

WILD JUSTICE

Cover illustration: the Figure of Justice in Samuel Rowland's *Sir Thomas Overbury or the Poisoned Knight's Complaint* (London 1614).

Designed and typeset by the author in Leitura News and Lucida Sans. System: Adobe Indesign® 2.0.

ISBN: 978-90-76912-80-6

WILD JUSTICE

The Dynamics of Gender and Revenge
in Early Modern English Drama

WRAAKLUST

De dynamiek van gender en vergelding
in het vroegmoderne Engelse drama

(met een samenvatting in het Nederlands)

Proefschrift

ter verkrijging van de graad van doctor
aan de Universiteit Utrecht

op gezag van de rector magnificus, prof. dr. W.H. Gispen,
ingevolge het besluit van het college voor promoties in het
openbaar te verdedigen op vrijdag 22 juni 2007 des ochtends
te 10.30 uur

door

Kristine Steenbergh
geboren op 9 juni 1976
te Utrecht

Promotoren: Prof. dr. P. J. de Voogd
Prof. dr. E. M. P. van Gemert

Co-promotor: Dr. A. J. Hoenselaars

Dit proefschrift werd mede mogelijk gemaakt met financiële steun van het Prins Bernhard Cultuurfonds.

For my parents



Since women do most delight in Revenge,
it may seem but feminine manhood to be vindicative.

Sir Thomas Browne



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I thoroughly enjoyed the years of reading, thinking, and writing that went into this research. A dissertation is supposed to be a lonely business, but I always found myself in the company of colleagues, friends, and family members, whom I would like to thank here for their support.

I am grateful to my supervisors Peter de Voogd and Lia van Gemert for their energetic management of the project, their careful reading and insightful comments. Ton Hoenselaars witnessed the birth of this research when he calmly suggested that an MA thesis on ‘women and power’ perhaps needed a sharper focus. Through the years, he has continued to channel my enthusiasm in such a productive manner. He taught me everything I know about academic life, and is the most inspiring and supportive supervisor one could wish for.

I would like to express my gratitude to the members of the reading committee, who had a shaping influence on this research in various ways: professor Rosi Braidotti of Utrecht University, whose masterclass on gender theory proved indispensable in building a theoretical framework; professor Kate McLuskie of the Shakespeare Institute, an inspiring chair at the “Le mythe et la plume” conference at the University of Valenciennes; professor Jan Konst of the Freie Universität Berlin, whose book *Woedende wraakgierigheid en vruchteloze weklachten* was ever present on my desk; professor Richard Todd of Leiden University, to whom I am grateful for his kind and astute comments on an earlier version of this book; and finally professor Helen Wilcox of the University of Wales, who was involved in this project at a very early stage, and was always sympathetic and supportive. I would also like to express my gratitude to emeritus professor Bart Westerweel of Leiden University, who contributed to the initial research proposal and remained interested in my progress throughout.

This research would not have been possible without the financial and institutional support of the Research Institute for Culture and History at Utrecht University. I would especially like to thank our PhD-coordinator Simone Veld, kept an eye on our room from across the square, and became a good friend. The Prins Bernhard Cultuurfonds contributed financially to a stay at the library of the Shakespeare Institute in Stratford-upon-Avon where I prepared my research proposal. At the Shakespeare Institute, I was always warmly welcomed by Jim Shaw and Catherine Alexander.

I would like to thank Guillaume Winter, Richard Todd, Jan Frans van Dijkhuizen, Odin Dekkers, and the organizers of the British Graduate Shakespeare Conference for giving me the opportunity to present and receive feedback on my ideas at their conferences. Rod Lyall provided food for thought as commentator at the annual Huizinga Institute postgraduate conference. A mock ceremony organized by Nadine Akkerman, Jan Frans van Dijkhuizen, Helmer Helmers, Jeroen Jansen, and Anna Tijsseling steered me for the public defence of my dissertation.

Jan Frans van Dijkhuizen, Inge Werner, Helmer Helmers and Joost de Bloois read parts of this book in earlier versions, and I am very grateful for their support, comments and suggestions. Not only is Tessa Kelder a great friend, she also made sure I kept a healthy mind in a healthy body on our regular expeditions to the swimming pool. Liedeke Plate and Dafne Jansen took me to the sauna to relax, Paul Franssen preferred De Gasterij for that purpose. Thanks to my fellow editors at the *Jaarboek voor Vrouwengeschiedenis* for showing me how to work hard and have a lot of fun at the same time, and to the Joyce/Sterne reading group for lovely long Thursday evenings.

The Brandmeesters deserves a special mention as the preferred place for the exchange of gossips and research ideas of Bregtje Lameris, Inge Werner and myself, as well as a big thank you for their excellent latte macchiatos that always managed to put our brains into gear. I am very happy that Inge and Bregtje will also be with me on the big day, as my paranymphs.

The legendary Tuinhuis and later the Muntstraat were true research hubs where one could always join a discussion or find friendship. Thanks to everyone there: Wibo Bakker, Jacqueline Borsje, Maayke Botman, Rudmer Canjels, Clazina Dingemanse, Isabella van Elferen, Arja Firet, Gaston Franssen, Kornee van der

Haven, Geert van Iersel, Monica Jansen, Fransje de Jong, Everhard Korthals Altes, Eef Masson, Daantje Meuwissen, Thunnis van Oort, Mustapha Özen, Sandra Ponzanesi, Yolanda Rodriguez, Eva Röell, Saskia Rolsma, Els Rose, Iris van der Tuin, and Joost Vrieler. Also, it was always inspiring to meet up with fellow PhD students in English studies outside Utrecht University. Thanks to Nadine Akkerman, Marguérite Corporaal, Kathrin Lang, Evert van Leeuwen, and Astrid Stilma for sharing ideas.

In my final months as a PhD student, I started a new job as lecturer in English Literature at the University of Amsterdam and the Vrije Universiteit. I would like to thank my colleagues Theo Bögels, Diederik Oostdijk, Anita Raghunath and Jochem Riesthuis at the Vrije Universiteit, and Joyce Goggin, Roger Eaton, Gene Moore, Steve Smith, and Dan Hassler-Forest, the secretaries Jetty Peterse and Henny de Boer, and especially my roommate Leen Maes at the University of Amsterdam for making me feel very much at home in two new departments.

My gratitude to my parents Karin and Paul Steenbergh for giving me a warm nest and the confidence to spread my wings, is expressed in the dedication. My sister Anne took my mind off revenge by taking me for walks with her dog Emma in the weekends, talking of orchids and bacteriae.

And Joost, I couldn't have done it without you. We survived two dissertations together – I hope our love will last for many books to come.



CONTENTS

<i>Note on texts and dates</i>	1
INTRODUCTION	3
1. DEFINING REVENGE	13
2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	27
3. FROM STATE TO STAGE State Formation and the Gender of Revenge	41
4. "THE MOTIVE AND THE CUE FOR PASSION" Revenge Tragedy and Masculine Selfhood	101
5. CIVILIZING THE MASCULINE The Politics of Passion in the Private Theatres	151
CONCLUSION	193
BIBLIOGRAPHY	199
SAMENVATTING	237
CURRICULUM VITAE	241



Note on texts and dates

When using sixteenth- or seventeenth-century copies of texts, I have retained original spelling. In citing primary texts from modern editions, I have used the modernised spelling. Plays have been dated according to the second edition of the *Annals of English Drama*, edited by Alfred Harbage and Samuel Schoenbaum.



INTRODUCTION

Wild Justice

THE DYNAMICS OF GENDER AND REVENGE IN EARLY MODERN ENGLISH DRAMA

“*Revenge*,” wrote Francis Bacon in his *Essays*, “is a kinde of Wilde Justice; which the more Mans nature runs to, the more ought Law to weed it out.”¹ Around the time that Bacon wrote these lines, the emerging English nation state was seeking to strengthen its sovereignty. Traditions of blood revenge among the aristocracy were outlawed as the state claimed a monopoly on the right to punish. A nationwide legal system was gradually being brought into place. Bacon conceives of this process in horticultural terms. The phrase “the more ought Law to weed it out” in his essay constructs an opposition between revenge and law in terms of nature and culture.² Revenge is portrayed as something that “Mans nature” is inclined to, a weed that naturally grows in society. The law, on the other hand, Bacon envisages as a gardener: a force of order, culture and civilisation, which constrains the growth of the natural excesses of revenge.

The concept of revenge is envisaged in terms of nature and culture also in the work of Norbert Elias. Building on Freud’s *Civilization and Its Discontents*, Elias traces a historical development in the relation between human instincts and the formation of absolutist states. In his *Civilizing Process*, he describes how in the process of state formation the use of personal violence among subjects decreased with the increase of the power of the absolute monarchy.³ The early modern period is pivotal in Elias’s view of the civilizing process. The growth of state power in the period changed people’s

behaviour, bridling their previously unrestricted instinctive reactions. Elias writes that if “the power of a central authority grows [...] the molding of affects and the standards of the economy of instincts are very gradually changed as well.”⁴ In this model of historical development, the monopolization of the right to punish leads to a change in behaviour:

The moderation of spontaneous emotions, the tempering of affects, the extension of mental space beyond the moment into the past and the future, the habit of connecting events in terms of chains of cause and effect – all these are different aspects of the same transformation of conduct which necessarily takes place with the monopolization of physical violence[.]⁵

In Elias’s perspective, the growth of society’s control over men’s conduct is paralleled with the growth of an individual’s rational control over the emotions. The literary scholar G. K. Hunter similarly characterizes revenge as a natural instinct. He argues that the pervasiveness of the revenge motif in art, from Greek tragedy to the modern film genre of the Western, signals the universality of the human instinct of revenge. It is an instinct “too basic to be confined to one culture or outmoded by ‘the progress of civilization,’” he writes.⁶

If retaliation is a universal, natural instinct, it is also a phenomenon marked by historical specificities. Each act of revenge is intricately bound up with notions of power, justice, honour, and the emotions. These issues are very much shaped by acute historical pressures.⁷ In this dissertation, I am interested in the early modern debates about revenge in which Bacon seeks to find his way. Focusing on a period of roughly eighty years (1558–1642), I explore the frictions and conflicts that existed between various ways of thinking about revenge in early modern culture. Rather than viewing revenge as a universal human impulse, this dissertation teases out the cultural and historical specificities of conceptions of revenge in the period, tracing the terms in which early modern culture itself shaped its thinking on revenge.

Revenge was to remain a problem throughout Bacon’s legal career. As Julius Ruff remarks, we should not assume “that the increasing expansion of the judicial institutions of the early modern state inexorably triumphed over older or local traditions.”⁸ The legal system was not only confronted with the persistence of older

traditions of revenge but also witnessed the emergence of newer forms of retribution. As attorney-general under James I, Bacon saw himself faced with continuing traditions of blood revenge and with the growing popularity of the duel among the nobility and the gentry. Rather than being gradually weeded out, practices of revenge grew rank and flourished in new varieties.

Since the theatres are one of the key locations where debates over the concept of revenge took place, the drama forms the focal point of this research. On the early modern London stages, the issue of revenge was rehearsed in many genres, shapes, and contexts. Accommodating large audiences from across the social stratum, the commercial theatres were a major cultural agent in discussions about revenge. The stage disseminated images and narratives that helped shape playgoers' interpretations of conflicting ideas of justice and revenge.⁹ As Katherine Rowe and Steven Mullaney have both argued, the early modern theatre conditioned affective experience. Performances shaped the ways audience members came to name and interpret their emotions, as well as how they understood them as "social and political currency."¹⁰

In the past, the stage's representations of revenge have been studied from a moral perspective. Critics in the first half of the twentieth century asked whether an Elizabethan audience would have approved or disapproved of the revenges they saw performed in the theatres.¹¹ If some critics argued that early modern theology and law disapproved of private revenge, others countered that blood revenge was still considered a duty at the time. These critics' disagreement over the early modern view on revenge points to the conflicts that surrounded the concept of revenge in the period itself. If theologians thought of revenge as the opposite of Christian mercy, aristocratic discourse considered revenge a key element of the nobility's identity. If the state sought to erect a boundary between law and revenge, Stoic thinkers saw rational revenge as an instrument of Stoic Natural Law. The conflicting, historically specific terms in which the early modern period thought about revenge form the subject of this research.

The central question that this study seeks to answer is: what was the role of the commercial London theatres in this discursive dynamics of revenge in the early modern period? In their representations of revenge, early modern plays interacted with the debates in the period. Critics working within the new

historicist tradition have studied the interaction between the stage and its social and cultural context predominantly in terms of the stage's subversion of state power. They have asked whether the stage's representation of the outlawed practice of revenge posed a threat to the expanding system of law, or whether such performances perhaps provided a ritualized means of exorcising the audience's desires for revenge. This dissertation takes a less binary view of the stage's negotiations of contemporary debates. It charts the interaction between the various theatrical representations of revenge and notions of body and mind, passion and reason, inwardness and selfhood, honour and shame, as they figured in the various conflicting discourses of revenge that circulated in early modern culture. In order to analyse the debate as it took place on the London stages, I use a gender perspective. As will be explained in chapter two, gender is an ideal instrument in the analysis of the stages' negotiations of revenge, because gender is not only functional in defining the social roles of men and women, but is a key concept in ordering relations of power.

Sources

Some ten years after the opening of The Theatre, the first purpose-built commercial theatre in London in 1576, Thomas Kyd wrote what is often considered as the first revenge tragedy, *The Spanish Tragedy*.¹² The genre remained popular in the public theatres during the late sixteenth and the first half of the seventeenth century.¹³ The name "revenge tragedy" itself was not used in the period; it was coined by A. H. Thorndike in 1902, who defined the genre as "a distinct species of the tragedy of blood [...] whose leading motive is revenge and whose main action deals with the progress of this revenge, leading to the deaths of the murderers and often the death of the revenger himself."¹⁴ Fredson Bowers widened Thorndike's definition to include "tragedies wherein the exhibition of revengeful action is prominent and wherein the dramatists have depended upon revenge entirely for the motivation of their tragic catastrophes."¹⁵ Lily Campbell has even argued that if we remember that the term revenge in the early modern period also referred to divine retribution, then "all Elizabethan tragedy must appear as fundamentally a tragedy of revenge."¹⁶ Indeed, the theme of revenge was not confined to the theatrical genre of tragedy alone. As Linda Anderson has demonstrated in *A Kind of*

Wild Justice (1987), and Harry Keyishian in *The Shapes of Revenge* (1994), other dramatic genres such as the comedy and the history play represent acts of revenge and engage with contemporary ideas on the subject as well. This dissertation therefore does not limit itself to revenge tragedy, but traces the concept of revenge across dramatic genre boundaries. It explores the ways in which the London theatres intervened in cultural debates about the changing meaning of retribution. Moreover, it maps the stage's interactions with other cultural fields by examining representations of revenge in pamphlets, sermons, and emblem books.

The case studies in the three core chapters of this study should not be read as representative of a given discourse, nor should the corpus of plays be considered representative of the whole spectrum of uses of ideas on revenge in the period. Indeed, it is precisely my argument that no such thing as “the” early modern view on revenge existed. The plays discussed below all occupy their own positions in the discursive matrix. Within these plays, conflicting views of revenge are often juxtaposed, dramatically producing as well as reproducing the terms in which the debate was carried out in society.

Periodization

I concentrate my research on the period between 1558 and 1642. Although processes of state formation and the expansion of the national legal system can be seen to occur before this period, it is during Queen Elizabeth I's reign that Seneca's tragedies were first translated into English, and the first revenge tragedies were written and performed at the Inns of Court and the commercial London theatres. The year of Elizabeth's accession to the throne therefore forms an appropriate starting point for this research. I end in 1642, when the Civil Wars between parliamentarians and royalists led to the closure of all commercial theatres, imposing an abrupt conclusion to the theatre's role in cultural discussions of revenge – though at a point in time when notions of law and state, revenge, and the rights of the individual citizen were more acute than ever before.

Outline

In the next chapter, I will explore the concept of revenge in early modern culture. I concentrate on the dynamic process of defining

revenge, in which a boundary was constructed between notions of private, public and divine retribution. Since the concept of revenge was not stably defined, a theoretical framework is required that is able to analyse the dynamic and shifting position of revenge in the period. In chapter two, I will argue that a gender analysis is a useful tool in mapping the contours of early modern debates about revenge, precisely because the debate is conducted on the cusp of such terms as civilization and barbarity, passion and reason – oppositions that are often conceived of in gendered terms.

Chapters three, four and five discuss plays that function as markers of different areas of the discursive dynamics of revenge in the period. Chapter three focuses on processes of state formation and the opposition between traditions of revenge and the growing national system of law. At the heart of this expanding legal system were the Inns of Court, London's schools of law, where new generations of lawyers and judges were being educated. These schools of law knew a strong theatrical tradition. They produced a number of tragedies that combine historical tales of English civil wars with elements from Senecan revenge tragedy. These plays have predominantly been studied from a literary perspective: they are usually considered the seeds for the genre of revenge tragedy as it was later performed in the commercial theatres. I examine these plays within their institutional context, and argue that these Inns of Court plays produce images of revenge that help to reinforce a boundary between legal retribution and private vengeance. They produce a discourse in which private revenge is represented as feminine, described in terms of excess, passion, self-interest, and civil war. Parliament and the law are on the contrary represented as masculine, rational, and as serving the public interest. These Inns of Court tragedies thus partook in processes of centralization and state formation, depicting older traditions of revenge as undesirable by means of the dramatic construction of a gendered divide between the law and revenge. In the second half of the chapter, I explore how this gendered boundary between law and revenge is challenged in Shakespeare's first tetralogy of history plays (1591–92) and his first revenge tragedy, *Titus Andronicus* (1594).¹⁷

A gender analysis of dramatic representations of revenge sheds light also on current debates about understandings of selfhood in early modern drama. Critics working in the field disagree whether

the experience of inwardness in the period was based on a fluid sense of selfhood, in which the humoral self stood in a dynamic relation to its environment, or whether the sense of inwardness was produced rather by the *control* of these exchanges with the environment. A gender analysis of the genre of revenge tragedy shows that representations of revenge as masculine draw on this notion of a controlled, rational selfhood, whereas representations of revenge as feminine emphasize the openness of the early modern body to the influences of its surroundings. In revenge tragedy, these two opposing views of selfhood function politically. Characters who think of blood revenge in terms of a duty to their father or son, view it as an essential instrument in the confirmation of masculine identity. Other characters view revenge in the terms shaped by the dramatic discourse of Senecan tragedy itself. They fear the effects of acted passion, and are anxious that the performance of revenge dissolves rather than confirms masculine selfhood. Feminine, passionate revenge in their view leads to a loss of control over the self, whereas in aristocratic traditions revenge affirms masculine identity. In attacks and defences of the theatre, these conflicting notions of selfhood are also central to anxieties over the performance of revenge on the public stage. Whereas defenders of the theatre argue that the performance of revenge will teach spectators to obey the law, opponents of the theatre appropriate concepts of imitation and loss of selfhood from the genre itself to emphasize the dangers of the staging of revenge in public theatres.

In chapter five, I examine the role of the private London theatres in debates about the duel. During the first half of the seventeenth century, duelling became extremely popular among the gentry and the aristocracy. Manuals translated from the Italian were rushed off the printing presses even as the government published proclamations that protested against this newly violent fashion. The private theatres have been seen as producing a Cavalier mentality in which aristocratic honour and the practice of the duel played a central role. Drawing on revisionist views of the role of the private theatres in the decades before the Civil Wars, this chapter challenges that view of the relation between the theatre and the duel. It explores the ways in which plays from various genres performed in the theatre of Blackfriars engage with the popularity of the duel. The plays of George Chapman and

Philip Massinger explore the role of revenge in the context of new models of honour, gentility and civility that were taking shape in the period. The private theatre generates models of masculinity in which revenge is an instrument of masculine sovereignty, but also shapes images of masculinity based on feminine values such as forgiveness and patience, in which revenge no longer holds a place.

NOTES

¹ Bacon 2000: 16.

² William Wiseman refers to Bacon as the “principall gardener” in the garden of English justice. In his charge against duelling he remarks that civil manhood easily slides into “ranke and wilde manhood; as hearbes, apples and flowers doe, which for want of culture [...] degenerate in time to weedes, and wildings” (Wiseman 1619: sigs. Y3r and V1v).

³ The Middle Ages have been seen as an age of unfettered emotions. Marc Bloch describes the Middle Ages as emotional and irrational. He writes that people were “closer to nature” and speaks of “the rages, the impulsive acts” that characterize their behaviour (Bloch 1989: 72-73). Elias states that the instinct of revenge was not limited to the nobility: “fifteenth-century towns are no less rife with wars between families and cliques. The little people, too – the hatters, the tailors, the shepherds – were all quick to draw their knives” (Elias 1978: 200). Corien Glaudemans in her study of revenge in late-medieval Holland and Zeeland argues that this view of the period does not take into account the historical specificities of emotion (Glaudemans 2004: 72-73). Studies such as those collected in Barbara Rosenwein’s *Anger’s Past* (1998) demonstrate that excessive emotions of anger and vindictiveness had a firmly circumscribed social function in medieval culture. Interestingly, socio-biological scientists have argued that the urge to revenge is at the basis of any social structure (see Ridley 1997: 51-75; and Fon and Parisi 2005).

⁴ Elias 1978: 236.

⁵ Elias 1982: 240.

⁶ Hunter 1997: 422.

⁷ On the historical specificity of the emotions, see Paster, Rowe, and Floyd-Wilson 2004.

⁸ Ruff 2001: 74.

⁹ See also Howard and O’Connor 1987: 164.

¹⁰ The words are Katherine Rowe’s (Rowe 2004: 176); see also Mullaney 1994: 140-42.

¹¹ For an overview of the debate, see on page 13 below.

¹² Fredson Bowers identifies Kyd’s play as the first revenge tragedy (Bowers 1966: 65), discounting earlier works such as *Gorboduc* and *Horestes*, plays that will be discussed in chapter two.

¹³ See also Simkin 2001: 2.

¹⁴ Thorndike 1902: 125.

¹⁵ Bowers 1966: 63.

¹⁶ Campbell 1931: 287.

¹⁷ I deviate here from the *Annals of English Drama*, which dates the play 1592. Jonathan Bate in his edition of the play in the Arden third series, however, makes a very strong case for *Titus Andronicus* being a post-plague work, first appearing and being performed in 1594.



CHAPTER 1

Defining Revenge

This study partakes in a central yet unresolved debate about early modern thinking on revenge. Literary critics have been unable to agree on the view that early modern society took of the theme of revenge. Specifically in the first half of the twentieth century, critics debated the question whether an audience watching a revenge tragedy would have approved of the acts of revenge they saw performed before them. J. Q. Adams in his 1929 edition of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* wrote that:

the notion that it was morally wrong for a son to avenge his father's murder [...] was not entertained in Hamlet's time. On the contrary, revenge was believed to be necessary to the eternal rest of the murdered one. [...] To the people of his own time, and even to the audience of the Elizabethan age, Hamlet was called upon to perform a "dread" (=sacred) duty.¹

According to Fredson Bowers, even if early modern law punished the blood revenger as severely as the initial murderer, "a very strong undercurrent favoring private justice for murder existed [...] a sympathy with (and native knowledge of) blood-revenge, and a persistent tradition by which the son, or heir, must take personal cognizance of the murder of his ancestor." A. C. Bradley shared the opinion that according to the conventional moral ideas of the early seventeenth century, blood revenge was an unquestioned duty.² Bertram Joseph went so far as to argue that the duty of revenge was not only socially accepted, but was also experienced as a religious duty: "failure to avenge a murdered father was as unnatural as

irreverence to God, disloyalty to the King, or any other refusal to acknowledge the natural bonds of blood and sanctity of an ordered universe.”³ These critics all worked in the first half of the twentieth century, but G. K. Hunter in 1997 still agreed with their view that “Elizabethan society was, *of course*, one in which this duty was felt strongly: centralized legality was only marginally able to control the sense that an individual must respond in kind to violations of family honour (male or female).”⁴ Along similar lines, Karen Robertson spoke of “the vitality of the revenge ethic in the period.”⁵

Other critics have argued to the contrary that revenge was not an accepted practice in early modern England at all. These critics mainly base their arguments on philosophical and religious treatises from the period. Eleanor Prosser, for example, wrote that blood revenge would have been considered a sin in the eyes of an Elizabethan audience: “[r]evenge was a sin against God, a defiance of the State, a cancer that could destroy mind, body, and soul – and that was that.”⁶ Lily Campbell similarly identified a persistent condemnation of revenge in early modern ethics, a condemnation that was primarily based on religious argument.⁷

These critics’ conflicting interpretations of early modern views on revenge demonstrate a tendency accurately described by Catherine Belsey. She detects a propensity to conceive of cultures of the past as monolithic. “[T]his seductive account of the past seems to me fundamentally misguided,” she writes, “and nowhere more so than as an interpretation of the early modern period, where virtually every topic was matter for dispute, much of it passionate, some of it violent.”⁸ The twentieth-century studies surveyed above seek to identify one consensual opinion on revenge in early modern culture. They either argue that an early modern audience opposed the practice of revenge, or conclude that ‘the Elizabethan’ considered revenge as a duty. In so doing, these critics lose sight of the complexity of the early modern debate. I approach the subject matter from a different angle. The very fact that modern critics have been unable to agree on the audience’s moral view of private retribution, signals the existence of contradictory ideas in early modern discourse. A homogeneous early modern view of the duty of revenge never existed. Instead, the period knew an energetic and searching debate on questions of justice and revenge.

Renegotiating revenge

The meaning of the term ‘revenge’ was subject to continual renegotiation during the early modern period. Ronald Broude has cautioned scholars that they tend to take the term ‘revenge’ to refer to extralegal retaliation and associate it with wrathfulness and vindictiveness. The term in the sixteenth century had a broader range of connotations, and resembled the notion of ‘retribution’ as we use it today. The *Oxford English Dictionary* registers an early modern meaning of the word that has now become obsolete: “punishment or chastisement” (*sv* revenge *n.* 5). The *OED* cites from Greene’s *Philomela* (1582) to illustrate how we should understand this definition: “Therefore have I produced them in open court, that my dishonours may end in their revenge.” Paradoxically in the eyes of modern readers, early modern texts can speak of acts of revenge carried out in a court of law. Thus, the “Homily on Obedience” can refer to magistrates as the executioners of “vengeance on him that doth euill.”⁹ Similarly, in this dissertation’s frontispiece the figure of Justice seems to speak the word “Revenge.” She stands next to the tomb of Sir Thomas Overbury, poisoned by his wife. The plaque on the knight’s tomb speaks for the dead man inside: “Iustice sword is drawne to right my wrongs.”¹⁰

The polyvalence of the concept of revenge corresponds with socio-legal history. The legal system of the early modern state itself developed out of traditions of blood revenge. In the historical development of the legal system, the *lex talionis* or “talion law” plays a central role. Before the development of systems of justice, individuals who received an injury took direct revenge upon their injurers in order to maintain order within a community. This talion law later broadened into the blood-feud, based on a binding obligation to revenge the death of a family member.¹¹ Although the medieval tradition of blood revenge is often represented as unchecked and virulent, historically it was an instrument to maintain social stability. Bowers describes the vendetta as a system of “collective justice,” and Kerrigan similarly stresses that the talion law embedded in Judeo-Christian heritage in the concept of “eye for eye, tooth for tooth” was intended to control violence, rather than to incite it.¹² In medieval society, the blood-feud also functioned to maintain order, rather than to create disorder in society.¹³ The feud was considered a legal sanction, and was an

essential instrument in minimalising violence after a crime had been committed. The principles of the feud entailed procedures for pacifying the parties involved, and worked to generate pressures for peace rather than war.¹⁴ In the twelfth century, the feud was governed by strong normative constraints, notions of balance and reciprocity. William Ian Miller's analysis of Icelandic sagas led him to conclude that honour and justice in this genre are inextricably connected to a notion of reciprocity "by a foundational metaphor based on debt, obligation, and the exchange of gifts."¹⁵ Robert Schoemaker has examined the functions of revenge in the twelfth century, and he also confirms that at the time the blood-feud was recognized as an instrument of order. He suggests that there must have been a period in which this perception changed: "before the extirpation of revenge from modern criminal justice could occur, revenge had to be converted from a virtue to a vice; from a good into an evil."¹⁶

Richard Jones's *Booke of Honor and Armes*, first published in 1590, suggests that this process of conversion was ongoing in the early modern period. An amalgamation of English and Italian works on the art of single combat, the quarto-sized volume instructs the nobility in the codes of revenge, outlining the kinds of situations that require a reaction of revenge on their parts. Jones assures his readers that the book is not intended to turn them into vindictive men:

This booke doth not incite men to vnaduisid fight, or needles reuenge (as some simple wit may surmize) but enformeth the true meanes how to shunne all offences: or being offended, sheweth the order of reuenge and repulse, according vnto Christian knowledge and due respect of Honor.¹⁷

These lines are indicative of the tone of the work. Throughout, readers are assured that revenge is "a thing not reproachful." Accusations of thoughtlessness and futility are refuted as the booklet describes revenge as an honourable and Christian deed for the English nobility. "True it is," Jones writes, "that the Christian lawe willeth men to be of so perfect patience, as not onlie to indure iniurious words, but also quietlie to suffer euerie force and violence."¹⁸ Nevertheless, he sets out to explain the laws of aristocratic honour to "the vulgar sort (and many right noble also)" who are ignorant "what words or deedes are of such

qualitie as ought to be repulsed or reuenged.”¹⁹ What is at stake in these cases is masculine honour: “euerie iniurious action not repulsed, is by common consent of all Martiall mindes holden a thing dishonorable, infamous, and reproachfull,” Jones assures his readers.²⁰

The care with which Jones negotiates the subject of the single combat is a sign of the contested status of revenge in early modern culture. With the destructive feuds of the Wars of the Roses well in mind, the Tudor state was especially aware of the dangers of a strong nobility. Queen Elizabeth in her royal proclamations objected to the scale of some aristocratic households, which “plainly hinder justice and disorder the good policy of the realm [...] by stirring up and nourishing of factions, riots, and unlawful assemblies, the mothers of rebellion.”²¹ The state adapted socio-legal systems to replace forms of aristocratic self-government with a centralized system of power. This process contributed to what Lawrence Stone has termed the “crisis of the aristocracy”:

Granted that change is a continuous process, that every shift has both earlier antecedents and later developments, it is nevertheless between 1560 and 1640, and more precisely between 1580 and 1620, that the real watershed between medieval and modern England must be placed. It was then that the State fully established its authority, that dozens of armed retainers were replaced by a coach, two footmen, and a page-boy, that private castles gave way to private houses, and that aristocratic rebellion finally petered out; then that the north and west were brought within the national orbit and abandoned their age-old habits of personal violence[.]²²

One of the key rights to be appropriated from the nobility by the state was the right to execute legitimate violence.²³ Feuds among the nobility infringed upon the rights of the state and posed an inherent threat to the legal system. By means of a growing number of Justices of the Peace, the state sought to replace private practices of retribution and restitution with a national legal system.²⁴ The Privy Council, the Court of Star Chamber and the two Councils of Wales and the North were all employed to deal with problems of feudal disorder, and to buttress state authority over the aristocracy.²⁵

Stone’s theory of a crisis of the aristocracy has come to be criticized by historians.²⁶ They question the degree to which the nobility actually lost their privileges with regard to government,

arms and forces.²⁷ What remains undisputed however, is that the nobility clearly perceived itself to be in difficulty in the period between 1580 and 1640. An intense public debate was taking place over the function of the aristocracy. Their privileges declined and the ideology that placed the warrior aristocrat at the top of society lost its cogency.²⁸ Jennifer Low has argued that the nobility's loss of occasion to affirm their honour in military pursuits was experienced as a 'crisis' in aristocratic masculinity:

When the aristocracy ceased to be defined as a military elite, male aristocrats lost the warlike tradition that had structured their way of proving themselves, their way of serving their sovereign, and their way of employing their time.²⁹

This sense of crisis was shaped in part by anxieties over the nobilities' feuds among each other. A treatise written by Lawrence Humphrey, the president of Magdalen College at Oxford in 1563, shows that public debate focused on the aristocracy's traditions of private revenge. Writing on the "nature, duties, right and Christian Institution" of the aristocracy, Humphrey registers that people wonder "whether Nobles oughte to be borne [=tolerated] in a wel ordred, and Christianlike gouerned state."³⁰ He warns that popular resistance to the aristocracy is growing: "[f]or some impugn it with wordes, some with weapons. Either parte thinkes [the nobility] ought to be abolished. [...] [E]uen some learned hold opinion: that they deserue as vnprofitable members to be cutte of."³¹ One of the factors to discredit the nobility is the tradition of the blood feud. The feuds of the nobles are a threat to the stability of the country, Humphrey warns, because private revenge does not serve the common good: "the nobilitie luyunge in tumulte, and discord, bothe theyr owne myghte is hocked, and the foundations of the comen wealth are shaken."³² Whereas blood vengeance in the medieval period functioned as an instrument of social order, Humphrey cautions the aristocracy that their feuds are at the close of the sixteenth century perceived as "tumulte" and "discord."

The "mysticall foundation" of the law

Revenge's schizophrenic identity as an instrument of order and disorder is mirrored in ideas about the nature of law in the early modern period. Michel Foucault has demonstrated that whereas technologies of power from the eighteenth century onwards have

tended to focus on a preventive and corrective interpretation of the right to punish, early modern law conceived of punishment as a ceremony of vengeance. “In the execution of the most ordinary penalty, in the most punctilious respect of legal forms, reign the active forces of revenge,” he writes.³³ The legal system was not based on a desire to correct criminal behaviour. Rather, early modern law conceived of a crime as an affront to the power of the monarch, and exacted revenge on the criminal.

Paradoxically, although operating according to similar principles as the blood feud, the law defined itself against existing traditions of blood revenge. Walter Benjamin in his “Critique of Violence” argued that such moments of the law’s instatement are always moments of violent performativity. In order to establish itself as sovereign, the law needs to appropriate the right to violence for itself. For, writes Benjamin, “the law’s interest in a monopoly of violence vis-à-vis individuals is explained not by the intention of preserving legal ends but, rather, by the intention of preserving the law itself[.]” If violence was not the sole right of the law, the notion of law itself is in danger: “violence, when not in the hands of the law, threatens it not by the ends that it may pursue but by its mere existence outside the law.”³⁴ That this is by no means a post-modern view of the relation between law and revenge appears from Montaigne’s essays. The early modern French author recognized that the instatement of the law is a performative act: “Lawes are now maintained in credit, not because they are essentially just, but because they are lawes. It is the mysticall foundation of their authority; they have none other.”³⁵ The execution of revenge inherently subverts this foundation of the legal system, since the revenger appropriates the right to judge and punish that the law reserved for itself.³⁶

The expansion of the legal system in the early modern period depended, then, on the creation of an opposition between the order of the law and the disorder caused by traditions of revenge. The law presented itself as an agency of order and regulation, and defined itself against the disorder of private revenge.³⁷ In their endeavours to bring about a change in public perception of the feuds between the nobility, the state represented the revenges executed between the nobles as illegal and seditious, and contrasted these with the authority of the national legal system. Individual revenge was represented as part of a complex of evils associated with rebellion

and riot, which infringed upon the divine patent to judge granted to the monarch and magistrates.³⁸

Divine, public and private retribution

The concept of revenge in the Tudor period was divided into the categories of divine, public, and private retribution. Divine revenge included all punishment executed by God; public vengeance referred to the authorized punishments implemented by the legal system (representative of God's judgement on earth), whereas private vengeance was an illegal practice undertaken by private subjects.³⁹ Homilies and proclamations issued by the government underscore this distinction between divine, public, and private retribution. The "Homily on Obedience," which Elizabeth I ordered to be read in all churches, stresses that the congregation should "obediently be subject" to the monarch, the Privy Council, magistrates as well as officers, since they safeguard order in the state.⁴⁰ The homily explains that the right to revenge belongs to God, but also to the legal system:

Wee reade in the booke of Deuteronomie, that all punishment pertaineth to GOD, by this sentence, Vengeance is mine, and I will reward. But this sentence wee must understand to pertaine also unto the Magistrates which doe exercise GODS roome in iudgement, and punishing by good and godly lawes, here in earth. And the places in Scripture, which seeme to remooue from among all christian men, iudgement, punishment, or killing, ought to be understood, that no man (of his owne priuate authority) may be iudge ouer other, may punish, or may kill.⁴¹

The crucial distinction is thus not one between God and men, but between public and private punishment. Magistrates are publicly authorized to execute justice, and are the representatives of God's judgement on earth. Individual persons, however, may not judge over others, and exact revenge of their "owne priuate authority."

This distinction between "public" and "private" revenge comes to the fore also in William Perkins's description of Moses slaying the Egyptian in Exodus. He "took vpon him publike reuenge in his action, as a Magistrate, and not priuate, as a priuate man," he writes.⁴² Here, a revenge is public when it is carried out by a magistrate, a person with the public authority to execute punishments. If an individual appropriates that right, his revenge is by definition private. The distinction between public and private

revenge is vital also in Bacon's essay on revenge. The essay as a whole is less univocal than its first sentence is often taken to suggest. In its typically aphoristic manner, it explores the multifaceted position of revenge in early modern culture, allowing for some kinds of revenge and condemning others. "Publique *Revenge*," for example, "are, for the most part, Fortunate." As examples of public revenges, Bacon mentions "that for the Death of *Cæsar*; For the Death of *Pertinax*; for the Death of *Henry* the Third of France; And many more."⁴³ All three revenges are aimed at the murderers of national leaders; the first two are executed by the persons who became the new leaders after a period of civil war: Octavian after the assassination of Caesar, and Septimus Severus after the assassination of Pertinax.⁴⁴ Since the persons who executed these revenges thereafter became public leaders, their revenges are seen to represent public authority. The adjective "public" here could also refer to the notion that these revenges affect or concern the nation.⁴⁵ It is used in this way by Thomas Wright in his treatise on the passions, where he advises his readers that "[i]t is of the essence that the passion & action relish not of some private quarrel or reuenge, for then it leeseeth all the force and grace of perswasion, because the passion smelleth then of proper interest and utility, and consequently will be accounted inordinate & vitious."⁴⁶ In Wright's view, a quarrel or revenge is "private" when it reeks of self-interest, and is not directed towards the common good. Notions of public and private revenge thus evoked a field of associations connected to the institutional position of the revenger as well as to the motivation for his revenge.

Definitions of private and public had not yet crystallized towards the end of the sixteenth century. This appears from an official document dating from 1584. Written after the murder of William of Orange and responding to the Catholic threat to the stability of the nation, the Bond anticipated on the event that a Catholic traitor might assassinate the queen. As J. E. Neale points out, the Bond attempted to avert a situation of complete lawlessness: "[w]ere Elizabeth to be slain, chaos would follow: there would be no council, no judges, no royal officials anywhere, as their commissions died with the monarch; no one would be entitled to avenge her murder."⁴⁷ In these circumstances the execution of public revenge would be impossible, since no one were authorized to punish the murderer. In order to create a possibility

for public, rather than private revenge in such a situation, William Cecil and Francis Walsingham drafted a document that compelled English gentlemen to perform blood revenge on the murderer of their monarch. In the Bond of Association, they vowed:

we will aswell with our joyunct [=joint] and particular forces during our lives withstande offend and pursue, aswell by force of armies as by all other means of revenge almaner [=all manner] of persones of what estate soever [...] that shall attempt [...] or consent to any thinge that shall tende to the harm of her Majesties Royall Person. And we shall never desist [...] to the uttermost extermynacion of them ther counsellors and abbettors. [...] But do also vowe in the presence of God to prosecute such person or persons to the death, with our joyncte or perticuler forces, and to take the uttermost revenge of them by any possible means.⁴⁸

The oath binds its subscribers to the pursuit of violent revenge “by any possible means” on anyone who conspires or helps to conspire against the life of the English queen. The Bond of Association was signed by members of the Privy Council, the heads of the Inns of Court, the Church, as well as gentlemen of the counties.⁴⁹ The document marks a shadowy area between public and private revenge. Although it was signed by the Privy Council, and signatories swore an oath in church, parliamentary discussion indicates that the Bond evoked debate over the dilemma of the legality of this kind of revenge. Karen Robertson writes that “[i]n debate, a number of signatories of the bond expressed their distress that failure to pass the Bond into law placed them in the morally ambiguous position of being sworn to an oath not legally sanctioned.”⁵⁰ The question of the legality of blood revenge in this case hinged on the distinction between individual, illegal revenge and public, authorized justice. When Robertson remarks that “there was less discussion over the ethical propriety of private vengeance,” she therein disregards a central aspect of debates about revenge in Elizabethan England.⁵¹ For it is precisely the private or public nature of revenge that determined the ethics of revenge. The question debated in parliament *was* an ethical as well as a political question: the debate centred on the uncertainty whether a signatory of the bond committed “wild justice” or acted within the compass of the law if he were to take revenge in the event that Queen Elizabeth was assassinated.⁵²

The debate about the Bond of Association hinges on the difference between private and public revenge, a difference central to all discussions of tyrannicide in the period.⁵³ Robert Miola writes that the murderer of a tyrant was considered just when he “acted on authority delegated to him, explicitly or implicitly, from God or from fellow citizens or, more usually, from some combination of the two.”⁵⁴ Private desires, public interest and divine retribution were defined against each other in these debates.

The boundaries between public and private revenge, then, were not undisputed in the early modern period. Various groups defined the concept in different terms, and even within state discourse no unified definition of revenge existed, as the discussion over the Bond of Association demonstrates. Revenge was defined differently in the various discourses that circulated and conflicted in early modern English culture. It is the very process of definition and its inherent conflicts that concern me here. In order to map the role of the stage in these debates, a theoretical model is required that allows for the analysis of the discursive dynamics. In the following chapter, I will outline a framework for the analysis of the role of the stage in this dynamic process of defining revenge.

NOTES

¹ J. Q. Adams cited in Campbell 1931: 281.

² Bradley 1911: 99

³ Joseph 1953: 40.

⁴ Hunter 1997: 422, italics mine.

⁵ Robertson 1989: 91.

⁶ Prosser 1967:72.

⁷ Campbell 1931: 281.

⁸ Belsey 1999: 16. See also Frye 1984, 10–11.

⁹ Lancashire 1997a: I.10.1–104.

¹⁰ In the Scottish genre of revenge painting, divine justice, public law, and revenge are similarly merged. An oil painting by Livinus de Vogelaare (1568, fig. 1) depicts the tomb of Henry Stuart, consort and first cousin of Mary, Queen of Scots. In the centre of the painting, the future King James VI of Scotland and I of England kneels before the sarcophagus as his grandparents, the Earl and Countess of Lennox, and his elder brother Charles kneel behind him. From the infant James’ mouth issues a banner with the prayer: “Arise, O Lord, and avenge the innocent blood of the King my father and, I beseech thee, defend me with thy right hand.” (Fry, 1984: 34). According to a plaque on the wall in the painting itself, the work was commissioned by James’ paternal grandparents so that “if they, who are already old, should be deprived

of this life before the majority of their descendent, the King of Scots, he may have a memorial from them in order that he shut not out of his memory the recent atrocious murder of the King his father, until God should avenge it through him" (Thomson 1975:18).

¹¹ Bowers 1966: 3–4.

¹² Kerrigan 1996:22. The passage occurs in Exodus 21:24. Although the words "eye for eye" are usually taken to refer to a kind of primitive ethics, the phrase occurs among a list of punishments that vary from monetary repayments to the death sentence. After God has handed Moses the Ten Commandments, he tells him to set a number of judgements before his people. These outline what is to be done if a man kills another man, if a master kills his maidservant with a rod, or if an oxen falls into a pit. One of the laws states that "[i]f men strive, and hurt a woman with child, so that her fruit depart from her, and yet no mischief follow: he shall be surely punished, according as the woman's husband will lay upon him; and he shall pay as the judges determine. And if any mischief follow, then thou shalt give life for life, Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, Burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe" (Exodus 21:22–25). See also Eagleton 2003: 140.

¹³ On revenge as a principle of the maintenance of order, see also Kerrigan 1996: 21. From a biologically behaviourist perspective, Matt Ridley argues that the tit-for-tat principle sustains social order (Ridley 1997: 51–75); and Vincy Fon and Francesco Parisi conclude that human instincts for revenge may have been an important ingredient for the sustainability of peaceful social behaviour (Fon and Parisi 2005).

¹⁴ Brown 1986: 2. Richard Fletcher also stresses that in medieval England, blood revenge and the feud were not considered disruptive elements as we would consider them today. Rather, they were inseparable from concepts of justice, order, equity and stability. Fletcher 2003: 10.

¹⁵ Miller 1999: 76 and 81.

¹⁶ Schoemaker 2005: 358.

¹⁷ Jones 1590: Sig. A3r. The volume is in the STC attributed to Richard Jones, but is sometimes ascribed to William Segar, since his name is mentioned on Sig. Nn3v, and the book draws heavily on his work, as well as that of Vincentio Saviolo.

¹⁸ Jones 1590: Sig. A2r.

¹⁹ Jones 1590: Sig. A2v.

²⁰ Jones 1590: Sig A2v.

²¹ Hughes and Larkin 1969: 350 and 495–97.

²² Stone 1966: 15–16. See also Bowers 1966: 3–40 and Broude 1975: 47. For a comparable argument on the French nobility, see Bitton 1969.

²³ M. Mann writes that the very concept of the nation state is based in the notion of a centralized set of institutions which enjoy a monopoly on the means of legitimate violence over a territorially demarcated area ("State and Society," cited in Braddick 2000: 12).

²⁴ Alan Smith describes how the powers of justices of the peace grew

significantly during the sixteenth century (Smith 1984: 134). Julius Ruff refers to a “judicial revolution” in early modern Europe. He notes that the early modern English situation is exceptional in its European context, since the authority of the crown’s court grew more rapidly there than on the continent (Ruff 2001: 73–74). K. J. Kesselring warns that we should not consider the expansion of the legal system as emerging too methodologically. She stresses that the drive toward greater enforcement of the law was a movement caused by individuals as much as by state policy (Kesselring 2003: 44).

²⁵ Stone 1966: 234.

²⁶ See Coward 1982 and Ellis 1997.

²⁷ Cressy writes that Stone’s argument that the early modern period was beset by friction between notions of hierarchy and mobility, remains valid (Cressy 1991: 128).

²⁸ Dewald 1996: 16 and 35. See also Ellis 1997 and Coward 1982. On the process of English state formation, see Smith 1984; Helgerson 1992; Womack 1992; McEachern 1996; Mikalachki 1998; Hindle 2000; Braddick 2000; Edwards 2001; Knapp 2002.

²⁹ Low 2003: 3. See also Woodbridge and Beehler 2003: xiv.

³⁰ Humphrey: sig. b6v.

³¹ Humphrey: sig. b6v.

³² To hock is to disable by cutting the tendons of the ham or hock (*OED* *sv.* hock *v.* 1).

³³ Foucault 1991: 48. Broude also writes that “[n]either Tudor political theory nor Tudor religion rejected the blood-for-blood ethic which was the basis of private, public, and divine vengeance alike” (Broude 1975: 50), and Kerrigan from a more philosophical standpoint also contends that “revenge and retributive justice are hard to disentangle” since the responsibility for the enactment of revenge is transferred from the victim to a judge within the legal realm (Kerrigan 1996: 23).

³⁴ Benjamin 1996: 239.

³⁵ Montaigne 1893: III, 337.

³⁶ See also Maus 1995a: xiv.

³⁷ Foucault writes that “[i]f these institutions were able to implant themselves, this was because they presented themselves as agencies of regulation, arbitration, and demarcation” (Foucault 1990: 86–87).

³⁸ See Broude 1975: 48.

³⁹ Broude 1975: 42.

⁴⁰ For the royal proclamation, see Hughes and Larkin 1969: 133.

⁴¹ Lancashire 1997a: I.10.1–80–88.

⁴² Perkins 1972: 504.

⁴³ Bacon 2000: 17.

⁴⁴ Henry the Third was murdered by a monk, Jacques Clément, who was quartered and burned for his deed.

⁴⁵ *OED* *sv.* public *adj.* 1.

⁴⁶ Wright 1971: 177.

⁴⁷ Neale 1953: 50.

⁴⁸ “The Instrument of an Association,” reprinted in Tenison 1933: vol.

5, appendix B, pp. 206–207, italics mine. See also Cressy 1982 for an analysis of the function of the bond.

⁴⁹ See Robertson 2001: 224–25.

⁵⁰ Robertson 1989: 94.

⁵¹ *Ibid.* Cressy writes that the Bond for its endorsement of revenge has been considered an embarrassment by analysts of Tudor history, and has been called “a naked appeal to the most primitive instincts of its signatories” (Cressy 1982: 217–18).

⁵² The Bill passed by parliament in December 1584 closely resembled the Bond of Association. According to Cressy, it “promised bloody revenge against any involved in a plot against the queen. Some members balked at the prospect of unregulated vengeance without due trial and judgement, and sought to make the Association more conformable to English Law” (Cressy 1982: 225).

⁵³ See Jaszi and Lewis 1957; Miola 1985; Bushnell 1990.

⁵⁴ Miola 1985: 284.

CHAPTER 2

Theoretical framework

In the final decades of the twentieth century, critics working in the new historicist tradition analysed the stage's interventions in debates about revenge. They conceived of the role of the stage in terms of subversion and containment, concepts central to the new historicism's understanding of power. Stephen Greenblatt first proposed these concepts in his essay "Invisible Bullets" (1981).¹ There, he argued that the subversion of state ideology in the early modern period is always already contained by that ideology, and ultimately works to support it. He described how in Shakespeare's *Henry V*, the eponymous monarch deliberately creates his own subversion in order to consolidate his power. "Indeed," Greenblatt wrote, "the subversiveness is the very product of that power and furthers its ends."² The model is best explained with reference to the concept of carnival: although the misrule of carnival might seem temporarily to challenge authority, the release of this festive energy ultimately affirms the status quo. Similarly, if the theatre is allowed to scrutinize the theatrical workings of power and to insist upon "the paradoxes, ambiguities, and tensions of authority," then this is because this production of subversion in the end upholds the state's authority.³

Applying this model to the performance of revenge, critics have argued that the popularity of revenge tragedy in the early modern period strengthened the state's authority, and especially the power of the legal system. This would seem a paradox, since the performance of an outlawed practice can be said to subvert the legal system, rather than to support it. Especially if the audience

identified with the revenger portrayed on stage, the act of vengeance might inspire spectators to disobey the law themselves. New historicist critics argue, however, that the dramatic enactment of revenge ultimately strengthened the state's monopoly on modes of punishment. The state's power is consolidated, because the performance of revenge functions as a pressure valve to release pent-up tensions brought about by its very prohibition. Stevie Simkin argues, for example, that a visit to the theatre may have provided such release specifically for those nobles who were accustomed to traditions of blood revenge and frustrated by the introduction of a centralised legal bureaucracy.⁴ In this model of subversion and containment, the fictional character of a theatrical performance is a key factor. Ton Hoenselaars points out that the dramatic context of these acts of revenge safeguards them from subverting state power. He suggests that an act of revenge could temporarily gain legitimacy on the stage, as long as the playwright emphasized that this legitimacy was of an aesthetic nature. Thus, potentially subversive elements in the drama were contained by notions of poetic justice; the theatre functioned as a safely ritualistic pendant of the act of revenge that was outlawed in society.⁵ As such, the stage contributed to the maintenance of order in English society. Karen Robertson thinks that the dramatic enactments of revenge "may have served as substitutes for violent action."⁶ She concludes that revenge plays "form one element in the ideological process of state formation in the late Tudor and early Stuart period, as the state centralized control over the execution of justice, particularly control over private blood-feuds."⁷ The performance of revenge in these critics' views did not pose a threat to the establishment of the legal system, but supported the authority of the law.

This model of subversion and containment, prevalent in the early stages of the new historicism, has been criticized for its monolithic conception of the dominant order. The problem with the model of subversion and containment lies in its understanding of power in terms of an opposition between a dominant structure and a subversive force. Louis Montrose observes that the "binary logic of subversion/containment produces a closed conceptual structure; its terms are reciprocally defining and dependent, complementary and complicit."⁸ The model presupposes the existence of a uniform dominant discourse, against which subversive elements are defined. As cultural materialists such as Jonathan Dollimore,

Alan Sinfield, and Catherine Belsey have signalled, power within the emerging nation state was all but uniform.⁹ Sinfield points out that “it is plain that the political power of the feudal nobility continued [...] alongside the developing economic power of the urban bourgeoisie [...]; and a further complication [...] was the development of a bureaucracy.”¹⁰ In the context of debates about revenge, it is difficult to determine which group or institution was dominant. Precisely because the concept of revenge was constantly being redefined in the period, it is hard to identify a dominant perspective in this dynamic matrix of thinking on revenge.

The model of power that is used in this thesis is based on the work of Michel Foucault. Although Greenblatt’s original model of the operations of power is often attributed to Foucault, the latter’s definitions of power are more accommodating towards a fragmented view of power.¹¹ In *The History of Sexuality* (Vol. I) Foucault writes that power must not be looked for in the primary existence of a single point or a unique source of sovereignty. Instead, “it is the moving substrate of force relations which by virtue of their inequality, constantly engender states of power, but the latter are always local and unstable. [...] Power is exercised from innumerable points.”¹² In his view, we should not think in binary terms of a dominant and an excluded discourse, but envisage a multiplicity of discursive elements that can come into play in various strategies:

Are there no great radical ruptures, massive binary divisions, then? Occasionally, yes. But more often one is dealing with mobile and transitory points of resistance, producing cleavages in a society that shift about, fracturing unities and effecting regroupings, furrowing across individuals themselves, cutting them up and remolding them, marking off irreducible regions in them, in their bodies and minds.¹³

The conflicting findings of previous critics on the position of the drama within discussions about revenge signal the existence of such contradictions and conflicts. Rather than examining which concept of revenge was dominant in early modern society, I am interested in these points of conflict, and in the dynamic shifts in thinking on revenge.

Points of diffraction

In order to study the role of the stage in this fragmented and

dynamic model of power, I employ a strategy for discursive analysis outlined by Foucault. This strategy reads for points of conflict within a discursive practice. In its representation of revenge, the drama tends to focus on such conflicts of authority. It brings the contested position of the revenger to the fore and stresses “points at which [society’s] self-conception is perniciously inconsistent, or at which it makes conflicting demands upon its members.”¹⁴ Foucault in his *Archaeology of Knowledge* offers a set of tools to analyze such points of conflict. He writes that in order to analyse the complex dynamics of discourses, one needs to identify *points of diffraction*. A point of diffraction comes into existence when two discourses within a discursive practice conflict with each other. They each shape a concept in their own way, and these two concepts can be seen to conflict: their incompatibility characterizes them as points of diffraction. As Foucault phrases it: “two objects, or two types of enunciation, or two concepts may appear, in the same discursive formation, without being able to enter – under the pain of manifest contradiction or inconsequence – the same series of statements.”¹⁵ These two conflicting concepts signal a larger conflict between the discourses that produced them. In the words of Foucault, these points of diffraction are also “link points of systematization.” He explains that “on the basis of each of these equivalent yet incompatible elements, a coherent series of objects, forms of statement, and concepts [can be] derived (with, in each series, possible new points of incompatibility).”¹⁶ Points of diffraction mark a conflict between discourses, and therefore form an ideal starting point for the analysis of discursive systems. The identification of points of diffraction allows us to trace larger conflicts between co-existing discourses, and gives insight into the workings of the discursive dynamics.

The tool of gender

I use an analytic model that combines Foucault’s strategies for discursive analysis with a gender perspective.¹⁷ This gender perspective does not entail a focus on the female sex, nor on female dramatic characters. Instead, it conceives of gender as a dynamic construct that does not have a stable relationship with either the male or the female sex, but which is constantly redefined. Judith Butler has argued that the focus on the category of women within feminist criticism might unwittingly result in the reproduction of

existing gender relations. She proposed a model in which gender is seen to operate independently from sex.¹⁸ Joan Scott has also warned that the term “gender” in academic discourse has come to be used as a synonym for “women” in scholarly publications.¹⁹

In the feminist analyses of representations of revenge in early modern drama, gender is indeed frequently related to the biological category of “woman.” Faced with a plethora of vindictive female characters, various critics have sought to explain the recurrence of such commonplace representations of the female sex with reference to ideas about ‘the nature of women’ in the period. Thus, notions of female evil have been related to a masculine anxiety about female power in the early modern period. Christina Leon Alfar, for example, writes that such fantasies are “produced by male fears of female desire, and therefore by masculinist beliefs in women’s power over childbirth.”²⁰ Also, Betty Travitsky has studied representations of murdering mothers in pamphlets as well as in the drama of the early modern period. She remarks that although humanist theorists prescribed new roles for women as judicious mothers, older stereotypes of women as prone to excessive passion nevertheless persisted in these texts. She concludes that in pamphlets and stage plays, “the message is the same – women are destructive.”²¹ Travitsky thus relates representations of the Medea figure in early modern drama to contemporary fears about women’s wild passion as well as their potential destructiveness. “All women were obviously considered to be potentially damnable furies,” she writes.²² A final example is Linda Woodbridge’s study of representations of women in early modern literature, subtitled *Literature and the Nature of Woman-kind*. Woodbridge connects representations of women’s vengefulness to what she calls “the real world,” where “contemporary women were donning breeches and challenging people to duels.”²³ She discusses an anonymous play that defends women against the accusations of the seventeenth-century woman-hater Joseph Swetnam. In *Swetnam the Woman-Hater Arraigned by Women* (1618) the only stereotype about women that is allowed to stand – to Woodbridge’s dismay – is their penchant for revenge. Woodbridge suggests that: “[p]erhaps the playwright allowed himself this one stereotype because it wasn’t really a stereotype – not adapted from stale literary models but drawn from the life. All the evidence suggests that contemporary women *were* aggressive.”²⁴

The French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu has argued that when we find ourselves faced with such gender stereotypes, we should not automatically assume that these representations reflect an actual situation. We certainly must “not try to deny the permanences and the invariants, which are indisputably part of historical reality,” he writes – but we should accept the stereotype as a *topos*. The *topos* need not necessarily reflect the aggressive nature of women in the early modern period. Instead, Bourdieu argues that we need to analyse how this seemingly transhistorical stereotype came to be constructed, to be put into circulation in this specific historical context: “one must reconstruct the history of the historical labour of dehistoricization.”²⁵ Gender stereotypes come into being, or are reproduced, under specific historical pressures. As Kathleen McLuskie writes, “the representation of women in Elizabethan culture cannot be regarded as purely mimetic, since it was constantly being negotiated around conflicting paradigms of womanhood.”²⁶ Only by examining the political and historical processes that shaped these paradigms of womanhood can we give an explanation for the reproduction of these stereotypes without relating them to an essentialist concept such as the nature of women.²⁷

Joan Scott has formulated a model for the use of gender as a tool in historical analysis that allows for such an examination of the forces that shaped these paradigms. She writes that “concepts of power, though they may build on gender, are not always literally about gender itself.”²⁸ In her view, gender is a primary way of signifying relations of power: it is part of the meaning of power itself, its structure is embedded in the discourse of politics and power. Gender constructs in historical texts therefore do not always refer to sex itself. Although the meaning of gender might seem fixed, and although it appears to function as an objective set of references, it is continually redefined in shifting relations of power. If we accept that gender is not a stable given, but a construct that is contested and in flux, then, in the words of Scott, “we must constantly ask not only what is at stake in proclamations or debates that invoke gender to explain or justify their positions, but also how implicit understandings of gender are being invoked and reinscribed.”²⁹ It is the task of the historian, she argues, to disrupt the seeming objectivity of gender structures, and to examine the nature of the debate that led to the appearance of timeless

permanence in binary gender representation. This kind of analysis provides insight into the ways in which gender constructs are shaped under the pressure of contemporary debates.

I will argue that gendered representations of revenge form points of diffraction within early modern discursive practice. Because gender is a key binary construct in relations of power, as Scott argues, gendered representations of revenge can be seen to mark a point of conflict between two discourses. In Shakespeare's comedy *Much Ado about Nothing* (1598), for example, revenge is marked as a masculine prerogative. When her kinswoman and friend Hero is slandered and dishonoured at the altar, Beatrice wishes that she were a man so that she could defend Hero's honour by means of public revenge. She accuses the men in her surroundings of having become too feminine to enact revenge:

that I were a man for his sake! Or that I had a friend who would be a man for my sake! But manhood is melted into curtsies, valour into compliment, and men are only turned into tongue, and trim ones, too: he is now as valiant as Hercules, that only tells a lie, and swears it.³⁰

Here, revenge, and specifically revenge by means of a duel, is marked as a typically masculine act, associated with valour, honour, and the classical hero Hercules. The passage hints at a process of change in notions of masculine identity in the early modern period, a change in which the practice of revenge is implicated. The gendered representation of revenge in this passage can be traced to a conflict between discourses. The definition of revenge as masculine in *Much Ado about Nothing* draws on images from chivalric discourse as well as from classical mythology. These images of manhood are contrasted to the concept of civility (curtsies and compliment), which is characterized as effeminate.

Feminism and the new historicism

Frictions exist between the two theoretical frameworks of this dissertation, feminist criticism and the new historicism.³¹ The new historicism has been accused by feminist critics of reproducing existing patriarchal power structures, neglecting gender issues and concentrating on male power relationships. Carol Thomas Neely wrote that its "effect – not necessarily a deliberate or inevitable one – has been to oppress women, repress sexuality, and subor-

dinate gender issues.³² In Neely's view, feminist criticism should focus on women's experience, and should over-read possibilities of women's resistance or subversion.³³ Natalie Zemon Davis, for example, famously argued that ordinary women could be inspired by fictional representations of "women on top" to imagine revenges of their own. Along similar lines, Pamela Allen Brown has argued against interpretations of stereotypes of the unruly or violent woman as repressive; she points out that these images could also inspire women to take matters in their own hands. Finally, Alison Findlay also argues that the outlawed agency of the revenger must have seemed attractive to women in the audience.³⁴

I do not intend to "over-read" early modern drama to locate possibilities of female resistance in dramatic representations of revenge. Instead, I employ gender as an analytical tool in my analysis of the role of the drama in the discursive dynamics of revenge. As David Bevington wrote in response to the frictions between the new historicism and feminism: how can one truly historicize if one leaves out gender, or how can one look at gender representations fully without taking their historical construction into account?³⁵ In this historical deconstruction of gender stereotypes, historical specificity is of more weight than a cross-historical female resistance of patriarchal systems. Kathleen McLuskie succinctly remarks that the aim of highlighting the political work of culture "cannot be served by asserting the timelessness of feminism, turning the struggles of early modern women into costume drama versions of our own."³⁶ The historical awareness that notions of masculinity and femininity are defined against each other in a continual state of flux, however, does create leeway for the redefinition of these gender patterns in our own time. In that sense, this research is both feminist as well as historical.

Louis Montrose used Scott's analytical framework in a seminal article: "The Work of Gender in the Discourse of Discovery," published in the new historicist journal *Representations* (1991). There, Montrose examines discourses of discovery from a gender perspective, concentrating his analysis on the writings of Sir Walter Raleigh. He describes how the process of colonial "othering" engages with two Elizabethan discourses: that representing relations between the English and the Spanish, and that articulating the relationship between the woman monarch and her masculine

subjects. More specifically, he explores the destabilizing effect of conflicting gender constructs in early modern discourses of discovery.

In focusing on the tensions between male subject roles and the female sex of the monarch, Montrose follows Joan Scott's suggestion that gender "has been employed literally or analogically in political theory to justify or criticize the reign of monarchs and to express the relationship between ruler and ruled."³⁷ Scott mentions Catharine de' Medici and Elizabeth I as possible case studies, and Montrose concentrates on the latter. He argues that in the case of the English queen, her sex conflicts with her gender role: Elizabeth "is at once a *ruler*, in whose name the discoveries of her masculine subjects are authorized and performed; and also a *woman*, whose political relationship to those subjects is itself frequently articulated in the discourses of gender and sexuality."³⁸ Montrose shows how Queen Elizabeth appropriated a space of feminine authority within the dominant masculine and patriarchal structures of her society, and how her successful strategies also "tapped the alternating current of misogyny in her ostensibly adoring and obedient masculine subjects."³⁹ He concludes that:

However distinctive in detail, Raleigh's individual relationship to Queen Elizabeth was shaped by a cultural contradiction that he shared with all members of his nation, gender, and social estate: namely, the expectation that he manifest loyalty and obedience to his sovereign at the same time that he exercised masculine authority over women.⁴⁰

Montrose's article was groundbreaking within early modern literary studies in its combination of gender analysis with new historicist theory. It is therefore surprising that the model has not found large following outside the specific subject area of early modern proto-colonialism. Of the fifty citations in the Humanities Citation Index, for example, forty-six are in articles concerned with colonialist discourse, and only three are concerned with the issue of gender, one of which is another article by Montrose himself. The reason for this might be that although Montrose analyses the representation of the relation between the Spanish and the English as well as the relation between colonizer and colonized in terms of gender, the focus of his article is on the more explicit connection between gender and power in the relation

between aristocratic male subjects and their female monarch. Joan Scott writes that such frictions between gender roles in politics “are examples of explicit connections between gender and power, but they are only part of my definition of gender as a primary way of signifying relationships of power.”⁴¹ Crucially, she argues that attention to gender in discourses of power is often less explicit. I have sought to focus on such implicit, as well as more explicit, modes of gendering revenge in this dissertation.

A gender perspective is especially relevant in this research, since the concept of revenge pivots on issues of gender. The cultural debates about revenge centre on the family, masculine honour, the public and the private sphere, selfhood and the body; concepts that are themselves bound up with gender. Those who opposed the practice of the duel, for example, redefined the concept of masculine honour in order to preclude the need for revenge. Masculine honour in this view depended on the public favour of the monarch, and not on private acts of aggression. In contrast, the desire for revenge was marked as feminine and opposed to the values of patience and fortitude, which were identified as typically masculine. Gender plays a crucial role in the shifting contrasts that are in the process of being produced in these debates. An analysis of the stage’s production of such gendered constructs provides insight into the theatre’s role in cultural debates about revenge.

Whereas critics have hitherto examined the role of the stage in debates about revenge in binary terms, in this research I chart the conflicting and fragmented discourses of revenge that the various early modern English stages produce. Such an approach renders insight into the various points of power in early modern culture. Discussions of revenge are not dominated by a unified state discourse, but display an array of different views of revenge held by the militant aristocracy, Stoics, ministers, or statesmen. I analyse the role of the stage in these views, and hope to provide insight into the ways in which different playwrights, institutions, troupes and theatres take part in the debates. The exploration of the theatres’ representations of revenge shows how concepts of honour, shame, the body, the passions, and reason are shaped in gendered terms in these debates.

NOTES

¹ Greenblatt 1988b: 2. “Invisible Bullets” was first published in *Glyph*

8 (1981), then in *Political Shakespeare: New Essays in Cultural Materialism*, ed. Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield (1985), and finally in his *Shakespearean Negotiations* (1988).

² Greenblatt 1988b: 30.

³ Greenblatt 1988b: 65.

⁴ Simkin 2001: 2.

⁵ Hoenselaars 1991: 118. See also Maus 1997: 371. Ronald Broude similarly argues that “revenge tragedy enabled conflicts to be identified and formalized within the conventions of an established dramatic form, opening for the audience the possibility of resolution on both the intellectual and emotional levels” (Broude 1975: 58). In *Shakespearean Negotiations*, Greenblatt admits that he grew increasingly uneasy with his earlier model of power. He suggests that the theatre may itself have produced the idea of a liberty of fictional entertainment, providing itself with a broad license to engage with political issues (Greenblatt 1988b: 18–19).

⁶ Robertson 1989: 94. Interestingly in this context, Robert N. Watson in a recent article suggests that the popularity of the revenge genre may also have derived from the Reformation’s abolishment of various rituals of mourning, such as masses, prayers for the dead and indulgences. The practice of revenge constituted an alternative relation of the living with the dead: “If prayers for the dead were discouraged in churches, then revenge on behalf of a ghost would be performed in theatres,” he suggests (Watson 2002: 174). See also Rist 2003.

⁷ Robertson 2001: 220.

⁸ Montrose 1996: 8–9. Within the new historicism, Louis Montrose has long advocated a less monolithic model of power. As early as 1989 he advised that within the new historicism “[a] closed and static, singular and homogeneous notion of ideology must be succeeded by one that is heterogeneous and unstable, permeable and processual” (Montrose 1989: 22).

⁹ Dollimore 1989; Sinfield 1992. Catherine Belsey has objected that in the New Historicism “[p]ower is represented as seamless and all-pervasive, while resistance, where it exists at all, is seen as ultimately self-deceived” (Belsey 1989: 164). Deborah Shuger writes that “[n]ot only is the global division of ideas into ‘subversive’ and ‘orthodox’ problematic [...] but it is not always clear what precisely is subversive with respect to the dominant ideology, nor does orthodox ideology seem quite as monolithic and hegemonic as either Tillyard and his [new historicist] critics seem to have supposed” (Shuger 1990: 2–3).

¹⁰ Sinfield 1992: 82.

¹¹ See also Sinfield 1992: 47–48.

¹² Foucault 1990: 93–94.

¹³ Foucault 1990: 96.

¹⁴ Maus 1995a: xi. Theodore Ziolkowski (2004) has argued that the revenger’s hesitation in tragedies like *Orestes* and *Hamlet* exposes a deep-lying conflict between traditions of blood revenge and the emerging legal systems in classical and early modern English society.

¹⁵ Foucault 2002: 73.

¹⁶ Foucault 2002: 73.

¹⁷ Although the use of gender in historical analysis is generally accepted in Anglo-American academia, it occasionally meets with resistance in studies of Dutch historical literature. Lia van Gemert made a plea for the use of gender in the analysis of Dutch historical literature in her inaugural lecture. She emphasised that, contrary to existing prejudices, a gender analysis need not conflict with the historical object (Van Gemert 1996: 6). Rosi Braidotti in her inaugural lecture as professor in Women's Studies at Utrecht University emphasized that "notions such as 'gender,' which have emerged within women's studies, can be of relevance and inspiration for other disciplines from the humanities" (Braidotti 1991: 6).

¹⁸ Butler 1990: 6.

¹⁹ Building on Foucault, Judith Butler therefore stresses the social constructedness of categories of sex in *Bodies that Matter: on the Discursive Limits of Sex* (1993). Also, Eve Sedgwick in her work employs the term gender to refer precisely to the problematic "space" between sex and gender.

²⁰ Alfar Leon 2003: 23.

²¹ Travitsky 1993: 77.

²² Travitsky 1993: 68.

²³ Woodbridge 1986: 110. Woodbridge does not provide a source for this representation of women's behaviour in "the life."

²⁴ Woodbridge 1986: 312-13.

²⁵ Bourdieu 1998: 82-83. I refer to Bourdieu's study of masculine domination here for its comment on the relation between gender stereotypes and power. I will not use Bourdieu's theoretical concepts of taste and cultural habitus. For the use of these concepts in Shakespeare studies, see Bristol 1996 and Wilson 2001.

²⁶ McLuskie 1989: 227.

²⁷ In the study of early modern drama, moreover, this conflation of gender with sex is problematized by the material practice of performance in the public theatres. Since women were not allowed to act on the commercial stage, female roles were performed by boy actors. Beneath the dress of a female character was thus always a male body. Thomas Laqueur's work on the perception of sex and gender differences in the early modern period also prevents the conflation of gender with sex. Laqueur writes that in the Galenic one-sex model, woman is not essentially different from man, but is an inverted version and hence less perfect (see also Greenblatt 1988b: 66-93). "Turn outward the woman's, turn inward, so to speak, and fold double the man's [genital organs], and you will find the same in both in every respect," Galen wrote (cited in Laqueur 1990). The difference between the sexes was based on the degree of heat in the body. Colder bodies became female, and hotter bodies male; over-exertion could make bodies shift gender to become masculine. Although Laqueur's assertion that the Galenic model held sway until the eighteenth century has been questioned, his work should

nevertheless prevent the easy slippage of gender categories into sexual categories.

²⁸ Scott 1986: 1069.

²⁹ Scott 1986: 1074.

³⁰ Shakespeare 1997: *Much Ado About Nothing* 4.1.312-17.

³¹ For a discussion of the frictions between new historicism and feminist criticism, see Neely 1988; Newton 1988; McLuskie 1989: 227-29; Bevington 1995; Maus 1995b; and Corporaal 2003: 1-3.

³² Neely 1988: 7.

³³ Neely 1988: 15.

³⁴ Findlay 1999: 56.

³⁵ Bevington 1995: 308. Judith Newton in a seminal article on feminism and the new historicism argues that “if we wish to be serious about our assertion that representation ‘makes things happen’ we will need to explore the way that discursive meanings circulate throughout a culture” (Newton 1988: 118).

³⁶ McLuskie 1989: 229.

³⁷ Scott 1986: 1071.

³⁸ Montrose 1991: 3.

³⁹ Montrose 1991: 32.

⁴⁰ Montrose 1991: 34.

⁴¹ Scott 1986: 1072-73.



CHAPTER 3

From State to Stage

STATE FORMATION AND THE GENDER OF REVENGE

For that since your sacred Maiestie
In gracious hands the regall scepter held
All tragedies are fled from State, to stadge
The Misfortunes of Arthur (1588)

The literary roots of the genre of revenge tragedy in England lie in an institution that sought to “weed out” customs of revenge – to speak with Francis Bacon. The tragedies of the Roman statesman, philosopher and dramatist Lucius Annaeus Seneca were re-discovered in England in the middle of the sixteenth century by translators and playwrights who had close connections to the London Inns of Court, England’s schools of law. These men’s translations of Seneca’s plays and their new tragedies in Senecan style are usually studied for their literary influence on the later genre of revenge tragedy.¹ An analysis of these texts’ interactions with the institutional and political context in which they were written and performed, shows that the Inns of Court’s interest in the theme of revenge in Seneca’s tragedies cannot be seen in isolation from the gradual expansion of the national legal system in the period. The plays shape a discourse in which private revenge is represented in terms of the feminine, the passionate, and the uncontrollable and contrasted to the rational, masculine, and public character of the law. The very first English ventures in the genre of revenge tragedy can thus be seen to play a crucial role in debates over the legitimacy of revenge: these plays presented their

audiences with a particular way of thinking about retribution, a discourse shaped by Seneca's images of furies and vindictiveness. This does not mean that the stage's earliest representations of revenge shape a monolithic and dominant state discourse. A gender analysis reveals structural frictions in these translations and adaptations between the Senecan idea of feminine, passionate and irrational revenge and the Christian notion of masculine, rational, divine retribution. In the second half of this chapter, I explore how Shakespeare's early history plays and his first revenge tragedy *Titus Andronicus* both draw on Seneca's tragedies to challenge the boundaries between masculine justice and feminine vindictiveness that the Senecan drama of the Inns of Court helped to shape.

Seneca's institutional context in sixteenth-century England

Two surges of English interest in Seneca occurred. In the 1560s, students and fellows at the universities and the Inns of Court, circulated their English translations of Seneca's tragedies in manuscript form, and published editions of individual translations. New tragedies inspired by Seneca's plays were produced at the Inns of Court. Thomas Sackville and Thomas Norton co-authored the original, heavily Senecan tragedy *Gorboduc*, first performed in 1562. John Pykering, a member of Lincoln's Inn, wrote his *Horestes* in 1567. The second period of increased interest occurred in the 1580s, when Thomas Newton published the earlier translations of Seneca's tragedies together with his own in 1581.² The use of these English translations in early modern drama was for a long time neglected, but in the twentieth century their vital position in the English Senecan tradition was finally acknowledged.³ The Inns of Court produced new Senecan tragedies in this decade as well. In 1587, members of Gray's Inn wrote *The Misfortunes of Arthur*. After the Inns of Court, the commercial London theatres discovered Seneca's tragedies as source material. Playwrights such as Kyd, Marlowe, and Shakespeare used Seneca's tragedies as material for their own work. The popularity of Seneca's tragedies as source material for revenge tragedies inspired Thomas Nashe's familiar observation that "English Seneca read by candle light yields many good sentences, as *Blood is a beggar*, and so forth; and if you entreat him fair in a frosty morning, he will afford you whole Hamlets, I should say handfuls of tragical speeches."⁴ Kyd's

Spanish Tragedy (1587) draws heavily on the work of the Roman playwright, and Nashe's reference to "whole Hamlets" is believed to refer to a Senecan *ur-Hamlet*, possibly written by Kyd as well.

The choice of the translation, adaptation and performance of a Senecan tragedy was political: the Inns of Court were one of the central institutions in the expanding national legal system in Elizabethan England. Known as England's third university, Lincoln's Inn, Gray's Inn, Middle Temple and Inner Temple functioned as the main gateway to a career in common law, and also trained many of the country's future governors and administrators.⁵ The Inns of Court occupied a key position in the expansion of the nation state, and had a vested interest in replacing traditions of revenge with the operations of the law.⁶ The dramatic performances produced at these schools of law took place during the Inns' Revels. In this period an artificial state was created within the institution, in which members of the Inns enacted all executive, legislative and judiciary functions, enabling the legal profession to explore the political concepts of constitutionalism and limited monarchy during the period of the revels.⁷ The Inns performed their plays before audiences of students, lawyers, politicians, and the royal court. Within this institutional context, scholars turned to Seneca's tragedies to comment on contemporary politics, to bring into circulation images of private revenge as passionate and uncontrollable.

Classical source texts

The scope of Seneca's literary bequest to early modern English drama has long been the subject of critical controversy.⁸ Critics such as John W. Cunliffe and F. L. Lucas in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century identified a broad array of formal, stylistic and textual elements as well as verbal echoes and parallel passages inherited from the classical dramatist in early modern drama. Among these were the five-act structure; the use of stock characters such as the ghost, nurse, servant, messenger, tyrant, and chorus; the rhetorical figure of stichomythia. These aspects were complemented by a thematics of madness, passion and vengeance.⁹ Later analyses challenged or qualified these claims and introduced a wider spectrum of intersecting and contiguous borrowings from sources such as the Italian novella, the medieval morality play, and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*; sources

that themselves draw on Seneca. These findings do not nullify the Senecan inheritance, however, for as Robert Miola asserts, the word 'source' has come to signify a wide range of possible relations with a text, varying from direct contact to indirect absorption.¹⁰

In this chapter, I gratefully build on prior identifications of textual traces of Seneca in the early modern drama to apply a more dynamic model of source study. Rather than viewing imitations of classical literature within an exclusively literary context, I regard these borrowings as a process of negotiation and exchange with contemporary discourses. Translations and reworkings of classical texts are themselves cultural constructs whose sudden appearances at distinct historical moments function as significant shaping forces of cultural transformation.¹¹ Stephen Greenblatt made a forceful argument for a new mode of source study that asks after this exchange of social energy involved in the appropriation of one text by another. It does not analyse the relations between two texts in isolation, but looks at the ways in which texts negotiate other discourses. It analyses the ways in which source texts are entered into contemporary processes of negotiation, and asks "[w]hose interests are served by the borrowing? And is there a larger cultural text produced by the exchange?"¹²

The new historicism in its programme to cross the boundaries between the literary canon and other texts tends to concentrate on the ways in which contemporary, non-literary sources are appropriated by the drama. This chapter takes a similar approach to the appropriation of classical literature by the early modern drama. Whereas the new historicism commonly plots the dynamic interrelations between contemporary texts, this chapter will examine the ways in which an older, classical source is brought into renewed circulation to interfere in a contemporary debate.¹³

Seneca and the gender of revenge

Seneca applies a crucial distinction between passionate and rational revenge. In his philosophical essay on anger entitled "De Ira" Seneca disapproves of acts of vengeance motivated by anger. In the philosopher's view, the passion most eager for revenge is unnatural to man and should therefore not be allowed to enter his mind, according to Seneca.¹⁴ He thereby disagrees with Aristotle and the school of the Peripatetics, who allow for moderated and controlled anger, since it is able to stir a man to courage and

noble action.¹⁵ Seneca is of the contrary opinion that “Reason is all – sufficient in itself, serving not merely for counsel, but for action as well” (151). Seneca’s disapproval of passionate revenge is underlined by means of a gender construction: revenge is gendered masculine when it is motivated by filial affection, reason, and duty. In contrast, when an act of vengeance springs from anger, it is gendered feminine. It is therefore not the act of retribution itself, but the manner in which it is produced that determines its gender.¹⁶

True manhood in Seneca’s essay on anger is determined by the ability to act on reason, and not on passion. Revenge is introduced as the litmus test for the control of masculine reason over the feminine emotion of anger:

What then (saith he) shall not a good man be angrie, if hee see his Father stroken, his Mother rauished? hee shall not bee angrie, but reuenge and defend them. What fearest thou that his pietie towards his parents is not an occasion more pregnant to incite him therunto then wrath is? Wee say after the same sort. What therefore? shall not a good man when he seeth his Father, or his sonne, cut in peeces, weepe or fall in a sound? as we see it falleth out in women, as often as any slight suspicion of danger doth awake them. A good man executeth his offices without confusion or feare, and in such sort will performe those things that are worthie a good man, that hee will doe nothing that is vnworthie a man.¹⁷

The propensity to the passions is not necessarily associated with the female sex. Rather, it is a weakness *gendered* feminine. In Thomas Lodge’s translation of Seneca’s “De Ira” the association of anger with the feminine is highlighted by Lodge’s consequent reference to anger as “she,” in accordance to the Latin grammatical gender of ‘ira.’¹⁸ Indeed, Lodge’s translation seems to personify anger as an intemperate and uncontrollable woman: “[w]ith crie, tumult, and iactation of the whole body, she persecuteth these whom she hath resoued to iniurie with reproches and curses.”¹⁹ Seneca admits that the emotion of anger “is found in men also,” and that “even men may have childish and womanish features.”²⁰ Revenge in Seneca’s essay is gendered by the degree of either reason or anger that feeds into it, not by the sex of the agent.

This gender construct is operative in Seneca’s tragedies as well. A key element in the representation of revenge in the tragedies are the three Furies. Alecto, Megaera and Tisiphone are often

represented in classical literature as snake-haired women who carry burning torches. This tradition was continued into early modern drama. *The Battle of Alcazar* provides three furies “one with a whip: another with a bloody torch: and the third with a Chopping knife.”²¹ Their attributes refer to their function as spirits of revenge.²² The furies are key figures in Seneca’s tragedies. In Seneca’s *Thyestes* the fury Megæra appears among the *dramatis personae*; she is the driving force behind the revenge plot of the play. More often, the furies function as an external embodiment of the emotion of vindictiveness.²³ They infuse the caller with the anger and vengefulness required for the execution of acts of revenge. Revengers thereby lose their sense of identity. Those who invoke the furies become mere vessels for vindictiveness, possessed by an overwhelming desire for revenge that ultimately leads to chaos.²⁴

In Seneca’s tragedies, the furies are represented in terms of the body and the passions. The revenges induced by these spirits are gendered feminine, and contrasted to rational, heroic, masculine types of vengeance. In *Hercules Furens*, for example, Juno causes Hercules to be possessed with a feminine type of vengefulness. In classical as well as in Renaissance culture, Hercules is the epitome of heroic manhood. His deeds of revenge are similarly masculine: in an early scene he reports how he “[w]ith [his] revenging right hand slayne now Lycus loe the ground | With groveling face hath smit.”²⁵ In his defeat of the tyrant Lycus, Hercules’s use of his right hand symbolises the kind of heroic and dutiful revenge that constitutes manhood, and is representative of law and order. At the other end of the spectrum we find Juno’s passionate desire for revenge on the son whom her husband Jupiter conceived with another woman. The goddess invokes the furies to bring her into the emotional state required for her revenge on Hercules. The play stresses that she cannot perform her revenge until she reaches the required state of frenzied anger: “Wherfore doth Juno yet not into raging fall? | Mee, me, ye Furyes, systers three throwne quite out of my wit | Tosse first.”²⁶ The moment of “becoming revenger” in Seneca’s tragedies is embedded in terms of the body and the passions. The revenger needs to surrender him- or herself to the angry passions incited by the furies. This is the moment at which revengers invoke the furies, and ask them to take possession of their body. Atreus’s invocation to the furies in *Thyestes* is a classical example of this moment of becoming revenger:

Depart thou hence all piety, if in this house as yet
 Thou euer wert: and now let all the flocke of furies dyre,
 And full of strife Erinnis come, and double brands of fyre
 Megæra shaking: for not yet enough with fury great
 And rage doth burne my boyling brest: it ought to bee repleate,
 With monster more.

(Eliot 1964: *Thyestes*, II; 63)

Atreus' words emphasize the bodily character the rage that is required to execute the cannibalistic revenge he has in mind. The boiling anger that is to fill his breast is personified as a "monster." Similarly, Medea cannot act her vindictive murder of her children before she has been tormented by the furies herself: "in plunge of passing payne | Torment yee mee, that on my spouse doe wishe this woe to raygne."²⁷ This moment of the revengers' dedication to the forces of vindictiveness is a key to the gender representation of their act.

Juno's revenge plot in *Hercules Furens* consists of instilling in Hercules a madness similar to the rage she invoked the furies to incite in herself: "That mad of mind and witles may Alcides driven bee | With fury great through pearced quight."²⁸ Hercules's masculine, since reasoned, reaction to the usurpation of the tyrant Lycus – his right-handed revenge – is contrasted in the play with the feminine, uncontrolled revenge that Juno incites him to commit.²⁹ Hercules in his madness sees the furies: "Erynnis [=furies] bringing flames [...] fearse Tisyphone [=one of the furies] with head and ugly heare | With serpents set."³⁰ The goddesses of revenge drive him to madness, and cause him to think that Lycus's offspring is still alive, and before him. His natural reaction is to seek revenge on them. With his weapons of masculine revenge – his right hand, his club, and his bow with arrows dipped in Hydra's poison – he murders not the tyrant's offspring, but his own wife and children. His right hand is now no longer a revenging hand, but a self-destroying force. Juno has employed his own masculine strength against him, and driven him to murder those closest to him, his own flesh and blood.³¹

Hercules Furens introduces issues of private and public that are central this chapter. The masculine hero returns from revenges undertaken in the service of the public, in the same way that Agamemnon returns from the wars with Troy. These men's public revenges are followed by a private act of revenge,

performed within the house, in the bath or in the bedroom. Private revenge is defined by location, but, more importantly, by a contrast between reason and public interest against passion and private interest. The gendering of revenge as feminine evokes these associations of the private and the passionate, in opposition to masculine honour, public interest, and rational causes. Juno's revenge in *Hercules Furens* is doubly characterized by feminine rage, since it is both her motivation and her weapon. Hercules's masculine *ratio* is conquered by feminine *furor*, an overthrow central to Seneca's tragedies. If masculine revenge defends family as well as national identity, feminine revenge brings chaos and destruction on a private as well as public level. It is this gendered distinction between rational retribution and passionate, irrational vindictiveness that was appropriated in Elizabethan discourses of private and public revenge: the rational, authorized retribution executed by the state was aligned with Seneca's masculine, rational duty, whereas private revenge was discouraged by presenting this kind of passionate, irrational and feminine agency as an uncontrollable threat to the family as well as the state. The two co-existing genderings of revenge in early modern culture represent a point of diffraction. On the one hand, revenge can be heroic and masculine; on the other, it is shaped as feminine and furious.

That the line between masculine and feminine revenge is not sharply drawn, appears from critics' interpretations of *Hercules Furens*. Disagreement exists over the question whether Juno truly brings on the hero's madness, or if perhaps Hercules's fury is a natural exponent of his martial deeds earlier in the play.³² Defending the latter theory, Jo-Ann Shelton has interpreted Hercules's madness as caused by a fatal flaw in his character. John Fitch writes that in Seneca's tragedy, Hercules is characterized by an angry desire for punishment, a destructive and imbalanced obsession that conflicts with the kind of revenge recommended by the philosopher in his essays.³³ On the other hand, Gilbert Lawall argues that Hercules's chief enemy is not "his own irrationality" as Shelton would have it, but rather Juno's irrational passion. The goddess plunges him into a disaster for which none of the human characters in the play blames him, Lawall writes.³⁴ This division between modern critics signals a broader issue concerning the boundaries between public and private revenge.

Crucial in this discussion are the workings of the passions. Jo-Ann Shelton, for example, argues that in his heroic fights prior to Juno's ploy, Hercules's "desire for revenge may be justified, but his intense anger is an emotional, rather than rational response to the situation."³⁵ Private and public revenge are thus marked along lines of passion and reason in *Hercules Furens* as well as in critics' reception of the tragedy. These associations between the passionate, the private, and the feminine on the one hand, and the public, rational and masculine on the other are central also to the translations of Seneca's tragedies in the sixteenth century.

The Elizabethan translations of Seneca's tragedies

The translators of Seneca's *Tenne Tragedies* published in 1581 by Thomas Newton, return to this divide between public and private revenge. Howard Norland has studied the additions and changes that the Elizabethan translators made to their original material. He found that John Studley throughout his translation elaborates on descriptions of unnatural and violent actions.³⁶ Also, all translators of Seneca's tragedies expand the emotional dimensions of dramatic situations and language, and can be seen to elaborate on sensational elements in the tragedies. "Perhaps," Norland concludes, "the young scholars can be faulted for dwelling too much on the passions and perversions of Senecan drama."³⁷ Norland explains this preference for passionate emotions with reference to sixteenth-century conceptions of tragedy, which display a preference for blood and violent emotions.³⁸ The translators' emphasis on the passions in their changes to the material should, I think, be explained from a broader perspective than that of literary tastes. The first translation of literary texts in the sixteenth century had a political purpose. Humanism supposed that the reading of classical literature would advise the public of the general misery and national decline that resulted from civil war.³⁹ The translators of Seneca's tragedies added passages that stress the relation between uncontrollable passion, private revenge, and civil war.

Traces of this larger cultural and political text produced by the exchange between early modern culture and Seneca's tragedies can still be found in the *Oxford English Dictionary*. This dictionary defines the noun "revenge" primarily as "the act of doing hurt or harm to another in return for a wrong or injury suffered." Its

earliest citation for this meaning of the word is a Senecan phrase, the question: “Can not remembrance of revenge out of thy breast be reft?”⁴⁰ Dating from 1566, the phrase is culled from Cambridge student John Studley’s translation of Seneca’s *Agamemnon*, the tragedy that tells the story of Clytemnestra’s revenge on her husband. Intriguingly, the phrase cited by the *OED* derives from a passage of 72 lines that John Studley added to the fifth and final act of his translation of *Agamemnon*, a passage that has no basis in Seneca’s original text. The character Euribates, who earlier attempted to assuage Clytemnestra’s vindictive rage, in these lines laments the bloody acts of vengeance that have occurred in the play:

Alas yee hateful hellish Haggges, yee furies foule and fell,
 Why cause yee rusty rancours rage in noble heartes to dwell?
 And cancred hate in boyling breastes to grow from age to age?
 Coude not the graundsires paynefull pangues the childrens wrath
 asswage?
 [...]
 But after breath from body fled, and Lyfe thy Lymmes hath left,
 Can not remembraunce of revenge out of thy breast be reft?
 [...]
 So after all these bloody broyle [*sic*], Greece never shall be free:
 But bloud for bloud, and death by turnes, the after age shall see.⁴¹

The added passage emphasizes the uncontrollable nature of vindictiveness. The passions of anger and hate lead to a vicious cycle of revenges within the House of Pelops (Tantalus, Pelops, Atreus and Thyestes, Aegisthus and Agamemnon, Orestes and Elektra), affecting the whole of Greece. Private, passionate revenge is associated with the everlasting “bloody broiles” that oppress Greece. Jasper Heywood similarly added a scene to his translation of Seneca’s *Troas*. The ghost of Achilles’ irate cry for revenge sets off the Trojan tragedies that are also in Seneca’s play. Like Studley’s added lines, this scene causally connects a private desire for revenge with the tragedies of an entire community:

The deepe Averne my rage may not sustayne,
 Nor beare the angers of Achilles spright.
 From Archeront I rent the spoyle in twaine,
 And though the ground I grate agayne to sight:
 Hell could not hide Achilles from the light,
 Vengeance and bloud doth Orcus pit require,
 To quench the furies of Achilles ire.

These additions to Seneca's tragedies in the Elizabethan English translations emphasize the large-scale destructive effects of a private desire for revenge. They stress the trans-generational operations of the body's desire for vengeance: "remembrance of revenge" paradoxically rankles in the "breasts" of these ghosts, long after their bodies have decayed. By representing private revenge as bodily, passionate, and as leading to nationwide destruction and civil war, these translations helped to shape an early modern discourse of revenge that contrasted strongly with earlier models of retribution as an instrument in the maintenance of social order. If those models pivoted on notions of even-handedness and right, these translations stress that private revenge is excessive and uncontrollable. It is envisaged as a *desire* for vindictiveness, a passion that is bodily in nature. These connotations are crucial in the context of the frictions between revenge and law in the early modern period. The translators found in Seneca a model of revenge that helped shape a distinction between private and public, authorized revenge.

The translators show themselves aware that their emphasis on the uncontrollability of revenge at times conflicts with the Christian concept of God's retribution on sinners. The friction between classical and Christian notions of revenge sits at the heart of Seneca's equivocal position in early modern culture.⁴² The unjust world of Senecan tragedy, in which the crimes of characters such as Medea go unpunished, sits uncomfortably with the Christian view of God's divine justice.⁴³ The translations therefore emphasize the didactic value of the tragedies that they rendered into English. Alexander Neville's prefatory material to his translation of Seneca's *Oedipus* (1563) tells his readers that his translation attempts to remain faithful to:

the use, that Seneca himself in his Invention pretended: Which was [...] lyvely to expresse the just revenge, and fearefull punishment of horrible Crimes, wherewith the wretched worlde in these our myserable dayes pyteously swarmeth. This caused me not to be precise in following the Author word for word: but sometimes by addition, sometimes by subtraction, to use the aptest Phrases in geving the Sense that I could invent.⁴⁴

Paradoxically, in his attempt closely to reproduce Seneca's intentions, Neville feels free to waver from the original text. When he states that it was Seneca's aim to show the just punishment of

horrible crimes, he attempts to contain the ‘wild justice’ of the revenges of classical tragedy within a scheme of divine, or at least poetic justice.

Thomas Nuce similarly encourages his readers to employ Seneca’s tragedy and its representations of revenge as a lesson.⁴⁵ Nuce combines the Christian notion of inherited sin with the Senecan motif of cyclical blood revenge. In his prefatory poem to John Studley’s *Agamemnon*, Nuce reminds his readers that Clytemnestra’s murder of her husband was “done by Talyon lawe”: “here blood did blood requyer.”⁴⁶ The poem historicizes Clytemnestra’s revenge, and places it in a distant past in which blood revenge was the order of the day. Later, however, the poem seeks to incorporate Agamemnon’s death within a Christian scheme of justice. The poem interprets Clytemnestra’s murder as Thyestes’ long-awaited revenge on his brother:

Wherby thou cheefly mayst be taught
The prouydence of god:
That so long after Atreus fact
Thyests revenge abode. (155-58)⁴⁷

The notion that God visits the sins of the fathers upon their sons derives from the Old Testament, where in the Book of Deuteronomy the second commandment reads: “For I, Yahweh your God, am a jealous God and I punish the father’s fault in the sons, the grandsons, and the great-grandsons of those who hate me.”⁴⁸ The poem applies this notion of the inheritance of sins to Seneca’s tragedies, in which the murder of Agamemnon (Atreus’s son) satisfies Thyestes’s desire for revenge. Clytemnestra’s revenge on her husband is in this manner contained within a patriarchal, biblical scheme of divine justice. Other prefatory poems, such as “W. R. to the reader”, present the tragedy as a lesson in “fycle fortunes waueryng wyles” (l. 211), appropriating it in the *de casibus* tradition as an example of the fall of great men, as Studley’s preface to the reader also does. Private, feminine vengeance is shown to be part of a plan of divine punishment.

The two traditions that merge in this representation conflict: in containing feminine fury within a scheme of divine providence, Nuce’s poem implicitly sanctions Clytemnestra’s murder of her husband as public, indeed divine, revenge.⁴⁹ Although the poem elsewhere claims that the Christian God is one “[t]hat well

deseruers well rewardes, | and ill, doth scourge with rod,” God’s revenge here does not operate in terms of individual reward and punishment, but in terms of Senecan blood revenge. Lily Campbell has praised Elizabethan dramatists for their ability to translate the Senecan treatment of revenge into their own philosophical vernacular, in which God is in the end the true avenger.⁵⁰ The translation is a palimpsest, since the uncontrollable forces of classical feminine vengeance have not been quite overwritten by a Christian model of divine retribution.⁵¹ Within these translations of Seneca’s tragedies, then, private revenge is on the one hand represented as feminine, uncontrollable, and destructive; on the other hand, it is also seen as part of a controlled, divine plan of justice. From the introduction of Senecan revenge drama into early modern culture, the dramatic discourse of revenge is all but monolithic.

Native history and classical tragedy

On the 26th of December 1589, The Queen’s Men in all probability performed before their royal patron the anonymous *True Tragedie of Richard the Third*.⁵² Published as a ‘bad quarto’ based on memorial reconstruction in 1594, the play opens with an induction in which the figure of Truth offers to flesh out Poetry’s literary shadows with a “true tragedy [...] done in England but late.”⁵³ The substance that Truth brings to the stage is drawn from English historiography; the Wars of the Roses are represented “as the Chronicles make manifest.”⁵⁴ Indeed, *The True Tragedy* has been shown to draw both on Hall’s *Chronicle* and *The Mirror for Magistrates* in its portrayal of the life of Richard the Third.⁵⁵ Written after the defeat of the Spanish Armada, the play honours “Worthie Elizabeth” as the ruler who brought an end to the destructive cycles of blood revenge of the Wars of the Roses. The Queen was “the meanes that ciuill wars did cease” and “by whose wise life and ciuill gouernment her country was defended from the cruelty of famine, fire and sword, warres, fearefull messengers.” Punningly contrasting the “ciuill” wars between the Yorks and the Lancasters to Elizabeth I’s “ciuill” government, the play strengthens Elizabeth’s position as England’s monarch.⁵⁶

The Tudor government employed native historiography, such as the history of the feuds between the Yorks and the Lancasters, as a means to define and bolster their power.⁵⁷ Jean Howard and

Phyllis Rackin have analysed the ways in which the history play in sixteenth-century England helped to authorize a new national identity, and created a modus to “deal with the anxieties and contradictions that threatened to undermine the nation-building project.”⁵⁸ One of these anxieties key to the genre of the history play in the late sixteenth century is the tension between central government and the aristocracy.⁵⁹ Tudor representations of the Wars of the Roses can be read in the light of these tensions. The term “Wars of the Roses” was a sixteenth-century invention, and the depiction of these wars as a destructive dynastic feud between two clearly delineated sides (York and Lancaster) originated during Tudor rule, and was propagated by Tudor historians.⁶⁰ As Paul Murray Kendall writes, “[t]he wars of the Roses were not, in our sense, wars at all. [...] Sixteenth-century historians painted highly coloured pictures of fifteenth-century civil strife in order to emphasize the blessings of strong Tudor rule.”⁶¹ The contrast between “ciuill wars” and “ciuill government” underscored in history plays like *The True Tragedie of Richard the Third* supported the governing institutions in their desire to centralize power in the Elizabethan state.

Native history is not the only ingredient of *The True Tragedy of Richard the Third*. Several genres are intermixed in the play. Indeed, the title itself introduces the history play as a tragedy. The play opens with a cameo appearance by a Senecan ghost. The ghost speaks two lines of Latin verse and leaves the stage crying “*vendicta [sic]*.” The audience is informed that this was George the Duke of Clarence, who was “most unnaturally” drowned in a vat of wine by his own brother. Truth interprets the shield that the ghost left behind on his exit, and translates that “blood spilt, craues due reuenge.”⁶² The classical call for revenge dovetails with the Christian principle of divine retribution and providential history when the fall of Richard III at the close of the play is portrayed as the fulfilment of Clarence’s appeal for blood revenge. The play explains that “guiltlesse blood will for reuengement crie.”⁶³ Native history, Senecan revenge tragedy and the tradition of divine retribution thus combine to mark the rule of Richard’s Tudor successors as legitimate and successful. A similar combination of Senecan tragedy with English history characterizes the tragedies of the Inns of Court.

The Senecan tragedies of the Inns of Court

The Inns of Court tragedies *Gorboduc, or Ferrex and Porrex* and *The Misfortunes of Arthur* combine the images of passionate, feminine revenge from Senecan tragedy with native English history in order to forge an association between private revenge and civil war in the political imaginary.⁶⁴ Brian Corrigan explains the plays' reliance on a native subject set in a classical, Senecan structure from a literary perspective: the plays responded to a developing taste for blood tragedy, especially where the revenge elements are concerned.⁶⁵ In what follows, I will not analyse the intertext with Seneca's tragedies from the perspective of literary tastes, but consider the ways in which these two plays in their appropriations of Senecan phrases, motifs, and plotlines negotiated early modern ideas of law and revenge.

Cultural historians agree that the Tudor government employed native historiography as a means to define and bolster their power. Little critical attention has been devoted, however, to the role of these tragedies in the Tudor historiography of English feuds and civil wars. Perhaps taking their cue from Tillyard's remark that Seneca has "nothing to do with ideas about English history," critics have not examined in depth the appropriation of Seneca's tragedies in the political context of the Tudor government's aims to replace ancient traditions of blood revenge with a national system of justice. If the perception of revenge changed gradually from a tool in the maintenance of order to a cause of chaos, then the Inns of Court's fusing of native English history with Senecan tales of blood revenge was an agent in this change. A gender analysis of these plays' representations of revenge reveals that the Inns of Court employed Seneca's tragedies to shape a contrast between private revenge and public law.

I will discuss two tragedies performed before Queen Elizabeth as well as audiences at the Inns themselves. They are Inner Temple members Thomas Norton and Thomas Sackville's *Gorboduc* (1562) and *The Misfortunes of Arthur* (1588), a collaborative product of members of Gray's Inn.⁶⁶ These plays' appropriations of Senecan material centre on representations of revenge as passionate, as an act that elicits other acts of revenge and escalates into a nationwide conflict.⁶⁷ In order to shore up the boundary between the law and private revenge, the two Inns of Court tragedies appropriate representations of passionate feminine vindictiveness from Seneca's

tragedies and connect these to English histories of rebellion and civil war. A third Inns of Court play, *Horestes* (1567) contrasts these forms of feminine vengeance to a rational, masculine, and chivalric mode of retribution, which it associates with the Inns of Court's role as counsellors to the monarch.

Fury of civil war

Thomas Norton and Thomas Sackville wrote what is often considered as the first English revenge tragedy: *Gorboduc, or Ferrex and Porrex*. The play was performed during the Christmas celebrations of 1561–62 in the Inner Temple and at court on the 18th of January. Philip Sidney famously praised the tragedy in his *Apology* for its “stately speeches and well-sounding phrases, “climbing to the height of Seneca’s style.”⁶⁸ The Senecan elements of the play are combined with the history of King Gorboduc. That king, like Shakespeare’s later King Lear, decided to split the English nation between his children. When his son Porrex consequently murdered his brother Ferrex in a dispute over this division of the realm, Queen Videna took revenge on her one remaining son, and murdered him in a fit of rage. The play compares the murdering queen to the classical character Medea, since Videna and Medea both “moued by Furies vnnaturally had slaine their owne Children.”⁶⁹

The Medea-figure in early modern drama has been read as representing anxieties over transgressive female power. Betty Travitsky has compared contemporary representations of infanticide in pamphlets and broadsides to representations of the Medea-figure in the drama. Her conclusion is that murdering mothers in the drama always send the same message: “women are destructive [...] the similarity of the language of the various accounts shows that all women were obviously considered to be potentially damnable furies.”⁷⁰ She wonders whether these classical murdering mothers perhaps embody an apparently transhistorical discourse of misogyny, a conflation of sexual passion, tragic excess and evil. I will argue that Queen Videna as a Medea-figure need not mimetically reflect early modern ideas on women or womanhood. Nor should we read the figure of the murdering mother as a transhistorical, universal mimetic representation. If we interpret the play in the context of debates over revenge, and analyse the terms in which the play’s representations of fury and

retribution intervene in discourses of justice and revenge, we will see that gendered representations do not necessarily refer to notions of womanhood, or the relations between the sexes, but are used in all relations of power as a structuring tool, as Joan Scott has argued. In *Gorboduc*, gendered representations of revenge intervene in frictions between the expanding legal system and older traditions of private revenge. The Inns of Court had a stake in representing private revenge as passionate, uncontrollable, and as the cause of civil war.

The tragedy forges a structural association between Queen Videna's revenge on her own son, and the outbreak of civil war in England. The play's own summary of the plot draws the reader's attention to the expansive cycles of blood revenge and civil war that spiral out of the queen's revenge on her son:

The sons fell to dissension. The younger killed the elder. The mother, that more dearly loved the elder, for revenge killed the younger. The people, moved with the cruelty of the fact, rose in rebellion and slew both father and mother. The nobility assembled and most terribly destroyed the rebels. And afterwards for want of issue of the prince [...] they fell to civil war, in which both they and many of their issues were slain, and the land for a long time almost desolate and miserably wasted.⁷¹

The people's rebellion against the royal family is "moved" by the cruelty of Videna's revenge on her son; the civil war that ensues after king and queen have been murdered by the people is the final result of this act of infanticide. In its final act, the play once more parallels Queen Videna's vindictiveness to the outbreak of a destructive civil war reminiscent of the Wars of the Roses:

And thou, O Britain [...] shalt thus be torn,
Dismembered thus, and thus be rent in twain,
Thus wasted and defaced, spoiled and destroyed,
These be the fruits your civil wars will bring.
[...]
Thus wreak the Gods, when that the mother's wrath
None but the blood of her own childe may 'suage;
These mischiefs spring when rebels will arise,
To work revenge and judge their princes fact.⁷²

In Betty Travitsky's reading, the reason why Videna is here implicated in the outbreak of civil war should be looked for in

contemporary ideas on motherhood: “It is to her, a passionate, terrible mother, that we must point. Perverted female principle here leads to the fall.”⁷³ I would argue that the Inns of Court playwrights appropriated the classical character and the terms in which she is described from Senecan tragedy, in order to forge a link between the passionate and unnatural revenge in Seneca’s *Medea* and English civil wars of the past. The association of Videna’s revenge with rebellion and civil war operates in terms of a shared fury, and the unnaturalness of both acts.

Both Videna’s revenge and the people’s rebellion are represented as an uncontrolled outburst of passion. In its representation of this fury, the play’s draws on the text of Seneca’s tragedies. The long monologue in which Videna decides to take revenge on her only remaining son is written in the style of his tragic monologues, especially that of *Medea* in the eponymous play.⁷⁴ The rebellion of the people is similarly moved by unbridled passion: “For give once sway unto the people’s lusts | To rush forth on,” the secretary to the King argues, “and stay them not in time | And as the stream that rolleth down the hill, | So will they headlong run with raging thoughts | From blood to blood[.]”⁷⁵ The people who rise against their royal family in a civil war are described as possessed by the classical spirits of revenge: they “stode bent to fight, as Furies did them move[.]”⁷⁶ The text also mentions the “blind fury [that] headlong carries them[.]”⁷⁷ This association between the furies, passion, private revenge and civil war occurs also in Lawrence Humphreys’ *The Nobles*. He describes civil war in terms of madness, rage, and destruction in the private as well as the public area, and refers to Ate, the classical goddess of revenge:

For nought else is warre, than meere fury and madness, wherein not aduice, but madnes, not righte but rage ruleth, and rayneth. [...] But let us nearer viewe who warres. A priuate person, to whom belongeth, nor iudgement nor vengeaunce. [...] For the attempt proceedeth from the euell spirite and furious Ate: and the successe though in semblant happy, plongeth yet many, as well conquered, as conquerors, into infinite calamities ruinet as well the priuate as publike weale.⁷⁸

Duncan Salkeld has described how madness in the early modern drama is politicised as a metaphor for the intrigues, sedition and civil strife of the period.⁷⁹ In *Gorboduc*, a field of associations exists between madness, the passions, furies and revenges from

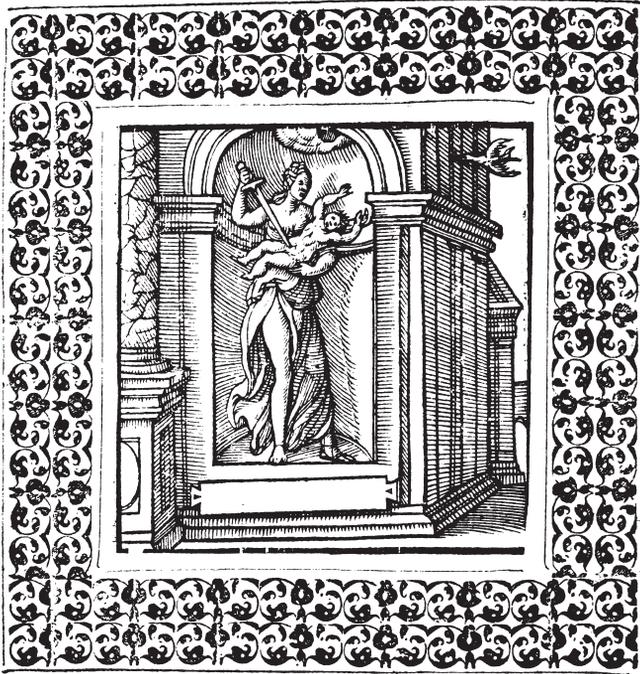
Senecan drama, and the civil wars from English history. By bringing together Seneca's representations of passionate revenge in terms of style, characters and imagery, with the life and death of King Gorboduc from English history, the play takes part in the ongoing debates about revenge, and helps to shape a way of thinking about the dangers of revenge, a discourse deriving from classical drama that we encounter also in Humphreys advice to the English nobility.

The connection that the play establishes between Videna's revenge on her son, the rebellion of the people, and the civil war that ensues, depends also on the analogies between family and state. *Gorboduc* is often read as a plea for the queen to appoint a successor, in order to ensure a stable transition to the next reign.⁸⁰ Issues of motherhood in the play also work in a broader political context, however. The unnaturalness of a mother's murder of her son is compared to the unnaturalness of a subject's rebellion against his prince. Such associations between a family and state were not uncommon in early modern culture. The analogy between the household and the state allowed for comparisons of the father to the king, the mother to the subject. Frances Dolan cites John Wing's *Crowne Conjugall* (1632), which states that "an undutifull wife is a home-rebell, a house-traitor."⁸¹ The Medea-figure of the mother who killed "whom shee should have loved beste," in the words of Geoffrey Whitney, comes to stand for the subjects who turned against their monarch (figure 1).⁸²

Videna's murder is explicitly marked as monstrous in going against female nature: "If not in women mercy maybe be found, | If not, alas, within the mother's breast, | [...] where should we seek it then?"⁸³ By analogy, the rebellious inhabitants of Britain are compared to children who destroy both their mother as well as themselves:

Even they should give consent thus to subvert
Thee, Britain land, and *from thy womb* should spring,
O *native soil*, those, that will needs destroy
And ruin thee and eke themselves in fine.

(5.2.19-22; italics mine)



MEDEA loe with infante in her arme,
Whoe kil'de her babes, shee shoulde haue loued beste:
The swallow yet, whoe did suspect no harme,
Hir Image likes, and hatch'd vppon her breste:
And leste her younge, vnto this tirauntes guide,
Whoe, peccemeale did her proper fruite deuide.

Oh foolish birde, think'st thou, shee will haue care,
Vppon thy yonge? Whoe hathe her owne destroy'de,
And maie it bee, that shee thie birdes should spare?
Whoe slue her owne, in whome shee shoulde haue ioy'd.
Thow arte deceauide, and arte a warninge good,
To put no truste, in them that hate their blood.

*MEDÆ statua est: natos cui credis Hirundo?
Fer aliò: vident hac mactet vt ipsa suos?*

Figure 1. Medea in Geoffrey Whitney's *A Choice of Emblemes* (1586)

We find a similar comparison between civil war and family relations in the “Homily Against Disobedience.” There, it is emphasized that rebels “rise not onely against their gracious Prince, against their naturall countrey, but against all their countrey men, women, and children, against themselves, their wives, children & kinsefolkes.”⁸⁴ In *Gorboduc* the family similarly operates as a microcosm of the state: the figure of the murderous Medea is appropriated to express the unnatural character of private revenge and civil war. Gendered representations of revenge appropriated from Seneca’s tragedies reinforce a difference between rational and authorized government and private revenge, whether by women or private subjects. Indeed, the allegorisation of Videna’s revenge into the image of a country uprooted by feuds was so strong as to survive into the polemical literature of the seventeenth century, where Queen Videna continues her literary life as an image of the strife-torn realm.⁸⁵

A similar analogy between a private feminine desire for revenge and the outbreak of civil war is to be found in the Inns of Court play *The Misfortunes of Arthur*. The play was written by eight men of Gray’s Inn, among whom we encounter Francis Bacon.⁸⁶ Like *Gorboduc*, this tragedy combines native English history (the history of King Arthur is based on Geoffrey of Monmouth’s *Historia Regum Britanniae*) and elements from Senecan tragedy.⁸⁷ That tragedy’s depiction of King Arthur’s wife Guenevora is based on Seneca’s portrayal of Clytemnestra. Like her classical counterpart Clytemnestra, Guenevora awaits her husband’s return from the wars, and plots with her lover to be revenged on Arthur. The play is interlarded with translated quotations and imitations of Seneca’s tragedies; the queen speaks lines from Seneca’s *Agamemnon* as well as his *Thyestes*, *Phaedra*, *Phoenissae*, *Hercules Oetaeus*, *Oedipus* and *Medea*. She is compared to the furious Hercules of *Hercules Furens* discussed above, who, possessed by the furies, murdered his own family. Unlike Seneca’s Clytemnestra, whose revenge on her husband is at least in part motivated by the sacrifice of their daughter Iphigeneia at Agamemnon’s departure for Troy, Guenevora does not make explicit the reasons for her vindictiveness. In a Senecan passage that echoes *Thyestes* in foregrounding the bodily experience of vindictiveness as well as in proposing that revenge can only be excessive, she invokes the furies to possess her with anger:

Come spitefull fiends, come heapes of furies fell,
Not one, by one, but all at once: my breast
Raues not inough: it likes me to be filde
With greater monsters yet. My hart doth throbbe:
My liuer boyles: some what my minde portendes,
Uncertayne what: but whatsoeuer, it's huge.
So it exceede, be what it will: it's well.
Omit no plague, and none will be inough.
Wrong cannot be reueng'd, but by excesse.⁸⁸

Guenevora, however, ultimately does not execute her vindictive plots. Experiencing a sudden abatement of her vengeful anger, she decides to spend the remainder of her life in a convent. Feminine rage is transformed into resignation and a Christian interpretation of the concept of revenge: “dayly penance done for each offence | May render due revenge for every wrong,” she tells her sister (1.3.72-73). Although *The Misfortunes* initially presents itself as a retelling of Clytemnestra’s revenge in a native English context, feminine vindictiveness is contained within the confines of the Christian convent.⁸⁹

As in *Gorboduc*, however, the passionate vindictiveness of a female character is not confined to the private family situation: feminine vengefulness is not purged from the play with the queen’s confinement to a convent. Instead, it continues to exert its influence on the plot of the tragedy. As Guenevora leaves the stage for the last time in the play, Clytemnestra’s lines from Seneca’s *Agamemnon* are transferred from her character to that of Arthur’s rebellious son Mordred. He ruled Britain in his father’s absence and was Queen Guenevora’s sexual partner (and thereby resembles the character of Aegisthus in Seneca’s *Agamemnon*). When a counsellor advises him to seek reconciliation with his father, Mordred objects that “[t]he safest passage is from bad to worse,” a translation of Clytemnestra’s well-known words *per scelera semper sceleribus tutum est iter*.⁹⁰ In the stichomythic exchange that follows, Mordred continues to give voice to Clytemnestra’s thoughts from *Agamemnon* (ll. 150-54). In this manner, the feminine vindictiveness first embodied by the character of Guenevora is transferred onto Mordred, who is about to engage in a feud against his own father that is to inflict civil war on the country. This parallel between the Senecan fury displayed by Arthur’s wife and the ensuing civil war also comes to the fore when the ghost of Gorlois juxtaposes the “franticke moodes [that]

[d]istract a wife” with the “sword and fire still fedde with mutual strife” and the “civill warres | And discord” that “swell till all the realme be torne.”⁹¹ Like *Gorboduc*, this tragedy appropriates a Senecan female revenger to express the destructive fury and unnaturalness of private revenge and civil rebellion.

Both *Gorboduc, or Ferrex and Porrex* and *The Misfortunes of Arthur* shape a discourse in which Senecan representations of feminine fury are combined with native English histories of rebellion and civil war to create an image of revenge as passionate, furious, uncontrollable and destructive. The audiences at the Inns of Court were thus provided with the tools to strengthen the boundary between law and revenge that the state sought to bring into place. Admittedly, Senecan tragedy cannot lay an exclusive claim to the representation of passion as excessive. The passionate, unthinking impulse to avenge a wrong is also personified by the recurrent figure of Wrath in such sixteenth-century morality plays as *The Trial of Treasure* (1567) or William Wager’s *The Longer Thou Livest, the More Fool Thou Art* (1559), perpetuating a medieval tradition of the representation of evil.⁹² As I hope to have demonstrated, however, Senecan tragedy is a crucial element in the Inns of Court’s strengthening of a boundary between justice and revenge, and the recurrence of images of furies and classical representations of revenge in contemporary documents points to its circulation and appropriation in early modern culture. The analysis of a third Inns of Court play will demonstrate that the playwrights working within these institutions constructed an image of the masculine, rational counsel of the law in opposition to these images of feminine vindictiveness.

Rational counsel and passionate revenge

The Inns of Court interlude *Horestes* (1567), possibly performed before Queen Elizabeth,⁹³ is generally interpreted in the context of the Catholic threat posed by Elizabeth’s cousin Mary, the Scottish Queen.⁹⁴ The play was written by Sir John Pickeryng, a member of Lincoln’s Inn, later member of the Privy Council, Speaker in the House of Commons, and Lord Keeper. Pickeryng was a close ally of Robert Devereux, the second earl of Essex, and a member of the militant protestant faction at court.⁹⁵ His interlude *Horestes* evokes the classical domestic revenge of Orestes on his mother Clytemnestra as a means to abate anxieties over Queen Elizabeth’s right to condemn

the former Queen of Scotland to death. The play stresses that revenge is sometimes justified, and emphasizes the importance of the advice of the Privy Counsel as a distinguishing factor between rational, masculine, justice and feminine, passionate revenge.

A Catholic relative accused of murdering her husband so that she could marry another man, Queen Mary posed a significant threat to the future of the Protestant English nation. The militant protestant faction at court urged Elizabeth to authorize her cousin's execution over her involvement in the Babington conspiracy.⁹⁶ Cecil and Leicester, both Protestants with strong connections to the Inns of Court, advised her to eliminate the danger posed by Mary. Queen Elizabeth is reported to have been reluctant to pronounce a death sentence on her cousin for her involvement in Catholic treason plots, and sought to be reconciled with her. The choice of this particular tragedy may have been inspired by topical comparisons of Queen Mary to Clytemnestra. Mary was suspected of murdering her husband (James VI's father) in order to marry the Earl of Bothwell.⁹⁷ The popular conception of Mary was of an "intemperate woman, lustful, cruel, murderous and relentlessly ambitious."⁹⁸ This image is sharpened in the interlude by juxtaposing it to a Protestant, divinely ordained, and justly revenging Elizabeth in the shape of Orestes.⁹⁹

Roman Catholic depictions of the queen's eventual authorization of the execution as "an unlawful act of private revenge rather than as the lawful duty of a monarch" confirm that Elizabeth was in danger of being represented as a wilful tyrant as a result of her judgement.¹⁰⁰ This threat is especially poignant in the context of contemporary representations of tyrants as effeminate or womanish.¹⁰¹ The distinction between tyrant and just ruler, like that between public justice and revenge, hinged on the contrast between passion and reason. During the seventeenth century, the notion of the king's passion became crucial in the parliamentarians' representation of absolutist monarchy. Milton in his *Eikonoklastes* describes the wilfulness of the monarch as the "humour, passion, fansie, folly, obstinancie [*sic*] or other ends of one man, whose sole word and will shall baffle and unmake what all the wisdom of a Parliament hath bin deliberately framing."¹⁰² The passion of anger was especially reprehensible in a monarch, since the interference of this emotion would lead the monarch not to "render justice but rather give himself over to vengeance."¹⁰³

Central to humanist notions of governance is the control of the passions by reason. In humanist thinking on the state, “[t]he rational order of nature was to be the foundation for the orderly behavior of men,” William Bouwsma writes.¹⁰⁴ The state being compared to a body, political distempers should be controlled by a the head of that state, a rational ruler. Thomas Elyot’s *Book Named the Governor* (1531), one of the key guidebooks for the new generation of rulers in the Tudor state, advises those who govern not to be guided by their passions. Especially when pronouncing judgement, rulers should not surrender to their desire for revenge, the book stresses, but adhere to temperance and equity. “There is [...] a moderation to be used agayne [=against] wrathe or appetite of vengeance,” Elyot writes: “who so euer puttethe on [=puts on] the habite of a common [=public] persone or gouernour it shal not beseme him to reuenge priuate displeures.”¹⁰⁵ For when a governor pronounces justice out of vindictiveness or wrath, “he shall neuer kepe that meane whiche is betwene to moche and to lyttell.”¹⁰⁶ Elyot’s advice constructs a crucial set of binary oppositions. The humanist virtue of temperance or moderation is pitted against a boundless desire for vengeance, or wrath.

Richard Helgerson describes how one of the most prestigious common lawyers of his time, Sir Edward Coke, emphasised the independent authority of the common law as an important factor in this context. He contrasted the English situation with the tyranny of other nations wherein powerful will and pleasure stands for law and reason [...]. In other kingdoms the laws seem to govern, but the judges had rather misconster law and do injustice than displease the king’s humor.”¹⁰⁷ The authority of English common law in the eyes of this member of the Inns of Court functioned as a barrier against the tyranny of a humorous monarch. In *Horestes*, the ruler’s willingness to heed the advice of his council distinguishes the rational and just monarch from a passionate and vindictive tyrant.¹⁰⁸

Horestes in Pikeriung’s play is torn between his desire to revenge the death of his father, and his natural bond with the murderer, his mother Clytemnestra. In the context of Elizabeth’s predicament, it is interesting that the text stresses the unnaturalness of blood revenge on a member of one’s own family. The figure of Nature argues that Horestes’s murder of his mother would be unnatural. “From mothers blood withdraw thy bloody hand!” is her urgent

advice.¹⁰⁹ She reminds him of the pains Clytemnestra suffered for him in childbirth, and asks him not to requite her maternal suffering with murder:

Canst thou (a lacke, unhappye wight!) consent revenged to be
On her whose pappes, before this time, hath given foud to the?
In whom I, Nature, formyd the, as best I thought it good.
Oh now requight her for her pain; withdraw thy hands from blood.
(ll. 416-19)¹¹⁰

Horestes, however, is not receptive to the arguments of his mother and Nature.¹¹¹ In order to achieve his revenge, he eradicates all ties with the maternal, and needs to overcome feminine emotions of pity, as Elizabeth would have to do with regard to her cousin, Mary Queen of Scots.¹¹² To Dame Nature, Horestes explains that since his mother offended the love of God, it is no crime to punish her with death. Against the argument of natural law Horestes pits the concepts of human and divine justice:

Who offendith the love of God, and eke mans love with willing hart,
Must by [that] love have punnishment as duty due for his desart.
For me therfor to punnish hear [=her], as law of gods and man doth wil,
Is not a crime, though that I do, as thou dost saie, my mother kil.
(ll. 420-23)

Matricide is justified when sanctioned by God, as Horestes believes he has been. He rationalizes his revenge in terms of the law, both God's law and man's, and tells his mother: "For kyllyng of my father thou now kylled shault be" (818). Claims of blood and family ties, emblemized by the maternal, nurturing body, are thus replaced by a discourse of masculine, Christian justice.

At the beginning of the play, Horestes is encouraged in his resolve to avenge his father's death by the figure of the Vice, who also figures under the allegorical name of Revenge. Later in the play, however, Horestes denounces the Vice, who then seeks his hail in the company of women, depicted as naturally vindictive.¹¹³ Apart from this parting of ways with the vindictive Vice, another crucial factor in the construction of Horestes's revenge as masculine and just is the support and authorization he receives from the figure of Counsel.¹¹⁴ Spelled "Councell" in the play, this allegorical figure can be seen to represent good counsel in general, but also occupies the position of Privy Council. Counsel

assures the prince that “it should be nothing ill | A prince for to be revenged on those which so dyd kyll | His father’s grace.”¹¹⁵ Sanctioning royal blood revenge, Counsel emphasizes the ties between father and son, and eliminates the mother from the equation by referring only to “those which so dyd kyll.” As Karen Robertson also writes, the play shifts attention away from the natural bond between mother and son to the patriarchal bond of father and son.¹¹⁶ Blood revenge is not only seen as a patriarchal duty, but is also defended by Counsel as a means of just royal punishment that maintains order in the state:

For to [=two] causes, my soferayne lord, revengment ought to be:
 The on [one], least others be infecte with that that they shall se
 Their princes do; the other is, that those that now be yll
 May be revoked and may be taught for to subdew their wyll.
 [...]
 Therefore, O king, if that her faute should unrevengyd be,
 A thousand evylles would insu their of, your grace should se.
 Her faulte is great, and punnyshment it is worthy for to have,
 For by that meane the good, in south, from daungers may be saufe.
(514-21; 524-27)

Associations of revenge with passion, vengefulness and excess are here avoided. In the specific case of an act of revenge executed by one monarch on the other, Counsel fashions revenge as a punishment that prevents subjects from imitating the crimes committed by their princes, and also deters future murderers. The role of the allegorical figure of Counsel is crucial in the distinction between blood revenge and justice. With his approval, Horestes’s desire for blood revenge is no longer a ‘kind of wild justice.’ Rather, the authorities’ assent marks him as an officer of the law and of divine justice.¹¹⁷

The distinction between the passionate revenge inspired by the Vice and the authorized, divine justice ratified by the Counsel is a gendered distinction. Where the Vice is associated with women who “know Revengys operation” (1088), Horestes’s eventual murder of his mother is styled as a chivalric feat. The prince sees his revenge as a means of regaining both his honour and his heritage (261-63), and this element of masculine honour also plays an important role in King Idumeus’s reasons for supporting the young prince in his pursuit of blood revenge. He advises him: “like a manly knight | In place of stouer [combat] put forth thy

selfe; assay with all thy might | To win the fame, for glorey none in chambering doth rest” (282–84).¹¹⁸ *Horestes* demonstrates that royal revenge on a fellow prince need not attract stereotypes of passion, vindictiveness and tyranny. Indeed, William Perkins in his *Cases of Conscience* (1606) answers the question “[w]hen [is] Anger a vertue, and so, good and lawfull, and when [is it] a vice & consequently evill and unlawfull?” with the assertion that anger is virtuous when it has a right beginning or motive: it should be conceived upon counsel and deliberation.¹¹⁹ It is the reliance on the rational counsel of her advisors that prevents the monarch’s decision from being marked as wilful or vindictive, and allows it to be conceived of as a just, masculine, and chivalric judgement.

The play’s rehearsal of a discourse of rational and authorized royal revenge can be read in a broader political context than the execution of Queen Mary. Recent research into the Elizabethan monarchy has pointed to the “tension between Elizabeth’s view of her ‘imperial’ monarchy – the idea that sovereignty was vested in her alone – and the conviction of Cecil and the Privy Council that sovereignty lay in the ‘queen-in Parliament.’”¹²⁰ The female sex of the current monarch made this tension all the more poignant. John Aylmer in his refutation of John Knox’s attack on female rule stressed that England was a suitable country for female rule, because it was not a pure monarchy, but rather a “rule mixte.”¹²¹ In Elizabeth’s coronation pageants it was emphasized, as Helen Hackett has demonstrated, “that a queen will be unusually dependent on the support of God and her advisers.”¹²² Pyckering’s *Horestes* similarly stresses that without the ratification of the Privy Council, a monarch’s judgements may be conceived of as tyrannical and motivated by the passions, rather than reason.

The Inns of Court plays *Gorboduc* and *The Misfortunes of Arthur* find their way in contemporary debates about revenge by shaping a discourse in which private retribution is associated with feminine fury, rebellion, and civil war. In the interlude *Horestes*, such images are contrasted to the rational, masculine, even chivalric revenge of the eponymous hero. The play stresses that a revenge is public and authorized when it is informed by the counsel of parliament and the common law. By constructing a gendered opposition, these Inns of Court plays emphasize the importance of their own institution in the crucial difference between private revenge and public justice, in the strengthening of the national

legal system, and in processes of state formation. The opposition between private revenge and the rational rule of Queen Elizabeth is emblemized also in the epilogue to *The Lamentable Tragedy of Loocrine* (1591). This Inns of Court-style play opens with the appearance of Ate, the classical goddess of revenge, “with Thunder and Lightning, all in black, with a burning Torch in one hand, and a bloudie Sword in the other hand.” The play reflects on the turmoil caused by civil war, and allocates responsibility for those broils to a woman: “a woman was the only cause | That civil discord was then stirrèd up.” Significantly, the epilogue to the play contrasts the past with the present: “So let us pray for that renownèd maid, | That eight and thirty years the sceptre swayed | In quiet peace and sweet felicity.”¹²³ It is important to realize that the contrast between the private revenges of the past and the rational rule of the present is not constructed in terms of the sex of the revenger. It is shaped in gendered terms: a female queen can execute a public, authorized, and masculine revenge. Representations of revenge as feminine should not automatically be related to early modern ideas of womanhood. Indeed, I would argue that the plays seek to target traditions of blood revenge current among the *male* members of the aristocracy. They reinforce the stability of the emerging nation state by shaping a representation of private revenge against the image of a stable, just, and rational government.

Gender and revenge in the commercial theatres

In the tragedies of the Inns of Court, then, the English past is represented as a feminine, passionate Other to the masculine, rational justice of the Elizabethan nation state. The Senecan tradition initiated at the Inns was later taken up by the commercial drama produced at the public London theatres.¹²⁴ Both Shakespeare’s first tetralogy as well as his *Titus Andronicus* draw on Seneca in the representation of revenge.¹²⁵ These plays negotiate circulating discourses of revenge and civil war, whether they treat the subject of the Wars of the Roses in England, or the vendetta between Titus Andronicus and the Queen of Goths in Rome. If the Inns of Court plays, performed before lawyers, governors and occasionally the Queen, realize the emerging nation state’s effort to differentiate between private revenge and public justice, Shakespeare’s plays present the audiences of the commercial theatres with representations of revenge that draw attention to the constructed nature of that

difference. A gender analysis of the way these plays negotiate the various discourses of revenge circulating in early modern culture demonstrates that they problematize the very boundary between public and private revenge that the Inns of Court sought to erect.

Gender and revenge in Shakespeare's first tetralogy

A contemporary interpretation of gender representation in *1 Henry VI* occurs in Thomas Nashe's defence of stage plays in *Piers Penniless his Supplication to the Devil* (1592). The text complains about the neglect of masculine honour and proposes the heroic deeds of Talbot as an antidote to the perceived lack of "manhood" in the author's own time.¹²⁶ One of the signs of the effeminacy of Elizabethan men in Nashe's view is their neglect of private revenge. His fellow Englishmen will "suffer every upstart groome to defie him, set him at naught, and shake him by the beard unrevengd." In terms recalling Shakespeare's portrayal of Henry VI himself, Nashe sneers: "let him straight take Orders, and bee a Church-man, and then his patience may passe for a vertue: but otherwise, to be suspected of cowardise, and not car'd for of anie."¹²⁷ *Piers Penniless* ridicules the masculine role model that the humanist scholars of the Inns of Court set out to propagate. Its model of aggressive masculinity demonstrates that conflicting discourses of revenge existed in early modern England. The chivalric and aggressive model of manhood that Nashe's text propagates is associated with the heroic deeds of the nobles of the English past; it is a discourse of traditional aristocratic masculinity, in which revenge occupies an important position. *Piers Penniless* contrasts this discourse with the economic ideology of the Puritans who oppose the theatre and "care not if all the auncient Houses were rooted out, so that like the Burgomasters of the Low-Countries they might share the government amongst them as States, & be quarter-masters of our Monarchy."¹²⁸ Celebrating the English nobility's past heroic deeds, the history play is in Nashe's view firmly bound up with a nostalgic celebration of aggressive aristocratic masculinity:¹²⁹

Nay, what if I proove Playes to be no extreame, but a rare exercise of vertue? First, for the subject of them (for the most part) it is borrowed out of our English Chronicles, wherein our forefathers valiant actes (that have lyne long buried in rustie brasse and worme-eaten bookes) are revived, and they them selves raysed from the Grave of

Oblivion, and brought to plead their aged Honours in open presence:
than which, what can bee a sharper reproofe, to these degenerate
effeminate dayes of ours?¹³⁰

Nashe's recommendation of history plays suggests that the genre circulated a significant counter discourse to the Inns of Court's representations of revenge as feminine.

The first scene of *1 Henry VI* indeed stages a contrast between effeminate grief and masculine revenge that echoes Nashe's gendered divide between past and present.¹³¹ The hero Talbot embodied the masculine, aristocratic heroics representative of the court of the former King Henry V. He is repeatedly referred to as valiant as well as noble, "[t]he Great Alcides of the field."¹³² Talbot's heroics are couched in concepts of blood revenge and honour.¹³³ When Salisbury is killed in a French ambush, Talbot considers it his duty to shed French blood in return for his death. "He beckons with his hand," he says of the dying Salisbury, "[a]s who should say, 'When I am dead and gone, | Remember to avenge me on the French.'" ¹³⁴ The first attempt of revenge failed, he speaks of the "shame hereof" that will make him hide his head.¹³⁵ Nashe's celebration of history plays as the repository of an immortalized English heroic past is inscribed in the play itself by Talbot's desire monumentalize his blood revenge:

Now have I paid my vow unto his soul.
For every drop of blood was drawn from him
There hath at least five Frenchmen died tonight.
And that hereafter ages may behold
What ruin happened in revenge of him,
Within their chiefest temple I'll erect
A tomb wherein his corpse shall be interred,
Upon the which, that everyone may read,
Shall be engraved the sack of Orleans,
The treacherous manner of his mournful death,
And what a terror he hath been to France.

(2.2.7-17)

Talbot ensures the immortality of both Salisbury's honour as a warrior, and of his own revenge exacted in blood by erecting an engraved tomb within the very city that was sacked as part of his vengeance. Harry Keyishian has termed Talbot's desire to inscribe his revenge a Foucauldian "coded action," a manifestation of power on the body of the condemned, the town of Orleans.¹³⁶

We cannot, however, conclude that Shakespeare's first tetralogy defends the aristocracy's right to the execution of private revenge throughout. Although the passage cited above depicts a heroic English past in which blood revenge takes up a central position, the tetralogy as a whole problematizes the conflict between state discourses of private revenge on the one hand, and discourses of heroic aristocratic masculinity on the other. For over and against Talbot's masculine and heroic blood revenges on the French, the first tetralogy depicts the domestic vendetta that was to escalate into the Wars of the Roses in wholly different terms. Significantly, the blood-feud between the two aristocratic houses of York and Lancaster is couched in the very rhetoric of heroic masculinity that Nashe celebrates. When Richard of York seeks to encourage Warwick to renew their feud against the Lancasters, he employs an opposition between religious patience and revenge similar to Nashe's:

But in this troublous time, what's to be done?
Shall we throw away our coats of steel
And wrap our bodies in black mourning gowns,
Numb'ring our Ave-Maries with our beads?
Or shall we on the helmets of our foes
Tell our devotion with revengeful arms?¹³⁷

Examples of the destabilizing capacity of masculine codes of honour and revenge abound: Humphrey of Gloucester and the Archbishop of Winchester challenge each other to the face, and the King eventually rehearses the rhetoric of blood revenge himself when he seeks to incite Clifford and Northumberland to be avenged on York.¹³⁸ As David Riggs writes, the first tetralogy demonstrates "that the received ideals of heroic greatness may be admirable in themselves, but they invariably decay, engender destructive violence and deadly rivalries."¹³⁹ The aggressive masculinity that *Piers Pennilesse* celebrates is in the first tetralogy shown to be capable of causing disorder and destruction, indeed civil war. Coppélia Kahn remarks that:

As the rival houses of York and Lancaster fall to scrabbling for the crown, what comes to replace martial valor or honor as paternal inheritance and identity in Henry's realm is the vendetta. Nominally, it is based on the same principles as paternal succession: sons are bound to avenge their fathers (and fathers their sons).¹⁴⁰

This shift from the masculine heroics of revenge to the destructive vengefulness of the vendetta is represented in the first tetralogy as a slippage from masculine blood revenge into a feminine vindictiveness.

Like the Inns of Court plays, the histories revert to Senecan images of revenge as passionate and uncontrollable in order to portray the destructiveness of private revenge. Exeter refers to the vendetta as “furious raging broils.”¹⁴¹ York speaks of his “boiling choler” and in an aside confides that his “choler is so great” that he could spent his anger on rocks, or “like Ajax Telamonius, | On sheep and oxen [...] spend my fury.”¹⁴² Clifford declares that “the sight of any of the house of York | Is as a fury to torment my soul.”¹⁴³ Like *Gorboduc*, the plays employ a Senecan Medea figure as the embodiment of this unbridled vindictiveness.¹⁴⁴ His father murdered, Clifford vows revenge on the York family:

York not our old men spares;
No more will I their babes. Tears virginal
Shall be to my flaming wrath be oil and flax.
Henceforth I will not have to do with pity.
Meet I an infant of the house of York,
Into as many gobbets will I cut it
As wild Medea young Absyrtus did.
[...]
Come, thou new ruin of old Clifford's house;
[*He takes his father upon his back.*]
As did Aeneas old Anchises bear,
So bear I thee upon my manly shoulders.

(2 Henry VI, 5.3.51-63)¹⁴⁵

The juxtaposition of the two mythical figures – the masculine Aeneas deriving from the epic tradition, and the feminine Medea from Senecan tragedy; the one a murdering mother, the other a son who rescues his father – brings to the fore the capacity inherent in aristocratic masculine heroics to escalate into a passionate and destructive feminine vindictiveness.¹⁴⁶ Clifford's desire for revenge is rooted in the patriarchal lines of “old Clifford's house,” and the blood-feud in which he engages operates according to the same principles as patriarchal succession. The emphasis on the patriarchal bonds between father and son in the myth of Aeneas and Anchises, as well as Clifford's mention of his “manly shoulders,” contrasts with his vowed destruction of the children of the house of York. The emblem of *pietas* offered by this scene,

the devotion and duty to gods, country and elders, jars with the preceding dedication to cruelty.¹⁴⁷ Rather than opposite ends of a scale, *pietas* and *furor* are represented as points on a sliding scale. Clifford's fury leads to a revenge that transgresses the honour codes of patriarchal society: it is aimed at children rather than at adult men, and it is driven by anger rather than reason. Seneca disapproved of the idea that anger is profitable in a time of war: "It raiseth and inciteth mens minds, neither doth fortitude performe any worthy action in warre, except by this meanes mens hearts bee inflamed, and this instigation hath whetted and animated bond-men to attempt dangers." The philosopher and playwright is aware of the dangers that the passion of anger poses to self-control: "For the minde being once mooued and shaken, is addicted to that whereby it is driuen," he writes.¹⁴⁸ As in Seneca's *Hercules Furens*, the *virtus* of the hero, Clifford's devotion to his father, his house, and his king, is shown to be liable to *furor*, the destructive forces of passionate fury. Denis and Elisabeth Henry write that Seneca's questioning of the heroic attitude in *Hercules Furens* is one of the reasons why early modern readers were fascinated by the tragedy: "they valued it for the complexity of the hero's role as well as for the intoxicating language of an insane fit in 'Ercles' vein."¹⁴⁹

The image of Medea who hewed her brother's body into pieces emphasizes the unnatural character of a war between fellow countrymen. As Henry Richmond puts it in *Richard III*, where he restores order to the English nation:

England hath long been mad, and scarr'd herself:
The brother blindly shed the brother's blood;
The father rashly slaughter'd his own son;
The son, compell'd, been butcher to the sire.¹⁵⁰

The pattern continues in the closing play of the tetralogy, where Richard III turns against his own family and is responsible for the death of the young princes in the Tower. As the chronicler Edward Hall records: "[B]ecause they had now no enemies risen, on whom they might revenge themselves [...] they exercised their crueltie, against their awne selves: and with their proper bloud, embrued and polluted their awne handes and membres."¹⁵¹ Revenge in *Richard III* also draws on Seneca's tragedies.¹⁵² Richard III cites Seneca's Clytemnestra: "But I am in | So far in blood that sin will pluck on sin; | Tear-falling pity dwells not in this eye."¹⁵³ Richard's

unnatural revenges on his own family are put in the words of a female Senecan revenger.

Margaret in *Richard III* remains a representative of feminine vengefulness, even though she claims to be the instrument of God in her revenge. She longs to see revenge on the house of York: “Bear with me: I am hungry for revenge, | And now I cloy me with beholding it.”¹⁵⁴ As an outsider who predicts and desires the downfall of the house of York, Margaret resembles the Senecan ghost in Seneca’s *Thyestes* or in Kyd’s *Spanish Tragedy*. Indeed, her own description marks her role as such: “Here in these confines slyly have I lurk’d |To watch the waning of mine enemies.”¹⁵⁵ The association with the Senecan ghost is underpinned when Margaret’s curses are fulfilled and her wishes for revenge established as the course of the plot. Teaching the other women in the play how to curse, Margaret shares her choric function with these female characters, as it is later shared by the ghosts of all those murdered by the house of York appearing in the night before the battle of Bosworth. Harold Brooks asserts that Margaret remains representative of the Senecan type of vengeance, only to be superseded by the chastisement of Richmond, who is represented as the hand of God:

The old type of vengeance, [...] perpetuating the Senecan chain of wrong and curse on royal houses, is embodied in [Margaret]; it is superseded by vengeance which is God’s, is just, and calls for no further vengeance, when Richmond is made the minister of chastisement.”¹⁵⁶

Antony Hammond similarly conceives of Margaret as an entirely ‘ritual’ embodiment of “brutal, un-Christian, Old Testament concepts of retributive justice” which Richmond successfully counteracts.¹⁵⁷ As in the *Oresteia*, the wild passion of the furies is finally subdued by the powers of the civilization of the *polis* and its system of law. These critics reproduce the Tudor state’s boundary between private revenge and public, authorized law, between Margaret and Richard’s feminine vindictiveness, and Richmond’s authoritative, reasoned “chastisement,” as Brooks terms it.

Shakespeare’s history plays in this view support Tudor state ideology, and support the Tudor myth of Henry VII as the bringer of peace and stability. John Cox argues that “[t]rue to Tudor practice, [Shakespeare] always assumes that centralized power

is the key to political stability,” and Richard Helgerson has also stated that “Shakespeare’s history plays are concerned above all with the consolidation and maintenance of royal power.”¹⁵⁸ The first tetralogy, however, can be seen to draw into doubt the binary construction of feminine, private revenge on the one hand, and masculine, public revenge on the other. As we have seen, patriarchal, aristocratic codes of honour are shown to be liable to transform into the wild feminine vengefulness of civil war. Similarly, the public justice that Richmond represents is implicated in forces of revenge. The furies at the close of the *Oresteia* are not banished from the *polis*, rather “they are coopted and made to serve the interests of the polis, rather than the narrower ones determined by ties of blood.”¹⁵⁹ The legal system that replaces traditions of private revenge is based in the same principle of vengeance, and the threat of violence of the tit for tat-mechanism is still necessary to deter people from committing crimes, and to ensure their respect for the law.¹⁶⁰ A reading of revenge in Shakespeare’s first tetralogy from the perspective of gender demonstrates that the opposition between the state’s centralized power and the aristocracy’s independent traditions of revenge is not clear-cut. Instead, the plays show that masculine, public revenge is capable of transforming into feminine, private vindictiveness, and challenge the gendered boundary between law and revenge that the Inns of Court sought to shape in their dramatic productions.

Law and revenge in *Titus Andronicus*

In his *Cases of Conscience* (1606), William Perkins answers the hypothetical question whether a Christian man can “with good conscience and a meeke Spirit, defend himselfe by law, for wrongs that are done unto him?”¹⁶¹ Perkins answers that St. Paul rebukes the habits of the law, since suitors

in lawing [...] fell into rash and violent passions of rage, and envie, so as they could not temper themselves [...] Paul notes their fault by a word that signifies Weakenesse or impotencie of their affections, whereby it came to passe, that being overcome by the strength of their owne desires, upon injuries offered, they were unable to beare them in any degree of Christian moderation.¹⁶²

Perkins draws a parallel between the Biblical condemnation of the

excesses of the law and the law courts of his own time. It appears, he adds, that few comply to this ordinance of God, because men do not consider the function of civil courts, but are so intent on revenge that they fix their “eyes wholly, upon the event of his action by extremitie of law: and so swarveth from that Christian moderation, required by the word of God in this case” (498). Perkins’ argument against the uses of the law resembles that of Calvin. He writes that the Bible prohibits us not only to “execute revenge with our own hands, but that our hearts also are not to be influenced by a desire of this kind.” Basing himself on this biblical passage, Calvin argues that

it is therefore superfluous to make a distinction here between public and private revenge; for he who, with a malevolent mind and desirous of revenge, seeks the help of a magistrate, has no more excuse than he devises means for self-revenge. Nay, revenge, as we shall presently see, is not indeed at all times to be sought from God: if our petitions arise from a private feeling, and not from pure zeal produced by the Spirit, we do not make God so much our judge as the executioner of our depraved passion.¹⁶³

In Calvin’s view, public revenge and even divine revenge should not be sought after if men desire them from a private feeling, a private longing for retribution. The distinction between private, public, and divine revenge that was taking shape in the early modern period is challenged in Calvinist theology on the grounds of a shared private longing for revenge that lies at the basis of all three categories.

The conflict between private passions and the legal function of the law courts that Perkins and Calvin here signal, is explored also in Shakespeare’s *Titus Andronicus* (1594), a play that questions the cross-fertilization between the practices of law and the desire for revenge. Like the first part of *Henry VI*, it moves from public, honourable and heroic revenge to the private revenges of the vendetta when it follows the eponymous general Titus Andronicus from the wars against the Goths into the feud between his family and Tamora’s. The tragedy shares the political themes of blood revenge and civil war that inform Shakespeare’s first tetralogy.

The genre of revenge tragedy as a whole has been seen as “one element in the ideological process of state formation in the late Tudor and early Stuart period, as the state centralized control over the execution of justice, particularly control over private

bloodfeuds.”¹⁶⁴ An examination of gendered representations of revenge in *Titus Andronicus*, however, leads to different conclusions. For, just as Shakespeare’s earliest history plays can be seen to question both private feminine vengeance as well as more authorized, masculine heroic versions of revenge, *Titus Andronicus* probes the divide between masculine and feminine constructions of revenge, and thus destabilizes the binary opposition between public law and private vengeance that the Inns of Court plays construct.

The blending of concepts of public law and private revenge occurs already in the first scene of the play. In order to appease the ghosts of his sons killed in battle, Lucius decides that the oldest son of the Queen of Goths needs to be sacrificed:

Give us the proudest prisoner of the Goths,
That we may hew his limbs and on a pile
Ad manes fratrum sacrifice his flesh
Before this earthly prison of their bones,
That so the shadows be not unappeased,
Nor we disturbed with prodigies on earth.

(1.1.99–104)

Like the ghosts in Senecan tragedy, Titus’s deceased sons in the underworld desire blood revenge for their death. The sacrifice of the enemy’s eldest son renders peace to their shadows, and prevents them from returning to the living world in order to haunt the living Andronici “with prodigies on earth.” The demand of blood for blood is performed in *Titus Andronicus* in the context of an institutionalized Roman ritual, designed to channel the passionate responses of grief and revenge into a “cold-blooded, passionless ceremony.”¹⁶⁵ Yet, in its demand of blood for blood, the Roman ritual strongly resembles the practice of blood revenge. Critics have conceived of this moment of blood sacrifice as the entrance of barbarity into the city of Rome.¹⁶⁶ Richard Marienstras asserts that although the sacrifice is in conformity with the traditions of family and city, it is pitiless nevertheless: “wildness is not absent from the customs of Rome.”¹⁶⁷ Indeed, Marienstras compares the sacrifice to Queen Margaret’s and Clifford’s vengeance on York. Brecken Rose Hancock writes that “the very qualities that [Titus] considers to be virtuous – sacrificial piety, constancy, and militarism – are those that lead to tragedy.”¹⁶⁸ The play opposes these qualities with the values that Tamora stresses in her appeal

for her son's life, an appeal that resembles Mother Nature's to Horestes, for she calls upon pity, mercy, and the natural bond between mother and child (see above, p. 1).¹⁶⁹ Titus, like Horestes, refuses to accept these arguments, however. He states that "[t]o this your son is marked, and die he must, | T'appease their groaning shadows that are gone" (1.1.124-29). Titus's desire for revenge, although staged in the context of Roman traditions of masculine honour, sets off the destructive cycle of vengeance that follows, and as such does not resemble Horestes's authorized and just revenge. Tamora's condemnation of the ritual as "cruel irreligious piety" (1.1.133) in a telling oxymoron lays bare the brutal violence of blood revenge that lies beneath the pious ritual. As Heather James writes: "[s]imply put, the founding acts of empire turn out to contain the seeds of its destruction."¹⁷⁰

The overlap between Titus's public ritual of sacrifice and Senecan representations of ghosts' desire for revenge destabilizes the binary construction of law and revenge. Jonathan Bate argues that in writing this revenge tragedy, "Shakespeare is interrogating Rome, asking what kind of an example it provides for Elizabethan England," and refers specifically to the English legal institution. "By casting revenge in the form of an elaborate public performance," he writes, "the drama reveals that the public performance known as the law is also a form of revenge action."¹⁷¹

This semantic conflation of law and revenge in *Titus Andronicus* is revealed through a gender analysis which focuses on a series of crossings of gender boundaries. Initially, as we saw, Titus is represented as a military hero, whereas Tamora takes up the role of mother, and evokes the emotions of pity and mercy. Interestingly, Tamora's blood revenge for Alarbus' ritual death is characterized at its inception as based on classical female role models of revenge. Demetrius tells his mother to "stand resolved" and hope for an opportunity to emulate the "sharp revenge" executed by "the queen of Troy," Hecuba, upon the "Thracian tyrant in his tent" (1.1.138-41). Hecuba in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* takes revenge for the murder of her son "as a Lyon robbed of her whelps" and scratches out the tyrant Polymestor's eyes with her nails.¹⁷² This pattern of the emulation of classical and biblical examples of female vengeance persists throughout the play. When Bassianus and Lavinia interrupt her amorous activities in the woods, Tamora styles herself as Diana who took revenge on Actaeon by

transforming him into a stag: “Had I the power that some say Dian had, | Thy temples should be planted presently | With horns” (2.2.61–63). At the height of her revenge plot, Tamora imitates the classical furies when she presents herself at Titus’ study with the words: “I am Revenge, sent from th’ infernal kingdom | To ease the gnawing vulture of thy mind | By working wreakful vengeance on thy foes” (5.2.30–32).

Like Queen Margaret in the first tetralogy, Tamora marries into the royal house, and becomes a domestic rather than a foreign threat to the stability of the state. Tamora is able to subvert the Roman legal system from within in order to achieve her revenge on Titus: the death sentence of two of his innocent sons. Her abuse of the legal system is symbolized by her appropriation of her son’s sword in the forest: she becomes a figure of Justice who holds a sword but no scales, a symbol of the unbridled character of feminine vengefulness.¹⁷³

Tamora’s subversion of Roman justice forces Titus into the position of private revenger. As Robert Ornstein comments: “the revenging hero almost invariably has no way of bringing his criminal opponent to justice, either because no proof of the crime exists, or because the criminal is placed beyond the reach of justice, or because justice itself is a mockery in the hero’s society.”¹⁷⁴ Titus’s confrontation with merciless judges echoes Tamora’s position in the first scene. Where she kneels in front of the Andronici to ask Titus’ forgiveness for her sons, Titus as a father kneels before the Roman justices and appeals to the judges’ mercy on behalf of his sons (3.1.1–9).¹⁷⁵ Titus takes up the outlawed position of revenger, as Tamora did before him.

When the Andronici discover that Lavinia has been raped by Tamora’s sons, Titus’s brother Marcus advises to model their vengeance on the masculine classical example of Junius Brutus’ revenge for Lucrece’s rape (4.1.89–94). The young Lucius in a similarly masculine fashion declares that “if I were a man | Their mother’s bedchamber should not be safe” (4.1.107–108). Titus finds his two kinsmen too passionate in their revenge, however. He instructs moderation as he advises them to “let alone” and “lay it by” for a while, so that their revenge may be carried out more subtly (4.1.101 and 104). Titus’s recommendation of a calculated revenge resembles the advice of Medea’s nurse, who in John Studley’s translation declares that:

Who with a modest minde abides the Spurs of pricking payne,
And suffereth sorrowes patiently, may it repay agayne
Who beares a privy grudge in breast, and keepes his malyce close.
He leeseth [=loses] opportunity who vengeaunce doth requyre,
That shewes by open sparkes the flame the heate of kindled fyre.
(*Medea*, II.61)

His Senecan plea for self-control in order to execute the more effective revenge associates him with classical feminine avengers. The idea of women's ability to 'brood' on their revenge was stereotypical, as appears also from Richard Brathwait's *English Gentlewoman* (1631). He writes that some women "with a bite of their lip, can surpresse an intended revenge: and like dangerous Politicians, pleasingly entertaine time with one they mortally hate, till oportunity [sic] usher revenge, which they can act with as much hostility, as if that very moment were the Actor of their injury."¹⁷⁶ Titus's eventual revenge is more explicitly modelled on a feminine classical example, that of Progne for the rape of Philomel.

Bate comments that Titus is an unusual revenger "in that he knocks up a pie rather than a curtain; he plays the cook, not the author and the actor."¹⁷⁷ Indeed, the Roman general is a feminine rather than a masculine director of revenge.¹⁷⁸ Not only does he imitate and emulate the pattern of a classical female revenger, his revenges are carried out in the domestic space of the kitchen. Progne and her sister's preparations for revenge in Golding's translation of Ovid's source tale for Titus's revenge have the appearance of a recipe: "In gobbits they him rent: whereof were some in Pipkins boyld, | And other some on hissing spits against the fire were broyld" (6.815-16). Titus's vengeance follows similar conventions when he informs his victims of his plans with their bodies:

I will grind your bones to dust,
And with your blood and it I'll make a paste,
And of the paste a coffin I will rear,
And make two pasties of your shameful heads[.]
(5.2.86-89)

As Brecken Rose Hancock writes, "Shakespeare portrays Titus as domesticated and feminized."¹⁷⁹ The cannibal meal that Titus feeds Tamora, making her eat "the flesh that she herself hath bred"

(5.3.61), is a perversion of family relationships in which the womb consumes the children it produced. Like the child murders and the metaphors of cannibalism that figure in the first tetralogy and that here are literalized – as many metaphors are in the play – this revenge is styled as a classical example of feminine vengeance that disrupts the patriarchal lines of inheritance.¹⁸⁰

Titus's revenge, however, is not only feminine in character. It contains masculine elements as well. His murder of Lavinia is performed in imitation of Virginius, who slew "his daughter with his own right hand, | Because she was enforced, stained and deflowered" (5.3.37–38). This patterning narrative is a decidedly masculine classical tale of patriarchal honour. Likewise, as Stephen Mead comments, at the moment when Titus and Lavinia slice the boys' throats Titus assumes the persona of a priest ("Lavinia, come | Receive the blood").¹⁸¹ The role of the priest jars with Titus's role as a cook and mythological sister to Lavinia. Hancock, referring to Titus's mention of Virginius, comments that "Shakespeare shatters the barriers between Roman and revenger altogether when Titus recites Roman tradition only twelve lines before he takes revenge on Tamora."¹⁸² This blurring of boundaries prevents a classification of Titus's vengeance as either a masculine Roman revenge or a wild, barbaric and feminine vengeance.

In view of the resemblances between Titus's and Tamora's revenges, it is difficult to maintain that Titus's is a "crafty, vigorous, justifiable and regenerative revenge," as Harry Keyishian sees it.¹⁸³ Nor do I read Titus as Ronald Broude's revenger "with a strong sense of justice and duty selected by the heavens to act as the agent of their vengeance."¹⁸⁴ Instead, *Titus Andronicus* demonstrates that Roman law and private vengeance are not altogether dissimilar. Even the "public performance that brings political change" that Bate sees in Lucius's military revenge on Rome is conducted by the man who at the opening of the play suggested the ritual sacrifice of human life.¹⁸⁵ Lucius's military campaign is also represented as motivated by vengefulness: he instructs the Goths to be "impatient of [their] wrongs," and the army of Goths is compared to a swarm of angry "stinging bees" (5.1.6 and 14). The cycle of blood revenge seems all but ended when Lucius kills Saturninus as blood revenge for his father's death: "Can the son's eye behold his father bleed? | There's meed for meed, death for a deadly deed." (5.3.64–65). And as Dorothea Kehler also remarks, Lucius refusal to bury Tamora

("let birds on her take pity" [5.3.1999]) is reminiscent of Titus's threatened refusal to allow the entombment of Mutius.¹⁸⁶ *Titus Andronicus* demonstrates how the legal system that formed so intricate a part of the emerging English nation state is not so distantly related to the wild feminine vengeance of Seneca's tragedies.

Conclusion

The Tudor state in the sixteenth century attempted to replace infrajudicial modes of conflict resolution by a national legal system. In the process of the definition of the difference between public and private retribution, classical sources were strategically entered into the contemporary discursive conflict. The representation of private revenge as passionate, uncontrollable and destructive in Seneca's tragedies was appropriated by the Inns of Court in their self-fashioning as a key institution of the English legal system. Constructs of gender play a strategic role in the circulation of discourses of justice and revenge. Gender constructs, as Joan Scott has argued, do not necessarily refer to relations between men and women. The Inns of Court appropriated Senecan representations of revenge as feminine to intervene in the discursive practice of revenge. The Inns of Court attempted to entrench the distinction between public and private revenge by portraying the latter as passionate and unbridled, and associating it with the destructive forces of civil wars from the English past. In doing so, they can be seen to struggle with the relation between public and divine revenge, as well as with the sex of their monarch. On the public commercial stage, Shakespeare's first tetralogy of history plays and his *Titus Andronicus* challenge the categories of private, public and divine revenge circulated and shaped in the drama of the Inns of Court. Although Shakespeare's first tetralogy like the tragedies of the Inns of Court blends native history with Senecan tragedy, its representations of revenge problematize the gendered division between masculine public revenge and private feminine revenge. Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* draws explicit attention to the interstices between the public retribution of the legal system, and the feminine private revenges of both Titus and Tamora. The play thus problematizes the impression of a strict division between public and private revenge carefully constructed in the drama of the Inns of Court.

NOTES

¹ An exception is Jessica Winston, who reads the translations against the background of social, political, and literary culture. She argues that the play provided a vehicle for their individual authors “to participate in the political world they sought to serve,” but who does not discuss the revenge theme of the plays in its historical political context (Winston 2006).

² These are the authors and the translations collected in *Seneca His Tenne Tragedies*: Jasper Heywood, *Troas* [*i.e. Troades*] (1559), *Thyestes* (1560) and *Hercules Furens* (1561); Alexander Neville, *Ædipus* (1563); Thomas Nuce, *Octavia* (1566); John Studley, *Agamemnon* (1566), *Medea* (1566), *Hercules Cætæus* (1566), and *Hippolytus* [*i.e. Phædra*] (1567); Thomas Newton, *Thebais* [*i.e. Phœnissæ*] (1581).

³ The translation of Seneca’s tragedies was one of channels through which Seneca reached the English stage. Howard Norland argues that the efforts of the first translators of Seneca made Seneca more accessible to a public far beyond academia, and played a major role in transferring the tragedies from the classroom to the theatre (Norland 1996: 242, 262–63). E. M. Spearing was the first to make a case for the importance of the translations (Spearing 1969, first published in 1912); see also Eliot 1964; and Stapleton 2000. The ways in which Seneca’s plays became part of early modern English drama are notoriously difficult to trace. Certain is that Seneca’s plays were taught and translated in grammar schools, and often cited in florilegia. Playwrights who attended university may have read the tragedies in their original language. But Seneca also reached the English shores via the Senecan traditions in both French and Italian drama, and the plays were translated into English as well. T. S. Eliot distinguishes three main types of drama that were influenced by the works of Seneca. The first is the popular Elizabethan tragedy, performed in the public theatres; the second is the Senecal drama, which was pseudo-classical, and composed by and for a small and select body of persons not closely in touch or in sympathy with the popular drama of the day; and finally the two Roman tragedies of Ben Jonson (Eliot 1964: xx). It should be noted, however, that the relation between the Senecan drama of the Inns of Court and the plays of the public stage is much more dynamic than Eliot here suggests: the Inns of Court plays were also performed at the royal court, which was the great mediator between academic and popular drama (Kastner and Charlton 1921: cxli). For the ways in which Seneca was accessible to English playwrights, see Kastner and Charlton 1921: lxiii–cxxxviii, and cxlvicliiii; and also Cunliffe 1912: xix–lxiii.

⁴ Nashe, *A Preface to Robert Greene’s Menaphon*, cited in Jenkins 1982: 83.

⁵ Prest 1972: 39. See also Raffield 2004: 66. Frank Whigham describes the Inns as one of the “rapid escalators” for upward mobility, together

with the professions of merchant, administrator, and the clergy (Whigham 1984: 6). The institutions maintained close ties with court and government circles. Francis Walsingham, William Cecil, and Francis Bacon were all alumni of Gray's Inn, and the latter two kept up their association with the Inns also after they had attained high political office (Prest 1972: 38). Braddick and Ingram both stress that administration of justice and national government were intimately related in the early modern period (Braddick 2000: 25 and Ingram 1987: 27).

⁶ See also Raffield 2004: 65.

⁷ Raffield 2004: 85–103. The Inns during this period became a heterotopian location, contained within its walls and excepted from external jurisdictions, it created its own symbolic nation state. Raffield argues that the Revels should not be seen as a rejection of order: the inversion of conventional hierarchy rather affirms that hierarchy and its rituals. See also Smith 1988: 111.

⁸ See Miola 1992: 3–8 for an excellent overview of varying perspectives on Seneca's influence on early modern drama. See also Cunliffe 1912 and 1965; Kastner and Charlton 1921; Eliot 1964; Baldwin 1994; Johnson 1948; Hunter 1978a and 1978b.

⁹ See Cunliffe 1965 and Lucas 1922. For a more comprehensive list, see Miola 1992: 3.

¹⁰ Miola 1992: 7.

¹¹ See also Rose 1991: 291.

¹² Greenblatt 1988: 95.

¹³ See also Howard 2004 and Sheen 2004: 156–58.

¹⁴ Seneca 1970: Vol. I, 139. All further quotations from “On Anger” will be from this edition, unless otherwise indicated.

¹⁵ On the conflicting influence of the Stoic and the Augustinian tradition in Renaissance humanism, see Bouwsma 1990: 19–73.

¹⁶ Colebrook 2004: 58–62.

¹⁷ Lodge 1614: 519.

¹⁸ Thomas Lodge became a member of Lincoln's Inn in 1578, and continued a social and probably a residential relation with the Inns. See Halasz 2004. His edition of the works of Seneca was published in 1614.

¹⁹ Lodge 1614: 524.

²⁰ Seneca 1970: 161.

²¹ Dessen and Thomson 1999: 249.

²² Cancik and Schneider 1998: vol. 4, 713.

²³ Hunter comments that “[i]t is impossible to know just how subjective or objective Seneca intended Erynis or Megaera to be, but clearly we are not dealing only with a fluctuation of inner mood” (Hunter 1978b: 184). The *Dictionary of Stage Directions* states that the word “Fury” in stage directions refers either to an alternative to spirit or to a synonym for anger. Furies appear in stage directions in *The Brazen Age*, *The Silver Age*, *Grim the Collier*, *The Jew's Tragedy*, *Old Wives Tale*, *The Lady Mother*, *The Battle of Alcazar*, *Rare Triumphs*, *A Warning for Fair Women*, *If This Be Not a Good Play*, *The Night Walker*, *Four Playes*

in *One, Herod and Antipater, The Traitor, Messalina, and Faithful Friends* (Dessen and Thomson 1999: 98).

²⁴ Occurrences of the word *bedlem* in translations are interesting in this context: in *Hercules (Etæus)*, the nurse describes Deianira as: “Hercles Wyfe all bedlem like doth stande, | And scowleth as the Tiger wilde which couched on the sande | In shade of rocke doth shrowde his whelpes.” See also *Agamemnon* l. 152.

²⁵ “*Victrice dextra fusus adverso Lycus | terram dedit ore*”; I, 38; 895–96. Fitch notes that Hercules’s eagerness for action is often a desire specifically for *punitive* action (Fitch 1987: 25).

²⁶ “*Iuno, cur nondum furis? | me me, sorores, mente deiectam mea | versate primam*”; I, 12; 109–11.

²⁷ Eliot 1964: *Thyestes*, I; 56.

²⁸ “*Ut possit animo captus Alcides agi, | magno furore percitus*”; I, 12; 107–108. Fitch confirms that Juno is motivated by a desire for revenge that leads to a loss of mental control, a state of *furor* (Fitch 1987: 33).

²⁹ Douglas E. Green writes that “the hero’s hands and weapons” are at this stage of the plot “instruments of virtue” (Green 1984: 117). See also Lawall, who argues that “[i]n his first display of Hercules’s *virtus*, Seneca has been careful to create the impression that his actions are fully justified and that they are those of a man driven to violent and necessarily bloody action by duty and responsibility to his family and his city and by a commitment to the defence of society and the reestablishment of law and order” and that “Seneca seems to have taken pains to minimize any suggestion that Hercules punishes Lycus out of sheer anger. The emphasis is on Hercules’s *virtus*.” (Lawall 1983: 12 and 25).

³⁰ “*Flammifera Erynys [...] saeva Tysiphone, caput | serpentibus vallata*”; I, 40–41; 982–85.

³¹ Hercules’s state of feminine fury is once more contrasted to his former masculine potency when the chorus wishes him to “shake of[f] this madde and ylle | Tossinges of mynde, returne let piety, | and vertue to the man” (I, 44). The word *virtue* carries strong associations with masculinity: the Loeb edition of the tragedies translates Seneca’s “*redeat pietas virtusque viro*” as “let the hero’s piety and manly courage come again” (p. 97).

³² For an overview of the hero’s ambivalent heroism in the Hercules tradition before Seneca, see Fitch 1987: 15–44 (esp. 21n19 for an overview of conflicting views of Hercules in criticism).

³³ Fitch 1987: 25–26.

³⁴ Lawall 1983: 6.

³⁵ Shelton 1978: 61.

³⁶ Norland 1996: 249.

³⁷ Norland 1996: 262.

³⁸ To me, it remains uncertain to what extent these early modern preferences for a display of the passions in drama were themselves shaped by the revival of Senecan drama, and not the other way round. According to F. L. Lucas, violent rhetoric finds its roots in the performance practice of Seneca’s drama. Since it was not intended

to be performed by actors, but was recited as a chamber-drama, the plays are rather static in nature, and “the whole burden is thrown upon the language,” he writes. The lack of action in the tragedies results in violently rhetorical language, and what Lucas calls “the lurid extravagances of Senecan bombast and flamboyance.” He writes that although Horace famously advised ‘Let not Medea kill her children before the audience,’ Senecan tragedy sometimes makes violent bloodshed part of the action, since it was not written for the stage. The Elizabethans assumed that Seneca’s tragedies were performed by actors, and followed Seneca’s violent enactment of revenge. Lucas considers the cock-fighting and bear-baiting affinities of the Elizabethan audiences an extra stimulus for the popularity of blood and thunder on the popular stage (Lucas 1922: 57). T. S. Eliot, however, considers the influence of Seneca on “the horrors which disfigure Elizabethan drama” overestimated. “When we examine the works of Seneca, the actual horrors are not so heinous or so many as are supposed” (Eliot 1964: xxii-iii).

³⁹ Conley, 1967: 49-50.

⁴⁰ The dictionary in its guidelines explains that “the quotations illustrate the forms and uses of the word, showing the age of the word generally, and of its various senses particularly; the earliest and, in obsolete words or senses, the latest, known instances of its occurrence being always quoted” (Vol I: xxix).

⁴¹ Eliot 1964: *Agamemnon* II: 139 and 141.

⁴² G. K. Hunter explains, “the ethic of Seneca was [...] quite hostile to the ethic that is tolerable to a Christian community” (Hunter 1978b: 182). Although Seneca’s works constituted key texts within the humanist system of education, Kristian Jensen argues that the attitude of early modern writers toward their pagan counterparts was ambivalent (Jensen 1996: 77). As Robert B. Pierce comments, Seneca’s morality is not prominently present in the tragedies (Pierce 1971: 13.) Critics have argued that the contrast between the tragedies and the philosophical writings led the Elizabethans to see Seneca the philosopher as a different man than Seneca the tragedian. Jonathan Bate rejects this view (Bate 1995: 30). Anne Pippin Burnett suggests that Seneca’s plays are in accordance with his philosophy, since the reception of a play is an exercise in the control of the emotions. A member of the audience “can rehearse himself in not surrendering, and learn to view horror and injustice with no more than an agreeable thrill because his mind has chosen not to be affected” (Burnett 1998: 10).

⁴³ Hunter cites Fulke Greville who writes of the classical tragedies as “exemplify[ing] the disastrous miseries of man’s life, where Order, Laws, Doctrine, and Authority are unable to protect Innocency from the exorbitant wickedness of power, and so out of that melancholic vision stir horror, or murmur against Divine Providence.” Also, Greville describes contemporary tragedies as “point[ing] out God’s revenging aspect upon every particular sin” (Hunter 1978b: 182).

⁴⁴ I, 187-88; quoted in Green 1984: 19n24.

⁴⁵ This didactic use of Senecan representations of revenge occurs also in the 1578 additions to *The Mirror for Magistrates*, where the Wars of the Roses are – in *de casibus* tradition – associated with the furies, and are presented as didactic material for magistrates: “discord and debate, | Which when it haps in kindred or in bloud, | *Erynnis* rage was neuer halfe so wood [=furious]. || Be sure therfore ye kinges and princes all | That concorde in kingdomes is chiefe assurance, | And that your families do neuer fall” (Campbell 1938: 449–50).

⁴⁶ “In Agamemnona Senecae, Thomae Newcei,” in Spearing 1913: 8, ll. 151–52.

⁴⁷ In the Latin poem that precedes this poem, also written by Nuce, a similar notion of divine retribution is expressed in the lines: “Et Deus Atream patris de crimine, prolem | Perdit” (And God destroyed the offspring of Atreus for the crime of the father) (ll.9–10). Nuce applies the principle of divine blood revenge even to those who calumniate Studley’s work: “For be thou sure, though god doth spare | thee for a season here, | And suffer thee with poysoned tonge | to frump, and carp thys gere, [=this translation] | That eyther thou thy self shalt feele | some bytter bytyng greefe, | Or els shall thy posteritye | with payne haue their releefe” (167–74).

⁴⁸ Deuteronomy 5.9–10. Cited in Kelly 1970:1. See also Exod. 34.6–7 and num. 14.18. The notion is toned down, however, two chapters later in the same book where we read: “Know then that Yahweh your God is God indeed, the faithful God who is true to his covenant and his graciousness for a thousand generations towards those who love him and keep his commandments, but who punishes in their own persons those that hate him.” Deuteronomy 7.9–10. Later in Deuteronomy we read: “The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin” (Deut. 24:16).

⁴⁹ *Gorboduc* similarly attempts to contain its representations of feminine fury within the greater scheme of divine providence. The Chorus in *Gorboduc*, for example, tells the audience that the “dreadful furies” in the plays are the instrument of Jove, who sends them forth to “make the mother kill her onely sonne” in revenge for his fratricide. When the chorus asserts that Jove by his everlasting dome has determined that “[b]lood asketh blood, and death must death requite,” the play awkwardly merges divine providence with classical mythology. On early modern revenge tragedy and providential history see also Dollimore 1989: 36–40, 83–108 and 139–43.

⁵⁰ Campbell 1931: 294.

⁵¹ See also Mercer 1987: 6.

⁵² Lewis Mott suggested that it was this play that the Queen’s Men performed before the Queen on December 26, 1589 (Mott 1921: *passim*).

⁵³ Anonymous 1594: Sig. A3r. Chambers, Kirschbaum and Dover Wilson identify the text as a bad quarto (see Dover Wilson 1952: 299–300).

⁵⁴ G. K. Hunter writes that the appeal to truth as a justification for history plays is common in the period; he identified thirteen uses of the

word 'true' in Elizabethan play titles (Hunter 1997: 157).

⁵⁵ Dover Wilson 1952: 300.

⁵⁶ The two senses of the adjective "civil" that are played out here are: "of or belonging to citizens; consisting of citizens, or men dwelling together in a community," (*sv* civil, *adj.* 1) and the now obsolete meaning of "having proper public or social order; well-ordered, orderly, well-governed" (*sv.* civil, *adj.* 7). Contemporary texts refer to the feud between the aristocratic families of York and Lancaster as civil wars, perhaps to stress that these noble families' revenges are an appropriation of the royal right to distribute punishment.

⁵⁷ E. M. W. Tillyard has received much criticism for his teleological interpretation of the workings of divine providence in Shakespeare's history plays (see Tillyard 1986). That the Tudor government financed chronicle writers to record the Tudors' peaceful conclusion of the Wars of the Roses, however, remains undisputed. Annabel Patterson who recently wrote a book to overthrow the all-too monolithic conception of the chronicles as supporting the Tudor myth, nevertheless affirms that Holinshed's *Chronicles* were compiled first as "a commitment to settling disputes by words rather than swords, and to the importance of constitutional government" (Patterson 1994:19). Phyllis Rackin asserts that the study of English history in the context of the emergent nation state was an essential source of self-definition (Rackin 1990: 4).

⁵⁸ Howard and Rackin 1994: 14.

⁵⁹ Hunter 1997: 155. For a discussion of historians' analyses of processes of state formation and the powers of the aristocracy, as well as the role of traditions of revenge in this context, see pp. 17-21 above.

⁶⁰ See Edwards 2001: 22.

⁶¹ Murray Kendall 1962: 30. Murray Kendall also proffers that "your average Englishman living through these times would probably have been amazed to learn from a subject of Queen Elizabeth the First that he had endured a generation of horrors" (30). Edward Hall's *The Union of the Two Noble and Illustre Families of Lancaster & Yorke* (1550) stresses that Tudor rule brought an end to civil war: "For as Kyng Henry the fourthe was the begynnyng and rote of the great discord and deuision: so was that godly matrimony, the final end of all dissensions, titles and debates." Hall 1550: A3r. On the historiography of the chronicles see also Goy-Blanquet 2002 and Patterson 1994.

⁶² Sig. A3v.

⁶³ Sig. H2v. As in Shakespeare's *Richard III*, the king sees the ghosts of his victims, among whom his brother George "gaping for revenge" in the night before his battle with the Earl of Richmond.

⁶⁴ G. K. Hunter describes the plays as fables "of national unity, of order and disorder, of the internecine quarrels that nearly destroy the royal family, and so the nation" (Hunter 1997: Vol 6, 51).

⁶⁵ Corrigan 1992: 24.

⁶⁶ The other tragedies are *Gismond of Salerne* (1567), written by Robert Wilmot and his colleagues of the Inner Temple; and *Horestes* (1567) written by John Pikeryng who was a member of Lincoln's Inn. *Gismond*

of *Salerne* was written by members of the Inner Temple and men associated with the Inns (see Johnson, *Early Elizabethan Tragedies*, 282), one of whom, Robert Wilmot, revised the play in 1591 as *Tancred and Gismund*.

⁶⁷ Although Raffield writes that the Inns of Court saw the classical period as the time in which the common law originated, and argues that the institutions drew authority from representations of these classical origins, I will demonstrate that they drew also on classical representations of disorder, particularly revenge, in an effort to strengthen the boundary between public and private revenge (Raffield 2004: 132).

⁶⁸ Sidney 2002: 110.

⁶⁹ Cunliffe 1912: *Gorboduc*, dumb show preceding Act 4.

⁷⁰ Travitsky 1993: 63–84 (77 and 68). Catherine E. Thomas in her reconsideration of Travitsky's findings convincingly argues that the drama's representation of murdering mothers is more than an attempt to demonize women. Thomas argues that the Medea-figures are intended to urge Queen Elizabeth to marry and become a mother herself (Thomas 2003: 303–327).

⁷¹ Sackville and Norton 1970: 3.

⁷² Sackville and Norton 1970: 5.2.29–33 and 5.2.240–43.

⁷³ Travitsky, 1993: 64.

⁷⁴ Cunliffe 1893: 50. The plot of *Gorboduc*, with its two brothers involved in civil war, bears resemblance to Seneca's *Thebais*. In that play, however, the mother, Jocasta, seeks to reconcile the warring brothers, instead of avenging one of them.

⁷⁵ Sackville and Norton 1970: 5.1.66–70.

⁷⁶ Sackville and Norton 1970: 5.2.48.

⁷⁷ Sackville and Norton 1970: 5.2.2.

⁷⁸ Humphrey 1563: Sigs. c7v–d1r.

⁷⁹ Salkeld 1993: 82.

⁸⁰ See Bevington 1968: 141–55; Axton 1977: 11–25 and 38–72; James and Walker 1995; Jones and Whitfield White 1996; Vanhoutte 2000; and Vanhoutte 2003: 114–27.

⁸¹ Dolan 1994: 21.

⁸² Whitney 1973: 33.

⁸³ Sackville and Norton 1970: 4.2.171–76.

⁸⁴ Lancashire 1997b: II.21–1–333–35.

⁸⁵ See Axton 1977: 54.

⁸⁶ The eight authors are Thomas Hughes, Francis Bacon, William Fulbecke, Nicholas Trotte, John Penruddocke, Francis Flower, John Lancaster, and Sir Christopher Yelverton. These eight men may have performed the play themselves.

⁸⁷ On the use of the *Historia Regum Britanniae*, see Corrigan 1992: 8.

⁸⁸ Corrigan 1992: 1.2.39–47 (ll. 250–54 in *Thyestes*). Guenevora's indecision with regard to the nature of her revenge, as well as her conviction that it will be an act of passion and excess, are echoed in Shakespeare's *King Lear*, where the angry king warns his daughters:

“I will have such revenges on you both | That all the world shall – I will do such things – | what they are, yet I know not; but they shall be | The terrors of the earth” (Shakespeare 1997: *The Tragedy of King Lear*, 2.2.445–49).

⁸⁹ On vengeful female characters who retire to a nunnery and the heterotopian function of monasteries and nunneries in early modern drama, see Steenbergh 2007.

⁹⁰ Corrigan 1992: 77, Eliot 1964: *Agamemnon* l. 115.

⁹¹ Corrigan 1992: 1.1.33–42; these lines appear in Thomas Hughes’s version of the play, not in the version presented before court. Corrigan corroborates this parallel between Guenevora’s vindictiveness and civil unrest in the play when he argues that Guenevora is not a human character, as is Seneca’s Clytemnestra, but is illustrative of the state of Britain (Corrigan 1992: 23).

⁹² See Belsey 1979 for the influence of these morality plays on the representation of conscience and revenge in Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*.

⁹³ The Revels’ accounts for that year list a *Tragedy of Orestes* among the plays performed for the Christmas celebrations of the year 1567/68. Most critics agree that this title refers to Pickeryng’s interlude.

⁹⁴ See Axton 1982; Bevington 1968: 152; Robertson 1990; Phillips 1964. Robertson writes that it is likely that the play “forms part of the English propaganda effort to justify the deposition of a neighbouring queen” (Robertson 1990: 29). David Bevington argues against this overt allegorical parallel, and would rather see the play as “discussing the universal attributes of all wise rulers, allowing Elizabeth to interpret as she saw fit” (Bevington 1968: 152). Whether intended as a direct allegorical parallel or a more general advice on the attributes of rulers, it is significant that the play employs certain gender strategies in validating Orestes’s revenge on his mother in order to uphold his revenge as a positive example.

⁹⁵ Jones 2004.

⁹⁶ For the political context, see Hadfield 2003: 465.

⁹⁷ David Bevington writes that “Scottish propaganda had in fact equated Mary with Clytemnestra, and by 1570 Elizabeth’s ministers were covertly sponsoring anti-Marian pamphlets. In the parliament of 1572, Richard Gallys compared Mary to Clytemnestra as ‘killer of her husband and an adulteress’” (Bevington 1968: 152). Winstanley cites documents that reveal that contemporaries conceived of Mary’s supposed murder of her husband as blood revenge for Darnley’s prior alleged murder of Mary’s lover Rizzio (Winstanley 1921: 67–68). The case of Mary’s murder of her husband was topical in 1567 London. In 1567, the Murray faction supporting the infant James was in London to show Elizabeth I’s council the notorious Casket Letters. The same year, Robert Semphill, Scottish politician and ballad writer, used the Orestes story to refer to the dilemma of Murray and the Scottish government. The connection between *Horstes* and the Scottish monarchy also appears from the English Revels accounts for that year, which list the costs of seven plays performed, the seventh of which stages Orestes’s revenge alongside

a 'Tragedy of the kinge of Scottes': "The sevoenthe of Orestes and a Tragedy of the kinge of Scottes, to ye which belonged divers howses, for settinge forth of the same as Stratoes howse, Gobbyns howse, Orestious howse Rome, the Pallace of prosperitie Scotlande and a gret Castell on thothere side." (Axton 1982: 29). See also David Norbrook 2002: 97-139. George Buchanan compares Mary to Medea, since they were both unable to moderate their passions: "Call to minde that part of hir letters to Bothwell quhairin sche maketh hir selfe Medea, that is, a woman that nouthur in loue nor in hatrit can kepe any meane. I could alswa allege vther causes of hir hatrit, although in dede nat reasonable causes, yet sic as are able to shooue forward and to push hedlang a hart for outrage nat able to gouerne it selfe" (Buchanan 1571: G2r).

⁹⁸ As one of the sources for this perception, Brian Corrigan mentions the pamphlet by George Buchanan (Buchanan 1571). See also Phillips 1962.

⁹⁹ James Phillips in his *Images of a Queen* argues that the play draws one-to-one parallels with contemporary politics, in which Mary is Clytemnestra, Bothwell is Egistus, and Elizabeth or James is Horestes. The parallels between James and Orestes are strong, since Mary was suspected of murdering her husband, James's father. James's grandparents, the Lennox family, commissioned a painting called the Darnley Memorial, in which the young James and the Lennox family pray for revenge, while a plaque on the wall bids James to remember his father's murder. The Orestian theme of blood revenge on a mother who murdered the father thus fits James's situation. Since the interlude was performed before Elizabeth, however, it is more commonly read as an advice to her, spurring her to execute Mary for her involvement in the Babington conspiracy, although Norland disagrees with this reading (Norland 2000: 182). The comparison with a male protagonist is in itself not unusual, since Elizabeth was careful to present herself as king as well as queen of England, and used male analogies in order to promote this image (see Levin 1994: 131). Bevington writes that the parallel between political situation and the play is not conclusive, since "Horestes is impetuous, having to be restrained by counsel, whereas Elizabeth urged temporizing" Bevington 1968: 150.

¹⁰⁰ Jacoby 1983: 35.

¹⁰¹ Bushnell 1990: 9; 67-69.

¹⁰² *Eikonoklastes* 3.576, cited in Staines 2004: 91. Francis Osborne advises his son that it is better to live in a republic than in a monarchy, since under the rule of a monarch one is "subject to the passions of a single judgement" (Wright 1962: 92).

¹⁰³ Bühner-Thierry 1998: 75-76. Interestingly, Sir Philip Sidney in his *Defense of Poesie* argues that "tragedy maketh kings fear to be tyrants and tyrants fear to manifest their tyrannical humours" (432).

¹⁰⁴ Bouwsma 1990: 34.

¹⁰⁵ Elyot 1970: Sig. e7v-e8r.

¹⁰⁶ Elyot 1970: Sig. flr.

¹⁰⁷ Helgerson 1992: 82. See also Raffield 2004, whose principle argument it is that the English constitution was consciously developed to

represent the indivisibility of divine law and common law. He writes that “successive Tudor monarchs consolidated and enhanced the independent status of the nation-state, providing stability and security through increased use of the royal prerogative. Common lawyers responded to the threat of absolutism by citing the Ancient Constitution as the amorphous symbol of fundamental rights and freedoms” (3).

¹⁰⁸ Along similar lines, *Gorboduc*’s wise councillor stresses that the destructive cycles of revenge in the play were caused by the king’s defiance of reason: “hereto it commes when kinges will not consent | to graue aduise, but follow wilfull will” (5.2.234–35).

¹⁰⁹ Pikeryng 1982: l. 408. All further quotations from the play will be from this edition, and provide line references since the play is not divided into acts and scenes.

¹¹⁰ Linda Woodbridge mentions this argument as a typical strategy in the later debate over women’s nature, where it was used in pamphlets written in defence of women. See Woodbridge 1986: 34.

¹¹¹ Her arguments for pity and mercy are later rehearsed by Clytemnestra herself. Appealing to him as her son, she begs him: “Yf aney sparke of mothers bloud remaynd within thy breste, | O gracious child, let now thine eares unto my words be prest” (ll.730–31). See Mikalachki 1998: 129–39 for a discussion of the significance of breast feeding and the idea of the family in early modern England. Mikalachki points to the paradoxical elements of blood and violence inherent in orthodox literature on the natural role of maternal breast feeding.

¹¹² In a crucial moment of hesitation, Horestes tells the vice that his mother’s misery almost induced him to pity, were it not that she murdered his father. In order to execute his masculine retribution, Horestes needs to banish both pity and maternal love. Robertson considers Horestes’s murder of his mother as an initiation rite which “demonstrates his full entrance into manhood and his potential capacity as a ruler” (Robertson 1990: 32).

¹¹³ Lines 1082–86; 1110–14. The Vice’s remarks on women’s vindictiveness recall Clytemnestra’s vengeful murder of her husband. The play does not mention Clytemnestra’s motivation for her revenge on Agamemnon; it eliminates the role of Agamemnon’s sacrifice of their daughter Iphigeneia, thereby enhancing the idea of Clytemnestra’s revenge as purely motivated by lust. She is repeatedly referred to as the “adultrous dame.” See also Robertson, who sees this emphasis on Clytemnestra’s adultery as part of the wider Protestant propaganda effort condemning Mary for her association with Bothwell (Robertson 1990: 30).

¹¹⁴ See also Norland 2000: 176. Spelled as “Councill” in the text, this figure is rendered variously by critics as ‘Counsel’ – advice in general, or as ‘Council’ – referring more specifically perhaps to the institution of the Council. Duty at the close of the play specifically praises Elizabeth’s Council, spelled “Councill” as well.

¹¹⁵ Lines 268–70.

¹¹⁶ Robertson 1990: 30.

¹¹⁷ The emphasis on corrective justice as opposed to wild revenge is essential also in the political context. By representing Orestes's vengeance as a just and restorative act, the interlude assuages anxieties over possible Scottish counter revenge. Before Mary's execution, even Protestant Scots spoke of retaliation (Doran 2000: 599). James did not threaten with an outright war if his mother should be put to death, but, as Susan Doran writes, his envoys' instructions "reveal an implicit warning: if Mary were to die, they were commanded to say, her faction might be 'mair egyrly enfla[med] to a more cruell desyre of revenge wherein thay wald assuir [themselves] of our ayde and concurrence who have the cheif interest and schame be her d[eath]'" (Doran 2000: 596).

¹¹⁸ Axton in her edition of the play glosses 'chambering' as self-indulgence, luxury. Passivity and idleness are here contrasted to a masculine ideal of fame and glory which pertains to a 'manly knight' who defends his honour in combat. This portrayal of Horestes's revenge as chivalric is remarkable in an Inns of Court play. Humanist scholars such as Ascham and Elyot frown upon the violent masculine honour of chivalric traditions, and seek to replace them by newer models of honour based in obedience to the monarch.

¹¹⁹ Perkins 1972: 507.

¹²⁰ Guy 1997: 99.

¹²¹ Peltonen 2002: 87-106.

¹²² Hackett 1995: 44.

¹²³ Anonymous 1981: 5.6.195-204. Lytton Gooch in her introduction to the play argues for an earlier dating of the play to c. 1585, to be entered in its final revised form in the Stationer's Register in 1594.

¹²⁴ See note 3 above.

¹²⁵ See Brooks 1980; Miola 1992. F. R. Johnson writes that "Shakespeare made his way to the history play through the door of Senecan tragedy. [...] 2 *Henry VI* and other early history plays to a lessening extent show an obvious transition from the Senecanism of *Titus Andronicus* to a new, more straightforward style and method" (Johnson 1948: 64, 56).

¹²⁶ Nashe 1997: 53, sig. H2. Nashe is seen by the Arden editors as one of the potential co-authors of the *Henry VI* plays: Edward Burns agrees with Gary Taylor that the major identifiable contributors to the play are Shakespeare and Nashe; Ronald Knowles does not want to reject the idea that Nashe may have been one of the authors of 2 *Henry VI*; and John D. Cox and Eric Rasmussen venture that "Shakespeare shared the composition of 3 *Henry VI* with indeterminate others" (49).

¹²⁷ Nashe 1997: 51.

¹²⁸ Nashe 1997: 53.

¹²⁹ See also Howard and Rackin, who cite Thomas Heywood as well as Thomas Nashe as examples of defenses of the theatre that stress the "role of history plays in preserving the memory of English heroes and of encouraging patriotic feelings in the spectators." They write that Shakespeare's history plays were not only associated with the national heroes of the chronicles, but also with an older notion of masculine

identity, rooted in patrilinear inheritance (Howard and Rackin 1997: 18 and 111).

¹³⁰ Nashe 1997: 53.

¹³¹ With the death of warrior-king Henry V, Bedford suggests the nobles offer up their arms. He predicts a future of grieving women: “When at their mother’s moistened eyes babes shall suck, | Our isle be made a nourish of salt tears, | And none but women left to wail the dead.” Exeter, however, contrasts this representation of England as an effeminate grieving nation with a call for revenge: “We mourn in black, why mourn we not in blood?” (1.1.17). Bedford later applies a similar contrast: “Away with these disgraceful wailing robes; | Wounds will I lend the French, instead of eyes, | To weep their intermissive miseries” (1.1.86–88). See Kurtz 2003 for an analysis of the gender of grief in the first tetralogy.

¹³² *1 Henry VI*: 4.7.60. All quotations from *1 Henry VI*, *2 Henry VI*, and *3 Henry VI* are from the Arden Third Series editions of the plays.

¹³³ The English notion of military heroics is contrasted in the play with the French reliance on trickery, plots, and witchcraft. I disagree with M. L. Stapleton’s assertion that “Joan makes herself heroic in the same masculine aristocratic way that her enemies do” (Stapleton 2000: 59). On the contrary, Joan is depicted as a wily schemer, who forms an explicit contrast to English masculine heroics. The quotation of the shining “comet of revenge” that Stapleton employs as the title of his chapter on Joan, figures precisely in the context of her capture of the city of Rouen by deceit, rather than what the play depicts as English masculine heroics. See also Howard and Rackin, who argue that “what [Joan] says attacks both the English version of history and the values it expresses, with an earthy iconoclasm that threatens to discredit the traditional notions of chivalric glory invoked by the English heroes” (Howard and Rackin 1997: 57).

¹³⁴ *1 Henry VI*, 1.6.70–72.

¹³⁵ *1 Henry VI*, 1.7.39. Harry Keyishian writes that Talbot, when he describes his fellow English’ “lack of revengeful passion as fundamental disloyalty,” he in effect “accuses them of treason” (Keyishian 2001: 68).

¹³⁶ Keyishian 2001: 69. Keyishian, however, sees Talbot’s blood revenges in terms of the lunacy of revenge (68), in terms of “revengeful passion,” (68) and comments that in Talbot’s eyes they are “the bloodier, the better” (69). I disagree with this interpretation of Talbot’s revenges, for I would say the play depicts them as rigidly coded according to traditions of blood revenge, expressed in terms of vows (2.2.7) and measured out in drops of blood. Precisely because they form part of a historiography of masculine heroics as well as of a tradition of blood revenge, Talbot’s retributions cannot be seen in terms of passion and lunacy, but are represented by the play as conscious and reasoned, masculine actions.

¹³⁷ *3 Henry VI*, 2.1.159–64.

¹³⁸ *3 Henry VI*, 1.1.54–56. Margaret, carrying the head of Suffolk in her arms, similarly rehearses this transition from grief to revenge in

2 Henry VI: “Oft have I heard that grief softens the mind | And makes it fearful and degenerate; | Think therefore on revenge and cease to weep” (4.4.1-3). In 3 Henry VI she similarly admonishes her lords: “Great lords, wise men ne’er sit and wail their loss | But cheerly seek how to redress their harms” (5.4.1-2). Walter Whitmore refuses to exchange the Earl of Suffolk for ransom because he will not “sell revenge” “merchantlike” (4.1.41): an interesting reverberation of Nashe’s *Pierce Penniless*, implying that middle class merchants do not attach importance to the aristocratic codes of honour that Nashe sees celebrated in the genre of the history play. These masculine codes of honour, however, are here seen to undermine the stability of the English nation.

¹³⁹ Riggs 1971: 99.

¹⁴⁰ Kahn 1981: 57. Jones argues that remembrance plays a minor part in the blood revenges of parts 2 and 3, whereas it did play an important part in Talbot’s revenges (Jones 1991: 24). I would argue that Clifford’s revenge is clearly motivated by the memory of his father, and thereby draws on the same discourse of masculine blood revenge as Talbot’s. In its execution and subsequent representation, however, feminine passionate vindictiveness prevails.

¹⁴¹ 1 Henry VI, 4.1.185.

¹⁴² 2 Henry VI, 5.1.26-27.

¹⁴³ 1 Henry VI, 5.6.120; and 3 Henry VI, 1.3.31-32.

¹⁴⁴ The term, used to describe a woman in the drama who murders her children derives from Travitsky 1993.

¹⁴⁵ Although Clifford refers to Medea’s murder of her brother rather than the murder of her own two children, the image of her child-murder is nevertheless evoked by the context of the quotation, in which Clifford executes his revenge on a child.

¹⁴⁶ See also Kahn, who comments: “Exiting with his dead father on his back and alluding to Aeneas carrying Anchises from Troy, Young Clifford’s ancestral piety travesties Virgil; reverence for the father now sanctions not order but anarchy” (Kahn 1981: 59).

¹⁴⁷ Hattaway is cited in the footnote to these lines in the Arden edition. Ronald Berman comments that “[t]he juxtaposition of the myths of Aeneas and Medea by Clifford condenses the intermingling of piety and barbarity” (Berman 1962: 494).

¹⁴⁸ Lodge 1614: 515.

¹⁴⁹ Henry 1985: 107.

¹⁵⁰ *Richard III*: 5.8.23-26.

¹⁵¹ Edward Hall, cited in Keyishian 2001: 77.

¹⁵² Hammond notes: “Certainly the revenge element is stressed. Anne prays for vengeance in I.ii; Margaret dominates I.iii with her appalling litany of revenge; it is cried upon Richard by the wailing Queens in IV.i and iv; and finally threatened upon him by the ghosts in V.iii” (Hammond 1981: 98).

¹⁵³ 4.2.65-67. The quotation derives from *Agamemnon* (l. 115): “through crime is always the safe way for crime.” See also 4.4.6n in the Arden

edition.

¹⁵⁴ 4.4.61–62.

¹⁵⁵ 4.4.3–4.

¹⁵⁶ Brooks 1980: 722.

¹⁵⁷ Hammond 1981: 107–109.

¹⁵⁸ Cox 1989: 87; and Helgerson 1992: 234.

¹⁵⁹ Shapiro 2003: 24. As Terry Eagleton also remarks, the *Oresteia* does not present a teleological journey from chthonic powers to civic legality; “the drama is about both at once, about the law and the Eumenides together” (Eagleton 2003: 144).

¹⁶⁰ Robert Appelbaum, with reference to Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*, points out that “if endless cycles of violence are expressions of the regime of masculinity, so is the promulgation of the law” (Appelbaum 1997: 255).

¹⁶¹ Perkins 1972: 493.

¹⁶² Perkins 1972: 495.

¹⁶³ Calvin 2003: 474.

¹⁶⁴ Robertson 2001: 220. See also Bowers 1966 and Broude 1975. As Robertson also asserts, Jean Howard in her *The Stage and Social Struggle* and Jonathan Dollimore in his *Radical Tragedy* have questioned such interpretations of the drama as only partly useful.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 469.

¹⁶⁶ Bate 1995: 6.

¹⁶⁷ Marienstras 1985: 46. Where critics often tended to identify the Roman political structure as monolithic, and to see Tamora in opposition to what they termed “the dominant patriarchal culture” (Brink, cited in Christensen 1996: 332n16), critics in recent years have come to emphasize the cultural disintegration inherent in Roman society. Naomi Liebler argues that “the crisis of Roman cultural definition is illuminated from the very start of the play through the contesting claims for ‘piety’, defined separately by Tamora and Titus as ‘vengeance’ and as proper burial rites” (Liebler 1994: 275). Douglas Green also stresses the overlap between barbaric Goth and pious Roman when he argues that “Tamora [...] illustrates and demarcates the extremes of Titus’s character” and states that “[i]n one sense [...] Tamora embodies dangers already inherent in the rule of men like Saturninus, Titus, and even Marcus.” (Green 1989: 320 and 321). Virginia Mason Vaughan similarly deconstructs the opposition between Goth and Roman previously accepted by critics (Vaughan 1997). Catherine Belsey also comments that “[r]evenge exists in the margin between justice and crime” and “deconstructs the antithesis which fixes the meanings of good and evil, right and wrong” (Belsey 1984: 115). See also Paster 1985: 58–90 and 2002: 155–57; and Kehler who comments that “Tamora’s desire for vengeance against the Andronici only replicates their talionic belief that the slain cannot rest until their enemies are dead” (Kehler 1992: 126).

¹⁶⁸ Hancock 2004: § 7.1.

¹⁶⁹ The illustration of the play found in the Longleat Manuscript shows

Tamora kneeling to Titus in what René Breier argues is “the loose-bodied gown favored by pregnant women of the time, [and] the folds of the gown appear to fall over what appears to be a large, protruding belly” (Breier 1998: 20). Breier writes that Tamora’s “pregnant body would plead louder than words for her son’s life” (21). Tamora’s pregnancy at this moment would provide a striking visual image of the maternal and natural values she appeals to, and would associate her more strongly with Mother Nature. The Longleat drawing (also known as the Peacham drawing) however, famously conflates passages from the text. Jonathan Bate thinks that “the illustration may offer an emblematic reading of the whole play” as the title page of the 1615 edition of *The Spanish Tragedy* similarly juxtaposes key moments from the play, as does the title page illustration of *The Tragedy of Arden of Faversham* (Bate, 1995: 41). Tamora could not have been represented on stage as pregnant in the first scene of the play if the baby she has in Act four is to be considered the emperor’s.

¹⁷⁰ James 1991: 123.

¹⁷¹ Bate 1995: 27. Bate also wonders if playgoers would have drawn comparisons between the revenger’s ritualized violence and the ritualized violence of public executions (Bate 1995: 23), and Mead makes a similar argument (Mead 2004: 460). See also Kehler 1992: 131; and Marti 2001.

¹⁷² Nimms 1965: 13.656. Interestingly, Hecuba lures Polymestor to a quiet location with reference to a “masse of gold” hidden there, a plot that resembles Tamora and Aaron’s scheme in the woods in *Titus Andronicus*. Bate posits that Shakespeare’s memory conjured the tyrant’s tent, which makes no appearance in Ovid, from another, biblical tale of female vengeance: Jael’s murder of Sisera by hammering a nail through his head after having given him refuge in her tent, a deed celebrated by Deborah in Judges 5.24 (Bate 1995: 136).

¹⁷³ See also Alison Findlay, who writes that “Revenge transformed the figure of Justice, the silent female form who held her sword aloft in the service of patriarchal law, into a frightening independent force” (Findlay 1999: 54).

¹⁷⁴ Ornstein 1960: 23.

¹⁷⁵ See also Wynne-Davies 1991: 138.

¹⁷⁶ Brathwait 1970: 35.

¹⁷⁷ Bate 1995: 23.

¹⁷⁸ Christensen comments that Titus “‘plays the housewife,’ performing the duties and rituals normally allotted to women in early modern households” (Christensen 1996: 340). Wall writes that “while it might give modern readers pause to imagine a freshly killed [...] draping the kitchen workspace, carnage was a household commonplace at this time. [...] [T]he housewife disembowels, beats, and boils the animal parts. [...] Renaissance cookbooks depict domestic work as both aggressive and visceral” (Wall 2002: 192-193).

¹⁷⁹ Hancock 2004: § 7.14.

¹⁸⁰ See Tricomi 1974; Fawcett 1983; and Kendall 1989.

¹⁸¹ Mead 2004: 476.

¹⁸² Hancock 2004: § 7.18.

¹⁸³ Keyishian 1994: 41.

¹⁸⁴ Broude, 1979: 503. Broude's view of Titus concurs with the image that Marcus attempts to establish of him when he begs the heavens to avenge old Andronicus (4.1.129), and when he sees Lucius as joining the Gods in their revenge on Saturnine (4.3.33-35).

¹⁸⁵ Bate 1995: 26.

¹⁸⁶ Kehler 1992: 129. Markus Marti concludes that “[t]he non-verbal code of blood and murder is used throughout the play, it is the language the Romans and Titus's family use at the very beginning - and the language they still use at the end” (Marti 2001).



CHAPTER 4

“The Motive and the Cue for Passion”

REVENGE TRAGEDY AND MASCULINE SELFHOOD

About nothing do I suffer greater conflict in my selfe then about induring wrongs; for other duties – though perhaps I seldom performe them, yet I am resolued they should be done; and it is not the fault of my meditation, but of my negligent flesh. But heere is set up Reputation as the Garland appointed, and he that reuengeth not is not capable of this glorie.

Sir William Cornwallis, *Essayes* (1600)

Sir William Cornwallis, the author of this private confession, vies with Francis Bacon for the title of the first English essayist.¹ The two authors each employ a different style of writing. Bacon’s latter’s essays are a compilation of the notes he took in his commonplace book, enlarged with quotations and allusions from his reading. Cornwallis, on the other hand, was inspired by Montaigne’s more introspective style.² This difference is visible also in their respective discussions of revenge. Bacon in his essay sets out to create categories to think with.³ As we saw in the introduction, he seeks to distinguish between public and private forms of revenge in an effort to bring order and clarity to a matter much discussed. Cornwallis’s essay, on the other hand, opens with a searching analysis of his personal qualms about revenge.

The inward conflict that Cornwallis anatomizes in his essay hinges on the duty of revenge. This sense of duty weighs more heavily than Stoic advice of patience or Christian counsel of

forgiveness: “I know what Diuinitie, what Philosophie perswades,” Cornwallis writes, “and yet for all this, I dare not yeeld.”⁴ The essayist explains that he does not have many opportunities to build a reputation of courage since he lives in a time of peace. Without warlike feats to establish his honour, he feels the need to avenge an insult to his honour without delay. “I know againe this idle breath should not diuert me from Vertue; but hauing no present occasion wherein I may exercise valour, and manifest my worth, I dare not take day in any thing so nearly concerning me,” Cornwallis explains.⁵ Whereas Cornwallis admits to neglecting other duties because of his “negligent flesh,” his avoidance of revenge is no bodily matter. It is meditation, rational thought, that keeps the essayist from the performance of this duty.

The thought that prevents Cornwallis from taking revenge, is a concern with the effects of passion, an anxiety inspired by the essayist’s familiarity with the genre of revenge tragedy. “If it were possible to play Furie to the life, and yet not haue her effects inwardly,” he writes, “I would be content vpon some great occasion not to hurt, but scare the iniurious, but it is dangerous, and [...] it is to be feared will weaken the brain as ill as drunkennesse.”⁶ Even in the case of a revenge that would not hurt his opponent, Cornwallis fears for the effects of vindictiveness. His notion of “play[ing] Furie to the life” – an expressly dramatic phrase – points us to the cultural platform from which his hesitation to perform an act of revenge derives. Indeed, as the author of one of the earliest pieces of Senecan criticism, *Discourses upon Seneca the Tragedian* (1601), Cornwallis would have been intimately familiar with the effects of vengeful anger on the revenger in Seneca’s tragedies.

In this chapter, I explore the representation of masculine selfhood and revenge in the genre of revenge tragedy as it was performed in the commercial theatres around the turn of the seventeenth century. Focusing on Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* (1600), I will analyze two conflicting representations of selfhood and revenge. The conflict between these discourses is expressed in gendered terms of passion, imitation and acting. The two discourses of selfhood and revenge can be detected at work in Cornwallis’s essay, and they also figure centrally in attacks and defences of the commercial theatre as an institution. The gender analysis of representations of revenge in this chapter throws light on current debates about early modern selfhood, as well as on the

role of the genre of revenge tragedy in debates about revenge in the period.

Selfhood in early modern culture

Cornwallis's doubts about the performance of revenge hinge on ideas of the body and mind, of reason and passion: ideas which are central to recent work on early modern conceptions of selfhood. Critics working in the field of early modern selfhood disagree over the question whether and how inwardness was experienced in the period. Since critics in the 1980s and 1990s cautioned against the anachronistic assumption that early modern, pre-Cartesian selfhood was disembodied and inward like ours, critics have explored the ways in which thinking on the body shaped notions of selfhood in the early modern period.⁷ Current debates focus on the extent to which early modern writers believed in the possibility of self-control and temperance.⁸ Michael Schoenfeldt in *Bodies and Selves* has argued that it is in the control of the passions that notions of selfhood and identity took shape in the early modern period. He draws attention to the self-control that authorizes individuality. "The Renaissance seems to have imagined selves as differentiated not by their desires, which all more or less share, but by their capacity to control these desires."⁹ Gail Kern Paster in a recent study of humoral phenomenology of the passions stresses, however, that humoral discourse emphasizes change and penetrability of the body rather than identity and stasis. The body is not self-contained or self-controlled, but is in a constant state of flux with its environment, a condition that Paster calls "the humoral ecology." Noting that the material body was predominantly understood to be constituted by its passions, and was only minimally governed by the rational soul, she argues that issues of change and fluidity are central in early modern conceptions of selfhood:

It is not surprising, then, that the humoral body should be characterized not only by its physical openness but also by its emotional instability and volatility, by an internal microclimate knowable, like climates in the outer world, more for changeability than for stasis.¹⁰

If Schoenfeldt looks for the stability of self that is produced by the control of the passions, then Paster counters that the historical self is not as stable as we tend to think: un-self-sameness in her view is the striking feature of early modern physiology.

Reacting to this discussion and its emphasis on the physical self, Richard Strier writes that it would be a major mistake to think that people in the early modern period experienced their emotions in terms of the body. Mocking the bodily approach, he accords a central importance to the cultural causes of emotions:

When an early modern person got angry, for instance, he or she did not say to her/himself: "Oh dear, my liver is heating up; my choleric humour is being activated, etc." [...] Instead, then, as now, people said, "That makes me mad, and I'm going to retaliate, or remember," or something along those lines. To make a phenomenology historical, one needs to reconstruct the kinds of things that made persons at some time react (anger, in both men and women, to continue the instance, was often tied to ideas about honor).¹¹

Cornwallis's meditation on revenge shows us, however, that Strier might be too categorical here. Indeed, the essay shows that Cornwallis takes issues of honour and reputation into consideration when he thinks about revenge, but also fears the bodily and humoral effects of "play[ing] Furie to the life," which weakens the brain.

My overall argument in this dissertation is that no monolithic discourse of revenge existed in the early modern period. Instead, conflicting views on retribution circulated, each with their own words, shapes, and images. We have thus far found that the stage does not produce one single narrative of revenge. In the tragedies of the Inns of Court, we distinguished between passionate, feminine fury and masculine, rational revenge. Similarly, I will argue in this chapter that the stage does not produce a unified concept of selfhood as proceeding from either control or permeability. Instead, these two concepts are at the heart of two conflicting discourses, which both circulate in the genre of revenge tragedy. There, masculine selfhood is sometimes represented as permeable and fluid, sometimes as controlled. The passions play a central role in these representations, and this role of the passions is political. I mean that the conflicting representations of selfhood that we find in the genre of revenge tragedy should not be seen in isolation from their political contexts. Humanist discourses among the governing classes sought to discourage notions of aristocratic honour and independent rule, and bring into circulation images of vindictive anger as a force that permeates individuals and threatens to dissolve their sense of selfhood. We encountered

such representations of revenge in the tragedies of the Inns of Court. On the other hand, in aristocratic discourses drawing on chivalric literature and traditions of blood revenge, anger functions as an instrument of masculine honour and identity, and is often represented as a passion controlled by reason.

Masculine selfhood and revenge

The genre of revenge tragedy is fuelled by notions of masculine honour based in patrilinear relationships. The concept of blood revenge is inherently based in the notion of family honour and blood lines. Sons are faced with the duty to avenge their fathers' deaths, fathers seek retribution for the murder of their sons. In Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, the ghost appears to his son on the battlements of Elsinore castle to tell him the tale of his uncle's murder, and to impress on him the necessity of blood revenge. He tells the young prince that he is "bound" to avenge his death. The bonds of blood revenge are expressed in terms of family honour, but also in terms of obligations of one generation to another. As the ghost in Marston's *Antonio's Revenge* phrases it quite blasphemously: "sons that revenge their father's blood are blest."¹² In *Hamlet*, the ghost as a "portentous figure" from the past is an anachronistic figure not only because he returns from the land of the dead, but also because he is representative of the residual discourse of an older warrior culture.¹³ He appears on the battlements in full armour, wearing the same harness that the king wore "[w]hen he th'ambitious Norway combated" and "in an angry parle | [...] smote the sledded Polacks on the ice" (1.1.63-66). As a member of an older generation, he asks of his son to conform to his notions of honour and manhood. In the words of Philip Fisher, "when the ghost demands that his son avenge his murder, the old world is summoning the new to rise to its now archaic laws – those, for example, of revenge and the primacy of the father-son bond."¹⁴ This sense of an encounter between older and newer discourses is emphasised also by the literary sources that the play draws on. King Hamlet is described in an Elizabethan heroic idiom, influenced by translations of Homer and Virgil into English. Moreover, he is representative of the heroic culture inscribed in Saxo Grammaticus' *Historiae Danicae*, a Norse saga instilled with medieval epic values that is one of the possible sources for Shakespeare's play. In this classical epic tradition,

revenge functioned as a noble activity, “in some ways as *the noble activity par excellence*.”¹⁵

The ghost in *Hamlet* emphasizes that the neglect of this filial duty to revenge would constitute a blemish on the prince’s honour. He tells his son that he would be “duller [...] than the fat weed | that roots itself in ease on Lethe wharf” if he were to neglect his duty (1.5.32–33). These words bring into play a field of cultural connotations, in which the neglect of revenge is construed as detrimental to masculine honour.¹⁶ The river Lethe is the river of forgetfulness in the classical underworld: to drink from the river is to forget all memories. Like lethargy and sleep, forgetfulness in early modern culture is a sign of an unregulated and undisciplined body. Associated with the cold and wet humour of phlegm, forgetfulness is the reverse of man’s hot and dry nature in humoral theory, and “makes the male body more like a female one.”¹⁷ The lack of masculine discipline and rational control associated with forgetfulness could be expressed in early modern culture in terms of the feminine, but we also find notions of animality used in this context. Hamlet, for example, chides himself for his “dull revenge” and asks: “What is a man | If his chief good and market of his time | Be but to sleep and feed? A beast, no more” (4.4.33–35). “As such,” Gareth Sullivan concludes in his study of forgetfulness in early modern culture, “the lethargic or forgetful subject expresses the opposite of Renaissance ideals of masculinity.”¹⁸ In *Hamlet*, forgetfulness is contrasted to the remembrance of the masculine duty of revenge, a rational process that confirms identity rather than dissolves it.

In contrast to this image of a cold, wet, and phlegmatic feminine forgetfulness, Polonius’s son Laertes displays an unquestioning attachment to blood revenge. In his outlook, the remembrance of revenge is indeed essential to masculine identity and family honour. According to Mervyn James, the aristocratic traditions that built on violence and revenge as a means to establish honour, also “were unanimous that blood and lineage predisposed to honourable behaviour.”¹⁹ As the Duchess of Gloucester states in *Richard II*, “That which in mean men we entitle patience | Is pale cold cowardice in noble breasts” (1.2.33–34). Along these lines, Laertes considers blood revenge a crucial instrument in the affirmation of the blood relation between father and son. When he learns that his father was murdered, he does not hesitate to vow

that he will take revenge, and emphasizes that the literal as well as metaphorical blood ties between him and his father induce him to vengeance:

That drop of blood that's calm proclaims me bastard,
Cries cuckold to my father, brands the harlot
Even here between the chaste unsmirched brow
Of my true mother.
[...]
Let come what comes, only I'll be reveng'd
Most thoroughly for my father.

(4.5.116-20; 135-36)

It is the deed of revenge, a deed that claims blood for the blood shed by his father, that affirms Laertes's identity. The passion of vindictiveness serves as a litmus test of the bond between him and his father: if one drop of his blood were to remain calm, Laertes exclaims, that very drop would brand him a bastard. Patience is linked to illicit female sexuality in this crude logic, whereas anger and consequent vengefulness are proof of patriarchal identity. A similar series of associations occurs in Thomas Middleton and William Rowley's *A Fair Quarrel* (1617). When a Colonel challenges Captain Ager to a duel by calling him the son of a whore – a traditional challenge, but one that Captain Ager takes literally – Ager decides to question his mother before engaging in a duel on the basis of this insult. His mother's notions of masculinity and the body are in accordance with the traditional ideas of warrior culture: she values anger over patience. When Ager complains to her that the Colonel is of a "hasty" or choleric temper – "he's all touchwood" – his mother replies that "[s]o are the best conditions; | Your father was the like."²⁰ This remark on his father's fiery temper breeds doubts about his provenance in Captain Ager:

I begin now
To doubt me more: why am I not so too then?
Blood follows blood through forty generations,
And I've a slow-paced wrath – a shrewd dilemma!

(2.1.54-57)

Here, too, a lack of choler is marked as disrupting patriarchal lines of inheritance; had Ager had as furious a temper as his father and his forefathers, he would have defended his mother's and his own honour in a duel without question. Similarly, King Hamlet

expects his son to follow in his martial footsteps when he asks him to perform his duty of blood revenge.

Laertes envisages his achievement of revenge as a trajectory from effeminate grief to masculine anger. Crucial in Laertes's conception of anger in *Hamlet* is a transformation of the passion of grief into a desire for revenge. This process of change from grief to vengefulness is not confined to *Hamlet*. In *1 Henry VI*, the Duke of Bedford considers the rituals of mourning for the death of King Henry V as effeminate, and longs to transform tears into masculine anger: "Away with these disgraceful wailing robes; | Wounds will I lend the French, instead of eyes, | To weep their intermissive miseries" he cries (1.1.86-88). In Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, the warrior Macduff grieves over the murder of his family "like a man," and is advised to employ his anguish as a source for his revenge: "Be this the whetstone of your sword. Let grief | Convert to anger: blunt not the heart, enrage it" (4.3.230-31).²¹ In revenge tragedy, this passage from grief to vindictiveness is represented as the natural path for a revenger to follow. Indeed, the period of grief in revenge tragedy is a necessary prequel to the performance of vengeance. Grief is "designed to thrust the revenger into a frame of mind proper for the ghost to work on," since it yields the mind more vulnerable to the effect of strong passions such as anger and vengefulness.²² Lily Campbell writes that in Laertes, Hamlet, as well as Fortinbras, grief "is succeeded by the desire for revenge," but "each [of them] must act according to the dictates of his own temperament and his own humour."²³ For Laertes, whom Campbell identifies as a choleric person, this passage from grief to revenge is self-evident:

LAERTES [*Weeps.*] When these are gone,
The woman will be out. Adieu, my lord,
I have a speech o'fire that fain would blaze
But that this folly douts it.

(4.7.184-90)

Hamlet, on the other hand, finds it hard to muster such masculine anger. Whereas Laertes' "woman" is soon "out," Claudius chides Hamlet for persisting in "unmanly grief" (1.2.94). The prince himself thinks he is "a dull and muddy-mettled rascal" (2.2.562), a man whose humours operate like those of a lower-class man, a rascal whose mettle is not of sufficient quality to warrant

aristocratic identity.²⁴ Hamlet considers his humoral economy as too phlegmatic for an aristocrat, and fears that he lacks the humoral fluid required for the generation of anger, gall:

Am I a coward?
Who calls me villain, breaks my pate across,
Plucks off my beard and blows it in my face,
Tweaks me by the nose, gives me the lie i'th' throat
As deep as to the lungs – who does me this?
Ha!
'Swounds, I should take it: for it cannot be
But I am pigeon liver'd and lack gall
To make oppression bitter, or ere this
I should ha' fatt'd all the region kites
With this slave's offal.

(2.2.565–576)

Hamlet aligns a lack of response to injuries to his personal honour to his passivity where the blood revenge for the death of his father is concerned. His humoral self-portrait echoes his father's images of phlegmatic humours and the forgetfulness of one's identity and position, and also rehearses King Hamlet's view of anger as a sign of aristocratic honour. In *Hamlet*, then, both the old King and Laertes see revenge as a patrilineal duty. Their observations on the relation between selfhood, anger, and revenge do not align with Paster's view of early modern selfhood as fluid and changeable. Instead, Laertes sees anger as a controlled and necessary step in the execution of revenge.

This view of the role of vindictive passion in the defence of masculine honour conflicts with Seneca's advice in "De Ira." Seneca approved of revenge as long as it was not motivated by the passion of vindictiveness but by reason alone. Laertes turns this notion on its head, and sees vindictive passion as a crucial element in the performance of masculine, patriarchal blood revenge. Whereas Seneca, and the tragedies of the Inns of Court, represent vindictive passion as a feminine force of destruction, this discourse sees it instead as a sign of patriarchal aristocratic honour. The conflict in gender representations signals a point of diffraction in the discursive system, a point where two discourses conflict in their gendered representations of revenge. The feminine representation of revenge can be traced to humanist discourses of reason, counsel and obedience. The masculine representation of

vengefulness is connected to aristocratic discourses that sought to safeguard the powers and traditions of the nobility. In this residual discourse of chivalric, militant, aristocratic manhood, anger is considered the mark of manhood.

The conflicting views on anger and masculine identity are contrasted in an emblem from Henry Peacham's *Minerva Britanna* (1612). The illustration features a young man speeding towards us, his hair blowing in the wind and his sword drawn (fig. 2). The wild shape of the man's hair is mirrored in the picture of a flame, emblazoned on what the epigram tells us is a "crimson" shield. The flame, the red colour, the desert-like surroundings of the young man, the lion that is couched behind him, as well as his unsheathed sword, combine to refer to the hot and passionate nature of the choleric temperament, "resembling most the fire."²⁵

The epigram tells us that the choleric man depicted is not a normative model of manhood, but a young man, "to shew that passions raigne, | The most in heedless, and unstaied youth."²⁶

While Peacham's emblem thus implies that choler is not compatible with adult masculinity, it also suggests a different reading. This reading centres on the lion in the image, an animal that is initially explained by the epigram as signifying the cruelty that results from choler. "Or hath perhaps," the poem then wonders, "this beast to him assign'd | As bearing most, the braue and bounteous mind"? These lines give way to a different interpretation of the relation between choler and manhood. Instead of constructing choler as unbridled and cruel, the closing couplet presents its readers with a counter-discourse that suggests the lion might also signify choler's contribution to courage.

This positive view of the powers of anger stands in stark contrast to Seneca's disapproval of the emotion. Like the Inns of Court's appropriation of Senecan representations of vindictiveness, Peacham's defence of anger can be read in a political context. The notion of choler as conducive to courage is associated in early modern culture with aristocratic tradition.²⁷ Mervyn James in his influential study of concepts of honour in early modern England affirms that Peacham tends to defend the more aggressive and military aspects of honour. The author of a book of emblems as well as a guide to gentlemanly behaviour, Peacham attaches great value to rivalry as the essence of nobility, which "stirs up emulation in great spirits, not only of equalling others, but of



NEXT *Choller* standes, resembling most the fire,
 Of swarthie yeallow, and a meager face;
 With Sword a late, vnsheathed in his Ire:
 Neere whome, there lies, within a little space,
 A sterne ei'de Lion, and by him a sheild,
 Charg'd with a flame, vpon a crimson feild.

We paint him young, to shew that passions raigne,
 The most in heedles, and vnstaied youth:
 That Lion showes, he seldome can refraine,
 From cruell deede, devoide of gentle ruth:
 Or hath perhaps, this beaft to him assign'd,
 As bearing most, the braue and bounteous mind.



T 2 .

Phlegma

Figure 2. Emblem of cholera.
 From Henry Peacham, *Minerva Britannia* (1612)

exceeding them.”²⁸ Evidence of this preference for aggression lies enclosed in the emblem as well. In his later collection of essays, Peacham compares the lion to the nobility – “man of greater perfection, of nobler form.”²⁹ Also, the adjective “bounteous” could refer to a mind full of goodness, but the *Oxford English Dictionary* lists as its second, now obsolete definition the chivalric use of the adjective, in which it describes prowess, and functions as a synonym for the adjective “valiant.”³⁰ Robin Headlam Wells has demonstrated how such concepts as masculine virtue or noble manly courage function politically in early modern England.³¹ They play a significant role in the political discourse of members of the Sidney–Essex faction and of later admirers of the young Henry Prince of Wales, expressing a commitment to the ideals of militant Protestantism.³² The emblem in Peacham’s *Minerva Britanna*, dedicated to the young “and hopefull” Prince Henry, openly questions the humanist view on anger, suggesting that this passion might be of use to the aristocratic male.

The gender of anger

Peacham’s emblem introduces a view of anger as masculine and honourable, whereas other texts represent anger as feminine and destructive. We find this gendered contradiction also in treatises on the passions. The physician Helkiah Crooke differentiates between feminine anger and masculine wrath when he writes: “Anger is a disease of a weake minde which cannot moderate itselfe but is easily inflamed, such are women, children, and weake and cowardly men, and this we tearme fretfulnessse or pettishness: but wrath which is *Ira Permanens* belongs to stout heartes.”³³ Crucial in this association of wrath with the male sex is the factor of bodily temperature, a factor that shaped gender difference as well as conceptions of ethnicity in early modern culture.³⁴ Men’s bodily economies were seen as hotter and drier – or more sanguine and choleric – than women’s colder and moister physiology, which was viewed as more phlegmatic and melancholic. Less choleric than men, women in humoral theory are nevertheless presented as naturally furious, and early modern treatises on the passions paradoxically agree that “women are commonly sooner driven into choler than men.”³⁵ Lemnius in his *The Secret Miracles of Nature* explains that “a woman’s mind is not so strong as a man,” and illustrates this with the observation

that “a woman enraged, is besides her selfe, and hath not power over her self, so that she cannot rule her passions, or bridle her disturbed affections, or stand against them with the force of reason and judgement.”³⁶ Women are incapable of the constant heat that produces courageous manly constancy, in Crooke’s view.³⁷ “If therefore women are Nockthrown or easily mooued of the hindges, that they haue from their cold Temper, and from the impotencie and weakness of their mind, because they are not able to lay a law upon themselves.”³⁸ The low temperature of female bodies, then, makes women more susceptible to passions and more receptive to the external influences of their environment.³⁹ Men’s anger was seen as constant, women’s anger as inconstant and uncontrolled.

Paradoxically, women were also represented as typically self-contained and secretive in their revenges, an image that conflicts with this humoral explanation of their stereotypical fury. Richard Brathwait affirms the stereotype of secret female vengefulness:

True it is, some [women] with a bite of their lip, can surpresse an intended revenge: and like dangerous Politicians, pleasingly entertaine time with one they mortally hate, till oportunity [*sic*] usher revenge, which they can act with as much hostility, as if that very moment were the Actor of their injury.⁴⁰

The idea that women could secretly brood on revenge draws upon analogies with contemporary medical science’s thinking on the function of the womb, an organ associated with “hiddenness,” as Katharine Eisaman Maus explains: “The womb is the private space of thoughts yet unuttered, or actions yet unexecuted. It is a container, itself concealed deep within the body, with something further hidden within it: an enclosed and invisible organ, working by means unseeable by and uncontrolled from the outside.”⁴¹ The female body is seen as porous and uncontrolled on the one hand, and as secretive and closed on the other. The two models of selfhood coexist in discourses of the female body as well as in discourses of revenge. Gender constructs of selfhood do not have a stable meaning in early modern culture; they are continually redefined according to the specific discursive context in which they function.

The Inns of Court tragedies discussed in the previous chapter sought to represent the unbridled passion of anger, gendered

feminine, as the cause of rebellion and civil war. Peacham's emblem, as well as Laertes' words, demonstrate that a counter-discourse existed, in which revenge is gendered masculine, where it functions as an instrument in the confirmation of patrilineal identity, and is conducive to courage and honour. Humanist discourse on this point conflicts with the discourse of the militant nobles who centred their hopes for a chivalric revival first on the second Earl of Essex, later on the young Prince of Wales. Revenge tragedy works with these conflicting views on anger. We saw how King Hamlet and Laertes see anger as noble and manly. The play also rehearses another view of selfhood, the passions, and revenge, however. This discourse associates revenge with passion, the body, and the dissolution of masculine selfhood.

Revenge and the body

If the aristocratic discourse of revenge stresses the importance of anger in blood revenge and the confirmation of male identity, other discussions of the passions emphasize the bodily character of anger, and the loss of selfhood that results from the passion. Seneca compares angry men to boars, bulls, lions, serpent and mad dogs. Like these animals, men lose their selves to fury; their entire being becomes bodily:

Their eyes sparkle and shine, their face is on fire thorow a refluxe of bloud that boileth vp from the bottom of their breasts, their lips quiuer, their teeth grate, their haire startleth and standeth vp right, their breath is inforced and wheeseth, they wrest and cracke their fingers, their speech is interrupted with plaints and grones and muttering, which a man may hardly vnderstand. They often clap their hands, and stampe the ground with their feet; their whole bodie startleth, and is shaken, their actions are full of furious menaces. In briefe, they haue a dreadfull and horrible countenance, resembling such men that disfigure and puffe themselues vp after a strange fashion.⁴²

Angry men thus metamorphose into purely bodily beings who can no longer be understood by other men. Their loss of control over their body causes men to lose their sense of selfhood. Thomas Wright cautions that a body possessed by anger is no longer capable of rational thought: "the soule beeing possessed of a vehement passion, her force is so exhausted in that action, that if shee will continue therein, she can not exactly consider the reasons which may disswade her from attending or following such affections."⁴³

Nicholas Couffeteau warns that anger “doth wholly transport men, torments them perpetually, and neuer giues them any rest, vntill they haue satisfied their reuenge.”⁴⁴ Similarly, Thomas Lodge in his translation of Seneca’s *De Ira* describes wrath as “neglecting her selfe so she may hurt another.”⁴⁵ Once the passion of anger and the desire for revenge take hold of a person, they lose all control over themselves, and become mere bodily beings. In John Davies of Hereford’s *Microcosmos* (1603) this sense of the autonomy of the body is expressed through emblazonment. Rather than describing the beauty of a mistress’s eyes, lips, or cheeks, this poem describes the bodily parts of angry men as individual agents:

No *Beast* is halfe so fell, in maddest moode,
As *Man*, when *Furie* sets on fire his *bloud*.
From which *fire* flie out *Sparkles* through his *eies*,
Who stare, as if they would their *holdes* enlarge,
The *Cheekes* with boiling *Choler* burning rise,
The *mouth* doth thundring (*Canon*-like) discharge
The *fire* which doth the *Stomacke* overcharge:
The *teeth* doe (grating) one another grind;
The *fists* are fast, in motion to giue *charge*,
The *Limbes* doe tremble, *feete* no footing find
But stampe, or stand vnconstant as the *Winde*.⁴⁶

The fragmented description of the body of an angry man emphasizes the uncontrolled nature of his movements: the eyes stare, the mouth thunders, the teeth grind, as if these body parts manage their own actions. To emphasize the bodily origins of wrath, Seneca aligns it with “shiuering when wee are sprinkled with colde water,” or the impulse of “starting backe upon tickling.” Wrath is a bodily reaction to an injury, rather than a reasoned decision, and can therefore not be controlled once it takes hold of a man. Whereas Laertes sees his anger and his desire to avenge his father as a confirmation of his identity, these treatises on the passions argue to the contrary.

A similar counter discourse exists where memory and forgetfulness are concerned. We saw how King Hamlet represents forgetfulness and the neglect of blood revenge as a bodily process that is emasculating. Other discourses that circulated in early modern culture on the contrary see the remembrance of revenge as a somatic and emasculating process. Thomas Nashe’s *The Unfortunate Traveller* (1594) relates how Cutwolfe, having longed

to avenge the murder of his brother for a number of years, finally locates his victim:

Looke how my feete are blistered with following thee from place to place. I haue riuen my throat with ouerstraining it to curse thee. I haue ground my teeth to powder with grating & grinding them together for anger when any hath namde thee. My tongue with vaine threatoes is bolne, and waxen too big for my mouth: my eyes haue broken their strings with their staring and looking ghastly, as I stood deuising how to frame or set my countenance when I met thee. I haue neere spent my strength in imaginarie acting on stone wals, what I determined to execute on thee: intreate not, a miracle may not reprieue thee: villaine, thus march I with my blade into thy bowels.⁴⁷

Like Seneca's angry men who transform into beasts, Cutwolfe has lost his identity to the pursuit of vengeance: his body has metamorphosed into a revenge machine. Crucially, Nashe describes the desire for blood revenge in terms of acting: Cutwolfe has practised the moment of the performance of his revenge for years; has rehearsed the curses that he will utter, has strained his eyes to perfect the threatening stare that he would direct at his victim. Indeed, Cutwolfe has so often rehearsed the deed of revenge on stone walls that his body has become inscribed with the imagination of the act.

This kind of revenge-by-proxy, the rehearsal of an intended revenge on an object instead of the injurer, is in the genre of revenge tragedy regularly associated with acting, the dissolution of identity, and madness. In *The Spanish Tragedy*, Isabella finds herself powerless in the face of justice, and takes out her anger on the tree in which her son was hung:

Since neither piety nor pity moves
The king to justice or compassion,
I will revenge myself upon this place
Where thus they murdered my beloved son.⁴⁸

Like Bel-Imperia in the same tragedy, and Mellida in John Marston's *Antonio's Revenge* (1600), she feels impotent in the knowledge that she is not able to take revenge herself: "I cannot wreak my wrong," Mellida claims. Whereas Bel-Imperia in *The Spanish Tragedy* decides to work her revenge through Horatio and later through his father, Isabella vents her vindictiveness on the tree. She considers the garden an accomplice to the murder

of Horatio, and resolves to make it as fruitless as she herself has become, now that her only son is dead. As she spends her fury upon the tree, the ghost of Horatio seems to appear to her. Like a Senecan ghost, he urges her to take revenge:

Ay, here he died, and here I him embrace:
See where his ghost solicits with his wounds
Revenge on her that should revenge his death.
[...]
And none but I bestir me – to no end.
And as I curse this tree from further fruit,
So shall my womb be cursed for his sake;
And with this weapon will I wound the breast
She stabs herself
The hapless breast that gave Horatio suck. [*Exit*]

Isabella interprets the apparition of the ghost as a sign of her son's reproach for delaying the revenge of his death. Since she cannot fulfil his wish herself, and since no one else "bestir[s]" himself to avenge Horatio's murder, she is driven to take revenge on her own body. If she punished the tree for yielding such a horrid fruit of death, then, in the crude logic of fury, she also takes revenge on her own womb and breast, stabbing and mutilating her female body. Isabella's suicide sharply figures the effects of vindictive fury that lacks a victim to be revenged upon. Whereas Cutwolfe finally meets with the man he so longed to kill, Isabella's fury is spent upon itself, and consumes her entire being.⁴⁹

In Senecan revenge tragedy, the effects of anger on the revenger are often represented as a bodily process that lies outside the character's control.⁵⁰ Revengers express their surprise over the sudden changes in the experience of their bodies. In *Thyestes*, Atreus wonders about strange feelings inside his chest: "a tombling tumult quakes, within my bosom loe, | And round it rolles: I moved am and wote not whereunto | But drawn I am."⁵¹ And in Seneca's *Medea*, the nutrix comments on Medea's sudden and unexpected change in mood: "What fury fel inforceth thee, bereaved of thy wits, | To rage and rave with bedlam braynes, to fret with franticke fittes?"⁵² Similarly, Guenevora's decision in *The Misfortunes of Arthur* not to execute her plan of revenge on her husband is not represented as a rational, but as a bodily process:

What's this? my mind recoyls, and yrkes these threats:

Anger delayes, my grieffe gynnes to asswage,
My furie faintes, and sacred wedlockes faith
Presents it selfe. Why shunst thou fearefull wrath?
Add coales a freshe, preserue me to this venge.⁵³

Guenevora has no control over her anger; it abates as suddenly as it possessed her, and she can only describe what she experiences. The desire for revenge in Seneca's tragedies is also represented as a primarily bodily phenomenon, a burning heat that disturbs the humoral economy. Clytemnestra in *Agamemnon* feels how her body is eaten away from within:

The flashing flames and furious force of fiery fervent heate,
Outraging in my boyling breast, my burning bones doth beate:
It suckes the sappy marow out the juice it doth convey,
It frets, it teares, it rents, it gnaws, my guttes and gall away.⁵⁴

The experience of vindictiveness in these examples is not controlled by the revengers' reason, nor is it an affirmation of their identity. Instead, vindictiveness in this bodily form is represented as dissolving selfhood, as a loss of agency and self-direction.

This view of vindictiveness as a feeling that takes control of the body, is literalized in the literary tradition of revenge tragedy in the appearance of the furies. The furies' possession of the revenger's body similarly represents vindictive anger as a force that originates outside the revenger's sphere of influence and which is not controlled by reason. Their operations are expressly bodily in nature, as for example in Barnabe Barnes's *The Devil's Charter*, where Lucretia invokes the goddesses of revenge:

You griesly Daughters of grimme Erebus,
Which spit out vengeance from your viperous heires,
Infuse a three-fold vigor in these armes;
Immarble more my strong indurate heart,
To consummate the plot of my revenge.
*She riseth and walketh passionately*⁵⁵

The stage direction here tantalizingly suggests that a tradition of performance of vindictive passion must have existed on the early modern stage, a tradition in which the shorthand "walketh passionately" may have referred to a broad array of gestures associated with the revenger possessed by the furies. David Bevington writes

that in early modern acting, a “repeated emphasis on staring, trembling, and rolling the eyes suggests the kind of stage action that an Elizabethan audience would recognize as a conventional sign of furious distress.”⁵⁶ This tradition may have stressed the bodily nature of vindictive desire even more than the textual traces that have survived.

Charles and Elaine Hallett define the madness of the revenger as “the overthrow of reason by the passion of revenge.”⁵⁷ They conclude that in order to act, a revenger must pass beyond the rational world: passion must consume his entire being. The desire for revenge may cause the loss of the revenger’s selfhood and integrity, since all his rational capacities need to submit to violent passion. In the words of Alison Findlay, “for men, a danger of taking personal revenge was that, rather than being a means of asserting independent subjectivity, it could be a way of losing one’s self.”⁵⁸ Many opponents of private revenge see this loss of selfhood as a key argument against the practice of retribution. Francis Bacon, for example, stresses that vindictiveness is a self-destructive desire: “This is certaine; That a man that studieth *Revenge* keeps his owne Wounds greene, which otherwise would heale, and doe well.”⁵⁹ These texts’ view of anger and revenge as threats to masculine selfhood resemble Cornwallis’s fears of the effects that “play[ing] *Furie*” might have on the brain.

We will look next at the associations between this view of vindictiveness as a bodily desire that dissolves selfhood, and notions of acting, imitation and revenge in early modern culture. I will argue that this field of associations, which feeds Cornwallis’s internal conflict over the duty of revenge, also causes Hamlet’s doubts over the acting of revenge. I do not mean to pluck the heart out of Hamlet’s mystery, but intend to show how the play contrasts Laertes’ ideas of revenge with another view, and how these views appropriate conflicting notions of selfhood in their representations of revenge.

Becoming revenger: imitation and the loss of self-control

In the revenge tragedies of the public theatre, as well as in Seneca’s tragedies and the productions of the Inns of Court, the pursuit of revenge is associated with the concept of imitation. The act of revenge often replicates the original crime, restoring the balance that was disturbed by the first deed. In Henry Chettle’s *Tragedy of*

Hoffman, for example, the eponymous protagonist tells the “dead remembrance” of his father: “I will not leaue thee, vntill like thy selfe, | I’ue made thy enemies.”⁶⁰ Indeed, the revenger runs the risk of being perceived as a murderer himself (or herself). In *A Theater of Envy*, René Girard argues that the notion of imitation inherent in revenge is precisely what keeps Hamlet from the execution of revenge. Although he is aware of the social pressures that weigh on him, Hamlet feels that he will become like his uncle if he kills him: “the crime by Claudius looks to him like one more link in an already long chain, and his own revenge will look like still another link, perfectly identical to all the other links.”⁶¹ The imitation of the murderer causes the revenger to lose his sense of self-identity: he becomes one with a community of murderers.

The imitation of literary exemplae of revenge frequently signals this moment of “becoming revenger.” When Lucretia in Barnes’ *Devil’s Charter* (1607) vows revenge upon her husband who has “betraid [her] honor, wrong’d [her] bed,” for example, she grafts her plot on the examples of classical female revenges:

All sinnes have found examples in all times
 If womanly thou melt then call to minde,
 Impatient *Medeas* wrathfull furie,
 And raging *Clitemnestraes* hideous fact,
Prognos strange murther of her onely sonne,
 And *Danaus* fifty Daughters (all but one)
 That in one night, their husbands sleeping slew.
 My cause as just as theirs, my heart as resolute,
 My hands as ready. *Gismond* I come,
 Haild on with furie to revenge these wrongs.⁶²

Lucretia shows herself thoroughly aware of the literary tradition that she will choose to become part of. She cites these examples of classical female vengeance for their “wrathfull furie” and their “raging,” so that she too is “haild on with furie” to the execution of her plot of revenge, aided also by the inspiration of the furies.

Instances of imitation mark a dissolution of a sense of self-identity also in a different sense than the imitation of the murderer discussed by Girard. The revenger loses his reason and his rational selfhood in the imitation of a revenger from classical mythology or literary tradition. A clear example of this transformation can be found in Kyd’s revenge tragedy *The Spanish Tragedy* (1587), where Hieronimo mourns the death of his murdered son. As a

representative of the legal system, Hieronimo has long tried to bring his son's murderers to court. When he realizes that they will escape through the mazes of the law, he opts for private revenge. He enters the stage with a book in his hand, contrasting a biblical with a classical quotation to express the friction between God's prohibition of vengeance and his private desire for revenge:

Vindicta mihi!

Ay, heaven will be revenged of every ill,
Nor will they suffer murder unrepaid:
Then stay, Hieronimo, attend their will,
For mortal men may not appoint their time.
'*Per scelus semper tutum est sceleribus iter.*'
Strike, and strike home, where wrong is offered thee;
For evils unto ills conductors be,
And death's the worst of resolution.⁶³

The first quotation, '*Vindicta mihi*' derives from *Romans*, 12.19: "Avenge not your selves, (dearely beloved) but give place unto wrath: for it is written: vengeance is mine, and I will repaye, sayth the Lord." The biblical quotation supports the state monopoly on violence, urging private individuals to leave revenge to God. By appropriating these words as his own, Hieronimo forshadows his decision not to rely on God or court. As he turns from the law to revenge, he turns from the Bible to Seneca's tragedies. The book in his hand may be a volume of Seneca's tragedies in original Latin, since in turning from the voice of patriarchal divine authority to that of classical tragedy, he cites the words of Clytemnestra in Seneca's *Agamemnon*: "Through crime ever is the safe way for crime" (l. 115).⁶⁴ "Strike, and strike home, where wrong is offered thee," is Hieronimo's new credo. His soliloquy, "specifically designed to mark the moment at which the will aligns itself with the passion of revenge," turns not only to classical tragedy, but also to a female revenger as a model for imitation.⁶⁵ Patriarchal law is contrasted to feminine revenge.

The ideal of early modern humanism was to build civic virtue on the study of the classics. In revenge tragedies, protagonists tend to be schooled in the classics; they cite from Seneca's tragedies, and carry books of Ovid and Seneca onto the stage. The effects of their learning, however, are not as humanism envisioned. Hieronimo brings onto the stage a volume of Senecan tragedies and cites from it, not to warn himself or his audience about the dangers

of passionate action, but to incite in himself a violent passion of vindictiveness. Jonathan Bate writes that Shakespeare in *Titus Andronicus* similarly “has his cake and eats it too. He displays his own learning [...] but he also implicitly offers a critique of the very humanism he is embodying.”⁶⁶ The didactic function of the imitation of classical examples is implicitly criticized in the genre of revenge tragedy.

In *Antonio's Revenge*, Marston's revenger also enters with a book in his hand. Here, the book draws attention to the double bind between Seneca's Stoicism and the excessive emotion of his tragedies. Antonio cites in Latin from Seneca's *De Providentia*: “*ferre fortiter*,” urging himself to “endure with fortitude,” to control his passions with reason.⁶⁷ He then cites a passage from Seneca's *Medea* that suggests the contrary. Medea advocates a grief so overwhelming that it cannot tolerate rational advice: “That grief is wanton-sick | Whose stomach can digest and brook the diet | Of state ill-relished counsel” (ll. 155-56). Antonio's choice of Senecan wisdom stresses the impossibility to control passion. Notably, Medea's words associate the female body with the unbridled nature of the passions. The moment of becoming revenger is thus marked by a turn away from masculine reason or patriarchal, biblical law towards the imitation of female revengers from Senecan tragedy.

In the genre of revenge tragedy, imitation of classical female revengers not infrequently leads to emulation. Atreus in Seneca's *Thyestes* voices the idea most lucidly: “*Scelera non ulcisceris, nisi vincis*” (195-96). Jasper Heywood translates the phrase as “Thou never dost enough revenge the wronge | Except thou passe.”⁶⁸ This notion of emulation in revenge tragedy is not only related to the increase of the original crime in the execution of revenge; it also signals a desire to emulate previous avengers. We find this mechanism of imitation also in the Inns of Court play *The Misfortunes of Arthur*, discussed in the previous chapter. When Guenevora in that tragedy seeks to stimulate her own desire for revenge, she asks herself: “Why stayest? It must be done: let bridle goe, | Frame out some trap beyonde all vulgar guile, | Beyonde Medea's wiles” (1.2.10-12). These lines are a literal translation of Clytemnestra's words in Seneca's *Agamemnon* (ll. 116-121). Whereas Clytemnestra decides that she will dare what Medea dared, Guenevora in this early modern imitation of Seneca decides

that she will dare to outgo the crafty wiles of both Clytemnestra and Medea. The moment that Guenevora devotes herself to the ritual of revenge is thus characterized by associations with women's wiles, with an excessive release of control over the passions ("let bridle goe"), as well as with exceeding the examples of classical revenges executed by women. Another example occurs in Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*. When Titus finds out that the rape and mutilation of his daughter was "patterned by that the poet [Ovid] here describes," he similarly longs to emulate the crimes of antiquity. "Worse than Philomel you used my daughter," he exclaims, "and worse than Progne I will be revenged."⁶⁹ If Progne killed her son and fed his remains to his father, then Titus ambitiously doubled the ingredients of the recipe, killing Tamora's two sons. Similarly, Timoclea in John Mason's Senecan tragedy *The Turke* (1607) when asked if she is revengeful, answers she is more so than Medea, and later adds: "I would outgoe examples, and exceed | As in desire, all others so indeed."⁷⁰

The moment that men and women in the drama become ready for the acting of revenge, then, is regularly marked by the citation of the words of female revengers from Seneca's tragedies. These moments signal the abandonment of rational, masculine law for passionate, feminine, excessive vindictiveness.

The performance of revenge

The performance of revenge in the theatre is often seen in terms of this loss of self in imitation and passion. The imitation of vindictive passion by an actor could cause him to lose control over his emotions. A notable example of this danger can be found in Thomas Heywood's *Apology for Actors*, which recounts an anecdote about Julius Caesar as an actor. Heywood tells how the Roman emperor once performed the role of Hercules in Seneca's *Hercules Furens*. He became possessed by the fury of the revenger that he was merely imitating:

Julius Caesar himself for his pleasure became an Actor [...]. Amongst many other parts acted by him in person, it is recorded of him, that with generall applause in his owne Theater he played *Hercules Furens*, and [...] it is thus reported of him: Being in the depth of a passion, one of his seruants (as his part then fell out) presenting *Lychas* [the tyrant], who before had from *Deianeira* brought him the poisoned shirt, dipt in the bloud of the Centaure *Nessus*: he in the

middest of his torture and fury, finding this *Lychas* hid in a remote corner (appoynted him to creep into of purpose) although he was, as our Tragedians use, but seemingly to kill him by some false imagined wound, yet was *Caesar* so extremely carried away with the violence of his practised fury, and by the perfect shape of the madnesse of *Hercules*, to which he had fashioned all his active spirits, that he slew him dead at his foot, & after swoong him *terq; quaterq;* (as the Poet sayes) about his head.⁷¹

Heywood explains the contagiousness of imitation in terms of the humoral economy. Caesar in the acting of Hercules's furious revenge on the tyrant so "fashioned all his active spirits" to the hero's madness, that he was "extremely carried away" with the fury he was merely enacting, and killed a man. The perfect imitation of Hercules's madness in this description is very much a bodily exercise. It requires the fashioning of the actor's spirits to the madness of the part, spirits being the messengers between the heart and the passions in early modern humoral theory. These are the "inward effects" of acted passion that Sir William Cornwallis was anxious about in his essay. Cornwallis specified that vindictive desires "weaken the braine" and are "as ill as drunkenness."⁷² The anecdote thinks of selfhood as a fluid concept in the terms of seventeenth-century physiology. The imitation of a passion leads to a physical change in the performer, a change that is not managed by reason, and that causes Caesar to lose control over his actions.

Not all early modern treatises on the passion adhere to this view of the dangers of acted passion. In Thomas Wright's treatise *The Passions of the Mind in General* (1604), for example, the imitation of female models of vindictive passion does not lead to excessive vengeance, but is a strategic kind of performance.⁷³ Wright explains that the replication of the manners of a vengeful woman is one tool available for the orator to persuade his audience. He describes women's "furious fashion":

Their voice is loud and sharpe, and consequently apt to cut, which is proper to ire and hatred, which wish ill, and intend revenge: their gestures are frequent, their faces inflamed, their eyes glowing, their reasons hurry one in the necke of another, they with their fingers number the wrongs offered them, the harmes, injuries, disgraces & what not, thought, said, and done against them?⁷⁴

The passage catalogues the bodily signs of female fury, emphasizing

the physical pulses and cadences of female vengefulness. Wright's inventory of the body language of angry women is expressly dramatic in nature, and gives us a glimpse of the performance of vindictiveness on the early modern stage.⁷⁵ His detailed portrayal, however, is not addressed at players, but is intended as a model to be imitated by Christian orators, "whose project is perswasion."⁷⁶ In his treatise, Wright argues against the Christian humanist notion, based in Seneca's Stoic philosophy, that the passions should be eradicated from civil behaviour. "Passions are not only, not wholly to be extinguished (as the Stoicks seemed to affirme) but sometimes to be moued, & stirred vp for the seruice of vertue," he writes. Indeed, the controlled use of passion is necessary for the persuasion of the orator's audience in the public cause: "Cicero expressly teacheth that it is almost impossible for an Orator to stirre up a Passion in his auditors, except he bee first affected with the same passion himselfe." This is why the *topos* of the angry and vindictive woman is of importance:

because although their excesse be vitious and not to be imitated, yet for that they let nature worke in her kind, their furious fashion will serue for a good meane to perceiue the externall manage of this passion [...] if a prudent oratour could in this case better their matter, circumsise the weakenesse of the reason, abate the excesse of their furie, certainly he might win a pretie forme for framing his action."⁷⁷

Wright's orator imitates the passion he intends to incite in a controlled manner, avoiding precisely the excess of fury that marks the woman's desire for revenge. Against the image of the natural, bodily, passionate and unbridled aspects of women's anger, the treatise constructs an artificial, rational, stage-managed and controlled male method of persuasion. Male anger is a political passion: it is the kind of anger that is profitable both to the "ciuill Gentleman and prudent politician."⁷⁸

Hamlet and the cue for passion

As Jacqueline Miller has argued, the passions in the early modern period, although associated with inwardness, are thought to come into being through the imitation of external signs.⁷⁹ In the case of revenge tragedy, the performance of revenge is often enabled through the imitation of Seneca's revengers as well as his specific

imagery of revenge. Paradoxically, as Hamlet is aware, these inward passions cause a loss of selfhood, since the imitation of the genre of Senecan tragedy leads irrevocably to the revenger's loss of self-control.

Hamlet throughout the tragedy is portrayed as using the performance of Senecan rhetoric and "passionate action" (3.2.130) to evoke in himself the desired passion of vindictiveness. He employs a theatrical performance to "catch the conscience of the King" (2.2.601), but the parts he requests the travelling players to perform are intended to excite choler and vindictiveness in himself. When the players arrive at Elsinore, Hamlet demands from them the "passionate speech" of Pyrrhus' revenge on Priam, as a motive and a cue for passion. In contemporary culture, "fell revenging Pyrrhus" was known as the kind of passionate, violent, and determined revenger that Hamlet aims to be.⁸⁰ Pyrrhus's qualities unite both the dedication to his father's command of blood revenge, and the unbridled murdering rage necessary to enact that deed: a combination that Hamlet seeks to achieve throughout the play.⁸¹

The First Player's tale is exceptional in terms of its archaic and bombastic use of verse and style. It has been argued that the particular style of the passage serves to set it off from the main play as a performance within a performance.⁸² The play's reference to an older dramatic genre in this scene, however, does not serve a merely formalistic function. Indeed, the style of the passage is closely connected to the contents. The tale of Pyrrhus's violent retribution on the murderer of his father is cast in the rhetorical style of the early Elizabethan translations of Seneca's tragedies.⁸³ Associated with excessive theatrical emotion, the style of the actor's lines matches their story of extreme vengeful passion.

Whenever the prince seeks to attain the furious mood that will allow him to execute his revenge, the play reverts to Senecan rhetoric. Howard Felperin has argued that the *Mousetrap*, the play-within-the-play that finally confirms Hamlet in his suspicions of his uncle, is written in precisely such a style:

The Murder of Gonzago represents [...] a typical revenge action of what might be termed the first wave, of the kind produced during the late 1580s and early 1590s. [...] The six lines [of] Lucianus are in a vein similar to students of those first-wave revenge plays – *The Spanish Tragedy*, *Soliman and Perseda*, *The True Tragedy of Richard III*,

Titus Andronicus, and (dare I say it?) the *Ur-Hamlet*. [...] At the very center of *Hamlet*, then, we have a substantial fragment of a primitive Elizabethan revenge tragedy [...].⁸⁴

At certain moments, Senecan revenge rhetoric does incite Hamlet to try on the part of Senecan revenger. After the performance of the play-within-the-play, he claims he is ready to “drink hot blood, and do such bitter business as the day would quake to look on” (3.2.380–81), and at Ophelia’s grave is ready to imitate Laertes’ passionate rhetoric when he tells him: “Nay, and thou’lt mouth, | I’ll rant as well as thou” (5.1.278–79).⁸⁵ But, as Gertrude has also perceived, these fits of passion do not last long in him, and he is soon “as patient as the female dove” (5.1.281). It is characteristic of the prince’s humoral economy that he is more receptive to Hecuba’s grief than to Phyrrius’ choler. It is only when he sees his mother murdered before his eyes that he manages to combine his duty of blood revenge with the necessary anger and vengefulness to kill Claudius.

The prince’s reluctance to devote himself wholly to vindictive passion is paradoxically informed by the same genre of Senecan tragedy that sometimes manages to incite a vengeful mood in him. Like Cornwallis, Hamlet is aware of the madness that may characteristically result from the devotion to revenge. His familiarity with the conventions of revenge tragedy allows him to dissemble and play the part of the conventional revenger, but his grasp of the theatrical role of the revenger is also part and parcel of his hesitation to engage in the act of revenge itself. Although the ghost warns Hamlet not to taint his mind, the very genre of the play dictates that the stage revenger should do exactly so.⁸⁶

At the time that *Hamlet* was written, the revenger’s possession by vengeful passion had become such a stock phenomenon, that the genre of revenge tragedy was mocked for its excessive display of violent passion. At the turn of the sixteenth century, Senecan revenge tragedy was going out of dramatic fashion. Although *The Spanish Tragedy* was still hugely popular with certain audiences, and held steady for fifty years in the amphitheatres, theatrical taste was changing, and playwrights such as Shakespeare and Jonson mocked the exaggerated styles of Marlowe’s *Tamburlaine* or Kyd’s *Spanish Tragedy* as “outmoded and overwrought.”⁸⁷ The anonymous *A Warning for Fair Women* (1599) derides the stock character of the “filthie wining ghost” lapped in a foul sheet,

“skreaming like a pigge halfe stickt, | And [crying] Vindicta, revenge, revenge.”⁸⁸ A similar treatment was accorded to *The Spanish Tragedy* by Jacobean satirists who remembered the play for its excess of theatrical emotions and rhetoric.⁸⁹ The Senecan revenge tragedy had come to be associated with what Hamlet calls “strutting and bellowing.”

The prevailing disapproval of overwrought theatrical emotion was attached especially to the performance of the vindictive emotion itself. Jonson’s *Every Man in his Humour* (1598) for example, mocks the conceited oratorical style of the soliloquy in which Hieronimo hesitatingly abandons faith in justice and God.⁹⁰ Marston’s *Antonio’s Revenge* (1600), a play performed by the boy actors of St Paul’s, similarly targets the performance of vindictive passion. The play is by some critics considered to be a parody on the genre of revenge tragedy. R. A. Foakes argues that it was written for “child actors consciously ranting in oversize pants, and we are not allowed to take their passions or motives seriously.”⁹¹ In the eyes of the Neostoic Pandulpho in the play, valour is not to “swagger, quarrel, swear, stamp, rave and chide | To stab in fume of blood” (1.5.77-78). Rather, in his view that man is valorous whom “fortunes loudest thunder cannot daunt” and “whose well-peised action ever rests upon | Not giddy humours, but discretion” (1.5.97-98). Therefore, when his son is murdered, he derides the pattern set by the theatrical performers of revenge before him:

Wouldst have me cry, run raving up and down
For my son’s loss? Wouldst have me turn rank mad,
Or wring my face with mimic action,
Stamp, curse, weep, rage, and then my bosom strike?
Away, ’tis apish action, player-like.

(1.5.76-80)

Hamlet similarly considers the performance of passion in older revenge tragedies as archaic and offending, as appears from his advice to the travelling players. In his welcome to the troupe, he instructs them to act “gently” since, he explains, “it offends me to the soul to hear a robustious periwig-pated fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very rags [...] I would have such a fellow whipped for o’erdoing Termagant. It out-Herods Herod. Pray you avoid it” (3.2.4-14). The theatrical types that Hamlet here marks as

repulsive are stock figures of theatrical rage. Termagant is a “noisy violent personage in the Mystery plays,” and Herod the biblical tyrant known for his violent fury.⁹² Hamlet’s objection to such “scenicall strutting, furious vociferation” appears also from one of his first speeches in the play.⁹³ There, he tells his mother that his grief over his father’s death is not a mere outward passion, since these “forms, moods, [and] shapes of grief” are but “actions that a man might play” (1.2.76–86). These words betray a similar disapproval of acted passion as his advice to the players. Instead of acted passion, Hamlet famously claims to have “that within which passes show” (1.2.85).

Indeed, whenever the prince does indulge in a display of emotional vengefulness, he is the first to correct himself. He privately rages against Claudius and calls him a “[b]loody, bawdy villain! | Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless villain!” (2.2.576–77), an exclamation that in the Folio version of the play ends with the distinctly Senecan words: “Oh vengeance!” (F2.2.578). Scott Kastan comments that Hamlet here “struts and bellows with the impassioned theatricality of the stage revenger.”⁹⁴ The next line of the soliloquy, however, departs from this Senecan rhetoric of revenge, and Hamlet chides himself for his lack of action:

Why, what an ass am I! This is most brave,
That I, the son of a dear father murder’d,
Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell,
Must like a whore unpack my hearts with words
And fall a-cursing like a very drab,
A scullion! Fie upon’t! Foh!

(2.2.578–85)

As the son of a murdered father, Hamlet feels he should engage in a masculine type of revenge, the kind of decisive retribution that Laertes seeks to enact for the death of Polonius. Instead, he finds himself echoing the rhetoric of the stage revenger, the Senecan rhetoric of passion. Hamlet associates this rhetoric with women and the lower classes, with the ranting of prostitutes and foul-mouthed kitchen servants. As I argued above, women in humoral discourse were considered innately incapable of self-control, especially with regard to the passion of anger. Hamlet associates the “unpacking” of his heart – a profuse display of “that within”

- with whores and drabs. Whereas masculine aristocratic honour demands the subject to be in control of his passions, Hamlet finds himself to indulge in rhetorical and passionate excess. Patricia Parker has written that in early modern culture, anxieties over performative rhetorical excess found expression in the comparison of an expansive style to the 'dilated' body of the whore or harlot. She recognizes in Hamlet's words a binary, gendered division in which women are words, and men are deeds. She sees a "feminized Hamlet impotent to do more than utter 'words, words, words.'"⁹⁵

Hamlet is aware that he needs to rehearse the rhetoric of revenge, the Senecan imagery of blood, night, and murder, in order to enact his revenge. He hesitates to dedicate himself wholly to this passion of vindictiveness and the loss of selfhood that lies contained within it. The play registers a conflict between aristocratic discourses of masculine honour and blood revenge, and the humanist discourse of Senecan tragedy where revenge involves a dedication to feminine vengefulness, and all the dangers of playing Fury to the life. When Hamlet tells us that he is not like Hercules (1.2.152-53), he may refer to the epitome of classical heroic manhood and mean that he is not able to perform the heroic revenges that his father could. Hercules, however, was also current in early modern culture as the "Hercules Furens" of Seneca's tragedy, whose feminine fury leads him to take revenge on his family. This is the man whose archaic rhetoric of revenge came to be known as "Ercles vein," the kind of passionate rhetoric that drives a man to madness.⁹⁶

Passionate and rational selfhood in the theatre

I argued in chapter 3 that Senecan tragedy was one of the key instruments for the Inns of Court to rehearse a discourse of the excessive passion and threats of civil war inherent in private revenge. The Inns of Court performed their Senecan tragedies within the context of their legal institution: their representations of revenge were intended for an audience familiar with the law, an audience that was able to judge the actions of the revengers represented. The cases of the Senecan revengers were employed in the Inns as a means to instruct and correct their audiences, an instrument similar to their moot court cases. What happens, however, when the genre of revenge tragedy is taken out of its legal

context, and is performed publicly in the commercial theatres of London?

Stephen Greenblatt has alerted critics to the ways in which the public theatre appropriates materials from other cultural zones. “We need to understand not only the construction of these zones but also the process of movement across the shifting boundaries between them,” he writes. “Who decides which materials can be moved and which must remain in place? How are cultural materials prepared for exchange? What happens to them when they are moved?”⁹⁷ Inspired by the work of Foucault, critics have analyzed the similarities in location, function, and representation between the theatre and courts of law, between the scaffold and the stage.⁹⁸ Contemporary writers on the theatre, however, also perceived crucial differences between the legal courts and the theatre, and harboured doubts about the commercial theatre’s appropriation of a genre that originated in the Inns of Court. In debates over the commercial theatres’ performance of revenge, the conflict between contrasting models of selfhood can also be distinguished.

Defences and attacks of the theatre are patterned along similar gendered lines as discourses of revenge in the period. Defenders of revenge as well as the theatre argue that passions are profitable to the commonweal, and that the people are able to form their own independent judgement. Opponents of both the theatre and revenge construct an image of selfhood that is easily overwhelmed by the effects of passion. In this model, neither the revenger nor the spectator is capable of judging for him- or herself, since both acted and real passions threaten to dissolve their identity and rational judgement. Anti-theatrical authors therefore consider the performance of revenge in the commercial theatres as extremely subversive of state authority. They compare the theatre to a private revenger who has appropriated the right to judge from the proper authorities. Arguing that the theatre is no legal institution, and that the socially diverse audiences in the city are incapable of judging what they see, these writers fear the effects of imitated passion on actors as well as spectators.

In classical poetics, the effect of a theatrical performance on the audience is explained in terms of emotions by Aristotle, and in terms of understanding by Horace. In his *Poetics*, Aristotle sees the evocation of pity and fear in the spectator as one of the main

effects of the genre of tragedy. Horace, on the other hand, stresses the didactic function of theatre in his *Ars Poetica*.⁹⁹ These two interpretations of the effect of the theatre on the audience play a central role also in early modern English defences and attacks on the stage. Sir Philip Sidney in his *Apology for Poetry* emphasizes the didactic possibilities of drama. He values poetry above justice and philosophy because it is most suited to teach the difference between good and evil. If judges merely endeavour to “make men good, but that their evil hurt not others; having no care, so he be a good citizen, how bad a man he be,” Sidney is possibly more condescending towards philosophers. “I see [them] coming towards me with a sullen gravity, as though they could not abide vice by daylight [...] angry with any man in whom they see the foul fault of anger,” he writes.¹⁰⁰ Poetry is more effective in teaching to aspire to virtue and to shun vice. For the art of poetry, Sidney argues, gives a particular example of a general notion, and thereby has more effect than a mere description or philosophical dissection of that notion. Thus, the “the sour-sweetness of revenge in Medea,” one of the dramatic characters whose names “we now use [...] to signify their trades” is more effective than a philosophical exposé on the evils of revenge.¹⁰¹ Crucial in Sir Philip Sidney’s defence of poetry is the notion of *poetic justice*. Whereas the historian represents historical facts and is therefore bound to portray virtuous people who suffer miserably and rebels who flourish, the drama is produced by the imagination. It can apply its own measure of justice to the characters it represents, and can therefore show vice to be punished, and virtue rewarded.

Thomas Heywood in his *Apology for Actors* agrees with this definition of the purpose of playing. Plays are written and performed, he claims, “to teach the subjects obedience to their King, to shew the people the untimely ends of such as haue moued tumults, commotions, and insurrections” and also “to present them with the flourishing estate of such as liue in obedience, exhorting them to alleageance, dehorting them from all trayterous and fellonious stratagems.”¹⁰² The theatre functions as a representation of justice: by separating good from evil, as a sermon also does, it teaches its spectators to shun disobedience, and to become proper citizens. Heywood sees theatre as one of the instruments of the legal system. Indeed, he employs the language of the court when he writes that he “will prove it” to his readers:

We will prove it by a domestic and home-born truth which within these few years happened. At Lin, in Norfolk, the then Earl of Sussex players acting the old History of Feyer Francis, and presenting a woman who, insatiately doting on a young gentleman, (the more securely to enjoy his affection) mischievously and secretly murdered her husband, whose ghost haunted her; and at divers times, in her most solitary and private contemplations, in most horrid and fanciful shapes, appeared and stood before her. As this was acted, a towns-woman (till then of good estimation and report) finding her conscience (at this presentment) extremely troubled, suddenly screeched and cried out, 'Oh! my husband, my husband! I see the ghost of my husband fiercely threatening and menacing me!'

In Heywood's defence of theatre, as in Hamlet's plans with *The Murder of Gonzago*, the performance of murder functions to solve cold cases. The dramatic enactment of a specific tale murder can work on the spectator's conscience more effectively than abstract moral advice, troubling her to such an extent that she confesses her murder.

This is not how anti-theatrical authors thought of the workings of acted revenge. They were afraid that the strutting and the bellowing, the rhetoric and the acting of the revenger that incites the characters within revenge tragedies to murder, could also infect the audiences, crossing the boundary between stage and pit. When Heywood argues that "so bewitching a thing is liuely and well spirited action, that it hath power to new mold the harts of the spectators and fashion them to the shape of any noble and notable attempt," opponents of the theatre counter that the same imitative effects apply to passionate acting.¹⁰³ Anti-theatrical writers feared that the performance of revenge in the commercial theatres might incite audiences to rebellion and murder.

The fears over the effects of acted passion build on a notion of selfhood as permeable. Whereas defences of the theatre conceive of the audience as a rational organism that is capable of judgment, opponents of the stage see spectators as passive receptacles on whom the passions work, infecting their mind, especially through their eyes and to a lesser extent, their ears. Stephen Gosson, for example, writes that:

Tragedies and Comedies stirre up affections, and affections are naturally planted in that part of the minde that is common to us with brute beastes [...] The diuel is not ignorant how mightely these

outward spectacles effeminate, and soften the hearts of men, vice is learned in the beholding [...] and those impressions of mind are secretly conveyed over to the gazers, which the players do counterfeit on stage.¹⁰⁴

The passions work on a level of the mind that humans share with animals: the rational judgement does not exercise influence on the effects of acted passion, since the impressions are “secretly” conveyed to the spectators, softening and effeminising them. Thomas Wright in his treatise on the passions explains how the representation of a passion may cloud the spectator’s judgement:

And indeed the Passions, not vnfitly may be compared to greene spectacles, which make all things resemble the colour of greene; [...] the understanding looking into the imagination, findeth nothing almost but the mother & nurse of his passion for consideration, where you may well see how the imagination putteth greene spectacles before the eyes of our wit, to make it see nothing but greene, that is, seruing for the consideration of the passion.¹⁰⁵

Both Gosson and Wright emphasize the role of sight in the operations of passion. The imagination is fed by what the eyes see, whereas rational understanding is associated with hearing rather than viewing, with audiences rather than spectators. Wright distinguishes between those who listen to a play, and those who merely watch the action:

wise men are most moued with sound reasons, & lesse with passions: contrariwise the common people or men not of deep iudgment, are more perswaded with passions in the speakers; the reason is, because we have two senses of discipline especially, the eies & the eares: reason entreth the eares; the passion wherewith the orator is affected passeth by the eies, for in his face we discover it, & in other gestures: the eies are more certaine messengers and lesse to be doubted of, for we many times suspect the reasons lest they be friuolous, although we cannot answer them, but those passions wee see, nature imprinteth then [sic] deeper in our hearts, & for the most part they seeme so evident, as they admit no tergiversation: wherfore the euidence & certainty of the passion, perswadeth much more effectually the common people, than a suspected reason.¹⁰⁶

The passionate acting of revenge is thus not only capable of infecting the actors on stage, as in the case of Julius Caesar, but can also affect the audience in the commercial theatres.

Laura Levine has described how early modern anti-theatrical

writers compare plays to magic that can turn the spectators into aggressive beasts or will-less robots. "Action can shape the doer," and in early modern thinking about theatre the play also "induces audience members to match their action to those which they see represented."¹⁰⁷ These anxieties existed about representations of revenge on stage as well. Nicholas Couffeteau warns that "cholericke men infuse into vs their troublesome humours,"¹⁰⁸ and William Prynne estimates that the dangers of tragedy lie in the effects of passion:

as the Stile, and subject Matter of Stage-Playes is Scurrilous, and Obscene, so likewise it is Bloody, and Tyrannicall; breathing out Malice, (k) *Fury, Anger, Murther, Crueltie, Tyrannie, Treacherie, (l) Frensie, Treason, and Reuenge,* (the constant Theames, and chiefe Ingredients, of all our Tragedies,) which (m) *Efferate, and enrage the Hearts, and Mindes, of Actors, and Spectators; yea, oftimes animate, and excite them to Anger, Malice, Duels, Murthers, Reuenge, and more then Barbarous crueltie, to the great disturbance of the publike Peace.*¹⁰⁹

The style and subject matter of revenge tragedies is here accorded the power to affect the humoral economy of its audiences. Plays that represent fury, anger and revenge "efferate" (render fierce) both hearts and minds of spectators. The result, according to Prynne, is an increase in duels and revenge in society:

Many have been the murthers, more the quarrels, the duels that have growne from our Stage-playes, whose large encomiums of rash valour, duels, fortitude, generosity, impaciency, homicides, tyranny and revenge, doe so exasperate mens raging passions, and make them so impatient of the very smallest injury, that nothing can satisfie, can expiate it but the offenders blood. [...] Yea pittie is it that such Playes, such Spectacles should be suffred, which thus animate men on to quarrels, duels, contentions, injuries, impaciency, bloodshed, and most unchristian revenge.¹¹⁰

The dangers of the performance of revenge lie in the audience's inability to make rational judgements about what they see. Whereas Sir Philip Sidney famously argued that "a Tragedy, wel made and represented, drewe abundance of teares" so that even a Tyrant could not resist the "sweet violence of a Tragedie," anti-theatrical authors employ this argument of the emotional effects of the theatre to its own disadvantage.¹¹¹ They reason that the passions evoked by the drama make the audiences that flock to

the theatres incapable of judging the subject matter of the play for themselves. Prynne argues that stage plays effeminate their actors as well as spectators, “making them mimickall, histrionickall, [...] apish, amorous, and unmanly, both in their habites, gestures, speeches, complements, and their whole deportment: *enervating and resolving the virility and vigour of their mindes*, to their own private and publike prejudice.”¹¹² This is why Prynne grudgingly allows for the reading of stage plays: when reading a play, a man has less chance to be infected with these effects of acted passion.¹¹³

A seventeenth-century example of the effects of acted revenge on an audience member is recorded by Richard Brathwait in his *English Gentleman*. Advising his gentlemen readers on their modes of recreation, Brathwait urges them not to be too immoderate in their visits of the theatre. He knows that his readers are fond of stage plays:

So as I much feare mee, when they shall be struck with sicknesse, and lie on their death-bed, it will fare with them as it fared with a young *Gentlewoman* within these few yeeres; who being accustomed in her health every day to see one *Play* or other, was at last strucke with a grievous sicknesse even unto death: during which time of her sicknesse, being exhorted by such *Divines* as were there present, to call upon God, that hee would in mercy look upon her, as one deafe to their exhortation, continued ever crying, *Oh Hieronimo, Hieronimo, me thinks I see thee brave Hieronimo!* Neither could she be drawne from this with all their perswasions; but fixing her eyes intently, as if shee had seene *Hieronimo* acted, sending out a deepe sigh, shee suddenly died. And let this suffice to have been spoken of the *moderate* use of this *Recreation*: upon which I have the longer insisted, because I am not ignorant how divers and different opinions have beene holden touching the lawfulnessse of *Stage-playes*.¹¹⁴

Brathwait chooses *The Spanish Tragedy* as the play that haunts this woman to her death, possibly because it was still popular in the public theatres even in the 1630s. James Shapiro has written that “in its afterlife upon the Jacobean and Caroline stages [*The Spanish Tragedy*] was identified with the transgressive behaviour of Englishwomen in ways *unimaginable* at the time of its composition.”¹¹⁵ I would argue that the story illustrates the effects of acted passion in a way that was indeed imaginable when *The Spanish Tragedy* was written. The woman’s calls at seeing the ghost of Hieronimo in fact echo the calls of Heywood’s murderess,

who saw the ghost of her murdered husband in the theatre. In a later version of the story, Brathwait writes that the gentlewoman “in the very heat of her distemper” thinks that she actually *is* Hieronimo.¹¹⁶ This woman’s fondness for the theatre has led her to lose her selfhood in her identification with this revenger.

The theatre as judge

Whereas defences of the theatre argued that stage plays showed the tragic ends of criminals and murderers, opponents feared for the effects of acted passion. Moreover, attacks on the theatre also stressed that the commercial stages are not legal courts, and should therefore not presume to perform their function. The anti-theatrical author I. G. objects that the theatres in appropriating the genre also appropriate the Inns’ authority to judge: “Players assume an unlawfull office to themselves,” he writes. The theatre in its aim to show the audience the consequences of proper and villainous behaviour transgress on the authority of the church as well as the law. “God only gave authority of “publique instruction and correction [...] to his Ecclesiasticall Ministers, and temporal Magistrates: he neuer instituted a third authority of Players.”¹¹⁷ Like the private revengers that feature on their stages, the theatres cross the line between public and private justice in their representation of right and wrong. For whereas a court of law can engage its authority to ensure good behaviour, the stage has no means to control its audience: “Players haue no authority in their enterludes: they have no law to cause men to fly that which is euill and to follow that which is good.”¹¹⁸ The playwrights themselves make less than ideal judges, I. G. objects, since a judge needs to be rational and equitable, and under no circumstances can his judgement be motivated by passion. “[N]either the Poets which penne the playes, nor the Actors that present them upon the Stage, doe seeke too be any good unto such as they rebuke, for the Poets intente, is, to wreake his owne anger.”¹¹⁹ This element of vindictive passion in the playwright’s creation, as well as in the actor’s performance of his role, is precisely what Thomas Elyot objects to in a judge. A private man may act from anger or vindictiveness, but a governor should never be affected by passion in his judgement. It is crucial that

whan according to the lawes/ they do punyssh offendours/they

them selves be nat chaufed or meued with wrath: But (as Tulli sayeth) be lyke to the lawes/whiche be prouokedde to punysshment nat by wrathe or displeasure/ but onely by equitie. And immediately the same autour gyueth an other noble precept concerning moderation in punysshment: sayenge/ that in correcting/ wrath is principally to be forboden/ for he that punissheth whyle he is angry/shall neuer kepe that meane/whiche is betwene to moche and to lyttell.¹²⁰

The public theatre, I. G. points out, cannot function as a judge who instructs and corrects by his public performance. Instead, the theatre in its appropriation of this right to judge is compared to the private revenger, characterized by a desire for vengeance and the inability to produce equitable judgements.

The changed material circumstances of the production and performance of the genre of revenge tragedy reveal the subversive potential of the genre. As Greenblatt writes, “[p]lays are made up of multiple exchanges, and the exchanges are multiplied over time, since to the transactions through which the work first acquired social energy are added supplementary transactions through which the work renews its power in changed circumstances.”¹²¹ Anti-theatrical authors view these changed circumstances, the shift in institutional context in which revenge tragedies were performed, as a danger to society. The terms in which I. G. objects to the theatre are precisely those in which debates about revenge were carried out. I. G. argues that the theatre does not have the authority to judge: it encroaches upon the authority of state and church in correcting its audiences. Associated with this dispute over the boundaries of public and private justice is the theme of reason and passion. Playwrights in I.G.’s view are not rational, but passionate authors, who seek to spend their anger rather than contribute to the common good.

Class distinctions and the dangers of revenge plays

An important factor in these concerns over the performance of revenge is the composition of the audiences in the commercial theatres. Whereas the Inns of Court performed their plays for the higher classes and the educated – judges, government officials, Elizabeth’s court – the commercial theatres staged their plays for anyone who could afford the entrance fee. The mixed composition of these audiences was a cause for concern:

At Stage Plaies [...] the worste sorte of people haue the hearing of it, which in respecte of there ignorance, of there ficklenes, and of there furie, are not to bee committed in place of iudgement. A Judge must be graue, sober, discrete, wise, well exercised in cases of gouernement. Which qualities are neuer founde in the baser sort.¹²²

Like women, the lower classes were thought incapable of judging a play on the basis of reason. The discourse of passionate femininity generated also in the Senecan tragedies of the Inns of Court is here employed to describe the lower class visitors of the commercial theatres. “The worst sort,” like women, are seen as furious and fickle. Hamlet remarks that the groundlings are capable of “nothing but inexplicable dumb-shows and noise,” they love the “robustious periwig-pated fellow [who] tear[s] a passion to tatters”¹²³ Seen as most attracted to the strutting and bellowing that Hamlet so detests, these spectators are in especial danger. They are seen as easily influenced by passion and not considered capable of rational judgement.

The performance history of the play *Sir Thomas More* (1595) shows how dangerous the effects of acted revenge were considered in early modern culture. In the first act the humanist scholar and London sheriff Thomas More employs his rhetorical skills to suppress an insurrection of London citizens who are no longer inclined to tolerate the presence of foreigners in their city. The citizens’ insurrection hinges on the conflict they perceive between the obedience that they owe to the state, and their desire to take private revenge on the foreigners who injure their patriotic and citizen honour. The citizens protest that “[i]t is hard when Englishmen’s patience must be thus jetted on by strangers, and they not dare to revenge their own wrongs.”¹²⁴ The conflict between law and revenge is portrayed in gendered terms. A wife accuses her docile husband of effeminate cowardice. Private revenge is feminine, associated with lawless women when she announces:

I’ll call so many women to mine assistance, as we’ll not leave one inch untorn of thee [addressing a Lombard]. If our husbands must be bridled by law, and forced to bear your wrongs, their wives will be a little lawless, and soundly beat ye. [...] I am ashamed that freeborn Englishmen, having beaten strangers within their own bounds, should thus be braved and abused by them at home.

(1.1.63–68; 72–74)

The wife intends to take revenge for the honour of “freeborn Englishmen.” She employs a discourse of masculine honour that resembles that of the militant aristocracy, but adapts it to London citizens. The broker John Lincoln appeals to similar values when he addresses his fellow citizens as “gallant bloods” and tells them they will become “rough ministers at law.” The contagious fury of the citizens is contained, however, by the eloquence of Thomas More, who convinces the citizens to be obedient to their king, and not to rise in riot. The play thus represents the victory of rational eloquence over vindictive fury. Private revenge is associated with the feminine and with the passion of vindictiveness, and is opposed to the rationality and capacity for judgement of the governors of the state.

Despite this eventual control of the vindictive passions of the London citizens in the play, Edmund Tilney, the Master of the Revels, considered the scenes too dangerous to be performed. He initially crossed out the lines in which the wife eggs her husband on to revenge, as well as the line cited above, in which Lincoln complains that it is hard when Englishmen dare not revenge their own wrongs. The urge to take private revenge in the *Tragedy of Sir Thomas More* was so volatile a subject that the Master of the Revels finally ordered to cut the whole first scene and several other passages from the manuscript. In the left margin he wrote: “Leave out [...] | ye insurrection | wholly w^t | ye Cause ther off [...] & nott otherwise | att your own perilles.”¹²⁵ Perhaps afraid that the staged insurrection, like the riots in the play, would cause “dangerous fierce commotion” and “would have bred | Great rage” (2.3.190 and 194), the Master of the Revels ordered that the play should begin with the scene in which Thomas More is complimented for suppressing the insurrection, and should leave out all that went before. As Gabrieli and Melchiori conclude, Tilney aimed to avoid allusions to public disorders against the authorities. Although the first act of *Sir Thomas More* when considered as a whole might be supportive of Tudor state discourse since it shows the triumph of reason over passion, the audience in the commercial theatres could be infected by the performance of vengefulness. An audience that is not controlled by any authority – since the theatre has no law, but is left to judge for itself – is within this discourse naturally drawn to vindictiveness. Or, in the words of I. G.: “The rudest of the people are sometime rauished with eery giewgawe, sometime

so headie, that they runne together by heaues, they know not whither; and lay about with their clubbes, they see not why.”¹²⁶

Conclusion

Revenge tragedy represents masculine selfhood both as permeable by the effects of acted passion, and as self-contained, controlled and rational. In response to current debates in the study of early modern selfhood, we can conclude that in this genre, the representation of the relation between selfhood and revenge is political. Discourses that view revenge as part of an age-old aristocratic tradition draw on models of rational selfhood, in which blood revenge serves to affirm the patrilineal identity of the revenger. Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* dramatizes the conflict between this view of revenge as masculine, controlled, and affirming identity, and the neo-Stoic view of revenge as feminine, excessive, and destructive. In revenge tragedy, the discourse that disapproves of revenge is an explicitly theatrical discourse: it draws on Senecan tragedy, and pivots on the effects of acted passion. *Hamlet* shows how a traditional aristocratic discourse that constructs revenge as a masculine, patriarchal duty conflicts with the humanist discourse of the Inns of Court, in which vindictiveness is shown as necessary for the execution of revenge, but is represented as feminine, theatrical, excessive, uncontrolled and therefore destructive. The play explores the role of the genre of revenge tragedy in this discursive conflict between public justice and revenge, between aristocratic independence, or adherence to the monarch, between reason and passion, between patience and action. On the one hand, Hamlet attempts to draw inspiration from Senecan plays performed within the play, and seeks to be infected with Pyrrhus’ choler and vengefulness as well as with the Senecan rhetoric and the bombastic style of acting that belongs to the early revenge tragedies. On the other hand, his attempts to follow the examples of Senecan revengers never succeed, precisely because the prince is aware of the conventions of the genre of revenge tragedy. Hamlet associates the performance of vengeance with excessive rhetoric and the madness of feminine passion. Like Sir William Cornwallis, he is inhibited by the destructive results that an imitation of such models of vindictiveness would have.

The conflict between two models of selfhood also underlies contemporary views on the effects of the genre of revenge tragedy.

Whereas proponents of the theatre argued that the performance of revenge would teach the audience to shun murder, anti-theatrical authors feared the irrational effects of acted passion on the spectators. These opponents of the theatre emphasize the “secret” ways in which passion works on the mind, cancelling out the control of reason, and effeminising the spectators. They reproduce the discourse of feminine, uncontrolled and destructive revenge shaped in Seneca’s tragedies. The institutional context of the performance of revenge is crucial in these discussions. Unlike the Inns of Court, the theatre is not an institution representative of the authority of the law. Yet, they perform public plays, which in the eyes of defenders of the drama serve to instruct and correct the audience. Puritan opponents of the theatre object that the theatre thereby appropriates a right to judge. Like a private revenger, playwrights in their public punishments are driven by vindictive passion rather than by authorized, rational judgement, and public performances are therefore to be disapproved of. Like women, the less educated members of the audience are by opponents of the theatre seen as furious and fickle mobs, who are controlled by their passions. They are not capable of a rational judgement of the performance, and are likely to be incited to their natural passion of vindictiveness, rather than to be instructed in the vices of revenge. The doubly subversive concept of imitation, inherent in the genre of revenge tragedy, has a different ideological effect when the genre is performed before London citizens, authorized by the payment of their entrance fees to act as judges.

While Sir William Cornwallis may have been sufficiently impressed by Senecan dramatic discourse to decide not to play the fury to life, the minister W. Westerman, writing in the same year in which Cornwallis composed his essay, complains about vengeful London citizens. He relates this vengefulness to the humours and to the stage, and targets the genre of revenge tragedy in particular when he complains of the “tragicall humor, and stage-like behaiour of our dayes: wherein euey *Nouice*, like a fury, learns to cry *Reuenge*.”¹²⁷

NOTES

¹ See also Kincaid 2004.

² See also Don Cameron Allen’s introduction in Cornwallis 1946.

- ³ Bacon 2000: 16–17.
- ⁴ Cornwallis 1946: 14. All further quotations from the essay will be from this edition, pp. 14–15.
- ⁵ The *OED* defines “to take day” as “to put off to another day” (*sv.* take *v.* 67).
- ⁶ Cornwallis 1946: 15.
- ⁷ For recent overviews of discussions of the body and the self, see also Van Dijkhuizen 2003: 26–29; Paster 2004: 1–24; and Calbi 2005: xiii–xxii.
- ⁸ See Floyd–Wilson 2005: 2.
- ⁹ Schoenfeldt 1999: 17.
- ¹⁰ Paster 2004: 22 and 19.
- ¹¹ Strier and Mazzio 2005: 16–17. The discussion (Floyd–Wilson 2005) and the reaction by Strier and Mazzio were both published in the online journal *Literature Compass*.
- ¹² Marston 1978: 5.5.82.
- ¹³ *Hamlet*: 1.1.112. All further quotations from the play will be from the Arden Second Series edition, edited by Harold Jenkins (1982).
- ¹⁴ Fisher 1991: 46.
- ¹⁵ Cantor 1989: 30; see also Headlam Wells 2000: 74.
- ¹⁶ In Shakespeare’s *Antony and Cleopatra*, “Lethe’d dullness” is explained to be the result of “sleep and feeding,” echoing the notions of “fat” and “ease” in the ghost’s words (2.1.26–27). Significantly, this sleep and feeding is said to “prorogue [Antony’s] honour”: dullness is injurious to male reputation. See also the long note to 1.5.32 in Jenkins’s Arden edition of *Hamlet* (p. 455).
- ¹⁷ Sullivan 2005: 31.
- ¹⁸ Sullivan 2005: 37.
- ¹⁹ James 1986: 310.
- ²⁰ Middleton and Rowley 1974: 53–54.
- ²¹ See also Brome’s *The New Academy* (1635): Where grief is described as “puleing,” (weakly or sickly) and the anger that “may instruct [...] to revenge” as a “nobler and more manly passion” (1.1).
- ²² Hallett and Hallett 1980: 71. See also Grossman 2003: 184.
- ²³ Campbell 1961: 109.
- ²⁴ Gail Kern Paster writes: “The scornful phrasing represents the kind of abuse that would be directed from a high- to a low-born man. The descriptors link the rascal’s sluggish and ineffectual disposition, his ‘muddy’ mettle, to his base birth. His lack of purpose and inner strength – his lack of worthy ‘mettle/metal’ – is degrading for a king’s son; hence it is a form of psychological servitude, transforming him from prince to ‘rogue and peasant slave’” (Paster 2002: 146–47).
- ²⁵ Peacham 1971: 128.
- ²⁶ Gail Kern Paster has argued that women are not depicted as agents in humoral emblems, because their humoral constitution is characterized by change, and such temperamental un-selfsameness is kept out of view in this genre of emblem (Paster 2004: 85).
- ²⁷ Vincentio Saviololo in his guide to duelling, *Vincentio Saviolo his*

Practice (1595), stresses that courage should always be controlled by reason: “the wisdom and discretion of a man, is as great a vertue as his magnanimitie and courage, which are so much the greater vertues, by how much they are accompanied with wisdom: for without them a man is not to be accounted valiant but rather furious.” Sig. Bb1^r, cited in Middleton and Rowley 1974: 9n42.

²⁸ James 1986: 406–407. The quotation derives from Peacham’s *Complete Gentleman* (1622).

²⁹ Peacham 1962: 11–12.

³⁰ *OED* *sv.* bounteous *adj.* 1b. The *OED* cites a text from c. 1440 in which a knight is described as bounteous in battle: “The knyghtus [...] in batelle so bountyveus.” Although the last example that the *OED* cites for this use of the word is 1485, the use of archaic vocabulary is common in chivalric texts.

³¹ Headlam Wells 2000: 7–19.

³² Richard McCoy in his seminal study of chivalric culture argues that the clash between aristocratic honour and the necessity of obedience to the monarch was accommodated in Elizabethan England in the genre of chivalric literature. Elizabethan chivalry, McCoy writes, “was a continuing compromise between the Queen and her fractious aristocrats, one in which she had the upper hand but still conceded a great deal” (18). The chivalric ceremonies of the Elizabethan court in a precarious balance allowed the aristocracy to celebrate their martial independence, while at the same time paying tribute to their monarch.

³³ Crooke, *Microcosmographia*, 276, cited in Paster 2004: 99. Bevington confirms that “women were regarded as naturally phlegmatic, fleshy, and soft; their moist temperaments inclined them to tears and to passions that were quickly engendered, but as quickly dissipated. Men were as a whole more dry and hot, and therefore, braver, more choleric, more intelligent” (Bevington 1984: 74).

³⁴ On the construction of gender difference, see Paster 1993: 7 and *passim*; on conceptions of ethnicity, see Floyd–Wilson 2004, *passim*.

³⁵ Primaudaye, 312–13. The French author on the passions Charron similarly writes that women are particularly liable to vengefulness (see James 1997: 8). See also Kennedy 2000: 6–7 for more examples from early modern humoral treatises.

³⁶ Lemnius, *The Secret Miracles of Nature*, cited in Schoenfeldt, 1999: 36.

³⁷ See also Kennedy 2000: 7.

³⁸ Crooke, *Microcosmographia*, cited in Paster 2004: 99.

³⁹ Interestingly, a comparable contrast was applied between people of northern and southern climates. The colder and more phlegmatic north is characterized by quick fury, and is easily reconciled, whereas the hotter and more choleric south is represented in terms of a slow but enduring ire: “the man of the North is transported into fury by the heat of courage, and pursueth his revenge in open field; where being provoked, and passion asswaged, he is easily pacified: whereas the Southerne man is not easily provoked; nor once in passion, is easily to

be reconciled: and in actions of warre, he wholly setteth his hopes on policies and stratagems, tormenting with great indignitie and crueltie his slaine or vanquished enemies, and that in cold blood” (Botero 1630: 14). Ton Hoenselaars points out that the desire to revenge wrongs by means of clever schemes was in the early modern period associated with Italians (Hoenselaars 1992: 117). See also Floyd-Wilson 2004.

⁴⁰ Brathwait 1970: 35.

⁴¹ Maus 1995b: 190. Laura Gowing also asserts that women’s reproductive bodies were often read as “a conduit for revenge, fear, and danger” (Gowing 2003: 134).

⁴² Lodge 1614: 511.

⁴³ Wright 1971: 50.

⁴⁴ Couffeteau 1621: 573.

⁴⁵ Lodge 1614: 510.

⁴⁶ John Davies of Hereford, *Microcosmos*, cited in Bevington 1984: 92.

⁴⁷ Nashe 1920: 119.

⁴⁸ Kyd 1995: 4.2.1–4.

⁴⁹ The idea of revenge upon a mother’s womb is frequent in revenge tragedy. It occurs in *Octavia*, one of Seneca’s ten tragedies (now thought not to be by Seneca), and also in Thomas Goffe’s *Orestes*, where Clytemnestra pleads with her son to execute his revenge upon her womb, instead of on the child she conceived with Aeghystus: “O turne thy bloody weapon on my brest, | ’Twas this wombe that brought forth this Babe and thee. | If that be guilty, I haue made it so. | Rip vp this place which first did bring thee forth, | ’Tis I intreat thee, ’tis the mother, she | Which gaue thee house-roume here within this brest, | Vpon whose dugs thy infant lips did hang.” Medea regrets that her womb yielded only two children, and like Isabella threatens to take revenge on it: “And yet to staunche my hungry grieffe the number is to small, | If onely twayne I slea, if pleadge of love lye secrete made, | My bowels Ile unbreast, and search my womb with poking Blade” (Eliot 1964: I, 97).

⁵⁰ J. W. H. Konst has argued that the passions in Dutch Senecan tragedy of the early modern period, “the passions are not only considered as psychological entities, but also as physical phenomena” (Konst 1993: 236).

⁵¹ Eliot 1964: I, 63.

⁵² Eliot 1964: II, 107.

⁵³ Corrigan 1992: 1.2.29–33.

⁵⁴ Eliot 1964: II, 107.

⁵⁵ Barnes 1980: 1.5.601–605.

⁵⁶ Bevington 1984: 93.

⁵⁷ Hallett and Hallett 1980: 62. Whereas modern terminology distinguishes between anger and madness, in early modern humoral theory madness is an extreme form of anger, as Joseph Hall attests: “[there is] no difference between anger and madness, but continuance; for, raging anger is a short madnesse. [...] [a]nd madness again is nothing but a continued rage.” Hall, “Holy Observations,” cited in

Hallett and Hallett 1980: 45. We encountered such a loss of selfhood already in *Hercules Furens*, where manly reason is subdued by feminine, destructive passion. A similar pattern may have taken place in Chettle and Dekker's now lost *Orestes Furious* (Admiral's Men, 1599), see Schleiner 1990: 35.

⁵⁸ Findlay 1999: 60. Findlay, however, does not read *Hamlet* along the gender lines I set out in this chapter. Instead, she sees the masculine, paternal form of revenge propagated by the ghost contrasted in the play with a maternal form of revenge, namely suicide. "Hamlet has to choose between paternal and maternal forms of revenge [...]. To 'take arms' against Claudius would be to constitute himself in the image of his father, as an independent adult, but to 'take arms' against himself, as a mother's son, would be to embark on a fantasy of annihilating any selfhood apart from her" (67).

⁵⁹ Bacon 2000: 17.

⁶⁰ Chettle 1951: 23-24.

⁶¹ Girard 1991: 273.

⁶² Barnes 1980: 1.5.585-94.

⁶³ Kyd 1995: 3.13.1-9.

⁶⁴ Critics have been puzzled by Kyd's choice of this particular line. Scott McMillin writes that the main problem with the line seems to be that Clytemnestra is not talking about revenge against Agamemnon at this point in the text. Although "there is an element of revenge in her motive," the speech from which the line is taken is filled with metaphors of giving over the reins and casting oneself adrift. "[S]he speaks of the intended murder," McMillin concludes, "as a headlong fulfillment of what she has become" (McMillin 1974: 202). In the tradition of Senecan revenge tragedy, however, this apparent conflict between revenge and a sense of headlong dedication does not represent a contradiction. On the contrary, since the mental and physical dedication to the passion of vengefulness forms so crucial a step in the attainment of revenge in the genre, the association of private revenge with notions of "casting oneself adrift" is only logical. This crucial connection between the execution of revenge and feminine passion appears also from the lines in which Hieronimo voices his determination to turn from justice to revenge, where he vows that since "on this earth justice will not be found" he will "in this passion" descend to the underworld to gather "a troop of Furies and tormenting hags" (3.13.108-113).

⁶⁵ Hallett and Hallett 1980: 203.

⁶⁶ Bate 1993: 107.

⁶⁷ Marston 1978: 2.3.45.

⁶⁸ Eliot 1964: I, 61.

⁶⁹ Shakespeare 1995: 4.1.57 and 5.2.195-96.

⁷⁰ Mason 1963: ll. 1709-13. See also Henry Chettle's *Tragedy of Hoffman* (1603), where Clois Hoffman says: "He was the prologue to a Tragedy | That if my destinies deny me not, | Shall passe those of Thyestes, Tereus, | Iocasta, or Duke Iasons ieaious wife." (Chettle 1951: 407-10).

⁷¹ Heywood 1973: sig. E3v.

⁷² *OED* sv. inwardly.

⁷³ Wright's interest in the passions is politically strategic since it is closely related to his work as a Catholic missionary (see also Staines 2004: 93-97). Wright ventured to preach in Protestant England, seeking to convince his listeners that loyalty to the Catholic faith was compatible with loyalty to the English crown. He engaged in religious controversies in print, and wrote the earliest drafts of *The Passions of the Mind in General* while he was imprisoned for publicly debating religious questions. Thomas Sloan in his introduction stresses that Wright's Catholicism and the rhetorical purposes of the treatise have hardly been recognized (Wright 1971: xiii). Wright himself acknowledges the uses of his treatise when he writes that "the Christian Orator (I mean the godly Preacher) [who] perfectly understanding the natures and properties of mens passions, questionlesse may effectuate strange matters in the mindes of his Auditors" (3).

⁷⁴ Wright 1971: 180.

⁷⁵ Descriptions of the performance practice of the revenge ghost that have come down to us in early modern drama similarly emphasize the sound of fury: the ghost's shrill and piercing voice. The domestic tragedy *A Warning for Fair Women* (1599) tells us that "a filthie whining ghost [...] Comes skreaming like a pigge halfe stickt | And cries Vindicta, revenge, revenge" (Anonymous 1975: Induction 54; 56-57) and Thomas Lodge evokes the shrill female voice of the oisterwife when he refers to "the ghost which cried so miserally at the Theator like an oisterwife, Hamlet, revenge" (Lodge, *Wits Miserie*, sig. h4v; cited in Marston 1963). In the dumbshow to the fourth Act in *Gorboduc*, the furies appear "as though out of hell" to the squealing of "Howboies".

⁷⁶ Wright 1971: 172.

⁷⁷ Wright 1971: 180. I emended "batter" to "better."

⁷⁸ Wright 1971: 5-6.

⁷⁹ Wright 2001: *passim*.

⁸⁰ The quotation is from Marston's *The Insatiate Countess* (Marston 1998: 1.1.119).

⁸¹ See also Kastan 1987: 113.

⁸² Jenkins writes: "The *play within the play* is at once marked off from the surrounding dialogue by the rhyming couplets and by an artificial elaboration of style characteristic of an older period. [...] There is no reason to suspect parody. Having set the tone, embellishment by periphrasis soon gives way, but the couplets, with an accumulation of *sententiae*, many inversions, and the occasional unfamiliar word, continue their distancing effect" (LN3.2.15-55). Similarly, Gurr argues: "Their leader, in giving a patently poetic piece of declamation, simply provides a contrast with Hamlet, who gives a performance of his own much more realistic passion immediately afterwards. That is, the actor of the First Player provides a level of recitation in comparison with which the actor of Hamlet seems completely natural" (Gurr 1963: 100).

⁸³ Brower 1971: 291. Brower adds also that it features those characteristics of the Elizabethan Roman-heroic style that also occurs

in descriptions of the ghost: “noun and epithet phrases like ‘the rugged Pyrrhus,’ ‘the ominous horse,’ ‘the hellish Pyrrhus’ and ‘Th’unnerved father.’”

⁸⁴ Felperin 1977: 47–48.

⁸⁵ Jenkins writes that the scenes in which Hamlet rants in Senecan fashion bring him closest to the imitation of the murderer he would take revenge on: they “revea[l] not so much an acceptance of duty as an exultation in hate, vindictiveness, blood lust” (Jenkins, 3.2.379LN).

⁸⁶ The ghost urges his son: “Taint not thy mind” (1.5.85). Jenkins explains that most commentators [...] appear to take this as an injunction complete in itself. [...] Dover Wilson understands it as a warning against loss of mental control (Wilson 1935: 46, 209), others as enjoining Hamlet to avoid ignoble passion” (LN 1.5.85). See also Hallett and Hallett, who argue that “[s]ince revenge is a ‘motion of the heart’, an affection or a perturbation like jealousy or love, the madness hinted at by these ominous words of King Hamlet [‘taint not thy mind’] is, obligatorily, a madness of inordinate passion” (Hallett and Hallett 1980: 60). Miola describes the double bind that this command poses when he writes that “Hamlet can only live up to the demands of *pietas* by acting with *impius furor*. This is the paradox that confounds [his] morality and threatens [his] humanity” (Miola 1992: 278).

⁸⁷ Wiggins 2000: 56. See also Gurr 2004: 108.

⁸⁸ Anonymous 1975: induction, ll.54–57.

⁸⁹ Hunter 1997: 71–72.

⁹⁰ Jonson 1966: 1.4.44–56. Jonson mocks the passage by having the gull Matthew admire its style, a dramatic taste which according to the editor of the comedy, Seymour-Smith, “would have been regarded as old-fashioned and ignorant” (28n44). Seymour-Smith adds that Jonson in his play is “not altogether deprecatory” of *The Spanish Tragedy*.

⁹¹ R. A. Foakes, cited in Reavley Gair 1978: 35.

⁹² Jenkins, 3.2.14n. Jenkins reports that Herod in the Coventry Pageant of the Shearmen and Taylors cries out: “I stampe! I stare! [...] I rent! I rawe! And now run I wode!” after which Herod “*ragis in the pagond and in the strete also*.” Braden writes that Herod anticipates “many of the general features I have been calling Senecan. Herod’s spectacular ravings were an obligatory high point of the pageant, and within them remarkably ‘Senecan’ figures of speech can develop” (Braden 1985: 179).

⁹³ Ben Jonson, *Timber*, 100. Braden remarks that Hamlet “is one of the most influential critics of Senecan furor” (Braden 1985: 217). Andrew Gurr has argued that such critical remarks on strutting and bellowing refer to Edward Alleyn’s style of acting, known for its “violence of voice and gesture [...] which contrasted unfavourably in some minds with the moderation of the Blackfriars.” He remarks that the term “furious” is often employed with reference to Alleyn’s acting (Gurr 1963: 96, 99).

⁹⁴ Scott Kastan 1987: 116. See also Mercer who comments that Hamlet here speaks the mighty word that should fill him up with murderous resolution” (Mercer 1987: 195).

⁹⁵ Parker 1987: 23.

- ⁹⁶ These are Bottom's words in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Shakespeare 1997: 1.2.33. See also Miola 1992: 44.
- ⁹⁷ Greenblatt 1988: 7.
- ⁹⁸ See, for example, Cunningham 1990; Kendall 1998; and Smith 2001.
- ⁹⁹ See also Konst 1993: 163–65.
- ¹⁰⁰ Sidney 2002: 90 and 88.
- ¹⁰¹ Sidney 2002: 91.
- ¹⁰² Heywood 1973: sig. F3v.
- ¹⁰³ Heywood 1973: sig. B4r.
- ¹⁰⁴ Gosson 1972: sigs. F1r and G4r.
- ¹⁰⁵ Wright 1971: 49 and 51.
- ¹⁰⁶ Wright 1971: 174–75. Sir William Cornwallis makes a similar distinction between a base and a more sophisticated kind of imitation in his essays. He writes that the imitations of Italian fashion in England are “base Imitations begotten betweene the sences and the fantasie, bastards vnknown to the inward true discerning soule” (Cornwallis 1946: 63–64).
- ¹⁰⁷ Levine 1994: 13–14 and Sullivan 2005: 41.
- ¹⁰⁸ Couffeteau 1621: 623.
- ¹⁰⁹ Prynne 1633: sig. K4v.
- ¹¹⁰ Prynne 1633: sig. Xxx3r–3v. Interestingly, Wiseman in his *Christian Knight* makes a similar argument about the dangers of chivalric romance and the reading of play books: “a multitude of idle books and ingenious devises as I said, but much naughtinesse in them, to inuegle the minde of man, and wrie our understanding quite on t'one side. Such as *Amades*, and *Ariosto* [...] that are full of these challenges, and brauadoes [...] These and such like, men teare, and weare with continuall reading. Euery one will haue one of these, or a play booke in hand, and what men delight in, they are made like vnto” (Wiseman 1619: sig. V1r).
- ¹¹¹ Sidney 2002: 98.
- ¹¹² Prynne 1633: sig. Eee*2r.
- ¹¹³ Prynne 1633: sig. Cccccc2v–3r.
- ¹¹⁴ Brathwait 1975: 195.
- ¹¹⁵ Shapiro 1991: 101, see also 108. Italics mine.
- ¹¹⁶ Cited in Shapiro 1991: 109.
- ¹¹⁷ I. G. 1973: sig. H2v.
- ¹¹⁸ I. G. 1973: sig. H2v
- ¹¹⁹ Gosson 1972: sig. D3v–D4r.
- ¹²⁰ Elyot 1970 : sig. flr.
- ¹²¹ Greenblatt 1988: 20.
- ¹²² I. G. 1973: sig. C8v.
- ¹²³ Shakespeare 1982: 3.2.9–12.
- ¹²⁴ Munday 1990: 1.1.25
- ¹²⁵ Gabrieli and Melchiori 1990: 17.
- ¹²⁶ I. G. 1973: sig. D1r.
- ¹²⁷ Westerman 1600: sig. C6v.



CHAPTER 5

Civilizing the masculine

THE POLITICS OF PASSION IN THE PRIVATE THEATRES

But, Stoique, where (in the vast world)
Doth that man breathe, that can so much command
His blood, and his affection?
Ben Jonson, *Every Man in his Humour* (1599)

In 1632, in the private theatre of Blackfriars a play was about to begin.¹ Blackfriars was one of the private commercial theatres that became increasingly successful in the seventeenth century. These indoor venues were smaller than the open-air amphitheatres, and asked a higher price of admission. In the hall of the former monastery, playgoers were taking their seats in the galleries and in the pit. The Countess of Essex, accompanied by her stepson, Captain Essex, was seated in one of the boxes that flank the stage, the seating area frequented by the wealthier patrons of the theatre. In front of the boxes, young male gallants were seated on the stage itself, in stools hired for an extra sixpence, as was customary in Blackfriars. The number of chairs for hire was limited, however, and when the Irish Lord Thurles arrived, the store of chairs in the tiring house had in all probability been depleted. Therefore, Lord Thurles took up position on the edge of the stage. Captain Essex in the box behind him did not appreciate this, however:

This Captaine attending and accompanying my Lady of Essex in a boxe at the playhouse at the blackfryers, the said lord coming upon

the stage, stood before them and hindred their sight. Captain Essex told his lordship they had payd for their places as well as hee, and therefore entreated him not to deprive them of the benefitt of it. Whereupon the lord stood up yet higher and hindred more their sight. Then Capt. Essex with his hand putt him a little by. The lord then drewe his sword and ran full butt at him, though hee missed him, and might have slain the Countesse as well as him.²

This example of aristocratic revenge for injured honour, performed on stage and in full view of the spectators at Blackfriars, confirms an image of the private theatres as decadent playhouses. In his *Shakespeare and the Rival Traditions*, Harbage famously contrasts the public playhouses as the theatre of the nation, to the private theatres that he sees as catering only to a decadent coterie audience. The latter theatres ignored political and social pressures, and withdrew into a world of escapism, fantasy, and romance. This escapist attitude fostered a rift between the populace and these coterie audiences, Harbage argues. In his view, this rift resulted in the Civil Wars that were to close all the theatres in 1642.³ If our period of study began with the memory of the Wars of the Roses still imprinted on the memories of the governors of the Tudor state, it is rounded off with this closure of the theatres at the outbreak of the Civil Wars in 1642. This chapter analyses the representation of revenge in the private theatre of Blackfriars, to re-examine the role of the private theatre in discourses of revenge in the decades before the civil war.

The division between Roundheads and Cavaliers, Parliamentarians and Royalists, was not only based on political and religious concepts, but also pivoted on conflicting ideas on manners and civility. The concept of revenge plays a central role in what has been called the 'Cavalier mentality' supposedly produced in the drama of the private theatres. Mervyn James has described how in the course of the seventeenth century processes of state formation pressured traditional gentry politics to such an extent that the traditional aristocratic sense of honour came to be contested. In its place, a new concept of individual, personal honour was established: influenced also by Italian books of courtesy, honour increasingly came to be regarded as a reward for individual virtue rather than a quality inherited through aristocratic lineage. With aristocratic feuding and blood revenge on the wane, the concept of individual honour introduced a novel threat to social stability.

The sense of masculine identity derived from deeds of honour was not as secure as the intrinsic aristocratic honour that it replaced: masculine reputation was a fragile notion that could swiftly come to be injured or lost.⁴

This new sense of masculine identity called for ways to defend one's honour if insulted, a need that was answered by the practice of the duel. The duel as a means to defend masculine honour quickly gained ground in England in the first decades of the seventeenth century. "These times have begotten this idele beliefe in the brave ones, and they will owne it, that who is stained by any abuse is bound in honour to scoure it by a challenge," complains the anonymous author G. F.⁵ Elizabeth Foyster describes how the ritual of the duel was idiosyncratic among the gentry as a means of defending and restoring honourable manhood, and fencing schools as well as fencing manuals were highly popular in London. In the private honour system, masculinity is defined by the preparedness to engage in retribution when one's reputation is injured. "Refusal to fight," writes Foyster, "could render a man open to mockery and insult."⁶

The notion of revenge for honour in the seventeenth century became prominent in the drama as well. C. L. Barber writes that: "sensitivity to affront or injury, the taking of revenge, [...] all become almost everyday matters in the drama during the century, whereas they play a relatively minor part in Elizabethan [sixteenth-century] drama: even the villain-heroes of Elizabethan revenge tragedy seldom claim that their deeds are motivated or justified by honour."⁷ The drama of the first half of the seventeenth century, Barber points out, uncritically accepted the code of honour as the basis for gentlemanly conduct, and this resulted in a frequent and positive representation of the duel for honour. The Puritan anti-theatricalist William Prynne in his *Histriomastix* (1633) makes a crucial connection between the theatre, the aristocratic duel for honour (as practiced both by actors and spectators), uncontrolled passion, and tyranny:

Our owne experience can sufficiently informe us; that Playes and Play-houses are the frequent causes of many murthers, duels, quarrels, debates, occasioned, sometimes by reason of some difference about a box, a seate, or place upon the Stage: [...] Many have been the murthers, more the quarrels, the duels that have growne from our Stage-plays, whose large encomiums of rash valour, duels,

fortitude, generosity, impaciency, homicides, tyranny and revenge, doe so exasperate mens raging passions, and make them so impatient of the very smallest injury, that nothing can satisfie, can expiate it but the offenders blood.⁸

Prynne thus not only sees the theatre as a place where aristocrats fought over a box or a seat on the stage (for it was the nobility who sat in these conspicuous areas), he also accuses the drama itself of producing such passions as lead to a desire for revenge. In a sense, Prynne's view of the dangers of drama accords to Harbage's political interpretation. He too sees revenge as one of the examples of the decadent patterns of Cavalier behaviour fostered at these theatres. The moral attitude to revenge propagated in plays such as Marston's *Antonio's Revenge*, in his view is "debased."⁹

This view of the role of the drama of the private theatres has come to be criticized, however. In the first place, the assumption that the private theatres were frequented exclusively by the aristocracy is now challenged.¹⁰ Although critics agree that the largest part of the audiences of these more expensive commercial theatres were those with status, wealth, education or achievement, they do not categorically rule out the presence of many others at these playhouses as well. The audience of these private theatres did not consist of courtiers only, but also attracted the gentry, including its newer members who had acquired education, achievement and wealth, and could afford the price of a ticket as well as the aristocracy could.¹¹ Apart from this challenge to the traditional view of the audience constitution, critics like Martin Butler have commented that the association between Cavalier culture and the theatre is precisely what Puritan propagandists like William Prynne sought to foster. Butler has demonstrated that the drama of the period was not escapist at all, but very much engaged with the political issues of its time.¹² This political context was not as polarized as was long thought, as historians of the Civil Wars have recently argued.¹³ There was no monolithic source of power that produced a unified discourse, but neither were there two unified discourses opposed to each other. Instead, as Martin Butler argues:

'Cavalier' and 'puritan', 'court' and 'country' were not fixed norms of sensibility or behaviour to one or other of which every individual conformed, but values in a continual state of flux or dialectic, each

perpetually modifying and modified by the other as they issued into the experience of their time[.] [...] There is here a society seriously at disagreement with itself; but the disagreements have not yet entirely polarized into mutually exclusive counter-cultures.¹⁴

The historiography of the first half of the seventeenth century, then, has recognized the importance of discursive structures and their relation to processes of power and the formation of meaning. These new developments in historiography as well as in theatrical research call for a re-examination of the private theatres' representations of revenge.

This chapter examines the cultural politics of gender and revenge in the London private theatres in the first half of the seventeenth century. It asks after the ways in which the drama of the private theatres represented revenge, specifically in the form of the duel and the honour codes that are associated with it. I will analyse representations of revenge in Chapman's heroic tragedies, Middleton and Rowley's *The Fair Quarrel* and Massinger's comedies *The City Madam* (1632), *The Spanish Curate* (1622) and *A Very Woman* (1634).

The revenger as gentleman

In the years 1604-1610, George Chapman wrote four tragedies that problematize the role of aristocratic honour and revenge in absolutist monarchies. *The Tragedy of Bussy D'Ambois* (1604), *The Conspiracy of Byron* (1608), *The Tragedy of Byron* (1608), and *The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois* (1610) were all performed in the theatre of Blackfriars, and remained popular throughout the Jacobean and Caroline period. All four are what Richard Ide terms "heroic tragedies."¹⁵ These tragedies negotiate the friction between humanist models of honour and the aristocratic notion of honour based in personal achievement. In humanist ideology, all sense of honour derives from obedience to the monarch. In both older and newer models of aristocratic honour, it is not the king who confers honour on a subject. Instead, it is the noblemen's aristocratic lineage, or his individual achievements that determine his reputation. Frictions between the two models came to a height in 1601, when the second Earl of Essex rose in rebellion against Queen Elizabeth. The Essex rebellion is a touchstone to which Chapman's tragedies constantly return in their examination of the role the aristocratic hero in an absolutist

monarchy. As Richard Ide writes: “[w]ith Essex’s abortive rebellion and subsequent execution in 1601, a typical social misfit became a tragic paradigm.”¹⁶ The practice of revenge plays a key role in the plays’ probing of aristocratic notions of honour. As a practice that is expressly concerned with personal honour rather than obedience, revenge offers a mode of resistance to absolute monarchy. Revenge is subversive of absolute monarchy whether the act is directed against the monarch himself or not, for any corruption of the law is an offence to the monarch. In Chapman’s tragedies, revenge is often motivated by a Stoic adherence to the concept of rational law. These laws of reason weigh more heavily than civil law in the view of Stoic philosophy, and therefore provide Chapman’s heroes with a justification of their disobedience. In the tragedies about Duke Byron and in *The Tragedy of Bussy D’Ambois* this aristocratic sense of honour that finds justification in Stoic philosophy is associated with a choleric humour. These heroes’ angry passions and desire for revenge compromise their position at court. The sequel to *The Tragedy of Bussy D’Ambois*, however, presents a Stoic hero who is able to contain his passion, and to perform a rational and measured revenge for his brother’s death. Fredson Bowers has argued that in *The Revenge of Bussy D’Ambois* we encounter for the first time on the English stage a revenger “who could be an English gentleman.”¹⁷

In 1598, George Chapman dedicated his translation of *Seaven Bookes of the Iliades of Homer* to Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex. At that time, three years before his execution at the Queen’s order, the Earl of Essex was the epitome of masculine heroism. Headlam Wells writes that “[w]hen Samuel Daniel praised Essex for reviving ‘ancient honor nere worne out of date’ he was referring to that neo-chivalric code of values that the Elizabethan armorist Gerard Legh defined as ‘glory gotten by courage of manhood.’”¹⁸ In his dedication, Chapman lauds his patron as the present-day Achilles, “The Most Honored now living Instance of the Achilleian vertues eternized by divine Homere.” He portrays him as a renaissance man of arms, placing the earl in a line of masculine warrior heroes. The Earl of Essex, however, was soon to lose his status as the protestant warrior of England; his impulsive behaviour led to his downfall when the Queen executed him for treason. Concomitantly, Chapman in his revisions of his translation of the *Iliad* made significant changes to his initial heroic portrayal

of Achilles. Richard Ide speculates on the reasons why Chapman later condemns Achilles' excessive passion:

First, the pagan heroic ethos in the second half of Homer's *Iliad* and Achilles' awesome wrath do not readily translate into the Elizabethan ethical code; and second, like Achilles, Essex had moved beyond the bounds of rational, virtuous restraint. Achilles' irrational fury in the second half of the *Iliad* and Essex's impulsive blunder in 1601 forbade a partisan portrayal of them as heroic victims, such as Chapman had offered in 1598.¹⁹

Nevertheless, in his *The Tragedy of Bussy D'Ambois* (1604), a play based on the life of a contemporary French nobleman, Chapman made a final attempt to reconcile masculine heroism with the virtuous restraint of Stoic philosophy and the requirements of an absolutist monarchy. In its portrayal of the aristocrat Bussy D'Ambois, renowned in France as well as England for his triumph in a duel and his love affair with the wife of the Guise, the play represents Bussy as a Stoic character, who seeks to live by his own sense of wrong and right, and refuses to adapt to the corrupt manners of the court of Henri III. Revenge in the form of a duel to defend one's honour is represented as a part of Bussy's masculine identity; his readiness to defend his personal morality is what makes him a hero in the play. In 1610, however, Chapman wrote a sequel to this tragedy, entitled *The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois*. Here, Clermont, Bussy's brother, is a Stoic who would rather not engage in the practice of blood revenge. While Bussy was represented as an active Herculean hero, Clermont is more close to Ulysses, the contemplative hero. Like Achilles in Chapman's later revisions of his *Iliad*, Bussy is retrospectively portrayed as a person too much swayed by anger. These two plays, then, differ in their concepts of what it means to be a Stoic hero. Where revenge is an inseparable part of masculine honour and identity in the first tragedy, in *The Revenge of Bussy* it is problematized, and only grudgingly performed by Bussy's brother Clermont.

The tragedy of *Bussy D'Ambois* (1604) experiments with the concept of an active Stoic hero. Bussy has always desisted from making an appearance at court, since he is averse to the kind of corruption and flattery that surrounds the monarch. He is drawn out of his *vita contemplativa*, however, when the French king asks him to come to court. The relative virtues of the active

versus the contemplative life were subject to discussion in the early modern period. Henry Peacham – like Chapman writing under the patronage of the Earl of Arundel – advises the nobleman in his *Complete Gentleman* (1622) to be beneficial and useful to his country: “for they are hardly to be admitted for noble who, though of never so excellent parts, consume their light as in a dark lanthorn in contemplation and a Stoical retiredness.”²⁰ This condemnation of the *vita contemplativa* was shared also by the early modern Neostoic philosopher Guillaume du Vair. Like Epictetus, whom Chapman admired, du Vair valued the active life over the contemplative.

The dilemma for the man of action, however, was that this public world was often corrupt and aggressive. This is where the concept of revenge plays a key political role in the plays. The question that Chapman’s plays seem to ask, is how an aristocratic Stoic character can maintain his honour at an absolutist court, where his obedience to the king is adamant. Peter Bement writes that “all Stoics agree in principle that the wise man should obey the laws and customs of his particular commonweal so long as they agree with Right Reason.”²¹ This notion of right reason, or natural law is where the powers of resistance of Stoicism lie. Whereas humanist thinkers employed Neostoic thought to bolster the idea of obedience to the monarch through control of the passions, Neostoic philosophy could also function as the rationale for private resistance against the laws of the state, and could function to support a deed of private revenge. Stoicism in this form is not concerned with a contemplative withdrawal from society, but proposes an active life and the manipulation of anger for political ends.²² Andrew Shifflet has explored this militant aspect of Stoicism in the seventeenth century, and writes that “Stoicism remained an important rhetorical means for noble English malcontents and their intellectual retainers to reclaim honor over and against institutional authorities at a time when the moorings of honor to royal authority and the royal church, so strong during the Tudor reigns, were steadily unraveling.”²³ I will argue that Chapman’s heroic tragedies explore the dilemmas of such forms of militant Stoicism, based in the political manipulation of the passion of anger.

The problematization of the *vita activa* and Stoic resistance against tyranny in Chapman’s *Bussy D’Ambois* is intertwined with a problematization of aristocratic notions of honour and private

revenge. For when Bussy decides to join the court, his reputation is immediately challenged by his fellow courtiers, for the suddenness with which Bussy has become one of the king's favourites arouses their jealousy. It is interesting, in this context, that Lord Thurles, whose violent revenge for his honour we witnessed at the opening of this chapter, had only just arrived in London from Ireland. He too may have felt the need to settle his reputation once and for all, in public view of other aristocrats on the stage of Blackfriars. In *The Tragedy of Bussy D'Ambois* the courtiers in a metaphorical change of scenery from France to England compare Bussy to one of King James's newly knighted Scottish followers, in calling him a: "[k]night of the new edition" (1.2.111); "some new-denizen'd lord" (1.2.154).²⁴ The allusion, writes N. S. Brooke in the note to this line, "is to James I's Scottish entourage."²⁵ This contemporary reference to the great entourage of Scottish courtiers that King James brought with him into London works on two levels. The first is that of temperament: Bussy's choleric character resembles the temperament that Scotsmen were known for in seventeenth-century London. Scotsmen were stereotypically thought to be extremely passionate in their anger, as Thomas Wright describes in his *The Passions of the Minde in Generall* (1630):

It is well knowne in *Scotland* how insatiable is the passion of Ire, and the appetite of Revenge, for their deadly flod [*sic*] will never by quenched, but with the blood of al their enemies and their adherents.²⁶

The comparison is also relevant where the practice of duelling is concerned. Fredson Bowers writes that Londoners held James's Scottish entourage responsible for the steep increase in duelling that occurred in early seventeenth-century London. Likewise, Bussy is represented in the play as a fervent practitioner of the duel. When he suspects that these courtiers mock him as a newcomer, he issues a challenge. The duel that ensues is fought by Bussy and two of his friends who challenge the three offending courtiers. Not performed on stage, the fight is reported by a *nuntius*, who describes a duel of epic proportions: he compares one of the noblemen to Hector, the Trojan hero, and praises Bussy as the bravest man in the whole of France. The death of Bussy's final opponent is described with an epic simile:

[A]s in Arden I have seen an Oak
 Long shook with tempests, and his lofty top
 Bent to his root, which being at length made loose
 (Even groaning with his weight) he gan to nod
 This way and that, as loth his curled brows
 (Which he had oft wrapp'd in the sky with storms)
 Should stoop: and yet, his radical fivers [=fibers] burst,
 Storm-like he fell, and hid the fear-cold Earth.
 So fell stout Barrisor[.]

(2.1.94-102)

The comparison of Barrisor's death with the fall of a great oak derives from Virgil's *Aeneid*, where the figure is used to illustrate the fall of Troy.²⁷ Bussy's revenge is thereby elevated to an epic level, a strategy comparable to Chapman's praise of the Earl of Essex as the new Achilles in his dedication of his translation of Homer's *Iliad*.²⁸ This heroic reception of the duel is, however, contrasted in the play with the reaction of one of the courtiers, who interrupts this epic tale with the exclamation: "O piteous and horrid murder!" (2.1.104). The mixed reception of Bussy's victory in the duel points to the contested position that aristocratic heroism holds within the social order.²⁹

The extent to which the laws of reputation still hold an attraction in the early modern period appears also from the courtier Monsieur's attempt to convince the French King Henri that the duel was not illegal:

Manly slaughter
 Should never bear th'account of wilful murder;
 It being a spice of justice, where, with life
 Offending past law, equal life is laid
 In equal balance, to scourge that offence
 By law of reputation (which to men
 Exceeds all positive law).

(2.1.150-56)

The courtier in his defence of the duel stresses the justice of the practice. Rather than passionate and excessive, private revenge is here characterized as "a spice of justice" that is based on an even-handed principle: the loss of one's reputation weighs as heavy as the loss of life, since "fame's dear life [...] is above life" (2.1.174-75). Since the offence of an injury to a man's reputation is "past law," cannot be righted by the law, it needs to be repaired outside of the law, as the law of reputation dictates. Crucially, this law of

reputation in his view carries more weight than national law. The right to private revenge is so essential to the Stoic that it makes him a king in himself: “When I am wrong’d and that law fails to right me, | Let me be a King myself (as man was made) | And do a justice that exceeds the law,” Bussy tells the king (2.1.197-99).

Bussy’s self-sufficiency and his adherence to rational law, then, seem to allow him to make a living at court without compromising his Stoic principles or his adherence to aristocratic codes of honour. Even the King of France himself agrees that he ought not to be punished for defending his reputation by means of private revenge. His final demise, however, is caused by the anger that Chapman’s plays seem unequivocally to associate with the aristocratic hero. As was the case with Byron, Bussy’s temperament is characterized by a violent temper. He is described as having a “great spirit (2.1.1.), and as Monsieur puts it, “[h]is great heart will not down” (1.2.138). This inability to curb his rage as well as his amorous passions makes his heroic status in the play ambivalent, and eventually leads to his death in a duel with his mistress’s husband. The husband, however, is represented as false and “manless,” whereas Bussy’s aristocratic codes of honour are never outrightly condemned. Instead, the play closes with a eulogy that compares him to Hercules:

Farewell brave relics of a complete man:
Look up and see thy spirit made a star,
Join flames with Hercules: and when thou set’st
Thy radiant forehead in the firmament,
Make the vast continent, crack’d with thy receipt,
Spread to a world of fire: and th’aged sky,
Cheer with new sparks of old humanity.

(5.3.268-74)

In his tragedies about the French aristocrat Byron, Chapman similarly examines the role of aristocratic honour at an absolutist court. Byron is a military hero who lives by his own law, and refuses to adapt to the humanist ideology in which honour derives solely from the approval of the king. He desires to be judged on his own merits, rather than on the basis of the king’s favour. In *The Conspiracy of Byron* and *The Tragedy of Byron* (1608), both performed by the children’s company The Queen’s Revels, the historical French aristocrat feels that his king does not honour

him sufficiently for his martial achievements in allaying the civil wars. He experiences this lack of recognition as an affront to her personal honour, and according to aristocratic honour codes sees only one way to restore his reputation. He seeks to take revenge on the monarch, and revolts. The vindictive Duke justifies his desire to be revenged on the king by means of Stoic discourse. He places himself above the public laws, since “[h]e goes before them and commands them all | That to himself is a law rational” (3.3.144–145), and even decides that he will be his own king (5.1.137). Likewise, he does not recognize the authority of the judges who rule over him at his eventual trial for conspiracy:

Must I be sat on now by petty judges?
These scarlet robes, that come to sit and fight
Against my life, dismay my valour more
Than all the bloody cassocks Spain hath brought
To field against it. (5.2.38–42)

The French Duke often compares himself and his position at court to that of the Earl of Essex. Like Essex, Byron adheres to a personal sense of aristocratic honour based in his martial achievements as well as in his aristocratic lineage. Throughout the two plays, Byron chides the king for favouring upstart courtiers who are merely obedient to his wishes, and did not earn their honour in combat. He stresses that it was his father who helped Henri become king, thus placing his aristocratic honour above that of newly knighted courtiers, as well as above the authority of the king (5.1.151–55). When the king laughs at Byron’s claim that it was he who saved the country from civil war, Byron draws his sword. His violent reaction echoes the moment when Essex purportedly drew his sword in the presence of the queen. Like the play, the anecdote about Essex centres on the tensions that existed around the older aristocratic patterns of honour and humanist models of honour. It is indicative also of the central role that revenge occupied in this sense of friction:

In 1598 [Essex] and the Queen argued bitterly over the appointment of a Lord Governor of Ireland. When the quarrel grew so heated that he turned his back on her, Elizabeth boxed his ears. Essex reached for his sword, and after he was restrained by the others around him, he stormed from the room.³⁰

In an angry reaction to the physical violence offered him by the queen, Essex quickly reaches for his sword in revenge.³¹ His *faux-pas* is not to be explained away simply by the heat of the quarrel. Essex's vindictive reaction is produced by the friction between aristocratic independence and the need for obedience to the monarch.³² The desire violently to repay a dishonourable injury is deeply engrained in the aristocratic manners that here conflict with Essex's duty to obey to his monarch. McCoy reports that in the aftermath of the event, Essex wrote to the Lord Keeper: "What I owe as a subject I know, and what as an Earle, and Marshall of England: to serve as a servant and a slave I know not."³³ Both Byron's and Essex's vindictive reactions to their monarch's affronts to their personal sense of honour point to the central function of revenge in these old aristocratic notions of honour, and expose the difficulties with which these older notions of honour and revenge could be accommodated at court.

Indeed, Byron's violent manners, which pose a threat to the social order, throw a different light on his martial achievements. If the prologue celebrates Byron for ending the civil wars in France, the duke himself is often associated with the threat of civil war in the plays. The words that Byron speaks as he enters the stage for the first time – "What place is this, what air? What region?" (*Conspiracy*, 1.2.22) – are an unmistakable recollection of Seneca's *Hercules Furens*.³⁴ These are the words that Hercules speaks after waking from the frenzy that caused him to take revenge on his own family. Byron and the dangers of vindictive passion are thus introduced together. Remarks on Byron's furious character and choleric humour are interspersed throughout the play. The king remarks that "Duke Byron | Flows with adust and melancholy choler" (2.2.42).³⁵ The Duke's rebellion is replicated in the description of the microcosm of Byron's body, in which the passions wage a civil war against the seat of reason: "Yet are the civil tumults of his spirits | Hot and outrageous" (*Tragedy*, 5.3.215–216). Although Byron claims to base his rebellion against the king on the superior laws of reason, the play itself thus indicates that his revenge is corrupted by his rebellious passions. The attempt to reconcile aristocratic resistance to absolute monarchy with a sense of Stoic heroism is shown to fail in this tragedy. Perhaps in an echo of popular representations of Essex's personality, this failure is ascribed to Byron's excessive passions. The Stoic model of

rational law is thus seen to conflict with the ingredients of anger and revenge in aristocratic notions of honour.

In this respect, both Chapman's heroes share character traits not only with the second Earl of Essex, but also with the protagonist of Samuel Daniel's *Philotas* (1604), similarly performed by the Queen's Revels. The events of *Philotas*' life resemble the Essex rebellion to such an extent that Samuel Daniel was summoned before the Privy Council, who suspected that under the guise of an ancient plot he sought to breathe new life into old controversies. Like Chapman, Daniel ambivalently represents his protagonist's militant protestant rebellion at court. Also like Chapman, Daniel represents a man who has heroic intentions, and who is in essence a good man, but "acts his goodness ill": his temper is too violent to adapt to the manners at court. His father warns him to restrain his vindictiveness: "In Courts men longest live, and keepe their rankes, | By taking injuries, and never giving thankes" (1.1.61-62). *Philotas*' preparedness to take revenge for personal injury is part of his heroic identity, however, and he insists on retaining a large number of men at court, because "Men must be shod that go among the thornes" (1.1.56). The material that Chapman was treating in his tragedies, then, was politically volatile.³⁶

Six years later Chapman wrote a sequel to the first Bussy play: *The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois* (1610), like the Byron plays performed by the Queen's Revels. Like the other heroic tragedies, this sequel is concerned with the definition of aristocratic virtue in an active life at court. Chapman dedicated his tragedy *The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois* to Thomas Howard, the Earl of Arundel. He praised the earl's "undoubted virtue and exceeding noblesse" and hoped that the play contained matter "deserving [his] reading, and excitation to heroical life."³⁷ Howard, the grandson of the fourth Duke of Norfolk who was executed for treason in 1572, criticized the inflation of honours and the sale of aristocratic titles in the regimes of James and Charles.³⁸ Together with the third Earl of Essex, he sought a political role for the aristocracy, and revived and extended the privileges of the House of Lords. Like the second Earl of Essex, Robert Devereux, before him, Thomas Howard came to hold the office of Earl Marshall, a political function associated with chivalry and ancient aristocratic honour. Mervyn James writes that the two earls and their supporters subsidized plays that stressed the more archaic aspects of honour: blood, lineage

and valour.³⁹ Within this social context, Chapman wrote a sequel to *The Tragedy of Bussy D'Ambois* that once more explores the roles of Stoicism, honour and revenge at court.

Like the tragedies of Byron as well as *The Tragedy of Bussy D'Ambois*, this sequel is concerned with the possibilities of achieving aristocratic honour at an absolutist court. The nobility at court discusses the difficulty of achieving honour in a time of peace (1.1.32–69). The hero of the play, Bussy's brother Clermont, compares nobles without a task in war to pent-up lions who grow soft and lose their fire and greatness (2.1.154–71).⁴⁰ Life at court is portrayed as effeminising, even more so because the king of France in his play is represented as a tyrant. Clermont associates with a group of aristocrats who explore the possibilities for resisting tyranny. The republican potential of this group appears from comparisons of Clermont to "Rome's Brutus" (2.1.103).

Although he likewise explores the room for individual manoeuvre within the monarchy, Clermont is different from his brother where his temperament is concerned. The play explicitly compares the two brothers in this respect:

He [Clermont] wears the crown of man, and all his parts,
Which learning is, and that so true and virtuous
That it gives power to do as well as say
Whatever fits a most accomplished man:
Which Bussy (for his valour's season) lacked,
And was so rapt with outrage sometimes
Beyond decorum; where this absolute Clermont,
Though (only for his natural zeal to right)
He will be fiery when he sees it crossed
And in defense of it, yet when he lists
He can contain that fire, as hid in embers.⁴¹

If Bussy was valorous and therefore honourable, he was sometimes so possessed with anger that he went "beyond decorum." This emphasis on civility and models of behaviour signals one of the crucial problems of models of aristocratic honour: they are antisocial. Whereas this was not a problem within a feudal society, these patterns of behaviour sit uneasily in the context of the centralized nation state, where obedience to the monarch, and social codes of civility are of the essence. Thomas Wright therefore recommends his treatise on the passions to "the ciuill Gentleman," who "by penetrating the nature and qualities of his

affections, by restraining their inordinate motions, winneth a gracious carriage of himselfe, and rendreth his conuersation most gratefull to men.” Control of the passions is thus considered civil and gracious, whereas Bussy’s uncontrolled anger is associated with older aristocratic models of behaviour. It is this kind of aggressive antisocial behaviour that Thomas Wright seeks to counter by means of his treatise:

[F]or I haue my selfe seen some, Gentlemen by blood, and Noblemen by birth, yet so appassionate in affections, that their company was to most men intolerable [...] And therefore how ungratefull must his company seeme, whose passions ouer-rule him? and a man had need of an Astrolabe alwayes, to see in what height or eleuation his affections are, lest, by casting forth a spark of fire, his gun-powdred minde of a sudden bee inflamed.⁴²

Clermont is blessed with a less “gun-powdred” humoral economy. Although he is called a “Senecal man,” his management of the passions is not traditionally Senecan. Instead of resisting the force of his passions altogether, Clermont is said to be able to contain his anger, as if it was hid in embers, only to release it when he sees fit. Gordon Braden and Andrew Shifflet have pointed out that within Renaissance Neostoicism, this kind of controlled anger provided a means for the aristocracy to maintain a sense of masculine honour independent from the absolutist king.⁴³ “Stoicism in its most powerful forms is not about actual withdrawal from the world but about the meaning of action and the manipulation of anger for political ends,” Shifflet writes.⁴⁴ In the case of Clermont, this form of independent masculine honour does not induce him to take up arms against the tyrannous king of France. When his friend the Guise is murdered by the king, Clermont’s “natural zeal to right” does not lead him to engage in tyrannicide. As he told Monsieur, who tested the limits of his Stoic resistance earlier in the play, his Stoicism does not make him apt for “killing of the king” (1.1.277). In the face of the king’s tyrannous murder of the Guise, Clermont at the close of the play commits Stoic suicide.

The practice of revenge is nevertheless central to this tragedy. The ghost of Bussy, who was slain by Montsurry in a treacherous duel, has appeared to Clermont and has charged him with the duty of blood revenge. His brother is determined to enact this revenge only if it accords with his ideals of masculine honour. He is said to

loathe “any way to give it act | But in the noblest and most manly course,” and he has therefore sent his opponent a gentlemanlike challenge. Clermont later admits that he regrets even this rational and civilized mode of revenge. “All worthy men should ever bring their blood | To bear all ill, not to be wreaked with good,” is his opinion. In Clermont’s view, personal honour should not be seen as exempt from the laws of the commonweal. Revenge is therefore not part of Clermont’s arsenal of resistance: “Do ill for no ill: never private cause | Should take on it the part of public laws,” he states (3.2.108–16). Because he conceives of revenge as a duty to his brother, Clermont does eventually fight a duel with the man who murdered Bussy. He performs his duty of blood revenge in such a rational and mannered way that his defeated opponent forgives him for his murder.

In the context of the Stoic heroism of Clermont D’Ambois, it is noteworthy that the women in *The Revenge of Bussy D’Ambois* are contrastingly represented as extremely vindictive. Masculine self-containment is contrasted with these female characters’ violent desire for retribution. The three main female characters are Charlotte (Bussy and Clermont’s sister); Tamyra (Bussy’s former mistress); and the Countess of Cambrai. All three are firm adherents to the concept of blood revenge. In its representation of their desire for the punishment of Bussy’s murderer, the play grasps back to the representation of feminine vindictiveness in Seneca’s tragedies. Tamyra employs typically Senecan rhetoric in her desire for retribution:

Revenge, that ever red sitt’st in the eyes
Of injured ladies, till we crown thy brows
With bloody laurel, and receive from thee
Justice for all our honour’s injury;
Whose wings none fly that wrath or tyranny
Have ruthless made and bloody, enter here,
Enter, O enter!

(1.2.1-7)

Tamyra is here depicted as a woman who gives herself over to the rule of her passions. Her unbridled longing for revenge stands in shrill contrast to the reasoned challenge to a duel that Clermont sends Bussy’s murderer, and to his patience in waiting for an answer. It is not only Tamyra who is vindictive in *The Revenge of Bussy D’Ambois*: the two other women in the play long for

revenge too. Charlotte's vindictive temper is compared to that of her brother, as well as to Medea's vengefulness. The Countess of Cambrai is also bent on revenge when she hears that her friend Clermont has been arrested by the king. These women's vindictiveness is not canalised into a deed of revenge, however. It seems as if the overload of feminine vindictiveness in this sequel, and the practical absence of it in the first tragedy, serves to set off Clermont's particular brand of masculine Stoic heroism. By comparing the women's furious desire for blood revenge to Bussy's temper, his vindictiveness is aligned with that of the women, and is retrospectively marked as feminine in its passionate character.

Not all literary critics would agree with this analysis, however. Alison Findlay in her *Feminist Perspective on Renaissance Drama* regards the vindictiveness of the women in *The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois* as a path to agency and self-determination. Although she agrees that their vengefulness does not lead to any results in the play, she does dub the vindictive Tamyra 'feminist.'⁴⁵ I cannot agree with such a reading of the play. The representation of women as vindictive is not primarily related to female rebellion, or a desire for vengeance on the part of female spectators. Rather, it functions within the plays as a foil to the ideal of masculine aristocratic heroism. The representation of manhood in *The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois* reacts to recognizable and nuanced social and cultural developments, while the representation of femininity grasps back to misogynist classical stereotypes, the better to nuance the change in masculine ideals.

Chapman's four heroic tragedies of the early seventeenth century explore the possibilities of managed anger in militant Stoic resistance. Notions of aristocratic honour and the practice of the duel occupy a central position in these tragedies performed in London's private theatres, but these representations cannot be straightforwardly categorized as contributing to the Cavalier mentality, nor as promoting the duel. Instead, these plays explore the friction between absolute monarchy and aristocratic honour, and explore possible models of resistance to the curbing of old aristocratic rights. These models of aristocratic independent honour were readily associated with civil war in early modern culture. Martin Butler writes that "the problem of many who found themselves at odds with the crown in the 1630s was that it put them beyond society, that they had been conditioned to think

of dissent as equivalent to rebellion.”⁴⁶ Chapter three described how the revenge tragedies of the Inns of Court may have taken active part in that process of conditioning. Their plays associated such modes of resistance as private revenge, rebellion and civil war with feminine uncontrollable passions. Like the homilies, these plays imagined revenge not as an instrument of order, but as an act that can only lead to a loss of control and the excesses of civil war. In this humanist Neostoic discourse, the passions need to be overruled by reason, since they are represented as inherently disorderly. We have seen how in the heroic tragedies of Chapman a new brand of Neostoicism, based in the philosophy of Epictetus and the Neostoic author Lipsius takes shape. In the person of Clermont d’Ambois, Stoic sovereignty is achieved by means of controlled anger: the passions are shown to carry political potential for resistance.

Domesticated revenge

Chapman’s plays can thus be seen to concern themselves with the functions of masculine honour and revenge at an absolutist court. Other plays performed in the private theatres are concerned with the position of revenge in changing models of civility in early modern culture. In the following section, I will analyze a set of comedies written by Philip Massinger, to probe how these plays relate to the perceived frictions between the aristocracy and the middle classes in the decades before the Civil Wars.

Representations of friction between feudal aristocratic manners and newer models of masculinity shaped in the city and the court often hinge on the issue of revenge. In Shakespeare’s *King Lear*, these frictions are emblemized in a confrontation between Oswald, the steward of one of King Lear’s daughters who is suffused with the manners of the court, and Kent, who derives from Lear’s feudal culture.⁴⁷ Kent characterizes Oswald as:

A knave, a rascal, an eater of broken meats; a base, proud, shallow, beggarly, three-suited-hundred-pound, filthy, worsted-stocking knave; a lily-livered, action-taking knave, a whoreson, glass-gazing, superserviceable, finical rogue; one that wouldst be a bawd in the way of good service and art nothing but the composition of a knave, beggar, coward, pander and the son and heir of a mongrel bitch; one whom I will beat into whining if thou deniest the least syllable of thy addition.⁴⁸

The addressee and the speaker belong to two different camps, and to two different cultures in the play. Kent belongs to an older, medieval society that is feudal and aristocratic. Oswald on the other hand belongs to an early modern courtly culture, in which Kent no longer holds a place: “The old-style Elizabethan soldier, projecting in debate, pamphlet, and behavior a personal myth of honorable warrior or heroic knight, was out of touch with the social and political reality of Elizabethan society and court,” writes Richard Ide.⁴⁹ Norbert Elias sees this clash between the warrior and the courtier as central to what he calls the civilizing process: “Not only within the Western civilizing process, but as far as we can see within every major civilizing process, one of the most decisive transitions is that of warriors to courtiers.”⁵⁰ The friction between these two classes is emblemized in the conflict between Kent and Oswald in *King Lear*. The irritated Kent means to draw Oswald into a duel by insulting him. His insults are based on a gendered division, in which fighting and duelling are considered masculine, and the refusal to defend one’s honour with violence is associated with cowardice and femininity.⁵¹

Oswald is placed firmly on the courtly, feminine side of the gendered divide between the two men. The reference to clothes in “three-suited-hundred-pound” describes Oswald as being elegantly dressed. Later in his tirade, Kent again focuses his anger on Oswald’s way of dressing: “nature disclaims in thee – a tailor made thee” (2.2.50). The adjective “glass-gazing” again refers to an obsession with appearance and clothing, which in early modern culture was considered a feminine, indeed effeminizing, fad.⁵² Other invectives similarly place Oswald on the feminine side, such as “whoreson” and “son and heir of a mongrel bitch.” What is particularly relevant in this inventory of expletives is that Kent describes Oswald as an “action-taking knave” – someone who takes legal action, rather than defending himself by fighting.⁵³ Going to court is thus defined as a feminine course of action, as opposed to the masculinity of the revenge that Kent proposes to enact in the form of a duel.⁵⁴ We may thus reconstruct Kent’s gendering of revenge in this passage as the following binary arrangement: on the masculine side stands the cluster of fighting, duelling and revenge, associated with functional clothing and bravery. On the feminine side stand foppishness, serviceable behaviour, the refusal to engage in a duel, and, interestingly,

litigation. The friction between these two characters thus plays upon a conflict between the older aristocratic values in which revenge is considered a masculine duty, and a courtly, humanist discourse that perceives an appeal to the law as the proper way to proceed.

In the public theatres, the bourgeois genre of domestic tragedy similarly mocked older notions of revenge. Often based on actual crimes, this genre is domestic in more ways than one: not only is the location English instead of foreign, the plays are also set in the household, in the everyday life of the lower or middle classes.⁵⁵ In all these factors, the genre seems to pit itself against the popular revenge tragedy. Indeed, several inductions and epilogues to domestic plays comment on the schism between Senecan tragedy and their own genre. Where the former represents a foreign, courtly plot of revenge, set among the higher classes, the domestic tragedy counters Aristotelian rules of decorum by portraying murders in middle class English villages. The home and the village community represent a locus of conflict, where friction between individual desires leads to lurid murder scenes. Whenever Mediterranean elements of revenge plots are introduced into the plays, such as poisoned meals, or deadly paintings, these plots falter on English ground. The move from Senecan revenge tragedy to domestic drama is also a cultural move from the classical tales of revenge to a Christian ethic of divine justice and mercy. The plays have a strong homiletic import, and in general close with a court case, the repentance and execution of the criminal.⁵⁶

In the anonymous domestic tragedy *Arden of Faversham* (1591) Master Arden suspects that his wife is being tempted by the attentions of a man named Mosby, and he swears that since he is a gentleman by birth, he will be revenged on this adulterer: “That injurious ribald [...] shall on the bed which he thinks to defile, | See his dissevered joints and sinews torn” (1.36–43). These words seem to prepare the spectators for a revenge tragedy, in which the bed of adultery will turn into a locus of revenge. Arden’s neighbour, however, advises him to be patient, and tells him that sweet words, not jealousy are the way to keep a woman chaste. “For women, when they may, will not, | But being kept back, straight grow outrageous.” (1.52–53). The rhetoric of revenge tragedy is here superseded by a new discourse of household management; the neighbour’s advice on how to manage one’s wife echoes the advice

for husbandmen provided in the genre of household handbooks for the middle classes that thrived in this period. The epilogue to the play, spoken by that same neighbour, advertises the drama as “this naked tragedy,” an unadorned play, “[f]or simple truth is gracious enough | And needs no other points or glozing stuff.” Emphasizing the plainness and truth of the tragedy, this epilogue pits the play against the tragical norm. Similarly, in *A Woman Killed with Kindness*, the main plot is “thoroughly English in atmosphere, so much so that at least one commentator assumed that it was based, like other domestic tragedies, on an actual, contemporary event.”⁵⁷ This English plot, featuring a husband who does not revenge himself on his adulterous wife, but rationally punishes her with patient banishment and eventually forgives her, is foiled by a subplot from an Italian novella, rife with feuds and duels. By contrasting the Italianate feud with the English tale of containment and forgiveness, Heywood in his exploration of the domestic genre seems to represent Christian England as the antithesis to exotic, and Catholic tales of revenge. The epilogue to *A Warning for Fair Women*, finally, consciously constructs the genre against the revenge tragedy when Tragedy tells the audience:

Perhaps it may seeme strange unto you al,
 That one hath not revengde anothers death,
 After the observation of such course:
 The reason is, that now of truth I sing.

(2722-25)

The drama of the private theatres reacted to these developments, indeed fed these trends itself by shaping new models of masculinity for the rapidly urbanising London surroundings, where the gentry (both the old aristocracy and those who recently acquired a title) needed to find new modes of behaviour to accommodate these changing social circumstances.

Anna Bryson, building on the work of Norbert Elias, has argued that England in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries witnessed quite a major shift in patterns of behaviour. “In the field of manners, it was a shift from ideals and practices governed by the concept of ‘courtesy’ to those which were expressed and moulded by a new concept – that of ‘civility’.”⁵⁸ The latter concept was aimed at interaction between peers, at codes of conduct that facilitated life in the crowded city of London and at court. Processes

of urbanisation caused changes in definitions of manners: “Good manners had become less a matter of household ritual and more a sign of a gentleman’s membership of ‘civil society,’ an ‘imagined community’ continually reproduced through the very substantial institutions of court, ‘Town’, and educational establishments reaching out to the upper ranks of the whole nation.”⁵⁹ Similarly, Ronald Ash has found that under the influence of Church, court and town alike, noble ideals of conduct became less violent and less heroically independent.⁶⁰ Mary Beth Rose in her groundbreaking study on the gender of heroism has traced changes in conceptions of the hero in the seventeenth century, and found that the ideal moves from masculine values of violence and independence, to more feminine values such as patience and endurance. She writes that although she did not analyse the plays of the private theatres, this might be a fruitful area of study: “Focusing on the drama of the 1630s could reveal the ways in which changes in manners begin to privilege the virtues of more bourgeois heroes.”⁶¹ I will briefly pursue some of the implications of Mary Beth Rose’s idea, and argue that the corpus of plays performed in the private theatres explore the position of revenge within the new concepts of masculine civility and gentility that were then taking shape.

Models of civilized masculinity

One of the texts that shaped these models of masculine civility was Richard Brathwait’s popular conduct book *The English Gentleman*, first published in 1630, and reprinted in 1641 and 1652. It is advertised on its title page as “Containing sundry excellent *Rules* or exquisite *Observations*, tending to the Direction of every *Gentleman*, of selecter ranke and *qualitie*; How to demeane or accommodate himselfe in the manage of publike or private affaires.” Addressed at those members of the middle classes who wanted to know how to behave themselves as gentlemen, the dedication chides “that adulterate *Gentility* which degenerates from the *worth* of her Ancestors” and their “infant effeminacy,” and ridicules “bleary-eyed vulgar honour.” Brathwait pits his ideal gentleman against the old aristocracy, which he depicts as an avaricious and vindictive class: “this is an evil more properly inherent to our rich oppressors, who *grind* the face of the poore, and raise them an house to their seldom thriving Heires out of others ruine” (44-45).

In its discussion of the duel, the handbook shows itself aware of the discourse of masculine honour and reputation that necessitated a duel as an answer to personal injuries:

But, you will aske me, how should this be prevented? Can any *Gentleman* suffer with patience his *Reputation* to be brought in question? Can he endure to be challenged in a publike place, and by that means incurre the opinion of a Coward? Can he put up disgrace without observance, or observing it, not *revenge* it, when his very *Honour* (the vitall bloud of a *Gentleman*) is impeached? (43)

This passage rehearses the common reasons among young aristocratic males for pursuing retribution for an insult, citing honour as “the vitall bloud of a *Gentleman*.” Masculine self-identity in this discourse of honour is given shape and is maintained by means of revenge. But the handbook proposes a different pattern of masculinity, one in which revenge does not play a role. Vengeance in defence of masculine honour is condemned from a Christian perspective:

O Gentlemen, how many of your ranke and quality have perished by standing upon these termes! [...] Sure I am, their deare Countrey hath felt their losse, to whom in all due respect they should have tendred both love and life, and not have made prodigall expence of that, which might have beene a meanes to strengthen and support her state. Yet doe I not speake this, as one insensible of wrong, or incapable of disgrace: for I know that in passages of this nature, publike imputations require publike satisfaction, so that howsoere the Divine Law, to which all humane actions ought to be squared, may seeme to conclude, *That wee are to leave revenge to whom revenge belongeth*; yet so passionate is the nature of man, and through passion much weakned, as hee forgets many times what the divine Law bids him doe, and hastens to that which his owne violent and distempered passions pricks him to. Now to propose my opinion, by way of direction, in a word it is this. As one may be *angry and sinne not*, so one may revenge and offend not, and this is by *heaping coales of fire upon our Enemies head*: for by this *meeknesse is anger appeased*, and wee of our fury revenged.

(206-207)⁶²

Revenge is in this passage associated with the passions, with fury in particular. It is man’s natural fury that causes him to neglect the divine law that forbids revenge. This “distempered passion” of fury is conceived of as a threat to the stability of the nation,

for it wastes valuable blood that should have been employed in its defence. In his handbook, Brathwait advises gentlemen to follow another code of conduct than this code of honour. He proposes meekness, mildness, temperance and moderation, charity, and Stoic fortitude (not doing but repelling an injury) as the most generous dispositions for the gentleman (51-72).

Massinger's comedies are among the drama often cited as representative of the escapist mentality of the private theatres. And yet, as I will argue below, his comedies rehearse representations of revenge similar to those of Brathwait's handbook. Massinger's plays have often been read as an exhortation to safeguard traditional aristocratic values in the face of the threat that the rise of the merchant classes posed to these values. In this view, Massinger is characterized as a conservative adherent to aristocratic ideologies, who closed his eyes to the possibility of social change. L. C. Knights in his *Drama and Society in the Age of Jonson*, for example, considers Massinger's city comedies as the reaction of conservative society to the economic and social changes of the seventeenth century that threatened to destroy older social customs. In the view of Margot Heinemann, Massinger reacts to the socio-political developments of his time by "adopting what he thinks is the good old hierarchic scheme of aristocratic values, as embodied for example in sumptuary laws."⁶³ She considers his two city comedies, *A New Way to Pay Old Debts* and *The City Madam* to be plays "where the older social attitudes are powerfully and nostalgically reaffirmed" (117). Alan G. Gross also sees Massinger's comedies as displaying the aristocracy's fear that the early Stuart trading classes endanger their social integrity. He considers Massinger's moral convictions "definite impediments to his understanding" and wonders over the fact that Massinger "does not think that these problems are due, for the most part, to widespread, and to a certain extent, inevitable, irreversible, and impersonal economic changes which will eventually spell the end of the power of the traditional upper class."⁶⁴ Gross teleologically and retrospectively considers the civil wars that were to follow within a decade as an irreversible event that Massinger should have been able to foresee. He considers it "futile to demand the destruction of capitalism, as Massinger does, in favor of a system that had once been real enough, perhaps, but which as it existed in his mind had all the qualities and substance of a mirage" (331).

Since Massinger wrote his plays for the Caroline upper classes who visited the private theatres, his comedies in his view must be read as a naive confirmation of upper class values in the face of irreversible social change.

This view of Massinger's interaction with changing social circumstances has been challenged by both Martin Butler and Ira Clark. Butler analyzes the composition of Massinger's audience, and concludes that they were certainly not all members of the old aristocracy. Indeed, "Massinger would have expected a not insubstantial proportion of his Blackfriars audience of 1632 to have had close links with, or even to have been, people who would consider themselves more "city" than "court."⁶⁵ He emphasizes that in Massinger's comedies, interaction between the merchant and aristocratic classes is much more frequent than in, for instance, Middleton's *Shoemaker's Holiday*. Discussing Massinger's *The City Madam*, he counters Gross's and Knights's interpretations by stating that "[t]he play is not opposed to social advancement as such, but is committed to ensuring that modifications in the shape of society occur smoothly and without undermining the survival and good order of the whole" (174). Butler argues that Massinger's comedy cannot be read as evidence of a narrowing of the drama to suit the tastes of the Caroline aristocracy. Instead, he reads the play as endorsing fully the morality of Sir John Frugal, the religious citizen, and sees the play as adhering to puritan, middle class values. Both Butler and Clark argue that these plays put forward a new morality for the early modern city and its inhabitants: they "are helping the town to create itself by providing it with a model of the norm of good manners."⁶⁶ In this effort, Massinger's comedies combine older feudal customs with new mercantile values so as to create social mores that fit the altering social circumstances. As Clark writes, "his plays generally suggest reformation based on a mutually grateful accommodation of traditional values and mores and of new necessities and future promises."⁶⁷ Influenced by revisionist readings of the decade before the civil war, then, interpretations of Massinger's social attitude no longer portray him as conservative and blind to social change, but as a playwright who seeks to accommodate both aristocratic and middle class values in a flexible reaction to altered social circumstances.

In what follows, I will examine the representation of revenge and the duel in three of Massinger's comedies: *The City Madam*

(1632), *The Spanish Curate* (1622) and *A Very Woman* (1634). In his seminal study of the genre of revenge tragedy, Fredson Bowers sets apart the work of Philip Massinger as singularly representative for the sentiments of a period of “absolute disapproval of revenge under any circumstances” in the drama between 1620 and 1630: “If the spirit of this era was comprehended within the work of one man, that man was Philip Massinger,” he writes.⁶⁸ Although these three comedies do indeed express the fear that the older aristocratic values of charity and hospitality may be lost in the face of the growing power of the capitalist merchant classes, they on the other hand display a fundamental disapproval of both revenge and the duel, and thereby adopt a point of view more commonly associated with the middle classes, who saw the practice of the duel as a disturbance of the stable society they required to conduct their trade. In his disapproval of vindictiveness and advocacy of charity Massinger combines the morals of both the aristocracy and the merchant classes in an attempt to shape a morality for Caroline London.

Both the *City Madam* and *The Spanish Curate* take the rising middle classes as their subject. These comedies mock the avarice of families who have gained their wealth through commercial transactions. Thus, the plays could be said to close their eyes for the irreversibility of social change. Significantly, however, it is not middle class behaviour that the plays mock, but precisely the aristocratic vices that these rising middle classes seek to imitate. *The Spanish Curate*, co-authored with John Fletcher, targets what Ira Clark has termed the “avaricious sociopolitics” of a rich merchant family.⁶⁹ The play hones in on the vice of avarice. Revenge plays a major role in the subplot as well as the main plot. In the former, several instances of comical revenge take place between the jealous and avaricious lawyer Bartolus, obsessed with the fear that his wife might cuckold him, and the young nobleman Leandro, who, in the disguise of a student of law, infiltrates in Bartolus’ household. In this subplot, however, revenge has a restorative and reconciliatory role.⁷⁰ Bartolus invites all citizens who had their revenges on him in the past to a breakfast at his house. The scene strongly resembles the bloody banquet often found in the closing act of a revenge tragedy, for it becomes clear that Bartolus’ final retribution is concealed under the lids of the dishes that are served at this banquet. The setting prepares the audience for

a scene from *Titus Andronicus*, when Bartolus announces that “[A] masque of all your furies shall dance to ye” (5.2.91). Hidden under the lids, however, are not body parts, but bills and letters from creditors demanding payment of debts. Bartolus’s revenge is purely financial, in accordance with his avaricious character. The lawyer’s revenge plot has led to a public reconciliation, the restoration of his position in society, and also to the repair of the economy of his household: both his wife and his finances are kept in check by means of this comic revenge.

In Thomas Middleton and William Rowley’s comedy *A Fair Quarrel* (1617), revenge similarly functions in the context of household management and economic exchange.⁷¹ The play draws on the subplot of Thomas Heywood’s domestic tragedy *A Woman Killed with Kindness*, in which two friends fall into conflict. The two friends in the play are Captain Ager and the Colonel, who get entrenched in an argument over their relative worth. When the Colonel, who is of a fiery temper, calls Ager a “son of a whore,” this is a clear challenge to a duel. Ager is now expected to ‘call the lie’ and tell his friend that he is wrong, so that a duel can ensue. The Captain, however, hesitates, and decides to verify the validity of the Colonel’s accusations with his mother. The play clearly makes comedy out of the complicated codes of the duel, and mocks the worn accusations that are used as overtures to a fight. In so doing, it also draws into question the logic of the challenge, however, for it begs the question whether every insult needs to be answered by a challenge.

In the very first scene of Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*, the casual way in which a conversation can lead to a challenge is emphasized by means of the rhetorical figure of anadiplosis, in which a line picks up a word from the preceding line, and so forth. The sense of natural growth and speed that lies enclosed in this figure of speech lends an air of unavoidability to the duel that is about to ensue when two servants of the house of Capulet enter with swords and bucklers:

SAMSON Gregory, on my word, we’ll not carry coals.

GREGORY No, for then we would be colliers.

SAMSON I mean an we be in choler, we’ll draw.

GREGORY Ay, while you live, draw your neck out of collar.

SAMSON I strike quickly, being moved.

GREGORY But thou art not quickly moved to strike.

SAMSON A dog of the house of Montague moves me.⁷²

The stychomythic exchange between the two men itself takes the shape of a duel, prefiguring the bodily violence that is to follow in the play. In a similar manner, *A Fair Quarrel* also draws attention to the nature of the language of the challenge, and the verbal confusion that often leads to bloodshed. “Why should man, | For a poor hasty syllable or two, | And vented only in forgetful fury” risk both his life and his soul, Captain Ager wonders (3.1.81–83).⁷³

Eventually, however, even this temperate Captain is drawn into a duel when the Colonel calls him a “base submissive coward.” He issues a challenge, and defeats the Colonel, who immediately repents his insults, and sees his wounds as heaven’s revenge for his injuries to Ager’s honour:

Oh, just heaven has found me,
And turned the stings of my too hasty injuries
Into my own blood! I pursued my ruin,
And urged him past the patience of an angel:
Could man’s revenge extend beyond man’s life,
This would ha’ waked it. Noble deserver!
Farewell, most valiant and most wronged of men;
Do but forgive me, and I am victor then.

(3.1.174–83)

The play thus stresses the valour of forgiveness, but also implicitly shows how a duel can lead to the reinforcement of homosocial bonds. Instead of blows, the two men now exchange a woman when the Colonel in his will decrees that Ager is to marry his sister: “the fairest restitution” that he could give him (4.2.99). An economy of injury and bloodshed is thus replaced by a patriarchal economy of marriage and household management, and the verbal codes of the duel are made the stuff of comedy.

In thus relating the duel to household economy, these plays do not stand on their own, but interact with the genre of the anti-duelling tract written in the first half of the seventeenth century. These tracts similarly conceive of the duel as a waste of blood, as an economy of anger that suffers only losses. The pamphlet *Duell-Ease*, for example, states that it aims to “prevent a waste of men” and to provide “some few Antidotes to prevent and cure a fiery distemper, a Consumption, or waste of blood fatall to the noble bowels of your kingdome.”⁷⁴ The body of state and the humoral economy are aligned in this comparison, in which vindictiveness

is seen as a hot distemper, a fever that can only be cured by the letting of blood: “[t]he nature of this burning feaver, is to strike to the heart, which in an heape of resentments, not well digested, falleth into such an Apoplexie, that it findeth ease in nothing, but in bleeding.”⁷⁵ This bleeding is considered a waste of valuable blood from the body, or, by analogy, as a waste of valuable lives from the national economy. Anti-duelling pamphlets argue that the life of a subject belongs to the monarch, and it is therefore his right to decide to what use an individual will be put. The passion of anger should not be allowed to lead to loss of life, but should in utilitarian fashion be employed for the improvement of the national economy:

If your choller boyles so fast about your heart, that it makes your fingers ends tingle: lay them not therefore upon your neighbours, your kings subjects, but go further from home, to prey upon humane blood: your king hath enemies in the world, fall you on them abroad, and the kings lawes will in requital fal upon your foes at home. When your King hath no enemies, yet you may finde your selfe warre-like workes: bring in new found lands, to enlarge your kings kingdomes: the greatness of his royal merits deserve roome to spread over far more large territories: [...] Walke you Dueller with your valour, abroad the world, it hath a large scope, and many skirts; finde you one to lye upon & lay on in a iust conquest lustily: shew greatnesse of valour in that you can make your good king greater; and waste not his subjects at home, so you make him lesser: to shew your fiery mettle consume not your kings power.⁷⁶

In *The City Madam*, the duel similarly functions in discourses of economy and household management. In this comedy, two gentlemen aspire to the hand of the daughters of Sir John Frugal, a rich merchant who has bought a knighthood. The two men are from different classes: Master Plenty, like Sir John Frugal, is a rich merchant who has achieved the status of gentleman, and aspires to be seen as an aristocrat. He is mockingly reported to have bought himself a wardrobe according to the latest aristocratic fashion, and has attended “the Academy of Valour” so that he knows all about duels and fencing (1.2.23). Frank Whigham has analyzed the imitation of aristocratic modes of behaviour among the higher middle classes in early modern culture. In his view, “the principal strategy of self-manifestation in such a frame is the ostentatious practice of symbolic behavior taken to typify aristocratic being.

The gentleman is presumed to act in certain ways; the limiting case would have it that only a gentleman *can* act in those ways.”⁷⁷ In order to be accepted as a gentleman, Master Plenty therefore feels the need to imitate aristocratic practices such as dress and the duel. When his fellow suitor, the aristocrat Sir Maurice Lacie mocks Plenty’s new manner of dressing, he lets him know that at least he was able to pay his tailor immediately, “a sin your man of title | Is seldom guilty of” (1.2.46–47). Lacie takes his revenge, however, stating that in his patience he has shown “to[o] much of the stoicks” (1.1.65). He reminds Plenty that his great grandfather was a butcher, his grandfather a grasier, his father a Constable, “and thou the first of your dunghill, | Created gentleman” (1.2.69–70). These class-related insults soon lead to a duel between the two gentlemen.

In Massinger’s comedies, imitation of the aristocracy is mocked, but the comedies thereby also mock those members of the Blackfriars audience who belong to the old aristocracy. For both Master Plenty and Sir Maurice are chastised by the rich merchant knight Sir Frugal for their engagement in the duel:

I blush for you
Men of your quality expose your fame
To every vulgar censure. This at midnight
After a drunken supper in a tavern,
(No civill man abroad to censure it)
Had shewen poor in you, but in the day, and view
Of all that pass by, monstrous!

(1.2.78–84)

Whereas the duel for the aristocracy functions as a primary tool in the expression of aristocratic masculinity, Frugal here employs that very notion of aristocratic masculinity in his attempt to discourage these men’s duelling. He appeals to their sense of reputation and class in telling them their behaviour is monstrous and does not suit their quality, and that by openly exposing their anger “to every vulgar censure” they have demeaned themselves. “Neither your birth,” he tells Sir Maurice, “nor your wealth,” he tells Master Plenty, “shall privilege this riot” (1.2.89–90). Massinger’s comedies thus target the vices of both the richer merchant classes as well as the older aristocracy, representatives of both classes that are thought to have made up the audiences of the private theatres in which they were performed. Instead of avarice

and revenge, these plays propose a new model of behaviour for both classes, a model that are strongly based in Christian charity and mercy.

In *A Very Woman*, this new model of manhood takes shape in a plot that revolves around a duel. The duel is fought between Don John Antonio and Don Martino, who are both in love with Almira. Don John, although he is a Neapolitan, who, as Martino states, are thought to be “fiery spirits, uncapable of the least injury,” is nevertheless “a Stoick, with a constancy, | Words nor affronts can shake” (1.1.54–55; 57–58). Martino himself, however, is characterized by a more volatile temper, and he is the one who insists on a sword fight, which he barely survives, being mortally wounded by his opponent. He recovers from his wounds as a repentant man:

Why did I wrong this man, unmanly wrong him,
Unmannerly? He gave me no occasion;
In all my heat how noble was his temper!
And when I had forgot both man and manhood,
With what a gentle bravery did he chide me!

(3.3.14–18)

Repentant over his instigation of the duel, Martino conceives of the heat of anger and vindictiveness as both unmanly and unmannerly. The unmanly is associated with the passions, with revengefulness, and contrasted with civilized masculinity that is associated with well-behaved conduct, with a restraint of feminine passions, with gentility and “gentle bravery.”

Anti-duelling tracts similarly stress that the duel does not shore up masculine reputation because the practice is too passionate to be valorous. Excessive passion causes duellers to lose control over themselves, and this lack of control stands in sharp contrast to the sense of honour that the duel is meant to achieve. Duellers are compared to children who do not know how “to governe themselves,” who lack control over their own humoral economy, their bodies, and their weapons.⁷⁸ Manhood is unmasked as childish, or even as bestial in these pamphlets: “[Y]ou are so farre out of reason, that you turne an irrational creature: you turn Cur,” writes G. F. “What a combat, what a gnawing, what a pawing; o had the dog but a sword by his side, what a brave Dueller hee would make!”⁷⁹ These constructions of the masculine selfhood of

the dueller all emphasize the threat that is posed by the passion of vindictiveness. Instead of establishing his reputation of honour, the dueller loses his masculine identity, and changes into a child or a dog in the pursuit of revenge. This sense of dissolution is ascribed to the treacherous nature of the concept of honour. In *The Peace-Maker*, a pamphlet against duelling apparently commissioned by James I and published in 1618, Thomas Middleton compares the lure of reputation to magic and the addictive effects of tobacco: “The punctualitie of Reputation, is no better then a Bewitching Sorcerie, that enchants the spirits of young men, like the Smoake of fashion, that Witch *Tobacco*, which hath quite blowne away the Smoake of Hospitalitie, and turned the Chimneyes of their Fore-fathers into the Noses of their Children.”⁸⁰ George Wither in his *Juvenalia* bemoans the dueller’s loss of reason: “Alas, poore men, what hath bewicht your mind?” he asks.⁸¹ Francis Bacon in his proclamation against duelling similarly represents the men who engage in duelling as unable to govern themselves. Duellers have no control over their actions, but are infused with a discourse of honour that penetrates them like the spirits of the air:

But then the neede of this mischeefe [duelling] being such, it is nourished by vaine discourses, and greene and unripe conceits, which neuerthelesse haue so preuayled, as though a man were staid and sober minded, and a right beleeuer touching the vanity and unlawfulness of these *Duells*, yet the streame of vulgar opinion is such, as it imposeth a necessity upon men of value to conforme themselves; or else there is no liuing or looking upon mens faces: So that we haue not to doe, in this case, so much with perticuler persons, as with unfound and depraued opinions, like the dominations and spiritis of the ayre, which the Scripture speaketh of.⁸²

Massinger’s comedies, like these anti-duelling tracts represent duellers as unmasculine, since their passions control their actions, and since they are susceptible to outside influences. In fact, these men resemble women in their humoral economy’s susceptibility to factors that lie outside the self. *The Office of Christian Parents* therefore concludes that duelling “doth altogether carry away the man, and suffereth him not to be any more a man.”⁸³

Significantly, *A Very Woman* not only represents revenge as unmasculine, but also introduces an extremely vindictive woman. The ‘very woman’ of the title functions as a stereotype of female vindictiveness. She longs to take revenge on Don Martino’s opponent

in the duel, and is represented as groaning and beating her breast in her longing for vengeance, almost as if she had to give birth to revenge. Philip Edwards regards Almira as an artistic failure. He considers Massinger's portrayal of women in other plays as almost feminist: "his extensive criticism of the exponents of male dominance and his recognition of the rights of women as people strike a much more modern note than can be found in many of his contemporaries," he writes.⁸⁴ Edwards is therefore dissatisfied with Massinger's portrayal of Almira as essentially vindictive, and cannot but regard her as an artistic failure. I would say, however, that Massinger's representation of femininity as vindictive in *A Very Woman* should not be read in terms of its feminist potential, for the stereotype of feminine vengefulness that the play draws on functions in the play as a foil for a new model of masculine heroism, a model that is based on the containment of the passions, and on Christian forgiveness. We find a similar mechanism at work in George Wither's *Juvenalia*, where he also disparages older aristocratic codes of honour and revenge by branding them as typically feminine:

Moreouer, there be many doe suppose,
 It [= *choler*] is a signe of courage. What meane those?
 What is their iudgement? they me thinkes should gather
 That it were *weakenes* did produce it rather:
 Or else, why should the feeble and the sick,
 Women and children be most cholerick?⁸⁵

The new model of masculine heroism that *A Very Woman* puts forward does not involve aggressive honour, ambition or rivalry. The doctor who treats Don Martino lectures him on the height of honour:

No man to offend,
 Ne'r to reveal the secrets of a friend;
 Rather to suffer, then to do a wrong;
 To make the heart no stranger to the tongue;
 [...]
 To aim at just things; if we have wildly run
 Into offences, wish 'em all undone.
 'Tis poor in grief for a wrong done to die,
 Honor dare to live, and satisfie.
 [...] Who fights

With passions, and orecomes 'em, is indu'd
With the best vertue, passive fortitude.

(4.2.140-55)

This doctor instils in Martino a new morality of endurance of wrongs, of patience, and of passive fortitude. Martino now speaks of “humility,” of “meekness” and “sufferance” instead of honour, courage, and revenge. *A Very Woman* advocates patient suffering over active revenge, and to do so, it appropriates traditionally feminine virtues such as patience, meekness, and humility, and advertises them as a masculine morality, as civil behaviour to be observed in the urban, mercantile context of early modern London.

A feminine heroics

Anti-duelling pamphlets similarly shape new models of masculine valour for their readers. They also stress that it is “prime valour, oft times, to suffer,” and introduce a Foucauldian model of self-discipline as the height of honour, in which the enemy to overcome are the passions, rather than an injury to honour:

And hence you shall ever finde those your best victories, whereof some part is, to overcome your selfe. A golden consequence! If to conquer, you must master yourselfe, your victories be profitable: the more they have of selfe-mastership, the more they will have of profit: for by our difficulties & dislikes, we know what doth become us: and by our desires, we reckon still our mistakings: I will talke still of things within the compasse of courage.⁸⁶

In discouraging the formerly masculine concept of revenge for honour these texts define a new masculine identity against the vices of the rich middle classes, the old aristocracy and the culture of gentlemanly honour. Interestingly, the new masculine identity that is put forward consists of virtues formerly associated with the feminine, virtues commonly represented in female form in early modern culture.⁸⁷ This movement away from the more active, traditionally masculine virtues towards more private, passive virtues has recently been described by Mary Beth Rose in her *Gender and Heroism in Early Modern English Literature*. Proceeding from the work of Norbert Elias and others, Rose argues that at the close of the seventeenth century, more passive dimensions of heroism, such as patience and endurance, came to

be valorised over the traditional heroic image of the aristocratic warrior. It is her argument that this change in heroic values is a gendered change, in which formerly feminine values come to be marked as masculine heroic traits:

[T]he gendering of heroism from the late sixteenth to the late seventeenth centuries in England does not reveal an accelerating idealization of that which is male, public, and active, but rather the opposite. Indeed, an exclusive focus on these qualities obscures a more passive but equally potent dimension of heroic identity that by the late seventeenth century emerges as dominant: that which privileges not the active confrontation with danger, but the capacity to endure it, to resist and suffer with patience and fortitude, rather than to confront and conquer with strength and wit.⁸⁸

What has also become clear from this chapter, is that the gendering of heroism in the first half of the seventeenth century cannot be represented as a process, or as a gliding scale that “accelerates” in the direction of male, public, and active, or in the direction of feminine, private and passive. Instead, as I hope to have demonstrated, conflicting engenderings of revenge circulated in the drama of the private theatres. These points of diffraction each interact with different political and religious discourses, and each represent different points within the matrix of the discursive dynamics of the period. Whereas Chapman’s tragedies interact with a militant protestant discourse of aristocratic independence, Massinger’s comedies as well as Brathwait’s handbook of gentlemanly conduct draw on a Christian discourse in their fashioning of male heroism. Each of these plays examines whether notions of revenge can still be accommodated within changing patterns of masculinity in city and court.

In her recent study *Manhood and the Duel*, Jennifer Low examines the practice of the duel in early modern England from a gender perspective. One of her chapters analyses representations of the duel on stage. In that chapter, Low argues that since playwrights were generally members of the middle classes, they failed to understand the significance of the concept of honour among the aristocracy:

Playmakers chose not to portray quarrels over individual honor positively; indeed, such subjects are rare. [...] The playwrights’ scepticism about the resolution promised by the combat becomes

evident in what results from the attempt to take the rituals of honor seriously. In this respect, we see the playwrights unable to control their own perceptions of aristocratic mores.⁸⁹

Furthermore, she characterizes representations of the duel in the theatre as unrealistic, for “because all playwrights wrote commercial drama rather than social criticism, their portrayals of the duel were based on dramatic imperatives.”⁹⁰ I do not deny that the drama has its own generic conventions, but do think that the drama cannot be seen as separate from historical reality. Indeed, as I have argued throughout, the drama was one of the cultural platforms in which discourses of gender and revenge were produced and rehearsed; the plays performed in the private theatres provided their patrons with tools to think with.

A gender analysis of representations of revenge in the private theatre shows that the performance of revenge on these stages was political. The conflicting gendered representations interact with notions of sovereignty, civility and the public good. Whereas Chapman conceives of a controlled and rational management of the passions as a model for masculine revenge, plays such as Massinger’s comedies accuse duellers of losing their manhood to the passion of vindictiveness. They propose a new model of masculine valour, in which concepts of revenge are replaced by formerly feminine notions of forgiveness and suffering as expressions of male heroism. These gendered points of diffraction in these plays’ representations of revenge are caused by the conflict between co-existing discourses of sovereignty and civility. The restrained passions of active Stoicism provide means of resistance in a tyrannous monarchy. In Massinger’s comedies, the restraint of private passions leads to the prosperity of the commonweal only if subjects do not follow their individual desires, but invest their passions in the public good.

NOTES

¹ The former monastery of Blackfriars was first used as a private playhouse in 1576 by Richard Farrant and his Children of the Chapel. Closed in 1584, it was reopened by Richard Burbage in 1600 and used by the Children of Queen Anne’s Revels as well as The King’s Men.

² Gurr 2004: 34. See also Kastan 1997: 313. The reconstruction of the situation is loosely based on Gurr’s interpretation of the quotation, p. 34–36.

³ I use the term Civil War for convenience sake. In reality, there were three successive periods of war between 1642 and 1651. Also, revisionist historians have argued that the “English Civil War” should properly be referred to as “The Wars of the Three Kingdoms,” since Scotland and Ireland were very much involved in both the causes as well as the fighting of the wars.

⁴ Elizabeth Foyster (1999) has looked at constructions of masculinity in the context of honour, sex, and marriage, and has analyzed the ways in which precarious manhood could be asserted, lost, and restored in early modern England.

⁵ G. F. 1635: sig. A3v.

⁶ Foyster 1999: 178.

⁷ Barber 1985: 42 and 25.

⁸ Prynne 1633: sig. Xxx3r. It is interesting that Prynne should here equate concepts such as homicide, tyranny and revenge with fortitude and generosity, but as will appear from this chapter, these two terms are part of an aristocratic discourse of honour, in which they are indeed associated with a heroic mentality, and with the duel.

⁹ Harbage compares Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* to Marston’s *Antonio’s Revenge* to illustrate “the distinct conceptions of the nature of man at the public and the private theatres” (Harbage 1952: 172).

¹⁰ See especially Cook 1997.

¹¹ On the debate over the audiences of the private theatres, see Cook 1981 and 1997; Butler 1984: esp. 100–41; Sturges 1987; and Gurr, 2004.

¹² Butler 1984: *passim*.

¹³ See, for example, Carlin 1999; Hutton 2004; Purkiss 2005.

¹⁴ Butler 1984: 5–6.

¹⁵ Ide 1980: xii.

¹⁶ Ide 1980: xiv.

¹⁷ Bowers 1966: 145.

¹⁸ Wells 2000: 109.

¹⁹ Ide 1980: 32.

²⁰ Peacham 1962: 12.

²¹ Bement 1972: 351.

²² On the Stoic tradition and the role of anger, see Braden 1985.

²³ Shifflet 1998: 15.

²⁴ Andrew Kirk argues that, as an outsider at the French court, Bussy automatically assumes the traditional English role of mirror to the French. He argues that Bussy falls from “a position defined by the attributes that the English usually assigned to themselves – plainness, constancy, fortitude, masculinity – and [falls] *into* his French identity, which is characterized by false exteriors and deception, excessive passion, inconstancy [...]” (Kirk 1996: 161). The *Revenge of Bussy*, I will argue, aligns this ‘French’ excessive passion of vindictiveness with the feminine, thus linking the notion of Catholic French vindictiveness to women.

²⁵ N. S. Brooke ed., *The Tragedy of Bussy D’Ambois* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, [1964] 1999), 25. All further

quotations from the play will be from this edition.

²⁶ Wright 1971: 72.

²⁷ Vergil, *Aeneid*, II.626-31: “Ac veluti summis antiquam in montibus
ornum | Cum ferro accisam crebreisque bipennibus instant | Eruere
agricolae certatim: illa usque minatur | Et tremefacta comam concusso
vertice nutat, | Volneribus donec paulatim evicta suprenum | Congemuit
traxitque iugis avolsa ruinam.”

²⁸ See also Kirk 1996: 163.

²⁹ Ide 1980: 83. In fact, a spirited critical debate exists over Chapman’s intentions with his Bussy character: is he a Herculean hero, or rather a man who cannot control his passions? The main proponent of the view that Chapman intended Bussy as an anti-hero is Ennis Rees, in his *The Tragedies of George Chapman: Renaissance Ethics in Action* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1945). Rees argues that Chapman always intended Clermont in *The Revenge of Bussy* to be the true Stoic hero, therefore the portrayal of Bussy as a hero must be seen as ironic. He bases his argument, however, on Chapman’s poetry published at the time of *The Revenge*, which Rees considers to be more representative of the playwright’s ideas than the plays themselves. Eugene Waith, in his *The Herculean Hero in Marlowe, Chapman, and Dryden* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1962) argues that Chapman intended Bussy as a Herculean hero, and that Rees “greatly oversimplifies Chapman’s attitude towards Achilles and Ulysses, and towards the two kinds of heroes in his own tragedies. It leads to a serious distortion of the meaning of *Bussy D’Ambois*” (106). Ide summarizes Rees’ argument and adds: “But this will not do. The translation of Achilles’s self-centered, bloody heroism in the second half of the *Iliad* no doubt gave Chapman pause (it was not published until 1611), but he still clung to the belief that there was something of value in the pagan heroic ideal and that it could not be wholly discredited on ethical grounds” (Ide 1980: 11). The *Tragedy of Bussy* in my view explores the combination of heroic masculinity with Stoic fortitude, and shows its consequences. It is not necessary to know what Chapman intended with the play. What is relevant to my question is the way the play problematizes the discourse of aristocratic Stoic resistance to absolute monarchy, by emphasizing the workings of the passions.

³⁰ McCoy 1989: 95.

³¹ See also Holderness 2000: 27. The Queen’s box on the ear can be read in the context of disciplinary violence common in early modern culture: “corporeal punishment from ear-boxing to whipping reminded unruly subordinates of their place, through humiliating them and denying them the right of self-defence,” Alexandra Shepard writes. Since “disciplinary violence was almost entirely carried out by men,” except when women disciplined children or female servants, and since “it was particularly offensive [...] to box the ears of an opponent” Essex may have been overly humiliated by the Queen’s resort to personal violence. (Shepard 2003: 130 and 139 and 144).

³² See also Holderness, who describes Essex’s resort to the sword “an

aristocrat's gesture" (Holderness 2000: 27).

³³ McCoy 1989: 96.

³⁴ See also Waith 1962: 133-34.

³⁵ If cholera was heated to excess, it could blacken and dissolve into a dust. This humoral condition was known as 'melancholy adust.'

³⁶ See also McCoy 1989.

³⁷ Maus 1995a: 176. Katharine Eisaman Maus writes that the earl's "Roman Catholicism and his personal unpopularity may have encouraged Chapman to believe that he would be sympathetic to both the politics and the reception of *The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois*" (Maus 1995a: 376). I would say the dedication, with its reference to nobility and heroic life, points in the direction of the earl's concerns with aristocratic honour.

³⁸ See also Heinemann 1991 who describes the role of Southampton as a militant protestant patron of the popular stage; on chivalry and the Elizabethan aristocracy, see McCoy 1996.

³⁹ See James 1986: 406-407.

⁴⁰ See also *The Conspiracy of Byron*, 1.1.130-31.

⁴¹ George Chapman, *The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois*, in Maus 1995a: 2.1.83-94.

⁴² Wright 1971: 6.

⁴³ Braden 1980 5-27; Shifflet 1998: 3-34.

⁴⁴ Shifflet 1998: 3.

⁴⁵ Findlay 1999: 69.

⁴⁶ Butler 1984: 19.

⁴⁷ See also Boehrer 1990: 243-61. Although the play itself is a legendary history set in a distant past before the Roman invasion in Britain (Holinshed locates Leir's reign in the eighth century BC), and finds its sources in historical chronicles such as Geoffrey Monmouth's *History of the Kings of Britain* and *Holinshed's Chronicles*, it engages with early modern culture as well as with its medieval setting.

⁴⁸ Shakespeare 1997, *King Lear*, 2.2.13-21.

⁴⁹ Ide 1980: 12.

⁵⁰ Elias 1982: 259.

⁵¹ When Oswald refuses to fight, he is accused of being lily-livered. The term strongly resembles Hamlet's reference to himself as "pigeon-livered." Significantly, Hamlet in the same monologue also refers to a whore when he describes his procrastination in revenge.

⁵² See also Hoenselaars 1998: 108-116; and Howard and Rackin 1997: 137-59 for a discussion of the mirror in *Richard II*.

⁵³ The *OED* defines the adjective "action-taking" as "litigious" (*sv.* action *n.* 16).

⁵⁴ In certain courts, such as the ecclesiastical court, it was possible for a woman to sue in her own name without her husband. According to Stretton, statistics from a range of different courts show that the numbers of women active in litigation were high. Indeed, the suing woman may have become somewhat of a cultural stereotype, 'clamorous' women, "who had entered multiple suits against a single

opponent in one or more courts, or who the Masters felt had pursued an action too vigorously or too loudly” (Stretton 1998: 31).

⁵⁵ For a historical overview of definitions of the genre, as well as a useful set of guidelines on criteria for inclusion in the genre, see Clark 1975: 1-26.

⁵⁶ H. H. Adams (1943) over-emphasizes the homiletic nature of the plays to the detriment of their sensational attraction. For a qualification of this view, see Doran 1954; and Clark 1975.

⁵⁷ Sturgess 1969: 40.

⁵⁸ Bryson 1998: 132.

⁵⁹ Bryson 1998: 150.

⁶⁰ Ash 2003: 126.

⁶¹ Rose 2002: xviii.

⁶² The homily on obedience similarly marks revenge as unchristian and unmanly when it asserts that “true strength and manliness is to overcome wrath, and to despise injury and other mennes folishnes.” “An Homelie agaynst Contencion and Braulynge” in Bond 1987: 195.

⁶³ Heinemann 1980: 186.

⁶⁴ Gross 1967: 330.

⁶⁵ Butler 1982: 162.

⁶⁶ Butler 1984: 143.

⁶⁷ Clark 1993: 155-56.

⁶⁸ Bowers 1966: 186 and 189.

⁶⁹ Clark 1993: 212.

⁷⁰ Keyishian discusses the redemptive, regenerating properties of revenge in Shakespeare’s *Titus Andronicus* and *The Rape of Lucrece* (Keyishian 1995: 40-52).

⁷¹ It is uncertain in which theatres *A Fair Quarrel* was performed (see Bentley 1966: Vol. IV, 868). I discuss it here briefly for its similarities in its treatment of revenge to Massinger’s play.

⁷² Shakespeare 1997, *Romeo and Juliet*: 1.1.1-7.

⁷³ See also Low 2003: 109-18.

⁷⁴ G. F. 1635: sig. A3v.

⁷⁵ G. F. 1635: K2r.

⁷⁶ G. F. 1635: sig. H4v-I1r. Wiseman also speaks of the public interest: “How vnworthy is it then to aduenture thy selfe so vngloriously? Your neighbours, and countrey-men haue part in yee, why should yee robbe them of yee? Your kindred haue interest in yee, why doe yee depriue them? Your Soueraigne may neede you, why deny you him his due, and hazzard the best blood yee haue in obscurity?” (Wiseman 1619, sig. V2r).

⁷⁷ Whigham 1984: 33. Whigham also cites Wrightson, who in his *English Society 1580-1680* “has argued with conviction that in the period between 1580 and 1660 the ‘middling sort’ [...] allied with their betters, whose cultural values they increasingly came to share and adopted an increasingly hostile and distant attitude towards the rural masses.”

⁷⁸ G. F. 1635: sig. D4r.

⁷⁹ G. F. 1635: sig. E4v. Later in the tract, duellers are said to “turn bloud-

hound” in their persistent pursuit of revenge (sig. K3r).

⁸⁰ Middleton 1618: sig. Dr2-v.

⁸¹ Wither 1622: 61.

⁸² Bacon 1614: B2v-B3r. Anthony Copley similarly writes: “So credulous is Angers moodie vigure | When once it is in-Caesared in youth: | And hand in-handed with a quaint Disdaine | Iniurious disglorie to sustaine.” Copley 1883: 25. The *OED* does not list the verb in-Caesar. It does define the verb Caesar as “to make into or like Caesar,” but I would hazard that the verb rather refers to a sense of penetration, of taking up residence in body or mind.

⁸³ Foyster, *Manhood*, 180.

⁸⁴ Philip Edwards, “Massinger’s Men and Women,” *Philip Massinger: A Critical Assessment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 49.

⁸⁵ Wither 1622: 73.

⁸⁶ G. F. 1635: F2v-F3r and I4r.

⁸⁷ For patience, temperance, charity and mercy as traditionally feminine virtues, see Benson 1992: 36-40; 68-70; 213; Linda Woodbridge describes how the association of mercy, liberality and charitableness with women is stereotypical in the renaissance. See Woodbridge 1986: 69 and 309-10; in the middle ages, these genderings were commonplace as well. Anne Clark Bartlett writes: “Middle English devotional treatises written for women represent several aspects of courteous femininity, including humility, chastity, beauty, patience, meekness, and domesticity” (Bartlett 1992: 10). Thomas Wright similarly writes that “Women by nature are inclined more to mercy and pity than men, because the tenderness of their complexion moveth them more to compassion” (Wright, 1971: 119).

⁸⁸ Rose 2002: xii.

⁸⁹ Low 2003: 108.

⁹⁰ Low 2003: 93. Gauging the extent to which representations of the duel in the drama are representative of reality, she notes, for example, that in the drama “the psychological results for the characters are oddly realistic.”

CONCLUSION

Early modern drama and the dynamics of gender and revenge

The drama's engagement with issues of revenge in early modern society has traditionally been conceived in terms of moral approval or disapproval. Within the new historicism, the question has been shaped in terms of subversion or support of the state's appropriation of the right to revenge. By analyzing gendered points of diffraction within the drama, I present in this dissertation a more dynamic model of early modern ideas on revenge, and the role of the drama therein. In my opinion, a gender analysis of representations of revenge in various early modern genres and theatres shows that the theatre's contribution to debates on revenge in the period was all but homogeneous or monolithic. The theatre created many conflicting images of blood revengers, duellists, jealous wives, passionate sons, and angry tyrants. These stage representations each in their own way interact with contemporary political discussions on the role of revenge in early modern society. A gender perspective provides a way into the dynamics of theatrical representations, since gender is not only a key instrument in relations of power, but also because debates on revenge in the period are conducted in gendered terms of reason and passion, private and public, honour and civility.

The early modern period can be considered a watershed in thinking on revenge. If traditions of blood revenge were in the

medieval period considered instruments of social order, this notion was subject to discussion in the period that forms the focal point of this research. England witnessed an expansion of a national legal system, and Tudor as well as Stuart governments sought to eradicate practices of blood revenge in their kingdoms. The word 'revenge' could refer to punishment executed by God, the law, or individual persons. In the period, however, the term was split into the three categories of divine, public, and private revenge, so as to distinguish between the personal, unauthorized revenge of individuals and the public, authorized revenge of the law. In this dissertation, I explored the role of the stage in this dynamic process of defining revenge in early modern English culture.

The emergence of the genre of revenge tragedy into early modern England occurred in the institutional context of the Inns of Court, the early modern law schools. The Inns educated the lawyers, judges and governors that the expanding legal system called for. In their dramatic performances, the Inns shaped a discourse that sharpened the boundary between private revenge and public justice. The tragedies written for the Inns' theatrical revels combine elements from Senecan revenge tragedy with native English history from the chronicles. From Senecan tragedy, the Inns of Court playwrights especially took the characters and the rhetoric of vindictive women, such as Medea and Clytemnestra. These Senecan representations of feminine fury are in the Inns of Court tragedies tacked onto characters from English national history, such as Guenevora or Videna. These women's desire for revenge and their murders of their family members, are related to the outbreak of rebellion and civil war. Thus, these Inns of Court tragedies create an association in the political unconscious between private revenge and civil war. The Senecan images of uncontrolled feminine vengeance counterbalance notions of revenge as even-handed and orderly. In the Inns of Court tragedy *Horestes*, wild feminine fury is contrasted to a rational and publicly authorized form of revenge, which is associated with masculinity and chivalry. The Inns of Court tragedies thus shape a specific dramatic discourse in which private revenge is associated with uncontrollability, excess, passion, and the feminine, whereas the public revenge of the legal system is associated with rationality, control, and masculinity.

In Shakespeare's first tetralogy of history plays, and also in his *Titus Andronicus*, the gendered boundary between the wild justice of revenge and the authorized justice of the public law is disputed. Like the Inns of Court tragedies, Shakespeare's first tetralogy blends native history with Senecan tragedy. In its representations of revenge, however, the tetralogy problematizes the gendered division between masculine public revenge and private feminine revenge that the Inns of Court sought to produce. Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* also draws explicit attention to the interstices between the public retribution of the legal system, and the feminine private revenges of both Titus and Tamora.

The dramatic discourse of uncontrolled feminine vindictiveness is contrasted in the genre of revenge tragedy with a view of revenge as masculine and controlled. The conflict between these two discourses is played out in gendered terms of selfhood. Whereas Senecan representations of revenge focus on the loss of selfhood caused by the feminine fury of revenge, other representations view the passion of vindictiveness as an essential element of masculine identity. In this view, the pursuit of revenge does not threaten madness or fury, but is a duty that a son owes to this father, a duty that affirms the bonds between male family members. Anger is a controlled ingredient of this type of masculine revenge. Notions of the body and the mind, passion and reason, play a crucial role in this defence of the social role of revenge. Militant aristocratic discourse in this period argues that revenge is part of aristocratic male identity, and should not be conceived of as feminine and uncontrolled, but as honourable and masculine. These political debates on revenge draw on two ideas of selfhood: a controlled, masculine type of selfhood, and a permeable, feminine type of selfhood. These two views of selfhood and revenge are shaped, and shown to conflict, in the genre of revenge tragedy. They figure not only in the genre itself, but also take up a prominent place in early modern objections to the performance of revenge in the commercial theatres.

In the historiography of the role of the stage in the civil wars that break out in the 1640s, the private theatres have been described as nurturing the decadence of the higher classes in their representations of duelling courtiers. A gender analysis of a corpus of plays from the private theatres shows that the political issues of the time were explored with more nuance. Chapman's

tragedies attempt to accommodate the practice of revenge in neo-Stoic political thinking on sovereignty and the subject's right to resist tyranny. Gender plays a crucial role in his plays to distinguish between the self-contained, rational revenge of the Stoic characters in the tragedies, and the limitless feminine desire for revenge that the plays disapprove of. Massinger's comedies propose a new model of masculine heroics, in which revenge plays no part. Instead, new masculine virtues are based on (formerly feminine) concepts such as forgiveness and patience.

We cannot speak of "the role" of "the drama" in early modern thinking on revenge. In the three core chapters of this study, I demonstrated that the role of the drama is not a unified or monolithic one. Instead, the plays functioned within different discursive contexts, as well as within different material contexts. The Inns of Court drama was mainly concerned with the reinforcement of a distinction between public and private revenge, for example, and negotiated discourses of revenge produced in sermons and state politics. The plays of the private theatres discussed in chapter four, as a contrast, pivoted on notions of class and masculine honour, and appropriated representations of masculine selfhood from anti-duelling pamphlets as well as conduct books in their representations of revenge. These plays all engage with different aspects of the problematics of revenge, and can therefore not be captured under one definition.

What is more, a single play cannot be considered as a cohesive discursive unit. Since plays are dialogic in nature, they rather explore conflicts than resolve them. As Louis Montrose writes, in a dramatic text "so many cultural codes converge and interact that ideological coherence and stability are scarcely possible."¹ Even within the dramatic productions of the Inns of Court, which can be said to be the most programmatic in their representations of revenge among the plays analysed here, I identified points of diffraction, points of conflict between gendered representations of revenge. These points of diffraction signal larger conflicts between discourses that circulated in early modern culture. This study charted which plays engage with which conflicts, and which images these plays circulate and produce in their engagement with these conflicts.

Of seminal importance also in the plays' engagements with discourses of revenge is the theatrical context within which

they were staged. A remarkable illustration of this conclusion is proffered by the case study in chapter three, where the performance of revenge tragedy in the public London theatre elicited anxieties over the right to judge that were not associated with the Inns of Court performances, staged before aristocrats and students of the law. The discourse of public and private revenge that the Inns of Court tragedies had produced was used as an argument against the public performance of the genre itself in anti-theatrical pamphlets. The theatres, in their aim to teach the audience to imitate the good and shun the evil examples presented in the plays, were accused of appropriating the right to judge between good and evil that belonged only to the church and the state. Moreover, these anxieties were also fed by the difference in audiences between the earlier dramatic productions and those in the public theatres. In London's public theatres, audiences were a cross-section of the London population, ranging from the lower classes to the aristocracy. Anti-theatrical authors argued that lower class members of the audience would not be able to judge the contents of a play by means of their reason, but would react to the performance of passion on an emotional level. Thus, the institutional context of the performance of revenge tragedy proves of crucial importance in its interactions with the discursive dynamics of revenge. The notions of justice and revenge, reason and passion that play a central role in the drama's engagement with discourses of revenge, also played central role in perceptions of the drama itself in early modern society. As McLuskie argues, "[a] reading, however brilliantly informed by a 'poetics of culture' which situated these texts merely in an undifferentiated 'Renaissance' cannot do justice to their complex historical existence."² The dissemination and material context of the textual traces that have survived needs to be taken into context in an analysis of their cultural work.

My answer to the central question of this dissertation: "what is the role of the drama in the cultural dynamics of revenge in the early modern period?" can thus only be that this is a conflicting and dynamic role. Applying a gender perspective to various plays, I have traced the engagements of the Inns of Court, Shakespeare's history plays, the genre of revenge tragedy, domestic tragedy and the tragedies and comedies of Blackfriars with contemporary debates. Whereas the drama of the Inns of Court seeks to establish

a difference between the masculine, counselled, and rational justice of the state and the feminine, excessive and passionate character of private revenge, plays performed in the public theatres draw the existence of this difference into question. The revenge tragedies discussed in chapter three probe the effects that conflicting aristocratic, Neostoic, and Christian discourses have on the experience of masculine selfhood, and meta-dramatically reflect on the role of theatrical concepts of acting and imitation in this experience of selfhood. The drama of the private theatres discussed in the final chapter attempts to shape models of masculine selfhood that negotiate the disapproval of passionate revenge, but do so in very divergent ways, stressing the need for aristocratic sovereignty and the Stoic right formulate a rational judgement for oneself in Chapman's revenge tragedies, and the need for accommodation to models of Christian mercy and forgiveness in Massinger's comedies. One unifying factor in all these plays, however, is that masculine images of revenge are consistently played off against non-masculine counterparts. It is this mechanism of gender that allowed me to trace the specific ways in which the early modern drama engages with conflicting discourses of revenge. The binary mechanism of gender plays a crucial role in the shifting definitions of selfhood, honour, shame, the body, passion and reason that take shape in the early modern theatres' engagement with discussions on revenge.

NOTES

¹ Montrose 1989: 22.

² McLuskie 1995: 427.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

- Anonymous. *The True Tragedie of Richard the Third wherein is showne the death of Edward the fourth, with the smothering of the two yoong princes in the Tower: with a lamentable ende of Shores wife, an example for all wicked women. And lastly, the coniunction and ioyning of the two noble houses, Lancaster and Yorke. As it was playd by the Queenes Maiesties Players.* London: 1594. STC 21009.
- Anonymous. *A Warning for Fair Women.* 1599. Edited by Charles Dale Cannon. The Hague, Paris: Mouton, 1975.
- Anonymous. *The Lamentable Tragedy of Lochrine: A Critical Edition.* Edited by Jane Lytton Gooch, Garland English Texts 7. New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1981.
- Anonymous. *Haec Vir.* 1620. In: *Half Humankind: Contexts and Texts of the Controversy about Woman in England, 1540-1640.* Katherine Usher Henderson and Barbara F. McManus. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1985. 277-289.
- Anonymous. *Hic Mulier.* 1620. In: *Half Humankind: Contexts and Texts of the Controversy about Woman in England, 1540-1640.* Katherine Usher Henderson and Barbara F. McManus. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1985. 264-276.
- Aristotle, *The "Art" of Rhetoric.* With an English Translation by John Henry Freese. The Loeb Classical Library: Aristotle, 23 vols. Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press and William Heinemann, 1926. Vol. 12.
- Ascham, Roger. *The Schoolmaster.* Edited by Lawrence V. Ryan. Folger Documents of Tudor and Stuart Civilization 13. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1974.
- Bacon, Francis. *A Declaration of the Practices and Treasons*

- attempted and committed by Robert late Earle of Essex and his Complices [...]*. London: 1601. STC 1133.
- . *The Charge of Sir Francis Bacon Touching Duels*. 1614. *The English Experience* 7. Amsterdam and New York: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, 1968.
- . *The Essayes or Counsels, Civill and Morall*. Edited with introduction, notes and commentary by Michael Kiernan. Oxford: Clarendonn Press, [1995] 2000.
- Barnes, Barnabe. *The Devil's Charter*. 1606. Edited by Jim C. Pogue. *The Devil's Charter by Barnabe Barnes: A Critical Edition*. New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1980.
- Bond, Ronald B. ed. *Certayne Sermons or Homelies (1547) and A Homily against Disobedience and Wilful Rebellion (1570): A Critical Edition*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987.
- Botero, Giovanni. *Relations of the Most Famous Kingdomes and Common-wealths Thorowout the World*. Translated by Robert Johnson. London: 1630. STC 3404.
- Brathwait, Richard. *The English Gentlewoman*. *The English Experience* 215. Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, 1970.
- . *The English Gentleman*. *The English Experience* 717. Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, 1975.
- Buchanan, George. *Ane detectioun of the duinges of Marie Quene of Scottes*. 1571. STC 275:11.
- Calvin, John. *Commentary upon the Acts of the Apostles*. Edited by Henry Beveridge, based upon the translation by Christopher Fetherstone. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2003. Vol. II.
- Cecil, William. *The Execution of Justice in England. 1583. The Execution of Justice in England And A True, Sincere, and Modest Defense of English Catholics*. Edited by Robert M. Kingdon. Ithaca and New York: Cornell University Press, 1965.
- Chapman, George. *Bussy D'Ambois*. 1604. *The Revels Plays*. Edited by Nicholas Brooke. London and Cambridge, MA: Methuen and Harvard University Press, 1964.
- . *The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois*. 1610. *Four Revenge Tragedies*. Edited by Katharine Eisaman Maus. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995.
- Chettle, Henry. *The Tragedy of Hoffman*. 1603. London: Malone Society: 1951.
- Copley, Anthony. *A Fig for Fortune*. 1596. Manchester: The Spenser Society, 1883.
- Cornwallis, William. *Essayes*. 1600 [1606]. Edited by D. C. Allen. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1946.
- . *Discourses Upon Seneca the Tragedian*. Delmar, NY: Scholars' Facsimiles & Reprints, 1952.
- Corrigan, Brian Jay. *The Misfortunes of Arthur: A Critical, Old-*

- Spelling Edition*. New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1992.
- Couffeteau, Nicolas. *A Table of the Humane Passions. With Their Causes and Effects. Written by Ye Reuerend Father in God F. N. Coeffeteau, Bishop of Dardania [...]* Translated into English by Edw. Grimeston Sergiant at Armes. Translated by Edward Grimeston. London: Printed by Nicholas Okes, 1621. STC 5473.
- Cunliffe, John. W., ed. *Early English Classical Tragedies*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1912.
- Daniel, Samuel. *The Tragedy of Philotas*. Edited, with introduction and notes, by Laurence Michel. New Haven: Yale University Press; London: Oxford University Press, 1949.
- Elyot, *The Book Named the Governor*. 1531. Menston: The Scholar Press, 1970.
- G. F. Duell-Ease: *A Worde With Valiant Spiritts Shewing the Abuse of Duells that Valour Refuseth Challenges and Priuate Combats sett foorth by G.F. a defendour of Christian valoure*. STC 10637. London: 1635.
- Gosson, Stephen. *Playes Confuted in Five Actions*. 1582. Edited by Arthur Freeman. New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1972.
- Greville, Fulke. *The Works*. Edited by Alexander B. Grosart. 4 vols. New York: AMS Press, [1870] 1966.
- Hall, Edward. *The vnion of the two noble and illustre famelies of Lancastre & Yorke, beyng long in continuall discension for the croune of this noble realme : with al the actes done in both the tymes of the princes, both of the one linage & of the other beginnyng at the tyme of kyng Henry the werth, the first auctor of this deuision, and so successiuey procedi[n]g to ye reigne of the high and prudent prince kyng Henry the eyght, the indubitate flower and very heire of both the saied linages. Whereunto is added to euery kyng a seuerall table*. London: Rychard Grafton, Prynter to the Kynges Maiestye, 1550. STC 12723.
- Heywood, Thomas. *An Apology for Actors*. 1612. “An Apology for Actors” by Thomas Heywood; A Refutation of the “Apology for Actors” by I. G. Edited by Arthur Freeman. New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1973.
- Hughes, Paul L. and James F. Larkin eds. *Tudor Royal Proclamations*. Volume II: The Later Tudors. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1969.
- Humphrey, L. *The Nobles, or, of Nobility*. London: 1563. STC 13964.
- I. G. *A Refutation of the Apology for Actors*. 1615. “An Apology for Actors” by Thomas Heywood; A Refutation of the “Apology for Actors” by I. G. Edited by Arthur Freeman. New York and

- London: Garland Publishing, 1973.
- James, King. "A Proclamation Prohibiting the Publishing of any Reports or Writings of Duels." Hinchinbrooke, 15 October 1613. *Stuart Royal Proclamations*. 2 Vols. Volume 1 *Royal Proclamations of King James I*. Edited by James F. Larkin and Paul L. Hughes. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973. 295-97.
- . "A Proclamation Against Private Challenges and Combats: With Articles Annexed for the Better Directions to Be Used Therein, and for the More Judiciall Proceeding Against Offenders." Westminster, 4 February 1614. *Stuart Royal Proclamations*. 2 Vols. Volume 1 *Royal Proclamations of King James I*. Edited by James F. Larkin and Paul L. Hughes. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973. 302-308.
- Jones, Richard. *The Booke of Honor and Armes*. Printed by Richard Jones. London: 1590. STC 22163.
- Jonson, Ben. *The Alchemist*. 1610. Edited by Gordon Campbell. Oxford World's Classics. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.
- . *Every Man in his Humour*. 1598. Edited by M. Seymour-Smith. The New Mermaids. London: Ernest Benn Limited, 1966.
- Kastner L.E. and H.B, eds. Charlton, *The Poetical Works of Sir William Alexander*. Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1921.
- Knox, John. *The First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women*. 1558. Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, 1972.
- Kyd, Thomas. *The Spanish Tragedy*. 1587. *Four Revenge Tragedies*. Edited by Katharine Eisaman Maus. World's Classics Series. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995.
- Lancashire, Ian, ed. Homily on Obedience. *The Elizabethan Homilies*. STC 13675. *Renaissance Electronic Texts* 1.2. 1994, 1997a. [<http://www.library.utoronto.ca/utel/ret/homilies/bk1hom10.html>]
- , ed. "Homily Against Disobedience and Wilful Rebellion." *The Elizabethan Homilies*. STC 13675. *Renaissance Electronic Texts* 1.2. 1994, 1997b. [<http://www.library.utoronto.ca/utel/ret/homilies/bk2hom21.html>]
- Lodge, Thomas. *The Workes of Lucius Annaeus Seneca. Both Morall and Naturall*. London: 1614. STC 22213.
- Marston, John. *Antonio's Revenge*. 1600. Edited by W. Reavley Gair. Manchester and Baltimore, MD: Manchester University Press and Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978.
- . *The Insatiate Countess*. 1610. Edited by Martin Wiggins. *Four Jacobean Sex Tragedies*. World's Classics Series. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.

- Mason, John. *The Turke*. 1607. *Materialien zur Kunde des älteren Englischen Dramas* 37. Louvain: Uystpruyst, [1913] 1963.
- Massinger, Philip. *The City Madam*. 1632. *The Plays and Poems of Philip Massinger*. Edited by Philip Edwards and Colin Gibson. 5 Vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976. Vol. 4.
- . *A Very Woman*. 1634. *The Plays and Poems of Philip Massinger*. Edited by Philip Edwards and Colin Gibson. 5 Vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976. Vol. 4.
- and John Fletcher. *The Spanish Curate*. 1622. *The Dramatic Works in the Beaumont and Fletcher Canon*. 10 Vols. Edited by Fredson Bowers. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966–96. Vol. 10.
- Middleton, Thomas. *The Peace-Maker, or, Great-Brittaines Blessing*. STC 14387. London, 1618.
- and William Rowley. *A Fair Quarrel*. 1617. Edited by R. V. Holdsworth. London: Ernest Benn Limited: 1974.
- Montaigne, Michel de. *The Essays*. Translated by John Florio. London, 1603. London: David Nutt, 1893.
- Munday, Anthony and others. *Sir Thomas More*. 1595. Edited by Vittorio Gabrieli and Giorgio Melchiori. *The Revels Plays*. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1990.
- Nashe, Thomas. *The Unfortunate Traveller or the Life of Jacke Wilton*. 1594. Edited by H. F. B. Brett-Smith. *The Percy Reprints*, no. 1. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1920.
- . *Piers Penniless His Supplication to the Devil*. 1592. Early English Prose Fiction Full-Text Database. Cambridge: Chadwyck-Healey, 1997. STC 18371.
- Newton, Thomas, ed. *Seneca His Tenne Tragedies Translated into English*. 1927. 2 vols. Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1964.
- Nims, John Frederick, ed. *Ovid's Metamorphoses: The Arthur Golding Translation 1567*. New York: The Macmillan Company; London: Collier-Macmillan Limited, 1965.
- Nowell, Alexander. "A Catechism written in Latin by Alexander Nowell, Dean of St Pauls, together with the same catechism translated into English by Thomas Norton. Added is a sermon preached by Dean Nowell before Queen Elizabeth at the opening of the parliament which met January 11, 1563." Edited by G. E. Corrie, D. D. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1853.
- Painter, William. *The Palace of Pleasure*. 1890. Ed. David Nutt and Joseph Jacobs. New York: Dover Publications, 1966.
- Peacham, Henry. *The Complete Gentleman*. 1622. "*The Complete Gentleman*," "*The Truth of Our Times*," and "*The Art of Living in London*." Edited by Virgil B. Hetzel. Ithaca, NY: Cornell

- University Press, 1962.
- . *Minerva Britannia* (1612). The English Experience 407. Amsterdam and New York: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, 1971.
- Peele, George. *The Battell of Alcazar, Fought in Barbarie, betweene Sebastian king of Portugall, and Abdelmelec king of Marocco. With the death of Captaine Stukeley*. London: 1594.
- . *The Tale of Troy* (c. 1580). *The Life and Works of George Peele*. Edited by David H. Horne. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1952. Vol. I, 183–202.
- Perkins, William. *The Whole Treatise of the Cases of Conscience*. 1606. The English Experience 482. Amsterdam and New York: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, 1972.
- Pikeryng, John. *Horestes: A Newe Enterlude of Vice conteyninge the Historye of Horestes with the cruell revengment of his Fathers death upon his one naturall Mother*. 1567. *Three Tudor Classical Interludes*. Edited by Marie Axton. Cambridge: D. S. Brewer; Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Littlefield, 1982.
- Primaudaye, Pierre de la. *The French Academie*. Translated by T[homas] B[owes]. London: 1586. STC 15233.
- . *The Second Part of The French Academie*. London: 1594. STC 15238.
- Sackville, Thomas and Thomas Norton. *Gorboduc or Ferrex and Porrex*. Edited by Irby B. Cauthen. London: Edward Arnold, 1970.
- Seneca, L. A. “A Treatise of Anger.” *The Workes of L. A. Seneca Both Morall and Naturall, Newly Enlarged and Corrected by Thomas Lodge*. Translated by Thomas Lodge. Printed by W. Stansby. [1614] 1620. STC 22214.
- . *Seneca his Tenne Tragedies Translated into English*. 1581. Edited by T. S. Eliot. Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, [1927] 1964.
- . *Seneca’s Moral Essays*. Trans. John W. Basore. 3 vols. The Loeb Classical Library: Seneca. 10 vols. Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press and William Heinemann, 1970.
- . *Seneca’s Tragedies*. Trans. Frank Justus Miller. Eds. E. Capps, T. E. Page, and W. H. D. Rouse. 2 vols. The Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge Massachusetts: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann, 1927.
- Shakespeare, William. *Hamlet*. Edited by Harold Jenkins. Arden Second Series. Walton-on-Thames: Thomas Nelson & Sons Ltd., 1982.
- . *1 Henry VI*. Edited by Edward Burns. Arden Third Series. London: Thomson Learning, 2000.
- . *2 Henry VI*. Edited by Ronald Knowles. Arden Third Series. London: Thomson Learning, 1999.

- . *3 Henry VI*. Edited by John D. Cox and Eric Rasmussen. Arden Third Series. London: Thomson Learning, 2001.
- . *Richard III*. Edited by Antony Hammond. Arden Second Series. London and New York: Routledge, 1981.
- . *Titus Andronicus*. Edited by Jonathan Bate. Arden Third Series. London: Thomson Learning, 1995.
- . *The Norton Shakespeare*. Edited by Stephen Greenblatt, Walter Cohen, Jean E. Howard and Katharine Eisaman Maus. New York and London: W. W. Norton and Company: 1997.
- Share, Don, ed. *Seneca in English*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1998.
- Shirley, James. *The Maid's Revenge*. Edited by Albert Howard Carter. New York: Garland Publishing, 1980.
- Sidney, Philip. *An Apology for Poetry or The Defence of Poesy*. Edited by Geoffrey Shepherd. Revised and expanded for the third edition by R. W. Maslen. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2002.
- Smith, G. Gregory. *Elizabethan Critical Essays*. 2 vols. London: Oxford University Press, 1967.
- Studley, John. *The Seuenth Tragedie of Seneca, Entituled Medea*. London: 1566a. STC 22224.
- . *The Eyght Tragedie of Seneca Entituled Agamemnon*. London: 1566b. STC 22222.
- Sturges, Keith, ed. *Three Domestic Tragedies*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969.
- Swetnam, Joseph. *The Araignment of Lewde, idle, froward, and unconstant women; Or the vanitie of them, choose you whether. With a Commendacion of wise, vertuous and honest Women. Pleasant for married Men, profitable for young men, and hurtfull to none*. 1615. *Female Replies to Swetnam the Woman-Hater*. Bristol: Thoemnes Press, 1995.
- . *The Schoole of the Noble and Worthy Science of Defence*. London, 1617. STC 23543.
- Tourneur, Cyril. *The Atheist's Tragedy, or, The Honest Man's Revenge*. 1609. Edited by Katharine Eisaman Maus. *Four Revenge Tragedies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995.
- Westerman, William. *Two Sermons of Assise the one intituled A prohibition of reuenge, the other, A sword of maintenance: preached at two seuerall times, before the right worshipfull iudges of assise, and gentlemen assembled in Hertford, for the execution of iustice, and now published*. London: 1600. STC 25282.
- Whitney, Geoffrey. *A Choice of Emblemes*. English Emblem Books 3. Selected and edited by John Horden. Menston: The Scholar Press, 1973.

- Wiseman, William. *The Christian Knight*. London: 1619. STC 10926.
- Wither, George. *Juvenalia*. London: 1622. STC 25911.
- Wright, Thomas. *The Passions of the Minde in Generall*. A reprint based on the 1604 edition, with an introduction by Thomas O. Sloan. Urbana, Chicago and London: University of Illinois Press, 1971.
- Wright, Louis B., ed. *Advice to a Son: Precepts of Lord Burghley, Sir Walter Raleigh, and Francis Osborne*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1962.

Secondary Sources

- Adams, H. H. *English Domestic or Homiletic Tragedy, 1575 to 1642*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1943.
- Adams, J. Q. "Introduction." *Hamlet*. Edited by J. Q. Adams. New York: Houghton Mifflin and Company, 1929.
- Aggeler, Geoffrey. "'Sparkes of Holy Things': Neostoicism and the English Protestant Conscience." *Renaissance and Reformation* 14:1 (1990): 223-40.
- Alexander, Nigel. *Poison, Play and Duel: A Study in Hamlet*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul: 1971.
- Alfar, Christina Léon. *Fantasies of Female Evil: The Dynamics of Gender and Power in Shakespearean Tragedy*. Newark: University of Delaware Press; London: Associated University Presses: 2003.
- Allman, Eileen. *Jacobean Revenge Tragedy and the Politics of Virtue*. Newark: University of Delaware Press; London: Associated University Presses, 1999.
- Amussen, Susan D. "The Part of a Christian Man: The Cultural Politics of Manhood in Early Modern England." In: *Political Culture and Cultural Politics in Early Modern England: Essays Presented to David Underdown*. Edited by Susan D. Amussen and Mark A. Kishlansky. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1995. 213-33.
- Amussen, Susan D. and Adele Seeff, eds. *Attending to Early Modern Women*. Newark: University of Delaware Press; London: Associated University Presses, 1998.
- Anderson, Linda. *A Kind of Wild Justice: Revenge in Shakespeare's Comedies*. Newark, Delaware: University of Delaware Press, 1987.
- Appelbaum, Robert. "'Standing to the Wall': The Pressures of Masculinity in *Romeo and Juliet*." *Shakespeare Quarterly* 48:3 (1997): 251-72.
- Axton, Marie. *The Queen's Two Bodies: Drama and the Elizabethan Succession*. London: Royal Historical Society, 1977.

- , ed. *Three Tudor Classical Interludes*. Cambridge: D. S. Brewer; Totowa: Rowman and Littlefield, 1982.
- Baldwin, T. W. *William Shakespeare's Small Latine and Lesse Greeke*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1944.
- Barber, C. L. "The Ambivalence of *Bussy D'Ambois*." *A Review of English Literature* 2:4 (1961): 38–44.
- . *The Theme of Honour's Tongue: A Study of Social Attitudes in the English Drama from Shakespeare to Dryden*. Gothenburg Studies in English 58. Gothenburg: Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis, 1985.
- Barbour, Reed. *English Epicures and Stoics: Ancient Legacies in Early Stuart Culture*. Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1998.
- Barker, Deborah E. and Ivo Kamps, eds. *Shakespeare and Gender: A History*. London and New York: Verso, 1995.
- Barker, Francis. *The Tremulous Private Body: Essays on Subjection*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1995.
- Bartlett, Anne Clark. "'Delicious Martyr': Feminine Courtesy in Middle English Devotional Literature for Women." *Essays in Medieval Studies* 9 (1992).
- Bartlett, Phyllis B. "The Heroes of Chapman's Homer." *The Review of English Studies* 17:67 (1941): 257–80.
- Bate, Jonathan. *Shakespeare and Ovid*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993.
- . "Introduction." *Titus Andronicus*. Edited by Jonathan Bate. Arden Third Series. London: Thomson Learning, 1995. 1–121.
- . "Elizabethan Translation: The Art of the Hermaphrodite." *Translating Life: Studies in Transpositional Aesthetics*. Edited by Shirley Chew and Alistair Stead. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1999, 33–51.
- Bates, C. Jr. "Aristotle and Aeschylus on the Rise of the Polis: The Necessity of Justice in Human Life." *Polis: The Journal of the Society for Greek Political Thought* 20:1–2 (2003): 43–61.
- Belsey, Catherine. "The Case of Hamlet's Conscience." *Studies in Philology* 76 (1979): 127–48.
- . *The Subject of Tragedy: Identity and Difference in Renaissance Drama*. London and New York: Methuen, 1985.
- . "Feminism and Beyond." *Shakespeare Studies* 25 (1997): 32–41.
- . *Shakespeare and the Loss of Eden: The Construction of Family Values in Early Modern Culture*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1999.
- Bement, Peter. "The Stoicism of Chapman's *Clermont D'Ambois*." *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900* 12:2 (1972): 345–57.
- Benjamin, Walter. "Critique of Violence." *Walter Benjamin*:

- Selected Writings*. Volume 1, 1913–1946. Edited by Marcus Bullock and Michael W. Jennings. Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1996. 236–52.
- Benson, Pamela Joseph. *The Invention of the Renaissance Woman*. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992.
- Bentley, G. E. *The Jacobean and Caroline Stage*. 7 Vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966–68.
- Berman, Ronald S. “Fathers and Sons in the *Henry VI* Plays.” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 13:4 (1962), 487–97.
- Berry, Edward I. *Patterns of Decay: Shakespeare’s Early Histories*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1975.
- Berry, Philippa. *Shakespeare’s Feminine Endings: Disfiguring Death in the Tragedies*. London and New York: Routledge, 1999.
- Bevan, Elinor. “Revenge, Forgiveness and the Gentleman.” *A Review of English Literature* 8:3 (1967): 55–69.
- Bevington, David M., “The Domineering Female in *1 Henry VI*.” *Shakespeare Studies* 2 (1966): 51–58.
- . *Tudor Drama and Politics: A Critical Approach to Topical Meaning*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968.
- . *Action is Eloquence: Shakespeare’s Language of Gesture*. Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1984.
- . “Two Households, Both Alike in Dignity: The Uneasy Alliance between New Historicists and Feminists.” *English Literary Renaissance* 25:3 (1995): 307–19.
- Bitton, Davis. *The French Nobility in Crisis, 1560–1640*. Stanford University Press, 1969.
- Bloch, Marc. *Feudal Society. Volume I: The Growth of Ties of Dependence*. Translated by L. A. Manyon. London and New York: Routledge, [1939] 1989.
- Boehrer, Bruce Thomas. “King Lear and the Royal Progress: Social Display in Shakespearean Tragedy.” *Renaissance Drama* 21 (1990): 243–61.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. *Masculine Domination*. Translated by Richard Nice. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, (1998) 2001.
- Bouwsma, Willem J. *A Useable Past: Essays in European Cultural History*. Berkeley, LA and Oxford: University of California Press, 1990.
- Bowers, Fredson. *Elizabethan Revenge Tragedy 1587–1642*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, [1940] 1966.
- Bradbrook, Muriel Clara. *Themes and Conventions of Elizabethan Tragedy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: [1935] 1980.
- Braddick, Michael J. *State Formation in Early Modern England c. 1550–1700*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- Braden, Gordon. *Renaissance Tragedy and the Senecan Tradition*:

- Anger's Privilege. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985.
- . "Newton, Thomas (1544/5–1607)." *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004. [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/20069>, accessed 14 Oct 2005].
- Bradley, A. C. *Shakespearean Tragedy: Lectures on "Hamlet," "Othello," "King Lear," "Macbeth."* London: Macmillan, 1911.
- Braidotti, Rosi. *Theories of Gender, or, "Language is a Virus!"* Utrecht: Rijksuniversiteit Utrecht, 1991.
- Brannigan, John. *New Historicism and Cultural Materialism*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998.
- Breier, René. "The Longleat Manuscript: Tamora's Great Belly." *English Language Notes* 35:3 (1998): 20–22.
- Breitenberg, Mark. *Anxious Masculinity in Early Modern England*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- Bristol, Michael. *Big-time Shakespeare*. London: Routledge: 1996.
- Brooke, C. F. Tucker. *The Tudor Drama: A History of English National Drama to the Retirement of Shakespeare*. 1911. Hamden, CT and London: Archon Books, 1964.
- Brooks, Harold. "Richard III: Unhistorical Amplifications: The Women's Scenes and Seneca." *Modern Language Review* 75:4 (1980): 721–37.
- Broude, Ronald. "George Chapman's Stoic-Christian Revenger." *Studies in Philology* 70:1 (1973): 51–61.
- . "Revenge and Revenge Tragedy in Renaissance England." *Renaissance Quarterly* 28:1 (1975): 38–58.
- . "Four Forms of Vengeance in Titus Andronicus." *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 78 (1979): 494–507.
- Brower, Reuben A. *Hero and Saint: Shakespeare and the Graeco-Roman Heroic Tradition*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971.
- Brown, Keith M. *Bloodfeud in Scotland 1573–1625: Violence, Justice, and Politics in an Early Modern Society*. Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers, 1986.
- . "Gentlemen and Thugs in Seventeenth-Century Britain." *History Today* 40:10 (1990): 27–32.
- Brown, Pamela Allen. *Better a Shrew than a Sheep: Women, Drama, and the Culture of Jest in Early Modern England*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2003.
- Brusberg-Kiermeier, Stefani. "The Role of Body Images in the Tudor Myth and its Subversion in Shakespeare's History Plays." *The Anatomy of Literature: Proceedings of the First International Conference of the Tudor Symposium (1998)*. Edited by Mike Pincombe. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001. 189–194.
- Bryson, Anna. *From Courtesy to Civility: Changing Codes of*

- Conduct in Early Modern England*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998.
- Bührer-Thierry, Geneviève. “‘Just Anger’ or ‘Vengeful Anger?’: The Punishment of Blinding in the Early Medieval West.” *Anger’s Past*. Edited by Barbara Rosenwein. 75–91.
- Burnett, Anne Pippin. *Revenge in Attic and Later Tragedy*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998.
- Bushnell, Rebecca W. *Tragedies of Tyrants: Political Thought and Theater in the English Renaissance*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1990.
- Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York and London: Routledge, 1990.
- . *Bodies that Matter: on the Discursive Limits of Sex*. London and New York: Routledge, 1993.
- Butler, Martin. “Massinger’s *The City Madam* and the Caroline Audience.” *Renaissance Drama* 8 (1982): 157–87.
- . *Theatre and Crisis 1632–1642*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984.
- Calbi, Maurizio. *Approximate Bodies: Gender and Power in Early Modern Drama and Anatomy*. London and New York: Routledge, 2005.
- Campbell, Lily Bess. “Theories of Revenge in Elizabethan England,” *Modern Philology* 28 (1931): 281–96.
- , ed. *The Mirror for Magistrates*. New York: Barnes and Noble: 1938.
- . *Shakespeare’s Tragic Heroes: Slaves of Passion*. London: Methuen [1930] 1961.
- Cancik, Hubert and Helmuth Schneider. *Der Neue Pauly. Enzyklopädie der Antike*. Stuttgart: Verlag J. B. Metzler, 1998. 15 vols.
- Cantor, Paul. *Shakespeare, “Hamlet.” Landmarks of World Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.
- Carlin, Norah. *The Causes of the English Civil War*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1999.
- Carroll, Clare. “Humanism and English Literature in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries.” *The Cambridge Companion to Renaissance Humanism*. Edited by Jill Kraye. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 1996. 246–69.
- Carroll, Stuart. *Blood and Violence in Early Modern France*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.
- Cartwright, Kent. *Theatre and Humanism: English Drama in the Sixteenth Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- Castor, Helen. *Blood and Roses: The Paston Family in the Fifteenth Century*. London: Faber and Faber, 2005.

- Cavallo, Sandra, and Simona Cerrutti. "Female Honor and the Social Control of Reproduction in Piedmont between 1600 and 1800." Translated by Mary M. Gallucci. *Sex and Gender in Historical Perspective*. Edited by Edward Muir and Guido Ruggiero. 73-109.
- Cavanagh, Dermot. *Language and Politics in the Sixteenth-Century History Play*. Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003.
- Charlton, H. B. *The Senecan Tradition in Renaissance Tragedy*. Manchester: University of Manchester, 1946.
- Chickera, Ernst de. "Palaces of Pleasure: The Theme of Revenge in Elizabethan Translations of Novelle." *Review of English Studies* (New Series) 11:41 (1960): 1-7.
- Christensen, Anne. "Playing the Cook: Nurturing Men in *Titus Andronicus*." *Shakespeare and History*. Edited by Holger Klein and Rowland Wymer. *Shakespeare Yearbook* 6. Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1996. 327-54.
- Clark, Andrew. *Domestic Drama: A Study of the Origins, Antecedents and Nature of the Domestic Play in England, 1500-1640*. Salzburg Studies in English Literature 49. 2 vols. Salzburg: Institut für Englische Sprache und Literatur, Universität Salzburg, 1975.
- Clark, Ira. *The Moral Art of Philip Massinger*. Lewisburg: Burcknell University Press; London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1993.
- . "Writing and Dueling in the English Renaissance." *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England* 7 (1995): 275-304.
- Clemens, Wolfgang. *English Tragedy Before Shakespeare: The Development of Dramatic Speech*. 1961. Trans. T. S. Dorsch. London and New York: Methuen, 1980.
- Colebrook, Claire. *New Literary Histories: New Historicism and Contemporary Criticism*. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1997.
- . *Gender*. Transitions Series. Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.
- Comensoli, Viviana. "Household Business": *Domestic Plays of Early Modern England*. Toronto, Buffalo, NY, and London: University of Toronto Press, 1996.
- Conley, C. H. *The First English Translators of the Classics*. Port Washington: Kennikat Press, [1927] 1967.
- Connell, R. W. *Masculinities*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995.
- Cook, Ann Jennalie. *The Privileged Playgoers of Shakespeare's London, 1576-1642*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981.

- . “Audiences: Investigation, Interpretation, Intervention.” A *New History of Early English Drama*. Edited by John D. Cox and David Scott Kastan. New York: Columbia Press, 1997. 305–20.
- Corporaal, Marguérite. *Wicked Words and Virtuous Voices: The Reconstruction of Tragic Subjectivity by Renaissance and Early Restoration Women Dramatists*. Unpublished PhD dissertation. Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, 2003.
- Corrigan, Brian Jay. “Introduction.” *The Misfortunes of Arthur: A Critical, Old-Spelling Edition*. New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1992.
- Council, Norman. *When Honour’s At the Stake: Ideas of Honour in Shakespeare’s Plays*. London: George Allen and Unwin, 1973.
- Coward, B. “A ‘Crisis of the Aristocracy’ in the Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries? The Case of the Stanleys, Earls of Derby, 1504–1642.” *Northern History: A Review of the History of the North of England and the Borders* 18 (1982): 54–77.
- Cox, John D. *Shakespeare and the Dramaturgy of Power*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989.
- Craig, Hardin. “Shakespeare and the History Play.” *Joseph Quincy Adams Memorial Studies*. Edited by James G. McManaway, Giles E. Dawson and Edwin E. Willoughby. Washington, DC: The Folger Shakespeare Library, 1948. 55–64.
- Cressy, David. “Binding the Nation: The Bonds of Association, 1584 and 1696.” *Tudor Rule and Revolution. Essays for G. R. Elton from his American Friends*. Edited by Delloyd J. Guth and John McKenna. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982. 217–34.
- . “Foucault, Stone, Shakespeare and Social History.” *English Literary Renaissance* 21:2 (1991): 121–33.
- Cunliffe, John W. “Introduction.” *Early English Classical Tragedies*. Ed. John W. Cunliffe. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1912.
- . *The Influence of Seneca on Elizabethan Tragedy*. 1893. Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1965.
- Cunningham, Karen. “Renaissance Execution and Marlovian Elocution: The Drama of Death.” *PMLA* 105:2 (1990): 109–22.
- Daalder, Joost. “Madness in Jasper Heywood’s 1560 Version of Seneca’s *Thyestes*.” *Classical and Modern Literature: A Quarterly* 16:2 (1996): 119–130.
- Davis, Nathalie Zemon. *Society and Culture in Early Modern France*. London: Duckworth, [1965] 1975.
- Dessen, Alan C. and Leslie Thomson. *A Dictionary of Stage Directions in English Drama, 1580–1642*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- Dewald, Jonathan. *The European Nobility 1400–1800*. New

- Approaches to European History. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- D'Haen, Theo, Rainer Grübel, and Helmut Lethen. *Convention and Innovation in Literature*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 1989.
- Dijkhuizen, Jan Frans van. *Devil Theatre: Demonic Possession and Exorcism in English Drama 1558-1642*. Unpublished PhD dissertation. Leiden University, 2003.
- Dillon, Janette. *Theatre, Court and City, 1595-1610. Drama and Social Space in London*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- Dolan, Frances E. *Dangerous Familiars: Representations of Domestic Crime in England 1500-1700*. Ithaca and New York: Cornell University Press, 1994.
- . *Whores of Babylon: Catholicism, Gender, and Seventeenth-Century Print Culture*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1999.
- Dollimore, Jonathan. *Radical Tragedy: Religion, Ideology and Power in the Drama of Shakespeare and His Contemporaries*. Brighton: Harvester, [1984] 1989.
- Doran, M. *Endeavors of Art: A Study of Form in Elizabethan Drama*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1954.
- Doran, Susan. "Revenge her Foul and Most Unnatural Murder? The Impact of Mary Stewart's Execution on Anglo-Scottish Relations." *History: The Journal of the Historical Association* 85:280 (2000): 589-612.
- Durand, W. Y. "Palaemon and Arcyte, Progne, Marcus Geminus, and the Theatre in Which They Were Acted, as Described by John Bereblock (1566)." *PMLA* 20:3 (1905): 502-28.
- Eagleton, Terry. *Sweet Violence: The Idea of the Tragic*. Oxford: Blackwells, 2003.
- Edlin, T. P. J. "Studley, John (c.1545-1590?)." *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004. [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/26742>, accessed 14 Oct 2005].
- Edwards, Philip. *The Making of the Modern English State, 1460-1660*. Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001.
- Elias, Norbert. *The Civilizing Process: State Formation and Civilization*. Transl. Edmund Jephcott. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, [1939] 1982.
- Eliot, T. S. "Introduction." *Seneca his Tenne Tragedies Translated into English*. 1927. Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1964.
- Ellis, Steven. "A Crisis of the Aristocracy? Frontiers and Noble Power in the Early Tudor State." *The Tudor Monarchy*. Edited by John

- Guy. London, New York, Sydney, etc.: Arnold, 1997.
- Evans, Gareth Lloyd. "Shakespeare, Seneca, and the Kingdom of Violence." *Roman Drama*. Edited by T. A. Dorey and Ronald R. Dudley. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965. 123-59.
- Fawcett, Mary Laughlin. "Arms/Words/Tears: Language and the Body in *Titus Andronicus*." *English Literary History* 50 (1983): 261-77.
- Felperin, Howard. *Shakespearean Representation: Mimesis and Modernity in Elizabethan Tragedy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1977.
- Ferrante, Lucia. "Honor Regained: Women in the Casa del Soccorso di San Paolo in Sixteenth-Century Bologna." Translated by Margaret A. Gallucci. *Sex & Gender in Historical Perspective*. Edited by Edward Muir and Guido Ruggiero. 46-72.
- Fetrow, Fred M. "Chapman's Stoic Hero in *The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois*." *Studies in English Literature* 19 (1979): 229-37.
- Findlay, Alison. *A Feminist Perspective on Renaissance Drama*. Oxford: Blackwells, 1999.
- Fisher, Philip. "Thinking About Killing: *Hamlet* and the Path Among the Passions." *Raritan* 11:1 (1991): 43-77.
- Fitch, John G. *Seneca's "Hercules Furens."* *A Critical Text With Introduction and Commentary*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1987.
- Fletcher, Anthony. *Gender, Sex and Subordination in England, 1500-1800*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995.
- Fletcher, Richard. *Bloodfeud: Murder and Revenge in Anglo-Saxon England*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.
- Florby, Gunilla. *The Painful Passage to Virtue: A Study of George Chapman's "The Tragedy of Bussy D'Ambois" and "The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois."* Lund: CWK Gleerup, 1982.
- Floyd-Wilson, Mary. "English Mettle." *Reading the Early Modern Passions: Essays in the Cultural History of Emotion*. Edited by Gail Kern Paster, Katherine Rowe and Mary Floyd-Wilson. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004. 130-46.
- , Matthew Greenfield, Gail Kern Paster, Tanya Pollard, Katherine Rowe, and Julian Yates. "Shakespeare and Embodiment: An E-Conversation." *Literature Compass* 2 (2005): 1-13.
- Foakes, R. A. "The Player's Passion: Some Notes on Elizabethan Psychology and Acting." *Essays and Studies* 7 (1954): 62-77.
- . "*Hamlet*" Versus "*Lear*": *Cultural Politics and Shakespeare's Art*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.
- Fon, Vincy and Francesco Parisi. "The Behavioral Foundations of Retaliatory Justice." *Journal of Bioeconomics* 7:1 (2005): 45-72.
- Foucault, Michel. "Orders of Discourse." Inaugural Lecture

- Delivered at the Collège de France. Translated by Rupert Swyer. *Information sur les sciences sociales* 10:2 (1971): 7–30.
- . *History of Sexuality*. 3 vols. Vol I. An Introduction. Translated by Robert Hurley. New York: Vintage Books [1976] 1990.
- . *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Translated by Alan Sheridan. London: Penguin Books, [1975] 1991.
- . *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. Translated by A. M. Sheridan Smith. London and New York: Routledge, [1969] 2002.
- Foyster, Elizabeth A. *Manhood in Early Modern England: Honour, Sex, and Marriage*. London and New York: Longman, 1999.
- France, Peter, ed. *The Oxford Guide to Literature in English Translation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- French, Marilyn. *Shakespeare's Division of Experience*. 1981. London: Jonathan Cape, 1982.
- Frye, Roland Mushat. *The Renaissance Hamlet: Issues and Responses in 1600*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984.
- Gabrieli, Vittorio and Giorgio Melchiori. "Introduction." Anthony Munday and others. *Sir Thomas More*. 1595. Edited by Vittorio Gabrieli and Giorgio Melchiori. The Revels Plays. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1990. 1–53.
- Gelderen, Martin van and Quentin Skinner, eds. *Republicanism: A Shared European Heritage*. Vol I, Republicanism and Constitutionalism in Early Modern Europe. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- Gemert, Lia van. *Norse negers. Oudere letterkunde in 1996*. Nijmegen: Katholieke Universiteit Nijmegen, 1996.
- . "De Krachtpatser en de hoer. Liefde en wraak op het zeventiende-eeuwse toneel." *Schelmen en prekers. Genres en cultuuroverdracht in vroegmodern Europa*. Edited by Hans Bots and Lia van Gemert. Nijmegen: Vantilt, 1999. 15–37.
- Girard, René. *A Theater of Envy: William Shakespeare*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991.
- Glaudemans, Corien. *Om die wrake wille. Eigenrichting, veten en verzoening in laat-middeleeuws Holland en Zeeland*. Hilversum: Verloren, 2004.
- Gowing, Laura. *Domestic Dangers: Women, Words, and Sex in Early Modern London*. 1996. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998.
- . *Women, Touch and Power in Early Modern England*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003.
- Goy-Blanquet, Dominique. "Elizabethan Historiography and Shakespeare's Sources." *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare's History Plays*. Edited by Michael Hattaway. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- Green, Douglas E. *Seneca's Tragedies: The Elizabethan*

- Translations*. Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms International, 1984.
- . “Interpreting ‘Her Marty’d Signs’: Gender and tragedy in *Titus Andronicus*.” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 40:3 (1989): 317–26.
- . “Newton’s Seneca: From Latin Fragments to Elizabethan Drama.” *Colby Quarterly* 26:2 (1990): 87–95.
- Greenblatt, Stephen. *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1980.
- , ed. *Representing the Renaissance*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988a.
- . *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988b.
- . “Introduction to *The Tempest*.” *The Norton Shakespeare*. Edited by Stephen Greenblatt, Walter Cohen, Jean E. Howard and Katharine Eisaman Maus. New York and London: W. W. Norton, 1997. 3047–3053.
- . *Hamlet in Purgatory*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2002.
- Griswold, Wendy. *Renaissance Revivals: City Comedy and Revenge Tragedy in The London Theatre 1576–1980*. Chicago and London: Chicago University Press, 1986.
- Gross, Alan Gerald. “Contemporary Politics in Massinger.” *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900* 6:2 (1966): 279–90.
- . “Social Change and Philip Massinger.” *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900* 7:2 (1967): 329–42.
- Grossman, Marshall. “Hamlet and the Genders of Grief.” *Grief and Gender 700–1700*. Edited by Jennifer C. Vaught with Lynne Dickinson Bruckner. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003. 177–93.
- Gurr, Andrew. “Who Strutted and Bellowed?” *Shakespeare Survey* 16(1963): 95–102.
- . *Playgoing in Shakespeare’s London*. Third edition. 1987. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.
- Guy, John, ed. *The Tudor Monarchy*. London, New York, Sydney, etc.: Arnold, 1997.
- Hackett, Helen. *Virgin Mother, Maiden Queen: Elizabeth I and the cult of the Virgin Mary*. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1995.
- . *Women and Romance Fiction in the English Renaissance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 2000.
- Hadfield, Andrew. “Shakespeare and Republicanism.” *Textual Practice* 17:3 (2003): 461–83.
- . *Shakespeare and Renaissance Politics*. Arden Critical Companions. London: Thomson Learning, 2004.

- Halasz, Alexandra. "Lodge, Thomas (1558–1625)." *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004. [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/16923>, accessed 17 Oct 2005].
- Hall, Edith. "Greek Tragedy and the British Stage, 1566–1997." *Cahiers du GITA* 12 (1999): 113–33.
- Hallett, Charles A. and Elaine S. Hallett. *The Revenger's Madness: A Study of Revenge Tragedy Motifs*. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1980.
- Hammond, Antony. "Introduction." *King Richard III*. Edited by Antony Hammond. London and New York: Routledge, 1981. 1–120.
- Hancock, Brecken Rose. "Roman or Revenger?: The Definition and Distortion of Masculine Identity in *Titus Andronicus*." *Early Modern Literary Studies* 10:1 (2004): 7.1–25. [<http://purl.oclc.org/emls/10-1/hancroma.htm>, accessed 6 December 2004].
- Harbage, Alfred. *Shakespeare and the Rival Traditions*. Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1952.
- Harris, William V. *Restraining Rage: The Ideology of Anger Control in Classical Antiquity*. Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2001.
- Heinemann, Margot. *Puritanism and Theatre: Thomas Middleton and Opposition Drama under the Early Stuarts*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980.
- . "Political Drama." *The Cambridge Companion to Renaissance Drama*. Edited by A. R. Braunmuller and Michael Hattaway. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990. 161–206.
- . "Rebel Lords, Popular Playwrights, and Political Culture." *Politics, Patronage and Literature in England, 1558–1658*. Special issue of the *Yearbook of English Studies* 21 (1991): 63–86.
- Helgerson, Richard. *Forms of Nationhood: The Elizabethan Writing of England*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1992.
- Henderson, Katherine Usher and Barbara F. McManus. *Half Humankind: Contexts and Texts of the Controversy about Woman in England, 1540–1640*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1985.
- Henry, Denis and Elisabeth. *The Mask of Power: Seneca's Tragedies and Imperial Rome*. Warminster: Aris and Phillips: 1985.
- Hibbard, Caroline. "The Theatre of Dynasty." *The Stuart Court in Europe: Essays in Politics and Culture*. Edited by R. Malcolm Smuts. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. 156–76.
- Higgins, Michael H. "Chapman's 'Senecal Man': A Study in Jacobean Psychology," *The Review of English Studies*, 21:83 (1945): 183–

- Hindle, Steve. *The State and Social Change in Early Modern England, c. 1550-1640*. Houndmills, Basingstoke and New York: Macmillan Press and St. Martin's Press, 2000.
- Hobbins, Daniel. "The Sanctification of The Tudor Dynasty in Bernard André's *Vita Regis Henrici Septimi*." *West Virginia Shakespeare and Renaissance Association Selected Papers* 21 (1998). Edited by Byron Nelson. <http://www.marshall.edu/engsr/SR1998.html>
- Hoenselaars, Ton. "Het spel van wraak en moraal in het Engelse en Nederlandse toneel van de Renaissance." *Zeventiende Eeuw* 7:2 (1991): 113-26.
- . *Images of Englishmen and Foreigners in the Drama of Shakespeare and His Contemporaries: A Study of Stage Characters and National Identity in English Renaissance Drama*. Rutherford, Madison and Teaneck: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press; London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1992.
- . "Kleren maken de man: Mode en identiteit in het vroegmoderne Engeland." In: Harald Hendrix and Ton Hoenselaars eds. *Vreemd Volk: Beeldvorming over buitenlanders in de vroegmoderne tijd*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1998. 93-119.
- Holderness, Graham. *Shakespeare's Histories*. Houndmills, Basingstoke and London: Macmillan Press, 2000.
- Hopkins, Lisa. *The Female Hero in English Renaissance Tragedy*. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002.
- Howard, Jean. "Scripts and/versus Playhouses: Ideological Production and the Renaissance Public Stage." *Renaissance Drama New Series* (Essays on Dramatic Traditions: Challenges and Transmissions. Edited by Mary Beth Rose) XX (1989): 31-50.
- . *The Stage and Social Struggle in Early Modern England*. London and New York: Routledge, 1994.
- . "Gender on the Periphery." *Shakespeare and the Mediterranean: The Selected Proceedings of the International Shakespeare Association World Congress Valencia, 2001*. Edited by Tom Clayton, Susan Brock, and Vincente Forés. Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2004. 344-62.
- and Marion O'Connor eds. *Shakespeare Reproduced*. London and New York: Methuen, 1987.
- and Phyllis Rackin. *Engendering a Nation: A Feminist Account of Shakespeare's English Histories*. London and New

- York: Routledge, 1997.
- Hunter, G. K. "The Heroism of Hamlet." *Hamlet*. Stratford Upon Avon Studies 5. Edited by John Russell Brown and Bernard Harris. London: Edward Arnold, 1963. 90-109.
- . "Seneca and the Elizabethans: a Case-Study in Influence." *Dramatic Identities and Cultural Tradition: Studies in Shakespeare and his Contemporaries*. Edited by G. K. Hunter. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1978a. 159-73.
- . "Seneca and English Tragedy." *Dramatic Identities and Cultural Tradition: Studies in Shakespeare and his Contemporaries*. Edited by G. K. Hunter. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1978b. 174-213.
- . *English Drama 1568-1642: The Age of Shakespeare*. The Oxford History of English Literature. Vol 6. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997. 15 vols.
- Hutson, Lorna. *The Usurer's Daughter: Male Friendship and Fictions of Women in Sixteenth-Century England*. London and New York: Routledge, 1994.
- , ed. *Feminism and Renaissance Studies*. Oxford Readings in Feminism Series. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- . "Rethinking the 'Spectacle of the Scaffold': Juridical Epistemologies and English Revenge Tragedy." *Representations* 89 (2005): 30-58.
- Hutton, Ronald. *Debates in Stuart History*. Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.
- Hutton, Sarah. "Platonism, Scepticism, Classical Imitation." A *Companion to English Renaissance Literature and Culture*. Edited by Michael Hattaway. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000. 44-57.
- Ide, Richard S. *Possessed with Greatness: The Heroic Tragedies of Shakespeare and Chapman*. London: Scolar Press, 1980.
- Ingram, Martin. *Church Courts, Sex and Marriage in England, 1570-1640*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.
- . "Reformation of Manners in Early Modern England." *The Experience of Authority in Early Modern England*. Edited by Paul Griffiths, Adam Fox, and Steve Hindle. Basingstoke and London: Macmillan, 1996. 47-88.
- Jacoby, Susan. *Wild Justice: The Evolution of Revenge*. New York, Cambridge, Philadelphia, etc.: Harper and Row Publishers, 1983.
- James, Heather. "Cultural disintegration in *Titus Andronicus*: Mutilating Titus, Vergil, and Rome." *Violence in Drama*. Themes in Drama Series, 13. Edited by James Redmond. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991. 123-40.
- James, Henry and Greg Walker. "The Politics of *Gorboduc*." *English*

- Historical Review* 110:1 (1995): 109-21.
- James, Mervyn. "English Politics and the Concept of Honour 1485-1642." *Society, Politics and Culture: Studies in Early Modern England*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, [1974] 1986.
- James, Susan. *Passion and Action: The Emotions in Seventeenth-Century Philosophy*. Oxford: Clarendon Press: 1997.
- Jászi, Oskár and John Donald Lewis. *Against the Tyrant: The Tradition and Theory of Tyrannicide*. Glencoe, IL: The Free Press, 1957.
- Jenkins, Harold. "Introduction." *Hamlet*. Edited by Harold Jenkins. Arden Second Series. Walton-on-Thames: Thomas Nelson & Sons Ltd., 1982.
- Jensen, Kristian. "The Humanist reform of Latin and Latin teaching." *The Cambridge Companion to Renaissance Humanism*. Edited by Jill Kraye. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 1996. 63-81.
- Johnson, Francis R. "Shakespearian Imagery and Senecan Imitation." *Joseph Quincy Adams Memorial Studies*. Edited by James G. McManaway, Giles E. Dawson and Edwin E. Willoughby. Washington, DC: The Folger Shakespeare Library, 1948. 33-53.
- Johnson, S. F. *Early Elizabethan Tragedies of the Inns of Court*. Harvard Dissertations in American and English Literature. Edited by Stephen Orgel. New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1987.
- Johnston, Arthur. "The Player's Speech in *Hamlet*." *Shakespeare Quarterly* 13:1 (1962): 21-30.
- Jones, Emrys. *The Origins of Shakespeare*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977.
- Jones, Ernest. *Hamlet and Oedipus*. London: Gollancz, 1949.
- Jones, N. G. "Puckering, Sir John (1543/4-1596)." *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Oxford University Press, 2004. [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/22860>, accessed 27 June 2005].
- Jones, Norman and Paul Whitfield White. "Gorboduc and Royal Marriage Politics: An Elizabethan Playgoer's Report of the Premiere Performance." *English Literary Renaissance* 26 (1996): 3-17.
- Jones, Robert C. *These Valiant Dead: Renewing the Past in Shakespeare's Histories*. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1991.
- Jordan, Constance. *Renaissance Feminism: Literary Texts and Political Models*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1990.
- Joseph, Bertram Leon. *Conscience and the King: A Study of Hamlet*.

- London: Chatto and Windus, 1953.
- . “*The Spanish Tragedy and Hamlet: Two Exercises in English Seneca.*” *Classical Drama and its Influence: Essays Presented to H. D. F. Kitto*. Edited by M. J. Anderson. London: Methuen, 1965. 119–34.
- Jowitt, Claire. *Voyage Drama and Gender Politics 1589–1642*. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2003.
- Kahn, Coppélia. *Man’s Estate: Masculine Identity in Shakespeare*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1981.
- Kastan, David Scott. “‘His Semblable is his Mirror’: *Hamlet* and the Imitation of Revenge.” *Shakespeare Studies* 19 (1987): 111–24.
- Kastner, L. E. and H. B. Charlton. “Introduction.” *The Poetical Works of Sir William Alexander*. Edited by L. E. Kastner and H. B. Charlton. Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1921.
- Kehler, Dorothea. “*Titus Andronicus: From Limbo to Bliss.*” *Shakespeare Jahrbuch* 128 (1992): 125–31.
- Kelly, Henry Ansgar. *Divine Providence in the England of Shakespeare’s Histories*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970.
- Kelly, Joan. “Did Women Have a Renaissance?” *Feminism and Renaissance Studies*. Edited by Lorna Hutson. Oxford Readings in Feminism Series. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Kelso, Ruth. *The Doctrine of the English Gentleman in the Sixteenth Century*. Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1964.
- Kendall, Gillian Murray. *Shakespearean Power and Punishment: A Volume of Essays*. Madison NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson Press, 1998.
- Kendall, Paul Murray. *The Yorkist Age: Daily Life During the Wars of the Roses*. London: Allen and Unwin, 1962.
- Kennedy, Gwynne. *Just Anger: Representing Women’s Anger in Early Modern England*. Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 2000.
- Kerrigan, John. *Revenge Tragedy: Aeschylus to Armageddon*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996.
- Kesselring, K. J. *Mercy and Authority in the Tudor State*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- Keyishian, Harry. *The Shapes of Revenge: Victimization, vengeance, and Vindictiveness in Shakespeare*. Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1994.
- . “The Progress of Revenge in the First Henriad.” *Henry VI: Critical Essays*. Edited by Thomas Pendleton. New York and London: Routledge, 2001. 67–77.
- Kiernan, V. G. *The Duel in European History: Honour and the Reign of the Aristocracy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988.

- Kincaid, Arthur. "Cornwallis, Sir William, the younger (c.1579–1614)." *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004. [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/6345>, accessed 16 Dec 2005].
- Kinney, Jane Meredith. "To Gods Glory and Our Owne Reformation": The Cultural Work of John Reynolds' "The Triumphs of God's Revenge." Phd Dissertation, Duke University. Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1992.
- Kirk, Andrew M. *The Mirror of Confusion: The Representation of French History in English Renaissance Drama* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1996).
- Konst, J. W. H. *Woedende wraakghierigheidt en vruchteloze weeklachten. De hartstochten in de Nederlandse tragedie van de zeventiende eeuw*. Assen en Maastricht: Van Gorcum, 1993.
- Knapp, Jeffrey. *Shakespeare's Tribe: Church, Nation, and Theater in Renaissance England*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2002.
- Knapp, Robert S. "Horestes: The Uses of Revenge." *English Literary History* 40 (1973): 205–20.
- Knowles, Ronald. "Introduction." *2 Henry VI*. By William Shakespeare. Arden Third Series. London: Thomson Learning, 1999.
- Kraye, Jill, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Renaissance Humanism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- Kurtz, Martha A. "Tears and Masculinity in the History Plays: Shakespeare's *Henry VI*." *Grief and Gender 700–1700*. Edited by Jennifer C. Vaught with Lynne Dickson Bruckner. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003. 163–76.
- Laqueur, Thomas Walter. *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud*. Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press: 1990.
- Lawall, Gilbert. "Virtus and Pietas in Seneca's *Hercules Furens*." *Ramus. Critical Studies in Greek and Roman Literature* 12: 1 and 2 (1983): 6–26.
- Leech, Clifford. "The Hesitation of Phyrus." *The Morality of Art. Essays Presented to G. Wilson Knight by His Colleagues and Friends*. Edited by D. W. Jefferson. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969. 41–49.
- Leedham-Green, Elisabeth. "Neville, Alexander (1544–1614)." *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/19923>, accessed 14 Oct 2005]
- Legatt, Alexander. "The Tragedy of Clermont d'Ambois," *Modern Language Review* 77:3 (1982): 524–36.

- . *Shakespeare's Political Drama: The History Plays and the Roman Plays*. London and New York: Routledge, [1988] 1989.
- . *Shakespeare's Tragedies: Violation and Identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Levin, Carole. *The Heart and Stomach of a King: Elizabeth I and the Politics of Sex and Power*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994.
- Levine, Laura. *Men in Women's Clothing: Anti-theatricality and Effeminization, 1579-1642*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.
- Lieblein, Leanore. "The Context of Murder in English Domestic Plays, 1590-1610." *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 23:2 (1983): 181-96.
- Liebler, Naomi Conn. "Getting It All Right: *Titus Andronicus* and Roman History." *Shakespeare Quarterly* 45:3 (1994): 263-78.
- . "'A Woman Dipped in Blood': The Violent Femmes of *The Maid's Tragedy* and *The Changeling*." *Women, Violence and English Renaissance Literature*, edited by Woodbridge and Beehler. 2003. 303-327.
- and Lisa Scancellia Shea. "Shakespeare's Queen Margaret: Unruly or Unruled." *Henry VI: Critical Essays*. Edited by Thomas Pendleton. New York and London: Routledge, 2001. 79-96.
- Lindley, David. *The Trials of Frances Howard: Fact and Fiction at the Court of King James*. London and New York: Routledge, 1993.
- Loomba, Ania. *Gender, Race, Renaissance Drama*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, (1989) 1993.
- Low, Jennifer. *Manhood and the Duel: Masculinity in Early Modern Drama and Culture*. Early Modern Cultural Series. New York and Houndmills, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.
- . "'Women are Wordes, Men are Deedes': Female Duelists in the Drama." *Women, Violence and English Renaissance Literature*, edited by Woodbridge and Beehler. 271-302.
- Lucas, F. L. *Seneca and Elizabethan Tragedy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1922.
- Marienstrass, Richard. *New Perspectives on the Shakespearean World*. Translated by Janet Lloyd. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Paris: Editions de la maison des sciences de l'homme, [1981] 1985.
- Marston, Jerrilyn Greene. "Gentry Honor and Royalism in Early Stuart England." *The Journal of British Studies* 13:1 (1973): 21-43.
- Marti, Markus. "Language of Extremities/Extremities of Language: Body Language and Culture in *Titus Andronicus*." Seventh

- World Shakespeare Congress, Valencia, 2001. <http://www.unibas.ch/shine/revengemarti.htm>. Consulted on 14-12-2004.
- Martindale, Charles and Michelle. *Shakespeare and the Uses of Antiquity: An Introductory Essay*. London and New York: Routledge, 1990.
- Martindale, Charles and A. B. Taylor, eds. *Shakespeare and the Classics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.
- Mauch, Mercedes. *Senecas Frauenbild in den Philosophischen Schriften*. Studien zur Klassischen Philologie. Ed. Michael van Albrecht. vol. 106. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1997.
- Maus, Katharine Eisaman. "Introduction." *Four Revenge Tragedies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995a.
- . *Inwardness and Theater in the English Renaissance*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995b.
- . "Introduction to *Titus Andronicus*." *The Norton Shakespeare*. Edited by Stephen Greenblatt, Walter Cohen, Jean E. Howard and Katharine Eisaman Maus. New York and London: W. W. Norton, 1997. 371-78.
- . "*The Spanish Tragedy*, or, The Machiavel's Revenge." *Revenge Tragedy*. Edited by Stevie Simkin. New Casebooks. Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001. 88-106.
- McAlindon, Tom. "Testing the New Historicism: 'Invisible Bullets' Reconsidered." *Studies in Philology* 92 (1995): 411-438.
- McCoy, Richard. *The Rites of Knighthood: The Literature and Politics of Elizabethan Chivalry*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989.
- . "Old English Honour in an Evil Time: Aristocratic Principle in the 1620s." *The Stuart Court in Europe: Essays in Politics and Culture*. Edited by R. Malcolm Smuts. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. 133-55.
- McCrea, Adriana. *Constant Minds: Political Virtue and the Lipsian Paradigm in England, 1584-1650*. Toronto, Buffalo, NY, and London: Toronto University Press, 1997.
- McEachern, Claire. *The Poetics of English Nationhood, 1590-1612*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- McLaren, A. N. *Political Culture in the Reign of Elizabeth I: Queen and Commonwealth, 1558-1585*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- McLuskie, Kathleen. *Renaissance Dramatists*. Feminist Readings. Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1989.
- . "Old Mouse-Eaten Records: The Anxiety of History." *English Literary Renaissance* 25:3 (1995): 415-431.
- McMillin, Scott. "The Book of Seneca in *The Spanish Tragedy*." *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 14:2 (1974): 201-208.
- Mead, Stephen X. "The Crisis of Ritual in *Titus Andronicus*."

- Exemplaria* 6:2 (2004): 459–79.
- Mercer, Peter. “Hamlet” and the Acting of Revenge. Houndmills, Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1987.
- Mikalachki, Jodi. *The Legacy of Boadicea: Gender and Nation in Early Modern England*. London and New York: Routledge, 1998.
- Miles, Geoffrey. *Shakespeare and the Constant Romans*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996.
- Miller, Jaqueline T. “The Passion Signified: Imitation and the Construction of Emotions in Sidney and Wroth.” *Criticism* 43:4 (2001): 407–21.
- Miller, William Ian. “In Defense of Revenge.” *Medieval Crime and Social Control*. Edited by Barbara A. Hanawalt and David Wallace. Medieval Cultures, vol. 16. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1999. 70–89.
- Mills, Sara. *Discourse*. The New Critical Idiom. London and New York: Routledge [1997] 2004.
- Miola, Robert S. “Julius Caesar and the Tyrannicide Debate.” *Renaissance Quarterly* 38:2 (1985): 271–89.
- . “Aeneas and Hamlet.” *Classical and Modern Literature* 8 (1988): 275–90.
- . *Shakespeare and Classical Tragedy: The Influence of Seneca*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992.
- Monsarrat, Gilles D. *Light from the Porch: Stoicism and English Renaissance Literature*. Collection Études Anglaises 86. Paris: Didier-Érudition, 1984.
- Montrose, Louis. “Shaping Fantasies: Figurations of Gender and Power in Elizabethan Culture.” *Representations* 2 (1983): 61–94.
- . “The Poetics and Politics of Culture.” In: *The New Historicism*. Edited by H. Aram Veenser. New York and London: Routledge, 1989.
- . “The Work of Gender in the Discourse of Discovery.” *Representations* 33 (1991): 1–41.
- . *The Purpose of Playing: Shakespeare and the Cultural Politics of the Elizabethan Theatre*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1996.
- Mott, Lewis F. “Foreign Politics in an Old Play.” *Modern Philology* 19:1 (1921): 65–71.
- Mroz, Sister Mary Bonaventure. *Divine Vengeance: A Study in the Philosophical Backgrounds of the Revenge Motif as It Appears in Shakespeare’s Chronicle History Plays*. New York: Haskell House Publishers, 1971.
- Muir, Edward and Guido Ruggiero. *Sex and Gender in Historical Perspective*. Translated by Margaret A. Gallucci with Mary M.

- Gallucci and Carole C. Gallucci. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990.
- Mullaney, Steven. "Mourning and Misogyny: *Hamlet*, *The Revenger's Tragedy*, and the Final Progress of Elizabeth I, 1600-1607." *Shakespeare Quarterly* 45:2 (1994), 139-62.
- Mulryne, J. R. "Introduction: Theatre and Government Under the Early Stuarts." *Theatre and Government Under the Early Stuarts*. Edited by J. R. Mulryne and Margaret Shewring. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993. 1-28.
- Murphy, John M. "'Our Mission and Our Moment': George W. Bush and September 11th." *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 6:4 (2003): 607-632.
- Murrin, Michael. *History and Warfare in Renaissance Epic*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1994.
- Nagle, Betty Rose. "Amor, Ira, and Sexual Identity in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*." *Classical Antiquity* 3 (1984): 236-55.
- Neale, J. E. *Elizabeth I and her Parliaments*. 2 Vols. London: Cape, 1953-57.
- Neely, Carol Thomas. "Constructing the Subject: Feminist Practice and the New Renaissance Discourses." *English Literary Renaissance* 18:1 (1988): 5-18.
- Neill, Michael. *Issues of Death: Mortality and Identity in English Renaissance Tragedy*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997.
- Newman, Karen. *Fashioning Femininity and English Renaissance Drama*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991.
- Newton, Judith. "History as Usual? Feminism and the 'New Historicism'." *Cultural Critique* 9 (1988): 87-122.
- Norbrook, David. *Poetry and Politics in the English Renaissance*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, [1984] 2002.
- Norland, Howard B. "Adapting to the Times: Expansion and Interpolation in the Elizabethan Translations of Seneca." *Classical and Modern Literature* 16:3 (1996): 241-63.
- . "The Allegorising of Revenge in Horestes." *Tudor Theatre: Allegory in the Theatre/L'Allégorie au théâtre*. Edited by Peter Happé. Bern, Switzerland: Peter Lang, 2000. 169-85.
- Oestreich, Gerhard. *Neostoicism and the Early Modern State*. Edited by Brigitta Oestreich and H. G. Koenigsberger. Translated by David McLintock. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982.
- Orlin, Lena Cowen. *Private Matters and Public Culture in Post-Reformation England*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1994.
- Ornstein, Robert. *The Moral Vision of Jacobean Tragedy*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1960.
- Parker, Patricia. *Literary Fat Ladies: Rhetoric, Gender, Property*.

- London and New York: Methuen, 1987.
- Paster, Gail Kern. *The Idea of the City in the Age of Shakespeare*. Athens GA: University of Georgia Press, 1985.
- . *The Body Embarrassed: Drama and the Disciplines of Shame in Early Modern England*. Ithaca and New York: Cornell University Press, 1993.
- . “The Unbearable Coldness of Female Being: Women’s Imperfections and the Humoral Economy.” *English Literary Renaissance* 28 (1998): 416–60.
- . “The Tragic Subject and Its Passions.” *Cambridge Companion to Shakespearean Tragedy*. Edited by Claire McEachern. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. 142–59.
- . *Humoring the Body: Emotions and the Shakespearean Stage*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004a.
- , Katherine Rowe, and Mary Floyd-Wilson, eds. *Reading the Early Modern Passions: Essays in the Cultural History of Emotion*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004b.
- Patterson, Annabel. *Reading Holinshed’s Chronicles*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press: 1994.
- Pechter, Edward. “The New Historicism and Its Discontents: Politicizing Renaissance Drama.” *PMLA* 102:3 (1987): 292–303.
- Peltonen, Markku. “Francis Bacon, the Earl of Northampton, and the Jacobean Anti-Duelling Campaign.” *The Historical Journal* 44:1 (2001): 1–28.
- . “Citizenship and Republicanism in Elizabethan England.” *Republicanism: A Shared European Heritage*. Edited by Martin van Gelderen and Quentin Skinner Vol I, Republicanism and Constitutionalism in Early Modern Europe. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. 87–106.
- . *The Duel in Early Modern England: Civility, Politeness, and Honour*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- Pendleton, Thomas A., ed. *Henry VI: Critical Essays*. New York and London: Routledge, 2001.
- Phillips, James E. *Images of a Queen: Mary Stuart in Sixteenth-Century Literature*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1964.
- Pierce, Robert B. *Shakespeare’s History Plays: The Family and the State*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1971.
- Pieters, Jürgen. *Moments of Negotiation: The New Historicism of Stephen Greenblatt*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2001.
- Pollak, Ellen. “Feminism and the New Historicism: A Tale of Difference or the Same Old Story?” *The Eighteenth Century* 29:3 (1988): 281–86.

- Posner, David M. *The Performance of Nobility in Early Modern European Literature*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- Prest, Wilfrid R. *The Inns of Court under Elizabeth I and the Early Stuarts 1590-1640*. London: Longman, 1972.
- Prosser, Eleanor. *Hamlet and Revenge*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press; London: Oxford University Press, 1967.
- Purkiss, Diane. *Literature, Gender and Politics During the English Civil War*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- . “Medea in the English Renaissance.” In: *Medea in Performance 1500-2000*. Edited by Edith Hall, Fiona Macintosh and Oliver Taplin. Oxford: European Humanities Research Centre, University of Oxford: 2000. 32-48.
- Rackin, Phyllis. *Stages of History: Shakespeare’s English Chronicles*. London: Routledge, 1990.
- Raffield, Paul. *Images and Cultures of Law in Early Modern England: Justice and Political Power, 1558-1660*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.
- Reavley Gair, W. “Introduction.” *Antonio’s Revenge*. Edited by W. Reavley Gair (Manchester and Baltimore, MD: Manchester University Press and Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978). 1-46.
- Rees, Ennis. *The Tragedies of George Chapman: Renaissance Ethics in Action*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1954.
- Replogle, Carol. “Not Parody, Not Burlesque: The Play Within the Play in *Hamlet*.” *Modern Philology* 67:2 (1969): 150-59.
- Ridley, Matt. *The Origins of Virtue*. Harmondsworth: Penguin [1996] 1997.
- Riggs, David. *Shakespeare’s Heroical Histories: Henry VI and Its Literary Tradition*. Cambridge, Ma: Harvard University Press, 1971.
- Rist, Thomas. “Religion, Politics, Revenge: The Dead in Renaissance Drama.” *Early Modern Literary Studies* 9:1 (2003): 4.1-20.
- Robertson, Elizabeth and Christine M. Rose, eds. *Representing Rape in Medieval and Early Modern Culture*. New York and Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001.
- Robertson, Karen. “Antonio’s Revenge: The Tyrant, the Stoic, and the Passionate Man.” *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England: An Annual Gathering of Research, Criticism, and Reviews* 4 (1989): 91-106.
- . “The Body Natural of a Queen: Mary, James, *Horestes*.” *Renaissance and Reformation*, 14:1 (1990): 25-36.
- . “Rape and the Appropriation of Progne’s Revenge in Shakespeare’s *Titus Andronicus*, or ‘Who Cooks the Thyestean

- Banquet?’” *Representing Rape in Medieval and Early Modern Culture*. Edited by Elizabeth Robertson and Christine M. Rose. New York and Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001. 213–37.
- Rose, Mary Beth. “Where are the Mothers in Shakespeare? Options for Gender Representation in the English Renaissance.” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 42:3 (1991): 291–314.
- . *Gender and Heroism in Early Modern English Literature*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2002.
- Rosenwein, Barbara H. ed. *Anger’s Past: The Social Uses of an Emotion in the Middle Ages*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1998.
- Rowe, Katherine. “Humoral Knowledge and Liberal Cognition in Davenant’s *Macbeth*.” *Reading the Early Modern Passions*. Edited by Gail Kern Paster, Katherine Rowe, and Mary Floyd-Wilson. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004. 169–91.
- Ruff, Julius R. *Violence in Early Modern Europe 1500–1800*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- Sacks, Peter. “Where Words Prevail Not: Grief, Revenge and Language in Kyd and Shakespeare.” *English Literary History* 49:3 (1982): 576–601.
- Salkeld, Duncan. *Madness and Drama in the Age of Shakespeare*. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1993.
- Schleiner, Louise. “Latinized Greek Drama in Shakespeare’s Writing of *Hamlet*.” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 41:1 (1990): 29–48.
- Schoemaker, Karl. “Revenge as a ‘Medium Good’ in the Twelfth Century.” *Law, Culture and the Humanities* 1 (2005): 333–58.
- Schoenfeldt, Michael C. *Bodies and Selves in Early Modern England: Physiology and Inwardness in Spenser, Shakespeare, Herbert, and Milton*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- Scott, Joan W. “Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis.” *The American Historical Review* 91:5 (1986): 1053–76.
- . *Gender and the Politics of History*. Rev. ed. New York: Columbia University Press, 1999.
- Shapiro, Alan. “Introduction.” *The Oresteia*. Translated by Alan Shapiro and Peter Burian. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003. 1–38.
- Shapiro, James. “‘Tragedies Naturally Performed’: Kyd’s Representation of Violence.” *Staging the Renaissance: Reinterpretations of Elizabethan and Jacobean Drama*. Edited by David Scott Kastan and Peter Stallybrass. New York and London: Routledge, 1991. 99–113.
- Shapiro, Michael. “John Pikerlyng’s *Horestes*: Auspices and Theatricality.” *Shakespeare and Dramatic Tradition. Essays*

- in Honor of S. F. Johnson*. Edited by W. R. Elton and William B. Long. Newark: University of Delaware Press; London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1989. 211–26.
- Sharpe, J. A. “Domestic Homicide in Early Modern England.” *The Historical Journal* 24:1 (1981): 29–48.
- Sheen, Erica. “‘These Are the Only Men’: Seneca and Monopoly in *Hamlet*, 2.2.” in *Shakespeare and the Classics*, edited by Charles Martindale and A. B. Taylor. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.
- Shelton, Jo-Ann. *Seneca’s Hercules Furens: Theme, Structure and Style*. Hypomnemeta: Untersuchungen zur Antike und zur ihrem Nachleben 50. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1978.
- . “Revenge or Resignation: Seneca’s *Agamemnon*.” *Ramus. Critical Studies in Greek and Roman Literature* 12: 1 and 2 (1983): 159–83.
- Shepard, Alexandra. *Meanings of Manhood in Early Modern England*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.
- Shifflett, Andrew. *Stoicism, Politics, and Literature in the Age of Milton: War and Peace Reconciled*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- Shuger, Deborah Kuller. *Habits of Thought in the English Renaissance: Religion, Politics, and the Dominant Culture*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990.
- Sibly, John. “The Duty of Revenge in Tudor and Stuart Drama.” *A Review of English Literature* 8:3 (1967): 46–54.
- Silber, Patricia. “The Unnatural Woman and the Disordered State in Shakespeare’s Histories.” *Proceedings of the PMR Conference* 2 (1977): 87–96.
- Simkin, Stevie, ed. *Revenge Tragedy*. Contemporary Critical Essays. New Casebooks. Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001.
- Simon, Sherry. “Gender in Translation.” *The Oxford Guide to Literature in English Translation*. Edited by Peter France. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000. 26–33.
- Sinfeld, Alan. *Faultlines: Cultural Materialism and the Politics of Dissident Reading*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992.
- Smith, Alan G. R. *The Emergence of A Nation State: The Commonwealth of England 1529–1660*. London and New York: Longman, 1984.
- Smith, Bruce R. *Ancient Scripts & Modern Experience on the English Stage 1500–1700*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988.
- . *Shakespeare and Masculinity*. Oxford Shakespeare Topics. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Smith, Hilda L. “Humanist Education and the Renaissance Concept

- of Woman.” *Women and Literature in Britain, 1500–1700*. Edited by Helen Wilcox. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 1996. 9–29.
- Smith, Molly Easo. “The Theatre and the Scaffold: Death as Spectacle in *The Spanish Tragedy*.” *Revenge Tragedy*. New Casebooks. Edited by Stevie Simkin. Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave, [1992] 2001. 71–87.
- Somogyi, Nick de. “Nuce, Thomas (c.1545–1617).” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004. [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/20385>, accessed 14 Oct 2005].
- Spearing, E. M. *The Elizabethan Translations of Seneca’s Tragedies*. 1912. Folcroft, PA: The Folcroft Press, 1969.
- , ed. *Studley’s Translations of Seneca’s “Agamemnon” and “Medea,” edited from the octavo’s of 1566*. Materialien zur Kunde des älteren Englischen Dramas 38 (1913).
- Spivack, Bernard. *Shakespeare and the Allegory of Evil. The History of a Metaphor in Relation to his Major Villains*. New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1958.
- Staines, John “Compassion in the Public Sphere.” In Paster 2004b: 89–110.
- Stapleton, M. L. *Fated Sky: The Femina Furens in Shakespeare*. Newark: University of Delaware Press; London: Associated University Presses, 2000.
- Staub, Susan C. *Nature’s Cruel Stepdames: Murderous Women in the Street Literature of Seventeenth-Century England*. Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 2005.
- Steenbergh, Kristine. “‘Bare Ruined Choirs’: The Monastery as Heterotopia in Early Modern Drama.” *The Reformation Unsettled: British Literature and the Question of Religious Identity, 1560–1660*. Proteus: Studies in Early Modern Identity Formation. Leiden: Brepols, forthcoming 2007.
- Stocker, Margarita. *Judith Sexual Warrior: Women and Power in Western Culture*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998.
- Stone, Lawrence. *The Crisis of the Aristocracy 1558–1641*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, [1965] 1966.
- Stretton, Tim. *Women Waging Law in Elizabethan England*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- Strier, Richard and Carla Mazzio. “Two Responses to ‘Shakespeare and Embodiment: An E–Conversation.’” *Literature Compass* 3:1 (2005): 15–31.
- Sturgess, Keith. *Jacobean Private Theatre*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1987.
- Sullivan, Garrett A. “‘Arden Lay Murdered in that Plot of Ground’:

- Surveying, Land, and Arden of Faversham.” *English Literary History* 61 (1994): 231–51.
- . *Memory and Forgetting in English Renaissance Drama: Shakespeare, Marlowe, Webster*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Tenison, E. M. *Elizabethan England: Being the History of this Country in Relation to All Foreign Princes*. 5 vols. Royal Lemington Spa and Warwick: [s.n.], 1933.
- Terry, Reta A. “‘Vows to the Blackest Devil’: *Hamlet* and the Evolving Code of Honor in Early Modern England.” *Renaissance Quarterly* 52:4 (1999): 1070–1086.
- Thomas, Catherine E. “‘You Make me Feel Like (Un)natural Woman’: Reconsidering Murderous Mothers in English Renaissance Drama.” *Women, Violence and English Renaissance Literature*, edited by Woodbridge and Beehler. 303–327.
- Thomson, Duncan. *Painting in Scotland 1570–1670*. Edinburgh: Trustees of the National Galleries of Scotland, 1975.
- Thorndike, Ashley H. “The Relations of *Hamlet* to Contemporary Revenge Plays.” *PMLA* 17:2 (1902): 125–220.
- Tillyard, *Shakespeare’s History Plays*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, [1944] 1986.
- Travitsky, Betty. “Child Murder in English Renaissance Life and Drama.” *Medieval and Renaissance Drama* 6 (1993): 63–84.
- Tricomi, Albert H. “The Aesthetics of Mutilation in *Titus Andronicus*.” *Shakespeare Survey* 27 (1974): 11–19.
- Turner, Robert Y. “Giving and Taking in Massinger’s Tragicomedies,” *Studies in English Literature 1500–1900* 35:2 (1995): 361–81.
- Underdown, David E. “The Taming of the Scold: The Enforcement of Patriarchal Authority in Early Modern England.” *Order and Disorder in Early Modern England*. Edited by Anthony Fletcher and John Stevenson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985. 116–36.
- . “Yellow Ruffs and Poisoned Possets: Placing Women in Early Stuart Political Debate.” *Attending to Early Modern Women*. Edited by Susan S. Amussen and Adele Seeff. Newark: University of Delaware Press; London: Associated University Presses, 1998. 230–43.
- Ustick, W. Lee. “Changing Ideals of Aristocratic Character and Conduct in Seventeenth-Century England.” *Modern Philology* 30:2 (1932): 147–66.
- Vanhoutte, Jacqueline. “Community, Authority, and the Motherland in Sackville and Norton’s *Gorboduc*.” *Studies of English Literature* 40:2 (2000): 227–39.
- . *Strange Communion: Motherland and Masculinity in*

- Tudor Plays, Pamphlets, and Politics*. Newark: University of Delaware Press; London: Associated University Presses, 2003.
- Vaughan, Virginia Mason. "The Construction of Barbarism in *Titus Andronicus*." *Race, Ethnicity and Power in the Renaissance*. Edited by Joyce Green Macdonald. Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 1997. 165–80.
- Vaught, Jennifer C. and Lynne Dickson Bruckner, eds. *Grief and Gender 700–1700*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.
- Veenstra, Jan. "The New Historicism of Stephen Greenblatt: On Poetics of Culture and the Interpretation of Shakespeare." *History and Theory* 34 (1995): 174–98.
- Veesser, H. Aram. *The New Historicism*. New York and London: Routledge, 1989.
- . *The New Historicism Reader*. New York and London: Routledge, 1994.
- Vocht, H. de, "Jasper Heywood and his Translation of Seneca's *Troas*, *Thyestes*, and *Hercules Furens*, edited from the octavos of 1559, 1560, and 1561." *Materialien zur Kunde des älteren Englischen Dramas* XLI (1913).
- Waith, Eugene M. "The Metamorphosis of Violence in *Titus Andronicus*." *Shakespeare Survey* 10 (1957): 39–49.
- . *The Herculean Hero in Marlowe, Chapman, Shakespeare and Dryden*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1962.
- Wall, Wendy. *Staging Domesticity: Household Work and English Identity in Early Modern Drama*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- Watson, Curtis Brown. *Shakespeare and the Renaissance Concept of Honor*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1960.
- Watson, Robert N. "Tragedy." *The Cambridge Companion to English Renaissance Drama*. Edited by A. R. Braunmuller and Michael Hattaway. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.
- . "Tragedies of Revenge and Ambition." *Cambridge Companion to Shakespearean Tragedy*. Edited by Claire McEachern. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. 160–81.
- Weimann, Robert. *Authority and Representation in Early Modern Discourse*. Edited by David Hillman. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996.
- Wells, Robin Headlam. "The Fortunes of Tillyard: Twentieth-Century Critical Debate on Shakespeare's History Plays." *English Studies* 66:5 (1985): 391–404.
- . *Shakespeare on Masculinity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- Westerweel, Bart. "Tussen Seneca en Shakespeare: Wraak en gerechtigheid in de Elizabethaanse tragedie." *De Mensen van vroeger, de hoven van weleer: Over de receptie van de*

- klassieken in de Europese literatuur*. Edited by Karl Enenkel and Paul van Heck. Voorthuizen: Florivallis, 2001.
- Whigham, Frank. *Ambition and Privilege: The Social Tropes of Elizabethan Courtesy Theory*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1984.
- Wigfall Green, Alwin. *The Inns of Court and Early English Drama*. 1931. New York: Benjamin Blom, 1965.
- Wiggins, Martin. *Journeymen in Murder: The Assassin in English Renaissance Drama*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991.
- . *Shakespeare and the Drama of His Time*. Oxford Shakespeare Topics. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Wilcox, Helen, ed. *Women and Literature in Britain 1500–1700*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- Willbern, David. “Rape and Revenge in *Titus Andronicus*.” *English Literary Renaissance* 8 (1978): 159–82.
- Willcock, Gladys D. “Language and Poetry in Shakespeare’s Early Plays.” *Proceedings of the British Academy* (1954): 103–18.
- Williams, Penry. *The Tudor Regime*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979.
- Williams, Raymond. *Marxism and Literature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977.
- Williamson, Marilyn. “‘When Men Are Rul’d by Women’: Shakespeare’s First Tetralogy.” *Shakespeare Studies* 19 (1987): 41–59.
- Willis, Deborah. “‘The Gnawing Vulture’: Revenge, Trauma Theory, and *Titus Andronicus*.” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 53:1 (Spring, 2002): 21–52.
- Wilson, Donna F. *Ransom, Revenge and Heroic Identity in the Iliad*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- Wilson, John Dover. “Shakespeare’s *Richard III* and *The True Tragedy of Richard the Third*.” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 3:4 (1952): 299–306.
- . *What Happens in “Hamlet.”* London and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1959.
- Wilson, Richard. “The Management of Mirth: Shakespeare via Bourdieu” in *Marxist Shakespeares*. Edited by Jean Howard and Scott Cutler Shershow. London and New York: Routledge, 2001. 159–177.
- Winstanley, Lilian. *Hamlet and the Scottish Succession: Being an Examination of the Relations of the Play of Hamlet to the Scottish Succession and the Essex Conspiracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1921.
- Winston, Jessica. “Seneca in Early Elizabethan England.” *Renaissance Quarterly* 59:1 (2006): 29–58.
- Womack, Peter. “Imagining Communities: Theatres and the English Nation in the Sixteenth Century.” *Culture and History*

- 1350–1600: *Essays on English Communities, Identities and Writing*. Edited by David Aers. New York, London, Toronto etc.: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1992.
- Woodbridge, Linda. *Women and the English Renaissance: Literature and the Nature of Womankind, 1540–1620*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1986.
- and Edward Berry, eds. *True Rites and Maimed Rites: Ritual and Anti-Ritual in Shakespeare and His Age*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1992.
- and Sharon Beeler, eds. *Women, Violence and English Literature: Essays Honoring Paul Jorgensen*. Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2003.
- Wormald, Jenny. “Bloodfeud, Kindred and Government in Early Modern Scotland.” *Past and Present* 87 (1980): 54–97.
- Worp, J. A. *De Invloed van Seneca’s treurspelen op ons toneel*. 1892. Utrecht: Hes Publishers, 1977.
- Wright, Louis B. *Middle-Class Culture in Elizabethan England*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, [1935] 1958.
- Wrightson, Keith. *English Society 1580–1680*. London: Routledge, [1982] 1995.
- Wynne-Davies, Marion. “‘The Swallowing Womb’: Consumed and Consuming Women in *Titus Andronicus*.” *The Matter of Difference: Material Feminist Criticism of Shakespeare*. Edited by Valerie Wayne. New York, London, etc.: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991. 129–52.
- Yates, Frances A. *Astraea: The Imperial Theme in the Sixteenth Century*. London and Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975.
- Ziolkowski, Theodore. *Hesitant Heroes: Private Inhibition, Cultural Crisis*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2004.



SAMENVATTING

Wraakzucht

DE DYNAMIEK VAN GENDER EN VERGELDING IN HET ENGELSE VROEGMODERNE DRAMA

De manier waarop het vroegmoderne toneel (1588-1642) zich verhiel tot discussies over wraak in de Engelse maatschappij is door literatuurwetenschappers traditioneel gezien in termen van morele aanvaarding of afkeuring. Ook binnen de nieuwere cultuurhistorische benadering van het *new historicism* ziet men de rol van het toneel in termen van tegenstellingen, en vraagt men zich af of de verbeelding van wraak op het toneel bijdroeg, of juist afbreuk deed aan de pogingen van de natiestaat om zich het alleenrecht op vergelding toe te eigenen. Dit proefschrift stelt een dynamischer model voor van de rol van het drama in vroegmoderne ideeën over wraak. Een genderanalyse van de representatie van wraak laat zien dat de bijdrage van het theater aan debatten over wraak in het geheel niet homogeen of monolithisch was. Het theater schied tal van verschillende verbeeldingen van bloedwrekers, duellisten, jaloerse vrouwen, wraakzuchtige zonen en heetgebakerde tirannen. Die dramatische representaties reageren elk op hun eigen manier op historische politieke discussies over de rol van wraak in de vroegmoderne maatschappij, en geven op hun beurt vorm aan die discussie. Zoals uit dit proefschrift blijkt, is het daarbij heel belangrijk om ook de institutionele context van deze toneelstukken in ogenschouw te nemen.

Het gebruik van een genderperspectief biedt een ingang tot het bestuderen van de dynamiek tussen toneel en de bredere culturele

context., Gender speelt een sleutelrol speelt in het vormgeven van machtsrelaties. Wanneer we ons realiseren dat mannelijkheid en vrouwelijkheid niet alleen een rol spelen in relaties tussen de twee seksen, maar één van de belangrijkste methoden zijn om verschil te duiden in alle machtsrelaties, kunnen we gender gebruiken als een instrument voor cultuurhistorische analyse. Debatten over wraak werden gevoerd in termen van mannelijkheid en vrouwelijkheid, rede en passie, publiek en privé, eer en beschaving. Gender speelde daarbij niet alleen een rol als het om de wraak van vrouwelijke personages ging, maar werd veel breder ingezet om verschillen in denken kracht bij te zetten. Dit proefschrift combineert daarom de ideeën van de historica Joan Scott met Foucaults theorieën over de werking van discoursen, om de dynamische rol van het toneel in het denken over wraak te analyseren.

De vroegmoderne periode kan worden gezien als een keerpunt in het denken over wraak. Terwijl tradities van bloedwraak in de Middeleeuwen werden gezien als een gereedschap in het handhaven van de maatschappelijke orde, stond dat idee ter discussie in de Renaissance ter discussie. Engeland was getuige van een expansie van het nationale rechtssysteem, en zowel de Tudors als de Stuarts streefden ernaar om praktijken van bloedwraak volledig uit te roeien in hun koninkrijk. Dat de periode er een was van verandering, blijkt ook uit wijzigende definities van het begrip wraak in de periode. Men onderscheidde in de Renaissance drie verschillende categorieën van vergelding: goddelijke, publieke, en private wraak. Op die manier maakte men onderscheid tussen de wraak van God, de publieke, legale wraak van het recht, en persoonlijke, onrechtmatige wraak van individuele burgers. Dit proefschrift verkent de rol van het toneel in dat dynamische proces van de politieke herdefiniëring van de rol van wraak. Het brengt de verschillende manieren in kaart waarop het toneel de beeldvorming over wraak in deze roerige periode beïnvloedde. Het laat bovendien zien dat wraak, recht en beelden van mannelijkheid en vrouwelijkheid een cruciale rol hebben gespeeld in de totstandkoming van de vroegmoderne natiestaat.

De opkomst van het genre van de wraaktragedie in Engeland vond plaats binnen de institutionele context van de *Inns of Court*, instellingen waar de rechters en bestuurders werden opgeleid die de uitbreidende rechtsstaat zo hard nodig had. Juist in deze instituties vertaalde men de wraaktragedies van Seneca, en voerde

deze ook op bij traditionele gelegenheden. In hun bewerkingen van deze klassieke toneelstukken schiepen deze instituties een vertoog waarin de grenzen tussen private en publieke wraak werden aangescherpt. Die stukken beeldden wraak af als iets vrouwelijks, en associeerden vergelding met rebellie en burgeroorlog. Op die manier contrasteerden zij vrouwelijke, emotionele en excessieve persoonlijke wraak met een mannelijk, afgewogen en rationeel rechtssysteem in hun toneelstukken.

In Shakespeares eerste tetralogie van koningsdrama's en ook in zijn wraaktragedie *Titus Andronicus* wordt die ge-genderde grens tussen wilde wraak en legitieme rechtspraak in twijfel getrokken. De koningsdrama's mengen net als de tragedies van de *Inns of Court* klassieke wraaktragedies met de binnenlandse geschiedenis van Engeland, maar in Shakespeares stukken wordt het verschil tussen mannelijke publieke vergelding en vrouwelijke wraak dat de instituties van de rechtspraak probeerden aan te brengen in hun toneeltraditie, juist in twijfel getrokken. Ook zijn vroege wraaktragedie *Titus Andronicus* richt expliciet onze aandacht op de overlappingen tussen de publieke wraak van het rechtssysteem, en de vrouwelijke, persoonlijke vergeldingsdaden van Titus en Tamora.

Het populaire genre van de wraaktragedie richtte de aandacht van het publiek op deze conflicterende representaties van wraak. Die verschillende beelden van wraak zijn in het genre gerelateerd aan verschillende noties van het zelf. Terwijl Senecaanse verbeeldingen van vergelding draaien om een verlies van zelfbeheersing veroorzaakt door vrouwelijke wraakzucht, benadrukken andere vertogen in het genre juist dat woede en wraak onlosmakelijk verbonden zijn met het mannelijke zelf, en weldegelijk gecontroleerd worden door de mannelijke rede. Deze twee visies van het zelf als ongecontroleerd en beïnvloedbaar aan de ene kant, en rationeel en beheerst aan de andere kant, spelen niet alleen een belangrijke rol in politieke debatten over wraak, maar ook in de vroegmoderne discussies over de functie van het toneel en de gevaren van het uitbeelden van wraak op de planken. In de wraaktragedie hadden conflicterende begrippen van het zelf een politieke functie in het culturele debat over het recht op wraak van de adel.

In de historiografie van de rol van het toneel in de burgeroorlogen die in de jaren veertig van de zeventiende eeuw uitbraken,

worden de private, overdekte theaters vaak beschreven als een broedplaats voor de decadentie van de hogere klassen, vooral waar het hun representaties van duellerende hovelingen betreft. Een genderanalyse van een corpus van stukken uit deze theaters laat zien dat de politieke conflicten van die periode met veel meer nuance werden benaderd. In Chapmans tragedies wordt bijvoorbeeld geprobeerd een plaats te vinden voor de praktijk van wraak in een Neo-Stoicijns politiek model van denken over soevereiniteit en het recht van de onderdaan om tegen tirannie in opstand te komen. Gender speelt ook hier weer een belangrijke rol in de manier waarop deze stukken een politiek onderscheid proberen aan te brengen tussen de beheerste, rationele wraak van Stoicijnse personages, en de representatie van ongebreidelde vrouwelijke wraaklust in de tragedies. Massingers komedies, die ook in het voormalige klooster van Blackfriars werden opgevoerd, introduceren een nieuw model van mannelijke heroïek, waarin wraak geen rol meer speelt. In plaats daarvan is het model van mannelijkheid dat de stukken voorstaan gebaseerd op (vroeger vrouwelijke) concepten van vergeving en geduld.

Het antwoord op de centrale vraag van deze dissertatie, de vraag naar de rol van het toneel in de culturele dynamiek van wraak in de vroegmoderne periode, kan dus alleen maar zijn dat dit een conflicterende en dynamische rol is. Een genderperspectief op verschillende toneelstukken laat zien hoe de *Inns of Court*, Shakespeares koningsdrama's, het genre van de wraaktragedie, en de tragedies en komedies van Blackfriars zich mengden in actuele debatten. Er is echter één constante in al deze vertogen, en dat is dat mannelijke beelden van wraak consequent worden afgezet tegen niet-mannelijke tegenpolen. Het is juist dit mechanisme van gender in het definiëren van machtsrelaties dat mij in staat stelde de specifieke manieren waarop het vroegmoderne drama zich mengde in politieke en culturele conflicten rond wraak in kaart te brengen. Het binaire mechanisme van mannelijkheid en vrouwelijkheid speelt een cruciale rol in de veranderende definities van het zelf, eer, schaamte, het lichaam, emotie en rede die vorm kregen in de representaties van wraak in het theater.

CURRICULUM VITAE

KRISTINE STEENBERGH werd op 9 juni 1976 geboren in Utrecht. Zij studeerde Engelse taal- en letterkunde aan de Universiteit Utrecht en de University of Birmingham, en studeerde in 1999 *cum laude* af. Daarna werkte zij enige tijd als parttime docent Engelse letterkunde, als ontwerper van interactieve leeromgevingen op het internet, als redacteur en vertaler. Van 2002 tot 2007 was zij als promovendus verbonden aan het Onderzoekinstituut voor Geschiedenis en Cultuur van de Universiteit Utrecht. Op dit moment is zij werkzaam als docent Engelse letterkunde aan de Universiteit van Amsterdam en de Vrije Universiteit. Daarnaast is zij redacteur van *Folio*, het tijdschrift van het Shakespeare-Genootschap van Nederland en Vlaanderen, en eindredacteur van het *Jaarboek voor Vrouwengeschiedenis*.

