SENECAN AND OTHER INFLUENCES ON SIX
ELIZABETHAN REVENGE PLAYS

APPROVED:

[Signatures]
SENECA AND OTHER INFLUENCES ON SIX
ELIZABETHAN REVENGE PLAYS

THESIS

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CHAPTER I

THE VOGUE OF SENeca, 1570-1600

In this thesis an attempt will be made to trace briefly the revival of Senecan tragedy from 1570 to the end of the sixteenth century through some of the earlier translations, adaptations, and imitations, and to evaluate the significance of the final evolution of such works into the Elizabethan tragedy of revenge.

In order to proceed more easily in discussing Senecan tragedy, it is appropriate to include here some concrete definition of the tragedy of blood. Such definition is not possible without a brief glance at the history of the Roman product in the tragic drama. The tragedies of Seneca, modeled closely after the tragedies of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, link ancient tragedy with modern tragedy. The Greeks had already delved into all forms and fields of literature, and Roman tragedy was an imitation of these great models. Seneca wrote his tragedies to please a demanding audience which comprised an upper class clique with a classical education. It must be borne in mind that Seneca's plays were meant to be recited, not acted, and the reading public was anxious to receive academic works in Latin, the universal language of scholarship.\(^1\) Seneca combined both

\(^{1}\) F. L. Lucas, Seneca and Elizabethan Tragedy, p. 55.
classic and romantic elements to compose his tragedies. During his period of writing, Seneca was forced to abound in rhetoric, to parade his pedantry, to moralize with epigrams, and to exaggerate gruesome details, because political stagnation deprived him of a popular trend of writing. Seneca's Stoicism induced a hardness in his characters; death to them was a positive good; suicide was a luxury. In Troadas, Astyanax, child of Hector and Andromache, is described by the messenger as having met his death with a royal soul. Polyxena, daughter of Hecuba and Priam, whose blood is to be spilled upon the tomb of Achilles that she might be reunited with her mate in Elysium, is described by Andromache as follows:

Behold, her soul leaps up with mighty joy
At thought of death.

Oedipus, in Thebaus, self-blinded and self-exiled from his land because of a stroke of fate which threatened him before birth, earnestly seeks death, but he is restrained from committing suicide by his faithful daughter, Antigone, and he declared that he had rather be forced to die than be prevented from dying.

Seneca's tragedies may be briefly analyzed as a skeleton of epic, lyric, and dramatic scenes, held together by

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2 Lucius Seneca, Troadas, IV, 945-946. Future citations to Seneca will be found in The Tragedies of Seneca, translated by Frank J. Miller.
rhetoric. His tragedies make up the logical development in drama under the prevailing conditions of a scholarly public with a taste for intrigue, adultery, murder, and horror piled upon horror through the use of ghosts, mythological characters, unnatural deaths, and mutilation. The definition for the tragedy of blood is most conveniently given by listing its characteristics:

1. The tragedy of blood is tragic in that the principal character or characters meet death as the inevitable result of a catastrophe filled with incredible horrors.

2. It is usually motivated by a desire for revenge because of gruesome injustices.

3. It usually contains numerous allusions to Greek mythology.

4. It is further characterized by the use of the ghost, chorus, stock characters, such as the good and the evil counselor, and all comprehensible mechanics of blood-letting.

In examining some of Seneca's plays, we find their structure is the same. Seneca divides his plays into five acts. Act I is both retrospective and anticipatory of the catastrophe; Act II sets forth the principal character devising means to execute his revenge; Act III brings the rivals together; Act IV is usually the summation of events; Act V is given over to the completion of the catastrophe.3

It is immediately obvious that Seneca is provided the opportunity of narrating and moralizing in the invariable use of the chorus to conclude the first act. In each of his tragedies we are cognizant of his dramatic technique—long, rhetorical speeches and much epigrammatic stichomythia. This line-for-line dialogue occurs in the second act of each of his tragedies, and is made up of persuasive conversation on the part of the nurse, counselor, or servant who attempts to reason against the principal character's avenging an injustice. Throughout Seneca's tragedies, the desire for revenge is the only point about which a plot may be woven. In Thyestes, Atreus gains revenge against his brother, Thyestes, for having usurped his kingdom and defiled his wife; in Hercules Furens, Juno, attempting to strike evil against her brother, Jupiter, through his son, Hercules, thrusts the youth into madness after he has killed the tyrant, Lycurgus, and causes him to kill his own wife and children. In Thebais, as in Hercules Furens, we find a deity seeking revenge for the murder of a favorite. Apollo seeks revenge for Laius, who is murdered by Oedipus, son of Laius and Jocasta. In Hippolytus, because Hippolytus preferred the service of chaste Diana to a life of adultery with his step-mother, Phaedra told his father, Theseus, that Hippolytus had committed filthy acts with her. Theseus, foiled in an attempt to have his son put to death, appealed to Poseidon, God of the sea, to destroy Hippolytus, and the God granted the request. In Thyestes, Hippolytus, Medea,
Iphigenia and Hercules Furens, the atmosphere of crime and revenge is set forth in the opening monologues. Seneca allows no device for emphasizing a situation to escape him. His characters may become erudite upon amazingly short notice. When Medea is to poison the bride of Jason, all the poisons known to mythology are enumerated. Although such lengthy enumerations delay action and are somewhat distracting for the reader, they are found frequently in Seneca's works. In Oedipus, Tiresias, unwilling to trust his personal knowledge of the cause of a great pestilence, goes to the underworld to consult the murdered King Laius. For dramatic effect, Seneca parades all the personages of Hades before Tiresias is able to find King Laius. This rhetorical element, characteristic of Seneca in all his plays, is attributed to the schools of rhetoric which taught declamation upon given situations in lieu of character portrayal.

This heightened style and display of technique appealed to the romantic Elizabethan age. Since Seneca was the most available model, and since his plays were not composed for the stage, the value of the florid speeches is found in oratory rather than in content.  

6 Felix E. Schelling, English Drama, p. 41.
A rough division of the historic growth of English Seneca into the three decades, 1570-1580, 1580-1590, and 1590-1603, is necessary for consideration of Seneca's popularity. In 1570-1580, a lull in Senecan influence was evident, and because the universities have left no records of Senecan activities during the decade, we are almost entirely dependent upon lost plays which are listed in the Revels Accounts. From 1580-1590, there was a distinct revival of Senecan influence as made apparent by Newton's Thebais, which is a translation of the whole of Seneca, and by Newton's collection of earlier translations into the one volume, Seneca, His Ten Tragedies Translated into English, in 1581. In the same year, William Gager had a Senecan tragedy, Meleager, performed at Christ Church. In the universities Senecan influence was firmly established. The students at Gray's Inn produced a purely Senecan tragedy, The Misfortunes of Arthur, 1587-1588. In some of the plays of Kyd, Marlowe, and Shakespeare, we find the most important influence of Seneca during this decade. Kyd's Spanish Tragedy, 1586, marks the peak of Senecan influence. In the years from 1590 to 1603, we are compelled to examine plays more closely to find Senecan traces, and although the writers

7H. R. Charlton, The Senecan Tradition in Renaissance Tragedy, p. 142.

8Ibid., pp. 142-143.
of the period used Senecan models, the plays have changed from gory tragedies of blood to distinct tragedies of revenge.

A discussion of at least two purely Senecan imitations is necessary to further comprehension of direct Senecan influence. Gorboduc, written by Thomas Norton and Thomas Sackville, 1562, was the earliest English tragedy with definite Senecan features: the bloody theme, the division into five acts, the use of the chorus, the removal of action from the spectators, and rhetorical speeches. The tragedy, performed before Queen Elizabeth at Whitehall on January 18, 1562, was written with a political purpose. The authors of Gorboduc were striving to emphasize the inherent evils of an unsettled succession. King Gorboduc divided his kingdom between his two sons, Ferrex and Porrex, and the discord and consequent evils befalling the jointly ruling sons constitute a theme which is suggestive of the Greek story of the wars of the sons of Oedipus and the destruction of Thebes. Seneca's Thebae is identical in plot with Gorboduc. Eteocles and Polynices are rivalrous brothers between whom the kingdom is divided. The elder brother is murdered by the younger; the mother murders the younger son; and the people, preceding civil strife, murder both the father and the mother.

Several parallelisms found in Gorboduc and in tragedies of Senecan authorship are worthy of mention. Videna, in Gorboduc, weighs the value of day and night:

The silent night, that brings the quiet pause,
From painfull travailes of the weare day,
Frolonges my carefull thoughtes, and makes me blame
The slow Aurore, that so for love or shame
Both long delay to shewe her blushing face, 10
And now the day renewes my grieffull plaint.

Oedipus' speech at the beginning of the tragedy of Oedipus is essentially the same:

Now night has fled; and with a waveringe gleam
Returns the sun; all wrapped in murky clouds
His beams arise, and with their baleful light
Shall soon look upon our stricken homes.
And day reveal the havoc of the night. 11

In Octavia, the first five lines originate the day and night discussion:

Now doth the flushing dawn from heaven drive
The wandering stars; the sun mounts into sight
With radiant beams, and brings the world once more
The light of day. Up, then, my heavy soul
With grievous cares o'erburdened, and resume
Thy woe. 12

In the dumb show proceeding Act II of Gorboduc, reference to the administering of poison is as follows:

After him commes a brave and lustie young gentleman and presentes the King with a cup of golde filled with poyson, which the King accepted. 13

10 Thomas Norton and Thomas Sackville, Gorboduc, I, 1, 1-6.
11 Lucius Seneca, Oedipus, I, 1-5.
12 Octavia, I, 1-5. This anonymous play has frequently been attributed to Seneca.
13 Gorboduc, Dumb Show, 6-8.
In epigrammatic form, Thyestes remarks:

... for 'tis in cups of gold
    That poison lurks.\textsuperscript{14}

Here, it is interesting to note that the authors of Gorboduc departed from the established custom by making the allegorical representations precede the various acts to explain the significance of each, whereas Seneca used the chorus to review events and to anticipate the catastrophe.\textsuperscript{15} For the sake of attaining horror through word selection, Norton and Sackville have Gorboduc declaim in Senecan style:

\begin{quote}
    Whose vengeance neither Simois' stayned streames
    Flowing with blood of troian princes slaine ... \textsuperscript{16}
\end{quote}

Seneca produces the same color in Agamemnon's speech:

\begin{quote}
    Nor Simois' waves empurpled with the slain ... \textsuperscript{17}
\end{quote}

The words, "blood" and "bloody" are recurrent in Seneca's plays, and Gorboduc is filled with identical words:

\begin{quote}
    Nuntius: ... his owne most bloody hand ... \textsuperscript{18}
\end{quote}

In Thebais, Oedipus mentions bloody hands in one of his speeches:

\begin{quote}
    Into my father's bed I bore my hands
    Smeared with my father's blood.\textsuperscript{19}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{14}Seneca, \textit{Thyestes}, III, 453-454.


\textsuperscript{16}Gorboduc, III, i, 2-3.

\textsuperscript{17}Seneca, \textit{Agamemnon}, II, 215.

\textsuperscript{18}Gorboduc, III, i, 161.

\textsuperscript{19}Seneca, \textit{Thebais}, I, 267-268.
Gorbovuc is equipped with a Senecan cast of corresponding characters. The three principal characters, Gorbovuc, Ferrex, and Porrex, are provided with good counselors, as well as a wicked parasite who nullifies sententious counsel.  

Equally as reminiscent of Senecan tragedies is The Misfortunes of Arthur, the body of which was written by Thomas Hughes, 1587, in collaboration with seven other members of the Society of Gray's Inn. The play is well described as a paraphrasing of Seneca's stichomythia.  

The Senecan ghost of Gorlois gloats over the revenge; the dumb-shows foreshadow coming events. Arthur's son, Mordred, who was the result of an incestuous practice, seduces Queen Guenevere. When the Queen hears of Arthur's proposed return, her plans for committing suicide are disrupted, and she flees to a nunnery. Mordred gathers large forces to wage war against Arthur, and in the Battle of Cornwall, only twenty of 120,000 men survive on each side. Arthur slays Mordred and receives his own death wound.

This tragedy is more closely related to Seneca's Thyestes in dialogue concerning crime, death, and revenge than to any other of his plays. Seneca, in describing the extent

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21 Ibid., p. 102.
of crime puts the following words into Clytemnestra's speech:

The only path that's safe for crime is crime.22

Hughes allows Queen Guenevere to declare:

Omit no plague, and none will be enough.
Wrong cannot be reveng'd, but by excess.23

The same sentiment is expressed by Atreus in Thyestes:

No crime's avenged save by a greater crime.
But where the crimes that can surpass his deeds?24

Atreus extends his attitude toward crime in the following speech:

... but no end
Is possible when vengeance through the crime
Is sought.25

Queen Guenevere strikes a similar trend of thought in her lines:

Wrong claymes a meane, when first you offer wronge.
The meane is vaine, when wrong is in revenge.26

As an example showing that death was a positive good to Senecan characters, we find Atreus exclaiming:

In my domain, death is a longed-for boon.27

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22 Seneca, Agamemnon, II, 115.
24 Seneca, Thyestes, II, 195-196.
25 Ibid., V, 1055-1057.
27 Seneca, Thyestes, II, 249.
Guenevere becomes an imitation of a Senecan character in saying:

Death is an end of paine, no paine itself. 28

Of particular interest is the stoicism found in the Chorus following Act III of Thyestes:

Him, whom the dawning day beholds
In proud estate, the setting sun
Sees lying in the dust. 29

An identical stoical expression is found in the epilogue of The Misfortunes of Arthur:

Him, whom the morning found both stout and strong.
The evening left all groveling on the ground. 30

Concerning royal power, Mordred flaunts his views in a single line:

Weake is the Scepter's hold, that seekes but right. 31

Atreus states the same idea as follows:

When Kings are forced to choose right alone,
Their rule is insecure. 32

From the foregoing parallels found in two direct imitations of Seneca, we are able to summarize briefly Seneca's contribution to English tragedy. Of primary importance, he gave a pattern of construction, the five-act division,

28 The Misfortunes of Arthur, I, iii, 43.
29 Seneca, Thyestes, III, 612-614.
30 The Misfortunes of Arthur, Epilogue, 40-41.
31 Ibid., I, iv, 98.
with comparatively little action upon the stage from only
two or three characters. The lack of action on the stage
served as a requisite for the messenger to report off-
stage action. His chorus reviews previous incidents and
predicts the outcome of such events. Elizabethan tragedy
takes over such stock characters as the ghost and the
good and the evil companions. Seneca's sensational themes
authorized the Elizabethan penchant for bloody action.
Seneca established the convention for having the principal
characters meet death nobly, and he set the precedent
for having them meet death at the end of each tragedy.

We find Norton and Sackville and Hughes closely patter-
tning their plays after those of Seneca; however, we
find in later Elizabethan drama several marked departures
from Seneca. Immediately noticeable is the shift of
interest from the outer conflict to the inner conflict,
from incredible atrocities to the emotions of the mind. 33
Whereas Seneca had no complexity of plot, English dramatists
became renowned for plot continuity and for the expert
blending of sub-plots. Seneca's ghost invariably emitted
the cry for revenge, but it was not a participant in the
subsequent action of the tragedies. In Elizabethan
tragedies of revenge, the ghost is no dramatic piece of
machinery; it actually motivates the other characters and

33 Thomas M. Parrott and Robert H. Ball, Elizabethan
Drama, p. 40.
is a vital part of the *dramatis personae*. We find a growing sense for the need of action on the stage to satisfy the demands of a romantic and realistic group of theatre-goers. Tragedies of Seneca were at the fingertips of such geniuses as Kyd, Marlowe, and Shakespeare; however, their works surpassed those of Seneca to the extent that a more applicable expression for the dramatists is that they "out-Seneca Seneca."
CHAPTER II

PROBLEMS OF CHRONOLOGY, SOURCES, AND AUTHORSHIP

In this chapter will be discussed the chronology of the six plays of revenge under consideration with a detailed survey of their sources. Additionally, some problems of authorship of the doubtful plays will be presented.

The first of these six tragedies to be published was The Spanish Tragedy, the earliest extant quarto of which bears the date 1594. The date of entry in the Stationers' Register, according to Chambers, is October 6, 1592, and the play is entered by Abell Jeffes, with publishing rights granted to Edward White.¹ This quarto of 1594 is in the University Library at Gottingen. A second extant quarto, dated 1599, is in the Earl of Ellesmere's Library at Bridgewater House, and from the title-page, we know the quarto of 1599 is "newly corrected and amended of such grosse faults as passed in the first impression."² There is an undated quarto in the British Museum, which was a second edition of a corrected and amended first impression. Mr. Boas concludes that the first impression, of which no

copy is extant, is either that licensed for the press to Abell Jeffes on October 6, 1592, under the title of The Spanish Tragedie of Don Horatio and Bellmipala, or a piratical edition issued by Edward White between October 6 and December 18 of the same year. The copyright of the play remained in the possession of Jeffes from the date of entry in the Stationers' Register until August 13, 1599, when he transferred his right to Edward White, who accordingly printed an edition in that year. For Allde, White's printer, to have printed an edition between these dates would have been an invasion of Jeffes' rights unless there were some very irregular proceedings. A series of internal evidences suggests 1586-1587 as the period within which the play was written. According to the allusions in Act V of The Spanish Tragedy to English victories in Spain and Portugal, the date would definitely precede the defeat of the Spanish Armada, and Jonson's words in Bartholomew Fair would fix the date at 1586.

With the question of date, that of source is partly involved. Boas argues that Kyd took the political background of the tragedy from historical accounts of the war between Spain and Portugal in 1580. It is unlikely that a writer could have invented a plot so nearly in conformity

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3 Ibid., pp. xxvii-xxviii.
4 Ibid., p. xxx.
5 Ibid., pp. xxx-xxxi.
to the Spanish-Portuguese struggles for supremacy. The framework for the purely imaginary experiences of Hieronimo came from some lost work of fiction, or it was the product of Kyd's ingenious mind. We have no definitive source for The Spanish Tragedy, but whatever the source from which Kyd drew, he succeeded in producing the most popular of Elizabethan plays.

For fifty years The Spanish Tragedy maintained a popularity unrivaled by that of any other play throughout England and a large part of the European Continent, but with the triumph of Puritanism and the closing of the theatres in the middle of the seventeenth century, Kyd's fame was totally eclipsed. When, in 1744, The Spanish Tragedy was brought anew before the reading world, the author's name had been forgotten; however, Hawkins, sometime before 1773, found the following three lines in Heywood's Apology for Actors:

Why, Nero thought it no disparagement
And Kings and Emperours have tane delight  
To make experience of their wits in plaies.

Heywood names Kyd as the author of the preceding lines, and enlightens a world which could easily have forgotten the author of such a masterpiece since Kyd's name is not listed on the twelve extant editions of The Spanish Tragedy.7

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6 Thomas Kyd, The Spanish Tragedy, IV, 1, 86-88.
7 Frederick S. Boas, op. cit., p. xiii.
The second play in the chronology of the tragedies of revenge under discussion is *The Jew of Malta*, entered in the Stationers' Register May 17, 1594, to Nicholas Ling and Thomas Millington. The only extant edition of the tragedy is the quarto of 1633, which Thomas Heywood dedicated to his friend, Thomas Hammon; however, it is possible to fix the date of the play within fairly close limits. The allusion in the Prologue to the death of the Guise refers to the assassination of the third Duke of Guise, on December 23, 1588. Henslowe's Diary records a performance of *The Jew of Malta* on February 26, 1591. The consensus fixes 1589 as the approximate date.  

There is no doubt of Marlowe's authorship of *The Jew of Malta*; however, the quarto of 1633 gives evidence of Heywood's hand in several scenes, and in the Prologue and Epilogue, which contain analogies to *The Captives*. The presence of Heywood's writing in this quarto can be understood easily when we consider that the play, which survived only in the playhouse in manuscript, could not have been handed down in the exact words of Marlowe after a lapse of more than forty years.

Marlowe drew his chief sources for *The Jew of Malta* from books that he had read. Through recent research, such critics as J. Kellner and C. F. Tucker Brooke agree

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8Frederick S. Boas, *Christopher Marlowe*, p. 129.
that Marlowe borrowed much from Belleforest's *Cosmographie Universelle*, and from Lonicerus' * Chronicorum*. Lonicerus gives an account of Juan Michæsius, a Portuguese Jew, who flourished during the middle of the sixteenth century.

After enduring persecution in his own country, in Antwerp, and in Venice, Michæsius took refuge with the Turks in Constantinople, and there employed his enormous wealth over the Sultan Selim to the disadvantage of the Christians.

When Michæsius was made Duke of Naxos and the Cyclades, he exchanged his former Christian name for the Jewish name of Joseph Nassi. The historical Nassi was actually in political and financial relations with the courts of France and Germany, though later unmasked as the enemy of both.

There is a parallel situation in *The Jew of Malta* when Parabas is reviewing his evil deeds:

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And in the wars twixt France and Germany,
Under pretense of helping Charles the Fifth,
I slew friend and enemy with my stratagems.
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The third extant play which we shall consider is *Soliman and Perseda*, which was entered on the Stationers' Register, November 20, 1592, by Edward White, and printed by Edward Alle. There are only two dated copies of the tragedy, and each bears the date 1599. In the British

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Museum there is an undated quarto bearing the following excerpt from its title-page: *The Tragedye/ of Solyman and Perseda/ wherein is laide open, Love's/ constancy, Fortune's incon-/ stancy, and Death's/ Triumphs.*

The title-page is identical with those of the 1599 quartos with the exception of the omission of the date. Arguments in favor of this undated quarto being the earliest of those extant is that apart from two serious misprints which render two passages unintelligible, the quarto represents the best text. In any case, the entry in the Stationers' Register fixes November, 1592, as the downward limit for the composition of the play.

Because *Solyman* and *Perseda* is anonymous in all three editions, there is no external evidence to indicate its author; however, there is weighty evidence for attributing it to Kyd. Of primary importance is the fact that the story of Solyman and Perseda is the subject of Hieronimo's play within the play, *The Spanish Tragedy*. Obviously, Kyd introduced the story into *The Spanish Tragedy*, and may have later elaborated it in an independent work. Wotton's *Cortlie Controversie* could have served as a source, since the first three acts of his play and those of *Solyman* and *Perseda* are closely akin in metrical characteristics, such

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as the frequency of double endings and the proportional use of blank verse to rhyme. At times, the exact phraseology of Wotton's novel is borrowed. The similarities of technique between Soliman and Perseda and The Spanish Tragedy, the repetition of the orgy of bloodshed which ends each play, and the use of humorous relief with the graver issues of each play are not definitive evidences of Kyd's authorship; yet we may conclude that Kyd wrote Soliman and Perseda, or one of his disciples imitated a theme already handled on the stage by Kyd. A brief summary of Kyd's play-within-the-play will serve as conclusive evidence that the independent work of Soliman and Perseda found its source within The Spanish Tragedy. Hieronimo, devising a play whereby Lorenzo, Balthazar, and Belimperia are to meet death under color of stage business, gives the argument that a Knight of Rhodes, Erastus, was betrothed and wed to Perseda, an Italian girl whose beauty captivated everyone who looked upon her. Soliman, the Turkish Emperor, was an honored guest at the wedding feast of Perseda and Erastus, and he strove in vain to make Perseda switch her affections to him. Soliman then ordered Erastus' death by falsely accusing him of treason, met death at Perseda's hand, and in the conclusion of the play-within-the-play, Perseda stabs herself to

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13 Ibid., p.lvii.
escape the wrath of Soliman’s successor. Soliman and Perseus depart but little from Kyd’s dramatic play-within-the-play, and in a later chapter those departures will be shown.

The fourth play in chronological sequence, Titus Andronicus, was entered in the Stationers’ Register February 6, 1594, by Dantar, to be published the same year by Edward White and Thomas Millington. Chambers concludes that Titus Andronicus may be ascribed to the pen of William Shakespeare from the available external evidence. The title-pages of the 1594 and the 1600 editions of Titus Andronicus contain lists of the companies by whom the play was performed. The entries in Henslowe’s Diary are almost identical and suggest that the extant text dates from the beginning of 1594, and that it represents a revision of Titus and Vespasian which was produced in the spring of 1592. Since Henslowe treats the play as new, the revision must have been substantial. An allusion by Ben Jonson in Bartholomew Fair makes it possible that the 1592 version was a revision of some earlier work. Titus Andronicus was listed in Meres’ Palladios Tamia in 1598, and it was included in the First Folio edited by Heminges and Condell in 1623. Chambers disregards the views of Ravenscroft,

15 E. K. Chambers, Shakespeare: A Survey, p. 34.
who felt that Shakespeare was a reviser of the play and
gave only a few master touches to one or two of the principal characters and scenes. J. M. Robertson's views that
Titus Andronicus was the collaborative efforts of Peele,
Marlowe, Kyd, and Greene, receive very little consideration from Chambers, who prefers to use the parallels of
Titus Andronicus and others of Shakespeare's undisputed plays as conclusive evidence of his original authorship.
Chambers acknowledges that Titus Andronicus was one of
Shakespeare's earliest works, and he attempts to appease dissenters who refuse to recognize Shakespeare's "sweet Roman hand" in such a blood-curdling tragedy, by contending that portions of Shakespeare's early style passed away,
and that when Shakespeare reproduced, consciously or unconsciously, the style of his predecessors, he maintained a permanent style distinctly recognizable in his ensuing works. A brief résumé of Ovid's story of Philomela in his Metamorphoses will show that Shakespeare, portraying the helpless, tongueless Lavinia, consciously reproduced an episode from Ovid. Procne and Philomela, daughters of Pandion, joined forces to secure revenge against Tereus, Procne's husband, who had ravished Philomela, cut out her tongue, and imprisoned her. Philomela was able to weave

16 J. M. Robertson, An Introduction to the Study of the Shakespeare Canon, p. 91.
her story on a loom, and both she and Procone killed Itys, son of Tereus and Procone. Later, the two women quartered the child's body and served it to Tereus, who unwittingly thought he was celebrating a wedding feast. Shakespeare drew the episode of the banquet of human flesh from Seneca also. In Thyestes, we find the play rising to a grand finale in a banquet at which Thyestes is served the flesh of his sons because of the hatred of his brother Atreus. In Titus Andronicus, Tamora is lured to a Thyestean banquet that she may feed upon her own sons to satisfy the desire for vengeance on the part of Titus.

Shakespeare's Hamlet was entered on the Stationers' Register July 26, 1602, to publishers Nicholas Ling and John Trundle. Its date of print is 1603, and the title-page of Quarto 1 contains "The Tragical Historie of Hamlet, Prince of Denmarke By William Shakespeare." There is little evidence for the exact date of Hamlet; however, Chambers fixes the date between 1600 and 1601 because it brings the tragedy near Julius Caesar as a companion study of tragic idealism. Chambers concludes that Quarto 2 substantially represents the original text of the play, and that Folio I and Quarto 1 are based upon derivatives from Quarto 2. From external evidence found in Nash's prefatory Epistle

18Ovid, Metamorphoses, Book VI, translated by Frank J. Miller.
to 

مانفون، في الذي يさま كيد المغرم الفي المدير، 

it is concluded that Kyd was the author of the lost play, 

the Ur-Hamlet, and from the internal evidences gleaned 

from comparing The Spanish Tragedy and Senecan works, we 

feel that the lost play containing the Hamlet story, with 

which Shakespeare undoubtedly was acquainted, was of Kyd's 

composition. Origins of the Hamlet story may be found in 

Saxo Grammaticus' Historiae Danicae, printed in 1514, and 

in Belleforest's Histoires Tragiques, 1576. How many of 

the divergences of the Hamlet story from Belleforest are 

due to the Ur-Hamlet, and how many are due to Shakespeare 

are matters for conjecture. 19 The Hamlet-story, as trans- 

lated by Belleforest in his Histoires Tragiques from the 

Latin of Saxo Grammaticus, is a primitive tale of blood, 

lust, and revenge. It embraces the marriage of Horvven-

dille with Geruthe, and the birth of their son, Amleth. 

Fengon murders his brother, Horvvendille, and marries 

Geruthe, whom he had previously seduced. Amleth assumes 

madness to gain time to work out a plan of revenge on his 

uncle, interviews his mother in a closet, murders an eaves-

dropper, and is sent by Fengon to England with secret in-

structions for his execution. Amleth discovers the plot 

against his life, returns to England, executes his 

19 E. K. Chambers, William Shakespeare: A Study of 

long-delayed vengeance, ascends the Danish throne, and finally meets death at the hands of his maternal uncle, Wotgore. There are striking resemblances of dramatic technique between Hamlet, as we have it, and The Spanish Tragedy; however, a detailed study of the interrelations of the six tragedies of revenge will be deferred to a later position in this thesis.

In discussing the authenticity of The First Part of Ieronimo, which is the last of the revenge plays under consideration, it is necessary to mention that Henslowe has recorded twenty-three performances of the play in his Diary from February 23, 1591, to January 22, 1593. Lord Strange's men were performing the play, entitled "The Comedy of Done Oracio" or "The Comedy of Ieronimo," in almost every case, a day or two before a performance of The Spanish Tragedy. Naturally, we infer that the entries provided evidence of a humorous fore-piece written by Kyd as an introduction to The Spanish Tragedy. We have reason to doubt that the fore-piece survived, since Henslowe makes no further mention of it after June 20, 1592. During 1597, the play gained in popularity, and records of the play reveal only the title "Ieronimo." In 1605, The First Part of Ieronimo is listed in the Stationers' Register to be

20 Frederick S. Boas, op. cit., p. xlvi.
published by Thomas Pavier. This quarto of 1605, because of weighty internal evidence, is assumed to be the work of an anonymous playwright who took advantage of the revival of popularity of *The Spanish Tragedy* in 1602, and manufactured this crude melodrama to dupe theatre-goers for personal gains. In *The Spanish Tragedy* itself, there are several allusions which seem to assume a knowledge in the audience of events prior to the opening of the action. These allusions relate chiefly to the secret love of Andrea and Bel-imperia, and the Duke of Castile's wrath at its discovery. Kyd's induction to *The Spanish Tragedy*, consisting of dialogue between the Ghost of Andrea and Revenge, unquestionably served as the source for the plot of *The First Part of Ieronimo*.

The facts considered above indicate that during the period 1586-1601, the tragedies of revenge, stemming from Senecan works, were popularized. There is much evidence of duplication in the six tragedies of revenge, and with a knowledge of the chronology, sources, and authorships, we are better equipped to attempt to reveal the inter-relationships of the tragedies.

CHAPTER III

INTERRELATIONSHIPS OF SIX TRAGEDIES OF REVENGE

The purpose of this chapter is to determine the extent of usage of the Senecan manner by showing striking resemblances and interesting comparisons within six tragedies of revenge. It is necessary to summarize briefly the plots of the plays under consideration in order that we may clearly see how the dramas merit the title of revenge plays. Opening in orthodox Senecan fashion with the apparition of Andrea’s ghost, accompanied by Revenge, The Spanish Tragedy progresses rapidly through a series of episodes in which we see how Balthasar, during his captivity at the Spanish court, falls in love with Lorenzo’s sister, Bel-imperia, and how she spurns his love and transfers her affections to Horatio, in alliance with whom she hopes to avenge Andrea’s death. Lorenzo favors Balthasar’s suit and is resolved to further it at all hazards. He employs Pedringano to spy upon his sister and her lover. Horatio is seized, hanged on a tree and stabbed before Bel-imperia’s eyes. Her frantic cries for help as the villains whisk her away arouse Hieronimo, who rushes to the bower to find his son shamefully murdered. He dedicates his life to revenge, but resolves to dissemble his grief until he has found the murderers.
Bel-imperia contrives to send Hieronimo a letter written with her own blood, disclosing the assassins’ names. Hieronimo, fearing trickery, inquires about Bel-imperia and arouses the suspicions of Lorenzo, who contrives that Pedringano shall slay Serberine, one of the accomplices, and shall fall into the hands of the watch. After Pedringano has been executed, there is found upon his body a letter from which Hieronimo learns that Lorenzo and Balthasar are, without doubt, guilty of Horatio’s death. This discovery plunges him into frenzied agitation bordering on madness. He is almost helpless in securing revenge against such highly-placed offenders. He affects a feigned reconciliation with Lorenzo to disarm suspicion before he strikes his grand blow. He arranges a dramatic entertainment on the tragic subject of Soliman and Perseda, and so apportions the parts that he can stab Balthasar to death. Bel-imperia stabs Lorenzo and then kills herself. Hieronimo explains to the horror-stricken audience that they have witnessed a real tragedy, and he bites out his tongue to refrain from making a fuller confession. With a penknife, he stabs Lorenzo’s innocent father, and finally crowns the heap of bodies with his own body. In the Epilogue, the ghost of Andrea declares himself appeased, and lifts the curtain of the future to reveal his friends amid heavenly bliss and his enemies amid endless suffering.
Equally as blood-curdling a plot is that of a second revenge play, Titus Andronicus. Returning victoriously from the Gothic wars, Titus Andronicus brings as captives, Tamora, Queen of the Goths, and her three sons. Titus is offered the crown, but he refuses it and accepts Saturninus' proposal to make Lavinia the Empress. Bassianus, younger brother of the Emperor, is in love with Lavinia and abducts her to prevent the marriage. Titus murders one of his own sons who blocks his pursuit of Lavinia. Tamora finds favor in the eyes of the Emperor, and to avenge the death of her son, influences Saturninus to effect a reconciliation with Titus and his sons.

Aaron, the Moorish lover of Tamora, incites Tamora's sons, Demetrius and Chiron, to ravish Lavinia and to ensure her silence by tearing out her tongue and cutting off her hands. Demetrius and Chiron slay Bassianus, satisfy their lust for Lavinia, and pervert the evidence so that Titus' sons, Martius and Quintus, are accused of the murder of Bassianus. Aaron deceitfully brings Titus word that his sons will be freed if he will chop off one of his hands and send it as evidence of his good faith. Titus sacrifices one of his hands to the Emperor, but it is scornfully returned with the heads of his two sons. Despite Lavinia's mutilation, she holds a stick in her mouth, and writes in the sand the names of her offenders. Meanwhile, Tamora gives birth to Aaron's child, and a white baby is
substituted so that Saturninus will be none the wiser. Titus
arranges a Thyestean banquet, before which he slays
Demetrius and Chiron, allows Lavinia to catch the blood
by holding a basin between her two stumps, carves the
bodies, and serves them to Tamora. Titus slays Lavinia
to end her shame, and then stabs Tamora. Saturninus kills
Titus, and Titus' son, Lucius, kills Saturninus. Lucius
is proclaimed the rightful Emperor, and Aaron is condemned
to death by torture.

Following the Senecan model less closely, yet worthy
of praise as a third revenge play is The Jew of Malta with
its Machiavellian setting. We learn that the aftermath
of wars between the men of Malta and the men of Turkey
is hatred. In having to furnish much of the tributes de-
manded by Turkish officials, Barabas is dispossessed and
swears vengeance against all Christians. He takes pride
in countless evil deeds, some of which consist of provok-
ing Mathias, Abigail's lover, and Lodowick, the Governor's
son, to duel to death. Parabas forces his daughter to
enter the convent under false pretenses, so that she may
find bags of gold which are hidden under planks in the
house. When Abigail is released from the convent, after
having been instrumental in restoring the wealth of Barabas,
she soon realizes his ruthless policies, and denounces him.
She enters the convent again, not to serve her father, but
to escape him. Parabas and his accomplice, Ithamore, send
a poisoned pot of porridge to the convent, and all the nuns and even Abigail, his own daughter, meet death. Abigail, before her death, had disclosed to Friar Bernardine all the details of her father's iniquities. When the Jew realizes that his secrets are known, he strangles Friar Bernardine and places the blame on Friar Jacomo, who pays the penalty for an imagined crime. Ithamore, after a drinking bout with Bellamira and Filia-Borza, betrays the Jew, and the two courtesans disclose Parabas' crimes to the Governor before they are killed by odors from poisoned flowers which Parabas displays before them. He feigns death so that he may be free to cause more evil. When Selim Calymath returns to collect the Maltese tribute, Parabas arranges with Fernese, the Governor of Malta, to allow him to welcome the Turkish soldiers to a feast in a monastery which has been mined with explosives. Selim Calymath is to meet his doom when Fernese pulls a cord to open a trap-door in the citadel. Fernese notices that treacherous Barabas is standing directly over the trap-door, and when the cord is released, Parabas falls into a boiling cauldron. Although Selim's life was saved, his soldiers were massacred by the explosion, and Fernese holds Selim prisoner, while he boasts that oceans can be drunk dry before Malta can be conquered.
The fourth tragedy of revenge under consideration is *Hamlet*, which is made up of the desire for revenge on the part of a son for his father. *Hamlet* is called from his studies at Wittenberg to Elsinore by news of his father's death. His sorrow is deepened by his mother's hasty marriage to Claudium, the elder Hamlet's brother. Hamlet's lover, Ophelia, rejects his suit at the insistence of Polonius, her father. Hamlet encounters the ghost of his father, who urges him to avenge his foul and most unnatural death. Hamlet feigns madness to allay suspicions, and plans to present a play before Claudium which contains episodes that closely resemble the actual killing of his father. With the presentation of the play, Hamlet is convinced of Claudium's guilt; however, rather than take chances on sending Claudium's soul to heaven by killing him as he prays, Hamlet waits for a more opportune moment. After Hamlet kills Polonius by mistake, he is sent to England and is accompanied by two of the King's spies, who possess a letter demanding Hamlet's execution upon arrival in England. Hamlet escapes aboard a pirate vessel and returns to Denmark to find Ophelia insane because of her father's death. She drowns, and at her grave, Hamlet and Laertes, Ophelia's brother, quarrel as to which one loved her the most. Claudium turns Laertes' wrath against Hamlet, and the two plot to kill him with a poisoned foil. In a friendly contest before the court, Laertes wounds Hamlet with the poisoned rapier, and in the scuffle they exchange weapons,
which enables Hamlet to wound Laertes fatally. Queen Gertrude drinks a poisoned glass of wine which Claudius had prepared for Hamlet. Before Gertrude and Laertes die, they reveal the villainies of Claudius, whom Hamlet stabs to death. Then he wrests the poisoned cup from his best friend, and begs Horatio to live to clear his name. As Hamlet dies, English ambassadors report the execution of Rosencrants and Guildenstern, and Fortinbras arrives to claim the kingdom and restore order.

Although Soliman and Perseda is an anonymous play, there is no doubt of its classification as a revenge play. It opens with the arguing of Love, Fortune, and Death as to which character has more prominence in the tragic story. Erastus and Perseda swear fidelity to each other by exchanging a ring and a chain. In a tilting tournament Erastus wins honors but loses his chain. Ferdinando finds the chain, which he presents to his lover, Lucina. Perseda thinks Erastus unfaithful, and in trying to recover the chain from Lucina in a dice game, Erastus confronts Ferdinando, is accused of stealing, and kills Ferdinando. Erastus is forced to flee to Turkey to escape the governor's wrath. In the meantime, we are introduced to Soliman, Emperor of Turkey, who is determined to conquer Rhodes. Because Amurath thinks Haleb gave unwise counsel to Soliman, he stabs his brother. Soliman, in turn, kills Amurath for having taken Haleb's life. Erastus finds
Immediate favor in Soliman's eyes because Brusor has praised
Erastus highly as a warrior. Erastus successfully averts
being appointed a general of the Turkish army to subjugate
Rhodes, but Brusor and his soldiers attack Rhodes, kill
Phylippo and Cipris, and capture Guelpio, Iulio, Basilisco,
Perseda, and Lucina. Guelpio and Iulio are stabbed because
they refuse to deny Christ. Basilisco turns Turk, but re-
turns to Christendom, for love of Perseda, and finally meets
death at the hands of Soliman. Soliman favors Perseda and
Brusor favors Lucina; however, Erastus is accused of treason
and is strangled to death. Perseda, wanting revenge for
Erastus' death, kills Lucina because she has aided Brusor
and Soliman in their plans to win Perseda's love for Soliman.
Perseda, disguised in man's apparel, meets Soliman in
single combat and is slain. Soliman meets death because
of a poisoned kiss which Perseda gave him. The play ends
with Death possessing the most important part of the tragedy.

The last of the tragedies of revenge under considera-
tion is also anonymous, and contains only three acts. The
First Part of Ieronimo is the story of revenge sought by
Lorenzo because he was ignored in the appointing of an am-
bassador to Portugal. Andrea was selected to collect
Spain's tribute from Portugal, and Lorenzo plans with
Lazarotto, a discontented courtier, to kill Andrea,
Bellimperia's lover, upon his return. Andrea, instead of
peacefully collecting the tribute, incites the Portuguese
to war. Lorenzo urges Alcario, son of Duke Medina, to disguise himself as Andrea, and wed Bellimperia. Lazarotto kills Alcario when he mistakes him for Andrea. Horatio does not realize that it is not Andrea who is slain, and dedicates his life to revenge. When the Spaniards and Portuguese fight, Andrea is killed. Horatio takes up Andrea's fight with Prince Balthazar, and makes him his prisoner. Lorenzo seizes Balthazar's weapon and also claims him as his prisoner. Lorenzo intends to choose for his sister a second love, who will be Balthazar. The ghost returns to Horatio as assurance that Andrea's death is avenged, and Spain's victory is assured. Horatio's diminutive father, Ieronimo, highly praises his son for his valorous deeds.

From the foregoing summaries of six of the tragedies of revenge, we have a glimpse of the interdependence of the authors. I propose to analyze in detail the closely related plays and bring to light analogies and comparisons which will serve to cement the tragedies of revenge to one another and to Senecan origins.

Immediately obvious is the fact that all the revenge plays contain parallel orgies of bloodshed. The First Part of Ieronimo, in comparison with so gory a tragedy as The Spanish Tragedy, becomes farcical in nature; however, there are sufficient amounts of bloodshed wrought by the desires of revenge-seekers in The First Part to warrant
its being linked with Senecan tragedies. Lazarotto mistakes Alcario for Andrea and kills him; Lorenzo kills Don Pedro; Alejandro kills Roger; the Portuguese Soldiers kill Andrea. In only three acts, the anonymous playwright of The First Part has his principal figures to meet death, and his vocabulary of such words as "blood," "bloody streames," and "crimson rivers" is used more extensively than such words are used in The Spanish Tragedy, which has such scenes of blood-letting that references to singular words of blood are unnecessary. (In The Spanish Tragedy there are five murders, two executions, and one death from dueling.) Gory episodes which suggest lust after the horrible are inserted near the end of the tragedy. Hieronimo bites off his tongue and murders an innocent man. In this tragedy the Ghost of Andrea prolongs a note of savagery in saying:

... though death hath end their miserie, Ile there begin their endless Tragedie.  

In the conclusion of The First Part of Ieronimo, the Ghost of Andrea appears to assure Horatio that he is a happy ghost and that his death has been avenged.

Titus Andronicus exceeds the other five tragedies of revenge in bloodshed. There are fifteen executions and murders; Lavinia is dishonored, her tongue is cut out, and her hands are severed; Titus sacrifices one of his hands

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to redeem the lives of his sons, whose decapitated heads are thrown at his feet; he slits the throats of Lavinia's ravishers, while she holds a basin to catch their blood; and the atrocities reach the zenith when at a banquet, Tamora feeds upon her own sons.

More highly polished than usual Senecan models is *Hamlet*, containing nine murders and deaths brought about by stabbing and poisoning. Before meeting his own death from an envenomed sword, Hamlet slays Polonius, Laertes, and King Claudius, who in turn has murdered the elder Hamlet and Gertrude. In changing some orders of execution, Hamlet sends Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to death. Ophelia's death by drowning was the result of insanity. *Hamlet* is developed into a complex dramatic structure interestingly analogous to *The Spanish Tragedy*. Numerous parallels will be revealed in a later portion of this chapter.

Marlowe, in *The Jew of Malta*, is not less capable than any other author of the revenge plays under consideration, in presenting outrageous and gory episodes to be woven as threads into his basic plot of revenge. Marlowe gives seven known murders in the tragedy and lists countless others. Barabas provokes a duel to death between Mathias and Lodowick; poisons Abigail, Ithamore, Pilia-Borsa, and Bellamira, strangles Friar Bernardine, and arranges for the deaths of all the nuns in Bernardine's
Convent, in addition to the deaths of those soldiers who accompanied Selim Calymath to Malta. Parabas is allowed to commit all these atrocities before he becomes a victim of his own plotting by falling into a boiling cauldron which he had intended for Selim's sepulcher.

Rated next to Titus Andronicus in numerical order of deaths is the anonymous play, Soliman and Peraeda, with thirteen murders. Erastus is forced to kill Fernando in order to retrieve his love chain given by Peraeda; Amurath kills his brother, Maleb, and Soliman begins his wholesale slaughter with the death of his brother, Amurath. At the bands of Soliman, Phylippo, Cipris, Guelpio, Iulio, Basiliaco, Piston, Erastus, Peraeda, and Brusur meet death. Peraeda stabs Lucina and brings death to Soliman in the form of a poisoned kiss. When Soliman sends his faithful henchman, Brusur, to the block, there is almost a repetition of the orgy of bloodshed that ends The SpanishTragedy, where Hieronimo extends his vengeance to an old friend, the innocent Duke of Castile.

In addition to the basic motives of revenge and the orgies of bloodshed, a third Senecan element, the use of the supernatural, must be discussed. Andrea, in The Spanish Tragedy, returns from an oddly classical Hell which he describes completely:

Through dreadful shades of ever glooming night,
I saw more sights than thousand tongues can tell,
After studying Andrea's entire speech, and reviewing the mythological names of the underworld, we are reminded of the ghost of Tantalus, in Seneca's Thyestes, who, with Revenge, watches the events of the play, and comments upon proceedings at the end of each act. Andrea's part is not an active one; it is rather that of an on-looker than an actual participant in the tragedy. An active part is assumed by the ghost of the elder Hamlet in Shakespeare's Hamlet. From the speeches of Marcellus, Bernardo, and Horatio, we visualize an actual specter. When finally the ghost talks to Hamlet, he suggests a different underworld from that portrayed by Andrea:

But that I am forbid
To tell the secrets of my prison-house,
I could a tale unfold whose lightest word
Would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy young blood,
Make thy two eyes, like stars, start from their spheres,
Thy knotted and combined locks to part
And each particular hair to stand an end,
Like quills upon the fretful portentine:
But this eternal blazon must not be
To ears of flesh and blood.

When Hamlet demands absolute secrecy of Horatio and Marcellus concerning their sight of the ghost, the undertones of "Swear" from the elder Hamlet are chilling reminders of

an actual participant in the tragedy who cannot rest until his foul and unnatural murder has been avenged.

In *Titus Andronicus*, no use of the ghost is employed; however, Titus appeals to the gods for justice in appeasement of wrongs rendered him. He shoots arrows bearing messages to Pluto, Jove, Apollo, Mars, Mercury, and Saturn. Titus feels that justice has fled the earth and that she must be sought for underground:

'Tis you must dig with mattock and with spade,  
And pierce the immost center of the earth.  

With these lines may be compared the passage where Hieronimo shares the conviction that justice does not dwell on earth:

Though on this earth justice will not be found,  
Ile down to hell, and in this passion  
Knock at the dismal gates of Plutos court.

The *Jew of Malta* has no ghost as a participant in the subsequent tragedy, or as an on-looker; however, Marlowe uses the supernatural to produce a Machiavellian setting. Machiavel vows:

I count religion but a childish toy,  
And hold there is no sin but ignorance.

When we become acquainted with the character of Barabas, we are convinced that he is imbued with the Machiavellian spirit.

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5The *Spanish Tragedy*, III, xiii, 107-109.  
Soliman and Perseda introduces a chorus of allegorical figures, Fortune, Love, and Death, to argue at the end of each act, like the Ghost of Andrea and Revenge in The Spanish Tragedy; however, Andrea is not so jubilant in counting the numbers of deaths as is Death at the conclusion of Soliman and Perseda. Because Andrea had expected to see Balthasar slain, instead of his friend, Horatio, Revenge speaks:

Be still; and ere I lead thee from this place;
I'll shew thee Balthazar in heavy case.

Certainly Revenge executes all of Andrea's desires for revenge, and at the conclusion of The Spanish Tragedy, Revenge carries further Andrea's wishes in saying:

Then haste we downe to meet thy friends and foes:
To place thy friends in ease, the rest in woes.  

Death, in Soliman and Perseda, triumphs over Love and Fortune and concludes in eerie fashion:

I, now will Death, in his most haughtie pride,
Fetch his imperiall Carre from deepest hell,
And ride in triumph through the wicked world.

The anonymous author of The First Part of Ieronimo does not introduce a ghost until the conclusion of the tragedy. Suggestive of the presence of a future ghost is the dialogue between Lorenzo and Lazarotto:

Lor. Come then, how ere it hap, Andrea shall be crost.

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7The Spanish Tragedy, II, vi, 10-11.
8Ibid., IV, v, 45-46.
9Soliman and Perseda (author unknown), V, v, 34-36.
Let me alone; I will turn him to a ghost.10

At the conclusion of this tragedy, when the call is made for a boat to transport the souls to bliss or condemnation, Andrea's ghost, by signs, rather than by oral procedure, shows Horatio that his death has been avenged, and that the passage to rest cannot be blocked.

The foregoing discussion shows us the inevitable dependence of the tragedies upon Senecan plays. To establish further the interrelations of the revenge plays, it is interesting to see what direct parallels may be drawn from the works of Kyd, Marlowe, and Shakespeare. Aaron and Barabas have parallel speeches in which they gloat over ruthless crimes. Aaron, when asked by Lucius whether he is sorry for committing heinous deeds, declares:

Ay, that I had not done a thousand more.
Even now, I curse the day . . .
Wherein I did not some notorious ill;
As kill a man or else devise his death;
Ravish a maid, or plot the way to do it;
Accuse some innocent, and forswear myself;
Set deadly enmity between two friends;
Make poor men's cattle break their necks;
Set fire on barns and hay-stacks in the night,
And bid the owners quench them with tears.
. . . And nothing grieves me heartily indeed,
But that I cannot do ten thousand more.11

When Aaron has received his sentence to death by starvation, his reaction is as follows:

I am no baby, I, that with base prayers

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10The First Part of Ieronimo (author unknown), I, iii, 71-72.
11Titus Andronicus, V, i, 124-144.
I should repent the evils I have done:
Ten thousand worse than ever yet I did
Would I perform, if I might have my will!
If one good deed in all my life I did,
I do repent it from my very soul. 12

Corresponding with Aaron’s catalogue of atrocities is
Parabas’ list:

As for myself, I walk abroad at nights
And kill sick people groaning under walls:
Sometimes I go about and poison wells . . . 13

Parabas continues his boasts of villainies, such as en-
riching priests with burials, digging graves and ringing
dead men’s knells, slaying friend and foe in the guise of
soldier, being a usurer, filling jails with bankrupts, and
driving men to hang themselves. When Parabas realizes
that he is to die in the boiling cauldron, his words almost
parallel those of Aaron:

Then, Parabas, breathe forth, thy latest hate,
And in the fury of thy torments strive
To end thy life with resolution . . .
Die life, fly soul, tongue curse thy fill, and die. 14

Both Shakespeare and Kyd use feigned reconciliation
scenes. Tamora, filled with hypocrisy, urges Saturninus
to befriend Titus in the following statement:

Come, come, sweet emperor, come, Andronicus.
Take up this good old man and cheer the heart
That dies in tempest of thy angry frown. 15

12Ibid., V, i, 185-190.
13The Jew of Malta, II, i, 177-179.
14Ibid., V, v, 82-93.
15Titus Andronicus, I, i, 456-458.
Castile suggests a similarly hypocritical scene in *The Spanish Tragedy* between Hieronimo and Lorenzo:

But here, before Prince Balthazar and me,
Embrace each other and be perfect friends. 16

Claudius in *Hamlet* plots with Laertes to render Hamlet's death blow, and tries to pretend that the fencing is but a sport between brothers. Immediately after the reconciliation scene in *Titus Andronicus*, Titus arranges a hunt in honor of Saturninus' marriage, which reminds us of the scene in *The Spanish Tragedy* in which Hieronimo arranges to entertain the King and the Portuguese Ambassador with a masque. Equally as hypocritical a scene is in *The Jew of Malta* when Barabas plans with Fernese to have a feast for Selim Calymath and his soldiers preceding their massacres.

We are immediately impressed by the lack of pity which one character has for another. In *Titus Andronicus*, although Aaron's refusal to repent for his crimes does not compel sympathy, Lucius sentences Aaron to death by torture:

Set him breast-deep in earth, and famish him;  
There let him stand and rave and cry for food;  
If any one relieves or pities him,  
For the offence he dies. 17

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16 *The Spanish Tragedy*, III, xiv, 154-155.  
17 *Titus Andronicus*, V, iii, 179-182.
Lucius, in his sentencing Tamora, justifies his lack of pity:

As for that heinous tiger, Tamora,
No funeral rite, nor man in mourning weeds,
No mournfull bell shall ring her burial;
But throw her forth to beasts and birds of prey:
Her life was beastly and devoid of pity,
And, being so, shall have like want of pity. 18

When Barabas' body is brought before the Governor, after Barabas has feigned death by poisoning, the Governor orders:

For the Jew's body, throw that over the walls
To be a prey for vultures and wild beasts. 19

The Ghost of Andrea shows a lack of pity for his foes as evidenced by the following request made of Revenge:

Let me be judge and doome them to unrest.
Let loose poore Titius from the Vultures gripe,
And let Don Cipriano supply his roome. 20

Andrea is eager to place his friends in ease, his enemies in woes. The Governor of Malta has no pity for Barabas in the speech:

Should I in pity of thy plaints or thee,
Accursed Barabas, base Jew, relent?
No, thus I'll see thy treachery repaid,
But wish thou hadst behaved thee otherwise. 21

Many interesting parallels in phraseology found in the works of Kyd, Marlowe, and Shakespeare, serve as evidence

18Ibid., V, iii, 195-200.
19The Jew of Malta, V, i, 59-60.
20The Spanish Tragedy, IV, v, 31-32.
21The Jew of Malta, V, v, 75-78.
of the three authors' dependence upon one another. Statements concerning limitless bounds of love are found in

The Spanish Tragedy and in two of Shakespeare's tragedies:

Andrea. On whom I doted more than all the world,
Because she [Bel-imperia] loved me more than all the world. 22

Chiron. I care not, I knew she and all the world:
I love Lavinia more than all the world. 23

Hamlet. I loved Ophelia: forty thousand brothers,
Could not, with all their quantity of love,
Make up my sum. 24

When, in The Spanish Tragedy, Hieronimo is digging in
the earth to find the body of his son to exhibit, he cries:

Away, Ile rip the bowels of the earth. 25

A similar passage is included in The Jew of Malta:

... Ripping the bowels of the earth for them. 26

Hieronimo and Aaron have similar speeches consisting of
a play upon words:

Hier. Thus therefore will I rest me in unrest
Dissembling quiet in unquietness. 27

Aaron. But let her [Tamora] rest in her unrest awhile. 28

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22 The Spanish Tragedy, II, vi, 5-6.
23 Titus Andronicus, II, i, 71-72.
24 Hamlet, V, i, 267-269.
25 The Spanish Tragedy, III, xii, 71.
26 The Jew of Malta, I, i, 112.
27 The Spanish Tragedy, III, xii, 29-30.
28 Titus Andronicus, IV, ii, 31.
Titus and Hieronimo give expression of their mourning for
daughter and son respectively:

**Titus.** Then must my sea be moved with her sighs,
Then must my earth with her continual tears
Become a deluge, overflowed and drowned. [29]

**Hier.** For me amidst these darke and deathfull
shades,
To drown thee with an ocean of my teares. [30]

When Chiron and Demetrius murder Pessianus and drag off
his bride, Lavinia, Chiron interrupts Lavinia's protests
with:

**Nay, then I'll stop your mouth.** [31]

When Lorenzo and Balthazar murder Horatio in the bower
and drag off his mistress, Lorenzo stops Bel-imperia's
protests with the following words:

**Come, stop her mouth; away with her.** [32]

There are many parallel episodes in The Spanish
Tragedy and Soliman and Perseda which lead us to believe
that Kyd introduced the play-within-the-play in The
Spanish Tragedy and later worked out a longer play,
Soliman and Perseda. In the latter play, the action is
shifted abruptly from Constantinople to Rhodes at regular
intervals; Kyd uses the same technique in shifting action
from Portugal to Spain. When Soliman kills his brother

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[29]Ibid., III, i, 228-230.
[31]Titus Andronicus, II, iii, 185.
Amurath for having slain Haleb, we are reminded of the scene in The Spanish Tragedy in which the Viceroy appears between two lords, one of whom, by a charge of treachery, nearly brings the other to his doom. This scene is followed by the first tender interview between Horatio and Bel-imperis, and in Soliman and Perseda, after the quarrel between the brothers of Soliman, Fernando and Lucina exchange words of love. Fernando greets Lucina thus:

As fits the time, so now well fits the place
To cool affection with our words and looks,
If in our thoughts be semblant sympathie.\(^{33}\)

Horatio has a similar speech to his mistress:

Now, Madame, since by favor of your love
Our hidden smoke is turned to open flame,
And that with looks and words we feed our thoughts...\(^{34}\)

The episode in Soliman and Perseda where Perseda is doomed to execution and delivered on the very stroke of death has a counterpart in The Spanish Tragedy, where Alexandro similarly makes ready for his death, and is saved as if by a miracle. Alexandro's condemnation on a false charge is paralleled by the arraignment of Erastus on perjured evidence.

The Spanish Tragedy and The First Part of Ieronimo contain identical names in the dramatis personae; however,

\(^{33}\) Soliman and Perseda, II, i, 1-3.

\(^{34}\) The Spanish Tragedy, II, ii, 1-3.
the characters have nothing in common but their names. The First Part of Ieronimo is a medley of farce and melodrama in comparison with The Spanish Tragedy. The revenge motif is present in The First Part of Ieronimo; yet Lorenzo is provoked because he failed to receive a political appointment. This hardly suffices for the motivation of revenge when we consider the other tragedies which have impelling motives for securing revenge.

Yielding in popularity only to The Spanish Tragedy is the truly Senecan play, Titus Andronicus, which bears close resemblance to Thyestes. The valley where Bassianus is murdered is not unlike the scene of Atreus' slaughter of Thyestes' sons, and the Senecan indebtedness of the last scene where Tamora is treated to a Thyestean banquet in which her own son's flesh is baked is unquestionable.

From the foregoing parallelisms, we can more clearly see the interdependence of Kyd, Marlowe, and Shakespeare. Of much interest would be a survey of the manner in which the writers created unforgettable characters. In attempting to analyze the character portrayals, we shall see how the characters employed certain dramatic devices to further their individual plans. We shall consider the principal figures of The Spanish Tragedy, Titus Andronicus, and Hamlet because the revenge-seekers have a greater tenacity of purpose than have the heroes of The Jew of Malta, Soliman and Perseda, and The First Part of Ieronimo.
Kyd uses the desire for power and for a woman as motives which necessitate revenge on the part of Hieronimo for his son, Horatio. Shakespeare furnishes Titus with the desire for revenge for multiple injustices he has endured. Hamlet seeks revenge for the death of his father. Hieronimo has no prominent part in The Spanish Tragedy until, after his discovery of his son's body waving in the wind, he dedicates his life to securing revenge.

These few lines reveal his determination:

I, heaven will be revenged of every ill;  
Nor will they suffer murder unpaid.  
Then stay, Hieronimo, attend their will;  
For mortall men may not appoint their time.  

Hamlet's indecision to act is well expressed in his soliloquy, after the ghost of the elder Hamlet informs him of Claudius' guilt:

... To die: to sleep;  
No more; and by a sleep to say we end  
The heart-ache, and the thousand natural shocks  
That flesh is heir to, 'tis a consummation  
Devoutly to be wish'd. ...  
And makes us rather bear those ills we have  
Than fly to others that we know not of.  
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all,  
And thus the native hue of resolution  
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought.

Hamlet delays in killing Claudius because he is not wholly convinced that the ghost is not a devil sent to thwart further his perverted mind. When Hamlet decides to have

35 The Spanish Tragedy, III, xiii, 1-4.  
36 Hamlet, III, i, 59-65.
a group of players re-enact Claudius' crime in "The Murder of Gonzago," we agree with his prefatory remarks:

... The plays the thing
Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king. 37

Hamlet uses the play-within-the-play to produce conclusive evidence of Claudius' guilt; yet, further irresoluteness is shown when Hamlet finds Claudius praying. Hamlet refuses to kill Claudius and rationalizes thus:

Up, sword, and know thou a more horrid hent;
When he is drunk asleep, or in his rage,
Or in the incestuous pleasure of his bed;
At game, a-swearing, or about some act
That has no relish of salvation in't;
Then trip him, that his heels may kick at heaven
And that his soul may be as damn'd and black
As hell, whereeto it goes.

Hamlet's delay is due to inner conflict; Hieronimo's delay is due to external problems. Hieronimo is handicapped at first by not knowing who has murdered his son. When Bel-imperia sends him a letter, penned in her blood, naming Lorenzo and Balthasar, Hieronimo refuses to accept the letter as proof of their guilt. Hieronimo, after being convinced of their guilt, delays because of his age and inferior social position. Hieronimo also uses a play as a device for gaining revenge; however, whereas Hamlet wanted to use the play in order that he might watch Claudius' reactions, Hieronimo doles out the parts of his

37 Ibid., II, II, 602-603.
38 Hamlet, III, iii, 43-50.
play, "Soliman and Perseda," so that actual murders may be performed under color of stage business. Kyd portrays Hieronimo as an old man, and his frenzied outbursts make us realize that his madness is not feigned. Unlike Hieronimo, Hamlet assumes an "antic disposition" in order that he may allay suspicions. Hamlet cannot be a happy character; his retrospection prevents mirth. We see the true Hamlet when he is alone. His obvious brutality toward Ophelia is overlooked when we read of Hamlet's remorsefully passionate outbursts at Ophelia's grave. His brutality toward Gertrude causes no lack of sympathy for him. Hamlet was shrewdly intelligent, cruelly kind, and resolutely irresolute.

Titus Andronicus commands our sympathy from his first stage entrance. We are aware of the acclamations he receives for being a victorious general; however, he mourns the death of his twenty-one slain sons. We admire Titus' blind loyalty to Saturninus, but hardly are we in sympathy with a father who kills his own son, who has tried to interfere with Titus' loyalty, and we cannot sympathize with a man who takes his daughter's life so that her shame might die with her. Titus never loses sight of his desire for vengeance because innumerable sufferings are inflicted upon him. Titus assumes madness so that a delay in securing revenge is hardly noticed. The injustices piled upon Titus have not enough lapse of time between them for a delay in action to be distracting to the reader.
Equally as outstanding characters are the villains in the three plays. In The Spanish Tragedy Lorenzo's character is developed with unerring consistency from the moment he assures Balthazar that he can win Bel-imperia's love. Lorenzo gives voice to his thoughts with the following statement:

"I have already found a stratageme To sound the bottom of this doubtfull theme." 39

In his interview with Pedrignano, Lorenzo shows his determination to force the servant to betray Bel-imperia's confidence. He is the villain "par excellence," and his character is the embodiment of hypocrisy, cynicism, cruelty, and lack of human sympathies. Aaron, in Titus Andronicus, and Barabas, in The Jew of Malta, are typical villains. A catalogue of their atrocities and parallel speeches showing their refusals to repent for their crimes have been listed in an earlier part of this chapter. We are aware of the fact that Aaron, Barabas, and Lorenzo let no person or thing stand in the way of their evil-doings.

Claudius, in Hamlet, has a character with some redemption. His soul is not so black as those of Aaron and Barabas. After Claudius knows that Hamlet is aware of his guilt when "The Murder of Gonzago" is staged, Claudius escapes to his room to pray for atonement of his sins.

39 The Spanish Tragedy, II, 1, 35-36.
He realizes the futility of "words without thoughts" and determines to get Hamlet out of the way. His plans to have Hamlet executed upon arrival in England go awry, and because he plots with Laertes to kill Hamlet with a poisoned rapier, we feel that he is reluctant to perform the murder himself. No one of the afore-mentioned villains would have shown any hesitancy in committing a murder.

Lorenzo, in The First Part of Arsenio, is far from being the typical aristocratic villain. He stoops to undignified jocularity with Lazarotto, his accomplice. Lorenzo's childish suggestion to Alcaro that he win Bellimperia's love by disguising himself in "a suit just of Andrea's cutlers" gives no hint of premeditated evil-doings. Lorenzo does flaunt his hypocrisy when he refuses to attempt to save Lazarotto's life.

Much of a barbarous nature is revealed in Soliman's character in Soliman and Perseda. Victim after victim, beginning with his own brother, falls by his order or by his hand. We see a villain of homicidal fury who, because of his royal position, does not have to use any methods of evil thinking to commit crimes.

In the six tragedies of revenge under discussion, as well as in the Senecan tragedies described in the first chapter, the heroines occupy a position which is inferior to that of the heroes. In The Spanish Tragedy Bell-imperia possesses masculine strength of will and intellect. She
successfully parries Balthazar's words of love and completely abandons her haughty reserve when she allies herself with Horatio to avenge Andrea's death. In The First Part of Ieronimo Bellimperia is a sentimental, vacillating creature with no prominent speeches to build her reputation as a self-reliant heroine. Abigail in The Jew of Malta is much like Bellimperia of The First Part of Ieronimo. Abigail could also parallel Ophelia's character in Hamlet in that both girls submit willingly to parental wishes. Perseda resembles Bel-imperia of The Spanish Tragedy in her powers of repartee and in her self-reliance. Perseda's determination to avenge the death of Erastus never falters. Lavinia, in Titus Andronicus, is less carefully drawn than any of the other heroines; she is outstandingly absurd, and possesses no part of desperate revengefulness. The role of Tamora in this play is more prominent than that of Lavinia. Tamora leaves no strong impression until she initiates her scheme of revenge by sanctioning the outrages of Demetrius and Chiron against Lavinia. Throughout the rest of the tragedy, Tamora impresses us with her villainous ideas and hypocritical manners.

In a discussion of some of the characters, it is necessary to describe the clowns. In the tragedies of revenge, we find the use of comic relief, whereas in Senecan plays, there is no device for relieving tension.
The *Spanish Tragedy* contains almost an independent little comedy in the grimly jocular episode of the trial and execution of Pedringano. The Boy, who carries an empty box, supposedly containing Pedringano's pardon, and the Hangman are subordinate figures in the comedy. In *Soliman and Perseda*, Piston, like Pedringano, is the servant of one of the principal figures, and is truly a witty character. Shakespeare, in *Hamlet*, uses the grave-digging scene as comic relief. The two clowns, with spades, jest at their task of digging Ophelia's grave. Throughout *The First Part of Hieronimo* there is a comic under-plot. Lazarotto humorously points out that his name suggests that his body is "rotting in this lazy age." The principal figure, Hieronimo, sinks into buffoonery in every scene where he appears. Neither *Titus Andronicus* nor *The Jew of Malta* has comic characters.

From the foregoing discussion of similarities in plots of the tragedies under discussion, we realize how they fall into the category of revenge plays. Each tragedy has its principal character seeking revenge. The methods for attaining striking yet grotesque situations bear a distinct relation to those of Seneca. The authors of the tragedies of revenge followed Seneca's precedent for having horror piled on horror until in each conclusion, all the leading characters met death. In reviewing analogies and comparisons of parallel episodes and stock Senecan
characters, we easily recognize the interrelationships of the plays, and the mutual dependence of the authors upon one another and upon their predecessor, Lucius Seneca.
CHAPTER IV

DRAMATIC AND STYLISTIC DEVICES
IN THE REVENGE PLAYS

The preceding chapters have attempted to trace the relationships of the revenge plays to their sources, and to indicate some interrelationships among the plays themselves. The purpose of this chapter is to present several dramatic and stylistic devices of the tragedies of revenge, and to trace the line of descent of the plays from Seneca to the Elizabethans.

Prefacing a discussion of the dramatic devices, a brief sketch of the significance of the chorus in Greek tragedy is necessary, because from the Greek chorus stem the Senecan chorus and the Elizabethan dumb-show. The tradition of the ancients has it that Thespis was the first to present an actor opposite the chorus. In the interval while his dancers rested, Thespis came forward and declaimed to the audience himself.¹ He was not limited to monologue; he could engage in conversation with the leader of his chorus. Greek drama passed swiftly from the domain of religion to that of art. Throughout

¹F. L. Lucas, Senecan and Elizabethan Tragedy, p. 8.
the history of tragic drama, we see gradual extinction of the Tragic Chorus, because the actors dominated and evicted the descendants of the rustic dancers. Euripides was the first to make the chorus sing lyrics irrelevant to the immediate action.\(^2\) Because religious convention forced him to make use of the chorus in his modernist drama, Euripides converted the members from an acting to an orchestral part, providing musical interludes between parts. The chorus was an inheritance from the past of what had once been the most important element in the drama. In the plays of Euripides, we do not find such long choral passages as are usual in Aeschylus, a second predecessor of Seneca, but Euripides never forgot that there must always be fifteen persons on the stage who were aware of all of the action. The members of the chorus were usually friends or servants of the hero or heroine. Frequently, their connection with the plot was intimate, as in the \textit{Pacchae} or the \textit{Suppliants}; however, the connection is less close in the \textit{Phoenissae} or the \textit{Andromache}. Occasionally the regular choral songs were dissociated from their context, but more frequently the subject of the song was comment on the past, or speculation.

\(^{2}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 10.$
as to the future of the leading characters, or of the members of the chorus themselves. ³

In Seneca's tragedies, we find the chorus used for the furtherance of rhetorical effects, and the de-dramatization of the chorus is a striking feature of his tragedies. The function of the chorus became mechanical, that of announcing persons on entering, questioning messengers, or interrupting a lament. Even in its exercise of such mechanical functions, the chorus at times appears ignorant of what has taken place in the course of the play. Several episodes in Seneca's plays show that the chorus was invariably absent during the progress of the action. ⁴

In Thyestes, the Chorus celebrates the reconciliation of Atreus and Thyestes, and rejoices over the power of love between brothers, although the preceding scenes expose the plot of Atreus' crime, making reconciliation and brotherly love impossible. In a later episode of Thyestes, the Chorus asks the reason for the unnatural darkness, although the explanation has been given by the Messenger who described the murder of Thyestes' children. In Troas, after a detailed announcement has been made of the appearance of Achilles' shade, the Chorus concludes that there is no such thing as existence after death. Such

³ William N. Bates, Euripides, pp. 33-34.
⁴ Howard V. Canter, Rhetorical Elements in the Tragedies of Seneca, p. 33.
relations as Seneca's chorus bear to the dramatic action are regularly found at the beginning and conclusion of each of his five acts. Seneca uses a chorus to review preceding events and to anticipate future action. In analyzing the introductory and concluding remarks of the chorus, we find that they abound in detailed description of all kinds, expanded enumeration and characterization of persons, things, and places, and in recitation of material composed of a moral and philosophical character. For his philosophizing, Seneca finds fruitful sources in such subjects as death, fortune, fate, social position, power, emotions, and beauty.

From Seneca, Norton and Sackville made beginnings which were to be developed into the peculiar merits of Elizabethan tragedy. In Gorboduc, the authors retained a chorus composed of four ancient and sage men of Brittany to review each act, with the exception of Act V. The authors replaced the Senecan introductory chorus with a far more dramatic device, the dumb show, which is discussed later in this chapter. The chorus of Norton and Sackville was comparable to that of Seneca, particularly in the restatement of previous action, and in the declamatory moralizing. The chorus of Gorboduc was not anticipatory of coming events as was Seneca's chorus; Norton and Sackville made their Nuntius foreshadow ensuing events.
Thomas Hughes adheres to the established tradition of the chorus, four in number, in *The Misfortunes of Arthur*. His chorus is both retrospective and anticipatory in character, and in Act V, Hughes introduces the innovation of the chorus in dialogue with Arthur and Cador, Duke of Cornwall. Like Norton and Sackville, Hughes employs the Numtius to herald events.

To perform the function of the Tragic Chorus, Thomas Kyd employs the Ghost of Andrea and Revenge to establish the setting for *The Spanish Tragedy*. At the end of each of the four acts, Andrea and Revenge take stock of the number of deaths necessary for the avenging of Andrea's death, predict an additional number of forebodings, and at the conclusion of the tragedy, the dialogue is delivered gleefully because Revenge has made possible the assured bliss for Andrea's soul.

Much like the part of Andrea and Revenge in *The Spanish Tragedy* is the role of the Chorus, consisting of the allegorical figures of Fortune, Love, and Death, in the anonymous play, *Soliman and Perseda*. The three members of the Chorus open the tragedy with an argument as to the preëminence of each member to serve as chorus in the tragic story. At the close of each act, the question of preëminence is still debatable; however, in the conclusion of *Soliman and Perseda*, Death triumphs as the most important member of the Chorus.
In The First Part of Ieronimo, the anonymous author has three members for his Chorus, Andrea's Ghost, Revenge, and Charon, although the three members do not appear until the third and last act. The Chorus has only a slight connection with the context of the tragedy. Revenge allows Andrea to show by actions that he is pleased with Horatio's avenging methods. Charon has only one speech which is worthy of mention:

Indeed'tis such a time, the truth to tell, I never want a fare to passe to hell. 5

In Titus Andronicus, we see no use of the chorus as found in Seneca; however, when Tamora disguises herself and goes with her two sons to visit Titus, she attempts to convince him that she is Revenge accompanied by Rapine and Murder. Her dialogue with Titus is much like that of Revenge and Andrea in The Spanish Tragedy, yet we cannot say that the role is that of a chorus because it is a feigned role, and in the preceding plays under discussion, the chorus has been a part of the dramatis personae.

A second dramatic device used by the writers of revenge plays is the innovation of the dumb show. In Seneca's tragedies there is no evidence of a dumb show; its ellipsis was due to Seneca's invariable use of the chorus and the messenger for necessary explanation of the transience and recurrence of events. In Corbodius, the earliest English

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5 The First Part of Ieronimo, III, iii, 26-27.
tragedy molded in Senecan form, we have the dumb show before each act. The dumb shows replace the anticipatory chorus of Seneca, and set forth the incidents of each act in pantomime. The dumb show preceding Act I of Gorboduc will serve as an example:

First the musicke of Violence began to play, during which came in upon the stage sixe wilde men clothed in leaves. Of whom the first bare in his necke a fagot of small stickes, which they all both severally and together assayed with all their strengths to breake, but it could not be broken by them. At the length one of them plucked out one of the stickes and brake it: And the rest plucking out all of the other stickes one after another did easily brake them, the same being severed: which being conjoined they had before attempted in vaine. After they had this done, they departed the stage, and the Musick ceased.

This action signified that a unified state can continue against all force, but being divided, a state is easily destroyed. The dumb show was nothing more than a prefatory pantomime, briefing the audience upon the fact that King Gorboduc had divided his kingdom between his two sons, Ferrex and Porrex, and it predicted the dissension which would be inevitable between the two brothers. Before each of the dumb shows in Gorboduc, it is interesting to note that music of some origin is sounded. With the absence of a choral interlude, as was evident in the tragedies of Euripides and Seneca, perhaps Norton and Sackville included musical chords to prevent a complete abandonment of the chorus.

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6 Gorboduc, Dumb Show, 1-10.
In The Misfortunes of Arthur, the elaborate dumb shows prepared by Francis Bacon and other members of Gray's Inn formed the most important feature of the tragedy. Preceding each act is a dumb show which makes use of characters and stage decoration to form five additional shows. Hughes has the three Furies in his first dumb show bearing snakes, cups of wine, firebrands, and whips to signify the banquet and death of Arthur, and the hatred, cruelty, and ambition necessary for the continuity of the tragedy. Hughes' next three dumb shows bring out the magnificence of costuming, but they do not measure up to the splendor of the fifth dumb show. After the music has sounded, four men in black appear with articles in one hand symbolizing the unfortunate victories of Arthur, and with targets in the other hand which were ornately depicting the struggles for victory. After the four men in black, followed a King in black attire and his page, bearing a target on which was portrayed a pelican pecking her blood to feed her young. The three striking colors, black, gold, and red, are predominant in all of Hughes' dumb shows.

Less striking than the dumb shows of Corboduc and The Misfortunes of Arthur is the masque given by Hieronimo in The Spanish Tragedy. Hieronimo has promised to

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7 John W. Gunliffe, editor, Early English Classical Tragedies, p. 90.
entertain the King and Ambassador with some form of jest at a banquet. He enters with a drum, three knights, and three kings. The knights take the kings' crowns. The King of Spain is pleased with the short masque; however, there is not enough symbolism in the dumb show for the King to understand its meaning. Kyd effectively allows Hieronimo to explain fully the meaning of the show. The three knights represented Robert, Earl of Gloucester, Edmund, Earl of Kent, and John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, who had in turn conquered Spain. The ambassador was to assume from the presentation of the dumb show that Spain would not gloat over conquering Portugal, since she had known defeat at the hands of English warriors.

Shakespeare uses the dumb show in Hamlet to precede his play-within-the-play. After the hautboys play, a King and a Queen enter lovingly. The King lies down to sleep, and the Queen leaves him. Soon a third person enters, takes the King's crown, kisses it, pours poison in the King's ears, and departs. When the Queen finds the King's body, she laments, and is consoled by the Poisoner who woos her with gifts and wins her love. It is interesting to note that Ophelia asks the meaning of the dumb show in the same manner that the King of Spain asked Hieronimo in The Spanish Tragedy. Unlike Kyd, however, Shakespeare does not let his principal character give the meaning of the dumb show, since the Players enter immediately.
A third dramatic device used by Kyd and Shakespeare is the play-within-the-play. Obviously this device was an example of Kyd's dramatic genius, since there are no such devices occurring in earlier tragedies of revenge. Kyd used his play-within-the-play to the extent of aiding Hieronimo to secure complete revenge before the spectators. Shakespeare uses his device to enable Hamlet to be convinced of the veracity of the elder Hamlet's speech. Hamlet's play-within-the-play was "The Murder of Gonzago" with a plot identical with the murder of the elder Hamlet. Hamlet assumed correctly that by watching the expressions of Claudius, he could establish the King's guilt. Hieronimo cleverly worked up a play, "Soliman and Perseda," and assigned the parts which meant actual death to his enemies. Hieronimo prefaces his play with the following statement:

And if the world like not this Tragedie,  
Hard is the hap of olde Hieronimo.  

A similar remark is uttered by Hamlet preceding his play:

For if the King like not the comedy,  
Why then, belike, he likes it not, perdy.  

Although Kyd and Shakespeare were the only authors who inserted a play-within-the-play in the tragedies of revenge under discussion, all of the revenge play writers use the soliloquy as an effective dramatic device. The

8 The Spanish Tragedy, IV, i, 196-197.  
soliloquy was used to reveal a situation in the plot, or to reveal the thoughts of a character. Glancing through a few of Seneca's tragedies, we find frequent monologues inserted mainly for rhetorical effect; however, in Hercules Furens, Hercules delivers a passionate soliloquy of despair and remorse when he regains his consciousness and recognizes his dead wife and children. In Medea, we see the inner conflict of Jason as he laments the hard lot assigned him by fate, in which he must either desert Medea or lose his own life. Thyestes includes more soliloquies than any other work of Seneca. Atreus declaims in twenty-eight bombastic lines about his vengeance on Thyestes. When Thyestes returns to Argos from banishment, he attempts to restore his faltering courage in a brief but thought-revealing soliloquy:

With whom the kingdom given is, behold, and will regard,
Beast but late with such mishaps, as all men counte full harde,
I stoute and joyfull was: but now agayne thus into feare
I am returne, my mynde miscoutes, and backward seekes to beare
My body hence, and forthe I draw my rase agaynst my will."

Atreus completely reveals his character when he exults over his plan for vengeance in sixteen lines of oratory.

The villainous characters in all the revenge plays reveal their wickedness in soliloquies. Before an evil deed is committed, the audience is given ample opportunities to judge the evil-doers. In The Spanish Tragedy, both Balthazar and Lorenzo reveal their iniquities in demanding the life of Horatio. After Pedringano has named Horatio as Bel-imperia's lover, Balthazar obscures himself in the garden and in a lengthy soliloquy, gives an insight into his mind:

Both well and ill: it makes me glad and sad:
Glad that I know the hinderer of my love;
Sad, that I fear she hates me whom I love:
Glad, that I know on whom to be reveng'd;
Sad, that sheecl flie me, if I take revenge. 12

Lorenzo reveals his villainous plotting in the following lines:

Watch still, mine eyes, to see this love disjoyned;
Hear still, mine ears, to hear them both lament;
Live, heart, to joy at fond Horatio fall. 13

The lines from the two foregoing soliloquies have a two-fold purpose: personal characters are revealed, and situations furthering continuance of the plot are shown.

The soliloquies of Aaron in Titus Andronicus and of Barabas in The Jew of Malta are similar to those of Kyd in The Spanish Tragedy. Neither Aaron nor Barabas disclose their true evils except in monologues. In the

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13Ibid., II, iii, 21-23.
previous chapter parallels in the speeches of the villains have been noted; however, to bring out Barabas’ lust for gold, it is necessary to include an excerpt from one of his soliloquies. After Abigail has secured his money from the convent, Barabas exclaims:

My gold, my fortune, my felicity!  
Strength to my soul, death to mine enemy!  
Welcome the first beginner of my bliss!  

Aaron’s soliloquy concerning money does not reveal his avarice; instead the monologue is effectively inserted for plot continuity. When Aaron enters the forest with a bag of gold, he gives life to his evil plot to sanction the ravishing of Lavinia with the following lines:

He that had wit would think that I had none,  
To bury so much gold under a tree,  
And never after to inherit it.  
Let him that thinks of me so abjectly  
Know that this gold must coin a stratagem,  
Which, cunningly effected, will begat  
A very excellent piece of villany:  
And so repose, sweet gold, for their unrest.  

In Soliman and Perseda we find frequent soliloquies; however, they are not base character revelations such as we find in the preceding revenge plays. Basilisco flaunts his vanity in the following lines:

The Turk, whom they account for barbarous,  
Having forebore of Basilisces worth  
A number under prop me with their shoulders,  
And in procession bare me to the Church,

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14 *The Jew of Malta*, II, 1, 48-50.  
As I had been a second Mahomet,
I, fearing they would adore me for a God,
Wisely informed them that I was but man.\textsuperscript{16}

Soliman is addicted to lengthy soliloquies in which we realize his utter disregard for humanity. Perseda uses the monologue advantageously to declare her allegiance to the idea of avenging Erastus’ death.

The anonymous author of \textit{The First Part of Ieronimo} does not use the soliloquy so extravagantly as do the other authors of the revenge plays. Lorenzo, disappointed because Andrea has been selected as ambassador to Portugal, gives a monologue upholding revenge. The language of his soliloquy is very commonplace; none of the rhetorical effects are employed. The following passage is an example of the flat-sounding phrases:

\begin{quote}
I hate Andrea, cause he aims at honor,
When my purest thoughts work in a pitchy vale,
Which are as different as heaven and hell.\textsuperscript{17}
\end{quote}

Of all the soliloquies in the revenge plays, the most memorable is Hamlet’s "to be or not to be" soliloquy, which has phrases that are so absolute in power and forcefulness that they have not lost their appeal in three centuries. We are able to become intimate with Hamlet’s mind when we have our attention arrested with such speeches as the following:

\begin{quote}
To be or not to be: that is the question:
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{16}Soliman and Perseda, IV, ii, 11-17.

\textsuperscript{17}The First Part of Ieronimo, I, i, 106-108.
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing end them. . . .
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause: there's the respect
That makes calamity of so long life . . .
But that the dread of something after death,
The undiscover'd country from whose bourn
No traveller returns, puzzles the will.18

Shakespeare's language in Hamlet's soliloquy is without parallel in beauty. Ophelia gives an insight into Hamlet's character in one of her monologues after Hamlet has advised her to go to a nunnery. Hamlet, in refusing to kill Claudius at prayer, is afforded the opportunity of explaining his deliberate inaction. Claudius seeks atonement for his sins in a soliloquy which commands no little sympathy from the audience, because unlike afore-mentioned villains' speeches, his prayer is one of honest effort.

At the conclusion of Act IV, we realize from Hamlet's monologue that he is determined to act:

O, from this time forth,
My thoughts be bloody, or be nothing worth.19

In Shakespeare's Hamlet, the soliloquy, which had its being in Senecan works for the furtherance of rhetoric, reached its zenith. Shakespeare wrote the speeches so that not only the sound but the sense travels easily and effectively. He made his audience want to hear, to listen,

18Hamlet, III, i, 55-60.
19Ibid., IV, iv, 65-66.
to feel, and to imagine. In mastering completely the soliloquy as a dramatic device, Shakespeare made his sentences do full service. His lines were to advance the story, to reveal character in the speaker, and to strike responsiveness in the listeners. The soliloquies were not mere compressions of logic nor were they truly natural; however, Shakespeare delighted his audience in lending a magic touch to the speeches which seemed spontaneous. The creating and interpreting of character was an essential dramatic device of the Elizabethan playwrights, who peopled their plays with individuals instead of walking abstractions.

Just as similar dramatic devices were used by Seneca and writers of revenge plays, so the same stylistic devices recur in most of these dramas. It has been mentioned previously that Seneca abounded in stichomythia, a line-for-line dialogue, which showed the degree in which he was influenced in thought and style by the sententious mode of expression dominant in the rhetorical schools of his time. Seneca's use of stichomythia in his tragedies takes the form of a rhetorical "altercatio" by stating pros and cons, or by making one character match wits with another. Godley very adequately describes Seneca's stichomythia as follows:

It does not matter in the least who is taking part in the Senecan "altercatio"—whatever characters
are on the stage, the dialogue is a succession of thrust-and-parry repartees. Each speaker shows off his cleverness at parrying the opponent's foil within the allotted space of a line, or half a line, or even a quarter.20

In all of Seneca's tragedies there is no fixed time for the characters to display their erudition. The following lines from Medea, containing dialogue in which the nurse cautions Medea about her outspoken vows of vengeance, are exemplary of Seneca's moralizing:

The nurse who wears the goldencrested crown, him dread with awe you should.

Medea. My father was a king, yet I betrayed his Fleece of gold.

Nurse. Cannot the deadly violence of weapons make thee fear?

Medea. No, though such grisly Lads they are . . .

Nurse. Then wilt thou cast thyself to death?

Medea. Would God that I were dead.

Nurse. Fly, fly to save thy life.

Medea. Why shall I fly?

Nurse. Fly for thy children sake.

Medea. Yee see by whom, and how,

A wretched Mother I am made.

Nurse. Thy lyfe by flight to save Dost thou mistrust?

Medea. Nay, fly I will, but vengeance first Ile have.21

A second stylistic device occurring numerous times in each of Seneca's tragedies is repetition of the same word, or practically the same word in successive statements. The repeated word carries the mind back thus:

Not ritches makes a kyng or high renowne,


Not garnisht weeds with purple Tyrian die,
Not lofty looks, or head enclosed with crowns,
Not glittering beams with gold and turrets his.22

The repeated negatives occur freely throughout Seneca's plays, and they reflect strongly the disappointment and displeasure of most of the characters in tragic situations. Seneca uses countless classical allusions which outnumber those of Euripides, his pattern, and in the use of tropes, Seneca, with only twenty-seven examples of the hyperbole in his ten tragedies,23 must have felt that the hyperbole is too frigid for compositions which aim primarily at force and striking effects. His use of the apostrophe is more frequent than that of the hyperbole. The apostrophe is used in any turning aside by speakers from the immediate course of thought, to address vividly divinities, heroes, things, or places. In the ten tragedies Seneca uses 157 examples of the apostrophe.24 Notable instances of the apostrophe are found in Medea, when Medea invokes thirteen different powers for vengeance upon Creon and his daughter, and in Oedipus, when Oedipus calls upon various divinities to attend him in his imprecation against the murderer of Laius.

22_Thyestes_, II, 321-324. This Elizabethan translation reflects the same parallelism in the original Latin.

23_Howard Canter, op. cit., p. 177.

24_Ibíd., p. 178._
Since Seneca's plays were not acted, the whole burden was thrown upon the language. Seneca's audience was steeped in rhetoric, and therefore his language had to be violently rhetorical. Usually Seneca had no more than two or three speakers on the stage at one time, and actual poetic qualities were lacking in his tragedies, because the recited parts were sonorous, and his audience had to be kept tense with horror piled upon horror. From Seneca's stylistic devices was formed the pattern to which Kyd, Marlowe, and Shakespeare were to give life.

In Gorboduc we are amazed that the earliest English tragedy, molded so completely in Senecan form, has no stychnomythia. The Misfortunes of Arthur has five of the line-for-line dialogues, the content of which is similar to that of Seneca. When Conan, Modred's faithful counsellor, attempts to advise Mordred against being vengeful, the dialogue is as follows:

Mord. I have as great a share in chance, as be.  
Cona. His waies be blinde, that maketh chance his guide.

Mord. Whose refuge lies in Chance, what dares he not?  
Cona. Warres were a crime farre worse than all the rest.

Mord. The safest passage is from bad to worse.  
Cona. That were to passe too farre, and put no meane.  
Mord. He is a foole, that puts a meane in crimes.  
Cona. But sword and fire would cause a common wound.  
Mord. So sword and fire will often seare the soare. 25

Although Hughes does not use stychomythia so frequently as Seneca does, the moralizing is very obvious. The anonymous author of *Soliman and Perseda* uses the line-for-line dialogue only once, when Piston and Basilisco are engaged in a lively repartee which affords more comic relief than epigrams. The First Part of *Ieronimo* has no stychomythia, but most of the speeches contain no more than one sentence of five or six words. Bel-imperia, in *The Spanish Tragedy*, wins the contest of wits in two instances. She successfully parries the love speeches of Ralthazar, and she proves superior in intelligence in comparison with Lorenzo. Shakespeare, in *Titus Andronicus* and in *Hamlet*, puts stychomythia to spontaneous dramatic use. The volleying of phrases is inserted to relieve moments of tension or excitement, as is found in the grave-digging scene in *Hamlet* when the two clowns exchange humorous remarks concerning the bones which they excavate. In *Titus Andronicus*, the stychomythia is employed to further the tension, as is found in the dialogue between Chiron and Demetrius when they view Lavinia's mutilated body.

In discussing the use of repetition and parallelism in the tragedies of revenge, it is necessary to include a concrete definition of the terms. According to Hubbard, repetition is the use of the same word, or words, in succeeding lines of verse; parallelism is the repeated use
of the same form of expression in succeeding lines of verse. The single repetition of the same word is most frequently found in The Misfortunes of Arthur:

All truth, all trust, all blood, all bands be broke.

Hughes employs more single repetition than any other type of repeated use. Very effectively used is his combination of repetition and parallel construction in the same or successive lines:

There were prepared the forreine aides from farre,
There were the borrowed powers of divers Kings,
There were our parents, brethren, sones, and kinne.

For the following examples of repetition and parallelism, lines from Titus Andronicus and from The Spanish Tragedy will be used to demonstrate the stylistic device as perfected by Kyd and Shakespeare. Both authors expertly applied parallelism between the first half and the second half of the same line as is found in the following:

Villuppo. Injurious traytor, monstrous homicide.

Titus. Witness this wretched stump, witness these crimson lines.


28 Ibid., II, i, 59-61.

29 The Spanish Tragedy, III, i, 57.

30 Titus Andronicus, V, ii, 22.
For parallelism between the first half of a line and the first half of succeeding lines, we have:

_**Lorenzo:**_ Thus must we works that will avoide distrust; Thus must we practice to prevent mishap.31

Whole lines, which are parallel in groups of two or more, produce the same dramatic effect that single repetition of words produces. Both Kyd and Shakespeare frequently use this type of parallelism:

_**Balthasar:**_ His men are slaine, a weakening to his Realm;
His colors ceaz'd, a blot unto his name;
His sonne distrest, a corrosive to his hart. 32

_**Demetrius.**_ She is a woman, therefore may be woo'd;
She is a woman, therefore may be won;
She is Lavinia, therefore must be loved. 33

Kyd's style of progressive repetition and parallelism is easily detected. In Balthazar's speech, we realize instantly the force and power of logic:

First in his hand he brandished a sword,
And with that sword he fiercely waged warre,
And in that warre he gave me dangerous wounds,
And by those wounds he forced me to yeeld,
And by my yeelding I became his slave:
Now, in his mouth he carries pleasing words,
Which pleasing wordes doe harbour sweet conceits,
Which sweet conceits are lim'de with sly deceits,
Which sly deceits smooth Bel-imperia's ears,
And through her eares dive downe into her hart
And in her hart set him where I should stand.34

Shakespeare does not use the progressive repetition; however, a dramatic effect equally as great is achieved by

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31 *The Spanish Tragedy*, III, 11, 105-106.
32 Ibid., I, 11, 141-145.
33 *Titus Andronicus*, II, 1, 82-84.
34 *The Spanish Tragedy*, II, 1, 119-129.
his single repetition of words. A few lines from Hamlet are worthy of quoting to illustrate such repetition:

**Ghost.** O, horrible! O, horrible! Most horrible. 35

**Hamlet.** O villain, villain, smiling damned villain! 36

**Polonius.** That's an ill phrase, a vile phrase; Beautified is a vile phrase. 37

**Hamlet.** Woot weep? woot fight? woot fast? woot tear thyself? 38

Marlowe, in *The Jew of Malta*, does not use repetition as a definite stylistic device. Instead, he uses parallel structure in lines, some examples of which are as follows:

**Bar.** Ne'er shall she grieve me more with her disgrace; Ne'er shall she live to inherit aught of mine. 39

**Fern.** And naught is to be look'd for now but wars. And naught to us more welcome is than wars. 40

**Bar.** Know, governor, 't was I that slew thy son, Know, Calymath, 't was I that aimed thy overthrow. 41

The anonymous authors of *Soliman and Perseda* and of *The First Part of Ieronimo* use repetition and parallel sentence

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35 *Hamlet*, I, v, 80.
39 *The Jew of Malta*, III, iv, 26-27.
structure infrequently; however, in both plays there is a rather crude recurrence of words pertaining to the anatomy of the human being. Following are some of the notable passages:

Pass. I, villaine, I have broke my shin bone, My back bone, my chanell bone, and my thigh bone, Beside two dossen small inferior bones. 42

Icr. My knee sings thanks unto your highnes bountie; Come hether, boy Horatio; fouled thy joynts; Kneele by thy fathers loynes, and thank my leedge. 43

Hor. Come, noble rib of honor, valliant carcasse, I loved thee so entirely, when thou breathedst That I could die, wert but to bleed with thee. 44

For the discussion of the last of the stylistic devices used by the Elizabethan writers of revenge plays, it is appropriate to select the first one hundred lines, omitting the introductory chorus, to estimate the frequency of classical allusions and trope. In Soliman and Perseda, there are two classical allusions in the selected lines, and because Erastus is trying to express his love to Perseda, much use is made of the simile. Here, also, are found three examples of the hyperbole. In The First Part

42 Soliman and Perseda, I, iv, 54-46.
43 The First Part of Ieronimo, I, i, 4-6.
44 Ibid, III, ii, 149-151.
of Ieronimo there are no classical allusions in the first one hundred lines, and no examples of the apostrophe or the hyperbole. Kyd uses only two classical allusions in the introductory lines after his Chorus has spoken; however, it is worthy of noting that the Chorus alone has twenty-two classical allusions within sixty-five lines. Throughout The Spanish Tragedy, Kyd uses classical allusions almost to the extent of pedantry, and the play exhibits more numerous examples of the hyperbole than any other revenge play. The hyperbole is a stylistic device which is necessary for describing the exaggerated evil deeds and the intensified emotions of love and hatred, and Kyd's plot for The Spanish Tragedy demanded such a figure of speech. The hyperbole is abundant in Marlowe's Jew of Malta for the same reason, although in the first one hundred lines, there is only one exaggeration of the number of camels, mules, and wagons required to transport the wealth of Barabas. Marlowe uses classical allusions sparingly, and includes none in his introductory lines. He does not make use of the apostrophe in his play, yet one of his contemporaries, Shakespeare, inserts the apostrophe in appreciable numbers, and uses the hyperbole sparingly, while he abounds in classical allusions. In the selected lines from Titus Andronicus, there are two classical allusions, and one exaggeration of atrocities. In Hamlet Shakespeare practically abandons classical allusions and
hyperbole while he retains numerous examples of the apos-
trophe. The hyperbole was not necessary for the exaggera-
tion of evil deeds in Hamlet, and Shakespeare's stylistic
devices were used evenly and effectively without gross
misrepresentation of actualities, which Kyd and Marlowe
required.

In reading the six tragedies of revenge for the sole
detection of poetic qualities, we conclude that the only
two real poets were Kyd and Shakespeare. Marlowe's ex-
pression is phrased in an ordinary method; Shakespeare's
expression, in Hamlet particularly, is a flow of poetic
elocution, a continuous lyric of beauty. Kyd's skill in
making even the horrible assume poetic beauty is evidence
of his individual genius.

In summarizing the dramatic and stylistic devices
of the revenge plays, we find only a few innovations which
Seneca did not use. He made use of the chorus, soliloquy,
stichomythia, classical allusions, and trope. Norton and
Sackville apparently invented the dumb show to further
dramatic effect. Hughes effectively used the dumb show
in The Misfortunes of Arthur. In the revenge plays under
discussion, the authors gradually abandoned the chorus,
and depended upon other forms of expression to reveal
incidents of the plot, or to reveal a character's thoughts.
The innovation of the play-within-the-play in The Spanish
Tragedy was foreign to Seneca's work, but aside from the
dumb show and the play-within-the-play, the writers of the revenge plays included all of Seneca's dramatic devices, and imitated and improved greatly his stylistic devices. Unlike Seneca, the Elizabethan playwrights did not over-burden their plays with epigrammatic stychoomythia. Their line-for-line dialogue provided comic relief among the graver issues; classical allusions were held to a minimum; and trope was inserted with logic. Whereas Seneca employed stylistic devices to stun his audience, Elizabethan playwrights polished these same stylistic devices to strike sympathetic responsiveness from their audiences.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

In this thesis an attempt has been made to estimate the influence of Seneca upon six Elizabethan tragedies of revenge, and to trace the line of descent from him to the Elizabethan playwrights who wrote during the last decades of the sixteenth century. Moreover, a detailed study of the plays with the problems of chronology, sources, and authorship has been presented in order to show some characteristics of the techniques and conventions followed by their authors.

The tragedies of blood, which were dramatized versions of catastrophes filled with incredible horrors wrought by seekers of revenge, were popular for a variety of reasons, among which were the romantic love of incident and the neo-classic desire to follow Latin and Greek models. The Elizabethans found satisfaction in witnessing the duplicities and scenes of horror which are logically associated with the revenge plays. In the Elizabethan era, knowledge of the Greek dramatists was limited, and Seneca was the classic dramatist, "par excellence," from whom the playwrights took their revenge themes, their ghosts, and their horrors. Before the end of the sixteenth century many
plays of the revenge type must have been in existence; however, the majority of these have perished. In dramatic quality the plays are comparable to the best known plays of the century; the revenge plays were the work of men of genius, such as Kyd, Marlowe, and Shakespeare who imitated Senecan patterns of tragedy. Seneca set the pattern for five-act division, a retrospective and anticipatory chorus, lengthy rhetorical speeches, and much epigrammatic stichomythia. His plots were by no means complex; there were seldom more than two or three characters on the stage at one time, and a leading character was motivated by revenge. Although Seneca did have all his characters meet death as the fulfillment of the catastrophe, he carefully removed such action from the spectators.

A discussion of two purely Senecan imitations, Corboduc and The Misfortunes of Arthur, reveals that the dramatists closely followed Seneca, but they were responsible for the innovation of the dumb show, allegorical representations which preceded the various acts to explain their significance, whereas Seneca used the chorus and messenger for such reports.

A study of the chronological incidence of the plays reveals that from 1575 to the turn of the century, a gradual rise in the number of such plays presented culminated in a marked climax with the appearance of Shakespeare's
Hamlet. The quickening popular demand for revenge plays resulted in keen competition for subject matter, and much duplication is revealed by a thorough study of the sources for the revenge plays.

A detailed study of Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* reveals that the story was the product of Kyd's ingenious mind. The play might be considered the peak of the revenge plays, the fountain from which flowed *The First Part of Ieronimo, Soliman and Perseda, Titus Andronicus, Hamlet*, and *The Jew of Malta*. Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy*, with its large element of horror, presumes an audience eager for scenes of violence, and simultaneously, an audience very critical of dramatic worth. The survey of the six tragedies of revenge reveals the mutual dependence of the revenge playwrights upon one another and upon Seneca.

The dramatic and stylistic devices used by the Elizabethans were more effectively worked into the tragedies than were the same devices used by Seneca. Because Seneca was a rhetorician, much of the meaning of his tragedies is lost in lengthy speeches. His soliloquies were burdened with classical allusions; character revelation was apparently of minor importance. His chorus was invariably retrospective and anticipatory; his messenger reported action which was excluded from the audience. His line-for-line dialogue lost dignity and ease because he inserted stichomythia at inopportune moments; a person of low intellect was too
frequently made erudite. Seneca crowded his passages with the hyperbole to prod his audience. The Elizabethans had no need for such startling devices; instead, they conscientiously strove to produce tragedies which had genuine poetic qualities. Lengthy soliloquies of the Elizabethan playwrights were not mere examples of bombast; they revealed inner thoughts of the characters, or the soliloquy was necessary for plot continuity. In this sense, the soliloquy of a leading character replaced the Senecan messenger. The Elizabethan audience was thrilled with the participation of the ghost as a member of the dramatic personae. The actual role of the ghost and the dumb show were outgrowths of Seneca's traditional chorus. The innovation of the play-within-the-play in *The Spanish Tragedy* and *Hamlet* was foreign to Seneca's works, yet Kyd's usage of the play-within-the-play is a tribute to his genius for knowing the tastes of his audience. The whole work rises at the end to a climax in the play scene. Contemporaries found in this tragedy a Senecan play adapted to popular requirements.

Kyd, realizing the need for action on the stage, constructed a play which borrowed Seneca's ghosts and revenge themes. In lieu of walking abstractions which were found in Seneca's tragedies, Kyd provided characters with forceful, capable dialogue. He contributed a new type of tragic hero to the stage. Indeed, the principal figures in tragedy
up to his time had been supermen; Kyd's subtle character
delineation appealed most to his audience. Hieronimo does
not briskly gain his revenge; he moves from a mere figure-
head in the first act to a dominant figure who hesitates,
falls into madness and indecision, and then completes his
task.

Although Kyd presented the hesitating type, Shakespeare
magnifies the character in Hamlet. Shakespeare transforms
his protagonist into a normal man with a wrong to redress,
and he is open to supernatural influences, full of doubt,
hesitancy, and reticence. Hamlet is stoical and fatalistic
in his philosophy of life, and Shakespeare provides solilo-
quies which demand immediate sympathy from the listeners.
The choice of words is unparalleled in other versions of
the revenge tragedies. Shakespeare applies his majestic
imagination, penetrating psychology, and magic verbal
music to contribute a marvelous literary creation which
is sufficient evidence alone of his inventive dramatic
craftsmanship.

The revenge plays, after a rapid rise from Senesian
origins to great popularity, achieved lasting success.
The Elizabethan playwrights artistically retained the
Senesian conventions of the chorus, five acts, moralizing,
rhetorical stychomythia, ghosts, and the supernatural, yet
they contributed several features which lifted the dramas
from the realm of pure Senecanism. With the introduction of violence on the stage, the dumb show, the play-within-the-play, complexity of plots, utilization of new material for plots, comic relief, more realistic characterizations, and less artificial style, the Elizabethan dramatists produced a unique genre of revenge play.
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