the grave "mediate" yin and yang. As one might guess, in this context the ancestor's spirit is more problematic, likely to exercise both negative influence and (perhaps less predictably) positive fertility upon descendants and others. By the same token, anonymous, hungry ghosts conceived to populate the "domain of yin"—Chinese purgatory—possess little power except during the 7th lunar month when they are said to be able to leave the domain of yin to roam the yang world of the living—again, "mediating" yin and yang.

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[11] Sangren, *History and Magical Power in a Chinese Community*.

I extend this sort of structural analysis to a variety of Chinese beliefs and practices. With respect to whether or not ancestors are conceived to be benign or malevolent, for example, I argue that suitably worshipped (hence "remembered") ancestors are unlikely to haunt surviving kin whereas spirits of kin (especially problematic ones like unmarried daughters, fetuses, suicides) not properly worshipped (and, in this sense, "forgotten") frequently haunt their survivors, demanding rectification.[12] I also argue that *ling*, the efficacy or agency attributed to supernatural entities, can be analyzed as a form of ideological alienation of individual and collective powers of production. Images of supernatural powers that are products of human imagination are understood to be the producers of human social life, thus in the classically Marxian sense inverting the real relations between product and producer.[13]

I believe that this structuralist/Marxist analysis can be augmented by a Freudian consideration of how ambivalence toward parental figures manifests in variously malevolent and benign supernatural powers. Moreover, I believe that the symbolic system's implicit emphasis on power itself—cosmologically represented as mediating order and disorder—brings us closer to the crux of ambivalence. In brief, ambivalence colors our relations with others because we desire both to control our social milieu and to avoid being too tightly controlled by others' reciprocal desires.[14] I concede that I cannot justify this assertion here, but hope to have said enough to suggest a trajectory of inquiry.

My aspiration to reconcile this earlier structuralist analysis with a more psychoanalytically informed understanding of desire, still within a Marxian emphasis on production, is consistent with more recent work I have done on Chinese mythic narratives.[15] Most important for the present argument is that I interpret patriliny's institutions as constitut-

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[12] Such hauntings are typically diagnosed in spirit possession.

[13] Sangren, *Chinese Sociologics: An Anthropological Account of the Role of Alienation in Social Reproduction.*

[14] This ambivalence, although not framed in specially psychoanalytic terms, comes through clearly in some important reconsiderations of exchange in which the tension between dependence and desire to control colors the ethos of interpersonal relations. Cf. Maurice Godelier, *The Enigma of the Gift* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999); Fred R. Myers, *Pintupi Country, Pintupi Self: Sentiment, Place, and Politics among Western Desert Aborigines* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1986); and Annette B. Weiner, *Women of Value, Men of Renown: New Perspectives in Trobriand Exchange* (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1976).

[15] Sangren, "Filial Obsessions: A Chinese Mode of Production of Desire," (Unpublished).

ing a "mode of production of desire"—that is to say, a context within which differently situated individuals, in particular, Chinese sons and Chinese daughters, confront differently arrayed social obstacles, producing differently oriented desires. Equally importantly, and probably more likely to provoke disagreement, I argue that patriliny's collective institutions—descent, inheritance, ancestor worship, gender ideologies, and associated values including "filial piety"—comprise what I term an "instituted fantasy." [Many observers of religion, of agnostic or atheistic conviction, often note that ghosts are "real" insofar as they are believed in by those we study; turn this around, so-called "real-world" institutions like patriliny, gender, etc., are "fantasies" or abstractions whose reality is dependent upon a similar conviction that they are real among their subjects.]

This instituted fantasy entails, among other things, patriliny's attempt to minimize not only female contributions to the production of the self (an argument with respect to "patriarchy" well established in anthropology),[16] but, much more elliptically and oddly, to deny paternal dependence—odd, because on the face of things Chinese culture's pervasive concern with "filial piety" would seem to assert precisely the opposite. To make a long story short, as "instituted fantasy," Chinese patriliny can be understood as a culturally specific instance of Freud's "omnipotence of thought"—that is to say, a collective form of narcissism (if such a category is imaginable). What appears to be a culture obsessively concerned to insist on patriarchal authority and the debt Chinese owe their parents can be shown to veil a deeper privileging of what might be termed the "filial son."

I can only gesture toward the ethnographic evidence here. For example, ancestor worship elevates the son-sacrificer to what is in effect the producer of the transcendent ancestor as guarantor of the son's secular authority. Worship of the ancestor can thus be seen as denial of dependence veiled by representing it as though it were an assertion of radical abjection. The son constructs himself as a patriarch by means of asserting his dependence upon an imaginary father figure. From

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[16] Maurice Bloch and Jonathan Parry, "Introduction: Death and the Regeneration of Life," in M. Bloch and J. Parry eds., *Death and the Regeneration of Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp. 1–44; Maurice Godelier, *The Enigma of the Gift*; P. Steven Sangren, "Women's Production: Gender and Exploitation in Patrilineal Mode," in Steven Sangren ed., *Chinese Sociologics: An Anthropological Account of Alienation, London School of Economics Monographs on Social Anthropology* vol. 72 (London: Athlone, 2000), pp. 153–85.

this vantage, even the Chinese obsession (and it is no exaggeration to term it such) with "filial piety" is rife with ambivalence. Insofar as sons represent themselves in ancestral rites as producers of domestic order, these rites constitute a narcissistic fantasy of radical self-production. This ritual-cum-ideological rhetoric reaches its most dramatic form in imperial sacrifices, in which the "son of heaven" asserts his ability to construct order in "all under heaven" by imagining into being—"omnipotence of thought" again—a cosmos that excludes by transcendentalizing—i.e., rendering to heaven as abstract order—all that the emperor himself does not create. In other words, in Lacanian terms, the father figure as "the law" standing for socially constituted reality in ritual becomes in ritual practice the son's creation. This ritualistic transcendentalizing—what Angela Zito terms "filial action"[17]—thus defines filial piety as an abstract political ideology with very real social consequences—consequences experienced most directly by subordinates of the son/patriarch's authority. Moreover, the patriarchal-cum-narcissistic structure of this ideology harnesses the sentiments of gratefulness and filial love that Freud also acknowledges into a moral system that demands subordinates to repress their own narcissistic desires and subordinate them to the desires of their real-world, patriarchal superiors.

I hope that this dense characterization conveys at least patriliny's veiled, ironic structure: as "fantasy," patriliny embodies a desire to imagine one's self to be wholly autonomous, but as "instituted," the same fantasy produces all manner of real-world obstacles for individuals to the realization of autonomy, not least of these obstacles is "filial piety's" instituted status as moral imperative.

Conclusions

Note that I have moved, perhaps too glibly, from souls to ancestor worship to patriliny as "instituted fantasy"—my point having been to suggest that the ambivalence Freud discerns in filial relations has implications for an anthropology of China that extends well beyond ancestor worship and ghosts. But granting the general tenor of this argument, what relevance does it have to the disquiet I expressed regarding logic and affect? As I indicated at the outset, I can make no

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[17] Angela Rose Zito, "City Gods, Filiality, and Hegemony in Late Imperial China," *Modern China* 13.3 (1987): 333–70.

claim to provide a solution to this problem. Yet I hope that my sketchy discussion of Chinese patriliny suggests that ambivalence toward one's parents is grounded in primary narcissism and that narcissism, in turn, is a constant not only in the experience of the individual, but also an important constituent element in collective institutions. And this is so because, like the odd ironic structure of Chinese patriliny, collective institutions (including parental care-giving) inevitably frustrate individual intentions, thereby provoking narcissistic fantasies that things might be otherwise.

Narcissism is, although perhaps primary, not so much a biological constant as it is an emergent effect of the fact that human beings are "naturally" social. But, as Freud supposed, our natural sociality runs against the grain of our ego-centrism—not necessarily because libido or biology causes us to love our mothers and therefore to resent our fathers (as Freud would have it) but because the very presence of *either* mother *or* father is testimony to our limitations. Or, in Lacanian terms, it is not so much that our "subjectivity" is "split" at the mirror stage and the subject's "entry into language" and that we therefore harbor a life-long resentment of this dimly remembered "injury," as that ambivalence with respect to our relations with others is a *constant* of social life, coloring and reconstituted in every social encounter.

Ambivalence linked to narcissism, then, would seem to constitute inescapable elements of the human condition—inescapable not because they are biologically grounded, but because they are emergent consequences of our individual accommodations to social life, given that human beings are *naturally* social. But by the same token, insofar as affect can be understood to emerge in this tension between two existential imperatives—the first being the requirement to accommodate to the fact that others insist upon the autonomy of their own desires, the second being primary narcissism—desire itself is neither wholly biological nor (socio)logical. In this respect, we can understand desire to be a human universal, but a universal that exists only as shaped by the particularities of the socio-cultural circumstances that produce it.

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