Chapter 2
The Deep Time of the Dead

[We are] mortal creatures who miss our dead friends, and thus can appreciate
levitating tigers and portraits by Raphael for what they are—songs of mortality
sung by the prisoners of time"[1]

Vous nous voyez ci-attachés cinq, six
Quant de la chair, que trop avons nourrie,
Elle est pieça devoree et pourrie,
Et nous les os, devenons cendre et pouldre.

You see us cleaving together, five, six:
As for the flesh, that we nourished too much,
It is long since consumed and corrupted,
And we, the bones, have become ashes and powder.

Villon, Ballade des pendus

Most of this book is about a vast enterprise on a relatively small stage: the work
of the dead in Western Europe—especially in England-- since the Enlightenment. It is the
history of specific practices with specific causes and specific consequences, measured on
a scale of years, decades, or, at the most, centuries and limited to one small part of the
world. But the enterprise itself—the work— has a far longer and distinguished pedigree
from which it derives its power and authority. Before turning to what will seem like local
histories I want to answer as far as possible the question of why the dead in my studies
matter in the first place. Why, as Diogenes wished for the fate of his body, they were not
simply tossed over the wall? How is that "nous les os"-- "we the bones"—can claim to
speak both for humanity and for their own little community?
　　　It might seem at first as if there were no historical answer. In three important
ways, the dead are a people without a history, rather like our earliest ancestors or, as was
once thought, pre-literate tribes who lived implausibly in an eternal present or in fixed
cycles of time. Perhaps only the incest taboo can rival the recognition of death and of the
dead-- that special liminal category of the human-- as a civilizational ground zero: neither
just biological or just cultural but the mark of their boundary. Sharing in this
foundational status, seemingly frozen at the beginning of cultural time, means that for all
the immense variety in the treatment of the dead that historical, sociological,
anthropological and archaeological research has revealed over thousands of years—again
only kinship as a field of inquiry is anywhere near as rich— death and the dead have

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[1] David Hickey, Air Guitar, (Los Angeles: Art Issues Press, 1997) 189.

always mattered in important, defining, and broadly similar ways.

Second, there is a way in which the dead predictably drop out of history even if they were temporarily in it. Three generations is about as long as a grave is remembered today; perpetual prayers for the dead in medieval Europe did not last much longer; even those championship athletes of death, the Egyptians, with their sophisticated embalming techniques were on to the fact that the dead might be soon forgotten or destroyed. It may have taken more time for Chinese ancestors to move into a deep undifferentiated space of the dead but after forty generations they too entered boundless oblivion. At some point— subject to all manner of contingencies and momentary reprieves—the dead become just stuff like the mummies that were burnt as fuel in the nineteenth century and whose wrappings had been used as paint pigment earlier; or like the bones from early modern churchyards that were carted away as rubbish; or, like devotional objects and paintings in a museum, admired, not for what they were and had once meant, but for what they signified in their new situation on display among other objects.

Finally, and most importantly from the perspective of this book, the dead of each era carry their deep history with them. Millennia collapse into moments. It may not be quite so self-consciously mixed up and mobilized as it was for the rich Cambridgeshire antiquarian John Underwood who died in 1733 and insisted in his will that he be carried to his grave not to the sound of hymns and the tolling of the passing bell, but to the voices of six friends singing the 20th ode from the second book of the first century Augustan poet Horace.

> No dirges for my fancied death;
> No weak lament, no mournful stave;
> All clamorous grief were waste of breath,
> And vain the tribute of a grave.

But there was more to this gesture than pagan poetry. He ordered that in his green coffin there be placed a Greek New Testament in his right hand, a little edition of Horace in his left, and the great eighteenth century classical philologist Richard Bentley's 1732 edition of Milton's Paradise Lost under his feet. It is difficult to extract a historical specific attitude toward death from all this. It is, however, easy to see a highly wrought commitment to a deep tradition of classical scholarship that the dead man hoped to reaffirm as he was put into the ground.[2] Underwood's burial, still noticed in the late nineteenth century, suggests how the body in the coffin can appropriate the weight of millennia. If not exactly timeless—without history— much of the work of the dead subsists in what the *Annales* school of historians called the *longue durée*— the very slow time of fixed structures and enduring cultural landscapes. It has its *evenements*—its moments—which will occupy much of the rest of this book-- but this chapter is about the underlying cultural strata that give it is power and efficacy.

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[2] I have this from Paul Fussell who cites the case in his The Rhetorical World of Augustan Humanism (1965) 11, based on a notice in the 1733 Gentleman's Magazine. [get citation] It was famous for centuries and accounts were often reported, in full, for the next hundred and fifty years as evidence for unusual last wishes.

I begin this chapter, as I did the last, with Diogenes of Sinope, 412- 323 b.c.e., the Cynic, the dog philosopher who was as disrespectful of the conventions of living as he was of the dead. This time, however, I will have a longer look at the tradition of skepticism about the importance of the corpse that he began. No one in the western tradition makes the case against the pretensions of bodies more uncompromisingly and with such enduring influence, a challenge of the limit case, a well reported and seemingly common sense rejection of all that decency and custom prescribed. Plato, 427- 347 b.c.e, his near contemporary, referred to him as "Socrates gone mad,"— the philosophical pursuit of virtue gone of the rails, views on this and other matters that have a certain lunatic quality. Pierre Bayle, the great Enlightenment historian of philosophy and religious skeptic, thought that Diogenes was "one of those extraordinary men who are upon extremes in everything, without excepting reason, and who verify the maxim that there is no great wit without a mixture of folly." He might have added "without excepting death."[3]

Diogenes was perhaps the first to tell the wholly plausible and, at the same time, outrageously impossible truth that the dead human body really is nothing, irrelevant to itself and to the world of the living. He articulated a clear policy: the sooner and unceremoniously disposed of, the better. (No one attributes to him the seeming more radical, and environmentally sound view that the dead might be thrown in specific places as fertilizer.) Perhaps he was not the first to hold such views. Heraclitus, the pre-Socratic philosopher, (d 475 b.c.e.) and famous for his views on change—"You can not step into the same river twice"—may have gotten there first: "corpses," he said, "are more worth throwing out than dung." But while the phrase had as long afterlife it was never, unlike Diogenes' formulation, taken as a precept for what to do with the dead.[4] Much of the

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[3] Plato's remark views are according Diogenes Laertius, the third century biographer, in his The Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers, English translation by R.D. Hicks (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1958-59, Loeb Classical Library), bk 6, chap 54.; my understanding of the relationship of the filial relationship between Socratic and Cynic moral philosophy and comes from Susan Prince's essay "Socrates, Antishenes and the Cynics" 88-89 and 75-94 more generally, in Sara Abhel-Rappe and Rachana Kamtekar, A Companion to Socrates (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006) Prince makes the point that Diogenes' first entry into philosophy was a specifically a gesture of cultural repudiation. "Currency" in Greek, she tell us, had the same root as "custom" and "defacing" has a common root with the word for "stamping." This Diogenes' "defacing the currency" is an undoing of customary norms. ;for Pierre Bayle see the translation, faithful to the 1702 enlarged original, that would have been familiar to eighteenth century Englishman: The dictionary historical and critical… the second edition… vol. 2 (London 1734-38) entry= Diogenes, the Cynic, 665. Bayle offers a wonderfully learned and critical account of the many sayings attributed, rightly or wrongly, to this sage.

[4] Diels- Kranz, Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker B22 96 (p. 172) The philosopher had a biographical association with dung. When he developed dropsy he covered himself with dung in the hopes that its heat would dry him out. Then he died either because the treatmenmt failed or because he couldn't get the dung off and dogs tore him apart.

history of culture generally, and the specific work of the dead about which I write, address the Cynic's challenge.

In one story he was asked "if then you die, *who* will bury you?" "Whoever wants my house" he replied, which, since he famously lived in a large wine cask, was the Greek equivalent to "who cares." *Where* and *how* he thought was equally inconsequential.

> When he was dying, he ordered his friends to throw his corpse away without burying it, so that every beast might tear it, or else to throw it into a ditch, and sprinkle a little dust over it.[5]

Diogenes inspired stories as few other philosophers of antiquity did. (In fact, everything we know about him is from the mouths of others.) For example, a disciple asks him how to die. "Live according to virtue and nature, and that is in our power." Remember, that just as he had come from nature at birth so he will return to nature when dead; nature begets and destroys. And finally, he talks about his body: 'have no worry about my being at any time unconscious of feeling," because he is sure that "I shall be furnished with a staff after breathing my last, that I might drive away the animals that would defile me." [6]

Finally in Cicero's version which I quoted at the beginning of Chapter 1 this rather cryptic phrase comes in the context of a real argument for the nothingness of the dead body with which I began the last chapter and will rehearse here: "he ordered himself to be thrown anywhere without being buried" and when reminded that he would be eaten by birds and beasts, responded "how am I then injured by being torn by those animals, if I have no sensation?"[7] In the Greek world, where being left out for animals to devour was an unbearable thought, this was an outrageous if not actually sacrilegious claim.

It is, however, a compelling sophism that depends for its force not on a particular metaphysical claim: Diogenes was not a materialist and, like others known as Cynics, believed in an immaterial soul that survived the body. It is a radical extension of his ethical views about this world, that is, about what it is to live virtuously, to the world of the dead. The virtuous man, Diogenes taught, ought to comport himself as closely as possible to nature; he lived on the street, wore only rags and was called the dog philosopher because, like a dog, he would do in public what others would do only in private: defecate, fornicate, and masturbate as the natural urges made themselves felt. Codes of decency and pressure to act civilly worked against this kind of show-of austerity and commitment to principle in real life. But, the dead had no excuse. They *were* a part of nature, beyond norms and comforts, and to treat them otherwise was to miss an essential truth. In other words, the community of the dead that are an important mirror and companion to the community of the living can actually live more virtuously than they could before.

Diogense Laertius <u>Lives</u> 9.1-17

[5]Diogenes Laerius, <u>Lives…</u> vi

[6]"The Epistles of Diogenes," trans Benjamin Fiore, S.J, in Abraham J. Malherbe, <u>The Cynic Epistles</u> (Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press for the Society of Biblical Literature, c1977) 117.

[7] Cicero, <u>Tusculan Disputations</u>, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, Loeb Classical Library) I, 43

For millennia, the voices of skeptics speaking in the name of Diogenes, have mocked the social pretensions of doing things for the dead, especially the folly of funerary practices. i.e. the idea that what might be appropriate in life has any bearing on the dead and more generally that it is possible to spend money wisely on something that we know does not matter. (Jessica Mitford's 1963 attack on funerary excess—and Dickens' a century earlier-- have a continuous history stretching back for millennia.) Lucian (c125-180c.e.) in his hilarious <u>Dialogues of the Dead</u> – these figured, readers will recall, in Hume's deathbed scene and were the model for many seventeenth and eighteenth century imitators, are model.

The dead do the talking. Diogenes and King Mausolus of Carion, d. 353 b.c.e., the eponymous progenitor of the "mausoleum" meet as corpses in the nether world and the philosopher starts his conversation by asking the king whether he thinks he is better than the rest of the dead. (Mausolus would have been a stock figure already in Lucian's day, famous for his wife's excess grief—she is said to have made herself "a living and breathing tomb" for her husband by drinking his ashes mixed in a potion— and for his "mausoleum," one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. All this excessive mourning was not his fault but he bears the burden. Almost two thousand years later the story is still told, this time in the context of an attack on the "barbarous custom of burial" itself. Artemesia and the late seventeenth century chemist Johannes Kunckel are singled out because they understood that ashes last longer than the best embalmed bodies. Kunckel who discovered a new way to produce ruby glass supposedly had himself turned into a tankard in 1702 from which his companions drank.)) The king responds by recounting first his deeds and then bragging of the artistic quality of his tomb, made of the fairest marble with "perfect semblances of man and horse" as bas relief ornaments. If all this does not prove his superiority, what does, he asks? "But, my handsome Mausolus," Diogenes points out mockingly, "the power and the beauty are no longer there." Your skull is no better than mine; we are both bald and fleshless, our teeth show, our eyes gone, our noses snubbed. In fact, he continues, having a big tomb does not Mausolus better than any of the other corpses except perhaps, as he says to the crestfallen king, you can "claim to carry more weight than the rest of us with all that marble on top of you." "So we are equal?" Mausolos asks, trying to make the best of it. No, not even that. Diogenes replies. He himself does not know whether he has a tomb or not, "the question never having occurred to him" but if not, then all the better because being remembered "as one who lived the life of a man… is a far better monument than stone." (In fact, Diogenes has—or had—a tomb. The Roman travel writer Pausanius reports that "as one goes up to Corinth there are tombs, and by the gate is buried Diogenes of Sinope, whom the Greeks surname the Dog.")[8]

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[8]   Lucian of Samosata, <u>Dialogues of the Dead…</u>, M.D. McLeod, trans, Loeb Classical Library 29 (24)xxx;l the story about Mausolos' wife Artemesia and the potion—she can be identified in Renaissance and Baroque pictures by her goblet—is from the first century c.e. Roman collector of anecdotes Valerius Maximus, <u>Memorable Deeds and Sayings</u>, ed. Henry J. Walker, (Hackett, 2004) 146 in a section on "love in foreign lands." For Kunkel see Louis Windmüller, ""Disposal of the Dead in Cities," <u>Muncipal Affairs</u> vi, 1902, 475. The very presence of an article on this subject in a

This conversation about the futility of taking care of individual bodies when the dead are all basically the same and irrelevant offered an enormously generative trope. Almost two thousand years later and in a very different context a new *bon mot* on the subject was attributed to Diogenes based on two old stories: the one, ever popular, from Diogenes Laertius, about Alexander the Great meeting the philosopher and asking him how he could be of service to so wise a man and the other probably from a remark of Marcus Aurelius' that "Alexander of Macedon and his groom are equals now in death;" both now dust. The first of these has Diogenes answer that he could get out of his light and Alexander respond that if he could choose to be anyone else he'd choose to be Diogenes. The second seems to be at the root of a long tradition that the dead Alexander is the limit case for the nothingness of bones. Hamlet asks Horatio as they contemplate the skull of Yorick:

> Ham: Doest thou think Alexander looked o" this fashion I' the earth?

> Hor: E'en so.

> Ham: And smelt so? Pah!

> Hor: E'en so my lord.

> Ham: To what base uses may we return, Horatio! Why may not imagination trace the noble dust of Alexander, till "a find it stopping a bung hole?

> Hor: Twere to consider too curiously to consider so.

> Ham: No faith, not a jot. But to follow him thither with modesty enough, and likelihood to lead it: as thus: Alexander died, Alexander was buried, Alexander returnest into dust; the dust is earth; of earth we make loam; and why of that loam, whereto he was converted, might they not stop a beer barrel.

> The great king is the stuff with which one might plug a "bunghole."

In the new late seventeenth century amalgam of these two Diogenes meets Alexander the Great stories they meet not in the sun but in a Charnel House. The king asks him what he is doing there. "I am seeking for your father's bones and those of my slave," but without success "because there is no difference between them" comes the reply. It has no ancient source—the Greeks, unlike the Christians, had no charnel houses; Diogenes is not reported to have a slave although he was said to have been one for a time-- and thiss version seems to have been invented as a way for radical Protestants to criticize Catholics for their veneration of relics and more moderate Protestant for their superstitious, i.e. neo—Catholic—burial of the dead inside a church. By the nineteenth century it had become a commonplace in dictionaries of quotations and source books for

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journal of this sort speaks volumes about what the dead came to signify.

preachers. In other words, the general question of how and whether to honor the dead body was re-invented over and over again under very different circumstances in the name of the skeptic Diogenes.[9]

And in the process of re-invention the answer is almost always "yes, but…;" the corpse is nothing but it is something. For thousands of years Diogenes' sophism or its equivalent has served to generate its conclusion and at the same to back off from it for a great variety of reasons. Custom and decency, i.e. culture, became the excuse of radical Calvinists, for example, as I suggested in Chapter 1 but the dance went in before and continued after. St. Augustine, to go back to the beginnings of Christianity, seems not far from taking it on board. "Whether the location of [a] body is of any advantage to the soul of the dead requires more careful study," he says in the context of having been asked whether it mattered that someone was buried near to the body of a saint:

> We should especially inquire, not according to common belief, but according to the sacred origins of our religion, if it has any effect on the souls of men for enduring or for increasing their misery after this life, whether their bodies have not been buried….

"Earth has not covered many of the bodies of the Christians, but nothing has kept any one of them from heaven and earth," he adds pointing out that if pagan philosophers—Diogenes-- could be indifferent to what happened to the dead, Christians should not be ashamed in front of their non-Christian neighbors to have their martyred dead unburied. (The Church fathers had a love-hate relationship to Diogenes and to the cynics generally who were, of course, in the minority among the pagans. Proper burial was of utmost importance. Jerome praised him as a "victor over human nature; Augustine found his lack of decency less attractive.)

It does not matter whether a body is buried at all Augustine tells a community whose exemplary members—the martyrs- were torn apart by wild beasts or burnt to ash. What is done with bodies is thus a matter of indifference -- "more a comfort for the living than support for the dead" he concludes, acknowledging the mandate of civility and decency in ways that Diogenes explicitly rejected. It is precisely because what one does with the dead connects them to the living in countless ways—even if it has no bearing on the future of the immortal soul-- that Diogenes sophism loses its force even as one accepts its truth.[10] (This is, of course, not where the matter will come to rest but more of

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[9]   The origin of this story is obscure. The Antiquary Vol 1, 1871, p. 142 in a note by one of its most regular correspondents signing himself as W. Winters attributes it to someone writing to a "Dutch Spectator" in 1736 against "Romish superstition" and the communion of the living with the dead. It re-appears, among many other places, in the oft reprinted Cyclopedia of Moral and Religious Anecdotes, ed. George Barrell, (London, 1849) and the equally popular Mirror of Literature, Amusement, and Instruction (London 1828) edited by, among others, the well known antiquary Johm Timbs and Reuben Percy who claimed to be a Benedictine monk and was the editor of many collections of anecdotes. George Seaton Bowes' Illustrative Gatherings for Preachers and Teachers (London: Wertheim, Macintosh and Hunt; London, 1860), offers it as a comment of the question of honor, 233.

[10]   Augustine, *De Cura Mortuum Gerenda* II.3-4.6,XVIII.22 (cf. *de Civitate Dei* 1.12-

that in a moment.)

A thousand years later, Sir Thomas Browne, the pious seventeenth century physician who wrote on religious matters, again addresses the Cynic, this time directly. The dead body, he says, matters not a wit; having dissected many of them he knows from experience that they are nothing but rot and decay and claims that he does not care what happens to his own body. Although he does not give the same argument as would radical anti-Papist Calvinist for whom almost any sign of respect for the dead skirts idolatry his first instincts are the same and he supports them with a footnote to Diogenes. Like the Cynic, he is willing to bid "adieu of the World, not caring for a monument, History or Epitaph, not so much as a Memory of my Name, to be found anywhere but in the universal register of God." What is the point anyway: "gravestones tell truth scarce forty years" as he says elsewhere.[11]

More than a century and a half later we find the Diogenes sophism again, this time in the 1810 Essays on Epitaphs by the poet William Wordsworth this time with a different denoument. The human dead, he insists, could not be merely, as the ancient sage said, "the shell of the flown bird." It is the flesh that was once united with soul and the fact of this intimate association is why the corpse matters, why we give the dead proper graves: "a tribute to man as a human being."[12] Were we to think that the body is just a shell, of no more value to the human than their shells are to the fowls of the forest or the chickens in the roost, then we would not, Wordsworth claims, write epitaphs near bodies to keep the departed in memory. But we do, and so this counter-factual thought experiment shows that Diogenes was wrong.

It does not of course. The flight of the bird representing the soul leaving the body is, to offer a counter-example, a common motif of New England Puritan gravestones. When the shell of a hatching egg breaks, "the bird does then fly away," says Cotton Mather. Likewise "our death is the breaking of the shell [i.e. the body] and we have an Immortal Soul in us, which is *We*, and in this we *Fly away"[13]* More radical puritans took this to be an argument for as little attention to the dead body as possible. But there have many, many forms of "yes, but…;" there are many reasons for why we would want to make something of the dead and they do not depend on any particular view of the soul, or its claim on the body, or, as we will see, even on there being a soul.

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13)[?] [Addressed to Paulinus of Nola, who asked about the propriety of other burials in the Basilica near the body of Saint Felix the Confessor (ch. 1).]; S. Matton, "Cynicism and Christianity from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance in R. Bracht Branham and Marie-Odile Goulet-Cazé, eds. The Cynics: The Cynic Movement in Antiquity and Its Legacy (Berkeley: UC Press, 1996)241-42. 262-63 and 240-262 *passim*.

[11] Sir Thomas Browne, Religio medici (London 1737, new edition corrected and amended) 111-112; Hydrotaphia, Chapter 5,
[12] The prose works of William Wordsworth, Edited by W.J.B. Owen and Jane Worthington Smyser (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974) get pages. I make the attribution on their authority.
[13]Quoted in Allen Luwig, Graven Images: New England Stonecarving and its Symbols, 1650-1815," (Wesleyan University Press, 2000) 214-215

The Cynic's neighbors erected a prominent monument in his honor despite what he had said. Augustine, in the text I quoted earlier, goes on to say that

> "the bodies of the dead, especially of the just and faithful, are not to be despised or cast aside. The soul has used them as organs and vessels for all good work in a holy manner…. Bodies are not for ornament or for aid, as something that is applied externally, but pertain to the very nature of the man….

And, he continues, "if this is true, a place provided for burying the bodies among the memorials of the saints is surely a matter of good human affection" an *aide memoire* that reminds the living to pray for the dead.

Thomas Browne, who would have had no sympathy for these views—no truck with prayers for the dead or burial near relics-- and who says he care about neither name nor monument, also has second thoughts. "I am not so Cynical, as to approve the Testament of Diogenes," he protests. In his "calmer judgment," that is, when he listens to the still voices of the heart rather than the more shrill dictates of reason, he too wants to be buried so as to remain part of an imagined community of the living. Jacob as he lies dying says to Joseph that he does not want to be buried in Egypt, that he hopes that his son will deal kindly and truly with him and carry him out of Egypt to the burying place of his fathers. And so too Browne who allies himself with the Patriarchs who want to "sleep by the urns of their Fathers and go the neatest way into corruption." (There is an odd skeptical hook here as if he cannot quite get himself into mind set of Jacob. The next few pages are about his having lived too long.)[14]

"Yes, but…" is the history of responses to the Cynic over the millennia. In the ellipses "…." is the work of culture, of the human imagination, and of this book. Even though some of the developments I will recount were, and were understood at the time to be, part a narrative of secularization my general claim for the work of the dead and for its importance stands outside this story. We have, so to speak, always been and, at the same time, never been secular. The dead matter, as thousands of years of answers to Diogenes suggest, even when they are not supposed to. They matter because they have always mattered and because the dead as evident in the corpse are not quite dead to the living. If sacrality plays a role in my story it is the sacrality of History and of what seems to be a very deep human desire to live with the ancestors.

Put differently, sacrality is one, but only one of the ways in which bones and bodies can be made to matter. Let me make this clear with another set of examples in which the chasm between nothing and something is at its deepest: first, that of the remains of the special dead, those that came, in the context of the early Church, to be regarded as relics and then of the "secular sacred" who transcend any particular eschatology and yet take their meaning from through very similar processes. The case of the special dead is clearest for saints and martyrs, who, as the historian Peter Brown puts it, "were exempt from the facts of death." Early Christians could imagine the blood flowing back into here-and-now bones rejoined with flesh at the resurrection of the special dead. At their graves, as he puts it, "the eternity of paradise and the first touch of the resurrection come into the present." Even a part of the body of a saint who died the

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[14] Browne, <u>Religio Medici</u>, 112; Genesis 47: 29-30 as paraphrased by Browne.

horribly painful death of martyrdom becomes detached from its physical presence and is transformed into a sign of the great promise of Christianity: corporeal resurrection of the dead. The bodies of saints may have been nothing in their physicality—leaving aside those that smelled sweet or were actually distinguishable from ordinary bodies-- but they became, as the body in which had dwelled the soul that was now with God, a new kind of link between heaven and earth. They were, so to speak, the outward sign of a great and powerful friend able to intercede for the more spiritually needy. The relics of saints thus represent the limit case of "yes, but....:" nothing that had become magnificently something linking heaven and earth.[15]

No idea has been more fraught with controversy. Enormous intellectual energies went into the creation of an orthodox Christian theology for the veneration of the special dead that were at the heart of the pre-Reformation Church and of popular piety. And even more pastoral effort went into the day-to-day problems of policing the holy. The miracles that were the main evidence for a relic's authenticity had to be confirmed; recall Augustine near the beginning of the story reporting on the blind man restored to sight before the immense crowd that had gathered to witness the translation of the long lost bones of the martyrs Protasius and Gervasius, whose authenticity the miracle vouched for, into Milan's cathedral.[16] Special bones had to be distinguished from fake ones, i.e. the movement of relics and the documentation their provenance had to be somehow regulated.

But most importantly the imaginary world into which relics offered access had to be policed without at the same time undermining its efficacy and reality. They were, after all *just* bones or some other material that had been elevated into a treasure because they were understood to be evidence for the existence and the intercessory power of a saint. Like paper money and credit in general their reality was based on a promise of something not in the material itself and on belief in the larger world of which they were a part. Thus pastoral authorities could destroy the credit of relics and popular demand could restore it. Making much therefore of the corporeal remains of saints is thus a paradigmatic answer to Diogenes which at the same time acknowledges the enormous amount of cultural work—work of the imagination—that needs to go into giving the dead body meaning.[17]

All of this produced a great deal of skepticism, not about whether there could be such a thing as a relic in general but about many particular cases. Under all but the best the best of circumstances special bones look just like other bones; they usually did not speak for themselves and, out of the context of a reliquary and the community that

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[15] Peter R. L. Brown, The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Late Antiquity, 78 and passim.

[16] R. W. Dyson, edited, The City of God against the Pagans, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1998)22, 8, p 1121.

[17] I owe this formulation to discussion with Prof. David Ganz, Kings College, London, who kindly sent me a communication on saint's bones as offering "credit"—spiritual liguidity-- in the context of our discussions at the Institute for Advanced Study, Fall 2009 of his work, this book, and my earlier discussion of the problem of masturbation and credit.

venerated them, confirmation could pose an insurmountable problem. Fakes were rife. Many experts, if they wanted to, could no doubt have caught out Chaucer's pardoner but the problem was more difficult in the context of the huge and profitable market in stolen relics whose provenance, like that of stolen art today, had been purposefully obscured. How was the famous Bishop Odo of Bayeaux (1036-97) to know that the bones he purchased with the understanding they belonged to St. Exuperius, shadowy fifth century bishop of Toulouse, were actually those of a peasant of the same name foisted on him by a church custodian? *Caveat emptor*. How were the claims of different churches in different places to having the bones of the same saint to be adjudicated?[18] Within the world of medieval Catholicism in which the veneration of relics was as an important part of religious practice there was grounds for doubt in any particular case, for wondering whether bones were really something special or just bones. But the principle of the special dead and the imperative to venerate their bodies was not in doubt.

In the Reformation to whole world of the special dead, and not just its abuses, came fundamentally into question. It was a central tenant of the reformers that a Christian did not need the help of saints or other intermediaries for salvation—the guiding principle of *sola scriptura*, only God's word is needed. Bones and anything else belong to them were irrelevant. Worse, the veneration of saints was a species of idolatry especially offensive to the more radical and Calvinist reformers, to the iconoclasts who destroyed shrines and scattered bones throughout northern Europe.

But this was not the end of relics even in Protestant countries. However much the legitimacy of relics might have been denied in the aftermath of the reformation something remarkably like the bones of saints lived on for many, if not all of the same reasons as before.

I want to take as exemplary the English Enlightenment deist philosopher and radical William Godwin sadly forgotten 1809 *Essay on Sepulchres* whose self conscious secular necromancy echoes St. Augustine and St. Thomas. It is, as its subtitle says, "a proposal to for erecting some memorial of the illustrious dead in all ages on the spot where their remains have been interred," and was intended to be the first step of a utopia plan to map necro-geography in such a way as to resist the inevitable erosion by time. The places where note worthy bodies were buried would be identified by name, Godwin proposed—like today's historical signs—and would be marked on maps, like those that already existed "in which the scenes of famous battles were distinguished with a particular mark," This exercise would result in what he called an "Atlas of those who Have Lived, for the Use of Men Hereafter to be Born" that would keep in memory those who might otherwise be forgotten.

Godwin knew anecdotally and intuitively what modern research has confirmed: that after the passing of the generations that had known the dead directly, or through the stories of those who had, the interest of the living in those who are gone fades;

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[18] See, on this particular case, Jay Rubenstein, Guibert of Nogent: <u>Portrait of a Medieval Mind</u> (London: Routledge, 2002) 124-130, esp 125, 4-9; the problem of stolen relics in particular is made in Patrick J. Geary, <u>Furta Sacra: Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages</u>, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990 revised edition) 5-9, 124-125, and passim.

gravestones become neglected and fall into ruin, cut down as stubble in the field. The "perishablness of monuments," and the shortness of memory were all too clear. "Where is Horace's tomb now? Or where the tomb of Macenas his patron" Godwin asks rhetorically? His son-in-law Shelley eight years later in "Ozymandias" would make the same point when he wrote about the broken statute of the once great king:

> Round the decay of that colossal wreck boundless and bare
> The lone level sands stretch far away.

Godwin offers his proposal as a scheme to avert oblivion through perpetual care of names for the sake of mankind. The "recollection and admiration of the dead" made possible by knowing where they are buried, will, he argues, make us better people and the world a more virtuous place. [19]

This claim is less important in this context—it will return later a part of thre story of the politics of naming-- than the arguments he makes for why dead bodies matter in the first place. Godwin wrote this pamphlet in 1809, twelve years after Mary Wollstonecraft, his wife, died giving birth to the girl who would end up marrying Shelley and writing Frankenstein. Theirs had been a short but intensely passionate courtship and marriage but and her death devastated him. Six months after she died he published his controversially revealing Memoir of her life but it did not end his mourning. The enormity of death -- "the greatest of earthly calamities, and the most universal…" – he death, still weighted on his heart. "The dead are gone " he reflects "beyond all the powers of calculation to reach;" "the effects flowing from the mortality of man to human affairs," is incalculable. Loss is "perhaps greater to him that survives than to him that dies" not because, as St. Augustine wrote, the dead are comfortably at the mercy of God or because of the assurance of life eternal, or because, as the Epicureans would have it, the dead are no more than they were before the unborn. The living suffer because they cannot be sure that the dead are anywhere.

Yet Godwin, like Augustine in this respect, tries to bridge the unimaginably great divide between the two worlds through attention to bodies of the special dead. The question is why, for someone who was as close to an atheist as we will find the late eighteenth century, the dead body is able to do this. Godwin's answer will take us back to the Church Fathers.

He offers a psychology and theoretical anthropology of the dead that goes back via Aquinas to the beginnings of the Church. For those who survive, he says, anything associated a friend-- possessions, furniture they used, body parts-- have "the virtue which the Indian is said to attribute to the spoils of him he kills." This is a remarkable emotional alliance for a man who prided himself on his civilized rationalism and he translates its meaning for readers. Everything "which has been practically associated with my friend, acquires a value from that consideration; his ring his watch, his books, his habitations." (The "he" in this case is a "her;" the friend in question is "the wife of my bosom.")

But a far more powerful connection to the person of the friend than what she had

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[19]   William Godwin, <u>An Essay on Sepulchres, or, a proposal for erecting some memorial of the illustrious dead in all ages on the spot their remains have been interred</u> (London: W. Miller, 1809)

owned or had held near to her body, was the body itself. Godwin knows that he ought to accept the views of Bishop Berkeley that "the body of my friend, the vehicle through which [her] knowledge and virtue was conveyed to me was nothing." And yet he admits that he can not let it go at that:, "I can never separate my idea of [her] peculiarities and [her] actions, from my idea of [her] person." "I can not," he concludes, "love my friend, without loving [her] person." But only the corpse remains but it is the nearest that the living can come to being with dead: "[Her] dead body is far closer to that person even than his [her] book or watch." (His insistence on the male "his" is un-relenting perhaps because it suggests that what he says is true in general—the universal masculine pronoun—and is not to be interpreted as an idiosyncratic personal expression of grief. I have substituted "her."

Godwin is painfully aware that there exists no more radical rupture than that between the living and the dead body; if its rosy hue could somehow be purchased it "would be my companion still" which it—she—painfully is not. The corpse is the great, paradigmatic reminder set for us by the "system of the universe" that we are of a degraded nature and of humble origins, that we are mortal. We cast bodies into the ground to mould back into earth as a token of this truth. And yet the corpse remains strangely still the person it was, lacking only what seems so little yet so enormous—the breath of life, the "rosy hue." The corpse and the person are not irrevocably sundered.

Godwin thus resists what would seem the self-evident truth that the dead are really gone—that they are no more in this world-- and he therefore asks the next obvious and universal question: if the dead are not gone, then where are they? "Where is my friend?" "Close deductions of reasoning" might allow him, he says, to recover "the thinking principle which animated [her]." "Suggestions of faith" might allow him to follow the dead "through the vast regions of space and see the spirit return to God that gave it." But neither of these options is satisfying. Memory of the wise things a person said or wrote is cold comfort and the deist Godwin was famously not given to faith. He is, he insists, a "creature of sense," a creature of things that are palpable, present, touchable. This, in turn, offers at the same time a dispiriting conclusion—a moldering body is very far from a passionate friend and wife—and the beginning of hope. All that we have left is the epitaph "*hic jacet,*" "here lies dead" over the place where "the body is deposited." There is only the sign and dead body beneath it. But then Godwin appropriates the remarkable power of the imagination and creates a microcosm of the kinds of stories this book tells. One would have to have to have an impenetrable heart, he says, not to feel "a certain sacredness of the grave" a sensibility as old as writing on the subject of death and as generative.

Based on this intuition—this feeling-- Godwin proposes necromancy: "the habit of seeing with the intellectual eyes things not visible to the eye of sense;" "rescuing the illustrious dead from the jaws of the grave;" making "them pass in review;" querying "their spirits and recording their answers;" having "live intercourse with the illustrious Dead of all ages." The proposal to erect a small monument, with a name affixed, to the final resting places of the worthy dead—or even the legendary resting place of near mythical figures like King Arthur or Homer and fictional ones like Clarissa— is thus, explicitly, an act calling up them back or willing them into being through the voice of the imagination and the act of building memorials.

But he wants to do more than just call individuals back to life. Marking, with names places "hallowed by the reception of all that was mortal of these glorious beings" and erecting a "shrine to the memory," is *de facto* creating a community of the holy dead without believing in holiness. It is a way of communing with each and every one of them without subscribing to any traditional religious views of how and whether this might be possible. Godwin offers what he knows is formula for necromancy and for the veneration of relics which he does not believe it and that the national church vigorously disavows. We "indulge all the reality we can now have of a sort of conference," with the dead "by repairing to the scene which, as far as they are at all on earth, *they still inhabit*" (italics in text). The dust that covers a great man's tomb—although by extension any tomb worth paying attention to-- "is simply and literally *the great man himself.*" (Again, italics in text.) We can attain, he says, "the craft and mystery, by which we may spiritually, each in his several spheres *compel the earth and ocean to give up their dead alive.*" (My italics.)

These are extra-ordinary claim for a virulently anti-catholic old radical who was as close to being an atheist as almost anyone in his day. (The problem of the argument from design seems to have kept him, as it did many others, from taking the last step.) In the final year of his life he would write a book that attacked all manner of superstition, an expose of the "credulity of the human mind," as an assault to reason, and necromancy was foremost among them. No sooner are we acquainted with the laws of nature, he wrote in 1835, but that we "start calling up the deceased from the silence of the grave and compelling them to disclose the secrets of the world unknown." The dead are, or ought to be, beyond "our power to disturb" because there is something sacred about their repose. And yet…. Of course, Godwin is not interested the "secrets of the grave" but in a conversation about things of this world. But he does want to rescue, query, and pass the dead in review. He wants the presence of his love Mary Wollstonecraft and believed that proximity to her dead body was sadly as close as he can get.

Already in 1809, he was aware that all this was sailing close to what generations of English would have branded Catholic superstition if not to an insult to man such as himself, who "in, his genuine and direct sphere, is the disciple of reason." Perhaps he protests too much by assuring readers that there is "no danger in the present state temper of the European mind of falling into idolatry." But still, "no-one could not be affected by the visit of a grave."[20]

This is probably true as far as it goes for early nineteenth century England. (Visitors to the chaste grave of Elvis Pressley in Graceland's "Meditation Garden," or the tomb of Jim Morrison, clouded in the mists of marijuana smoke, in Pere Lachaise may wonder whether the danger of falling into "idolatry," in the present state of the modern mind is really past.) But Godwin has reason to be defensive. Whether he knew it or not, St. Thomas Aquinas defended "the worship of relics of the saints," in exactly the same way he uses to explain his attachment to the body of his beloved and, by extension, to others whom one wants to keep near. Quoting St. Augustine as his authority St. Thomas argues that

If a father's coat or ring, or anything else of that kind is so much cherished by his

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[20]   William Godwin, <u>Lives of the Necromancers</u> (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1835) iv-v, 42.

children, as the love for ones parents is greater, in no way are the bodies themselves to be despised, which are more intimately and closely united to us than any garment; for they belong to a man's very nature.

Someone who feels affection for someone who has departed will have affection for their clothes and "such like,' and—this seems evident to Aquinas-- for their bodies or parts of their bodies. If this is the case for the ordinary bodies of the ordinary dead, it is all the more true for the special bodies of the special dead—saints-- "which were the temples, and organs of the holy ghost dwelling living and operating in them." The skeptic might respond with the syllogism that (a) it is absurd to venerate that which is insensible; (b) the bodies of saints [and of everyone else] are insensible; and therefore (c) it is absurd to venerate them. But the answer is clear. One worships not an insensible body for its own sake but for the sake of the soul to which it was united. That is, the dead body carries with it a quality of having been something material that had had an intimate relationship with the soul just as a beloved father's ring or clothes had had with his person.[21]

The, philosophical and religious justifications as well as the purposes for which they sought to honor the bodies of the dead could not have been more different Godwin on the one hand and the greatest theologians of the Church on the other. Godwin thinks that the "recollection and admiration of the dead" that comes from knowing where they are buried will make us better people and the world a more virtuous place. Augustine and Aquinas believe it connects this world with God and the saints in heaven to the benefit of the living and the dead. Godwin denies an afterlife for the dead body; Aquinas believes that the self same person, body and soul, will be resurrected on the day of judgment. (This is probably the best answer anyone has given to Diogenes but it was seldom mustered.)

But for all the differences in the two accounts, taken together they show that one can go a long way toward making the dead body consequential without particular eschatological or metaphysical commitments. It was an enlightenment radical materialist who believed that the dead "are infected with the perishable quality of their histories; " that they were "imbued with some qualifying substance, or active principle." It was the deist Godwin who believed that, unremembered, they are "barren soil," and "perished and left not a trace behind." But, properly buried and remembered those clods of earth— "the dust is earth; of earth we make loam"-- are "admirably fertile," perhaps not of grain or flowers but of "sentiments and virtues."

Godwin's proposed landscapes are thus enchanted not by divinity or by having had immortal souls but by history and, paradigmatically, by the history to which the dead body testifies. In other words, he tells the story of how the "nothing" of the dead body can become something on account of it having been "something" when it was alive. The dead thus enchant the body, as they do other objects that remain behind, whether one denies the possibility of enchantment as Godwin does in more sober moments or embraces it as did St. Augustine. The value the body of ones beloved and of things that belonged to her are "not merely fictitious," Godwin insists, they are constitutive of a

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[21]   Thomas Aquinas, <u>Summa Theologica</u> Part 3, quest 25 "On the Adoration of Christ."

person existing in time. The dead, he says, "have an empire," over the mind.

Some of the developments I will recount were, and were understood to be already in the eighteenth century to be part of a narrative of secularization. But the work of the dead stands outside this story. We have, so to speak, always been and at the same time never been secular. The dead matter, as thousands of years of answers to Diogenes suggest, even when they are not supposed to. They matter because they have always mattered. If sacrality plays a role in my story it is the sacrality of the deep structures of history and anthropology but I am happy to do without the term except when—as it often does in many different ways— my protagonists speak of the sacred in connection with the dead.

Some definitions:

I can no longer avoid the question that I have skirted so far: *what* or *who* am I talking about? What are "the dead" or, more specifically—and manageably-- what is the *dead* body. The two, as my brief history of responses to Diogenes was meant to suggest, are deeply intertwined because the relatively easy to imagine corpse takes on meaning through its relationship to the much more elusive and difficult to fully comprehend category of the dead more generally. Dead bodies are consequential because the dead continue among the living or elsewhere but still not really gone in a bewilderingly diffuse and imaginatively rich way. The world's religions offer an important view into this relationship but I will place less emphasis on doctrine or on "beliefs" or on justifications or even on practices although I will offer much more about them as I will on sensibilities and on what sometimes seems almost like an expression of some mysterious cultural DNA humans share. Augustine and Godwin shared a lot even as they seemed to share almost nothing. This chapter argues that the dead in modern world could do the work they did not only because of the specific circumstances of our era but because they inherited a rich historical longue durée that transcends specific beliefs and doctrines. I will offer several possible answers and non-answers to what the dead are by way of specifying my historical actors.

First off, I do not consider the question "what are the dead," to be an epistemological question—how can we know, or how did people in the past think they knew, that someone is actually dead. This interpretation of the question became exigent in the middle of the eighteenth century, continued to be deeply worrisome for about one hundred and fifty years and then eased off in the late nineteenth century. It has only a thin prehistory: Physicians in antiquity had occasionally commented on the uncertainty of the signs of death and had offered ways to tell when someone was dead. That there might be some confusion, i.e. that it might be difficult to distinguish the between a trance and genuine death, was enough in the consciousness of ordinary people in the sixteenth century to play a crucial part in the plot of *Romeo and Juliet* and, more happily, in Bocaccio's *Decameron* where a man disinters his prematurely buried lover who subsequently bears him a son. Seventeenth century experts on forensic medicine pointed to occasional difficulties in diagnosing death but without their concerns making much an impact outside medical circles. (Certain of the tests they proposed were commonplace-- King Lear's desperate attempt see the breath of life in a fogged mirror held to Cordelia's

nostrils— but not generally exigent.

The real anxiety about making the mistake of wrongly burying someone who was not really started around 1740 and ended by 1900 by which time doctors were routinely "pronouncing" people to be dead by a variety of criteria set by the State. (A new worry about the definition of death arose in the 1980's as a consequence of the advent of modern technology and the demands of transplant surgeons who needed bodies that were to be alive from the perspective of their biological status —the organs had to be "fresh"—but dead from the perspective of the law—one can not take vital organs from a live person since that would be murder. The social status of such a live dead person can be problematic but more about this in Section 3)

For about a hundred and fifty years, however, the border between life and death seemed horrifyingly indistinct and easy to mistaken. The start of the problem can be dated with some precision. In 1740 there appeared an eight page long Latin thesis on "the uncertainty of the signs of death" that would have enormous resonance. It was by a student who went on to a relatively obscure career, Leander Peaget, but it was sponsored by a famous advisor, Jacques-Bénigne Winslow, member of the Academy of Sciences, noted anatomist—his textbook appeared in 32 versions and five languages in the eighteenth century different-- and one of the most the most famous professor on the Paris medical faculty. He himself had been mistakenly taken for dead when he was a young man and his anxiety on the subject would infect the western world.

Winslow's imprimatur made all the difference. In 1742, a translation of the Latin thesis into French, with mountains of new anecdotal evidence and a scary new subtitle-- "the evil of premature burial and embalming,"-- by Jacques-Jean Bruhier d'Ablaincourt, a client of Winslow's, a well known doctor and a *soi disant* literary figure, gave the problem of diagnosing death a sharp and culturally exigent form that would engage the international reading public for a long time. The original dissertation grew metastatically. Eight pages of Latin in 1740 had grown to three hundred sixty four of French in 1742, then to almost four hundred by 1746, and to six hundred and nine stretched over two volumes volume in 1749. The two English editions of the 1740's were only two hundred or so pages but no less influential for relatively small bulk; the German edition of 1754 came in at a record setting eight hundred. A publishing epidemic fed popular fears. Four hundred and eighteen specialized books and articles had accumulated by the time of an 1891 bibliography and it did not count the many textbook discussions, mountains of gothic fiction, and many journalistic reports that echoed, again and again, how difficult it was to tell if someone were really dead, how scary it would be to be entombed alive, and be sure that one would escape that fate. (The advocates of high tech cremation in the 1870's and 1880's still fed on this fear when they pointed out that an advantage of their method of disposal was that it removed the danger of premature burial.)

There are cultural reasons why so many people became so intensely worried about being mistakenly diagnosed as dead and consequently being buried alive when before no-one paid much attention to the problem but I will leave a fuller discussion of these until later. The proximal cause of the epidemic, however, has to do with our immediate question. It is this: around the middle of the eighteenth century "dead" became, in certain circles, a purely technical term which, in turn, put "being dead" within the realm of

technical error. The *locus classicus* for this development is the entry "death, medicine," that the chemist and royal physician Paul-Jacques Malouin wrote for the *Encyclopédie*. The point was to strip death of its historical pedigree and reduce it to an empirical matter. It begins with a rejection of the old distinction between human and animal death— between death in culture and death in nature-- by declaring that it is groundless and pointless to discuss.

> The separation of the soul away from the body, a mystery that is perhaps more incomprehensible than its union, is a dogma of theology affirmed by religion and consequently is beyond discussion. Neither consonant with the light of reason nor supported by any medical observations we will not make any mention of it in this article.

An answer to the question "when is a body dead?" thus depends upon determining how, and more urgently, precisely when, life is irretrievably over. And being alive means "the continual movement of solids and fluids through the whole living body," that is, not being dead. Both, life and death, become mutually constitutive features of the body.[22]

This re-definition was not incompatible with the older view that death was the separation of body and soul any more than the Protestant abolition of purgatory did not mean that souls had no place to go. (What exactly did happen to them was, as Chapter 1 suggested, a big question that I will take up again later in this chapter.) Most people continued to hold conventional views about what happened when one died. But the shift I have pointed to did have three important consequences for the work of the dead, my subject. First, it opened up the possibility that death—at least in one guise—could be absorbed in what would, by the early nineteenth century, would be called "biology," the science of life and become an essentially empty category. I have already quoted his famous tautology: "life the totality of those functions that resist death."[23] But it did not matter for the purposes of defining death that one have deep views—as the vitalist Bichat

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[22]   Paul-Jacques Malouin had an apartment at Versailles, was physician to the queen, and member of the Academy of Sciences; he was a wealthy member of the medical establishment: Mort, medicine: 10, 718*"La séparation de l'ame d'avec le corps, mystere peut-être plus incompréhensible que son union est un dogme théologique certifié par la Religion, & par conséquent incontestable ; mais nullement conforme aux lumieres de la raison, ni appuyé sur aucune observation de Médecine ainsi que nous n'en ferons aucune mention dans cet article purement medicinal."* This is near the beginning of nine page lkong, doubvle column article.

17, 249. *"Vie, c'est l'opposé de la mort, qui est la destruction absolue des organes vitaux, sans qu'ils puissent se rétablir; ensorte que la plus petite vie est celle dont on ne peut rien ôter, sans que la mort arrive; on voit que dans cet état délicat, il est difficile de distinguer le vivant du mort; mais prenant ici le nom de vie dans le sens commun, je la définis un mouvement continuel des solides & des fluides de tout corps animé.* This very short piece is also by Jaucourt.

[23]   Xavier Bichat, Physiological Researches upon Life and Death, trans by Tobias Watkins (Philadelphia: Smith & Maxwell) 1809, 1. The first Paris edition appeared in 1800.

had about its opposite. "If we are aware of what indicates life," wrote a pragmatically inclined doctor in a forensic medicine textbook

> which everyone may be supposed to know, *though perhaps no one can say that he truly and clearly understands what constitutes it,* we at once arrive at the discrimination of death. It is the cessation of the phenomena with which we are so especially familiar—the phenomena of life."[24]

If there is a mystery it is not death but life. (The deeply engaging question of what exactly life was and how it emerged was sidestepped in the way that doctors today are able to identify cancer without having the foggiest idea what the disease actually is, if it indeed is *a* thing.)

Second, as death became increasingly a biological event, the dead became ever more imbricated in the culture wars that produced modernity. Treating death and the dead body as matters of science and technology was to make a political claim that I will have much more to say about later. Much of the debate about cemeteries and cremation depended on the dead being an empirical medical category and not a religious or metaphysical one. The first and in some ways still paradigmatic conflict between Haskalah (Judaism informed by the Enlightenment) and its more traditional adversaries was precisely over the question of which account of being dead should prevail. On the one side was its most important thinker Moses Mendelssohn who argued that Jews should go along with new laws that required that a body remain for three days in a so called "leichenhaus"—a place for corpses--to be sure that it was really dead. He, like other "enlightened" Jews in Germany led by Jewish doctors, welcomed the regulation promulgated by the Duke of Mecklenberg-Schwerin in 1772, and copied elsewhere, that was meant to avoid the horrible possibility of premature burial. On the other stood those who resisted the new rules in favor of the Talmudic precept for same day burial. After furious and long running battle ensued in which the Mendelssohn negotiated a compromise- Jews could bury within the traditional twenty four hours if they obtained a physician's assent- but without backing down on principle: waiting three days was not a serious violation of Jewish law, he said, and custom would eventually accommodate itself to reason. Even doctors who opposed the new rules did so on empirical rather than religious grounds: that the Jewish custom of remaining with the newly dead until the time of burial ensured sufficient scrutiny to avoid the acknowledged problem of misdiagnosing death.[25] Modernity and tradition faced off over the corpse.

Finally, when being dead became a metaphysically empty category it became am epistemological problem: *how* one could tell that life was *really* gone. The "continual

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[25] Efron; Eberhard Wolff, <u>Die Architektur einer modernen judischen Identität: Medizin und Ärzte im deutschen Judentum der Reformära (1750-1850)</u> Schriftliche Habilitationsleistung zum Habilitationsgesuch an die Philosophisch-Historische Fakultät der Universität Basel (2008); Rüve, Gerlind (2008): Scheintod. Zur kulturellen Bedeutung der Schwelle zwischen Leben und Tod um 1800. Bielefeld, 2008

movement of solids and fluids" whose cessation entailed death could be very, very slight and therefore difficult to recognize. If, by definition, the "smallest bit of life is that which the body can not do without, without which death ensues," one has a real diagnostic problem on ones hands. What if there were still enough life present to keep death from happening but too little to readily detect and too easy to miss by all but the most careful, experienced, and skilled observers. "In this delicate state," as the *Encyclopédie* admitted, "it is difficult to distinguish the living from the dead."[26] Determining whether life was gone became an exercise much like cancer screening today and fraught with the same problems. It required real diagnostic skill to detect reliably and was subject to false positives.

The epidemic of fear that apparent death would be mistaken for the real thing fueled gothic fiction: Poe's "Fall of the House of Usher" and "The Premature Burial" are but the most famous of a genre about the nightmare of being trapped in a tomb. (Roger Corman's film "Premature Burial" with Vincent Price as its star brings the genre to near the present.) False death is there in later nineteenth century novels—Wilkie Collins Jezebel's Daughter has a long drawn out scene in which a dead woman in a Frankfurt *leichenhaus* comes back to life, for example. It gave rise to "Humane societies" that taught lay people to be careful about acting as if apparent death were the real thing and also how to try to resuscitate those who might still have a spark of life in them. A mainstay of modern first aid, "artificial respiration," was developed to make those who seemed dead breath again. And, all sorts of devices were invented to allow would be corpses in the grave to alert those above that a mistake had been made. The State developed an interest in being sure that everyone who was buried really was dead—and more recently in promulgating rules for a body could be dead for some purposes—harvesting organs—and alive for others—the whole point is to avoid cadaver organs. Doctors became the main experts on the question as "really dead" became a matter of biology. Death shifted registers. These are no mean developments and I will come back to them and their role in the work of the dead.

But as a matter of fact it does not take very long to know for sure that a body is dead-- a matter of days. Waiting tells the story and putrefaction is definitive. The great philosopher, Bishop Berkeley was one of the first famous people to publicize this insight. Afraid of misdiagnosis, he insisted in his will his body "be kept five days above ground, or longer, even till it grow offensive by the cadaverous smell." It was to "lye unwashed, undisturbed and covered by the same bedclothes, in the same bed, the head being raised by pillows." When he was finally buried in Christ Church Cathedral on the sixth day the matter was beyond dispute.[27]

All of the bodies that I will be dealing with in this book are, as was the Bishop's, un-problematically well and truly dead. How to be sure whether someone is actually dead is a technical question once death is defined biologically. It became worrisome for a time—and hangs on in popular culture today-- but was, and is, not conceptually

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[26]   "on voit que dans cet état délicat, il est difficile de distinguer le vivant du mort".

[27]   Alexander Campbell Fraser, Life and Letters of George Berkeley (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1871) vol. 4, 344-45. Berkeley died Sunday, 14 Jan 1753 and was buried on Sunday the 20th.

demanding. From the perspective of defining "dead body" the epistemological question is important because it offers a modern, and historically specific, instance of the very old horror of letting go, of the dread that that the chasm of death represents between this world and nothing. The causes of the premature burial panic, in other words, are to be found in the eighteenth century. But the emotional energy behind it comes from the feeling that someone is not—could not—be really dead. This is grounded in very longue durée of history: in the fact that we humans live with our dead, that we find being truly nothing unbearable, and that we do a great deal to keep the dead alive.

Defining "the dead" when death is understood metaphysically -- when it seems to require knowing about the nature or reality of death itself either in a religious or a secular context-- is as conceptually difficult as defining biological death is easy. To some extent it is a question about the nature of the soul and its status in a temporally limited or eternal afterlife: does it die, sleep, subsist in conscious form"; is it permanently dead, or dead and resurrected at the same time as the body, or never dead but joined to the dead body at some point, or eternal independently of the body. All these formulations speak to the question of what and where are the dead, what will become of them, and what is there relationship to that paramount token of death—the dead body.

But at issue also is the nature of the related, but distinct, liminal state that we might think of as para-death: a time of varying duration during which the dead are still in some form— sometimes, but not necessarily or even primarily, as ghosts-- among the living. Para-death is, or may be made to be through the power of the imagination, compatible with a variety of views about the soul including complete skepticism about its existence. Most of us have come a long way since the eighteenth century when reasonable men—including even the orthodox and culturally conservative Dr. Johnson— had their doubts:

> It is wonderful that five thousand years have now elapsed since the creation of the world, and still it is undecided whether or not there has ever been an instance of a spirit of any person appearing after death. All argument is against it; but all belief is for it.

But still we still act as if the dead hover around because it is very hard to take on board the full force of the tradition that comes closest to offering a philosophically plausible, if psychologically bracing, argument for reducing the interval between the moment of death and the complete disappearance of a person to zero. Death in its ordinary daily sense as something that happens to a person as a result of trauma, or disease, or old age, or witchcraft or anything-- begins the condition of not-being that is at the heart of Diogenes' sophism. To be truly dead is really not to be significantly anywhere. In this case it makes no difference where ones body is cast. Bu this level of dead is rare and hard to sustain in the imagination. Epicurus, (341-270 b.c.e.) the materialist philosopher of antiquity who offered the most influential and long lived account of death as complete and permanent annihilation, denied that a wise man should live the dog-like life advocated by the Cynics. That said, accepting his views would make Diogense's more plausible and no less a scholar than the great Christian humanist Erasmus put a version of Epicurus'

materialist arguments for the permanent death of body and soul in Diogenes' mouth.)[28]

There are two crucial claims in Epicurus' argument for what being dead is. First, there is no such thing as an immaterial soul that might be able to somehow subsist as a version of the person after death. And second, the material soul that enlivens a body can have no independent life. This means that once dead the story is over. The body loses its sentience when the soul departs—the defining moment of death in all western and most other traditions until the advent of modern biological accounts— but so does the soul because it was sentient only as a consequence of it having been "been somehow confined within the rest of the frame." Soul and body need each other and neither can exist on its own. When specialized corporeal soul atoms leave the body at the moment of death they both become, Epicurus holds, just matter again.

But what if the soul were not a material substance but instead were incorporeal as Plato held and as orthodox Christianity made into dogma, and that, as such, it could be eternal and free standing. It could live after the body had died and in some relation to it. This idea, argues Epicurus, is incoherent. Only empty space is "self existent." But, if the soul were empty space then it could "not act or be acted upon" and this is precisely what souls in bodies are engaged in. So a dead person instantly becomes nothing-- it leaves the world of culture-- the instant that its two kinds of atoms are sundered. She becomes exactly what she was before she was born.

Whether this oft cited observation is comforting to those of us afraid of death is not the question here. Lucretius thought of his views as being an antidote to the fears of death that was instilled by irrational religion and that poisoned the last hours, if not the lives, of many believers. (Some of the humble Christian mortalists I will come to in a moment developed their views in response to the fear that they had been predestined for damnation.) Hume claimed I that the idea of being no different when dead as when still unborn was the foundation of his deathbed tranquility. The tradition of Epicurean philosophy had it that the answer was "yes," but that it took a very high degree of philosophical training to really take it on board. On the other hand, oblivious and eternal not being is probably not generally re-assuring even to very educated people. Julian Barnes surveys the modern scene. Tennyson can speak for the nineteenth century:

> Why should be bear with an hour of torture, a moment of pain,
> If every man die for ever, if all his griefs are in vain,
> And the homeless planet at length will be wheeled through the silence of
> > Space.

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[28]   A.A. Long, "The Socratic Tradition: Diogenes, Crates, and Hellenistic Ethics" in R. Bracht Branham and Marie-Odile Goulet-Cazé, eds. The Cynics… pp.29-30 and 28-46, *passim.* Death, according to Erasmus' Diogenes, is not an evil because as long as death is away, all is fine: "As long as a man hath perfect sense and feeling, he is alive, so then death is not yet in place, that if the same [death] be present, then sense and feeling is away. And evil is it not, that is not felt." "This manner of argumentation or reason," Erasmus' learned sixteenth century translator adds, "certain writers ascribe to Epicurus." Nicolas Udall, The Apophthegmes of Erasmus, (London, 1542; facsimile edition Boston, Lincolnshire: Robert Roberts, 1878) Book 1, aph. 203, p. 169. I have modernized the spelling.

Motherless evermore of an ever-vanishing race,
When the worm shall have writhed its last, and its brother-worm will
      Have fled
From the dead fossil skull that is left in the rocks of an earth that is dead?[29]

The point for now is that the Epicurean view of death as complete annihilation does offer support to Diogenes' sophism not only because it says that the body will not feel anything but because it makes clear why there is nothing to left anywhere to feel or to care about. In principle, as the early modern proponents of these annihilationist views argued, human death was no different from animal death and, to be consistent, the human body ought to have no more claim on culture than did those of the beasts. In fact, not even the most radical materialists ever went this far and let philosophy dictate practice.

The third book of Lucretius (c99-55 b.c.e.) long philosophical poem <u>On the Nature of Things</u>, recovered in the Renaissance and a massive cultural presence ever since, diagnoses the problem: it is very hard to think about *really* being dead, to imagine our own not being and, by extension, the not being of others. (It is easier, of course, to imagine the nonexistence of others-- our children for example-- before their births than it is to image the world without us. Vladimir Nabokov writes about the narcissistic resentment he feels when seeing a photograph of his mother happy before he was born. When we contemplate the deaths of others we still imagine them somewhere which is why the dead matter.)

Even if one believes--which Lucretius does not-- that the spirit, even a spirit made of atoms, felt anything once it was ripped from the body it would, he argues, no longer be "our" spirit or, for that matter, "our" body. "We" do not suffer because "we" are made from the *conjunction* of soul and body; without their jointure there is no "we" even if, counterfactually, the soul did someone subsist after death. And even if in the infinity of time all our atoms could somehow come together again in exactly the same form as they were before we died -- we recognize this a a thermodynamically improbable event-- the reconstituted creature would not be us because "there would be break in consciousness." The new us-- the reassembled replica-- would no more be us than we have any connection with possible earlier version(s) of ourselves. (Re-incarnation is an incoherent idea although he does not use the term.) Death ends time just as birth begins it. Wittgenstein gets at this with his observation that "death is not an event in life." And so does the twentieth century French philosopher Blanchot: "What is extraordinary begins at the moment I stop. But I am no longer able to speak of it." And so does Freud in much of his writing about the death wish and about the impossibility of imagining being dead ourselves.[30]

Lucretius is explicit about what he thinks are, or logically ought to be, the practical consequences of his views for is to be done with the dead. Basically, Diogenes has it right. Anyone who worries about what will happen to her own body, or who has sympathy for a corpse, is simply unwilling or unable to recognize the truth. They fail to dissociate themselves "sufficiently from the outcast corpse; they identify themselves with

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[29] "Despair,"

[30] Get Wittgenstein and Freud quotes; Maurice Blanchot, <u>Death Sentences</u>, trans Lydia Davis (New York: Station Hill, 1978) 30.

it and, as they stand by, impregnate ["taint," "*contaminat*," l. 883) it with their own feelings." In other words they do what most cultures do to a greater or lesser extent: they treat the dead as if they still mattered, as if there were something still human about them. We succumb, he suggests, because of a certain resilient narcissism. Indignant at "being created mortal," we resist the fact that "in real death there will be no second self alive to lament their own end and stand by and grieve at the sight of them lying there being torn to pieces or burned."

So, someone who worries about rotting in the ground or being jerked around by savage beasts or about whatever else might happen to a corpse is simply railing against mortality. It is, Lucretius argued, no more, or less disastrous, "to be mauled by the devouring jaws of wild beasts," than to be laid on a funeral pyre or "embalmed in stifling honey," or to "grow stiff with cold reclining on a smooth surface on an icy slab of stone," or to "to be pulverized by the crushing weight of earth upon us." Our relationship to a dead body as a person is nothing but an act of projection-- attributing our own thoughts and emotions onto nature, a case of acting as if it mattered when we know it does not. (Adam Smith, deeply rooted in the Epicurean tradition, understood that the limit case for sympathy was our capacity to feel for a dead body when we know full well that it feels nothing and that nothing matters to it. Feeling bad for the buffoon who does not know recognize the stupidity of his behavior is a related exercise of the imagination.) [31]

This takes us back to the main theme: "and yet…." We do taint or impregnate or project upon the dead feelings and meaning, just as we impose meanings on all sorts of inanimate matter. Epicurean atomism offers us a clear definition-- to be dead is no longer to be-- and an argument for why the dead ought to be doing no work. And worse: for those who are no longer "it makes not one speck of difference whether or not they have ever been born once their mortal life has been snatched away by deathless death."[32] But no-one, not even the most anti-religious nineteenth century materialists explicitly beholden to Lucretius culture, consistently act as if this were the case.

The Reformation raised the question of what and where the dead are with new urgency and brought the classical annihilationism of into a Christina context. (Tertullian, Iraeneus and other heterodox Church fathers who had vigorously resisted the Platonic doctrine of an immortal *immaterial* soul had gotten there first and were rehabilitated by radical Protestant thinkers. But a thousand years of orthodoxy had made the dead much less dead than they were to become.) The problem was this and for Catholics the solution was relatively straightforward: the body was dead and the soul was engaged in the drama of salvation. When someone died the immortal immaterial part separated from the flesh. This was definitional. The souls of all but saints and martyrs then waited around in varying degrees of discomfort until the corporeal resurrection of the dead--body and soul-- who were then judged and sent, as appropriate, to heaven or hell. Exactly what

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[31] Adam Smith, Theory of Moral Sentiments; Esther Schor, Bearing the Dead: The British Culture of Mourning from the Enlightenment to Victoria (Princeton, 1994)

[32] Lucretius, De Rerum Natura (On the Nature of Things), trans with introduction and notes by Martin Ferguson Smith (Indianapolis, Cambridge: Hackett Publishing 2001) Bk 3, lines 844-850, 880-894, 869; Ludwig Wittgenstein, Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus.

constituted corporeal resurrection of a person was a huge problem but being dead was a conceptually less demanding exercise. (Still in eighteenth century Protestant England theological debates about what it meant to be resurrected in the *same* body had their popular counterparts. What would become of the flesh of someone eaten by a cannibal and incorporated into his body engaged the middle class readers of Robinson Crusoe as they did the theologians of the high Middle Ages.)[33]

      With the Protestant rejection of Purgatory the status of the dead became an acute question again. Where and what exactly were they between death as ordinarily understood and the last judgment.[34] No Christian subscribed to the full-blown annihilationist position of the ancients: that both body and soul ceased to exist forever as such when the material soul and the material body came apart. Even, or perhaps especially because of their committed scripturalism, the most radical sectaries during the English Revolution held on to the notion there was a last judgment and a life everlasting somewhere. To have done otherwise, that is to give up on the idea that there was some final accounting, would have been to adopt a full scale atheism that was on the agenda of few, if any, people in early modern period. But the problem remained and one answer was given by those we can loosely associate as Christian "mortalists." They believed that a material soul died when the body died, hence mortalism, and in this respect they followed Lucretius and Epicurus. But they also argued in various ways that at the end of time God would revivify the soul as he did the body, make a judgment on the newly alive person, and send him or her to the appropriate fate. (There were, of course, non-Christian mortalists, most importantly Spinoza who fit roughly into this tradition.)

      At one end of the mortalist spectrum, and, perhaps not even qualifying for the label at all, were Reformers like Martin Luther and William Tyndale, the first great translator of the Bible into English, who were called, then and now, "psychopannichists," (from the Greek *psyche*, soul + *pannuchizein*, to last all night): soul sleepers. That is, they held that an immaterial *and* immortal soul survived death but that while the body moldered it was in a deep, dreamless, oblivious sleep from which it awakened at the Last Judgment, unaware of the passage of time. Nothing happened to the dead as they slept their mindless and timeless sleep but they also weren't quite dead either.

      Real mortalists, so called "thnetopsychists" (from the Greek *thneto*, mortal + *psyche*, soul) believed that the soul was made of matter and that it died when the body died. They were thus clearly the heirs of Epicurus and Lucretius with whose bad

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[33] The standard reference work on what the physical rising of the dead means is Caroline Bynum's remarkable <u>The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christendom.</u>

[34] I rely for the theology of mortalism on William Spellman, "Between Death and Judgment: Conflicting Images of the Afterlife in late Seventeenth-Century English Eulogies," <u>Harvard Theological Review</u> 87: 1 (1994) 49-65; Norman H. Burns, <u>Christian Mortalism from Tyndal to Milton</u> (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press) and Bryan W. Ball, <u>The Soul Slepers: Christian Mortalism from Wycliffe to Priestly</u> (Cambridge: James Clarke, 2008); Nicholas McDowell, "Dead Souls and Modern Minds? Mortalism and the Modern Imagination," forthcoming, Fall 2010, <u>Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies</u>.

reputation for atheism they were, not without reason, associated.) To be dead was to be nothing and nowhere until the Last Judgment. This solved the purgatory problem; and it solved various other theological questions that, according to this view, had been introduced when the early Church took the disastrous turn toward Platonism.

But, it left the question of how justice would be rendered: how would the wrongs of this world be righted if death were really the end? This the Christian mortalists answered by arguing that if God could raise the dead at all he could raise them from matter alone. They appropriated here a long tradition that speaks of the infinite powers of God to effect the resurrection of the body that had an immortal, immaterial soul as its essence. Augustine comforts his readers not to be afraid of those who kill the body by rerelling Eusebius' story of martyrs in Gaul whose flesh was fed to dogs that were then, along with the bones of the martyrs, cremated and scattered in the Rhone so that truly nothing would remain of them to be remembered. And still God raised the dead. Donne gave sermons with the same point: atoms wished into the sea, eaten by fish and yet still resurrected. A materialist moralist position on resurrection just carries this one step further. God had given life to clay when he created Adam at the beginning of the world; Adam was made of matter alone; God could do it again for each individual case at the end using specific individual atoms of clay. Indeed every act of generation since Adam had in a sense been just this--the creation of life out of matter (Mortalism was related to, but did not entail, traducianism (from the Latin *tradux* meaning a shoot, or vine for propagation), the heretical doctrine of which Tertullian was the most famous proponent that held that in the act of generation the soul like the body was created, bespoke, out of the matter of both parents, i.e. propagated by them, and hence that it was not an immaterial add-on from outside.) "Cannot God that raised inanimate dust and clay into a living creature," asked the mortalist Thomas Hobbes rhetorically, "as easily raise a dead carcass to life again and continue him alive for ever or make him die again by another word."[35]

Christian mortalists-- the famous ones like Hobbes and Milton and Locke and Newton and arguably the Laudian divine Jeremy Taylor whose guide to dying was the standard Anglican work on the subject for two centuries-- as well as the humbler ones-- the Muggletonian prophets John Reeve (1608-1658) and his sidekick Ludovico Muggleton (1609-1698), the Leveller radical Richard Overton whose tracts Man's Mortality (1644) and Man Wholly Mortal (1655) were closely linked to the most democratic forces of the English Revolution-- all imagined, like the classical materialists, that the dead did not exist anywhere in any form between death and the end of time. Unlike their ancient predecessors they believed in their eventual rebirth and resurrection in some form.

They did not, however, share any particular view of what happened at the Resurrection i.e. when the dead ceased being dead. This is, in a way not our subject, but it reflects back upon it. Heaven and hell, they would agree, were empty, if they could be

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[35] Augustine, Care of the Dead (1955) chap. 6; 361 Leviathan, 44.14, 44.23-6. For a clear summary of Hobbes' views of the resurrection see the article on this subject in A.P. Marinich, A Hobbes Dictionary (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005) online at http://blackwellreference.com/subscriber/tocnode?

thought to exist at all, before the Last Judgment, because there would have been no-one to go to either place. So, the dead were truly nowhere. But then stories differed. Reeve and Muggelton believed, for example, that at the end of time both the damned and the saved would be corporeally resurrected, that the righteous would go to a place above the stars and the wicked would come the carry hell inside themselves-- "spirits in their bodies shall be fiery Devils"-- on a darkened earth. There was an asymmetry; hell was in the mind of the resurrected damned while heaven was a place. John Locke held privately that the good would be given spiritual bodies at the Day of Judgement-- only the soul, the foundation of self consciousness, was needed for personal identity which was the point of it all- and would go to heaven while the damned would be resurrected physically and then annihilated. Publically he wrote that, although not necessary, God would in fact resurrect the righteous bodily and that they would live forever in that form. Hobbes thought that at the Last Judgment the righteous would be given eternal life in new bodies while the damned would be eliminated for good, i.e. they would die permanently and there would be no hell. Milton imaged a fairly traditional dark one for the newly alive material body and soul that had been found wanting:

A Dungeon Horrible, on all sides round
As one great Furnace flam'd…[36]

Mortalism, either in its classical or Christian form had little effect on what actually became of bodies. Hume was conventionally buried under a respectable monument in Edinburgh's most fashionable cemetery; Milton asked to be, and was, buried by his father, in the chancel under the clerk's desk in St. Giles, Cripplegate, in London. (That he was disinterred and despoiled of his hair and teeth by those who found and opened his coffin in 1790 in the course of searching for the exact location of his grave prior to erecting a monument is another story top be told later.)[37]

Even John Reeve, the Muggletonian prophet, who had a real interest in a more radical disposal of his body, did not have the courage of his convictions. (In any case, those responsible for his body didn't) He and Muggleton had claimed for themselves the fate of the two witnesses spoken of in Revelations 11:3-11: They shall be killed by the beast," they say in their summary, " and their bodies be unburied in the street of a great city three days while the people shall rejoice," because the prophets had tormented them. It was remarked upon at the time that Reeve died not at the hands of the beast but of natural causes-- his health was broken by six months in Newgate where he caught a chill that turned into what was then called consumption; was buried modestly in Bethlehem New Churchyard like the poor man he was and not left on the street. In fact there is something sweetly commonplace about Muggleton's account of Reeve's death as well.

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[36] Paradise Lost; For Hobbes, Locke, and Milton see Philip Almond, Heaven and Hell in Enlightenment England (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994) 47-51, 88-89, 140-142 and passim 38-162. For the Muggletonians see William Lamont, Last witnesses: the Muggletonian History, 1652-1979 (Aldershot, England; Burlington, VT : Ashgate, c2006)
[37] A narrative of the Disinterment of Milton's Coffin… (London: T. and J. Egerton, 1790)

He was visiting some believers near Maidstone when the crisis came; the eldest, Mrs. Frances, "closed his eyes for he had said unto her, 'Frances, close my Eyes. Lest my enemies say O died a staring prophet.'" This she did, Muggleton continues, and he "gave up the Ghost and said not one word more." Mrs. Frances cut off as lock of his hair as a memorial. ("Ghost," as it was used in the King James translation of the Bible would not have meant "immaterial soul," to these mortalists as it might have more orthodox Christians but something closer to its ancient Hebrew sense of "to breath out," but still the account shows how rooted was the language of what it is to be dead even among the radical fringe."[38]

Imaging the dead as truly and fully dead-- as matter and nothing but-- did not directly effect how the dead body was treated. It also did not somehow lead to a putative secularization of death; the Christian mortalists were intensive readers and interpreters of scripture and deeply committed to a real, if heterodox, view of judgment and eternal punishment or bliss. The Muggletonian mortalists lived by calling down curses upon their enemies with the abandon and occasional success of Old Testament prophets. That said, mortalism helped to create new cultural configurations that made possible the work of the dead of the modern period.

It undermined the belief in ghosts-- under mortalist assumptions they were impossible-- and the fears they engendered but it did not truly render the dead as nothing either. Milton in 1655 at a time when he was almost certainly committed to the death of the soul as a matter of belief still asks God to "Forget not in they record book" the groans of the Waldensians who been had slaughtered by the Duke of Savoy in a renewed effort to destroy an old medieval heresy which now, in its remnants, took on new meaning as a menacing proto-Protestantism.[39] The dead are present enough to need someone to speak for them. Mortalism also created new imagined communities of the dead: humans and animals alike had material souls and that could alike be resurrected and live together eternally. And most importantly, it brought the dead into a variety of new and politically charged situations where they had not been before. Hume's ostentatious evocation of Lucretius in his account of what it was to be dead was as resonant as it was among the educated, and perhaps even in more popular circles, because it echoed the debates of the previous two centuries.

Mortalism was associated with the political radicalism of the seventeenth century revolution not because, in its Christian form, it undermined the fundamental story of judgment, resurrection, and eternal life-- although it did, along with many other forces, sap hell of some of its horrors-- but because of the enemies it attracted and the friends it seemed to have. Orthodox Anglican clergy and laymen attacked it as a dangerous heresy ands were satisfied with a variety of views about what became of the soul between death and resurrection all of which allowed the faithful to think of the dead as still very much around with fates still in play. Calvin thought that mortalism was not only incompatible with predestination-- the souls of the dead were in bliss ("intermediate glory" or torment

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[38] Ludowick Muggleton, <u>The Acts of the Witnesses of the Spirit</u>, (London 1699) 78-80; in ancient Israel to give up the ghost, that is to breath meant to die. Job 9: "But man dieth, and wasteth away; yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?"
[39] "On the Late Massacre in Piedmont"

right away and the Last Judgment joined them with their bodies so that the whole resurrected person bore the full pain or pleasure. More to the point of a cultural history of the dead, he associated mortalism with Anababptists and Socinians who were in all sorts of other ways poisoning the hearts and minds of thousands.[40] And in one sense he was right: Richard Overton the Leveller writer and author of an important mortalist tract, was a General Baptist with links to protestant radicals in Holland. And he was, of course a democrat and a republican. There was no necessary connection between Socinianism-- named after the Reformation figure Fautus Socinius who argued, against the Trinitarian view of the Christian God, that Christ did not exist before he became man-- and mortalism. But the anti-Platonic foundations of both positions as well a certain way of reading scripture meant that the two were often overlapping and doubly threatening. And, Socinianism was in fact closely allied with politically radical Protestantism by the eighteenth century if not before. Joseph Priestley and John Jebb, two of its most prominent and threatening figures, were Socianians *and* mortalists.[41] Finally, Christian mortalism was tainted by its family resemblance to a modern version of real Epicurean and Lucretian annihilationism and atheism that seemed to have spread to popular culture. In the background of much of the debate were the views and plays of the notorious Christopher Marlow who was probably as close to an atheist as one could find in early modern England and certainly a disreputable figure. However much most of those who espoused mortalism being might protest their Christian best intentions, they could not help but be tainted in the eyes of the orthodox by association with his blasphemies.

Neither Epicurean or Christian mortalism cleared the field for Diogenes' skepticism even in the most heterodox circles. Even a dead body that is truly, completely and eternally dead was caught in a complex of meanings and social practices that keep it from being just trash. All the more so for the somewhat less dead.

 I am speaking here not of the ambiguously dead—that is the apparent death issue which is easily solved— but of the dead-but-not-quite-dead, the un-dead, and, more mundanely and by association, the vastly greater number of the dead not entirely gone from this world and whose bodies consequently matter all he more. I am speaking not, as I was before of souls in an putative afterlife or in some intermediate period—although they too make demands on us even when we believe them to be completely annihilated- but of a vast category of difficult to characterize beings who constitute a whole class of the dead among the living.

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[40] Clavin's 1542 Psychopannychia was translated from French into English in 1581 as An Excellent Treatise of the immortalytie of the Soul by Thomas Stocker (fl 1563-93). He translated three other of Calvin's works and at least five more major Protestant tracts. Stocker was, says the DNB, a major contributor to the creation of international Calvinism.

[41] B. W. Young '"The Soul-Sleeping System": Politics and Heresy in Eighteenth-Century England', Journal of Ecclesiastical History, 45 (1994), 64-81; Anthony Page, John Jebb and the Enlightnement Origins of British Radicalism (London: Praeger, 2003) 69-70. Jebb, a clergyman, reforming don at Cambridge, and physician, was a great figure in London radicalism and an important figure in the efforts to combine the materialism of David Harley with Christianity.

First there are, the gradations of these dead, those who have not really left at all and who stay near if no longer in their bodies. We have in general, since the seventeenth century, worried relatively little about precisely how long the dead body and the person it was co-exist. (Certain tradition of modern Judaism, based on Kabbalah do worry a lot about this and insist up very rapid burial even at the risk of burying someone who is still alive because of the dangers of sprits hanging around their bodies.)But the cultural weight of the question is part of our mental baggage and historical practice. The Rabbis of the Talmud debated the matter looking for a precise answer:

R. Hisda: A man's soul mourns for him [after death] seven whole [days] for it is said, And his soul mourneth for him; and it is written, and he made mourning for this father seven days.

R. Abbahu says a dead mans knows all that is said in his presence until the top-stone closes the grave, which is interpreted by others until the coffin lid is closed. They base this on Eccl12, 7 "And the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit return unto God.' In other words as soon as the body—dust—is buried that which animated it is with God.

R. Simeon and in a different context, R. Issac disagree. The dead man knows what is said in his presence and feels pain until his flesh rots away for it is written that "his flesh upon him hath pain and his soul within him mourneth,' Simeon makes the case more pointedly "Worms are as painful to the dead as a needle in the flesh of the living."[42]

Jesus waited a full four days-- the body was said to have already begun to putrify-- to raise Lazarus from the dead because by then, according to popular belief, his spirit will certainly have departed. Early Islam worried about similar matters and roughly the same timetable. And even if there is not much explicit discussion about the dead staying around the body in our period, mourners still acted as if someone was present at the customary funeral feast. Usually three or four days after the body's death it had its last occasion to host a meal of relatives and friends. A Durham County yeoman in 1612 left £ 6 to provide a dinner to make his neighbors "welcome for my last farewell to them out of this sinful world." [43]Funerary meals continued well into the nineteenth century although we do not know at how many of these the dead were still thought to be present. John Ferrier, the Manchester physician of the late eighteenth century, recounts among the superstitions of the poor that soul that its finding it difficult to leave the body-- a lingering soul-- can be hastened along by stripping the dying person of her clothes and or placing her on a pallet on the floor. Once dead those who lay out the poor are also, Ferrier, reports, overly anxious to open all the doors and windows of an apartment and expose the dead body to the air. He does not say whether this is to move the departed soul along. (He does suggest that such treatment sometimes revives the seemingly dead.) [44]In general, in the west and even more so in modern times, death is understood as being relatively abrupt: a soul leaves with some dispatch. But this does not necessarily mean that the dead are really gone.

In addition those souls who hang around a few days there is another a huge class

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[42] Babylonian Talmud Tractate Shabbath152a-b.

[43] Quoted in Houlbrooke, Death, Religion and Family... 275

[44] John Ferriar, Medical histories and reflections (London, 1798) vol 3, 198-203.

of the dead who have not finished their business with the living and who remain engaged with the lives, properties, and pleasures that they have irrevocably, but not entirely, left. By the eighteenth century they were probably not around much but they still maintained a hold on the imagination of the living. They had tales to tell and advice to give; vengeance to seek; they offered and asked for help, demanded, for example a proper, decent, appropriate place to rest or succor from the torments of where they were. They may have needed food and drink. Some, and these are deeply rooted in religious and secular culture, predicted the future.

The recently dead and buried Samuel is the proto-typical Biblical case. Disturbed by the witch of Endor, and very unhappy about it, he tells Saul that the next day the king too will be dead and Israel delivered to the Philistines. There is a certain irony in this since Saul had banned necromancy from his realm and might have known that God would be displeased by this interference with the peace of the dead. Eighteenth century commentators still took this seriously. Something had gone wrong, wrote an orthodox Anglican clergyman explaining the odd story to a "lady," Saul had "expected to converse with the *real* soul of *Samuel* and not with any spectre or Phantom;" perhaps the witch had cried out because there was "something extra-ordinary in the Appearance, more than she had been used to on like occasions."[45]

Fortune telling ghosts also subsisted in the long tradition of Virgil and Homer before him. The blind dead Tiresias says to Odysseus, when the hero approached him in Hades, that he should put away his sword so that "I may drink of the blood and speak truth to you." "The flawless seer spoke," wise in death as he had been in life, predicting and counseling Oddyeus about all that he would encounter on his travels home. Finally Tiresias allowed him to know about the circumstances of his own death: it shall come to you, he says,

> away from the sea, the gentlest imaginable, that shall lay you low when you are overcome with sleek old age, and your people shall be dwelling in prosperity around you.[46]

Indeed the dead might be said to see the future of nations. Anchises takes his son Aeneas to a mound above the river of Lethe from which they "scan all the long array," of souls as they are finally washed of their memories of an earlier existence and "note their countenances as the came." In this way the founding and early history of Rome can be told, as if the dead could see the future before it is thrust upon the world above.[47] I do not claim that such ghosts were frequenting eighteenth century England. I do claim that they were an important element of the vast repertoire for imaging the dead that the modern world inherited and re-worked from antiquity.

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[45] Thomas Dawson, <u>Dissertations on the following subjects' viz Samuel's appearance at Endor… written at the request of a lady…</u> (London 1727) 21-22.

[46] Odyssey, trans by A.T. Murray, revised by Georges E. Dimock, Loeb Classical Library, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press 1995) 11: 96-138

[47] Virgil, <u>Aeniad</u>, Book VI, 752-756 to 902, trans. H. Rushton Fairclough, revised ed. Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986)

There is a vast and cross-cultural arena for the work of the not quite dead that has very specific local histories and enters the modern period through other and different cultural pathways. There are Norse draugrs who can change the weather; they and other of the dead as well might be starving, hungry for meat, for blood, for life. The more humble dead, in much less and more common circumstances, may be present to the bereaved as innocuously as they had been in life —watching, caressing, and exuding the smells and other sensations of life.[48]

There are also quite specific social histories of the returning dead. Roman ghosts, for example, were ubiquitous. Then, the Church fathers, anxious to separate their religion from the religion of the pagans argued the ghosts of antiquity were really demons and not the spirits of the dead at all and that Christians should have no truck with them. Yes, of course God, could allow genuine ghosts to return to earth but, as a matter of fact, he did so only rarely. And when he did, communication should be left to experts. Necromancy was, and indeed remained, a dangerous business.[49]

The advent of Purgatory in full glory during the twelfth and thirteenth century all this changed. A vast in-between world of the dead was called into being; the Church was its guardian and sponsored an extensive, expensive, institutionally elaborate repertoire of ways in which the living could care for their dead: praying, paying others to pray, buying indulgences, and much more. To remember the dead and to care for them became one and the same thing; tens of thousands of clergy and great riches were devoted to the enterprise. More to the point, under these conditions the dead themselves came to have much more extensive unfinished business with the living. They started to appear much more often than they had before to report on how things were in this nether world, to rouse the consciences of the living, and to make specific requests. Their business with the living increased dramatically and a whole genre of literature grew up reporting directly or indirectly on these encounters; deciding on whether a visitation was real or diabolical became in itself an art.   From the perspective of the historian if not the believer, the social history of the work of the dead and the institutional history of a Church neatly coincide.

The abolition of purgatory in Protestant Europe– of the intermediary venues where the individual dead men and women dwelt and from which they came to make demands on the living— and the increasing vigilance of Church authorities over traffic with the dead made ghosts less frequent in the world of the living than they had been before. The educated classes everywhere also became more skeptical of about the existence of ghosts just as they did about witches. But ghosts had always had a

[48] Gillian Bennett and Kate Mary Bennett, "The Presence of the Dead: an Empirical Study,: Mortality, 5, 2, July 2000, 139-157.
[49]   This and the following paragraph draw heavily on Jean-Claude Schmitt,… See on these themes Stephen Greenblatt, Hamlet in Purgatory, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001. His account of the fourteenth century Gast of Gy is a wonderfully rich account of a text that deals with what the dead want with the living, with how the Church mediates the conversation as well as with the psychological responses of all sides. Pp. 105-137.

problematic status. "Spectre and apparition make a great noise in the world," says Daniel Defoe at the beginning of his long 1736 book that tried to settle the matter. Between our ancestors who believed in them too strenuously and "the present Age endeavoring wholly to explode and despise them, the world seems hardly ever to have come at a right understanding about them." Defoe concludes that there are no actual ghosts, i.e. nowandering spirits or souls of the dead-- otherwise there would be more of them around seeing to the proper execution of their testamentary wishes-- and that what we see are really apparitions. These, he thinks, mostly represent kindly angels who presumably communicate some of the things people think they hear from real ghosts.[50] But the issue is never really settled and perhaps it does not matter much.

  In the most notorious cases eighteenth cases ghosts did very little of consequence beyond exciting controversies about whether they existed. Defoe had made a short foray into the question in 1706 when he wrote about the specter of Mrs. Veal who visited a friend, a Mrs. Bargrave, whom she had grievously neglected in life. He is unwilling to commit himself to whether any of this really happened; for a long time people thoiught the whole thing was a fiction; and ever since Sit Walter Scott wrote on the subject there seemed a good case to be made that the ghost showed up with little more in mind other than praising a book about being dead that was not selling as well as its, and Defoe's, publisher might have hoped. (Defoe's tract was often appended to the book that the ghost had recommended, Charles Drelincourt's "The Christian Defence against the Fears of Death."[51]

  The notorious "Cock Lane ghost" captivated London in late 1761 and early 1762 by rapping yes and no answers to queries put to her by the publican who owned the rooms where she had lived. She had died not of smallpox but been murdered by her husband she seems to have said by knocking ion the wainscoting. In February, 1762 when a distinguished committee that included the not very skeptical Samuel Johnson took up the ghost's promise—made by further knocks— that she would knock on the coffin of her sister in St. John's vault the story unraveled. (The publican's wife was at heart of the fraud.)[52] It was story that would repeat itself in the late nineteenth century's version of

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[50] Daniel Defoe, An essay on the History and reality of apparitions; being an account of what they are and what they are not..." (London 1727) Preface, n.p. There is a well documented modern edition which sets this text in context ed. by Kit Kincaid (New York: AMS Press, 2007)

[51] C.H. Firth, "Defoe's True Relation of the Apparition of Mrs. Veal," Review of English Studies 7 (25) January 1931, 1-6. The Eighteenth Century Short Title Catalogue suggests Drelincourt did come to sell well. It lists nineteen one of which declres itself to the twenty-second. There are least thirteen free-standing editions of Defoe's short tract.

[52] For this see Clery, E.J., The Rise of the Supernatural Fiction, (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995) particularly pp. 13-32. The contemporary literature on this ghost is enormous-- she held the popular presses undivided attention for weeks and no less a writer than Oliver Goldsmith collected and embellished on her clippings. Later, nineteenth century writers, connected her to further rappings, knocking and the like elsewhere by other unquiet spirits.

ghost stories, accounts of spirits who knocked and bumped tables and clouded photographic plates. This is more the horseplay than the work of the dead; William James wondered why the creatures he was investigating were so boring.

In short, the dead with business among the living did not disappear from the popular imagination or even the interests of the more educated although they seemed to be engaged in less consequential matters. But they did continue to hover more seriously in the background. The potentially unquiet souls of suicides in England were kept in their place by burying the body at a cross roads with a stake through the heart still in the early nineteenth century.[53]

The spirits of the dead in our world also found a new place in the imagination and hence the social world of the living in the late nineteenth century explosion of the occult. However many frauds were exposed the dead did not disappear. Or to put it more precisely, while the question that in the sixteenth century is still deeply imbricated in the unsettled status of Purgatory and that haunts the opening scene of Hamlet— only he sees his dead father-- had shifted. But their power over our minds had not. "As if…" will do. "The souls of the Dead," writes Joseph Addison in the most important and widely read journal of the early eighteenth century,

> appear frequently in cemeteries and hover about the place where their bodies are buried, *as if* hankering about the old brutal pleasures and desiring again to enter the body.[54]

Almost three hundred years later the power of "as if" but in a gentler mood is still captivating. The rural cemeteries of Bohemia, says the narrator of The Unbearable Lightness of Being, sparkle with tiny candles at dusk: "It looks as though thye deads are dancing at a children's ball. Yes, a children's ball, because the dead are as innocent as children." No matter how brutal the times-- Hitler, Stalin-- these places were peaceful, "beautiful as a lullaby."

[55]In the Enlightenment ghosts entered the mind. (Or at least it did for some. In 2003 a Harris Poll found that 51% of Americans thought ghosts really exist. Mercifully the older one gets the less likely we are to be among this number: only 35% of those 25-29 are skeptical, 73% of those over sixty four.) The rationalists of the eighteenth century did not, however, so much kill the ghosts of old as translate them into a new realm of the uncanny, into the realm of "as if," as if one were in the presence of the un-natural or the supernatural. When ghosts became thoughts, as the literary critic Terry Castle argues, "the mind became subject to spectral presences…. [B]y relocating the world of ghosts in

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[53] Cheshire Notes and Queries, 4, 1884, March 29, 1884, 43. Until the late eighteenth century murderers were still being gibbted at Stockport Moor casuing passers by to avoide the place. At some point neighbors cut down the pole, buried the bones, and sold the iron to a blacksmith. Suicides were buried at he intersection of Turncroft Lane and the Roman road near Vernon park

[54] Dr. Johnson uses this quotation from Spectator 99 in his dictionary to illustrate the word "cemetery."

[55] Milan Kundera, The Unbearable Lightness of Being, translated by Michael Henry Heim (Perennial Classics) 104.

the closed space of the imagination, one ended up supernaturalising the mind itself."[56]

  This is the world in which the German writer Arnold Zweig (1887-1968) told Sigmund Freud that a continuous stream of broken faces, deaths head, faces of men lying down and more had started to come into the visual field of his right eye. Two thirds of an explanation for these "optical phantoms," he writes, is of the "man in the moon" sort: Moonshine, tricks of the mind. But of the last third he is not yet prepared to speak. "It could be," he writes, "that what is standing behind these always new dead faces of the dead is my feelings of guilt with respect to my father and my father-in-law." He wants to deal with these analytically before he reports any further.[57]

  That these faces are either tricks of the eye or hauntings of the mind might seem obvious to modern readers but their relation to history and to the psyche is worth studying. "Neither dreams for the analyst, nor hallucinations for the psychiatrist…" argues a leading modern historian of the human face, Zweig's images are "but blank, physiologically explicable projections…" of physiognomic types. He was, she suggests, thinking of death masks "nearer the corpse than a picture" that became popular in the late eighteenth century and all the rage in the nineteenth. Whether this is true or not is less interesting to me than the powerful way in which his ghosts are inside and projections of what in an earlier age might be understood more starightforwardly as the product of not having put the dead properly to rest. (Zweig was a man engaged with faces who published a book of pictures of east European Jews in an effort to make German Jews like himself moiré kindly disposed toward them.) The passion for death mask was to a great extent a product of phrenology that held that the character of a person could be read from the contours of the head. Casts of the dead could thus uncannily bring them back to life. The largest collection in the United States was assembled for this purpose; the British Phrenological Journal offers its reader many articles on the subject.[58] Even, or perhaps especially, in progressive scientific circles the dead are not quite dead and remain among the living.

  In fact, the dead haunt he living even when it is quite clear that they do not and cannot exist. They are dead. Janos Kader, the communist prime minister of Hungary after the 1956 Revolution in Hungary refused to speak the name of its deposed leader Imre Nagy, whom he had murdered and had dumped into a mass grave at the Budapest Zoo, for fear that saying the necronym would bring political disaster. This was the case despite

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[56] Terry Castle, The Female Thermometer: eighteenth-century culture and the invention of the Uncanny (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995) 8. Castle's work provided for the the context for the next two paragraphs as did Colin Davis' Haunted subjects: Deconstruction, Psychoanalysis and the Return of the Dead (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007) 1-19, although his whole book is about the re-apprearance of the dead among the living in contemporary popular culture.

[57] Freud- Zweig, Briefwechsel , 1968. S. 22 ff quoted in Claudia Schmölders, "Das ewige Antlitz ein Weimarer Totenkult," p. 250 in Schmölders and Sander L. Gilman, eds. Gesichter der Weimarer Republik (Köln: Dumont, 2000); p 250-251,

[58] Schmölders "Das ewige Antlitz…" 254. See Lawrence Hutton, Death Masks: Portraits in Plaster (New York: Harper and Row 1894). Hutton's collection is in the Princeton University Library.

the fact that Kadar shared none of the "beliefs" of south Pacific islanders who fear saying the names of the dead lest they return a spirits to earth and would not accept a psychoanalytical account of the sort Zweig gives. In a strange way Kadar seems to have fallen victim to what the philosopher Slavoj Žižek thinks of as the "fundamemtal fantasy of contemporary mass culture:" the return of the dead because they were not properly buried. "Something went wrong with their obsequies," and they come back as "the sign of a disturbance in the symbolic order."

The return of the dead is not a specifically modern obsession. Freud gets this right. There is a continuity between earlier worries and those of today. We experience, he says, the feeling of the uncanny in the highest degree in relation to death and dead bodies and to ghosts and spirits writes:

> There is scarcely another matter upon which our thoughts and feelings have changed so little since the earliest times, and in which discarded forms have been so completely preserved under a thin disguise, as our relation to death.

It is a very long way from Epicurus and Diogenes to a Lacanian psychoanalytical analysis of the haunting powers of the dead but it does bring us to a place from which I can define more fully what I mean by "the dead." They are whose bodies are treated as dead—buried, burnt, tossed into the sea-- but who remain powerful in the imagination of the living under very different assumptions about what or where they *really* are or indeed *whether* they are anything. The dead, in short, are a powerful category of the imagination and the corpse is their token then and now. And, as such they-- the corpse and whatever the dead are or are not-- play an important role in the affairs of this world. It appears to be impossible to live for long with the stark sophism of Diogenes whatever one might believe.

I do not, by saying this, want to deny that specific views about the other world—that of the dead—have had enormous impact on social, political and cultural life of people everywhere: the building of the pyramids; monastic communities that prayed for the dead; all sorts of feasting; human and animal sacrifice. I do not want to deny that understanding ghosts as real presences in the world has different consequences from understanding them as phantoms of the mind. Accounts of how this difference matters fill anthropology and history books. But I want to suggest that there is a deeper story here that connects what we do with the dead and that stands outside specific beliefs.

It is a story that once again addresses the argument that Diogenes made to his interlocutors. And once again, we can look to St. Augustine. He tells the faithful that hey must no believe "fabulous poetic imaginings" of pagans on the fate of the unburied or uncared for dead. He is referring to the part of Vergil's Aeneid (6: 348-394) where, in the marshes of the River Styx, there waits a "huge throng of the dead" —"mothers and grown men and ghosts of great souled heroes, their bodies tripped of life, and boys and unwed girls…" a helpless "great rout," who the ferryman Charon will not take because they have not been properly buried:

> And no spirits may be conveyed
> Across the horrendous banks and hoarse, roaring flood

Until their bones are buried and they rest in peace… [59]

The fate of the soul has nothing to do with the fate of the body. But if it were not Vergil's "fantastic poetic imaginings" that explains why "the bodies of the dead, especially of the just and faithful, are not be despised or cast aside" there are many, many other reasons. Augustine gives some of these-- caring for the dead is a sign of piety, of love and affection, of religious devotion. Reasons are spoken of or intuited in other, equally imaginative if less poetic, language that Virgil's through the ages. This book is about the work of the dead in this world that is only possible because they remain so deeply and complexly present. I have recounted a variety of stories from different times and different traditions because they are the historical ground out of which the actors in my story will come.

What is the work of the dead?

I should be clear. I will not be writing about the work and social life of the dead in some other world, or in world to come, or even in our world where they might appear as ghosts. How this was imagined of course had an enormous and sometimes decisive impact on how dead bodies were supposed to be treated. A view of what the dead were doing justified norms for their treatment and more generally created the imaginative structures for the extended process of seeing them slowly out of this world while also keeping them present. However specific to archaic Greece, the conversation of Patroclus with Achilles also structures a relationship between the living and the dead that is more universal. The just dead Patroclus could not have put this more succinctly or poignantly: "Thou sleepest and has forgotten me" his spirit, so lifelike, says to Achilles during the night. "Bury me with all speed that I might pass with the gates of Hades." Unburied, he roams amongst the "Phantoms of men" who will not yet let the dead hero join them. The work of this once great hero is no longer battle but making sure that he can definitively enter the nether world: "never more again shall I come back from out of Hades, when once ye have given me my due of fire." It was an extra-ordinary "due," a magnificent cremation that would release his spirit from his bones and flesh. Whole forests – "measureless wood" for the pyre—were culled from the forests; brave Trojan captives were slain and thrown on the flames; nine dogs their throats cut were cast in as well; wine was poured on the fire all manner of other obsequies duly performed by Achilles; and finally, Achilles and his comrades took his bones and ashes from the center of a fire, wrapped them the fat a sacrificed bull and placed them in a golden urn that was put in a burrow. Magnificent games followed. The visit of the ghost had not been in vain.[60]

But even without voices from another world, imagined activities after death determined where the dead body would go. The dying King in Fridthjofs Saga wants to be buried near the howe of a dead friend so that he can easily call greetings from grave to

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[59]Virgil, <u>The Aeniad</u>, trans. By Robert Fagels (New York: Penquin Books, 2006) 6: 348-394, pp 192-193; Augustine, *De Cura Mortuum Gerenda* II.3-4.6, XVIII. 22,

[60] (Iliad 23:071- 23:897) Hector's body was saved from an ignominious burial not by his ghost but by the intervention of the gods who make Achilles return the body to his father.

grave. There is a long history in the west of burying friends and lovers together at their own request for a variety of post mortem lives: priests and scholars in the late medieval period who would share in the grave the brotherhood and intimacy they had shared in life; eighteenth century friends near one another to unite their families; John Henry Cardinal Newman who insisted in his will that he be buried with his friend Fr Ambrose St. John so they could create the Second Coming of Jesus together; Heathcliffe and Catherine in their parallel coffins at the end of Wurthering Heights. Even before the creation of freehold property in cemeteries allowed all but the very prominent to guarantee the burial of families together, relatively modest people did what they could to stay in proximity with deceased loved ones. The rich and powerful, with their customary claims on choice parts of the church and their influence over the clergy, had always been able to stay together, wives with their husbands, parents with children. These dead keep families together. [61]

There are also many other less benign, more spectacular, more literal ways in which people of other times and places have construed the work of the dead in relation to the living. Chinese worker-dead, the tens of thousands of men, women, and children were, over the centuries, beaten into the ramparts of the tombs of the Shang emperors or great lord to serve them in death as they had in life. Hundreds made up the largest of these brigades. Some were probably prisoners—the usual victims for human sacrifice—whose bodies were broken before they were buried—beheaded, dismembered. Others were the slaves and higher status servants of the tomb's main resident who were buried whole and who were clearly meant to carry on their labors in death as in life. Some emperors took with them concubines who were only freed from their labors when royal tombs were destroyed in the Cultural Revolution. Guards were buried with helmets and realistic weapons of bronze and stone; chariots carried hem to their work in the next life. Workman had their knives, adzes, drills, and saws. The royal dead of Ur took their retinues with them as well, perhaps not peacefully by having them take poison but by driving stakes through their skulls. But these are quite other worlds with other labors than those we will encounter. Well, not quite. Under radically different sets of assumptions, people much nearer to ourselves believed that they could make the work of the living into the work of the dead. The nineteenth century novelist Louisa May Alcott died in 1888 but a few days after hher famnous father, the transcendentalist philosopher and education reformer Amos Bronson Alcott. She asked in her will that she be buried at the foot of her parents' grave so as, she says speaking of herself in the third person, "to take care of them as she had done all her life." There she lies still.[62]

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[61]I draw these examples except for the invention of Emily Bronte and Fridthjofs Saga, from Alan Bray's remarkable book, The Friend (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003) On the general wish to stay roughly together in churchyards see Vanessa harding, The Dead and the Living in Paris and London 61-62.

[62]   David Keightley, Shang Civilization,   New Haven, Conn.: Yale UniversityPress, Particularly pp. 110 --124. See also Keightley (1999:12-16) for the Neolithic origins of the custom: "At the Beginning: The Status of Women in Neolilthic and Shang China", Men, Women and Gender in Early and Imperial China 1:1-62 and his forthcoming "Working for His Majesty;" Harriet Reisen, Louisa May Alcott (New York: Holt, 2009)

We might also tell stories of the dead of other species who serve their human masters in death as in life: the hunting dogs buried with their owners on the northern plains of America or the dogs—perhaps just friends—found in Neolithic Scandinavian graves; the mummified cats, ibises, crocodiles, and bulls populate Egyptian tombs by the tens of millions, some as sacrificial messengers to the gods and others—animals that were pets—as companions to dead humans; the magnificent horses, Herodotus reports, were buried with their Scythian lords.[63] All of these inhabit a world very different from those creatures who were simply thrown on rubbish heaps. Grave goods supply the material needs of these grave people and grave animals, supplies for what the dead had to do in their world.

There is the work of the dead across and between worlds: the work of the special dead—the Saints who are with God- and who intercede on the behalf of supplicants and the work of the restless, nor quite dead—the ghosts and sprits which could range from nudging the living to help in some way to quite specialized tasks like fortune telling.

But my interest is not what the dead do elsewhere but with what they do here, or specifically with how we imagine our own or other's people's deaths and dead bodies in this world. I think this is contingently related to how we imagine what specifically happens in their world but necessarily connected our deeply grounded feeling that they are still somehow, somewhere, and that they matter.

Even in an enchanted world it took a great deal of fancy cultural footwork to make the insignificant bodies of the dead the center of much, but not too much, importance. They were dust. But making them mean something would not have seemed like a modern anthropological magic show to most people before the Enlightenment. That said, the dead were never just like the living; access to them was always something very different. If this were not the case we, and they, would not be mortal. Without the gap between what the dead are and what we take them to mean this book—and a great deal of religion, art, politics, and poetry—would not be.

I number myself among the un-enchanted; I take the work of the dead to be one of the great tricks of culture. There is, I am sure, nothing "real" behind it. But as I have tried to show it has always taken a great imaginative leap to make something, but not too much, corpses. If the things magicians did were, in fact "real," they would lose much interest. Instead, as Dave Hickey writes,

> [We] simply take pleasure in seeing the impossible appear possible and the invisible made visible. Because if these illusions were not just illusions, we should lot be what we are: mortal creatures who miss our dead friends, and thus can appreciate levitating tigers and portraits by Raphael for what they are—songs of mortality sung by the prisoners of time.[64]

Why does the dead body matter?

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[63]   Christine El Mady, <u>Mummies, Myth and Magic</u> (London: Thames and Hudson, 1989, pp. 158-169.
[64] Hickey, <u>Air Guitar,</u> <u>op cit.</u> 189.

I come now to the second part of this chapter's title which I might rephrase to ask "why is it that no culture anywhere, at least not under any but the most horrible circumstances, has been able to treat the dead body as trash and nothing but?" To rephrase the question a third time, "what is claim of the dead upon the living."

There is, of course, no answer as such. All I can do is gesture to a vast body of literature and philosophy and practice that collectively bears witness to the fact that what we do with dead bodies has great import, that it is often parallel to, and yet very differently, important than what we do with living bodies, and that the work of the dead in one era has determined their work in another. A primal anthropology of the dead informs the specific historical practices of an era.

The most general answer I might give is that the dead body appropriates the reflected, self-evident importance of death in organizing a worthwhile life. Or even more generally, the dead body is sign of Death whose recognition seems to stand at the cusp of the entry of humans into culture. (More on this in a moment.) The first, more philosophically inflected claim, has a long history in western thought. Michel Montaigne's famous claim that "he who would teach men to die would teach them to live," echoes a long tradition. Cicero says that to philosophize is to learn how to die." Socrates, asked whether "the separation of the soul from the body is the pre-occupation of the philosophers," answers yes and that "those who practice philosophy in the right way are in training for dying, and they fear death least of all men." (Ph 67d-e) And Lucretius and Epicurus who have a very different, materialist view of what death is-- no immaterial eternal soul for them-- also think that it is a sign of philosophical wisdom to be able to die without fear because there is nothing to fear about being nothing again as one had been before birth. There is a very long list of views in this philosophical tradition and a parallel one in the teaching of most religions and secular ideologies. Death, as the poet William Empson, writes bears the burdens of our very biggest ideas:

Liberal hopefulness
Regards death as a mere border to an improving picture.

Then there is the civilizing love of death by which
Even music and painting tell you what else to love.

Buddhists and Christians contrive to agree about death
Making death their ideal basis for different ideas.
The Communists however disapprove of death
Except when practical.

Because we have neither hereditary nor direct knowledge of
        death
It is the trigger to the literary man's biggest gun.
And we are happy to equate it with any conceived calm.

Otherwise, I feel blank upon this topic
And think that though important, and proper for anyone to bring up,

It is one that most people should be prepared to be blank upon.[65]

I am clearly not prepared to remain entirely blank on the subject but take from Empson the point that its oceanically vast repertoire of meaning will help explain why Diogenes was wrong and the dead body matters.

It does not follow from any of this, of course, that the dead body should matter; the nature and fate of the dead body of Jesus is of central importance to Christian traditions; the dead body of Socrates is irrelevant to the vast interpretive tradition that has engaged with what his death and specific utterances made as he prepared for it mean for an understanding of his views more generally. Death could, in principle, matter a great deal, while what becomes of the body could be inconsequential.

Martin Heidegger, for whom Death is of a central philosophical importance, offers a reason for why this is not the case. "In ending and in the totality thus constituted of *Da-Sein* [from the ordinary German word for existence, *dasein*, being there, but meaning here the human entity as a coherent Being-in-the World] there is essentially no representation," he argues. That is, it is impossible to experience or to grasp Being when it is finished, when it is no more even though that would be the only condition under which it could be grasped. The dead body under these circumstances becomes a vehicle-- ultimately futile-- for trying to comprehend "no-longer being there," by allowing us to imagine our own death—Death— through the death of another as represented by the dead body. In other words, as Heidegger puts it "When Da-Sein reaches its wholeness in Death, it simultaneously loses the being of the there;" we think we can somehow circumvent this truth by keeping the "not being" of others in this world.

Contra Diogenes, we distinguish the "merely being objectively present" condition of the dead body, from a lifeless, immaterial thing. The dead body is more; it is something *unliving* and not just a thing. And likewise funeral rites allow us to be with the no longer present deceased in the terms of this—our—world. (The greatest nineteenth century collector of death masks, Laurence Hutton (1843-1904), explains what makes casts of the dead face so revealing in terms that Heidegger would have understood: "What life makes fugitive, death arrests. What was indefinable is defined.") [66]

In other words, the relationship we maintain with the dead is a consequence of the

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[65] "Ignorance of Death", in John Haffenden (ed.) The Complete Poems (London: Allen Lane 2000) 78. The poet himself seems attracted to a sort of impersonal immoratality. Who first in Europe," he writes to his friend Christopher Ricks "ever thought that the soul after death returns like a drop of water to the sea?" Or for that matter in Asia either." The answer, from his reading of Norman Cohn, seems to been Plotinus who Empson vows to try to read again. 3 August 1967, 456-457 in Selected Letters of William Empson, ed. John Haffenden.

[66] Martin Heidegger, Being and Time, trans. Joan Stambaugh (State University of Nw York Press: Albany, 1996) II. 1, 237-238, pp 221-222; Laurence Hutton, Portraits in Plaster: From the Collection of Laurence Hutton (Nee York: Harper, 1894) xiv. He is quoting the eighteenth century German father of physiognomy, Johan Kaspar Lavater.

philosophical difficulties with Death itself that we translate into the phenomenology of living with the dead. The corpse becomes an icon, a way of making present something that is not or something that is radically different-- a soul subsisting somewhere-- that cannot be present or grasped. Burying it is thus a representation of a drama yet to unfold. It is in this sense that late nineteenth century clerics objected to cremation because it destroyed the iconic significance of burial as a representation of the state from which the dead will rise at the end of time. (The, the conditions for comprehending "Dasein", the use Heidegger's terms, would be fulfilled.) Or, how we speak of the dead body as evidence, says Tertiullian, for the fact that, whatever his opponents might say-- he has Epicurus especially in mind-- we act as if there were a soul which lives, cares, and will be united with the "dowry of the body": if this were not so why would pagans curse the memory of their enemies with "may the earth lie heavy" on them and their ashes be tormented. (*Sit tibi terra levis*-- "May the earth lie lightly upon thee," a common grave inscription abbreviated as S.T.T.L.)[67] In short, the most egregious evidence of Death is the dead body and its cultural *gravitas* weighs upon it.

But corpse turns out to be anthropologically central whether for this reason or not. Our species lives with its dead, materially and imaginatively; it is *a*, if not *the*, sign of our emergence from the order of nature into culture. It is, as the philosopher Hans- Georg Gadamer puts it, "the immutable anthropological background for all the human and social changes, past or present, " and, he continues,

> …the burial of the dead is perhaps the fundamental phenomena of being human. Burial does not refer to a rapid hiding of the dead, a swift clearing away of the shocking impression made by one suddenly struck fast in leaden and lasting sleep. On the contrary, by a remarkable expenditure of human labor there is sought an abiding with the dead, indeed a holding fast of the dead amongst the living….We have to regard this in its most elementary significance. It is not as religious matter or a transposition of religion into secular customs, mores, and so on. Rather it is a matter of the fundamental constitution of human being from which derives the specific sense of human practice; we are dealing here with life that has spiraled out of the order of nature. [68]

I think this is roughly right. Gadamer's use of the phrase "elementary significance," put us in mind of Claude Levi Strauss' Elementary Structures of Kinship which argues that the incest taboo stands at the border of humans as being in nature and in culture. (Universal as the laws of nature; a norm and thus cultural.) Burying the dead, "holding fast" to them and making them the bearers of memory, shares this. I not really concerned here whether, in fact, care of the dead is or is not conterminous with culture-- "the fundamental constitution of human being from which derives the specific sense of

[67] Tertullian, Testimony of the Soul, trans Rudolph Arbesmann, O.S.A., *et. al.*, (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press) 137-38.

[68]Hans-Georg Gadamer, Reason in the Age of Science, p. 75

human practice." There was no such moment or such a border; it is the creation of fictive anthropology. All I need for now is that in contemporary debates and as far back as people have thought about the subject, care of the dead is regarded as foundational-- of religion, of civilization itself.

Debates over whether Neanderthals buried their dead today, as in the nineteenth century, are not about the principle of the matter. Had they engaged in "purposeful burials," it would be taken by everyone as evidence for "symbolic behavior; " evidence of ritual treatment of the dead suggests an idea about an afterlife or "an emotional capacity equal to our own." Funeral rites have long stood with tool making-- now no longer a very secure divide-- and language-- more secure but not definitive-- as the defining moment where and human and natural history part company. The debates are about facts in the ground and how they ought to be interpreted. Are the few intact Neanderthal skeletons that have been found evidence for burial rather than of geological sedimentary processes. Would the absence of burial distinguish Neanderthal from homo sapiens? (There are apparently morphologically human creatures for whom we have no burial evidence.) That said, anthropologists seem agreed that burial does mark "the profound changes that differentiated the [upper Paleolithic] (40,000 to c 10,000 b.c.e) from the Middle Paleolithic," and that grave goods, grave alignment, the use of ochre and other decorations, etc. do bear witness to a new "symbolic, cognitive and social environment."[69]

Gianbattista Vico, one of the greatest of the proponents of eighteenth century speculative historical anthropology, would have agreed. He thought that burial of the dead was one of the three "universal institutions of humanity" that produced and continued to sustain civil society.[70] The other two "universal institutions" are matrimony

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[69] Robert H. Gargett, "The Evidence for Neanderthal Burial," [with fourteen replies] Current Anthropology 30, 2, (April 1989) 157-90/ The author thinks all earlier evidence is suspect and that the placement of skeletons can be interpreted as he result of geomorphology. This and what it means is disputed. Giacomo Giacobini, "Richness and Diversity of Burial Rituals in he Upper Paleolithic," Diogenes 214, 19, and 19-39 passim. He uses Italian evidence of graves to date the upper Paleolithic to around 40,000. Paul Mellars, the leading expert in the field, thinks burials do define a moment c 40,000 but pushes "modern" humans back to c 70,000 and to Africa based on evidence of tools: "Neanderthals and the modern human colonization of Europe ," Nature 42, 25 November 2004, 461-65 (review article). My interest is not resolve the question but to pointy to the centrality of burial evidence in various answers. Whether, in fact, burial rather than cremation, was the aboriginal mode of disposing of the human dead was as much debated in the nineteenth century as it had been in the Roman Republic. Cicero thought that burial came first, a sort of natural return to ones Mother. Nineteenth century proponents of cremation argued for the symbolic primacy of fire. But for the history of living with the dead the answer is irrelevant. Cremation before the use of steel-making furnace technology did not leave tidy small remains; the burnt bodies of antiquity and medieval non-Christian Europe were materially substantial and demanded care.

[70] Giambattista Vico, *The New Science*, trans, by Thomas Goddard Bergin and Max

and religion but they too come back quickly to the dead. The living stand between the dead ancestors and their own progeny; the primal *lex* – the law of genealogy-- that creates the family or the clan as an institution, connects the unborn and the dead and projects into historical time. It is, Cicero thought, the family or the clan who are responsible for the proper care of the dead. Religion and the dead, he thought were also intimately connected a directly and through the family. Because "graves are the object of so much religious veneration," he thought that it was, as a question of natural law, wrong to bury in them corpses belong to another family and also that they be buried on public property because it ought "not to receive a sacred character through rites performed by private individuals."[71] (The appropriation of the special dead to create new sorts of public-- communal is probably a better word-- places is, of course, exactly what fourth and five centuries Christians did.)

Again, the point is not whether Vico and Cicero are factually correct. Although both adduce empirical evidence for their claims both are clearly engaged in a sort of historical, philosophically inflected, fictive anthropology that offers no hard answers. But both write as if it were perfectly clear, and in accord with right order, that people act as if care of the dead-- burying them, remembering them properly-- stands at a cultural ground zero. Necro-topology and necro-mnemonics if not in fact, then in the views of a long tradition of commentary, have been interpreted as general signs of human activity-- of humanness-- and as a way of doing specific cultural work. The great encyclopedias of the eighteenth century echo these view; they had become a commonplace among the educated. Diderot and d'Alembert's great compilation explains that burial or its equivalent falls under natural law but also human law and the concept of justice itself. It is of the essence of humanity "to not allow human bodies to rot or to leave them to be preyed upon by the beasts." Chamber's, its English equivalent, is a little cagier-- a littloe more on to Diogenese-- but points in the same direction:

> The desire of burial has been strong in most ages, and the denial of it reputed the last and severest of punishments; yet the Cynics appear to have despised it; and Pliny ranks the concern for it in the number of weaknesses peculiar to man…. [72]

Harold Fisch (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984) para. 12, p. 8. There is a huge amount of social historical evidence for the general drift of Vico's argument. Where one sees mounds of earth marking the places of the dead there one sees the work of civilization *tout court* as well as the particular work of a particular civilization: burial mounds are evidence of human work and, in Anglo- Saxon Britain the burial mounds of previous owners of land constituted border markers of holdings; legitimate possession of land was to know its provenance, to know where those who had held it before were buried. Claiming land with the dead goes back to the translation of Joseph's bones if not earlier.

[71] Cicero, <u>The Laws</u>, trans. Clinton Walker Keyes, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1928, 1968) II, xxii, 55, II, xxiii, 58 (pp. 439 and 445).

[72] Encyclopdie, entry, SEPULTURE (*Droit naturel.*) Le droit de *sépulture* est fondé sur la loi de l'humanité, & en quelque façon même sur la justice. Il est de l'humanité de ne pas laisser des cadavres humains pourrir, ou livrés en proie aux bêtes; Chambers Encyclopedia, 1753, entry "burial."

Gadamer's point that through a vast "expenditure of human labor there is sought an abiding with the dead, indeed a holding fast of the dead amongst the living…." points to another set of origin stories about the consequences of keeping them with us. These draw our attention to the danger of representing the dead either, through an image or through the synecdoche of their bones. The most important Anglican collection of sermons, first published by the English reformed church in the reign of Elizabeth to explain key points of doctrine and reprinted scores of times well into the nineteenth century, argues, for example, that the human need to live with the dead is the basis of idolatry in general. It did not, however, invent the claim.[73] The Hellenistic Jewish Book of Wisdom had invested memory of the dead with a remarkable cultural potency:

> For a father afflicted with untimely mourning, when he hath made an image of his child soon taken away. Now honoured him as a god, which was then a dead man, and delivered to those that were under him, ceremonies and sacrifices. Thus in the process of time an ungodly custom grown strong, was kept as a law, and graven images were worshiped by the commandments of kings.[74]

The Protestant gloss makes the point in a more up-to-date way. "The origins of images and the worshipping of them thus begins," it says, "in the blind love of a fond father." He made an image of his dead son for his own comfort-- here comes a dazzling extrapolation-- "and so at last Men fell to worshipping the image of him whom they know to be dead." And, if this is true for the image of a dead mortal, the preacher continues, how much more so for the image of God, or his Son, or saints if they are allowed to remain in churches. He offers the most corporeal of analogies: given "Man's nature to idolatry," erecting an idol, as did the father to his dead son, is "as for a man given to lust, to sit down by a strumpet." In both cases it is to tempt God. Such views did not translate easily into policy; monuments continued to be made to the dead in the churches of Reformed England. But idolatry continued to be seen as a temptation and at its heart, so said a canonical Anglican homily, was the effort to represent the absent dead body and the person that it had. (Bones in the Protestant imagination, of course, are the more usual route to the same place. "Why might no one know where Moses Sepulcher was?" asked a radical anti-Laudian writer in 1642? The answer is, "For fear of idolatrous worship; had the people known the place they would have worshiped the mould there, and kissed his bones." Moses stood in sharp contrast to Joseph whose bones he retrieved before leaving Egypt; they were carried in an ark through the whole of the travails of the

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[73] Certain Sermons or Homilies Appointed to be Read in Churches in the Time of the Late Queen Elizabeth (London, 1713) "The Third part of the Sermon against the Perils of Idolatry."

[74] The Book of Wisdom is a Hellenistic Jewish text written in Greek that was translated in Jerome's Vulgate and was declared by the Council of Trent to be a canonical book of the Bible. It was translated and included in the so-called Apocrypha by King James' team. The verse I cite is from Wisdom KJ version. 14: 15-16. The Homilies , see next note, claim it is in chapter 8. I cannot find it there in any sixteenth century translation but clearly the text I quote is the one it had in mind.

Children of Israel and when they came to rest in he land of Canaan, they did create a claim on land if not a claim to worship.)[75]

With this story of the origins of idolatry we could put the related origin stories of the origin of art in human efforts to live among our dead. Pliny tells the story of the Roman scholar Marcus Varro who put portraits of seven hundred famous people in his books thus bestowing upon them an sort of immortality that even the gods would envy, one that could be "dispatched… all over the world." Art itself was born, he speculates, in the tracing of shadows-- perhaps of a dead or absent lover-- to make loss more bearable. This story we see informing Poussain's painting "Et in Arcadia Ego" where the shepherds discover death by tracing the outlines of a shadow on a tomb in Arcadia.[76]

It was God, however, so goes another story, who taught our common parents to bury the dead in he first place. Adam and Eve, after they became mortal and thus fully human, were sitting about, mourning and weeping for their son murdered by his brother Cain. They had never seen a corpse before and knew nothing about the care of the dead. God clearly was not on the side of Diogenes: a dog that had guarded Abel's flocks protected his master's body from the beasts and the birds that would have devoured. Then the Lord intervened and taught Adam what to do. A raven had fallen dead by his side; another raven came, took dug a hole in the ground, took hold of his companion, and placed the dead bird in the grave. "I will do as this raven did," Adam responded and buried the body of Abel. It is a strange story about how the beasts know more about the foundation of culture than do humans, about dogs who know that tossing a body over the walls won't do and birds who teach humans about inhumation. But it is God who translates their knowledge for Adam's use and thus supports the kind of claim that Gadamer made.[77]

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[75] Homilies…against the peril of Idolatry… 152-153; Margaret Aston, "Art and Idolatry: Reformed Funeral Monuments," in Tara Hamling and Richard L. Williams, eds. Art Reformed: Re-assessing the impact of the Reformation on the Visual Arts (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Newcastle, 2007) "The dead were dangerous for reformers," she argues, 246 ff. although the importance of keeping order made the authorities oppose the destruction of tombs. Philip Lindley, "Disrespect for the dead?' The Destruction of tomb monuments in Mid-Sixteenth century England,"Church Monuments 19, (204)53-79, esp. 68—argues that clearly iconoclasm threatened tombs despite the Edwardian Act, Statues IV/1, 111; 3-4 Ed Vi, cap 10. The crosses case in Cheapside (London: for T.V. 1642) 16-17;

[76] Pliny, Natural History, vol. 9, trans. H. Rackham, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1952) XXXV, ii, 11, p. 267; XXXV, v, 16, p. 271.

[77] Angelo S. Rapport, Myth and Legend of Ancient Israel, 1, 197-198 based on the ninth century Midhrashic text Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer, Chap21, which I read on line at http://www.archive.org/stream/pirkderabbieli00frieuoft_djvu.txt, p. 156; and on a later medieval homiletic compilation Yalkut Shimeoni, p. 156. Prov. 963.; Leor Helevi in Muhammad's Grave: Death Rites and the Making of Islamic Society (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007) tells the same story from eighth century

Origin stories like these could be multiplied almost endlessly. I have cited those above to hint at the historical depth of the anthropological truth most clearly articulated in 1907 by Robert Hertz a brilliant twenty six year old, Jewish, student of Emile Durkheim and Marcel Mauss. There are, he made clear in his enormously influential paper, two kinds of dead, one in nature, the other in culture.[78] (He himself died in the trenches of the Great War eight years later.) On the one hand there were the dead as bodies, the sort of which Diogenes spoke: smelly putrefying flesh that had lost whatever had made alive and was like any other organic matter about to decay and food for scavengers. Soon hey would be but only bones. These dead have little history. (As Hertz, and many anthropologists since, argue, the concept of "natural" death, v.s. a death caused by exogenous evil forces is far from universal and does have a history. I am speaking here of the dead body in nature however it came to be in that state.)

On the other hand, there are the dead as social facts, as creatures who need to be eased out of this world and settled safely into the next. How this is done—through funereal rites, initial disposition of the body and often a redisposition or re-burial, mourning and other kinds of post--mortem attention--- is deeply, paradigmatically, indeed foundationally, part of culture. It is not like, natural death, something that happens, more or less, in an instant: becoming really dead-- even in the west where supposedly death is instantaneous-- takes time It takes time for the rending of the social fabric that death occasions to be repaired-- this was Hertz's main point-- and, more importantly from my perspective, for the dead to do their work in creating, recreating, and representing the social order.[79]

Of course, in complex urban societies not every death leaves a hole. Indeed much of the history of the work of the dead in the nineteenth century is to insist that death un-noticed before be honored. And in the modern world, rituals of death do more than repair a breach in a breach in the social order: they demand new social and political arrangements. But this is possible because of the structures through which the dead body matters and the seemingly universal sensibility that Hertz articulates, the sense that the dead are still about and must be eased out gently or invited back. We are, so the historical and anthropological record suggests, a species that not only lives with its dead but is acutely aware of their foundational importance. And we seem to be the only species to do so. The case for animals, with perhaps a very slight exception for elephants, is very thin.[80]

Arabic sources.

[78] Robert Hertz, "A Contribution to the Study of the Collective Representation of Death," in <u>Death and the Right Hand</u>, trans. Rodney Needham and Claudia Needham, (Aberdeen: Cohen and West, 1960) 36-37. Originally published in 1907.

[79] See Maurice Bloch and Jonathan Perry, eds. <u>Death and the Regeneration of Life</u>, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982) p. 6 of their introduction where they criticize Hertz on this point. My interest in Hertz grows out of the fact that his basic insight does not depend in the slightest on what he takes to be the ultimate ends of death rituals.

[80] Douglas-Hamilton, I., Bhalla, S., Wittemyer, G., & Vollrath, F. 2006. "Behavioural reactions of elephants towards a dying and deceased matriarch. <u>Applied</u>

How and why do the dead make civilization

There are two sorts of answers to this question. The first is much like my answer to the question of why the dead matter at: because those who think upon the subject have long regarded the care of the dead as the sign of civilization-- as opposed to savagery-- and as a distinguishing characteristic of a specific civilization. The second is more local: it is that the actors in this book understood themselves to be engaged with specific histories of the civilization-making powers of the dead. On the one hand, they were engaged in a negative project: overthrowing what they understood to be the vast necro-geography and the institutions that maintained it that the Church had imposed on Europe. If the dead were the foundation of the Church then removing them from clerical control would weaken the institutional power of religious bodies and clear the ground for something new. On the other hand, there was the positive project: the dead could be mobilized to make a new civic order or to advance a particular political or social claim because of their engagement in the longue durée of culture. The dead of the modern era are powerful because they had been powerful for other projects in other ages. I begin with the first sort of answer.

The first great anthropologically informed historian-- Herodotus-- understood that we live with a deep belief that our own death customs are irreducibly right and ethically inescapable as if they were grounded in nature and at the same time with full knowledge that other people with radically different views hold theirs equally dear and equally natural. The Persian King Darios

> …[I]n the course of his reign he summoned those of the Hellenes who were present in his land, and asked them for what price they would consent to eat up their fathers when they died; and they answered that for no price would they do so. After this Darios summoned those Indians who are called Callatians, who eat their parents, and asked them in presence of the Hellenes, who understood what they said by help of an interpreter, for what payment they would consent to consume with fire the bodies of their fathers when they died; and they cried out aloud and bade him keep silence from such words. Thus then these things are established by usage, and I think that Pindar spoke rightly in his verse, when he said that "of all things law is king."[81]

"Thus then," concludes Herodotus, "these things are established by usage, and I think that

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Animal Behaviour Science 100:87-102; George Wittemyer writes in a private correspondence that there is very little literature on the subject because there is so little evidence that animals care for their dead. Chamber's Encyclopedia 1753 ed, entry "burial" however offers this in response to its quoting Pliny on the uniqueness of humans in caring for their dead: "Yet it is said, we find something like it in some species of brutes. Naturalists assure us, that elephants, passing by the corpse of others, gather grass, and break branches of trees with their trunks, wherewith they cover the dead."

[81] Herodotus, Histories

Pindar spoke rightly in his verse, when he said that 'of all things law is king.'" In other words, how one disposed of the dead seems, at the same time, foundational, like natural law, -- "it is not likely that any but a madman would make a jest of such things" – and culturally specific. Darios' anthropological experiment is much used today as the prototypical case for moral relativism, but my interest is not on the grounds for moral judgment. It is that treatment of the dead was already at the heart of a fifth century B.C.E. example of cultural difference *and* of cultural exigency and was still being cited in eighteenth century anthropologies. (Ephraim Chambers' Cyclopedia quotes the Herodotus text that I have used in the context of explicating death practices around the world. These Chambers points out reflect deep cultural commitments:

> Burial [he means here the care of the dead generally] is an office or debt of humanity. Some found this obligation on the law of nature, others on the law of nations, and others on the divine law.

And between the eighteenth century anthropologists and Herodotus there is a long and self conscious tradition of commentary. The great fifteenth century humanist Leon Baptista Alberti, for example, argues that places where the dead are interred were said to be sacred by "the old Law," -- the reference must be to Cicero-- and that "we still possess the same belief, namely that sepulchers belong to religion." Furthermore, he thinks that places of burial are more or less co-extensive with civilization itself. "There was scarce ever a People so barbarous," he thought, "as to be without the Use of Sepulchres, except, perhaps those wild Ichthyophagi in the remote parts of India," who simply throw their dead into the sea claiming that it was irrelevant by which element- air, fire, water, or earth— corpses are consumed. [82](It was the outrageousness of such indifference that had long made Diogenes disregard for the fate of his body so radical a rejection of culture; sleeping in a barrel, masturbating in public, and passing forged coins make the same gesture perhaps a little less forcefully. The fact that late nineteenth century cremationists would argue that burning a body in a steel-making furnace is just a faster way of oxidizing a corpse than burial is another story that we will take up later.) Zedler, the great German encyclopedist, is more open minded on the subject of water burial. He cites without invidious comparison, and based on a variety of ancient sources, a whole list of African, Asian, and European peoples who put the remains of the dead in water. East Indians, Zedler adds, burned bodies first. (The European case is dodgy: the Hyperboreans, a mythical folk from beyond the north wind-- *boreas*-- who the Greks thought lived for a thousand years in a terra incognita and seventeenth century commentators identified with the Swedes.)[83] At the border of savagery and civilization, propriety and barbarity, us ands them, lie the dead.

In the early nineteenth century Wordsworth, for example-- and Hegel more

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[82] Leone Battista Alberti, Ten Books of Architecture ed. Joseph Rykwert (London: Alec Tiranti, 1955, based on a the Venetian architect James (Giacomo) Leoni (1686-1746) eighteenth century translation of Alberti's 1452 masterpiece) 163-164.
[83] Johann Heinrich Zedlers, Grosses vollsändiges Universallexicon aller Wissenschaften und Künste (1732-1754) entry "Waßer-Begräbnisse," vol. 53.

fundamentally and for different reasons-- make similar points from an equally long historical perspective. Hegel in his fictive philosophical anthropology thinks that the tomb is the work of the symbol-making architect in distinction to the house that is but the life conserving structure of the builder. Or, put differently, the house for the dead is the entry in symbol making and memory. [84] Wordsworth thinks that building tombs and in later ages placing epitaphs near bodies-- here literacy becomes the vehicle for immortality-- guards the border: "Never any neglect burial but some savage nations, as the Bactrians, which cast their dead to the dogs," the poet writes, quoting as his authority William Camden, the Elizabethan historian whose magisterial survey of Great Britain was meant to "restore antiquity to Great Britain and Great Britain to antiquity." With very few exceptions, even savage tribes, "unacquainted with letters" put mounds of earth or rude stones over their dead in order to guard the remains of the deceased from "irreverent approach or from savage violation" and to "preserve their memory."

The dead make civilizations because those who think about this elusive term believe that they do and act as if they did. We have already seen evidence of this and will encounter more in the coming chapters. But more specifically, those who, in the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries changed how we bury and name the dead, as well as those who advocated burning them in high technology ovens, understood themselves to be engaged with dismantling a world which they had more or less inherited from the middle ages and the struggles of the Reformation. They were un-doing one revolution and making another.

"Burial customs," writes the historian Peter Brown, are among the most notoriously stable aspects of most cultures." They cannot be characterized as pagan or Christian, as popular or superstitious; they transcend the categories imposed by historians. "The customs surrounding the care of the dead," he continues, "were experienced by those who practiced them to be no more than part and parcel of being human." Then, sometime between the third and the seventh centuries the ground shifted under this "notoriously stable" aspect of culture. "You have filled the whole world with tombs and sepulchers," says Julian the Apostate of the Christians among whom he had once numbered himself.[85]

As far back as the archeological and literary records go the peoples of the Mediterranean world and those who came under its sway buried their dead outside of cities and away from the gods. (The dead created their own sacrality that the state protected but independently of its support for the gods themselves.) Cicero in the first century b.c.e. traces the prohibition against intra mural back to the fifth century laws of the ancestors, the Twelve Tables, that had themselves been promulgated after a study of Greek customs. The third century c.e. jurist Paulus explains that the reason one can not bring a corpse inside a city lest its "sacred

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[84] Tony Vidler The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the modern unhomely, (Cambridge: MIT Press) 122 ff. Much of the book and especially the chapter "Buried Alive" is on our themes.

[85] Brown, Cult of Saints..., 24; Julian the Apostate, Against the Galileans , trans by Wilmer Cave Wright, in The Works of the Emperor Julian (Cambridge, MA: Harvad University Press, 1962-69) XXX

places" be polluted, a commonplace opinion, widely circulated in the provinces, regularly enforced and thoroughly taken for granted. As a norm it died slowly. In fact, the law code of Justinian (c. 530) still prohibited burial inside cities or churches at a time when the very old and long robust taboos against mingling the dead and the living were slowly crumbling almost everywhere.[86]

Slowly, however, the dead moved in among the living and, far from polluting the sacred, became its locus. Already in the third century a text claiming to be in the voice of the apostles addresses the faithful as those that "according to the Gospel and according to the power of the holy spirit come together even in cemeteries, and read the holy scriptures…and offer an acceptable Eucharist." Already then, Christians are reminded, neither the burial of a person or the bone of a corpse not a tomb-- or a wet dream for that matter-- can pollute their souls. But the adamantine customs of burial changed slowly. [87]

For a long time, well into the fourth century and even later Christians often still buried their dead alongside their pagan neighbors. (So did Jews for that matter.) Then, the bodies of the special dead began to be carried triumphantly into churches. It is true that Ambrose's new basilica in the imperial capital of Milan to which he brought the bodies of the martyrs Gervasius and Protadius was outside the old city walls. The old barriers had not been definitively breeched. But the translation of bodies from outside to inside an inhabited area had a huge symbolic impact-- (se pp. xxx) and practical impact. The much-frequented church was in a well-populated area; the point was clear; the daily intercourse of living and dead was now the norm. The same could be said for the burial of St. Martin in what had been a previously inhabited part of Rome.[88]

Increasingly churches also came to be built around the bodies of the special dead in suburban areas or in the countryside. The living came to the dead to worship even if the dead did not move right away and so, far from polluting the sacred, the special dead made it visible. In some way, of course, this marks the physical erasure of ancient urban civilization and of paganism more generally. Thus in Corinth for example, the sacred bounds of the city were still respected in he fourth century and old prohibitions enforced. By the next century, *martyria* and cemeteries were being built on the tombs of saints,

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[86] Cicero, Laws, II.58. ; Paulus, Sententiae, (Opinions)1.21.2 in Valerie Hope, Death in Ancient Rome: A Sourcebook (London: Routledge, 2007) 129-130. Hope points out that such opinions were commonplace, widely circulated in the provinces, regularly enforced and thoroughly taken for granted.

[87] R. Hugh Connolly, ed. Didascalia Apostolorum. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1929.

[88] Jill Harris, "Death and the Dead in the Roman West," in Steve Bassett, ed. Death in Towns: Urban Responses to the Dying and the Dead, 100-1600 (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1992) 60-61 and 56-67 more generally; Donald Bullough, "Burial, Community and Belief in the Early Medieval West," Ideal and reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon society : studies presented to J.M. Wallace-Hadrill, edited Patrick Wormald (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983) 179 and 175-201 more generally. On Christian and pagan burials together see the evidence from legal, ecclesiastical and archeological sources in Mark J. Johnson, "Pagan-Christian Burial Practices of the Fourth Century: Shared Tombs, " Journal of Early Christian Studies, 5.1 (1997) 37-59.

outside new, more circumscribed walls, but well within what had been older inhabited areas. At the same time the dead also took over pagan sacred places, the aggressive colonizastion that so pained Julian the Apsitate. The sanctuary of Asklepeios and the shrine of the Scared Spring of Lerna, (a port to the underworld in Greek mythology), for example, became Christian burial places. (The spring became also a holy well thus adding to its attraction as a place for burial *ad sanctos*.) By the middle of the sixth century there was a cemetery at the south end of the old forum and tombs and churches in the old spaces of the city. At the turn of the ninth century the Emperor Leon VI formally rescinded the ancient prescriptions that had centuries been irrelevant or worse. [89]

The movement of the dead into cities and into-- and around churches-- happened at a different pace in the various regions of the Roman world and its periphery. The amount of local variation was enormous; where the dead were buried depended on a large number of individual decisions within different constraints. But in general the trend was clear. The dead moved in among the living and into and around new sacred sites. There is considerable evidence for intramural burial in Italy and western Roman cities in the fifth and sixth centuries, in Gaul, Britain and Spain by the seventh. (Except for Macedonia and Greece this was rarer in the east although burial with extra-mural churches was common.) Burial in pagan cemeteries declined slowly and burial within churchyards-- and especially parish churchyards developed slowly and unevenly in large measure because there were still relatively few churches. There were in England still a few pagan cemeteries in use in the late Anglo-Saxon period organized around the grave not of a saint but a founding body; there were even a few old style mounds with grave goods. But where a place was well supplied with churches-- Winchester is a good example-- the dead were buy 675 inside the city walls and aligned in the pattern that would prevail until the nineteenth century except for the increased move by some bodies to the aisle and chancel during the high middle ages. (Before the conquest, burial inside he church was extremely rare.)[90] The point, however, is not to map on a fine scale this massive cultural transformation but to suggests its but clear broad contours.

I could point to symbolic moments of transformation. Charlemagne issued ordinances in 786 and 810/13 forbidding the use of pagan cemeteries and giving the Church-- if not necessarily the parish church-- exclusive claims on the dead. These had some currency in England but in fact there were not nearly enough churches to go around; the clergy were located in minsters and serviced surrounding villages. People were still buried on their properties, or in field cemeteries that were exclusively Christian but not consecrated in the tenth centuries. (This was clearly second best. The story is told

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[89] For this example see Eric A. Ivison, "Burial and Urbanism at Late Antique and Early Byzantine Corinth (c. AD 400-700) in N.T. Christie and S.T. Loseby, ed., <u>Towns in Transition: Urban Evolution in Late Antiquity and the Early Midle Ages</u> (Aldershot: Scholar Press, 1996) 97-125.

[90] Birthe Kjølbye-Biddle, "Dispersal or concentration: the disposal of the Winchester dead over 2000 years" in Steven Bassett, <u>Death in Towns: Urban Responses to Dying and the Dead, 100-1600</u> (Leicester: Leicester University Press) 221ff. and 210-247 more generally.); Warwick Rodwell, <u>The Archaeology of Religious Places</u> (Philadelphia: Univ of Pennsylvania Press, 1989) 157 and ff.

in the saga of Eric the Red of a man who haunted the countryside because a priests pouring holy oil into a hole over his farm grave was not enough to settle his soul.) Consecration of the churchyard seems also to be an eighth century innovation; if everyone can not be inside with the relic and the great at least the ground in which ordinary people were buried could be made sacred. (Special services for the dead developed in roughly the same period.)   Slowly too a social necro-geography came into view. The important people in the community as well as monks and priests increasingly insisted on being buried as near the special dead as possible -- *ad sanctos*-- as it was called and lesser folks spread out from their into the churchyards: saints, monks, nuns, important clergy and the prominent laity inside the church and grandly laid to rest, everyone else outside in the wet. (Again, of course there are exceptions: ascetic modesty by holy men and devout lay people.)[91]

There is no clear endpoint this story of a new necro-geography. When one sees it on the ground-- and here the archeological evidence is striking-- the change is clear: thousands of grave all oriented east west surround the outlines of a church. A church built on the site of an older cemetery. In an urban context it is even more striking. By the time of the Norman Conquest, to take just the case of England, the world that the dead had made and that modern reformers would attack was in firmly place. The parish was the basic unit of organization and at its center were the church that was by definition a place for the dead. It was a principle of ecclesiastical law in England that the church could be distinguished from a chapel by proofs that "Sacraments have been administered and the Dead buried."[92] Of course it was not unchanging from the eleventh to the eighteenth century anywhere: burial in monastery churches ended with the Reformation in Protestant countries; churches in the late middle ages and well into the early modern period in both Catholic and Protestant Europe battled mightily, once the dead and the living were so promiscuously mingled, to bring dignity to its burial ground and prevent the most egregious commercial and festive intrusions there. Individual bodies and the body in general probably came to matter more, or in any case to be represented more often, in the late medieval period.[93] Family, clan and other ecclesiastical extra-parochial forces challenged the centrality of the parish community. But the broad contours main point for our purposes were evident by the turn of the millennium if not much earlier in many places: the ancient separation of the spaces of the living and the dead had definitively ended and a new Christian space that they shared, controlled by ecclesiastical authorities, took its place.

From the perspective of our question-- how and why do the dead make civilization-- this shift in the geography and temporality of the dead in their new places

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[91] Luce Pietri, "Les Sepulchres Privilegiees en Gaule d'apres les sources Literraires," in Y. Duval and J.-Ch. Picard, eds., L'inhumation privilégiée du IVe au VIIIe siècle en Occident (Paris: de Boccard, 1986) 133-142
[92] [Giles Jacob] The Complete Parish Officer (10th ed.), 1744) 118. Jacob, 1686-1744) was a prolific and well informed writer of legal guides for laymen and lawyers.
[93] There is a well documented account of these changes in Dominic Olariu, "Johannes Paul Supertod: Ikones Eines Neuen Todesverständnisses," in Thomas Macho and Kristin Marek, eds. Die Neue Sichbarkeit des Todes (2007) 59-78, esp. 65-69

awaiting the Day of Judgment had several consequences. In the first place, the change in the organization of time and space that we have just outlined what one historian has called a "'tactile revolution'" -- a revolution in how the dead body felt to the living. Long a source of pollution shunned by the living, it had become, in the case of the special dead, a locus of holiness and in the case of more ordinary corpses, a part of the community and of new communal space. This revolution did not represent a rejection of ancient hygienic standards. Ritual pollution is not a health hazard. Nor was it a revolution of the senses. Perhaps the bodies of some saints miraculously did not decompose and even smelled sweet; but even if a martyr's hand or the skull or entire body did not smell at all it would in the ancient world been associated with the putrid and polluting body. And no one was under any illusion that the ordinary dead smelled of corruption; the adjective "stinking" was routinely if redundantly appended to "corpse" a commonplace that informs Biblical accounts, commentaries, and later pictures of the raising after four days of the dead Lazarus. Bystanders are shown holding their noses as he emerges from his shroud as they are more generally in other contexts when a dead body comes into olfactory range. (figs xxxx) We also have considerable evidence going back more than a thousand years that the insides of churches smelled badly, that burial grounds around churches were a crowded mess almost from the start, and that everyone knew this.[94]

The dirty had become clean not because anyone thought that the dead were in fact "clean" but because they had become part of a new kind of community with a new communal end: the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting. These no-longer-polluting dead had helped make, and were sustaining, this new order. Eighteenth and nineteenth century reformers who helped lead the new modern smell revolution both misunderstood and appropriated the earlier revolution for their purposes: for the work of the dead. They wrongly attributed the ancient fear of bodies to worries about hygiene rather than ritual pollution and they could not acknowledge the powerful ritual powers of their own seemingly objective medical mandate for once again separating the dead from the living.

The place and the nature of the dead had changed in the making of Christian Europe and so also did their governance. What had been a largely private matter under the general supervision of the State-- those who could afford it bought and owned their burial places; cemeteries were regulated by whomever had the right to sell *loci*-- became a largely communal affair in which the places of the dead belonged to- or any case were controlled by-- ecclesiastical authorities. (There was no private ownership of burial

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[94] The quote is from Polymnia Athanassiadi, <u>La Lutte Pour L'Orthodoxie dans le Plantonisme Tardif de Numénius à Damascius</u> (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2006) 224.; Frederick Paxton, in his hugely informative book, writes for example about the ways that monasteries become the loci of noble family tombs and how Gertrude, d. 659, the daughter of Pippin I, asked to be buried in a simple shroud. This show of modesty apparently helped ease out the elaborate dressing of bides and the issue of grave goods in Frankish tombs. <u>Christianizing Death: The Creation of Ritual Process in Early medieval Europe</u> (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990) 63 and f.

places between the end of late antiquity and the early eighteenth century but rights to graves and chapels was a vastly complex affair with infinite local variations that I will discuss as needed later on.) Access to church and churchyard, monastic cloister and even the free standing chapels of the great was ultimately regulated by ecclesiastical authorities from the early middle ages to eighteenth century with but a few seventeenth century exceptions. That is, the new communities of the dead were for members of the Christian community in good standing; there they dwelled and there they were remembered.

It goes without saying that Jews were excluded and likewise those who were excommunicated or had taken their own lives or were in other ways out of favor with ecclesiastical authorities. A right to burial somewhere seems to have subsisted under all circumstances; dead bodies were not left in the fields or in the street. But where it was put came under strict supervision. Gregory of Tour tells the story of Count Palladius who in the late sixth century committed suicide after a losing quarrel a bishop; he was buried near but at a distance from the Christian community in the grounds of a monastery. A monk who hid three gold coins in violation of monastic, so Pope Gregory I relates, was denied burial among his brethren. And supernatural forces patrolled the news spaces of the dead even more strictly. The seventh century nuns who had repeatedly fled their convent and failed to mend their ways each time were buried, by the Abbess' orders, in segregated plots. But this was not enough for higher authorities; within six month their tombs had been scorched by fire and the bodies reduced to ash; for three years a fiery ball sat over the unconsecrated graves and screams could be heard echoeing through the landscape. Jewish bodies were systematically removed from confiscated burial grounds. Of course, enforcement varied and there were many loopholes but Voltaire's fears of ignominious burial and the many fights about burial rights in eighteen and nineteenth century England-- and hundreds of other such battles elsewhere-- were all in the context of the new symbolic and legal world of the dead. Who was in and who was out of had become the decision of the religious authorities.[95]

The one area in which eighteenth and nineteenth century commentators seriously misinterpreted the history of dead bodies in the making of Christianity was with respect to cremation. It did not cause or even accelerate the decline of burning the dead in the ancient world and the rise of inhumation. This shift had a history all its own and was more or less complete by the time of the Peace of God when the new religion began to have some real public clout. But they were not entirely wrong either. In later battles against pagan practices more generally cremation took on explicitly non-Christian quality that it had not had earlier. Charlemagne, for example, after his conquest of Saxon territories and as part of his efforts to enforce an explicitly church burial, issued a series of edicts prohibiting cremation on penalty of death.[96] These came to be much cited in the nineteenth century. There was thus enough in the historical record to make burning the dead a serious matter in the cultural politics of the modern world.

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[95] I have these stories from Bonnie Effros, "Beyond Cemetery Walls: early Christian funerary topography and Christian Salvation," in Early Medieval Europe 1997 6 (1) 2-3, 14-15, 19 and 1-23 more generally for regional variations on the theme.
[96] Paxton, Christianizing Death, ...95.

The specific answer to the question of how and why the dead make civilization can be answered in the context of this history. It is, in part a story of undoing and going back to what had been before the Christina era. The Encyclopédie in its article on cemeteries pointed out that in Rome the dead themselves could render a space sacred and take it out of human commerce; now, they are not enough. Higher ecclesiastical authorities had acquired the right to bless and consecrate with great solemnity a place destined for the bodies of the faithful and for no-one else. There was-- with very few exceptions-- no other place for them in the old regime. When the radical Jacobin Joseph Fouche included in the notorious de- Christianization decrees of October 10, 1793 the proviso that the dead were henceforth to be buried in civic cemeteries with the inscription "Death is an Eternal Sleep," the enemy was clear. [97] In England and other Protestant countries the story is less dramatic but still recognizable: to appropriate an imagined past for a new future by rejecting what had come between.

But the work of the dead was not always so negatively construed. There was the more gentle historicism of Jacob Grimm, one of the fairy tale collecting brothers, who in his learned address to the Berlin Academy argued that to cremate the dead was to honor antiquity but that even in pre-classical antiquity cremation represented a step forward in the spiritual or mental cultivation of a people: the use of fire distinguished humans from animals; it articulated with religion— spirit to heaven, flesh to earth—and with it burnt sacrifice; it is practical—ashes are easier to transport; and it is rational-- fire does quickly what earth does slowly.[98] There were the affirmative project of creating new communities of the dead that inspired those who supported the cemeteries of the nineteenth century as well as those who tried to rehabilitate the churchyard.

In other words, the dead were enabled to do their work in eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth century because they had engaged in similar sorts of labor in the deep anthropological time of the species. If I were to add a final and more theoretical justification in it would be in the language of the French sociologist Pierre Boudieu. "Symbolic systems, he argues,

> [have]practical coherence-- that is, on the one hand, their unity and their regularities, and on the other, their "fuzziness" and their irregularities and even incoherencies, which are equally necessary, being inscribed in the logic of their genesis and functioning.[99]

The dead in the ground, or anywhere where they have been thoughtfully put, constitute such a symbolic system. They are matter with an order and a purpose that defies the cultural nihilism of Diogenes' skepticism and that carries within itself a long

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[97] See on this John McManners, The French Revolution and the Church, (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), 88 ff.

[98] Jacob Grimm, Über das Verbrennen der Leichen," read 29 Nov.1849, and published first in *Abhandlung der Königlishen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin*; reprinted in his Kleinere Schriften ii (Brlin, 1865) 211-31`3, esp 192.

[99] The Logic of Practice, trans. Richard Nice (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990) 86.

history of meaning. As such the dead are powerful. To change the symbolic system is to change the world.

      If the possibility that

. the house is the work of the builder, the tomb of the symbol making architect.