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'A devill in the wall': Acts of Resurrection on the Seventeenth-Century Stage

This piece is taken from the first chapter of my dissertation, which addresses the use of tombs in seventeenth-century tragicomedies. Specifically, this chapter explains how tomb properties were employed in the mock resurrections that became a stock feature of Jacobean tragedies and tragicomedies. I argue that in order to understand these moments as something other than simply parodic we need to consider their material and affective connection to similar moments in the medieval religious drama. Consequently, I read Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi* and Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale* as plays that borrowed an affective technology--a dramatic structure removed from its original context but not entirely devoid of an emotional charge--from the medieval stage. Here I specifically address *The Winters Tale*, but I also contextualize this late play within the broader Shakespearean canon, arguing that plays from *Much Ado About Nothing* (1598) to *Pericles* (1608) establish a pattern of experimentation with the trope of resurrection and illuminate *The Winter's Tale's* highly self-conscious appropriation of this generic convention. The final scene of this play, in which Hermione's statue comes to life on stage, frustrates its audience's expectations by asserting that it is possible to have a resurrection without a tomb. Shakespeare thus leaves the material remnant of Catholic drama behind, while creating a moment that is nonetheless charged with religious affect.