

## Voorbeeld Letterkunde

In my BA thesis I would like to examine representations of the afterlife in William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*. It is well known that the afterlife is a crucial issue in *Hamlet*, with the question of the origins of the ghost and the consequences of Ophelia's suicide for the fate of her soul as two examples. Much of the scholarly debate on this issue focuses on the relation between *Hamlet* and changing theological views on the afterlife during the early modern era (Greenblatt 2001; Low, 1999). By reading *Hamlet* in tandem with *Macbeth*, I aim to show that the crisis in early modern understandings of the afterlife is central to Shakespeare's conception of tragedy more broadly: in both plays, the tragic is bound up with a sense that available rituals for managing the transition from life to death have ceased to function.

Three secondary sources:

Emmerichs, Sharon (2012), 'Shakespeare and the Landscape of Death: Crossing the Boundaries of Life and the Afterlife', *Shakespeare* 8.2, 171–194.

Greenblatt, Stephen (2001), *Hamlet in Purgatory*. Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press.

Low, Anthony (1999), 'Hamlet and the Ghost of Purgatory: Intimations of Killing the Father', *English Literary Renaissance* 29.2, 433–467.