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The Language of Violence in Early Modern Tragedies, 1580-1630

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Abstract

This project takes an interdisciplinary approach to early modern drama, analyzing how playwrights conceive of and represent violence via the visual, material, rhetorical, and performance cultures that inform their work. It suggests that rhetoric and action are inextricably intertwined and that this intertwining is especially forceful, heightened, and affective during moments of staged violence on the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English stage. As a result, violent speech generates not only meaning and feeling, but also material forms of violent action and impact, endowing the embodied act with particularly forceful potential. Rhetoric is not just *heard* in the theatre, it is *enacted*, it is *felt*, and it is *experienced*.

As such, this thesis is attuned to and explores the violent potential of embodied rhetoric by examining premodern plays with a methodology that is positioned at the intersection between rhetoric and performance, using both textual analysis and practice as research to offer up a new critical approach that enables us to see the spectacular and affective power of violence in the rhetoric and performances of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century tragedies. As I unpick the linguistic roots of violence in these plays and the ways they manifest on stage, I define two specific and identifiable vocabularies of violence: the first, a descriptive vocabulary of *language about violence* and the second, a demonstrative vocabulary of *violent language*. Using these vocabularies, I argue that language plays an imperative role in generating and enlivening acts of violence on stage, in defining its performance, and in provoking an emotional response in both actors and audience members in the early modern period and today.

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I am grateful to the friends and colleagues who generously read my work, helped me think aloud, forced me to take breaks, and lent me their brains and bodies for proofreading and practice as research. You are all excellent people, and I hold your friendship close. Special thanks go to Megan Batterbee, Sierra Carter, Dr. Daniella Gonzalez, Lucy Holehouse, Kayla Kaufmann, Anouska Lester, Shelly Lorts, Jack Newman, Emily Smith, Noah Smith, and Katie Toussaint-Jackson. Kristine Gift gets her own separate acknowledgment because she has believed in this project from its start as an application draft and has read most of it.

I am indebted to the graduate students and ECRs who have offered help, a sounding board, and good counsel or kept me well-supplied with cards, cookies, and the occasional pangolin: Dr. Ella Hawkins, Dr. Erin Julian, Dr. Tom Lawrence, Dr. Hannah Lilley, Dr. Nora Williams, the Revels Office padlet, and my FEMS officemates. I would also be remiss to not mention Snug, who stuck close by my

side through the final weeks of this thesis and is surely the world's most patient kitten.

Finally, I am thankful for my family and my second family, who supported and encouraged me from afar while I ran halfway across the world to get a Ph.D., and to my MEMS family, who supported me once I got here.

COVID-19 Preface

There is no doubt that the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns had a serious impact on this thesis. When the U.K. entered its first lockdown in March 2020, I had just started work on a reevaluation of Chapter One and was still working to complete my research on *The Spanish Tragedy*. Out of necessity, I made do with the books I had already checked out of the library and what research material I could access online. The revisions of each chapter and the bulk of the work done on my introduction and conclusion were also hampered by the lack of physical access to libraries and materials. Some older, often foundational secondary material was not fully digitized (or, indeed, digitized at all) and other sources were behind steep paywalls that were and are prohibitive. I have endeavored to fill gaps like these to the best of my ability given the materials that were available, often relying on colleagues at other institutions, resources like MEMSlib, and the kindness of strangers on Twitter.

The impact I felt most acutely was the sudden inability to complete my planned practice as research events. Instead of holding in-person workshops, I transitioned the majority of my practice-based work to practitioner interviews, performance analysis, and a virtual workshop held online. While I am now confident that these reimagined events helped me develop a more well-rounded investigation of the embodied performance of early modern drama (and that they do not offer radically different conclusions than the workshops they replaced might have done), they represent a significant departure from my original plans and should be viewed as the best effort to continue with my doctoral research during a global crisis.

Note on Texts

Where possible, I have chosen to cite the most recent critical edition of each text, using the New Oxford Shakespeare's *Modern Critical Edition*, the Collected Works of Thomas Middleton, and the Arden Early Modern Drama Series. After the first footnote, subsequent references to plays are incorporated into the body of the text. When quoting from non-dramatic early modern sources, I have retained the original spelling, punctuation, and italicization and, where editorial intervention is needed, I have marked my additions or emendations with square brackets in the quotation. Where page signatures are unavailable in the early printed text, I have used page numbers. Throughout, I have standardized any uses of the long 's' and made substitutions for 'u', 'v', or 'w' in place of the Latinate 'u' and 'i' or 'j' for the Latinate 'i' in both the main text and footnotes. Dates for non-Shakespearean drama are taken from *British Drama 1533-1642: A Catalogue* by Martin Wiggins, in association with Catherine Richardson; dates for Shakespearean drama are from *The New Oxford Shakespeare: Authorship Companion*, edited by Gary Taylor and Gabriel Egan.

Introduction

In 1615, the writer I. G. took issue with the tragedies being performed on London's public stages. The problem, the writer argued, was that

[t]he matter of Tragedies is haughtinesse, arrogancy, ambition, pride, injury, anger, wrath, envy, hatred, contention, warre, murther, cruelty, rapine, incest, rovings, depredations, piracies, spoyles, robberies, rebellions, treasons, killing, hewing, stabbing, dagger-drawing, fighting, butchery, trechery, villany &c. and all kind of heroyick evils whatsoever.¹

I. G.'s vivid description of the "heroyick evils" one might expect to encounter in the theatre, provides some insight into the popularity of violent subject matter in the drama of the late sixteenth- and early-seventeenth centuries — the period of English drama from which this thesis draws its material. Sensationally bloody and violent plays captivated their viewers; as Linda Woodbridge writes, "authors wouldn't have kept writing or companies staging such plays unless audiences flocked to them".² Violence was popular in print as well: according to Woodbridge, "[w]here most plays were printed only once (or never)", twenty different revenge plays were reprinted in two or more editions from the 1580s 'til the closure of the theatres in 1642.³ Clearly early modern audiences had a vested interest in the spectacular "villany" of the stage, whether or not they were as bothered by it as I. G. was.⁴

¹ I. G. (John Greene?), *A refutation of the Apology for actors Divided into three briefe treatises. Wherein is confuted and opposed all the chiefe groundes and arguments alleaged in defence of playes: and withall in each treatise is deciphered actors, 1. heathenish and diabolicall institution. 2. their ancient and moderne indignitie. 3. the wonderfull abuse of their impious qualitie.* By I. G. (London: 1615), p. 56. STC (2nd ed.) 12214.

² Linda Woodbridge, *English Revenge Drama: Money, Resistance, Equality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 4.

³ Woodbridge, p. 4.

⁴ I. G., p. 56.

The root of I. G.'s complaint, however, is not just that such plays "tend [...] to the dishonour of God, and nourishing of vice, both which are damnable".⁵ He insists that commercial theatre, in particular tragedies, are doubly dangerous because their "action is two-fould, in word, and in deede".⁶ This thesis builds upon I. G.'s second accusation, that the violent spectacles of the early modern stage occurred both in word and in deed. In attending to and grappling with violence in early modern drama, this thesis looks to both the words (dramatic texts and spoken performances) and deeds (dramatic performances of embodied action) that form, shape, and enhance acts of violence on stage and, in so doing, expands the critical understanding of violence both performed and written. It suggests that the body of the actor activates the verbal utterance, and that the embodied action of performance works to enact, heighten, and make real violence on stage. In the following introduction, I will offer a working definition of modern and early modern violence; locate early modern staged violence within a legacy of performance and rhetorical traditions that stem from the drama and rhetoric of the ancient world and the medieval period; outline the textual and practice-based methods that inform my work; and summarize the existing scholarship that the thesis builds on, as well as the critical gaps that it seeks to fill.

Defining Violence

Violence is a notoriously slippery term; it is easily recognizable in real world contexts, used to describe acts of terrorism, police brutality, settler-colonialism, riots, insurrections, genocide, homicide, sexual assault, and domestic

⁵ I. G., p. 56.

⁶ I. G., p. 56.

and psychological abuse (to name but a few), yet it resists narrow definition, as the range of circumstances listed here shows. Most definitions focus solely on the physical aspect of the word, categorizing violence as the “deliberate exercise of physical force” or “the use of excessive physical force, which causes or has the potential to cause harm or destruction”.⁷ But increasingly, the word “violence” can be used to refer to verbal, emotional, psychological, natural, and ideological acts, in addition to physical acts, and can occur on an individual or a systemic level. Larry Ray summarized it neatly by saying that violence “permeates the unstable divisions between public and private, legitimate and illegitimate, individual and collective”; in other words, it is a complex phenomenon of experience that can take on multiple forms and is therefore worth a closer and more detailed examination in light of its capaciousness.⁸ This thesis examines the complexities of violence at the intersection of and the intersection between word and deed, analyzing the language of embodied performance in order to propose a more nuanced method of defining, describing, and examining the potent stage violence that permeates early modern plays.

While physical force is certainly one important component of violence as not only an early modern but also a modern concept, it is far from the only one. Violence can take the form of psychological and emotional abuse, marked by deliberate attempts to scare, threaten, humiliate, degrade, or manipulate someone, or find expression as slander or “back-biting” — a phrase that frames

⁷ “Violence, n.”, *OED*, 1a.; J. Coakley and P. Donnelly, *Sports in Society: Issues and Controversies*, 2nd edn. (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson), p. 188. These definitions follow the etymology of the word “violence”, from the Anglo-Norman ‘*violence*’ and Middle French ‘*violence*’, which indicate an “unreasonable or excessive use of force, [or the] power of a natural force or physical action”. (“Violence, n.”, *OED*.)

⁸ Larry Ray, *Violence and Society*, 2nd edn. (London: SAGE Publications, 2018), p. 2. See also Charles Tripp, ‘Memories of Violence: Introduction’, *Journal of the British Academy*, 8(s3), 1-6 (p. 5).

slander as a physical and material thing.⁹ Violence occurs in the natural world as tornados, hurricanes, derechos, or, as R. A. Foakes points out, shipwrecks.¹⁰ Violence can manifest as systemic inequality, where minority populations are subjected to redlining (the deliberate segregation of minority communities and subsequent denial of upward socio-economic mobility based on location) and over-policing (a holdover from racialized slavery and, in the United States, Jim Crow laws, which hinge on the “suspension of legal norms” to punish arbitrary crimes and misdemeanors).¹¹ Early modern dictionaries define violence both more narrowly and more broadly than the modern definitions above — Kim Solga, whose work is focused on sexual violence in early modern performance, notes that, in regards to the legal definition of domestic assault, “the early moderns defined a very limited array of such acts [as rape or physical abuse] as violence proper”.¹² Acts that, in the twenty-first century, would be broadly grouped and understood from a legal standpoint as violent crimes against a woman were instead viewed and prosecuted in relation to the family unit, the community, or the state; to quote Solga, in the eyes of the law, “[r]ape was a crime against a household, a husband or father, his goods, property and honour;

⁹ National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, ‘Emotional Abuse’, <<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/emotional-abuse/>> [accessed 20 May 2021]; Sandrine Parageau, “‘Play, utopia or anguish?’ Accounting for the Persistence of the Discourse against Slander from the Middle Ages to the Early Modern Period”, *Style*, 51.2 (2017), 207-227 (p. 207-208); David Cressy, *Dangerous Talk: Scandalous, Seditious, and Treasonable Speech in Pre-Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 1.

¹⁰ R. A. Foakes, *Shakespeare and Violence* (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 10.

¹¹ Matthew Bennis, Matthew Ruther, Nicholas Nash, Matthew Bozeman, Brian Harbrecht, and Keith Miller, ‘The impact of historical racism on modern gun violence: Redlining in the city of Louisville, KY’, *Injury*, 51 (2020), 2192-2198 (p. 2193); Jesse A. Goldberg, ‘Theorizing and Resisting the Violence of Stop and Frisk-Style Profiling’, *CLA Journal*, 58.3-4 (2015), 256-276 (p. 260). See also Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (New York: The New Press, 2012).

¹² Kim Solga, *Violence Against Women in Early Modern Performance: Invisible Acts* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p. 7. See also Frances E. Dolan, *Dangerous Familiars: Representations of Domestic Crime in England 1550-1700* (Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 1994), p. 1.

domestic violence was ‘reasonable correction’, a form of household-ordering essential to the proper functioning of parish, county, and state”.¹³ While these acts were subject to legislation and therefore taken seriously, their specific legal categorization as, for instance, the theft of a male guardian’s property, means that our modern sense of what counts as violence does not easily map onto the narrower early modern understanding of the same.¹⁴

On the other hand, if one turns from the legal to linguistic definitions of violence in the period, John Baret’s *An Alvearie* (1574) offers a wide scope of usages for lemmas of “force, strength, [and] violence”, ranging from “[w]rested from one by violence, constrayned by tormentes, forced” and the “vehemency of custome”, to such meanings as “to compell” or “to be of force or power,” and finally, the “[v]ehemencie, and force of words”.¹⁵ Four decades later, Robert Cawdry’s *Table Alphabeticall of Words* (1617) broadly defines the word “violent” as anything “forcible, cruell, [or] injurious” — a remarkably expansive interpretation that can be applied to any number of circumstances.¹⁶ Henry Cockeram calls those who are violent “impetuous” in his 1623 *English Dictionarie*, while violence itself is assigned the broader use of “great force”.¹⁷ As Katherine Ackley writes, then, it is perhaps more helpful from a methodological point of view to “use the term ‘violence’ in its broadest sense, including not only such obvious physical

¹³ Solga, p. 7.

¹⁴ Solga, p. 8; see also Karen Bamford, *Sexual Violence on the Jacobean Stage* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 2000), p. 3-7.

¹⁵ John Baret, *An Alvearie or Triple Dictionarie, in Englishe, Latin, and French* (London: 1574), <<https://leme.library.utoronto.ca/lexicon/entry/127/2229>> [accessed 7 June 2021]. STC (2nd ed.) 1410.

¹⁶ Robert Cawdry, *A table alphabeticall, or the English expositor containing and teaching the true writing and vnderstanding of hard vsuall English words, borrowed from the Hebrew, Greeke, Latine, or French, &c.*, 4th edn. (London: 1617), I7r. STC (2nd ed.) 4886.

¹⁷ Henry Cockeram, *The English dictionarie: or, An interpreter of hard English words* (London: 1623), G1v, C4r. STC (2nd ed.) 5461.2.

aggressions as rape, battering, or murder, but also such spiritual and psychological assaults as badgering, economic deprivation, domination, and confinement”.¹⁸ Clearly, then, violence offers up a variety of avenues for scholarly exploration, as it is made up of not only the obvious acts of aggression, but also the insidious and psychologically scarring acts done and words said behind closed doors. In each case, however, violence consists of the deliberate and forceful exertion of one’s will over another, in an attempt to control or destroy.

In the medieval and early modern periods, violence was recognized as both a positive and negative force. For this reason, Warren C. Brown notes that “medieval accounts of violence can seem contradictory”, both “lawless and anarchic, as a force for evil that disrupts the right order of the world” and yet also “a tool of right and justice”.¹⁹ Violence could be felt, whether physically or by perceiving the disruption of the natural order of things, as well as seen and heard. In this context, Baret’s warning about the “[v]ehemencie, and force of words” highlights the degree to which medieval and early modern society was wary of words and sounds as agents of violence and disorder.²⁰ The fifteenth-century treatise *Jacob’s Well* deals explicitly with what Clare Wright calls the “morally corrosive aspects” of hearing others’ violent, “angry words”; the *Jacob’s Well* author advised readers that they should smite “out of þi mowth stryif, chydyng, & woordys of discord” — in short, “angry and boystous woordys” mark people out as “angry folk”.²¹ Rather than returning angry, violent words with more violence,

¹⁸ Katherine Anne Ackley, ‘Introduction’, *Women and Violence in Literature: An Essay Collection* (New York & London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1990), xi-xviii (p. xi).

¹⁹ Warren C. Brown, *Violence in Medieval Europe* (Abingdon & New York: Routledge, 2014), p. 1-2.

²⁰ John Baret, entry 127.

²¹ Clare Wright, ‘Acoustic Tyranny: Metre, Alliteration and Voice in Christ before Herod’, *Medieval English Theatre*, 34 (2012), 3-29 (p. 21); *Jacob’s Well: An English Treatise on the Cleansing of Man’s Conscience*, ed. by Arthur Brandeis (London: Early English Text Society, 1900), p. 267.

one should instead speak “with myldenes of softe woordys”, not engaging in the sins of an “euyll tunge”.²² In one sixteenth-century text, the tongue is again described as “an unruly evill”, and Edward Nisbet warns that an uncontrolled tongue “defileth the whole body” and, when turned on others, “breaketh ye bones” — rather a different idea from the modern proverb, “sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me”.²³ Nisbet quotes, in part, from the Epistle of James, characterizing the tongue as full of “deadly poison” and lending a sense of physicality to the words that are the product of the unruly “little member”.²⁴ This sense of language’s physicality was not unique to the early modern period; Chris Woolgar cites the work of medieval philosopher John Blund, who built on texts by Aristotle and other classical thinkers to posit that breath itself was “a material substance — a subtle form of air — [that] might be perceived as a form of touch”.²⁵ These visceral descriptions of, and reactions to, words as a nexus of violence reflect the way that language was conceived of as a physical thing in the early modern period, capable of being embodied and having a real, bodily impact.

But violence could also be imagined, as Brown writes, as “a weapon for the protection of the poor and helpless”.²⁶ Stuart Carroll notes that private violence, that is to say, acts of violence committed by individuals rather than state structures, usually acts of revenge or retribution, were “widely accepted” in the

²² Brandeis, p. 267, 152.

²³ E. Nisbet, *Caesars dialogue or A familiar communication containing the first institution of a subject, in allegiance to his soveraigne* (London: 1601), p. 33. STC (2nd ed.) 18432.5. “Sticks and stones” is thought to have first appeared in print in *The Christian Recorder* (March 1862). The proverb also appears as “sticks and stones may break my bones, / But names will never hurt me”, see Mrs. George Cupples, *Tappy’s Chicks and Other Links Between Nature and Human Nature* (London: Strahan & Co., 1872), p. 78.

²⁴ *The Geneva Bible*, James 3:8, 3:5. Nisbet terms this “Adders poyson”, p. 33. See also Cressy, p. 5.

²⁵ C. M. Woolgar, *The Senses in Late Medieval England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), p. 64.

²⁶ Brown, p. 2.

late Middle Ages, “even if its legality was being eroded”.²⁷ Private feuds and duels were considered noble acts, driven by ritual and duty to one’s family, and a means by which to establish, defend, or maintain a divinely-ordered sense of justice.²⁸ But private violence as a means of addressing private wrongs was also denounced by “clerics and moralists” and was eventually outlawed in England, though it continued to be practiced.²⁹ Publicly, violence was legitimized through what Annalisa Castaldo calls the “spectacles of public execution and torture used by the early modern state”.³⁰ The scaffold, gallows, stake, and pillory all represented sites of violence that, as Sarah Covington argues, quickly “imprinted themselves on the early modern imagination”; the violence of crime was answered with the violence of punishment, with the intention of not only deterring further offenses, but also, as Randall McGowen writes, publicly “writ[ing] the message of justice” on the bodies of the offenders in order to restore order to society.³¹ In these cases, too, violence is linked to control, whether that manifests as control by an individual or by the state.

The control afforded by state-sanctioned, public acts of violence meant that such acts and the tools used to accomplish them became ultra-visible in the streets

²⁷ Stuart Carroll, *Blood and Violence in Early Modern France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 10.

²⁸ Carroll, p. 10-11.

²⁹ Fredson T. Bowers, *Elizabethan Revenge Tragedy, 1587 - 1642* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), p. 12; Carroll, p. 11; Foakes, p. 109.

³⁰ Annalisa Castaldo, “‘These were spectacles to please my soul’: Inventive Violence in the Renaissance Revenge Tragedy”, in *Staging Pain, 1580 - 1800: Violence and Trauma in British Theatre*, ed. by James Robert Allard and Mathew R. Martin (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2009) 49-56 (p. 56). For a brief overview of the performative nature of legal punishment in the medieval period, see Lynn Forest-Hill, *Transgressive Language in Medieval English Drama: Signs of Challenge and Change* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), p. 13-19.

³¹ Sarah Covington, ‘Cutting, Branding, Whipping, Burning: The Performance of Judicial Wounding in Early Modern England’, in *Staging Pain, 1580 - 1800: Violence and Trauma in British Theatre*, ed. by James Robert Allard and Mathew R. Martin (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2009), 93-110 (p. 95); Randall McGowen, ‘Punishing Violence, Sentencing Crime’, in *The Violence of Representation: Literature and the History of Violence*, ed. by Nancy Armstrong and Leonard Tennenhouse (London: Routledge, 1989), 140-156 (p. 143).

of early modern London. Not only were the instruments of violence listed above (the scaffold, gallows, stake, and pillory) prominently positioned in the city, but the results of those violent acts were also displayed equally prominently, with, for instance, heads on spikes on London Bridge.³² These were explicitly intended to be viewed, providing a visual reminder of the law's prerogative to enact violent punishment on those judged criminals or traitors. Executions and corporal punishment were, in Desmond Manderson's words, "a normal weapon in the arsenal of the state, [which were] accomplished publicly"; state violence, then, was framed as a form of discipline that was meant to, in the words of the Book of Job, "return [the people] from iniquity".³³ As such, the law holds a necessarily complicated relationship with violence, where, as Austin Sarat writes, "[t]he law depends on violence and uses it as a counterpunch to the allegedly more lethal and destructive violence situated just beyond [the] law's boundaries".³⁴ In effect, the state engaged in what Andreas Höfele calls "calculated savagery", toeing the line between violent acts as crimes and violent acts as correctives.³⁵ The next section of this introduction examines developments in the tradition of violence in English theatrical performance, positioning the use of physical and verbal violence

³² Katherine Royer, 'The Body in Parts: Reading the Execution Ritual in Late Medieval England', *Historical Reflections / Réflexions Historiques*, 29.2 (2003), 319-339 (p. 324).

³³ Desmond Manderson, *Songs Without Music: Aesthetic Dimensions of Law and Justice* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), p. 114; *The Bible*, trans. by William Whittingham, Anthony Gilby, and Thomas Sampson (Geneva, 1560), Job 36:10. Hereafter cited as *The Geneva Bible*. See also Subha Mukherji, *Law and Representation in Early Modern Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 13; and Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process: State Formation and Civilization*, trans. by Edmund Jephcott (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1982), p. 240.

³⁴ Austin Sarat, 'Introduction', in *Law, Violence, and the Possibility of Justice*, ed. by Austin Sarat (Princeton & Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2001), 3-16 (p. 3).

³⁵ Andreas Höfele, *Stage, Stake, and Scaffold: Humans and Animals in Shakespeare's Theatre* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 37. See also Lorna Hutson, *The Invention of Suspicion: Law and Mimesis in Shakespeare and Renaissance Drama* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 66; James A. Sharpe, *Crime in Early Modern England 1550-1750*, 2nd edn. (London: Routledge, 2013), p. 87, 90; and John Witte, Jr., *The Reformation of Rights: Law, Religion, and Human Rights in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 282-283.

together as an embodied act with particularly forceful potential on the early modern stage.

Violence in Performance

Public displays of judicial violence are, as Covington demonstrates, inherently theatrical, emphasizing the visual spectacle of public executions and the act of group spectatorship that bridges medieval and early modern performance cultures.³⁶ She notes the potential for interaction in some types of lesser punishments (that is, those that did not end in execution), “with onlookers able to contribute to the punishment themselves by hurling rotten fruit, rocks, or even dead cats at the pilloried offenders”.³⁷ This model of participation was partially influenced by folk performances, and Covington draws a direct link between the violence of state-sanctioned punishment and the mock violence of mummers’ plays, which could “contain menacing if not violent currents, including mock decapitations that generated laughter”.³⁸ Margaret Owens, too, cites the use or display of apparatuses of capital punishment, including “stocks, a pillory, manacles, a gibbet, a heading ax, and a heading block”, alongside performances of mock violence during Christmas revels, folk dramas, and court festivities.³⁹ The dramatization of violence was equally important to the performance of medieval religious plays, which staged spectacles like Cain’s murder of his brother, Abel, the

³⁶ Covington, p. 94.

³⁷ Covington, p. 95. See also Forest-Hill’s description of the participatory mockery in which audiences engaged during medieval biblical plays; Forest-Hill, p. 51-62; and Mitchell B. Merback’s work on penal spectacles and audiences, *The Thief, the Cross, and the Wheel: Pain and the Spectacle of Punishment in Medieval and Renaissance Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), p. 18-19.

³⁸ Covington, p. 96.

³⁹ Margaret Owens, *Stages of Dismemberment: The Fragmented Body in Late Medieval and Early Modern Drama* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2005), p. 43-44.

Slaughter of the Innocents, and the Crucifixion, inviting the audience to engage with the visceral visual imagery of Cain beating his brother to death, mothers loudly mourning the loss of their massacred infants, and Christ's scourged and wounded body, staged with alarming realism.⁴⁰ Jody Enders discusses some of the special effects of late medieval passion plays, including fake blood, iron caps and wigs, "fake rocks, cudgels, knives, daggers, and whips", and stuffed corpse props "full of bones and entrails" — devices that facilitated a realistic and multi-sensory staging of Christ crucified or a martyr burned at the stake.⁴¹ Enders writes of the variety of responses that staged accounts of the Passion might evoke, from "horror, terror, fear, and trembling in some; [to] pity, mercy, and empathy in others; [even] yucks and guffaws"; the acts of violence involved in the Crucifixion, however, formed the basis of Christian theology, and medieval passion plays used the dramatized body of Christ to represent what Enders conceives of as the metaphorical and embodied "battlefield for a greater conflict between Christian and pagan forces".⁴² It is on this legacy of bodily violence and suffering that early modern drama (with its interest in what Bowers calls "blood-revenge") builds — and the way this legacy is enacted and embodied that is the focus of this thesis.⁴³

Such is the prevalence of blood and revenge in early modern drama that modern scholarship has established an entire genre category for it: revenge tragedies. In his foundational work defining and investigating the genre, Bowers categorized these plays as those in which "revenge constitutes the main action[.]

⁴⁰ See Forest-Hill on the *Slaughter* plays, p. 59-60 and Clifford Davidson on dramatizations of Cain and Abel, *History, Religion, and Violence: Cultural Contexts for Medieval and Renaissance English Drama* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002) p. 101-116 (particularly p. 110-111).

⁴¹ Jody Enders, *The Medieval Theater of Cruelty: Rhetoric, Memory, Violence* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1999), p. 193-195.

⁴² Enders, *Cruelty*, p. 180, 181.

⁴³ Bowers, p. 3.

in the sense that the audience is chiefly interested in the events which lead to the necessary revenge for murder, and then in the revenger's action in accordance with his vow".⁴⁴ Bowers, however, seems to view the violence of revenge drama as an unfortunate element to be tolerated, not studied; he notes the "rough and straightforward bloodshed" of early revenge plays and the "sensationalism and artificiality" of later works, but rather than dwell on these acts of violence, he frames them as "background material" and focuses instead on how revenge plays act, in his words, as a study in villainy and "a testing ground for the human spirit".⁴⁵ Expanding on Bowers' work, Castaldo points out that violence is not a secondary or background concern in revenge drama, but instead the genre "is marked out by the elaborate nature of the revenger's violence, and the public element of the various tortures and murders attached to the revenge".⁴⁶ Castaldo is right: when Bowers and others (notably Peter Sacks) refer to the spectacular acts of violence that are the hallmark of revenge drama as "trickery" or a kind of inadequate elegy put into action, they trivialize such acts as additional to or, as Castaldo writes, "a weakness of" these plays, rather than central to them.⁴⁷ Just as medieval religious drama worked to embody and make real the representation of Christ's suffering, so too does early modern revenge drama work to draw out and display both the violence and suffering a revenger has endured and the violence which acts as remedy. In this way, the violence of revenge stems from a desire for retribution: one bad deed deserves (or indeed, necessitates) another. Janet Clare, in her work on revenge drama, frames retribution as a means of "effecting closure and

⁴⁴ Bowers, p. 63.

⁴⁵ Bowers, p. 154, 155. See also p. 165.

⁴⁶ Castaldo, p. 49.

⁴⁷ Bowers, p. 72; Peter Sacks, 'Where Words Prevail Not: Grief, Revenge, and Language in Kyd and Shakespeare', *ELH*, 49.3 (1982), 576-601 (p. 577); Castaldo, p. 49, see also p. 54.

restoring balance” but notes that the imaginative and horrific designs of the revenger “tend to be more cruel and insatiable” than the original offence.⁴⁸ Those who engage in vengeful acts of violence, then, are less concerned with the appropriateness or parity of their response than with personal retaliation and (in Francis Bacon’s frequently quoted words) “wild justice”.⁴⁹

There was both a biblical and classical precedence for the wild justice of violent revenge. The Old Testament book of Numbers instructs its readers that “[t]he revenger of the blood himself shall slay the murderer: when he meeteth him, he shall slay him” and promises that when “the revenger of blood slay[s] the murderer, he shall be guiltless”.⁵⁰ King David’s song of praise in 2 Samuel likewise speaks to the divinely sanctioned right of vengeance, saying, “[i]t is God that giveth me power to revenge me, and subdue the people under me”.⁵¹ God, too, could be counted on to take revenge; God tells Moses in Deuteronomy that “[v]engeance and recompense are mine: [...] for the day of their destruction is at hand”.⁵² The prophet Isaiah paraphrases this promise, saying, “behold, your God cometh with vengeance, even God with a recompense”, and Paul reiterates it in his letter to the Romans: “Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but give place unto wrath; for it is written, Vengeance is mine: I will repay, saith the Lord”.⁵³ These verses indicate a somewhat contradictory set of beliefs regarding the role of revenge in a morally upstanding Christian life — that is, should vengeance be left solely to God, as Paul

⁴⁸ Janet Clare, *Revenge Tragedies of the Renaissance* (Horndon: Northcote House Publishers Ltd, 2006), p. 1.

⁴⁹ Francis Bacon, *The essays, or counsels, civil and moral, of Sir Francis Bacon, Lord Verulam, Viscount St. Alban with a table of the colours of good and evil, and a discourse of The wisdom of the ancients : to this edition is added The character of Queen Elizabeth, never before printed in English.* (London, 1696), B5^r. Wing (2nd ed.) B296.

⁵⁰ *The Geneva Bible*, Numbers 35:19, 27.

⁵¹ *The Geneva Bible*, 2 Samuel 22:48.

⁵² *The Geneva Bible*, Deuteronomy 32:35.

⁵³ *The Geneva Bible*, Isaiah 35:4, Romans 12:19.

instructs in the New Testament, or is the act of taking revenge oneself a God-given right, as Numbers suggests in the Old Testament.

Some theologians interpreted this shift as an important development from the Old to New Testament: there was no longer any need to take personal revenge (as in Numbers and 2 Samuel) because, as Paul indicates in his letter to the Hebrews, “Christ himself had fulfilled these duties under the new covenant”.⁵⁴ The preacher Alexander Ross recalled God’s covenant with Noah after the flood, writing that “this covenant that God made with Noah concerning the waters, is the figure of that everlasting covenant of peace which the father hath made with us in Christ”.⁵⁵ William Westerman, in a sermon on private revenge, also cited the new covenant as the means by which “the sword of vengeance is wrested out of every private mans hand”.⁵⁶ For Ross and Westerman, humans should work to emulate God’s promise that “I will henceforth curse the ground no more for man’s cause [...] neither will I smite anymore all things living”, living, instead, in peace.⁵⁷ Yet Westerman also acknowledged that it was, at times, the duty of a Christian to enact revenge in God’s stead:

“The life and blood of the murderer is owing to the Lord, who putteth the sword into the Magistrates hand to make payment and satisfaction for blood wrongfully shedde: there is no way to purge the land from blood, but to strike the offender”.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ *The Geneva Bible*, Hebrews 9:24n. See also Matthew 5:17-20.

⁵⁵ Alexander Ross, *The Second Booke of Questions and Answers Upon Genesis, Containing those questions that are most eminent and pertinent, from the sixth to the fifteteenth Chapter of the same Booke. Collected out of ancient and recent Writers: Briefly propounded and expounded.* (London: 1622), p. 26. STC (2nd ed.) 21325.5.

⁵⁶ William Westerman, *Two Sermons of Assise The one intituled; A prohibition of Reuenge: The other, A Sword of Maintenance. Preached at two seuerall times, before the Right worshipfull Iudges of Assise, and Gentlemen assembled in Hertford, for the execution of iustice: and now published.* (London: 1600), p. 37-38. STC (2nd ed.) 25282.

⁵⁷ *The Geneva Bible*, Genesis 8:21.

⁵⁸ Westerman, p. 26.

Westerman's concession, coupled with the Old Testament notion of revenge as a right given by God, consequently left some room for individual interpretation. This moral grey area in turn provided the opportunity for more imaginative investigations of violent revenge, which sixteenth- and seventeenth-century dramatists exploited through work that highlighted the tension between revenge as divine justice or as unlawful and excessive private retribution.

Early English dramatists' use of violence on the commercial stage was also partially influenced by the translation of a collection of Seneca's tragedies into English in 1581, as much critical work has identified.⁵⁹ While Seneca's dramatic, rhetorical, and philosophical works were well-read in Latin at the universities and Inns of Court, Thomas Newton's publication of *Seneca His Tenne Tragedies* made the Roman author's work much more widely available to English readers outside of Oxford, Cambridge, and the Middle Temple. Newton's work (facilitated by multiple translators) brought to the fore a clear 'Senecan' style that caught English readers' and writers' imaginations; in recent work on Seneca's influence, Susanna Braund describes the "perverse violence and declamatory rhetoric" of Senecan plays, as well as the proliferation of "ghosts and tyrants" that were soon also found in English drama, and Emily Mayne cites the distinct "rhetorical, linguistic, and thematic features [of] tragedies by Seneca" that influenced early modern writers.⁶⁰ Anthony Boyle outlines these in more detail, noting the "spectacle, bombast, paradox, epigram, brevity, plenitude, abstraction, grandeur, violence,

⁵⁹ Some Senecan plays were available in individual translations earlier than the 1580s; Jasper Heywood, for example, translated the Senecan tragedy *Thyestes* in 1560. Newton's edition marked the first instance of a printed collection of Seneca's works in English.

⁶⁰ Susanna Braund, 'Haunted by Horror: The Ghost of Seneca in English Renaissance Drama', in *A Companion to the Neronian Age*, ed. by Emma Buckley and Martin T. Dinter (Chichester: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2013), 424-443 (p. 441); Emily Mayne, 'Presenting Seneca in Print: Elizabethan Translations and Thomas Newton's *Seneca His Tenne Tragedies*', *The Review of English Studies*, 70.297 (2019), 823-846 (p. 845).

disjunction, allusion, [and] sensuousness” that appear in the classical plays and became visible in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century drama as well.⁶¹ Seneca’s work is also marked, Boyle writes, by his “psychological insight[s]” and use of “violent imagery”, which, when coupled with his forceful rhetoric, could “overwhelm the audience with [its] verbal power”.⁶² For Boyle, however, Seneca’s influence and use in England “extended beyond allusion, action and form. It encompassed thought, idea and meaning”; in other words, Seneca and his work provided English Renaissance readers, writers, and thinkers with a framework through which to interpret the world and attend to (or grapple with) issues of ethics, passion, power and authority, and justice in both individual and social settings.⁶³

Seneca’s use of violence, in particular, caught the Renaissance imagination and has been written about at length. It is now a critical truism that Senecan violence relies on rhetoric: the gruesome deaths, bloodshed, and acts of torture which appear in Senecan tragedy were usually, though not always, as Tanya Pollard points out, “narrated [by a messenger] rather than performed onstage”, using language to create vivid mental images of Oedipus, killing his father, Agamemnon, murdered by his wife and her lover, or Thyestes, whose sons are killed and fed to him during a feast.⁶⁴ These are not, Pollard reminds us, ‘just’ murders; rather, Seneca’s plays verbally present gruesomely savaged bodies, described in great and gory detail, putting previously unimaginable acts into

⁶¹ Anthony Boyle, *Tragic Seneca: an essay in the theatrical tradition* (London: Routledge, 1997), p. 18.

⁶² Boyle, p. 15, 18.

⁶³ Boyle, p. 167.

⁶⁴ Tanya Pollard, ‘Tragedy and revenge,’ *The Cambridge Companion to English Renaissance Tragedy*, ed. by Emma Smith and Garrett A. Sullivan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 58–72 (p. 66).

words.⁶⁵ The evocative detail with which these acts of violence were described served, as Carolyn McKay writes, to “compel the audience to envision the inferred violence from a self-reflexive viewpoint, provoking an awareness of their own vulnerability to the uncontrollable forces of misfortune and evil”.⁶⁶ Senecan drama was particularly interested in crimes that were enacted on the body itself, particularly those that centered around (as Brian Arkins summarizes) “torture, mutilation, incest and corpses”.⁶⁷ Robert Miola argues that, in Seneca’s plays, violent crime became “the central principle of tragic action and design”, the action around which the whole play revolved.⁶⁸ Seneca offered playwrights access to violence as theatrical spectacle, where the best way to respond to bodily crime was by outdoing them — or, as Clytemnestra says in *Agamemnon*, “*per scelera semper sceleribus tutum est iter*”, that is, “crimes always find a safe way through crimes”.⁶⁹ This became the preoccupying phrase associated with Senecan tragedy, as writers and dramatists borrowed from classical texts or invented new, bloodier acts of violence that necessitated even more brutal and excessive acts of revenge.

At the same time as these English playwrights were adapting and responding to the surfeit of newly translated classical dramatic material, they were also aware of and in conversation with the changing political landscape of

⁶⁵ Pollard, p. 66-67. Nancy Sorkin Rabinowitz has written more specifically on the role of the messenger in reporting acts of violence that occur offstage, see Rabinowitz, *Greek Tragedy* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), p. 28-29.

⁶⁶ Carolyn McKay, ‘Murder Ob/Scene: The Seen, Unseen, and Ob/scene in Murder Trials’, *Law Text Culture*, 14 (2010), 79-93 (p. 81).

⁶⁷ Brian Arkins, ‘Heavy Seneca: His Influence on Shakespeare’s Tragedies’, *Classics Ireland*, 2 (1995), 1-16 (p. 4).

⁶⁸ Robert S. Miola, *Shakespeare and Classical Tragedy: The Influence of Seneca* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), p. 16.

⁶⁹ Seneca, *Agamemnon*, ed. and trans. by John G. Fitch, Loeb Classical Library 78 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018), l. 115. This quotation also appears in Thomas Kyd, *The Spanish Tragedy*, ed. by Clara Calvo and Jesús Tronch (London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2013), 3.13.6.

their time. Much recent scholarship has sought to examine these political dimensions and the impact they have on the social and cultural contexts of English revenge tragedies as a genre. In work on the trauma of violence in early modern drama, Deborah Willis emphasizes the fact that the popularity of violent revenge drama was contemporary to discussions around “expand[ing] a centralized legal system” in England, and so playwrights and theatre companies responded by writing and staging plays that questioned and examined the effectiveness of private vengeance, “state-centered justice”, and the opportunities for corruption that each made available.⁷⁰ Public authorities could be unscrupulous just as private individuals could be vindictive, and revenge drama provided a space to unpick and problematize revenge narratives, positioning the audience between both sides, “producing divided loyalties and shifting, ambivalent identifications [...] between opposing sides”.⁷¹ Those studying at the Inns of Court were particularly interested in interrogating the nuances of violent revenge through drama, using Seneca’s argument that the only way through crime was by committing more crimes — “*per scelera semper sceleribus tutum est iter*” — as an argument against traditional practices of private revenge.⁷² One of the earliest Inns of Court plays that was explicitly concerned with blood-revenge was *Gorboduc, or Ferrex and Porrex* (1562), which follows the Senecan five act

⁷⁰ Deborah Willis, “‘The Gnawing Vulture’: Revenge, Trauma Theory, and “Titus Andronicus”, *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 53.1 (2002), 21-52 (p. 23, 24). See also Derek Dunne’s discussion of early modern Londoners’ resistance to the legal remedies of the time, *Shakespeare, Revenge Tragedy and Early Modern Law: Vindictive Justice* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), p. 163; and Heather Hirschfeld on the ways revenge drama addresses political inequity, ‘Playing with Hell: *The Revenger’s Tragedy* and the Infernal’ in *The Revenger’s Tragedy: The State of Play*, ed. by Gretchen E. Minton (London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2017), 61-84 (p. 72).

⁷¹ Willis, p. 24.

⁷² Kristine Steenbergh, ‘Gendering Revenge in *The Spanish Tragedy*: feminine fury and the contagiousness of theatrical passion’, in *Doing Kyd: Essays on The Spanish Tragedy*, ed. by Nicoleta Cinpoș (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018), 53-72 (p. 56-57).

structure and uses a messenger and Chorus to describe and interpret acts of violence to and for the audience. But, crucially, the English use of Seneca did not restrict visual depictions of violence to the offstage space, nor did it rely solely on verbal descriptions; instead, the *Gorboduc* playwrights, Thomas Norton and Thomas Sackville, used dumb shows (that is, a condensed part of the play's narrative "represented by action without speech") to represent acts of violence before they happened — a practice Jonathan Bate describes as symbolic anticipation.⁷³ "Symbolic" is the key word here: while *Gorboduc* included violence that was both spoken and enacted (albeit separately), Norton and Sackville followed the Senecan precedent for rhetorical reports of violence that could move a listener through carefully crafted figures of speech.

More and more, however, early modern English dramatists became interested in the action of violence itself and brought it onto the stage in full view of the audience. Unlike in *Gorboduc*, where the king's counselors debate and advise on each course of action and its consequences, the tragedies staged in the public theatres took the bloody business of revenge from second-hand report to first-hand experience. While the violence of Elizabethan revenge drama certainly borrowed from the structure, form, and style of Seneca's tragedies Bate notes that, "[a]t its core, popular tragedy was not Senecan. How could it be, when what was required for popularity was not philosophizing but action, replete with spectacle".⁷⁴ Yet Seneca retained a strong influence over Elizabethan tragedy, even as it evolved from his works; in one case, Thomas Nashe scoffed at the English

⁷³ "Dumb show, n.", *OED*, 1; Jonathan Bate, 'Enacting Revenge: the mingled yarn of Elizabethan tragedy', in *Doing Kyd: Essays on The Spanish Tragedy*, ed. by Nicoleta Cinpoș (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018), 25-42 (p. 34).

⁷⁴ Bate, p. 33.

tendency to borrow “manie good sentences, as *Bloud is a begger*, and so foorth” from translations of Seneca, complaining that the classical playwright’s phrases were so picked over that he “at length must needs die to our stage”.⁷⁵ Together, Nashe’s derision and Bate’s comment on the changing style of popular tragedy demonstrate a key difference in how Seneca came to be used in Elizabethan drama: while playwrights could certainly borrow phrases and sentences from Seneca, they could also model their works on the ideas, the feeling, and the spectacle of Seneca’s plays. Here was a playwright that early modern readers and writers could only encounter through his texts, without seeing them as they would have been performed. In reading them and using them to make their own performances in the Inns of Court or influence performance in the London theatres, English playwrights drew on their own inherited, living traditions and lived experiences of theatrical violence — as Miola writes, “Seneca is both a text and a tradition” for early modern playwrights and could be used alongside other traditions (for instance, the medieval passion plays or classical rhetorical techniques) to achieve lofty speech and bloody realism simultaneously.⁷⁶

One such example is Christopher Marlowe’s *Tamburlaine* plays, which incorporate the classical tradition of *peripeteia* (that is, an unexpected reversal in fortune or change in events) with rhetoric modelled on Roman tragedies and the more gruesome elements of Senecan revenge drama.⁷⁷ In *Tamburlaine, Part One*

⁷⁵ Thomas Nashe, ‘To the Gentlemen Students of both Universities’, in Robert Greene, *Greenes Arcadia, or Menaphon* (London, 1589), sig. A4r. STC (2nd ed.) 12275.

⁷⁶ Miola, p. 9. For more on living and inherited theatrical traditions in England, see Helen Cooper, *Shakespeare and the Medieval World* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), especially p. 62-63, where Cooper quotes Ralph Willis’ detailed recollection in 1639 of watching a touring morality play in the 1560s.

⁷⁷ Ronald W. Vince, ‘peripeteia’, in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Theatre and Performance*, ed. by Dennis Kennedy, online edn. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), <<http://www.oxfordreference.com/>> [accessed 1 June 2021].

(1587), Tamburlaine's reputation for brutality earns him the title of "the scourge and wrath of God".⁷⁸ His own wife, Zenocrate, describes the "bloody spectacle" (5.2.277) of the carnage that Tamburlaine leaves in his wake, saying,

Wretched Zenocrate, that livest to see
Damascus' walls dyed with Egyptian blood,
Thy father's subjects and thy countrymen,
The streets strowed with dissevered joints of men,
And wounded bodies gasping yet for life.
But most accursed, to see the sun-bright troop
Of heavenly virgins and unspotted maids,
[...] On horsemen's lances to be hoisted up
And guiltlessly endure a cruel death (5.2.257-263, 266-267).

Zenocrate's mournful soliloquy echoes the Senecan precedent of describing horrific violence at a remove; while she paints a vivid verbal picture of the death and destruction Tamburlaine has brought upon Damascus, the virgins themselves were "*take[n] away*" (5.2.57sd) offstage, where they were unceremoniously murdered out of sight of the audience. But other acts of violence, like Agydas stabbing himself (3.2.106sd) or Bajazeth's death by "*brain[ing] himself against the cage*" (5.2.241sd), are performed onstage, merging visual and verbal elements to powerful and horrifying effect, innovating on the Senecan model. In this way, the early modern stage became a testing ground for cultural conversations around violence. By using both physical and linguistic acts of violence on stage, playwrights explored and responded to other, contemporary innovations that were seen, felt, and heard outside the theatres (such as the expansion of a central legal system, as outlined earlier in this section and established in a range of critical works). However, I argue that there is more occurring in these moments than simply the use of both action and rhetoric simultaneously; instead, this thesis

⁷⁸ Christopher Marlowe, *Tamburlaine, Part One*, ed. by Anthony B. Dawson (London: Methuen Drama, 2003), 3.3.44.

asserts that rhetoric and action are inextricably intertwined and that this intertwining is especially forceful, heightened, and effective during moments of staged violence. Having established the conventions of and developments to violence in performance, I will now examine rhetoric's role in creating violence on stage in the following section.

Rhetorical Practice

In order to examine how precisely language serves to augment embodied performance, and the especially intense interaction between them on stage, it is first necessary to understand the rhetorical education most early modern playwrights received. Writers like Marlowe capitalized on the combined theatrical power of emotive Senecan rhetoric when staging violence — as Matthew Greenfield points out, Marlowe's work is marked by a concerted effort to “find language for the representation of physical pain” and his characters “often speak vividly and compellingly about what they feel”, just as Seneca's characters examine and describe their thoughts and emotions to move and persuade listeners.⁷⁹ Bate makes this connection explicit, writing that the “rhetoric of self-examination in the Elizabethan tragic soliloquy is learnt in part from Seneca”.⁷⁹ Such rhetoric served to emphasize and call attention to the physical stage practice of violence, making use of technologies similar to and developed from the fake blood, daggers, and corpse props that Enders noted in medieval Corpus Christi plays.⁸⁰ Staged violence in the early modern period emphasized the vulnerability

⁷⁹ Matthew Greenfield, ‘Christopher Marlowe's Wound Knowledge’, *PMLA*, 119.2 (2004), 233-246 (p. 233).

⁷⁹ Bate, p. 33.

⁸⁰ Enders, *Cruelty*, p. 193-195; Cooper, p. 72.

of the human body — as *The Duchess of Malfi*'s Bosola argues, “[w]hat’s this flesh? [...] Our bodies are weaker than those paper prisons boys use to keep flies in”.⁸¹ Stevie Simkin reminds readers that tragedies are preoccupied with the body as it is “violated, punctured, caused to bleed, [and] mutilated” and use language and physical gesture together to “accentuate the grotesque, the macabre, and the horrific”.⁸² In various early modern tragedies, people are stabbed, strangled, dismembered, or garroted; have their tongues bitten off or cut out; are murdered by contact with poisoned bibles, skulls, pictures, and helmets; trapped in chairs and drained of their blood; and have their eyes plucked out. All these were, in Maurice Charney’s words, “used by the Elizabethans as part of a determined dramatic effort to excite and even to terrify the audience”.⁸³ But Charney also views violence as largely devoid of any greater meaning, “performed for its own sake and [meant] to be judged by esthetic rather than moral criteria”.⁸⁴ Huston Diehl pushes back against Charney’s work, highlighting the way that stage violence “enable[ed] the audience to apprehend the act of vengeance both emotionally and intellectually” by appealing to “widely understood [aesthetic,] moral and ethical concepts”.⁸⁵ Lucy Munro echoes this argument, writing that “gory stage effects can also work on a spectator’s intellect, invoking a range of broader thematic and symbolic contexts and associations” — in short, acts of

⁸¹ John Webster, *The Duchess of Malfi*, ed. by Leah S. Marcus (London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2009), 4.2.121, 123.

⁸² Stevie Simkin, ‘Introduction’, in *Revenge Tragedy: Contemporary Critical Essays*, ed. by Stevie Simkin (Hampshire: Palgrave, 2001), 1-24 (p. 9).

⁸³ Maurice Charney, ‘The Persuasiveness of Violence in Elizabethan Plays’, *Renaissance Drama*, N.S. 2 (1969), 59-70 (p. 65).

⁸⁴ Charney, p. 66.

⁸⁵ Huston Diehl, ‘The Iconography of Violence in English Renaissance Tragedy’, *Renaissance Drama*, N.S. 11 (1980), 27-44 (p. 32, 30).

violence are “not merely designed to shock”.⁸⁶ As both Diehl and Munro note, violence on stage can provoke a broad spectrum of responses and effects; yet many critics still view the verbal and physical as competing features of staged violence. This thesis seeks to establish exactly how this process of generating meaning works, arguing that it is only through the intertwining of spoken and embodied elements in dramatic performance that early modern plays can enact and activate violence with truly potent force on stage, viscerally affecting the audience through the theatrical experience.

While dramatists learned from rhetoric, rhetoricians also learned from drama. A play’s capacity to shock, excite, and work on an audience was closely aligned with the goals of persuasive oration — because of this, Martin Wiggins asserts that “drama was considered a valuable adjunct to a student’s rhetorical training”.⁸⁷ Thomas Wilson, in his *Arte of Rhetorique*, notes how both a good orator and a good actor can “force a man to be sory with them” just as easily as they could “move laughter”.⁸⁸ This was reflected in the grammar school education that playwrights like Shakespeare and his contemporaries would have received. Peter Mack, writing on the rhetorical training available at Elizabethan grammar schools, draws a direct link between school training and playwriting, saying that “[t]he

⁸⁶ Lucy Munro, “‘They eat each other’s arms’: Stage Blood and Body Parts’, in *Shakespeare’s Theatres and the Effects of Performance*, ed. by Farah Karim-Cooper and Tiffany Stern (London: Bloomsbury Arden, 2013), p. 73-93 (p. 75).

⁸⁷ Martin Wiggins, ‘Senecan Drama’, in [The Oxford Encyclopedia of Theatre and Performance](http://www.oxfordreference.com/), ed. by Dennis Kennedy, online edn. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), <<http://www.oxfordreference.com/>> [accessed 27 May 2021].

⁸⁸ Thomas Wilson, *The arte of rhetorique for the use of all suche as are studious of eloquence, sette forth in English* (London: 1553), T1v, T2r. STC (2nd ed.) 25799. The Greek writer and rhetorician Lucian also wrote of the power of oratory to leave an audience “struck dumb with admiration of your appearance, your diction, your gait, your pacing back and forth, your intoning, your sandals, and that ‘sundry’ of yours”, a sentiment which Jody Enders aptly notes sounds entirely theatrical. Lucian, *A Professor Public Speaking*, trans. by A. M. Harmon, Loeb Classical Library 162 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1925), p. 161; Enders, *Rhetoric and the Origins of Medieval Drama* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), p. 1-2.

guiding idea of rhetoric is that whenever one writes one must think about one's audience and about what one aims to achieve through speaking to them", with special attention paid to "what arguments are most likely to appeal to that audience, what emotions one might want to arouse in them and how one should present oneself".⁸⁹ This is especially the case in the theatre, where speakers address not only the audience offstage, but also the other characters on the stage with them and must make their argument clear and compelling to both. Beyond their focus on argument and intent, pupils in the Elizabethan grammar schools were trained to create convincing narratives that were effective on what Mack calls both a local and higher level, concerned with not only "understanding the stories characters tell, the reasons for telling them and the[ir] effect", but also "the implications of the overall narrative of the play, [and] of the choices made in relation to presenting certain parts of the narrative onstage while narrating other parts".⁹⁰ In other words, a formal education in and knowledge of rhetoric was an invaluable tool in the early modern playwright's arsenal — indeed, Enders notes that the interplay between drama and rhetoric "is of the utmost relevance to the origins of drama itself".⁹¹ As such, drama should be considered both a supplement to rhetorical training (as Wiggins argues) and a product of it. The two came to inform each other.⁹²

⁸⁹ Peter Mack, 'Approaching Shakespeare through Rhetoric', in *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare's Language*, ed. by Lynne Magnusson and David Schalkwyk (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 115-131 (p. 119). See also Lynn Enterline, *Shakespeare's Schoolroom: Rhetoric, Discipline, Emotion* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), p. 14-16.

⁹⁰ Mack, p. 124. See also Lynne Magnusson, 'Style, Rhetoric and Decorum', in *Reading Shakespeare's Dramatic Language: A Guide*, ed. by Sylvia Adamson, Lynette Hunter, Lynne Magnusson, Ann Thompson, and Katie Wales (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2001), 17-30 (p. 17-20).

⁹¹ Enders, *Rhetoric*, p. 2.

⁹² Wiggins, 'Senecan Drama'.

The grammar school education may also have taught the very use of Seneca that Thomas Nashe decried in *Menaphon*: Mack notes that students were encouraged to reuse “their reading in their own writing” through commonplace books, “letter-writing exercises”, or by writing their own work that was “in dialogue with earlier texts which they hoped to draw on and surpass”.⁹³ In this context, Nashe’s complaint about the borrowing of “manie good sentences” from Seneca is a practice that, instead of bleeding the classical writer until he “must needs die”, follows good scholarly form and instruction.⁹⁴ Indeed, the sixteenth-century didactic writer, Roger Ascham, wrote in his grammar textbook that the “doctrine of Imitation would bring forth more learning, and breed up trewer judgement, than any other exercise that can be used” in the schoolroom.⁹⁵ Senecan rhetorical violence, then, becomes a model with which Elizabethan and Jacobean playwrights are in conversation, rather than “just” imitating. These early modern writers needed a good working knowledge of Seneca and his works in order to borrow from and build on them — knowledge that was grounded in the typical schoolroom training that most male playwrights would have received as boys. By using and alluding to classical tragedies, they demonstrate their awareness of rhetorical power and possibility, and indeed weave it into the genetic structure of their own plays. For this reason, early modern dramatic texts should be viewed as participants in an ongoing legacy of writing, publishing, and performance. Each play in this thesis, therefore, is considered as a piece in conversation with a wider dramatic canon, where each play is intensely aware of and deliberately engages

⁹³ Mack, p. 120, 121.

⁹⁴ Nashe, sig. A4r.

⁹⁵ Roger Ascham, *The Scholemaster, or plaine and perfite way of teaching children* (London: 1570), sig. D4r. STC (2nd ed.) 832.

with an ongoing legacy of formations of violence portrayed through language. As such, this thesis will identify those rhetorical devices, both past and contemporary, that underpin the enactment and embodiment of violence onstage.

Performance itself was another key component of the Elizabethan grammar school curriculum. John Wesley (the twenty-first-century scholar, rather than the eighteenth-century theologian) discusses the kinds of oral performance required of grammar school students, writing that many of the schools' statutes required "up to seven oral performances" per day,

including prayers ('with due tact and pawsing'), the ten commandments, rules for rhetoric and grammar (to recite 'a part of a speech and of a verb in its turn'), a passage of poetry, a translation of their own, a piece of classical oratory, a speech from a play, excerpts of a sermon, a dialogue, and, for higher forms, themes and declamations.⁹⁶

These would have been performed in both Latin and vernacular English and were intended, in Jessica Winston's words, to allow students to "practice the rhetorical skills they would need to possess" beyond the classroom and to teach what Frederick Boas calls "rhetorical fluency".⁹⁷ University dramatist William Gager shares a similar view of the role of oral performance in humanist education, arguing that students' recitations of "some learned poem or other" helped them "to practice our own style either in prose or verse; [...] to try their voices, and confirm their memories; to frame their speech; [and] to conform them to

⁹⁶ John Wesley, 'Rhetorical Delivery for Renaissance English: Voice, Gesture, Emotion, and the Sixteenth-Century Vernacular Turn', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 68.4 (2015), 1265-1296 (p. 1267).

⁹⁷ Jessica Winston, *Lawyers at Play: Literature, Law, and Politics at the Early Modern Inns of Court, 1558-1581* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), p. 177; Frederick Boas, *University Drama in the Tudor Age* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1914), p. 277.

convenient action”.⁹⁸ Thomas Heywood, too, was in favor of training students at the grammar school and university level with plays, as Latin drama in particular “not onely emboldens a scholler to speake, but instructs him to speake *well*”.⁹⁹ Through the reading and performing of dramatic work, Heywood said, a student would learn to achieve the measured “delivery of his words” that should be the hallmark “of any discourse that belongs to a scholler”.¹⁰⁰ Students, therefore, were trained up in a culture of performance from their early years as an established mode of developing their physical, vocal, and mental acuity.

This method of training can be traced to the classical period, where rhetoric (and its formal elements of rehearsal and memory) shaped the theory and use of purposeful, persuasive communication. Ancient thinkers like Aristotle viewed rhetoric as an inherently teachable art, with a strong emphasis placed on method and instruction.¹⁰¹ In the Roman tradition, Cicero focused on a three-pronged approach to rhetorical study, made up of theory (that is, “a set of rules that provide a definite method and system of speaking”), imitation (similar to the recitations that Gager championed in the early modern grammar school), and practice (which is to say, gaining experience through one’s own use and application of theory).¹⁰² Theoretical study was grounded in the five canons of rhetoric as set out by Cicero in *Rhetorica ad Herennium*: invention (*inventio*), wherein a speaker would devise

⁹⁸ William Gager, ‘Letter to Dr. John Rainolds (1592)’, in *Shakespeare’s Theater: A Sourcebook*, ed. by Tanya Pollard (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2004), 179-187 (p. 182, emphasis added). Also quoted in Boas, p. 235-236. See also Winston, p. 78.

⁹⁹ Thomas Heywood, *An apology for actors Containing three briefe treatises. 1 Their antiquity. 2 Their ancient dignity. 3 The true use of their quality. Written by Thomas Heywood* (London: 1612), C4r. STC (2nd ed.) 13309.

¹⁰⁰ Heywood, C4r.

¹⁰¹ Timothy Borchers and Heather Hundley, *Rhetorical Theory: An Introduction*, 2nd ed. (Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, Inc., 2018), p. 40.

¹⁰² Cicero, *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, ed. and trans. by Harry Caplan, Loeb Classical Library 403 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1954), p. 9; on Gager, see p. 34 of this thesis; and Borchers and Hundley, p. 41.

their topic and supporting evidence; arrangement (*dispositio*), or the structure and ordering of the speech itself; style (*elocutio*), through which the speaker would select the types of language and stylistic elements that would most affect and persuade their audience; memory (*memoria*), retaining each element of the preparation for rhetorical performance and later using past rhetorical experience to shape the delivery of future orations; and delivery (*pronuntiatio*), the “graceful” presentation of the speech, both verbal and gestural.¹⁰³ Good rhetoric required attention to the mind, the body, and the voice together, as well as rehearsal (Cicero’s third prong) to ensure the affective power of the speech on its audience. The next section expands on the affective experience of violence as it is spoken and enacted in performance by arguing for a practice-based approach to studying the dynamic between action and rhetoric.

Theatre Practice

Thus far, I have broadly attended to the affective power of language and how that language can be performed with an intent to move its listeners; I turn now to the ways that theatre practice augments the aural dimensions of a play text with visual spectacle and embodied movement in order to underpin this thesis’ main argument, that performative verbal violence can enact theatrically real violent action. The simultaneous attention to mind, voice, and body taught in the rhetorical curriculum of the early modern schoolroom was (and is) also a predominant feature of theatre practice and theatregoing. The action of acting involved the whole body, from physical gesture and movement to the production

¹⁰³ Borchers and Hundley, p. 42-51; Cicero, p. 7.

of vocal sound and speech-making — it is a corporeal act of doing and feeling.¹⁰⁴ Likewise, Allison Hobgood has articulated how the act of theatregoing should frame spectators not “as disciplined receivers of dramatic passions but rather as potent and productive co-creators of the drama they attended”.¹⁰⁵ Theatre, in other words, involves what Simon Shepherd calls a relationship of “exchange and circulation” between the practitioner and the audience that extended to the emotionally moving rhetoric of a performance.¹⁰⁶ The affecting passions of theatre, Hobgood notes, were not confined solely to the mind, but occurred in the spectator’s body, too, making theatre a “felt experience”.¹⁰⁷ In this way, the acts of playing and of playgoing are both inherently individual and yet relational, focused on what one’s own body is doing or experiencing or responding to and on what the surrounding bodies were doing, experiencing, and responding to. As Peter Eversmann notes of modern-day theatregoers, audience responses are often described “in a physical way”, such as “feeling [reactions] in one’s stomach, shaking, being breathless, being immobilized, shock-experience, cold-sweat, laughing and crying”.¹⁰⁸ These visceral, phenomenological responses are easy to imagine in an early modern audience as well, since Wilson wrote of the ways affective performance could “move laughter” and provoke other responses.¹⁰⁹ Bodily experience seems to have not only informed the playgoing experience but also formed an integral part of creating a lively representation of the body on

¹⁰⁴ Simon Shepherd calls theatre “an art of living bodies”, in *Theatre, Body and Pleasure* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2006), p. 15.

¹⁰⁵ Allison P. Hobgood, *Passionate Playgoing in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. 28.

¹⁰⁶ Shepherd, p. 164.

¹⁰⁷ Hobgood, p. 5, 6.

¹⁰⁸ Peter Eversmann, ‘The Experience of the Theatrical Event’, in *Theatrical Events: Borders, Dynamics, Frames*, ed. by Vicky Ann Cremona, Peter Eversmann, Hans van Maanen, Willmar Sauter, and John Tulloch (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2004), 139-174 (p. 156).

¹⁰⁹ Wilson, T2r.

stage. While there has been robust critical engagement with embodied performance as well as with the phenomenological experience of early modern drama, the same attention has not been paid to the ways that violence impacts performance and experience. To that end, this thesis places particular emphasis on the representation of violence in performance, and how it might affect actors and audience members, in order to demonstrate the incredible performative power that language and action hold in combination, where the former incites and compounds the latter.

Elizabethan audiences regarded theatre as an auditory and visual event; as Gabriel Egan has shown, early modern audience members spoke of ‘seeing’ *and* ‘hearing’ plays — in other words, a multi-sensory experience.¹¹⁰ Heywood considered the visual and embodied physical aspects of drama to be just as “bewitching” as speech, writing that “action, passion, motion, or any other gesture” could “moove the spirits of the beholder”; it was, however, the combination of rhetorical “delivery and sweet action” that made theatre so affecting.¹¹¹ The coupling of text, sight, and action means that not only is violence being staged *in* these plays — shocking, exciting, and moving its audiences — it is also being staged and played out *on* the actors’ bodies. Staged violence is drawn from Senecan and medieval predecessors and embedded into the verbal, visual, and physical components of the drama in such a way that each holds their own impact

¹¹⁰ Gabriel Egan, ‘Hearing or Seeing a Play?: Evidence of Early Modern Theatrical Terminology’, *Ben Jonson Journal*, 8 (2001), 327-347; see also Andrew Gurr, *Playgoing in Shakespeare’s London*, 2nd edn. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 90-98. Ben Jonson also references an audience “com[ing] to hear and see plays” in *The Magnetic Lady*, ed. by Helen Ostovich in *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson Online*, ed. by Martin Butler, David Bevington, Karen Britland, Ian Donaldson, David L. Gants, and Eugene Giddens (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), Chorus 2, 42-43.

¹¹¹ Heywood, B4r, B3v, C4r.

and are all brought together to generate a heightened, embodied effect and response.

For both the spectator and the actor, then, theatre is not a passive activity but, as Hobgood puts it, a “perpetually changing, energetic process” and a “literal action”.¹¹² Like Hobgood’s work, as well as others, this thesis examines theatre “in its most verb-like sense”, engaging in performance as a lively, participatory, multi-sensory, and relational process.¹¹³ However, it focuses in particular on the multi-sensory and relational process of the embodied representation of violence, an aspect of early modern drama that has not yet been examined in a sustained fashion. Because of its subjective nature, individual to each spectator (an audience member) as they bring with them their own beliefs, emotions, and understanding of the world yet negotiated as a collective group (the audience), performance can generate and shape meaning alongside and beyond the play text in what Susan Bennett calls a “theatrical event”.¹¹⁴ Bennett, Hobgood, and other critics, have highlighted the fact that early modern theatre was effectively co-produced by the actors and audience in the lively process of performance. But in this rich context, the embodiment of staged violence remained a notable and spectacular experience that made for a visceral theatrical encounter. Violence, spoken and enacted, carried with it a potent performative power to affect an audience on a deep-seated and bodily level. Violence, then and now, demands a response from viewers, whether of macabre delight or horrified fascination, and is the result of

¹¹² Hobgood, p. 27.

¹¹³ Hobgood, p. 27. See also Julie Stone Peters on the sensory pleasures of performance, in *Theatre of the Book, 1480-1880: Print, Text, and Performance in Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 149; and Stephen Purcell on the active and “processual” quality of spectatorship, in *Shakespeare and Audience in Practice* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p. xiii.

¹¹⁴ Susan Bennett, *Theatre Audiences: A Theory of Production and Reception* (London: Routledge, 1997), p. 106.

the phenomenological process of performance, co-produced by the playwright, actors, and audience as the play text is enacted and embodied on stage. For this reason, my thesis moves beyond a solely literary and text-based approach, engaging with practice-based methodologies that allow a fuller examination of that performative power. By nature, this practice-based work offers a range of tools that provide the opportunity to view the performance of violence in a fully embodied and emotional way. The following chapters assert that the staging and embodiment of violent words constitutes several aspects, and each seeks to identify and analyze their effects. In order to most fully examine the interplay between language and violence in early modern tragedies, as this thesis seeks to do, we must consider not only the act of performance but also the experiences of witnessing violence from the audience, responding to violence as it is enacted by the other actors on stage, and directing the performance of embodied violent acts.

As I work to theorize acts of verbal violence in early modern plays, I use theatrical techniques and performance strategies to enrich the current critical understanding of staged violence. As this thesis demonstrates, a practice-based methodology enables scholars and practitioners to analyze and take into account the array of violent possibilities that exist outside of the purely physical realm. Violence, as I have outlined above, encompasses more than just physical action; likewise, staged violence is more nuanced than ‘just’ a stabbing or a poisoning. While it certainly includes these actions (and I do not attempt to frame these as anything other than the violent acts they are), violence on stage is not limited solely to physical acts. My research brings these two modes of inquiry together to analyze the ways violent words translate into embodied performance and to examine what dramatic texts, in both their page and stage iterations, can tell us

about staged violence more broadly. I challenge, as Harry Newman does in his work on metatheatricity, “the tendency to characterize playreading in opposition to performance and theatricality”, pushing back against scholars like David Scott Kastan and Stephen Orgel, who have argued, respectively, that a printed play text is “a *non*-theatrical text [that] defer[s] or, even better, den[ies] performance”, and that “[i]f the play is a book, it’s not a play”.¹¹⁵ In this way, my thesis explores text and performance together in order to identify how reading and imagining violence intersected with seeing and hearing violence. The goal of this thesis, then, is to offer up a new definition of staged violence that goes beyond spectacle, privileging embodied action *alongside* verbal utterance in the performance of early modern dramatic texts.

While I cannot hope to exactly replicate or recover the real experience of early modern actors or audience members enacting, seeing, or hearing violence on stage, performance-informed research offers the chance to explore the relationships between violent words and deeds as they are understood and interpreted by actors and audiences.¹¹⁶ These relationships will not be identical in the twenty-first century to what they were in the seventeenth, but they can still suggest insights into the ways we read, embody, and relate to early modern texts,

¹¹⁵ Harry Newman, ‘Reading Metatheatre’, *Shakespeare Bulletin*, 36.1 (2018), 89-110 (p. 90); David Scott Kastan, *Shakespeare and the Book* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 8; Stephen Orgel, ‘What Is an Editor?’, *Shakespeare Studies*, 24 (1996), 23-29 (p. 23). In their introduction to a special issue on practice and research in early drama, Sarah Dustagheer, Oliver Jones, and Eleanor Rycroft also write that “the text is not necessarily (though it might be) the origin of the scholarly investigation”; ‘(Re)constructed Spaces for Early Modern Drama’, *Shakespeare Bulletin*, 35.2 (2017), 173-185 (p. 178).

¹¹⁶ See Nova Myhill and Jennifer A. Low, ‘Introduction: Audience and Audiences’, in *Imagining the Audience in Early Modern Drama, 1558-1642*, ed. by Jennifer A. Low and Nova Myhill (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 1-18 (p. 9-10). See also Bruce R. Smith, who writes about the scholarly possibility that comes from “projecting ourselves into the historically reconstructed field of perception as far as we are able”, *Phenomenal Shakespeare* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010) p. 28. Hobgood also recalls Smith, asking how scholars can “properly project ourselves [...] into largely unrecorded, subjective experiences so distant from our own”, p. 8.

as many scholars using practice as research methods have noted.¹¹⁷ In a sense, performance becomes, as the actor Simon Russell Beale once told an interviewer, a kind of “three-dimensional literary criticism”.¹¹⁸ Using a combination of workshops, practitioner interviews, and performance analysis alongside my own textual analysis, this thesis draws on the varied experiences of modern actors, directors, and students as sites of inquiry in order to accomplish what Tim Ingold calls “knowing *from the inside*”; in other words, I argue that practice-based analysis can help identify incidents of verbal violence through sustained close engagement with the process of performance.¹¹⁹ In this way, practice as research is a reflective and reflexive methodology that, in Stephen Purcell’s words, understands theatrical performance not simply “as a manifestation or interpretation of text, [but] as activity in its own right”.¹²⁰ My focus is on the point where the physical and verbal intersect in the portrayal of violence — how staged violence happens, why it happens, what demands this makes on the actor, and

¹¹⁷ See Dustagheer, Jones, and Rycroft, p. 178; Farah Karim-Cooper, ‘Cosmetics on the Globe stage’, in *Shakespeare’s Globe: A Theatrical Experiment*, ed. by Christie Carson and Farah Karim-Cooper (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 66-76 (p. 68); Harry R. McCarthy, *Performing Early Modern Drama Beyond Shakespeare: Edward’s Boys* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), p. 11-12; Stephen Purcell, *Shakespeare in the Theatre: Mark Rylance at the Globe* (London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2017), p. 55; Kevin A. Quarmby, ‘OP PC or PAR RIP?’ *Shakespeare Bulletin*, 36.4 (2018), 567-598 (p. 569); Will Tosh, *Playing Indoors: Staging Early Modern Drama in the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse* (London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2018), p. 17; Don Weingust, ‘Authentic Performances or Performances of Authenticity? Original Practices and the Repertory Schedule’, *Shakespeare*, 10.4 (2014), 402-410 (p. 405); Sarah Werner, ‘Audiences’, in *Shakespeare and the Making of Theatre*, ed. by Stuart Hampton-Reeves and Bridget Escolme (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 165-189 (p. 166); Emma Whipday and Freyja Cox Jensen, “Original Practices,” *Lost Plays, and Historical Imagination: Staging “The Tragedy of Merry”*, *Shakespeare Bulletin*, 35.2 (2017), 289-307 (p. 291); and Penelope Woods, ‘The audience of the indoor theatre’, in *Moving Shakespeare Indoors: Performance and Repertoire in the Jacobean Playhouse*, ed. by Andrew Gurr and Farah Karim-Cooper (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 152-167 (p. 159).

¹¹⁸ Paul Taylor, ‘Simon Russell Beale: A performer at his peak’, in *The Independent* (14 January 2005) <<https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/theatre-dance/features/simon-russell-beale-a-performer-at-his-peak-486512.html>> [accessed 2 October 2020].

¹¹⁹ Tim Ingold, *Making: Anthropology, Archaeology, Art and Architecture* (Abingdon & New York: Routledge, 2013), p. 5.

¹²⁰ Stephen Purcell, ‘Practice-as-Research and Original Practices’, *Shakespeare Bulletin*, 35.3 (2017), 425-443 (p. 430).

what effects it has on the audience. Focusing on this intersection demands an approach that examines plays as both textual objects and theatrical processes, and my thesis demonstrates the value of such an approach in unlocking the fullest meanings of early modern dramatic works.

Both premodern and modern grammatical texts inform this thesis' analysis of violent speech, including its attention to distinct linguistic word forms and phrase types. It is through sustained textual attention, I argue, that these forms and types become evident across the early modern canon, most particularly when applied to the medium of embodied performance. Early modern grammatical studies like William Lily's *A Short Introduction of Grammar* provided the groundwork for the schoolroom curricula that most playwrights would have been taught. Just as the rhetorical training covered in the previous section acted as a kind of jumping off point for adapting and reimagining the literary violence of the ancient world, so the study of grammar left its mark on the artistic output of those dramatists who grew up in or with an awareness of the premodern classroom in England.¹²¹ Lily's *Introduction* was (like other grammatical works of the period, including those from the schoolmaster John Brinsley and cleric Charles Hoole), Leah Whittington writes, part of a rich and "multifaceted cultural experience, inseparable from [the] historical, sociological, affective, cognitive, and aesthetic

¹²¹ Leah Whittington cites Jack Cade's speech at the execution of Lord Saye as an example of this "artistic consequence": "It will be proved to thy face that thou has men about thee that usually talk of a noun and a verb and such abominable words as no Christian ear can endure to hear" (*New Oxford Shakespeare*, 19.29-30). Whittington, 'Shakespeare's Grammar: Latin, literacy, and the vernacular', in *The Routledge Research Companion to Shakespeare and Classical Literature*, ed. by Sean Keilen and Nick Moschovakis (London and New York: Routledge, 2017), 78-106 (p. 78); William Shakespeare, Christopher Marlowe, and others, 'The Second Part of Henry the Sixth; Or, The First Part of the Contention', ed. by Rory Loughnane, in *The New Oxford Shakespeare: Modern Critical Edition*, ed. by Gary Taylor, John Jowett, Terri Bourus, and Gabriel Egan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

contexts” in which playwrights of this period existed.¹²² But, at their core, grammatical texts also served the utilitarian function of outlining the rules and conventions for constructing sentences and using each part of speech to its full effect; in other words, these grammatical studies illustrated how language worked on a structural level. Attention to grammar is, therefore, fundamental to the study of how violent words work.

E. A. Abbott’s foundational work in *A Shakespearian Grammar* is one such example of the modern grammar books that inform my arguments, as this reference work excavates what Abbott refers to as the “peculiarities” of Elizabethan English.¹²³ While Abbott does not always look kindly on some of these peculiarities, attributing them to inefficient “anomalies” and the “redundancies” of syntactical derivations that he implies signal the proverbial growing pains of a developing language, his work is, overall, a helpful starting point for unpacking the idiomatic use of prosody and grammatical constructions that make up early modern plays and poems.¹²⁴ In this respect, I share Jonathan Hope’s approach to Abbott’s work, viewing it as a jumping off point that can start to inform other work. Hope’s own *Shakespeare’s Grammar* is of particular use in Chapter Two, as his analysis of early modern pronoun use is more thorough than Abbott’s. In bringing scholarship on grammar into dialogue with performance for the first time, I demonstrate the intersection between grammatical and rhetorical constructions

¹²² Whittington, p. 79. See John Brinsley, *Ludus literarius: or, The grammar schoole shewing how to proceede from the first entrance into learning, to the highest perfection required in the grammar schools* (London: 1627). STC (2nd ed.) 3770b; and Charles Hoole, *An Easy Entrance to the Latin Tongue, wherein are contained the Grounds of Grammar, a Vocabularie of Common Words, English and Latine* (London: 1649). Wing H2681.

¹²³ E. A. Abbott, *A Shakespearian Grammar*, 3rd edn. (London: Macmillan, 1966), p. 7.

¹²⁴ Abbott, p. 9.

and performance possibilities. In so doing, the thesis asserts that these intersections between the physical and the verbal (that is, the embodied and the rhetorical) are inherent features of staged violence in the period, and that this methodological framework provides new ways to analyze how they work.

Scholarly work that has paid attention to language *as* and *in* performance has also greatly informed this thesis. Sylvia Adamson, Lynette Hunter, Lynne Magnusson, Ann Thompson, and Katie Wales' edited collection, *Reading Shakespeare's Dramatic Language*, has proved particularly helpful as an example of reading and interpreting rhetoric from a range of critical approaches. Keir Elam's work in that volume, on language and the body, challenges the assumption that "the actor's body can only 'mean' or signify something to the extent that it can be translated into words", asking how dramatic texts "can inscribe the body — not only the character's but also the actor's — as an indispensable part of [their] meaning-making".¹²⁵ Elam answers this question by investigating the four "levels of bodily meaning that Hamlet indicates in his reading of *The Mousetrap*", writing in turn about "the body dramatic", "the body historical", "the body discursive", and "the body performative".¹²⁶ My work builds from Elam's notion of "the body being realized through words", using and inverting this view of dramatic performance to consider not only how the body is effected by violent words, but also how violent words are realized through embodied performance. In other words, my thesis considers words and bodies as mutually effecting forces that generate meaning, feeling, and action together. On the stage, words hold both an affective

¹²⁵ Keir Elam, 'Language and the Body', in *Reading Shakespeare's Dramatic Language: A Guide*, ed. by Sylvia Adamson, Lynette Hunter, Lynne Magnusson, Ann Thompson, and Katie Wales (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2001), 173-187 (p. 174, 177).

¹²⁶ Elam, p. 177-182.

and a physical power that works on the bodies enacting the violent dramatic narrative. I argue that critics have to this point overlooked the linguistic phenomenon by which words and bodies contribute simultaneously to the other's realization in the act of performance.

But despite the recent focus on text as/in performance, as well as embodiment and language individually, there has not been a sustained examination of the ways in which violence manifests in both text and performance simultaneously. This is an odd critical gap, which this thesis seeks to fill, because staged violence is so often where the most dynamic intersection between language and performance exists on the early modern stage. As I will argue, examining these intersections reveals the full performative power of these plays. Existing full-length studies on violence on the early modern stage tend to focus on *either* performance *or* rhetoric, missing the powerful connection between the two. For example, Foakes' *Shakespeare and Violence* pays some attention to the plays as performance texts, but his focus is usually on Shakespeare's "exploration of issues linked to the propensity for violence that seems natural to human beings" and his "further development as a dramatist".¹²⁷ In the same way, Karen Bamford's important work on sexual assault in Jacobean drama, states that her concern is "with the representation, not the actuality of sexual assault"; and while she does attend to the staging of such moments, her approach to the language of these violent attacks focuses much more on the rhetoric surrounding sexual assault as "an index, or test, of [a female character's] chastity" and not on the language that enables or occasions the act itself.¹²⁸ While these are certainly valuable

¹²⁷ Foakes, p. 8, 57.

¹²⁸ Bamford, p. 6, 7.

contributions as they focus critical attention on violence and its portrayal, there remains a gap in scholarship that this thesis seeks to fill — namely, an examination of violent language as an inherent part of embodied performance. The thesis that follows, therefore, argues that language plays an imperative role in generating and enlivening acts of violence on stage, in defining its performance, and in provoking an emotional response. The final section of this introduction outlines how this argument will manifest over the course of the thesis.

Thesis Outline

Each chapter in this thesis analyzes a distinct type of staged and spoken violence and is shaped and contextualized by the methodological approach outlined in the previous sections — that is, a methodology positioned at the intersection between rhetoric and performance, using both textual analysis and practice as research. I use this methodology to frame a broader discussion of the interconnected nature of text, performance, speech, and the body across the whole work. Each chapter compares a well-known, canonical play with a less canonical work, often separated by a generation; my purpose in selecting these plays was to investigate language and its use in enacting violence on a broad scale, looking in particular at potential developments across generational divides, and at the ways playwrights continued to build on the work of their contemporaries and predecessors. At its core, this thesis is concerned with the interplay between words that variously prompt, underscore, or define acts of violence on stage, and the project is structured around two discrete vocabularies of violence that I have identified as being used and repeated in plays across the canon. Chapter One, called ‘Embodying Violence’, introduces the two vocabularies, which I have called

violent language and *language about violence*. Using Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* (1587) and Thomas Middleton's *A Yorkshire Tragedy* (1605) as examples of language as and in action, I argue that Kyd and Middleton's use of rhetoric as a means of underpinning violent action represents a developing pattern of dramatic performance in early modern plays.¹²⁹ This pattern, in which certain words and word types appear to collect around particularly violent moments in the narrative, forms the basis of my analysis, as I argue that different word types are used to accomplish specific acts of violence on and off stage. I pair textual work (primarily close readings) on Hieronimo's play-within-the-play, *Suleiman and Perseda*, with two interviews with theatre practitioners, exploring the ways modern actors and directors use early modern language to guide their work on the play. Such language offers an embodied imperative that scaffolds violent action and is as useful to today's practitioners as it would have been to early modern acting companies. My analysis of *A Yorkshire Tragedy* is likewise paired with a practice as research workshop, where I worked with actors on the embodied imperative in performance.

Chapter Two, titled 'Objects of Violence', examines the two vocabularies (the demonstrative *violent language* and the descriptive *language about violence*) in practice. Here, I argue that early modern playwrights, players, and playgoers understood violence on a kind of spectrum, from the physical to the non-physical. I turn again to Thomas Middleton, with *The Revenger's Tragedy* (1606) and *The Lady's Tragedy* (1611), using these plays to interrogate the destructive power of words and the violence of un-enlivening on stage. Both plays are concerned with

¹²⁹ I take the date for *The Spanish Tragedy* from *British Drama 1533-1642: A Catalogue, Vol. 2: 1567-1589*, ed. by Martin Wiggins and Catherine Richardson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), entry 783.

the violent act of objectification, that is, the process by which someone (in each case, a woman) is figured as an object. Where in Chapter One grammar and rhetoric are used to describe and enact violent murders, in Chapter Two women's dead bodies and body parts are verbally anatomized and used to accomplish further acts of violence. I draw on 'thing theory' to theorize the role of objects (or subjects-turned-objects) in affording violence on stage, which in turn informs the two practice-based workshops that appear in the chapter. By reframing language as another means of inflicting violence on stage, I argue for a reconsideration of objects and subjects-turned-objects and the roles they play as both instruments and victims of staged violence.

This focus on victimization carries into Chapter Three, 'Frustrated Feminine Violence', which examines the relationship between gender, violence, and language. This chapter (the longest of the thesis) looks at plays by and about women and asks who is allowed to access and use the two vocabularies of violence outlined in Chapter One and put into practice in Chapter Two. Focusing briefly on William Shakespeare's *Macbeth* (1606), I outline how the Lady's wish to be 'unsexed' points to a larger desire to access masculine modes of speech and behavior from which women are barred. Building on this framework, Chapter Three's approach to gender and language in practice is multifaceted and aims to identify the ways that gendered tropes of violence translate into both language and embodied performance. Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* (1589) provides another, earlier example of this phenomenon, as Tamora, Queen of the conquered Goths and Empress of Rome, asserts, denies, and reasserts her gender to take advantage of the various tropes of behavior and language that masculinity and femininity allow. My work on early modern tropes of femininity in *Titus*

Andronicus is contextualized by my experience of the play in performance at the modern reconstruction of Shakespeare's Globe Theatre, analyzing a filmed production that visually reenforces and reasserts Tamora's gender at the very moment she aims to discard it and 'unsex' herself. I move from Shakespeare to Elizabeth Cary's *Tragedy of Mariam* (1605), placing a female playwright in dialogue with her male contemporaries. In *Mariam*, I argue, Cary illustrates the frustration of women's efforts to enact real violence themselves. My exploration of *The Tragedy of Mariam* unintentionally mimicked what is thought by scholars to be the play's original performance conditions, as I facilitated a table reading of the closet drama. Rather than trying to stage the play, the reading allowed a concentrated focus on the language Cary uses to evoke her characters' depth of feeling and their attempts to harness linguistic power. But, as the third play in the chapter, John Ford's *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* (1629), demonstrates, women who attempt to enact violent action through their language are deemed unnatural and dangerous to patriarchal power systems. *'Tis Pity* returned to the workshop format of Chapter Two, as I worked alongside participants to test the physical and linguistic embodiment of female and male emotions. In each case, the portrayal of gender and gendered difference was key as I sought to uncover a language of violence that was shared between women and men. While each of these performance events was inflected by modern audiences' sensibilities, beliefs, and experiences, they still offered some insights into my work on the ways early modern grammar can shape both a spoken or embodied act of violence and the response to that act. These insights are central to this thesis' understanding of staged violence in not only an early modern context, but also as we continue to stage early modern plays in the twenty-first century.

What connects each of the three chapters is the belief that the potent and richly multi-faceted nature of staged violence and its effects on actors and audiences demands a more nuanced examination that takes into account not only the printed language of the text, but also the embodied language of the text in performance. As I. G. warned in his tract against theatre, staged action is a “two-fould” thing, underpinned by and enacted “in word, and in deede”.¹³⁰ The following chapters are similarly concerned with how playwrights represent and conceive of violence, in word, in deed, and in practice. By unpicking the linguistic roots of violence in these plays and the ways they manifest on stage, this thesis aims to reframe the field’s understanding of staged violence and, in doing so, offer up a new critical approach that enables us to see the spectacular and affective power of violence in the rhetoric and performances of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century tragedies.

¹³⁰ I. G., p. 56.

Chapter 1: Embodying Violence

Psalm 57 begins with an exhortation:

Have mercy upon me, O God, have mercy upon me; for my soul
trusteth in thee, and in the shadow of thy wings will I trust,
til these afflictions overpass.
I will call unto the most high God,
even the God that performeth his promise toward me.
[...] My soul is among lions; I lie among the children of men, that
are set on fire; whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their
tongue a sharp sword.¹³¹

This passage illustrates two important concepts for the context of this first chapter. First, that words can be acted upon, explicitly tying them to performance (“the God that performeth his promise”); and second, that words are capable of enacting violence (“their tongue a sharp sword”).¹³² The belief that language can effect real action in the world was a popular one in the early modern period. Indeed, it has remained a central concern for scholars up to the present day, who have written extensively on how to do things with words, to borrow from the title of J. L. Austin’s published lecture series.¹³³ Doing things with words, or, making words accomplish actions is of particular interest when thinking theatrically (that is, about the theatre and theatremaking), where language is used to create worlds, establish characters, and set scenes, beyond its normal dialogic function.

In the playhouse, the relationship between language and action is shaped and affected by multiple factors, including the gesturing body of the actor and the

¹³¹ *The Geneva Bible*, Psalm 57:1-2, 4.

¹³² *The Geneva Bible*, Psalm 57:2, 4.

¹³³ J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, 2nd edn. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962). For responses to Austin, see Judith Butler, ‘Burning Acts: Injurious Speech’, *The University of Chicago Law School Roundtable*, 3.1 (1996), 199-221; Jacques Derrida, ‘Signature Event Context’, in *Limited Inc* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1977), 1-23; Stanley E. Fish, ‘With the Compliments of the Author: Reflections on Austin and Derrida’, *Critical Inquiry*, 8.4 (1982), 693-721.

material properties in and conditions of the playing space. Recent critical work on gesture by Miranda Fay Thomas has argued for the importance of analyzing the physical language of gesture on stage alongside and in addition to the verbal language written in the script — both are, after all, expressive and interpretive modes of communication that are based upon signs (in this case, words or gestures) and signifiers (the referent of the same).¹³⁴ Similarly, John Wesley has argued for further attention to the physical features of rhetorical practice, in both written and spoken forms.¹³⁵ This chapter expands on the work of scholars like Thomas and Wesley by focusing on the rhetorical as physical and the physical as rhetorical during moments of staged violence. I take a holistic approach to language, viewing the physical, verbal, textual, and performative as components working in the service of each other, rather than one type of analysis or the other individually. By considering these simultaneously, the chapter analyzes the ways in which violence is prompted, enacted, and accomplished in the early modern theatre, ultimately arguing that language serves to augment the embodied performance of violent acts and lending them a vibrant potency.

In the sections that follow, I explore the relationship between language and action in two plays written a generation apart, Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* and Thomas Middleton's *A Yorkshire Tragedy*. By reading violent language in performance, I investigate how violence is embodied on stage, and develop a more nuanced vocabulary with which to discuss the ways language can be used to support and augment violent acts. In the following case studies, I pay close attention to early modern grammatical conventions (as well as the development

¹³⁴ Miranda Fay Thomas, *Shakespeare's Body Language: Shaming Gestures and Gender Politics on the Renaissance Stage* (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2020), p. 8-9.

¹³⁵ Wesley, p. 1292.

of their use in a dramatic context), which inform my reading of performative acts of violence, and critical work on speech acts. These interpretive approaches are ones upon which I rely throughout the close readings in this thesis, and they are also central to my understanding of performance practice. The chapter's role in the larger project, therefore, is to establish a framework that can then be applied to other plays across the early modern period. This goal of establishing a framework is precisely why I have chosen to begin with *The Spanish Tragedy*: its status as a foundational, genre-defining work makes it well-suited for use in a case study meant to ground the work of the rest of this thesis. In the second half of this chapter, I turn to *A Yorkshire Tragedy*, a play written in response to a real case of murder and domestic assault, which provides, in contrast to *The Spanish Tragedy*, a dramatic example of violence for the sake of violence: the Husband's murderous rage is brought on not by a desire for justice, but by a sense of desperation. By placing violence in a different context (in the home instead of at the court, enacted by a father against their child rather than a father avenging their child, and impromptu as opposed to premeditated acts of murder), I test the grammatical conventions and patterns of use highlighted in the first half of the chapter.

The Spanish Tragedy demonstrates that words and deeds are inherently connected in a theatrical setting. I show in the first section that the metatheatricality of the play-within-the-play, *Suleiman and Perseda*, as well as Hieronimo's intense focus on the work of authoring violent revenge, emphasizes the joint roles of rhetoric and action in performing stage violence. In this play, violence is verbalized before it is enacted and language acts as a scaffold for the murders that take place on stage. In other words, Kyd shows that language is a necessary component of the performance of violent action. The second half of the

chapter focuses on *A Yorkshire Tragedy* and builds on this notion of verbalized physical movement. At the same time, I argue, the later play illustrates a development from Kyd's work; instead of reiterating the necessity of language for theatrical violence, Middleton's play reveals that performative language can be used to enact violence in two distinct ways, both to demonstrate and describe violent action. Thus, Middleton more clearly explores the intersection between violent language and violence in action. These modes of verbalized violence not only function differently but must be performed differently as well. The two vocabularies of violent action that I argue are present in *A Yorkshire Tragedy* are an essential starting point for the discussion of language and performance in early modern tragedies, as they set up a comparative lens through which to examine the ways that sixteenth- and seventeenth-century playwrights conceive of and represent acts of violence. This chapter, and by extension this thesis, asserts that rhetoric and performance are intensely interrelated practices, especially during moments of violence on the early modern stage. As Kyd writes in *The Spanish Tragedy*, "all this [that is written down] must be performed", and I therefore argue that our critical focus must be on both.¹³⁶

I. *The Spanish Tragedy*

In Act 3, scene 2 of Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy*, Bel-Imperia drops a letter "written to Hieronimo" (3.2.25) from her balcony. In it, she reveals the names of the men "who murdered [his] son" (3.2.29) and compels Hieronimo to "revenge Horatio's death" (3.2.30). This letter is one of many props in the play that

¹³⁶ Thomas Kyd, *The Spanish Tragedy*, ed. by Clara Calvo and Jesús Tronch (London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2013), 4.1.155.

demonstrates the power of language, whether verbalized or written, to urge and incite action on stage, which is the focus of this section. In *The Spanish Tragedy*, smaller props like this letter serve to turn our attention to the role of language in performance in a particularly material fashion, visually highlighting the ways in which the playwright uses language to make us aware of the action of embodied violence. These small stage props also function as a means of producing carefully articulated stage images; as Eleanor Tweedie notes, the “glove, scarf, letter, [and] sword” props that are so integral to the plot work to make us “continually aware of the playwright’s use of the performers, their actions, and their movement on the platform” of the stage.¹³⁷ The importance of the letter, of text written down, cannot be understated. Tweedie traces the appearances of these props through the play — from the letter that Bel-Imperia drops for Hieronimo (3.2) and the petitioners’ letters torn by the Knight Marshall (3.13), to the letters sent by Pedringano (3.4, 3.7) and, extending to other written materials, the books and script which Hieronimo variously holds and displays (3.13, 4.1).¹³⁸ Drawing on Tweedie’s explication of the stage images involving these written materials, this section is interested in text as language, and language in performance. In other words, I want to think about the ways that language appears so continuously as a prop, as a metaphor, and as a command in the performance of this play, and unpack the way that words simultaneously enhance and underscore the performance of the violent situations around which these written materials appear.

¹³⁷ Eleanor M. Tweedie, “‘Action is Eloquence’: The Staging of Thomas Kyd’s *Spanish Tragedy*,” *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 16.2 (1976), 223-239 (p. 233, 236, 239).

¹³⁸ Tweedie, p. 227-228.

The Spanish Tragedy has become a cultural touchstone. The play appeared in ten separate printed editions in the years between 1594 and 1613, and had at least 29 recorded performances from 1592-1597 alone, evidence of its popularity in both print and performance.¹³⁹ Beyond its own well-recorded appearances in print and on stage, a large number of references to *The Spanish Tragedy* appear in contemporary drama and prose work, such as Thomas Nashe's preface to Robert Greene's *Menaphon* (1589), Thomas Heywood's *1 The Fair Maid of the West* (c. 1597-1603), Ben Jonson's *Cynthia's Revels* (1600), and Thomas Dekker's *The Wonderfull Yeare* (1603), to name a few.¹⁴⁰ Cultural and scholarly interest in the play focuses in particular on its rhetoric, which was usually the target of parody. Kyd's use of euphuism (that is, flowery, figurative language in the style of John Lyly's *Euphues*) and strong sense of rhyme came to be considered old-fashioned.¹⁴¹ Modern scholarship also draws attention to the heightened rhetoric of the play, calling it "lofty" and "intensified", and gently accusing Kyd of valuing "rhetorical balance" over dramatic clarity; in her work on language as national identity, Carla Mazzio goes so far as to briefly conceive of *The Spanish Tragedy's*

¹³⁹ Emma Smith, 'Author v. Character in Early Modern Dramatic Authorship: The Example of Thomas Kyd and "*The Spanish Tragedy*"', *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England*, 11 (1999), 129-142 (p. 129); see also Emma Smith, '*The Spanish Tragedy*, Not Shakespeare: Elizabethan and Jacobean Popular Theatre', University of Oxford, 4 September 2010, iTunes U; and Edel Semple, 'The Critical Backstory', in *The Spanish Tragedy: A Critical Reader*, ed. by Thomas Rist (London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2016), 21-51 (p. 21-22).

¹⁴⁰ These works represent only a brief sampling of *The Spanish Tragedy's* literary influence; for a more thorough examination of the references to and parodies of *The Spanish Tragedy* in sixteenth and seventeenth century work, see Semple, p. 23-30; *The Works of Thomas Kyd*, ed. by Frederick S. Boas (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1901), lxxviii-ciii; Arthur Freeman, *Thomas Kyd: Facts and Problems* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), 131-139; and Rebekah Owens, 'Parody and *The Spanish Tragedy*', *Cahiers Élisabéthains*, 71 (2007), 27-36.

¹⁴¹ For two early modern examples of references to *The Spanish Tragedy's* rhetoric, see Francis Beaumont, *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, ed. by Michael Hattaway (London: A&C Black, 2000), 5.278-279; Ben Jonson, *Cynthia's Revels*, ed. by Eric Rasmussen and Matthew Steggle, in *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson*, ed. by David Bevington, Martin Butler, and Ian Donaldson, 7 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), I, *Praeludium*, 166-167. "Euphuism, n.", *OED*, 1a: defined as "affectation in writing or speech, [...] affectedly periphrastic or 'high-flown' language in general".

high rhetoric as a kind of physical thing, calling the play (and Hieronimo's playlet in Act 4) a "linguistic spectacle".¹⁴² Such an analogy is apt, as I argue that Kyd makes use of such intensely vivid language in order to draw specific parallels between heightened speech and heightened action in the play-within-the-play. In other words, Kyd's high language is not just worth noting for its form and style, as modern critical engagement suggests. Rather, I argue that rhetoric is central to the modes of staged violence Kyd employs in this play.

Throughout *The Spanish Tragedy*, Kyd works to connect verbal and visual imagery. James R. Siemon describes this connection as "rhetorical gesture", referring to words that call attention to and decipher stage images and action.¹⁴³ Siemon cites Hieronimo's description of the old man who brings him a petition for justice as an example of Kyd's verbalization of gestural action: "But wherefore stands yon silly man so mute, / With mournful eyes and hands to heaven upreared?" (3.13.67-68). In this way, words are used to interpret and clarify the physical stage action, made visible and audible to the audience. As Jonas A. Barish writes, "Kyd uses figures of rhetoric not simply to decorate the action but to articulate it" — the playwright uses words to "aid the plot to incarnate itself as a physical event on a physical stage".¹⁴⁴

Thus, several critics (including Mazzio, Siemon, and Barish) have noted an important link between rhetoric and action in the play. Yet, beyond this initial

¹⁴² Semple, p. 24; Carol McGinnis Kay, 'Deception through Words: A Reading of *The Spanish Tragedy*', *Studies in Philology*, 74.1 (1977), 20-38 (p. 32); Carla Mazzio, 'Staging the Vernacular: Language and Nation in Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy*', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 38.2 (1998), 207-232 (p. 218); Jonas A. Barish, '*The Spanish Tragedy*, or The Pleasures and Perils of Rhetoric', ed. by John Russell Brown and Bernard Harris, *Elizabethan Theatre* (London, 1966), 59-85 (p. 59-60, 75).

¹⁴³ James R. Siemon, 'Dialogical Formalism: Word, Object, and Action in "The Spanish Tragedy"', *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England*, 5 (1991), 87-115 (p. 93).

¹⁴⁴ Barish, p. 67, 59.

identification, none of these critics offer a full-scale analysis of the word types or rhetorical figures that Kyd relies on to embody and physicalize the play's narrative. In contrast, I seek to address the idea of words as stage events, extending Mazzio, Siemon, and Barish's awareness of the physicality of language to specific word types in order to develop a scholarly and practical understanding of how speech generates and physicalizes not only meaning and feeling, but also action and impact.

I suggest that the word type most associated with the embodied use of rhetorical gesture is the deictic expression, referring to those words or phrases whose meaning relies on the context in which it is used. Deictics are considered "pointing" words; their Greek root, *deicticos*, translates as "to show, [or] showing directly".¹⁴⁵ Deictic words encapsulate both a linguistic expression and a bodily one, making the actor's body into a literal figure of speech. This is particularly relevant to theatrical work. As Sylvia Adamson has written, deictic words like "that", "this", "thus", and "there" are all "words with an unusually close relation to performance", and usually indicate "some kind of demonstrative activity".¹⁴⁶ In plays, Adamson shows, they are "used as implied stage directions" and may occasionally be accompanied by an explicit stage direction in the printed text.¹⁴⁷ Adamson's examples from *Othello*, *Richard II*, and *King Lear*, among others, make clear that deictics "direct the audience's gaze" by "forc[ing] performers to propose some answers if they are not to leave the gestural deictics as nonsense words" —

¹⁴⁵ "Deictic, adj. and n.", *OED*, etymology.

¹⁴⁶ Sylvia Adamson, 'Understanding Shakespeare's Grammar: Studies in Small Words', in *Reading Shakespeare's Dramatic Language: A Guide*, ed. by Sylvia Adamson, Lynette Hunter, Lynne Magnusson, Ann Thompson, and Katie Wales (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2001), 210-246 (p. 232).

¹⁴⁷ Adamson, p. 232.

that is, words without a clear referent.¹⁴⁸ Keir Elam, writing in the same volume, makes this more explicit: the actor works to “complete the sense of the words by gestur[ing]”, but “[i]t is deixis [...] that creates the [theatrical] illusion of unity between the character’s utterances and the actor’s speech and movements on stage”.¹⁴⁹ As such, deictics are normally used in the present tense, prompting the simultaneous embodiment of the spoken action. Andy Kesson picks up this attention to deictics by examining the varying roles “thus” plays in the drama of the 1580s, both performative and literary. Kesson cites early works like John Lyly’s *Campaspe* as an example of the more rhetorical use of “thus”, where, he argues, it “may simply denote formal stages in argumentation”.¹⁵⁰ However, Kesson notes a change in playwrights’ use of “thus”, with instances of usage increasing significantly in the late 1580s and early 1590s. In doing so, he draws particular attention to *The Spanish Tragedy*, which clocks 63 “thuses” in its first printing in 1592 — a figure which far exceeds the more “normal” contemporary rate of use of around 30 per play.¹⁵¹ In each of these works, deictic words are established as a word type that is inherently performative; Kesson, in fact, ends his essay with the observation that deixis may have functioned in the early modern period “as entirely explicit, obvious markers of the need to move, enact or

¹⁴⁸ Adamson, p. 234.

¹⁴⁹ Keir Elam, ‘Language and the Body’, in *Reading Shakespeare’s Dramatic Language: A Guide*, ed. by Sylvia Adamson, Lynette Hunter, Lynne Magnusson, Ann Thompson, and Katie Wales (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2001), 173-187 (p. 180).

¹⁵⁰ Andy Kesson, ‘Performing words #3: thus and thus’, *Before Shakespeare*, <<https://beforeshakespeare.com/2018/02/01/performing-words-3-thus-and-thus/>> [accessed 20 May 2020], n.p.

¹⁵¹ This figure increases to 67 in the 1602 quarto. Kesson includes the following data for context: “Only *The Jew of Malta* and *The True Tragedy of Richard III* come close to this figure, at 57 and 40 respectively. Of the 32 remaining plays that [Martin] Wiggins tentatively dates as onstage by 1591, only *Love and Fortune*, *The Woman in the Moon* and *Fair Em* have more than 30. In other words, *The Spanish Tragedy* contains over twice as many thuses as almost all other plays performed in the London playhouses before 1591”. Kesson, n.p.

gesture”.¹⁵² My work in this chapter brings together the earlier, more broadly linguistic work of Mazzio, Siemon, and Barish with the specific considerations of Adamson and Kesson, by looking at *The Spanish Tragedy*’s extensive use of “thus”, alongside “here”, “this”, and “these”, and treating each as an explicit marker of violent performative acts.

‘thus and thus’: Using Deictics

It is a common critical assertion that Lorenzo’s Latinate quote from Act 2, scene 1 neatly summarizes *The Spanish Tragedy*’s approach to language: “*tam armis quam ingenio*: / Where words prevail not, violence prevails” (2.1.107-108).¹⁵³ Lorenzo’s certainty that language can reach a point at which it is no longer expressive enough, after which the only remaining option is physical action, has become a sticking point for this play; scholars frequently cite Hieronimo’s multilingual play-within-the-play, *Suleiman and Perseda*, as evidence that language has been rendered insufficient and incomprehensible by violent loss, unable to articulate the action happening on stage, and so, has failed in its role as an interpretive, signifying device.¹⁵⁴ While the spoken rhetoric of these scenes might fail to literally describe the action on stage (a particular difficulty for anyone reading the play in print), I argue that deixis marks the clear success of action

¹⁵² Kesson, n.p.

¹⁵³ Scholars who read these lines as representative of the whole play include Peter M. Sacks, “‘Where Words Prevail Not’: Grief, Revenge, and Language in Kyd and Shakespeare”, *ELH*, 49.3 (1982), p. 576-601; and Timothy A. Turner, “Torture and Summary Justice in ‘The Spanish Tragedy’”, *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 53.2 (2013), 277-292.

¹⁵⁴ Work on the failure of language includes William N. West, “‘But This Will Be a Mere Confusion’: Real and Represented Confusions on the Elizabethan Stage”, *Theatre Journal*, 60.2 (2008), 217-233 (p. 221, 232); Siemon, p. 7; Alexandra S. Ferretti, “‘This place was made for pleasure not for death’: Performativity, Language, and Action in ‘The Spanish Tragedy’”, *Early Theatre*, 16.1 (2013), 31-49 (p. 40); Robert Barrie, “‘Unknown Languages’ and Subversive Play in ‘The Spanish Tragedy’”, *Explorations in Renaissance Culture*, 21 (1995), 63-80 (p. 71-72).

itself. Barish, too, picks up on the multi-directional force which language carries in *The Spanish Tragedy*, writing that “[w]ords come to oppose physical events *as well as to buttress them*”.¹⁵⁵ Ultimately, however, Barish reaches the conclusion that the “reciprocity between words and acts is fractured” in Kyd’s work, where, “instead of confirming and corroborating each other, they delude and destroy”.¹⁵⁶ Even while recognizing the simultaneous opposition and buttressing of words in relation to staged physicality, Barish still finally realigns himself with the critical majority when he writes that in “the splintering, shattering finale of *The Spanish Tragedy*, in which all communication breaks down, the community collapses”.¹⁵⁷ This section pushes back against such critical claims, and against Barish’s conclusion as well, suggesting that the use of deictic words in the play’s most violent scenes is not an example of inarticulate violence, but rather carefully articulated action through verbal markers of physical movement in performance. In other words, deictic words like “thus” prevail to communicate and direct the physical acts of violence which occur in this play, as “thus” and other guiding deictics become the impetus for such action, making visible the interactions between language and bodily action on stage.

The Spanish Tragedy is a play that is built entirely around violence. The opening scene, in which the ghost of Don Andrea describes his journey through the underworld to Pluto’s court, is precipitated by Spain’s bloody war against Portugal; the rest of the action is shaped by Revenge’s promise that Andrea “shalt see the author of thy death, / [...] Depriv’d of life” (1.1.87, 89). This framing device establishes a precedent of violence that continues through the rest of the narrative

¹⁵⁵ Barish, p. 67, emphasis added.

¹⁵⁶ Barish, p. 83.

¹⁵⁷ Barish, p. 83.

structure: what begins in war ends with six corpses on stage and the promise of “tortures” in “deepest hell” (4.5.28, 27). Violence is made manifest as characters are stabbed, shot, and hung, and one revenge plot develops into four. But Revenge’s lines in Act 1 also serve to associate violent death with the practice of dramatic writing (Balthazar is the “author of [Andrea’s] death”, as above, and the ghost and Revenge will “serve for Chorus in this tragedy” [1.1.91]). As David Cutts writes, *The Spanish Tragedy* “identifies the revenger as a kind of author and writing as one of the weapons available to him”.¹⁵⁸ That language, particularly theatrical language, should be such an integral part of the play’s enactment of violent revenge is the crux of my argument in this chapter. By focusing on the articulation and embodiment of violence from both a textual and performance perspective — made visible in Hieronimo’s commitment to authoring vengeance through his play-within-the-play — I lay the groundwork for a thread that appears throughout this thesis as I consider how exactly violent action can and should be understood and enacted via words.

Deictic words make up 2% of the total word count of the 1602 quarto edition of *The Spanish Tragedy*, only comprising 468 out of 24,569 words. However, of these, “thus” accounts for 14.3% of the total deictics used, with 67 instances. By comparison, “thus” appears approximately half as often as the name “Hieronimo” (130 instances).¹⁵⁹ Use of “thus” begins in Act 1, scene 2, when the Spanish King remarks on his General’s entrance to the court, “thus in haste” (1.2.5), marking this word as a clear indicator of action. From this point at the

¹⁵⁸ David Cutts, ‘Writing and Revenge: The Struggle for Authority in Thomas Kyd’s “The Spanish Tragedy”’, *Explorations in Renaissance Culture*, 22 (1996), 147-159 (p. 147).

¹⁵⁹ This figure does not include character headings, taking into account only those instances where the name ‘Hieronimo’ appears in the dialogue of the play.

beginning of Act 1, scene 2 to Act 2, scene 3, “thus” is used sparsely, with only eight instances; this rate of use increases exponentially in Act 2, scene 4, when Horatio and Bel-Imperia enter the arbor. While they draw on metaphors of love as a type of violent warfare (which prefigure Horatio’s imminent and equally violent death at the end of the scene), the use of “thus” jumps to five instances in this scene alone. This increase suggests that the play’s most violent scenes take advantage of the opportunities for embodying language that deictics provide.

“Thus” is not the only deictic to appear in this scene; some of the other demonstrative deictics, particularly “this”, have also been variously expanded into stage directions. In the 2013 Arden edition, for instance, editors Clara Calvo and Jesús Tronch choose to interpret Bel-Imperia’s line, “[t]hen ward thyself, I dart this kiss at thee” (2.4.40) and Horatio’s response, “[t]hus I retort the dart thou threw’st at me” (2.4.41) with the editorial stage directions, “[k]isses him” (2.4.40sd) and “[k]isses her” (2.4.41sd). Yet Calvo and Tronch do not expand on Horatio’s earlier lines, during which the couple touch hands (2.4.36-37), despite the fact that all three of these instances contain examples of deictic words which give clear direction to both actors and readers of these characters’ actions. Horatio leads with a deictic “thus”, saying “[t]hus we begin our wars: put forth thy hand / That it may combat with my ruder hand” (2.4.36-37). “Thus” here sets up the actor playing Horatio for a gestural action, which should then lead to a reciprocal action from Bel-Imperia after Horatio’s imperative command that Bel-Imperia “put forth” her hand (2.4.36) to match his own. The “this” (2.4.40) and “thus” (2.4.41) before the pair kiss function similarly, with both deictics directing the intimate

performance of Bel-Imperia and Horatio's love affair.¹⁶⁰ But the deixis in this moment of sexual contact does more than just provide guidance for the actors' performance choices; the warlike language which defines this moment and which is driven by deixis foreshadows the subsequent use of language as an impetus for action throughout the rest of the scene (during which Horatio is murdered), and indeed the rest of the play.

The next four deictics that the reading or stage audience encounter continue this pattern of prompting violent action. During Bel-Imperia and Horatio's last moments alone together, Horatio describes his lover's "twining arms" (2.4.43) by saying, "[t]hus elms by vines are compassed" (2.4.45). The action described here, of Bel-Imperia "*embrac[ing]*" (2.4.43sd) Horatio, occurs as he speaks — the simultaneity signified when Horatio refers to his own arms as "large and strong withal" (2.4.44), as "withal" indicates something happening "[a]t the same time".¹⁶¹ The deictics used by the murderers ten lines later are also simultaneous to the violence they narrate. As Horatio asks, "[w]hat, will you murder me?" (2.4.53), Lorenzo replies, "[a]y, thus, and thus" (2.4.54). These words are followed by the non-editorial stage direction "[t]hey stab him" (2.4.54sd). While the two "thuses" certainly carry a strong implication of staged movement as directed by language, a third deictic points back to the stabbing as well: "these", Lorenzo says, referring to the action of stabbing and the wounds which that action produces, "are the fruits of love" (2.4.54). These instances explicitly connect deictic words to violent action within the world of this play, and by doing so, lay the groundwork for Hieronimo's revenge at the end of the play. More importantly,

¹⁶⁰ Act 2, scene 4 contains 11 instances of deictic word use, five of which are "thus". The other six are made up of "this" (twice), "these" (twice), and "there" (twice).

¹⁶¹ "Withal, adv.", *OED*, 1b.

the use of deixis in this scene begins to illustrate the necessity of reading theatrically, where the text informs performance and vice versa: while “thus” does not at first appear to be an inherently violent word, the implications of deixis as an imperative for the embodied performance of violence cannot be overstated.

Language not only accompanies the ultra-violent moments of this play, it also actively underpins them — in fact, Hieronimo’s initial plan is grounded in active rhetoric, where words are tied to and strengthened by specific actions. He resolves to

go [and] plain me to my lord the King,
And cry aloud for justice through the court,
Wearing the flints with these my withered feet,
And either purchase justice by entreats
Or tire them all with my revenging threats (3.7.69-73).

These lines suggest that Hieronimo’s words (whether entreating or threatening) will be fruitful precisely because they are connected to an action (pacing) and an audience (the court). Merely being voiced is not enough; that is, words that are not grounded in action can accomplish nothing. Hieronimo calls these “unfruitful words” (3.7.67). In order to be fruitful, then, his complaints must be made both active and audible before they can be considered meaningful and able to be enacted. As his revenge plot begins to take shape, Hieronimo works to join words to action by literally writing it out as a script; his *Suleiman and Perseda* becomes a bespoke device for vengeance, allowing him to tailor his revenge to suit Lorenzo and Balthazar’s “villainies” (3.13.31) by embedding violent action into the language of the playlet. Just as Kyd has done, Hieronimo marks action in the playlet through deictic words, primarily “thus”, which have fruitful and deadly consequences outside of the playlet in the broader world of *The Spanish Tragedy* itself.

Act 4's action is framed by both literary and theatrical language, highlighting the interconnected nature of words and actions. Hieronimo unfolds the scheme slowly and — in contrast to the revenging characters of later English tragedies — reveals little about his planned act of vengeance, saying only that “the plot's already in mine head” (4.1.51). William N. West, in his work on confusion, touches briefly on the literary and authorial aspects of this revenge plot, writing that Hieronimo's “resistance to revelation” complicates the audience's ability to interpret *Suleiman and Perseda* as a form of vengeance, “leaving its interpretation unclear until it is given definitive meaning by its author”.¹⁶² The lack of clarity is compounded by the performance of the playlet in Latin, Greek, Italian, and French (4.1.165-170), which Balthazar worries will “be a mere confusion” (4.1.172). While West and others have focused their critical attention on the comprehension and meaning of the various languages said to be used in the play-within-the-play (in particular, interrogating both if and how these languages might have been represented in performance since they appear in print in English), the fact that Hieronimo himself is most interested in the act of performance cannot be overlooked.¹⁶³ His response to Balthazar is that “[i]t must be so, for the conclusion / Shall prove the invention, and all was good” (4.1.174-175). It is Hieronimo's final “oration” (4.1.176) and “strange and wondrous show” (4.1.177), hidden until the end of the playlet “behind a curtain” (4.1.178), that “shall make the matter known”

¹⁶² West, p. 226.

¹⁶³ Critical studies on and surveys of language and speech within *The Spanish Tragedy* include Barish; Tweedie; Mazzio; Siemon; Ferretti; Kay; and West. For more on the performance of non-English languages on the English stage, particularly in Shakespeare's *Henry V*, which can be used as a guide to the performance of multi-lingual scenes, see Margaret W. Ferguson, *Dido's Daughters: Literacy, Gender, and Empire in Early Modern England and France* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), especially p. 152-160; and Andrew Fleck, “Ick verstaw you niet”: Performing Foreign Tongues on the Early Modern English Stage”, *Medieval & Renaissance Drama in England*, 20 (2007), 204-221.

(4.1.179). Comprehension of the spoken languages and foreknowledge of the revenge plot is a secondary concern for Hieronimo; what matters instead is the physical embodiment of the written word — that is, the “acting of revenge” (4.3.29) — and subsequent display of the dead bodies on stage.

The actual performance of the play-within-the-play, and the scene that frames it, features another marked increase in the use of deictic words — there are 57 total instances of deictic word use in Act 4, scene 4, of which six are “thus”. By comparison, Act 2, scene 4 (which is approximately one third the length of Act 4, scene 4) includes 11 instances of deictics, of which five are “thus”. Deictics again emphasize and prompt demonstrations of heightened violence (as Lorenzo’s “thus, and thus” did in Act 2 [2.4.54]) and direct the onstage and theatrical audiences’ attention in specific, gestural ways. Each of the deaths that Hieronimo has orchestrated are accompanied by the deictic “thus”, usually alongside a stage direction that indicates someone has been stabbed. Hieronimo as the Bashaw kills Lorenzo as Erasto, saying, “*thou shouldst be thus employed*” (4.4.51) and the accompanying stage direction reads “[s]tabs him” (4.4.51sd). Bel-Imperia as Perseda approaches Balthazar as Suleiman and says, “*were she able, thus she would revenge / Thy treacheries on thee, ignoble Prince, / And on herself she would be thus revenged*” (4.4.64-66); after each instance of “thus”, a stage direction notes that she “stabs him” (4.4.65sd) and “stabs herself” (4.4.66sd), respectively. Bel-Imperia needs no instruction; even when enacting language that is not her own, that is written in a cue script for her to follow, she is aware of the words which lend themselves to the performance of violent action. Each of these “thuses” is firmly (almost inescapably) connected to a physical act of violence, explicitly setting deictic words as the impetus for and articulation of performative action.

As Hieronimo concludes the play-within-the-play's performance, his focus shifts to the act of publicly recording the narrative of Horatio's death. His rhetoric centers around the experience of speaking and writing: phrases and words such as "sundry languages" (4.4.73) and "vulgar tongue" (4.4.74) (references to the diverse spoken languages of *Suleiman and Perseda*, and the clarity of the various audiences' understanding) appear in the same speech as "tongue" (4.4.84), "tale" (4.4.84), and "words" (4.4.86).¹⁶⁴ Deictics begin to be used as a rhetorical device, both marking instances of violence and denoting, as Kesson said of John Lyly's earlier use of deictics, the formal stages of an oratorical argument.¹⁶⁵ When the Spanish King asks, "what follows for Hieronimo?" (4.4.71), the Knight Marshal responds by setting up the frame of his argument: "this follows" (4.4.72). Hieronimo uses three deictics in quick succession to ensure his audience is paying attention: "Marry, **this** follows for Hieronimo. / **Here** break we off our sundry languages, / And **thus** conclude I in our vulgar tongue" (4.4.72-74, emphasis added). These deictics serve to guide the audience through the transition from the play-within-the-play to Hieronimo's planned "oration" (4.1.176), where their use explicitly ties the rhetorical process of "mak[ing] the matter known" (4.1.179) to the acts of violence that "urg[ed Hieronimo] to this [revenge]" (4.4.87).

Hieronimo's 80-line explication follows conventional early modern teachings on rhetorical performance, working to persuade and affect the audience onstage and in the theatre with the account of Horatio's murder. Among these was

¹⁶⁴ Carol McGinnis Kay notes the frequency with which such language-centered phrases are used throughout *The Spanish Tragedy*, writing that "'word,' 'words,' 'speech,' 'speak,' and 'tell' appear in the play's dialogue more than eighty times, while the words 'revenge' and 'vengeance' appear less than thirty times". Kay, 'Deception through Words: A Reading of *The Spanish Tragedy*', *Studies in Philology*, 74.1 (1977), 20-38 (p. 21).

¹⁶⁵ Kesson, n.p.

the practice of supporting an oration with expressive gesture by the speaker, since, as Thomas Heywood wrote in his *Apology for Actors*, “[r]hetoricke [...] instructs him to fit his phrases to his action, and his action to his phrase, and his pronuntiation to them both”.¹⁶⁶ Hieronimo embodies this instruction throughout his Act 4 speech, such as when he “[d]raws the curtain and shows his dead son” (4.4.87sd), presenting a visual record of the wrong done to his family in Lorenzo and Balthazar’s murder of Horatio. But gestures are also written into the fabric of his declamatory speech, as Hieronimo uses “thus”, “here”, “this”, and “these” to direct the audience’s gaze, pointing them to the sight of Horatio’s body in the discovery space. It is a near continuous linkage; as Hieronimo reveals the lifeless corpse, he says:

See here my show, look on this spectacle.
 Here lay my hope, and here my hope hath end;
 Here lay my heart, and here my heart was slain;
 Here lay my treasure, here my treasure lost;
 Here lay my bliss, and here my bliss bereft.
 But hope, heart, treasure, joy and bliss,
 All fled, failed, died, yea, all decayed with this.
 From forth these wounds came breath that gave me life.
 They murdered me that made these fatal marks (4.4.88-96).

This repeated use of “here” is different in effect to the “thuses” used previously. Where “thus” became an impetus for action, “here” shows the tangible result of that action: Horatio’s dead body “[t]hrough-girt with wounds, and slaughtered as you see” (4.4.111). Deixis, then, provides a crucial form of scaffolding for theatrical texts — supporting the performance of violence through the performance of rhetorical oration. By tracing its use in *The Spanish Tragedy*, we see that Kyd uses this word type to intensify and prompt the violent action of the narrative. In the

¹⁶⁶ Heywood, C3v-C4r.

next section, I examine the ways deixis works in a performance context, ultimately arguing that deictics play a crucial role in underscoring the violence of the play.

“sweet action”: Deictics in Practice

Heywood’s *An Apology for Actors* frames rhetorical oration as an inherently theatrical practice; powerful and affecting speech, he writes, “requires five things in an Orator, *Invention, Disposition, Eloquuti[o]n[,] Memory, and Pronuntiatio*”, as was taught by the Roman rhetoricians like Cicero and Quintilian.¹⁶⁷ But, Heywood continues,

all [these] are imperfect without the sixt, which is *Action*: for be his inven[t]ion never so fluent and exquisite, his disposition and order never so composed and formall, his eloquence, and elaborate phrases never so materiall and pithy, his memory never so firme & retentive, his pronuntiatio never so muscally and plausible, yet without a comely and elegant gesture, a gracious and a bewitching kinde of action, a naturall and a familiar motion of the head, the hand, the body, and a moderate and fit countenance sutable to all the rest, I hold all the rest as nothing.¹⁶⁸

In other words, words and actions are not only a natural pairing, but also a necessary one. This is true of all who might wish to display rhetorical skill, but especially true of actors whose speeches are designed to make an “impression in the hearts of the p[eople]”.¹⁶⁹

As I have already argued, Kyd uses deixis as a rhetorical device to scaffold and supplement violent action; words like “thus”, “this”, “that”, “these”, “there”, and “here” guide and direct the murders of Acts 2 and 4, prompting violent action

¹⁶⁷ Heywood, C4r. Heywood is expanding on the five ‘parts’ of the art of rhetoric as outlined by Cicero: invention (*inventio*), arrangement (*dispositio*), style (*elocutio*), memory (*memoria*), and delivery (*pronuntiatio*). See also R. W. Serjeantson, “Testimony: the artless proof”, in *Renaissance Figures of Speech*, ed. by Sylvia Adamson, Gavin Alexander, and Katrin Ettenhuber (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 181-196 (p. 182); and Borchers and Hundley, p. 41-51.

¹⁶⁸ Heywood, C4r.

¹⁶⁹ Heywood, C3r.

through the act of speaking them. In this section, then, I want to consider how deictics might translate from the page to the stage. As I have noted, it is both apparent and critically well-established that Kyd's language was and is inherently violent. Instead, moving beyond this critical truism, I want to examine how, exactly, violent language (written so precisely, as my analysis of deictics above has shown) is embodied on stage. How might it be performed and how is it experienced both by actors and audience members? In order to explore these questions, I turn to theatre practice, asking practitioners how they approach the task of embodying violent words. How might those scenes with the highest instances of deictic word use be staged? Are these words, which read as clear directions in the early modern text, still helpful to modern practitioners working on premodern plays? And finally, how do theatre professionals who specialize in early modern dramatic works conceive of the relationship between language and performance — especially in a play like *The Spanish Tragedy*, where language appears variously as a prop, as a metaphor, and as a command? This last question carries particular importance, as my approach to drama in this thesis integrally considers early modern plays to be both performance pieces *and* textual objects. The purpose of examining the play in practice, then, is to inhabit and externalize the violence of this language by embodying the rhetorical practice which Kyd uses to structure his performance text.

This practice-based work was rooted in practitioner interviews conducted and recorded via the video conferencing platform Zoom. Both interviews centered around a set of questions that I shared beforehand, each related to how language might be used to stage Act 4, scene 4, and which functioned as a jumping off point

for the larger discussion.¹⁷⁰ This last point merits expansion: while I hoped to cover the material in the set questions, as they addressed issues which actively informed my textual analysis of *The Spanish Tragedy*, I was also interested in the unexpected and unique directions in which each conversation might flow. Both of the theatre professionals whom I interviewed had formal experience working on *The Spanish Tragedy* in varying capacities. The first, Philip Bird, an actor who has worked at Shakespeare's Globe and previously co-authored (with Sarah Dustagheer) a chapter on the use of the discovery space in early modern theatres and play texts in which they thought through the act of revealing Horatio's dead body in *The Spanish Tragedy*; and second, Ricky Dukes, the artistic director of Lazarus Theatre Company, who edited and directed their 2013 production of the play.¹⁷¹ These contrasting experiences allowed for conversations that ranged from the practical (how does a 90-minute production edit the final act to focus on the essential narrative arc?) to the textual (what does the verse form of Hieronimo's play-within-the-play signal to actors?). The common thread in these two interviews, however, was a focus on the play text as *evidence*, as a tool in an actor's or director's arsenal that provides not only guidance but also something to fall back on "if ever we get stuck".¹⁷²

This attitude toward the script of *The Spanish Tragedy* speaks to the close relationship between practitioners and the text. This phenomenon in and of itself is not surprising — drama students are frequently advised to put their "trust [...]"

¹⁷⁰ A copy of the pre-circulated interview questions is listed in Appendix A.2 Interview Questions, 'Practice-Based Work on *The Spanish Tragedy*' (17 June 2020), p. 274.

¹⁷¹ Sarah Dustagheer, with Philip Bird, "'Strikes open a curtain where appears a body': Discovering Death in Stage Directions', in *Stage Directions & Shakespearean Theatre*, ed. by Sarah Dustagheer and Gillian Woods (London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2018), 213-237.

¹⁷² Appendix A.3 transcript, 'Interview with Ricky Dukes on Practice-Based Work on *The Spanish Tragedy*' (26 June 2020), p. 311.

in the text” — but it suggests a straightforward response to my initial interview question.¹⁷³ That is, how do theatre practitioners approach the task of embodying violent words? By using the words themselves. Because of this answer, both interviews devoted more time to the building blocks of my main interview question: reflecting on the specific words that actors and directors find useful; whether these words were the same ones that I as a literary scholar had identified; and how they work to translate text work into clear and meaningful embodied action in the rehearsal room. However, through the process of interviewing Bird and Dukes it became clear that this supposedly straightforward response — allowing the text itself to guide the staged embodiment of violent speech — could mean entirely different things to individual practitioners. Using the words themselves by no means signaled a universal experience. While both were attentive to the language of the play and used it as a kind of “evidence, which is [to say] data” in the rehearsal room, their approaches to understanding and using that language varied.¹⁷⁴ Some of these differences can be attributed to a difference in training — Bird is much more familiar with the use of cue scripts and has worked with the Globe on original practice (OP) productions, whereas Dukes structures his rehearsal room around Brechtian practice — but both Bird and Dukes are well-versed in Elizabethan and Jacobean drama and text. In what follows, I will outline Bird and Dukes’ feedback on their processes of using Kyd’s text to unlock violent action in practice.

Early on in our conversation, Bird noted the thematic importance of words in *The Spanish Tragedy*, identifying the same quantity of props and plot points that

¹⁷³ Cicely Berry, *The Actor & The Text* (London: Virgin, 2006), p. 11.

¹⁷⁴ Appendix A.2 transcript, p. 283.

took the form of written material as I had. This is a play, he said, that “does seem to be sort of [about] words”.¹⁷⁵ Some of this notion, he admitted, came from the fact that words are a key feature of the dramatic form: “that’s a kind of early modern theatre thing, [...] it needs dialogue”.¹⁷⁶ Unlike modern cinema or television, which can more easily utilize “looks, [and] doesn’t need dialogue” to narrate every moment, premodern drama relies on language to evoke feeling, to conjure visions of imagined action, and to emphasize the movement and gestures of the actors on stage.¹⁷⁷ The prologue to Shakespeare’s *Henry V* is a prime example of this phenomenon in action: “Think when we talk of horses, that you see them, / Printing their proud hoofs i’t’h’ receiving earth”.¹⁷⁸ In *The Spanish Tragedy*, when the General talks of the battle against the Portuguese army (1.2.22-84), we are to suspend our disbelief around not literally seeing the army and instead imagine it; likewise, when Hieronimo speaks at length about the violent loss of his son (2.5.1-33), the audience should share his grief.

Because of this theatrical convention, Bird suggested that “language can to some extent replace action, in our imaginations, by being an expression of an emotion, or description of violent offstage action”.¹⁷⁹ But there comes a point, he said, particularly “when you’re feeling impassioned [...], when you can no longer talk. Where words on their own will not do the job. And so the talking has to cease”.¹⁸⁰ Bird’s example in this instance was modern day musicals, in which “speaking and walking and daily activity are not enough to express what you want

¹⁷⁵ Appendix A.2 transcript, p. 280.

¹⁷⁶ Appendix A.2 transcript, p. 281.

¹⁷⁷ Appendix A.2 transcript, p. 281.

¹⁷⁸ William Shakespeare, ‘The Life of Henry the Fifth’, ed. by Rory Loughnane, in *The New Oxford Shakespeare: Modern Critical Edition*, ed. by Gary Taylor, John Jowett, Terri Bourus, and Gabriel Egan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), Prologue.26-27.

¹⁷⁹ Appendix A.2 transcript, p. 282.

¹⁸⁰ Appendix A.2 transcript, p. 281.

to say, you have to sing. And you have to dance. Because there's no other way of expressing yourself".¹⁸¹ But can scholars and/or practitioners reasonably elide Kyd's sixteenth-century play and a show like *Singin' in the Rain*, where Gene Kelly proclaims that he has "gotta dance"?¹⁸² Where Kelly's character can burst into song and dance to express himself outside of or beyond spoken interactions with the other characters, Hieronimo does not arrive at speechlessness (that moment Bird identified as the point when "talking has to cease") until he cuts his tongue out.¹⁸³ Up to that point, words are Hieronimo's best means of expression and Bird even noted that Hieronimo "generally talks at length because he has no other outlet yet. For his feelings".¹⁸⁴ There seem to be two conflicting ideas at play here: for Bird, words are not enough because these characters need action to fully express themselves; but, at the same time, words are Hieronimo's only means of articulating and processing his thoughts and feelings. In both cases, Bird told me, there is "no other way", "no other outlet".¹⁸⁵ Yet even as Bird distinguished between early modern and modern (theatrical) understandings of expression and indicated that they are not the same, I was struck by how similar they really are. Perhaps this parallel stems from the fact that language was and is a type of action itself, where sounds are produced and formed into meaningful speech by the lungs, vocal cords, throat, tongue, teeth, and lips. To speak is to embody words.

In *The Spanish Tragedy*, then, how does this sort of embodiment work? In simple terms, Kyd's play enables action through its script, through the embodiment of the written word; the act of speaking is the act of putting into

¹⁸¹ Appendix A.2 transcript, p. 281.

¹⁸² *Singin' in the Rain*, dir. by Stanley Donen and Gene Kelly (Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1952).

¹⁸³ Appendix A.2 transcript, p. 281.

¹⁸⁴ Appendix A.2 transcript, p. 282.

¹⁸⁵ Appendix A.2 transcript, p. 281, 282.

action. In its most violent moments, this language necessitates action and demands it of the actors, as Kyd encodes violence into the text at a level where embodiment becomes instinctual — that is, there occurs a sort of automatic and primeval behavioral response by the body to the text. The complex intersection between spoken word and embodied act therefore requires a level of careful attention it has not yet received in critical circles, as plays like *The Spanish Tragedy* show just how potently affective and consequential this intersection becomes during moments of staged violence. My interviews with Bird and Dukes demonstrated the variety of ways in which most words can be embodied — in a brilliant example of the Nobleman’s observation that “words have several works” (3.1.17), Bird and Dukes’ individual interpretations of Act 4, scene 4 ranged from taking down a hanged body in the discovery space of an Elizabethan playhouse to throwing “party cake and jelly” around a black box theatre.¹⁸⁶ But both indicated that certain words enable only one type of embodied response. “You’d be a fool as an actor,” Bird said, “not to stab somebody on the word ‘thus’”.¹⁸⁷ In a performance context, deictic words appear to hold some kind of extra embodied imperative. When thinking specifically about violence, then, deictics seem to do more than just provide an opportunity for embodied movement, they require it — so much so that the stabbings in Act 4, scene 4 (each led by a deictic “thus”) are accompanied by an original, rather than editorial, stage direction. One can almost imagine Bird briefly speaking for Kyd (or the printer preparing this text for publication): the actor has to “stab somebody on the word ‘thus’. It’s where you do it”.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁶ Appendix A.2 transcript, p. 286, 292; appendix A.3 transcript, p. 303.

¹⁸⁷ Appendix A.2 transcript, p. 290.

¹⁸⁸ Appendix A.2 transcript, p. 290.

That the embodiment of such violent moments is driven by an actor's instinct seemed to Dukes so obvious that, in our interview, he was reluctant to spend much time on the subject. When I broached the topic of deictics toward the end of our discussion and asked specifically about the role they played in his rehearsal practice, he was more interested in speaking about the process of editing for the stage, and how, for him, that meant paying attention to the "narrative [rather] than single words coming out, or actions or direction stuff".¹⁸⁹ Nonetheless, Dukes said, "actors [like deictic words] because they are active" and they give "a sense that something's happened".¹⁹⁰ "Of course", he told me, "you can go back to the Arden [edition] again and see that's where he stabs him, but you've already understood that something's happening".¹⁹¹ Dukes' statement underscored my earlier argument, that deixis triggered some kind of deep-seated natural response by the body. Here, though, deixis also seemed to function as a kind of shorthand between playwright and actor, where those in Dukes' rehearsal room no longer needed the written stage directions they could find in the Arden edition of the play because they had already understood the performance cues Kyd had encoded in his text.

These deictic cues proved essential to the final scene of the play in performance: despite Dukes' interest in the events of the narrative rather than the individual words or phrases, the performance script he edited for his production preserved the violent deictics connected to characters' deaths. While the play-within-the-play became a "semi-operetta" in which "most of the lyrics had been changed from the original text to contemporary stuff", "we mainly kept

¹⁸⁹ Appendix A.3 transcript, p. 315.

¹⁹⁰ Appendix A.3 transcript, p. 315.

¹⁹¹ Appendix A.3 transcript, p. 315.

everybody's death line".¹⁹² Even with this kind of semi-adaptation, where much of the production retained the original script but made use of a collaboratively-devised modern text for the final scenes, there is something specific and actionable about the deictic words that accompany the violence of *The Spanish Tragedy* that marks them as essential to the process of embodying this early modern play.

Dukes also made a point of saying how tightly linked embodiment was to close reading practices, explaining that "I think the play is written to stimulate", to be active and to have a "little sense of liveliness" and to be made real for the audience.¹⁹³ But, he cautioned me, "you can only embody it if you understand it. Otherwise, it just sounds like poetry".¹⁹⁴ For this reason, Dukes' rehearsal practice is built around "always looking for the facts" of the script and, in doing so, working to "really dissect that text. What's really happening there? What's the key piece of information? When do you know it? *How* do you know it? I always ask actors that".¹⁹⁵ Once an actor really understands the text, and Dukes was clear that "[y]ou have to understand [it] physically, emotionally, intellectually, textually, [and] vocally", then the script leads the way and an actor knows by instinct exactly "how you're going to perform this".¹⁹⁶ Dukes and I also spoke about the ways Kyd embeds directional words into this text which enable and prompt movement, particularly violent movements — at one point, Dukes summarized this by saying, "Kyd gives you the ammo, he gives you the ideas" — but in order to follow those

¹⁹² Appendix A.3 transcript, p. 301, p. 317.

¹⁹³ Appendix A.3 transcript, p. 319.

¹⁹⁴ Appendix A.3 transcript, p. 319.

¹⁹⁵ Appendix A.3 transcript, p. 313, 314.

¹⁹⁶ Appendix A.3 transcript, p. 319, 313.

directions, actors and directors have to know and understand the text.¹⁹⁷ For Dukes, this was key:

It's the words but also the action. You've got to understand. Fit the action to the words, isn't it? [...] That's the craft, that's the skill. It's both a level of intensity and interrogation, and then you have to communicate it. [...] We have to understand it for the audience, and for ourselves, you have to do the work to understand it.¹⁹⁸

Ultimately, this suggests that embodiment is a source-led practice, in which the words of the play text lead practitioners to implicit and instinctual action.

Reflecting on this possibility, I was reminded of a point that Bird raised on the verse structure of the play-within-the-play. Bird noted that “the verse of the play-within-the-play [is] lovely and even. It's smooth. There is the odd extra syllable, unstressed. There are a few eleven-syllable lines. But generally, the verse is iambic” except when “Bel-Imperia comes in with the most startling trochee, the only trochee of the whole performance”.¹⁹⁹ If embodied violence is text-led, as my interviews with Bird and Dukes have shown, is it then also verse-led? That is, are violent directional words like deictics stressed within the meter of the verse lines? While Bel-Imperia's trochee (“Tyrant” [4.4.58]) is not an example of deixis, reading across these lines indicated that her two final deictics, on which she kills Balthazar and then herself, would fall on stressed syllables. If stressed and unstressed metrical feet are intended to guide listeners and point to moments where “something dramatic [is] happening, either within the action of the play or with the feeling and behaviour of the character”, then could they not also guide

¹⁹⁷ Appendix A.3 transcript, p. 304.

¹⁹⁸ Appendix A.3 transcript, p. 319.

¹⁹⁹ Appendix A.2 transcript, p. 289. Bird's point overlooks the fact that eleven syllable lines with an additional unstressed syllable are within the typical metrical range for early modern plays.

actors to and through actions or gestures?²⁰⁰ Bel-Imperia's final lines scan as follows:

- / - / - / - / - /
 But were she able, thus she would revenge
 - / - / - / - / - /
 Thy treacheries on thee, ignoble Prince,
 - / - / - / - / - /
 And on herself she would be thus revenged. (4.4.64-66)

Here, the deictic words that lend themselves to action, where Bel-Imperia “[s]tabs [Balthazar]” (4.4.65sd) and “[s]tabs herself” (4.4.66sd), are stressed within the normal beat pattern of iambic pentameter, suggesting that violence is not only prompted and augmented by language, but also driven by meter. Hieronimo’s “thus” 15 lines earlier, on which he stabs Lorenzo, also falls on the stressed syllable: “thou shouldst be thus employed” (4.4.51). In the arbor scene, too, six of the scene’s eleven deictics land on stressed syllables, including Lorenzo’s murdering “thuses” (2.4.54). These examples demonstrate the overarching argument of this chapter, in that they position violence in performance as deeply embedded in the verse itself and show the very real need for a cooperative and interdisciplinary approach to drama, guided by both textual analysis and rehearsal practice.

While these two interviews began with the intention of asking theatre practitioners about the process of embodying the violent words of *The Spanish Tragedy*, they quickly raised other questions of text-use, instinct, and interpretive practice. Bird and Dukes’ varied experiences with this play highlighted the importance of not identifying one universal mode of theatre practice (or even one

²⁰⁰ Berry, p. 53. See also Charlene V. Smith, *Early Modern Verse, Rhetoric, and Text Analysis* (Alexandria, VA: Brave Spirits Theatre Company, 2018), p. 12.

universal form of meaning that all audience members might take away from the play). Although both spoke about the value of close attention to the language of the play as “evidence” or “source material” in a rehearsal setting, their visions of the play showed the wide range of performance possibilities available to practitioners as they embody this text.²⁰¹ Where the previous sections of this chapter have asserted that language intensifies, undergirds, and prompts the violent action of early modern tragedies, particularly through Kyd’s use of deictic words in the most violent scenes of his play, these interviews demonstrated that deictics are more than just “implied stage directions” that indicate “demonstrative activity”.²⁰² Rather, they hold an embodied imperative that allows only one kind of action, despite the non-universal flexibility of staging and performance. Certain words inherently call for and afford action. This exploration of deictics in practice reflects a source-led process followed by both Bird and Dukes that corresponds with conventional, modern theatrical training, where practitioners are advised to “trust the text”, attuning themselves to the playwright’s encoded instructions.²⁰³ The next section of the chapter returns to the text of *The Spanish Tragedy* in order to analyze the role language holds in the final moments of the play, arguing that written language works in tandem with spoken rhetoric and performance practice to further enhance and underscore the forceful potential of and emotional response to the embodied violent act.

²⁰¹ Appendix A.2 transcript, p. 283; Appendix A.3 transcript, p. 311.

²⁰² Adamson, p. 232.

²⁰³ Berry, p. 48. Acting teacher Daniel Spector (NYU Tisch School of the Arts) also spoke about the value of a text-led, “evidentialist” acting process in his plenary for the 2020 British Graduate Shakespeare Festival (Daniel Spector, ‘Teaching Shakespeare in the Era of Bad Faith’, conference plenary presented at the *British Graduate Shakespeare Festival* [University of Birmingham – Shakespeare Institute, 19 September 2020]).

Authoring Violence

Once Hieronimo has explained the purpose and conceit of his playlet as a device for revenge, many critics agree that *The Spanish Tragedy* works to illustrate the inadequacy, or even failure, of language in favor of visual representation.²⁰⁴ Hieronimo bites out his own tongue, crying, “therefore, in despite of all thy threats, / Pleased with their deaths, and eased with their revenge, / First take my tongue and afterwards my heart” (4.4.185-187). The Spanish King expresses his frustration that Hieronimo should have “bitten forth his tongue / Rather than to reveal what we required” (4.4.189-190), despite the fact that Hieronimo has just spent nearly 100 lines outlining how his “guiltless son was by Lorenzo slain” (4.4.168). But instead of viewing Hieronimo’s mutilated tongue as a gruesome symbol for the substitution of images for words, I want to argue that the Knight Marshall clings to language all the more closely in both the moment he bites out his tongue (4.4.187sd) and seven lines later when he stabs himself and the Duke of Castile to death (4.4.196sd).

Hieronimo’s self-silencing reasserts the importance of language, as his written act of revenge is spoken and enacted by his actors. In his playlet, art imitates life and Erasto, like Horatio, is killed out of jealous rivalry while the murderers reenact their crime on their own bodies. By refusing to explain himself yet again, Hieronimo lets his grief for his son and his promise of revenge hang over the audience even as they are confronted with the news that Lorenzo, Balthazar, and Bel-Imperia’s dead bodies are not “fabulously counterfeit” (4.4.76) but very real. Hieronimo attempts to finish his part of the play, “*run[ning] to hang himself*”

²⁰⁴ West, p. 221, 232; Siemon, p. 7; Ferretti, p. 40; Barrie, p. 71-72.

(4.4.151sd) and so “conclude his part” (4.4.148). When this action, scripted in the argument for *Suleiman and Perseda* (4.1.127), is impeded by the King’s attendants, who “*break in and hold Hieronimo*” (4.4.155sd), he resorts to other means to finish the playlet. If he is not able to end his life, as the end of the *Suleiman and Perseda* script demands, he will instead end his speaking part, literally removing his tongue as the instrument of speech. This, however, does not defeat language — as the Duke of Castile notes, “[y]et [Hieronimo] can write” (4.4.191) and in doing so clarify the revenge plot. Even when his speaking part is over and his tongue cut out, Hieronimo makes deliberate use of language, using writing implements as weapons explicitly meant to engineer his own death. Just as he understood Horatio’s murderers to be “author[s] of this endless woe” (2.5.39), so, too, does Hieronimo turn back to writing in his moment of death. Successive stage directions indicate that after he “*makes signs for a knife to mend his pen*” (4.4.194sd), he uses that knife as he “*stabs the Duke of Castile and himself to death*” (4.4.196sd). When such specific instances of language’s use in revealing plots and enacting revenge are consistently visible in *The Spanish Tragedy*, when Hieronimo uses language in its spoken and written forms right up until the moment of his death, is it reasonable to say that language has failed? Instead, it is perhaps more productive to identify and explore the intersections visible in this moment: the image of the tongue cut out by the penknife, the practice of writing, and the embodied performance of this moment can signify visual, material, and rhetorical cultures simultaneously and should be considered in conjunction with each other, rather than separately.

This first half of the chapter has endeavored to establish deictic words as a key word type in the exploration of the relationship of violence and language in

early modern drama. Through a study of *The Spanish Tragedy*, I have argued that deixis is not only an implicit indicator of demonstrative activity but also an explicit marker of the success of action onstage. By examining words like “thus”, “here”, and “these”, I have shown how deictic words carefully articulate action by directing the physical movements of the actors in performance and make this violent action clear to the audience. The fact that such deictic words appear to collect around particularly violent moments in the play only serves to solidify the connection I have drawn between words and action here. Hieronimo’s response to the violent murder of his son further strengthens this link, as he frames his revenge plot with and enacts it through the rhetoric of authorship and language use. The practice-based work of the previous section reinforces my argument in a performative context: language is a crucial component of the performance of violence because of the embodied imperative it offers. This importance was most evident when considering the theatre practitioners’ conviction that certain words afforded a singular type of action (in this case, murder), despite the variety of staging scenarios they suggested for other moments in the same scene.

In *The Spanish Tragedy*, the acts of speaking, writing, and meaning making are understood as inherently word-based, where even when a character can no longer physically speak, they still grasp at the physical tools used for producing language and attempt to complete the plot that is written down for them. This play, so formative in the development of revenge drama (and tragedies more widely) in the Elizabethan and Stuart periods, demonstrates quite clearly that performative, violent action cannot be separated from language in the study of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century drama. The holistic approach which I have demonstrated above, in which the intersections and embedded nature of language with action

are taken into account, can help scholars to move us beyond the basic critical acknowledgement that there is violence in this language. Instead, we can begin to identify where violence sits within that language more specifically, as well as how violence is enacted through and underscored by the words of a play, as I have begun to show with deixis here. The next sections will examine a later play, *A Yorkshire Tragedy*, and develop *The Spanish Tragedy*'s notions of violent words into a distinct vocabulary of dramatic violence.

II. *A Yorkshire Tragedy*

On 23 April 1605, thirteen years after the first publication of *The Spanish Tragedy* in London, Walter Calverley entered his house in Wakefield, Yorkshire, murdered two of his three young sons, and gravely injured his wife. The two events, while unrelated, both fed into a commercial fascination with "bloodie Murther" and, not unlike Kyd's play, the case immediately captured the public's attention; the Calverley murder made for sensational news: the two boys were both under the age of four, and the wife was severely wounded in her unsuccessful attempt to protect the younger child.²⁰⁵ When Calverley was brought to trial soon after, he swore that his violent actions were justified, as he thought his wife guilty of adultery, having "many times theretofore uttered speeches and given signs and tokens unto him whereby he might easily perceive and conjecture that the said children were not by him begotten".²⁰⁶ By August, a dramatization of the murders,

²⁰⁵ Anonymous, *Two most unnaturall and bloodie Murthers: The one by Maister Calverley, a Yorkshire Gentleman, practiced upon his wife, and committed upon his two Children, the three and twentie of Aprill 1605. The other, by Mistres Browne, and her servant Peter, upon her husband, who were executed in Lent last past at Bury in Suffolke, 1605.* (London: 1605), title page. STC (2nd ed.) 18288.

²⁰⁶ Stanley Wells, 'Introduction', *A Yorkshire Tragedy*, in *The Collected Works of Thomas Middleton*, gen. eds. Gary Taylor and John Lavagnino (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007), p. 452.

based on a pamphlet published during the trial itself, was performed in a London commercial theatre. The same play was circulating in print within three years.

The second half of this chapter builds on my earlier discussion of *The Spanish Tragedy*'s use of deixis and the interrelated nature of language and action in embodied violence on stage by arguing that distinct grammatical and rhetorical forms of violent speech become evident in performance across the early modern canon. In the decades after Thomas Kyd's foundational revenge drama, other commercial playwrights used *The Spanish Tragedy* as a starting point for their own discursive violence and so developed a number of specific modes of writing violence for the early modern stage. Two of these modes — the first, a demonstrative vocabulary and the second, a descriptive one — are visible in *A Yorkshire Tragedy*, the sensational one-act play that came out of the Calverley murders in 1605. As such, the play provides a helpful overview of the various ways language can support and augment the performance of violent subject matter. Examining this play, at times viewing it alongside the pamphlet on which it is based and also in a workshop setting, provides the opportunity to conduct a detailed study of these two discrete vocabularies and also the chance to reframe the cultural lexicon of violence at play in early modern drama more broadly. By expanding our critical understanding of violence as it is written down and performed, the second half of this chapter offers up a method of rhetorical analysis wherein textual and performance practices intersect and are explicitly linked.

In their collaborative work on *A Yorkshire Tragedy*, A. C. Cawley and Barry Gaines point out the textual debt which the play owes to its pamphlet source material. Cawley and Gaines highlight the parallel structure of the two works, as well as the fact that the anonymous playwright (now widely considered to be

Thomas Middleton) regularly borrows directly from the pamphlet's text, often lifting whole passages for use in the staged version.²⁰⁷ Sandra Clark picks up this comparison between texts, using it to suggest possible ways in which "theatrical representation could operate to complicate and add nuance to narratives of crime and punishment".²⁰⁸ Where Cawley and Gaines highlight the differences between the play and pamphlet, Clark reframes this argument by thinking instead about how the playwrights who adapted popular printed material such as pamphlets "were able to draw on that familiarity in their shaping of the narrative for the stage".²⁰⁹ Other criticism on the play focuses on the moralistic and religious threads that are woven through both it and the pamphlet source; Lena Cowen Orlin's most recent work on the play turns the critical discussion from crime to sin, noting that "*A Yorkshire Tragedy* imputes [the Husband's] crimes to demonic possession", while Peter Kirwan looks in detail at the "invisible" evil spirits of the play, which represent "not the fantasy demons of a morality tale, but the real, uninvited monsters of daily life".²¹⁰ For Kirwan, as for Cawley and Gaines, the play's "intensity" comes from the unfettered brutality of the Husband, rather than any external, diabolical force.²¹¹ Domestic life is the other key theme of critical work on the play; in an earlier piece, Orlin cites a "theatrical appetite" in the early 1600s for domestic plays, which "brought into the foreground the recurrent subtext of the husband's responsibility for disarray in his household, figuring him

²⁰⁷ A.C. Cawley and Barry Gaines, 'Introduction', *A Yorkshire Tragedy*, ed. by A. C. Cawley and Barry Gaines (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986), p. 12.

²⁰⁸ Sandra Clark, *Renaissance Drama* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007), p. 65.

²⁰⁹ Clark, p. 63.

²¹⁰ Lena Cowen Orlin, 'Domestic Tragedy: Private Life on the Public Stage', *A Companion to Renaissance Drama*, ed. by Arthur F. Kinney (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 367-383 (p. 378); Peter Kirwan, *Shakespeare and the Idea of the Apocrypha* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), p. 85.

²¹¹ Cawley and Gaines, p. 12; Kirwan p. 83-84.

as the new locus of disorder”.²¹² Catherine Richardson argues that *A Yorkshire Tragedy* is, however, unlike other domestic tragedies in that the play is most interested in “the relationship between public and private action”, rather than an “investigation of the quality of household governance” seen in plays like *Arden of Feversham*.²¹³ The point of agreement among critics remains that, whether triggered by demon possession, male transgression, or didactic moralism, the play achieves a “crescendo of violence” meant to shock and disturb.²¹⁴

Beyond a general comparison between play and pamphlet, Richardson and Kirwan are the only critics to take much notice of *A Yorkshire Tragedy*’s language: Richardson notes the “curious texture of this play’s language, with its modest but strikingly visual descriptions and elaborations”, while Kirwan writes that “despite the play’s dependence for language on its source material, it exists independently of it in the theatre[,] on its own terms”.²¹⁵ Most, like Cawley and Gaines, focus their discussions on the play’s imagery. While Cawley and Gaines lay important critical groundwork in their discussion of this imagery and the way the playwright uses it to “transform a humdrum tale of murder”, the essays do not extend past outlining the distinct differences in form between the prose pamphlet and stage play.²¹⁶ Cawley and Gaines spend very little time on the details of these differences or what effect they might have on a reading or viewing audience. For instance, at a very basic level, where the pamphlet reports a crime that has already happened, the play reconstructs the same narrative as if it were happening in the present. This

²¹² Lena Cowen Orlin, *Private Matters and Public Culture in Post-Reformation England* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), p. 239.

²¹³ Catherine Richardson, *Domestic Life and Domestic Tragedy in Early Modern England: The material life of the household* (Manchester University Press, 2006), p. 183, 182.

²¹⁴ Richardson, p. 176.

²¹⁵ Richardson, p. 176; Kirwan, p. 88.

²¹⁶ Cawley and Gaines, p. 12.

deviation is due, in part, to the nature of the theatrical form towards which Cawley and Gaines gesture: characters can refer to events that have already happened, but the action itself can exist only in the here and now, with each event actively unfolding in front of the audience. Written from the perspective of the present tense, however, the play offers language as a complement to, rather than a record of, action, and foregrounds Walter Calverley's violent crime as the central event of performance.²¹⁷ As I will demonstrate in the next two sections, Middleton enacts the violence of these murders via a series of speech acts, where the utterance literally becomes the action.

James S. Bauman's work on speech acts is central to my work in this section, where he conceives of speech acts as a way of "*saying as doing*", marking the "confluence of rhetoric" and, in this case, violent action.²¹⁸ Bauman asserts, in much the same way as Mazzio, Siemon, and Barish earlier in this chapter, that language can (and should) be considered as a material thing that holds power and force. He quotes Wayne A. Rebhorn's work from nearly two decades earlier, as both Bauman and Rebhorn before him think about the Renaissance understandings of words; for both critics, "rhetoric is no language game; it is a serious business that aims to affect people's basic beliefs and produce real actions in the world".²¹⁹ Rebhorn and Bauman's understanding of the "serious business" of language echoes, Thomas Wilson's 1553 *Arte of Rhetorique*, which speaks of the power of the tongue, such that "most men are forced even to yelde to that, which

²¹⁷ The murders of the two boys and the attack on the Wife occur in scenes 4 and 5 of *A Yorkshire Tragedy*, halfway through the eight-scene text.

²¹⁸ James S. Bauman, *Theologies of Language in English Renaissance Literature: Reading Shakespeare, Donne, and Milton* (Plymouth: Lexington Books, 2012), p. xxiv (original emphasis), 38.

²¹⁹ Bauman, p. xviii, xiii, quoting Wayne A. Rebhorn, *The Emperor of Men's Minds: Literature and the Renaissance Discourse of Rhetoric* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), p. 4.

most standeth against their will”.²²⁰ While Baumlin applies his theories of speech acts primarily to the prelapsarian ideals and postlapsarian realities of human language as understood by sixteenth- and seventeenth-century writers like Wilson, Baumlin’s work can also be applied to performance studies, as an enactment of bodily rhetoric reminiscent of Heywood’s instruction to “fit his phrases to his action, and his action to his phrase”.²²¹ In speech acts, Baumlin writes, rhetoric is “expressive of human agency and materiality”, where language joins with and is spoken and enacted by the “breathing, speaking human body”.²²² For Baumlin, the key here is language’s power to persuade, to bend others to the speaker’s will. However, he also admits that there is more than just persuasion at work in the minds of renaissance speakers and listeners; there is a kind of magic to words, where they become capable of enacting actual events and actions.²²³ For me, in what follows, I argue that these magical speech acts are made manifest (and, indeed, manifest themselves) on the actors’ bodies, and that this manifestation is especially clear and effective during moments of staged violence.

In *A Yorkshire Tragedy*, words beget action which begets injury, and so the results of violent acts are made explicit and visible on the bodies of the characters on stage. Just as Hieronimo interprets Horatio’s dead and wounded body for his audience, so, too, do Middleton’s characters point out and display their “wound[s]” and “bleeding” (5.7sd) bodies.²²⁴ The body becomes not only the origin of language through breathing and speaking, to paraphrase Baumlin, but also the localized site

²²⁰ Wilson, A3v.

²²¹ Heywood, C4r.

²²² Baumlin, p. xxv.

²²³ Baumlin, p. 20, 23.

²²⁴ Thomas Middleton, *A Yorkshire Tragedy*, ed. by Stanley Wells, in *The Collected Works of Thomas Middleton*, gen. eds. Gary Taylor and John Lavagnino (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007), 2.172.

of language turned into violent action and its physical consequence.²²⁵ Yet not every incident of violence is conveyed as a speech act. Some of the pamphlet's narrative of violence appears as stage directions, seen only by a reading audience, and enacted by the actors for the theatrical audience. This reenactment of the pamphlet text becomes a type of physical language that sits between and alongside the play's dialogue; in other words, the gestures scripted in the margins of the printed play text serve to enhance the violent movement which the dialogue of *A Yorkshire Tragedy* calls for implicitly.

Much like *The Spanish Tragedy*, *A Yorkshire Tragedy* relies on deixis to communicate especially violent moments in the narrative, using "thus", "this", "that", "these", and "here" to direct the actors' gestures and interactions. Such usages begin early in the play, establishing violence as a near-constant feature of the narrative, as the Husband rages against his Wife, and finally "*spurns her*" (2.87sd) as he says, "take that for an earnest —" (2.87). The word "that" punctuates the action called for in this stage direction, a spurn being a "stroke with the foot, [or] a kick".²²⁶ The Husband "*spurns*" (3.48sd) the Wife again in the following scene, emphasized with the words, "[t]his fruit bears thy complaints" (3.55). Each time he spurns her, the Wife responds by asking for mercy, saying "[s]ir, do but turn a gentle eye on me" (2.93) and "[g]ive me but comely looks and modest words" (3.68). Her responses call for good-natured language and physical movements, and so strengthen the link between the Husband's words and actions, as they imply that the deictic words in each instance are explicitly connected to

²²⁵ Baumin, p. 23.

²²⁶ "Spurn, n. 1", *OED*, 3a. For more on spurning in *A Yorkshire Tragedy*, see Alex MacConochie, "'Spurns her': Violence and Hierarchy in *A Yorkshire Tragedy*", *Medieval & Renaissance Drama in England*, 33 (2020), 144-166.

the rough, aggressive actions dictated in the stage directions. Where these outbursts are merely descriptive in the pamphlet text, as the author tells readers, “the first thanks he gave her was a spurn”, the play’s dialogue and embodied stage directions transform these moments into words with demonstrably violent results, beginning a pattern of textual image as action that is sustained through the rest of the play.²²⁷

Grammatically, however, the early scenes of the play are structured differently than those of the second half of the work, especially in terms of their treatment of violence. Outside of the two moments outlined above, where “this” and “that” are paired with a spurn, scenes 1 to 3 portray violent behavior as a possibility, with the potential to arise out of violent words, but not necessarily a guaranteed reality. That is, the grammatical constructions in these early scenes indicate what is known by grammarians as “contingent futurity”, what *should* or *could* happen, rather than “definite futurity”, what *will* come to pass.²²⁸ Hostile curses, like the Husband’s wish that “a vengeance strip thee naked” (2.34), revolve around an elided optative verb, usually “let” or “may”. This verb form signaled, in E. A. Abbott’s words, a sense of “inevitability” to Elizabethan readers or listeners, though this inevitability is “subject, of course, to a condition which is not fulfilled. [...] The possibility is regarded as *an unfulfilled fact*, to speak paradoxically”.²²⁹ In performance, then, a curse like this can do nothing more than evoke harm, bringing the possibility of violence to the forefront of the audience’s mind but not enacting a real hurt; the curse is, at a grammatical level, divorced from the Husband’s physical actions and cannot affect those around him.

²²⁷ Anonymous, p. 9.

²²⁸ Abbott, p. 228, 223.

²²⁹ Abbott, p. 261.

There begins to be a shift in grammatical mood from optative to subjunctive, suggesting a parallel shift away from potential action, at the end of scene 2. As the Gentleman attempts to defend the Wife, he confronts the Husband, saying “I am come with confidence to chide you” (2.131); but the Husband is ready now to trade words for action, as evidenced in his reply: “if thou chidest me angry, I shall strike” (2.133). It is the use of “shall” that marks this shift: while it still refers to an action in the future, rather than the present moment, as his curse did, this line is constructed as an “if/then” statement of conditional fact. The Husband promises a gestural movement (“strike” [2.133]) as a consequential response to the Gentleman’s provocation. This is no longer a curse but a reaction, an actuality rather than a possibility. Again, this conditionality impacts the performance of this moment: the Husband promises violence as a consequence but does not enact the promised act of violence. The future potential construction of these moments, whether optative, in the curse form, or subjunctive, in the “if/then” form above, is not grounded in present action, but in a desired future state. While this type of construction can appear in the rhetoric of both male and female characters, the linguistic shift that allows for a move from potential to real action tends to be a primarily male one, and signals to the audience that the latent violence of the Husband’s language will soon become physical.²³⁰ This shift is more than just the logical shape of a play, with a rising and falling pattern of dramatic action from exposition to dénouement; instead, violence is foregrounded from the beginning of scene 1 and the playwright’s grammatical choices throughout signpost a development in both likelihood and intensity through the early scenes until the

²³⁰ The optative form, in particular, appears as a characteristic of anger-driven female speech; chapter 3 examines the feminine use of optatives more closely.

ultra-violent murders of scene 5 and beyond. Having established grammar as a linguistic marker for moments of both potential and real violent action, I now turn to an analysis of my workshop on the play, which works to investigate grammatical markers in action.

“Up, sir”: Words and Stage Images

The play’s approach to violence moves from descriptions of potential hurt to demonstrations of actual harm from scene 4, in which the Husband attacks his young son. Here, the narrative begins to focus on those violent actions that can be both embodied and narrated by the actors. For this reason, I found it productive to workshop the most violent scenes in the second half of the play (scenes 4 and 5), testing the physical embodiment and enactment of rhetorical violence in a rehearsal space.²³¹ The workshop was centered around the relationship between text and embodied movement, with particular attention given to textual “cue words” beyond deixis, that is, other words which prompt certain movements on stage. My goal was to test whether deictics are the only textual guide to imperative stage movement that a playwright builds into their work. Can non-actors identify theatrical cue words and interpret them as opportunities for action? Does the embodied imperative evident in *The Spanish Tragedy* afford any flexibility in the type or types of action available to an actor?

For the purposes of this workshop, all editorial and authorial stage directions were removed from the participants’ scripts, so that the participants had the opportunity to initiate action using only the language of the text. Stage

²³¹ The script for this workshop can be found in Appendix C.1 workshop scripts, *Violence and Embodied Performance on the Early Modern Stage* (13 December 2018), p. 336-342.

directions were retained for reference in my own script, as a means of recording and comparing our decisions in the workshop setting against those of the text's compiler or editors. The majority of the workshop participants did not have an acting background and were unfamiliar with the excerpted text used during the workshop itself. While this meant that I needed to explain specific concepts like implicit stage directions, it also gave the participants an increased sensitivity to those moments when the text called for action. Because they had no familiarity with the script in their hands, they spent the entirety of the workshop listening closely for cue words and opportunities to move around the space and interact with each other. As in my interviews with Bird and Dukes, instinct (that is to say, the innate response by the body to the text) played an important role in this workshop; throughout the course of the workshop it became apparent that the imperative to move was so clearly imbedded in the play text that even when the participants had not consciously picked up on a cue word or an implicit direction in their scripts, they experienced instinct-driven moments that prompted them to act or move.

Our exploration of scene 4 began when the Son enters the stage space, joining his father onstage. This entrance drew the audience and participants' attention to the spatial arrangement of and dynamics between the two actors; the Son notes that he "cannot scourge my top as long as you stand so: you take up / all the room with your wide legs" (4.95-96), leading the participant playing the Husband to adopt a broad, wide-legged stance. This line directed our shared awareness, much like a deictic word would, to the space occupied by each of the actors' bodies. However, it quickly became clear that the spatial relationship here is not just a lateral one; the participants pointed out that no sooner has the Son

finished speaking, but the Husband gives an imperative command that is oriented vertically: “[u]p, sir” (4.98). The vertical movement of this word was reflected in a stage direction in the full version of the text, indicating that the Husband “*takes up the child by the skirts of his long coat in one hand and draws his dagger with th’ other*” (4.97sd). In this word, “up”, visible to a reading audience in the printed stage direction and dialogue and made visible and audible to a theatre audience by the actors’ embodied movement and speech, *A Yorkshire Tragedy* explicitly links action to gesture to outcome, demonstrating the close relationship of spoken language to demonstrations of violence on stage.

This relationship was made even clearer in the Husband’s next line, where, as in the two isolated incidents of spurning in scenes 2 and 3, his movements are prompted by a deictic “that”. In the full version of the text, as the Husband holds the boy “*by the skirts of his long coat*” (4.97sd), he “*strikes*” (4.100sd) his Son while saying, “take that!” (4.100). Even without the benefit of stage directions, the participants immediately identified “take that” as a phrase that demanded movement, and as a group decided that it implied physical contact between the two characters, such as a slap, punch, or some kind of blow. This choice was consistent with both the stage direction and the OED’s definition of “strike” as the action of “deal[ing] a blow; [or] to hit with some force”.²³² The participants also pointed out that the Son and Husband’s verbal responses make the staging of this moment quite clear; their lines indicate that a serious injury has been dealt, as the Son exclaims, “[o]h, you hurt me, father!” (4.101) and that his “head’s broke” (4.107), while his father insists that “’tis charity to brain you” (4.106). One

²³² “Strike, v.”, *OED*, V. 25a; see also, “stroke, n.”, *OED*, 1a.

participant raised the possibility of the phrase “to brain you” as a second blow to the Son’s head, functioning as an impetus for movement just as the deictic “take that” (4.100) had done. Grammatically, this frames “to brain you” not just as an indicative verb phrase, expressing fact, but as an imperative, a command that the Husband gives to himself, guiding and verbally illustrating his violent action.²³³ Reading this verb phrase as an imperative highlights the powerful potential for violence within the Husband’s language, and makes available a certain amount of flexibility of interpretation to the actors, providing several options for embodied violence within the context of the scene.

As the imperative phrase above demonstrates, deixis is not the only word or phrase type used to couch and direct violence in *A Yorkshire Tragedy*. Middleton also builds on Kyd’s use of repetition at the end of *The Spanish Tragedy*, but rather than repeating deictic words like “here”, as Hieronimo did in Act 4, scene 4, to point the audience’s gaze to the result of past violence, in this case repetition is used to aurally mimic and emphasize the sight of present violence on the stage. That is, repeated consonant sounds are employed to punctuate the Husband’s acts of violence in real time, as he perpetrates them on his family. This was brought to light in the context of the workshop, when repeated voiced plosives created a particularly harsh vocal soundscape. As the Husband “*stabs*” (4.107sd) his young Son, he says, “[b]leed, bleed, rather than beg, beg” (4.108). The participant playing the Husband in this instance reported feeling like their whole body was powering this attack: the repeated words drove a repeated action and every “b” sound

²³³ In his work on Verbs, Moods, and Tenses, E. A. Abbott offers up another possibility which can be applied to 4.106; “to brain” could be read as an infinitive auxiliary verb, indicating duty or obligation, where “ought to” is elided. This reading retains the possibility of a second blow to the child’s head, but does not necessitate this action (Abbott, p. 248-249).

seemed to give them an excuse to hit harder and harder, suggesting that not only was this violent act driven by the language of the dialogue, but that its intensity was controlled by words as well.

This vivid first-person account of the experience of embodying an act of violence corresponded with Andrew Hiscock's analysis of staging trauma, in which he identifies repetition as a core piece of "supplement[ary] evidence" for action that is "already present in the spoken dialogue" of a play.²³⁴ For Hiscock, repetitive words function as a kind of implicit stage direction, emphasizing movement and acting as "a vehicle or stimulus for direction" in both violent and non-violent theatrical situations.²³⁵ Hieronimo's repeated use of "here" is a helpful example again, as the nine "heres" (4.4.88-92) serve to direct attention to the deadly wounds on Horatio's body, emphasizing the brutality of his death. This pattern of repetition, intended to "bludgeon the audience with the details of what it has seen", also appears in *Titus Andronicus* (roughly contemporary to *The Spanish Tragedy*) when Titus notes the loss of his and his daughter's hands:

Ah, wherefore dost thou urge the name of **hands**?
To bid Aeneas tell the tale twice o'er
How Troy was burnt and he made miserable?
O handle not the theme, to talk of **hands**,
Lest we remember still that we have none.
Fie, fie, how frantically I square my talk,
As if we should forget we had no **hands**
If Marcus did not name the word of **hands**.²³⁶

²³⁴ Andrew Hiscock, "'Enter Macduffe, with Macbeth's Head': Shakespeare's *Macbeth* and the Staging of Trauma", in *Stage Directions & Shakespearean Theatre*, ed. by Sarah Dustagheer and Gillian Woods (London: Bloomsbury Arden, 2017), 241-261 (p. 244).

²³⁵ Hiscock, p. 245.

²³⁶ Jeremy Lopez, *Theatrical Convention and Audience Response in Early Modern Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 83; William Shakespeare and George Peele, 'Titus Andronicus', ed. by Gary Taylor, Terri Bourus, Rory Loughnane, Anna Pruitt, and Francis X. Connor, in *The New Oxford Shakespeare: Modern Critical Edition*, ed. by Gary Taylor, John Jowett, Terri Bourus, and Gabriel Egan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 3.2.26-33, emphasis added.

Repeatedly calling attention rhetorically to the result of violent action is a marked feature of the Senecan drama that appeared in translation, in print, and in imitation on stage between the 1560s and early 1590s.²³⁷ Such repetition also runs the risk of edging from the grotesque into the absurd, evoking laughter from the audience.²³⁸ By 1605 with *A Yorkshire Tragedy*, however, the use of repeated words develops to show action in the present tense, demonstrating a powerful connection between the verbal and the visual when staged, as these words not only draw attention to but also reinforce the action of the Husband stabbing his Son as it happens.

Repetition as a means of both verbalizing and demonstrating violent action is used even more explicitly in scene 5, when the Husband attacks his Wife and infant son. This was a particularly visceral and affecting scene to enact during the workshop, constructed around the same kind of imperative phrases as were used in the previous scene. However, the participants were not convinced that the various possibilities for embodied action afforded by the flexible grammar of scene 4 (where phrases could be imperative, indicative, or infinitive auxiliaries) extended into scene 5. Instead, they described scene 5 as feeling “tightly choreographed” and said that the fast-paced dialogue of the scene detailed exactly what gestures and actions the playwright wanted to see and when they should happen. As we worked through the scene, one participant shared that the careful

²³⁷ For more on English Seneca, see F. G. Hubbard, ‘Repetition and Parallelism in the Earlier Elizabethan Drama’, *PMLA* 20.2 (1905), 360-379 (p. 369); Anthony Boyle, *Tragic Seneca: An Essay in the Theatrical Tradition* (Abingdon & New York: Routledge, 1997), p. 15-31; James Ker and Jessica Winston, ‘Introduction’, *Elizabethan Seneca: Three Tragedies*, ed. by James Ker and Jessica Winston (London: The Modern Humanities Research Association, 2012), 1-61 (p. 42-43); and the introduction to this thesis, p. 22-29.

²³⁸ For more on the thin line between horror and humor, see Nicholas Brooke, *Horrid Laughter in Jacobean Tragedy* (London: Open Books, 1979); and on laughter as an audience response, Penelope Woods, ‘Skilful Spectatorship? Doing (or Being) Audience at Shakespeare’s Globe Theatre’, *Shakespeare Studies*, 43 (2015), 99-113 (p. 110).

guidance they saw in the text felt authentic to the play as it might have been first performed.

This sense of choreography or guidance was a direct result of the imperative verb phrases of the scene, that emerge almost as soon as the Husband enters the stage space. As the family's Maid attempts to intervene, the Husband "*throws her down*" (5.12sd) while saying, "[d]ownstairs, / Tumble, tumble, headlong" (5.11-12). "Tumble, tumble" (5.12), like "bleed, bleed" (4.108) in the previous scene, is constructed as an imperative as the character of the Husband commands the action he is embodying and simultaneously underpins the theatrical performance with his language. Like "[u]p, sir" (4.98), this moment is augmented by movement-based rhetoric, providing directional force for the actor, and making violence both an aural and visual experience for the audience. "Downstairs, / Tumble, tumble, headlong" (5.11-12) provided a clear cue to the participants that this interaction between the two actors would end up near one of the spaces we had marked off as a door; that the Husband would need to grab the Maid and drag her towards this entrance; and that the actor playing the Maid would be thrown roughly and with a downward motion, to facilitate her "tumbl[ing], headlong" (5.12). As the participants also pointed out, just as the Son's insistence that his father "take[s] up / all the room with [his] wide legs" (4.95-96) demonstrated in scene 4, the Husband's treatment of the Maid here demands that the actors and audience be attentive to the material and spatial conditions of the stage space and the physical distance (or lack thereof) between characters. These are inherently theatrical phrases that work to animate the text

and serve as a record of performance choices.²³⁹ When embodied by the actors, phrases like “[u]p, sir” (4.98) and “tumble, tumble” (5.12) make visible the demonstrative violence contained within the text, and in doing so make the audience witness to the rhetorical act made manifest.

The workshop participants were living proof that to witness (or, for the actors, to enact) is to activate an affective power within these scenes. At the end of our first run-through of scene 5, those watching the action unfold looked shell-shocked. One of the participants who acted in this scene shared that she felt uncomfortable watching this level of abuse as she waited for her entrance cue. This response took me by surprise, as I had immersed myself so completely in the grammar of the script that I had forgotten the impact this scene was intended to have when embodied and enacted. Looking solely at the language of the play without considering its implications on performance involves seeing the dramatic work as only half itself; this incident reinforces my decision to include practice-based work in this thesis — to base my analysis on the fullest possible picture of early modern language and theatre practice by seeing plays *as* plays. In this workshop, the participants’ response demonstrated in real-time the “vibrant transmission of emotion between world and stage” that Allison Hobgood notes in her work on the affective resonances of early modern plays on their audiences.²⁴⁰ The act of witnessing domestic violence in this way is such a resonant experience for audiences precisely because it exists so clearly within the realm of possibility; in 2019, the U.K.’s Office for National Statistics reported that one in three women

²³⁹ Tiffany Stern, ‘Inventing Stage Directions; Demoting Dumb Shows’, in *Stage Directions & Shakespearean Theatre*, ed. by Sarah Dustagheer and Gillian Woods (London: Bloomsbury Arden, 2017), 19-43 (p. 33).

²⁴⁰ Hobgood, p. 70.

aged 16-59 “will experience domestic abuse in her lifetime”.²⁴¹ The statistics on abusive acts perpetrated on children are less clear, according to the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, as “[c]hild abuse is usually hidden from view”.²⁴² Coupled with the knowledge that *A Yorkshire Tragedy* dramatizes real events, every workshop participant was uncomfortably aware that these acts of violence are not just confined to the boundaries of the dramatic work; instead they expand outward into the real world then and now. As Meg Twycross writes, the theatrical act is not solely illusion: instead, in live theatre, “whatever is happening is happening in the here and now and is being done by real people”.²⁴³ The challenge for scholars and practitioners, then, is to unpick the framework of the play and the culture surrounding it which enable this violence to be committed against vulnerable people. In the case of early modern drama, this work involves unraveling the grammatical mechanisms that lay the groundwork for and allow the performance of violent actions, in order to interrogate concepts of violence in both the past and present. The next section of this chapter more closely examines the demonstrations of violence that this workshop brought to

²⁴¹ Office for National Statistics, ‘Domestic abuse in England and Wales overview: November 2019’, <<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/domesticabuseinenglandandwalesoverview/november2019>> [accessed 2 November 2020]; see also, Refuge, ‘The Facts: The extent of domestic violence’, <<https://www.refuge.org.uk/our-work/forms-of-violence-and-abuse/domestic-violence/domestic-violence-the-facts/>> [accessed 2 November 2020].

²⁴² NSPCC Learning, ‘Statistics on child abuse’, <<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/statistics-child-abuse>> [accessed 2 November 2020]. The stay at home and lockdown orders necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic have exacerbated reports of domestic abuse; early reports indicate alarming increases in cases of abuse, “rang[ing] from a 20%–25% increase in calls to helplines in Spain, Cyprus and the UK to a 40% or 50% increase in calls in Brazil” with “similar increases in Australia, Brazil, China, and the United States”, according to Candace Forbes Bright, Christopher Burton, and Madison Kosky, ‘Consideration of the impacts of COVID-19 on domestic violence in the United States’, *Social Sciences & Humanities Open*, 2.1 (2020), 1-5 (p. 1).

²⁴³ Meg Twycross, ‘Beyond the Picture Theory: Image and Activity in Medieval Drama’, *Word & Image* 4 (1998), 589-617 (p. 603).

light before finally proposing two distinct vocabularies that can be applied to the violence found in the language of early modern tragedies.

Demonstrations and Descriptions

Instances of demonstrative violence are not comprised solely of the Husband's imperative verb phrases, as he narrates the movements he is taking physically; instead, the workshop illuminated the extent to which the Husband shifts between imperatives and indicatives as he overpowers the Maid and Wife, commanding each violent action as he does it and reacting to the defensive movements made by the other characters. After throwing the Maid downstairs (5.12sd), the Husband attacks his youngest son, and "*stabs at the child*" (5.24sd) as he says, "have at his heart" (5.24). This language leaves little to the imagination and was interpreted by the participants as an intense grappling between the Husband and Wife as they tried to stab and protect the baby, respectively. While the Wife hunched herself over the baby prop we used, the Husband tried to wrench it from her arms and, when that failed to achieve a result, stabbed over and around her shoulder to reach the baby. Other imperatives in this scene are similarly clear-cut; as he struggles with the Servant, the Husband's language explicitly demonstrates each movement of the fight: "Oh, villain, now I'll tug thee, now I'll tear thee! / Set quick spurs to my vassal, bruise him, trample him!" (5.37-38). The participants found these lines particularly fruitful as they seemed to indicate both a threat and a promise of actions like kicking (denoted by the words "quick spurs" and "trample" [5.38]) and punching or hitting (which the participants took from "bruise" [5.38]). This matched my own exploration of the Husband's pronoun phrases here: expanding "I'll" to its grammatical root "I will"

illustrates the definite futurity of these imperatives and lends a sense of grammatical inevitability to the Husband's violent actions — a marked departure from the contingent futurity of his earlier violent words.²⁴⁴ The Husband's words here further support, on a syntactical level, the participants' instincts that words characterized and indicated the performance of violence, marking language as having a supplementary role in the embodiment of violent acts.

The Husband's indicatives, however, are usually constructed as questions. This detail was one important takeaway from the workshop, since the high volume of question marks used in scene 5 was first raised by one of the participants. By working through these phrases, we determined that such questions should be interpreted on stage as further examples of speech acts, or proof of action, as the Husband's words demonstrated disbelief over his Wife's physical defense of their child or the Servant's bodily intervention. Each of the Husband's queries, "[d]ost thou prevent me still?" (5.23), "[c]om'st thou between my fury to question me?" (5.30), "[h]old me?" (5.32), "[t]ug at thy master?" (5.34), and "shall my slave fetter me?" (5.36), suggest a direct and physically violent response to movements made by the Servant or Wife. The Husband's questions are reactive: as one of the participants pointed out, there is no need to ask "[d]ost thou prevent me still?" (5.23) unless the attempt to strike "*the child in [the Wife's] arms*" (5.24sd) is prevented in some way. Later in the same scene, the Servant uses indicative verb phrases in order to present the result of the Husband's actions. No longer demonstrative, these indicatives are descriptive and report action that has already happened. "O, I am scarce able to heave up myself," the Servant tells the audience,

²⁴⁴ Such an expansion is not meant as an emendation of or comment on the habits of the author, scribe, or compositor as this would enter the realm of speculation; instead, the expansion simply serves to illustrate the full grammatical meaning of the contraction used in the text.

“[h]e’s so bruised me with his devilish weight / And torn my flesh with his blood-hasty spur” (5.50-52). The participant playing the Servant used these phrases as invitations to self-indicate, gesturing to the bruises the audience should see on her body and enacting the injury of her torn flesh. The image of violence revealed here on the actors’ bodies is explicitly located at the intersection between the visual, material, and linguistic, and, as such, has the potential to exercise a potent and multi-sensory affective energy on an audience both during and after the performance (as it did in this workshop).

The role of indicative verb phrases in reading and hearing the play text was another notable outcome of the *Yorkshire Tragedy* workshop, as it highlighted the need for a mindful examination of tense markers. It became increasingly clear that indicative phrases like the Husband’s and the Servant’s could take two forms: such verb phrases were demonstrative when they appeared in the present tense (“prevent” [5.23] or “tug” [5.34]), and descriptive when they were used in the past tense (“bruised” [5.51] or “torn” [5.52]). Analysis after the conclusion of the workshop revealed that this was a consistent rhetorical choice throughout the rest of the play, where present tense indicative verb phrases denoted the linguistic impetus for violence and past tense indicatives showed the impact of violence already enacted. This choice appears to have been one made by other playwrights, too, as evidenced by characters like Polonius in Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, when he declares in the present tense, “I am slain” or Mercutio in *Romeo and Juliet*, when he says, in the past tense, that he “was hurt under [Romeo’s] arm”; or, turning to Webster, the Cardinal’s words to Julia, as he tells her, “thou’rt poisoned with that

book”.²⁴⁵ These examples, taken alongside the moments from *A Yorkshire Tragedy* cited above, suggest a larger trend in the way playwrights of the period after Kyd’s *The Spanish Tragedy* distinguish between forms or types of violence; that is, the choice to differentiate linguistically between violence being enacted and violence already done is a deliberate one by playwrights, that exploits the audience’s culturally-informed understanding of violence as discrete acts across a range of contexts.

At the end of *A Yorkshire Tragedy*, when the Husband has been captured and sits in a jail cell awaiting his trial, the townspeople are at a loss to try to understand his actions. As they struggle to comprehend the murder of the two young boys by their father, they place the blame for this act of violence not on the Husband, but on some kind of external force — “hell’s power” (5.54) has “stole humanity from his breast” (5.82). They repeat descriptions of the atrocity to themselves and those around them; the Wife cries out that her children are “both bloody, bloody” (5.17), while the Knight asks his Gentleman to confirm that the Husband has in fact “[e]ndangered so his wife? Murdered his children?” (7.1). In both cases, the account of the murders is overwhelming in its brutality; the Knight requests that the Master and Gentlemen who captured the Husband should “not repeat it twice. I know too much” (7.8). The description of infanticide is just as violent as the embodied demonstration of the act, as was also made clear in the workshop. Yet there is a clear distinction between these two representational

²⁴⁵ William Shakespeare, ‘Hamlet’, ed. by John Jowett, in *The New Oxford Shakespeare: Modern Critical Edition*, ed. by Gary Taylor, John Jowett, Terri Bourus, and Gabriel Egan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 3.4.23; William Shakespeare, ‘Romeo and Juliet’, ed. by Francis X. Connor, in *The New Oxford Shakespeare: Modern Critical Edition*, ed. by Gary Taylor, John Jowett, Terri Bourus, and Gabriel Egan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 3.1.92-93; John Webster, *The Duchess of Malfi*, ed. by Leah S. Marcus (London: Methuen Drama, 2009), 5.2.263.

modes; it is not enough to paint in broad strokes and talk about the violence of this language. Instead, taking into account both the descriptive and demonstrative violence at play here, I want to propose a greater degree of specificity in our terminology, where descriptions of violent action (on or offstage), threats of violence that are promised or desired but not realized, and violent curses are all classified as *language about violence*, and deictic words or phrases, speech acts, and verbal demonstrations of physical action are grouped together as *violent language*. This approach allows, as this thesis illustrates, a more nuanced analysis of the degrees and types of violence present and reflected in early modern plays.

What *The Spanish Tragedy* suggests and *A Yorkshire Tragedy* makes explicit is that language not only reports and affectively interprets acts of violence to and for a theatrical audience, but also that the words themselves function as a type of violence. In other words, language does not act solely as an impetus for the embodied action, it supplements and complements physical displays of violence on stage. By identifying the linguistic markers of demonstrative and descriptive violence in the context of *A Yorkshire Tragedy* (including deictics, imperatives, and present tense indicatives, and threats, curses, and past tense indicatives, respectively) and then exploring the effects of each in a workshop setting, I have established in this section a set of working vocabularies to carry forward as this thesis continues to examine early modern notions of violent acts on stage. Distinguishing between demonstrative *violent language* and descriptive *language about violence*, as I have started to do, allows scholars to examine more precisely the ways in which playwrights, and by extension their theatregoing audience and a wider reading audience after publication, conceive of and represent violence as a concept. To be clear, both vocabularies show violence, but in order to interrogate

the violence of early modern plays more fully, I argue that we must be more specific and unpick the distinct ways different word or phrase types can enact or underscore violent dramatic action — whether in practice or in theory. For this reason, delineating separate vocabularies that showcase the shades of violence in the rhetoric of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century tragedies is an important next step in developing new critical and analytical approaches to the language of early modern literary and performance works.

Chapter Conclusion

In his 1619 treatise on the unruly tongue, the preacher George Webbe paraphrased and conflated Psalm 52 and Proverbs 12, writing that the “Tong[ue] is a sharpe Sword, and it speaketh words like the pricking of a Sword. A rasor it hath: for the tongue deviseth mischiefe like a sharpe rasor”.²⁴⁶ Webbe’s conviction that words (figured allegorically as the instrument of speech, the tongue) are “sharpe weapons”, capable of “wound[ing] deeper than any sword” echoes the passage from Psalm 57, quoted at the beginning of this chapter, as well as Thomas Wilson’s certainty decades earlier of the great “force [of] the tongue”, and illustrates one of the popular early modern beliefs in the power of language which is central to this chapter, and indeed to this thesis as a whole.²⁴⁷ That is, words are never empty or meaningless; instead, they carry their own unique materiality, wherein speech generates not only meaning and feeling, but also material forms

²⁴⁶ George Webbe, *The araignement of an unruly tongue Wherein the faults of an evill tongue are opened, the danger discovered, the remedies prescribed, for the taming of a bad tongue, the right ordering of the tongue, and the pacifying of a troubled minde against the wrongs of an evill tongue. By George Web, preacher of Gods word at Stepleashton in Wiltshire*. (London: 1619), p. 51. STC (2nd ed.) 25156. In the Geneva Bible these verses appear as “Thy tongue imagineth mischief, and is like a sharp razor, that cutteth deceitfully” (Psalm 52:2) and “There is [a tongue] that speaketh words like the prickings of a sword” (Proverbs 12:18).

²⁴⁷ Webbe, p. 27, 43; Wilson, A3v.

of action and impact. This is especially true in the theatrical texts which form the basis of my research. In the theatre, words hold more than just an affective power, able to move the listener to a particular emotional response, but an actual physical power as well. Lorenzo's "thus, and thus" (2.4.54) find their mark not only in the audience's ears but also on Horatio's body. Here, words drive the action of stabbing, and the two combine to effect the theatrically real "pricking of a sword".²⁴⁸

As a play celebrated for its genre-defining approach to violent revenge, *The Spanish Tragedy* lays the groundwork for early modern drama's fascination with putting violence on stage. I have argued that Kyd consistently emphasizes the interconnected nature of language and action, and that this is most visible in his use of the deictic "thus" during moments of staged violence and his assertion that these characters are able to author and then physicalize their own acts of vengeance. The violence of Horatio's murder and Hieronimo's revenge is not shocking solely because of the actions embodied on the stage, but because of the supporting role that language plays, as it intensifies, undergirds, and prompts violent action. Such clear and consistent associations between word and deed are inherently theatrical, directing the audience's gaze and prompting embodied action by the actors. Using *A Yorkshire Tragedy* as an initial case study, this chapter has made the case that playwrights writing for the stage in a post-*Spanish Tragedy* world are accessing two distinct vocabularies of violence, which build on Kyd's simultaneous use of high rhetorical and performance practices: descriptive *language about violence* and demonstrative *violent language*. Because of these

²⁴⁸ Webbe, p. 51.

theatrical inheritances, I want to suggest that audiences, too, could be expected to distinguish between these two vocabularies, as their shared understanding of the conventions of spoken language would inform their awareness of which words could have an impact, especially in cases like *A Yorkshire Tragedy* where there also exists an awareness of the violent and real source material. Put simply, audiences could likely hear the difference between a curse, a desire, a threat, and a speech act — a distinction they likely would have been conditioned to make by listening to sermons like Webbe's and plays like Kyd's and Middleton's. The sharing of this kind of cultural lexicon between playwrights and audience members speaks to a collective understanding of how violence can be represented, not only physically and visually, but also verbally and aurally, both within the theatre and its broader cultural context. The next chapter will explore verbal representations of violence in more detail, putting the demonstrative and descriptive vocabularies of *violent language* and *language about violence* into practice.

Chapter 2: Objects of Violence

In the early modern period, words have matter. They are substantive and tangible, simply by virtue of being spoken. Richard Rainolde's 1563 *Foundacion of Rhetorike* notes that "[t]here is greate force" in an oration that "shewe[s] matter to be manifest".²⁴⁹ "Matter" has multiple shades of meaning; in the case of Rainolde's work, it is an "event, circumstance, fact, question, state or course of things, etc., which is or may be an object of consideration or practical concern", but it is also simultaneously a "[p]hysical substance", the material "of which a thing consists".²⁵⁰ Rainolde is not the only early modern writer to conceive of words as showing or having matter; Thomas Wilson writes about the effect of elocution on those who listen to a moving speech, after which there "is a fast holdyng, bothe of matter and woordes couched together" in their minds.²⁵¹ In this context, words and things are inseparable. Words can conjure not only the image of matter in one's mind but also the matter itself, made manifest. This conjuration is especially true in a theatrical context, where words enliven and make real the drama, its characters, and their actions.

But if words can create matter in the theatre, they might also be used to destroy it. This theatrical work is inherently violent, if imaginative. It is an insidious type of violence, grounded not in the stabbings or beatings of *The Spanish Tragedy* or *A Yorkshire Tragedy*, but in transforming human bodies into

²⁴⁹ Richard Rainolde, *A booke called the Foundacion of rhetorike because all other partes of rhetorike are grounded thereupon, every parte sette forth in an oracion upon questions, verie profitable to bee knowen and redde: made by Richard Rainolde Maister of Arte, of the Universitie of Cambridge. 1563.* (London: 1563), f. 33v, f. 30v. STC (2nd ed.) 20925a.5.

²⁵⁰ "Matter, n.1", *OED*, I. 1a; "măț(e, n.", *Middle English Dictionary*, 1a.

²⁵¹ Wilson, A4r.

non-human objects. I argue that not only can a subject be un-enlivened by words, but also that the same subject-turned-object can be deployed as an instrument of violence itself. That is, after an act of violence reduces a person to an object, that object can be used to enact further acts of violence. In framing bodies and body parts as objects that can exert influence and act upon the characters around them, this chapter draws on 'thing theory' to view victims of verbal violence as disruptive of our understanding of early modern stage violence. Instead of purely subject-led violence spoken and enacted by human agents, readings guided by 'thing theory' open up the possibility for violent action led by a non-human object. In such readings, the demonstrative vocabulary of *violent language* is enacted on the human body or its dismembered parts, literally objectifying them, while the descriptive vocabulary of *language about violence* alerts us to those acts of violence initiated by the objects themselves.

Coined by Bill Brown, 'thing theory' is a critical framework that seeks to "index a certain limit or liminality" between subjects and objects; the 'thing', as Brown defines it, "hover[s] over the threshold between the nameable and unnameable, the figurable and the unfigurable, the identifiable and unidentifiable".²⁵² At its core, 'thing theory' focuses on those parts of an object that go beyond what Brown calls "their mere materialization as objects or their mere utilization" — in this sense, 'thing theory' is concerned with the excessive parts of objects, which "seem to assert their presence and power".²⁵³ Things, then, are those objects that move from the margins to the center of our awareness. In a theatrical context, things are considered to be the props which appear to interact

²⁵² Bill Brown, 'Thing Theory', *Critical Inquiry*, 28.1 (2001), 1-22 (p. 5).

²⁵³ Brown, p. 5, 3.

with an actor. As Marlis Schweitzer and Joanne Zerdy argue, building on Brown's work, material objects do not "function as a passive channel for human action, affect, and desire; instead, [they] *act*".²⁵⁴ When materials confront us as things, they take on a curious vitality, or quasi-subjectivity, through which they are capable, in Schweitzer and Zerdy's words, of "constructing, reshaping, choreographing, and obstructing the humans with which [they] interact".²⁵⁵ 'Thing theory' can also be helpfully applied to early modern drama, as some scholars are beginning to do; Amanda Bailey demonstrates the utility of 'thing theory' to premodern plays with her work on the spectral dagger in *Macbeth*, arguing that the dagger "is an active participant in an expansive environment that in turn both shapes and responds to Macbeth's choices and courses of action".²⁵⁶ The dagger as thing is simultaneously a passive object and an active quasi-subject, capable of affecting the people who interact with or encounter it, even to the point of triggering violent action. Just as 'thing theory' is concerned with the gaps between subject and object, so I am concerned with the space that may or may not be visible or audible between words and things.

Both of my case studies for this work are drawn from the commercial plays of Thomas Middleton — *The Revenger's Tragedy* (1606) and *The Lady's Tragedy* (1611) — as Middleton seems to have a particular awareness of and interest in the act of enlivening and un-enlivening through language which he explores and exploits, I argue, through the figures of Gloriana and the Lady. In discussing these

²⁵⁴ Marlis Schweitzer and Joanne Zerdy, 'Introduction: Object Lessons', in *Performing Objects and Theatrical Things*, ed. by Marlis Schweitzer and Joanne Zerdy (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 1-17 (p. 4).

²⁵⁵ Schweitzer and Zerdy, p. 4.

²⁵⁶ Amanda Bailey, "'Is this a man I see before me?': Early Modern Masculinities and the New Materialisms", in *The Routledge Handbook of Material Culture in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Catherine Richardson, Tara Hamling, and David R. M. Gaimster (London: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group, 2017), 293-305 (p. 294).

plays, I analyze grammar and linguistic practice, alongside their use in performance, to pick apart the ways in which Middleton depicts the female body and its composite parts as physical ‘things’ to be used and handled by male characters. The grammar used to discuss and refer to these women underpins their material status as subjects-turned-objects, rhetorically making and unmaking them through the use of third-person pronouns (he/she/it). An awareness of pronoun use is crucial for both scholars and theatre practitioners, as it highlights the distinct relationships between actors, and between actors and props, as well as serving to bring this type of violent objectification of subjects into objects to the fore. This chapter therefore acts as a working model for the specificity that is needed in our treatment of the various degrees and types of violence present in the drama of the early modern period, for which I argued in Chapter One. Using two plays as case studies, I analyze one of the types of speech that support the demonstrative and descriptive vocabularies proposed in Chapter One, testing *violent language* and *language about violence* at a grammatical level and the implications such attention brings to a performance context.

My work on pronouns throughout Chapter Two is informed by Jonathan Hope and Penelope Freedman’s individual studies of early English grammar and pronoun use, which focus on syntax and performance possibilities respectively. Hope offers his work as a modern adaptation of E. A. Abbott’s foundational work on Elizabethan grammar, particularly in terms of addressing Abbott’s tendency to attribute some of the (now more archaic) grammatical choices made by Shakespeare and his characters to either “ignorance”, “neglect or misuse”.²⁵⁷

²⁵⁷ Abbott, p. 8, 139; Jonathan Hope, *Shakespeare’s Grammar* (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2003), p. 69, 71.

While Abbott is still a valuable source, his lack of attention to the complex meaning behind early modern pronoun use and pronoun variation means that *A Shakespearian Grammar* is of less use here than in other chapters of this thesis. Hope's *Shakespeare's Grammar*, on the other hand, is more attuned to the nuance and "considerable variation" of language as used by early modern English dramatists.²⁵⁸ In his section on pronouns, Hope notes (as most studies of pronouns do) that early modern writers and speakers were conscious of a "complex system of choice between *th*-forms and *y*-forms", that is thou, thee, and you; changes in second-person pronoun use could indicate social hierarchy, emotional shifts, and formal or intimate occasions.²⁵⁹ Penelope Freedman takes this framework as the jumping off point for her work, focused solely on second-person pronoun shifts in Shakespearean drama. Freedman makes clear that such variation of pronoun use can provide a considerable range of performance possibilities, once actors and directors are made aware of the "powerful and complex emotional connotations" that pronouns carry in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.²⁶⁰ In one such example, Freedman touches on the shifting and affective combination of pronoun forms in Act 2, scene 4 of *1 Henry IV*, where she close reads Hotspur's line to his wife, "[w]hat sayst thou, my lady?"²⁶¹ Hotspur's "thou", addressed to his wife, can be played as "affectionate, distracted, irritated or patronizing", at which point his

²⁵⁸ Hope, p. 69.

²⁵⁹ Hope, p. 73, 247, 74. See also Lynne Magnusson, *Shakespeare and Social Dialogue: Dramatic Language and Elizabethan Letters* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 2. Other valuable studies on pronominal shifts in Shakespearean drama include Angus McIntosh, "'As you like it': A Grammatical Clue to Character", *Review of English Literature*, 4.2 (1963), 68-81 and Clara Calvo, 'Pronouns of Address and Social Negotiation in *As You Like It*', *Language and Literature*, 1.1 (1992), 5-27.

²⁶⁰ Penelope Freedman, *Power and Passion in Shakespeare's Pronouns: Interrogating 'you' and 'thou'* (London: Routledge, 2007), p. 3.

²⁶¹ William Shakespeare, '1 Henry IV', ed. by Anna Pruit, in *The New Oxford Shakespeare: Modern Critical Edition*, ed. by Gary Taylor, John Jowett, Terri Bourus, and Gabriel Egan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 2.4.64.

use of “my lady” in the same line “becomes ironic in juxtaposition to [‘thou’], and an actor needs to signal the implied inappropriateness of its formality and dignity in this context”.²⁶² By applying some of the same principles used by Hope and Freedman and bringing their focus on grammar into dialogue with the demands of embodied performance, this chapter provides a more thorough reading of third-person pronouns. Doing so, as this chapter shows, will demonstrate the equally complex connotations of subjecthood and objecthood that these pronouns carry (for actors, for an audience, or for readers of the play text) and the violence they bring to the surface in performance.

For many scholars, theatre practitioners, and readers, the point of comparison when thinking about bodies and body parts as objects in performance in early modern drama is obvious: the Yorick skull in *Hamlet*. Like Gloriana, Yorick is named, and by the practice of naming him so he transforms, in Rosalie Colie’s words, from a “standard prop” into “the specific skull of a dead friend”.²⁶³ Lezlie C. Cross explains further: “When an actor playing Hamlet handles a skull onstage, it becomes more than an object; [it becomes] — for a performative moment — Yorick”.²⁶⁴ Here, again, is this same elision between subject and object, aided by the prop’s status as neither truly an actor-subject nor a passive object in the background of the theatrical narrative; in the case of Yorick, the skull is at once recognizable as the remains of an animate body (a subject) and an anonymous and inanimate piece of bone (an object). Yorick functions as a *memento mori*, which

²⁶² Freedman, p. 232.

²⁶³ Rosalie Colie, *Shakespeare’s Living Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974, reprinted 2015), p. 11.

²⁶⁴ Lezlie C. Cross, ‘The Linguistic Animation of an American Yorick’, in *Performing Objects and Theatrical Things*, ed. by Marlis Schweitzer and Joanne Zerdy (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 63-75 (p. 63).

Marjorie Garber and Elizabeth Williamson interpret as a reminder not only for the characters on stage, but also for the audience both “of what we will one day become” and “what we are now, suggesting that the distinction between dead objects and live subjects is not as straightforward as we might think”.²⁶⁵ In her discussion of deathly figures, Garber points to Old Hamlet’s ghost as a second *memento mori*, connecting both the skull and ghost to the anamorphic vision of the death’s-head in Hans Holbein’s 1533 painting, *The Ambassadors*, where the skull depicted on the floor of the Ambassadors’ room appears to move (like both Yorick and Old Hamlet) between flat inanimacy and vivid liveliness.²⁶⁶ As Williamson puts it, each of these three (that is, the painting, the skull, and the ghost) are “object[s that] stubbornly [refuse] to stay dead”.²⁶⁷ Horatio’s first description of Old Hamlet serves to confirm the slippage between live subject and dead object here; when Horatio confronts Bernardo during his watch, neither man knows quite how to conceive of the “dreaded sight twice seen” and Horatio finally settles on calling it “this thing”.²⁶⁸

Andrew Sofer builds on Garber’s comparison between the Yorick skull and *The Ambassadors* but proposes that Garber does not take the image far enough, arguing that there is a leap to be made “from the ‘literalization’ of the memento mori skull as prop to its personification as character — its *refusal* to be reified into a dead thing”.²⁶⁹ Instead, Sofer writes, “[t]he point of anamorphosis”, that is, the

²⁶⁵ Elizabeth Williamson, ‘Yorick’s Afterlives: Skull Properties in Performance’ in *Borrowers and Lenders: The Journal of Shakespeare and Appropriation*, 6.1 (2011), 1-21 (p. 3); Marjorie Garber, “‘Remember Me’: *Memento Mori* Figures in Shakespeare’s Plays’ in *Renaissance Drama*, 12 (1981), 3-25 (p. 4, 15). See also Colie, p. 217.

²⁶⁶ Garber, p. 5, 6.

²⁶⁷ Williamson, p. 3.

²⁶⁸ William Shakespeare, ‘Hamlet’, ed. by John Jowett, in *The New Oxford Shakespeare: Modern Critical Edition*, ed. by Gary Taylor, John Jowett, Terri Bourus, and Gabriel Egan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 1.1.23, 1.1.19.

²⁶⁹ Andrew Sofer, *The Stage life of Props* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003), p. 94.

changing shape of the skull in the painting and its form as subject or object, “is its either/or-ness. We can choose to see ambassadors or skull, but we cannot see both at once”.²⁷⁰ Visually, this holds true — the skull and the ambassadors are never clearly in focus at the same time. Verbally, however, I argue that Middleton deliberately works to make the audience see both simultaneously; language by its nature allows multiple meanings at once, through such devices as puns, wordplay, connotations, and double entendre. By exploiting the multiplicity that language enables for its readers, listeners, and speakers, Middleton manipulates the barrier between subject and object so that the dead body and its discrete parts are at once the literal prop and the personified character. As both subject and object, the skull and the body become vibrant, quasi-animate things, represented visually by the prop and the actor’s body and signified rhetorically and textually by the pronouns “it” and “she”, used with some variation. In this way, Gloriana’s skull and the Lady’s body distort our sense of whether either is a true object or a true subject: they are acted upon and thus objects, but they can act upon others and therefore have some form of subjectivity.²⁷¹ It is this distortion, visible through the shifts in the male characters’ pronouns (“it”, “she”, “her”, and “thee”), that shows, I argue, Middleton’s awareness of how ‘things’ can work. In other words, the male characters’ language use around the skull and corpse activates the thingness of Gloriana and the Lady, where she/it becomes more than a dead and nonhuman object, but a vibrant thing capable of forceful affectivity and able to shape the play’s narrative action. The following sections interrogate the role of pronouns in making and unmaking subjects and objects and explore the role that such objects

²⁷⁰ Sofer, p. 95.

²⁷¹ See also Sofer’s discussion of props as “triggered” by actors, p. 11.

play in affording acts of violence on stage. I begin with a textual analysis of *The Revenger's Tragedy*, before moving on to a practice-based workshop that tests the role of pronouns in performance. I then turn my attention to *The Lady's Tragedy*, where I examine Middleton's keen interest in the violent potential of shifting pronouns in performance, and the affective power of embodied rhetoric.

I. *The Revenger's Tragedy*

In the opening scene of Thomas Middleton's 1606 play, *The Revenger's Tragedy*, Vindice enters holding his dead fiancée's skull, which he calls the "sallow picture of my poisoned love, / My study's ornament, thou shell of death".²⁷² The skull, named Gloriana, is more than a stage prop, it is a visual reminder of wrongdoing and an efficacious thing that prompts the revenge of Act 3. But by referring to the skull as both "a fallow picture" (1.1.14) and "my poisoned love" (1.1.14), Vindice simultaneously figures it as both a human subject and a nonhuman object, verbally positioning the skull somewhere between person and material artifact. The word "picture" (1.1.14) further emphasizes this point, as Tarnya Cooper and Alfred Gell have individually pointed out the "magical efficacy" of portraits in the early modern period, which "might themselves actively elicit responses from viewers" and enchant those who look on painted objects as images by "exercising [their] own spell".²⁷³ In addition, pictures were regarded as

²⁷² Thomas Middleton, *The Revenger's Tragedy*, ed. by Gretchen E. Minton (London: Arden Bloomsbury, 2019), 1.1.14-15.

²⁷³ Alfred Gell, 'The Technology of Enchantment and the Enchantment of Technology', in *Anthropology, Art and Aesthetics*, ed. by Jeremy Coote and Anthony Shelton (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 40-66 (p. 44); Tarnya Cooper, 'The Enchantment of the Familiar Face: Portraits as Domestic Objects in Elizabethan and Jacobean England', in *Everyday Objects: Medieval and Early Modern Material Culture and its Meanings*, ed. by Tara Hamling and Catherine Richardson (Abingdon & New York: Taylor & Francis, 2016), 157-177 (p. 167).

important forms of representational material, standing in for the subject as a sort of physical presence in their absence.²⁷⁴ And yet, by using Gloriana's literal skull as both a representational subject and handheld object, Vindice linguistically reduces the female body into spare parts (as he did when he physically separated her skull from her body). This itself is an act of violence, presented in the first fifteen lines of the play. The body part becomes an object designed for Vindice's use, while also calling attention to and identifying the skull's personhood as the remains of Gloriana. The prop is no longer anonymous but individualized and metaphorically fleshed out.²⁷⁵

Vindice's use of "thou" (1.1.14, 15) when addressing the stage object attributes both animacy and efficacy to it by casting the skull as a kind of conversation partner with which Vindice is in dialogue. Animacy here means the "quality of being alive or animate", while efficacy speaks to the "power or capacity to produce effects".²⁷⁶ In other words, the skull that plays such a central role in *The Revenger's Tragedy* exists as an inanimate object able to interact with and exert power over the human subjects around it. Gloriana, while fully dead and dismembered, is able to inspire Vindice to an act of revenge just as the spectral dagger prompts Macbeth to murder Duncan. Here, the skull becomes a "thing", both the subject Gloriana and the object skull, where she and it are combined in a single unit that participates in a relationship with Vindice, where they act on and with each other. In acting on him, the skull is able to, in Bailey's words, "solicit certain responses, behaviours, and interpretations in [both] the character and

²⁷⁴ Cooper, p. 172.

²⁷⁵ Graham Holderness, "'I covet your skull': Death and Desire in *Hamlet*" in *Shakespeare Survey*, 60 (2007), 223-236 (p. 227).

²⁷⁶ "Animacy, n.", *OED*, 1; and "Efficacy, n.", *OED*, 1.

[audience]”.²⁷⁷ In this sense, the skull is an actant, a term Bruno Latour uses to signify something “to which activity is granted by others.”²⁷⁸ In Latour’s Actor-Network Theory, actants are inherently relational, taking shape through and gaining meaning from the network of human and nonhuman actors around them. Latour’s understanding of actants’ relational status echoes Brown’s ‘thing theory’, which endeavors to locate “particular subject-object relation[s]” — in other words, both Latour and Brown highlight the importance of a kind of dialogue between subjects and objects, which elides some of the difference between categories by virtue of the active participation involved.²⁷⁹ The participatory objects become instead, in Latour’s words, “quasi-objects” and “quasi-subjects”.²⁸⁰ So, while she can no longer physically move herself, Gloriana, as quasi-object and quasi-subject (or, a thing), maintains an affective quality that both invites and incites violence — participatory possibilities that Vindice uses to his advantage in Act 3 when he takes revenge on the lustful Duke.

Pronouns play a particularly important role in helping readers, actors, and audiences identify such possibilities. When Vindice speaks to the skull at the start of the play (quoted above), the initial pronouns he uses are the intimate second-person “thou” (1.1.14-15) and the possessive first-person “my” (1.1.14-16), exerting a claim over this piece of bone. The remains are his to do with as he likes, not only physically but also linguistically, as he calls attention to the skull as an unfleshed object, an “ornament” and “shell of death” (1.1.15) and renders it metaphorically fleshy again as his “betrothed lady” (1.1.16). Even as the audience

²⁷⁷ Bailey, p. 295.

²⁷⁸ Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 7.

²⁷⁹ Brown, p. 4.

²⁸⁰ Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, trans. by Catherine Porter (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), p. 10-11. Also quoted in Brown, p. 12.

is confronted with the bare skull, Vindice insists that they imagine Gloriana as if she still embodied her skull, saying,

When life and beauty naturally filled out
These ragged imperfections,
When two heaven-pointed diamonds were set
In those unsightly rings — then 'twas a face
So far beyond the artificial shine
Of any woman's bought complexion (1.1.17-22).

He draws attention to the absence of her features and the stark nakedness of “ragged” (1.1.18) bone, remembering her physical appearance for the audience as they look upon the skull. His pronoun use, too, reflects both the woman the skull represents (“thou” [1.1.14, 15, 31], “thy” [1.1.31, 33], “her” [1.1.25], and “she” [1.1.26]) and the object in its current state (“’twas” [1.1.20], an elision of “it was”), as he ascribes the lifeless object with the liveliness of the woman who personified it. In this way, pronoun use indicates the permeable boundary between subject and object and provides a barometer for the changing status of things within *The Revenger's Tragedy*.

Gloriana is not the only female body that is transformed from subject to object in this play. Antonio's wife, also unnamed and already dead when we encounter her corpse, is introduced as a kind of statue, revealed by her husband for the visual benefit of the lords who view the “discover[ed] body” (1.4.sd) at a distance. The body becomes an image of violence, a memorial to the chaste woman (1.4.10-11) who killed herself after being sexually assaulted by “the Duchess' youngest son” (1.4.31). Antonio's description of his wife's body undermines her subjectivity, calling her “a fair comely building newly fall'n” (1.4.2). Hippolito and the other lords present reiterate this imagery of the wife's body as an object, calling it “so fair a monument” (1.4.67) now in “ruins” (1.4.67). There is little

distinction made between the dead body and the “prayer book” that lies as “pillow to her cheek” (1.4.14). Instead, the body is a “house” (1.4.11) that contained both “[h]er honour [...] and her life” (1.4.10), suggesting that the essence of the woman is her absent soul, not the deceased body. Grammatically, Antonio’s use of pronouns supports this separation between body and soul; while he uses architectural imagery to call attention to the corpse in the discovery space (carefully avoiding pronouns when describing it), he consistently uses third-person feminine pronouns, such as “she” and “her”, when referring to his wife as he remembers her.²⁸¹ The men carefully distinguish between the wife’s body and her person, where the former is an object safe from sexual predation and the latter is a subject vulnerable to it. As a lifeless thing, Antonio’s wife is a “[p]recedent for wives” (1.4.6), whose “chaste presence / Would e’en call shame” on “[p]ale wanton sinners” (1.4.7-9). While living, she was susceptible to being “singled out” (1.4.34), “harried” (1.4.42), and “her honour forced” (1.4.45). Here, death and her status as an object, “a monument” (1.4.67) to the deceased subject, provide a kind of safety where the wife’s faithfulness can no longer be called into question.²⁸²

Gloriana’s detached skull, however, does not receive the same benefits. Vindice’s use of pronouns fails to provide (or perhaps deliberately does not provide) the same clear separation between body and soul as Antonio’s pronoun use does for his wife; instead, the skull represents both the physical woman and the departed soul together. While Gloriana’s death is also intimately connected to her sexual purity, made clear through her refusal to “consent / Unto [the Duke’s] palsy-lust” (1.1.33-34), death does not protect Gloriana from further sexual

²⁸¹ Dustagheer, with Bird, p. 213-214.

²⁸² Middleton returns to and subverts the notion of bodies as static monuments in his later play, *The Lady’s Tragedy*, which I examine in the second half of this chapter.

assault and shame as it does Antonio's wife. Instead, Vindice uses Gloriana's severed head to deliver a sexualized act of revenge in response to a sexual crime, undermining any lasting purity Gloriana's body achieved through death. There are three equally non-consensual acts of violence at work here. First, the Duke's poisoning of Gloriana (1.1.32) when she refuses his "hot and vicious" (1.1.37) unwanted sexual advances; second, Vindice's dismemberment of her skull from her body as he turns the piece of bone into his "study's ornament" (1.1.15) rather than leaving her to a peaceful burial; and third, when her skull is used to deliver revenge through a poisoned kiss — an act she rejected and which led to her death. In each case, Gloriana and her bodily remains are the center of unwanted and violent eroticization, which manifests linguistically as well as physically. The skull's appearances on stage are marked by adjectives that highlight its role as an object meant for male use and appreciation: the poisoned and disguised skull is said to have "a delicious lip, a sparkling eye" (3.5.32) and is called "a quaint piece of beauty" (3.5.53). In other words, where Antonio's wife was viewed and mourned at a static distance, Gloriana is actively objectified — broken into parts both physically and linguistically — touched and handled, forced into the role of an object-participant in the dramatic action.

Rhetorical objectification in its adjectival form works in tandem with the more insidious objectification marked by pronouns. The adjectives used to refer to Gloriana and Antonio's wife, including "bright" (1.1.16), "heaven-pointed" (1.1.19), "fair" (1.4.2, 67), "virtuous" (1.4.6), "rich" (1.4.14), "wondrous" (1.4.48), "beguil[ing]" (3.5.51), "delicious" (3.5.32), "sparkling" (3.5.32), "quaint" (3.5.53, meaning ingenious and elegant), "pretty" (3.5.56), and "bright" (3.5.67), would not be out of place in a blazon, the poetic device used, in this play, to further itemize

the women's bodies.²⁸³ But where the blazon typically draws attention to the parts which make up the idealized whole, this itemization serves to separate and fragment each part from the body in its entirety; that is, not only is Gloriana's skull physically severed from her body, but the separation is also emphasized as Vindice calls attention to attributes that should be visible on her flesh but are now jarringly absent in the starkness of bone.²⁸⁴ The catalogue of Gloriana's former beauty also serves as another means for Vindice to claim ownership over her, where, as Patricia Parker writes, an "'inventory' of parts becomes a way of taking possession by the very act of naming or accounting".²⁸⁵ In anatomizing Gloriana through his blazon-like adjectives, Vindice breaks apart the dead woman both literally and metaphorically, linguistically refashioning her into a new object meant solely for his use and enjoyment.

Similarly, Vindice's use of second- and third-person pronouns builds on the poetic adjectives outlined above, imagining the whole and fully fleshed woman he remembers while the audience sees only the discrete piece of bone in his hand. These range from the formal "you" (3.5.47, 48) to the intimate and familiar "thee" (3.5.90) and "thou" (3.5.89, 113), as well as the feminine "her" (3.5.60, 110) and "she" (3.5.111). There is a sense of deliberate linguistic and visual distortion at work here, where the language Vindice uses to describe the skull is at odds with the object he holds up for the audience to see. In this moment on stage, Vindice rhetorically activates the subjecthood of Gloriana while interacting with the

²⁸³ "Quaint, adj., adv., and n.2", *OED*, A. I. 1a and 3b.

²⁸⁴ For more on blazons as a type of literary and linguistic dismemberment, see Patricia Marchesi, "'Limbs mangled and torn asunder': Dismemberment, Theatricality, and the Blazon in Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*", in *Staging the Blazon in Early Modern English Theatre*, ed. by Deborah Uman and Sara Morrison (London: Routledge, 2013), 85-96 (p. 95).

²⁸⁵ Patricia Parker, *Literary Fat Ladies: Rhetoric, Gender, Property*, Routledge Revivals (London: Routledge, reprinted 2016), p. 131.

objecthood of the skull, relying on both identities to affectively work on the audience and the characters around him to enact his revenge. In other words, the skull becomes both subject and object, an animate and inanimate thing that resists categorization and carries its own efficacious force that acts on and engages with both Vindice and the audience.

This force is most visible when Vindice produces the skull in its macabre disguise, "*dressed up in tires [and masked]*" (3.5.42sd). It is this scene, Act 3, scene 5, which features the greatest fluctuating use of pronouns as the skull is linguistically enlivened and effects revenge. Where the skull's first appearance on stage (in Act 1, scene 1) is marked by eight second- and third-person pronouns, "thou", "thy", "she", and "her", these all refer to Gloriana's personhood and the dead woman's relationship with Vindice (who also uses the possessive pronoun "my" three times in reference to the skull); in contrast, Act 3, scene 5 introduces the third-person neutral pronoun "it" among the twenty usages of second- and third-person pronouns spoken by Vindice and directed to the skull. This increase is due, in part, to the level of activity in Act 3 compared to Act 1: rather than Vindice's static position in Act 1, where he observes "*a train [as it] pass[es] over the stage*" (1.1.sd), Act 3 includes his final preparation for and execution of the long-planned act of revenge. I argue, however, that the increase in pronoun use and the introduction of third-person neutral pronouns is a conscious choice that demonstrates Gloriana's simultaneous subject and object status as her skull becomes both an instrument of violence and a memorial to the dead woman. In using both feminine and neutral pronouns to refer to Gloriana and the inanimate skull, Vindice triggers the thingness of the skull so that it can participate in the act of revenge.

The word “it” proves key here; the neutral pronoun is used only twice before the Duke’s entrance and, each time, is used in conjunction with the deictic word “this”. As outlined in Chapter One, deictics signal the embodied use of rhetorical gesture, directing the audience’s gaze toward a specific reference point. In *The Revenger’s Tragedy*, the combination of “it” and “this” works to refer directly to the skull as an efficacious thing; if anyone on or offstage was not convinced that “it” meant “Gloriana’s skull”, the deictic works to emphasize the point, shining a rhetorical spotlight on the skull for the audience. As Vindice explains,

I have not fashioned **this** only for show
And useless property. No, **it** shall bear a part
E’en in **it**[s] own revenge. **This** very skull,
Whose mistress the Duke poisoned, with this drug,
The mortal curse of the earth, shall be revenged
In the like strain and kiss his lips to death (3.5.99-104, emphasis added).

Vindice’s use of “it” makes clear that the skull is more than just a dead object, it is a thing capable of working on the Duke, inviting a kiss and delivering poison. The skull’s quasi-subjectivity is further emphasized by the adjectival word “own” in line 101, attributing a sense of ownership to the dead thing. This act of vengeance belongs to it. Vindice’s words highlight the duality of the skull’s ontological status: immediately after declaring the skull’s active participation in its “own revenge” (3.5.101), Vindice reasserts its status as an inanimate object with a “mistress” (3.5.102) who, in turn, owns it. And yet, in the very next line, Vindice makes clear that it is not the mistress, but the skull that “shall be revenged” (3.5.103). The word “shall” carries significant weight here, as “shall” promises future action that, in Abbott’s words, “denote[s] inevitable futurity” — grammatically, revenge is not simply a likelihood, but an unpreventable and guaranteed action that will be

enacted by the skull itself.²⁸⁶ In its capacity to exert its own efficacy, affecting those who interact with it and enacting violent revenge, this skull is precisely what Vindice says it is: not a “useless property” (3.5.100), but in fact a very useful one.

By the time the Duke enters the stage space and enquires after the lady he is to meet, the skull is disguised enough to look convincingly human, able to “beguile” (3.5.51) and “tempt a great man” (3.5.55). While the audience is now fully aware that the “lady” Vindice reveals is nothing more than the skull “*in tires*” (3.5.42sd), that is, with its head covered and somehow wearing a gown, to the Duke’s eyes this is a living, breathing woman here only to satisfy his sexual appetite.²⁸⁷ Vindice puns on the knowledge he shares with the audience, saying the lady is “a little bashful” (3.5.132), and therefore shy and modest, and “[h]as somewhat a grave look with her” (3.5.135-136).²⁸⁸ The audience is made complicit in the trick: that this woman is no subject at all, but an object. But, again, the skull resists easy categorization as subject or object, disrupting Sofer’s notion of “either/or-ness”; instead, the skull is a vibrant and forceful thing, both unable to act on its own and able to affect those around it.²⁸⁹ When it is presented as a bashful woman for the lusty Duke’s sexual use, the skull invites only one action — it solicits a kiss from the Duke, not acting of its own accord, but acting upon him to deliver the poisoned kiss. The affective and efficacious capacity that the skull exerts in this instance makes it possible for the act of revenge to occur: Vindice, using the descriptive vocabulary of *language about violence* to highlight an act of

²⁸⁶ Abbott, p. 223; Hope also speaks to the “sense of obligation” that “shall” lends to grammatical expressions of futurity, p. 145.

²⁸⁷ *A Dictionary of Stage Directions in English Drama, 1580 - 1642*, ed. by Alan Dessen and Leslie Thompson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 231.

²⁸⁸ “Bashful, adj.,” *OED*, 2.

²⁸⁹ Sofer, p. 95.

violence already accomplished, reveals “the skull / Of Gloriana, whom thou poisonedst last” (3.5.48-49) and as such the Duke realizes, with the same descriptive phrasing, that “[i]t ’as poisoned me” (3.5.150). The Duke’s words draw attention back to the dual status of the skull once more: “it”, the object, has somehow taken action against him, poisoning him. The Duke’s use of the powerful and efficacious “it” is mirrored by Vindice, who counts the skull as an actant in the scheme:

DUKE	What are you two?
VINDICE	Villains, all three. The very ragged bone Has been sufficiently revenged (3.5.151-153)

But despite acknowledging the skull as an active participant with Vindice and Hippolito (signaled by Vindice’s assertion that it is “all three” [3.5.152] of them, instead of two), the sentence structure sounds strangely passive to modern readers or listeners: the skull “[h]as been” revenged, emphasizing the action of vengeance more than the skull that enacted the revenge. But to an early modern audience, the “has been” construction indicates instead the present perfect tense, or perfect aspect, which signals, as Hope writes, “actions completed in the past”.²⁹⁰ In this way, the phrase “has been” works to reiterate the active status of the skull, demonstrating on a grammatical level that the skull has successfully enacted vengeance on the Duke. In other words, by acknowledging the skull as one of “three” participating “villains” (3.5.152) in the revenge plot and deploying the present perfect construction “has been”, Vindice acknowledges the skull as a thing that carries an overpowering sense of active objectivity: it is more than a passive, inanimate object but an actant possessing affective subjectivity. The next section

²⁹⁰ Hope, p. 153.

more closely examines the skull's affective subjectivity, moving from a purely textual context to a performance context.

Object-led Violence in Performance

Vindice's insistence that the skull is not merely a "useless property" (3.5.100) carries with it implications for the staging of this performative moment. Not only is this a clever textual moment, punning on the prop as property and using pronouns and deictics to emphasize the efficacy this quasi-animate thing can exert, but it also opens broader opportunities to think practically (that is, in practice) about the role such objects hold in affording acts of violence on stage. Divorcing Vindice's attitude toward and use of the skull prop from embodied performance prevents readers from seeing objects and stage props as active participants in the act of revenge, affording and inviting violence. Instead, it positions props as passive and inert, rather than things that generate action or elicit engagement by the actors. In this more active framing, the skull as prop embodies Bruno Latour's notion of the "actant" — not something that acts, per se, but "to which activity is granted by others" — by working in relationship with the actors on stage.²⁹¹ This relationship is worth exploring, as it makes visible the typically invisible ways in which human subjects act upon nonhuman objects (and objects likewise act on subjects) to enact violence, interpreting and embodying the text to show the violent "matter to be manifest".²⁹² How, then, might an actant prop exert affective qualities on actors? Can an object truly take on some form of quasi-subjectivity and work on those around it? And is the distortion of subject

²⁹¹ Latour, p. 7.

²⁹² Rainolde, f. 30v.

and object, represented by the Gloriana skull, as visible in performance as I have argued it is in the text, through shifting pronoun use? It is this line of thinking that prompted me to develop an undergraduate workshop, during which I could assess the potential affordances of objects in enacting violence in *The Revenger's Tragedy*.

The workshop, titled 'Masking and Unmasking in *The Revenger's Tragedy*', was broadly divided into three sections: first, viewing, where we analyzed video clips from two recorded productions of *The Revenger's Tragedy*; then, close reading, with collaborative and focused work on a 60-line section of Act 3, scene 5, done in small groups; and finally, acting, where the same small groups staged the extract.²⁹³ Student participants were instructed to mark implicit stage directions in their extract, as well as possible points of physical contact and engagement between individual actors, and actors and props, that might guide their interactions with each. The few editorial stage directions that remained in the printed extracts also needed to be expanded, with the students identifying those textual cues that prompted an editor to include a direction. Each group was given a balloon to use as their skull prop, in order to mimic the size of the object Vindice, Hippolito, and the Duke would interact with in 3.5.²⁹⁴ After their initial bafflement, we shared a laugh and together drew basic features on each group's balloon to make it look more skull-like. The students quickly adjusted to the balloon skull, considering it and working with it as if this was the most natural thing in the world. The balloons, though inanimate, became important members of each small group as the participants referenced them and even questioned them

²⁹³ The script for this workshop can be found in Appendix C.2 workshop scripts, *Masking and Unmasking in The Revenger's Tragedy* (6 November 2019), p. 343-350.

²⁹⁴ While the use of balloons allowed us to mimic the *size* of a skull prop, the balloons' other physical properties, including their weight (or lack thereof), did have an impact on the way this scene was staged. I address some of these issues on p. 139 of this thesis.

during their collaborative close readings, thinking through how they might hold them or interact with them, debating the physicality of the skull, and questioning whether or not Hippolito might be acting as Gloriana's absent body (3.5.119-120, 140). In this way, the visible object functioned as a prompt to think more deeply both about the text as text, and about the text as staged performance.

The combination of independent and collaborative close reading gave the student participants a chance to dig into the text, building their familiarity with the extract by focusing on the smallest details. Because of this attention to detail, they also reported a growing sense of confidence and empowerment that was directly related to their dedicated time reading and marking the extract. This self-assurance translated into a willingness to experiment and take charge of staging and prop work. Like Vindice, time spent with the skull prop developed into a feeling of ownership over the whole stage business. Without any explicit instruction, the students began thinking aloud about the ways the skull might interact with or act on them, and where and how it might intervene in the scene. They cited lines such as the Duke's insistence that he "must be bold with [Gloriana]. Oh, what's this? Oh!" (3.5.144) as a moment that required extra attention while staging, as "the Duke doesn't know what he's about to kiss — or what's about to kiss him!" Such a shift in thinking suggested an assumption by the student participants that their prop might be capable of exercising its own efficacy on them as actors. When they began staging the scene, their belief in the affective agency of the prop became more explicit, since they consistently referred to their notes on the text to guide their consciously active and engaged prop work. As I moved between each student group, I witnessed careful choreography of the

prop's use and participation in the scene that highlighted the complexity of the prop's thingness and its role as both object and quasi-subject.

Because of the attentive nature of their staging and prop work, I began watching for moments that illustrated the simultaneous nature of the prop's subjecthood and objecthood in practice, which I suspected might start to become visible during the course of the acting portion of the workshop. The first of such moments came barely eleven lines into the extract. In one group, the student playing Vindice spoke to their prop as if they expected it to respond, either verbally or physically; the line "[h]ide thy face now, for shame; thou hadst need have a mask now" (3.5.13) was delivered as a tender command to the skull, while the student stroked the side of the balloon-skull's 'face' with the back of one finger as if the fully fleshed subject Gloriana was in front of them. When the student playing the Duke entered three lines later, Vindice furtively delivered the next line, "[b]rother, fall you back a little / With the bony lady" (3.5.119-120) and quickly thrust the prop at Hippolito — a movement they deliberately rehearsed to represent a disregard for whether the skull was face-up or face-down. Their Hippolito practiced bobbling the balloon in their hands, as if surprised to be holding it, demonstrating a perceptive grasp of the bodily and theatrical spatial awareness needed to stage a moment of disregard or unawareness. All traces of gentleness disappeared as quickly as they had first appeared, and Gloriana became mere object again.

In another group, the students gave Hippolito control over the skull much more quickly. Once Vindice revealed the skull to his brother, on the line, "[n]ow to my tragic business. Look you, brother" (3.5.98), he tossed the balloon over to Hippolito, who caught it and examined it closely before helping it nod 'yes' and 'no'

as Vindice outlined his plot. In this staging, Vindice hung back, taking a voyeuristic approach and distancing himself from the skull so that, in the students' words, "it's not Vindice's tool, it's more able to act for itself, even though Hippolito has to do all the movements for it". Even here, the efficacious "it" was at work as the students attributed agency to the inanimate object. Despite the balloon's inability to literally "act for itself", it became an emotive member of the group, as one of the students made the skull shake with silent laughter as Vindice revealed that Gloriana's skull would "be revenged / In the like strain and kiss [the Duke's] lips to death" (3.5.103-104). Vindice's distance from the skull in this staging added a palpable sense of tension and expectation to the scene as the students worked out when the revenger would next make contact with the skull. As a group, they chose to delay contact as long as possible; rather than "*applying poison to the skull's lips*" (3.5.108sd) himself, Vindice tossed the poisoned cosmetics to his brother, who carefully mimed using lipstick on the balloon while Vindice watched. Vindice's "[s]o" (3.5.109) became a gestural instruction, where he pointed to his own mouth, only completing the line when Hippolito had finished: "'tis laid on" (3.5.109). This group maintained Vindice's distance from the skull for another 40 lines, until the Duke has received the poisoned kiss; this group's Vindice finally picked up the prop when he told the Duke who the skull belonged to: "'Tis the skull / Of Gloriana, whom thou poisonedst last" (3.5.148-149).

The third group of student participants also had the skull change hands between the brothers. Once Vindice applied the poison, he handed the skull to Hippolito and adjusted the paper veil the students had made, saying, "[n]ow come and welcome, Duke, / I have her for thee" (3.5.109-110). These students had Vindice take a step back to appraise the skull's disguise and his next line was

delivered approvingly: “she makes almost as fair a sign / As some old gentlewoman in a periwig” (3.5.111-112). At the same time, Hippolito began practicing how he might manipulate the prop’s movements, treating it as the “useless property” (3.5.100) that had first been introduced. These students also played with perceived liveliness: when Vindice instructed the skull to “hide thy face now, for shame” (3.5.113), Hippolito ducked it down slightly, as if the skull really were ashamed and chastised. The participants then added a shared laugh between the brothers, a direct response to the skull’s movement mediated by and through Hippolito’s own body, and an acknowledgement of its lack of agency in that moment. But even as it lacked agency, the group worked to make the skull fully share in the act of revenge, arranging themselves into a tableau for the line “[v]illains, all three” (3.5.151), the balloon in-between and at eye level with Hippolito and Vindice as they leered at the Duke, actively embodying and representing the notion of the skull as participant.

While the students experimented with how they might trigger and then capitalize on the prop’s liveliness on stage, I was struck by a change to the students’ collective use of grammar that showed the animated force of the balloon-skull. As they worked with gesture, action, and interaction, each group’s pronoun use shifted, vacillating between referring to the prop as “she” and “it”, as Vindice does in *The Revenger’s Tragedy* and as I have done in this chapter. Moving around the room, I heard such statements as “but what if the Duke drops her head? Is Hippolito still holding it?”, “she needs to be brought back in by this point, because Vindice has his line there”, and “how aggressively do we want her to kiss him? Please don’t actually kiss it though”. Their use of pronouns mirrored those deployed in the play text, varying to reflect the changing subjecthood or

objecthood of the prop in that moment. In their attentive close readings of the extract, the students had instinctively perceived the consistent variation in pronoun use and as they worked to enliven and un-enliven the prop in performance, they also did so grammatically. This changing use of third-person pronouns extended into their written feedback as well, where they referenced Gloriana as “a puppet of her own revenge”, raised questions “about the handling and whereabouts of her head[,] particularly where the Duke kisses it”, and reflected on the way “[t]he female body [was] disrespected[;] it’s used more as a prop and the view of it as a human seems to have been lost completely”.²⁹⁵ These comments showed that the student participants were differentiating between “she”, Gloriana the character; “it”, the imagined skull; and “it”, the balloon prop they held in their hands, and yet also blurring the boundaries between each. In the workshop space as in the play text, the boundary between subject and object was made permeable through the efficacious balloon prop and skull’s status as things, able to influence and act on the students as well as the characters they embodied.

In practice, the grammatical blurring of boundaries between subject and object does impact performance, as it serves to obscure the audience’s understanding of where violence originates in Act 3, scene 5. While the site of violence remains clear (Gloriana’s bony lips or, in the case of this workshop, the drawn-on mouth of the balloon), the agent behind the violence suddenly appears to be changeable and unclear. Surely Vindice is responsible for this act of violence, since he swears that “her death / Shall be revenged” (3.5.69-70), where “shall” promises future action. Vindice is certainly an active and engaged participant in

²⁹⁵ Appendix B.2, workshop questionnaire and anonymous responses from *Masking and Unmasking in The Revenger’s Tragedy*, with undergraduate students from the University of Kent’s *Shakespeare and Early Modern Drama* module (6 November 2019), p. 330.

the violent act which causes the Duke's death — indeed, Vindice builds on the initial act, using his dagger to “keep possession / About [the Duke's] heart” so that “[i]f he but gasp, he dies” (3.5.195-196) and threatening to “tear up his lids / And make his eyes like comets shine through blood” (3.5.199-200). What both the workshop and my analysis of pronoun use suggest, however, is that violence somehow originates with the skull itself, where the student-actors and the grammar of the play text linguistically enliven the prop and so endow it with the agentic capabilities which prompt and make possible this act of revenge. The nexus of staged violence, then, is found in the interaction between language, the performer's body, and the prop, where each component lends its efficacy to the others in the act of embodied performance. This ability to act on those around it was highlighted through the students' own comments during the workshop: “how aggressively do we want her to kiss him?” While they were still controlling the inanimate object (signaled through their use of the phrase “do we want”), she and it were simultaneously uncontrollable — “she” was actively going to “kiss him”.

But the word “actively” can be misleading. This does not mean that the prop is alive or engaged in animate movement or activity, but instead that, in its capacity as a thing, the prop variously responds to and resists interactions with the actors, affording certain actions while inhibiting others.²⁹⁶ In the context of the workshop, the balloon props afforded and resisted different actions than a hard plastic or plaster skull prop might. For example, the students quoted above, who questioned whether the Duke could drop Gloriana's skull after kissing it, tried

²⁹⁶ “Animacy, n.”, *OED*, 1; and “Affordance, n.”, *OED*, 2. James J. Gibson coined the term ‘affordances’ as a means of noting “what things furnish, for good or ill”; affordances are observed after “the constant properties of constant objects are perceived (the shape, size, color, texture, composition, motion, animation, and position relative to other objects)”. Gibson, *The Senses Considered as Perceptual Systems* (London: George Allan & Unwin Ltd, 1966), p. 285.

exactly this during their staging process: after the student playing the Duke mimed kissing the balloon-skull, their eyes widened and they dropped the balloon, grasping at their throat and delivering the Duke's line, "[o]h, what's this? Oh!" (3.5.144). Before Vindice could react with any kind of shock, anger, or similar emotional response as his fiancé's skull hit the ground, the other students began laughing as they watched the balloon float incongruously to the ground. Where a true skull prop (or a real skull) might be thrown or dropped in a meaningful way, the balloon-skull resisted and prevented this type of action, forcing the students to rethink their staging choice in this moment. And yet, consistently, no matter what prop is used in this scene, the moment it is disguised as the woman who the Duke expects to "greet him [...] / In some fit place veiled from the eyes o'th' court" (3.5.12-13), the prop affords only one action. The Duke will kiss it because it invites a kiss. In this way, the prop exposes itself as neither subject nor object, but instead vibrant material that can somehow act upon a person without actually acting at all.

In using the efficacious "it" to reveal the skull to the Duke, Vindice also distinguishes between subject and object while also naming both. "View it well", Vindice says, "'Tis the skull / Of Gloriana" (3.5.148-149). The prop is simultaneously Gloriana, the dismembered skull, and the thing, "it" (3.5.148). But in asserting its participation, Vindice also grammatically prioritizes the "very ragged bone" (3.5.152) over the dead woman, the object over the subject. This rhetorical eclipse mirrors the language used in the three scenes examined in the first half of this chapter (Act 1, scene 1, Act 1, scene 4, and Act 3, scene 3), which objectifies the dead female characters even when gendered pronouns are used. In figuring Antonio's wife and Gloriana as a "comely building" (1.4.2) or "a quaint

piece of beauty" (3.5.53), the women are stripped of their subjectivity, linguistically un-enlivened, and so transformed into objects. It is the third-person neutral pronoun, "it", used for Gloriana but not Antonio's wife, that serves to position the violated female corpse between living, animated subject and dead, inanimate object. "It" is then an extraordinarily powerful word, signaling the rhetorical means by which the material of Gloriana's skull is made into a vibrant thing, capable of playing a part in "it[s] own revenge" (3.5.101). Having established the affective vibrancy of the skull prop and the violent potential it carries, which I have argued is made possible by Middleton's use of pronouns, the next half of the chapter continues this discussion of the power of "it", expanding from Middleton's use of the pronoun to signify a dismembered body part to the dead body as a whole.

II. *The Lady's Tragedy*

Five years after *The Revenger's Tragedy*, Middleton builds on his brief examination of Antonio's wife's body by combining it with the most horrific elements of Vindice's use of Gloriana's skull. In *The Lady's Tragedy*, the audience encounters the dead woman while she still lives and then witnesses her death (and her corpse's violation) as she attempts to protect herself from a vengeful Tyrant — a marked departure from Middleton's earlier dramatic work, where both women are dead before the play begins. In dramatizing the transition from living body to lifeless corpse, *The Lady's Tragedy* serves to further complicate the discussion of when subjecthood ends and objecthood begins. Once more, the play rejects Andrew Sofer's assertion of "either/or-ness": Middleton places the Lady's body directly in between the two binary points, and the second half of the play

hinges on the corpse's identity as both subject and object.²⁹⁷ In the second half of this chapter I argue that the decision to insistently keep and use the dead body on stage has an immediate and lasting impact on the language of those characters who interact with the corpse. The third-person neutral pronoun "it" once more plays a central role, not only illustrating vibrancy and the capacity for the actant-object to exert its thingness but also testing how well (if at all) the boundary between subject and object holds up when a body, instead of a body part, is at play. Where Gloriana's skull represented Middleton's deliberate attempt at making this boundary permeable, the Lady's body further disrupts the notion of what (and where) that boundary is, not only by using a recognizable, fully fleshed person whom the audience has seen embodied by an actor but also by using object-focused, property language to describe her while she lives.

The Lady's Tragedy is a play intimately concerned with the act of possession. Possession is itself a state of having, owning, or holding that implicitly signifies the existence of an object — the "person or thing" that someone claims "as one's own".²⁹⁸ This is most clearly reflected in the language used to describe the nameless main female character, the Lady, which centers on her value as a unit of property. She and her actions are reduced to descriptions of wealth and treasure (items to be owned or possessed) which act as analogies for her beauty and chastity. The first instance of this motif occurs barely twenty lines into the play when the usurping Tyrant tells the court that the Lady's father is "richer in one smile / That came from her, than she in all [her father's] blessings" (1.1.18-19). The usurped Govianus, too, compares the Lady to a material good, exclaiming

²⁹⁷ Sofer, p. 95.

²⁹⁸ "Possess, v.", *OED*, I. 1a.

that her love and loyalty to him places him “[a]bove a king in fortunes” (1.1.132), while the prospect of losing her in his exile leaves him “beggared” (1.1.112). This type of metaphor, which equates the Lady to wealth and material goods, was a popular, broadly contemporary analogy for beauty and virtuousness, seen in works ranging from the sonnets of William Shakespeare, John Donne, and Philip Sidney to masques like Milton’s *A Masque Presented at Ludlow Castle*, where Comus states that “[b]eauty is nature’s coin”.²⁹⁹ However, in figuring female chastity and beauty as commodities, these poets and dramatists participate in a violent tradition of linguistic objectification disguised as romance, where male control is prioritized over female subjectivity.³⁰⁰

The commodity metaphors are not limited to Act 1. In Act 3, as Govianus attempts to thwart the Tyrant in his impatience to win the Lady, he returns to the idea of female value, as he calls the Lady “[t]he riches of my youth” (3.1.66) and claims “the whole world / Yields not a jewel like her” (3.1.247). This time, however, the Lady participates in the trope, using the same metaphor when she learns that the Tyrant will try to take her by force, saying,

Will you be robbed
And have such warning of the thieves?
[...] A resolute captain
Will rather fling the treasure of his bark
Into whales’ throats than pirates should be gorged with’t.
[...] I’m like that treasure
Dangerous to him that keeps it. Rid thy hands on’t (3.1.67-68, 70-72, 76-77).

²⁹⁹ John Milton, *A Masque Presented at Ludlow Castle*, ed. by Guilherme Ferraz and Thomas H. Luxon (Dartmouth, NH: John Milton Reading Room), ll. 740. For more on analogies of beauty and virtue in the early modern period, see Edith Snook, *Women, Beauty and Power in Early Modern England: A Feminist Literary History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p. 5.

³⁰⁰ For a more detailed discussion of economic rhetoric as a means of achieving sexual control over and possession of women, see Parker, p. 154.

The simile in line 76 — “I’m like that treasure” — positions the Lady more firmly in the space between subject and object. She reasserts her subjecthood through the use of the first-person pronoun “I” while simultaneously framing her body as a “treasure” (3.1.76), an object that, in this metaphor, is kept, lost, and fought over. Ownership is cast as an unstable and changeable state that carries with it an inherent anxiety. Those who own treasure are susceptible to “thieves” (3.1.68) and must constantly keep watch.

Such wealth-based rhetoric is only effective if the female body is understood as an object designed for male use, exchange, and enjoyment. This interpretation stems from social and legal constructions of female purity in the early modern period, where women were defined by what Christine M. Gottlieb calls the “value-conferring properties of virginity or chastity”.³⁰¹ In this context, chastity becomes the metaphorical crown jewel of the Lady’s treasure and the commodity prized above all others. But chastity is also precarious and vulnerable to threat; while the Lady insists in Act 1 that she is “not to be altered” (1.1.123), she also speaks to a fear that the Tyrant, reframed here as a pirate, will “gorge” (3.1.72) his sexual appetite by “robb[ing]” (3.1.67) her (and, by extension, her husband Govianus) of sexual purity through rape. Because of its precarious nature, the chaste body is insistently commodified and valued in direct and indirect addresses to the Lady, as the male characters call her “precious” (3.1.25), “sweet” (3.1.235, 4.3.88), “delicious” (3.1.244), and “virtuous lady” (5.2.196), adjectives that speak to her purity and lack of corruption (whether physical or moral). These references do not seem to depend on the Lady’s state of animation

³⁰¹ Christine M. Gottlieb, “Middleton’s Traffic in Dead Women: Chaste Corpses as Property in *The Revenger’s Tragedy* and *The Lady’s Tragedy*”, *English Literary Renaissance*, 45.2 (2015), 255–274 (p. 260).

— indeed, she is already dead by the time the words “sweet”, “delicious”, and “virtuous” are used to describe her, marking each of these as an example of *violent language* enacted on the body to objectify and commodify it. As in the case of Antonio’s wife, death reifies the Lady’s sexual purity; by killing themselves, these women become a “[p]recedent for wives” (*Revenger’s* 1.4.6), so chaste as to merit praise.

But where Antonio’s wife gains a stable and lasting form of chastity in death, inscribed upon her like “a monument” (*Revenger’s* 1.4.67), the Lady herself argues that her body is not yet safe. Antonio’s wife is kept at a distance from the men on stage, viewable but not to be touched; the Lady, meanwhile, appears as a ghost to complain that the Tyrant has stolen and intends to use or interact with her body, putting her eternal purity at risk. The same language is used for both women’s dead bodies: when he sees the “*tomb where the Lady lies buried*” (*Lady’s* 4.3.sd), the Tyrant swears that “[t]he monument woos me” (4.3.9). Here, the monument becomes a “marble prison” (4.2.45), an obstacle to be overcome rather than a memorial to the dead woman. The Tyrant is determined to get and keep the Lady’s body as his prize: neither “[d]eath nor the marble prison my love sleeps in / Shall keep her body locked up from mine arms” (4.2.45-46), the first-person possessive pronouns signaling belief in his right of ownership. Two scenes later, the Lady’s Ghost disavows the Tyrant’s claim, asserting her continued possession of her body through the same property-based rhetoric: “The monument is robbed. Behold, I’m gone, / My body taken up” (4.4.61-62). The exhumation of the body is explicitly framed as a property crime, a robbery, wherein the body as object is violently stolen from its rightful place and owner (the subject soul).

When the Tyrant first enters the church and sees the Lady's tomb, he undermines her bodily subjectivity by conflating her with the objects that surround her. He describes the tomb as if it is her body; not only does he insist that "[t]he monument woos me" (4.3.9), he also feels compelled by it to "run and kiss it" (4.3.9) as if it exerts a forceful affectivity on him. The use of the third-person neutral pronoun here works to emphasize the lack of distinction between the Lady's body and her tomb, activating a quasi-subjectivity with which the Tyrant engages throughout the scene. For the Tyrant, the tomb stands in for the Lady while it hides her corpse from his sight, taking on some of her life and animacy to act on him. The personified tomb appears to feel emotion — "[t]was weeping to itself before I came. / How pity strikes e'en through insensible things" (4.3.12-13) — and the Tyrant switches to the familiar second-person "thou" when referring to it as "[t]hou house of silence" (4.3.15) and "[t]hou grey-eyed monument" (4.3.23). However, when the tomb exerts its capabilities as an actant, in this case by withholding the Lady, the Tyrant grows frustrated with it and stops using pronouns altogether. Instead, it is a "cold, ponderous creature" (4.3.26) and he speaks while "*striking at the tomb*" (4.3.44sd), saying, "wilt not yield? / Art so loath to part from her?" (4.3.44-45). When the tomb is finally opened, the Tyrant makes little distinction between the dead body and the tomb:

I never shall be weary to behold thee.
 I could eternally stand thus and see thee.
 Why, 'tis not possible death should look so fair;
 Life is not more illustrious when health smiles on't (4.3.62-65).

When confronted with the corpse as it lies in the mausoleum, the Tyrant refuses to conceive of it as the body of a dead woman. Nor does he "run and kiss it" (4.3.9), as he desired to do at the beginning of the scene — instead, his words turn

voyeuristic, the emphasis landing on “behold” (4.3.62), “see” (4.3.63), and “look” (4.3.64). The body entombed takes on the same kind of “magical efficacy” that Gell argued a portrait might and exercises, as Cooper posited, a “spell” on the Tyrant as viewer.³⁰² In this sense, the tomb as a representational material stands in for the Lady’s body (which may still be out of sight of the audience), acting as an object-memorial to the lively and animate subject and eliding the two into one “blest object” (4.3.61).³⁰³

Like Antonio, the Tyrant distinguishes between the dead woman’s body and soul, referencing the body as a “house” (4.3.114) in which “the spirit [...] dwelt” (4.3.113).³⁰⁴ But the Tyrant’s grammar contradicts this distinction. Where Antonio uses pronouns to refer to his memories of his wife, avoiding them when referring to his wife’s corpse, the Tyrant attempts to re-enliven the Lady, using intimate second- and third-person feminine pronouns to speak solely about her body. Grammatically, then, he over-ascribes subjectivity to the corpse; he remarks that “[s]he’s only pale, the colour of the court, / And most attractive” (4.3.66-67) and speaks to the body as if it should respond, saying,

Art thou cold? [...]
 Madam! ’Tis I, sweet lady, prithee speak!
 ’Tis thy love calls on thee, the king thy servant.
 No, not a word? All prisoners to pale silence?
 I’ll prove a kiss (4.3.86, 88-91).

While not overtly violent, these words signify the enactment of a non-consensual act of sexual violence perpetrated on the Lady’s body, submitting her to the same unwanted sexual advances that she died to avoid. The unwanted eroticization of

³⁰² Gell, p. 44; Cooper, p. 167.

³⁰³ Cooper, p. 172.

³⁰⁴ Compare to Antonio’s line in *The Revenger’s Tragedy*: “Her honour first drunk poison, and her life, / Being fellows in one house, did pledge her honour” (1.4.10-11).

the corpse falls under the descriptive vocabulary of *language about violence*: as the Tyrant decides to kiss the human remains, he attributes subjectivity where there is no longer any and verbally asserts possession of the body. He immediately uses gendered pronouns, “she” (4.3.66, 71) and “her” (4.3.70, 73), and jealously claims “[t]hou art mine now, ’spite of destruction / And Govianus; and I will possess thee” (4.3.115-116). This act of violence is clearest in performance, when the audience can witness the non-consensual physical interaction between the two actors, but the Tyrant’s pronoun use reveals evidence of rhetorical violence as well.

In contrast, Govianus’ visit to the tomb in the next scene centers on the Lady’s soul and makes explicit separation between body and spirit. When he first enters the stage, he too comments on the funerary monument and its ability to evoke emotion in him: “[a]lready mine eye melts. The monument / No sooner stood before it but a tear / Ran swiftly from me, to express her duty” (4.4.1-3). But where the Tyrant reverences the body the tomb represents and holds, Govianus’ words position the mausoleum as a part of the cathedral space, calling it “[t]emple of honour” (4.4.4) and “[c]hamber of peace” (4.4.5). This phrasing shows a clear shift from the Tyrant’s characterization of the tomb as a “cold, ponderous creature” (4.3.26), emphasizing instead the tomb as a monument to Govianus’ “grief’s devotion” (4.4.11). As he begins to memorialize the Lady, he calls her an “[e]ternal maid, whose chaste body / Lies here” (4.4.37-38) in the tomb in front of him. The vault becomes the site of mourning and a place of spiritual connection to the Lady, though Govianus recognizes that she, the “eternal maid”, is not present. By using the pronoun “whose”, Govianus connects the body to the Lady, linking flesh and spirit in the same way Vindice did in the line “[t]is the skull / Of Gloriana”

(*Revenge*'s 3.5.148-149) through similarly possessive constructions. But where the grammar around the skull prop simultaneously signified the woman, the object, and the actant, this possessive signifies the Lady's body and soul as separate but related entities, connected in life but now separate in death.

The Lady's Ghost does not make this same distinction. In her first appearance as the Spirit, she interrupts Govianus' memorial speech to say, "I am not here" (*Lady's* 4.4.40). These words are a direct response to Govianus' acknowledgment of the "chaste body [that] / Lies here" (4.4.37-38), confirming what the audience saw in the previous scene — that is, the removal of the Lady's body by the Tyrant. When the Ghost becomes visible "*in the midst of the tomb; [...]* *standing just before him*" (4.4.42sd), she reinforces the grammatical link between her body and soul, claiming it with more possessives by saying, "I'm gone" (4.4.61) and "my body [is] taken up" (4.4.62). By referring to the dead body with the words "I" and "my", the Lady's Ghost claims it and asserts her personhood from beyond the grave, a claim she can only make because she is present on stage as her own ghost. The Lady can speak for herself in a way neither Gloriana nor Antonio's wife can, as the audience only encounters their dead or dismembered bodies. The Lady speaks of her corpse in the present tense, as if her soul is still connected to the absent body; "I am now at court", she tells Govianus,

In his own private chamber. There he woos me
And plies his suit to me with as serious pains
As if the short flame of mortality
Were lighted up again in my cold breast (4.4.66-70).

The possessive pronouns used by the Ghost are explicit, with the word "my" indicating that any actions done to the deceased and stolen body have a direct impact on the soul, too. It is as if the Lady's spirit actively experiences the Tyrant's

“sinful kiss upon my senseless lip” (4.4.72) and is made complicit in his act of necrophilia. Even in death, her chastity must be claimed (or owned) and protected, and the Tyrant’s actions put her eternal purity at risk.

Govianus’ interaction with the Ghost has an immediate impact on his grammar and pronoun use. When the Lady’s Ghost speaks, he recognizes it as “the spirit of my love” (4.4.55), making clear that this is neither truly the Lady herself, nor her bodily presence, but her soul. A few lines later, there is a further grammatical differentiation: the Lady’s Ghost tells him, “I’m gone, / My body taken up” (4.4.61-62) and Govianus responds by saying, “[’t]is gone indeed!” (4.4.62). Rhetorically, Govianus distinguishes between body and soul as soon as he sees that one and not the other is present — the body is “it” (from the expansion of “’tis” to “it is”), a vessel for the soul, “she”. This verbal distinction continues to the end of the scene; Govianus uses third-person feminine pronouns to refer to the Ghost as “she” (4.4.84) and “her” (4.4.89) and reserves the third-person neutral pronoun “it” to mark the lifeless corpse as distinct from the living Lady (or, in the case of the Ghost, the lively Lady). In essence, Govianus recognizes the body as object and the spirit as subject. This division is made to feel natural (as opposed to the Tyrant’s decidedly unnatural over-attribution of subjectivity to the dead body): similar language is used in the *Book of Common Prayer*’s “Order for the Buriall of the Dead”, which reminds readers that the body “is sowen in corruption, [and] riseth againe in incorruption. It is sowen in dishonour, it riseth againe in

honour”.³⁰⁵ In this idealized view of the body as object, it should rest safely away from human interference (as Antonio’s wife rests out of reach behind the curtain in the discovery space [*Revenger’s* 1.4.sd]), where it can wait to be “restore[d] again” (*Lady’s* 4.4.79) in the resurrection.

Objects, however, are meant to be used. Their purpose in the theatre is, as Sofer puts it, to be “handled” by the actors and “perceived” by the audience.³⁰⁶ While the pronouns Govianus uses to refer to the Lady’s body are framed as natural (echoing those used in the *Book of Common Prayer*), they still function as a means of linguistic objectification, which in turn enables its use as a stage object. Grammatically, then, it is no surprise that the Lady’s corpse is visibly physically manipulated by Govianus and the Tyrant because such use is embedded in the play’s dialogue. The act of violence here is in the deliberate confusion of pronoun use. While Govianus makes a rhetorical distinction between the dead body, “it”, and the Lady’s spirit, “she”, the Tyrant violently re-attributes subjectivity to the dead woman (“her”, “my”) on his own terms, refusing to respect “[t]he peace that death allows” (4.4.60) and using the non-consenting corpse to fulfill his sexual desires. But because the Tyrant attempts to distort the audience’s understanding of whether the Lady’s body is a subject or an object, Govianus is able to trigger its status as an actant — a thing — and take advantage of the quasi-subjectivity the Tyrant has ascribed by using it to enact violent revenge. In this way, *The Lady’s*

³⁰⁵ Church of England, *The booke of common prayer, and administration of the sacraments, and other rites and ceremonies of the Church of England* (London: 1604), sig. P8v. STC (2nd ed.) 16327. Soon after James I’s accession to the throne of England, he commissioned a revised edition of the *Book of Common Prayer* at the 1604 Hampton Court Conference which remained largely unchanged until 1662; this 1604 edition would have been the most up-to-date version of the text (and the one used during services) when Middleton was writing *The Revenger’s Tragedy* and *The Lady’s Tragedy*.

³⁰⁶ Sofer, p. 31.

Tragedy highlights an actant object that invites, on a grammatical level, violent embodiment and use by the two men; in the next section, I analyze how this process might play out on the stage.

Activating the Body on Stage

In performance, the dead body as a quasi-animate and efficacious thing acts on the characters around it in much the same way Gloriana's skull acted on the Duke: the corpse's face is painted with poisonous cosmetics, it seems to invite or solicit a sexual encounter (despite dying to avoid sexual violation), and it acts upon its aggressor to deliver a poisoned kiss. The body's status as prop, however, is complicated by the fact that the corpse is played by a living actor. While Gloriana's skull might be played by human remains, the Lady's body continues to be represented by an actual human. As the audience watches the body move between living subject and dead object-actant, there remains an awareness of the actor's liveness which further troubles the notion of subjecthood and objecthood as binary and oppositional points. This chapter has argued that things inherently hold a form of subjectivity (that is, quasi-subjectivity), where they take on the role of both object and subject, simultaneously acted upon and acting on others; but when the living body is the thing, we encounter an additional layer of subjectivity (the actor's) which cannot be easily discarded. As Susan Zimmerman writes, the very act of representing "the corpse on the early modern stage entailed the metatheatrical recognition [...] of an illusion", as the living actor embodies the

dead character.³⁰⁷ The final section of this chapter grapples with the ways in which the fleshiness of the actor's body disrupts the audience's interpretation of the subjecthood, objecthood, or thingness of the body prop, and how pronoun use might help us navigate the body's shifting status in performance.

Because the final scene of the play features the clearest and most consistent examples of pronoun variation by both Govianus and the Tyrant, I found it helpful to examine this scene (Act 5, scene 2) in a workshop setting.³⁰⁸ Done hand-in-hand with the *Yorkshire Tragedy* workshop, the session was focused on embodied rhetorical action, with particular attention paid to embodying violence through and with props during the *Lady's Tragedy* portion of the workshop. Not only were the participants conscious of deictic commands in the text (the basis of our *Yorkshire Tragedy* work), but I also asked that they give some thought to the central prop in Act 5, scene 2 — that is, the Lady's body — which would be more difficult to move or use than the prop daggers we had used in the first half of the workshop. One participant was assigned the role of the dead body and sat in a chair at the center of our stage space, listening and passively reacting to physical interactions with the other participants as well as textual cues. My goal here was to consider the dead body as prop when represented by a living actor and how the actor's inherent subjectivity might be understood as distinct from or part of the object-actant, aiding or disrupting the prop's quasi-subjectivity and efficacious affectivity.

³⁰⁷ Susan Zimmerman, 'Animating Matter: The Corpse Idol in *The Second Maiden's Tragedy*', *Renaissance Drama*, 31 (2002), 215-243 (p. 222).

³⁰⁸ The script for this workshop can be found in Appendix C.1 workshop scripts, *Violence and Embodied Performance on the Early Modern Stage* (13 December 2018), p. 335-342.

We began with all of the speaking characters on stage already, jumping straight into the scene *in media res* rather than spending time on exposition and various characters' staggered entrances. This decision also eliminated the need to bring out or situate the dead body on stage. The play text includes a detailed original stage direction, where the Tyrant's attendants:

Bring the body in a chair, dressed up in black velvet which sets out the paleness of the hands and face, and a fair chain of pearl across her breast and the crucifix above it. The Tyrant stands silent awhile, letting the music play, beckoning the soldiers that bring her in to make obeisance to her, and he himself makes a low honour to the body and kisses the hand (5.2.13sd).

While this stage direction clearly sets out the manner in which the Lady's body should be brought on stage and positioned, carefully choreographing the interactions between the body and the soldiers, attendants, and Tyrant, it also requires more actors than were in the workshop. Instead, we began with the Tyrant calling attention to the body already on stage in front of the audience; the Tyrant's imperative command to "[l]ook on yon face and tell me what it wants" (5.2.66) casts a kind of verbal spotlight on the dead body, directing the gaze of both actors and audience members by asking them to closely examine it and note its appearance and status. The participant playing Govianus experimented with multiple responses, first looking at the limp body in the chair in front of them and laughing, then bowing just before the Tyrant's line so as to miss the accompanying gesture toward the chair, and finally asking that another body stand behind the Lady to serve as a visual reference point for their confused delivery of the line, "[w]hich [face]? That, sir?" (5.2.67). After our work on deictics in *A Yorkshire Tragedy*, the participants were quick to pick up on the directional force of the word

“that” in Govianus’ first line but were hesitant to use the dead body as a referent too soon; one actor felt that Govianus needed to hold off on interacting with the body, since the Tyrant was clearly keen to do so. By placing another body in their line of sight, Govianus could deliberately mistake the subject of the Tyrant’s command, treating the corpse as an incidental object.

The Tyrant’s insistence on using feminine pronouns supports the participants’ instincts here; after Govianus’ use of the ungendered deictic “that”, the Tyrant leaves no room for ambiguity in his reply: “What colour wants **she**?” (5.2.72, emphasis added). Grammatically, this is consistent with the Tyrant’s language in Acts 3 and 4, where he not only over-ascribes subjectivity to the corpse, but also re-asserts its gender, calling attention to and identifying the body as the remains of the Lady. This is evident in the use of tense markers by the Tyrant and Govianus as well, where the Tyrant linguistically positions the body in the present tense, as if the Lady still actively “draws” (5.2.84) or evokes physical and emotional responses from a lover and “wants” (5.2.72) things, connoting both a sense of what she might lack and what she might desire. Govianus, however, refers to the Lady in the past tense, calling her “poor woman, whatso’er she was” (5.2.76). Like their use of pronouns, this tense switching also serves to distort and make illegible the distinction between living subject and dead object. In performance, such a distortion is immediately obvious because it is so visible — that is, both men share the same visual reference point, the dead body which their words demand the audience observe, even as their uses of grammar and language treat that shared referent differently.

The idea of a shared visual focal point became an important part of the staging process in the workshop, as the participants worked to maintain a clear

line of sight between the Lady and the audience. The actors playing Govianus and the Tyrant consciously kept the Lady's body between them, so that every line of dialogue they spoke to each other was visually mediated through the corpse. The participant playing the Lady, whose eyes were closed for the entirety of the scene, reported feeling surrounded and slightly disoriented as they heard dialogue coming from nearly every direction around them. Whenever another actor interacted with them physically, this participant tensed and even flinched, as a result of never knowing where or when contact might be made. This (understandable) reaction complicated our work by adding an additional layer of subjectivity for consideration — the recognition of illusion which Zimmerman notes is an inherent component of embodying a dead body in performance.³⁰⁹ This body was very obviously “playing dead” and could never truly be pure object, as was made evident through the actor's automatic bodily response to being touched with little to no warning while their eyes were closed. Unlike the Gloriana skull, the actor playing the dead body can still act for itself precisely because its underlying subjectivity has not changed; the body is alive even as it represents itself in death, and so blurs the line between object and subject, material and matter, and reality and representation.

But despite not being a true object, the living body of the actor playing the dead Lady could still be objectified and made to seem as if it were an object. Some of its pseudo-object status was accomplished by the other actors, who interacted with their peer as if they were encountering a dead body: Govianus hesitated to touch the body's face when he began to paint it with the poisoned cosmetics

³⁰⁹ Zimmerman, p. 222.

(5.2.95sd) and when he did, his movements were stiff and reluctant, and the one servant we had onstage (as opposed to the multiple soldiers and servants called for in the text) was careful to arrange the Lady's limp hands at her sides and then rearrange them when one forearm fell heavily off the arm of the chair. Govianus' pronoun use also served to obscure the actor's living body and assert instead the objecthood and latent thingness of the theatrically dead corpse. The participants pointed out that Govianus moved from the ungendered "that" to "she", matching the Tyrant's words when the two men spoke to each other, but then shifted back to a neutral pronoun (the efficacious "it") when speaking in asides; as he prepares to paint "*the face of the body*" (5.2.95sd), Govianus reminds himself of the absent "spirit of my love" (5.2.94), saying that the "[p]oor soul, 'tis weary" (5.2.95). This time, it is the soul that becomes the neutral "it", rather than the body, but it serves in this context as another reminder to the audience that the inanimate body and animate spirit are separate entities.

Thirty lines later, Govianus uses "it" to refer to the body once more, when he asks the Tyrant, "[c]annot the body after funeral / Sleep in the grave for thee? Must it be raised / Only to please the wickedness of thine eye?" (5.2.129-131). Here, "it" refers implicitly back to "the body" as object and removes any false sense of animacy from it. Throughout, however, the Tyrant refers to the body with feminine pronouns ("she" and "her") and the intimate second-person "thee", so much so that one of the participants thought the pronouns signaled a complete denial of reality, as if the Tyrant refused to admit the Lady was deceased. Another participant disagreed, citing the Tyrant's intention to "[b]y art force beauty on yon lady's face, / Though death sit frowning on't" (5.2.110-111) and saying that these lines read as stubbornness and a desire to exert some kind of power over death

itself. In response, the actor playing the Tyrant emphasized the pronoun which appeared in the final line of the same speech: "Our pleasure shall prevail" (5.2.112). Yet while the Tyrant attempted to exert his will over death, the Lady's corpse was activated by the two men's mixed use of pronouns, becoming linguistically enlivened enough that the body as thing could exert itself on the Tyrant. The Tyrant attributes activity to the body, saying, "O, she lives again! / She'll presently speak to me!" (5.2.114-115) and the body prop affords the same response as Gloriana's skull, inviting and compelling the Tyrant to kiss it (5.2.118-120). The actor subject and stage prop object have always (in this scene) necessarily been one and the same, but in this performative moment their individual statuses combine to expose the vibrant thing, active and acting upon without taking action. In performing the prop, the actor becomes the prop.

The body's status remains in flux until the very end of the play, despite the fact that its purpose in the act of revenge has been fulfilled. After delivering the poisoned kiss to the Tyrant, it should not need to act upon anyone else. But as we worked on the final speech of the play, the participants were concerned that the body might invite further interaction, this time from Govianus. The actor playing the Lady's body jokingly shared their worry that they might be kissed again. In terms of the grammar used in the final speech, this worry makes sense. By this point, the Tyrant has been defeated and the grammar surrounding the Lady's body should have restabilized after the Tyrant's conscious and deliberate over-attribution of subjectivity to the corpse. However, in the penultimate ten lines of the play, Govianus moves between "her", "it", and "ours" (used as the singular possessive, rather than plural), his words shifting just as dramatically between possessable object and independent subject as did the Tyrant's, saying,

And since the body of that virtuous lady
 Is taken from **her** rest, in memory
 Of **her** admired mistress, 'tis our will
It receive honour dead, as **it** took part
 With us in all afflictions when **it** lived.
 Here place **her** in this throne, crown **her** our queen,
 The first and last that ever we make **ours**,
Her constancy strikes so much firmness in us.
 That honour done, let **her** be solemnly borne
 Unto the house of peace from whence **she** came
 As queen of silence (5.2.196-206, emphasis added).

These pronoun variations suggest a similar potential for action as the Tyrant's attempts to "labour life into [the Lady]" (5.2.119) and "possess [her]" (4.3.116). When Govianus determines to "crown her our queen" (5.2.201), the audience should hear the verbal parallel and wonder, as the participant said they did, if the body was once more in danger of violation. Govianus acknowledges there is room for comparison, too, as he reassures the Lady's Ghost that "[t]hou need'st not mistrust me" (5.2.207) — those on stage and watching in the theatre must take Govianus' word that no other violent and non-consensual acts will happen.

In the speech above, though, each pronoun points to a different referent because the Ghost and body are both present. The first instances of "her" (5.2.197-198), for example, are used to evoke the Lady's memory, referring to "that virtuous lady" (5.2.196) now deceased; "it" (5.2.199-200) signifies the dead "body" (5.2.196), which will "receive [funeral] honour[s]" (5.2.199); "ours" (5.2.202) acts, in this case, like "mine", reasserting Govianus' claim on the Lady as his "truest love" (5.2.163) now that her body is reclaimed from the Tyrant through the act of revenge; and the final usages of "she" (5.2.205) and "her" (5.2.203, 204) serve to rhetorically close the distance between the Lady's body and spirit as the same happens physically and visually on stage: "*The Spirit [of the Lady] enters again and*

stays to go out with the body, as it were attending it" (5.2.206sd). These shifts are not indicators of a change in status of one singular entity (the body), rather they signify the two discrete parts of the Lady that the audience sees in front of them (the body and the soul). The word "it" plays multiple roles, then: not only does it signal the potential for thingness, where the efficacious prop can act on the characters around it to incite revenge, it also linguistically un-enlivens the actor's living body so that it can function as a prop in performance.

The simultaneous reality of the subject, object, and thing that occurs on the living actor's body destabilizes any remaining belief in a binary view of subjecthood or objecthood. Instead, the act of representing the Lady's body on stage is best described with the conjunction "and" — that is to say, rather than "subjecthood or objecthood" it is more productive to think about the "subjecthood *and* objecthood" (and thingness, too) of the body prop and body part prop. Scholars and practitioners must be aware, though: when interrogating the acts of violence that are accomplished by and with body props and enacting the process of rhetorically enlivening and un-enlivening them, some extra care must be taken as we risk objectifying the actors themselves and metaphorically breaking them down into parts meant to serve us. As above, performing can mean becoming as the actor comes to embody and represent the prop. This act, however unintentional, is just as violent as the actions which occur in the world of the play. Instead, we must work to ensure that the actor remains a stable subject throughout, even while the objecthood and thingness of the prop are coded onto their body through the rhetoric of the play text.

Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has been guided by the *Foundacion of Rhetorike*'s principle that words carry "greate force", extending this notion to think not just about "shew[ing] matter to be manifest", which I argued can be understood as the process of linguistically enlivening things, but about how words might be used to break people down into useable parts by un-enlivening them.³¹⁰ The act of verbally transforming bodies into objects is a dangerous and volatile one. When body and body part props are used as instruments of violence, those who use them must also contend with the prop's quasi-subjectivity and the efficacy it can exert. The body prop's agentic power is made visible through the pronouns used in reference to it, particularly third-person pronouns which vary between the feminine "she"/"her" and the neutral "it", and through the act of performance, where the prop affords and invites (and perhaps incites) certain actions and interactions on the part of the actors around it.

Through an examination of *The Revenger's Tragedy* and *The Lady's Tragedy*, I have worked to show that Middleton deliberately tries to make the audience see both subjecthood and objecthood simultaneously by manipulating the barrier between the two states so that the dead body and its discrete parts are at once the literal prop and the personified character, combined and distorted into an efficacious thing. The props are positioned in between multiple points — linguistically as both "she" and "it", ontologically as both subject and object (and yet neither — a thing), and materially as tangible items with complex histories and contexts on and off stage. After analyzing the ways this in-betweenness might be

³¹⁰ Rainolde, f. 33v.

represented textually, the same scenes were viewed in practice, to test how the violent distortion of subject and object might be made visible in the embodied act of performance. From my work on both plays, it is clear that shifting pronoun use does make a real impact, as workshop participants unconsciously adopted their own pronoun variation during discussion of the scenes and noted how the language used around a body prop could prompt further interactions or incidents of violence. I suggested that the word “and” seems key to our understanding of the multiple states of being body props can occupy (that is, subjecthood, objecthood, and thingness). Rather than viewing these individually, scholars and practitioners should follow Middleton’s lead, playing with the intersecting or overlapping moments and opportunities that such multiplicity affords. This is especially true in the case of *The Lady’s Tragedy*, where staging the final scene in a workshop setting brought to light the additional layer of subjectivity that comes with using a living actor’s body as a prop. Together, the two workshops again demonstrate the methodological value of analyzing language and action as richly interconnected elements of performance, as they reveal the violent potential of embodied rhetoric on the early modern stage.

Attention to pronoun use around bodies and their parts is a means of reframing scholarly discourse around Gloriana, Antonio’s wife, and the Lady, providing space to acknowledge not only the verbal and physical acts of violence these women have perpetrated on them, but also the linguistic residues that then linger on their bodies and allow them to be used as instruments of violence. ‘Thing theory’ is central to this work, as it offers the critical vocabulary needed to define the role and status of such quasi-objects and quasi-subjects. To be made into a thing is to have one’s very humanity reduced to nothing, a process triggered

rhetorically by the word “it”. In this way, this powerful two-letter word is an important component of the demonstrative vocabulary of *violent language*, as it works to enact a literal objectification on the female body. This kind of verbal violence, that is, the controlling and insidious act of un-enlivening, where words are played out as deeds on bodies, is a type of violence as worthy of consideration as the stabbings of *The Spanish Tragedy* or braining someone as the Husband does in *A Yorkshire Tragedy*. The final chapter of this thesis inverts this chapter’s work on female characters by examining how women attempt to use the demonstrative and descriptive vocabularies of *violent language* and *language about violence* themselves.

Chapter 3: Frustrated Feminine Violence

The 1599 English translation of Alexandre Pontaymeri's *Paradoxe apologique, où il est fidèlement démontré que la femme est beaucoup plus parfait que l'homme en toute action de vertu* [*A Womans Woorth*] sets out to defend womankind "against all the men in the world", declaring women "more perfect, excellent and absolute in all vertuous actions, than any man of what qualitie soever".³¹¹ In the dedicatory epistles, Anthony Gibson calls the text an "apologie of womens faire vertues", and addresses the work to "all the Honorable Ladies, and Gentlewomen of England".³¹² Women's best qualities, according to the pamphlet, are founded in "mildenes" — that is, the opposite of the "furies" which are so central to Pontaymeri's conception of masculinity.³¹³ This chapter takes as its starting point the gendered difference displayed in Pontaymeri's translated work, analyzing female characters from three plays across the Elizabethan and Stuart periods who push back against this notion of feminine mildness. Rather than adhering to the rigid expectation of meek humility idealized by male writers, the women I put into conversation in this chapter strive towards an overt expression of anger, the "fury" that Pontaymeri condemns, which I argue is the root of violent action.³¹⁴ The goal of this chapter, then, is to invert the male vocabulary of rhetorical violence that I proposed in Chapters One and Two; here, I argue that both the demonstrative *violent language* and the descriptive *language about*

³¹¹ Alexandre Pontaymeri, *A womans woorth, defended against all the men in the world Prooving them to be more perfect, excellent, and absolute in all vertuous actions, then any man of what qualitie soever. Written by one that hath heard much, seene much, but knowes a great deale more*, trans. by Anthony Gibson and Anthony Munday(?) (London, 1599), sig. A1r. STC (2nd ed.) 11831.

³¹² Pontaymeri, sig. A2r, A9r.

³¹³ Pontaymeri, sig. B2r.

³¹⁴ Pontaymeri, sig. B2r.

violence of these dramatic works are understood differently when used by men or women, and that women must make themselves less feminine (or, indeed, unfeminine) in order to access a similar register of verbal violence as men.

The previous chapters have shown that where men are allowed to enact the violent behaviors that they speak into existence, women's actions are frustrated (that is, prevented) and their words are left unembodied. Bel-Imperia must use Hieronimo's words to effect action in the playlet of *The Spanish Tragedy*; the Wife's pleas on behalf of her children in *A Yorkshire Tragedy* are ignored and she is beaten into submission; Gloriana escapes sexual violence only to have her dead body parts used to enact sexual revenge in *The Revenger's Tragedy*; and, in *The Lady's Tragedy*, the eponymous Lady's only means of protecting herself is to fall onto a sword, after which her body is violated anyway. This chapter builds on these dramatic precedents to explore gendered rhetoric about violence in two distinct ways: first, by examining female characters who actively attempt to seek revenge of their own accord and on their own behalf, in order to develop a vocabulary of female- and male-coded violence in language; and second, by placing male playwrights writing for the commercial stage alongside a female playwright writing for a private audience, and so interrogate a masculine and feminine conception of female-led violence.

This chapter takes examples from across three decades of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries to examine instances of female- and male-coded acts of linguistic violence. After using the Lady of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* as the entry point for my analysis of violent women, I turn to Tamora, the queen of the Goths in George Peele and William Shakespeare's 1589 play, *Titus Andronicus*, to establish an early and archetypal violent femme for the commercial stage.

Tamora's desire to commit acts of violence stems directly from her anger over a perceived wrong done to her; in this way, anger is situated as the root of violence itself, an emotion which prompts a violent response (whether verbal or physical) that manifests as action in male characters and speech in female characters. The association of anger with violent revenge is not original to Shakespeare, rather it stretches back to the classical period; Seneca, in his *De Ira*, wrote that anger "is wholly violent and has its being in an onrush of resentment, raging with a most inhuman lust for weapons, blood, and punishment, [...] eager for revenge though it may drag the avenger along with it".³¹⁵ In this way, Tamora participates in a well-established tradition of anger as the origin of violence, though she is prevented from acting on it. This portrayal of the vengeful, angry woman is then contrasted in the second portion of the chapter with Elizabeth Cary's *The Tragedy of Mariam*, written around 1605. The play, designated by critics as a so-called 'closet drama' — that is, non-commercial drama, whether published or unpublished, that was circulated among and read by a coterie of aristocratic peers — has long been read biographically, as scholars have tried to read the titular queen Mariam onto the English noblewoman who wrote her. Instead, I place *Mariam* in dialogue with commercial dramatic work and argue that Cary's representation of female anger is best read alongside her contemporary male counterparts. The final sections of the chapter return to commercial drama with John Ford's *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, written around 1629. Rather than focusing on

³¹⁵ Seneca, *Moral Essays, Volume I: De Ira*, trans. by John W. Basore, Loeb Classical Library 214 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1928), p. 107. See also the 1637 translation of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, that calls anger the "desire of revenge, joined with greefe for that He, or some of his, is, or seemes to be neglected [by] some particular, or individuall thing", Andrew Crook, *A briefe of the art of rhetorique Containing in substance all that Aristotle hath written in his three bookes of that subject, except onely what is not applicable to the English tongue*. (London: 1637), p. 69. STC (2nd edn.) 767.

Ford's incestuous sibling couple, my work centers on Hippolita, the scorned widow who plots her own revenge in response to a broken promise of marriage. As in previous chapters, my textual work on the grammar and language of these plays is augmented with practice-based work, including performance analysis, a public reading and accompanying discussion, and a virtual acting workshop, in order to explore the practical implications of my attention to rhetoric, grammar, and punctuation.

The portrayal of women's emotions seen on the early modern commercial stage is necessarily speculative because the playwrights putting these characters in front of a public audience are men — this work is a male imagining of female anger. While it is a well-documented fact that playwrights need not have experienced an event, place, idea, or emotion themselves in order to write about it, their understanding of the feminine experience comes largely from cultural knowledge or, potentially, personal observation.³¹⁶ This distinction is why it is so important to put these male-authored plays into dialogue with contemporary female-authored works, even if their plays would not have been performed side by side: what men write about women and what women write about women *will* look different.³¹⁷ In positioning male and female writers next to each other, this

³¹⁶ In one such example, David McInnis discusses the ways that "[e]arly modern playgoers [...] enjoyed being 'transported' about the universe 'in the imagination'" and the simulation of experience on the early modern stage in his book *Mind-Travelling and Voyage Drama in Early Modern England* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p. 2; see also Allison B. Kavey, 'Building Blocks: Imagination, Knowledge, and Passion in Agrippa von Nettesheim's *De Oculta Philosophia Libri Tres*', in *World-Building and the Early Modern Imagination*, ed. by Allison B. Kavey (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 35-58 (p. 44).

³¹⁷ I am mindful of the fact that, as Danielle Clarke warns readers, the "sex of the author is neither a reliable nor an authentic indication of [a] speaker's gender, and [that] this is as true for women's writing as for that by men" and so I follow Clarke's lead in analyzing "representations of women's speech by men" and women's "representations of their own speech"; Clarke, 'Introduction', in *This Double Voice: Gendered Writing in Early Modern England*, ed. by Danielle Clarke and Elizabeth Clarke (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 2000), 1-15 (p. 2).

chapter argues that not only do male and female characters talk about violence differently on the early modern stage, but also that they think about and represent violence differently as playwrights navigating that stage.

While linking developing ideas about female anger, vengeance, and violence in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, this chapter discusses the necessary de-feminization women must attempt in order to reach a form of anger which society reads as credible and acceptable.³¹⁸ They are not always successful, as women who deny their femininity and adopt behavioral and linguistic tropes that read as masculine or even simply anti-feminine are often viewed as a threat to patriarchal power structures. Another Shakespearean woman becomes the touchstone here. Before beginning my analysis of *Titus Andronicus*, *The Tragedy of Mariam*, and *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, I will establish *Macbeth's* Lady as a recognizable example of the explicit rejection of femininity and the desire for the violent capabilities gained by becoming less female. When Lady Macbeth receives word of the Weird Sisters' prophecy to her husband, she worries that Macbeth is "too full o'th' milk of human kindness" to enact the necessary violence that would bring him to the Scottish throne.³¹⁹ While "milk" here stands as the opposite to blood, it is difficult not to see the opposing liquids as an analogy for masculinity and femininity. Lady Macbeth then juxtaposes words and actions along the same male-female divide, as she expresses a desire to "pour my spirits in thine ear, / And chastise with the valour of my tongue / All that

³¹⁸ For more on credible representations of passions, see Paul Menzer, 'The Actor's Inhibition: Early Modern Acting and the Rhetoric of Restraint', *Renaissance Drama*, 35 (2006), 83-111 (particularly p. 87, 95).

³¹⁹ William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, ed. by Sandra Clark and Pamela Mason (London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2016), 1.5.17. I have used the Arden edition instead of the New Oxford Shakespeare in this instance because of the textual notes surrounding the Lady's speech in 1.5.

impedes thee" (1.5.26-28). While she cannot, as it stands, act for her husband, she can use words (which the Arden editors Sandra Clark and Pamela Mason gloss as women's "main weapon") to urge Macbeth to act.³²⁰ Yet as soon as the messenger gives Lady Macbeth the news of Duncan and Macbeth's arrival, she attempts to put aside her femininity in order to affect her husband's fate: "Come, you spirits / That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here" (1.5.40-41). Where Macbeth is full of "human kindness" (1.5.17), his Lady appeals to unhuman spirits to "fill [her] from the crown to the toe, top-full / Of direst cruelty" (1.5.42-43), and to "[s]top up th'access and passage to remorse" (1.5.44). Just as milk and blood were positioned as the opposing lifeforces of femininity and masculinity, so too "direst cruelty" (1.5.43) and "remorse" (1.5.44) signal an inherent contrast between gendered qualities or behaviors. For Lady Macbeth to invoke supernatural spirits and make these two specific requests (first "unsex me" [1.5.41] and then "fill me [...] full / Of direst cruelty" [1.5.42-43]) implies that cruelty is not a behavioral trope to which she currently has access — to be violent is to be un-feminine, to be remorseful, un-masculine.

The difficulty here is in maintaining the un-feminine. While Lady Macbeth rejects her womanhood (although she is not entirely successful as, two scenes later, her husband is sure that her "undaunted mettle should compose / Nothing but males" [1.7.74-75]), she also embraces behaviors and experiences that are uniquely feminine. She recognizes that it is precisely her femininity that can guide and manipulate Macbeth's actions as she voices another evocation that once more frames milk as a feminine lifeforce: "Come to my woman's breasts, / And take my

³²⁰ Clark and Mason, 1.5.27n.

milk for gall, you murdering ministers" (1.5.47-48). While she cannot act violently unless unsexed and un-feminine, she can only nurture violent action if she is recognizably sexed and un-masculine. Her femininity is crucial to her "fell purpose" (1.5.46). It is this tension between femininity and the un-feminine, and the desire to cling to or reject individual womanhood, which guides the following sections.

This chapter recontextualizes women's attempts to effect violence through their language by exposing the modes of verbal violence made available to women and the individual ways they manipulate or push back against those modes. The desire for violent action is stripped back to its most elemental form, anger, and so I argue that women's violent words necessarily sit in a different register than the words of the male protagonists of the previous chapters. In the first sections, I examine Tamora's use of male agents to achieve her goal of violence. I focus on both the very male quality of Tamora's anger, which stems from her public humiliation, and the innate femininity of the violence she encourages, which Shakespeare grounds in tropes of womanhood. In the second portion of the chapter, I suggest that Cary depicts what I have called the two vocabularies of violence (the demonstrative *violent language* and the descriptive *language about violence*) as two opposing and gendered responses to the angry passions which might "stirre up" a man or woman's mind.³²¹ Cary's women are more vocal about their violent desires, but even their reasonable anger is unable to find a physical outlet as they struggle against societal expectations of ideal femininity. In the final sections, I position Hippolita as one woman in a successive line of violent, angry

³²¹ John Florio, *A Worlde of Wordes, or Most Copious, and Exact Dictionarie in Italian and English* (London, 1598), sig. V3^v (p. 234). STC (2nd ed.) 11098.

women. I demonstrate that, through Hippolita, Ford plays with similar tropes of womanhood as Shakespeare, but takes this work further by suggesting that widows are perfectly placed to challenge the modes of acceptable anger set out by society. In the end, this chapter determines that gender is a crucial differentiating factor in a character's use of demonstrative *violent language* or descriptive *language about violence*, as it is through a gendered lens that men and women not only understand violence but also enact it.

I. *Titus Andronicus*

Almost a decade and a half before Lady Macbeth rejected her inherent femininity and called on the spirits to unsex her in order that she might access a more masculine strength of action, Shakespeare explored gendered rhetoric about violence through the opposing forces of Tamora and Titus in *Titus Andronicus*. Tamora represents Shakespeare's first sustained look at female anger, and the futile desire for violent action that stems from it. While a large portion of critical work on *Titus Andronicus* examines the rhetoric of revenge, these essays tend to focus their attention on Titus himself, his brother Marcus, the Roman emperor, Saturninus, and Aaron.³²² Those critics who do examine the female characters in the play are most concerned with Lavinia, and the words spoken for her by her

³²² These include Ronald Broude, 'Four Forms of Vengeance in "Titus Andronicus"', *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 78.4 (1979), 494-507; Clifford Chambers Huffman, "'Titus Andronicus': Metamorphosis and Renewal', *The Modern Language Review*, 67.4 (1972), 730-741; Peter M. Sacks, 'Where Words Prevail Not: Grief, Revenge, and Language in Kyd and Shakespeare', *ELH*, 49.3 (1982), 576-601; Molly Easo Smith, 'Spectacles of Torment in Titus Andronicus', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 36.2 (1996), 315-331; Albert H. Tricomi, 'The Aesthetics of Violence in Titus Andronicus', *Shakespeare Survey*, 27 (1974), 11-19; Eugene M. Waith, 'The Metamorphosis of Violence in Titus Andronicus', *Shakespeare Survey*, 10 (1957), 39-49; and William W. Weber, "'Worse Than Philomel": Violence, Revenge, and Meta-Allusion in Titus Andronicus', *Studies in Philology*, 112.4 (2015), 698-717.

male family members or written by her own broken body.³²³ They frame the body as a site of meaning, and point to the way Marcus, Titus, and Lucius interpret Lavinia's wounds, gathering meaning of their own from her tears, sighs, and signs. These critics conceive of language as not only verbal but nonverbal, and they use Lavinia as an example of alternative modes of communication. Fewer critics focus on Tamora, the queen of the Goths, and the power and agency displayed in her rhetoric. When Tamora is the subject of critical attention, this work centers on her role as a mother or the betrayal by Tamora of Lavinia as the failure by a woman to protect or look after other women.³²⁴ Such work frames Tamora and Lavinia as binary opposites: lusty versus chaste, attacker versus victim, the virgin/whore dichotomy in action.³²⁵ While undoubtedly valuable, this scholarship tends to ignore the similarities between the two women and the active role they both openly desire to play within the multiple revenge plots.

The following analysis of *Titus* challenges some earlier critical interpretations of Tamora as distracted by lust to argue instead that nearly every

³²³ Catherine Belsey, *The Subject of Tragedy: Identity and Difference in Renaissance Drama* (London & New York: Methuen & Co., 1985), p. 149; Karen Cunningham, "'Scars Can Witness': Trials by Ordeal and Lavinia's Body in *Titus Andronicus*", in *Women and Violence in Literature: An Essay Collection*, ed. by Katherine Anne Ackley (New York & London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1990), 139-162 (p. 149-150); Mary Laughlin Fawcett, 'Arms/Words/Tears: Language and the Body in *Titus Andronicus*', *ELH*, 50 (1983), 261-277; Douglas E. Green, 'Interpreting "Her Martyr'd Signs": Gender and Tragedy in *Titus Andronicus*', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 40.3 (1989), 317-326; Bilal Tawfiq Hamamra, 'Violence and Violation: A Palestinian reading of rape and revenge in Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*', *Psychodynamic Practice*, 26.3 (2020), 260-277; Bernice Harris, 'Sexuality as a Signifier for Power Relations: Using Lavinia, of Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*', *Criticism*, 38 (1996), 383-407; and Katherine Rowe, *Dead Hands: Fictions of Agency, Renaissance to Modern* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), p. 73.

³²⁴ Coppélia Kahn, 'The Daughter's Seduction in *Titus Andronicus*, or, Writing is the Best Revenge', in *Roman Shakespeare: Warriors, Wounds, and Women*, ed. by (London: Routledge, 1997), 46-76; Andreas Höfele, *Stage, Stake, and Scaffold: Humans and Animals in Shakespeare's Theatre* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 142-170; Kaara L. Peterson, *Popular Medicine, Hysterical Disease, and Social Controversy in Shakespeare's England* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2010), p. 122-131; Lauren J. Rogener, 'Womb Rhetoric: The Martial Maternity of Volumnia, Tamora, and Elizabeth I' in *The Palgrave Handbook of Shakespeare's Queens*, ed. by Kavita Mudan Finn and Valerie Schutte (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 127-144.

³²⁵ For more on the division of women into opposing archetypal categories and the virgin/whore dichotomy, see Virginia M. Allen, *The Femme Fatale: Erotic Icon* (Troy, NY: Whitston, 1983).

aspect of her identity (as a woman, a mother, and a lover) is guided by a desire for violent revenge. I suggest that Tamora's verbal violence is just as direct and brutal as that of the male characters in this play, but also show that women are restricted to the use of *language about violence* instead of *violent language* — that is, descriptive rhetoric that details violent action rather than demonstrative speech that pairs words and actions to prompt or cue violence. While Tamora's language is vicious — that is to say, deliberately cruel and violent —, she cannot enact her violent desires on her own (indeed, she is prevented from enacting them) and instead relies on male agents to bring her vengeful plans to fruition. Within the play's ongoing cycle of violence, Tamora weaponizes her femininity while also attempting to unsex herself through the use of masculine registers of speech in order to take action on her own behalf. In the greater context of the chapter, therefore, my discussion examines Tamora's rhetorical patterns alongside work on gender, the history of emotions, and the play in performance, and analyzes the empress' desire for and attempts at violent action through these lenses.

The audience first encounters Tamora as a victim of violence, brought on stage with her three sons "*as prisoners*" in a triumphal procession led by their Roman captors.³²⁶ Her rhetoric supports this image: she is a suppliant, "*kneeling*" (1.107sd) as she pleads for her son Alarbus' life. Having just seen the victorious Titus prepare to bury his own sons, lost in battle, Tamora appeals to him as a fellow parent, saying, "if thy sons were ever dear to thee, / O, think my son to be as dear to me!" (1.110-111). But though this eloquent and passionate speech

³²⁶ William Shakespeare and George Peele, 'Titus Andronicus', ed. by Gary Taylor, Terri Bourus, Rory Loughnane, Anna Pruitt, and Francis X. Connor, in *The New Oxford Shakespeare: Modern Critical Edition*, ed. by Gary Taylor, John Jowett, Terri Bourus, and Gabriel Egan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 1.72sd. It should be noted that Scene 1 is attributed to George Peele.

comes in response to the Andronicii's desire for a funerary sacrifice after war, Tamora frames this as a wrong done to her, not explicitly to her heir. She describes Alarbus only in reference to herself and he exists solely in relation to her: he is "her son" (1.109), her "first-born son" (1.123), her "dear son" (1.456). Because of this relational framing, her sense of the Andronicii's "cruel irreligious piety" (1.133) and her desire for vengeance comes not wholly from Lucius' promise to "hew [Alarbus'] limbs till they be clean consumed" (1.32) or particularly from his death, but from the fact that Titus has "let a queen / Kneel in the streets and beg for grace in vain" (1.457-468). For Tamora, this is an issue of humiliation and paves the way for her own acts of personal, retributive justice.

Such a public shaming as a source for anger and revenge would have been well understood in the early modern period. As part of her larger project on emotional excess, Bridget Escolme argues that anger should be read as a "socially constructed" force.³²⁷ Citing Daniel M. Gross' work on *The Secret History of Emotions*, Escolme explains that "[a]nger is a deeply social passion provoked by perceived, unjustified slights".³²⁸ That is, anger is built upon public perception, external to the self, and is a result of a perceived "losing face" in front of others.³²⁹ In the context of the early modern period, Escolme highlights the work of the French theologian and philosopher Nicolas Coeffeteau, who wrote that anger was

³²⁷ Bridget Escolme, *Emotional Excess on the Shakespearean Stage: Passion's Slaves* (London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2014), p. 13.

³²⁸ Daniel M. Gross, *The Secret History of Emotion: From Aristotle's 'Rhetoric' to Modern Brain Science* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), p. 1; cited in Escolme, p. 13-14.

³²⁹ The *OED* defines shame (noun) as the "painful emotion arising from the consciousness of something dishonouring, ridiculous, or indecorous in one's own conduct or circumstances", and the verb form, "[t]o feel or conceive shame; to become or be ashamed"; these feelings are usually "triggered by the sensation of being looked at", notes Lesel Dawson, "mak[ing] one feel that some fundamental aspect of the self has been exposed as deficient". "Shame, n.", *OED*, 1a.; "shame, v.", *OED*, 1a.; Lesel Dawson, 'Shame: A Lover's Complaint, Coriolanus, The Rape of Lucrece', in *Shakespeare and Emotion*, ed. by Katharine A. Craik (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 238-252 (p. 238).

at times understandable: if, for instance, someone's "inferiors fail to yield them the honour which they think is due unto them, they cannot endure this injury, but fall into rage; which makes them to seek all occasions to punish this contempt".³³⁰ Seneca, too, considers this a natural reaction to humiliation, saying, "no man is so humble and base, who cannot hope to see justice upon his greatest adversary: we have power enough to hurt".³³¹ Viewed in this context, anger like Tamora's should be understandable as her desire to "massacre them all, / And raze their faction and their family" (1.453-454) stems from a natural emotional response, but the male-centric source material means that women's anger is not so clear cut.

Despite this natural tendency toward anger by those who have been wronged, writers and thinkers like Coeffeteau and Seneca both conceive of anger as a thing to be controlled, rather than submitted to, viewing it, in Escolme's words, as "the most negative and excessive of the passions".³³² In Paul Menzer's examination of the passions as they are embodied on the early modern stage, he demonstrates that contemporary sources encourage restraint, as "[u]nrestrained, exposed passion is an embarrassment, the province of women, children, frauds, lunatics, and sinners".³³³ Key in both Escolme and Menzer's work is the idea that "emotional expression disrupts and exceeds authority [and] convention", that reacting with an excess of any emotion is somehow socially unacceptable,

³³⁰ Nicolas Coeffeteau, *A Table of the Human Passions*, trans. by Edward Grimeston (London, 1621), p. 569-570. STC (2nd ed.) 5473.

³³¹ Lucius Annaeus Seneca, *The workes of Lucius Annaeus Seneca, both morrall and naturall Containing, 1. His bookes of benefites. 2. His epistles. 3. His booke of providence. 4. Three bookes of anger. 5. Two bookes of clemencie. 6. His booke of a blessed life. 7. His booke of the tranquillitie of the minde. 8. His booke of the constancie of a wiseman. 9. His booke of the shortnesse of life. 10. Two bookes of consolation to Martia. 11. Three bookes of consolation to Helvia. 12. His booke of consolation to Polibius. 13. His seven bookes of naturall questions. Translated by Tho. Lodge, D. in Physicke*. (London, 1614), p. 512. STC (2nd ed.) 22213.

³³² Escolme, p. 15.

³³³ Menzer, p. 98.

especially for men of good public standing.³³⁴ Like the primary documents, Escolme focuses her examination of excessive anger on male characters, namely Coriolanus, and only references the choler of a female character — Katharina, from *The Taming of the Shrew* — in passing. In a counterpoint to Escolme's work, I focus on the anger of female characters, arguing that women's emotions, especially in excess, are depicted as less permissible than men's passions. Titus pays barely any mind to Tamora's desperate plea for Alarbus' life and later expresses absolute surety that he can "o'erreach [Tamora and her sons] in their own devices" (11.143). Her anger is framed as illegitimate, not only because it is not male, but also because for Tamora to act on her anger and "with a desire of vengeance", as she does after Alarbus' death, is for her to give in to the basest impulses of "brute beasts".³³⁵ This is reflected in the language of the play itself, as both Lavinia and her brother, Lucius, refer to Tamora as a "beastly creature" (3.182) and liken her to a "cursèd hell-hound" (11.144). These comparisons demonstrate that while anger is a natural emotion for men to feel and act on, it is not for women. Instead, Tamora's anger makes her unhuman, and as a result the Andronicii insist that she is "beastly" (12.198, printed as "beast-like" in the Folio) "and devoid of pity" (12.198).

The hardening of her heart (of which being "devoid of pity" is symptomatic) functions as further proof of the absolute and all-consuming nature of Tamora's anger. The English translation of René Descartes' *Les Passions de l'âme* [*The Passions of the Soule*], warns that this type of wrathful anger is more than just an excessive fit of emotion, but that it is "without compare, more violent than [the]

³³⁴ Escolme, p. xxviii.

³³⁵ Seneca, p. 512-513.

other three Passions, because the desire to repell things hurtfull, and be revenged, is most vehement of all”.³³⁶ This is a lasting and sustained feeling that “gnawes [...] on the heart”.³³⁷ This animalistic desire to “be revenged” is also reflected in Francis Bacon’s treatise *On Revenge*, where he calls such vengeance a “wild justice”, rough and outside the law.³³⁸ Both Descartes and Bacon are clear that while revenge is not a suitable course of action, wrongs must be righted and, indeed, it is healthy for both the individual and society. Anger must have an outlet or the “wildness” of violent revenge as a form of personal justice will take over. This prevailing belief — that wildness and violence were a result of all-consuming anger — should be taken into consideration when reading Tamora’s words and actions in *Titus Andronicus*, as it frames her anger as a guiding force that naturally prompts violent action as a kind of healing from perceived injustice.

Like Bacon and Descartes, Shakespeare, too, alludes to violence as a means of righting wrongs and healing hurts. When Tamora appears in scene 11, dressed as the personification of Revenge, she tells Titus that bringing destruction on his enemies will “ease” both “the gnawing vulture of thy mind” (11.31) and “thy angry heart” (11.119). Outside of the Roman world of the play, there exists a biblical precedent for this sentiment, too; in a treatise on spiritual health, the late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century theologian John Downname quotes Ecclesiastes, where “Solomon sayth that Anger is better than laughter, for by a sad countenance the hart is made better”.³³⁹ In other words, violence is the result of

³³⁶ René Descartes, *The passions of the soule in three books. The first, treating of the passions in generall, and occasionally of the whole nature of man. The second, of the number, and order of the passions, and the explication of the six primitive ones. The third, of particular passions.* By R. des Cartes. And translated out of French into English (London, 1650), p. 161. Wing (2nd ed.) D1134.

³³⁷ Descartes, p. 163.

³³⁸ Bacon, p. B5r.

³³⁹ John Downname, *Spiritual physicke to cure the diseases of the soule, arising from superfluitie of choller, prescribed out of Gods word Wherein the chollericke man may see the dangerousnesse of*

— and an outlet for — anger, as well as a byproduct of shame. But women's emotions are consistently downplayed in the printed literature on anger, revenge, and justice. Where violence can be an outlet for men's anger, women are not granted the same freedom to act on or ease their anger. Instead, as Marguerite Tassi notes, vengefulness was "thought to reflect women's naturally inferior state and moral weakness"; while women could possess a "dangerous Clytemnestra-like fury", this rage was actually a symptom of impotence and "harmless, groundless passions".³⁴⁰ In contrast, masculinity was linked with what Fiona Dunlop calls a powerful "readiness to resort to physical violence" — an expectation that played out in medieval and Tudor drama by giving male characteristics to anthropomorphized sins like wrath, and likely would have been part of the cultural context surrounding this passion for writers like Downname.³⁴¹

And yet, the volatile potential of anger is often actively gendered female in these early modern sources. Thomas Lodge's translation of Seneca, for instance, refers to anger with female pronouns, writing, "How farre better is it for thee that thou shouldest surmount **her**, then that **she** should be Mistresse of thee?"³⁴² This use of pronouns harkens back to the assumption that Tassi (among others) flags in these documents: that male domination and female submission were a natural and intrinsically gendered dynamic.³⁴³ Even with this small sample of work from

this disease of the soule unjust anger, the preservatives to keepe him from the infection thereof, and also fit medicines to restore him to health beeing already subject to this raging passion. Profitable for all to use, seeing all are patients in this disease of impatiencie (London, 1616), p. 13. STC (2nd ed.) 7147. William Whittingham's translation of the Bible records this verse as "Anger is better than laughter: for by a sad look the heart is made better", (*The Bible*, Ecclesiastes 7:5).

³⁴⁰ Marguerite A. Tassi, *Women and Revenge in Shakespeare: Gender, Genre, and Ethics* (Sellingrove: Susquehanna University Press, 2011), p. 51.

³⁴¹ Fiona S. Dunlop, *The Late Medieval Interlude: The Drama of Youth and Aristocratic Masculinity* (York: York Medieval Press, 2007), p. 87. Dunlop also points out that, in Henry Medwall's *Nature*, wrath "adopts the pseudonym Manhode" in order to join Man's retinue (p. 87).

³⁴² Seneca, p. 572, emphasis added.

³⁴³ See Tassi, p. 51.

Downname, Lodge, Seneca, Descartes, and Coeffeteau, two shared assumptions were commonly drawn: first, that a man will occasionally experience a lapse in self-control and feel anger, before restraining himself once more; and second, that women are incapable of the same restraint. Anger, an emotion that can spiral out of control into wildness, is framed in feminine terms — perhaps as a reminder to men of their higher-order capabilities of self-discipline and composure, and the divine command that a woman “shall be subject to thine husband, and he shall rule over thee”.³⁴⁴ Understanding the gendered connotations of emotions like anger in the early modern period can, I suggest, shed new light on Tamora’s violent actions in *Titus Andronicus*.

Persistent Femininity

Rather than mastering her anger, as Thomas Lodge prompts men to do in his quote above, Tamora leans into the feminized representation of it. She embraces her rage, saying, “I am Revenge” (11.3), and claiming violent retribution as a core part of her own identity. Indeed, in her study of female anger in early modern England, Gwynne Kennedy reflects upon the fact that women were “believed to get angry *more* often and *more* easily than men because of their physiological, intellectual, and moral inferiority to men”.³⁴⁵ Kennedy frames this as a self-fulfilling prophecy, where these “allegations of women’s inferiority to men” are the very thing that makes women so angry.³⁴⁶ In a way, then, Tamora is right: she is Revenge because her anger is female.

³⁴⁴ *The Bible*, Genesis 3:16.

³⁴⁵ Gwynne Kennedy, *Just Anger: Representing Women's Anger in Early Modern England* (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 2000), p. 3.

³⁴⁶ Kennedy, *Just Anger*, p. 22.

Kennedy uses responses to such allegations as an entry point into writing by women in the early modern period, where she sees a clear “condemn[ation of] misogyny and patriarchal practice” as women write authoritatively on their own feelings.³⁴⁷ What Kennedy spends less time on is the fact that the early modern understanding of gender and emotion is seemingly caught between two diametrically opposed points. On the one hand, for anger to fester and go unaddressed for so long that it develops the capacity to “[work] wreakful vengeance” (11.32) — for a person to have what Tamora calls an “angry heart” (11.119) — they must be female. Yet, paradoxically, it is also femininity that prevents the physical, rather than verbal, expression of anger. Women were, after all, thought of as the “weaker vessell, [meant] to obey, and not to rule”.³⁴⁸ This means that Tamora can never “surmount” her anger, as Lodge and Seneca instruct, but must exploit the “patriarchal practice” of the men around her by leaning into the tropes of motherhood, marriage, and romance, using these to enable male agents to act on and ease her anger for her.³⁴⁹

The two options available to a woman in a theatrical context, where female characters are sometimes treated with a bit of flexibility for the sake of narrative, are to either resort to gendered words that will spur violent revenge in others on her behalf or, like Macbeth’s Lady, unsex herself in an attempt to prompt action on her own. This simultaneous gendering and un-gendering is brought to the fore in scene 11, where Tamora appears as the embodiment of Revenge, accompanied by

³⁴⁷ Kennedy, *Just Anger*, p. 162.

³⁴⁸ Richard Boyle, *Counsel to the Husband: To the Wife Instruction. A short and pithy treatise of severall and joynt duties, belonging unto man and wife, as counsels to the one, and instructions to the other; for their more perfect happiness in this present life, and their eternall glorie in the life to come* (London: 1608), p. 50. STC (2nd ed.) 1069.

³⁴⁹ Seneca, p. 572; Kennedy, *Just Anger*, p. 162.

her sons, dressed as “Rapine and Murder” (11.62). In doing so, I argue that she actively attempts to shed her female identity, de-feminizing herself in order to become the physical representation of an abstract concept. But in having her sons join her, Tamora implies that their masculine identities should also be disguised, and all three of them appear as anthropomorphic representations of violent acts: named as Revenge, Rapine, and Murder, rather than addressed with gendered pronouns (“thy” [11.45], “thou” [11.46], “them” [11.47], “thee” [11.49], “they” [11.61], and “you” [11.83]). The conscious and deliberate un- and re-gendering of all three bodies in this scene, during which Tamora, Chiron, and Demetrius slip in and out of their distinctly female or male presentations of gender and make use of a genderless, conceptual identity (perhaps a deliberate attempt by Shakespeare to subvert the expectations an audience might bring with them from those Tudor plays that consciously gendered sins like wrath), is especially apparent in Lucy Bailey’s 2014 production of *Titus Andronicus* for Shakespeare’s Globe.³⁵⁰ When Tamora and her sons enter the stage space in their “strange and sad habiliment” (11.1), the viewer’s eye is drawn to the feminine garments (long purple shift dresses and tall, red platform shoes) worn by all three actors. Chiron and Demetrius are made un-male and effeminate by these costumes, which are paired with large and grotesque red masks decorated with elaborate beading. Viewed alongside their mother’s matching mask and dress, the three are presented as one unit, Revenge and her ministers, the enablers of “wild justice”.³⁵¹ By placing Tamora in the center of their three-person unit, Bailey’s staging quite literally

³⁵⁰ *Titus Andronicus* (Shakespeare’s Globe Theatre), dir. Lucy Bailey (2014).

³⁵¹ Bacon, p. B5r.

positions the queen as the figure holding power over acts of vengeance that are, visually, an extension of her body, even if she is not literally enacting them herself.

Tamora foregrounds the linguistic capacity of her role as Revenge early in this scene, saying that Titus should “[c]onfer with [her] of murder and of death” (11.34). This emphasis on language is reiterated four lines later, when Tamora promises that nothing can hide from her, “but I will find them out, / And in their ears tell them my dreadful name, / Revenge, which makes the foul offender quake” (11.38-40). There is no vengeance in action here, rather it is the word “revenge” itself and the thought of what form revenge might take that “makes the foul offender quake” (11.40); even without “taking vengeance” (11.63) directly, Tamora imagines herself as a formidable and dangerous entity. By taking the form of Revenge, she implies her control over the brutal action that stems from her anger and shame — “bloody murder or detested rape” (11.37) — enacted for her by other (male) agents. And so, it is not Revenge, but Rape and Murder who are able to “take vengeance” (11.63), enacting brutal revenge in the absence of civic justice. While Chiron and Demetrius embody the very crimes they committed on the Andronicii, they can promise to “deal with” (11.93) and “be revenged” (11.95) on “villain[s]” (11.94), their mother is restricted to “lay[ing] a complot” (11.147) and speaking violence to her enemies rather than physically carrying out the deeds herself.

However, by prompting Titus to “lesson” (11.110) her ministers, the instruments of Revenge, Tamora shows an awareness of her inability to access the physical experience of violent action; action must be taken by Rape and Murder *on behalf of* Revenge, instead of by Revenge herself. In the 2014 production, Titus exploited this inability to act by physically separating Tamora from her sons; as

he instructed Rape and Murder on how to find “murderer[s]” (11.100) and “ravisher[s]” (11.103) in “the wicked streets of Rome” (11.98), Titus led first Demetrius, then Chiron to the outer edges of the Globe’s stage, isolating Tamora as Revenge in the center and leaving her in an open and exposed position. This exposure was highlighted as Titus approached Tamora, sneaking up on her from behind and saying, “up and down [Tamora] doth resemble [Revenge]” (11.107); the delivery of this line was punctuated by Titus touching Tamora’s side, as if to stroke her torso and hip. This moment acted as a visual callback to the way that Tamora and her sons had separated Lavinia from Bassianus in scene 3, marking both women as vulnerable and defenseless. Despite Tamora’s obvious discomfort, as she leaned away from Titus’ touch and her mouth tightened visibly through the mask, Tamora continued to promise revenge for the Andronicii and to orchestrate the downfall of their enemies. This staging also illustrated the change in control in this scene — closing off Tamora from her sons signified a return to the power structure of the beginning of the play: man over woman, Roman over Goth. Standing alone in the center of the stage and being touched without her consent showed the fragility of Tamora’s power.

Again, because she is a woman, Tamora cannot do more than speak of her anger unless and until she successfully unsexes herself. But in choosing the abstract form of Revenge, Tamora ensures that her own plan to cast off her femininity will not work. In the classical tradition of Virgil (and before him, Homer), Revenge was one of three avenging deities gendered female — one of the Furies “that under earth take vengeance on men”.³⁵² Titus recognizes this when

³⁵² Homer, *Iliad: Volume II, Books 13-24*, trans. by A. T. Murray, revised by William F. Wyatt, Loeb Classical Library 171 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1925), p. 353.

he refers to Tamora's disguise as a "dread Fury" (11.82), as does Tamora when she declares she has been "sent from th'infernal kingdom [to work] wreakful vengeance on thy foes" (11.30, 32). But in taking on the visage of a female demon, Tamora reasserts her female identity, tying herself to the inhuman women who can accomplish what she wishes to, as some kind of aspirational manifestation of her vengeful desires. Because of this act of hubris, Titus is able to recognize the empress, saying in line 25, "I know thee well" (11.25) and calling her by name: "mighty Tamora" (11.26). Bailey's production leans into comedy here, making it exceedingly obvious that not only has Titus seen through all three disguises but also that Tamora has unwittingly given him the perfect opportunity to exact his own revenge. For this reason, Tamora's "strange and sad habiliment" (11.1) cannot be a successful act of un-gendering; in being recognized by Titus, Tamora's womanhood is not only visible but also named and affirmed.

In the context of the Globe's production, the un-gendering and re-gendering of disguise is rendered unbelievable from the moment that Tamora and her sons enter the stage space. As Chiron and Demetrius struggled to walk in their platform sandals without falling over, the audience laughed and joined in Titus' conspiratorial winks and his acknowledgment that he "knew them all, though they supposed me mad" (11.142). When Tamora gloried over Titus' supposed "lunacy" (11.70), the audience response made clear that they believed neither the disguise nor the madness in performance. Here, too, Tamora's gender and identity are reaffirmed: not only is it clear that she is a woman, but she is also an easily identifiable woman — the "proud empress, mighty Tamora" (11.26). Her position as wife to the emperor makes her recognizable and, in a stark contrast to the disguises used in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century comedies, reveals rather

than obscures. This revelation is an insurmountable hurdle that is visible on both page and stage but made most obvious in a performance setting. In its original performance context, Tamora's revealed femininity is complicated by the male actor's body, depicting the feminine while actually being the masculine; such layered representation is less of an issue in many modern performances (and, indeed, in Bailey's staging) because of the use of female actors. So, in the Globe's 2014 production as in the early modern text, the tangible and visible materiality of costume and embodied performance work together to illuminate the persistent femininity that Tamora carries with her and cannot cast aside.

Linguistic Femininity

Femininity also provides the framework for Tamora's violent rhetoric where her identity as a woman, specifically as a mother and a lover, explicitly shapes the language she uses for each of the men who act as agents of violence for her. This is particularly clear in scene 3 (the forest scene wherein the Goths begin to take revenge on the Andronicii), during which her use of different vocabularies or linguistic registers shifts based on who she is addressing. When Tamora enters the stage space, she verbally paints an idyllic scene which is at odds with her previous impassioned speeches. The Goth queen turned Roman empress celebrates the natural world as a place of sweet safety, pointing to the "birds [who] chant melody on every bush" (3.12), "the cheerful sun" (3.13), and the "sweet shade" (3.16) of the trees. It is her suggestion that Aaron "sit" (3.16) and that they should lay "wreathèd in [each] other's arms" (3.25) that critics have read as indicative of Tamora's controllable and dangerously feminine lust, and many interpret this scene as evidence of an unrestrained appetitive desire which

distracts Tamora from her goal of revenge.³⁵³ Aaron's speech in response is the basis for the majority of the critical work on Tamora's supposed single-mindedness, as he appears more immediately focused on the pursuit of revenge than Tamora, saying, "[m]adam, though Venus govern your desires, / Saturn is dominator over mine" (3.30-31). Notably, however, Venus was also the Roman goddess of victory, in addition to love and sexual desire, and Tamora's determination to enact absolute victory over the Andronicii marks her still, by Aaron's own admission, "[t]o villainy and vengeance consecrate" (1.617).³⁵⁴ While the "fatal-plotted scroll" (3.47) that sets part of their plan in motion is supplied by Aaron, it is Tamora who has "file[d their] engines with advice" (1.619) and drives this revenge plot, her lust not a distraction but a tool used to provoke revenge.

The amorous language she uses while alone with her lover confirms this, as she calls Aaron "lovely" (3.10) and "sweet" (3.51), charming him into acting on her behalf in exchange for "wanton" (1.518) pleasures. These words trade on Tamora's sexual appeal and point to an early modern anxiety outside the play text that is distinctly masculine: namely, the fear that women, with their changeable whims, might trick men into committing sinful acts that will lead them to "destruction".³⁵⁵ The pamphleteer Joseph Swetnam warned of just such deviance

³⁵³ Some examples include Gwynne Kennedy, 'Gender and the Pleasures of Revenge', in *Feminisms and Early Modern Texts: Essays for Phyllis Rackin*, ed. by Rebecca Anne Bach and Gwynne Kennedy (Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press, 2010), 152-171 (p. 164-165); Deborah Willis, "'The Gnawing Vulture': Revenge, Trauma Theory, and 'Titus Andronicus'", *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 53.1 (2002), 21-52 (p. 38-39); Lorna Hutson, 'Forensic Aspects of Renaissance Mimesis', *Representations*, 94.1 (2006), 80-109 (p. 97); and Sacks, p. 589.

³⁵⁴ For more on Venus as a goddess of victory in war (Venus Victrix), see Kamil Kopij, 'Opera Pompei and the Theology of Victory', *Studies in Ancient Art and Civilization*, ed. by Ewdoksia Papuci-Władyka (Krakow: Jagiellonian University Institute of Archaeology, 2010), 167-178 (p. 170); and J. R. Fears, 'The Theology of Victory at Rome: Approaches and Problems', *ANRW*, II.17.2 (1981), 736-826 (p. 801).

³⁵⁵ Joseph Swetnam, *The araignment of lewd, idle, froward, and unconstant women or the vanitie of them, choose you whether : with a commendation of wise, vertuous and honest women : pleasant for married men, profitable for young men, and hurtfull to none*. (London: 1615), p. 15. STC (2nd ed.) 23533.

in women, writing in 1615 that “women have a thousand waies to entise [men], and ten thousand waies to deceive the[m], and all such fooles as are sutors unto them: some they keepe in hand with promises, and some they feed with flattery”.³⁵⁶ Greene and Shakespeare’s *Tamora*, though written more than two decades earlier, fits Swetnam’s description of the deceptive woman as a vice-like creature, encouraging her lover to enact her revenge plot with the promise of sexual reward. Viewed alongside each other, Swetnam’s words and *Tamora*’s actions link sexual deviance and violence as parallel acts of transgression. As Janet Clare writes, “[r]evenge is ignited through crimes of passion”; so here, too, *Tamora*’s enticing words denote a linguistic register based on her identity as a lover that indicates both a sexual appetite and a thirst for violence.³⁵⁷ In effect, then, these texts point to a fear that lust and revenge are not mutually exclusive at all, while *Tamora*’s words and deeds evoke an even more intimate association between them.

Tamora is not the only female figure to draw a connection between love and vengeance, or love and the capacity to provoke violence and destruction. She uses classical allusions to draw an explicit parallel between herself and female models of vengeful anger, casting herself not only as a second Dido (3.22), a queen capable of both passionate love and creating her own kingdom in a new land, but also, later, as the goddess Diana (3.61-63), who sets Actaeon’s own dogs onto him as revenge for watching Diana bathe. These allusions establish a precedent of permissible female anger: Dido loves Aeneas fiercely and then destroys herself when he leaves Carthage; Diana’s privacy is violated and as punishment she

³⁵⁶ Swetnam, p. 15.

³⁵⁷ Janet Clare, *Revenge Tragedies of the Renaissance* (Horndon: Northcote House Publishers Ltd, 2006), p. 95.

watches while Actaeon's hounds rip him limb from limb. In these stories, anger turned to violent action is acceptable if it accompanies female loss: Dido loses love, Diana loses chastity, and Tamora loses a son. Shakespeare is also not the only early modern playwright to use classical figures as an entry point into a discussion of loss triggering female anger and revenge; William Gager, in his 1583 play, *Dido*, calls the vengeful queen of Carthage a "tigress" that "show[s her] rage" after Aeneas leaves her.³⁵⁸ As Aeneas' betrayal consumes her, Dido "wanders, out of her mind, groaning, shrieking, [and] raging" (5.1), gripped by "heavier passion" (epilogue). Her wrath is reported by a messenger at the beginning of Act 5, who notes Dido's "thundering in words" (5.1), that is, descriptive *language about violence*, before the queen falls on Aeneas' sword and dies. But unlike Tamora, Dido's destruction is enacted only on herself; she deliberately sends her maid away and commits a self-contained act of violence. Where Dido does not enact violence against her lover or the other Trojans, even at the height of her anger at Aeneas, Tamora's violent response to rage spirals outward and destroys outside of herself as she attempts to access the vocabulary of *violent language*.

These classical figures work to illuminate Tamora's self-fashioning of her own nature: she views herself as an authority figure (a queen, a goddess) and makes clear that she can be driven by both sexual desire and desire for revenge simultaneously. Bailey's production for the Globe signified this by having Aaron's talk of "[b]lood and revenge" (3.39) excite Tamora even further, the thought of "[v]engeance" (3.38) visibly arousing her as she and Aaron caressed each other as they lay on the stage floor. For Bailey's Tamora, violence was essential to her

³⁵⁸ William Gager, *Dido*, trans. by Elizabeth Sandis (Early Drama at Oxford, 2020), 5.2, <<http://edox.org.uk/dido>> [accessed 1 December 2020]. It should be noted that Gager's Latin play was performed in a university, rather than commercial, setting.

sexual behavior. Her dual desires are reaffirmed linguistically, as well: even while inviting Aaron to “sit down” (3.20) with her to enjoy a “golden slumber” (3.26), Tamora is aware of the “hounds and horns” (3.27) around them, and, like the goddess Diana, orchestrates with Aaron the “double hunt” (3.19) that will lead to the downfall of not only Bassianus and Lavinia, but Quintus and Martius, too. In this context, the forest transforms into a wild place, where the hunt is both the erotic soundtrack of Tamora’s encounter with Aaron and a source of “yelping noise” (3.20) and violent death — an association closely related to the courtly poetic tradition of hunting the hart as an allegory for sexual pursuit.³⁵⁹ As Bassianus and Lavinia enter the stage and turn Tamora’s earlier talk of “horns”(3.27) into an accusation of cuckoldry, using the Diana allusion to talk about Tamora’s extramarital affair with Aaron at Saturninus’ expense, so Tamora turns the classical metaphor back onto them. She takes ownership over this association with Diana, and the violent connotations that accompany it, reclaiming the role of goddess of the hunt as she prepares to undertake her own “general hunting in this forest” (3.59). Tamora inverts their metaphors, casting the forest as a dangerous space under female control and making it a domain in which she can sanction violence toward the enemies she meets there. No longer is Saturninus the “horned deer” (that is, a husband cuckolded by his wife’s “foul desire” [3.79]; instead, it is Bassianus and Lavinia’s “new-transformèd limbs” (3.64) that become food for Chiron and Demetrius as Actaeon’s hounds to “dine upon” (3.64).³⁶⁰

³⁵⁹ See Thomas Wyatt, ‘Whoso list to hunt’, in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature: The Sixteenth Century and Early Seventeenth Century*, ed. by Stephen Greenblatt, 10th edn. (New York & London: W. W. Norton & Co, 2018), p. 121; and William Shakespeare, ‘Venus and Adonis’, ed. by Francis X. Connor, in *The New Oxford Shakespeare: Modern Critical Edition*, ed. by Gary Taylor, John Jowett, Terri Bourus, and Gabriel Egan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

³⁶⁰ Taylor, Bourus, Loughnane, Pruitt, and Connor, p. 206n. This metaphor also builds upon Chiron, Demetrius, and Aaron’s figuration of Lavinia as a “dainty doe” who should be overcome

By the time Chiron and Demetrius enter the stage, the “sweet” (3.16) vale of Tamora and Aaron’s romantic liaison has all but disappeared. Bailey’s production emphasized the affected nature of the forest atmosphere by giving Tamora a smug aside after her “cross” (3.53) words with Bassianus, staged so as to remind the audience that this was a planned “quarrel” (3.54). As her sons entered, Tamora turned to the audience and confidently said, “[w]hy I have patience to endure all this”, following the Arden edition’s use of the quarto texts, rather than the *New Oxford*’s “[w]hy have I patience to endure all this?” (3.88) from the Folio.³⁶¹ This punctuation variant (and the order of the words) impacts the tone in which an actor will deliver this line and, in Bailey’s production, highlighted Tamora’s feigned helplessness, as Demetrius suggested she had a “pale and wan” (3.90) appearance that the audience knew was artificial. At her sons’ prompting, Tamora painted a verbal landscape of a “barren detested vale” (3.93). Instead of hearing “[t]he birds chant melody on every bush” (3.12), now the wood was filled with “a thousand hissing snakes, / Ten thousand swelling toads, [and] as many urchins,” who make “fearful and confused cries” (3.100-102). This imagining of the forest builds upon the violence of the Diana and Actaeon myth, with Tamora now framing herself as the hunted rather than the hunter, falsely claiming powerlessness against Bassianus and Lavinia’s “hellish tale” (3.105) and the supposed threat of a “miserable death” (3.108). Tamora’s defenselessness is meant to prompt her sons into action, casting them as the male protectors of a vulnerable woman via a linguistic register that is intensely feminine.

“by force, if not by words” (1.613-614). Willis also briefly touches on the continuous “metaphorical reduction of human to animal” in *Titus Andronicus*, p. 48.

³⁶¹ William Shakespeare, *Titus Andronicus*, revised edition, ed. by Jonathan Bate (London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2018), 2.2.88; see also the digitized editions of Folger Shakespeare Library’s 1594 Q1 (Folger STC 22328) and 1623 F (Folger STC 22273 Fo.1 no.68).

Linguistically, this means weaponizing her role as their mother, ending her litany of the Romans' offenses by saying,

And had you not by wondrous fortune come,
This vengeance on me had they executed.
Revenge it as you love your mother's life,
Or be ye not henceforward called my children (3.112-115).

The impetus for and expectation of revenge is, once more, found in female humiliation as Tamora commands her sons to take action in response to the "bitterest terms" (3.110) that Bassianus and Lavinia have spoken to her.

Tamora's words, then, manipulate tropes of feminine weakness by invoking helplessness but are at odds with the powerful women with whom she associated herself earlier. It is hard to imagine Queen Dido or the hunting goddess Diana defeated by even the "bitterest terms" (3.110) when both classical women are known as fierce leaders. In the same way Tamora's rhetoric shifts between powerless and powerful in such a manner that it becomes clear her vulnerabilities are pretended and she still holds control over the acts of violence committed in the forest space. A mere five lines after appealing to her sons for protection, she orders Chiron to "give [her] the poniard" (3.120), swearing that, beyond any action taken by her sons, "[y]our mother's hand shall right your mother's wrong" (3.121). But even as Tamora voices a desire to enact violence, she is prevented from committing those actions herself. Demetrius replies to his mother's command to "[g]ive me the poniard" (3.120) with "[s]tay, madam" (3.122) — an imperative command that verbally works to restrain her while signifying his physical movement to prevent her from actually taking hold of the weapon. Tamora's command to "give" (3.120) and Demetrius' response of "stay" (3.122) act as competing imperative statements, each line delivering a direct command to the

listener. Key to this moment, then, is the tense and mood of the verbs in the surrounding phrases; Tamora's order that her sons "[g]ive me the poniard" (3.120) is followed by the verb "shall" in her next line: "You **shall** know, my boys, / Your mother's hand **shall** right your mother's wrong" (3.120-121, emphasis added). Demetrius counters with "[s]tay, madam, here **is** more belongs to her" (3.122, emphasis added). Grammatically, "shall" promises future rather than present action, where "is" remains rooted in the present. In other words, the timing indicated by these verb tenses determines the strength of each imperative and Demetrius' statement takes precedence. Tamora cannot, therefore, effect real action with her imperative command as it is not grounded in the present moment; her words never move past the nascent potential for action of descriptive *language about violence* into the reality of action found in Demetrius' truly demonstrative *violent language*.

Despite the impossibility of action in Tamora's words, the moment remains open to interpretation both editorially and in performance. While the Arden editor chooses not to lead the reader to any firm conclusion, the *New Oxford Shakespeare* notes that Tamora "may speak this to either of her sons, and they may or may not comply".³⁶² In the Globe's 2014 performances, Tamora was nearly able to successfully commit this act of violence, as Bailey interpreted lines 120-121 as *violent language*, the verbal demonstration of a physical act. Here, Chiron handed his mother his dagger as soon as she demanded it, and she made to slit Lavinia's throat, only stopping when Demetrius yelled for her to "[s]tay" (3.122). "Stay" was interpreted as "stay your hand", embodying what the *OED* refers to as "a

³⁶² Taylor, Bourus, Loughnane, Pruitt, and Connor, p. 207n.

suspension of action” — that is, action temporarily halted, but which still holds the potential for completion.³⁶³ The sense of suspension in this scene was consistent with the rest of the production, which made an effort to infuse the play with a continuous potential for violence, often spilling over into an over-the-top enactment of that violence. The unrelenting nature of violence in this production became its hallmark; reviewer Lyn Gardner wrote that this *Titus*’ “savagery is always disturbing” while Nick Clark wrote that “more than 100 people either fainted or left the theatre after being overcome by [the] on-stage gore” and the grotesque violence of such a “terrible cycle of mutilation, rape and murder”.³⁶⁴ Demetrius’ command that his mother “[s]tay” (3.122) interrupts the cycle of violence momentarily, preventing female action but offering instead an even more gendered act of violence — Lavinia’s sexual assault.

Tamora’s agreement with her son’s horrifying suggestion moves her beyond the acceptable tropes of relatively self-contained female anger demonstrated by Diana or Dido. Instead of self-destructing or magically prompting another’s self-destruction, Tamora takes an active and vindictive role. Whereas her previous speeches centered on variants of the first-person pronoun “me” (including “I” and “my”), with ten usages between lines 91 and 115, Tamora’s grammar changes in the speeches immediately preceding Lavinia’s rape, grouping the empress and her sons as one consolidated unit. The most significant of these is the plural “we” to describe a shared desire for and ownership of violence. As

³⁶³ “Stay, n. 3”, *OED*, 1a. See also “stay, v. 1”, *OED*, 1.1.a.

³⁶⁴ Lyn Gardner, ‘Titus Andronicus review – Shakespeare’s bloodbath becomes a sadistic delight’, *The Guardian* (11 May 2014), <<https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2014/may/11/titus-andronicus-globe-review>> [accessed 4 December 2020]; Nick Clark, ‘Globe Theatre takes out 100 audience members with its gory Titus Andronicus’, *The Independent* (22 July 2014), <<https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/theatre-dance/news/globe-theatre-takes-out-100-audience-members-its-gory-titus-andronicus-9621763.html>> [accessed 4 December 2020].

Chiron and Demetrius tell their mother that Lavinia should not carry her “chastity” “unto her grave” (3.124, 127), Tamora agrees to let her “sweet sons” take “their fee” (3.179), saying, “when ye have the honey we desire, / Let not this wasp outlive us both to sting” (3.131-132). Tamora’s rhetoric suggests that she can take vicarious sexual satisfaction from her sons’ actions, even if she does not directly participate (and, indeed, leaves the stage during the act of assault itself), as the use of “we” implies the communal nature of this act of violence. “We” is also a textual variant, appearing only in the Quarto editions of the text and emended in the *New Oxford Shakespeare* to “ye”, after the Folio text.³⁶⁵ But “we” is consistent with Tamora’s use of communal “us” in line 132, and reads as a return to Tamora’s opening gambit at the beginning of this scene, when her lust for Aaron and lust for revenge run parallel.

If Tamora cannot hurt Lavinia herself, she can encourage her sons to do so, trading the bodily violence of the “poniard” (3.120) for the sexual violence of rape. Lavinia recognizes both this substitution and the group mentality that has entered Tamora’s vocabulary through the empress’ pronoun use, saying to Chiron and Demetrius,

O, do not learn her wrath! She taught it thee.
The milk thou suck’st from her did turn to marble;
Even at thy teat thou hadst thy tyranny.
Yet every mother breeds not sons alike (3.143-146).

Lavinia cites Tamora as the source of Chiron and Demetrius’ viciousness, calling to mind both Lady Macbeth’s use of “milk” as a means of nurturing “murdering ministers” (*Macbeth* 1.5.48) and the popular early modern belief that a mother’s

³⁶⁵ See the British Library Shakespeare in Quarto digitized manuscript images for the 1594 Q1 (Folger STC 22328), D3^r, 1600 Q2 (Edinburgh University Library De.5.111), D2^v, and 1611 Q3 (British Library C.34.k.60), D2^v.

“milk [has] great power and influence in imprinting certain behaviours and complexions in those who first drink them”.³⁶⁶ She attempts to break them from Tamora’s use of the collective “we” by reminding them that “every mother breeds not sons alike” (*Titus* 3.146). In response, Tamora turns this linguistic register of motherhood against the other woman, just as she did the Diana allusion, saying, “[r]emember, boys, I poured forth tears in vain / To save your brother from the sacrifice” (3.163-164) and telling them to “use her as you will — / The worse to her, the better loved of me” (3.166-167). Revenge becomes a measurement of filial love and duty, where Tamora as a mother not only “taught” her sons violence “at [her] teat” (3.143, 145) but can also expect acts of violence in return. She not only takes shared ownership of Lavinia’s assault (“the honey **we** desire” [3.131, emphasis added]) but also treats it as a sign of the “naturall care and loyalty” her sons owe to her.³⁶⁷

The use of these distinct linguistic registers (lover, mother, woman) establishes Tamora as an example of how female words can be weaponized, exploiting male agents so that they take revenge on an angry woman’s behalf. But while the language surrounding Tamora’s anger uses female-specific tropes — those of familial loyalty, of the revenging Diana, and of a lover’s devotion — the source of her anger itself reads very similarly to what writers contemporary to Shakespeare suggest is a rather masculine type of anger. Shame is, for these writers, an understandable (and even reasonable) catalyst for anger, but their

³⁶⁶ Laurent Joubert, *Popular Errors* (1579), trans. by Gregory de Rocher (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1989), p. 193.

³⁶⁷ Anonymous, *An ould ship called an exhortation to continue all subjects in their due obedience, or the reward of a faithfull subject to his prince. To the bishops and clergy. To the true nobility. To the civil magistrate. To the true and faithfull subject. What a faithfull subject is? The discription of loyalty. New riged by a well-wisher, to his prince and countrie, never more need to be set forth to sea, then in these distracted times.* (London: 1648), p. 6. Wing (2nd ed.) O216.

discussions of shame do not include women. Where shame is reflected outward for men, stemming from a public loss of face that in turn leads to an expectation of revenge, work from writers like Downname, Lodge, and Coeffeteau considers women's shame as a thing that should be private and inward-facing — not to be acted upon but internalized. As a result, women's anger (that is, a manifestation and externalization of shame) is framed as irrational, without grounds, and, so, illegitimate. No matter how Tamora attempts to rhetorically legitimize her rage in the tradition of destructive classical women, she is limited in her ability to act on that anger.

Tamora, therefore, provides a useful baseline for thinking about three things: violent, angry women; the modes through which they can express these emotions; and the avenues of action available to them in an early modern society. Gender is key here; as I have demonstrated in these sections, Tamora both manipulates and rejects the feminine tropes with which women must engage. I have argued that female characters exploit the societal expectations visible in the pamphlet literature of the period, that is, that women are categorically weaker than men, with unstable and unregulated passions; by playing into these expectations, these female characters are able to persuade men to act for them, as Tamora does when she feigns helplessness in the forest. As shown through my analysis of The Globe's production of *Titus Andronicus*, this exploitation is made clear in performance, where Tamora is initially sexually aroused by the thought of the vengeance Aaron can enact for her and then deliberately pretends to be vulnerable to justify protective, "defensive" violence by her sons on their mother's behalf. But even while giving Tamora some freedom of expression and the linguistic ability to compel men into action, Shakespeare ultimately reinforces the

notion that women can only access descriptive *language about violence* and not the demonstrative *violent language* that can be tied to action. This is especially clear when Tamora demands a poniard (3.120), her moment of near action taken from her by the more active language used by her son. In order to act, Tamora attempts to undertake and fails to successfully assume the necessary defeminization that women must undergo, where real vengeful acts are only an option if a female character can fully unsex herself. As my analysis of the first play in this chapter suggests, the two vocabularies of violence are not so easily inverted; instead, I have established a tension between saying and doing which playwrights can exploit. This tension is undeniably shaped by gendered tropes of behavior and language, which I argue scholars must take into account if they hope to fully examine early modern staged violence in its broadest sense.

II. *The Tragedy of Mariam*

Having established Greene and Shakespeare's Tamora as a dramatic precedent for female anger as depicted by male playwrights, I turn now to Elizabeth Cary's *The Tragedy of Mariam* (c. 1605) and its contrasting representation of feminine emotion and its expression. My consideration of Cary's play covers legitimate and illegitimate anger (labelled in early modern works like Downname's *Spiritual physicke to cure the diseases of the soule* as "just" and "unjust"). In what follows, I suggest that because of the lack of attention given over to female experiences in these contemporary literary sources, the gender of the playwright writing about women's anger should be a crucial consideration. In this female-authored play, as with the male-authored plays examined in this thesis, conflict and violence are foregrounded as major concerns, with the paratextual

Argument detailing King Herod's execution of his wife Mariam's brother and grandfather, "under the colour of sport".³⁶⁸ But while *Mariam*, referred to by critics as a 'closet drama', includes the deaths of five of its characters (including the eponymous queen), and is shaped by the deaths of two more before the play even begins, none of these occur on stage. Instead, following the Senecan conventions usually observed by this genre, Cary moves this violent action into the offstage space, and her readers rely on other characters for a reported narrative of these events. In the next few pages, I explore the implications of Cary's dramaturgy before moving into an analysis of her use of the descriptive vocabulary of *language about violence*.

My word choice here, 'readers', points to another distinction between *Mariam* and the commercial plays analyzed in this chapter (and indeed, throughout the rest of this thesis); as a closet drama, defined by Marta Straznicky as "a play that was either never intended for performance or never performed", *Mariam* is part of a group of plays that critics have long thought were likely "read aloud as one of the pastimes of an aristocratic circle".³⁶⁹ This critical assumption has led to a tendency to ignore the theatrical possibilities of these texts, many of which (including *Mariam*) show great sensitivity to staging practices and dramatic convention, including but not limited to entrances and exits, stage directions, act and scene divisions, and dramatic techniques like stichomythia, despite the lack of extant production records. Its absence from public stage records in the early modern period does not mean, as Alison Findlay, Stephanie Hodgson-Wright, and

³⁶⁸ Elizabeth Cary, *The Tragedy of Mariam*, ed. by Ramona Wray (London: Methuen Drama, 2012), *Argument*, 12.

³⁶⁹ Marta Straznicky, 'Closet drama', in *A Companion to Renaissance Drama*, ed. by Arthur F. Kinney (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 416; Ramona Wray, 'Introduction', *The Tragedy of Mariam*, ed. by Ramona Wray (London: Methuen Drama, 2012), p. 54.

Gweno Williams also point out, that *Mariam* is somehow “unperformable”, but that scholars must be especially mindful of the play’s relationship in print to both a private and public audience of readers, whether they were actor-readers of the aristocratic sphere or commercial readers buying the text in print.³⁷⁰ Indeed, as Harry Newman has argued, printed forms of drama “should not be seen as non-theatrical and non-performative, but rather as offering readers new ways of engaging with performance and theatrical culture”.³⁷¹ In other words, as Holger Syme also writes, drama in print offers “an alternative mode of theatricality” to its reading audience.³⁷² For the purposes of this chapter, then, I treat *Mariam* as a dramatic piece, using the word ‘audience’ to indicate both a theatrical and a reading audience, and referring to the onstage and offstage areas of a physical theatre space.

Closet dramas, as a general rule, draw from neoclassical influences and traditions, particularly in their Senecan rhetorical style. They rely on historical source material (Cary uses Josephus’ *Antiquities of the Jews*, as translated and published by Thomas Lodge in 1602) and subscribe closely to the three unities of time, place, and action as set out by Aristotle.³⁷³ The Senecan influence on these plays was further characterized by long, oratorical speeches, and “messengers whose reports substitute for enactments of the events they describe”.³⁷⁴ In *Mariam*, these narrative reports take the form of Choral interventions between

³⁷⁰ Alison Findlay and Stephanie Hodgson-Wright, with Gweno Williams, *Women and Dramatic Production 1550-1700* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 3.

³⁷¹ Newman, p. 90.

³⁷² Holger Syme, ‘Unediting the Margin: Jonson, Marston, and the Theatrical Page’, *English Literary Renaissance*, 38.1 (2008), 142-171 (p. 144).

³⁷³ The Aristotelian Unities instruct that a dramatic work should take place within a single day, in only one location, with all attention focused on the main action rather than on subplots. See Chris Baldick, ‘The Unities’, in *The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*, <<http://www.oxfordreference.com/>> [accessed 19 June 2018].

³⁷⁴ Wray, p. 54; see also, Baldick, ‘Senecan Tragedy’, in *The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*.

scenes and the messenger brought on to relate the queen's death at the end of the play. In confining Mariam's death to the offstage space, Cary follows the formula established by Seneca and utilized by the late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century aristocratic closet dramatists like Lady Mary Sidney, Samuel Daniel, and Fulke Greville.³⁷⁵ But following generic tropes does not make *The Tragedy of Mariam* any less violent a text. Rather, the closet drama framework lets Cary foreground violence differently than the male-authored commercial works I have examined up to this point. Anger still permeates the entirety of this play text, as Tamora's anger did in *Titus Andronicus*, yet the resulting acts of violence occur where readers or audience members cannot view it. Instead, the characters attack each other verbally, rather than physically, and acts of aggression are depicted rhetorically. In this way, Cary's work sits solidly within the second vocabulary of violence I proposed in Chapter One, that is, the descriptive *language about violence*, which reports violence after it has already occurred or promises future violence yet to occur. For Cary, women have violence done to them but cannot do it themselves. They are the receptacles of male violence, stemming from male anger, while women's anger is not afforded a physical outlet. By focusing on the linguistic representation and description of the violent act, I argue that Cary highlights women's inability to commit such acts themselves, positioning the descriptive, wished-for talk of violence as the only real conduit for their emotions that women can access.

³⁷⁵ For more on *The Tragedy of Mariam*'s place in the canon of Senecan closet drama, see Nancy Cotton Pearse, 'Elizabeth Cary, Renaissance Playwright', *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 18.4 (1977), 601-608; and Laurie J. Shannon, 'The Tragedie of Mariam: Cary's Critique of the Terms of Founding Social Discourses', *English Literary Renaissance*, 24.1 (1994), 135-153. It should be noted, too, that, when unperformed, plays need not consider the practicalities of onstage death, such as playing dead or the removal of a body (see also p. 152 of this thesis).

As a descriptive vocabulary, Cary uses *language about violence* to detail offstage deaths in such a way that it becomes *ekphrastic* — that is, vividly expressive, a kind of “verbal pictorialism” that represents actuality.³⁷⁶ By reporting moments like the queen’s death rather than showing them to the audience, Cary can evoke the image of execution without needing to stage the scene. Instead, she stages Herod’s emotional response to Mariam’s death, a response prompted by the Nuntio’s rhetorical exercise. In doing so, she builds on the medieval dramatic and exegetical traditions of Herod as an exemplar of volatile passions, particularly rage. Harkening back to the eleventh century, French dramatic works depicted Herod as a man defined by his “pomposity, impetuosity and violence”, while twelfth-century writers “emphasize the violence of [Herod’s] nature”.³⁷⁷ The English York Cycle, too, portrayed Herod as a linguistically and acoustically chaotic tyrant. J. B. Reese argued that the “tumultuous [...] alliterative verse” assigned to Herod was a powerful poetic device that signaled the key characteristics associated with the Herod role, namely rage, violence, and madness.³⁷⁸ Similarly, as Clare Wright has written, the Chester mystery cycle requires their Herod to “throw and catch a sword, the symbol of his confrontational nature, which he then breaks in a fit of rage”.³⁷⁹ Drawing on these

³⁷⁶ Claire Preston, ‘Ekphrasis: painting in words’, in *Renaissance Figures of Speech*, ed. by Sylvia Adamson, Gavin Alexander, and Katrin Ettenhuber (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 115-129 (p. 117); Aristotle, *The Art of Rhetoric*, trans. by J. H. Freese, for the Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1926), p. 407; see also Leonard Barkan, ‘Making Pictures Speak: Renaissance Art, Elizabethan Literature, Modern Scholarship’, *Renaissance Quarterly*, 48.2 (1995), 326-351 (p. 335, 342-3).

³⁷⁷ David Staines, ‘To Out-Herod Herod: The Development of a Dramatic Character’, *Comparative Drama*, 10.1 (1976), 29-53 (p. 33, 34).

³⁷⁸ J. B. Reese, ‘Alliterative Verse in the York Cycle’, *Studies in Philology*, 48 (1951), 639-668 (p. 668); see also Lynn Forest-Hill, *Transgressive Language in Medieval English Drama: Signs of Challenge and Change* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 26-29.

³⁷⁹ Clare Wright, ‘Acoustic Tyranny: Metre, Alliteration and Voice in Christ before Herod’, *Medieval English Theatre*, 34 (2012), 3-29 (p. 5).

traditions, Cary illustrates the performative and affective reaction to violence rather than the performance of violence itself.

But worryingly, Cary's Herod also makes it clear that one can be moved to act by the extreme emotions one feels. Indeed, Bridget Escolme notes the relationship between passion and emotion, writing that "[i]n 1602 [when Lodge's translation of Josephus was published in English], passions *are* movements, disturbances, perturbations of the mind".³⁸⁰ Katharine Craik, too, writes that, in the 1590s, emotions were "often described as *motions*[,] impulses that aroused the mind, body and soul" and quotes John Florio's 1598 dictionary, which described 'emotion' (and its Latin root *movere*) both as "'a passion of mans minde' [and,] more generally, the impulse to 'stirre up ... to trouble, to disturbe'".³⁸¹ Read together, these sources demonstrate that the emotions Cary's characters profess to experience are more than just abstract feelings occurring in their heads or hearts, but possibilities for action. In other words, emotions make things happen. As Tamora's desire for revenge stemmed from her shame and anger, so too does Mariam's execution stem from Herod's "jealousy" (*Argument*, 47) and "violent affection" (*Argument*, 18). Mariam, too, experiences "vehement hate" (*Argument*, 46), but, unlike Tamora, she never attempts to unsex herself nor does she act on the emotions that move her. Mariam and the other women in this play exhibit a stable form of femininity, neither unsexing themselves, as Tamora tries to, nor being cast as the threatening anti-feminine force that Hippolita will be in *'Tis Pity*

³⁸⁰ Escolme, p. xx.

³⁸¹ Katharine A. Craik, 'Introduction', in *Shakespeare and Emotion*, ed. by Katharine A. Craik (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 1-16 (p. 1, 16), quoting John Florio, sig. V3^v (p. 234). See also John Leech, *Certaine grammar questions for the exercise of young schollers in the learning of the Accidence* (London: 1590), which conflates the "motions or passions of the minde" (sig. J1r). STC (2nd ed.) 15374.2.

She's a Whore. Instead, I argue that Cary depicts what I have outlined as two vocabularies of violence as two opposing and gendered responses to the passions which might “stirre up” the mind.³⁸² Where men respond to extreme emotions by taking demonstrative action (found in *violent language*), women reflect on their (equally passionate) emotional turmoil with descriptive argumentation and invectives (*language about violence*). Here, I examine the violent, emotional rhetoric of Cary’s play and show the interplay between language, violence, and performance in cases where action is either not an option or restricted to the spaces offstage.

The play’s Argument introduces both King Herod and Queen Mariam as individuals driven by their strong emotions. The reader learns that Herod has been summoned to Rome, to give answer to Caesar for the deaths of Mariam’s brother and grandfather, and in a fit of “violent affection” (*Argument*, 18) ordered that “if he were slain, [Mariam] should be put to death” (*Argument*, 19-20). The queen discovers her husband’s plot and on his return to Jerusalem “fell to upbraiding him” (*Argument*, 40) — that is, verbally attacking him — for the deaths of her male family members and his willingness to have her killed as well.³⁸³ Cary paints Mariam’s anger as “vehement hate” (*Argument*, 46), to which Herod responds “with jealousy” (*Argument*, 47) and orders her execution. Cary’s summary ends thusly: “[this] rashness was afterward punished in him with intolerable and almost frantic passion for her death” (*Argument*, 50-52). By calling attention to Herod’s “frantic passion”, Cary notes that such strength of feeling or

³⁸² Craik, p. 16; Florio, p. 234.

³⁸³ See *OED*, “upbraid, v.” 2a: “To reproach, reprove, censure (a person, etc.).”

emotion is not solely the remit of women while also framing Herod's distress as a direct result of rashly emotional and violent action.

The audience's introduction to Mariam herself is marked by even more emotionally grounded language than appears in the Argument. In the first scene of the play, Mariam speaks of her feelings of "rage and scorn" (1.1.19) against her husband and asserts that "[h]ate hid his true affections from [her] sight" (1.1.21). Her hatred quickly develops into a preoccupying desire for her husband's rumored execution to be true: as she references her dual feelings of "grief and joy" (1.1.10), she begins to fixate on a vocabulary of "death" (which appears nine times in Act 1, scene 1), "slaughter" (1.1.12), "doom" (1.1.40), and "murder" (1.1.45). These words do not imply a peaceful end, rather they mirror the unnatural deaths of the ruling male figures in Mariam's life. By verbally connecting Herod to this semantic register of untimely death and execution shared by her brother and grandfather, Mariam seeks to enact a kind of verbal revenge on her husband, calling down the same violent death on him as he sought for them. The word "wish" appears as a repetitive device in this first scene, the subjunctive construction indicating Mariam's awareness of her inability to act on her desire for Herod's death. Her lines here, "[o]ft have I wished that I from him were free; / Oft have I wished that he might lose him breath; / Oft have I wished his carcass dead to see" (1.1.16-18), are abstractly violent — that is, not literal and constructed grammatically as a desired past event. They demonstrate the limit of female power and so her anger manifests in the verbal, passively voiced assault that is accessible to her as a woman.

Mariam's words are reactive, a direct result of and response to male action, but beyond this outrage in soliloquy, she and the other female characters tend not

to target their husbands. In a play text where men are so often absent (Herod is evoked continually in Acts 1 and 3 but does not appear on stage until the beginning of Act 4), female anger is rarely able to seek redress from a patriarchal figurehead. The men are seldom there to see or hear it. Instead, Mariam, Alexandra, Salome, and Doris aim their “furnish words” (1.3.23) — that is, “hot-tempered [or] irascible” words — at each other, rather than at the real (male) sources of their rage.³⁸⁴ This displacement of anger, also known as lateral or horizontal violence, here takes the form of taunts, scorn, and loud railing (5.1.36) directed at the other women around them as they effectively transfer their anger onto the symbol of wrongdoing rather than the doer of those wrongs.³⁸⁵ Lateral violence has recently enjoyed renewed attention in scientific literature discussing nursing and critical care but can be helpfully applied to dramatic work like *The Tragedy of Mariam*. The critical care profession’s definition of lateral violence, its symptoms, and its enactment provides a lens through which to analyze the verbal violence that the female characters in *Mariam* direct at each other while they are “[u]nable to effectively retaliate against their own oppressors”.³⁸⁶ Behaviors such as verbal abuse, bullying, and “hostil[ity] or aggressi[on]”, including “insults, ridicule; patronizing, or condescending language” and “threats” (or, more broadly, the irascible language used by the *Mariam* characters), are interpreted as toxic and misguided attempts to “release built-up anger [and] frustration” at those in authority over them.³⁸⁷ Mariam, Salome, and Doris exhibit these and similar

³⁸⁴ “Furnish, adj.,” *OED*, 4.

³⁸⁵ Grif Alspach, ‘Lateral hostility between critical care nurses’, *Critical Care Nurse*, 28.2 (2008), 13-19 (p. 13).

³⁸⁶ Grif Alspach, ‘Critical Care Nurses as Coworkers: Are Our Interactions Nice or Nasty?’, *Critical Care Nurse*, 27.3 (2007), 10-14 (p. 12).

³⁸⁷ Alspach, *Nice or Nasty*, p. 12, 13.

behaviors as they redirect their anger at their husbands onto the women they view as their social inferiors, behaviors which reinforce “furnish words” (1.3.23) as a type of violence used by those who cannot take action against their superiors.

Contemporary (male) pamphlet writers also recognize the inherent violence of “hate so deep” (1.6.44) and angry, “upbraiding” (*Argument*, 40) words. The preacher William Gouge instructed married women to practice mildness, both “by gesture, so by speech also [...] both in her husbands presence, and also in his absence”.³⁸⁸ If a woman is not mild and soft spoken, Gouge warns, she runs the risk of becoming “waspysh and shrewish”, which the minister frames as the

[condemnable] disposition of many wives to their husbands, who care not how hastily and unadvisedly they speake to them, like Ra[c]hel; nor how angerly and chidingly, like Jezabel; nor how disdainfully and spitefully, like Zipporah; nor how scoffingly, and frumpingly, like Michal; nor how reproachfully and disgracefully, like Jobs wife. [...] The very object whereupon many wives usually spit out their venomous words, is their husband; [...] Let wives therefore learne first to moderate their passion, and then to keepe in their tongues with bit and bridle[.]³⁸⁹

Such women, Gouge makes clear, must be brought forcibly back under their husbands’ control — his final lines quoted above are a reference to the scold’s bridle, an instrument of corporal punishment made up of a metal bridle and gag that was locked around women’s heads if they were deemed to speak too shrewishly or were unruly.³⁹⁰ In this context, it is understandable that Mariam’s opening speech begins with an apology for her tendency to speak “with public voice” (1.1.1), calling it “too rash a judgment in a woman” (1.1.6). Mariam’s

³⁸⁸ William Gouge, *Of Domesticall Duties eight treatises* (London: 1622), p. 281. STC (2nd ed.) 12119.

³⁸⁹ Gouge, p. 285.

³⁹⁰ Lynda E. Boose, ‘Scolding Brides and Bridling Scolds: Taming the Woman’s Unruly Member’, *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 42.2 (1991), 179-213 (p. 205).

acknowledgment of her “public voice” (1.1.1) is also indicative of her public role as queen, a title that would grant her greater freedom of speech than most women of lower status.³⁹¹ Yet neither her apology nor the lingering threat of male condemnation and punishment prevents her from continuing to pronounce her “rage and scorn” (1.1.19) or referring to herself later in the scene as “[h]ard-hearted Mariam” (1.1.63). Female characters like Mariam are caught in a double bind: their angry words are deemed inappropriate and worthy of punishment, but those same words are the only outlet they have through which to describe their emotions or articulate sometimes violent desires toward the husbands to whom women are required to quietly submit.

Male anger was both more permissible and more active. In his treatise on marriage, Gouge reminds husbands to rule their households “with meeknesse” and not “in anger give [their wives] evill language”, yet he concedes men should have permission to reprove an unruly wife “upon urgent and necessary occasion” and enact “just punishment” on her.³⁹² Male anger, therefore, has an accepted and socially legitimate space to occupy, where women’s rage does not. This cultural mandate for punishment by husbands or communities on “contrary wives” and angry women is reflected in the brutal, hunting-based language which Cary writes for her male characters, echoing the type of rhetoric used in the English sonnets of Philip Sidney, Thomas Wyatt, or Mary Wroth.³⁹³ When men finally appear in *Mariam*, they talk of women as “precious prey” (1.5.4) and “rare creature[s]” (1.5.31), casting them as animals to be pursued and caught, in the style of *Whoso*

³⁹¹ Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks, *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) p. 309, 314-316.

³⁹² Gouge, p. 372-373, 383, 412. Unruliness as a distinctly female quality is discussed later in this chapter, p. 230.

³⁹³ Gouge, p. 285 (n. 1760).

List to Hunt.³⁹⁴ These animalistic hunting metaphors hinge on dominance: women who do not surrender to the societal expectations of mild behavior and voice are framed as non-human (as Tamora becomes a “beastly creature” [*Titus* 3.182]), biting back when they should be tame. Women who are appropriately meek and feminine become those noble beasts that provide pleasure in their submission.

In this context, women’s bodies are meant to be dominated and enjoyed — or, in Linda Grant’s words, “ruled, mastered, and domesticated by men” — the violence of the hunting metaphor transforming into the violence of male erotic desire.³⁹⁵ In *Mariam*, in turn, men function under the belief that bodies are meant to have violence enacted on them. The wildness of the female characters (Mariam’s “public voice” [1.1.1], Salome’s “private conference[s]” [1.6.3] with men who are not her husband, Doris’ vehement cursing [2.3]) justifies, in the style of the Petrarchan love sonnet, what Grant calls men’s “intended taming and domesticating” of women via a violent form of “ritualised obedience”.³⁹⁶ Even an innocent act like blushing is framed, when men discuss it, as a violent event where “blood / Bedash[es] my proper brow” (1.5.18-19), “injur[ing] or spoil[ing]” one’s facial features.³⁹⁷ This violent imagining of the body hinges on the expectation that the body is an object onto which violent acts are written or inscribed; women’s

³⁹⁴ Thomas Wyatt, ‘Whoso list to hunt’, in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature: The Sixteenth Century and Early Seventeenth Century*, 10th edn., ed. by Stephen Greenblatt (New York & London: W. W. Norton & Co, 2018), p. 121.

³⁹⁵ Linda Grant, ‘“Ovid was there, and with him were Catullus, Propertius and Tibullus”: Catullus and the shaping of early Tudor love poetry’, *Textual Practice*, 33.8 (2019), 1277-1295 (p. 1290).

³⁹⁶ Grant, p. 1290. Emily Detmer also speaks to this notion of domestication as an excuse for or justification of violence, and how this justification is staged for an audience; Detmer, ‘Civilizing Subordination: Domestic Violence and The Taming of the Shrew’, *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 48.3 (1997), 273-294 (p. 273-274).

³⁹⁷ Wray, p. 80n.

bodies, especially, become the receptacle for their husbands' "fury and outrage" as they are tamed.³⁹⁸

But Cary and her contemporaries are clear that there are not only just and unjust forms of anger, but also appropriate and inappropriate ways of acting upon that anger, especially when those actions could lead to violence. While John Downname, quoted at the end of the previous paragraph, acknowledges that in extreme cases anger can cause "men to be hurtfull to all others, so especially to those whom they should most love, cherish, and defend, that is, they who are of a mans owne familie", he is quick to note that this kind of violence is "furious and unreasonable".³⁹⁹ In a powerful use of biblical precedent, Downname writes that men should work to reject "the example of *Cains* anger agaynst *Abell*, *Saules* agaynst *Jonathan* and *David*; *Nebuchadnezers* agaynst the three children, *Herods* against the innocents, the Scribes and Phariseis agaynst Christ" and instead "all endeavour to use all good meanes by which we may prevent anger".⁴⁰⁰ However, Downname's discussion of anger is centered on the male experience, uses male examples, and does not account for female anger. Passionate anger might be justified, especially when it "opposeth it selfe onelie against sinne and injustice", but only when that injustice affects men.⁴⁰¹

Women's anger was dismissed as "a matter of no waight at all" and pamphlet writers bemoaned "how ill beseeming is it, the chaste, sober, modest, and amiable face of a loving and virtuous wife, to fret, lower, skowle, scold, braule,

³⁹⁸ Downname, p. 57.

³⁹⁹ Downname, p. 57.

⁴⁰⁰ Downname, p. 56-57, 59.

⁴⁰¹ Downname, p. 36.

or bee unquiet towards her husband".⁴⁰² This trivialization of women's anger, where the emotion is framed as both unbecoming and unjust, also removes any avenue for appropriate action based on that anger. While men could act on their anger through the just correction of their household, a duel of honor against their peers, or the culturally sanctioned violence of the hunt, women were restricted from accessing the same. Cary's play approaches anger, and the violence it can produce, differently. While women are still not able to act on their angry impulses or desires, the rage they speak of does appear to be justified. Mariam's fury at Herod, for instance, stems from his murder of her remaining male family members and his order for her death as well. But even so, men and women's anger, and their responses to the emotion, are placed in opposition to each other. Men, with access to the demonstratively physical vocabulary of *violent language*, can act on their "choler" (1.6.32), while women occupy a solely verbal sphere, marked with descriptive *language about violence*, as they "upbraid" (1.6.34) their husbands with mouths that "like a serpent, poisons where it kisses" (2.4.50).⁴⁰³

Because of this lack of a physical outlet, Cary gives her female characters full scope of verbal expression. Like Tamora, these women speak their minds; unlike Tamora, they never try to unsex themselves and instead vent their anger through violent rhetoric that evokes images of what *should* happen or what they *wish* would happen to those who have wronged them. This language comprises the declamatory evocation of future action meant to punish. Grammatically, this

⁴⁰² I. T., *The Haven of Pleasure: Containing a freemans felicitie, and a true direction on how to live well* (London, 1597), p. 151. STC (2nd ed.) 23621; Boyle, p. 67.

⁴⁰³ The physical and verbal spheres proposed here offer a complement to the notion of the civic and domestic spheres that men and women respectively occupied in the early modern period. See Laura Gowing, *Domestic Dangers: Women, Words, and Sex in Early Modern London* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 22-23 and Susan Amussen, *An Ordered Society: Gender and Class in Early Modern England* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), p. 34-66.

takes the form of optative verbs (that indicate a wished-for or desired future state) and the future potential “will”, alongside subjunctive statements, such as “let” (4.8.95) or “hear” (4.8.89), that mimic the sound of imperatives. These grammatical constructs become admonitions, curses, and biting invectives. They evoke harm, but do not enact it. They represent a way around the frustration of action — that is, the prevention of action — that women experience. Such language is coded female by other playwrights as well; in *Hamlet*, for instance, the prince speaks of his annoyance at the need to “unpack [his] heart with words, / And fall a-cursing like a very drab”.⁴⁰⁴ Angry words, then, are understood as the non-physical, female response to a wrong or injustice that would incite a physical reaction from men. As I suggest in the next section, these angry words can take on a particular grammatical shape and form, functioning in such a way as to communicate both the potential of violence and the futility of that hope.

Curses, Scorn, and Wished-For Violence

For angry words to be effective, women must prove their rage has just cause. In this way, the verbal expressions of violence in Mariam, Salome, and Doris’ speeches are centered around a firm belief in their own victimization. Their words attempt to legitimize and, as Linda Pollock has argued, “secure redress for a grievance”, usually personal, that has affected them.⁴⁰⁵ In persistently reminding others of a wrong, these characters are seen as railing women, and each woman casts herself as an aggrieved victim in an attempt to “revenge her selfe with her

⁴⁰⁴ William Shakespeare, ‘Hamlet’, ed. by John Jowett, in *The New Oxford Shakespeare: Modern Critical Edition*, ed. by Gary Taylor, John Jowett, Terri Bourus, and Gabriel Egan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 2.2.481-482. “Drab” in this context is glossed as “whore” (2.2.482n).

⁴⁰⁵ Linda A. Pollock, ‘Anger and the Negotiation of Relationships in Early Modern England’, *The Historical Journal*, 47.3 (2004), 567-590 (p. 588).

tongue”.⁴⁰⁶ But in lobbying for punishment or redress, the wronged woman becomes the doer of wrongs. Female speech of this type therefore exists as a complex and aggressively gendered device, which B. S. Lee summarizes as “neither blameless nor without justification”.⁴⁰⁷

The simultaneity of wronged and wrongdoing is first evident in Act 1, scene 3, in the “fumish words” (1.3.23) traded between Salome and Mariam. Salome accuses Mariam of being prone to “choler” (1.3.22), directly tying Mariam’s words to a fit of anger and implying that her speech, like that of the angry women in *The Haven of Pleasure* pamphlet, carries “no waight at all” and in fact shows the irrational loss of the “rayns of reason”.⁴⁰⁸ But by linking language to emotion as Salome does here, she undercuts the early modern pamphleteers’ argument: if Mariam’s choler is sufficient cause to unleash her tongue, her words carry an enormous amount of weight. Words represent and manifest feelings, and so women’s angry speech constitutes a rational attempt at unraveling and affirming these emotions. Salome accuses Mariam of frequent outbursts, saying she “ha[s] borne” this choler “more than once” (1.3.22). The use of the word “borne”, meaning “to bear”, lends a sense of very real physicality to Mariam’s words, illustrating the way speech can be used to circumvent the women’s inability to literally act on their emotions the way men can.⁴⁰⁹ “[B]orne” also acts as a means to legitimize Salome’s reply to Mariam: Salome’s “scorn” (1.3.24) is justifiable if the audience believes that she has been wronged by her sister-in-law.

⁴⁰⁶ “Rail, v.5”, *OED*, 1a. For more on railing women, see Kirilka Stavreva, *Words like Daggers: Violent Female Speech in Early Modern England* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2015); Swetnam, p. 45.

⁴⁰⁷ B. S. Lee, ‘Queen Margaret’s Curse on Richard of Gloucester’, *Shakespeare in Southern Africa*, 7 (1994), 15-21 (p. 20).

⁴⁰⁸ I. T., p. 151.

⁴⁰⁹ “Bear, v.”, *OED*, 1.

Mariam's response hinges on her own victimization, where she has the right to rail at Salome for the "infamy" (1.3.45) and "slander" (1.3.52) targeted at her. For the queen, Salome's accusation that Mariam is "unchaste" (1.3.52) warrants her vitriol in return; the two women have fallen into a cycle of faults against each other that necessitate redress. Mariam's response mirrors the more famous cursing queen, Margaret, of Shakespeare's history plays, when she turns to "heaven" (1.3.45) in the hope of divine retribution, asking, "dost thou mean this infamy to smother? / Let slandered Mariam ope thy closed ear!" (1.3.45-46). This invocation is reminiscent of Margaret's curses aimed at Richard III, during which she hopes that her words will "pierce the clouds and enter heaven" and "there awake God's gentle-sleeping peace".⁴¹⁰ Where Margaret relies on her status as the rightful queen of England to add justification to her curse, Mariam's right to do so comes, in her mind, from her Jewish ancestry. She cites her descent from "the more virtuous Jacob" (a racial difference she contrasts with Salome's "baser birth" [1.3.27] as "parti-Jew and parti-Edomite" [1.3.29]) as proof that God Himself should rally behind her.⁴¹¹ Her racist verbal attack concludes with a grammatical future potential construction that promises a future state while simultaneously taking its precedent from the past: "Thy ancestors against the heavens did fight, / And thou, like them, wilt heavenly birth disgrace" (1.3.31-32). These race-based insults, which generate a dichotomy of inferiority and superiority between the two women, fuel Salome's plot against Mariam later in the play, which results in the queen's death.

⁴¹⁰ William Shakespeare, 'Richard III', ed. by John Jowett, in *The New Oxford Shakespeare: Modern Critical Edition*, ed. by Gary Taylor, John Jowett, Terri Bourus, and Gabriel Egan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 1.3.193, 1.3.287.

⁴¹¹ Wray, p. 88n; see also Alexandra's curse at 1.2.5-12.

Most illustrative of the use of victimhood as a justification for angry words is Doris, Herod's first wife whom he divorced in order to marry Mariam. Doris' rage toward Herod is directed laterally at Mariam, her supposed peer, rather than hierarchically at her former husband. In one exceptional moment, however, Doris extends her anger toward the entire city of Jerusalem, holding it as a metonymic substitute for Herod and a target for her wrath. In a speech to her son, Antipater, in Act 2, scene 3, Doris rebukes the royal palace where Mariam now lives, commanding it to "bow your lofty side[s]" (2.3.1) to its rightful queen and prince, and so "[l]et your humility upbraid the pride / Of those in whom no due respect is seen!" (2.3.3-4). Doris is furious at the "wrong" (2.3.12) done to her and her son, and she catalogues them with a series of rhetorical questions: "Art thou [Antipater] not Herod's right-begotten son?" (2.3.17), "Was not the hapless Doris Herod's wife?" (2.3.18), "Was I not fair enough to be a queen?" (2.3.21). Her firm sense of this injustice lends itself to the use of the optative subjunctive, a grammatical form that E. A. Abbott describes as implying, for an early modern audience, both "inevitability" and "an unfulfilled fact, to speak paradoxically".⁴¹² Doris' use of "let" therefore signals the deep desire that her words should come true, and the belief that they cannot help but come to pass.

While my own analysis of each woman's grammar found Doris to be a particularly explicit example of "furnish words" (1.3.23) acting as a kind of violence between women, I was interested in assessing the degree to which this might be clear to others. Could an audience of lay readers identify specific words as markers or measures of lateral violence? If so, were any of these gendered?

⁴¹² Abbott, p. 261.

Would specific grammatical and punctuation features strike readers as violent, emotional, or actionable (that is, able to be acted upon)? With these questions in mind, I collaborated with the University of Kent's Paper Stage play reading group to set up a public reading of *The Tragedy of Mariam*. The reading was structured in two halves, with a break mid-way through that mimicked the intermission a modern audience might encounter after Act 3. Before the reading, I gave a brief introduction to the text, with biographical information on Elizabeth Cary as well as an explanation of the closet drama genre and its features. Afterward, I convened an informal discussion about the text and the experience of reading it aloud, before distributing a feedback questionnaire meant to capture more targeted information. The group was made up of undergraduate and postgraduate students with an interest in early modern drama and/or female-authored literary works.

When read aloud, Doris' anger was so palpable that one student remarked on how the scenes in which Doris features "[felt] like a rollercoaster"; "she seems very strong and vengeful, and *angry*".⁴¹³ In response, I asked if the strength of Doris' anger made her words sound as if they should come true, testing the sense of "inevitability" that Abbott identifies in the optative subjunctive "let".⁴¹⁴ The students' opinions were split; some felt that Doris' words "demonstrate her own lack of personal agency, which she is trying to mask through language of command" and said that Doris sounded prayerful, which undercut any power she could have claimed: "[by] praying to God for vengeance, she is putting her faith in His judgement rather than speaking with authority".⁴¹⁵ Others pointed out a

⁴¹³ Appendix B.1, questionnaire and anonymous responses from *The Tragedy of Mariam* public reading, with The Paper Stage (10 December 2018), p. 320.

⁴¹⁴ Abbott, p. 261.

⁴¹⁵ Appendix B.1 questionnaire, p. 320, 326.

change in what they called Doris' tone between Act 2, scene 3 and Act 4, scene 8 (her two major speeches), saying, "I am not sure I see [a potential for reality] as much in her first speech as I do in the second" and "Doris is 'hopeful' in Act 2 that vengeance will happen as she has longed [for]. In Act 4, [it sounds] like Doris assumes it will come to fruition".⁴¹⁶ Grammatically, this signaled a recognizable shift in the construction of Doris' volatile curses, where she moves from relying on the optative subjunctive "let" (2.3.3, 2.3.53) in Act 2 to imperative verbs in Act 4 ("thrust" [4.8.91], "plague" [4.8.92, verb form], "throw" [4.8.93]).⁴¹⁷ Whether or not the audience could name these grammatical features, they sensed them in the verse of Act 4 and interpreted them as indicators of potential violence that were just as likely to happen as the Husband's threats to his child in *A Yorkshire Tragedy*.

The strong sense of a potential for violence found in Doris's angry words is a direct result of not only the grammatical construction of her lines but also the punctuation as well. As Doris' curses grow increasingly vicious, so, too, does the use of exclamation points increase. While David Crystal notes that "few [exclamation marks] are original" to early modern dramatic texts, many modern editors seem to have made the collective decision to add punctuation — specifically exclamation points — to Doris' curses and Mariam's frantic replies.⁴¹⁸ As one reader pointed out, "[t]here is only one exclamation point in the Act 2 speech, which seems very different to me than the ones in Act 4".⁴¹⁹ This comment showed, again, a sensitivity to tonal shifts between Doris' main speeches, where

⁴¹⁶ Appendix B.1 questionnaire, p. 326.

⁴¹⁷ The verb form of "plague" is defined as "to afflict" or "to visit calamity or misfortune on (a person, etc.) esp[ecially] as a punishment"; "plague, v.", *OED*, 1.

⁴¹⁸ David Crystal, *"Think on My Words": Exploring Shakespeare's Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 72. Danielle Clarke discusses the issue of punctuation in women's writing in 'Nostalgia, Anachronism, and the Editing of Early Modern Women's Texts', *Text*, 15 (2003), 187-209 (p. 201-202).

⁴¹⁹ Appendix B.1 questionnaire, p. 324.

“[i]n Act 2 it [reads] like an exclamation of grief or loss. In Act 4 the exclamations *are* her curses; they are filled with anger and ‘may these things happen!’”⁴²⁰ Textually, the majority of Doris’ exclamation points appear when she levels her final curses at Mariam, serving to emphasize the violence of her words. In this sequence, exclamation points are closely linked to the imperative verbs which begin each curse, the two features acting as bookends to each invective:

Hear, thou that didst Mount Gerizim command
To be a place whereon with cause to curse!
Stretch thy revenging arm! Thrust forth thy hand
And plague the mother much, the children worse!
Throw flaming fire upon the base-born heads
That were begotten in unlawful beds! (4.8.89-94)

In effect, this gives the curse a double emphasis, where the imperative verb demands action, and the exclamation point lends it additional force and emotion. Both David Bevington, editing for the Norton Anthology, and Ramona Wray, editing for Arden’s Early Modern Drama series (the volume from which I have quoted in this chapter), chose to emend this speech to include exclamation points that clearly emphasize the terrifying power of Doris’ curse both when performed and read.⁴²¹ While these are not original to Cary’s text, there is some early modern precedent for this editorial intervention — namely that exclamations were a recognizable rhetorical device (recorded in Cicero’s orations) that George Puttenham cites as a means to “shew any extreme passion, [...] crying out,

⁴²⁰ Appendix B.1 questionnaire, p. 324.

⁴²¹ Elizabeth Cary, ‘The Tragedy of Mariam’, ed. by David Bevington, in *English Renaissance Drama: A Norton Anthology*, ed. by David Bevington, Lars Engle, Katharine Eisaman Maus, and Eric Rasmussen (New York & London: W. W. Norton & Co., 2002), 4.8.85-94. The New Mermaids edition of the play, edited by Karen Britland, follows the Quarto printing and excludes the exclamation points from this speech but does include one in Mariam’s reply, “Oh, heaven forbid!” (4.8.101) at the end of the scene; Elizabeth Cary, *The Tragedy of Mariam, the Fair Queen of Jewry*, ed. by Karen Britland (London: Methuen Drama, 2010). See also Alicia Rodríguez-Álvarez for more on early modern punctuation as “marks of the writer and for the reader”, in ‘Teaching Punctuation in Early Modern England’, *Studia Anglica Posnaniensia*, 46.1 (2010), 35-49 (p. 46).

admiration or wondering, imprecation or cursing”.⁴²² Cary’s habit of writing rhetorically makes a compelling case for the inclusion of these exclamation points, wherein the marks show, in Puttenham’s words, the “extreme passion” of Doris’ “cursing”, and call attention to each separate invective by dividing them into individual imperative demands.⁴²³

This choice of punctuation also provides space within the verse for emphatic movement or gesture. The participants involved in the reading all linked exclamation points to a simultaneously visible and verbal show of emotion, referencing anger, grief, and bitterness in their feedback forms, as well as “a fist-grinding-into-palm gesture”, “raising her hand to heaven”, “pointing [with] accusing hands”, and “looking up to heaven with upraised fists”.⁴²⁴ Mariam’s reaction to Doris’ curse demonstrates the range of emotion that an exclamation point can indicate beyond those that the readers identified; Mariam’s two short responses include four exclamation points, three of them caesural, all of them reading as fearful desperation: “Oh, Doris, now to thee my knees I bend!” (4.8.80), “Curse not mine infants!” (4.8.82), “Oh, heaven forbid!” (4.8.101), and “Now, earth, farewell!” (4.8.103). While Doris’ words alone cannot truly enact harm in and of

⁴²² Crystal, p. 72; George Puttenham, *The Arte of English Poesie Contrived into Three Bookes: The First of Poets and Poesie, the Second of Proportion, the Third of Ornament* (London: 1589), f. Aa3r (p. 157). STC (2nd ed.) 20519.5; Cicero’s best-known example of *ecphonesis* (rhetorical exclamation) is “O tempora! O mores!”, *In Catilinam 1-4. Pro Murena. Pro Sulla. Pro Flacco*, trans. by C. Macdonald, Loeb Classical Library 324 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976). John Leech also lists the exclamation point as a mark of interjection that can signify “disdaining”, “scorning”, “cursing”, and “calling” in his *Certaine grammar questions for the exercise of young schollers in the learning of the Accidence* (London: 1590), sig. J1v. STC (2nd ed.) 15374.2.

⁴²³ Puttenham, p. 157. Richard Sherry’s 1555 *Treatise of the figures of grammar and rhetorike* also cites Cicero, saying that “Exclamation is [the figure], whiche sheweth the signification of sorowe, or anger”; Sherry, *A treatise of the figures of grammer and rhetorike profitable for al that be studious of eloquence, and in especiall for suche as in grammer scholes doe reade moste eloquente poetes and oratours: whereunto is joygned the oration which Cicero made to Cesar, geving thanks unto him for pardonyng, and restoring again of that noble ma[n] Marcus Marcellus, sette foorth by Richarde Sherrye Londonar.* (London: Robert Caly? With Ricardi Totte, 1555), fol. xxxv. STC (2nd ed.) 22429.

⁴²⁴ Appendix B.1 questionnaire, p. 323.

themselves, Mariam recognizes the potential they invoke for future harm — a powerful and terrifying tool in the angry woman’s linguistic arsenal. The subjunctive (future desire) statements that are expressed like imperatives (direct commands) describe physical acts of aggression that the audience might expect to be embodied as *violent language* — “[s]tretch” (4.8.91), “[t]hrust” (4.8.91), “plague” (4.8.92, verb form), and “[t]hrow” (4.8.93) — but Doris’ curse is rhetorical and descriptive, *language about violence*, and therefore not literal. Put into words, her curse expresses violent and enraged emotion but finds no physical outlet. For the participants, this came through in their reading of the scene: they associated Doris with a number of different actions, but these were all purely gestural, that is to say, stationary and self-contained with no physical interaction between the two women. As one participant put it, Doris’ words “come across as violent, but not actionable”.⁴²⁵ These choices are supported syntactically within the verse lines by the fact that the grammatical form Doris uses points to a wished-for state that *could* happen in the future but is not guaranteed.

Instead, many of the participants again pointed out that Doris’ fervent curses took on a prayerful note, with a number of readers using the words “supplicatory” or “supplication” in their written responses. These words were most closely associated with Doris’ first speech in Act 2, scene 3, during which she “upbraid[s]” (2.3.3) Jerusalem for its lack of “due respect” (2.3.4) for her position as Herod’s first wife and queen. In particular, the readers called attention to a quatrain that catalogued Doris’ past appeals to heaven, which she believes have finally been answered:

Oft have I begged for vengeance for this fact,

⁴²⁵ Appendix B.1 questionnaire, p. 325.

And with dejected knees, aspiring hands,
Have prayed the highest power to enact
The fall of her that on my trophy stands (2.3.33-36).

Noting the “supplicatory posture” of these lines (similar to the gestural action couched in language which Siemon highlighted in *The Spanish Tragedy* as Hieronimo described the old man “[w]ith mournful eyes and hands to heaven upreared” [3.13.67-68]), the readers expressed surprise at the passivity Doris exhibits in this passage.⁴²⁶ One participant summarized this moment by saying, “She has *asked* for vengeance but not been able to actually enact it herself - she has had to rely on a supernatural agent”.⁴²⁷ This was a stark contrast to the woman who “sounds like an avenging Fury” in Act 4, but was indicative of their shared perception (supported by this play) of a feminine “lack of agency to *act*”.⁴²⁸ This prayerful passivity was also associated with Mariam during our discussion, as the queen turns to “heaven” (1.3.45). In both cases the readers indicated that the “female character relies on vengeance done by God”, rather than taking action herself.⁴²⁹ The prayer-like invocation with which both women preface their curses frames the wished-for acts of violence as things beyond human scope, perhaps excusing their inactivity, as such action is the work of God and not womankind.

Salome, Mariam, and Doris’ angry words beg the question: is this physically frustrated verbal register — physically passive but actively angry in spirit — a distinctly female trait? Can it truly be classified as violent rhetoric, if violence is not enacted by the speaker? The other plays examined in this thesis suggest that

⁴²⁶ Appendix B.1 questionnaire, p. 322; James R. Siemon, ‘Dialogical Formalism: Word, Object, and Action in “The Spanish Tragedy”’, *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England*, 5 (1991), 87-115 (p. 93).

⁴²⁷ Appendix B.1 questionnaire, p. 322.

⁴²⁸ Appendix B.1 questionnaire, p. 323, 321.

⁴²⁹ Appendix B.1 questionnaire, p. 322.

this is not the case. In my examination of *A Yorkshire Tragedy*, I proposed that the optative, future potential construction was a grammatical register available to and used by both men and women, but what my work on *The Tragedy of Mariam* demonstrates is that women, unlike Herod or the Husband, are not able to make the linguistic shift from potential to real action. Doris' language contains just as much latent violence as the Husband's but is prevented from being physicalized. This is precisely why I argue for the need to delineate between distinct types of violent rhetoric, which I have worked to do in offering two vocabularies of violence as starting points for this practice; there is a clear difference between the types of words and phrases that enact or desire violent dramatic action that must be acknowledged. Language that voices the promise of or potential for violence in the future, but is prevented from enacting real violence in the moment, is no less violent than language that underscores a physical blow, but it can be helpfully categorized as descriptive *language about violence* instead of demonstrative *violent language*.

For early critics of *The Tragedy of Mariam* (most notably Nancy Cotton Pearse, whose initial work on Cary's plays inspired years of biographical readings), the anger expressed by these female characters and their inability to take action on such feelings was symptomatic of a sense of futility in the playwright herself.⁴³⁰ But Cary herself refutes this idea in her play text, where she includes a male character (Herod) who also experiences linguistic frustration.

⁴³⁰ In her foundational work on the play, Pearse wrote that it is "difficult to avoid the conclusion that the sentiments expressed in the play are autobiographical. Elizabeth Cary apparently entered marriage with an impossible idealization of wifely behavior, which she expresses through Mariam, and with an even more impossible ideal of an independent, even rebellious, intellectual life, embodied in Salome", Nancy Cotton Pearse, 'Elizabeth Cary, Renaissance Playwright', *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 18.4 (1977), 601-608 (p. 605).

While this type of language as a substitute for action is generally characteristic of female characters, who are prevented from making the linguistic shift from potential to real action, Cary makes it a key feature of Herod's speech in the final act of the play — once more following a rhetorical precedent set by medieval drama. In both French and English medieval plays, Herod was characterized by the "rash actions" caused by his "furious rage", and cast as "the bragging fool, the ineffectual weakling, the raving buffoon".⁴³¹ Staines characterizes the medieval Herod as verbally incomprehensible, arguing that "[h]is anger, when expressed vocally, becomes bombast".⁴³² Cary borrows from this characterization to shape her Herod's verbal tendencies, whose bombast in the final scene of the play replaces real, onstage action born of his grief and rage.

For all his centrality in the minds of the female characters, Herod is conspicuously absent until Act 4, during which time he is believed to be dead. Herod's arrival throws the other characters into chaos, his unexpected return kindles emotional responses, including Mariam's "discontent" (4.3.8) and "sorrow" (4.3.10). Her "wretched[ness]" (4.3.27) over her brother's death at Herod's command stirs anger in her husband, who insists that "Hyrceanus plotted to deprive my head / Of this long-settled honour that I wear, / And therefore I did justly doom him dead" (4.3.35-37). Herod and Mariam's speeches read as an old argument, rehearsed many times before, as evidenced by Herod's rhymed lines, "[h]ow oft have I with execration sworn! / [...] Yet are my protestations heard with scorn" (4.3.32, 34). Herod's application of the word "scorn" to Mariam and her rage indicates another gendered difference between men and women's angry

⁴³¹ Staines, p. 35; Mariam Anne Skey, 'Herod the Great in Medieval European Drama', *Comparative Drama*, 13.4 (1979-1980), 330-364 (p. 338); Staines, p. 49.

⁴³² Staines, p. 50.

words. “Scorn” itself is broadly defined by the *OED* as “mockery, derision, [or] contempt”, and then more narrowly as a “derisive utterance[,] a taunt, an insult”; both definitions carry an implication of being vocal rather than physical.⁴³³ Throughout this play, “scorn” is a word applied only to female speech; it appears just once in the dueling scene between Constabarus and Silleus, connoting, in that context, action rather than contempt or disdain. At its core, this is a linguistic difference which rests on an awareness of two distinct parts of speech; for Cary’s male characters, “scorn” is a verb, an action to be taken, as per Silleus’ “[a] blow for her my arm will scorn t’afford” (2.4.12). For the female characters, “scorn” is a noun, a mode of speech laced with indignation, illustrated by “Salome’s reply is only scorn” (1.3.24). Grammatically, then, this word highlights the divide between the means of emotional expression available to men (the physical) and women (the verbal), where men’s words become action while women’s cannot.

In a fit of rage, Herod responds to Mariam’s scorn by ordering her execution: “[C]all our royal guard” (4.4.74) and “take her to her death” (4.4.77). This order makes use of imperative commands (“call”, “take”) just as Doris’ curses tried to, but Herod’s words are not subjunctive constructions — that is to say, they will have a real and immediate impact instead of merely imagining a wished-for result, just as Demetrius’ active, imperative command to his mother, Tamora, indicates a reality of action. No sooner does he order Mariam’s death than he recalls the soldiers who have come to take her away: “Come back, come back!” (4.4.77), another imperative command. He is plagued by indecision, with Mariam’s life hanging in the balance. While many critics, including Pearse, Marta Straznicky,

⁴³³ “Scorn, n.”, *OED*, 1a and 2.

Laurie Shannon, Danielle Clarke, and Balil Tawfiq Hamamra, have read Herod's hesitancy as a critique of power and male authority, I argue that it is gendered rhetoric that is key to understanding this moment.⁴³⁴ Herod's speech is wildly emotional and indecisive because he recognizes the action his words explicitly direct those around him to take. When Herod vacillates between "she shall die, [...] That she shall" (4.7.1) and "I am resolved she shall be spared" (4.7.4) a mere three lines later, it is because his words hold the power to command real action. While the women of *The Tragedy of Mariam* speak and their words are frustrated and never physically acted upon, Herod's words afford only action.

Despite Mariam's anger in Acts 1 through 4, the queen reportedly faces her death "mildly" (5.1.28). Only a single descriptive word matches her earlier characterization, when the Nuntio who reports Mariam's death to Herod references her "dutiful, though scornful smile" (5.1.52). The Nuntio's account of the execution scene describes a woman with a calm, steady temperament very much unlike the "rage" (1.1.19) and "discontent" (1.1.63) she expressed up to this point. Instead, in this final scene, Herod is portrayed as emotionally unstable, moving between seemingly feminine excesses of emotion (including joy, sorrow, and anger) while utilizing a masculine register of speech (direct imperative commands). Mariam, by contrast, is "unmoved" (5.1.55), full of un-feminine stability in her final moments. But this is not a last attempt to unsex herself, in the style of Tamora or Macbeth's wife. Instead, it recalls Gouge and Swetnam's image

⁴³⁴ Pearse, p. 603; Marta Straznicky and Richard Belling, "'Profane Stoical Paradoxes': 'The Tragedie of Mariam' and Sidnean Closet Drama", *English Literary Renaissance*, 24.1 (1994), 104-134 (p. 124); Shannon, p. 148; Danielle Clarke, "'This domestic kingdome or Monarchy': Cary's 'The Tragedy of Mariam' and the Resistance to Patriarchal Government", *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England*, 10 (1998), 179-200 (p. 182); Bilal Tawfiq Hamamra, "'Tell thou my lord thou saw'st me lose my breath': Silence, speech, and authorial identity in Cary's The Tragedy of Mariam", *ANQ*, 32.2 (2018), 84-92 (p. 89).

of the ideal wife, rather than an attempt to de-feminize the queen, and is one final bid by Cary to frame Mariam's anger as justified and righteous. She faces her death as a Christ-like figure, promising that "[b]y three days hence, if wishes could revive, / I know himself would make me oft alive" (5.1.77-78).⁴³⁵ Mariam's promise also serves, as one play reading participant pointed out during discussion, to undercut the linguistic mode of cursing that characterized the second half of the play. "Wishes" (5.1.77) cannot effect action.

In Mariam's "scornful" (5.1.52) death, Cary situates the queen's language and persona in a distinctly feminine register, through the use of the noun form of the word "scorn". In contrast to the verb form of the word, the noun "scorn" eliminates all possibility for action on Mariam's part, making her a passive participant in the violent action that is done to her. Rhetorically, this continues the pattern of grammatical constructions which highlight the female characters' inability to commit violent acts themselves (a theme which also underscored the public reading and discussion that I conducted), instead positioning the descriptive, wished-for talk of violence as the only real conduit for their emotions that women can access. Unlike her male contemporaries, Cary paints women's anger as both reasonable and justifiable, even though they are not permitted to take action in response to any wrongs committed against them. Instead, women must seek retribution through "upbraid[ing]" (1.6.34) or cursing, calling down wished-for vengeance as an optative subjunctive, that is, an unfulfilled future potential. However, I have argued that, unlike the male characters around them,

⁴³⁵ Carolyn McKay makes a similar comparison to the resurrection in her work on the witness statements of murder trials, which can be helpfully applied to Senecan and neo-Senecan drama and is particularly relevant for this scene of *Mariam*, writing that "the spoken word becomes instrumental in providing murder victims with an ephemeral resurrection so their voices, filtered through the words of witnesses, may be heard". McKay, p. 84.

Cary's female characters have no way to shift their rhetoric from the potential for to the real enactment of violent action. This is, I suggest, a shift available only to men. The final sections of this chapter seek to uncover a female character type that, unlike Tamora, Lavinia, Mariam, or Doris, can push back against this purely verbal outlet and enact violence on her own behalf.

III. *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*

Sixteen years after Cary's *The Tragedy of Mariam* was printed, John Ford develops and innovates on the idea of the vengeful, angry woman in his play *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* (1629). Hippolita, the widow who orchestrates the deadly wedding masque which joins the subplots and main plot, is not usually the focus of academic work. Instead, more critics concentrate on the incestuous siblings and the violence inherent in Giovanni's relationship with Annabella. While there has been much fruitful work on the language, volatile passion, and imagery of the play, little of this has focused on the revenge plot by Hippolita that threads through Acts 2 to 4.⁴³⁶ The final sections of this chapter intend to correct that lacuna by refocusing attention on Hippolita as a key part of Ford's concept of tragic verbal violence, rather than as a figure we should view only in opposition to Annabella. Notably, the Annabella-Hippolita dichotomy is reminiscent of the critical

⁴³⁶ For work on the language and imagery of *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, see Terri Clerico, 'The Politics of Blood: John Ford's "'Tis Pity She's a Whore'", *English Literary Renaissance*, 22.3 (Autumn 1992), 405-434; Michael Neill, "'What Strange Riddle's This?': Deciphering *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*' in *John Ford: Critical Re-visions*, ed. by Michael Neill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 153-174; and Carol C. Rosen, 'The Language of Cruelty in Ford's "'Tis Pity She's a Whore'", *Comparative Drama*, 8.4 (Winter, 1974), 356-368. For more on passion, emotion, and the body in the play, see Kibrina Davey, 'Ungovernable Passion in John Ford's *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*', *Early Modern Literary Studies*, 26 (2017), n.p.; Hillary M. Nunn, *Staging Anatomies: Dissection and Spectacle in Early Stuart Tragedy* (Aldershot & Burlington: Ashgate Publishing, 2005), 145-148; and Susan J. Wiseman, '*'Tis Pity She's a Whore*: Representing the Incestuous Body', in *Revenge Tragedy*, ed. by Stevie Simkin (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), 208-228. For writing on revenge in *'Tis Pity* more generally, see Janet Clare, *Revenge Tragedies of the Renaissance* (Horndon: Northcote House Publishers Ltd, 2006), 109-114.

conversation around *Titus Andronicus*, that places Tamora and Lavinia as oppositional forces, and the lateral violence that the women of *The Tragedy of Mariam* aim at each other. I am interested, therefore, in investigating the development of linguistic violence across multiple generations of early modern playwrights. Here, I argue that Ford is building on earlier representations of violent women, using Hippolita to warn against the destructive potential therein. In doing so, I reframe Hippolita's disruptive presence, proposing that she is not an easily forgotten secondary character but a crucial foil to the masculine revengers of the play.

Ford's work has frequently been characterized as "decadent" and "excessive", descriptions which point to the richly illustrative language used in his play, as well as to the dramatization of Senecan-style violence that had previously appeared as off-stage action, as in Cary's *The Tragedy of Mariam*.⁴³⁷ Yet Ford is not exceptional in this regard, as these features are considered a hallmark of later Stuart tragedies, particularly in the work of contemporaries of his, like John Webster and Philip Massinger. Their collective work, then, follows in a tradition of Stuart drama that builds upon that of their Elizabethan predecessors, just as the violence of Elizabethan plays builds upon its medieval and classical predecessors. Now, in the seventeenth century, Ford, Webster, Massinger, and others use spectacular (in the sense of creating a spectacle) and sustained moments of staged violence in a way that, in Huston Diehl's words, "develops and advances" the "drama's themes".⁴³⁸ Giovanni's bloody dagger harkens back to earlier works by

⁴³⁷ Bowers, p. 178, 206; Charney, p. 60; Rosen, p. 356; Simkin, p. 5; Robert N. Watson, 'Tragedy', in *The Cambridge Companion to English Renaissance Drama*, 2nd edn., ed. by A.R. Braunmuller and Michael Hattaway (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 292-343 (p. 306).

⁴³⁸ Clare, p. 109; "spectacular, adj. and n.", *OED*, 1a; Diehl, p. 30.

Middleton, Shakespeare, and Kyd, and Annabella's death in the name of loving constancy recalls the same. Likewise, I argue that Hippolita sits within a shared successive line of female revengers, in conversation with Tamora, Lavinia, Mariam, and Salome, as she works to confront the man who has wronged her. This time, however, Ford crafts a female character who begins taking violent action herself. She recruits a male agent to aid in her revenge plot, but rather than convincing this male agent to act for her, Hippolita takes vengeance into her own hands and plans to offer up the poisoned cup herself.

This play, then, moves the chapter's discussion of violent women back to where it began: with a male playwright. If Shakespeare exposed the modes through which women in their various roles can 'reasonably' express their anger and Cary laid bare the frustration women feel in not being afforded the same freedom to act on that anger as men have, then I suggest that Ford is interested in the women who sit between societal roles and to whom some of the normal rules of verbal and emotional expression do not apply. As a widow, Hippolita holds a freedom that neither Tamora nor Mariam — both married women — can access. Even as empress and queen, respectively, they are still bound by (and arguably bound up more fully in) the rules of societal engagement. As a widow, Hippolita is not limited to acting as an unmarried maid or a wife; according to Amy Froide, widows like Hippolita held "a public and independent place within the patriarchal society" unlike and separate from other women.⁴³⁹ Not only is Hippolita operating in a different type of feminine role, but Ford also locates the root of her anger in a more complicated sense of injustice. While all three of the playwrights discussed

⁴³⁹ Amy M. Froide, *Never Married: Singlewomen in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 17.

in this chapter work to make visible the tropes of femininity into which women are expected to fit, and that they must negate in order to express their anger at the men who have wronged them, Ford's Hippolita is motivated by more than just a wrong done to her. For Hippolita, both her anger and desire for revenge are based on the fact that, not only has Soranzo wronged her by refusing to marry her after her husband's death, but he has also made her wrong herself through an act of infidelity while she was still married.

There is still an expectation, however, that Hippolita should not outright act on her anger, no matter Soranzo's offence. Despite her status as a widow, wherein she is understood to lack a male partner or agent and gains the ability to take action on her own behalf, anger remains a negative quality in a woman, an emotion that should either be ignored or stamped out. To express anger is to directly contradict the socially constructed tropes of womanhood on which so many of the pamphlet writers already quoted in this chapter focus; there is no space in their interpretation of ideal femininity for such "rage" or "contempt".⁴⁴⁰ These sixteenth- and seventeenth-century writers are clear: women, as subjects to their husbands in Robert Cleaver's notion of the "little commonwealth", should be subservient and submissive to those in authority over them.⁴⁴¹ This kind of deferential behavior is inherently passive and inactive and depends on women believing themselves to be naturally unequal in the eyes of God, the law, and their greater community.

⁴⁴⁰ Coeffeteau, p. 569-570.

⁴⁴¹ Robert Cleaver, *A godlie forme of householde government for the ordering of priuate families, according to the direction of Gods word. Whereunto is adjoynded in a more particular manner, the severall duties of the husband towards his wife: and the wifes dutie towards her husband. The parents dutie towards their children: and the childrens towards their parents. The masters dutie towards his servants: and also the servants dutie towards their masters. Gathered by R.C.* (London, 1598), p. 13. STC (2nd ed.) 5383.

But widows are uniquely positioned to challenge this inequality, because they take on certain rights by virtue of their status as previously married women. In her work on widows and singlewomen (that is, women who never married), Froide argues that marital status was “an important differentiating factor between women” because of the “very disparate roles of widows and wives on the one hand, and singlewomen on the other”.⁴⁴² Widowhood existed as a further category of difference between these roles and their relationship to the men around them: singlewomen “were expected to remain in a dependent position” and wives became their husbands’ deputies in the “little commonwealth” of the household, but widows were afforded “extensive [...] rights and privileges”, as well as protection under the law, that these married and unmarried women were not.⁴⁴³ Froide outlines the social benefits (such as poor relief) as well as residential and employment opportunities available to not-married women, grouping widows and singlewomen together to draw out the different experiences of what she calls the “never-married” and “ever-married” women without husbands.⁴⁴⁴ Froide’s case studies demonstrate that widows had greater freedom to live and work on their own than did singlewomen. Indeed, widows effectively assumed the role of head of their household at their husbands’ death and thereby legally “gained authority over the house, the family, the servants and apprentices, and the family business”.⁴⁴⁵ Froide’s work also assumes that these widowed women are of the burgeoning middle class (the middling sort) or above (that is, households that would include servants or apprentices); it can therefore be helpfully extended to

⁴⁴² Froide, p. 16.

⁴⁴³ Froide, p. 17; Cleaver, p. 13; Froide, p. 25.

⁴⁴⁴ Froide, p. 3, 16.

⁴⁴⁵ Froide, p. 18.

apply to Hippolita as well. As a noblewoman of “gentle birth” (above middling), Hippolita will gain control of her household and presumably sizable estate at her husband’s death.⁴⁴⁶ More importantly, as a widow Hippolita will have “earned [the] right to live outside a male-controlled household”, regardless of her social status.⁴⁴⁷

In the eyes of the law, then, widows of the early modern period were in a position to rule themselves and act in their own interest, but the (male) writers of the time betray a sense of distrust of this female freedom. Because widows were largely able to act, live, and work independently, they gained a reputation for wanting to maintain that freedom even if they remarried. Widows, Joseph Swetnam warns, “will be the cause of a thousand woes” because they are “so froward, so waspish, and so stubborne, that thou canst not wrest them from their willes”.⁴⁴⁸ Likewise a broadside ballad from 1629 advises young bachelors that maids make better wives, as “[w]idowes will not be contrould”.⁴⁴⁹ This reputation developed into the stereotype of the “lusty, avaricious widow” who appears frequently on the early modern stage, in comedies such as Shakespeare’s *Twelfth Night* (1602), George Chapman’s *The Widow’s Tears* (1604), and seven times in Middleton’s comedies, to tragedies like John Marston’s *The Insatiate Countess*

⁴⁴⁶ Peter Earle writes that “[t]hose who were middling [...] would employ servants, probably more than one since single-servant households went well below the level of the middling sort of people”, while Catherine Richardson notes that “farmers, manufacturers and tradesmen in particular lived in households that were often powerful units of production and consumption which included a body of servants”. See Earle, ‘The Middling Sort in London’, in *The Middling Sort of People: Culture, Society and Politics in England, 1550-1800*, ed. by Jonathan Barry and Christopher Brooks (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1994), 141-158 (p. 157) and Richardson, *Shakespeare and Material Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 19; John Ford, *’Tis Pity She’s a Whore*, ed. by Sonia Massai (London: Methuen Drama, 2011), p. 135n; 2.2.157. See also Natasha Korda, ‘Dame Usury: Gender, Credit, and (Ac)counting in the Sonnets and *The Merchant of Venice*’, *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 60.2 (2009), 129-153 (p. 131-133).

⁴⁴⁷ Froide, p. 19.

⁴⁴⁸ Swetnam, p. 59.

⁴⁴⁹ Anonymous, *A Batchelers Resolution, Or, have among You Now, Widowes or Maydes... to the Tune of the Blazing Torch* (S.l.: A. Mathewes[?], 1629). STC (2nd ed.) 1105.5.

(1610), John Webster's *Duchess of Malfi* (1613), and John Fletcher's *Keep the Widow Waking* (1624).⁴⁵⁰ Many of those plays which feature widowed female characters touch on the idea of "the widow's lust", which Jennifer Panek argues is born out of a culturally pervasive male anxiety of seemingly "fragile manhood" and an "emasculating exchange of [gender] roles" when a man entered into a marriage contract with a wealthy widow.⁴⁵¹ In this context, widows are meant to end comic play chastised, humbled, and re-contained by remarriage while tragedies often saw the widow harshly punished.

With *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, I argue, Ford both leans into and develops further this stereotype of the lusty widow, using his characterization of Hippolita to explore the free widow's dangerous capacity for violence. Because widows are culturally understood in a way that maids and wives are not — typically through their lack of husband or male guardian — widows hold a potential for violent action unlike that of the married women discussed in the previous sections of this chapter. Hippolita comes closest to actually achieving her desired revenge; she is not limited solely to the descriptive *language about violence*, she picks up the poisoned cup and speaks demonstratively *violent language* with the clear intention of enacting harm. Hippolita's plan is ultimately thwarted by Vasquez in a move which parallels the stereotypical widow's chastisement and re-containment. This time, however, re-containment constitutes death rather than remarriage. Through her death, any threat Hippolita previously held for the male characters is extinguished and they view the act of destroying her as a

⁴⁵⁰ Michael Shapiro, *Gender in Play on the Shakespearean Stage: Boy Heroines and Female Pages* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994), p. 167.

⁴⁵¹ Jennifer Panek, *Widows and Suitors in Early Modern English Comedy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 124, 179, 54.

preservation of social order. Hippolita, then, represents a new development in terms of rhetorical violence on the early modern stage, where a woman is able to push back against the limited means of expression available to female characters and can attempt to move between the descriptive and demonstrative vocabularies of *language about violence* and *violent language*, but is punished for doing so.

In what follows, I will outline the early modern perception of the somehow unreliable nature of femininity in widowhood and the worrying “exchange of [gender] roles” that Panek cites in early modern men.⁴⁵² If the lusty widow is able to pursue a man rather than be pursued by him and if she brings economic assets to her second marriage, Panek demonstrates that a widow risks becoming “a general threat to the rational male order of things, and a private threat to the personal honor of individual men”.⁴⁵³ This double threat is rooted in a perceived display of un-feminine dominance over a man, through which a widow could undermine male authority and, as Gouge warns in his *Domesticall Duties*, assert herself as his “master, and [so] rule him”.⁴⁵⁴ The chief worry here, then, is that there exists only a thin line between “un-feminine” and “masculine”; if a woman is able to reject her feminine subjection, to unsex herself and rule her husband, as men like Gouge fear, what is to stop her from adopting other masculine behaviors, thereby seriously disrupting the natural order of society, both on and offstage?

This kind of unstable femininity becomes especially troubling when applied to violence. Both the pamphlet literature and contemporary dramatic works draw a clear connection between widows and scolding or verbal abuse:

⁴⁵² Panek, p. 54.

⁴⁵³ Panek, p. 124. See also Elizabeth Foyster, ‘Marrying the experience widow in early modern England: the male perspective’, in *Widowhood in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Sandra Cavallo and Lyndan Warner (London: Routledge, 2014), 108-124.

⁴⁵⁴ Gouge, p. 110.

Swetnam assures young men that if they take a widow as a wife, “she will vex thee” and “with her cruell tongue shee will ring thee such a peale, that one would thinke the Devill were come from Hell”.⁴⁵⁵ If widows grew too comfortable in ruling their new husbands as the dominant figure in the household, they could conceivably also begin to adopt what Juliet Dusinberre and R. A. Foakes call the more “violent action which defines manhood” and move away from the “scowl[ing], scold[ing], [and] brawling” that defines female behavior and language in the pamphlet literature.⁴⁵⁶ That this anxiety should be reflected in contemporary literary and dramatic work, where women are punished both for their undesirable female characteristics and attempts at masculine ones, should hardly be surprising. This potential for an evolving and violent female domination is realized onstage in Hippolita, who both scolds and plans to kill Soranzo after he breaks his promised betrothal to her. The combination of her language, which occupies a female register, and her planned action, which moves into a distinctly male range, mirrors the male anxiety of emasculation identified in English comedy by Panek but, crucially, responds to it in violent, tragic form. Hippolita becomes an example of what could happen if a widow exercised typically masculine behaviors — as well as a warning of why such behavior must not be permitted. When revenging women like Hippolita are portrayed on stage, then, they are treated in such a way as to discourage similarly violent action in other women offstage.

⁴⁵⁵ Swetnam, p. 60-61.

⁴⁵⁶ Juliet Dusinberre, *Shakespeare and the Nature of Women*, 3rd edn. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p. 273; Foakes refers to violent revenge as belonging to the “world of masculine values” (p. 122); Boyle, p. 67.

Widows and the “rules of civility”

'Tis Pity She's a Whore provides just one such example in the later early modern period of a female character seeking to avenge herself, only to be thwarted and re-contained. Both Gwynne Kennedy and Marguerite Tassi's explorations of the trope of the revenging woman highlight the negative, disparaging portrayals of female avengers: Tassi discusses the trend of depicting violent women as somehow “transform[ed] from a conventionally gendered female into a beast or unnatural creature” while Kennedy writes that many playwrights often “employ[ed] strategies that effectively discredit the legitimacy of the woman's revenge or minimize its impact”.⁴⁵⁷ Kennedy is one of the few critics who focuses directly on Hippolita in *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, using her to inform the other case studies in the essay as “several features of [Hippolita's] attempted revenge also appear in the plots of other early modern female revengers”.⁴⁵⁸ Hippolita becomes the cornerstone for a discussion of what Kennedy calls “meta-revenge plot[s]”, which she frames as a development specific to female-driven revenges in noncomedic plays “in which a male character, often (as here) the person ostensibly assisting the female revenger, in fact controls the woman's revenge plans and frustrates her intentions”.⁴⁵⁹ The idea of the meta-revenge once more checks female action, placing all the power in a male puppet-master who pulls the strings and orchestrates the revenging woman's downfall. Kennedy argues that this meta-revenge plot is successful primarily because

⁴⁵⁷ Tassi, p. 117; Gwynne Kennedy, ‘Gender and the Pleasures of Revenge’, in *Feminisms and Early Modern Texts: Essays for Phyllis Rackin*, ed by. Rebecca Anne Bach and Gwynne Kennedy (Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press, 2010), 152-171 (p. 152).

⁴⁵⁸ Kennedy, *Pleasures of Revenge*, p. 153-154.

⁴⁵⁹ Kennedy, *Pleasures of Revenge*, p. 154. This dynamic is also visible in *Titus Andronicus*, when Chiron and Demetrius prevent their mother from enacting physical revenge against Lavinia with the poniard.

Hippolita takes pleasure in her attempted revenge over Soranzo (a poisoned cup at the feast for his wedding to Annabella), writing that “[s]he grows more corrupt and lustful, so that any complexity in her character” disappears into caricature, but in what follows I argue that Hippolita views vengeance not as a pleasure, but a right owed to her.⁴⁶⁰ Her revenge fails, I believe, by virtue of her overreach, as she strives for a right that Ford makes clear is not hers to claim.

For a woman to defend or avenge herself in such a deliberately active way is a direct contradiction of the passive, idealized femininity that Dusiinberre refers to as the desired “male images of female weakness, mental and physical”; critics tend to read the women who oppose the male ideal as a reflection of the uniquely feminine propensity toward so-called “unruliness”.⁴⁶¹ In her treatment of emasculation and the feminine in early Shakespeare, Liberty Stanavage reminds readers that “female figures in Elizabethan literature are frequently portrayed as subject to their bodies or their passions” (as visible in the typical critical consensus on Tamora), and that there is a real sense that women hold the potential to endanger the little commonwealth by “losing control and becoming physically and rhetorically unruly”.⁴⁶² Stanavage echoes Gina Bloom in connecting the early modern perception of a lack of control of both language and the body with effeminate weakness, pointing out that “unlike women, most men were expected to be capable of regulating voice”.⁴⁶³ Stanavage argues that, in this

⁴⁶⁰ Kennedy, *Pleasures of Revenge*, p. 155.

⁴⁶¹ Dusiinberre, p. 275.

⁴⁶² Liberty Stanavage, ‘From Titus to Titus: Edward Ravenscroft’s Titus Andronicus and the Emasculation of Shakespeare’s Tamora’, in *Titus out of Joint: Reading the Fragmented Titus Andronicus*, ed. by Liberty Stanavage and Paxton Hehmeyer (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012), 141-163 (p. 156).

⁴⁶³ Stanavage, p. 157; Gina Bloom, *Voice in Motion: Staging Gender, Shaping Sound in Early Modern England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), p. 11. See also Menzer, on the restraint of emotions.

mindset, the desire for revenge, while a sign of laser-focused reason and rationality in a man, is a symptom of instability in a woman — proof of her inability to self-regulate and control her passions.⁴⁶⁴ Women are positioned as the opposite of men, instead of being disciplined and in control, they are unruly, irrational, and rarely logical — traits in such strong contrast that Stanavage sees the societal expectations placed on men as not only a rejection of supposed feminine qualities, but also a refutation of those qualities. In *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, Hippolita exhibits just such focused rationality in her first scene, which Soranzo immediately paints as unreasonableness.

Hippolita's entrance in Act 2, scene 2 brings her into a distinctly male space; she is quickly labelled a "rude intrusion" (2.2.22) by Soranzo and she violates the "rules of civility" (2.2.19) by forcing her way into his study (2.2.sd). Her first words are assertive: she has come on her own behalf, because Soranzo "and [his] distracted lust have wronged [her]" (2.2.27). She accuses him of violence toward her, increasing the charge from "distracted lust" (2.2.27) to a "sensual rage of blood" (2.2.28). Throughout this first speech, Hippolita establishes a clear contrast between sexual desire and chastity that is the antithesis of the lusty widow trope; here, Soranzo is the "false wanton" (2.2.31), while it is Hippolita who works to maintain her "modest fame" (2.2.31), "free from stain or scandal" (2.2.32). Hers is the dominant voice in the scene: though Soranzo is the first speaker, Hippolita has double the number of lines and interrupts his "supple words" (2.2.46) — that is to say, words that are "soft or yielding" and therefore coded feminine — multiple times to continue her catalogue of "the

⁴⁶⁴ Stanavage, p. 156, 158.

grossness / Of [her] abuses" (2.2.46-47).⁴⁶⁵ This forceful claim of injustice is met with dismissive rejection from Soranzo, who declares her "too violent" (2.2.51), a word which, according to seventeenth century dictionaries, means something said or done "with a more than ordinary force and fury", to be "cruell [or] injurious".⁴⁶⁶ The *OED* echoes this understanding of "violent" as a feeling "characterized by its intensity" or power.⁴⁶⁷ An early modern audience would have understood Soranzo's words as a reference to Hippolita's gender, where she as a woman is more susceptible to changeable passions and emotional exaggeration, and so they discredit her accusation.

But Hippolita's reply, closely following Soranzo's reprimand in a shared line, turns this dismissal back on him. She does not refute his words but uses the same verbal form to reiterate and build on what she has already said: "You are too double / In your dissimulation" (2.2.51-52). The word "dissimulation" sits in the same linguistic register as "perjured man" (2.2.26), "false wanton" (2.2.31), "sorcery" (2.2.33), "oaths" (2.2.35), and "supple words" (2.2.46) — terms that highlight Soranzo's deception and root it in slippery, dishonest language. At the heart of this scene is Hippolita's fervent belief that she and Soranzo have switched roles: he has been inconstant and operates verbally, while she stands firm and appears in his study as a dominating physical presence. Vasquez cannot stop her from entering as she pushes into the room and "interrupts [Soranzo's] peace" (2.2.22). Yet Soranzo and Vasquez interpret her presence differently, with Soranzo

⁴⁶⁵ "Supple, adj.", *OED*, I.1.

⁴⁶⁶ Edward Phillips, *The new world of words, or, A universal English dictionary containing the proper significations and derivations of all words from other languages ... as now made use of in our English tongue : together with definitions of all those terms that conduce to the understanding of any of the arts or sciences ... : to which is added the interpretations of proper names ... and likewise the geographical descriptions of the chief countries and cities in the world ... / collected and published by E.P.* (London, 1696), sig. Gggg4r. Wing P2073.; and Robert Cawdry, sig. F4v.

⁴⁶⁷ "Violent, adj.", *OED*, II.d.

in particular casting Hippolita as unruly and uncontrollable, that is, “past all rules of sense” (2.2.60). Soranzo attempts to leverage the image of the widow as a dangerous and destabilizing force by framing her as “a woman frantic” (2.2.67). Here, this Caroline play deliberately echoes the Elizabethan pamphlet literature, painting womanhood as particularly liable to physical and rhetorical unruliness in order to undercut Hippolita’s credibility.⁴⁶⁸ Textually, however, Hippolita’s assertiveness and verbal defiance in this scene is eloquent and measured, even while Soranzo works to undermine her, and the man’s descriptions of her are at odds with her counterargument. Like Tamora in *Titus Andronicus*, Hippolita’s anger is both understandable and reasonable — a natural emotional response that stems from “shame” (2.2.83) — and her desire for retribution therefore justified.⁴⁶⁹ Her words are so convincing, in fact, that Vasquez tells his master, “[y]ou do not well; this was not your promise” (2.2.96) and later, that “[t]his part has been scurvily played” (2.2.102).

Because of Hippolita’s firm belief that she is linguistically and emotionally stable while Soranzo is unreliable and changeable, I wanted to test how actors and readers might embody the emotions portrayed by these characters while thinking specifically about whether or not there is a gendered difference in how this is done. Do the words used by female and male characters *sound* different to an audience? Is Ford distinguishing between perceived female and male emotions in this scene? Are particularly emotive words easily gendered? How might an actor embody or convey masculinity or femininity through their words or actions on stage? These questions formed the basis of a virtual performance workshop that

⁴⁶⁸ Stanavage, p. 156.

⁴⁶⁹ See p. 172-174 of this thesis, particularly the quotations from Seneca on punishment as a natural reaction to humiliation.

explored Act 2, scene 2 through a script-in-hand reading.⁴⁷⁰ It quickly became clear that the workshop participants, too, believed that Soranzo's "part ha[d] been scurvily played" (2.2.102). As we worked through the scene together, one participant said they felt that Hippolita was "kind of defending herself as this holy, wronged character and chaste and pure", while Soranzo's assertion that she was unruly and uncontrollable — "a woman frantic" (2.2.67) who was "past all rules of sense" (2.2.60) — struck them as dismissive and at odds with Hippolita's eloquent argument.⁴⁷¹ A female participant summarized her reaction to the extract by saying,

I think men might see [Hippolita] come in and go, 'what is this hysterical woman doing', where my instinct is much more, 'what's he done?' [There is] a sense that she's angry because of a reason, that it's not just senseless anger, or anger directed at nothing, it's anger directed at a certain thing for a certain reason.⁴⁷²

With no contextual knowledge of the rest of the play, the workshop attendees were moved by the affective power of Hippolita's words and felt she had successfully justified both her anger at and confrontation of Soranzo.

For both the characters in the play and an audience hearing and seeing it performed, it is clear that Hippolita has just cause for her complaint, as Vasquez confirms to her privately (2.2.112-113). Her mistake — the moment she shifts from sinned against to sinning — comes once Soranzo leaves the stage. Again, Hippolita rehearses her complaint against him, saying that he "shuns the use of that which I more scorn / Than I once loved, his love" (2.2.104-105). But in the

⁴⁷⁰ The script for this workshop can be found in Appendix C.3 workshop scripts, *Embodying Emotion in 'Tis Pity She's a Whore* (12 June 2020), p. 351-354.

⁴⁷¹ Appendix A.1 transcript, Virtual Workshop, *Emotion and Embodiment in Early Modern Theatre* (12 June 2020), p. 247; Appendix B.3, questionnaire and anonymous responses from *Emotion and Embodiment in Early Modern Theatre*, with MEMS Festival 2020 (12 June 2020), p. 264.

⁴⁷² Appendix A.1 transcript, p. 269.

next breath she resolves to punish him herself: “But let him go: / My vengeance shall give comfort to his woe” (2.2.105-106). It is this oath of revenge that causes Vasquez to qualify his acknowledgement of her rightful anger, saying, “[s]ome [cause] I confess you have, but sure, not so much as you imagine” (2.2.113-114). Her just cause has been weakened, according to Vasquez, by her words, which are “miserably bitter” (2.2.116) and “too shrewd” (2.2.118). Where Soranzo reiterated Elizabethan tropes, Vasquez mimics Swetnam’s Jacobean pamphlet, where widows are known for their “cruell tongue[s]” and “vex[ing]” words.⁴⁷³ The two men establish a lengthy precedent, against which Hippolita’s words and actions are measured and judged. This precedent is unambiguous: women who lack a firm male presence in their lives will become unruly and try to turn their words into disordered action. But as this chapter has shown, such a precedent is not unique to widowed women; married women like Mariam and Salome voiced their own bitter complaints as well (with Salome even swearing to take action against her husband [*Mariam* 1.4.41-50]) and they were harshly chastised or punished by their husbands for it.⁴⁷⁴ In each case, these women must be restrained and brought back under male control.

The workshop’s modern audience of actor-readers, however, identified disorder and unruliness as hallmarks of both Hippolita and Soranzo’s behavior in this scene, removing a gendered difference from these qualities. Both characters were described in aggressive and violent terms: Soranzo “lashes out” or angrily “storms out”, while Hippolita “inwad[es] the stage”, “bursting, busting, [or]

⁴⁷³ Swetnam, p. 60-61.

⁴⁷⁴ See also Emily Shortslef, ‘Acts of Will: Countersovereignty and Complaining in *the Tragedy of Mariam*’, in *Early Modern Women’s Complaint: Gender, Form, and Politics*, ed. by Sarah C. E. Ross and Rosalind Smith (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), 117-136.

barging” into the space.⁴⁷⁵ These words were paired with confrontational and abrupt hand gestures — the participants offered a range of gestures during our reading, including pointing sharply at their webcams, clenching a fist as if to punch someone, or mimicking the action of slamming a door.⁴⁷⁶ As one participant noted, this sense of aggression permeated the entire extract; in the first lines of our workshop script,

the author himself writes that this is a ‘rude intrusion’ that ‘interrupts peace’. So, here, we are staging a conflict, we have to break the status quo, break the calm of this situation, and that’s why I think we are led to imagine this is something violent.⁴⁷⁷

But despite the fact that both Soranzo and Hippolita speak and act angrily in this scene, Hippolita is introduced as the more aggressive party: the participants pointed out that she is described with words that indicate consistently forceful actions and gestures more frequently than the male characters with whom she shares the stage. These actions and gestures might have had an impact on our use of space as well, had the participants and I been able to occupy the same room; the movements attributed to Hippolita would likely have translated to especially powerful and affective physical action if we had been able to demarcate the intimate and enclosed space of Soranzo’s study. Her invasion of that small room could imply a visual switching of gendered roles, mirroring the rhetoric of this scene and the anxiety around the potential emasculation of men by widows: Hippolita’s dominating physical presence reads as traditionally masculine, while Soranzo’s inconstant and changeable language matches the stereotypically feminine manner in which he passively receives that spatial violation.

⁴⁷⁵ Appendix A.1 transcript, p. 256, 272, 269.

⁴⁷⁶ Appendix A.1 transcript, p. 260, 262, 272.

⁴⁷⁷ Appendix A.1 transcript, p. 269.

The discrepancy between modern and early modern notions of gender and emotion was made abundantly clear here; while the participants identified emotions and characteristics that they saw in both male and female roles, regardless of gender, Ford's writing suggested a firm belief that certain emotions were more (or, indeed, less) acceptable in men or women. This, in turn, implied that while anger itself could not be gendered, an audiences' reaction to the embodiment of this anger could be impacted by the gender of the character performatively experiencing this emotion. In practice, this shows an unsurprising shift in certain western, socially constructed tropes of womanhood. While sixteenth- and seventeenth-century women were expected not to show or express anger, as it contradicted the passive and deferential interpretation of ideal femininity, twenty-first-century audiences (like those who elected to participate in this workshop) have been increasingly exposed to examples of women who demonstrate their anger publicly. Instead of making her "monstrous" (2.2.97), as Soranzo insists, Hippolita's anger made her, in the workshop setting, "powerful".⁴⁷⁸ Yet echoes of the early modern period are still clearly visible in the criticism and denigration of public expressions of anger made by women today (especially women of color); even in this workshop, the only male participant in the workshop said of Soranzo, "[he] says, 'The vows I made, if you remember well, were wicked and unlawful', maybe that's true? I have no reason not to believe him".⁴⁷⁹ Even so, this shift in perception marks a change to the response audiences

⁴⁷⁸ Appendix A.1 transcript, p. 263.

⁴⁷⁹ Appendix A.1 transcript, p. 263. This same participant later acknowledged that he had no real reason not to believe Hippolita as well, since her words to Soranzo made it clear that "she's been wronged, she's been tricked". (Appendix A.1 transcript, p. 263.)

might have to a forceful expression of anger from a character like Hippolita.⁴⁸⁰ The participants' description of her as "powerful" means that, rather than framing Hippolita's words in Act 2, scene 2 as a rejection of femininity, they saw her angry rhetoric as a now essential part of modern womanhood.

But while the modern audience's reaction to a powerful, angry woman is perhaps more positive, overall, than an early modern audience's response, I do not wish to suggest that Hippolita's role was written and performed in such a way as to appear *less* powerful to seventeenth-century audiences. In fact, I want to suggest that Ford's characterization of Soranzo and Vasquez's replies in this scene indicates that an early modern audience *should* hear the strength and anger behind Hippolita's words. Despite the fact that Soranzo has left Hippolita "to [her] shame" (2.2.83), she holds enough authority to be able to enter his house (even into the private space of his study) and speak her mind without any meaningful interruption from Soranzo or his servant, disrupting the expectations of quiet passivity associated with women of "gentle birth" (2.2.157). Herein lies the truly dangerous potential of Hippolita's power: not just that she is a woman who is openly expressing and attempting to act on her anger, but that she can be so powerful while doing so. This formidably un-feminine behavior could complicate the audience's response: on the one hand, contemporary literature and sermons make clear that an audience should not condone Hippolita's forceful words and actions; on the other hand, if we believe her argument that Soranzo has grossly mistreated her with his inconstant behavior and inconsistent language, then

⁴⁸⁰ For contemporary discussions of female anger, see Carla Kaplan, Sarah Haley, and Durba Mitra, 'Outraged/Enraged: The Rage Special Issue', *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 46.4 (2021), 785-800; and Soraya Chemaly, *Rage Becomes Her: The Power of Women's Anger* (London: Simon & Schuster UK, 2018).

Hippolita's desire for revenge after this confrontation is, as the modern audience pointed out, perfectly reasonable. Ford's writing, therefore, does not shy away from a nuanced portrayal of gendered verbal violence. Instead, Hippolita is a woman driven to un-feminine rage and a desire to enact vengeance and an audience should hear the dangerous potential in her words.

This power was also visible in the written workshop feedback, where the participants felt that Hippolita spoke to a "sense of injustice" and "actively [...] seeks a resolution for her complaints".⁴⁸¹ These modern readers expected "more open" displays of emotion from the female character that might cast her as hysterical and identified a "connection between male emotion and concealment" in this scene.⁴⁸² This reflected both early modern and modern sentiments, reiterating Stanavage and Bloom's arguments on the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century expectation of masculine self-regulation, and the twentieth- and twenty-first-century belief that the "suppression and control of emotions are key" to the image of a stoic, male ideal.⁴⁸³ The female participants in particular drew parallels between the 1629 text and their own experiences in 2020, writing, that "female anger [has been] used as a tool to discredit valid opinions" and that this scene read like "[e]very interaction where a woman is angry about something and a man tells her to calm down [or] asks her if she's on her period".⁴⁸⁴

For these participants, anger was not only an essential part of characterization but also an entry point into understanding and engaging with this

⁴⁸¹ Appendix B.3 questionnaire, p. 332.

⁴⁸² Appendix B.3 questionnaire, p. 332.

⁴⁸³ Stanavage, p. 157 and Bloom, p. 11; Greg Murray, Fiona Judd, Henry Jackson, Caitlin Fraser, Angela Komiti, Pip Pattison, Alex Wearing, and Garry Robbins, 'Big boys don't cry: An investigation of stoicism and its mental health outcomes', *Personality and Individual Differences*, 44.6 (2007), 1369-1381 (p. 1370).

⁴⁸⁴ Appendix B.3 questionnaire, p. 333, 334.

text on a personal level, as they identified with Hippolita and recognized real power behind her words. Their instinct was supported by the language of the scene: Hippolita exhibits far greater rhetorical control in Act 2, scene 2 than does Soranzo. During their 76-line verbal sparring match, for example, six of Hippolita's seven speech cues constitute shared lines, often signifying interruptions, as she clips Soranzo's lines and mimics his turns of phrase (she changes his "too violent" [2.2.51] to "too double" [2.2.51]) thereby consistently regaining linguistic control of the scene. This responsiveness from the participants is not, I suggest, at odds with Ford's development of the play as a whole — indeed, Vasquez takes Hippolita's anger and verbal power equally seriously. Rather, the process of testing the embodiment of emotion proved that Hippolita is not a counterpoint to Annabella, but to the male characters of this play, as Ford places the stylistic composition and power of angry, violent words spoken by men and widows on nearly equal footing.

Mistress and Monstrous

From a textual standpoint, Hippolita's essential trait is not her anger, but her widowhood. Just as Soranzo and Vasquez reference widowhood as evidence of her feminine instability, Hippolita uses her status as a formerly married woman to exercise a seemingly unfeminine autonomy, offering Vasquez "myself and all what I can else call mine" (2.2.145) if he will help her take revenge. This sentiment is repeated twelve lines later, when Hippolita vows to "make thee lord of me and mine estate" (2.2.157). Like Tamora, Hippolita chooses to weaponize her femininity while simultaneously rejecting feminine tropes of behavior. She negotiates on her own behalf (participating in one form of the "emasculating

exchange of gender roles” between widows and the men who seek to marry them that Panek cites in her work), but in this case the reward is Hippolita’s own body.⁴⁸⁵ Here, however, the male agent is not meant to act *for* her, as Aaron does for Tamora, but *with* her: Hippolita contracts Vasquez to “help to bring to pass a plot” (2.2.155) that Hippolita has already developed on her own. This ownership of the revenge plot by Hippolita is signaled verbally through her consistent use of the word “shall”. Just as in Chapter One, “shall” does not imply the same sense of futurity that “will” holds; instead, it connotes “compulsory necessity” and the consequential actuality of violent action.⁴⁸⁶ That is, when Hippolita swears that her “vengeance **shall** give comfort to his woe” (2.2.106, emphasis added) and that “it **shall** be so” (2.2.124, emphasis added), she promises, in a linguistic register which reads as masculine in its surety of action, that violence *will take place* as a result of Soranzo’s broken pledge.

Yet in the very next scene, the audience learns that Hippolita is not actually widowed and any remaining right to action she previously held, disappears. Her husband, Richardetto (who is still very much alive, though appears disguised), uses aggressively gendered language when speaking about Hippolita, calling her “wanton” (2.3.7) and “lascivious” (2.3.7), and criticizing her “loose adultery” (2.3.12). These targeted insults, all coded female, cast Hippolita as a creature consumed by lust, figured in this play as a particularly destructive appetitive desire. Robert Burton, in his *Anatomy of Melancholy*, calls lust “a disease” and a “brutish passion”, and he warns that “thunder and lightning, fires, plagues, have not done that mischief to mankind, as this burning luste”.⁴⁸⁷ This image of

⁴⁸⁵ Panek, p. 54.

⁴⁸⁶ Abbott, p. 225. See also Hope, p. 144; and Chapter One of this thesis, p. 88-89, 100.

⁴⁸⁷ Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (London, 1621), p. 536. STC (2nd ed.) 4159.

burning lust is reimagined by Ford when Hippolita attempts to take revenge, as Vasquez publicly compares her to “a fire-brand that hath kindled others and burnt thyself” (4.1.74-75). Both her lust and her desire for vengeful action, about which she swears, “I [sha]ll do it bravely” (3.8.5), are turned back on her in a metaphorical and literal enactment of Burton’s words. When Hippolita drinks the poison intended for Soranzo, she speaks of “cruel, cruel flames” (4.1.96) and “[h]eat above hell fire” (4.1.95) as she is destroyed from the inside out.

Poison was not considered a solely female mode of violence in the early modern period (indeed, K. J. Kesselring’s study on gender and homicide shows that women “killed more often with their bare hands”, “strangl[ing], suffocate[ing] and drown[ing]” victims rather than using poisons or instruments like daggers or cudgels), but it nonetheless provided an opportunity for women to assert power over men in a subtle and almost passive way.⁴⁸⁸ Poison was characterized as a particularly terrifying form of violence, attacking and destroying the body through “unsuspecting ingestion”, and perpetrated by social inferiors with intimate access to their superior, usually in an effort to disrupt social or domestic hierarchies.⁴⁸⁹ In plotting to offer Soranzo the poisoned cup, she enacts one of the behaviors about which Swetnam warns his male readers: that “a woman will feed thee with hony, and [then] poyson thee with gall”.⁴⁹⁰ “Gall” here I take to refer both to Hippolita’s harsh speech and also the liquid in the cup she holds, but also harkens back to Lady Macbeth’s association of milk with gall (*Macbeth* 1.5.48), marking gall

⁴⁸⁸ K. J. Kesselring, ‘Bodies of Evidence: Sex and Murder (or Gender and Homicide) in Early Modern England, c. 1500-1680’, *Gender & History*, 27.2 (2015), 245-262 (p. 250); see also Catherine E. Thomas, ‘Toxic Encounters: Poisoning in Early Modern English Literature and Culture’, *Literature Compass*, 9.1 (2012), 48-55 (p. 48-49) and Tanya Pollard, *Drugs and Theater in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

⁴⁸⁹ Thomas, p. 51, 50; Pollard, p. 110.

⁴⁹⁰ Swetnam, p. 5.

as uniquely feminine; together, language and object embody the symptom and the much feared result of an unruly woman acting without male control or restraint. But the “right” (4.1.49) of violent revenge to which Hippolita still lays “claim” (4.1.47) is undone by her false widowhood and willingness to adopt a widow’s anti-feminine mastery over men, and her “poysoned hatred” destroys her instead.⁴⁹¹

Hippolita begins her revenge in much the same way as she first approached Soranzo: she boldly enters a private space where she is unwelcome. When she unveils herself, she is just as eloquent and self-assured as she was in Act 2; her opening lines build on each other, with Act 2’s “[’t]is I. / Do you know me now?” (2.2.25-26) developing into Act 4’s “you shall know. / What think you now?” (4.1.37-38). She has cast herself as a revenger in the same tradition as Vindice in *The Revenger’s Tragedy* or Hieronimo in *The Spanish Tragedy*, using a masque to gain access to and then “reckon” (4.1.42) with her wrongdoer. Crucially, however, while all three revengers must (in keeping with generic traditions) die, there is a greater urgency to prevent Hippolita’s attempt at revenge and re-contain her within the patriarchal system. As men, Vindice and Hieronimo are permitted to redress the wrongs done to their families although they must pay for enacting further wrongs themselves. As a woman, Hippolita is not given the same license. Nonetheless, she reiterates her claim of justified anger, saying that “it hath been said that I would claim / Some interest in Soranzo, now [Annabella’s] lord; / What I have right to do, his soul knows best” (4.1.47-49). She relies on metaphors of commerce and the law in this speech, using words like “reckon” (4.1.42), “claim”

⁴⁹¹ Swetnam, p. 15.

(4.1.47), “interest” (4.1.48), and “right” (4.1.49) to code her rhetoric as male and re-assert her identity as a widow allowed to negotiate on her own behalf without a male agent. This negotiation, in turn, lays the groundwork for her planned violent action — in both cases, Hippolita both speaks and acts for herself. These metaphors continue as she “*join[s] Annabella and Soranzo hand in hand*” (4.1.52sd), promising “[t]hat you may know my single charity: / Freely I here remit all interest / I e’er could claim and give you back your vows” (4.1.56-58). But Hippolita is not allowed to successfully complete the act of vengeance, as the same false “charity” (4.1.56) she offers to Soranzo in the form of the poisoned cup is turned back on her by Vasquez (4.1.79). Vasquez interprets Hippolita’s failure through a gendered lens: she is unsuccessful because she is a “woman” (4.1.80), and therefore unable to complete such action for herself. Yet both he and the assembled wedding guests seem unsure of how to make sense of a woman who has nonetheless attempted a violent act on her own behalf. They mix gendered verbal referents, she is both “woman” (4.1.89) and “creature” (4.1.104), mistress and monstrous, feminine and un-feminine.⁴⁹²

Nowhere is this duality made clearer than in Vasquez’s use of the simultaneously gendered and ungendered word, “thing” (4.1.79). As Chapter Two’s analysis of Bill Brown’s ‘thing theory’ and the agentic power of certain objects illustrates, “thing” is a loaded term that indicates a level of animacy in an

⁴⁹² Patricia A. Parker notes that, in early modern texts, the word “monstrous” is often used to refer to the act of “uncovering or bringing to light something at the same time characterized as ‘monstrous’ or ‘obscene’”; to call Hippolita “monstrous” (2.2.97) or a “creature” (4.1.104), then, refers not only to the shocking discovery of her attempted revenge but also to the un-gendering she undergoes by enacting un-feminine violence. Parker, ‘Fantasies of “Race” and “Gender”: Africa, *Othello* and bringing to light’, in *Women, “Race,” and Writing in the Early Modern Period*, ed. by Margo Hendricks and Patricia A. Parker, 2nd edn. (London: Routledge, 2013), 85-100 (p. 87). See also Tassi, p. 20.

object, that may or may not be controllable.⁴⁹³ To identify Hippolita as a “thing” (4.1.79) as Vasquez does here is to, in part, acknowledge her powerful capacity for independent action and efficacy. But at the same time, “thing” holds multiple gendered, sexual connotations in the early modern period. Gordon Williams, in his glossary of *Shakespeare’s Sexual Language*, writes that “thing” can also indicate both “the woman’s sex” (that is, the vagina) or “a whore”.⁴⁹⁴ Both potential meanings fit, as allusions both to Hippolita’s lust and also to her promise that Vasquez will enjoy her once her vengeance is complete. But this doubleness is further strengthened by the use of gendered and ungendered words referring to Hippolita throughout the remainder of the scene. While she is still figured as female in Vasquez’s speech, through the use of the feminine pronouns “she” and “her”, she is also transformed into something unrecognizable, a “thing of malice” (4.1.79-80), “so vile a creature” (4.1.104), and the representation of the vices of “lust and pride” (4.1.105). As when Tamora became Revenge, so, too, Hippolita embodies Lust: destructive abstractions that are anthropomorphically cast as female.

But while Revenge serves to reaffirm Tamora’s gender, marking her as recognizably feminine, Hippolita’s attempt at violent action causes confusion. While Lust fits into the image of femininity that writers like Swetnam condemn and caution their readers to avoid, it usually results in “amorous glances”, “folly”, and “infamy” (the same damage to one’s reputation for which Hippolita blames Soranzo in Act 2) rather than murder.⁴⁹⁵ Performing an act of vengeance is so far

⁴⁹³ See Chapter Two of this thesis, p. 108-109.

⁴⁹⁴ Gordon Williams, *Shakespeare’s Sexual Language: A Glossary* (London & New York: Continuum, 2007), p. 306-307.

⁴⁹⁵ Swetnam, p. 31, 26.

outside the sphere of acceptable (or expected) female behavior that it escapes verbal comprehension. The men simultaneously reassert Hippolita's gender in their disbelief that a "woman" (4.1.89) could take such action and deny her womanhood, calling her "creature" (4.1.104), because they have witnessed the very near success of an attempt at revenge that threatens male authority.

As she is subdued by her imminent death, Hippolita's rhetoric shifts back into the feminine register of optative subjunctive curses, which Doris uses to good effect in *The Tragedy of Mariam*. When women cannot or, in Hippolita's case, can no longer act, curses remain a vehicle for speaking future harm into existence. The optative "may" appears three times in Hippolita's final speech, as she wishes for and calls down inevitable hurt upon Soranzo with some vigor: first, "may thy bed / Of marriage be a rack unto thy heart" (4.1.97-98); then, "mayst thou live / To father bastards" (4.1.100-101); and finally, "may her womb bring forth / Monsters, and die together in your sins, / Hated, scorned and unpitied" (4.1.101-103). The men's denouncement of her as "woman" (4.1.80, 89) and "creature" (4.1.104) has successfully returned Hippolita from unruliness to being ruled: her dangerous capacity for violence is re-contained, her rhetoric is changed from masculine and demonstrative *violent language* to feminine and descriptive *language about violence*, and social order is preserved.

In its exploration of the female revenger, I have argued that *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* joins a long line of plays which subvert audiences' expectations of violent women. Ford uses conventional tropes of widowhood to destabilize and expand the normative view of the angry woman. Instead of focusing on the frustrated desires of women who are limited in their action or not permitted to act at all, Ford's Hippolita uses her perceived widowhood to her advantage, leveraging what

Froide cites as the “privileges English society afforded to wives, mothers, and widows” after their husbands’ deaths.⁴⁹⁶ These privileges translate into a certain amount of freedom, where widows are allowed a degree of un-feminine independence and agency and could negotiate or act on their own behalf, rather than through a male agent. Hippolita in turn interprets this prerogative as the justification needed to confront Soranzo when he wrongs and shames her. Her encounter with Soranzo makes it appear, linguistically, as if the two have switched roles, with Soranzo cast as the changeable, verbal party normally coded female and Hippolita as the traditionally masculine, stable and physical presence — a claim strengthened by the practice-based workshop participants’ discussion of gendered and embodied language and emotions.

Crucially, however, I have argued that Hippolita’s plan for vengeance hinges on a concurrent rejection and affirmation of her femininity similar to Lady Macbeth, as she makes use of masculine registers of speech to plot her revenge while also utilizing her womanhood to gain access to Soranzo during her attempt to kill him. Ultimately, this shifting use of gendered tropes proves unsustainable and Hippolita is figured as not only un-feminine but also unhuman in an attempt by the male characters to re-contain and control what they see as destructive unruliness. The contemporary pamphlet literature I have brought into dialogue with this play suggests that this unruliness presents a threat to the natural order of the world, upsetting the hierarchy recognized in Cleaver’s conception of the little commonwealth.⁴⁹⁷ The lesson is clear: for a woman to adopt such masculine behaviors as violent speech and action is to open up society to disorder and

⁴⁹⁶ Froide, p. 7.

⁴⁹⁷ Cleaver, p. 13.

danger, where female anger as a display of mastery disrupts patriarchal systems of power.

Chapter Conclusion

In his 1616 treatise on anger, John Downname explicitly ties this emotion to language, writing that the “cheife nourishment whereby anger is nourished and increased, is multiplying of words”, for

wordes [may] be sayd to be but winde; for as nothing sooner than winde causeth a small sparke to burst out into a furious flame: so nothing sooner doth cause a small spark of anger increase to a raging flame of revenge, then the winde of wordes.⁴⁹⁸

For Downname, words do nothing more than fan the flame of a person’s choler, whether they are spoken to them or by them. This chapter has similarly demonstrated the extent to which women’s anger in particular is intricately bound up with words, through their use of descriptive *language about violence* and in their attempts to access truly demonstrative *violent language*. Focusing on some of the vengeful, angry female characters from *Titus Andronicus*, *The Tragedy of Mariam*, and *’Tis Pity She’s a Whore*, I have argued that cultural expectations of womanhood are central to the experience of female anger, as these women embody recognizable tropes of femininity and reject the lack of action found in these tropes. The process of un-gendering themselves becomes a core part of women’s attempts to enact violence in response to their anger. While none of the women studied in detail in this chapter are quite as explicit as Lady Macbeth and her urging that the “spirits” should “unsex [her] here” (1.5.40-41), this defeminization appears in other ways, rooted in allusions and grammatical

⁴⁹⁸ Downname, p. 73.

constructions that are simultaneously gendered female and anti-feminine. The unfeminine angry woman and the violence of which she is potentially capable become points of acute anxiety for the men around her, who fear the disruption of the patriarchal structures of society.

Across the three case studies, this chapter has worked to expose the permissible modes of angry expression to which women are given access. It has examined the distinct ways men and women write about violence through their female characters and developed the notion of the unfeminine as unhuman through linguistic associations of women with beasts and monsters. Even those women like Mariam and Doris, who express a desire for violent action specifically in order to shore up or return them to an idealized and culturally acceptable image of womanhood, are deemed dangerous and subsequently punished. The practical performance work in this chapter has demonstrated that the intertwining of rhetoric and action is not only potent and heightened during those moments when violence is accomplished on stage (as shown in Chapters One and Two), but that this intertwining still holds great force even when characters are unable to act. The violent potential of their words carries such insistence in performance that the audience can sense in a very immediate fashion the frustrated acts of violence that remain just outside the characters' reach. Once more, the intersection between modes of language and performance illustrates the importance of the methodological approach this thesis has taken, combining detailed grammatical analysis with that of performance. Violence remains, as it has throughout this thesis, an embodied expression of control, but this control is ultimately withheld from women and made available to men alone.

Conclusion

On 6 January 2021, a violent mob stormed the U.S. Capitol building in Washington, D.C. Urged to action by then-President Donald Trump, the insurrectionists broke into the Senate chambers, where the results of the recent presidential election were set to be certified. They hunted down members of Congress, looted and vandalized the building, and chanted “hang Mike Pence”, a reference to the Republican vice president who presided over this particular electoral results certification session.⁴⁹⁹ The president’s speech preceding the insurrectionists’ march on the Capitol centered on a call to arms: that those attending what was billed as the Save America March should “fight like hell. And if you don’t fight like hell, you’re not going to have a country anymore”.⁵⁰⁰ Five weeks later, House impeachment manager Diana DeGette stood before the U.S. Senate and argued that the insurrectionists’

own statements before, during and after the attack make clear the attack was done for Donald Trump, at his instructions and to fulfill his wishes. They truly believed that the whole intrusion was at the president’s orders, and we know that because they said so.⁵⁰¹

The violent actions of the mob, which resulted in five deaths and nearly 150 injuries, were the direct consequence of the then-president’s violent rhetoric, as he incited his followers to, in one Senator’s words, “beat and blood[y] our own

⁴⁹⁹ U.S. House, Committee on the Judiciary, ‘Materials in Support of H. Res 24, Impeaching Donald John Trump, President of the United States, for High Crimes and Misdemeanors’ (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2021), p. 16, 39.

⁵⁰⁰ ‘Transcript of Trump’s speech at rally before US Capitol riot’, *AP News* (14 January 2021), <<https://apnews.com/article/election-2020-joe-biden-donald-trump-capitol-siege-media-e79eb5164613d6718e9f4502eb471f27>> [accessed 5 July 2021], n.p.

⁵⁰¹ Barbara Sprunt, ‘House Impeachment Managers Wrap Their Case’, *NPR* (11 February 2021), <<https://www.npr.org/sections/trump-impeachment-trial-live-updates/2021/02/11/967076505/house-impeachment-managers-wrap-their-case>> [accessed 6 July 2021], n.p.

police”, deface the Senate and House chambers, “hunt down the Speaker of the House”, and “buil[d] a gallows and [chant] about murdering” members of Congress.⁵⁰² As even Republican Senator Mitch McConnell said at the close of the impeachment trial, “the president’s intemperate language on January 6th” left “no question that President Trump [was] practically and morally responsible for provoking the events of that day”.⁵⁰³ While “intemperate” is undoubtedly too passive a description for the president’s performative rhetoric (a fact which became clear during the public hearings held by the Select Committee to Investigate the January 6th Attack on the United States Capitol), there was a clear connection drawn between words and deeds both on 6 January and in its aftermath. Inflammatory language both incited and compounded the violent and deadly attack on a federal building.

In terms of a modern example of performative verbal violence enacting real violent action, then, there is no better case study than the January insurrection. The House impeachment managers’ case, that the former president “set the stage for the Capitol attack in the months leading up to January 6th, and [that] on that date, he exhorted the mob into a frenzy, aimed it like a loaded gun down Pennsylvania Avenue, and pulled the trigger”, relies on an understanding of language as a means of prompting, underscoring, and achieving violent actions — the same argument that this thesis has made regarding language and action in

⁵⁰² ‘Transcript: Mitch McConnell’s Trump impeachment speech’, *Al Jazeera English* (14 February 2021), <<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/2/14/mcconnell-on-impeachment-disgraceful-dereliction>> [accessed 6 July 2021], n.p.

⁵⁰³ ‘Transcript: Mitch McConnell’s Trump impeachment speech’, n.p. In her resignation letter, former Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos wrote that “[t]here is no mistaking the impact [the president’s] rhetoric had on the situation”, ‘Betsy DeVos resignation letter’, *The Washington Post* (7 January 2021), <<https://www.washingtonpost.com/context/betsy-devos-resignation-letter/cfd93504-2353-4ac3-8e71-155446242dda/>> [accessed 11 August 2022], n.p.

early modern theatres.⁵⁰⁴ While the violent actions performed on stage are not real (and, so, do not hold the same real-world gravity or finality as those enacted at the January insurrection), the link I have drawn between violent words and deeds in early modern drama is mirrored in the twenty-first century by the violent words and deeds of the president and his followers in this instance. In paying attention to the embodiment of linguistic violence in performance, this thesis has attempted to address the need for further scholarly work on the complex relationship between the physical and rhetorical in both early modern texts and contemporary performance and offered new critical vocabularies for analyzing the intersections of spoken and enacted violence on stage.

As the House impeachment managers argued so firmly, violent rhetoric has actual, violent consequences.⁵⁰⁵ So, too, has this thesis demonstrated that there is an intricate and immediate connection between violent words and violent actions in early modern tragedies. Throughout, I have argued that words and deeds are inseparable and are deliberately put into practice together in order to craft specific, spectacular acts of violence on the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English stage. I have shown that staged violence is not restricted solely to physical movements and argued that scholarly work on violence that considers only those

⁵⁰⁴ U.S. House, Committee on the Judiciary, p. 26. Others have already drawn a comparison between Trump, the insurrection, and certain early modern dramatists (see Will Quinn, 'What Shakespeare Tells Us About the Trump Insurrection', *OZY* [3 February 2021], <<https://www.ozy.com/news-and-politics/opinion-what-shakespeare-tells-us-about-the-trump-insurrection/419588/>>, n.p.; and Charles McNulty, 'What "Hamlet" has to say about Trump's impeachment trial', *LA Times* [8 February 2021], <<https://www.latimes.com/entertainment-arts/story/2021-02-09/trump-impeachment-trial-hamlet-shakespeare-insurrection>>, n.p.).

⁵⁰⁵ U.S. House, Committee on the Judiciary, p. 19. The 2022 Select Committee also made a case for the direct connection between rhetoric and action and included evidence from text messages sent by the president's former campaign manager, Brad Parscale, who acknowledged that "[Trump's] rhetoric killed someone". '07/12/21 Select Committee Hearing', Select Committee Website, <<https://january6th.house.gov/legislation/hearings/071222-select-committee-hearing>> [accessed 11 August 2022].

physical acts of aggression risks overlooking the expansive interpretations of the word 'violence' available to and used by writers, thinkers, and theatregoers in the early modern period. Similarly, I have demonstrated the need for twenty-first-century practitioners to think about the implications of performing early modern works today, as they stage works that actively inscribe violence on the bodies of the actors. Playwrights from Thomas Kyd to John Ford used language to represent and prompt forms of violence that ranged from the physical acts of stabbing, raping, or maiming; the verbal act of calling down a curse on one's enemies; the state-sanctioned violence of executions; and the psychological and emotional violence of dehumanization and objectification. In attending to the role of language in staged violence, I have argued that embodied words carry their own unique materiality, wherein speech generates not only meaning and feeling, but also material forms of action and impact. Rhetoric is not just *heard* in the theatre, it is *enacted*, it is *felt*, and it is *experienced*.

Throughout this thesis, I have shown that early modern playwrights consciously accessed two distinct vocabularies of violence — both of which build on neo-Senecan and medieval traditions of rhetoric and performance — and that they developed, in turn, a cultural lexicon of violence and its representation on stage and in print. In uncovering these vocabularies, which I have called the demonstrative vocabulary of *violent language* and the descriptive vocabulary of *language about violence*, this thesis redresses the critical tendency to skim over a deeper discussion of violence: where scholars have written important work on violence more broadly, this work lacks the specificity needed to interrogate fully what it means to claim that language is violent or that there is violence in a play's language. In response, I have argued that a deeper consideration of the embedded

nature of language in dramatic action and vice versa can help scholars identify distinct vocabularies of dramatic violence. Part of this process means moving away from a solely theoretical or textual view of violence, refocusing our attention on language as and in performance. Put simply, words and actions drive each other, effecting the theatrically real violence that the audience sees and hears. Violence is not merely physical or textual — in these premodern plays, it is both simultaneously — and our scholarship must account for the theatrical intersections of text, body, and performance in order to fully grasp the powerful impact of violence in early modern tragedies on players, playgoers, and readers then and now.

In viewing violence as a simultaneously written, spoken, and enacted thing, Chapter One began with *The Spanish Tragedy* and argued that when violence is verbalized and embodied on stage it finds its mark not only in the audience's ears but also on the actors' bodies. The deictic word "thus" drives the action behind each character's dagger or poniard, physicalizing language and inscribing it on the body. Similarly, in *A Yorkshire Tragedy*, language was utilized as the propelling force behind violent action, shaping and underpinning the Husband's assault on his wife and the murder of his children. In plays, then, words hold both an affective power as well as a physical power, each activated in the act of theatrical performance. One goal of this thesis, therefore, has been to model a form of rhetorical analysis of early modern plays that considers the embodied action of performance as it is intertwined with the written and spoken words of the performance text, reinforcing the action that is written on the page through embodied practice on the stage. My conversations with two theatre professionals about *The Spanish Tragedy* and the workshop with amateur actors on *A Yorkshire*

Tragedy underlined the importance of this methodological model, as each performance-informed experience generated new insights into the enactment of rhetorical violence and demonstrated the importance of seeing language embodied. Conducting analysis in this way offers scholars a chance to move past a binary view of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century dramatic works as the products of or for either the page or the stage individually; it opens the field up, as W. B. Worthen encouraged in 2003, to a study of early modern theatre that goes beyond just a “textual form” or “mode of utterance” and focuses instead on theatre as “an act with *force*”.⁵⁰⁶

Building on existing work on ‘thing theory’, stage props, and linguistic animacy, Chapter Two argued that words in performance not only enact acts of violence, verbally prompting and propelling violent action, but also grant force and efficacy, affording and inciting further opportunities for staged violence to occur. By analyzing language’s ability to both enliven and un-enliven on stage, I demonstrated a potential new avenue for scholarly discussions of violence against women in early modern plays, examining not only the wife beatings of plays like *A Yorkshire Tragedy* in Chapter One, but also the rhetorical anatomizing and breaking down of women’s bodies that occurs in plays such as *The Revenger’s Tragedy*, in which a dead woman’s skull is stolen from her and used to enact a perverse type of justice via the sexual acts she died to avoid. In other words, in Chapter Two I have expanded our understanding of how staged violence is deployed against women, not only physically but also psychologically and linguistically. Such an expansion is necessary because it will help both scholars of

⁵⁰⁶ W. B. Worthen, *Shakespeare and the Force of Modern Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 8.

early modern drama and theatre practitioners define, discuss, and think practically (that is, think about embodiment in practice) about the range of acts of violence visible in the drama we study, direct, and perform. The two workshops in this chapter were designed to foreground the embodied practice of violence, testing the experience of violence on the body on stage and thinking about the ways that body parts as props variously enliven themselves and are enlivened by the actors who use them, both physically and linguistically. Through a focus on the Gloriana skull in *The Revenger's Tragedy* and the Lady's corpse in *The Lady's Tragedy*, the actors and I examined the language that serves to position the violated female corpse between living, animated subject and dead, inanimate object, and interrogated the simultaneous reality of the subject, object, and thing that occurs on the living actor's body when they 'play dead'. By identifying the language and parts of speech that contribute to acts of staged violence in less overt ways (the pronoun "it", for instance, instead of more obvious verbs like "strike" or "stab"), it is my goal to reframe the discourse surrounding women's bodies and body parts on stage, keeping space for the physical violence that these women have perpetrated against them while also expanding the discussion to the verbal acts of violence which not only cause harm but also leave residual linguistic marks.

Chapter Three continued my examination of gender and verbal violence, arguing that, in early modern plays, women are prevented from accessing the demonstrative vocabulary of *violent language* unless they successfully go through a process of un-feminization, shedding their femininity in favor of a pseudo-masculine linguistic register. This is necessary, I argued, because violence is inherently tied up with patriarchal power structures that are deliberately set up to exclude women. If women are unable or unwilling to divest themselves of

femininity (as I have shown most female characters are), they must make do with the descriptive vocabulary of *language about violence* — their desire for violent revenge hinging on a wished-for future that is constructed grammatically instead of enacted physically. In building on Chapters One and Two, Chapter Three found scope for further work on female characters (and, indeed, female playwrights) and the types of violent words or actions they are permitted to use or embody on stage. The practice-based work included in Chapter Three showed how we might begin a more detailed exploration, showing that, without access to *violent language*, women hold little to no agency to act on their violent desires. When they do attempt to act, as Tamora does when she demands a poniard or when Hippolita plans to hand Soranzo a poisoned cup, their agency is removed and their ability to act is undermined by the men around them. In these plays, to be a woman is to have no agency — or, as my analysis of the monstrous vengeful woman illustrated, to have agency is to be less womanly. For modern practitioners, this attitude toward women blurs the line between rhetorical violence, theatrical violence, and actual violence, as it demands that female characters be violently subdued; in witnessing these spoken and embodied acts of violence on stage, the audience is reminded that, as Meg Twycross notes, live theatre is not simply illusion: staged violence in performance is, on the one hand, inherently theatrical but it is also “happening in the here and now and is being done by real people”.⁵⁰⁷

Together, the three chapters show the productive potential of supplementing scholarship on early modern drama with work from theatre studies more explicitly, using strategies like practice-based research to lend the

⁵⁰⁷ Twycross, p. 603.

force of performance to our often text-focused critical work. While further work is needed to test my conclusions and the two vocabularies of violence in early modern tragedies beyond those examined here, it is my hope that this thesis invites a more thorough consideration of the intersections between violence, language, and bodies in performance and that it offers a widely applicable methodology for the study of staged, spoken, and embodied violence in early modern theatres. In particular, a closer examination of the demonstrative vocabulary of *violent language* and the descriptive vocabulary of *language about violence* in the comedies, rather than the tragedies, of this period would be beneficial as this work could consider the potential generic features of rhetorical violence and deepen the field's understanding of violence in language across commercial drama more broadly.

Linguistic violence did not suddenly emerge in the theatres of the early modern period; rather, it was a dramatic motif that arose as a result of a rich legacy of violence in performance drawn from classical and medieval dramatists and traditions. Throughout my thesis I have argued that staged violence is, just as the writer I. G. feared in his anti-theatrical tract quoted in the introduction to this work, enacted "in word, and in deede".⁵⁰⁸ Viewing the phenomena of violence, language, and performance as entirely separate and distinct from each other is, I suggest, short-sighted. Rather, action and language are linked *through* embodied performance, and each has an intimate and immediate impact on the other. It is no longer enough to gesture to violence as a part of early modern plays without further definition and specificity. Instead, we must, as this thesis has done,

⁵⁰⁸ I. G., p. 56.

acknowledge the interconnected nature of language, violence, action, and bodies on stage, viewing violent words and deeds as two aspects that contribute to the rich fullness of the embodied medium of performance.

Appendices

Appendix A – Transcripts

A.1 Virtual workshop, *Emotion and Embodiment in Early Modern Theatre*, with MEMS Festival 2020, collaboratively exploring Act 2, scene 2 of *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*. Recorded via Microsoft Teams on 12 June 2020.

Anna Hegland (AH): So, again, welcome, everyone, and thank you so much for joining in. We're going to be working on embodying emotion today, using the play *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* by John Ford. We'll be thinking about gendered expressions of emotion, by which I mean how the emotions of male and female characters are represented on the stage. We'll be exploring the similarities and differences in women and men's emotional reactions, and how these can be variously portrayed on the page and on the stage. So, I'm really interested in how we might choose to embody the language that we're looking at, and how certain words might lead us to particular gestures, a tone of voice, an interaction between us as actors, but I want to reassure you that this workshop does not require expertise in acting or directing! Instead, I want you to try and think like an actor or a director about how the scene we're reading today might 'look' to you as a participant or as an audience member; so it's important to also stress that there are no right or wrong answers today, or actions. Instead I'd like you to focus on what feels natural or comfortable, versus unnatural or awkward, rather than right or wrong. This is all about experimentation, so let's try things out. If we hit on one way of reading or embodying the text and then decide to change it, that's great! I'm really interested in what prompts us to make those changes, how we feel about them before, during, and after trying them out. We'll try out a number of different things and we'll just see where the afternoon takes us. Ok? Before we begin, I'll give you a little information on the play itself. *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* was written by John Ford sometime between 1629 and 1633. The play is set in Parma, Italy, and concerns the incestuous relationship between Giovanni and his sister, Annabella. Unfortunately, we won't be looking at any of those exciting scenes today, because we're focusing on the subplot instead. The scene we're looking at involves Soranzo, he's a nobleman who is engaged to marry Annabella; Soranzo's servant, Vasquez, also appears in this scene; as well as Hippolita, who is a widowed noblewoman who previously had an affair with Soranzo. This scene is Hippolita's first appearance in the play, as she's come into Soranzo's private study to confront him. Hippolita argues that by becoming engaged to Annabella, Soranzo has broken his promise to marry Hippolita after her husband's death. I have a few videos for us to watch as an introduction to this scene in performance before we really dive into close work with our scripts, so I've just put links to those in the Teams chat. Can everyone see those two links? Perfect. So, these are two cropped videos, they'll give you just the moments we're looking at in our script, so I'd like you to follow along using that. Fair warning, I have cut a few lines, so don't worry if some of the lines don't match up exactly, but I'd like you all to take

a few minutes, watch those, make notes of things you might want to revisit during discussion, and then come back to this space.

[From 02.15 to 09.08, participants watched two video clips of *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* in performance.⁵⁰⁹]

AH: Now that we're back altogether, I'm going to ask you to read through the script again, without the videos this time, and I'd like you to make a note of any words that strike you as being really focused on emotions or give you a sense of a character's mood. This could include words from the clips you just saw or lines that jump out at you that maybe this filmed production didn't pick up on. Since we're working digitally today, the comment function on Word will work really well for this task. Does anyone have questions? Great! I'll give you a couple minutes to read that and just raise your hand or give me a thumbs up when you've had a chance to go through the whole thing.

[From 11.08 to 16.43, participants read and annotated their workshop scripts, reprinted in full in Appendix C.3]

AH: Is everyone feeling comfortable with the script and taken a couple of notes? Great. I think we'll get into the first part of our discussion here, and I'm really curious about what kind of words you were making note of and what kinds of feelings or moods they evoked for you.

Iman Sheeha (IS): There's quite a contrast between his mood when he says he's at peace and her sort of explosive entrance, the rage she brings to the stage. So, I think that's a very interesting contrast between their moods and what's happening to these two people.

AH: That's great, yeah. What parts of the language were giving you that sense of rage?

IS: Well, she referred to her 'rage of blood', to herself being 'wronged' in the third line of her speech – his rage of blood has done her this wrong – and then she refers to his hatred and contempt later on, lots of negative words there.

AH: Definitely. Thank you. Pietro, I think you started to say something as well?

Pietro Mocchi (PM): Sorry.

AH: No, it's fine, go ahead.

⁵⁰⁹ John Ford, *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, dir. by Chris Sims (The Hague, Netherlands: Het Nationale Theatre, 2015) <<https://ytcropper.com/cropped/zB5ee108851a216>> and <<https://ytcropper.com/cropped/c05ee109a8f2764>>.

PM: The very first line, 'rude intrusion', that sets the scene in a framework of contrast between the two of them. And also I get from her, from her first line, a sense of refusal and shame. But that's followed by a few lines where I get a sense of pride from her, her 'modest fame', her 'honor', her 'chaster bosom', I get that dynamic in places here.

AH: Very good, yeah. What else is this raising for people?

Francesca Sward-Read (FSR): I think, to almost contrast with that, is the talk of sin and repenting for sin. I think it's Soranzo who says it right at the very end, the idea of sin, so whereas she's kind of defending herself as this holy, wronged character and chaste and pure, he's then saying, "well, it's your sin you're repenting for". He's kind of shirking the blame off. But obviously the connotations of sin, that's a big accusation to throw around. I quite like the contrast between how she was wording herself and how he was.

AH: Ok, so there's a bit of a sense of self issue here, with both characters, that isn't matching up with the perception by the other characters.

FSR: Yep.

AH: Perfect, ok. Anyone else?

Eva De-Valk (EDV): I sort of noted down on the second to last page where he says that he doesn't want to talk to a woman who's frantic. It seems to me that the point she's making before that, she is angry but she's making points that are logical and well-argued, and he's just trying to shut her down completely by basically saying she's insane or mad so he doesn't have to engage with what she's trying to say.

AH: That's a really good point, yeah. Yeah. Ok, so now thinking about what we've just talked about here and the notes that you took on this script, think back to those two videos we've watched and how they play with these same words. And, again, I cut out some lines, but it's the same scene. Were there things that you noticed in those videos that pushed back against some of the notes you made or things that were done differently that really struck you?

Megan Batterbee (MB): For me it seemed quite emotionless, in comparison to the words, because there's no touching at all. She's not sort of imploring him physically in any way, it's all verbal. And the bit that really struck me was that he never puts his cigarette down, that was really strange for me, he doesn't even stop smoking for long enough to actually try and calm her down because she doesn't seem as angry here as she does in the text, I don't think. I think the use of all the rhetorical questions as well, like "look, you have done this", "here is a thing you've done, I'm explaining it back to you", to incite a reaction in him, and the fact that he's not reacting, he's not biting, is frustrating her into more anger. But I didn't get that at all in the film.

AH: Hm, that's really interesting. You mentioned that there's no physical contact between them; are there words in the script that indicate to you that there should be some sort of contact between these actors?

MB: To me, it's almost every time she says, "look". That's a kind of "pay attention to me, focus on me" – it could be that he's wandering off! To me that's a kind of grab you and make you look at me kind of moment.

AH: Excellent, ok. Pietro, you've got your hand up?

PM: I think at some point there is some physical contact, because she kneels at his side, on his left, and she touches his leg and maybe his arm, I think. So, you're absolutely right, there's not much physical contact, but there is some. At some point she gets closer to him.

AH: Does that physical contact match what's in the script, in your mind?

PM: Well, I don't remember exactly at what point in the script it was...

AH: That's ok, that's fine.

PM: I just remember that there was some, a little bit of contact.

AH: But I know I cut someone else off, I'm sorry. Go ahead!

Samantha McCarthy (SM): I was basically just going to pick up on what Megan said as a really good point, because I don't know this play, but I was quite struck by the lack of eye contact during the first section of video. Or I suppose, really, it's the use of the actors' line of sight, because she's looking at him but he's not looking at her. I guess that could kind of feed into the way that he's misrepresenting his side of the story or not wanting to fully acknowledge that what she's saying is logical.

AH: That's also quite interesting, yeah. This is great. Are there other things that people are noticing? Anything you like or dislike about this particular staging?

FSR: Um, I quite liked that it was obviously a late 40s, early 50s setting?

AH: [laughs] Go on.

FSR: I'm a huge fan of the style of that era, but regardless of that, I think the parallels between the ideal woman at the time and the ideal values for family, for a wife... I think watching it, the parallels between then and when the play was originally written kind of struck me, "oh, of course, this makes perfect sense", but I think I'd never really thought about it before? So, I think putting it in that setting, especially with a modern audience, you can instantly go, "oh, well, this is how a woman should be behaving in this time period". I think it fits quite nicely, it didn't seem out of place,

which probably says more about the values of the 1940s and 50s more than anything else, but I found it quite fitting.

AH: Ok, so there's a cultural reference point there, it sounds like. Was there anything in the language that was reflecting this? Were there certain lines in the video or in the script that really cemented that for you?

FSR: I think some of it was about husbands being alive? Obviously, this is just post-war, so I think there was, at the time, some promiscuity and unsureness of husbands returning and things, so I think those kinds of lines for me and ideas of love changing at the time, and promises being broken, resonated.

AH: Ok, cool. What else did people notice? Was there anything that stood out to you in the script that wasn't in the filmed production?

MB: I know, for me, it was strange that she was moving around so much, because if she's saying, "look, see'st thou this", that implies to me that she'd be standing still at that point, rather than keep moving. I know there's movement to get or keep people's attention, but there's no point when she's standing there to say, "look at me, look what you've done", there's no stillness. I don't know if that's just how I read it.

AH: I like that idea of lines that read as more static or declamatory. But then thinking about what both you and Sam said, about how Hippolita seems to be constantly working to get into Soranzo's eyeline, it seems like that's something this production might have had to look for in their scripts, places where they could add that extra movement in.... Nice. Anything that you didn't like about this particular staging?

MB: Vasquez is just lurking in the corner. And I know he's meant to be, but the fact that he's just standing there, he's not reacting to what they're saying or engaging with them, his interjections are coming in more like an aside rather than an actual conversation with Soranzo. It's more for the audience.

AH: Ooh, good observation there. So, you're seeing more engagement from Vasquez in the written text?

MB: There's a lot more of a sense that he's actually involved in the conversation, I think. He's picking up on what both of them are saying, whereas in the staging, he does seem quite apart from it all, almost as if he's aware of it but doesn't want to be involved in the same way.

AH: Ok, yeah, great. I think the next thing that I'd like us to do is try and put this scene on its feet. So, I'd like us to read this aloud. Now, we'll try this as a group and take turns, maybe swapping roles and trying different things, suggesting things. Could I get some volunteers for reading parts? We only need three people for this scene, remember. [pauses] Ok, Megan, you've put your hand up but you kind of seem resigned to this. [laughs] Can I have two more volunteers, please? Sam, thank you. And... thank you, Eva. Ok! Could we have... let's see. Megan, could you read Hippolita,

please? And then, Sam, could you be Vasquez and Eva, Soranzo? Great, thank you. So while we're reading that, and I'll have you unmute yourselves and we'll read it as if we're all together in person – I wish – but if you're not reading, I'd like you to again follow along in your script, note words that strike you as particularly focused on emotion, or words and moments that you'd like to come back to in discussion. And I'd like you to keep an eye out for words that seem like prompts or cues to you. A lot of the things we've talked about already have been very movement-based, so I'm interested in that kind of interplay between motion and emotion. Whether these are gestural and movement-based or maybe a tone or mood or an attitude that an actor is trying or could try, if something happens and you say, "oh, wouldn't it be interesting if we try this instead". We're looking for performance possibilities. So, we'll read that scene, take notes again, and then come back and discuss this. I'll mute myself, and then Eva, Megan, and Sam, if you could begin.

EDV: Right. 'What rude intrusion interrupts my peace?
Can I be nowhere private?
What's the matter, Vasquez? Who is't?'

MB: 'Tis I.
Do you know me now? Look, perjured man, on her
Whom thou and thy distracted lust have wronged.
Thy sensual rage of blood hath made my youth
A scorn to men and angels, and shall I
Be now a foil to thy unsated change?
Thou know'st, false wanton, when my modest fame
Stood free from stain or scandal, all the charms
Of hell or sorcery could not prevail
Against the honour of my chaster bosom.
Thine eyes did plead in tears, thy tongue in oaths
Such and so many that a heart of steel
Would have been wrought to pity, as was mine.
And shall the conquest of my lawful bed,
My husband's death urged on by his disgrace,
My loss of womanhood be ill rewarded
With hatred and contempt? No. Know, Soranzo,
I have a spirit doth as much distaste
The slavery of fearing thee as thou
Dost loathe the memory of what has passed.'

EDV: 'Nay, dear Hippolita —'

MB: 'Call me not dear,
Nor think with supple words to smooth the grossness
Of my abuses. 'Tis not your new mistress,
Your goodly Madam Merchant, shall triumph
On my dejection. Tell her thus from me:
My birth was nobler and by much more free.'

EDV: 'You are too violent.'

MB: 'You are too double
In your dissimulation. See'st thou this,
This habit, these black mourning weeds of care?
'Tis thou art cause of this, and hast divorced
My husband from his life and me from him,
And made me widow in my widowhood.'

EDV: 'Will you yet hear?'

MB: 'More of thy perjuries?
Thy soul is drowned too deeply in those sins;
Thou need'st not add to the number.'

EDV: 'Then I'll leave you;
You are past all rules of sense.'

MB: 'And thou of grace.'

SM: 'Sir, I beseech you, do not perplex her; griefs, alas, will have a vent. I dare undertake Madam Hippolita will now freely hear you.'

EDV: 'Talk to a woman frantic? Are these the fruits of your love?'

MB: 'They are the fruits of thy untruth, false man.
Did'st thou not swear, whilst yet my husband lived,
That thou would wish no happiness on earth
More than to call me wife? Did'st thou not vow
When he should die, to marry me? Yet thou
Forget'st thy vows and leav'st me to my shame.'

EDV: 'Who could help this?'

MB: 'Who? Perjured man, thou could'st,
If thou had faith or love.'

EDV: 'You are deceived:
The vows I made, if you remember well,
Were wicked and unlawful; 'twere more sin
To keep them than to break them. As for me,
I cannot mask my penitence. Think thou
How much thou hast digressed from honest shame.'

SM: 'You do not well; this was not your promise.'

EDV: 'I care not; let her know her monstrous life.
Ere I'll be servile to so black a sin,
I'll be accursed. Woman, come here no more.
Learn to repent, and die, for by my honour
I hate thee and thy lust; you have been too foul.

MB: 'How foolishly this beast contemns his fate
And shuns the use of that which I more scorn
Than I once loved: his love. But let him go:
My vengeance shall give comfort to his woe.'

AH: [applauding] Thank you very much. Brilliantly read. How did that feel to you, as readers, as actors? Were there things you noticed or anything that felt natural or weird?

MB: I felt like I should have been much angrier.

AH: [laughs] Ok! Why?

MB: Because of the quick rebukes, where he's like, "do you not do this?" and she immediately comes back with, "this is why!" She's answering very quickly, I feel like I'm almost interrupting the rest of them?

AH: Definitely, and you get some of that in the punctuation, I think. Like on page 2, when Soranzo says, "nay, dear Hippolita –" and she just cuts him off.

MB: Yeah.

AH: I really liked how you guys were kind of jumping on some of those lines and those entrances, it was really clear when we had Soranzo's line, "you are too violent", and then we have Hippolita immediately jumping in with, "you are too double in your dissimulation!" It's right back at him, right in his face. Other thoughts?

EDV: It feels quite weird to read it sitting down. I know that's what he did in the video as well, but you just want to get up and move around. At least I did.

AH: [laughs] Yes! And for those of us kind of watching this scene, how did it sound to you? Was it similar to the videos we watched or were there things you noticed that were new, or different, or interesting? Did people emphasize different words?

MB: I felt like I was emphasizing 'you' a lot.

AH: The word 'you'?

MB: Yeah. Or 'thou'. Any time there was a word sort of pointing to Soranzo, I felt like it needed more of a stress as I said it.

AH: Ok, that's interesting.

PM: I feel like, hearing it, Hippolita is more the center of attention here. Whereas on stage, the attention is more shared between them because Soranzo was at the center of the stage and she kind of moves around him. But here, hearing it, she talks more. So, really the attention is more on her. She's giving more of a monologue than having a dialogue.

AH: Wow, yeah, I'd never thought of it like that. That connects us back to Eva's point about wanting to move around, I think, and something a bunch of you brought up after we watched those videos initially, there's a lot of movement or not enough movement in certain characters, and that idea of static versus dynamic characters. Anything else?

FSR: I felt like in the clips that we watched, Hippolita was just a high level of angry and Soranzo was just one level of "so what". But in the reading, it ebbed and flowed more, which is more of how I think it should be read. It's not just one level of "ah, I'm really angry at you" and "yeah, I don't really care", it needs to have more of that ebb and flow, peaks and troughs of anger and upset.

AH: That's great; were there certain words that were giving you a sense of the ebb and flow? That modulation of emotion?

FSR: I think it's mainly with Soranzo. He starts off with just short sentences, obviously he's cut off by Hippolita quite a lot, but in his "nay, dear Hippolita", that sounds quite loving and then he goes on to say he's not going to listen to a woman venting, because she's too violent. So, I think that shift from "calm down, dear" to "I'm not dealing with you" is kind of what would temper Hippolita's reactions.

AH: There's some sense of escalation there, right? I mean, by the end, Soranzo's calling her 'monstrous'! Which, I don't know about you guys, but I certainly don't think that's the same as 'dear'. So, I'm really glad you brought up that "dear Hippolita" line, because I think that's really telling. [pauses] Now, as we're talking about ebb and flow, what kinds of emotions are you seeing here, and can you pinpoint specific words that make you think of them? Megan's already said that it felt like the 'yous' and 'thous' needed to be stressed a little more. Fran's pointed out that 'dear' is very gentle.

MB: I think the line where I felt most angry reading it was on page... I don't know what page it was, but when Soranzo says, "who could help this?" and she responds, "who? Perjured man, thou could'st!" and it's the exasperation in that moment as well as the anger that comes out. Again with the rhetorical question thing, it's like, "I'm telling you exactly what you can do and you're not acknowledging the truth of my words" is making her more exasperated and more angry, and the fact that she isn't being placated by his "come on, dear, calm down" is making him angry, in turn, because she's not the pushover that I think he thinks she is.

AH: Great, yeah.

FSR: I think that first speech, the speech by Hippolita on the first page, that – sorry, is it Megan? I'm not sure of names, ok yeah – when Megan was reading, I don't know if it was conscious or not, but I felt like there was more stress on the bodily words? So the words like "rage of blood", I felt like were stressed, and "chaster bosom" and there was another one as well, I don't remember which one though. But it was those kind of words, bodily words, that I thought were being stressed a little more.

AH: Could we try, Fran, could you read that speech? Just that speech, and really land hard on those bodily words that you've highlighted.

FSR: Yeah, of course. "Tis I.
Do you know me now? *Look*, perjured man, on her
Whom thou and thy distracted *lust* have wronged.
Thy sensual rage of *blood* hath made my *youth*
A scorn to men and angels, and shall I
Be now a foil to thy unsated change?
Thou *know'st*, false wanton, when my modest fame
Stood free from *stain* or scandal, all the charms
Of hell or sorcery could not prevail
Against the honour of my *chaster bosom*.
Thine *eyes* did plead in tears, thy *tongue* in oaths
Such and so many that a *heart of steel*
Would have been wrought to pity, as was mine.
And shall the conquest of my lawful bed,
My husband's death urged on by his disgrace,
My *loss of womanhood* be ill rewarded
With hatred and contempt? No. Know, Soranzo,
I have a spirit doth as much distaste
The slavery of fearing thee as thou
Dost loathe the memory of what has passed.'

AH: [applauding] Brava, thank you. I think what's really interesting there is that while you were emphasizing those bodily words, you were already really landing on the kind of reference words around the body words. So, 'heart of steel' and 'steel' was the really strong word there. 'Chaster bosom', 'chaste' is the thing that's really important here, right? I found that really interesting, thank you so much for reading that. We've kind of just started it now, with my asking Fran to reread this, but are there things that people want to try within these speeches? And it can be a particular line, it can be a line and an interruption, it doesn't have to be the whole thing or even a whole speech, by any means. But are there things that people want to try out, in the spirit of collaborative work. [laughs]

EDV: I was just thinking, though it's not something I necessarily want to try myself –

AH: That's ok!

EDV: Just reading, I'm now wondering if maybe Soranzo gets more angry toward the end, because he's actually getting angry at Vasquez interrupting, so he's angry at his servant mingling in it, rather than being angry at Hippolita.

AH: Great. What lines are really bringing that up for you?

EDV: Um, I just think it's mainly that last bit, where he calls her 'monstrous' all the sudden. Because also he says, "her". "Let *her* know *her* monstrous life", so it doesn't seem like its directed at Hippolita, it's directed at Vasquez, so that made me wonder if that's actually responding to him and that's what gets him going, basically.

AH: Interesting. Could we try reading the final two pages, then? And could we have... Sam, could you read Soranzo this time? And then Pietro, could you read Vasquez, please? Thank you. And I'll read the little bits of Hippolita that we have on these last two pages. So... we'll start with "sir, I beseech you". Pietro? Yep.

PM: 'Sir, I beseech you, do not perplex her; griefs, alas, will have a vent. I dare undertake Madam Hippolita will now freely hear you.'

AH: Sam, you're on mute still, sorry!

SM: Sorry! 'Talk to a woman frantic? Are these the fruits of your love?'

AH: 'They are the fruits of thy untruth, false man.
Did'st thou not swear, whilst yet my husband lived,
That thou would wish no happiness on earth
More than to call me wife? Did'st thou not vow
When he should die, to marry me? Yet thou
Forget'st thy vows and leav'st me to my shame.'

SM: 'Who could help this?'

AH: 'Who? Perjured man, thou could'st,
If thou had faith or love.'

SM: 'You are deceived:
The vows I made, if you remember well,
Were wicked and unlawful; 'twere more sin
To keep them than to break them. As for me,
I cannot mask my penitence. Think thou
How much thou hast digressed from honest shame.'

PM: 'You do not well; this was not your promise.'

SM: 'I care not; let her know her monstrous life.'

Ere I'll be servile to so black a sin,
I'll be accursed. Woman, come here no more.
Learn to repent, and die, for by my honour
I hate thee and thy lust; you have been too foul.

AH: Great, thank you, we'll stop it there. Awesome. So, yeah, there does seem to be some tension there between Soranzo and Vasquez, as Eva pointed out. I think that might be especially clear, not only in those 'hers' in the final speech, but when we have that switch of "talk to a woman frantic?", switching over to Hippolita. That's great. Other things that people are noticing here? And it can be from the little bit that we just read or the whole thing.

MB: For me, the line that makes Soranzo angry is when Vasquez backs up Hippolita and is going, "no, actually, that wasn't your promise". That's the bit that really flips that section of this. It's almost like "I care not" is a lash out at him, and then he turns back to Hippolita and from 'woman' onwards, then starts yelling at her in anger, I think, more than before? He isn't really angry at Vasquez, it's kind of "what do I do about this woman?" whereas, he sees Vasquez – not necessarily switching allegiances, but stating the hypocrisy of what he's saying – at which point, everyone's an enemy and he lashes out at both of them.

AH: Very nice, yeah.

SM: I thought, when we were watching the clip, it was kind of odd that they didn't choose to put Vasquez physically on the same side of Soranzo as Hippolita? But I don't know, maybe he does feel like they are physically flanking him in that situation, and that's what they were going for? I don't really know where I'm going with that, sorry.

AH: No, that's ok, I think that's interesting because that kind of spatial awareness of the stage is really important and we've already been able to see from some of our discussion of the static or dynamic action, though static action isn't really a thing, but we can see how important that is. So, I think you're exactly right, paying some attention to the position of bodies on stage, especially here, is really important. And maybe at that line when we've just said that this is when Soranzo gets angriest, and at Vasquez, because Vasquez backs Hippolita up, maybe he's physically between them or something, maybe moving away from Soranzo side physically and inserting himself. Yeah, Iman?

IS: Hi, can I go back to the text, if that's ok? I'm really struck by the way he seems, as in Soranzo, he seems to be consistently addressing her with the respectful 'you', as if trying to mollify her? And she consistently uses 'thou' and 'thy', so I'm looking at "will *you* yet hear?" "more of *thy* perjuries", so it's really consistent the way they're using these forms of address, and I think it's really interesting because he seems to be indifferent to her sort of grievances and she comes across as a complete asshole.
[laughs]

AH: [laughs]

IS: She does! But the register he's using is more respectful? I wonder if other people have noticed this too, and why that might be?

AH: Well, I think the other thing to note here is that 'you' can not only be more respectful, but it can also be a little condescending.

IS: Yes.

AH: To a social inferior or something.

IS: Mhm, yeah.

AH: Though that doesn't take away the asshole quality. [laughs]

IS: Yes! [laughs]

SM: It could also maybe fit with his general argument to her, where he's attempting to take the moral high ground; he's being more respectful and arguably morally better, from his perspective. Maybe he's just going for that – which is also condescending! So. That's fun.

AH: Pronouns, man. Who knew.

IS: [laughs]

SM: [laughs]

AH: This is great, yeah. I wonder if we can read the scene again, taking into account some of the notes that we've made in discussion about pronouns, about lines where people are really interjecting, words that we're landing really heavily on, and that kind of escalation of emotion? And thinking about, this time, Eva's comment about wanting to get up and do this on your feet. What kind of gestures or motions come to mind when you're doing this? I'm not going to make you get up and actually do them, we don't really have space for that, but if there's a time when you go, "oh man, I really want to stand up and I want to move closer to this actor, or further away, turn my back", if you could just make a note of that. And could we have our original three readers, I'll give you different parts this time, but could we have you three read this again for us? Perfect, thank you. Sam, could you read Hippolita this time? And Eva, could you read Vasquez, and Megan, Soranzo? Whenever you are ready, and again everyone making note of places where you really think a gesture or a movement fits here.

MB: From the beginning, yeah?

AH: Please.

MB: 'What rude intrusion interrupts my peace?
Can I be nowhere private?
What's the matter, Vasquez? Who is't?'

AH: Sam, you're muted again.

SM: Every time, I'm so sorry. 'Tis I.
Do you know me now? Look, perjured man, on her
Whom thou and thy distracted lust have wronged.
Thy sensual rage of blood hath made my youth
A scorn to men and angels, and shall I
Be now a foil to thy unsated change?
Thou know'st, false wanton, when my modest fame
Stood free from stain or scandal, all the charms
Of hell or sorcery could not prevail
Against the honour of my chaster bosom.
Thine eyes did plead in tears, thy tongue in oaths
Such and so many that a heart of steel
Would have been wrought to pity, as was mine.
And shall the conquest of my lawful bed,
My husband's death urged on by his disgrace,
My loss of womanhood be ill rewarded
With hatred and contempt? No. Know, Soranzo,
I have a spirit doth as much distaste
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Dost loathe the memory of what has passed.'

MB: 'Nay, dear Hippolita —'

SM: 'Call me not dear,
Nor think with supple words to smooth the grossness
Of my abuses. 'Tis not your new mistress,
Your goodly Madam Merchant, shall triumph
On my dejection. Tell her thus from me:
My birth was nobler and by much more free.'

MB: 'You are too violent.'

SM: 'You are too double
In your dissimulation. See'st thou this,
This habit, these black mourning weeds of care?
'Tis thou art cause of this, and hast divorced
My husband from his life and me from him,
And made me widow in my widowhood.'

MB: 'Will you yet hear?'

SM: 'More of thy perjuries?
Thy soul is drowned too deeply in those sins;
Thou need'st not add to the number.'

MB: 'Then I'll leave you;
You are past all rules of sense.'

SM: 'And thou of grace.'

EDV: 'Sir, I beseech you, do not perplex her; griefs, alas, will have a vent. I dare undertake Madam Hippolita will now freely hear you.'

MB: 'Talk to a woman frantic? Are *these* the fruits of your love?'

SM: 'They are the fruits of thy untruth, false man.
Did'st thou not swear, whilst yet my husband lived,
That thou would wish no happiness on earth
More than to call me wife? Did'st thou not *vow*
When he should die, to marry me? Yet thou
Forget'st thy vows and leav'st me to my shame.'

MB: 'Who could help this?'

SM: '*Who?* Perjured man, thou could'st,
If thou had faith or love.'

MB: 'You are deceived:
The vows I made, if you remember well,
Were *wicked* and unlawful; 'twere more sin
To keep them than to break them. As for me,
I cannot mask my penitence. Think thou
How much thou hast digressed from honest shame.'

EDV: 'You do not well; this was *not* your promise.'

MB: 'I care not; let her know her monstrous life.
Ere I'll be *servile* to so black a sin,
I'll be accursed. *Woman*, come here no more.
Learn to repent, and die, for by my honour
I *hate* thee and thy lust; you have been too foul.'

SM: 'How foolishly this beast contemns his fate
And shuns the use of that which I more scorn
Than I once loved: his love. But let him go:
My vengeance shall give comfort to his woe.'

AH: [applauding] Thank you very much. Before I ask you guys to point out what words were kind of evoking action or gesture, as you were listening to this or reading it, I just want to say, Megan, that word you highlighted earlier, 'look', was really coming to mind this time, and that idea of a "look at me" or a "look you!" going on there. Alright, so other thoughts on this? What kinds of movements or gestures were you hearing?

MB: I think there should be loads of angry pointing at Soranzo, from Hippolita. When I was reading it earlier, I was thinking it was like, "you need to do this! Pay attention!" [points at the camera sharply] But it was weird then, being Soranzo, who's much more "what have I done? I've done nothing wrong!" I kind of subconsciously did it without realizing, I don't know if you could see it in the camera, but I was shrugging at certain parts, like "who me?" It's only at the end when he kind of clenches and gets angry – "no, you! I'm not doing what you say and I'm going and you can't be here." At the end I clenched my fist subconsciously, in a kind of "I don't care, do what you want, out of my house" way. The turn in that last section, with Soranzo, it felt like there was far more emotion in that last bit than in the whole rest of the scene, where he's trying to placate her.

AH: Interesting. Well, I like that, thinking about embodying this without consciously thinking about those actions that come so naturally to us, like clenching up or pointing, shrugging things off. I really like that. Yeah, go ahead, Iman.

IS: Hi, I think there's a lot of pointing to herself, as well as the pointing to him? Pointing to her own body. The 'chaste bosom' for example, but also her habit, her outfit, when she goes, "you're too double, see'st thou this" "these black mourning weeds of care", she's drawing attention to her outfit, as well as to him and to his outrageous behavior.

AH: Definitely, that's a really good point.

EDV: I was wondering now, if maybe because, before Soranzo gets properly angry he already says once, "I'll leave, you're past all rules of sense" and listening now I was wondering if Hippolita, when he's leaving, sort of shouts after him and it's Vasquez who actually sort of stops him from leaving and brings him back into the conversation. Maybe.

AH: Yeah! That could be really interesting, because then Soranzo's line, "I'll leave you, you're past all rules of sense", and Hippolita's response, "and thou of grace", could be read as kind of a throwaway line, a parting shot as he walks out of the room, yeah. Definitely. Other thoughts about motion or gesture?

FSR: I'm going to take it back to the "nay, dear Hippolita" line.

AH: Go for it!

FSR: I think it's become my favorite line of this passage. [laughs] But I think I almost saw it as she gets to the end of her tirade, this kind of outpouring of "these are all the things I want to say to you", and I kind of saw it like she turns away to give herself a moment to compose herself, but he comes in with this "nay, dear Hippolita" and, like, she whips around and going "*what?*" Like she's there being powerful and strong and has a moment of composure before coming back.

AH: Hmm, yeah. She comes out so strong with that long opening speech, so I think that's really important. Pietro's already said, she talks more, she's the center of this scene. But that brings us back to space, as an issue not only in the playing space, as we're acting this, but on the page as well. Spatially, she has more time here. And space and time are obviously different things, but she's got all of the space on these pages, she's kind of taken over the scene, which is really unusual, for a woman to get that much time to just speak so frankly and openly about her anger. It's really kind of exciting, actually.

IS: Her entrance is quite grand. "It is I!" [laughs]

AH: Right? [laughs]

IS: "Who is it?" "It is I!" How would you stage that entrance? It's such a grand thing.

AH: She just bursts on in there, yeah!

SM: When I said that, I felt like I should be wearing a big cape or something like that.

IS: To take up space, yeah!

AH: Well, I think of, you know, Yzma in *The Emperor's New Groove*, when she drops the cloak on the ground.⁵¹⁰ That kind of "here I am! What are you going to do about it?" [laughs]

IS: [laughs]

SM: [laughs]

MB: I get the sense that, though it says the stage direction is after "what's the matter? Who is't", in my head, she's already halfway into the room and already has made the entrance. If she comes in after "can I be nowhere private", "what's the matter", "oh, it's me, I'm the problem", immediately inserting herself into his conversation with the servant. And I had another question about, after the "nay, dear Hippolita", when we were talking about pronouns, is it telling that when she talks about, you know, the "goodly madam merchant", she calls her 'you'? In that section, thinking about "your mistress" and is that a moment where that flips slightly as well? Because it's only then that Soranzo goes, "no, now you've taken it too far, don't

⁵¹⁰ *The Emperor's New Groove*, dir. by Mark Dindal (Walt Disney Pictures, 2000).

talk about my girlfriend like that". Like, "insult me all you like, but you don't talk about her like that."

AH: Oh, yeah. I really like that, because that is the only moment where she really switches from that constant use of 'thou' and 'thy' that Iman pointed out.

EDV: I think with that bit as well, in my head, when she says, "goodly madam merchant", she's doing air quotes – "oh yeah, 'goodly madam merchant', uh huh".

AH: [laughs] It's such a weird burn, right?

MB: Almost like, "tell your girlfriend, I'm better than your girlfriend".

AH: Exactly, that's exactly what she's saying, yeah. I like that idea – oh, I'm sorry, Pietro, go ahead.

PM: No, sorry. Well, going back to the gestures, I imagined – "my vengeance shall give comfort to his woe". I imagined that "my vengeance" comes down with a fist, or something really strong, because 'vengeance' is such a striking word, so it should be accompanied by a gesture that embodies that anger and strength.

AH: That's great, yeah, I like how it's strength as well as anger; vengeance is a very powerful word, I think? What does everyone else think of that?

PM: I associate it with 'rightful vengeance', in a way. It really comes from above, you're entitled to it, like the way it comes from the text makes me think of something that comes down to punish. In a way.

AH: So, it's more just?

PM: Exactly. I think of it as a concept. You have your right to vengeance because you've been wronged, basically.

AH: Yeah, definitely. I mean, that's a good question. Do you think, from the way Hippolita presents herself and argues her case, and the way that Soranzo and Vasquez both react, does she have a right to be this angry?

PM: I don't think so.

AH: You don't?

PM: I don't know, I have no idea about the rest of the play, but, well, where Soranzo says, "The vows I made, if you remember well, were wicked and unlawful", maybe that's true? I have no reason not to believe him.

AH: Do you have a reason not to believe her?

PM: [shrugs] Not really. But does she cheat on her husband?

AH: Yes, with him, with Soranzo.

PM: Ok. And he promises to marry her?

AH: Yep.

PM: Ok. Well. I don't know.

AH: [laughs] That's ok. I was going to say, though, you made a good point that you don't know the rest of the play.

PM: Well, in a way, it feels like she's been wronged, she's been tricked into it.

AH: Well, she is certainly very firm about the fact that she thinks she's been wronged, right?

PM: Mhm.

AH: And so, these speeches are all about getting the audience, getting the other characters on her side. She has a very clear sense that she's been wronged, from these speeches. And she's pretty eloquent about it.

PM: Yeah, I can totally see her point of view, then.

EDV: I did wonder, I think that Soranzo's a massive scumbag, but also from what she says, she knows that that's what he's like. I'm kind of like, well, she did get herself into this because clearly she knows that he sleeps around and he's not to be trusted, so she's kind of got herself into this situation as well, because she should have known better?

AH: What lines make you say that?

EDV: She says somewhere that he has a habit of constantly wanting new people to sleep with, but I can't quite remember where it was.

AH: There's that bit at the beginning, I think, where she talks about his "unsated change"?

EDV: Yeah, yeah, that's it. So, I mean, clearly, she knows that he's a slut.

PM: And, question, would you really want to marry that kind of man? Like, would you insist on marrying him?

AH: Well, I think there's a point here, as a character, Hippolita is thinking through whether it's worse to have been led on and dumped or marry a man who's a serial cheater. But at least be married?

PM: That would soothe the public shame, in a way?

AH: Yeah, there is a lot of shame here.

IS: I guess the fact that he is denying his vows is really interesting. What were these vows? What did he vow to do?

AH: Exactly.

IS: And now to deny them? Yeah. So, did he vow to be loyal to her? Did he vow to, sort of, denounce his past life? I don't know. But it's an interesting idea.

MB: Sorry, I think he *does* vow that? Because when he goes later and says, "but 'twere more a sin to keep them than to break them", he's saying, "oh yeah, I did actually say what you said I did, but it'd be so bad if I did that, I can get away with not doing anything" because society's going to look at him better for jilting her than for actually keeping his promise. There's definitely the moment where he acknowledges that there was a promise to begin with that he's now trying to wheedle his way out of being culpable for. He goes from "I never promised you anything" to "ok, actually I did promise you something, but it'd be bad for me to keep that promise" and even Vasquez chips in at that point to say, "actually that's not good of you, you can't lead someone on." Although it's not necessarily the honorable thing to do, he's put his reputation on the line by making that promise in the first place. He has promised it. I think, anyway.

AH: And Vasquez specifically uses that word, 'promise', after they've both said "vows" and Hippolita's landed really hard again on "you've forgotten your vows" and Soranzo says, "well, they were sinful vows," but Vasquez comes back with "but this was your *promise*".

IS: Yeah.

EDV: I'm also now wondering if she's really angry at herself, for being taken in by Soranzo and so she's kind of venting at him because it's a nice outlet but she's also maybe feeling a bit angry at herself or blaming him.

AH: Yeah, maybe. Iman, you were about to say something?

IS: I was just thinking it's interesting how cheaters and scumbags on the early modern stage seem to treat their vows as breakable? I'm thinking of *Arden of Faversham* for example, Mistress Arden, the vows she swore on her wedding day and she refers to them as air, "vows are words and words are wind", basically.

AH: Yeah....

IS: So, it's an interesting idea, how cheaters don't really take vows to mean anything.

AH: Yes! Gosh. Well, I was going to say, on the topic of 'things we don't know outside this scene': we never get to hear those vows between Soranzo and Hippolita – like I said, this is Hippolita's first scene in the play. Immediately before Hippolita's entrance, a bit that I've cut from this scene, because if you look at the top, I've brought you in at line 22, Soranzo is sitting in his study, reading love poetry. And he's thinking about going and reading this poetry to Annabella, but also the love poets don't know how great love is, because, as he says, he's *really* experiencing it. And then you hear Hippolita before she actually comes onstage. And you hear Vasquez's response; Vasquez is going, "no, this isn't right, you have to let me go and tell him you're here first" and she just busts in. So that line "rude intrusion", there's some stuff going on offstage that we can hear but we can't see yet. So that's kind of the buildup to this scene, when you've got her aurally already making a commotion and kind of ramping herself up to this massive "it's me" when she enters. I'm not sure if that changes how you view Hippolita when she enters or the level of emotion that she might already be at. Does that add things, make things more complicated?

MB: I think it's good, because it shows just how mad as hell she is when she enters. It adds to the idea that she's come storming in with a cape and things, it adds to that dramatic entrance. The juxtaposition of him going, "oh, I'm in my love-bubble with the woman I want to marry" and then your ex-girlfriend comes bursting in angrily. It does make it far more obvious why he's annoyed because he's off in his little dream of what he wants in a relationship and then the obligations of his real life are coming and intruding on that kind of perfection that he wants.

AH: Does that knowledge about Soranzo reading the love poetry, thinking himself, you know, the best of all poets, does that change how you read his "nay, dear Hippolita" line?

EDV: [nods]

AH: How so?

EDV: Maybe he's been reading that and is now going, "oh yeah, I can be like this, I'm going to be like this", a really good, lovely, calm gentleman.

FSR: Yeah, it seems a lot more like he's in this lovey-dovey place and it's come from a [sweet voice] "oh, nay, dear *Hippolita*" whereas before I read it more like a misogynistic, condescending "ugh, *dear Hippolita*". And I think now it's coming from this headspace of love and reading this love poetry and he's just kind of... loving everyone? [laughs]

AH: [laughs] Yeah, Iman, you had something to say as well?

IS: Sorry, can I just add, love poetry is about idealized love, isn't it – it's about mistresses who are silent, who are passive, everything they say is usually "no", I'm thinking of *Astrophil and Stella*, for example, but obviously the lover doesn't take no for an answer and he keeps trying. But then you have this mistress invading the stage, she's got agency, she's claiming her right to claim him, in a way, so there's a bit of a contrast that we must notice.

AH: There really is, yes. This is much more active than that passive, idealized woman, and I think that connects really well to what Fran said earlier about this kind of 1940s, 1950s kind of housewife with the pearls, that idea that Hippolita really won't let him take no as a yes, she's coming and fighting back, which is really unexpected! Megan, you had your hand up.

MB: I was just going to say, I think his reading that love poetry dissociates in his head what love is. So, what Hippolita experienced in that versus what he experienced, he may be able to kind of separate. If he's reading the poems going, "oh, this is love, so what happened before doesn't count, because that wasn't what I think love is *now*". Hippolita is very much still in that moment of pain and anger, she doesn't have that alternative of the lovey-dovey storybook to escape into. She's very much going, "I have been left in a heap of trouble that you need to remember and acknowledge". I think there's a sense of "well, I've moved on, why can't she".

AH: Hm. Yeah. Ok, I'd like you to go ahead and mute yourselves again, go back to the script, with all of the things that we've talked about in your head, the notes that you've taken if there are any, and I want you to read through the script on your own one more time. This time, I'd you to literally write out what movements you're seeing. We've talked about people are pointing, turning away, leaving the room, any of these things; if you can underline those moments in the text, so, link those moments explicitly to specific words, what words are you connecting to the act of pointing? What words are you connecting to shrugging it off, leaving the room, and ignoring the crazy woman. Go ahead, I'll give you five or six minutes, until 2:30, and just read through and make notes on that, please.

[From 1.14.26 to 1.16.05, participants read and annotated their workshop scripts]

MB: Um, Anna, I have a question – is Vasquez the only person that doesn't speak in verse throughout?

AH: Oh, good question, I don't remember if he's the *only* person throughout... no, he's not, not throughout the whole play. A couple other minor characters speak in prose, but he's the only person –

MB: Like servant-level?

AH: In the play, yeah. He's the only person in this scene who speaks in prose though, yes.

[From 1.16.31 to 1.19.26, participants read and annotated their workshop scripts]

AH: Alright. So, what kind of gestures are you all coming up with? Do they align with some of the ones we've discussed previously or are they completely different? Are they on words that we've discussed already or are you highlighting different things? Tell me about what you've decided as directors.

SM: I think given the context that you gave us for the beginning of the scene, I was more struck by Soranzo's line at the beginning, where he asks, "can I be nowhere private?", compared to before. And it makes me wonder whether that might be accompanied by a gesture of attempting to concealing what he'd been reading, or something, from Hippolita? I'm not sure if it's just a case of he would want the space to himself or he wouldn't want her to know how he was feeling and thinking at that time.

AH: I like that, that's really interesting.

EDV: For me, with that same bit of the scene, the very start, I was thinking now that he's a million miles away, absorbed in his book, and so when she comes in and says, "tis I" and sort of barges into his sightline, that he's maybe quite startled because he honestly hadn't expected her and didn't hear her shouting?

AH: Nice, yeah. [pauses] Iman? Oh, you're still muted, sorry!

IS: Sorry! Yes, I think it's really interesting that she doesn't enter on her own, she enters with Vasquez. And what happens before... he's obviously been trying to prevent her from entering, so how do they actually enter? Does he try to pull her away from the stage, producing a comic effect, maybe? Does she push him away, stressing her violence? I don't know. How do people see this entrance being staged?

AH: Yeah, there are a lot of possibilities here!

MB: For me, it's like a slammed open door, with it kind of reverberating.

AH: [laughs]

IS: [laughs] It is!

MB: Just banging the door into the wall.

AH: I love that. What else? What kind of interplay are we seeing here, or do we want to see here? Because we've got at least two bodies entering really closely with another body already onstage.

FSR: I think I was seeing it, thinking about Vasquez and Soranzo later on, and their interaction? In this initial section, yeah, I kind of see that busting through the door with Vasquez almost running to catch up with her, to stop her, and then him maybe

being further back on the stage? So, when he interrupts and says his piece, I see him walking and maybe grabbing Soranzo's arm to literally stop him from saying what he's saying, and Soranzo shrugs him off and carries on to Hippolita. That's how I kind of see it, he's in the background, not between Soranzo and Hippolita but on one side to be able to pull Soranzo away from doing something stupid.

AH: [laughs] Very nice, yeah. I'm struck by, Iman used the word 'violence' and I think that's right on here, the words that we've all used to describe Hippolita's entrance, 'bursting', 'busting', 'barging', are all quite intrusive and aggressive. And what kind of vision does that give us of this character, before she's even said anything? What impression do we get?

MB: I think it would partly depend on the audience. I think, men might see her come in and go, "what is this hysterical woman doing", where my instinct is much more, "what's he done?" But I don't know if that's because I kind of know this play and I know what he has done, but there's almost a sense that she's angry because of a reason, that it's not just senseless anger, or anger directed at nothing, it's anger directed at a certain thing for a certain reason. Which I think, in my head, is why Vasquez almost follows her in and when he gets in the room, he hangs back, he doesn't get anywhere near Soranzo because he's worried that Soranzo's going to be mad at him for letting her in in the first place. As well as not wanting to get too close to the woman who's very angry.

AH: Hm.

PM: I think we imagine it as barging, as intrusive, because the author himself writes that this is a "rude intrusion" that "interrupts peace". So, here, we are staging a conflict, we have to break the status quo, break the calm of this situation, and that's why I think we are led to imagine this is something violent.

AH: That's a really good point, yeah. Megan said that, as a woman, it's the impression of "what's he done" rather than "what's she so mad about". Was that impacted by the fact that we didn't have a male reader for the first two times we've read the whole scene aloud? [pauses] It might not have had an effect.

EDV: I think I would have still felt the same, but I don't know.

SM: I'm not entirely sure, but I don't know if it would have made that much of a difference, at least for me, because my first impression of this passage included the videos we watched, and I feel like the staging there, where he's smoking and indifferent really told me that this guy was a dick, in case anyone had any doubts or didn't realize. Like.... *this guy*. And I think that probably shaped my impression of him as a character probably from the beginning of the workshop.

AH: Ok. I mean, that's interesting because this is also the first time where Soranzo's been seen in private, we've seen him in very public settings up to this point in the play. And he's been very well-behaved because he's with, you know, the woman he's

engaged to and her father, who is running the engagement. I'm interested, if we could try something really quickly. Pietro, could you read Soranzo's opening speech and then Fran, can you read just a couple lines of Hippolita's response, maybe to "unsated change" so it gets us to the end of a sentence. Just that little bit of the entrance for both of these characters, in our script.

PM: Mhm. 'What rude intrusion interrupts my peace?
Can I be nowhere private?
What's the matter, Vasquez? Who is't?'

FSR: 'Tis I.
Do you know me now? Look, perjured man, on her
Whom thou and thy distracted lust have wronged.
Thy sensual rage of blood hath made my youth
A scorn to men and angels, and shall I
Be now a foil to thy unsated change?'

AH: Great, thank you both. How do we feel? I'm sorry, Pietro, I'm going to put you on the spot here, but how do we feel about having a male voice with this?

EDV: I don't want to be unkind, but it made it worse for me. [laughs]

AH: [laughs] That's ok! That's what we were trying to find out.

PM: Oops. [laughs]

AH: But there is a different in that kind of bodily presence that comes through with even just a voice, I think. Now, Pietro's lovely, so I don't want to give anyone a bad impression of him, but that sense of "rude intrusion", when we can't hear the offstage stuff happening because we're not in a theatre or a workshop space, we're all kind of by ourselves, what impression do we have of Soranzo? I mean, we've talked about this already a little, Sam said that from the videos before Soranzo even starts speaking, he looks like a dick! Before Hippolita even enters, she's a rude intrusion.

PM: Can I point out a couple of lines?

AH: Yeah, of course, go for it.

PM: The way I perceive Soranzo, the way we are talking about him, and the way he's kind of being represented in the play we've seen, he looks like a bit of a flat character, doesn't he? But there's the line, "as for me, I cannot mask my penitence". What does he mean with that? Is he really remorseful? Or is this just a line to shove her off?

AH: I think that's a really good question, I like that we already have a couple people shaking their heads. But I think that's something that we need to think really

critically about, as directors or as actors, if we read the scene. How do we want that line to go? Because there are multiple possibilities there, and it can completely change how we view that character. You're absolutely right, he does come across as a little bit flat, and that might be because Hippolita gets so much time in this scene, but that line kind of wiggles against what we've already established.... Fran, you raised your hand?

FSR: Yeah, I was thinking, because you said this is the first time we see Soranzo in private, and I feel like the first half of this extract is him talking as if he's in private and then all the sudden it changes, and he starts talking about penitence and sin and vows and bonds, and that's very public language. I feel like he's reverted back, and I don't see the private Soranzo, we're seeing a public version of him.

AH: That's fascinating! What words in particular are signifying that shift for you? And while you look at those, Iman had her hand up and then Megan as well.

IS: Yes, I'm just thinking back to what difference, if any, having a man read Soranzo's lines might make, I think it made a difference for me in a good way, because for me it brought it home. I mean, this idea of a female seen as intruding into a male space, to have a man saying those lines somehow makes these lines seem more relevant? Even today in the twenty-first century, we know that women are still a minority in professorial positions, we're still seen as intruding on male spaces. I mean, just yesterday I had a very heated debate with someone on Facebook, they were arguing against trans people being given access to female spaces and "what if they wanted to assault them" and I was thinking this is a similar sort of idea, someone seen as not belonging, someone needing to be contained in a certain space, and their presence in this scene as an intrusion. So yeah, having a male voice with this – though, sorry, Pietro, I'm not saying it's only men who express these views – but it definitely made it feel more relevant for me, having a man read this.

AH: Ok, hm. And that kind of foreshadows one of the things I'll be asking you in my survey when we're done. Ok, as we wrap up, Megan, and then Pietro, and then back to Fran to loop back to what words are signifying that shift between private and public.

MB: I was just going to add to the point about how I read a lot of Soranzo's lines very cynically. There are certain moments where he is being more performative than others? Like, "who could help this?" in a kind of asking it to the audience instead of the woman he's talking to. "As for me, I cannot mask my penitence", I took that as really entitled and high and mighty. There's a sense of entitlement there, I get my private space, I can hear a woman screaming in the background and how dare she enter my space, how dare you accuse me in my own home, this sense of "of course you should believe exactly what I'm saying". It's only when people start calling him out for the untruths he's telling that the mask drops and then suddenly at the end he's going, "you know what, damn you and damn you too, you can't stop me from doing what I want to do" and he leaves.

AH: Yeah, that's fair. Pietro now, and then back to Fran.

PM: Cool. A couple of words that I think could be revealing and might speak to these gender dynamics, I think the concept of 'honest shame', "Think thou how much thou hast digressed from honest shame". So the sense that there's a certain way to behave, in this case for a woman, and that she's stepping out of her boundaries, going against what society tells her to do, how society tells her to behave, I think that could add to the gender dynamic we were discussing here.

AH: Definitely, yeah. That's a great point. Alright, back to you, Fran, thank you for waiting.

FSR: I think for me, the shift in his private to public persona comes when he asks, "will you yet hear?" Because I feel like it's not really him asking, it's more of a command, it's him trying to take back control of the situation and going, "listen to me", and that's where we get the shift. Even the line before, "you're too violent", it still seems like an offhand comment or an instant reaction, it's not thought through? I feel like everything he's said up to this point is off the cuff, whereas after "will you yet hear" everything then becomes more thought through. Especially when, after this, Vasquez interrupts, you then have Soranzo speaking between Vasquez, in his household, and Hippolita, not in his household. So that then indicates that shift for me, I think.

AH: That's really great, yeah. I think you're right that the "you are too violent" line is almost dismissive, it's another one of those shrugging moments. But I like that shift you've identified between private and public, that's a really interesting thought. Just in the last couple of minutes, after which I'll send you my questionnaire to look at post-workshop and let you go have a tea break, can we go back to some of the notes on gestures that you took? We've talked quite a bit about the opening of this scene, which is really great and helpful material, but is there anything else throughout the rest of the scene where you're seeing gestures that we haven't already talked about? Anything new you'd like to bring up in the last couple of minutes here? [pauses]
Yeah, Sam.

SM: Thank you, I noticed a little bit of a shift, mid scene, in the second page between Soranzo's "nay, dear Hippolita" and "you are too violent", where I kind of imagine that his initial approach seems to be to sweet talk her, and then her response is kind of like he's been bitten? I can imagine him aligning himself with her or moving closer to her, and then away again on "you are too violent".

AH: Yeah, that's really great. Well, I think especially because we have that interruption there with Hippolita's really quick, "call me not dear, nor think with supple words to smooth the *grossness* of my abuses". I think you're exactly right with calling this sweet talk, her response is definitely "don't you sweet talk me!" She knows exactly what he's trying to do and it's not going to work this time. She kind of smacks him away a bit, right? Yeah, Iman, your hand's up?

IS: Yes, I'm just thinking about Soranzo's exit and just before her final speech, because he abruptly just leaves, he turns around and says, "she's a monster, I'm leaving her here" and then storms out. And then what happens before she delivers her final lines? Is she trying to follow him? Does she throw her hands up in desperation? What happens there, does she fall to the ground? I'm really interested in what sort of gestures we're seeing or not seeing here. But she sees him as a beast, so I don't see her following him or expecting any sort of mercy or compassion from him. Does she slam the door behind him, trying to take control of the space? I don't know!

AH: Yeah, all good questions, there's a lot of possibilities there. I think "beast" is especially interesting, after he's just called her "monstrous". They're both seeing each other in these not-quite-human terms.

IS: Yeah, yeah.

AH: Yes, and Eva?

EDV: I was also thinking, because almost at the end she says, "but let him go". Is she saying that to herself or is she saying it to Vasquez as he's maybe trying to go after him? Because I think it reads like she shouldn't have to say that to herself, because she seems quite resigned about it, so that's what made me wonder if she's actually directing it to Vasquez.

AH: Ooh, yeah, that's an interesting point. Megan, you had your hand up?

MB: I was just going to say, for me that's frustration more than upset. I know in the video, the character of Hippolita kind of sat down in Soranzo's chair and looked really sad, that isn't how I would have played that. It's much more "ugh, he's such an idiot! I'll let him go now, but I'm *going* to get revenge". There's a sense of frustration, where she's been telling him exactly what he promised and he's not listening. It's "how can I get my own back" rather than the sad, dejected, "oh, he doesn't love me".

AH: And that connects really nicely back to what Pietro's already said about 'vengeance' being a really firm word and maybe making a fist or something.

IS: What if she produces a knife from under her skirt? Vengeance!

AH: [laughs] Maybe! Vengeance! I like that.

SM: Or from under her giant cape.

AH: [laughs] She has a whole knife pocket in the cape, probably! Alright, well this has been great – thank you so much, everyone, I'm going to stop recording now and then put a link to the questionnaire into the Teams chat and email you a copy as well, but thank you again for all of this great discussion.

A.2 Interview questions for practice-based work on *The Spanish Tragedy*. Distributed via email on 17 June 2020.

I'm interested in thinking about how Act 4, scene 4 (Hieronimo's play-within-the-play, and the deaths in his revenge plot) has been or might be staged, and I'd particularly like to focus on how the language of the play can assist in blocking this scene. I'd like to talk with you about questions such as:

- If you've previously worked on this play, could you tell me about the process of blocking this scene as an actor or director?
- Are there any words that you find particularly fruitful as implicit stage directions or cue words for specific movements and gestures in this scene? If so, what movements did you associate with particular words?
- More specifically, there seem to be multiple opportunities for action in Hieronimo's speech that begins "See here my show..." (full text attached).⁵¹¹ When acting in or directing this scene, are there specific words in this speech which strike you as implicit stage directions, or words that cue certain actions or gestures, whether by Hieronimo or his onstage audience? If so, do you connect them to particular actions or movements?
- Finally, *The Spanish Tragedy* makes repeated use of written text as a prop, especially as letters, books, and the script of Hieronimo's play-within-the-play. Language like 'word,' 'words,' 'speech,' and 'speak,' show up time and again in the play's dialogue, and Hieronimo famously stabs himself and the Duke of Castile with a penknife given to him to help trim his pen. I'd like to get your thoughts on the relationship between language and performance here, since language appears so continuously as a prop, as a metaphor, and as a command in the performance of this play.

I'm sure other questions might well arise during our conversation, but these are the main questions that I'm using to inform my research. We don't need to worry about covering absolutely everything, as I'm also interested in whatever unexpected directions our conversation might go. I may also follow up with you after our video call, in case anything needs clarifying.

⁵¹¹ A copy of this script is listed in Appendix C.4 script, *The Spanish Tragedy* 4.4 (17 June 2020), p. 366-373.

A.3 Interview with Philip Bird, discussing practice-based work on *The Spanish Tragedy*. Recorded via Zoom on 23 June 2020.

Anna Hegland (AH): So, if you're ready to begin. It is the 23rd of June, and I am Anna Hegland speaking with...

Philip Bird (PB): Philip Bird.

AH: Thank you very much, Philip. Alright, go ahead with your first question for me!

PB: Well, alright, the first thing I thought in general; I did a workshop a couple of years ago, a Research in Action, public workshop about women and killing or acts of violence in early modern theatre. It was in that period, in the zone, if you like, in the playhouse, and they were using pistols.

AH: Interesting.

PB: And I thought about this before, but the lady produced a pistol from her little bag, and boom, and the thing about a pistol is that you can kill someone, or injure them, at a distance. And, of course, if you're physically not as strong as your assailant, that's a perfect weapon for a woman. Or indeed a less strong man. Or less versed in fighting. And I was thinking about the stabbings in this play, because there are about nine deaths, which, you know, Andrea kindly lists for us at the end again, and I think it's six stabbings, a shot or two, and a bit of hanging. As I remember. And so shooting someone, you haven't got to be close to them to do it, and indeed it can be sort of anonymous, which is what Pedringano wants to do to Serberine. But, when you stab someone you're close enough, and I think you either want them to know who's doing it or, in the case of Horatio being killed, you want Bel-Imperia to witness who did it. And I think there's something quite vindictive about stabbing, quite apart from the spectacle of pig's blood – and I was trying to remember the guy, or the women, who's big on, I'm sure you've probably got the hidden bladders of offal, and I think there's stuff there, yeah. Yes.

AH: I think you've brought up a kind of interesting idea of space, and I think it brings to mind for me the word intimacy because being that close to someone, it is a much more intimate way to kill someone.

PB: Hm. Oh yeah. Yes, yes.

AH: And I think that's kind of a key part of *The Spanish Tragedy* as well, that kind of level of closeness and intimacy kind of runs through the entirety of the play, people are kept close to each other.

PB: Mm, yeah, well yeah, which is no mean feat in an outdoor theatre, you know, and from my research it was done at the Rose initially –

AH: Mhm.

PB: – because I wanted to know that for thinking about trying to stage it. So that was my first thought, and you know Isabella stabbing herself in the breast, the lifegiving breast, it's now, like the arbor, a place of barrenness and infection. And those real stabbings in the play-within-the-play, I mean, the King and the Viceroy applaud the execution! "This is brilliantly done! Almost like the real thing... you know, well done" [applauding] So, I thought that generally the themes that I'll just kind of itemize, which no doubt you have, about revenge, violence, war, and even war as seduction, I mean in –

AH: Yes, yep.

PB: Is it in 2.4?

AH: Yes. Horatio and Bel-Imperia. Their language of love is so infused with this other sense of violence with it.

PB: Yeah... yeah. And I mean I mentioned to you when we first began, when you introduced yourself earlier, I did find myself thinking because you know you're immersed in this material and I generally am in working life, when I'm working at the Globe, I kind of go "oh yeah, this is what they did then", you know, "this is how violent life was then" and many of the men in the audience, certainly, were very close to warfare, they either served or their fathers did or their brothers died, or something, so violence and death was more present, people say, and I can imagine. On the other hand... when you come to this fresh out of doing whatever I've been doing for the last month or two, which is a bit of gardening and music –

AH: [laughs]

PB: – and occasional work for the Globe online, I thought this was... I mean, extraordinary how violence seems to infuse the language. Do you find it extraordinary? Or is this like normal for the 1580s and 90s?

AH: I find it extraordinary too. I think the words that I keep coming back to are "sensational" and "spectacular", this is meant to be a spectacle. It's meant to be more than normal, it's meant to be shocking, so I find it interesting that you kind of got to that point as well. Which proves one of my points, that this is recognizable as a shocking, ultra-violent play.

PB: Yes!

AH: Which is good to hear!

PB: And here, looking at the front page there and the language, "containing the lamentable end of Don Horatio and Bel-Imperia, the pitiful death of Hieronimo", "lamentable" reminding me of Pyramus and Thisbe, you know –

AH: Yes. [laughs] The most lamentable comedy.

PB: Were a lot of plays sold – I know Emma Whipday, who I’ve crossed paths with a number of times, has been very interested in domestic violence and I worked with her a bit on the *Tragedy of Thomas Merry* a while ago, and have done stuff since on such things, and is it a selling point, is it come and see, you said, sensational and spectacle, is this the point?

AH: Yeah... I think it is. And the little bit of work that I’ve done on pamphlets and domestic tragedies, because I’ve actually paired *The Spanish Tragedy* in the chapter that I’m working on with *A Yorkshire Tragedy*, which is Thomas Middleton’s one-act play, very domestic, but I’ve paired the two of them together as these kind of sensational outbursts, they’re just more than we expect and I think that’s a trend in these violent tragedies throughout the early modern period, Elizabethan, Jacobean, Stuart. Where this is something entertaining, it’s meant to be different than everyday life, and a lot of people have written about bearbaitings and public executions and the fact that violence really suffuses aspects of everyday life, but this is meant to be more so, I think, yeah. But going back to domestic tragedies and the work on pamphlets, because *A Yorkshire Tragedy* is based on a pamphlet of the same story – it was a real case – they also use the word “lamentable”, “pitiable” comes up a few times, and these seemed to be genre-specific catchwords? Where you’re telling the audiences in advance what to expect, and if you use the word “lamentable” it tells you something specific. So.

PB: Ok. I think there’s possibly a quarto or two of Shakespeare’s too, is it *King John*? It’s not *King John*, that’s “troublesome”.

AH: There’s a couple, yeah.

PB: Yeah... I think there is. And is this, it’s impossible to kind of speculate as to authorial intention.

AH: Yeah... [laughs]

PB: [laughs] let alone then. But this is for money? Or is this because they want to say something about “aren’t these times violent, couldn’t we all just love each other”. It’s not that, is it? It’s just like “we are Tarantino, this is what we do, and if you like that stuff, come and see us”, yeah?

AH: Well I think the other point to raise there is that this is very separate from authorial intent, because as the plays were being produced they were taken out of the playwright’s hands and they became the company’s property. And as they’re in print, they’re still the company’s property, and sometimes the printer’s property, so these are also words that, you’re exactly right, are used to market this, it’s for money, it’s to sell copies, to get people into the theatre. And so, that’s one of the things that we don’t really know, what hand playwrights would have had in those kind of title pages and the full title of their work. Marlowe’s a great example because

when *Edward II* is published posthumously, it goes through a couple quartos and the title changes on those quarto pages and Marlowe is dead! So, [laughs] it's completely out of his control!

PB: [laughs]

AH: But they're highlighting different things, and I go through this with my students when we look at *Edward II*, what's being highlighted in this title, what are the things that the printer or the playing company are telling us are the important things about this story –

PB: Yes....

AH: – so one of the quartos of *Edward II* highlights Mortimer, and how Mortimer takes the throne and his death. And another it's much more geared toward Edward and Gaveston.

PB: Gaveston, of course, yeah.

AH: So these things can change over time, and with *The Spanish Tragedy*, while it maintains some consistency, is published really regularly, like it's very popular, it's published, you know, ten times, ten different editions, just between 1592 and 1597, so it is wildly popular.

PB: Yeah, ok. Oh well thank you, I've learned a lot. I knew I would! [laughs] I knew I would.

AH: Yeah! [laughs]

PB: Cool. I thought about, yeah obviously war, hell, heaven, interesting that justice most of the time seems to be expected to come from hell.

AH: Yes. Yes.

PB: Revenge certainly comes from there. I mean, there was finally right at the end, when the good people reunite and stuff, there was "Hieronimo, heaven will be revenged" in 3.13 line 2. But, generally, it seems to me, I mean, if he can't get justice here "he'll down to hell to knock at the dismal gates of Pluto's court", hell is where justice is to be found. There isn't much on heaven really.

AH: No, but then again, within that, you gestured to it already, but it's not... Christian heaven or hell.

PB: Oh! No, no...

AH: You've got Greek and Roman gods, so –

PB: Yes...

AH: These spaces are different than we expect, we're using words that would have been culturally recognized as relating to heaven and hell, so there's a lot of complicated ideas, I think maybe conflicting ideas at times, about where justice begins or what the root of justice is.

PB: And he doesn't really invoke like Mephistopheles or people, like Faustus, does he –

AH: Mm.

PB: – it's more, yeah... Acheron, Pluto, yeah, I see what you mean, yes.

AH: Mhm, Proserpine, too.

PB: Yeah, it's not "the devil" was it, as such, brilliant. Thank you.

AH: Yeah...

PB: I thought about the props, I mean, when I direct, because I've been there, getting it entirely wrong, playing Dr Caius in *Merry Wives* and I thought he ought to have a set of bottles of urine, because that's the main diagnostic tool, and it's terrible as an actor when you come fresh from research, from Farah Karim-Cooper or somebody saying "this is how it was done", you go, "well I'm going to show that!"

AH: [laughs]

PB: So on the first preview, I came on with this kind of milk crate, this cleverly constructed wooden thing with about five – four bottles of – fake, don't worry – urine, various different tinctures, I was asked about how I'd like them to look and I said "well, you can put some blood in one of them, if you want", you know.

AH: [laughs]

PB: Anyway, of course, what happened? Well they kind of fell out and rolled and I thought, no, no, no, no, if Shakespeare or in this case –

AH: Thomas Kyd, yes.

PB: Yes, Kyd says that, thank you. But if a prop is important, then I will talk about it, otherwise just go prop free. Do yourself a favor. So I always now, when actors say "I think it'd be really good if I had a [gestures] in this scene", I start thinking "Mm, is it you who needs that or the character?" And we generally manage to erase it after, I let them have it for a bit, because it makes them feel better, but then generally... and I'm not patronizing actors, I'm an actor myself, I want all the help I can get, but still,

ultimately I think we can go “do you know what, I don’t think we need that now, it’s just showing and telling, and let’s just do one or the other, let’s not do both”.

AH: Mhm.

PB: So of course, yeah, letters like you wouldn’t believe and then there’s Bel’s glove, this bloody handkerchief that seems to matter hugely, lots of letters, a purse, a bit of gold, and then sort of papers, the petitioners’ papers, and the book with the story, and the papers for the actors. So it does seem to be sort of words, words, and I’m not sure how words, to come on to your thing about words and actions, which is a really big deal for me, and, from reading it, and you sort of begin to wonder if words are actually trustworthy to Hieronimo in the end. He can’t trust Bel-Imperia’s letter initially. And by the way, reading this has given me a really good insight into *Hamlet*. I had to help somebody with a podcast a couple of weeks ago, and I found myself batting for Hamlet like you wouldn’t believe, because I analyzed where, at what point in the play, the protagonist receives evidence, which we the audience know to be true, but which the protagonist doubts. And the letter from Bel-Imperia or the appearance of the ghost, for goodness’ sake, which is even earlier in Hamlet’s case, and in each case they go “hmm, not sure.” Because obviously committing murder, you know, unjustifiably, will condemn you to hell of whatever sort. So let’s be careful here. And then finally when they get the evidence and finally Hieronimo gets the evidence in the letter, I think, the blackmail letter that Pedringano sent before he died, and then he only got it afterwards, saying this is what happened, which is about, whatever it is, about five-eighths of the way through the play? Two-thirds? And at the same juncture, Hamlet has the play-within-the-play, and to his satisfaction, which is the King’s guilt, and in the next scene he tries to kill what he thinks is the King through the curtain? No, it’s the wrong guy. And then he’s sent to England. So how much quicker is he supposed to act? Anyway, so this has really given me a lot to think about, I have no truck now with the thing about Hamlet being indecisive, I’m sorry, I just don’t. So anyway, words cannot be trusted.

AH: Yeah.

PB: And, I mean, the pardon, which doesn’t exist of course, can’t be trusted. And indeed, something that is easy to overlook is the contrasting fates of Villuppo and Alexandro, which I think is really important in giving us another taste of sleezy, betrayal-y, kind of activity. There’s another color, which is easy to overlook, because we’re all fixated on Hieronimo, of course, because he’s on stage a lot and speaks a lot. So, I think the status of words is actually quite interesting. So now, this is really kind of answering your question about specific words and actions... I went through, looking for any words I find fruitful. And you say “*The Spanish Tragedy* makes repeated use of written texts as prop and the script of his play, language like ‘word’, ‘words’, ‘speak’, ‘speech’ show up time and again.” I’d just be interested in words and actions. I mean, see Lorenzo, act 2, scene 1, “where words prevail not, violence prevails.”

AH: Mhm, that’s a phrase that’s proved very key to my chapter.

PB: It's key to my thinking too.

AH: Yeah, I think it predicts so much of the play, but also pushes back against so much of the play? And I'm not sure if I believe Lorenzo?

PB: Oh, yeah! Who do we believe, when? We'll pick a quote if it suits our purposes! You know.

AH: Yeah.

PB: Like the best politicians. Mhm. But it got me thinking, I mean, as an actor, in other words does violent action begin when, where the talking stops? And as an actor, though it's not my favorite genre as a performer because I can't dance, so I try and hide in the pit and play guitar, but in musicals, you know, basically, when speaking and walking and daily activity are not enough to express what you want to say, you have to sing. And you have to dance. Because there's no other way of expressing yourself. You have to go into another thing and it's more action than it is just pure speech. And that made me think very hard about when you're feeling impassioned... it gets to a point when you can no longer talk. Where words on their own will not do the job. And so the talking has to cease. So I went back to the Horatio-Bel-Imperia love scenes leading up to the murder, and I looked at 2.2, and they are kind of, well as all chat ups happen, from the back row of the cinema, well you've had the chat and the meet and all the swipe left and right, but then in those scenes, when we see them together, alone, line 3, "with looks and words we feed our thoughts". And I think the thoughts are tending towards the act of love. But we're on looks and words at the moment. And then 24, Horatio is speech-less because "what do I say here", he is without speech and actually Balthazar and Lorenzo are too, in the previous six lines. They are just going to look, they're going to listen, they're not going to say a thing. And then from 34 to 37, we've got from words to looks to lines to kiss, as a kind of progression. Act 2, scene 4, they're talking, line 23 they're sitting, line 36, 37 they're touching hands, 38 their feet, 40 a kiss, and 43 to 46 'twining arms', and 47 to 49 'die'. And no need to underline that one. The language is doing some of the work, but the characters are moving, heading towards beyond. Now, I get the fact that they're still using words to describe what they're doing, but I think that's a kind of early modern theatre thing, early modern, it needs dialogue. If this was *Normal People*, well you know....

AH: There's no need to say it, yeah.

PB: Well, as they did endlessly! Callum and what's her face would just look at each other, and the next thing you knew, they're bouncing up and down on the bed! Because cinema gives you looks, it doesn't need dialogue, but this genre does, it seems to me. And then of course, the action goes to 'hang' on line 53, 'murder' on line 55, 'stop her mouth' in 62. So there's a scene where in the end the talking stops, either cause it's silenced [mimes covering his mouth, hanging from a noose, and throat being cut]. Or because it was heading towards love, I guess, in the arbor. And

then when Hieronimo finds him, he talks at length, and he generally talks at length because he has no other outlet yet. For his feelings. And indeed, no object, not even an object of his revenge because he doesn't know who it is yet, so that's why he talks so much. Because he needs to know who's done this. As does Isabella in 4.2. She still doesn't know who's done it. In fact he doesn't tell her, even though he knows earlier than that. He hasn't told her. I mean, she's not exactly a side character, but they seem to be on different tracks. This death has divided them, hasn't it?

AH: Yeah. Very much so.

PB: Yeah. And in their own way, they're mourning in different ways, and take their own steps. She to kill herself, he to take revenge. So I think language can to some extent replace action, in our imaginations, by being an expression of an emotion, or description of violent offstage action, like the battles, Act 1, scene 2, Act 1, scene 3, but ultimately, dramatically, what we need at the end or somewhere, is onstage action to resolve and release the emotions that have been stirred up. In us, as well as in the characters. So the oral violence of this kind of language becomes actual violence.

AH: I think I'm curious, based on what you've just said... how this translates to the fact that with early modern plays, they survive as textual objects, and so we as readers need that dialogue, where in a theatre, because they're also performance objects, that's not as necessary. So that kind of middle ground between these two separate audience events, where we have a reading audience and a viewing audience, and what that does.

PB: Yes.... Yep. Plus, how much play scripts were plumped out for readership publication.

AH: Yeah.

PB: We have very little way of knowing. Apart from some, sort of, stage directions which seem to be describing something, "this is what happened now, chaps. This is what we did, this is what we did that night in 1613", you know, that will do.

AH: And, you know, we've got one of those in *The Spanish Tragedy*, as well, when the play-within-the-play starts. And –

PB: Yes! "Gentlemen" – gentlemen, by the way, ladies can't read, obviously. [laughs]

AH: Of course. [laughs] But, "performed in sundry languages" and that whole note about "we're giving it to you in English, for ease of reading."

PB: Yeah, well... yeah! Yes, exactly. I mean, your point was that all we have now is a text, and it comes to that in rehearsal. For me in rehearsals now with students, text is king. They've often come to me having seen, particularly acting students, having gone online and seen a film or a video or, you know, "well, Rylance made these

choices, and what do you think?" And I'm sorry this is not arrogance, it's just not helpful for them to do, to be invited to do anything other than to do it their way because at that given moment they are probably the only Claudio in London, at eleven o'clock on a Tuesday morning, rehearsing *Measure for Measure*, and therefore, Claudio doesn't exist until he's embodied. But, when we're talking about what is so-and-so's character, while you're rehearsing the play, you can then say "well, it's in character for this, because of what they said there". But the idea that there's some kind of abstract, ur-Hieronimo, which if I'm trying to play it, I'm trying to squeeze myself into this Hieronimo-shaped box rather than a Philip-shaped box, and I can change my shape a bit, but I just think is unhelpful to an actor. It may suit some students as they start to make their way, but I don't think ultimately, certainly acting students, need that kind of telling.

AH: Yeah. I mean, I say to my students in our Shakespeare class at Kent, that there is no wrong way to read a play. So, the lines that we are reading together might mean something completely different to me than they do to my students. And within my students, they might come up with six different readings of the play. And as long as they can back it up with the text, all of those are equally valid, and that's the beauty of this form. The fact that we can get so many variants out of it, while encountering it at the same time.

PB: When we say that, it can be very frightening to someone who's quite new to it, going "there's no right and wrong". What if, I mean, my reaction is I don't understand half of it. Is that right? And so, you know, sometimes people need a couple of handrails, but then I think I, like you, I go on to say, "just find me the data, find me the evidence in a line, why do you think that? Please let's just go back to the evidence, which is the data, which is the words." And the last thing for words and actions, of course, is biting out your tongue.

AH: Yes.

PB: I'm denying you language, I'm going beyond words, just like Isabella did, either you kill yourself or you bite out your tongue. And the rest is silence.

AH: I do find it curious that after biting out his tongue, Hieronimo still grasps at language as a tool. Because as soon as he bites his tongue out, the Viceroy is saying "but he can still write" and then they hand him the pen, the penknife to mend the pen...

PB: But I don't believe he grasps at it, I think he's planning to stab someone with it.

AH: Oh, definitely.

PB: But he doesn't grasp at it for linguistic purposes, he grasps at it as a weapon. And I believe, if they were listening, he's given them his confession in the last 240 lines! But they've been too... I whizzed through the actual scene to see what strikes me, but they're so busy on "who's this guy? Oh, that's your son, he's doing awfully well, isn't

he". Just like people do now, "how do you learn all those lines? Oh, it was awfully good." Which is nice, and that's an equally good reaction, but it's not what I was trying to do. Don't look at the 'how', try and look at the 'what' I'm doing, unless the 'how' is terrible and you can't get to the 'what' by way of a terrible 'how'. So they can't have been paying attention! Why do you need this confession, I've just said it! And I mean, those were deeds, these words, you'd never believe me anyway in a court of law. I had no other recourse but this. So I think by now, the pen knife, the knife is definitely going to be a weapon.

AH: Sure, yeah.

PB: So in terms of directing, I haven't directed this play.... But. About the play-within-the-play. So the preparation, this is evidence. In 4.1 really, because no one has listened to Hieronimo when he has tried to plead his case, and going to court would be fruitless, action now is the only alternative and Bel-Imperia is up for it. The actors are given "a paper", which has "an abstract". Now presumably this is the outline of the plot, which he's told them a little bit about already, and a description of the character they're going to play. They're asked to improvise their own lines. I'm just going through my thought process. So in lines 102 and 163-167, they're asked to improvise their actual lines. And to play in different languages, Balthazar in Latin, Lorenzo in Italian, Bel-Imperia in French, and Hieronimo in Greek. And they're also asked to think about their costumes. And all this raises a lot of issues. Now three of those languages are quite common; I mean, for a Spanish play to have all these quotes in Italian and Latin, peppered throughout the play, is interesting but they're all Romance languages. But how fluent are his fellow actors and the audience in Greek? Are they going to know? I'm interested in the fact that Hieronimo's chosen Greek. Are they going to know exactly what he's saying without a quick bit of translation in their heads? And the King seems especially slow in keeping up. I don't know quite if anyone knows just what he's going to be saying, but they're probably be thinking "oh we'll get a signal when he's stopped and then we'll go, but anyway it's largely about us, isn't it", because that's what we all think. Now I've done cue-script performances at the Globe in the '90s, playing John in *King John*, Posthumus in *Cymbeline*, and Orlando in *As You Like It*. Now when you do a cue-script performance, and I'd only read (to my shame) *As You Like It* before these projects came up, I hadn't read *King John* or *Cymbeline*. So, I didn't know the plot. I knew that King John died, because I knew he dies in the last bit of my cue-script, but I didn't know if it was the end of the play or not. And Posthumus, likewise. And in a cue-script performance, you don't actually know the detail of what your fellow actor says, not really. You've got your lines, and you've got your cues, so at least you can expect certain things to happen. You can except, if there might be a cue line of, I don't know, "have at you, sir", and then "oh, I'm hurt", or something, and then you kind of know when these incidents are going to take place. Now that is nerve-wracking enough. But actually here, the actors do not know what's going to happen moment to moment.

AH: Yes.

PB: I think if I was preparing actors, I would probably go through the fact that there are three set ups, right? There's the Bashaw / Soliman set up, you know, looking at Perseda from a distance and talking. Then Erasto comes in and talks to Perseda. And then the triple murders. You've got three little kind of vignette scenes, but what happens is unrehearsed. And all unknown to Balthazar and Lorenzo. And indeed even Hieronimo's surprised by how it turns out. So the actors have written their own parts themselves.... And I reckon their focus is largely on remembering their lines and showing off their skill as writers and performers. And Balthazar in particular has given himself some excellent speeches, I think. Lorenzo, very lazy. But I think Balthazar has done well with his opening one, it's lovely! And they found their own costumes, and all these efforts find appreciation in their royal audience. And I'm thinking of a kind of masque situation, where there is a certain amount of little sort of "ooh, nicely said", "he's spoken so terribly well, didn't he", et cetera. It seems to me. So. 4.3. Hieronimo's got his curtain and Balthazar got the chair and half a mustache. And all this kind of artifice and stuff around it, I kind of alluded to in Sarah's chapter that I wrote with her.⁵¹² It's a great distraction, beyond what I wrote then, from the actual, real event which is about to happen. I mean Hieronimo himself is getting it all absolutely tickety-boo, but likewise it does now distract the rest of them from what's really going to happen. The staging of this is really interesting! As ever. I see it was first performed at the Rose. Your research has found similar?

AH: Yes, that seems to be the scholarly consensus. Emma Smith, especially, has done a lot of work on the printing and performance history, and the earliest that we're sure of, it was performed at the Rose.

PB: Yes, so the question as a director is, where does the play-within-the-play take place, and where is everyone placed to see it. So what does the onstage audience need to see and what does the theatre audience need to see, because, you know. So we've got the action of the play, and the reactions of the kings, and the reveal of Horatio. And everyone needs to see all of it, ideally.

AH: Absolutely, yeah.

PB: Now I've been fairly, ever since I had the idea for the Research in Action on the discovery space in 2014, which Will Tosh covered in his book, *Playing Indoors*.⁵¹³ And I chose three scenes, one from *Love's Sacrifice*, from *Messalina*, and for the last one I chose the end of *The Winter's Tale*, because I'm just interested in the fact that there's no line for Paulina beyond "I'll draw the curtain". "And also I'll get someone to kind of push her out of the way!" Nothing like that. So you know we did this workshop, and of course workshop attendees are kindly disposed towards the work,

⁵¹² Sarah Dustagheer, with Philip Bird, "'Strikes open a curtain where appears a body': Discovering Death in Stage Directions', in *Stage Directions & Shakespearean Theatre*, ed. by Sarah Dustagheer and Gillian Woods (London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2018), 213-237.

⁵¹³ Will Tosh, *Playing Indoors: Staging Early Modern Drama in the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse* (London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2018), 160-167; Philip Bird and Will Tosh, 'Research in Action: Drama and dramaturgy 2: The discovery space' (Shakespeare's Globe, 21 September 2014), unrecorded workshop.

but I did write to the guy who was about to direct *Winter's Tale*, which they asked me if I'd like to be in, I'd done it already in 2005, but I had just come out of a long contract in the West End and I needed a rest. Shame, in a way. Michael Longhurst. And I did write to him and I said "we've done this workshop, and Hermione remained in the space, didn't come out, so certain people couldn't see much of her. So instead they ended up watching everyone else on stage", which of course I alluded to in Sarah's chapter. So this discovery space, be it in the recessed space, which everyone seems to think it was, I'm quite a fan of the booth idea, and if I ever direct *Winter's Tale*, I will try it with a booth instead, for Autolycus to pop out of and stuff, for the second half anyway. But whatever it is, if you're in the gallery, you can't see that. You can't see what's being revealed. So Horatio would have to be pulled out somehow, if the King were in the gallery and there's no lines about this. It's all, in my opinion, "see here, exhibit A of a list of one", because that's all you need. Some close ups on wounds, but apart from that it's basically A1, A2, 3 and 4. So here's the exhibit, here's the evidence, and I think it's not [mimes dragging a body into view]. Could the curtain be somewhere else? Well, I saw *Midsummer Night's Dream*, Dominic Dromgoole's production, and I think they had a curtain across the middle of the stage. So if you're standing, for example, at the front, in the middle of the yard, you could see both sides. I, as ever, chose to stand at the side because it's less crowded and I could get to lean against the back because that's nice. And I saw half. Because a lot of directors forget about the people at the sides. And so I don't think a curtain anywhere else on the stage kind of works.... Although to be fair the touring *Hamlet* strung a curtain halfway across somewhere... yes. So anyway, my plan for rehearsals, and then see if this works, would be 4.3, because Hieronimo asks Castile to throw down the key when the train are passed into the gallery. The train. I.e., those people who attend on the kings. Oh, you're nodding, good. [laughs] There's an open door here.

AH: [laughs]

PB: Not the kings, in my opinion. Balthazar comes on with a chair and a cushion, as requested. I don't think he comes on in the gallery holding this chair and putting it down for the King, I think he comes on stage, personally.

AH: It makes sense to keep them all more visible that way, yeah.

PB: Exactly. So this is what I'd do. At the end of 4.3, maybe during Hieronimo's soliloquy, actually, when he comes on talking to us, and maybe this ruckus motivates his hurrying up of Balthazar. "Look, quick, they're coming in". And the kings and the train would pass over the gallery on their way. The train would remain, Castile can make to lock the door, I mean there's no mention made of locking the door, but there's evidence of locking the door, with the key. And the kings make their way down to the stage, as Hieronimo finishes talking, and they enter at 4.4. And Castile remains up there, and he can chuck his line, at line 24, he can throw that down from the gallery. There's kind of a "oh, she's acting very well, Bel-Imperia plays that part very well" or whatever it is. Then the King gives the Viceroy the book, which Hieronimo gave to Castile to pass on, and the King hasn't read it, lines 33 and 34,

“who’s this?” [laughs] And the book is not the playscript, in my opinion. Because there isn’t a playscript. It’s the argument, i.e., the synopsis of the plot and a description of the characters with the actors’ names attached. It’s like a program, but like a fat program with a bit of a story in there. It seems to me. And the blocking of the play-within-the-play, I think it’d be very simple, a presentational style, a masque style. To one side you’ve got Soliman and Bashaw, to the other side, Perseda. Erasto arrives with Perseda, Bashaw crosses to them and kills Erasto, and either Perseda goes to Soliman or Soliman crosses to Perseda, then she kills him and then herself. And so the onstage audience of the King and the Viceroy, I think they’re seated on cushions or that chair, unless that chair was holding up that sign, you know, “the scene”, “where we are”. And I think they’re downstage of the action, so they can see it. They’ve got their backs to the audience, though no one has their backs to anyone in the Globe, and the Swan, but they’re kind of downstage of the action and then they can see the reveal of the curtain and they’re staring at it.

AH: Mhm, that makes sense.

PB: Because when Hieronimo runs to hang himself at 152, there would be no time for the King and the Viceroy to come down from the locked gallery.

AH: No. Or servants and attendants, at that point.

PB: Because there have to be guards on the door, exactly. And as the scene progresses, maybe they come down on the first few lines, and then they arrive. But there’s no gap, there’s no time, and they have to be down at the end for the penknife. So I think they’re on stage. And furthermore, I think, theatrically, the break-in at 156 is much more interesting, theatrically, if it’s through the entrance to the stage itself. So the locking in referred to in 4.3 sort of becomes in our minds and I’m using smoke and mirrors here, related to the locking of the stage so the King and the Viceroy cannot escape. And I mean lastly, a little directorial idea, I’d experiment, because how do you get bodies off.

AH: Yeah, no, exactly.

PB: It’s all open stage. I’d experiment with leaving the bodies of Hieronimo, Bel-Imperia, and Horatio because they’re not carried off in this cortege, as it were, for mourning. They remain on at the start of 4.5, and when they’re mentioned, they awake to journey to Elysium. So Horatio at line 17, wakes up, and Bel-Imperia at 21, and Hieronimo at line 23. And there might even be a way of getting Isabella in. I’d try very hard to work in Isabella, but we don’t know how that’d be until we do it, and then we could go “oh, well that doesn’t work”. “Could you be ghostly?” That would be something I’d kind of like to do. So! That was that, and I could just whip through the rest of the scene to point out what I think might be of use.

AH: Definitely! Yeah, that sounds great. This has all been very helpful.

PB: Well, you asked about the process of blocking or working on the scene as an actor or director. I went through it as I do any scene, and noted things I found of interest, so I picked up, particularly what you've alerted me to about words, speaking, and stuff, and how much speaking there is, and I found in general, quite a lot. I marked a little 'w' in the margin where I found references to speech and a little 'a' where I found references to action, and I found action trumping words quite a lot.

AH: Interesting. How so?

PB: I'll go through. In terms of actual specifics in this scene, not in the rest of the play, because this is the culmination; this is my thesis, that in the end, words are not enough, that's basically what I'm saying, or what Kyd's saying, at rather great length, for about forty minutes. Line 1, "shall we *see* the tragedy", so we're seeing rather than speaking or listening. We're going to see this now, this is the closest thing Hieronimo's going to get to a court trial, "I'm going to present you evidence". "This is the argument they *show*", line 10, so again it's visual. Now, when rehearsing, particularly with cue-scripts, and I often give students cue-scripts to work with even if we aren't finally going to use them because it helps them focus on what they're about to say, before they start going "oh, I don't talk for three pages, I shall walk upstage, light a cigarette, pour myself a whiskey, and stare enigmatically out of the French windows...", you know. [laughs] Just focus on what you're going to say.

AH: That reminds me so much of a Pinter play I saw at my undergrad. [laughs]

PB: I'm not suggesting it's this play, because there's no tennis racket or court outside. [laughs] Imagine! Right, so, and some of my watchwords, they're obvious really, a word like "thus" is rather wonderful.

AH: Oh yes.

PB: Oh yes. Obviously.

AH: I've thought a lot about "thus" in this chapter, "thus" has been my catchword throughout the whole chapter.

PB: Maybe someone's written a whole thesis on "thus" because, heavens above, it's a wonderful tool. "Don't saw the air, *thus*". Equally useful when you're working in a cue-script context, because you haven't blocked or rehearsed, and maybe you're going to end up miles away from the person who's just talked to you, your ears and eyes are really on the alert for the word "this" or "these". You know, "*this* man owes me money", he's next to me. "*That* woman is a harlot", she's over there. And it's absolutely lesson one in blocking, "this", "that", "here", "there" are intensely useful in cue-script performance.

AH: I'm so glad to hear that, because this chapter has really been informed by exactly those words, so grammatically they're called deictic words, it's deixis, a Greek term

for, basically, pointing words, gestural language. So I'm so happy to hear you say that, because it's proving my point! [laughs]

PB: Well you've got all of these here! Line 16, "*this* fair Christian nymph", so as you say, I believe they're a clue to gesture and possibly proximity, which we may come to with "*these* wounds", and it depends on how good an actor Balthazar is, or indeed the actor playing Balthazar is, but you do see quite a lot of amateur performance with "see *here*" [gestures broadly] "*this* is my", you know. I'm not saying it's demanding quite that, but there is room for something... if nothing else, it invites a turn of the head. "*This* fair Christian nymph", it implies you're looking at her. It may not even be gestural by your hands, but it's something. Like you've picked up, of course. "*See*, Viceroy, *that's* Balthazar", line 20, it's just I hadn't had anything about listening or speaking yet, it's all actions. I'm working my way through, so I'll keep jumping back and back. 29, "the influence of her *lights*", we're talking eyes here. Wasn't there an "eyes" on the previous page...? I'm sure there was. Here we are, "whose *eyes* compel like powerful adamant", line 18. So again I think looking is big in this scene, either by the actors to each other or by the audience. Now, one of my other interests is verse in this period and it can hang students up a lot, and I'm at pains to say "go with it, this is on purpose, if he wanted it to be prose, he would have made it prose, this is something we can use, it's an opportunity, not an obstacle". And I looked at the verse of the play-within-the-play. And it's lovely and even. It's smooth. There is the odd extra syllable, unstressed. There are a few eleven-syllable lines. But generally, the verse is iambic, basically. Fine, you might say, it's 1582 or whatever it is, 1589, so it's just crossing over from Spenser or Lyly, it's just working its way into drama, it's the form. But jumping on for a second, Bel-Imperia comes in with the most startling trochee, the only trochee of the whole performance, like she's letting out, of course, her own emotions. "*Tyrant*." And that verse is extraordinary, compared with what's come before it. "Yet liveth Soliman to comfort thee. / Fair queen of beauty, let not favour die, / But with a gracious eye behold his grief" "*Tyrant*! Desist soliciting vain suits". We've got ourselves our ten, but it's a trochee. And I find trochees startling. I analyzed Julius Caesar all the way in trochaic openings and most of them are, of course, somebody's name. "Brutus!" "Caesar!" "Cassius!" And I think there are only 29 other instances of a trochaic verse line. "Blood" is a good one. So I love a trochee because they're so unusual. And the fact that she's written her own lines says so much, I think, about that speech and the verse in general. The other two are getting pretty great verse, some really serviceable syllables. But she's going for it. And Hieronimo, of course, is just popping in the cues as and when required. Let's forget, for a moment, the fact that in Greek or Latin it may not have scanned like that, we'll just let that one go. So, we've got "*lights*", "that he may *see* Perseda, my beloved", back to line 32. And then, "here comes Lorenzo. *Look* upon the plot", so it's pretty much as a plot which was around then, which was put together for our original practice, our cue-script productions, and that was pretty much "they come on", "he comes on", then "they go off", "he murders him", stuff like that. So, the King doesn't know what's going on because he hasn't read it. It's quite useful, why did Hieronimo give them the book, the outline, I suppose to show he's got nothing up his sleeve, nothing to hide? I mean, it's not actually the script, it's kind of the story that he's already told the actors, so I suppose he's not

particularly ashamed of it. And his case for putting on a tragedy is because Nero did it and people love Nero, don't we? Like that's going to work. [laughs]

AH: Of course. [laughs]

PB: So looking for actions and gestures that actors might perform during it, "Erasto, Soliman *saluteth* thee", there's room for something there in line 50, "thou shouldst be *thus* employed", "thus" the killing. Now this is, wow, it has no prologue. No "watch out-ness" about it. It's just "hello and *thus*", and the stabbing happens on "thus". You'd be a fool as an actor not to stab somebody on the word "thus". It's where you do it. And, of course, Lorenzo isn't expecting that! I mean, he knows he's going to get killed, but there will be a sort of, some kind of warning to the other actors, get ready to do the kind of fake fall, here comes the rubber knife, you know. It's utterly surprising, with no "by your leave". No warning to your fellow actor. You don't do fights without rehearsal, when you do any kind of fight, and nowadays people are even more safety conscious, you do not take your fellow actor unawares. Before a fight, before any move, you make eye contact. Boom, and go. If there isn't that kind of – and go, the other person may not be ready and they may just be thinking about what they just said, the laugh they just got, whether their agent's in, not quite on it for something that's about to be potentially quite fierce and dangerous with a sword. And then, Erasto's slain. Quick work. Right, so it's Bel-Imperia's turn now, and we've only just started the play! "With a gracious *eye behold* his grief", more seeing. And it's quite interesting with the casting of this play, that of course she probably wouldn't kill Lorenzo, she has to kill Balthazar, to kill her brother, I think, would be a little bit too much for Hieronimo to ask. So he's cast it that way round, it seems to me. "Butcher", for goodness's sake. "But were she able, *thus* would she revenge", I'm not able to so I'm going to kill you anyway? That's brilliant, that. "To thy power Perseda doth obey" and then boom! "But were she able, *thus* would she revenge". So she's just led Balthazar into some kind of false – caught him unawares too. It's brilliantly done. And I imagine she's learned those eight lines. And I assume it's "*thus* she would revenge / Thy treacheries on thee, ignoble Prince" and "thus" is where the stabbing happens, and he would be reacting and she'd be talking as he died, so he hears these words before he finally pegs it. It seems to me. And then she throws in this last line, which, unrehearsed, she hadn't gone through her lines with Hieronimo but that we and Hieronimo were not expecting. That's a surprise. "And on herself", boom, before you even have time to register what's just happened, she's gone and she's down, so action, action. So I think we've had an awful lot, as you'd expect from a play within the play, of action, rather than talking about talking. It seems to me really action-heavy, which, your research has shown how much talking there is in the play, and this is the culmination of that. "Bravely done", "plays so well", "very nice", they haven't got it. And then Hieronimo has to present it. Now this is a very long speech. And in a way he's telling us, the theatre audience, stuff we already know. Which, in fact, Don Andrea does as well in the next scene. So when you've got that, as an actor, you think, "it's got to be how I'm telling it that's got to be magnetic, because the what I'm telling is already known". So it's a big challenge for Hieronimo to keep this interesting. And a challenge for the King and the Viceroy to not get up. I mean, you'd

be thinking, "how do I play this?" Well, you're stunned. I can do stunned for 20 lines, but this....

AH: [laughs]

PB: There is a kind of appalling whatsit about it, his kind of intro before "see here" is sort of alright, you can go along with this, but then the actual story is some 50 lines. So he's going to have to work quite hard. Hieronimo's going to have to work quite hard and so is the actor, to keep their attention and that can be through physical proximity, maybe. I've assumed they're not armed, they're at court, protected. But Hieronimo has got a knife, and he has already killed somebody. And he's got this knife, so you've got to go easy on that. The watching audience above... it's just so easy when we read a play to forget there are eight people listening to this, as well as the person talking, isn't it? They're all thinking, as actors, "well, what do *I* do during this? Why don't I go and try the doors?" No, because Castile knows they've locked the doors. I don't know, but in rehearsal you find out exactly how we can graduate this. Of course, most of the attention's going to be on Hieronimo, but the rest of them can't just sit there like dummies, it seems to me. So finally he then says, "well you've seen all the action", and I think there are references to words. "Whose tongue is tuned to tell", beautiful. It's like the best line Pyramus ever said. "Whose tongue is tuned to tell his latest tale". Brilliant, at 85, 86. And then, "*behold*. I see your *looks* urge instance of these *words*". Ok, so I've done all this stuff, and now you need me to explain. Your looks, they're either looking at each other, in a "did you just see what I saw?" sort of way, or they're looking at the seeping pig's blood and thinking "that's a bit too impressive, actually...". Or they're looking at him with their jaws dropped. Whatever it is, there's something there. People are doing stuff for him to comment on.

AH: Mhmm.

PB: Action, shows his dead son. "*See here* my show, *look on this* spectacle". And then "here, here, here, here". Lots of opportunities. I know it's not the same "here", of course, but there is room for his gesturing to it, his seeing it, his reacting to it. And if they're not looking, you probably wouldn't go up to a king and grab him by the face and say, "look at it!" Although you might, just not 50 lines away from the speech ending. Or maybe you could try that in rehearsal? They start to get up, but he sits them there and says, "no, you're going to look at this". That might actually establish their stillness... that might actually work. Well, we'd try it. The rehearsal is about trying things and going "do we think that works?" You may have felt great, as an actor, but if it didn't tell the story, does it work? And so on. So, "here, here, here, here, here". And then we've got the gesture and action. "*These* wounds". "*These* fatal marks". "All decayed with *this*". This, these, and these, all bunched up together, 96 and 98. And then "*these* traitors". He's going from this exhibit behind the curtain, where he's been miles from them, "see here my show", and they're miles from him. He's actually now quite near the doors, so they can't escape anyway. He's got a knife, and he'll beat them to the door. And he could do anything, as far as they're concerned. He'll kill anyone who moves. And then presumably "these traitors

harms", 103, will bring him closer to these bodies and it'd be nice if they were close, though we'll see in rehearsal if they die close together or miles apart. You've got room to go between them, maybe. In fact, one might try and do that... Soliman would stay to that side when Erasto is killed and then Perseda will come to him, because she does actually have a line, she could easily cross on "Erasto! See, Soliman has slain him" and that would be her cue perhaps to get across near him. I think I'd invite that and then he can maybe get on his knees, I thought. There's room for a gesture on "fair queen of beauty, let not favour die, / But with a gracious eye behold his grief", he could actually kneel to her in 55 and 56. Might be quite good for her to then get stuck in. So he can come to them, they could be separate, and then "my dear son, my dear Horatio" and then "they butchered up" "in dark, black night", "he shrieks". Interestingly, "and yet methinks I hear, / His dismal outcry echo in the air". For a moment, he loses it. He loses the present and suddenly gets haunted again by something. But he can't drop his guard for long and then he's back, but there's definitely room to bracket that as a kind of "oh, I think I hear him now..." [gestures spookily] And then, ok, so I've done this, I did this, and there we go. "As you *see*", "slaughtered as you *see*". "*Speak*", saying something! You can't. Words are not enough, 114. And then he produces his next piece of evidence, "*behold* this bloody handkerchief". So yes, I think we could actually... you can't usually be close to a king, but all proximity is gone, he's really in their faces now. And if they are, they'll probably be quite close to each other because of the book, they're sharing and muttering about "who's this?" But that is under their faces and it's covered in blood. There's blood on his hands, on this handkerchief, on the bodies. On the stage. "*See*", see again, "I have reserved". "With *these* accursed murderers", 128. And "*this* Balthazar, thy son", so there's another "this" there. And then "Bel-Imperia missed her part in this" and there's, I think, a change in mood, and a move to her. Whether he comes down to her, we could do with a bit of up-and-down-ness, visually we want to keep it mesmerizing because he's got to hypnotize these royals. And then... boom, the princes. You've seen him, you've seen them, you've seen her, and now me. We'll stick him in the middle somewhere, nicely. "Princes, now *behold* Hieronimo". Here's the final act. And "thus I end my play" is interesting. Because it would be great if it was "*thus* I end my play" [mimes stabbing himself] but he doesn't do that.

AH: No.

PB: He runs to hang himself. And, of course, he couldn't be stopped with that, because he's locked the doors and they wouldn't get to him in time. So, interestingly, the author has decided, Kyd has decided "I'm going to do something else here". So, what's he going to hang himself on? Interesting... Has he got a rope? Has he got a noose in the discovery space? Is there a noose hanging in the discovery space? He's the kind of guy who'd prepare all his props, he's got this prepared. Do you have a thought of how the hanging would be engineered?

AH: Well... I'm wondering, because at the end of 4.2, beginning of 4.3 he closes the curtain, the stage direction I have is that he "knocks up the curtains", concealing Isabella's body, concealing that arbor.

PB: Yes, yes.

AH: And suddenly, there's Horatio's body as well. We've jumped forward in time and space a little bit. So I wouldn't be surprised if there's a noose. It strikes me, because I have also done some acting, I'm by no means an expert, but I am familiar with rehearsal room spaces; it strikes me that one possibility to try, and it would take some work, is if Horatio's body is hanging there when Hieronimo reveals it again, and that "see here" is taking the body down maybe? Then there's a noose right there ready to go. And it would be the same kind of poetic end that Hieronimo is going for throughout the play, of using the same noose that he hung his son back up with, or that they hung his son with initially, to then kill himself. It's the kind of, that desire for intimacy again, that closeness again, when his son has been taken away from him –

PB: Yes. Wow. And he's hugging a dead body.

AH: And it brings him back closer to his son, who was taken from him.

PB: Wow. Well he's only got a line to go "here lay my hope", to lay him down, assuming "lay" is something to do with lying him down.

AH: Yeah, it's a quick one. Mhm.

PB: He's got to lay him down...

AH: Well, but also, "here lay" happens four times.

PB: Yes! Yes.

AH: Here lay my hope, my heart, my treasure, all of that.

PB: Yes! That is brilliant!

AH: [laughs] Thanks.

PB: No, no, I'd never thought of that. So "here", in other words, is like a self-imperative. "Here I *will*" or a future. "Here I will lay my hope". Oh! Rather than "here" past tense, in this arbor lay my hope, because it didn't, it was hung, oh I'll have to ask for a reprint of the book. That is brilliant. It's a "here I *will*".

AH: I was thinking, one of the things that I didn't expect my thesis to do was to become quite interested in grammar, so the "thuses" have been quite important, and in other chapters there are other words. But thinking about Elizabethan grammar, that elision happens quite a lot. So with indicatives, with imperatives, those kind of things, are quite often elided, especially in verse, to save space in your meter and all sorts of things. It's a convention that's fairly well established, especially theatrically, in the grammar of this time.

PB: I love that. "Here will", assuming I am about to, or I'm doing this now, "here I will lay". And he's down by "bliss bereft." "But hope, heart, treasure, joy and bliss, / All fled, failed, died, yea, all decayed with this", that is wonderful. I was intrigued though, to go back to the hanging, I mean, hang him up and then stab him. I assumed that hanging in the arbor was just... I don't know. Making him a kind of, well, *Strange Fruit*. What kind of horrible fruit is hanging in this tree? We're into lynching almost. I didn't quite ever see that as "we'll hang him and then we'll stab him", I thought it was just "we'll hang him up, we'll tie him in the tree". You know, stick him up in the branches, on the arbor, so you can get it in better. But what's that frontispiece? Has he got a rope around his neck?

AH: Oh... let me look. There is that image. I have it in the introduction to my Arden edition.

PB: Ok. Yeah, I don't seem to have it in mine. I remember this image of a trellis.

AH: That's very much what I think it's like. In the very small image that I have, it does kind of look like a noose. Yeah, it's a trellis and it looks like he's strung up.

PB: That's fine. I'm with you then. And because hanging can take 45 seconds or quite a long time, we'll stab him as well.

AH: Yeah. And he's hanging at a very odd angle in the frontispiece, his head's at a weird turn and stretched.

PB: Ick. Well, brilliant, I love this. So he's already down, but the noose is already there. You've solved that one, super!

AH: Convenient.

PB: Can we please work together on the next production I'm doing?

AH: [laughs] Yes, please.

PB: So the line before it, 152, "urge no more words, I have no more to say". It's a bit like the Lorenzo 2.1, it's kind of "where words prevail not, violence prevails". He could almost be saying it to himself all the way through, except he didn't know how to do it then and now he does. And then it's like the Viceroy and the King have the spell broken, this is real, this actually happened, and boom. And because, as we've both previously said, they wouldn't have time to run down and come on, I think they start up and call for stuff to happen, and then guards come, who are always kind of outside doors anyway, you know, boom, through the actual doors, and grab him. And now it is about words, "come on, *explain*", "Hieronimo, *inform* the King", 157, and "*speak*, traitor", 163, three times. Explain yourself, why have you done this? They just haven't been paying attention. And, of course, Hieronimo has been trying words forever and Lorenzo's just been saying "this guy's insane. He wants any kind of trial,

we'll just shoo this away." This is the royal family he's up against here. And Hieronimo says, "oh good *words*". I mean, great. They're useless. "I've just given you everything and you've seen it." And that's a short line, "oh good words", which is actually unusual in this very, very sort of metrically even verse. Even when someone has a half line, someone else will have a half line to go with it. But there aren't very many short lines in this play, and I always find that helpful, I always point it out to actors, what's happening there? Point them up, when you've got fewer words in a line. And, well, the one thing the Viceroy was paying attention to was that Bel-Imperia killed his son, because "I saw her", "I saw her stab him". So, he was paying attention at that point. Again, "why *speakest* thou not?" Well, I think why he won't speak at this point is because he won't incriminate himself. Or Bel-Imperia. He's not going to say anything about Don Andrea, or Horatio, or anything to sully her memory. Silence is better than that. "I may not, or I will not tell thee", and in fact I've said everything. Even though the King says, "I'll make thee *tell*", "indeed", short line, interesting. You'll "never force me to reveal / The thing which I have vowed inviolate". Personally, I think that's about Don Andrea, don't you think?

AH: I'm not sure, because I'm not sure how much Hieronimo knows about Don Andrea. Obviously he's aware that there's some sort of friendship between Horatio and Don Andrea, they're quite close, but Hieronimo isn't explicitly around for hearing about Don Andrea's death, he's not around when Lorenzo and Horatio are talking about who captured Balthazar. Hieronimo's not explicitly said to be in that scene and he has no lines.

PB: And when he talks with Bel-Imperia later on, that's all in relation to Horatio, I imagine.

AH: Yes, yeah.

PB: Because they're family, as it were. Ok. Well, I just feel that Hieronimo's going "I'm not going to say any more, where's my lawyer", that sort of thing. It's not my business, sort of thing. Hieronimo's business was revenge on his son's murder. "I didn't plan for this to happen, by the way, this was as much a surprise to me as it was to you, her killing herself. But she very much wanted to kill Balthazar, I wanted to kill them both, she persuaded me otherwise, and that's as much as I'm prepared to say." And then he bites his tongue. And I'm quite interested in that. I mean, of course stabbing someone's appalling. Why am I equally, if not more appalled by someone biting out their own tongue? I don't know. Maybe because it's self-willed? And you're then in pain! You haven't committed suicide, where you don't feel anything afterwards, you've just caused yourself excruciating pain. It's like when Lavinia comes on in *Titus*, and when I saw it at the Globe in 2006, she came on with her stumpy hands and her bloody dress, she opened her mouth to speak and out came... I hit the deck. It was like the first World War out there, there were about 30 of us, lying on our backs, getting fresh air, being nursed by stewards. I just passed out.

AH: I think somehow the mutilation is worse than death, the death is at least over fairly quickly in these plays.

PB: And deserved. I mean, Horatio's death... maybe that's it, something to do with merited death and unmerited death. But Isabella stabbing herself is ghastly. And Horatio being slaughtered is horrible. Biting out your tongue, I don't know. I don't know. It is horrible. And, of course, it's the ultimate action and leaves him in silence. So Castile grabs on to "well he can write". He can still tell us, but of course he's told them everything already. Oh, and interestingly, how many hands Hieronimo's got. That knife, I guess, was taken away from him by the attendants, so he's now unarmed. So now he needs a sign, because words are impossible. He has to make a sign. "Look to my brother", action, of course, and then boom. Why did he stab Castile? He was quite a nice guy, but that's the succeeding hope, "expected after my decease", oh. That's why. The emphasis is on the line, as it were. And then back to action, "*go, bear his body hence*", "*take up our hapless son*", and then the sounds of the march and the mourning and the action of the people leaving. And I know that once you get a theory you start looking for it, but it just added up for me, and of course, it's just the last scene of the play where action takes over. Words can do a lot in firing us up and firing up the audience, and giving us the feeling of warfare offstage and emotions onstage, but ultimately they're not enough.

AH: Mm. That was very fruitful, thank you.

PB: Well, I did, as you can see, make copious notes because I just can't help it. So I hope I didn't just blurt at you.

AH: No, that was wonderful. I think we've covered everything.... It was so great to hear you confirm my theory about the deictic words, so I really loved that, but I hadn't thought about what you said about proximity, I had only put it to the gesture, but you're exactly right with guiding us around the stage space as well, not just guiding personal action but movement around the whole stage.

PB: Yes, well, you know from acting, too, that you're constantly looking not to be boring, and in a big old space like the Rose or the Globe, there are people over there and if you're over here then they need a bit of love, so you want to get over there when you can, so you want to keep the action nice and spread. Funnily enough, you want to keep them quite far apart. When I work with modern students and actors, and they have a kind of two-handed scene, they all kind of get in close for the closeup. The closer you get, the less we can get in. So actually, love scenes played at a distance are incredibly powerful.

AH: And there's so much more tension there, and there's motivation in these words to do that. It's right there!

PB: And what you said about proximity, once you get to the moment, be it the kiss or the stab, that's why it's shocking or it's different, because suddenly – wham – you're so close. That's happened. As a contrast to what's been happening before. And he's sectioned it very nicely for us, he talks about this guy, then about that guy, talks about her, them, him, then himself. You've got lots of places you can go, without

looking wander-y. It's all motivated by language. Cool. Well, I promise not to talk anymore, actions not words. But if, after reflecting on this, you want to send a follow-up email, then do.

AH: Perfect, thank you so much.

A.4 Interview with Ricky Dukes, discussing practice-based work on *The Spanish Tragedy*. Recorded via Zoom on 26 June 2020.

Anna Hegland (AH): Alright, so we'll start recording. It is the 26th of June and I am Anna Hegland, speaking with...

Ricky Dukes (RD): Ricky Dukes.

AH: Ricky, could you really quickly just tell me about the capacity in which you've been involved in *The Spanish Tragedy*?

RD: Yeah, so I'm the artistic director of Lazarus Theatre Company, and the director of our production in 2013, and also, working with a dramaturg, did the editing as well.

AH: Amazing, ok.

RD: I think very often people think, well, "who did the script, who did the edits" and we're quite keen in our company to credit the dramaturg when they've done it but also put in a bit of a note about when the director has done it as well, because we're quite renowned for our editing – the pruning knife. [laughs]

AH: What was the run time for your production?

RD: 90 minutes, straight through.

AH: Perfect, ok, nice and swift.

RD: No breaks. At all. Full foot to the pedal, here we go.

AH: Love a no-interval show. [laughs]

RD: Oh, me too, me too. [laughs]

AH: Alright, so could you just tell me a little bit about the process of blocking, particularly the end of the play, but I'll take thoughts on the whole thing because yours was such a compact production. And that can include ideas that you walked into the rehearsal room with or things that changed through that process, or the end product, whatever you like, and we can just have a conversation from there.

RD: Sure, yeah. Well, I suppose the first thing to say is that we as a company and I as a director work quite rigorously in a kind of Brechtian process. So, I'm a big fan of the practitioner Brecht and there's a number of things he does, of course, but for us, I think, it's about working through the text to find the facts. Brechtian process is an actor's process and a dramaturgical process and a directorial process – so instead of following a tragic arc of a character, what you're actually doing is identifying the major events and more specifically the choices that they're offered. Very often, you

know, in what I would call an RSC production, you're following the tragic arc of King Lear. And then it really is, *King Lear* is about King Lear.

AH: Mhm.

RD: Whereas when we did *King Lear*, it's really about the situation of power, about mental stability, family life, politics, civil war. So, of course, it's still about King Lear, but actually, in a way, when you deconstruct the play, you're really looking for these major events during which there are choices offered and then choices not taken, choices ignored. And I'm a big fan of, in rehearsal, saying, "there's no such thing as a rhetorical question" – if it's not answered, why is it not answered? And sometimes characters choose not to answer, which can tell you so much more about a character than if they did answer, actually. So, we look at a play in that respect, and nine times out of ten, like with *Spanish Tragedy* we played with it being relatively contemporary. Contemporary to the audience it was playing in front of, so set in 2013. And we didn't really go down a kind of tweeting or mobile phone stuff, but it was really more sort of a contemporary landscape, that then for an audience... it's not really necessarily about being relatable, it's about not allowing the audience to get away with going, "oh, that was ages ago, that would never happen now". But with a production that signposts the choices and asks the audience the questions as the characters are being questioned, it just gives it a bit more immediacy and that's what I find exciting about classics, it's that I find them incredibly immediate, incredibly responsive, and to the times, to the issues of society, which actually, the reason I think it's a golden age is because the issues more broadly that the writers were talking about are the issues that we're still dealing with, still trying to work out. In the middle of this pandemic, in the middle of this theatre crisis we're going through, it really questions what the value of storytelling is, and I think these writers totally knew how to tell a story. And maybe that includes having a prologue, a framing device, I mean, brilliant. It's so interesting, I see new plays all the time and new musicals and you go, "this needs a framing device", just put it in a frame and we'll understand it! Just follow the masters! It gives you so much context, and of course the popular play-within-the-play, which, the play-within-the-play becomes such an Elizabethan, Jacobean trope, but, of course, Kyd was really sort of setting the trend and using that, utilizing it, and being so honest, you know, that it's a play! And that's another thing I love about the Brechtian process – an audience must always be aware that it's a play. There is no fourth wall, and contemporary actors forget that the whole 'fourth wall' bit in theatre's history is very, very small in comparison to the whole breadth of theatre. And I think sometimes actors worry about being truthful? You can be truthful, but you can be even more truthful by letting audiences know that this is a play. And I think Kyd does that brilliantly, actually.

AH: Mm, yeah.

RD: So I come into rehearsal having done the dramaturgy, we've deconstructed the play to a certain extent, either on my own or me with the dramaturg. We might have done some workshops, and with *Spanish* we did a workshop about six months before, trying to work out what the hell is going on.

AH: [laughs] A good question.

RD: Always a great start. Particularly with the play-within-the-play, when they start doubling characters, they're names of characters that are foreign and a bit strange, so, modern actors kind of go, "ahh, uh, erm" – they always say it like it's French, like some distant language that they don't know. So, there's a process of trying to understand the basics, really. Who is who, what are their relationships, how does that work, what are the major events, what are the decisions that are being made? I'm a big fan of listing, and our rehearsal room becomes a bit like a primary school set-up, with displays and imagery – we put the play around the wall and a visual glossary to go with it – so we're trying to, as a company, understand what the play is doing, before we start worrying about "what's my motivation" or any of that kind of twentieth-century nonsense, as I like to sort of discard it as. You know, what's the drive, what are the elements? And then you do an edit. And the edit for *Spanish* came very early, actually, and, in those days, I was far more brutal than I am now. Now I'm a bit more delicate. But maybe I've 'matured' and I think a bit more now about the consequences of an edit, particularly certain lines, whereas I think earlier in our history and myself as a director, we did *Julius Caesar* and I cut Julius Caesar. And that was straightforward, "let's just start the play with his murder, done". And to me that seemed the most obvious thing, but, oh, the critics did not like it. [laughs] I think it was quite a brutal edit, in that large swathes of it could go. And I should say that that was partly because the brief at the time at the Blue Elephant Theatre was that they much preferred 90 minutes, straight through. So, for us, coming in as the only classics company there, it was about how do we make that accessible to an audience that is used to non-text-based performance, then we're throwing them an Elizabethan classic...

AH: Yes, that's very different.

RD: Those kinds of practicalities. Also, we rehearse in three weeks!

AH: Oh, wow, ok.

RD: Yes, there's an awful lot to get done. Week one is about playing and building ensemble, and trying to understand the play. We don't really start staging things usually until the middle of the second week, maybe sometimes the beginning of the third week, because I find that when you start staging – and I know some directors say blocking, but I find "blocking" to be a bit restrictive where "staging" feels to me like we're building on the play – but if you don't understand the play, you can't come up with anything. You're just coming up with *anything*, rather than an informed choice. Once you've done the groundwork and we're now working collaboratively as a company, as an ensemble, actually I find staging in week three is very quick. And you can stage an act in a morning. It's bizarre, it's incredible. Because the actors understand what's going on, and of course, they've got the pressure of knowing it's the last week, so they just get on with it as well – a wonderful practicality. [laughs] But the actors are informed. Because they've understood the text, they know where

they've come from, they know where they're going to, they know what props they have to have, you don't have to have that long rehearsal going, "shouldn't you have a dagger right now?" "Oh, right, yes". They know that, because we've done the work and we're up on our feet. And I suppose specifically with Act 4, scene 4, in the workshop and in rehearsals, we found the text there, I think because it's the end of the play, really impenetrable. What we started to look at was, is there another way we could tell the story. Still sticking to the facts and events, you know, in terms of who's murdered and when and all those kinds of things, but is there a different device? I also think, as we said when you and I were first talking, the thing that I think gets lost quite often in contemporary productions is the catharsis, the idea of us feeling something. And as you pointed out, the horror and the humor, and those two things being very, very close together. I can be horrified, but hilariously laughing, that's a sort of complex contradiction when it happens. But when I've seen contemporary productions of classics, when they're a little bit too clean or they're a little bit sterile, actually I think the plays require a massive amount of bonkers-ness with a capital B. Bonkers-ness. So, in the end, what we came up with, which I think answered that but might not have answered other people's requirements, we turned it into a semi-operetta.

AH: Interesting!

RD: Yeah, we sang most of it.

AH: Ok, nice.

RD: And we used some of Kyd's language, we also came up with our own lyrics and the company devised and created that as we went. But we really played on this thought that the lyrics should not be sophisticated, there shouldn't be any level of high art here. The King and the Viceroy want to see something like proper groundlings, muddy, filthy, sex-driven, murder-driven. Everything we sort of hope for in life, really. [laughs]

AH: [laughs] Obviously.

RD: And in a way the play-within-the-play has in it all the reasons that I come to a Jacobean or Elizabethan tragedy experience. So, we thought, "let's throw that all into the last ten minutes and you're going to get it all". And we set it in a ridiculous operetta at a children's birthday party, so lots of balloons, bunting, tall hats, and it's a device that I've sort of used from then, I've used in a few productions now, there's nothing like someone coming onstage with a balloon, a big smiley face, and a party hat that makes the audience go, "what the eff is happening". And in a way, I find that audiences then stop thinking about the classical bit of it and just start listening. We did a similar device with the play-within-the-play at the end of *Midsummer Night's Dream*. So instead of having a twenty-minute Thisbe-Pyramus love story, we again turned it into some sort of macabre, slapstick, grandiose, ridiculous opera, which anyone can then understand. And, actually, they become show stealers. In the case of *Spanish Tragedy*, most people who talk about that production talk about the opera at

the end, and you have to remind people there isn't an opera at the end. "There is! There was definitely some weird singing!"

AH: I really love this idea of opera as the accessible artform here, because that seems so counterintuitive for so many people.

RD: Yes!

AH: I mean, I grew up doing opera in high school and I think it is quite accessible, just as I think Elizabethan and Jacobean drama is, but I really love that you worked to switch that idea around in the audience's mind.

RD: Yeah, and it's also sort of a pastiche, take the mickey type thing, that if you just warble on a note for ten minutes, people will find that hilarious, you know? I mean, maybe not at the end of *Tosca*. But there's something about the bonkers, the ridiculousness of it. So as a company, we took how many murders there were, we took how in the play they were murdered, and did we want to keep true to that way of murdering them or did we want to come up with a different way of murdering them, and then in my sort of 'wisdom', inverted commas, I thought, "well, why don't we just kill everybody?" The whole cast's going to get it. So, we actually played it as, of course Hieronimo, with the help of Bel-Imperia, staging this ridiculous thing... I suppose it was really about Hieronimo sticking his fingers up to them. He knows this is crap. There was no level of "I'm going to draw you in and make you feel something". More like "I'm going to put on the worst show", a bit like *The Producers*, actually. Put on the worst show ever, to mock your authority and your relationship with the Viceroy. And you know, the Viceroy's son is in it as well, we're all in it, actually, everybody's in the show. It's a bit community theatre, everyone gets to have a go. So it certainly wasn't high opera, it was very crass, the crassest of the crass, Gilbert and Sullivan type of thing, so there's a sense of ridiculousness and bonkersness and craziness. In a way, when Hieronimo started his killing spree, you weren't sure, a bit like in the play really, you're not sure if it's performance or real. The meta sort of crosses, because we then also played that the actor, Danny, who played Hieronimo, who was actually Hieronimo playing inside a play, we were playing – [laughs] lots of play – we were playing that Danny was actually killing everyone.

AH: Ok, so the actor, not the character?

RD: Exactly. It was the actor as the character who's playing a character. I suppose that was totally inspired by Kyd, with the framing device of Revenge and the ghost. But you know, not content with three frames, I put another one in. [laughs]

AH: [laughs] Very reasonable.

RD: You can't have too many frames, right?

AH: The more, the better! Yeah.

RD: The start of the opera was very controlled and rigid, and we're doing a performance, and then bit by bit, verse by verse, you could see Danny move from the character in the play [the Bashaw] to Hieronimo to Danny, "now I'm a human being". And we changed it from father-son to elder brother-younger brother, purely because of logistics of casting actors. And we only had to change a few words and it didn't make that much of a difference and no one really noticed or remarked on it. And sometimes that's the joy of the more obscure Elizabethans or Jacobean, people aren't quite sure whether they can call you out on it, you know what I mean? Like with *Macbeth*, everyone's a critic, but with something like *Spanish Tragedy* you get more of the "I'm not sure it was a brother relationship... but ok." "I'm not sure there was an opera, but let's go with it!" It's interesting to see how far you can go. We played that he was so destroyed by the death of his younger brother, the death of Horatio, that that couldn't be contained anymore inside the operetta. And that it as if he and Bel-Imperia had a plan, but then Hieronimo goes way further than the plan by actually killing the whole court.

AH: Ok, yeah.

RD: And then in the end, he kills himself, though in our version he shot himself. There was no running off to get rope and hanging himself, we had him so that he wrote across the back wall of the theatre 'vengeance is mine' in big letters. And he was throwing party cake and jelly, so we came up with this device that was sort of '101 ways to kill someone in a theatre', which was a bit disconcerting because everyone filled in that list quite quickly! Clearly, they'd been thinking about it. [laughs] So we garroted someone with bunting, we impaled someone with a ladder into the wall, obviously safely, this happened eight times a week, we killed someone with an airhorn by inserting it up their rectum....

AH: That is very inventive. [laughs]

RD: [laughs] Very noisy, I found. Very noisy. There was a phone wire that someone got hanged on, it was a bit of a logistics nightmare with the music and singing and whatnot, for Danny to not get too carried away and out of time. Safety, at all times. We had to have the feeling that he was, though. So, I suppose, process-wise, there was an idea that, "this is quite impenetrable, what might we do" and then as a company we all jumped on board with that and said, "right, let's find a way". And as a process through rehearsals and previews and tech, sort of locking down those logistics, so that the last image is just him, with 'revenge is mine' written on the wall behind him, and he puts the gun in his mouth and fires. And then we did a lighting trick that was a blackout, three seconds later, Revenge and the Ghost were in the middle of the stage, and you think, "how have they gotten there?" And of course they've just stepped from behind a curtain. But there was an element that made it look like they'd been a part of this the whole time.

AH: Nice. Yeah.

RD: We used to have a bet with one of the actors: if you can get the audience involved, I'll buy you a pint. So the actor who played the King of Spain, who was a female actor, we made the King of Spain female, they were sat on the side of the auditorium with the audience, and we did that so that we could sort of play it a bit WWF. When they actually started fighting, we got them going, "yessss, kill him!" A bit Roman, gladiatorial. And Roseanna, who played the King of Spain, was brilliant at this. Almost like the Queen of Hearts, bouncing up and down on a chair, "go on!" She really started going for it, swearing and other things. She asked, "is there anything I can't say" and I told her, "no, go for it". And one night she got the whole audience, of about 80 people, in time, yelling "kill him, kill him, kill him". So, we've got Hieronimo with someone in a headlock, knife to their throat, and an audience shouting to kill him. Like a baying mob. Which was really frightening.

AH: Amazing, it sounds so visceral, yeah.

RD: So when you then get to the end of the 'operetta', when you're met with a man stood with a gun in his mouth and then bang and then blood all over the wall, with a blood pack, you've gone from 100% and the audience enjoying murder to suddenly, "oh my God, what have I been involved in?" I think the Elizabethans and Jacobean do this really wonderful thing to us as audience members, because there is no fourth wall, we are complicit with what they've done. Particularly if you turn around to your audience and you've got 80 people with party hats on, blowing horns, chanting "kill him", and it was wonderful watching that audience. In some ways, I think you could probably only do that in a fringe show. I can't imagine an audience at the RSC doing that.

AH: Oh, absolutely not, no.

RD: You know, "come on, everyone!" I don't think they'd be up for that. But the frenzy of it all. I remember going up to the office afterward and the staff in the bar saying, "what the hell was going on down there?" And you can only say, "an Elizabethan drama!" Because we always think they're these polite things where you sit quietly but I think Kyd gives you the ammo, he gives you the ideas, he gives the actors... not freedom, but I think he gives them the rocket to shove up the backside of the audience, really. It's a play about performance, so sure you have to be truthful and you have to know what you're saying and say it like you know what it is, but you don't have to worry about naturalistic motivation. You're stood on a tall chair with a party hat on, screaming, "kill him". Go for it. And I find British actors have this sort of insecure way about them, even when they're acting with some bravado, it's coming from an insecure place. They have a kind of desire to make sure they don't look stupid, when I think the Elizabethan and Jacobean playwrights actually require you to be stupid, they require you to be ridiculous, even the serious ones. That's so often the problem with Hamlet, he just takes himself way too seriously. I think Hamlet's got – and should have – a lot of humility, he's trying to work out humanity. Which is a bit much for a young man to do. Probably why it takes him four hours. [laughs]

AH: [laughs]

RD: So that was it, really; you do need to listen a bit to preview audiences, though there's always going to be some people who don't like it, but I think as practitioners, that shouldn't really be our aim, to make people like it. It's about asking people to ask questions about it and experience it. It's very interesting how many people don't like *The Spanish Tragedy*. That's really interesting. At the time, we were thinking, "why isn't it performed more? Why is it more rarely performed? What is it about it?" And it was interesting doing a bit of digging, you know, asking people who said, "oh, no, horrible play", and when you'd ask them why they couldn't quite say why, actually. I don't know whether you've experienced that?

AH: I mean, within academic circles, people love to write about it and love to dissect it, and love to say, "oh, I wish it was performed more often", but then no one talks about any specifics.

RD: But they probably wouldn't go to see it, if it was on.

AH: Yeah. There's an article I read from the late 1970s that's trying to make scholars think about the play in performance rather than just as a textual piece, and I'm not sure it's 100% successful because it doesn't do very much with it? It doesn't make concrete suggestions of how we should go about doing that. But it was very interesting to read that, in this context of, oh, everybody's thinking about this purely as a rhetorical exercise, that's down on paper, and forgetting that, you know, this play has a rich performance history. This play was performed 29 times, according to Henslowe's diary, which is incredible! That's so much more than most other plays! And reprinted frequently, that's amazing. It shows how popular this was, and not just as a print object, it's a performance piece as well as a print object. It's existing in multiple forms.

RD: Yeah, and I think there's an interesting history between the academic aspect and the connection to performance, in, you know, how many times do we have people in early modern forums, or on Twitter, saying, "you really must do more of this, and you really must do more of that". And since we've taken residency at the Greenwich Theatre, the commercial pressures are higher. The risk on an obscure Elizabethan, Jacobean play is less likely now. Certainly, compared to our history as a company, of how many early moderns we've done, now they just don't stack up economically. But you say to academics, I've said it several times to academics or at conferences, "let's try and find a link", in that if the academic community, including universities, could be part of the funding of that, we could make these popular again! Give them a modern performance history, rather than waiting for the Globe or the RSC to have a go. You know?

AH: Definitely.

RD: And also, with the Globe and the RSC, you pretty much already know they're not going to be radical investigations. They may well be very good, and there are productions that I've really enjoyed, I really enjoyed Maria Aberg's *Duchess of Malfi*,

actually, I found it quite refreshing compared to the Old Vic's version with Eve Best. It was like a breath of fresh air, like it was a different play, and I much appreciated that. But Maria's probably the wildest card at the RSC.

AH: Her *Faustus* was incredible, and people hated it!

RD: Oh, yeah. [laughs] I mean, I loved it for the fact that no one else is doing this here and the only other productions I've seen have been very, very stuffy, not magical, not dangerous, not, not, not. I thought with her production at the Swan, where I saw it twice, and then it came to the Barbican, where I think it lost its intensity, but in the Swan, it did feel like someone was behind me when they were doing the conjuring. And you go, "oh, oh, this is a bit weird," and in a way, even though she's doing a modern or contemporary version of it, that feeling – from all the contemporary reports that we've got – is like an Elizabethan standing there thinking, "oh God, the devil's here".

AH: Absolutely.

RD: Because the famous story with *Faustus* was that they thought the devil did appear at one performance, right?

AH: I remember I was doing my Master's in Stratford when that *Faustus* was on, and I went to see it multiple times because I was still within the £5 ticket window, age-wise, which was great. [laughs]

RD: [laughs]

AH: But there was a point, because I was also working for the Education department at the RSC, and I ended up getting a staff ticket in the front row of the stalls, but on the side of the stage, and it was too close. I sat in that performance wanting to back up more and more in my chair, because it felt too real.

RD: Wow. Wow, wow!

AH: It was incredible. So powerful. I have never experienced anything like it.

RD: And I think she, in some ways, she's the wild card, though in terms of theatre at large, she's not wild at all. But in that circle, in that space, and also seeing the Swan transformed not necessarily by scenery but by scenography, if you see what I mean. We don't need lots of Roman steps and statues and things, but the atmosphere, through the use of light or sound or performance, because she could have gone down a really spooky path, but actually it was just about intensity?

AH: Oh yeah, definitely.

RD: Yeah, I'm a big fan of Maria, thank goodness for her at the RSC.

AH: She was so great.

RD: Anyway! [laughs]

AH: Yeah.... To get back to *Spanish Tragedy*! [laughs] I have a question about something you said, at the beginning of talking about your process, with choices. I was wondering how that matches up, if you're using it as a synonym for motivation, or if that's a different concept in your rehearsal room? Whether that's character motivation or actor motivation, or how does that compare to the work you put into choices?

RD: I think it's about actor-audience motivation. In our rehearsal rooms, I ban the word 'character' and we instead talk about them being 'the people in the play'. Because I think a lot of actors think that with 'a character', you have to add things on top, like an accent or a funny walk or a wig or a prop. And, actually, I think the Brechtian way is to sand it back, sand *you* back, the actor. You as an actor are doing the things Hieronimo is doing, but don't for a minute pretend you are Hieronimo, because that's just silly. No one's ever going to buy that, we know it's a play and we know you're an actor. In fact, we started our production of *Spanish* with a name-game ball exercise so when the audience came in, the actors were throwing a ball to the actor named, so you come in and go, "they're actors" and they're using actors' names. I like to really let the actors go, "you are actors, doing the things that the 'characters' in the play are doing". So, I suppose in terms of choices, the actor needs to be aware to signpost it, because very often I find that actors, certainly in speeches, ask all the questions like they're rhetorical. They almost take a deep breath in and "here comes the speech". And ten minutes later we go, "oh, yes, that was lovely" and we don't get the peaks and troughs in the middle. I suppose you could argue that that's the sign of a good or bad actor, right? But I think, certainly with training now, actors are trained with so much of the tv and film stuff and not enough of the textual analysis. And that in our process, we really do have to beat that out of the words, we have to really understand *when* someone's asking a question, *when* someone answers a question, and then not only questions but the choices that are offered. I suppose the perfect example, in a Brechtian sense, is Grusha in *Chalk Circle*, does she take the child or does she leave the child? And there are consequences to both, and there's no good answer and no bad answer – there's a human answer. So I try and approach it in rehearsals practically, because there's no point in doing it in theory, as Brecht can just blow people's minds because he's so contradictory, he blows my mind most of the time, I sit there going "what does he mean by this? I don't know... let's forget him and move on".

AH: [laughs]

RD: You have to very practically signpost to the audience that there is a choice, and it isn't good, it isn't bad, it's human. And, so, in a way, without turning the lights on the audience, it says to an audience, "which one were you going to choose? Where are you going to go?" There's no such thing as fate and nothing is inevitable. And Brecht – and I love this, I put this on our rehearsal room wall all the time – Brecht basically

surmises that fate has been constructed by establishment, to keep us in our place. Which I totally think is what's happening right now too, with the Tories and theatre. We don't want theatre, because it makes you think and it makes you think you have a voice. But you don't have a voice, you don't, actually, unless you're a Tory. I was trying to keep politics out of it, but when you talk about Brecht, it's impossible.

AH: That's for sure, yeah.

RD: And honestly, I think Brecht does what the Jacobean and Elizabethan were doing. Very anti-establishment and being able to be anti-establishment without getting your head chopped off. "We'll just set it somewhere else, easy". [laughs] "Oh, we're not talking about *our* king or queen, we're talking about the ridiculous King of Spain and the ridiculous Viceroy of Portugal". It's all foreign, "they're weirdos in Europe", which is very contemporary. [laughs]

AH: [laughs] Unfortunately.

RD: "Those Europeans" [mimes waving something away] So there's a sense of, I think, the actor understanding those choices as they play it and act it, but the audience understanding there's a choice. This is not predestined. King Lear doesn't die because that was the destiny. I mean, I suppose you could say all of our destinies is death, but King Lear has to take responsibility. It's not inevitable that Cordelia is going to get this love test wrong. In the case of *Spanish Tragedy*, it's not inevitable that Horatio is going to be killed. There's a series of events that lead to that.

AH: Mhm, yeah. Well, I think *Lear* is such a good example, because Cordelia at the very beginning connects to what you've been saying about choices, and it's making possibilities available, and I think we see that in her speeches, "what am I going to say, I don't feel comfortable saying this" and she goes through it for and with us.

RD: And she chooses not to lie.

AH: Yes.

RD: And straight away, that's, for me, when an actor's playing Cordelia you could go, "oh, it's the little sister, she's got nothing to really do, she spends most of her time offstage, really", and in some productions they have her doubling because she's got nothing to do in the middle. But actually, she's the one who makes possibly the hardest choice, and she's the one who's defied the king, not only her father, but the king. So that's a huge choice! That's massive. And so as an actor, as story-tellers, as directors, and everybody involved in it and I mean everyone because how do you light that choice, how do you create the scenography to identify that choice? You could do quite a simple thing, where the lights switch and boom, focus in, and I've done that in the past where we quite literally put the lights on the choice. And when they've made the choice, it goes, boom, back into the scene. Almost gameshow in a way, where you're highlighting the tension of the choice, so the audience definitely knows there's a choice. Which box is it? The "do I lie" box or "do I tell the truth" box.

It empowers the actor, so you can't just play this on auto-pilot, it empowers the audience more so, because we then sit in the audience – and you know Brecht was doing this because he was telling the German public, “you do not *have* to go along with the Nazi party, you don't *have* to go along with this, you have a choice, by saying nothing you've chosen not to speak out” – so there's a revolutionary thing there too. But I think that's what makes the classics feel a bit more immediate and fresh. It's not some old poetry we regurgitate for four hours, it's going to ask you questions, it's going to involve you having to partake. It might not be like pantomime, where I've got to get the audience to boo and hiss, but if I do want some response... otherwise I'd perform to a morgue, wouldn't I? We do want a response.

AH: Hmm, yeah.

RD: And there's one exercise I don't often have time to do, but if an actor's really struggling with the choices, we play the alternative or the parallel universe. So, for example, if my choice is to drink or not to drink, that is the question. Say in the script I do drink, then we play the scene several times, probably more, actually, where I don't drink. So the actor gets into a situation where, actually, the inevitable is that I wouldn't drink, so then the choice in the script is that they do drink, and that feels like it's actually a choice rather than I've got to act like there's a choice, “oh dear, which one”. [laughs] Does that make sense?

AH: Yeah, yeah, it does.

RD: In a way, you have to make the alternative – ‘the not’, is what Brecht calls it – the alternative universe, the parallel story, that's the more obvious choice perhaps.

AH: Mhm, and real.

RD: Yeah, so that when they make the choice that's in the script, it feels like it is actually an active choice rather than, “yeah, yeah, of course she's going to say ‘I don't love my father more’, of course she's going to do that”. And then it just keeps us on our feet, so that as an audience, by the end of the play, we might have a grain of hope that they might find Cordelia in time and that there's a way of helping Lear and Lear doesn't die. Because otherwise, we're sat there for four hours knowing what's going to happen. And like a Shakespearean audience, or like an Elizabethan or Jacobean audience, they were new plays and we forget that! We forget that. And this is another side note, sorry, Anna, I'm off on one –

AH: No, you're fine!

RD: This is why I don't have a problem with editing, and pruning, I don't have a problem with that. Because if you prune *Macbeth*, it's ok, there'll be another one coming down the line. Don't worry. I'm a little bit more protective now over the obscures, so maybe if I did *Spanish* again, maybe I wouldn't be so butcher-like, because they don't get performed as much, so you feel like you've got a bit more of an obligation, people might only ever see this production just the once, there's a

good chance. Like *Tamburlaine*, am I ever going to see *Tamburlaine* again? It's such a big play, it's very expensive. I'm sure now, though we've done *Tamburlaine*, we have done it, but that's when you're on the fringe and people are doing it not for money, people are doing it because they want to do it and because it's a passion project, and really that can only be done on that grassroots level *or* at the high end, "we've got a company of 30". But anyway, the reason I think pruning is fine is because we've got a version, and I'm a big fan of Arden, I always go for the Arden, lovely graphic on this one. [holds up the Arden edition of *The Spanish Tragedy*]

AH: It's so good, isn't it? [Also holds up the Arden edition of *The Spanish Tragedy*]

RD: The thing I like about them is that we've got a 'complete' version of what was left. That's not to say that was the version performed, and it's not to say the writer wouldn't have rewritten bits and changed bits.

AH: Especially with the Arden showing all of the additions and everything, over the years, which I think is a really helpful thing to see, but can be overwhelming when you're coming at it from a performance standpoint, because you have too many texts to choose from, in a way?

RD: Actually when I do work in drama schools or drama training in universities, or wherever, a workshop, I always suggest that they go to the Cambridge Shakespeares first or the new Arden performance versions, and then progress to the Arden, because I think you're right in that the density, particularly of the Arden *Spanish Tragedy*, could be, from an actor's point of view, a bit too much. And sometimes you need a bit more of an accessible route in first, then off you go. But, of course, some of them, like with *Spanish Tragedy*, I don't really know how many editions there are. Are there any New Mermaids or shorter editions?

AH: Yes, there is a New Mermaids, it's very light, editorially, so there are some notes but not very many, the introduction's fairly short, but it's available on Drama Online and it's in print. It's a solid edition, but it's very much for someone who's familiar with early modern language, I think.

RD: Yeah, see, that doesn't help actors either, does it, you need an edition that... well, as an actor said to me once, you need a Shakespeare for Dummies. Because as an actor, it is useful to know all of that information, *at some point*, but from a director's point of view, I need to know that early on, because I'm working out the dramaturgy at the same time. But from an actor's point of view, you just need to know what the action is, really, to start with. And then, of course, you progress, and you build, and you start building a picture. But I find, not to say actors are not intelligent, they totally are, but sometimes that level of detail is too much, and I as a director have to stop at a certain point, like in previews I don't keep giving them dramaturgical information because they're worried about lighting and haze and noise and trap doors and audience! Oh my god, the audience, all the sudden there's 400 people in front of you. Yes, it's a performance. And we forget, because sometimes we're so enraptured, certainly I am, in the Brechtian dramaturgy of it all, you have to remind

yourself there are people behind you, watching. And then I often, in the run, depending on the run, I start bringing a bit more of the dramaturgical stuff back in the notes, so it might be a practical thing like, “could you put the dagger down a bit earlier” or if I’ve not got much of that, I’ll say, “oh I was reading –”, one of my favorite books, *Shakespeare and Violence*, two of my favorite things, and I sort of go, “it says here”.⁵¹⁴ And I quite like dropping those tidbits in here and there, it’s not just that the director’s got some weird ideas, it’s that they’ve done a bit of research and it adds nuggets to it. Anyway. Sorry!

AH: This is all helpful, you’re fine. I’m curious, because you seem to be very invested in a lot of textual analysis – which I think is great, especially for the purposes of my thesis – but, having cut the play and kind of reframing the play-within-the-play at the end, how much are you relying on verbal cues? And I don’t like the words original or authorial, but I’m going to have to use them, but original verbal cues in particular, when you’re staging something that you’ve rewritten? How are you working with those or working against them, maybe?

RD: I think probably a bit of both, actually. What we have in the rehearsal room, with something like *Spanish*, certainly *’Tis Pity*, I think more recently I’ve been doing this on all the plays. Because you assume actors know *Macbeth* or are familiar, but what actually happens is that they *think* they know it. But when you start unpicking it, no one knows it. Which is what’s great about the ensemble work we do, the actors feel like they come away with, “oh my god, it’s a new way of reading the play” and you go, “yes, it’s dramaturgy. It’s *reading* a play, not just ‘reading’ a play”. And it fires the facts at you. So what we do is we have the full length play on the wall and then the edited play on the wall, and of course all the actors have the edited play in front of them, and then they are strongly advised, though I don’t know how many of them do, but they are strongly advised to read the full play and then as we go through the text work on its feet in the rehearsal room, we do the text work with the edited play. But if ever we get stuck, I call the original play the source material. So, in a weird way, a bit like Shakespeare would write a play based on a poem or another play, we refer back to the source material. And I always call it the source material because actors will go on about, “oh, in the ‘proper play’” or the ‘full play’, but this is the proper play and it is a full play. This is the full play of our production. So, we go back to the source material. It may well be that, for example, you might be in rehearsal and because of the cutting you don’t know a certain stage direction or a visual cue or something, but then you can go back to the original and say, “what does the original say about that?” I’m very proactive, we don’t sit down, we don’t do any table work, we’re doing the text work on our feet. And in the rehearsal room, I have what I call ‘observation stations’ – very Brechtian, this, very German [laughs]. So, around the table, I’ll have Dictionary Corner, so there will be two people with notebooks, with sharpies, big A1 pieces of paper, because why have A4 when you can have A1, right? And then actors can write really big and angry and colorful and be creative! We’ll have people at Dictionary Corner, and there will be the Arden version, so any words that aren’t on the glossary, and then we can say, “oh, what does that word mean,

⁵¹⁴ R.A. Foakes, *Shakespeare and Violence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

please?” And I expect the actor to have found that out, but sometimes the actor forgets or life, you know, so the actors do that themselves. If you’re in a scene, you’re in the central playing space, if you’re not in a scene, you an observer. So we have the observation stations, we have someone on the full-length script, we have someone on the edited script, we’ll have someone listening for certain themes like animals, weather, nature, body parts, faith, transactions, choices, and they will list them on a wall on a big white board. So that’s what I mean by primary school, I even get the stage managers involved and they’re going, “I’m not sure this is in my contract”, well, ok, let’s get on with it.

AH: [laughs]

RD: I’m not asking you to get up on stage and kill someone, I’m just asking you to listen! And what I do, very often, with stage managers is a list of props. So instead of a stage manager trawling through some early modern drama where they don’t understand the language, looking for, “oh, it says we need a chair”, actually do the props that you hear. And then I have a rule in the rehearsal room that you’re not allowed to mime. Because, well, one, it’s lying so why bother, but also if you’re using something, we can go, “what is that?” and you say, “oh, it’s the knife”, at which point it’s, “knife, everyone, bring a knife?” And on the props list, though we don’t write ‘props list’, we call it an ‘objects list’, so it might be a birdcage, a knife. So, in that first bit of text work, it’s only things in the play. Not Ricky Dukes’ invention, only things in the play. And that’s why it takes so long, and that’s why when we get to the staging, it’s quite late in the day. Because you have to dissect it thought by thought first, and I work in thoughts, rather than lines, in the text – so from a capital letter to a full stop, rather than verse lines. I work in thoughts. So it’s very labor intensive and exhausting, but being on your feet keeps you energized and keeps you going. It might be that you miss cues or stage directions or information.

AH: Mhm.

RD: But we go with the edited version, unless there’s a problem. And then if there’s a problem, we go, “right, what’s in the original that we’re missing?” And that might be that we then put that information back in the play, for the audience’s benefit, or we might go, “how else might we represent that?” So, back in the 2013 days, I was a big fan of tableaux; when I did *The White Devil*, all of the murders were done as dumb shows or tableaux, which, of course, is what Webster’s implying with dumb shows later in the play, but I went, “well, let’s run with that idea and let’s have all of them as dumb shows”. You know, the idea of the curtains revealing things, though we didn’t have curtains revealing, we did light. Light reveals the poisoned picture, and so on, that sort of thing. So, it’s a bit of a free for all in the ensemble as well. Someone might have come up with an idea to sort something, you know, things like swords – swords are very problematic – and people go “ooh, are we actually having swords?” And you say “No! It’s 2020, why would we have swords?” In *Macbeth*, for instance, it is so specifically a dagger and we had one day where we played with a gun, except shooting someone is different than stabbing someone. And in the end, of course, the best idea is that it’s a dagger. [shrugs] But going through that exploration, means

that, when an actor comes on with those daggers, and the way that Lady M holds the daggers, they are definitely daggers now, they are not a prop. Even down to where on the dagger you hold them, the way you hold them, the way you present them. And the actor who played Lady M, Alice, I think thought I was ridiculous even contemplating not using daggers, but I said to her, “now we’ve gone through a number of ways of killing Duncan, we now know the daggers are right, Shakespeare was right, but we also know the consequence of that action”. So sometimes in questioning things, actually, you come back to the original answer. That’s not a waste of time, that’s exploration, that’s investigative work.

AH: I think finding the ‘why’ for the answer is equally important, it’s not just question-answer, it’s *why* is *this* the answer?

RD: And it becomes a bit like the choices, the Brechtian choices. Why has Shakespeare decided that he’s going to be stabbed to death, and not hanged or suffocated? You know, 101 ways of murdering someone.... But why didn’t he put a pillow over his mouth and suffocate him? Why? Well, I think I know why now, there’s something about penetrating the body, there’s something about force, you have to really put some physicality behind it, there’s something muscular about it. But you have to question it. And, of course, the actor isn’t going offstage to do that, but they have to come back on as if they *have* done that. The actor now understands. So yeah, in some plays it works like a dream and you actually find in your edit that you’ve kept all the bits you need to keep, and there’s sometimes when you go, “oh I’ve really” *Don Carlos*, for instance, I did *Don Carlos*, 2011, I think.

AH: I love *Don Carlos* [laughs].

RD: Oh, our production was an absolute mess, a mess.

AH: Oh, no!

RD: A mess. Because I think the way it was written, with these huge, huge speeches – you know, argument, counterargument, just swap opinions, and you go, “this goes on forever”. And in a way, what we’d done with the edit was taking bits out of speeches but actually you were losing so much of the argument that way. The arguments became flippant and then they didn’t have any weight. And then in production, you go, “this is a hodge-podge”. I’ve learned with Schiller, you’ve got to have a fantastic edit and you probably, I don’t know, as a director I’d be a bit hesitant to do it myself. But certain plays lend themselves, too, to being cut and pasted, or moving scenes. In *Midsummer Night’s Dream*, I moved a Mechanicals scene from Act 2 into Act 1, so we meet the Mechanicals before we go to the forest. As long as the rehearsal room is a bit like a police investigation scene, a bit like CID, you’re always looking for the facts. And when actors just look for the facts, they stop acting. Which is really exciting. So there’s less, “how am I going to perform this?” I don’t really care how you’re going to perform this, you’re an actor, I know you’re going to be able to do that. What I’m really more interested in is *how* do you know that, *where* have you got that from, and I find it very impressive in a Q&A, perhaps, or in the bar afterwards, someone asks

them, “how did you come to that?” and they say, “well, in Act 3, scene 5, he says ‘my lord, I’ve come to town’, so we knew he came to town from there, and then he says –”, and you sit there going, “I’m so proud of you guys!” [laughs] “You’re read it!”

AH: [laughs] That’s great. They know the text! I love that.

RD: And their choices are then informed by the facts, not “I’m an actor, I want a funny wig and a funny accent”. Because that’s lying, whereas acting, I don’t think acting is pretending, I think acting is portraying, is demonstrating, is informing, is presenting the facts. Which is again very Brechtian, very European, but I think the Elizabethans do that very honestly, actually. Rather than me having to emote to an actor, I need to understand what the actor is doing. If that makes sense. And I actually find it far more cathartic, because instead of an actor on stage crying to make me cry, which never makes me cry, because I think you’re crying, if an actor’s actually holding back that emotion and trying not to let the vase crack, I find that deeply emotional because I can see the actor going, “I’ve got to tell this story, but my God, it’s affecting me”. And genuinely affecting, not “I’ve got to act like I’m crying, this is the scene where I cry”, you know?

AH: Mhm, yes.

RD: How many times in, say, *Richard II*, the queen has to do a bit of crying and you go, “I don’t believe you”. And I think it’s so hard for an actor because she’s got very little to do, very little head start, but I suppose the truth would come if that actor and the director and whoever’s involved with it really dissect that text. What’s really happening there? What’s the key piece of information? When do you know it? How do you know it? I always ask actors that. “When did you know that?” “Oh, I don’t know” Well, you need to know, because if you start the play knowing that, you don’t actually know that until Act 3. So how do you know that? “Well, I know that because I read it” “Yeah, I know you’ve read it, because I read it with you”. At what point do they find information out and how? And how is just as important. A telegram, carrier pigeon, smoke signals, other methods of communication. And in the rehearsal room I do have methods of communication, I’ll have phones. Rotary phones. And they’re not plugged in, they’re just there, along with typewriters or laptops, things like that. They’re not in the text, of course, you’re not going to ever say, “my lord, bring forth thy laptop” – I mean, you might, but I’ve not found it yet, but they were ahead of their time. But it allows the actor to respond to “how do you know” with “well, it’s a telegram, but is that verbal, is someone telling you that, or is someone giving you a piece of paper, a letter?” And it just gives us some significance. And not every actor like this process, as you can imagine, they don’t want to do this, they want to perform, they don’t want to go into the dramaturgy, so that’s difficult. But in our auditions know we look for actors who are excited by the text – daunted, sure, but excited by it. It’s actors who are investigative. But it’s really rewarding when they have ownership of it. So very often, going back to the question, [laughs] very often the actor will already know but then we ask how we know it and realize that in our edit we don’t know that. Ah. So either we’ve got to go back to the main play and put that back in or find a device for showing that, it might be a tableau, it might be the

company says, “actually, I could have known that offstage and then come on with that information and I’m not giving it away until later”. I suppose you just have to work out what the impact of that is, because it might make a character a liar when they’re not. Information they’re not sharing, that they sat on, is a very different choice for a character than if a letter’s arrived. For example.

AH: Yeah, yeah.

RD: But I think there’s generally enough in the edit to go on something, but if you struggle, go back to the original, it’s your source material and I’m not afraid of that.

AH: Yeah. I think one of the things that’s come up for me, quite a lot, for this play is the number of directional words that Kyd is giving outside of stage directions. So, all of the deictic words, the pointing words, ‘here’, ‘these’, ‘that’, ‘thus’, all the stabbings are on ‘thuses’; do you find those helpful in your editing process? Are those words that you take out or struggle with? Are they words that actors kind of clutch on to or anything? Are they important in your process?

RD: I think actors do because they are active. And you get a sense that something’s happened on words like that. And you go, “oh, where’d you get that sense from”, “well, it says I’m doing this” ..., “well, yeah, then there’s got to be something happening there”. And, of course, you can go back to the Arden again and see that’s where he stabs him, but you’ve already understood that something’s happening. Whether that’s “is that where they kill him?” “Yeah, I think so” “Try it”. Someone in Dictionary Corner will go, “in the Arden it says....” But when you’re doing a Shakespeare, we’ll have the Oxford, the Cambridge, No Fear Shakespeare, we’ll have six or seven editions of the play, so Dictionary Corner’s very busy. But we end up with, “in this version it says this, but in this version he says that”, because of the editors debating the reference point. But in terms of editing, the editing process is a bit more about narrative than single words coming out, or actions or direction stuff. For example, when I did *The Duchess of Malfi*, the way we found to edit that was we would start the play when her and Antonio meet and we’ll end it when they part. So, actually, then I could cut Act 5 very easily because we end with her death – there’s 20 minutes gone! In a way, you have to be kind of cavalier about it, because if you’re protective of every line, you’ll never cut anything. You have to think, where’s the meat? And I suppose in *Spanish Tragedy*’s case, it was really following Hieronimo. I’ve talked about the Brechtian events, in this case the events that Hieronimo’s going through. So, any scenes that he’s not directly in, you start going, “do I need this?” And that’s quite good in that the audience only knows what Hieronimo knows. In that respect, you can get rid of quite a lot of scenes that tell us information that Hieronimo doesn’t know. You do lose the dramatic irony, because we aren’t as informed, but in a way, in a sense, we then become a bit more connected to Hieronimo’s events and choices because we’re in the dark perhaps as much as him. And I think in the end, with the edit, we went with a bit of 50-50, so there were a few scenes that he wasn’t in, because of plot devices –

AH: I was wondering for a second there if you cut Horatio’s murder?!

RD: Oh, no! No, no, no, definitely got to keep the murdering!

AH: I was really worried for a second, [laughs] you can't do that.

RD: No. [laughs] But it gives you, in a way, you can be a little bit more cavalier. I don't think it's disrespectful, it's just a bit more... this has to be 90 minutes. That's the brief. What goes? You could argue, "why do it in the first place, if you've going to halve it?" But you think, "actually, there's a very, very good, intensity here". I think *Duchess of Malfi* is actually quite a thrilling play, when you've cut the bugger out of it. The whole thing is too much, I think. It's too fat-laden, whereas if you really prune it and tighten it, it's a thriller. It becomes frightening, it's a real thriller. So, yeah, I think in the end, we ended up with 50-50, but if your eye is always on Hieronimo's journey and the information chronologically around that, then there are whole scenes that you go, "well, we just don't need it, that can go". But again, remembering, in the room if another actor has that struggle of "how do I know that then", that's happened offstage. There's an onstage and an offstage world and we as a company find a way through what's important and what's not important. I find that when actors feel ownership, they get less protective. You'll often find that actors go, "you know that whole speech I have about that? I don't think we need it". Sometimes you think that's the actor just trying to get rid of some text because they can't learn it, but that's such an odd thing for an actor to say, losing their lines. Actually though when they realize what's happening and are in it together as a company, they go, "I'm not sure this is really telling anything". And that certainly happened with Danny, who played Hieronimo, that big, very long, final speech, going, "do we need all of this? Or do we not?" And, in the end, we had the majority of it, because it is the eleven o'clock number, it's his finale, these are all the reasons why. And often I find with Elizabethan drama, because there's so much repetition, as long as you've got it in somewhere, and if it's in a 90-minute version, people will remember. The reason you have to repeat it in a four-hour version is because I might have forgotten who you are again. Particularly when things aren't in English. I find modern audiences go, "what's your name?" A name like 'John', we all know it's a name, whereas 'Hieronimo' is something you shout when you jump out of a plane. People don't know what a Hieronimo is. So, we did quite a lot of that in rehearsal too, "what is it?" "Well, it's a name", "yes, we know that, but the audience, anyone off the street doesn't necessarily". I think it's less cutting bits and bobs, it's more big sweeps. And it's quite convenient when it's the last act, it's very convenient, actually. Same with *Othello*, if you cut it when he kills Desdemona, you don't have to tie up the ends. Same with *Merchant of Venice*, once Shylock's been cast out, you don't have to do all the awful ring nonsense, you can just get rid of it.

AH: [laughs] Amazing.

RD: And no one needs to know about it, because we haven't heard that information before. I suppose the only thing audiences sometimes get a bit funny about is, "well, what happened to them?" And you can answer that somehow – I recently did a production of *Duchess of Malfi* at Bath University and I cut it at the same time,

actually, right after her murder. But in tableaux around the design, I had Ferdinand turning into the wolf, you saw Julia and the Cardinal as he kills her, Bosola going and killing the Cardinal, then Bosola running upstage, killing himself. And all the while we had Antonio – of course, at this point the Duchess thinks Antonio's dead but he isn't, we had him gaffer-taped up, strapped to the wall, trying to shout her name. Because Bosola put music on so loud that she couldn't hear that he wasn't dead. So, in a way, we played it so that, as an audience, you get this sensory overload, there's four or five stories being completed at once. And what was brilliant about that was that it made people come back again because they wanted to watch the conclusion of someone else. I think it's better for an audience to leave going, "what happened to them" than "oh, I don't care". I'd rather have them wanting to know what happened. Read the full play, there is more! There's a sequel within the same play.

AH: There's so much more there then, yeah. Take me back to the operetta, with Danny and Hieronimo kind of simultaneously going on the killing spree. Were you playing that as a series of interruptions, so Balthazar doesn't get to finish his whole speech before Bel-Imperia runs him through, or the Viceroy is midsentence, or how did this work? How did the language work in and against the violence that's here? How exactly is it going bonkers? What's that process?

RD: So it started off with them all singing in verse, in chorus, and presenting this play, and that was where most of the lyrics had been changed from the original text to contemporary stuff, which was the sort of bonkers "what's going on here" stuff. Then we mainly kept everybody's death line.

AH: Oh, ok. Yeah.

RD: So particularly the double trick of "but are they dead?" And we had a moment where the King and Viceroy went through, "oh, you got me, aha!" Almost as if we were watching a play, then we saw you murder people, then we thought, "no, wait, it's just a play", then we went, "oh, no, this is real", "wait, you're telling us it is part of the play". So, we played it so that the King and Viceroy have the double torture of realizing they're dead again. And Hieronimo sort of enjoys them going through the pain twice.

AH: Ok, that makes sense. I think that's really true to the play, too. Hieronimo has that beautiful line about them thinking this was "fabulously counterfeit". But it's not!

RD: And it makes you think, right? It makes you go, "um, wait, what have we been to see?" We had them go over to the bodies and check their breathing. And then realize they're not and there's blood coming out of their heads.... "what the –". Brilliantly visceral in that respect. So I think the chunk of the play-within-the-play had mostly gone or been contemporized, but the death lines stayed. I think they're pretty juicy, really, and I suppose the chaos bit of it came from the music getting faster and the actors doing all the little dancing-operetta bits couldn't quite keep up, so it looked itself a little bit like a waltz getting out of control. The idea was a bit like a gramophone or the orchestra has been possessed, so it's getting quicker and quicker

and skipping and skipping and so with each one of those phrases getting quicker, the idea was that Danny was becoming more and more out of the play, bit by bit becoming less Hieronimo. More and more Danny with each one. By the time he killed each member of the cast, he was Danny the human, “and now I’m going to shoot myself”, because of all the things as an actor that I’ve experienced as Hieronimo and on behalf of Hieronimo. So, the meta – in a way, it’s very European, it affects the actor, the actor is affected. I think the perfect example is, when you see a British cast take a curtain call, you tend to see them acting exhausted. So, they act tired, “I’m so tired, but I have to bow”.

AH: [laughs] Yeah, I’ve seen that before.

RD: It’s a very sweeping statement, obviously, this isn’t everyone. But when you see a European company come to somewhere like the Barbican, when they do a curtain call, they’ve all left a little bit of them in the play. And I don’t think it’s healthy, and probably why they only do four or five shows in rep a week, in European repertory houses, because playing *Medea* eight times a week over two years probably would take an awful lot out of you. But when an actor comes out, you can see in their body – even when it’s not a play where they’ve been running around – there’s an intensity there. They don’t act tired, but you can see physically and emotionally that they have spent something. I think there’s something about when you dissect a play, from a dramaturgical point of view, when the actor goes through these things and they’re physically exhausted. Like there’s a genuine sense that when Hieronimo kills himself, you go, “oh, my God”, there’s relief that he’s dead. There’s a really strange complexity there, because we’re sort of cathartically released at the same time he’s released, because he’s dead. And Bel-Imperia is now free of these shackles, metaphorically or literally. And maybe in the romantic Disney version you like to think she’s been reunited, but we didn’t show any of that, but there’s a sense of “you’re now free from this mortal turmoil”. So the operetta became out of control and it was difficult for Danny as an actor, because as he’s ‘coming out of character’ and becoming ‘less of an actor’, as an actor he’s also thinking through, “this needs to happen on this beat, and if it doesn’t, the ladder really will go through their face”. We don’t want that, it’s a safety issue. But that was quite hard for him, very technical, very tricky in that respect. In a way we then choreographed it so that the least technical elements were the ones at the end, so that it didn’t rely on him. And there’s the other stage combat logic of the person being hit is often the one in control of the hit, so we would do that a lot, so that Danny could have a break. Danny’s a bit of a nutter anyway, and that’s what exciting about him as an actor, sometimes he’ll look at you during rehearsal and go, “shall I throw the table?” And you go, “... go on, then” [laughs].

AH: Do it [laughs].

RD: He’s an actor with a little darkness within, he is in control, he’s not unsafe. But it goes back to what I asked you, about if these authors are writing to be sensational or if there’s something slightly darker there. I think certainly in John Webster’s case there’s a lot of darkness there, it feels sort of diseased. You sort of feel like the walls

are diseased, not just the actors, but the building they're in, it's all rotting. The maggots-under-the-skin type stuff. We spent a lot of time rehearsing how out of control it could get. And by the end of it, he was ripping the set down and the curtains down, throwing furniture, so there were moments where he could let rip, but you create those in a safe way. Bars eight to twelve you can let rip, but on bar twelve the gunshot goes and stops things. For example. And on some days, it would be more measured than others, other performances he would come backstage and go, "what happened? I don't know what happened". There were moments when it was almost Faustian, where it was like he'd been possessed. In the moment. And because it comes at the end of the play, the actors are already knackered anyway. Even in 90 minutes, because they're onstage all together, all the time. You're in this, and it's very intense. And the euphoria of going mad at the end is a product of trying to keep it all contained for the last hour and 20. And it just explodes. And he did! He threw food, threw paint on walls, everything. So, it really was, from the audience's perspective, going from here we are all singing along, chanting "kill him", in this grotesque, gladiatorial arena, to "oh, no, he's gone mad, someone stop him". It's really rare to see audiences react in theatre, because they know it's part of the play, but when you can tip just slightly over to the edge of "this really might be an actor killing other actors and going mad", then there's a lovely little sense of liveliness. It sounds like I want to put everyone on edge, but I think the play is written to stimulate.

AH: It feels very embodied to me, even just hearing about this process, it seems like a much more embodied experience of the play for both the actors and the audience. And I think that feels very true to form, especially for this play, but for many early modern plays. That's how they're meant to be experienced.

RD: And, you know, just with the caveat that not every actor likes that way of working and not every actor gets that energy. It does require an actor to really have an investigative mind and really want to keep finding things, and again, I'm not suggesting some actors are lazy, but some actors, the way they work doesn't go down that line. They want the dramaturgy to be done, to be told what it means, and then they flourish in the performance bits. But for me, yeah, it's the actors embodying it – and you can only embody it if you understand it. Otherwise it just sounds like poetry. It's the words but also the action. You've got to understand. Fit the action to the words, isn't it? You have to understand physically, emotionally, intellectually, textually, vocally, and at the same time down that safely in a performance setting, eight times a week. That's the craft, that's the skill. It's both a level of intensity and interrogation, and then you have to communicate it. My view of actors is that they're communicators. That's it. But I also then say, communicating is the hardest thing to do. We have to understand it for the audience, and for ourselves, you have to do the work to understand it. You shouldn't be in performance working at "what's that word mean again?" It just has to be there. Then you're free to respond in the moment, at the moment, on the moment.

AH: Definitely. Well, wow, Ricky, this was incredible, thank you so much for all of this.

Appendix B – Workshop Questionnaires and Responses

B.1 Public reading questionnaire and anonymous responses from *The Tragedy of Mariam*, with the University of Kent's Paper Stage play reading group. Collected via Google forms after the workshop on 10 December 2018.

The Tragedy of Mariam Audience Questionnaire

Thank you for attending this reading of *The Tragedy of Mariam*. In addition to our discussion surrounding the reading, I am interested in your comments and reflection on the text. Please fill out as much of the following survey as you are able, and please feel free to contact me with other thoughts, comments, or questions at alh46@kent.ac.uk.

What are your initial thoughts on these speeches? What emotions do you think they embody, what strikes you as surprising or noteworthy, etc.?

1. My overarching impression of these texts is a sense of desperation and lack of personal agency, but which Doris is attempting to mask
2. She seems bitter and feels spurned, but also is much more concerned about how her son fares than she herself does. She seems vindictive. Also despite saying Mariam's "purer cheek" robbed her, and that she hoped for Mariam's death, she seems to be directing more of her anger at Herod?
3. Both speeches have tones of bitterness and resentment. Doris seems to cling to a future she had forecast for herself and more specifically for her son, and resents that it was taken away by what she sees as Herod's opportunism, and possibly cruelty, given the way they were treated after the divorce and marriage to Mariam. The second speech though has an extra layer of resignation, as she hopes that Antipater will one day take his rightful place, though this will no longer be in the near future. In both it seems she sees herself and her son as victims who wait for the chance to have their vengeance or reclaim their position.
4. Doris has been harboring this vengeance for 9 years. It is cool and calculating, thoroughly envisioned in her head.
5. Hatred, anger, spite, vindictive. I am surprised that Doris is directing this vitriol towards Mariam so strongly, whilst appear to hold so little for Herod, who, it would appear, was the one who really wronged her.
6. Whilst her overall message makes her seem passive (see answer to Q 2), the tonality of the words she seems very strong and vengeful, and *angry*. They embody a variety of emotions and feel like a rollercoaster from reminiscence to sadness to anger etc (first speech). With quick changes in emotion.

Does it surprise you that these speeches are performed by a female character? Do they sound particularly gendered to you? Why or why not?

1. Words like 'vengeance', 'glory', 'trophy' seem perhaps geared towards the masculine, but then the preoccupation with beauty and comparing herself with Mariam is more stereotypically female i.e. the conviction that female worth is set by looks and that's the key distinguishing factor between the two women. Also, the (regrettable) female tendency to hate and want revenge on the new woman your husband is with, rather than your husband who was the actual dick, makes this seem more gendered to me - and the whole 'woman scorned' trope. In the second passage (Act 4 scene 8) the focus on the female tongue and the power of female language again makes this more gendered (i.e. biblical association of destructive female language and comparing it to poison). Overall this lack of agency to *act* (i.e. having to pray to bring about Herod and Mariam's destruction rather than being able to actively fight them) also seems more feminine.
2. It's interesting to see female characters wielding monarchical power. However, it feels as if Doris is very much wielding this power in her role as mother for her son, rather than for herself, thus using said power in a more traditionally acceptable way for her gender.
3. The speeches seem very feminine in their frequent references to motherhood or her son, her references to herself as a bride or a queen. There are a few mentions of scorn and waiting for fate/revenge that seem feminine to me as well, in that a woman would be taking a more passive action toward vengeance than a man might. It also seemed gendered in the way the bitterness toward her position was always circling back to Antipater; it frequently had less to do with her own fall from power as wife/queen, but his stolen future of being in power as heir.
4. It does not surprise me because the speeches reflect the reality of a woman's place and value in that society. Her value is based on her beauty and by the wealth and status of her family, which gives her importance in the eyes of the men around her only for the ways she can bring them status, wealth and/or influence. The content of the speeches are 'gendered' because she recognizes this reality, but the language she uses to describe her situation and her grievances does not sound particularly 'female' to my ears.
5. I don't think so, and they don't sound particularly gendered. Within the context of this being a seventeenth century play, there are certainly lines that I would expect to be different if a man were saying it, such as the central reference to Doris' worth being that of her beauty. The one section that I would say is gendered is Doris wish for her son, and not her, to be the one who actually enacts the revenge by killing Mariam's children.

6. Yes. The female character relies on vengeance done by God, rather than taking her own revenge (as say, a MacBeth(?) would have). They also focus very much on her son's right to the throne rather than vengeance for her own sake. Her desire for vengeance is itself tied to her son's right to the throne. By seeking vengeance from God, Doris takes a passive stance in her son's fate, and trusts in morality (that she is on the good side and Mariam the bad side). Doris also appears and frequently addresses her son, highlighting her role as mother. She seems to fill an archetypal role of a slighted widow looking for the best for her children's future. She seeks vengeance in the form of misfortune to Mariam's children. The last line in the second speech seems to evoke her stance with agency in that she hopes that her son will carry out revenge for her once King.

Imagine that you are watching these speeches in performance. Are there particular movements or gestures that this text brings to mind? If so, please share examples (with the word or phrase that trigger this association).

1. "Oft have I begged for vengeance for this fact, And with dejected knees, aspiring hands, Have prayed the highest power to enact The fall of her that on my trophy stands" - this description of a supplicatory gesture (which could perhaps be alluded to on stage - maybe not fully assumed by Doris but kind of pointed out/ gestured towards with movement of hands or something) to me encapsulates this sense of lack of personal agency which is pervasive throughout both passages. She has *asked* for vengeance but not been able to actually enact it herself - she has had to rely on a supernatural agent to hear and act on her desires. This supplicatory posture to me seems to kind of embody her passivity in achieving her desire.
2. Definitely very forthright and firm. I imagine quite a lot of gesticulating. A gesture towards Mariam at "purer cheek." Also up until at least "art thou not Herod's right-begotten son?" delivered to Antipater. Possibly for a few lines after as well, but I'm not sure. I imagined the section which is spoken to "Herod" as being said outwards to the audience. Some gestures at herself on "you, and rich, and nobly born." Another gesture towards Mariam on "fall of her that on my trophy stands." I imagine the gestures to Mariam to be quite dismissive. Some kind of interaction with Antipater on "sweet boy" along with a gentling of tone as she considers her son. As for the second speech, I imagined it as less contained physically. More gesturing in a more loose style. As if her anger has over taken her almost and it's too much to contain. Very vehement if you know what I mean. Also, most of it delivered not really paying attention to Mariam until the last two lines which are addressed to Mariam, when Doris's movements calm as she laser focuses in on Mariam and what she wants to happen.
3. Because of the use of ! and ? I would assume there is cadence of volume that crescendos to a ! or end of a question, then quiets back down to start over. I

think that cheek would prompt either a back-of-hand-on-own-cheek gesture, or reaching out as if to caress someone else's. Smother at the end of the Act 2, Scene 3 passage makes me think of a fist-grinding-into-palm gesture. "Stretch thy revenging arm! Thrust forth thy hand" makes me imagine someone literally reaching out, grasping in their air with their hand. And I think "And, Mariam, I do hope this boy of mine / Shall one day come to be the death of thine" would be delivered in a very low tone, menacing and vengeful.

4. Act 2 : First, Doris looks around her at the "fair city" she has been away from for 9 years; then, "And thee, my boy" - I imagine Doris gesturing to her son, perhaps gently touching his cheek in a motherly gesture. I envision Doris having two different focal points for her words: her son, and the (not present) "false monarch." I can see her turning from her son to an opposite point onstage, gesturing to the absent Herod. Later, I can hear sarcasm and anger when she says "THEN thine oaths" and "THEN I was young, and rich, and nobly born." She accuses Herod with her words, "ungrateful", and with "meaner fate" and so I would expect to hear accusation in her voice. Then comes the language of supplication and prayer: "begged for vengeance,... dejected knees, aspiring hands, have prayed the highest power..." where I imagine Doris' actions would follow these words. I love the four line sentence: "Revenge I have according to my will, Yet where I wished, this vengeance did not light; I wished it should high-hearted Mariam kill, But it against my whilom lord did fight." I think this is the heart of her speech. It shows her "will" (that she wanted death to those who wronged her), and her recognition of not being able to control her fate or her Revenge (yet where I wished). Then at the end of her speech, she hopes for Herod's future actions to balance out the cruelty to her with treating her son as 'natural,' that is, as his own true heir and not as a bastard, and says that she will forgive the cruelty shown to her if her son is recognized as the heir. Act 4: We hear Doris addressing the absent Herod again, but then she addresses God, I envision her looking up to heaven with upraised fists as she calls on God to answer her curses with punishment for the those who took away what was hers. I can also see her pointing accusing hands at the absent or off-stage Mariam. I am sure she sounds like an avenging Fury; "But let them live" I imagine a calculating tone, maybe a scheming tone, as she talks about the outcome she longs for.

5. Despite the seeming similarity in content of the two speeches, I would expect Doris to be far more calm and in control in Act 2, Scene 3. The level of vitriol and anger in the words of Act 4, Scene 8 would lead me to expect a far more animated an expressive performance. Whereas I would think the first scene would be a calm, yet determined, introduction of intent by Doris directed mainly towards the audience, or at least, herself, I think that the second scene is argumentative and see broad gestures of hatred throughout.

6. I see Doris gesturing/addressing her son when she mentions him (e.g. Act 4... line 6). The speech in act 4 seems that it goes from being quite quiet and reminiscent to more angry and strong at the end with dips of remorse and sadness when talking about how Herod cast her aside. In the second speech, I see her raising her hand to heaven with the line 'Stretch thy revenging arm! Thrust forth thy hand'.

Doris' speeches use a lot of exclamation marks. What effect do these have on your reading of the text? Do these lines strike you as violent, emotional, or actionable (able to be acted upon)? Why or why not?

1. To me the use of exclamation marks convey a sense of desperation and again a lack of personal agency. They seem to be attempted imperatives e.g. that she is trying to command fate/ a supernatural agent to conform to her will and enact it for her, but she herself lacks the agency to perform her desires.
2. They make my reading much more emphatic, and suggest pent up anger being let out. Most of the actionable sections seem to be directed at God, so I would say they seem potentially actionable, but not by Doris herself.
3. The exclamation marks seem like punctuations on thoughts or escalations of emotion. I read them as markers that volume and intensity raise to that point, and then are allowed to reset. They seem highly emotional, though those emotions vary between bitterness, resentment and something akin to disbelief ("When thou wert born, how little did I fear / Thou shouldst be thrust from forth thy father's door").
4. There is only one exclamation point in the Act 2 speech, which seems very different to me than the ones in Act 4. In Act 2 it seems like an exclamation of grief or loss. In Act 4 the exclamations are her curses; they are filled with anger and "may these things happen!"
5. They definitely strike me as lines of the truest emotion, of her wanting Mariam and her children to suffer as she has suffered.
6. The exclamation marks evoke emotion above anything, as they are not only used when she talks about vengeance, but also in her anger for being mistreated (Thou shouldst be thrust from forth thy father's door!). The other phrases, whilst seeking God to do her vengeance are not actionable as she is relying on God's just punishment rather than saying that she will do it herself. They do come across as violent, but not actionable.

Doris' first speech also features a number of questions. What purpose do you as an audience member or reader think they serve? Do they change your view of how the scene might look on stage?

1.	The questions to me speak of confusion and inability to accept or understand what has happened. They also perhaps lead Doris to assume the position of victim in the eyes of the audience (or her attempting to get them to perceive her as a victim) as she is kind of dejectedly asking 'Why meeee?'
2.	I very much viewed the questions as a rhetorical device. She doesn't view these as questions, rather statements of fact - Antipater is the right-begotten son, she was his wife. I'm not sure how I read "was I not fair enough to be queen?" I think I'm falling on the side of Doris thinking her "fairness" has nothing to do with it.
3.	The questions seem to underline to me the root of her discontent and her bitterness toward her position and toward Herod. I feel like she would either direct these to someone listening on-stage or to the audience.
4.	The questions are rhetorical for Doris's son, but give the audience the background information they need. I think the scene still works in my mind the way I described above: I see Doris speaking to her son and then to the absent Herod and turning back and forth.
5.	Yes, I would expect this scene to be framed as Doris talking through her intent to herself, whilst in actuality, informing the audience of her plans and motivations and getting the audience to ask these same questions to get them onto her side.
6.	These phrases evoke the audience's sympathy. They give reason for her vengeance through requiring the audience to answer the (rhetorical) questions of Herod's mistreatment of her as his wife and his replacement of her with Mariam. These phrases seem to be sadder, more introspective than her phrases on revenge which are more outwardly looking.

Words like "let", "may" are part of a grammatical construction called the "optative subjunctive", which signals a kind of "inevitable future potential" or a statement of fact that is simultaneously unfulfilled and true. Reading through Doris' speeches again, do you think her words carry any weight of potential reality? Do they sound as if they will come true? Why or why not?

1.	Similarly to the use of exclamation points, the speak to me of a kind of attempted imperative. It sounds like fighting talk/ that she is tempting or challenging fate, but ultimately they are just words and again demonstrate her own lack of personal agency, which she is trying to mask through language of command.
2.	I am not sure I see that as much in her first speech as I do in the second, where her hopes have been dashed (Herod is not dead, Mariam is not killed (yet?)) and she is speaking toward the future, of what she sees as potential reality.

3.	Doris is 'hopeful' in Act 2 that vengeance will happen as she has longed. In Act 4, she is calling on the place of cursing (Mt. Gerizim). She wants to bring judgment down on Mariam and this sounds very strong to me, and like Doris assumes it will come to fruition. Then it changes slightly, and becomes more of her personal revenge and thirst for shame and suspicion to fall upon Mariam and her children.
4.	Yes, they sound as though they carry weight of potential reality. I'm not really sure why, but I think that it may be that when someone expresses a negative potential future in a story, I expect that to happen.
5.	It seems that she does not use these words. Her speeches do not seem like they carry much weight. Whilst praying to God for vengeance, she is putting her faith in His judgement rather than speaking with authority.
6.	X

Are there particular words in Doris' speech that sound to you like they hold more (or less) potential for coming true?

1.	None which particularly jump out at me!
2.	Most of the curses etc feel overblown to me and like they are unlikely to come true. However, the last two lines of "I do hope this boy of mine/shall one day come to be the death of thine" do feel as if they have a greater potential to come true than the rest. I'm not entirely sure why. It might just be because that's where the speech ends, but also I think the lack of exclamation point makes it feel more like a statement than a plea. And the change in rhyme scheme I think also gives it added weight.
3.	"But let them live till they have sense to know / What 'tis to be in miserable state." I assume the miserable state is one similar to Doris/Antipater's situation, and that seems more likely than Antipater usurping Mariam's child(ren) as Herod may be as likely to cast Mariam aside for a better opportunity as he was Doris. On the other hand, the sentiment expressed by "Let him but prove as natural to thee" to the end of this speech seems to have far less potential for reality, given that Herod has divorced Doris and taken away Antipater's birthright. It is highly unlikely that he would willfully return this birthright. Herod has already moved on.
4.	Act 4: "But let"... "then be" ... "I do hope"... sounds like it doesn't have much weight, perhaps because Doris knows that the political landscape changes quickly. This personal 'vendetta' seems less likely to happen. When Doris is calling on God, this sounds to my ear as much stronger and more possible.
5.	The words relating to the negative outcomes (such as the death of Mariam's children and general revenge of Doris) sound more likely than those with more positive outcomes (like Herod accepting Doris' son as his heir).
6.	The last line seems to carry weight. This is interesting because here she is hoping that her son will take vengeance [<i>sic</i>] rather than herself. It is the

only phrase (I think) where she addresses Mariam herself, rather than through God.

Please share any other thoughts on the connections between language, action, and emotion in these scenes.

1. Overall, on the surface the language seems to me to suggest agency, action, power, command, but it masks what is, underneath, Doris's passivity and lack of personal agency.
2. It's a really passionate speech! I also get the vague feeling that it's masking a deep self loathing. It feels like she is deliberately directing all her anger at Mariam, despite Herod having wronged her. The second speech in particular feels quite frenetic to me, suggesting a lot of movement, up until the last two lines, which then suggest a sense of inner certainty and calm. Doris has decided what she wants by that point and is focused on getting it.
3. I was struck by how discontent Doris was in what had happened to her and her son, yet she was also resigned to how her life would play out. She is obviously speaking with strong emotion, but much of it seems plaintive on behalf of her son in the first speech, and bitter and vengeful again on his behalf in the second. She is obviously unhappy with her own treatment, which has allowed her own discontent to fester, but is most upset by the treatment of her son and the denial of his birthright.
4. Act 2: "Did rob from mine the glory" is language of loss and grief. "Thou shouldst be thrust forth" speaks to the separation of Doris and her son from the power of being Herod's wife and the isolation of being set aside. "False monarch" and "ungrateful" shows her (righteous) anger and speaks to the loss and rejection she feels.

B.2 Workshop questionnaire and anonymous responses from *Masking and Unmasking in The Revenger's Tragedy*, with undergraduate students from the University of Kent's module, EN694 – Shakespeare and Early Modern Drama. Transcribed from physical copies of the questionnaires, collected in person on 6 November 2019.

***The Revenger's Tragedy* Participant Questionnaire**

Thank you for attending the workshop, *Masking and Unmasking in the Revenger's Tragedy*. In addition to our discussion and collaborative work, I am interested in your comments and reflection on the workshop material. Please fill out as much of the following survey as you are able and do feel free to contact me with other thoughts, comments, or questions at alh41@kent.ac.uk.

How did performing or speaking aloud these scenes affect your view of the relationships between characters? Between characters and objects?

1. The physical difficulty of dealing with props – how the skulls/balloons would be held/believably presented to be ambiguous/deceptive.
2. It gave me more thought into how the characters would utilize the props and the tone which they would use.
3. Each group gave a different interpretation of each scene, which gave, in turn, a new interpretation of it.
4. You were able to see what felt natural etc. You can play with alternative tones to add humour, sorrow, etc.
5. Illuminated new subtleties to the text, made implicit stage directions clearer and taking on the roles of one character made deciphering motives easier.
6. These scenes are more comedic when played on staged and they require a lot of movements from the actors.
7. By performing it, we got to see the dynamics between certain characters. Supervacuo and Ambitioso, for example, are similar and we got their lines mixed up. These two characters are interlinked.
8. In particular it charged the two sets of brothers' relationships, to see the connection between both. Perhaps that Hippolito was not as part of the revenge as I originally thought. And the comedic relationships between the characters became more obvious as we acted it out.
9. It made certain movements more natural. It made me understand a character's decisions more.

How do you think Middleton is distinguishing between male and female bodies in these two scenes (3.5 and 3.6)?

1.	The female is more used as a puppet of her own revenge, in Vindice's eyes anyway. The male is more of a symbol than a character – a prop to emphasise the comic / foolishness of the brothers. Female = would be played as somber or comic a little. Male = probably more comic but <u>could</u> be played somber.
2.	There seems to be less care in the handling of Gloriana's skull, at least in discussion. There were more questions raised about the handling and whereabouts of her head particularly where the Duke kisses it.
3.	In some representations, both male and female heads were treated with comedic effect and without respect. Where Gloriana's skull was violated, however, Jr. Brother's skull could have been weaponized, further demonstrating the difference in gender.
4.	The manipulating of the female skull showed how careless women's bodies were treated. The male head being in a bag and protected, therefore more respected.
5.	Male bodies treated with more respect, allowed stillness/modesty in death (officer holding bag) whereas female bodies are stripped of agency (Vindice controls/manipulates Gloriana's head)
6.	Female bodies are treated like objects and moved around, whereas male bodies are more static.
7.	Male bodies feel more respected and less interacted with. Female bodies seem more disrespected and tragic.
8.	The female body is much more disrespected, it's used more as a prop and the view of it as a human seems to have been lost completely. Whereas the male body is used more to get a violent and shocking reaction about it. But the female dead body hasn't got such a reaction, a shocking one isn't seen.
9.	I think there is a really clear difference in behaviour when it comes to the way the text handles a male and female body. Often the fem skull is treated with disrespect and it is put in an open space, as if it's a very trivial thing.

Did anything surprise you?

1.	Just how better to understand what's happening in the play rather than using imagination – the physical aspects of the acting rather than just a story in text.
2.	The different interpretations were definitely surprising, as each group had a different thought process.
3.	Where you can apply humour in a place which seems serious within the text.
4.	The comedic elements of the text were much clearer – changed the tone of both scenes when performed as opposed to read. How much room for interpretation Middleton leaves in the text.
5.	Vindice's agency on the skull. When performed, his part requires a lot of movement.
6.	How volatile props can be and how essential they can be for tragic action.
7.	How comedic the play was and how difficult it is to use a skull/prop when acting and to think about how you need to constantly know where it is on stage and how you are reacting to it.

- | |
|--|
| 8. It surprised me how easy it was to slip into a character and how difficult it was to react to the skull rather than the head. |
|--|

Please share any other thoughts about the connection between actors and props in performance, versus in the text.

- | |
|---|
| 1. I really loved the cursing between Supervacuo and Ambitoso and tossing the head between them in dialogue. |
| 2. The handling of Junior's head at the end of the scene with Ambitoso and Supervacuo seems like it could be done in a very comedic – passing the head like a volleyball – or in a serious way. |
| 3. Similar to above response. |

**B.3 Virtual workshop questionnaire and anonymous responses from
Emotion and Embodiment in Early Modern Theatre, with MEMS Festival
2020. Collected via Google forms after the workshop on 12 June 2020.**

Embodying Emotion Participant Questionnaire

Thank you for attending the workshop, *Embodying Emotion in 'Tis Pity She's a Whore*. In addition to our discussion and collaborative work, I am interested in your comments and reflection on the workshop material. Please fill out as much of the following survey as you are able, and please feel free to contact me with other thoughts, comments, or questions at alh46@kent.ac.uk.

How did performing or speaking aloud these scenes affect your view of the relationships between characters?

- | | |
|----|--|
| 1. | It gave me a complete [<i>sic</i>] new perspective on the text, making me rethink and sometimes change my perception of the characters and the play itself |
| 2. | I found that performing these scenes altered my understanding of Vasquez's place within this exchange and the dynamic of the argument. For some reason, the scene we watched at the beginning of the workshop left me feeling that he was more closely aligned with Soranzo than he seemed in our own performance of the scene. I wonder whether this may have been because reading the text over Teams placed more emphasis on his words, while the actor's body language in the clip and the fact that he was not physically standing beside Hippolita while vouching for her may have softened some of the language on stage. |
| 3. | It helped to be able to speak multiple roles - to look at the scenarios in multiple lights. It crystallised the anger in the scene in a way the example video did not portray |
| 4. | I found that my dislike of Sorenzo [<i>sic</i>] got stronger with each reading, but perhaps that was also to do with the fact that we talked about him a lot. |

How do you think John Ford is distinguishing, or has distinguished, between male and female emotions in this scene?

- | | |
|----|---|
| 1. | Female emotions are shown, whereas male emotions are kept hidden by a façade of good manners. The anger and sense of injustice are made manifest by Hippolita, who is condemned by Soranzo for 'digressing from honest shame'. It could be exemplified by the dichotomy of her being 'violent' vs him being 'double' |
| 2. | In general, Hippolita's anger seems more open and aggressive. She actively seeks confrontation and ostensibly seeks a resolution for her complaints with Soranzo. By comparison, when Soranzo's anger 'peaks' in this situation, he removes himself from the confrontation. Given that he is also engaging with thoughts of romance at the opening of this scene and complains when his privacy is invaded, I think this may be gesturing towards some connection between male emotion and concealment. I'm a little reluctant to say that this is entirely true as Soranzo's frustrations are still quite clear in this scene and his dialogue with Hippolita. |

- | | |
|----|---|
| 3. | It gives an entitled view to the masculine - that Soranzo's opinions are the most valid from the outset because of the disorderly way Hippolyta enters. However, Hippolyta is more powerful as the scene goes on - she highlights and undermines the lies Soranzo tries, and is backed up by Vasquez's support. |
| 4. | I think that the representation of female emotion as much more violent and intense than male emotion is quite common for the period. That being said, I also think that Ford somewhat undermines that distinction by putting these very stereotypical characterisations of Hippolyta's emotion (violent, frantic, past sense) into Soranzo's mouth when the audience knows that he's unreliable and that he has very strong interests in making her/this situation go away quietly. I also think that Soranzo's more violent emotion towards the end of the scene, which reads a bit like a sudden outburst to me, (plus the fact that he can't keep it in his pants) is perhaps a reflection of how Italian men were often portrayed in English drama as unseemingly passionate. |

What contemporary examples of women's (or men's) anger come to mind when you reflect on this workshop scene, if any?

- | | |
|----|--|
| 1. | X (sorry) |
| 2. | I was very struck by Soranzo's dismissal of Hippolyta's behaviour as being 'too violent' and 'past all rules of sense.' At risk of sounding like a bitter old maid myself, I think that it's still too common for men to dismiss the anger of former female partners as irrationality rather than recognising that said anger might be the natural reaction to something that they are responsible for. I suppose that what I am struggling for is an academic way of expressing the idea that 'bitches be crazy.' While the scenario portrayed in this scene is very different to the comparison that I am about to make, I did find that it reminded me of some of the backlash associated with the #MeToo movement. Soranzo's taking the moral high-ground in this situation - and villainising Hippolyta for inconveniencing him with seemingly quite valid concerns - reminded me of some of the disbelief, anger and accusations of opportunism directed towards those who came forward during the movement, as well as some of the preoccupation with the harm that was inflicted on the men's reputations. |
| 3. | The frustration at being unable to impress the truth of a scenario onto a man unwilling to hear his own failings is really telling. Men's anger at being confronted with evidence of their own failings is incredibly prescient at the moment. Disclaiming truth as 'fake news' and distorting the truth, gaslighting those that know the truth - it's all very prevalent in current news |
| 4. | Every interaction where a woman is angry about something and a man tells her to calm down/asks her if she's on her period. |

If any contemporary examples came to mind, what aspects of the workshop scene (e.g., verse, word choice, tone while reading, actions you or others associated with the text) raised these for you?

- | | |
|----|--|
| 1. | X |
| 2. | I think word choice was certainly the main factor in stressing Soranzo's perception of Hippolyta's irrationality (especially in the examples of 'too violent,' 'frantic' and 'past all rules of sense'). His dismissive attitude towards her is apparent in his leaving the stage once he realises that he is not in |

control of the situation. The inconvenience presented by Hippolita's anger is highlighted from the beginning of the scene through the physical invasion of Soranzo's space and his first question, 'What rude intrusion interrupts my peace?' Soranzo's anger with Hippolita comes across in his increasingly hostile word choices and modes of address, with 'Nay, dear Hippolita' eventually progressing to 'I hate thee and thy lust; you have been too foul.' He asserts his own moral standing while defaming Hippolita by invoking the lexical field of religion ('vows,' 'unlawful,' 'sin,' 'break,' 'penitence,' 'shame,' 'repent' etc.).
3. Undermining a woman's truth by stating 'you are too violent', implying that female complicity equates to full culpability, female anger being used as a tool to discredit valid opinions
4. Nay dear Hippolyta / Calm [<i>sic</i>] me not dear Who could help this? (Seems quite sarcastic to me since the answer's so obvious - I can imagine it being played for laughs as an aside to the audience) His tone in general being quite dismissive

Did anything surprise you?

1. The social dynamic between the Vazquez and Soranzo. To what extent could a servant openly contradict his master as Vazquez did? He gets to the extent of telling Soranzo how he should behave. I know nothing about early modern theatre, but the trope of cunning and plotting servants in ancient theatre (eg. Miles Gloriosus), as far as I remember it, has servants being allusively sarcastic, rather than openly contradictory
2. To be honestly, not especially. I'm not familiar with the play, so I didn't come to the workshop with too many pre-conceived notions of what to expect.
3. The amount of movement that could be presented in this compared to the video example online. This scene is meant to be volatile
4. The tension between Vasquez and Sorenzo, which only came out for me after reading it again.

Please share any other thoughts about the connection between gender and emotions in this scene.

1. I find interesting the exchange: 'you are past all rules of sense' 'and thou of grace'. I wonder what 'Hippolita' means with 'grace' ('and thou of grace'). If it's something related to the semantic area of 'good manners', something like 'behaving inappropriately', it'd mean she's trying to respond to him with his own argument; but it could also be interpreted more spiritually
2. Not really a thought about gender and emotion, but thank you for an excellent workshop!
3. Male emotion is predominantly responsive to female anger in this scene. It is only when false words do not work, and Hippolita hits a nerve by insulting Soranzo's fiancée, that we see true emotion from Soranza [<i>sic</i>]
4. I liked that Hippolyta is very unapologetic about her anger. I was comparing this scene in my mind to Paulina berating Leontes in Winter's Tale - her anger is very justified but she still feels like she needs to qualify it by being all 'oh I'm only a hotheaded woman'. Hippolyta doesn't seem to doubt the righteousness of her own anger at all.

Appendix C – Workshop Scripts

C.1 Workshop script for *Violence and Embodied Performance on the Early Modern Stage*, excerpted from *A Yorkshire Tragedy*, 4.94-112 and 5.15-55, and *The Lady's Tragedy*, 5.2.66-206, 13 December 2018.

A YORKSHIRE TRAGEDY, 4.94-112

By Thomas Middleton

Enter Son

SON

What ail you, father, are you not well? I cannot scourge my top as long as you stand so. You take up all the room with your wide legs. Puh, you cannot make me afeard with this. I fear no visors nor bugbears.

HUSBAND

Up, sir, for here thou hast no inheritance left.

SON

O, what will you do, father? – I am your white boy.

HUSBAND

Thou shalt be my red boy. Take that!

SON

O, you hurt me, father.

HUSBAND

My eldest beggar. 'Tis charity to brain you.

SON

How shall I learn now my head's broke?

HUSBAND

Bleed, bleed, rather than beg, beg. Be not thy name's disgrace.
Spurn thou thy fortunes first if they be base.
Come view thy second brother. Fates, my children's blood
Shall spin into your faces; you shall see
How confidently we scorn beggary.

A YORKSHIRE TRAGEDY, 5.15-55

By Thomas Middleton

Enter Husband, with Son

SON

Mother, mother, I am killed, mother!

WIFE

Ha, who's that cried? O me, my children! Both, both,
Both bloody, bloody!

HUSBAND

Strumpet, let go the boy, let go the beggar.

WIFE

O, what will you do, dear husband?

HUSBAND

Give me the bastard.

WIFE

Your own sweet boy.

HUSBAND

Dost thou prevent me still?

WIFE

O God!

HUSBAND

Have at his heart!

WIFE

O my dear boy! O heaven!

HUSBAND

And perish, now be gone.

SERVANT

O sir, what deeds are these?

HUSBAND

Base slave, my vassal,
Com'st thou between my fury to question me?

SERVANT

Were you the devil I would hold you, sir.

HUSBAND

Hold me? Presumption! I'll undo thee for't.

SERVANT

'Sblood, you have undone us all, sir.

HUSBAND

Tug at thy master?

SERVANT

Tug at a monster.

HUSBAND

O villain, now I'll tug thee, now I'll tear thee,
Set quick spurs to my vassal, bruise him, trample him.
So, I think thou wilt not follow me in haste.
My horse stands ready saddled, away, away.
Now to my brat at nurse, my sucking beggar.
Fates, I'll not leave you one to trample on.

SERVANT

O, I am scarce able to heave up myself.
He's so bruised me with his devilish weight
And torn my flesh with his blood-hasty spur,
A man before of easy constitution
Till now hell's power supplied, to his soul's wrong.
O, how damnation can make weak men strong!

THE LADY'S TRAGEDY, 5.2.66-206

By Thomas Middleton

TYRANT

Look on yon face and tell me what it wants.

GOVIANUS

Which? That, sir?

TYRANT

That. What wants it?

GOVIANUS

Troth, my lord,

Some thousand years' sleep and a marble pillow.

TYRANT

What's that?

Thy apprehension has too gross a film

To be employed at court. What colour wants she?

GOVIANUS

By my troth, all, sir. I see none she has,

Nor none she cares for.

A lower chamber with less noise were kindlier

For her, poor woman, whatso'er she was.

TYRANT

But how if we pleased to have it thus

And thou well hired to do what we command?

Let but thy art hide death upon her face

That now looks fearfully on us, and but strive

To give our eye delight in that pale part

Which draws so many pities from these springs,

And thy reward for't shall outlast thy end,

And reach to thy friend's fortunes, and his friend.

GOVIANUS

Say you so, my lord? I'll work out my heart, then,

But I'll show art enough.

TYRANT

About it, then.

I never wished so seriously for health

After long sickness.

GOVIANUS

A religious trembling shakes me by the hand
And bids me put by such unhallowed business,
But revenge calls for't, and it must go forward.
'Tis time the spirit of my love took rest.
Poor soul, 'tis weary, much abused and toiled.

TYRANT

Could I now send for one to renew heat
Within her bosom, that were a fine workman!
Life is removed from her, now, as the warmth
Of the bright sun from us when it makes winter,
And kills with unkind coldness – so is't yonder.
An everlasting frost hangs now upon her,
And, in such a season men will force
A heat into their bloods with exercise
In spite of extreme weather, so shall we
By art force beauty on yon lady's face,
Though death sit frowning on't a storm of hail
To beat it off. Our pleasure shall prevail.

GOVIANUS

My lord!

TYRANT

Hast done so soon?

GOVIANUS

That's as your grace

Gives approbation.

TYRANT

O, she lives again!

She'll presently speak to me! Keep her up,
I'll have her swoon no more, there's treachery in't.
Does she not feel warm to thee?

GOVIANUS

Very little, sir.

TYRANT

The heat wants cherishing, then. Our arms and lips
Shall labour life into her. Wake, sweet mistress,
'Tis I hat call thee at the door of life!
Ha! I talk so long to death, I'm sick myself.
Methinks an evil scent still follows me.

GOVIANUS

Maybe 'tis nothing but the colour, sir,
That I laid on.

TYRANT

Is that so strong?

GOVIANUS

Yes, faith, sir.

'Twas the best poison I could get for money.

TYRANT

Govianus!

What fury gave thee boldness to attempt
This deed, for which I'll doom thee with a death
Beyond the Frenchmen's tortures!

GOVIANUS

Doom me, tyrant!

Had I feared death, I'd never appeared noble
To seal this act upon me which e'en honours me
Unto my mistress' spirit – it loves me for't.
I told my heart 'twould prove destruction to't,
Who, hearing 'twas for her, charged me to do't.

TYRANT

O, if there be a hell for flesh and spirit,
'Tis built within this bosom! My lords, treason!
Your king's poisoned! Lay hold on him,
On Govianus. O, my torments!

GOVIANUS

He's gone,
And all the kingdom's evils perish with him!
And since the body of that virtuous lady
Is taken from her rest, in memory
Of her admired mistress, 'tis our will
It receive honour dead, as it took part
With us in all afflictions when it lived.
Here place her in this throne, crown her our queen,
The first and last that ever we make ours,
Her constancy strikes so much firmness in us.
That honour done, let her be solemnly borne
Unto the house of peace from whence she came
As queen of silence.

**C.2 Workshop script for *Masking and Unmasking in The Revenger's Tragedy*,
excerpted from 3.5.98-155 and 3.6.31-90, 6 November 2019.**

THE REVENGER'S TRAGEDY, 3.5.98-155

By Thomas Middleton

VINDICE

Now to my tragic business. Look you, brother,
I have not fashioned this only for show
And useless property. No, it shall bear a part
E'en in it[s] own revenge. This very skull,
Whose mistress the Duke poisoned, with this drug,
The mortal curse of the earth, shall be revenged
In the like strain and kiss his lips to death.
As much as the dumb thing can, he shall feel;
What fails in poison we'll supply in steel.

HIPPOLITO

Brother, I do applaud thy constant vengeance,
The quaintness of thy malice, above thought.

VINDICE [*applying poison to the skull's lips*]

So, 'tis laid on. Now come and welcome, Duke,
I have her for thee. I protest it, brother,
Methinks she makes almost as fair a sign
As some old gentlewoman in a periwig.

[*masking the skull*]

Hide thy face now, for shame; thou hadst need have a mask now.
'Tis vain when beauty flows, but when it fleets
This would become graves better than streets.

HIPPOLITO

You have my voice in that.

[*Enter DUKE and GENTLEMEN*]

Hark, the Duke's come.

VINDICE [*aside*]

Peace, let's observe what company he brings
And how he does absent 'em; for you know
He'll wish all private. – Brother, fall you back a little
With the bony lady.

HIPPOLITO

That I will. [*He withdraws*]

VINDICE [*aside*]

So, so.

Now nine years' vengeance crowd into a minute.

DUKE [*to Gentlemen*]

You shall have leave to leave us, with this charge,
Upon your lives: if we be missed by th' Duchess
Or any of the nobles, to give out
We're privately rid forth –

VINDICE [*aside*]

Oh, happiness!

DUKE

With some few honourable gentlemen, you may say.
You may name those that are away from court.

1 GENTLEMAN

Your will and pleasure shall be done, my lord. [*exeunt Gentlemen*]

VINDICE [*aside*]

'Privately rid forth'!

He strives to make sure work on't!

[*stepping forward*]

– Your good grace!

DUKE

Piato, well done. Hast brought her? What lady is't?

VINDICE

Faith, my lord, a country lady, a little bashful at first, as most of them are, but after the first kiss, my lord, the worst is past with them. Your grace knows now what you have to do. Sh'as somewhat a grave look with her, but –

DUKE

I love that best. Conduct her.

VINDICE [*aside*]

Have at all!

DUKE

In gravest looks the greatest faults seem less.
Give me that sin that's robed in holiness.

VINDICE [*to Hippolito, who comes forward*]

Back with the torch, brother, raise the perfumes.

DUKE

How sweet can a duke breathe? Age has no fault;
Pleasure should meet in a perfumed mist. –

Lady, sweetly encountered. I came from court,
I must be bold with you. [*Kisses the skull.*] Oh, what's this? Oh!

VINDICE
Royal villain! White devil!

DUKE
Oh!

VINDICE
Brother,
Place the torch here, that his affrighted eyeballs
May start into those hollows. Duke, dost know
Yon dreadful vizard? View it well. 'Tis the skull
Of Gloriana, whom thou poisonedst last.

DUKE
Oh, 't'as poisoned me.

VINDICE
Didst not know that till now?

DUKE
What are you two?

VINDICE
Villains, all three. The very ragged bone
Has been sufficiently revenged.

DUKE
O Hippolito, call treason!

HIPPOLITO
Yes, my good lord. Treason, treason, treason!
Stamping on him.

THE REVENGER'S TRAGEDY, 3.6.31-90

[*Enter an OFFICER, carrying a head in a bag.*]

SUPERVACUO

How now, what's he?

AMBITIOSO

One of the officers.

SUPERVACUO

Desired news.

AMBITIOSO

How now, my friend?

OFFICER

My lords,

Under your pardon, I am allotted
To that desertless office, to present you
With the yet bleeding head.

SUPERVACUO [*aside to Ambitioso*]

Ha, ha, excellent!

AMBITIOSO [*aside to Supervacuo*]

All's sure our own. Brother, canst weep, think'st thou?
'Twould grace our flattery much. Think of some dame;
'Twill teach thee to dissemble.

SUPERVACUO [*aside to Ambitioso*]

I have thought.

Now for yourself.

AMBITIOSO

Our sorrows are so fluent,
Our eyes o'erflow our tongues. Words spoke in tears
Are like the murmurs of the waters; the sound
Is loudly heard, but cannot be distinguished.

SUPERVACUO

How died he, pray?

OFFICER

Oh, full of rage and spleen.

SUPERVACUO

He died most valiantly, then. We're glad
To hear it.

OFFICER

We could not woo him once to pray.

AMBITIOSO

He showed himself a gentleman in that,
Give him his due.

OFFICER

But in the stead of prayer
He drew forth oaths.

SUPERVACUO

Then did he pray, dear heart,
Although you understood him not.

OFFICER

My lords,
E'en at his last, with pardon be it spoke,
He cursed you both.

SUPERVACUO

He cursed us? 'Las, good soul!

AMBITIOSO

It was not in powers, but the Duke's pleasure.
[aside] Finely dissembled o' both sides. Sweet fate!
Oh, happy opportunity!

Enter LUSSURIOSO

LUSSURIOSO

Now, my lords.

BOTH

Oh!

LUSSURIOSO

Why do you shun me, brothers? You may come nearer now.
The savour of the prison has forsook me.
I thank such kind lords as yourselves, I'm free.

AMBITIOSO

Alive!

SUPERVACUO

In health!

AMBITIOSO

Released?

We were both e'en amazed with joy to see it.

LUSSURIOSO

I am much to thank you.

SUPERVACUO

Faith, we spared no tongue unto my lord the Duke.

AMBITIOSO

I know your delivery, brother,

Had not been half so sudden but for us.

SUPERVACUO

Oh, how we pleaded!

LUSSURIOSO

Most deserving brothers,

In my best studies I will think of it. [*exit*]

AMBITIOSO

Oh, death and vengeance!

SUPERVACUO

Hell and torments!

AMBITIOSO

Slave, cam'st thou to delude us?

OFFICER

Delude you, my lords?

SUPERVACUO

Ay, villain, where's this head now?

OFFICER

Why, here my lord.

Just after his delivery, you both came

With warrant from the Duke to behead your brother.

AMBITIOSO

Ay, our brother, the Duke's son.

OFFICER

The Duke's son,
My lord, had his release before you came.

AMBITIOSO

Whose head's that then?

OFFICER

His whom you left command for,
Your own brother's.

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!

OFFICER

Oh, my good lord! [*exit*]

SUPERVACUO

The devil overtake thee!

AMBITIOSO

Oh, fatal!

SUPERVACUO

Oh, prodigious to our bloods!

AMBITIOSO

Did we dissemble?

SUPERVACUO

Did we make our tears women for thee?

AMBITIOSO

Laugh and rejoice for thee?

SUPERVACUO

Bring warrant for thy death?

AMBITIOSO

Mock off thy head?

SUPERVACUO

You had a trick, you had a wile, forsooth.

AMBITIOSO

A murrain meet 'em; there's none of these wiles that ever come to good. I see now there is nothing sure in mortality but mortality.

Well, no more words; 'shalt be revenged, i'faith.

Come, throw off clouds now, brother; think of vengeance

And deeper-settled hate. Sirrah, sit fast.

We'll pull down all, but thou shalt down at last.

**C.3 Workshop script for *Embodying Emotion in 'Tis Pity She's a Whore*,
excerpted from 2.2.22-106, 12 June 2020.**

'TIS PITY SHE'S A WHORE

By John Ford

SORANZO

What rude intrusion interrupts my peace?

Can I be nowhere private?

What's the matter, Vasquez? Who is't?

[Enter HIPPOLITA and VASQUEZ]

HIPPOLITA

'Tis I.

Do you know me now? Look, perjured man, on her

Whom thou and thy distracted lust have wronged.

Thy sensual rage of blood hath made my youth⁵¹⁵

A scorn to men and angels, and shall I

Be now a foil to thy unsated change?⁵¹⁶

Thou know'st, false wanton, when my modest fame

Stood free from stain or scandal, all the charms

Of hell or sorcery could not prevail

Against the honour of my chaster bosom.

Thine eyes did plead in tears, thy tongue in oaths

Such and so many that a heart of steel

Would have been wrought to pity, as was mine.

And shall the conquest of my lawful bed,

My husband's death urged on by his disgrace,

My loss of womanhood be ill rewarded⁵¹⁷

With hatred and contempt? No. Know, Soranzo,

I have a spirit doth as much distaste

The slavery of fearing thee as thou

Dost loathe the memory of what has passed.⁵¹⁸

SORANZO

Nay, dear Hippolita —

HIPPOLITA

Call me not dear,

Nor think with supple words to smooth the grossness

⁵¹⁵ Sensual rage of blood = violent desire, sexual passion

⁵¹⁶ Unsated change = a reference to Soranzo's desire for a variety of lovers, without suffering from a similar loss in reputation

⁵¹⁷ Loss of womanhood = loss of reputation, presumed lack of marital fidelity

⁵¹⁸ I have a spirit ... what has passed = I dislike the idea of being afraid of you, just as much as you dislike the memory of our affair

Of my abuses. 'Tis not your new mistress,
Your goodly Madam Merchant, shall triumph⁵¹⁹
On my dejection. Tell her thus from me:
My birth was nobler and by much more free.⁵²⁰

SORANZO

You are too violent.

HIPPOLITA

You are too double

In your dissimulation. See'st thou this,⁵²¹
This habit, these black mourning weeds of care?
'Tis thou art cause of this, and hast divorced
My husband from his life and me from him,
And made me widow in my widowhood.⁵²²

SORANZO

Will you yet hear?

HIPPOLITA

More of thy perjuries?

Thy soul is drowned too deeply in those sins;
Thou need'st not add to the number.⁵²³

SORANZO

Then I'll leave you;

You are past all rules of sense.

HIPPOLITA

And thou of grace.

VASQUEZ [*to* SORANZO]

Sir, I beseech you, do not perplex her; griefs, alas, will have a vent. I dare undertake
Madam Hippolita will now freely hear you.⁵²⁴

SORANZO

Talk to a woman frantic? [*to* HIPPOLITA] Are these the fruits of your love?⁵²⁵

HIPPOLITA

⁵¹⁹ Madam Merchant = Annabella, Soranzo newly betrothed wife

⁵²⁰ More free = of noble birth, again

⁵²¹ Dissimulation = lying, falsehoods

⁵²² Hast divorced ... in my widowhood = 'divorce' can also be applied to violent death; caused my husband's death and separated us in our marriage, then widowed me again by not marrying me after my husband's died

⁵²³ Thy soul ... to the number = you have damned yourself with lying already, no need to lie again

⁵²⁴ Perplex her = old usage, to trouble or torment

⁵²⁵ Frantic = violently mad, even raving

They are the fruits of thy untruth, false man.
Did'st thou not swear, whilst yet my husband lived,
That thou would wish no happiness on earth
More than to call me wife? Did'st thou not vow
When he should die, to marry me? Yet thou
Forget'st thy vows and leav'st me to my shame.

SORANZO

Who could help this?

HIPPOLITA

Who? Perjured man, thou could'st,
If thou had faith or love.

SORANZO

You are deceived:
The vows I made, if you remember well,
Were wicked and unlawful; 'twere more sin
To keep them than to break them. As for me,⁵²⁶
I cannot mask my penitence. Think thou
How much thou hast digressed from honest shame.

VASQUEZ

You do not well; this was not your promise.

SORANZO

I care not; let her know her monstrous life.
Ere I'll be servile to so black a sin,⁵²⁷
I'll be accursed. Woman, come here no more.
Learn to repent, and die, for by my honour
I hate thee and thy lust; you have been too foul.

[SORANZO *exits*]

HIPPOLITA

How foolishly this beast contemns his fate
And shuns the use of that which I more scorn
Than I once loved: his love. But let him go:⁵²⁸
My vengeance shall give comfort to his woe.

⁵²⁶ The vows I made ... to break them = from Augustine, breaking a contract made in sin in order to return to virtue, is not a sin

⁵²⁷ Servile to so black a sin = complicit in an act of adultery, a serious sin (morally and socially) in this period

⁵²⁸ Shuns the use ... his love = Soranzo deliberately forgets how much he supposedly loved Hippolita; she now rejects his past love and swears off any remaining loyalty

**C.4 Workshop script for practice-based work on *The Spanish Tragedy*,
excerpted from 4.4, 17 June 2020.**

THE SPANISH TRAGEDY
By Thomas Kyd

Enter SPANISH KING, VICEROY, the DUKE OF CASTILE, and their train

KING

Now, Viceroy, shall we see the tragedy
Of Soliman the Turkish emperor,
Performed of pleasure by your son the prince,
My nephew Don Lorenzo, and my niece.

VICEROY

Who, Bel-Imperia?

KING

Ay, and Hieronimo, our marshal,
At whose request they deign to do't themselves:
These be our pastimes in the court of Spain.
Here, brother, you shall be the book-keeper:
This is the argument of that they show.

*He giveth him a book Gentlemen, this play of Hieronimo, in sundry languages, was
thought good to be set down in English more largely, for the easier understanding
to every public reader.*

Enter BALTHAZAR, BEL-IMPERIA, and HIERONIMO

BALTHAZAR

*Bashaw, that Rhodes is ours, yield heavens the honour,
And holy Mahomet, our sacred prophet;
And be thou graced with every excellence
That Soliman can give, or thou desire.
But thy desert in conquering Rhodes is less
Than in reserving this fair Christian nymph,
Perseda, blissful lamp of excellence,
Whose eyes compel, like powerful adamant,
The warlike heart of Soliman to wait.*

KING

See, Viceroy, that is Balthazar, your son,
That represents the emperor Soliman:
How well he acts his amorous passion.

VICEROY

Ay, Bel-Imperia hath taught him that.

CASTILE

That's because his mind runs all on Bel-Imperia.

HIERONIMO

Whatever joy earth yields betide your majesty.

BALTHAZAR

Earth yields no joy without Perseda's love.

HIERONIMO

Let then Perseda on your grace attend.

BALTHAZAR

*She shall not wait on me, but I on her:
Drawn by the influence of her lights, I yield.
But let my friend, the Rhodian knight, come forth,
Erasto, dearer than my life to me,
That he may see Perseda, my beloved.*

Enter [LORENZO as] ERASTO

KING

Here comes Lorenzo; look upon the plot,
And tell me, brother, what part plays he?

BEL-IMPERIA

Ah, my Erasto, welcome to Perseda.

LORENZO

*Thrice happy is Erasto that thou liv'st –
Rhodes' loss is nothing to Erasto's joy;
Sith his Perseda lives, his life survives.*

BALTHAZAR

*Ah, bashaw, here is love between Erasto
And fair Perseda, sovereign of my soul.*

HIERONIMO

*Remove Erasto, mighty Soliman,
And then Perseda will be quickly won.*

BALTHAZAR

*Erasto is my friend, and while he lives
Perseda never will remove her love.*

HIERONIMO

Let not Erasto live to grieve great Soliman.

BALTHAZAR

Dear is Erasto in our princely eye.

HIERONIMO

But if he be your rival, let him die.

BALTHAZAR

*Why, let him die: so love commandeth me.
Yet grieve I that Erasto should so die.*

HIERONIMO

*Erasto, Soliman saluteth thee,
And lets thee wit by me his highness' will
Which is, thou shouldst be thus employed.
[Stab him]*

BEL-IMPERIA

*Ay me,
Erasto! see, Soliman, Erasto's slain!*

BALTHAZAR

*Yet liveth Soliman to comfort thee.
Fair queen of beauty, let not favour die,
But with a gracious eye behold his grief,
That with Perseda's beauty is increased,
If by Perseda his grief be not released.*

BEL-IMPERIA

*Tyrant, desist soliciting vain suits;
Relentless are mine ears to thy laments,
As thy butcher is pitiless and base,
Which seized on my Erasto, harmless knight,
Yet by thy power thou thinkest to command,
And to thy power Perseda doth obey:
But were she able, thus she would revenge
Thy treacheries on thee, ignoble prince: [Stab him]
And on herself she would be thus revenged. [Stab herself]*

KING

Well said, old marshal, this was bravely done!

HIERONIMO

But Bel-Imperia plays Perseda well.

VICEROY

*Were this in earnest, Bel-Imperia,
You would be better to my son than so.*

KING

But now what follows for Hieronimo?

HIERONIMO

Marry, this follows for Hieronimo:

Here break we off our sundry languages

And thus conclude I in our vulgar tongue.

Haply you think, but bootless are your thoughts,

That this is fabulously counterfeit,

And that we do as all tragedians do:

To die today, for fashioning our scene,

The death of Ajax, or some Roman peer,

And in a minute starting up again,

Revive to please to-morrow's audience.

No, princes; know I am Hieronimo,

The hopeless father of a hapless son,

Whose tongue is tuned to tell his latest tale,

Not to excuse gross errors in the play.

I see your looks urge instance of these words;

Behold the reason urging me to this:

Shows his dead son

See here my show, look on this spectacle.

Here lay my hope, and here my hope hath end;

Here lay my heart, and here my heart was slain;

Here lay my treasure, here my treasure lost;

Here lay my bliss, and here my bliss bereft;

But hope, heart, treasure, joy, and bliss,

All fled, failed, died, yea, all decayed with this.

From forth these wounds came breath that gave me life;

They murdered me that made these fatal marks.

The cause was love, whence grew this mortal hate,

The hate, Lorenzo and young Balthazar,

The love, my son to Bel-Imperia.

But night, the coverer of accursed crimes,

With pitchy silence hushed these traitors' harms

And lent them leave, for they had sorted leisure

To take advantage in my garden-plot

Upon my son, my dear Horatio:

There merciless they butchered up my boy,

In black dark night, to pale dim cruel death.

He shrieks, I heard, and yet methinks I hear,

His dismal outcry echo in the air.

With soonest speed I hasted to the noise,

Where hanging on a tree I found my son,

Through-girt with wounds, and slaughtered as you see.

And grieved I, think you, at this spectacle?

Speak, Portuguese, whose loss resembles mine:

If thou canst weep upon thy Balthazar,
 'Tis like I wailed for my Horatio.
 And you, my lord, whose reconciled son
 Marched in a net, and thought himself unseen
 And rated me for brainsick lunacy,
 With 'God amend that mad Hieronimo!' –
 How can you brook our play's catastrophe?
 And here behold this bloody handkercher,
 Which at Horatio's death I weeping dipped
 Within the river of his bleeding wounds:
 It as propitious, see I have reserved,
 And never hath it left my bloody heart,
 Soliciting remembrance of my vow
 With these, O these accursed murderers:
 Which now performed, my heart is satisfied.
 And to this end the bashaw I became
 That might revenge me on Lorenzo's life,
 Who therefore was appointed to the part,
 And was to represent the knight of Rhodes,
 That I might kill him more conveniently.
 So, Viceroy, was this Balthazar, thy son –
 That Soliman which Bel-Imperia
 In person of Perseda murdered –
 Solely appointed to that tragic part
 That she might slay him that offended her.
 Poor Bel-Imperia missed her part in this:
 For though the story saith she should have died,
 Yet I of kindness, and of care to her,
 Did otherwise determine of her end;
 But love of him whom they did hate too much
 Did urge her resolution to be such.
 And princes, now behold Hieronimo,
 Author and actor in this tragedy,
 Bearing his latest fortune in his fist:
 And will as resolute conclude his part
 As any of the actors gone before.
 And, gentles, thus I end my play:
 Urge no more words: I have no more to say.

He runs to hang himself

KING

O hearken, Viceroy! Hold, Hieronimo!
 Brother, my nephew and thy son are slain!

VICEROY

We are betrayed! my Balthazar is slain!
 Break ope the doors, run, save Hieronimo.

They break in, and hold HIERONIMO

KING

Hieronimo, do but inform the king of these events;
Upon mine honour thou shalt have no harm.

HIERONIMO

Viceroy, I will not trust thee with my life,
Which I this day have offered to my son.
Accursed wretch,
Why stayest thou him that was resolved to die?

KING

Speak, traitor; damned, bloody murderer, speak!
For now I have thee I will make thee speak –
Why hast thou done this undeserving deed?

VICEROY

Why hast thou murdered my Balthazar?

CASTILE

Why hast thou butchered both my children thus?

HIERONIMO

O, good words!
As dear to me was my Horatio
As yours, or yours, or yours, my lord, to you.
My guiltless son was by Lorenzo slain,
And by Lorenzo and that Balthazar
Am I at last revenged thoroughly,
Upon whose souls may heavens be yet avenged
With greater far than these afflictions.

CASTILE

But who were thy confederates in this?

VICEROY

That was thy daughter Bel-Imperia;
For by her hand my Balthazar was slain:
I saw her stab him.

KING

Why speak'st thou not?

HIERONIMO

What lesser liberty can kings afford
Than harmless silence? Then afford it me:
Sufficeth I may not, nor I will not tell thee.

KING

Fetch forth the tortures.

Traitor as thou art, I'll make thee tell.

HIERONIMO

Indeed,

Thou may'st torment me, as his wretched son

Hath done in murdering my Horatio,

But never shalt thou force me to reveal

The thing which I have vowed inviolate.

And therefore in despite of all thy threats,

Pleased with their deaths, and eased with their revenge,

First take my tongue, and afterwards my heart.

He bites out his tongue

KING

O monstrous resolution of a wretch!

See, Viceroy, he hath bitten forth his tongue

Rather than to reveal what we required.

CASTILE

Yet can he write.

KING

And if in this he satisfy us not,

We will devise th'extremest kind of death

That ever was invented for a wretch.

Then he makes signs for a knife to mend his pen

CASTILE

O, he would have a knife to mend his pen.

VICEROY

Here; and advise thee that thou write the troth.

KING

Look to my brother! save Hieronimo!

[HIERONIMO] with a knife stabs the DUKE and himself

KING

What age hath ever heard such monstrous deeds?

My brother, and the whole succeeding hope

That Spain expected after my decease!

Go bear his body hence, that we may mourn

The loss of our beloved brother's death;

That he may be entombed, whate'er befall:

I am the next, the nearest, last of all.

VICEROY

And thou, Don Pedro, do the like for us;
Take up our hapless son, untimely slain:
Set me with him, and he with woeful me,
Upon the main-mast of a ship unmanned,
And let the wind and tide haul me along
To Scylla's barking and untamed gulf,
Or to the loathsome pool of Acheron,
To weep my want for my sweet Balthazar:
Spain hath no refuge for a Portingale.

The trumpets sound a dead march, the KING OF SPAIN mourning after his brother's body, and the VICEROY of Portingale bearing the body of his son.

Appendix D – Permission Form

D.1 Individual Consent Form for audio-visual recording from *Emotion and Embodiment in Early Modern Theatre*, with MEMS Festival 2020. Collected via Microsoft Teams before the workshop on 12 June 2020.



Use of photographs – form for individual consent

Canterbury Campus –

I give permission for Anna Hegland to use my film/audio, photograph(s) and/or a written account of my experience taken on Friday 12th June 2020 (in full or part, authorised on behalf of the University of Kent), for use in her doctoral thesis: *The Language of Violence in Early Modern Tragedies, 1580-1630*, in print, future workshops or interviews, and on the world wide web, including, but not limited to, Moodle (Turnitin).

Written account yes/no

Photos yes/no

Film and/or audio yes/no

Applicable to written accounts only: tick one of the following

Are you happy for Anna Hegland to use your written account without asking each time?

☐ Yes, you don't need to ask me each time

☐ No, ask me each time you use it.

Name _____

University department/course _____

Email _____

Nationality _____

Location _____

Description (distinguishing features/clothes etc)

Signature _____

Date _____

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