

## Introduction

Anger is an enduringly problematic theme in literature, a rush of cognition concentrated through pain. This emotion can be understood as creation by negation: it comes into existence when its subject is belittled or negated. Anger builds its walls around the angry man or woman and blinds them with its power. The importance of studying anger comes from the fundamental role it plays in shaping critical reactions in daily experiences that either construct or destroy the lives of human beings. These reactions differ according to each individual. Sometimes, anger is equally an indiscriminate and an elective emotion. It is the desire to retaliate in response to an injury. It is a conspiracy against the self as much as against others, an emotion which richly furnishes the great body of literature and philosophy that is traditionally associated with it. The power of anger expresses itself as an obsessive dialogue between the voice of the injured, their injury, and that of the injurer. This thesis will provide a reading of anger in Elizabethan revenge tragedy which focuses on the relationship between the destructive and creative potentials of this emotion.

In a sense, the choice of anger as an object of study is hardly voluntary. This subject selects its students as much as they select it. I am especially fascinated with the subject of anger due to its magnetic power, the authority that is connected to its dangerous and violent nature. The blind irrational feeling of self-righteousness that surges throughout the angry individual inspires the reader or writer of its narrative to wonder about the nature of this emotion. Much of the theatrical, narrative power of anger, I will argue, stems from the transformative nature of the emotion. The change in the attitude, the feeling of complete wholeness, accompanied by the

desire to annihilate this same entity, is one of the captivating characteristics of anger, like when Medea kills her children to avenge herself on her husband Jason<sup>1</sup>.

Anger does not merely furnish the content of dramas, it is itself a theatrically shaped emotion; it creates and directs itself on the stage because it generates its own narrative. Anger also shapes the speeches and the actions of this genre. Seneca constructed the idea of anger in philosophy and on the stage long before the Elizabethans, and was crucial to the development of meta-theatrical elements in Elizabethan drama like *the Murder of Gonzago* in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Therefore Seneca, and to a lesser extent Aristotle and Galen will be discussed in the first part of the thesis. They are essential to the project due to their impact on the studies of emotion in general, and their specific interest in analyzing anger in particular. Seneca is of particular use here because he was a theatre practitioner himself, so his theoretical discussion of "anger" in the abstract can be directly compared to the manifestation of this emotion in his plays, which will help to form a dramaturgical analysis of anger in the theatre.

It is necessary to begin with a survey of how anger has been defined in ancient and early modern philosophies which impacted on the revenge tragedies under discussion here, in order to understand the obsessive dialogue between the voice of the injured, their injury itself, and the injurer which, according to the argument presented here, characterizes the way that anger is presented in revenge tragedy. For these characterizations, Seneca and Galen are chosen as the main sources of reference due to their immense influence on the theory of emotions during the Elizabethan period as well as the revenge tragedy tradition.

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<sup>1</sup>Lucius Annaeus Seneca, *Seneca's Tragedies*, trans. Frank Justus Miller (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1917- reprinted 1961).

This project explores theatrical – staged -representations of anger in Elizabethan revenge tragedy. I will argue that conventions of representing anger are crucial to the rhetoric of production: that anger characterizes the speech and action of the plays considered here.

Therefore, I suggest that revenge is not the only consequence of anger in early modern revenge plays. Revenge is but one of the results of anger. I argued that anger and the consequent revenge which results from it are not merely irrational and indiscriminate, and it can be the most calculated step of the process. The depiction of anger is also responsible for the artistry in the plot and action; it sometimes becomes the action itself in the Senecan creation as opposed to Aristotle's definition of the action in tragedy as having a beginning, middle and an end:

Now, according to our definition, Tragedy is an imitation of an action that is complete, and whole, and of a certain magnitude; for there may be a whole that is wanting in magnitude. A whole is that which has a beginning, a middle, and an end. A beginning is that which does not itself follow anything by causal necessity, but after which something naturally is or comes to be. An end, on the contrary, is that which itself naturally follows some other thing, either by necessity, or as a rule, but has nothing following it. A middle is that which follows something as some other thing follows it. A well constructed plot, therefore, must neither begin nor end at haphazard, but conform to these principles<sup>2</sup>.

Aristotle's definition is methodical exploration of the tragic structure which aims at emphasizing the resulting concept of catharsis due to the emotional build up. This definition is challenged by Seneca by transforming the action of the tragedy from events into depicting the emotion of anger. For him, anger explores the relationship between the self and the principles that change the self. It influences the creative structure of the plays accordingly.

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<sup>2</sup> Aristotle, *Poetics*. Trans. Gerald F. Else.: (Ann Arbor:University of Michigan Press, 1970. First published 1967), 12.

Seneca is of particular use here because he was a theatre practitioner himself, so his theoretical discussion of “anger” in the abstract can be directly compared to the manifestation of this emotion in his plays, which will help to form a dramaturgical analysis of anger in the theatre. Galen’s work provides a useful contrast to Seneca’s, because he views emotions as “materialistic” phenomena, “parts of the body” with an immediate impact on the mind-body, and nature relationship<sup>3</sup>. Seneca, by corollary, sees anger rather as an error in judgment. His views on anger are at some distance from Galen’s materialistic or medical approach. His analysis does not involve comparison or contrast with the other emotions whereas Galen’s analysis is tangible and more compatible with the human body. Seneca directly dramatizes anger. He thinks about anger in terms of its theatrical discourses. He depicts its cognitive travesty and violence on the stage in rhetorical outbursts. In his dramatic texts, Seneca’s anger hijacks reasoning by camouflaging itself as logic. In *Thyestes*, we see Atreus going over his brother’s injuries against him and obsessively ruminating on his revenge. Atreus sounds calm and calculating while planning the most hideous of acts. Seneca’s dramatization of anger heavily depends on the rhetoric of anger and the Stoic rhetoric of the injured, with which Seneca sometimes concludes his plays.

Generally, the engagement with the philosophy of anger is more vibrant in revenge tragedy than in other genres due to the disequilibrium of this genre’s universe. The philosophy of anger is intense; it suits the emotional strain of revenge tragedy. Senecan revenge tragedy can represent anger without the quest for justice because the genre is able to sweep up the audience in the emotion rather than engage them with the question of justice. In a different genre, anger would be presented in moral terms and involve a demand for justice, but in revenge tragedy the desire

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<sup>3</sup> Peter Brain, *Galen on Bloodletting: A Study of the Origins, Development, and Validity of His Opinions, with a Translation of the Three Works*(New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 8.

to reciprocate the injury is more powerful than the desire to achieve impartiality. Stichomythia, a technique Seneca uses in his tragedies, is an appropriate example in showing how anger can control language, and is used in Elizabethan tragedies like *The Spanish Tragedy*. Seneca's revenge tragedies focus on this emotion through description. Not only was Seneca's – Latin – language an important part of shaping the rhetoric of Elizabethan revenge tragedy, but also the power of his imagery, and the way that he used tragedy to communicate a political position, was highly influential in forming the English art-form. His influence on early modern theatrical conventions is also seen in the figure of the Ghost and the five act structure. To fully understand the importance of Seneca for the early modern revenge tradition, we need to focus on Senecan ethics and inspect Senecan drama.

For Seneca, anger is an erroneous judgment that has no true correspondence to reality. For Galen however, anger is a natural emotion that recognizes its objective and corresponds to reality because he accepted the fact that the mastery of anger is a matter of habit<sup>4</sup>. These philosophers talk about anger in some detail. Their works anatomize the nature of anger from cultural, medical, philosophical, and theatrical perspectives. Arguably, Seneca turns to the theatre not just to illustrate his views on anger but also to release his own anger. It should be mentioned that his plays are based on Greek texts. He empties the Greek characters of their depth and roundedness in order to turn them into exemplars of anger and its effects or consequences. Seneca wants his audience to experience the horror of anger directly. His dramatic profession influenced his ethical writings and he uses rhetoric in the treatise *On Anger* to warn against it. It is arguable that Seneca's theatrical experience shapes his philosophical proposition. He treats the human mind as a stage for the enactment of anger in several movements:

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<sup>4</sup>Susana Barund and Glenn W. Most, eds. *Ancient Anger: Perspectives from Homer to Galen* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 192.

There's [an] initial involuntary movement—a preparation for the passion, as it were, and a kind of threatening signal; there's a second movement accompanied by an expression of will not yet stubbornly resolved, to the effect that "I should be avenged, since I've been harmed" or "this man should be punished, since he's committed a crime"; the third movement's already out of control, it desires vengeance not if it's appropriate but come what may, having overthrown reason<sup>5</sup>.

Seneca's analysis of anger attempts to find a method of control. His account of the psychological origins of anger, as seen in the above quotation, resembles a theatrical director telling the actors how they should perform on the stage. He diagnoses anger and offers his views about curing it. For him anger stems from disappointment with the world. To be attuned to nature is one of the ways to avoid this disappointment. This means that we have to be aware of our role in the environment and the cosmic order to which we must submit ourselves. By creating angry characters in drama, Seneca constructs the poetics of anger on stage; something he is affected by in his ethics. Seneca's conception of anger shows how impossible it is to be objective when one writes about it. He thinks that life should be acted and directed by reason. Despite his warnings against fury, Seneca becomes angry when he writes about aristocrats. Also, he appears to be furious when he talks about Aristotle:

Such, in their anger, was the savagery of barbarian kings, who had not been steeped in learning and literary culture. Now I'll give you—from the bosom of Aristotle-king Alexander, who killed Clitus, his dearest friend from childhood, with his own hand while feasting, because Clitus was insufficiently fawning and loath to pass from freedom as a Macedonian to slavery as a Persian.(SENECA 2010:77).

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<sup>5</sup>Lucius Annaeus Seneca, *Anger, Mercy, Revenge*, trans. Robert Kaster and Martha Nussbaum (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 7.

Here, Seneca's attack on Aristotle is irrational and emotive. He judges Aristotle based on the actions of his pupil, Alexander. The language he uses when mentioning Aristotle denotes anger and discontent. The emotion that hits Seneca while talking about Aristotle is a key to understanding the Senecan theatrical tradition. His plays speak his anger. The theatre is where Seneca can heal the stagnancy of the emotions he encourages in his philosophy, and which he probably suffered from in his life. Although Seneca calls for total submission to reason, his attack on Aristotle, as seen in the quotation above, undermines the seriousness of his proposition because his own attack is not based on logical premises. Seneca himself seems to become angry despite his own rejection of anger as he calls for total commitment to logic in his ethics. The irrational attack on Aristotle in Seneca's treatise appears as an act of *belittling* Aristotle. This "irrational" part of Seneca's attack on Aristotle is represented by the fact that Seneca *belittles* Aristotle in an impossible debate, since Aristotle cannot defend his thesis about anger. Seneca's fear of criticizing the brutality of the contemporary aristocrats of his nation makes him redirect his anger at someone who came centuries before him. He projects their deeds on Aristotle's views of anger in order to express his own rage at their deeds without being persecuted. Aristotle accords rational status to the emotion Seneca dismisses it as an erroneous judgment:

I may say that the first prompting is involuntary, a preparation for passion, as it were, and a sort of menace; the next is combined with an act of volition, although not an unruly one, which assumes that it is right for me to avenge myself because I have been injured, or that it is now beyond control, in that it wishes to take vengeance, not if it is right to do so, but whether or no, and has utterly vanquished reason.(SENECA 2010: 175).

For Seneca, anger as all emotions is the cause of irrational behaviour. And since anger, for him, is the main motive of revenge, Seneca condemns it. Seneca does not believe that the pursuit of revenge is rational. Instead he holds to the belief that anger seeks blood insistently and at

random. This is related to Seneca's terminology. He believes that individuals should not pay back an injury. He defines liberty as rising above injury. These definitions explain the reason for the endings of Seneca's plays, in which there is usually a Stoic statement by a victim of anger. Seneca's style of ending his plays without the punishment of the perpetrators does not seem to have influenced the early modern revenge tragedies: they usually end with the deaths of both the perpetrators and the injured. Yet, the early modern plays use the Senecan rhetoric of grief as a precursor to anger and the atrocities that take place subsequently. Seneca knows the power of grief. Furthermore, Seneca, unlike Aristotle, believed that the changes brought about by becoming angry were not permanent: for Seneca, there is no going back to how you were before. The philosophical discourses about anger vary, and knowing about these controversial themes is essential to understanding the early modern texts presented in this project. Although Seneca and humoral psychology are confluent at times, there are many differences between their theorization of emotion. For example, Seneca says:

And so the wise man—calm and even-tempered in the face of error, not an enemy of wrongdoers but one who sets them straight— leaves his house daily with this thought in mind: “I will encounter many people who are devoted to drink, many who are lustful, many who are ungrateful, many who are greedy, many who are driven by the demons of ambition.” All such behavior she will regard as kindly as a doctor does his own patients. When a man's ship is taking on a lot of water, as the joins buckle and gape on every side, he surely doesn't become angry with the sailors and the ship itself, does he? Rather, he runs to help—keeping the water out here, bailing it out there, plugging the gaps he can see, working constantly to counter the unseen gaps that invisibly draw water into the bilge—and he doesn't leave off just because more water takes the place of all the water he drains. Prolonged assistance is needed against constant and prolific evils, not so they cease, but so they don't gain the upper hand.(SENECA 2010: 41-42)



Here Seneca states that in order to keep away from anger as it is pointless and dangerous, human beings should avoid socializing with their inferiors, or superiors. He encourages separation between social strata in order to help stop anger at bay. Seneca reinforces his view of the angry figures as weak and likens them to “mice and ants” contradicting Aristotle and Galen in the matter, since Aristotle defends anger and Galen thinks that it is part of the human body.

The differences between these early philosophical accounts enhance our understanding of the complex nature of anger. These philosophers’ analyses and representations of anger can be taken as a comprehensive exploration of this emotion prior to the early modern era. They provide an historical horizon to the complex representation of anger in Elizabethan revenge tragedy. To sum up the major differences of the above mentioned philosophers, Galen thinks of anger as a materialistic emotion. One of the humors (yellow bile) floods the body triggering this emotion. Seneca, however, thinks that anger is a form of madness that leads its subject astray from objectivity and pushes them into a revenge spree. Discussing these philosophies explains the complexity of this emotion and adds to understanding its importance. Seneca creates a dialogue between how anger is discussed, and its representation on stage.

The question of Seneca’s ethical and dramatic influence on Elizabethan tragedy raises another point of interest regarding the Greek influence on the genre. Greek revenge tragedy is more nuanced in the representation of emotions. The Elizabethans writers’ knowledge of Latin allowed them to translate Seneca’s works as texts and to adapt some of his theatrical techniques. Moreover, the Stoic, almost anti-Greek, principle of choosing suicide over the prospect of a corruption of the soul is another point of attraction for the Elizabethans. Seneca advises people to choose ending their own lives when they are forced to do what goes against their principles. The

Stoic principle of choosing suicide over the corruption of the soul is compatible with anger, for the reason that anger is a self-destructive force in itself as it is in the case of Goddess Ira:

Whatever its external prompting, suicide is the natural fulfillment of the wise man's life, the point where his drive for control becomes totally and unsurpassably self-referential over the world outside. It is an absolute that answers by mirroring the absoluteness of imperial devastation. Indeed, the Stoics suicide beckons to the universe as well; the theory of the ecpyrosis, almost happily awaited, prescribes a kind of cosmic suicide: "these things will destroy themselves with their own force, and the stars will collide with stars and what now shines in order will burn in one blaze of flaming matter" (Seneca, *Dial.* 6. 26. 6.)<sup>6</sup>.

The above quotation illustrates the Senecan advice to commit suicide if someone feels that his or her soul is to be corrupted. It talks about the destructive force of anger because this emotion annihilates those who are prone to it. For Burton, for example, anger in its heat is equal to madness. There is no difference between these two conditions. Furthermore, the powerful rhetoric of anger and its antithesis dramatized together in Senecan plays was appealing for the Elizabethans. Seneca was widely taught in Elizabethan schools because of his endorsement of the "natural order", and because he is a strong advocate of monarchy. He encourages political passivity and the Elizabethan monarchy found his philosophy desirable. The political applicability of Seneca's writings encouraged dramatists like Sackville and Norton to use his writings as a model, especially when it comes to showing the harmful and dangerous nature of emotions. The hyperbolic style used to translate Seneca for the Elizabethan audience, and the way that the dramatists used him, confirm their obsession with establishing the idea that emotions are undesirable constituents of society. The proposition regarding the harmfulness of emotions gave ordinary people a sense of critical distance from the aristocrats and made them

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<sup>6</sup> Gordon Braden, *Renaissance Tragedy and the Senecan Tradition: Anger's Privilege* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 24-25.

proud of their non-emotive state of mind, where, for them, their judgment seemed to be safe from anger.

To summarize in respect of the translations of Seneca, I argue that interpreting Seneca's tragedies and adapting them onto the Elizabethan stage had political, cultural and social consequence in encouraging political passivism<sup>7</sup>. In her Article *Seneca in Early Elizabethan England*, Jessica Winston suggests that translating Seneca was a political exercise in how to control the people. She proposes that those who took up translating Seneca's works were in touch with the ruling caste at the time, and that they were educated people who were trained for employing rhetoric with critical minds (WINSTON 2006: 34). This means that the translation of Seneca's works was a statement directed to the monarchs about the danger of their subjects' emotional awakening. On the other hand, Linda Woodbridge posits that translating the Senecan revenge tragedy formed a discourse of resistance to overthrow tyranny<sup>8</sup>. I will discuss this difference of opinion in due course.

I begin by exploring Seneca's Stoic analysis of anger in his philosophical and ethical discourse. In the first chapter, I go on to treat two Senecan plays. The first is *Thyestes* in relation to Seneca's own essay *On Anger*; and the second is Jasper Heywood's translation of Seneca's *Thyestes* in relation to Galen's theory of humoral psychology, which is discussed at length because it is contemporary to Elizabethan revenge tragedy. The popularity of humoral psychology in the early modern period ensured that Senecan ethics and his tragedies would have a powerful impact of Elizabethan revenge tragedy.

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<sup>7</sup>Jessica Winston, "Seneca in Early Elizabethan England". *Renaissance Quarterly*, vol.59, No.1 (Spring 2006), p 32.

<sup>8</sup>Linda Woodbridge, "Resistance Theory Meets Drama: Tudor Seneca". *Renaissance Drama* 38.1 (2010: 115-139. <http://muse.jhu.edu/> (accessed 22/09/2012).

Seneca's drama is patently fascinated by the kind of emotion which his ethical writing warns against. Studying *On Anger* is therefore essential to this thesis, for the sake of comparing between Seneca's ethics and his dramatic works. This study tries to examine Seneca's *Thyestes* in comparison to his treatise *On Anger*, which explores the stylistic representations of anger in both these works and concludes that Seneca is not completely successful in condemning anger in this tragedy because he gives the best lines to the angry character. He refers to an incident in which the action is similar to *Thyestes*. The comparison aims at showing Seneca's fascination with anger in *Thyestes* despite his denunciation of it in his ethical writing. To the same effect, another chapter is dedicated to the study of the Elizabethan translator Jasper Heywood's translation of Seneca's *Thyestes* in relation to the contemporary Elizabethan theory of the humors, specifically the Galenic branch. The chapter is aimed at showing how the importance of Seneca is enhanced through Humoralism in relation to Christianity. Heywood's additions to the text reflect the prevailing cultural and religious spirit of the century.

The Elizabethan texts will be presented here in chronological order. I begin, therefore, by discussing the relationship between Seneca, Galen, and *Gorboduc* or *Ferrex and Porrex* (1561) by Thomas Sackville and Thomas Norton, which is considered a pioneering example of English revenge tragedy as distinct for its Senecan aspects in renaissance England. The nature of the plot invites Girard's theory of the "monstrous double". *Gorboduc* is vital to my study of anger because it is the first English revenge tragedy. It pertains to the political, rhetorical and consequential aspects of anger and revenge. The play comments on the nature of anger as a self-consuming emotion: the queen mother in the play kills her own son in revenge for the other son. This play closely follows the Senecan rhetorical style of depicting anger. The power of these rhetorical speeches compels the authors to add dumb-shows at the beginning of each scene where

the audience has the chance to think about the scene before becoming emotionally involved.

These dumb-shows are meant to soothe the power of rhetoric and draw the audience's judgment away from their emotions. This play is fundamental to my research due to its political and cultural focus on anger.

The second Elizabethan text is Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* (1582-1592). Kyd composes the play with the Senecan elements of the Ghost of Andrea and Revenge as characters. Whereas Seneca argues that "no evil can befall a good man", in his essay *On Firmness*, Kyd shows that evil can befall a good man in *The Spanish Tragedy*. Thus, with Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy*; the Elizabethans depart importantly from Seneca's ethical principles and redefine the nature of evil, inasmuch that it now engulfs the "good man". Not only does Kyd depart from Seneca's ethical writing, he also redefines the notion of catharsis by changing revenge from a moral issue into an aesthetic resolution of anger in which revenge is carried out during a play-within-a-play. Kyd uses Seneca's supernatural characters, like ghosts and furies, differently. Even more, Elizabethans, in general, and Kyd in particular use stichomythia, a technique Seneca often uses to portray how, in a state of anger; the characters do not speak *to* each other, but *at* each other. Usually, the Elizabethans use this technique in order to indicate that anger is a theatrically shaped emotion. They use it because it stands for a duel of words, two angry characters doubling the effect of their emotion by killing the meaning of each other's statements. The protagonist in *The Spanish Tragedy* is a good man who is conspired against by the Spanish court. Kyd builds what Paul Ricoeur calls "a myth of accusation" in which Ricoeur discusses the idea of accusation as being the standpoint of judging. Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* turns the Senecan thought of condemning anger, into an ethical problem of sympathizing with the angry avenger. He creates emotional stages whereby the protagonist passes from being a sane character, to extreme grief,

and then to anger. Seneca does not grant his characters the luxury of moving on to different emotional situations: they are angry the minute we encounter them. Furthermore, in *The Spanish Tragedy*, Kyd uses the play-within-the-play in order to enact revenge. The relationship between Senecan drama and the early modern revenge tragedies is discernible if we consider the Elizabethans' fascination with Seneca's rhetorical style of his plays. These techniques, in variant forms, are used in subsequent revenge tragedies such as Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* and *Hamlet*.

In *Titus Andronicus*, Shakespeare is argued to have kept the Senecan revenge tradition, as represented in the Thyestean Feast at the end of the play; he displaces the power of anger onto the language itself. This play displays anger and cruelty mainly at the level of language. Violence in this play is mostly directed towards the organs of speech and writing like tongues and hands. Thus Shakespeare uses the body as a language substitute to bridge the gap between the mute body and its emotions, especially those of pain and grief. Shakespeare's use of the hands and tongue to express pain and anger in Lavinia's case, leads to exaggeration of the rhetoric of grief to the point of fetish fascination with the mutilated body. This fascination is evident in Marcus' speech when he first sees Lavinia. Shakespeare's use of violence is overtly poetic; he makes his audience feel that the angry characters are bleeding language. The anger inflicted on the body merges with the rhetoric of grief in order to fill the space on the stage with bombastic utterances of pain and blood. In *Titus Andronicus* (1593), the space on the stage is filled without having the injured speak. This is because in *Titus Andronicus* revenge is carried out by performing a Thyestean dinner: Titus sets up the dinner as if carrying out a play-within-the-play, in order to complete his revenge. By depicting how the violence of anger cuts through the language of the injured. Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* is influenced with the Senecan

technique of displaying ruthless anger. *Titus Andronicus* is one of the major texts in the thesis due to its displacement of anger from the human subject onto language. Furthermore, this text is vital to my research because it explores the uses of the stage in the absence of language. This play also explores Senecan anger and its influence on language. It proposes that anger does not listen to reason and directs the resulting revenge on the parts of the body that produce language. Vengeful anger in *Titus Andronicus* is about contaminating the purity of the female body in Lavinia's character.

In *Hamlet* (1602), Shakespeare takes the Senecan anger and revenge in more cautiously aesthetic and philosophical directions. I argue that anger becomes an aesthetic question of a self-analytical nature. Hamlet's anger is not directed at an injury so much as it is directed at himself. His soliloquies outdo Seneca's characters in their powerful rhetoric; he does not act on his anger despite talking about it. He acts neither in response to anger nor grief. Hamlet starts the play angry at the remarriage of his mother, but after he has met with the Ghost of his father he becomes doubtful about his emotions. Shakespeare submits the hysterical aspects of Senecan protagonists to an aesthetic representation of self-doubt. The action of the play takes place through Hamlet's emotional words. Shakespeare presents angry characters that form doubles in the play such as Hamlet and Laertes. These doubles interact and collide creating the emotional dynamic which reaches the point of meta-theatrical experience; something that reveals itself in the play-within-the-play. Hamlet sets up *The Murder of Gonzago* to "catch the conscience of the king" (II. ii. 607). In *Hamlet*, anger as a theatrically shaped emotion, becomes a meta-theatrical aspect of Hamlet's revenge plan due to replicating his father's murder in stage production. Hamlet repeats the emotions he expressed in the soliloquies he says after the *Murder of Gonzago*. He tries to use the player's rhetorical speech, the speech which he has asked the player

to perform. Instead, his insanity becomes apparent after the performance of the play-within-the-play in the closet scene. This insanity, although claimed to be false by Hamlet, seems real to Gertrude and the audience alike. Hamlet's madness is not triggered by his anger; it is triggered by his inability to be in a state of Senecan anger whereby he could kill Claudius without having to analyze himself. The interaction between seeming and being is similar to the interaction between life and art in the play in general; and emotion and art in particular. The play shows a considerable influence of Seneca with the intensity of the presence of Hamlet's father's Ghost, yet, it departs from Seneca in the same element (the ghost) because the anger of the Ghost is not ruthlessly blind. The Ghost's anger is aligned with Aristotle's definition rather than Seneca's representation of anger. *Hamlet* is Shakespeare's masterpiece and one of the pillars of English literature studies; however, this is not the reason I chose it for this research. I selected this text because Shakespeare metamorphoses anger from an outspoken emotion into an introspective and self-inflicted analysis of the inner thoughts belonging to an angry individual.

My thesis finds agreement with many critics, three of whom discuss revenge tragedy from different points of view. This tradition deals with revenge as a social, political, and individualistic practice. In his book *Elizabethan Revenge Tragedy 1587-1642* published in (1959) Thayer Fredson Bowers argues that revenge is a social practice in Elizabethan culture. When compared to my thesis, Bowers' analysis fits into the section of the social motives in revenge tragedy texts that discuss social injustices. For him, revenge tragedy is a literary genre that deals with revenge as the moving power behind words. Revenge is an act of retaliation performed against the injurer, by the injured. It is a manifestation of a conception of justice. In the beginning, it was the injured person alone who would take his revenge. Therefore, revenge was a question of strength rather than justice. It then became a collective practice; injury to one



person means an injury to all. The whole family gets involved in the revenge practice if any member gets attacked. This was achieved by the growth of a central power that concerned itself with what has been considered private wrongs. However, the act of revenge defines eras of the human individual motives that influence the social and cultural existence of society. After the state took over the issue of vengeance, public punishment was visited on the offenders. The English audience who attended these executions found pleasure in the sight of blood. Bowers says that early modern audiences revived the Roman practice of watching mortal combat with gladiators. Only premeditated murder was a source of horror for the Elizabethan people. The secretive cold-blooded murder is what scared them most as it offered no motives; therefore, it is malicious and terrifying. The only difference between the public and private executions is that the public execution is administered by an institution, whereas the private murder is supervised by either the existence of certain emotions or the absence of other emotions. In relation to this research, Bowers is valuable for this analysis of revenge within the English state of law; however, he does not address the question of anger as a systematic movement in the dynamics of the revenge tradition, and this is how his work diverges from the line of this research.

Gordon Braden, in *Renaissance Tragedy and the Senecan Tradition: Anger's Privilege* (1985) explains the cultural relation between the representation of anger on the Senecan stage, and the various Elizabethan dramatizations of this emotion in revenge tragedy. Braden discusses the meaning of Senecan drama in Roman and Elizabethan contexts. More specifically, Braden argues for the “privilege” of anger on the Elizabethan stage. He talks about the metamorphosis of anger from the Senecan stage onto the Elizabethan one and explores the possibilities of Elizabethan social identity. Braden talks about anger in relation to Seneca’s influence on the Elizabethan revenge tragedy. He talks about the Elizabethan imitation of Seneca not as a static

object, but as an ongoing process of modification. He analyses Senecan rhetoric and imagery in relation to Seneca's historical background and to the Elizabethan understanding of these images and rhetorical utterances. Braden maps out the philosophical dimension of anger in Senecan and Elizabethan texts. He, however, does not talk about demanding justice. He differs in this aspect from Linda Woodbridge, whose book *English Revenge Drama: Money Resistance, Equality* (2010), talks about revenge tragedy as being the quest for justice, and proposes that translating Seneca's plays implies an act of resisting tyrants, rather than an act of encouraging political passivism. She defends this controversial statement in Chapter Two, which addresses the Elizabethan attraction to Seneca's philosophy and drama. For Braden, the ancient philosophical dispute about the nature of anger is manifested in the absence of a discussion of justice in relation to revenge; for Woodbridge, the focus is on justice in relation to revenge and resistance, as will be discussed in due course.

Robert Miola, the third critic under discussion here, addresses revenge as a cultural practice. His *Shakespeare and Classical Tragedy* (1992) proves invaluable to this research talks about the influence of Seneca through an analysis of Shakespeare's tragedies. This book relates to the study of anger in general and to the study of the Senecan influence on the Elizabethan revenge tragedy in particular.

Additionally, I have found Martha Nussbaum's works on ancient philosophy very informative about the different views of Greek and Roman philosophers concerning emotion in general, and anger in particular. In her book, *Therapy of Desire: Theory and Practice in Hellenistic Philosophy*, (1994) Nussbaum discusses the Roman and Greek debate about emotions. She agrees with Aristotle's proposal that emotions have a cognitive origin because they are natural part of human psychology. She gives a historical account of the political and historical

development of these arguments. Her work will particularly influence the theoretical aspect of this thesis. She explains the Aristotelian and Senecan definitions of emotion, and talks about the therapeutic effects of philosophy on the passions. Her methodology for analyzing emotion is Senecan, although her discourse is Aristotelian. She agrees that emotions are part of human psychology, but she uses an emotive style to prove it. She relates to some Elizabethan representations of anger. Also, she insists on the fact that the ancient philosophers' views about the emotions are still of great importance to our contemporary understanding of them.

John Kerrigan treats revenge at the level of a cultural practice. In his *Revenge Tragedy: Aeschylus to Armageddon* (1996), Kerrigan examines the revenge phenomenon, raising questions about the legitimacy of the act, and producing definitions about revenge tragedy in many literary works:

Revenge is a cultural practice which arouses intense emotion, not only in those who exact or endure it but in those who stand by and judge. Much of its capacity to disturb stems from its paradoxical nature...partly because of this; revenge is regarded as 'a kinde of wilde justice', as Francis Bacon says<sup>9</sup>.

Defined as a cultural practice, revenge describes both social and literary dramatic traditions in a certain society. Revenge complicates drama, shaping situations through violence, personae made frantic, and the bearing-out of emotionally compelling grievances. Moreover, revenge scrutinizes the forgiveness argument within the framework of reprisal. By the practice of revenge, forgiveness, which is a matter of cultural pride in some societies, can represent a form of vendetta, as is the case in Heywood's *A Woman Killed With Kindness*. Kerrigan analyzes the various plots of Elizabethan revenge tragedies mainly in relation to the emotional representation

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<sup>9</sup> John Kerrigan, *Revenge Tragedy: Aeschylus to Armageddon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), vii.

of the protagonists. Kerrigan's treatment of revenge tragedy is different from Bowers'. Bowers, writing before Kerrigan, talks about the act of revenge. His analysis is more political than Kerrigan's, who traces the development of the revenge tradition through classic philosophies and modes of religious thought. In respect to the project at hand, Kerrigan's analysis will be used to inspect the nature of emotion, and to discuss how these definitions relate to tragedy.

A.J. Boyle's *Tragic Seneca: An Essay in the Theatrical Tradition* (1997) is invaluable to this research because it reinvestigates Seneca's influence on Elizabethan revenge tragedy. Boyle presents a historical and cultural analysis of Seneca's tragedies. He examines the complexity of Seneca's rhetorical style, and the influence of Roman culture on his dramatic creativity. Boyle also reexamines the position of Seneca's tragedies to the major Elizabethan dramatists. Furthermore, Boyle contextualizes the influence of Seneca's drama on the European revenge tradition thus contextualizing the importance of studying Seneca in relation to the cultural, political, and theatrical impact on revenge tragedy in Elizabethan England, in general, and Europe in particular.

For Linda Woodbridge (2010), the obsession with revenge in renaissance English drama stems from the quest for justice. The early modernists show the need for exact punishment through injury. This obsession with the "balancing" act of revenge is not only the result of the injury; it also denotes that realizing that justice is impossible to achieve in the part of the avenger is the main cause of anger and violence. This shows similarities between her and Bowers. Her point is that there was a well-developed tradition of opposition to tyranny and that this fed into revenge tragedy, making it more socially constructive than we might have thought. Woodbridge talks about the history of the concept of justice as a cultural practice. She goes on to examine the relationship between revenge, justice, and drama, laying the groundwork for her discussion of

the role of the goddesses Fortuna and Justice. The book answers questions about the cultural nature of tragedy and justice. Woodbridge proposes the idea of materialistic justice in revenge. She describes the avengers as accountants who need to balance the injury as if it were an account book. The ensuing argument is that anger and madness are rational. They channel the mind to focus on revenge as a balancing act which finds confluence with humoral psychology in reference to emotions and the relationship between the body and the mind.

In this project, I embark on a study of cultural assimilation of Seneca's dramatization of anger and his philosophical writings of emotions and how these were adapted by early modern revenge tragedy dramatists. I use anger to look at the historical, political and social axis that influenced the construction of one of the prevailing genres in the English literature of the early modern period. I will investigate how anger becomes a cultural and aesthetic product on stage.

## Chapter One

### The Philosophy of Anger

Anger turns everything from what is best and most righteous to the opposite. It causes whosoever has come into its clutches to forget his duty: make a father angry, he's an enemy; make a son angry, he's a parricide. Anger makes a mother a stepmother, a fellow-citizen a foreign enemy, a king a tyrant. (SENECA 2010:16).

Seneca's judgment of anger as a philosophical topic could not have been more compelling. Talking about anger is a difficult task whether for a philosopher, a critic or a student, yet it is a cutting edge topic which needs careful examination. There are vast numbers of studies on its qualities and disadvantages. Seneca's theoretical writing portrays anger as both dangerous and creative at the same time. In his dramatic works however, anger is not portrayed in entirely negative terms. Both strains of writing exerted influence on later theatrical traditions. Throughout his treatise *De Ira*, or *On Anger*, Seneca's treatment of anger, and his dramatic works are literary forces of influence on the latter theatrical traditions. The main focus of this study is to examine Seneca's treatment of anger and his influence on the Elizabethan theatrical tradition. His account of anger, though philosophical in nature, underscores the civilizing effect of the Roman conventions on the revenge tragedy tradition in Elizabethan culture.

Seneca's philosophical work, and his dramatic tragedies, offer stylistically contradictory readings of anger; they are so different in both style and substance as almost to contradict each other. In his ethical writings, Seneca shows anger to be physically malicious and

mentally dangerous, whereas when we examine Seneca's plays, they show that anger is significant:

Atreus: some greater thing, larger than the common and beyond the bounds of human use is swelling in my soul, and it urges on my sluggish hands - I know not what it is, but 'tis some mighty thing. So let it be. Haste, thou, my soul, and do it. 'Tis a deed worthy of Thyestes, and of Atreus worthy; let each perform it... Let the father with joyous greed rend his sons, and his own flesh devour. 'Tis well, more than enough. This way of punishment is pleasing. (SENECA 1917: 114-15).

Atreus' speech highlights Seneca's philosophical view of anger; it demonstrates the dangers of this emotion taking over reason. The speech criticizes Aristotle's definition of catharsis as a pleasurable conclusion of a tragic punishment. However, Atreus admits that his hands are sluggish, and that his anger is the reason he is able to proceed with his plan. Henceforth, anger is what defines his relationship with his brother for him.

Anger affects our understanding of ourselves and others. It affects our understanding of words and phrases as much as it influences our attempts to produce them. Anger can be described as an existential state of mind whereby individuals define their choices by reacting to injury. These responses result in revenge; in these cases, they define the relations among family members, or the people of a state. Seneca shows anger to be a destructive emotion that causes disharmony in human communications, tears apart social interactions, and leads to war. Seneca is showing the dangers of anger, and at the same time, cannot escape its significance in being the backbone of the action –or action itself – in the play.

The nature of anger is not solely negative. It can unite divine rhetoric with demonic consequences; it can represent righteous indignation, or destructive blood thirsty passion that seeks death at all times. Anger can help us come to a decision, but how trustworthy is a decision if made in the grip of such arbitrary emotion? There is a sense that anger is deeply stimulating

and energizing, a burst of thoughts and judgment that allow us to dig a little deeper, to reach beneath the superficial and question the familiar. In contrast, when our mood is neutral or content, there is no incentive to embrace the unfamiliar, to engage in mental risk-taking and come up with new ways of thinking. The absence of criticism keeps us in the same place. Anger makes it easier to think anew about what we usually take for granted. Anger is connected with the fear and anxiety of the people surrounding the angry person. The connection between these emotions results in creating what is perceived as moral judgment, a concept which can be further explained from a Senecan perspective:

Anger is regarded as negative, a response to frustration, described by Averill (1980) as conflictive. According to Averill, the conflict is between two different moral judgments, the one being the right or desire to protect oneself or one's property, the other the social sanction against harming another... In terms of theory, too, anger is an important emotion because of its intimate relationship with morality or moral judgment<sup>1</sup>.

This quotation demonstrates how usually theories of anger are related to moral and ethical norms. The association between rage and ethics varies between cultures. Understanding these connections shapes the relationship between theatre and anger in early modern culture and literature. The nature of anger will be analyzed and defined within the context of the Elizabethan revenge tragedy. Seneca's analysis of anger labels it as an error of judgment. Aristotle tried to "defend" anger by differentiating it from hatred.

It is necessary, therefore, to differentiate between anger and hatred. This separation will be contextualized in the light of the philosophical debate among philosophers like Seneca, Aristotle, and Galen who establish an anatomy of these two emotions, emphasizing their difference:

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<sup>1</sup> Susan Kippax, June Crawford, et al., *Emotion and Gender: Constructing Meaning from Memory* (London: Sage Publications, 1992), 167.



*Let anger, then, be desire, accompanied by pain, for revenge for an obvious belittlement of oneself or one of one's dependents, the belittlement being uncalled for.* If, then, this is anger, then the angry man must always be angry with a *particular person* (e.g. with Cleon, but not with mankind), and because that man has done or is about to do something to the angry man himself or one of his dependants, and with all anger there must be an attendant *pleasure*, that from the *prospect of revenge*<sup>2</sup>.

Aristotle separates anger from hatred. However, in Seneca's work, these emotions are not differentiated as such. This can lead to inconsistencies in Seneca's definitions of anger. Seneca dwells upon Aristotle's use of the word *belittlement*. The terminology used by Seneca in *On Anger* is borrowed from Aristotle's, in order to argue against Aristotle's definition. The emphasis on the word *belittle* brings back Seneca's own definition of this emotion in his treatise *On Anger*. This may be considered an act of *belittling* anger from the Senecan point of view, but it is not the case in his plays. Seneca dramatizes anger in order to criticize it, yet, angry characters are given the best lines and they come up with cunning plans. Seneca makes anger and the revenge that results from it appealing and seductive. In his treatise *On Anger*, Seneca endeavors to dismiss Aristotle's argument indirectly, and tries to *belittle* him by associating his "defense" of anger with violent incidents:

Such was the ferocity of barbarian kings when in anger – men who had had no contacts with learning or the culture of letters. But I shall now show you a king from the very bosom of Aristotle, even Alexander, who in the midst of the feast with his own hand stabbed Clitus, his dearest friend, with whom he had grown up, because he withheld his flattery and was reluctant to transform himself from a Macedonian and a free man into a Persian slave. (SENECA: 2010, 77)

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<sup>2</sup>Aristotle, *The Art of Rhetoric*, trans. H.C. Lawson-Tancred (London: Penguin, 2004), 142.

Seneca does not keep this assertion at the forefront of his writing. However, it explains the vast difference between Seneca's ethical views on anger and his highly emotional, rhetorical, bloodthirsty, and very violent plays. The obvious ferocity of Seneca's wording partially destabilizes the relationship he bears towards his own ethical writing. It says that anger is a characteristic of certain nations, which Seneca labels as barbarous. The word *belittle* in the previous quotation is used by Seneca to criticize Aristotle. The king is a barbarian, and his barbarism becomes contextualized by association with Aristotle. Seneca aims at explaining his attack on Aristotle in a manner that is borrowed from Aristotle's own definition of anger as being directed towards a *particular* person.

The differences between how Seneca perceives anger in his philosophical writing and how he dramatizes it in his tragedies is best examined by introducing humoral psychology in relation to Senecan ethics, drama, and the Elizabethan text. This theory is contemporary to the Elizabethan texts and it will be introduced in due course. Before that, a brief introduction about Stoicism is due in order to enhance our understanding of Seneca's view of anger and his dramatizing of this emotion. It is suggested that humoral psychology worked to increase the prestige of Seneca's view of anger at the expense of Aristotle's view. There is quite a bit of criticism of Elizabethan drama nowadays addressing it in humoral terms. Gail Kern Paster uses Ben Jonson's play *Every Man in His Humour* to explain Elizabethans' humoral understanding of anger:

Anger maintains physical and psychological boundaries that other emotions might compromise. For Jonson, the overarching issues of civil life may thus reduce to the question of managing quarrelsomeness – which seems to be the characteristic temperature and endpoint of urban intercourse. This is not because of the inevitability of anger, generally, but because of the incentive to aggression and impulsivity – both structural and psycho physiological – that exist when individuals have to negotiate their places in an unclear social order and are forced to

share the same physical and symbolic spaces with equally anxious others<sup>3</sup>.

According to Paster, anger has powerful effect on individuals who share the same sphere, as sometimes, it does other emotions. In comparison, to the Stoics the most important and meaningful fact about the universe was that the universe is harmonious and ordered. It was this order that the Greeks called divine, and the purpose of philosophical thought was to contemplate the divine. The Stoics viewed the universe as a single living entity, regulated by reasoning, of which we are all part. In other words, the Stoics, as well, thought of the universe as a divine totality. Planets, humans, suns all have their purpose as part of the divine ordered structure of the cosmos, just as heart, lungs, and liver all have their purpose in a human. This is not an external personal God who takes an interest in our welfare, but rather a universe, logically ordered on the cosmic scale, with laws humans could discover through science and philosophy. Logic formed an important core in Stoic teaching as a means of relating our existence to what surrounds us, and therefore uncovering the meaning of our lives. For them, emotions are misguided judgments which disturb this order.

The Stoics, including Seneca, propose that every emotion involves two distinctive value judgments, one that is “good or bad”, and these emotions demand reactions. For them, fear is the judgment that there is something bad which it is appropriate to avoid<sup>4</sup>. The decision made under the influence of an emotion bears double results:

In anger, for example, the idea is that it is appropriate for me to be avenged, or for him to be punished. I need not think, in such a case, that I am myself in a position to carry out the reaction, or

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<sup>3</sup> Gail Kern Paster, *Humoring the Body: Emotions and the Shakespearean Stage* (Chicago: University of Chicago press, 2004), 221.

<sup>4</sup>Richard Sorabji, *Emotion and Peace of Mind: from Stoic Agitation to Christian Temptation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 29-30.

even that anyone else is. It is merely that punishment *would* be right. Although anger is classed as an appetite looking forward to revenge, the idea of vengeance imports a reference to a present evil, which makes anger akin to grief; the stoics help us to see how easily anger and grief can slide one into the other.(SORBAJI 2002:31).

In the quotation, there is an association between emotions and value judgments for the Stoics and for Senecan ethics. Every emotion requires a specific reaction. Hence, the Stoics see revenge as the natural response to anger. Their assumption focuses on anger as a feeling that is accompanied by a judgment. This proposes the idea of emotions hijacking reason. They think that emotions should be controlled by reason. In other words, emotions for them are an introspective process that involves subconscious judgmental power. Emotions camouflage themselves as reasoning, which dangerously affects judgment. Furthermore, Senecan Stoicism associates anger with sadness rather than hatred because the sad individual blames others for causing grief and becomes angry with them. The association that the Stoics make between anger and grief appears in Seneca's explanation of their symptoms, movements and function:

Now, to make plain how passions begin or grow or get carried away: there is the initial involuntary movement – a preparation for the passion, as it were, and a kind of threatening signal; there is a second movement accompanied by an expression of will not stubbornly resolved, to the effect that “I should be avenged, since I have been harmed” or “this man should be punished, since he’s committed a crime.” The third movement’s already out of control, it desires vengeance not if it’s appropriate, but come what may, having overthrown reason. We can not avoid that first mental jolt with reason’s help, just as we cannot avoid the other movements that (as I’ve mentioned) befall our bodies, just as we cannot overcome those movements, though perhaps their force can be lessened if we become used to them and constantly keep a watch for them (SENECA 2010: 36-37)

Here, Seneca is distinguishing between emotion as judgment and a kind of pre-emotion that precedes cognitive notice. Thus the Stoic sage might experience fear at imminent shipwreck, but this is not *really* fear because it assaults him before he has had a chance to take proper cognitive notice of it. Once he takes cognitive note, he does not feel fear because the cognition proper to fear is not present. Seneca's insistence on the movement of the mind as being a reaction towards external circumstances, what lies beyond one's power, brings up the issue of prelude in reaction to the unfair events. The prelude is essential in stopping anger from taking over reasoning. These movements occur before the existence of the emotion. Seneca intensifies the discussion of this specific emotion by attributing it to this composite mechanism in production. He says that anger is not easily provoked; therefore, from his point of view, controlling it is effortless. Having stated this, Seneca dramatizes his description of anger. He thinks that anger is a transformational process in the mind. Kerrigan explains Seneca's description of anger in the light of the early Stoics:

A dualistic urge, partly derived from Posidonius, to speak of the enslavement of reason by passion (e.g. I. vii. 3-4) is thus modified by the early Stoic belief that 'passion and reason are only the transformation of the mind toward the better or the worse' (I. viii. 3). This makes for a supple model of psychology, one which preserves Aristotle's insistence on the cognitive dimension of the emotions while identifying internal oscillations between reason and impulsive rage<sup>5</sup>.

Kerrigan suggests that the relation between passions and reason sets a dialectical argument about the emotion's role in hijacking reason. For Stoics, emotions do not take over the brain so much as change its movement. The mind's movements are identical with the outer circumstances; this

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<sup>5</sup>John Kerrigan, *Revenge Tragedy: Aeschylus to Armageddon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 114.

is just the onset of the real emotions, whether positive or negative. These transformations pivotally decide the extremity of anger's manifestation on the irritated individual's facial expressions. Anger rises from rationally held ideas about the world. The problem with those ideas is that they are far too optimistic. Seneca thinks that people get angry because they are too hopeful. Anger stems from a person's own perception of justice. The "good" features of life that humans cling to are what surprises and angers them. Seneca suggests fending off optimism. He calls for pessimism, and invites us to be prepared for the worst in order to be neither sad nor angry. It can be argued that Seneca's view of anger is consistent with political pessimism: i.e., anger arises because our expectations of justice are too high; we should therefore simply expect to be treated unjustly, and so thus avoid getting angry. This argument mainly aims at leading to political quietism and disengagement with the concept of justice. Seneca lived up to these principles to the point of ending his life at Nero's request:

You become less wrathful when you let go of your high expectations of the world: Let our activities, consequently, be neither petty, nor yet bold and presumptuous; let us restrict the range of hope; let us attempt nothing which later, even after we have achieved it, will make us surprised that we have succeeded. Since we do not know how to bear injury, let us endeavor not to receive one. We should live with a calm and good-natured-person; one that is never worried or captious; we adopt our habits from those with whom we associate, and as certain diseases of the body spread to others from contact, so the mind transmits its faults to those near-by<sup>6</sup>.

For Seneca, anger happens because it is the individual's way of reacting towards undesired occurrences in their life. Seneca believes that humans become angry because they suppose the world runs according to their expectations, and that the world should conform to their wishes. Therefore, he recommends that it is better to acquiesce to the world's unexpected occurrences

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<sup>6</sup>Lucius Annaeus Seneca, *Moral Essays*, trans. John W. Basore (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1928), 273.

rather than try to change them. Humans are unable to alter certain events, so it is better for them to change their attitudes towards these events. It is this ability to change our approach that gives us a distinctive kind of freedom. Seneca thinks that adapting to the circumstances will keep humans calm. Therefore, in order to be at peace, it is better not to expect perfection in the world. As a result Seneca thought that daily meditation on what goes wrong in life is a good way to be prepared for the unexpected to take place and not be angry. Humans are not the masters of their own destiny; they become slaves to extreme passions once they become dissatisfied with what they have. Their anger at what happens leads them to stray from the path of rationality. They become locked within a vicious circle of angry feelings at not acquiring what is beyond their ability to obtain, or at the thought that they are weak. Seneca's analysis of anger is accompanied with a prescription:

So what you need is not those radical remedies which we have now finished with – blocking yourself here, being angry with yourself there, threatening yourself sternly somewhere else but the final treatment, confidence in yourself and the belief that you are on the right path, and not led astray by the many tracks which cross yours of people who are hopelessly lost, though some are wander not far from the true path<sup>7</sup>.

Seneca recommends preparation against what can happen in our life, as one of the remedies against excessive emotions. Confidence in one's ability to believe that the individual is on the right way is one of the cures Seneca recommends to heal the unstable violent emotion which will entrap humans into violence. Seneca proposes a different approach. In his treatise *On Anger*, he presents a detailed analysis of the emotion, and looks into the nature and movements of anger as motions of the mind. Psychological approach that suggests emotions are easier to control. They are "Shadows of passion" in Seneca's opinion; as he puts it:

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<sup>7</sup>Lucius Annaeus Seneca, *Dialogues and Letters*, ed. C.D.N. Costa (London: Penguin Books, 1997), 33.

For as Zeno says: “even the wise man’s mind will keep its scar long after the wound has healed.” He will experience, therefore, certain suggestions and shadows of passion, but from passion itself he will be free. (SENECA 1928:151).

In his interpretation of Zeno, Seneca suggests that reason is a sufficient means of survival.

Reason is balanced and direct to the point, whereas anger is pretentious, weak and mad. Seneca analyses the nature of this emotion: anger goes through stages before it takes the shape of violent and bloodthirsty revenge. These stages are summed by Seneca in the following:

Such sensations, however, are no more anger than it is sorrow which furrows the brow at sight of a mimic shipwreck, no more anger than that is fear which thrills our minds when we read how Hannibal after Cannae beset the walls of Rome, but they are all passions of a mind that would prefer not to be so affected; they are not passions, but the beginnings that are preliminary to passions...None of these things which move the mind through the agency of chance should be called passions; the mind suffers them, so to speak, rather than cause them.(Seneca1928: 171).

The condemnation of anger in the Senecan sense draws attention to its origins and dangers.

Seneca often associates anger with madness and volatility. Tranquility is an essential part of the soul which anger attacks and shakes. These stages are, for Seneca, what makes anger controllable and possible for this to be subservient to reason. It is easier to control anger if it is caught in the first stage. Humoral psychology posits a comparable view of anger:

The very activity of mechanically repeating these conventional movements – the impulsive stride, the stamping foot, the gnashing teeth, the strident trembling voice – “will thus infallibly cast on his mind a dim feeling of anger that will react on his body and will produce such changes as do not solely upon his will. His face will glow, his eyes sparkle, his muscles will dilate; in short he will seem to be truly furious without being so[i.e., in his soul], without comprehending in the least why he should do so.” These mechanical actions thus stimulate “involuntary changes”<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> Joseph Roach, *The Player's Passion*, (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1993), 84.



What Roach is saying here is that there are similarities between the description of the movement of anger in Seneca, and what is labeled as a humoral conception of anger and its power. Humoral psychology, however, states that anger is part of the human body, whereas Seneca thinks that anger is an intruder on the body “the mind suffers them, so to speak, rather than cause[s] them”(Seneca 1928: 171). For Seneca, those who act in accordance with anger are not noble. Seneca was aware of the cruel rich people in Nero’s court; they inspired his writings on anger. He often highlights the relationship between the slaves and their angry masters, as Miriam Griffin notes:

The Stoic doctrine of the wickedness of all passions was naturally applied to that relationship which most of all encouraged anger and licentiousness. In *De Ira*, Seneca draws some of his most vivid examples from this area of life, showing that the slave narrows his yoke by succumbing to angry feelings, and that the master who punishes his slave in anger has not made sure that there is sufficient cause or estimated the appropriate degree of punishment<sup>9</sup>.

In the above quotation, Griffin explains that Seneca encourages the subjugating figures of the social strata, the masters, to search for a reason behind the punishment they inflict on slaves. He says that accepting anger from a superior will increase its power of destruction. Freedom from fear of death, freedom from bodily desires, self-control, and attainment of virtue are primary philosophical positives. He tries to educate the masters about punishment. For him, the masters should have a reasonable cause for penalizing their slaves. Seneca complicates this relationship between the anger of masters and the passiveness of the slaves. He explains the slave master relation to anger in terms of class division. He is interested in the way that the master’s virtues are undermined by their emotion. Noticeably, he does not blame the slaves for their submissiveness:

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<sup>9</sup> Miriam Griffin, *Seneca: a Philosopher in Politics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), 261.

“Anger”, it is said, “is expedient because it escapes contempt, because it terrifies the wicked.” In the first place, if the power of anger is commensurate with its threats, for the very reason that it is terrible it is likewise hated; besides, it is more dangerous to be feared than to be scorned. If, however, anger is powerless, it is even more exposed to contempt and does not escape ridicule. For what is more silly than the futile blustering of anger. (SENECA 1928: 189)

This is an account of the social and political background Seneca used when composing his treatise *On Anger* which is a recurrent reference in this chapter due to its importance in examining the staging this emotion in Elizabethan revenge tragedy.

Seneca’s lifetime compelled him to undertake this project of dealing with anger. He witnessed a lot of cruel punishments and horrible acts performed by powerful angry figures, which, as we have seen, he addressed by urging humans to lower their expectations. He encourages political quietism. Implicitly, Seneca rejects powerful men’s anger under the cover of philosophy, at the same time mounting a social and political critique. He justifies this critique by saying that it is dangerous to argue with anger, because it refuses to listen to reason or submit to rationality. Citizens fear the indiscriminate wrath of their governments and succumb to the anger of superior powers, but none try to ridicule or underestimate the power of this emotion.

Building on the idea that anger is presented poetically within the political system, Martha Nussbaum gives a clear analysis to some of the ambiguity in Seneca’s definition of anger. Nussbaum proposes that Stoicism is therapeutic in writing; yet, she criticizes it as a practice. For her, Seneca does not treat anger as part of the human psychological state. In her opinion, he disregards what she labels key concepts in his definition of this emotion:

Seneca’s central line of argument to Novatus has three parts: an account of anger that shows it to be non-natural and non-necessary, an artefact of judgment; an argument that anger is not necessary or even useful as a

motivation for correct conduct; an argument from excess, showing Novatus that the angry person is prone to violence and cruelty. In other words, Seneca does not rely on showing that the beliefs of the angry person about the importance of injury are false; and, as we shall see, the desire not to confront the interlocutor openly on this point is a source of considerable complexity in the argument<sup>10</sup>.

Nussbaum suggests that Seneca's treatise displays inconsistency. Seneca, she argues, does not seem sure about eradicating emotion nor does he give a clear cut definition as to how one might do that. He speculates as to the cure without clarifying his argument. Nussbaum's proposition can be best understood in the light of humoral psychologists' approach to anger. Borrowings from humoral psychology clarify the divide between Seneca's theory of anger and his dramatization of the emotion on stage in his plays. Seneca uses his rhetorical and dramatic style in a rhetorical frame work in order to sound convincing:

Behold solitudes stretching lonely for many miles without a single dweller-anger laid the waste. Behold all the leaders who have been handed down to posterity as instances of an evil fate- anger stabbed this one in his bed, struck down this one amid the sanctities of the feast, tore this one to pieces in the very home of the law and in full view of the crowded forum, forced this one to have his blood spilled by the murderous act of his son, another to have his royal throat cut by the hand of a slave, another to have his limbs stretched upon the cross.(SENECA 1928: 111).

In the reference, Seneca's argument is elusive. It is emotive, which makes his meaning difficult to grasp. It is constructed as an emotional vein to attack anger. Seneca's language often sounds emotional and threatening. He resorts to rhetorical questions when he reaches the zenith of his attack on emotion. This is an indication that his call for total eradication of emotions is not a success. If Seneca is emotional when writing about emotions, then it suggests a rhetorical strategy: namely he has to provoke the reader's abhorrence of anger to achieve his purpose. On the other hand, there is another kind of proof in Galen: "psychological proof", which considers

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<sup>10</sup>Martha Craven Nussbaum, *The Therapy of Desire: Theory and Practice in Hellenistic Ethics*(Princeton.: Princeton University Press, 1994), 410.

emotions to be parts of the human body, and are constituents of the body-mind relationship. This is distinct from Seneca's "emotional proof". It is odd that Seneca does not use the psychological proof but the emotional one, since he criticizes emotions and those who defend them. Perhaps he is trying to dramatize the seductiveness of anger:

“There can be no doubt,” you say, “that such a force is powerful and pernicious; show, therefore, how it is to be cured.” And yet, as I said in my earlier books, Aristotle stands forth as the defender of anger, and forbids us to cut it out; it is, he claims, a spur to virtue, and if the mind is robbed of it, it becomes defenseless and grows sluggish and indifferent to high endeavour. Therefore, our first necessity is to prove its foulness and fierceness, and to set before the eyes what an utter monster a man is when he is enraged against a fellow man, with what fury he rushes on working destruction – destructive of himself as well wrecking what cannot be sunk with it... Can anyone assign this passion to virtue as its supporters and consort when it confounds the resolves without which virtue accomplishes nothing? (SENECA 1928: 259-260)

Seneca's style is not stable; he sounds angry because he uses powerful nouns “foulness” and “fierceness”. The use of these terms is emotive, aimed at provoking anger. Seneca is against feeling anger or communicating anger to others, and yet he sounds angry when talking about Aristotle as the “defender of anger”. Instead of approaching Aristotle's defense of anger logically, Seneca, in an aggressive manner, attacks him. This argument carries Seneca's discussion of anger in favor of Aristotle's defense of it because of its element of irrationality. This undermines the validity Seneca's argument about eradicating emotions. True, Seneca asks people to consult reason over anger; however, in his treatise, he depends on individual incidents in which the angry person is rebuked by someone else to prove that Stoicism works as a daily routine. His examples are not always about angry individuals who act on Stoic principles when hurt. He talks about Stoic philosophers, who respond towards injuries in a Stoic manner, like Cato (95 BC–46 BC) to set his examples. For Seneca, anger is irrational. Nussbaum explains:

He will pursue the murder of his father, the rape of his mother; he will defend himself and his own (1. 12). In such passages Seneca might be read as saying that the difference between the angry person and the non-angry person is a non-cognitive difference: they both have the same reasons and judgments, but one has a kind of furious passionate motivation that the other does not. (NUSSBAUM 1994: 414).

Seneca thinks that unjust situations are cognitively unfeasible, yet he calls the angry reactions towards them misguided judgments. Seneca calls for the dissociation of anger from human existence. He describes it as kind of wrathful judgment about the external circumstances that are beyond the individual's control. He characterizes the word "external" as "fortune" which signifies the circumstances that are out of the human control. In this case; the difference between the angry and the non-calm is in judgment rather than reason. Hence, it may be argued that Seneca denies that humans are born with aggressive or angry instincts in them; belligerence grows outside of them by interacting with the externals. It is the bloodthirsty emotion that seeks pleasure in returning an injury for pain and oversteps humanity to achieve that. However, Seneca thinks that the study of philosophy is the healer of aggressive thoughts. It can be argued that Seneca is being restrictive in that perspective because the hypothesis is that Stoic philosophy is the healer of those wrong judgments. Nussbaum writes:

Seneca is not altogether explicit at this point concerning the judgments that are at the root of this non-natural passion; and we shall soon see how difficult it is for him to be so. But, given that even the Aristotelian position makes judgments of a certain sort necessary conditions for anger, he is, with his interlocutor, on safe ground: anger is in some way or another a social artefact, a product of what we are taught to believe and judge, for which any non-cognitive bodily predisposition (cf. 2. 17ff.) will prove insufficient. (NUSSBAUM 1994: 412)

Seneca's treatment of anger is ambiguous and rhetorical in nature. It is argued that there is more to anger than simply having a bloodthirsty drive to destroy. Getting rid of anger in

human life, leads to the death of defensive instincts. Seneca attacks the passions with emotionally charged statements which undermine his attack. Nevertheless, this attack, as we saw earlier, turns Seneca's argument against itself. As L.D. Reynolds has it:

Finally, the devastating point of his style and the almost endless supply of ready-made eloquence which he furnished on a variety of several topics provided the soldiers of the church with ample ammunition for both attack and defense. His power to persuade could be used with effect on the side of Christianity, and it is noticeable that the *eloquentia* is stressed as much as his moral earnestness. Ironically, his eloquence was occasionally turned against himself<sup>11</sup>.

This quotation conforms to the idea that Seneca is comfortable with using emotional rhetoric and passionate eloquence when teaching against the passions. Seneca's moral writings are highly pompous; however, the incidents he narrates in his treatise do not justify the portrayal of horrific situations depicted in his plays. This would explain the arguable contradictions between what he asks for in his *Moral Essays* and his plays. Trying to tackle this issue, it may be useful to recapitulate the Stoic ethics in general and Seneca's axis of morality in particular. Although he is often characterized as a Stoic, there are crucial differences between Seneca's philosophy and classic Stoicism.

Rather than describe Seneca a strict Stoic, it is usually suggested that he composes his views *within* the Stoic philosophy. He maintains Stoic views, but he does not think of himself as someone's follower. Seneca thinks of himself as a philosopher like the rest of the Stoics. Moreover, Seneca is not interested in conforming to the Stoic views. Seneca implements ideas from other schools of thought if they sound helpful to him. Seneca seems to think of philosophical points of view as if they were suggestions made in a court of law, where it is

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<sup>11</sup>L.D. Reynolds, *The Medieval Tradition of Seneca's Letters* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), 114.

ordinary practice to ask the advocate of the suggestion to split it up in two proposals, so that one can agree with one half, and vote against the other.

Stoics focus on self-preservation in their ethical teachings. Individuals are asked to do what helps them continue existing. Stoicism does not only focus on preserving the body, it also aims to protect the soul against whatever will corrupt it. Therefore, rational individuals are asked to choose what is “good” for their existence and avoid what is “bad”. The logic of choice compels the rational human being to keep a clear mind, which means that individuals must get rid of their emotions. For the Stoics, emotions are diseases of the soul; they can be cured by subordinating the soul to reason. Stoics define emotions as mistaken judgments. They propose the idea that philosophical freedom results from remaining emotionless. Stoicism believes that happiness consists of virtue, and virtue is achieved by living in accordance with nature, and it stems from the self-preservation principle. It can be demonstrated as the well-being of the rational human.

Stoic ethics are summarized by John Sellars:

The Stoic ethical ideal, built upon Stoic physics and epistemology, is striking. The only thing that has inherent goodness, and so the only things with which we should concern ourselves, is virtue, conceived as an excellent internal disposition of the soul; a healthy mind, we might say. All external objects and states of affairs are strictly speaking neither good nor bad and so should be a matter of indifference to us. Many of the emotions that we suffer are based upon mistaken judgments on our part, judgments that attribute spurious value to indifferent externals. These emotions are diseases of the soul and they reduce our well-being or happiness<sup>12</sup>.

As seen in the quotation, the contradiction in the Stoic doctrine stems from their fragile self-preservation motto. They call for preserving human life, although they also advocate suicide under particular conditions. This helps to explain Seneca’s ambivalent attitude towards anger in

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<sup>12</sup> John Sellars, *Stoicism* (Chesham: Acumen, 2006), 133.

his ethics and his plays. In his ethics he invites us to ignore our feelings of anger. In his plays he gives anger the best of the speeches. Moreover, the Stoics' "emotion-free" life eliminates a major part of the individual's "self-preservation" motive. Seneca tries to dismiss the issue of emotions in general and anger in particular as means of human well-being in his essay *On Providence*. In this treatise, Seneca attempts to say that misfortunes befall those who deserve them, and that therefore "no harm can befall a good man":

I shall reconcile you with the gods, who are ever best to those who are best. For nature never permits good to be injured by good; between good men and the gods there exists a friendship brought by virtue... You ask "why do many adversities come to good men? No evil *can* befall a good man; opposites do not mingle. (SENECA 1928: 7)

In order to understand Seneca's rather controversial statement, it is useful to refer back to his understanding of the master-slave relationship which is mentioned earlier in the chapter. Seneca believes in the natural order of men. This order, for him, will not allow "opposites to mingle". He thinks if the natural order is kept stable, the "good man" will not have to blend with evil people. Seneca does not explain the term "good man". It can be argued, though, that "good man" means the man who studies philosophy and abides by it. The position of the "good man" is maintained by studying philosophy, and is enhanced by giving way to "the external" without being emotionally moved. On the qualities of a good man and what makes a "bad man", Seneca says:

"If you are well, it is well; I also am well." Persons like ourselves would do well to say: "if you are studying philosophy, it is well." For this is just what "being well" means. Without philosophy the mind is sickly, and the



body, too, though it may be very powerful, is strong only as that of a mad man or a lunatic is strong<sup>13</sup>.

Here, Seneca presents a rough definition of good and bad men. This categorization falls under two main influences; the first is the study of philosophy, and the deference to logic in preserving one's existence. The second is somewhat confusing because it is unclear what Seneca means by "diseased". Philosophy, for him, is much more than mere "logic"; it indicates being in tune with the universe. It is for this reason that individuals become diseased when they do not practice philosophy. However, in the above quotation, if Seneca is talking about the disease as being the emotion, he is then admitting that one cannot escape this disease. For him, while it might be true that no-one can escape the fate of being diseased, it is also true that this does not rule out the possibility of virtue. Virtue is precisely what allows us to fight the disease. It is what is born from the fight with disease. Fighting disease is precisely what makes virtue stronger, which makes fighting off anger more difficult than he proposes.

He therefore negates the validity of his arguments about the dangers of emotion, especially those in his treatise *On Anger* and his epistle, *On Self-Control*. In the following pages, I examine the ruling relationship between Seneca's ethical writing and the characterization of his protagonists on stage. My proposition is that Seneca's philosophical examination of anger is in contradiction with his plays because he suggests that anger should be eliminated from the individual's life on the one hand, and yet dramatizes it eloquently on the other hand.

There is a counter argument to what I propose in this thesis. This argument would suggest that there is no such division between Seneca's philosophical writing and his dramas. Thomas

Rosenmeyer writes:

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<sup>13</sup> Lucius Annaeus Seneca, *Ad Lucilium Epistulae Morales*, trans. Richard M. Gummere. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press 1962), 94-333.

The cutting in two of Lucius Annaeus Seneca is the most radical step taken by those who are embarrassed and irritated by their own failure to find anything essentially Stoic or philosophical in Senecan drama. One of the latest critics to come to this conclusion—though he does not go all the way but keeps the man Seneca unsplit - is F. H. Sandbach, the author of an authoritative handbook on Stoicism<sup>14</sup>. Sandbach has a brief section on Senecan drama, in which he refuses to see any appreciable trace of Stoicism, except for *Hercules Oetaeus*, which, he thinks, exhibits a Stoic saint in action<sup>15</sup>.

In the above quotation, Rosenmeyer tries to dismiss any contradiction between Seneca's drama and the philosophical treatises he wrote. This proposition is partially correct if we consider that Seneca *tries* to convey Stoic teachings via his drama. However, Rosenmeyer does not take into consideration the issue of the lack or rather the nonexistence of catharsis in Senecan drama, nor does he follow the rhetorically intoxicated speeches of the Senecan characters on stage. Seneca tries to avoid creating a cathartic outcome to the action of his tragedies, yet his dramatic portrayal of emotions, especially anger, shows catharsis when the revenge is achieved. For example, Atreus finds great pleasure in retelling how he killed Thyestes' children. An explanation of what Rosenmeyer criticizes for ideologically uniting Seneca's tragedies and philosophical writing comes from the Galenic methodological approach, whereby emotions are situated in the body. His explanation contradicts the approach to emotions as seen in Stoic philosophy. Christopher Gill writes:

The Stoic thinkers invite us to analyse emotion as a psychological union of intentionality and physiology, while emphasizing that it is psychic assent that forms the locus of the subject's responsibility for his own emotions. Galen presents these strongly physical and sometimes bodily localized

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<sup>14</sup>It is study of the Stoic philosophers which concentrates on their ethical teaching. It aims to give a clear account of the principal doctrines held by members of the school and sets them in their historical context.

<sup>15</sup>Thomas Rosenmeyer, *Senecan Drama and Stoic Cosmology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 8.

characterizations of emotions as inconsistent with Chrysippus' view of emotions as judgments<sup>16</sup>.

According to Gill, the Galenic argument against the Stoics is directed against their holistic approach when analyzing emotions. Galen is meticulous in categorizing the functions of each human organ because he understands the anatomy of the human body, and therefore does not conform to the general Stoic conception of the emotions. Earlier, Rosenmeyer criticized the school of thought that sees contradiction between Seneca's philosophical writings, and his tragedies. He thinks they are the same from a cosmological point of view. Rosenmeyer's argument can be contradicted in the light of the Galenic analyses of emotions as seen in Gill's reading of the difference between the Stoics (Seneca included) and Humoralism.

This applies to the difference between Seneca's tragedies and his philosophical writings. Seneca's attempt to dramatize emotions cannot conform to his Stoic and philosophical ideals. Each emotion Seneca embodies on stage cannot be tailored according to the Stoic philosophy, even if we try to understand it from a cosmological point of view as Rosenmeyer proposes the correspondence between Seneca's philosophy of emotions. Seneca's tragedies can be deconstructed on the basis of the inescapability of these emotions, specifically anger, because they comprise the early form of our knowledge of the surrounding world. The emotions Seneca tries to fight against in his philosophical treatises are dramatized in his plays in a suggestive manner, proposing that he is fascinated by them. Anger is the emotion to which Seneca dedicates a comprehensive treatise, with a view to eradicating it from people's experience. Seneca chooses revenge tragedy to show how dangerous anger can be; yet, he dedicates the best lines to the bloodthirsty and angry characters. In the coming section, I shall apply my assumption about the

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<sup>16</sup>Christopher Gill, *Naturalistic Psychology in Galen and Stoicism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 205.

unstable relationship between Seneca's philosophical view of anger, and his revenge tragedy *Thyestes*.

Seneca's treatise *On Anger*, along with his other ethical writings on emotion, does not seem to bear any relation to the violent and the vengeful, passionate, angry and bloodthirsty characters in his tragedies. It is arguable that his philosophical discussion has influenced the creation of his theatrical characters. The revenge framework in his tragedies mostly depends on the same anger he tries to eliminate in his philosophy. Seneca depends on that "devastating emotion" in his tragedies to show how anger corrupts the morality of humans. However, it appears that he emphasizes the inescapability of fate on the stage and blames it for creating that emotion. Paradoxically, the extremity of his portraits of anger suggests an attraction towards this emotion.

Seneca copies the Greek mythology when constructing his dramatic texts; yet, this dependence is framed by a focus on the character of the barbarian in his tragedies. It can be argued that he focuses on all the emotions that are supposed to be "alien" to the Stoic, and projects them onto one character who worries in vain, and who is blinded by all the turbulence caused by emotions, and moves beyond the imagination in committing violence and cruelty. So, why does Seneca imitate these characters? T. S. Eliot tries to answer this question and argues that Seneca does not copy Greek tragedy so much as he invents thoughts and emotions. Eliot thinks that Seneca creates new methods of characterization by rewriting these plays:

It is likely that the Athenian tragedies were performed by amateurs I mean that the beauty of phrase in a Greek tragedy is the shadow of a greater beauty - of thought and emotion. In the tragedies of Seneca the centre of value is shifted from what the personage says to the way in which he says

it. Very often the value comes near to being mere smartness. Nevertheless, we must remember that ‘verbal’ beauty is still a kind of beauty<sup>17</sup>.

The above quotation proposes that Seneca invites human instincts and social taboos to contribute to an ugliness which is, in Eliot’s words, turned into beauty. In Senecan tragedy, language and characterization are used to show how people become corrupted by their emotions. *Thyestes* is one of Seneca’s masterpieces which talks about the power of the grudge. In this tragedy, the act of the protagonist consuming his own flesh-albeit unknowingly- stands as a symbol suggesting that the angry individual consumes himself and others. Thyestes is not a “good man” in the play. He sleeps with his brother’s wife and steals the Golden Fleece which awakens Atreus’ anger. Since anger is an error in judgment, anger turns itself against its source. It is useful to look into Seneca’s own narration of an incident that is similar to *Thyestes* in *On Anger*:

I doubt not that Harpagus also gave some such advice to his king, the king of the Persians who taking offence thereat, caused the flesh of Harpagus’s own children to be set before him as a course in the banquet, and kept inquiring whether he liked the cooking; then when he saw him sated with his own ills, he ordered the heads of the children to be brought in, and inquired what he thought of his entertainment. The poor wretch did not lack words, his lips were not sealed. “at the king’s board” he said, “any kind of food is delightful.” And what he gained by this flattery? He escaped the invitation to eat what was left. (SENECA 1928: 293)

The comment made by Seneca is to praise Harpagus’s tolerance and flattery which saved him from eating what is left of his children’s flesh. The Senecan portrayal of cannibalizing one’s own flesh in *Thyestes* is often quoted in early modern revenge tragedies such as *Titus Andronicus*, and *Antonio’s Revenge*<sup>18</sup>. These cannibalistic incidents seem to have haunted Seneca and inspired

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<sup>17</sup>Lucius Annaeus Seneca, *Seneca : His Tenne Tragedies*, trans. Thomas Newton (London : Constable, 1927), ix.

<sup>18</sup>In Dante’s *Inferno*, the angry are depicted eating their own flesh.

him to write down the myth of *Thyestes*. He confirms his fascination with anger by focusing on Atreus' meditative anger and wrathful speeches. Contrary to Aristotle's argument that anger consults reasoning, is cognitive in nature, and morally acceptable, Seneca proposes that once anger takes off, it is impossible to stop, and is irrational and bloodthirsty, as is demonstrated in Atreus' case. Seneca concentrates on Atreus' state of meditative anger, especially when the Chorus amplifies his inflamed judgment with his own malevolent thoughts. Atreus' dialogue with his attendant reveals to us that he is a calculating character. He plans a bloody revenge out of reason, rather than irrational frantic and wrathful man:

When rage scents blood, it cannot be concealed; yet let it be concealed.  
See how his thick hair, all unkempt covers his woeful face, how foul his  
beard hangs down. [*In bitter irony*] now let me keep my promise. [*To  
Thyestes*] 'Tis sweet to see my brother once again. Let all our angry  
feelings pass away from this day let ties of blood and love be cherished  
and let accursed hatred vanish from our hearts.(SENECA 1917: 135)

Atreus' exclamations to himself are formed with the use of reason. Although the statement conforms to Stoic principles, he immediately defies it when proceeding to action. He suppresses his anger and goes on with his plan, which sets a direct contrast to Seneca's proposition that getting rid of anger lessens the consequent violence. The irrational nature of the passions proposed by the Stoics is articulated in Atreus' words. The impulsiveness he experiences from time to time is the manifestation of his sharpened decision to take revenge. He outdoes reason in reasoning his crime as he acts out his anger in cold blood and knows how to hide this emotion. However, the question raised here is: did Seneca use his own philosophical ideas when creating Atreus? Does Seneca project his philosophy in Atreus' words and deny it in this character's deeds? Does Atreus commit his horrible murder without being angry? It is useful to go back to

Seneca's treatise *On Anger* and see what he says about the bloodshed committed by men against their fellow men:

A man thinks himself injured, wishes to take vengeance, but dissuaded by some consideration immediately calms down. This I do not call anger, this prompting of the mind which is submissive to reason; anger is that which overleaps reason and sweeps it away. Therefore that primary disturbance of the mind which is excited by the impression of the injury is no more anger than the impression of the injury is itself anger; the active impulse consequent upon it, which has not only admitted the impression of injury but also approved it, is really anger – the tumult of mind proceeding to revenge by choice and determination. There can be no doubt that fear involves flight, anger involves assault. (SENECA 1928: 173)

Seneca's words do not match those of Atreus'. His definition of anger does not comply with this character, whose revenge is more blood-thirsty than Seneca's definition of anger. Therefore, it might be suggested that Atreus' revenge on his brother is not meant to show the dangers of that particular emotion as much as it can show how cruel reasoning can be. Anger is a temporary emotion, or state of mistaken judgment; however, Atreus' suppression of it, and the reasoning he introduces in accordance is more dangerous than anger. In the play, however, Seneca seems to want to stress that Atreus takes his revenge out of fury. He uses Tantalus' Ghost to emphasize this:

Let their passions know no bounds, no shame; let blind fury prick on their souls; heartless be parents' rage, and to children's children let the long trail of sin lead down; let time be given to none to hate old sins.(SENECA 1917: 95).

The main element of the curse is translated "external" which means the powers that are out of the individuals' control, and in the hands of natural, social, or political forces. However, the reaction of the emotion in the form of this curse is worse than the gods' expectations as they express disgust with the horrors of Atreus' deed later in the play. Tantalus' curse touches upon what

Seneca, reflecting on the cruelty embedded in the human existence, had earlier called “the diseased self”. Thus, deconstructing his whole concept of “the external”, Seneca confuses his readers. For him Atreus is diseased and the element of the “external” is a secondary motive in creating the passionate and monstrous result of the tragedies. Yet, surely the disease of anger is magnified due to a prior event, the curse of their ancestor’s ghost: the “external” element. To be more specific, anger in this tragedy does not only pertain to Atreus: it is represented in Thyestes who eats his children’s flesh. Yet, we are not told about Thyestes’ anger in the course of the play<sup>19</sup>. It is true that Atreus is “angry”; however, like most Elizabethan revengers, he dissembles; he disguises his emotions, and presents a calculating figure. The general tendency of the Early Modern revenge artist is to plot maliciously, and to serve in their revenge cold.

The messenger in the play recounts the killing scene in a passionate tone that sounds judgmental whereby the reader of *Thyestes* is forced into believing that Atreus’ wrath is the main motive of committing these horrors. Moreover, the messenger sensationally describes the child’s Stoic response to his uncle’s brutality:

Careless of self he stood, nor did he plead, knowing such prayers were in vain; but in his wound the savage buried the sword and, deep thrusting, joined hand with throat....Then Plistenes to the altar did that butcher drag and set him near his brother. His head with a blow he severed; down fell the body when the neck was smitten, and the head rolled away, grieving with murmur articulate... Atreus raves and swells with wrath and, still grasping his sword drenched with double slaughter, scarce knowing against whom he rages.(SENECA 1917 : 151-53).

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<sup>19</sup> Luke Roman and Monica Roman, eds., *Encyclopedia of Greek and Roman Mythology* (New York:Facts on File Publishing, 2010), 13. After the events mentioned in the play, Thyestes visits the Oracle of Delphi to ask how he to take revenge on his brother. The oracle answers that Thyestes must sleep with his daughter to beget a son to avenge him. Thyestes rapes his daughter and conceives Aegisthus the avenger.



The messenger's graphic description of the crime is striking. Seneca draws upon his rhetorical and poetic skills in portraying the dreadful scenes. His gloomy landscape is carefully drawn in service of showing the horrors of anger. The gods are terrified, yet Atreus pursues his anger to its zenith, and cooks his nephews for their father to eat. Then, Thyestes appears on stage reciting his joy at the banquet and afterwards lamenting his mysterious grief before the secret of the food is revealed. Seneca does not intend Thyestes' words to stir pity and fear in the audience. He inscribes Thyestes' speech in order to stress the hideous nature of the crime as afterwards he focuses on the grief that Thyestes feels. He reminds the audience of the ugliness of anger by applying synonyms for anger to Atreus' speeches. Seneca reinforces the blindness of anger in the messenger's speech, "scarce knowing against whom he rages", nonetheless, he (perhaps subconsciously) withdraws this assumption by having Atreus carefully re-narrate his deeds to Thyestes, deriving sadistic joy at Thyestes' reaction to his words. Thyestes' Stoic reaction is summed up in a couple of lines: "The gods will be present to avenge; to them for punishment my prayers deliver thee"(SENECA1917: 181). Thyestes' response is very short by comparison to Seneca's account of the Stoic response by Harpagus on the same story, narrated in the treatise *On Anger*. Seneca finds immeasurable interest in describing the terror committed by Atreus in the play and concludes the play with a very short Stoic response. Our immediate reaction towards Thyestes' dilemma is pity; however, our emotions disappear once we think of what Thyestes does to take his revenge on Atreus.

In the course of the play, Seneca introduces the oration of the ghost of Tantalus and that of the Fury, thus building the tension that dominates the whole atmosphere of the stage. The curse is being cast by the Ghost, and is encouraged by the Fury. After this, the Chorus appears on stage to establish their function as observers and commentators on the action. When Atreus first

appears he utters a wrathful soliloquy, the content of which mirrors his inner feelings and echoes of the wishes of the Ghost of Tantalus and the Fury. Atreus states the inevitability concerning the fateful curse on the house of Tantalus and makes the fact known to the audience, thus suggesting that his plot amounts to self-defense against a brother who will annihilate him if he does not initiate the killing. The soliloquy is placed at the first movement in the play in order to focus on the predestined doom of the whole family. It also introduces Atreus' bloody thoughts:

O undaring, unskilled, unnerved, and (what in high matters I deem a king's worst reproach) yet unavenged after so many crimes, after a brother's treacheries, and all right broken down, in idle complaints doest busy thyself-a mere wrathful Atreus? ... This mighty palace itself, illustrious Pelpos' house, may it e'en fall on me if only on my brother, too, it fall... I must dare some crime, atrocious, bloody, such as my brother would more wish were his. Crimes thou dost not avenge, save as thou doest surpass them. And what crime can be so dire as to overtop his sin?.(SENECA 1917: 105).

Atreus begins his soliloquy with negatives that may be intended by Seneca to signify the total absence of virtue and to predict the future negation of reasoning. His "O" resounds all over the stage. It is arguable that Atreus' character causes the negation of the other characters. It combines all of these characters in the frame of un-action by denying the children's bodies' proper ritualistic burial and hurling their cooked flesh down their father's stomach. Theyestes' body seems to follow its own logic, as it starts regurgitating the carnivorous meal. The logic of negation seems to have shifted from the human mind into the human body parts. Therefore, in the above soliloquy, Atreus' tongue may be considered an organ speaking according to its own logic. In committing this deed, not only does Atreus become a bloody avenger, but he also becomes a criminal, repeating his crime by narrating it, delighting in repeating the horrors to himself and to his brother. His repetitive style is closer to the ethical writing of Seneca in its didactical aspects. In his treatise *on Anger*, Seneca frequently seems to reiterate words like

“again” along with other formulae of repetition. This leads to the belief that Seneca subconsciously identifies himself with Atreus:

How much is it better to heal than to avenge an injury! Vengeance consumes much time, and it exposes the doer to many injuries while he smarts from one; our anger lasts longer than the hurt. ... “Will you ever desist-or never?” If ever, how much better it is to forsake anger than to wait for anger to forsake you! Or shall this turmoil continue forever.  
(SENECA 1928: 323)

Here we see how Seneca relies on repetition to convey his philosophical ideas on the stage. It is not only Atreus who enjoys the killing by re-telling how he achieves revenge. Seneca finds cathartic escape from a stagnant emotional life through his plays and by re-telling dreadful theatrical plots. Seneca confounds the structure of his teachings with this villainous character. Moreover, the self-commanding structure we saw in Seneca’s *On Anger* is another aspect he shares with Atreus. Seneca’s dedication of one line to the Stoic doctrine, after the murder is successfully carried out, is pleasurably re-told by Atreus. This places Seneca’s ethical teachings in jeopardy because he invites everyone to suit the word to action. He writes:

Philosophy teaches us to act, not to speak; it exacts of every man that he should live according to his own standards, that his life should not be out of harmony with his words, and that, further, his inner life should be one hue and not out of harmony with all his activities. This, I say, is the highest proof of wisdom-that deed and word should be in accord, that a man should be equal to himself under all conditions, and always the same.(SENECA 1928: 133-35).

In this quotation, Seneca does not acknowledge that he does not, in fact, apply “his own standards” to his dramatic work, which in fact encourages the audience’s fantasies about violence<sup>20</sup>. He says that the philosopher should suit his words to his action, and these should be in harmony with the inner world of the person. Furthermore, this harmony should be continual with no change, which –in his opinion- is a positive quality in the wise man. The harmony he mentions here is not adopted in his plays. A. J Boyle:

The declamatory themes of the schools –vengeance, rage, power-lust, incest, hideous death, fortune’s savagery – were the stuff of his life. His literary response was twofold: the consolatory discourse of Stoic moral philosophy, reflected in his prose works, and the tragedies, which articulate a world quiet different from that of the dialogues and epistles<sup>21</sup>.

Boyle expands on the contradictory message with which Seneca endows his philosophical writings and tragedies. In the tragedies, Seneca tries to couch the plays in Stoic teachings against the dangers of the emotion, whilst the rhetoric of anger in the plays works against what –he allegedly intends. There is an apparent paradoxical relation between the situations he uses to discuss anger in his treatise when compared to the extremely violent anger he depicts on stage.

In this chapter we saw that Seneca’s philosophy of emotions is that of rejection. He portrays a dark image of anger as ugly and violent. For him, anger should be replaced by reasoning. Being an error of judgment, anger can only be destructive. On the other hand, Seneca dramatizes anger, and tries to show its ugliness. I argue that even with his attempt to show the ugliness of anger, Seneca’s rhetoric belies a fascination with the power of emotion. In *Thyestes*, as we have seen,

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<sup>20</sup>Seneca’s rhetorical representation of violence conveys fascination rather than repulsion. He dwells on narrating violent deeds and the satisfaction his protagonists gain from acting on their anger in the plays. On the other hand, in his treatises, he analyses the emotion and elaborates on avoiding it.

<sup>21</sup>A. J Boyle, *Tragic Seneca: An Essay in The Theatrical Tradition* (London : Routledge, 1997).32.

Seneca gives the most powerful lines to Atreus, despite the fact that Seneca says that the angry individual is incapable of producing art.

## Chapter Two

### Seneca and the Elizabethans

The business of this chapter will be to show the effect of Seneca's philosophy of anger and the impact of his tragedies on the early modern revenge tragedy. In the previous sections, I began by exploring Seneca's play *Thyestes*, in terms of the framework set up in his treatise *On Anger*. I will also talk briefly about the relationship between the Galenic theory of the humours, and the use of the theme of anger in Elizabethan revenge tragedy.

Whilst it is generally agreed<sup>1</sup> that Seneca contributed to the creation of the angry characters of Elizabethan drama, it is necessary to examine the way in which they dealt with his ideas, structures and orations in relation to anger and revenge. I will take *Gorboduc* as the first representative example of the Elizabethans' fascination with Seneca's rhetoric and structure. This is an adaptation rather than a translation. Jasper Heywood's translation of Seneca's *Thyestes* is an example of Seneca's influence on Elizabethan translators, which might arguably be read as an adaptation of Seneca owing to Heywood's changes to the original text. Discussion of this translation, however, will be held over to a later chapter, where it will be examined in relation to the Galenic conception of anger.

Seneca's influence on the English culture of this period is immense in philosophy and culture, on the revenge tragedy in particular. The power of his position is imprinted on the Elizabethan mind and in the tragic form as it appears in their stage-plays, as well as in the political lives of

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<sup>1</sup> James Ker and Jessica Winston, eds. *Elizabethan Seneca: Three Tragedies* (London: The Modern Humanities Research Association, 2012), 8-10. See also, Braden, Gordon, *Renaissance Tragedy and the Senecan Tradition: Anger's Privilege* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 64.

the people and the monarchy (WINSTON 2006: 33) of the time. The manifestation of Seneca's influence on the Elizabethan stage and life can be explained via the concept of fortune as the power that controls destiny: this belief helps to eliminate the dissatisfaction created by the system. These themes have been claimed by a number of writers, critics and historians, as Bowers illustrates:

The three main themes of Seneca's tragedies were lessons on the inconsistency of fortune, as in *Troades* and in the tragic story of *Oedipus*; portrayals of great crimes and examples of the evil results of murder, as in *Thyestes*, *Medea*, and *Agamemnon*; and pleadings in favour of simplicity, of poverty, and of chastity, as in *Hercules Oetaeus* and *Hippolytus*<sup>2</sup>.

Seneca influenced the style and content of Elizabethan revenge tragedy. The gloomy atmosphere, the use of ghosts and the foreboding Senecan chorus illustrate Seneca's influence on the Elizabethan revenge tragedy. Bowers, in the above quotation, gives some examples of Seneca's effect on the Elizabethan tragedy. More recent critics, such as Miola, who is mentioned later, contextualizes Seneca's impact on the Elizabethan revenge tradition through recent theoretical discussions. He analyzes the impact of Seneca on the Elizabethan canon by way of the concept of *furor*, which he discusses at length<sup>3</sup>.

Seneca's Stoic philosophy has affected the writing of his plays more than his philosophy: the stagnancy of emotions caused by the Stoic view, and the ruthless violent anger of the aristocracy witnessed by Seneca and his Stoic colleagues begot the fascination with extreme emotions that we see in Seneca's drama. This Stoic view comes to the fore when tested in the light of the dialectical relationship between Seneca's plays and his ethics. We saw this in chapter one, which

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<sup>2</sup>Fredson Thayer Bowers, *Elizabethan Revenge Tragedy, 1587-1642*(Gloucester: Peter Smith, 1959), 41.

<sup>3</sup> Robert S. Miola, *Shakespeare and Classical Tragedy: The Influence of Seneca*(Oxford : Clarendon Press, 1992),10.

highlighted the unstable ground between his plays and his philosophical treatise *On Anger*. This difference between Seneca's tragedies and his philosophy is essential to understanding his influence on the Elizabethan revenge tradition.

In the previous chapter, we saw how Seneca advises people to have low expectations of their surrounding world in order not to become anguished or resentful. For him, anger arises from rationally-held ideas about the world. The problem with these ideas is that they are unreasonably optimistic. Seneca announces that people get angry because they are too hopeful. These hopes are disappointed by the reality of things. When people become vexed, there is an element of surprise, self-pity and feelings that an injustice has befallen them. What he does in the plays is show how these surroundings, "the external powers," especially fate and fortune, affect human beings, make them angry, and push them to commit horribly unnatural acts. I have argued that Seneca's tragedies reflect some of his own anger at those powers that exist outside human control. Human beings should not be surprised that they cannot shape the world according to their wishes, and they should not become angry as a result. In Seneca's opinion, if humans cannot change the world, they can instead change their attitude towards the elements that make them feel angry. It is this change of attitude, Seneca believes, that gives human beings a distinctive form of freedom. Seneca proposes that wealth does not make people calmer; it actually makes them more susceptible to anger than ordinary people. He says, "Prosperity fosters bad temper" (SENECA1928: 60). Accordingly, all his theatrical characters are aristocrats. The wealthier people are, he thinks, the higher their expectations of the surrounding world; therefore, when their hopes are dashed, their anger is violent. A cursory look at Seneca's biography illustrates that he had experienced the wrath of the rich first hand.



In the coming section, I am going to talk about the aspects of Senecan philosophy and drama that attracted the Elizabethans and caused them to emulate him. Before that, I should mention that the degree of Seneca's influence on the Elizabethan revenge tragedy has a long history of debate. Robert S. Miola writes:

Critics have long attempted, with varying success, to define the nature of Seneca's influence on Elizabethan drama, especially Shakespeare. Jakob Engel, John W. Cunliffe, and F. L. Lucas identified numerous verbal echoes and produced long disappointing lists of parallel passages. Seneca's bequest, many thought, also include formal, stylistic, and thematic elements: the five-act structure and retention of the unities, the use of stock characters, such as the ghost, nurse, servant, messenger, tyrant, and chorus; a fondness for melodramatic narration, the rhetorical set-piece, self-absorbed soliloquy, and stichomythia; a fascination with lurid violence, the habit of including ruminative passages on the instability of the fortune, the power of time, the dangers of wealth, the benefits of poverty, the advantage of the country over the city, the problems of kingship, the habits of tyrants; and a general concern with madness, passions, vengeance, and the supernatural (MIOLA 1992: 3).

This quotation shows the ambivalent views about the influence of Seneca's drama on the Elizabethan revenge tragedy genre; *Shakespeare and Classical Tragedy: The Influence of Seneca* discusses the numerous effects of Senecan drama on the Elizabethan revenge tragedy. Miola criticises some of his predecessors' attempts at dismissing the influence of Seneca on Elizabethan tragedy. Unlike Bowers, Miola reemphasizes Seneca's presence in Elizabethan revenge tradition.

The rhetorical force of anger is one of many factors attracting the attention of the Elizabethan playwrights and audience. One of Seneca's influences on the Elizabethan drama is seen in the oratory of the protagonists, usually motivated by surprised anger, and the agony which follows.

Anger mixed with grief is one of the main causes of violence in Seneca's plays; this can be considered as the "offspring" of the highly oratorical style of his characters. This became one of the major features of Elizabethan drama. It is to Seneca, too, that early modern revenge tragedy owes its ghosts and its five-act structure. The Senecan tragic style and structure has been appropriated by its Elizabethan inheritors. Many critics consider the influence of Senecan tragedy on the Elizabethan form to be more important than that of the Greeks. According to this perspective, Seneca's influence lies in the power of utterance in his plays. As Braden writes:

I have tried to show how the more visibly Senecan features of Senecan rhetoric are not just a repertoire of varied effects, but have a corporate coherence as instruments of particular style of selfhood; and at that level there is a serious affinity between Senecan tragedy and Renaissance drama generally<sup>4</sup>.

As suggested above, the Senecan invention of angry characters whose oration was imported onto the Elizabethan stage, contributes to creating a new style of argument. The angry characters on the Elizabethan stage indulge in eloquent speeches. The effect of the Senecan plays on the Elizabethan revenge tragedy is closely related to translations of Seneca in the 1650s. This appropriation becomes apparent, if we think of Seneca's vivid style of presenting the emotional content of his plays. Senecan tragedies tend to end with ever-widening circles of conflagration, still essentially within the hero's unchallenged fantasies of vindictive fulfilment. Senecan drama never quite steps outside those fantasies. These fantasies are directly related to the violence of anger in the Senecan depiction.

Unlike the Greek dramatists, who depend on summoning the emotions, Seneca's habitual centralizing of the emotional speeches of his characters places these passions at the heart of the

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<sup>4</sup>Gordon Braden, *Renaissance Tragedy and the Senecan Tradition: Anger's Privilege* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 66.

action, and sometimes, they become the action itself. They become the action because Seneca renovates the theatrical plot by disregarding the linearity of the events found in the Greek plays and focusing on the emotional display of characters in response to events. To be more specific, the Elizabethans' preference for translating Seneca over the Greek tragedians is key evidence which can help us to understand the effect of Seneca on Elizabethan revenge tragedy overall, and especially in the rhetorical manifestation of characters.

Seneca was more popular in English schools than the Greek tragedians. Critics generally agree that Euripides and Aeschylus were not known to the Elizabethan dramatists<sup>5</sup>. To begin with, there has been some debate about the real significance of Seneca's influence on the Elizabethans. In *The Origins of Shakespeare* (1977), Emrys Jones argues that Euripides was known to Shakespeare. He builds his argument on the assumption that Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* is directly adapted from Euripides' *Hecuba*. Then, he moves to discuss Shakespeare's relation to Plutarch by mentioning *Julius Caesar*. Although both chapters in the book *The Origins of Shakespeare* discuss Shakespeare's knowledge of Euripides, Jones relies heavily on one-to-one play comparison between Shakespeare and Euripides. His examination of the emotional development in the plays suggests an investigation of the plot after he empties it of the content, namely the emotion the characters display in their speeches. His analysis is mechanical in nature and does not take the oratorical aspects of the plays into consideration. He focuses on the cannibalistic banquet, and disregards the emotional display of grief and anger that precedes it. Jones discusses the downfall of Titus' family and the misfortunes that lead to the bloody banquet. Nevertheless, he hastens to dismiss the author of *Thyestes* on the assumption that *Titus Andronicus* has nothing to do with Seneca:

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<sup>5</sup> Percy Simpson, *Studies In Elizabethan Drama*, (Folcroft: Folcroft Library Editions, 1971), 138.

The tale throws valuable light on Shakespeare's aims and methods in this early tragedy: it also helps to free the play from the Senecan label which has traditionally and somewhat misleadingly been attached to it. The most obviously 'Senecan' feature of the play has always seemed the cannibalistic banquet with which it ends...Of course there are undeniable 'Senecan' elements in *Titus Andronicus*- some quotations (or misquotations) – and the banquet itself may well have been considered Senecan even though its source was not. But we can not get very far by explaining the play in relation to the author of *Thyestes*<sup>6</sup>.

Jones is very quick to dismiss *Thyestes*' impact on the writing of *Titus Andronicus* despite the crucial similarities between the two texts in terms of action and plot. Furthermore, he does not elaborate on the symbolic nature of killing the children in *Thyestes*, which is meant to indicate the truncation of Rome's future. For him, the only connection between *Thyestes* and *Titus Andronicus* is the bloody banquet. He does not mention the representation of extreme emotions, and the uttering of mad and angry speeches. On the other hand, critics argue that Elizabethans who imitated Seneca were not well cultivated in Greek tragedy:

Yet the general influence of Seneca on the writing and the original conception of the play cannot be denied, for such an influence of Seneca was unavoidable at the time. Classical tragedy had gained an enormous prestige in England because of the great value set on classical learning, of which tragedy was supposed to be the highest expression; and knowing little of the Greeks the Elizabethans came to regard Seneca as the most tragic, the most perfect of ancient writers. Senecan tragedy was dominant on the continent; Seneca was read freely in the English schools and universities where his plays were acted, as were Latin imitations. (BOWERS 1959: 74)

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<sup>6</sup>Emrys Jones, *The Origins Of Shakespeare* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 86.

Bowers considers Seneca to have offered Elizabethan dramatists an admirable model. The popularity of Latin, which was widely taught in Elizabethan schools, is another point of the attractiveness of Seneca among Elizabethan dramatists.

T. S. Eliot observes that the wide-spread knowledge of Latin, and the popularity of teaching Seneca as a major subject in the schools of the Elizabethan age, had a tremendous influence on the foundations of revenge tragedy:

Seneca was a regular part of the school curriculum, while Greek drama was unknown to all but a few great scholars. Every school boy with a smattering of Latin had a verse or two of Seneca in his memory; probably a good part of the audience could recognise the origin of the occasional bits of Seneca which are quoted in Latin in some of the popular plays <sup>7</sup>.

Eliot concludes his discussion of Seneca's impact on the renaissance revenge tragedy with the observation that the Elizabethans manipulated Seneca to serve their own purposes. He attributes the Senecan influence on the Elizabethan revenge tragedy to the power of Latin as a language, and the fitness of Latin for tragic situations. Moreover, Latin was the language of moral instruction; therefore, the insights staged in plays like *The Spanish Tragedy* dramatize the Senecan conception of the moral dilemma encountered by humans under extreme stress. The explosive anger expressed in many Elizabethan revenge tragedies surpasses Seneca's own style in dramatizing this irrational emotion.

Critics like Altman and Braden attribute the Elizabethan fascination with Seneca's plays to his highly oratorical style, where he marries images of nature to the events of the play. The atmospheric Senecan descriptions of gloomy landscapes are worth mentioning. Additionally, Seneca's ominous atmosphere is usually conveyed in a sequence of violent utterances that

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<sup>7</sup>Lucius Annaeus Seneca, *Seneca: His Tenne Tragedies*, vol.1, trans. Thomas Newton(London : Constable, 1927), xxi.

oblige the reader to identify with the seriousness of the narrated situation. In other words, Seneca's language appealed to the visual imagination of the Elizabethan dramatist more than the Greek dramatists who focus on the internal world of the protagonist. As Joel Altman has it:

It is a familiar form in Seneca, and it originated in the orator's attempt to secure conviction by appealing to the visual imagination of his hearers: "for oratory fails of its effect, and does not assert itself as it should, if it appeals merely to the hearing, and if the judge merely feels that the acts on which he has to give his decision are being narrated to him, and not displayed in their living truth to the eyes of the mind<sup>8</sup>.

Vivid imagery is a key component in evoking the poetics of anger in revenge tragedy. The images Seneca uses are highly emotional in nature, and they convey these passions to the audience as well. Seneca's plays offered visual pleasures of anger in sharp contrast to his strict philosophy. This seeming contradiction between Seneca's plays and his philosophy creates a flexible structure for the avenger's emotional character. The figure of the avenger in Seneca's ethical writing is emotionlessly depicted. This is to say that the rhetorical style used in his portrayal of the avenger's anger is more flexible than his own presentation of the angry characters in the philosophical work. One example would be the anecdotes he uses in the previously discussed *On Anger* to illustrate violence and revenge. Seneca's style is repetitive and emphatic in his philosophical works. The vibrant technique he uses in creating a character on the stage is different. Seneca's anger is not revealed in his philosophy as much as it is in his plays. The characters utter long vivid introspective speeches anatomizing the human soul and defining human morality from the avenger's view point. Usually, this subjective morality is the pretext for the avenger to achieve a personal vendetta. In his philosophical treatise *On Anger*,

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<sup>8</sup>Joel B. Altman, *The Tudor Play of Mind: Rhetorical Inquiry and the Development of Elizabethan Drama* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 238.

Seneca narrates the same story that he dramatized in *Thyestes*, but in the treatise, Seneca does not use the vivid imagery he uses in the play<sup>9</sup>.

For the Elizabethans, the tragic hero contaminates himself with innocent blood; this incurs anger and condemns the murderer. Therefore, I have argued that the Elizabethans choose to inherit the rhetorical outbursts of Seneca's characters because they serve on the one hand as an outlet for the expression of emotion, and on the other to sharpen the intention for revenge, inextricably linking those two functions together: it is emotion that compels audiences, and emotion that begets revenge. This is added to their focus on fortune which, which, as we have seen, provokes anger in the course of the events. These characteristics help form the oratorical complaints in the Senecan plays which are emotionally effective and logically convincing; it is the beauty of the speech that thrills the audience more than the horrors of fortune. Catharsis, in the Senecan play, can be achieved through the scripting of the speeches rather than committing the act that is usually considered to be a Stoic ideal, taking into consideration that Stoicism calls for suicide in order to conquer the hostility of the world that can corrupt the soul. It should be noted here that Seneca does not draw upon the peak of his Stoic views, including the desirability of suicide, in his plays.

Elizabethans delighted in the intensity of emotions in Seneca's plays, and his use of extreme situations in order to express Stoic views about passion. They thought of passions as elements of the human body as well: as humours. The depiction of the passions in revenge tragedy is well expressed through the figure of the wheel of fortune, which negates the responsibility of

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<sup>9</sup> The story goes as follows "I doubt not that Harpagus also gave some such advice to his king, the king of the Persians who taking offence thereat, caused the flesh of Harpagus's own children to be set before him as a course in the banquet, and kept inquiring whether he liked the cooking; then when he saw him sated with his own ill, he ordered the heads of the children to be brought in, and inquired what he thought of his entertainment. The poor wretch did not lack words, his lips were not sealed. "At the king's board" he said, "any kind of food is delightful." And what he gained by this flattery? He escaped the invitation to eat what was left".

reasoning for man's downfall: surely "fortune" is to blame. Although Seneca dismisses the principle that revenge that is based on anger, he does not reject revenge altogether. Seneca supports the conception of revenge that is based on duty. Moreover, for Seneca, suicide is a better exit than having one's soul contaminated with anger. He would argue that suicide is the ultimate triumph over one's misfortunes. Braden is useful here:

Whatever its external prompting, suicide is the natural fulfilment of the wise man's life, the point where his drive for control becomes totally and unsurpassably self-referential over the world outside. It is an absolute that answers by mirroring the absoluteness of imperial devastation. Indeed, the Stoics suicide beckons to the universe as well; the theory of the ecpyrosis, almost happily awaited, prescribes a kind of cosmic suicide: "these things will destroy themselves with their own force, and the stars will collide with stars and what now shines in order will burn in one blaze of flaming matter" .(BRADEN1985: 24-25).

It can be argued that Seneca's calmness concerning death is another point of attraction for the Elizabethans. The meeting of the vital with the eventual in Seneca's works intrigued the best English playwrights, and led them to combine fate with violent emotions, creating dark and tense situations that require vengeful reaction. Braden does not talk about Seneca's violent scenes as points of attraction for the Elizabethans. He suggests that Seneca's rhetoric suits the tragic narration more than the Greek oratory, supporting the argument that Elizabethan spectators are not offended by Seneca's violent scenes as long as the rhetoric is compatible with the plot.

Bowers thinks that the sensational portrayal of blood and horrors in Seneca's drama is one of the major reasons that the Elizabethans emulated him. The dreadful scenes satisfied the blood thirsty Elizabethan audience, and the elevated style suited their intellect: "Finally, Seneca's emphasis on sensationalism, on physical horrors to stimulate emotion, appealed to the English taste, for blood and horror on the stage could not be offensive to the spectators at cruel executions" (BOWERS



1959:74-75). Bowers assumes that the Elizabethan audience would not be offended by the killing scenes on stage. This may be true taking into consideration the public executions that used to be performed.

One of the reasons the Elizabethans liked to emulate Seneca is that he accepted monarchy as the necessary form of government. This may have been one of the reasons that Seneca was widely taught at schools. It also responds to Seneca's obsession with natural order. The focus on monarchy explains the numerous allusions to nature being disturbed by the foul deeds of the villainous characters in Senecan plays. This stresses the necessity of maintaining the *natural order* of the state. The Elizabethans acknowledge the power of order whether in governmental or theatrical structures. This idea of order is surely encouraged by the governing classes, while theatrically the systematic order of characters explains the numerous staged deaths on the Elizabethan stage. It is like a game of chess, when the head of the state dies, many others die too. The villainous character creates instability in the natural order of life, then disaster follows. Simultaneously, anger is an unnatural movement in the universal harmony of human judgment. Similarly, the order of the state should not be disturbed or turmoil will befall the nation, a feeling shared by the Elizabethan playwrights. It is disastrous on the level of events on the one hand, but it creates sublime eloquence on the other. Susanna Braund :

Not only does Seneca accept monarchy, or autocracy, as inevitable...He also regards ruler and ruled as organically connected. The organic metaphor, whereby the ruler is the head or the soul of the state's body, is developed repeatedly in *De Clementia*. This metaphor accords well with the stoic insistence on living in accord with nature; earlier political theorizing generates analogies with the natural world as arguments for monarchy- the monarchy of Zeus, the relations

of the sun and stars, the head of the herd and the king of the bees<sup>10</sup>.

The quotation above demonstrates that not only does Seneca approve of monarchy; he also draws on it as an analogy with the organic unity of the human body. Seneca's rejection of anger is read in terms of his support for political despotism. By comparing monarchy to the organic unity of the human body, Seneca suggests that anger is politically dangerous to any monarchic system. The ability to control anger is a major political concern, and this problematic issue can be at least partially solved by adopting Seneca's ideas. His plays show the worst results of anger. Seneca's structure and rhetoric are the most perfect literary subjects for teaching in early modern England. Seneca's teachings support the idea of monarchy because his ethics are based on the belief in natural order, which was a political necessity in the England of that epoch. He concentrates the play's action in emotion. He convinces his audience that emotions are unnatural agents of a horrifying nature that lead to disorder in life that will afflict the whole country when expressed to the public. Seneca is favoured by early modern playwrights in England because their focus on the politics of monarchy needed to be crystallised through pure intellect. As Michael Braddick has it:

Emphasis on mobilisation reveals a direct connection between the social depth of political engagement and the conditions which fostered intellectual creativity. It provides a sociological context in which to understand the legitimating and delegation of particular institutions; an insight into the conditions which provoked and enabled one of the most creative periods in the English intellectual history. It is a modest step towards a deeper contextualisation of the history of political thought, of the links between words and action, or the constraints on action, as a means better to understand 'linguistically uniform partisanship,

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<sup>10</sup> Lucius Annaeus Seneca, *De Clementia*, ed, Susanna Braund(Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2009), 69.

a war of words in which the adversaries inhabit the same linguistic context<sup>11</sup>.

To be more specific, the Elizabethan era demanded psychological stability in the general population. Moreover, Seneca's popularity does not encourage civil disobedience because it discourages the main causes of anger. Seneca's long political career is said to have significantly affected his philosophical thinking; nevertheless, the above quotation does not directly suggest that the Elizabethan choice of Seneca as their tragic model was deliberately political. The reference assumes that political thought shaped the creative process more generally. The main focus is on playwriting; however, the political context of the literary Elizabethan canon was shifting the focus of the public from action to abstraction. Politically, the Elizabethan plays showed how emotional behaviour can affect the whole nation. Theatrically, it shows how creative those emotions are when implemented in poetical phrases and staging techniques. Jessica Winston suggests that politics is one of the main reasons that the Elizabethans emulated Seneca:

What about "Seneca himself" was so important? An outline of his life and works is instructive. Seneca was an author and politician whose plays reflected his observations about the nature of governance, kingship, and tyranny. For this reason, the translators were drawn to the political nature of his works, viewing the plays as stories that could usefully help them to respond to the politics of kingship and power in their own day.(WINSTON 2006:33).

Winston indicates here that the choice of Seneca in the Elizabethan period was "double-edged". Seneca would show the pressure of tyranny and despotism on society, and at the same time, his plays showed the hideous effects of anger against the aristocracy. His political career confirms that he insists on the arbitrariness of tyranny. Seneca's disapproval of anger is an endorsement of

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<sup>11</sup>John Morrow and Jonathan Scott, eds. *Liberty, Authority, Formality: Political Ideas and Culture, 1600-1900: Essays in Honour of Colin Davis* (Exeter: Imprint Academic, 2008), 177.

monarchy; however, he challenges the aristocrats in his plays, by exposing their irrational emotions. Seneca is argued to be in favour of monarchy but not tyranny. His tragedies are intended to deter tyranny in monarchs.

The Elizabethans' choice of Seneca is also driven by stylistic concerns. Seneca's characters are less "flesh and blood" than those of the Greek tragedians. This assumption may exclude *Troas*, in which Seneca's dramatization of pain and anger are the main focus. However, Jasper Heywood inserts anger into his translation of the play. The human fleshing out of the characters' dimensions is achieved by spotlighting Achilles' anger and its effects on the Trojan women. Senecan effects are clearer on the page than on the stage. The wild emotions do not seem to have been conceived for the playgoers. Senecan theatre-goers can interpret the moral implications of atrocity. This display of destruction is meant to encourage the audience to expunge these passions from their daily routines. What they hear is meant to be a warning against emotions. On the other hand, Seneca makes his audience feel the emotions, but they must not be swept away with them. The audience is supposed to deal with extreme situations, and train themselves to come to a rational decision. If evil happens to any person they must be prepared and in full control, because Seneca's plays have placed these persons in the world of evil and prepared them to expect the worst of the world, and that is why they contemplate fortune or the external circumstances before they carry out their violent deeds. The more the characters talk, the less they act. Seneca does not want the people or the audience to have rebellious thoughts, or defiant emotions. He never wants them to act; he has them talk their feelings out. In fact Seneca's views widen the gap between words and action because he conceives of emotion as the action in his plays. Emotions, especially anger, become the driving force of the events in the tragedy. Braden:

Rozelaar has tellingly pointed to “the contradictory union of humility and self-criticism on the one hand and arrogance and aggressiveness on the other” as one of the striking characteristics of Seneca’s thoughts and personality... But such risk is what the Stoic, no less than the emperor, seeks to avoid as they divide the world between them: one has it all and one wants none of it. The wise man is invincible, we are told, because he refuses any contest in which he is not superior (Arrian, *Epict.* 3. 6. 5; Epictetos *Ench.* 19) Seneca is even more thorough: “to contend with an equal is uncertain, with a superior mad, with an inferior shabby”.(BRADEN1985: 22).

Despite the fact that most of Seneca’s characters present themselves as puppets, he never takes away their vivid, colourful speeches; the Elizabethans may have seen them as suitable puppets in politics. Seneca thinks that “no evil can befall a good man” because it is not wise to mingle with those who are superior or inferiors:

We must, then, keep anger at a distance, whether the party who ought to be challenged is a peer or a superior or an inferior. With a peer, conflict can turn out this way or that; with a superior, it’s daft; with an inferior, it’s ignominious. It’s the mark of a very small and wretched person to try to get back at someone who nips him: mice and ants turn to bite if you lay a finger on them- weak things think they’re harmed just by being touched.(SENECA 2010: 59).

This is where, it is argued, Tomas Kyd departs from the Senecan tradition by having his protagonist –who is not a bad man- be brutalized by his superiors, which changes the Senecan revenge formula: the powerful aristocrat avenger becomes an ordinary man whose grief moves the audience to sympathise with him. For Seneca’s avengers, sympathy is not allowed: they are violent, mad, and powerful.

Additionally, Seneca structures his characters’ emotional outbursts by using the device of stichomythia, whereby the characters speak *at*, rather than *to*, each other. The lines in

stichomythic dialogues alternate in an emotional exchange of words indicative of a linguistic duel. The stichomythia can also indicate the absence of action during the emotional speeches of the characters. Seneca resorted to expressing persistent emotions, especially those of anger and fury, through stichomythia. Stichomythia diverts angry exchanges into verbal duels, where anger's rhythm is sharpened and wrath has logic of its own. F. L. Lucas had referred to this in the book *Seneca and Elizabethan Tragedy*. Likewise, Joel B. Altman elaborates on this point:

How excellent are closely packed dialogues, frequent and rapid conversations, of either single verse or half lines, in seizing the audience's attention. Moreover, those dialogues are best which contain sharp and animated *sententiae*, especially if they seem opposed to each other: which our poet uses in *Hercules Furens*, when Lycus and Megara speak; in *Oedipus*, between Oedipus and Creon; in *Thyestes*, between Atreus and the servant; in *Octavia*, where Nero and Seneca dispute in this fashion<sup>12</sup>.

Anger's genius can be expressed through stichomythia. The emotion deliberately develops through these stichomythic exchanges. The stichomythic portions allow characters to speak first and second equally. Moreover, stichomythia gives more space for monologues due to the short and rapid exchange among characters. An example would be a dialogue between Medea and her husband. It creates the sensational anger Medea utters when recalling all that she has done for Jason's sake. Therefore, his "thou" and "me" in the above quotation turn into "I" in her words:

Jason : What Medea charge me with love?  
Medea. Yes, murder, too, and treachery.  
Jason. What crime, pray, canst thou charge to me  
Medea. Whatever I have done.(SENECA1917: 271).

In this example, the pronoun "I" in Medea's words ceases to individualize her, it is there to combine her past deeds with Jason's betrayal. This unity is achieved through the emphasis on the

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<sup>12</sup> Joel B. Altman, *The Tudor Play of Mind: Rhetorical Inquiry and the Development of Elizabethan Drama* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 243.

pronoun in both sentences. It is the nature of anger that encourages repetition especially in word duels. Usually, for angry people, anger is provoked when the injury done to them is repeated in their minds, or when they see it repeated against someone else. Stichomythia may also explain why the Elizabethans imported the alliterative and repetitive fourteener when translating Seneca's style onto their stage. Additionally, it may be argued that the fourteener is more convenient for the actors when memorising the long speeches in the Elizabethan plays. It can be considered as an essential aspect of the artistic memory of the actor. William Engel writes:

Metaphor, in the Renaissance, was itself metaphorized as being the 'figure of transport'. Such transportation, then, was understood not only as a word denoting transposition, but also as a process connoting transformation. Bound up in the work of translation is a sense of faithfulness to the original, whether ideas or images, words or deeds, toward which one has an obligation and with which one has tacitly enters into a relationship<sup>13</sup>.

Many Elizabethan plays, which reveal how metaphors can influence the speech of a community as they circulate without the full awareness of writers, confirm the notion that a metaphor derives part of its power from its disguise. Metaphor, which begins as one of the kinds of words that can obscure clarity, emerges later as one of the kinds of words that can affect clarity, a clarity through which an unfamiliar quality is sensed, which, in the Senecan tragedy, intensifies the impact of the emotional metaphors and speeches in the plays.

Moreover, the speeches in Senecan tragedies involve condensed imagery of nature. Nature is also a repetitive cyclical force, and a friendly correspondent to the emotions, especially anger. Seneca's portrayals of nature in his plays should be literally interpreted. For example, the anger of the gods at the ghastly meal in *Thyestes* causes an actual premature night. The literal

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<sup>13</sup>William Engel, *Death and Drama in Renaissance England: Shades of Memory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 90.

correspondence between the physical entity of nature and Seneca's text can be interpreted within the framework of the Stoic belief that man should live well-attuned with nature. Moreover, it also can interpret the disastrous effects of the unnaturalness of emotions like anger in Seneca's opinion, while too, it explains how nature sometimes interferes in a man's life. Braden explains:

The motif has a special resonance with Stoic cosmology, where a principle of universal *sympatheia* transmits moral action directly into physical consequences, even at a great distance; that conviction appears to be at work in much of what now looks like mere hyperbole in Seneca's rhetoric, though nowhere else does he make quite as much of it as he does in *Thyestes*. What happens in this play seems to be not a mere eclipse or retrograde motion, but the destruction of celestial reality itself. (BRADEN 1985: 55).

The Stoic conviction of tuning man's life to nature is a problematic issue. Seneca's tricky use of the "external" is usually attributed to "logic" and "reason" but, controversially, it can describe nature. Dramatically, nature in Seneca empathizes with man but textually Senecan nature can be hostile and angry. Seneca draws an analogy between angry men and animals, which are parts of nature. Moreover, the Elizabethans characterized Seneca's concept the "external" in the two alliterating forces of fortune and fate. It may be argued that in the above quotation, the world of man and the natural world are intermingled in a way that each affects the other. These externals stimulate anger, and this is why Seneca tries to elaborate on the idea of submitting to them.

In conclusion, the importance of the influence exercised by Senecan tragedy upon the development of the Elizabethan drama is now generally admitted. The extent of this influence has been demonstrated by J. W. Cunliffe in his *Influence of Seneca on Elizabethan Tragedy*, among many other texts. It affected both the substance and the form of the drama. The division into five acts, and the introduction of the chorus, as in *Gorboduc*, *The Misfortunes of Arthur*,



and others, may be taken as examples of the influence of Seneca on the form of the Elizabethan drama, whilst in regard to matter and treatment, Seneca's influence is of still greater importance.

The next chapter will address the complex relationship between Senecan ethics, his tragedy and humoral psychology. Humoral psychology will explain the deficiencies of Seneca's analysis of anger. It will also scientifically clarify the unstable relationship between Seneca's views on anger in his ethics on the one hand and his tragedies on the other. These explanations are vital to this thesis due to the fact that humoral psychology presents a methodical approach to the study of anger, and it is contemporary to the Elizabethan theatre. It gives us a better explanation of the Elizabethan perception of anger, and how it was dramatized on stage.

## Chapter Three

### An Elizabethan Translation of *Thyestes*: Humoral Seneca.

Humoral psychology was one of the major ways of thinking about emotion in the early modern period, and as such had a profound influence on Elizabethan revenge tragedy. Humoral theory proposes that the human body is composed of four bodily fluids which affect personality, each creating a distinct temperament. They are: sanguine (bloody), which is pleasure-seeking and sociable; choleric (possessed of bile), which makes one ambitious and leader-like; melancholic (possessed of black bile), which encourages analytical and thoughtful tendencies, and phlegmatic, which meant the literal possession of an abundance of phlegm, but also, then as now, the phlegmatic character was expected to be relaxed and quiet. If these fluids were unbalanced, it was believed, illness and instability of emotions would occur. The fluids are linked to the basic four elements (air, water, earth, and fire), combined by “ethos”: the human character. Humoral psychology links the emotions with rhetoric and character. As Joseph Roach has it:

Emotions strongly felt in the chest are part of our common human experience, but the ancients attributed much of this intensity to the reaction of volatile inhalations of the blood, which they believed to be copiously present in the chest around the heart as a congregation of *humours* and *spirits*<sup>1</sup>.

Anger is thereby related to other emotions such as envy, grief, and hatred. The relationship between hatred and anger can be seen as accumulative. Following Roach, emotions are conveyed by words: they settle in the airy spirits finally, and immovably, in the humours themselves.

Seneca classifies anger, like he does the other emotions, as a value judgment. He divided the emotions into four categories, each of a pair of emotions; for each pair to which he attributed a

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<sup>1</sup> Joseph R. Roach, *The Player's Passion: Studies in the Science of Acting* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993), 26.

positive value judgement, there was another that he considered evil. This chapter will present a study of anger from the contemporary Elizabethan perspective of humoral psychology. This theory is particularly useful in explaining the unstable relationship between Seneca's tragedies and his ethics. As we have seen, Seneca views anger as an erroneous judgment, involving "unnatural" movements in the human mind. Humoralists on the other hand adopt the view that the human body is composed of a limited number of elementary fluids which are influenced by changes in the atmosphere. Humoralism presents us with medical psychology in the ancient world. It is best understood by relating it to psychological thought in such fields as ethics and rhetoric. The concept that ties these various domains together is character - Aristotle's *ethos* - which characterizes humans into clearly distinguishable psychological types, recognizable on the basis of external signs. Psychological ideas based on humoral theory remained influential well into the early modern period. Humoralists like Galen specifically state that each of the four humours can be connected with specific qualities. Galen was a physician, writer and philosopher who became the most famous doctor in the Roman Empire and whose theories dominated European medicine for centuries:

There is intelligence – nous and logos – involved on Plato's creation, and it was motivated by god's *prooia* – for producing order from chaos would be an improvement in the state of things, is not done by the demiurge himself, but by his subordinates, the 'young gods', and the motif *techne* is nowhere invoked. On the other hand, the Stoics talk of their active principle, god in its more demiurgic moments, as 'designing (*tecnike*) fire, as well as intelligent and provident, and they also refer to it as 'nature'<sup>2</sup>.

This comparison explains humoral psychology in relation to Seneca's version of Stoicism, and supports the assumption that Galen's view of the origin of creation is different from the Stoics'.

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<sup>2</sup> Christopher Gill et. al, eds , *Galen and the World of Knowledge: Greek Culture in the Roman world*(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009),74.

Galen thinks of emotions in terms of the organisation, or indeed arrangement, of bodily organs<sup>3</sup>. Galen did not share the Stoics' judgements as to the value of different emotions, and neither did he agree with their formulation of the divine or natural order of things. Galen's conception of humoral psychology is considerably less binary than Seneca's. According to the formulation of Senecan Stoicism, it is the binary pairing of the humours which enables them to be controlled by the exercise of reason, or good judgement, proving that Stoicism considers the habitual aspects of the emotion.

Galen believes emotional stability in the individual's life is connected with and achieved by the equilibrium between the elements of nature and the fluids inside the human body. This theory rationalizes anger in connection to what Seneca calls the "external", their differing conceptions of externality notwithstanding. Seneca considers fate, fortune and the powers that operate against the human will as the external, whereas according to the Galenic line of the thought, the external consists mainly of natural elements. For Galen, anger is caused by instability among these elements. For Seneca, anger mainly happens due to disappointment at external event or power that cannot be controlled by human action, resulting from the over-expectation discussed previously.

Galen's approach is about assigning each emotion a physical location, and about requiring balance for the proper functioning of the whole. Anger occurs when some crucial function is blocked, which can disturb the balance between the humours. Each humoral substance - bile (or choler), black bile, phlegm, and blood - is distinguished by its determinate qualities (associated with the four elements): they are possessed of heat or cold, and either moisture or dryness<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> Christopher Gill, *Galen and Stoicism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 126.

<sup>4</sup> Joel Kaye, *A History of Balance: 1250-1375: The Emergence of a New Model of Equilibrium and its Impact of Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 170.

For example, according to this conception, blood, which is moist, is produced by the liver, whereas, black bile is both cold and dry, originates in the spleen. Losing the appropriate balance between such humours will produce a specific temperament, which can be diagnosed and treated according to which qualities predominate and according to the bodily origins of the relevant humours. Almost all of the many later authors who considered physiological aspects of the emotions owe their basic framework to the Galenic and Stoic traditions. Galen's approach investigated emotions as part of the psychological and physiological state of individuals, which was therefore not easy to control:

The most influential of these theories was that of the four humors, and the analogues qualities, and the analogues four qualities, Hot, Cold, Wet and Dry. This is worked out in detail in 'On the Nature of Man' to which Galen wrote a commentary... Human health is a matter of having these qualities in the appropriate balance: any imbalance results in illness. Furthermore, different individuals are differently constituted by nature: thus those who are normally of hot and dry temperament are more likely to suffer ephemeral fevers as a result of over-heating. The different temperaments of different individuals will account their varying susceptibilities to external cause factors<sup>5</sup>.

By comparison, Galen gives a physiological reinterpretation of the aforementioned contractions of the mind, described as movements by Seneca. It is not the soul that one is feeling; rather the sensation is due to yellow bile flowing down into the stomach. Anger itself involves the boiling of the blood or warm matter around the heart. Galen's concern with the soul's state of tension as making it liable to emotion would also be converted into physiological state of mind. His methodical approach allowed a study of the emotions which maintained a critical distance that Seneca failed to achieve. In addition to his physiological linking of the presence of the four humours to particular character types, Galen even argued that bodily composition contributed to

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<sup>5</sup>Galen, *On Antecedent Causes*. trans. ed. R.J. Hankinson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 29-30.

“differences in characters which make people spirited . . . or intelligent or otherwise<sup>6</sup>,” and he suggested that the humours could “cause all kinds of diseases of the soul, great and small, few and many.” As mentioned previously, it was thanks to the prevalence of humoral psychology in contemporary philosophy that Senecan thought was carried over into the Elizabethan revenge tradition.

Galen wanted to cure emotional upheavals where Seneca wanted to prevent them from happening. Both, however, were of the opinion that once emotion has taken over, it hijacks rational thought (as Seneca would have it), and (by Galen’s conception) the humours flood the body. They approach the idea of curing or preventing the passage of undesirable emotion by way of philosophy. Christopher Gill explains:

The idea that emotions are sicknesses which need to be removed or ‘cured’ is closely linked with the Stoic-Epicurean approach, as is the genre (therapy of the emotions) in which Galen is working here. A number of motifs throughout the essay evoke the Stoic-Epicurean connotation of the genre... Other features which reinforce this Stoic tone include the idea that the expression of anger, even in its less extreme forms, is a kind of ‘madness’ (*mania*), a mark of subhuman (bestial) character, and ‘sickness’ (*nosema*) of psyche. In the same context, a similar status is attached to five emotions (grief, rage, anger, appetite, and fear)<sup>7</sup>.

Galen locates these emotions in the body and tries to analyze each of them according to the function of the organ in which they are located and their connection to it. As he described this process:

Another young man . . . was not far from death at the hands of doctors of this sort. He was of a particularly hot and choleric

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<sup>6</sup> C. F. Goodey, *A History of Intelligence and ‘Intellectual Disability’: the Shaping of Psychology in Early Modern Europe* (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing, 2011), 138.

<sup>7</sup> Christopher Gill, *Naturalistic Psychology in Galen & Stoicism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 253-4.

temperament by nature; he took an energetic walk through a low-lying sandy area, in great heat, arriving at the gymnasium already quite dried out. Then he had himself oiled and rubbed down (he was an athletic young man), when another youth of a similar age took him in a wrestling hold, and, as often happens, got him so worked up that he forgot one ought to bathe after an oiling and rubbing, and wrestled some more instead.(GALEN 1998:77).

We see here that Galen drew a clear distinction between his practice, and that of the other doctors of his time. The above description covers the patient's physical and emotional state. Furthermore, Galen tends to show his medical professionalism when talking about and to his patients distinguishing himself from the other doctors:

The excellent physician will, necessarily, not only despise money, but also be extremely hard-working. And one cannot be hard-working if one is continually drinking or eating or indulging in sex: if, to put it briefly, one is a slave to genitals and belly. The true doctor will be found to be a friend of temperance and a companion of truth<sup>8</sup>.

According to Galen, these positives are appreciated by "true philosophers." Galen passionately pursued great projects. When Galen criticizes "a slave to genitals and belly," he echoes implicit disparagement of the Epicurean life: "their god is the belly and their glory is in their shame; their minds are set on earthly things." The underlying Greek root for slave in these expressions evoked in its time not a person cruelly and unjustly enslaved, but a person completely at a master's service. Galen put his life completely at the service of projects much greater than genitals and bellies.

Let us, then, investigate Galen's conception of the nature of man. Galen sets off by showing that man alone of all creation is endowed with reason, by which he is qualified for the pursuit of art and science; consequently, the improvement of the mind is of infinitely more importance than

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<sup>8</sup>Susanna Elm and Stephan M. Willich, *Medical Challenges for the New Millennium: an Interdisciplinary Task* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2001), 11.

that of the body, or than the increase of wealth. This leads him naturally to a description of fortune the inconstancy of which is pointed out, and exemplified by several conspicuous and familiar instances. He deduces from various examples the superiority of striving to improve oneself in the (morally) beneficial arts to toiling in the mere pursuit of riches. He furthermore points out the folly of those who lay great stress on their nobility. Even the elegance of the body, and of furniture and dress, is considered by him of little importance, unless it be at the same time united with a well adorned mind. He cautions all to whom his remarks apply not to misapprehend him when he speaks of study or of the arts, none of which are of any importance, unless they benefit society. He supports his views by giving some details relative to the care bestowed in the gymnastic trainings of the athlete in preparing for their corporeal duties, in service of the flesh only. He considers the nature of the arts as being twofold: the first is noble, owing to its connection with the gifts of the mind; the other is ignoble or inferior, being dependent on corporeal labour alone. Then, as might be anticipated, he places medicine at the head of the first division, superior to every other mental pursuit or liberal art. Galen seems to suggest that the “good man” is the one who dedicates himself to the benefit of society. Seneca usually proposes that the “good man” is the one who adheres strictly to well-learned philosophical teachings. These ideas overlap, as both philosophers take into consideration the welfare of society as a whole. It can be argued that the difference is in caring for the individual. Seneca however is elitist in his view of the “good man”; Galen, on the other hand, is concerned with the individual’s emotional and physiological health.

Following this short survey of the differences and comparisons between Seneca and Galen’s distinct humoral psychology, I should like to investigate the difference between these two philosophers’ perspectives on anger and revenge. One of the most important differences



between Seneca and Galen is that, when analysing anger, Seneca is interested in the movement of the mind (the emotional judgment proof), and Galen is interested in the (Physiological proof). Moreover, Galen is more interested in the causality of anger than Seneca, who is more concerned with the nature of anger. This does not mean that Seneca's philosophy is less methodical, however; only that Galen's approach is scientific in nature, where Seneca's is philosophical.

Seneca's emotional approach to anger is generic by comparison to Galen's. Galen's approach takes each specific organ affected by the humours as an individual case, as will be discussed in detail later in this thesis. Being closer in time to Elizabethan tragedy, it is important to discuss this theory in relation to the Elizabethan revenge tradition and its conception of anger, both philosophically and in performance. I argue that, in early modern culture, the passions were experienced as bodily phenomena. The emotions were produced by the humours. These four fluids should not be seen as metaphors; rather, choler, melancholy, blood and phlegm are material substances that literally travel through the body. As a consequence, the emotions in this psychological materialism are physically felt: a passion is a bodily sensation. While in one sense obsolete, humoral theory is "modern":

Some of the research conducted in 'affective neuroscience' in the last two decades has become closer to the Aristotelian and Galenic approaches by questioning traditional viewed of cognition and affect as separable (and often opposing) forces or processes within the mind, suggesting that they are interrelated processes, and that their distinction is phenomenological, not ontological. Emphasizing the physiological basis of cognition, affective neuroscientists have located different emotions in different regions of the brain... Cultural historians working on the English context sometimes drawn on catchy phrases such as Wright's "passions ingender humours, and humours breed passion" in trying to reconstruct the Renaissance humoral understanding of the interaction between mind and body. Yet, in so doing, they have tended to overlook the crucial role which

medieval and early modern Galenic physicians attributed to the spirits within that interaction <sup>9</sup>.

I argue that this material approach to the emotions, which studies the bodily processes associated with the passions in early modern texts, renders some insights into actual experience. The view of emotions as material fluids that run through the body compels the question of revenge as a material act of balancing these fluids. Moreover, it proposes the idea of the intervention of the conditions that affect these humours. Emotions are mostly described as physical phenomena in medical texts of the period, and early modern characters also depicted the emotions as such.

When an early modern character got angry, he or she might say, for example:

And these same thoughts people this little world,  
In humours like the people of this world,  
For no thought is contended

(Shakespeare, *Richard II*, V. v. 9-11)

Moreover, there are examples of characters who say, “That makes me angry, and I’m going to retaliate, or remember”, or something along those lines, which is seen as a proper Senecan utterance. It does not concentrate on the operations of the body, but on the mental processes of anger. Research ought to focus on the reasons that made people angry as well as on the actions and decisions that result from the passion: to make a Senecan assumption, one needs to reconstruct the kinds of things – the “external” conditions – that made people react at various times. Treating anger as a material emotion begs the logical conclusion that revenge and justice are to be treated as material phenomena. In the same line of thought, Linda Woodbridge states that the obsession with revenge in English renaissance drama is the result of a quest for justice. Early modern playwrights show the need to exact punishment for injury. This obsession with the “balancing” activity of revenge is not only the result of the injury; it denotes that the

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<sup>9</sup>Elena Carrera, ed. *Emotions and Health, 1200-1700*.(Leiden : Brill, 2013),17.

impossibility of achieving justice is the main cause of anger and violence. Her point is that there was a well-developed tradition of opposition to tyranny and that this fed into revenge tragedy, making it more socially constructive than we might have thought (WOODBRIDGE 2010: 173) Woodbridge talks about the history of justice as a concept and as a cultural practice. She goes on to examine the relationship between revenge, justice and drama, laying the groundwork for her discussion of the role of the goddesses Fortuna and Justice. The book answers questions about the cultural nature of tragedy and justice. Woodbridge proposes the idea of materialistic justice in revenge. She describes the avengers as accountants who need to balance the injury as if it was an account book:

Can we imagine revenge as a world-upside-down equivalent of debt? World-upside-down broadsheets were common to this period (see Kunzle), which relished underworlds mirroring earthly hierarchies. Hell was a kingdom, mimicking earthly monarchies, as were the animal kingdom with its leonine lord, fairyland with its monarchy, and the world of rogues, thought to be organized in hierarchies (WOODBRIDGE 2010: 85).

Woodbridge's idea of materialism might be different from Galen's. Woodbridge links revenge tragedy to the systematic unfairness of the Elizabethan political and social system, and then says that revenge tragedy is a kind of vicarious form of redress. I would argue that this quotation shows anger and revenge to be material in nature, and therefore rational. They bring the mind to focus on revenge as a balancing act which finds agreement with the Galenic proposition about anger, in contradiction of Seneca's definition of this emotion. There are a great many instances of Elizabethan characters talking about their emotions in terms of bodily experience. Many characters in early modern literature remark on the heat in their liver or the boiling of their blood. Other characters in turn proclaim that they will remember or retaliate against an injury or insult. The distinction between bodily experience and intentionality should not lead to an exclusive

choice between these two approaches to the experience of the emotions. Here, I would argue that the distinction is one that was made in the early modern period itself, and it was a distinction that functioned politically. Rather than argue for either approach to the role of anger, it is more fruitful to observe how these two perspectives on anger operated in early modern culture, and in which institutional and political circumstances the choice between these two views was made. In what follows, I will explore representations of the role of pain in the anger of the avenger in order to trace the ways in which this distinction between the bodily experience and the Senecan philosophizing of anger form part of distinct discourses. I will examine the conflicts between these discourses in their outlook on anger, and how it relates to their understanding of pain. Addressing the balance, or the relationship, between anger and pain is one of the main motives in a character's revengeful attitude, as will be examined through the lens of Jasper Heywood's translation of Seneca's *Thyestes*.

Pain directs a person's attention inwards, and cuts them off from all other sensations – a tendency that is central to making the experience of pain a catalyst for revenge. What sets pain apart from other human physical experiences such as hearing, touching, or desiring, is the fact that pain has no object or necessary correlation in the external world. Other human experiences can be expressed in terms of pain when they, too, are characterized by this lack of an object. A state of consciousness other than pain will, if deprived of its object, begin to approach the environs of physical pain; conversely, when physical pain is cathected onto an object, it is eliminated. We encountered an example of the first case in the translations of Seneca's tragedies, where anger is deprived of its object. When vengeful characters in these plays experience the emotion of anger, they tend to forget that they had an object of revenge in mind. They are fully occupied by the bodily experience of anger, and their anger comes to approach physical pain<sup>10</sup>.

This will form an important part of the analysis of Heywood's translation later in this chapter.

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<sup>10</sup> Kristine Steenburgh, *Pain, Anger and Revenge in Early Modern Culture* (Dijk: Enenkel, 2008), 180.

Although the translators of Seneca might be blamed for bloodthirstiness in accord with the literary tastes of the time, their emphasis on the passions might be explained against a broader perspective than that of literary taste. The translation of Seneca in the sixteenth century can be read in the context of the Inns of Court's political interests:

Early in the preface to his translation of *Thyestes* Jasper Heywood indicates that he works with other authors in mind, praising eight contemporaries — including Thomas Sackville, Thomas Norton, and Thomas North, as well as a “great nombre more” — for their achievements in poetry and translation. Others also imagine the translations within and against their immediate intellectual surroundings. In a prefatory poem in Studley's *Agamemnon*, one “T. B.” lauds the translator, comparing him with recent writers — including Thomas Phaer, Barnabe Googe, and Arthur Golding, as well as, in a phrase that echoes Heywood, a “great sorte more” — whose works favorably “with Heiwood [do] compare.” In short, the translations were written and read as contributions to a contemporary literary community<sup>11</sup>.

It is not coincidental that the translators added passages that stress the relation between a bodily, uncontrollable passion of anger, private revenge, and civil war. Early modern translations of the tragedies emphasize the pain of anger, and represent that pain as a necessary step towards revenge. Medea, for example, cannot take revenge on her husband without first being tormented by the Furies herself. She asks these goddesses of revenge to use their torches, whips and knives to inflict pain on her. In order to enact the murder of her own children, Medea needs to be thrown into a state of fury that gives her the force to enact such a horrific deed. The experience of the pain inflicted by the Furies is all-absorbing:

Let my blood flow upon the altars; accustom thyself to, my hand, to draw the sword and endure the sight of beloved blood. [*she slashes her arm and lets the blood flow upon the altar.*] self-smitten have I poured forth the sacred stream. But if thou complainest that too often thou art called on by my prayers, pardon, I pray; the cause, O

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<sup>11</sup>Jessica Winston reads the translations against the background of social, political, and literary culture. She argues that the play provided a vehicle for their individual authors ‘to participate in the political world they sought to serve’; but does not discuss the revenge theme of the plays in its historical political context. Winston 2006: 29-58.

Perses' daughter, of my too oft calling on thy bows is one and the same ever, Jason.(SENECA 1917: 279).

When they are thus tormented, angry characters cannot describe anything other than the very physical and painful emotion they are experiencing. In translations of Seneca's tragedies, then, anger is represented as a bodily experience that is intensely painful. Aspiring avengers call upon the Furies to inflict this pain on them, in order to reach a state of fury that is so painful they can no longer delay their act of revenge. The risk inherent in this method, however – as suggested earlier in relation to Senecan ethics – is that the pain of fury turns against itself, and inflicts the most painful wounds on the avenger, who is no longer in control of his anger. Thus, the men of the Inns of Court introduce a discourse into early modern English culture in which anger is depicted as an uncontrollable bodily process that leads to destruction and even self-destruction. As if to emphasize this, the translators also added long passages in which anger is depicted as excessive and self-destructive. One example would be lines that Jasper Heywood added to the beginning of the second act of his translation of Seneca's *Troas*, which has no basis in Seneca's original text:

The sprite of Achilles [is] added to the tragedy by the translatur.  
Forsaking now the places tenebrous,  
And depe dennes of thinfernal regione  
From all the shadowes of elisious  
That wander there the pathes full many one.  
Lo, here am J returned all alone,  
The same Achill whose feerce and beauy hand  
Of all the world, no wight might yet withstand<sup>12</sup>.

This addition of Heywood's shows the ghost of Achilles physically whereas in Seneca, the ghost of Achilles is merely reported as having appeared. This mere reportage allows Seneca to question the existence of ghosts in a chorus. Evidently, there is none of this scepticism in

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<sup>12</sup>Jasper Heywood, *Heywood's Troas, Thyestes, and Hercules*, edited from the octavos of 1559, 1560 and 1561 by H. De Vocht (Vaduz : Kraus Reprint, 1963),22. Subsequent line references are to this edition.

Heywood. He is much more immediate and more passionate. The influence of Jasper Heywood's translations of Seneca's tragedies on English tragedy is most evident in the way ideas of anger for Elizabethan cultural memory is shaped by Senecan tropes. Heywood placed special emphasis on the relationship between anger and bodily pain by framing the emotion in Seneca's tragedies in bodily terms. This chapter is designed to show how Heywood's translation of *Thyestes* was crucial to the development of emotions as bodily experiences in Elizabethan tragedy. *Thyestes* was possibly the most influential of Seneca's tragedies (even imitated by the young Shakespeare in *Titus Andronicus*).

The appeal of *Thyestes* in England at a time of profound religious reappraisal reveals some of the important elements that contributed to interest in the humours. Seneca's Atreus is driven to commit heinous crimes against his brother when he hears of an alleged affair between his brother and his wife and becomes inflamed with rage, or *furor*. He even goes as far as to impose his own fantasy on Thyestes when he claims that Thyestes did not kill Atreus' sons and serve them in a banquet to him because Thyestes thought his nephews were actually his own sons, Atreus: " This one thing stayed thee – thou didst think them thine" (SENECA 1917:181)<sup>13</sup>.

Thyestes fails to respond to his brother's verbal attack with equal force, and in the end Atreus' evil nature is triumphant while Thyestes cowers, seeking divine justice from the heavens.

Seneca's Thyestes and his brother Atreus both act according to the destructive curse of the Fury on the house of Tantalus. In the first scene the Fury rouses Tantalus with threatening words to remind him of the consequence of his sins for his descendants:

Onward damned shade.,and goad thy sinful house to madness]. Let there be rivalry in quilt of every kind; let the sword be drawn on this side and on that; let their passions know no bounds, no shame; let blind fury prick on their souls; heartless be parents' rage, and to children's children let the long trail of sin lead down; let time be given to none to

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<sup>13</sup> Allyna E. Ward, *Women and Tudor Tragedy: Feminizing Council and Representing Gender* (Plymouth: Dickinson University Press, 2013), 76.

hate old sins - ever let new arise, many in one, and let crime, e'en midst  
its punishment, increase (SENECA 1917: 95).

Thyestes, who maintains his composure throughout his stay with his brother, enacts the fury's curse and is driven by anger. When he implores the gods to curse Atreus at the end of the play, Thyestes echoes the curse of Tantalus. In turn, Thyestes' anger will only bring further destruction to the house of Tantalus and so the cycle of tragedy on their wretched house will continue. On the day Atreus slaughters Thyestes' sons to feed them to their father, the sun ominously refuses to shine. Heywood's translation of Seneca's chorus works to tell the audience how nature failed to engage with the earth on this fateful day:

The woonted turnes are gone of day and night.  
The ryse of Sunne, nor fall shalbe no more.  
Aurora dewysh mother of the light  
That woonts to sende the horses out before,  
Doth wonder mucche agayne returnde to see,  
Her dawnyng light  
And now commaundes the darkenes vp to ryse,  
Before the night to come prepared bee

(HEYWOOD 1963: 2201-2211).

In Seneca's tragedy Thyestes' only response to the knowledge that he has consumed his own children is his utterance: "The gods will be present to avenge; / to them for punishment my prayers deliver thee" (SENECA 1917: 181). Thyestes' reply distances him from his evil brother on an emotional level and this is meant to show his Stoic response towards the evil done to him by Atreus. In vain, Thyestes appeals to Jupiter when Atreus tells him the fate of his children and the substance of their feast. His appeal goes unanswered and Thyestes stoically accepts his misfortune: "[T]hese arms let loose and hurl fires. Make compensation for the banished day". (SENECA 1917: 179). In the end Atreus achieves another verbal defeat over his brother's words by getting the last bitter word: "To thy sons for punishment do I deliver thee" (SENECA 1917: 181). Atreus turns Thyestes' utterance around and reminds him that he has consumed his own children: Atreus clearly gets the better of this last exchange, since the punishment he speaks of is not simply hopeful, but a reality. The difference between the brothers' characters is even more salient in the context of Seneca's musings on human virtue and vice. For Seneca, tyrannical behaviour and immorality were indelibly linked. He discusses the fate of the tyrant, or the cruel man, contrasted with the fate of the virtuous in his ethical writings<sup>14</sup>.

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<sup>14</sup> Allyna Ward, *Relentless Punishments: Mirrors of Hell from Sackville to Shakespeare* (Newcastle: University of Newcastle, 2005), 130.



In the context of humoral psychology, Heywood's translation emphasizes the difference between the humoral aspects of what is normally considered Thyestes' Stoic response to the horrors done by Atreus. And Atreus' humours are out of proportion by comparison to the balanced nature of Thyestes. John Kerrigan summarizes the relationship, in Senecan tragedy, between nature and human events:

Senecan tragedy presents a natural order which convulses with horror at human perversion. This is why, when Thyestes devours his children, the stars and planets go awry and darkness covers the day. (KERRIGAN 1996: 112)

As suggested above, this subversion of the natural order of day and night reflects the crimes of men. There is no satisfying conclusion or resolution at the end of the tragedy and the audience is left with the sense that the Fury has removed all sense of order from the world of the play with her curse. Heywood's additions at the end of the play go further than simply a moral separation of good and evil by making Thyestes accept moral culpability for this crime. This may be explained by the cosmic disorder that happens after he has consumed his children. This disorder corresponds to the one that took place in his body after he – albeit unknowingly - cannibalized his children. Atreus' evil act causes both the cosmic disorder and the humoral chaos that Thyestes does not respond to at the end. In Heywood's additional material Thyestes cries out to the furies in Hell and is reminded of Tantalus' sins before he begs for the transfer of all punishments suffered in Hell onto him:

Flocke here ye fowlest feendes of Hell.  
and thou O grandsier greate,  
Come see the gluted gutts of mine,  
with suche a kynde of meate,  
As thou didst once for godds prepare.  
let torments all of Hell  
Now fall uppon this hatefull hed,

that hathe deserved them well.

(HEYWOOD 1963:2729-2736)

In Seneca's treatise *On Anger*, the Stoic links anger with uncontrolled ire and consequently with destruction, even endless tragedy. For Seneca, anger and its companion *furor* represent two of the most serious ills of mankind. But Seneca does not believe that men are prone to anger by nature and he explains how men may overcome the dangers of *anger*: there are a thousand further instances illustrating how persistence can surmounts every obstacle, and that nothing is really difficult if, as a rational Stoic, you really “put your mind to it”:

The relevance of anger to tragedy, at least for Seneca, is most poignantly made in the tragedy *Thyestes* when an actual personification of the emotion, the Fury, rouses Tantalus from Hell. As a result of Tantalus' crimes Thyestes and Atreus both act according to the destructive curse of the Fury on the house of Tantalus. Although the Fury never actively engages with Atreus' humours, she claims responsibility for the ensuing tragedy as she torments Tantalus at the start of the play. In Heywood, Thyestes is not looking to avenge himself on his brother Atreus. Rather, he is looking for a type of divine vengeance for his own actions, calling out, “Let torments all of hell / Now fall vpon this hatefull head, that hath deserved them well” claiming that “Yee all be plagued wrongfully, your gyfts be small, in sight / Of myne, and meete it were your pange on me alone should light” (HEYWOOD 1963: 2734-2740). In this competitive display of anguish, where Thyestes begs for increasingly violent punishment for his sins, he calls after the “infernall fiends” in his final lines, insisting, “[Y]e scape not fro me so ye Godds/ still after you J goe.” “And vengeance aske on wicked wight/ yout thunder bolt to throe” (HEYWOOD 1963: 2809-2812). (WARD 2005:149-150).

Vengeance becomes a part of the lament, as Heywood rewrites the play in order to have a grieving Thyestes return for a final extended soliloquy where, in his grief, he begs for the gods to strike him from the face of the earth:

The audience is meant to feel uncomfortable with Atreus' victory and Thyestes' passive faith in the heavens. For Seneca, this difficult end perfectly represents human irrationality and the effects of uncontrolled passions. But for Jasper Heywood, this moral paradox was directed to a Christian audience; in the added material at the end of the tragedy he transforms Seneca's morally unresolved tragedy with Christian ending. By adding a scene in which Thyestes, not Atreus, begs for punishment from the infernal deities, Heywood returns the play to chaos, where it began. Heywood's addition to the play suggests that belief and humours intertwine, resulting in a Stoic attitude towards emotions in general and anger in particular<sup>15</sup>.

This does not, however, abolish revenge altogether. Thyestes' speech promises a future vengeance. This is a reminder of one of Seneca's ethical statements: Seneca thinks that revenge, if performed as a duty devoid of anger, is a correction of a cosmic wrong. His rejection of anger does not mean he totally rejects revenge, but only revenge that is based in anger:

“What then?” You ask; “will the good man not be angry if his father is murdered, his mother outraged before his eyes?” No, he will not be angry, but he will avenge them. Why, moreover, are you afraid that filial affection, even without anger may not prove a sufficiently strong incentive to him?... The good man will perform his duties undisturbed and unafraid; and he will in such a way do all that is worthy of a good man as to do nothing that is unworthy of a man. My father is being murdered—I will defend him; he is slain—I will avenge him, not because I grieve, but because it is my duty . (SENECA 1928: 137)

In this quotation, Seneca defines revenge as a duty, rather than an irrational impulse based in anger. Seneca rejects anger as a violent emotion that leads to revenge and bloodshed; however, he allows for revenge in extremely exact cases, as mentioned above. To be more specific, the rational justification for an irrational behaviour is that of acting according to duty. Interestingly, this means that emotionless and mechanical reactions are allowed in the Senecan ethics; however, he does not attribute them to his characters on stage. His techniques are designed to

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<sup>15</sup> Allyna E. Ward 'If the head be evill the body cannot be good': Legitimate Rebellion in Gascoigne and Kinwelmershe's *Jocasta*' <http://extra.shu.ac.uk/emls/14-1/article2.htm> accessed 22/09/2014.

allow the greatest display of unjustified, ferocious emotions. The promised revenge will not stem out of anger: rather, it is acted out as a kind of moral duty. It is a balancing act, to level out an imbalance in the cosmic system. As Sandra Clark explains:

The object of revenge is a levelling out, and while it may at first stem from a moral impulse, as playwrights from the Greek tragedians and Seneca onwards recognized, the necessary recourse to violence runs the danger of compromising the revenger's integrity, not least because violence can become dangerously attractive in itself. 'When the bad bleed, then is the tragedy is good', observes Vindice, the morally equivocal protagonist of the *The Revenger's Tragedy*, with the implication that the more bleeding there is, the better.<sup>16</sup>

According to Clark, historically, revenge was the first manifestation of consciousness of justice, the only way that wrongs could be righted. It was assumed to be a duty of an injured man to avenge himself upon the one who wronged him or any member of his family. By the Elizabethan era, the concept of justice had changed. Fredson Bowers, in his book *Elizabethan Revenge Tragedy*, describes the evolution in detail. Starting with the system of *wergild*, which was the earliest English law, Bowers leads us through the history of the concept of justice. According to the system of *wergild* the injured family had the responsibility of collecting payment; justice was a privilege of the state, and private blood revenge had no legal place in England. All kinds of murder, including that of revenge killing, fell into the same category in law, and punishment for the avenger was as heavy as for the original murder. This kind of material representation of both emotion and revenge can be connected to the Senecan understanding of anger and its resulting revenge if we consider Seneca's dramatic imagery as literal rather than figurative.

Seneca's portrayal of nature in his plays should be literally interpreted. For example, the anger of the gods at the ghastly meal in *Thyestes* causes an actual premature night. The literal correspondence between the physical entity of nature, and Seneca's text, can be interpreted

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<sup>16</sup>Sandra Clark, *Renaissance Drama* (Cambridge: Polity, 2007), 128.

within the framework of the Stoic belief that man should live well-attuned with nature. It also highlights, by physically manifesting, the disastrous effects of the unnaturalness of emotions like anger in Seneca's opinion, whilst also illustrating how nature interferes in the life of men.

Braden writes:

The motif has a special resonance with Stoic cosmology, where a principle of universal *sympatheia* transmits moral action directly into physical consequences, even at a great distance; that conviction appears to be at work in much of what now looks like mere hyperbole in Seneca's rhetoric, though nowhere else does he make quite as much of it as he does in *Thyestes*. What happens in this play seems to be not a mere eclipse or retrograde motion, but the destruction of celestial reality itself. (BRADEN 1985: 55).

Finally, and as we see in this quotation, the Stoic principle of attuning human life to nature is problematic. Seneca's use of the "external" is usually attributed to "logic" and "reason" but, controversially, it can describe nature. Dramatically, nature in Seneca empathizes with man but textually Senecan nature can be hostile and angry. Seneca draws an analogy between angry men and animals, which are parts of nature. The Elizabethans split Seneca's concept the "external" in two alliterating words: fortune and fate. The above quotation suggests the world of man and the natural world are intermingled so that each impacts the other. Galen proposes that we are not passive recipients of the natural world, we respond to it as much as it affects us.

The next chapter will address the adaptation of Seneca's rhetoric on the Elizabethan stage in the writing of early modern revenge tragedy texts, by way of the text that critics usually consider as the pioneering English revenge tragedy: *Gorboduc*.

## Chapter Four

### The Poetics of Anger in the Elizabethan Revenge Tragedy: *Gorboduc*.

The focus on retribution, cruelty, and the poetics of anger in Seneca raises critical issues in regard to the Elizabethan stage. The poetics of anger and cruelty in Seneca do not affect the reader of Elizabethan revenge tragedy in the same way. Seneca's plays condemn anger and grief, considering revenge as a major consequence of these emotions. In *Gorboduc*, which is considered one of the first English revenge tragedies written in 1561, the king decides to split his kingdom between his two sons Ferrex and Porrex. Unfortunately, the two princes fell in dissension, and the younger kills the older. The mother Videna, loved the older prince more than the younger one, therefore, she kills the younger. The people of the kingdom rebel against the Gorboduc; the king and Videna; the queen and kill them both.

Elizabethan plays are more colourful but also more uneven in this respect. They allow for a variety of emotions in the text and on the stage. The Elizabethans tend to distinguish between anger and hatred. For example in *Gorboduc*, Ferrex uses this word in order to justify his intention to attack Porrex. The following speech by Ferrex suggests that hatred precedes rage.

Ferrex: Yea, and that son which from his childish age  
Envieth mine honour and doth hate my life,  
What will he now do, when his pride, his rage,  
The mindful malice of his grudging heart  
Is armed with force, with wealth, and kingly state?<sup>1</sup>.  
(II. i. 58-62)

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<sup>1</sup>Thomas Sackville and Thomas Norton, *Gorboduc; or, Ferrex and Porrex*, ed. Irby B. Cauthen Jr (London: Edward Arnold, 1970), 36. Subsequent references are to this edition.

Taking into consideration that *Gorboduc* is the pioneering Elizabethan revenge tragedy that shows a clear Senecan influence, the above quotation suggests that these two dramatists have considered an Aristotelian approach in the sense and that they talk about “hatred” and “rage” separately. They differentiate themselves from Seneca who does not discriminate between these two emotions. Unlike Seneca, Aristotle, whose definition of anger is mentioned in the first chapter, distinguishes between anger and hatred. In his treatise *On Anger* Seneca contextualizes his rejection of Aristotle’s support of anger. However, he never mentions Aristotle’s distinct definition and rejection of hatred. Yet, there is more to the Elizabethan imitation of Seneca than the above noted dichotomy. The quotation just suggests that the Elizabethans were aware of the qualities of emotions.

Aristotle’s defence of anger and Seneca’s complete condemnation of this “savage emotion” is explained in *Gorboduc* by creating what Rene Girard calls “The Monstrous Double”, whereby the foundation of violence originates in a desire to imitate divinity. In *Gorboduc* violence governs the language of the brothers and the mother. In the play, the kingdom is Ferrex and Porrex’s object of desire, but it is not the material land they compete for, the real competition between these two brothers concerns becoming the sole governor of the land – in a sense, aspiring to become divine. Girard writes:

In the traditional view the object comes first, followed by human desires that converge independently on this object. Last of all comes violence, a fortuitous consequence of the convergence. The sacrificial conflict increases in intensity, so too does the violence. It is no longer the intrinsic value of the object that inspires the struggle; rather, it is the violence itself that bestows value on the objects, which are only pretexts for a conflict. From this point on it

is violence that calls the tune. Violence is the divine force that everyone tries to use and that ends by using everyone for its own<sup>2</sup>.

Girard's argument offers a new view of Aristotle's defense of anger and rejection of hatred, and Seneca's rejection of all emotions. Girard assumes that violence precedes the emotion that Seneca and Aristotle think is the cause of brutality. The mimetic aspect of this desire is one of Girard's most important themes in his theory of the "Monstrous Double". He does not directly refer to human emotions; he seems to sum them up in the word "desire". This statement may be viewed as "true" in classic terms because both Seneca and Aristotle define emotions as engulfing "desires". These doubles indicate that we are inhabited by these emotions and not merely recipients of external powers that provoke them. The characters in the play show how the depiction of Senecan anger also involves humoral influence.

In this adaptation of Senecan themes and style, *Gorboduc*, textual anger is expressed within the framework of blank verse. The play presents revenge from gendered, political, and emotional perspectives. Revenge and the avenger's emotions are the play's primary focus. This focus on the avenger has political implications that were addressed to the court of Queen Elizabeth at the time. Moreover, the functional nature of this rhetorical anger intensifies all of the above mentioned issues. The silent nature of hatred reshapes the body of Porrex's speeches. Ferrex and Porrex's interchangeable dialogue stirs the sense of a twofold antagonism, which gives the impression that their characters are built on binaries. This is not necessarily true. The linguistic trick in the play offers a modern reading of the text whereby it becomes difficult to point out the emotional force which controls speech and action. There are several agents of powerful emotion in the play, granting the text multi-perspectival dimensions.

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<sup>2</sup>Rene Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*, trans. Patrick Gregory (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1977), 144.



Emotionally, both Ferrex and Porrex's characters are fully developed. They are seemingly distinct and recognizable personalities. This is not entirely true, given the degree to which the two brothers mirror each other's intentions. In this sense, they cannot be considered separate personalities. They characterize each other to reveal their own emotional characteristics. These personalities are depicted as envious and jealous. They are jealous of each other; their speeches are dense with envy. Jealousy and envy give rise to Porrex's hatred and Ferrex's anger. Each brother portrays the other with emotional basis:

Ferrex: He envieth mine honor and doth hate my life.  
What will he now do, when his pride his rage,  
The mindful malice of his grudging heart  
Is armed with force, with wealth and kingly state?...  
Porrex: His wretched head shall pay the worthy price  
Of this his treason and his hate to me.  
Shall I abide and treat and send and pray  
And hold my yelden throat to a traitor's knife.

(II. i. 55-60)

Their pathos is inherent within the stylistic representation of sibling rivalry. Ferrex and Porrex seem to be different to each other in nature, but similar in the emotional claims they make on the reader. They seem to forget that they are treated equally by the father. They are each given equivalent proportions of the kingdom. Their hatred for each other is not provoked by material gain. It can be interpreted as a desire to absorb the other's personality. Girard's idea of "mimetic violence" applies to the princes' description of each other. The violence is actually generated by the mimesis involved in their peer rivalry. As noted above they use similar statements in order to convince the reader of their point of view. Each wants what the other has. Envy intensifies hatred; Porrex already hates his brother. Now that Ferrex has control of

something, Porrex needs to claim it as his own. Rene Girard explains the concept of envy shedding light on the brothers' emotional relationship as follows:

He defines envy as "a feeling of impotence which vitiates our attempt to acquire something, because it belongs to another." He observes, on the other hand, that there would be no envy, in the strong sense of the word, if the envious person's imagination did not transform into concerted opposition the passive obstacle which the possessor puts in his way by the mere fact of possession... *Envy* occurs only when our efforts to acquire it fail and we are left with a feeling of impotence"<sup>3</sup>.

Videna functions as a soothsayer in relation Ferrex and a killer in relation to Porrex. Her address to Ferrex invokes a wishful sense of healing, while she kills Porrex because of an unnatural desire to avenge Ferrex's death. She warns Ferrex against his brother. Her first sad appearance combines anger and love. She is angry with Gorboduc, hates Porrex and loves Ferrex. Videna can be considered the mediator in the triangle of anger, hatred and envy. Hatred makes her chop Porrex to pieces. She functions as the mediator between the two rival characters who both envy each other and desire to become one. This can be explained by Girard's theory of the "Monstrous Double":

He asserts that his own desire is prior to that of his rival; according to him, it is the mediator who is responsible for the rivalry. Everything that originates with the mediator is systematically belittled although still secretly desired. Now the mediator is a shrewd and diabolical enemy. He tries to rob the subject of his most prized possessions; he obstinately thwarts his most legitimate ambitions.(GIRARD1965:11).

Moreover, Videna's speech after the dumb show in the first act establishes the narrative of the play. She knits the line of action in this drama. She, therefore, combines all the emotional

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<sup>3</sup>Rene Girard, *Deceit, Desire, and the Novel; Self and Other in Literary Structure*, trans. Yvonne Freccero (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1965), 12-13.

conditions that occur throughout. Anger, hatred, and grief are united in her words. She creates the atmosphere of this revenge tragedy. She silently conceives the tragedy and enacts its horror. She does not perform her revenge on the stage. The Queen's revenge is narrated rather than acted; the same goes for Porrex's crime. Textually, the Queen starts the tragedy and finishes it. The Queen conceives murder and gives birth to revenge. It could be argued that she copies the desire that her sons have towards each other. The desire of total annihilation causes the tragedy. Videna's anger towards Porrex's crime is preceded by hatred of Porrex. She is her son's murderer, and the victim's mother. The tragedy originates from her womb; she copies Porrex's anger and kills him. The princes' anger consumes both them and their parents.

Videna, the mother of his two wicked sons. Beyond the control of her husband, she is a female monster, an undutiful and unloving wife, who is a „Quene of adamant“ with a „marble brest“ (IV.ii.233). Her alienation from the womanly virtues and alignment with the wild and „uncivil“ is emphasised by the depiction of her unnatural motherhood, her sons having drawn milk not from „womans brest“ but from „the cruell tigers teate“ (IV.i.72-73). She is no bringer of harmony, but an ambitious and over-reaching destructive force unleashed upon the realm, the industrious sower of the discord between her sons, the harbourer of an incestuous lust for her older son, and the vengeful murderer of her younger. I do not see Videna as a direct reference to Elizabeth, but in her female dominance she may perhaps be seen as a „dark double“ of the Queen, a terrible warning of the inherent danger in uncontrolled gynocracy. Videna's transgressive and inversionary behaviour opens the way for the unleashing of the Furies 91 upon the hapless realm. These terrible female wreakers of vengeance descend „[w]ith flames and bloud, and with a brand of fire“ (IV.ii.280), to usher in the destructiveness of the civil war<sup>4</sup>.

The quotation “woman's brest” is a clear indication of emphasizing Videna's irrational nature due to her gender. Clark writes:

For writers of plays about women and domestic crime the category *woman* was a particularly problematic one, given the prevalent culture fear of deviant or transgressive women such as witches and murderers, and the feeling that they are at heart

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<sup>4</sup> Catherine Anne Parsons, 'Harlots and Harloty' *The Eroticization of Religious and Nationalistic Rhetoric in Early Modern England*(Sussex: University of Sussex, 2010), 90-91.

unknowable and could not be explained through normal process of rational scrutiny<sup>5</sup>.

Clark illustrates the Elizabethan view of women as irrational and problematic. The general view of “transgressive” women has them labeled as witches. In *Gorboduc*, however, the woman is the queen. Here, Videna’s transgressive and divisive behavior opens the way for the unleashing of the Furies upon the whole unfortunate realm. These terrible wreakers of vengeance descend to usher in the destructiveness of the civil war.

There are three emotional displays in the play. There is a clear progression from envy to hatred to anger. Rage is given birth to, and enacted by, Videna, who kills her own flesh and blood. This leads the public to anger: they execute the king and Videna. The image of a city in ruin is left to the spectator’s imagination. The sensational language conjures a nightmarish world of total ruin and cruel death. There is an especial vindictiveness to this tragedy as the victims are killed by their nearest blood relations. Anger drives them to murder their own flesh and blood. The invocation of pity and fear depends on the closeness of the blood line in these tragedies.

Emotional display is part and parcel of tragedy. These emotional demonstrations invite the use of sensuously attractive language. Emotions therefore influence the methods of creating and conceiving tragedy. Imitation does not only involve “complete action”, it needs comprehensive emotional coloration. Emotions are responsible for completing and complementing the action in tragedy; it is the precise articulation of distinct emotions which shapes the action. They have the potential to be the main artistic constituents of the genre. The fusion between emotion, and the

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<sup>5</sup> Sandra Clark, *Women and Crime in the Street Literature of Early Modern England* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 115.

stylistic genius of Seneca is what transformed him for an Elizabethan audience, making him more attractive to early modern translators than his Greek predecessors.

In *Gorboduc*, Seneca's influence is felt through speech. The absence of action exaggerates the function of language and dumb show. These emotionally prepare the audience to witness violence. The pantomimes set up the dark atmosphere of the play, fortelling and explaining the forthcoming plot. Videna assumes the role of a Senecan ghost in the first act as she opens the play with a series of gloomy adjectives that reflect upon night versus day, and love versus shame. Those binaries are combined in the speech, just as Videna merges her desires with her sons', and foreshadowing the whole crime. She kills one son to avenge the other:

The silent night that brings the quiet pause  
From painful travails of the weary day  
Prolongs my careful thoughts and makes me blame  
And slow Aurore, that so for love or shame.  
(I. i. 1-4)

Videna is the first character to talk about injustice. Her role as an avenger saturates her vocabulary: she speaks of "grief", "sadness", "wrongdoing", "unkindness", and "rage". It is a form of self-fulfilling prophecy, prefiguring her later action. Videna does not speak of anger at the outset; she is, rather, a melancholic figure. Her strongly oppositional emotions define her character, and thereby her action: she favours her elder son and hates her younger. Porrex, for whom she has no affection, becomes a crucible for her powerfully negative emotions.

Videna is a divided character from the outset; by channeling all of her negative emotions into Porrex, as an external vessel which can be destroyed, she seeks to address the humoral imbalance in her own nature. *Gorboduc*'s division of the kingdom reinforces the dramatic importance of the division between brothers, and the mother's divided self: the divisions between Lear and the

Fool, Cordelia, Regan, and Lear's kingdom in *King Lear* would make a nice comparison. As Gorboduc's counsellor characterizes it here:

Philander: When fathers cease to know that they should rule,  
The children cease to know they should obey.  
And often overkindly tenderness  
Is mother of unkindly stubbornness.  
(I. ii.207-210)

The foreshadowing of emotional and political imbalance is expressed in balanced sentences. Directly after the passage mentioned above, the counsellors continue by providing another character sketch of Ferrex and Porrex. It is just the first of several. There is no mention of the Queen in the counsellors' vocalizations. The word "mother" here recalls the "grudging grief" (I. i. 15) of Videna's speech at the opening of the play. Representing the mother's divided affection from the beginning of the play, it might be argued, means that the kingdom is in some sense already divided. The tormented, wrathful heart of the queen affects the state of the kingdom. The play enacts the dangers of emotions in general, and anger, in particular by showing the turbulent effect of emotions on the lives of nations. However, the play suggests that it is the king's business to ensure the hereditary line: with this achieved, emotions are rendered relatively harmless. The play is deeply indebted to Seneca in this respect. Seneca's philosophy, as much as his style, colours early modern writing and thought. Susan James writes:

In early modern writing, our constitutional inability to govern our emotions is often attributed to the Fall; as punishment for Adam's sin, God removed from us the capacity to control, moderate, and direct them, creating the inward chaos that is the lot of all but very few exceptional people... Our passions, they concede, make us

false, foolish, inconstant, and uncertain. They are the flaws that trip us up and the stuff of which tragedy is made<sup>6</sup>.

Seneca, therefore, is not the only figure who influenced the shaping of early modern tragedy. His philosophy appealed to the predominant form of Christianity in the Elizabethan age. The philosophy of emotions that prevailed in that epoch helped define the ground on which revenge tragedy is constructed. Our emotions are what makes us inapt to be consistent with the order of the universe, the individuals we have to interact with, and society. They reflect the inner chaos of our being which, results in tragedy.

In *Gorboduc*, dumb shows are the peak of reason set up for the audience. They help prepare the audience for the scenes and relive the emotional density of the tragic atmosphere. They can be seen as the main theatrical device used in order to channel the audience's emotions.

Anger, grief, and envy are the most articulate emotions in *Gorboduc*, but not the ones that most effect the action: jealousy, Videna's rage against Porrex, and the rivalry and hatred between the brothers occupy that position. It could be argued that the hatred between the brothers is the main catalyst in the play, since it sparks Videna to act on her own impulses. The rhetoric of the angry and sad mother overshadows the opening, but the unarticulated hatred between the brothers sets the course of the play's action. Seldom spoken outright, the submersion of hatred shows itself in a series of contorted puns throughout the play. The word "kind", for example, occurs frequently and with a number of different meanings: Here fate collaborates with a man who makes an unwise decision, who abnegates his responsibilities, and who violates the laws of "kind" that primal nature that is the basis for one's living in a beneficent relationship with his fellow-man and with his God. (SACKVILL AND NORTON: XIX)

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<sup>6</sup>Susan James, *Passion and Action: The Emotions in the Seventeenth-Century Philosophy* (New York: Oxford University press, 1997), 13.

*Gorboduc* mixes envy with anger which, according to the play, leads to hatred. More importantly, the melancholic atmosphere of the play's opening suggests that it is going to enact a sad grudge that takes over all the characters. It is a melancholic play and, for the early moderns, melancholia could be humoral or social by turns. In 1621, Robert Burton wrote:

Melancholy, the Subject of our present discourse, is either in disposition or habit. In disposition, is that transitory melancholy which goes and comes upon every small occasion of sorrow, need, sickness, trouble, fear, grief, passion, or perturbation of the mind, any manner of care, discontent, or thought, which causeth anguish, dullness, heaviness, and vexation of spirit, any ways opposite to pleasure, mirth, joy, delight, causing forwardness in us, or a dislike<sup>7</sup>.

Burton's definition implies anger, discontent, and envy as causes of melancholy. They affect the humour and incite turbulence of the mind. In *Gorboduc*, the mother's melancholic grieving, along with her dislike of Porrex, trigger this violent humour. She manifests her hatred in speech immediately before she kills Porrex. Revenge, however, is postponed until the fourth act. The thematic "disposition" is once and for all the ultimate action; which is revenge and emotional annihilation of language in the pictorial narration of the act by Marcella. *Gorboduc*'s misfortunes never make the transition from words to action. Therefore, his "position" does not change to "disposition". He does not take action against his son, but rather laments his loss. The play might maintain a politic rhetorical distance by situating the action in a remote historical kingdom, but it nevertheless echoes anxieties about contemporary Elizabethan rule and magistracy. The problems afflicting the state are seen as originating directly from the actions of the monarch: the eponymous king, *Gorboduc*, despite his apparent strength of will and self-assertiveness, is in reality foolish. He goes directly against the advice of his wise counsellors, insisting upon

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<sup>7</sup>Robert Burton, *the Essential Anatomy of Melancholy*, ed. et. al. G.C.F. Mead (Mineola: Dover Publications, 2002), 15.



splitting the kingdom between his two sons. In this display of self-will he behaves with an irrationality and lack of self-control which marks him as unwise. The authors are careful to emphasize Gorboduc's abandonment of his divinely-appointed duty as king and the rupture of his kingdom in terms of inversion and the unnatural act of the division of his land from course of right. This alignment of inadequate government and civil disorder with the unnatural is paralleled by Gorboduc's failure as family man, the resultant breach of familial ties echoing those of the ruptured bonds of community. Presumably the result of his failures as a father, the ambitious, avaricious and bloodthirsty Porrex murders his brother Ferrex out of motives of greed and ambition, unleashing the devastation of a civil war upon the kingdom. In an evocation of the early-modern correspondence held to exist between the individual body and the political body, both the monarch and his kingdom are seen as unbalanced humoral bodies; Gorboduc's "noisome humour" which is shown in his irrational behaviour, is paralleled by the "succeeding heapes of plagues" infecting the "misguided state" (II.ii.100).

According to T. S. Eliot "Seneca's characters do not have a private life", hence, the queen uncovers this "disposition" in her character, giving the audience access to the private life of the other characters mostly because anger is not a private emotion, unlike hatred which is dangerously anonymous according to Aristotle's definition of it. The queen's expressive attitudes define the aesthetic values of the plays language, in both its dialogues and soliloquies. The anger is aesthetized in such a way that its dramatization strengthens the emotional value of the tragedy. The best example from *Gorboduc* may be Videna's response to her son's fratricide:

Why should I live and linger forth my time  
In longer life to double my distress?  
O me, most woeful wight, whom no mishap  
Long ere this day could have bereaved hence.

Mought not these hands, by fortune or by fate

...

Without my feeling pain; so should not now  
This living breast remain the ruthless tomb,  
Wherein my heart yelden to death is graved;

...

My dear Ferrex, my joy, my life's delight,  
Murdered with cruel death? O hateful wretch!  
O heinous traitor both to heaven and earth!

(V. i. 1-35)

This long speech begins the fourth act which is preceded with a hallucinatory ramble. This act crystallizes the Senecan influence on *Gorboduc*. The dumb show is the enactment of a symbolic representation. It is a warning against the misfortunes that will take place during the act. The Chorus makes of each of the five acts a self-contained unit at the expense of the momentum of the play; the meaning of the play is established by building up and then tending towards a final revelation. The pantomime translates into Videna's speech and revenge. The pantomime introduces revenge by impersonating the furies and presenting a set of Senecan characters who murder their children. Moreover, the speech elaborates Videna's hatred of Porrex. She does not feel pain nor does she care about the consequences of her actions. The first two sentences of her speech are disintegrating into one another: the alternative words are synonyms, articulated as relational opposites. Thus, "live" and "linger" rhyme with "life" and "longer": in context, they oppose one another. Life transcends its meaning to become death. The questions she states while angry come from a mother who knows that she has given birth to the killer and the victim at the same time. Therefore, her vocabulary binds each concept to its opposite. Videna's revenge on Porrex begs the question: who is going to avenge his death? The play has the mob turn against the king and queen and kill them both. The reaction of the crowd towards the murders that took place in the kingdom can be seen as the result of the contagious nature of anger. Thus, Videna,

Porrex, and Ferrex, and by association Gorboduc, can be labeled as responsible for the people's rebellion. Seneca would consider this coup as one of the main results of this unleashing of anger in the individual. This is where Seneca and Girard meet:

So Girard holds that violent social conflict is *mimetic* not simply in the sense that antagonists can be unwittingly drawn into monotonous replication of each other's offensives, but in terms which render pellucid the very contagiousness of violence itself: violence exhibits a remarkable capacity to infect those in close proximity to it, even, perhaps especially, those ostensibly 'rational' parties who intervene in an attempt to arrest its spread...Girard argues, then, that the social problem of human violence is not simply that there is no natural end point to it (save, perhaps death)- there is the related and perhaps greater problem that violence, like desire, is easily 'caught' by others, such that a personal dispute may eventually threaten to engulf an entire community<sup>8</sup>.

In terms of the play, Girard gives an explanation of its violence from his idea of "mimetic violence". Porrex kills Ferrex due to their rivalry over the kingdom, and over their mother's love and affections. Their mother favours one over the other which fires up their hatred of each other. Videna's is close to the violence that embodies the relationship between Ferrex and Porrex and kills her own son. Thematically, the rhetoric of anger in Videna's speech outdoes the semiotics of words. This is a characteristic of the emulation of Seneca's stichomythia. As there is not another character with whom Videna converses, the mother is self-divided and she is talking to her other self, intensifying all her emotions by imagining herself in a heated conversation between the mother of the victim and the mother of the killer. The self becomes the other and still wants to preserve her entirety. Her grieved self and her angry self are quarrelling in a stichomythic manner. This is described by Peter Holland:

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<sup>8</sup> Chris Fleming, *René Girard: Violence and Mimesis* (Cambridge: Polity, 2004), 46.

He constructs the mimetic act as one of rivalry, in which the imitator mimics the model because she or he wishes to appropriate that which the model possess, promoting the model to redouble their appropriative act – so effectively mimicking their imitator – and so “each becomes the imitator of his own imitator and model of his own model”<sup>9</sup>.

This may be attributed to the fact that most of them are angry characters. Francis Bacon proposes a correspondent idea in his essay *On Anger* where he disagrees with Seneca on certain points. Bacon disagrees with Seneca about the total eradication of anger from life, yet, he thinks that this emotion should be controlled. Bacon agrees with Seneca on observing the cruelty of revenge that results from anger. Like Seneca, Bacon attributes the baseness of anger to certain types of people; namely women, children, the sick and the elderly. They agree on the idea that observing the “representation” of anger would make people avoid it. Videna, then, crystallizes the two Philosophers’ thoughts about anger:

To seek to extinguish anger utterly is but a bravery of the Stoics. We have better oracles: *Be angry, but sin not. Let not the sun go down upon your anger.* Anger must be confined, both in race and in time... Seneca saith well that *anger is like ruin, which breaks itself upon that it falls.* The scripture exhorteth us to *posses our souls in patience.* Whosoever is out of patience is out of possession of his soul... anger is certainly a kind of baseness; as it appears well in the weakness of those subjects in whom it reigns: children, women, old folks, sick folks. Only men must carry out their anger rather with scorn than with fear<sup>10</sup>.

Videna carries her anger with fear. The injury done to her is also done by her. She tries to undo what she has done. The act of killing Porrex is not only revenge; it can be the act of unmothering herself, returning her to the state before her children were born: Porrex has already

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<sup>9</sup>Jonathan Holmes and Adrian Streete, eds., *Refiguring Mimesis: Representation in Early Modern Literature*, (Hatfield : University of Hertfordshire Press, 2005),7.

<sup>10</sup>Francis Bacon, *The Essays*, ed. John Pitcher (Harmondsworth : Penguin Books, 1985), 226.

killed her other son. A constant feeling of hatred makes Videna “feel no pain” as hatred is compared with the loss of feeling. Her hatred exceeds the limits of anger’s recognition. The essence of hatred is the loss of the ability to mentally distinguish between a real injury and the mere desire to totally *annihilate* the hated person. Videna’s revenge is rationalized via her own hatred. She thinks that her revenge on her son is just. She views Porrex’s crime primarily as treason, not simply in the restrictive sense of regicide, but in the broad sense of the order of nature:

O heinous traitor both to heaven and earth!  
...  
Traitor to kin and kind, to sire and me,  
To thine own flesh, and to thyself;  
The gods on thee in hell shall wreak their wrath,  
And here in earth this hand shall take revenge.  
(IV, i, 20-34)

She is aware of the paradox of a position in which a parent kills a son. She solves this paradox by renouncing her motherhood to Porrex to her own satisfaction. She refuses the idea that Porrex was born of her womb. In spite of this rationale for morally just revenge, Videna’s reaction to Ferrex’s death and to her own revenge for his death makes clear that personal considerations motivate her desire for revenge far more than justice, Gwynne Kennedy writes:

Some researches hold that gender has no influence on the frequency or ability to express anger; that is, men and women have equal difficulty or ease becoming angry and communicating anger. Others find that women have more difficulty than men do and attribute the cause to women’s socialization, which encourages them to repress anger and other negative emotions. In early modern England, however, neither view prevails. Instead, women are believed to get angry *more* often and *more* easily than men because of their physiological, intellectual, and moral inferiority to men. A woman’s anger is a sign of weakness that confirms her need to

submit to male authority, as well as a response to a particular situation<sup>11</sup>.

Videna's anger is not only filicidal, it also means that she is morally inferior to men, who actually start the cycle of violence. Within the structure of the play, the murder of her elder son is justifiable cause for her to take revenge on the murderer, but not for the violence and passion with which she contemplates and enacts the revenge. One of the essential connotations of Videna's words is wrath which -to justify her murder- is attributed to the gods. The speech is characterized by a vivid account of the anger of the gods. For Seneca and Girard, anger is unexpected and Videna does not talk about her own anger, she expresses it. She uses the pronoun 'I' when she is determined to act. The sentence wherein she uses the first person singular, comes about after her decision to act. Her self is constituted by her anger, and the instability of anger colours the speech with recognition. Therefore, after relating the horrors of Porrex's murder of Ferrex and deciding to murder him, Videna incites recognition of the whole situation:

But whereunto I this ruthful speech,  
To thee that hast thy brother's blood thus shed?  
Shall I still think that from this womb thou sprung?  
That I care thee bare? Or take thee for my son?  
No, traitor, no; I thee refuse for mine! (IV. i. 61-65) .

Videna makes her decision about killing Porrex at the beginning of the speech. She ceases to be a mother and becomes an avenger. From this speech onward, the semiotics of the word "mother" rhymes with the word "murderer". The meaning of womb becomes tomb. She says that she spent all her "wrathful speech". On the other hand, Gorboduc shows a different response towards Porrex's murder. He listens to his son's false rationale about the murder and

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<sup>11</sup>Gwynne Kennedy, *Just Anger: Representing Women's Anger in Early Modern England* (Illinois: Southern University of Illinois, 2000), 4-5.

does not take revenge. Gorboduc's rhetoric is Stoic. He is angry with himself. His irate lamentations are well weighed to suit his rational nature. Porrex, the product of his father's logical nature, and his mother's womb, tries to un-commit his act by using rhetoric, much as his mother will subsequently attempt to erase the entirety of his life by reclaiming her body from the state of motherhood:

When thus I saw the knot of love unknit  
All honest league and faithful promise broke,  
The law of kind and truth thus rent in twain,  
That ever time could win him a friend to me;  
...  
And wisdom willed me without protract.  
In speedie wise, to put the same in ure.  
(IV. ii. 114-122)

Porrex claims that wisdom obliges him to take action against his brother Ferrex. His sentences are well-structured. His words resonate as solid and balanced. He gives the impression that he resorts to reason and never allows emotions to dictate his action. He can be considered a Machiavellian character, turning everything to his own advantage: he abuses language, rhetoric, and logic for his own interest.

The alteration of "W" in the last sentence of the quotation corresponds to the many "woes" that have been uttered so far in the play. Ciphers in service of plot development like Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, Porrex's flatterer Tyndar and Ferrex's parasite Hemon are central to the orchestration of hatred between the brothers. What is more, being the injurer, Porrex should be considered the villain against whom the just part of revenge should be performed. What defines Porrex's deed as a crime is the blood relation between him and his victim, almost requiring that Ferrex's mother should be his avenger. Seneca's definition of the situation in *Gorboduc* would

be that Videna's anger sped on her action, as anger seeks any outlet, prioritising immediacy over justice:

For anger confounds art and looks only for a chance to injure.  
Often therefore, reason counsels patience, but anger revenge, and  
when we have been able to escape our first misfortunes, we are  
plunged into greater ones. Some have been cast into exile because  
they could not bear calmly one insulting word, and those who had  
refused to bear in silence a slight wrong have been crushed with the  
severest misfortunes, and indignant at any diminution of the fullest  
liberty, have brought upon themselves the yoke of slavery.  
(SENECA 1928: 199).

Anger bewilders art and works for the sake of destruction. It heeds revenge over patience. Seneca's argument is a clear-cut definition of a one-sided dispute. He does not look for any artistic values that anger may produce. Seneca believes that anger only seeks injury; he does not mention hatred in the same frame. For Seneca anger is devoid of artistic value. It kills any chance for creativity because it represents the essence of annihilation. Individuals should bear contempt and slight with patience because only reasoning can lead to tolerance and the production of art. The craftsmanship of the angry speeches in *Gorboduc* directly belie this assertion. It also might be said that anger encourages a peculiarly symmetrical kind of art, because its effects are so predictable. But the parasites' speeches are characterized by a recurrent sibilance, which imbues their speeches and advice with hissing sounds and suggests devious attitudes that links them to the logic of disastrous flattery. Their voices are not in harmony with the voices of the counselors that Gorboduc assigned to help his sons. Here is a speech by Ferrex's parasite:

Hermon. So slow sliding of his aged years,  
Or sought before your time to haste the course  
Of fatal death upon his royal head  
Or stained your stock with murder of your kin. (II. i. 8-12)



The contrast between the voices of the parasites and those of the counsel is didactic. The choice of sound embodies the way that persistence can overcome benevolent reason. The rhetorical aspects of the parasites are stronger than those of the advisors. The parasites' effect is embodied in Princes' readiness to accept their foul rhetoric rather than the well advised speeches of the counsels. Eubulus articulates the characters of the two princes:

Porrex, the younger, so upraised in state,  
Perhaps in courage will be raised also.  
In flattery then, which fails to assail  
The tender minds of yet unskilful youth,  
...  
The elder, mildness in his governance,  
The younger, a yielding contendness.  
And keep them near unto your presence still  
That they, restrained by the awe of you,  
May live in compass of well tempered stay  
And pass the perils of their youthful years.  
(I. ii. 289-308)

Eubulus has identified the emotional characteristics of both princes. He singles out Porrex for the age, state, and courage; he then moves to the subject of flattery. Thematically, flattery operates through self-division and uncertainty: the same themes that unite the domestic and national levels of this tragedy. Flattery effectively operates through display of false emotions. It also depends on the art of faking these emotions so as to decorate the words. Flattery affects both of the princes; however, it is more effective with Porrex because he is young and unstable. Porrex's youth is also juxtaposed to Ferrex's leniency. They did not get along well and they went unsupervised. Eubulus assumes if these characteristics were nourished with good advice, rather than flattery, the princes would make good kings: a politically safe pronouncement.

Flattery, anger, and the other emotions are translated into the political stream of thought in the Elizabethan age.

The Elizabethan translators acknowledged Seneca's political writings. His works and life were taken into consideration as the mirror to the politically charged atmosphere of the Elizabethan age. *Gorboduc* symbolizes the political and thematic anger that the Elizabethans absorbed through Seneca's life and works. Many of the moral political themes of the play inform the philosophical side of the play. In *Gorboduc*, ideas emerge in didactic fashion from passionate soliloquies and long debates. The philosophical ideas of the play are merged in the uses of words such as "law", "order", "nature" and "Kind": words that are utilized in Senecan ethical writing. "Law" and "order" are synonyms, as are "nature" and "kind", and both concepts unite in *Gorboduc* to form the oft-repeated tenet that there is a natural order of things, a law of kind which governs all personal and political relationships. The political oratory in the play is deliberative and emphatic which emphasizes order. For example, words such as "traitor", "rebel, and "treason" are powerful signifiers of denunciation. In the interest of justice, treason and rebellion must be revenged. The reason given in the play is that proper revenge will maintain civil order. But the reason for the necessity of revenge goes deeper than that. Rebellion and treason are sins because to rise up against a ruler is to rise up against God's substitute. Early in the last scene of *Gorboduc*, rebels are described as "aweless of God" (V. ii. 47) and they are condemned for their behaviors. "Just" revenge implies that retribution will restore the order and balance which wrongdoing has destroyed. The same applies to anger, which ebbs after revenge, and the order of humors in the body is balanced. The political significance of the play keeps drawing our focus towards the problematic issue that Queen Elizabethan has to choose an heir.

The inflammation in the playwright's desire to convince the Queen to pick an heir is thoroughly presented in the play. Politically motivated plays reflect the unstable emotional reaction of the effectively educated social stratum. *Gorboduc* certainly has a political agenda to serve.

Moreover, it has to achieve this political goal by using oratory as its means of conveying ideas and emotions, which is also implied in the Senecan theory of politics, ethics and plays. Irby B.

Cauthen writes:

The tragedy does not mention Ferrex's flight to France and it alters the details of the slaying of Porrex by Videna, probably, as Watt has pointed out, because of the exigencies of plot. But these are but minor details: the reign of Gorboduc was seen by both the Medieval and the Elizabethan as solemn warning of what might happen to a crown and a commonwealth without the provision for an orderly succession; the horrors of civil war, the intervention of foreign power, the injustice of despotic action were sure to follow. (SACKVILLE AND NORTON: XV).

Seneca preceded the Elizabethans in sensing these fears. His treatise *On Anger* is argued to hold political significance in respect to extinguishing any possibility for riots, or civil wars. His insistence on the fact that humans should not expect much from their surroundings, and not to become vexed, is argued to be a call for political quietism. This leads to the assumption that he resorted to the Greek tragedy because he could channel his ethics to the Roman audience and convey emotional traits in his texts. The psychological dualism of the Senecan ethics affected the way of presenting political situations in plays like *Gorboduc*. Seneca is difficult when being interpreted in the sense that multiple and contradictory meanings are present simultaneously in his sentences. Brad Inwood writes:

The same procedure will be in order when the *images* Seneca uses are ones he creates himself. Possibly the best and most important example of this would be at letter 37.4-5, where the highly

coloured personification might well be taken as a sign of a dualistic attitude to the relationship between the passions and reason: but the dissection or analysis of the soul undertaken here is much more plausibly regarded as a mark of deliberately vivid presentation<sup>12</sup>.

Similarly, *Gorboduc* can be interpreted as channeling the political emotions of people, to invite questions about who is to be placed on the throne without causing disturbance to the public crowd. The relation between the public and the private, the people and the royal family, shows parallels between the private emotional state of the royal family and the movement of the public emotional state. Arguably, the main political statement made in the play is that the royal family should be the reasoning part in the body of the kingdom. They should always wear their logic, and eliminate whatever emotion tries to overcome them. However, Gorboduc does so, and he is killed at the end. Dividing the kingdom is one catalyst of Videna's negative emotions in the text. King Gorboduc erred in dividing the kingdom between his sons while he lived, instead of following the natural course of succession which would call for his elder son to succeed him at his death. The cycle of passionate revenge that took place is a punishment for defying this natural order for political succession. Gorboduc's political transgressions, Seneca would agree, contributed to the blood revenge. Gorboduc, Videna, and Porrex's consideration of justice for their own purposes, Videna's passion causes her to vitiate a just cause for revenge by an unjust execution of the revenge; while Gorboduc's cool and rational perception of the justice revenge causes him to fail in achieving it.

*Gorboduc*, the pioneering Elizabethan revenge tragedy, exhibits not only the influence of Senecan philosophical and dramatic, but also the awareness of gendered anger. The chain of anger kills those who are caught up in it. It affects individuals and the body of the nation alike.

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<sup>12</sup>Brad Inwood, *Reading Seneca: Stoic Philosophy at Rome* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 37.

The coming section will deal with a major revenge tragedy in the Elizabethan tradition, *The Spanish Tragedy* by Kyd presents a different approach to adapting Seneca's ethics and dramatic imposture on the page and stage. Kyd renovates the revenge tragedy tradition by changing the revenge formula.

## Chapter Five

### *The Spanish Tragedy: A Myth of Accusation*

In this chapter I investigate the effect of Seneca's techniques and ideas on the writing of Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy*. This generation of stage Senecanism in England breaks with Seneca more fundamentally than the generation of the 1560s (i.e. Heywood and Norton & Sackville). Whereas Heywood departs from Seneca in relatively minor ways, (showing the ghost rather than merely having its appearance reported), Kyd makes a major departure. The way Kyd breaks with Seneca of course is in introducing the "myth of accusation". Kyd follows Seneca's dramatic techniques and departs from his philosophy. He creates a sympathetic virtuous man to whom the royal powers in the courts of Spain and Portugal cause injustice and suffering. By contrast, the first appearance of Seneca's protagonists in his plays suggests that the monarchs are the disturbed figures. Kyd's Hieronimo is not a monarch nor is he deranged. The violation that befalls Hieronimo's is not the direct result of a conspiracy of supernatural powers. It is the result of a plot against him in the Spanish palace.

Why, given all this attention to Seneca on the English renaissance stage, is Kyd moving away from the Senecan Philosophy? A reading of *The Spanish Tragedy* in relation to Seneca's ethical writings and dramatic techniques will help in our understanding of where Kyd intends to meet Seneca and where he intends to depart from his ethics and characterization. Hieronimo's journey of grief and revenge amounts to a critique of Seneca's ethics by Kyd, and his adaptation of Seneca's style.

Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* created a new genre in English theatre. This play is said to have sparked the genre of a distinctively English revenge tradition on the early modern stage. It is one of the most important plays in the history of English tragedy. *The Spanish Tragedy* inaugurates what is effectively a second-generation revenge tragedy in England. The first generation revenge tragedy is mainly of Senecan style in philosophy and dramatic techniques. The exact year when the play was written is unsure. In the introduction to his play *Bartholomew Fair* (1614), Ben Jonson listed *The Spanish Tragedy* as being "five and twenty or thirty years" old. If we take the time period literally then the possible range of date for this play would be 1584-89. There are many arguments about the date and the most agreed that the date is 1587. The play is mainly about a father whose son is murdered. This sets him on a journey of grief, madness and revenge.

The emotional rhetoric of the play inspired subsequent playwrights such as Marston and Webster to create protagonists with a mix of sane and monstrous features<sup>1</sup>. This amounts to the creation of a distinctive tragic self on the Elizabethan stage. *The Spanish Tragedy* is one of the first plays to successfully combine reason and emotion in an antithetical relationship. The rhetoric results in one of the most powerful displays of grievance on the English stage. Seeing the virtuous Hieronimo mistreated and moving from being the marshal of Spain to an aggrieved father and an angry avenger is fascinating in the sense that the construction of Hieronimo's emotions is done intuitively. Maybe one of the most tragic aspects of Hieronimo is that he is a good man, unlike Seneca's protagonists who are mostly corrupt and hysterical figures. In its second part, the play harps on the rhetoric of loss; the slaughter of a son, of justice, meaning, and eventually the loss of reasoning. This, moreover, makes it a universal play. Again, seeing a virtuous man harmed

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<sup>1</sup>Gregory A. Staley, *Seneca and the Idea of Tragedy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010),96.

moves the audience to sympathize with his attempts to repay the injury. This is why *The Spanish Tragedy* is emulated by dramatists after its production in 1591.

In addition, the emotional display of Hieronimo's rhetorical lamentations is examined in the light of the Senecan techniques used by Kyd. Using Senecan techniques, this play not only presents revenge in an emotional language, it also questions the place of justice in human existence, which is an un-Senecan approach to revenge. Seneca would only approve of revenge if based on duty towards the harmed person, rather than an emotion. Seneca's protagonists are not concerned with achieving justice. For them, revenge is a necessity to satisfy anger. This is why we feel that Kyd deliberately makes Hieronimo grieve for a long time in the play before he becomes angry. His long grief gains him sympathy from the audience. Senecan characters are mostly unsympathetic, as they are inherently evil and mad with anger. Their anger is blind and destructive. Anger plays a crucial role in creating the Senecan atmosphere and character. On the other hand, *The Spanish Tragedy* is less marked by anger and more by sadness and grief. Hieronimo's anger is deferred. Moreover *The Spanish Tragedy* examines the aesthesis of the aforementioned emotions and the meaning of violence within passionate and poetic frameworks. This contrasts with the Senecan character who mostly exhibits the nightmarish aspects of this emotion.

A closer examination of the relationship between Kyd's and Seneca's writings can be presented as follows: structurally, the play follows the Senecan model. However, there are some differences between the Senecan tragic hero, and Hieronimo. Seneca's protagonists are royal figures. They have no recognition for the common man against whom their anger is directed. Hieronimo is not of a royal family. He just works for the royal court in Spain. His social position does not permit him the anger that monarchs allow themselves. Yet, the emotions of this



ordinary man are caused by the royal injustice he suffers. In *the Spanish Tragedy*, Kyd departs from the Seneca's notion that "No evil can befall a good man". Hieronimo is a good man who is brutally abused by the royalty of Spain. The verbal duels that take place between the Machiavellian character Lorenzo and the good man lead to an exchange of roles at the end of the play. Hieronimo's response to his own anger leads him to kill Lorenzo and Balthazar. One of the reasons for convicting Hieronimo at the end of the play is that he becomes "angry" while he is seeking justice. However, I shall argue that Hieronimo's anger shapes his speeches. Yet as a Senecan character, Hieronimo's world is destroyed by emotion. He is forced to comply with his feelings and express the torture of his grief, anger and pain. His social being disintegrates and he is turned into an emotional being whose tumultuous nature does not comply with the logic of the outside world.

Kyd allows free play in the creation of Hieronimo's character. He grants his tragic hero freedom of behaviour on stage, he does not treat him as a puppet. The virtuous man and the Machiavellian villain are fully developed. Kyd wants to show that evil can inhabit a good man. It is not fortune nor is it the "external" as Seneca would suggest. In *The Spanish Tragedy*, Kyd emphasizes Lorenzo's evil nature in order to accentuate Hieronimo's good qualities. By characterizing Hieronimo as a good man being abused, the play offers a different interpretation of the good man's emotional constitution. Hieronimo's character is considered the essential tragic element of *The Spanish Tragedy*. It develops throughout his emotional speeches. Nonetheless, Hieronimo's emotional utterances define the ground of his intentions. It is very interesting how the reaction of a good man to the pressure of the evil done to him, turns out to destroy the lives of everyone around. He kills Lorenzo and Balthazar, his plan leads to Bel-imperia's death and the devastation of the Spanish court. Before the death of his son, Hieronimo

is the most rational person in the play. He is in control of the world around him. In Hieronimo's mind, the concealment of the murder of his son from the court when he attempted to complain is a concealment of a revolting act done against nature. Therefore, his character draws the spectator's attention to the events and to his suffering by unfolding his words and emotions. For him, revenge is a need to achieve justice and emotional equilibrium. He is left without a son, whereas, the kings of Spain and Portugal still have theirs. There is no equilibrium achieved at the end of the play. This is interpreted as the disharmony between his world and the world of the Spanish court which results in mutual annihilation. The loss of Horatio creates a sharp imbalance in Hieronimo's emotional world. It starts with unspeakable grief and ends in total anger. Gregory Semenza writes:

Aesthetically and scientifically speaking, revenge is a rather beautiful phenomenon. As Simone Weil once noted, "The desire for vengeance is a desire for essential equilibrium," meaning that a clean act of revenge has at least the illusory ability to erase human mistakes and correct cosmic wrongs. Ethically and practically speaking, revenge is quite ugly because equilibrium is illusory-an imaginary construct<sup>2</sup>.

The quotation can be linked to Seneca's recommendation that human beings should be submissive to nature. To be well attuned to nature is one of the basic features of happiness in the Senecan version of Stoicism. Revenge, if performed as a duty devoid of anger, is a correction of a cosmic wrong that shakes the world of the avenger. Seneca does not try to show it as such on his stage. It can be connected to the fact that Seneca's rejection of anger does not mean he totally rejects revenge. Seneca rejects the revenge based on anger<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Garrett A. Sullivan et. al., *Early modern English Drama: a Critical Companion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 5. This quotation is taken from Semenza's essay.

<sup>3</sup>"What then?" You ask; "will the good man not be angry if his father is murdered, his mother outraged before his eyes?" No, he will not be angry, but he will avenge them. Why, moreover, are you afraid that filial

Seneca defines revenge as duty, rather than an action based on anger. It is interesting that Seneca rejects anger as a violent emotion that leads to revenge and bloodshed; however, he allows for revenge in certain cases as mentioned above. To be more specific, the rational justification for an irrational behaviour is that acting out of according to duty. Interestingly, this means that emotionless and mechanical reactions are allowed in the Senecan ethics; however, he does not attribute them to his characters on stage. His techniques are designed to allow the greatest display of unjustified ferocious emotions. Moreover, these dissimilar attitudes in Senecan ethics and drama translate differently on the Elizabethan and Jacobean stages. In the coming section, I will discuss the effect of Senecan techniques on *The Spanish Tragedy*.

Kyd depends on Seneca's dramatic style to create the emotional dimensions of his characters in *The Spanish Tragedy*. He relies on the structural model Seneca created in his plays so as to allow his characters to represent certain sentiments and present all the different interpretations of those emotions. Hieronimo starts grieving right after the murder of his son and is then made angry. Bel-imperia becomes a hating woman after she loses her lover, and Isabella turns into a sad and then mad mother. Each character expresses a different perspective, shown by their emotional reactions, towards the events. It appears that the emotional display in *The Spanish Tragedy* is intended to affect the audience. Kyd rhetorically invites his audience to identify their emotions with Hieronimo. It is certain that Kyd's rhetoric leads to the audience becoming emotionally entangled in *The Spanish Tragedy*. Lukas Erne:

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affection, even without anger may not prove a sufficiently strong incentive to him?... The good man will perform his duties undisturbed and unafraid; and he will in such a way do all that is worthy of a good man as to do nothing that is unworthy of a man. My father is being murdered—I will defend him; he is slain—I will avenge him, not because I grieve, but because it is my duty .(SENECA 1928: 137).

A lady who is close to death stubbornly refuses to turn her thoughts towards the next world, thinking that there is not need to trouble herself with such thoughts yet, cries out: '*Hieronimo, Hieronimo; O let me see Hieronimo acted*'. The sophistication of its dramatic artistry as well as the tremendous emotional impact the play had on its early modern audience, and has shown still to exert in our own time, do not suffer from comparison with some of Shakespeare's plays<sup>4</sup>.

Like a chorus, Andrea and "Revenge" act as a stand-in for the audience in the action on stage. They focus the theatre audience's emotional reactions on the play. They function as directors of the audience's emotions. They serve as 'the Chorus' in the tragedy, but they have no contact with the other characters. Andrea's emotions towards what takes place on stage channels the audience's feelings of frustration. He sounds like a pessimist when he talks to Revenge about his desire for retribution. Furthermore, he does not speak about justice nor does he refer to it. The removal of revenge to an afterlife as a metaphysical commentator and stage-manager, is Senecan in formal terms, but profoundly un-Senecan with regard to his ethics. For Seneca, surely, revenge is profoundly personal and thus *not* normative. Making revenge a meta-theatrical character in the play suggests that it *is* normative. For Seneca, the normative aspect of revenge is the duty attributed to the man in performing it. Therefore, in Senecan ethics, it is normal for a man to perform his revenge; however it should not be based on an emotional reaction. In Senecan theatre, it is normal for an angry ghost to talk about revenge. Anger presents revenge as an irrational act; the ghosts' speeches in the Senecan theatre are usually associated with anger. Therefore, I suggest that Kyd's Andrea is a Senecan ghost, whereas Revenge, as a character, is the supernatural director of the tragedy. Also, Revenge is seen as the indifferent force that allows evil to befall the virtuous Hieronimo at the hands of Lorenzo and Balthazar.

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<sup>4</sup>Erne Lukas, *Beyond the Spanish Tragedy: A Study of The Works of Thomas Kyd*(Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008), 95.

Additionally, Lorenzo can be seen as the first Machiavellian character in Elizabethan revenge tragedy, because he uses people's emotions to serve his own ends. He abuses Balthazar's love for Bel-imperia to gain an accomplice in killing Horatio. Kyd heavily relies on Machiavelli's *The Prince* in creating Lorenzo, who focuses on the use of cruelty to achieve his goals. The Machiavellian character has to be prepared for what may happen; Lorenzo deceives Pedringano into his execution. This act, by Lorenzo, is explained in Machiavelli because he insists on the practice of cruelty to maintain loyal and united subjects. It is about the dynamics of staying in power. In Lorenzo, Kyd creates more than just a villain. He creates a potent sense of a malignant plot: in which society and all the powers are arranged in a malignant alliance against the good man. This forms a powerful spur to accusation and to anger. If all wickedness can be imputed to the other side, then this is a means of stimulating anger:

The character of Lorenzo in *The Spanish Tragedy* deserves individual examination. He is of a type commonly designated 'Machiavellian Villain', and historically-presuming that Kyd's play precedes Marlowe's *Jew of Malta*-he is the first kind on the Elizabethan stage. But his pedigree is mixed<sup>5</sup>.

There are no soliloquies by Lorenzo, and he speaks one short aside despite the fact that he is a plotter of evil, he whispers all his plans in Balthazar's ears, who agrees to everything. He uses language to deceive people rather than persuade them. Lorenzo uses his verbal skills in order to trick others, like Pedringano, into being unjust as means of his own ends. Moreover, Lorenzo and his shadow Balthazar; the antagonists in the play signify a corruption of the body of the court of Spain. They cause much melancholy and grief to the "good man" Hieronimo and his wife Isabella, when it becomes apparent to the audience that getting revenge on them is a cure. As seen in chapter three, this presents a material analysis of emotions where revenge become a

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<sup>5</sup> Arthur Freeman, *Thomas Kyd: Facts and Problems* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1967), 56.

rational result of a malaise, just like bleeding used to be a treatment method for certain illnesses. Revenge becomes a new form of medicine for grief, with dangerous curative power. From Hieronimo's perspective, it seems to succeed as a remedy: after having carried out his murders, he tells his stricken onlookers that his heart is satisfied. Whether or not the play corroborates his belief, however, is a more complicated question. Although Hieronimo, like the play's framing figure of Don Andrea, expresses pleasure at the end of the play, he, like his victims, is dead. The play attains a sort of equilibrium, there are, of course, no murderers left to punish. This description of Lorenzo by Balthazar helps understand Lorenzo's character better. It is related after the capturing of Balthazar:

*King:* Let go his arm, upon our privilege let *him go*.  
Say worthy prince, to whether didst thou yield?  
*Bal.* To him in courtesy, to this perforce:  
He spake me fair, this other gave me strokes:  
He promis'd life, this other threaten'd death:  
He wan my love, this other conquer'd me<sup>6</sup>. (I. ii. 159-164)

Balthazar's description of Lorenzo's deeds determines their relationship as one that is characterized by a selfsame willingness to kill whoever stands in the way of their plans. Moreover, their relationship is built on mutual interest rather than real friendship. If Balthazar is not labeled a Machiavellian character, he certainly can be thought of as a counterpart to Horatio in loving Bel-imperia. His rhetorical attempts to show her his love are dependent on Lorenzo's actions. This means that he does not talk to Bel-imperia before Lorenzo does. He also bases his speeches on other characters' words. He is intellectually dependent as he derives his rhetoric from others, especially Lorenzo. He becomes a replica of Lorenzo's fatal desires as soon as he knows that Lorenzo is politically interested in the marriage he intends with Bel-imperia:

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<sup>6</sup> Kyd, Thomas, *The Spanish Tragedy*, ed. Edwards, Phillip (London: Methuen, 1959), 15. Subsequent references are to this edition.

Appropriately, even his cohort Balthazar is kept partially in the dark about Lorenzo's devices, and unwittingly 'prosecutes the point' designed by the plotter; secrecy is Lorenzo's watchword and he prefers an underhanded but private way of effecting his ends to a simple agreement between the Portuguese prince and himself, which undoubtedly he could arrive at.(FREEMAN 1967:91).

Balthazar is Lorenzo's shadow. Both are the Machiavellian characters in the play. Bel-imperia loves Horatio, and despises Balthazar. She may not be a Machiavellian character but she uses Machiavellian logic in the course of her revenge. She begins her revenge against Balthazar by rejecting his love, and choosing Horatio over him. She intends to hurt Balthazar at the beginning. Then, her affections for Horatio transform into real love which, in turn, leads to his murder by Lorenzo and Balthazar. These plot webs contribute to causing more grief to Hieronimo, and this is what Paul Ricoeur calls a *Myth of Accusation*. In his essay *The Demythization of Accusation*, Paul Ricoeur describes a "myth of accusation" that can be deconstructed. By "myth of accusation" Ricoeur talks about the power of *Judgment* in the consciousness and how it creates a myth of "just" anger. Ricoeur proposes that this "myth of accusation" can be deconstructed because man is "the maker of his own human existence". One of the things that Kyd arguably does is create a "myth of accusation" from Seneca's "myth of counter-anger", which is to say a myth of "counter accusation".

If I say that accusation is what is unspoken in obligation, that accusation is what is understood in obligation, then this "unspoken" and this "understood" are not accessible to any kind of direct analysis<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup>Paul Ricoeur, *The Conflict of Interpretations: Essays in Hermeneutics*, ed. Don Ihde (Evanston : Northwestern University Press, 1974, reprinted 1979), 337.

In the context of reading the play the above quotation corresponds to Seneca's approval of revenge as duty. It can be argued that, what Ricoeur means by "unspoken" and "Understood", refers to what is done without over analysis. In this respect, Kyd valorizes accusation by making revenge the main value in the play. The myth of accusation Kyd creates makes revenge an ethical cause, which the audience sympathizes with. Seneca, on the other hand, devalues anger and thinks it is merely a desire to inflict pain in the act of revenge. Kyd's atmospheric depiction of the evil done against Hieronimo, enables the audience to feel the gravity of his grief. Furthermore, Isabella, Hieronimo's wife portrays her sorrow differently. She tries to cure it by resorting to medicine in vain. The sadness that builds up to madness in Isabella's case becomes an ailment she cannot deal with towards the end of the play. She pores over the contents of her garden with her maid. Seeking an herbal remedy for grief, she finds all medicines impotent in the face of her loss:

So that you say this herb will purge the eye,  
And this the head?  
Ah, but none of them will purge the heart:  
No, there's no medicine left for my disease,  
Nor any physic to recure the dead. (III.viii.1-5)

In response to her grief, Isabella seeks purgation, the standard form of cure in the Elizabethan medical tradition inherited from Galen. As noted in a previous chapter, Galenic medicine held that illness stemmed from an imbalance in the body's fluids, or humours and that the path back to normal health consisted of rediscovering that balance, typically by ridding the body of excess humours:

Although Isabella's surfeit of sadness might strike modern readers as an emotional, rather than physical, malady, an early modern understanding of the passions would have rendered this distinction tenuous, if not meaningless. Not only were the mind and the body understood to be profoundly permeable to each



other, but melancholy, was itself one of the humours running through the body, simultaneously a corporeal and spiritual phenomenon (BURTON 2002:23). Although Isabella does not play a direct role in carrying out the play's revenge, her grief, and her reflections on its incurability by standard means, are crucial to its development<sup>8</sup>.

Not only does she reflect Hieronimo's own powerful sense of sadness, but her resulting suicide spurs on his response:

Thou hast receiv'd by murder of thy son,  
And lastly, not least, how Isabel,  
Once his mother and thy dearest wife,  
All woe-begone for him hath slain herself.  
Behoves thee then, Hieronimo, to be reveng'd...  
(IV.iii.21-7)

Although Horatio's death remains the first cause of Hieronimo's revenge, Isabella's death offers another, no less powerful, motive for recompense by violence. As the murderers' second victim, even if indirectly, she multiplies his losses and increases the urgency of his need for retaliation. Beyond intensifying Hieronimo's motives for revenge, however, Isabella also offers the vocabulary for articulating what he hopes to gain by it. Although her reaction to Horatio's death takes a different path from Hieronimo's, exploding internally, into suicide, rather than externally, into murder, the grief that they share becomes the moving force behind both. Her formation of her need as a quest for purgative medicines, then, offers an important parallel to, and model for, Hieronimo's quest for solace through revenge. In fact, Hieronimo's own health deteriorates rapidly over the course of the play: the melancholy into which he is plunged after Horatio's death escalates into madness, which erupts into frenzy and hallucination when petitioners come to him to seek his legal help. This madness, which seems to have been one of the most striking and popular aspects of the play to early audiences, identifies Hieronimo's suffering with a medical

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<sup>8</sup> Pollard, Tanya, *A kind of Wild Medicine: Revenge as Remedy in Early Modern England* (<http://publica.webs.ull.es/upload/REV%20RECEI/50%20-%202005/05%20%28Tanya%20Pollard%29>), 60.

crisis. Yet instead of turning to herbal remedies, as Isabella does, Hieronimo seeks to purge his melancholy and madness through action. Externalizing his suffering, he rids himself of it by violently transferring it onto those who first caused it, Balthazar and Lorenzo.

Conversely, Seneca's characters do not go through these stages: they are already mad with anger and ready to carry out their bloodthirsty vengeance. Their immoral existence does not grant sympathy to their revenge. Furthermore, Kyd's focuses on Hieronimo's internal world, in terms of the conflict between grief, reasoning and then anger, whereas Seneca focuses on the external circumstances that push his deranged protagonists to act according to their madness. They do not doubt their foes, they mainly ponder over the severity of their revenge. The external powers of the Senecan stage have been replaced by human villainies for Kyd, this is, of course, because we are made to think of Revenge and Andrea as commentators on the events of the play. To consider this in more detail, Seneca solely blames anger for the irrational act of revenge; so, all his characters can be easily judged because their actions precede their decisions. The judging consciousness of the Senecan character becomes the consciousness judged by the audience. His characters are totally hysterical and irrational from the opening of his plays till the catastrophic end. Kyd, on the other hand, has a more solid plot for his characters. He uses the Senecan supernatural elements to say that, even though anger and revenge can be separate entities, malignant behaviour against the good man will lead him to revenge. Anger and revenge meet in Hieronimo's character as a reaction to the injustice done to him by Lorenzo and Balthazar. Additionally, we sympathize with Hieronimo as he conceals the pretext of the irrationality of his anger with his rhetorical grief. He resorts to suspicion first and then judges the murderers after dismissing the possibility of their innocence. Hieronimo accuses them of killing his son; however, he first makes sure they have been involved. Kyd creates the myth of the common

good man's anger. Seneca writes about the aristocrats' wrathful anger. These categories totally differ in the sense that the roles are reversed in the construction of the vengeful selves between the Senecan and the Kydian stages.

Ricoeur's 'myth of accusation' describes all the ethical forces that are based on primitive emotions. The mythical part of the accusation presents revenge as a moral act because, for Ricoeur, myth is built on symbols that construct it as a logical objective reality. Kyd compels the audience to sympathize with Hieronimo by personating a righteous man's grief within the successive blows he gets from the evil characters. The just man's anger gives power to accusation when his pain is narrated with the overwhelming force of his emotions. This, in turn, moves the audience to sympathize with his cause. On the Senecan stage, royal anger is presented in its full irrational consequences. Rarely does the Seneca character think of justice or seek it. In Kyd, the representation is made of a common man's anger and it is mostly about the absence of justice. Hieronimo knows that he will not obtain it, which makes his concentration on it intense. The more Hieronimo talks about justice the clearer it becomes that he will not attain it. The quest for justice does not concern Andrea and his fellow character, Revenge.

Revenge and Andrea's chorus stands in, in this play, for the dumb show. Revenge is inserted to shape up the action; this can be applied to the closing scene of act III where Andrea has to awaken Revenge. The dumb show is created by Revenge to convince Andrea that he is at work even when sleeping. Andrea will have to sit and watch, like a theatre audience. This is another sign of Stoicism's influence that one should not meddle with the working of the external powers which rule man's life; one should be a submissive subject of them. The dumb show represents the complexity of Revenge in the world of the *Spanish Tragedy*. The dumb show helps Andrea calm down and rest assured that Revenge is going to carry out the mission:

*Revenge.* Behold, Andrea, for an instance how  
Revenge hath slept, and then imagine thou  
What 'tis to be subject to destiny.

*Enter a Dumb Show*

*Andrea.* Awake, Revenge, reveal this mystery.

*Revenge.* The two first, the nuptial torches bore,  
As brightly burning as the mid-day's sun:  
But after them doth Hymen hie as fast,  
Clothed in sable, and saffron robe,  
And blows them out and quenches them with blood,  
As discontent that things continue so.

*Andrea.* Sufficeth me, thy meaning's understood,  
And thanks to thee and those infernal powers  
That will not tolerate a lover's woe.  
Rest thee, for I will sit to see the rest.

*Revenge.* Then argue not, for thou hast thy request.

(III.xv. 25-40)

Considering that Revenge is a supernatural character, the dumb-show is created in the dreams that Revenge tells and interprets to Andrea when he wakes up. This explanation changes Andrea's anger into the ease of a spectator who knows the ending and enjoys watching the process of the upcoming theatrical events. Revenge presents the coming events artistically. The tragedy of Hieronimo is perceived in Revenge's imagination before Hieronimo had thought about it. These artistic aspects of Hieronimo's vengeance are conceived in Revenge's imagination. The scene can be used to argue that the play is characterized by predestined events. The characters in Revenge's play are not responsible for their actions because he is the director of the events. Hieronimo becomes a character in Revenge's pantomime. It is difficult to decide if the play addresses 'predestination' as an answer to the act of 'Revenge'. It is argued that *The Spanish Tragedy* suggests that punishment, as an act, is coated with predestined emotion which

forces the avenger to act accordingly. This is also seen as one of its Seneca aspects because for Seneca emotions are the actions on stage. Furthermore, this scene can be viewed in the light of the Elizabethan obsession with acting as the force which drives human life:

‘while the members of Kyd’s audience view everything that happens on the stage as part of the fabulously counterfeit *Spanish Tragedy*, the action of his play forces them to ask how they might feel if the events seen on the stage suddenly turned out to be real’. It is easy to see that this is only a small step away from a belief that acting can be a means to shape one’s life rather than have it shaped by a divine *agon*. (ERNE2008: 104)

In the quotation it is proposed that the action of *The Spanish Tragedy* compels the audience of its time to question the situation and consider whether it may have taken place in the real world. It is argued that the “action” is the “anger” Hieronimo expresses at the murder of his son and the absence of justice from the Spanish court. If we isolate the events in the play from Hieronimo’s agonized exclamations the result is an intensified question about the absence of justice. This dissociation is achieved by making Hieronimo incapable of expressing his anger about the death of Horatio to the king in Act III Scene xii, where, in anger, he shouts for recognition and justice, but he is obstructed by Lorenzo:

*King*. Now show, Ambassador, what our Viceroy saith:  
Hath he receiv’d the articles we sent?  
*Hier*. Justice, O justice to Hieronimo!  
*Lor*. Back seest thou not the king is busy?  
*Hier*. Oh, is he so?  
*King*. Who is he that interrupts our business?  
*Hier*. Not I Hieronimo, beware: go by, go by.  
*Amb*. Renowned king, he hath reciev’d and read  
Thy kingly proffers, and thy promised league.

(III. Xii. 25-32)

The response to Hieronimo's quest for justice in the above quotation resembles an absurdist answer to an existential question. His quest for justice is what defines his existence at this stage in the play. Lorenzo steps forward and physically restrains Hieronimo from approaching the king, and realizing that now is not the time to explain his case to the king Hieronimo remains silent. The king and the ambassador discuss the proposed marriage of Balthazar and Bel-imperia, and some thirty lines go by before Hieronimo speaks again. Hieronimo has remained in the background all this while, and is prompted to speak when the ambassador mentions Horatio's name in relation to the ransom money. Hieronimo can no longer contain his grief, and he breaks out in an irrational and incoherent plea. When Lorenzo tries to restrain him once more, Hieronimo's madness is exacerbated:

Away Lorenzo, hinder me no more,  
For thou hast made me bankrupt of my bliss.  
Give me my son. You shall not ransom him.  
Away I'll rip the bowels of the earth,  
And ferry over to the Elysian plains,  
And bring my son to show his deadly wounds.

(III.xii.68-73)

When he speaks these lines, Hieronimo is on his knees, digging at the earth with his dagger in a mad attempt to burrow through to the underworld. This is one of the most powerful scenes in the play for it shows Hieronimo at the height of madness. But it is precisely this madness that prevents him from giving the king a rational and logical account of what happened to his son. Surprisingly, the king does not even notice that Horatio is missing, let alone dead, and because of his ignorance of this situation he cannot possibly make any sense out of Hieronimo's mad ravings. Hieronimo ends his speech by exclaiming that he will surrender his position of knight marshal. Hieronimo renounces his responsibilities as a judge, thereby repudiating his belief in

the justice system. Instead, he will call upon the hellish fiends for assistance in his revenge. Following this promise, Hieronimo flees the stage. From now on, Hieronimo's problematic question, by which he defines his existence, is directly connected to the essential concept of justice. His anger builds around righteousness and revenge. He discusses the idea of the son, and asks:

‘What is a son? A thing begot within a pair of minutes,  
thereabout,  
A lump bred up in darkness, and doth serve  
To balance these light creatures we call women;  
And at nine months end, creeps forth to light.  
What is there yet in a son<sup>9</sup>.

These existential utterances resound loudly in Hieronimo's godless situation. His world is empty and hollow. After the death of his son, Hieronimo's life turns into a constant wrathful elegy. Hieronimo's anger is about the absence of meaning and justice. His lamentations are about the significance of having a son, something that might bring meaning to one's empty existence. The above quotation places Hieronimo's quest for the absence of meaning among contemporary writings. *The Spanish Tragedy* can be considered the link between the Senecan tradition and the modern nihilist school of thought because it speaks about a Stoic character who loses his temper and unleashes his anger due to the loss of the of meaning to his being. Moreover, the play talks about the absolute loss of the desired object. Nobody wins at the end. All the characters become annihilated within the void. The relativity of the high merits is emphasized by the fact that the King does not even know, or care to know, what happens to Hieronimo. One of the most important points in the play is when the King responds with puzzlement to Hieronimo's lamentations, which leads Hieronimo to depend on himself and achieve the lost equilibrium in his life.

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<sup>9</sup>Kyd, *The Spanish Tragedy*, 1959 :additional passages, third addition (Between III. xi. 1 and 2), 125.

The mask of madness Hieronimo feigns for a short while after the murder of Horatio is ritualized, unlike Seneca's characters who are mad for real. However, the feigned madness agrees with real anger. The manufactured part of Hieronimo's madness is the rational part and his anger helps it to look real to the court members. Masking his madness well, Hieronimo achieves his revenge in a ritualistic manner. His revenge looks primeval and very artistic at the same time. The play he stages to kill his foes becomes a temple for this ceremonial killing and Bel-imperia becomes a human sacrifice in the process. The language turns into a ritualised process of exposing Horatio murder. Erne explains:

G. K. Hunter held that in the play-within-the-play, '[t]he illusion of free will is suspended [...] character has become role, speech has turned into ritual; the end is now totally predetermined. This does not answer the question, however, of who has done the casting, who has predetermined the end, Revenge, as the frame implies, or Hieronimo and Bel-imperia, as the play within suggests. (ERNE 2008: 100).

Hieronimo is left alone without anyone to reflect upon his anger. Only when meeting the Senex<sup>10</sup>, does he see the emotion he has been avoiding; namely; grief. This mirroring encounter doubles Hieronimo's anger. The meeting with the old man opens Hieronimo's eyes to the loss of the harmony between him -as the marshal of Spain- and the world around him. The loss of what Hieronimo thought of as equilibrium, between himself and the world, is what makes him angry. It makes his anger eloquent as it seeks poetic justice on the theoretical level. Likely, the increase of his realization of the terrible situation builds up his anger and moves him from "speaking" into "carrying out" his revenge. The mirror to Hieronimo's grief, mixed with anger, inflames his power to carry out his threats. The Senecan-like utterance "Then I will rent and tear them thus and thus, Shivering their limbs in pieces with my teeth", (III. xiii.122-123) which Hieronimo

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<sup>10</sup>Senex means "old man" in Latin.



says during the meeting with Senex, directs his actions later. Before meeting the old man, Hieronimo's threats may have stayed verbal. During the meeting with the men who demand an "action" against the injustices done to them, Hieronimo loses his reasoning which is replaced by anger and pain:

Come on, old father, be my Orpheus,  
And if thou canst no notes upon the harp,  
Then sound the burden of thy sore heart's grief,  
Till we do gain that Prosperine may grant  
Revenge on them that murdered my son:  
Then I will rent and tear them thus and thus,  
Shivering their limbs in pieces with my teeth.

(III. xiii.117-123)

The above quotation shows how angrily Hieronimo articulates his emotion. It indicates a moment of truth about a human reality; the beast that Seneca discourses against in his ethics. Hieronimo's Senecan utterances at this stage are not those of the ethical Seneca; these words show the "angry" theatrical Senecan character. Hieronimo knows that he is placed in a situation where words have lost their content. He is left with the physical content of the imagery he is drawing on in the above quote. For Seneca, this is a moment of truth humans have to face.

Overly bloodthirsty and angry, Hieronimo, collapses at hearing the Old Man's complaint. This is the moment when he decides to announcing the murder of his son to its real performers before killing them. The ultimate representation of the Senecan character aspects in the play is determined by the impact of the "external powers" represented by the Spanish court on Hieronimo. This, in the text refers to the King's negligence; Hieronimo's own mounting violent emotions and the sheer boldness of the murderers who killed Horatio as their existence builds up Hieronimo's anger. Hence, Hieronimo decides to put his anger under control and plan revenge. He follows the course of his emotions logically. He rationalizes his anger to retaliate against the

killers, invents a mirror image of the murder of his son. After the execution of Pedringano, Hieronimo tries to express his anger in words and find a way to achieve *revenge* and *justice*. These terms are the two axes around which his life evolves. By stating these terms, Hieronimo is undermining every interpretation of “justice” and “revenge”.

The lengthened speeches by Hieronimo about his emotional status stress the fact that Revenge is the composer of the tragedy. The tragic dimension of Hieronimo’s character runs along with his rhetorical outbursts. The inventive method of his revenge mirrors these artistic rhetorical outbreaks. Revenge is the one who pulls the strings of the puppets on the stage of the Spanish court. The tension point in the play is between the supernatural represented by Revenge and the creative force of Hieronimo’s anger in retaliation. However, Hieronimo seems to outdo Revenge in carrying out Revenge’s game. He contextualizes the tragedy that Revenge has already prepared.

After meeting the Old Man, Hieronimo’s lines become a series of rhetorical questions. Mad with grief, Isabella dies. In spite of her minimal role in the play, Isabella is given a very interesting lunacy speech. It is fully furnished with images of sterility and bareness. This speech contextualizes Isabella’s and Hieronimo’s grief. She mirrors her husband’s emotions in the last moments of her life. For her, pity and piety are not to be accounted for by the external power of “the King”. It can be argued that her suicide towards the end of the speech is another Stoic victory over the external powers, represented by the King’s negligence with regard to Horatio’s death. This speech can be seen as Isabella’s convergence with the supernatural character of Andrea. Prophetic sentences are uttered in mad moments. Images of sterility and desolation are voiced all over the stage with Isabella’s pain and anger. These futile shrieks for justice and

revenge by Isabella are going to be artistically answered by Hieronimo who is setting his theatrical revenge.

Bel-imperia, Andrea's beloved and Horatio's passionate companion is a controversial character. She is the female figure around whom the other characters' passions revolve. Her love for Andrea may be considered the passion for which she dies. She truly cherishes Andrea, yet she rapidly takes Horatio as the object of her desire. Her anger is relentlessly violent. She is verbally civil in her protests at what her brother does, but emotionally violent concerning what happens to Andrea and Horatio. Her anger is Senecan; she is a mad member of the royalty. Kyd seems to meet Seneca in the creation of Bel-imperia's character. She conforms to the Senecan standards of irrational and angry monarchs. Her character fits into Seneca's definitions of anger in his *On*

*Anger:*

Anger aims at nothing splendid or beautiful. On the other hand, it seems to me to show a feeble and harassed spirit, one conscious of its own weakness and over sensitive, just as the body is when it is sick and covered with sores and makes moan at the slightest touch. Thus anger is a most womanish and childish weakness. (SENECA 1928: 161)

For Seneca, anger is not concerned with eloquence, which makes Bel-imperia's Senecan anger verbally clever but not eloquent. She rarely uses images or allusions. Her words are meant to get back at her brother and Balthazar. Her use of words is stichomythic; they serve as weapons in responding to her foes. Kyd creates a female Senecan character in order to state a difference with Hieronimo. Bel-imperia's stichomythia is the outcome of her anger. She simply bounces back at Lorenzo. She sends Hieronimo a letter telling the names of Horatio's killers, his response is weighed with grief and suspicion. Hieronimo's doubt about Bel-imperia's letter shows a healthy relationship to the world around him, although he is in deep sorrow. Seneca will never approve

of Hieronimo's character being logical under the effect of severe sadness. He would think that Bel-imperia's character is a revengeful woman whose only desire is to murder her foes and the letter she writes is the first movement to getting her revenge:

Kyd's stichomythia is more than a rhetorical trick, a dead device taken over from Seneca. Bel-imperia is a strong minded and self-willed woman, beautiful and imperial as her name suggests, neither married nor virginal, and nothing could introduce her character better than the way she linguistically bounces back at Lorenzo's and Balthazar's advances. (ERNE 2008: 71).

The quotation addresses the ambiguity of Bel-imperia's stichomythia in relation to her emotional state of mind. In one of her stichomythic dialogues with Lorenzo she starts by rejecting their blood relationship, when the dialogue starts to be stichomythic, however, she calls Lorenzo brother. This verbal duel with Lorenzo turns out to be an acknowledgment of her Machiavellian characteristics. The exchange goes as follows:

*Enter BEL-IMPERIA*

*Bel.* Thou art no brother, but an enemy;  
Else wouldest thou not have us'd thy sister so:  
First, to affright me with thy weapons drawn,  
And with extremes abuse my company:

...

*Bal.* 'Tis I that love

*Bel.* Whom?

*Bal.* Bel-imperia

*Bel.* But I that fear

*Bal.* Whom?

*Bel.* Bel-imperia

*Lor.* Fear yourself?

*Bel.* Ay, brother.

*Lor.* How?

*Bel.* As those  
That that what they love are loath and fear to lose.

*Bal.* Then, fair, let Balthazar your keeper be.

*Bel.* No, Balthazar doth fear as well as we. (III. X. 95-101)

These lines testify to Bel-imperia's double personality as suggested by her name. She rejects Lorenzo as a brother and wants to get revenge for Andrea and Horatio. The excerpt relates Bel-imperia to all the other characters. She is vivid to the extent that her words present her psychological reality. She is not talking to the other characters, as much as she is talking *at* them. Her character is defined as a confronting stichomythic, and violently angry at Lorenzo and Balthazar. This adds to the Senecan dimension of her character. Nonetheless, she can reason her way into revenge without recourse to feigned madness. In this respect, she uses Horatio to humiliate Balthazar's advances:

Bel.: Ay, go Horatio, leave me here alone,  
For solitude best fits my mood:  
Yet what avails to wail Andrea's death,  
From whence Horatio proves my second love?  
Had he not lov'd Andrea as he did,  
He could not sit in Bel-imperia's thoughts.  
But how can love find harbour in my breast,  
Till I revenge the death of my beloved?  
Yes second love shall further my revenge.  
I'll love Horatio, my Andrea's friend,  
The more to spite the prince that wrought his end.  
And where Don Balthazar, that slew my love,  
Himself now pleads for favour at my hands,  
He shall rigour of my just disdain.

(I.iv.57-71)

Here Bel-imperia admits that she cannot love Horatio yet. Later, she rationalizes her love for him in the framework of revenge. Her pursuit is built upon the desire to achieve revenge which ends up causing the elimination of Horatio by his rivals. Only then does she realize that she has genuinely fallen in love with him. Being such an emotional character conforms to the proposition that her anger is Senecan.

Nonetheless, Bel-imperia's own death at the end of the play suggests that she is consumed by her emotions and the rivalry she creates between Horatio and Balthazar. She tells Hieronimo the truth because Lorenzo and Balthazar have deprived her of love for Andrea and Horatio respectively. In creating Bel-imperia, Kyd seems to have conformed to the Senecan theatrical representation of anger when it comes to Bel-imperia's royal and emotional status. As we have seen, Seneca opposes the irrationality of revenge built on anger. He is very specific about the revenge he permits as he calls it a type of duty. Assuming that Kyd's purpose is to copy Seneca, Bel-imperia depends on the temporarily insane Hieronimo to plan her revenge. Unlike Hieronimo, Bel-imperia does not search for justice. Bel-imperia's punishment for Balthazar and Lorenzo is not a question of justice. She is seeking retribution against those who deprived her of love. It is a very personal kind of revenge performed by a public persona. Hieronimo is seeking revenge against those who killed his son in order to achieve justice. Therefore, revenge as an action escorts him, as much as it accompanies Andrea in personation.

Hieronimo's anger is poetic. It triggers verse and drama. When Hieronimo appears on stage as a theatrical figure he presents images of usurpation in a jesting manner. Now, after the injustice has befallen him, he will be presenting a tragedy in which language and meaning are usurped giving confusion the advantage. The tragedy is well organized in service of anarchy. The artistic correspondence between Hieronimo's play and Revenge's play, where Andrea has become the audience, is determined by the power of Hieronimo's confusing languages. He surpasses Revenge in creating a textual tragedy where nobody understands the others and they are all killed at the end:

Consequently the play dramatizes a divine malevolence as radical as that found in some of Seneca's plays, but while there is 'a dreadful logic' to Seneca's malevolent gods, the one in Kyd is entirely wanting and is replaced by utters 'meaninglessness'

We are thus faced with a dilemma. If the infernal deities entirely predetermine the living by exerting 'total control' over them, as Edwards has it, any identification with these predetermined puppets would seem out of place. Yet, the title page of all early editions announces 'the pitiful death of olde *Hieronimo*', implying a reaction of sympathy and identification. This is corroborated by early references hinting at the emotional impact Hieronimo had upon the audience. Also, any evaluation of the morality of the characters' actions, Lorenzo's villainies, the king's benevolence or his lack of it, Hieronimo's revenge – despicable, objectionable, or justifiable depending on the critic – would be irrelevant if the play insisted on the character's determinism.(ERNE 2008: 106).

Here, the level of the dramatic action in Revenge's *Spanish Tragedy* is relatively less intense than Hieronimo's play-within-the-play. Hieronimo's play is short, dense, incomprehensible (the language factor) and deadly. Revenge's is long, poetic, and cathartic for Andrea. Hieronimo's play is seen as the same as Revenge's but in a short and condensed manner. Hieronimo repeats the word revenge four times before he starts the act, emphasizing that he is going to erase the villains both textually and in the real world of the *Spanish Tragedy*:

Behoves thee then, Hieronimo, to be revenge'd:  
The plot is laid of dire revenge:  
On then, Hieronimo, pursue revenge,  
For nothing wants but acting of revenge.      *Exit Hieronimo.*

(IV.iii. 26-30)

The moving forces of the play-within-the-play are revenge and anger. Hieronimo, however, does not lengthen the mental suffering of his foes as he hurries them to the underground and he follows them shortly. This reference to the acting of revenge mostly refers to the fact that the play is already shaped by revenge; therefore, acting does not refer to faking an action, it matches

reality. The acting of revenge does not stop on Hieronimo's stage; it goes on after the death of the avenger and the avenged. Tragedy never ends so neither do the emotions which shape it.

These emotions, especially anger, inhabit injustice and they stage their effects in every tragedy.

In conclusion, vengeance is not only a deed shaped by emotions; it is a morally destructive life style. Had Hieronimo lived, he would have ended up with more blood on his hands. The act of cutting off his tongue is a very significant indicator of the fact that words do not mean anything in this situation. Revenge is a curse that manipulates the human mind and body leading people who succumb to it to lose their sense of the meaning of their existence.

In the next chapter, Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* will be taken to illustrate the effects of anger and violence in the performance of language and revenge. The tragedy of human existence that is seen in *The Spanish Tragedy* becomes the tragedy of language in *Titus Andronicus*.



## Chapter Six

### *Titus Andronicus: A Tragedy of Language*

In previous chapters, I have talked about the role of anger in driving the action of revenge tragedy. I have concluded that this emotion becomes the action in Senecan drama in the absence of a traditional beginning, middle and an end to his tragedies. The Senecan presentation of tragedy is about the intensity of anger with regard to the revenge it leads to. Seneca is not concerned with the unity of action as such, nor does he take what Aristotle calls catharsis into consideration. Catharsis is the purification or discharge of the audience's feelings. Senecan tragedy does not aspire to justice at all. In his tragedies, Seneca aims to show the effect of this "irrational" and violent emotion once the individual succumbs to it. This is in accord with his philosophical views against emotions in general, and anger in particular. Catharsis is an outlet of the emotions, something that provides satisfaction. This is a release of tension excited by those emotions. Seneca in his ethical writings does not recommend aspiring to any emotional release. Nevertheless, he excites the most primitive emotions in his plays and does not grant catharsis to his audience. For Seneca, catharsis pertains solely to the avenger who is not usually a virtuous character. His ethical purpose in showing that catharsis belongs to a bad man is to warn against the validity of the emotions as something that, if adhered to, allow one to lead a virtuous life. The moral judgment of the audience will be adversely affected if they sympathize with the angry avenger. The definition of catharsis presupposes sympathy for the protagonist and thence the releasing of it, which allows the viewer to emotionally interact with the tragic event. This allows for the release of negative emotions accordingly, and affords the viewer an opportunity for making a clear moral judgment after fully experiencing the anger of the tragic protagonist. For

example, Titus experiences Senecan catharsis in *Titus Andronicus* when he sees Tamora consume her sons. And catharsis is realized when Lucius kills Saturninus. We witness catharsis in the angry Tamora when she exults over the loss of Titus' hand.

I talked about the effects of Seneca's drama on the composition of early modern revenge tragedy. I described *Gorboduc* as being tremendously affected by the Senecan techniques of displaying extreme emotions. Then, I examined the similarities and differences between Seneca's theatrical techniques, ethical writings and Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy*. The argument is that Kyd enlists our sympathy on behalf of the avenger by means of a myth of accusation where all the powers of the human and the divine conspire to destroy a good ordinary man. This is contrasted with Seneca's protagonists whose anger constitutes royal characteristics; who are by no means virtuous.

In the current chapter, I examine the Senecan influence on *Titus Andronicus*, one of Shakespeare's earliest plays. I look at the position of the play in terms of its relation to the Kydian influence an example is Marcus and Lavinia. The violence done against Lavinia has pushed critics to doubt Shakespeare's authorship of the play. Traditionally there have been doubts that this play was written by Shakespeare due to its extreme violence and its "inferior poetic" style.

The long history of skeptical opinion about the play reveals two sorts of evidence to support such a case:(1) parts of the play are unworthy of Shakespeare either in conception (as in the sheer brutality of both the rape and the revenge) or in execution (as seen as stylistic inferiority of certain passages); (2) Parts of the play resemble the work of other playwrights (mainly in poetic style or vocabulary)<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> William Shakespeare, *Titus Andronicus*, ed. Eugene M. Waith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 13.

The main reason for mentioning these claims is to set the background for the controversial issues the text tackles. Here I argue that Shakespeare's attempt is to equip his characters with Senecan theatrical emotions and revenge. Shakespeare tries to create sympathetic responses for Titus by focusing on the cruelty done to Lavinia.

This play offers an unusual dramatization of anger as an emotion. It explores the physical aspects of characters and language in relation to violence. *Titus Andronicus* outdoes Seneca's rhetoric of violence. This is why I look into constructing the self through a stylistic display of the characters' anger and agony. For example, Titus' character develops through anguish and loss. He becomes more interactive with the rest of his family members after losing many of them. One way of looking at the play is to focus on the force of the characters' emotional displays. The movement of the self on stage in *Titus Andronicus* starts with irrational and angry characters, and ends up with hysterical nightmarish beasts. *Titus Andronicus* can also be seen as a play in which the characters are disguised by their words and violent actions. Only when they try to camouflage themselves, do they reveal their true natures. An example is Tamora and her sons in act V scene II, when they disguise themselves as revenge, rape and murder:

Tamora: Know, thou sad man, I am not Tamora;  
She is thy enemy, and I thy friend.  
I am Revenge, sent from th'infernal kingdom  
To ease the gnawing vulture of thy mind  
By working wreakful vengeance on thy foes.  
Come down and welcome me to this world's light;  
Confer with me of murder and of death.  
There is not a hollow cave or lurking-place,  
No vast obscurity or misty vale  
Where bloody murder to detested rape  
Can couch for fear, but I will find them out,  
And in their ears tell them my dreadful name,  
Revenge, which males the foul offender quake<sup>2</sup>. (V. ii. 28-40)

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<sup>2</sup> William Shakespeare, *Shakespeare's Tragedies*, ed. David Bevington (New York: Pearson Education, 2007), 999. Subsequent references are to this edition.

Believing that Titus is mad, Tamora and her sons appear at his house, disguised as the gods of Revenge, Rape and Murder to answer his letters. Titus begs Tamora to leave Rape and Murder with him for a while. The instant she leaves, Titus orders Chiron and Demetrius bound and restrained. He slits their throats, and Lavinia collects their spilled blood. Due to the depiction of Lavinia's character, I argue that once a character is mutilated in this play their presence becomes more effective linguistically and emotionally; they become more fully present despite losing language producing body parts. In a Senecan play violence and cruelty are most often narrated, whereby, language becomes the horror. In *Titus Andronicus*, the mutilations take place on stage, and the absence of language producing body parts emphasizes the presence of language in comparison to the loss of the body parts that produce speech:

No wonder our own age of decentred emotionality has rediscovered these works. Seneca's limitation of vocabulary, rhetorical figures, and concentration on the flow of emotional movement rather than on structures of action or events creates a kind of artificial echo chamber where human suffering, and all the emotional responses it involves, are magnified to a new level and therefore appear with a new pictorial expressiveness, what has been called a 'psychotic portrait of emotional affect. Here the real action occurs in the spaceless and timeless realm of the emotional life<sup>3</sup>.

Characterization in the play is developed through emotion, action, and language. Enacted violence supplies the content of the speeches. The fusion between language, body and action is powerful. They link the audience's emotions to the most spectacular moments of the play, which usually follow the violent deeds. An example is the problematic speech given by Marcus after the rape and the "trimming" of Lavinia. Marcus fetishizes Lavinia's injured body. Moreover, in his speech, Marcus refers to the dreamlike state he now finds himself in. As he beholds the

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<sup>3</sup> John G. Fitch, ed. *Seneca* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 141.

mangled Lavinia, time seems to stand still. Lavinia remains motionless as he speaks, except for turning away her face for shame. Marcus alludes to the mythological story of Tereus and Philomela, which Shakespeare drew from Ovid for his plot. Tereus raped Philomela, his wife's sister, he cut out her tongue. Philomela depicted what had happened in a tapestry, and her sister Procne avenged her by killing her own son, and serving him to his father, Tereus, in a meal. Referring to Lavinia's lopped limbs, Marcus mentions Tereus' rape and mutilation of Philomela. Here, Marcus focuses on the cruelty done on her. He treats her injuries as if they were the source of his inspiration to utter the speech, emotions and language:

Alas, a crimson river of warm blood,  
Like to a bubbling fountain stirred with wind,  
Doth rise and fall between thy roséd lips  
Coming and going with thy honey breath.

(II.iii.22-25)

The rhetoric Marcus uses is absorbed in Lavinia's "beautiful" image when disfigured: the "warm blood, between thy roséd lips, honey breath". The fetishization of Lavinia's injuries is meant to empty words of their meanings and focus on the body as means of expression. Besides, Marcus' speech restores violence to its primeval aspect because he treats her almost as a religious sacrifice. Technically, Marcus' way of describing her attempts at speaking resembles the Petrarchan conceit of idolizing the object of description: itemizing the body so that it can be admired piece by piece. This tribute is achieved by combining the pleasure of praise with the pain of Lavinia's body. The shock is doubled and sympathy with her is increased after the poetic description of her injuries is uttered by Marcus. This is achieved through the use of oxymoron, which is the Petrarchan's technique of combining images of pleasure and pain to express love. Originally, the Petrarchan conceit was meant to inspire envy. Marcus invokes Ovid's

*Metamorphoses* within the context of obsessive mimetic violence. In *Titus Andronicus*, the fetish is directed towards the violated body where language is torn apart by the extreme violence performed on the flesh of the characters. The violence of anger rewrites itself in a manner that deprives language of its emotive purposes. Rene Girard writes:

Envy and wrath do not know how to carve; their avidity and brutality can only mangle their victims. Behind the opposition between carving and hacking, we recognize a familiar theme: mimetic violence is the principle of a false differentiation that eventually turns to outright undifferentiating in a violent dissolving of the community. In the carving metaphor all aspects of culture seem harmoniously blended, the differential and the spiritual, the spatial, the ethical, and the aesthetic. This moment illustrates what we may call the “classical moment” of sacrifice<sup>4</sup>.

The gap between the human body and the language-producing organs is bridged by the mutilation of these very specific human parts (hands and tongue). Girard thinks of sacrifice as an act of eliminating the difference among society members, and in doing this, dismantling the violence that inhabits society. In being violent in the act of sacrifice, the different components of society are carved together into harmony. In *Titus Andronicus*, Lavinia is treated as a sacrificial victim because violent characters (like Chiron and Demetrius) take out their violence on her.

This can be seen in the light of Antonin Artaud’s theory of *Théâtre de la Cruauté*. In his book *The Theatre and Its Double*, Artaud seeks to renovate theatre by showing people what they do not wish to see. ‘La Cruauté’, meaning “raw”, “uncooked”, signifies the fact that the theatre should not be “cooked”: i.e. served only with written language. Rather it should use gesture and space in order to show the audience what they usually do not wish to see. He calls for making the most of space and bodily expression on stage. It is about making the theatre more concrete to the

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<sup>4</sup>Rene Girard, *A Theater of Envy: William Shakespeare* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 213.

audience in the sense that it should articulate the space and the body by means of signs and gestures. This is what Shakespeare does in *Titus Andronicus*. By having Lavinia lose the ability to speak or write, Shakespeare allows more space for the interpretation of “her martyred signs” (III.ii.36). Artaud observes:

It has not been proved definitely that the language of words is the best possible language. And it seems that on the stage, which is above all a space to fill and a place where something happens, the language of words may have to give way before a language of signs whose objective aspect is the one that has the most immediate impact upon us... Furthermore, these concrete gestures must have an efficacy strong enough to make us forget the very necessity of speech. Then if spoken language still exists it must be only as a response, a relay stage of racing space; and the cement of gestures must by its human efficacy achieve the value of a true abstraction<sup>5</sup>.

Lavinia’s case is seen from a different perspective in the light of Artaud’s words. She is the silent character around whom all the rhetorical utterances revolve at certain points in the play. The extremity of the violence done against her to prevent her from expressing pain is subtly solved by Marcus’ speech. The power of rhetoric is set against the concrete violence. Titus kills Lavinia after he cooks her attackers and serves them in a pie to be eaten by their mother. By having them cooked, Titus revenges the rape of his daughter and the lie that lead him to wilfully lose his hand. Titus feeds Tamora the flesh of her sons, the same way Chiron and Demetrius dress his daughter with gestures of violation and signs of shame. Titus uses rhetoric in order to cloth the mechanical language of extreme violence same way he dresses Chiron and Demetrius’ flesh in a pie.

To continue with Marcus’s speech, we see that he mentions “Lucrece’s rape”, “Lord Junius Brutus swore for Lucrece’s rape” (IV.i. 91):

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<sup>5</sup> Antonin Artaud, *The Theatre and Its Double*, trans. Mary Caroline Richards (New York: Grove Press, 1958), 107-108.

This means that he has clear in his mind what happened to Lucrecia, the beautiful and chaste Roman wife was raped by Sextus Tarquinius, the youngest son of the last Roman King, Tarquinius Superbus, as Livy told in his *Historiae*, and Ovid poetically interpreted in his *Fasti*. Marcus keeps alive his classical and Roman past in the present, symbolizing Roman *integritas*. Invoking “Lucrece’s rape”, he sees a comparison with Lavinia’s story and swears revenge on the enemies that have blemished not only a woman, but also the Roman social order. Lucrece, in fact, lived in a society very similar to that of *Titus*, where the family is the fundamental element of the social system and, as Robert S. Miola points out, ““honour”, “shame”, “fame” – the opinions of others – constitute the only frame of reference by which one can judge actions in Lucrece’s world, the world of Rome<sup>6</sup>”. After the rape, Lucrecia fears being cast out from her family, and the society that until then had praised her for her feminine virtues essential to the existence of the city, and she ponders suicide in order not to stain her family’s and the city’s honour. She hopes to be exonerated from being judged as a fallen woman. The rape has already killed her soul, and she decides to escape the dirty prison of her body and that of human opinion by committing suicide<sup>7</sup>.

As Miola writes:

The suicide is an exercise of *pietas*, the quintessentially Roman and Vergilian subordination of self to the obligations of family and city. It transforms Lucrece into a symbol of constancy and honour, thereby winning the fame that to her mind is an acquittal and a glorious reward.(MIOLA 1983: 39).

As already noted, Lavinia cannot commit suicide. She is trapped in her polluted body which would pollute the Andronici and Rome. She is destined to experience what Lucrece was afraid of. Lavinia is at the centre of public opinion, she cannot escape it.

The representation of royal anger in Saturninus and Tamora shows the peak of madness, irrationality, and sheer thirst for blood. Anger destroys every character. The most horrible consequences of this emotion befall the least angry characters, Lavinia: Titus’ daughter. Anger in

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<sup>6</sup>Miola, Robert S., *Shakespeare’s Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 37.

<sup>7</sup> Alessandra Pertina and Cinzia Russo, *The Representation of Death in Titus Andronicus* (Anno Accademico 2010-2011), 45-46.



*Titus Andronicus* unites language with the human body. The body becomes the language through which anger screams. Anger is not only erroneous judgment; it is also hasty to shed blood. This is clearly shown in the first act where Titus kills his son:

This use is found prominently in the treatise *On Anger*. Judgment and decision ... are part of the language of legal authority... Two contrasting cases are cited to demonstrate the need to pause, in a judicial spirit, for assessment, hearing both sides before coming to a decision on any important matter: the tyrant Hippias who caused his own downfall by hasty reaction to suspicions, and the decision of Julius Caesar to prevent himself from over-reaction by destroying potentially damaging evidence before even reading it. (FITCH 2008: 132).

In view of this statement about Seneca, anger might be presented in various phases in *Titus Andronicus*. The play focuses upon the ritualistic aspects of violence performed in accordance with this emotion. Rituals are gestures and customs that reflect cultural values; they are practiced as a means of community-building and as a response to the threat of political disorder and human suffering. In ceremonial practice, no less than the existence of the community is at stake; in *Titus Andronicus*, Shakespeare dramatizes the political instability that results when characters manipulate rituals for self-serving purposes or disrupt them to enact violence. The crises repeatedly brought about by failed rituals in this play reveal fundamental links between emotion, ceremony and brutality. Anger creates kinds of rivalry among all the characters, irrational as it is; this rivalry focuses on material objects rather than concepts when it comes to the royal family:

*Saturninus*. Noble patricians, patrons of my right,  
Defend the justice of my cause with arms,  
And, countrymen, my loving followers,  
Plead my successive title with your swords.  
I am his first born son that was the last  
That wore the imperial diadem of Rome.  
Then let my fathers honors live in me,  
Nor wrong mine age with this indignity.

*Bassianus.* Romans, friends, followers, favorers of my right,  
If ever Bassianus, Caesar's son,  
Were gracious in the eyes of royal Rome,  
Keep then this passage to the Capitol,  
And suffer not dishonor to approach  
The imperial seat, to virtue consecrate,  
To justice, continence, and nobility;  
But let desert in pure election shine,  
And, Romans, fight for freedom in your choice.

(I. i. 1-17)

This quotation demonstrates the rivalry which *leads* to anger. This rivalry starts over the throne, and then moves to a competition over Lavinia, resulting in Titus killing his own son. The two different principles opposed in the above speeches are: primogeniture vs. choice by merit. Saturninus justifies his candidature on the ground of primogeniture. Titus recognizes this principle when he chooses Saturninus to become emperor. The freedom of choosing the emperor is granted to Titus who believes in the patriarchal system of the Romans. The cry for a democratic election of the emperor is eliminated; leaving the choice to Titus's patriarchal character who, for the time being, only recognizes rigid hierarchy and military orders. Thus Titus responds positively to Saturninus' threatening language and selects him to be the Emperor. It indicates a corruption on the political and social levels. In the same line of thought, the bodily mutilation which we will see enacted throughout the play is emblematic of social fragmentation. When Chiron and Demetrius rape and dismember Lavinia, as I will show, they violate a ritual intended to commemorate the imperial wedding hunt; through rape, they pervert the matrimonial union and potential procreation it symbolizes, and, through mutilation, they subvert the traditional role of the hunt as a celebratory affirmation of stability and hierarchy. But, the Goths are not the only characters who manipulate rituals; in perhaps the play's most well known scene, Titus deceives his enemies by staging a banquet under the pretence of peace and reconciliation.

During the feast, as I will argue, Titus manipulates a ceremony frequently intended to celebrate peace and friendship as an opportunity to gain bloody vengeance; human sacrifice serves as not just an accompanying element to the ritual of the banquet but the central motive for it.

Saturninus, the head of the body politic, is the most unjust figure. He leaves Bassianus with the least opportunity to choose his wife, his position in the court, and his destiny. The above speeches foreshadow what will happen. In order to maximize the effects of anger, meaning is separated from words. The bloodshed in the play starts with a religious ceremony. Titus sacrifices Tamora's first born son Alarbus. The first killing in the play is performed, though offstage, ritualistically. This triggers the anger of the queen and leads to the subsequent blood spree throughout the play:

Violence is an enduring feature of *Titus Andronicus*, and its function must be understood if the play is not to be dismissed as merely hyperbolic in its bloodshed. We are constantly aware of ritual human sacrifice, murder, and maiming, as in Titus' sentencing of Tamora's son Alarbus and his slaying of his own son Mutius, the massacre by Tamora's sons of Bassianus and their ravishing of Lavinia, the subsequent execution of two of Titus' sons wrongfully accused to Bassianus' murder, the cutting off Titus' hand, the feeding to Tamora of her sons' bodies ground into a fine paste, and still more.(BEVINGTON 2007:957)

Ritualistic violence opens the play. It shapes the motivation of all characters. It precedes all events, given that there was a war going on before the play starts. This means that violence precedes the thing that causes it in *Titus Andronicus*. This resembles *the Spanish Tragedy*, as the play starts at the end of the war between Spain and Portugal. In *Titus Andronicus*, violence takes place collectively in the war between the Romans and the Goths. However, as mentioned earlier, the first act of sacrificing Tamora's son is a demonstration of power. This is verified by Demetrius:

*Demetrius*: oppose not Scythia to ambitious Rome.  
Alarbus goes to rest, and we survive  
To tremble under Titus' threat'ning look  
Then, madam, stand resolved, but hopes withal  
The selfsame gods that armed the Queen of Troy  
With opportunity of sharp revenge  
Upon the Thracian tyrant in his tent  
May favor Tamora, the Queen of Goths-  
When Goths were Goths and Tamora was queen.

(I. i. 132-141)

The quotation shows that Titus uses his eyes to show dominance. His gaze is angry and threatening. The life of the queen will be controlled by Titus' look because he is in a powerful position. When Tamora becomes powerful Titus's gaze is reduced to disappointed words. Demetrius tries to demean the power of the "threat'ning look" by relating images that are suggestive of the power granted to women in the history of Troy. It is worth pointing out that Demetrius alludes to Euripides's play *Hecuba* here. This is interesting because though he is *not* thinking of Seneca as such, he *is* thinking of an example of bestializing rage (according to the prophesy of her victim, Polymestor, Hecuba will be transformed into a dog by the savagery of her revenge. The significance of Titus' gaze is that it is going to be interwoven with the images of his raped and mutilated daughter, in addition to the heads of his two executed sons. The queen is made known to others as a bloodthirsty avenger; she was in power once and will be again. Nevertheless, the violence with which both parties carry out their revenge is worth examining in the light of its dramatization of violent emotions. The fusion of anger and violence in Tamora is a very Senecan aspect of *Titus Andronicus*. Her anger and stiffened attitude towards what her sons do to Lavinia echoes Seneca's *On Anger*:

The source of this evil is anger, and when anger from oft-repeated indulgence and surfeit has arrived at a disregard for mercy and has expelled from the mind every conception of the human bond, it

passes at last into cruelty. And so these men laugh and rejoice and experience great pleasure. (SENECA 1928: 177).

Motivated by anger, many of the characters in *Titus Andronicus* anticipate their destiny in the light of the cruelty of Roman rule. They move within the orbit of a nihilistic world of the most dangerous and destructive passions. The best example of that is Aaron's character. Perverting the same rituals observed by Titus and Lucius, Aaron thrills at his performance of grotesque bodily violence and his subversion of all conventions; rather than burying the dead, Aaron has disinterred corpses, and put them at the doors of their loved ones. With or without ritual the characters in the play manage to tell us that violence finds its way into society. The extremity of bloodshed that functions in the framework of a religious ritual aims at discharging violence. A Sacrifice is supposed to confine violence to a symbolic object, Girard writes:

Nevertheless, there is a common denominator that determines the efficacy of all sacrifices and that becomes increasingly apparent as the institution grows in vigor. This common denominator is internal violence – all the dissensions, rivalries, jealousies, and quarrels within the community that the sacrifices are designed to suppress. The purpose of sacrifice is to restore harmony to the community. (GIRARD 1977:8).

According to the quotation, the sacrifice of Tamora's son was not the only cause of violence in the play. Aaron, the Moor, and Tamora's secret lover, show self-indulgent anger. His anger stems from feelings of inferiority towards the Romans, the Goths, and all who are different from him. His character is meant to represent pure evil. He takes advantage of the act of sacrificing Tamora's son in order to retaliate against Titus. He uses the act that is meant to please the gods in serving his own goal to get his revenge against the Romans. For Aaron, his life and grudge are inseparable. He infuses his colour with anger, making it a part of his identity. His vicious attack is directed towards Lavinia, the purest character in the

play. She stands as his opposite in all characteristics: colour, evil, and self-indulgence. Here we have to remember that the stage “blackamoor” was, in its primitive form, a symbol of evil and malevolence. The evil nature of the “blackamoor” character is related to the woods in *Titus Andronicus* as he recommends that the rape should happen there. He also begets his son in the woods while plotting to falsely accuse Titus’ sons Quintus and Martius of the murder of Bassianus. The Romans perform sacrificial rituals because they want to put the souls of their army to rest. This will also help reduce the tendency for violence among the homecoming soldiers. In this context, Rene Girard explains the importance of sacrifice:

The sacrifice serves to protect the entire community from *its own violence*; it prompts the entire community to choose victims outside itself. The elements of dissension scattered throughout the community are drawn to the person of the sacrificial victim and eliminated, at least temporarily, by its sacrifice. (GIRARD 1977:8).

Yet, as we see in the play, the language with which Lucius and Titus focus on Alarbus’s execution indicates that a perverse anticipation in corporeal dismemberment, rather than the symbolic comfort of the ceremony, is the focal point of this ritual sacrifice. Lucius initially justifies this sacrifice as essential to the burial ritual. He uses vividly descriptive rhetoric that hints at vengeance. Lucius anticipates this ritual as a bloody spectacle; only thirty lines later, he reiterates his thirst for dismemberment (even using some of the same language as in his earlier appeal):

*Lucius*: Away with him [Alarbus], and make a fire straight,  
And with our swords, upon a pile of wood,  
Let’s hew his limbs till they be clean consumed”

(I. i. 127-29).

Lucius links his justification of the sacrifice in Titus’s burial ritual. According to Lucius, Alarbus’s execution is integral for the appeasement of the shadows of Titus’s slain sons with its

impact as a demonstration of Roman power. Lucius implicitly intends this bloody display to shame and threaten Tamora and her sons. He judges the success of the funeral based on the spectacle of Alarbus's dismemberment and execution, and he ensures its display as an element of these "Roman rites" (I. i. 144) by announcing its effects in public. Objecting to Alarbus' sacrifice, Tamora contrasts the symbolic power of Titus' ritualistic burial of his slain sons, a celebration of their heroic defence of Rome, with the public mutilation and sacrifice of her oldest son, a demonstration of Titus's thirst for blood and vengeance:

Tamora: Sufficeth not that we are brought to Rome  
To beautify thy triumphs, and return  
Captive to thee and to thy Roman yoke;  
But must my sons be slaughtered in the streets  
For valiant doings in their country's cause?

(I.i.109-13)

The intention to mitigate violence becomes the cause of violence. Sacrifice in this play is dysfunctional because Tamora becomes the Empress. This reverses the purpose for which Alarbus is sacrificed. The act of sacrifice, which is supposed to be inoffensive, becomes the origin of violence when Saturnine marries Tamora. He gives her the power to avenge the killing of her eldest son. Sacrifice; a ritualistic act triggers the dynamics of the emotional dimensions of language. Sacrifice loses its effect because of the emotions of some characters. Girard writes:

It is clearly legitimate to define the difference between sacrificeable and nonsacrificeable individuals in terms of their degree of integration, but such definition is not yet sufficient. In many cultures, women are not considered full-fledged members of their society; yet women are never, or rarely, selected as sacrificial victims. There may be a simple explanation for this fact. The married woman retains her ties with her parents' clan even after she has become in some respects the property of her husband and his family. To kill her would be to run the risk of one of the two

groups' interpreting her sacrifice as an act of murder committing it to a reciprocal act of revenge.(GIRARD1977: 12-13).

This is what happens to Titus, the sacrifice was intended to be completely within the boundaries of Roman society. However, Saturnine changes the qualities of the sacrificial victim by incorporating Tamora with Rome. Tamora would not be able to react to sacrificing her son as long as she remained an imprisoned Goth. However she is made a royal Roman due to Saturninus' marriage to her: "Titus, I am incorporate in Rome" (1.i.463). The power given to her by the marriage to Saturnine changes the revenge formula of the play.

On the subject of Tamora, I would argue that even when Tamora is a monstrous enemy that Romans fear, there is another side of the queen of Goths which must be considered. At the beginning of the play, she shows herself as a "gracious mother"(II.iii.89) and not solely a "bestly creature" (II.iii.182). Aaron's depiction of Tamora is a reminder of Titus' words "Upon her wit doth earthly honour wait, and virtue stoops and trembles at her frown" (II.i.10-11). Both Tamora and Titus prize glory and honour above life itself but the former, unlike the latter, puts her family first when there is a risk of losing it. Tamora, in fact, kneeling, desperately implores Titus to spare her son Alarbus. This is the occasion in which Tamora recognizes her captivity as the manifestation of Titus's power, shown once again with these formal words that cannot but paralyze her:

*Titus:* Patient yourself, madam, and pardon me.  
These are their brethren whom your Goths beheld  
Alive and dead, and for their brethren slain  
Religiously they ask a sacrifice;  
To this your son is marked, and die he must,  
T'appease their groaning shadows that are gone.

(I.i.121-126)

As Robert Miola points out:



Tamora's brave sons are dear to her, just as Titus's are dear to him. And just as Titus's sons hope to grant their brothers eternal rest, so Tamora's sons hope to preserve Alarbus from mortal harm. Tamora challenges Roman *pietas* to encompass those brothers outside the immediate family, to recognize the human identity that transcends national disputes.(MIOLA1983: 48).

Even Tamora has been silenced by the oppressive power of men. She is a loser in front of Titus and her persona, at this point of the play, has fainted:

The aforementioned words bring to light a tender side of Tamora which soon disappears when later in the play she exposes her subtle power saying aside to Saturninus "My lord, be rul'd by me, be won at last, Dissemble all your grieves and discontents" (I.i.442-443), or when she reveals her intention to "find a day to massacre them all" (I.i.450). The cruel Tamora, in this early part of the tragedy, is won by her female side, but her masculine, barbaric self does find the way to avenge her son's murder (PERTINA 2010-2011: 50.)

Tamora's devilish nature, in fact, is evident when, at Lavinia's request for mercy "Be not obdurate, open thy deaf ears" (II.iii.160) she replies:

Remember, boys, I poured forth tears in vain  
To save your brother from the sacrifice  
But fierce Andronicus would not relent.  
Therefore away with her and use her as you will;  
The worse to her, the better loved of me.

(II.iii.163-167)

Violence and horror are Tamora's language and the first body she wants to eliminate is not that of Titus, the responsible of her son's death, but that of Lavinia. Tamora attacks the valorous warrior by aiming at his graceful daughter, and does this by means of her sons, Chiron and Demetrius. Tamora uses male bodies to set up her revenge, Lavinia's murder. She hides her tricky mind behind her sons' lusting flesh; only men, besides, can be responsible for raping a woman. As previously seen, Lavinia's existence is determined by her father's errors and the

same Titus turns out to be the very victim of his errors and, I would say, of the female characters that subtly determine the sequence of events. Titus, so, has created little by little throughout the play a Fury called Tamora, who declares “Know thou sad man, I am not Tamora; She is thine enemy, and I thy friend. I am Revenge” (V.ii.28-30).

I would argue that the play tries to deconstruct pre-existing systems of principles and builds a reversed system of ethics. The play seems to be driven by its own moral imperative. In other words there is not a conventional source of morality in the world of the play. The morality in the play is that of satisfying the lust for blood and revenge, because of the defining opposition of Rome vs. the Barbarians is confused by Saturninus’ marriage to Tamora. If we can attribute the action of the play to capricious emotions and still use the word “logic” in describing all the horrors that take place , we can understand the treatment of the play within its stylistic systems when creating its language and controlling its own moral world via language:

*Titus:* How now, has sorrow made thee dote already?  
Why, Marcus, no man should be mad but I.  
What violent hands can she lay on her life?  
Ah, wherefore dost thou urge the name of hands,  
To bid Aeneas tell the tale twice o’er  
How Troy was burnt and he made miserable?  
Oh, handle not the theme, to talk of hands,  
.....  
As if we should forget we have no hands  
If Marcus did not name the word of hands!  
Come, let’s fall to; and, gentle girl, eat this.  
Here is no drink! Hark, Marcus, what she says;  
I can interpret all her martyred signs.  
She says she drinks no other drink but tears,  
Brewed with her sorrow, mashed upon her cheeks.  
Speechless complainer, I will learn thy thought;  
In thy dumb action will be as perfect  
As begging hermits in their holy prayers. (III. i. 23-45)

Titus' speech is tremendously emotional; he is on the verge of madness when he talks of Lavinia's and his mutilations. Nonetheless, this speech reflects an unwritten agony that surpasses the language involved. It echoes the loss of moral meaning in the world; the world outside language sounds hollow due to the repetition of the word "hand" which emphasizes the physical deformity of Titus (the loss of his hand), and his daughter. The above quotation articulates the poverty of language and its inability to define Titus' agony. Furthermore, language, for Titus, is another means of torture because it does not assist in relieving his pain and it does not allow him to communicate with his daughter, whose tongue is cut out. Although Lavinia is tongueless, she finds a way to communicate her grief and the names of her torturers. The above speech can be seen as doubly saddening because it does not allow Lavinia to express her misery, and since Titus tries to interpret her mute signs through his grief. Her inability to speak or use her hands makes Titus' attempt at reporting her condition more painful, because he is mutilated as well. Titus utters this speech when Marcus talks about hands, which are the mutual lost organs for Titus and his daughter. The word "hand" is echoed throughout as it cruelly dominates the speech, and so draws attention to the physical mutilations of hands. Tears become the language of the silenced Lavinia. She pours her wordless sorrows over her cheeks silently lamenting her inability to "handle" the loss. Shakespeare creates a dark view of the language of agony. The utterance deliberately stumbles on the word and its variations. Shakespeare could create an adequate style of speech about the inadequacy of words in encompassing emotions. His mastery of the language in the previous quotation confirms his understanding of the passions:

If conceptually there is a gap between word and thing,  
rhetorically it is amazing what things a man or a woman can  
achieve. From beginning to end, from *Titus Andronicus* and the  
*Henry VI* plays to *The Tempest*, Shakespeare's plays to nothing  
so much as to his interest in what people can do to themselves

and to each other by language-whether in the form of the comic wit of Rosalind (or Falstaff) or the tragic persuasiveness, unequalled among traditional Revenge ghosts and amounting to nothing less than emotional blackmail... they should note the absurdity of language reduced to formulas (such as Touchstone on lies, or Viola on wooing), or find language inadequate to extremes of emotions – love, grief, suffering – as does almost every character in *King Lear*. And it is natural that they should be conscious of the gap that can exist between language and truth, whether they are operative liars /actors like Richard III or less professional hypocrites, like Angelo<sup>8</sup>.

This quotation suggests that Shakespeare's faith in language is not absolute. He believes that silence can be more expressive than words. He proves it in the case of Lavinia. The casual divorce between words and their meanings has a provocative force in the characters' speeches. They reflect the breakdown of language when these characters try to convey certain emotions. The aforementioned speech by Titus refers to Lavinia's "tears" as becoming her drink and book of sorrows, which brings back to mind his own usage of the word "tear" when he first appears on stage. He uses this word in a different context:

*Titus:*Cometh Andronicus, bound with laurel boughs,  
To re-salute his country with his tears,  
Tears of true joy for his return to Rome.

(I. i. 74-76)

The separation between words and their meanings in certain contexts replicates the emotional dimensions of a given character's speech. In *Titus Andronicus*, the presence of language and its absence adds to the atrocious events of the play. Titus looks as if he describing a grim dumb show when depicting his daughter's pantomimic attempts to conceptualize her agony. He functions as the interpreter of her pain, and he verbalizes his own. The language of her silence

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<sup>8</sup>Stanley Wells, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare Studies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986),51.

becomes crueller than the spoken words. It is violent in the sense that it hurts to hear. The objective of her silence is to express pain. Titus reports it along with his agonies. His speech moves young Lucius to tears. Transitively, silence is the action that pushes Titus to speak the words which move Lucius to tears. Jean-Jacques Lecercle explains how language can be physically violent:

We note that language is the source of pain, not directly, as when voices scream inside Perceval's, as they do inside Schreher's head, but through the violence they exert, the linguistic violence of literalness, which threatens to turn into the literal violence of language. The violence of feelings, of indignation, of guilt, once interpreted in the literal terms of language, becomes the painful violence of physical action<sup>9</sup>.

The above quotation suggests that the use of language has had physical effects on the human body. Language is the frontier between the mind and the body. In *Titus Andronicus* violence in the lives of the characters is not only physical. It is linguistically practiced. This also means that language, like humoral emotions, has a physical dimension to its existence among characters, and the audience. Language becomes the object of emotions. The characters become the symptoms of their emotions. Language is not reduced to an emotion per character. It is enriched by the attempt of the character's emotion to stretch the vocabulary. Characters become the symptoms of the linguistic system that is born out of the emotion. The passion becomes the body of language in *Titus Andronicus*. The distinction here is between language as medium and language as an object or event. Furthermore, language becomes the action in the sense that it hurts the audience to hear a speech like the one in the quotation above. It can be argued that this transitive relationship between language, emotions and action is what constructs the character rather than the opposite. Language is not a means of representation; rather it becomes the essence

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<sup>9</sup>Jean-Jacques Lecercle, *The Violence of Language* (London: Routledge, 1990), 232.

of the character. Hence, it is argued that *Titus Andronicus* is a tragedy of language. This can be demonstrated by examining Titus' words and character from the beginning of the play.

Titus' character does not progress from a sane to an insane character, nor does he move from being peaceable to being angry. He is an angry character from the beginning of the play. His anger varies according to the events that provoke him. Titus defines himself as a military man who gives up his children to shield Rome and this is the only purpose of his life. Once his mission is done, the only thing that remains in him is the anger of the warrior. This anger is magnified in the absence of purpose in Titus' life. It becomes his occupation to react violently to simple provocations as anger and violence are part of his nature. We meet him at the end of his military career and the beginning of his family life. The play shows the consequences of Titus' anger with Rome and his family members. Significantly, the play starts with a conflict over the leadership of Rome, a rivalry Titus has to resolve. His choice affects the life of a nation. He is the one to appoint the emperor and has to choose between the conflicting brothers: Saturninus and Bassianus. Ironically he chooses Saturninus after the latter threatens him with words.

However, at this stage Titus does not scrutinize Saturninus' curses linguistically. It appears that he makes up his mind before hearing Saturninus' threats.

Subconsciously, Titus identifies with the irrational self of Saturninus. Although he knows about Saturninus' character, Titus gives way to Saturninus' capricious actions because he believes in the superiority of the royal family. Besides, he trusts himself to control the masses for the emperor. This labels Titus as a Senecan politician because he supports political despotism despite the fact that Saturnine is apparently an erratic character. At this stage, Unlike Hieronimo, Titus does not suspect the royal family of being insane and murderous. On the contrary, he suspects his own son. Therefore, he can be considered subconsciously complicit in the offence

that takes place against his family. Titus identifies with Saturninus' tyrannical self in the sense that he chooses him to be the emperor on the foundation of hierarchal, patriarchal, and tyrannical traditions. Saturninus speaks on impulse in the same way that Titus responds to his daily life events. This is something which brands him as a monomaniacal personality. Titus' obsession with the primogeniture right makes him choose Saturninus without considering Bassianus' virtuous personality. Also, Titus' obsession with "good causes" results in killing his own son. He cannot see more than one side to the events that take place in his life. Titus tyrannizes his family while Saturninus tyrannizes his own brother, Bassianus, and Rome:

*Saturninus:* Proud and ambitious tribune, canst thou tell?

*Titus:* patience, prince Saturninus

*Saturninus:* Romans do me right

Patricians, draw your swords, and sheathe them not  
Till Saturninus be Rome's emperor.  
Andronicus, would thou were shipped to hell  
Rather than rob me of the people's hearts!

*Lucius:* Proud Saturnine, interrupter of the good  
That noble-minded Titus means to thee!

*Titus:* [*To Saturninus*] Content thee, prince. I will restore to thee  
The people's hearts, and wean them from themselves.

(I. i. 202-212)

Saturninus' attitude is irrational and impulsive. He cuts off the conversation before Titus starts speaking. Words do not mean anything to him, unless they comply with his whims. In the above speech, the word "interrupter of the good" suggests that Lucius knows who is going to be chosen. It also means that "good" is a very relative term in the world of the Andronicus family as it later appears that "good" is the worst that could happen to them. As for the irony of choice,

Titus elects Saturninus who ships him off to hell. Furthermore, Saturninus, whose name is suggestive of devouring one's children, obtains the blind loyalty of Titus who kills his own son on an impulse. Saturninus creates imbalance in the "purity" of the Roman "Stoic" self by marrying an "outsider", and thus he causes disorder in the hierarchical traditions of the Romans. There is a sense of cosmic disturbance once Saturninus marries Tamora. It shakes the body of Rome as a pure entity. This idea of a shaken Rome is enhanced by the rape and defilement of Lavinia who -as an echo of Aeneas's bride and Rome's founding mother-is the symbol of a pure Rome. The result is a literal consummation of the remaining virtuous Romans, namely Martius, Quintus and Bassianus, in the "swallowing pit". Shakespeare's use of the "pit" is an image of the contaminated procreation of criminal emotions brought to Rome by the election of the evil Saturninus and the "incorporation" of Tamora into the body of the Roman life, for example, practicing hunting as a sport. This engenders Rome as a "heart of darkness" where all kinds of transgressions are committed:

Shakespeare creates his own 'heart of darkness' with a startlingly original use of the stage 'pit'. This becomes the focus of dramatic attention from the moment that Lavinia begs to be thrown 'into some loathsome pit' (2. 3. 176), rather than be raped by Chiron and Demetrius. Our attention is momentarily distracted from the pit as Lavinia is dragged off, but it is immediately refocused as the body of Bassianus is thrown in. Hereafter, the pit is remorselessly anthropomorphised. When Aaron enters with Titus' sons, he too describes the pit as 'loathsome'<sup>10</sup>.

According to Gillies, Shakespeare portrays the equivocal role played by language during the hunt; he demonstrates how language fails Titus and Marcus in their attempts to justify the necessity of this bloody ritual, while it serves Chiron and Demetrius as a means of exacerbating the bodily violence they inflict on Lavinia.

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<sup>10</sup>John Gillies, *Shakespeare and the Geography of Difference* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 106.



Moreover, the election of Saturninus marks the beginning of a series of injustices that will drive Titus and his family to gradual annihilation from the beginning of the play. Titus starts his family life by trying to control his daughter's choices and then killing his own son for the emperor's sake. This filicide is how Titus starts and ends his filial life after a long military career. The frame of the play is a filicidal sequence initiated by the father. It is a reversal of the Oedipus complex where the father kills his son.

In addition, Titus is like the mythical figure of Saturn who devours his children because the oracle informs him that one of them will take power. Mutius challenges Titus' power and Titus kills him accordingly. Titus, moreover, does not care about Saturninus' use of words before choosing him to be emperor; he simply gives Lavinia to him. Saturninus' ingratitude towards this gift becomes concretely tangible when Titus realizes the importance of words and rhetoric in making decisions. His world starts revolving around vocabulary and the significance of meaning. Words start to hurt Titus; they start taking the shape of his emotions. Once he kills his son, and Saturninus rejects Lavinia, Titus becomes disarmed of his emotions; they become the property of other people's words and deeds:

*Saturninus:* No, Titus, the emperor needs her not,  
Nor her, nor thee, nor any of thy stock.  
I'll trust by leisure that mocks me once;  
Thee never, nor thy traitorous haughty sons,

...

*Titus:* Oh, monstrous! What reproachful words are these?

*Saturninus:* But go thy ways; go, give that changing piece  
To him that flourished for her with his sword.  
A valiant son-in-law thou shalt enjoy,  
One fit to bandy with thy lawless sons,  
To ruffle in the commonwealth of Rome.

*Titus:* These words are razors to my wounded heart.

(I. i. 300-314)

In the above reference, Titus seems to be having a revelation about the power of language. He realizes that the relationship between language and the human being can be mutually violent. Those are the words of a tyrant. Saturninus' words wound his heart. In the beginning Saturninus' curses did not affect Titus' opinion. Indeed, he actually elects him, although Saturninus wants him to be shipped to hell. Words are used as indicators of the personality that speaks them. They produce the emotion rather than tranquility at this stage. They are not the products of emotions; they are responsible for generating an emotion or intensifying one. Titus' refusal to bury the son he murdered in the family vault is another indicator that he applies military values to his family life. His self-construction throughout the play goes from anger to madness. He cannot develop further as he has vanquished empires and fought for Rome. This man who has twenty five sons and a daughter does not show an understanding of family life.

At this stage, the context by which Titus describes words is emotional. He values the function of language on an emotional basis rather than a communicational one. This is apparent from the way he reacts to conversations. For him, the function of words defines his lifelines. His acknowledgment of the hierarchy he creates by electing Saturninus is another source of stress for his emotional production and perception of expressions. Language seems to swing him in between two extremes. "Words" are either a "razor to his wounded heart" (I. i. 354) or they "infuse new life in [him]". Moreover, this shows how unstable and changeable his character is. This means that his judgments and definitions of justice are unreliable. The queen of the Goths seems to have realized this in Titus and starts planning her revenge accordingly.

*Tamora:* The cruel father and his traitorous sons  
To whom I sued my dear son's life'  
And make them know what 'tis to let a queen  
Kneel in the streets and beg for grace in vain-  
[*Aloud*] Come, come, sweet emperor; come, Andronicus;  
Take up this good old man, and cheer the heart  
That dies in tempest of thy angry frown.

*Saturninus:* Rise, Titus, rise. My empress hath prevailed.

*Titus:*[*Rising*] I thank Your Majesty and her, my lord.  
These words, these looks, infuse new life in me.

(I. i. 453-463)

Titus does not know her plan of revenge because he believes what she says at this point. His emotions lead his life. Hence, there is no role for reasoning at this point. He is a man of actions rather than words. However, he is still unaware of the unspoken narratives of revenge that Tamora is planning. Titus is not totally sane and he is prone to violence and impulsive actions. This is a very Senecan aspect of his character. His anger is devastating and his actions are reckless. It may be argued that the absence of military action from his life makes him search for another life in language. Tamora wants to destroy 'the words, and the looks that infuse life in him'. At this stage, Titus still believes that the power of the monarchy is good. Shakespeare's treatment of Roman politics through his construction of Titus' character is very Senecan in philosophical terms.

To conclude, the tragedy of *Titus Andronicus* draws our attention to the powerful impact of anger and Senecan influence on Elizabethans especially in term of the way they think of language, politics, family and gender roles. Titus is submissive to Saturninus politically. However, Shakespeare relinquishes the call for submission and political absolutism that Seneca's politics called for when he shows what happens to the Andronicus family later in the play. The

Monarchic role should be handed to the virtuous rather than the tyrant; Titus makes an erroneous judgment when he chooses Saturninus instead of Bassianus. As mentioned earlier, Tamora notices Titus' fickle mood and she plans her revenge against the Andronicus family on that basis. Tamora is not the only one to generate the turmoil in Titus' life. Her sons and servant collaborate in creating the disastrous measures which ruin the Andronicus family. Yet, it is in grief and anger that the characters found a way to express themselves even when they could not speak or write.

In the last chapter, I discuss the aesthetics of anger in another Shakespearean play, namely *Hamlet*, where Shakespeare's representation of this emotion is less Senecan than it is in *Titus Andronicus*, yet more philosophically appealing.

## Chapter Seven

### Anger in *Hamlet*: Revenge and its Double

*Hamlet* is elusive when considered as a representation of anger. The play's dramatization of this emotion far surpasses that of Seneca's plays in complexity, whether we are speaking primarily of emotion or style. This is due to the uniquely close link between anger and grief in Shakespeare's play. Though grief is connected with rage in Seneca, grieving characters are more distinct owing to their personal disappointments. They do not relate to or sympathize with the loss or injury of the other characters. Hamlet's grief and anger are different in that these emotions are highly aestheticized; they address wide-ranging issues and personal problems. Seneca's plays are simpler than Shakespeare's complex representation of the avenger's character; the angry characters tend not to be self-conscious, and are inclined to blame their evil and anger on those who disappoint them. In comparison, Shakespeare takes anger to a different level of representation. He depicts this emotion as a complex human web of words which touches virtually all characters. This chapter will deal with the relationship between anger and theatricality in *Hamlet*. The relationship between the themes of anger and revenge are further complicated in *Hamlet* because they are constantly refracted through melancholy. Shakespeare multiplies the perspectives on anger by several means. He does this by creating parallel revenge plots in the play, such as those of Laertes and Fortinbras.

In *Gorboduc*, Senecan anger is expressed in poetry and action. The play imitates Senecan tragedies where anger is exteriorized as a landscape and does not consider the anger within the sphere of the psychologized dramatic persona. Senecan rhetoric on stage corresponds to the imaginative world of the mind as much as the psychological state of the emotions. In *Hamlet*, Shakespeare challenges Sackville and Norton by turning over the external elements

that induce Senecan anger to an internal mental process, just as did Kyd in his portrayal of Hieronimo's anger after the discovery of his son's killers. Similarly, Shakespeare turns Hamlet's mind's eye inwards. The audience is allowed to closely inspect Hamlet's varied and complicated feelings alongside his masked insanity. Besides, we can see the process whereby he becomes irrational as this mask of lunacy blends with reality. This process is not followed in earlier Elizabethan tragedies.

I have argued that in *Gorboduc* the play's political anger is meant to alienate the audience, and they are not meant to sympathize with the angry characters. Unlike *Gorboduc*, *Hamlet* is not written for a particular monarch; *Gorboduc* was written for Queen Elizabeth and the anger in this play was meant to reflect the possibility that the queen might not leave a successor to the throne. On the other hand, in *Gorboduc*, anger is critical of external powers, and therefore, very Senecan. In *Hamlet*, the angry character is self-accusing and does not blame external circumstances. Hamlet does not exclude his own failings when he tries to place the blame of his misfortune on the surrounding circumstances.

In *The Spanish Tragedy*, to which *Hamlet* is indebted, Kyd builds a "myth of accusation" by presenting a good man whose son is killed and his case ignored by the Spanish aristocracy. Kyd insists on justice, a demand that is missed on the Senecan stage. This demand is represented through Hieronimo, who is sympathetic where Seneca's heroes are not. The audience empathizes with the grieving Hieronimo because he searches for justice. The focus of Hieronimo's search for justice, coupled with his mourning, creates the tragic sensibility of the play. Justice is absent from Seneca's plays because his protagonists do not ask for it. They seek their revenge blindly.

In *Hamlet*, Shakespeare creates a philosophical problem built on the melancholic nature of the protagonist. Profound philosophical questions replace the Senecan characters' anger.

Hamlet reflects on the general state of man, producing a reflection on the protagonist's grief that resembles what we see in *The Spanish Tragedy*, in particular in Hieronimo's encounter with the character of the old man. Hieronimo is cornered by the power of the royal house; he is provoked to anger. The Senecan characters are fashioned so as to willfully exhibit dreadful aspects of sadistic anger and show the visceral side of this particular emotion. Due to their eerie obsession with this anger, Senecan characters are not sympathetic. Kyd's Hieronimo is built to show how, in the absence of justice, bloodthirsty anger replaces grief. Shakespeare has Hamlet doubt the Senecan aspect of this emotion from the beginning of the play. As a royal figure, though, he is given the freedom to be angry – which he certainly is at the beginning of the play, although he does not become vengeful until he encounters his father's ghost.

The vengeful thoughts which flood through Hamlet after meeting the Ghost are not exactly Senecan. He does not become irrational with anger, nor does he start plotting revenge immediately. He counterfeits madness, and this false show of insanity forces a complex synthesis of plots that interrogate the previous revenge tragedies' representations of anger. Hamlet's uncertainty about the ghost's provenance occasions his pretended madness. Hieronimo has his doubts about Bel-imperia's letter, but does not feign grief or anger. Senecan characters usually become mad with anger when they face an overwhelming situation. They have no doubts about their objects of revenge. Hamlet's first reaction to meeting the Ghost is to focus on the memory of his father, and subsequently to curse the untimely delivery of the revenge demand. I argue that Shakespeare critiques the Senecan assumption that anger is a bloodthirsty emotion, regardless of the need for seeking justice, because Hamlet is a royal figure. Seneca's characters do not think of justice because they do not have a superior power that oppresses them: they are usually the rulers, and they assume domination over others. They think that their anger is divine. Seneca usually talks about the

“monstrous” aspects of aristocratic anger. For Kyd, Hieronimo is not an aristocrat, and his quest for justice makes it easier for the majority of people to identify with him. In the “To be or not to be”(III. i. 55) soliloquy Hamlet talks about the “insolence of the office”:an observation that could be extended to Hieronimo’s position, as he is systematically insulted by his social superiors. Hamlet’s is a well-crafted anger that inspires emotional and intellectual responses, rich with aesthetic meaning. Although he is a member of the royal family, indeed the crown prince, his anger is not irrational in nature, unlike that of Seneca’s characters. We are suspended in the beauty of Hamlet’s melancholic, angry, and indecisive speeches.

Shakespeare’s complex theatrical treatment of anger tames its vengeful aspects. Kyd treats anger as a sympathetic emotion. Shakespeare interrogates anger and turns it into the aesthetic production of an intellectual mind while Seneca condemns and accuses it of being indiscriminately violent:

All other passions have something calm and quiet about them; this one consists entirely in aroused assault. Raging with an inhuman desire to inflict pain in combat and shed blood in punishment, it cares nothing for itself upon the very weapon raised against it, hungry for a vengeance that will bring down the avenger too.(SENECA 2010:14).

In this quotation from *On Anger*, anger is defined as self-reinforcing drive, which turns the character into a juggernaut. However, Shakespearean anger is much more complex than Seneca’s. He internalizes it within Hamlet so that the other characters sympathize, empathise and interact with it. In *Hamlet*, anger does not stand alone; it gives birth to artistic ideas. This contradicts Seneca’s proposition that anger involves self-inflicted injury. Hamlet does not injure himself during the play, although he wishes to commit suicide. He exudes a multidimensional anger in his first appearance when he talks to his mother about the difference between appearance and reality. He is melancholic, and angry with her. However,



anger precedes melancholy and feeds on it. In *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, Burton supports Seneca's views on anger and thinks that anger prepares the body to harbour melancholy:

Anger, a perturbation, which carries the spirits outwards, preparing the body for melancholy and madness itself; anger is temporary madness, one of the three most violent passions.(BURTON 2002: 37).

Hamlet's anger complements his "inky cloak" (I. ii.78), but he is not satisfied with this and asks his mother to distinguish between his *outer* expressions of grief, and what he feels *within*:

Hamlet describes his mourning clothes as an "inky cloak" that denotes his sorrow, however inadequately. In these early scenes, the characters figure as pieces of paper presenting information to be read and digested, often on pain of death. In this quotation, Hamlet directly connects the body's responses to sorrow—facial expressions, breath, tears—to ink and writing. His body "denotes" or transcribes his humoral imbalance. However, that denotation is not necessarily true or accurate; just as the body can take the form of a text to be read by others, so other texts can amend or damage it. Hamlet continues with images of ink and writing through which he expresses his melancholy<sup>1</sup>.

Consider the first soliloquy after the exchange between his mother and himself

Hamlet: O, that this too too sullied flesh would melt,  
Thaw and resolve itself into a dew,  
Or that the Everlasting had not fixed  
His canon against self slaughter<sup>2</sup>.

(I. ii. 129-131)

Hamlet's suicidal wish is a characteristic of his unfulfilled anger; it is the mask of madness he wears that fulfils his wish to be a Senecan character. The mask of hysteria is what Hamlet uses to declare his dissatisfaction with the world. While Claudius pretends to be the most

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<sup>1</sup> Kristen Kayem Polster, *The Fifth Humour: Ink, Texts, and the Early Modern Body* (Dissertation Prepared for the Degree of doctor of philosophy (University of North Texas:2012), 156.

<sup>2</sup> William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Ann Thompson & Neil Taylor, eds. (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2006, third edition). Subsequent references are to this edition.

balanced king, Hamlet acts as if he were a mad man. Hamlet's death-wish in the above quotation is a bombastic rhetorical announcement that he belongs to a world of uncertainties. This soliloquy does not focus on the death wish as much as it focuses on Hamlet's desire to be separated from his reality, his mother's remarriage being the reason for his suicidal impulse.

Shakespeare develops these self-reflective moments to build up his readers' attention through their use. He transforms Senecan anger from an irrational and bloodthirsty emotion that seeks injury into an analytical, introspective thought process that extends itself equally to all other passions. In Senecan theatrical texts, the protagonists use all their stylistic abilities to tyrannize the stage with their anger. The cosmos becomes dim when confronted with the violent and relentless acts of his angry characters. Hamlet, on the other hand, uses the tyranny of his emotions to voice anger in his corner of the stage, which becomes the world. His utterances become the action that moves the audience's emotions, exposing his feelings. Seneca's characters project their hysteria from the stage and their deeds frighten the gods. Hamlet's moments of introspection are rhetorical, reflective and wishfully violent. They surpass Seneca's rhetoric because they mostly speak to the immeasurability of anger. Seneca's angry characters make use of the stage as a physical projection of their madness. Hamlet's speeches bring abstractions to the stage, in which everything is open to question. Shakespeare defines *Hamlet's* relation to Senecanism by emphasizing the elegiac aspect of Hamlet's speeches about his father. Hamlet tries to be someone else in order to face the killer of his father and the "frailty" of his mother:

*Hamlet* clearly defines itself in relation to Senecanism, whether that relation is conceived of as continuous, revisionary, or parodic. *Hamlet's* Senecanism is variously "post-Oedipal": generically, in its melancholic difference from Aristotelian tragedy; the matically and formally, in its language of ostentatious grief and ceremonial,

allegorical, and recitative diction and psychoanalytically, in its dynamics and imagery of its maternal and paternal mourning. Braden writes of Hamlet's occasionally Senecan diction: "It often seems to be somebody else's language" (*Renaissance Tragedy* 217). This alterity of Senecan language within *Hamlet* most clearly characterizes the play's metatheatrical set pieces (the player's speech, the play within the play), both set off and inset. The Ghost is almost an embarrassing piece of Senecan machinery, which, in its ghostliness, is clearly marked as a creature foreign to the play and its atmosphere of witty skepticism. A similar foreignness infects such moments as Hamlet's speech, "Tis now the very witching time of night..." (III. ii. 379)<sup>3</sup>.

The above quotation explains the other voices in Hamlet's emotional mixture. This reference shows that Hamlet treats anger as a foreign agent by which he is compelled to assume another persona. He sounds like another person when he tries to be angry. Once he puts on the mask of madness, his utterances settle into a persistent discontent. This cannot be explained in terms of oedipal eruptions of anger at the father figure. Hamlet is angry because of his human nature, not because his mother replaced the object of his father with another father-figure. The quotation labels the Ghost as an awkward Senecan idea; it tries to state that Senecan moments are foreign to the body of the play. This disjunction between Senecan anger and the mourning element in Hamlet's speeches is knitted to the body of the play. Senecan rhetoric and imagery relate themselves to Hamlet's character, and simultaneously stand out against the structure and content of the play. It is harder to separate the Senecan elements from mourning and melancholy than from anger in *Hamlet* for one reason: it is Seneca who mentions that one of the main causes of anger is grief and disappointment:

It's a natural property of virtue to be glad and joyful; being angry's no more in accord with virtue's honourable standing than grief, whereas wrath has sadness as its companion, and it inevitably turns to sadness, either after it comes to feel regret

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<sup>3</sup>Julia Reinhard Lupton and Kenneth Reinhard, *After Oedipus: Shakespeare in psychoanalysis* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1993), 99.

or either after it is rebuffed. Or again: if being angry at wrongdoings is proper for a wise man, then the greater the wrongdoings, the, the greater is his anger will be, and he will be angry often; it follows that the wise man will not only experience anger, he will be wrathful by disposition.(SENECA 2010: 38).

Seneca explains anger as an emotion that multiplies itself and cannot be stopped from committing atrocities. The Senecan elements in *Hamlet* are not foreign. They are the elements that build the character's psychological profile. The mask of madness lends a Senecan twist to Hamlet by showing his angry moments as habitually practiced. The Senecan representation of emotions on the stage awakens meta-theatrical aspects in *Hamlet*. The play's meta-theatrical aspects are enhanced by the Senecan elements of ruthless anger and wishful violence. They appear in the "what a rogue and peasant slave am I!"(II. ii. 485), soliloquy. In this soliloquy, Hamlet's anger at himself provokes him to talk about the nature of anger. It is anger talking about itself.

Seneca uses self-instruction for the angry characters in his tragedies. This thematic signature helps the audience avoid identifying with the hysterical character. In the Seneca plays, the characters address themselves; this takes place once the intended violence is performed. Hamlet instructs himself on his way to see his mother in her bedroom, but then kills Polonius unintentionally. He is angry because, for him, she is lustful. His anger spirals out of control when he talks to her in the place of what he perceives as lust. In the closet scene, Hamlet goes authentically mad with anger: it is no longer a mask. Seneca introduces the concept of false anger. Orators, for example, are not supposed to be angry and in a battle they have to affect rage:

"An orator is sometimes better when he's angry." No, when he's acting angry: for actors, too, move their audience, though they're not angry when delivering their lines but are acting angry. So too before a panel of judges and at a public

assembly and whenever we must move other people's minds according to our will, we will ourselves make a show now of anger, now of fear, now of pity, to instill those feelings in others. Often stimulated passions have achieved what actual passions would not. (SENECA2010: 46).

Seneca encourages the orator to fake an emotion in order to alleviate its impact on the audience. Shakespeare in *Hamlet* elaborates on faking emotion. For all his dissembling, Hamlet nevertheless becomes genuinely angry on a couple of occasions, namely in the nunnery and the closet scenes. Let us inspect some of these moments and see how Shakespeare applies Senecan thoughts to his tragic hero.

As previously mentioned, the Ghost is one of the Senecan elements in *Hamlet*. It imposes revenge as a filial duty on Hamlet, already melancholic over his mother's hasty marriage. The Ghost can be taken as a Senecan element in this sense. It asks for revenge but does not stir Senecan anger since it asks Hamlet not to be angry with his mother and leave her to her own guilt, but certainly the Ghost certainly incites anger against Claudius, and Hamlet is responsive to its mood. For Hamlet, this is a complicated emotional line to tread, as he is inclined to anger against both Gertrude and Claudius. There is a marked difference between the Ghost in *Hamlet* and the ghost of Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy*. The ghost of Andrea in Kyd's play is a Senecan Ghost who represents anger and orders his friend Revenge to bring about the deaths of his murderers. Moreover, Andrea and Revenge serve as chorus to the tragedy: they emphasize the meta-theatrical aspects of the act of revenge in the text because they function as directors to the play. They represent the external force that mobilizes the action. In addition, Andrea does not only demand revenge against those who kill him, he also asks for the blood of all who could be related to the circle of his murderers. In the final speech, he describes all the deaths in the Spanish court and expresses satisfaction at the sight. Andrea's character along with Revenge can be replaced with characters which represent

“Fate and Fortune”, alongside them being the chorus. They are the ancient deterministic powers that frame the action.

The Ghost of Hamlet’s father differs from Andrea; the Ghost does not catalyze anger in the protagonist; nor does it try to control the action of the play. Rather it asks Hamlet to forgive Gertrude and “leave her to heaven” (I. v. 86). Senecan ghosts usually call for complete annihilation of whoever is involved with, or close to, those whom they curse. The Ghost calls for an Aristotelian kind of anger in *Hamlet* in the sense of requiring a cognitive anger. It asks him to be angry with an individual for the “right” reasons, in the right degree, and for specific length of time. It asks for the separation between Gertrude and the murder. The Ghost does not ask for justice: it calls for revenge because of “an unnatural murder” (I. v. 25). Though the Ghost asks for a mediated response from Hamlet regarding Gertrude, it communicates its anger to Hamlet in respect to Claudius. Shakespeare does not bracket the Ghost from the action, as is the case in *The Spanish Tragedy*; the Ghost in *Hamlet* functions in an un-Senecan manner, and that is one reason to why Hamlet’s reaction is un-Senecan in practice. Shakespeare not only duplicates the revenge plot, he also doubles the opposing characters’ functions as mentioned earlier. Shakespeare focuses on replicating the command rather than the revenge plot. Two contrasting characters receive the same commands. The Ghost in *Hamlet* contributes the same function as the letter of Bel-imperia in *The Spanish Tragedy* that becomes the element of doubt. It does not charge Hamlet with a new emotion. The Ghost just tells the story of a murder and asks Hamlet to take revenge. Martin Scofield observes:

As I have suggested, if one amends that to ‘a man who has been given a task by his father’s ghost’, one comes probably as close as one can get, I think, to an adequate formula for the play. On a man profoundly world-weary and melancholy at the death of his father, and even more at the hasty marriage of his mother, there impinges a revelation and commandment from another world. What, to put it another way, is the ‘given’ of *Hamlet*? It must surely lie in the combination of the appearance of the Ghost in

the first act with what we see of Hamlet in his first scene, the combination of a mysterious and morally indeterminate apparition with a protagonist whose view of life has been soured, perhaps beyond the bounds of reasons, by his mother's frailty<sup>4</sup>.

Unlike Senecan ghosts, the Ghost in *Hamlet* does not demand blood and torture. It is Senecan in its narration of the horrors. It can be considered a Senecan Ghost that has a conscience.

The chorus in Seneca provides such descriptions. Here, all Shakespeare has done is to modify the Senecan formula so as to show the Ghost in a state of sorrow and not anger. Shakespeare gives the Ghost human qualities that are considered elements of his melancholy. The Ghost is the main cause of Hamlet wearing the mask of madness. However, it might be argued that when madness is pretended it does not invoke the same imagery of the properly mad Senecan characters. This does not negate the fact that Hamlet shifts from a manufactured madness into the real madness of anger later in the play. This is seen after the performance of the *Murder of Gonzago* and before Hamlet meets his mother. Moreover, Hamlet's acting skills give ample reason to doubt the extent and nature of his madness. Before he sees the ghost, before his plan to clothe himself with an "antic disposition" (I. v. 170) in order to hide the nature of his true intentions, Hamlet confesses to the kind of melancholy "within which passes show" (I.ii.85), setting the stage for a theatrical motif that persists throughout the play. This emphasis on acting and theatre, again, leads one to believe that Hamlet's madness might not be genuine but feigned. Before he begins his ranting, he tells Marcellus and Horatio that he will put an antic disposition on, as one would put on a costume or a persona in a play.

Continuing with this metaphor, Claudius wonders during the middle of the play why Hamlet puts on this confusion. Hamlet himself was a well-versed actor, able to compose a play to "catch the conscience of the king" (II. ii. 607) and mete out to the actors over forty lines of

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<sup>4</sup>Martin Scofield, *The Ghosts of Hamlet: The Play and Modern Writers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 138-139.

detailed instruction concerning the production of that play. Concerning madness and folly, Burton uses the stage as a metaphor, suggesting that we all “play the fool”(BURTON2002: 151). Acting and theatrics, then, pervade *Hamlet* from beginning to end. Hamlet, who reveals intimate knowledge of the theatre in his interactions with the players, is himself plagued by an inability to act on his father’s demand for revenge at the same time that he “acts” mad. The acting in *Hamlet* is not limited, however, to Hamlet: Claudius spends most of the play acting as if he didn’t kill King Hamlet. He tells the audience of his dissembling outright: “My words fly up, my thoughts remain below./ Words without thoughts never to heaven go” (III. iii. 97-98). Ophelia acts out her father’s wishes in an attempt to discover the cause of Hamlet’s melancholy. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern act as spies and couriers at the king and queen’s behest. The troupe of professional actors, who appear midway through the play, are acting on command. The final level of performance and dissembling of course occurs when the play *Hamlet* is performed on stage.

Most of the Senecan moments in *Hamlet* revolve around what happens after Hamlet attempts to reveal Claudius’ crime by putting on the “antic disposition” and performing *The Murder of Gonzago*. The play-within-a-play proved the Ghost’s words to be true to Hamlet’s satisfaction at least. Hamlet has to avenge the death of his father by killing Claudius. Hamlet’s soliloquy at this point resounds as one of the most disturbing speeches in the play. When Hamlet speaks this soliloquy he outdoes a Senecan ghost in creating an atmosphere of unspeakable terror. In the flowing soliloquy Hamlet’s melancholy disappears, and is replaced with bloodthirsty anger:

Tis now the very witching time of night,  
When church yards yawn and hell itself breaths out  
Contagion to this world.  
Now could I drink hot blood.  
And do such bitter business as the day  
Would quake to look on.  
Soft now to my mother.



(III.ii.387-91)

At these words, Hamlet invokes the furies of hell and death. The description of the night brings back the Ghost scene where Hamlet learns that Claudius had killed King Hamlet: something which constitutes a primeval act. This soliloquy starts as a very Senecan piece of rhetoric, recalling the ghost of Tantalus at the opening of Seneca's *Thyestes*. In the above soliloquy, Hamlet is exteriorizing his anger. He strove in vain to be angry when he met with the players, but now he experiences it in earnest when he is summoned by his mother. The mentioning of the "witching time" here recalls Hecate, mentioned by Lucianus in the *Murder of Gonzago*. This would link Hamlet's image of himself to the murderer in the play-within-the-play. In terms of the landscape of the imagery in this passage, this reference to the graveyard evokes the malevolent external powers that predetermine the course of Senecan tragedy and lead its action, as well as prefiguring the late action of Shakespeare's play. Hamlet asks for the help of the gods of anger and revenge who will have him drink "hot blood" – in itself a direct reference to humoral psychology. He cannot perform his revenge unless he identifies with the murderer Lucianus, his own creation: Hamlet creates his own double. The moment in which he refers to Lucianus as the king's nephew is a moment of self-identification. His anger is harmful. He repeats "now" twice in the first three lines of the soliloquy. His anger is external at this point; that "light" of day will tremble at the dark and bitter nature of his intended action.

This momentary anger is stirred by the mirror-act of the real murder and the summons of the mother he is angry with. The above quotation from the play supports the idea that Hamlet's "antic disposition" will become his reality. He has not noticed that the interiorized anger has minimized the gap between his "seeming" and "being". He becomes what he pretends to be.

However, in the same soliloquy Hamlet changes his mind. He immediately controls his anger and addresses himself with another “now”:

Soft, now to my mother.  
O heart, lose not thy nature; let not ever  
The soul of Nero enter this firm bosom;  
Let me be cruel, not unnatural.

(III.ii.355-58).

These words change, in the following scene, where he is angry, and his exchange with his mother turns into bickering between him and his mother, although he decides not to affect a feigned countenance for the interview. The previous soliloquy foreshadowed Hamlet’s mad utterances during the meeting with his mother in the closet scene. Although he mentions drinking hot blood, he never mentions Claudius; he turns inwards, and asks the spirit of Nero not to enter his bosom. There is a very strong indication that the closet scene in Hamlet is designed to take the shape of a Senecan play. The graveyard scene (Ophelia’s burial) is another highly aestheticised reference to Seneca.

The meeting between Hamlet and Laertes in the graveyard scene marks a major change from the bloodthirsty anger in the “now could I drink hot blood” soliloquy. First, Hamlet’s rage is self-destructive; then, he becomes self-reproaching after the gloomy experience in the graveyard with Horatio. After coming back from his voyage to England, Hamlet encounters the naked truth of death: the dead all look and smell the same. This is followed by the shocking news of Ophelia’s suicide in the same graveyard. Hamlet’s own grief and anger is a match for that which Laertes expresses over the loss of a father and a sister. Laertes conveys his sadness about the death of his sister in a very moving manner that forces Hamlet to identify himself after hiding behind the gravestone. Laertes jumps into the grave invoking envy and self-destructive anger. We discern envy in this scene because Hamlet wishes to say just what Laertes is saying. They move into the grave and Hamlet asks to be buried with

Ophelia, by an actor's tradition (Hamlet's moving into the grave is unscripted), the space of the grave becomes a little stage on which the play out their rival emotions: figuratively, Hamlet is able to move out of the world of the living, as he wished to at the outset. Shakespeare uses Seneca in this scene in order to emphasize the fact that grief, anger and rage are inseparable: something which supports another Senecan assumption that grief feeds and encourages anger.

In the Graveyard scene, Shakespeare's *Hamlet* briefly analyzes the predilection that melancholic people have for Satanic influence, but ultimately presents thwarted ambition as the genuine cause of Hamlet's melancholy. Hamlet thinks that his melancholy makes him easy prey for the devil. Although Hamlet is predominantly melancholy, his humoral balance is in constant flux as his body reacts to changes in the physical, social, and cultural world around him. *Hamlet* explores the iconography of melancholy in the graveyard scene suggesting that Hamlet has melancholic disposition throughout the play but in the graveyard scene puts off the antic disposition evident in most of the play, concluding that melancholy defines the distance between Hamlet and the other characters. Melancholy distinguishes Hamlet from Laertes in the Graveyard scene.

Hamlet and Laertes strive to show their emotions towards Ophelia. However, Hamlet should know that his killing of Polonius is the reason for Ophelia's suicide. This makes him angrier with himself and more forceful in the show of love. The scene is very charged and dense as Laertes is the one who invokes Seneca. He is a furious Hercules who wants a cosmic destruction that enables him to join his dead father and sister. Hamlet recognizes the feelings of grief and anger on Laertes' part and identifies with them. This encourages him to meet Laertes and quarrel with him over the dead body of Ophelia:

*Laertes:* Now pile your dust upon the quick and the dead,  
Till of this flat a mountain you have made

To o'ertop old Pelion or the skyish head  
Of blue Olympus

*Hamlet.* What is he whose grief  
Bears such an emphasis, whose phrase of sorrow  
Conjures the wand'ring stars, and makes them stand  
Like wonder-wounded hearers? This is I,  
Hamlet the Dane.

(V. ii. 249-256)

Here we have another exploration of Senecan anger. In *Hamlet*, emotion becomes the individuality of the character. In this scene, Shakespeare portrays the emotion that becomes the identity of the person. Hamlet's appearance from behind the gravestone, and his jumping into the grave, aggravate his emotion and, reciprocally, that of Laertes. Hamlet unsuccessfully tries to push himself to feel real anger on many occasions; this time he becomes one with love, life and death. His anger is added to his grief at losing Ophelia and he blames himself for becoming Claudius' double. However, the reciprocal anger bandied between the lover and the brother over Ophelia's dead body reveals both these characters' complicated feelings towards her. Each expresses his love for the dead Ophelia in a manner that outdoes their efforts while she lived. They are both like Hercules who, in madness and possession by the furies, killed his family. Once he gets his reasoning back, he wants to kill himself. They fetishize the dead Ophelia. They fight over her dead body within the space of the grave as if she were a doll between two children. This comic aspect is meant to contrast Hamlet's anger with Laertes'. Although Hamlet recognizes his double offence towards Laertes, he insists on showing love, and his guilt does not appear despite the identification of his offence. The oddity of this scene, and where Shakespeare uses Seneca, is that it is not self-reflective. It is about Hamlet's lack of introspection about his part in Ophelia's suicide. Hamlet copies Laertes' passion because the emotion he is supposed to show is regret. He

does not confess to his involvement in Ophelia's death, and his anger is mimetic: he dismisses his guilt.

Laertes, Hamlet's double in revenge, demonstrates that he does not mind dying if this will also bring about Hamlet's death; in this way his anger is very Senecan. It stands out when Claudius doubles for the Ghost in the play and asks Laertes about the love he bears for his father, and what to do about the killer, and gets the answer: "cut his throat in a church" (IV.vii.124). This utterance puts him in direct contrast to Hamlet in the prayer scene. Hamlet could not kill his uncle in prayer because he wants to send him to hell. Hamlet does not slit his enemy's throat in the church as Laertes would do. Hamlet's anger at the prayer scene is not Senecan, he thinks of weighing the sins of the ghost with his uncle's.

In *Hamlet*, Shakespeare gives more focus to the reciprocity of revenge than anger. His characters mirror each other. These doubles do not represent the same force of each other's anger. Emotions are not equally duplicated in *Hamlet*. Hamlet and Laertes are angry and should take their revenge on their various objects of vengeance. However, their reactions towards revenge, duty and their feelings about it are different. Laertes is mobilised by pure irrational anger, unlike Hamlet who thinks about anger and does not act upon it. Hamlet shows a different kind of anger. He treats himself in a godlike manner and wants to send Claudius to hell whilst Laertes is ready to make a pact with the devil to get his revenge. The complexity of Hamlet's awareness of anger's rhetoric is simplified in Laertes' case. Laertes' story mirrors Hamlet's but he does not exhibit Hamlet's complex emotions. Furthermore, the pact between Laertes and Claudius indicates that Laertes cannot mask his anger without the cunning of Claudius. The two characters reflect each other's masks differently. Hamlet in killing Polonius becomes Claudius' double and Claudius doubles the Ghost of Hamlet's father in appealing to Laertes' "nature" and demands for revenge.

Hamlet's reaction to the Ghost's demand is to ponder the value of memory and project the sufferings of the Ghost onto his own tainted flesh.

Claudius communes with Laertes' grief. This encourages Laertes to express his disappointed anger. Hamlet's grief and anger were concealed; no one could commune with him, even Horatio. His anger does not morph into rage until Hamlet elicits the truth about the murder via the play-within-the-play. He unmask this anger within his mother's bedroom when he tells her that he is not insane for real but "mad in craft" (III. iv. 186). Hamlet's unique sense of how anger functions and his awareness of its powerful rhetoric prevent him from communicating his angry moments publically.

This awareness on the sides of the protagonist and the antagonist, who mirror each other at certain points in the play, enriches their plots with a density of rhetorical utterances. Claudius plays rhetorical games with Laertes. Horatio and Hamlet predict what Claudius and Laertes are plotting against Hamlet. Hamlet, in turn, decides to act according to the course of events rather than his emotions. He disregards Claudius' plot against him and he could foresee the destiny of his eventual death when he first saw the Ghost: "My fate cries out" (I. iv. 82).

Hamlet realizes that Laertes is a version of himself regardless of their different responses to the revenge duty. Laertes acts upon it but Hamlet is a complex Stoic character; he represents a Stoic character whose world is turned upside down.

Hamlet's awareness of anger's theatricality finds expression in words not actions. He tries to charge himself with emotion in his soliloquies. His soliloquies are self-reflective: the creation of this emotional awareness which he shares with the theatregoers allows him to construct his own emotional zone, which he controls. From a Senecan perspective, anger is not a complete emotion because it is not cognitively functional. It is a frame for turbulent action. Anger, for Seneca, is caused by exterior powers, like fortune, and disappointment. However, Hamlet's anger is not primarily triggered by these provocations. His anger is

stirred by dissatisfaction with other characters' behaviours. He expresses it at himself in the "O, what a rogue and peasant am I!" soliloquy. This soliloquy comes after Hamlet has met the players and asked one of them to perform Aeneas's speech about the murder of Priam by Pyrrhus. Hamlet speaks the savage, passionate speech, which Polonius praises. In this scene, Hamlet acts out anger very well, but he cannot feel it properly. He theorises about it after the Pyrrhus speech by the player. Hamlet orates the speech which is a projection of his realization of how angry he should be. He knows that he is not angry enough. He does not become affected by the speech because he is aware of the rhetorical function of anger. He knows that he is not going to feel this emotion, which makes him mock himself and others around him.

Hamlet's interactions with the players further reveal the power of acting. When the troupe of players enters, Hamlet has been acting mad but has not yet put into action his father's demand for revenge. The player's soliloquy, wherein he weeps for Hecuba, reveals Hamlet's inaction in stark relief. Hamlet has all the natural impetus, "prompted to [his] revenge by Heaven and Hell" (II. ii. 515) and yet he "must like a whore unpack his heart with words" (II. ii. 516) rather than action. Thus, the player king causes Hamlet to question his inability to act thus far. The player has none of Hamlet's motivations "What's Hecuba to him, or he to her?" (II. ii. 561) and yet the player is able to act as if he is genuinely heartbroken. Hamlet, whose heart is actually broken by the death of his father, is moved to outrage at himself and his inaction by the power of the player's pretended emotion for Hecuba. Hamlet, further, describes it as "monstrous that this player here/But in a fiction, in a dream of passion/could force his soul to his own conceit" (III. i. 487). What is "monstrous" is, by very definition, unnatural: here, he raises the question of whether this kind of acting is even natural at all. Is it monstrous that Hamlet has not been able to act thus far? Or, if by becoming a murderer, even with a good cause, will he become a monster himself? Whether natural or unnatural, the

player's actions spur Hamlet to his own action, for it is in this scene that Hamlet devises the plan to use a play as a direct method to divine the true nature of the King.

These realisations by Hamlet compel the audience to question Hamlet's control over the plot, especially when considering that the Senecan world is controlled by the furies, ghosts and the hysterical anger of the protagonists. Revenge tragedy before *Hamlet* does not question anger as a multidimensional emotion. Despite this, Hamlet is in control of the plot that takes place around him most of the time. He is not in total control of his erratic emotions, nor can he force his anger to erupt on demand. He draws the players' attention to the need to "suit the action to the word, and the word to the action"(III. ii.18) This shows his realization of the importance of matching emotion to language and action in *The Murder of Gonzago*. Hamlet knows that his confused emotions are the action. The instability of these actions brands him "the king of his space" rather than a puppet in the hands of fate whereas in *The Spanish Tragedy*, action is mainly controlled by Andrea and Revenge.

In *The Spanish Tragedy* Andrea and Revenge stage the lives and deaths of the other characters. Hieronimo stages the deaths of his foes in the form of a play-within-the-play in which he kills them. Hieronimio does not question his emotions when preparing for the play-within-the-play, by which he achieves revenge. On the other hand, Hamlet questions his emotions in *The Murder of Gonzago* as he prepares to pierce Claudius' conscience. He awakens the emotional potential of meta-theatre in recreating the murder of his father. In doing so, Hamlet revives Claudius' conscience and controls it. This does not mean that Hamlet controls the action by taking over Claudius' conscience. He alters the course of the action by disarming Claudius of his rhetorical genius. He mirrors Claudius' murder, stripping him of the lies about murdering his brother. The play-within-the-play creates meta-theatrical dimension via Hamlet's melancholy along with his point of view of the philosophy of anger.



There are different levels of meta-theatricality in Hamlet, and these levels are directly connected to his fickle emotions. He uses madness as a cover for his inability to tune his emotions properly. In Hamlet's case the faking of madness means that he is represented as a different character to those who surround him. In the nunnery scene, he tells Ophelia that women have driven him mad. In that scene Hamlet's anger unleashes itself upon Ophelia's gender. He criticises women for changing their realities and playing "roles" to deceive men. This is a self-referential passage, as he uses a mask while he talks about women's deceptiveness. The idea reminds him of his madness mask, which "makes him mad":

I have heard of your paintings well enough. God hath given you  
one face, and you make yourselves another. You jig and amble,  
and you lisp and nickname god's creatures, and make your  
wantonness your ignorance. Go to, I'll no more on't, it hath made  
me mad.

(III. i. 139-143)

Once he dons his mask, Hamlet loses touch with the border between feigned madness, real madness and anger. He substantially identifies with madness as the only way to go on with life, acting his part by hanging between a realisation of fake madness and real madness. The instability of Hamlet's relationship towards women creates an unbalanced association between his character and emotions. In addition, the speeches are specifically about his mother. The two female characters Hamlet criticises in the nunnery scene are one version of his own anger, and different parts of his mask. His distrust of women originates from suspicions about Gertrude's behaviour, and he projects the feelings onto Ophelia because she lends herself to Polonius' machinations. Hamlet then expresses this distrust in terms of the generic "frailty" of womankind, gesturing to the story of the Fall. He blames his tragic feelings and fall on the frailty of women. The roles he invents in the aforementioned quote are the product of his anger at women. For him, Ophelia is not a person anymore. She is a character playing a gender role. He fictionalizes Ophelia the woman, and forgets Ophelia the person. Furthermore, Hamlet treats Ophelia as a pawn in the game, and Shakespeare

emphasises this by having her focus on the white colour in her song when she becomes mad. She says: “Pray you mark. [Sings.] White his shroud as the mountain snow (IV. v. 35)”. This, immediately, brings to mind Hamlet’s first appearance in the play, when he wore black and talked to Gertrude about the difference between “seeming” and “being” in emotional representations. Ophelia’s madness is not fake, it is a state of “being”. Hamlet’s black madness is a state of conscious “seeming”. His seeming madness can be seen as anger under control.

The sexual-textual economy in *Hamlet* shapes the audience's perception of Ophelia throughout the play, emphasizing a crucial fact about textual and sexual interactions between men and women in early modern drama and poetry—text and sex constitute similar forms of bodily violation. At the end of the soliloquy, Hamlet imagines his words finding their way into Ophelia's body, exclaiming, "The fair Ophelia!—Nymph, in thy orisons/ Be all my sins remembered"(III. i. 88-89). She will verbalize his sins, which she has internalized, to God, thus becoming the physical vehicle of his redemption. In Hamlet and Ophelia's conversation in the same scene, the textual violation that Hamlet imagines becomes more concrete. Ophelia attempts to return "remembrances" that Hamlet has given her, including, significantly, "words of so sweet breath composed,"(III. i. 100) scented letters and poetry that have now "their perfume lost"(III. i. 101). Of course, Ophelia cannot regain her virtue by returning these tokens. Hamlet, recognizing the irreversibility of his textual intercourse with Ophelia, calls madly for her to get to a nunnery, implying that she is unchaste and ruined. She has "sucked the honey of his musicked vows" (III. i. 155). Ophelia's efforts to repel the texts of men fail, ultimately leading to her demise. For Hamlet, the acts of writing love poetry, sending a letter, and creating a dramatic production become modes of purging his ill humours. Such purgation is not an effective healing exercise for Hamlet; rather, it alters the nature of his imbalance to help him avenge his father. Healing or not, the power of textual creation and dissemination influences his humoral body<sup>5</sup>.

He acknowledges as much when he engages the players for *The Murder of Gonzago*,

Michael C. Schoenfeldt writes:

So Galenic medicine led individuals to a kind of radical introspection, an introspection whose focus was physiological as well as psychological. The Galenic body achieves health not by shutting itself off from the world around it but by carefully monitoring and manipulating the inevitable and literal

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<sup>5</sup> Kirsten Kayem Polster, *The Fifth Humor: Ink, Texts, and the Early Modern Body* (Dissertation Prepared for the Degree of PhD at the University of North Texas, 2012), 164-65.

influences of the outside world, primarily through therapies of ingestion and excretion. "Physick," notes Robert Burton in *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, "is naught else but *addition and subtraction*." This principle at once empowers the individual consumer and puts immense ethical and medical pressure on the type and quantity of food consumed. Like so many of the humors books, *The Anatomy of Melancholy* contains elaborate descriptions of the effect of a variety of foods on the humoral disorder of melancholy. Not only are medicine and diet closely aligned in this discourse, but they are seen to blend with ethics and religion<sup>6</sup>.

Hamlet remembers the First Player's speech as being "caviare to the general" and "well-digested," (II. ii. 440).

Moreover, Ophelia's madness leads to her suicide. Hamlet's feigned madness leads him to kill Ophelia's father. His prism-like way of reflecting upon the power of his passions works through meta-theatre in the play. The goal seems to be emotional clarification of catharsis. This can be seen as the reason for his directing the *Murder of Gonzago*. Hamlet arranges for the *Murder of Gonzago* after a long conversation with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. Wearing his mask of madness, Hamlet treats these two characters as an audience to his antic disposition. He reflects upon the nature of man and comments on the contradictory roles that man plays during life. When Rosencrantz and Guildenstern tell him that players are coming to Elsinore, his response corresponds to his anger with Claudius, which he can only represent through the use of illusionary situations. Even when his anger is Senecan in the "Now can I drink hot blood" soliloquy, he does not think of Claudius. Hamlet thinks of the Ghost's words about Gertrude. Claudius does not come to Hamlet's thoughts save in the narrative. He treats him as a character upon whom he can take revenge with a work of fiction. Hamlet's anger at Claudius is a work of fiction too. When Hamlet learns of the players' arrival, his first reaction is:

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<sup>6</sup>Michael C. Schoenfeldt, *Bodies and Selves: Physiology and Inwardness in Spenser, Shakespeare, Herbert, and Milton* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 22.

Hamlet: He that plays the king shall be welcome-his majesty shall have tribute on me; the adventurous knight shall use his foil and target; the lover shall not sigh gratis; the humorous man shall end his part in peace; the clown shall make those laugh whose lungs are tickle o'th' sere; and the lady shall say her mind freely or the blank verse shall halt for't. What players are they?

(II. ii. 319-326)

Hamlet's hospitable welcoming is unreal. It is a direct comment on the way in which he conceives of the world as a stage. In the above lines Hamlet is being cynical in his treatment of Elsinore as a stage. Each role represents a character in *Hamlet* the play; this is an illusory projection by Hamlet of the castle of the king of Denmark.

In the play-within-the-play, Hamlet presents a critique of reality with a conscious sense of disillusionment concerning the court of Denmark. Action is related to Hamlet's imagination regardless of its space dimensions. The above quote corresponds to Hamlet's meta-theatrical representation of anger. He expresses his real emotion to Claudius, when talking about the actor who is the fake king in this case.

In the "nunnery" speech quoted above. Hamlet explains the gap between his antic disposition and language. Speaking of his antic disposition, Hamlet shows a divorce from "his seeming madness". The language of his "being" with the players represents his "seeming" in the first act. Among dissemblers, Hamlet's emotion becomes authentic. Its rhetoric expresses his melancholy, depression and anger. The one-dimensional representation of Hamlet's language when he drops his mask of madness is introspective. Nevertheless, Hamlet's rhetoric surpasses the linguistic power of a protagonist like Hieronimo. Hieronimo's sadness is intensified through the rhetoric of loss. Hamlet focuses on the human condition and its relation to the anatomy of pain when mourning the loss of truth. The events of the play take place within his imagination in a rhetorical pattern where he analyzes his feelings and blames his dilemma on the mother. The theatre within him, as it were, relates to a controlled sadness

which turns into mockery when the antic disposition is put in place. Hamlet cannot express his melancholy unless he manoeuvres with words to avoid his feelings.

This is what he does when he meets the players and stages *The Murder of Gonzago*. Hamlet has to be masked in order to break the routine of his melancholy and present himself as a round character and not a sketch. When Hamlet meets the players he senses sympathy between himself and the players. He welcomes them ceremoniously, as if they were entering a theatre. He reminds them of how they looked before he left Denmark, compares this to how he sees them now, and then he asks for a passionate speech:

O, old friend why thy face is valanced since I saw thee last.  
Com'st thou to beard me in Denmark?—What my young lady and  
mistress? By'r lady, your ladyship is nearer to heaven than when  
I saw you last by the attitude of a chopine. Pray God your voice,  
like a piece of uncurrent gold, be cracked within the ring.  
Masters, you are all welcome. We'll into't like French falconers,  
fly at anything we see. We'll have a speech straight. Come give  
us a taste of your quality, come a passionate speech. (II. ii. 440-  
448).

He longs for a passionate speech from the players because he craves the emotional release of rhetoric. However, Hamlet's inability to imitate theatrical anger torments him even more than the demand of the Ghost. He is suffering due to his awareness of the theatrical aspects of anger. He believes that anger can be faked and not felt on the part of the performer. He tackles the issues of time in relation to emotions and the use of voice in expressing them. Hamlet focuses on the use of voice in representing an emotion during a speech. Here he performs Pyrrhus's speech, which represents his own definition of a passionate speech: a very violent and angry one. On the other hand, the Player gives two different speeches: the first is a continuation of Hamlet's savage words. Unlike the player's version of Pyrrhus, Hamlet's version has a bloody sword. Then, Hamlet asks the player to proceed to the Hecuba speech which stands for mourning and loss. This is where Polonius begs the player to stop because he cannot handle the emotional display of this speech. Hamlet's response is formal and

business-like. The player's representation of Hecuba's emotions does not influence him. Hamlet cannot mimic the player's emotions, unlike Polonius who is so affected by the emotion that he asks the player to stop.

When left alone, Hamlet utters a self-condemning soliloquy, this soliloquy clarifies his abnormal emotional state. He compares his lack of moving response to the player's tears for Hecuba's laments. The player has tears in his eyes. These actions a man can perform but Hamlet cannot respond to these emotions when the player fakes them. Hamlet could not imitate the feigned emotions of the player because he cannot imitate a fictional emotion. Hamlet's soliloquy after the Hecuba speech is bombastically rhetorical. He deplores his inability to feign emotion:

O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I!  
Is it not monstrous that this player here,  
But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,  
Could force his soul so to his own conceit  
That from her working all his visage waned;  
Tears in his eyes, distraction in his aspect.

(II. ii. 485-489)

This soliloquy is driven by the disjunction between "seeming" and "being". The reality of the player's visage collides with what Hamlet considers himself to be doing with his antic disposition. He focuses on the player's facial appearance and psychological distractions. The power of the player's performance forces Hamlet to unmask his emotional instability to himself. This speech can be clarified through Sandra Clark's essay on *Macbeth and the Language of Passion*, the analogy between the two plays being that both Hamlet and Macbeth are aware of their inability to have a proper emotional reaction:

It is as if Macbeth is wondering at his own lack of feeling. In the famous speech in 5.3 in which he confesses his weariness with life, Macbeth calls himself "sick at heart", acknowledging that his heart is now so "poor" that it is not bold enough to cast off flattery or challenge his enemies. It is not the heart that had "Courage to make's love known" that he ambiguously claimed in 2.3. Once again, Macbeth's anatomising of his emotions and his

exposure of his vulnerability function so as to move the audience response<sup>7</sup>.

Like Macbeth, Hamlet sees himself as empty of everything except oratory. His heart's poverty is referred to with the word "unpregnancy" which he uses to indicate his lack for the proper emotion for real revenge discloses the painful truth that he can only "unpack his heart with words". His "antic disposition" is the mask that he wears but does not want to see. As Clark notes in the above quotation, the aim of this emotional exposure is to move the audience response. Not believing the Ghost, Hamlet camouflages his emotions as madness. As stated above, the anatomising of his emotion is an exposure of –in the case of *Hamlet*– shows his fragility in not being able to balance his emotions between his mask of madness and reality. His progress here can be compared with that of Hieronimo whose madness is a way into his true emotions. When Hieronimo meets the Senex whose son is murdered, he identifies with him to the extent that he misidentifies himself with his son. Hamlet does not identify with the player's show of passions in the Hecuba speech, nor does he identify with Laertes as an avenger.

The piece of advice Hamlet gives the players later confirms full awareness of the theatrical functions of the emotions, or in early modern terminology, passions. Hamlet insists on creating his characters in the *Murder of Gonzago* through the focus on balancing his voice in relation to the passions, and words in relation to the action. Hamlet's concentration on these points in the *Murder of Gonzago* comes from a self-realization that, in his antic disposition, he fails to do what he asks of the players. He tries to redeem the shortcomings of his life by focusing on the character that will play his role on the stage. He is aware of the necessity of being balanced when representing the emotions, telling the player who misrepresents the emotion that it depresses him:

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<sup>7</sup>Sandra Clark, "Macbeth and the Language of the Passions" *Shakespeare* 8:3, 300-311. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17450918.2012.696278> (accessed 19/11/2013).

[F]or in the very torrent, tempest, and as I may say, whirlwind of your passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance that may give it smoothness. O, it offends me to the soul to hear a robustious periwig-pated fellow tear a passion to tatters... suit the action to the word, the word to the action.

(III. ii. 4- 15)

Hamlet's concerns about the play he directs are self-analytical. Balance is very important in conveying a feeling to the audience. He wants to convey his anger with Claudius throughout the play. Unlike in the *Spanish Tragedy*, where Revenge leads the action, in *Hamlet* the play-within-the-play becomes Revenge. The action acquires meaning in the *Murder of Gonzago* while words acquire meaning outside of it, especially in Hamlet's soliloquies. He changes the concept of revenge from the realm of action to the territory of the emotions, which later become the action. In setting *the Murder of Gonzago*, Hamlet is not only testing the conscience of the king, he is also testing his own feelings. However, once he knows that he can fake a passion, but cannot act on it, he again becomes inwardly angry with himself. Although he tells the player to 'hold a mirror up to virtue', it seems that he thinks acting is better than real life. This mirror beautifies the short-comings of his plan, and this same deficiency exists in his inability to act in real life. He performs his revenge in a play. He does not hold theatre as a mirror to life; he considers it a better version of life.

After the players exit, Hamlet has the "passion's slave" conversation with his Stoic friend

Horatio:

Since my dear soul was mistress of her choice  
And could of men distinguish, her election  
Hath seal'd thee for herself; for thou hast been  
As one, in suffering all, that suffers nothing,  
A man that fortune's buffets and rewards  
Hast ta'en with equal thanks: and blest are those  
Whose blood and judgment are so well commingled,  
That they are not a pipe for fortune's finger  
To sound what stop she please. Give me that man  
That is not passion's slave, and I will wear him  
In my heart's core, ay, in my heart of heart,  
As I do thee.--Something too much of this.



(III. ii. 57-68)

In this speech, Hamlet shows his admiration of Horatio's humoral balance. In the conversation, he glorifies Horatio's emotional control and realises that he cannot imitate that either. His emotional outbursts are uncontrollable and impulsive, mainly occurring when he most wants to dominate them. This is why he writes the *Murder of Gonzago*. He cannot control his dissatisfaction with reality. He resorts to the theatre, which is a representation of reality that allows him to look at his own mask when put on another person.

The dumb show that appears at the beginning of the *Murder of Gonzago* transcends the meta-passion that Hamlet yearns to imitate. It does not "unpack itself with words"(II. ii. 516). Its physical representation of Claudius' crime is not supposed to induce any emotions in the audience save for Claudius and Gertrude. During the *The Murder of Gonzago*, Hamlet functions as an orator, he cannot abandon the idea that he is in control because his mask allows him to direct people's emotions and actions. The pantomime is meant to be the lightning before the thunder. It sums up the "action" in the play; Ophelia does not understand it because she is not meant to be involved in Hamlet's meta-theatrical experience. The pantomime is not meant to address her. Gertrude seems to have understood it as the show goes on; she identifies with the character of the Queen in the *Murder of Gonzago*. In *The Spanish Tragedy* the pantomime takes place in Revenge's dream. In *Gorboduc* the exchange between the pantomime and the dumb show does not intersect with the action, nor is it related to other characters. In *Hamlet* the dumb show summarizes one revenge plot around which Hamlet creates his mask and starts directing the lives of everyone around him. The pantomime is the backbone version of the dialogue that Hamlet interposes. As the *Murder of Gonzago* proceeds to the murder, Hamlet keeps playing the witty madman for Ophelia. During the performance of *the Murder of Gonzago*, Hamlet resumes behaving according to his madness mask. Two plays are being performed, each reflects the other. Hamlet plays mad

for Ophelia who goes mad for real and kills herself. Also, he creates a parallel revenge plot within the body of *The Murder of Gonzago*, which influences the whole course of *Hamlet*. As the play-within-the-play continues Hamlet alternates the meta-passion between real life behaviours and played emotions. It seems that once he pulls on the mask, Hamlet loses the borderline between his theatrical pretence in the court of Denmark and his real life behaviour. The “seeming” and “being” dichotomy ceases to be effective. It intertwines within Hamlet and carries the stage to his “distracted globe” (I. v. 97) where he lives abiding by memory, which, in turn, is dallied by his imbalanced emotional condition. In *Hamlet*, Shakespeare presents a domino effect of action that induces an unexpected emotional reaction. Revenge keeps duplicating itself; however, the emotional reactions to it differ. In *Hamlet*, the tragedy starts, not with the birth of an emotion, but with the shifting of revenge from the object of the protagonist’s anger to the object of the Ghost’s demand. The brother-killer and the wife-sister, Polonius, and Ophelia, do not represent objects of Hamlet’s revenge. They stand for objects of personal use needed to expel his anger and declare melancholy.

## Conclusion

This thesis examines the relationship between anger and Elizabethan revenge tragedy. The link is explored from the perspective of an extensive survey of classical and early modern philosophy related to the subject through classical and then Elizabethan drama. A key aspect of this exploration has been to chart the shifting relationship between a predominantly Senecan reading of emotions and a humoral reading of some selected scenes in Elizabethan revenge drama. Seneca and humoral psychology had profound influence over the Elizabethan revenge tradition. The tradition is considered to have begun with the Senecan philosophical and theatrical reading of anger, manifest in translations and adaptations of Seneca's work in the 1560s. These texts were flamboyant in structure, characterization and rhetoric. However, this tradition evolved in a logical direction via Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy*. This major shift is marked by the abandonment of Seneca's ethical writings and theatrical characterization. Prior to *The Spanish Tragedy*, sympathy with the avenger was not sought, because all avengers were "bad men", and Seneca's proposition, that "no evil can befall a good man", was still followed by the Elizabethan tragedians. The Senecan influence, and the Galenic theory of emotion in the revenge tradition, oscillated in the Elizabethan tradition between characterization and oratory. Furthermore, this thesis concerns itself with the study of anger as a cultural gauge of how emotional reactions to unexpected circumstances are governed by anger. It proposes that anger is not only an emotion that concerns itself with retaliation. It is a philosophical problem that was discussed by great philosophers throughout history and is still being researched today.

This thesis has considered the views of three major ancient philosophers (Seneca, to a lesser extent, Aristotle and Galen whose theory deeply influenced the view of emotions in Elizabethan drama) on the problematic nature of anger. However, the main argument has been about the complex elaboration of this emotion on the Elizabethan stage. Additionally,

by moving from the philosophical part of the thesis to the Elizabethan plays I have shown how aspects of Senecan philosophy can be argued to have caused the Elizabethans to initiate this tradition through the emulation of his model. This project shows that the treatment of anger, from a rhetorical perspective, by Seneca is changed into a multi-layered investigation of philosophical and theatrical levels by the Elizabethan dramatists.

Seneca, who is the philosopher and dramatist who most influenced the early modern playwrights, is investigated at length in the opening chapters: his treatise *On Anger* and his play *Thyestes*, alongside its translation by Jasper Heywood, were discussed with regard to the different philosophical treatments of anger by Seneca, and Galen. The project of connecting Seneca's views on anger to the adaptations of his philosophy and theatrical techniques in Elizabethan revenge tragedy required a section detailing Seneca's attraction for the Elizabethan dramatists, namely, the issues that influenced them. In particular, I was interested in how Elizabethan playwrights, influenced by Senecan philosophy, shaped the dramatic treatment of anger in order to suit their historical, political and social realities.

In the first section of the thesis, I reached the conclusion that Seneca is fascinated by anger as much as he is repulsed by it. Though he wrote a treatise against anger he also created plays that show intoxicated versions of the same emotion. I also argued that his criticism of Aristotle's "defence" of anger is an indication that Seneca harbours the emotion he advises against. This, possibly, is the result of the power anger maintains on its scholars. It takes over its students on various levels. An example is Hieronimo's soliloquy "[w]hat is a son" in *the Spanish Tragedy* section.

My discussion of the classical material involves examining Seneca's general philosophy and the difference between his analyses of anger and Aristotle's theory on emotions in *On Rhetoric book II*. Then I moved to a discussion of one of Seneca's dramatic works, *Thyestes*, in relation to *On Anger*. In doing so I highlighted a major difference between Seneca's

dramatic works and his philosophy. The language in Seneca's theatrical works is intoxicated with emotions, whereas his philosophical works advise against the passions altogether. Moreover, in a following section I looked into Jasper Heywood's translation of *Thyestes*, which differs from Seneca's original text by certain additions that suit the Elizabethan literary and political atmosphere of the time.

The concept of four humours as the basis of physiology and medicine, later popularized by Galen as integrated patterns of physiology and physiognomy, dominated Western thought until the mid-nineteenth century. In humoral theory, the sharp-featured, anger-prone, "choleric" (from *cholos*) person is ambitious, energetic, and dominant in social exchange. The choleric pattern results from an excess of yellow bile, which also corresponds to fire (more exactly, excess heat) in the four element theory of matter<sup>1</sup>.

One of the main connections between Seneca and Galen is that they regarded anger as a form of madness. Galen's popularity in the Elizabethan age is one of the reasons Seneca became the main influence on the Elizabethan revenge tradition. Seneca, as we saw, thinks of it as an unnatural movement of the mind. Galen's proposition is that it happens when the body is overflowed the humour responsible for it. These philosophers agree on the danger of anger, they propose ways of stopping or "curing" it. In the thesis, I argued that Seneca's view of anger is passive. For him, it is a reaction that causes the worst acts of violence. Seneca does not provide a tangible cure, his examples are theoretical which is why I propose that he dramatizes anger out of attraction, and wanting to show its dangerous effects, does not constitute a way of eradicating anger altogether. Galen's methodical approach of analyzing anger suggests that individuals are not passive recipients of the "external" powers – as Seneca puts it- but they are part of it, and anger—despite its danger- is a natural element of the human

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<sup>1</sup> Irwin, James R. "Galen on the Temperaments", *Journal of General Psychology*, Vol 36, 1947, 45-64.

body. Galen's view counts emotions as an engagement with the "external" rather than being passive recipients to it.

I touch upon female anger in the plays because there is a tradition of angry female characters in the plays investigated: notably, Videna, Bel-imperia and Tamora. Elizabethans considered women more prone to anger than men, and therefore, morally inferior. This means that their anger is by no means just or legitimate (KENNEDY 2000:22). Videna's anger at the death of her elder son sets a series of disasters in motion. She kills her younger son, which results in chaos where the people turn against her husband and herself and kill them. Bel-imperia's anger is a complex representation of a woman whose anger turns her into Machiavellian character who uses the grieving Hieronimo to avenge the death of her lovers. Tamora takes her revenge on Titus for killing her eldest son in a religious ritual. Her revenge is not an act of leveling up an injury, it is a series of violent crimes the worst of which is encouraging the rape and mutilation of a fellow woman; Lavinia. I argued that fueled by remorse and anger for Alarbus' brutal death, Tamora utilizes common misogynistic views of women to mask her schemes. Shakespeare questions Elizabethan assumptions about the avenger. Tamora's loss of identity as a mother leads her to abandon femininity and become the masculine avenger. The Elizabethan texts are discussed in chronological order. The first text to be considered is the revenge tragedy play *Gorboduc* which was a Senecan adaptation. The Senecan influence on the depiction of anger was shown throughout the highly rhetorical speeches, which reveal relentless anger, and the acts of violence that followed. The play represents a political treatment of this emotion, so did the following texts in the early modern revenge tradition. The obsession with a contrast between the individual's anger and the public's political rage is tackled in *Gorboduc*, as it does in other following texts. Moreover, the idea of justice is explored in several ways on the Elizabethan stage. The anger/ justice paradigm is not a typical search for righteousness in both stages. In Seneca, the avengers are aristocrats, they

think of themselves as the embodiment of justice, despite being mad with anger. The search for justice in Elizabethan revenge tragedy comes from the realization that justice does not exist. So often does the audience of revenge tragedy assume that the angry rhetorical speeches of the protagonist are meant as a quest for justice, yet, it becomes clear to him that these outbursts are about the awareness that justice does not exist.

I suggest that Kyd departed decisively from the Senecan paradigm by incorporating an equivalent of Ricoeur's "myth of accusation". When I moved to the following tragedy, I talked about anger in relation to the body and language. In *Titus Andronicus*, I have stated that Senecan anger is directed at body parts associated with the production of language. The play follows a Senecan display of tyranny and brutality, yet, we sympathize with Titus mostly through our response to the torture of his daughter Lavinia. Mainly, even when anger dismisses language, the space on the stage reflects the characters' attempts to interpret the signs of the mute character. Shakespeare tells us that tragedy is not confined to language; it can also be characterized by the emotions expressed through the incompatible relations between the disfigured body of Lavinia, and the speech her uncle gives when he sees her after she is raped and "trimmed". In the section that followed, I talked about how Shakespeare problematizes the depiction of anger in *Hamlet*. It is the reflective nature of Hamlet's anger that creates the meta-theatrical dimension of the play. This meta-theatrical aspect proves highly influential on subsequent revenge drama. I argue that Hamlet's knowledge of the power of rhetoric, and of his reflective anger, is what makes theatre talk about itself.

Anger was and will always be an intriguing emotion to examine due to its complex process of build-up. A multifarious emotion, it invites artistic treatment. The famous quotation "speak when you are angry, and you will make the best speech you will ever regret" by Ambrose Bierce suggests that anger is an intuitive yet deceptive emotion. For example, one of the Senecan products of this emotion in revenge tragedy is the character of the ghost. The ghost

stands mostly for the catalyst of anger or, indeed, it is the angry character. More importantly, the ghost is the character that is neither dead nor alive. This character expresses anger in its speeches and explains its presence. Likewise, anger is half recognition and half denial. It is a state of emotion where the angry person both acknowledges and negates the party that provokes him or her.

Finally, anger remains one of the most interesting emotions to study from a cultural, philosophical and historical perspective because it reveals the most fundamental realities about human beings, which can be both violent and artistic at the same time.



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