

*The Avengers Tragedy, Allegorical Decay,  
and the Fierce Urgency of Now*



# Revenge Tragedy

## The Spanish Tragedie:

OR,

Hieronimo is mad againe.

Containing the lamentable end of *Don Horatio*, and  
*Belimperia* with the pittifull death of *Hieronimo*.

Newly corrected, amended, and enlarged with new  
Additions of the *Painters* part, and others, as  
it hath of late beene divers times acted.



LONDON,

Printed by *W. White*, for *I. White* and *T. Langley*,  
and are to be sold at their Shop over against the  
*Sarazens* head without New-gate. 1615.

## THE MOST LA- mentable Romaine

Tragedie of Titus Andronicus:

As it was Plaide by the Right Ho-  
nourable the Earle of *Dorset*, Earle of *Pembroke*,  
and Earle of *Suffex* their Seruants,



LONDON,

Printed by *Iohn Danter*, and are  
to be sold by *Edward White* & *Thomas Aspley*,  
at the little North doore of *Pauley* at the  
signe of the Gunne,  
1594.

## THE Tragicall Historie of HAMLET,

Prince of Denmarke.

By *William Shakespeare*.

Newly imprinted and enlarged to almost as much  
again as it was, according to the true and perfect  
Copie.



AT LONDON,

Printed by *I. R.* for *N. L.* and are to be sold at his  
shoppe vnder *Saint Dunstons* Church in  
*Fleetstreet*. 1607.

## ANTONIOS REVENGE.

The Second Part of the Hi-  
storie of *ANTONIO* and  
*MELLIDA*.

*As it hath beene sundry times acted  
by the Children of Pauls.*

*Written by I. M.*



LONDON,

Printed for *WILLIAM SHEERES*.

1633.

# Francis Bacon on Revenge

Revenge is a kind of wild justice; which the more man's nature runs to, the more ought law to weed it out. For as for the first wrong, it doth but offend the law; but the revenge of that wrong, putteth the law out of office. Certainly, in taking revenge, a man is but even with his enemy; but in passing it over, he is superior; for it is a prince's part to pardon. That which is past is gone, and irrevocable; and wise men have enough to do, with things present and to come; therefore they do but trifle with themselves, that labor in past matters. . . . The most tolerable sort of revenge, is for those wrongs which there is no law to remedy; but then let a man take heed, the revenge be such as there is no law to punish; else a man's enemy is still beforehand, and it is two for one. Some, when they take revenge, are desirous, the party should know, whence it cometh. This is the more generous. For the delight seemeth to be, not so much in doing the hurt, as in making the party repent. Public revenges are for the most part fortunate; as that for the death of Caesar . . . . But in private revenges, it is not so. Nay rather, vindictive persons live the life of witches; who, as they are mischievous, so end they infortunate.

# “Purposes Mistook / Fall'n on the Inventor's Heads”

De contemptu mundi / memento mori / et arcadia ego

The “revenger’s delay”

“Webster was much possessed by death  
and saw the skull beneath the skin”

-- T. S. Eliot

Senecan Tragedy--University Performance



# The question of authorship

--Revengers Tragedy entered anonymously into the Stationer's Register 7 Oct 1607

--attributed to Cyril Tourneur, author of The Atheist's Tragedy, in a 1656 play list

--modern scholarship generally assigned the play to Thomas Middleton, Shakespeare's younger contemporary and occasional collaborator

# The Satirical Mode

Now in this Towne were many sundrie sorts of people of all ages; as Old, and young, and middle age: men, women, and children: which did eate, and drinke, and make a noyse, and die . . . they were Creatures that served the time, followed Shaddowes, fitted humours, hoped of Fortune, and found, what? I cannot tell you....

The Cuckold hangs downe his head: the thiefe hideth his face: the Prodigall fetcheth a déepe sighe: and the Louer with infolded armes, and (perhappes) a wéeeping Eye, singes a Ballad of his Brainsicknes, to the tune of *O man in desperation*. (Cyril Tourneur, *Laugh and Lie Down, Or the Worlds Folly*)

*Micro-cynicon.*

# SIXE SNAR-

ling Satyres.

Infatiat	Cron.
Prodigall	Zodon.
Insolent	Superbia.
Cheating	Droone.
Ingling	Pyander.
Wife	Innocent.

*Ad sis pulcher homo canis hic tibi  
pulcher emendo.*



Imprinted at London by Thomas Creede,  
for Thomas Bushell, and are to be sold  
at his shop at the North doore of  
Paules Church. 1599.

....a pale Chequered black Hermophrodite.  
Sometimes he jets it like a Gentleman,  
Otherwhiles much like a wanton Courtesan:  
But truth to tell a man or woman whether,  
I cannot say shees excellent in either.  
But if Report may certifie a truth,  
Shees neither of either, but a Cheating youth.  
Yet Troynovant that all admired towne,  
Where thousands still do travell vp and downe,  
Of Bewties counterfeits affords not one,  
So like a lovely smiling paragon,  
As is Pyander in a Nymphes attire,  
Whose rolling eye sets gazers' hearts on fire:  
Whose cherry lip, black brow & smiles procure  
Lust burning buzzards to the tempting lure.  
What shall I cloake sin with a coward feare,  
And suffer not Pyander's sin appeare?  
I will I will: your reason? why, Ile tell,  
Because time was, I loved Pyander well:

When, as is the case in the Trauerspiel, history becomes part of the setting, it does so as a script. The word “history” stands written on the countenance of nature in **the characters of transience**. The allegorical physiognomy of the nature-history [Natur- Geschichte], which is put on stage in the Trauerspiel, is present in reality in the form of the ruin. In the ruin history has physically merged into the setting. And in this guise **history** does not assume the form of the **process of an eternal life so much as that of irresistible decay**.

Allegory thereby declares itself to be beyond beauty. Allegories are, in the realm of thoughts, what ruins are in the realm of things. . . . That which lies here in ruins, the highly significant fragment, the remnant, is, in fact, the finest material in baroque creation. For it is common practice in the literature of the baroque to **pile up fragments ceaselessly, without any strict idea of a goal, and, in the unremitting expectation of a miracle**, to take the repetition of stereotypes for a process of intensification. The baroque writers must have regarded the work of art as just such a miracle. (Origin 177–78)







THE  
Pleasant Comedie of  
Old Fortunatus.

As it was plaied before the Queenes  
Maestie this Christmas by the Right  
Honourable the Earle of Notting-  
ham, Lord high Admirall of Eng-  
land his Servants.



LONDON

Printed by S. S. for William Aspley, dwelling in  
Pauls Church-yard at the signe of the  
Tygers head. 1600.

15015

**1** **A** Re you then traueiling to the temple of Eliza?

**2** Euen to her temple are my feeble limmes traueiling. Some cal her Pandora: some Gloriana, some Cynthia: some Delphabe, some Astræa: all by seuerall names to expresse seuerall loues: Yet all those names make but one celestially body, as all those loues meete to create but one soule.

**1** I am one of her owne countrie, and we adore her by the name of Eliza.

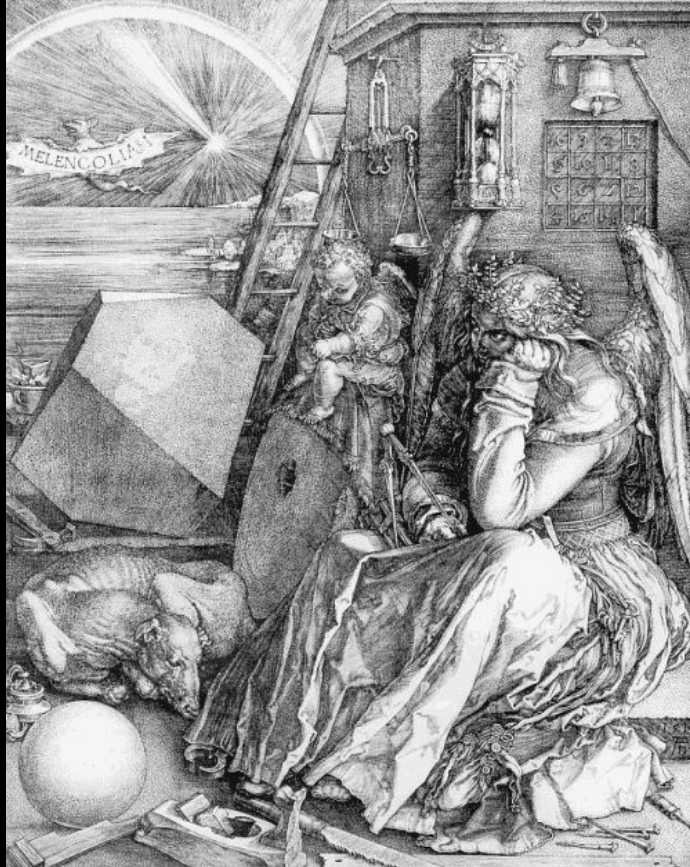
**2** Blessed name, happie countrie: Your Eliza makes your land Elizium: but what doe you offer?

**1** That which all true Subiects should: when I was young, an Armed hand; now I am crooked, an vpright heart: But what offer you?

I weepe for ioy to see the Sunne looke old,  
To see the Moone mad at her often change,  
To see the Starres onely by night to shine,  
Whilst you are still bright, still one, still diuine:  
I weepe for ioy to see the world decay,  
Yet see Eliza flourishing like May:



# Melancholy and Allegory



**QUEEN GERTRUDE** Come, come, you answer with an idle tongue.

**HAMLET** Go, go, you question with a wicked tongue.

**QUEEN GERTRUDE** Why, how now, Hamlet!

**HAMLET** What's the matter now?

**QUEEN GERTRUDE** Have you forgot me?

**HAMLET** No, by the rood, not so:  
You are the queen, your husband's brother's wife;  
And--would it were not so!--you are my mother.

**QUEEN GERTRUDE** Nay, then, I'll set those to you that can speak.

**HAMLET** Come, come, and sit you down; you shall not budge;  
You go not till I set you up a glass  
Where you may see the inmost part of you.

**QUEEN GERTRUDE** What wilt thou do? thou wilt not murder me?  
Help, help, ho!



# Providence and Allegory

**Vindice** O, thou almighty patience! 'Tis my wonder / That such a fellow, impudent  
and wicked, / Should not be cloven as he stood, / Or with a secret wind burst  
open. / Is there no thunder left, or is't kept up / In stock for heavier vengeance?  
There is goes (4.2.193-198)

**Lussorioso** I am not pleased at that ill-knotted fire, / That blushing, flaring star.  
Am I not duke?.... [*To the blazing star*] You thing, we shall forget you quite anon.  
(5.3.18-20; 39)

**Vindice** Mark thunder! / Dost thou know thy cue, thou big-voiced crier? / Dukes'  
groans are thunder's watchwords . . . / No power is angry when the lustful die. /  
When thunder claps heaven likes the tragedy (5.3.43-44; 47-48)



# Danse Macabre





“We die after a nest of dukes”

