

V&R **unipress**

Representations & Reflections
Studies in Anglophone Literatures and Cultures

Volume 3

Edited by

Uwe Baumann, Marion Gymnich
and Barbara Schmidt-Haberkamp

Imke Pannen

When the bad bleeds

Mantic Elements in
English Renaissance Revenge Tragedy

V&R unipress

Bonn University Press



„Dieses Hardcover wurde auf FSC-zertifiziertem Papier gedruckt. FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) ist eine nichtstaatliche, gemeinnützige Organisation, die sich für eine ökologische und sozialverantwortliche Nutzung der Wälder unserer Erde einsetzt.“

Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek

The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data are available in the Internet at <http://dnb.d-nb.de>.

ISBN 978-3-89971-640-5

**Publications of Bonn University Press
are published by V&R unipress GmbH.**

© Copyright 2010 by V&R unipress GmbH, D-37079 Goettingen

All rights reserved, including those of translation into foreign languages. No part of this work may be reproduced or utilized in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, microfilm and recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

Cover image: A checkerboard collection of various recognized prodigies from a pamphlet entitled: "The Signs of the Times: or, Wonderful Signs of Wonderful Times" by C. N (London: 1681). From Bodleian Library, Oxford, Ms. Ashmole 309, Art. VIII, title page verso. The author would like to express her thanks to the Bodleian Library, Oxford for the permission to print the image of the cover of this study. Though published at a later date than the interpreted revenge tragedies were performed, the printed image nevertheless well reflects the portents analysed in this thesis; the later publication date only strengthens the idea that common perceptions about portents were popular in the Renaissance, and even after the Restoration.

Printed in Germany

Contents

Abbreviations and List of Plays	7
Abbreviations	7
List of Plays in Chronological Order	7
Acknowledgements	9
I. Theory	11
Preface – “Thunder and Lightning. A blazing starre appears”	11
1 Mantic Elements in English Renaissance Drama – “Oh, blest revelation!”	12
1.1 Structure and Aim – “They told me my intent”	16
1.2 Literature and Research – “What manuscript lies here?” . . .	22
1.3 The Plays – “Sdeath! the vault opens. The gulfe opens.” . . .	25
2 A Cultural Background to Mantics – “O how this discord doth afflict my soul”	36
3 Mantics in Renaissance drama – “Your prodigious Blood/ Sweates through his holy Image”	52
II. Analysis	69
4 Omens as visual mantic elements – “A blazing star appeareth” . .	69
4.1 Omens of light – “She stains the time past: lights the time to come”	75
4.2 Stars and planets taking shape – “I wait but that eclipse” . . .	77
4.3 Meteorological Portents – “More earthquakes?”	84
4.4 Omens of darkness – “Night rises in mists”	95
4.5 Animals – “When screech-owls croak”	103
4.6 Portents of physiognomy – “Why should his voice keep tune”	114
4.7 Inklings and Premonitions – “My spirit’s heavy”	153

5 Mantic elements of visionary perception – The apparition of “dreadfull visions”	160
5.1 Dreams and Dream Visions – “Last sleep my sense was steep’d in horrid dreams”	160
5.1.1 Dreams of comic relief – “baby thoughts/ in the cradle of sleep”	166
5.1.2 Instructive dreams – “I’ll tell your grace/ A dream I had last night”	168
5.1.3 Prophetic Dreams – “I had a very strange dream to-night” . . .	173
5.2 Ghosts and Spiritual Visitations – “What art thou”	181
5.2.1 The provenance of the ghost – “Ascendit Umbra”	186
5.2.2 Ghostly appearances to the audience – “Come we for this from depth of under ground”	191
5.2.3 Ghostly visitations to the prospective revenger – “Revenge my blood! Take spirit, gentle boy”	199
5.2.4 Visitation to the wife – “O, shed no tears”	212
5.2.5 Apparitions to the murderer – “Bless me! It slides by.”	214
6 Mantic speech acts – “I’ll speak a prophecy ere I’ll go”	224
6.1 Prophecies – “And I’ll endure all storms before I part with ’t.”	227
6.2 Curses and Wishes – “here’s the cursed day”	256
6.2.1 Cursing the self – “Oh mee accurst! why lieu I this blacke day?”	259
6.2.2 Cursing the other – “Your beauty! Oh, ten thousand curses on ’t!”	277
III. Conclusion	297
7 Mantic Elements in English Renaissance Revenge Tragedy “Misgoverned Kings are cause of all this wrack”	297
IV. Bibliography	307

Abbreviations and List of Plays

Abbreviations

AR	Antonio's Revenge
AT	The Atheist's Tragedy
CR	Caesar's Revenge
Ch	The Changeling
DM	The Duchess of Malfi
MR	The Maid's Revenge
MT	The Maid's Tragedy
RB	The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois
RT	The Revenger's Tragedy
ST	The Spanish Tragedy
TH	The Tragedy of Hoffman
WD	The White Devil

List of Plays in Chronological Order

c.1587	Thomas Kyd, <i>The Spanish Tragedy</i>
1590s	Anonymous, <i>Caesar's Revenge</i>
1593	William Shakespeare, <i>Titus Andronicus</i>
1600	John Marston, <i>Antonio's Revenge</i>
1601	William Shakespeare, <i>Hamlet</i>
1602/03	Henry Chettle, <i>The Tragedy of Hoffman</i>
1607	Thomas Middleton, <i>The Revenger's Tragedy</i>
1607/11	Cyril Tourneur, <i>The Atheist's Tragedy, Or, The Honest Man's Revenge</i>
c.1610/11	Beaumont/ Fletcher, <i>The Maid's Tragedy</i>
bef.1612	George Chapman, <i>The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois</i>
1612	John Webster, <i>The White Devil</i>
1614	John Webster, <i>The Duchess of Malfi</i>
1622	Thomas Middleton/ John Rowley, <i>The Changeling</i>
1626	James Shirley, <i>The Maid's Revenge</i>

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisor Prof. Dr. Uwe Baumann for his support, not only in the fabrication of this study, but also for the diversification of academic life, and to Prof. Dr. Marion Gymnich for her reassurance and encouragement. Furthermore, I would like to thank Eva Amann-Brockhaus and Prof. Götz Schmitz for introducing me to the interpretation of English literature, the latter especially for familiarising me with New Historicism and a love of Renaissance literature. I am very grateful for the scholarship from the Maria von Linden programme which allowed me to finish this study in the Nottinghamshire countryside.

The interest in the topic first originated in the reading of Edmund's and Lear's invocations of nature during a stay at the University of Aberdeen and in the study of George Peele's *The Battle of Alcazar* and the impact of weather omens in the plot – "nature doth with merit challenge."

My thanks go to my friends and family, my parents, Angelika and Jörg, my sister Meike, and my partner Klaus for just being there.

I. Theory

Preface – “Thunder and Lightning. A blazing starre appears”¹

These late eclipses in the sun and moon portend no good to us. Though the wisdom of nature can reason it thus and thus, yet nature finds itself scourged by the sequent effects. Love cools, friendship falls off, brothers divide; in cities, mutinies; in countries, discord; in palaces, treason; and the bond cracked ‘twixt son and father. This villain of mine comes under the prediction: there’s son against father. The King falls from bias of nature; there’s father against child. We have seen the best of our time. Machinations, hollowness, treachery, and all ruinous disorders follow us disquietly to our graves.
The Tragedy of King Lear, I.ii.95–105

References to portents foreboding chaos in the cosmos are numerous in English drama. The well-known quote by *King Lear*’s Gloucester who is foreseeing chaos is one of the prototypes of mantic predictions made by a character in English Renaissance tragedy. Discord and treachery follow these “late eclipses in the sun and moon” in the state and family.² The irregular phenomena and appearances in the heavens predict the developing chaos in the microcosm of the state. This chaos represents human failure.³ An appropriate terminology of the presentation of disorder, i.e. chaos in the cosmos needs to include the compound term “chaosmos”, coined by James Joyce, which represents the combination of utter disorder on all levels, a situation that appears in all revenge tragedies.⁴

1 Anonymous: *The Bloody Banquet*, V.ii.1859.

2 The images he invokes are comparable to those employed by Ulysses in *Troilus and Cressida*, in: *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt (New York/ London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1997³), I.iii.94–111.

3 See Wolfgang Weiß: “Die dramatische Tradition“, in: Ina Schabert: *Shakespeare-Handbuch. Die Zeit. Der Mensch. Das Werk. Die Nachwelt* (Stuttgart: Alfred Kröner Verlag, 2000⁴), p. 55.

4 It first appears in Joyce’s *Finnegans Wake*: “[E]very person, place and thing in the chaosmos of Alle anyway connected with the gobblydumped turkery was moving and changing every part

This study is concerned with the function of mantic elements in English Renaissance revenge tragedy. However, supernatural appearances as signs of a disrupted order have their literary origins in ancient tragedy.⁵ They became established structural topoi in vengeance drama and continue to function thus in the Renaissance. Shown as disruptions of the macrocosm, they represent and foreshadow destructive forces in the microcosm of the state. As Robert Burton wrote in *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, heavenly bodies correspond to mankind and the macrocosm influences the microcosm: “the Heavens, Planets, Starres &c. [...] producing this and such like effects.”⁶ The focus of this study is how supernatural phenomena like a “*blazing starre*”,⁷ as it appears at the beginning of *The Bloody Banquet*, promote the plot of retaliation and are treated as a “prodigious bearded fire [...] [whose] beames are fatall” (V.ii.1863–64). The undeniable fatality and truth of an existing chaosmos, as presented in the plots of the different dramas, will be targeted in this study.

1 Mantic Elements in English Renaissance Drama – “Oh, blest revelation!”⁸

Mantic elements in English Renaissance drama, and especially in revenge tragedy, are elements that predict and determine the plot in this type of drama. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the term *mantic* is defined as the “art or practice of divination”,⁹ – mantics is the art of divination. The term is derived from Greek *mantis*¹⁰, which means ‘seer’ or ‘prophet’; it thus denotes a person who is able to apprehend, through supernatural insight, what the future holds – he can perceive events to come and he can discern revelations of present

of the time”; in: James Joyce: *Finnegans Wake* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1939), p. 118.

5 Especially the Senecan influence is of great importance to Renaissance tragedy. See especially Gordon Braden: *Renaissance Tragedy and the Senecan Tradition. Anger's Privilege* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985).

6 Robert Burton: *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621), Vol. 1, ed. Thomas C. Faulkner/ Nicolas K. Kiessling/ Rhonda L. Blair (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), p. 199.

7 See above.

8 *Ch*, V.ii.78.

9 See *The Oxford English Dictionary*, ed. John Andrew Simpson/ Edmund S. C. Weiner, Vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989) and http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/00301481?query_type=word&queryword=mantic&first=1&max_to_show=10&sort_type=alpha&result_place=1&search_id=n7rK-vmpVH9-4858&hlite=00301481.

10 From *μαντειον*, Wilhelm Gemoll: *Griechisch-Deutsches Schul- und Handwörterbuch* (München: Verlag Holder-Pichler-Tempsky/ R. Oldenbourg, 1997⁹), p. 484. See Robert Parker: “Mantis“, in: *Der Neue Pauly. Enzyklopädie der Antike. Das klassische Altertum und seine Rezeptionsgeschichte*, ed. Hubert Cancik/ Helmuth Schneider/ August Pauly (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2003), vol. 7, p. 834–836.

circumstantial events. Divinatory mantics is one of the *artes magicae* or *artes incertae* of classic and Arabian origin,¹¹ and the suffix “-mancy” the way of foretelling, as e.g. in oneiromancy, which is mantic foreboding via dreams.

The means that are used to foretell future events are divided into different mantic elements: they are manifestations of the supernatural – dreams and dream visions, ghosts or ghostly visitations, ominous portents and prodigies, prophecies, and foreboding wishes and curses.¹² They predict and reveal events in the present and the future.¹³ Interpreting and understanding their content is the task of an oracle or soothsayer,¹⁴ and other characters in the play can only guess their meaning.

The way mantics are interpreted is also a question of how their content is related to the experience of foretelling. Mantics can be divided into more specific types. Deductive and inductive mantics¹⁵ are concerned with the deductive reasoning of the inference of particular instances according to general laws, or with the inductive reasoning of these generalities as derived from particular events. Mantic elements are visual or linguistic signs that prove to be explanations for past, present and future events.¹⁶ They are divine, direct visions that can be prophetic forebodings mostly through natural, but to Renaissance logic inexplicable, phenomena. The commonplaces of the prophetic character of mantic elements derived from these deductions. Well-known in the Renaissance, they were displayed in customs and traditions, such as weather proverbs or country sayings.¹⁷ They were part of common knowledge and belief of a “profoundly religious” country,¹⁸ but also incensing a discussion “of much con-

11 W. Schmitt: “Mantik“, in: *Lexikon des Mittelalters* (München/ Zürich: Artemis & Winkler Verlag, 1980–1999), Vol VI, p. 206; id.: “artes incertae“, in: *LMA*, p. 1058.

12 E. Stiglmeier: “Mantik“, in: *Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (RGG), ed. Kurt Galling (Tübingen: Mohr/ Siebeck, 1960), Vol IV, p. 727–729.

13 Compare B. Asmuth: *Einführung in die Dramenanalyse*, p. 118f; Peter Pütz: *Die Zeit im Drama. Zur Technik dramatischer Spannung* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1970); Manfred Pfister: *Das Drama* (Stuttgart: UTB, 2001¹¹), p. 79.

14 Veit Rosenberger: “Orakel“, in: *Der Neue Pauly*, vol. 9, p. 2–7. On “Divination“, see Dominique Briquel/ Jan N. Bremmer, *ibid.*, Vol. 3, p. 703–718. See also Manfred Beyer: *Das Staunen in Shakespeares Dramen. Ursachen, Darstellungsweisen und Wirkungsintentionen* (Köln/ Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 1987). In the third chapter, Beyer is investigating supernatural occurrences as a means to impress those who have to confront them, p. 127ff.

15 E. Stiglmeier: “Mantik“, in: *RGG*, IV, p. 727–729. Compare Stefan Maul and see Dominique Briquel/ Jan N. Bremmer: “Divination“, in: *Der Neue Pauly*, vol. 3, p. 703–718.

16 Compare Uwe Baumann: *Vorausdeutung und Tod im englischen Römerdrama der Renaissance (1564–1642)* (Tübingen/ Basel: Francke Verlag, 1996), p. 474–479.

17 “So commonplace was some knowledge at least of lunar astrology that the moon was consulted for guidance in every area of daily life.” L. Braswell: “Popular Lunar Astrology in the Late Middle Ages“, *University of Ottawa Quarterly* 48 (1978), p. 187–94, here p. 187.

18 People relied “on God to explain epidemics, bad weather, strange diseases and sudden

trovery”¹⁹ with conflicting attitudes towards them. This contemporary controversy, which caused the topic to be discussed in diverse essays and treatises, also made stage authors attentive to the motive of mantics. In the theatre belief in mantics could serve “the needs”²⁰ of dramaturgy.²¹

The Renaissance is called a time of changing paradigms.²² All areas of society were affected by new developments, discoveries, and, as will be outlined, innovative thought.²³ The high popularity and prosperity of the theatre falls into this age of dispute. Controversial topics were extensively used and explored by Renaissance playwrights; especially in tragedies, there is a denser atmosphere of extreme circumstances and combinations of apparently extraordinary catastrophes.²⁴ In these plays, the relation between the cosmoi is underlined in the plot development, which is still determined by providentialism.

Arthos writes on the use of supernatural signs in Shakespeare’s plays: “Dreams, ghosts, apparitions – these are among the greatest delights in Shakespeare, he gives them a multitude of forms and discovers contrivances for their use that are as charming or awesome in spectacle as they are rich in meaning.”²⁵ This statement can be extended as it concerns the playwrights of the Renaissance in general. The entertainment value is vital in this regard. The extremity of violence in the retaliation plot asks for extremity in its contextual representation, or, as Obermark phrases it: “The use of the occult was [...] to increase the magnitude of individual incidents or of the plot as a whole.”²⁶

Revenge tragedy is a genre shaped by bloodshed. “When the bad bleeds, then

death.” Vanessa MacMahon: *Murder in Shakespeare’s England* (London/ New York: Hambledon and London, 2004), p. 17.

19 Gamini Salgado: *The Elizabethan Underworld* (London: Sutton Publishing, 1977), p. 92.

20 Hildred Geertz: “An Anthropology of Religion and Magic, I”, in: *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 6 (1975), p. 71–89, here p. 77.

21 Compare Jeremy Lopez: *Theatrical Convention and Audience Response in Early Modern Drama*, p. 2.

22 Compare A. L. Rowse: *The Elizabethan Renaissance. The Cultural Achievement*, p. 288; Thomas S. Kuhn: *The Copernican Revolution: Planetary Astronomy in the Development of Western Thought* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1957); id.: *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962); Geoffrey R. Elton: *Reformation Europe, 1517–1559* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963); Elton: *The Tudor Revolution in Government: Administrative Changes in the Reign of Henry VIII* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953); James Hankins (ed.): *The Cambridge Companion to Renaissance Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Manfred Beyer: “A beggar’s book outworts a noble’s blood”: *Werte und Wertekonflikte in Shakespeares Dramen* (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2009).

23 An introduction to the cultural context is given in chapter 2.

24 Compare Molly Smith: *The Darker World Within*, p. 25.

25 John Arthos: *Shakespeare’s Use of Dream and Vision* (London: Bowes & Bowes, 1977), p. 9.

26 Gerardine Marie Obermark-Clark refers to Shakespeare’s plays with this statement; in: *The Structural Function of Ghosts, Dreams, Prophecies and Portents in Shakespeare’s Plays* (Diss. Indiana University, 1977), p. 588.

the tragedy is good” – thus ends the verse, chosen as title for this study, from *The Revenger’s Tragedy* (III.v.200). The “bad”, the villain of the tragedy needs to be killed, i.e. his blood needs to be spilt to fulfil retaliation. Thus the villain’s death is an essential part of the plot of a revenge tragedy.

Vengeance in English Renaissance revenge tragedy is dominated by ideas from the Senecan model and contains murder, a ghost,²⁷ intrigues, madness, and violence, culminating in a catastrophe.²⁸ Supernatural, ambiguous phenomena allow a diversified interpretation, i.e. the possibility of foreshadowing unknown truths with a veil of superstitious secrecy. There is not a ghost in each of the revenge tragedies, but in each there are supernatural signs which serve – like a ghost – as mantic elements.

Dealing with the application of different mantic elements in the development of the plot of revenge tragedy includes forebodings to the execution of justice. The question of moral law, i.e. the sanction of personal vengeance in contrast to a legal punishment of the offender, dominates the action and leads the hero of the play to the edge of reason, as Janet Clare underlines: “Then the code of revenge becomes the closest approximation to law: a rough justice, or, as Bacon declared, a ‘wild justice’, on the brink of anarchy.”²⁹ Self-destruction and personal justice become the centre of attention.

As human behaviour transgresses the boundaries of stately order, so does nature transgress its territory and supernatural events happen which represent and forebode this chaos. The order in the cosmos is created by God; disorder threatens the divine ideal and a chaos is created.³⁰ This commonplace is skilfully functionalised by the playwrights. Lopez illuminates that foreboding the action is part of the dramatic structure. In the plot, foretelling can be a-

27 See Fredson T. Bowers: *Elizabethan Revenge Tragedy, 1587–1642* (Princeton: Yale University Press, 1940); compare his theses on the presentation of the ghost.

28 On the general stereotypes, commonplaces, and expectation of the revenge tragedy genre, compare e.g. the introductions among others in: Fredson T. Bowers: *Elizabethan Revenge Tragedy, 1587–1642* (Princeton: Yale University Press, 1940); Janet Clare: *Revenge Tragedies of the Renaissance* (Tavistock: Northcote, 2006); John Kerrigan: *Revenge Tragedy. Aeschylus to Armageddon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).

29 Janet Clare: *Revenge Tragedies of the Renaissance*, p. 6. Compare Francis Bacon’s essay “Of Revenge” in: *The Essays*, ed. John Pitcher (Harmondsworth: Penguin Classics, 2004); Compare also William Cornwallis the Younger: *Essayes* from 1600: “Upon the receipt of a wrong and an honest determination to forgive, I am whispered in the eare that this lenitie is injustice, that I nourish sinne with not cutting it up when I see it grow, that though I effect revenge, and revenge woulde doe no more, yet it is not revenge – it is justice. Pittifull abuse.” Quoted in Eleanor Prosser: *Hamlet and Revenge* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1967²), p. 14.

30 Caroline F. E. Spurgeon calls the transgression of order an “act of shame”; in: *Shakespeare’s Imagery and what it tells us* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1935, repr. 1968); see also the introduction to Dorothea Krook: *Elements of Tragedy* (New Haven/ London: Yale University Press, 1969).

chieved by a choric figure or a dumb-show introducing an aspect of the play: “[T]hese kinds of scenes involve direct address more or less uncomplicated by other, more urgent business on stage, and because they involve a single, usually somehow-omniscient character talking directly to the audience”.³¹ In contrast to this, direct foreboding, a sense of future action is also given by the more indefinite mantic elements: a hint towards the revelation of the plot. Supernatural elements that are foreshadowing or mirroring the action need to be taken into account, whether examined and introduced by one single character, in dialogue or through stage action.³²

1.1 Structure and Aim – “They told me my intent”³³

Mantic elements in revenge tragedy are manifold and diverse but are used by every playwright, even though not every dramatist functionalises the same elements in similar circumstances. These instances and functionalisations will be addressed in this study. Many similarities can be found among the different revenge plays of the English Renaissance. This study aims to highlight similarities and differences in the usage and function of the different types of mantic forebodings.

In theatre, mantic elements diffusely predict the forthcoming action to the audience, and partly also to the characters on stage. They come true in the course of the play; however, their reliability cannot consistently be determined, because their way of foreboding is oracularly veiled in uncertainty.³⁴ Thus through foreboding, a bond is created between the audience’s expectation of the revenge genre and its discrepant awareness of the coming action, because the spectator can and must interpret the ideas suggested through mantics.³⁵

The chosen revenge tragedies will be interpreted on the basis of five different categories of mantic elements: these are omens (chapter 4), ghosts and dreams

31 Jeremy Lopez: *Theatrical Convention and Audience Response in Early Modern Drama*, p. 80.

32 Even though opportunities of foreboding through props were limited on the public stage in the early modern period, some mantic foreshadowings include visible elements.

33 *The White Devil*, I.ii.219–244.

34 One of the few exceptions to concealed and ambiguous oracles in Renaissance drama is Shakespeare’s *The Winter’s Tale* with the clear-cut and nevertheless neglected revelation of Hermione’s character and faultlessness. See William Shakespeare: *The Winter’s Tale*, in: *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt (New York/ London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1997⁵), Act III, Scene ii.

35 Compare studies on dramatic irony and discrepant awareness, e.g. Klaus Peter Jochum: *Discrepant Awareness. Studies in English Renaissance Drama*. Neue Studien zur Anglistik und Amerikanistik 13 (Frankfurt a. M.: Peter Lang, 1979); see also Manfred Pfister: *Das Drama* (Stuttgart: UTB, 2001¹¹), p. 80; Peter Pütz: *Die Zeit im Drama. Zur Technik dramatischer Spannung* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1970), p. 62.

(chapter 5.1 and 5.2), and prophecies and curses (chapter 6.1 and 6.2). The chapters will deal with the differentiation of the mantic elements, their portrayal in the revenge tragedies, their role for the revelation of the plot's development, and the similarities that can be detected among the different tragedies, leading to general assumptions of the playwrights' use of mantics.

Greenblatt says in his essay on the term *culture*: “The world is full of texts, most of which are virtually incomprehensible when they are removed from their immediate surroundings. To recover the meaning of such texts, to make any sense of them at all, we need to reconstruct the situation in which they were produced.”³⁶ In accordance with this, this study will investigate the circumstances and contexts of mantics and revenge tragedy in the Renaissance before looking at the precise function of mantics in revenge tragedy. The study seeks to combine the literary criticism of *close reading* and the contextual academic study, i.e. *New Historicism* and its British variant *Cultural Materialism*. This methodology seems appropriate in that it allows to set the plots of the plays into the cultural context of the performances but also includes the intensive analysis of each dramatic text.³⁷

Chapter 2 and 3 introduce the topic of mantics in the cultural and the dramatic context, i.e. the role of the belief in supernatural foreshadowing in society and its application and possible exploitation on stage. The texts and their functional use of mantic elements shall be interpreted according to the context of

36 Stephen Greenblatt: “Culture”, in: *Critical Terms for Literary Studies*, ed. Frank Lentricchia/ Thomas McLaughlin (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), p. 227. Compare Marion Gymnich/ Birgit Neumann/ Ansgar Nünning (eds.): *Kulturelles Wissen und Intertextualität. Theoriekonzeptionen und Fallstudien zur Kontextualisierung von Literatur*. Studies in English Literary and Cultural History (ELCH) 22 (Trier: WVT, 2006), p. 18: “Die Diskurse einer Kultur und das durch sie bereitgestellte Wissen sind folglich nicht nur Bedingung und Gegenstand der literarischen Darstellung; vielmehr ist Literatur umgekehrt auch prägende Kraft der kulturellen Diskurse. Literatur ist Produkt des kulturellen Wissens, setzt kulturelles Wissen voraus und hat selbst an der Produktion von Wissen teil.”

37 This study thus combines the wider perspective of the background and impact of mantics with the *close reading* analysis of the chosen texts. It recalls Neohistoricism as a reciprocal amalgamation, a woven net of textuality and historicity. For this idea, see Uwe Baumann: “Image of that Horror”: Die Apokalypse in der Politik, Kultur und Literatur der Englischen Renaissance”, in: Barbara Haupt (ed.): *Endzeitvorstellungen* (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 2001), p. 271–289. Compare Molly Smith: *The Darker World Within. Evil in the Tragedies of Shakespeare and His Successors* (Newark: University of Delaware Press/ London/ Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1991), p. 20f. This study owes much to recent new historicist studies like those of Greenblatt, Dollimore, or McAlindon which demand an opening of literature to the society of the age and its ideas and also include the possible counter-influence that literature could have on society through the culture that was depicted within the plays. See bibliography. Consequentially, recent ideas on cultural need to be considered as a theoretical point of reference. See Marion Gymnich/ Birgit Neumann/ Ansgar Nünning (eds.): *Kulturelles Wissen und Intertextualität*, see especially therein Birgit Neumann: “Kulturelles Wissen”, p. 29–51, p. 38–42 on Greenblatt.

the time and the immanent relevance for the action of the play: that is the significance they have for the future dramatic action. To analyse the plays in their context, nevertheless, close reading is essential and a scholar “must make full use of the practises of close reading from which current practise has too often seemed to distance itself.”³⁸ Thus, each drama needs to be interpreted according to its use of mantic elements.³⁹

According to Lopez who names various staged incidents, like echoes, and use of stage darkness, etc., this study aims to produce an insight into “the bizarre variety of Renaissance drama, and into the way in which that variety characterizes the dramaturgy of the period.”⁴⁰

Aspects that will be examined in the following sections are especially the use of mantics to determine events of the immediate future but also their use in speech, i.e. as metaphorical and rhetorical devices to foreshadow personal resolutions and behaviour.

The difference between the use of mantics in historical tragedies and tragedies based on non-historical sources is another issue which might be based on different functions. However, as will be seen, mantic elements virtually have the same function across genres;⁴¹ the only difference being that in histories, the motifs are taken from past events, and these non-fictional ideas are presented in a fictionalised drama on stage; thus the audience might know more precisely what is predicted when mantic elements appear. However, a similar theory needs to be applied when the source of a tragedy is a well-known myth or legend.⁴²

As far as contemporary history and politics are concerned, one question that has to be kept in mind is the political influence and potential explosiveness of a

38 Michael Neill: *Putting History to the Question. Power, Politics, and Society in English Renaissance Drama* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), p. 5.

39 As far as the cultural context is concerned, one aspect especially needs to be targeted; Limon stresses the importance of the theatrical performance: “In our understanding, drama is a distinct literary genre, whose meaning is independent of actual theatrical productions. Theatre is a different art form, in which dialogue – or, broadly speaking, verbal means of expression – is only one element, with scenery, lighting, music, acting etc. as other, equally important components in a conglomerate and highly complex structure.” Jerzy Limon: *Dangerous Matter. English Drama and Politics in 1623/24* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 16. It is difficult to interpret an unrecorded audience reaction and to assume likely responses but nevertheless the spectator must not be neglected when acting is addressed.

40 Jeremy Lopez: *Theatrical Convention and Audience Response in Early Modern Drama*, p. 98.

41 See interpretation of *Caesar's Revenge*.

42 A distinction can often not be made as far as the source of a play is concerned. A historical source is treated as a set idea and distinctive plot that has to be followed, because it is known to the audience. However, a source of a play that is based on a myth, or a legend, as many other Renaissance plays were, also follows this determined plot. Compare for example Shakespeare's *Coriolanus*. See Anne Barton: “Livy, Machiavelli, and Shakespeare's *Coriolanus*”, in: *Shakespeare Survey* 38 (1985), p. 115–129.

performance, whatever topic is put on stage. This is obviously the case when histories are presented, especially those with a direct relevance to Renaissance politics, but also when current events are described or veiled in the dramatic plots of tragedies, as Jerzy Limon writes, elaborating on the presentation of ideology and political purpose in distinct performances:

Owing to its mimetic qualities and the ability to pretend to be a ‘mirror up to nature’, to be an objective and unambiguous ‘reflection’ of the empirical world, a dramatic text reveals through its seeming ‘objectivity’ an enormous persuasive power, and may with ease function as an efficient instrument of propaganda. [...] That dramatic texts could become useful tools in political struggle, or a means of persuasion that is capable of influencing wide circles of society, had already been fully recognized during the reign of the early Tudors.⁴³

The impact of criticism on stage could show the “enormous power of theatre” and how it could “influence public opinion”.⁴⁴ This relation between playwright, stage, and audience (see also chapter 3) could thus support the continuance of conventional commonplaces as the influence of supernatural phenomena, and also the role of current debates questioning traditional values. As far as the investigation of the cultural context is concerned, the theoretical reflection on the audience’s reception needs to be taken into account,⁴⁵ the co-existing cultural objectivation.⁴⁶

According to this context, the plays will not only be interpreted in terms of their reflections on the philosophical background, but social and political ideas need also be observed in the literature of the age of the Renaissance. “Politics and apocalyptic thought were bound closely together in Early Modern Europe, and each influenced the other.”⁴⁷ Plays dealing with politics and chaos were ob-

43 Jerzy Limon: *Dangerous Matter*, p. 1. Compare also David Bevington: *Tudor Drama and Politics. A Critical Approach to Topical Meaning* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1968); Jonathan Dollimore/ Alan Sinfield: *Political Shakespeare. Essays in Cultural Materialism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994²); Alexander Leggatt: *Shakespeare’s Political Drama. The History Plays and The Roman Plays* (London/ New York: Routledge, 1988); Molly Smith: *Breaking Boundaries. Politics and Play in the Drama of Shakespeare and His Contemporaries* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998).

44 Limon: *Dangerous Matter*, p. 5. Compare also Henk Gras: “Objective Images: The Elizabethan Character and its Relation with Spirits and Species”, in: *Studies in Elizabethan Audience Response to the Theatre* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1993).

45 See Marion Gymnich/ Birgit Neumann/ Ansgar Nünning (eds.): *Kulturelles Wissen und Intertextualität*, p. 2; on drama, especially Klaus Peter Jochum: *Discrepant Awareness. Studies in English Renaissance Drama. Neue Studien zur Anglistik und Amerikanistik 13* (Frankfurt a. M.: Peter Lang, 1979).

46 Marion Gymnich/ Birgit Neumann/ Ansgar Nünning (eds.): *Kulturelles Wissen und Intertextualität*, p. 6.

47 Bernard Capp: “The Political Dimension of Apocalyptic Thought”, in: *The Apocalypse in*

viously influenced by all kinds of new structures, convictions, and thoughts of the age concerning psychology, anthropology, and sociology and its interrelations.⁴⁸ In the Renaissance, the age of a change of paradigms, disputes were often conflicting and incoherent; nevertheless, even apparently paradox ideas often mingled into some kind of heterogeneous, syncretistic picture.⁴⁹ The eclectic combination must thus be reflected in the scholarly treatment of the age. A certain amount of interdisciplinary research cannot be ignored in these parameters;⁵⁰ various ideas of the context flowed into the writings of the playwrights.⁵¹

Limon is careful to underline the fact that the audience was “certainly capable of understanding all the allusions the players made to events or people they were not allowed to show directly in theatre.”⁵² He stresses that the audience was quick to catch on implications that referred to political propaganda. This grasp of political comprehension is also true for the implications brought forward by a mantic element, which is just as “variable owing to its topical, often accidental, temporal and circumstantial nature.”⁵³

Today, it is difficult to discern the contemporary reaction of an audience in the Renaissance theatre, i.e. the experience that is created from a dramatic text in a live performance.⁵⁴ Nevertheless, the supposed expectation and reaction that must be intended in a dramatic performance are important in the study of the chosen revenge plays. The reaction can be presumed from the interpretation of the printed text.

This thesis examines a range of non-Shakespearean⁵⁵ revenge tragedies and

English Renaissance Thought and Literature, ed. C. A. Patrides/ Joseph Wittreich (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1984), p. 93–124, p. 93.

48 See chapter 2. Compare e.g. Molly Smith: *The Darker World Within*.

49 See especially the historicist studies on the world picture from the 1940s–60s.

50 See Molly Smith: *The Darker World Within*, p. 21.

51 Compare the introduction in Christian Meier: *Die politische Kunst der griechischen Tragödie* (München: C. H. Beck, 1988), p. 1–30, or Uwe Baumann: “Das Drama der Englischen Renaissance als Politische Kunst: Die zeitgenössische Aktualität der Römerdramen I“, in: *Literaturwissenschaftliches Jahrbuch 33* (1992), p. 101–131. See bibliography on further studies on drama in its context. Compare also the chapter on ideology in Max Weber: *Selections in Translations*, ed. W. G. Runciman, transl. Eric Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), p. 155.

52 Jerzy Limon: *Dangerous Matter*, p. 16. Compare also Jeremy Lopez: *Theatrical Convention and Audience Response in Early Modern Drama*, p. 7.

53 *Ibid.*, p. 14.

54 Compare *ibid.*, p. 98.

55 Huebert mentions that “plays by Marston, Webster, Middleton, and Ford deserve the kind of critical attention that is routinely given to Shakespeare.” Not only are there thousands of analytical research projects on Shakespeare each year, Renaissance drama in general is enjoying widest attention. In: Ronald Huebert: *The Performance of Pleasure in English Renaissance Drama* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p. 17–8.

the dramaturgic function of their mantic content.⁵⁶ In the choice of dramas, which this study focusses on, one maxim has to be kept in mind:

I do not claim to be discovering new masterpieces or building a new canon, nor even to be establishing a new tradition of audience study, but rather to be developing an approach to Renaissance drama that will give students of the drama a more accurate picture of the nature, variety, and scope of the drama than the massive Shakespeare text and criticism industry otherwise might.⁵⁷

The objective is to introduce new aspects of a few Renaissance revenge tragedies that are partly well-reputed, partly not well-known, to gain an insight into revenge literature on stage. The study aims at presenting the different mantic aspects in the chosen plays systematically. Within each chapter on one type of mantic element, the focus will be on a number of thematically relevant scenes taken from these revenge tragedies.

The plays were written from the late 1580s until the late 1620s. Following the development of revenge drama, it is additionally interesting to analyse how evil shows itself in the villains in the drama of the Elizabethan period and that its presentation becomes not necessarily more violent, but more perverse or grotesque in the Jacobean age⁵⁸ and how this is represented within the scope of mantic elements. It will be shown that authors like Webster display cruelty and violence in very explicit and grotesque forms.⁵⁹

Most riveting about Renaissance drama is the creativity that allows the playwrights to feed their plots of violence with mantic foreboding. Revenge tragedy seems to be one of the most compelling dramatic forms because of its psychological extremity; it plays with moral convictions, presents cruel bloodshed, and yet portrays, full of hope, wishes for satisfaction, balance, and harmony which, in turn, are fought for with even greater violence, thus per-

56 As the plays are analysed within their cultural and dramatic context, Shakespeare can be seen as a matrix that can be compared to the chosen tragedies. In this study, Shakespeare is not going to be at the centre of attention. This intentional decision allows research on new and supportive knowledge of the Shakespearean age.

57 Jeremy Lopez: *Theatrical Convention and Audience Response in Early Modern Drama*, p. 7.
58 This is an aspect that Molly Smith has worked on intensively in her study *The Darker World Within. Evil in the Tragedies of Shakespeare and His Successors*, see especially p. 11f.

59 The decay of order in Stuart drama, as Molly Smith argues, proves a “dramatic fascination with the darker aspects of the psyche [which] has come to be regarded as symptomatic of other things, of social and political factors. [...] The drama of the period destroys metaphorically those conventional hierarchies and systems that provided the basis for the arguments of [...] Renaissance theorists”; in: Molly Smith: *The Darker World Within*, p. 13. Compare also Rainer Lengeler: *Tragische Wirklichkeit als Grotteske Verfremdung bei Shakespeare* (Köln/ Graz: Böhlau Verlag, 1964). Leonard Goldstein: *George Chapman: Aspects of Decadence in Early Seventeenth Century Drama 2*. Salzburg Studies. Jacobean Drama Studies (New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1975).

verting the cosmos of the state into utter desolation and chaos. This offers a great potential for mantic representations.

1.2 Literature and Research – “What manuscript lies here?”⁶⁰

Through the past years and decades, there has been an enormous academic interest in Shakespeare and newly-developed theories and ideas have readily been applied to his plays. Some of his contemporaries, too, have benefited from the rising popularity of Renaissance drama in general. This study does not involve an analysis of the superiority, which has been ascribed to Shakespeare’s treatment of mantics as a topic but instead focuses on the dramas of his contemporaries and how they used omens, prophecies, and other portents and subtly formed them as instruments for the elaboration of their own plays.

The topic of the supernatural has also been very popular in the last decades. Interest in the occult side of science and its relation to religion produced various studies.⁶¹ For approximately a century, the supernatural in Shakespeare’s

60 *Ch*, IV.i.20–25.

61 Compare different studies on science, e.g. Douglas Bush: “Science and Literature”, in: Hedley Howell Rhys (ed.): *Science and the Arts* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1961), p. 29–58; T. G. Cowling: “Astrology, Religion and Science”, in: *Quarterly Journal of the Royal Astronomical Society* 23 (1982), p. 515–26; Paul M. Kocher: *Science and Religion in Elizabethan England* (San Marino: Huntington Library, 1953). On astrology: Don Cameron Allen: *The Star-Crossed Renaissance. The Quarrel about Astrology and its Influence in England* (New York: Octagon Books, 1973); M. L. R. Bonelli/ W. R. Shea (eds.): *Reasons, Experiment and Mysticism in the Scientific Revolution* (New York: Science History Publications, 1975); L. Braswell: “Popular Lunar Astrology in the Late Middle Ages”, *University of Ottawa Quarterly* 48 (1978), p. 187–94; Bernard Capp: *Astrology and the Popular Press. English Almanacs, 1500–1800* (Ithaca, N. Y.: Cornell University Press/ London: Faber and Faber, 1979); id.: “The Political Dimension of Apocalyptic Thought”, in: *The Apocalypse in English Renaissance Thought and Literature*, ed. C. A. Patrides/ Joseph Wittreich (Ithaca, N. Y.: Cornell University Press, 1984), p. 93–124; id.: “The Status and Role of Astrology in Seventeenth Century England. The Evidence of the Almanac”, in: *Scienza, Credenze Occulte, Livelli di Cultura* (1982), p. 279–90; Brian G. Cooper: “Religious Astrology in the Seventeenth Century”, in: *Dalhousie Review* (1964), p. 312–320; Patrick Curry: *Astrology, Science and Society. Historical Essays* (Woodbridge: Suffolk, 1987); id.: “The Decline of Astrology in Early Modern England, 1642–1800” (University of London PhD, 1986); id.: *Prophecy and Power. Astrology in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989); J. C. Eade: *The Forgotten Sky. A Guide to Astrology in English Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984); Eugenio Garin: *Astrology in the Renaissance. The Zodiac of Life* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983); Anthony Grafton/ William R. Newman (eds.): *Secrets of Nature. Astrology and Alchemy in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, Mass./ London: The MIT Press, 2001); Bertil Johansson: *Religion and Superstition in the Plays of Ben Jonson and Thomas Middleton. Essays and Studies on English Language and Literature VII* (Uppsala: A.-B. Lundequitska Bokhandeln/ Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1950); Wilhelm Knappich: *Geschichte der Astrologie* (Frankfurt an Main: Klostermann, 1988). On religion: Henry G.

drama has received attention.⁶² During the last decades, anticipation and mantic elements have been treated as foreboding forces in Shakespearean plays.⁶³ Dealing with the art of weaving mantic elements as divinatory features into a drama’s composition, Clemen expresses the opinion that they influence the “structure of [...] plays, since the peculiar function of anticipation and foreboding often consists in establishing subtle correspondences between earlier and later utterances or situations in the drama, in binding together various threads of the action.”⁶⁴

Revenge tragedies, too, have been analysed and compared in various studies especially for the last thirty years.⁶⁵ There are studies comparing Shakespeare and his contemporaries in their plot structure, question of justice and moral, the role of the revenger, the question of guilt and justice, and revenge as justification for murder.⁶⁶

Some journal articles have engaged in the discussion of aspects of mantics in these tragedies, too – either concerning the topic of death, or the grotesque usage of the supernatural. Especially the role of the ghost has received extensive attention from the critics, as far as its classic tradition is concerned but also its function in the Renaissance plays.⁶⁷ Studies on the better-known plays by Shakespeare’s contemporaries, such as Kyd’s *Spanish Tragedy*, have helped to make the topic of supernatural influences more prominent. Reed elaborates on the occurrence and importance of supernatural events in the Renaissance: “Their interest in supernatural phenomena [...] far surpasses that of the secular

Alexander: *Religion in England 1558–1662* (London: University of London Press, 1968); Anthony Fletcher/ Peter Roberts (eds.): *Religion, Culture and Society in Early Modern England: Essays in Honour of Patrick Collinson* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Kaspar von Greyerz (ed.): *Religion and Society in Early Modern Europe 1500–1800* (London/ Boston/ Sydney: George Allen & Unwin, in cooperation with The German Historical Institute, 1984).

- 62 Around the turn of the century, a few studies were made on the supernatural in drama, e.g. Hans Ankenbrand: *Die Figur des Geistes im Drama der Englischen Renaissance* (Leipzig: A. Deichert’sche Verlagsbuchhandlung Nachf. (Georg Böhme), 1906), Münchner Beiträge zur Romanischen und Englischen Philologie, ed. H. Breymann/J. Schick, Vol. 35; see bibliography for other studies.
- 63 Compare Wolfgang Clemen: “Anticipation and Foreboding in Shakespeare’s Early Histories”, in: *Shakespeare Survey* 6 (1953), p. 25–35.
- 64 Wolfgang Clemen: “Anticipation and Foreboding in Shakespeare’s Early Histories”, p. 25.
- 65 See bibliography, e.g. Fredson T. Bowers: *Elizabethan Revenge Tragedy, 1587–1642* (Princeton: Yale University Press, 1940); or Irving Ribner: *Jacobean Tragedy. The Quest for Moral Order* (London: Methuen & Company, 1962).
- 66 Especially bibliographies in editions of Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* reflect this interest.
- 67 E. g. Gisela Dahinten: *Die Geisterszene in der Tragödie vor Shakespeare. Zur Seneca-Nachfolge im englischen und lateinischen Drama des Elisabethanismus*. Palaestra. Untersuchungen aus der deutschen und englischen Philologie und Literaturgeschichte 225, ed. W. Kayser et. al. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1958).

playwrights of any other period of literature in England.”⁶⁸ He accredits this supernatural idea of magic a role in society which influenced people at least through its power of thought and allowed creative playwrights to incorporate and functionalise them.

The Renaissance was also a time of religious, philosophical, and mental changes: “First, there was a strong sense of pessimism and fatalism; second, there was the powerful influence of astrology; third, there was a deep-rooted belief in signs and omens; fourth, there was a tradition of mystical prophecy which offered a cogent spiritual interpretation of these events”.⁶⁹ This evaluation also holds true for mantic elements in the context of revenge tragedy, and even though their existence has been discussed before, this study will attempt to combine the fatalistic need of revenge, which the plot structure is based on, with the influence of supernatural occurrences, their corresponding impact in drama, and their prophetic, providential connection to the resolution of the tragedy.

There is no general study on the topic of mantic elements and their function in revenge tragedy yet.⁷⁰ Even if the motif itself is central in some studies on Renaissance theatre,⁷¹ this study, in comparison, elaborates the precise usage of different mantic elements in their context in the revenge tragedies. It will present similarities and contrasts of mantics in lesser known revenge tragedies. Valuable results which the concentration on Shakespearean plays have produced are taken into account as well as ideas on the contextual history if they contribute to completing the picture of mantics in English Renaissance drama.⁷² This study therefore aims to close a gap in English literary studies, and relies on McAlindon’s elementary formula that literary texts, and ideas and criticism concerning these, are “interdependent and mutually illuminating”,⁷³ also taking cultural studies on the context into account, as literary works evolve from a context of cultures – in their symbolic order, the cultural knowledge is re-

68 Robert Rentoul Reed Jr.: *The Occult on the Tudor and Stuart Stage* (Boston: The Christopher Publishing House, 1965), p. 15.

69 Scribner writes this on the German reformation. Robert W. Scribner: *For the Sake of Simple Folk. Popular Propaganda for the German Reformation* (Cambridge: CUP, 1981), p. 117.

70 Obermark-Clark has attempted to treat the topic of the supernatural in Shakespeare’s plays extensively: Gerardine Marie Obermark-Clark: *The Structural Function of Ghosts, Dreams, Prophecies and Portents in Shakespeare’s Plays* (Diss. Indiana University, 1977).

71 Uwe Baumann’s monography investigates the topics of prediction and death in Roman plays of the Renaissance. Uwe Baumann: *Vorausdeutung und Tod im englischen Römerdrama der Renaissance (1564–1642)* (Tübingen/ Basel: Francke Verlag, 1996).

72 Even studies on other epochs might be taken into account if they help to illuminate the picture of Renaissance revenge tragedy.

73 Thomas McAlindon: *Shakespeare’s Tragic Cosmos* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. xiii.

flected.⁷⁴ At the same time mantics were a means to reflect and foreshadow the future to the audience – thus the angle of the spectators’ reception also needs to be taken into account.⁷⁵

It will thus present an innovative approach to a representative group of revenge tragedies that will reflect the conventions of mantic functionalisation of supernatural elements in this genre.

1.3 The Plays – “Sdeath! the vault opens. The gulfe opens.”⁷⁶

Titus Andronicus and *Hamlet* by Shakespeare⁷⁷ are probably among the best-known revenge tragedies of the English Renaissance. However, for scholars, Kyd’s *Spanish Tragedy* or Webster’s *Duchess of Malfi* are hardly less important, even though the scholarly literature on Shakespeare by far surpasses those on his contemporaries. This study also focusses on some rather unknown revenge tragedies like Chettle’s *The Tragedy of Hoffman* or Chapman’s *The Revenge of Bussy D’Ambois*, where secondary literature, especially on the topic of supernaturalism, is sparse, if there is any at all.⁷⁸

74 Compare Gymnich/ Neumann/ Nünning (eds.): *Kulturelles Wissen und Intertextualität*, p. 6. See also p. 7.

75 Studies that present a good basis for the investigation of audience reception are: Henk Gras: *Studies in Elizabethan Audience Response to the Theatre*, 2 vols. (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1993); Klaus Peter Jochum: *Discrepant Awareness. Studies in English Renaissance Drama*. Neue Studien zur Anglistik und Amerikanistik 13 (Frankfurt a. M.: Peter Lang, 1979); Manfred Pfister: *The Theory and Analysis of Drama* (Cambridge: University Press, 1988); Peter Pütz: *Die Zeit im Drama. Zur Technik dramatischer Spannung* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1970).

76 RB, V.v.4.

77 Rowland Wymer in his chapter on “Jacobean Tragedy writes: “It is obviously not possible to address Shakespeare’s work adequately within the scope of this chapter but it must be emphasized that generalizations about Jacobean tragedy which implicitly ignore Shakespeare are of little value. There was a continuous artistic dialogue between him and his fellow playwrights and we must not listen to only one side of the exchange.” In: Rowland Wymer: *Suicide and Despair in the Jacobean Drama* (Brighton: The Harvester Press, 1986), p. 547. Criticism might arise from the lack of treating Shakespeare in this dissertation. However, this thesis would like to invoke an image of the Renaissance and the contemporary context of drama. Shakespeare obviously played a major role in these times but his role has been accredited in various and numerous analyses. This study is to give an insight into other texts that have not been so extensively looked at with regard to the topic of mantics, even though some of them have been interpreted more than others, partly on a neighbouring topic (or even more closely on a treated aspect, like the ghost in *The Spanish Tragedy*).

78 Tracey Hill in her review of Nora Johnson’s *The Actor as Playwright in Early Modern Drama* addresses the necessity of attention “to non-canonical and infrequently discussed writers and their equally neglected work” in her book review in: *Renaissance Studies* 18 (2004), Blackwell, p. 348.

The selection of plays thus presents a deliberate mixture of more and less known revenge plays, which originate in the decades from the 1580s to the 1620s. The aim is to show essential features common to the various tragedies, which might also be applied to other tragedies not addressed in this study. However, it also gives an insight into the chosen plays and how mantic elements are functionalised in each of them in comparison to the others. The revenge tragedies show common tendencies of the representation and function of mantic elements and are representative of their age.

Revenge tragedy has been chosen as a genre not only because the interest in this group of plays has increased over the last decades, but also because the topic of the functionalisation of supernaturalism has not been extensively treated in research literature. The group of revenge tragedies is also relatively constricted: thus the evaluation of the specific plays analysed here, can also introduce general results of the genre.⁷⁹

In the historical context, private revenge was illegal⁸⁰ and it is fruitful to analyse how supernatural powers support a revenger in forgetting the law – private revenge being forbidden in public – and making him follow a path of personal vengeance and how the supernatural functions in promoting personal justice.⁸¹ Central to this idea of individuality is thus the opposition to the law, while private and individual revenge seems to be sanctified and even supported by divine powers, as is apparent in the plays.

Awareness of this function, the methodology of the playwrights' technique, is inevitably at the centre of the analysis and relates to the way in which the writers used and functionalised contemporary conventions of thought. It is not only the usage of the supernatural as functionalised in the texts of the revenge plays that becomes important for the interpretation; it is also the impact on stage: i.e. the stimulus and effect on the audience, which have to be taken into consideration,

79 Other plays like e.g. John Ford's *Tis Pity She's a Whore* or *The Bloody Banquet* by an anonymous playwright could have been included, but have been left out in favour of the representative choice of the presented revenge tragedies.

80 See among others Sarah J. Glady: "Revenge as Double Standard in *The Tragedy of Hoffman*", in: *Discoveries* 18/2 (2001), p. 3–4, p. 3

81 See Bacon's essay "On Revenge", in: *The Essays or Counsels, Civill and Morall*, ed. Michael Kiernan (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985), p. 16–17. Hans-Wilhelm Schwarze: *Justice, Law and Revenge. 'The Individual and Natural Order' in Shakespeares Dramen*. Studien zur Englischen Literatur 6, ed. Johannes Kleinstück (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag Herbert Grundmann, 1971). Compare also Kathryn R. Finin: "Re-membering Gloriana: 'Wild Justice' and the Female Body in The Revenger's Tragedy", in: *Renaissance Forum. An Electronic Journal of Early Modern Literary and Historical Studies* 6.2 (2003), on: <http://www.hull.ac.uk/ren-forum/v6no2/finin.htm>; Dieter Mehl: "Corruption, retribution and justice in *Measure for Measure* and *The Revenger's Tragedy*", in: *The Revels Plays Companion Library. Shakespeare and his Contemporaries. Essays in Comparison*, ed. E. A. J. Honigsmann (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986), p. 114–128.

as a revenge tragedy is “a specialised form of the tragedy of sensation and horror, which sought to supply the Elizabethan [and Jacobean] appetite for thrills on the stage”.⁸² The early revenge tragedies of the Renaissance, those of the Elizabethan era and the first years of the reign of King James I, are generally perceived to be dominated by pessimism, cynicism, and evil destroying order,⁸³ those of the later Jacobean era by grotesque sensationalism, irresponsibility, and decadence; similar decadence can also be applied to the tragicomic plays by Beaumont and Fletcher in the Jacobean era, or even more to the elaborate court masques in the Caroline age.⁸⁴

The earliest revenge tragedy treated here is Thomas Kyd’s (1558–1594) *The Spanish Tragedy*, written probably in 1587 and very likely performed by The Lord Strange’s Men, which expresses a vital spirit of revenge, a “vehemence of passion which combined to place it on a higher level than the ordinary ‘thriller’ of the day.”⁸⁵ It promotes, among other functionalised mantic elements, especially a ghost in the tradition “of the tragic horror of Seneca”.⁸⁶ The morals of the play are dominated by private retaliation and its violent execution until justice is achieved by murder. As will be seen, Kyd functionalises images of supernatural origin to reveal the structure of his plot, as Ardolino underlines: “Kyd uses apocalyptic structural, verbal, and iconographic patterns and motives to present to Elizabethan audiences the mystery play that shows them how divine Provi-

82 Harold Jenkins: *The Life and Work of Henry Chettle* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1934), p. 72.

83 Una Ellis-Fermor divides Renaissance drama into three phases: the first phase before the turning of the century until around 1598, that in between until about 1610/11, and that after. She lists revenge authors like Marston, Webster, Tourneur, and Middleton in the second category: “The second reveals a developing pessimism which constitutes itself in spiritual despair and death. [...] The third phase shows an atmosphere of emotional irresponsibility represented in sensational presentations of humanity which is lifted from reality to a theatrical form. This phase includes writers such as Ford and Shirley, however is dominated by Beaumont and Fletcher.” Una Ellis-Fermor: *The Jacobean Drama. An Interpretation* (London: Methuen, 1965). Compare also Arthur F. Kinney: *A Companion to Renaissance Drama* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2002).

84 Francis Beaumont/ John Fletcher: *The Dramatic Works in the Beaumont and Fletcher Canon*, ed. Fredson Bowers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Martin Butler: *The Stuart Court Masque and Political Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); David Bevington/ Peter Holbrook (eds.): *The Politics of the Stuart Court Masque* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Darryll Grantley: “Masques and Murderers: Dramatic Method and Ideology in Revenge Tragedy and the Court Masque”, in: *Jacobean Poetry and Prose. Rhetoric, Representation and the Popular Imagination* (Houndsmills/ London: Macmillan, 1988), p. 194–212.

85 Harold Jenkins: *The Life and Work of Henry Chettle*, p. 73.

86 *Ibid.*

dence has inevitably led to the defeat of the Whore of Babylon.”⁸⁷ The play was the first revenge tragedy of the Renaissance and set the tone for its successors.⁸⁸

The Tragedy of Caesar and Pompey, or, Caesar's Revenge (1592/96) by an anonymous author, first staged by students at Trinity College Oxford, is, apart from being a revenge tragedy, a Roman play with a historical background.⁸⁹ Although the situation of the theatrical performance therefore differs from those of the other tragedies in that the audience is aware of the historical proceedings around Caesar's history, the plot is nevertheless structured according to a story of retaliation. While it does not necessarily have a brilliant dramaturgy or poetry, the play presents similar functions of foreboding as other revenge tragedies.⁹⁰

John Marston's (1576–1634) *Antonio's Revenge*, performed by the boys of St. Paul's (1600), deals with a private, very cruel vengeance once the Stoic hero⁹¹ is resolved to pursue revenge. In terms of its plot, it is very similar to Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy*, Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, and *Titus Andronicus*.⁹² However, Antonio, in comparison to Hamlet, is a more active hero and avenger once being called to the duty of revenge by his father's ghost.⁹³

The play's seriousness combined with the acute awareness of criticism by its author, the satirist Marston, and performed by children, possibly had an ironic or exaggerated undertone. It might even, as Ayres argues, be a parody of the

87 Frank Ardolino: “Now Shall I See the Fall of Babylon”: *The Spanish Tragedy* and Protestant Apocalypse”, in: *Shakespeare Yearbook* 1 (1990), p. 93–115, p. 113.

88 Even though there is a lot of literature on *The Spanish Tragedy*, including various studies on the ghost and its function in the play, the play has been included in this study because it is so influential for the development of revenge tragedy.

89 Compare especially Gerardine Marie Obermark-Clark's chapter on the function of the supernatural in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* (Chapter V) in: *The Structural Function of Ghosts, Dreams, Prophecies and Portents in Shakespeare's Plays* (Diss. Indiana University, 1977), p. 240–297. See Harry Morgan Ayres: “Caesar's Revenge”, in: *PMLA*, Vol. 30/4 (1915), p. 771–787. Uwe Baumann: *Vorausdeutung und Tod im englischen Römerdrama der Renaissance*, p. 125–135.

90 On the distinction between the sources of histories and tragedies, see fn 41.

91 On Stoicism in Renaissance drama, see a. o. Gordon Braden: *Renaissance Tragedy and the Senecan Tradition. Anger's Privilege* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985); Robert S. Miola: *Shakespeare and Classical Tragedy. The Influence of Seneca* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992); Raimund Borgmeier: “Die englische Literatur”, in: *Der Einfluss Senecas auf das europäische Drama*, ed. Eckard Lefevre (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1978), p. 276–323.

92 See A. H. Thorndike: “The Relations of Hamlet to Contemporary Revenge Plays”, in: *PMLA* 17 (1902), p. 155–166; Philip J. Ayres: “Marston's Antonio's Revenge: The Morality of the Revenging Hero”, in: *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900*, Vol. 12/2 (1972), p. 359–364, p. 359; Fredson T. Bowers: *Elizabethan Revenge Tragedy, 1587–1642* (Princeton: Yale University Press, 1940), p. 118–119. As explained above, the Shakespearean revenge tragedies are not addressed in this study.

93 On the relation between AR and *Hamlet*, see also introduction to Jenkins' edition of *Hamlet*. The Arden Shakespeare, ed. Harold Jenkins (London/ New York: Routledge, 1982), p. 7 ff.

genre. Nevertheless, it takes a more serious turn towards at the end,⁹⁴ while Clare calls it an exploitation of revenge genre conventions with a bizarre and “zestful theatrical self-reflexivity”,⁹⁵ which also plays with the functionalisation of mantic elements.

Henry Chettle⁹⁶ wrote *The Tragedy of Hoffman* in the last years of the reign of Elizabeth I. It was performed by the Lord Admiral’s Men at The Fortune (1602). It is a revenge tragedy dominated by hatred and “pervaded throughout by a sinister gloom and a sense of harsh, even brutal tragedy”⁹⁷ with violent cruelty portrayed on stage⁹⁸ with a “revolting mass of blood and murder”.⁹⁹ Full of death symbolism¹⁰⁰ and omens, Chettle recalls ideas that Shakespeare and Kyd had put on stage, but starts his plot *in medias res* of an immediate and destructive retaliation scheme, which discards earlier doubts about personal justification as in *Hamlet*; Hoffman never doubts his motives like Hamlet or even Antonio. The ruthlessness of the revenger¹⁰¹ is accompanied by his awareness of his death as a necessary, corollary consequence of the course of revenge because he is aware of transgressing the boundaries of revenge and thereby becoming a villain: “It becomes apparent that Hoffman’s desire for revenge has gone beyond simply wanting to repay the person responsible for his father’s death. Rather, he wants to kill anyone connected with his father’s killer.”¹⁰²

Fredson Bowers remarks on the change from the supposedly moral Elizabethan plays, where violence was “a testing ground for the human spirit”¹⁰³ to the sensational cruelty of Jacobean drama, that the focus of the genre of revenge

94 See Philip J. Ayres: “Marston’s Antonio’s Revenge: The Morality of the Revenging Hero”, p. 360.

95 Janet Clare: *Revenge Tragedies of the Renaissance* (Tavistock: Northcote, 2006), p. 59.

96 Chettle’s dates of birth and death are uncertain; he died around 1603/07.

97 Harold Jenkins: *The Life and Work of Henry Chettle*, p. 71.

98 Even thunder and lightning appear as cruel in this play because they are not only supporting the vengeful Hoffman, but rebuking his inactivity. Compare Clare: *Revenge Tragedies of the Renaissance*, p. 50.

99 John Payne Collier: *History of English Dramatic Poetry to the Time of Shakespeare* (London: John Murray, 1831), p. 231.

100 Compare Janet Clare: *Revenge Tragedies of the Renaissance*, p. 8. Compare also Uwe Baumann: “Das Leben als Tanz in den Tod in der Rachetragödie der englischen Renaissance“, ed. F. H. Link, *Tanz und Tod in Kunst und Literatur, Schriften zur Literaturwissenschaft* 8 (Berlin: Perfect Paperback, 1993), p. 139–160.

101 This ruthlessness is also accompanied by the ambivalent justice which Hoffman is pursuing. He revenges his father who was punished and executed for a crime is never explained as just or faulty to the audience. Thus the justice of the deed is never a given pre-requisite: the spectator never finds out who is the maltreated party and who is on the right side of justice, moral, and vengeance.

102 Sarah J. Glady: “Revenge as Double Standard in *The Tragedy of Hoffman*”, in: *Discoveries* 18/2 (2001), p. 3–4, p. 3.

103 Fredson T. Bowers: *Elizabethan Revenge Tragedy, 1587–1642*, p. 154–156.

drama is not on heroism anymore but on villainy, horror, and love. As will be seen, the boundaries between the two ages are quite blurred, and a drama like *Hoffman* needs to be seen in the new light of Jacobean sensational violence just as those by Webster.

The first tragedy from the Jacobean period dealt with in this study is *The Revenger's Tragedy* staged at The Globe by The King's Men (1607).¹⁰⁴ Called full of disgust of humanity¹⁰⁵ by Eliot, it "has often been regarded as an expression of cynicism or disillusion, a revelation of a world-order of evil power, an image of horror",¹⁰⁶ underlined by supernatural solicitings.¹⁰⁷ Corresponding in satirist attitudes to Marston, it is also analogous to Chettle's cruelty¹⁰⁸ and parallels this drama partly in the structure of its revenge scheme.

The Revenger's Tragedy and *Antonio's Revenge* "draw attention to their status as revenge drama through melodramatic exaggeration and parody [...] both works exemplify the essentially non-naturalistic nature of revenge plays as transparent, self-confessed villains eagerly reveal their infamy to the audience."¹⁰⁹ *The Revenger's Tragedy* portrays a corrupt court without morals and like *The Spanish Tragedy* capitalises on the vitality and horror of vice with cursing and ill-wishing. The ubiquitous presence of the dead,¹¹⁰ the corpse, or rather, the skull, of the deceased beloved – in a similar way as in *The Spanish Tragedy* – constantly reminds the spectator and the revenger alike¹¹¹ of past evil and the looming need for revenge.¹¹² To make the bad bleed, the revenger risks

104 The debate about the author of this tragedy is still not settled, though most scholars today agree on Thomas Middleton, while Cyril Tourneur has widely been discarded as its author. See *The Revenger's Tragedy*. The Revels Plays, ed. R. A. Foakes (London: Methuen/ Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1966), p. xlviii-liv.

105 T. S. Eliot: *Selected Essays* (London: Faber and Faber, 1951), p. 190.

106 See introduction to Cyril Tourneur [ascribed to Middleton]: *The Revenger's Tragedy*. The Revels Plays, ed. R. A. Foakes (London: Methuen/ Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1966), p. xx.

107 Compare M. C. Bradbrook: *Themes and Conventions of Elizabethan Tragedy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1935), p. 174.

108 Both dramas begin similarly with the revenger holding a skull, obviously reminiscent of the melancholic Hamlet, who sees it as an image of decay. Though the skull in RT only reminds Vindice of his beloved, it mainly serves as an image of revenge. "Vindice's attachment to the skull of his dead lover becomes an apparent contradiction, an unhealthy identification that is a sign of excess memory." Thomas P. Anderson: *Performing Early Modern Trauma from Shakespeare to Milton* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), p. 159.

109 Janet Clare: *Revenge Tragedies of the Renaissance* (Tavistock: Northcote, 2006), p. 55. This can also be applied to *Hoffman*.

110 There is no ghost in RT. See M. C. Bradbrook: *Themes and Conventions of Elizabethan Tragedy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1935), p. 165.

111 Thomas P. Anderson writes that the revenger even denies his character to achieve retaliation in disguise: *Performing Early Modern Trauma from Shakespeare to Milton*, p. 160.

112 Compare Thomas P. Anderson: *Performing Early Modern Trauma*, p. 154ff.

and prophecies his own downfall, as “Middleton’s tragic characters generally are well aware they are violating the moral order.”¹¹³

Also played by The King’s Men at The Globe, Beaumont and Fletcher’s¹¹⁴ *The Maid’s Tragedy* (c1610/11) concentrates on a woman¹¹⁵ who avenges her honour. It is a revenge tragedy about the causes of love and its entrapments. There are not many mantic elements in the tragedy; the political entanglements – the “King is both a tyrant and legitimate”¹¹⁶ – however, prove prophetically fatal for its protagonists.

The Atheist’s Tragedy by Cyril Tourneur (c.1611) cannot be left out in a study on revenge tragedy because it presents a counter-foil to the other plays. The revenger does not transgress law and the villain is executed by divine judgement. Divinity and divination are supported especially by ominous appearances and atmospheres¹¹⁷ and contrasted with the denial of their impact.¹¹⁸

A play that resembles *Antonio’s Revenge* in structure is George Chapman’s (1560–1634) *The Revenge of Bussy D’Ambois*, performed at Revels at Whitefriars (1612). However, it differs from *Antonio’s Revenge* in the use of cruelty because its hero is too hesitant in revenge. *The Revenge of Bussy D’Ambois* is the retribution sequel to Chapman’s *Bussy D’Ambois*.¹¹⁹ It continues to address cor-

113 Peter B. Murray: *A Study of Cyril Tourneur* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1964), p. 151.

114 John Fletcher (1579–1625), Francis Beaumont (1584–1616).

115 On the role of women in *The Maid’s Tragedy*, see Allman’s chapter 5 in *Jacobean Revenge Tragedy and the Politics of Virtue*, especially 129ff. On the role of women in tragedy, see, as introductory studies, Ina Schabert: *Englische Literaturgeschichte. Eine neue Darstellung aus der Sicht der Geschlechterforschung* (Stuttgart: Kröner, 1997); compare also Uwe Baumann: “ Erotische Macht und tragische Ohnmacht der Frauen im Drama der englischen Renaissance, oder: Gibt es tragische Heldinnen im Drama Shakespeares und seiner Zeitgenossen?“, in: N. Lennartz (ed.): *The Senses’ Festival. Inszenierungen der Sinne und der Sinnlichkeit in der Literatur und Kunst des Barock* (Trier: wvt, 2005), p. 37–56; Dympna Callaghan: “The Duchess of Malfi and Early Modern Widows”, in: *Early Modern English Drama. A Critical Companion*, ed. Garrett A Sullivan Jr/ Patrick Cheney/ Andrew Hadfield (New York/ Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 272–286; id.: *Women and Gender in Renaissance Tragedy. A Study of Othello, King Lear, the Duchess of Malfi and The White Devil* (Brighton: Harvester, 1989).

116 Lee Bliss: “Beaumont and Fletcher”, in: Arthur F. Kinney (ed.): *A Companion to Renaissance Drama* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2002), p. 524–539, p. 533.

117 See M. C. Bradbrook: *Themes and Conventions of Elizabethan Tragedy*, p. 176. Compare Irving Ribner in the introduction to Cyril Tourneur: *The Atheist’s Tragedy, or, The Honest Man’s Revenge*, p. lxiv; Richard B. Sewall’s comment on *King Lear: The Vision of Tragedy* (New Haven/ London: Yale University Press, 1959), p. 70.

118 Peter B. Murray: *A Study of Cyril Tourneur*, p. 59.

119 Chapman’s play has a historical background, though he does fictionalise the source, change the story. See George Chapman: *The Revenge of Bussy D’Ambois*. Salzburg Studies in English Literature. Jacobean Drama Studies 75, ed. Robert J. Lordi (Salzburg: Institut für Englische Sprache und Literatur, 1977), p. 4–13. Compare also the introduction to *The*

rupted human justice and “the decline in natural virtue”, as Lever calls it.¹²⁰ The play does not contain many mantic elements foreboding future action but towards the end of the play, there are indications of the future, which can be structured according to the established pattern; from the beginning of *The Revenge of Bussy D’Ambois*, there is an atmosphere of some looming tragedy in the air because in the prequel, the titular hero had been murdered.

This study analyses two of John Webster’s (c1580-c1634) revenge tragedies.¹²¹ *The White Devil* and *The Duchess of Malfi* have been chosen for their prototypical usage of mantic elements; but Webster also toys with these conventions and uses pretended mantic elements contrastively, as will be seen in the analysis.

Webster’s *The White Devil* (1612), put on stage at the Red Bull by The Queen Anne’s Men, has been called one of his “sombre and noble tragedies”¹²², named thus for their bitter yet sardonic¹²³ tone which stresses a sinister and gloomy atmosphere. Bradbrook’s verdict on Webster’s use of the supernatural in his plays – like unnatural weather omens alluding to doom and downfall – is that “[h]e was concerned with perfection of detail rather than general design”¹²⁴ and instrumentalises, for example, a ghostly vision for a specific single instance rather than binding it into the context of the play. For the argument of this thesis this would support a stress on the supernatural as a functionalistic device.

The setting can be compared to the terrible vividness of deeply corrupted court life in *The Revenger’s Tragedy*, where cursing is frequent, just as in Webster’s best-known play *The Duchess of Malfi*,¹²⁵ first presented in 1614 by The King’s Men at The Globe.¹²⁶ The play is full of reference to the macrocosmic level

Conspiracy and Tragedy of Charles Duke of Byron, ed. John Margeson, *The Revels Plays* (Manchester/ New York: Manchester University Press, 1988), p. 17 ff.

120 J. W. Lever: *The Tragedy of State. A Study in Jacobean Drama* (London/ New York: Methuen, 1971), p. 40.

121 Other plays, like John Ford’s dramas *The Broken Heart* or *’Tis Pity She’s a Whore*, or *The Bloody Banquet* might have been taken into consideration, but have been replaced in favour of the chosen tragedies.

122 Harold Jenkins: *The Life and Work of Henry Chettle*, p. 72.

123 Compare M. C. Bradbrook: *Themes and Conventions of Elizabethan Tragedy*, p. 194. Similar to RT, the court is utterly corrupted in *The White Devil*; they portray circumstances that are typical for all revenge tragedy but especially permeating in the later plays of the genre in the seventeenth century. See also the development of plays in Rainer Lengeler: *Tragische Wirklichkeit als Grotteske Verfremdung bei Shakespeare* (Köln/ Graz: Böhlau Verlag, 1964).

124 M. C. Bradbrook: *Themes and Conventions of Elizabethan Tragedy*, p. 186.

125 Compare Eileen Jorge Allman: *Jacobean Revenge Tragedy and Politics of Virtue* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1999), p. 147. Compare also Phoebe Spinrad: *The Summons of Death on the Medieval and Renaissance Stage* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1987), p. 251. Spinrad calls the *The Duchess of Malfi* together with *The Atheist’s Tragedy* plays of the “old style.”

126 Compare M. C. Bradbrook: *Themes and Conventions of Elizabethan Tragedy*, p. 195.

and the realm of death,¹²⁷ as it contains allusions to mental torture and “moral perversion”.¹²⁸

Thomas Middleton (1580–1627) and William Rowley (c1585–1626) wrote *The Changeling*, which was performed by The Lady Elizabeth’s Men at The Phoenix in 1622. Here, as in *The Duchess of Malfi*, madness signifies chaos.¹²⁹ Fate¹³⁰ depends on sexual attraction.¹³¹ *The Changeling* shows the revelation of providence.¹³² It is one of the last revenge tragedies and was very successfully performed in the 1620s.¹³³

In comparison, James Shirley’s (1596–1666) early *The Maid’s Revenge*, performed 1626 by Queen Henrietta’s Men at The Cockpit, is a tragedy with a retribution topic which does not adhere to the established pattern of other revenge tragedies.¹³⁴ Being the only Caroline play in this list, it only incorporates few mantic elements.¹³⁵

Most of these tragedies are set in the South of Europe to represent the decay in

127 Thomas P. Anderson, *Performing Early Modern Trauma*, p. 5–6.

128 Janet Clare: *Revenge Tragedies of the Renaissance*, p. 103.

129 Especially the subplot deals with madness, as it is set in a lunatic asylum. However, this study does not focus on the details of the subplot because there, mantics are not prominently used, and most of the scenes of madness are of comic relief and not concerning mantically predicted fate.

130 Dorothea Forstner: *Die Welt der Symbole* (Innsbruck/ Wien/ München: Tyrolia Verlag, 1967²), p. 434. On Fortune in general, see Frederick Kiefer: *Fortune and Elizabethan Tragedy* (San Marino: Huntington Library Press, 1983); Klaus Reichert: *Fortuna oder die Beständigkeit des Wechsels* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1985).

131 See Clare: *Revenge Tragedies of the Renaissance*, p. 90.

132 Compare *ibid.*, p. 86–87.

133 Mary Hesse: *Revolutions and Reconstructions in the Philosophy of Science* (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1980), p. 236. On the practise of alchemy, which was still common in the Renaissance, see also Allen G. Debus: “Alchemy and the Historian of Science”, in: *History of Science* 6 (1967), p. 128–37; Anthony Grafton/ William R. Newman (eds.): *Secrets of Nature. Astrology and Alchemy in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, Mass./ London: The MIT Press, 2001).

134 The two sisters in the plot are the revengers, the one being ruthless and immoral, the other innocent and desperate.

135 Compare Peter F. Mullany: “Religion and the Artifice of Jacobean and Caroline Drama”, in: *Salzburg Studies in English Literature. Jacobean Drama Studies* 41 (1977), p. 2. He writes on the idea of the decadence of late Renaissance drama and its decadence before the closure of the theatres by the Puritans in 1642. Charles Forker states: “However brightly it might be made to flower in the Caroline period, revenge tragedy was dying at the root, and its reappearance, even in the hands of the decade’s greatest dramatist, reveals hothouse nurture. Paradoxically, nothing illustrates the decadence so well as one of the play’s major strengths – the revival of the straightforward Kydian ethic of blood revenge carried out not solely by a Machiavellian monster but by a character of whom we can fundamentally approve” in: Charles R. Forker (ed.) in his introduction to: James Shirley, *The Cardinal*, *Indiana University Humanities Series* 56 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1964), p. lxx.

the corrupt Catholic countries¹³⁶ and divert from association with English history: “Spaniards are presented as a treacherous nation, filled with ambition to conquer the world, as bloodthirsty Catholics indefatigable in their attempts to destroy true Christian religion.”¹³⁷ Thus, setting the plays in a different country allowed the playwrights to portray the vices of society¹³⁸ more directly. The apocalyptic ideas of a decaying society are covered with the image of a seemingly attractive, southern country.¹³⁹

Elaborating on tragedies, Molly Smith expresses the opinion that these plays “depict the undermining of patriarchal authority primarily as the subversion of a desirable norm.”¹⁴⁰ In Elizabethan and Jacobean plays, this norm is the harmonious cosmos, which is destroyed. The playwrights could let their views on the changing times¹⁴¹ be understood when focussing on chaos and destructive changes in micro- and macrocosm.¹⁴² Quite consciously, corresponding violent images are invoked.¹⁴³

All these characteristics bring about distinctive aspects and features of

136 See e.g. Richard Kenneth Emmerson: *Antichrist in the Middle Ages. A Study of Medieval Apocalypticism, Art, and Literature* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1981), p. 221 f.; he defines Rome and the Catholic force as the Antichrist – Catholic Spain is treated similarly. In later centuries, gothic novels would take up similar concepts for their settings; see a general introduction to Gothic fiction like Jerrold E. Hogle: *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

137 Jerzy Limon: *Dangerous Matter. English Drama and Politics in 1623/24* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 13.

138 Michael Neill: *Putting History to the Question*, p. 373.

139 See Alison Shell: *Catholicism, Controversy, and the English Literary Imagination, 1558–1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 28.

140 Molly Smith: *The Darker World Within. Evil in the Tragedies of Shakespeare and His Successors* (Newark: University of Delaware Press/ London/ Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1991), p. 76.

141 Peter F. Mullany: “Religion and the Artifice of Jacobean and Caroline Drama”, in: *Salzburg Studies in English Literature. Jacobean Drama Studies* 41 (1977), p. 1.

142 Compare the playwright’s as an artist’s role in e.g. Stephen Greenblatt: *Renaissance Self-Fashioning. From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980). Compare also Marion Gymnich/ Birgit Neumann/ Ansgar Nünning (eds.): *Kulturelles Wissen und Intertextualität*, p. 15. On the cosmos see Stephen Collins: *From Divine Cosmos to Sovereign State. An Intellectual History of Consciousness and the Idea of Order in Renaissance England* (New York/ Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989); J. Daly: *Cosmic Harmony and Political Thinking in Early Stuart England*. Transactions of the American Philosophical Society 69.7 (1979); Edward Grant: *Planets, Stars and Orbs. The Medieval Cosmos* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); S. K. Heninger: *Touches of Sweet Harmony. Pythagorean Cosmology and Renaissance Poetics* (San Marino: The Huntington Library, 1974); Sara Schechner-Genuth: *Comets, Popular Culture, and the Birth of Modern Cosmology* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1997); Thomas B. Stroup: *Microcosmos. The Shape of the Elizabethan Play* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1965).

143 See Jeremy Lopez: *Theatrical Convention and Audience Response in Early Modern Drama*, p. 5.

Renaissance tragedy in general and about the presentation of attitudes in particular. One of the distinctive features, as will be seen, is the incorporation of mantic elements to foreshadow information about the future plot to the audience with “conventional verbal and theatrical devices” of transgression.¹⁴⁴

Dessen calls anomalies “the key to understanding what is distinctive about drama [...], the surprises, the moments that make us aware of the full stretch of the dramaturgy”.¹⁴⁵ The unusual usually foreshadows future truth, and is discernable by the supernatural weight given to it in any scene. There are also some predictions that appear not to come true, and it will be seen that this can occur when the apparent hero transgresses too many moral boundaries¹⁴⁶ and turns into a villain. However, in these cases, predictions often come true in an unexpected and unplanned way. On the figural level, thus, characters often phrase predictions oracularly, so that their value of truth is not revealed or cannot be detected directly. Characters misinterpret and misjudge prognostications. However, the truth shows itself even in unexpected ways. This is also related to “the amount of self-knowledge that a character may gain or that we may impute to him.”¹⁴⁷ The limits of a character’s knowledge are presented through “the playwright’s selection and presentation of his material.”¹⁴⁸

Schwarze draws attention to the fact that the constellation of motives, and thus also of the different mantic elements, is very individual and each playwright has his own design.¹⁴⁹ In the following chapters, this study explores similarities between the usage, arrangement, and functionalisation of mantic elements in English Renaissance revenge tragedy,¹⁵⁰ their potential in the development of the plot, and it will show that generalisations can be made from perceptions and consequential interpretations.

144 Ibid. Compare also Adam Fox: *Oral and Literate Culture in England 1500–1700* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 2000), p. 406.

145 Alan C. Dessen: *Elizabethan Stage Conventions and Modern Interpreters* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 18.

146 See Richard B. Sewall: *The Vision of Tragedy* (New Haven/ London: Yale University Press, 1959), p. 50.

147 Klaus Peter Jochum: *Discrepant Awareness. Studies in English Renaissance Drama*, p. 19.

148 Ibid.

149 Hans-Wilhelm Schwarze: *Justice, Law and Revenge. ‘The Individual and Natural Order’ in Shakespeares Dramen* (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag Herbert Grundmann, 1971), p. 1 f.

150 Obviously in the histories, the future on stage will be past in reality, but similarly the truth of a prophetic foreshadowing of future events in tragedy is inevitable. See fn 41.

2 A Cultural Background to Mantics – “O how this discord doth afflict my soul”¹⁵¹

Before the alteration and changes of kingdomes and in the time of warres, seditions, and other daungerous seasons, ther most commonly happen very strange things in the aire, in the earth, & amongst liuing creatures clean contrary to the usuall course of nature. Which things men cal, wonders, signes, monsters, and forewarnings of matters to come.¹⁵²

The foreboding of future events by strange indicators “contrary to the usuall course of nature”¹⁵³ is the main function of mantics in drama. The background to the ideas of mantics is deeply rooted in the traditions of Renaissance culture.

Literary critics and historians have outlined and respectively criticised generalisations on the Renaissance World Picture.¹⁵⁴ It declined as a set construct of ideas at the end of the sixteenth and beginning of the seventeenth centuries, and by the end of the seventeenth century most supernatural beliefs were still commonly known but challenged and replaced by rational explanations.¹⁵⁵ However, it still had an immense influence on the ways of thinking at the time of the prosperity of English theatre. The ancient and medieval ideas that had dominated philosophy and the arts were still prominent in people’s minds and also influenced the adaptation of revolutionary ideas, such as those of astronomical science, social treatises, religious reform, and other areas that affected life. The syncretistic attitudes towards developments in every field of society, be they religious, scientific, or political, are candidly discussed at a time that struggled with attempts to combine traditional ideas with modern progress. Partly adapted into the old, firmly religious model, a heterogeneous blend represented

151 Shakespeare: *The First Part of King Henry VI*, III.i.109.

152 Lewes Lavatar: *Of Ghostes and Spirits Walking by Nyght* (London, 1572), ed. J. Dover Wilson/ May Yardley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1929), p. 80–81.

153 Compare also Christopher Marsh: *Popular Religion in Sixteenth Century England. Holding their Peace* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1998), p. 151.

154 E. M. W. Tillyard: *The Elizabethan World Picture* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1943, repr. 1967); Paul Oskar Kristeller: *Renaissance Concepts of Man and Other Essays* (New York/ Evanston/ San Francisco/ London: Harper Torchbooks/ Harper & Row, 1972); J. B. Bamborough: *The Little World of Man* (London/ New York/ Toronto: Longmans, Green & Co., 1952); William R. Elton: “Shakespeare and the Thought of His Age”, in: *A New Companion to Shakespeare Studies*, ed. Kenneth Muir/ S. Schoenbaum (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), p. 180–198. Compare also Geoffrey R. Elton: *Reformation Europe, 1517–1559* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963); id.: *The Tudor Revolution in Government: Administrative Changes in the Reign of Henry VIII* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953).

155 See Vanessa McMahon: *Murder in Shakespeare’s England* (London/ New York: Hambledon and London, 2004), p. 18.

a syncretistic mindset, which embraced new ideas alongside old ones¹⁵⁶ at a time of social turbulence in which a gradual emergence of a new order, and the increasing feeling of transition had reached the public.¹⁵⁷

Conflicts were inevitable and these were also the basis for internal conflicts that could obviously be used by playwrights and presented as topics or motives within their fictionalised worlds. The possibility of the mimesis of life in the theatre thus proved fruitful and allowed various characters and attitudes to be displayed.¹⁵⁸ The traditional image of mantic forebodings, criticised in the Renaissance, could be represented in a mimetic way but the circumstances of its implications do not necessarily become topics of conflict but determining items of plot structure. There could also be criticism by opposite protagonists discussing a controversial subject as presented on stage, like atheism controversially attacked the role of divine influence in the proceedings of the world.¹⁵⁹

This chapter deals with mantics in the context of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries in England, how mantics are defined, how they were accepted, and what kind of context was touched or influenced by them. The attitudes towards mantics in the Renaissance are dependant on supernaturalism and its impact, the concepts of prophecies in literature, and the religious and social context, which also influenced the theatre. Collins summarises the interest in these innovative indications and events in the Renaissance as follows:

It is not surprising that the best descriptions of the commonplaces of society and the traditional idea of order were written in the Elizabethan years when anomalous atti-

156 See literature on the change of paradigms in the Renaissance. The following studies present only an introduction to different contexts: Don Cameron Allen: *Doubt's Boundless Sea. Scepticism and Faith in the Renaissance* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1964); Ernst Cassirer: *Individuum und Kosmos in der Philosophie der Renaissance* (1927). Studien der Bibliothek Warburg 10 (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, repr. 1977); Stephen Greenblatt: *Shakespearean Negotiations. The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988); Richard McCabe/ Debora Shuger (eds.): *Religion and Culture in Renaissance England* (Cambridge/ New York/ Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Michael Neill: *Putting History to the Question. Power, Politics, and Society in English Renaissance Drama* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000).

157 See Molly Smith: *The Darker World Within*, p. 25f. On the idea of cultural embedding, see Marion Gymnich/ Birgit Neumann/ Ansgar Nünning (eds.): *Kulturelles Wissen und Intertextualität. Theoriekonzeptionen und Fallstudien zur Kontextualisierung von Literatur*. Studies in English Literary and Cultural History (ELCH) 22 (Trier: WVT, 2006), p. 7 and 9.

158 Compare Jonathan Dollimore's article on "Two concepts of mimesis: Renaissance literary theory and *The Revenger's Tragedy*", in: *Drama and Mimesis*, ed. James Redmond (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), p. 25–50.

159 Compare Gymnich/ Neumann/ Nünning (eds.): *Kulturelles Wissen und Intertextualität*, p. 17; Manfred Pfister: "Elizabethan Atheism: Discourse without Subject", in: *Shakespeare Jahrbuch* (West) (1991), p. 59–81.

tudes in science, religion, politics, and poetry began challenging the traditional commonwealth [...] [j]ust as historical, secular, relativistic, and existential attitudes.¹⁶⁰

The challenges of “anomalous attitudes” were received and not always easily accepted by customary ideas, which had their roots in the classical tradition. Mantic elements present anomalous proceedings but the tradition of their interpretation did not develop in the Renaissance. It originates in Greek and Roman times,¹⁶¹ when omens and prodigies were interpreted, and divination was relied on for decisions concerning political and private life. This tradition continued and was still popular and customary in the Renaissance, though it was not as influential as far as politics were concerned. Elias Ashmole in the 1650s, in his *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum*, wrote that “Iudiciall Astrologie is the Key of Naturall Magick, and Naturall Magick the Doore that leads to this Blessed Stone”.¹⁶² The philosophical association was still strong, and persevered through the seventeenth century.¹⁶³ The importance of supernaturalism was still tangible, even though its scientific value was often disputed.¹⁶⁴ Buell stresses that a divine influence was accepted by the majority of the public:

This whole affair supplies the clearest evidence that the habit of interpreting prodigious phenomena as portents was not, in sixteenth-century England, a superstition held by the illiterate and unlearned, to be deplored or ridiculed by the better educated. It was a considered doctrine set forth by the highest authorities of the Church, with the hearty support, if not at the instance, of the heads of the State, and was not merely offered to, but positively and forcefully enjoined upon, the whole population of the realm.¹⁶⁵

160 Stephen Collins: *From Divine Cosmos to Sovereign State. An Intellectual History of Consciousness and the Idea of Order in Renaissance England* (New York/ Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 8.

161 See various works on the tradition of the soothsayer in Roman and Greek history; for an overview, see encyclopedias in the bibliography and Keith Thomas: *Man and the Natural World* (London: Allen Lane, 1983); id.: *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973).

162 See Anthony Grafton/ William R. Newman (eds.): *Secrets of Nature. Astrology and Alchemy in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, Mass./ London: The MIT Press, 2001), p. 24, taken from Elias Ashmole: *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum*, ed. A. G. Debus (New York: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1967; facsimile of London, 1652), p. 443.

163 The impact of such ideas is still visible in literature. Compare Thomas Kullmann: *Vermenschlichte Natur. Zur Bedeutung von Landschaft und Natur im englischen Roman von Ann Radcliffe bis Thomas Hardy* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1995).

164 There are various treatises discussing or even renouncing superstitious beliefs, e.g. L. M. Buell: “Elizabethan Portents: Superstition or Doctrine”, in: *Essays Critical and Historical Dedicated to Lily B. Campbell*, p. 27–41; Bertil Johansson: *Religion and Superstition in the Plays of Ben Jonson and Thomas Middleton. Essays and Studies on English Language and Literature VII* (Uppsala: A.-B. Lundequitska Bokhandeln/ Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1950); D. H. Rawcliffe: *Occult and Supernatural Phenomena* (New York: Dover, 1952).

165 L. M. Buell: “Elizabethan Portents: Superstition or Doctrine”, p. 40.

Superstition was understood by the illiterate public as well as political leaders or learned scholars, and it could explain how to interpret portents as a divine intervention.

The belief in supernatural powers was influenced by a sceptical attitude¹⁶⁶ towards alteration, radical transformation through scientific development, and “the preoccupation with chaos, even when expressed in metaphoric, abstract or theological terms, was undoubtedly rooted in a fear of social change and social disorder”.¹⁶⁷

Nevertheless, science – especially in the field of astrology which is of particular interest for this study – was advancing. In 1543, Copernicus had published his *De Revolutionibus Orbium Celestium*, and with further works by Kepler and Galileo¹⁶⁸ new results were spreading fast and shattered a perfect picture of divine harmony. The interest in the philosophical background of science was equally strong: scientific philosophers published treatises, e.g. Francis Bacon’s *Essays*; however, the astrologer John Dee was just as popular and his knowledge and art widely acknowledged.¹⁶⁹

New developments and discoveries¹⁷⁰ made in the natural sciences, medicine and technology proved fruitful for discussions in all areas of life and partly threatened the belief in religious traditions.¹⁷¹ Conventional faith was doubted because of new scientific developments¹⁷² which challenged the seductive magical and forbidden knowledge of wizards, witches and sorcerers.¹⁷³

166 Richard H. Popkin: “Predicting, Prophecy, Divining, and Foretelling from Nostradamus to Hume”, in: *History of European Ideas* 5 (1984), p. 117–35.

167 Jonathan Dollimore: *Radical Tragedy. Religion, Ideology and Power in the Drama of Shakespeare and his Contemporaries* (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1989²), p. 93.

168 *De Motibus Stellae Martis* in 1609 and *Sidereus Nuncius* in 1610.

169 See e.g. Nicholas H. Clulee: *John Dee’s Natural Philosophy. Between Science and Religion* (London/ New York: Routledge, 1988); Peter French: *John Dee* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972).

170 On science see a. o. Allen G. Debus: “Alchemy and the Historian of Science”, in: *History of Science* 6 (1967), p. 128–137; id.: *The Chemical Dream of the Renaissance*; id.: *Man and Nature in the Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978); id.: “Renaissance Chemistry and the Work of Robert Fludd”, in: *Alchemy and Chemistry in the Seventeenth Century* (Los Angeles: University of California, Los Angeles, William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, 1966), p. 1–25; id.: *Science and Education in the Seventeenth Century* (London: MacDonald, 1970)/ *Science, Medicine and Society in the Renaissance. Essays in Honour of Walter Pagel*, 2 Vols. (London: Heinemann, 1972); Steven Shapin: *The Scientific Revolution* (Chicago/ London: The University of Chicago Press, 1996); Alan G. R. Smith: *Science and Society in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1972); W. P. D. Wightman: *Science and the Renaissance. An Introduction to the Study of the Emergence of the Sciences in the Sixteenth Century* (Edinburgh/ London: Oliver and Boyd, 1962).

171 See Richard S. Westfall: *Science and Religion in Seventeenth Century England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1958), p. 1.

172 Compare Verena Olejniczak Lobsien: “Multi Pertransibunt, oder: Das versprochenen Ende.

The impact of the contemporary debates on the influence of sciento-philosophical treatises on lay people, however, was not immense: “In short the conventional [concept of] heaven of the layman remained unaffected by science”.¹⁷⁴ Alongside the old ideas of cosmic order went the pseudo-scientific ideas of celestial and astrological influence,¹⁷⁵ containing the popular perception of omens: they were commonly treated as signs of disorder in the macrocosm and thus influencing the microcosm. This idea of the corresponding cosmoi allowed ancient ideas of mantic foreboding to prosper, because the mantic readings of supernatural signs were popular, and prophetic predictions were part and parcel of country customs.

The validity of foreshadowing and the belief in divine providentialism influenced popular expectations but also popular entertainment. Common ideas in society were taken up by the playwrights and adapted for the stage. Ideas that could introduce complications into the plot were necessary in all plays, but the divine interference and true chaos in the world frame was especially desirable in tragedies, such as the violent revenge tragedies. Here, providential chaos perturbed the structure of the dramatic plot. The literary study of these thus also proves a functional history.¹⁷⁶

As mentioned above, the popular interest in superstitious predictions was high, and also demanded satisfaction in the field of the book-trade. There was a growth in the market¹⁷⁷ of printed media, including astrological catalogues, which contained weather predictions, horoscopes, or country proverbs. These almanacks¹⁷⁸ became more prominent, containing at first only charts for con-

Inszenierungen frühneuzeitlicher Apokalyptik in Shakespeares *King Lear*”, in: *Apokalypse. Der Anfang im Ende*, ed. Maria Moog-Grünewald/ Verena Olejniczak Lobsien (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2003), see especially p. 109.

173 Compare J. B. Black: *The Reign of Elizabeth 1558–1603* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), p. 331.

174 J. B. Black: *The Reign of Elizabeth 1558–1603*, p. 308.

175 Ibid.

176 See Gymnich/ Neumann/ Nünning (eds.): *Kulturelles Wissen und Intertextualität*, p. 19.

177 See Eustace F. Bosanquet: *English Printed Almanacks and Prognostications. A Bibliographical History to the Year 1600* (London: Chiswick Press for the Bibliographical Society, 1917). Bernard Capp: *Astrology and the Popular Press. English Almanacs, 1500–1800* (Ithaca, N. Y.: Cornell University Press/ London: Faber and Faber, 1979); Abel Heywood: *Three Papers on English Printed Almanacs* (London: privately printed, 1904); Francis R. Johnson: “Astronomical Text-Books in the Sixteenth Century”, in: E. A. Underwood (ed.): *Science, Medicine, and History* (London/ New York/ Toronto, 1953), p. 285–302; id.: “An Anthropology of Religion and Magic, II”, in: *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 6 (1975), p. 91–109; Keith Thomas: *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973).

178 Compare Tim Thornton: “Reshaping the Local Future: The Development and Uses of Provincial Political Prophecies, 1300–1900”, in: Bertrand Taithe/ Tim Thornton (eds.): *Prophecy. The Power of Inspired Language in History 1300–2000* (Stroud: Sutton, 1997),

junctions and planetary oppositions, dates of eclipses, and movable feasts,¹⁷⁹ but later, they developed into commonplace books with a much wider content and a higher popular demand. This impact of the printed media¹⁸⁰ must also be interpreted as an increasing interest in prophetic data and culture, such as the interpretations of supernatural omens. However, the almanacks also provided information on the “rich calendrical cycle”¹⁸¹ of church festivities, originating in the medieval traditions. “Almanacks, like astrology itself, were at their peak in England in the Elizabethan and Stuart period.”¹⁸² The popularity of almanacks and zodiacs in calendars was established by the general concern with catastrophes like earthquakes, floods and rain, lightnings and thunders, heavenly fire, a dearth, or epidemics¹⁸³ and tried to provide explanations for causes of divine interference and providence.¹⁸⁴ Walsham writes that “monstrous births, blazing stars, frightening apparitions, and eclipses were widely acknowledged to be providential tokens of future misfortune, and contemplated with a mixture of anxiety, astonishment, and awe.”¹⁸⁵ Thus the fascination with the spectacular supported the practise of popular beliefs,¹⁸⁶ even though the misuse of God’s name and blasphemy on his powers were prohibited by political acts.¹⁸⁷

Provoking divine action and premonitions was not part of Renaissance culture, and artificial mantics, such as Greek and Roman oracles, which prophesied from experiments with animals or stones were not common in the Renaissance any more, but the above mentioned deductive and inductive¹⁸⁸ conclusions

p. 51–67, here p. 54. Bernard Capp published extensively on the tradition of almanacks, see bibliography.

- 179 Eustace F. Bosanquet: *English Printed Almanacks and Prognostications. A Bibliographical History to the Year 1600* (London: Chiswick Press for the Bibliographical Society, 1917), p. 1.
- 180 Compare Capp: *Astrology and the Popular Press. English Almanacs, 1500–1800*; see John Miller: *Religion in the Popular Prints, 1600–1832. The English Satirical Print, 1600–1832* (Cambridge: Chadwick-Healey, 1986). Compare Tim Thornton: “Reshaping the Local Future: The Development and Uses of Provincial Political Prophecies, 1300–1900”, in: Taithe/ Thornton (eds.): *Prophecy. The Power of Inspired Language in History 1300–2000*, p. 51: “The success of printing meant that it became possible to produce printed books and pamphlets in large numbers, relatively quickly, and at very low prices.”
- 181 Christopher Marsh: *Popular Religion in Sixteenth Century England. Holding their Peace* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1998), p. 98.
- 182 Bernard Capp: *Astrology and the Popular Press. English Almanacs, 1500–1800* (Ithaca, N. Y.: Cornell University Press/ London: Faber and Faber, 1979), p. 276.
- 183 Compare Walsham: *Providence in Early Modern England*, p. 170–171, 184.
- 184 See Christopher Marsh: *Popular Religion in Sixteenth Century England*, p. 150.
- 185 Walsham: *Providence in Early Modern England*, p. 167.
- 186 See Marsh: *Popular Religion in Sixteenth Century England*, p. 149.
- 187 *Ibid.*, p. 148.
- 188 Compare the ideas of Eco on deduction, induction, and abduction, also reflecting on the philosophy of Charles Sanders Peirce; described in: Michael Caesar: *Umberto Eco. Philosophy, Semiotics and the Work of Fiction* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001), especially p. 98, 117–118.

played a crucial role in popular perceptions of mantic reasoning. Each of these traditions influenced and paved the way that foreboding played on stage.

As can already be discerned from the above, the branch of mantics that proved most popular in the Renaissance was that of astrology. Omens and comets in the skies¹⁸⁹ presented an imbalance of order in the cosmos.¹⁹⁰ This was especially evident in the astronomical science.¹⁹¹ Star constellations and comets like the 1572 supernova presented a shift in the cosmos and thus a corresponding danger to the microcosm of the state of men. Eade writes that “the stars of the pre-Newtonian universe were *fixed* in a number of senses. First, their number – those, at least, to which any attention was paid – was distinctly finite [...]; second, their positional relation to each other was considered not to vary by comparison with the planets”.¹⁹² Moving stars represented a loss of the fixed order and thus a sign of disorder.

Calamities guided the discourse on divine influence and divination,¹⁹³ because there was a popular fascination¹⁹⁴ with the spectacular and supernatural:¹⁹⁵ Strange occurrences could be interpreted as divine signs and warnings.¹⁹⁶ The ideas and preconceptions of mantic or supernatural beliefs were commonplace in society; even for medical treatment, calculations of the stars were taken into consideration and McMahon states that “[t]heir powers (and other magic) were still considered to be very real. Things we [today] consider to be intangible and incredible were part of the mental world of the majority of the population.”¹⁹⁷ The supernatural belonged to the early modern construct of ideas¹⁹⁸ which

189 See chapter 4.

190 On the concept of order, compare also Stephen Collins: *From Divine Cosmos to Sovereign State. An Intellectual History of Consciousness and the Idea of Order in Renaissance England* (New York/ Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 96.

191 Astronomical science included the idea of astrological superstition – the distinction was blurred yet. On ideas that concerned astronomy and astrology, compare the introductory book on the topic by Patrick Curry: *Prophecy and Power. Astrology in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989).

192 J. C. Eade: *The Forgotten Sky. A Guide to Astrology in English Literature* (Oxford Clarendon Press, 1984), p. 14.

193 Sara Schechner Genuth: *Comets, Popular Culture, and the Birth of Modern Cosmology* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1997), p. 12.

194 Compare Allen G. Debus: “Renaissance Chemistry and the Work of Robert Fludd”, in: *Alchemy and Chemistry in the Seventeenth Century* (Los Angeles: University of California, Los Angeles, William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, 1966), p. 1–25, here p. 8.

195 McMahon contrasts the belief in magic and supernatural with logical reasoning. Vanessa McMahon: *Murder in Shakespeare's England* (London/ New York: Hambledon and London, 2004), p. 19.

196 See Christopher Marsh: *Popular Religion in Sixteenth Century England*, p. 151.

197 Vanessa McMahon: *Murder in Shakespeare's England*, p. 17.

198 *Ibid.*, p. 17–18.

“seemed real enough”¹⁹⁹ to the popular audience. McMahan underlines the importance of the entertainment value of mantics: “By involving providence, storytellers and witnesses could gloss over contradictory or implausible evidence and bury their role as accusers behind ghostly voices or fortuitous events. In these cases, providence provided a cover”.²⁰⁰

The contradictions and uncertainties²⁰¹ of mantic influence were fascinating and merged with the question of the role of the individual in life, i.e. his position in a conflict between nature, religion, and society, which dominated the world. Thus even more, they had an impact on the mirror²⁰² to the world: the theatrical stage.²⁰³

Berman draws attention to the public feeling of being part and belonging to the cosmos and individual attempts to find a role through the identification with nature and the world. By the disenchantment of the world, so Berman, chaos was created through sorrow and mourning, and the individual looked for a compensating force to fill this vacuum or find a therapeutic way out of the void. What he is drawing on is the loss of a sense of belonging through the change of paradigms,²⁰⁴ containing “a revolution in cosmology”,²⁰⁵ which involved religious changes in the seventeenth century.²⁰⁶

199 Hilary Carey: *Courting Disaster. Astrology at the English Court and University in the Later Middle Ages* (Houndsmills/ London: Macmillan, 1992), p. 18.

200 Vanessa McMahan: *Murder in Shakespeare’s England*, p. 20–21; see also Peter Lake: “Deeds against Nature: Cheap Print, Protestantism and Murder in Early Seventeenth-Century England”, in: Kevin Sharpe/ Peter Lake (eds.): *Culture and Politics in Early Stuart England* (London: Macmillan, 1994), p. 274.

201 See Dwight Gwilym James: *The Dream of Learning. An Essay on The Advancement of Learning Hamlet and King Lear* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1951), p. 66.

202 Holding “as ‘twere the mirror up to nature” (*Hamlet* III.ii.20) also allows to address issues that dominated current debates and concerned popular and academic opinions and discussions. Compare Herbert Grabes: *Speculum, Mirror und Looking-Glass*. Anglia. Zeitschrift für Englische Philologie 16 (Tübingen: M. Niemeyer, 1973).

203 See Alexander Demandt: *Metaphern für Geschichte. Sprachbilder und Gleichnisse im historisch-politischen Denken* (München: C. H. Beck’sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1978), chapter VI.

204 Compare Allen G. Debus: *Man and Nature in the Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), p. 140. On political conflicts in Early Modern England with relation to religion, see among others: John William Allen: *History of Political Thought in the Sixteenth Century* (London: Methuen, 1951); Jonathan Barry/ Christopher Brooks: *The Middling Sort of People. Culture, Society and Politics in England, 1550–1800* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1994); Dagmar Freist: *Governed by Opinion: Politics, Religion and the Dynamics of Communication in Stuart London, 1637–1645* (London: Tauris, 1997); Kaspar von Greyerz (ed.): *Religion and Society in Early Modern Europe 1500–1800* (London/ Boston/ Sydney: George Allen & Unwin, in cooperation with The German Historical Institute, 1984); Debora Kuller Shuger: *Habits of Thought in the English Renaissance. Religion, Politics, and the Dominant Culture* (Berkeley/ Los Angeles/ Oxford: University of California Press, 1990). Compare also Bernard Capp: “The Political Dimension of Apoca-

The wish to compensate this feeling of loss and to entertain the public brought the playwrights to incorporate thoughts on superstition and the occult in their plays. On stage, as Stewart elaborates, the “mass of the people are also susceptible to the signs of the times, and see, sometimes in the phenomena of Nature sometimes in their own hearts, prophetic warning of evils to come.”²⁰⁷

Thus mantics and especially their visual aspects are invoked by the description of occult influences on the mind; these can be detected in the visions of the sleeping and the waking mind, dreams and ghosts.²⁰⁸ A similar role can be ascribed to the existence of spirits of the dead which play an existential role in English Renaissance drama and, more prominently, in revenge tragedy. The value of prophecies and curses as supernatural forebodings is harder to discern but is nevertheless found in the plays they are as relevant for men’s disposition. For example, even though Ben Jonson regarded the occult sciences as “humbug”, “we must remember that the conception of ghosts was part of the Elizabethan world picture and [even] far more common than the belief in astrology and alchemy”, as Johansson concedes in his dissertation.²⁰⁹

The contemporary debate was mostly concerned with astrology.²¹⁰ The so-called chain-of-being dominated the idea of planet order, and the sphere containing the heavens was circling around the lapsed and corrupted world.

One of the main branches of astronomy that was concerned with mantics and most prominently featured in discussions about the Renaissance cultural context is that of the Elizabethan World Picture and most visually, the image of astrological arrangements. Astrology, comprising today’s differentiated area of

lyptic Thought”, in: *The Apocalypse in English Renaissance Thought and Literature*, ed. C. A. Patrides/ Joseph Wittreich (Ithaca, N. Y.: Cornell University Press, 1984), p. 97.

205 Hedley Howell Rhys (ed.): *Seventeenth Century Science and the Arts* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1961), p. 4.

206 See Morris Berman: *The Re-enchantment of the World* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981).

207 Helen Hinton Stewart: *The Supernatural in Shakespeare* (London: John Ouseley, 1908), p. 18.

208 Compare the analysis of mantic devices in Uwe Baumann: *Vorausdeutung und Tod im englischen Römerdrama der Renaissance (1564–1642)* (Tübingen/ Basel: Francke Verlag, 1996).

209 Bertil Johansson: *Religion and Superstition in the Plays of Ben Jonson and Thomas Middleton. Essays and Studies on English Language and Literature VII* (Uppsala: A.-B. Lundequistska Bokhandeln/ Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1950), p. 251. In the course of this study, the Elizabethan World Picture will be spelled with capital letter, because it is established as a set term since E. M. W. Tillyard: *The Elizabethan World Picture* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1943).

210 Especially the apparent changes in the heavenly *empyreum*, for example in 1572: Nova in the Cassiopeia, in 1577: a comet in the orbit, in 1580: an earthquake as a corresponding chaos in the microcosm of the earth. In 1583: the conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn. Compare J. C. Eade: *The Forgotten Sky. A Guide to Astrology in English Literature* (Oxford Clarendon Press, 1984), p. 59.

scientific astronomy allowed various introspections into “personalities, [...] everyday lives, and the larger trajectories of [...] careers”²¹¹ of individual people. The impact of and belief in astrology merged with the Christian faith; its importance can also be detected through the use of horoscopes, for example in the context of the plays discussed. E. g. Webster supports the belief in horoscopes by having a horoscope cast at the time of birth of the Duchess of Malfi’s child in his play of the same name.²¹²

The task of astrologers would be to read signs in the sky, form judgements on their impact, and organise “elections” and “interrogations” to give precise council. Thus, as Grafton writes, “[a]strology was a form of divination along with oneiromancy, arithmology, and a host of other techniques for auguring and at times altering the future”.²¹³ In the manner of mantics, predictions were inductively synthesised, effects calculated from past experiences and the consequential future events deduced.

Doubts, new ideas, and contemporary developments allowed ideas of possible supernatural voices and influences, and disruptive forces to be presented in drama. In revenge tragedy, supernatural constructs portrayed necessary²¹⁴ disruptive complexes. In the aftermath of the reformation and a problematic religious settlement in England, drama was dependent on divine influence guiding the plot. This was still based on the ideas of the medieval images of the corresponding cosmoi and how the sympathies work on and affect the minds of men. Playwrights relied on the instability of mankind and their destiny of imperfection caused by the lapsus, the fall of Adam and Eve.²¹⁵

Astrology and the belief in these religious and superstitious constructs provoked a combined human attitude towards religion and magic – both played an eminent part in Renaissance society.²¹⁶ Whereas earlier scholars tried to sup-

211 Anthony Grafton/ William R. Newman (eds.): *Secrets of Nature. Astrology and Alchemy in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, Mass./ London: The MIT Press, 2001), p. 12.

212 See chapter on omens, ch. 4.

213 Anthony Grafton/ William R. Newman (eds.): *Secrets of Nature*, p. 15.

214 See Vanessa McMahon: *Murder in Shakespeare’s England*, p. 22.

215 Compare J. B. Bamborough: *The Little World of Man* (London/ New York/ Toronto: Longmans, Green & Co., 1952); Hardin Craig: *The Enchanted Glass. The Elizabethan Mind in Literature* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1960); Victor Harris: *All Coherence Gone. A Study of the Seventeenth Century Controversy over Disorder and Decay in the Universe* (London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1949).

216 Compare Allen G. Debus: *Man and Nature in the Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), p. 13. Natural philosophy was a prospering branch: the detection of secrets of divine nature was the aim of intellectuals like John Dee, the Queen’s astronomer. See Nicholas H. Clulee: *John Dee’s Natural Philosophy. Between Science and Religion* (London/ New York: Routledge, 1988); Peter French: *John Dee* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972); id.: *Philosophy of Science. Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 15 (University of Notre Dame, 1994). Especially on magic, compare also J. B. Black: *The Reign of Elizabeth*

press the effect of a belief in occult, supernatural phenomena, their underlying power offered playwrights a wide range of motives. Additionally, a differentiation between the supernatural and the natural is sometimes blurred: “it had to be decided what were the boundary conditions governing miracles, prodigies, marvels, and ‘prestiges’; how to define and use categories such as ‘magic’ and ‘occult’; and how to relate the explanatory languages of theology and natural philosophy.”²¹⁷

Christian faith did not necessarily mean the exclusion of supernatural beliefs. Thus, magic and the supernatural always have to be considered in a broader and rather syncretistic context.²¹⁸ Superstition and the belief in miracles were essential and held its importance in a society that felt threatened by the above-mentioned uncertainty:²¹⁹ “Ghosts, witches, fairies, demons and God define how people considered their world [...] [and] remained part of the belief system of certain people and part of everyday language.”²²⁰

Supernatural beliefs,²²¹ as much as their influence declined in an age of natural scientific discoveries, were still extensively functionalised in Renaissance drama. This was also the case because, as Black argues, “the conventional heaven of the layman remained unaffected by science [...]. Eclipses were harbingers of disaster, comets were associated with the deaths of illustrious persons.”²²² However, Black does admit that the debates went on when traditional values were being threatened by new discoveries and that, while “astrology was deeply rooted in the popular mind, the common sense of the age was beginning to revolt against its absurdities.”²²³ These discussions and quarrels called upon visions

1558–1603 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), p. 327: Black writes on magic in everyday life that the “efficacy of charms, spells, incantations, divinations, and amulets was accepted as part and parcel of everyday existence.” This is also underlined by William L. Hine in: “Marin Mersenne: Renaissance Naturalism and Renaissance Magic”, in: Brian Vickers (ed.): *Occult and Scientific Mentalities in the Renaissance* (Cambridge/ London/ New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 165.

217 Stuart Clark: “The Scientific Status of Demonology”, in: Brian Vickers (ed.): *Occult and Scientific Mentalities in the Renaissance* (Cambridge/ London/ New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 354.

218 Vanessa McMahon: *Murder in Shakespeare’s England*, p. 28.

219 See Richard S. Westfall: *Science and Religion in Seventeenth Century England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1958), p. 8–10.

220 Vanessa McMahon: *Murder in Shakespeare’s England*, p. 27.

221 Compare William L. Hine: “Marin Mersenne: Renaissance Naturalism and Renaissance Magic”, p. 165.

222 J. B. Black: *The Reign of Elizabeth*, p. 308.

223 *Ibid.*, p. 309. Compare Vanessa McMahon: *Murder in Shakespeare’s England*, p. 25. Molly Smith investigates the contemporary scepticism at the beginning of the seventeenth century, in Molly Smith: *The Darker World Within. Evil in the Tragedies of Shakespeare and His Successors* (Newark: University of Delaware Press/ London/ Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1991), p. 15.

and visitations, even superstitions for support²²⁴ and playwrights could instrumentalise public doubts and insecurities effectively on stage. As was already mentioned the belief in the occult and supernatural was often also almost eclectically associated with Christian faith, as MacMahon notes: “References to God, demons or ghosts often had discernible logical implications as well as reflecting contemporary popular belief.”²²⁵

Religion was one of the pillars of the world in the Renaissance,²²⁶ even though the seventeenth century proved a watershed in Christianity²²⁷ – new concepts of the world brought forth a decline in the influence of religion,²²⁸ while syncretistic ideals might attempt a consolidation between religion and science.

The harmonious image of an ever-loving God seemed a mere ideal and partly failed in the reality of the believers and the age, which denied a perfect, divine order. Not everyone was reconciled with optimistic Christian humanism²²⁹ and desolate about providence which caused conflicts and discussion. This was exaggerated and exploited by the playwrights to entertain the public by reminding them of their customs, thoughts and fears;²³⁰ it is depicted in most of the Renaissance tragedies and histories.²³¹

One of these was an apocalyptic vision “that the end of the world was at hand”,²³² fused by past disruption of the cosmos, among them scientific dis-

224 See John Arthos: *Shakespeare's Use of Dream and Vision* (London: Bowes & Bowes, 1977), p. 11.

225 Vanessa McMahon: *Murder in Shakespeare's England*, p. 25 and 26–7.

226 See e.g. Henry G. Alexander: *Religion in England 1558–1662* (London: University of London Press, 1968); Mircea Eliade: *Das Heilige und das Profane. Vom Wesen des Religiösen* (Frankfurt: Insel Verlag, 1984). See bibliography for further titles on religion.

227 After the Anglican reformation, England struggled with religious debates and controversial attitudes towards faith.

228 Richard S. Westfall: *Science and Religion in Seventeenth Century England*, p. 1.

229 Compare Irving Ribner: *Jacobean Tragedy. The Quest for Moral Order* (London: Methuen & Company, 1962), p. 2–3. See also Manfred Beyer: *Das Staunen in Shakespeares Dramen. Ursachen, Darstellungsweisen und Wirkungsintentionen* (Köln/ Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 1987), especially on values and conflicts in the theatre.

230 Compare Christopher Marsh: *Popular Religion in Sixteenth Century England. Holding their Peace* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), p. 98.

231 One aspect that is exploited is the corruption of the Catholic church. For example, in WD, the Pope appears unblemished on the surface but reveals a scheming, malicious, and perfidious character.

232 Bernard Capp: “The Political Dimension of Apocalyptic Thought”, in: *The Apocalypse in English Renaissance Thought and Literature*, ed. C. A. Patrides/ Joseph Wittreich (Ithaca, N. Y.: Cornell University Press, 1984), p. 97; John Napier in 1593, for example, had calculated the end of the world for 1639, see Bernard Capp: “The Political Dimension of Apocalyptic Thought”, in: *The Apocalypse in English Renaissance Thought and Literature*, ed. C. A. Patrides/ Joseph Wittreich (Ithaca, N. Y.: Cornell University Press, 1984), p. 100; compare p. 101: “While never accepted universally, millenarian ideas won widespread support in England, especially in the period of the civil wars”. Compare also Uwe Baumann: “Image of

coveries, or political conflicts, as for example the Armada.²³³ Especially the political aspect of these providential conflicts and eschatological debates is not to be underestimated and even politically instrumentalised.²³⁴ “Politics and apocalyptic thought were bound closely together in early modern Europe, and each influenced the other”,²³⁵ Bernard Capp argues with regard to the emotional and intellectual ideas on the Apocalypse in the Renaissance. This idea of approaching doom²³⁶ aroused patriotic fervour²³⁷ in a period of political crisis at the end of the sixteenth and beginning of the seventeenth centuries. The change of paradigms as it has often been called was affected by major upheavals in all areas of society in that ideas and attitudes towards almost every aspect of life changed.²³⁸ Divine providence was part of politics²³⁹ and, as Anne McLaren writes, “political prophecy is about power.”²⁴⁰ She argues that from the midst of the sixteenth century onwards the impact of political prophecy was essential and represented a critical aspect of kingship and the nature of a state and its future.²⁴¹

that Horror’: Die Apokalypse in der Politik, Kultur und Literatur der Englischen Renaissance“, in: Barbara Haupt (ed.): *Endzeitvorstellungen* (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 2001), p. 271–289.

- 233 Compare Bernard Capp: “The Political Dimension of Apocalyptic Thought”, p. 97. See also Frank Ardolino: *Apocalypse and Armada in Kyd’s Spanish Tragedy*. Sixteenth Century Essays & Studies 29 (Kirksville, 1995).
- 234 See Verena Olejniczak Lobsien: “Multi Pertransibunt, oder: Das versprochenen Ende. Inszenierungen frühneuzeitlicher Apokalyptik in Shakespeares *King Lear*”, in: *Apokalypse. Der Anfang im Ende*, ed. Maria Moog-Grünewald/ Verena Olejniczak Lobsien (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2003), p.106.
- 235 Bernard Capp: “The Political Dimension of Apocalyptic Thought”, p. 93.
- 236 Promoted through diverse catastrophes, the idea of an apocalypse permeated the atmosphere of tragedy. See McLean, *Humanism*, p. 146. See Verena Olejniczak Lobsien: “Multi Pertransibunt”, p. 111.
- 237 Verena Olejniczak Lobsien: “Multi Pertransibunt”, especially p. 105–6.
- 238 Montaigne in his essay “On Prognostications” calls their utterances “dark, ambiguous, fantastical, and prophetically gibberish” – see Michel de Montaigne, *Montaigne’s Essays*, transl. John Florio, ed. J. I. M. Stewart, 2 Vols. (London: The Nonesuch Press, 1931), p. 44. Compare the ideas on war, morals, and nature of Machiavelli, Bacon, or James I; see bibliography.
- 239 On this topic, see especially Alexandra Walsham: *Providence in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).
- 240 Anne N. McLaren: “Prophecy and Providentialism in the Reign of Elizabeth I”, in: Taithe, Bertrand/ Thornton, Tim (eds.): *Prophecy. The Power of Inspired Language in History 1300–2000* (Stroud: Sutton, 1997), p. 31–50, here p. 31.
- 241 See Anne N. McLaren: “Prophecy and Providentialism in the Reign of Elizabeth I”, p. 31. Compare also Tim Thornton: “Reshaping the Local Future: The Development and Uses of Provincial Political Prophecies, 1300–1900”, in: Taithe/ Thornton (eds.): *Prophecy. The Power of Inspired Language in History 1300–2000*, p. 55; Constantinos Apostolos Patrides/ Joseph Antony Wittreich: *The Apocalypse in English Renaissance Thought and Literature. Patterns, Antecedents and Repercussions* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1984), Chapter 4 (p. 93–124).

There was also a high interest in prophecy in literature.²⁴² Kevin Sharpe draws attention to the fact that Renaissance “authors were not only aware of the political force of the seemingly apolitical matter, but capable of a sophisticated manipulation of the correspondence – bringing it into now closer, now more distant, focus.”²⁴³ Thereby, he also emphasises the opportunities given to playwrights by the political and thus plot-related correspondences to providence-related circumstances,²⁴⁴ as for example foreboding signs.²⁴⁵

Vickers adds to this the impact of the occult on identity.²⁴⁶ He draws on the fact that humanity evolves in its consciousness of self and identity. Prophecy could change the nature of acceptance of diverse political ideas²⁴⁷ within their cultural context. Political processes played their part in plots.²⁴⁸ Thus in the plays, prophecy can relate to the plot-development. It can be extensively incorporated in different dramas alluding to the insecurity of the future which was presented on stage where danger and downfall, decay and devastation were transparent as a threat to the system which could then be eliminated in the course of the plot.

Taithe and Thornton even suggest that “[a]s a political language prophecy moved from being at the heart of western politics to being a subversive force”²⁴⁹,

242 See Tim Thornton: “Reshaping the Local Future: The Development and Uses of Provincial Political Prophecies, 1300–1900”, in: Taithe/ Thornton (eds.): *Prophecy. The Power of Inspired Language in History 1300–2000*, p. 52.

243 Kevin Sharpe: *Politics and Ideas in Early Stuart England. Essays and Studies* (London/ New York: Pinter Publishers, 1989), p. 8.

244 Compare William R. Elton: “Shakespeare and the Thought of His Age”, in: *A New Companion to Shakespeare Studies*, ed. Kenneth Muir/ S. Schoenbaum (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), p. 180–198.

245 See Uwe Baumann: “‘Image of that Horror’: Die Apokalypse in der Politik, Kultur und Literatur der Englischen Renaissance“, in: Barbara Haupt (ed.): *Endzeitvorstellungen* (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 2001), p. 271–289, especially p. 273–282. He calls this “Unnatur der Natur”, p. 276.

246 Brian Vickers: “Analogy vs. Identity: the rejection of occult symbolism, 1580–1680”, in: Brian Vickers (ed.): *Occult and Scientific Mentalities in the Renaissance* (Cambridge/ London/ New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 129.

247 One of the important aspects in the sixteenth century proves the question of female rule. It might be legitimated through the right prophetic instances in a society that was dominated by traditional patriarchy. Compare Anne N. McLaren: “Prophecy and Providentialism in the Reign of Elizabeth I”, p. 32–35.

248 Nora Johnson argues against Bloom’s Bardo-centric “determination to seal writing off from certain forms of the collective, the commercial, the performative, and the material” and elaborates on the economic, collaborative, and physical influences on drama. Nora Johnson: *The Actor as Playwright in Early Modern Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 152.

249 Taithe/ Thornton (eds.): *Prophecy. The Power of Inspired Language in History*, p. 11. Propaganda about providence also increased: e.g. flyers were distributed. See Alexandra Walsham: *Providence in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 32f. If not distributed by flyers, then word of mouth told of “monstrous births, blazing stars,

as such it can also be subversively used by the villains of a tragedy²⁵⁰ and threaten the heroes who have to retaliate crimes but are drawn into a web of violence in doing so – therefore they cannot create a completely crime-free state themselves and fail in their hope for a harmonious and perfect pre-lapsarian state of scene.²⁵¹

“O how this discord doth afflict my soul”.²⁵² The way Henry in Shakespeare’s *The First Part of King Henry VI* describes the internal discomfort that the political struggle causes him is the same way that all struggles in the microcosm of drama affect every level of society. According to the Renaissance World Picture, so do the various spheres of the cosmos correspond to the mood of the microcosm, whether internal discord, as in *Henry IV*, or harmony. In the plays, characters tried to achieve control and at the same time the actors or playwrights throughout the performance sought control of the microcosm of the theatre.²⁵³

Even if Lever’s description of the transition from the scholastic mind to a commonplace conception “of static hierarchies, each dominated by a supposedly perfect specimen from the stars down to the planets and minerals, had long since declined from a philosophy to a political mystique”,²⁵⁴ the content that

frightening apparitions”, p. 167 (see also p. 171, 184). Compare Bernard Capp: “The Political Dimension of Apocalyptic Thought”, in: *The Apocalypse in English Renaissance Thought and Literature*, ed. C. A. Patrides/ Joseph Wittreich (Ithaca, N. Y.: Cornell University Press, 1984), p. 97.

250 Obviously the use of possibly subversive forces in the context of divine providence also asked for criticism against this usage in the theatre, which calls order and faith into question. See Christopher Marsh: *Popular Religion in Sixteenth Century England. Holding their Peace* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1998), p. 106.

251 As will be seen, AT portrays a singular example of a revenge tragedy where the hero is not involved in active vengeance, but here too, the chaos of the villain’s deeds does leave its scars.

252 Henry utters this in the context of a skirmish between his own people. *The First Part of King Henry VI*, III.i.106. It also foreshadows the War of the Roses.

253 For body metaphors and the connection between the cosmoi see among others Barkan who stresses the parallel or mutual action or projection – he mainly relies on the classical influence of Plato’s *Timaeus* – and explains that these ideas obviously had an impact on various different trains of thought, for once on natural philosophy and science, then on social and political philosophy, and also on aesthetics and architecture. Astral correspondences were part of an infinite and complex system where a harmonious world order seems only a tiny part of what seemed to exist. See Leonard Barkan: *Nature’s Work of Art. The Human Body as Image of the World* (New Haven/ London: Yale University Press, 1975), p. 39. Compare Alexander Demandt: *Metaphern für Geschichte. Sprachbilder und Gleichnisse im historisch-politischen Denken* (München: C. H. Beck’sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1978). Andrew Gurr: “‘Coriolanus’ and the Body Politic”, in: *Shakespeare Survey 28: Shakespeare and the Ideas of his Time*, ed. Kenneth Muir (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), p. 63–70.

254 J. W. Lever: *The Tragedy of State. A Study in Jacobean Drama* (London/ New York: Methuen, 1971), p. 5. Elton describes Shakespeare’s works as portraying this transition period, see William R. Elton: “Shakespeare and the Thought of His Age”, in: *A New Companion to Shakespeare Studies*, ed. Kenneth Muir/ S. Schoenbaum (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), p. 180–198, p. 193.

these ambivalent commonplaces comprised, allowed great opportunities to the stage.²⁵⁵ Within this frame, the individual – in life and on stage – was part of the larger unity.

This “grandly cosmological [...] scope”²⁵⁶ need not imply that providential events explain everything, however, they did have a great, sometimes disquieting impact on the individual. Many phenomena were not grasped in the Renaissance and misunderstood, often provoking a negative outlook on the future which can also be discerned in the revenge tragedies of the period. Ribner mentions that Chapman’s *Bussy D’Ambois*, for example is “a mirror of the pessimism which comes to dominate the vision of the Jacobean era”.²⁵⁷ Virtues and given circumstances and beliefs were being questioned and this conflict was portrayed through enormously creative ways within the theatrical productions.²⁵⁸ There, moral order could be questioned, emotions played with, and virtue corrupted and destroyed²⁵⁹ – a universal denominator of tragedy. The way providential phenomena were portrayed onstage caught the attention of the audience, because divine, mantic foreboding evoked impressive pictures of supernatural events. They allowed intuitive conclusions to be drawn. The attraction of these visionary aspects caught the spectator, especially by those playwrights who would functionalise them to further attract and lead an understanding audience, or even mislead it on purpose²⁶⁰ by e.g. exaggerated ecstatic dreams, inspirations, or inklings. The playwrights conveyed the significance these elements had through language and created a factor for the dramatic process and progressive action on stage; the audience, as Lopez argues, could “constantly [watch] in the process of evaluating and validating”²⁶¹ what they witnessed.

In drama, the audience expected the revenge plot to unfold and be solved.

255 Ambivalence, as works on Renaissance drama within the last decades have shown, is a valuable term for the interpretation of cultural implications, especially as far as supernatural beliefs are concerned in the Renaissance. See especially studies on Stuart drama and compare Molly Smith: *The Darker World Within*, p. 13.

256 Leonard Barkan: *Nature’s Work of Art. The Human Body as Image of the World* (New Haven/ London: Yale University Press, 1975), p. 277.

257 Irving Ribner: *Jacobean Tragedy. The Quest for Moral Order* (London: Methuen & Company, 1962), p. 19.

258 Compare Brian Vickers: “Analogy vs. Identity: the rejection of occult symbolism, 1580–1680”, in: Brian Vickers (ed.): *Occult and Scientific Mentalities in the Renaissance* (Cambridge/ London/ New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 148. However, this study needs to be aware of the conscious use of different attitudes towards convictions and contemporary thoughts, instrumentally applied by the playwrights.

259 See Irving Ribner: *Jacobean Tragedy. The Quest for Moral Order*, p. 19.

260 Compare for example Ursula in Ben Jonson’s comedy *Bartholomew Fair*, in: Ben Jonson: *The Alchemist and other Plays*, ed. Gordon Campbell (Oxford/ New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 327–433.

261 Jeremy Lopez: *Theatrical Convention and Audience Response in Early Modern Drama*, p. 81.

They followed “human endeavour prove[n] insufficient, [so] then God would ensure a felon was captured, either by throwing obstacles in the way of their flight (like terrible thunderstorms) or by intervening more directly.”²⁶² Miraculous divine intervention could be introduced and led by mantic elements,²⁶³ foreboding a providential denouement.

3 Mantics in Renaissance drama – “Your prodigious Blood/ Sweates through his holy Image”²⁶⁴

A thousand lingering years his prophecies have run,
And scarcely shall have end till time itself be done.²⁶⁵

Michael Drayton, author of the historiographic epos *Poly-Olbion*, praises the prophecies of Merlin in the above quotation, the magician and prophet who is also recalled as an authority on prophecies by the fool in *King Lear*, when the fool predicts the future from a motley perspective;²⁶⁶ Clemen argues that in “Holinshed and Hall omens are generally believed in unreservedly.”²⁶⁷ Drayton deliberately uses metaphysical or mantic elements, and Kelly judges: “Historiographers of earlier times made an abundant use of supernatural elements in their accounts of the events of past and present”.²⁶⁸ However, in the Renaissance, it is not only historiography that incorporates supernatural images – all genres make use of them, and thereby represent especially impressive, traditional or customary ideas. Sharpe also underlines the relevance of current debates for the stage: “This is nowhere more apparent than in studies of the theatre. In any age, the dialogic form of theatre permits and reveals the debates and differences about contemporary issues and social codes.”²⁶⁹

Renaissance debates of social matters are, however, not openly discussed in

262 Vanessa McMahon: *Murder in Shakespeare's England* (London/ New York: Hambledon and London, 2004), p. 21.

263 Ibid, p. 23.

264 Francis Jaques: *The Queen of Corsica* (1642), ed. Henry D. Janzen, The Malone Society Reprints, 1989, V.iii.2069–2070.

265 Michael Drayton: *Poly-Olbion. Works Vol. 4* (Oxford: Shakespeare Head Press/ Blackwell, 1933), p. 101: Song V.161–162.

266 Shakespeare, *Lear* III.ii.81–94.

267 Wolfgang Clemen: “Anticipation and Foreboding in Shakespeare's Early Histories”, *Shakespeare Survey* 6 (1953), p. 25–35, p. 34.

268 Henry Ansgar Kelly: *Divine Providence in the England of Shakespeare's Histories* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970), p. vii.

269 Kevin Sharpe: *Remapping Early Modern England. Cultures of Seventeenth Century Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 418.

the plays but they contribute to the plots of the plays; conventional beliefs in mantics constitute a general backdrop to drama and were also criticised by characters portraying *new men*,²⁷⁰ which present themselves as self-confident and non-religious – these ideas that dominated the context had an influence on the drama of Shakespeare and his contemporaries, as Danby elaborates: “Shakespeare conceives his drama as having a direct contemporary reference.”²⁷¹ According judgements apply to his contemporaries’ plays.

Lever elaborates on the position of English Renaissance playwrights who had to find and defend their place at a time of radical transformation. In the theatre, ideas could be presented in a relatively free way,²⁷² where rebellion could be juxtaposed to tyranny, ordained authority that is questioned by human weakness set versus sacrosanct, infallible divinity. Issues that were presented on stage often show a clear relevance to contemporary events within their historical and fictitious settings.²⁷³ Lever also draws attention to the fact that in an age when the belief in old systems – the so-called Elizabethan World Order²⁷⁴ – declined, the “silent majority still nodded consent to these platitudes”²⁷⁵ and the audience appropriated and cherished these popular ideas. To support the dramaturgy of Renaissance drama, writers functionalised these popular ideas.²⁷⁶ Especially the belief in the supernatural was functionalised in the revenge tragedies; mantic foreshadowing as part of the supernatural forces contributed to the development of the plot: “Ghosts and supernatural omens incongruously guide the actions of Italian dukes or French noblemen”²⁷⁷ in plots concerned with political and sexual intrigue. Playwrights functionalise mantic elements also to structure the development of their characters. Adding the supernatural level of the corre-

270 See e.g. the pre-Darwinistic attitudes of Edmund in *King Lear*, I.ii.

271 John F. Danby: *Shakespeare's Doctrine of Nature* (London: Faber and Faber, 1949), p. 215.

272 On censorship, see Annabell Patterson: *Censorship and Interpretation. The Conditions of Writing and reading in Early Modern England* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), chapter 2.

273 For this point of clouding of contemporary English issues in a setting of Roman history or in a southern European country, see J. W. Lever: *The Tragedy of State. A Study in Jacobean Drama* (London/ New York: Methuen, 1971).

274 This generalisation has been criticised by various literary academics, especially *Cultural Materialists*, see a. o. Jonathan Dollimore: *Radical Tragedy. Religion, Ideology and Power in the Drama of Shakespeare and his Contemporaries* (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1984, 1989²); id.: “Shakespeare, Cultural Materialism, Feminism and Marxist Humanism”, in: *New Literary History* 21.3 (1990), p. 471–493; id.: “Two concepts of mimesis: Renaissance literary theory and *The Revenger's Tragedy*”, in: *Drama and Mimesis*, ed. James Redmond (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), p. 25–50; id./ Alan Sinfield: *Political Shakespeare. Essays in Cultural Materialism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994²).

275 J. W. Lever: *The Tragedy of State. A Study in Jacobean Drama*, p. 5.

276 Charles A. Hallett/ Elaine S. Hallett: *The Revenger's Madness. A Study of Revenge Tragedy Motifs* (Lincoln, Nebraska/ London: University of Nebraska Press, 1980), p. 12f.

277 J. W. Lever: *The Tragedy of State*, p. 9.

spondent cosmoi²⁷⁸ to the story means seeing history as guided by providence, especially where the punishment of amorality, cruelty, revenge, and pessimism are concerned.²⁷⁹

Foreshadowing in drama is used in many different ways, but virtually every playwright in the Renaissance seems to use it. Even in comedies, metaphors relating to mantic concepts are not unusual.²⁸⁰ There are hints and indications to the development of the plot in almost every play, sometimes on a bigger scale, sometimes only in metaphorical figures of speech. Those plays most prone to the use of mantics seem tragic plays, with and without historical background. Here, future doom weighs heavily, and the indication of looming fate accompanies characters and plot.

The correspondence between microcosm and macrocosm reflects the relation between divinity and humanity in the microcosm of the theatrical stage and, as Sharpe writes, these “analogues cannot be reduced to mere metaphor”.²⁸¹ Correspondences between the cosmoi were common knowledge in the Renaissance, they have become commonplace in drama. Their social and religious association, “understood as a cultural phenomenon”²⁸² and comprising supernatural beliefs, plays into the spectacle and the effects used in drama.²⁸³

In the institutionalised theatre for the public,²⁸⁴ which presented a branch of professional entertainment, cultural, mantic ideas determine the plot through a dramaturgical perspective. They can simplify the presentation of relevant content on stage to guide the audience and elaborate on the situation and development of a stage character, dependent on his dramatic context. This knowledge, e.g. a thunder meaning trouble, was well known and internalised by the audience and familiar, contextual interpretative possibilities understood.²⁸⁵

278 See also Thomas McAlindon: *Shakespeare's Tragic Cosmos* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 13.

279 See J. W. Lever: *The Tragedy of State. A Study in Jacobean Drama*, p. 10.

280 For example in *Much Ado about Nothing*, Beatrice mentions the following: “there was a star danced, and under that was I born” (II.i.293–294).

281 Kevin Sharpe: *Politics and Ideas in Early Stuart England. Essays and Studies*, p. 7.

282 Kaspar von Greyerz (ed.): *Religion and Society in Early Modern Europe 1500–1800* (London/ Boston/ Sydney: George Allen & Unwin, in cooperation with The German Historical Institute, 1984), p. 1.

283 See Marion Lomax, *Stage Images and Traditions. Shakespeare to Ford* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 10. Compare also the mystification dealt with by Jonathan Dollimore, *Radical Tragedy*, p. 231.

284 Compare Peter Burke: “Popular Culture in Seventeenth Century London”, in: *London Journal* 3 (1977), p. 143–62, here p. 143, 149.

285 This needs to include the aesthetics and functions of reception next to a new historicist and cultural materialist approach. See Henk Gras: “Objective Images: The Elizabethan Character and its Relation with Spirits and Species”, in: *Studies in Elizabethan Audience Response to the Theatre* 2 (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1993); Jeremy Lopez: *Theatrical*

Mantics appeal to the psychology of the spectator watching the actions of the characters. McAlindon elucidates on the corresponding macrocosmic images that are evoked on stage: “The phenomenon of psychic and interpersonal chaos is magnified by the hero’s intense emotional distress and reflected in society at large, which is torn by civil strife if not civil war; it is also reflected in external nature, where terrible storms and other more ‘unnatural’ disorders prevail.”²⁸⁶ To achieve this effect, chaos is presented to the audience on a very personal level, which is aggrandised by a supernatural relation. Eade comments on this that “[l]iterary reference to the planets and to their motions greatly simplifies the celestial mechanics”.²⁸⁷ Thus the audience experiences the direct role of supernaturalism more clearly.

The reasons for supernatural chaos given within drama, which stimulate the action and drive it towards a catastrophe, reflect aspects of a neglected stately order or nation. Social values are destroyed in the corrupted society of drama which is, for example, presented as a family that is falling apart: “The plays depict the undermining of patriarchal authority primarily as the subversion of a desirable norm.”²⁸⁸ Thus a patriarchal system is destroyed from within and without its own structure on all levels by subversive and corruptive powers, which aspire to their own advancement. These elements, displayed, performed and mentioned in drama, evidently lead to a complication, a catastrophe, and, finally, the conclusion of the plot. There is no need in this study to exemplify the accuracy of a star constellation for the interpretation and use in drama – what is important is the main and basic idea of the existence and function of the mantic elements such as, for example, stars as created by God and put into place against the upcoming ideas of moving comets, seemingly unnatural, and their behaviour, whether they seem impossible disjunctions or crucially influencing constellations.²⁸⁹

Most playwrights present an idealist philosophy²⁹⁰ on stage, which in reality was not commonly taken for granted and undisputed, but was theatrically in-

Convention and Audience Response in Early Modern Drama (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

286 Thomas McAlindon: *Shakespeare’s Tragic Cosmos* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 2.

287 J. C. Eade: *The Forgotten Sky*, p. 21.

288 Molly Smith: *The Darker World Within*, p. 76.

289 Compare J. C. Eade: *The Forgotten Sky*, p. 27: “In order to check upon the validity of an astronomical dating in a play or a poem one needs either a set of contemporary [...] or [...] modern tables, together with the knowledge that they will not give one falsely precise value.”

290 Alan Sinfield/ Jonathan Dollimore: “History and Ideology, Masculinity and Miscegenation: The Instance of *Henry V*”, in: Alan Sinfield: *Faultlines. Cultural Materialism and the Politics of Dissident Readings* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1992), p. 109.

strumentalised in various contexts,²⁹¹ in especially extensive ways in tragedies. These include physical, artificial images of violence and disorder in each cosmos, which always arouse the interest of the audience. Lopez reminds us of the “powerful conventional system”²⁹² that is created through the use of artificial, linguistic “extra-dramatic verbal moments [...] wherein audiences are given a sense of knowingness and perception that supersedes – even outrightly disguises – excess, incoherence, and discontinuity”, and where “disruption is continually converted into functional hyperbole [...] wherein the audience is given a sense of control over experience which is, nevertheless, likely to be disrupted at any moment.”²⁹³ Commonplaces are toyed with by each playwright. Arthos comments on Shakespeare that he “thinks of the visionary as inherent in the character of tragedy and comedy, and it is almost second nature to him, it appears, to include the supernatural in the representation of history.”²⁹⁴ The belief in supernatural powers proved part of the traditional popular culture with its “rituals and festivals”,²⁹⁵ and was transformed on stage into this new popular culture of professional entertainment that included politicised messages and topics from history, legends, or ballads, that also draw ideas from current events like “battles, murders, witches, or accounts of prodigies like monstrous births”.²⁹⁶

The audience knew what they were presented with and certainly were aware of the reactions that mantic elements on stage would have towards the ensuing action: “It is essential to historicize [sic] audience response in order to be confident [...] in making claims about what playwrights expected of dramatic action and their audiences”.²⁹⁷ Lopez mentions the vital effects that cause an audience to understand the relation between the action on stage, the relevance of, in this case, supernatural proceedings for the plot and the expectations of the audience. These relations, the function of supernatural images as mantic elements will be examined in this study: the means of mantic usage and knowledge

291 Sinfield warns of the effect of inconsistency and indeterminacy which might be conveyed, if not presented understandably according to ideologies of writing. See Alan Sinfield/ Jonathan Dollimore: “History and Ideology, Masculinity and Miscegenation: The Instance of *Henry V*”, p. 116–7.

292 He defines convention as an original eruption in an established circuitry. Jeremy Lopez: *Theatrical Convention and Audience Response in Early Modern Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 98.

293 Jeremy Lopez: *Theatrical Convention and Audience Response in Early Modern Drama*, p. 97.

294 John Arthos: *Shakespeare’s Use of Dream and Vision* (London: Bowes & Bowes, 1977), p. 9.

295 See Peter Burke: “Popular Culture in Seventeenth Century London”, p. 144.

296 For this paragraph see Peter Burke: “Popular Culture in Seventeenth Century London”, quotation on p. 154.

297 Jeremy Lopez: *Theatrical Convention and Audience Response in Early Modern Drama*, p. 14.

will be interpreted, accordingly its functionalisation within the drama, which arouse expectations in the audience.²⁹⁸

Reed sees a tradition of the fascination with mantic ideas within drama. The use of unnatural, or supernatural devices does not need to correspond directly to the current belief in these forces, but the playwrights depended on traditional beliefs and cultural influences.²⁹⁹ He divides the time of the creation of drama into two theatrical phases as far as the role of supernaturalism is concerned; he is critical of a mere dramatic functionalisation and sets it in contrast to a true contemporary belief. He concentrates on the function of the ghost, and elucidates that drama reworked ideas that existed before, for example within Greek tragedy, i.e. especially Senecan plays, and strengthened the occult effect of, e.g., the Senecan ghost. Reed claims that the style of revenge ghosts, striving for nemesis, which had descended directly from the classical tragedies, changed in the 1590s: “Of the Senecan devices of supernatural intervention, the goddess of vengeance exerted the most important influence on the regular Elizabethan drama prior to 1587;”³⁰⁰ doom was presented in all different shades of revenge, and the ghost of revenge, as Reed argues, “was to produce an atmosphere of foreboding and create suspense”, spurring on the action from the beginning of the play.³⁰¹ After the first influential phase of supernatural, or mantic functionalisation, the ghost became compatible with Christian doctrine and appeared throughout, crying for vengeance and interacting with other characters within the “structural framework”,³⁰² as an “embodiment of the beholder’s conscience-torn psyche”.³⁰³ Thus Reed separates between different presentations of the ghost in drama and their function as an image of revenge.

Mantic elements are used recurrently to repeat revenge motives. They foreshadow and represent events depicted in a drama and are important for the overall structure of a play, but they also determine individual emotions like fear.

298 Compare this with studies on popular culture, such as Steven L. Kaplan (ed.): *Understanding Popular Culture. Europe from the Middle Ages to the Nineteenth Century* (Berlin/ New York/ Amsterdam: Mouton Publishers, 1984).

299 Robert Rentoul Reed Jr.: *The Occult on the Tudor and Stuart Stage* (Boston: Christopher Publishing House, 1965), p. 15.

300 Ibid, p. 22.

301 Ibid, p. 24.

302 The function of the ghost in the plot’s exposition and rising action was diminished. See below, chapter 5.2. Compare Robert Rentoul Reed Jr.: *The Occult on the Tudor and Stuart Stage*, p. 27. In 1597, James I wrote his *Daemonologie* professing against the existence of ghosts, in 1600, the Church of England denied the papal doctrine of the existence of “spirits of the dead” walking the earth, in 1602 William Perkins wrote that “[d]ead men doe neither walke, nor appeare in bodie or soule after death.” Compare Robert Rentoul Reed Jr.: *The Occult on the Tudor and Stuart Stage* (Boston: Christopher Publishing House, 1965), p. 32–3.

303 Ibid, p. 35–6.

There is a strengthening of doom through mantic elements, which includes the story of the human individual.³⁰⁴ Thus, they are plot devices and support the story of the facets of the play, can mystify its content, set the mood, and present politico-ideological mentality.³⁰⁵

Applied to popular theatre, this can be interpreted as a language all the audience was familiar with and could understand: the effect of the prophecies is based in the dramas, they speak a language of visible plot development. This role is played by all mantic elements – they were signs of predestination. Prophecy could be treated as a sign of hope that truth and destiny would fulfil itself and a predestined future would come to pass which represented order, but prophecy could also foreshadow downfall and death, “full of terrible frustrations and catastrophic evil”.³⁰⁶

The plot of a revenge tragedy focuses on the theme of retaliation, to promote justice in the bare sense of paying back.³⁰⁷ Mantics foreshadow the plot, and thus also foretell punishment and justice. Sisson writes that “Justice is an intensely alive problem in the world of today, affecting alike the individual in the conduct of his own life, the State in its organisation of society and its administration of the law, and the interrelations of States and communities.”³⁰⁸ This also applies to the microcosm of the tragedy on stage: justice – the bleeding of the bad – and the establishment of something better³⁰⁹ is the ultimate end to each plot and the phenomena that foreshadow it have the effect of constantly reminding the audience of this aim, but never clearly revealing how events will unfold: a “great dramatist must always strike a balance between the certainty of foreknowledge and the uncertainty of ignorance, between the restlessness of our inquiring mind and mental composure, between a vague presentiment and an assured expectation.”³¹⁰ In drama then, supernatural ideas were functionalised; they conceptualized “abstract astrological theory in its ultimate development to the

304 Compare Tim Thornton: “Reshaping the Local Future: The Development and Uses of Provincial Political Prophecies, 1300–1900”, in: Taithe, Bertrand/ Thornton, Tim (eds.): *Prophecy. The Power of Inspired Language in History 1300–2000* (Stroud: Sutton, 1997), p. 51–67, here p. 56.

305 Compare Miguel Requena Jimenez’ lecture on “Vorzeichen und Tod” – portents and death – on 15 July 2008 at the University of Bonn.

306 John Arthos: *Shakespeare’s Use of Dream and Vision* (London: Bowes & Bowes, 1977), p. 11. His comment is on chronicle plays but can be transferred to revenge tragedies alike.

307 Compare Thomas McAlindon: *English Renaissance Tragedy* (Houndsmills/ London: Macmillan, 1986), p. 27.

308 Charles Jasper Sisson: *Shakespeare’s Tragic Justice*, p. vi.

309 The revenger strives to restore “an inescapable frame of order”, but is violently destructive in most his action. Thomas McAlindon: *English Renaissance Tragedy* (Houndsmills/ London: Macmillan, 1986), p. 33.

310 Wolfgang Clemen: “Anticipation and Foreboding in Shakespeare’s Early Histories”, *Shakespeare Survey* 6 (1953), p. 25.

visual imagination” of the audience.³¹¹ Human suffering was depicted³¹² and the attempts to create harmony were often facing new injustice, because, as Bacon terms it, “*Revenge is a kind of Wilde Justice*”³¹³ and a sign of disorder. Consequently the tragedies’ quest for moral order often proved a failure. Cruelty and violence are necessary motives of revenge tragedy.³¹⁴ Violence becomes an essential necessity for the revenger to restore balance.³¹⁵ In the evoked imagery of disorder he rebels against pre-existent laws of justice as he is revenging in a spirit of self-created moral and in an inversion of power:³¹⁶ “There is a touch of the rebel or revolutionary in several avengers of the Renaissance theatre, as they rise up against a state of the world they find intolerable.”³¹⁷

Dreams present a different metaphysical level, on which mantic and supernatural solicitings can transform the world of the spectator into a mirrored life of horror, evil, and suppressed wishes, all to entertain the audience. Cope highlights the entertainment factor of drama as follows: “This fluidity takes a myriad of forms: in the theatre and literature of cruelty, theatrical horrors and pains are translated into pleasure”.³¹⁸

This study will examine to which effect mantic elements were used and how their possible influences were exploited within drama, concentrating on their function as a foreshadowing dramatic power, which they play for the spectator.³¹⁹ As they, as Clemen puts it, are “considerably contributing to the scene’s

311 L. Braswell: “Popular Lunar Astrology in the Late Middle Ages”, *University of Ottawa Quarterly* 48 (1978), 187–94, here p. 194.

312 See Irving Ribner: *Jacobean Tragedy. The Quest for Moral Order*, p. x.

313 Francis Bacon: “Of Revenge”, in: *The Essays or Counsels, Civill and Morall*, ed. Michael Kiernan (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985), p. 16–17, p. 16. Collins writes that “Bacon struggled with the sense that both order and disorder were natural” and that chaos is inherent in a worldly balance; see Stephen Collins: *From Divine Cosmos to Sovereign State. An Intellectual History of Consciousness and the Idea of Order in Renaissance England* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 146.

314 Contrast this to E. M. W. Tillyard, who wrote that violence “is unnatural; and in the end order and the natural law will reassert themselves”; in: *Shakespeare’s History Plays* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1944, 1962²), p. 23. This might only apply to *The Atheist’s Tragedy*, where the revenger does not fulfil revenge but does indeed bear further suffering until revenge is divinely executed.

315 Compare Janet Clare: *Revenge Tragedies of the Renaissance*, p. 1.

316 Inversion is a topic that Kastan and Stallybrass are analysing in the context of English Renaissance Drama. See David Scott Kastan/ Peter Stallybrass: *Staging the Renaissance* (New York/ London: Routledge, 1991).

317 Janet Clare: *Revenge Tragedies of the Renaissance*, p. 7.

318 Jackson I. Cope: *The Theatre and the Dream. From Metaphor to Form in Renaissance Drama* (Baltimore/ London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), p. 3.

319 Clemen argues that in the early histories, Shakespeare does not use the function of genuine anticipation to the extent that it could have played in effect on stage but gives away some of its dramatic impact by being too obtrusive and too explicit, only linking present and future, not giving enough dramatic explosive material to create suspense – later it has more

tension and portentous tone, they are also remembered at later moments of the play when becoming fulfilled (thus emphasizing [...] the nemesis of the plot.)”.³²⁰ The aim within the play is modelled after ideas that exist in reality. However, the aim of this study is to show that teleologically, the characters within the play are moving towards a goal that the playwright planned for them, following realistic ideas but structurally controlled and instrumentalised. Order in the plays is destroyed, as structurally represented in the chaos that is illustrated through mantic elements, and the mood in revenge tragedy is apocalyptic.³²¹

The choice of mantic elements and dramas – “Roare sea and winds, and with celestial fires/ Quicken high projects”³²²

The different mantic elements used by playwrights are chosen for the dramaturgical structure and strategy of the plays – they seem to be arranged in a syncretistically fitting way for the design of the plot. They are elements of the textual and cultural context and present reflections of cultural knowledge.³²³ The mantic elements analysed in this study are all of a different nature and their role is often defined by their obvious relevance of their situational use in connection to their context and dramatic stage function, which they are given within the dramaturgical development of the plot.³²⁴ The playwrights primarily use them as

“structural significance”, compare Wolfgang Clemen: “Anticipation and Foreboding in Shakespeare’s Early Histories”, *Shakespeare Survey* 6 (1953), p. 26.

320 Wolfgang Clemen: “Anticipation and Foreboding in Shakespeare’s Early Histories”, p. 26.

321 Compare the following essay: Verena Olejniczak Lobsien: “Multi Pertransibunt, oder: Das versprochenen Ende. Inszenierungen frühneuzeitlicher Apokalyptik in Shakespeares *King Lear*”, in: *Apokalypse. Der Anfang im Ende*, ed. Maria Moog-Grünwald/ Verena Olejniczak Lobsien (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2003), see especially p. 112, She calls this phenomenon of not coming to an end the “Eskamotierung des Topischen” (p. 112) so to say the negation of the actual topics and thereby humanising it. However, she intensifies the textual immanence and recalls Frank Kermode: “die anthropologische Elementarfunktion überwältigender Konkordanz zu ebenso konsistenter wie verstörender Textualität wird, die, indem sie Apokalypse suspendiert, diese zugleich ästhetisch erfahrbar macht”, p. 137. The textual immanence in this case would be the creative power to make apocalyptic destruction experience possible, an experience which the audience needs to confront in revenge tragedy, where disorder corrupts the cosmos.

322 Henry Chettle, *The Tragedy of Hoffmann*, I.i.29–30.

323 Compare Gymnich/ Neumann/ Nünning (eds.): *Kulturelles Wissen und Intertextualität*, p. 14.

324 Richard Rowland argued that mantic elements, especially omens in the history plays, called politics into question and thus had an influential role in the dramaturgy of the plot; in his lecture on “‘Monstrous Observations in his Chronicle’. The Politics of Performance in the History Plays of Shakespeare and his Contemporaries”, delivered on 29 January 2003 at the University of York. This is an idea that can be found in Christopher Hill’s studies on the Civil

symbols of a revelation of truth in the plays. As Olejniczak Lobsien explores in her essay on *King Lear* that philosophical ideas were conveyed to the audiences through the plays: they were created as experiences with a textual immanence³²⁵ and an aesthetic sensuality.

There are different elements that determine and permeate the revenge tragedies analysed here: the structural elements that have been chosen for this study are mantic omens, dreams, ghosts, prophecies and curses.

The following chapters, which constitute the main body of this thesis deal with the different mantic elements. In Chapter 4, the significance of omens in revenge tragedy is explored. Omens might be described as visual mantic elements even though their visible status is mostly based on the speech of the characters, i.e. most omens, though they are described as seen by the characters, are only delivered to the audience through language. Thus they are first and foremost outer signs of an “aura of decay and impending death”,³²⁶ destroying harmony.

The chapter concentrates on the correspondence between macro- and microcosm and the reflected “strange difference ‘twixt us and the stars! They work with inclination strong and fatal”, as Chapman writes in *Byron’s Conspiracy*.³²⁷ The centre of attention is the different impact of lightness, fire, and stars,³²⁸ as they support and strengthen the mood and tone of a scene, but also on darkness, invoking contrastive images of a gloomy atmosphere. It will also investigate

War, e.g. *A Nation of Change and Novelty. Seventeenth Century England* (London: Routledge, 1990).

325 See Verena Olejniczak Lobsien: “Multi Pertransibunt”, p. 113.

326 See Chapter II in: “George Chapman: Myth as Mask and Magic”, in: Jackson I. Cope: *The Theatre and the Dream. From Metaphor to Form in Renaissance Drama* (Baltimore/ London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), p. 70. He attributes this aura especially to the final scenes of a play.

327 Chapman, *Byron’s Conspiracy*, III.iii.5–6.

328 There is an uncountable number of texts on astrology. As far as this topic is concerned, the following literature might be interesting for the context of phenomena in relation to the stars: L. Braswell: “Popular Lunar Astrology in the Late Middle Ages”, *University of Ottawa Quarterly* 48 (1978), 187–94; Brian G. Cooper: “Religious Astrology in the Seventeenth Century”, in: *Dalhousie Review* (1964), p. 312–320; T. G. Cowling: “Astrology, Religion and Science”, in: *Quarterly Journal of the Royal Astronomical Society* 23 (1982), p. 515–26; Anthony Grafton/ William R. Newman (eds.): *Secrets of Nature. Astrology and Alchemy in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, Mass./ London: The MIT Press, 2001); Verena Olejniczak Lobsien: “Multi Pertransibunt, oder: Das versprochene Ende. Inszenierungen frühneuzeitlicher Apokalyptik in Shakespeares *King Lear*”, in: *Apokalypse. Der Anfang im Ende*, ed. Maria Moog-Grünewald/ Verena Olejniczak Lobsien (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2003), p. 103–127; Keith Thomas: “An Anthropology of Religion and Magic, II”, in: *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 6 (1975), p. 91–109; especially Keith Thomas: *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973); Brian Vickers (ed.): *Occult and Scientific Mentalities in the Renaissance* (Cambridge/ London/ New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 95–163.

physical omens that draw on the body, such as blood and animals. An example of this kind of omen is presented in the title of the chapter: “Your prodigious blood/ Sweates through his holy image”³²⁹ – the sweated blood is foreshadowing toil and doom, as the reaction implies fearfully: “Monstrous!/ What does this Sweat portend?” The chapter finishes with inklings, strange inspirations. Which elements are functionalised in which context of the plays is the individual, and syncretistic choice of the playwrights.³³⁰ However, all have in common that omens are treated as a divine presence in life³³¹ and that they shape and intensify a “man’s disposition”.³³²

Chapter 5 deals with supernatural visions of the mind: the first part of the chapter is concerned with dreams and dream visions, the second one with ghosts or ghostly visitations. The first category is one of inner visions and revelations, the second of outer visions – the dead appear to characters on stage.

Prophetic dreams have to be articulated through language, they are not displayed through acting; as such a dream is an “aesthetic phenomenon”.³³³ A dream creates a theoretical, mind-related framework that foreshadows an inevitable fate.³³⁴ The “relations of play and dream”³³⁵ are then revealed or verified through stage action, thus the true value of the dream is imminent.

Ghosts are outer visions, or visitations, spurring on the plot. As a dramaturgical device, they derive from Senecan drama and “incongruously guide the action”.³³⁶ The belief in the existence of ghosts³³⁷ creates a level of supernatural

329 Jacques: *Queen of Corsica*, V.iii.2069–2070 and the answer I. 2071–2072.

330 Clulee calls this an “eclectic individual creation”. Nicholas H. Clulee: *John Dee’s Natural Philosophy. Between Science and Religion* (London/ New York: Routledge, 1988).

331 See also Kaspar von Greyerz: *Vorsehungsglaube und Kosmologie. Studien zu englischen Selbstzeugnissen des 17. Jahrhunderts*, Veröffentlichungen des Deutschen Historischen Instituts London/ Publications of the German Historical Institute London 25 (Göttingen/ Zürich: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990), p. 51.

332 J. B. Bamborough: *The Little World of Man* (London/ New York/ Toronto: Longmans, Green & Co., 1952), p. 78.

333 Jackson I. Cope: *The Theatre and the Dream. From Metaphor to Form in Renaissance Drama* (Baltimore/ London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), p. 212. Compare also Florian Matern: “Dreams in Spenser’s ‘Faerie Queene’ and its epic successors in the 17th century: Joseph Beaumont’s ‘Psyche or Loves Mysterie’, Abraham Cowley’s ‘Davideis’, John Milton’s ‘Paradise Lost’ and ‘Paradise Regained’, and Sir Richard Blackmore’s ‘Prince Arthur’ and ‘King Arthur’” (Diss. Bonn, 2009), hitherto unpublished.

334 Compare Jürgen Struve: *Das Traummotiv im Drama des XVII. Jahrhunderts* (Diss. Kiel, 1913), p. 45.

335 Jackson I. Cope: *The Theatre and the Dream. From Metaphor to Form in Renaissance Drama*, p. 220.

336 J. W. Lever: *The Tragedy of State. A Study in Jacobean Drama* (London/ New York: Methuen, 1971), p. 9. Compare especially the study by Gisela Dahinten: *Die Geisterszene in der Tragödie vor Shakespeare. Zur Seneca-Nachfolge im englischen und lateinischen Drama des Elisabethanismus*. Palaestra. Untersuchungen aus der deutschen und englischen Philologie

influence from the past – ghosts are the spirits of dead people, and in revenge tragedy, they come back from the underworld with a structural importance.³³⁸ to remind the audience of their unnatural death and draw attention to the questioning of justice. They are visible to the audience and their demand, the punishment of their murderer is openly stated and part of the revenge scheme, often sets the dramatic machinery into play.

The sixth chapter deals with mantic foreshadowings, which are caused by speech. Obviously, all three mantic elements mentioned above are dependent on speech, as well, but while spoken words describe their stage and fantastical existence, prophecies and curses occur only as mantic elements by foreshadowing through words. They are mantic speech acts.³³⁹ Subjective wishes become objective statements about future events.

The belief in prophecies is based on historical faith³⁴⁰ and a divine order where events are providential,³⁴¹ and part of a principle of order in cosmology.³⁴² Prophecies were a stronghold in the Renaissance,³⁴³ they continued when new knowledge was combined with old beliefs. In this way it proved of great importance in coping with unexpected cultural and cosmological shocks such as the discovery of the New World.³⁴⁴

There are different kinds of prophecies,³⁴⁵ and they are often connected with other mantic elements like the sighting of omens as appearing before or after a planetary conjunction, or they relate to specific political events. The chapter, however, concentrates on prophetic utterances that come true within the course of action.³⁴⁶ Prophetic utterances often coincide with emotional outcries about a

und Literaturgeschichte 225, ed. W. Kayser et. al. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1958).

337 See Baumann, Greyerz, Struve.

338 Similarly, the apparition of *genii* promote the existence of spiritual visitations to reveal aspects of a character. Compare Brutus' genius in CR III.iii.1330–1335. Compare Uwe Baumann: *Vorausdeutung und Tod im englischen Römerdrama der Renaissance*, p. 129–130.

339 See Hadumod Bußmann: *Lexikon der Sprachwissenschaft* (Stuttgart: Kröner, 1990²), p. 726–729. For a general analysis of speech acts in English, see Andreas H. Jucker/ Irma Taavitsainen: *Speech Acts in the History of English* (Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2008).

340 See also Kaspar von Greyerz: *Vorsehungsglaube und Kosmologie*, chapter 3 and 4.

341 *Ibid.*, p. 34. However, uttering a prophecy could also be dangerous when connected to witchcraft, as Christina Hole elaborates in: *Witchcraft in England* (London: B. T. Batsford, 1945), p. 140.

342 See Kaspar von Greyerz: *Vorsehungsglaube und Kosmologie*, p. 68.

343 Bertrand Taihe/ Tim Thornton (eds.): *Prophecy. The Power of Inspired Language*, p. 7.

344 *Ibid.*, p. 3.

345 Compare among others Marjorie Reeves: *The Influence of Prophecy in the Later Middle Ages* (Oxford: OUP/ Clarendon Press, 1969).

346 If the outcome is known to the audience due to the knowledge of the drama's source,

desperate situation and then direct towards the future of the tragedy, as the speaker determines to take the needed action towards revenge or despair of his coming doom.

The second part of the chapter is concerned with curses, hopes and wishes. In comparison to supposedly general prophecies, individual curses often appear as very subjective accusations against one self or another person. The revenger often curses himself because of his unbearable situation, when overwhelmed with melancholy and pessimism; the villain often curses his surroundings and enemies. He is affected by his own curse and will have to suffer for it: treason and death are the consequence for the revenger in tragedies, but only after he has taken retaliation against his enemy.

The final verification of mantic elements depends on the doom the characters have to encounter – there is in the end an unconscious irreversibility³⁴⁷ of the development of the plot and revenge leads into inevitable violence: the result of the play is death, and that is unavoidable.

The plays chosen³⁴⁸ for this study portray a representative mixture of revenge tragedies from different decades of Renaissance drama.

The Spanish Tragedy by Thomas Kyd is the earliest play chosen here. It presents a foil to many of its successors and had a significant impact on the genre. Also included is the historical tragedy *Caesar's Revenge* by an anonymous playwright.³⁴⁹ Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* and *Hamlet* are not included in this study to give more room to the interpretation of less known contemporaries; however, the results of studies on the supernatural in these plays is obviously underlying this study, too,³⁵⁰ and references to Shakespeare are often mirrored as events in the chosen plays, for example in the comparatively little known *The Tragedy of Hoffman* by Henry Chettle. Two of the plays included here are sequels to popular plays: John Marston's *Antonio's Revenge*, a sequel to his earlier

prophecies within a historical context, even if left out in the play, could be valuable and dramaturgically useful.

347 Compare this to Verena Olejniczak Lobsien: "Multi Pertransibunt", especially p. 113.

348 Not chosen here for reasons of brevity in the sense of doubling arguments, Francis Jaques' *The Queen of Corsica* (1642) has been described as a drama preoccupied "with violence and incestuous passion [...] between the horrible and the absurd". In: Clifford Leech: *Shakespeare's Tragedies and other Studies in Seventeenth Century Drama* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1950), p. 111. It "is not an innocent courtly tragicomedy [...] [but] a play in the popular Jacobean or Caroline mode" as Henry D. Janzen put it in his introduction to the play in Francis Jaques: *The Queen of Corsica* (1642), ed. Henry D. Janzen, The Malone Society Reprints, 1989, p. x. There are not many functionalised mantic elements in it but some metaphors according to this subject.

349 On the audience's knowledge of history and the consequent expectations of a historical revenge tragedy, see below in the interpretation. CR has sometimes been attributed to Chapman but this has not been proved yet.

350 As the bibliography shows, many studies, illuminating all Renaissance drama, concentrate on the analysis of Shakespeare.

comedy *Antonio and Mellida*, and George Chapman's *The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois*, a sequel to *Bussy D'Ambois*, both deeply influenced by Stoicism and the decay of human strength.

Plays that lead revenge tragedy onto an even bloodier and ruthless level include *The Revenger's Tragedy* by Thomas Middleton and two of John Webster's tragedies, *The White Devil* and *The Duchess of Malfi* – often comprising grotesque and horrendous images.

Cyril Tourneur's *The Atheist's Tragedy* proves a controversial example of the morals of revenge tragedy, because it widens the definition of the retaliation scheme;³⁵¹ *The Maid's Tragedy* by Beaumont and Fletcher, who are more famous for tragicomedy, and Middleton and Rowley's *The Changeling* from 1622, are one of the last true revenge tragedies adhering to the mood of this type of play. The last play that is included in this study is the very late *The Maid's Revenge* by James Shirley from 1626 (printed 1638), a time when revenge plays were not in popular demand any more and the genre of tragicomedy dominated the stage, a fact that seems to be influencing the content of the revenge tragedy, too, where mantic elements are only sparsely used.

All revenge tragedies have the motifs of hurt, vengeance, and bloodshed in common, and there is a revenger, – be he remorseless or a pure victim of circumstances – who is determined to carry out retaliation. Even though the revenger seems obsessed with self-justice and revenge itself is never only the killing of a murderer but invocation of infernal powers,³⁵² there remains a moral justification, a defence the spectator can enjoy and an entertainment, which perpetuates necessary cruelty. The revenge tragedies are therefore abundant with the transgression of violence: "In feuds – real or fictional – vengeance breeds vengeance; violence escalates and all parties are consumed in a domino effect of hatred and retaliation."³⁵³ The fascination with this topic of injustice and justice dominated these plays and their popularity, possibly also the fascination of the playwrights with it: "If, in general, the writer falls in love with the best, or even with the most widely held opinions of his time, he will, if his art is adequate, be what is called popular."³⁵⁴

In revenge tragedy, the motive of retaliation is supported by the supernatural frame,³⁵⁵ and, presented through mantic elements,³⁵⁶ remains essentially theat-

351 Compare Irving Ribner: *Jacobean Tragedy. The Quest for Moral Order*, p. 73 and 87.

352 Again, AT needs to be excluded here.

353 Janet Clare: *Revenge Tragedies of the Renaissance*, p. 3.

354 Hardin Craig: *The Enchanted Glass. The Elizabethan Mind in Literature* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1960), p. 83.

355 Compare also Alexander Leggatt: *Shakespeare's Political Drama. The History Plays and The Roman Plays* (London/ New York: Routledge, 1988), p. 26.

356 "Das Metaphysische oder seine Einzelaspekte werden im historischen Drama aus ver-

rical.³⁵⁷ Shakespeare³⁵⁸ and his contemporary playwrights made use of the marvellous possibilities and symbolic value of mantic elements in their revenge tragedies.³⁵⁹ The material, which functionalised nature as “more than a commonplace”,³⁶⁰ was used with an irresistible force to support the theatrical aspect of vengeance,³⁶¹ which presented divine and moral justice.³⁶² In drama the world of order is endangered.³⁶³ Divine harmony needs to be reconstructed; however, cruel revenge often worsens the situation.³⁶⁴

The audience who went to see a revenge tragedy would already have preliminary genre expectations,³⁶⁵ anticipate certain events through mantic fore-

schiedenen Gründen verwandt. Einmal können sie dramatischen Zielen dienen, sei es als strukturelle Mittel, sei es als Hilfen zur Charakterisierung oder als ‘Dekoration’.” Herbert Geisen: *Dimension des Metaphysischen*, p. 24.

- 357 Compare Henk Gras: *Studies in Elizabethan Audience Response to the Theatre. Vol. II: As I Am man. Aspects of the Presentation and Audience Perception of the Elizabethan Female Page*. European University Studies. Europäische Hochschulschriften. Publications Universitaires Européennes, Vol. 48/49 (Frankfurt am Main et al: Peter Lang, 1993), p. 125. Kevin Sharpe writes on the entertainment value: “It is vital to remind ourselves, albeit surprising to need to remind ourselves, that for the early modern age, as for our own, the performance (be it coronation, charivari or beach wedding) and the image (royal portrait, scatological woodcut or computer graphic) were and are ways in which we structure, communicate and interrogate our systems of values and meanings.” In: *Reading Revolutions. The Politics of Reading in Early Modern England* (New Haven/ London: Yale University Press, 2000), p. 14.
- 358 Thomas B. Stroup: *Microcosmos. The Shape of the Elizabethan Play* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1965), p. xi.
- 359 R. S. White: *Natural Law in English Renaissance Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. xii.
- 360 Edward William Taylor: *Nature and Art in Renaissance Literature* (New York/ London: Columbia University Press, 1964), p. 3.
- 361 See Peter F. Mullany: “Religion and the Artifice of Jacobean and Caroline Drama”, in: *Salzburg Studies in English Literature. Jacobean Drama Studies* 41 (1977), p. 1. He is especially underlining the theatrical strength of Marston.
- 362 Westfall argues on the decline of the influence of religion in Richard S. Westfall: *Science and Religion in Seventeenth Century England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1958), p. 1; nevertheless, on stage, the ideas that religion and cosmology comprised, were reconstructed and functionalised. Compare Yates, who mentions cosmic proportions relating to the plays: Frances A. Yates: *The Occult Philosophy in the Elizabethan Age* (London/ Basingstoke/ Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979), p. 156.
- 363 See Hans-Wilhelm Schwarze: *Justice, Law and Revenge. ‘The Individual and Natural Order’ in Shakespeares Dramen* (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag Herbert Grundmann, 1971), *Studien zur Englischen Literatur*, ed. Johannes Kleinstück, Vol. 6, p. 18.
- 364 Awaiting victim revengers can also delay revenge like Hamlet and make evil deeds more imminent and powerful until they finally strike in their task as revengers, see below e.g. Antonio, Pandulpho (both AR), and Clermont (RB).
- 365 Manfred Pfister writes about these genre expectations: “Dies zeigt sich schon daran, daß der Rezipient eines dramatischen Textes aufgrund seiner gesellschaftlich vermittelten Kenntnisse und Erfahrungen und aufgrund seiner Vertrautheit mit den Konventionen dramatischer Texte Informationen an diesen heranträgt, die den fiktiven Figuren nicht zugänglich sind.” He continues that this kind of dramatic irony comprises various levels of

shadowing and await doom³⁶⁶ on stage. “See you not in the heavens prodigious signes”³⁶⁷ must be answered positively as will be seen in the following chapters. Lopez calls their significance “the responses they [the audience] expected and were expected to have”³⁶⁸ and they will “focus on the explication and interpretation of [...] [the] significance”³⁶⁹ of the use of mantic elements within the dramatic concepts of the plays and their function to express premonitions of fate through various signs:

[O]f course, the nature of this tragedy produced by a range of dramatists with individual styles is widely divergent, but a distinct tendency towards a similar approach to that outlined above manifests itself: schematic, self-displaying, metaphoric rather than mimetic theatre creating an entirely theatrical frame of reference.³⁷⁰

These metaphoric (and mimetic) images and utterances of omens, dreams, ghosts, prophecies and curses present supernatural symbols that foreshadow events in the plot; and the playwrights of the “Elizabethan and Jacobean drama” relied on the fact that they could “be very sure of the response [...] [wanted] from its audience as a whole at any given moment.”³⁷¹

In the following chapters, the different mantic elements will be analysed in the context of their plays. The first chapters will play the supportive role and underlying structure of the cultural contextual knowledge to these interpretations.

dramatic conventions, based on the outer communicative system: “Auf dem allgemeinsten Niveau, da historisch am wenigsten variabel, ist dies die Divergenz zwischen dem Wissen der Zuschauer um die Fiktionalität des dramatisch Präsentierten einerseits und dem ‘Realitätsbewußtsein’ der fiktiven Figuren andererseits. Diese latent immer vorhandene Divergenz kann dadurch aktualisiert werden, dass diese fiktiven Figuren ihre Realität im Bild des Theaters als scheinhaft thematisieren.” In: *Das Drama* (Stuttgart: UTB, 2001¹¹), p. 68–69.

366 See Gregory M. Colón Semenza: “The Spanish Tragedy and Revenge”, in: *Early Modern English Drama. A Critical Companion*, ed. Garrett A Sullivan Jr/ Patrick Cheney/ Andrew Hadfield (New York/ Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 50–60, p. 50.

367 Anonymous: *Edmond Ironside or War Hath Made All Friends*, The Malone Society Reprints, 1927, (no act/scene division) l. 785. Compare the form and appearance of nature and history in Ernst Cassirer: *Freiheit und Form. Studien zur deutschen Geistesgeschichte*, ed. R. Schmücker, *Gesammelte Werke. Hamburger Ausgabe*, Vol. VII (Hamburg: Meiner, 2001), p. 369.

368 Jeremy Lopez: *Theatrical Convention and Audience Response in Early Modern Drama*, p. 8.

369 Wolfgang Clemen: “Anticipation and Foreboding in Shakespeare’s Early Histories”, p. 27.

370 Darryll Grantley: “Masques and Murderers: Dramatic Method and Ideology in Revenge Tragedy and the Court Masque”, in: *Jacobean Poetry and Prose. Rhetoric, Representation and the Popular Imagination* (Houndsmills/ London: Macmillan, 1988), p. 194–212, p. 196.

371 Jeremy Lopez: *Theatrical Convention and Audience Response*, p. 8.

II. Analysis

4 Omens as visual mantic elements – “A blazing star appeareth”

To make short, in this yeare sundrye wofull, and cruel evils, together with many straunge and horrible events shal sensibly appeare, which sha principally molest and afflict the westward countries.

Thus wrote Richard Harvey on the rare star constellation in 1582, a planetary conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter, seen as one of the most notorious omens in the late 16th century. Omens, prodigies or portents are phenomena that depict or foreshadow an event in the present or the future.¹ They are visual symbols,² and were in the Renaissance seen as signs of a divine order or a contravening disorder.³ Disorder threatened the order of the world picture, and this “[o]rder also meant fixity, constancy, immutability. Change was the greatest of all enemies. Tudor thinkers viewed time and history cyclically. Flux meant chaos and chaos meant a return to pre-Creation disorder.”⁴

Omens are out-of-the-ordinary occurrences, which can neither be expected nor anticipated – they are signs of extraordinary and mostly of a contradicting nature. Comets, for example, were “of comparatively common occurrence, and

1 See Alexander Demandt: *Metaphern für Geschichte. Sprachbilder und Gleichnisse im historisch-politischen Denken* (München: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1978), p. 124f. Compare also Will-Erich Peuckert: “Vorzeichen”, in: *Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens*, ed. Hanns Bächthold-Stäubli (Berlin: Gruyter, 2000³), p. 1730–1760.

2 The term visual is nevertheless problematic. Only few omens could really be seen or heard on stage (see below thunder and lightning), most were reported through speech, the so-called *Wortkulisse*. Still they are supposed to be experienced by every character and not only made up by one character; as such, they become objective and not subjective experiences.

3 Compare Gerardine Marie Obermark-Clark: *The Structural Function of Ghosts, Dreams, Prophecies and Portents in Shakespeare's Plays* (Diss. Indiana University, 1977), p. 595.

4 Stephen Collins: *From Divine Cosmos to Sovereign State. An Intellectual History of Consciousness and the Idea of Order in Renaissance England* (New York/ Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 16.

were usually considered signs of misfortune”,⁵ unexpected weather conditions, misbalances in nature, or bodily malfunctions were interpreted as messengers of a disturbed order. Omens could divinely foreshadow death, epidemics, political conflicts, wars, or personal tragedies – but sometimes also have positive influences. By divination and interpretation their influence could be anticipated but their consequences were unknown until they became true.

On portents, Buell argues that prodigies are administered doctrinally – they are fixed, determined indications of a divine concern with mankind, and show themselves as comets or earthquakes. They have political implications, which is also admitted by religious academics who would write in favour or against a possible faith in portents.⁶ Discussions on the belief in portents, especially about the importance of astrology became predominant. On stage, the mantic foreshadowing of stars became the most ominous one – their appearance often alludes to a change of stately order or fortune in battle, already indicated by the doubt and fear expressed at its sighting.

Staging visual signs on a virtually empty stage seems a great task without the support of scenery; by means of a verbal presentation of stage scenery, however, this was skillfully created, and a “flexible platform dramaturgy”,⁷ as Weimann calls it, was used instead.⁸ Omens, apart from noises that could be created behind the curtain, were mostly presented by way of theatrical pretense, invoked linguistically. Thus omens are not truly visual elements, but are indeed so in the literal sense of the word – they represent objective experiences made by the characters on stage and interpreted differently by each of the characters, presented to the audience through teichoscopic description.

The impact of these presentations of omen is essential for revenge tragedy. Omens, foreshadowing the development or outcome of the plot, are the central type of mantic elements within these plays. Sometimes, omens can be foreshadowing agents that are paralleling the action of the plot directly;⁹ in other cases they were used as a more indefinite sign, creating a “grim expectancy, a

5 W. Gersham Collingwood: *Astrology in the Apocalypse. An Essay on Biblical Illusions to Chaldaean Science* (Sunnyside, Kent: George Allen, 1886), p. 67.

6 For this paragraph compare L. M. Buell: “Elizabethan Portents: Superstition or Doctrine”, in: *Essays Critical and Historical Dedicated to Lily B. Campbell* (Berkeley/ New York: Russell & Russell, 1950), p. 27–41. See also S. K. Heninger Jr.: *A Handbook of Renaissance Meteorology with Particular Reference to Elizabethan and Jacobean Literature* (Durham, N. C.: Duke University Press, 1960), p. 89f.

7 Robert Weimann: *Shakespeare and the Popular Tradition in the Theater*, p. 216.

8 The German term *Wortkulisse* seems especially appropriate in this respect, because it describes the stage imagery as created through speech.

9 See Gerardine Marie Obermark-Clark: *The Structural Function of Ghosts, Dreams, Prophecies and Portents in Shakespeare's Plays* (Diss. Indiana University, 1977), p. 597.

suspenseful foreboding concerning some tragic occurrence”.¹⁰ Thus, this study will need to analyse whether the dramaturgically incorporated omens are corresponding to an event or corresponding to a certain mood in the plays. In *Caesar’s Revenge*, for example, Pompey is – in expectation of upheaval and battle – painfully aware of attending to the symptoms of the time: he is in a depressed mood and very much aware that Rome is facing doom: he will “awaite,/ How Fortune dealeth with our doubtfull State” (I.v.427–428).

There are numerous types of prophetic omens which differ as to their symbolic value; and “[p]opular culture was certainly permeated by symbolism.”¹¹ For example, birthmarks or other physical distortions of the body, and astrological phenomena like planet conjunctions or the appearance of a comet were interpreted as divine signs foretelling future events, i.e. signs of the cosmological disorder.¹²

This chapter is divided up according to different types of omens and their blends or mixtures. The existence of blends or the combination of different omens draws attention to the fact that it is often not only the idea of one omen that defines and influences a situation, but the playwrights often, or rather regularly, mixed different omens in their writings to create chains of omens.¹³ The chapter begins with images of light and its causes, i.e. light, stars, and other signs in the heavens determined by weather conditions. After that, the chapter deals with the opposite of light, its negation at night and in darkness, which is also related to a cold climate. Then follows the analysis of physical omens – animals¹⁴ and bodily phenomena like bleeding or wounds and this section also deals with the combination of physical bodily omens with the above-mentioned astronomical signs. In these chains of omens, each supports the other in stressing a certain mood. The last category is that of inklings, indefinite thoughts

10 Ibid, p. 596.

11 Anthony Fletcher/ John Stevenson (eds.): *Order and Disorder in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 6.

12 For cosmology see also Morris Berman: *The Re-enchantment of the World* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981), p. 16–17 on identification with nature. Compare also Ruth Leila Andersen: *Elizabethan Psychology and Shakespeare’s Plays* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1966), p. 57–58.

13 A more specific omen classification in this chapter would have led to more complicated triple mixtures. Such chains of mantic signs are nevertheless common; one example are the different foreshadowing to Lord Hastings in Shakespeare’s *Richard III*, see especially III.iv., in: *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt (New York/ London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1997⁵).

14 Black animals especially, such as black birds or black dogs, were fairly common as portents of harm, just as in contrast, white bodies or figures could often be identified with ancestors. See Will-Erich Peuckert: “Vorzeichen”, in: *Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens*, p. 1733.

that perturb one of the characters, which largely appear in connection with other signs.

Comets and meteors, so-called shooting stars, stand out from the routine of perfection and permanence in a harmonious divine astrological order. Transient and unpredictable, as Beech calls them, the “rare occurrence of such storms and the sporadic appearance of bright meteors, or fire balls, are well documented in the ancient literature or journals.”¹⁵ These sources, almanacks etc, provided the playwrights with ideas and inspiration for the presentation of omens in their plays, mostly described in a creative flow of incredible supernatural teichoscopic speeches. This can be expected in an age of scientific interest – astrology and astronomy were still strongly based on religious premises – the question here remains what kind of implications they brought to the stage and how they functioned in the plot of the revenge plays.

The playwrights used different approaches to the conflicts on stage. Take the Aristotelian explanations of earthly vapours and exhalations, which amounted to an interpretation of nature and could be instructional on stage, a form of a “benefit of moral and spiritual growth”.¹⁶ Falling stars were seen as a destructive element in a set system of proper and fixed stars. They possessed an absoluteness by virtue of belonging to the heavens; falling stars or comets thus represented a loss of the fixed order: they break away from their sphere¹⁷ and thus give a symbolic expression to a disturbed relation between the cosmos and the natural law.¹⁸ Especially in drama, this picture of disorder and chaos was strongly used: comets as divine messengers create and reflect chaos in tragedy.

Strange happenings and foretokens in revenge tragedy inspire fear and awe – whether their origin is in the heavens, i.e. the sky, or on earth, in flora or fauna.

15 Martin Beech: “Meteor Imagery in English Poetry, c. 1600–1900”, in: *New Comparison 7* (1989), pp. 99–112, here p. 99.

16 Ibid, p. 101.

17 In the seventeenth century, the role of comets declined in literature, but was still predominant in the beginning of the century. See Martin Beech: “Meteor Imagery in English Poetry, c. 1600–1900”, p. 102.

18 On the connection between the nature of macrocosm and microcosm, see for example Leonard Barkan: *Nature's Work of Art. The Human Body as Image of the World* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1975); Hans Blumenberg: *Die Lesbarkeit der Welt* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1981); K. M. Briggs: *Pale Hecate's Team. An Examination of Witchcraft and Magic among Shakespeare's Contemporaries and His Immediate Successors* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962); Ernst Cassirer: *Individuum und Kosmos in der Philosophie der Renaissance* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1977, Nachdruck der 1. Auflage (Leipzig/ Berlin, 1927), Studien der Bibliothek Warburg 10); R. G. Collingwood: *The Idea of Nature* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1945); George C. Herndl: *The High Design. English Renaissance Tragedy and the Natural Law* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1970); Frances Teague: “Letters and Portents in *Julius Caesar* and *King Lear*”, in: *The Shakespeare Yearbook* 1992), p. 87–102.

The customary belief in them is exploited as a set expectation in drama, functionalised as a warning or indication of future or present proceedings.

Hallett and Hallett argue on the fact that madness, “universally found in revenge tragedy[,] is not a crowd-pleasing spectacle, meant to send shivers up the spines of those in the galleries, but an integral part of the revenge theme.”¹⁹ The same applies to the function of all elements of mantics within drama. They are not only used to introduce a supernatural tension of divine action, but they are following a strict pattern of arousing expectations in the audience. Omens were used as symbols to express intentions,²⁰ initiating expectations the spectator will have on the future course of the play. The same idea can be found in Bacon: “As there are certain hollow blasts of wind and secret swelling of sea before a tempest, so there are in States.”²¹

Barbara Shapiro writes that historical elements of nature “of the heavens, comets, meteorology, cosmography, geography, botany, zoology, physiology, and anatomy”²² were all included, and this means that omens of all shapes could be interpreted as signals,²³ because of the corresponding reciprocity between landscapes in the microcosm and macrocosm.²⁴

The New Historicist reading of the aim of harmony in Renaissance tragedies has been criticised as inconsistent with the idea of an impending and everpresent chaos, defended by the Cultural Materialists. In the bleak bloodshed-ridden endings of revenge tragedies, the idea that humanity is trying to fight a losing battle against chaos in the cosmos seems even more appropriate. In accordance with Cultural Materialist theory, however, it seems also appropriate to include the facts of mantic theory: it is also possible and necessary to double-read mantic elements as omens.

Radical Tragedy takes a different approach to conflict and contradictions, arguing that Jacobean theatre interrogated structures of belief which legitimated prevailing power

19 Charles A. Hallett/ Elaine S. Hallett: *The Revenger's Madness. A Study of Revenge Tragedy Motifs* (Lincoln, Nebraska/ London: University of Nebraska Press, 1980), p. 9.

20 See Ernst Cassirer: *Individuum und Kosmos in der Philosophie der Renaissance*, p. 6.

21 Francis Bacon: *The Oxford Francis Bacon IV. The Advancement of Learning* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), Book 2, p. 13.

22 Barbara J. Shapiro: *Probability and Certainty in Seventeenth-Century England. A Study of Relationships between Natural Science, Religion, History, Law, and Literature* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1983), p. 126; Shapiro is also elaborating on other ideas that proved influential: medicine, ethnology, sleeping, diets, ageing, music, visions, or appetites.

23 On a different topic with a similar impact on drama, see also Duncan Salkeld: *Madness and Drama in the Age of Shakespeare* (Manchester/ New York: Manchester University Press, 1993), p. 4.

24 See also Eckhard Lobsien: *Landschaft in Texten. Zu Geschichte und Phänomenologie der literarischen Beschreibung* (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzlersche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1981), Introduction.

relations, and that it often did this by seizing upon, intensifying and exposing those contradictions in the prevailing social order which it is one of the effects of ideology to efface.²⁵

The function of mantic elements clearly intensify and expose the plot, but the playwrights also exploit the capacity of the audience by allowing mantic elements to be misread in the plays, differentiated in their effect and exaggerated in their revealed truth.

Frances Teague in her article on *Julius Caesar* and *King Lear* states that often omens produce paradoxical readings and so change moods, characters' attitudes and their perception of omens, especially in connection with forged letters. For example, Gloucester in *King Lear* reads the false letter as being true, the true portent as being false, which produces an evil outcome like a civil war.²⁶ In the same way Cassius ("not in our stars but in ourselves") uses false news to persuade Brutus of his plans, even though the latter should take ominous prodigies as "signs in the natural world of supernatural warning".²⁷ Teague states that: "Some mortals refuse to read portents, convinced of their inadequacy as readers; others read portents tentatively, fully aware of potential ambiguity or equivocation; and finally, some read with self-assurance, certain that they can discern a divine message from a damned one and then reproduce that message in mortal terms."²⁸ It is not only important to interpret the omens themselves, but also to understand people's belief in them and to credit the faith in their revelatory capacity. Often negatively connotated characters will not see a meaning in the portents and will not recognise them as a divine device but only use them as a manipulative pretence.

Omens are used in a dynamic way to promote possible developments of the plot, and the interdependence of interacting and interpreting opposites can provoke conflicts and confusion.²⁹

25 Dollimore, *Radical Tragedy*, p. xxiii.

26 Frances Teague: "Letters and Portents in Julius Caesar and King Lear", in: *The Shakespeare Yearbook* (1992), p. 99.

27 Ibid.

28 Ibid, p. 93. A prime example is Macbeth's misinterpretation of the three apparitions in *Macbeth* IV.i.87–109 and his fallible resolution on their impossible future: "That will never be." (l. 110) in: *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt (New York/ London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1997³).

29 See Thomas McAlindon: *Shakespeare's Tragic Cosmos*, p. 5–6, 10.

4.1 Omens of light – “She stains the time past: lights the time to come”³⁰

In this chapter, the different mantic elements will be addressed in a logical order, beginning with those that define the atmosphere of clarity and brightness on stage. *Light* and brightness describe the clarity and illumination of a scene, lightness becomes ominous when it is either extremely striking or when it is lighting a usually dark setting. Shining light is connected with a positive influence, illuminating and revealing, shining bright upon a person, a constellation or a context.³¹ The above quote from *The Duchess of Malfi* evokes the presence of light as a positive influence on the future; light represents hope and happiness. However, light can also be associated with danger, if it is an aggressive light like a consuming fire.

Through warm light and brightness, a scene is not only illuminated but becomes harmonious. In *Antonio’s Revenge*, for example, the morning light is accompanied by “soft music [that] gently moves the air” (I.ii.61)³², and Antonio enters the stage, looking optimistically into the future:

Darkness is fled; look, infant morn hath drawn
Bright silver curtains ’bout the couch of night;
And now Aurora’s horse trots azure rings,
Breathing fair light about the firmament. (I.ii.65–68)

With his friends, Antonio is joking about the pleasures of the beautiful day and his forthcoming marriage with Mellida; their conversation soon centres on a “horned devil” (l. 70, 72, 74) and thus has sexual implications – there seems to be no infiltration of the night’s black deeds, the murder of Antonio’s father, at this point in time.

A person can also appear as a pleasant illumination or enlightenment to somebody else. Confronted with Alsemero in *The Changeling*, Beatrice instantly falls in love with him and compares him to a bright diamond, a shiny stone, which promises happiness for her. Thus it is not only the direct shine of the

³⁰ DM, I.i.204.

³¹ For the symbolism of light, see a. o. Dorothea Forstner: *Die Welt der Symbole* (Innsbruck/ Wien/ München: Tyrolia Verlag, 1967²), p. 100f.

³² *The Maid’s Tragedy* begins on a similar musical note. The disharmonious sounds of war have ended, and the play begins with a bright celebration of marriage. Melantius has returned home to Rhodes from successful wars abroad. For himself, Melantius prefers the war to celebratory feasting, which might already be a sign that, now he is home, there will be warlike confusion in his home as in the wars, but for the moment, music is surrounding him: “These soft and silken wars are not for me;/ The Musick must be shrill, and all confus’d,/ That stirs my blood, and then I dance with armes:/ But is *Amintor* Wed?” (I.i.44). The cause for the harmonious musical celebrations is a wedding, and the tragedy only seems to begin in a rather pleasant manner.

sunlight, which promises happiness, but also this metaphoric usage of sunlight imagery which causes the same positive associations as a true ray of light.

A true deserver like a diamond sparkles:
 In darkness you may see him, that's in absence,
 Which is the greatest darkness falls on love;
 Yet is he best discern'd then
 With intellectual eyesight. (II.i.15–19)

The diamond³³ signifies the brightness that Alsemero brings to her, if only in her thoughts. The Duchess of Malfi is described by her lover as a shining and bright human being. All other protagonists at court, her two siblings and their entourage, are described as beastly; the Duchess is the only person left in the court who is considered pure and Antonio refers to her thus: “She stains the time past: lights the time to come” (I.ii.131). Both her brothers plot some business in which they do not involve Antonio: “His nature is too honest” (I.ii.151).

Caesar's Revenge begins with an enigmatic fire omen in the initial stage direction: “*flames of fire*” (I.i.0) illuminate the scene – these might have been torches, firearms or fireworks.³⁴ They correspond to the fiery battle of Pharsalia, which is fought on another level by the protagonists. The use of brightness here is very different from the above incantation of morning and the comparison of love to a sparkling object. Light is here compared to fire, probably supported by flames from torches on stage. The fire is a destructive force, a symbol for the flaming battle that is going on backstage, and its intensity is also underlined by the first figure to enter the stage: the Prologue³⁵ is spoken by “*Discord*”, who describes the shock of the battle in Pharsalia.

With the image of destructive flames, the prologue introduces the following action as a scene of horror. *Discord* evokes the threats of past history: the Roman civil war with Pompey on the ultimately defeated side. Downfall, decay and destruction are the consequences of the turmoil in the state and cosmos. What is to come is to be awaited full of anxiety, and the ominous impression of destruction reflects the woe of the defeated fighters Titinius, Brutus and Pompey in

33 See Dorothea Forstner: *Die Welt der Symbole* (Innsbruck/ Wien/ München: Tyrolia Verlag, 1967²), p. 145 (also p. 44). Compare also Christel Meier: *Gemma spritalis: Methode and Gebrauch der Edelsteinallegorese vom frühen Christentum bis ins 18. Jahrhundert* (München: Wilhelm Fink, 1977), especially p. 236–253.

34 See Lily B. Campbell on the usage of props and machinations to create sounds: *Scenes and Machines on the English Stage During the Renaissance* (New York: Barnes and Noble, Inc., 1912, repr. 1960), p. 64f.

35 On the function of the chorus figure, see e.g. articles on the Chorus in *Henry V*: compare Uwe Baumann: *Shakespeare und seine Zeit* (Stuttgart/ Düsseldorf/ Leipzig: Klett, 1998), p. 63f; Id.: “Die Chorus-Figur als funktionales Zentrum: Informationsvergabe, Sympathienlenkung und Metatheater”, in: *Henry V. Programmheft der Bonn University Shakespeare Company* (2001), p. 26–29.

I.i, who are in despair about their lost battle: Titinius compares the battle to a shipwreck and flames, and adds the metaphor of sinking a glorified, virginal ship in the harbour.

Fire stays a recurring omen of battle in *Caesar's Revenge*. After Act I, the chorus figure *Discord* re-enters the scene, surrounded with "*Flashes of fire*". She refers to recent foreshadowings of "golden gifts and promis'd victories,/ By fatall signes at *Rubicon*" (l.610–611) and relates how the present has proved fortunate for Caesar. Indicating signs of warning, she remembers defeated Pompey and compares his fate to that of one rising and falling on Fortune's wheel. As her name indicates, it is *Discord's* aim to divide the parties, split people apart and bring more sorrow to Rome: "And now O *Rome*, woe, woe, to thee I cry/ Which to the world do bring al misery." (l. 640–641).

The influence of light has to be differentiated according to its possible danger. It can seem direct and aggressive like fire, but it can also be bright and shiny like a diamond, or illuminate the pleasures and harmonious hours of a day.

4.2 Stars and planets taking shape – "I wait but that eclipse"³⁶

*Stars*³⁷ are a further source of illumination; however, in contrast to the above lights, their influence is always related to the macrocosmos.³⁸ Drayton admits their possible influence, and calls those that have a positive one "blessed stars,' 'lucky stars,' 'happy stars,' 'smiling stars,' or 'fair stars.'"³⁹ He sees in them various possible cosmic relations. Even though the sunlight is lighting the day from afar, the stars are considered as a distant cosmic backdrop. On stage, stars

³⁶ *Changeling*, III.iv.15.

³⁷ Astrology, and with it, astronomy, is one of the earliest sciences, deriving from the classical times of the Chaldeans and Egyptians, who set the first definitions of star constellations, noted planets and produced horoscopes. Their ideas were differentiated and further developed in Hellenistic and Roman times, and astrology also proved influential in medieval times, with its influence reaching its peak in the late middle ages and early Renaissance. The seventeenth century saw a gradual decline in astrology. See LMA, p. 1135f. Especially interesting are new stars appearing in the firmament, and the movement of stars in the skies. See Compare Hedley Howell Rhys (ed.): *Seventeenth Century Science and the Arts* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1961), p. 34–35.

³⁸ One strange and paradoxical omen, a black star appears in RB. Guise tells of omens of death that he saw, which seem to threaten him: "there hangs/ A blacke starre in the skies, to which the sunne/ Gives yet no light, will raine a poyson'd shower/ Into your entrailes" (V.iv.56–59). It is a star which strangely reflects no light. This is a very different indicator of some evil proceedings and belongs rather in the category of darkness than in that of stars – this image foreshadows Guise's death.

³⁹ Don Cameron Allen: *The Star-Crossed Renaissance. The Quarrel about Astrology and its Influence in England* (New York: Octagon Books, 1973), p. 161.

are painted on the roof, as McAlindon explains: “on the so-called ‘heavens’ or extended canopy above the stage were depicted the sun and moon and other planets, whose unceasing influence was held to be responsible for all change in the sublunary world.”⁴⁰ Cosmology and its interpretation through astrology⁴¹ and astronomy explains the relation between the cosmos and mankind, i.e. how it is reflected in the human state. “In such a world there was nothing outrageous about alchemy, astrology, witchcraft or magic: they all fitted well into universally held assumptions.”⁴² Influencing the earthly microcosm, omens are interpreted as indicators of shifts in the microcosmic state.

“Prodigious apparitions in the heavens were prophetic indications of the divine will!”⁴³ By 1700, the credence given to astrology and astronomy⁴⁴ had

40 Thomas McAlindon: *Shakespeare’s Tragic Cosmos* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 3.

41 There are countless works on astrology, and its counterpart astronomy, in the Renaissance, the influence of stars, the science, and its development. I have listed only a few: Don Cameron Allen: *The Star-Crossed Renaissance. The Quarrel about Astrology and its Influence in England* (New York: Octagon Books, 1973 (1st 1944)); Bernard Capp: *Astrology and the Popular Press. English Almanacs, 1500–1800* (Ithaca, N. Y.: Cornell University Press/ London: Faber and Faber, 1979); Hilary Carey: *Courting Disaster. Astrology at the English Court and University in the Later Middle Ages* (Houndsmills/ London: Macmillan, 1992); W. Gersham Collingwood: *Astrology in the Apocalypse. An Essay on Biblical Illusions to Chaldean Science* (Sunnyside, Kent: George Allen, 1886); Brian G. Cooper: “Religious Astrology in the Seventeenth Century”, in: *Dalhousie Review*, 1964, p. 312–320; Patrick Curry: *Prophecy and Power. Astrology in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989); J. C. Eade: *The Forgotten Sky. A Guide to Astrology in English Literature* (Oxford Clarendon Press, 1984); S. K. Jr. Heninger: *A Handbook of Renaissance Meteorology with Particular Reference to Elizabethan and Jacobean Literature* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1960); Christopher Hill: “Science and Magic in Seventeenth Century England”, in: Samuel, Raphael/ Jones, Gareth Stedman (eds.): *Culture, Ideology, and Politics. Essays for Eric Hobsbawm* (London/ Boston/ Melbourne/ Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983), p. 176–93; Francis R. Johnson: *Astronomical Thought in Renaissance England. A Study of Scientific Writings 1500–1645* (New York Octagon Books, 1937¹, repr. 1968); Paul M. Kocher: *Science and Religion in Elizabethan England* (San Marino: Huntington Library, 1953); Christopher McIntosh: *The Astrologers and their Creed. An Historical Outline* (London: Arrow Books, 1969¹, 1971); Eric Russell: *Astrology and Prediction* (London: B. T. Batsford, 1972); James Winny: *The Frame of Order. An Outline of Elizabethan Belief Taken From Treatises of the Late Sixteenth Century* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1957).

42 Christopher Hill: “Science and Magic in Seventeenth Century England”, p. 181.

43 Brian G. Cooper: “Religious Astrology in the Seventeenth Century”, p. 316.

44 For example Francis R. Johnson: “Astronomical Text-Books in the Sixteenth Century”, in: E. A. Underwood (ed.): *Science, Medicine, and History. Essays on the Evolution of the Scientific Thought and Medical Practise Written in Honour of Charles Singer* (London/ New York/ Toronto: Geoffrey Cumberlege/ Oxford University Press, 1953), p. 285–302; David Darst: “The Role of Witch Hunting in the Demise of Astrology and Magic and the Birth of Modern Science in Renaissance Europe”, in: *University of Dayton Review* 20 (1989), p. 57–67; Herbert Dingle: “Astronomy in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries”, in: E. A. Underwood (ed.): *Science, Medicine and History* (1953), p. 455–68; Eugenio Garin: *Astrology in the Renaissance. The Zodiac of Life* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983); first published as *Lo*

clearly diminished since the science of astrology had been in demise⁴⁵; by 1600 it had, if not scientifically, still a common and popular appeal and “movements in the heavens revealed the movements of God’s purposes”.⁴⁶ In the second half of the sixteenth century “almanacs, prognostications, astrological predictions, and books on astrology become very frequent.”⁴⁷

Marjorie Reeves explains that this fascination is also related to the attention given to the apocalypse: “There appears to have been an outburst of new interest in apocalyptic themes”.⁴⁸ The belief in the significance of portents, placed by God,⁴⁹ and especially the interest in non-fixed stars and comets⁵⁰ and their significance as symbols in the universe⁵¹ was essential on stage. “The influence

Zodiaco della Vita. La Polemica sull'astrologia dal Trecento al Cinquecento (Rome, 1976); William L. Hine: “Marin Mersenne: Renaissance Naturalism and Renaissance Magic”, in: Brian Vickers (ed.): *Occult and Scientific Mentalities in the Renaissance* (Cambridge/ London/ New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 165–76; Brian Vickers: “Analogy vs. Identity: the rejection of occult symbolism, 1580–1680”, in: id. (ed.): *Occult and Scientific Mentalities in the Renaissance* (Cambridge/ London/ New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 95–163.

- 45 Mark Graubard: “Astrology’s Demise and Its Bearing on the Decline and Death of Beliefs”, in: *Osiris* 13 (1958), p. 210–61, p. 215.
- 46 Brian G. Cooper: “Religious Astrology in the Seventeenth Century”, p. 316.
- 47 Rupert Taylor: *The Political Prophecy in England* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1911), p. 121.
- 48 Marjorie Reeves: “English Apocalyptic Thinkers (c.1540–1620)”, in: *Storia e figure dell’Apocalisse fra ‘500 e ‘600*. Atti del 4^o Congresso internazionale di studi gioachimiti, ed. R. Rusconi. Viella, 1996, p. 259–273, p. 259; though Reeves is talking about the early Tudor period and not the end of the sixteenth century; see also Ann Geneva: *Astrology and the Seventeenth Century Mind. William Lilly and the Language of the Stars* (Manchester/ New York: Manchester University Press, 1995), p. 84: “it is important to mark the prognosticatory tradition within cometology”. For the interest in the apocalyptic, see also Uwe Baumann: “Image of that Horror”: Die Apokalypse in der Politik, Kultur und Literatur der Englischen Renaissance“, in: Haupt, Barbara (ed.): *Endzeitvorstellungen* (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 2001), p. 271–289.
- 49 See also Marjorie Reeves: “History and Eschatology. Medieval and Early Protestant Thought in Some English and Scottish Writings”, in: *Medievalia et Humanistica. Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Culture* 4 (1973), p. 99–123, especially p. 103; see also Brian Cooper: “Religious Astrology in the Seventeenth Century”, in: *Dalhousie Review* (1964), p. 312–320; and L.M. Buell: “Elizabethan Portents: Superstition or Doctrine”, in: *Essays Critical and Historical Dedicated to Lily B. Campbell* (Berkeley: L. A., 1950), p. 27–41; Keith Thomas argues that “[c]omets did not cease to be seen as divine warnings when in the later seventeenth century it came to be appreciated that they had natural causes and could be predicted”; see Keith Thomas, p. 91.
- 50 On comets, see especially Sara Schechner-Genuth: *Comets, Popular Culture, and the Birth of Modern Cosmology* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1997), Introduction and “Physical Theories of Comets”, p. 17f.
- 51 See the introductory study by Arthur O. Lovejoy: *The Great Chain of Being. A Study of the History of an Idea* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1953); especially p. 100f.

and effects of comets were universally known; the manuals of astrology were filled with accounts of the evil and noxious rays of the bearded monsters.”⁵²

Geneva distinguishes between “three major astrological categories of prognosis”.⁵³ For this analysis, the category of celestial omens appears to be the most important, while the third, that of conjunctions, occurs seldom. Rowse, in his general study on the Renaissance, writes: “Astrology aimed at controlling and guiding the destinies by means of fore-knowledge.”⁵⁴ Knowledge about the influence of the stars and the toying with superstition⁵⁵ prove an essential quality of the dramaturgy of revenge tragedy. Reeves tries to explain the interest in astrology: “the hidden things men desire to know most are future things”,⁵⁶ and this is a phenomenon the playwrights used to capture the audience by feeding them with hints and allusions. These effects were used in drama to surprise and also to define and shape the further devolvement of the plot.

The horoscope that the Duchess of Malfi’s husband Antonio has ordered for his child reflects the constellation of the stars; the nativity chart of the child’s birth shows the “astral correspondence”⁵⁷ that will influence the child’s life.⁵⁸ This customary belief in the stars and the power of horoscopes underlines its traditional function. Meeting Bosola, Antonio has a bad feeling or inkling⁵⁹ of harm, which is even stronger than the apparently poisonous effect on the Duchess, causing her contractions: “This fellow will undo me.” (II.iii.29). When Antonio loses the horoscope and Bosola reads the calculation of the child’s

52 Don Cameron Allen: *The Star-Crossed Renaissance. The Quarrel about Astrology and its Influence in England* (New York: Octagon Books, 1973), p. 178.

53 Ann Geneva: *Astrology and the Seventeenth Century Mind. William Lilly and the Language of the Stars* (Manchester/ New York: Manchester University Press, 1995), p. 176, see also p. 75.

54 A. L. Rowse: *The Elizabethan Age*, Vol. 3.1: *The Elizabethan Renaissance: 1. The Life of the Society* (London: Macmillan, 1971), p. 228.

55 As important for omens, astrology and its interpretation of superstition becomes equally relevant when it comes to the divinatory analysis of other mantic elements. Next to the divination of prodigies, there is the relevant and affected subject of divination of dreams and visions, see chapter 5.2.

56 Marjorie Reeves: “History and Eschatology. Medieval and Early Protestant Thought in Some English and Scottish Writings”, p. 99.

57 Leonard Barkan: *Nature’s Work of Art. The Human Body as Image of the World* (New Haven/ London: Yale University Press, 1975), p. 39.

58 “What ’s here? a child’s nativity calculated?/ [Reads.] The duchess was deliver’d of a son, ’tween the hours twelve and one in the night, Anno Dom. 1504,–that ’s this year–’decimo nono Decembris,–that ’s this night– ’taken according to the meridian of Malfi,–that ’s our duchess: happy discovery!–’The lord of the first house being combust in the ascendant, signifies short life; and Mars being in a human sign, joined to the tail of the Dragon, in the eighth house, doth threaten a violent death.” (II.iii.55–63). See also Don Cameron Allen: *The Star-Crossed Renaissance. The Quarrel about Astrology and its Influence in England* (New York: Octagon Books, 1973), p. 177; Gamini Salgado: *The Elizabethan Underworld* (London: Sutton Publishing, 1977), p. 92.

59 Inklings are the last category of omens treated in this chapter.

nativity, he immediately finds out about the unknown, secret child of the Duchess and her clandestine relationship. Eade analyses this paragraph as rather unspecific as far as a true horoscope is concerned, it presents a precise date and time but only one planet, and is therefore rather open in its interpretation, as Eade explains: “Literary reference to the planets and to their motions greatly simplifies the celestial mechanics of the Ptolemaic universe”.⁶⁰ Eade continues to question Webster’s astronomical knowledge, but underlines the dramaturgical effect that the passage will have on the audience:

How, then, is the passage to be read? The answer must be that Webster knew enough of his subject to provide his audience merely with the appropriate signals. He is trading on their knowledge that the ascendant is the most powerful point in the horoscope; that to be ‘combust’ bodes no good; that Mars is necessarily malevolent; that conjunction with the Dragon’s Tail also bodes no good; and that the eighth house is a bad house, one of the two worst.⁶¹

Thus the spectator will expect a short, unfortunate life, and a violent death: the “conjunction of heaven and private retribution”⁶² reflects the status given to the astrological mantic aspect in the determination of a life and thus also in the revenge tragedy. Exactly as foreshadowed, the horoscope comes true – The Duchess’ child dies young. Fatally, she and Antonio are never troubled by the shameful, unofficial circumstances into which they have manoeuvred themselves and neglect the risk they should be aware of when meeting; Antonio and the Duchess are nevertheless happy in their clandestine marriage, feeling like “eminent stars” (III.ii.32). These, however, can fall and bring about the decay of their relationship. Ferdinand discovers the relationship, written “i’th’stars” (III.i.59), sees through her intentions, and calls her influenced by “witchcraft [which] lies in her rank blood” (I. 78).

In *The Tragedy of Hoffman*,⁶³ Lucibella, the daughter of Austria, about to marry Ludowick, the Prince of Saxony, believes in and trusts the power of her

60 J. C. Eade: *The Forgotten Sky. A Guide to Astrology in English Literature*, p. 21.

61 Ibid, p. 188–189.

62 Philip J. Ayres: “Marston’s Antonio’s Revenge: The Morality of the Revenging Hero”, in: *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900*, Vol. 12/2 (1972), p. 359–374, p. 364.

63 A horoscope is also influential in Marlowe’s *Tamburlaine the Great, Part II* in III.ii.6–9: “Over my zenith hang a blazing star/ That may endure till heaven be dissolved,/ Fed with the fresh supply of earthly dregs,/ Threat’ning a death and famine to this land.” Tamburlaine’s determined fate is later recalled by the Physician in V.iii.91–92. In: Christopher Marlowe: *The Second Part of Tamburlaine the Great*, in: *Marlowe’s Plays and Poems*, ed. M. R. Ridley (London: Dent/ New York: Dutton, rev. 1955), p. 60–119. Compare also Johnstone Parr: *Tamburlaine’s Malady, and Other Essays on Astrology in Elizabethan Drama* (Tuscaloosa, Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1953); Hubert Wurmbach: *Christopher Marlowes Tamburlaine-Dramen. Struktur, Rezeptionslenkung und historische Bedeutung. Ein Beitrag zur Dramenanalyse* (Heidelberg: Winter, 1984), p. 101–103, 283–285.

horoscope and leaves her fate to divine will, following her “starres” (I.ii.303). However, in the same scene, those same stars that should be followed are deliberately used as a pretense when Lorrique enters the court to explain the whereabouts of Otho, who is deeply missed by his uncle Ferdinand of Prussia. In a lie full of beautiful figures of speech, Lorrique explains how he saved Otho from a shipwreck “by the power of heauen,/ goodnesse of starrs, kindnesse of winds, mercy of the waues” (l. 344–345) and killed Hoffman, who allegedly tried to murder Otho. With those well-chosen words, he tries to charm his listeners with the ominous kindness of the weather, pretending all the way that it was he himself who benefited from and acted on these positive signs. Thus, he is cunningly using the commonly held beliefs about the influence of stars for his own advantage and incorporates them in a fictitious story.

Good tidings are reflected in the heavens for the king of Spain in *The Spanish Tragedy*. Having defeated the Portuguese, the King is dutifully aware to whom he has to attribute this victory: “Then blest be Heauen, and Guider of the heauens,/ From whose faire influence such iustice flowes!” (I.ii.10–11). Taking his lead, everyone thanks God for winning the battle, underlining this with musical celebrations “That valles, hils, and riuers made rebound” (l. 30), but also acknowledging the battle’s ferocity:

Both battailes ioyne and fall to handie blowes,
Their violent shot resembling th’ oceans rage
When, roaring lowd and with a swelling tide,
It beats vpon the rampiers of huge rocks,
And gapes to swallow neighbor-bounding lands.
Now, while Bellona rageth heere and there,
Thick stormes of bullets ran like winters haile,
And shiuered launces darke the troubled aire; (I.ii.47–54)

Raging war is indeed like chaos in nature. Exactly this is also foretold in *Caesar’s Revenge*. Cato foresees hard times for Rome, anticipating them from his analysis of past ominous events and lamenting the death of Rome’s fortune, he utters: “Rome ware thy fall: those prodigies foretould,/ When angry heavens did powre downe showers of blood/ And fatall *Comets* in the heavens did blase,/ And all the Statues in the Temple blast” (I.iv.354–357). The re-appearing comet, a star loosened from the fixed sphere of stars in *The Revenger’s Tragedy* is a sign of upheaval in the macrocosmos, reflecting the chaotic state of sin in the microcosmos, just as the comet in 1577 augured a major upheaval in society: “A further blow was dealt by the appearance of the comet in 1577 which not only cut across the crystalline spheres, but clearly went into orbit round the sun.”⁶⁴

64 Antonia McLean: *Humanism and the Rise of Science in Tudor England* (London: Heinemann, 1972), p. 146. Compare also D. C. Allen: *The Star-Crossed Renaissance. The Quarrel about*

“[H]eavenly bodies exercised a profound influence on human affairs. Eclipses were harbingers of disaster.”⁶⁵ As mentioned above, astrology was a much discussed topic in the Renaissance, and the trust in its supernatural role changed in the course of the seventeenth century; however, at its beginning, the traditional belief in the danger of antecedents, underlined by rare occurrences of novae, or conjunctions in the times of political struggle at the end of the sixteenth century was deeply-rooted and these seemingly supernatural phenomena were associated with conflict in tracts and other writings: “The rare occurrence of such storms [of meteors] and the sporadic appearance of bright meteors, or fire balls, are well documented in the ancient literature or journals.”⁶⁶ Likewise in plays, they were seen as occurrences of changes in the sublunar, imperfect sphere.⁶⁷ With its unpredictable appearance, the comet in *The Revenger’s Tragedy*, for example, reflects the destroyed state of order, caused by the sinful life of the ducal family.

An eclipse in a play could reflect a complete change of circumstances. *The Changeling’s* Beatrice has arranged the murder of her fiancée Alonzo, to be committed by Deflores, and thus forecasts: “And if that eye be darkened that offends me—/ I wait but that eclipse—this gentleman/ Shall soon shine glorious in my father’s liking, /Through the refulgent virtue of my love” (III.iv.14–17). Alonzo’s eye and his countenance, which offend her,⁶⁸ is darkened by his execution as in an eclipse that covers the light of a planet, so that the place of Beatrice’s future husband can be taken over by Alsemero and his shining expression. She is using the image of the eclipse to present the wished-for exchange of her unloved fiancé with her new object of desire, Alsemero, as if one planet is darkened and another illuminated.

However, this turns out to be the hope of a cruel woman, whose wishes will be denied to her because of her vain disposition. She will not live in happiness, but is stabbed towards the end of the drama by her blackmailer and lover Deflores. Dying, she confesses her vices and compares herself to a falling meteor:

Astrology and its Influence in England, p. 181. Compare Francis R. Johnson: *Astronomical Thought in Renaissance England. A Study of Scientific Writings 1500–1645* (New York Octagon Books, 1937), p. 214.

65 J. B. Black: *The Reign of Elizabeth 1558–1603* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), p. 308.

66 Martin Beech: “Meteor Imagery in English Poetry, c. 1600–1900”, in: *New Comparison 7* (1989), p. 99–112, p. 99.

67 Ann Geneva: *Astrology and the Seventeenth Century Mind. William Lilly and the Language of the Stars* (Manchester/ New York: Manchester University Press, 1995), p. 86. Compare also S. K. Heninger Jr.: *A Handbook of Renaissance Meteorology with Particular Reference to Elizabethan and Jacobean Literature* (Durham, N. C.: Duke University Press, 1960), p. 91.

68 *The Bible. Authorized King James Version* (1611), ed. Robert Carroll/ Steven Prickett (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), Matthew 18.9.

Beneath the stars, upon yon meteor
 Ever [hung] my fate, 'mongst things corruptible;
 I ne'er could pluck it from him. My loathing
 Was prophet to the rest but ne'er believ'd;
 Mine honour fell with him, and now my life. (V.iii.154–158)

Deflores quickly commits suicide, feeling as if “left in hell” (l. 163), and Beatrice dies, professing her guilt and finally accepting that she deserves death: “’Tis time to die when ’tis a shame to live.” (l. 179) As she lived a sinful life, her prodigious hopes do not prove true, but fatal and vain hopes.

Stars thus often reflect the fate of a character. With a created incongruity in the macrocosm, they portend – when displaced and moving away from their fixed sphere in the order of the universe – discord and dangerous change.

The question of heaven’s agreement and understanding is not only posed with relation to stars. The reaction and action of the macrocosmos can also be seen directly in meteorological imagery, weather metaphors.⁶⁹

4.3 Meteorological Portents – “More earthquakes?”⁷⁰

Weather omens and meteorological metaphors are most common in revenge tragedy.⁷¹ The backdrop of the weather strengthens characters or circumstances in many scenes. Usually it is the characters that describe the weather scenery to the audience.⁷² The omens that are concerned here are firstly thunder and

69 Compare Gunilla Florby: *Echoing Texts: George Chapman’s Conspiracy and Tragedy of Charles Duke of Byron. Lund Studies in English*, No. 109 (Lund, 2004), especially p. 112; see also the traditional classical influence of Plutarch: *Lives [of Noble Grecians and Romans] Vol. I and II*, ed. Arthur Hugh Clough (New York: Random House/ Modern Library, 2001); Aristotle, *Meteorologica* (Cambridge, Mass.: Loeb Classical Library, 1975).

70 DM, III.ii.154.

71 Kullmann states: “Bei Shakespeare findet sich das Motiv des ‚göttlichen Zeichens‘ in der Form von Naturphänomenen, die von Dramengestalten als Vorzeichen auf bedeutsame, vor allem unheilvolle Ereignisse gedeutet werden.” Thomas Kullmann: *Vermenschlichte Natur. Zur Bedeutung von Landschaft und Natur im englischen Roman von Ann Radcliffe bis Thomas Hardy* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1995), p. 37. Wilson also writes on the connection between microcosmic evil and macrocosmic weather correspondences, in: Stephen Wilson: *The Magical Universe. Everyday Ritual and Magic in Pre-Modern Europe* (London/ New York: Hambledon and London, 2000), p. 55.

72 The German term “Wortkulisse”, the creation of scenery through speech is described in Eckhard Lobsien: *Landschaft in Texten. Zu Geschichte und Phänomenologie der literarischen Beschreibung* (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzlersche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1981), p. 6: “Das Wahrnehmen von Landschaft ist ein produktiver Akt, durch den Landschaft allererst konstituiert wird.”

lightning,⁷³ to a lesser extent rain of all kinds, earthquakes and similar meteorological events that directly influence the earthly climate.⁷⁴

An exception has to be made, though, for the use of thunder and lightning.⁷⁵ For this natural spectacle, props were used to create a rumbling sound and these noises “regularly provided [thunder] on the stage”.⁷⁶ Campbell in her book on stage machinery describes how new scenery and stage conditions increased and proves by lists of productions and acquisitions that for a bolt of lightning and sounds of thunder for example “a plank, with a flash of lightning painted on dark background, was shot out of a box into a receptacle below” and heavy balls – or bullets⁷⁷ – were rolled over uneven planks.⁷⁸

Painted stage scenery was only introduced in private theatres, and decoration in public theatres was limited. Stage descriptions in the spoken lines themselves often indicate what was supposed to be seen on stage and it remains an open question how much of these remained imaginary puissance and what was actually shown and seen by the spectators. These effects might have been created optically. Campbell speculates that sight deception, mirrors and perspective glasses – for example to filter the light – were to enhance the stage spectacles involving light⁷⁹, or with smoke and flames from trap doors. However, only after the Restoration were machines used for all kinds of techniques to present ghosts, furies and gods.⁸⁰

Even in John Heywood’s early *Play about the Weather* from 1533, the dependence of mankind upon the weather is depicted as crucial: “Anone upon Eolus all these dyd fle/ Complaynyng theyr causes eche one arow/ And sayd to compare none was so evyll as he/ For when he is disposed his blastes to blow”.⁸¹ Cruel weather, corresponding to a chaotic macrocosm and the endangered state

73 “Lightning was thought to have immediate and violent effects on men. It was dangerous to some extent if seen only at a distance”; see S. K. Heninger Jr.: *A Handbook of Renaissance Meteorology with Particular Reference to Elizabethan and Jacobean Literature* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1960), p. 79.

74 See Will-Erich Peuckert: “Vorzeichen”, in: *Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens*, p. 1738.

75 See Lily B. Campbell: *Scenes and Machines on the English Stage During the Renaissance* (New York: Barnes and Noble, Inc., 1912, repr. 1960), especially p. 64f.

76 *Ibid.*, p. 120.

77 *Ibid.*, p. 135.

78 *Ibid.*, p. 64–5. Compare also Antony Harris: *Night’s Black Agents. Witchcraft and Magic in Seventeenth-Century English Drama* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1980), p. 151f.

79 Compare Campbell: *Scenes and Machines on the English Stage During the Renaissance*, p. 64–5 and 159.

80 *Ibid.*, p. 212.

81 John Heywood: *The Play of The Weather* (1533), The Malone Society Reprints, 1971 (1977), l. 58–61.

of men shows how “disorder [a]s a fearful threat” can determine a play.⁸² This especially applies to frightening cold climatic conditions contrasting with an idyllic context, e.g. a wintry, maritime, northern climate versus a gardenlike park in sunshine. It may also be storms, rain, floodings that represent changes of the weather and alter the atmosphere of the play.⁸³ Laguardia differentiates between pictures of chaos and harmony in nature: “One dimension in nature is invoked by metaphors of serenity, musical harmony, purity, and reconciliation, the other by metaphors of tempests, discords, foulness, and separation.”⁸⁴

Malinowski stresses that “there is the school of meteorological interpreters who regard wind, weather, and colors of the skies as the essence of myth.”⁸⁵ The fear of weather disasters⁸⁶ is part of humanity and with it, the fear of the destruction of personal belongings. Even early Renaissance literary criticism of the 20th century drew attention to weather imagery as essential for the ominous setting of the tragedies, as for example Rupert Brooke in his dissertation:

Again, [Webster’s] mind was always turning to metaphors of storm and bad weather, and especially the phenomenon of lightning. He is for ever speaking of men lightning to speech or action; he saw words as the flash from the thunder-cloud of wrath or passion.⁸⁷

In Act III of Webster’s *Duchess of Malfi*, anger is seen as a tempest, a fairly common simile: everyone seems to have heard of the Duchess’ clandestine childbirths and “The common rabble do directly say/ She is a strumpet”

82 Richard B. Sewall: *The Vision of Tragedy* (New Haven/ London: Yale University Press, 1959), p. 70.

83 See Frederic W. Moorman: *The Interpretation of Nature in English Poetry from Beowulf to Shakespeare*. Quellen und Forschungen zur Sprach- und Culturgeschichte der Germanischen Völker 95 (Straßburg: Karl J. Trübner, 1905), p. 158; Siegfried Koringner: *Die Naturauffassung in der Englischen Dichtung des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Wien/ Stuttgart: Wilhelm Braunnüller. Universitäts-Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1956), Wiener Beiträge zur Englischen Philologie, ed. Leo Hibler-Lebmansport, Vol. 64, p. 126; Caroline F. E. Spurgeon: *Shakespeare’s Imagery and what it tells us* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1935, repr. 1968), p. 46.

84 Eric LaGuardia: *Nature Redeemed. The Imitation of Order in Three Renaissance Poems* (London/ The Hague/ Paris: Mouton & Co., 1966), p. 14.

85 Bronislaw Malinowski: *Magic, Science and Religion and Other Essays* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, Doubleday & Company, 1948), p. 97.

86 See Uwe Baumann: “‘Image of that Horror’: Die Apokalypse in der Politik, Kultur und Literatur der Englischen Renaissance“, in: Haupt, Barbara (ed.): *Endzeitvorstellungen* (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 2001), p. 271–289. Baumann mentions different causes that made people apprehensive: “die permanenten Kriege, die sich in Erdbeben, Überschwemmungen und Mißernten artikulierende Unnatur der Natur und der allgemeine Niedergang der Moral, die Nova von 1572 und die große Konjunktion von Saturn und Jupiter im Jahre 1583“, p. 276.

87 Rupert Brooke: *John Webster and the Elizabethan Drama* (New York: John Lane Company, 1916), p. 156–157.

(III.i.25–26). Her husband Antonio fears her brother Ferdinand's outbreak of anger, who has been quiet for some time while everyone, including the audience, is aware of his temperamental character: "He is so quiet that he seems to sleep/ The tempest out, as dormice do in winter./ Those houses that are haunted are most still/ Till the devil be up" (III.i.21–24). Instead of showing his anger, Ferdinand declares his plan to give the officially free Duchess to Count Malateste in marriage, an idea that makes her exclaim: "This deadly air is purg'd" (l. 56). Indeed, the climate of the court is charged with betrayal and lies.

Ferdinand hopes for the Duchess' suicide, leaving her with his dagger – an action that causes Antonio to remark: "You would use it [poniard] on yourself?" (III.ii.149), and thereby implies the opportunity he wishes her to take: to escape circumstances by killing herself. When Bosola knocks on the Duchess' door, Antonio inquires: "who knocks? More earthquakes?" (l. 154). Indeed, the shaking of the balance, which is produced by Bosola's devotion to her vile brothers, is comparable to the chaos created in the cosmos by an earthquake. Knowing the knocking is Bosola's, the Duchess is not calm but calls out "misery" (l. 158), as if she knew he comes to kill her.

It must seem ominous to the audience, much like Beatrice's actions (s.a.) to play with fortune as the Duchess and her husband do – Antonio is blaming his "malevolent star" (DM, III.ii.195) for the twist of fate: Of course, Fortune does him wrong but blaming the "inconstant/ And rotten ground of service" (l. 196–197) for this fate seems to be tempting his own stars, which proves fatal in the end.

Indeed, the Duchess' defying to protect her husband from detection are discovered by Bosola, who guesses the cunning in her pretended pseudo-banishment of Antonio and tries to tempt her to confess and reveal her plans to him, teasing her: "what moisture is/ drawn out of the sea, when foul weather comes, pours down,/ and runs into the sea again" (DM, III.ii.209–211). He almost pities the twists of fate and flatters Antonio, calling him an "unvalu'd jewel" (l. 248) born under a "bless'd planet" (l. 234), until she confesses her marriage to him. Bosola plays a dangerous game, when he recommends to cover up her leaving of the court and "feign a pilgrimage" (l. 305–306). Only the Duchess' servant Cariola ponders on the risks of pretending to undertake a pious action as a disguise for one's personal advantage: "I do not like this jesting with religion,/ This feigned pilgrimage" (l. 316–317). Even worse seems the scolding she receives for this utterance from the Duchess: "Thou art a superstitious fool" (l. 317). This denial of heavenly powers is Antonio's and the Duchess' worst mistake: underestimating the divine influence seems to be their flaw, as it is that of other protagonists, too.

At the same time the belief is mocked. Count Malateste, for example, is ridiculed for relying on a star calendar: he fights "By the almanac, I think,/ To

choose good days and shun the critical” (DM, III.iii.21–22). This credulous belief in the books is thus made fun of, even at this time. It is interesting to investigate whether the practise to pour contempt on the belief in superstition becomes more general, as revenge itself as a topic in tragedies becomes more grotesque, an aspect that needs to be researched especially in the later revenge tragedy of Webster and Marston, but also in Tourneur’s *The Atheist’s Tragedy*. As will be seen in the following chapters, especially Webster uses mantic elements to emphasise the brutality of revenge in the structure of his tragedies *The White Devil* and *The Duchess of Malfi*.

Castabella in *The Atheist’s Tragedy* is painting a picture of mourning, supported by a heavily clouded sky, when considering her beloved Charlemont’s farewell:

The lovely face of Heaven was masked with sorrow,
 The sighing winds did move the breast of earth,
 The heavy clouds hung down their mourning heads
 And wept sad showers the day that he went hence,
 As if that day presaged some ill success [...]
 Some sad event will follow my sad fears. (I.ii.109–118)

Charlemont gone to war, Castabella is sure the backdrop of weather prophecies a sad fate. Thus she is conscious of the influence that the weather has on the future of the hero, and functionalises the rain as a foreshadowing of sorrow. She leaves the “sad event” quite open to interpretation: it could be Charlemont’s death, which indeed will be presented as the following sad event, although this explanation is only invented by the villain D’Amville to secure his family line and wealth by marrying his son Rousard to Castabella.⁸⁸ Ominously underlining the divine denial of D’Amville’s plans, his son Rousard appears sickly from the beginning and indeed proves impotent, thus not being able to please Castabella sexually, or penetrate her hymen, i.e. her chastity.⁸⁹ Neither can he alter her love to Charlemont. Thus the wedding of two people who do not love each other can also be seen as the true outcome of the “sad showers”, because it presents the audience with a supposedly divine sanction, which proves nothing but an apparently legal rape (I.iv.119) of divine order and thus is a reflection of the cosmos in chaos, as Castabella had already hinted at in her speech above, which thus becomes true.

D’Amville crudely schemes to attain a fortune, as his servant delivers a re-

88 See I.ii.240–241.

89 This includes the fact that a marriage, not consummated, was not legally binding. See Katherine Usher Henderson/ Barbara F. McManus: *Half Humankind. Contexts and Texts of the Controversy about Women in England, 1540–1640* (Urbana/ Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1985), p. 72–80.

heard speech: With images of heavenly correspondences, he magnifies the battle which Charlemont took part in: “The enemy, [...] / Whose thunder and lightning made our bulwarks shake” (II.i.39–44). He underlines the comparison between thunder and canons. He contrasts this glorious, earthquake-like battle to the defeated, drowned soldiers (l. 59). Instructed by D’Amville, the servant tells that Charlemont’s corpse was allegedly found: “the weeping sea, [...] every time it parts / Sheds tears upon him” (l. 89, 75–79); the contrast of roaring thunder and sorrowful sea gives the scene a atmosphere of fear and mourning.

Tears symbolise sorrow while thunder stands for brutality. However, the divine thunder is merely treated as a natural, scientific event by D’Amville. Much like Edmund in *King Lear*, he denies any divine influence to the natural uproar and establishes himself as a – rather early Darwinistic – self-sufficient atheist, who ridicules the cosmic correspondences. Even the hero of *The Revenger’s Tragedy* questions the heavens: “Is there no thunder left” (RT, IV.ii.205).⁹⁰ McCabe calls this denial “a special effect designed to punctuate the hero’s overblown rhetoric”,⁹¹ which will intensify its infamous effect on the audience: “What! / Dost start at thunder? Credit my belief, / ‘Tis a mere effect of Nature” (II.iv.136–42). He flatly calls the belief in the visible wrath of God nonsense.⁹²

Thus D’Amville’s dismissal of thunder – traditionally the voice of an angry God – marks him out as one of those reviled by Robert Burton for supplanting primary with secondary causes thereby draining from the very term ‘nature’ all of the moral and religious connotations previously attaching to it.⁹³

To discredit D’Amville⁹⁴ and establish and re-affirm the correspondence between the cosmoi, a soldier comments on the war scene, which is underlined by the rumbling “*Thunder and lightning*” (II.vi.5): “Heaven and earth are now in

90 Similarly Byron reacts in Chapman’s *Byron’s Conspiracy*: “I am a nobler substance than the stars / And shall the baser overrule the better? [...] I have a will and faculties of choice / To do or not to do: and reason why / I do or not do this: the stars have none, / They know not why they shine” (III.iii.109–115).

91 Richard McCabe: *Incest, Drama and Nature’s Law 1550–1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 244. Compare Irving Ribner in his introduction of Cyril Tourneur: *The Atheist’s Tragedy, or, The Honest Man’s Revenge*, ed. Irving Ribner (London: Methuen & Co Ltd., 1964), p. xliii.

92 See Samuel Schuman: *Cyril Tourneur* (Twayne Publishers: Boston, 1977), p. 107 and Henry Hitch Adams: “Cyril Tourneur on Revenge”, in: *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 48, ed. Henning Larsen, John J. Parry, Helmut Rehder (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois, 1949), p. 80. Compare this to the supernatural phenomena in Shakespeare’s *Anthony & Cleopatra*, *Julius Caesar*, or *King Lear*. See *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt (New York / London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1997³).

93 Richard McCabe: *Incest, Drama and Nature’s Law 1550–1700*, p. 219.

94 Cox mentions that “D’Amville is an ‘atheist’ not only because he denies God but because he discounts an omen”; see John D. Cox: *The Devil and the Sacred in English Drama, 1350–1642* (Cambridge: CUP, 2000), p. 186.

con-/ sort, when the thunder and the cannon play to one another” (II.vi.9–10). Bradbrook concedes that “‘Nature’ is a key word”⁹⁵; she adds to this that “[i]n *The Atheist’s Tragedy* thunder is, however, replaced, as a symbol of the deity, by ‘The stars’.”⁹⁶ As seen above, this is only partly true. Tourneur remains with the image of thunder, but adds (as others) the stars in that he compares their influence on the microcosm and also attributes them a quality like earthly gold, an aspect that is clearly concerned when it comes to D’Amville’s securing of his material fortune. “A third reviler of astrology is D’Amville of *The Atheist’s Tragedy*, who [...] is chiefly interested in the gold standard and who insists that it is money and not the stars, those agents of God, that controls the destinies of men.”⁹⁷

The denial of a guiding divinity is also neglected in *The Changeling*. On seeing Beatrice for the first time, Alsemero is bedazzled. This almost erotic encounter happens in the temple, a place unsuitable for *luxuria*, lust – even though Alsemero is quick to stress his holy intent:

’Twas in the temple where I first beheld her,
 And now again the same; what omen yet
 Follows of that? None but imaginary.
 Why should my hopes or fate be timorous?
 The place is holy, so is my intent:
 I love her beauties to the holy purpose (I.i.1–6)

However, love and lust in a holy place seems a bad omen, since the temple should be restricted to prayer and Christian virtue; so, a contrast is created between reality and appearance. Falling in love in a church is indeed a contrastive warning of a coming truth⁹⁸ – it proves fatal for the engaged Beatrice: “Alsemero [sic] sees in Beatrice-Joanna exactly what he wants to see – a woman framed by the parameters of his desire.”⁹⁹ Desire dominates both their wants; Alsemero is willing to forsake weather omens dictating his leave and denies his planned travels and a pleasant sea voyage: “Come, the wind’s fair with you;/ Y’are like to have a swift and pleasant passage” (l. 13–14). His servant even protests: “’Tis the critical day, / It seems, and the sign in Aquarius” (l. 48–49). The water carrier Aquarius is a positive star sign to be traveling by water; it predicts a “good time

95 Muriel C. Bradbrook: *Themes and Conventions of Elizabethan Tragedy*, p. 175.

96 *Ibid.*, p. 176.

97 D. C. Allen: *The Star-Crossed Renaissance*, p. 184.

98 See Andrew Stott: “Tiresias and the Basilisk: Vision and Madness in Middleton and Rowley’s *The Changeling*”, in: *Revista Alicantina de Estudios Ingleses* 12 (1999), p. 165–179, p. 172.

99 *Ibid.*, p. 167.

for a sea voyage”.¹⁰⁰ But Alsemero denies the prodigious power of the omens. Acting against the omens, the “temple’s vane to turn full in [his] face” (Ch, I.i.20), and consciously acting against his first inclination to stay (I.19–21) and also against his better reasoning as a sailor who always would “[h]oist sails for fear to lose the foremost breath” of “fair winds” (I. 32–33). He has indeed “chang’d [his] orisons” (I. 34) and goals from a successful man to one determined by fatal love, and his servant is doubtful of the future: “We must not to sea today; this smoke will bring forth fire” (I. 50). Thereby the audience can assume that the relation between Alsemero and Beatrice can only end fatally. This is also underlined by the unusual condition of the moon: “What an opacous body had that moon/ That last chang’d on us!” (I. 196–197). Like Beatrice’s love, it seems capricious in its translucent opacity, thus reflecting the shallowness of her feelings.

The servant is truly surprised at seeing Alsemero and Beatrice greeting each other with a kiss: “[*Aside*] How now! The laws of the Medes¹⁰¹ are chang’d sure” (I. 57). A positive interpretation of this is impossible: something unalterable only changes like fixed stars which leave their place, and are always functionalised as bad omens destroying the harmonious order.

The whole first scene establishes possible problems that will arise in the future because of this ominous love at first sight of Alsemero and Beatrice. While she knows “there’s one above” (I. 82), which might address God, or her father, who has already planned a different match for her. Interesting here is her willingness to later deny this authority and clearly act against her father’s and God’s will by having her fiancé killed to be free for Alsemero.

Beatrice’s willingness to employ vicious scheming mark her as villainous. Similarly does Evadne in *The Maid’s Tragedy* appear to be willing to calculate murder as a part of her plan. This forms a clear contrast to innocent calling for God’s assistance and guidance, which is employed by Evadne’s husband Amintor. He finds out about his new wife Evadne’s duplicity in her pseudo-marriage vows towards him, and that she is really devoted to another man. This reveals her scheming nature. Amintor is therefore asking for heavenly comfort: “You powers above, [...] why is this night so calm?/ Why does not Heaven speak in Thunder to us,/ And drown her voice?” (II.i.247, 253–255). He asks for divine interference and challenges encouragement from heaven, which does not support him at this point. The plot will be even more twisted before the truth evolves

100 Joost Daalder in his critical notes to Thomas Middleton/ William Rowley: *The Changeling*. New Mermaids, (London: A & C Black/ New York: W. W. Norton, 1990²), p. 7.

101 According to *The Bible. Authorized King James Version* (1611), ed. Robert Carroll/ Steven Prickett (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), Daniel 6.8, the law of the Medes never changes: “Now, O king, establish the decree, and sign the writing, that it be not changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not.”

and Amintor realises his own fault in the marriage to Evadne, for whom he ignored his former love Aspatia.

Evadne, in contrast, is sure of divine support in this argument: “When I call back this Oath, the pains of hell environ me.” (II.i.275–276) because she is counting on direct patronage from the microcosmic head of state, the king. She also threatens Amintor not to become violent: “Every ill-sounding word, or threatening look/ Thou shew’st to me, will be reveng’d at full” (l. 285–286). Haughtily, Evadne denounces maidenhead for her own “hot and rising blood” (l. 293) that is reserved for “the best, and in that height/ Have sworn to stand or die: you guess the man [...] ’tis the King” (l.301–302, 310). Hearing the name of the king as the person for whose sexual pleasure Amintor is disgraced and abused, he is shocked: “in that sacred word,/ ‘The King’, there lies a terror” (l. 314–315). The forced inactivity this name imposes seems unbearable. The king superimposes himself as above the law, leading all order, and Amintor has to accept arbitrary behaviour from him.¹⁰² Thus he stoically transfers the right to revenge to the gods and implores their help. He requests Evadne’s mercy to kill him so that he does not have to bear the shame, but she flatly refuses, having married him to become an officially respectable woman: “To cover shame I took thee, never fear/ That I would blaze my self” (l. 344–345). The scene thus ends in an unfortunate arrangement to maintain each other’s public reputation, a state truly unbearable for the audience, who will be expecting a breach of some kind in the plot.

A similar image of macrocosmic correspondence to a horrible tragedy on earth, involving the corruption of the king, is used by Clermont’s wife in *The Revenge of Bussy D’Ambois* as an omen of chaos in the cosmos: “And hee breake, some brack’s in the frame of nature/ That forceth his breach” (IV.iii.5–6). The news of betrayal and arrest are likened to chaos in the whole state: “Will Kings make treason lawful? [...]/ Kings are compar’d to Gods, and should be like them,” (IV.iii.41, 46). Like Clermont’s sister (s.a.), she swears vengeance against those who took him into custody.¹⁰³

In contrast, the protagonist of *The Tragedy of Hoffman* does not hope for on peace-bringing death, allegedly ordered by divine will, but concentrates on chaos, reflected in the macrocosm, as Jones underlines: “Hoffmann takes the thunder and lightning as divine calls to begin his revenge; he answers them, and goes to the top of a promontory to view what wrecks the dashing seas may have cast upon the rocks.”¹⁰⁴ The image of thunder reflecting the microcosmic chaos –

102 Even the king should adhere to law, and arbitrary behaviour by the ruler implies a neglected world order, i.e. the development and danger of chaos.

103 See chapter 6.2.2.

104 Frederick Lafayette Jones: *Henry Chettle: A Study of His Life and Works*. Doctoral Thesis, Cornell University (Ithaca, New York, 1925), p. 268–269.

thereby also calling for the need of revenge – is a figure of speech used by Hieronimo in *The Spanish Tragedy*. Reminiscing on the possibility of revenge, he refers to the fact that “time steals on,/ And steals, and steals, till violence leaps forth/ Like thunder wrapp’d in a ball of fire,/ And so doth bring confusion to them all” (III.xi.45–48). The only way to avoid confusion and thunder will be revenge for the violence committed by Hieronimo’s opponents.

A similar macrocosmic chaos illustrates *The Revenge of Bussy D’Ambois*. Her brother Clermont being imprisoned, Charlotte feels “bloody” (IV.ii.36) woes. She is raging “So wild, so mad” (l. 34), which reflects the storm in the microcosm which urges the tragedy on. She is compared to Medea, who, “[w]ith all her herbs, charms, thunders, lightnings,/ Made not her presence and blacke haunts more dreadful” (l. 40–41). This lightning, as Heninger comments, “was thought to have immediate and violent effects on men. It was dangerous to some extent if seen only at a distance”.¹⁰⁵ Later on this chaos is revealed in the opposite forces that fight to establish their idea of order and control in the cosmos. Florby comments this as follows:

In the last two scenes the earthquakes and thunderclaps that have been part of the imagery of disorder and violence are actualized for the audience. [...] The sense of turmoil and intense emotion conveyed by the nature imagery is reinforced by images of war and explosions. The violent disorder of the elements and the atmospheric disturbances are emphasized by the more artificial effects of steel and sulphur.¹⁰⁶

She elaborates on the powerful metaphors of nature which include imagery of sounds, motions, senses, the positive forces of nature,¹⁰⁷ and an earthquake “construed as a deadly portent of God’s wrath”.¹⁰⁸ Lordi calls Charlotte’s idea of revenge rather primitive, and tears down the concept of vile revenge that nature supposedly dictates: “Charlotte’s concept of honor, limited to the primitive code of an eye-for-an-eye and excessive pride in family, reminiscent of the private, divisive, dangerous kind of wild justice¹⁰⁹ and pride that we find in Dante’s lower circles which ends in hatred, the blood feud, and the destruction off society.”¹¹⁰ In that, both Charlotte and Hoffman seem similar – theirs is not a Stoic or moral doubt about revenge.

A cosmic oracle or omen that supports the action in *The Revenger’s Tragedy* is

105 S. K. Heninger Jr.: *A Handbook of Renaissance Meteorology*, p. 79.

106 Gunilla Florby: *The Painful Passage to Virtue. A Study of George Chapman’s The Tragedy of Bussy D’Ambois and The Revenge of Bussy D’Ambois. Lund Studies in English*, No. 61 (CWK Glerup, 1982), p. 122–23, 123.

107 Ibid.

108 S. K. Heninger Jr.: *A Handbook of Renaissance Meteorology*, p. 24.

109 Francis Bacon: “Of Revenge”, in: *The Essays or Counsels, Civill and Morall*, ed. Michael Kiernan (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985), p. 16–17.

110 Lordi: Introduction RB, p. 31.

the thunder that underlines Vindici's disgust at his master Lussurioso's lies: "There it goes!" (IV.ii.206), commenting on the thunder. It rumbles exactly when Vindici asks for divine response to the gross accusations Lussurioso utters against the disguised Vindici. As Mehl states: "Thunder is Heaven's answer to human crimes (IV.ii.199) and a sign of divine approval",¹¹¹ and as mentioned above, it is technically easy to create this dooming atmosphere on stage.¹¹²

Similarly, more comments by Vindici are given a backdrop of ominous weather: when Vindici and his brother are accusing their mother, their hate mellows down with a sweet rain approaching:

Brother, it rains, 'twill spoil your dagger; house it.
[...]
I'faith, 'tis a sweet shower; it does much good.
The fruitful grounds and meadows of her soul
Has been long dry: pour down thou blessed dew.
Rise, mother; troth, this shower has made you higher. (IV.iv.46–51)

Water is the element of compassion and emotion, and thus this "sweet", positive rain is an omen of reconciliation and forgiveness. Gratiana, too, takes up the metaphor of cleansing water: "Take this infectious spot out of my soul;/ I'll rinse it in seven waters of mine eyes./ Make my tears salt enough to taste of grace." (IV.iv.52–54). Water, like dried up tears, softens their hearts: "Farewell, once dried, now holy-wat' red mead;/ Our hearts wear feathers that before wore lead." (IV.iv.86–87). The rain has indeed wiped out any struggle that existed within the revenger's family. Water cleanses struggles, as tears of emotion help the sad, thus the crying heaven signifies and reflects problems but also washes the surface of the earth.¹¹³

In *The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois*, crying represents the emotional and physical, but stays related to the stars. Clermont's wife has, in a dream, the inspiration that she will not see her husband again after he is arrested by the King's captains. She thinks he might die in prison or might be killed. However, Clermont is pardoned and released, but nevertheless the prophetic dream ominously becomes true. Before being able to celebrate his newly acquired freedom happily, the Countess cries her eyes out: "those loveliest eyes [...] She wept quite out, and, like two falling starres,/ Their dearest sights quite vanisht with her teares." (V.i.144–148). Her eyes fall out in a flood of tears and she is

111 Dieter Mehl: "Corruption, retribution and justice in *Measure for Measure* and *The Revenger's Tragedy*", in: *The Revels Plays Companion Library. Shakespeare and his Contemporaries. Essays in Comparison*, ed. E. A. J. Honigmann (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986), p. 114–128, p. 118.

112 Compare also Alexander Demandt: *Metaphern für Geschichte*, p. 135f.

113 Compare Alexander Demandt's analyses of the different usage of water metaphors in: *Metaphern für Geschichte*, p. 74.

blinded by this grief. As mentioned above, tears are an image of emotions. Here, they are compared to falling stars, and are often presented as pearls.¹¹⁴ She cries her eyes out as an image of unbearable sorrow.

One further aspect that needs to be mentioned in this passage is the use of ship metaphors in dangerous weather. Both Vittoria and Flamineo in *The White Devil* use these to describe their leaving strength and approaching death: “My soul, like to a ship in a black storm,/ Is driven, I know not whither” (V.vi.245–246). Death is seen as a voyage to another land, where the souls of the dead travel to. A ship presents the means of transport, is one of the more fleeting pictures, and thus also a very poetical idea of death. A ship can easily be tossed by a tempest; therefore is prone to weather omens that might scare safety and the natural order.¹¹⁵

Weather omens appear as specifically grand in drama: the impact of thunder and evoked elemental disorder creates an immediate sense of discord and disharmony in the cosmoi – an image of chaosmos.

4.4 Omens of darkness – “Night rises in mists”¹¹⁶

Next to omens of light, stars and weather, there are omens of *darkness*.¹¹⁷ The colour black – as the direct contrast to the positive brightness – represents death, and a gloomy and ambiguous atmosphere of fear. Often these omens of darkness appear in combination or contrast with the above mentioned. The following paragraph will look more closely at these combinations, thereafter darkness and its impact as an omen is analysed more individually.

Darkness is for example contrasted to brightness in the famous quote from *Othello*, when the protagonist is about to kill his wife Desdemona: “she must die,

114 Compare J. C. Cooper: *An Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Traditional Symbols* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1978). Alain Gheerbrant/ Jean Chevalier/ John Buchanan-Brown: *The Penguin Dictionary of Symbols* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2005); Christel Meier: *Gemma spiritalis: Methode and Gebrauch der Edelsteinallegorese vom frühen Christentum bis ins 18. Jahrhundert* (München: Wilhelm Fink, 1977), p. 93 et. al.; Manfred Lurker (ed.): *Wörterbuch der Symbolik*, p. 304f.; Udo Becker: *Lexikon der Symbole* (Köln: Komet, 1992), p. 215–216.

115 Ancient traditions often present the departure of a dead person by the image of crossing a water, an image that was also used in burial rites. See Manfred Lurker (ed.): *Wörterbuch der Symbolik*, p. 437f. Compare also Alexander Demandt: *Metaphern für Geschichte*, p. 190f.

116 MT, I.ii.122.

117 The structure of the parts of chapter 4 could have been rearranged to directly contrast light and darkness. However, it is more sensible to combine light and the stars because their qualities are, as far as the latter’s shine is concerned, essentially dependent. Weather omens in 4.3 present the influence of both light and darkness, therefore pure darkness has been set here as 4.4 to conclude these aspects and their inversion.

else she'll betray more men./ Put out the light, and then put out the light."¹¹⁸ The deed of murder is committed in darkness. To carry out the crime, Othello therefore needs to kill any light.

In *The Maid's Tragedy*, a mask play containing the character of Night is put on stage in court to celebrate the marriage of Amintor and Evadne. It is not one of hymneal rites and fertile blessing though – as the marriage itself will not be a fertile one – but shows the struggle to find a peaceful celebratory atmosphere in darkness, because festivities in darkness are – if held – then rather Dionysian in character. Like a dumb-show, the mask professes information that reflects the proceedings in court: The personified character “Night rises in mists” (I.ii.122) and states its rule over time:

Our reign is come; for in the raging Sea
The Sun is drown'd, and with him fell the day:
Bright *Cynthia* hear my voice, I am the Night
For whom thou bear'st about thy borrowed light;
Appear, no longer thy pale visage shrowd,
But strike thy silver horn through a cloud,
And send a beam upon my swarthy face,
By which I may discover all the place
And persons, and how many longing eyes
Are come to wait on our solemnities.

Enter Cynthia.

How dull and black am I! I could not find
This beauty without thee, I am so blind;
Methinks they shew like to those Eastern streaks
That warn us hence before the morning breaks;
Back my pale servant, for these eyes know how
To shoot far more and quicker rays than thou. (I.ii.122–137)

Cynthia, or Cynthia, the goddess of the moon,¹¹⁹ promises to shine brightly for her tonight to make this darkness like an artificial day: “One of my clearest moons I have put on;” (l. 139) but warns Night, that day always has to be brighter, it cannot “outshine the Day” (l. 145) by “gods decrees, but when our time is come,/ Must drive away and give the day our room” (l. 148–149). Cynthia, however, underlines the impact Night can cause by its beauty and grace to make

118 W. Shakespeare: *The Tragedy of Othello the Moor of Venice*, in: *The Norton Shakespeare*, V.ii.6–7.

119 Cynthia, better known as Artemis, Diana or Selene is the goddess of the moon. See A. Maxwell-Hyslop/ Pierre Grimal/ Stephen Kershaw: *The Penguin Dictionary of Classical Mythology* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2005). Fernand Comte: *The Wordsworth Dictionary of Mythology* (Ware: Wordsworth Reference, 1994), p. 52–53. Elizabeth I has also been addressed as Cynthia; a popular satirical play during the war of the theatres with this topic is Ben Jonson's *Cynthia's Revels*.

its admirers “hate/ Our brothers glorious beams, and wish the night/ Crown’d with a thousand stars, and our cold light” (l. 153–155) could be forever existent. Now Night is actually inventing a pastoral scene, in which Endymion, the lover of the moon¹²⁰ glorifies the idyllic and then invokes Cynthia’s beams to be “drawn away,/ And of this long night let him make a day.” Cynthia seems to take this as a challenge, denies her love for Endymion – like Evadne later denies her love for Amintor (see above) – and instead calls on a stronger deity: Neptune, whom she commands to “charge the wind flie from his Rockie Den” (l. 183) will cause confusion by releasing the winds. Cynthia asks Neptune to keep Boreas in check but the rebellious wind breaks “his chain,/ And struggling with the rest, has got away” (l. 203–204). Only performed as a mask play, this revolution of elements is nevertheless an omen of Rhodes’ future strife in the microcosm, when strong passion will rebel against the harmony of the stately order.

While the winds blow, Neptune’s demand “Tritons, play/ Music to lay a storm!” (MT, I.ii.249–250) is fulfilled and songs are sung at the gods’ gathering to celebrate marriage and “To honour this great Nuptial.” (l. 232). Night is begged to stay with her darkness to cover the first night’s secrets, “hide all” (l. 243), though this also includes obscurer deeds committed in its secrecy. Eolus then brings news of a raging tempest:

The Seas go hie,
Boreas hath rais’d a storm; go and applie
 Thy trident, else I prophesie, ere day
 Many a tall ship will be cast away:
 Descend with all the Gods, and all their power to
 strike a calm. (I.ii.259–264)

Then day arrives – almost sooner than expected –, and quickly the mask ends with Cynthia and Night vanishing from the scene. The mask play is supposed to create calm, while the attentive audience will be aware of the dangers and threats of the night. What follows is Evadne’s pretended preparation for her bridal night, commented on by the lascivious Dula and chaste, sad Aspatia. Evadne is clearly avoiding to have sexual intercourse that night, and the reason for this appears to be her chaste modesty, though the audience later discovers, that she has sworn to her lover, the king, never to betray him with another man, not even her future husband. There might be a glimpse of Evadne’s immorality displayed in this scene in her idea of letting Dula, with a bed-trick, have the pleasures of the first night – which reflects Cynthia in the mists, but all consolation and mirth that might be found in this idea are destroyed by Aspatia’s continuing sadness.¹²¹

120 Endymion is the lover of Selene, here Cynthia, the goddess of the moon. See Karl Kerényi: *The Gods of the Greeks* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1951), p. 196f.

121 Compare Uwe Baumann: “ Erotische Macht und tragische Ohnmacht der Frauen im Drama

Another combination of darkness and stormy weather appears in *The Duchess of Malfi* – a play whose “literal darkness”¹²² Nordlund highlights. The Duchess has died but with the appearance of her ghostly echo there is an upheaval in the heavens that night. The chaos on earth is finally answered by a storm from above: “’Twas a foul storm to-night.” (V.iv.18) which affected the lodgings of the Duke most ominously: “The Lord Ferdinand’s chamber shook like an osier.” (l. 19); however, it is treated as an almost satanic help by Count Malateste, a courtier: “’Twas nothing but pure kindness in the devil/ To rock his own child.” (l. 20–21). Clearly, Webster implies that heaven does not approve of the activity of the Duchess’ brothers.

The Cardinal is plotting to remove evidence that might prove his guilt, including his lover’s corpse and Bosola’s knowledge by planning to murder him, too; but Bosola is aware of this and knows of the Cardinal’s maxim: “we know black deeds must be cur’d with death.” (DM, V.iv.40). Bosola is therefore determined to forestall the Cardinal and kill him that night. In the darkness, though, Bosola fatally mistakes Antonio for the Cardinal and strikes him, causing a further catastrophe. Again, night proves full of secrets and deceits and provides the backdrop to black deeds.

The revenger Bosola is plunged with his fellow revengers into an impermeable darkness that does not allow him, any more than it allows Ferdinand, to distinguish a brother from a traitor. Contrary to his will, he collaborates again with the Cardinal, killing Antonio just as, later, Ferdinand will kill the Cardinal.¹²³

The chaos, reflected in the storm, dominates the scene and Bosola’s possibly sole good deed has turned into his utter desolation: he wrongly killed Antonio. He compares himself to the stars’ mere toy: “The man I would have sav’d ’bove mine own life!/ We are merely the stars’ tennis-balls, struck and banded/ Which way please them” (DM, V.iv.52–54). Comforting the dying Antonio with the thought that he will be reunited with his children and wife in death, Bosola despairs: “Break, heart!” (l. 70) and is determined to neglect any moral obligations from then on: “Now I ’ll bring him [the Cardinal] to th’ hammer” (l. 79), invoking complete destruction.

der englischen Renaissance, oder: Gibt es tragische Heldinnen im Drama Shakespeares und seiner Zeitgenossen?“, in: N. Lennartz (ed.): *The Senses’ Festival. Inszenierungen der Sinne und der Sinnlichkeit in der Literatur und Kunst des Barock* (Trier: wvt, 2005), p. 37–56, here p. 50.

122 Marcus Nordlund: *Dark Lantern*, p. 376.

123 Allman: *Jacobean Revenge Tragedy*, p. 165.

“There’s some black deed on foot”¹²⁴

The time of *night* is the usual setting for illegal deeds, especially murder is mostly committed in *darkness*. For example, in *The Spanish Tragedy*, murder is committed at night (III.iii). The colour of death is black,¹²⁵ and darkness is the ominous mood for visions, illusions and hallucinations.¹²⁶ Frances Yates calls the background of *Macbeth* a “dark night of melancholy witchcraft”.¹²⁷ As far as *King Lear* is concerned, she refers to the play’s cosmic proportions,¹²⁸ which Stroup calls the “powers of darkness”.¹²⁹ Shadows, darkness, and night are identified with chaos and godless hate.¹³⁰

Nonetheless [or rather exactly therefore], night and darkness play an important part in many Elizabethan plays – for plot, imagery, and general atmosphere. [...] In other plays, the ‘darkness’ associated with the extinguishing of an on-stage light can be linked to a rape [...] or a murder.¹³¹

The portentous atmosphere that nights sets, allows ominous surprises and disappointments which are anticipated by the audience in scenes set in darkness. Straight from the beginning of e.g. *Antonio’s Revenge*, the audience is introduced to a much gloomier atmosphere than they might have expected after the joyful *Antonio & Mellida*. The Prologue draws a picture of a cold atmosphere, “winter raps” (0.1), and “true sense of misery” (l. 25). As night is approaching, so is the time for vengeful deeds in *Antonio’s Revenge*, and the revengers must stand together to be successful. This firm band of friends, taking vengeance together, is one that seems to strengthen their power. They are fighting against the villain Piero, even though the ghost of Andrugio never encouraged this ensemble of

124 WD, V.v.12.

125 On the connection between the darkness of the night and its association with danger or death, see the lecture on prodigies and death by Miguel Requena Jimenez, p. 11; Thomas Zaunschirm (ed.): *Die Farben Schwarz* (Wien/ New York: Springer, 1999); in this catalogue, the authors mention the diverse function of the colour black.

126 Compare Walter Clyde Curry: *Shakespeare’s Philosophical Patterns* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1937, 1959²), p. 64f.

127 Frances A. Yates: *The Occult Philosophy in the Elizabethan Age* (London/ Basingstoke/ Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979), p. 155.

128 Ibid, p. 156; on the idea of order, see also Edward William Tayler: *Nature and Art in Renaissance Literature* (New York/ London: Columbia University Press, 1964). As far as order in Renaissance drama is concerned, it is always necessary to name the New Historicists. See bibliography, e.g. Arthur Lovejoy, Theodore Spencer, or E. M. W. Tillyard.

129 Thomas B. Stroup: *Microcosmos. The Shape of the Elizabethan Play* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1965), p. 66.

130 See also Siegfried Korninger: *Die Naturauffassung in der Englischen Dichtung des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Wien/ Stuttgart: Wilhelm Braunmüller. Universitäts-Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1956), Wiener Beiträge zur Englischen Philologie 64, ed. Leo Hibler-Lebmannsport, p. 38.

131 Alan C. Dessen: *Elizabethan Stage Conventions and Modern Interpreters* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 70 and 72.

revengers. Mourning together but also joining hands creates a stronger worldly link of possible success. Piero only has the audience left to confide in, and they do not support him, but very likely would hiss at his wish to have “some poison to infuse” the drink unto “Andrugio,/ Feliche, Strotzo, and Antonio’s ghost” (V.iii.27, 25–26).

In the ensuing mask,¹³² the revengers prove successful and blessed, weakening Piero’s defence even more by showing him the corpse of his dead son Julio, and then kill him by stabbing him together to “close the last act of [...] vengeance” (l. 172).

Alsemero’s verdict on Beatrice’s guilty behaviour – having watched Deflores and her in a situation of unmistakably sexually connotation – is that she carried a dark mask, disguising herself. Alsemero utters disgustedly: “The black mask/ That so continually was worn upon’t/ Condemns the face for ugly ere’t be seen,/ Her despite to him, and so seeming bottomless.” (V.iii.3–6). And his servant underlines her “corruption.” (l. 9). They are shocked by the ominous darknegrugly murder and envious passions.

Darkness is also expected when a murder is committed,¹³³ but in the anonymous *Caesar’s Revenge*, the reversal happens. The omen of darkness is desired but does not appear: Anthony is asking for an eclipse of the sun after the stabbing of Caesar, but there is none. So he desperately demands: “How could the sunne see this and not eclipse?” (III.vii.1748). This can only be explained by the fact that the murder itself is part of the determined fate, and thus not disturbing its cause, and the invoked revenge a motor of the action.¹³⁴ The

132 As in ST, or RT, revenge is finally carried out as part of a mask play. In *The White Devil*, the murders of Isabella and Camillo are performed in a mask-like dumb show. (See Dieter Mehl: *The Elizabethan Dumb Show. The History of a Dramatic Convention* (London/ New York: Methuen, 1965). This is significant in that the revenger takes on a mask to deliver the retaliation in a dramaturgically structured play-within-a-play. The art of doubly reflecting the artificiality of theatre while nevertheless strengthening the function of revenge appears in some of the other revenge tragedies as well. In *Hamlet*, it is the duel between Laertes and Hamlet that sets the backdrop – it is a directed fight, influenced by Claudius’ poison on Laertes’ weapon. Similarly, the execution scene of AT is like a staged version of revenge, while in that case the active role has been reversed as the hero in AT is the honest and passive, peace-keeping revenger all along.

133 See above: likewise, thunder could otherwise also constitute the background to murder.

134 See Shakespeare’s *Antony and Cleopatra*: before the battle of Actium, Antony often uses divine exclamations to strengthen his arguments (e.g. III.xiii.85–86: “by Jove that thunders! What art thou, fellow?”; or l. 95–96: “Moon and stars/ Whip him!”) and thus uses them colloquially but displaces regular attention to their force. Cleopatra, too, invokes divine destruction should she be unfaithful in her love to Antony, III.xiii.162–169. Most interestingly though is Caesar Octavian’s almost ironic exclamation at the news of Antony’s death. Decretas enters with Antony’s sword and delivers the message of Antony’s death unto which Caesar reacts as follows: “The breaking of so great a thing should make/ A greater crack. The rived world/ Should have shook lions into civil streets,/ And citizens to their

structure of the tragedy relies on the development of the retaliation scheme and the denouement is yet to come, as the revenger is waiting for signs to support his scheme. Thus the non-appearance of an omen could also be explained as a retarding deferral of delay of action. Nevertheless it is an uncommon device that is not frequent in revenge drama.

The mind can also be determined by an obsession with darkness, and criminal deeds. The *Tragedy of Hoffman's* protagonist's anger is impetuous due to the wrongs he has suffered. His mind also grew darker, since he was, as he explains, submitted into a "dungeon hidden from the sunne,/ [...] condemn'd to endlesse night" (l. 179–180) – now though, he sees better chances for himself and his plan of vengeance in the future: "My Lord behold these pretious twines of light/ Burnt out by day eclipst even as the sunne/ For shame obscur'd himselfe this deed was done" (l. 195–197). It appears that Hoffman is showing the skull of his dead father with two holes for eyes, a scene supported by shrieking owls,¹³⁵ lamenting his father's fate. His foe Otho, the son of his father's murderer will have to face death now: "This earth shall be your throne" (l. 206) and he will be enthroned with the burning crown that Hoffman's father was killed with,¹³⁶ thereby proving Hoffman's dark intentions.¹³⁷

Whenever they are appropriate – and sometimes when they are not – Chettle seems to take a delight in images of fire, and cloud, and blood. He employs colours and epithets which paint pictures striking and sinister, sombre or wan, to create his atmosphere of gloom and tragic horror.¹³⁸

Jenkins in the above quote explains how Chettle uses the images that provide opportunities for mantic foreshadowing, like sinisterness. The darkness of the night also plays a central role in *The Atheist's Tragedy*,¹³⁹ because D'Amville

dens" (Vi.14–17). Demanding a macrocosmic parallel to this microcosmic event might have been the expectation of the audience, too – thus Shakespeare is playing with the convention of a portentous reflection between the cosmoi.

135 Owls are wise birds that cannot only look into every direction, but can also see at night. See Dorothea Forstner: *Die Welt der Symbole*, p. 242.

136 See above on flames, and compare chapter on curses. On the theatricality of this omen, see also Boris Ford (ed.): *Seventeenth Century Britain* (The Cambridge Cultural History of Britain, Vol. IV) Cambridge University Press, 1992, p. 175.

137 Dark intentions and notifications are also written down in Monticelso's black book in WD: he keeps valuable lists of names of villains of all professions in this. See Anders Dallby: *The Anatomy of Evil. A Study of John Webster's The White Devil. Lund Studies in English* 48 (Lund: CWK Gleerups, 1974), p. 129.

138 Harold Jenkins: *The Life and Work of Henry Chettle* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1934), p. 82.

139 Samuel Schuman: *Cyril Tourneur* (Twayne Publishers: Boston, 1977), p. 125; compare the atmosphere of death and darkness to Desdemona's death in *Othello*: "Put out the light, and then put out the light." Othello first removes a light before killing his wife; in: *The Norton Shakespeare, The Tragedy of Othello the Moor of Venice*, V.ii.6–7. D'Amville uses the night just as well to cover his brutal deeds, II.i.52–4.

functionalises the background of night-time for his plans – his brother’s murder and his daughter-in-law’s ravishment. Night reflects the chaos that exists but cannot be seen through. Similarly, in *The White Devil*, Hortensio suspects unknown cruelty: “There ‘s some black deed on foot.” (V.v.12) Even the innocent protagonists of revenge tragedy let the darkness of night cover themselves: The doomed couple in *The Spanish Tragedy*, Horatio and Bel-Imperia meet in secrecy: “Now that the night begins with sable wings/ To ouer-cloud the brightness of the sunne,/ And that in darkenes pleasures may be done” (II.iv.1–3). They are tempting their fate by adhering to the laws of darkness, as B. L. Joseph analyses:

[T]here is something reprehensible in the love of Bel-imperia and Horatio which brings grave consequences; [...] For their illicit pleasure the ‘heavens have shut up day’ and the stars ‘hold back their twinkling shine’. Even the moon withholds her light.¹⁴⁰

Bel-Imperia has an inkling¹⁴¹ of something strange, but tries to be nevertheless comforted by Horatio: “I follow thee, my love, and will not back,/ Although my fainting heart controls my soul. [...] And yet my heart foretells me some mischance.” (II.iv.6–7, 15). In combination, darkness is not only the appropriate time for bloody murder, visions and dreams, but also inklings of a darker sort. Horatio’s misinterpretation of the darkness of the night, which does not even allow the starlight to shine on them, turns out to be their downfall: “faire Fortune is our friend,/And heavens have shut up day to pleasure us./ The stars, thou seest, hole back their twinkling shine” (II.iv.16–18). The night is absolutely pitchblack, which they mistake for a good omen to support their love, but then are betrayed. Very quickly and effectively, without a grand show of a fight, Horatio is cruelly hanged and stabbed.

Hieronimo in *The Spanish Tragedy*, being shouted for, enters the scene “*in his shirt, &c.*” (II.v.0), thus clearly marking him as coming out of bed, and “with trembling fear” (l. 2), i.e. not properly attired or furnished to the tragedy he is to encounter. Hieronimo is not misjudging the power of nightly darkness: “O heavens, why made you night, to cover sin?/ By day this deed of darkness had not been.” (l. 24–25). Isabella, dead Horatio’s mother, appears even wilder in her grief, calling for a catastrophic revenge, supported by weather omens: “Blow, sighs, and raise and everlasting storm:/ For outrage fits our cursed wretchedness.” (l. 43–44).

In *The Changeling*, too, night presents the time of dark deeds. When “*A clock strikes one.*” (V.i.0), deeds should have been committed; the worst darkness should be over. Therefore Beatrice is angry at her servant Diaphanta for not

140 B. L. Joseph in: Kyd, Thomas: *The Spanish Tragedy* (The New Mermaids), ed. B. L. Joseph (London: Ernest Benn Ltd., 1964), p. xx.

141 The term inkling is used here as a mantic element foreshadowing the future in an unknown way, creating a feeling of unease and fear in the person that feels it.

returning from the marriage bed and bed-trick with Alsemero, even when the clock “*Strike[s] two*” (V.i.11). Complaining to Deflores, Beatrice calls Diaphanta a “whore [that] forgets herself” (l. 23) while day is approaching: “The day-star, by this hand; see Phosphorus plain yonder.” (l. 25). The morning star, however, is also an image of Lucifer¹⁴² – the darker plans of Beatrice are turning against herself.

The third act of *The Tragedy of Hoffman* contains the positive outcome of Hoffman’s key strategies. The lovers Ludowick and Lucibell have run away on his advice (dressed as the hermit Roderigo) and they are killed by Lodowick’s brother who has been made to think that Ludowick is a disguised new suitor with whom lascivious Lucibell has run away. The image that is created is that the moon is weeping silent tears sympathizing with their flight – “the cleare moone strowes silver in our path,/ And with her moist eyes weepes a gentle dew” (II.i.837–838) – and Lucibell is frightened and trying to calm Ludowick’s: “wrath inflames thy spirit, let it cease;/ Forgive this fault, convert this war to peace” (l.863–864). She will try to keep in control of the situation: “ile watch for feare/ Of venomous wormes, or wolves, or woluvish theeuves:” ([sic] l. 874–875). She includes animals metaphors that portend no good to her life. However, it is not the animals that kill them, but Ludowick’s brother whose mind has been set with venomous thoughts and brings about their end.

Night and darkness represent danger and promote the execution of evil deeds, supporting their gloomy and sinister value.

4.5 Animals – “When screech-owls croak”¹⁴³

Animals portray typical omens in Greek and especially in Roman history. They appear in classic drama and have an immense impact on Renaissance plays. Their function continues in English drama and animal images incorporate a similar role in these plays, thus reviving classic traditions of animal associations with comparable representations of savage aspects in English Renaissance revenge tragedy.¹⁴⁴

142 See the critical apparatus in Middleton/ Rowley: *The Changeling*. New Mermaids, ed. Joost Daalder (London: A & C Black/ New York: W. W. Norton, 1990²), p. 97: “*Phosphoros* [...] the morning star, or Lucifer – the Devil.”

143 WD, V.iv.81.

144 See Alexander Demandt: *Metaphern für Geschichte*, p. 30f. and various entries on animals in J.C. Cooper: *An Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Traditional Symbols* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1978); Alain Gheerbrant/ Jean Chevalier/ John Buchanan-Brown: *The Penguin Dictionary of Symbols* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2005); Manfred Lurker (ed.): *Wörterbuch der Symbolik* (Stuttgart: Alfred Kröner Verlag, 1991³). Compare e.g. Seneca: *Four Tragedies and Octavia*. Penguin Classics (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1966) to English re-

Beastly omens, often depicting individual men or women¹⁴⁵ are “forces of the animal world” and are sometimes called “malignant powers”.¹⁴⁶ Mostly presenting wild, brutal animals, they are strikingly though, not as common in revenge tragedy¹⁴⁷ as might be expected from parallel savage themes of revenge.¹⁴⁸

Only in one of the chosen revenge tragedies do animals occur unusually often to be compared with individual human beings: in the play *The White Devil*. Wolves, dogs,¹⁴⁹ and other animals pose as adversaries¹⁵⁰ and create an atmosphere of looming danger.

For example, the protagonist Flamineo’s mother Cornelia is mourning her dead son Marcello with “superstitious howling” (V.iv.62), which can be compared to a wolf’s cry foreboding melancholy and hunting. The death of her one guiltless son has taken her sanity and she appears mad, rather Ophelia-like¹⁵¹ distributing weeds, singing, and does not recognise Flamineo, but stays in her deluded state:

When screech-owls croak upon the chimney-tops,
And the strange cricket i’ th’ oven sings and hops,
When yellow spots do on your hands appear,

presentations of animal portents, e.g. in Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar*, in: *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt (New York/ London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1997⁵). Compare also Stephen Wilson: *The Magical Universe. Everyday Ritual and Magic in Pre-Modern Europe* (London/ New York: Hambledon and London, 2000), p. 384.

- 145 Rupert Taylor: *The Political Prophecy in England* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1911), p. 4.
- 146 Clive Holmes: “Popular Culture? Witches, Magistrates, and Divines in Early Modern England”, in: Steven Kaplan (ed.): *Understanding Popular Culture* (Berlin/ New York/ Amsterdam: Mouton Publishers, 1984), p. 85–111, p. 94.
- 147 Shakespeare’s *Macbeth* is a tragedy with a similar account of animal occurrences and metaphors.
- 148 Michel de Montaigne writes in “Of Prognostications” that he doubts the importance of oracles but underlines the possibility of certain effects of other kinds of prognostications – like those by animals. He quotes from Plato: “*We are of opinion, certain birds were even bred to prognosticate some things; [...] bird-prophets foresee as much: much is foretold by Oracles; much by prophecies; much by dreames; much by portentuous signes, & others*”, this of course concerning antiquity. Montaigne says about his own time: “our religion has abolished them. And albeit there remaine yet amongst us some meanes of divination in the starres, in spirits, in shapes of the body, in dreames, and elsewhere a notable example of the mad and fond vuriositie of our nature, amusing it selfe to preoccupate future things, as if it had not enough to doe to digest the present”; in: *Montaigne’s Essays*, transl. John Florio, ed. J. I. M. Stewart, 2 Vols. (London: The Nonesuch Press, 1931), Vol. 1, p. 40–44, here p. 40.
- 149 Compare Anders Dallby: *The Anatomy of Evil. A Study of John Webster’s The White Devil. Lund Studies in English* 48 (Lund: CWK Gleerups, 1974), p. 111 f., especially p. 113–114.
- 150 See also Sharon L. Jansen: “Prophecy, Propaganda, and Henry VIII: Arthurian Tradition in the Sixteenth Century”, in: *King Arthur Through the Ages*, ed. Valerie M. Lagorio/ Mildred Leake Day, Vol. 1 (New York/ London: Garland Publishing Inc., 1990), p. 275–91, p. 282.
- 151 Especially for V.iv.76–78, see *Hamlet* IV.v.

Be certain then you of a corse shall hear.

Out upon 't, how 'tis speckled! h'as handled a toad sure. (V.iv.81–85)

Hiding from sight later on, Flamineo also announces to “go hear the screech-owl.” (III.iii.52) This animal, more familiarly known as barn owl was supposed to be an ominous fowl of bad tidings, prophesying misfortune.¹⁵² Cornelia expresses her sorrow in such beautiful words, first doubting the fault in Flamineo’s spotless, washed hands (l. 79). Then however – after an incantation of possible guilt that is underlined by the disharmonious screech-owls’ and crickets’ songs – she imagines pictures of speckled toad-like points on his hands that do tell of the committed murder, intimidating Flamineo until he almost cannot bear it: “I would I were from hence” (l. 88). Further distracted, Cornelia sings of birds, small animals and then moves on to more dangerous, bigger animals. Webster cleverly instrumentalises the rhetorics of mantic elements:

Call for the robin redbreast, and the wren,
 Since o'er shady groves they hover,
 And with leaves and flowers do cover
 The friendless bodies of unburied men.
 Call unto his funeral dole
 The ant, the fieldmouse, and the mole,
 To rear him hillocks that shall keep him warm,
 And (when gay tombs are robb'd) sustain no harm;
 But keep the wolf far thence, that's foe to men,
 For with his nails he 'll dig them up again. (V.iv.92–101)

Cornelia is clearly distracted; she becomes lunatic, creating distorted pictures of nature in her speech. However, her desolate state does have some impact upon her son Flamineo, who is guilty of causing this grief: “I have a strange thing in me, to th' which/ I cannot give a name, without it be/ Compassion. I pray leave me.” (V.iv.110–112).

The conversation between Bosola and the Cardinal in *The Duchess of Malfi* is no less ominous of some ill ideas, underlined by animals. Bosola emphasises his will to rise: “I will thrive some way: black-birds/ fatten best in hard weather: why not I in these dog days?” (I.i.38–39). Even in unhealthy overheated times as those of the dog-days, which are supposed to be the hottest days of the summer, he wants to fatten, i.e. profit. The use of the blackbird seems rather unusual, since

152 See Dorothea Forstner: *Die Welt der Symbole*, p. 242. Compare J.C. Cooper: *An Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Traditional Symbols* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1978); Alain Gheerbrant/ Jean Chevalier/ John Buchanan-Brown: *The Penguin Dictionary of Symbols* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2005); Manfred Lurker (ed.): *Wörterbuch der Symbolik* (Stuttgart: Alfred Kröner Verlag, 1991⁵).

blackbirds might only be doomed unlucky because of their colour but not necessarily as a bird of bad omen in general.¹⁵³

The basilisk, whose look can kill, is compared to Ferdinand's looks as he is attentively observing his sister, the Duchess of Malfi. Aware of the danger of discovery of her marriage in court, the Duchess notices Ferdinand hidden in her room with a dagger, and cursing her, wishing he could kill her unknown husband with his eyes alone: "if I could change/ Eyes with a basilisk" (DM, III.ii.87–88), a deadly snake, whose eyes could kill.¹⁵⁴ The same snake-like beast is addressed in *The Changeling*, as Beatrice calls Deflores such a cruel beast. Deflores, in turn, is aware of Beatrice's hate towards him "As if danger, or ill luck, hung in my looks" (Ch, II.i.36). Appearing like a beastly omen in *The Duchess of Malfi*, Ferdinand reproaches his sister, the Duchess, for sharing savage characteristics with animals:

The howling of a wolf
Is music to thee, screech-owl: prithe, peace.–
Whate'er thou art that hast enjoy'd my sister,
[...] let dogs and monkeys
Only converse with him, and such dumb things
To whom nature denies use to sound his name (DM, III.ii.89–107)

Ferdinand feels deeply disappointed by his sister and wishes she would stop the contact to Antonio. His request that only dumb animals may contact him seems a strong curse. For Ferdinand's broken trust in her, – which is caused by her secrecy – he apparently curses himself and vouchsafes never to see her again: he calls her a screech-owl, since she has renounced reputation.

The atheist D'Amville asks Boracchio a rhetorical question about the course of nature and the similarity of human and animal life: "Observ'st thou not the very self same course/ Of revolution both in man and beast" (I.i.5–6). He is asking about the way of life and death, and, affirmed in this by his servant, he calls money an absolute necessity of life, thereby comparing man and beast – and calls this fact an "oracle,/ For what's a man that's honest without wealth" (I. 31–32). He pretends the financial situation is divinely accredited and sees gold as the only symbolic materialisation of happiness. This fact already serves the audience to categorise D'Amville as a shallow and dubious figure in the play; the symbolic and atheist denial of God's power is enough to be aware of the character that presents himself on stage: D'Amville is the materialist in the play – bound to earthly happiness, he stands out as one whose future must teach him a lesson about divine proportions.

153 See the above on birds.

154 See Andrew Stott: "Tiresias and the Basilisk", p. 166. Compare also Dorothea Forstner: *Die Welt der Symbole*, p. 317–318.

Ferdinand, denying Christian virtues and ordering the death of his sister, turns lunatic,¹⁵⁵ and in a grotesque, werewolfish, psychotic way becomes mad.¹⁵⁶ By the fourth act, he is off to “hunt the badger, by owl-light,” a “deed of darkness” (DM, IV.ii.324–325).¹⁵⁷ Ferdinand’s strains of madness dominate his personality as a consequence of his evil actions. Having cursed others by calling them wolf-like¹⁵⁸, he has now developed “lycanthropia” (V.ii.6)¹⁵⁹, a wolf-madness, which is explained thus: “melancholy humour they imagine/ Themselves to be transformed into wolves” (l. 9–10). Howling like a werewolf, spending his time on churchyards, Ferdinand himself prefers to be solitary, comparing himself to an eagle, as a head of state would, rather than to a wolf – “Eagles commonly fly alone. They are crows,/ daws, and starlings that flock together” (l. 30–31) – but he madly tries to catch his own shadow, swears “I ’ll confess nothing” (l. 54), admits to “cruel sore eyes”¹⁶⁰ (l. 61), threatens them all, and exits attacking the doctor. The madness Ferdinand shows here is explained as a divine judgment, which Bosola comments as follows: “Mercy upon me, what a fatal judgment/ Hath fall’n upon this Ferdinand!” (V.ii.83–84).

Ferdinand becomes animalistic, other men in high positions in the revenge tragedies use such behaviour and act like lusty animals: the King in *The Maid’s Tragedy* or the Duke in *The Revenger’s Tragedy* are dominated by their sexuality: “Today, when we are learning again what the Renaissance always knew about the inseparability of sexuality and power, art and politics, that perspective is losing credibility. We are becoming acutely aware that sexual desire is not that which transcends politics and power, but the vehicle of politics and power.”¹⁶¹ This animalistic behaviour has an ominous effect since it denotes the character of those it befalls. Ferdinand runs mad, his beastly behaviour towards his sister has turned him into a lunatic beast. Overt sexuality, too, is treated as a savage and

155 See Dympna Callaghan: “The Duchess of Malfi and Early Modern Widows”, in: *Early Modern English Drama. A Critical Companion*, ed. Garrett A Sullivan Jr/ Patrick Cheney/ Andrew Hadfield (New York/ Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 272–286, p. 283.

156 See Rainer Lengeler: *Tragische Wirklichkeit als Grotteske Verfremdung bei Shakespeare* (Köln/ Graz: Böhlau Verlag, 1964), p. 208f.

157 Allman, p. 154–155.

158 For example his sister in III.ii.88.

159 Compare Dorothea Forstner: *Die Welt der Symbole*, p. 325–326. See also Albert Tricomi: “Historicizing the Imagery of the Demonic in *The Duchess of Malfi*”, in: *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 34.2 (2004), p. 345–372.

160 In III.ii.86, he wishes he could “change/ Eyes with a basilisk”. This is a giant snake whose look can kill. Compare note, *The Duchess of Malfi*. New Mermaids, ed. Brian Gibbons (London: A & C Black/ New York: W. W. Norton, 2001⁴), p. 63. Compare Dorothea Forstner: *Die Welt der Symbole*, p. 317.

161 Jonathan Dollimore: “Shakespeare, Cultural Materialism, Feminism and Marxist Humanism”, in: *New Literary History* 21/3 (1990), p. 471–493, p. 486. A prime example to confirm this thesis is Helena, portrayed by Shakespeare in *Troilus & Cressida*.

vicious quality opposing chastity and pure love which shows lascivious characters as dominated not by reason but by physical desire and thus not prone to divine acceptance.

The ugliness that these people show by their animalistic qualities is something that the servants Bosola and Deflores portray: Both are considered ugly, especially Deflores is introduced as a vile being: “I must confess my face is bad enough,” (Ch, II.i.37); his face must be disfigured in some way. Looking deformed on the outside was a sign believed to be identical with inner deformity, too. This presents an opposition to kalokagathia, the idea that something is good and thus beautiful and vice-versa.¹⁶² Beatrice calls him an ominous creature: “[*Aside*] This ominous ill-fac’d fellow more disturbs me / Than all my other passions!” (l. 52–53). His face is described as sickly, and Deflores is called a “standing toad-pool” (l. 58), bred in a pool of stagnant water, which might signify a toad-like, spotty facial quality of skin – a face that implies disgust:

While Beatrice’s initial disgust emphasises the distance that exists between Alsemero’s beauty and De Flores’ ugliness, it also serves as a mark against which we can chart the degeneration of categories in this world of deposed reason.¹⁶³

However much Beatrice accuses him, Deflores is ominously forced by an inner urge: “I must see her still;/ I shall have a mad qualm within this hour again” (Ch, II.i.78–79) Trying to interpret the signs of the time, Deflores is questioning his fortune: “What this may bode I know not; I’ll despair the less/ Because there’s daily precedents of bad faces” (l. 82–83). However she torments him, he still seems to preserve some hope, like a dog, while to her, he seems the most horrible omen: “I never see this fellow but I think/ Of some harm towards me: danger’s in my mind still;/ I scarce leave trembling of an hour after” (l. 89–91). Employing him nevertheless, she falls into the trap set by Fortune and becomes the “deed’s creature” (III.iv.137).¹⁶⁴

Tomazo, brother to the murdered Alonzo is determined to seek revenge: First calling Deflores honest, he later notices some natural opposition towards Deflores. An inkling of the murder of his brother, whom Deflores murdered, shudders Tomazo: “So most deadly venomous” (V.ii.14). Apparently uncaused in this situation but inflamed with the knowledge of his brother’s murder, Tomazo draws upon Deflores and charges him to a fight. Ominously Deflores is unable to defend himself, held down by the knowledge of his murderous deed,

162 See Mischa Meier: “Kalokagathia“, in: *Der Neue Pauly. Enzyklopädie der Antike. Das klassische Altertum und seine Rezeptionsgeschichte*, ed. Hubert Cancik/ Helmuth Schneider/ August Pauly (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2003), vol. 6, p. 209–210.

163 Andrew Stott: “Tiresias and the Basilisk“, p. 174.

164 Compare Verna Ann Foster: “The Deed’s Creature: The Tragedy of Bianca in ‘Women Beware Women’“, in: *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 78 (1979), p. 508–21.

“Fresh bleeding in his eye” (l. 33). An inkling is an uncanny suspicion or feeling. In revenge tragedy texts, it foreshadows approaching danger.¹⁶⁵ Tomazo then swears to revenge the murder of his brother and prophecies to kill the culprit. Seemingly paradoxical, the murderer stands before him, still being part of the bloody spectacle.

Bosola owns a similarly malformed face, which lets his trustworthiness seem doubtful, as the outer appearance is thought to reflect the inner disposition in the Renaissance.¹⁶⁶ His character is not trusted by the two brothers, whose “creature” (l. 287) he becomes, because his face gives signs of “oblique character” (l. 155). Bosola’s face is somehow distorted. Bosola himself though denies any connection between looks and character, but loyally subjects himself to the sinful brothers of the court, as Allam stresses: “Bosola has become Ferdinand’s thing, a homunculus modeled in excrement as a smaller version of his creator and master.”¹⁶⁷ Being determined thus from the start to be villainous,¹⁶⁸ Bosola struggles with his fate: “Doth he study physiognomy?/ There ’s no more credit to be given to the face/ Than to a sick man’s urine” (I.ii.156–158). However, the physiognomic prejudice proves correct. It will turn out that Bosola is corruptible; only in the end does he appear as pitiful, and even supporting the Duchess. Nevertheless, Bosola is bought with bribes, teasing his ambition. Offered gold, Bosola’s consequential sentence is determined according to illegal actions and the shedding of blood: “What follows? (Never rain’d such showers as these/ Without thunderbolts i’ the tail of them;)/ Whose throat must I cut?” (l. 168–169). The omen of his face therefore directs the interpretation of his character rightly.¹⁶⁹ The distorted, apparently beastly nature of his face reflects the savage, anti-social nature of his character. However, he can nevertheless well judge his employers – and Bosola sees a basilisk in the Cardinal: “This fellow doth breed basilisks in ’s eyes,/ He ’s nothing else but murder” (V.ii.143–144). Indeed, the Cardinal kills his own mistress with a poisoned Bible: “thou’rt poison’d with that book.” (l. 273). The idea of poisoning a Bible seems the most perverse of the play. Using a religious utensil as a murder weapon is an omen of

165 See below, ch. 4.7.

166 The distinction of someone’s character by his face is a commonplace in the Renaissance, see for example Martin Porter: *Windows of the Soul. The Art of Physiognomy in European Culture 1470–1780* Oxford Historical Monographs (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

167 Allman: *Jacobean Revenge Tragedy*, p. 150. The idea of Bosola as an abject, an excrement of society, could also be looked at under a gender perspective according to Kristeva. This would go too far in a study like this though.

168 This reminds of Richard III’s deformities. See e.g. Shakespeare’s *Richard III*, l.i.30: “I am determined to prove a villain”. This determination is nevertheless ambivalent due to the interpretation of the word and its meaning as fate or plan.

169 Compare Martin Porter: *Windows of the Soul. The Art of Physiognomy in European Culture 1470–1780*. Oxford Historical Monographs (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

the topsy-turvy morals in this revenge tragedy and lets the audience expect further death in the justified punishment of the Cardinal, Bosola's "fellow-murderer" (l. 291).

Not only can the body be the means to present a character, the mind's decisions can also be functionalised as an indeterminable physical weakness. Hoffman for example is directed by his love: at court (IV.ii) Martha of Luningberg is grieving her husband's death and waiting for her son to comfort her. Hoffman enters, while she is asleep, an encounter, which proves to be Hoffman's doom: falling in love with Martha keeps him from decisively following his aim of avenging his father's murder. Instead, his revenge is vanquished by his amorous, physical desires. He is overcome with temptation, which makes him vulnerable.

Parallel to this development at the court of Luningberg, Lucibell – who has turned mad after the killing of her betrothed Ludowick – is living in Hoffman's old cave and has added Otho's dead body to the decoration Hoffman had already put up in the cave – the skeleton of his father, creating a horrible reception of "two leane porters staru'd for lacke of meat" (V.i.1948). Both are still crowned with the golden, burning crowns that caused their deaths. The strange circumstance of this image of the physically decaying dead: the skull of Hoffman's father reflects the decaying state. Roderigo comments on this atmosphere of further death as follows: "my heart diuines,/ Some strange and horrid act will be reueald." (V.i.1989–1990). The prophetic wording of a revelation, indicated here by the divining heart, reflects the underlying nature of certain phrasings – like premonitions, they are construed to mirror the mantic potential.

The remembrance of the dead also causes the audience to expect further death. Martha calls the cave "Some basiliskes, or poysonous serpents den!" (V.i.2005), as if it was peopled by ominous, evil creatures of death.¹⁷⁰

Fascinatingly, Lucibell, finding truth in madness,¹⁷¹ understands Hoffman's motives and calls him "knaue" (l. 2039) and "Lyer" (l. 2046). Once all swear revenge against Hoffman, and the distracted Lucibella ominously becomes sane again, a sign that the events are leading toward a just future: "Nay, Ile come, my wits are mine agen/ Now faith growes firme to punish faithlesse men." (l. 2254–2255). In the cave, where the revengers have prepared a spectacle for Hoffman, he first sees Lorrique, whom he believes to be dead, and takes him for his "pale ghost" (V.iii.2558). His death is performed ritually as those in which his father and Otho died – the murder he became an avenger for and the first murder he committed himself – with the burning crown: "weare [t]his crowne made

170 See e.g. T. H. White: *The Bestiary. A Book of Beasts. Being a Translation from a Latin Bestiary of the Twelfth Century* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1954).

171 See Allen Thiher: *Revels in Madness. Insanity in Medicine and Literature* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), p. 73f.

flaming hot with fire:/ Bring forth the burning crowne there” (V.iii.2582–2583). Interestingly, justice, personified by Hoffman’s judges, punishes him but does not overcompensate. Pardoned by his murderers when dying, Hoffman accepts death willingly: “I deserue it that haue slackt reuenge.” And “punish true desert with scorned death” (l. 2611, 2618).

Justice and retaliation are the main topic of the revenge tragedies. Thus, Antonio in *Antonio’s Revenge* needs to remind himself of the vindictive duties he will have to perform. After the dumb show which presents his mother Maria accept the villain Piero’s suit, Antonio enters to remind the audience of the responses that heaven demands: “The black jades of swart night trot foggy rings/ ’Bout heaven’s brow. *Clock strikes twelve.*” (III.i.1). Right at midnight, as the clock indicates, Antonio swears an oath to his father to revenge the deeds done to his family. After being visited by his father’s spirit, who is enticing his thoughts towards vengeance, Maria enters – seemingly distressed, with “*her hair about her ears*” (l. 52), a sign of confused thoughts.¹⁷² These indications prove true in her speech: “I’ll range about the church/ Like frantic Bacchanal or Jason’s wife/ Invoking all the spirits of the graves/ To tell me where. Ha! O, my poor wretched blood” (III.i.59–62). The world is falling to pieces around Antonio and it is his duty to establish order again.

Similarly in *The Duchess of Malfi*, – while the titular heroine and her husband are still professing their stolen love and happiness – the Duchess realises that her hair is a little loose: “My hair tangles” (DM, III.ii.53). This is mostly used as a sure sign of madness, here it is signifying the mad revenge that will be sentenced upon her by her brothers. So, too, can Isabell, Hieronimo’s wife and Horatio’s mother be imagined who “*runs lunatic*” (ST, III.viii.5) after her son’s death. This madness is also an omen of the catastrophe: the world is out of joint, out of balance. Thus the omen is also an indicator or symbol of the reflected chaos.

Antonio’s revenging thoughts are given inspiration and energy in this scene through his father’s visitation and he awaits a chance to kill Piero. Instead Julio, Piero’s son, enters the stage, “Crying that bugbears and spirits haunted him” (III.i.138). These beings prove more fatal than the idea of little disturbance during sleep. Julio’s blood is that of his father and therefore Antonio is settled to kill the young boy and is encouraged in that by another visit of Andrugio’s ghost, who is entering the stage while Antonio is pondering Julio’s murder, shouting “Revenge!” (l. 174). Accompanied by a groan from the region “under the stage”,

172 Dishevelled hair is a sign of madness, see Ophelia in *Hamlet*, IV.v., or the Queen in *Cymbeline*, Constance in *King John*, III.iv, but also Isabella in ST. Compare Elaine Showalter: “Representing Ophelia: Women, Madness, and the Responsibilities of Feminist Criticism”, in: Patricia Parker/ Geoffrey Hartman (eds.): *Shakespeare and the Question of Theory* (New York: Routledge, 1993), p. 77–94.

and very likely from ghosts in the underworld, Antonio stabs Julio with the following words:

Now barks the wolf against the full-cheek'd moon,
 Now lions' half-clamm'd entrails roar for food,
 Now croaks the toad and night-crows screech aloud,
 Fluttering 'bout casements of departing souls;
 Now gapes the graves, and through their yawns let loose
 Imprison'd spirits to revisit earth;
 And now, swart night, to swell thy hour out,
 Behold I spurt warm blood in thy black eyes. (III.i.187–194)

Even though Antonio is sorry for Julio's sake and wishes him well in eternity, he is fulfilling the first step towards revenge on Piero. Brutal animals like the wolf, who keeps to the night, and the lion, who is portrayed as hungry, yearning for flesh allude to cruelty, and the ugly toad and night-crows, making frightening noises, cover the murder. It is the hour of open graves and wandering spirits shortly after midnight, to whom Antonio commits the newly slaughtered body: "*Sprinkles the tomb with blood.*" (l. 206)

In contrast to this cruel and beastly deed of revenge, Anthony in *Caesar's Revenge* tries to convince Caesar of the hope that can still be found, although the water is coloured with blood: "silver streames [...] turn'd to lakes of blood" (I.iii.269). Threatening as they are, these images should not weaken Caesar's feelings of heroic strength but he should move on like the "Ægle" (l. 277) he has proved to be in past battles. He should take honourable revenge and kill Pompey: "Let pale *Tysiphone* be cloyd with bloud:/ And snaky furies quench their longing thirst" (l. 285–286) – in these words Anthony prognoses the death of his adversaries. However, this is only a wish for the one fighting side with his idea of Caesar receiving "glory in their end" (l. 287) which will not last long. Rome is – by civil war – responsible for her own fall. So it will also in the rest of the play be the "fatal fuell which this fire enflamd" (l. 320).

In all of the tragedies, a catastrophe destroys the stately foundations. The Cardinal in *The Duchess of Malfi*, pretending to be a person of dignity, is depicted by Bosola as one of the greatest of villains: "this great fellow were able/ to possess the greatest devil, and make him worse" (I.i.45–46). He explains to Antonio that "He and his brother are like plum-trees that grow/ crooked over standing-pools;¹⁷³ they are rich and o'erladen/ with fruit, but none but crows, pies, and caterpillars feed/ on them. Could I be one of their flattering panders, I would/ hang on their ears like a horseleech, till I were full, and/ then drop off" (l. 49–54). These images clearly convey the idea of corrupt persons, whom he is comparing

173 This recalls the description of Deflores' physiognomy in *The Changeling*, as described above, see Ch, II.i.58.

to beasts. He describes a situation that is devastating for a state. Nevertheless, it shows the same ambition in Bosola, which he uses for his own advancement, as Antonio fears: “This foul melancholy/ Will poison all his goodness; [...] want of action [for honour]/ Breeds all black malcontents” (l. 75–80). Thus doubt and crime threaten the functioning of the state and this is encouraged by the following scene: the court is arrogantly boasting with their horses’ grandeur¹⁷⁴ and the impression and knowledge that Antonio has of the Cardinal: “The spring in his face is nothing but the engend’ring of toads,¹⁷⁵ where he is jealous of any man, he lays worse plots for them than ever was impos’d on Hercules, for he strews in his way flatterers, panders, intelligencers, atheists, and a thousand such political monsters” (l.ii.81–85). This figure, which should impersonate not only authority but also sanctity, is corrupt and dictatorial. His brother, Duke Ferdinand, a “most perverse and turbulent nature” (l. 91), is also introduced as pretentious, profligate, and exorbitant: “the law to him/ Is like a foul, black cobweb to a spider,/ He makes it his dwelling and a prison/ To entangle those shall feed him” (l. 99–102). He is criticised with biting images, and compared to a savage devil.

If Ferdinand has appeared somewhat frantic in some of his earlier appearances, his behaviour increases in rage and the tendency towards violence: “Mark Prince Ferdinand:/A very salamander lives in ’s eye,/ To mock the eager violence of fire” (DM, III.iii.47–49), the salamander being a symbol of elementary fire-resistance.¹⁷⁶ Ferdinand laughs like “a deadly cannon/ That lightens ere it smokes” (l. 54). The Cardinal, in comparison, seems to become more sneering and arrogant: “He/ lifts up ’s nose, like a foul porpoise before a storm” (l. 51–52). Everything seems set for the cannon to fire and the tempest to rage – an eerie silence before the storm that Delio describes as one full of witchcraft: “In such a deformed silence witches whisper their/ charms” (l. 57–58).

Ferdinand’s and the Cardinal’s rage is still directed against their sister, but indirectly destroying Amalfi: damning her, their accusations fly: “Methinks her fault and beauty,/ Blended together, show like leprosy,/ The whiter, the fouler.” (DM, III.iii.61–63). Both still hide under the cover of religion, too, but they do not show Christian virtues, only unforgiving principles which they do not apply to their own behaviour.

Order is destroyed; Antonio will fly to Milan with his eldest son, and naively still hopes there is a divine purpose in this, and his journey is not just a bare flight

174 This possibly reminds the audience of the ridiculous scene in the French camp in *Henry V*: William Shakespeare, *Henry V*, IV.ii, but especially the French exaggeration of the grandeur of their armour and horses at the beginning of III.vii, in: *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt (New York/ London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1997⁵), especially lines 1–27.

175 Again, the metaphor recalls Deflores’ physiognomy.

176 Udo Becker: *Lexikon der Symbole* (Köln: Komet, 1992), p. 246.

from danger: “Since we must part,/ Heaven hath a hand in ’t; [...] To bring ’t in better order.” (l. 59–63). This utterance is to appease the Duchess, who likewise tries to detect a positive trait in this flight: “And yet, O heaven, thy heavy hand is in ’t!” (l. 75). However, both are aware of the imminent threat and when Antonio leaves her, he does so with a wish of farewell: “If I do never see thee more,/ Be a good mother to your little ones,/ And save them from the tiger” (l. 81–83) and his farewell is perceived as a “speech/ [that] Came from a dying father.” (l. 84–85). She adds to this an omen of forthcoming death: “Your kiss is colder/ Than that I have seen an holy anchorite/ Give to a dead man’s skull.” (l. 85–87) and Antonio confirms her impression, afraid of what the future will bring: “My heart is turn’d to a heavy lump of lead,/ With which I sound my danger: fare you well” (l. 88–89). When Antonio has left, the Duchess is weighing her ruin, accepting her “laurel [...] withered” which again prophecies the loss of glory, and also attacking Bosola verbally: “What devil art thou that counterfeit’st heaven’s thunder?” (l. 97).¹⁷⁷

Destruction and fatal immanence are clearly apparent when indicated by these ominous professions. Dangerous animals foreshadow defeat, danger, and cruel death. The violence of beast is thus applicable to the situation on stage.

4.6 Portents of physiognomy – “Why should his voice keep tune”¹⁷⁸

In contrast to animal omens, portents of physiognomy have a direct and maybe even more apparent relation to the characters on stage. The human *body* with its corresponding connection to the macrocosm constitutes a different level of omen to foreshadow events in revenge tragedy.¹⁷⁹ Physical means concerning the body reflect the revelation of hidden truth. These can be chronic bodily signs like scars or birthmarks, it can be the certain disposition of a character or they can be acute phenomena like bleeding. Blood represents murder and often the murderer is showing off his deeds when confronting the audience. Thus the anatomy of the human body, its regularity, but also its deformations can denote premonitions of the future in Renaissance revenge tragedy.

177 As the duchess judges on the palace as a dangerous place, this might remind the audience of Shakespeare’s *Richard II*, who is conveyed to the tower (*Richard II*, IV.i.304–308) – also considered a place of “safety and pity” (DM, III.v.107).

178 AR, IV.ii.93.

179 Leonard Barkan: *Nature’s Work of Art. The Human Body as Image of the World* (New Haven/ London: Yale University Press, 1975), p. 14; see also Raimund Borgmeier: “Die englische Literatur”, in: *Der Einfluss Senecas auf das europäische Drama*, ed. Eckard Lefevre (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1978), p. 276–323. He explains the influence of Seneca on English tragedy.

Bleeding wounds following injuries¹⁸⁰ can be a sign to detect a murderer, denying them can be a sign of “intellectual pride”,¹⁸¹ which might provoke fatal decision-taking. A part of the body can be functionalised as an image of death, as for example the skull in *Hamlet*, in *The Revenger’s Tragedy* – which is made-up as a trap, commented on by sartorial jests,¹⁸² and it serves as a *memento mori*, as the remembrance of a dead father in *Hoffman*.¹⁸³

Another aspect that becomes the motivating force of revenge especially in the later revenge tragedy, as Aimee Ross has pointed out, is the female corpse. As, for example, in *The Revenger’s Tragedy* the dead body of Antonio’s wife – and to a more gory extent, Gloriana’s skull presents the need for revenge.¹⁸⁴ She also argues that this image becomes more important after the idea of the influence of

180 The handkerchief “besmear’d with blood” is a constant reminder of death: ST, II.v.49.

181 D’Amville for example denies a divine influence, clearly marking him as one who will suffer from divine revenge; see Allen: *Doubt’s Boundless Sea. Scepticism and Faith in the Renaissance* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1964), p. 24.

182 Michael Neill: “Death and The Revenger’s Tragedy”, in: *Early Modern English Drama. A Critical Companion*, ed. Garrett A Sullivan Jr/ Patrick Cheney/ Andrew Hadfield (New York/ Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 164–176, p. 167.

183 Ibid, p. 169. Compare also Michael Neill: *Issues of Death. Morality and Identity in English Renaissance Tragedy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), p. 83–84, 234–236, 250–251 et al.

184 On the image of the skull Roland Wymer has an archaeological tribute to Middleton: “The probable answer is to be found in *Hamlet* and takes us to the heart of Middleton’s emblematic imagination. In the graveyard scene, Hamlet inquires ‘How long will a man lie i’t’h’earth ere he rot?’ (5.1.158) and is told by the gravedigger that the maximum period is eight or nine years. ‘A tanner will last you nine year’ (5.1.162). The emphasis here is on a process of decay, but the figure of nine years seems to have lodged in Middleton’s mind as signifying the culmination of the process, a culmination crucial to the particular symbolism of *The Revenger’s Tragedy*. After nine years the flesh will unquestionably have rotted away from Gloriana’s skull, enabling it to function not just as a traditional *memento mori* but as a stark emblem of ultimate moral purity. The clothing of flesh must be stripped away to reveal the only true object in a world of false appearance. The play is obsessed with the sins of the flesh, which are seen as inevitable as long as there is any flesh to cover the bones. When asked what moved him to rape, the Duchess’s youngest son replies, ‘Why flesh and blood, my lord; / What should move men unto a woman else?’ (1.2.47–48). Free from its flesh, the skull is now free from sin. It can appear as something cold and white and chaste to set against the hot desires of the flesh. ‘Thou mayst lie chaste now’ Vindice tells it (3.5.89). After nine years in the ground it has reached a state of incorruptible purity which allows it to join forces with Castiza and the dead wife of Antonio as the main symbols of opposition to the life of the court. The nine years Vindice has waited have nothing to do with any doubts about the ethics of revenge but were the natural period of time necessary to produce the play’s chief moral symbol. The skull, like truth itself, is *filia temporis*, the daughter of time. Ironically, of course, when Vindice turns from his role of moralist and preacher in the opening speech to become an active revenger, he perverts the elemental purity of the skull by dressing it up, masking it, and smearing it with poison. The natural process by which a compelling emblem of unadorned truth and purity was generated is put into rapid reverse, and the nine years of patient waiting are succeeded by a frenetic flurry of violence.” See Roland Wymer: *Suicide and Despair*, p. 551. This underlines the physical aspect of the body that drives Vindici’s obsession with revenge.

the ghost has diminished.¹⁸⁵ Not the appearance of the ghost of his father, but the memory of his father's physical past, represented by his skull and skeleton, cause Hoffman to be a revenger.

Sometimes, these physical omens can even appear grotesque,¹⁸⁶ as the above-mentioned skulls, or Bosola's and De Flores' appearance. Their anatomy is grotesque; they appear "out of his place"¹⁸⁷ – both allegedly displeasing conventions. At the end of most revenge tragedies there is often a spectacle of bloodshed, especially in *The Revenger's Tragedy*, called a "piteous tragedy! Able to wake/ An old man, 's eyes bloodshot" (V.iii.65), and in *Antonio's Revenge* a "gory spectacle" (V.iii.115), a true disaster in the end. Just as grotesque as the use of blood, or an ugly appearance, can be the use of other parts of the body as physical reminders of death. Instead of a dead skull, attention is drawn to the head in *The White Devil* when Brachiano is wearing a poisoned helmet that makes the brain burn. Another example is the cold, cut-off hand in *The Duchess of Malfi* which the Duchess' brother presents to scare her, much like the finger in *The Changeling*,¹⁸⁸ which is reminiscent of the murdered Alonzo, from whom it has been cut off.

In the microcosm, chaos is also created by destruction. This concerns the order and harmony in the microcosm of men, and in its macrocosmic correspondences: "The world of [*The Duchess of Malfi*] is one in which the macro-microcosmic mythology of order, centered in the body and blood of the monarch, is honoured only in the breach."¹⁸⁹ Breaking the order of the cosmos is the crime that sets the tragedy off; however, the constant inconsistency with justice,

185 See especially Aimee Elizabeth Ross: *From Ghosts to Skulls: Selfhood, Bodies and Gender in Renaissance Revenge Tragedy* (PhD University of Oregon, 2000).

186 Especially in the later revenge tragedy of the 1610s and 1620s, gory details were also used to shock and crudely entertain the public. See among others Uwe Baumann: "Das Leben als Tanz und Tod in der Rachttragödie der englischen Renaissance", in: F. H. Link (ed.), *Tanz und Tod in Kunst und Literatur, Schriften zur Literaturwissenschaft* 8 (Berlin: Perfect Paperback, 1993), p. 139–160.

187 Mark Thornton Burnett: "The Changeling and Masters and Servants", in: *Early Modern English Drama. A Critical Companion*, ed. Garrett A Sullivan Jr/ Patrick Cheney/ Andrew Hadfield (New York/ Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 298–308, p. 299.

188 Compare Darryll Grantley: "Masques and Murderers: Dramatic Method and Ideology in Revenge Tragedy and the Court Masque", in: *Jacobean Poetry and Prose. Rhetoric, Representation and the Popular Imagination* (Houndsmills/ London: Macmillan, 1988), p. 194–212, p. 202. The finger is compared to the phallus, as Alonzo's dead finger, like Alonzo's dead phallus can nevermore penetrate Beatrice, and instead, Deflores cuts of the finger, takes the ring and later deflowers Beatrice. See Michael Neill: *Issues of Death. Morality and Identity in English Renaissance Tragedy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), p. 172–174, 190.

189 Karin S. Coddon: "The Duchess of Malfi: tyranny and spectacle in Jacobean drama", in: *Madness in Drama. Themes in Drama* 15, ed. James Redmond (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 1–17, p. 4.

committed by the revenger to retaliate the crime, sets a permanent disruption into motion. The revenger becomes a criminal in his unproportional rage for vengeance.

Antonio in *Antonio's Revenge*, for example, remoulds his personality. As the audience witnesses, this needs time, thus retarding revenge, or revenge itself takes time due to elaborate or hesitant planning. Antonio almost becomes as remorseless as the villain Piero to execute punishment for murder and defamation.¹⁹⁰ In his passionate vehemence, which often seems to contradict feelings of love, he is supported by the righteous dignity of revenge and the powers of heaven, even if vengeance incorporates disguise or imposture, trickery and crime.

Thus the revenger might become a crude type of a stage-Machiavell¹⁹¹ just like the villain he is fighting against. In revenge tragedy, bloodshed is not only accepted, but intended from the beginning. Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* ends in a bloodbath in the finale, but Kyd does not remain the bloodiest of revenge authors: the generation after him turns bloodshed into even more grotesque images.¹⁹² Webster uses scenes of physical and mental torture for murder, Tourneur uses an absurd coincidence as divine revenge, Middleton conflicts sexuality and murder; and Jenkins argues that *Antonio's Revenge* is most cruel:

Marston is deeply involved in his writing in the murder scenes. They might question the aesthetic merits of these sensational scenes, but they would certainly admit that nowhere else in Jacobean drama is the brutal inhumanity of the passion of revenge documented with such actuality.¹⁹³

Charlemont in *The Atheist's Tragedy* stays an unblemished hero because he is not actively involved in committing revenge; thus he does not become a vigorous, strong revenger, and stays rather colourless to the audience (and the critics), while Hoffman's antagonist plays a lesser role and Hoffman's eagerness to take revenge from the beginning makes him not only more of a villain but he seems a more lively character, which Jenkins explains by Chettle's love "of action and crowded incident".¹⁹⁴

On first meeting Beatrice, Alsemero in *The Changeling* is influenced by a

190 See Philip J. Ayres: "Marston's Antonio's Revenge: The Morality of the Revenging Hero", in: *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900*, Vol. 12/2 (1972), p. 359–374, p. 367.

191 See Katharine Eisaman Maus: *Inwardness and Theater in the English Renaissance* (Chicago/London: The University of Chicago Press, 1995), p. 35. Compare Robert S. Miola: *Shakespeare and Classical Tragedy. The Influence of Seneca* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 72f.

192 Otto Michael: *Der Stil in Thomas Kyds Originaldramen* (Berlin: Mayer & Müller, 1905), p. 27.

193 Harold Jenkins: *The Life and Work of Henry Chettle*, p. 165.

194 *Ibid.*, p. 77.

“hidden malady” (I.i.24), a new passion that turns out to be the love for Beatrice; from the beginning, it is indicated to be a sickness, i.e. something that disrupts the organism not only of his body but of the cosmos of the play. Beatrice, though betrothed to Alonzo, too, falls in love with Alsemero: “saint, I fear me: I find/ A giddy turning in me.” (l. 153–154). To delay her planned marriage, Beatrice is pretending to cherish and honour her intact hymen, i.e. her virginity, too much to “part with it so rude and suddenly” (l. 193). Obviously, she is only faking to delay the marriage vows with Alonzo de Piracquo for Alsemero’s sake and it seems dangerously ominous to toy with the Christian virtue chastity.

By Beatrice’s dropping of a glove, an allusion to her sexuality is made. And it is neither Alsemero, nor Alonzo, who picks it up, but the servant Deflores who puts his “fingers/ Into her sockets” (I.i.231–232) – thereby foreshadowing their sexual intercourse. Later in the play, a similar metaphor is used when Deflores cuts off dead Alonzo’s finger in III.ii, thereby also implying that his sexual potential will never be fulfilled.¹⁹⁵

Alsemero demands honesty from his fiancée Beatrice professing an inkling of untruth; he has strong “doubts” of her virtue (V.iii.23), foreshadowed by an early feeling of sickness:

’Twere but hypocrisy of a sadder colour,
But the same stuff; neither your smiles nor tears
Shall move or flatter me from my belief:
You are a whore. (V.iii.28–31)

Beatrice in turn, not chaste but hot and fiery – as her face seems to denote – warns him not to destroy his trust, although Alsemero knows of her adultery with Deflores: “Worse: [he is] your lust’s devil,/ Your adultery” (l. 53–54). She justifies herself by speaking of the consequences of his attractiveness, a acted out of love: “your love has made me/ A cruel murderess” (l. 64–65), though it is clear that she is confusing love with desire. Suspecting her of betrayal, Alsemero gives her of the elixir to test her virginity whose signs she feigns according to the book, so that he is satisfied and convinced that she is still a virgin: “thou hast given me such joy of heart/ That never can be blasted” (IV.ii.145–146). However it seems rather grotesque that he embraces her upon these false conditions: “My Joanna,/ Chaste as the breath of heaven or morning’s womb” (l. 148–149). In contrast, Alsemero is truly chaste, a fact that is underlined by his dislike for a “cherry” (l. 127), a fruit that connotes sexual desire.

In the darkness of her room, the Duchess of Malfi is confined and surrounded by madmen, but accepts their entertainment, “chain’d to endure all your tyr-

195 While cutting off the finger, Deflores utters that he will “clear/ The passages” (III.ii.25–26). As above, see Michael Neill: *Issues of Death. Morality and Identity in English Renaissance Tragedy*, p. 172–174.

anny" (IV.ii.61), which starts in a song and continues in a play which the first madman, a mad astrologer begins very fittingly: "Doom's-day not come yet!" (l. 74). For the Duchess, too, death is near. After this mask play Bosola enters disguised as an old man, pretending to be a gravedigger: "I am come to make thy tomb" (l. 115); he calls her "a box of worm-seed" (l. 123) and pities her protestation "I am Duchess of Malfi still" (l. 139) in an allegory: "Glories, like glow-worms, afar off shine bright,/ But, look'd to near, have neither heat nor light." (l. 141–142). He is indeed sent by the Duchess' brothers to disconcert her, calling himself "a tomb-maker" (IV.ii.145), i.e. her murderer. Anderson argues that Bosola at this point indicates the future ordeal of the Duchess – death is close to life and close to the body:

Webster satirizes the replacement of religious narratives with the secular depictions of the deceased on the tombs, with the focus of the image on the corpse. The tombmaker's attention shifts from a focus on the process of dying properly to a concentration on the finality of death.¹⁹⁶

The image of death evokes the Duchess' future, and her desire to enquire about Bosola's dismal business of joining in the plot to dig her grave "is an impossible demand, because the effects of his art have an afterlife that will survive her"¹⁹⁷, as Anderson analyses. He argues about the effects of her reformation, but his quote as well matches the effect of impending doom in the tragedy. He is convinced of the presence of the dead and re-involutions of ideas about death and the deceased.¹⁹⁸ Bosola accompanies this as a bellman:

Hark, now everything is still,
The screech-owl and the whistler shrill
Call upon our dame aloud,
And bid her quickly don her shroud!
[...]
Their life a general mist of error,
Their death a hideous storm of terror. (IV.ii.168–179)

The song is set at night-time whose silence predicts not peace, but deeds of darkness – the screech-owl, as in *The White Devil*, and the whistler make strange noises: the storm indicates the ongoing war which is invoked in shrill pictures – the storm is a sign of death, heralded by sin and terror. The Duchess is instructed

196 Thomas P. Anderson, *Performing Early Modern Trauma from Shakespeare to Milton* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), p. 131. Compare Uwe Baumann: "Das Leben als Tanz in den Tod in der Rachetragödie der englischen Renaissance", in: F. H. Link (ed.), *Tanz und Tod in Kunst und Literatur, Schriften zur Literaturwissenschaft* 8 (Berlin: Perfect Paperback, 1993), p. 139–160.

197 Anderson, p. 132.

198 Ibid, p. 133.

to prepare for execution, which she does admirably: “Tell my brothers/ That I perceive death, now I am well awake,/ Best gift is they can give or I can take.” (DM, IV.ii.213–215). Before being strangled to death, she in turn, instructs her executioners to properly execute their office – “Pull, and pull strongly, for your able strength/ Must pull down heaven upon me” (l. 220–221) – and in a dignified fashion welcomes death: “Come, violent death,/ Serve for mandragora to make me sleep” (l. 224–225). The tragedy in the state, which was foreshadowed by Antonio at the beginning of the play, is now taking shape: “But if’t chance/ Some curs’d example poison ’t near the head,/ Death and diseases through the whole land spread” (I.i.13–15). This statement auguring ill fortune seems to underline Bosola’s entrance, whom Antonio describes as “The only court-gall [...] Would be as lecherous, covetous, or proud,/ Bloody, or envious, as any man,/ If he had means to be so” (l. 23–28).

Such a stately confusion is found in *Antonio’s Revenge*. A sign that deadly revenge is supported by supernatural powers: “*the grave openeth*” (IV.ii.87) at the united cry of vengeance of Antonio, Alberto and Pandulpho against Piero.¹⁹⁹ Only now, they bury his son Feliche, when Pandulpho is willing to take up his weapon and fight for his honour. A hoarse song out of tune would correspond to the horror of the events:

PANDULPHO.

Why, coz, why should it not be hoarse and crack’d,
When all the strings of nature’s symphony
Are crack’d and jar? Why should his voice keep tune,
When there’s no music in the breast of man?
[...]

ANTONIO.

The gloomy wing of night begins to stretch
His lazy pinion over all the air;
We must be stiff and steady in resolve.

Let’s thus our hands, our hearts, our arms involve. (IV.ii.91–94, 107–110)

Antonio depicts the cheerless mood of mourning. When the curtain to Mellida’s bed is opening, and Antonio is deep in reflection upon her beauty – “See, look, the curtain stirs; shine, nature’s pride” (AR, I.ii.192) – the scene that is revealed is all the more shocking, since a wonderful sight is expected. What appears though is “*the body of Feliche, stabb’d thick with wounds [...] hung*” (l. 199) as a

¹⁹⁹ Finally settled on revenge, they are also proud of the decision and action they have taken. According to the Senecan maxim, they are approaching the “Senecan tragic climax”, brutal revenge and thus fulfilling their *tellus* or destination, in: Introduction to Seneca: *Four Tragedies and Octavia*. Penguin Classics, ed. E. F. Watling (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1966), p. 25. Compare also Gordon Braden: *Renaissance Tragedy and the Senecan Tradition. Anger’s Privilege* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985).

“gory ensign up,/ In flat defiance of humanity” (l. 195–196). As a message of death, the dead body greets them from a realm of death – murdered in Mellida’s bed seems a clear sign that he had access to it – therefore she must have conversed with him in her bed and must be promiscuous. This is exactly the appearance that Piero wants to create and he underlines this in his comment on the situation: “He lies as loud as thunder; she’s unchaste,/ Tainted, impure, black as the soul of hell” (l. 202–203). Later he tries to give proof for the accusation of the murder of Feliche. Instead of believing in the scene’s obvious explanation, Antonio becomes instantly angry about such an insult towards Mellida. Hearing additionally of his father’s death, Antonio is asking for a divine response to his sorrow: “Cracks not the joints of earth to bear my woes?” (l. 268). Something more than past dreams should now echo these heavy losses.

Pandulpho, on the other hand, is refusing to be intimidated by “fortune’s loudest thunder” (l. 330). Having lost his son Feliche, he stoically states: “Jove is without, but this ‘bove sense of woes; [...] let my breath exact/ You strike sad tones in dismal act” (I.ii.336, 339–340). It seems fit to create a sullen funeral but Pandulpho only seems to serve “as chorus to this tragedy” (l. 299), he watches from the outside, and is not aroused by the action, but judges that the gods have sadly left the scene of murder. He is amazed, though, when Piero wants to deny Feliche a grave, the dead corpse of his (falsely accused and) murdered son seems to comment on this denial with strange noises:

Peace, peace!

Methinks I hear a humming murmur creep
From out his gellied wounds.
[...] look, look, they seem to stir
And breathe defiance to black obloquy. (II.i.72–74, 78–79)

showers of darts may dark

Heaven’s ample brow, but not strike out a spark, (l. 84–85)

The sound of a “humming murmur” exhaling from the corpse, which might naturally be explained by gases entrapped in the organs, are here interpreted as signs of a strong will.²⁰⁰ Feliche is giving some grunts from the shadows of death about the “foaming malice” (l. 84) that has happened. The scene at the graveyard, comparable to the dark and gloomy setting of murder in *The Atheist’s Tragedy*, is not only the site of the dead, but generally presents itself as the site of the corpse. There is the centre of the physical, like sex, plotting of murder, or necrophilia. Lyons analyses this, as follows: “[t]raditionally gloomy and horrifying back-

200 The sound strengthens the idea of past misdeeds. It underlines the atmosphere of death and the need for vengeance. For a study on death and its perception through the ages, compare Philippe Ariès: *Geschichte des Todes* (München und Wien: Hanser, 1980).

grounds like graveyards or charnel houses could of course also be expanded into settings for whole scenes, as in *Antonio's Revenge* (III, I, ii) [sic] or Tourneur's *The Atheist's Tragedy* (IV, iii).²⁰¹

In *The Maid's Tragedy*, physical death is haunting the domestic atmosphere. An outward appearance of happiness is exactly what Amintor portrays the morning after he has found out about his wife's deceit. However, it seems he cannot quite control his emotions and makes some unusual comments that Melantius detects as signs that something must be wrong, also made obvious to the audience by his aside: "O how near am I/ To utter my sick thoughts!" (III.i.67–68). Publicly, Amintor tries to pretend as much happiness as possible, but especially once the king enters the questioning of bridal pleasures during the night, Amintor's comments can be understood both ways, as directly pleasant and content, indirectly pointed and accusatory: "So well I like her [Evadne]./ For this I bow my knee in thanks to you [king],/ And unto Heaven will pay my grateful tribute" (l. 155–157). This is indeed nothing but bitter dryness and an explosion waiting underneath the surface, if the king desires a private meeting with Evadne: "A'will not tell me that he lies with her?/ If he do, something heavenly stay my heart,/ For I shall be apt to thrust this arm of mine/ To acts unlawful!" (l. 168–171). The deserted, former bride, Aspatia, in contrast wants to die at her beloved Amintor's hand.

Evadne later enters the scene; she has understood her mistakes and has killed the king, who had dominated her thoughts until then. Her hands are still bloody of the king's murder – having revenged her honour. Amintor detects the blood as an omen of death and seems quite doubtful about her explanation: "There is presage of some important thing/ About thee, which it seems thy tongue hath lost:/ Thy hands are bloody, and thou hast a knife." (V.iv.124–126) He receives the news that Evadne has killed the king full of horror and calls her life doomed from now on: "Why, thou hast rais'd up mischief to this height, [...] But all thy life is a continual ill;/ Black is thy colour now, disease thy nature" (l. 131–135).²⁰² Murdering the king, she has killed the one person that is supposedly untouchable by humans. Far from respecting or understanding her, he instead turns to the true emotions he feels in this scene. Those are directed towards the boy, whom he still thinks of as Aspatia's brother and not her: "Here lies a youth whose wounds bleed in my brest" (l. 145). He denies any compassion with Evadne – who has

201 Bridget Gellert Lyons: *Voices of Melancholy. Studies in Literary Treatments of Melancholy in Renaissance England* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971), p. 47.

202 Compare also Uwe Baumann: " Erotische Macht und tragische Ohnmacht der Frauen im Drama der englischen Renaissance, oder: Gibt es tragische Heldinnen im Drama Shakespeares und seiner Zeitgenossen? ", in: N. Lennartz (ed.): *The Senses' Festival. Inszenierungen der Sinne und der Sinnlichkeit in der Literatur und Kunst des Barock* (Trier: wvt, 2005), p. 37–56, esp. p. 50–52.

taken revenge not only for herself but for his honour, too – and calls her a “monster of cruelty” (l. 158). First she is labelled as a terrible beast for betraying him, then she tries to reverse her past behaviour. This sharp rejection by Amintor is not the kind of reception Evadne expected, and she tells Amintor that “eyes are sharper than thou canst make thy sword” (l. 159–160). As Amintor is disgusted by her kneeling appeal, she passionately, but at the same time cool-headedly resolves to kill herself: her reason now dominates her past emotional moral transgressions.

Evadne’s death causes some attention and pity from Amintor, but his greater sorrow is directed towards the dying Aspatia, who is disguised as her brother, and Amintor feeling a strong attachment to her/him. Interestingly he does use the female personal pronoun already – maybe due to sensing the reality of her presence:

This earth of mine doth tremble, and I feel
 A stark affrighted motion in my blood;
 My soul grows weary of her house, and I
 All over am a trouble to my self;
 [...]

 Yet still betwixt the reason and the act,
 The wrong I to *Aspatia* did stands up,
 I have not such a fault to answer,
 Though she may justly arm with scorn
 And hate of me, my soul will part less troubled,
 When I have paid to her in tears my sorrow:
 I will not leave this act unsatisfied,
 If all that’s left in me can answer it. (V.iv.177–196)

The single task that Amintor sees left to him is the apology he owes to Aspatia – hating himself for having hurt and deserted her, when she reveals herself to him, diminishing the strength of the wounds she conceived from him and asking for his blessing: “Those threats I brought with me, sought not revenge,/ But came to fetch this blessing from thy hand,/ I am *Aspatia* yet” (l. 207–209). Recognising the depth of her wounds and sensing impending death, she inquires whether Amintor could love her, were she to live: “I would fain live,/ Now if I could: would’st thou have loved me then?” but it is too late for any future. She dies, and, to be with her, Amintor commits suicide, never doubting the righteousness of the action: “No comfort comes, [...] The soul is fled for ever, and I wrong/ My self, so long to lose her company./ Must I talk now? Here’s to be with thee love. *Kills himself*” (l. 240–244). Justice can only be reached through the denial and killing of emotions. Beaumont and Fletcher present the true suffering that is

caused by a plot centering on betrayal, bloodshed, and retaliation. The victims suffer and die, and thus present the epitome of death in revenge tragedy.²⁰³

Omens appear in situations that are determined by tragical fate. *The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois* ominously begins by calling the fate of the country into question: "To what will this declining kingdome turne,/ Swindging in every license, as in this/ Stupide permission of brave D'Ambois Murther?/ Murther made parallel with Law!" (I.i.1–4) These are circumstances that establish a revenge tragedy. Consequently, circumstances like these present an ideal situation to interpret prodigious omens. In *The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois*, Marquis Renel joins in this evocation of an insecure picture of the present political situation: "We celebrate with all the cities bells/ Jangling together in untun'd confusion" (l. 11–12). This seeming disorder in the chime of the bells might reflect an image of the spherical music in like confusion and thus reflect the "declining kingdome's" state and this "inordinate swindge of downe-right power" (l. 15).

It is indeed on omen of bad times when "Justice, and truth that tell the bounded use,/ Vertuous and well distinguisht formes of time,/ Are gag'd and tongue-tide." (l. 16–18) They argue that there have been harmony and glorious wars before when "Vertue subdu'd all" (l. 53), but sin was introduced "when pride enter'd them, and rule by power" (l. 23). These caused a morbid ambition for influence, feeding "selfe-love, fraud, and vice" (l. 26), which creates a lazy attitude, where "Idlenesse rusts us, since no vertuous labour/ Ends ought rewarded" (l. 33–34) and "now none are wise/ That thinke not heavens true foolish" (l. 69–70). They glorify the past and see the present as a time of decay.

The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois is a very political play, full of diplomatic reasoning, and intricate failings of the political order. Guise, right at the beginning, sees through Monsieur's provocation and understands it as a sign of coming upheaval: "No more! Ill fortune!" (I.i.290). The Countess of Cambray is also on Clermont's side to take revenge as Baligny explains: "his lady, by his suite/ (Wooing as freshly as when first love shot/ His faultlesse arrowes from her rosie eyes)/ Now lives with him againe, and shee, I know,/ Will joyne with all helps in her friends revenge" (l. 101–105). She is a strong woman and will in the end join the revenging party, crying her eyes out for her beloved husband Clermont (V.i.144–148, see above).

As the state is compared to a body,²⁰⁴ the decay and trouble in the realm and its

203 The death of the innocent represents collateral damage in a plot centering on retaliation with a vengeance.

204 See especially *Coriolanus* I.i.: Menenius on the fable of the stomach and the limbs as an image of the political society. Compare Andrew Gurr: "'Coriolanus' and the Body Politic", in: *Shakespeare Survey 28: Shakespeare and the Ideas of his Time*, ed. Kenneth Muir (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), p. 63–70.

reign mirror the failings of its people. Monsieur's speech proves his inner weakness and lack of virtues "Without which greatnesse is a shade, a bubble." (RB, II.i.297). To his friend Guise, Clermont calls Monsieur a "proud tumour" (l. 306), fitting to the game of "puppetry" (l. 324) as this world proves a stage (l. 331). Clermont himself is willing to revenge his brother, spurred on by Guise, and sends a challenge to Montsureau, "the murtherous Earle" (l. 381), hoping for success. Accusations fly from all directions, reflecting the chaos in the microcosm of *The Revenge of Bussy*.

Individual fights underline this struggle. Baligny brings Montsurry a challenge from Clermont, but even the sight of the bearer, brother-in-law to Bussy, makes Montsurry shiver and fear: "Death! who have wee here?/ Ho! Guard! Villaines! [...] Negligent trayters! Murther, murther, murther!" (l. 120–122) As before, Montsurry's temper is a characteristic that makes him act too fast, feels attacked by Baligny who only insists on the challenge from Clermont, and starts a combat: "Murther, murther! [...] *They all fight and Bal[igny] drives in Mont[surry]*" (l. 136–137) Montsurry is only wounded. This could also be seen as a sign that Baligny will never prove the destined revenger of Bussy since he willingly presents the challenge but does not fight properly at this moment, for his wound does not kill Montsurry, whom he wants to spare for another revenge.

The body of the king is also affected first in the fight, but ultimately its corruption comes from the decay caused by flattery:²⁰⁵ At court, Baligny diplomatically flatters the King and assures him of his full service due to his "respect [of] universal rule" (II.i.36), thereby denying his family duties:

I will be honest, and betray for you
 Brother and father; for I know (my lord)
 Treacherie for Kings is truest loyaltie,
 Nor is to beare the name of treacherie,
 But grave, deepe policie. (RB, II.i.30–34)

Baligny explains his loyalty with regard to the macrocosmic order of the universe, where the "supreame Rectors generall decrees" (II.i.38), the king's decisions, respond in the chain of being to God, "the King of Kings" (l. 46). By this speech, he supports the argument that the king – in this case Henry – may rule as arbitrarily as he pleases, and Baligny would still follow and obey him.²⁰⁶ This

205 In discourses regarding especially the history of mentality, it has often been discussed that the court of James I was known for the king's preference of his favourites. Compare Graham Parry: *The Golden Age Restor'd. The Culture of the Stuart Court, 1603–42* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1981). The influence of flattery could determine the rise and fall of noblemen, a fact that is taken up in many Renaissance plays.

206 Compare Machiavellian strategies of rule and mirrors for kings, for example, as examined in Claus Uhlig: *Hofkritik im England des Mittelalters und der Renaissance. Studien zu einem Gemeinplatz der europäischen Moralistik* (Berlin/ New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1973).

appears as a foreboding of the plot, while Clermont and Charlotte both still trust their family member Baligny. Even Guise, Clermont's friend unfortunately trusts him and ominously advises him: "Continue your designements with the King" (l. 127).

Since the party against Clermont is not successful in provoking or persuading him to follow their arguments, the King resolves to an intrigue against him. Observations of the army at Cambray shall be used to lure Clermont into the company of the King's captains who can arrest him. The Captains themselves, following the King's orders are aware of their sinful deed though and especially Aumall seems to truly be on Clermont's side – he acts as a messenger for him – and predicts: "Tis strange a man that had, through his life past,/ So sure a foote in vertue and true knowledge/ As Clermont D'Ambois, should be now found tripping,/ And taken up thus, so to make his fall/ More steepe and head-long" (III.i.24–28). Reflecting the reason for Clermont's planned arrest, Aumale resumes that Clermont will have to pay for Bussy's adultery: "There was a merit for this, in the fault/ That Bussy made, for which he (doing penance)/ Proves that these foule adulterous guilts will runne/ Through the whole blood, which not the cleare can shunne" (III.i.42–45). It is an omen of the state's decay that "all/ This martiall preparation" is only pretended and staged to prevent Clermont from wrong decisions: "his blamelesse spirit deserves/ (I dare engage my life) of all this, nothing" (80–81). Instead, so the Captain's argument, it is rather Renel who is playing against virtue and honesty:

No question; for since hee is come to Cambray,
The malecontent, decaid Marquesse Renel,
Is come, and new arriv'd; and made partaker
Of all the entertaining showes and feasts
That welcom'd Clermont to the brave virago,
His manly sister. Such wee are esteem'd
As are our consorts. Marquesse malecontent
Comes where hee knowes his vaine hath safest vent. (III.i.94–101)

It appears that Renel is exactly like all those French nobles that Clermont described and, according to Clermont's renewed comment, he is now interested in news from the court – which will also backfire against himself: "Since commonly such braines are most delighted/ With innovations, gossips tales, and mischiefes" (III.ii.15–16). The news that Clermont receives prove indeed ominous and "[m]onstrous" (l. 71): "Strange ones, and fit for a novation;/ Waightie, unheard of, mischievous enough" (l. 68–69). They tell him of his brother-in-law's betrayal by an anonymous letter and advise him to fly on his dependable horse. The whole state seems to be corrupted and none can be trusted. Henger

stresses the ever-present correspondence in the macrocosm that is continuously reflecting the earth's chaos with "the purest meteorological theory".²⁰⁷

To find out the truth about the letter, Clermont receives a visit from one of the executing Lieutenants, who has the King's command to arrest Clermont on the occasion of an inspection of the soldiers. To find out the truth, Clermont indicates: "Some sparkes will flye from his dissembling eyes" (III.ii.183). They seem to fly indeed when Clermont is taken and the liar's "count'nance chang'd in turning." (l. 196) – a sign of the discovered truth. Nevertheless, Clermont, possibly out of love and trust in his brother-in-law, willingly neglects this obvious avowal. Ide also notices: "Nevertheless, armed with such a blind faith in heaven, Clermont will defy augury."²⁰⁸ He makes the Captain take an oath on his denial: "Stand, or I vow to heaven, Ile make you lie,/ Never to rise more" (l. 215–216). The Captain swears, as Baligny at the beginning of the play, and explains to the King "I will be honest, and betray for you" (II.i.30), vouchsafing to Clermont the truth of his answer, while lying on the King's command: "[I have] Nothing [like a letter] you seeke, I swear" (III.ii.224) and even swearing to God on this lie: "My faith to God; all's one:/ Who hath no faith to men, to God hath none" (l. 241–242), which might prove fatal for his life, but not in this decayed state of flattery and general lies. Later in IV.i., the same Captain admits his lie and receives a curse from Clermont for this: "Thy owne tongue damne thy infidelitie!" (IV.i.79). However, at that moment, his oath causes belief. The messenger, who saw the Captain's blushing cheeks, is nevertheless convinced that there is worse to come when signs are not observed:

How vaine are mens fore knowledges of things,
 When heaven strikes blinde their powers of note and use,
 And makes their way to ruine seeme more right
 Then that which safetie opens to their sight.
 Cassandra's prophecie had no more profit
 With Troyes blinde citizens, when shee foretolde
 Troyes ruine; which, succeeding, made her use
 This sacred inclamation: "God" (said shee)
 "Would have me utter things uncredited;
 For which now they approve what I presag'd;
 They count me wise, that said before, I rag'd. (III.ii.246–256)

Like the Trojans that did not follow Cassandra's warning, Clermont does approach the captains even though he was warned of their treachery through a

207 S. K. Jr. Heninger: *A Handbook of Renaissance Meteorology with Particular Reference to Elizabethan and Jacobean Literature* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1960), p. 183.

208 Richard S. Ide: "Exploiting the Tradition: The Elizabethan Revenger as Chapman's 'Complete Man'", in: *Medieval & Renaissance Drama in England*, ed. J. Leeds Barroll III (New York: AMS Press, 1984), p. 159–172, p. 164.

letter. He is not fully convinced of their trustworthiness at first though. Doubtful of this foreshadowing, Clermont questions his feelings and inklings. “I had an aversation to this voyage,/ When first my brother mov’d it, and have found/ That native power in me was never vaine;/ Yet now neglected it” (RB, III.iv.8–11). He is annoyed by his insecurity: “I wonder much/ At my inconstancie in these decrees” (l. 11–12). He is trying to control himself not to be “[w]rathfull, revengefull, and insatiate” (l. 15), but does not quite succeed. He asks for guidance for his life and is inflicted by his fear of wrong decisions of “judgement, resolution, uprightnesse” (l. 21).

Renel tries to dissolve these doubts, thereby seems to be one of the King’s men: “take heede you prove not/ Dismaid with this strange fortune” (l. 26–27) and that he will “never know, unlesse in death thou trie,/ That thou know’st how to beare adversitie” (l. 30–31). Clermont is still aware of the risk of giving himself to his adversaries but he is more afraid of Baligny’s break of familial loyalty: “My sister truely said, there hung a taile/ Of circumstance so blacke on that supposure,/ That to sustaine it thus abhorr’d our mettall.” (RB, III.iv.38–40) If there is a conspiracy, then Baligny is part of it. Convincing himself, Clermont accepts his own cursed fate:

Hee that strives t’invert
The Universals course with his poore way,
Not onely dust-like shivers with the sway,
But crossing God in his great worke, all earth
Beares not so cursed and so damn’d a birth. (III.iv.71–75)

However, instead of accepting this damned birth, Clermont ignores a guided life. Thus he decides to face the troops. Renel comments on this like a friend: “As good consort with you/ As with an angell; I could heare you ever” (III.iv.142–143). Leaving the safety of Cambray, Clermont closes:

Chance what can chance mee, well or ill is equall
In my acceptance, since I joy in neyther,
But goe with sway of all the world together.
In all successes Fortune and the day
To mee alike are; I am fixt, be shee
Never so fickle; and will there repose,
Farre past the reach of any dye she throws. (III.iv.159–165)

Clermont stoically accepts his fate in life.²⁰⁹ And as predicted in the anonymous letter, the Captains do try to catch Clermont. First, it seems his horse can escape them, and Clermont is apparently helped by divine powers, as Aumale observes

209 On the influence and reception of stoicism in Renaissance drama, see Raimund Borgmeier: “Die englische Literatur”, in: *Der Einfluss Senecas auf das europäische Drama*, ed. Eckard Lefevre (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1978), p. 276–323.

in a detailed reporting of offstage events, but then the captains take him into custody:

What spirit breathes thus in this more then man,
 Turnes flesh to ayre possesset, and in a storme
 Teares men about the field like autumnne leaves?
 He turnd wilde lightning in the lackies hands,
 Who, though their sodaine violent twitch unhorst him, 15
 Yet when he bore himselfe, their saucie fingers
 Flew as too hot off, as hee had beene fire.
 The ambush then made in, through all whose force
 Hee drave as if a fierce and fire-given canon
 Had spit his iron vomit out amongst them. 20
 The battailes then in two halfe-moones enclos'd him,
 In which he shew'd as if he were the light,
 And they but earth, who, wondring what hee was,
 Shruncke their steele hornes and gave him glorious passe.
 And as a great shot from a towne besieg'd 25
 At foes before it flies forth blacke and roring,
 But they too farre, and that with waight opprest
 (As if disdainng earth) doth onely grasse,
 Strike earth, and up againe into the ayre,
 Againe sinkes to it, and againe doth rise, 30
 And keepes such strength that when it softliest moves
 It piece-meale shivers any let it proves –
 So flew brave Clermont forth, till breath forsooke him,
 Then fell to earth; and yet (sweet man) even then
 His spirits convulsions made him bound againe 35
 Past all their reaches; till, all motion spent,
 His fixt eyes cast a blaze of such disdaine,
 All stood and star'd, and untouch'd let him lie,
 As something sacred fallen out of the skie. *A cry within.*²¹⁰
 O now some rude hand hath laid hold on him! 40 (IV.i.11–40)

Very elaborately, Aumale is describing the action offstage, especially to underline the bravery of Clermont: he glorifies Clermont's strength and skill, and underlines his struggle with metaphors of elemental grandeur. Thereby he supports Clermont's cause as that of a justified but nevertheless complicated person. Clermont is the hero of the play who has to struggle against circumstances. At the end of the scene though, Clermont is taken into custody, which is lamented by Aumall: "I grieve that vertue lives so undistinguisht/ From vice in any ill, [...] shame and paine" (IV.i.86–89). Aumall also declares himself willing to be the messenger of these sad tidings to Clermont's wife, the Countess of

210 My italics; this needs to be indicated as a stage direction, marking Clermont's arrest.

Cambray. In his arrest, Clermont is very understanding of the course of nature and pronounces himself joined “with th’Universe” (IV.i.139) and “appertaines to one celestiaall borne” (l. 157), thus considering himself blessed by the stars.

As can be seen above, *The Revenge of Bussy D’Ambois* is full of physical omens concerning the safety of the body of the protagonists and the state. It was therefore necessary to guide the interpretation along the plot to structure it.

In *The Tragedy of Hoffman*, Hoffman’s body imagery heavily relies on Hoffman’s pretense of being Prince Otho – he interferes with German hereditary laws and disturbs the order of stately institutions. Hoffman in disguise is named as Ferdinand’s successor, even though his natural son is present: “wee’l disinheret our fond sonne [...] by our sonne elect” (l. 376–377). Even though the spectator has understood that this son is rather a fool than a thinker, it is still wrong to decide against the natural order of hereditary inheritance²¹¹ – obviously even more so, since the audience knows that the new heir is the disguised revenger. The scene ends ominously with Ferdinand having a strange inkling of feeling “fearefull” (l. 385). This is an uncanny feeling, foreboding danger. Meanwhile Hoffman is very content: “So run on fate, my destinies are good,/ Reuenge hath made me great by shedding blood” (II.iii.643–644). His plans run smoothly, and there will be even more spilled blood of innocent victims.

Blood has already been spilled in the war between Spain and Portugal in *The Spanish Tragedy*. The Spanish having won, Hieronimo, knight-marshal to the king, enjoys the praise of his son and wishes for continuous loyalty to his monarch: “Long may he [his son Horatio] live to serve my sovereign liege,/ And soon decay unless he serve my liege!” (I.ii.98–99). In retrospect, this humble wish proves lethal, because the royal family neglects Horatio’s rights and he is killed.

Contrasted to this glorification is the Portuguese court, where their viceroy of Portugal is tumbling and “*Falls to the ground*” (I.iii.9). He demands: “Here let me lie! Now am I at the lowest!” (l. 14). He is sad and deeply aware what impact the defeat has on him and his country: “Those bloody wars have spent my treasure,/ And with my treasure my people’s blood” (l. 35–36). The viceroy wrongly believes his son is dead and mentions a rule valid for most avengers: “They reck no laws that meditate revenge” (I.iii.48). This can be considered as a general revenger’s principle but some keep Christian faith and their own safety in mind. The viceroy is too occupied with mournful thoughts about his son Balthazar, while other revengers are fully occupied with the task of vengeance and discard legal justice.

In such matters of revenge, action is needed and will be taken because words

211 Ernst H. Kantorowicz: *The King’s Two Bodies. A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology* (Princeton: University Press, 1957, rev. 1997), p. 314f.

are insufficient in return for injustice: “Language proves inadequate as consolation and, more important for Hieronimo, whereas the visible, corporeal presence of blood – a residue of action and a relic from past deeds in the play – suggests an exchange between the living and the dead imagined outside of the figurative or metaphoric” as Anderson argues.²¹² Potential action is looming, because Hieronimo’s “justice by entreats/ Or [...] revenging threats” (III.vii.73–74) do not suffice.

“Seest thou those wounds that yet are bleeding fresh?”²¹³

Blood is the visible evidence of the necessity to pay back one’s harm, as in *The Spanish Tragedy*. The bloody handkerchief, which belonged to Horatio and is very likely Don Andrea’s, reminds Hieronimo of the necessary deed: “See’st thou this handkercher besmear’d with blood?/ It shall not from me till I take revenge./ Seest thou those wounds that yet are bleeding fresh?/ I’ll not entomb them till I have reueng’d” (II.v.49–54 [sic]). The handkerchief stays a token of past love and retaliation all through the play, – a symbol and structural instrument²¹⁴ – full of pain he laments: “No sir, it was my murder’d son,/ O my son, my son, O my son Horatio!/ [...] *He draweth out a bloudie napkin*” (III.xiii.80–81, 85). The bloody napkin, next to Horatio’s corpse, symbolises the everconstant presence of committed murder and thus the duty of revenge. Horatio’s blood will urge Hieronimo to achieve satisfaction.

O, no, not this: Horatio, this was thine.
 And when I dy’d it in thy dearest blood,
 This was a token ‘twixt thy soul and me
 That of thy death revenged I should be. (III.xiii.86–89)

The body of Horatio is presented as a horrible spectacle to Hieronimo and like a constant foreboding curse, it stays “a constant reminder to his father of inner trauma, as well as a powerful symbol of murder and injustice. In *The Spanish Tragedy* physical objects are powerful mementoes and, like places, trigger memory of what has been lost.”²¹⁵ Red, the colour of blood, is also the ink in Bel-Imperia’s letter (III.ii), informing Hieronimo whom to blame for his son’s death.

The visual effect of blood is the most haunting to the revenger. However, Alonzo’s brother Tomazo in *The Changeling* signifies the past bloodshed that Deflores has committed against his brother. Thus, when Deflores sees Tomazo,

212 Thomas P. Anderson: *Performing Early Modern Trauma from Shakespeare to Milton*, p. 146. 213 ST, II.v.52.

214 Compare Evelyn Hentschel: “Die dramatische Funktion der Requisiten bei Shakespeare”, in: *Texte und Untersuchungen zur englischen Philologie* 10 (1981), p. 244–259, p. 244f.

215 Janet Clare: *Revenge Tragedies of the Renaissance* (Tavistock: Northcote, 2006), p. 32.

he has a bad inkling, because he feels reminded of the murdered Alonzo: “[*Aside*] I’d fain get off; this man’s not for my company:/ I smell his brother’s blood when I come near him” (IV.ii.40–41). It seems as if an ominous suspicion of death is coming upon him, even though Tomazo does not yet suspect him, on the contrary: he fatally calls him honest and trusts Deflores: “That Deflores has a wondrous honest heart./ He’ll bring it out in time, I’m assur’d on’t” (IV.ii.57–58). Misjudging circumstances, settings, or another person – especially the villain – retards retaliation.²¹⁶

Revenge seems possible in *Antonio’s Revenge*, when the villain Piero admits his weakness to the audience: his love for Maria, and even his speech he seems affected in his consistency when thinking about her: “She’s gone, and yet she’s here [...] I’ll marry her./ She’s most fair—true! most chaste—most false!/ Because most fair, ’tis firm I’ll marry her” (l. 171–175). At the beginning of the third act he seems to have achieved his goal of marrying Maria during the dumb show that introduces the further action.²¹⁷ In this dumb show “*she seemeth to reject his suit, flies to the tomb, kneels and kisseth it [...] Piero stayeth her, tears open his breast, embraceth and kisseth her*” (III.i.0.5–0.8). Having won her by offering his breast again seems to underline the weakness that he shows when approaching Maria.

Flamineo in *The White Devil* is desperate towards the end of the play. Having killed his brother and being in charge of Isabella’s and Camillo’s death²¹⁸, Flamineo needs to see reason in his actions and therefore wants money from Vittoria. Not receiving any, he blames her: “Thou hast a devil in thee; I will try/ If I can scare him from thee” (V.vi.17–18). He resolves to a different plan: His idea of a joint suicide is one great show he stages for Vittoria. Explaining that Brachiano did not want his servant and his wife to live without him, he forces Vittoria to do the following: “say your prayers: [...]/ Neither yourself nor I should outlive him” (l. 31–33) and pretends to be more than ready for death

216 See e.g. Clermont in RB, or Charlemont in AT. Clermont misjudges the ominous letter he receives warning him of danger and – not following its advise – is taken into custody for a short while. Clermont misjudges the trustworthiness of his villainous uncle, only afterwards understanding his plottings.

217 On the general function of dumb shows, see especially Dieter Mehl: *The Elizabethan Dumb Show. The History of a Dramatic Convention* (London/ New York: Methuen, 1965).

218 The Doctor, who performs the murders, is described as a ruthless, abominable (l. 306) character – “he will poison a kiss” (l. 298–299) – “cursed antipathy to nature! Look, his eye’s bloodshot,” (l. 304) who is willing to take on the order of killing the two harmless spouses. Danger is also indicated by Francisco, who compares the cause for the necessity of the murders, Vittoria (here still to flatter Camillo) to the sungod Phoebus, but underlining the fact that she has no offspring to burn this earth, actually comparing this light from the sun to the loose morals of Vittoria. See II.i.331–352, ending: “Her issue, should not providence prevent it,/Would make both nature, time, and man repent it.”

himself: “This is my resolve: [...] My death shall serve mine own turn: make you ready” (I. 46, 50).

Vittoria cannot understand her brother’s resolution to commit suicide because Brachiano is dead, and, instead of following his plan, she thinks him mad and believes Flamineo has lost his senses and has become lunatic:

Are you grown an atheist? will you turn your body,
Which is the goodly palace of the soul,
To the soul’s slaughter-house? Oh, the cursed devil,
Which doth present us with all other sins
Thrice candied o’er, despair with gall and stibium;
Yet we carouse it off. [*Aside to Zanche.*] Cry out for help!
Makes us forsake that which was made for man,
The world, to sink to that was made for devils,
Eternal darkness! (V.vi.54–62)

Vittoria considers Flamineo’s decision to commit suicide as a grotesque and devilish resolution. Next to a long appeal to buy herself time, Vittoria is actually accusing him of faithless thoughts which seems ridiculous since all along in the course of the plot, both – Vittoria and Flamineo – have never doubted any of their non-Christian decisions. But now, she appeals to his faith to save themselves from hell, where – so it seems – she does not see herself. With her servant, she then takes a different turn and seemingly consents to Flamineo’s suicidal plan – seeing a chance in surviving herself, if she betrays Flamineo during the planned execution of the siblings.

Yet I am now resolv’d; farewell, affliction!
Behold, Brachiano, I that while you liv’d
Did make a flaming altar of my heart
To sacrifice unto you, now am ready
To sacrifice heart and all. (V.vi.80–84)

So, both are playing a part, portraying suicidal tendencies to convince the other of death. Flamineo is staging an elaborate show of welcoming death: Giving Vittoria and Zanche the pistols to shoot him, he imagines himself received among heroes and dissolved in the elements: “Whether I resolve to fire, earth, water, air,/ Or all the elements by scruples, I know not,/ Nor greatly care. – Shoot! shoot!!/ Of all deaths, the violent death is best” (WD, V.vi.111–114).²¹⁹ This is the

219 On violent death, the quote reminds of Julius Caesar. Suetonius writes in paragraph 87 in “Divus Iulius” of his *De Vitis Caesarum* that sudden death was favoured by Julius Caesar: “Illud plane inter omnes fere constitit, talem ei mortem paene ex sententia obtigisse. nam et quondam, cum apud Xenophontem legisset Cyrum ultima ualitudine mandasse quaedam de funere suo, aspernatus tam lentum mortis genus subitam sibi celeremque optauerat; et pridie quam occideretur, in sermone nato super cenam apud Marcum Lepidum, quisnam esset finis uitae commodissimus, repentinum inopinatumque praetulerat.” Compare Sue-

turning point in this scene – Vittoria shoots Flamineo, hoping she can leave the situation without being hurt. Flamineo, on the other hand, wants to test his sister’s loyalty and to punish her for not cooperating with him any more. Thus after the shot, Vittoria does not perform her promise to Flamineo to commit suicide but calls him a “most cursed devil!” (l. 121); she warns him – who she supposes is dying – “This thy death/ Shall make me, like a blazing ominous star,/ Look up and tremble” (l. 129–131), thereby picturing herself as the cause of a disruptive force in this cosmos. His death corresponds to a loose star in the heavens. Once Vittoria shows her true mind that she is not willing to commit suicide and follow Flamineo, he reveals his true plan and indicates that he has real weapons to threaten Vittoria and her servant:²²⁰ “Oh, cunning devils! now I have tried your love,/ And doubled all your reaches: I am not wounded. [*Flammineo riseth.* [...] Here are two other instruments” (WD, V.vi.146–147, 164). In an almost blasphemous way, Flamineo has toyed with life and death, a valuation that determines his worthiness in the end. Like the atheist D’Amville, or Edmund in *King Lear*, Flamineo denies divine providentialism and then falls victim to his proud refusal of believing in a higher power.

The tragedy finishes with Giovanni’s appearance as the successor in his father’s dukedom. As a boy, he has the aura of naive purity; as a ruler he is plunged into decision-making in this court that is peopled by murderers and their victims’ corpses. Thus, Giovanni has to punish his adversaries, which he practises by ordering his uncle Francisco and his conspirators Ludovico and Gasparo “to prison, and to torture” (WD, V.vi.288). He demands that all “that have hands in this shall taste our justice,/ As I hope heaven. [...] Let guilty men remember, their black deeds/ Do lean on crutches made of slender reeds” (V.vi.289, 297–298). Evil will never prevail. There is some hope left at the end of this tragedy, though it is also rather slender, considering the fact that the one person that did not receive due punishment for his intrigues is the Cardinal/Pope, representing the corrupt church. He stands for the bribed Catholic church which exhibits one possible aspect of the representation of evil in revenge tragedy, set in southern Europe.²²¹

However, blood is not only seen as an image of death in the revenge tragedies,

tonius: *The Lives of the Caesars*, ed. Catherine Edwards (Oxford: Oxford Paperbacks, 2000), p. 2–42. As far as the elements are concerned, Mark Antony in his last words in Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar* calls Brutus honourable but reminds his listeners of Caesar as a true man, because in him the elements were equally arranged and thus in harmony: “His life was gentle, and the elements/ So mixed in him that nature might stand up/ And say to all the world “This was a man.”” (V.v.72–74).

220 “The pistols held no bullets; ’twas a plot/ To prove your kindness to me; and I live/ To punish your ingratitude. I knew,/ One time or other, you would find a way/ To give me a strong potion. [...] How cunning you were to discharge! do you practise at the/ Artillery yard? Trust a woman? never, never” (V.vi.148–157).

221 See above.

but there is also life and love involved. In *The Duchess of Malfi*, the marriage between the Duchess and Antonio appears to be a genuinely positive decision, Antonio being an honest man, and the wooing scene between the two is supported by sexual connotations of the determined Duchess, but nevertheless contains only shy signs of love. Antonio supports the idea of love and exhibits “blood-shot” (DM, I.i.396) eyes when talking about fatherhood. She uses the image of her ring “to help [his] eyesight” (l. 401) but at the same time stresses her marriage promise “’Twas my wedding-ring,/ And I did vow never to part with it/ But to my second husband” (l. 324–326). The emblem of marriage serves also as a *double entendre* as entrance to her sexuality.²²² Antonio understands the offer: “There is a saucy and ambitious devil/ Is dancing in this circle” (l. 397–399), reminding the audience of macabre dances of death.²²³ The temptation of sexual pleasure for its own sake is then removed by the marriage vow when she “*puts the ring upon his finger*” (l. 407).

The marriage itself is doomed by danger. Antonio is neither of high rank nor would their union ever be approved by the Duchess’ brothers. The marriage reeks of ambition “[w]hich makes it lunatic beyond all cure” (l. 416), as Antonio professes, but still the Duchess accepts him, and raises him from his knees: “We are forc’d to woo, because none dare woo us” (l. 434). Antonio mentions the consequences that will ensue from her brothers, but the Duchess denies any possible danger – a weakness that will prove fatal: “Do not think of them:/ All discord without this circumference/ Is only to be pitied, and not fear’d:/ Yet, should they know it, time will easily/ Scatter the tempest” (l. 460–465). Since the audience has already experienced their determination to control and their willingness towards corruption, a shadow of doubt is already cast over these marriage blessings. The Duchess’ wish that their marriage will never be untwined by violence (l. 470–471) will prove futile, as Antonio’s desire that “fortune may not know an accident,/ Either of joy or sorrow, to divide” (l. 477–478) them; an inkling, that Cariola utters in her judgement on this bond is that it will prove a “fearful madness” (l. 494).

Their happiness is soon found out by the deformed Bosola. He is joking with a friend and an old lady when making an ominous observation towards the state of man, referring to the lady’s make-up, but indirectly to his own outer deformity:

What thing is in this outward form of man
To be below’d? We account it ominous,

222 In *The Changeling*, the double entendres are more openly of a sexual nature when Deflores takes Beatrice’s glove and later cuts of Alonzo’s finger, see above.

223 See Uwe Baumann: “Das Leben als Tanz in den Tod in der Rachttragödie der englischen Renaissance“, in: F. H. Link (ed.), *Tanz und Tod in Kunst und Literatur, Schriften zur Literaturwissenschaft* 8 (Berlin: Perfect Paperback, 1993), p. 139–160.

If nature do produce a colt, or lamb,
 A fawn, or goat, in any limb resembling
 A man, and fly from 't as a prodigy:
 Man stands amaz'd to see his deformity
 In any other creature but himself.
 But in our own flesh though we bear diseases
 Which have their true names only ta'en from beasts, –
 As the most ulcerous wolf and swinish measles, –
 Though we are eaten up of lice and worms
 And though continually we bear about us
 A rotten and dead body, we delight
 To hide it in rich tissue: all our fear,
 Nay, all our terror, is, lest our physician
 Should put us in the ground to be made sweet. – (II.i.48–63)

In a matter-of-fact style, he analyses physical diseases of mankind that are taken as signs of prodigy: his badly-shaped and deformed face denotes him as determined by evil. He capitulates to the determinations society is making because he cannot change prejudices. Bosola therefore plays his part in society, which in *The Duchess of Malfi* is that of an informer. He also says that he does not have any higher aspirations: “I look no higher than I can reach: they are the gods that/ must ride on winged horses” (II.i.92–93). However, Antonio sees through him, revealing Bosola’s ambition but also reminding of the obstacles: “You would look up to heaven, but I think/ The devil, that rules i’ th’ air, stands in your light” (l. 97–98). Evil intentions block light and the good aspirations that might have been there. Bosola has indeed taken the devilish way towards achievements.

Bosola is bribed by the Duchess’ brothers to keep them informed about her activities, and also about her state of being, i.e. signs that show her pregnancy: “I observe our duchess/ Is sick a-days, she pukes, her stomach seethes,/ The fins of her eye-lids look most teeming blue,/ She wanes i’ the cheek, and waxes fat i’ the flank;/ And, contrary to our Italian fashion,/ Wears a loose-bodied gown: there’s somewhat in’t” (II.i.66–71). The Duchess shows typical signs of pregnancy; however, Bosola is determined to prove his suspicion with a test, which comprises eating apricots and then showing specific signs of response of the “young springal cutting a caper in her belly” (II.i.155) to those fruits. Indeed the duchess shows the reaction he has been hoping for – she “greedily” (l. 151) gulps them down and then feels their reaction: “This green fruit and my stomach are not friends./ How they swell me! [...] Oh, I am in an extreme cold sweat” (l. 158–161) – “apparent signs/ of breeding” (II.ii.2–3). Bosola seems content with the facts, seeing his knowledge as a good sign of his advancement, “the same golden showers, that rained/ in the time of Jupiter the Thunderer” (II.ii.18–19). This imagery underlines that he will be paid well.

The apricots did not poison the Duchess but led to contractions. Antonio

therefore makes up a story of an imaginary theft to be able to lock all doors and keep the Duchess out of sight, while she is suffering “torture, pain, and fear” (II.ii.60) in labour. Hearing the cries of the Duchess during birth, Bosola nevertheless denies knowing anything about them when Antonio confronts him with hearing a noise. Trying to cover it in front of Bosola, Antonio ascribes them to the wind or to a dream of his, accusing Bosola of trying to poison the Duchess with the apricots, and calling him an “impudent snake” with a dangerous “sting” (II.iii.38–39). However, he is denying the bad character of an omen this situation causes: this is an epistaxis, apparently coming from nowhere:

My nose bleeds.

One that were superstitious would count
This ominous, when it merely comes by chance.
Two letters, that are wrought here for my name,
Are drown'd in blood!
Mere accident. – (II.iii.41–46)

Speaking of a possible ominous interpretation of this nose-bleed as superstitious humbug, Antonio deliberately denies any divine reference to this sign, taking it as a natural and incidental occurrence. This mistreatment of omens rather reminds of other villains' reactions like those of Edmund in *King Lear* or of D'Amville in *The Atheist's Tragedy* than of an honest, positive protagonist who should be aware of divine guidance. Instead, he seems dangerously negligent; this underlines Antonio's naivety, which will prove fatal in the end.

Bodily decay is the aim of the two murders of Vittoria's husband Camillo and Brachiano's wife Isabell, so the two survivors can be easily married to each other. A conjuror is at the centre of the murdering scene (II.ii), invoking ghostly spirits. He is the executioner to Brachiano's and Flamineo's murdering schemes against Camillo and Isabella. At “dead midnight” (II.ii.1) the necromancer is prophetically staging two ghostly dumb-shows, visible through the power of a charm'd night-cap (II.ii.21). First, Isabella is murdered by a kiss on a poisoned picture of her beloved Brachiano, next Camillo's neck is broken while jumping on a vaulting-horse. Via villainous tricks, the two props of a portrait painting and a sports device are turned into murderous instruments – and the conjuror's comment on this is merely: “Both flowers and weeds spring, when the sun is warm,/And great men do great good, or else great harm” (II.i.56–57). Later, when Vittoria is accused, Francisco recalls this fatal accident of Camillo as ridiculous – “What a prodigy” (III.ii.113) – and not only unlikely but rather impossible to happen from “two yards' height” (l. 114), thereby implying the fact that Camillo must have been murdered.

The death of a person is brought to a limit in *The Tragedy of Hoffman*. Hoffman thought he killed Ludowick, who turns out to be still alive. There is

some hope that Lucibell is not dead, even though the stage direction said “*Moritur*” (l. 996), but when Roderigo is carrying her out, he mentions a “breath” (l. 1071); however, when we finally meet her again in IV.i, recovered from the wound, her mind has wandered off and Lucibell went, Ophelia-like, mad, “distract of sense” (IV.i.1427). Ominously enough, though, madly she announces the truth behind the cruel stabbing:²²⁴

a knaue may kill one by a tricke,
Or lay a plot, or foe, or cog, or prate,
Make strife, make a mans father hang him,
Or his brother, how thinke you goodly Prince,
God giue you ioy of your adoption;
May nor trickes be vsd ? (IV.i.1470–1475)

Lucibell with this *mad* speech ominously utters the truth of the murders and intrigues – the knave or criminal Hoffman has used more than one trick to kill and plot. He had Mathias kill his own brother. Hoffman also hung up his father’s body for a monument, as Lucibell foresees, he is then adopted by the Prussian court, and other tricks will follow.

Roderigo, too, interprets the situation as hazardous; by conversing in the events of diplomacy and politics, reconciling with his brother, he has an inkling of having made a wrong decision joining the court life and decides to be reclusive again from now on:

Would I might neuer liue in noe worse state;
For contemplation is the path to heauen.
My new conversing in the world is prou’d
Lucklesse and full of sorrow; fare-ye-well
My heauens, alone, all company seemes hell. (IV.i.1519–1523)

Characters have to crudely weigh the arguments when they are aware of possible opposite interpretations of prodigies. With the above uncanny suspicion, Roderigo leaves the stage to return to mourn Prussia’s death. Saxony’s reminiscing in past triumphs recalls similar sorrows about the present – he sees himself forsaken by Fortune, creating the image of himself now being on that wheel’s side which goes down: “fortune and I are parted” (l. 1543).

The scene is indeed one of doom. Jerom plots to kill his cousin Otho with a poisoned drink for standing in his way to his father’s throne of Prussia, being the uncontended heir. He did actually receive the poison from Lorrique and Hoffman who is in this scene disguised as Otho and therefore knows not to drink

224 This reminds of other characters seeing or understanding the truth, while they are physically or psychologically not fit to do so. One example is Gloucester in *King Lear*, who does “see better” once his eyes are plucked out (compare *King Lear* III.vii and then IV.i, IV.vi, V.ii).

from the supposed poison. Through Hoffman's planning, Jerom commits suicide by drinking the poison himself but no proper antidote.

This makes Ferdinand believe that his son Jerom conspired against him and he feels nauseated: "The subtill poyson mingled with my blood/ 'Nums all the passages, and nimble death/ Fleetes on his pnrple [sic!] currents to my heart." (IV.i.1582–1584). Like a snake, the poison seems to enter the body and numb it. Not believing the excuses his dying son gives him, Ferdinand also orders that the servant needs to be punished: "Let him be tortur'd, then vpon a wheele/ broke like a traytor and a murderer" (l. 1601–1602). The metaphor of Fortune leaving him on the lowering side of her wheel will become true for Jerom's servant who will not only metaphorically but literally be bound to a wheel and tortured to death.

Ferdinand invokes a shipwreck²²⁵, as the audience was asked to imagine at the beginning of the play, and Ferdinand sees himself being tossed into the water: "Likea [sic!] ship that hauing long contended with/ The waues, is at last with one proud billow/ Smit into the ruthlesse swallow of the sea" (l. 1615–1617). The sea is portrayed as a hungry beast which gulps down poor Ferdinand.

Again, Hoffman is mocking and misusing sadness, calling himself unfortunate, but only the audience and his servant know that this is indeed a mocking of the proceedings: "Would God I were [poisoned], but my sad starres reserue/ This simple building for extremer ruine" (IV.i.1629–1630). It is almost daring how strongly he provokes divine interference on earthly proceedings – blaming his stars for not having fulfilled his life's destiny. The audience is aware that his fate is determined by ruin. Hoffman's way of playing with the interpretation of prodigies is risky and violent, however, not as grotesque²²⁶ as some of the images that are created in later revenge tragedy: in *The Changeling*, for example, Deflores, not being able to take Alonzo's ring off, cuts the finger off with it: this is an omen that seems to underline that by the promise of marriage, the ring as a symbol for marriage has become one item with the finger with all its sexual connotations.²²⁷ Not even after Piraquo's death, Deflores can take the ring off the finger – "What, so fast on?! Not part in death?" (III.ii.23–24) – that he delivers both together: "I could not get the ring without the finger" (III.iv.28). Shocked, Beatrice finds the act repulsive – "Bless me! What hast thou done?" (l. 29) – even though this was not much more than a trifle compared to the murder itself.

225 See the metaphorical imagery of the dying Flamineo and Vittoria in WD.

226 Compare J. P. Gibson: *Shakespeare's Use of the Supernatural* (Cambridge: Deighton Bell & Co./ London: George Bell & Sons, 1908), p. 88: Gibson belittles the contemporaries of Shakespeare as "mingling the serious with the trivial and grotesque".

227 See Amy L. Stahl: *Blasting Binaries and Humanizing Humans: Thomas Middleton's Feminism* (M.A. Thesis Florida State University, 2007), p. 72.

Even more absurd seems divine justice in *The Atheist's Tragedy*: The villain D'Amville is about to execute his innocent nephew Charlemont, but "As he [D'Amville] raises up the axe {he} strikes out his own brains, {and then} staggers off the scaff" (V.ii.241)²²⁸. D.C. Allen put this more bluntly: "the atheist must knock his brains out to understand the divine."²²⁹ D'Amville "dies in the act of murder, yet in death he has a moment of insight into the frailty of human reason, so easily brought to madness by grief and to folly by drink. [...] Not chance or misfortune have killed him and his sons, but the power and the providence of God."²³⁰ Instead of killing his enemy, he kills himself, a divinely guided action, as the audience has to give credit (V.ii.275).²³¹

Atheism with its denial of divine influence²³² is troubling the late sixteenth century.²³³ D'Amville is even called monstrous by Dollimore,²³⁴ because he appears as an antisocial being in a stage society that is still dependent on congruencies and correspondences not only to entertain but also to tease the audience with foreshadowings of the content of the plays. The atheist's death also presents one of the more grotesque aspects of a combination between a physical, bodily omen – the split skull – and the stars: after the godly judgment, the hero Charlemont utters contently: "I will tempt/ My stars no longer" (V.ii. 292–3).

"Thou look'st ghastly"²³⁵

Physical signs of the body are often linked with weather omens or settings in darkness, and at night. This combination strengthens the nature the omens because it adds a further level of correspondences, those of the outer macrocosm and the human microcosm to underline their mutual dependence. Thus the

228 Brackets in the quote indicated in the edition.

229 Don Cameron Allen: *Doubt's Boundless Sea*, p. 24.

230 Peter B. Murray: *A Study of Cyril Tourneur* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1964), p. 84.

231 See Irving Ribner in his introduction to Cyril Tourneur: *The Atheist's Tragedy, or, The Honest Man's Revenge*, p. xxxviii; more grotesque is the fact that D'Amville does not directly die after this action, but holds a speech on his plans and wisdom. Henry Hitch Adams calls the strike a sign of divine justice: "The whole play is based on the idea that Providence will accomplish the ends of divine justice." Compare Henry Hitch Adams: "Cyril Tourneur on Revenge", p. 81 and 83.

232 See e.g. Edmund's speech to nature in *King Lear*, I.ii.1–22.

233 See Keith Thomas: *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973), p. 199ff. Compare Manfred Pfister: "Elizabethan Atheism: Discourse without Subject", in: *Shakespeare Jahrbuch* (West) (1991), p. 59–81.

234 Jonathan Dollimore: *Radical Tragedy. Religion, Ideology and Power in the Drama of Shakespeare and his Contemporaries* (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1984, 1989²), p. 85.

235 DM, V.v.8.

connection between humanity and nature reflects the atmospheric “stormiest passion of human nature”.²³⁶

Such a combination of weather and the body also appears in *Caesar's Revenge* and indicates the future: Caesar's fate is doomed through his love for Cleopatra, promising Egypt's rule to her (I.vi). Both are evoking great images of happiness and grandeur, flowery beauty and tyrannical love. Anthony comments with a statement on the inevitable influence of Cleopatra: “O onely worthy for whose matchles sake,/ Another seege, and new warres should arise” (I.vi.528–529) and thereby already underlines Caesar's fatal love. In this emotional delirium, Anthony foreshadows a future of more trouble and conflict between the Romans about Egypt: “Led with the lode-starre of her lookes, I go/ As crazed Bark is toss'd in trobled Seas,/ Uncertaine to arrive in wished port” (I.vi.604–606), as indeed Rome will be defeated through the loss of her people. Indeed, the foreshadowing refers even further than the frame of the play to the historical context with the downfall of Antony's fleet at Actium. Cleopatra's charisma is compared to an ominous star causing naval defeat.

The *Duchess of Malfi* ends with a similar scene of divine justice. Bosola encounters the Cardinal, who receives him commenting “Thou look'st ghastly;/ There sits in thy face some great determination/ Mix'd with some fear” (V.v.8–10) – his face forebodes doom. As explained above, a deformed face presages deformed thoughts and actions.²³⁷ Bosola confesses: “I am come to kill thee” (l. 11). The villain Bosola has finally understood the Duchess' innocence and now wants to defend her honour: “When thou kill'd'st thy sister,/ Thou took'st from Justice her most equal balance,/ And left her naught but her sword” (l. 38–40). Both have denied the law in the past, so now there is no balance on a scale of justice any more, but only violence: thus they fight. Mad Ferdinand joins them and, like D'Amville in *The Atheist's Tragedy*, carries out an unintended blow, though not towards himself as D'Amville but his brother, the Cardinal, mistaking him for a conspirator of the devil, and in the brawl, hurts Bosola, too, who in turn stabs him. Fate judges rightly and the evil brothers are punished. The spectator is confronted with an exaggerated scene of murder, which leaves all villains of the play dying and reminiscing remorsefully. In death, Ferdinand seems to recover some sense: “My sister, O my sister! There's the cause on't./ Whether we fall by ambition, blood, or lust,/ Like diamonds, we are cut with our own dust. *Dies*” (l. 70–72). The imbalance of justice, which the brothers themselves created, now turns against them. Diamonds are the sharpest cutting tools but because of this, they are also used to shape and form themselves: for the brothers, this means that their ambition and sin are the cause for their downfall.

236 See Frederic W. Moorman: *The Interpretation of Nature in English Poetry*, p. 235.

237 See above on kalokagathia.

Bosola comments on the implied combination between the signs of the outer world and the human body, reflecting on the correspondences between the cosmoi and their personal deserved death:

We are only like dead walls or vaulted graves,
That, ruin'd, yield no echo. Fare you well.
It may be pain, but no harm, to me to die
In so good a quarrel. O, this gloomy world!
In what a shadow, or deep pit of darkness,
Doth womanish and fearful mankind live! (V.v.96–101)

He compares his fate mysogynistically to an effeminate fear of decay. Indeed, the tragedy ends in death with a stage full of corpses,²³⁸ as Bosola's metaphors reflect. However, he seems also glad to finally be punished for the sins that have determined his actions. The images he invokes are of darkness and world of human failure.

Likewise is gloominess set as a background in *The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois*. Darkness and a parallel constellation of stars are presented as a typical asset to murder,²³⁹ as almost any example underlines. When Bussy was stabbed in the prequel, it was dark: night shadows illegal deeds like the "cruell'st murther that ere fled the sunne" (I.ii.14). Tamyra is always reminded of it by a spot on the floor: "drawne in his deare blood,/ And mark'd the place" (I. 12–13) – the blood can still be seen. The place signals the everpresence of the murder. Everpresent therefore also seems Bussy's spirit, which she feels from "the sphære of fire/ Whence endlesse flames it sheds in my desire." (I. 18–19), reminding her of his hot and very physical love.

The play *Antonio's Revenge* sets off in a situation of murder and darkness. Piero, the Duke of Venice, has killed Andrugio, the Duke of Genoa. Piero was his one-time rival for the hand of Andrugio's wife Maria and their son Antonio is betrothed to Piero's daughter Mellida. Entering the stage "*unbrac'd, his arms bare, smear'd in blood, a poniard in one hand, bloody, and a torch in the other*" (I.i.0), the setting directly creates an atmosphere of violent death by these signs of a bloody fight in the middle of the night. The clock strikes two: at this time, cruel deeds are supported by the darkness, so none can witness them. There is only his torch to illuminate the scene.²⁴⁰ In his blood thirst and planned intrigues, Piero is creating a scene of defamation against his own daughter – a plan

238 In the midst of dead corpses, Delio claims Antonio's son as a picture of hope: "Let us make noble use/ Of this great ruin; and join all our force/ To establish this young hopeful gentleman/ In 's mother's right." (DM, V.v.109–112), trying to create a positive view into the future which might be difficult for the audience to believe.

239 See above chapter 4.2–4.4.

240 The torch was also one of the props that signified night and darkness in the play, while the stage was still lit by daylight at the time of performance in the afternoon.

that seems already predestined to backfire since it is set against his own blood. At this point in the play, however, Piero is wholly satisfied with his preparations and glorifies in metaphors of beasts:

Ho, Gaspar Strotzo, bind Feliche's trunk
 Unto the panting side of Mellida. *Exit Strotzo.*
 'Tis yet dead night, yet all the earth is clutch'd
 In the dull leaden hand of snoring sleep;
 No breath disturbs the quiet of the air,
 No spirit moves upon the breast of earth,
 Save howling dogs, nightcrows, and screeching owls,
 Save meager ghosts, Piero, and black thoughts. *[Clock strikes.]*
 One. Two. Lord, in two hours what a topless mount
 Of unpeer'd mischief have these hands cast up!
 I can scarce coop triumphing vengeance up
 From bursting forth in braggart passion. (I.i.1–12)

Piero celebrates his gory triumph: Night seems quiet and still but actually only veils evil deeds in darkness and hides them from the eyes of sleeping people. In the night, Piero has slain Pandulpho's son Feliche, and also Antonio's father and Maria's husband Andrugio – deeds that make Piero appear “great in blood,/ Unequal'd in revenge” (AR, I.i.17–18). In a very arrogant, ambitious speech, he is satisfied with his revenge against his love's rival and even invokes darker, devilish regions to applaud his doings: “Hell, Night,/ Give loud applause to my hypocrisy.” (l. 30–31) and “hale on mischief” (l. 78). Piero pretends to be flawless and nice during daytime, promising a successful future to his daughter Mellida and Andrugio's son Antonio. But he perverts all harmony into “happy vengeance, unsuspected death” (l. 67). Such pride and self-glorification – as expressed by “adore my topless villainy” (l. 85) – does in the end cause his downfall. Piero's servant even imagines that some kind of incubus, an evil spirit or nightmare demon, controls Piero's body and decisions²⁴¹ to make him restless and devoted to what he calls revenge. However, changing the course of nature by trying to “turn a glorious bridal morn/ Unto a Stygian night” (l. 89–90) cannot be successful, though at this morning the waking court is shocked by the nightly proceedings: “This morn my vengeance shall be amply fed” (I.i.110). For the moment, Piero is satisfied as he sees supporting signs of morning in the heavens that seem to applaud his nightly doings and will reveal the bloodshed. Night is the time of cover – violence is only detected when it is light, and then his

241 See footnote on line 91 in Hunter's edition. Hunter elaborates that Piero seems driven by obsession.

murderous scheme of arranging a deathbed can unfold its dangerous implications.²⁴²

Night is also presented as the time of sexual loss of virtue.²⁴³ The Duchess of Malfi's brothers accuse her of loss of virtue due to her apparent sexual liberality and see her well matched to the lack of light: "This darkness suits you well" (IV.i.30). Opposed to this, Antonio uses the words: "lights the time to come" (I.i.204).²⁴⁴ Insultingly, they call her children "cubs" (IV.i.33), for which animalistic accusation she cries: "You violate a sacrament o' th' church/ Shall make you howl in hell for 't" (l. 38–39), taking up the dog metaphor turning it against her brothers. Still feigning a will to concordial communication, Ferdinand seemingly reaches a hand towards the Duchess, which she "affectionately" (l. 45) kisses as a gesture of good will. However, the hand is not Ferdinand's but a dead, cut-off hand, prepared to appear as Antonio's. Her reaction reads as follows: "You are very cold:/ I fear you are not well after your travel:/ Ha! lights! Oh horrible! [...] What witchcraft doth he practise, that he hath left/ A dead man's hand here?" (l. 51–55). To frighten the Duchess even more, a curtain is opened and behind it, a show of death has been prepared to take away all her power to live: "*Here is discovered, behind a traverse, the artificial figures of Antonio and his children; appearing as if they were dead*" (l. 55). It appears to her as if the prophecy of death has come true and her family is indeed dead. Ferdinand functionalises darkness to successfully and prophetically shock and frighten his sister.

Against the backdrop of night, too, indicated by the use of a torch, the characters of the vicious ducal family appear in *The Revenger's Tragedy*: "Enter [...] Duke, Duchess, Lussurioso [his] son, Spurio the bastard, with a train pass over the stage with torchlight" (I.i.0). In the dead of night, Vindici enters before them with a skull – the latter an image of a past darker deed. It is a reminder of a former crime, however, at the same time it is the image of revenge to follow. Hippolito, Vindici's brother, witnesses Vindici's sorrow: "Still sighing o'er death's vizard?" (I.i.49). Vindici's love Gloriana was poisoned by the Duke, and the skull is a constant reminder of this crime and his mourning, denying peace to Vindici, and proving a sign of coming revenge.

Vindici is indeed frustrated waiting, asking Hippolito for a sign from fate for

242 Piero stages himself as an agent of evil, revealing his gory intentions to the audience. He thus alludes directly to the tradition of the vice-figure in the theatre, a stock character who shares the knowledge of his evil plans with the audience. See John D. Cox: *The Devil and the Sacred in English Drama, 1350–1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

243 During their first sexual encounter, the destruction of the hymen also causes bloodshed, which can be compared to violent acts of the night.

244 Compare the opposite reaction: Antonio loves her, while Ferdinand and the Cardinal hate her for discarding their decisions.

revenge: “Prithee say,/ Has that bald madam, opportunity,/ Yet thought upon’s? Speak, are we happy yet?” (I.i.53–55). Indeed, more ominous proceedings reflect the foul nature of the whole court: “the duchess’ youngest son/ Has play’d a rape on Lord Antonio’s wife” (I.i.108–109). The audience learns that Vindici’s father also lately died, thus leaving the family headless. All characters on stage are influenced by the lack of order. Vindici complains: “My life’s unnatural to me, e’en compell’d/ As if I liv’d now when I should be dead” (I.i.119–120). It seems nature cannot run its smooth course until Vindici has realised what his name predicts: revenge.

More vengeance is promised by further entanglement of disorder within the court by the bastard son of the Duke Spurio and by the Duchess, whose kiss foreshadows further catastrophe: “Oh, one incestuous kiss picks open hell!” (I.ii.174). A friendly gesture of love is here distorted to incest and chaos. In a different manner, Lussoriosio’s trust in Vindici, who is disguised as Piato, is an indication of the fatality of the court’s fortune. Lussurioso’s “Fine villain! Troth, I like him wondrously” (I.iii.56) shows that he falls into a similar trap as Tomazo de Piracquo in *The Changeling*, who also trusts his enemy.

Further omens of trouble become visible for the audience in the appearance of the dead corpse of the beautiful, “*ravish’d*” (I.iv.0) wife of Antonio. He compares her to a “fair, comely building newly fall’n” (l. 2), “[a] sight that strikes man out of” him (l. 5). Antonio is forming an image that defies all humanity because it is too cruel for mankind. The unnatural circumstances of rape reflect a non-working legal and social system. Having drunk poison to preserve her honour seems paradox, but in these circumstances suicide with “A prayer book the pillow to her cheek,/ [...] another/ Plac’d in her right hand, with a leaf tuck’d up,/ Pointing to these words:/ *”Melius virtute mori, quam per dedecus vivere”*” (I.iv.13–17). Dying therefore appears the better alternative to everlasting shame. At the same time her body, together with Gloriana’s skull, becomes the constant reminder of everlasting viciousness in the ducal family that needs to be repaid.

Added to this rape is the circumstance that it took place during the night, which according to Vindice, looks “like funeral heralds’ fees” (II.ii.134). The nightly rape foreshadows further death. To cover up the deed by loud noises could be heard all around, Junior misused her innocence. His account is as follows: “last revelling night,/ When torch-light made an artificial noon” (I.iv.26–27) he “fed the ravenous vulture of his lust!” (l. 44). Next to the carnivalistic circumstances during the night, Junior is also compared to an ugly bird of prey, the vulture, which devours anything, and thus stands for the remorseless cruelty this court is representing.

There, vice continues. Not only Junior uses the secrecy of the night to commit evil deeds. As the Duchess and Spurio indicate, they are now feeding their lust, having incestuous adultery – committing one of “those sins that have no grace at

all” (II.ii.136), while her husband and his father is sleeping – “Oh, sin foul and deep,/ Great faults are wink’d at when the duke’s asleep!” (II.ii.113–114). And, as Vindici goes on, he discovers more sexual encounters hidden by the night:

Now cuckolds are a-coining, apace, apace, apace, apace;
And careful sisters spin that thread i’ th’ night
That does maintain them and their bawds i’ th’ day! (II.ii.134–136)

This seems to pre-echo Milton’s lascivious and gluttonous, Dionysian god Comus in his mask at Ludlow Castle, who asks: “What hath night to do with sleep?”²⁴⁵ Night is always considered the time of sound sleep but it is also the time of sexuality and murder, subversive ideas and activities. Hippolito’s subsuming comment on the events is very fitting: “there’s gunpowder i’ th’ court” (II.ii.173). Gunpowder symbolises the explosive power of court politics, but at the same time it might refer to the Catholic Gunpowder Plot which was a plan to blow up the parliament when it was to be opened by the king in 1605. Thus the comment represents the corruption in the state and the dangers it has to face.

Even the Duke realises these corruptive forces,²⁴⁶ when he tests his stepsons Ambitioso and Supervacuo, seeing through their inner falsity: “Here’s envy with a poor, thin cover o’er ’t,/ Like scarlet hid in lawn, easily spied through./ This their ambition” (II.iii.108–110). They cannot cover their sinful nature. At the same time, he is confessing his own guilt to the audience:

Many a beauty have I turn’d to poison
In the denial, covetous of all.
Age hot is like a monster to be seen:
My hairs are white, and yet my sins are green. (II.iii.133–136)

Especially ominous is this confession in the eyes of the spectators, because they have already witnessed the existence of the Duke’s victims, the remainder of dead Gloriana: her skull. It has become a constant image of the need for revenge to Vindice, and even becomes its instrument. Vindici disguises “*the skull of his love dress’d up in tires*” (III.v.42) as a beautiful female face and uses it to present a young girl who is willing to meet the Duke for a rendezvous. The make-up shows that “here’s an eye/ Able to tempt a great man to serve God” (III.v.54–55) but Vindici poisons Gloriana’s lips to kill the Duke. Thus, as a twist of fate, the Duke meets Gloriana again – this time both as his commissioned prostitute and as his nemesis – like he killed her, she now kills him. The skull is an image of mortality,

245 John Milton: “Comus”, in: *Selected Poetry*, eds. Jonathan Goldberg/ Stephen Orgel (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), line 122.

246 The presentation of corruptive forces against the stately regime might remind the audience of plots against Queen Elizabeth I or James I, like the 1605 Gunpowder conspiracy, only paradoxically sanctioned by divine forces in this play, as the royal throne is corrupt itself.

transitoriness and decay, and is functionalised as a poisonous weapon by the dramaturge-acting Vindice:²⁴⁷ “Here might a scornful and ambitious woman/ Look through and through herself; see, ladies, with false forms/ You deceive men but cannot deceive worms” (III.v.95–97). The image of tempting beauty becomes an omen of death.

Encountering her, it seems grotesque that the Duke ominously utters that “sh’as somewhat a grave look with her” (III.v.137) and “I love that best” (l. 138), as she will indeed lead him to the grave: by kissing her, he poisons himself, and dying, he has to face the past: “’tis the skull/ Of Gloriana, whom thou poisoned’st last” (l. 149–150). As if murder is not enough revenge, Vindice reveals himself to the Duke and confesses the incestuous adultery of his wife: “thy bastard rides a-hunting in thy brow” (l. 178). Finding satisfaction in this vengeance, Vindice is calling for poetic justice against the Duke: “heaven is just: scorns are the hires of scorns;/ I ne’er knew yet adulterer without horns” (l. 183–184). He is, indeed, punished as a “white devil” (l. 146), an evil being whose sould is black opposite to what it seems. His absence will later on be commented on by a gentleman: “’Tis oracle, my lord.” (l. 97). It proves to be a prediction, an oracle of the Duke’s death who is “by miracle [...] found [...] dead” (V.i.79). Ambizioso comments on this with a metaphor of cosmic response: “Over what roof hangs this prodigious comet/ In deadly fire?” (V.i.104). This comet reflects the microcosmic chaos in the mocrocosm.

Contrastive to the show of dissembling sorrow, which all his sons display while they are truly glad the old Duke is dead, they hope for advancement. Lussurioso, in that manner, accepts being Duke now: “I’ve many griefs to dispatch out a’ th’ way./ [Aside] Welcome, sweet titles!” (V.i.142–143). He invokes the picture of his new position as one of sorrow, when indeed he is happy, pretending: “Alas, I shine in tears like the sun in April” (l.150). Onstage, he is functionalising the convention of sorrow. As already indicated before, Lussurioso is just as corrupt as his father and interested in Vindici’s qualities as leaning “to curse fates,/ [...] full of want and discontent” (IV.i.50–52). Full of “melancholy”²⁴⁸ (l. 61), Lussurioso sees a further advantage in Vindici’s employment: “He being of black condition, suitable/ To want and ill content” (l. 76–77).

247 As a part of his plans to kill the Duke, Vindice not only disguises himself and adopts a different part but also gives Gloriana’s skull a new role to play. For this, she gets a new costume and make-up, all parts of a rehearsed performance.

248 On the idea of melancholy in the Renaissance, see especially Robert Burton: *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, ed. Thomas C. Faulkner/ Nicolas K. Kiessling/ Rhonda L. Blair (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989) and Timothy Bright: *A Treatise of Melancholy* (1586). The Classics of Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences Library, ed. Hardin Craig (New York: Gryphon Editions, 1995).

Lussurioso wants to use the melancholic and therefore subversive character of his servant.²⁴⁹

The Revenger's Tragedy continuously relates to the above-mentioned comet, so, too, in the final scene of the play, which is introduced with the sign of the star moving around the firmament and having lost its fixed position in the heavens: "A blazing star appeareth." (V.iii.0). As explained above, a star, loosened from the firmament, is an omen of change, upheaval and chaos "a wondrous, dreadful one" (V.iii.17), which threatens the new Duke Lussurioso with "great anger" (l. 27):

LUSSURIOSO: [*To the comet*] Beshrew thee, what art thou mad'st me start?
 Thou hast committed treason: a blazing star!
 [...]
 I am not pleas'd at that ill-knotted fire,
 That bushing, flaring star. Am not I duke?
 It should not quake me now: had it appear'd
 Before it, I might then have justly fear'd;
 But yet they say, whom art and learning weds,
 When stars [wear] locks, they threaten great men's heads. (V.iii.14–24)

The comet is moving on the firmament and has thus left his fixed position from the heavenly order. It is indeed reflecting divine response of anger to the courtly circumstances where sins reign²⁵⁰, and it is a sign that threatens the court and its new head. Nevertheless, Lussurioso willingly disregards it to hold a celebration of his new office and thereby discarding divine intervention: "[*To the comet*] You thing, we shall forget you quite anon!" (l. 41). This will prove fatal, and in the mask play, the revengers kill the ducal family, an act that is supported by thunder from heaven to underline Vindici's cause: "Mark thunder?/ Dost know thy cue, thou big-voic'd crier?/ Dukes' groans are thunder's watchwords" (V.iii.44–46): "No power is angry when the lustful die;/ When thunder claps, heaven likes the tragedy" (l. 49–50). Indeed, thunder and lightning are signs of divine revenge against the physical corruption of each of the courtly members and in this last scene of the play, everyone who committed sins against the law, including Hippolito and Vindici, who acted according to their own moral revenge code but not that of legal justice, are punished according to true justice, personified by Antonio.

Vindici also questions an alleged non-existence of cosmic correspondence. Towards his mother, for example, Vindici shouts a disgusted cry of disappointment, which should also reverberate in a heavenly response: "Why does

249 A revenger is described as a melancholic person, one perfect example is presented in John Marston: *The Malcontent*. New Mermaids, ed. W. David Kay (London: Methuen, 1999).

250 Some characters have names that indicate their sin directly, e.g. Ambitioso or Supervacuo.

not heaven [turn] black, or with a frown/ Undo the world? Why does not earth start up/ And strike the sins that tread upon't?" (II.i.254–256) He is questioning the reflective quality of mantic elements to underline their usual reliability in corresponding to microcosmic catastrophes.²⁵¹

Later, Vindici asks for thunder to stress Lussurioso's lies and bursts out with disbelief until it finally thunders: "Is there no thunder left, or is't kept up/ In stock for heavier vengeance? There it goes!" (IV.ii.201–206). Thunder then supports his argument as invoked.

Thunder reflects destructive forces. Just as in *The Revenger's Tragedy*, there is a constant physical reminder of death and revenge in *The Tragedy of Hoffman*. Immediately from the beginning, the spectator is introduced to a scene of foreboding revenge. The hero and determined revenger Hoffman appears with the dead body of his murdered father, his idea of vengeance supported by ominous blasts of thunder:

Hence Clouds of melancholy
 He be no longer subject to your schismes,
 But thou deare soule, whose nerues and arteris
 In dead resoundings summon vp reuenge,
 And thou shalt hate, be but appeas'd sweete hearse,
 The dead remembrance of my liuing father, *strikes ope a cur-*
 And with a hart as aire, swift as thought *taine where ap-*
 I'le execute iustly in such a cause. *peares a body.*
 Where truth leadeth, what coward would not fight?
 Ill acts moue some, but myne's a cause that's right
thunder and lightning.
 See the powers of heauen in apparitions,
 And fright full aspects as insenced,
 That I thus tardy am to doe an act
 which iustice and a fathers death excites,
 Like threatening meteors antedates destruction. *thunder*
 Againe I come, I come, I come,
 Bee silent thou effigies of faire virtue
 That like a goodly syen wer't pluckt vp
 By murderous, winds, infectious blasts and gusts
 I will not leaue thee, vntill like thy selfe,
 I'ue made thy enemies, then hand in hand
 Wee'le walke to paradise againe more blest
 He to yon promonts top, and their furuey,

251 Vindici's outcry reminds of Caesar Octavian in Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*. Caesar comments on the news of Antony's suicide: "The breaking of so great a thing should make/ A greater crack" (V.i.14–15) and thereby aggrandises Antony's relation to the functioning of the world. In: *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt (New York/ London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1997⁵).

What shipwrackt passengers the belgique sea
 Casts from her fomy entrailles by mischance.
 Roare sea and winds, and with celestiall fires,
 Quicken high proiects, with your highest desires. (I.i.3–30)²⁵²

This speech not only introduces the protagonist's vindictive thoughts but gives a definite picture of the world, both macro- and microcosm, in chaos – the thunder obviously apparently supports the immanent conflict. Though it does not seem clear at this point whether the thunder is really supporting Hoffman's argument or whether it is questioning his motives and roaring against the success of his intentions. In this first speech, Hoffman indicates that his own end in the enterprise of revenge will be death, once he has taken revenge against his father's enemies and that he will be admitted to heaven to join his father "Wee'le walke to paradise" (l. 25). Hoffmann finishes this speech with a wish for success and, invoking the seas to roar, once more supports the idea of a noisy and brutal revenge, as indicated by his pleasure and trust in loud thunder.

Hoffman's visible reminder of revenge is his father's skull. This skull becomes, similar to Hamlet with Yorrick's skull, a token of the time past. However, as in *The Revenger's Tragedy*, in *The Tragedy of Hoffman*, it portrays the image and motive of revenge, especially since the visible signs of his father's death can still be detected in his skull: "'tis the fame vpon the dead scull ther's the iron/ Crowne that burnt his braines out, what will come of this, I/ neyther know nor care" (l. 105–107). The burnt line on the bones is a token of ensuing bloodshed. Jenkins argues that the playwright Chettle often used blunt and direct horror to shock the audience:

Chettle knew little of the value of subtle suggestion; he was often blatant and extravagant: but at least he knew the importance of arresting the attention of the spectator from the very first lines of the play. The opening scene of *Hoffman* has nothing of the haunting mystery and the rapid and breathless climax of *Hamlet*, but it is hardly less exciting. Before half a dozen lines are spoken the ghastly spectacle of the skeleton is revealed and there follow immediately thunder and lightning and tumult of the elements. Chettle knew most of the tricks of the trade; but too often he exaggerates and blurs the sharpness of his effects.²⁵³

The "ghastly spectacle" is underlined throughout the play, and passionate vehemence supports Hoffman's desire for retaliation. Leningberg's Prince Otho enters the stage, reminding the audience that the thunder has not ceased and portentously is still wielding. "*Otho* A fearefull storme/ *Lor.* And full of horror."

252 In the Malone Society edition reprint, the line numbering has been adopted from the print and seems flawed from the beginning. I have, nevertheless, taken over the given line numbering to make it easier for the reader to find the correct lines in the text.

253 Harold Jenkins: *The Life and Work of Henry Chettle*, p. 78.

(l. 111–112) – and a few lines later we also hear about Otho’s grief at the merciless raging of the sea, corresponding to his own sorrow:

How greedily the fierce vnpyting sea, and waues,
 Deuour’d our frends another trouble greeues my vexed eyes
 With gastly apperitions, strange aspects
 Which eyther I doe certainly behold
 Or else my soule deuining some sad fate
 Fills my imaginary powers with shapes
 Hideous and horrid. (l. 115–121)

This ominously cruel mood of the sea evokes a vision of dread in Otho but more than just the aspect of the sea is provoked by the storm. He feels a “sad fate”, “[h]ideous and horrid” (s.a.). This inkling is more like a dream vision: he calls the images apparitions and evokes the impression of looming danger. Nevertheless, he is willing to risk entering the “ruthless sound” (TH, l. 130) waters again rather than meeting Hoffman, who, as Lorrique now tells him and the audience “Turn’d a terrible pirate” (l. 129). At this moment, Hoffman enters. Paying reverence to Otho, crying “downe in teares” (l. 145) about his father, Hoffman tries to calm Otho down: “My disturb’d blood runnes smoothly through my veines” (l. 147). His tears, however, are still making him ponder revenge, and once Otho enters Hoffman’s cave, the protagonist orders Lorrique to bring the weapon to kill the unsuspecting Otho: “Villaine bring nothing but a burning Crowne” (l. 153). To use the same weapon which cruelly killed his father seems appropriate but also excessively violent. Even though remorseless punishment is expected, the willingness to be this cruel makes Hoffman appear rather villainous than a retaliating victim.²⁵⁴

The potential of power and violence, which are described above, can also be inverted. A physical disfunction, for example is presented in *The White Devil*. It is related to the influence of the stars and human fate: the fact that Camillo is impotent,²⁵⁵ and therefore cannot satisfy his wife Vittoria, foreshadows the idea of adultery in the tragedy: “So unable to please a woman” (I.ii.32) he will be cuckolded by Vittoria. Camillo even knows the character Vittoria will betray him with and is jealous of Brachiano. This jealousy the scheming Flamineo wants to cover with a contrary horoscope: “a cuckold,/ Contrary to your Ephemerides,/ Which shows you under what a smiling planet/ You were first swaddled?” (I.ii.65–69). The ephemerides were an “almanac or calender containing astro-

254 Compare Sarah J. Glady: “Revenge as Double Standard in *The Tragedy of Hoffman*”, in: *Discoveries* 18.2 (2001), p. 3–4. Glady interprets this as a fact that draws sympathy away from the hero who turns more and more into a villain in the eye of the spectator.

255 Much like Rousard, the son of the atheist D’Amville in AT, though Camillo additionally appears very naive, Rousard’s impotence is presented as a divine punishment of his father’s wants and actions. See AT, II.iii.30–31, III.i.110–112.

logical or meteorological predictions for each day of a specific period".²⁵⁶ Camillo denies the influence of the stars on his body, though, naively explaining that they do not shine during the day, thus have no influence then: "tell me not/ Of planets nor of Ephemerides./ A man may be made cuckold in the day-time,/ When the stars' eyes are out" (69–72). Truly, Flamineo is playing a dangerous game promising one thing to Camillo, but having promised the opposite to Brachiano, which serves as a net in which the characters will be entangled in the course of the play. The functional usage of the astrological background proves true in the tragedy, in that Camillo will lose his wife (and his life). It also incorporates the dramatic functionalisation of Flamineo, who denies astrological influence for his own advantage and fails in the end.

Quite funny in its use are the weather metaphors by Francisco and Brachiano, who are confronting each other. Francisco accuses Brachiano of keeping Vittoria as his strumpet and threatens him with words of thunder: "Look to 't, for our anger/ Is making thunderbolts" – though they do not at all have that effect on Brachiano: "Thunder! in faith,/ They are but crackers." Both are threatening and warning the other party: "Francisco: We 'll end this with the cannon./ Brachiano: Thou'lt get naught by it, but iron in thy wounds,/ And gunpowder in thy nostrils" (II.i.71–74). In an ongoing truly hostile discussion, both are winding the other one up. It becomes clear in this discussion that these two will never find a common truce.

At the end of *The White Devil*, Vittoria is in vain praying for hope: "I have seen a blackbird that would sooner fly/ To a man's bosom, than to stay the gripe/ Of the fierce sparrow-hawk" (V.vi.181–183). However, malignant blackbirds should not come near humans, as they support danger and fear. Nevertheless they metaphorically do, when Ludovico, dressed as a Capuchin monk, possibly with a cowl like wings, murders Brachiano, underlining the maxime of revenge again. He thinks that revenge will always crave for more than barely the just punishment of those that committed a sin and expresses this as follows: "Naught grieves but that you are too few to feed/ The famine of our vengeance" (l. 197–198). He wishes for stronger satisfaction of his wish for retaliation. As Vittoria compares her sinful life to a wandering star loosened from the firmament, so does Ludovico: "Oh, thou hast been a most prodigious comet!/ But I 'll cut off your train" (l. 211–212). Ludovico threatens with revenge: The train of a comet cannot be cut, but metaphorically he is threatening her life.

Once struck, the wounded Vittoria admits that she received a fair penalty for her sins: "Oh, my greatest sin lay in my blood!/ Now my blood pays for't" (V.vi.237–238). This is a confirmation of Cornelia's curse – the family was destined to fall from the beginning (of the plot); even Flamineo accepts this in

256 See Elizabeth M. Brennan's footnote on the line in her *New Mermaids* edition of *WD*, p. 13.

the end: “Th’ art a noble sister! / I love thee now” (l. 238). Dying, Vittoria curses the court, wishing she had never set foot in it and experiences its tempting grandeur: “Oh, happy they that never saw the court, / Nor ever knew great men but by report! *Vittoria dies*” (l. 258–259). As in *The Revenger’s Tragedy*, the court, which should reflect dignity and order, has presented itself as a place of corruption and sin. Flamineo, too, understands the wickedness of his life and asks: “Let no harsh flattering bells resound my knell; / Strike, thunder, and strike loud, to my farewell! *Dies*” (l. 272–273). He is willing to dispense with a commonplace funeral praise about his lifetime achievements but prefers the stark applause for his death from heaven to underline the disruptive life he led while on this earth.

Portends of physiognomy mostly have a direct relation to the characters on stage – their fate is determined by their body and the mantic impact on their physical condition.

4.7 Inklings and Premonitions – “My spirit’s heavy”²⁵⁷

Physical signs that arouse a feeling of indefinite, negative foreboding have been subsumed under the heading of a combination of bodily omens and inklings, i.e. physical signs of the body combined with uncanny suspicions.

All those present at the death of Ludowick and Lucibell in *The Tragedy of Hoffman* experience an ominous feeling of fate. As death approaches, Ludowick’s hands are getting cold and Roderigo exclaims: “Oh strange coniecture!” (III.i.1010). The use of an ominous star constellation reflects the strange situation that characters are confronting; they are signs of a disorder. Not thirty lines later the Duke of Austria is attacked and falls down, though he is apparently untouched by a sword, falsely accusing Saxony of murdering him and calling off their agreed truce. The ominous inkling and the cold hands have indicated these strange proceedings.²⁵⁸

Almost as in a Freudian slip, Mathias, when defending Hoffman who is masked as Otho, draws on Lorrique to support him, and calls him “compos’d of mirth”, misinterpreting his mood, only to correct himself a second later: “Of mirth? of death: why should I thinke on mirth / After so foule a murder?” (III.i.1056–1058). Lorrique, obviously, is in a merry mood at this point since his master Hoffman is successful with his scheming. This seems a very upsetting

²⁵⁷ AR, I.ii.101.

²⁵⁸ At the end of the scene, Hoffman confesses to Lorrique that he has stabbed Austria, marking it as a ridiculously easy task “by him or me, / Noe matter, hee’s gone” (l. 1121–1122).

notion when even the good Mathias is ominously influenced by the happy mood of the villains.²⁵⁹ This seems a dangerous sign as to the power of the villains.

Inklings of dangerous situations often overcome characters in happy situations: soon after joking about their forthcoming marriage vows, Antonio in *Antonio's Revenge* has a bad inkling of luring mischief:

ANTONIO.

Blow hence these sapless jests. I tell you bloods 100
My spirit's heavy, and the juice of life
Creeps slowly through my stiffen'd arteries.
Last sleep my sense was steep'd in horrid dreams:
[...].

Three times I grasp'd at shades,
And thrice, deluded by erroneous sense,
I forc'd my thoughts make stand; when, lo, I op'd
A large bay window, through which the night 115
Struck terror to my soul. The verge of heaven
Was ring'd with flames and all the upper vault
Thick lac'd with flakes of fire; in midst whereof
A blazing comet shot his threat'ning train
Just on my face. Viewing these prodigies, 120
I bow'd my naked knee and pierc'd the star
With an outfacing eye, pronouncing thus:
Deus imperat astris. At which my nose straight bled;
Then doubl'd I my word, so slunk to bed. (I.ii.100–103, 112–124)

He is insecure of his sensual experiences and feels he cannot trust his body. Antonio's inkling is strengthened by physical reactions of his body. He is depressed by the dream of ghosts,²⁶⁰ and additionally the dark night stands as background to these fears. Last but not least, his heavy conscience is prodigiously supported by the heavenly body of the blazing comet.²⁶¹ Waking up from his dream of ghosts at night, Antonio looks out of his window into the dark sky: in the dead of night, exactly at the time when Piero committed his murderous deeds, Antonio sees the huge fire in the heavens, rings of flames, bursts of fire, and, most significantly, this blazing star or comet²⁶² which is illuminating the sky and presents "heaven as a providential force".²⁶³ As the villain Piero describes his murderous deeds during the night to the audience in the first scene, which takes

259 Apparently unmitigated happiness in the face of evil is here presented as a bad omen. Compare Hastings in Shakespeare's *Richard III*, III.ii.

260 See chapter on ghosts (5.2).

261 Compare Sara Schechner-Genuth: *Comets, Popular Culture, and the Birth of Modern Cosmology*, p. 58.

262 See above 4.2.

263 Jonathan Dollimore: *Radical Tragedy*, p. 36.

place in the early hours of morning just before the light rises, Antonio wakes up from his dream of ghostly apparitions and – “Antonio here reassures himself with an orthodoxy”²⁶⁴ – witnesses such evil-boding omens. Antonio ascribes these starry visions to God who answered with Antonio’s nosebleed²⁶⁵ – a sign of divine understanding. All these are signs of a disruption in the harmony of the cosmos, since Antonio’s father was killed in that night, which is unsettling the macrosom of the stars and the microcosm of mankind:

I pray thee peace. I tell you gentlemen
 The frightful shades of night yet shake my brain;
 My gellied blood’s not thaw’d; the sulphur damps
 That flow in winged lightning ’bout my couch
 Yet stick within my sense, my soul is great
 In expectation of dire prodigies. (I.ii.135–140)

Antonio’s observations of his body also reflect this upheaval in the balance of the universe. His brain feels uneven, his blood’s consistence is congealed, his sense almost poisoned, and he has an inkling of more serious matters to come. This description seems like a foreshadowing of what is to come. Instead, firstly “silence and an unmoved calm” (l. 152) follow.

Antonio’s mother Maria joins Antonio and Mellida and all hope for a glorious wedding ceremony, attended by Andrugio – but it is in vain, as the audience is already aware of. It seems almost ridiculous to the spectator, who knows of the past murder, to see them hope for a happy ending and sing of the past “bond of love” (l.177) between Piero and Andrugio and praise “the solsticy/ And highest point of sunshine happiness” (l. 178–179), when truly their fortune is cursed. The earth is at the greatest distance from the sun and cannot positively illuminate the scene.

A premonition of his own wrong behaviour overcomes Amintor when meeting his former love Aspatia on his way to join his bride Evadne in *The Maid’s Tragedy*. Amintor has an overwhelming feeling of remorse, having left Aspatia:

I did that Lady wrong; methinks I feel
 Her grief shoot suddenly through all my veins;
 Mine eyes run; this is strange at such a time.
 It was the King first mov’d me to’t, but he
 Has not my will in keeping–why do I

264 Ibid, p. 37. Dollimore additionally mentions that Antonio “later loses faith” in this orthodoxy, which is represented in his struggle to commit revenge.

265 In *The Duchess of Malfi*, II.ii.75, the servant Delio had called “Bleeding at nose” a superstitious sign; however shortly afterwards does his master Antonio’s nose bleed – an indication of Bosola’s evil influence on him (II.iii.43). In AR, I.ii.123, in contrast, the nosebleed is an answer from God, i.e. a sign of divine understanding.

Perplex my self thus? something whispers me,
 Go not to bed; my guilt is not so great
 As mine own conscience (too sensible)
 Would make me think; I only brake a promise,
 And 'twas the King that forc't me: timorous flesh,
 Why shak'st thou so? away my idle fears. (MT, II.i.131–141)

His conscience not only gives him firm knowledge of the pain he caused for Aspatia, and saddens him, too, so that his body shows grievous signs of remorse, but it also influences him with an inner voice of doubt about his wedding night with Evadne. He has an inkling of anxiety when thinking about his role as a husband, but then tries to deny these feelings, explaining his obedience to the king's command. These precognitions go hand in hand with the fatality of the king's orders. Indeed Aspatia has been wrongly discarded, purely for the king's arbitrary choice of a partner for his mistress – and Amintor's wedding night will prove worse than any of Amintor's fears mentioned in this scene.

Amintor's inkling becomes true in that he finds out that Evadne has sworn an oath against sharing his bed: "Yes, Sworn Amintor, and will swear again/ If you will wish to hear me" (II.i.159–160). Evadne is even trying to entangle him in an oath to commit suicide: "it is thou that wrongest me, I hate thee,/ Thou shouldst have kill'd thy self" (l. 187–188). So, Amintor's inkling reveals its truth more bluntly than the audience might have expected. This aspect seems interesting, as far as the playwright uses the common omen of an inkling to foreshadow danger, but is surprising the spectator with even more cruelty.

Again, it seems important to mention the denial of omens, in this case of inklings: Tomazo in *The Changeling* believes that Beatrice does not love his brother Alonzo: "In troth I see small welcome in her eye" (II.i.106), which Alonzo ominously denies, even when Beatrice asks for a delay of the wedding for three days.

Tomazo also warns Alonzo: "Unsettle your affection with all speed/ Wisdom can bring it to, your peace is ruin'd else" (II.i.128–129). He is even picturing torture and suffering that will ensue if Alonzo marries Beatrice: "Think what a torment 'tis to marry one/ Whose heart is leapt into another's bosom" (l. 130–131). But he is discarded with the pain of knowing his brother's fate will be a hapless one: "Thus a man / Quickly steals into his vexation." (154–155). However, the consequence is much worse than just a hapless fortune, since Alonzo is stabbed by Deflores in a vault in Vermandero's castle (III.ii).

“’Tis somewhat ominous, this”²⁶⁶

As has already been explained, an uncanny knowledge or a suspicion can be called an *inkling*. It is a presupposition of something without any definite sign, but rather a feeling. This can be an idea of an approaching war, hinting at some ultimate finale,²⁶⁷ or it might be a thought connoting a right suspicion. It often indicates through the choice of words and their underlying notions of mantic value, e.g. a diving heart.²⁶⁸ In revenge tragedies, it is mostly an emotion of danger.

In *Antonio’s Revenge*, Antonio’s mother Maria has a strange inkling of the nightly proceedings. She feels “fortune’s gilt” having left her (I.ii.5) and is not fully convinced of a reconciliation between her husband Duke Andrugio with Piero, and doubting a positive, or harmonious outcome:

Or is glib rumor grown a parasite,
Holding a false glass to my sorrow’s eyes,
Making the wrinkl’d front of grief seem fair,
Though’tis much rivel’d with abortive care? (I.ii.17–20)

Her past sensual experiences now seem ridiculous to her. This indeed proves truly fatal for her, because her husband has been murdered. She, now newly widowed, becomes the object of her Piero’s desire, her husband’s murderer.²⁶⁹

A similar strange feeling of doom overcomes Alsemero in *The Changeling*, when he meets Tomazo, who wants to take revenge for the disappearance (and murder) of his brother Alonzo de Piracquo. He supposes a possible murder, so that Alsemero strangely asks himself:

’Tis somewhat ominous, this, a quarrel entered
Upon this day; my innocence relieves me,
I should be wondrous sad else. (IV.ii.78–80)

Since the committed murder does not concern Alsemero, as far as its punishment is concerned, he has a strange and doom-boding inkling, but is not inflicted with a heavy conscience by it. However, there is indeed “a quarrel entered”, since Beatrice has wrought an intrigue to kill Tomazo’s brother. This will

266 Ch, IV.ii.78.

267 See among others Bernd Koch: “Bibelauslegung und Endzeiterwartungen in der frühen Neuzeit”, in: Barbara Haupt: *Endzeiterwartungen*, p. 313–29.

268 TH, V.i.1989–1990: “my heart diuines,/ Some strange and horrid act will be reueald.”

269 Interestingly, Maria’s servant Lucio is trying to calm her down and convince her of a situation where “all clouds clear’d of threat’ning discontent.” (I.ii.28), i.e. he is trying to create a dangerless situation with positive weather interpretations.

only be over when Tomazo is satisfied, once the murderer (Deflores) and the schemer (Beatrice) find their death.

However, a wrong judgement, and wrong interpretation of intricate feelings can also lead to a wrong decision. Even though Tomazo mistrusts the court and supposes it to be involved in the disappearance of his brother, he wrongly trusts his brother's murderer Deflores, and thinks he is sincere: "That Deflores has a wondrous honest heart./ He'll bring it out in time, I'm assur'd on't" (IV.ii.57–58). Thus his senses completely mislead his decisions. This wrong interpretation of inklings and uncanny feelings can be compared to the opposing interpretations of visual omens.

Inklings also play their role in *Caesar's Revenge*, especially in relation to impressions concerning the outcome of battles. Pompey enters the scene having fled the battle, having lost all hope, and being utterly desolate. He is reminded of a foreboding thought he had: "My flight a heavy memory doth renew,/ Which tels me I was wont to stay and winne" (1.70–71). He talks about the inspiration he had before this battle, that he would not win, and even ran away from the battlefield and acknowledges his downfall and "misery" (1.75). Interestingly, his inkling leads him to take a decision that will prove true. He had an inkling that caused him to take an action that would consequentially fulfil it. Deserting his army, Pompey is afraid of his own death, and therefore ashamed of his lack of courage, and – in all this misery – foresees his own death as a noble general of a defeated army: "O Noble Brutus, can I live and see,/ My Souldiars dead, my friends slaine in field" (1.106–107). The defeated party would be discarded and disgraced.

Caesar, too, is fearing loss and decay, but more noble-minded. He worries about his fatherland: This might be connected to the inkling he has at the end of the *Pharsalia*: "I heare a hoarse, and heavy dolfull voice,/ Of my deare Country crying, that to day/ My Glorious triumphs worke her owne decay" (1.222–224). Caesar's impression is that of coming doom, which is indeed soon followed in the play by his murder.

Towards the final battle between Caesar's murderers and his supporters, Brutus, too, has an ominous feeling of the cruelties that will ensue in the war between Romans: "My minde thats troubled in my vexed soule,/ (Opprest with sorrow and with sad dismay,)/ Misgives me this wilbe a heavy day" ([sic], V.i.2227–29). Similarly to Caesar, but in a more distinct way does he have an inkling of the bloodshed. In a similar way Cassius relates parallel images about a battle of the elements: "*Boreas* from his Iron cave" rising and keeping the "furies Striving in the waves", "The God *Oceanus* trembles at the stroke" (V.i.2264, 2265, 2269). He adds these weather metaphors to Brutus' inkling and thus supports his feeling with a visible omen.

Philippi indeed is Cassius' and Brutus' final battle. Thinking of the decay

destroying Rome, Cassius has an ominous feeling of a “trembling heart” (V.v.2449). He imagines looking into a bleak and dark future, adding even more ominous, visual dimensions to strengthen his hopelessness: “And without stares do sayle ‘gainst stares and winde./ In drery darkenesse and in chereles night,/ Without or hope or comfort endles are” (V.v.2417–19). To support his inkling, he evokes astrological signs, weather imagery and darkness, all representing doom.

The trembling heart – like the devining heart – indicates a premonition of things to come. The mind presages the future – the character is overcome with imminent danger and future revelations.

Omens of various different character foreshadow the plot and action of drama. Sometimes they represent only a small aspect of a scene in the revenge tragedies. It is mostly a commonplace that repeats itself in the different revenge tragedies and can also be found in other drama.²⁷⁰

Some of the plays contain more of one of the mantic elements, some do not contain one of the different elements, for example a ghost. Omens however are the most common element to transmit to the audience a knowledge of something to happen in revenge tragedy, be it through light images, planetary and astrological references, weather signs, figures of speech that imply darkness, or physical signs adhering to the body of either a human being or an animal, and lastly the impression of a prodigious signal, referred to only through an imprecise inkling.

These omens help to differentiate characters, they can create misunderstandings²⁷¹ and thus complicate or slow the plot line and more often than positive, they transmit an atmosphere of danger and evil to entangle the story with intrigues, disguises, slaughters, deformities, destruction, mostly to create sensation and anticipation.

By the playwrights, mantic elements such as omen or portents are used as auxiliary phenomena, strengthening and differentiating the different layers of the plot.²⁷² They become semiotic symbols of cultural commonplaces presented and functionalised on stage.²⁷³

270 Compare other tragedies, histories and even comedies. E. g., Beatrice in *Much Ado about Nothing* explains her nature as determined by the stars: her mother cried during her birth but “there was a star danced, and under that was I born” (II.i.293–294).

271 Compare George C. Herndl: *The High Design. English Renaissance Tragedy and the Natural Law* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1970).

272 See Gerardine Marie Obermark-Clark: *The Structural Function of Ghosts, Dreams, Prophecies and Portents in Shakespeare’s Plays*, p. 595.

273 See Marion Gymnich/ Birgit Neumann/ Ansgar Nünning (eds.): *Kulturelles Wissen und Intertextualität*, p. 11.

5 Mantic elements of visionary perception – The apparition of “dreadfull visions”²⁷⁴

The following two chapters deal with the mantic functionalisation of dreams and dream visions, and ghosts and ghostly visitations. Both dreams and ghosts are presented to the stage character as a vision, the first foremost during sleep, the latter being awake.²⁷⁵ Ghostly appearances are divided through the nature of the visitation and its dramaturgical function. This offers a potential for their differentiation as to whether the ghost is visible only to the audience, to a selected number of characters or to every person on stage, and presenting their cause to the spectators directly or to the stage characters.²⁷⁶

The dream cannot be presented to the audience, it is narrated by one character either in a monologue or dialogue. The following chapter will elucidate the different aspects and values inherent in dreams of the English revenge tragedy.

5.1 Dreams and Dream Visions – “Last sleep my sense was steep’d in horrid dreams”²⁷⁷

Somtime you do divine by dreames, and that is called *per Somnia*.
Nturall Phylosophy and Divinity doe manift the cause of dreams:
dreames sometime proceed from the fulnes of the belly,
sometimes from the emptines of the belly, somtimes by illusion,
somtimes by revelation, & sometimes by cogitation and revelation.²⁷⁸

In his *Astrologaster, or, The Figure-Caster*, which Melton wrote against the misuse of quack prophecies and charlatan foretellings, he acknowledges natural reasons for dreaming, but nevertheless grants a divine character to some dreams. He admits that prognostications could be drawn from metaphysical instances of sleeping visions and accepts the idea of divinatory dreams. Those

274 CR, line 1159.

275 Exceptions can be day dreams, and ghostly visions that occur during sleep, i.e. that have the nature of a dream.

276 See Gisela Dahinten: *Die Geisterszene in der Tragödie vor Shakespeare. Zur Seneca-Nachfolge im englischen und lateinischen Drama des Elisabethanismus*. Palaestra. Untersuchungen aus der deutschen und englischen Philologie und Literaturgeschichte 225, ed. W. Kayser et. al. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1958).

277 Marston: *Antonio’s Revenge*, I.ii.103.

278 John Melton: *Astrologaster, or, The Figure-Caster. Rather the Arraignment of Artlesse Astrologers, and Fortune-tellers, that cheat many ignorant people under the pretence of foretelling things to come, of telling things that are past, finding out things that are lost, expounding Dreames, calculating Deaths and Nativities, once againe brought to the Barre*. (London: Barnard Alsop, for Edward Blackmore, 1620), p. 66.

defined as caused by a divine force to influence the knowledge of the dreaming person and the interpreter of the dream are the kinds of dreams that appear in the theatre: a dream that foretells the future to a character on stage and the audience. Obviously the question is whether the dreamer will understand what he dreamt. What happens to him if he acts accordingly, if he neglects the dream, or if he misinterprets it and acts contrary to the demands of the dream?

In Elizabethan and Jacobean drama, dreams are mostly functionalised as these ominous mantic dreams²⁷⁹, a tradition that derived from that of the epic.²⁸⁰ The divine origin often goes unmarked in drama until its final impact comes to the surface in the denouement of the play. A dream is seen as a means of motivating character, foreshadowing the inevitable, creating suspense and being a brief interlude in a larger unfolding story shedding light on the plot and the *dramatis personae*.²⁸¹

For Shakespeare and his contemporaries, dreams carry transferred meanings and are used as metaphorical expressions of a vast variety, either as objective and occult information to the soul or divine guidance (especially in the late plays) or they are functionalised as mantic dreams containing ominous visions which prove true in the course of the play²⁸² and become a “conscious tool”.²⁸³

Often, the dream is misinterpreted by the characters. Sometimes it is contradicting its figurative content, i.e. it is used as a misleading mantic sign to reconstruct a controversial argument, which might only be solved in the conclusion.

Horrid dreams or dream visions, which haunt the characters in the chosen Renaissance revenge tragedies, are instances when the mind of one of the characters is perturbed. These are often difficult to read for the characters on stage, only revealing the truth through interpretation and a fulfilling realisation, as one character in *Clyomon and Clamydes* states: “Now what this dream doth

279 See introduction to Manfred Weidhorn: *Dreams in Seventeenth-Century English Literature* (The Hague/ Paris: Mouton, 1970).

280 See Florian Matern: “Dreams in Spenser’s ‘Faerie Queene’ and its epic successors in the 17th century: Joseph Beaumont’s ‘Psyche or Loves Myserie’, Abraham Cowley’s ‘Davideis’, John Milton’s ‘Paradise Lost’ and ‘Paradise Regained’, and Sir Richard Blackmore’s ‘Prince Arthur’ and ‘King Arthur’” (Diss. Bonn, 2009), hitherto unpublished. See especially chapter II.ii.

281 On this paragraph, see Manfred Weidhorn: *Dreams in Seventeenth-Century English Literature* (The Hague/ Paris: Mouton, 1970).

282 See Manfred Weidhorn: *Dreams in Seventeenth-Century English Literature* and D. E. Landry: “Dreams as History. *Cymbeline*”, in: *Shakespeare Quarterly* 33 (1983), p. 68–79, here p. 77.

283 Steven R. Fischer: “Dreambooks and the Interpretation of Medieval Literary Dreams”, in: *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 65 (1983), p. 1–20, p. 19–20.

signify, / My simple skills will not suffice the truth thereof to specify.”²⁸⁴ As this quotation stresses, the truth, which is mystically revealed in the dream, is not easily understood – the character on stage will only understand its content once it proves true, whereas the audience is often aware of the possible reaction or result of the dream before the staged event. It is dramatic irony that the audience knew of the prophetic character of a dream while the character was unaware of an approaching event. For the characters, they signify an ecstatic influence of another level of supernatural events and proceedings, as relating to the microcosm. Hinton Stewart acknowledges: “Such apparitions appear only in a limited number of the dramas, but through almost the whole of Shakespeare plays a subtle breath of metaphysics may be apprehended in the form of dreams and presentiments”.²⁸⁵

This metaphysical touch was very strong in Renaissance drama, not only in the form of dreams but all mantic elements. Struve in his study on the dream motif in the seventeenth century²⁸⁶ stated that the use of dreams in drama was also a factor for the definition of a character at the beginning of the seventeenth century as well as for the proceedings of the plot. They were to motivate rather than to hinder characters from doing something. This becomes important when analysing the behaviour a character shows and the conclusions he draws, once he is confronted with a dream in the revenge tragedies, more specifically how a character is restrained or spurred on by the content of a dream. This chapter treats the moments and instances where dreams are in fact meaningful for the course of the plot. Haubrichs calls this the “functional-pragmatic distinctive features”.²⁸⁷ More precisely, the character within the play is provided with a dream, which he reveals to the audience, as a means to define the character²⁸⁸ and his thoughts and reactions to the following events.²⁸⁹

284 Anonymous: *Clyomon & Clamydes*. Malone Society Reprints (London: Oxford University Press, 1913), l. 22.

285 Helen Hinton Stewart: *The Supernatural in Shakespeare* (London: John Ouseley, 1908), p. 3.

286 Jürgen Struve: *Das Traummotiv im Drama des XVII. Jahrhunderts* (Diss Kiel, 1913). See also Peter Brown (ed.): *Reading Dreams. The Interpretation of Dreams from Chaucer to Shakespeare* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999). Compare also Wolfgang Haubrichs: “Offenbarung und Allegorese. Formen und Funktionen von Vision und Traum in frühen Legenden”, in: *Formen und Funktionen der Allegorie*. Germanistische Symposien Berichtsbände 3, ed. Walter Haug (Stuttgart, 1979), p. 243–264.

287 See Wolfgang Haubrichs: “Offenbarung und Allegorese”, p. 244–5.

288 Dreams are also a question of the readiness of the soul, as Augustin writes. See Matern: “Dreams in Spenser’s ‘Faerie Queene’ and its epic successors in the 17th century.” See especially chapter II.ii.4.1.

289 There are various studies as to the history, nature and importance of dreams; see e.g. Ruth Leila Andersen: *Elizabethan Psychology and Shakespeare’s Plays* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1966); Max Arnold: *Die Verwendung des Traummotivs in der Englischen Dichtung von Chaucer bis auf Shakespeare* (Diss., Kiel, 1912); James Black: “Shakespeare’s *Henry V*

In drama, the question is not only who is dreaming (and when and where) but mainly what is being dreamt – and whether these dreams are contemporary to the action taking place in the dream and in the reality on stage²⁹⁰ – dreams can mirror the action or have the function of a *Mauerschau*. Struve especially distinguishes between dreams that prophesy mischance and those foretelling luck and happiness. The first type²⁹¹ he defines as first and foremost creating fear and doubt. This is the type that predominantly occurs in the revenge tragedies of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.²⁹² This type had existed long before English drama prospered.

The belief in the importance and significance of dreams can be traced back in history – the Greeks thought dreams were inspired by souls in the air dispatching futuristic inspirations via mental activities²⁹³ rather than a physical excess as a cause, as Aristotle thought; Christians believed in the demonic powers of malevolent devils, which inspired false hopes and anxieties. In addition to that, the souls were supposed to lose their bodies when freed by evil dreams, and ecstatic inspirations creating fear among the living. This information from a supernatural influence produces a different non-physical level that occurs during sleep as a liberation of the mind, which then produces an insight into an existential truth by recalling the past, comprehending the present or foreseeing the future. Dreams, according to astrologers, are due to planetary influence; the stars are able to direct dreams similar to the wanderings of a waking mind; theologians, too, believed in dreaming revelations instead of physical causes.²⁹⁴

and the Dreams of History”, in: *English Studies in Canada* 1 (1975); Peter Brown (ed.): *Reading Dreams. The Interpretation of Dreams from Chaucer to Shakespeare* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); Carroll Camden: “Shakespeare on Sleep and Dreams”, in: *The Rice Institute Pamphlet* 23 (1936), p. 106–133; George Steiner: “The Historicity of Dreams”, in: *Salmagundi* 61 (1983), p. 6–21.

290 See Jürgen Struve: *Das Traummotiv im Drama des XVII. Jahrhunderts*, chapter III and IV.

291 Ibid, p. 81. The second type is one that occurs in the drama of the later seventeenth century.

292 Compare Owen J. Flanagan: *Dreaming Souls. Sleep, Dreams, and the Evolution of the Conscious Mind* (Oxford/ New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 20.

293 For an idea of dreams, compare, for example, Democritus, Hippocrate, Artemidorus of Daldi, and Macrobius. There are various accounts of the existence of dreams and different kinds of analyses from classical times through to Renaissance interpretations. One could also look at the dreams in drama with a modern perspective, for example, on Shakespeare as read through Freud. However, a more complex introduction to the nature of dreams would go too far here. For those, see other studies which deal more closely with the question of the history of dreams. See introductory chapter of the history of dreams in Matern: “Dreams in Spenser’s ‘Faerie Queene’ and its epic successors in the 17th century”, chapter II.i. See also the introduction to Hildegard Hammerschmidt-Hummel: *Die Traumtheorien des 20. Jahrhunderts und die Träume der Figuren Shakespeares* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1992).

294 On this paragraph, see the various analyses and histories of the development of the interpretation of dreaming. Compare, among others, Manfred Weidhorn: *Dreams in Seventeenth-Century English Literature* (The Hague/ Paris: Mouton, 1970); Gerardine Ober-

Sleep and, likewise dreaming, was in medical history generally divided into three different modes containing three different kinds of dreams:²⁹⁵ *somnium naturale* – the natural sleep, *somnium animale* – the sleep of the mind, and *somnium coeleste* or *divina* – the divinely inspired sleep.²⁹⁶

The *somnium naturale* is produced by a disturbance in the balance of the body by the humours, i.e. a physical condition. Produced by the influence of heavy food, indigestion or an imbalance of the humours,²⁹⁷ these dreams are caused by the proceedings and actions of the day and the bodily balance and are not of interest in a study on mantic dreams.

The *somnium animale* is seen as a reproduction of impressions of the waking mind; i.e. it has a psychological origin,²⁹⁸ and sleepy vapours were scientifically diagnosed as a possible sign of psychological (or prophetic) character.²⁹⁹ In his article on “Dreams as Metaphysical Visions”, Takei underlines the fact that dreams are but shadows of man’s ambition and bad dreams visions of evil circumstances.³⁰⁰ These may be ignored, as they are, when Thomas Nashe in his *Terrors of the Night* defines a dream as “nothing else but a bubbling scum or froath of the fancie”³⁰¹, as a recollection of past events. However, as explained above, in drama they are given a plot-defining significance and therefore need to

mark-Clark: *The Structural Function of Ghosts, Dreams, Prophecies and Portents in Shakespeare’s Plays* (Diss. Indiana University, 1977). See also Wolfgang Haubrichs: “Offenbahrung und Allegorese. Formen und Funktionen von Vision und Traum in frühen Legenden”, in: *Formen und Funktionen der Allegorie*. Germanistische Symposien Berichtsbände 3, ed. Walter Haug (Stuttgart, 1979), p. 243–264, p. 245. Compare also Matern: “Dreams in Spenser’s ‘Faerie Queene’ and its epic successors in the 17th century” Compare especially chapter II.ii.5.

295 See Robert K. Presson: “Two Types of Dreams in Elizabethan Drama”, in: *Studies in English Literature* 7 (1967), p. 239–256; compare also Wolfgang Haubrichs: “Offenbahrung und Allegorese. Formen und Funktionen von Vision und Traum in frühen Legenden”, p. 243–264.

296 See also Raymond Gardette: “Les formes du songe dans le théâtre de Shakespeare”, in: *Le Songe a la Renaissance*, ed. Françoise Charpentier, Association d’études sur l’Humanisme, la Réforme et la Renaissance, Colloque International de Cannes 1987, p. 243–54, p. 246. See also Bain Tate Stewart: “The Misunderstood Dreams in the Plays of Shakespeare and His Contemporaries”, in: *Essays in Honor of Walter Clyde Curry* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1954), p. 197–206.

297 Compare for example the mid-seventeenth century studies by the physician Thomas Browne.

298 “Der Dichter lässt die Träume abhängig sein von dem Menschen selbst; was sein Innerstes bewegt, das spiegelt sich auch in seinen Träumen wieder. Nicht mehr in der unsichtbaren Welt, der Welt der Geister sucht er die Erklärung für die Träume, sondern in dem Menschen selbst.” From: Jürgen Struve: *Das Traummotiv im Drama des XVII. Jahrhunderts*, p. 81.

299 For the prophetic character see the next paragraph on *somnium divina*.

300 Naoe Takei: “Dreams as Metaphysical Visions”, in: *Shakespeare Studies* 8 (Tokyo/ Japan, 1969), p.19.

301 Thomas Nashe: *The Terrors of the Night*. The Stratford-upon-Avon Library 1, ed. Stanley Wells (London: Edward Arnold, 1964), p. 153.

be analysed as to their function. It is also interesting to watch and interpret the psychological effect that a dream, especially one of a bad nature, which forebodes evil, has on the stage characters.

The traditional belief of the English Renaissance audience recognised the importance of dreams and their perception as an unconscious transmission of truth: this revelation in drama is that of the unknown plot, which was used as a literary device of future-determining divination.³⁰² As such, a dream is nevertheless open to individual interpretation.³⁰³

Weidhorn characterises some dreams as self-generated dreams, which are based on the belief in the supernatural objective influence of dreams. Their reasons and explanations are often given as naturalistic. Anderson explains dreams as influenced by the spirit, “the chief instrument of the soul”; these being barred from a direct influence on the waking body during sleep and “forestall the framing of strange dreams”.³⁰⁴ In drama, however, they are of an expanding significance for the plot,³⁰⁵ in that they allow the metaphysical level to be considered within the plot, and they have an effect on the behaviour of the characters, as they foreshadow knowledge to the audience.

The knowledge that is perceived through dream visions enters the mind during sleep, as Camden explains: there is a separation of the fancy from the body and there are metaphysical influences determining the divine dreams of the supernatural type. These occur in revenge tragedy and give an insight into the plot and foreshadow present or future events.³⁰⁶ As far as this prophetic character is concerned, the *somnium coeleste* or *divina* proves the relevant type of sleep for mantic examination: the influence of a spiritual significance causing an impression of simultaneous or forthcoming events. They can also be of an evil nature, and are then called diabolical dreams³⁰⁷ – they are of threatening quality to the characters of the plot. The interpretation of dreams of the third type, the *somnium divina*, is the important one for the analysis of Renaissance revenge drama, because the dreams have the function to foreshadow events in the plot to the spectator. Celestial or divine dreams as phantoms of the present and the

302 Compare the definition of dreams in Manfred Weidhorn: *Dreams in Seventeenth-Century English Literature* (The Hague/ Paris: Mouton, 1970).

303 For the literary use of dreams, see among others Steven R. Fischer: “Dreambooks and the Interpretation of Medieval Literary Dreams”, in: *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 65 (1983), p. 1–20, p. 19–20.

304 Ruth Leila Anderson: *Elizabethan Psychology and Shakespeare’s Plays*, p. 10 and 50.

305 The significance is then not just that of the natural psychological determination by the character but by the outer circumstances and the contextual events. Compare also Weidhorn.

306 See Caroll Camden: “Shakespeare on Sleep and Dreams”, in: *The Rice Institute Pamphlet* 23 (1936), p. 106–133, p. 107.

307 For this paragrah, see Weidhorn: *Dreams*. See his differentiation of dreams.

future provide images to the stage character during his sleep: either as an objective visitation of a distant place in a literal and explicit, direct or in a symbolic, allegorical, indirect way. These images give information either to the inner or subjective faculties of the human being, as an objective, outer, divine guidance from a supernatural level and instruct or warn him, or they are presented as an unreal, symbolic dream, which appears to guide along the unknown territory of fate.

Dreams and dream visions in the revenge tragedies are not very numerous.³⁰⁸ However, they do appear in some of the revenge scenarios and can be divided into different categories as to their function. There are dreams, which are introduced to create a sense of comic relief and lighter matter, however, they do not have any future importance.

The second category of instructive dreams becomes interesting when looking at *The White Devil*; a planned theory is made up by a pretending dreamer to create the same effect as that of a true dream.³⁰⁹

The third category is the dreamt vision, the true *somnium divina*, predominantly a vision of danger – sleep is only the medium to this. It is the most important category as far as the determination of future events in the tragedy is concerned. It provides knowledge of dramatic plot events.

5.1.1 Dreams of comic relief – “baby thoughts/ in the cradle of sleep”³¹⁰

The first category, – that of comic relief – can be found in Nutriche’s dream in *Antonio’s Revenge*. It is not important for the foreshadowing of tragic action in the play, but proves interesting as a contrastive background. When Antonio’s beloved Maria is waking her servant Nutriche up, the latter wishes she had kept on dreaming. Only the dream itself is not one of deeper foreshadowing quality, but of blunt entertainment: Nutriche dreamt of a (marital) sexual encounter.³¹¹

Nevertheless, with her waking wish to have kept on dreaming, the nature of sleep is compared to the nature of waking. Only in this regard, this dream is significant: the audience knows that sleeping and dreaming seems the better alternative to confronting the blood and murder, which might ensue when awake and learning about the horrors of reality.

As such, having no dreams seems to be the better alternative to Nutriche, when she gives advice to Maria: when later in the play Maria is supposed to marry the villain Piero, Nutriche tells her to defy dreams and dreaming, and

308 Like ghosts, they appear only sporadically in some of the revenge tragedies, not in all of them.

309 See below for further information.

310 AR, III.ii.21–22.

311 AR, I.ii.31–39.

neglect those visions in her sleep that appear the night before Maria is supposed to wed Piero. Otherwise she might encounter dreams of threat and danger – as Antonio did before – which would only make her confused and insecure. John Bayley in his *Shakespeare and Tragedy* confirms that sleep allows an irrevocable dramatisation of a situation – he argues sleeping is a state where man is vulnerable in an intimate way.³¹² Nightmarish dreams create fear when the dreamer is awake – and thus they have an immanent, inner dramatic value.

The honest Balurdo in *Antonio's Revenge* on the other hand proposes “baby thoughts/ in the cradle of sleep” (III.ii.21–22) – Maria should influence her dreams by thinking of nothing but naïve and innocent ideas. Dreams, according to Balurdo, might promote an “absense of physical representations of evil and wickedness”³¹³, as Takei quotes, they will thereby stress the character’s psychology.³¹⁴ This seems to be a safe and sound, but impossible alternative to Maria. Instead of falling asleep, she is left with her thoughts of despair about herself and having lost her husband Antonio, who is believed to be dead in this scene (AR, III.ii). Instead of a dream, she is then visited by the ghostly vision of Antonio’s father Andrugio, who blesses her and leaves her in sadness and calm, until she joins in the final revenge against Piero.

In *The Maid's Revenge* by James Shirley from 1626, there is only one dream; however, it is of minor importance, because it merely allows one of the characters to boast about himself: Catalina, the daughter of Gasper de Vilarezo sees her love interest Count de Monte Nigro as a warrior in her dream. However, the Count, who is already introduced as a “braggard” in the list of dramatis personae, pretends to be aware of this right before she confirms it and thereby tries to underline his own qualities as a fighter. The dream continues: “And in that single combat, for my sake/ You slew a giant, and you no sooner had/ Rescued my honor, but there crept a pigme/ Out of the earth, and kill'd you.”³¹⁵ It is a dream to allow the character to boast about himself, comparing their fates to a greater importance, which is of no consequence for such a ridiculous character.

312 John Bayley: *Shakespeare and Tragedy* (London/ Boston/ Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), p. 69.

313 Naoe Takei according to D. G. James in *Dream of Prospero*: “Dreams as Metaphysical Visions”, p. 15.

314 See other studies on the theory of dreams, e.g. Florian Matern: “Dreams in Spenser’s ‘Faerie Queene’ and its epic successors in the 17th century: Joseph Beuamont’s ‘Psyche or Loves Myserie’, Abraham Cowley’s ‘Davideis’, John Milton’s ‘Paradise Lost’ and ‘Paradise Regained’, and Sir Richard Blackmore’s ‘Prince Arthur’ and ‘King Arthur’” (Diss. Bonn, 2009), hitherto unpublished.

315 *Maid's Revenge*, p. 6 (no act, nor scene division).

5.1.2 Instructive dreams – “I’ll tell your grace/ A dream I had last night”³¹⁶

The second category is that of the instructive dream.³¹⁷ It is effectively used by Vittoria in *The White Devil*, relying on the annunciatory character of the dream, given it is reported to the right person. Vittoria is a strong, lustful and greedy character: she is very cunning in her erotic luring of the married Brachiano and tells him an invented dream and dictates him how to act according to her plans:³¹⁸

To pass away the time, I’ll tell your grace
 A dream I had last night. [...]

A foolish idle dream:

Methought I walked about the mid of night
 Into a churchyard, where a goodly yew-tree
 Spread her large root in ground: under that yew,
 As I sat sadly leaning on a grave,
 Chequer’d with cross-sticks, there came stealing in
 Your duchess and my husband; one of them
 A pickaxe bore, th’ other a rusty spade,
 And in rough terms they ‘gan to challenge me
 About this yew. [...] This harmless yew;
 They told me my intent was to root up
 That well-grown yew, and plant i’ the stead of it
 A wither’d blackthorn; and for that they vow’d
 To bury me alive. My husband straight
 With pickaxe ‘gan to dig, and your fell duchess
 With shovel, like a fury, voided out
 The earth and scatter’d bones: Lord, how methought
 I trembled, and yet for all this terror
 I could not pray. [...]

When to my rescue there arose, methought,
 A whirlwind, which let fall a massy arm
 From that strong plant;
 And both were struck dead by that sacred yew,
 In that base shallow grave that was their due. (I.ii.219–244)

316 WD, I.ii.219–220.

317 This category proves to be a difficult one due to the uncertain nature of the dream’s narration. The indication to subsume this dream as potentially fictional and invented is given by Flamineo, see below.

318 Compare Jackson I. Cope: *The Theatre and the Dream. From Metaphor to Form in Renaissance Drama* (Baltimore/ London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), p. 3. Compare this to D. E. Landry: “Dreams as History. *Cymbeline*”, in: *Shakespeare Quarterly* 33 (1983), p. 68–79, here p. 71.

She is not only setting her dream in a graveyard – the place of death – but also at the time of night when there is darkness³¹⁹ around as a fitting surrounding for evil thoughts.³²⁰ Thus, Vittoria is using the image of an appropriate dream setting, as Bridget Lyons explains: “The black bile produced dreams and visions connected with death and evil spirits, with night and with graveyards, and with the plants, animals or other objects that represented or embodied these.”³²¹ Walking into the churchyard by night is an indication of some horrible deeds happening, since there are graves all around; and even though it is close to the church, it is also a place detached from doing of good deeds, but one of death and damnation.³²² The yew tree, a typical graveyard tree, is a sign of immortality and remembrance of those entombed in their graves and also of mourning and sadness,³²³ but here, Vittoria functionalises it as a symbol for her alleged purity and harmless love for Brachiano which Isabella and Camillo supposedly want to destroy; however, it is also a tree from which drugs, i.e. possible poison, are produced – as she is inducing Brachiano with poisonous thoughts.³²⁴ “There are both creative and destructive elements in the imaginative faculty, of which Shakespeare [and his contemporaries] seems to have been very conscious.”³²⁵ Webster uses it here as an artificial means³²⁶ that is produced by the playwright for a certain function and Vittoria uses it consciously as an on-stage dramaturgical artificial means herself: as planned prediction by the dream. This awareness Vittoria has of her own ability to direct certain events, is precisely what Wilson calls “the theatre as an alterna place of judgment”³²⁷ reworked into the play itself.

Vittoria never recognises or accredits the fictive nature of her dream, but her brother mentions its instructive character in his aside; he therefore recognises

319 See chapter 4.4.

320 See also Peter Brown (ed.): *Reading Dreams. The Interpretation of Dreams from Chaucer to Shakespeare* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

321 Bridget Gellert Lyons: *Voices of Melancholy. Studies in Literary Treatments of Melancholy in Renaissance England* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971), p. 44.

322 See e.g. *The Atheist's Tragedy*, where murder is committed in the churchyard; II.iv.

323 See J. C. Cooper: *An Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Traditional Symbols* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1978), p. 196. Aspatia in MT sings a song about “a garland on my hearse,/ Of the dismal yew” in MT, II.i.76–77.

324 Tamora calls the tree the “dismal yew”, *Titus Andronicus*, II.iii.112.

325 Naoe Takei: “Dreams as Metaphysical Visions”, p. 32.

326 See also Max Arnold: he uses the term “Kunstmittel”, see chapter V in Max Arnold: *Die Verwendung des Traummotivs in der Englischen Dichtung von Chaucer bis auf Shakespeare* (Diss., Kiel, 1912).

327 Luke Wilson: “*The White Devil and the Law*”, in: *Early Modern English Drama. A Critical Companion*, eds. Garrett A. Sullivan, Jr./ Patrick Cheney/ Andrew Hadfield (New York/ Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 225–236, p. 233.

the opportunities of a clever fictitious dream.³²⁸ It cannot be denied that the character and truth value of Vittoria's dream is not, as in a divine dream, unclear to the dreamer and the listener, but the meaning is directly clear to those on stage and not just to the audience. Therefore, it is essential to create this different category, that of the instructive dream, for this kind of active foreshadowing. The seemingly supernatural presents itself like a directed play on stage. Vittoria seems to be very aware of this interpretation and uses it to create this kind of instructive dream for the plot she is directing against her husband and Brachiano's wife.

Dramaturgically calling it a foolish dream, Vittoria, like the playwrights, uses the dream as a functional element. She is inciting action and thereby determining Brachiano's future decisions. Brown comments on this as follows: "The connection between dreams and subjectivity is more fully achieved in Vittoria's dream in *The White Devil*. Both the occasion and the subject-matter of the dream integrate dramatic and narrative function with the representation of character."³²⁹ Very cunningly, she instructs him through dream metaphors about the dangers allegedly threatening her own life. Since she undoubtedly functionalises the dream, it is not clear whether Vittoria really had this dream or whether – and this seems almost likelier concerning her witty use of words she and also her brother Flamineo command – that she has invented the dream to instruct Brachiano.

Vittoria's husband Camillo is turned from the naive cuckold that he is in reality into a dangerous threat in her dream. As if he is a life-threatening force, she is seeking help from Brachiano's strong arm.

This illusion is meant to provoke danger – the "discrepancy between the physical, material reality and the emotional reality, between the outer and the inner world"³³⁰ needs to be differentiated – here, Webster is handing the power of the function of the dream to one of his stage characters. Vittoria is beginning to direct her scene, which eventually leads to taking Isabella's place and becoming Duchess herself. According to this method, illustrated in Webster, the audience or the reader can find "victims of imagination"³³¹ experiencing horrible catastrophes and nightmarish imaginations which can even charm them into a false apprehension of the world they live in. Such is the fate of Brachiano. He has, but also wants, to accept Vittoria's dream at face value.

It seems as if it does not matter to the recipient, Brachiano, whether the dream is imagined or real: the effect is that of a mantic dream, as far as the future action

328 See below (I.ii.245–247).

329 Peter Brown (ed.): *Reading Dreams. The Interpretation of Dreams from Chaucer to Shakespeare* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 165.

330 Naoe Takei: "Dreams as Metaphysical Visions", p. 32.

331 Takei explains this for Shakespeare and his contemporaries. *Ibid.* p. 33.

of the interpreter is concerned. This seems also Takei's explanation: "Voices come from outside or inside. They are likewise inevitable and irresistible, and incomprehensible as well. The emotional impact of imaginative reality is as mysterious as any supernatural phenomenon."³³² For Brachiano, the consequence is that of a true mantic dream.

However, instead of seeing his sister's dream as one of mantic nature, too, Flamineo comments on the likelihood of Vittoria's invention of the dream and the true nature of its origin: "No; the devil was in your dream." (I.ii.239). He is aware of the fact that the narrated dream might be a dream fiction, which mirrors Vittoria's intent rather than indicating divine interference. Struve elaborates on these kinds of dreams as dream fiction.

Flamineo, as a third party, like the audience, perceives the fictionality of the dream, but also acknowledges Vittoria's cunning and her "direct and intentional influence".³³³ Flamineo knows, how Vittoria uses the invention as a false instruction and describes the dream for her own purposes: "Excellent devil! She hath taught him in a dream/ To make away his duchess and her husband" (I.ii.245–247). Brown reflects on the use of dreams: "The dramatists were aware of and could exploit the interpretation of dreams as a constant interplay between convention and the particularity of individual experience."³³⁴ Vittoria's dream in this respect seems like a double exploitation, addressed at the audience and the plot and actively at Brachiano.

The addressee Brachiano is completely absorbed by Vittoria, accepting her dream as a true warning to their joined future and as one that he will have to take seriously: it will be his task, as that of the yew branch, to determine measures to divert harm from his affair and create circumstances to make Vittoria accepted as a mistress (or possibly future wife):

Sweetly shall I interpret this your dream.
 You are lodg'd within his arms who shall protect you
 From all the fevers of a jealous husband,
 From the poor envy of our phlegmatic duchess.
 I'll seat you above law, and above scandal;
 Give to your thoughts the invention of delight,
 And the fruition; nor shall government
 Divide me from you longer, than a care
 To keep you great: you shall to me at once
 Be dukedom, health, wife, children, friends, and all. (WD, I.ii.248–257)

332 Ibid., p. 36.

333 See Jürgen Struve: *Das Traummotiv im Drama des XVII. Jahrhunderts*, p. 72–74.

334 Peter Brown (ed.): *Reading Dreams*, p. 165.

Elevating Vittoria above the law equals raising himself above the limits of law, an allowance that is not granted to a sublunar being, even if it is the head of state.³³⁵ This ignorance by Brachiano is related to the sin of pride, *superbia*.³³⁶

In contrast to Vittoria's decorative elaboration on her instructive dream, Brachiano's wife Isabella wishes to deny any influence of dreams. On the contrary, she wishes to sleep tight, undistracted from any thoughts or grievances her soul might be encountering during a dream: "Tis [her soul] burden'd with too many [grievous sins]; and I think/ The oftener that we cast our reckonings up,/ Our sleep will be the sounder." (WD, II.i.152–154) She neither accepts dreams to divert her thoughts, nor their scheming nature, and wants to create a distance between a true fear that comes from mantic dreams.

After the murder of Brachiano, the plot's pace becomes slower. Francisco is confidently cherishing his position in the success of killing Brachiano, when Zanche, Vittoria's coloured servant joins him and tries to lure him to her bed with an instructive dream: Francisco has instructed Ludovico to murder Brachiano during the marriage ceremony, but has taken on the disguise of a moor and calls himself Mulinassar. Zanche has fallen in love with Francisco in his disguise and advances him. First she narrates of her inkling of some dreadful event within her sleep: "I knew last night, by a sad dream I had,/ Some mischief would ensue: yet, to say truth,/ My dream most concern'd you." (WD, V.iii.221–223), thus cleverly relating her dream to a partly-confirmed truth, which Francisco should therefore give more credit.³³⁷ Then she reveals her purpose – like Vittoria, she is trying to instruct her listener by the dream she tells, only Zanche's dream is not clad in metaphors, but direct and frank: "Methought, sir, you came stealing to my bed. [...] Methought you lay down by me." (l. 225, 229) Interestingly, Francisco plays along with the idea and invents a corresponding dream: "So dreamt I;" (l. 229) and both arrange to meet at night to fly from Rome. This episode could rather be subsumed under the comic relief heading, but plays along the same idea as that of Vittoria, which Zanche obviously imitates here.³³⁸

In *Antonio's Revenge*, the servant Balurdo, to divert his master Antonio's

335 And even for kings, who are the agent of God in the state and only have their kingship by the grace of God, it can prove fatal, if they raise themselves too high; it proves their own downfall if they try to raise themselves above their status as head of state but not head of divine rule. See for example *Richard II*, etc.

336 Pride is one of the seven deadly sins. It is his pride (and also his lust) that causes Brachiano to become entangled in a net of further sin and crime – he acts against the oath he swore to Isabella in marriage and instructs murder.

337 See below, on AR.

338 Again, it is difficult to determine the quality of Zanche's dream, like that of Vittoria's, as purely fictional since there is no proof that they admit to the creative invention of its content and thus its instructive character.

horrible thoughts about his ominous, horrid dreams,³³⁹ but Balurdo just made his dream up to challenge and weaken the impact of Antonio's fearful dreams of his dead father, and to lighten the situation of its gravity: "Verily, Sir Jeffrey had a monstrous strange dream the last/ night. For methought I dream'd I was asleep, and methought/ the ground yawn'd and belk'd up the abominable ghost of/ a misshapen Simile" (I.ii.125–128).³⁴⁰ This diversion, though, is not successful since Antonio does not pay any attention to Balurdo and in comparison redirects all his mischief-boding thoughts of the night towards the sorrowful circumstances they represent. Balurdo is, while trying to make a joke of Antonio's dream, questioning the idea that bad dreams can be foreshadowing. However, the nature of the true mantic dreams is that of indeed giving a revelation about a real event.

Takei stresses the impact of dreams as "inner visions, they come to assume an illusory and nightmarish quality"³⁴¹ – evil dreams seem shadowy but present a direct fear or imagined danger even if not perceived instantly.

5.1.3 Prophetic Dreams – "I had a very strange dream to-night"³⁴²

The ominous mantic dream, the *somnium coeleste/ divina*, reveals the truth – it is a prophetic dream about the future, or a mirror to present events: a dream that defines the fortune of characters – a dream vision showing divine revelation and offering a future vision.³⁴³ This revelation of truth often comes as a shock, and the dreaming person might ask himself how he cannot be dreaming.

The truly ominous dream³⁴⁴ revealing danger is rarely but very impressively used to underline the fate and duty of the hero in the chosen primary literature – he is "blessed" with some supernatural vision,³⁴⁵ but might falsely interpret it as an illusion "from the heat-oppressed brain"³⁴⁶, as Macbeth calls his vision of the dagger.³⁴⁷ Tate Stewart asks: "Why were prophetic dreams consistently ignored or misinterpreted in the drama? The answer lies in their nature and function."³⁴⁸

339 See below, 5.1.3.

340 The ghost appears in the dream from the abyss of the underworld, a topical image, which Marston took from Seneca, see Hunter's introduction to his edition of *Antonio's Revenge*, p. xii–xv.

341 Takei: "Dreams as Metaphysical Visions", p. 21.

342 DM, III.v.12.

343 See also Jürgen Struve: *Das Traummotiv*, p. 70.

344 The so-called type D described by Manfred Weidhorn.

345 See Wolfgang Haubrichs: "Offenbarung und Allegorese", p. 244.

346 Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, II.i.39.

347 Compare Haubrichs: "Offenbarung und Allegorese", p. 244.

348 Bain Tate Stewart: "The Misunderstood Dreams in the Plays of Shakespeare and His Contemporaries", in: *Essays in Honor of Walter Clyde Curry* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1954), p. 197–206, here p. 202.

They were rarely presented in straightforward terms, but often veiled in symbols and indefinite revelations, which is the reason why Tate Stewart even calls it “superior to the dumb show as a conventional foreshadowing device”.³⁴⁹ Dreams present a certainty of fate and determination of action in the play.

At the beginning of *Antonio's Revenge*, the hero Antonio is introducing the audience to the sorrowful circumstances that set the revenge tragedy into action – through a dream: one part of this dream is already known by the audience as truth, because they have witnessed a scene, staged before Antonio enters, the events of which are now revealed to him in his dream. The audience is aware of their role as evaluator of the dream, like Antonio; however, they have encountered a proof to parts of the dream and therefore are put into a role where they can judge on the other part of the dream as even more likely true. Their evidence of fore-knowledge makes the second part's truth more imminent than the pure dream already does as a means to determine the truth. Antonio is describing his nightly dream to his followers, which – to them – proves truly ominous:

Last sleep my sense was steep'd in horrid dreams:
 Three parts of night were swallow'd in the gulf
 Of ravenous time when to my slumb'ring powers 105
 Two meager ghosts made apparition.
 The one's breast seem'd fresh paunch'd with bleeding wounds
 Whose bubbling gore sprang in frighted eyes.
 The other ghost assum'd my father's shape;
 Both cried, "Revenge!" At which my trembling joints
 (Iced quite over with a froz'd cold sweat)
 Leap'd forth the sheets. (I.ii.103–112)

In his dream, Antonio has a vision of ghostly apparitions.³⁵⁰ The bleeding first ghost is that of Antonio's friend Feliche, who has just been killed by Piero. The audience already witnessed this in the previous, first scene of the play. The second ghost – in his father's shape – represents his dead father, whom the audience do not know dead yet, but – knowing of the one murder – are easily led to believe. Thus, similar to Hamlet,³⁵¹ Antonio is called onto revenge by the spirit

349 Ibid., p. 206.

350 This dream could also be interpreted in the chapter on ghosts. I have included its analysis in this chapter because Antonio is not aware of the truly spiritual visitation that is made by these two ghosts, but explains it himself as a dream vision. In contrast to this, Francisco, for example, while being awake, creates the vision of his sister as her ghost – a reason that caused me to include that scene, which could also be treated as a dream vision, in the ghost section, see chapter 5.2. Especially Thomas Rist states that “that there is substance to Antonio's dreams; that the ghosts were present.” See Thomas Rist: “Religion, Politics, Revenge: The Dead in Renaissance Drama”. *Early Modern Literary Studies* 9.1 (2003), on: <http://extra.shu.ac.uk/emls/09-1/ristdead.html>.

351 The action of AR is very similar to *Hamlet*, see any introduction to the play.

of his murdered father – a “portentous ‘revenge’ vision”,³⁵² as Weidhorn calls it. The truth of the dream is evident the next morning: Feliche is stabbed, Andrugio murdered, and in addition, Mellida’s³⁵³ honour is tainted. Antonio calls out the horrible coming true of the ominous dream he had that night: “Why, now the womb of mischief is deliver’d/ Of the prodigious issue of the night.” (I.ii.259–260). Dream visions are haunting him from then on and he is trying to be more confident: “*Ferte fortiter* [...] Ha, ha! ’tis naught/ But foamy bubbling of a fleamy brain, I Naught else but smoke, O, what dank, marish spirit/ But would be fired with impatience” (II.ii.53–57) – he calms himself down by denying the influence of mantic visions, but cannot be successful in this, because his first dream visions in I.ii proved true. Over and over, Antonio tries to deny the inflaming visions, until ultimately revenge is taken and he can calm down again. The revenger needs to accept the cruelty and violence of dreams to carry out revenge,

As Antonio first tries to calm himself down, as does the viceroy in *The Spanish Tragedy* when he has an inkling of his son’s fate through a dream: he is afraid of his son’s death having seen him being taken by the Spanish in a dream: “Ay, ay, my nightly dreams have told me this!” (ST, I.ii.76) Indeed, it is true that his son has been taken as a prisoner of war, but was not killed by the victors – something the viceroy only feared, but did not see in a dream vision. The dream itself proves true, however; it is also interesting that the assumption that his dream led to is a false one.

Dreams are treated as visions that create a fear of death, though they do not necessarily foreshadow the looming death very clearly.³⁵⁴ However, there is always a glimpse of anxiety in the connection between the possible reality of a dream vision.³⁵⁵

The content of the dream reflects the truth, but the intuitive inkling of doom that it causes also creates fear. This can also be applied to other interpretations of mantic elements. The true character of a prophecy, an omen, or a dream is only revealed by the plot. However, in each case, the audience is aware of a more concrete looming tragedy, as the character within the plot is unconscious of what exactly will occur to him. This discrepancy or dramatic irony is at the same time teasing and attractive for the audience, as it is frightening and cryptic.

In *Caesar’s Revenge*, the character of *Discord* tells of Cassius’ unruly dreams about “blood and death” (I.1158) and “dreadfull visions” (I.1159) after the

352 Weidhorn: *Dreams in Seventeenth-Century English Literature*, p. 121.

353 Mellida is Antonio’s love and Piero’s daughter.

354 On the ambiguity of the content of dreams, see e.g. Steven R. Fischer: “Dreambooks and the Interpretation of Medieval Literary Dreams”, in: *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 65 (1983), p. 1–20, p. 17.

355 See Takei: “Dreams as Metaphysical Visions”, p. 23–4.

second act. These dreams foreshadow the proceedings of the following act: shortly before the ides of March, portrayed in the third act with its conflict between Caesar's side and Brutus' and Cassius' party, the effect of dreams – the bloodshed of Caesar's murder – becomes important in the play.

Once the morning of the ides of March has come, Calphurnia, Caesar's wife, warns him to restrain from going to the senate.³⁵⁶ That night she had an evil-boding dream, and telling Caesar of it, she tries to convince him not to leave her. Caesar, though, is trying to deny its influence, calling her dream visions merely "vaine illusions" (III.vi.1595) and "deluding visions" (l. 1555) meaning to frighten without valid reason.³⁵⁷ Similar to an atheist, he is consciously ignoring their divine power.³⁵⁸ He denies a power that anticipates the future and discards any possible danger – even though Calphurnia³⁵⁹ is not truly aware what exactly will happen to Caesar, she is confidently convinced that the dream foreshadows his downfall.

Denying dreams and their power proves fatal for those who do. Caesar is ignoring Calphurnia's warnings even though she keeps trying to convince him: "O dearest *Caesar*, hast thou seene thy selfe,/ (As troubled dreames to me did faine thee seene:)/ Torne, Wounded, Maymed, Blod-slaughtered, Slaine," (III.vi.1597–1599). The event she dreamt of is his bloody murder. He is neglecting her advice, while she is strongly insisting on the mantic power of dreams: "O do not set so little by the heavens,/ Dreames ar divine, men say they come from *Iove*,/ Beware betimes, and bee not wise to late" (l.1608–10) and reminding him of dangers in disguise: "There lurkes an adder in the greenest grasse" (l.1697). Still, Caesar is discarding her fears as effeminate, not to be taken seriously. But ignoring the immanence of dreams proves lethal for him.

In the same way, Caesar denounces the warning of an Augur³⁶⁰ as childish –

356 *Caesar's Revenge* is a relatively unknown play, but Gaius Julius Caesar's fate was well known to the Elizabethan audience. However, what is to be expected does not diminish the impact of the murder that is witnessed by the audience, even though they roughly know the plot beforehand. It seems indeed very similar to that expectation in a play where there is a similar kind of foreshadowing concerning an unknown plot. There, too, the audience will be expecting murder – not only because it is common in revenge tragedy as such, but because it is expected after these mantic signs foreshadow a gloomy, bloody, or cursed future.

357 See also Uwe Baumann: *Vorausdeutung und Tod im englischen Römerdrama der Renaissance (1564–1642)* (Tübingen/ Basel: Francke Verlag, 1996), p. 413.

358 As D'Amville in *AI*, or Edmund in *King Lear*, Caesar is denying divine influence to mantic foreshadowings, and he does not adhere to the restrictions recommended.

359 Hinton Stewart even asks whether Calphurnia has "the union of intellect and imagination necessary to forecast the future" – she definitely has the premonition of danger. Helen Hinton Stewart: *The Supernatural in Shakespeare* (London: John Ouseley, 1908), p. 12.

360 "The augur was also a classical figure who, like the oracle, was enabled by his priestly function and the practise of art to act as an interpretive prophet whose purpose it was to perceive future eventualities signified by the gods in natural signs and wonders." Gerardine

“Howlinge and cries, and gastly grones of Ghosts” (CR, III.vi.1654).³⁶¹ At some point, Caesar, too, utters doubts about his self-confidence, even more when handed a note announcing the looming conspiracy. Still, he does not give in to any of the signs and enters the senate, which means facing doom. Calphurnia’s dream does come true and Caesar is slaughtered in the senate by the Romans.³⁶² Her dream visions of murder are presented with cruel images of violence. The aspect of dramatic irony which is created by Calphurnia’s dream is even stronger in this historiographical revenge tragedy than in any other revenge play, because the audience is aware of what is going to happen to Caesar in the senate – only they do not know how exactly it will be presented on stage.

In *The Revenge of Bussy D’Ambois*, the hero Clermont is, like Caesar, another example of those who ignore the impact of dreams. Towards the end of the revenge tragedy, his friend Guise considers the importance of a dream voice, an “admired voice” calling him to Reims (V.i.37). However, Clermont, in contrast to Caesar, who is belittling the power of dreams, is not diminishing them as effeminate or bluntly ignoring them, but flatly denies their divine origin completely. To undermine any importance that could be ascribed to them, Clermont denounces any mantic quality and insists that dreams are caused by natural, scientific reasons: Clermont is thereby following an atheistic tradition,³⁶³ but Clermont does not necessarily adhere to a natural religion. Instead he is re-buffing mantic foreshadowing because he is afraid of its determination which also calls him to revenge:³⁶⁴

Twas but your fancie, then, a waking dreame:
For as in sleepe, which bindes both th’outward senses
And the sense common to, th’imagining power
(Stird up by formes hid in the memories store,

Marie Obermark-Clark: *The Structural Function of Ghosts, Dreams, Prophecies and Portents in Shakespeare’s Plays* (Diss. Indiana University, 1977), p. 172. On the classic function of the augur, see e.g. Dominique Briquel, in: *Der Neue Pauly*, p. 703f.; compare Will-Erich Peuckert: “Vorzeichen”, in: *Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens*, ed. Hanns Bächthold-Stäubli (Berlin: Gruyter, 2000³), p. 1730f.

361 Gerardine Marie Obermark-Clark writes about Shakespeare’s *Antony and Cleopatra*: “the Soothsayer’s prediction [...] anticipates and reminds the audience of the course of the historical action and contributes to suspense and inspires a fatal feeling concerning the tragic inevitability of events.” Likewise, in *Caesar’s Revenge*, the effect is the same and the structural function is still similar to non-historical revenge tragedy; in: *The Structural Function of Ghosts, Dreams, Prophecies and Portents in Shakespeare’s Plays*, p. 602.

362 The history of the Romans was well known in the Renaissance; Shakespeare and his anonymous contemporary had various sources to find out about his life and death, foremost Plutarch’s *Lives*.

363 See above the comparison between D’Amville, Edmund, and Caesar.

364 Clermont appears to be the Stoic type of revenger who is only enraged and determinately carries out his duty of revenge in the final moments of the play. Until then, he is so hesitant, that even his sister wishes she were to retaliate the crime against their mutual brother.

Or by the vapours of o'er-flowing humour
 In bodies full and foule, and mixt with spirits)
 Faines many strange, miraculous images,
 In which act it so painfully applyes
 It selfe to those formes that the common sense
 It actuates with his motion, and thereby
 Those fictions true seeme and have reall act:
 So, in the strength of our conceits awake,
 The cause alike doth [oft] like fictions make. (RB, V.i.41–53)

Clermont explains dreams as bodily vapours, which are created by imaginations of the sleeping senses – inspired by memories and fantasies – and not divine influences.³⁶⁵ Instead of accepting the existence of the *somnium divina*, he is concentrating on the concept of the *somnium naturale* as the only possible explanation to dreams. He joins Thomas Nashe in his qualification of a dream as “nothing else but a bubbling scum”.³⁶⁶ This attitude is important for the depiction of the character but also for the complication of the plot. The distinction between those kinds of dreams which are credited as *fancy* or *imagination* – the *somnium naturale* or *animale*,³⁶⁷ is compared to the definition of fantasy – the strength of a dream is supported by the “power of imagination”.³⁶⁸ Thus, the divine influence is ignored completely. It can also be portrayed as a question concerning the sanity of the dreamer – positive and negative images can be haunting each other. The reason of the incorporation the dream by the playwright depends on the function he concedes to the dream. The dream can reveal bloodshed, it can promote danger and hesitation, but it can also spur on, and encourage revenge. Dreams are incorporated to the dramaturgy: on stage, they are functionalised as adapted to their dreamers and the contextual plot.³⁶⁹ Its usage also underlines the expectation of the audience and thus their knowledge

365 See Artemidoros: “Artemidoros of Daldis (ca. 135–200 A. D.), the first known dreambook author whose work influenced succeeding writers, was also the first to collect older dream traditions and combine them into a dream book, or *Oneirocriticon*.” He also relies on the cause of dreams and their interpretation as based on the immediate context; for example, the nightly visions of the dreamer reveal his wishes and fears. Compare e.g. Steven Fischer: “Dreambooks and the Interpretation of Medieval Literary Dreams”, in: *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 65 (1983), p. 1–20.

366 See above on the introduction of dreams, on Nashe.

367 See Naoe Takei: “Dreams as Metaphysical Visions”, p. 26.

368 *Ibid.*, p. 28.

369 Dreaming is functionalised by the character who does so consciously – Vittoria – and directly by the playwright who makes the characters have dreams. This differentiation occurs, even if the playwright himself might not have believed in the divine nature of dreams; still they are functionalised to presage the future within his play. Compare also Uwe Baumann: *Vorausdeutung und Tod im englischen Römerdrama der Renaissance (1564–1642)* (Tübingen/ Basel: Francke Verlag, 1996), p. 416.

of a common discourse about the influence of dreams; this differentiation is also used by many playwrights to guide the audience in their sympathy towards the dreaming character.

Guise – in contrast to Clermont – considers the future impact of the dream, even though he is neglecting the possible cause of the dream. He is concentrating on its effect: “Be what it will, twas a presage of something/ Waightie and secret” (RB, V.i.54–55). With respect to its function within the context of the drama, the dream is foreshadowing the plot. It is a means of communicating an aspect of the story to the audience, which, out of custom, will be understood by them as foreshadowing. The audience is aware of the connotation of each dream. They also know the argument and implications around the natural cause of dreams and the danger of the denial of divine dreams. With discrepant awareness,³⁷⁰ they can judge the role of a dream within a revenge tragedy, rely on traditional conventions and expect a genre play determined by future bloodshed.

One additional aspect that seems interesting as far as Guise’s dream is concerned is his religion. In comparison to the other figures in the second part to *Bussy D’Ambois*, Guise is a character who is based on the real-life Guise, who took part in the planning of the Bartholomew Day’s massacre, and is presented as a Catholic fanatic. Even though the whole tragedy is set in France,³⁷¹ it is the strong Catholic ideas that Guise stood for in the first part of this tragedy, which almost appear as a burden in the second part. However, even though he turns out to be a positive character in this sequel and a true friend to Clermont, the reminder of his guilt in the first part indicates his future downfall, as he is convinced himself: “All writing that our plots catastrophe,/ For propagation of the Catholique cause,/ Will bloody prove, dissolving all our counsailes.” (RB, V.i.59–61). Clermont replies to these thoughts that Guise should stoically face the possible consequences.³⁷² So far, Clermont is behaving in a Stoic manner, not necessarily relating to Guise’s dream, but answering his own preference of taking life as it is lived.

As far as dreams and the effects of their predictions are concerned, it is clear to the audience that Guise will suffer a bloody end after his dream inkling –

370 See Manfred Pfister: *The Theory and Analysis of Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 49. Pfister relies on Friedrich Dürrenmatt, *Writings on Theatre and Drama*, transl. and with introd. by H. M. Waidson (London: Jonathan Cape, 1976), p. 75.

371 Revenge tragedies are set in foreign countries to divert from any political implications of corruption and bloodshed in England. These countries are mostly southern Catholic countries, which were presented as hostile to England and could therefore easily be associated with corruption, murder and intrigue.

372 Guise is not treated as the Catholic villain of the Bartholomew Day Massacre, but as a loyal supporter of the Stoic revenger Clermont and as such is positively connoted.

which he indeed does, being killed and then appearing to Clermont as a ghost, before the latter even knows of his death.³⁷³

In *The Duchess of Malfi*, the Duchess herself remembers an enigmatic dream she had, as she and Antonio compare their fate to fortune's wheel and predict the consequential fall of those who are rising now: "I had a very strange dream to-night. [...] Methought I wore my coronet of state,/ And on a sudden all the diamonds/ Were chang'd to pearls." (III.v.12–15). Like the Guise, she is considering the interpretation of this dream, which is instantly given by Antonio, who refers to the common wisdom³⁷⁴ that pearls signify tears (l. 17). Sorrow will follow after such a dream, as it seems to do on the spot, when the Duchess and Antonio receive a letter from Ferdinand. It is sent with pretended love and safety via Bosola who is to capture them. "See, see, like to calm weather/ At sea before a tempest, false hearts speak fair/ To those they intend most mischief" (III.v.24–26). As the Duchess guesses, Ferdinand is intending mischief, ordering Antonio back to court, but cladding his command in ominous phrases: "Send Antonio to me; I want his head in a business. [...] I had rather have his heart than his/ money'." (III.v.27, 34–35). It seems more than obvious that Ferdinand indeed wishes to see the head and heart, but removed from the body as those of a traitor, a thought that the Duchess rightly suspects.

As Hallett and Hallett explain with regard to ghosts, similar ideas dominate the use of dreams: "The message from beyond the grave gives the hero a wedge into the follies of man. Yet he is not lifted into a new order. Rather, he is placed in a void where vision and insight alternate with passion and illusion in an undifferentiated kaleidoscope. Ultimately, of course, he acts out of the blind passion that is symbolized by the excess at the end of the play."³⁷⁵ The dream throws the stage character into an atmosphere of fear and insecurity, which is foreshadowing the ensuing tragedy and the bloody future of the plot. In *The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois*, for example, The Countess is assured of Clermont's death, having dreamt "a most ominous dreame" (RB, V.iii.32), and certain "his death fixt" (l. 33). It remains to be seen when Clermont's end is predestined.

Dreams are used to create a sense of fear or danger in the stage characters and spur their actions on as messages from the unconscious, divinely influenced. In theatre, they will – even if the stage character fails to interpret the dream – always give some kind of information to the audience. The truth of this message will be understandable within the duration of time of the performance itself. Essential facts of the proceedings are presented via the secondary communicational

373 See also chapter on ghosts – Guise appears to Clermont before Clermont knows of his death (V.v.120).

374 Compare the role of pearls in Dorothea Forstner: *Die Welt der Symbole*, p. 304–307.

375 Charles A. Hallett/ Elaine S. Hallett: *The Revenger's Madness. A Study of Revenge Tragedy Motifs* (Lincoln, Nebraska/ London: University of Nebraska Press, 1980), p. 92.

system, the relationship between the proceedings on stage and the audience. The spectators understand the weight that a dream carries and can assume its meaning, which is mostly pointing towards death and bloodshed within the revenge tragedies.

5.2 Ghosts and Spiritual Visitations – “What art thou”³⁷⁶

The maner of appearing of spirits, is diuers & manifold as it apereth [...] For they shew themselues in sundry sorte: sometimes in the shape of a man whome we knowe, who is yet alyue, or lately departed: & otherwhile in the likenesse of one whom we knowe not.³⁷⁷

Lavater terms one apparition of ghosts that of the spirit of a lately deceased person. This kind of ghostly visitation is most important when it comes to drama. Visitations of ghosts can be interpreted as an “embodiment of the beholder’s conscience-torn psyche” or “creation of the guilty mind”,³⁷⁸ when it appears to a murderer, a ghost in revenge drama often appears to the revenger.

Various apparitions of spiritual beings appear in the course of drama: there are fairies appearing in *A Midsummernight’s Dream*, as nymphs do in diverse court masques. Ghosts as the spirits of the deceased are most common in the tragedies. Many also enter the proceedings of the histories, like those of Shakespeare³⁷⁹, but they are especially common and their apparition is almost part of the definition of the revenge tragedy.³⁸⁰ This is especially apparent as far as the Senecan influence is concerned. On the Senecan impact, there is a great amount of literature on ghosts.³⁸¹ Whitmore even calls the ghost the most en-

376 *The Changeling*, V.i.58.

377 Lewes Lavatar: *Of Ghostes and Spirits Walking by Nyght* (London, 1572), ed. J. Dover Wilson/ May Yardley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1929), p. 91.

378 Robert Rentoul Reed Jr.: *The Occult on the Tudor and Stuart Stage* (Boston: Christopher Publishing House, 1965), p. 35–6.

379 See especially Geisen on Shakespeare’s Histories and the appearance and function of ghosts in them. H. Geisen: *Dimension des Metaphysischen in Shakespeare’s Historien* (Frankfurt am Main: Akademische Verlagsgesellschaft, 1974).

380 The tradition of revenge drama is based on Senecan drama which includes the ghostly visitation.

381 See also H. Baker: “Ghosts and Guides: Kyd’s Spanish Tragedy and the Medieval Tragedy”, *MP* 33 (1935), p. 27–35; Gordon Braden: *Renaissance Tragedy and the Senecan Tradition. Anger’s Privilege* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985); Miriam Joseph: “Discerning the Ghost in Hamlet”, in: *PMLA* 76 (1961), p. 493–502; Gerardine Marie Obermark-Clark: *The Structural Function of Ghosts, Dreams, Prohecies and Portents in Shakespeare’s Plays* (Diss. Indiana University, 1977); Alfred Roffe: *An Essay upon the Ghost-Belief of Shakespeare* (London: Hope and Co., 1851); Aimee Elizabeth Ross: *From Ghosts to Skulls: Selfhood, Bodies and Gender in Renaissance Revenge Tragedy* (PhD University of Oregon, 2000); Wilbur Sanders: *The Dramatist and the Received Idea. Studies in the Plays of Marlowe and*

during device in tragedy – mainly representing the motive of revenge to the protagonists, having a function of either intrinsic or decorative value.³⁸²

This tradition of the ghost from Senecan tragedy on the Elizabethan stage is lasting. Irving Ribner writes on the influence of the Roman poet: “The evidence is overwhelming that [the tragedies of Seneca] were deliberately imitated by Elizabethan dramatists, and that such imitation left definite marks upon the course of English drama.”³⁸³ Therefore, some critics even argue that the ghost might be the foremost supernatural item to be looked at as far as revenge tragedy is concerned: “A study of the symbolic meaning of revenge tragedy might well begin with the symbol which comes earliest in the play, *the ghost*.”³⁸⁴

Struve underlines the belief in the existence of the ghost in his study *Das Traummotiv im Drama des XVII. Jahrhunderts*.³⁸⁵ The idea of ghosts and the influence of supernatural powers, in this case that of dead people, was still

Shakespeare (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968). Sanders is questioning the use and style in which “demonic manifestations” were used in his chapter on “Supernature and Demonism in Elizabethan Thought”. The first chapter of Hallett gives a good overview of the history of the ghost and its tradition in drama, and its function – as allegory, as promoter of action, as on its origin in Senecan tragedy. On Seneca and Renaissance drama, see a. o. Raimund Borgmeier: “Die englische Literatur”, in: *Der Einfluss Senecas auf das europäische Drama*, ed. Eckard Lefevre (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1978), p. 276–323; Gisela Dahinten: *Die Geisterszene in der Tragödie vor Shakespeare. Zur Seneca-Nachfolge im englischen und lateinischen Drama des Elisabethanismus*. Palaestra. Untersuchungen aus der deutschen und englischen Philologie und Literaturgeschichte, Vol. 225, ed. W. Kayser et. al. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1958); Renate Stamm: *The Mirror-Technique in Senecan and Pre-Shakespearean Tragedy*. The Cooper Monographs, Vol. 23. *Theatrical Physiognomy Series* (Bern: Francke, 1975).

382 In this chapter, a ghost will be addressed with the pronoun *it*, since it is a supernatural elements, used for mantic purposes. However, in drama, as the ghost is presented as the spirit of a deceased person, the pronoun will be altered according to the gender of the ghost, most often that of a male person, therefore addressed as *he*.

383 Irving Ribner: *Jacobean Tragedy. The Quest for Moral Order* (London: Methuen & Company, 1962). Compare also his *The English History Play in the Age of Shakespeare* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1957, rev. 1965). However, this study will not be concerned with the influence of the Senecan sources or the influence and divergence between Seneca and the Renaissance playwright. There have been various studies on this topic since the nineteenth century, and this dissertaton is too short to include all influences which have shaped and sometimes crudely determined the use of the ghost in Elizabethan and also Jacobean revenge tragedy. Here, the dramaturgical role of the ghost is analysed, given the fact that a great amount of his existence in revenge tragedy owes itself to the Senecan model. See also Clifford Leech: *Shakespeare's Tragedies and other Studies in Seventeenth Century Drama* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1950).

384 Charles A. Hallett/ Elaine S. Hallett: *The Revenger's Madness*, p. 8.

385 “[T]ief noch sitzt der Glaube an Geister im volkstümlichen Denken verwurzelt”; in: Jürgen Struve: *Das Traummotiv im Drama des XXVII. Jahrhunderts*, p. 35.

apparent in the seventeenth century. The ghost has also gathered a tradition in Renaissance drama, especially in tragedy, concerned with the topic of revenge.³⁸⁶

This supernatural effect is “sensational” and creates “terror”.³⁸⁷ As has been shown though, omens were the most common of all mantic elements, and only because their character does not necessarily distinguish them from natural proceedings, they might not appear as the foremost mantic element used by the playwright. Ghosts are clearly not natural. However, they are inspired by living organisms: “we know that in Shakespeare’s time the highest philosophy admitted, not only the existence of good and evil spirits, but their illusions, stratagems, power over mortals, and the possibility of inquiring into and obtaining some knowledge of their nature.”³⁸⁸ Like divine and supernatural dreams that occur during sleep, ghosts and spiritual visitations are occurrences and influences that can be traced back to an outer force and present themselves to one or more characters on stage.

Their presentation to characters in the plot depends on the circumstances when the apparitions occur. They have a certain meaning in the plot and are functionalised to set an action going: “The dramatic effect of ghosts and witches is again entranced by the surroundings into which they are introduced. They do not casually enter into every-day life as did the spirits of Shakespeare’s contemporaries, but they come at special times and to special places, and to people specially prepared for them.”³⁸⁹ What Gibson is trying to convey with this is the message that ghosts are never only used as one of many devices chosen arbitrarily, but that it is one device, which is functionalised as one possible way to convey a message of death and to give a purpose to revenge and spur the revenger on.³⁹⁰

386 See F. W. Moorman: “(Pre-)Shakespearean Ghosts”, in: *Modern Languages Review* 1 (1906), p. 192–201.

387 J. P. Gibson: *Shakespeare’s Use of the Supernatural* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1908), p. 96–97. Compare Raymond Gardette: “Les formes du songe dans le théâtre de Shakespeare”, in: *Le Songe a la Renaissance*, ed. Françoise Charpentier, *Association d’études sur l’Humanisme, la Réforme et la Renaissance, Colloque International de Cannes* (1987), p. 243–54, here p. 245.

388 Helen Hinton Stewart: *The Supernatural in Shakespeare*, p. 54.

389 J. P. Gibson: *Shakespeare’s Use of the Supernatural*, p.130. Compare also H. Geisen: *Dimension des Metaphysischen in Shakespeares Historien* (Frankfurt am Main: Akademische Verlagsgesellschaft, 1974), p. 66.

390 Compare H. Geisen: *Dimension des Metaphysischen in Shakespeares Historien*, p. 86: Geisen sees the function of ghosts as tools to connect past, present and future in drama: they are “Werkzeuge des Dramatikers, um mit ihren Prophezeiungen und Warnungen dramatische Vergangenheit, Gegenwart und Zukunft zu verknüpfen”; see also p. 87. Compare Raymond Gardette: “Les formes du songe dans le théâtre de Shakespeare”, in: *Le Songe a la Renaissance*, ed. Françoise Charpentier, *Association d’études sur l’Humanisme, la Réforme et la Renaissance, Colloque International de Cannes* 1987, p. 243–54, especially p. 245.

In the following, the questions that present themselves in the study of ghosts, are: foremost what is the function of the varying types of visitations, then where do they seem to come from, to whom do they appear – and with regard to this question, to whom they are visible.

These functions differ according to the nature of the visitation: “The changes wrought upon the ghost as this awesome figure is recast by one playwright after another to fit new molds are extremely instructive.”³⁹¹ However, next to each individual use of the ghost in each of the dramas, a general distinction of visitations is necessary – each role and function is unique, but there is a pattern to be found in the revenge tragedies, as Hallett underlines: “Yet underlying this seeming diversity there exists a remarkable unanimity of purpose. The motif has a symbolic integrity that transcends the personal vision.”³⁹²

This study thus aims to look at comparable situations and scenes, when and where visitations appear. The ghosts always have a particular desire for revenge,³⁹³ but they do not necessarily portray the hysteria of the Senecan ghost in their apparitions. Often they calmly remind the revenger of his duties, even though their appearance contains a shocking element. Grantley subsumes this, as follows: “One consistent element in this drama is the device of the ghost, something which in Senecan tragedy is used for a specific dramatic purpose which has as much or more to do with narrative expediency – the exhortation to revenge – as effects of horror.”³⁹⁴ However, apart from the bloody spectacle, their function often appears to be symbolical or rather allegorical in that they sometimes disguise their purpose. In its artistic effect, which Stoll calls “superior”³⁹⁵, the ghost “retains his old importance” as in Seneca³⁹⁶ as that “which inspired the greatest fear, awe, and wonder”.³⁹⁷

Korninger praises the status of the ghost scene in Elizabethan drama as

391 Charles A. Hallett/ Elaine S. Hallett: *The Revenger's Madness*, p. 17.

392 Ibid, p. 18.

393 See revenge tragedy from the beginning of the tradition with ST and Don Andrea's desire for vengeance.

394 Darryll Grantley: “Masques and Murderers: Dramatic Method and Ideology in Revenge Tragedy and the Court Masque”, in: *Jacobean Poetry and Prose. Rhetoric, Representation and the Popular Imagination* (Houndsmills/ London: Macmillan, 1988), p. 194–212, p. 202.

395 See Elmer Edgar Stoll: *Shakespeare Studies. Historical and Comparative in Method* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1927). Stoll begins his study by tracing the aim of the use of superstition in its dramaturgical and artistic effect; Gerardine Marie Obermark-Clark also elaborates on their purpose, in: *The Structural Function of Ghosts, Dreams, Prohecies and Portents in Shakespeare's Plays*, p. 587–88.

396 See Grumbine's introduction to: Thomas Hughes: *The Misfortunes of Arthur*, ed. Hearvey Carson Grumbine, *Literarhistorische Forschungen. Three centuries of drama. English, 1516–1641. Three centuries of English and American plays, 1500–1830* (Berlin: Felber, 1900), p. 12.

397 G. M. Obermark-Clark: *The Structural Function of Ghosts, Dreams, Prohecies*, p. 103.

almost surpassing that in Seneca, as unreached in future times.³⁹⁸ Ankenbrand, in his early study on ghosts,³⁹⁹ describes them as something wonderful and secret, – almost mystical – something supernatural. Furthermore, he divides ghostly apparitions into factual and imaginary.⁴⁰⁰

Whitmore stresses the Senecan function of the creation of terror: “Our next principle was that the supernatural, when given shape in a concrete figure, must preserve that element of incalculable power which is the essential cause of the supernatural terror.”⁴⁰¹ Thereby, they also provide a gothic⁴⁰² attraction and form a part of popular mythology and folklore.

“The ghost was a thing seen in the night”⁴⁰³ and it appeared between midnight and dawn. The exact timing seems often difficult to discern in the plays. Sometimes the time was indicated by the striking of a clock, sometimes the mentioning of darkness as a sign of deepest night has to suffice. As a thing of darkness, the ghost violates the categories of the dramatic plot⁴⁰⁴ – it comes from death into life and seems real while its origin is somehow supernatural.⁴⁰⁵

The ghost appears like a diabolic invention of the playwright as a theatrical effect to spur on the action or prophetic inspiration of the stage characters, since “they come at special times and to special places, and to people specially prepared for them.”⁴⁰⁶ It is therefore necessary to look at the effect that the ghost has on the different characters it appears to.

398 Siegfried Korninger: “Die Geisterszene im Elisabethanischen Drama”, in: *Shakespeare Jahrbuch West* 66, p. 124–145, p. 124; he then elaborates on the Senecan tradition etc

399 Hans Ankenbrand: *Die Figur des Geistes im Drama der Englischen Renaissance* (Leipzig: A. Deichert’sche Verlagsbuchhandlung Nachf. (Georg Böhme), 1906), Münchner Beiträge zur Romanischen und Englischen Philologie, ed. H. Breymann/J. Schick, Vol. 35.

400 The second type, Ankenbrand elaborates, can be caused by a very naive intellect. However, when looking at Ferdinand, there clearly is an intellectual or rational purpose behind the creative visualisation of the ghost. Compare also Gisela Dahinten’s differentiation of ghosts in *Die Geisterszene in der Tragödie vor Shakespeare*.

401 Charles Edward Whitmore: *The Supernatural in Tragedy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press/ London: Humphrey Milford/ Oxford University Press, 1915), p. 350; compare Ankenbrand: “[Geister] vermögen infolge ihrer Unerklärlichkeit und des sie begleitenden Grauens psychische Erschütterungen hervorzurufen.” Hans Ankenbrand: *Die Figur des Geistes im Drama der Englischen Renaissance*, p. 1.

402 Various elements that were part of revenge tragedy will later appear in the gothic novel – especially the supernatural proceedings. Therefore, the term gothic seems appropriate here.

403 See Frances A. Yates: *The Occult Philosophy in the Elizabethan Age* (London/ Basingstoke/ Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979¹, 2001), p. 180.

404 Sarah Monette describes the ghost as a transgressing figure on the Renaissance stage that crosses between life and death, in: Sarah Monette: ‘It harrows me with fear and wonder’: *Horror and Haunting in Early Modern Revenge Tragedy* (PhD University of Wisconsin, 2004).

405 Elmer Edgar Stoll: *Shakespeare Studies. Historical and Comparative in Method* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1927).

406 J. P. Gibson: *Shakespeare’s Use of the Supernatural*, p. 130.

The first questions that have to be investigated for the ghost is his provenance in English Renaissance Revenge Tragedy. There are numerous articles about the possible underworld origin of Hamlet's ghost,⁴⁰⁷ and likewise, this question has to be raised for all other revenge tragedies. As ghosts prove to be engines to a plot that climaxes in bloodshed and murder, they might derive from a hellish and vengeful place. Lewes Lavater in his *Of Ghosts and Spirits Walking by Night* (1572) tells of the underworld descent of ghostly figures:

Hereunto they add that the spirits, as well of the good as the ill, do come and are sent unto men living, from hell; and that by the common law of justice, all men at the day of judgment shall come to their trial from hell; and that none before that time can come from thence. [...] But as concerning the time and place when and where spirits do proffer themselves to be seen, they say no certain rule can be given, for this standeth wholly in God's pleasure, who if he list to deliver any, suffereth him to make his appearance forthwith even in such places as he may be well heard in.⁴⁰⁸

Similarly, however, the old issue arises whether personal revenge is necessary, and the "wild justice"⁴⁰⁹ which turns out to be nothing unlike a crime itself is a duty or a crime, especially since feuding and private retribution were forbidden. In later plays, the ghost also changes his function and becomes an agent of God, not in that it continues to promote divinely sanctioned vengeance but because it strengthens the principle of *Vindicta Mihi*, according to which revenge has to be left to God, and not to men. Ghosts "may yet possess the desire for revenge, within Shakespeare's dramatic representation they must either rely for its accomplishment on human agents, or they may effect it themselves to the extent that the horror of their presence discomfits their victims."⁴¹⁰

5.2.1 The provenance of the ghost – "Ascendit Umbra"⁴¹¹

"Kyd, and everyone who follows him in the writing of revenge tragedy, postulates that the revenger believes he is acting on an authority that transcends the human order."⁴¹² The ghost appears as an agent for that different order. Throughout

407 On the ghost in Hamlet, see e.g. Miriam Joseph: "Discerning the Ghost in Hamlet", in: *PMLA* 76 (1961), p. 493–502. For a distinctive bibliography, see a. o. William Shakespeare: *Hamlet*. The Arden Shakespeare, ed. Harold Jenkins (London/ New York: Routledge, 1982); and the third series edition: *Hamlet*. The Arden Shakespeare. Third Series, ed. Ann Thompson/ Neil Taylor (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2005).

408 Lewes Lavatar: *Of Ghostes and Spirits Walking by Nyght*, p. 91.

409 Compare especially Francis Bacon's elaboration on the topic in his essay "On Revenge" in: *The Essays*, ed. John Pitcher (Harmondsworth: Penguin Classics, 2004).

410 Gerardine Marie Obermark-Clark: *The Structural Function of Ghosts, Dreams, Prohecies and Portents in Shakespeare's Plays* (Diss. Indiana University, 1977), p. 593.

411 RB, Vi.0

412 Charles A. Hallett/ Elaine S. Hallett: *The Revenger's Madness*, p. 23.

revenge tragedy, it stays a truly ambiguous figure, representing the spirit of a deceased,⁴¹³ but appearing to those most beloved while alive⁴¹⁴ and those in charge of their murder.

The choric frame of *The Spanish Tragedy* from c. 1587 is determined by the everpresence of the ghost of Don Andrea. Murdered by Don Balthazar, he is complaining to the second chorus-figure, the Revenge⁴¹⁵ about the possible consequences of his murder; after every act he comments on the plot and is eager for sooner action.⁴¹⁶

Like most ghosts, Don Andrea explains his provenance: he “provides with relish a vivid and detailed account of his sojourn through the underworld:”⁴¹⁷ after death he descended into purgatory, where he was expelled at first, until his obsequies were held by his friend Don Horatio, which serve like a passport to the underworld.⁴¹⁸ Even though he was killed in the wars, he has come back to witness revenge, after first having entered the realm of death:

When I was slaine, my soule descended straight
 To passe the flowing streame of Archeron;
 But churlish Charon, only boatman there,
 Said that, my rites of buriall not performde,
 I might not sit amongst his passengers. (I.0.18–22)
 [...]

 Then was the fariman of hell content
 To passe me ouer to the slimie strond
 That leades to fell Auernus ougly waues.
 There, pleasing Cerberus with honied speech,
 I past the perils of the formost porch. (I. 27–31)

413 Geisen classifies ghosts as those of the deceased, spirits as different influences. In: H. Geisen: *Dimension des Metaphysischen in Shakespeares Historien*, p. 11. See also p. 58.

414 Noel Taillepied: *A Treatise upon Ghosts, being the Psychologie, or Treatise upon Apparitions and Spirits, of Disembodied Souls, Phantom Figures, Strange Prodigies, and of Other Miracles and Marvels* (1588).

415 Revenge is normally presented as a goddess, in ST however, the pronoun used when Revenge is described is the male third person singular “he”. See: “*he* sleep awhile”, my italics (ST, III.xv.22).

416 See also Hans Ankenbrand: *Die Figur des Geistes im Drama der Englischen Renaissance*, p.17f.

417 Molly Smith: *Breaking Boundaries. Politics and Play in the Drama of Shakespeare and His Contemporaries* (Aldershot et al.: Ashgate, 1998), p. 28.

418 There are different, classical concepts of the underworld. Kyd is referring to the idea of needing a passport to the underworld. Such is given to the dead once their obsequies are held. Compare Aeneas guided visit to the underworld. See Homer: *The Iliad*, ed. E. V. Rieu (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2003); Virgil: *The Aeneid*, ed. David West (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2003). Compare Uwe Baumann: “Botschafter und Botschaften aus dem Jenseits. Mantische Vorausdeutung im Drama der Shakespearezeit“, in: Wolfram Högge (ed.): *Mantik. Profile prognostischen Wissens in Wissenschaft und Kultur* (Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 2005), p. 225–247.

Don Andrea gives a detailed account of descending into hell and the proceeding of being allowed to pass through the first hindrances, before re-entering the world to witness revenge. Anderson argues for a “loss of purgatory as a place for the dead”⁴¹⁹ – he argues that the ghost which promotes revenge mounts straight from hell. This can also be taken into consideration when thinking of where the ghost in *Hamlet* or in *Antonio’s Revenge* comes from – whether a limbo intermediary place might not exist and therefore also, whether the ghost might have come up from a place further below – a hellish underworld.⁴²⁰

Don Andrea was possibly passing directly towards hell when catapulted back into the plot. He was wishing for this passport or permission to the underworld, which Charon first denies him, to find eternal peace. Given the permission to pass by Pluto, however, he has to face the labyrinth in the underworld. At that same instant, he is transported to a limbo state, which he and Revenge are inhabiting from the beginning to the end of the play.

Forthwith, Reuenge, she [Proserpine] rounded thee in th’ eare,
And bad thee lead me though the gates of horn,
Where dreames haue passage in the silent night.
No sooner had she spoke but we weere heere,
I wot not how, in the twinkling of an eye. (l. 81–85)

Led to the stage world as through a dream passage⁴²¹ to witness the action of the plot, Don Andrea and Revenge become the frame characters for the audience. Andrea’s ghost is accompanied by this allegorical⁴²² nemesis figure – and with it, “a whole supernatural machinery is directing and guaranteeing the revenge”.⁴²³ With this self-introduction to the audience, the ghost informs them clearly about his hellish provenance.⁴²⁴ However, the due obsequies might also refer to the religious necessity of a proper funeral before true peace can be found. Erne goes even further and reads a possible Christian aspect into this: “Kyd’s ghosts appear to hide a Christian dimension underneath their pagan appearance, growing out not only of Seneca but also of contemporary theological controversies.”⁴²⁵ Reed argues for the “Christianization of the ghost”⁴²⁶ from 1600 onwards, which refers directly to the time of revenge tragedy and forms part of the question regarding the background of a possible justice done to the ghost’s motive of vengeance.

As mentioned above, in *Antonio’s Revenge*, too, the ghost does not refer to a

419 Thomas P. Anderson: *Performing Early Modern Trauma from Shakespeare to Milton* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), p. 129 with the erasure of any mentioning of the word purgatory in the King’s Book of 1543.

420 Gerardine Marie Obermark-Clark, for example, calls Banquo’s ghost “a grim manifestation of demonic origin”; in: *The Structural Function of Ghosts, Dreams, Prophecies and Portents in Shakespeare’s Plays*, p. 461. Compare Molly Smith: *Breaking Boundaries*, p. 28.

421 As in Antonio’s dream of the ghost or the later almost dreamlike vision of Francisco’s sister Isabella, dreams, dream vision, ghosts and ghostly visitations seem to be very closely

kind of limbo or purgatory provenance: the ghost is clearly situated “below”.⁴²⁷ His impact on Antonio is massively influenced by emotions: “Verbal excess, whether the emotion expressed is grief, anger or vengeance, is the play’s keynote and in histrionic expression there is little to distinguish the victims of crime from its perpetrators. Antonio’s response to the Ghost’s call from below stage for murder is conveyed in a ghoulish conceit”.⁴²⁸

In the wake of battle preparation of *Caesar’s Revenge*, Caesar’s Ghost appears on stage. Like the above-mentioned ghosts and that of Hamlet’s father, he mentions his current whereabouts as something below: “Out of the horror of those shady vaultes, [...] My restles soule comes heere to tell his wronges.” (IV.iv.1972, 1975) and he invokes a classic scenario of an underworld peopled with past heroes and villains. He, too, is calling for revenge: “Give me my sword and shild Ile be Reveng’d, / My mortall wounding speare and goulden Crest. / I will dishorse my foemen in the field” (IV.iv.2007–2009).

The ghost moves upward to re-enter the stage world through a trap-door on the stage floor, which is clarified in *The Revenge of Bussy D’Ambois*. Act V is the only act where the title character of the play appears: the shadow or ghost of the murdered Bussy D’Ambois enters the stage from below: “*Ascendit Umbra Bussi.*” (V.i.0) As Hamlet’s ghost or Andrugio in AR, Bussy comes up from the realm between life and death, creating a link, but not yet finding peace to fully leave the world:

Up from the chaos of eternall night
 (To which the whole digestion of the world
 Is now returning) once more I ascend,
 And bide the cold dampe of this piercing ayre,
 To urge the justice whose almightie word 5
 Measures the bloody acts of impious men

related. Compare Virgil: *The Aeneid*, ed. David West (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2003), Book VI.

- 422 See Raimund Borgmeier: “Die englische Literatur”, in: *Der Einfluss Senecas auf das europäische Drama*, ed. Eckard Lefevre (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1978), p. 276–323, p. 303.
- 423 G. K. Hunter: “English Folly and Italian Vice: The Moral Landscape of John Marston”, in: *Jacobean Theatre*, Stratford-upon-Avon Studies 1 (London: Edward Arnold Ltd, 1960), p. 85–111, p. 90.
- 424 Gisela Dahinten: *Die Geisterszene in der Tragödie vor Shakespeare*, p. 40.
- 425 Lukas Erne: *Beyond The Spanish Tragedy. A Study of the Works of Thomas Kyd*. The Revels Plays Companion Library (Manchester/ New York: Manchester University Press, 2001), p. 54.
- 426 Robert Rentoul Reed Jr.: *The Occult on the Tudor and Stuart Stage* (Boston: Christopher Publishing House, 1965), p. 28.
- 427 The providence of the ghost – and his possible diabolical origin – is also intensively discussed in H. Geisen: *Dimension des Metaphysischen in Shakespeares Historien*, p. 58.
- 428 Janet Clare: *Revenge Tragedies of the Renaissance* (Tavistock: Northcote, 2006), p. 60.

With equall pennance, who in th'act it selfe
 Includes th'inflition, which like chained shot
 Batter together still; though (as the thunder
 Seemes, by mens duller hearing then their sight, 10
 To breake a great time after lightning forth,
 Yet both at one time teare the labouring cloud)
 So men thinke pennance of their ils is slow,
 Though th'ill and pennance still together goe.
 Reforme, yee ignorant men, your manlesse lives 15
 Whose lawes yee thinke are nothing but your lusts;
 When leaving (but for supposition sake)
 The body of felicitie, religion,
 Set in the midst of Christendome, and her head
 Cleft to her bosome, one halfe one way swaying, 20
 Another th'other, all the Christian world
 And all her lawes whose observation
 Stands upon faith, above the power of reason –
 Leaving (I say) all these, this might suffice
 To fray yee from your vicious swindge in ill 25
 And set you more on fire to doe more good;
 That since the world (as which of you denies?)
 Stands by proportion, all may thence conclude
 That all the joynts and nerves sustaining nature
 As well may breake, and yet the world abide, 30
 As any one plagood unrewarded die,
 Or any one ill scape his penaltie. *The Ghost stands close.* (V.i.1–32)

From the everlasting darkness, which Dahinten reads as a conventional image of the underworld,⁴²⁹ the ghost of Bussy is entering the cold earth to see his murderer receive the due punishment. Along an elaboration on the necessary consequence of a penalty for each deed, he wants to inflict pain in equal proportion; this, however, seems widely exceeding the human understanding of punishment ethics or morals. “Bussy’s ghost returns to soliloquize about the prevalence of moral decrepitude: [...] Here Chapman has created poetry from such unpromising material as the relative acuteness of sight and hearing, and the theory of lightning formation. In fact, his interest in such matters is exceeded only by his desire to moralize.”⁴³⁰ It seems as if Chapman internalises Bacon’s idea of wild justice.

The ghosts enter the plot of revenge tragedy from below to see exaggerated

429 See Gisela Dahinten: *Die Geisterszene in der Tragödie vor Shakespeare*, p. 51.

430 S. K. Heninger, Jr.: *A Handbook of Renaissance Meteorology with Particular Reference to Elizabethan and Jacobean Literature* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1960), p. 186–187.

justice committed before they will find peace. However, they do not always appear to those whom they want to execute punishment for their death.

5.2.2 Ghostly appearances to the audience⁴³¹ – “Come we for this from depth of under ground”⁴³²

Dahinten divides ghosts into the two categories of isolated, choric ghosts and dramatic ghosts, which enter into dialogue.⁴³³ A ghost that is only visible to the spectator, she calls the ‘isolated’ ghost. It remains in the frame of the theatrical action and does not enter into it. However, in the earliest play analysed here, *The Spanish Tragedy*, there is a specific difference. The ghost of Don Andrea does not communicate with the audience but he enters into interaction with a second frame figure, the personification of revenge as a divine figure.

Nevertheless, his feeling can be shared and stressed by the support of the audience. This is, for example, visible in *The Spanish Tragedy*, where the spectator follows Don Andrea all through the action of the plot. Not only at the beginning but throughout the play, Don Andrea comments on the plot after every act and is taken aback by the delayed revenge, apparently worsening the situation of Andrea’s loved ones. “The Ghost, perhaps echoing the audience’s reaction to these events, expresses dismay at witnessing Horatio’s murder rather than Balthazar’s as promised but Revenge, relishing the gory detour, insists on the relevance of these events as preambles to more cunning deaths yet to occur”.⁴³⁴ In contrast, the audience also witnesses the comments by Revenge, who much like a second spiritual figure, stresses the retarding action as necessary for a true fulfilment of proper vengeance.

The dramaturgical design of the genre of revenge tragedy is known to the audience, but as the plot’s design is revealed, differences between plots and actions are revealed. In *The Spanish Tragedy*, the figure of revenge and the ghost of Andrea comment on the unfolding of events in the frame of the play: “They witness tragic actions of which the outcome is already determined. [...] The similarity of experience for the intra- and extrafictional spectators may have been stressed by the placement of Andrea and Revenge in a box in the gallery adjacent to those of the paying audience.”⁴³⁵ This dramaturgical frame causes an

431 They could be addressed as prologue ghosts, German “Prologgeister”. This term is taken from H. Geisen: *Dimension des Metaphysischen in Shakespeares Historien*.

432 ST, I.v.1.

433 See especially Dahinten: *Die Geisterszene in der Tragödie vor Shakespeare*.

434 Molly Smith: *Breaking Boundaries*, p. 30.

435 Lukas Erne: *Beyond The Spanish Tragedy. A Study of the Works of Thomas Kyd*. The Revels Plays Companion Library (Manchester/ New York: Manchester University Press, 2001), p. 97.

awareness of the audience, that reflects on the whole structure of the revenge plot – the stage action is doubly watched, first by the ghost and revenge, and further by the audience who watch both: “in the divine theatre in which they cannot but enact the roles that have been pre-scribed by God. Rather than suggesting that the play is life-like, Revenge, overlooking and stage-managing the action, suggests that life is play-like.”⁴³⁶ The audience can be doubly aware of the fact that not only are they awaiting the unfolding of the stage action, but the figure that is awaiting retribution to be performed can be observed at the same time. Don Andrea’s and Revenge’s choric function⁴³⁷ connects each element of the acts, and the audience can be assured that, even if the ghost were not omniscient, the goddess Revenge has given the prophecy or promise of vengeance.

The frame thus serves as a rhetorical mirror to the action of the plot. The idea of looming death is present in *The Spanish Tragedy* from the beginning.⁴³⁸ The deceased hero, Don Andrea, is entering the scene as the ghost of a murdered nobleman. Anderson underlines the idea of an “obsession with corpses, funeral rites and revenge” in *The Spanish Tragedy*, which “highlights another concern about the shifting status of the community of the dead.”⁴³⁹ In this respect, it also sets a new mark to the following revenge tragedies, as far as the importance of the incorporation of death is concerned. In *The Spanish Tragedy*, Horatio is murdered to reflect the need for revenge in a physical image – his dead corpse reminds Hieronimo of what action he has to take. Since the actual revenge in the play is not that of Andrea, but Hieronimo’s revenge for the death of his son Horatio, “Don Andrea is effectively abandoned [...]. As a ghost in the play, he is a disembodied figure”⁴⁴⁰ and expresses his frustration in the denial of active participation in revenge, since he is merely a ghost and cannot achieve revenge himself. His function is rather a passive one, like that of other supernatural signs – much like voices or cries, and dream visions of other deceased in the plays. Only interacting with each other, neither the ghost nor Revenge are part of the plot itself, but, like the audience, act as spectators to the plot of the drama:

Then know, Andrea, that thou ariu’d
Where thou shalt see the author of thy death,
Don Balthazar, the prince of Portingale,
Depriu’d of life by Bel-imperia:

436 Ibid, p. 97.

437 Dahinten: *Die Geisterszene in der Tragödie vor Shakespeare*, p. 98.

438 See Uwe Baumann: *Shakespeare und seine Zeit* (Stuttgart/ Düsseldorf/ Leipzig: Klett, 1998), p. 128f. and compare id.: “Das Leben als Tanz in den Tod in der Rachetragödie der englischen Renaissance“, in: F. H. Link (ed.), *Tanz und Tod in Kunst und Literatur, Schriften zur Literaturwissenschaft* 8 (Berlin: Perfect Paperback, 1993), p. 139–160.

439 Thomas P. Anderson: *Performing Early Modern Trauma*, p. 136.

440 Ibid, p. 141.

Heere sit we downe to see the misterie,
And serue for Chorus in this tragedie. (ST, I.i.86–91)

From this comment on, the tragedy unfolds, and the retaliation theme is first created, as Stroup comments: “From the supernatural world of the Ghost we view the action in the natural world which comes to a most unnatural period in what was supposed to be a world of make-believe but turns out to be only too real.”⁴⁴¹ In this real stage world, another murder is committed to incense the revenge plot.⁴⁴²

The goddess Nemesis does not appear in any of the other revenge tragedies treated in this study, and a god-like character like her does not appear in the later plays.⁴⁴³ “Of the Senecan devices of supernatural intervention, the goddess of vengeance exerted the most important influence on the regular Elizabethan drama prior to 1587”.⁴⁴⁴ With her presence, accompanying the ghost of the deceased Andrea, she is foreboding vengeance and creating suspense.⁴⁴⁵ Even though her presence diminished, her function remained highly significant and gave its name to this genre of tragedy.

On the ever-present revenge figure in *The Spanish Tragedy*, demonstrating the unavoidable ubiquity of an ambivalent moral, Clare explains: “Possibly in a gallery on high or standing at the side of the stage, even occasionally intermingling with the characters, Revenge is a constant reminder of an infernal presence and of the illusory nature of Hieronimo’s apparent free will.”⁴⁴⁶ From the beginning, it is clear that revenge will have to be performed.

This, however, is only slowly accomplished, and the ghost becomes very nervous when vengeance seems to be delayed and tries to question the speed of the plot.

441 Thomas B. Stroup: *Microsmos. The Shape of the Elizabethan Play*, p. 51.

442 Compare the proceedings in John Fletcher: *The Tragedy of Valentinian*, ed. R. K. Turner, in: Fredson Bowers (ed.): *The Dramatic Works in the Beaumont and Fletcher Canon*, vol. 4 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), p. 264–414. For an analysis of Valentinian, see Uwe Baumann: *Vorausdeutung und Tod im englischen Römerdrama der Renaissance*, especially p. 393–400.

443 Tamora in *Titus Andronicus* dresses herself as Nemesis in the masque play; however, the goddess herself remains a disguise in the play-within-the-play – a mask, just as she remains a character only in the frame action of ST and does not act herself in the revenge tragedies. She represents a commenting personification of the essential motive which is dominating all the plays. Much like *Titus Andronicus*, the frame presents itself to the audience much alike a play-within-a-play, reflecting the stage action. In this instance, perhaps the term “play-within-the-frame” might be even more appropriate.

444 Robert Rentoul Reed Jr.: *The Occult on the Tudor and Stuart Stage*, p. 22.

445 *Ibid.*, p. 24.

446 Janet Clare: *Revenge Tragedies of the Renaissance*, p. 25.

ANDREA. Come we for this from depth of vnder ground, –
 To see him feast that gaued me my death's wound?
 These pleasant sights are sorrow to my soule:
 nothing but league and loue and banqueting!
 REUENGE. Be still, Andrea; ere we go from hence,
 Ile turne their freendship into fell despight,
 Their loue to mortall hate, their day to night,
 Their hope into dispaire, their peace in warre,
 Their ioyes to paine, their blisse to miserie. (ST, I.v.1–9)

Andrea is shocked to find the proceeding taking a turn towards the worse – “Brought'st thou me hither to increase my pain?” (II.vi.1), and is only sufficiently appeased by Revenge who persuades him to await the further plot “till the corne be ripe.” (II.vi.9); on the contrary – since revenge seems to be taking its time – he is invoking hell for a reaction, and in that, acts much more like an emotional revenger than one of those ghosts that ask their descendants to perform revenge.⁴⁴⁷ He is repetitive in his plea to hellish forces:

GHOST. Awake Erictho! Cerberus, awake!
 Sollicite Pluto, gentle Proserpine!
 To combat, Achinon and Ericus in hell!
 For neere by Stix and Phlegeton [there came.]
 Nor ferried Caron to the fierie lakes,
 Such fearfull sights, as poore Andrea see[s]?
 Reuenge awake!
 [...] Awake, Reuenge! for thou art ill aduise
 To sleepe away what thou art warnd to watch!
 [...] Awake, Reuenge, if loue, as loue hath had,
 Haue yet the power of preuailance in hell!
 Hieronimo with Lorenzo is ioynde in league,
 And intercepts our passage to reuenge.
 Awake, Reuenge, or we are woe-begone! (ST, III.xv.1–16)

Andrea becomes nervous and angry, assuming a failure of the revenge plan. However, Revenge finally assures Don Andrea's ghost of the coming vengeance with soothing words and the explanation of a dumb show that foreshadows the play-within-the-play, during which revenge is performed:

REUENGE. Thus worldings ground what they haue dreamd vpon!
 Content thy-selfe, Andrea; though I sleepe,
 Yet is my mood solliciting their soules.
 Sufficeth thee that poore Hieronimo
 Cannot forget his sonne Horatio.
 Nor dies Reuegne although he sleepe a-while;

447 See below, 5.2.3.

For in vnquiet, quietnes is faind,
 And slumbring is a common worldly wile.
 Beholde, Andrea, for an instance how
 Reuenge hath slept; and then imagine thou

What tis to be subiect to destinie.

Enter a Dumme-show.

GHOST. Awake, Reuenge! reueale this misterie!

REUENGE. The two first [do] the nuptiall torches beare,
 As brightly burning as the mid-daies sunne;
 But after them doth Himen hie as fast,
 Clothed in sable and saffron robe,
 And blowes them out and quenchem them with blood,
 As discontent that things continue so.

GHOST. Sufficeth me; thy meanings vnderstood,
 And thanks to thee and those infernall powers
 That will not tollerate a louers woe.
 Rest thee; for I will sit to see the rest.

REUENGE. Then argue not; for thou hast thy request. (III.xv.17–39)

Instead of blessing the supposedly but not truly beloved couple, Hymen kills them cruelly. The dumb show reflects the discontent of the gods; Hymen is not blessing their nuptials, but the situation is ending in a spectacular bloodbath – he is quenching out their blood as a foreshadowing of the coming catastrophe.⁴⁴⁸ Accordingly, a bloodshed follows in the play-within-the-play,⁴⁴⁹ which Hieronimo directs to fulfil revenge. With that scene of death the tragedy ends, only to be commented on by the ghost of Don Andrea and Revenge: Don Andrea is finally content with vengeance fulfilled.

GHOAST. I; now my hopes haue end in their effects,
 When blood and sorrow finish my desires:

448 Dahinten: *Die Geisterszene in der Tragödie vor Shakespeare*, p. 48.

449 See Wolfgang Iser: “Das Spiel im Spiel. Formen dramatischer Illusion bei Shakespeare“, in: *Archiv* 198 (1961–62), p. 209–226; Dieter Mehl: “Zur Entwicklung des ‘Play within a Play’ im elisabethanischen Drama“, in: *Shakespeare Jahrbuch* 97 (1961), p. 134–152. For a more recent study on plays within plays, see Gerhard Fischer/ Bernhard Greiner (eds.): *The Play Within the Play: The Performance of Meta-theatre and Self-reflection*. Internationale Forschungen Zur Allgemeinen & Vergleichenden Literaturwissenschaft (Amsterdam/ New York: Rodopi B. V., 2007); especially David Roberts’ comparative article “The Play within the play and the Closure of Representation” (p. 37–46).

Horatio murdered in his Fathers bower,
 [...] I, these were spectacles to please my soule.
 [...] Ile lead Hieronimo where Orpheus plaies,
 Adding sweet pleasure to eternall daies.
 But say, Reuenge, – for thou must helpe or none, –
 Against the rest how shall my hate be showne?

REUENGE. This hand shall hale them down to deepest hell,
 Where none but furies, bugs and tortures dwell. (IV.v.1–28)

The frame turns back to its initial topic: the ghost of Don Andrea will return to the underworld. This is the fate of the ghost in revenge tragedy: after vengeance has been performed, the ghost has to leave the earth again – where it was sent to incense or witness retaliation – and return to a state below, this time for good.

Don Andrea is additionally allowed to decide on the punishment and fate of those deceased during the plot. He judges fairly on those who helped his side and cruelly on his adversaries:

GHOAST. Then, sweet Reuenge, doo this at my request:
 Let me iudge and doome them to vnrest;
 Let loose poore Titius from the vultures gripe,
 And let Don Ciprian supply his roome;
 Place Don Lorenzo on Ixions wheele,
 And let the louers endles paines surcease,
 Iuno forget olde wrath and graunt him ease;
 Hang Balthazar about Chimeras neck,
 And let him there bewaile his bloody loue,
 Repining at our ioyes that are aboue;
 [...] And there liue dying still in endles flames,
 Blaspheming gods and all their holy names.

REUENGE. Then haste we downe to meet thy freends and foes;
 To place thy freends in ease, the rest in woes.
 For heere though death [doth] end their miserie,
 Ile there begin their endles tragedie. (IV.v.29–48)

This picture of the underworld, whose impression the audience is left with, seems much more cruel than any pain the audience had to witness on stage, which does not diminish the quality and quantity of cruelties they saw, but stresses the eternal pain that the villains have to suffer in the after-life.

It is noteworthy to see, though, that Hieronimo will not suffer for eternity although he did transgress his office as judge to accomplish true revenge through wild, i.e. lawless justice. This becomes increasingly interesting when compared to the future of the other revengers and their possible punishment for revenge.

A complete contrast to Don Andrea's ghost is that of the dead Bussy in *The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois*. Like Andrea, he has been dead all through the plot, but instead of appearing at the beginning of the play he only enters the scene in the last act – although he has indeed been talked about before already. He appears at the end of the play, even though the audience is aware of his existence from the beginning of the plot⁴⁵⁰ – he has demanded revenge, as Clermont feels obliged to carry it out. However, he too, enters an empty stage – Bussy appears to the audience. First appearing as an isolated ghost,⁴⁵¹ he holds his speech to the spectator and invokes pictures of a hellish underworld to his listeners. He closes the scene with an incantation of vengeful darkness and dances of death in the underworld to revel in justified punishment:⁴⁵²

The blacke soft-footed houre is now on wing,
Which, for my just wreake, ghosts shall celebrate
With dances dire and of infernall state. (V.iii.55–57)

With the fulfilment of revenge, he can enjoy cruel justice and then join the dead in peace. Similarly, Andrugio's ghost in *Antonio's Revenge* witness retaliation and thus finds peace to return to the underworld. In a plot-predicting dumb show, there is already a foreshadowing of revenge; Piero is loathed and discarded by all those present in the dumb show, while the ghost enters the scene “*tossing his torch about his head in triumph*” (V.i.0.7–0.8).

“The day has come, the time in which he pays back the foul mind for its crimes”, as Hunter translates Seneca's “*Venit dies, tempusque, quo reddat suis/ Animam squallentem sceleribus*” (V.i.1–2). Vengeance is about to be taken, as Andrugio's ghost introduces the spectator into the last act of the tragedy.

The fist of strenuous vengeance is clutch'd,
And stern Vindicta tow'reth up aloft
That she may fall with a more weighty peise 5
And crush life's sap from out Piero's veins.
Now 'gins the leprous cores of ulcered sins
Wheel to a head; now is his fate grown mellow,
Instant to fall into the rotten jaws
Of chapfall'n death. Now down looks providence 10
T'attend the last act of my son's revenge.
Be gracious, Observation, to our scene;

450 RB is the sequel to the play *Bussy D'Ambois*, at the end of which Bussy dies, so the knowledgeable audience of St Paul's might have watched that play before seeing the sequel. Already the title of the play, including the catchword revenge, would indicate the possible existence of a supernatural force, possibly a ghost.

451 Compare Dahinten (see above).

452 Compare, as above, other representations of dances of death; Baumann: “Das Leben als Tanz in den Tod in der Rachttragödie der englischen Renaissance“.

For now the plot unites his scatter'd limbs
 Close in contracted bands. The Florence Prince
 (Drawn by firm notice of the Duke's black deeds) 15
 Is made a partner in conspiracy.
 The States of Venice are so swoll'n in hate
 Against the Duke for his accursed deeds
 (Of which they are confirm'd by some odd letters
 Found in dead Strotzo's study, which had pass'd 20
 Betwixt Piero and the murd'ring slave)
 That they can scarce retain from bursting forth
 In plain revolt. O, now triumphs my ghost,
 Exclaiming, "Heaven's just; for I shall see
 The scourge of murder and impiety." (V.i.3–25)

The ghost is inviting the audience to witness the successful fulfilment of the revenge, which the ghost himself asked his son to perform. He compares Piero to a sick entity, that needs to be revolted against. "In the final sadistic revenge sequence, retributive providence and secular revenge are forcibly joined."⁴⁵³ Vengeance is creeping into Piero's body like an illness, as hate towards him has infiltrated the states of Northern Italy, who now stand up against his intrigues. Andrugio's spirit, his "ghost" will – after this success – truly have justice. Sitting as a spectator in Piero's court, he witnesses the murder of Piero: "*While the measure is dancing, Andrugio's ghost is placed betwixt the music-/ houses.*" (V.iii.49), commenting on his seat: "Here will I sit, spectator of revenge,/ And glad my ghost in anguish of my foe." (l. 53–54).

Once the revengers have cut out Piero's tongue, he is rejoicing: "Blest be thy hand. I taste the joys of heaven,/ Viewing my son triumph in his black blood." (l. 67–68). Jonathan Dollimore underlines the subversive aspect of revenge, known by its executioners: "As revengers, far from being the instruments of divine providence, they subversively arrogate its retributive function":⁴⁵⁴ Antonio is directly referring to revenge as the accepted main motive – to even the crime out.

After they have stabbed Piero thrice (l. 110–111), calling him "Scum of the mud of hell!", "Slime of all filth!", "most detested toad!", "most retort and obtuse rascal" (l. 96–99), Antonio threatens him with more ghostly confrontations in hell:

Thus charge we death at thee. Remember hell;
 And let the howling murmurs of black spirits,
 The horrid torments of the damned ghosts,
 Affright thy soul as it descendeth down
 Into the entrails of the ugly deep. (V.iii.100–104)

453 Jonathan Dollimore: *Radical Tragedy*, p. 37.

454 Ibid, p. 38.

To finish him off, they “run all at Piero with their rapiers” and deny him any last words in this tragedy. Satisfied, the ghost of Andrugio leaves the scene to the living, having received eternal peace: “’Tis done; and now my soul shall sleep in rest./ Sons that revenge their father’s blood are blest. *The curtains being drawn, exit Andrugio.*” (l. 114–115). He is speaking of the revenge his son has accomplished, but the audience never saw him tell his son about the due punishment; the only interaction between them happened in Antonio’s dream where the ghost appeared to his son in a off-stage vision.

Referring back to *The Spanish Tragedy*, the ghosts that witness the accomplishment of death, whether seen by the audience all through the play or not, seem like the unknown engine to the tragedy, even when not encountered by the stage characters, as Stroup underlines: “It was Andrea’s death that started the action, was the first cause.”⁴⁵⁵ The murder is an emblem of the ensuing tragedy, and it is even put on stage for the other characters to see in that the body of Horatio, once murdered, is left to rot by the tree. Anderson supports the argument for the everpresence of death and the need for revenge with the picture of Horatio’s rotting corpse in mind: “While it is true that only theatergoers, not the staged spectators, see the ghost of Don Andrea and Revenge, Horatio’s ubiquitous corpse substitutes for the invisible conspirator as a reminder of the desire for revenge and for how the dead seem to exert a force beyond the grave.”⁴⁵⁶ For the spectator, both form the backdrop to the plot: murder and its retaliation are all-encompassing.

5.2.3 Ghostly visitations to the prospective revenger – “Revenge my blood! Take spirit, gentle boy”⁴⁵⁷

The ghost most often appears to a relative, who will have to commit revenge in its place and for its sake. As such, the ghost of old Hamlet appears to his son in Shakespeare’s tragedy to demand vengeance for his death: “The Ghost’s tale of murder, by invoking all the natural loyalties of son to father, initiates an equally powerful emotional drive towards remedial action, the ‘wild justice’ of revenge.”⁴⁵⁸ It causes the revenger to be painfully aware of a past evil, which is not punished by legal justice and thus needs to be paid back by a more cruel and violent, possibly immoral justice.

This ghostly vision to the revenger is often that of a father to a son. As in *Hamlet*, for example, the murdered father appears to his offspring and calls onto

455 Thomas B. Stroup: *Microsmos. The Shape of the Elizabethan Play*, p. 50.

456 Thomas P. Anderson: *Performing Early Modern Trauma*, p. 139.

457 AR, III.i.36.

458 Rowland Wymer: *Suicide and Despair in the Jacobean Drama* (Brighton: The Harvester Press, 1986), p. 29.

his duty to revenge the deed committed on him and thereby appeals to his familial loyalty. The son is the ghost's answer to his avenging dilemma; being dead it cannot commit revenge himself, and thus needs a living being to physically revenge the crime of his murder.⁴⁵⁹ The ghost therefore enters the world of the son and grants him the painful awareness of evil deeds committed in his vicinity, which must not be born out, but must be retaliated, as the ghost demands.

The ghost brings a gift of knowledge to the hero. In the sense that this knowledge is not common among men, it is a gift. In the sense that knowledge wells up out of the region external to man that is the corollary to his passions, it is more of a curse. [...] But supernatural knowledge is heavy stuff and the gods, particularly the Furies, do not give it without a purpose. Nor are they all interested in the well-being of the individual they grace.⁴⁶⁰

Thus, the ghost does not only serve as a messenger from the underground, who conjures up glorious and fiery pictures of hell and purgatory. It is not just a stage thrill to frighten the ladies, or create horror among the groundlings. Additionally, it is given more than a function of shock, based on its supernatural origin and connection with a past crime of murder; instead the ghost is given a role in the structural development of the plot – the dramaturgy of the revenge tragedy is supported by the existence, appearance and demands of the ghost.

The ghost is directly associated with the revenge plot: it serves as an engine to the revenge tragedy.⁴⁶¹ Its task is to convey the office of vengeance to the son/revenger.⁴⁶² Angry about the injustice of its death and the imbalance in the universe – having been murdered by near kin, poisoned or stabbed by a rival, left dishonourably, it is a means in the unleashing of a force, an otherworldly objective to right the wrongs committed on earth. However, since it is but the spirit of a deceased person, it cannot do much more than frighten its murderer by haunting him, which is inefficient as revenge; its weapon is a trustful heir whom it may give the office of revenger. The ghost often speaks directly to the revenger and urges him to action. Through the psyche of the revenger, the ghost controls the action, even if vengeance is left to the revenger alone, as it seems. Clermont in Bussy for example is haunted by this loyal duty to repay his brother's murder.

459 Gregory M. Colón Semenza: "The Spanish Tragedy and Revenge", in: *Early Modern English Drama. A Critical Companion*, ed. Garrett A Sullivan Jr/ Patrick Cheney/ Andrew Hadfield (New York/ Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 50–60.

460 Charles A. Hallett/ Elaine S. Hallett: *The Revenger's Madness*, p. 105.

461 Even in ST, where it only appears in the frame and has no direct influence on the action, he is associated with the mirrored events that let his cause be retaliated and revenge against his enemies be fulfilled.

462 See Obermark-Clark: *The Structural Function*, p. 593. Another task, to be dealt with later, is that of confounding and threatening the murderer with their presence.

Retaliation, however, as is typical of all revenge tragedies overflows with the first step to right past wrongs, and uncontrolled action will “inevitably run to excess”.⁴⁶³ Thus the action, which the ghost starts off, appears almost as hellish justice, even though the ghost himself may be “destructive but not deliberately diabolic.”⁴⁶⁴

The ghost’s significance is directly relevant to the plot of the tragedy; however, the ghost gives – through its function as a supernatural agent – a corresponding cosmic function to the plot, with its provenance from another level. Thus, it relates the microcosmic chaos of the revenge plot – like omens, too – to a macrocosmic relevance. “Significantly, Marston presents it [the ghost] as an elemental force. It has an external reality, a supernatural existence, which makes it a personification of the universal sense of outrage against murder.”⁴⁶⁵ Like omens from the heavens, which reflect a possible chaos in the state, the ghost appears from a different, macrocosmic “reality” level, as Hallett and Hallett put it, and it draws the parallel of the universe into the tragedy. This supernatural origin which influences the revenge plot, and increases its historical and cultural dimension,⁴⁶⁶ might also be a reason for a more than appropriate excess of revenge. The ghost does not only stand for a providence of justice, but it also reflects an ethereal, heavenly blessing upon the revenger, who proves to be a saviour to the plot, and thus to the state,⁴⁶⁷ and, as Rist states, a meaning to the theatrical world.⁴⁶⁸ However, even though the revenger takes on a supposed necessary task, especially for the development of the plot, he is nevertheless a destructive force – not adhering to legal justice, but using excessive violence.⁴⁶⁹

Thus, the function of the dramatic ghost is more direct than that of the isolated ghost, who appears on its own and speaks to the audience.⁴⁷⁰ Even though it ascends from another, supernatural level, it seems nevertheless more human in its interaction than one who only frames the plot or comments on it. The dramatic ghost is never omniscient, but demanding and communicative,

463 Rowland Wymer: *Suicide and Despair in the Jacobean Drama*, p. 39.

464 Hallett/ Hallett: *The Revenger’s Madness*, p. 39.

465 *Ibid.*, p. 169.

466 Compare Historicist studies on Renaissance drama, e.g. Lovejoy, Tillyard, T. Spencer etc. and also New Historicist studies like those of Dollimore, Sinfield, and also McAlindon. See bibliography.

467 This is nevertheless of no further significance for any of those tragedies where there is no ghosts, such as RT. Other revenge tragedies reflect similar circumstances through other means. However, the impact of such a description of the underworld is indeed impressive – maybe more than the impact that a described comet can have.

468 Thomas Rist: “Religion, Politics, Revenge: The Dead in Renaissance Drama”. *Early Modern Literary Studies* 9.1 (2003), on: <http://extra.shu.ac.uk/emls/09-1/ristdead.html>.

469 See above on Bacon’s “wild justice” in: “Of Revenge”, p. 16.

470 Gisela Dahinten: *Die Geisterszene in der Tragödie vor Shakespeare*, p. 18.

like Hamlet's father. "I am thy father's spirit,/ Doomed for a certain term to walk the night".⁴⁷¹ For his son, he has an initiating function.⁴⁷²

So, the ghost is not merely a popular stage thrill, but a functional element with a great potential⁴⁷³ to indicate an injustice, which creates passion, a supernatural force to right the wrongs, arouse this search for retaliation in the revenger and ultimately exceed the wish for balance towards further violence.

Its intention is the will and ambition to revenge in a perturbed unnatural, death-influenced way: sometimes they are credited as evil spirits (hellish apparitions) appearing to good people and will always find a justification for their reasoning, if only to have some villainy committed.⁴⁷⁴ The ghost's aim is the internalisation of the psychology of its motive, so that the revenger takes on the ideas of the ghost. The authority it relies on seems to derive from heaven but the agent who delivers it comes from below.

After a soliloquy by his desperate son Antonio, the ghost of Andrugio, murdered by his rival Piero, enters the scene of AR in III.i. Coming to his son's aid and keeping him from committing suicide, his father's ghost bears a strong resemblance to that of old Hamlet.⁴⁷⁵ Incensing his son to action, he cries for revenge:

GHOST OF ANDRUGIO.

Thy pangs of anguish rip my cerecloth up;
 And lo, the ghost of old Andrugio
 Forsakes his coffin. Antonio, revenge!
 I was empoison'd by Piero's hand; 35
 Revenge my blood! Take spirit, gentle boy.
 Revenge my blood! Thy Mellida is chaste;
 Only to frustrate thy pursuit in love
 Is blaz'd unchaste. Thy mother yields consent
 To be his wife and give his blood a son, 40
 That made her husbandless and doth complot
 To make her sonless. But before I touch

471 *Hamlet*, I.v.9–10.

472 Gardette mentions in his essay on dreams that ghosts have a similar initiating function; in: Raymond Gardette: "Les formes du songe dans le théâtre de Shakespeare", in: *Le Songe a la Renaissance*, ed. Françoise Charpentier, Association d'études sur l'Humanisme, la Réforme et la Renaissance, Colloque International de Cannes 1987, p. 243–54, p. 253: "Le songe, dans ces constructions dramatiques un peu irréelles, a une fonction initiatique."

473 See these four points made by Hallett/ Hallett: *The Revenger's Madness*, p. 39.

474 Compare J. B. Bamborough: *The Little World of Man* (London/ New York/ Toronto: Longmans, Green & Co., 1952), p. 49.

475 Indeed the whole play has a similar plot. One main difference is the following: In contrast to *Hamlet*, the audience knows of Piero's guilt from the start, and does not only get to know the bloody truth through the ghost's information – which makes *Hamlet* less predictable and more exciting, and AR rather predictable.

The banks of rest, my ghost shall visit her.
 Thou vigor of my youth, juice of my love,
 Seize on revenge, grasp the stern-bended front 45
 Of frowning vengeance with impeised clutch
 Alarum Nemesis, rouse up thy blood,
 Invent some stratagem of vengeance
 Which, but to think on, may like lightning glide
 With horror through thy breast. Remember this: 50
Scelera non ulcisceris, nisi vincis. Exit Andrugio's ghost. (III.i.32–51)

He is persuading Antonio of a more severe revenge than the deed itself demands, repeating his need for bitter retaliation: making the punishment worse than its origin is the nature of vile revenge and also the nature of revenge tragedy. In every line, he seems to drag Antonio deeper into the mindset of barren hatred towards his adversary, only strengthening the idea of vengeance. The only unsure thought he utters is mentioning his wife Maria – in an interesting parallel to Piero –, who has agreed to marry Piero after her husband's death. Antonio is completely convinced of revenge through this visit from his murdered father. Marston “has the ghost communicate directly with the revenger. This latter alteration [after the frame ghost of ST] heightens the dramatic impact and clarifies the authority of the ghost, who now not only introduces the passion of revenge into the world, but plants it firmly in the bosom of the revenger. [...] Marston's achievement was to realize more fully the dramatic potential of the ghost without altering the fundamental concept underlying its presence on stage.”⁴⁷⁶

Once Antonio is enraged with revengeful thoughts, “*From above and beneath*” (AR, III.i.125), i.e. apparently from heaven and hell, there are acclamatory shouts to support his decisiveness: “Murder!” (l. 125) is stressed by the audience's awareness of a dead Andrugio and Feliche and a banished Pandulpho. It is interesting to decipher, whose voice comes from above and whose from beneath. Pandulpho might still be in prison *underneath*, though Mellida spoke through the grating of prison from *within*⁴⁷⁷, – and this stage direction could indicate the unestablished underworld providence of the dead spirits of the ghost of Antonio's father, as has also been questioned in *Hamlet*.

Takei stresses that, in *Hamlet* “[t]he Ghost brings this yet vague awareness of evil to the surface of his consciousness. Small wonder that he explains, when the horrible truth is revealed to him, ‘O my prophetic soul! My uncle!’ As he suspected, there was foul play behind the scenes.”⁴⁷⁸

These ghosts do not frighten Antonio, but rather stir his thoughts onto the

476 Charles A. Hallett/ Elaine S. Hallett: *The Revenger's Madness*, p. 28–29.

477 See II.ii.

478 Naoe Takei: “Dreams as Metaphysical Visions”, in: *Shakespeare Studies* 8, p. 20.

target of his revenge: the villain Piero: “Ay, I will murder; graves and ghosts/ Fright me no more; I’ll suck red vengeance/ Out of Piero’s wounds, Piero’s wounds.” (III.i.128–130); he repeats this during his short presence on stage, “Revenge” (l. 174) and urges Antonio on to murder his young friend and Mel-lida’s brother Julio, only because he is Piero’s son. Once Antonio does stab Julio, it must be Andrugio’s ghost who makes “*From under the stage a groan.*” (l. 194) – i.e. from the underworld region, where thus the ghost must be as in some kind of underworld or purgatory.

Antonio is fulfilling his promise of revenge with Julio as his first victim: he presents the blood of Piero’s son, invoking an image of Julio entering eternity, with blood-stained hands to Andrugio’s tomb and “to Vengeance” (l. 206). While sacrificing it to the monument, he is speaking incantations to his father:

Ghost of my poison’d sire, suck this fume;
To sweet revenge, perfume thy circling air
With smoke of blood. I sprinkle round his gore
And dew thy hearse with these fresh-reeking drops.
Lo, thus I heave my blood-dyed hands to heaven;
Even like insatiate hell, still crying: ”More!
My heart hath thirsting dropsies after gore.”
Sound peace and rest to church, night-ghosts and graves;
Blood cries for blood; and murder murder craves. (III.i.207–215)

Reminiscent of the proverb “blood will have blood”,⁴⁷⁹ also used in *Macbeth*, Antonio is setting himself further targets – murder will be revenged by more murder, just as Andrugio demanded in his first apparition: “More than any other ghost in Elizabethan revenge tragedy, the Ghost of Andrugio is the embodiment of the anger that is released into the world at the moment a violent injustice is committed. All of the hatred and cruelty, the self-absorption and the excess of the passion of revenge is revealed in the attitude of Andrugio as he rises from his coffin to address his son”.⁴⁸⁰

Andrugio has no conscience but only wants wild justice, disregarding humanity; he is relishing an excessive revenge and can persuade his son to commit the same.⁴⁸¹ Antonio needs a sanction for crime and this is what the ghost gives

479 See also footnote: Proverbial. Tilley B. 458; see e.g. *Macbeth*, III.iv.121.

480 Charles A. Hallett/ Elaine S. Hallett: *The Revenger’s Madness*, p. 29.

481 Though it needs to be conceded that Antonio at first has his doubts as to a Stoical idea of awaiting calmly what happens, in comparison to becoming a wild revenger. This creates a problem in the reconciliation of Senecan revenge and Christian ideology – a combination of both morals seems impossible, and it seems as if it cannot be resolved in revenge tragedy, since Christian morals forbid private retaliation, until AT: Tourneur does not fail this allegedly unbridgeable problem, in that he denies the permission to murder to his revenger

him: a legitimation, which turns vengeance into a part of providence.⁴⁸² Authors often try to give a religious sanction to cruel deeds of revenge, still there remains the dichotomy between Christian morality and revenge according to the audience's expectation of the play. Vengeance is seen as a noble deed – and the task asked for by the ghost to be carried out by the revenger is a deed appealing to the interaction of his vengeful passion and the crude intellect that dictates justice, while faith might forbid it.

Clermont in *Bussy* finds himself in a similar struggle – he has taken on the office of revenger without the willingness to perform vengeance.⁴⁸³ Through the visitation of his dead brother, like Antonio through Andrugio's visitation, he is reminded to commit the deed, which has been left on his shoulders. Lordi writes in the introduction to his edition of the play “the Ghost, scoffs at Clermont's passivity [as Charlotte does], attributing his tame spirit to a fear of danger”.⁴⁸⁴ Clermont, instead, “whose lodestar has been reason, cannot handle the irrational”⁴⁸⁵, as Florby writes – but the ghost can ultimately convince him of his duty: “Clermont finally accepts the obligation to accomplish the revenge after the appearance of Bussy's Ghost.”⁴⁸⁶

GHOST

Danger (the spur of all great mindes) is ever
 The curbe to your tame spirits; you respect not
 (With all your holinesse of life and learning)
 More then the present, like illiterate vulgars;
 Your minde (you say) kept in your fleshes bounds
 Shows that mans will must rul'd be by his power:
 When by true doctrine you are taught to live
 Rather without the body then within,
 And rather to your God still then your selfe.
 To live to Him is to doe all things fitting
 His image in which like Himselfe we live;
 To be His image is to doe those things
 That make us deathlesse, which by death is onely
 Doing those deedes that fit eternitie;
 And those deedes are the perfecting that justice
 That makes the world last, which proportion is

and instead punishes by divine intervention, appearing as a grotesque coincidence. See G. F. Waller: “Time, Providence and Tragedy in ‘The Atheist's Tragedy’ and ‘King Lear’”, in: *English Miscellany* 23 (1972), p. 55–74, p. 60.

482 Compare Charles A. Hallett/ Elaine S. Hallett: *The Revenger's Madness*, p. 31.

483 Even more than Antonio, Clermont is struggling with his obligation to fulfil revenge, which represents the opposition to his Stoical disposition.

484 Lordi in his introduction to his edition of Chapman's *The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois*, p. 23.

485 Gunilla Florby: *The Painful Passage to Virtue*, p. 256.

486 Lordi: Introduction RB, p. 22–23.

Of punishment and wreake for every wrong,
 As well as for right a reward as strong:
 Away, then! use the meanes thou hast to right
 The wrong I suffer'd. What corrupted law
 Leaves unperform'd in Kings, doe thou supply,
 And be above them all in dignitie. *Exit.* (V.i.78–99)

The revenger, like Clermont, should fulfil God's justice and keep it in appropriate measures – “The ghost calls for a ‘just wreak’ to be executed by an active hero in perfect harmony with the will of heaven.”⁴⁸⁷ – it seems to be denying a “wild justice”, but yet that is exactly what it is asking for: the ghost almost proves to be an agent of anarchy – it asks for its wishes, no matter what: “The Ghost caps his theological justification of revenge with an anarchic appeal to licence [...] This final appeal of the Ghost is remarkable, not only in its being at odds with Stoicism, but also with the concluding couplet of Clermont's rejection of Charlotte's arguments for revenge”.⁴⁸⁸

Bussy is vituperating Clermont for his constancy against vengeful – illegal and passionate – deeds, accusing him of too many doubting thoughts, being ruled by doctrine instead of power and emotions, while man, as instrument of God, should perform worldly justice. This speech is addressed to Clermont directly, who can perceive him, while the Guise cannot and therefore accuses Clermont of day-dreaming.⁴⁸⁹

Clermont's perception of the ghost also underlines a different approach to enmity. Bussy's ghost addresses Clermont, even though Guise is with his friend. This sheds a different light on the idea of the presence of Guise, who used to be an enemy of Bussy in the prequel. This enmity is not mentioned by Bussy at all, while Clermont senses some kind of uneasiness, because Bussy has apparently forgot all grudge against Guise. Guise's question – “Would he rise,/ And not be thundring threatas against the Guise?” – is answered thus: “You make amends for enmitie to him,/ With tenne parts more love and desert of mee” (V.i.105–108). The friendship that Clermont and the Guise have is stronger than a past grudge.

Together, Clermont, influenced by Bussy's passion, and Guise develop a grudge against the traitor Baligny, and curse his treachery. Clermont is nonetheless not convinced to take active revenge, whose deeds he deems “mischiefe” and suffering of “the common bloud” (l. 131,135) – Clermont fears the harm his

487 Richard S. Ide: “Exploiting the Tradition: The Elizabethan Revenger as Chapman's ‘Complete Man’”, in: *Medieval & Renaissance Drama in England*, ed. J. Leeds Barroll III (New York: AMS Press, 1984), p. 159–172, p. 168.

488 Lordi in his introduction to his edition to RB, p. 23–24.

489 This reminds of the closet scene in *Hamlet*, where Gertrude is unable to see the ghost of Hamlet, while he does appear to his son. III.iv.103–138.

action could cause, retains his Stoic attitude and, at least for a while, remains steadfast.

The situation appears similar in *Caesar's Revenge*. The ghost of Caesar, too, is asking for supposedly justified revenge; Caesar's ghost is encouraging Anthony and Octavian⁴⁹⁰ to carry out a just punishment – not to shed unnecessary blood, unless they feel the need to take vengeance in battle. However, he also wants to let Brutus feel the shame of his deed: “*Brutus* must feele the heavy stroke thereof” (IV.iv.2061) – thus, the ghost is also asking for personal retaliation, even if he clads it in justice. He does not leave the scene before Octavian and Anthony have sworn revenge against Caesar's killers “by all the Deities in Heaven” (l. 2093). They do so, or “in performance loose [their] vital breath.” (l. 2104). A “dissmall sight” (l. 2119) shall ensue after the appearance of the ghost.

Once the ghost has invaded the revenger's mind he remains a fixed entity until his wish for retaliation is granted. His appearance presents an initiation to the process and progress of vengeance.

A very different ghostly visitation, as far as its originiation is concerned, is presented in *The White Devil*. Instead of the ghost appearing to the revenger, here the revenger imagines the existence of the beloved dead person and thus creates the ghostly visitation by himself: Francisco is trying to remember his murdered sister to increase his own mood of vengeance, and to support his taking of action. As enacted in dumbshows, his sister Isabella died from the poison smeared onto Bracciano's portrait, which she kissed every night. In repayment for this murder, her brother Francisco now wants to act out revenge, and inquires for opportunities to hire a murderer. Francisco is settling firmer on his project of vengeance and actively creates the ghostly vision of his imagination⁴⁹¹, calling onto Isabella:

To fashion my revenge more seriously,
 Let me remember my dear sister's face:
 Call for her picture? no, I 'll close mine eyes,
 And in a melancholic thought I 'll frame
 [Enter Isabella's Ghost.
 Her figure 'fore me. Now I ha' 't—how strong
 Imagination works! how she can frame
 Things which are not! methinks she stands afore me,
 And by the quick idea of my mind,

490 See Uwe Baumann: *Vorausdeutung und Tod im englischen Römerdrama der Renaissance* (1564–1642) (Tübingen/ Basel: Francke Verlag, 1996), p. 425. He calls the ghost in CR rather complex and agile.

491 Thomas Rist: “Religion, Politics, Revenge: The Dead in Renaissance Drama”. *Early Modern Literary Studies* 9.1 (2003), on: <http://extra.shu.ac.uk/emls/09-1/ristdead.html>. Compare also Wolfgang Haubrich: “Offenbarung und Allegorese”, p. 244.

Were my skill pregnant, I could draw her picture.
 Thought, as a subtle juggler, makes us deem
 Things supernatural, which have cause
 Common as sickness. 'Tis my melancholy.
 How cam'st thou by thy death?—how idle am I
 To question mine own idleness!—did ever
 Man dream awake till now?—remove this object;
 Out of my brain with 't: what have I to do
 With tombs, or death-beds, funerals, or tears,
 That have to meditate upon revenge? [Exit Ghost.
 So, now 'tis ended, like an old wife's story.
 Statesmen think often they see stranger sights
 Than madmen. (WD, IV.i.97–117)

Francisco is imagining his sister, thereby invoking her ghost to appear, and as Nordlund calls it, “coolly inspects the ghostly apparition of his murdered sister behind closed eyelids, [but also] assured of the entirely fictional nature of his vision.”⁴⁹² This is an active calling of the spirit, “a play of his own making.”⁴⁹³ from beyond instead of a surprising visitation.⁴⁹⁴ Having summoned her himself, he “treats the apparition as an hallucination, which was one of the recognised symptoms of melancholy”⁴⁹⁵, rather trying to explain her appearance in terms of his brain's proceedings: “faced with a visitation by his murdered sister Isabella, Francisco watches her as if he were watching a play of his own making.”⁴⁹⁶

At first, he quickly dismisses his sister, being almost overpowered by the strength of the ghostly visitation.⁴⁹⁷ This remembrance of her death seems to him more unusual than the sights, which madmen see. Quoting Virgil, he ends his prophetic speech on revenge,⁴⁹⁸ which will move those who have entered hell:⁴⁹⁹ “In *The White Devil*, Duke Francisco coolly inspects the ghostly apparition of his murdered sister behind closed eyelids, assured of the entirely fictional nature of

492 Marcus Nordlund: *Dark Lantern*, p. 498.

493 Ibid, p. 370.

494 This aspect is important when it comes to the action of each revenger. They are often described as the directors of their revenge plays – revengers like Vindice, for example, set the scene for their plot of vengeance and direct the exertion of it. Compare the execution of the Duke in RT. See also Nordlund, p. 371.

495 See note on the line in Brennan's edition of WD, p. 76.

496 Marcus Nordlund: *The Dark Lantern*, p. 370.

497 See also Ankenbrand who supports the argument that this ghostly vision strengthens Francisco's determination; Hans Ankenbrand: *Die Figur des Geistes im Drama der Englischen Renaissance*. Münchner Beiträge zur Romanischen und Englischen Philologie 35 ed. H. Breymann/J. Schick (Leipzig: A. Deichert'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1906), p. 60.

498 “Flectere si necque superos, Acheronta movebo”: ‘If I cannot prevail upon the gods above, I will move the gods of the infernal regions.’ (Virgil: *Aeneid*, VII, 312).

499 See IV.i.138n.

his vision”⁵⁰⁰ and aware of his own creativity as a “self-conscious playwright”.⁵⁰¹ Nordlund calls this an exaggerated “parody on earlier revenge tragedy, with its conventional ghost”⁵⁰² that comes to demand revenge. “It is also a very literal example of that Websterian dramatic technique [...] we [the audience] are confronted with the theatrical staging of something that is visible only to Francisco.”⁵⁰³ The idea of a stage character summoning a ghost is a new one that – like Vittoria’s instructive dream – and it pushes the boundaries of the use of mantic elements to an active decision of the revenger. In contrast to deliberately uttered prophecies or curses, the creation of a vision through imagination can be visually implemented for the audience by having the ghost actively called onto the stage.⁵⁰⁴ Knowles calls the scene dominated by “man’s highest activity”: Francisco’s imagination presents “the intellectual vision of truth”.⁵⁰⁵ He demands from the visitation to give him reason for murder, asking her how she died.

Another strange ghostly visitation happens later in the play: “When, for example, Flamineo is confronted with the ghost of Bracchiano later on in the play, he is sufficiently perverse to ask the ghost for an advice about which religion is best for man to die in—he reaches the opposite conclusion: that the vision ‘is beyond melancholy’ (5.4.143)”.⁵⁰⁶ Thus Webster is using the mantic element in a new way. Instead of reacting with the expected fear as the dead Bracchiano appears, Flamineo grotesquely questions the ghost in a sarcastic manner, almost as if demanding proof of its representation.⁵⁰⁷

A very different consequential revenger’s behaviour is demanded by the ghost appearing in *The Atheist’s Tragedy*: the ghost does not call on the revenger to punish his murderer. The situation that is invoked by the visitation is more ambivalent than that of any ghost before. The ghost of the murdered Montferrers is appearing to his sleeping son Charlemont in his war camp, while thunder already portends the ghost’s arrival. His purpose at first seems conventional, in that he asks his son to face the truth of his past murder. However, instead of demanding revenge, he ends on a different note:

500 Marcus Nordlund: *The Dark Lantern*, p. 498.

501 Ibid, p. 371.

502 Ibid.

503 Ibid.

504 This obviously depends on the interpretation of the performance. Isabella might not appear as a ghost, but like Macbeth’s dagger, she has the effect of what appears to be truly seen.

505 David Knowles: *The English Mystical Tradition* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1961), p. 21–22.

506 Marcus Nordlund: *Dark Lantern*, p. 371–372.

507 This seems to underline the use of a mantic element with a different character by Webster. This can thus also support the interpretation of the dream used as an instructive element, as shown in 5.1.

Return to France, for thy old father's dead
 And thou by murder disinherited.
 Attend with patience patience the success of things,
 But leave revenge unto the King of kings. *Exit* (II.vi.19–22)

Instead of asking his son for vengeance, as would be expected, the ghost of Montferrers is informing him of his murder, but denying revenge to the son, according to the Christian doctrine: God cries *Vindicta mihi* – “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord.”⁵⁰⁸ Thus Tourneur is addressing the question of the revenger’s dilemma, as Whitfield White summerises: “The dilemma posed by revenge is whether the righteous can be the instrument of God’s wrath in avenging the murder of a family member.”⁵⁰⁹ Committing revenge leaves the revenger beyond legal justice. Nevertheless, each revenger needs to cross the boundary to fulfil his destination of taking part in retaliation – but Charlemont. Tourneur allows his hero to stay unblemished which makes him less a hero of the expected wild justice of revenge tragedy, but a Christian ideal of trusting believer in God’s providentialism.

Awakened from his vision, Charlemont first tries to explain this vision⁵¹⁰ to himself as an inner revelation: “O my affrighted soul, what fearful dream/ Was this that waked me? [...] It must be something that my Genius would inform me of.” (II.vi.23–24, 35–36). He is aware of some kind of weightful impact that this ghostly visitation must have, but tries to deny its influence and, like Caesar to his wife, calls the vision an “idle dream” (l. 44). He only believes in its existence – “Now gracious Heaven forbid!/ O, let my spirit be deprived of all/ Foresight and knowledge ere it understand/ That vision acted”⁵¹¹ – and cause after the ghost appears again to his waking mind: “The GHOST approaches Charlemont.” (l. 66).

Later on, when Charlemont has followed his inkling and gone home to find his father dead and supposedly himself, too, buried, he starts to act immediately as a revenger and fights with Sebastian, the son of the villain. At that moment, however, his father’s ghost appears again and withholds him from action: “Hold, Charlemont!/ Let him revenge my murder and thy wrongs/ To whom the justice of revenge belongs.” (III.i.32–34) This ghost, in contrast to almost all the other ghostly apparitions in revenge tragedy, follows a Christian moral and adheres not to the ethics of wild justice but the Christian doctrine of an avenging God, whose action must not be taken on by human hand. Interestingly, the other

508 *King James’ Bible*, Romans 12.19.

509 Paul Whitfield White: “Theater and Religious Culture“, in: John D. Cox/ Scott Kastan: *A New History of Early English Drama* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), p. 133–151, p. 149.

510 AT, II.vi.24–8.

511 AT, II.vi.36–39.

revenge tragedies show the opposite: an avenger who is aware of the Christian doctrine but nevertheless takes necessary retaliating action.⁵¹²

Another rewarding aspect of the interpretation of ghosts is that of an apparent ghostly vision, which is not really a ghost but a living person thought to be dead. People who are supposedly dead and then reappear, are at first, treated like ghostly visions.

This confusion can also happen when a third person is taken for the ghost of somebody else. Not only is the mad Hieronimo (in the case of ST, it is the father who avenges the son) taken in by the supposed apparition of a man, whom he supposes to be the ghost of his murdered son Horatio, but who really only mirrors a reminder of their common grief:

HIERO. But let me look on my Horatio:
Sweet boy, how art thou chang'd in death's black shade!
[...] not my son? thou, then, a fury art
Sent from the empty kingdom of black night
To summon me to make appearance
Before grim Minos and just Radamanth,
To plague Hieronimo that is remiss
And seeks not vengeance for Horatio's death.
BA. I am a grieved man, and not a ghost,
That came for justice for my murder'd son. (III.xiii.144–159)

The effect is nevertheless the same as that of a ghost; Hieronimo feels reminded of the need to fulfil revenge, which he has neglected until now.

Ghosts appear to the son or near kin to demand revenge– retaliation is demanded by the ghost and to be carried out by the human agent through the influence of the supernatural agent, coming from the realm of death – its interpretation must be understood by the revenger,⁵¹³ and he must internalise the reason and motive for vengeance to commemorate and honour the dead.⁵¹⁴

The ghosts of Isabella in Webster's *White Devil* and Montferrers in Tourneur's *Atheist's Tragedy* present a movement away from the common use of the ghost. The stereotypical character is changed and becomes even more a means in the hand of the playwright who is toying with conventions that the audience relies on.

512 A prime example is Hieronimo who first quotes "*Vindicta mihi!*" from the *Bible* and not five lines later settles on Seneca: "*Per scelus semper tutum est sceleribus iter*", a rough quote from *Agamemnon* (line 115). See Joseph's edition of ST, p. 69n, p. 115.

513 See Andrew Stott: "Tiresias and the Basilisk: Vision and Madness in Middleton and Rowley's *The Changeling*", p. 172.

514 Thomas Rist: "Religion, Politics, Revenge: The Dead in Renaissance Drama". *Early Modern Literary Studies* 9.1 (2003), on: <http://extra.shu.ac.uk/emls/09-1/ristdead.html>.

“The use of the ghost and bewitchment metaphors in documents showing audience response implies that an audience reified the illusory theatrical world. It may be deduced that the spectators became quite involved in this illusory world.”⁵¹⁵ The audience of a revenge tragedy would follow the plot of revenge and support the justice of a person they could emotionally understand. Since the revenger in revenge tragedy often seems the most sympathetic being, he is supported by the audience in his retaliation. The revenger discovers the wrong doings he and his dear ones have suffered: like the audience, he becomes aware of his villainous surrounding.⁵¹⁶

5.2.4 Visitation to the wife – “O, shed no tears”⁵¹⁷

As the ghost of the late Hamlet appears in his wife’s chamber,⁵¹⁸ so do some others in revenge tragedy appear directly to their widow: Andrugio, as promised in II.i.42–43, also visits Maria in the night before her betrothal to Piero. Instead of finding her willing to receive the new marriage blessings for her and Piero, Andrugio finds Maria at a moment of groaning on her bed “Alas, my dear Andrugio’s dead!” (III.ii.61). She is bewildered, in horrible amazement, when he confronts and accuses her:

GHOST OF ANDRUGIO

Disloyal to our hym’neal rites,

What raging heat reigns in thy strumpet blood ?

Hast thou so soon forgot Andrugio ?

65

Are our love-bands so quickly canceled? Where lives thy plighted faith unto this breast?
[*She weeps.*]

O weak Maria! Go to, calm thy fears;

I pardon thee, poor soul. O, shed no tears;

515 Henk Gras: *Studies in Elizabethan Audience Response to the Theatre. Part 2: As I Am man. Aspects of the Presentation and Audience Perception of the Elizabethan Female Page*. European University Studies. Europäische Hochschulschriften. Publications Universitaires EuropEennes, Vol. 48/49 (Frankfurt am Main et al: Peter Lang, 1993), p. 127.

516 Compare also Klaus Peter Jochum: *Discrepant Awareness. Studies in English Renaissance Drama*. Neue Studien zur Anglistik und Amerikanistik 13 (Frankfurt a. M.: Peter Lang, 1979), p. 17.

517 AR, III.ii.69.

518 There is among scholars the question whether Getrude might be able to see the ghost. See Miriam Joseph: “Discerning the Ghost in *Hamlet*”, in: *PMLA* 76 (1961), p. 493–502; Gerardine Marie Obermark-Clark: *The Structural Function of Ghosts, Dreams, Prophecies and Portents in Shakespeare’s Plays* (Diss. Indiana University, 1977); Stephan Greenblatt’s introduction “*Hamlet*” in *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt (New York/ London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1997³), p. 1659–1666 – Greenblatt analyses Hamlet’s “tragic isolation” (p. 1664); John Dover Wilson: *What happens in Hamlet* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1935¹, 2003), especially p. 246–257.

Thy sex is weak. That black incarnate fiend 70
 May trip thy faith, that hath o'erthrown my life.
 I was empoison'd by Piero's hand,
 Join with my son to bend up strain'd revenge;
 Maintain a seeming favor to his suit
 Till time may form our vengeance absolute. 75

Enter Antonio, his arms bloody, [in one hand] a torch and [in the other] a poniard.

ANTONIO.

See, unamaz'd I will behold thy face,
 Outstare the terror of thy grim aspect,
 Daring the horrid'st object of the night.
 Look how I smoke in blood, reeking the steam
 Of foaming vengeance. O, my soul's enthron'd 80
 In the triumphant chariot of revenge.
 Methinks I am all air and feel no weight
 Of human dirt clog. This is Julio's blood;
 Rich music, father! this is Julio's blood.
 Why lives that mother ?

GHOST OF ANDRUGIO

Pardon ignorance. 85

Fly, dear Antonio.
 Once more assume disguise, and dog the court
 In feigned habit till Piero's blood
 May even o'erflow the brim of full revenge.
 Peace and all blessed fortunes to you both. 90
 Fly thou from court; be peerless in revenge. *Exit Antonio.*
 Sleep thou in rest; lo, here I close thy couch.

Exit Maria to her bed, Andrugio drawing the curtains.

And now, ye sooty coursers of the night,
 Hurry your chariot into hell's black womb.
 Darkness, make flight; graves, eat your dead again; 95
 Let's repossess our shrouds. Why lags delay ?
 Mount, sparkling brightness, give the world his day.

Exit Andrugio (III.ii.63-97)

First accusing her of forgetting him so soon, he pities her as soon as she starts weeping and confides in her with the truth about his murder and his vengeful secret. Antonio, entering with the bloody signs of his first murder, at first cannot understand his father's forgiveness towards the seemingly unfaithful mother. However, it seems that he is completely taken in by the ghost's authority, and the

one comment “Pardon ignorance” is enough to forget any grudge towards his mother. Without a reply, Antonio follows his father’s commands, willing to put on a disguise and to fly from the court until the hour of vengeance approaches. Maria, too, immediately follows Andrugio’s orders. She does not make a sound after being laid to rest in bed through Andrugio’s closing of the curtains. All follow Andrugio’s commands willingly without questioning.

A human being that is mistaken for a ghost has the same effect on those that see it as a real ghost has. This happens to the revenger⁵¹⁹, but also to the suffering beloved. Like Vittoria’s instructive dream, which has the same effect as a true dream would have, so does the appearance of a person that is believed to be dead have an effect like a ghostly visitation:

Spurred on by the ghost of his father, Charlemont returns from the wars and find his beloved Castabella “mourning o’er [his] hearse” (III.i.71). Seeing him, Castabella mistakes him for his deceased spirit: “O Heaven defend me! *Falls in a swoon*” (III.i.73), before he can make her understand the truth. “The effect of a character disguised as a ghost is thus indistinguishable from the effect of a ghost.”⁵²⁰

5.2.5 Apparitions to the murderer – “Bless me! It slides by.”⁵²¹

The ghosts of the deceased do not only appear to those whom they want to spur onto revenge, but they also haunt those who killed them: “Part of the punishment of sinners was the horrible visions projected by their tainted vision. This is in part the reason why the ghosts of their victims so often appear to murderers in Elizabethan drama”.⁵²² These apparitions are part of a psychological punishment of the murderer; the dead come to haunt those who tortured and killed them to confront them with their guilt and wish them ill. They are demanding vengeance according to the Old Testament⁵²³ which rates the revenger’s conscience remorseless.

One example is Caesar’s ghost in *Caesar’s Revenge*,⁵²⁴ who appears to those

519 See especially Hieronimo.

520 Marcus Nordlund: *The Dark Lantern*, p. 186.

521 Ch, V.i.61.

522 J. B. Bamborough: *The Little World of Man* (London/ New York/ Toronto: Longmans, Green & Co., 1952), p. 39.

523 *The Bible. Authorized King James Version* (1611), ed. Robert Carroll/ Steven Prickett (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996). Exodus 21, 24.

524 Compare William Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar*. There the victim Julius Caesar appears to his murderer Brutus in IV.ii as his “evil spirit” (l. 333) to warn him of a further encounter at Philippi. There, he appears again, indicating to Brutus that his “hour is come” (V.v.19). In Shakespeare’s *Richard III*, the procession of ghosts is even more impressive. Before the

who murdered him. Just when they have an ominous feeling of ensuing bloodshed, he enters the scene. Already, Brutus is talking about his “tortured mind” and conscience about murdering Caesar, whose “remembrance now doth wound [his] soule” (V.i.2270, 2279). Caesar’s ghost accuses him and threatens revenge on this ungrateful friend as a sign of divine justice.⁵²⁵

Right at the end of the battle of Philippi, he appears again (for the last time), pursuing Brutus onto a part of the battlefield revenging himself: “Murther by her owne guilty hand doth bleed” (V.v.2529). Discord calls out to him that all is chaos, bloody, and hell is near; vengeance is taken, as the ghost assures himself – “my revengfull thirst [is] fulfilled” (l.2546) The bloody deeds themselves, which have been invoked during the past acts are not presented in detail – the audience only hears of revenge being taken in a pleasing way. The ghost is calling for a system of justice to rule further on, while Discord is pleased with the anger and deaths that she has caused in this episode of history as presented in the play: “And laugh to thinke I caused such endlesse woe.” (l.2552). The ghost of Caesar will quietly descend to his final resting place, his “eternall home” (l.2557) to spent eternity in happiness, so it seems he does not even enter the gates of hell but a limbo state where other heroes spend their everlasting future.⁵²⁶

In *Caesar’s Revenge*, the ghost is also reminiscent of a guilty conscience. After Caesar’s entrance into Rome and self-glorification, Anthony solely reflects on Caesar’s situation: “Alas these triumphes moove not me at all” (the annotated III.iii.1297), but he reminisces about having left Cleopatra who has touched and “conquered [his] heart” (l.1303) when his *bonus genius*, an attendant spirit to guide his inclination⁵²⁷, enters the scene.⁵²⁸ It is accusing Anthony of effeminate thoughts, unsoldierly behaviour whose “manly labours [were] luld in drowsy sleepe” and coming to warn him of the future: “I am thy *bonus genius*, Anthony,/ Which to thy dul eares this do prophecy:/ That fatall face which now doth so bewitch thee,/ Like to that vaine unconstant Greekish dame,/ Which made the stately *Ilian* towres to smoke,/ Shall thousand bleeding *Romains* lay one ground” ([sic] III.iii.1330–1335). It is invoking a future where Hymen shall “dolefull dirges singe” (l.1337) and cry; it sees the coming conflict, a “dreadfull sight” (l.1346). Anthony exits with the following threat: “*Glaucus* and *Panoepa*, *Proteus*

Battle of Bosworth Field, all victims of Richard appear to him as ghosts to curse him and thereafter address Henry of Richmond to wish him well (V.v).

525 See also Uwe Baumann: *Vorausdeutung und Tod im englischen Römerdrama der Renaissance*, p. 426. Compare H. Geisen: *Dimension des Metaphysischen in Shakespeares Historien*, p. 65.

526 For a contextualisation of the different concepts of a place and state after death, compare Jacques Le Goff: *The Birth of Purgatory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986).

527 A genius is a kind of guardian spirit, guiding decisions and portraying a conscience to its addressee.

528 Compare Uwe Baumann: *Vorausdeutung und Tod im*, p. 129–130.

ould,/ Who now for feare changeth his wonted shape,/ Thus your vaine love which with delight begunne:/ In Idle sport shall end with bloud and shame.” (III.iii.1348–1351). Anthony feels this warning threatening him and asks himself about the damage his genius has done to his love’s ideas or “prophecie” (III.iii.1356). Anthony associates the sayings of his genius with prophecies and then tells himself to shake their influence off and wake “from this idle dreame” (I.1361). “References to the supernatural often focus on sound (the ‘charming’ of the spectator) and on sight (the ‘bewitching’ of the audience by illusions). [...] A ghost metaphor is image-centred. The relationship between the image presented (the character) and the materials that build up the image (the actor) is of less importance than the the [sic!] relation between the image (the character) and the person it represents.”⁵²⁹ The idle dream is real to the audience;⁵³⁰ they recognise the character but they also recognise its function as the spirit of a deceased person. Their discrepant awareness allows to “gain [an entrance] to the world of a play [...] it recognizes one of the fundamental and much-discussed conditions of the existence of theatre and drama: the discrepancy between appearance and reality, deception and truth, disguise and discovery.”⁵³¹

In *The Changeling*, the ghost of the murdered Alonzo de Piracquo appears to remind the heroine Beatrice Joanna’s conscience of her remorseless deed. The Dumb Show at the beginning of the fourth act signifies the shift, which Beatrice has achieved through the murder of Piraquo. In the Dumb Show, her plan seems more perfectly achieved, in that people think Alonzo flies the court instead of being found murdered. However, at the end of the dumb show, Alonzo’s ghost appears to accuse those who are responsible for his murder:

Enter Gentlemen, Vermandero meeting them with action of wonderment at the flight of [Alonzo de] Piracquo. Enter Alsemero with Jasperino and Gallants; Vermandero points to him, the Gentlemen seeming to applaud the choice. [Exeunt Vermandero,] Alsemero, Jasperino, and Gentlemen [and Gallants]; [enter] Beatrice the bride, following in great state, accompanied with Diaphanta, Isabella, and other Gentlewomen. [Enter] Deflores after all, smiling at the accident; Alonzo’s Ghost appears to Deflores in the midst of his smile, startles him, showing him the hand whose finger he had cut off. They pass over in great solemnity. (IV.i.0)

Alonzo’s ghost appears to Deflores, Beatrice’s servant, during the wedding ceremony between her desired husband Alsemero and Beatrice. Deflores is the murderer she hired to kill Alonzo – the ghost comes to haunt him and remind him of the deed he committed. This is reflected in the dumb show, when Deflores

529 Henk Gras: *Studies in Elizabethan Audience Response to the Theatre*. Vol. II: *As I Am man. Aspects of the Presentation and Audience Perception of the Elizabethan Female Page*, p. 127.

530 Compare Klaus Peter Jochum: *Discrepant Awareness*, p. 20.

531 *Ibid.*

has a feeling that his senses are absolutely clear, the ghost of Alonzo appears: “*Enter Alonzo’s Ghost.*” (Ch, V.i.57).

First frightened for a second, Deflores’ reaction soon is that of the typical villain who denies superstitious events as explicable by scientific reasons:⁵³² “Ha! What art thou that tak’st away the light/ ’Twixt that star and me? I dread thee not!/ ’Twas but a mist of conscience. All’s clear again.” (V.i.58–60), but exits straight to fulfil his devious and scheming plans. Even if Deflores does not feel morally guilty, his conscience supports the apparition of the deceased with the image of the man he killed. “The Ghost of Alonzo reveals the reality of the supernatural, but only as ‘A mist of conscience’ to Joanna and Deflores. [...] the Ghost instigates no action – it merely pricks consciences.” Like Deflores, Beatrice, too, is unsure of the apparition and its purpose at first, but soon turns towards her anger against her servant Diaphanta again, when the ghost slides past:

Who’s that, Deflores? Bless me! It slides by. [*Exit Ghost.*]
 Some ill thing haunts the house; ’t has left behind it
 A shivering sweat upon me: I’m afraid now.
 This night hath been so tedious. Oh, this strumpet!
 Had she a thousand lives, he should not leave her
 Till he had destroy’d the last. [*Strikes*] *three a’ clock.*

List! Oh, my terrors, (V.i.61–66)

However, the ghost of Alonzo nevertheless has a stronger impact on her than on Deflores, because she sweats for a shivering moment. The ghost has this impact on her since they were engaged and she is responsible for his death because she ordered his killing.

The dead Duchess of Malfi’s voice presents itself as an echo of conscience, urging the living not to forget her murder. Her husband Antonio and his servant encounter an echo from the Cardinal’s fortifications, where the Duchess is buried. This echo, which is described in the stage directions, is coming directly “*from the Duchess’s Grave*” (V.iii.0). The whole scene is set in a gloomy atmosphere, as Delio describes their approach:

Yond ’s the cardinal’s window. This fortification

Grew from the ruins of an ancient abbey;
 And to yond side o’ th’ river lies a wall,
 Piece of a cloister, which in my opinion
 Gives the best echo that you ever heard,
 So hollow and so dismal, and withal

532 Interestingly, the villains at first tries to explain the supernatural to themselves as natural phenomena and only in the end need to accept its influence on mankind. See also D’Amville in AT or Edmund in *King Lear*.

So plain in the distinction of our words,
That many have suppos'd it is a spirit
That answers. (V.iii.1–9)

The danger of it does not scare Antonio, but makes him rather pensive, reverent and settled; he knows that death will come at some point and life has an end. The ghostly echo answers these thoughts with the repetition of his last words: “Like death that we have” (V.iii.19). Thereby it is recalling the Duchess’ end and reminding him of their common future. In further responses of the echo, which always reverberates Antonio’s sentence ending, it calls out being his “wife’s voice” (l. 26) death into presence as “deadly” (l. 21) and a “thing of sorrow” (l. 24) and supporting Delio’s advice not to visit the Cardinal tonight: “Do not” (l. 29), but to be “mindful of [his] safety” (l. 31, 32). Antonio does not want to accept these counsels and tries to deny the warning echo: “Echo, I will not talk with thee,/ For thou art a dead thing” (l. 37–38), but is met with the echo’s opposition in the repetition of the part of his cry: “Thou art a dead thing” (l. 38), ominously predicting his death and further on underlining the Duchess’ own death in that the echo announces that Antonio shall “Never see her more” (l. 41).

Anderson underlines the suitability of this echo from the Duchess’ grave – it is her voice that ghost-like calls out from beneath, from the realms of death: “It is fitting that the Duchess appears to return as a disembodied voice immediately after Antonio’s elegy about the Reformation. In her incarnation as Echo, the Duchess repeats Antonio’s fatalistic articulation of death’s finality.”⁵³³ The echo is not accepted as that of his murdered wife by Antonio, who thus declines its religious connotations. The audience, though, know about her violent death and thereby understand the call from the underworld for revenge.

A very different call from the underworld is apparent in *The Revenge of Bussy D’Ambois*. Instead of the dubious signals from the Duchess, dead Bussy appears directly: The trusted friend of the family Renel and Bussy’s sister Charlotte discuss revenge and think Bussy’s brother is too hesitant to be an active avenger. Therefore Charlotte herself ponders whether she could – in disguise – kill on Bussy’s murderer Montsurry, instead of her hesitant brother Clermont, about whom both think that he is rather weak. Renel insists on still demanding revenge by Clermont: “And know besides, his brother will and must/ Indure no hand in this revenge but his” (RB, V.iii.43–44). At that moment the shadow of Bussy appears again:

Enter Umbr[a] Bussy.
Umbra. Away, dispute no more; get up, and see!
Clermont must auchthor this just tragedie.

533 Thomas P. Anderson: *Performing Early Modern Trauma from Shakespeare to Milton*, p. 134.

[...] The ayre, in which
 My figures liknesse is imprest, will blast.
 Let my revenge for all loves satisfie,
 In which, dame, feare not, Clermont shall not dye.
 No word dispute more; up, and see th'event. (V.iii.45–52)

He prophecies Clermont's decisive hand in revenge, and explains the fragility of his shadowy, ghostly self, and assures Clermont's survival in the revenge, thus denying the idea of a "fixt" upcoming death-date. "[Clermont's] Stoic's faith in human reason, ironically illustrated by his laborious rationalizations of the disembodied voice heard by the Guise, appears quite hollow in the presence of the irrational or perhaps the suprarational in the shape of a ghost on stage".⁵³⁴

Additionally, the Countess has the inkling of Clermont's approaching death. This seems worth discussing: while Bussy assures her of his survival in the course of revenge, she foresees his death. Both will be proven right in the end, since Clermont does not die fighting against Bussy's murderer Montsurry, but soon afterwards commits suicide.

The revenger is expected to die in his last act of revenge, thus leaving the stage world and his excessive revenge, which must be called a just crime, punished in the end. However, this is not every revenger's fortune. Antonio in *Antonio's Revenge* is left as sad avenging hero mourning the death of his dear ones, even though their murder has been revenged. Vindice in *The Revenger's Tragedy* commits himself to the punishment of the law without being charged as a criminal, but thus confirms his fate. Their fortunes – unexpected as they might be by the audience – either follow the tradition of tragedy, where the young leader now has to face a sad duty, or the tradition of the dying revenger of the genre named after him. Clermont, too, dies, but his suicide is not a punishment for the wild justice he committed, but a voluntary decision out of the sadness about his best friend Guise's death – a decision that calls platonic friendship but possibly homoerotic implications into question.

The death of his adversary Montsurry, whom Clermont finally killed, is accompanied by a procession of ghosts – now leaving the stage to find eternal peace: "*Musicke, and the Ghost of Bussy enters, leading the Ghost[s] of the Guise, Monsieur, Cardinall Guise, and Shattilion; they dance about the dead body, and exeunt*" (V.v.119). For the audience, aware of the deaths yet unknown to Clermont, the procession seems logical.⁵³⁵ To Clermont, this is an odd spectacle, thinking the Guise to be alive: "How strange is this! The Guise amongst these

534 Gunilla Florby: *The Painful Passage to Virtue*, p. 254.

535 Klaus Peter Jochum: *Discrepant Awareness. Studies in English Renaissance Drama*, p. 18–19. Jochum mentions the idea of the technical property of discrepant awareness which is here caused by dramatic irony.

spirits,/ And his great brother Cardinall, both yet living!/ And that the rest with them with joy thus celebrate/ This our revenge! This certainly presages/ Some instant death both to the Guise and Cardinall.” His thoughts point to the right conclusion, only the deed has already been performed and Guise and his brother have been slain. Clermont interprets the procession as an afterlife approval⁵³⁶ and heavenly harmony – foreshadowed to him from the afterlife, while in fact, here, it is a consequence of Clermont’s final decision to carry out revenge. The “sensitive spirits” (l. 134) and ghosts have witnessed the conclusion of the circle of revenge in “the same formes they had/ When they were shut up in this bodies shade” taken on “[i]n colde condenc’t ayre” (l. 137–138). Clermont seems fascinated with this performance from the other world, when he learns of all their deaths, including the Guise’s. Having heard the news of Guise’s death, Clermont almost collapses in shock, cursing his fate: “The worst and most accursed of things creeping/ On earths sad bosome.” (V.v.144–145) Contemplating his fate as a revenger, “impious on their [the king’s] sacred persons” (l. 152) because of having taken justice into his own hands, he decides to follow his beloved friend Guise into death and commits suicide: “I come, my lord! Clermont, thy creature, comes. *Hee kills himselfe.*” (V.v.193)

In comparison to the apparition of the ghosts of the deceased, Charlemont in *The Atheist’s Tragedy* comes home from the wars to find his father murdered and himself supposedly buried. He visits D’Amville to whom he, seemingly, appears like a ghost: “*Enter Charlemont; D’Amville counterfeits to take him for a ghost*” (III.ii.17). D’Amville pretends to fear the craft of his “troubled sense” (l. 18) and feels himself dissolving after Charlemont’s statement of being the “spirit of Charlemont” (l. 20–21). He is pretending to take Charlemont for a ghost, while he actually knows him to be alive, thinking he is still in the wars. To the present people though, he pretends and achieves the same effect as that reaction of a person really seeing a true ghost. The reaction before, and now, when the real ghost – that of Montferrers – appears, is comparable to this counterfeiting: “When Montferrers’ ghosts appears (III.ii.37), Charlemont’s reaction is identical to the ‘false’ reaction of D’Amville, even though Montferrers is ‘truly’ a ghost, and D’Amville only feigns to see one.”⁵³⁷ Thus, as with Vittoria’s instructive dream (s.a.), the playwright presents the possibility of toying with the supernatural image. D’Amville uses his knowledge to play along the other present characters’ reaction. Although D’Amville is aware of the fact that Charlemont is really alive, he, too, pretends to have difficulties in disbelieving this ghostly vision: “I took/ You for a spirit” (l. 44–45), as Cox explains: “In Cyril Tourneur’s *The Atheist’s Tragedy*, for example, likely performed by the King’s Men at about

536 V.v.131–132.

537 Marcus Nordlund: *The Dark Lantern*, p. 185.

the same time they staged Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, ghosts are treated with the same metadramatic archness that devils are subjected to in other plays on the Shakespearean stage."⁵³⁸ The usage that the playwright functionalises here, is comparable to Vittoria's use of the instructive dream – "The effect of a character disguised as a ghost is thus indistinguishable from the effect of a ghost."⁵³⁹ Thereby, the playwright functionalises the idea of the mantic element for its dramaturgical process. D'Amville 'counterfeits to take [Charlemont] for a ghost' in order to maintain his lie that Charlemont is dead"⁵⁴⁰ In contrast, D'Amville does not see the true spirit of his murdered brother Montferrers; the atheist D'Amville denies omens,⁵⁴¹ and Montferrers does not appear to his evil brother but only to his true and good son. It is essential that Tourneur changes the moral thrust of the ghost: to his son (and the possible revenger), the ghost of Montferrers is denying revenge; thus Tourneur twists the expectations of his audience and presents to them an alternative to wild justice. Interestingly, this did not prevail in an age where revenge tragedy became commonly more cruel.

More adhering to the conventions of the genre, in *The White Devil*, the ghost of Bracciano appears to worsen the culprit Flamineo's situation (though Flamineo did not murder him). Flamineo feels quite lost at a moment when his future is completely undecided. Influenced by his mother's grief, and left alone on stage, Flamineo ponders on his role in the plot and the fate he will meet in the future:

This night I 'll know the utmost of my fate;
I 'll be resolv'd what my rich sister means
T' assign me for my service. I have liv'd
Riotously ill, like some that live in court,
And sometimes when my face was full of smiles,
Have felt the maze of conscience in my breast.
Oft gay and honour'd robes those tortures try:
We think cag'd birds sing, when indeed they cry. (WD, V.iv.113–120)

This moment, when Flamineo seems most prone to hurt but also willing to entangle himself even further in the net of courtly corruption, the ghost of the murdered Bracciano appears to him, carrying emblems of life and death – lilies⁵⁴² and a skull, thereby evoking – like a *vanitas* painting – everyman's mortality:

538 John D. Cox: *The Devil and the Sacred in English Drama, 1350–1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 185

539 Ibid, p. 186.

540 Ibid, p. 185.

541 Compare *ibid.*

542 Lilies are flowers signifying life and death – they appear at the annunciation of Mary, however, they are also a typical flower at funerals. See Dorothea Forstner: *Die Welt der*

Enter Brachiano's Ghost, in his leather cassock and breeches, boots, a cowl, a pot of lily-flowers, with a skull in 't

Ha! I can stand thee: nearer, nearer yet.
 What a mockery hath death made thee! thou look'st sad.
 In what place art thou? in yon starry gallery?
 Or in the cursed dungeon? No? not speak? (V.iv.120–124)

Brachiano was not murdered by Flamineo, so the situation appears a little different in *The White Devil*. Nevertheless, Flamineo is responsible for the chaos, which has led to Brachiano's murder, and thus he is indirectly responsible and is now visited by Brachiano's ghost as though he were a murderer.⁵⁴³ The ghost does not make a single sound, and in comparison to most other ghosts appearing on stage, he gives no notice of where he comes from. Flamineo therefore starts questioning him, almost provokingly:

Pray, sir, resolve me, what religion 's best
 For a man to die in? or is it in your knowledge
 To answer me how long I have to live?
 That 's the most necessary question.
 Not answer? are you still, like some great men
 That only walk like shadows up and down,
 And to no purpose; say – (V.iv.125–131)
[The Ghost throws earth upon him, and shows him the skull.

This action of throwing dirt comes rather unexpected,⁵⁴⁴ but like the items that Brachiano is carrying, the earth indicates death again⁵⁴⁵ – as does the gesture of underlining the importance of the skull by showing it again.⁵⁴⁶

What's that? O fatal! he throws earth upon me.
 A dead man's skull beneath the roots of flowers!
 I pray speak, sir: our Italian churchmen
 Make us believe dead men hold conference
 With their familiars, and many times
 Will come to bed with them, and eat with them. *Exit Ghost.*
 He's gone; and see, the skull and earth are vanish'd
 This is beyond melancholy. I do dare my fate
 To do its worst. Now to my sister's lodging
 And sum up all those horrors: the disgrace

Symbole (Innsbruck/ Wien/ München: Tyrolia Verlag, 1967²), also for further information: p. 196ff.

543 Flamineo is in charge of the murders of Isabella and Vittoria's husband and thus justfiedly called to consequence.

544 The whole situation seems very grotesque. Webster is again testing the limits of this mantic element until it seems almost ridiculous.

545 Compare the symbolism of death conveyed through earth in *Hamlet* V.i, the grave-digger scene.

546 See Hans Ankenbrand: *Die Figur des Geistes im Drama der Englischen Renaissance*, p. 61.

The prince threw on me; next the piteous sight
 Of my dead brother; and my mother's dotage;
 And last this terrible vision: all these
 Shall with Vittoria's bounty turn to good,
 Or I will drown this weapon in her blood. (V.iv.132–146)

Flamineo is clearly not unaffected by this visitation from Bracciano – daring his fate to do its worst, but he wants to be paid for every deed he committed on the path of corruption for Bracciano and “claim/Reward for my long service” (V.vi.7–8).

Ghosts, according to Gibson, are functionalised as assistants – their use is to “emphasise and assist”⁵⁴⁷ – though this seems strange, with regard to *Hamlet*, for example: the ghost in III.iv, the closet-scene, seems to appear to strengthen Hamlet's conviction of the need for revenge. He first appeared to convey the idea of bloody and foul murder and demand revenge – a threat that is also used in other dramas where the ghost as a kind of prologue opens and starts the action. But in III.iv, Old Hamlet also tells Hamlet to soothe his Queen, Hamlet's mother.

Gibson admits the restrictions of ghosts: they provoke conflicts, and he refers to them originating some action but not to be the true cause of the human ideas they trigger that are then transformed into action by the human protagonists on stage.⁵⁴⁸

The effect and presentation of the ghost is as different as their context. Its function depends on the circumstances during which it appears and on those to whom it appears: the son, or the revenger of the tragedy is normally spurred on by the ghost to finally commit a punishment for a deed that has been waiting to be repaid – to him he is supporting a quest of revenge not to be delayed too long.⁵⁴⁹ Only Tourneur does not fall into this category in that his ghost wants to leave revenge unto God and thus adheres to a Christian moral.⁵⁵⁰

547 Gibson also argues that he is not the initiating force, which seems odd coming in plays such as *Hamlet* where the protagonist has an inkling of a perturbed order but needs a spark to set him off.

548 See J. P. Gibson: *Shakespeare's Use of the Supernatural*, p. 80.

549 Ankenbrand argues that the ghost himself can also serve as a retarding element that hinders direct action by appealing to the revenger. See among others Hans Ankenbrand: *Die Figur des Geistes im Drama der Englischen Renaissance*, p.76. Compare also Cox: *The Devil and the Sacred*.

550 In other dramas, like AR or RB, revenge is retarded because of the Stoical attitude of the revenger. See Hunter's introduction to Marston's *Antonio's Revenge*. Regents Renaissance Drama Series, ed. G. K. Hunter (London: Edward Arnold, 1966), especially p. xiii. Compare commentary on Medea in: Lucius Annaeus Seneca: *Four Tragedies and Octavia*. Penguin Classics, ed. E. F. Watling (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1966). See also Gordon Braden: *Renaissance Tragedy and the Senecan Tradition. Anger's Privilege* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985); Robert S. Miola: *Shakespeare and Classical Tragedy. The Influence of Seneca* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).

The difference in ghosts is not only discernable as to their categories, or typical apparitions – they differ as to their morals: most ghosts, coming from below, want nothing but revenge, however, even the ghost of Andrugio shows pity towards his former wife. Or the ghost of Brachiano does not use speech to haunt Flamineo but increases the deadly image by holding a skull and lilies and throwing earth. Webster is trying to play with the limits of the use of ghosts, a procedure that Gibson calls mingling “the serious with the trivial and the grotesque”.⁵⁵¹ This communication between the ghost and the stage character reveals an impossibility of mutual understanding, and instead, creates a visual accusation of murder on stage.

The supernatural idea is precisely what is being functionalised in Renaissance drama. Its power, which is known as incalculable for the audience, becomes a device they can deem essentially powerful on stage. Its influence on the action seems more powerful than the mortal characters on stage. Their “suspended underworld sentence[s] are related to the present events shown onstage and the future [is] predicted”.⁵⁵²

They all foreshadow a coming catastrophe⁵⁵³ and reflect this “supernatural terror”,⁵⁵⁴ often with prophecies or curses, sometimes accompanied by omens. The ghost and its impact seem real to the characters and thus it proves to be a powerful element in the development of the revenge plot.

6 Mantic speech acts – “I’ll speak a prophecy ere I’ll go”⁵⁵⁵

The following two chapters, 6.1. and 6.2., concentrate on mantic elements not given through outer signs in the revenge tragedies, but through speech acts by the characters. The two chapters will concentrate on the analysis of prophecies and on that of hopes, wishes and curses. Both present directive examples of sentences that turn out to be assertives or constatives. They have a value of truth, even though they are meant as expressions of feelings in revenge tragedy.⁵⁵⁶

Prophecies are defined as predictions of an event that will happen in the future⁵⁵⁷ and, as Popkin analyses “[p]rophecies already fulfilled convince people

551 J. P. Gibson: *Shakespeare’s Use of the Supernatural*, p. 88.

552 Frank Ardolino: *Apocalypse and Armada in Kyd’s Spanish Tragedy*. *Sixteenth Century Essays & Studies* 29 (Kirksville, 1995), p. 64.

553 See Gisela Dahinten: *Die Geisterszene in der Tragödie vor Shakespeare*, p. 48–49.

554 Charles Edward Whitmore: *The Supernatural in Tragedy*, p. 350.

555 William Shakespeare, *King Lear*, III.ii.69.

556 See Andreas H. Jucker/ Irma Taavitsainen: *Speech Acts in the History of English* (Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2008), p. 14.

557 See also entry on “divination” by Stefan Maul, in: *Der Neue Pauly*, p. 704–718.

that these predictions came from God. Prophecies being fulfilled in one’s lifetime convince one that God is still active in history. Prophecies not yet fulfilled keep up people’s hopes and expectations of future gods.”⁵⁵⁸ Since it is the power of a divine being that causes the truth in these prophecies, there is always a sense of divination entailed in a spoken prophecy. Prophecies are, as Dahinten states, often foretelling a catastrophe, and a prophecy topos came into existence.⁵⁵⁹

In revenge tragedy, prophecies are not made through official questionings of augurs or oracles⁵⁶⁰ but must be treated as divinely inspired plans of action, revealed to the audience through speech – monologue or dialogue. Relevant in contrast to the specific information about the future, demanded as prodigies, prophecies in revenge tragedy reveal knowledge of a truth only to the audience – to the characters on stage, this knowledge stays unknown as a possible future, but present themselves only as their own plans and determinations.⁵⁶¹

Curses and hopes are vastly uttered as personal and emotional, assertive expressions of love, fear or hate, but, like prophecies, they do not reveal their prodigious or constative character at the moment they are spoken to the characters on stage, but to the audience, thereby foreshadowing the course of action. Prophecies thus stand in contrast to the wishes and curses, both utterances by an individual regarding the fate, rise or fall of the self or somebody else, through oracle, soothsaying⁵⁶² or individual expression of opinion. Both prophecies and curses, however, present “the voice of the individual”.⁵⁶³

558 Richard H. Popkin: “Predicting, Prophecy, Divining, and Foretelling from Nostradamus to Hume”, in: *History of European Ideas* 5 (1984), 117–35, p. 125. Compare Götz B. Schmitz: “Prophetische Elemente in der höfischen Literatur der frühen Stuartzeit”, in: Wolfram Högbe (ed.): *Mantik. Profile prognostischen Wissens in Wissenschaft und Kultur* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2005), p. 263–273.

559 Gisela Dahinten: *Die Geisterszene in der Tragödie vor Shakespeare*, p. 48.

560 The term for a professional person, uttering and interpreting prophecies is not as refined as in Greek or Roman tragedy. In Renaissance drama, the terms augur, soothsayer, and oracle seem virtually interchangeable, because they have a similar function. Compare also Compare Uwe Baumann: *Vorausdeutung und Tod im englischen Römerdrama der Renaissance (1564–1642)* (Tübingen/ Basel: Francke Verlag, 1996), p. 451–468.

561 Compare also Götz B. Schmitz: “Prophetische Elemente in der höfischen Literatur der frühen Stuartzeit”, in: Wolfram Högbe (ed.): *Mantik. Profile prognostischen Wissens in Wissenschaft und Kultur* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2005), p. 263–273, p. 263–264.

562 A soothsayer according to the OED is originally defined as someone “who speaks the truth; a truthful or veracious person” – the understanding of such a person would be someone who claims or pretends to speak the truth about the future i.e. utters sentences on the foretelling of the truth of future events and makes prognostications. And when soothsayers are either not qualified enough and will make mistakes, limitations and errors in following decisions might and often will occur. On soothsaying, see e.g. C. C. Barfoot: “News of the Roman Empire: Hearsay, Soothsaying, Myth and History in *Antony and Cleopatra*”, in: *Reclamations of Shakespeare*, ed. A. J. Hoenselaars (Amsterdam/ Atlanta: Rodop, 1994), p. 105–28.

The analysis of their function in revenge tragedy looks at the way prophecies, curses and wishes are cast, by, to and about whom, when, and why. By whom they are curst is vital because when spoken by the villain, they often only seem to be plans or passionate outbursts rather than prognostic sentences and do come true in an unusual way. As curses they prove to be nothing but emotional outbursts.⁵⁶⁴ The question to, and about whom they are cast concerns the matter of the plot and therefore also relies on the time when they are spoken. Positive prophecies or wishes concerning the victims of the plottings rarely come true before the end of the tragedy; concerning the villains, they often come true in the build-up of the catastrophe.⁵⁶⁵ It is also interesting to watch their interpretation: the question is whether the prophecies are seen as such in tragedy, which they are mostly not, but rather as utterances by a character, and not necessarily as prophetic objects that were interpreted as omens.⁵⁶⁶ Klein Scharff differentiates between two different types of prophetic foreshadowing in his study on histories – one where at least one of the characters on stage is aware of the existence of a prophetic foreshadowing, the other where only the audience is aware of a prophecy and none of the stage characters.⁵⁶⁷

Prophecies in history presented a means of political propaganda.⁵⁶⁸ In the case of revenge tragedy, they are mostly the formulation of retaliation plans by the revengers. Curses damn a character, as in classical drama, in mysterious ways and determine his life, or more often, his death. As other mantic elements, like

563 Howard Dobin: *Prophecy and Politics of Interpretation in Renaissance English Literature* (Diss. Stanford University, 1982), p. 15.

564 In his hybris, the villain often utters sentences that can apparently be interpreted as curses but turn out to be nothing but wishful, villainous thinking out of desire than divine inspiration while, if they are uttered as prophetic sentences, their nature can often be detected as open – leaving room for an oraculous interpretation of truth. Thus a villain, cursing his antagonist often seems to come closer to the fulfillment of his curse in the build-up of the climax of the tragedy, but towards the denouement, his curses seem irrational, emotional wishful thinking rather than a truly ominous utterance. At the same time prophecies made against the victims sometimes prove true in unexpected ways that – even though not meant that way when uttered – might prove harmful to the villainous speaker.

565 Negative prophecies by the positive characters mostly do come true within the course of the plot.

566 Even though divinely inspired, or at least divinely supported, prophetic utterances can at first often only appear as emotional utterances. Nevertheless the audience might already understand their prophetic nature through a metadramatic awareness of the development of the plot, possibly influenced by genre expectations. Jochum elaborates on the dramatic irony that can cause a certain ambivalence of the proceedings on stage. See Klaus Peter Jochum: *Discrepant Awareness*, p. 71. Compare also Bertrand Taithe/ Tim Thornton (eds.): *Prophecy*, p. 1.

567 See the study by Donald Klein Scharff: *Symbolic Foreshadowing in the English History Play from Gorboduc to Henry V* (Diss. Pennsylvania State, 1966).

568 See Harry Rusche: "Prophecies and Propaganda, 1641–1651", in: *English Historical Review* 84, no. 333 (1969), p. 752–70, p. 752.

omens, dream visions and ghostly visitations, they allow the author to play with his omnipotence in shaping the plot to foreshadow coming events to the spectator.

6.1 Prophecies – “And I’ll endure all storms before I part with ’t.”⁵⁶⁹

For as much as we must talk of Prophecy,
We intend with pardon and supportation,
As learned men doth well define and testify,
Thereof to make a true and pure declaration:
To prophecy of things is a divine inspiration,
Telling things to come wit unmoveable verity:
A gift only preceeding from Gods high majesty.
A divine inspiration he calleth prophecy,
That which doth all other Prophecies exclude:
Which are no prophecies, but things of mens fantasies,
Invented to deceive the ignorant and rude:

Anonymous, *The Pedlar’s Prophecy*, Prologue, 2–12

In this play from 1595, a prophecy is defined as making “a true and pure declaration” (l. 5) of the future, which is divinely inspired; it is not just a creative thought or willful idea on what is to come, construed to frighten or misguide others. The Prologue from *The Pedlar’s Prophecy* declares the divinity of prophecies as they are inspirations from a divine power.

Prophecies anticipate events to happen within the course of the play,⁵⁷⁰ but they also represent the result of creative work of the playwright. All speech acts, or spoken sentences in drama are “things of mens fantasies” (*Pedlar’s Prophecy*, l. 11), but in revenge tragedy, the term prophecy can be applied to the nature of those utterances of the characters, when their content comes true within the course of action.

A further feature to keep in mind is “the desire for obscurity and ambiguity [which] frequently leads to the adoption of certain disguises for the characters in a prophecy.”⁵⁷¹ Prophecies or “prognostications about future triumphs and

⁵⁶⁹ *Changeling*, l.i.51

⁵⁷⁰ As far as drama with a historical background is concerned, the premonitions and foreshadowings can even include coming events of the future within the historical context beyond the course of the play, if commonly known to the audience.

⁵⁷¹ Rupert Taylor: *The Political Prophecy in England* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1911), p. 3.

calamities [...] [can be very] confused and confusing.”⁵⁷² Thus, their interpretation can be even more vague than that of visual indicators, like omens.⁵⁷³

In comparison to omens, which are presented as visual indicators of the future, or revelations of ongoing events, or dreams and ghosts that appear to the characters of a play either from an outer level or from within their mind like a visual revelation, divinely inspired, curses and wishes often seem a very human outburst of feelings. Mantic hopes that truly foreshadow the development of the plot or function in “shaping the present”,⁵⁷⁴ i.e. represent a claim of truth, are hard to discern. The dramatic intention of the speech acts that curse, wish or prophecy need to be analysed, i.e. their function in the scene and as an exposition of the plot needs to be assessed.⁵⁷⁵

Thus, attention needs to be paid to the question whether curses or wishful sentences are spoken to portray personal feelings, which also give an insight as to the passions of a character or whether they do indeed foreshadow coming events, that is whether they carry an authority of truth, and indeed the weight of prophetic, foreshadowing utterances.⁵⁷⁶ Attention is due especially because “prophecy fulfils a basic human need for self-deception in its unlimited possibility for signification”,⁵⁷⁷ as Dobin argues – thus it seems necessary to look at those apparently emotional outbursts, which might nevertheless prove true foreshadowings. Therefore, speech and its validity, or the power of words to reflect truth, is essential in this chapter.

The ambiguity which prodigious elements have in drama as future information can never be assured to the characters in the play and will be critically observed, in that characters on stage would have certain ideas, certain knowledge and certain convictions about their effect, but only to the audience the full

572 Sharon L. Jansen: *Political Protest and Prophecy under Henry VIII* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1991), p. 10.

573 One of the few exceptions, as mentioned above (Introduction), to the ambivalent nature of prophecies by oracles proves Shakespeare’s *The Winter’s Tale*. Hermione is pronounced innocent by the oracle, but this judgment is denied and ignored by Leontes: “There is no truth at all i’ the oracle” (III.ii.138). See William Shakespeare: *The Winter’s Tale*, in: *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt (New York/ London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1997⁵).

574 Jansen: *Political Protest and Prophecy*, p. 19.

575 One of the first works Rupert Taylor: *The Political Prophecy in England*; for extensive works on prophecy, see also Marjorie Reeves: e.g. M. Reeves: “Pattern and Purpose in History in the Later Medieval and Renaissance Periods”, in: M. Bull (ed.): *Apocalypse Theory and the Ends of the World* (Oxford: OUP, 1995), p. 90–111.

576 Compare especially the history-foreshadowing curses of Queen Margaret in Shakespeare’s 3 *Henry VI* (*Richard Duke of York*), especially V.iv (compare also Henry VI’s prophecy of Richard’s further misdeeds, V.vi.59–60) and in *Richard III*, I.iii and IV.iv. See also R.W. Southern: “Aspects of the European Tradition of Historical Writing: 3. History as Prophecy”, in: *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th ser., 22 (1972), p. 159–80, p. 159.

577 Howard Dobin: *Prophecy and Politics of Interpretation*, p. 20.

range of their importance and value would be known. Including those, this analysis will concentrate on the ideas that were expected to come true in the future in the course of the drama.

Audience and characters in histories are “looking forward at anticipated events [...]. The result is a remarkable theatrical illusion, hindsight masquerading as foresight”.⁵⁷⁸ Absolutely true for histories, there is nevertheless a similar way of portraying security of forthcoming events within tragedies, given the fact that the audience realises when they are presented with supernatural solicitings and foreshadowings.

Thomas explains the belief in prophecies as a kind of missing link in the paradigmatic changes of the times. He argues that people wanted to see the continuity between past and present. This study argues that, no matter how radical times might have been, playwrights eclectically used traditional ideas of harmony and chaos and their representation of correspondences, divination drawing upon on traditional ideas and functions of prophecies – as other mantic elements – in their plays. This could be validating horoscopes, the verifying of dream visions, animal symbols coming true, alphabetic sign combinations or riddles.⁵⁷⁹

Shakespeare and other dramatists would often – for their histories – take existent prophecies and incorporate them; in this context Garber speaks of “the dramatic convention that prophecies always come true”.⁵⁸⁰ The audience – Garber calls this the semiotics of the theatre⁵⁸¹ – will always know that predicted, unlikely seeming, rather impossible “things will prove true, and it can do nothing with that knowledge but wait for the fulfillment of the future anterior – the future that is already inscribed.”⁵⁸² Similarly, in revenge tragedy – prophecies, gloomily spoken, could be identified by the audience as predictions – likely future events in the plot. Anachronistic prophecies in plays would be signs for the audience about facts they already knew, foreboding then would be provided by the dramatic action.

For the modern reader, who does not know about the Renaissance context of history and prophecy, the latter will still, comparable to the background and importance within historical chronicles resembling that of revenge tragedy,⁵⁸³ have the same effect for the audience – they point to the development of the plot. This will have the same effect on the modern audience as the tragedies had on the

578 See Marjorie Garber: “What’s past is prologue”, p. 308.

579 Compare Keith Thomas: *Religion* p. 423.

580 Garber: “What’s past is prologue”, p. 314.

581 *Ibid.*, p. 317.

582 *Ibid.*, p. 318. Compare Uwe Baumann: *Vorausdeutung und Tod*, p. 474–479.

583 The plot development of a historical play might have been clear to the audience, but they could have similar expectations of a similar effect of prophecies in non-historical plays.

Renaissance audience then: the act of prophecy would be taken as such – a functional means to reflect and show the determined future. Garber explains: “The act of prophecy becomes by convention its own guarantor of truth [...], we know it is destined to come true. Functionally then, the effect of these anachronistic prophecies is really the same for both audiences, Elizabethan and modern”;⁵⁸⁴ they were invented, used, changed, and functionalised by the playwrights.

Inside the plot, prophetic sentences can be disguised as “self-quotations and cross references, which underscore the inevitability of prophecy and validate that inevitability with theatrical rather than chronicle precedent.”⁵⁸⁵ Time and events are still to come, and their prognostications and foreshadowings promise their advent – they are articulations of forthcoming events and as such truths in the plays. Garber calls them “harbingers of truth”.⁵⁸⁶ In history plays, as the audience can remember past facts, they are “at the same time a prediction of the future and a memory of the past – the future in history, the past in theater.”⁵⁸⁷ Similarly in revenge tragedy, the audience is invited to expect proceeding events from comparable prophetic remarks. In the theatre a show of present, past and future, can possibly be “an imagined vision of the figure”,⁵⁸⁸ representing a constative truth.

Prophecy in drama can be used in various ways: through its undefinable ethereal character, diffuse ideas can be presented, even subversive ideas that contradicted the system, and political settings could be vaguely criticised in a way an audience could accept, interpret and understand as explosive material. This was a way out of the scurvy scrutiny of a censor who would disclaim any presentation of political criticism within the plot of the play, as for example in *Believe as you list* in 1630.⁵⁸⁹ Interpreters are needed for prophecies and in revenge tragedy; transcription and transmission is often left to the audience. The spectator “can do nothing with that knowledge [for example, of Caesar’s coming death] but wait for the fulfilment of the future anterior – the future that is already inscribed.”⁵⁹⁰ It is destined to come true and the audience needs to understand its inevitability.

Prophecies can be direct and easily interpretable. However, one of the aspects

584 Marjorie Garber: “What’s past is prologue”, p. 318.

585 Ibid, p. 319.

586 Ibid.

587 Ibid, p. 324.

588 Ibid, p. 327.

589 See a critical edition of Philipp Massinger, *Believe as you list*. William Gifford: *The plays of Philip Massinger*. With the addition of the tragedy “Believe as you list”, ed. by Francis Cunningham (London: Chatto and Windus, ca. 1887). A new edition is to be published in 2010, edited by Thomas Crofton Croker.

590 Marjorie Garber: “What’s Past is Prologue”, p. 318.

that is typical of the use of prophecies in the theatre as in ancient history – its most famous representative would be the Oracle of Delphi⁵⁹¹ – is that of its obscurity. Prophecies are often clad in hidden meaning or even a seemingly obvious outcome might turn out to be true in a completely different way than interpreted at first.⁵⁹²

Prophecies about the self often resemble an oath, sworn to tie down self-discipline about own actions. In revenge tragedy, this often applies to the revengers themselves who vow to commit revenge against their adversaries. Their avowal to revenge is part of the plot, and the necessity of vengeance as a duty of the revenger, are part of the genre. Thus the psychological, emotional problems of the revenger, which included doubts, anger, and curses were also expected by the audience, because they dominate the development of the plot.

In this mood of doubt and hate, Antonio is swearing vengeance towards Piero, quoting from Seneca’s *Thyestes*,⁵⁹³ prophesying: “*Ulciscar*” (III.i.73) – I shall revenge: “By the astoning terror of swart night,/ By the infectious damps of clammy graves,/ And by the mold that presseth down/ My dead father’s skull, I’ll be reveng’d!” (III.i.76–79). Invoking ominous support of visual darkness and death, Antonio cries vengeance drawing on ugly images of decay and rotten death, which impress and supposedly convince the audience of Antonio’s duty and promise of revenge, as demanded by his father’s apparition.

Antonio and Mellida part and their farewells seem full of doubt: “Mellida: Good night, good heart./ Antonio: Thus heat from blood, thus souls from bodies part. [*Lies down and weeps.*]” (II.ii.124–125) Their division is a break of union which is presented like the death of one whole body and both halves feel bereft without the other.⁵⁹⁴ Pretending his own death in his strategy of revenge, Antonio

591 Compare e.g. the ideas on the famous oracle in Veit Rosenberger: *Griechische Orakel. Eine Kulturgeschichte* (Darmstadt: Theiss, 2001). See above on the uncommon exception in *The Winter’s Tale*.

592 See Rupert Taylor: *The Political Prophecy in England* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1911), p. 3: “But the desire for obscurity and ambiguity frequently leads to the adoption of certain disguises for the characters in a prophecy.” A prime example for supposedly misleading prophecies is Macbeth. Here, the hero feels invincible because of two prophecies “for none of woman born/ Shall harm Macbeth” (IV.i.96–97) and “Macbeth shall never vanquished be until Great Birnam Wood to High Dunsinane Hill/ Shall come against him” (I. 107–109). Macbeth thinks “That will never be.” (I. 110). However, they do come true in that Macduff was, according to the information within the play brought to this world in a Caesarian section, though the truth of this medical operation can be doubted. The army disguises themselves against Macbeth with twigs and branches and thus an army of seeming trees attacks Macbeth.

593 AR, III.i.66–73. He is quoting the ghost of Tantalus demanding revenge at the beginning of *Thyestes*, Act I, l. 18–21, 76–83, in: Seneca: *Thyestes*, in: *Four Tragedies and Octavia*. Penguin Classics, ed. E. F. Watling: (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1966), p. 41–93.

594 This imagery refers to the idea of the unity of husband and wife as one body, legally dominated by the man’s part. See e.g. Introduction to Corinne S. Abate: *Privacy, Dome-*

unfortunately causes his beloved Mellida to suffer: “I know he lov’d me dearly, dearly I;/ And since I cannot live with him. I die.” (l. 221–222). She swoons, which is to be read as a sign of her true love and horror at the information of Antonio’s death. Both, Piero and Antonio are now afraid she might die – it would prove fatal to their plans of a happy ending: “Ay, all is lost if Mellida is dead.” (l. 230). Mellida does not die immediately but will do so later from the pain she had to suffer, being wrongfully accused and broken-hearted. However, they shared one happy kiss before she died uttering “thanks, good” (IV.i.310). A union stronger than death has been reached between these two, while their fate has turned into a nightmare of deadly causality.

Joined by Alberto and Pandulpho in IV.ii, Antonio vows to take revenge together and “*wreathe their arms*” (l. 110); Antonio’s revenge against Piero seems supernaturally supported when “*They strike the stage with their daggers, and the grave openeth*” (IV.ii.87). Death seems ready to receive Piero in his tomb. Pandulpho vouches the following: “By the dead brow of triple Hecate,/ Ere night shall close the lids of yon bright stars/ We’ll sit as heavy on Piero’s heart/ As Etna doth on groaning Pelorus” (IV.ii.113–116). Before the day is over, revenge is to be taken, which these three swear again at the end of V.ii, repeating their joined arms – “*Exeunt twin’d together*” (l. 89). As masked revellers, they enter Piero’s court, are blessed by prophet-like Galeatzo and finally prove successful. Their determination encourages them to go through with their plan: “*The conspirators bind Piero, pluck out his tongue and triumph over him.*” (V.iii.62). The villain is murdered, and revenge is finally committed.

Revenge is based on past hurt; the revenger pays back for sins that were committed against him or his dear ones. In *The Spanish Tragedy*, Hieronimo’s son Horatio is murdered and Hieronimo becomes determined on vengeance for his murdered son. Absorbed in his sorrow and mourning, he focusses on his task as a revenger, even surrenders his role at court: “And here surrender up my marshalship;/ For I’ll go marshal up the fiends in hell,/ To be avenged on you all for this.” (III.xii.76–78). Invoking the powers of heaven, he is willing to undergo the official justice which his office might have commanded to revenge for God: “Vindicta mihi!/ Ay, heaven will be reveng’d of every ill,/ Nor will they suffer murder unrepaid:” (III.xiii.1–3). He is conflating the revenge that belongs to God with his own: “I” sounding as “ay”, thus keeping revenge as supported and instigated by the powers above.

Similarly, Tomazo in *The Changeling* swears to revenge the murder of his brother and prophecies to do whatever it takes: “All league with mankind I

sticity and Women in Early Modern England (London: Ashgate Publishing, 2003). Compare Katherine Usher Henderson/ Barbara F. McManus: *Half Humankind. Contexts and Texts of the Controversy about Women in England, 1540–1640* (Urbana/ Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1985), p. 72ff.

renounce forever” (V.ii.43), though it takes further twists before he can delightedly state: “Oh, blest revelation!” (l. 78). He, as the dramaturgy demands it, is going to take revenge. Out of political reasoning, Cassius, too, is determinate and vows to kill Caesar in *Caesar’s Revenge*: “Thy sunne descend and loose his radiant light,/ [...] Ile be the man that shall this taske performe” (III.i.1188, 1191). Cassius can also persuade Brutus to join him. Brutus, having found a written prophecy that reads “*O utinam Brute viveres [...] Brute mortuus es.*” (III.iv.1380–82), assumes that his fate is determined and death is near, when Cassius enters to “wake [his] sleepy minde” (l.1402) until Brutus accuses himself of weakness and promises to “cure” Rome’s “fatall wound” (l.1422), “To loose his life or else to set thee [Rome] free” (l. 1560). Assured of heaven “applaud[ing] this enterprise” (l.1424) and evoking “bloudy vengeance on” (l.1430) Caesar, Cassius swears “Poniardes point shall pearce his heart as deepe” (III.vi.1563) who will not sacrifice himself to murder Caesar: “This heart, hand, minde, hath mark’d him out to die” (l.1576). However, their plans remind the audience that in the first scene of *Caesar’s Revenge*, defeated Pompey and Brutus were resolved to fight even against fate: “Our cunning play must then correct the dice” (I.i.176); but changing the future was and is not possible. Yet it seems they are trying to use prophecies in a subversive way, denying proven truths for their own advancement. Trusting their cunning, their own skills and abilities, they are misjudging divine providence.

A different approach to prophetic foreboding is presented when the villain predicts the future. The presentation of such a prophecy seems similar to the above. It is one which concerns personal fortune, is often given by the villain in the play. However, in comparison, these alleged prophecies are indeed seen through by the audience as dangerous and evil plans, which – as the plot demands – might come partly true to heighten the tension of the plot, but will never fully prove divine foreshadowings, because these characters are never divinely inspired but by their wanton sins. They appear as mantic prophecies, but prove personal aims.

Francis Bacon in his essay “Of Prophecies” writes about “the mischief” prophecies and especially dreams can provoke – even though he argues that they should not be taken seriously – and laments that nevertheless their influence and power is acknowledged everywhere.⁵⁹⁵ They are obviously accepted as such

595 Francis Bacon: “Of Prophecies”, in: *The Essays or Counsels, Civill and Morall*, ed. Michael Kiernan (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985), p. 112–114. Compare Brian Vickers: “Analogy vs. Identity: the rejection of occult symbolism, 1580–1680”, in: Brian Vickers (ed.): *Occult and Scientific Mentalities in the Renaissance* (Cambridge/ London/ New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 95–163; Günter Ahrends/ Hans-Jürgen Diller (eds.): *Theatre and Religion*. Forum Modernes Theater 25 (Tübingen: Narr Francke, 1998) on Christianity and paganism in the theatre.

because they appear to match circumstances and hit the target; they are not seen as possible ominous foreshadowings when missing the point – and as such obviously not to be taken seriously because then they were no true prophecies. It seems they can be used in exactly the same way in drama, and if played out in full, they can easily lead the spectator. Yet, if the playwrights and the actors wanted, they could also mislead.

The villain Piero in *The Tragedy of Hoffman* is the prototype of a villain in revenge tragedy who underlines his willingness to create havoc in the future: “Huge villains are enforc’d to claw all devils” (I.i.45–46). In Piero’s devilish prediction, he swears by Andrugio’s blood – which the audience knows to have been spilled, so his supposed prophecy is based on past validity to increase the tension and the risk of his opponents. His plan is to marry Maria, Andrugio’s widow: “By this warm reeking gore, I’ll marry her” (I.i.103). Piero also swears more vengeance and vouches to extinguish Antonio’s life:

Trophies of honor’d birth drop quickly down;
 Let naught of him, but what was vicious, live.
 Though thou [Andrugio] art dead, think not my hate is dead;
 I have but newly twone my arm in the curl’d locks
 Of snaky vengeance.
 [...]
 O, ’twill be rare, all unsuspected done.
 I have been nurs’d in blood, and still have suck’d
 The steam of reeking gore (II.i.4–20)

With vile terminology, Piero predicts his future, based on stealing a wife, a diplomatic marriage of his daughter Mellida, and a strengthening of his own influence. With the words he uses, Piero denotes himself as a savage being, comparing himself to a blood-sucking, snake-like and thus devilish beast. He is aware that this cannot be guilt-free, and being warned of committing deeds where “guiltless blood be spilt”, he answers: “Where only honest deeds to kings are free/ It is no empire, but a beggary” (II.i.119–120). Neglecting all law, the audience would be aware of the danger. This, as the innocent Pandulpho who is bereft of his son rightly judges, would turn out to be tyranny.⁵⁹⁶ The state is corrupted by its ruler, and the structure of the universum perverted. Pandulpho later predicts: “’Tis true, Piero; thy vex’d heart shall see/ Thou hast but tripp’d my slave, not conquer’d me” (I. 171–172). Piero does not accept any correction and punishment. He ignores “scourging Nemesis” (IV.i.249) and is always inclined to bring destruction; towards Pandulpho, he predicts: “I’ll make thee wretched” (II.i.135). With the murder of Pandulpho’s son, Piero does indeed drive Pandulpho into a vicious circle of Stoic doubt and desire for vengeance,

596 II.i.122.

which is only resolved by Pandulpho’s final decision to take revenge with his friends.

Piero concludes this scene with more announcements of death and destruction: “Confusion and black murder guides/ The organs of my spirit” (AR, III.i.222–223). He will cause more suffering in the drama, but the spectator sees through his exaggerated ambitions, reflected in his plans: “Excellent, excellent!—I’ll conquer Rome,/ Pop out the light of bright religion;/ And then, helter-skelter, all cocksure!” (l. 266–268). In these excessive thoughts, the audience detects his flaws. Not only his love for Maria is one weakness of Piero’s, but also this craving ambition, which has already caused the downfall of other stage heroes, for example Macbeth.

One of the very few examples of a prophecy in late revenge tragedy when the genre was not popular any more, comes from James Shirley’s *The Maid’s Revenge*. The play does not encompass many mantic elements, in fact those that can be found are very limited, as might be expected in an age where tragicomedies dominated the stage and theatre was under attack by the Puritans already. However, there is one very prominent prophecy to be found, made by Berinthia, the innocent heroine of the tragedy, whose beloved Antonio⁵⁹⁷ had been killed out of jealousy on the order of Berinthia’s sister, the villainous Catalina. After being thus mistreated, Berinthia finally determined to courageously take action and swears revenge:

So I will dare my fortune to be cruel,
 And like a mountainous piece of earth that sucks
 The balls of hot artillery, I will stand
 And weary all the gunshot: oh my soul,
 Thou hast been too long icy alpes of snow;
 Have buried my whole nature; it shall now
 Turn element of fire, and fill the air
 With bearded comets, threat’ning death and horror.
 For my wrong’d innocence, contemn’d disgrac’d,
 Nay murder’d, for with Antonio
 My breath expired—and I but borrow this
 To court revenge for justice; if there be
 Those furies which do wait on desperate men,
 as some have though, and guide their hands to mischief:
 Come from the womb of night: assist a maid
 Ambitious to be made a monster like you;
 I will not dread your shapes: I am dispos’d

597 Antonio before had vowed to his beloved that he would be Berinthia’s “for ever” (p. 16), which he is until his death, as the audience witnesses.

To be at friendship with you and want nought
But your black aid to seal it. (p. 54–55)⁵⁹⁸

It is an invocation of fiery and cruel passion that had never dominated her before, but now she is calling on all the powers of darkness to assist her with vengeance. At the end of the tragedy, Berinthia finally poisons her evil sister Catalina.

The villain of *The Tragedy of Hoffman* is also invoking pictures of chaos which he hopes to cause to his surroundings. Prophetically, the protagonist Hoffman in the first scene, tells of the harm he will cause and the danger that will ensue, comparing it to a war: “The huge Leuiathan is but a shrimpe/ Compar’d with our Balena⁵⁹⁹ on the land” (l. 41–45). He is planning a “glorious proiect of revenge” (l. 86), a scheme of retaliation for his (justly) murdered father: “my hart still bleeds/ Nor can my wounds be stopt, till an incision,/ I’ue made to bury my dead father in:” (l. 74–76); and later: “Come image of bare death, ioyne side, to side,/ With my long iniur’d fathers naked bones;” and “Sweet vengeance make me happiest of all men:/ Prussia, I come as comets against change:/ As apparitions before mortall ends; [...] I will haue thy drie bones, sanguin’d all or’e/ With thy foes blood” (I.iii.405–406, 418–426). Until he is revenged, he will cause more pain – personifying himself as a perilous comet of massive bloodshed –, though he is not ignorant of the villainy of his coming deeds, asking his servant to aid him: “wilt thou turne villaine speake” (l. 87). His servant tells the audience that Hoffman’s plans are leading directly towards hell but he is nevertheless proud to serve this criminal:

Blood I begun in and in blood must end yet this *Clois* is an honeft villaine, ha’s confidence in his killing of men: he kilns none but his fathers enemies, and there issue, ’tis admirable, ’tis excellent, ’tis well ’tis meritorious, where? in heauen? no, hell. (II.iii.660–664)

Content as Hoffman’s follower, he sees merits in supporting his master’s villainy. Something that later strikes the audience as cruel, however at the same time as generous, is Hoffman’s thought about his servant, whom he has tempted with villainy: it seems he will be hanged on Hoffman’s order some time in the future to save him from his sure destiny of hell, which he has acquired by helping

598 There is no line numbering in the edition.

599 Balena probably stands for the goddess of war Bellona and the havoc she can create. However, it can also point to the baleen whale (from Fench baleine), a whale, which fits the image of contrast to a shrimp. Since the words are very close, Chettle could have used this image of the whale Bellona that causes chaos in the state. It is thus also contrasted to the image of the dragon of chaos Leviathan: “In that day the LORD with his sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea.” (*The Bible. Authorized King James Version* (1611), ed. Robert Carroll/ Steven Prickett (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996, Isaiah 27, 1).

Hoffman. To “prefer” helping Hoffman to hanging, as Hoffman explains, will let him escape: “His sufferance heere may saue his soule from hell” (l. 753), as if Hoffman was aware of his own evil and willing to save his servant from it. From the beginning of the play, the spectator is therefore doubtful of the revenger’s righteousness, even though he might understand the motives of Hoffman’s desire for revenge.

Hoffman uses mantic images in the same way as the innocent heroes do, and Chettle plays with the convention of foreshadowing by partly proving his prophecies right to increase the chaotic entanglings of the plot in its first developments: at first, everything seems to go well for Hoffman’s revenge, when he is taken for the Prussian prince and crowned as successor, thereby increasing complications in the tragedy. In comparison to many other revengers, Hoffman – though feeling justified as a revenger – is aware of his illegal and horrendous villainy.

Additionally, Hoffman himself is functionalising mantics by fictional prophecies, convincing Ludowick, whom he sees as a barrier to his success, to fly the palace: “if you stay,/ Death and destruction waiteth your delay.” (II.iii.686–687); he even calls himself the maker of the succesful revenge plot and “boast[s] in the reuenges [he] ha[s] wrought” (l. 733).

Misjudgements and exaggeration prove the villains wrong, however. Hoffman’s next plan appears to prove successful, when Hoffman tries to “make one brother shed the others blood” (l.743), which apparently succeeds; but toward the end of the play the audience finds out that Hoffman failed in this already because Ludowick was not killed. Therefore Hoffman continued on false premises and entangled himself further in fate, rather than fortune.

Caesar in *Caesar’s Revenge* is predicting glory for himself in more explicit terms that concern his pride. His prophecy is one of victory in battle, success, and power: Pride and self-glorification are also Caesar’s faults, when he repeatedly compares himself proudly to the gods, “*Saturns* kingly Sonne,/ Call downe these goulden lampes from the bright skie,/ And leave Heaven blind, my greatnes to admire” (III.ii.1214–1216), Mars, “the God of battell, mad with rage” (III.v.1436), and to Jupiter: “Of *Love* in Heaven, shall ruled bee the skie,/ The Earth of *Caesar*, with like Maiesty” (III.v.1510–11). Even though he is a victorious leader, he is clearly aspiring to higher goals than given to any human being, which will contribute to his downfall from the wheel of fortune. Dolobella is supporting his self-glorification: “Since *Caesars* glory them [former Roman heroes] exceeds as farre/ As shining *Phebe* doth the dimmest starre” (III.ii.1232–1233). This mantic foretelling of historical events of Roman history, which the audience is already aware of, might seem peculiar when seemingly contrasted to the function that foreboding has in tragedy. However, prophecies in the histories often reassure the audience of their knowledge while apparently

making the staged action more mysterious.⁶⁰⁰ Prophecies are nevertheless remarkable for any revenge tragedy in the same way, even if some of the coming events are known, while some can only be foreseen. However, it supports the idea that mantics are conventions that are drawing the connection between prophecy in any staged performance, whether new to the audience or based on past events. It is noticeable that the anonymous playwright of *Caesar's Revenge* used the convention just like the other revenge playwrights, to foreshadow events but also to toy with the convention by questioning its possible truth when it comes to the critical treatment of prophecies, made by the villains of the play. Thus they are used in a dramaturgical way, asking for “a complicity between audience and actor”.⁶⁰¹ Thus the foreboding function is similar in both genres of drama.

Prophecies, based on emotional feelings of desire and not of revenge often relate to forthcoming sadness and melancholy caused for their surroundings. Evadne in *The Maid's Tragedy*, who is having a clandestine, illicit, and lustful affair with the king, displays pride and laughs at her new husband Amintor for thinking her a virgin,⁶⁰² and prophetically swears she will never share his bed: “the Oracle/ Knows nothing truer, 'tis not for a night/ Or two that I forbear thy bed, but for ever” (II.i.209–211). Recognising herself as no more than a prostitute, Evadne later regrets her decisions and statements, and dies – almost as a divine punishment to her former pride.⁶⁰³

In comparison to prophetic oaths of vengeance, very often those suffering from arbitrary decisions of rulers, who are destroying the order of the state, often doubt their own success and prophecy their own sorrow. This applies to either innocent victims, but also to hesitant revengers.

The melancholic revenger with a pessimistic providential outlook⁶⁰⁴ often

600 See especially the conclusions of Gerardine Marie Obermark-Clark: *The Structural Function of Ghosts, Dreams, Prophecies and Portents in Shakespeare's Plays* (Diss. Indiana University, 1977); Henry Ansgar Kelly: *Divine Providence in the England of Shakespeare's Histories* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970). Compare also Herbert Geisen: *Dimension des Metaphysischen in Shakespeares Historien* (Frankfurt am Main: Akademische Verlagsgesellschaft, 1974).

601 Marjorie Garber: “What's past is prologue”, p. 327.

602 Her answer to this is rather provocative: “A Maidenhead *Amintor* at my years?” (II.i.198–199). Evadne defines herself by the power of her sexuality and must thus feel almost insulted being addressed as a maiden. Instead she is, like Cleopatra, playing and working with her image as a sexually active woman.

603 Compare Baumann: “Erotische Macht und tragische Ohnmacht der Frauen im Drama der englischen Renaissance, oder: Gibt es tragische Heldinnen im Drama Shakespeares und seiner Zeitgenossen?“, p. 50–51.

604 Compare Marjorie Reeves: *The Prophetic Sense of History in Medieval and Renaissance Europe* (Aldershot, Brookfield/ Singapore/ Sydney: Ashgate, 1999), p. 41. Compare the ideas on melancholy in Timothy Bright: *A Treatise of Melancholy* (1586). The Classics of Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences Library, ed. Hardin Craig (New York: Gryphon Editions, 1995).

appears and behaves similar to Hamlet, on whom he is partly modelled.⁶⁰⁵ Seeing through “his uncle’s perfidious nature in his sense of human possibility”,⁶⁰⁶ he needs to understand the duty of retaliation while accepting his role in vengeful fate: “O my prophetic soul!” (I.v.41).

The innocent hero of *The Changeling*, young Alsemero, falls in love with Beatrice – but her servant and villain Deflores, too, loves her and prophecies: “And I’ll endure all storms before I part with’t” (II.i.51) and “I’ll stand this storm of hail though the stones pelt me” (l. 55). Indeed, both will have to endure chaos and deceit, but will never be happy with their desired woman. Dying at the end, Beatrice leaves Alsemero in death, while Deflores, too, is justly murdered. Alsemero indeed understands the predicted fate and the revelation of unnatural events at the end of the play, analysing it as destined for death from the beginning:

Oh, the place itself e’er since
Has crying been for vengeance, the temple
Where blood and beauty first unlawfully
Fir’d their devotion and quench’d the right one.
’Twas in my fears at first: ’twill have it now.
Oh, thou art all deform’d! (V.iii.72–77)

Alsemero accepts the absolute chaos the events have ended in. Even positive characters and hopeful efforts cannot avoid this “dangerous bridge of blood” (l. 81). This is a situation that innocent victims of revenge tragedy cannot escape – each character, good or evil has to face the circumstances he is confronted with and which cause him or her to face death and address his or her position towards action. The positive hero will have to ponder⁶⁰⁷ revenge to fulfil his destiny, and even the innocent victim has to defend her virtues.⁶⁰⁸

This contrast between a well-meant attitude and nevertheless powerless decision-taking is also presented in *Caesar’s Revenge*. Being defeated, Cato analyses his helplessness and loss of purpose: “My sonne thou seest howe all are overthrowne,/ That sought their Countries free-dome to maintaine” (II.v.1038–1039): Rome is destined to fall. He tries to prevent any harm for his son by calling on the heavens: “All blessings Fathers to their Sonnes can wish/

605 Compare Eleanor Prosser: *Hamlet and Revenge* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1967²). Compare also Bridget Gellert Lyons: *Voices of Melancholy. Studies in Literary Treatments of Melancholy in Renaissance England* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971); A. H. Thorndike: “The Relations of Hamlet to Contemporary Revenge Plays”, in: *PMLA* 17 (1902), p. 155–166.

606 Janet Clare: *Revenge Tragedies of the Renaissance* (Tavistock: Northcote, 2006), p. 44.

607 Even Charlemont in AT has to judge the idea of actively taking vengeance.

608 Antonio’s raped wife consequentially takes her life, while Castiza with aggressive words defends her honour and forswears her mother.

Heavens powre on thee” (II.v.1053–1054). Nevertheless, this does not prevent them from having inklings of a doomed future and Cato’s son is unsure of what the future may bring and rather sceptic: “O I feare I feare” (II.v.1061) – he shall wait what will happen, just as the audience is restricted to watch and wait, while his father’s mind is set on a *pean*⁶⁰⁹ – a song of hope and praise, but also full of sorrow, thereby again prophetically foreshadowing risk and doom. Anthony, too, stresses the shadows of glory by reminding the audience of Cleopatra’s celestial but fatal influence:

[H]aving lost my starr, my Governesse.
Which did direct me, with her Sonne-bright ray,
In greefe I wander and in sad dismay:
[...]
see mine inward mind under that face,
Whose collours to these Triumphes is disgrace (III.ii.1237–1243)

In bloody battle against Anthony, which Cassius predicted – “The ground not dry’d from sad *Pharsalian* blood;/ Will now bee turned to a purple lake” (V.i.2201–02) – he has to admit the force of vengeance against him – “*Rome* is overthrowne”, “Revenge from *Stygian* bands let loose” (V.iii.2349, 2354). Brutus’ and Cassius’ weakness had been their own, failing to control their emotions: “Anger did sparkell from our beautious eyes,/ Our trembling feare did make our helmes to shake” (I.2359–60), yet he sees the goodness of purpose in this terror (2367), even if it is life-threatening. Many chroniclers, biographers, and historians from classical times until the early modern era gave foretelling events a predominant place in their works on history. In drama they were also structured for the demonstration of hope, certainty, but also to set up hindrances that complicate the revenge scheme of the plot.⁶¹⁰

These complications are expected and assured in every revenge tragedy. As doubtful and banished, the Duchess of Malfi feels doom, looming in the background: “This puts me in mind of death” (III.v.7). Accordingly, her husband Antonio remarks that the wheel of fortune prophetically causes those to fall who first rose with it: “Right the fashion of the world:/ From decay’d fortunes every flatterer shrinks;/ Men cease to build where the foundation sinks” (III.v.9–11). Trust and glory that once appeared reliable are now decaying and falling to pieces, when their fortune is declining.

Aspatia, in *The Maid’s Tragedy* is equally desperate; from the first appearance of the heart-broken girl onwards, her future death is foreshadowed, which is caused by the royal denial to marry her to her beloved Amintor. Her song is

609 See also Lutz Käppel: “Paian“, in: *Der Neue Pauly*; p. 147–149; Gero von Wilpert: *Sachwörterbuch der Literatur* (Stuttgart: Kröner, 1964¹), p. 483–484.

610 Compare Rupert Taylor: *The Political Prophecy in England*, p. 88.

indicating the same: “*Lay a Garland on my hearse/ Of the dismal yew;/ Maidens, willow-branches bear;/ Say I died true.*” (II.i.76–79). Forgiving her rival Evadne, she exits with a farewell to Amintor: “This is the last time you shall look on me.–/ Ladies, farewell. As soon as I am dead,/ Come all” (l. 103–105) “May all the wrongs that you have done to me,/ Be utterly forgotten in my death” (l. 117–118). Contrastive to this passivity, she later appears to question the justice of the gods who do not punish those that hurt her: “[C]ould the Gods know this,/ And not of all their number raise a storm?/ But they are all as ill” (II.ii.49–51). Continuing this picture, Aspatia is madly invoking herself in a savage storm: “mine hair blown with the wind,/ Wild as that desert, and let all about me/ Tell that I am forsaken” (l. 69–71). Imagining herself as standing in the midst of the storm with loosened hair – a symbol of distracted senses – Aspatia’s sorrow becomes almost unbearable.⁶¹¹ The prophecy of her death becomes true in her next scene. In a soliloquy, she predicts “This is my fatal hour” (V.iv.1), before challenging Amintor, disguised as “the brother to the wrong’d Aspatia” (l. 42), to a duel, hoping to receive a fatal blow “defenceless” (l. 105). She wants to be killed by the man she loves.

The situation of the duel is very different in *The Revenge of Bussy D’Ambois*. Clermont, the Stoic hero, ascending from the vault, is confronting the murderer of his brother Montsurry. Finally challenging him to a duel to revenge his dead brother Bussy and punish the murderer, his opposite agrees, but Montsurry then changes his mind and becomes afraid of dying: “Sdeath! the vault opens. The gulfe opens” (V.v.4). Clermont is ready for single combat, a duel, judged by God.⁶¹² Montsurry is also frightened by his wife, dead Bussy’s mistress, calling her “damme of divels” (l. 43): “Sinke earth, open heaven,/ And let fall vengeance!” (l. 53–54), before assembling his spirits to fight. Montsurry clearly refers to Oedipus’ outcry “dehisce tellus”⁶¹³. He reminds the audience that he had killed Clermont’s brother because the latter had been cuckolding him:

O all you aking fore-heads that have rob’d
Your hands of weapons and your hearts of valour,
Joyne in mee all your rages and rebutters,
And into dust ram this same race of Furies;
In this one relicke of the Ambois gall,
In his one purple soule shed, drowne it all. *Fight.* (V.v.62–67)

611 Much like King Lear, who runs mad (*King Lear*, III.ii), Aspatia becomes desperate.

612 V.v.11–15.

613 Lucius Annaeus Seneca: *Oedipus*, in: *Four Tragedies and Octavia*. Penguin Classics, ed. E. F. Watling (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1966), l. 868. Compare Dahinten: *Die Geisterszene in der Tragödie vor Shakespeare. Zur Seneca-Nachfolge im englischen und lateinischen Drama des Elisabethanismus*, on the influence of Seneca, especially p. 20–60.

The foreheads are aching due to the horns that grow on them, and he is shouting for encouragement by the furies for killing the next D'Ambois. Both are suffering from the circumstances, and thus it seems a noble and valourous fight on both sides, accepting the other as an equal enemy. Clermont finally sees his personal duty in this revenge, but also the fairness of the duel: "I am the man in fate; and since so bravely/ Your lordship stands mee, scape but one more charge,/ And, on my life, Ile set your life at large" (V.v.106–108). Montsurry falls, forgiving his wife, and making up with Clermont, who wishes peace to both him and his brother Bussy: "Rest, worthy soule; and with it the deare spirit/ Of my lov'd brother rest in endlesse peace!" (l. 116–117).

Honour is often the backbone but rarely the executive arm of revenge. In *The Revenger's Tragedy*, the revengers get entangled in the lecherous proceedings at the Duke's court to achieve revenge. However, lust is not the only sin in the ducal court. Significantly justice and moral order are also ignored when the "irrevocable" (I.ii.76) judgement for rape on accused Junior does not please the family: Prophet-like, the Duke "hold[s]" the pronounced death-sentence and "defer[s] the judgment" (l. 81, 83). This reversal of justice foreshadows the topsy-turvyness in this Dukedom. If law can be twisted arbitrarily by the Duke, it is twisted by others, too. The Duke's son Lussurioso is "conjuring" Hippolito, Vindice's brother to look for a "strange-digested fellow forth/ Of ill-contented nature, either disgrac'd/ In former times, or by new grooms displac'd/ Since his stepmother's nuptials, such a blood/ A man that were for evil only good;" (I.i.74–79), and finds him in disguised Vindice. A chance like this seems to offer the opportunity to infiltrate the court itself. And therefore, Vindice takes on the office as a pander for Lussurioso and joins the court: "For to be honest is not to be i' th' world" (I.i.93). Leaving his mother and sister, he is ready to "quickly turn into another" (I.i.134) to find an opportunity for revenge. The world of the court is an inverted or perverted one, therefore Vindice needs to change: "Ritualised inversion, especially the image of the world turned upside down, figured prominently in folkrites, carnival, festival and court celebrations".⁶¹⁴ This turn is essential for revenge, because vengeance, in contrast to legal punishment, implies the willingness to neglect justice and ignore morals, and allow personal feelings of hatred to become involved in retaliation.⁶¹⁵ Thus retaliation and the prediction of it interfere with law and politics.

614 Jonathan Dollimore: *Radical Tragedy. Religion, Ideology and Power in the Drama of Shakespeare and his Contemporaries* (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1984, 1989²), p. 26.

615 It is significant that Hippolito and Vindice are the driving forces in this oath of revenge for the raped wife of Antonio, while he, the victim suffering from his wife's death, is reluctant to join vengeance, calling himself too old but relying heavily upon their promise to revenge her honour. Thus, the tragedy loses an active revenger; however, in the end it turns out that

Prophecying played an important role in the practical politics⁶¹⁶ of the past. It is documented from the times of ancient Greece and Rome, its impact also deriving from the Bible and influencing apocalyptic thought: “The main themes running through all the papers can be identified as prophecy as a political language, attempts to manage prophecy, and the relationship between power and prophecy.”⁶¹⁷ While not playing a major role in Renaissance politics, they do dominate the politics and plot structure of the different plays.

The rather simple-minded, disinherited Jerom, Prince of Prussia, also changes his attitudes. Willing to apprehend his Machiavell (“they say/ hee’s an odd politician”, TH, II.i.510–511), the audience acknowledges that he becomes angry and vengeful and takes up some responsibility: “Well, sword come forth, and courage enter in,/ Brest breake with griefe; yet holde to be reveng’d” (l. 514–515). Unsure of his commitment, the spectator will nevertheless be impressed by the words he chooses: “widdowes vnborne shall weepe,/ And beardlesse boyes with armour on their backes/ Shall beare vs out” and make the court “a caue of misery” (II.i.516–518, 521), recalling Henry V’s threat toward France.⁶¹⁸ It is notable that an apparently now sensible Jerom is drawing onto Machiavell because Hoffman before utters the idea that “’tis not fit that idiots should beare rule” (l. 649) and therefore has no remorse being instituted as heir instead of Jerom.⁶¹⁹ Quoting Machiavell, who on stage proved the stereotype of evil could have meant a prodigious fate for Jerom: his plans backfire and Jerom himself and his father die in the event, whilst Hoffman lives. That this is not the end of this disaster is clear, since Hoffman has not taken full revenge yet. And thus it seems fitting when Saxony, leaving the scene of murder, predicts: “Looke to your persons, these are dangerous times” (IV.i.1652).

The next scene shows how determination and will can falter within minutes, when the right emotions are touched. Prophetic utterances that are made in this mood likewise turn. Hoffman enters her chamber to kill Martha, the Duchess of

because he did not join the plot of intrigues and revenge but kept to the official law and justice, he can without take over office and power at the end any moral blame.

616 Compare Taithe/ Thornton (eds.): *Prophecy. The Power of Inspired Language in History 1300–2000*, p. 2.

617 Ibid, p. 3.

618 See Shakespeare’s *Henry V*: King Henry threatens the French, I.ii. 259–297.

619 This might also remind the audience of the *weak-king-dilemma*; Bolingbroke is supported because Richard II is a weak king. Here, Jerom appears as a simpleton, while the audience still follows Hoffman’s rise. Through Jerom’s words here, though, the spectator sees through his simple behaviour and can detect a worthy heir to Prussia’s throne. This reflects the weak-king dilemma of other plays, foremost Shakespeare’s *Richard II*. Here, the king is deposed from his thrown being too weak to rule his country. Compare Ernst H. Kantorowicz: *The King’s Two Bodies. A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology* (Princeton: University Press, 1957, rev. 1997), chapter on *Richard II*. Compare also Heinz Zimmermann: “Die ideologische Krise in *King Richard II*”, in: Uwe Baumann (ed.): *William Shakespeare. Historien und Tragödien. Neue Wege der Forschung* (Darmstadt: WBG, 2007), p. 15–34.

Luningberg: “thou sleep’st thy last” (l. 1746); being aware, though that killing this faultless woman only because she was married to an evil-doer towards his family, is an evil deed in itself: “Let not one light my blacke deed beautiste.” (l. 1750), and, gaining time to think of her faultlessness – “Alas poore Lady thou sleep’st here secure/ And neuer dream’st: of what thou shalt endure.” (l. 1759–1760) –, he ends up changing his mind: “[T]his angells face/ Confound her? blacke confusion be my graue/ Whisper one such word more, thou dyest base slaue.” (IV.ii.1790–1792). Expressions like these, taken as prophecy, threaten the receiver, but they could also clarify through exposition of danger “by exposing the difficulties and ambiguities of the prophetic mode.”⁶²⁰

Hoffman is completely taken by Martha’s beauty and innocence, and the audience might for a moment have some hope that he becomes a better person through these feelings. Being only a retarding moment in the course of action, though, the situation becomes worse: the feelings Hoffman has developed are not of love but lust: “ther’s another fire/ Burnes in this liuer lust, and hot desire,/ [...] In loue this course ile take, if she denie;/ Force her” (l. 1909–1910, 1915–1916).

Hoffman realises and fears his gradual decay: “But I can tell thee somewhat troubles me,/ Some dreadfull misaduenture my soule doubts” (2365–2366), yet he does not refrain from trying to kill his own servant on his path of revenge, who interprets these doubts to Hoffman’s displeasure. Wounded, the servant – who had earlier on predicted that his path is leading towards hell, now prophecies: “This is my day, to morrow shall be thine” (l. 2424). Further entangling himself in his vengeful mindset, Hoffman is not able to control his senses any more, “such a fury raignes,/ Ouer my boyling blood, that I enuy/ Any one on whom you cast an amorous eye” (V.iii.2509–2511), threatens Martha with rape “vnseene sports/ To quench these Lawlesse heates that burne in me” (l. 2522–2523), and with this too hot temperament does not even fear his enemies who come to kill him – a flaw that will cause his death.

Death is also the only possible outcome to the revenge of Hieronimo in *The Spanish Tragedy*. For the plot of the finale, the play-within-the play, Hieronimo chooses a grave matter and prophecies on the fictitious reflection of the situation: “I’ll play the murderer, I warrant you;/ For I already have conceited that” (IV.i.134–135). To the audience, Hieronimo reveals the downfall and acting out of his revenge: The death scene, as Anderson argues, shows the directness of death through the idea of the play, while it also underlines the limits of show and

620 Sharon L. Jansen: “Prophecy, Power, and Politics in the Sixteenth Century”, in: *Medievalia et Humanistica. Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Culture* 19 (1992), p. 179–195, here p. 183.

the confusion that is created through the mixture of languages in the play⁶²¹ – this makes it even more significant because the babel reflects the chaos in the state: “a mere confusion,/ And hardly shall we all be understood” (l. 181–182). It also reflects the everpresent misunderstanding between factions of society, revenging spirits, aspiring gentlemen: “Since language at court is deceptive, babble, which means nothing and so cannot deceive, is more honest.”⁶²² That exactly is Hieronimo’s intention: “Now shall I see the fall of Babylon/ Wrought by the heavens in this confusion” (l. 196–197).

The chaos and murder in the play also reflect the truth, because the stabbings performed are really carried out and the “accursed murderers” (IV.iv.128) Balthazar and Lorenzo, as innocent Bel-Imperia, are truly dead. Thus, there is the double function, which not only allows to predict and reflect murder, but also to carry it out: “See here my show, look on this spectacle” (IV.iv.89), Hieronimo is comparing his son’s past murder with the murder in his directed play-within-the-play by dragging out Hieronimo’s corpse as a reminder of the past deed and showing it to the audience. As he predicted, and having left justice and moral, Hieronimo at last is “resolved to die” and commits suicide, first trying “*to hang himselfe*“, then “*He with a knife stabs the DUKE and himself.*” (IV.iv.202).

In *The Maid’s Tragedy*, the rueful Evadne, who betrayed her husband Amintor, remorsefully calls herself “monstrous” (IV.i.186), “so leprous” (l. 201), “foulest” (IV.i.233), and prays him for forgiveness:

I am hell,

Till you, my dear Lord, shoot your light into me,
The beams of your forgiveness: I am soul-sick,
And [wither] with the fear of one condemn’d,
Till I have got your pardon. (IV.i.234–238)

Amintor, indeed a virtuous gentleman, forgives Evadne, but warns her of divine retribution if she is not honest, and accepts her apologies: “May each sin thou hast,/ Find a new mercy! Rise; I am at peace.” (IV.i.263–264).

In the end, the protagonists die, and her brother Melantius is deeply moved by the sorrow: “May I stand/ Stiff here for ever! Eyes, call up your tears! [...] Here was my Sister, Father, Brother, Son;/ All that I had” (V.iv.254–255, 268–269), and vows to starve himself to death to join Amintor. The closing lines are left to the new king Lysippus, who judges on the past events as a warning for the country’s future: “May this a fair example be to me,/ To rule with temper” (l. 296–297). The play is left with the hope of a future harmony but nevertheless the awareness of

621 See Thomas P. Anderson: *Performing Early Modern Trauma*, p. 151.

622 Janet Clare: *Revenge Tragedies of the Renaissance*, p. 35.

the threat of sins and the image of fortune, or, as it is put in *Caesar's Revenge*: "The rouling stone or everturning wheel" (II.iv.992).

An example of prophecy that shows personal determination and refusal to engage in action is given by Brachiano's wife Isabella in *The White Devil*. She predicts to restrain from future sexual intercourse with her husband. Knowing of her husband's affair and his future denial to stay true to his marriage, she takes all the blame and prophecies "I'll ne'er more lie with thee!" (II.i.195), knowing he will not: "this my vow/ Shall never, on my soul, be satisfied/ With my repentance: let thy brother rage/ Beyond a horrid tempest, or sea-fight,/ My vow is fixed." (l. 201–204). This cursing prediction causes a "sad ensuing part" (l. 224), as indeed proves true: her brother curses her, Isabella breaks down: "Unkindness, do thy office; poor heart, break:/ Those are the killing griefs, which dare not speak" (l. 276–277). Full of sorrow she sees her own heart and body falling apart. In threatening manner, Isabella then performs a show of furious anger, raging herself into a curse on the "strumpet" (l. 245) Vittoria, and forsaking her own marriage, which proves sadly true through a twist of fate, when she is murdered shortly afterwards, to make way for a new wife at Brachiano's side. Dollimore mentions that Webster is almost too chaos-obsessed in structuring his plays according to supernatural principles.⁶²³ Indeed, plays like *The White Devil* are centering on the chaos that is created in the plot. Nevertheless, the convention of divination, found in mantic elements, can be traced in Webster's plays, too.

More directly and determined by chaos, mantic elements shape the action of *The Spanish Tragedy*. From the beginning in the defeated court of Portugal, where courtiers lie for their own benefits, everything is turning towards disbelief, intrigue and destruction: in Spain this includes the plot to marry Bel-Imperia to Prince Balthazar of Portugal (II.iii) to settle the peace between Spain and Portugal. However, this directly includes a warning, which frightens not only Bel-Imperia but the state of order, as the audience will become aware of: "If she neglect him and forgoe his loue,/ She both will wrong her owne estate and ours." (II.iii.45–46). This prophecy is spoken as a direct threat for Bel-Imperia, she is the intended listener – however, the audience hears the prophetic voice in the threat, and as such, they become the intended audiences⁶²⁴ for the prophetic impact – the spectator, not those concerned in the play will understand the foreshadowing aspect of the disorder that is emerging and taking shape.

Prophecies about others are almost exclusively to their disadvantage. They mostly predict the downfall of an individual or a group.

One of the few positive predictions about another individual is made by Aspatia, the titular heroine of *The Maid's Tragedy*. Her beloved Amintor marries

623 See Jonathan Dollimore: *Radical Tragedy*, p. 59.

624 Sharon L. Jansen: "Prophecy, Power, and Politics in the Sixteenth Century", p. 183.

Evadne, who does not love him, because she is the mistress of the king. Aspatia prophecies Evadne’s future love for Amintor on the evening before the wedding night: “Thou think’st thy heart hard, but [...] thou shalt perceive a fire shot/ suddenly into thee” (II.i.63–65). Evadne will indeed feel thus, though much later than expected by the discarded bride: indeed – only at the moment when Evadne is accused of prostitution and adultery by her brother Malantius, – her thoughts instantly and miraculously convert her conscience to remorse, and she then discovers apologetic feelings of true love for Amintor. This prophecy is nevertheless not wholly positive, because it sums up the tragedy of the play. It is indeed a “source of information about the future – information which was in itself absolutely certain, though obscure in its manner of presentation.”⁶²⁵ Southern is here scrutinising the idea that soothsaying in histories was one of the only sources that could reveal the future. In revenge tragedy, the prophetic speech acts, not made by professional oracles but by one of the characters in the plot has the same function, albeit not as openly flagged as an intended prophecy, thus more difficult to discern.

Most other prophecies are either intendedly or unintendedly spoken to predict ill upon those they are cast. They often involve grim pictures, addressing quarrels and fights, indulgence and sins. For example, a statement on the lecherous Duke, who would likely refuse no woman offered to him in *The Revenger’s Tragedy*, is prophetically foreshadowing: “Heart, I think [he would refuse] none,/ Next to a skull, tho’ more unsound than one:/ Each face he meets he strongly dotes upon” (I.i.87–89). Ironically, the Duke dies through poison on the prepared lips of Gloriana’s skull, whom he thinks to be a willing virgin prostituting herself for him: each face – even the dead skull’s lips he “strongly dotes upon” or passionately devours – will become his prey and now his downfall.

Downfall and the decay of the state are also predicted in *Caesar’s Revenge*. After act II, *Discord* is analysing Caesar’s victory – his ambition is taking over control in Rome – and calling for the “Revengfull great *Adastria* Queene./ Awake with horror of thy dubbing Drumm,/ And call the snaky furies from below,/ To dash the Ioy of their triumphing pride” (l. 1149–1152) and prophecying fortune’s wheel to turn their victory into defeat and Caesar’s death as “a bleeding sacrifice” (l. 1155) by Cassius so that “Of warrs thus peace insues, of peace more harmes,/ Then erst was wrought by tragick wars alarmes” (l. 1167–1168). What will happen to Rome will be worse than the preceding war in which Caesar won.

A prophecy about Caesar’s death is also cast by an augur, or soothsayer. Before the Ides of March, not only Calphurnia warns her husband Caesar of

625 R. W. Southern: “Aspects of the European Tradition of Historical Writing”, p. 160.

going into the senate that day, but there is also an Augur foretelling a lethal end, interpreted from various omens:

O stay those steeps that leade thee to thy death,
 The angry heavens with threatening dire aspect,
 Boding mischance, and balfull massacres,
 Menace the overthrow of *Caesars* power:
Saturne fits frowning on the God of Warre,
 Who in their sad coniunction do conspire,
 Uniting both their bale full influences,
 To heape mischance, and danger to thy life:
 The Sacrificing beast is heart-les found:
 Sad ghastly fightes, and rayسد Ghostes appeare,
 Which fill the silent woods, with groning cries:
 The hoarse Night-raven tunes the chearles voice,
 And calls the bale-full Owle, and howling Doge,
 To make a confort. In whose sad song is this,
 Neere is the overthrow of *Caesars* blisse. (III.vii.1637–1651)

The augur⁶²⁶ interprets the conjunction of Mars and Saturn as an indicator of coming political strife, underlined by ghostly apparitions, and animal prodigies. And thus, accompanied by Cassius' outcry that the place "thy dreadfull grave shalbe" (l.1692), it comes true and the senators stab him.

Similar gruesome images as predictions of disorder continue. As an introduction to the fourth act, *Discord* is painting pictures of a bloody war: "*Thessalia* once againe must see your blood [...] Me thinkes I see the fiery shields to clash,/ Eagle gainst Eagle, *Rome* gainst *Rome* to fight" (Chorus IV, l.1773, 1777–78).⁶²⁷ Romans dying on both sides of the battlefield, and she sees Caesar rising like a Phoenix from the ashes: "And those great conquerors of the vanquished earth,/ Shall with their swords come there to dig their graves" (l.1787–88). Caesar does rise from the ashes in the form of his stepson Octavian who, in IV.i, does vow to revenge Caesar's death, that all will be coloured in "crimson hew" (IV.i.1802), "deadly burning torches are at hand" (l.1806), as Anthony calls Caesar's murderers traitors and damns them (see IV.ii.1862). They are resolved: "Revenge, Revenge upon the murtherers" (IV.ii.1887). Thus *Caesar's Revenge* is a complex to-and-fro of vengeful motivation, where each side has motives understood by the public, i.e. by the spectator. However, all are

626 See above.

627 Civil war as a horrible crime against mankind. The Chorus adds the metaphor of eagles fighting. This also refers to the Roman armies direct. The legions are headed by eagle standards, flag-signs, and as eagles are the birds of Jupiter, they would normally never fight against each other. The battle is thereby rendered as unnatural.

directed by the chorus within the framing prologues to each act, and they are thus prone to *Discord’s* arbitrary and destructive decisions.

As during the whole play, *Discord* with its telling name appears again as Chorus at the beginning of Act V and paints pictures of a following “dreadfull *Chaos*” (Chorus V, 2137):

Now Heavens array you in your cloudy weedes
 [...]

 Darknesse to day shall cover all the world:
 Let no light shine, but what your swords can strike,
 From out their steely helmes, and fiery shildes:
 Furies, and Ghosts, with your blue-burning lampes,
 In mazing terror ride through *Roman* rankes:
 With dread affrighting those stout Champions hearts,
 All stygian fiends now leave whereas you dwell:
 And come into the world and make it hell (V.2135, 2142–49).

It appears as if with each act, *Discord’s* prophecies become bleaker, as the future proves dismal and the two Roman forces are destroying each other.

Coming destruction is also the theme in *The Duchess of Malfi*. The choleric brothers Ferdinand and the Cardinal show themselves angry at a deduced prodigy of a mandrake: “I have this night digg’d up a mandrake. [...] And I am grown mad with ’t. [...] a sister damn’d: she ’s loose i’ the hilts;/ Grown a notorious strumpet” (II.v.1–4). Their sister has betrayed them; however, the Cardinal and Ferdinand do not measure their own deeds in the same way they judge others. The Cardinal invests himself as a soldier-like all-deciding authority, banishing Antonio and the Duchess in a dumb-show.⁶²⁸ The tragedy is entering deeper waters of no return to harmony, as one of the pilgrim bystanders comments: “Fortune makes this conclusion general,/ All things do help th’ unhappy man to fall” (III.iv.42–43). Planned reconciliation is only feigned: “I misdoubt it; [...] they appear/ But nets to entrap you” (V.i.2–5). All is prepared for ruin, as Act V shows Antonio’s fall after the Duchess’ death and his murder by Bosola.

Antonio is left alone in his downfall – his beloved wife is already dead and he is not in a position to take revenge, but he is one of the victims of the plot. In contrast to that, Melantius in *The Maid’s Tragedy* can plan retaliation, even as his

628 See III.iv.6, stage direction. Again, the dumb-show as the double theatrical performance intensifies the struggle in the revenge tragedy, as it does in most of the other dramas, to a similar degree as the play-within-plays. On the dumb show in general and on its function, see Dieter Mehl: *The Elizabethan Dumb Show. The History of a Dramatic Convention* (London/ New York: Methuen, 1965), especially p. 144–145.

loneliness is determined by scheming: Left alone on stage, Melantius utters a prophecy of chaos into the night. He will cause bloodshed to revenge the horrors imposed on his house by the king through his affair with Melantius' sister: "This is a night in spite of Astronomers/ To do the deed in; I will wash the stain/ That rests upon our House, off with his blood" (IV.ii. 288–290). Clearing the loss of reputation with murder follows the code of feuds and revenge, but makes the revenger himself sinful. To his surroundings, Melantius keeps outwardly calm and solaces his brother-in-law Amintor: "[L]et your reason/ Plot your revenge, and not your passion" (l. 300–301), and apparently listens to Amintor's advice: "But take heed,/ There's not the least limb growing to a King,/ But carries thunder in it" (l. 324–326). This entails a prediction of further sorrow and suffering, because revenge will be raised against the divine order, even though the cause seems just and has to be treated as a valid motive in the frame of revenge tragedy.

To delay the action in *The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois*, and to heighten the sense of disorder and corruption in the state, the revenger Clermont misjudges the trust he can put into his brother-in-law Baligny, and refrains from accepting the warning that his life is threatened, told him in an anonymous letter which informs him of a looming arrest by the Captains and that Baligny "absents himsef of purpose" (III.ii.78), but Clermont does not want to credit these statements: "ile not wrong/ My well knowne brother for Anonymos" (l. 90–91) which will prove fatal, because he is captured. However, it is this letter that makes Clermont ponder over the purpose of vengeance and makes him wonder: "Shall we revenge a villanie with villanie" (l. 98), a question to which the audience would answer positively.

Even though he is spurred on by his sister, Clermont nonetheless stays true to his Stoic principles and vows passivity: "I repent that ever [...] That e'er I yeelded to revenge his murther" (III.ii.112–115). His sister is furious about this inactivity that is denied to her as a woman and accuses Clermont of being far too "tame" (l. 120) and is only satisfied by Renel's prediction that revenge will be taken at some point in the future: "Madame, be sure there will be time enough/ For all the vengeance your great spirit can wish./ [...] give him breath;/ Sure death delaid is a redoubled death" (III.ii.121–129). And truly, incensed by his brother's spirit, Clermont states: "Let all fall that would rise unlawfully!" (V.i.69). It is a statement of truth and honesty: Vice will not prove stronger than virtue.

Vice seems to be utterly in control in *The Revenger's Tragedy*, however. Luxuria, lust, is dominating the court. The Duchess, angry with her husband who has not pardoned her son for the rape he committed, now vows to cuckold him: "I'll kill him in his forehead; hate there feed,/ That wound is deepest tho' it never bleed." (I.ii.107–108): with the wife committing adultery, horns would

grow on the husband’s forehead, and she could thus provoke and hurt him. Immediately, we see her and the Duke’s bastard son Spurio, who is damned by prejudice, bantering about possible adultery full of sexual innuendos: “Ay, there’s the vengeance that my birth was wrapp’d in;/ I’ll be reveng’d for all. Now hate begin;/ I’ll call foul incest but a venial sin” (I.ii.155–170).

Sexuality is also dominating the plot around the Duke’s son, significantly called Lussurioso, for whom Vindice pretends to play the pander with his own sister. Successfully bribing his mother with paradoxically called “Angel”-coins,⁶²⁹ he reluctantly confirms: “Your words will sting” (RT, II.i.133) in a triple sense. He will feel the poison of the sting in himself by having destroyed the honour of and trust in his family, and he fears, Castiza will be bribed, too and give in to the affair with Lussurioso, whose organ will then sting her. However, Castiza stays true to her name and thus establishes one point of hope in this tragedy, which Vindice applauds and which should reverberate in the divine sphere circling the earth to expand her strength and constancy. “Oh angels, clap your wings upon the skies,/ And give this virgin crystal plaudities!” (II.i.245–246). There is hope left outside the court.

Within the palace, Hippolito’s judgment that “there’s gunpowder i’ th’ court” (II.ii.173) proves very true, when Lussurioso is taken into custody for trying to murder his father (which had not been his intention), and his illoyal brothers secretly plan their own advancement in the court: “Now, brother, let our hate and love be woven/ So subtly together, that in speaking one word for his life,/ We may make three for his death:” (II.iii.65–67). So they do: they plead for Lussurioso, while at the same declaring that “the trespass is unpardonable,/ Black, wicked, and unnatural” (II.iii.75–76). Planning intrigues and feeling no pity whatsoever, they are not a jot better than any in the court. However, the warrant of execution miraculously turns against the real villain, the ravisher Junior. Thus justice proves partly functional.

Nevertheless, vice is still pre-eminent and lust is still dominating the court. Having watched Vindice’s dealing disguised as pander, he employs him for similar reasons as Lussurioso did: “To greet him with a lady” (III.v.12).

Vindice’s plan now is to lure the Duke into a set trap, which will prove fatal and give Vindice full revenge of what the Duke did to Vindice’s wife Gloriana in the past. He is prophesying to invent an artificially dark scenario where the Duke will also have to confront his own wife’s adultery before he dies, thus taking away all dignity from him. Developing this trap, Vindice calls himself “in a throng of happy apprehensions” (III.v.30), which represents a thirst for a bloody revenge.

629 The coins were called angels because on their one side was a picture of the archangel Michael. Compare *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, see also Philip Skingley: *Coins of England and the United Kingdom. Standard Catalogue of British Coins* (London: Spink, 2006).

Once Vindice is stirred up from melancholic brooding to vengeful action, he never shows any sign of hesitation, but embraces his bloodlust.⁶³⁰ The dressed-up skull of Gloriana is the mirror of death for the Duke and “her death/ Shall be reveng’d after no common action.” (III.v.69–70) Vindice seems to fall into a trap of madness being convinced of his chances of revenge. Poisoning the skull, he is elaborating on the glorious part that it shall play in revenge: “This very skull, [...] shall be reveng’d” (III.v.101–103). Predicting instant vengeance, Vindice is resuming on the current moment as the one he has been waiting for since Gloriana was murdered: “So, so: now nine years’ vengeance crowd into a minute!” (III.v.121). Affected by the poison which eats into his face, Vindice has the Duke’s “eyes like comets shine through blood;/ When the bad bleeds, then is the tragedy good” (III.v.199–200). Indeed, the villain bleeds and dies as proof of illegal justice, but morally understandable revenge.

As a twist of fate, the Duchess, committing adultery with Spurio in the same place as that where the Duke is poisoned through his lusty dealings, she is trying to make him ignore their incestuous relationship and “Forget him [the Duke] or I’ll poison him.” (l. 209) which is exactly what has already happened. Spurio joins her prophetic death sentence of the Duke: “I would add murder to adultery,/ And with my sword give up his years to death.” (l. 213–214) and mirrors in his speech the act which is taking place nearby: “[*Vindici stabs the Duke, who dies.*]” (l. 217). Echoing the rape of Antonio’s wife, there is “loud music” (l. 218) mantling the sounds of murder, as those of adultery: “’Tis state in music for a duke to bleed.” The finally achieved revenge is supported by music, reverberating and corresponding to the heavenly spheres, which give consent to the bloody scene. The rumbling noises thus led the audience in their belief in the macrocosmic correspondence, which was underlined by this audible spectacle.⁶³¹

Treason and revenge remain Vindice’s plan. Having fulfilled revenge for his beloved Gloriana by killing the Duke – his original goal –, he still does not stop here, but – as revenge is always excessive – turns against the whole ducal family: Lussurioso is next on his list for desiring the maidenhood of his sister Castiza, and Vindice prophesies: “Well, thou his son/ Art not long-liv’d; thou shalt not ’joy his death:” (IV.i.16–18). Vindice is playing with Lussurioso’s ignorance of his disguise and swears pretended revenge on Piato: “Full mad: he shall not live/

630 See <http://www.tech.org/~cleary/reven.html#KILLHIMI>.

631 As above, see Muriel C. Bradbrook: *Themes and Conventions of Elizabethan Tragedy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1935), on the production of noises; compare also Henk: *Studies in Elizabethan Audience Response to the Theatre. Part 1: How easy Is a Bush Suppos’d to be a Bear? Actor and Character in the Elizabethan Viewer’s Mind* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1993), p. 83f. Gras is not concentrating on the noises produced in the theatre but on the conventions of a performance.

To see the moon change” (l. 164–165). They are constructing images of death, underlined by darkness and cosmic support. Lussurioso also draws on the meaning of Vindice’s name – “a Revenger” (l. 176): “It does betoken courage: [thou] shouldst be valiant/ And kill thine enemies.” (l. 177–178) – as Vindice already has and will continue. Middleton⁶³² has created a superlatively vindictive drama, rich in extreme violence and bloodshed.

Spurred on by death and succession, the younger brothers to Lussurioso plan to murder their elder brother to inherit the title themselves:

He shall not live; his hair shall not grow much longer:
 in this time of revels, tricks may be set afoot.
 Seest thou yon new moon? It shall out-live
 the new duke by much; this hand shall dispossess him,
 then we’re mighty.
 A masque is treason’s license; that build upon:
 ’Tis murder’s best face when a vizard’s on. (V.i.179–185)

Through a mask play, Supervacuo and Ambitioso want to kill their brother – interestingly their prediction coincides with Vindice’s. Both plan their deeds before the next moon cycle, thereby evoking celestial correspondence. Vindice also directs his revenge to be acted out at the court’s revels⁶³³, the celebration is used as background to villainous deeds where “[i]n midst of all their joys, they shall sigh blood.” (V.ii.22), predicting horrible mass murder during the celebratory mask on the occasion of his inthronisation: “We’re ready now for sports; let ’em set on.” (V.iii.38) As the blazing comet already indicated divine anger, the mask play proves a fatal spectacle for the ducal family: in the “*Masque of Revengers [...] The Revengers dance. At the end, steal out their swords and these four kill the four at the table in their chairs. It thunders.*” (V.iii.42–44).⁶³⁴ As

632 Very likely, *The Revenger’s Tragedy* was written by Middleton, almost definitively not by Tourneur. However, the debate – which does not effect this study of revenge tragedy – continues. See, as indicated above, introductions to the different editions.

633 The audience would know that revellers in their disguise would often elect a Lord of Misrule who represents the mocked system of state – at least during carneval season after Christmas. It is striking that a similar situation is created here in the plot where indeed the order of the state is mocked. Compare e.g. Richard Knowles: *Shakespeare and Carnival. After Bakhtin* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 1998); John Pitcher/ Susan Cerasano/ Robert Lindsey (eds): *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2002) especially p. 278–279; Chris Humphrey: *The Politics of Carnival. Festive Misrule in Medieval England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001).

634 The mask-play is presented like a dumb show containing a dance of death. Especially popular in the Middle Ages, they are predicting the nearing end of life with a macabre dance of skeletons. See James M. Clark: *The Dance of Death in the Middle Ages and Renaissance* (London: Jackson, Son & Co., 1950); compare also Baumann: “Das Leben als Tanz in den Tod in der Rachttragödie der englischen Renaissance“, in: F. H. Link (ed.), *Tanz und Tod in Kunst und Literatur, Schriften zur Literaturwissenschaft* 8 (Berlin: Perfect Paperback, 1993),

planned, Ambitioso and Supervacuo join in, creating a scene of havoc and bloodshed, where all members of the incestuous and sinful ducal family die, as prophesied. Vindice's prophecy to murder the new Duke comes true: "I'll pierce him to his face; he shall die looking upon me." (II.ii.93–95).

Finally, Antonio, who had withdrawn from any revenge of his raped wife, takes over, hoping "May I so rule that heaven [may] keep the crown." (l. 98) and underlines the moral: "Just is the law above" (l. 100). God will punish sinners according to their crimes, as Vindice remembers: "time will make the murderer bring forth himself" (V.iii.125). Accordingly, Vindice, who has been playing various roles during the tragedy, will be led to the scaffold to receive his due punishment in the end.

While in *The Revenger's Tragedy* all are individually seeking their own advancement, in *The Tragedy of Hoffman*, all unite against the criminal Hoffman: Having found out about Hoffman's deeds and plans, his adversaries unite to revenge the murders – predicting vengeance on deceitful Hoffman: "Revenge should haue proportion,/ By slye deceit he acted euery wronge,/ And by deceit I would haue him intrapt;/ Then the renenge [sic] were fit, iust, and square" (V.i.2200–2203). That Hoffman has left his straight path of revenge and thereby becomes vulnerable is shown when he next enters the stage. "Ile swim to my desires, through seas of blood" (l. 2291) shows him less scheming and more passionate and thus not sly enough to be invincible any more.⁶³⁵

Uttering expressions that prove true foreshadowings is a use of mantic elements that proves less easy to be understood by the audience than omens, ghosts or dream visions,⁶³⁶ because – in contrast to these visual mantic elements – seeming prophecies need to prove true before they can be detected as such. Until they do so, prophecies might appear as emotional expressives.

In histories, where the expected outcome is roughly known, prophecies could be used to toy with the knowledge of the audience and play this out against the knowledge of the characters. "By an adroit manipulation of time, a kind of theatrical sleight of hand, Shakespeare has his characters look forward to an event on which the audience looks backward."⁶³⁷ Prophecies, prodigies, por-

p. 139–160; C. Herbermann/ G. Williamson: "Dance of Death", in: *In The Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1908). 9 July 2009 from New Advent: <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04617a.htm>.

635 The liquid consistency of blood is often related to a sea or draining rain. Already a Senecan topos, its most famous example might nevertheless be the speech of the Bishop of Carlise in *Richard II* who prophecies the War of the Roses: "The blood of English shall manure the ground" (*Richard II*, IV.i.128).

636 Compare Sharon L. Jansen: *Political Protest and Prophecy under Henry VIII*, p. 256.

637 Marjorie Garber: "What's Past is Prologue", p. 304. A prime example is Cranmer's prophecy about Elizabeth in Shakespeare's *Henry VIII* – Elizabeth I had died only ten years before the composition of the play.

tentious utterances, soothsayings thus play a slightly different role in the histories where the audience would already know the outcome of the play or historical tragedy beforehand, since the facts of historiographical writing could be known. The result and ending of the play would then be in accordance with memory, the function of all kinds of mantics in that sense true already if used to prophecy dramatically forthcoming, historically institutionalised facts. According to this, the audience would own a different way of perception of prodigious prophecies. This is one of the major differences between tragedy and history. This pre-knowledge can create a tension which makes the viewer feel dominant. The audience is presented with its own, known past.⁶³⁸

However, these dramatic conventions of historical prophecy were also used by the playwrights of tragedy. The way prophecies are introduced in tragedy, and especially revenge tragedy, does not differ in its dramatical function. Authoritative validation is given to stage truth in both types of play. Similarly, characters on stage neglect, ignore, or simply do not receive certain knowledge and the audience accepts “dramaturgical manipulation”⁶³⁹ and spoken, valid sentences as possible prophecies.⁶⁴⁰ Rupert Taylor, in his pioneering work *The Political Prophecy in England* in 1911 states that prophecy in its political sense was “an expression of thought, written or spoken, in which an attempt is made to foretell coming events of a political nature.”⁶⁴¹ In a play, prophecy is used not in a sense of narrative composition but of dramatic exposition. Prophecy is, as dreams, ghosts, and omens, functionalised to increase the onstage tension for the secondary communicative system, i.e. it is addressed to the audience to make them aware of the forthcoming suspense and a possible direction the action will be taking.

Because the audience knows that they are about to encounter tragedy and bloodshed, they know the general course the dramatic action is going. From the genre of a revenge tragedy, the audience expects violence; prophecies can narrow the details of the plots down to a more precise future. A prophecy is predicting unknown facts, and functions as a prognosticator of such a course of the plot – and in its meaning as an omen or portent, it is applicable as an object,⁶⁴² functionalised to foreshadow in a similar way as an omen, only without visual proof until proven true.

638 Ibid, p. 306. Compare above-mentioned ideas on the differentiation between the typology of the mantic function of supernatural elements in histories and tragedies.

639 Ibid, p. 305.

640 This study cannot investigate the art of speech and expression on Renaissance stage, and surely the art of the actors has a huge impact on the value that certain sentences are given.

641 Rupert Taylor: *The Political Prophecy in England*, p. 2.

642 For these definitions, see Taithel Thornton (eds.): *Prophecy. The Power of Inspired Language*, p. 1.

Some ideas and indications of future events will be communicated through mantic elements and the audience will know their possibly foreshadowing character as referring to a truth when hearing them. In the same sense as in history, they will know about the relevance of mantic functionalisation when it comes to a new plot. Even when the audience do not know about the ensuing resolution of the plot, they will be able to value and judge the influence, importance, metaphoric character of omens, curses, wishes, prophecies, dreams, visions, ghosts and are in “no position to deny [their] authenticity”.⁶⁴³ The spectator is guided by prophecies, as they are conveyed to the audience.

John Harvey in his *A Discursive Probleme concerning Prophetes* of 1588 is sure of divine influence, shown through supposed prophecies and their terrible effect when presented for singular events. In his conclusion, Harvey writes: “there may perhaps [...] some perillous issue of such troublesome and tragically actes, finly be expected.”⁶⁴⁴ The audience of Renaissance revenge tragedy expected death and bloodshed.

Prophecies in the revenge tragedies of the English Renaissance often seem emotional outbursts at first, but then reveal their underlying foreboding quality. Becoming true and thus supporting the structure of the plot of retaliation, their mantic efficiency is manifested. This motive dominates the future of the characters from the beginning of the tragedy and can remind the audience of the violence which they can expect in a drama of this genre.

6.2 Curses and Wishes – “here’s the cursed day”⁶⁴⁵

How often doe the forced motions and changes of our faces wisse the secretest and most lurking thoughts we have, and bewray them to by-standers? The same cause that doth animate this member, doth also, unwitting to us, embolden our heart, our lungs, and our pulses.⁶⁴⁶

643 Keith Thomas notes this on mythical figures that could support the authority of prognostications – however, the quote fits well to any prophecy made on stage – because it proves true before the end of the drama. Compare Thomas: *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, p. 392.

644 John Harvey: *A Discursive Probleme concerning Prophetes, How far they are to be judged, or credited, according to the surest rules, and directions in Divinitie, Philosophie, Astrologie, and other learning: Devised especially in abatement of the terrible threatenings, and menaces, peremptorily denounced against the kingdoms, and states of the world, this present famous yeere, 1588, supposed the Greatwoonderfull, and Fatall yeere of our Age*. London: John Jackson, 1588, p. 130.

645 *The Duchesse of Malfi*, II.v.13.

646 Michel de Montaigne: “Of the Force of Imagination”, in: *Montaigne’s Essays*, transl. John Florio, ed. J. I. M. Stewart, 2 Vols. (London: The Nonesuch Press, 1931), Vol. 1, p. 83–95, here page 89.

Montaigne draws attention to the fact that people often passionately wish for something to occur, but continues to degrade magical purposes and intentions. In Renaissance revenge tragedy, however, curses did – as he writes – reveal passions and spur on their speakers, but not exclusively. They also reveal to the audience foreshadowings of what is to ensue in the tragedies, especially because those characters, uttering insults, i.e. curses against other, are often about to take action. Their prophetic character is the only revealed through the action of the plot.

“Cursing [...] refers to several uses of offensive speech. Technically speaking, *cursing* is wishing harm on a person”.⁶⁴⁷ Cursing treated here as the negative form of positive wishing has a strong impact on the fate within the plot of revenge tragedy. Like prophecies, the impact of cursing and wishing derives from the power of language. It is an individual which utters the curse or wish about somebody else’s fate.⁶⁴⁸

Some curses are uttered as an emotional outcry, characterising the mood of a stage character.⁶⁴⁹ Important for this study are those curses which have a dramaturgical function in the plot: They are relevant for the development of the action and have a functionalised effect in drama added to the individual utterance of disappointment, hope, fear, sorrow, or wrath that characterise the speaker.⁶⁵⁰ Curses are technically used in both these ways by the different playwrights. Lacy states that curses are sometimes used by Shakespeare in more subtle ways in the tragedies than in the histories.⁶⁵¹ She is also drawing upon the

647 Timothy Jay: *Why we curse. A Neuro-psycho-social Theory of Speech* (Philadelphia/ Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1999), p. 9.

648 Götz B. Schmitz wrote in his proposition for this essay: “Flüche und Segenswünsche kristallisieren sich vor allem um neuralgische Punkte”. In: “Prophetische Elemente in der höfischen Literatur der frühen Stuartzeit”, in: Wolfram Högbe (ed.): *Mantik. Profile prognostischen Wissens in Wissenschaft und Kultur* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2005), p. 263–273.

649 These are face-threatening directives. See Andreas H. Jucker/ Irma Taavitsainen: *Speech Acts in the History of English*, p. 14. Often uttered as a spontaneous overflow of hate, they can have a foreshadowing function, but might only be threats against the other. A non-mantic function can often be found towards the end of the plays, spoken by the true villains, once they are finally overcome by the revenger, and if they are not showing remorse.

650 The speaker of a curse is characterised by the curse itself. It denotes him as an emotional and sometimes wrath-seeking being, depending on the curse. Thus it can reflect on his nature. The innocent heroine of AT e.g. does not show a vindictive character, and even Charlemont rarely utters emotional outcries of a curseful nature, while the hero of TH, for example, curses his opponents from the first scene onwards.

651 Geisen analyses among others one example of a curse that comes true, exactly as wished for: One example that readily comes to mind is that of Margaret of Anjou in Shakespeare’s 3 *Henry VI*, especially V.iv, and in *Richard III*, I.iii and IV.iv. Queen Margaret becomes the reminder of the Plantagenet families’ curse; see also H. Geisen: *Dimension des Meta-physischen in Shakespeares Historien*, p. 173. See also Wolfgang Clemen: *A Commentary on Shakespeare’s ‘Richard III’* (London: Routledge, 1968¹, 2005), especially p. 54–61.

fact that in the tragedies there is a stronger atmosphere of doom – portrayed through this connection between man and the supernatural forces.⁶⁵² The same can often be applied to the revenge tragedies by Shakespeare's contemporaries – curses, even though not necessarily subtly expressed, create an intense feeling of looming catastrophe.⁶⁵³

Both types, the mantic curse and the emotional outburst are wishing ill, and might seem pathetic desires of vengeance,⁶⁵⁴ however, they are also used as deliberate settings of an anarchic form of chaos against the existing rules of order, as Dollimore terms them.⁶⁵⁵ The structural significance of curses is to inform the audience of future events as an anticipatory warning through dramaturgic means.⁶⁵⁶ Like prophecies, they foreshadow through speech, but unlike prophecies curses are directly addressed at hated characters, wishing them ill.

The kinds of curses that are used in revenge tragedy can be divided into different categories. There are those curses and wishes which concern the self: the speaker is wishing negative or positive consequences for him- or herself, much like Hamlet who laments his birth and dutiful fate to commit revenge for his father: "O cursed spite that ever I was born to set it right"⁶⁵⁷ in an utterance of shock, because "the price of revenge is seen as a terrible one."⁶⁵⁸

The next categories are those which include the self, either in a group or with another person or group concerned. After those curses that include the self follow those that concern others. The first of those is the category that is addressed directly to a present opponent, cursing him or her in the second person singular; then follows the curse against the absent opponent in the third person singular, cursing him or her. The last category is that of curses that concern a whole group of others, mostly in the third person plural, cursing them. They have been divided into these categories allowing to differentiate between those that utter the curse, whom it addresses and concerns; those having a mantic impact are the curses that are analysed in the following pages.

Not all the curses in Renaissance revenge tragedies do come true. Some only reflect the mood of the characters. As explained above, especially the non-

652 Dallas Lynn Lacy: *Anticipation and Foreboding in Shakespearean Drama* (Diss. Louisiana State University, 1968), p. 57.

653 Compare the critical attitude of Herbert Geisen: *Dimension des Metaphysischen*, p. 88: Geisen heightens the awareness of indeterminate realisation of curses.

654 See Gisela Dahinten: *Die Geisterszene in der Tragödie vor Shakespeare*, p. 49.

655 See Jonathan Dollimore: *Radical Tragedy*, p. xxxviii.

656 Curses refer to a divergence from the frame of order. On the Renaissance frame of order as one of the prime images of the Elizabethan World Picture, see the general introduction by E. M. W. Tillyard: *The Elizabethan World Picture* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1943).

657 Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, I.v.190.

658 Janet Clare: *Revenge Tragedies of the Renaissance* (Tavistock: Northcote, 2006), p. 49.

remorseful villain often curses his revenging murderer before he dies. Sometimes curses seem barely emotional utterances of spontaneous feelings. However, if this only seems the case, a further distinction needs to be made between the nature of the cursing person – curses and wishes by the villains of the plays have to be treated differently, their hopes and wishes might come true at the beginning of a tragedy to accumulate to the climax or catastrophe happening in the plot, however, in the denouement, it is the wishes of the revenger that come true.

6.2.1 Cursing the self – “Oh mee accurst! why lieu I this blacke day?”⁶⁵⁹

Self-curses are mostly spoken either by a victim of violence or a villain in revenge tragedy. They vastly speak lines of self curse when their situation seems unbearable to them, out of horror, shock, faced with the death of loved ones, thwarting of success, and are uttered as a sign of defeat and despair. Curses are uttered consciously, but are sometimes also wishing ill upon another person as a by-product of wishing well to another party.

The introductory self-curse seems especially typical and prominent. The action is set into motion in *Antonio’s Revenge* with the murder of Andrugio, Antonio’s father. Thus, the tragedy of the family begins. “Andrugio’s dead” is the line that settles the curse on their family – while the villain Piero is feigning compassion, and Andrugio’s wife Maria, swooning and cursing herself, wants to follow her husband: “O, fatal, disastrous, cursed, dismal! / Choke breath and life. I breathe, I live too long./ Andrugio, my lord, I come, I come” (I.ii.247–249). Her son Antonio, too, curses the circumstances: his beloved Mellida is accused of being unfaithful, which Antonio will not give credit: “O, accursed lie!” (l. 264); and he pronounces his own fortune destined for misery, “blurr’d with false defames” (l. 277), feeling “punching anguish spur [his] galled ribs” (l. 280) and ready for more intoxicating horrors:

Confusion to all comfort! I defy it.
 Comfort’s a parasite, a flatt’ring Jack,
 And melts resolv’d despair. O boundless woe,
 If there be any black yet unknown grief,
 If there be any horror yet unfelt,
 Unthought-of mischief in thy fiendlike power,
 Dash it upon my miserable head,
 Make me more wretch, more cursed if thou canst—
 O, now my fate is more than I could fear,
 My woes more weighty than my soul can bear. (I.ii.284–293)

659 TH, IV.i, line 1431.

Cursing himself, apparently wishing for all the horrors in the world to confront him, Antonio is on the verge of losing his senses and own identity.⁶⁶⁰ He is at a point where his fate cannot appear worse. Caputi calls him “a man sickened by the spectacle of wrong and committed to combating it.”⁶⁶¹ In his howling, he is contrasted with the older Pandulpho, whose son has been murdered but who nevertheless appears calm⁶⁶² and behaves like a model of a Senecan Stoic.

The play is dominated by the grieving Antonio, who cannot cope with his moral duty of revenge, and even though he does briefly rush into bursts of anger, he sinks back into “wanton-sick [...] giant griefs” (AR, II.iii.2–5), a sullenness of misery: “But the most grief-full, despairing, wretched,/ I Accursed, miserable—O, for heaven’s sake/ Forsake me now;” (II.ii.16–18). Self-accusing, he is gliding into a state of passive sorrow. Further into this scene, the suffering voices of the court can be heard, all joining Antonio in crying woe for their losses.⁶⁶³

His beloved Mellida, on the contrary, even though accused and imprisoned, is trying to persuade Antonio to take vengeance: She is supporting this with the threat of a self-curse, should her honour not be true and their plan not succeed, and encouraging Antonio of silencing the false accusations:

If I be false to my Antonio,
If the least soil of lust smears my pure love,
Make me more wretched, make me more accurs’d
Than infamy, torture, death, hell, and heaven
Can, bound with amplest power of thought; if not,
Purge my poor heart from defamation’s blot. (II.ii.79–84)

Even though Antonio constantly curses himself, he is convinced of Mellida’s innocence and virtues, and therefore plucks courage to defend her. Fighting for her honour, Mellida herself is nevertheless on the verge of cracking. Wishing to be cleared of all accusations, she is desperate – “Kill me; i’faith, I’ll wink, not stir a jot.” (AR, II.ii.92) – like Antonio: “May I be cursed” (l. 96). Once they part at the end of the scene, there is an atmosphere of the division of two souls who belong together but will never be reunited and thus their destinies are cursed. “May I be more cursed than heaven/ Can make me if I am not more wretche” (l. 135–136), as Antonio states once Mellida has left the grate through which they talked. Maria, comforting her son, again curses herself: “My husband’s dead, my son’s distraught, accurs’d./ Come, I must vent my griefs, or heart will burst” (l. 169–170).

Castabella in *The Atheist’s Tragedy*, is likewise fearful of her own fate – “May

660 See Jonathan Dollimore: *Radical Tragedy*, p. 30–31.

661 Anthony Caputi: *John Marston, Satirist* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1961), p. 149.

662 See AR, I.ii.307.

663 II.ii.64–69.

my memory/ Be utterly extinguished” (IV.iii.118–119) and questions heaven not to support the horrible circumstances she finds herself in, being almost forcefully taken before her Charlemont saves her: “O patient Heav’n, why dost thou not express/ Thy wrath in thunderbolts” (IV.iii.163–164) and “O would this grave might open, and my body/ Were bound to the dead carcass of a man/ For ever, ere it entertain the lust/ Of this detected villain” (l. 171–174). Her chastity is then saved by her beloved Charlemont, and in contrast to other revenge tragedy couples, they do not carry out revenge, they stay alive, and their tragedy ends happily.

Marston’s setting of the revenge plot in *Antonio’s Revenge* is laden with self-curses. And it appears almost as if he is mocking mantic elements, since Marston not only overemphasises their function by exaggerated use through his characters, but he even mocks the tradition through the pretense of self-curses by his villain. They are not intended mantic foreshadowings, but are – by their speaker – intended to appear as mantic curses, performed for other characters in the drama to convince them of the speaker’s despair, while the audience is aware of the pretense.⁶⁶⁴

The villain Piero is still in the midst of his intrigues and pretends to curse himself in a show of melting affections towards the daughter who has allegedly betrayed his and Antonio’s trust:

I ha’ no reason to be reasonable.
Her wedding eve, link’d to the noble blood
Of my most firmly reconciled friend,
And found even cling’d in sensuality!
O heaven! O heaven! Were she as near my heart
As is my liver, I would rend her off. (AR, I.i.227–232)

All the while he is cursing Mellida’s flesh, he is secretly celebrating his own cunning in getting rid of Antonio as a possible son-in-law. A similar feeling of glory is caused by the horrible news of Andrugio’s death that reaches Antonio’s family (I.ii.240–241). The audience, however, is left in no doubt about Piero’s pretense, because they have witnessed Piero’s evil plan and murder before it is even revealed to the scene (I.i).

Later Piero’s servant is also included in the pretended self-curse to support

664 The audience thus has a certain discrepant awareness in comparison to the other characters on stage. Jochum writes “the playwright’s implied assumption [is] that an audience is at least required to notice the informational values of these scenes”; in: Klaus Peter Jochum: *Discrepant Awareness*, p. 12. He mentions specific examples but the idea must be applied here, too. See also Henk Gras: *Studies in Elizabethan Audience Response to the Theatre. Part 1: How Easy is a Bush Suppos’d a Bear? Actor and Character in the Elizabethan Viewer’s Mind* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1993), chapter IV.

Piero's plans. Pretendedly cursing himself and, "*a cord about his neck*" (IV.1.157) to underline his supposed despair, asking for death to destroy his sinful body:

O what vast ocean of repentant tears
 Can cleanse my breast from the polluting filth
 Of ulcerous sin? Supreme Efficient,
 Why cleav'st thou not my breast with thunderbolts
 Of wing'd revenge? (IV.i.157–161)

Strotzo is – on Piero's order – confessing Mellida's innocence but at the same time falsely accusing Antonio of bribing him to accuse her of lasciviousness. Like other self-curses, he is questioning the powers of heaven and wishing for pain from above, thereby aggrandising his pretense and thus his crime to higher dimensions.

Likewise pretending to mourn and to curse himself, Hoffman in *The Tragedy of Hoffman* accuses himself for having misled Prince Mathias into killing his brother Ludowick and he curses himself for having "begot this monster cruelty" (III.i.938). It is intriguing how self-assured Hoffman pretends self-curses, while risking death through being found out on his path to revenge. Similarly, D'Amville in *The Atheist's Tragedy* pretends to be sorry for his nephew's alleged death and calling the messenger "cursed" (AT, II.i.110), and later – after having ordered his brother's murder – supposedly cursing nature: "Drop out/ Mine eye-balls [...] Have I lived to this?! Malicious Nature!" (AT, II.iv.25–28). In the end, nature directs itself against him.

At the beginning of Act III in *Antonio's Revenge*, Antonio's plan is taking shape. Standing alone by his father's tomb, he prays for consolation, curses his own fortune, and asks for compassion: "O, blessed father of a cursed son,/ Thou died'st most happy since thou lived'st not/ To see thy son most wretched" (III.i.23–25). He is also fearing death – "*Non est mori miserum, sed misere mori*" (l. 31) and dying miserably: Antonio is creating an atmosphere of utter desolation, ready to receive advice from another sphere, as he is already talking to his dead father before the ghost appears to him. After this invocation, his father's spirit confronts him. Still, Antonio drives himself into a state of raving madness considering revenge, promoted by the signs of madness in his mother Maria and now, instead of cursing himself directly, he threatens himself with a suicidal curse, should he not be successful in this vengeance:

May I be cursed by my father's ghost
 And blasted with incensed breath of heaven,
 If my heart beat on ought but vengeance!
 May I be numb'd with horror and my veins
 Pucker with sing'ing torture, if my brain
 Digest a thought, but of dire vengeance;

May I be fetter’d slave to coward chance,
If blood, heart, brain, plot ought save vengeance! (III.i.85–92)

Thus finally, there seems to be at least some progress in the decision on planning retaliation by the determined revenger Antonio. He is not desolately cursing himself but reminding himself to commit the duty of revenge. His plan, though, delays the action again: Antonio disguises himself as “run mad,/ As one confounded in a maze of mischief,/ Stagger’d, stark fell’d with bruising stroke of chance” (IV.i.55–57), and presents himself as a disguised fool but hidden “Mach’avel” (IV.i.24), overflowing with vengeful desires – “With steeled ribs lest I do burst my breast/ With struggling passions. Now disguise stand bold!/ Poor scorned habits oft choice souls enfold” (l. 68–70).

In contrast, at the beginning of *The Atheist’s Tragedy*, the villain D’Amville is still hoping for a bright future for himself: “if death casts up,/ Our total sum of joy and happiness,/ Let me have all my senses feasted in/ Th’abundant fullness of delight” (I.i.16–19).⁶⁶⁵ His plans first seem to succeed, only in the end, he will have to suffer for the wrongs he committed.

In *The Changeling*, Alsemero is cursing himself on the prospect of never being able to share time with Beatrice after hearing that she is engaged to be married. This information proves like a curse on Alsemero, as he professes to the audience in asides: “I must now part, and never meet again / With any joy on earth.” (I.i.196–197); he feels poisoned (l. 205) by the news and calls each mentioning of Piraquo “murderers” (l. 221) in his ears. While the future husband is brooding over his misfortune, Beatrice is affirmatively wishing for better perspectives: “Good angels and this conduct be your guide;/ Fitness of time and place is there set down, sir” (II.i.3–4).

Beatrice is recklessly pursuing her own goals, using her feminine art of temptation to engage her deformed⁶⁶⁶ servant Deflores in her desire of having Alonzo murdered: “There’s horror in my service, blood and danger” (II.iii.119); nevertheless she convinces him of committing this deed, which he, completely besotted with her, is more than willing to perform for her. Hers is a double wish: have Deflores kill Alonzo and then supply the murderer, whom she abhors, with enough money to leave the court, so that she will be rid of both: “[*Aside*] I shall rid myself of two inveterate loathings/ At one time: Piracquo and his dog-face.” (l. 144–146) – her wishes first seem to hold, but then the villainous nature of her plans turns against her, when she is outwitted by Deflores.

However, Deflores’ fate is determined by his deformity from the beginning.⁶⁶⁷

665 His wishes include marrying his son to Castabella (I.ii.180).

666 See chapter on omens, explaining the physical distortion of Deflores’ face.

667 McLean: *Humanism*, p. 229. It seems easy to use and curse the deformity of Deflores or Bosola than to deal with the determination and cause of evil: “It was part of the general

Similarly, Bosola's life in *The Duchess of Malfi* is cursed from the start. His physical ugliness determines his psychological proneness to evil deeds. However, he is aware of this determination and accepts it, including bribes and orders to murder. Bought by Ferdinand, he is willing to become "a very quaint invisible devil in flesh:/ An intelligencer. [...] Take your devils,/ Which hell calls angels! These curs'd gifts would make/ You a corrupter, me an impudent traitor,/ And should I take these, they'll'd take me to hell" (I.ii.181–187). Knowing of the corruptibility of the court,⁶⁶⁸ Bosola is accepting it, but asks to openly discourse about corruption: "I would have you curse yourself now, that your bounty,/ Which makes men truly noble, e'er should make/ Me a villain. [...] Thus the devil/ Candies all sins o'er" (l. 192–197). Feeling cursed, he is aware of further chaos and disorder around him. His melancholy predestines him as prone to unrighteousness. It determines not only sadness and mourning but – as in *The Revenger's Tragedy* or in Hoffman – refers also to the willingness to become villainous and commit illegal action.⁶⁶⁹ Melancholy seems one of Bosola's traits that influence him towards ambition, which Ferdinand utilises: "Keep your old garb of melancholy; 'twill express/ You envy those that stand above your reach" (l. 199–200). Bosola knows how dysfunctional the society is and thus plays along with its scheme: "Since place and riches oft are bribes of shame./ Sometimes the devil doth preach." (l. 211–212), hoping for advancement, even if it includes giving up a cursed self and listening to the devil.

In *Caesar's Revenge*, Pompey's wife Cornelia is making self-accusations, dreading an insecure future, after he has lost his battle: "Tis my accursed stares that boade this ill,/ And those mis-fortunes" (I.v.397–398). Cursing herself and blaming the stars that determine her life for it, she is asking for revenge against herself – wanting to be killed by her own husband for ruining his life. The enraged Duchess of Malfi also curses the stars,⁶⁷⁰ but she, unlike Cornelia "threatens to conjure the distant stars into pestilent death-bringers to plague her

reluctance to deal with first causes which were impossible to define except in terms of God, and to concentrate on the more surely demonstrable second causes." Deflores could also be compared to Richard III in this respect.

668 Webster's descriptions of court life abound with "insistent horror" based on a "definite popular prejudice about the luxury and corruption bred by the palace", Graham Parry: *The Golden Age Restor'd. The Culture of the Stuart Court, 1603–42* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1981), p. 60.

669 On ideas on melancholy in the Renaissance, see especially the following treatises: Timothy Bright: *A Treatise of Melancholy* (1586). The Classics of Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences Library, ed. Hardin Craig (New York: Gryphon Editions, 1995); Robert Burton: *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621), 6 Vols., ed. Thomas C. Faulkner/ Nicolas K. Kiessling/ Rhonda L. Blair (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989).

670 Nordlund calls the Duchess' invocation of the stars "an empty curse and the victory she wins is at best rhetorical, the invocation of this radical expansion of mankind's powers mainly serves to deepen our ironic sense of the remoteness between earth and heaven that Webster has established." In: *Dark Lantern*, p. 395.

brothers”,⁶⁷¹ while Cornelia is only adding more woe to Pompey’s sorrow, even though she actually tries to support him in his grief about the lost battle. He, too, is dreading death until “Ayre be turnde, to poison to infect me,/ Earth gape and swallow him that Heavens hate,/ Consume me Fire with thy devouring flames,/ Or Water drowne” (I.v.450–453),⁶⁷² echoing Oedipus in the Senecan tragedy.⁶⁷³ He then leaves her, ready to die just like Cornelia is at the end of this scene, willing to commit suicide as a last resort, and having fled his own battle, deeply ashamed curses himself: “Accursed Pompey, loe thou art descried.” (I.i.89)

After her husband is murdered in II.i., Cornelia kills herself, cursing her own fortune: “Go cursed *Cornelia* rent thy wretched haire,/ Drowne blobred cheekes in seas of saltest teares” (II.ii.782–783) and the stars: “And you poore lights, that sawe this tragick sight,/ Be blind and punnish’d with eternall night.” (787–788). To escape light, and enter a world of eternal darkness, she stabs herself.

Act V of *Caesar’s Revenge* shows the final battle between Caesar’s revengers and their adversaries; speech is full of curses from both sides. Titinius calls the battlefield destined for bloodshed and is planning to desert the troops: “Where may I flie from this accursed soyle” (I.2395); shortly afterwards Cassius admits a cursed future for himself, too, and wishes he had died in earlier, honourable battles: “Why did I not” fall “by Caesars hand?” (V.v.2442–43). Titinius, seeing the desperate Cassius, curses himself for not supporting his friend enough and thereby underlining Cassius’ irreversible situation: “Accursed villaine murthurer of thy friend [...] Accursed weapon that such blood could spil,/ Nay cursed then the author of this deed” (I.2484, 2492–93). Taking more revenge, they will fall deeper into the pit of shame and blood. Likewise Brutus is cursing himself: “Boyle me or burne, teare my hatefull flesh,/ Devoure, consume, pull, pinch, plague, paine this hart,/ hell craves her right” (V.v.2514–16) – he has understood that killing Caesar was a crime and he wants to be punished for it by the ghost that haunts him.

The expectation and shock at the visualisation of death causes self-curses and a rejection of life itself. The Duchess of Malfi’s will to live is indeed broken and she wishes to die on the spot, when she believes her husband and children dead and sees herself in hell: “That ’s the greatest torture souls feel in hell,/ In hell: that they must live, and cannot die.” (IV.i.70–71). Hell is in most plays the place directly associated with curses (see above), Vittoria in *The White Devil* also ends her drama with a curse on the world: “Oh me! this place is hell” (WD, V.iii.177).

671 Ibid, p. 394.

672 In Epistle XXI of his *Morals*, Seneca also writes: “What if the ground stand still within its bounds, and without any violence? [...] But it is a terrible thing for the earth to gape, and swallow a man up into a profound abyss”, in: *Morals* (Bristol: Lansdown, 1807), p. 367.

673 Seneca: *Oedipus*, in: *Four Tragedies and Octavia*. Penguin Classics, ed. E. F.: Watling (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1966), p. 205–251, here p. 244, lines 868–873.

Dollimore judges that in *The White Devil*, as family, the church, and the courtly life are losing their reputation, there is a “demystification of political and power relations”⁶⁷⁴ – which underlines Vittoria’s judgment that her context, indeed, proves to be hell.

The Duchess of Malfi wants to torture herself – she twists the Christian imperative forbidding suicide: “The church enjoins fasting:/I’ll starve myself to death” (IV.i.73–74). Calling herself utterly cursed, she hopelessly states: “I account this world a tedious theatre,/ For I do play a part in ’t’gainst my will” (l. 81–82).⁶⁷⁵ Instead of being her stronger and defiant self, she gives in to despair, “full of daggers” and “vipers” (l. 87, 88); her spirit has truly deserted her: “I’ll go pray. No,/ I’ll go curse. [...] I could curse the stars [...] nay, the world/To its first chaos” (l. 92–96). The words reflect the utter desolation and despair of a character who has given up all hope.⁶⁷⁶

Even her destined murderer Bosola begins to pity her: “Look you, the stars shine still.” (IV.i.99) – but without success, she is settled to die: “Remember, my curse hath a great way to go:/ Plagues, that make lanes through largest families,/ Consume them! [...] I long to bleed:/ It is some mercy when men kill with speed” (l. 100–109). It seems Bosola has really found compassion for the Duchess, but does nevertheless murder her for money. Her brother Ferdinand, who ordered this death, curses Bosola for the deed, knowing well that he only executed his wishes: “For thee, as we observe in tragedies/ That a good actor many times is curs’d/ For playing a villain’s part, I hate thee for ’t,/ And, for my sake, say, thou hast done much ill well” (l. 282–285). As if aware of the played tragedy, Ferdinand officially condemns the events, calling to his mind the horror of the deed of curseful murder itself, thereby indirectly cursing himself.

In *The Maid’s Tragedy*, Amintor’s anger about his wife’s cuckolding with the king⁶⁷⁷ sounds equally suicidal, desiring insanity to forget all these dealings: first wishing he was only dreaming “I dream,–awake *Amintor!*” (II.i.212), then disgusted at his wife’s preference of sodomitic encounters with animals to the consummation of marriage with him,⁶⁷⁸ then embarrassment “thy shame and

674 Jonathan Dollimore: *Radical Tragedy*, p. 4.

675 On metaphors on the topos of the theatre, see Alexander Demandt: *Metaphern für Geschichte. Sprachbilder und Gleichnisse im historisch-politischen Denken* (München: C. H. Beck’sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1978), p. 332–425, especially p. 333f, 421f.

676 See also Thomas B. Stroup: *Microcosmos. The Shape of the Elizabethan Play*, p. 76.

677 Amintor finds out that his wife only married him to live in a proper and highly regarded marriage while secretly having an illicit affair with the King himself.

678 “I sooner will find out the beds of Snakes,/ And with my youthful blood warm their cold flesh,/ Letting them curl themselves about my Limbs,/ Than sleep one night with thee” (MT, II.i.213–216). The movement evokes choreographies of a perverse dance, but including the wish for worms in the decaying flesh of Evadne as a confirmation of her nuptial

mine” (l. 222) unto “I hate mine as much./ This ’tis to break a troth; I should be glad/ If all this tide of grief would make me mad” (III.i.298–300), but sarcastically keeping up appearances until confessing to his friend and brother-in-law Melantius exasperation and sorrow: “would I had died ere known/ This sad dishonour” (III.ii.177–178). He, too, is longing for death.

Toward the lover of his wife, the king, however, Amintor pretends happiness so well that he causes his unfaithful wife to swear on her non-consumed marriage to the king: “if I ever yet/ Toucht any other [i.e. Amintor], Leprosie light here/ Upon my face, which for your Royalty I would not stain” (III.i.193–195). This self-curse is grotesque in comparison to the true pain suffered by the betrayed husband.

Similarly grotesque does Baligny in *The Revenge of Bussy D’Ambois* call himself accurst without the opportunity to serve his king: “Incomparable, and most truly hellish,/To live depriv’d of our Kings grace and countenance,” ([sic], II.i.60–61) only being in “an abuse of life” (l. 66), thus promising King Henry everlasting subjection of his person, but services in his court are paid with money instead of true honour.⁶⁷⁹ Baligny is calling himself accurst for the circumstances.

Hoffman in *The Tragedy of Hoffman*, too, curses the circumstances – but he does not pity himself. Instead his curses find a new means. He is directing his curses against an object that belongs to him. This presents thus a very different curse that is centred on the essence of an artefact. A burning crown, the instrument that killed Hoffman’s father before the play begins and the device that Hoffman uses to kill Prince Otho is an artefact of a satanic nature, a cursed crown, burning itself magically into the wearer’s head once put on. When Otho is killed with the crown, he is crying from the pain it inflicts:

[T]ortor, I feele an Ætna burne
 Within my braines, and all my body else
 Is like a hill of Ice, all these Belgique seas
 That now, surround vs cannot quench this flame
 Death like a tyrant seazeth me vnawares,
 My sinewes shrinke like leaues parcht with the sunne
 My blood dissolues, nerues and tendons fayle
 Each part’s disioynted, and my breath expires
 Mount soule to heauen, my body burnes in fire. (l. 126–134)

This crown portrays a very physical, direct curse – a burning, painful, heat-inflicting artefact, endangering those confronting Hoffman through the course of the play. Inspired by its former role in his father’s murder, Hoffman is using it

denial. Indeed, after having killed the king, she commits suicide and will never consummate the marriage with Amintor.

679 See Clermont’s elaboration on royal services, RB, III.ii.27 ff.

while leading his opponents and their families into chaos. He persuades Mathias to kill his brother and ponder suicide:

I, accursed I,
 [...] *He offers to Kill*
 Hold me not Prince *Otho*. *himselfe*
 I will reuenge my selfe vpon my selfe:
 For Parricide for damned parricide:
 I haue kild my brother sleeping in the armes
 Of the diuine forme that e're held breath.
 I haue kild loues Queene defac't with my foule hand;
 [...]

 Oh me accursed! I am borne to shame." (III.i.912, 921–927, 935)

Finding out that his brother's beloved Lucibell has become mad witnessing the murder, Mathias repeats his self-curse "Oh mee accurst! why lieu I this blacke day?" (IV.i.1431), again offering suicide.⁶⁸⁰

Not much later, Hoffman is accused through the confessions of his surviving servant Lorrique, who confesses all of Hoffman's evil deeds, then curses himself to save his soul:

Ay me, accurst and damn'd (V.i.2059)
 O me accurst, o miserable me?
 Fall heauen, and hide my shame, gape earth, rise sea,
 Swallow, orewhelme me, wherefore should I liue,
 The most perfidious wretch that euer breath'd,
 And base consenter to my deare Lords death. (l. 2065–2069)

He is invoking the powers of the earth to punish him – making his shame and villainy correspond to the macrocosm, before he repeats the prophecy that Hoffman made: should he turn villain, his path would lead to hell: "I was ordain'd vnto perdition, stay me not" (l. 2077). Powerless Hoffman in their midst curses himself, but not because of his crimes but because he was in danger of losing his life. Addressing his anger not against himself but his enemies and his feelings that have led him to weakness: "And then must fall in love; oh wretched eyes/ That have betray'd my heart; bee you accurst;" (l. 2592–2593). He blames his eyes, i.e. the perception of his visual senses and the object of his desire that he will be punished.

Self-pity and desolation also dominate the lonely Guise, who had to leave his

680 Suicide, against the Christian doctrine, is seen as a punishment of the self. On this topic in general, compare Rowland Wymer: *Suicide and Despair in the Jacobean Drama* (Brighton: The Harvester Press, 1986). Compare Michael Neill: *Issues of Death. Morality and Identity in English Renaissance Tragedy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), p. 318–319; see also Phoebe Spinrad: *The Summons of Death on the Medieval and Renaissance Stage* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1987), p. 194 et al.

friend Clermont in *The Revenge of Bussy D’Ambois*. The solitary Guise is almost execrating himself in his loneliness, feeling his “imperfect bloud and flesh [...] Melting like snow within mee with colde fire” (V.iv.7–9).⁶⁸¹ Afraid of death, he is cursing his ambition and the circumstances of his life:

I hate my selfe, that, seeking to rule Kings,
 I cannot curbe my slave. Would any spirit
 Free, manly, princely, wish to live to be
 Comanded by this masse of slaverie,
 Since reason, judgement, resolution,
 And scorne of what we feare, will yeeld to feare?
 [...]
 O Clermont D’Ambois, wert thou here to chide
 This softnesse from my flesh, farre as my reason,
 Farre as my resolution not to stirre
 One foote out of the way for death and hell! (V.iv.10–23)

Indeed shortly afterwards, Guise is about to be murdered – a tragedy that will cause Clermont’s suicide, because he does not want to live without his friend. However, the difference between these two characters cursing the circumstances of their death is apparent to the audience. Hoffman appears as the bloodthirsty revenger through the whole *The Tragedy of Hoffman*, while Guise, in contrast, reminds the audience of the crimes he committed before the action of *The Revenge of Bussy D’Ambois* starts. He is blamed for his role in the Bartholomew Day Massacre, while all through *The Revenge of Bussy D’Ambois*, he has shown himself a reliable friend and supporter of the tragic hero and revenger Clermont. Therefore, Guise evokes pity, while Hoffman is loathed for his behaviour and is justly punished.

Self-curses are mostly uttered in apparently desolate circumstances when the speaker is either mourning for loved ones or sees inevitable chaos or death expecting him, too. They are spoken as sentences of self-pity and rage, addressed against the self because, for the speaker, despair is the only destiny. Often it is the revenger, who curses himself for not carrying out revenge in due time: The revenger is mostly a loud character, calling out to the world about the sins that were committed against him and his dear ones to spur on his vindictive spirit, and, once satisfied, is willing to have his story told to the world.⁶⁸²

Curses that include the speaker as well as those around him mostly encompass circumstances and a tragedy that destroys an order, which all characters are determined by and transforms the state into chaos.

681 Guise elaborates on the elements in his body which are obviously not in harmony, i.e. his humours are not in balance. On a simple introduction to humour theory, see e.g. Tillyard: *The Elizabethan World Picture*, ch. 5.v.

682 See Janet Clare: *Revenge Tragedies of the Renaissance* (Tavistock: Northcote, 2006), p. 5.

In *Caesar's Revenge*, for example, Rome is expecting civil war, i.e. a disruption of the stately order. Caesar is aware of the horrors of the looming battle, where families are torn apart and the country bleeds and suffers: to blame and therefore to be despised are the vices of ambition and pride of those who rule and force their countrymen to fight and fall. Caesar calls the soil of the battleground "accursed" (I.i.261) and sees the desperate situation of Rome after the fights: "Heere are no birdes to please thee with their notes:/ But ravenous Vultures, and night Ravens horse [sic]" (l. 266–267). He is invoking the picture of the battle as a field of death.⁶⁸³

The preparation for civil war echoes Cato's accusation versus Pompey: their own country is destroyed: "Furor in flame, and Sulphures smothering heate/ Upon the wicked and accurs'd armes/ That cruell *Romains* 'gainst their Country beare" (CR, I.iv.351–353). He likewise wishes for future peace and harmony supported by "Heavens powre" (II.v.1054"), but curses the day of Caesar's victory in the Pharsalian fields: "And note with black, that black and cursed day" (II.v.1083). Cato proves the inevitability of fate by expressing his utter desolation about the stately decay in stabbing himself – a dramatic staging that excels the emotional motifs to those of the historic Cato.⁶⁸⁴

At the end of *The Revenger's Tragedy*, when the ducal family is erased in the revengers' mask, Vindice proudly confesses himself guilty of the crime and accepts Antonio's justice and his punishment: "'Tis time to die when we are ourselves our foes./ When murders shut deeds close, this curse does seal 'em" (V.iii.118–119). The tragedy has resulted in murder and destruction, the curse he has brought to others now encompasses him, too – leaving Antonio to utter last words of hope for a better future, where no treason shall be committed: "'tis a heavy season:/ Pray heaven their blood may wash away all treason" (V.iii.136–137).

By including himself in this decay of order and accepting his role as revenger, Vindice also accepts the punishment for vengeance, which makes him, as Dollimore argues, a prototype of "the Jacobean anti-hero: malcontent, dispossessed, satirical and vengeful; both agent and victim of social corruption".⁶⁸⁵ Similarly, Lyons argues: "The possibility of villainy had always been connected with melancholy through the sinister personality and influence of Saturn, and through the tenacious, plotting, revengeful nature that was attributed to mel-

683 Caesar is invoking an apocalypse which is reflected again and again since Rome is fighting in a civil war against itself, thus the winner must also be the loser.

684 Cato's motives for his suicide differ somewhat from the historical source; see Uwe Baumann: *Vorausdeutung und Tod im englischen Römerdrama der Renaissance*, p. 127–129.

685 Jonathan Dollimore: *Radical Tragedy*, p. xxx.

ancholy types”.⁶⁸⁶ The chaos includes those who actively play a role in it: revenge is necessary to be conquered, but it does inflict pain, and as such, the revenger is also a “victim of the plot”.⁶⁸⁷

Antonio in *Antonio’s Revenge* is likewise aware of the risk he is taking in committing revenge and willing to die for its execution:

For all this, I dare live, and I will live,
 Only to numb some others’ cursed blood
 With the dead palsy of like misery.
 Then death, like to a stifling Incubus,
 Lie on my bosom. Lo, sir, I am sped.
 My breast is Golgotha, grave for the dead. (IV.ii.18–23)

He is ready to be overcome by death,⁶⁸⁸ but first has to take full vengeance on those that made his and Mellida’s life accursed and short. Joining him, encouraged by those determined thoughts of revenge, even the Stoic Pandulpho is ready to fight, first calling himself “the miserablest soul that breathes” (IV.ii.76) until his rage is spurred on: “And shall yon bloodhound live? [...] Let’s dig his grave with that shall dig the heart,/ Liver and entrails of the murderer” (l. 82, 86–87). The oath of vengeance is repeated: “O, now, *Vindicta!* that’s the word we have:/ A royal vengeance or a royal grave!” (V.ii.55–56).

The cuckolded Amintor in *The Maid’s Tragedy*, on the contrary, who has devoted himself to silent Stoic suffering rather than vengeful and brave action, refuses to attack the king, who is his wife’s lover, and “Touch holy things” (III.i.267), “touch the Throne of Majesty” (III.ii.252), which he believes a cursed deed which would prove fatal for its executioner: “A curse will follow that, but rather live/ And suffer with me” (III.ii.253–254). Therefore he is determined to endure the torture of life, nevertheless cursing his circumstances and feeling “thus wretched” (III.i.269).

A different disruption of familial life is threatening the bond between siblings in *The Maid’s Revenge*: Sebastiano sees himself cursed because his sister Catalina has wrongly accused Antonio of having abused her reputation. However, Antonio is beloved by Sebastiano’s other sister Berintia and is also best friend to Sebastiano himself, so that love and family reputation now oppose each other and Sebastiano demands Antonio to fight him in a duel: “Antonio, I am driven in a storm/ To split myself on thee, if not, my curse–/ We must on sir” (p. 50).⁶⁸⁹

686 Bridget Gellert Lyons: *Voices of Melancholy. Studies in Literary Treatments of Melancholy in Renaissance England* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971), p. 35. Compare p. 34–37.

687 Ibid, p. 37.

688 Antonio here likens Golgotha, the place of the skull and death of Jesus Christ, to his own despair and willingness to die.

689 MR does not have line indications, therefore quotes are given in pages.

Indeed, he kills Antonio, but later demands his sister to curse him for the deed: “Wilt thou not curse my memory” (p. 52).

A curse within a family is also destructive to all its members in *The White Devil*. Cornelia, the mother of the lusty Vittoria and the ambitious Flamineo sees the woe of her house in her offspring’s schemes and manipulations: “Woe to light hearts, they still forerun our fall!” (WD, I.ii.258), indicating the downfall of her house in the death of all her children at the end of the tragedy.

As far as Vittoria’s destiny is concerned, Cornelia curses the idea of adultery: “If thou dishonour thus thy husband’s bed,/ Be thy life short” (WD, I.ii.284–285), as her brother Marcello calls her his “unfortunate sister!” (III.i.31). Vittoria’s life will indeed be cut short as is her marriage to Bracciano, which is built on murder. However, Vittoria’s response to her mother’s accusation is a short ridiculous joke – she pretends to be shocked: “O me accurs’d!” (I. 290), which does nevertheless prove true: her destiny will be cut short and she dies at the end of the play.

Cornelia calls her son Flamineo, denoted by his brother Marcello as being on a path to “ruin” (III.i.36), another Judas: “Be thy act Judas-like; betray in kissing:/ May’st thou be envied during his short breath,/ And pitied like a wretch after his death!” (I. 287–289) – wishing that in his end Flamineo should understand his evil acts. However, even worse, she curses her own womb, which produced this remorseless son: “O that I ne’er had borne thee!” (I.ii.322).⁶⁹⁰

Cornelia continues to excoriate the foul nature of her house, comparing it to a garden which is turning into a grave: “O that this fair garden/ Had with all poison’d herbs [...] made a nursery/ For witchcraft” (WD, I.ii.263–266).⁶⁹¹ Cornelia wishes for the purity of nature, but realises its corruption through “the curse of children!” (I. 269), and cursing⁶⁹² seems all that is left to her. The family destroys itself through imminent vice. Cornelia’s second son Marcello accuses his brother of his relationship with Zanche the Moor, whose black facial colour he takes as a sign of darkness and witchcraft, for which Flamineo kills his brother.⁶⁹³ This image of the one brother fighting against his own blood epitomizes chaos in revenge tragedy.

In *The Revenger’s Tragedy*, a family seems likewise doomed; however, in this

690 This echoes ideas from the birth of Richard III in Shakespeare’s play. The Duchess of York calls her son damned (*Richard III*, IV.iv.134) and she accuses him of making life hell for her (IV.iv. 167–173, 184–196). Compare Wolfgang Clemen: *A Commentary on Shakespeare’s ‘Richard III’* (London: Routledge, 1968¹, 2005), p. 160 and 189.

691 A similar image of the garden, representing the state, is created by Shakespeare in *Richard II*, III.iv.

692 WD, V.ii.55

693 Thus the erotic temptation of the exotic is here the cause for the destruction of the microcosm of a family. The exotic is not accepted as part of society, but as a witchlike outsider. Compare studies on *Othello*.

case it is not the mother that has to digest her children’s evil traits but the children who confront their mother’s greed. The brothers Vindice and Hippolito call their mother a “[w]icked, unnatural parent!” (IV.iv.3) for wanting to pander her daughter: “in that shell of mother breeds a bawd” (l. 11), “corrupt all that was good in thee” (l.19). First trying to defend herself “That had been monstrous!” (l. 22) and then cursing herself, “hell unto my soul!” (l. 31), Gratiana is forgiven and cured by a cleansing rain, asking herself what made her so accursed and sinful: “I wonder now what fury did transport me?” (IV.iv.94) She even defends her newly found honour when she faces her daughter Castiza who challenges her conviction:

How often have you charg’d me on your blessing
 To be a cursed woman! When you knew
 Your blessing had no force to make me lewd,
 You laid your curse upon me. That did more;
 The mother’s curse is heavy: where that fights,
 Suns set in storm and daughters lose their lights. (IV.iv.112–117)

Wishing to withdraw her curseful decisions and “infect persuasion” (l. 128), Gratiana invokes a healthier climate of chastity against her identity as a pandering “black serpent” (l. 131), feeling the poison⁶⁹⁴ of her past corruption versus Castiza’s “virgin honour [as] a crystal tower” (l.152). Lastly, they find each other in their common denial of panderism and adultery.

In *The Changeling*, Beatrice becomes aware of the inevitable doom oppressing her family, when confronted by Deflores. Unlike Cornelia in *The White Devil*, she has manoeuvred herself into a web of murder and blackmail and is reminded of this by Deflores, accusing her of pretending virtues: “A woman dipp’d in blood and talk of modesty!” (126) until she understands into what kind of labyrinth she has manoeuvred and ensnarled herself: “Oh, misery of sin!” (127). The choice she is left with is that between punishment for the murder or sex with the killer, thus becoming the “deed’s creature” (III.iv.137).⁶⁹⁵ Wishing to undo the crime that she has ordered him to commit, she now realises that she has to give in to his command “[i]n death and shame my partner she shall be” (III.iv.154), when he orders her to sleep with him as payment, a demand that she curses herself for:

Vengeance begins;
 Murder, I see, is followed by more sins.
 Was my creation in the womb so curs’d
 It must engender with a viper first? (III.iv.162–165)

694 See IV.iv.136.

695 Compare Verna Ann Foster: “The Deed’s Creature: The Tragedy of Bianca in ‘Women Beware Women’”, in: *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 78 (1979), p. 508–21.

Beatrice is disgusted at the thought that she will have to sexually please Deflores in her wedding night instead of her husband Alsemero: “that’s my plague now” (IV.i.6). Because she betrays her husband from the beginning, her marriage seems destined to fail.

Vittoria in *The White Devil* will also never be happy in her marriage to Bracchiano, as foreseen by her mother Cornelia. But in contrast to the above, her husband is murdered in a conspiracy between Francisco and Ludovico (both professing to revenge Bracchiano’s first wife Isabella’s honour); he dies by way of a poisoned helmet, which resembles in its execution the burning crown of *The Tragedy of Hoffman*. When Bracchiano, in the midst of his wedding celebrations, is asking for a beaver, Ludovico hands him a poisoned helmet, which causes fatal heat on Bracchiano’s head: “Oh, my brain’s on fire!” (WD, V.iii.4). As if the poison gives him an inkling of the conspiracy, he utters: “There are some great ones that have hand in this,/ And near about me.” (l. 7–8). Quickly, doom is acknowledged by Flamineo, who curses the court, seeing the loss of his position once Bracchiano is dead: “A plague upon you!” (V.iii.10) while Bracchiano starts hallucinating:

O thou soft natural death, that art joint-twin
To sweetest slumber! no rough-bearded comet
Stares on thy mild departure; the dull owl
Bears not against thy casement; the hoarse wolf
Scents not thy carrion: pity winds thy corse,
Whilst horror waits on princes’. (V.iii.30–35)

He welcomes death as a deeper sleep and invokes images of ominous designs that would cause chaos but are harmless in comparison to the “horror” that he feels. Confronted with the devil, he describes Flamineo as a dancing murderer of his brother with purses of money⁶⁹⁶ and later mentions his name in connection with the “foul vermin” (WD, V.iii.126) in court. The scene comes to a climax when Ludovico, disguised as a Capuchin monk, appears to give Bracchiano the last anointment, but damns and strangles him, once the others have left the stage. Bracchiano’s despicable behaviour has indeed earned him a curse-worthy death.

The fate of a family is also determined by a curse in *The Revenge of Bussy D’Ambois*. Clermont’s sister Charlotte, who is more resolute than her brother, is one of the strongest women in all revenge tragedy. Because her brother is imprisoned and also seems too weak and undecided to commit revenge, she puts on man’s clothes to be allowed to be active herself.⁶⁹⁷ This has already been fore-

696 See V.iii.91 ff.

697 Aspatia in MT, too, dresses as a man to be allowed to challenge her beloved Amintor to a duel. (See MT, V.iv) However, it is not her intention to be revenged on him. On the contrary,

shadowed by Clermont before he joins the troops whose captains arrest him: “shee so madly/ Would take my apprehension, if it chance, That bloud would flow in rivers” (III.iv.146–148).⁶⁹⁸ Charlotte, too, had already indicated her future behaviour, wishing for a stronger female position: “I would once/ Strip off my shame with my attire, and trie/ If a poore woman, votist of revenge,/ Would not performe it with a president/ To all you bungling, foggy-spirited men” (III.ii.165–178).⁶⁹⁹ She is not only cursing her sex for its weakness but also questioning her husband’s loyalty whose betrayal falls like a curse on their future, when Charlotte swears to die rather than joining her husband again. In contrast to her stoic brother, she is invoking hell, throwing herself on her knees and crying for “his accurst misfortune” (IV.iii.97), damning herself: “Then must my life cease. Teares are all the vent/ My life hath to scape death. Teares please me better/ Then all lifes comforts, being the naturall seede/ Of heartie sorrow” (I. 103–106). At the end of the tragedy, when all others lament Clermont’s suicide after having carried out revenge, Charlotte is proud of her brother’s deed. Not only did he in the end perform the vengeance he vowed but also ended his life honourably, having achieved his task.⁷⁰⁰

Vindice, in comparison, is wishing for clandestine success and an enigmatic disguise, so that no one will detect him and his vengeful plans at court. He is analysing the prime vice in this court, which is cursing those determined by it: “Oh, Dutch lust! Fulsome lust!/ Drunken procreation, which begets so many drunkards! [...] Oh, hour of incest” (I.iii.58–59, 63). Vindice compares insatiable lust to gluttony, while Lussurioso is keen to tempt with pride: “Ladies know Lucifer fell, yet still are proud” (I.iii.75): women will always be vicious in following superbia. According to his name, Lussurioso proves lusty but he is cursed through his choice of woman: Vindice’s sister, the chaste Castiza and

Aspatia only disguises herself to assure she can be killed by him through this, while Charlotte in RB really wishes to replace her brother as an active avenger.

- 698 The blood flow which Charlotte could cause reflects the position she is willing to assume: she wants to become the fighter and thus transgress the female boundaries and adopt a warrior’s position. However, a concentration on the transgression of the gender concept would go too far here.
- 699 Similar wishes are uttered by Beatrice in Shakespeare’s *Much Ado about Nothing*. She claims “O that I were a man! What, bear her in hand until they come to take hands; and then, with public accusation, uncovered slander, unmitigated rancour, –O God, that I were a man! I would eat his heart in the market-place.” (IV.i.300–305 in *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt (New York/ London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1997⁵). Discarding the fact that *Much Ado* is a comedy and the consequences of the action never fatal, Beatrice questions gender concepts, but, like Charlotte, cannot change the situation herself.
- 700 Though against the Christian doctrine, Charlotte is proud of her brother having chosen suicide and not life. Thus she sees suicide as a positive decision – the revenger pays for revenge with his life. Contrast and compare Rowland Wymer: *Suicide and Despair in the Jacobean Drama* (Brighton: The Harvester Press, 1986).

thereby evoking Vindice's violent anger:⁷⁰¹ "Now let me burst: I've eaten noble poison!" (I.iii.170).⁷⁰² Lussurioso will die for his desire.

Much like Vindice, but to a more ruthless degree, Flamineo is a self-made Machiavellian hero, willing to take risks and sell his honour for money and social success. He curses his dependence on court, but instead of leaving, sacrifices himself. A schemer, he tries to control everything: "So who knows policy and her true aspect,/ Shall find her ways winding and indirect" (I.ii.341–342). One of the characters Flamineo cannot mislead is Monticelso. He turns out as one who knows how to play politics. When he becomes Pope, he excommunicates Vittoria and Bracciano as "cursed persons" (IV.iii.67) and dismisses the flattering Ludovico as "a foul black cloud, and thou dost threat/ A violent storm!" (I. 99–100). Monticelso is warning of the dangers of revenge, plays well in the game of politics (as Flamineo described it above), and supercedes the chaos of the play.

In *The Spanish Tragedy*, a family is destroyed by the death of the son. Murdered Horatio's mother Isabella curses the killers of her son: "O monstrous homicides!" just like her husband Hieronimo, who includes himself and his son in the curse: "Thy cursed father, and thy conquerd selfe!" (III.vii.70). However, Isabella goes on and even blames the setting where Horatio was murdered, before she damns herself: "as I curse this tree from further fruit,/So shall my womb be cursed for his sake,/ And with this weapon will I wound this breast,/ That hapless breast that gave Horatio suck. *She stabs herself*" (IV.ii.35–38). She curses the womb that gave birth to Horatio thus cursing her own womanhood and life – the consequences she chooses are despair and suicide. As Anderson argues, with her self-curse and following death, Isabella "imagines that her destruction of the pastoral landscape provides her with an immediate, unmediated revenge."⁷⁰³ Her desire against postponing vengeance causes her to kill herself quickly.

In *The Revenger's Tragedy*, too, it is the female womb that is cursed. Instead of cursing herself, the Duchess curses her female genitalia when the question arises as to the illegitimate nature of her bastard son and calls the organ a "thief of nature" (RT, I.ii.161). However, she does not – unlike Isabella – use her womb as a metonymy for herself, but detaches herself from the curse on her womb. In her case, they are hollow words before seducing her stepson, in contrast to Isabella's true remorse and sadness, which lead her into suicide.

701 See I.iii.134ff.

702 Vindice's figure of speech of eating poison does not prove true for either Vindice or Lussurioso. However, it seems a foreshadowing of the Duke's death instead, who indeed dies by eating poison, or rather kissing it off the prepared skull.

703 Thomas P. Anderson: *Performing Early Modern Trauma from Shakespeare to Milton*, p. 150.

6.2.2 Cursing the other – “Your beauty! Oh, ten thousand curses on ’t!”⁷⁰⁴

Curses are uttered as ill-wishing and they often address an enemy or hated character, whether openly or secretly. For example, Beatrice’s feelings for her betrothed Alonzo de Piraquo in *The Changeling* change from love to hate and have “[t]ransform’d into a curse” (II.i.23), which proves true when she orders Deflores to kill Alonzo. Curses often appear as insults, and their prophetic character is sometimes only revealed through developing action. Accordingly, they often show feelings and determinations very precisely and thereby foreshadow the action that their speakers are about to take.

Even though curses against another person are more common in revenge tragedy, they are here preceded by the self-curses, because those set the tone of one of the essential features of revenge tragedy: the melancholic, angry, and self-deprecating revenger.⁷⁰⁵

The first curse in *Antonio’s Revenge* is such an insult. Antonio addresses Piero whom he rightly suspects of tainting Mellida’s honour with bitter untruth: “Dog, I will make thee eat thy vomit up” (I.ii.204) – it is not meant literally, but implies the payback that Piero will have to face for his crimes. Antonio is threatening an ugly revenge for this denial of fatherly love. Wishing for torture in case of unfulfilled revenge, Antonio swears to kill Piero. He is so taken by the idea of actively “wish’d revenge” (l. 108) that he is determined to punish all sins committed by mankind:

The curse of heaven reigns
 In plagues unlimited through all his [man’s] days;
 His mature age grows only mature vice,
 And ripens only to corrupt and rot
 The budding hopes of infant modesty;
 Still striving to be more than man, he proves
 More than a devil; devilish suspect,
 Devilish cruelty, all hell-strain’d juice
 Is poured to his veins, making him drunk
 With fuming surquedries, contempt of heaven,
 Untam’d arrogance, lust, state, pride, murder. (III.i.114–124)

All mankind should transform into beastly animals according to their behaviour, since all are influenced by devilish desires. Indeed, the state is dominated by chaos, disorder and vice, because Piero has murdered Antonio’s father Andrugio and the young Pandulpho Feliche. He has also decided to marry the widow of his enemy, and is willing to risk everlasting shame tainting his daughter’s honour, as well as planning further murder.

704 WD, IV.ii.84.

705 See Dollimore: *Radical Tragedy*, p. xxix–xxxii.

Especially hurtful is Piero's defamation of his own daughter, who, he pretends, has been "impure" (IV.i.126), "defiled" (l. 127), "tainted [...] fowl" (128), and "all-dishonor'd" (129). He even pretends that he cannot wait for her judgment to be carried out and wishes her to "blush, blush for shame" (l. 141). Denying his family's blood in this staged arrangement directed by Piero himself, he cruelly pronounces the death sentence upon his innocent daughter, curses her fortune until his invented *deus ex machina* appears. His servant is to save Mellida, but Piero's plans do not ultimately succeed – he is punished for his greed, but his daughter cannot be saved and dies of grief.

In *The Changeling*, another family is destroyed through vice. It is not only Beatrice who produces confusion: when her father Vermandero understands what a noble gentleman Alsemero is, he too wishes that he could marry him to his daughter: "I wish I had a daughter now for you" (III.iv.2), thereby confirming Beatrice's wishes which set the tragedy into motion. A similar confirmation of fatal wishes is given by Caesar to Cleopatra in *Caesar's Revenge*. He is evoking a glorious future for her, giving up Egypt for her: "Raigne, I, stil raigne in *Caesars* conquered thoughts,/ There build thy pallace, and thy sun-bright throne:/ There sway thy Scepter" (I.vi.544–546). Being praised, she is convinced of her right to Egypt, which leads all Rome into chaos. As the prediction indicates, Rome and her triumvirs will end in chaos and discord – there seems to be a premonition of the battle of Actium, though this is not part of the play's plot.

In *Caesar's Revenge*, the Roman state is in chaos – there is a civil war dividing Romans on both sides, while in *The Maid's Tragedy*, the state's corruption reflects a family tragedy. Familial life never prospers in *The Maid's Tragedy*. Melantius' sister has married his best friend Amintor but does not consent to marital intercourse, because she has an affair with another man. Trying to explain to himself what led his sister Evadne to prostituting herself, Melantius mentions her beauty, which is tempting and must have been so to other men. He curses her for giving up her "long-lost honour", and is wishing for divine retribution: "Would the gods had se[n]t me/ [...] One of their loudest bolts!" (IV.i.41–43), forcing her to confess: "tell me/ Whose Whore you are, for you are one, I know it" (l. 55–56). However, Evadne seems to be self-confident, and professes that she committed no sin, because she believes that obeisance to her king, whose secret mistress she is, in matters of sexual congress is a subject's duty and privilege.⁷⁰⁶ More and more Melantius insists on this being a curse-deserving occupation – "He has undone thine honour, poison'd thy virtue,/ And, of a lovely rose, left thee a canker" (IV.i.89–90) and threatens her with murder: "Speak you whore, speak truth,/ Or by the dear soul of thy sleeping Father,/ This

706 Compare Baumann: "Erotische Macht", p. 50–51.

sword shall be thy lover: tell, or I’ll kill thee” (l. 100–102) – until she confesses and asks for forgiveness: “I have offended, noble Sir: forgive me” (l. 116).

As cursing dominates the family struggle between brother and sister in *The Maid’s Tragedy*, husband and wife are quarrelling in *The Revenge of Bussy D’Ambois*. Tamyra, Montsurry’s wife, is wishing for revenge, cursing her husband’s deed, the murder of her lover Bussy D’Ambois. The sympathy of the audience is on the wife’s side: they are mourning with Tamyra, as the tragedy centres on the revenge for Bussy’s death: “Revenge [...] enter here,/ Enter, O enter!” (II.i.1–7) She is painting pictures of a bloody revenge punishing miscreants according to justice.

Meanwhile her husband curses her unnatural behaviour, calls her everlasting love for dead Bussy “shamefull” (RB, II.i.35) and hopes that “worthiest women should shunne vulgar guises” (l. 43). Her constant affection is condemned by Montsurry as necrophile and called “witch-like [...] to kisse horror, and with death engender” (l. 31–32). In turn, Tamyra blames him for ambitiously seeking revenge “with rage,/ For that enrages” (l. 90–91). Too blunt and rash, he attacks simple messengers, “Perverse, and traiterous miscreant!” (l. 97), before listening to them. At this point he actually admits to a certain rashness, which leads to his suspicions – “I must be vigilant; the Furies haunt mee” (l. 102) – and his “too sterne injurious jealousy” (l. 118). In his final duel with Clermont, Montsurry first displays fear but then fights heroically to his death.⁷⁰⁷

The atmosphere between the royal houses in *The Tragedy of Hoffman* is critical, too – Saxony and Austria are quarrelling even though their children are engaged to be married, Ferdinand of Prussia is disappointed about his foolish, arrogant son whom he even calls “my blacke sinnes curse”, a “witlesse foole” (I.ii.279, 290), and who himself insults the present princes of being “bred of ill weather, come before you are sent for” (l. 268–269) which gives a strange impression of a disharmonious, malevolent situation setting the stage for the chaos that is to come.

A comparable preparation of further complication can be witnessed in *The Spanish Tragedy*. Not only do the Spanish quarrel in their state, but likewise do the defeated Portuguese, a court that is only mirroring the Spanish state’s disruption, where corruption and betrayal are answered by curses: “O wicked forgery: O traitorous miscreant!” (I.iii.72). The Viceroy calls life and the confrontation of traitors a “second hell!” (l. 89).

Similar accusations fly between the sexually immoral Vittoria and hypocritical Monticelso in *The White Devil*: he compares her to the chaos of hell,

707 Montsurry appears as a weak fighter, but in the end, proves himself bravely before being killed – in that respect, though not in character, he could be compared to Shakespeare’s Richard II, who also puts on a brave defense before being slain in *Richard II*, V.v.

catastrophes and creatures of the night which are boasting with their own grandeur and “[t]ake from all beasts and from all minerals/ Their deadly poison” (III.ii.103–104). He sentences her to religious confinement: “Such a corrupted trial have you made [...] ominous fate” (l. 258–260), comparing Vittoria to a looming omen of cosmic disequilibrium. Vittoria tries to excuse herself from being “[s]o entangled in a curs’d accusation,” (l. 133) and warns: “all your strict-combined heads,/ Which strike against this mine of diamonds,/ Shall prove but glassen hammers: they shall break” (l. 141–143). She is threatening with the powers she will be able to control, but (as seen above) she cannot taste the pleasures of domination because her husband Bracciano is murdered shortly after their wedding, so the curse she utters after the judgment is little more than an open promise after the end of the play, even if it appears as everlasting doom: “That the last day of judgment may so find you,/ And leave you the same devil you were before!” (l. 277–278), comparing herself to one of the richest gems: “Through darkness diamonds spread their richest light” (l. 292).⁷⁰⁸

Vittoria’s beauty actually proves to be her curse and that of her circumstances, which Bracciano, fallen for her, admits: “Your beauty! Oh, ten thousand curses on ‘t!’” (WD, IV.ii.84) and later “I was bewitch’d” (IV.ii.98). Their relationship is tempestuous from the desirous beginning to the fatal end.

Curses against others are often spoken in their absence. These curses, which therefore do not receive an immediate reply stand more detached from the direct action of the scene and point to a more indirect future. These curses against an absent person are also often spoken in an emotional soliloquy, thus revealing plans and hopes of destruction to the audience. They evoke a frame of divinely inspired, providential justice.

For example, after Andrugio’s funeral, Piero declares his mind to the audience: anger and an everlasting hate towards Andrugio and his son continue to dominate his thoughts: “Rot there, thou cerecloth that enfolds the flesh/ Of my loath’d foe; molder to crumbling dust;/ Oblivion choke the passage of thy fame!” (II.i.1–3). He is evoking an image of death and decay. Piero as the villainous trouble-maker is punished for his vice and will suffer in the end. That he is not of highest morals and self-assurance and cannot prevail is already indicated by his weakness in standing up to verbal accusations: answering Pandulpho’s satirical threats, Piero defends himself from verbal abuse by banishing the offenders: “O torture! slave, I banish thee the town,/ Thy native seat of birth” (II.i.153–154).

In all his ruthlessness, Piero goes too far. While Antonio pretends his own

708 On the comparison of jewels to light and possible allegories, see Christel Meier: *Gemma spiritalis: Methode and Gebrauch der Edelsteinallegorese vom frühen Christentum bis ins 18. Jahrhundert* (München: Wilhelm Fink, 1977), especially the impact of light on gems, p. 236–253.

death and disguises himself not to be recognised, but to be able to be true to himself and pursue his retaliation plans,⁷⁰⁹ Piero ignores values like his family due to his ambition, and willingly curses his daughter openly, although he knows of her innocence:

Were Mellida mine eye, with such a blemish
Of most loath’d looseness, I would scratch it out.
Produce the strumpet in her bridal robes,
That she may blush t’appear so white in show
And black in inward substance. (IV.i.78–82)

Instead of trying to preserve her and thereby the family’s honour, he is instead marking her as vicious offspring. Piero also turns against his faithful servant, who even lied for him: “Die, with thy death’s entreats even in thy jaws! Now, now, now, now. [*Aside*] Now my plot begins to work” (IV.i.192–193). The servant dies, having served his term in Piero’s menacing plot who now has to fear no one to confess his deeds – at least Piero thinks so, not knowing of the revelation of Andrugio’s ghost to Antonio and Maria.

In *The Changeling*, as already mentioned above, curses determine the plot around Beatrice, Deflores and the murder of the first fiancé to make way for a second. The characters curse their own fortune, but most curses are directed against the other party, creating complete chaos. As Beatrice calls the ugly Deflores, whom she willingly employs for her ugly deeds, hateful, a “deadly poison” (I.i.111), and worth nothing but cursing and calling a “serpent” (I.i.223): “Such to mine eyes is that same fellow there,/ The same that report speaks of the basilisk” (113–114). The basilisk is a deadly snake and ominous animal whose eyes could kill with their look.⁷¹⁰ Discarding this danger, she nevertheless hires him to murder her betrothed Alonzo whom she then calls an “enemy, a hateful one” (II.ii.17), because her feelings towards him have “Transform’d into a curse” (II.i.23). On the news of Alonzo’s arrival, she gets even angrier: “Vengeance strike the news!/ Thou thing most loath’d, what cause was there in this/ To bring thee to my sight?” (II.i.71–73). Her cursing rage on these news is directed against the messenger Deflores, “fouler visage” (II.ii.40), whom she then employs to kill Alonzo: “The ugliest creature/ Creation fram’d for some use” (l. 43–44). However, what draws her to Deflores is also a partly erotic fascination for evil, accompanied by his diligence toward her: “His face loathes one,/ But look upon

709 This might, in some respect be compared to Edgar in *King Lear*, who also appears as a disguised, seemingly changed person. See *King Lear*.

710 On the basilisk, see among others T. H. White: *The Bestiary. A Book of Beasts. Being a Translation from a Latin Bestiary of the Twelfth Century* (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1954). Compare also See Andrew Stott: “Tiresias and the Basilisk: Vision and Madness in Middleton and Rowley’s *The Changeling*”, in: *Revista Alicantina de Estudios Ingleses* 12 (1999), p. 165–179, p. 172.

his care, who would not love him?/ The east is not more beauteous than his service. [...] Here's a man worth loving! " (l. 70–72, 76).

Beatrice becomes more and more fascinated with evil, while Evadne in *The Maid's Tragedy* realises the sinfulness of her affair with the king after her eyes are forced open by her brother. Having asked for his forgiveness, Evadne also promises to die rather than continue the relationship, upon which Melantius still requires her to shout out her new found hate against her abuser:

Dost thou not hate this King now? prethee hate him:
 Couldst thou not curse him? I command thee curse him,
 Curse till the gods hear, and deliver him
 To thy just wishes: [...]
 Dost thou not feel amongst all those one brave anger
 That breaks out nobly, and directs thine arm to kill
 this base King? (IV.i.138–148)

She accomplishes revenge at the beginning of Act V, when once more invited to entertain the king in bed: "The night grows horrible, and all about me/ Like my black purpose: O the Conscience [...] I must kill him,/ And I will do't bravely" (V.ii.1–2, 15–16).⁷¹¹ Persuading herself of her deed, she forces remorse to withdraw. Like Hamlet, who does not want to kill Claudius while he is praying, Evadne does not want to kill the king while he is asleep – and thereby sending him not to hell but to heaven, and thus she fastens his arms to the bedposts while he is asleep, and then wakes him: "my vengeance/ Shall take him waking, and then lay before him/ The number of his wrongs and punishments./ I'll shake his sins like furies, till I waken/ His evil Angel, his sick Conscience:/ And then I'll strike him dead" (l. 19–24). Awoken, the king first perceives the ties as a new bed-game, an erotic sensation, but soon learns that because he has corrupted Evadne, she is now punishing him:

I am a tiger: [...]
 I am as foul as thou art
 [...] thou, thou, foul Canker,
 (Stir not) didst poison me: I was a world of vertue,
 Till your curst Court and you (Hell bless you for't)
 With your temptations on temptations
 Made me give up mine honour; for which, King,
 I am come to kill thee (V.ii54–70)

711 Plucking her courage together, she is persuading herself of the need of revenge. See the ideas on selfhood in Aimee Elizabeth Ross: *From Ghosts to Skulls: Selfhood, Bodies and Gender in Renaissance Revenge Tragedy* (PhD. University of Oregon, 2000). Compare also the introductory passage on *Hamlet* in Uwe Baumann: *Shakespeare und seine Zeit* (Stuttgart/ Düsseldorf/ Leipzig: Klett, 1998), p. 87–93.

Calling him an unnatural monster sent upon the earth “like a thick cloud to disperse a plague” (l. 80), she fulfils her promises and stabs him to death, taking vengeance for herself and her family. This can be seen as a reversed image of ravishment, an inverted rape of a man by a woman who forces herself on him violently.⁷¹²

The deed against the king which disrupts the stately order, is surprisingly quickly resolved in this late revenge tragedy. The new king, brother to the dead king, is crucially aware of past struggles and also that his own brother challenged and abused his royal position.⁷¹³ His truce seems very easily negotiated and also proves a surprisingly harmless resolution,⁷¹⁴ in contrast to individual desperate fates, which the audience might have been expecting – though the tragedy of the titular maid does end fatally.

One of the truly pure but also strong characters in *The Revenger’s Tragedy* is Castiza, Vindice’s sister, whom the Duke’s son Lussurioso wants to make his mistress. In contrast to Evadne, she never gives in to bribery or corruption and hits the messenger, her disguised brother, sent by the lascivious Lussurioso: “A box a’ th’ ear to her brother” (II.i.33). However, Castiza is herself – after accusing her pretentious lover – cursed by her greedy mother for the chastity she is trying to preserve: “But there’s a cold curse laid upon all maids:/ Whilst other[s] clip the sun, they clasp the shades!/ Virginitie is paradise, lock’d up” (II.i.152–154). However, as Melantius can cure Evadne of her sinfulness, so Vindice can cure his mother – and the curse turns back on those who asked for it: the lusty court. There the murdered Duke is discovered by his son, who confuses him with his pander and stabs the dead corpse again: “let him reel to hell” (l. 49), “[t]hou art a mad beast” (l. 51).

The Duke of Luningberg in *The Tragedy of Hoffman*, whom Hoffman wants to murder – “to that false Duke whom I will kill/ Or curse my stars” (IV.i.1674–1675) – is also already dead, which Hoffman finds quite disappointing: “T’de striue with heauen/ For executing wrath before the houre” (l. 1678–1679). Arrogant as he has appeared since the beginning, he is very presumptuous in the eyes of heavenly power even if he adds the following: “But wishes are in vaine, hee’s gone.” In the next act, all those he accused and con-

712 See Baumann: “Erotische Macht“, p. 51–52.

713 The new king seems also aware of the political background and the powerful forces in the state (Melantius has the key to the fortress), that this truce can easily be arranged (MT, end of V.iv).

714 Beaumont and Fletcher, – most famous for their tragicomedies – authors to *The Maid’s Tragedy*, changed the nature of the ending of their revenge tragedy in their more subjective and lighter style of the late 1610s and early 1620s, rather than that of the violent-determined years around 1600 and in contrast to the contemporary grotesque revenge tragedy by Webster or Middleton and Rowley.

fronted, unite against him with a choric cry for vengeance: “Vengeance, vengeance, fall/ On him, or suddaine death vpon vs all” (V.i.2248–2249), which is underlined by the rhyming couplet. They curse Hoffman, threatening themselves with a consequential wish for death, should they not achieve their goal of taking revenge on Hoffman by killing him. However, they do and burn him with the same crown that already killed his father (l. 2584–2618).

In *The White Devil*, Bracciano is infatuated by Vittoria, but also aware that she will cause havoc – comparing her to an upheaval in the macrocosmic climate: “Be thou the cause of all ensuing harm” (I.ii.296). Compared to the lusty Vittoria, Bracciano’s wife Isabella’s belief in chastity is unfortunately inappropriate in this court of corruption, lust, and bribery, as Bracciano leaves no doubt that any love he once might have held for Isabella has now turned into hate: “accursed be the priest/ That sang the wedding-mass, and even my issue!” (II.i.190–191). Distancing him from his family including his son Giovanni, Bracciano seems to entangle himself further into a kind of spider’s web which will prove lethal to himself, as Isabella rightly judges: “Oh, too, too far you have curs’d!” (l. 192). Her brother also wishes ill upon his brother-in-law Bracciano: “In such cursed dotage [...],/ Only the deep sense of some deathless shame” (II.i.385–386).⁷¹⁵ Accusations fly from all sides, but that of innocent Isabella in the end prevails. It proves essential for the analysis of curses not only to see whether they become true – i.e. have a mantic value – but continue to seek who utters them and at what time in the tragedy. Thus the question to be asked is whether the villain will prove his danger to others in the plot by cursing against them, or his victims curse to free themselves of unbearable circumstances and can be revenged. Valasco in *The Maid’s Tragedy*, for example only proves an incensed toy; he is in love with Vilarezo’s daughter Berinthia, and curses her love Antonio, but he is actually instructed by her jealous sister Catalina: “But my revenge, as heavy as Jove’s wrath/ Wrapt in a thunderbolt is falling on him.”⁷¹⁶ And she incenses him even further: “let his head/ Bleed out his brains, or eyes, aim at that part”.⁷¹⁷ She will lead everything into chaos until Berinthia understands that the true villain is her own sister and poisons her.

Cursing others often involves a group of people, the court, or even the state,

715 Dotage is associated with excessive love. Its consequence proves to be fatal because the lovers seem to love too much while their love is not determined by strong platonic ideals but the physical attraction. A similar image can be found in Shakespeare’s *Antony and Cleopatra*, I.i.1–2: the audience is informed of Antony’s infatuation with Cleopatra: “Nay, but this dotage of our General’s/ O’erflows the measure.” In I.ii, Antony claims he needs to leave Egypt to be released from losing himself “in dotage” (l. 106), in: *The Norton Shakespeare*.

716 *Maid’s Revenge*, p. 28 (no act, scene division).

717 Ibid. Catalina’s speech is wrongly marked as Val[asco]’s, too, but that is a clear setting mistake by the printer, as is obvious from the rest of the dialogue.

i.e. the cosmos. As the correspondences between the cosmoi influence each other, thus the cursing of e.g. the king is a curse against the cosmic system which, in the plays, is reflected in the development of the plot’s catastrophe.

At the end of the third act of the *Maid’s Revenge*, Catalina curses the circumstances for the close relationship of her sister Berinthia and Antonio, whom she wanted for her herself. She curses them both and plans revenge against them: “’tis revenge beyond/ My expectation, to close up the eyes/ Of his Berinthia, dying in his arms,/ Poison’d maturely; mischief I shall prove/ thy constant friend, let weakness virtue love” (p. 44). Catalina’s is a private retaliation in *The Maid’s Revenge*, whereas, in *Caesar’s Revenge*, a stately chaos is disturbing the Roman empire. Chaos can be represented directly in the microcosm of a family, while in the latter play it appears to be threatening the state of men, when Rome is in civil war.

Rome is sent into complete disorder when Caesar is stabbed by the senators, and while he is slaughtered, he curses his murderers, wishing revenge upon them: “blackest hell and Pluto bee thou judge: [...] Leave the black dungeon of your Chaos deepe:/ Come and with flaming brandes into the world,/ Revenge, and death, bringe seated in your eyes/ And plauge these villaynes for their trecheries” (III.vii.1713, 1716–1719). After Caesar’s death, Anthony, too, swears vengeance upon Caesar’s murderers: “deepe reveng,/ I will inflict upon the murtherers” (III.vii.1762–63). This curse is repeated again, when Caesar returns as a ghost to underline divine revenge, cursing Brutus with a “dreadfull vengeance of supernall ire [sic]” (V.i.2313), when he haunts him before the battle of the two opposing parties: “Accursed traytor damned *Homicide*” (V.i.2294); he predicts Brutus’ death by Anthony’s hand: “There *Anthonyes* sword will pierce thy trayterous heart./ *Brutus* to daie my blood shalbe revenged,/ And for my wrong and undeserved death,/ Thy life to thee a torture shall become” (I.2304–07). Repeating these curses against Caesar’s murderers over and over again, their prophetic value becomes more and more definite and necessary. They are also curses that Brutus does not take lightly, but foresees their serious character and foreshadowing potential: “dismall triumphes sound my fatall knell,/ Furies I come to meete you all in Hell” (I.2328). He, too is convinced of their realisation and the fact that he will find death in battle – as he does.

Cato, too, dies in battle; dying, he is invoking the one thing that is important for the state of Rome: order. The only thing he is longing for is a positive future for Rome, home to the enemies on both sides: “O Heavens help Rome in this extremity” (V.ii.2346). In contrast to this almost altruistic wish, Anthony still curses the fate of his adversaries:

Queene of Revenge imperious Nemesis,
That in the wrinkles of thine angry browes,

Wrapst dreadful vengeance and pale fright-full death:
 Raine downe the bloody showers of thy revenge,
 And make our swordes the fatall instruments,
 To execute thy furious bale-full Ire,
 Let grim death seate her on my Lances point,
 Which percing the weake armour of my foes,
 Shall lodge her there within there coward brestes,
 Dread, horror, vengeance, death, and bloody hate:
 In this sad fight my murdering sworde awaite. (V.iv.2383–2394).

With the worst possible pictures of revenge, including images of evil omens – the physical anger of Nemesis, pouring rain of blood – he is invoking Brutus' and Cassius' death.

Out of purely egotistical reasons, which might include an incestuous desire for their sister,⁷¹⁸ Ferdinand and the Cardinal in *The Duchess of Malfi* are determined to keep their sister, the Duchess, from marrying again. They angrily warn her about the consequences: “Ay, and give the devil suck. [...] And those joys,/ Those lustful pleasures, are like heavy sleeps/ Which do fore-run man's mischief” (I.ii.232, 244–246). Suspecting her of not listening to their advice they are trying to threaten her with undefined outcomes. Even though the Duchess protests verbally that she would not marry again (l. 223), they still put her under more pressure, warning her of hypocrisy (l. 234) and that her “darkest actions [...] Will come to light” (l. 235–236). Leaving her, Ferdinand is still not completely convinced of her denial: “Farewell, lusty widow” (l. 259). Her future – and the wrath of her brothers – seems fatally determined, when she tells her waiting-woman that she is already settled to marry again. Secretly, her eyes are set on Antonio, whom she will not publicly marry to avoid a scandal, but woo nevertheless. The brothers, finding this out through informants, curse the circumstances she created and swear to be revenged on her: “Here's the cursed day/ To prompt my memory; and here't shall stick/ Till of her bleeding heart I make a sponge/ To wipe it out” (II.v.13–16). Ferdinand is willing to kill his sister for this shameful act against their explicit command, wishing for a wild tempest, which “might toss her palace 'bout her ears,/ Root up her goodly forests, blast her meads,/ And lay her general territory as waste/ As she hath done her honours” (II.v.18–21). His words are at least as forceful and intense as those of Anthony in *Caesar's Revenge*, but directed at one person whom he curses for loving. Ferdinand is incensing a hot temper, not “balsamum, but fire, [...] To purge infected blood, such blood as hers” (l. 24–26) until the Cardinal agrees to execrate her:

718 Compare e.g. Elizabeth Brennan's introduction to John Webster: *The Duchess of Malfi*. New Mermaids, ed. Elizabeth M. Brennan (London: Ernest Benn Limited/ New York: W. W. Norton & Company Inc., 1964), p. xii-xiii; and that of Brian Gibbons in the new edition (London: A & C Black/ New York: W. W. Norton, 2001⁴), p. xx-xxv.

“Curs’d creature!” (l. 31). Both further instigate each other and their hate against their sister increases, seeing her in “the shameful act of sin” and calling her “whore” (l. 41, 48).

It is notable though that Ferdinand, cursing his sister, mentions the blood-connection between the three of them as a sign of divine retribution against them, being punished with such a sister: “I could kill her now,/ In you, or in myself; for I do think/ It is some sin in us heaven doth revenge/ By her” (l. 64–67). He quickly leaves this suicidal thought of punishing her through punishing themselves, but the Cardinal’s answer to these thoughts – “Are you stark mad?” – questions Ferdinand’s temper and is reminiscent of his madness at the end of the tragedy. Allman judges on Ferdinand’s behaviour as follows:

Ferdinand’s enactment of his authority similarly calls into question the familial relationship on which his right to command his sister rests. In brutally transforming the loving, fertile world the Duchess created into his theater [sic] of revenge, he exposes the madness woven into the cloth of absolutism.⁷¹⁹

Their plan, determined by Ferdinand’s lunatic fits, endangers their own microcosm by threatening the Duchess and her offspring: “I would have their bodies/ Burnt in a coal-pit with the ventage stopp’d,/ That their curs’d smoke might not ascend to heaven;/ Or dip the sheets they lie in in pitch or sulphur,/ [...] I’ll find scorpions to string my whips,/ And fix her in a general eclipse” (l. 67–80). As the brothers wish the Duchess’ children to die, they ruthlessly risk the destruction of their own family order. She, too, wishes to be revenged on her brothers and underlines the split of the family and acknowledges her children’s fate as determined by chaos: “since they were born accurs’d,/ Curses shall be their first language” (III.v.113–115).⁷²⁰ However, her children are yet too young to take action themselves, and will never be given the chance to take revenge.

Curses by Ferdinand and the Cardinal appear scheming and torturing rather than self-destructive: “I would wish, she’s plagued in art.” (IV.i.108); Ferdinand wants her damned (l. 117) and mad (l. 122) to confine her into a mental ward, attended by “mad folk [...] near her lodging” (l. 124) and orders Bosola to Milan “[t]o feed a fire as great as my revenge” (l. 136) against Antonio. The strength that the Duchess still shows, even when taken into custody, heightens the tension of looming doom. Bearing herself nobly she arouses her brother’s anger even more: “Her melancholy seems to be fortified/ With a strange disdain. [...] Curse

719 Allman: *Jacobean Revenge Tragedy*, p. 154.

720 This might almost remind of the monster Caliban in Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*, who learns language to curse, while he can actually present his thoughts in an eloquent way. See e.g. II.ii.1–14. For a more detailed analysis, see Stephen Greenblatt: *Learning to Curse: Essays in Early Modern Culture* (London: Routledge, 1992).

upon her!” (IV.i.11–15).⁷²¹ Homicide is committed, but with her death, the Duchess also takes with her the destiny of her brothers. Cursing in *The Duchess of Malfi* appears as a constant interchange of accusations, and in the end, all those who have cursed will end up in a tragedy dominated by greed, intrigues and murder.

Similar motives drive the characters of *The Revenge of Bussy D’Ambois* into sin. Monsieur, King Henry’s brother, deeply rejects Guise and Clermont for their “[c]ontempt of outward greatnesse” (I.i.155), which he calls “fine hypocrisie, and cheape, and vulgar” (l. 162). This grudge will grow in the course of the play, something that is already indicated by the mischievous comment: “Truth still fares worse” (l. 178) and Monsieur’s plan to test the famous Stoic Clermont: “Though this same Clermont hath a D’Ambois spirit,/ And breathes his brothers valour, yet his temper/ Is so much past his that you cannot move him:/ Ile try that temper in him” (l. 181–184). He provokes Clermont, asking him “[t]’unclasp thy bosome” (l. 193) and be like a mirror, “a true glasse” (l. 194). He teases him, “O were brave Bussy living!” (l. 201), prating on his influence towards their (Bussy’s and Clermont’s) careers. All try to provoke him; however, Clermont stays diplomatic even when Monsieur is indicating rebellion.⁷²² By answering calmly and realistically, he even has Monsieur’s impatient temper rise, who leaves him with a curse: “The Divell take him! Ile no more of him. [...] No more, I swear” (l. 288, 290). The curse will take its toll; Guise is killed and Clermont, after taking revenge for the murder of his brother, will commit suicide – however, their opponent, too, will have to pay. Clermont is blaming the “soft French Nobles” (l. 162), “painted men,” (l. 192) of laziness: “Rusting at home, and on each other preying,” (l. 169) “low in all true grace,/ Their height being priviledge to all things base” (l. 182–183) and thus neglecting the French state, which turns against them.

The beginning of *The Maid’s Tragedy* seems very happy with a celebration of marriage. Melantius has returned home to Rhodes from successful wars abroad. He is expecting his valiant friend and worthy comrade-in-arms Amintor married to Calianax’ daughter Aspatia, so when he encounters her, he wishes her well on the betrothal:

721 Compare especially Timothy Bright: *A Treatise of Melancholy* (1586). The Classics of Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences Library, ed. Hardin Craig (New York: Gryphon Editions, 1995) and Robert Burton: *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621), 6 Vols., ed. Thomas C. Faulkner/ Nicolas K. Kiessling/ Rhonda L. Blair (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989). In this case, it is a woman showing melancholic behaviour and not adhering to the instructions given to her by her brothers, a fact that should to be investigated with respect to gender-related concepts.

722 I.i.270–287.

Hail Maid and Wife!
 Thou fair *Aspatia*, may the holy knot
 That thou hast tyed to day, last till the hand
 Of age undo’t; may’st thou bring a race
 Unto *Amintor* that may fill the world
 Successively with Souldiers. (xxx 4)

This wish, though, proves a fatal curse with regard to the real proceedings. *Aspatia* has been neglected and discarded by *Amintor*, and instead he married *Melantius*’ sister *Evadne* on the order of the king, who thus broke an engagement vow, commented on by *Melantius*, as follows: “this is strange” (I.i.78). This ignorance of a holy promise, apparently to honour *Melantius*’ virtuous performances in the war, makes the king appear in a strange light, which will show itself in an even darker facet later on, when it becomes clear that the king ordered this marriage to preserve and cover his affair with *Evadne*. The destructive character of the situation becomes even more of a dead end with the appearance of the truly kind, loving, and innocent *Aspatia*, who really loves *Amintor*. *Melantius*, who sees her suffering, utters doubts regarding any forthcoming harmony – a sign of first cracks in the seemingly bright picture of the new marriage vows: “I am sad, my speech bears so unfortunate a sound/ To beautiful *Aspatia*; [...],/ Could I but call it back, that I would take/ So base revenges, as to scorn the state” (I.i.81–87). Indeed, the surface of the court seems untouched, but *Aspatia*’s Ophelia-like⁷²³ sadness is an ominous image of a contaminated, corrupted surrounding:

Yes; but this Lady
 Walks discontented, with her watry eyes
 Bent on the earth: the unfrequented woods
 Are her delight; and when she sees a bank
 Stuck full of flowers, she with a sigh will tell
 Her servants what a pretty place it were
 To bury lovers in, and make her maids
 Pluck’em, and strow her over like a Corse.
 She carries with her an infectious grief
 That strikes all her beholders, she will sing
 The mournful’st things that ever ear hath heard,
 And sigh, and sing again, and when the rest
 Of our young Ladies in their wanton blood,
 Tell mirthful tales in course that fill the room
 With laughter, she will with so sad a look

723 Compare *Hamlet*, IV.v.21 ff. Confusion in a woman, relating to madness, is also addressed in other plays, e.g. *Cornelia*, *Flamineo*’s and *Vittoria*’s mother in *WD* is also depicted as distracted (V.iv.), she repeats *Ophelia*’s lines on flowers almost by heart, l. 74–76. *Aspatia* in II.i underlines the sorrow with her song “Lay a garland on my hearse”.

Bring forth a story of the silent death
 Of some forsaken Virgin, which her grief
 Will put in such a phrase, that ere she end,
 She'll send them weeping one by one away. (I.i.89–107)

Her madness reflects the chaos which the state is facing. Indeed, it soon becomes clear that Melantius' friendship to Amintor never affected the king's decision on a different bride at all, but only his own lust. Amintor seems sorry about leaving Aspatia, but is nevertheless looks forward to a glorious future with Evadne and happy to have his friend Melantius as his brother-in-law. But their future is cursed from the start, because Melantius' inkling proves true: "I do believe my Sister is a Whore,/ A Leprous one" (III.ii.182–183). Like the contagious leprosy, the affair between Evadne and the king affects everyone through its vicious character. In comparison to Amintor, who accepts this fate as inevitable, Melantius is willing to take revenge for the dishonour: "But from his Iron Den I'll waken death,/ And hurle him on this King;/ [...] For nothing is so wild as I thy friend/ Till I have freed thee; still this swelling breast;/ I go thus from thee, and will never cease/ My vengeance, till I find my heart at peace" (l. 194–195, 203–206). Thus the revenge plot is laid.

Even more brutal is Hieronimo's motivation to commit revenge against the murderers of his son, whom he wants to challenge to a duel to receive God's judgment: "Grant me the combat of them, if they dare: *Draws out his sword.*" (III.xiv.141). Not being allowed to enter this, he curses them: "vengeance on those cursed murderers. [...] That causeless thus have murdered my son" (IV.i.34, 45). Hieronimo is willing to risk his life and persuading himself to carry out revenge for all criminal deeds. Especially after his wife is dead too, he has nothing to lose and commits suicide in the finale.

With the beginning of *The Revenger's Tragedy*, Vindice is cursing the ducal family, who are introduced to the audience in a procession on stage. They, however, are not promoting happiness, as a marriage would, but they are presented as sinful creatures: "Oh, that marrowless age/ Would stuff the hollow bones with damn'd desires,/ And stead of heat kindle infernal fires" (I.i.5–7). This is a procession of sin, showing the corruption of the world. Sharpe writes on the characters on stage: "Representations are constructed across all social performances and media: the game or procession, the image as well as the word."⁷²⁴ It seems as if Vindice is not only giving this introduction of hellish creatures to the spectator, but also to the skull he is holding in his hands – that of his beloved Gloriana,⁷²⁵ whom he addresses as the "sallow picture of my poisoned love,/ My

724 Kevin Sharpe: *Reading Revolutions. The Politics of Reading in Early Modern England* (New Haven/ London: Yale University Press, 2000), p. 12.

725 On the skull, see omens.

study’s ornament, thou shell of death” (I.14–15). Her life was cursed through the Duke’s lust and now the skull remains to wait for him – the revenger – to satisfy her need of revenge and end her story. His beautiful love for the dead⁷²⁶ is strongly connected with the court; Vindice is always intermingling comments about the characters passing by, revealing the following:

But oh, accursed palace!
 Thee, when thou wert apparel’d in thy flesh,
 The old duke poison’d,
 Because thy purer part would not consent
 Unto his palsy-lust, for old men lustful
 Do show like young men angry, eager-violent,
 Outbid like their limited performances.
 Oh, ’ware an old man hot and vicious!
 ”Age, as in gold, in lust is covetous.”
 Vengeance, thou murder’s quit-rent, and whereby
 Thou shouldst thyself tenant to tragedy,
 Oh, keep thy day, hour, minute, I beseech,
 For those thou hast determin’d! Hum: whoe’er knew
 Murder unpaid? Faith, give revenge her due. (I.i.30–43)

The Duke poisoned Gloriana, of whom only the skull remains, and his past sins are not forgotten by Vindice, but he is awaiting revenge. The Duke is characterised as lascivious and remorseless, and his horrible lust has to be punished, as all the ducal family is dominated by sins, and is mostly driven by sexuality; Parry also calls them degenerate and wanton: “the Court is an infectious centre of rottenness in society”.⁷²⁷

The Duchess’ son Junior’s hunger for lust needs to be punished for his lusty behaviour. Accused of rape by the judges, the Duke at first withdraws from any decision on this matter, even though the situation seems quite similar to his own malevolent deeds in the past. Now, he at first seems to accept the due punishment for rape: “I leave him to your sentence; doom him, lords,” (RT, I.ii17–19), which appears like an acceptance of a death sentence, which is looming like a possible curse above Junior. The culprit does not take the situation serious; jokingly, he calls the raped Antonio’s wife his destiny: “Her beauty was ordained to be my

726 “Vindice (as T. S. Eliot said of Webster) is much obsessed with death and sees the skull beneath the skin. The spectator sees a proud courtly procession but Vindice sees instead that age withers the body, the bone marrow no longer produces the healthy blood of youth. In place of fertile passion the frenzy of mortal sin goads the Duke, who ignores these warnings of approaching death and judgement.” Gibbons on the website: <http://www.tech.org/~cleary/reven.html#MARROWLE>. Love for the decayed corpse, i.e. necrophilia is underlining the level of grotesque ugliness in RT.

727 Graham Parry: *The Golden Age Restor’d. The Culture of the Stuart Court, 1603–42* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1981), p. 61.

scaffold [...] My fault being sport, let me but die in jest” (I.ii.64–66). Even the word scaffold appears in a double sense: the place of execution and that of the deed he committed. His demeaning attitude will bring him death, though through a twisted death sentence, which was originally intended for his brother, but justly punishes him. By lucky chance, it seems, or divine fate, as the audience has to understand, Junior is executed, leaving with a curse on his brothers on his lips: “oh, let me venom/ Their souls with curses! (III.iv.77–78).

Not all members of the ducal family were hoping for a merciful judgment; Spurio, the Bastard, in an aside “hope[s] he shall die,/And if a bastard’s wish might stand in force,/ Would all the court were turn’d into a corse” (I.ii.34–36), wishing death upon all his (legal) family and later on admitting the power of pretense in the court: “Nay, then if judgment have cold blood,/ Flattery and bribes will kill it” (I.ii.89–90). Incensed by the Duchess’ strong will to revenge herself on the Duke who did not cherish her son’s honour and life, Spurio is all prepared to curse the whole ducal family and be revenged on all of them:

Oh, damnation met
 The sin of feasts, drunken adultery!
 I feel it swell me; my revenge is just:
 I was begot in impudent wine and lust.
 Stepmother, I consent to thy desires;
 I love thy mischief well, but I hate thee
 And those three cubs, thy sons, wishing confusion,
 Death, and disgrace may be their epitaphs.
 As for my brother, the duke’s only son,
 Whose birth is more beholding to report
 Than mine, and yet perhaps as falsely sown –
 Women must not be trusted with their own –
 I’ll loose my days upon him: hate all I.
 Duke, on thy brow I’ll draw my bastardy,
 For indeed a bastard by nature should make cuckolds,
 Because he is the son of a cuckold-maker. (I.ii.188–203)

The Duke’s palace seems cursed from within and without – from without by Vindice who, disguised as a servant, has found a way in, and from within by the different vices and desires of the family at court.

As in *Antonio’s Revenge* or *Hoffmann*, men in *The Revenger’s Tragedy* are weak once they allow love or lust to dominate their behaviour. Thus, Spurio, hearing of Lussurioso’s plans with Castiza, invents a plan at this “sweet occasion” (II.ii.125) to kill his legitimate bother: “I’ll disinherit you [...] I’ll damn you at your pleasure: precious deed/ After your lust; oh, ’twill be fine to bleed!” (II.ii.126–129). Spurio himself, though, is at the same time not feeling guilty of committing adultery with his step-mother.

Vindice tries to use his knowledge about the crimes at court, e.g. the incest, to his own advantage. Leading Lussurioso to the Duchess to discover the adultery between her and Spurio, they find her instead with her husband, the Duke. Nevertheless, Vindice’s luck seems to bring him one step closer to revenge, because Lussurioso is imprisoned for detecting the intercourse, which will keep him from Castiza: “His [Lussurioso’s] vicious purpose to our sister’s honour/ Is cross’d beyond our thought” (II.iii.30–31). However, Vindice’s only wish is that Lussurioso “had killed him, ’twould have eas’d our swords” (l. 35). As in all revenge tragedy, it is the duty of the revenger to achieve retribution in revenge tragedy and not that of chance.⁷²⁸

Miraculously, Lussurioso is first saved from execution, but will have to encounter his brother’s jealousy and greed and Vindice’s hate for wanting to sleep with his sister. The brothers are shocked and surprised when Lussurioso joins them, because they had expected their younger brother Junior, who is neither a threat nor ducal title pretender to them:

AMBITIOSO: Oh, death and vengeance!
 SUPERVACUO: Hell and torments! (III.vi.68)
 AMBITIOSO: Our brother’s? Oh, furies!
 SUPERVACUO: Plagues!
 AMBITIOSO: Confusions!
 SUPERVACUO: Darkness!
 AMBITIOSO: Devils!
 SUPERVACUO: Fell it out so accursedly?
 AMBITIOSO: So damnedly?
 SUPERVACUO: Villain, I’ll brain thee with it!
 [...]
 SUPERVACUO: The devil overtake thee!
 AMBITIOSO: Oh, fatal!
 SUPERVACUO: Oh, prodigious to our bloods! (III.vi.77–82)

It seems they foreshadow the coming plot with their curses and self-curses. Both become rather ruthless and desperate. Similar to Vindice and his brother Hippolito, these two brothers are full of hate. Corrupted by society, they are willing to defend what is left of their supposed honour; they curse Spurio as unequal –

728 Note, though, the seemingly ridiculous death of D’Amville in the almost tragic-comical revenge play *The Atheist’s Tragedy*, which changes the role of the revenger completely, making him a Christian Stoic. Charlemont is ordered by the ghost of his father not to commit the necessary revenge which the audience would – according to the genre – expect from him. Instead, it seems to be chance – but needs to be interpreted as divine intervention – that finally kills the villain D’Amville, while the innocent hero stays unblemished.

“bastard, the duke’s bastard!” (IV.iii.13–15) – and plan a conspiracy to kill their elder brother.

One example where not a person but a symbol for corruption is cursed can be found in *The White Devil*. Corruption in a state often proves its downfall, because it reflects the possibility of bribery. Money, gold, or precious stones bribe characters as Flamineo in *The White Devil*, who is aware of their destructive force: “O gold, what a god art thou! And/ O man, what a devil art thou to be tempted by that cursed/ mineral! Your diversivolent lawyer, [...] there’s/ nothing so holy but money will corrupt and putrify it” (WD, III.iii.20–25).⁷²⁹ Paying his servant to become a villain is unacceptable behaviour that will be punished, but irreversibly pushes the servant into misery: “The dependence of Flamineo and Bosola on ‘courtly reward and punishment’ causes them to behave brutally, but they feel ‘the maze of conscience’ in their breasts and we can infer that, away from the ‘rank pasture’ of the court, their lives would have been less of a ‘black charnel’.”⁷³⁰ Giving in to temptation, they give in to tragedy.

Curses are difficult to discern as foreboding, mantic elements, because, like prophecies, they can prove to be merely emotional utterances of hope for certain events to happen. Even more than prophecies, which have a certain deictic character, they can present themselves as speeches of hate.

This hate is either directed against the self or the other – the first caused by sorrow and despair, the latter by a wish for revenge. There are also self-curses on a meta-level to be found in revenge tragedy, where the speaker uses the self-curse to pretend sorrow and self-hate to be pitied by others.

Curses are very effective, however, they are sometimes only recognised as forebodings once they come true and a former curse has taken firm hold in the action, i.e. the curse proves to be efficient, a functional and stylistic means, which – in comparison to omens, ghosts and dreams – might be easily overlooked, if the audience does not pay attention.⁷³¹

However, a regular audience might be attentive to curses, and also positive

729 Compare this to D’Amville’s “chief interest” in gold, which he names as main control for man’s destiny rather than divine stars; see Don Cameron Allen: *The Star-Crossed Renaissance. The Quarrel about Astrology and its Influence in England* (New York: Octagon Books, 1973), p. 184. See also Ben Jonson’s *Volpone*. The protagonist addresses his gold as the “world’s soul”, in: *Volpone, [or The Fox]*, eds. R. Brian Parker / David M. Bevington (Manchester: Manchester University press, 1999), I.i.1–27.

730 Wymer: *Suicide and Despair*, p. 552.

731 Thus curses, as they are not easy to decipher in the utterances of emotional dislike, are often only recognised as mantic once their true foreshadowing value proves itself through the realisation of the content of the curse. Then they are sometimes left to be discovered and acknowledge by the audience, sometime on stage, a character recognises the future-relating content of a past statement. Mostly the audience needs to address this value, as the foreboding is only rarely repeated by a character on stage to give a reminder of the past curse.

wishes, which as other mantic elements have a structural-dramatic effect:⁷³² they anticipate coming events. As mantic elements, curses mostly foreshadow death and despair, fights, battles, struggles between opposing parties that cannot be solved without one party suffering and ultimate death. As such their function, and who speaks, can often be discerned by the audience, because they would be aware of the structure of a revenge tragedy, where during the exposition and rising action until the climax, curses by the villains come true, thereafter, it is the hopes and wishes, mostly including curses against the villains, by the revenger that come true until revenge is accomplished at the end of the plays.

732 See Marjorie Garber: “What’s past”, p. 321.

III. Conclusion

7 Mantic Elements in English Renaissance Revenge Tragedy “Misgoverned Kings are cause of all this wrack”

For where there is no right order, there reigneth all abuse,
carnal liberty, enormity, sin, and babylonical confusion.
Take away kings, princes, rulers, magistrates, judges,
and such estates of God’s order, no man shall ride or
go by the highway unrobbed, no man shall sleep in his
own house or bed unkilld, no man shall keep his wife,
children, and possession in quietness, all things shall be common;
and there must needs follow all mischief, and utter destruction
both of souls, bodies, goods, and common wealth.¹

The aim of this thesis was to demonstrate the different functions and uses of mantics on the Renaissance stage. As the past chapters have demonstrated, the evaluation of the mantic character of supernatural elements has shown their functionalisation in determining the outcome of vengeance, and in pre-mirroring scenes of the coming action. Looming prophetic ideas create a tension, enhanced by the tragic nature of the plot. It is the genre of the play and the context of the time that determine the parameters of the performance.

Summarising the comparative analyses of the cultural and dramatic context of mantic elements in the English Renaissance and their function in revenge tragedy, it can be concluded that they have an essential role in the prediction of a “babylonical confusion”, of chaos and disorder in the development of the retaliation plot.

The Renaissance was a time of a gradual change of paradigms; there was no radical transformation. In the theatre, too, new ideas were absorbed, addressed,

¹ “An Exhortation concerning Good Order and Obedience to Rulers and Magistrates” (1547), in: *Certain Sermons or Homilies Appointed to be Read in Churches in the Time of the Late Queen Elizabeth of Famous Memory* (Oxford: University Press, 1832), p. 104.

and assimilated, but providentialism still held a firm sceptre on the development of a plot. The existence of supernatural influences were undoubtedly believed in by the audience and toyed with by the playwrights.

Divine forebodings and personal future-determining resolutions reveal the mantic structure within a play. Due to the mantic elements, the development of the plot can be predicted. Thus elements like omens, ghosts, dreams, prophecies, and curses are not only used as rhetorical decorum² but functionalised as supernatural, structural elements. They convey the infamous consequences for the characters on stage.

The plot develops with regard to these mantic elements and they guide through the story line of the plays which are determined by revenge. In each plot, there is a situation of disorder and chaos: justice is transgressed which is “of disastrous consequence to the body politic”.³ The microcosm, i.e. the drama-internal context of the plot is in a state of destruction, as Leggatt explains: “An ordered world, broken by violence; a disordered world that needs violence to control it; a world, finally, in which answers do not come easily.”⁴ The disintegrating world⁵ of revenge tragedy is indeed determined by a violent breach of rule and order: “[m]isgoverned Kings are cause of all this wrack”⁶ – those who are in charge of keeping order in the state have acted against its rules and therefore have provoked the hopeless chaos.⁷

As mantics foreshadow this imbalance of order, they often appear as hellish forces driving the victims into tragedy, and Senn elucidates: “This is largely a matter of the effects the playwright achieves by various structural means, [...] above all with the handling of such structural elements as surprise and suspense, preparation and anticipation, delay and acceleration.”⁸ The conduct of the ac-

2 Compare Northrop Frye: *Anatomy of Criticism. Four Essays* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1957), p. 212.

3 David Bevington: *Tudor Drama and Politics. A Critical Approach to Topical Meaning* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1968), p. 265.

4 Alexander Leggatt: *Shakespeare's Political Drama. The History Plays and The Roman Plays* (London/ New York: Routledge, 1988), p. 59.

5 Compare David L. Jeffrey: “Literature in an Apocalyptic Age; or, How to End a Romance”, in: *Dalhousie Review* (1981), p. 426–46.

6 Marlowe, *Edward II*, IV.iv.9.

7 This idea of the ruler destroying his own state does also appear in Thomas More: *Utopia*. Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought, ed. George M. Logan/ Robert M. Adams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989). Hythloday talks about working for a ruler and the conflicts this might cause, in that he believes in the principles of an ideal truth which is set against the restrictions and concessions of Realpolitik. More argues nevertheless that wise men must not refrain from not contributing to politics and let rule be corrupted, but attempt to make the state a better place. Compare also: I. Opelt: *Der Tyrann als Unmensch in der Tragödie des L. Annaeus Seneca*, Diss. Freiburg i. Br. (1951). For more general studies on the chaos in the microcosm caused by the corruption of the ruler, see chapter 1, fn. 61.

8 Werner Senn: *Studies in the Dramatic Construction of Robert Greene and George Peele*.

tion creates suspense and anticipation in the spectator, who is thus responding to the play not only by being entertained but by understanding the dramatist's technique and being able to judge on the functionalisation of mantic elements and their revelation of truth.

The cultural context allows this belief in the value of commonplace predictions. Supernatural signs appeared not only in the theatre but are described in poetry, lyrics, epics, emblems, ballads, historiographies, and other texts.⁹ According to Peter Burke, culture is defined by and for the people.¹⁰ Their attitudes and human values were employed by Renaissance playwrights, and, as has been demonstrated, they were functionalised in the entertainment business. Lobsien draws upon their linguistic power and calls the plays "a reservoir of desperate rhetorics and metaphors in this medium of madness".¹¹

The functional uses of these dramatically valuable elements, especially the belief in supernatural devices, depend on the situation of the plot and the framework of the play. It also involves the mindset of the individual characters in the play, as developed by the dramatist. According to the character type in the play, be he a villain, a revenger, or a victim, the playwrights instrumentalised different constructions of mantic elements in syncretistic,¹² varying formations to underline their circumstances and development "as a utilitarian device for achieving wonderful artistic effects of a highly sophisticated kind",¹³ as Obermark-Clark argues for Shakespeare.

As the analysis has shown, the different mantic elements have similar func-

Schweizer Anglistische Arbeiten/ Swiss Studies in English 74 (Bern: Francke Verlag, 1973), p. 162.

- 9 See e.g. Jonathan Crewe: *Hidden Design. The Critical Profession and Renaissance Literature* (New York/ London: Methuen, 1986); G. Rüdiger: *Zauber und Aberglaube in den englisch-schottischen Volksballaden* (Diss. Halle, 1907); Lowry Charles Wimberly: *Folklore in the English and Scottish Ballads* (Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishing, 2006); compare Peter Burke: "Popular Culture in Seventeenth Century London", in: *London Journal* 3 (1977), p. 143–162, p. 154; Charles A. Hallett/ Elaine S. Hallett: *The Revenger's Madness. A Study of Revenge Tragedy Motifs* (Lincoln, Nebraska/ London: University of Nebraska Press, 1980), p. 11. The tradition of the functionalised use of mantic elements has continued until today. In contemporary plays, novels, and even films it still appears and is functionalised. Examples could be *Harry Potter* or *Batman*. Compare also Thomas Kullmann: *Vermenschlichte Natur. Zur Bedeutung von Landschaft und Natur im englischen Roman von Ann Radcliffe bis Thomas Hardy* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1995). See also Eberhard: *Bauformen des Erzählens* (Stuttgart: Verlag J. B. Metzler, 1997), chapter B (p. 139–194). Lämmert differentiates between certain and uncertain prognostications.
- 10 Peter Burke: "Popular Culture in Seventeenth Century London", in: Barry Reay (ed.): *Popular Culture in Seventeenth-Century England* (London: Routledge, 1985), p. 31–58.
- 11 Verena Olejniczak Lobsien: "Multi Pertransibunt", p. 120.
- 12 Compare Ingeborg Maria Aspöck: *The Herald of His Age. Zum dramatischen Werk des Elisabethaners George Peele* (Dissertationen der Universität Salzburg, No. 39) (Wien: VWGÖ, 1993), p. 103.
- 13 Obermark-Clark: *The Structural Function*, p. 606.

tions: chapter 4 has shown that omens are the most common mantic elements; their nature is often being imprecise because they are visual signs and must be interpreted to reveal their hidden meaning, which may also be misread. They often forebode mischief by supporting a certain atmosphere and mood of scenes, hinting at further disorder to come.

Chapter 5 gave an analysis of dreams and ghosts. Dreams are mantic elements of the subconscious, divinely inspired messages foreboding bloodshed and death, and they appear, just like ghosts, often on a different level than potentially visible omens. Dreams are used to direct the character, but their warning function is usually neglected, which creates a discrepancy between the audience's knowledge of the future and the character's unawareness.¹⁴

Ghosts have an initiating dramaturgical function. Continually reminding the spectator and the character of the past crime, their ever-present demand for revenge directs the plot to its inevitable, violent end.

The sixth chapter dealt with prophecies and curses. They are mantic elements of a different origin. Uttered by characters, they are linguistic predictions, which reveal their truly mantic and supernatural character in the course of the revenge tragedy. Predicting the unknown, they are mostly employed as prognostications of cruelty. Similarly, curses forebode violence, they are often offensive wishings of harm against the opposing parties.¹⁵

The usage of mantic elements in drama is thus not a purely philosophical or decorative one. Mantics serve the decorum and contextual integration of the plays but mainly, they are dramaturgical devices: mantic images have the pragmatic function of effective foreboding.¹⁶ This evoked anticipation of impending doom always creates a bleak atmosphere which is also acknowledged by the hero of the play: "The discovery of anagnorisis which comes at the end of the tragic plot does not simply show the knowledge of the hero of what has happened to him [...] but the recognition of the determined shape of the life he has created for himself, with an implicit comparison with the uncreated potential life he has forsaken."¹⁷ Mantic elements shape this determination; the future seems inevitable once a certain path of revenge is taken.¹⁸ Grantley elaborates on the idea that "revenge drama is highly formulaic".¹⁹ It also appears irreversible once the

14 See Jochum: *Discrepant Awareness*.

15 Wishes obviously can also present the opposite and wish well to one's own party.

16 Compare Obermark-Clark: *The Structural Function*, p. 587–88.

17 Northrop Frye: *Anatomy of Criticism. Four Essays*, p. 212.

18 Clemen remarks that "these [supernatural, astronomical] omens and prophecies have become a less important means of foreshadowing events" in comparison to direct doubts and fears uttered about impending doom. But as expressed, mantic elements foreboding doom were still strongly used in the Renaissance. Wolfgang Clemen: "Anticipation and Foreboding in Shakespeare's Early Histories", p. 32.

19 Darryll Grantley: "Masques and Murderers: Dramatic Method and Ideology in Revenge

hero does not pay enough attention to the supernatural signs and deliberately disregards divine solicitings.

Foreboding can be judged as an integral part of the dramaturgy of the plays²⁰ and “foreshadowing becomes progressively so closely interrelated with other aspects of the dramas, such as character, atmosphere, tone, and image association”.²¹ It has been demonstrated in each passage above, that these devices of dramatic technique, their specific use, and mantic function in a drama perturb the affected scenes and the development of the plot’s structure.

At the same time they reflect the cultural context and perceived, traditional commonplaces, that influence the author’s drama.²² As has been shown, a political and structural interpretation of the plot is only possible if mantic providentialism is taken into account,²³ or, as Hine phrases it: “the influence of the stars amount[s] to a form of determinism, providing a source and guarantee of regularity and order in the universe.”²⁴ In the predictions about the coming plays, this relevance of support²⁵ of the action causes the impression that men’s decisions depend upon mantics, but their own character is reflected by the foreboding of supernatural elements.

Revenge tragedy irreversibly steers from a divinely controlled order through the “potential conflict”²⁶ of injustice to its inevitable opposite at the end²⁷ where morals are not only neglected but ignored²⁸ and “[r]evenge is itself an act of

Tragedy and the Court Masque”, in: *Jacobean Poetry and Prose. Rhetoric, Representation and the Popular Imagination* (Houndsmills/ London: Macmillan, 1988), p. 194–212, here p. 206.

20 Compare Baumann: *Vorausdeutung und Tod*, p. 474–479.

21 Dallas Lynn Lacy: *Anticipation and Foreboding in Shakespearean Drama* (Diss, Louisiana State University, 1968), p. v.

22 Compare Gymnich/ Neumann/ Nünning (eds.): *Kulturelles Wissen und Intertextualität*, p. 12–13.

23 See also Herbert Geisen: *Dimension des Metaphysischen in Shakespeares Historien*, p. 205. Clemen argues that anticipation in Shakespeare’s early Histories might be “too obtrusive, too explicit”. See Wolfgang Clemen: “Anticipation and Foreboding”, p. 26.

24 William L. Hine: “Marin Mersenne: Renaissance Naturalism and Renaissance Magic”, in: Brian Vickers (ed.): *Occult and Scientific Mentalities in the Renaissance* (Cambridge/ London/ New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 168.

25 Edmund says he would have been evil even if “the maidenliest star” (Shakespeare: *Lear*, I.ii.132) had shone at his birth, but the audience will see him as a villain and this will prove as such just because it supports and underlines the old idea of the horoscope determining the future of man. Compare the influence of the stars in Marlowe’s *Tamburlaine*; in: Johnstone Parr: *Tamburlaine’s Malady and other Essays on Astrology in Elizabethan Drama* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1953), p. 158.

26 Jonathan Dollimore: “Two concepts of mimesis: Renaissance literary theory and *The Revenger’s Tragedy*”, in: *Drama and Mimesis*, ed. James Redmond (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), p. 25–50, p. 26.

27 Dallas Lynn Lacy: *Anticipation and Foreboding in Shakespearean Drama*, p. 2.

28 As has been numerously explained, AT presents a contrasting exception to this scheme.

excess.”²⁹ Exodus reads: “And if any mischief follow then thou shalt give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe”³⁰ – obviously contrasting with the New Testament’s “Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord”.³¹ Nevertheless, apart from *The Atheist’s Tragedy*, the latter biblical quotation is not adhered to in most of the revenge tragedies but ignored in favour of bloodshed and cruel retaliation, which usually exceeds the past crime. One can often find, as part of the preparation for revenge, a hesitant insecurity about the scheme of retaliation, foremost in *Hamlet* and those tragedies with Stoic heroes, but in the end, providential vengeance is accomplished.³² The protagonist transgresses justice to punish political³³ or personal failure and injustice, according to the Senecan maxim that crimes are not revenged until they are exceeded,³⁴ and poetic justice, i.e. deserved retribution achieved.

Thus mantic elements also draw attention to how and when revenge is fulfilled and mantic “beliefs are to be understood primarily in terms of the needs which they serve”³⁵ – these are the needs of theatrical dramaturgy. Used as instrumentalised decorum, mantic elements forebode the coming action to the spectator.³⁶

This can also cause dramatic irony: the audience is quite aware of how the plot might continue while characters in the play are not. Gurr refers to “an interplay between illusion and reality”³⁷ which can be created by the actors’ play, their description of the action, and the circumstances of their communication. They convey the knowledge to the audience, explain setting and time, and also supernatural events, a process that leads to “transparent dramaturgy”,³⁸ as Lopez

29 Hallett/ Hallett: *The Revenger’s Madness*, p. 11. Compare Hans-Wilhelm Schwarze: *Justice, Law and Revenge. ‘The Individual and Natural Order’ in Shakespeares Dramen*. Studien zur Englischen Literatur, ed. Johannes Kleinstück, Vol. 6. (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag Herbert Grundmann, 1971).

30 Exodus 21.23–25.

31 Romans 12.19.

32 Compare Jonathan Dollimore: “Two concepts of mimesis”, p. 26f.

33 See ideas in David Norbrook: *Poetry and Politics in the English Renaissance* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984; rev. ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 152.

34 See the treatment of “scelus”, a crime, in Senecan drama, especially *Thyestes*. Compare especially introduction to Seneca: *Four Tragedies and Octavia*. Penguin Classics (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1966).

35 Hildred Geertz: “An Anthropology of Religion and Magic, I”, in: *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 6 (1975), p. 71–89, here p. 77.

36 See Jochum: *Discrepant Awareness* and Manfred Pfister: *Das Drama* (Stuttgart: UTB, 2001¹¹).

37 Andrew Gurr: *The Shakespearean Stage 1574–1642*, p. 164.

38 Jeremy Lopez: *Theatrical Convention*, p. 2. This obviously depends on the means of a theatre. In the private theatres, with more elaborate staging possibilities, the presentation of a mantic surrounding might have been more visual than in the public theatres, where speech often describes the scenery; see the chapters of the interpretation of mantic elements (4–6). Lopez

calls it. Literature, i.e. in this case drama, is an interactive medium.³⁹ The audience becomes aware⁴⁰ of the playwrights' intentions and the implications of the plays.⁴¹ The audience understands and can deduce (and induce) the logic of the use of supernatural events as mantic elements.⁴² They are then prepared for future revelations of the plot. Lopez calls it "[a]n ideal performance [...] where there is a sense of physical and emotional connection between audience and actor".⁴³ He continues to exemplify the various pleasures of going to the theatre: "above all they [the spectators] enjoyed – and playwrights enjoyed them – *responding*, visibly, audibly, and physically: the transparent self-reflexivity of the language and the dramaturgy, like the relative bareness of the stage and brightness of the theatre, would have made this both inevitable and essential."⁴⁴ Lopez underlines the communicative value that is created during a theatrical performance. Mantic foreshadowing thus also pleased the audience because it connected the spectator with the plot, in that it provided discrepant foreknowledge.⁴⁵ Moreover it allowed the audience to "validate [a] character's predictions of the future."⁴⁶ The spectator can therefore be prepared and made conscious of possible poly-meanings of foreboding situations on stage – which provides him with opportunities to judge on the stage proceedings, and specific outcomes in the play – this discrepant awareness "between the knowledge of the audience and the participants become[s] an important aspect of foreshadowing".⁴⁷

The audience is aware of the theatrical functionalisation of mantic elements and their dramatic purpose in the characterisation and development of the plot.⁴⁸ Mantic elements foreboding destruction and danger are part of the

also insists on the possibility of a failure of plays whose illusionary strength is not potent enough.

39 Gymnich/ Neumann/ Nünning (eds.): *Kulturelles Wissen und Intertextualität*, p. 20.

40 The awareness nevertheless depends on the "ability to interpret the play correctly." Frank Ardolino: *Apocalypse and Armada in Kyd's Spanish Tragedy*. Sixteenth Century Essays & Studies 29 (Kirksville: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1995), p. 64.

41 Isabel Rivers: *Classical and Christian Ideas*, p. 170: "Thus an allegorical work is not self-contained, but is part of an incomplete process. This process is only completed when the reader fully intuits the meanings which the author himself can only partly express."

42 Compare Jeremy Lopez: *Theatrical Convention*, p. 2 and 32.

43 Ibid.

44 Ibid, p. 34.

45 On the subject of discrepant awareness, see especially Jochum: *Discrepant Awareness*.

46 Marjorie Garber, "What's past is prologue", p. 331. Compare Pfister's ideas on the various degrees of information in the inner communicative system. He differentiates between the knowledge of the audience and characters on stage and the continual change of this relation of discrepant awareness. Pfister: *Das Drama*, p. 79; see also Jochum.

47 Dallas Lynn Lacy writes this on *Romeo & Juliet*. However, it can also be applied here: *Anticipation and Foreboding in Shakespearean Drama*, p. 69.

48 Compare Henk Gras: *Studies in Elizabethan Audience Response to the Theatre. Vol. II: As I Am man. Aspects of the Presentation and Audience Perception of the Elizabethan Female*

subversive character of revenge tragedy, in that it transgresses order and aims for destruction.⁴⁹ This is the case no matter whether the source of the play is taken from Roman history, another historical (European or English) background, a myth or legend, or be of fictional origin. Mantics are used similarly, as the comparison of mantic elements in the different revenge tragedies has shown.

In revenge tragedies, mantic elements do often not only produce an atmosphere of looming danger, but can also involve the grotesque⁵⁰ and bleak; “anticipated death”⁵¹ is the main topic in dramas that concern the topic of vengeance. It depends on the plot whether its characters live according to their looming fate and take it seriously or whether they are ignorant confronted with doom.

Kyd, as the leading Renaissance author to establish the revenge tradition, was often imitated by those who followed him in writing revenge dramas. Erne resolves on *The Spanish Tragedy*: “The tension between the determinist frame show[s] the characters entirely at the mercy of supernatural powers”.⁵² This can be applied to all other revenge tragedies, too.

Similarly, Shakespeare’s Hamlet dominates the prototype of a revenger in the tradition of the genre.⁵³ There are revengers who follow his attitude of hesitation and remorse about killing. Violence dominates the genre through all decades, but it is still caused by the wish for moral justice,⁵⁴ but especially in the seventeenth century the plotlines become more grotesque and sometimes even mocking in tone,⁵⁵ and the revenger himself is often portrayed as excessive and

Page. *European University Studies. Europäische Hochschulschriften. Publications Universitaires Européennes*, Vol. 48/49 (Frankfurt am Main et al: Peter Lang, 1993), p. 80.

49 See also Taihe/ Thornton (eds.): *Prophecy. The Power of Inspired Language in History*, p. 11.

50 Especially Webster has been associated with a grotesque presentation of characters and plot. Theodore Spencer: *Shakespeare and the Nature of Man* (New York: The Macmillan Company, (1942) 1951²), p. 212. Rainer Lengeler: *Tragische Wirklichkeit als Grotteske Verfremdung bei Shakespeare* (Köln/ Graz: Böhlau Verlag, 1964). Compare also Leonard Goldstein: *George Chapman: Aspects of Decadence in Early Seventeenth Century Drama 2*. Salzburg Studies. Jacobean Drama Studies (New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1975).

51 Dwight Gwilym James: *The Dream of Learning. An Essay on the Advancement of Learning in Hamlet and King Lear* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1951), p. 104.

52 Lukas Erne: *Beyond The Spanish Tragedy. A Study of the Works of Thomas Kyd. The Revels Plays Companion Library* (Manchester/ New York: Manchester University Press, 2001), p. 103.

53 He influences especially the type of revenger in Marston, Chettle, and Chapman. Compare Philip J. Ayres: “Marston’s *Antonio’s Revenge*: The Morality of the Revenging Hero”, in: *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900*, Vol. 12/2 (1972), p. 359–374, p. 359.

54 Compare Jackson I. Cope (in Chapter II: “George Chapman: Myth as Mask and Magic“, in): *The Theatre and the Dream. From Metaphor to Form in Renaissance Drama* (Baltimore/ London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), p. 75.

55 Compare Katharine Eisamann Maus: Introduction to *Four Revenge Tragedies*, ed. Katherine Eisamann Maus, Oxford. Clarendon Press, 1995 (Oxford Drama Library), p. xxiii. It is difficult to analyse whether some of the plays and parts of their scenes, especially those of the

loses the sympathy of the audience because of his unethical, exaggerated vengeance.⁵⁶

Tragedy is neither moral nor philosophical; it is cruel and an “exploration of human conflicts”.⁵⁷ The cruelty can be providentially foreshadowed by an omen in the macrocosm predicting chaos in the microcosm, by a ghost asking for retaliation, a dream revealing death, a prophecy determining fate, or a curse wishing ill.⁵⁸ These elements, determining the future of the characters, shape the plot.

Foreboding defines the tragedy and supernatural phenomena are in a “dynamic interplay, depend[ing] upon the dramatist’s treatment of causation”,⁵⁹ predicting the course of events in the plays. Lobsien writes that Shakespeare’s *King Lear* is virtuously playing on the piano of apocalyptic semiotics.⁶⁰ This can be extended to most revenge tragedies; they all employ symbols and signs of disorder and destruction and create a chaosmos.⁶¹ This determination is part of the process to build up the dramatic plot.

Especially in a period of change, playwrights use the conventional images and perceptions to lead the audience. This study has shown that Rupert Taylor’s remark made in 1911 is erroneous: “The Elizabethan dramatists as a rule disapproved of the widespread credence given [to] prophecies, and not infrequently gave voice to their disapproval.”⁶² On the contrary, as has been proved above, the supernatural is widely functionalised. An approach to supernatural phenomena and a functionalisation of the different types of mantic elements appear in all dramas: they prophesy the inevitable bloodshed of revenge tragedy. Accordingly, Hieronimo in *The Spanish Tragedy* accepts his duty as a “cursed father” (III.vii.65) to revenge his murdered son using violence, since legal justice has failed to punish the crime: “But wherefore waste I mine unfruitful words,/ When naught but blood will satisfy my woes?” (l. 68–69). Cursing himself, he determines his fate by the execution of excessive revenge, Bacon’s wild justice. The

later phase of revenge tragedy from roughly 1610 onwards, might have been intended in a mocking, or satirical way. As far as the text is concerned, it is extremely difficult to judge how scenes that might exaggerate the grotesque were performed.

56 See Bowers: *Elizabethan Revenge Tragedy*, p. 81.

57 J. W. Lever: *The Tragedy of State. A Study in Jacobean Drama* (London/ New York: Methuen, 1971), p. 40.

58 Compare also Charles R. Forker (ed.) in his introduction to: James Shirley, *The Cardinal*, *Indiana University Humanities Series*, No. 56 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1964), p. lxxi. Compare also Janet Clare: *Revenge Tragedies of the Renaissance* (Tavistock: Northcote, 2006), p. 76.

59 Werner Senn: *Studies in the Dramatic Construction*, p. 70. Compare Northrop Frye: *Anatomy of Criticism. Four Essays* (Princeton, New Jersey Princeton University Press, 1957), p. 212.

60 Verena Olejniczak Lobsien: “Multi Pertransibunt”, p. 117.

61 Compare Clemen: “Anticipation and Foreboding in Shakespeare’s Early Histories”, p. 31.

62 Rupert Taylor: *The Political Prophecy in England*, p. 128.

drama has called for retaliation from the beginning with the ghost's demand, and so Hieronimo revenges the murder of his son by killing the murderers of both the ghosts and Horatio in the end.

Omens, dreams, ghosts, prophecies, and curses have a future-determining function within the plot of revenge tragedy. As mantic elements throughout the plays have foretold – the bad bleeds and retaliation is fulfilled.

IV. Bibliography

Primary Literature

Revenge Tragedies

- ANONYMOUS: *The Tragedy of Caesar's Revenge*. [The Tragedie of Caesar and Pompey or Caesars Revenge] The Malone Society Reprints, ed. F. S. Boas (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1911).
- BEAUMONT, Francis/ FLETCHER, John: *The Maid's Tragedy*, in: *Five Stuart Tragedies*, ed. A. K. McIlwraith (London/ Oxford/ New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), p. 99–200.
- CHAPMAN, George: *The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois*. Salzburg Studies in English Literature. Jacobean Drama Studies 75, ed. Robert J. Lordi (Salzburg: Institut für Englische Sprache und Literatur, 1977).
- CHETTLE, Henry: *The Tragedy of Hoffmann* (1631). The Malone Society Reprints, ed. Harold Jenkins/ Charles Sisson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1950/51).
- KYD, Thomas: *The First Part of Hieronimo and The Spanish Tragedy*. Regents Renaissance Drama Series, ed. Andrew S. Cairncross (London: Edward Arnold Ltd., 1967).
- : *The Spanish Tragedy*. The New Mermaids, ed. J. R. Mulryne (London: Ernest Benn Ltd., 1970).
- : *The Spanish Tragedy*. The New Mermaids, ed. B. L. Joseph (London: Ernest Benn Ltd., 1964).
- MARSTON, John: *Antonio's Revenge*. Regents Renaissance Drama Series, ed. G. K. Hunter (London: Edward Arnold, 1966).
- MIDDLETON, Thomas: *The Changeling*, in: *Three Plays*, ed. Kenneth Muir (London/ Melbourne/ Toronto: Dent, 1975), p. 149–211.
- : *The Changeling*, in: *Three Jacobean Tragedies*, ed. Gamini Salgado (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1965), p. 259–344.
- ROWLEY, William: *The Changeling*. New Mermaids, ed. Joost Daalder (London: A & C Black/ New York: W. W. Norton, 1990²).
- SHIRLEY, James: *The Maid's Revenge* (London: Aldermanbury, repr. 1793).
- TOURNEUR, Cyril: *The Atheist's Tragedy*, ed. Brian Morris/ Roma Gill (London: A & C Black/ New York: W. W. Norton, 1976).

- [ascribed to Middleton]: *The Revenger's Tragedy*. The Revels Plays, ed. R. A. Foakes (London: Methuen/ Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1966).
- : *The Revenger's Tragedy*, New Mermaids, ed. Brian Gibbons (London: Ernest Benn Limited,).
- : *The Revenger's Tragedy*, in: *Three Jacobean Tragedies*, ed. Gamini Salgado (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1965), p. 41–136.
- WEBSTER, John: *The Duchess of Malfi*. New Mermaids, ed. Elizabeth M. Brennan (London: Ernest Benn Limited/ New York: W. W. Norton & Company Inc., 1964).
- : *The Duchess of Malfi*. New Mermaids, ed. Brian Gibbons (London: A & C Black/ New York: W. W. Norton, 2001⁴).
- : *The Duchess of Malfi*, in: *Five Stuart Tragedies*, ed. A. K. McIlwraith (London/ Oxford/ New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), p. 201–318.
- : *The White Devil*. New Mermaids, ed. Elizabeth M. Brennan (London: A&C Black/ New York: W. W. Norton, 1966).
- : *The White Devil*, in: *Three Jacobean Tragedies*, ed. Gamini Salgado (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1965), p. 137–258.

Further Primary Literature

- ABENEZRAH, Kinki: *An Everlasting Prognostication of the Change of Weather. Collected and Compiled for the common use and profit of all Countrymen* (London: printed for M. S[parke], 1620).
- ANONYMOUS: *Clyomon & Clamydes*. Malone Society Reprints (London: Oxford University Press, 1913).
- : The Pedlar's Prophecy (1595), The Malone Society Reprints, 1914.
- ARISTOTLE: *Meteorologica* (Cambridge, Mass.: Loeb Classical Library, 1975).
- BACON, Francis: *The Essays or Counsels, Civill and Morall*, ed. Michael Kiernan (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985).
- : The Oxford Francis Bacon IV. The Advancement of Learning (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000).
- BEAUMONT, Francis/ FLETCHER, John: *The Dramatic Works in the Beaumont and Fletcher Canon*, ed. Fredson Bowers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).
- The BIBLE. *Authorized King James Version* (1611), ed. Robert Carroll/ Steven Prickett (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).
- BRIGHT, Timothy: *A Treatise of Melancholy* (1586). The Classics of Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences Library, ed. Hardin Craig (New York: Gryphon Editions, 1995).
- BURTON, Robert: *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621), 6 Vols., ed. Thomas C. Faulkner/ Nicolas K. Kiessling/ Rhonda L. Blair (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989).
- Certain Sermons or Homilies Appointed to be Read in Churches in the Time of the Late Queen Elizabeth of Famous Memory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1832).
- CHAPMAN, George: *Bussy D'Ambois*, in: *Five Stuart Tragedies*, ed. A. K. McIlwraith (London/ Oxford/ New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), p. 7–97.
- : *The Conspiracy and Tragedy of Charles Duke of Byron*, ed. John Margeson, The Revels Plays (Manchester/ New York: Manchester University Press, 1988).

- D., T. [possibly Dekker, Thomas]: *The Bloody Banquet* (1639). Malone Society Reprints, ed. Samuel Schoenbaum (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962).
- DARIOT, Claude: *A breefe and most easie Introduction to the Astrological iudgement of the Starres. Whereby everye man maye with small labour, give aunswere to any question demaunded*, transl. Fabian Wither (London: Thomas Purfoote, 1583).
- DRAYTON, Michael: *Poly-Olbion*. Works Vol. 4 (Oxford: Shakespeare Head Press/Blackwell, 1933).
- ELIOT, T. S.: *Selected Essays* (London: Faber and Faber, 1951).
- FERRIER, Auger [Oger]: *A Learned Astronomical discourse, of the iudgement of Nativities*, transl. Thomas Kelway, 3 Vols. (London: Widdow Charlewoods house for Edward white, 1593; 1st published as Jugements Astronomiques sur les Nativitéz, 1550).
- FLETCHER, John: *The Tragedy of Valentinian*, ed. R. K. Turner, in: Fredson Bowers (ed.): *The Dramatic Works in the Beaumont and Fletcher Canon*, vol. 4 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), p. 264–414.
- FULKE, William: *Antiprognosticon; that is to saye, an Invective against the vayne and unprofitable predictions of the Astrologians as Nostradame, etc.*, trans. William Painter. (London: Henry Sutton, 1560).
- : “*Meteors, from: A Goodly Gallery (1563)*”, in: James Winny: *The Frame of Order. An Outline of Elizabethan Belief Taken From Treatises of the Late Sixteenth Century* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1957), p. 160–179.
- HARVEY, John: *A Discursive Probleme concerning Propheesies, How far they are to be valued, or credited, according to the surest rules, and directions in Divinitie, Philosophie, Astrologie, and other learning: Devised especially in abatement of the terrible threatenings, and menaces, peremptorily denounced against the kingdoms, and states of the world, this present famous yeere, 1588, supposed the Greatwoonderfull, and Fatall yeere of our Age* (London: John Jackson, 1588).
- HARVEY, Richard: *An Astrological Discourse upon the great and notable Conjunction of the two superiour Planets Saturne & Jupiter, which shall happen the 28 day of April, 1583. With a briefe Declaration oof the effectes, which the late Eclipse of the Sunne 1582. is yet heerafter to woorke* (London: Henrie Bynnemann, 1583).
- HEYDON KNIGHT, Sir Christopher: *A Defense of Iudiciall Astrologie, In Answer to a Treatise lately published by M. Iohn Chamber* (Cambridge: Iohn Legat, Printer to the Universitie of Cambridge, 1603).
- HEYWOOD, John: *The Play of The Weather* (1533), The Malone Society Reprints, 1971.
- HOMER: *The Iliad*, ed. E. V. Rieu (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2003).
- HOWARD, Henry, Earl of Northampton: *A defensative against the poyson of supposed Propheesies: Not hitherto confuted by the penne of any man, which being grounded, eyther upon the warrant and authority of olde paynted bookes, expositions of Dreames, Oracles, Revelations, Invocations of damned spirites, Judicialles of Astrologie, or any other kinde of pretended knowledge whatsoever, De futuris contingentibus: have bene the causes of great disorder in the common wealth, and choefely among the simple and unlearned people: very needeful to be published at this time, considering the late offence which grew by most palpable and grosse errors in Astrology* (London: John Charlewood (Printer to the right Honourable Earle of Arundell), 1583).
- HUGHES, Thomas: *The Misfortunes of Arthur*, ed. Hearvey Carson Grumbine, Liter-

- arhistorische Forschungen 14. Three centuries of drama. English, 1516–1641. Three Centuries of English and American plays, 1500–1830 (Berlin: Felber, 1900).
- JAMES I: *Daemonologie, In Forme of a Dialogue* (London: Arnold Hatfield for Robert Waldgrave, 1603).
- JAQUES, Francis: *The Queen of Corsica* (1642), ed. Henry D. Janzen, The Malone Society Reprints, 1989.
- JONSON, Ben: *The Alchemist and other Plays*, ed. Gordon Campbell (Oxford/ New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).
- : Volpone, [or The Fox], eds. R. Brian Parker / David M. Bevington (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999).
- LAVATAR, Lewes: *Of Ghostes and Spirits Walking by Nyght* (London, 1572), ed. J. Dover Wilson/ May Yardley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1929).
- MACHIAVELLI, Niccolò: *Il Principe. Der Fürst* (1512/ 1532), transl. und ed. Philipp Rippel (Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam, 1986).
- MARLOWE, Christopher: *Edward II*, in: *Marlowe's Plays and Poems*, ed. M. R. Ridley (London: Dent/ New York: Dutton, rev. 1955), p. 225–294.
- : *The Second Part of Tamburlaine the Great*, in: *Marlowe's Plays and Poems*, ed. M. R. Ridley (London: Dent/ New York: Dutton, rev. 1955), p. 60–119.
- MARSTON, John: *The Malcontent*. New Mermaids, ed. W. David Kay (London: Methuen, 1999).
- MELTON, John: *Astrologaster, or, The Figure-Caster. Rather the Arraignment of Artlesse Astrologers, and Fortune-tellers, that cheat many ignorant people under the pretence of foretelling things to come, of telling things that are past, finding out things that are lost, expounding Dreames, calculating Deaths and Nativities, once againe brought to the Barre* (London: Barnard Alsop for Edward Blackmore, 1620).
- MILTON, John: *Selected Poetry*, eds. Jonathan Goldberg/ Stephen Orgel (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).
- MONTAIGNE, Michel de: *Montaigne's Essays*, transl. John Florio, ed. J. I. M. Stewart, 2 Vols. (London: The Nonesuch Press, 1931).
- MORE, Thomas: *Utopia*. Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought, ed. George M. Logan/ Robert M. Adams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).
- NASHE, Thomas: *The Terrors of the Night*. The Stratford-upon-Avon Library 1, ed. Stanley Wells (London: Edward Arnold, 1964)
- PÉRIER, Benoît, S.J.: *De Magia, de Observatione Somniorum et de Divinatione astrologica libri tres. Colonia Agripp.* [Cologne] 1598.
- ROMEI, Annibale: "Of Universal Proportion" (1546), transl. J. Kepers (1598), in: James Winny: *The Frame of Order. An Outline of Elizabethan Belief Taken From Treatises of the Late Sixteenth Century* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1957), p. 197–212.
- SENECA, Lucius Annaeus: *Four Tragedies and Octavia*. Penguin Classics, ed. E. F. Watling (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1966).
- : *Morals* (Bristol: Lansdown, 1807).
- SHAKESPEARE, William: *Hamlet*. The Arden Shakespeare, ed. Harold Jenkins (London/ New York: Routledge, 1982).
- : *Hamlet*. The Arden Shakespeare. Third Series, ed. Ann Thompson/ Neil Taylor (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2005/ Cengage Learning EMEA, 2006).

- : *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt (New York/ London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1997³).
- : *Titus Andronicus*. The Arden Shakespeare. Third Series, ed. Jonathan Bate (London: Routledge, 1995).
- SUETONIUS: *The Lives of the Caesars*, ed. Catherine Edwards (Oxford: Oxford Paperbacks, 2000).
- TAILLEPIED, Noel: *A Treatise upon Ghosts, being the Psychologie, or Treatise upon Apparitions and Spirits, of Disembodied Souls, Phantom Figures, Strange Prodigies, and of Other Miracles and Marvels* (1588).
- VIRGIL: *The Aeneid*, ed. David West (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2003).

Secondary Literature

Works of Reference

- BECKER, Udo: *Lexikon der Symbole* (Köln: Komet, 1992).
- BUßMANN, Hadumod: *Lexikon der Sprachwissenschaft* (Stuttgart: Kröner, 1990²).
- COMTE, Fernand: *The Wordsworth Dictionary of Mythology* (Ware: Wordsworth Reference, 1994).
- COOPER, J.C.: *An Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Traditional Symbols* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1978).
- ENDRES, Franz Carl/ SCHIMMEL, Annemarie: *Das Mysterium der Zahl. Zahlensymbolik im Kulturvergleich* (Köln: Eugen Diederichs Verlag, 1985²).
- FORSTNER, Dorothea: *Die Welt der Symbole* (Innsbruck/ Wien/ München: Tyrolia Verlag, 1967²).
- GEMOLL, Wilhelm: *Griechisch-Deutsches Schul- und Handwörterbuch* (München: Verlag Hölder-Pichler-Tempsky/ R. Oldenbourg, 1997⁹).
- GHEERBRANT, Alain/CHEVALIER, Jean/ BUCHANAN-BROWN, John: *The Penguin Dictionary of Symbols* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2005).
- HAAN, Heiner/ NIEDHART, Gottfried: *Geschichte Englands vom 16. bis zum 18. Jahrhundert* (München: Verlag C. H. Beck, 1993).
- Handbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens*, ed. Hanns Bächtold-Stäubli (Berlin: Gruyter, 2000³).
- HENKEL, Arthur/ SCHÖNE, Albrecht (eds.): *Emblemata. Handbuch zur Sinnbildkunst des XVI. und XVII. Jahrhunderts* (Stuttgart/ Weimar: Verlag J. B. Metzler, 1967).
- Lexikon des Mittelalters*, 9 vols. (München/ Zürich: Artemis & Winkler Verlag, 1980–1999).
- LURKER, Manfred (ed.): *Wörterbuch der Symbolik* (Stuttgart: Alfred Kröner Verlag, 1991⁵).
- MAXWELL-HYSLOP, A./GRIMAL, Pierre/ KERSHAW, Stephen: *The Penguin Dictionary of Classical Mythology* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2005).
- MUNCK, Thomas: *Seventeenth Century Europe. State, Conflict and the Social Order in Europe 1598–1700* (Houndmills: The Macmillan Press, 1990).
- KERENYI, Karl: *The Gods of the Greeks* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1951).

- Der Kleine Pauly. Lexikon der Antike*, ed. Konrat Ziegler (München: dtv, 1979).
- Der Neue Pauly. Enzyklopädie der Antike. Das klassische Altertum und seine Rezeptionsgeschichte*, ed. Hubert Cancik/ Helmuth Schneider/ August Pauly (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2003).
- The Oxford Companion to Shakespeare*, ed. Michael Dobson/ Stanley Wells (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).
- The Oxford English Dictionary*, ed. John Andrew Simpson/ Edmund S. C. Weiner (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1950, 1989²).
- PLUTARCH: *Lives [of Noble Grecians and Romans] Vol. I and II*, ed. Arthur Hugh Clough (New York: Random House/ Modern Library, 2001).
- POLLARD, A. W./ REDGRAVE, G. R. (eds.): *A Short-Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland & Ireland 1475–1640*, 2 Vols. (London: Bibliographical Society, 1926).
- Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (RGG), 8 Vols., eds. Hans D. Betz/ Don S. Browning/ Bernd Jankowski (Tübingen: Mohr/ Siebeck, 1998).
- Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (RGG), ed. Kurt Galling (Tübingen: Mohr/ Siebeck, 1957–1965).
- SKINGLEY, Philip: *Coins of England and the United Kingdom. Standard Catalogue of British Coins* (London: Spink, 2006).
- SPEVACK, Martin: *A Complete and Systematic Concordance to the Works of Shakespeare* (Hildesheim/ New York: Georg Olms Verlag, 1968–1980).
- WHITE, T. H.: *The Bestiary. A Book of Beasts. Being a Translation from a Latin Bestiary of the Twelfth Century* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1954).
- WHITNEY, Geoffrey: *A Choice of Emblemes* (1586), ed. John Horden (Menston: Scholar Press, 1969).
- WILPERT, Gero von: *Sachwörterbuch der Literatur* (Stuttgart: Kröner, 1964⁴).

Secondary Literature

- ABATE, Corinne S.: *Privacy, Domesticity and Women in Early Modern England* (London: Ashgate Publishing, 2003).
- ADAMS, Henry Hitch: "Cyril Tourneur on Revenge", in: *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 48, ed. Henning Larsen, John J. Parry, Helmut Rehder (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois, 1949), p. 72–87.
- AHRENDTS, Günter/ DILLER, Hans-Jürgen (eds.): *Theatre and Religion*. Forum Modernes Theater 25 (Tübingen: Narr Francke, 1998).
- AL-HAMDI, Ali A.: "The Protagonist as Playwright and Stage Manager in Two Elizabethan Revenge Tragedies", in: *J. King Saud Univ.* 6, Arts 2 (1994), p. 21–32.
- ALEXANDER, Henry G.: *Religion in England 1558–1662* (London: University of London Press, 1968).
- ALLEN, Don Cameron: *Doubt's Boundless Sea. Scepticism and Faith in the Renaissance* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1964).
- : *The Star-Crossed Renaissance. The Quarrel about Astrology and its Influence in England* (New York: Octagon Books, rev. 1973).

- ALLEN, John William: *History of Political Thought in the Sixteenth Century* (London: Methuen, 1951).
- ALLMAN, Eileen Jorge: *Jacobean Revenge Tragedy and Politics of Virtue* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1999).
- ANDERSEN, Ruth Leila: *Elizabethan Psychology and Shakespeare's Plays* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1966).
- ANDERSON, Thomas P.: *Performing Early Modern Trauma from Shakespeare to Milton* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006).
- ANDERSEN, Jennifer/ SAUER, Elizabeth: *Books and Readers in Early Modern England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002).
- ANKARLOO, Bengt/ HENNINGSEN, Gustav: *Early Modern European Witchcraft. Centres and Peripheries* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).
- ANKENBRAND, Hans: *Die Figur des Geistes im Drama der Englischen Renaissance*. Münchner Beiträge zur Romanischen und Englischen Philologie 35, ed. H. Breymann/ J. Schick (Leipzig: A. Deichert'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1906).
- APFELBAUM, Robert: *Literature and Utopian Politics in Seventeenth Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
- APT, A. J.: *The Reception of Kepler's Astronomy in England. 1609–1650* (D.Phil. Oxford University, 1982).
- ARDOLINO, Frank: *Apocalypse and Armada in Kyd's Spanish Tragedy*. Sixteenth Century Essays & Studies 29 (Kirkville: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1995).
- : "Now Shall I See the Fall of Babylon": *The Spanish Tragedy* and Protestant Apocalypse", in: *Shakespeare Yearbook* 1 (1990), p. 93–115.
- ARNOLD, Max: *Die Verwendung des Traummotivs in der Englischen Dichtung von Chaucer bis auf Shakespeare* (Diss. Kiel, 1912).
- ARIÈS, Philippe: *Geschichte des Todes* (München und Wien: Hanser, 1980).
- : "L'Histoire des Mentalités", in: *La Nouvelle Histoire*, ed. Jacques Le Goff/ Roger Chartier/ Jacques Revel (Paris: Retz, 1978), p. 409–412, 420–423.
- ARTHOS, John: *Shakespeare's Use of Dream and Vision* (London: Bowes & Bowes, 1977).
- AYRES, Harry Morgan: "Caesar's Revenge", in: *PMLA* 30.4 (1915), p. 771–787.
- AYRES, Philip J.: "Chapman and Revenge", in: Alan Brissenden (ed.): *Shakespeare and Some Others. Essays on Shakespeare and Some of His Contemporaries* (Adelaide: Department of English, University of Adelaide, 1976), p. 146–158.
- : "Marston's *Antonio's Revenge*: The Morality of the Revenging Hero", in: *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900* 12.2 (1972), p. 359–374.
- BACHRACH, A. G. H.: "Shakespeare, the Sea, and the Weather...", in: *Elizabethan and Modern Studies*, ed. J. P. Vander Motten (Gent: Seminarie voor Engelse en Amerikaanse Literatuur, 1985), p. 9–20.
- BAINES, Barbara: "*Antonio's Revenge*: Marston's Play on Revenge Plays", in: *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900* 23.2 (1983), p. 277–294.
- BAKER, H.: "Ghosts and Guides: Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy* and the Medieval Tragedy", *MP* 33 (1935), p. 27–35.
- BAMBOROUGH, J. B.: *The Little World of Man* (London/ New York/ Toronto: Longmans, Green & Co., 1952).
- BARBOUR, Reid: *Deciphering Elizabethan Fiction* (Newark: University of Delaware Press/ London/ Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1993).

- : *Literature and Religious Culture in Seventeenth Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
- BARFOOT, C. C.: "News of the Roman Empire: Hearsay, Soothsay, Myth and History in *Antony and Cleopatra*", in: *Reclamations of Shakespeare*, ed. A. J. Hoenselaars (Amsterdam/ Atlanta: Rodop, 1994), p. 105–28.
- BARKAN, Leonard: *Nature's Work of Art. The Human Body as Image of the World* (New Haven/ London: Yale University Press, 1975).
- BARNES, Barry: *Interests and the Growth of Scientific Knowledge* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977).
- BARRY, Jonathan/ BROOKS, Christopher: *The Middling Sort of People. Culture, Society and Politics in England, 1550–1800* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1994).
- BATTENHOUSE, Roy W.: *Shakespearean Tragedy. Its Art and Its Christian Premises* (Bloomington/ London: Indiana University Press, 1969).
- BAUCKHAM, Richard: *Tudor Apocalypse. Sixteenth Century Apocalypticism, Milleniarism and the English Reformation: From John Bale to John Foxe and Thomas Brightman*. The Courtenay Library of Reformation Classics 8 (Appleford, Oxford: The Sutton Courtenay Press, 1978).
- BAUMANN, Uwe: "Botschafter und Botschaften aus dem Jenseits. Mantische Vorausdeutung im Drama der Shakespearezeit", in: Wolfram Högge (ed.): *Mantik. Profile prognostischen Wissens in Wissenschaft und Kultur* (Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 2005), p. 225–247.
- : "Die Chorus-Figur als funktionales Zentrum: Informationsvergabe, Sympathienlenkung und Metatheater", in: *Henry V. Programmheft der Bonn University Shakespeare Company* (2001), p. 26–29.
- : "Das Drama der Englischen Renaissance als Politische Kunst: Die zeitgenössische Aktualität der Römerdramen I", in: *Literaturwissenschaftliches Jahrbuch 33* (1992), p. 101–131.
- : "Das Leben als Tanz in den Tod in der Rachetragödie der englischen Renaissance", in: F. H. Link (ed.), *Tanz und Tod in Kunst und Literatur, Schriften zur Literaturwissenschaft 8* (Berlin: Perfect Paperback, 1993), p. 139–160.
- : "Das Drama der Englischen Renaissance als Politische Kunst: Die zeitgenössische Aktualität der Römerdramen II", in: *Literaturwissenschaftliches Jahrbuch 35* (1994), p. 63–100.
- : " Erotische Macht und tragische Ohnmacht der Frauen im Drama der englischen Renaissance, oder: Gibt es tragische Heldinnen im Drama Shakespeares und seiner Zeitgenossen?", in: N. Lennartz (ed.): *The Senses' Festival. Inszenierungen der Sinne und der Sinnlichkeit in der Literatur und Kunst des Barock* (Trier: wvt, 2005), p. 37–56.
- : "'Image of that Horror': Die Apokalypse in der Politik, Kultur und Literatur der Englischen Renaissance", in: Barbara Haupt (ed.): *Endzeitvorstellungen* (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 2001), p. 271–289.
- : *Shakespeare und seine Zeit* (Stuttgart/ Düsseldorf/ Leipzig: Klett, 1998).
- : *Vorausdeutung und Tod im englischen Römerdrama der Renaissance (1564–1642)* (Tübingen/ Basel: Francke Verlag, 1996).
- BAYLEY, John: *Shakespeare and Tragedy* (London/ Boston/ Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981).

- De BECKER [Bekker], Raymond: *The Understanding of Dreams, or the Machinations of the Night*, transl. Michael Heron (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1968).
- BEECH, Martin: "Meteor Imagery in English Poetry, c. 1600–1900", in: *New Comparison* 7 (1989), p. 99–112.
- BENOIT, Raymond: "The Prophecy in the Play: *Antony & Cleopatra*", in: *Greyfriar/Siena Studies in Literature* 17 (1976), p. 3–7.
- BERMAN, Morris: *The Re-enchantment of the World* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981).
- BEVINGTON, David: *Tudor Drama and Politics. A Critical Approach to Topical Meaning* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1968).
- / HOLBROOK, Peter (eds.): *The Politics of the Stuart Court Masque* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).
- BEYER, Manfred: *Das Staunen in Shakespeares Dramen. Ursachen, Darstellungsweisen und Wirkungsententionen* (Köln/ Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 1987).
- : "A beggar's book outworths a noble's blood": *Werte und Wertekonflikte in Shakespeares Dramen* (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2009).
- BIESE, Alfred: *The Development of the Feeling for Nature. In the Middle Ages and Modern Times* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1905).
- BIESTERFELDT, Peter Wilhelm: *Die dramatische Technik Thomas Kyds. Studien zur inneren Struktur und szenischen Form des Elisabethanischen Dramas* (Halle, Saale: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1936).
- BLACK, James B.: *The Reign of Elizabeth 1558–1603* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969).
- : "Shakespeare's *Henry V* and the Dreams of History", in: *English Studies in Canada* 1 (1975).
- BLISS, Lee: "Beaumont and Fletcher", in: Arthur F. Kinney (ed.): *A Companion to Renaissance Drama* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2002), p. 524–539.
- BLUMENBERG, Hans: *Die Lesbarkeit der Welt* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1981).
- BONELLI, M. L. R./ SHEA, W. R. (eds.): *Reasons, Experiment and Mysticism in the Scientific Revolution* (New York: Science History Publications, 1975).
- BORGMEIER, Raimund: "Die englische Literatur", in: *Der Einfluss Senecas auf das europäische Drama*, ed. Eckard Lefevre (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1978), p. 276–323.
- BOSANQUET, Eustace F.: *English Printed Almanacks and Prognostications. A Bibliographical History to the Year 1600* (London: Chiswick Press for the Bibliographical Society, 1917).
- BOWDEN, Mary Ellen: *The Scientific Revolution in Astrology. The English Reformers 1558–1686* (PhD. Yale University, 1974).
- BOWDEN, William R.: *The English Dramatic Lyric 1603–42. A Study in Stuart Dramatic Technique* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1951).
- BOWERS, Fredson T.: *Elizabethan Revenge Tragedy, 1587–1642* (Princeton: Yale University Press, 1940).
- BRADBROOK, Muriel C.: *Themes and Conventions of Elizabethan Tragedy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1935).
- BRADEN, Gordon: *Renaissance Tragedy and the Senecan Tradition. Anger's Privilege* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985).
- BRANN, N. C.: "The Conflict between Reason and Magic in Seventeenth Century England.

- A case-Study of the Vaughan-More Debate”, in: *Huntington Library Quarterly* 43 (1980), p. 103–26.
- BRASWELL, L.: “Popular Lunar Astrology in the Late Middle Ages”, in: *University of Ottawa Quarterly* 48 (1978), p. 187–94.
- BRIGGS, K. M.: *The Anatomy of Puck: An Examination of Fairy Beliefs among Shakespeare’s Contemporaries and Successors* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1959).
- : *Pale Hecate’s Team. An Examination of Witchcraft and Magic among Shakespeare’s Contemporaries and His Immediate Successors* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962).
- BRISSENDEN, Alan (ed.): *Shakespeare and Some Others. Essays on Shakespeare and Some of His Contemporaries* (Adelaide: Department of English, University of Adelaide, 1976).
- BROOKE, Rupert: *John Webster and the Elizabethan Drama* (New York: John Lane Company, 1916).
- BROWN, Peter (ed.): *Reading Dreams. The Interpretation of Dreams from Chaucer to Shakespeare* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).
- BUELL, L. M.: “Elizabethan Portents: Superstition or Doctrine”, in: *Essays Critical and Historical Dedicated to Lily B. Campbell* (Berkeley/ New York: Russell & Russell, 1950), p. 27–41.
- BURKE, Peter: “Popular Culture in Seventeenth Century London”, in: *London Journal* 3 (1977), p. 143–162; also in: Barry Reay (ed.): *Popular Culture in Seventeenth-Century England* (London: Routledge, 1985), p. 31–58.
- BURNETT, Mark Thornton: “*The Changeling* and Masters and Servants”, in: *Early Modern English Drama. A Critical Companion*, ed. Garrett A Sullivan Jr/ Patrick Cheney/ Andrew Hadfield (New York/ Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 298–308.
- BUSH, Douglas: “Science and Literature”, in: Hedley Howell Rhys (ed.): *Science and the Arts* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1961), p. 29–58.
- BUSH, Geoffrey: *Shakespeare and the Natural Condition* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1956).
- BUTLER, Martin: *The Stuart Court Masque and Political Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).
- CAESAR, Michael: *Umberto Eco. Philosophy, Semiotics and the Work of Fiction* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001).
- CALLAGHAN, Dymna: “The Duchess of Malfi and Early Modern Widows”, in: *Early Modern English Drama. A Critical Companion*, ed. Garrett A Sullivan Jr/ Patrick Cheney/ Andrew Hadfield (New York/ Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 272–286.
- : *Women and Gender in Renaissance Tragedy. A Study of Othello, King Lear, the Duchess of Malfi and The White Devil* (Brighton: Harvester, 1989).
- CAMDEN, Carroll: “Elizabethan Almanacs and Prognostications”, in: *Library* 12 (1931) *Annals of Medieval History. New Series* 2 (1982), p. 83–108, 194–207.
- : “Shakespeare on Sleep and Dreams”, in: *The Rice Institute Pamphlet* 23 (1936), p. 106–133.
- CAMPBELL, Lily B.: *Scenes and Machines on the English Stage During the Renaissance* (New York: Barnes and Noble, Inc., 1912, repr. 1960).
- : *Shakespeare’s “Histories”. Mirrors of Elizabethan Policy* (San Marino: Huntington Library, 1958/ London: Methuen, 1964³).

- CAPP, Bernard: *Astrology and the Popular Press. English Almanacs, 1500–1800* (Ithaca, N. Y.: Cornell University Press/ London: Faber and Faber, 1979).
- : "The Political Dimension of Apocalyptic Thought", in: *The Apocalypse in English Renaissance Thought and Literature*, ed. C. A. Patrides/ Joseph Wittreich (Ithaca, N. Y.: Cornell University Press, 1984), p. 93–124.
- : "The Status and Role of Astrology in Seventeenth Century England. The Evidence of the Almanac", in: *Scienza, Credenze Occulte, Livelli di Cultura* (Florence: Olschki, 1982), p. 279–90.
- CAPUTI, Anthony: *John Marston, Satirist* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1961).
- CAREY, Hilary: *Courting Disaster. Astrology at the English Court and University in the Later Middle Ages* (Houndsmills/ London: Macmillan, 1992).
- CASSIRER, Ernst: *Freiheit und Form. Studien zur deutschen Geistesgeschichte*, ed. R. Schmücker, *Gesammelte Werke. Hamburger Ausgabe*, Vol. VII (Hamburg: Meiner, 2001).
- : *Individuum und Kosmos in der Philosophie der Renaissance* (1927). Studien der Bibliothek Warburg 10 (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, repr. 1977).
- CHRISTIANSON, John: "Tycho Brahe's Cosmology from the *Astrologia* of 1591", *Isis* 59 (1968), p. 312–18.
- CHRISTIANSON, Paul: *Reformers and Babylon. English Apocalyptic Visions from the Reformation to the Eve of the Civil War* (Toronto/ Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1978).
- CLARE, Janet: *Revenge Tragedies of the Renaissance* (Tavistock: Northcote, 2006).
- CLARK, Cumberland: *Shakespeare and the Supernatural* (Diss. London, 1931).
- CLARK, James M.: *The Dance of Death in the Middle Ages and Renaissance* (London: Jackson, Son & Co., 1950).
- CLARK, Stuart: *Languages of Witchcraft. Narrative, Ideology and Meaning in Early Modern Culture* (Houndsmills/ London: Macmillan Press, 2001).
- : "The Scientific Status of demonology", in: Brian Vickers (ed.): *Occult and Scientific Mentalities in the Renaissance* (Cambridge/ London/ New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 351–374.
- CLEMEN, Wolfgang: "Anticipation and Foreboding in Shakespeare's Early Histories", in: *Shakespeare Survey* 6 (1953), p. 25–35.
- : *A Commentary on Shakespeare's 'Richard III'* (London: Routledge, 1968¹, 2005).
- : *The Development of Shakespeare's Imagery* (London: Methuen, 1951).
- CLULEE, Nicholas H.: *John Dee's Natural Philosophy. Between Science and Religion* (London/ New York: Routledge, 1988).
- CODDON, Karin S.: "The Duchess of Malfi: Tyranny and Spectacle in Jacobean Drama", in: *Madness in Drama. Themes in Drama* 15, ed. James Redmond (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 1–17.
- COLLINGWOOD, Robin George: *The Idea of Nature* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1945).
- COLLINGWOOD, William Gershom: *Astrology in the Apocalypse. An Essay on Biblical Illusions to Chaldaean Science* (Sunnyside, Kent: George Allen, 1886).
- COLLINS, Stephen: *From Divine Cosmos to Sovereign State. An Intellectual History of Consciousness and the Idea of Order in Renaissance England* (New York/ Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

- COLLINSON, Patrick: *The Religion of Protestants: The Church in English Society, 1559–1625* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982).
- COLÓN SEMENZA, Gregory M.: “*The Spanish Tragedy and Revenge*”, in: *Early Modern English Drama. A Critical Companion*, ed. Garrett A Sullivan Jr./ Patrick Cheney/ Andrew Hadfield (New York/ Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 50–60.
- CONWAY, Glenda: “The Presence of the Skull in Tourneur’s *The Revenge Tragedy*”, in: *Kentucky Philological Review* 7 (1992), p. 8–11.
- COOPER, Brian G.: “Religious Astrology in the Seventeenth Century”, in: *Dalhousie Review* 44 (1964), p. 312–320.
- COPE, Jackson I.: *The Theatre and the Dream. From Metaphor to Form in Renaissance Drama* (Baltimore/ London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973).
- COUTTIE, Bob: *Forbidden Knowledge* (Cambridge: Lutterworth, 1988).
- COWLING, T. G.: “Astrology, Religion and Science”, in: *Quarterly Journal of the Royal Astronomical Society* 23 (1982), p. 515–26.
- COX, John D.: *The Devil and the Sacred in English Drama, 1350–1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).
- / KASTAN, Scott: *A New History of Early English Drama* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997).
- CRAIG, Hardin: *The Enchanted Glass. The Elizabethan Mind in Literature* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1960).
- CREWE, Jonathan: *Hidden Design. The Critical Profession and Renaissance Literature* (New York/ London: Methuen, 1986).
- CURRY, Patrick: *Astrology, Science and Society. Historical Essays* (Woodbridge: Suffolk, 1987).
- : *Prophecy and Power. Astrology in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989).
- : “Revisions of Science of Magic” in: *History of Science* 23 (1985), p. 299–325.
- CURRY, Walter Clyde: *Shakespeare’s Philosophical Patterns* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1937, 1959²).
- DAHINTEN, Gisela: *Die Geisterszene in der Tragödie vor Shakespeare. Zur Seneca-Nachfolge im englischen und lateinischen Drama des Elisabethanismus*. Palaestra. Untersuchungen aus der deutschen und englischen Philologie und Literaturgeschichte 225, ed. W. Kayser et. al. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1958).
- DALY, J.: *Cosmic Harmony and Political Thinking in Early Stuart England*. Transactions of the American Philosophical Society 69.7 (1979).
- DANBY, John F.: *Shakespeare’s Doctrine of Nature* (London: Faber and Faber, 1949).
- DARST, David: “The Role of Witch Hunting in the Demise of Astrology and Magic and the Birth of Modern Science in Renaissance Europe”, in: *University of Dayton Review* 20 (1989), p. 57–67.
- DAVIS, Nick: *Stories of Chaos. Reason and its Displacement in Early Modern English Narrative* (Aldershot et al.: Ashgate, 1999).
- DEBUS, Allen G.: “Alchemy and the Historian of Science”, in: *History of Science* 6 (1967), p. 128–37.
- : *Man and Nature in the Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978).
- : “Renaissance Chemistry and the Work of Robert Fludd”, in: *Alchemy and Chemistry in*

- the Seventeenth Century* (Los Angeles: University of California, William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, 1966), p. 1–25.
- : *Science and Education in the Seventeenth Century* (London: MacDonald, 1970).
- (ed.): *Science, Medicine and Society in the Renaissance. Essays in Honour of Walter Pagel*, 2 Vols. (London: Heinemann, 1972).
- DEMANDT, Alexander: *Metaphern für Geschichte. Sprachbilder und Gleichnisse im historisch-politischen Denken* (München: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1978).
- DENMAN, Jason R.: "Anatomizing the Body Politic: Corporeal Rhetoric in *The Maid's Tragedy*", in: *Philological Quarterly* 84 (2005), p. 311–331.
- DESSEN, Alan C.: *Elizabethan Stage Conventions and Modern Interpreters* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).
- DIEHL, Huston: "'Reduce Thy Understanding to Thine Eye': Seeing and Interpreting in *The Atheist's Tragedy*", in: *Studies in Philology* 78 (1981), p. 47–60.
- DINGLE, Herbert: "Astronomy in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries", in: E. A. Underwood (ed.): *Science, Medicine, and History. Essays on the Evolution of the Scientific Thought and Medical Practise Written in Honour of Charles Singer* (London/ New York/ Toronto: Geoffrey Cumberlege/ Oxford University Press, 1953), p. 455–68.
- DOBIN, Howard: *Merlin's Disciples: Prophecy, Poetry, and Power in Renaissance England* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990).
- : *Prophecy and Politics of Interpretation in Renaissance English Literature*. Diss. Stanford University (1982).
- DOLLIMORE, Jonathan: *Radical Tragedy. Religion, Ideology and Power in the Drama of Shakespeare and his Contemporaries* (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1984, 1989²).
- : "Shakespeare, Cultural Materialism, Feminism and Marxist Humanism", in: *New Literary History* 21.3 (1990), p. 471–493.
- : "Two concepts of mimesis: Renaissance literary theory and *The Revenger's Tragedy*", in: *Drama and Mimesis*, ed. James Redmond (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), p. 25–50.
- / SINFIELD, Alan: *Political Shakespeare. Essays in Cultural Materialism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994²).
- EADE, J. C.: *The Forgotten Sky. A Guide to Astrology in English Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984).
- EASLEA, Brian: *Witch-hunting, Magic and the New Philosophy. An Introduction to Debates of the Scientific Revolution, 1450–1750* (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1980).
- EDGAR, Irving I.: *Shakespeare, Medicine and Psychiatry. An Historical Study in Criticism and Interpretation* (London: Vision, 1971).
- ELIADE, Mircea: *Das Heilige und das Profane. Vom Wesen des Religiösen* (Frankfurt: Insel Verlag, 1984).
- ELLIS-FERMOR, Una: *The Jacobean Drama. An Interpretation* (London: Methuen, 1965).
- ELTON, Geoffrey R.: *Reformation Europe, 1517–1559* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963).
- : *The Tudor Revolution in Government: Administrative Changes in the Reign of Henry VIII* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953).
- ELTON, William R.: "Shakespeare and the Thought of His Age", in: *A New Companion to Shakespeare Studies*, ed. Kenneth Muir/ S. Schoenbaum (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), p. 180–198.

- EMMERSON, Richard Kenneth: *Antichrist in the Middle Ages. A Study of Medieval Apocalypticism, Art, and Literature* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1981).
- ERNE, Lukas: *Beyond The Spanish Tragedy. A Study of the Works of Thomas Kyd. The Revels Plays Companion Library* (Manchester/ New York: Manchester University Press, 2001).
- EVANS, Bertrand: *Shakespeare's Comedies* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960).
- FIGGIS, John Neville: *The Theory of the Divine Right of Kings* (Whitefish, Mont.: Kessinger Publishing, repr. 2007).
- FININ, Kathryn R.: "Re-membering Gloriana: 'Wild Justice' and the Female Body in The Revenger's Tragedy", in: *Renaissance Forum. An Electronic Journal of Early Modern Literary and Historical Studies* 6.2 (2003), on: <http://www.hull.ac.uk/renforum/v6no2/finin.htm>.
- FIRTH, Katherine R.: *The Apocalyptic Tradition in Reformation Britain, 1530–1645* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979).
- FISCHER, Gerhard/ GREINER, Bernhard (eds.): *The Play Within the Play: The Performance of Meta-theatre and Self-reflection. Internationale Forschungen Zur Allgemeinen & Vergleichenden Literaturwissenschaft* (Amsterdam/ New York: Rodopi B. V., 2007).
- FISCHER, Steven R.: "Dreambooks and the Interpretation of Medieval Literary Dreams", in: *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 65 (1983), p. 1–20.
- FLANAGAN, Owen J.: *Dreaming Souls. Sleep, Dreams, and the Evolution of the Conscious Mind* (Oxford/ New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).
- FLETCHER, Angus: *The Prophetic Moment. An Essay on Spenser* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971).
- FLETCHER, Anthony/ ROBERTS, Peter (eds.): *Religion, Culture and Society in Early Modern England: Essays in Honour of Patrick Collinson* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).
- / STEVENSON, John (eds.): *Order and Disorder in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).
- FLORBY, Gunilla: *The Painful Passage to Virtue. A Study of George Chapman's The Tragedy of Bussy D'Ambois and The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois. Lund Studies in English* 61 (Lund: CWK Gleerup, 1982).
- FLY, Richard: *Shakespeare's Mediated World* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1976).
- FORD, Boris (ed.): *Seventeenth Century Britain. The Cambridge Cultural History of Britain IV* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992²).
- FORMAN, Henry James: *The Story of Prophecy* (New York: Tudor Publishing, 1940).
- FOSTER, Verna Ann: „The Deed's Creature: The Tragedy of Bianca in 'Women Beware Women'“, in: *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 78 (1979), p. 508–21.
- FOWLER, Alastair: *Times Purpled Masquers. Cambridge Studies in Renaissance Literature and Culture* 16 (Cambridge/ New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996).
- FOWLER, Elizabeth/ GREENE, Roland: *The Project of Prose in Early Modern England and the New World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).
- FREIST, Dagmar: *Governed by Opinion: Politics, Religion and the Dynamics of Communication in Stuart London, 1637–1645* (London: Tauris, 1997).
- FRENCH, Peter: *John Dee* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972).

- : *Philosophy of Science*. Midwest Studies in Philosophy 15 (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University of Notre Dame Press, 1994).
- FRYE, Northrop: *Anatomy of Criticism. Four Essays* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1957).
- FULBROOK, Mary: "Legitimation Crises and the Early Modern State: the Politics of Religious Toleration", in: Kaspar von Greyerz (ed.): *Religion and Society in Early Modern Europe 1500–1800* (London/ Boston/ Sydney: George Allen & Unwin, in cooperation with The German Historical Institute, 1984), p. 146–156.
- GARBER, Marjorie B.: *Dream in Shakespeare: From Metaphor to Metamorphosis* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974).
- : "What's Past is Prologue: Temporality and Prophecy in Shakespeare's History Plays", in: *Renaissance Genres. Essays on Theory, History and Interpretation*, ed. Barbara Kiefer Lewalski (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986), p. 301–331.
- GARDETTE, Raymond: "Les formes du songe dans le théâtre de Shakespeare", in: *Le Songe a la Renaissance*, ed. Françoise Charpentier (Association d'études sur l'Humanisme, la Réforme et la Renaissance, Colloque International de Cannes 1987), p. 243–54.
- GARIN, Eugenio: *Astrology in the Renaissance. The Zodiac of Life* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983).
- GEERTZ, Hildred: "An Anthropology of Religion and Magic, I", in: *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 6 (1975), p. 71–89.
- GEISEN, Herbert: *Dimension des Metaphysischen in Shakespeares Historien* (Frankfurt am Main: Akademische Verlagsgesellschaft, 1974).
- GENEVA, Ann: *Astrology and the Seventeenth Century Mind. William Lilly and the Language of the Stars* (Manchester/ New York: Manchester University Press, 1995).
- GIBSON, J. P.: *Shakespeare's Use of the Supernatural* (Cambridge: Deighton Bell & Co./ London: George Bell & Sons, 1908).
- GINZBURG, Carlo: *The Cheese and the Worms. The Cosmos of a Sixteenth Century Miller* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980).
- GLADY, Sarah J.: "Revenge as Double Standard in *The Tragedy of Hoffman*", in: *Discoveries* 18.2 (2001), p. 3–4.
- GOLDBERG, Jonathan: *James I and the Politics of Literature. Jonson, Shakespeare, Donne and their Contemporaries* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989).
- GOLDSTEIN, Leonard: *George Chapman: Aspects of Decadence in Early Seventeenth Century Drama* 2. Salzburg Studies. Jacobean Drama Studies (New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1975).
- GRABES, Herbert: *Speculum, Mirror und Looking-Glass*. Anglia. Zeitschrift für Englische Philologie 16 (Tübingen: M. Niemeyer, 1973).
- GRAFTON, Anthony: *New Worlds. Ancient Texts. The Power of Tradition and the Shock of Discovery* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap, 1992).
- / NEWMAN, William R. (eds.): *Secrets of Nature. Astrology and Alchemy in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, Mass./ London: The MIT Press, 2001).
- GRANT, Edward: *Planets, Stars and Orbs. The Medieval Cosmos* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).
- GRANTLEY, Darryll: "Masques and Murderers: Dramatic Method and Ideology in Revenge Tragedy and the Court Masque", in: *Jacobean Poetry and Prose. Rhetoric, Rep-*

- resentation and the Popular Imagination*, ed. Clive Bloom (Houndsmills/ London: Macmillan/ New York: St. Martin's, 1988), p. 194–212.
- GRAS, Henk: *Studies in Elizabethan Audience Response to the Theatre*, 2 vols. (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1993).
- GRAUBARD, Mark: "Astrology's Demise and Its Bearing on the Decline and Death of Beliefs", in: *Osiris* 13 (1958), p. 210–61.
- : *Witchcraft and the Nature of Man* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1985).
- GREENBLATT, Stephen: "Culture", in: *Critical Terms for Literary Studies*, ed. Frank Lentricchia/ Thomas McLaughlin (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), p. 225–32.
- : *Hamlet in Purgatory* (Princeton/ Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2001).
- : *Learning to Curse: Essays in Early Modern Culture* (London: Routledge, 1992).
- : "Psychoanalysis and Renaissance Culture", in: Parker, Patricia/ Quint, David: *Literary Theory/ Renaissance Texts* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986).
- : *Renaissance Self-Fashioning. From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).
- : *Representing the English Renaissance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).
- : *Shakespearean Negotiations. The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988).
- GREYERZ, Kaspar von (ed.): *Religion and Society in Early Modern Europe 1500–1800* (London/ Boston/ Sydney: George Allen & Unwin, in cooperation with The German Historical Institute, 1984).
- : *Vorsehungsglaube und Kosmologie. Studien zu englischen Selbstzeugnissen des 17. Jahrhunderts*. Veröffentlichungen des Deutschen Historischen Instituts London/ Publications of the German Historical Institute London 25, ed. Adolf M. Birke (Göttingen/Zürich: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990).
- GRIFFIN, Benjamin: *Playing the Past. Approaches to English Historical Drama 1385–1600* (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 2001).
- GUIBBORY, Achsah: *The Map of Time. Seventeenth Century Literature and Patterns of Ideas in History* (Urbana/ Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1986).
- GURR, Andrew: *The Shakespearean Stage 1574–1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970).
- : "'Coriolanus' and the Body Politic", in: *Shakespeare Survey* 28: *Shakespeare and the Ideas of his Time*, ed. Kenneth Muir (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), p. 63–70.
- GYMNICH, Marion/ NEUMANN, Birgit/ NÜNNING, Ansgar (eds.): *Kulturelles Wissen und Intertextualität. Theoriekonzeptionen und Fallstudien zur Kontextualisierung von Literatur*. Studies in English Literary and Cultural History (ELCH) 22 (Trier: WVT, 2006).
- HADFIELD, Andrew: *Literature, Politics and National Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).
- HALE, David George: *The Body Politic. A Political Metaphor in Renaissance English Literature* (The Hague/ Paris: Mouton, 1971).
- HALLETT, Charles A./ HALLETT, Elaine S.: *The Revenger's Madness. A Study of Revenge Tragedy Motifs* (Lincoln, Nebraska/ London: University of Nebraska Press, 1980).
- HAMMERSCHMIDT-HUMMEL, Hildegard: *Die Traumtheorien des 20. Jahrhunderts und*

- die Träume der Figuren Shakespeares*. Forum Anglistik (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1992).
- HANKINS, James (ed.): *The Cambridge Companion to Renaissance Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).
- HARRIS, Antony: *Night's Black Agents. Witchcraft and Magic in Seventeenth-Century English Drama* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1980).
- HARRIS, Victor: *All Coherence Gone. A Study of the Seventeenth Century Controversy over Disorder and Decay in the Universe* (London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1949).
- HAUBRICHS, Wolfgang: "Offenbarung und Allegorese. Formen und Funktionen von Vision und Traum in frühen Legenden", in: *Formen und Funktionen der Allegorie*. Symposium Wolfenbüttel 1978. Germanistische Symposien Berichtbände 3, ed. Walter Haug (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1979), p. 243–264.
- HAUPT, Barbara (ed.): *Endzeiterwartungen* (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 2001).
- HART, Vaughan: *Art and Magic in the Court of the Stuarts* (London/ New York: Routledge, 1994).
- HENINGER, S. K. Jr.: *A Handbook of Renaissance Meteorology with Particular Reference to Elizabethan and Jacobean Literature* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1960).
- : *Touches of Sweet Harmony. Pythagorean Cosmology and Renaissance Poetics* (San Marino: The Huntington Library, 1974).
- HENTSCHEL, Evelyn: "Die dramatische Funktion der Requisiten bei Shakespeare", in: *Texte und Untersuchungen zur englischen Philologie* 10 (1981), p. 244–259.
- HERBERMANN, C./ WILLIAMSON, G.: "Dance of Death", in: *In The Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1908).
- HERNDL, George C.: *The High Design. English Renaissance Tragedy and the Natural Law* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1970).
- HESCHEL, Abraham: *The Prophets* (New York: Harper and Row, 1962).
- HESSE, Mary: *Revolutions and Reconstructions in the Philosophy of Science* (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1980).
- HEYWOOD, Abel: *Three Papers on English Printed Almanacks* (London: privately printed, 1904).
- HILL, Christopher: *A Nation of Change and Novelty. Seventeenth Century England* (London: Routledge, 1990).
- : *Antichrist in the Seventeenth Century* (London/ New York/ Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1971).
- : "Science and Magic in Seventeenth Century England", in: Raphael Samuel/ Gareth Stedman Jones (eds.): *Culture, Ideology, and Politics. Essays for Eric Hobsbawm* (London/ Boston/ Melbourne/ Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983), p. 176–93.
- HILL, Eugene D.: "Revenge Tragedy", in: *A Companion to Renaissance Drama*, ed. Arthur F. Kinney (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2002), p. 326–335.
- HINE, William L.: "Marin Mersenne: Renaissance Naturalism and Renaissance Magic", in: Brian Vickers (ed.): *Occult and Scientific Mentalities in the Renaissance* (Cambridge/ London/ New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 165–76.
- HOGLE, Jerrold E.: *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
- HOGREBE, Wolfram (ed.): *Mantik. Profile prognostischen Wissens in Wissenschaft und Kultur* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2005).

- : *Metaphysik und Mantik. Die Deutungsnatur des Menschen* (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1992).
- HOLE, Christina: *English Folklore* (London: B. T. Batsford, 1940).
- : *Witchcraft in England* (London: B. T. Batsford, 1945).
- : *A Mirror of Witchcraft* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1957).
- HOLMES, Clive: "Popular Culture? Witches, Magistrates, and Divines in Early Modern England", in: Steven Kaplan (ed.): *Understanding Popular Culture* (Berlin/ New York/ Amsterdam: Mouton Publishers, 1984), p. 85–111.
- HOWSON, Frank: "Horror and the Macabre in Four Elizabethan Tragedies", in: *Cahiers Elisabethains* 10 (1976), p. 1–11.
- HUEBERT, Ronald: *The Performance of Pleasure in English Renaissance Drama* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).
- HUMPHREY, Chris: *The Politics of Carnival. Festive Misrule in Medieval England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001).
- HUNTER, G. K.: *Dramatic Identities and Cultural Traditions: Studies in Shakespeare and his Contemporaries* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1978).
- : *English Drama 1586–1642. The Age of Shakespeare* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1997).
- : "English Folly and Italian Vice: The Moral Landscape of John Marston", in: *Jacobean Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon Studies* 1 (London: Edward Arnold Ltd, 1960), p. 85–111.
- IDE, Richard S.: "Exploiting the Tradition: The Elizabethan Revenger as Chapman's 'Complete Man'", in: *Medieval & Renaissance Drama in England*, ed. J. Leeds Barroll (New York: AMS Press, 1984), p. 159–172.
- INGRAM, Martin: "Religion, Communities and Moral Discipline in late Sixteenth- and Early Seventeenth-Century England: Case Studies", in: Kaspar von Greyerz (ed.): *Religion and Society in Early Modern Europe 1500–1800* (London/ Boston/ Sydney: George Allen & Unwin, in cooperation with The German Historical Institute, 1984), p. 177–193.
- ISER Wolfgang: "Das Spiel im Spiel. Formen dramatischer Illusion bei Shakespeare", in: *Archiv* 198 (1961–62), p. 209–226.
- JAMES, Dwight Gwilym: *The Dream of Learning. An Essay on The Advancement of Learning Hamlet and King Lear* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1951).
- JANSEN, Sharon L.: *Political Protest and Prophecy under Henry VIII* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1991).
- : "Prophecy, Power, and Politics in the Sixteenth Century", in: *Medievalia et Humanistica. Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Culture* 19 (1992), p. 179–195.
- : "Prophecy, Propaganda, and Henry VIII: Arthurian Tradition in the Sixteenth Century", in: *King Arthur Through the Ages*, Vol. 1, ed. Valerie M. Lagorio/ Mildred Leake Day (New York/ London: Garland Publishing Inc., 1990), p. 275–91.
- JAY, Timothy: *Why we curse. A Neuro-psycho-social Theory of Speech* (Philadelphia/ Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1999).
- JEFFREY, David L.: "Literature in an Apocalyptic Age; or, How to End a Romance", in: *Dalhousie Review* 61 (1981), p. 426–46.
- JENKINS, Harold: *The Life and Work of Henry Chettle* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1934).

- JOBES, Gertrude: *Dictionary of Mythology, Folklore and Symbols* (New York: Scarecrow Press, 1962).
- JOCHUM, Klaus Peter: *Discrepant Awareness. Studies in English Renaissance Drama*. Neue Studien zur Anglistik und Amerikanistik 13 (Frankfurt a. M.: Peter Lang, 1979).
- JOHANSSON, Bertil: *Religion and Superstition in the Plays of Ben Jonson and Thomas Middleton. Essays and Studies on English Language and Literature VII* (Uppsala: A.-B. Lundequitska Bokhandeln/ Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1950).
- JOHNSON, Francis R.: "Astronomical Text-Books in the Sixteenth Century", in: E. A. Underwood (ed.): *Science, Medicine, and History. Essays on the Evolution of the Scientific Thought and Medical Practise Written in Honour of Charles Singer* (London/ New York/ Toronto: Geoffrey Cumberlege/ Oxford University Press, 1953), p. 285–302.
- : *Astronomical Thought in Renaissance England. A Study of Scientific Writings 1500–1645* (New York: Octagon Books, 1937¹, repr. 1968).
- JOHNSON, Nora: *The Actor as Playwright in Early Modern Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).
- JOSEPH, Miriam: "Discerning the Ghost in *Hamlet*", in: *PMLA* 76 (1961), p. 493–502.
- JUCKER, Andreas H./ TAAVITSAINEN, Irma: *Speech Acts in the History of English* (Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2008).
- KANTOROWICZ, Ernst H.: *The King's Two Bodies. A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology* (Princeton: University Press, 1957, rev. 1997).
- KAPLAN, Steven L. (ed.): *Understanding Popular Culture. Europe from the Middle Ages to the Nineteenth Century* (Berlin/ New York/ Amsterdam: Mouton Publishers, 1984).
- KASTAN, David Scott/ STALLYBRASS, Peter: *Staging the Renaissance* (New York/ London: Routledge, 1991).
- : "The Shape of Time: Form and Value in Shakespearean History Play", in: *Comparative Drama* 7 (1973–74), p. 259–277.
- KELLY, Henry Ansgar: *Divine Providence in the England of Shakespeare's Histories* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970).
- KELLY, John Thomas: *Practical Astronomy during the Seventeenth Century. Almanac-Makers in America and England* (New York: Garland, 1991).
- KERRIGAN, John: *Revenge Tragedy. Aeschylus to Armageddon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).
- KESLER, R. L.: "Time and Causality in Renaissance Revenge Tragedy", in: *University of Toronto Quarterly*, Volume 59.4 (1990), p. 474–497.
- KIEFER, Frederick: *Fortune and Elizabethan Tragedy* (San Marino: Huntington Library Press, 1983).
- KINGSLEY, Margery A.: *Transforming the Word. Prophecies in England 1650–1742* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2001).
- KINNEY, Arthur F. (ed.): *The Cambridge Companion to English Literature, 1500–1600* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).
- : *A Companion to Renaissance Drama* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2002).
- KNAPPICH, Wilhelm: *Geschichte der Astrologie* (Frankfurt an Main: Klostermann, 1988).
- KNOWLES, David: *The English Mystical Tradition* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1961).
- KNOWLES, Richard: *Shakespeare and Carnival. After Bakhtin* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 1998).

- KOCH, Bernd: "Bibelauslegung und Endzeiterwartungen in der frühen Neuzeit", in: Barbara Haupt: *Endzeiterwartungen* (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 2001), p. 313–29.
- KOCH, Klaus: *Rediscovery of Apocalyptic* (London: SCM Press, 1972).
- KOCHER, Paul M.: *Science and Religion in Elizabethan England* (San Marino: Huntington Library, 1953).
- KOENIGSBERGER, Dorothy: *Renaissance Man and Creative Thinking. A History of Concepts of Harmony 1400–1700* (Hassocks: The Harvester Press, 1979).
- KOLIN, Philip: *The Elizabethan Stage Doctor as a Dramatic Convention*. Elizabethan and Renaissance Studies. Salzburg Studies in English Studies 41, ed. James Hogg (Salzburg: Institut für Englische Sprache und Literatur, 1975).
- KORNINGER, Siegfried: "Die Geisterszene im Elisabethanischen Drama", in: *Shakespeare Jahrbuch West* 102 (1966), p. 124–145.
- : *Die Naturauffassung in der Englischen Dichtung des 17. Jahrhunderts*. Wiener Beiträge zur Englischen Philologie 64, ed. Leo Hibler-Lebmannsport (Wien/ Stuttgart: Wilhelm Braumüller. Universitäts-Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1956).
- KUHN, Thomas S.: *The Copernican Revolution: Planetary Astronomy in the Development of Western Thought* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1957).
- : *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962).
- KULLMANN, Thomas: *Vermenschlichte Natur. Zur Bedeutung von Landschaft und Natur im englischen Roman von Ann Radcliffe bis Thomas Hardy* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1995).
- KRISTELLER, Paul Oskar: *Renaissance Concepts of Man and Other Essays* (New York/ Evanston/ San Francisco/ London: Harper Torchbooks/ Harper & Row, 1972).
- KROOK, Dorothea: *Elements of Tragedy* (New Haven/ London: Yale University Press, 1969).
- LACY, Dallas Lynn: *Anticipation and Foreboding in Shakespearean Drama* (Diss. Louisiana State University, 1968).
- LÄMMERT, Eberhard: *Bauformen des Erzählens* (Stuttgart: Verlag J. B. Metzler, 1997).
- LaGUARDIA, Eric: *Nature Redeemed. The Imitation of Order in Three Renaissance Poems* (London/ The Hague/ Paris: Mouton & Co., 1966).
- LAKE, Peter: "Deeds against Nature: Cheap Print, Protestantism and Murder in Early Seventeenth-Century England", in: Kevin Sharpe/ Peter Lake (eds.): *Culture and Politics in Early Stuart England* (London, Macmillan, 1994).
- LANDRY, D. E.: "Dreams as History. *Cymbeline*", in: *Shakespeare Quarterly* 33 (1983), p. 68–79.
- LARKEY, Sanford V.: "Astrology and Politics in the First Years of Elizabeth's Reign", in: *Bulletin of the Institute of the History of Medicine* 3.3 (1935), p. 171–85.
- LARNER, Christina: *Witchcraft and Religion. The Politics of Popular Belief* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984).
- LEE, Albert: *Weather Wisdom* (New York: Doubleday, 1976).
- LEE, Sidney Gillmore M./ MAYES, Andrew Richard (eds.): *Dreams and Dreaming. Selected Readings* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973).
- LEECH, Clifford: *Shakespeare's Tragedies and other Studies in Seventeenth Century Drama* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1950).
- : *Shakespeare: the Tragedies. A Collection of Critical Essays* (Chicago/ Toronto: University of Chicago Press, 1965).

- LEGGATT, Alexander: *Shakespeare's Political Drama. The History Plays and The Roman Plays* (London/ New York: Routledge, 1988).
- LE GOFF, Jacques: *The Birth of Purgatory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986).
- LENGELER, Rainer: *Tragische Wirklichkeit als Grotteske Verfremdung bei Shakespeare* (Köln/ Graz: Böhlau Verlag, 1964).
- LEVER, J. W.: *The Tragedy of State. A Study in Jacobean Drama* (London/ New York: Methuen, 1971).
- LEVIN, Michael Henry: "Vindicta Mihi!": Meaning, Morality, and Motivation in *The Spanish Tragedy*", in: *Studies in English Literature 1500–1900* 4.2 (1964), p. 307–324.
- LEWIS, Clive Staples: *The Discarded Image. An Introduction to Medieval and Renaissance Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964).
- LIMON, Jerzy: *Dangerous Matter. English Drama and Politics in 1623/24* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).
- LOBSIEN, Eckhard: *Landschaft in Texten. Zu Geschichte und Phänomenologie der literarischen Beschreibung* (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzlersche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1981).
- LOBSIEN, Verena Olejniczak: "Multi Pertransibunt, oder: Das versprochene Ende. Inszenierungen frühneuzeitlicher Apokalyptik in Shakespeares *King Lear*", in: *Apokalypse. Der Anfang im Ende*, ed. Maria Moog-Grünewald/ Verena Olejniczak Lobsien (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2003), p. 103–127.
- LOGAN, Terence P./ SMITH, Denzell S. (eds.): *The Popular School: A Survey and Bibliography of Recent Studies in English Renaissance Drama* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1975).
- LOMAX, Marion: *Stage Images and Traditions. Shakespeare to Ford* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).
- LOPEZ, Jeremy: *Theatrical Convention and Audience Response in Early Modern Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).
- LOVEJOY, Arthur O.: *The Great Chain of Being. A Study of the History of an Idea* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1953).
- LUCY, Margaret: *Shakespeare and the Supernatural* (Liverpool: Shakespeare Press, 1906).
- LYONS, Bridget Gellert: *Voices of Melancholy. Studies in Literary Treatments of Melancholy in Renaissance England* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971).
- MacDONALD, Michael: *Mystical Bedlam. Madness, Anxiety and Healing in Seventeenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).
- MacPHAIL, Eric: "Prophecy and Memory in the Renaissance Dream Vision", in: *Visions in History. Proceedings of the XIIIth Congress of the International Comparative Literature Association*, ed. Gerald Gillespie (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1995), p. 193–199.
- MADELEINE, R. E. R.: "Stage Imagery in the Atheist's Tragedy", in: Alan Brissenden (ed.), *Shakespeare and Some Others. Essays on Shakespeare and Some of his Contemporaries* (Adelaide: Department of English/ University of Adelaide, 1976), p. 123–145.
- MALINOWSKI, Bronislaw: *Magic, Science and Religion and Other Essays* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, Doubleday & Company, 1948).
- MANHEIM, Michael: "The Weak King Dilemma in the Shakespearean History Play", in: *Renaissance Drama* 2 (1969), p. 71–80.
- MARSH, Christopher: *Popular Religion in Sixteenth Century England. Holding their Peace* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998).

- MARTINES, Laura: *Society and History in English Renaissance Verse* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 1985).
- MATERN, Florian: "Dreams in Spenser's 'Faerie Queene' and its epic successors in the 17th century: Joseph Beuamont's 'Psyche or Loves Myserie', Abraham Cowley's 'Davideis', John Milton's 'Paradise Lost' and Paradise Regained', and Sir Richard Blackmore's 'Prince Arthur' and King Arthur" (Diss. Bonn, 2009), hitherto unpublished.
- MAUS, Katharine Eisaman: *Inwardness and Theater in the English Renaissance* (Chicago/London: The University of Chicago Press, 1995).
- McALINDON, Thomas: *English Renaissance Tragedy* (Houndsmills/ London: Macmillan, 1986).
- : *Shakespeare and Decorum* (London: Macmillan 1973).
- : *Shakespeare's Tragic Cosmos* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).
- McCABE, Richard: *Incest, Drama and Nature's Law 1550–1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).
- / SHUGER, Debora (eds.): *Religion and Culture in Renaissance England* (Cambridge/ New York/ Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1997).
- McGINN, Bernard: *Apocalyptic Spirituality* (New York: Paulist Press, 1979).
- : *Visions of the End. Apocalyptic Traditions in the Middle Ages* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979).
- McINTOSH, Christopher: *The Astrologers and their Creed: An Historical Outline* (London: Hutchinson, 1969/ London: Arrow Books, 1971).
- McLAREN, Anne N.: "Prophecy and Providentialism in the Reign of Elizabeth I", in: Bertrand Taithe/ Tim Thornton (eds.): *Prophecy. The Power of Inspired Language in History 1300–2000* (Stroud: Sutton, 1997), p. 31–50.
- McLEAN, Antonia: *Humanism and the Rise of Science in Tudor England* (London: Heinemann, 1972).
- McMAHON, Vanessa: *Murder in Shakespeare's England* (London/ New York: Hambledon and London, 2004).
- MEHL, Dieter: "Corruption, retribution and justice in *Measure for Measure* and *The Revenger's Tragedy*", in: *The Revels Plays Companion Library. Shakespeare and his Contemporaries. Essays in Comparison*, ed. E. A. J. Honigmann (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986), p. 114–128.
- : *The Elizabethan Dumb Show. The History of a Dramatic Convention* (London/ New York: Methuen, 1965).
- : "Zur Entwicklung des 'Play within a Play' im elisabethanischen Drama", in: *Shakespeare Jahrbuch* 97 (1961), p. 134–152.
- MEIER, Christel: *Gemma spritalis: Methode and Gebrauch der Edelsteinallegorese vom frühen Christentum bis ins 18. Jahrhundert* (München: Wilhelm Fink, 1977).
- MEIER, Christian: *Die politische Kunst der griechischen Tragödie* (München: C. H. Beck, 1988).
- MICHAEL, Otto: *Der Stil in Thomas Kyds Originaldramen* (Berlin: Mayer & Müller, 1905).
- MIDELFORT, H. C. Erik: "Witchcraft, Magic and the Occult", in: Steven E. Ozment (ed.) *Reformation Europe. A Guide to Research* (St. Louis: Center for Reformation Research, 1982), p. 183–209.
- MILLER, John: *Religion in the Popular Prints, 1600–1832. The English Satirical Print, 1600–1832* (Cambridge: Chadwick-Healey, 1986).

- MIOLA, Robert S.: *Shakespeare and Classical Tragedy. The Influence of Seneca* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).
- MONETTE, Sarah: *'It harrows me with fear and wonder': Horror and Haunting in Early Modern Revenge Tragedy* (PhD University of Wisconsin, 2004).
- MONTER, William: *Ritual, Myth and Magic in Early Modern Europe* (Brighton: Harvester, 1983).
- MONTGOMERY, John Warwick: "Cross, Constellation and Crucible. Lutheran Astrology and Alchemy in the Age of the Reformation", in: *Ambix* 11 (1963), p. 65–86.
- MOORMAN, F. W.: *The Interpretation of Nature in English Poetry from Beowulf to Shakespeare*. Quellen und Forschungen zur Sprach- und Culturgeschichte der Germanischen Völker 95, ed. Alois Brandl/ Ernst Martin/ Erich Schmidt (Straßburg: Karl J. Trübner, 1905).
- : "(Pre-)Shakespearean Ghosts", in: *Modern Language Review* 1 (1906), p. 192–201.
- MÜLLER, Anja I.: "Negotiations of Violence in Jacobean Drama", in: *Anglistentag. Proceedings of the Conference of the German Association of University Teachers of English 1999 Mainz* (Trier: wvt, 2000), p. 147–160.
- MUIR, Edward: *Mad Blood Stirring. Vendetta in Renaissance Italy* (Baltimore/ London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998).
- MUIR, Kenneth/ SCHÖNBAUM, Samuel (eds.): *New Companion to Shakespeare Studies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971).
- MULLANY, Peter F.: "Religion and the Artifice of Jacobean and Caroline Drama", in: *Salzburg Studies in English Literature. Jacobean Drama Studies* 41, ed. James Hogg (1977).
- MULRYNE, J. R.: "*The White Devil* and *The Duchess of Malfi*", in: *Jacobean Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon Studies* 1 (London: Edward Arnold Ltd, 1960), p. 201–226.
- MURRAY, Peter B.: *A Study of Cyril Tourneur* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1964).
- NATE, Richard: *Wissenschaft und Literatur im England der frühen Neuzeit* (München: Fink, 2001).
- NEILL, Michael: "Death and *The Revenger's Tragedy*", in: *Early Modern English Drama. A Critical Companion*, ed. Garrett A Sullivan Jr/ Patrick Cheney/ Andrew Hadfield (New York/ Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 164–176.
- : *Issues of Death. Morality and Identity in English Renaissance Tragedy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997).
- : *Putting History to the Question. Power, Politics, and Society in English Renaissance Drama* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000).
- NICOLSON, Marjorie Hope: "English Almanacks and the New Astronomy", in: *Annals of Science* 4 (1939), p. 1–33.
- NORBROOK, David: *Poetry and Politics in the English Renaissance* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984/ rev. ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).
- (ed.): Preface to Lucy Hutchinson: *Order and Disorder* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001).
- : *Writing the English Republic. Poetry, Rhetoric and Politics, 1627–1660* (Cambridge: University Press, 1999).
- NORDLUND, Marcus: *The Dark Lantern. A Historical Study of Sight in Shakespeare/ Webster/ and Middleton*. Gothenburg Studies in English 77 (Göteborg: Acta Universitatis Gothoborgiensis, 1999).

- OBERMARK-CLARK, Gerardine Marie: *The Structural Function of Ghosts, Dreams, Prophecies and Portents in Shakespeare's Plays* (Diss. Indiana University, 1977).
- ORGEL, Stephen: *The Illusion of Power. Political Theory in the English Renaissance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975).
- ORNSTEIN, Robert: "Can We Define the Nature of Shakespearean Tragedy?", in: *Comparative Drama* 19, 1985, p. 258–269.
- : "The Atheist's Tragedy and Renaissance Naturalism", in: *Studies in Philology* 51 (1954), p. 194–207.
- OZ, Avraham: *The Yoke of Love. Prophetic Riddles in The Merchant of Venice* (Newark: University of Delaware Press/ London/ Toronto: Associated Univ. Presses, 1995).
- PARKER, Derek: *Familiar to All. William Lilly and Astrology in the Seventeenth Century 1602–1681* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1975).
- PARKER, Patricia/ QUINT, David: *Literary Theory/ Renaissance Texts* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986).
- PARR, Johnstone: *Tamburlaine's Malady, and Other Essays on Astrology in Elizabethan Drama* (Tuscaloosa, Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1953).
- PARRY, Graham: *The Golden Age Restor'd. The Culture of the Stuart Court, 1603–42* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1981).
- PATTERSON, Annabell: *Censorship and Interpretation. The Conditions of Writing and reading in Early Modern England* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991).
- PATRIDES, Constantinos Apostolos/ WITTEICH, Joseph Antony (eds.): *The Apocalypse in English Renaissance Thought and Literature. Patterns, Antecedents and Repercussions* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1984).
- : *Patterns, Antecedents, and Repercussions* (Manchester/ Dover, New Hampshire: Manchester University Press, 1984).
- PAYNE COLLIER, John: *The History of English Dramatic Poetry to the Time of Shakespeare* (London: John Murray, 1831).
- PESTA, Duke: "Articulating Skeletons. Hamlet, Hoffman, and the Anatomical Graveyard", in: *Cahiers Elisabéthains. A Biannual Journal of English Renaissance Studies* 69 (2006), p. 21–39.
- PITCHER, John/ Susan Cerasano/ Robert Lindsey: *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2002).
- PFISTER, Manfred: *Das Drama* (Stuttgart: UTB, 2001¹¹)
- : *The Theory and Analysis of Drama* (Cambridge: University Press, 1988).
- : "Elizabethan Atheism: Discourse without Subject", in: *Shakespeare Jahrbuch* (West) (1991), p. 59–81.
- PLOMER, H. R.: "English Almanacs and Almanac Makers of the Seventeenth Century", in: *Notes and Queries* 11 (1885), p. 221–2, 262–4, 301–2, 382–4.
- POPKIN, Richard H.: "Predicting, Prophecying, Divining, and Foretelling from Nostradamus to Hume", in: *History of European Ideas* 5 (1984), p. 117–35.
- PORTER, Martin: *Windows of the Soul. The Art of Physiognomy in European Culture 1470–1780* Oxford Historical Monographs (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).
- PRESSON, Robert K.: "Two Types of Dreams in Elizabethan Drama", in: *Studies in English Literature* 7 (1967), p. 239–256.
- PREVITE-ORTON, C.W.: "An Elizabethan Prophecy", in: *History* 2 (1917), p. 207–18.
- PROSSER, Eleanor: *Hamlet and Revenge* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1967²).

- PÜTZ, Peter: *Die Zeit im Drama. Zur Technik dramatischer Spannung* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1970).
- PUMFREY, Stephen (ed.): *Science, Culture and Popular Belief in Renaissance Europe* (Manchester/ New York: Manchester University Press, 1991).
- PURKISS, Diane: *The Witch in History. Early Modern and Twentieth Century Representations* (London: Routledge, 1996).
- RABER, Karen: *Dramatic Difference. Gender, Class, and Genre in the Early Modern Closet Drama* (Newark: University of Delaware Press/ London: Associated University Presses, 2001).
- RATTANSI, P. M.: "Science and Religion in the Seventeenth Century", in: M. Crosland (ed.): *The Emergence of Science in Western Europe* (London: Macmillan, 1975), p. 79–87.
- RAWCLIFFE, D. H.: *Occult and Supernatural Phenomena* (New York: Dover, 1952).
- REAY, Barry (ed.): *Popular Culture in Seventeenth Century England* (London: Croom Helm, 1985).
- REED, Robert Rentoul Jr.: *The Occult on the Tudor and Stuart Stage* (Boston: Christopher Publishing House, 1965).
- REEVES, Marjorie: "English Apocalyptic Thinkers (c.1540–1620)", in: *Storia e figure dell'Apocalisse fra '500 e '600. Atti del 4^o Congresso internazionale di studi giachimiti*, ed. R. Rusconi. Viella, 1996, p. 259–273.
- : "History and Eschatology. Medieval and Early Protestant Thought in Some English and Scottish Writings", in: *Medievalia et Humanistica. Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Culture* 4 (1973), p. 99–123.
- : "Pattern and Purpose in History in the Later Medieval and Renaissance Periods", in: M. Bull (ed.): *Apocalypse Theory and the Ends of the World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 90–111.
- : *The Influence of Prophecy in the Later Middle Ages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press/ Clarendon Press, 1969).
- : *The Prophetic Sense of History in Medieval and Renaissance Europe* (Aldershot, Brookfield/ Singapore/ Sydney: Ashgate (Variorum), 1999).
- : "Some Popular Prophecies from the Fourteenth to the Seventeenth Centuries", in: *Popular Belief and Practise*, ed. G. J. Cuming/ Derek Baker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), p. 107–34.
- REICHERT, Klaus: *Fortuna oder die Beständigkeit des Wechsels* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1985).
- RHYS, Hedley Howell (ed.): *Seventeenth Century Science and the Arts* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1961).
- RIBNER, Irving: *The English History Play in the Age of Shakespeare* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1957, rev. 1965).
- : *Jacobean Tragedy. The Quest for Moral Order* (London: Methuen & Company, 1962).
- REQUENA JIMENEZ, Miguel: *Vorzeichen und Tod*. Lecture at the Seminar für Alte Geschichte der Universität Bonn, on 15 July 2008.
- RIST, Thomas: "Religion, Politics, Revenge: The Dead in Renaissance Drama", on: *Early Modern Literary Studies* 9.1 (2003), on: <http://extra.shu.ac.uk/emls/09-1/rist-dead.html>.

- RIVERS, Isabel: *Classical and Christian Ideas in English Renaissance Poetry* (London/ Boston/ Sydney: George Allen & Unwin, 1979, 1994²).
- ROFFE, Alfred: *An Essay upon the Ghost-Belief of Shakespeare* (London: Hope and Co., 1851).
- ROSENBERGER, Veit: *Griechische Orakel. Eine Kulturgeschichte* (Darmstadt: Theiss, 2001).
- ROSS, Aimee Elizabeth: *From Ghosts to Skulls: Selfhood, Bodies and Gender in Renaissance Revenge Tragedy* (PhD. University of Oregon, 2000).
- ROSS, George MacDonald: "Okkulte Strömungen im 17. Jahrhundert", in: *Friedrich Ueberwegs Grundriss der Geschichte der Philosophie* 5.1, ed. J.-P. Schobinger (Basel: Schwabe, 1998), p. 196–224.
- ROWSE, A. L.: *The Elizabethan Age*, Vol. 3.1: *The Elizabethan Renaissance: 1. The Life of the Society* (London: Macmillan, 1971).
- : *The Elizabethan Renaissance. The Cultural Achievement* (London: Macmillan, 1972).
- : *Simon Forman; Sex and Society in Shakespeare's Age* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1974).
- RUSCHE, Harry: "Prophecies and Propaganda, 1641–1651", in: *English Historical Review* 84 (1969), p. 752–70.
- RUSSELL, Eric: *Astrology and Prediction* (London: B. T. Batsford, 1972).
- SALGADO, Gamini: *The Elizabethan Underworld* (London: Sutton Publishing, 1977).
- SALKELD, Duncan: *Madness and Drama in the Age of Shakespeare* (Manchester/ New York: Manchester University Press, 1993).
- SALZMAN, Paul: *Literary Culture in Jacobean England. Reading 1621* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002).
- SANDERS, Wilbur: *The Dramatist and the Received Idea. Studies in the Plays of Marlowe and Shakespeare* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968).
- SCHABERT, Ina: *Englische Literaturgeschichte. Eine neue Darstellung aus der Sicht der Geschlechterforschung* (Stuttgart: Kröner, 1997).
- : *Shakespeare-Handbuch. Die Zeit. Der Mensch. Das Werk. Die Nachwelt* (Stuttgart: Alfred Kröner Verlag, 1972, rev. 2000⁴).
- SCHAFFER, Simon: "Occultism and Reason", in: A. J. Holland (ed.): *Philosophy, Its History and Historiography* (Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1985), p. 117–43.
- SCHARFF KLEIN, Donald: *Symbolic Foreshadowing in the English History play from Gorboduc to Henry V* (Diss. Pennsylvania State University, 1966).
- SCHECHNER-GENUTH, Sara: *Comets, Popular Culture, and the Birth of Modern Cosmology* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1997).
- SCHMITZ, Götz B.: "Prophetische Elemente in der höfischen Literatur der frühen Stuartzeit", in: Wolfram Högge (ed.): *Mantik. Profile prognostischen Wissens in Wissenschaft und Kultur* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2005), p. 263–273.
- SCHRUFF, Renate: *Herrschergestalten bei Shakespeare. Untersucht vor dem Hintergrund zeitgenössischer Vorstellungen vom Herrscherideal* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1999).
- SCHUCHARD, Marsh Keith: "Freemasons, Secret Societies, and the Continuity of the Occult Traditions in English Literature" (PhD. University of Texas, 1975).
- SCHWARZE, Hans-Wilhelm: *Justice, Law and Revenge. 'The Individual and Natural*

- Order' in Shakespeares Dramen. Studien zur Englischen Literatur 6*, ed. Johannes Kleinstück (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag Herbert Grundmann, 1971).
- SCRIBNER, Robert W.: *For the Sake of Simple Folk. Popular Propaganda for the German Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).
- SENN, Werner: *Studies in the Dramatic Construction of Robert Greene and George Peele. Schweizer Anglistische Arbeiten/ Swiss Studies in English 74* (Bern: Francke Verlag, 1973).
- SEWALL, Richard B.: *The Vision of Tragedy* (New Haven/ London: Yale University Press, 1959).
- SHAPIN, Steven: *The Scientific Revolution* (Chicago/ London: The University of Chicago Press, 1996).
- SHAPIRO, Barbara J.: *Probability and Certainty in Seventeenth-Century England. A Study of Relationships between Natural Science, Religion, History, Law, and Literature* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1983).
- SHARPE, J. A.: *Early Modern England: A Social History, 1550–1760* (London: Edward Arnold, 1987).
- SHARPE, James: *Instruments of Darkness. Witchcraft in Early Modern England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997).
- SHARPE, Kevin: *Politics and Ideas in Early Stuart England. Essays and Studies* (London/ New York: Pinter Publishers, 1989).
- : *Reading Revolutions. The Politics of Reading in Early Modern England* (New Haven/ London: Yale University Press, 2000).
- : *Remapping Early Modern England. Cultures of Seventeenth Century Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).
- LAKE, Peter (eds.): *Culture and Politics in Early Stuart England* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1994).
- SHELL, Alison: *Catholicism, Controversy, and the English Literary Imagination, 1558–1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).
- SHERMAN, William H.: "Anatomizing the Commonwealth. Language, Politics, and the Elizabethan Social Order", in: Elizabeth Fowler/ Roland Greene (eds.): *The Project of Prose in Early Modern Europe and the New World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 104–121.
- SHOWALTER, Elaine: "Representing Ophelia: Women, Madness, and the Responsibilities of Feminist Criticism", in: Patricia Parker/ Geoffrey Hartman (eds.): *Shakespeare and the Question of Theory* (New York: Routledge, 1993), p. 77–94.
- SHUGER, Debora Kuller: *Habits of Thought in the English Renaissance. Religion, Politics, and the Dominant Culture* (Berkeley/ Los Angeles/ Oxford: University of California Press, 1990).
- SHUMAKER, Wayne: *The Occult Sciences in the Renaissance: A Study in Intellectual Patterns* (Berkeley: University of California, 1972).
- SINFIELD, Alan/ DOLLIMORE, Jonathan: "History and Ideology, Masculinity and Miscegenation: The Instance of *Henry V*", in: Alan Sinfield: *Faultlines. Cultural Materialism and the Politics of Dissident Readings* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1992), p. 109–142.
- SISSON, Charles Jasper: *Shakespeare's Tragic Justice* (London: W. J. Gage, 1963).

- SLOAN, A. W.: *English Medicine in the Seventeenth Century* (Durham: Durham Academic Press, 1996).
- SMITH, Alan G. R.: *Science and Society in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1972).
- SMITH, Molly: *Breaking Boundaries. Politics and Play in the Drama of Shakespeare and His Contemporaries* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998).
- : *The Darker World Within. Evil in the Tragedies of Shakespeare and His Successors* (Newark: University of Delaware Press/ London/ Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1991).
- SOUTHERN, R. W.: "Aspects of the European Tradition of Historical Writing: 3. History as Prophecy", in: *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society. 5th Series* 22 (1972), p. 159–80.
- SPENCER, Theodore: *Shakespeare and the Nature of Man* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1951²).
- SPIKES, Judith Doolin: "The Jacobean History Play and the Myth of the Elect Nation", in: *Renaissance Drama. New Series* 8 (1977), p. 117–149.
- SPINRAD, Phoebe: *The Summons of Death on the Medieval and Renaissance Stage* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1987).
- : "The Sacralization of Revenge in *Antonio's Revenge*", in: *Comparative Drama* 39.2 (2005), p. 169–185.
- SPURGEON, Caroline F. E.: *Shakespeare's Imagery and what it tells us* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1935).
- STAHL, Amy L.: *Blasting Binaries and Humanizing Humans: Thomas Middleton's Feminism* (M.A. Thesis Florida State University, 2007).
- STAMM, Renate: *The Mirror-Technique in Senecan and Pre-Shakespearean Tragedy*. The Cooper Monographs 23. Theatrical Physiognomy Series (Bern: Francke, 1975).
- STEINER, George: "The Historicity of Dreams", in: *Salmagundi* 61 (1983), p. 6–21.
- STEWART, Bain Tate: "The Misunderstood Dreams in the Plays of Shakespeare and His Contemporaries", in: *Essays in Honor of Walter Clyde Curry* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1954), p. 197–206.
- STEWART, Helen Hinton: *The Supernatural in Shakespeare* (London: John Ouseley, 1908).
- STOLL, Elmer Edgar: *Shakespeare Studies. Historical and Comparative in Method* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1927).
- STONE, Walter B.: "Shakespeare and the Sad Augurs", in: *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 52 (1953), p. 457–79.
- STOTT, Andrew: "Tiresias and the Basilisk: Vision and Madness in Middleton and Rowley's *The Changeling*", in: *Revista Alicantina de Estudios Ingleses* 12 (1999), p. 165–179.
- STRONG, Roy: *Art and Power. Renaissance Festivals 1450–1650* (Melton: Boydell & Brewer, 1984).
- : *The Spirit of Britain. A Narrative History of the Arts* (London: Pimlico, 2000).
- STROUP, Thomas B.: *Microcosmos. The Shape of the Elizabethan Play* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1965).
- STRUVE, Jürgen: *Das Traummotiv im Drama des XVII. Jahrhunderts* (Diss. Kiel, 1913).
- SUERBAUM, Ulrich: *Das Elisabethanische Zeitalter* (Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam, 1989).
- TAITHE, Bertrand/ THORNTON, Tim (eds.): *Prophecy. The Power of Inspired Language in History 1300–2000* (Stroud: Sutton, 1997).

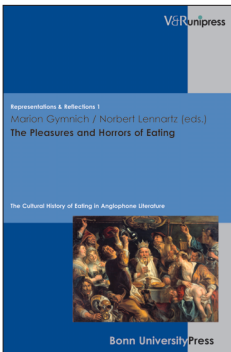
- TAKEI, Naoe: "Dreams as Metaphysical Visions", in: *Shakespeare Studies* 8 (1969), p. 18–47.
- TALBERT, Ernest William: *The Problem of Order. Elizabethan Political Commonplaces and an Example of Shakespeare's Art* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1962).
- TALLMADGE, G. Kasten: "On the Influence of the Stars on Human Birth", in: *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 13 (1943), p. 251–67.
- TAYLER, Edward William: *Nature and Art in Renaissance Literature* (New York/ London: Columbia University Press, 1964).
- TAYLOR, Rupert: *The Political Prophecy in England* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1911).
- TEAGUE, Frances: "Letters and Portents in *Julius Caesar* and *King Lear*", in: *The Shakespeare Yearbook* 3 (1992), p. 87–102.
- TETZELI von ROSADOR, Kurt: *Magie im Elisabethanischen Drama. Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen und Literaturen, Beiheft V* (Braunschweig: Georg Westermann Verlag, 1970).
- THIHER, Allen: *Revels in Madness. Insanity in Medicine and Literature* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999).
- THOMAS, Keith: "An Anthropology of Religion and Magic, II", in: *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 6 (1975), p. 91–109.
- : *Man and the Natural World* (London: Allen Lane, 1983).
- : *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1971/ Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973).
- THORNDIKE, A. H.: "The Relations of Hamlet to Contemporary Revenge Plays", in: *PMLA* 17 (1902), p. 155–166.
- THORNDIKE, Lynn: *A History of Magic and Experimental Science* (London/ New York: Columbia University Press, 1923–58).
- THORNTON, Tim: "Reshaping the Local Future: The Development and Uses of Provincial Political Prophecies, 1300–1900", in: Bertrand Taithe/ Tim Thornton (eds.): *Prophecy. The Power of Inspired Language in History 1300–2000* (Stroud: Sutton, 1997), p. 51–67.
- TILLYARD, E. M. W.: *The Elizabethan World Picture* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1943).
- : *Shakespeare's History Plays* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1962²).
- TOMPKINS, J. M. S.: "Tourneur and the Stars", in: *The Review of English Studies* 22 (1946), p. 315–319.
- TOOLE, William B.: "The Nurse's 'Vast Irreverence': Thematic Foreshadowing in *Romeo and Juliet*", in: *South Atlantic Bulletin* 45 (1980), p. 21–30.
- TOULMIN, Stephen: "Seventeenth Century Science and the Arts", in: Hedley Howell Rhys (ed.): *Science and the Arts* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1961), p. 23–8.
- TREUMANN, Rudolf: *Die Elemente. Feuer, Erde, Luft und Wasser in Mythos und Wissenschaft* (München: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1997).
- TRICOMI, Albert: *Reading Tudor-Stuart Texts Through Cultural Historicism* (Gainesville et al.: University Press of Florida, 1996).
- : "Historicizing the Imagery of the Demonic in *The Duchess of Malfi*", in: *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 34.2 (2004), p. 345–372.
- UHLIG, Claus: *Hofkritik im England des Mittelalters und der Renaissance. Studien zu*

- einem Gemeinplatz der europäischen Moralistik (Berlin/ New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1973).
- UNDERWOOD, E. A. (ed.): *Science, Medicine, and History. Essays on the Evolution of the Scientific Thought and Medical Practise Written in Honour of Charles Singer* (London/ New York/ Toronto: Geoffrey Cumberlege/ Oxford University Press, 1953).
- UNTERREITMEIER, Hans: "Deutsche Astronomie/ Astrologie im Spätmittelalter", in: *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 65 (1983), p. 21–41.
- USHER HENDERSON, Katherine/ McMANUS, Barbara F.: *Half Humankind. Contexts and Texts of the Controversy about Women in England, 1540–1640* (Urbana/ Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1985).
- VAN PATTEN, Jonathan K.: "Magic, Prophecy, and the Law of Treason in Reformation England", in: *The American Journal of Legal History* 27 (1983), p. 1–32.
- VICKERS, Brian: "Analogy vs. Identity: the rejection of occult symbolism, 1580–1680", in: Brian Vickers (ed.): *Occult and Scientific Mentalities in the Renaissance* (Cambridge/ London/ New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 95–163.
- WALLER, G. F.: "Time, Providence and Tragedy in 'The Atheist's Tragedy' and 'King Lear'", in: *English Miscellany* 23 (1972), p. 55–74.
- WALSHAM, Alexandra: *Providence in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).
- WEBER, Max: *Selections in Translations*, ed. W. G. Runciman, transl. Eric Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978).
- WEIDHORN, Manfred: *Dreams in Seventeenth-Century English Literature* (The Hague/ Paris: Mouton, 1970).
- WEIMANN, Robert: *Shakespeare and the Popular Tradition in the Theater* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978).
- WESTFALL, Richard S.: *Science and Religion in Seventeenth Century England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1958).
- WHITE, R. S.: *Natural Law in English Renaissance Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).
- WHITMORE, Charles Edward: *The Supernatural in Tragedy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press/ London: Humphrey Milford/ Oxford University Press, 1915).
- WIGGINS, Martin: "Conjuring the Ghosts in *The White Devil*", in: *Review of English Studies: A Quarterly Journal of English Literature and the English Language* 48 (1997), p. 448–470.
- WIGHTMAN, W. P. D.: *Science and the Renaissance. An Introduction to the Study of the Emergence of the Sciences in the Sixteenth Century* (Edinburgh/ London: Oliver and Boyd, 1962).
- WILLIAMS, Ann (ed.): *Prophecy and Millenarianism. Essays in Honor of Marjorie Reeves* (London: Longman, 1980).
- WILSON, John Dover: *What happens in Hamlet* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1935¹, 2003).
- WILSON, Luke: "The White Devil and the Law", in: *Early Modern English Drama. A Critical Companion*, eds. Garrett A. Sullivan, Jr./ Patrick Cheney/ Andrew Hadfield (New York/ Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 225–236.
- WILSON, Stephen: *The Magical Universe. Everyday Ritual and Magic in Pre-Modern Europe* (London/ New York: Hambledon and London, 2000).

- WIMBERLY, Lowry Charles: *Folklore in the English and Scottish Ballads* (Whitefish, Mont.: Kessinger Publishing, repr. 2006).
- WINNY, James: *The Frame of Order. An Outline of Elizabethan Belief Taken From Treatises of the Late Sixteenth Century* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1957).
- WITTREICH, Joseph: *Image of that Horror* (San Marino: Huntington Library, 1984).
- WYMER, Rowland: *Suicide and Despair in the Jacobean Drama* (Brighton: The Harvester Press, 1986).
- YATES, Frances A.: *The Occult Philosophy in the Elizabethan Age* (London/ Basingstoke/ Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979).
- ZAUNSCHIRM, Thomas (ed.): *Die Farben Schwarz* (Wien/ New York: Springer, 1999).
- ZIMMERMANN, Heinz: "Die ideologische Krise in *King Richard II*", in: Uwe Baumann (ed.): *William Shakespeare. Historien und Tragödien. Neue Wege der Forschung* (Darmstadt: WBG, 2007), p. 15–34.

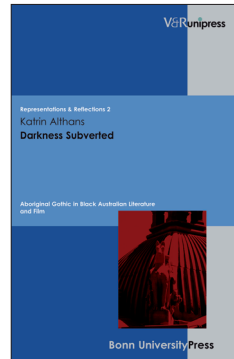
Weitere Bände dieser Reihe:

V&R
unipress



Band 1
Marion Gymnich /
Norbert Lennartz (Hg.)
The Pleasures and Horrors of Eating
The Cultural History of Eating in Anglo-
phone Literature
2010. 464 Seiten, gebunden
€ 57,90 D / € 59,60 A / SFr 94,00
ISBN 978-3-89971-775-4

In this volume, early modern ideas of feasting, banqueting and culinary pleasures are juxtaposed with post-18th- and 19th-century concepts in which the intake of food is increasingly subjected to moral, theological and economic reservations. Various images, rhetorics and poetics of plenty are seen in the context of modern phenomena such as the anorexic body or the gourmandizing *bête humaine*.



Band 2
Katrin Althans
Darkness Subverted
Aboriginal Gothic in Black Australian
Literature and Film
2010. 224 Seiten, gebunden
€ 39,90 D / € 41,10 A / SFr 65,00
ISBN 978-3-89971-768-6

At the heart of the Gothic novel lies the binary of »self« and »other«, which in colonial literature was quickly filled with representations of the colonial master and his indigenous subject. Contemporary black Australian artists have transformed this colonial Gothic discourse into an Aboriginal Gothic. This study centres on the question of how the Gothic can be permeated by elements of indigenous Australian culture in order to portray the current situation of Aboriginal Australians and to celebrate a recovered cultural identity.

V&R unipress

www.vr-unipress.de | Email: info@vr-unipress.de | Tel.: +49 (0)551 / 50 84-301 | Fax: +49 (0)551 / 50 84-333