Cognitive Poetics and Shakespeare:

The Role of Dramatic Anchors in *Hamlet*

by

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A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR

THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

in

The Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies

(English)

The University of British Columbia

(Vancouver)

September 2017

Abstract

This paper relies on the notion of *dramatic anchors* (Dancygier, 2016), alongside cognitive linguistic theories such as conceptual blending (Turner, 1997; Fauconnier and Turner, 2002), framing (Fillmore, 1982), compression (Fauconnier 2005; Turner 2006; Dancygier 2012), mental spaces (Fauconnier, 1994), narrative spaces (Dancygier, 2012), and representation blends (Dancygier, 2012) to propose a new way of reading Shakespeare's *Hamlet* through the material aspects of the stage. Narrative anchors (and, by extension *dramatic anchors*) are aspects of a narrative (objects, images and linguistic forms) that compress information so that it remains dormant, but accessible, throughout the narrative. This allows for meaning comprehension to flow seamlessly during the process of reading or viewing a narrative (cf. Dancygier 2012). Amy Cook (2010) further explains the value of applying blending theory to a text or performance in *Shakespearean Neuroplay,* suggesting that *Hamlet's* mirror-blend can inform us how meaning is constructed throughout the play. Elaborating upon these principles in *Hamlet*, I show how language, performance, and the material aspects of the stage converge in a process of multimodal blending (Forceville, 2009). My theory places the material objects at the center stage of theatrical performance, suggesting that abstract frames of knowledge are grounded in the material aspects of theatre and can be accessed by actors, and audiences, in the construction of narrative and conceptual meaning. The ghost, the play within a play, and Yorick's skull give audiences access to conceptual and narrative spaces that are not in language alone. Shakespeare creatively weaves conceptual and narrative spaces through the material objects on stage to suggest his thematic insistence on the art/life blend. Futhermore, through the figurative use of language, performance, and the material aspects of the stage, Shakespeare shows us how art informs life.

Lay Summary

My MA thesis explores the use of material objects within *Hamlet* from a cognitive perspective. The material aspects of theatrical performance have long gone unrecognized in theoretical discourse, due to more text-based analyses. I argue that the language, performance, and material aspects of theatrical performance converge on stage so that audiences can understand the conceptual and narrative underpinnings of dramatic works. My thesis explores three material objects in *Hamlet*: the ghost of Hamlet's father, *The Mousetrap* play (otherwise known as the "play within a play"), and Yorick's skull. Focusing on these material objects suggests how abstract meaning is grounded in the material aspects of the theatre so that actors and audiences can access abstract knowledge that is figuratively expressed through the interaction of actors and objects on stage. Using a cognitive approach reveals the network of associated spaces between language, performance, and the material aspects of the stage in *Hamlet*.

Preface

This thesis is original, unpublished, independent work by the author, Bradley J Jackson.

Table of Contents

List of Figures

Acknowledgements

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1   Introduction

1.1   Cognitive Approaches to *Hamlet*

Art uses the very same syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic resources that underlie *all*

meaning, but in art those resources are exploited in remarkable ways that give us a sense

of the meaning of things that is typically not available in our day-to-day affairs…. In art

we seek intensification, harmonizing, and fulfillment of the possibilities for meaning and

growth of meaning. (Mark Johnson *The Meaning of the Body* 261)

Conceptual blending theory exposes *how* Shakespeare means what he means, rather than

what he means. It destabilizes previous conceptions of how meaning was made and

provides a tool for watching the process of meaning making, for two often contrasting

ideas into a third emergent idea. (Amy Cook 153)

The relationship between language and the material aspects of the stage needs to be taken

into consideration in the discussion of any theatrical performance. The value of theatre is in its

ability to represent fictional storyworlds on the stage multimodally. The visual aspects of theatre

are often used in figurative ways to construct meanings that are not in the material aspects of the

stage alone, but are constructed through the dynamic blending of stage elements. Theatre

combines the language spoken by actors, the performance of actors, and the arrangements of the

material elements of the stage in a way that reflects the dynamic nature of our environment. . The

material arrangement of *Hamlet* allows us to see how the meaning structured throughout any

performance of the play is dependent upon the way characters interact with objects. For instance,

when Hamlet picks up the skull of Yorick, he breathes life into the object by holding it and using

words to evoke an understanding of Yorick's past life. The skull, often talked about as a signifier

of death, becomes a representation of Yorick's life, allowing Hamlet to access an off stage space

for on stage meaning construction. Recent developments in the cognitive sciences outline how we can process complex conceptual information within our dynamic environments without our brains becoming overloaded with information. Furthermore, research in the cognitive poetics has begun focusing on how our brains access complex narrative and conceptual information to construct meaning while engaging with figurative forms of communication, such as literature and drama. By applying theories from the cognitive poetics, we can expand upon our understanding of the relationship between language, performance, and the material aspects of theatrical performances.

The shift in focus, in the dramatic arts, to a study of the material aspects of the stage has been a long time coming. Theatre semioticians sought for meaning in objects on the stage suggesting that "all that is on stage is a sign," (Veltrusky 84) and "things serve only to the extent that they mean" (Elam 12). However, taking everything on the stage as a signifier of meaning would be far too deterministic of a view for the dynamic nature of theatre. Likewise, studying every minute detail would not allow for any meaningful interpretation of a text to be fully realized. The material turn, rather, saw a shift in focus to the major material objects on the stage that seemed to ground meaning in some way. For example, in *Shakespeare's Webs,* Arthur F. Kinney looks for networks of meaning that have been structured around certain objects on Shakespeare's stage, ie. mirrors, books, clocks, and maps. Likewise, in *The Stage Life of Props*, Andrew Sofer suggests that "props are three-dimensional objects launched into performance time and stage space by the actor's manipulation, and they come to life only by exciting the spectator's imagination during that evanescent object lesson in human contingency we call theatre" (202). A materialist approach centers upon the meaning inherent within specific objects and what meanings emerge as actors engage with them. It also accounts for meaning that

originates outside of the play to become embedded within the play's structure when objects are brought in from different staged productions, such as props that are used in multiple productions of different plays. A cognitive reading of the material objects within *Hamlet* suggests how material objects are being used by actors and audiences to access similar conceptual frames as those stimulated by language. For example, when Hamlet holds Yorick's skull, it becomes a symbol of death and performance, and Hamlet's language reflects both of these elements. This example suggests that material objects can not only do similar things as language, but that directors can use objects on the stage in figurative ways to elaborate upon the language being spoken by characters. In this sense, meaning is dependent upon the creative fashioning of language, actor's bodies, and material objects. Blending conceptual spaces from different modes can stimulate complex networks of figurative associations that could not be fully expressed in an individual mode. Cognitive theory provides us with the tools to see how the meaning that is generated in different modes is being used to access similar cognitive domains.

A cognitive approach to theatre highlights many intersecting points of interest for semioticians, materialists, and phenomenologists alike. Semiotics suggests how the stage sign can produce meaning, which may have been a good place to begin a study of the visual nature of theatre, but semiotics fails to explain the interaction between objects, actors, and performance. A materialist approach suggested that our understanding of materiality was based upon specific objects as nodes within networks of meaning comprehension; however, a materialist approach only hints at the figurative applications of stage props, without fully realizing the conceptual structure of the language, performance, and the material aspects of the stage. A cognitive approach, such as Barbara Dancygier's in *The Language of Stories*, blends our understanding of stage signs, or props, suggesting that they represent anchors of meaning that give us access to

abstract forms of information through the material aspects of theatre. Dancygier uses the term *dramatic anchor* to represent the material aspects of theatrical performances that anchor the meaning within dramatic works in some way. A dramatic anchor can be a prop, such as a dagger, or Desdemona's handkerchief, or it can be an actor playing the role of a statue, such as Hermione's statue in *The Winter's Tale*. Actors that play the role of material presences, such as ghosts or statues, cannot be talked about as props, but their physical makeup contains vital information that adds to our understanding of a play, so they, too, can be considered as dramatic anchors. The value of dramatic anchors is that they allow us to speak of any of the material aspects of the stage that anchor the meaning of a play in some way. Anchors also give the spectator access to narrative spaces and conceptual frames as actors speak about objects on stage. For example, when Macbeth clutches at a dagger floating in front of him, it gives us access to the frames of ambition and murder as he contemplates killing King Duncan to claim Duncan's throne.

The complexity of meaning that emerges around and through dramatic anchors on stage suggests that meaning arises out of a dynamic blending process of language, performance, and material elements. Theorists from the cognitive sciences focus on the role of the spectator as the locus of meaning being generated by a play, because narratives need to be understood by an audience. As Merja Polvinen suggests in "Enactive Perception and Fictional Worlds," "the sensation of encountering a fictional world may be better explained through the enactive conceptualization of having sensory access to it, with the perception forming in cooperation between the object and the actions of the embodied mind encountering it – actions which include the meaning-making based on our skill as users of fictional narratives" (31). The meaning generated through a play may be out there in the world, but the conceptual basis of narratives

needs to be constructed by our minds. In theatre, perception is a product of the dynamic exchange between the embodied mind and the objects on stage. A cognitive study places the figurative implications of the stage space into the embodied mind of spectators. The intersection between cognitive theories and material accounts of theatre reveals not only how stages are arranged to mean but also how individual minds construct meaning by actively engaging with what is on stage. Thus, a cognitive reading of *Hamlet* can explain the role of certain material objects on Shakespeare's stage while making clear how those objects add to the meaning structured throughout *Hamlet*.

1.2 Drama in a Cognitive Framework

Shakespeare's plays were meant to be performed for an audience, not to be read, and his language reflects that. According to Dancygier, "when characters speak on stage, they are not necessarily speaking only to other characters within the story space – they also speak to the audience, and sometimes speak to the audience via material objects and bodies as purported addressees" (*Language of Stories* 164). Through the language spoken by characters and the material objects used on stage, the characters are able to generate spaces that could not be accessed in any one mode alone. Thus, in the absence of a narrator, material objects on stage allow characters and audiences the ability to gain access to conceptual frames and narrative spaces in a similar way that they gain access to the meaning that is generated by language. Cognitive research in linguistics suggests that meaning is not in language alone, but that language is a tool that we use to access specific cognitive domains. Thus, Shakespeare uses the material aspects of his theatre to access cognitive domains through character's language, performance, and certain material objects so that meaning is produced multimodally upon the stage.

Much ground has been covered in the cognitive sciences that can tell us something about the way we interpret literature and theatrical performance. Theories that pertain to cognition, or the way we think, have considerable implications for contemporary, historical, and cultural understandings of the creative processes in operation during the construction of artistic and literary works. Understandably, there are rich social, cultural, and historical backgrounds that structure Early Modern theatre, but Early Modern audiences had minds capable of thought that is like our own, so we need to consider cognition a central aspect in the way that playwrights contemplated theatrical arrangements in Early Modern drama. If we use cognitive theory in a constructive way, one that broadens the scope of current cultural and literary theories, as Amy Cook has done in her book *Shakespearean Neuroplay*[1], then we can move toward a more thorough understanding of literature that suggests not only what certain dramatic works mean but also how they mean. For Cook, cognitive theories, like the conceptual blending theory, allow us to explore the complexities of the network of associated spaces primed for meaning construction on stage and it "provides a tool to explain the densely poetic and the seemingly simple" (43). We need to start asking ourselves why Shakespeare is using language that was not common, how that language gives access to certain spaces, and how the material aspects of the stage play an integral role in the exchange. Cognitive poetics elaborates upon the network of associated spaces in theatrical performance to show how abstract knowledge structures are being accessed and

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[1] Amy Cook, in *Shakespearean Neuroplay*, explores the notion of Hamlet's mirror from multiple perspectives and blends those ideas using cognitive theories to suggest that the stage as a mirror does not simply reflect what is in front of it, but it intentionally distorts what it simply reflects. She argues that this is how Shakespeare structured his play in order to show how mirrors, like theatre, are intentionally charged as they can be directed by an agent, and they distort the image that is in front of them for metaphorical purposes.

cultivated by playwrights so that audiences can understand densely poetic theatrical arrangements in a seemingly simple way.

Meaning pertains to the whole of a narrative rather than instances within it. However, instances within a narrative can also metonymically evoke the entire frame of the narrative. That is, information within a scene in a play is artistically compressed within specific objects, through language and performance, in ways that prompt meaning construction and add to the overall development of a narrative. For example, when Hamlet takes the skull Yorick and speaks about Yorick as a character of infinite jest, it evokes the frame of death (in the skull) and the frame of performance (Yorick was an actor). Likewise, this moment evokes Hamlet's role as a performer, as well as his fixation on death, signifying that, being fully aware of his mortality, he must continue performing his role until the play's end. Material objects are the nodes of representation within the network of the narrative that blend in important ways to structure the meaningful interpretation of a text, a work of art, or human thought in general.

My thesis targets the intersecting fields of literary studies and cognition. It will develop upon Barbara Dancygier's work on *dramatic anchors* (2016) alongside cognitive linguistic theories such as conceptual blending (Turner, 1997; Fauconnier and Turner, 2002), framing (Fillmore, 1982), compression (Fauconnier 2005; Turner 2006; Dancygier 2012), mental spaces (Fauconnier, 1994), narrative spaces (Dancygier, 2012), and representation blends (Dancygier, 2012) to propose a new way of reading Shakespeare's *Hamlet* through the material aspects of the stage. If we understand the meaning structured through the dramatic anchors of the ghost of Hamlet's father, the play-within-a-play, and Yorick's skull, then we can understand meaning emergence at the heart of Shakespeare's work. A cognitive methodology suggests that meaning in the play is compressed, structurally, within the dramatic anchors so that any time these

anchors appear, the frame of meaning surrounding them is evoked. Early Modern drama's utilization of stage props was an early form of narrative compression that Shakespeare was developing throughout his career to suggest how things happening on stage show us something important about life. A study of dramatic anchors within Shakespeare's work can reveal important avenues for research in the dramatic arts, performance, and literature.

2.   Cognitive Science and Theatrical Representation

2.1   Multimodality of Theatre: Language and Material Objects

Theatrical performances operate through multiple channels of communication to generate meaning. According to Fauconnier, "the mental construction, which remains the same regardless of the modality involved, can be reflected concretely by very different codes, adapted to that modality" (*Mental Spaces* 167). Thus, conceptual information can be accessed through different modalities to blend on stage, thereby creating meaning multimodally. For example, the meaning behind a sound and the meaning behind a gesture could be blended together to generate a mental space, such as our understanding that a character that pouts and places the back of their wrist against their forehead, is suffering from some form of sadness. Depending on the narrative construals within the scene, further spaces can be evoked so that the audience knows what, exactly, the character is suffering from. If theatrical representations access similar cognitive domains through language, performance, and the material aspects of theatre, then it is important to know how information can be projected across multiple modalities to construct meaning.

Charles Forceville, in "Non-verbal and Multimodal Metaphor in a Cognitivist Framework," puts forth the concept of *multimodal metaphors* (2009). A mode, according to Forceville, is a "sign system interpretable because of a specific perception process" (22). He further distinguishes these modes as: pictorial signs, written signs, spoken signs, gestures, sounds, music, smells, tastes, and touch. Multimodal metaphors function in a way that blends sign-systems from the nine different modalities to generate meaning. Not only is this distinction significant for the study of cognition but it also provides a theory from which we can recognize how theatre operates on the spectator through a process that goes beyond purely linguistic or semiotic means. Multimodality suggests that the juxtaposition of language and material objects,

and any other perceptual element, can blend from across modalities to generate meaning in a productive way. This understanding is important for the study of multimodal forms of art, such as theatre, because it explains the mind's capacity to grasp meaning from different modalities. Essentially, it combines, and expands upon, text-based and sign-based theories.

Plays that access frames of knowledge in different modalities rely on human cognitive abilities to understand abstract concepts by generating meaning in different modes. This notion allows playwrights to combine language, performance, and material objects in innovative ways to produce meaning within their narratives. We can understand the knowledge structures being accessed by different modalities, including those accessed by material objects, through Fillmore's conception of *framing*:

> frame semantics offers a particular way of looking at word meanings, as well as a way of characterizing principles for creating new words and phrases, for adding new meanings to words, and for assembling the meanings of elements in a text into the total meaning of the text. By the term 'frame' I have in mind a system of concepts related in such a way that to understand any one of them you have to understand the whole structure in which it fits; when one of the things in such a structure is introduced into a text, or into a conversation, all of the other things are automatically made available. (Fillmore 111)

For example, the terms like 'stage' or 'actor' evoke the frame of a theatrical performance. One cannot understand what a stage is without having the idea of what the entire theatre frame contains and what relations hold among elements – one would not confuse an 'actor' with a curtain', because both have specific forms to play in a theatrical event. In *Hamlet*, the skull of Yorick indicates the frame of death and enables Hamlet to speak about death. Furthermore, Hamlet holds the skull up to his face as if looking into a mirror so that he can reflect upon his

own death. Thus, the language, performance, and interaction with the material object blend to reveal how figurative meaning is being layered within the scene. An understanding of framing shows us that when the skull enters the scene, the frame of death is activated in each modality.

Knowing how meaning emerges through a process of blending of conceptual frames that have been arranged in multiple modes can help us to understand the material arrangement of Shakespeare's theatre. Furthermore, the language used by Shakespeare's characters can tell us, explicitly, how actors should perform and engage with objects on stage. Although contemporary directors of Shakespearean plays may provide different interpretations of Shakespeare's stage arrangements, the language used by the characters provides audiences with access to the required cognitive domains independently of what is being shown. Therefore, there must always be some form of a ghost, a play within a play, and a skull in any production of *Hamlet*. These objects provide meaning to *Hamlet* that is intrinsic to any interpretation.

The conceptual blending theory can tell us how information from multiple input spaces, or modes, is combined within a final blended space where new meanings emerge. Through blending, we can understand how meaning is created within a specific scene in a play, and how information from all the scene comes together in the final form of the emergent story. Thinking in these terms, abstract meaning is constructed through a network of blends within a multimodal framework. In *The Language of Stories*, Dancygier suggests that, "the conceptual structure of the blend, while relying on projection from the inputs, achieves its own coherence by selecting only the relevant parts of the inputs and compressing vital relations, such as time, causation, or identity" (32). For example, for the audience within and outside *Hamlet*, understanding the role of the play within a play in *Hamlet* includes identifying Claudius as a murderer and Old Hamlet as victim. These meanings do not emerge on their own, but in a blend of two narratives – *The*

Mousetrap and *Hamlet*. Since meaning often remains within the blended space, we can assume that without creating the blend Hamlet would not have been able to convince others of Claudius' guilt. This is a more constructive way to interpret the meaning-making basis of multimodal communication in a medium such as theatre. Blending suggests how multiple metaphors can generate meaning across the entire framework of a theatrical performance. Blending not only explains how meaning is created through the relationship between elements within a scene but it also explains how each scene connects to other scenes in a way that consistently provides structure and narrative coherence as a play progresses.

2.2   Dramatic Anchors

When actors interact with objects on stage, the objects take on meanings that are independent of their usual function. For example, blood becomes a symbol of guilt, a skull becomes a symbol of death, and so on. Sofer says that "objects take on a life of their own when they transcend their usual, 'transparent' function and draw the spectator's attention in their own right. Props most common function is to act as various kinds of *visual shorthand*" (20). This visual shorthand, otherwise known as the figurative applications of material objects, is what Dancygier refers to when she says, "when their material role stops being the central one, they cease to be simple props, and will become what I refer to as dramatic anchors" (Dancygier "Multimodality and Theatre" 30). Dramatic anchors are material elements within a story world that prompt meaning construction, which adds to the overall narrative coherence of a play. This process relies on compression and frame evocation. Dramatic anchors compress large networks of spaces within a narrative, such as conceptual information, identity, narrative spaces, etc., so that they can be evoked whenever they appear throughout the narrative. Furthermore, dramatic anchors have a dual function: they are material anchors (adding to the ongoing conceptualization

of the play's meaning) and they are narrative anchors (contributing to the understanding of the story). If material anchors prompt meaning comprehension in the real world, and narrative anchors prompt meaning construction in a narrative, then dramatic anchors represent a combination of the two as theatrical performance is medium where both are expressed: having real actors play fictional characters on a real stage that represents a fictional world.

Material anchors provide a way for understanding the human cognitive domain that associates conceptual structure and material structure. As previously mentioned, Hutchins has explored the complex network of conceptual spaces that the mind seamlessly interweaves when doing such things as reading a watch. A more basic example of material anchors can be found in Hutchins' "Material Anchors for Conceptual Blends" in which he discusses the conceptual basis of a queue (see Figure 1.1). In this example, when one is walking down the street and they pass a group of people all facing in the same direction, their mind automatically recognizes it as a queue for some type of event. We can understand this occurrence as a blending of conceptual and physical spaces. In this case, input space one is represented by a group of people, input space two is represented by an imagined trajector (the direction in which most of the people are facing), and in the final space the concepts are blended so that the material arrangement of people and the trajector compresses, blends, and represents the concept of a queue and its purpose. There are many more social and cultural spaces that could blend in the conceptualization of a queue, such as what type of organization, or event, the people are in line for, so Hutchins' blend of the queue is not an exhaustive explanation, but one that outlines the fundamentals of material anchors for conceptual blends.

Figure 1.1 Material Anchor for the Conceptual Blend of a Queue.
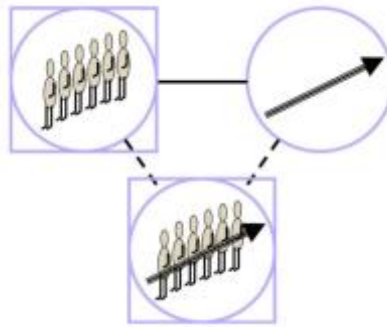
For Hutchins, "the physical objects themselves are input to the conceptual blending process. This is what I intend when I speak of 'material anchors' for conceptual blends" (1560). Furthermore, the use of physical objects within a conceptual blend "may increase the stability of conceptual structure, enabling more complex reasoning processes than would be possible otherwise" (1562). Hutchins' anchors reveal important configurations for knowing how, in a more complex and dynamic setting such as theatre, a multitude of conceptual processes are being represented and understood by the audience on the fly. Otherwise, an understanding of the emergent structure of any theatrical performance, or life in general, would be impossible. The notion of material anchors has opened a widely advantageous discourse on the fundamentals of meaning emergence in daily life, as well as for understanding complex forms of art that often seem too difficult for any one interpretation to be made, such as Surrealism. If we pay close attention to how conceptual structures operate within art and literature, we may be better suited to offer support for any claims we are making in our theoretical analyses.

With this approach in mind, Barbara Dancygier has developed upon the concept of material anchors to suggest how narrative anchors operate within fictional narratives. Narrative anchors are "expressions which set up or suggest the availability of narrative spaces, but do not elaborate them right away" (*Language of Stories* 42). Furthermore, the value of narrative anchors

is "narrative space building, prompting cross-input mappings, establishing identity, metonymy, and metaphor" (44). Narrative anchors can metonymically evoke larger concepts, constructing meaning through blending and frame metonymies. This concept can be further understood through Fillmore's conception of framing. Like materials anchors, framing accounts "for the structured way in which the scene is presented or remembered, we can say that the frame structures the word-meanings, and that the word 'evokes' the frame" (378). In this sense, the narrative anchor is structured by the frame of meaning surrounding it, but it can also evoke that frame of meaning. In other words, a narrative anchor can be thought of as an object, an image, or a word that compresses salient information for re-evocation throughout the emergent structure of a narrative. In a multimodal context, a narrative anchor could be represented by a sound, an image, a special effect, etc., that activates a frame of meaning, an input space (in a blend), or a narrative space. According to Dancygier, a narrative space is "a mental construct participating in the emergence of the story, having distinctive topology and narrative status," and a story is "a cognitive construct, a blend, emerging through the process of meaning construction triggered by reading…. The story is the mega-blend arrived at in the interaction in the text" (*Language of Stories* 56). One of the cognitive advantages of narrative anchors is that information relevant to the construction of a narrative is compressed within them so it can be activated when necessary to evoke a frame of meaning, epistemic viewpoint, or a narrative space. By extension, the meaning of a word, an image, or a sound, is structured by the frame in which it originates; however, this meaning can also be used to evoke the frame. A frame is like a narrative space in a narrative or an input space in a blend. We could say that the word, the image, or the sound also metonymically evokes the narrative space. What is important for our discussion of anchors within theatrical performance is that an anchor can be used to construct meaning across

modalities. If the material aspects of the stage can be used to access the same cognitive domains as language, then this suggests blending across modalities.

Dramatic anchors provide access to conceptual frames and narrative spaces. For example, a clock can represent a compression of time, but in a fictional narrative it can also generate narrative spaces that represent the passage of time, or the evocation of a memory. Thus, figuratively, the representation of a clock allows characters to speak about frames of time, time passing, losing time, a memory, etc. In *Hamlet,* the skull is used in a figurative manner so that, amongst other things, Hamlet can access the frame of identity as the skull fluctuates between a multitude of identities: a courtier, a lawyer, Yorick, Alexander, etc. Thus, the role of dramatic anchors is both literal and figurative.

Furthermore, theatre uses both language and the material aspects of stage arrangements to construct meaning. The conceptual basis for language and the material aspects of the stage is being accessed simultaneously in any performance as actors engage with material objects and speak to, or about, them. Through an actor's language, performance, and/or interaction with objects, they provide access to frames of meaning that could not otherwise be accessed. A study of meaning emergence across modalities can allow us to make sense of Yorick's skull, Richard's mirror, Juliet's dagger, Desdemona's handkerchief, etc. These material objects become markers of complex scenarios that are utilized to project meanings from scene to scene. When an actor speaks to an object, we must consider the object's significance in the development of the narrative. Here, more than anywhere, the material and the conceptual underpinnings of theatrical performance are exposed.

2.3   Mental Spaces, Narrative Spaces, and Representation

Narrative spaces are cognitive domains that are activated or set up using linguistic forms for the purposes of online story construction. They are similar to mental spaces (Fauconnier 1984, 1995): "constructs distinct from linguistic structures but built up in any discourse according to guidelines provided by the linguistic expression" (*Mental Spaces* 16). According to Fauconnier, linguistic expressions generate spaces, elements within those spaces, and relationships between elements. Fauconnier insists that "relatively simple grammatical structures give instructions for space construction in context. But this construction process is often *underdetermined* by the grammatical instructions; thus, simple construction principles and simple linguistic structures may yield multiple space configurations. And this creates an illusion of structural complexity" (2). A linguistic form in which multiple space configurations are used is poetry. The figurative use of language applied in poetry generally calls for multiple meanings to be associated with any one line so that meaning emerges, creatively, in seemingly complex ways. However, Dancygier argues that "mental spaces are not strictly linguistic phenomena, as recent work on gesture, art, comics, theatre, or film shows; rather, the theory is a useful tool in teasing out the details of various forms of meaningful interaction and discovering the correlations between such prompts and meaning" (*Language of Stories* 35). Thinking in terms of Hutchins queue, the space involved in understanding the queue is our notion of people standing in a line, and a trajector. Similarly, when speaking in a multimodal context, the sound of a bird chirping creates the mental space of *bird*, and one might project the image of a certain kind of bird into the mental space. In a theatrical performance, sounds and images may signify things not directly apparent on the stage. For example, a gunshot, or a bugle call, could provide access to off stage spaces. The multimodal nature of elements within the stage space allows for mental

spaces to be generated that are not on stage. Mental space theory allows for multiple meanings to arise throughout the dynamic interplay of elements on stage and off stage.

Dancygier has put forth the notion of *narrative spaces* to explain the arrangement of fictional spaces in works of literature and theatre. According to Dancygier, a narrative space is "a mental construct participating in the emergence of the story, having distinctive topology and narrative status, and linked to other narrative spaces in ways which prompt story construction" (*Language of Stories* 36). Narrative spaces differ from mental spaces in that they evoke narrative elements within fictional environments. Whereas, mental spaces are cognitive domains that are activated or set up using linguistic forms for on-line meaning construction, narrative spaces are cognitive domains activated or set up using linguistic forms, for on-line story construction. Material objects have a similar function to 'linguistic forms' that active mental and narrative spaces. Rather than evoke conceptual or narrative spaces through language alone, theatre uses material objects that arise again and again throughout a performance in order that narrative or conceptual spaces from previous scenes can add to the narrative structure of the emergent story. Thus, a ghost may represent a narrative space of the living person before they had died, or it can be used as a material representation of a certain character's guilt. Material objects evoke narrative spaces and mental spaces in order that elements within those spaces can blend with information from the main narrative space to maintain narrative coherence.

Material objects cannot always convey conceptual or narrative information on their own. Usually, an actor interacts with objects in ways that suggest the actor is accessing a conceptual or narrative frame. Dancygier says that the "material aspects of theatrical space are exploited to profile subjective contruals beyond the characters' words and play a central role in prompting story constructing processes" (*Language of Stories* 164). When Hamlet takes the skull of Yorick,

he speaks to it as though he is accessing the narrative space of Yorick's past life, while also accessing the conceptual space of death and mortality. Hamlet is accessing subjective construals through his language that relate to his memories with Yorick. Actors use material objects to talk about off stage spaces. When dramatic anchors provide access to narrative spaces that have occurred previously in the narrative, or have occurred off stage, then we can talk about the anchor as a representation.

Representations add to our understanding of dramatic anchors because they usually serve as an example of some element occurring within both the main narrative space and alternative narrative spaces in order that elements from both spaces blend and new meanings emerge. This type of dramatic anchor allows for the represented space to add meaning to the main narrative. In *Hamlet*, the dramatic anchors of the ghost and Yorick's skull are representations that allow certain characters to talk about past narrative events within the scene in which they emerge. When past narrative spaces are evoked, they can influence the progression of main narrative. Furthermore, the play within a play is a complex dramatic anchor that blends the representation of a past narrative space with a fictional space in order to evoke a response from certain characters. For example, Claudius recognizes the similarities between the murder of Old Hamlet and the murder of the Player King by poison in the ear, he reacts, and conveys his guilt to Hamlet. Representation blends are useful for providing narrative information that cannot be represented on the stage but is necessary to the development of the plot.

2.4   Mirrors on the Stage and the Stage as Mirror

Theatrical performances are representations of multiple narrative spaces that combine to produce meaning in the minds of audiences. For this reason, the stage can be viewed as a mirror that reflects something to the audience. This reflection usually is a figurative interpretation that

tells audiences something about life, but from a different angle. Obviously, the stage is not a physical mirror, but a metaphorical representation of some aspect of human nature. Therefore, it is necessary to explore the stage as more than just a replica of the world in front of it. One must take note of the 'stage-as-mirror' for its conceptual, metaphorical, and representational value. Amy Cook has provided a thorough analysis of the seventeenth century mirror and its multiple meanings in her book, *Shakespearean Neuroplay.* Through Cook's extensive overview of the mirror, we can no longer see the stage as something that merely reflects nature, but as something that provides a distorted reflection from a playwright's intentional viewpoint. Furthermore, Cook's mirror-blend suggests how we can view material objects as representations that blend within the storyworld to reflect something back to us.

Cook suggests the many ways that the conceptual blending theory can be used for a more thorough understanding of Hamlet's mirror than has previously been explored. Cook's main concern is that previous theories pertaining to Hamlet's mirror metaphor are incomplete since, simply put, the theatre is not a mirror and "no such mirror exists with which to understand theatre; it must be created through blending" (44). Through her examination of the mirror, Cook wants us to understand that blending "supports and extends other critical assessments of Hamlet's mirror, it suggests avenues of historical research and illuminates the connective tissue between ideas within the play – connective tissue that generates a cognitive scaffolding" (43). Furthermore, Cook states that "the true value of this method comes when the blend selected contains, compresses, or informs other parts of the play" (43). Historical research can uncover aspects of the technical developments of the period in regards to the mirror and what a mirror may have meant to an Early Modern audience, thereby signalling how an Early Modern audience may interpret and react to the mirror blend within Hamlet. Cook points out that "blends are

constructions of meaning based on projection of information from two or more input spaces to a blended space, such that the blended meaning contains information and structure from more than one space" (11). Moreover, Turner suggests that "one of the great cognitive advantages of a blended space is its freedom to deal in all the vivid specifics…. The blended space can powerfully activate both spaces and keep them easily active while we do work cognitively over them to construct meaning" (*Literary Mind* 61). Furthermore, Cook uses conceptual blending in her construction of Hamlet's mirror, suggesting that Hamlet's mirror is a blend comprised of three input spaces:

> a flat, perfect mirror that can show us what we cannot see without its aid (input space M1), a convex mirror that manipulates diffuse information such that it captures not what is there but what exactly it is angled toward (input space M2), and the angler or holder deciding where to look, what to reflect (input space M3). (Cook 58)

In the blended space, the mirror intentionally distorts what it simply reflects. The theatre is an intentional space provided by the stage director whereby our attention is directed toward specific events that both reflect and distort nature. Applying Cook's mirror blend to different moments within *Hamlet* can reveal how Shakespeare was trying to convey to his audience that plays are composed with the intent to reveal some aspect of human nature to an audience. Plays are constructed by human minds with the intention of being made sense of by other human minds; thus, applying Cook's mirror blend can reveal how different aspects of the theatre blend to construct meaning through all of a play's staged properties.

2.5 Cognition and Shakespeare

The shift in focus from language to the material aspects of the stage has created avenues of research that highlight the networks of meaning surrounding specific objects. Material objects

have histories that can inform our understanding of the storyworld and add value to the interpretations of dramatic works. For example, the knowledge of a mirror that is convex and distorted alters our perception of what Hamlet means when he compares the stage to a mirror held up to nature. We can no longer view the stage as an exact replica of the world, but we can understand it as showing us our world, and ourselves, from a different viewpoint. Theories from the cognitive sciences suggest the cognitive tissue underlying the complex layers of meaning structured through the language, performance, and material aspects of the stage. Understanding meaning emergence in a multimodal context highlights the fact that there is still much work to be done in our cognitive interpretations of art, literature, and drama. The recent shift to the material aspects of the stage can help us to understand the language Shakespeare used in his plays as well as how material objects provide access to that language.

3. Representation in *Hamlet*

Playwrights need to establish innovative ways of conveying conceptual and narrative information to an audience that comes off as easily accessible so that their plays maintain discursive and narrative cohesion. Typically, this is accomplished through creative fashioning of language, performance, and the material aspects of the stage. Material objects ground abstract conceptual and narrative information, representing one aspect of the narrative space topology that constructs a play. A cognitive approach shows us, more definitively, how Shakespeare accesses conceptual spaces through cognitive domains to generate meaning as it develops in the emergent structure of his narratives. As Gilles Fauconnier explains in "Compression and Emergent Structure":

> the complexity lies in the construction of the entire network, i.e. in building links, projections and compressions from familiar inputs to novel but simple ones. This shows in turn that when we speak of "emergent structure" we do not mean the structure of the blended space by itself, but rather the dynamic structure of the entire network, and in particular the compressions and projections that link the input mental spaces to the novel blended spaces. (527-528)

The dynamic structure of the network of a play relies on the blending of frames from multiple spaces, ie. the main narrative spaces, representation blends, frames evoked through character's speech, etc. In theatre, the material aspects of the stage ground this network through compression and frame evocation. Compression can be understood as "the unconscious process by which we

reduce the scale of something"[2] (Rhonda Blair and Amy Cook 18). Frame evocation refers to a

kind of decompression, whereby characters can access different frames of meaning that have

been compressed within objects. An understanding of the way conceptual and narrative spaces,

or frames, can be accessed throughout the Shakespeare's plays can highlight his innovative use

of the materiality of the stage as an anchor of meaning.

Dramatic anchors represent a figurative way of displaying information on the stage that

grounds abstract concepts and narrative spaces in the material elements of the storyworld. An

exploration of the material aspects of the stage as figurative representations is what Sofer calls

for when he says that "we must… acknowledge the metaphor of the prop with a life of its own as

a suggestive figure of speech and seek to unpack its figurative applications" (20). Through an

understanding of how material objects within the storyworld function alongside language and

performance, we can begin to tease out their conceptual and narrative implications for individual

narratives. We can also begin to recognize the innovations that drive specific stage arrangements

and theatrical performances. Knowing how these figurative arrangements work in a theatrical

performance can tell us something about the relationship between the mind and the world, and

how the cognitive faculties that drive such a relationship are inherently creative.

Exploring the relationship of the dramatic anchors of the ghost, *The Mousetrap*, and

Yorick's skull, suggests, conceptually, how Shakespeare develops his plays around the theme of

life as a performance. There are a series of compressions that take place in the first act of *Hamlet*

that allow the dramatic anchor of the ghost to undergo a transformation from mere illusion to a

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[2] In the introduction to "Cognitive Linguistics, Theatre, and Performance," Rhonda Blair and Amy Cook discuss three fundamental properties of cognition and theatre: 1) 'Meaning' is an embodied process; 2) We think and speak metaphorically; 3) Thinking and speaking requires compression.

fully embodied figure of Old Hamlet. This transformation suggests that art is not just an illusion, but that we actively engage with the art object as part of our reality. Furthermore, some dramatic anchors are also narrative space builders. Representation blends can help us to understand the complex narrative space topology as the anchor of the ghost evokes a space that Hamlet blends within *The Mousetrap* to evoke a response from Claudius. This approach complicates Cook's notion of the mirror blend by suggesting the multifaceted nature of the stage as a mirror, in which there are multiple observers and multiple reflections. Finally, exploring the notion of dramatic anchors and representation blends through Yorick's skull reveals how the stage as a mirror reflects the audience, in a moment of mise en abyme, conveying Shakespeare's insistence on art's role in life.

In the previous chapter, I discussed dramatic anchors as both material anchors and narrative anchors. Dramatic anchors ground both conceptual and narrative information so that characters can access conceptual frames and narrative spaces, thus, adding to the cohesiveness of the on stage action. Dancygier claims that "material aspects of theatrical space are exploited to profile subjective construals beyond the characters' words and play a central role in prompting story construction processes" (*Language of Stories* 164). When a character speaks about an object as evoking a subjective stance, a memory, the past, an event occurring offstage, etc., we can talk about dramatic anchors as narrative space builders. Thus, dramatic anchors often add to our understanding of a text through their ability to represent narrative spaces occurring, or that have occurred, outside of the main narrative space. When a dramatic anchor adds a narrative space, we can generally speak about it in terms of its representational value. A ghost is a representation of a dead person; thus, it often evokes past narrative spaces, or mental spaces (characters' memories). Speaking specifically about the role of ghosts in *Macbeth,* Dancygier

claims that "ghosts may play a variety of roles in the play, but what they share is an embodied form which can occupy a specific position in the narrative, including prompting access to narrative spaces" (*Language of Stories* 164). In this context, the ghost of Banquo adds to our understanding of *Macbeth* by evoking a past narrative space in which Macbeth had Banquo murdered. The representation of a past narrative space adds multiple layers to our understanding of the scene. Banquo had to enter at this moment in the play so that he is visible to the audience as the embodiment of Macbeth's guilt. However, Dancygier also claims that Banquo had to appear so that the other characters in the scene can appreciate Macbeth's distress. Thus, the ghost of Banquo is a representation of a past narrative space in the present that gives access to Macbeth's mental space and adds to the cohesiveness of the scene.

I will expand upon Dancygier's notion of dramatic anchors using the ghost in *Hamlet* to suggest the transformative quality of anchors in theatre. Transformation allows for objects on the stage to take on new meanings by blending emergent frames. This idea is similar to Mark Turner's argument, in "Compression and Representation," that "mental spaces are often connected by vital conceptual relations. When mental spaces serve as inputs to a blended mental space, the vital conceptual relations between them can be 'compressed' to blended structure inside the blended mental space. In other words, 'outer-space' relations become 'inner-space' relations (17). Dramatic anchors represent compressions of conceptual and narrative information that can be accessed by characters within the main narrative space. When characters access conceptual or narrative information, they are blending vital relations, as shown through their speech, between the main narrative space and the spaces they are accessing. The vital relations are compressed to the blended structure inside the blended narrative space: ie., the blend formed in the main narrative space (outer-space) is contained in the dramatic anchor (inner-space

relations). This is an elaborate way of saying that the meaning of the dramatic anchor is altered in relation to how it is being used on stage from scene to scene. Meaning emerges as the characters speak about an object, and that meaning becomes contained within the object so that whenever the object appears again, it carries with it the meaning generated in previous scenes. When the dramatic anchor appears subsequently, the meaning generated in the previous scenes blends with the new scene to create new meaning. The meaning generated from scene to scene reveals how we can understand the transformation that material objects undergo as arising from the emerging interpretations within each subsequent narrative space. For example, the dagger in *Macbeth* is a dramatic anchor that transforms from a tool used for murder, to a representation of the mental space of Macbeth's guilt as he sees the dagger spouting blood. Furthemore, the transformation process of the dramatic anchor of *Hamlet's* ghost reveals how anchors can undergo many transformations that add new meanings to emergent blends.

Dancygier uses *viewpoint compression* (2012) to explore the evocation of conceptual frames and narrative spaces within textually embedded narratives[3]. Viewpoint compression suggests how representation blends can evoke conceptual frames and narrative spaces through an act of decompression. Dancygier gives the example of a photograph blend that allows a narrator to access a past narrative space so that the protagonist in the present narrative space can imagine speaking to a character from the past within the present space. Representation blends offer a point of comparison between text-based narratives and theatrical representation because their role is, typically, the same. We can speak of ghosts and skulls as representation blends because they are objects that represent individuals. Representation blends can be used to speak about the

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[3] Due to the focus on material objects within this paper, I will forgo a more in depth discussion of how narrative viewpoint is construed and linguistically expressed within narratives. For more information on narrative viewpoint see Dancygier (2012).

ghost in *Hamlet* because it represents an identity that gives access to a past narrative space. Furthermore, the ghost represents different narrative spaces to different characters. Each character's take on the ghost provides new narrative information, transforming the ghost both materially and conceptually, and adds different meaning to each scene. For example, Hamlet takes information from the narrative space of the ghost of Old Hamlet and blends it with the represented space of the play within a play in order to evoke a response from Claudius. Viewpoint compression can be used to reveal the transformation of Old Hamlet's ghost and how information developed within that space adds to our understanding of the play within a play. For example, in *The Mousetrap* scene, Hamlet adds conceptual information from the space evoked by Old Hamlet's ghost - the murder by poison in the ear - and blends it with *The Mousetrap*. Viewpoint compression also reveals why Claudius reacts to the play within a play, and what that tells us about his motives. Although viewpoint compression may not offer any new interpretations of this scene, it provides an outlook on the events within the scene to suggest how the dynamic set of construals is being evoked from different characters' viewpoints and shows us how an audience can make sense of the complicated networks of viewpoint.

A playwright's ability to develop believable storyworlds through their narratives is dependent upon his or her use of figurative applications of language and the material aspects of the stage. Packing these worlds and narratives with as much conceptual information as possible while maintaining narrative cohesion adds to the intrinsic value of any work of art. Amy Cook refers to the notion of *cognitive scaffolding* suggesting that it "is the network of spaces and blends primed and evoked throughout the plays such that the play would not look the same without it" (44). Furthermore, "the true value of the method comes when the blend selected contains, compresses, or informs other parts of the play" (43). Shakespeare's ability to pack

figuratively dense material into seemingly simple stage arrangements has stimulated much theoretical discourse surrounding his work. His narratives are complex, conceptually dense, visually stimulating, and they tell a provocative story. Unpacking Shakespeare's conceptual and narrative topology has been of the utmost importance in Shakespearean scholarship, and unpacking his work using a cognitive approach can reveal insightful avenues for our understanding of the relationship between his language and his theatrical arrangements. Theories from the field of cognitive linguistics, and more recently the cognitive poetics, can provide insights into the cognitive topology that connects Shakespeare's conceptual and narrative apparatus through language, performance, and the material aspects of the stage. Complex narratives such as Shakespeare's are illuminating for the study of theatrical performance because they reveal how metaphorically dense the material aspects of theatrical arrangements can be.

Hamlet presents us with questions about how the material objects on stage ground meaning, and how that meaning can be accessed throughout the narrative to generate new meanings. Shakespeare relies on the underlying concepts discussed in the previous chapter to construct meaning throughout his narratives. Cognitive theories can provide useful insights into how Shakespeare achieves narrative cohesion through the material and linguistic aspects of his theatre. The language used by Shakespeare's characters operates on the same conceptual structures as the material objects and they blend multimodally within his narrative so that his plays maintain narrative coherence by blending language, performance, and the material aspects of his theatrical arrangements.

Lastly, what is conceptually revealed through these objects, suggests how we view representations on the stage, and how they enter our lives. Beyond the scope of the narrative, Shakespeare is discursively conveying to his audience that we are all performers on the stage of

life. This sentiment is echoed in many of Shakespeare's plays, so it is not confined to only an interpretation of *Hamlet*, but can be explored in many of his plays. Shakespeare conveys to his audience how art enter their lives, and how art is indicative of how audiences make sense of reality. A cognitive reading of the material aspects of the stage can reveal how, through an act of viewpoint compression, meaning transcends the boundaries of the storyworld and enters our world. Cognitive poetics can show us not only how we make meaning but also how Shakespeare has arranged his theatre, both conceptually and narratively, in a way that suggests his thematic insistence on the blend between art and life.

3.1   The Dramatic Anchor of the Ghost as Theatrical Representation

The ghost of Hamlet's father has remained a contentious figure in Shakespearean discourse. Many substantial, although differing, claims have been made about *Hamlet's* ghost. It has been interpreted as a theological, psychological, and historical figure, to name a few. However, as Stephen Greenblatt argues in *Hamlet in Purgatory*, the figure of the ghost is undefined due to each staging of a ghost within Shakespeare's plays retaining its own distinct and subtle meanings (157). Greenblatt goes on to suggest that the three fundamental perspectives to Shakespeare's ghostly representations are: the ghost as a figure of false surmise, the ghost as a figure of history's nightmare, and the ghost as a figure of a deep psychic disturbance. However, he claims that at the core of each of these ghostly representations there is a fourth perspective: "the ghost as a figure of theater" (157). Sarah Outterson-Murphy echoes this sentiment while claiming that "Shakespeare innovatively uses the parallels between Ghost and actor—both shaping the bodies of spectators through their liminal position between two worlds—to demonstrate theater's value and defend it against charges that it, like a ghost, is both dangerously powerful and mere illusion" (256). Fundamental to both Greenblatt and Outterson-Murphy's

discussion of the ghost is a recognition that the role of the ghost, no matter the interpretation, is theatrical in nature.

An exploration of the ghost as a figure of theatre rather than a figure of truth, history, or a character's psychology, can reveal explicitly how the ghost operates on a conceptual and narrative level. To know how the ghost is functioning both conceptually and narratively we must consider what frames of meaning are being evoked by the material structure of the play. Rather than focus on what the play might implicitly be saying about history, or the mind, we need to focus on what the play explicitly tells us, or shows us, about how the ghost functions within *Hamlet*. Viewing, as Amy Cook suggests, the ghost as "less a category of deceit or 'show' than it is a vehicle or transformative agent" (142), allows us to see how meaning emerges through the dynamic exchange between objects and performers on the stage, as well as how that meaning transforms throughout the narrative.

The ghost is a useful theatrical device because it represents a liminal figure that transgresses both material and immaterial worlds. The ghost undergoes a transformation from an apparition, as Barnardo and Marcellus first see it, to a fully embodied figure of the king. Each transformation that the ghost undergoes alters the meaning associated with its material form. Conceptually, the ghost transform to suit the occasion, and each transformation adds something to the narrative structure of *Hamlet*. For example, the representation of the ghost as an apparition, as Barnardo and Marcellus first see it, is vastly different from Hamlet's interpretation of the ghost of his father. Each time the ghost undergoes one of its transformations, the form that it takes is based on each character's viewpoint. Dancygier has mentioned the notion of viewpoint compression, wherein the "multiplicity of viewpoints in narrative discourse is conceptually manageable because of a series of compressions bringing micro-level viewpoint up to macro

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level of narrative space" (*Language of Stories* 97). Viewpoint compression suggests how meaning emerges through each transformation of the ghost. This transformation shows us that the representation of the ghost is established through character viewpoint, and that each character's viewpoint blends to create the final form of *Hamlet*'s ghost, as shown in figure 3.1.

Dramatic anchors are material representations that are both transformed by elements within the main narrative space and they generate narrative spaces and conceptual spaces that blend to produce new meanings. This blending is like the act of transformation as the conceptual and narrative structures of the scene are dynamically bound to the spatial and temporal dimensions of theatrical performance. Unlike other forms of art, theatre is always moving and meaning becomes somewhat unbound as the story progresses. Exploring the transformation of stage objects, such as the ghost, can show us how meaning emerges and transforms through a process of compression and frame evocation. As characters within the main narrative space reflect on the dramatic anchor, it cues salient information that makes them react, through performance, to the anchors on stage. For example, in the beginning of act 1 of *Hamlet,* Barnardo and Marcellus have seen some undistinguishable form of a "thing" (1.1.21), they tell Horatio, who confirms its form in the likeness of the deceased king, and they confront Hamlet about the ghost that had appeared in the likeness of his father. Hamlet provides the ghost of the king with a fully realized intentional stance and a voice. Each of these aspects not only suggests how meaning is generated through sight and the imagination, but they also suggest how narrative spaces are being accessed through the dramatic anchor of *Hamlet's* ghost to produce narrative coherence. Uncovering what the ghost does conceptually and narratively reveals how narratives transform objects to suit the needs of the story, while also suggesting how those transformations impact the narrative development.

As previously mentioned, transformation is at the heart of the first act of the play. The ghost is a liminal figure that acts as the embodiment of theatrical representation. It is both "physically embodied" and "dangerously fantastical," and the characters react to the ghost in both ways (Outterson-Murphy 269). The ghost, being both a representation "like the king that's dead" (1.1.41) and an "apparition" (1.1.28) allows it to undergo a transformation that adds to the conceptual and narrative structure of the play. An apparitions lack form; it is the representation of an idea that never takes shape because it has no material form in which to ground itself. Whereas, the ghost in a form "like the king that's dead" provides the ghost with an identity that establishes and grounds narrative and conceptual information that is cued by the language of the characters.

The term 'apparition' comes closest to any kind of determinable characteristic that represents the sighting that Barnardo and Marcellus first describe in the opening act. When they put forth the notion of the ghost as an 'apparition,' they are accessing the frames of sight and display. The *OED* lists five definitions of apparition from around the time of *Hamlet*'s production, one of which contains an example from Shakespeare's work, and the only one which is cited as "the ordinary current sense." Under definition 9a, "an immaterial appearance as of a real being; a spectre, phantom, or ghost," it cites *Julius Caesar* "I thinke it is the weaknesse of mine eyes/ That shapes this monstrous Apparition" (4.2.328). Under definition 1, "the action of appearing or becoming visible." Under definition 4, "manifestation, demonstration, display." And definition 10, "a deceptive appearance counterfeiting reality; an illusion, a sham." In the four examples listed above, the idea of an apparition is suggestive of some *thing* that has become visible, has manifested, has appeared, is on display, or has copied reality. The apparition, both ghostly and theatrical in our understanding of the word, is the embodiment of an idea without

form. Shakespeare uses terms relating to sight to suggest the importance of vision for generating meaning around objects on display. There are multiple references to "appearance" (1.1.21, 1.1.30), "sight" (1.1.25), and approving the "eyes" (1.1.29). The ghost, being the object at center stage, is what is looked at, but Barnardo and Marcellus are stuck trying to decipher what they have seen. They describe the ghost as a "thing," a "fantasy" (1.1.23), a "dreaded sight" (1.1.25), a "figure" (1.1.41). But in all of their descriptions, the ghost remains undefined in the context of their sighting, suggesting that it lacks form. Furthermore, they lack the ability to make sense of the object because of its inability to take shape. The reaction of Barnardo and Marcellus represents the inadequacy of representations that do not convey information visually. Spoken words may spark the imagination into a frenzy of images, but concrete shapes on the stage can be validated by observers. Barnardo and Marcellus, staring into the blackness of the night, lack the ability to approve their eyes; thus, they conjure fantasies, dreaded sights, and 'things' unseen. What they truly lack is a material form to ground their ideas, or anchor meaning.

Ideas on the stage are best represented if they have a form. When Barnardo and Marcellus access the frames of sight and display, they are suggesting the need for the material representation of an idea. Barnardo and Marcellus invoke the ghost from the darkness of their imaginations because material objects on the stage allow information to become anchored so that performers and audiences can conceptualize abstract information through the material aspects of the play. Furthermore, Horatio's sole purpose for being on the wall is so that he can validate what Barnardo and Marcellus have seen during their previous night's watch. Horatio must see the ghost because sight is the physical window to the imagination[5]. On the other hand, through

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[5] In "Windows on Contagion," Donald Beecher explains the psychosomatic affliction of melancholia as arising from infectious blood vapours that enter the body through the eye beams and infect the imagination of the perceiver.

the interaction of Barnardo, Marcellus, and Horatio, 'hearing' is suggested as a faulty sensory

faculty for understanding or producing meaning. For example, while waiting for the ghost to

appear in the opening act, Barnardo directs Horatio to:

> Sit down awhile,
>
> And let us once again assail your ears,
>
> That are so fortified against our story,
>
> What we have two nights seen. (1.1.30-33)

Horatio must physically see what the other two guards could only describe to him, suggesting the

inadequacy of storytelling as an art form. In this moment, Shakespeare stakes a claim for theatre

as a greater mode of representation than other art forms because of its visual nature. The sensory

modes of sight and sound combine multimodally to suggest how material objects on the stage

contain information that can be accessed through the language of the characters. When Horatio

finally does "approve [his] eyes" (1.1.29), the apparition becomes "something more than

fantasy" (1.1.54). And it is through the "sensible and true avouch" of Horatio's "own eyes"

(1.1.57-58) that the ghost enters the land of the living.

When Horatio does see the "figure like the king that's dead" (1.1.41), he is beckoned by

the others to "speak to it Horatio" (1.1.42). Here, the ghost has transformed into a fully embodied

figure from what Barnardo and Marcellus had described previously as an apparition. As the

apparition takes shape as the figure in the likeness of Old Hamlet, the characters are able to

access information that is relevant to the development of the plot. Horatio can speak about the

ghost, which adds narrative and conceptual structure to the scene, because it now has an identity

that is confirmed by both Barnardo and Marcellus. The characters, who now know the identity of

the apparition, assume that there must be some motivation behind its appearance. This prompts

Horatio to access a narrative space that has occurred prior to the narrative of *Hamlet* in which the former king was "dared to combat" (1.1.84) by the King of Norway, whereby Old Hamlet "did slay this Fortinbras" (1.1.86). Horatio assumes that the ghost of Old Hamlet has appeared to warn Hamlet that the young Fortinbras has come to reclaim his lands. Thus, the ghost is a dramatic anchor that represents a narrative space that has been evoked through Horatio's discourse. Furthermore, the material presence of the ghost suggests that dramatic anchors can take on different shapes and convey new meanings in the emergent structure of narratives. Conceptually, the ghost suggests that ideas require material form in order to be realized. Character's can access the ideas contained within material presences. This notion allows for narrative information to be conveyed to audiences as characters access narrative spaces through the material forms on stage.

The representation of the ghost as a dramatic anchor suggests how, visually, the immaterial form transforms depending on the observer. This transformation occurs both physically, as the apparition takes on a material form, and intellectually, as the interpretation of its material form changes depending on who is observing it. The ghost functions as a dramatic anchor that figuratively links its presence with a narrative space that had occurred prior to the main narrative. The dramatic anchor of the ghost prompts a response from Horatio that suggests that he is accessing a mental space. As he describes Old Hamlet, he projects a mental space into the narrative; thereby, providing the audience with information that is necessary to the plot. By utilizing dramatic anchors on the stage as narrative space builders, directors can provide audiences with relevant narrative information without directly presenting it on stage. In *Hamlet,* Shakespeare has Horatio speak about the duel between Old Hamlet and Fortinbras without the need for any monumental breaks in the flow of the narrative, such as a temporal shift.

The third transformation that the dramatic anchor of the ghost undergoes is from Hamlet's viewpoint. Hamlet, who, as Gertrude claims, has been "seek[ing] [his] noble father in the dust" (1.2.71), finds him fully embodied in the representation of the ghost. When Hamlet sees the ghost, the audience is already visually aware that it can evoke mental and narrative spaces, and that it is a representation of the former king. However, Hamlet's interaction with the ghost of his father reveals that it has a voice and intentionality. In this third form, the ghost is conceptually realized as a figure of theatre: it has material form, a voice, it performs, and it has intentionality. When Hamlet first speaks to the ghost it tells him to "lend thy serious hearing/ To what I shall unfold" (1.5.5-6). The act of hearing, first staged in the interaction between Barnardo, Marcellus, and Horatio, is now given credence because Hamlet can both see the ghost as a representation of his father and it tells him a story that is in line with his conception of his father. Whereas the narrative space evoked by Horatio's description of Old Hamlet was from his viewpoint, the narrative space evoked by the ghost when it speaks to Hamlet to is from the firsthand account of the ghost. This moment suggests that Hamlet's version of the ghost is a more credible theatrical representation because it has a voice, and conveys intentionality.

The spaces that each encounter with the ghost represents suggests that the ghost undergoes a kind of transformation as each interaction between the ghost and different characters adds a new frame of meaning. Each new frame of meaning can be understood as adding to the construction of the dramatic anchor of the ghost. Blending can help us to see how the ghost has transformed, what new meanings have emerged through this transformation, and how this meaning adds to our conceptualization of the ghost as a model of theatrical representation. Cook explains that "conceptual blending theory imagines a network of associated spaces primed for the composition of meaning" (Cook 43). In figure 3.1, I have mapped out (some) of the

conceptual spaces primed for our understanding of the ghost as an embodiment of theatrical representation. In the ghost blend, there are three input spaces that have been generated by each subsequent encounter with the ghost as it takes shape. In input space G1, Barnardo and Marcellus' original encounter with the ghost was as an apparition that they had seen, but could only speak about: it was visually on display, but it lacked form. Horatio's addition to the blend is in input space G2. In input space G2, the "figure like the King" is visually on display, has taken a form, but it lacks a voice. Input space G3 is from Hamlet's interaction with the ghost and this version of the ghost represents the ghost of Hamlet's father that is on display, has form, and has a voice. G1 is an idea without form. G2 is form with no meaning other than what the interpreter, Horatio, gives to it. G3 has agency and intentionality. In the final blended space, the ghost as a figure of theatrical representation is a form that is both visually and aurally on display, thereby prompting an intentional stance. Shakespeare's construction of the ghost through the three input spaces suggests how an idea takes form in the material aspects of the theatre. Here, ideas in the mind can be represented by material objects depending on the way characters, and audiences, interact with and interpret those objects.

Figure 3.1 The Ghost Blend in *Hamlet*
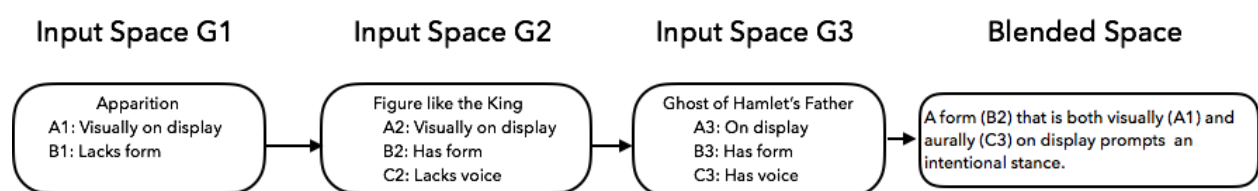
There is a discursive element to the construction of *Hamlet's* ghost. Each time the ghost appears it adds something to the conceptual arrangement of the scene while also adding narrative spaces that help construct the plot. Conceptually, the ghost represents a figure that transforms through each of the characters' interaction with it so that is goes from being a vision, to a fully

embodied representation of the figure of Old Hamlet's ghost. This transformation informs the audience about how material objects on stage can transform as the plot progresses. Each time the ghost appears, a new frame of meaning is added to the network of associative spaces that can be drawn upon in each subsequent scene. Furthermore, as the ghost reappears, it draws upon the network of spaces providing new meaning to the emergent blend. Narratively, the ghost helps structure the plot as each time it appears, it opens a narrative space that one of the characters reflects upon. The ghost allows Horatio to access a narrative space that had occurred prior to the narrative, which provides a backstory to the play. Furthermore, when Hamlet listens to the ghost's story it allows him, and the audience, to access a narrative space that reveals his father's murder by Claudius, which advances the revenge plot of the play. Thus, the dramatic anchor of the ghost functions as a representation that drives the play conceptually while providing narrative cohesion.

The characters and the audience focus on the same theatrical elements of the ghost: vision, display, fantasy, and illusion. This view suggests that we should pay attention to what exactly is on display, or what people are looking at, and what that says conceptually about the play. It is not just the actors' embodiment as they are performing that the audience relates to, but it is how Shakespeare's figurative use of language and the material aspects of the stage provide access to different elements of the play through the representation of the ghost. Through the dramatic anchor of the ghost, we can access mental spaces, narrative spaces, metaphorical frames, and cognitive domains. Providing access to alternative spaces that are figurative in nature is what is theatrical about the representation of *Hamlet's* ghost. It is not only that "the Ghost's effect on characters within the play models the effect of the play itself on playgoers," and that, "the Ghost's power over both on stage spectators and playgoers depends on the

paradoxical presence of the actor's body" as Outterson-Murphy suggests (269). Shakespeare is using the representation of the ghost to access conceptual domains through the figurative use of the material elements on the stage to explain how theatre can represent and inform our lives. Instead of mimicking the characters by embodying their performance, we mimic the characters because we understand the conceptual and narrative structure of theatrical performances. The characters explain how we are to understand the material presences on the stage. The audience accesses cognitive domains through the material aspects of the stage and the language used by characters. Through their understanding of staged properties, audiences may seem to embody the actor's performance; however, this notion fails to explain what all of the elements on stage represent to an audience. What the audiences truly embody is an understanding of the conceptual and narrative spaces on stage that theatrical representations give access to.

3.2 The Dramatic Anchor of *The Mousetrap* as Theatrical Representation

Uncovering the complex narrative space topology within *The Mousetrap* scene can reveal how dramatic anchors operate through dynamic systems of compression and frame evocation so that information from the representation blend of the ghost can be evoked within the representation blend of *The Mousetrap*. Representation blends complicate Cook's notion of the mirror blend as something that intentionally distorts what it simply reflects. Furthermore, representation blends can reveal how directors impose meaning onto dramatic anchors within their plays. For example, Hamlet imposes meaning onto *The Mousetrap* that he has learned from his father's ghost*,* and when that meaning aligns with Claudius' mental space, he reacts, and his reaction exposes his guilt over killing Old Hamlet. Cook claims that "critics seem to use the mirror to express their ideas without examining how they are holding or operating the source of reflection" (45). Representation blends and compression can show us how Hamlet intentionally

distorts the image in the mirror and angles it towards Claudius to show him something of his inner self, while at the same time, angling the mirror toward the audience to show them something of themselves. The multifaceted use of the mirror as an arbiter of meaning can be more fully realized through the machinations of viewpoint compression as various viewpoints blend within the elaborated narrative spaces. In theatre, viewpoint is complicated by its spatial and temporal dimensions: being acted out 'here' and 'now.' Thus, Shakespeare creates a complex and dynamic staging of *The Mousetrap* scene in which all the characters are watching the play within a play, as the audience is directed by Hamlet, through his dialogue with Horatio, to watch Claudius' reaction.

Typically, dramatic anchors are reserved for objects. However, we can also use the term to speak about the play within a play, even though it is composed of many moving parts, because the play within a play is a staged representation blend. In the same way that a photograph, a painting, a ghost, or a dagger may generate a narrative space, *The Mousetrap* is a representation of a fictional space, *The Murder of Gonzago*, blending with a past narrative space, the murder of Old Hamlet. Thus, the play within a play anchors the network of meaning composed throughout the scene. The way that the play within a play differs from other representation blends is that all of the events are depicted materially on stage so that the play within a play represents a mirror reflecting nature. However, the effect is the same as other representation blends, in that, characters access information from representation spaces and act accordingly. Viewpoint compression suggests how an interpretation of the play becomes dependant on who sees what, who is looking where, and what information is being accessed by whom.

The Mousetrap is a dramatic anchor that validates the ghost's story of Old Hamlet's murder by Claudius by blending elements from the represented past of the ghost with *The*

Murder of Gonzago (see Figure 3.2). We can refer to the play as a dramatic anchor in that it is a representation of a past narrative space that is outside of the main narrative space (MN space). The play represents both a story and past narrative events that were revealed by the ghost. Hamlet recognizes that "the spirit that I have seen/ May be a devil" (2.2.610-611) conjured "out of my weakness and my melancholy" (2.2.612) and he needs to find out, for himself, whether the ghost is good or evil[6]. From section 3.1, we know that the representation blend of the ghost links the representation of Old Hamlet to the represented past narrative space in which he was murdered. Hamlet accesses this space within the representation blend that he establishes in *The Mousetrap*, whereby he uses the representation of *The Murder of Gonzago* to stage the murder of the Player King by poison in the ear. The narrative space in which the characters are watching the performance of *The Mousetrap* is the MN-space. As we know, the ghost has told Hamlet of the murder of his father by Claudius by poison in the ear. The ghost blend, thus evokes NS2 (narrative space 2), the past narrative space in which Claudius did murder Old Hamlet by poison. *The Mousetrap* accesses NS2, when Hamlet adds the murder done by poison in the ear, and blends this information with *The Murder of Gonzago*. If NS2, revealed to Hamlet by the ghost, is in line with Claudius' mental space, as depicted by his reaction, then he affirms that he did in fact murder Old Hamlet. There are also cross-mappings between characters, whereby, Claudius, in *Hamlet,* is the murderer in the play within a play, and the victim in the play is Hamlet's father. The guilt that Claudius displays while watching the murder scene, affirms Hamlet's suspicions, and makes him the murderer, at least through Hamlet's eyes. Hamlet recognizes Claudius' guilt

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[6] According to Beecher in "Windows on Contagion," "the devil can stir up images as real as if they were freshly received impressions of the senses. Those with melancholy complexions were particularly prone to such abuses. The devil himself could invest the stare with its occult power" (43).

because he can match the play with what his father's ghost had told him. But none of the other characters can match Claudius reaction to the guilt that he suffers from. Only Hamlet, and the audience, becomes aware of the ghost's credibility, and thus, Hamlet's strength of mind.

Figure 3.2 Viewpoint Compression of *The Mousetrap* Scene in *Hamlet*
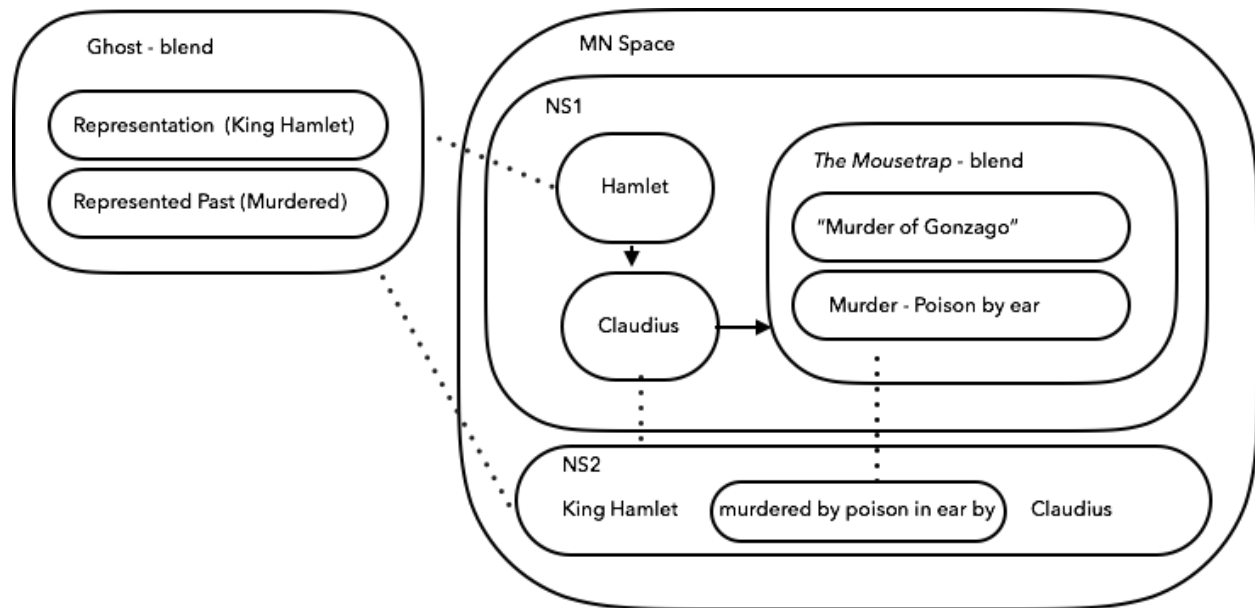
Understanding the narrative space topology may not reveal anything drastically new, or different, about *Hamlet* at face value, but its importance develops as we zoom out one level, in which all the constituent parts are reflected to the audience, making them aware of the discursive qualities of the scene. Whereas, in the case of the ghost, the past narrative space evoked by Horatio and Hamlet was a simple reflection suggesting how representations contain meaning that is both constructive conceptually and narratively, the play within a play has much more to reflect. It reflects how directors impose intentionality onto the material aspects of the stage in order that the material objects convey information that aligns with the audience's mental space topology. This mental and narrative alignment reveals something about the audience in the way that they perceive the artwork as a representation of themselves. Depending on how the audience

member's mental space aligns with the theatrical representation, it can reveal a good or bad conscience.

There is a discursive quality to Shakespeare's staging of the play within a play that goes beyond suggesting to the audience how theatrical representation is established in form and function. If the ghost suggested the transformative quality of the theatrical representation, the play within a play suggests its construction as a narrative tool with discursive elements that "show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure" (3.2.23-25). Here, Shakespeare the director blends with Hamlet the director. By aligning himself with Hamlet, Shakespeare demonstrates that he is intentionally distorting reality within his play in order to reflect something to his audience, to show them themselves from a different angle. Furthermore, through the dramatic anchor of *The Mousetrap*, Shakespeare sets a trap for the pious puritan antitheatricals in his audience, who must scorn their own image as it is reflected in the play[7]. Shakespeare blends historical fact (represented by the ghost blend) with fiction (represented by *The Murder of Gonzago*) to construct his plays, suggesting that puritans at the time achieved the same effect within their sermons to tease out a good or bad conscience. In the following scene, Claudius, who has observed his own wicked machinations within *The Mousetrap*, confesses his sins: "O wretched state! O bosom black as death!/ O limèd soul, that struggling to be free/ Art more engaged!" (3.3.67-69). Contained within the mirror of *The Mousetrap*, Claudius peers into the blackness of his own soul. Art reflects the image of his inward self.

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[7] In *The Antitheatrical Prejudice,* Jonas A. Barish The Antitheatrical Prejudice, Jonas claims that many playwrights condemned antitheatrical puritans for using theatrical devices in their own sermons, suggesting the hypocrisy of the antitheatricalists. When Claudius, a representative of piety, watches the performance of *The Mousetrap*, he recognizes himself in the play, suggesting his own hypocrisy.

The narrative spaces generated through each characters' interpretation of the ghost showed how the network of spaces around the ghost developed throughout the play. Viewpoint also revealed something nuanced about each character, as if reflecting something back at them. Each character's identity had been constructed through their own interpretation of the material presences on stage. For Barnardo and Marcellus, the dramatic anchor of the ghost represented something inconceivable because it lacked form. For Horatio, the ghost represented a figure like the king that is dead, revealing his understanding of the history between Old Hamlet and Fortinbras. And for Hamlet, the ghost represented a fully embodied representation of his father that exposed Claudius' crime. This final blended form of the ghost beckoned Hamlet to exact revenge on Claudius. Being a fully embodied figure – revealing its intentions both visually and aurally – Hamlet, if not believed the ghost, was willing to validate its story. This blending of viewpoints suggests that a multimodal theatrical representation can convey information more clearly than other forms of storytelling, but it left open the question as to whether the theatre, embodied as the ghost, is a faithful representation of an event. Thus, by combining elements of the ghost's story with *The Murder of Gonzago*, Hamlet shifts the angle of the mirror toward Claudius to determine the integrity of theatrical representations. When Claudius reacts, it validates Hamlet's claim that the stage is a mirror held up to nature. Although the mirror image is not an exact replica of the world in front of it, the figurative arrangements of the theatre evoke responses from audience members that challenge their subjective viewpoints.

The play within a play has more obvious figurative applications geared toward our understanding of theatrical representations than that of the ghost. Whereas the ghost shows us the transformative qualities of dramatic anchors – how information around an anchor compresses, decompresses, and blends - the play within a play shows us how dramatic anchors are established

by playwrights with the intention of stimulating a response, whether it be emotional, physical, intellectual, etc. The way that we respond to a work of art reveals to us some aspect of ourselves. Claudius' response showed him to be guilty. This moment suggests that our response does not have to reveal our role in the story, but it reveals the role of the story in our lives. Art evokes a response by making us blend ourselves with *any* aspect of what is being shown. This notion suggests how we can watch a play, and think about it, but not all feel the same. The audience's response to a play requires them to be engaged in every level of the narrative. Not only does it reveal the pious puritans' hypocrisy for their usage of theatrical devices within their own sermons but it also reveals our active engagement with the play, its performers, and the objects on stage.

3.3 The Dramatic Anchor of Yorick's Skull as Theatrical Representation

In *The Stage Life of Props*, Sofer claims that "props absorb dramatic meaning and become complex symbols" (24). Props are not just meaningless constructs on the stage used by characters to convey ideas that are independent of the objects they hold. They add to, and compliment, the complex network of meaning of any dramatic work. When props do complex things like blending, framing, and anchoring they become more than just props, they become dramatic anchors[8]. The usefulness of dramatic anchors for constructing narrative spaces through representation blends has been explored throughout this paper. Dramatic anchors also convey how the language used by certain characters is evidence that they are accessing frames evoked by the material objects on stage. This conception of dramatic anchors suggests that they are the

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[8] In *The Language of Stories*, Dancygier suggests the when material objects on stage that do more than just represent by adding to the emergent story, they require a distinction other than the term "prop." Anchor is a more appropriate term as the object adds to the narrative structure of a text.

link in the multimodal chain that connects actor, object, body and performance. I have discussed the ghost and the play within a play as dramatic anchors that transform, based on each characters' viewpoint, and they reflect multiple conceptual frames. Likewise, viewpoint compression can be used to explore the representation of Hamlet holding the skull of Yorick. Yorick's skull is a dramatic anchor that adds to the conceptual, narrative, and discursive spaces of the play, and a mental spaces approach can reveal how all of these spaces are compressed within this moment on stage. Furthermore, a mental spaces approach can reveal the ways that the structure of the representation blend reflects something to the audience that is similar to the way Hamlet engages with the skull and the actor engages with the object.

Many theorists claim that the moment Hamlet takes the skull of Yorick, as well as the entire play, is indicative of Hamlet contemplating his mortality. Glenda Conway argues that a Jacobean audience "would have been aware of the skull as a sign of the impermanence of earthly delight, a *momento mori*. However, audiences simultaneously would have seen it as a sign of the relative insignificance of the human soul's brief stay in the flesh, and hence, as a reminder of the everlasting glory that was promised by Christianity to those who lived their lives piously" (Conway 9). Hamlet's reflection, however, is of a different nature, as suggested by Jeffrey Alan Triggs when he says "the scene objectifies Hamlet's resignation to the human condition through the *vanitas* motif of a man holding a skull" (73). A moment that Sofer claims represents Hamlet "refusing to see himself in the death's-head" (97). What Hamlet's protean mind recognizes, on the other hand, is the fragmentation of identity that the skull evokes.

Prior to the *vanitas* motif of holding the skull, Hamlet picks up two other skulls claiming of the first that, "that skull had a tongue in it and could sing once" (5.1.76-77). Hearkening back to the ghost's voice as a marker of intentionality, here, the tongue that could sing allows Hamlet

to access the frames of speaking and performance. He associates the skull to "the pate of a politician" (5.1.79), "a courtier" (5.1.83), and "a lawyer" (5.1.100) before finally landing on Yorick's skull. Not only does Yorick rely on lies like the politician, supplicating appraisals like the courtier, or verbal "tricks" (5.1.101) like the lawyer, but the jester's lies, appraisals, and tricks are used to reveal inconvenient truths about characters[10]. Even in death, Yorick reveals an inconvenient truth to Hamlet: that is, in the reflection of the skull, Hamlet views himself as a character playing a role, or many roles, a "fellow of infinite jest" (5.1.186-187).

The skull may well serve as an emblem of *momento mori* or *vanitas,* but here Hamlet complicates it by not allowing it any single interpretation. Sofer suggests that "since it is a universal human attribute, the skull insists on identification as well as fragmentation" (90). Like the ghost and the play within a play, the skull does not just insist on being identified, the enactive cognitive processes of Hamlet's mind seek to identify it. The fragmentation that complicates the stage as mirror is the same as the fragmentation that complicates the skull as it reflects something to all who look upon it, and its meaning is dependent upon the observer and the angle at which they choose to observe.

Using a mental spaces approach to represent the moment Hamlet takes the skull of Yorick can tell us how the fragmentation of meaning that the skull represents enacts a reflexive element whereby Hamlet's understanding of Yorick as a character of infinite jest moves from storyworld to stage, from stage to audience, and from audience to the individual observer, revealing that we are all actors on the stage of life. Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner in *The Way We Think* discuss the notion of theatrical performance as a blend of art/life:

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[10] In *The Fools of Shakespeare*, Frederick Warde outlines what it takes to be a court jester in the Early Modern era, and he discusses how court jesters were seen as men of "wisdom" (3) who often revealed unpleasant truths.

The character portrayed may of course be entirely fictional, but there is still a space, a fictional one, in which the person is alive. We do not go to the performance of *Hamlet* in order to measure the similarity between the actor and the historical prince of Denmark. The power comes from the integration in the blend. The spectator is able to live in the blend, looking directly on its reality…. The importance and power of living in the blend would be hard to overestimate (266-267).

Through Hamlet, Shakespeare is suggesting how art does not just enter life, but art, through an enactive approach, is how we make sense of life. Zooming out one level, from the storyworld of the stage, we must recognize how an audience becomes a living part of the blend through an awareness that characters are played by actors, objects are props, and so on. Observing the stage as a blend between character/actor allows us to place ourselves in the role of the character/actor within our own lives. Furthermore, representation blends can be a useful tool for showing us how the character/actor blend is being accessed by Hamlet for the audience to recognize their role as performers in their own lives.

Previously, I have discussed the usefulness of representation blends in prompting narrative spaces for their integration into the main narrative space (ie. in section 3.1, I discussed the ghost blend as the ghost represents a past narrative space that can be accessed by Hamlet in the main narrative space). Representation blends serve another function in dramatic representations because the audience is always aware of the actor playing the role of a character. As Cook suggests, from the playgoer's perspective, "Hamlet walks on stage and the space that is 'Hamlet' has already been blended with the input spaces of the actor playing the role, the character, and the character's role in the play that bears his name" (96). Furthermore, Bruce McConachie takes note of the representation blend of the stage and the storyworld: "while we

perceive a single scene, we are simultaneously aware of the actor moving and talking on a stage in front of an audience, and of the corresponding character moving and talking within the represented storyworld" (56-57). Here, the stage becomes a representation blend of art (characters living a story) and reality (actors moving around on stage).

When Hamlet holds the skull of Yorick, he accesses the frame of the actor/character blend. In this act, the playgoer, the audience, the character/actor, and the object are caught up in a moment of mise en abyme[11], wherein their position within the fragmentation of identities is superimposed upon one another. Gerard Genette likens mise en abyme to 'metalepsis' claiming that "the most troubling thing about metalepsis indeed lies in this unacceptable and insistent hypothesis, that the extradiegetic is perhaps always diegetic, and that the narrator and his narratees—you and I—perhaps belong to some narrative" (236). Mise en abyme and metalepsis suggest the mirroring of signifiers within the text and the possibility that the level of signification enters reality so that the spectator becomes part of the text, or play. A mental spaces model can explain how concepts such as mise en abyme and metalepsis function on the stage, while revealing Shakespeare's attempt at mise en abyme to include the spectator within his work of art.

The viewpoint compression model in Figure 3.3 maps out how Shakespeare attempts to tackle this intense moment of reflection when Hamlet peers into the skull of Yorick, while making his audience aware of their position in the blend. The metareflective space is the outermost space that comprises the subjective viewpoint of the individual spectator in the audience. The spectator has all prior knowledge of life on stage and offstage, an awareness of themselves as a member of an audience, and the stage as a representation blend conveying a

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[11] The role of mise en abyme in literature and art is explored extensively in Cohn (2012) and Gennette (1980). Mise en abyme refers to moments in literature when there is a reduplication of images: concepts referring to a textual whole.

storyworld on the stage, with actors playing their roles as characters. The boundary that divides the spectator from the audience is the subjective mind, in that we cannot know the thoughts of others, and so there is a clear distinction between minds. The audience space comprises the audience viewpoint of being in a theatre and watching a play. Zooming in one level, we have the audience space, in w all individual members of the audience comprise the whole. The audience can view the theatrical representation as stage/storyworld blend, but they cannot know the minds of other audience members, and so they have no clue how the other members of the audience are engaging with the play. The final space is the stage space/storyworld in which Hamlet holds the skull of Yorick. From the metareflective space, all of the spaces are compressed to form the experience of being a member of an audience in a theatre watching a play. This narrative construction is all obvious from a spectator's viewpoint, but interesting things begin to happen when we understand how the object of Yorick's skull decompresses through the spaces to project meaning in the mind of the spectator.

At the core of the mise en abyme is Yorick, representing the actor/character blend evoked in Hamlet's mind. Hamlet takes the skull of Yorick and holds it up to his face as if looking into a mirror. The mirror is not on stage, but the way the skull reflects something to Hamlet, and its positioning on stage, is indicative of someone looking into a mirror. Hamlet is viewing a manifestation of his visual doppelganger in the skull of Yorick. The skull is both a representation of *momento mori* and of infinite jest. In the reflection, Hamlet the character sees "Hamlet" the actor. Through this creative blending process, whereby Shakespeare compresses the notion of life/death and actor/performer within the skull, Hamlet accepts his death, knowing that he must continue performing his role until the play's end.

Figure 3.3 Viewpoint Compression of Yorick's Skull in *Hamlet*
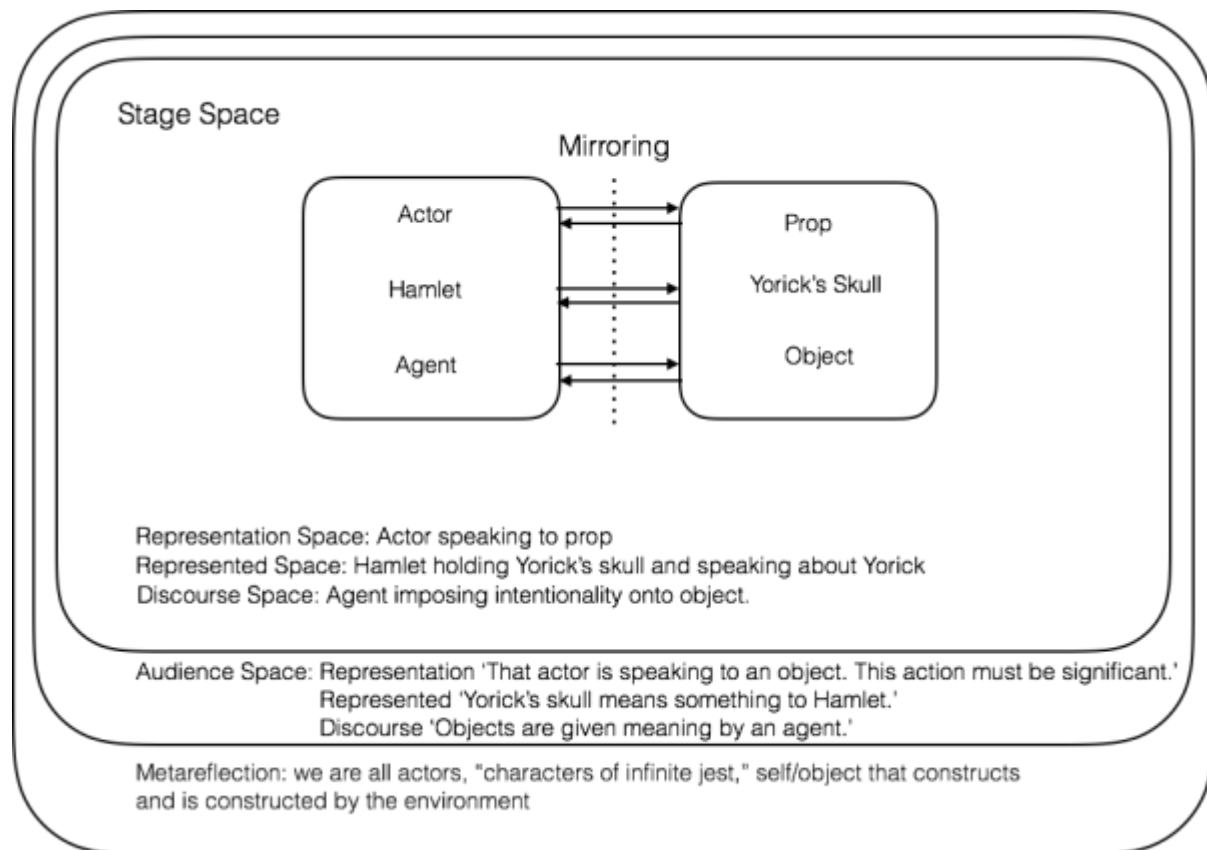
The next space is the audience space. There is a clear division between the audience

space and the stage space, whereby the audience is arranged in seats that are facing toward the

stage space. On stage, actors move around interacting with other characters and elements within

the storyworld. The actors, usually, never make eye contact with the audience, but the audience

is always looking directly toward the stage. There is an invisible barrier[12], the fourth wall of the

stage, that separates one from the other. This invisible barrier is like a mirror, with one world

contained, and one world reflected. The spectators, here, are always implicated in their own

story, the characters never aware of the story outside of the storyworld. Dancygier claims that the

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[12] In *The Language of Stories*, Dancygier talks about the division between the audience space and stage space as an *invisible barrier*.

categories of the stage space and audience space "are somewhat analogous to the distinction between the story space of a novel and the situation of reading" (*Language of Stories* 142). However, in the theatre, as in life, there is no narrator, and "metalepsis serves to explain why the reader feels such strong vertigo when the boundary between the world where the narrator narrates and the world that the narrator narrates disappears" (Cohn 107). The audience is always implicated in the diegetic space of a play, in that, the play always takes place in reality. In the way Hamlet reflects upon the skull, confronting both the image of mortality and of infinite jest, the audience embodies the space of Hamlet watching a play about death and performance.

The final space in the viewpoint compression is that of the spectator, the metareflective space. In the metareflecive space, the image of the skull, oscillating between subject/object, moves through the body of Hamlet to the body of the spectator. The spectator, looking into the mirror on stage, views themselves locked in the subject/object dichotomy. An actor performing multiple roles on the stage of life. Both observer of the object and the object observed. The multifaceted nature of identity and fragmentation decompresses[13] to the level of the observer, never fully reaching its final resting place. In the same moment, the spectator becomes the skull at the center stage. A hall of mirrors, each reflecting the other.

In this crowded hall of mirrors, the skull reflects the ghost. Hamlet, inspired by his dead father, and reflecting on the skull, has been partly in the realm of the dead already. He is aware of the impermanence of all things, making the spectator acutely aware of her own impermanence. Foreshadowing the rest of the play, Hamlet will be in pain, but he will jest. He

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[13] Dancygier elaborates on the notion of decompression in *The Language of Stories*. Similarly, she uses an example of individuals looking into a mirror whereby their identity is decompressed into two personas who will play different roles in the narrative. Interestingly, in the moment Hamlet looks into the skull of Yorick, he sees himself split into two identities: one actor, one character; one focused on performance, one focused on death.

recognizes that he must continue performing his role until the play's end. He outperforms Laertes, wrestling on the grave of Ophelia, as if making a mockery of death through his performance. From there, he goes on to make a spectacle of his last moments, with his dying words echoing the sentiment of his father's "remember me," claiming, rather, for Horatio to "absent thee from felicity awhile,/ And in this harsh world draw the breath in pain,/ To tell my story" (5.2.348-349). It is not the memory of his death that will live on through Horatio's story, but like the narrative spaces generated by the ghost and the skull, the performance of his life.

Like the ghost, the skull undergoes a transformation wherein it becomes a multitude of identities. An emblem of infinite jest. This could not have been any skull, it had to be Yorick's skull. As an actor who had played many roles throughout his life, Yorick is the figure of infinite jest. But through the representation blend of actor/character, the audience sees in the *vanitas* motif of Hamlet holding the skull, the reflection of themselves as actors playing different roles on stage. In the metareflective space, what is reflected to the individual observer is the idea that we are all actors – characters of infinite jest. Sofer claims that "skulls fascinate because of their sheer uncanniness, their disturbing ability to oscillate between subject and object" (90). We are the subject/object that is caught up in the superflux of being constructed by and constructing our environment. According to Di Paolo et al., enactivism is an approach whereby "organisms do not passively receive information from their environments, which they then translate into internal representations. Natural cognitive systems... participate in the generation of meaning... engaging in transformational and not merely informational interactions: they enact a world" (39). The play does not just contain information, but it transforms the audience through their enactive engagement living inside of the blend. Art is not an illusion of reality; art is reality and reality is art.

3.4 Conclusion

Hamlet is composed of many constitutive parts whose complex network of associative spaces goes far beyond the scope of this paper. Dramatic anchors are material representations that ground abstract concepts and narrative spaces for online meaning construction. Conceptual and narrative information compressed within a dramatic anchor can be evoked in later scenes to generate new meanings in the emergent narrative. This idea reveals how spectators can understand complex conceptual and narrative developments on the fly. This information is not in the object alone; it is generated through the active engagement of spectators who are utilizing specific cognitive domains that have been 'triggered' by the language, performance, and objects on stage. Each of the dramatic anchors discussed throughout this paper shows us one aspect of theatrical representation and how it enters our lives. The ghost represented a transformational space whereby Hamlet underwent his own transformation: from a self-reflexive observer searching for his father in the dust, to a man of action engaged in the revenge plot of his own tragedy. Hamlet embodies the spirit of theatrical performance and the blend of art and life. The play within a play shows us how art objects can evoke responses from spectators through the act of watching a play, and that each individual's response is dependent upon whatever background information they bring into the theatre. Finally, Yorick's skull suggests how meaning that is not inherent within material objects can be generated by spectators, while also implicating spectators as meaning-makers of the play. Dramatic anchors suggest that the material objects in theatrical performance contain, transform, and reflect information through our active engagement as playgoers.

Cognitive theories pertaining to how we make meaning out of language, performance, and the material objects on stage can provide avenues for further research in the study of any

dramatic work. A cognitive approach provides the framework for understanding art that involves many layers of complexity, is dynamic, and is multimodal. Furthermore, it provides an understanding of the relationship between conceptual and narrative spaces that develop throughout a narrative. Material objects represent one of the missing pieces of the 'meaning-emergence' puzzle. Figuring out what pieces are still missing, and how those pieces fit into the puzzle is the next step in discovering new meanings in theatrical performance. Cognitive theory suggests one way of looking at the pieces to make them all fit.

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