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Kabbalah, *Dybbuks*, and the Religious Posthuman in the Shakespearean Worlds of *Twin Peaks*

Abstract: In the series *Twin Peaks*, Mark Frost, David Lynch and others create a mythological framework structured by and filtered through Shakespeare in a post-secular exploration of the posthuman. *Twin Peaks* exemplifies a cultural postsecular turn in its treatment of the posthuman, taking the religious and spiritual perspectives to new—and often extreme—heights in its use of Kabbalah and other traditions. *Twin Peaks* involves spiritual dimensions that tap into other planes of existence in which struggles between benign and destructive entities or forces, multiple universes, and extra-dimensional, nonhuman spirits question the centrality of the human and radically challenge traditional Western notions of being. *Twin Peaks* draws from Shakespeare's expansive imagination to explore these dimensions of reality that include nonhuman entities—demons, angels, and other spirits—existing beyond and outside of fabricated, human-centered worlds, with the *dybbuk* functioning as the embodiment of the postsecular religious posthuman.

Keywords: *Twin Peaks*, *Twin Peaks: The Return*, *Fire Walk with Me*, *Twin Peaks: The Missing Pieces*, *The Secret History of Twin Peaks*, *Twin Peaks: The Final Dossier*, David Lynch, Mark Frost, Kabbalah, religious posthuman, Shakespeare, *Pericles*, *The Tempest*, *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*.

In the hybrid-genre television series *Twin Peaks* (1990-1991; *The Return*, 2017), Mark Frost and David Lynch use Shakespeare to create a mythological framework from multiple religious and spiritual mystical traditions in a post-secular exploration of the posthuman. This exploration continues in additional works that interface with the television show's three seasons—the films *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me* (Lynch and Robert Engels, 1992) and *Twin Peaks: The Missing Pieces* (Lynch and Engels, 2014); the novels *The Secret Diary of Laura Palmer* (Jennifer Lynch, 1990), *The Secret History of Twin Peaks* (Mark

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Frost, 2016) and *Twin Peaks: The Final Dossier* (Mark Frost, 2017); and the audiobook *Diane: The Twin Peaks Tapes of Agent Cooper* (Scott Frost, 1990). These materials collectively comprise the canon of the series, along with tangential or extracanonial materials by Frost and others, all of which circulate around the continually expanding orbit of *Twin Peaks*.¹

Shakespeare surfaces in uncanny ways in *Twin Peaks*, with *Hamlet* providing the Shakespearean undercurrent that propels the series. Major Garland Briggs (Don Sinclair Davis), a visionary who travels between two worlds and serves as the archivist in Frost's novels, echoes Hamlet in response to the mysterious supernatural occurrences in this fictional small town in the Pacific Northwest: "There's more in heaven and earth than is dreamt up in our philosophy" (E16). Tellingly, Briggs uses the pronoun "our" of the Folio, rather than "you" of the Second Quarto, in his paraphrase from Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (1:5:863-864)² to suggest that there are meanings and possibilities that cannot be conceptualized via human constructs of knowledge or understood empirically via human means of perception and experience. In Frost's novel *The Secret History of Twin Peaks*, President Nixon, discussing the possibility of extraterrestrial life with Twin Peaks character Douglas Milford in the 1970s, exclaims, "Only stands to reason that—to paraphrase the Bard—out there lies far more than we've dreamt of in our philosophies" (285). In the following decade, now in *Twin Peaks*, Briggs follows Milford to discover that the mysterious incidents suggest extradimensional rather than extraterrestrial worlds.

In the context of *Twin Peaks*, the word "philosophy" in these paraphrases of Hamlet's famous lines noted above denote scientific inquiry, philosophical theories, and various religious perspectives and spiritual practices, both Western and Eastern—even though all of these systems of knowledge and

¹ After this point, the title *Twin Peaks* or "the series" will refer to these materials as a variable, collective entity. Individual texts will be identified as such by episode or part. (I will follow the Blu-ray numbering system to document references from the show. Citations from the original series [1990-1991], Seasons One and Two, will be indicated by consecutively numbered episodes, i.e., "Episode 16" (or E16); citations from the limited series *The Return* [2017], Season Three, will be denoted by parts, i.e., "Part One" (or P1.) For brevity and clarification, specific titles provided in the text above will be abbreviated in citations as *TP* (whole series), *S1* (Season One), *S2* (Season 2), *TPR* (*Twin Peaks: The Return*), *FWWM* (*Fire Walk with Me*), *TPMP* (*Twin Peaks: The Missing Pieces*), *SDLP* (*The Secret Diary of Laura Palmer*), *SHTP* (*The Secret History of Twin Peaks*), *TPFD* (*Twin Peaks: The Final Dossier*), and *DTPTAC* (*Diane: The Twin Peaks Tapes of Agent Cooper*).

² Line numbers here are taken from Internet Shakespeare Editions, *Hamlet*, Second Quarto: https://internetshakespeare.uvic.ca/doc/Ham_Q2/scene/1.5/index.html. Other Shakespeare act, scene, and line citations refer to *Shakespeare: The Complete Works*, revised edition, edited by Richard Proudfoot, Ann Thompson, and David Scott Kastan (London and New York: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2011).

belief do factor in navigating the complex worlds unfolding in the town of Twin Peaks and beyond. Scientific discourses inform and enable the examination of evidence (forensics, for example); fringe scientific inquiry, especially on UFOs, provides a backdrop against which the show's supernatural entities emerge; and, importantly, Eastern and Western mysticism allows for glimpses into posthuman worlds beyond "our philosophy". Some religious and spiritual mystical beliefs, rituals and practices are rebuked and condemned, such as the occult Thelema and conspiracy theorist "brotherhood" Illuminati (as opposed to Freemason). Conversely, others form the postsecular vision of the show and its mythology, such as Transcendental Meditation, Tibetan mythology, Buddhism, Hinduism, Nez Perce Native American mythology, Theosophy, Christianity, and—the subject of this study—Kabbalah.³ In his newfound quest for enlightenment, Ben Horne (Richard Beymer) signals this multiplicity of religious and spiritual traditions in *Twin Peaks* quite literally by gathering several books—the *Koran*, the *Bhagavad Gita*, *Talmud*, the Hebrew Bible and Christian New Testament—and presenting them to his daughter, Audrey, at his hotel, the Great Northern (E28). The series itself expands this religious canon to include other traditions as it proceeds, interweaving them with appropriations of Shakespeare, which are deeply implicated in the series' exploration of mystical experience and posthuman, extradimensional realities.

Twin Peaks is unique in its often jarring, grotesque, humorous and moving treatment of religious and spiritual worlds, but the series nevertheless could be viewed as part of a larger cultural movement since the late twentieth century away from the secular to the postsecular. In her examination of religion and posthumanism, Elaine Graham identifies a "shift from a secular to a 'postsecular' sensibility" in science fiction film and television, which has contributed to a "'postsecular culture'" in which "new and enduring forms of religiosity coexist, albeit in certain tension, with secular atheist world views" (361-362). *Twin Peaks* exemplifies this postsecular turn in its treatment of the posthuman, taking the religious and spiritual perspectives to new—and often extreme—heights in its use of Kabbalah and other traditions. In *Twin Peaks*, Lynch, Frost, and others create spiritual dimensions that tap into other planes of existence in which struggles between benign and destructive entities or forces, multiple universes, and extradimensional, nonhuman spirits question the centrality of the human and radically challenge traditional Western notions of being. Like Major Briggs, *Twin Peaks* draws from Shakespeare's expansive imagination to explore these dimensions of reality that include nonhuman

³ Others have discussed the series' investment in Eastern traditions. See especially Brett H. Butler, "Thousands of Miles and Many Centuries: Eastern Mysticism and Spiritual Possession in *Twin Peaks*." *Supernatural Studies* 5.2 (2019): 120-144.

entities—demons, angels, and other spirits—existing beyond and outside of fabricated, human-centered worlds.

Importantly, it is *Twin Peaks*' investment in Eastern and Western spirituality that opens up perspectives beyond empirical reality and negotiates existence between the two worlds the series dramatizes, intersecting with Shakespearean perspectives, themes, motifs and characters.⁴ Among other religious and mystical frameworks, *Twin Peaks* draws from Kabbalah and Jewish folklore in its exhumation the *dybbuk* as an embodiment of the posthuman. *Dybbuks*, along with *golem*-like beings, demons and angelic forces, engage in a cosmic struggle while traveling between their dimensions and ours in the series. This representation of the religious posthuman, drawn from Kabbalah as well as other religious and spiritual traditions, is articulated through or infused with the spirit of Shakespeare.

Fittingly, Shakespeare's presence in *Twin Peaks* is spectral, flitting in and out of the series, taking many guises and haunting many of its plots and characters. Generally, discussed more specifically below, the series draws from Shakespeare's tragedies for its overall outlook and vision; the romances or tragicomedies for much of its plot and thematic content; the comedies, sonnets and histories for themes, motifs, and character development. *Hamlet* provides a thematic and narrative framework for *Twin Peaks*, underpinning the show's mysteries, uncanny occurrences and supernatural dimensions; *Julius Caesar*, *Macbeth*, and *Romeo and Juliet* offer additional points of insight and thematic interest. Besides the tragedies, the romances or tragicomedies—*Pericles*, *The Winter's Tale*, *Cymbeline* and *The Tempest*—all contribute profoundly to *Twin Peaks*' overall structure, informing various plots threads, themes, motifs and, as others have noted, its use of time. The comedies, primarily *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, factor in the dream motif, use of mythology, and spiritual world of the forest; and *The Sonnets* and histories (*Richard III* and *Henry V*) influence character, particularly Ben Thorne's offbeat behavior and energetic literary imagination in Seasons One and Two.

Shakespeare's spectral presence promotes alternative kinds of thought and knowledge, creating transformative, mythic worlds and modes of being often structured around trauma and passion. As Briggs' appropriation of Hamlet's lines implies, Shakespeare functions as a gateway to imagining what lies beyond empirical perception, scientific reasoning, and everyday experience of reality. As examined below, *Hamlet* offers the possibility of this exploration

⁴ Franck Boulège analyzes parts of *TPTR* according to *sefirot* in the Tree of Life in—Trees of Life and Death in *Twin Peak: The Return*.|| Lapsus Lima. 11 May 2020. <https://www.lapsuslima.com/the-trees-of-life-and-death-in-twin-peaks-the-return/> 24 August 2021, but the influence of Kabbalah in *TP* has not yet been examined in-depth.

that continues throughout the series; *Julius Caesar* opens a pathway into thinking about the destructive forces it uncovers; *Macbeth* examines the suffering, violence and despair such exploration into these dark forces can invoke; and *The Tempest* negotiates how to handle and manage ethically the knowledge and magical power such insights into the unknown might enable.

The glimpses we see of the unknown and the traffic between the spirit worlds (The Red Room, Black and White Lodges, the demons' meeting place above the convenience store, the Fireman's theatre, and so on) and the material world are characterized by a mythic sensibility hinged on incessant change. This mythos of *Twin Peaks*, which seems particularly Ovidian—and thus, by association, Shakespearean—undergirds the series' narrative structure and propels its creative energies, driven by the unending metamorphic possibilities of Shakespeare's plays, particularly *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Tempest*.⁵ The series' exploration of pain and desire, loss and redemption is woven into plotlines and characters appropriated from *Pericles*, *Cymbeline* and *The Tempest*; and its emphasis on interlocking drives of love and death surfaces in references to *The Sonnets* and *Romeo and Juliet*. Consequently, through Shakespeare, *Twin Peaks* enters into strange worlds inhabited by posthuman demons and angels who exist in extradimensional realities and engage in the dualistic cosmic struggles found in Kabbalah, as well as other traditions. Significantly, the existence of other dimensions, with their spiritual inhabitants, decenter and displace human beings.

Posthuman Kabbalah, Shakespeare, and *Twin Peaks*

Twin Peaks fully invests in Jewish Kabbalah, both in its earliest forms and later versions to the present, and intertwines it with Shakespeare and Christian Cabala, which influenced figures and authors in the early modern period, such as Christopher Marlowe and, most likely, Shakespeare, as explained below. Although Kabbalah should not be considered the only key to understanding all the religious and spiritual meanings in the series, it does provide an important perspective, one that is compatible with the series' other Eastern and Western theological belief systems and spiritual practices. Kabbalah, in all its variations and in concert with Shakespeare, provides a foundation for much of the series' mythology, its depiction of posthuman elements, demonic and angelic forces.

Kabbalah refers to the mystical or spiritual core of Judaism that is woven through its rituals and practice, in varying degrees or levels, from past

⁵ Elise Moore discusses the show's metamorphic qualities (not citing Ovid); and Lucas Mazintas explores Ovidian mythology in *Twin Peaks*. – Laurel Palmer: The Ovidian Influence on David Lynch's *Twin Peaks* Universe.‡ Unpublished paper.

centuries to the present day.⁶ The word itself in Hebrew means “to receive,” and Kabbalah is thought to encompass the wisdom and spiritual truths received from Jewish sages. In all its variations, Kabbalah stresses the need to repair the world to recover its connection to the Divine, which resides in and outside of all things. Kabbalah posits a multidimensional world powered by opposing forces, or *sefirot*, ten “emanations,” that interact with each other in the Tree of Life (*Eitz Chayim*)—a tree that is structured upside down, with its roots shooting upward to the Divine and its “tree top” manifesting in the human material world. The roots of the Tree extend past the highest *sephirah* to the *Ayn Sof*—the endless, expansive, wholeness of God that elides any materialization or manifestation. Below the *Ayn Sof*, the tree offers spiritual paths or tracks—up, down, and across—with each trajectory a different distinct significance or goal. The movement through these interconnected paths functions like energy transmission—not unlike the electrical currents that crackle and speed along wiring in *Twin Peaks* (especially in *FWWM*, *TPMP*, and *TPTR*). Importantly, the number of these paths—twenty-two—corresponds to the number of characters in the Hebrew alphabet. Numbers and letters carry symbolic meanings in Kabbalah; the two are connected in *gematria*, the practice of transposing Hebrew letters into numbers and then adding them up to discover secret meanings. This aspect of Kabbalah surfaces in *Twin Peaks* with the backwards speaking in the Red Room and especially in its obsession with numbers, particularly coordinates (*FWWM*, *TPMP*, and *TPTR*), for instance. And, perhaps coincidentally, the total number of parts in *TPTR* is 18, the number that corresponds to *chai*, “life” in Hebrew.⁷

When the *sefirot* on the right and left sides of the Tree are balanced, all is well; they depend upon each other to function. When the left and right side of the Tree become imbalanced, however—triggered by the malicious or destructive acts of humans—the left emanations can harness too much power, which then unleashes malevolent forces into the universe, potentially resulting in

⁶ It is impossible to describe Kabbalah adequately within the scope of this paper. For those interested in accessible, scholarly introductions to Kabbalah, I recommend these sources: Lawrence Kushner, *The Way Into Jewish Mystical Tradition* (Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2001) and Daniel C. Matt, *The Essential Kabbalah: The Heart of Jewish Mysticism* (Edison, NJ.: Castle Books, 1998). Many thanks to Rabbi Michael Torop for these suggestions, among others, that helped me learn about Kabbalah.

⁷ Interestingly, Mark Frost’s 1995 novel *The 6 Messiahs*, published on the heels of Seasons One and Two, includes the character Rabbi Jacob Stern, whose expertise is in Talmudic explication and Kabbalah. The novel contains numerous references to Kabbalah, a ceremony similar to *gematria*, a subplot dealing with the Zohar, demons, and an anecdotal reference to the *golem* (88-92). Another subplot involves a Shakespearean actor performing *Hamlet* (383-384).

horrific, devastating effects. Corresponding to different *sefirot* in the Tree, two other perspectives or maps form the complex mystical vision of Kabbalah: The Four Worlds and The Five Levels of the Soul. Significantly, on one hand, Kabbalah's expansive, multidimensional view of the universe decenters the human being in an expansive view of divine forces and entities, thereby generating a posthuman religious sensibility; on the other hand, it moves or compels humans to adopt a more compassionate view of each other, animals, the natural world, and even objects.

Kabbalah has changed and developed since the medieval era, with thinkers and communities in different geographical locations and time periods developing, emphasizing and modifying aspects of it. It remained isolated in specific communities until 1492, when Jews were expelled from Spain. At that time, as Harry Freedman explains, the Florentine Giovanni Pico della Mirandola lifted it from Judaism and appropriated it for Christianity, claiming Kabbalah to be a "universal science" (5). This appropriation initiated two independent strands of Kabbalah: Jewish Kabbalah and Christian Cabala. The latter evolved into a belief system that incorporated magic, Hermeticism, natural science (alchemy) and other occult practices (6).

Importantly, Christian Cabala became intertwined with magic and played a significant role in early modern English courts of Henry VIII and Elizabeth I, literature and theatrical representations of the occult, influencing poets Edmund Spenser and John Milton, as well as playwrights Christopher Marlowe and, most likely, Shakespeare.⁸ Magi Cornelius Agrippa and John Dee, who both considered themselves only practitioners of benign Cabala or "white magic", ended up being vilified, demonized, and reviled as European culture shifted its views to construe Cabala mysteries as demonology. Both Agrippa and Dee ended up influencing early modern plays. When Marlowe's Doctor Faustus vows to practice the dark arts, he turns to the Cabalist Agrippa's book, and he employs a perverted version of Cabalist ritual to summon Mephistaphilis. And when Shakespeare creates his powerful magician Prospero in *The Tempest*, he draws from magic practices and knowledge for which Dee, a scholar of mathematics and Christian Cabala in the court of Elizabeth I, was famous, then infamous during the reign of James I.

Shakespeare's *Tempest* explores the thin, tenuous line distinguishing "good" from "bad" magic that had characterized conceptions of Cabala through the magus Prospero. Prospero positions himself against the black magic of the "witch" Sycorax, yet his own practice of magic has come dangerously close to the dark arts for which he condemns her. Prospero's powers emanate from the Christian Cabalist rituals he has garnered from his books, which are therefore

⁸ Besides Freedman, see Dame Frances Amelia Yates, *The Occult Philosophy in the Elizabethan Age* (London: Routledge, 1979).

bent on the power of angels, not demons. Nevertheless, when he traces a circle to perform the rites and ceremony to “drown his book”, he paraphrases from Ovid’s healer-witch Medea and, through her, confesses to having raised the dead—an act that crosses the boundary between benign and malevolent magic (5.1.33 – 57). Prospero thus surrenders his powers and leaves off his practice of magic, but the play concludes with a double-edged, ambivalent representation of Cabala.

This dual perception of Christian Cabala, both its creative power and its dangerous proximity to the dark arts, continued long after the early modern era. Although it was often condemned as witchcraft, Cabala nevertheless had a tremendous influence on European thought in various ways: as a natural science, leading to the Enlightenment in the eighteenth century; as an occult pseudo-science, culminating in nineteenth-century spiritualism; as an offshoot of the dark arts championed by the notorious Aleister Crowley (who figures prominently in Frost’s *Twin Peaks* novels) in twentieth-century occult subcultures; and currently, often in combination with Jewish Kabbalah, as popular esoteric philosophy of twenty-first century postsecular culture (Freedman 9).

Twin Peaks harvests from these various strands of Kabbala—including Jewish folklore, Christian Cabala and various off-shoots—in a multilayered mythology that revolves around the posthuman cosmic struggle between demonic and angelic forces and, following Jewish Kabbalah, ultimately urges more ethical relations in the material world. In Frost’s novel *The Secret History of Twin Peaks*, FBI secret agent Tammy Preston (also a character in *TPTR*, played by Chrysta Bell), uncovers ancient roots that may explain the supernatural findings she has been examining with FBI Director Gordon Cole (David Lynch in *S2* and *TPTR*). When exploring the mysteries of the events that have occurred in *Twin Peaks*, she examines documents compiled by an anonymous archivist (later identified as Major Briggs), which trace the supernatural findings—first thought to be extraterrestrial, then later confirmed as extradimensional—back to the nineteenth century and then much earlier, finally to ancient cultures as recorded in the Hebrew Bible and Sumerian/Mesopotamian mythology. In the compiled papers, the archivist includes a modern translation of Ezekiel 1:4-1:21, the famous passages describing the Chariot of Ezekiel (Frost, *SHTP* 180-181). These passages form the basis for one of the earliest Kabbalistic texts and remain a core piece of Kabbalah mythology; moreover, they uncannily correspond to the past and present-day bizarre, mysterious sightings and occurrences surrounding the town of *Twin Peaks*. Elsewhere in Frost’s novels, variations on Kabbalah, especially Hermetic Qabalah (an offshoot of Christian Cabala), surface with the series’ interest in Theosophy, the esoteric teachings of Helena Blavatsky and the Hermetic Order

of the Golden Dawn, along with other spiritualist and occult philosophies and practices.⁹

These varieties of Kabbalah are bound up with Shakespearean characters, ideas and insights in *Twin Peaks*. Richly inflected with Christian Cabala, as noted above, *The Tempest* figures not only as a text informing the series' emphasis on the benign yet potentially malevolent power and danger of Cabalist mysteries, but also its development of character in terms of contemporary postsecular Kabbalah-inspired spiritualism. Reflecting on Dr. Lawrence Jacoby's life, his "new age" spiritual practices and recent transfiguration as "Dr. Amp", Preston observes that the shaman-like Jacoby exhibits "an air of the tarot's 'Magus'," one that reminds her of "a character like Prospero", who is "a man in the last act of life who's survived the 'tempest' of human turmoil and by doing so gained the ability to see beyond its commonplace illusions" (Frost, *TPFD* 113).¹⁰ Preston then describes Jacoby as someone who, "at one with nature and its pagan 'spirits,' basically lives out his spiritualist beliefs, and in doing so, has cultivated a keen sensibility that can penetrate the "'veil of existence' and leave him able and willing to share the wisdom one mines from such hard-earned territory" (Frost, *TPFD* 113)—like Prospero, whose tragic corollary, she notes, would be King Lear. Shakespeare, here, becomes a means by which Preston describes the ability of a character like Jacoby to overcome adversity and see beyond appearances by living a life, albeit an offbeat one, that aligns with his spiritualism.

Preston's thoughts on *The Tempest* and *King Lear* cause her to question the process of the mission that she, Gordon Cole and others have undertaken with the Blue Rose Project's examination of extradimensional realities, realizing that it requires both outward and inward awareness. She asks, "Is that the secret at the heart of the Blue Rose and the work we do? To identify root causes of human misery and evil, do we first have to find them in ourselves?" (Frost, *TPFD* 113). The series explores these questions, which parallel those raised in many of Shakespeare's plays and Kabbalah, in its supernatural, extradimensional elements: manifold realities, cosmic forces battling with themselves and human beings, demon possession, demonic and angelic entities and the transmigration

⁹ Blavatsky's esoteric philosophies are mentioned repeatedly throughout the *Twin Peaks* canon and in ancillary materials. The occult movements in *SHTP* are embodied by a character based on the real life Thelemite occultist Jack Parsons, who based his movement on the infamous English occultist Aleister Crowley. In the novel, Parsons' experiments, his efforts to summon "the mother of all destruction," appear to be linked to the arch-demon Judy in the series.

¹⁰ On a different note, Mat Cult refers to both Lynch and character Gordon Cole as Prospero-like figures in – "This Rough Magic": Comparing *Twin Peaks: The Return* to *The Tempest*. | Twenty-five years Later. 2017. <https://25yearslatersite.com/2017/09/12/this-rough-magic-comparing-twin-peaks-the-return-to-the-tempest/> 22 August 2021.

of souls. Importantly, the interplay between Kabbalah and Shakespeare enables an examination of the postsecular, religious posthuman in the series' fictional worlds, which are replete with entities that compete for power beyond human mastery or full understanding.

Posthuman Demons, *Dybbuks*, and *Golems* in the Shakespearean Worlds of *Twin Peaks*

Strangely and profoundly, the series appropriates Shakespeare in its exploration of the posthuman through Kabbalah, reviving not only angels and demons from centuries-old Jewish mysticism but also exhuming other phantoms of Jewish legend and superstition—such as the *dybbuk* and, to a lesser extent, the *golem*—to examine sacred and profane mysteries of transcendence and otherworldliness. FBI forensics specialist Albert Rosenfield (Miguel Ferrer) appropriates Shakespeare in an effort to grapple with what or who “BOB” is, to explain what force or reason could motivate the horrific murders that have been committed. After searches for BOB (Frank Silva) prove futile, FBI Special Agent Dale Cooper (Kyle MacLachlan), Sheriff Harry S. Truman (Michael Ontkean), Briggs, and Albert question whether or not killer BOB (Frank Silva) actually exists as a material being. In response, Albert quotes Antony from Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar* (3:2:76) in describing BOB as a manifestation of “the evil that men do” (E16). On first viewing, it appears Albert is suggesting that BOB does not exist literally, but rather figuratively as the malevolence inside Leland Palmer (Ray Wise) and other human beings. Albert’s reading is valid at this moment in the series, providing a psychological layer to the representations of BOB and the painful trauma that Laura Palmer (Sheryl Lee) had experienced. The series carries forward this psychological layer of meaning as it progresses, but then it moves beyond this interpretation, circling back in the opposite direction to represent BOB as, indeed, something very literal—a variation of the *dybbuk*.

As a *dybbuk*, BOB functions as an embodiment of the posthuman, a nonhuman entity who attempts to fuse with, consume, and therefore destroy human beings.¹¹ The *dybbuk*, with its roots in Castilian then early modern Lurianic Kabbalah, refers to a troubled spirit of a deceased sinful person who roams until finding a vulnerable person to possess. The spirit itself derives from demonic sources that originate from the realm of dark forces in Kabbalah, the

¹¹ Although BOB has not been discussed as a *dybbuk* in-depth, Seth Rogovoy notes that BOB “resembles a latter-day *Dybbuk*” in *The Forward*, November 7 (2014): 14; and Greg Olson, citing author Carlos Clarens, also refers to BOB as a *dybbuk* in *David Lynch: Beautiful Dark* (Scarecrow Press, 1998), p. 46.

sitra ahra (or the “other side”), an “inversion of the divine world” (Freedman 148). These dark forces spring free when *Gevurah*, the *sefirah* of “judgment or strength” (associated with the left shoulder or arm) from the left side of the Tree of Life, acquires more power than its companion *sefirah*, *Chesed*, the *sefirah* of “lovingkindness” (associated with the right shoulder or arm) from the right side. When this imbalance occurs, *Gevurah* becomes a deadly, violent force, ushering forth demons that cause destruction of the material world. Sometimes these evil spirits morph into animals—the owl (the most important to *Twin Peaks* mythology), black dogs or other animals—and even objects, as when Josie Packard’s (Joan Chen) soul is trapped in wooden drawer knob (E23). Like the early modern *dybbuk*, BOB, as an evil spirit, houses itself in human beings as well as animals, especially the owl (S1, S2, *SDLP*) and black dog (*FWWM*). Most typically, demons parasitically attach themselves to souls of the dead who were unable to transmigrate into new bodies because of their sinful past lives, directing that possessed dead soul into a susceptible living person to host it.

As a posthuman *dybbuk*, BOB exists in a parallel dimension with other demons from the Black Lodge, congregating in a room above a convenience store. Like the other demons in *Twin Peaks*, BOB thrives on *Garmonbozia*, or “pain and suffering,” which takes on the material form of canned creamed corn. Bent on destruction and violent acts, BOB can only be seen by those who have the gift to see into other dimensions, or those who are victimized by it. The *dybbuk* BOB possesses its host, Leland, through whom it murders Teresa Banks (Pamela Gidley), repeatedly rapes Laura for years before brutally killing her because she refuses to let BOB possess her, and then brutally murders Laura’s cousin Maddy Ferguson (Sheryl Lee) (S1, S2, *SDLP*, *FWWM*, *TPMP*). Later in the series (*TPTR* and *TPFD*), BOB inhabits Cooper’s evil double, which escapes from the Black Lodge in the final episode of Season 2 when the good Cooper travels to the Black Lodge to rescue his girlfriend, Annie Blackburn (Heather Graham).

The plots involving *dybbuk* BOB and host Leland strangely echo incest motifs from Shakespeare’s plays, especially *Pericles*, revealing the transgressive desires and violence that lie buried in the magical, restorative plot of Shakespearean romance. Leland’s continual abuse and rape of his daughter Laura while possessed by BOB recall the incestuous relationship of King Antiochus and his daughter, which serves as the backdrop to Shakespeare’s play and the impetus for Pericles’s travels. The reality of this relationship emerges when Leland plans to engage in a four-way sexual encounter with Teresa Banks and her friends but then backs out when he recognizes Laura as one of three. Leland/BOB then murders Banks, who had threatened to blackmail him; later terrorizes Ronette Pulaski (Phoebe Augustine), the third friend; and, of course, brutally murders Laura. At Laura’s funeral, in a scene that somewhat comically gestures at Laertes’ and Hamlet’s response to Ophelia’s burial in *Hamlet* (E3),

Bobby Briggs (Dana Ashbrook) pushes his way in and proceeds to accuse the townspeople of hypocrisy, causing his foil James Hurley (James David Greenblatt) to attack him. They fight, like Hamlet and Laertes, at Laura's open grave. To top it off, Leland jumps onto Laura's coffin in a moment that combines humor with the tragic, grotesque with the sublime, in the manner of Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*.

This Shakespearean juxtaposition of the comic and tragic is further exemplified by the juxtaposition of the violent, traumatic incest plot of Leland/BOB and Laura with a more comic, parallel *Pericles*-inspired plot involving Ben Horne and his daughter, Audrey (Sherilyn Fenn). The latter plot suggests some elements of Pericles's later encounter with his daughter Marina, whom he assumes dead, before he discovers her true identity (Act 5). In this subplot, Ben, the owner of the casino/brothel One-Eyed Jacks, almost has sex with the "new girl", who—unbeknownst to him—is his own daughter, Audrey, a virgin who has gone undercover as a prostitute to investigate clues concerning Laura's murder. When Ben approaches Audrey, who wears a mask to hide her face while avoiding her father's advances in bed, he gestures to another Shakespearean romance, featured throughout *Twin Peaks*, *The Tempest* (4:1:156-157): "Close your eyes. This is such stuff that dreams are made of" (E7). This line consciously signals the play on Shakespearean romance in this subplot, grafting together *Pericles* and *The Tempest*, both of which deeply involve father-daughter bonds.

Throughout Seasons One and Two, Ben Horne spouts out Shakespearean lines like this one, infusing the show with fragments of Shakespeare's spirit that speak to the series' themes and his relationship to them. Besides his *Tempest* reference above, he greets Blackie O'Reilly (Victoria Catlin), the madam of One-Eyed Jacks whose name resonates with the trope of blackness and beauty in Shakespeare's later sonnets, by reciting the earlier, famous Sonnet 18, "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?" in full (E2). This recitation underscores not only Ben's role as a charming seducer, but also his role, at this point in the series, as a two-faced conniver who is plotting with Jean Renault, the criminal who double-crosses and murders Blackie. As in his dealings here, Ben early on resembles many of Shakespeare's villains in their cutthroat dealings and realpolitik. Ironically, however, he appropriates from one of these villains, Richard III, when he seems to be rejecting that life, not when he's plotting to gain power and money through intrigue and deception—uttering the first three lines of Richard's monologue from *Richard III* (1:1:1-8), "Now is the winter of our discontent....", when waxing sentimental while viewing home movies from his childhood (E18). And when suffering from a mental breakdown, he cites the St. Crispin's Day speech from *Henry V* (4:3:60), "We few. We happy few. We band of brothers" (E21), during his delusional American Civil War reenactment. Ben's appropriation of Henry V's inspirational, manipulative rhetoric at this

moment—in the context of his reenactment in which the American Confederacy wins, rather than loses the Civil War—furthers that irony, comically showcasing Ben’s efforts to recuperate his losses and the futility of his former dealings in business and life. In these scenes, Ben almost functions as a Shakespearean *dybbuk*, a character who hosts Shakespeare’s spirit and literalizes its spectral presence in the show.

This spectral presence haunts other scenes in Seasons One and Two, interconnecting Shakespeare with disparate characters and various themes that run throughout the series. The show’s theme of love and romance, commented on and parodied by the clips of a Shakespearean-style show-within-the-show soap opera *An Invitation to Love*, appear in Seasons One and Two. This theme is punctuated by a comic moment that features *Romeo and Juliet*. Characters watch Dick Tremayne (Ian Buchanan) spontaneously embody Romeo, bursting forth with the line “O, she doth teach the torches to burn bright!” (1:5) in praise Lana Budding Milford’s beauty, with Doc Hayward (Warren Frost), Truman, Hayward, Andy (Henry Goaz) and Hawk (Michael Horse) standing around as a tableau of smitten admirers (E19). Although this scene furthers the comedic depiction of romance in *Twin Peaks*, when juxtaposed with the series’ obsession with the union of love with death and the aestheticized depiction of death—the almost necrophilic, erotic images of Laura’s corpse—the scene resonates with the darker edge of lovesickness represented in *Romeo and Juliet*. In that same episode, Dwayne Milford makes the offhand remark at his brother’s death: “what a falling out was here” (E19), echoing the Ghost in *Hamlet* (1:5:47), a brief comment that foregrounds the rivalry between these two brothers and the extended appropriations of *Hamlet* in the series. Not only Ben, but also these characters, major and minor, seem to be possessed by Shakespeare in *Twin Peaks*. This comic play on demonic possession serves as a literary foil to the terrifying role that demonic possession, the *dybbuk*, and dark forces play in the Shakespearean posthuman worlds of *Twin Peaks*.

Consequently, Albert’s brief Shakespearean citation from *Julius Caesar*, “the evil that men do,” allows the series to engage both inward and outward, via Kabbalah, into otherworldly territory with the *dybbuk* as an embodiment of the religious posthuman. Seen within this framework, BOB and the other demons take on the cosmic dimension that is expanded even more fully in *Fire Walk with Me*, *Twin Peaks: The Missing Pieces*, *The Return*, and Frost’s two *Twin Peaks* novels. As beings that exist between two worlds and that blur the distinction between human/nonhuman, human/almost human, *dybbuks* may be seen as the quintessential embodiment of the religious posthuman as described by Graham (366). Although there is not a clear indication that BOB or Judy (see below) originated or ever emerged from a deceased person, as is typical of a *dybbuk*, they seem, nevertheless, to be variations on it, especially in light of their emergence in *The Return*, Part 8. And, like the early modern *dybbuk*,

BOB can only be extinguished through a kind of exorcism. In Part 17, that exorcism involves a young British man Freddie Sykes (Jake Wardle), who finally smashes the grey orb of BOB's spirit by wearing a magic, superhuman strengthening green gardening glove as advised by The Fireman (Carel Struycken)—the Gabriel-like, the angelic entity from Part 8 (*TPTR*). As Freedman notes, in early modern Kabbalah, the exorcism of a *dybbuk* was more than the act of freeing a human body from the demon that possessed it; the ritual became “a battle in a cosmic war” between dark and light forces—as it is in *Twin Peaks* and in a play like *Macbeth*.

Although BOB is exorcised and supposedly banished to the Black Lodge, the force of demons unleashed by the left emanation's power continues beyond the end of the series, developing its later emphasis on *Macbeth*. The Black Loge spirits uncannily appear and disappear, similar to the Weird Sisters in *Macbeth*, which Shakespeare created from the dark imagination of Cabala as refigured in the time of James I as demonology and damned witchcraft. Like Shakespeare's witches, the spirits are both otherworldly and seemingly material, haunting dreams and initiating havoc in earthly realms. The extradimensional, posthuman spirits or demons who emanate from “pure air” may travel or “have intercourse between two worlds,” as The Man from Another Place or The Arm (Michael J. Anderson) exclaims in the room above the convenience store. A posthuman entity, The Arm sprung from the left arm (the body part associated with left emanation *sefirah*, *Gevurah*) that the spirit Mike (Al Strobel), possessing the body of human Phillip Gerard, amputated in an effort to sever the demon BOB from its body after seeing the face of God. The Arm runs its hand over the Formica table, perhaps miming the practice of using a reflective surface to reveal the evil spirit inside the *dybbuk*'s host in early modern Kabbalah, and harps on *Garmonbozia*—the pain and suffering of human beings on which the entities feed (*FWWM*, *TPMP*). Later, in *The Return*, The Arm metamorphoses into The Evolution of the Arm, a nonhuman entity that resembles a bare tree topped with a fleshy mass that serves as a talking head. The Evolution of the Arm's strange appearance underscores the connection of these spirits to the Tree of Life in Kabbalah; the bare but luminescent object seems to function more as an emanation than a character, even when it appears to warn Cooper about his evil double and when it enables Cooper, through a vision, to defend himself when faced with a gunman (*TPTR P2*, *P7*).

Twin Peaks thus shifts from *Hamlet*, which opens up questions of posthuman mysteries; to *Julius Caesar*, which probes the sources of malevolent behavior; and then to *Macbeth*, which expounds on the despair that results from an exploration into the dark forces. After examining humankind from the extradimensional, posthuman perspective, Preston ruminates on “wonder” and what she sees as its “Flipside”—“fear”. She likens the anxieties humans experience to *Macbeth*, who sees life as “a tale of sorrow and suffering” (*TPFD*

175), as she ponders the traumatic consequences of facing the dark forces. Nevertheless, Preston acknowledges the necessity of delving into that realm, of confronting and pushing beyond one's terror. For, she asks, "What if the truth lies just beyond the limits of your fear, and the only way to reach it is to never look away?" (*TPFD* 175).

She links this question, via *Macbeth*, to the commonplace Shakespearean metaphor of theatricality, musing that humans are like players who "fret upon a stage" in life (*TPFD* 176). This theatrical metaphor morphs into the Shakespearean dream motif that runs throughout the series, with the "stage" synonymous with the "dream" in Preston's notes (*TPFD* 177). This reference to the dream motif recalls the extradimensional beings and worlds of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* that undergird the series, replete as it is with spirits who live parallel lives with mortals who experience that world though a collective "dream". It also hearkens back to Ben Horne's paraphrase from *The Tempest*, "This is such stuff that dreams are made of"; recalls Cooper's quotation of Hamlet in his tapes to Diane, "To sleep, perchance to dream" (*DTPDAC*, E17); and directly connects to Cooper's superimposed image chanting "we live inside a dream" in Part 17 of *The Return*. In *Twin Peaks*, theatrical illusion thus corresponds to created fictions, fabricated universes. In this sense, the Shakespearean theatrical/dream motif reinforces the Kabbalist notion that human beings, and all of creation, spring from ideas of God (rather than the other way around, the notion that God is a human construct or idea), thereby decentering the human in the order of things.

This posthuman religious perspective underscores the series' depiction of cosmic battles between demonic and angelic forces and the permeable boundary between two worlds. In traveling from their world to earth, these demonic forces seek to possess vulnerable living beings, who then act as their hosts—like BOB, who emerged from an even stronger, more mysterious demonic force called "Judy" or "Jouday". Judy is introduced into the series in the films *Fire Walk with Me* and *Twin Peaks: The Missing Pieces*, enigmatically mentioned by Phillip Jeffries (David Bowie) and whispered in conjunction with images of the masked Pierre (Jonathan J. Leppell) and a monkey, then fully developed in *The Return* and Frost's *Twin Peaks: The Final Dossier*.

The rebirth of Judy (perhaps also the identity of "the experiment" in *TPTR* P1)—or rather the moment when the destructive spirit, the "mother of all abominations," is unleashed in the material world (*TPTR* P8)—may be interpreted in Kabbalistic terms. In *The Return*, the atomic bomb, which epitomizes "the evil that men do", hearkening back to Albert's appropriation of *Julius Caesar* in Season One, causes an imbalance in left and right pillars of the Tree of Life and unleashes dark forces from the left emanation. The July 16, 1945 "Trinity" nuclear test in White Sands, New Mexico results in the materialization of Judy (a grey, shadowy, earth-goddess figure) who then

“births”—or, rather, regurgitates—grey, bulbous spheres, one of which contains the image of BOB. Judy’s spirit exists along with other posthuman demonic forces, such as worker-type demons called Black Lodge Woodsmen. These dark beings, like the Weird Sisters in *Macbeth* or spirits that one imagines may exist in the underbelly of the fairy kingdom in *Midsummer*, cause create deadly havoc once they are energized by the bomb. But Judy is the “mother” of them all—a kind of perverse, evil Titania from *Midsummer* or more potent, demonic version of Sycorax, whose absent presence haunts *The Tempest*.

In *Final Dossier*, Preston claims that the demon Judy, a *utukku* (a roaming demon) that is linked with her companion demon Ba’al, dates back to 3000 B.C.E. in ancient Sumerian mythology (*TPFD* 158). No Sumerian demon by the name of “Judy” exists, though, historically speaking. Nonetheless, the figure of Judy in *Twin Peaks* does align closely with the demon Lilith from the incubi and succubi trio *Lilû, Ardat Lili, Lilitu* of Mesopotamian mythology, perhaps akin to a figure like Shakespeare’s less-powerful Sycorax. Often linked to the screech owl, the mythological figure *Lilith* emerged from both ancient Sumerian and Semitic origin; and the figure of Ba’al, in the context of *Twin Peaks*, corresponds most closely to the archangel of Death, Samael (Stamhouis). In ancient mythology and, notably, in early Kabbalah, Lilith and Samael are dark entities or forces which, if or when married, can be unfathomably disastrous for all in the material world (see Dan). In *Twin Peaks*, Lilith corresponds to Judy and Samael to BOB, and these demons’ hosts—Leland and Sarah Palmer (Grace Zabriskie)—are married, thus forming a union that results in horrific deaths and chaos.¹² Seasons One and Two focus on the former, Leland; then Season Three, *The Return*, shifts its focus to the latter, Sarah, tracing her descent into a posthuman *dybbuk* back to its origin. In this sense, both Leland and Sarah Palmer become *dybbuks*, hosts to evil spirits—BOB/Samael and Judy/Lilith, respectively.

Judy/Lilith therefore emerges as the most powerful and intriguing posthuman entity in *Twin Peaks*, set up against the White Lodge and its “chosen one,” Laura, a Cordelia-like figure in a Kabbalah-like cosmic struggle between left and right emanations that remains unresolved at the end of the series. *The Return* gives the history of Judy’s materialization and existence on earth. Once Judy is unleashed by the bomb in Part 8 of *The Return*, it mutates into a strange, frog/bug creature that breaks out of its shell and crawls into the mouth

¹² Although no clear explanation for the name “Judy” rather than “Lilith” is provided, the names may refer to the hosts themselves, rather than their possessing spirits. Lilith possesses Sarah Palmer, whose middle name is “Judith”; and Mike possesses the one-armed man, Phillip Gerard, whose middle name is “Michael.” Samael as BOB is less clear, since Leland Palmer is not given a middle name, but Leland mysteriously associates BOB with “Robertson.”

of a teenage girl who has just returned from a date. This girl most likely is Sarah Novack, later Sarah Palmer, Laura's mother and Leland/BOB's wife. Consequently, Judy possesses Sarah as a girl, but the parasitic demon apparently stays in remission until later in the woman's life. In *The Return*, an older Sarah descends into a violent *dybbuk* when Judy's demonic spirit returns in full force. The *dybbuk* Sarah/Judy binges on violent television shows while drinking heavily; converses with its human host in the liquor store; and commits a brutal murder. When accosted in a bar by a rude man, the Sarah/Judy *dybbuk* removes its mask-like face to reveal a left hand with a darkened ring finger, which morphs into an eerily open mouth encircling an interior black abyss that then bites out the man's jugular, resulting in his gruesome death (P14).

In Part 18, when Cooper travels back in time to save Laura, Sarah-as-*dybbuk* flies into a rage, violently stabbing the famous photo of her daughter as homecoming queen; she smashes and shatters the glass but, importantly, cannot penetrate the photo of Laura, who is "the one" sent to contest the dark forces of both Judy and BOB. Judy's efforts to eliminate Laura continue to the series' end. The ever-powerful demon apparently fabricates another universe in which to place Laura when Cooper travels back in time to save her from being murdered at the hands of the *dybbuk* Leland/BOB. The series ends with Cooper and the alternate universe Laura, named Carrie Page, experiencing a nightmarish reality in which the Black Lodge has overtaken her family's house in Twin Peaks. Standing in front of the Palmer residence with Cooper, Carrie relives past trauma from her alternate existence as Laura when she hears the *dybbuk* Leland's ghostly voice cry out, "Laura! Laura!" (TPTR P17).

These posthuman *dybbuks* exist alongside and, in the case of Cooper's evil double, intersect with nonhuman manufactured beings, *golem*-like doubles, *doppelgängers* or *tulpas* (a being created through imaginative powers), as they are often referred to in the series. These doubles take on various guises and interface with the mythologies of other traditions that pervade *Twin Peaks*. Both *golems* and *dybbuks* in the series stem from the human in some way: the doubles are manufactured from the "seed" of a living person; the demons are released by humankind's destructive actions. But, the latter, demons, are more closely aligned with the nonhuman, a variation of the posthuman, because they do not have a human origin (on the nonhuman, see Clarke). Doubles can overlap with the *dybbuk*, as with Cooper's evil *doppelgänger*, a manufactured double possessed by BOB in the Season 2 finale and in *The Return*. Preston debates the nature of Cooper's evil double, whether or not they are *tulpas* or "Dwellers on the Threshold".¹³ She discounts both theories, though, and instead ponders

¹³ Hawk explains that the "Dweller on the Threshold," or the "Shadow Self" in Nez Perce legend, refers to the evil that resides in everyone that each person must confront at the end of life's journey (E18). Preston discusses it as well (Frost, *TPFD* 148).

whether or not evil Cooper was “similarly possessed” as was Leland with BOB, for which an “exorcism might have been more efficacious than a criminal trial” (Frost, *TPFD* 149). In light of the entire series, evil Cooper might be considered a hybrid posthuman being, a crossing of the *golem* with the *dybbuk*. Conversely, doubles in *Twin Peaks* can simply be non-malevolent manufactured, *golem*-like beings, like Cooper’s benign double, Dougie Jones, who was created to save the place for the good or real Cooper to return from the Black Lodge.

Alternately, a double may fall somewhere in-between the *dybbuk* and *golem*, and in *The Return*, Diane Evans’ (Laura Dern) double complicates this dichotomy of evil/benign *golem*-like beings in a Shakespearean-inflected subplot that furthers the series’ investment in the late romances—this time, *Cymbeline*. This subplot marks a return to Shakespearean romance to explore the bittersweet experiences and Ovidian/Shakespearean transformations of the character Diane, who only exists silently at the other end of Agent Cooper’s handheld tape recorder in Seasons One and Two. In *The Return*, Diane, who suffered trauma when Cooper’s evil double raped her, is housed in the body of Naido (*gematria*-like play on the name “Diane”), an unworldly-looking female being with patched-over eyes that makes strange, bird-like sounds instead of speech. Similar to Imogen in *Cymbeline*, who hides out in the Welsh mountains disguised as Fidele, real Diane takes refuge in the body of Naido, at first living in a limbo space between the Black Lodge and the material world, where she ushers the good Cooper to earth and then later to Twin Peaks. Like Imogen, Diane increasingly feels trapped and frustrated when she—enclosed within Naido—cannot communicate directly to warn others about Cooper’s violent double.¹⁴ Meanwhile, Diane’s double stands in for meetings with Gordon and other FBI agents. Diane’s double spies for evil Cooper, so it cannot be seen as a benign creation like Dougie Jones, but its presence may serve to protect the real Diane until she is able to emerge from Naido. Once she does, the real Diane follows good Cooper to the parallel-time world, where she is split and transformed once again into another identity. As with other appropriations of Shakespeare’s romances, this one from *Cymbeline* situates the other-worldliness of Lynch and Frost’s imaginary worlds within the story arch of loss, redemption, and forgiveness—although one with a mysterious and ambiguous ending for the real Diane/Imogen.

¹⁴ In her discussion of time and Shakespearean romance, Moore links Diane and Naido to Hermione in Shakespeare’s *The Winter’s Tale*; and Valerie M. Fazel and Louise Geddes connect the use of time in *Twin Peaks* to *The Winter’s Tale* in *The Shakespeare Multiverse: Fandom as Literary Praxis*. London: Routledge, 2021.99-108.

Posthuman Angels in *Twin Peaks*

The worlds of *Twin Peaks* are filled not only with posthuman demons, *dybbuks*, and *golem*-doubles, but also angelic entities. In response to the question whether or not he believes in angels himself, Lynch echoes Briggs and, consequently, Hamlet: “There are many things I think that are out there that we don’t know about. But you get, you know, certain feelings” (Lynch, “Scene by Scene”). Angels, of course, figure in many faith traditions, and they resonate in more than one way in *Twin Peaks* (see Hurley 20). Seen from the perspective of Kabbalah, though, the angels participate in the mythic, cosmic struggle dramatized in the series. Figuring prominently in *Twin Peaks*, angels counter the entities of the Black Lodge and work to fulfill Kabbalah’s mission—or, rather, its never-ending goal—of healing a broken world.

This goal, embedded in the creation myth of Kabbalah, underpins and drives the ethical vision of *Twin Peaks*. In the creation myth of Kabbalah, the Divine, which first covers everything, contracts or withdraws to allow for the existence of the universe, including both good and evil potentialities, in an act called *tsimtsum*, which leaves remaining traces of God in the absence created by this contraction (*reshimu*). God then fills vessels with primordial Divine light, which causes them to shatter (*shevirat ha-kelim*), resulting in sparks of light (*netzuzot*) that become encased in shells (*k’lipot*) in the physical world. The goal for humans is to repair these shattered vessels, to bring forth the sparks of light into the world. However, every time a person commits a malevolent act, the shattering repeats itself. Although this goal of *Tikkun Olam* (repairing the world) is elusive and virtually impossible to reach, the Kabbalist strives for it nevertheless, following *mitzvot* (God’s commandments) and working towards a balance in the universe’s *sefirot*. Once again, the series explores this Kabbalistic cosmic order through imaginative Shakespearean worlds.

Like the spirits that inhabit Prospero’s island in *The Tempest* or the forest outside of Athens in *Midsummer*, Angelic entities and benign spirits of various sorts appear throughout *Twin Peaks*. In Seasons One and Two, the Giant (Carel Struycken) and Old Man Waiter (Hank Worden), spirits considered to be “one and the same” (E29), appear in *Twin Peaks* locations and the Red Room (the bridge between the Black and White Lodges). Like Ariel in *The Tempest*, who shapeshifts and exists in a parallel dimension with human beings, The Giant (played by the same actor as the Fireman in *The Return*) and its double, the Old Man Waiter, may be considered spirits or angelic beings from the White Lodge. These spirits appear to engage with others less benign, like The Arm (see above), who at times seems to be a trickster, like *Midsummer*’s Robin Goodfellow—a Puck who is sometimes apparently malevolent, in league with BOB and other demons, but other times, especially later as The Evolution of The Arm, benign and helpful, in coming to good Cooper’s aid.

References to Angels in the series are inflected with Shakespeare's ghost as well, particularly through Catherine Martell (Piper Laurie), who is often referred to in Shakespearean terms. Continuing the spectral presence of *Hamlet* in the series, Catherine echoes Hamlet's rescue from pirates when she describes her miraculous escape from murder in the sawmill fire and disguised return to Twin Peaks. Retracing how she stumbled upon shelter, she explains to Sheriff Truman, "I believe an angel saved my life" by directing her to the cabin of her childhood (E17). The association of Catherine with Shakespeare extends into Frost's novels. In one of the documents collected by the archivist in *The Secret History of Twin Peaks*, a book by Robert Jacoby (Dr. Lawrence Jacoby's brother), Jacoby describes to Catherine's courtship with Pete Martell (Jack Nance in the show) as a *Romeo and Juliet* rivalry between the two houses, the Packards and Martells (Frost 233); and he refers to Catherine as "Lady Macbeth of the sawmill" (Frost 234), thus foreshadowing the series' turn to *Macbeth* and linking Catherine's memory to it, even though she does not appear as a character in *The Return*.

The role of angels in *Twin Peaks* plays on the religious posthuman even more fully in the films *Fire Walk with Me* and *Twin Peaks: The Missing Pieces*, setting the stage for their integration into the Kabbalah creation myth in *The Return*. Both Ronette Pulaski (Phoebe Augustine) and Laura are visited by angels at traumatic, critical moments. Ronette is saved by an angel in the train car where Leland/BOB hold both her and Laura captive. Angels figure in a more extended way for Laura, who becomes a Cordelia-like figure in the series. She glances often at a child's painting hung in her bedroom, in which an angel serves a meal to children. Laura is greatly saddened to see the angel disappear from the children's picture when she prepares to go out on February 23, 1989, the night of her murder. When her best friend Donna Hayward (Moira Kelly) asks Laura what it would be like to fall through space, Laura responds, with a look of despair, that you would fall "faster and faster", eventually bursting into flames, "And the angels wouldn't help you, because they've all gone away" (*FWWM*). Laura fears that the angels have deserted her, but she is given hope by Doc Hayward, who sends her a secret message that "the angels will return, and when you see the one that's meant to help you, you will weep with joy" (*TPMP*). His message proves true when an angel appears to Laura, post-death, while she sits at a table in the Red Room, Cooper standing next to her with his hand on her shoulder. The scene, shot in slow motion, figures as a tableau with no dialogue, only swelling music—Cherubini's *Requiem in C Minor* (See Diaz 143). When the angel appears, Laura's expression changes from deep sadness to profound joy. This angelic vision may at first signal forgiveness and hope, as the one does for Ronette, but it carries a more extensive meaning for Laura when interpreted in light of *The Return*.

In *The Return*, the posthuman angelic entities from the earlier seasons and films are connected to the White Lodge and participate in a cosmic battle with the Black Lodge in the series' mythology. These entities—like Shakespeare's fairies in *Midsummer*, the spirit Ariel and "witch" Sycorax, or the Weird Sisters in *Macbeth*—exist in a dimension parallel but often invisible to the human world. The major figure of the White Lodge, The Fireman, lives in a black and white room, with 1930s décor that includes a giant, metal bell-like electrical object, which is nestled inside the top of a tall fortress, or factory, built on rocks in the purple sea. The Fireman apparently stays there with Senorita Dido (Joy Nash) until summoned through electrical currents that run through a giant metal bell to appear in his theatre, a classic old-time motion picture house. The theatre provides a mirror to the world, projecting occurrences on a movie screen for The Fireman and Dido to view. The Fireman is explicitly linked with angels (and Laura), for when Andy is taken to the White Lodge, he sees a vision of angels on each side of Laura's photo in The Fireman's room (TPTR 14).

In the context of Kabbalah, The Fireman takes on the role of the angel Gabriel: the strongest angel, associated with both fire and water, who manages the Tree of Souls and shepherds souls to their material existences. Part 8, the most Kabbalah-inspired scene of the series, stages the Tree of Souls in The Fireman's theatre. The theatre itself functions as a kind of transit station between worlds and a room of transport for souls, set in a fortress that may suggest the Chamber of *Guf* (a construct that houses a "Treasury of Souls" in a birdhouse-like structure). After watching the atomic bomb test explosion and the manifestations of Judy and BOB on the movie screen in his theatre, The Fireman transforms into a Gabriel-like angel to generate *gilgul* (or the transmigration of souls), when a sparkling, golden tree, blooming with encircling golden orbs blossoming at its top, sprouts out of his head. The glistening light corresponds to sightings that appear elsewhere in the series, representing the innocent or good souls, such as the golden aura emanating from the child (Hunter Sanchez) who is killed in the hit and run by sociopath Richard Horne (Eamon Farren), son of Audrey and evil Cooper (TPTR P6). One of the golden orbs from the Fireman's tree top contains the photo of Laura, which Dido (an angelic entity similar to Layla or Lailah, a figure that is directly opposed to Lilith in the Kabbalah myth), ushers Laura's soul to its destination on the map, directing it to the Pacific Northwest for birth in Twin Peaks (P8).

Laura's golden orb, which the Fireman and Dido send to earth, also appears as the overriding central image in *The Return's* opening credits. This image signifies that Laura's soul, emanating with *ohr*, the light, sharply contrasts with BOB's spirit, encapsulated in the dark grey, clouded orb that Judy has just vomited out into the universe. This scene also hearkens back to a pivotal moment when, in the Red Room, Laura peels off her mask to reveal pure,

pulsating light (P1) —a moment that sharply contrasts with Sarah’s later demonic face reveal in Part 14. All of these scenes corroborate the statement that Margaret Lanterman (Catherine E. Coulson), often referred to as “the Log Lady”, makes to Hawk over the phone that “Laura is the one” (P10), the series’ Cordelia in Shakespearean terms, the force sent to earth to resist BOB and combat the destructive forces headed by Judy.

Conclusion: The Posthuman Ethics of *Twin Peaks*

Margaret, a shaman-like character, speaks for and emblematically represents the deep-seated ethical underpinnings of *Twin Peaks*. Played by the late, renowned Shakespearean actor Catherine E. Coulson, the part often resonates with visionary Shakespearean characters—Cassandra in *Troilus and Cressida*, the Soothsayer in *Antony and Cleopatra*, Calpurnia in *Julius Caesar*, among others. Margaret speaks for herself and her log—the seemingly oracular, magical log cut from a Douglas Fir found at the site where her late husband, a volunteer fireman, fell into a ravine, was killed in a blaze directly following their wedding, and then was whisked up in a vortex of wind and flames (Frost, *SHTP* 421-423). She and her log function as a unit, comprising an interesting variation on the series’ engagement with the posthuman.

Like other representations of the religious posthuman noted by Graham, they “serve as bearers of sacred or religious insights” (368). In the original television series, Margaret, holding her log, provides brief introductions to each episode: words of spiritual, visionary and sometimes practical wisdom that resonate with the series’ religious and spiritual perspectives. In one introduction, for instance, she speaks about “balance”, which forms the heart of Kabbalah and other spiritual practices featured in *Twin Peaks*, as well as the Renaissance ideal of “temperance”—the ideal that Hamlet preaches but fails to practice. She explains, with her log, that “balance is the key to many things”. As she also points out, “The word ‘balance’ has seven letters”, commenting on the number seven as “difficult to balance” (E15). Of course, the number seven is extremely important in Kabbalah, as is the numerical significance of words, *gematria*. Other introductory commentaries like this one (S1 and S2), her conversation on owls and other matters with twelve-year-old Laura Palmer (*SDLP*), her heartfelt warning and compassionate blessing on the head of the grown Laura (*FWWM*), her warm yet prophetic telephone conversations with Deputy Hawk in her final days (*TPTR*), and her speech composed for Hawk to read at her funeral (Frost, *TPFD* 124-126) all create a spiritual sensibility and ethical calling grounded in both Kabbalah and Hawk’s Nez Perce tradition. These moments epitomize how the series, filtered through and shaped by Shakespeare, demonstrates and reinforces the ethics of posthumanism.

In the speech that Margaret prepares for Hawk to read at her funeral service, she sums up the ethical charge of *Twin Peaks*, which corresponds to views of Kabbalah and the other spiritual traditions highlighted in the series. Focusing on the separation of day and night, light and darkness, she writes, “There are forces of darkness—and beings of darkness—and they are real and have always been around us”, so “hold on to the light inside you”, and eventually “you will learn to recognize the light, in yourself and others”. For, she continues in a statement that resonates with Kabbalah, “This truth I know as sure as the dawn: Darkness will always yield to light, when the light is strong” (Frost, *TPFD* 124-126). Although this message may seem at odds with Shakespeare’s tragic vision, especially in tragedies like *Titus Andronicus*, *Hamlet*, *Macbeth* and *King Lear*, it does point to the only way out of their dark, violent, cruel worlds. Margaret’s words thus gesture towards Shakespeare’s late romances, which are featured so prominently in *Twin Peaks*, emphasizing the need to reject the violence and cruelty inherent in the tragic imagination, to overcome difficulties, to forgive, to reconcile, to experience joy—even if it is tinged with pain. And although the last part of *The Return* ends with Cooper and Laura (as Carrie) suspended in Judy’s frightening universe inhabited by *dybbuks* and other demons, the final voice of the series—Tammy Preston’s in *Final Dossier*—falls in line with Margaret’s message. Having explored the religious posthuman through the mysteries of *Hamlet*, the questions of *Julius Caesar* and the trauma of *Macbeth*, the series’ last note ends like the Shakespearean romance, stressing resilience and urging hope. As Preston puts it in her “Final Thoughts”:

We mustn’t give up.
Ever. (Frost *TPFD* 177).

These are the last five words of *Twin Peaks* to date.

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