The Spanish Tragedy Study Guide

The Spanish Tragedy by Thomas Kyd

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Introduction

Kyd based *The Spanish Tragedy* on the tragedies written by the Roman playwright Seneca, whose plays focused on murder and revenge. The emphasis was on a malignant fate that led inevitably to a bloody and horrific catastrophe.

Although *The Spanish Tragedy* is not performed in the early 2000s, its intricate plot, full of intrigue and even containing comic incidents, its swift-moving and sensational action, the questions it poses about the nature of justice and retribution, and the well-developed character of the revenger, Hieronimo, make it a rewarding play to read.

Author Biography

The exact date on which Thomas Kyd was born is unknown, but he was baptized on November 6, 1558, at a church in London. His father, Francis Kyd, was a successful scrivener, that is, a man who copied documents. Kyd's father was sufficiently well off to send his son to the Merchant Taylors' School, which had a reputation for high academic standards. Kyd entered the Merchant Taylors' School when he was seven years old, in 1565. The poet Edmund Spenser was also a student there at the time. Kyd may have remained at Merchant Taylors for eight to ten years, although his date of departure is unrecorded.

After leaving school, Kyd was probably apprenticed to his father, although this cannot be established beyond doubt. By 1583, he had begun writing plays for the company of actors known as the Queen's Company. Kyd wrote for this company until 1587, although none of his plays has survived. In 1587 or 1588, Kyd entered the service of a lord, possibly the earl of Sussex, as a secretary or tutor. In 1588, he published a translation of Tasso's *Padre di Famiglia*, under the title *The Householder's Philosophy*. *The Spanish Tragedy*, the play on which Kyd's fame rests, was written between 1582 and 1592, probably before 1587. It was the first example of an Elizabethan revenge tragedy and enjoyed great popularity during Kyd's lifetime and beyond. What other plays Kyd wrote is a matter of conjecture. He may have written *Soliman and Perseda*, and many scholars argue that he wrote an early version of *Hamlet*, although no trace of such a play exists.

In 1591, Kyd shared his lodgings with the dramatist Christopher Marlowe. In 1593, Kyd was arrested and questioned about whether he had any role in writing pamphlets that incited violence against foreigners in London, who were being blamed for outbreaks of the plague and a rise in unemployment. There is no evidence that Kyd did anything wrong; he was under suspicion only because of his association with Marlowe, who was notorious for his atheism. Marlowe was also arrested but was quickly released (and killed in a tavern brawl twelve days later). Kyd was not so fortunate in his dealings with the authorities. Heretical writings were found at his lodgings, but Kyd claimed they belonged to Marlowe. He was subjected to torture during his brief period of imprisonment, but he was not convicted of any crime.

After his release, Kyd wrote *Cornelia*, an adaptation of a play by the French playwright Robert Garnier. It was published in 1594. In his dedication, Kyd commented about the bitter times and great suffering he had endured.

Kyd died later that year, at the age of thirty-six. He was buried on August 15, 1594.

Plot Summary

Act 1

The Spanish Tragedy begins with the ghost of Andrea, a Spanish nobleman, and the personified abstraction of Revenge. Andrea explains that he was killed in battle against the Portuguese. This deprived him of his secret love, Bel-Imperia, and his ghost has now emerged from the underworld to seek revenge. Revenge promises the ghost of Andrea that he will witness his killer, Prince Balthazar, killed by Bel-Imperia. These two characters remain on stage throughout the play.

At the Spanish court, a general explains that during the battle, Balthazar was defeated in single combat by Horatio and taken prisoner. This ensured Spain's victory, and Portugal has agreed to pay Spain tribute. Balthazar is treated leniently, being merely detained in Spain as the guest of Lorenzo.

At the Portuguese court, the viceroy of Portugal is deceived by Villuppo into believing Balthazar is dead.

Back in Spain, Horatio tells Bel-Imperia of the circumstances of Andrea's death, and she transfers her affections from Andrea to Horatio, who was Andrea's friend. She also vows to have vengeance on Balthazar. Balthazar, encouraged by Lorenzo, declares his love for Bel-Imperia, but she rebuffs him.

The king of Spain holds a banquet, attended by the Portuguese ambassador, to celebrate the new alliance between the two countries. The ghost of Andrea complains to Revenge at seeing Balthazar so well received at the Spanish court. Revenge tells him that friendship will soon turn into enmity.

Act 2

Lorenzo, trying to advance Balthazar's cause with Bel-Imperia, gets her servant Pedringano to admit that she is in love with Horatio, because he has seen letters she sent to him. Lorenzo promises Balthazar that he will get rid of Horatio, leaving Balthazar free to win Bel-Imperia's love. In scene 2, Balthazar and Lorenzo, helped by Pedringano, spy on Bel-Imperia as she and Horatio discuss their love for each other. The new lovers arrange to meet in secret at night, in a garden on Horatio's father's land, where they will not be disturbed.

After a scene in which the duke of Castile agrees to the marriage of his daughter to Balthazar, Lorenzo and Balthazar, informed by Pedringano, surprise Horatio and Bel-Imperia at their secret meeting. They hang and stab Horatio and abduct Bel-Imperia. The disturbance arouses Hieronimo from his bed, and Hieronimo cuts down Horatio and laments his murder. Isabella, his wife, joins him, and he vows revenge. Meanwhile, the ghost of Andrea is again irritated, because he has seen his friend Horatio rather than his

enemy Balthazar killed. Revenge replies that he only has to wait, and he will see Balthazar brought low.

Act 3

At the Portuguese court, Alexandro is about to be put to death when the ambassador arrives with the news that Balthazar is alive. The viceroy releases Alexandro and condemns Villuppo to death because of his false claims that Balthazar was dead.

In Spain, Hieronimo, mourning for his son, receives a letter from Bel-Imperia in which she tells him that Horatio was murdered by Lorenzo and Balthazar. She calls on him to take his revenge. Hieronimo, suspicious that the letter may be a trick, resolves to investigate before he takes action. After Hieronimo talks with Lorenzo, Lorenzo becomes suspicious that Hieronimo may know something about the murder. He fears that Balthazar's servant, Serberine, may have said something to him. Lorenzo pays Pedringano to kill Serberine, but after Pedringano shoots Serberine, he is apprehended by three constables, who take him to Hieronimo. Lorenzo then arranges for Pedringano to be executed, while falsely telling him that a pardon already enacted will be revealed at the last minute (thus buying Pedringano's silence). The scheme goes wrong when the hangman shows Hieronimo a letter he has found on the dead Pedringano's clothing that confirms that Lorenzo and Balthazar killed Horatio. Hieronimo resolves to go to the king and seek justice. In the meantime, Isabella goes mad in her grief over her dead son, and Bel-Imperia, who is being kept in seclusion by Lorenzo, bemoans the fact that Hieronimo has not yet avenged Horatio's death.

Lorenzo sends for Bel-Imperia, who rails at him for abducting her. Lorenzo explains that he killed Horatio to protect her honor, since they had met in secret. He reminds her of how her reputation suffered because of her clandestine love affair with Andrea. He also explains that he abducted her lest the king should have found her there. He kept her in seclusion because he wanted to spare her the anger of their father, who is angry at Andrea's death. Balthazar again presses his claim to her love, but Bel-Imperia remains unresponsive.

Meanwhile, the grief-stricken Hieronimo contemplates suicide but decides against it, since if he dies there will be no one to avenge Horatio. Meanwhile, the king, the duke of Castile and the Portuguese ambassador agree on the marriage of Balthazar and Bel-Imperia. Hieronimo bursts in, calling for justice, but after he is restrained and ushered away, Lorenzo tries to convince the king that Hieronimo is not only mad but also wants for himself the ransom paid by Portugal for Balthazar.

Hieronimo forms a plan for vengeance, but waits until the best time to execute it. Meanwhile, he pretends he knows nothing of the guilt of Lorenzo and Balthazar. However, the grief of a man named Bazulto for his murdered son causes Hieronimo to reproach himself for delaying his revenge.

The viceroy arrives for the wedding, and Castile reproaches his son Lorenzo for obstructing Hieronimo's access to the king. When Hieronimo enters, summoned by Castile, Hieronimo pretends to be reconciled with Lorenzo. The act concludes with the ghost of Andrea again calling for revenge. Revenge reassures him, in the process explaining to Andrea the meaning of a "dumb show" (mimed performance) they have just witnessed.

Act 4

Bel-Imperia reproaches Hieronimo for failing to avenge Horatio and tells him that if he does not act, she will carry out her revenge herself. Hieronimo reassures her that he has a plan, and asks her to join with him. Lorenzo and Balthazar enter and ask Hieronimo to devise some entertainment for the Portuguese ambassador. Hieronimo produces a tragic play that he wrote when he was young. He assigns them all parts. Balthazar is to play Soliman the Turkish Emperor who pursues a woman, Perseda (played by Bel-Imperia), who kills him after one of Soliman's men (played by Hieronimo) kills her husband, Erastus (played by Lorenzo).

Isabella, believing that Hieronimo has abdicated his revenge, curses the garden where Horatio was murdered, and then kills herself.

The play is acted in front of the Spanish king, the viceroy of Portugal, and other members of the court. At the appropriate moment in the plot, Hieronimo stabs Erastus (Lorenzo). Bel-Imperia stabs Soliman (Balthazar) and then stabs herself. The on-stage audience does not realize the deaths are real, not feigned. Then Hieronimo produces the body of Horatio and explains how Horatio was murdered, and that the deaths of Balthazar and Lorenzo are real, designed by him. Bel-Imperia he had intended to spare, but she took it upon herself to commit suicide. Hieronimo then tries to hang himself. He is restrained, and the king demands that he explain himself fully. Hieronimo refuses to explain what role Bel-Imperia had in the plot, and bites out his tongue rather than speak. A pen is brought for him to write down an explanation. Hieronimo indicates he needs a knife to mend the pen, but when the knife is brought, he stabs the duke of Castile and himself.

In the final scene, the ghost of Andrea is pleased by what he has witnessed. He looks forward to welcoming Horatio, Bel-Imperia, Isabella and Hieronimo in pleasant circumstances. Revenge tells him that he can hurl his enemies to the deepest hell, and Andrea picks out the punishments for them that best please him.

Act 1, Scene 1

Act 1, Scene 1 Summary

This play is the story of the intense grief, quest for revenge, and eventual insanity of Hieronimo, whose son Horatio is murdered by an ambitious courtier. The play is an example of a medieval genre called the revenge tragedy, in which the naked, murderous ambitions of its central characters are moralistically avenged. The central theme of this play, as was the case with all such tragedies, is the inevitability and rightness of justice.

A Ghost appears, accompanied by a representation of Revenge. The Ghost introduces himself as Andrea and summarizes his life as a Spanish noble, his loving relationship with Bel-Imperia, and how he was slain in battle with Portugal. He also recounts his journey through the various realms of the underworld, where the governing spirits debated what should be done with his soul and eventually sent him to be judged by Pluto, the ruler of the underworld, and by Proserpine, his queen. Finally, he tells that Proserpine assigned Revenge to deal with him, and how Revenge brought him back to the land of the living. Revenge tells the Ghost he's been brought back to see revenge taken on the man who killed him - Balthazar, the Prince of Portugal. Revenge and the Ghost take their places and observe the unfolding of the tragedy.

Act 1, Scene 1 Analysis

This play is a sequel to *The First Part of Hieronimo*, a short tragedy featuring the same characters and documenting the conflict that led to Andrea's death. This scene, which is essentially a prologue, sums up the action of that play and establishes the fundamental nature of the action about to be played out - the revenge taken against Balthazar. As such, the scene functions as both exposition (explanation of the play's narrative context) and foreshadowing.

The underworld here is not the Christian hell of the Bible, but the classical Roman underworld governed by Pluto, the god of the dead, and by Proserpine. Proserpine has been allowed to return to earth from the underworld for six months of the year to be with Ceres, her mother and a goddess of nature and agriculture. There is a parallel here with Andrea's situation in that he, too, is allowed to return to the land of the living, albeit solely as a witness to events. The parallel can be seen to go even further when it is remembered that in the myth, Proserpine brought with her the spring, or new life. In Andrea's case, once revenge against Balthazar is complete, his spirit is freed to move on to the next stage of existence - a kind of new life, or perhaps a new kind of death. As a result of the intervention of Proserpine, an embodiment or symbol of the power of transition, Andrea's existence also transitions.

Act 1, Scene 2

Act 1, Scene 2 Summary

The Spanish King, the Duke of Castile, and Hieronimo hear from a General about the progress of Spain's war with Portugal. The General tells them Portugal has been defeated and that appropriate tribute will be paid. After the King and Castile offer prayers of thanksgiving, the General describes in vivid detail how the battle was fought. Don Pedro, the Portuguese general, was a good commander and led his army almost to victory, and Andrea challenged him bravely. Balthazar met Andrea's challenge and killed him. He also tells how Horatio, Hieronimo's son, went after Balthazar in revenge and took him prisoner. After rewarding the General, the King congratulates Hieronimo on the bravery and skill of his son. As Hieronimo thanks him, a trumpet sounds, and the General announces the return of the soldiers.

A procession appears, led by Lorenzo and Horatio holding Balthazar captive. As they pass, the King commands that a reward be given to all the soldiers, and that Lorenzo and Horatio bring Balthazar to him. He then greets Balthazar graciously. Balthazar responds by saying that the recent tension between the two countries has been honorably resolved. The King says that Balthazar will be kept prisoner but treated well, until the payment of tribute is received. Balthazar thanks him, and says he will do his best to deserve the King's graciousness. The King then asks who has control over the prisoner, Lorenzo or Horatio. The two soldiers argue who played the most important role in his capture, the King asks Balthazar what happened, and Balthazar says he surrendered to them both. Hieronimo says Horatio must have been the stronger warrior, but the King says both Horatio and Lorenzo will share the reward for the capture, revealing that Lorenzo is his nephew. Balthazar agrees this is fair, asking only that Horatio act as his companion, saying that he respects him so much as a warrior. The King agrees, and leads everyone out to distribute the rewards and to a celebratory feast.

Act 1, Scene 2 Analysis

There are two notable aspects to this scene. The first is the graphic detail with which the General describes events on the battlefield, with his lines referring specifically to severed limbs, spurting blood, and disemboweled horses. Aside from creating a vivid sense of the brutality and carnage of medieval war and serving as an example of the power of language to create an effective, viscerally affecting picture, this section provides an effective contrast to the second noteworthy element of this scene - the apparent civility with which the war is concluded.

The politeness and graciousness of all parties concerned seems remarkable, particularly the way Balthazar is gracious as captive and the King is gracious as conqueror. It may be, however, that they are speaking in the language of tact and

diplomacy. They are, when all is said and done, royalty, and Balthazar may very well realize that it would do neither him nor his country any good to be angry or upset. The King can afford to be gracious - he is, after all, the winner. The true emotional temperature of this encounter might be more truly read in the words and actions of Hieronimo, who is clearly extremely proud of his son and carried away on the adrenaline rush of that pride. It might also be read in the reactions of Horatio and Lorenzo, a pair of young, impulsive, clearly ambitious warrior/courtiers who both seem to be carrying within them the adrenaline rush of battle. Their eager one-upmanship of each other might also be a motivation for Lorenzo's later involvement in Horatio's death. Their rivalry is clearly defined in this scene, and it may be that in Lorenzo's case, the feelings are so intense that when he sees the opportunity, he eliminates his rival through murder.

In any case, it may be that the King and Balthazar simply have better control over their emotions than the others. It may also be that they are genuinely gracious, or perhaps it doesn't really matter which is the truth. The ultimate point of their courteousness within the context of the play is to establish a point of contrast, of relative peace compared with the emotionally over-wrought action that follows.

Act 1, Scene 3

Act 1, Scene 3 Summary

In the Portuguese court, the Viceroy (king) confirms with two warrior/courtiers, Alexandro and Villuppo, that an ambassador has been sent to Spain with the tribute money. In emotionally extravagant language, he talks at length about how miserable he is at being defeated, at having spent so much money on the war, at his country having lost so many lives, and at Balthazar being seemingly lost to him. Alexandro tells him Balthazar still lives. The Viceroy doesn't believe him, they argue, and Villuppo offers to tell him the truth. The Viceroy promises to reward him, and Villuppo says that in the midst of his efforts to win the day for the Portuguese, Balthazar was shot in the back by Alexandro and killed. Alexandro immediately protests that he's lying, the Viceroy tells him to be quiet. Villuppo says he saw Balthazar's body taken back to the Spanish camp, and the Viceroy angrily challenges Alexandro to explain why he did what he did, accusing him of accepting a bribe. As Alexandro begs to be allowed to speak, the Viceroy commands that he be imprisoned. As Alexandro is taken out, the Viceroy prepares to give Villuppo his reward. In an aside, Villuppo reveals that he did indeed lie, in the hopes of getting just such a reward.

Act 1, Scene 3 Analysis

In this brief but emotionally intense scene, a subplot involving the falseness of a member of the Viceroy's court is introduced. In general, the purpose of a subplot, or secondary plot, is to illuminate the action of the main plot either by repetition or by contrast. This subplot functions primarily on the first level, foreshadowing later betrayals in the main plot. Both the villainous courtier in this plot (Villuppo) and the similarly motivated courtier in the main plot (Lorenzo) act in devious ways that betray the trust of their respective rulers, and both betrayals result in the death, or near death, of innocent people. Most importantly, both betrayals serve as springboards for the development of the play's main theme exploring the nature of justice and how it is served. The theme specifically explores the way that justice ultimately will prevail, in spite of the efforts of the immoral and the weak such as the characters of Villuppo and Lorenzo.

An aside is a theatrical device used to reveal a character's inner emotions or thoughts. It differs from a soliloquy, which is used for the same purposes, in two ways. The first is that an aside is generally shorter, and this is the result of the second difference. An aside is generally spoken when there are other characters on stage, with the convention being that those other characters can't hear what's being said. A soliloquy, on the other hand, is spoken when a character is alone on stage, and can therefore take more time to reveal his inner emotional/psychological state. Another aspect to an aside is that it's often used to reveal a truth about a character's feelings or actions that other characters don't suspect. In that sense it engenders suspense much more than a soliloquy does, since once an aside is spoken there's always the question of whether and/or when the

other character will find out the truth. In this case, the question is whether the Viceroy will find out that Villuppo is lying, and what will happen if he does.

Act 1, Scenes 4 and 5

Act 1, Scenes 4 and 5 Summary

Act 1, Scene 4 - Back in the Spanish court, Bel-Imperia pleads with Horatio to tell her more about the circumstances of Andrea's death, referring poetically to how much she loved him. Protesting that he cared so much about Andrea that telling the story will be painful to him, Horatio eventually talks at length about how well Andrea fought, how vicious Balthazar was. Horatio goes on to tell home he captured Balthazar and insisted upon bringing Andrea's body back for a respectful burial. He gives Bel-Imperia a scarf that Andrea wore. Bel-Imperia says she had bestowed it as a token of her love, and then tells Horatio he can keep it as a token of her respect and gratitude. Horatio thanks her, and then goes out to join Balthazar as, he says, the King ordered him to.

After Horatio has gone, Bel-Imperia speaks in soliloquy about how in spite of her grief she finds herself attracted to Horatio, and resolves to love him so that she'll better be able to take her revenge on Balthazar for killing Andrea.

Lorenzo and Balthazar come in, and after a question from Lorenzo about why Bel-Imperia is walking alone, he tells her Balthazar asked to visit her. Fast paced, pointed dialogue reveals that Balthazar has come to court Bel-Imperia, and that she refuses to have anything to do with him. She starts to leave, dropping a glove as she goes. Horatio, coming back in, picks it up. As he hands it back to her and they talk quietly, Lorenzo assures Balthazar that it won't be long before Bel-Imperia's attitude softens and she accepts his attentions. He says he'll work to change her mind, and suggests that, in the meantime, Balthazar distract himself with sport and partying.

The King comes in, accompanied by the Portuguese Ambassador and members of the Royal Court. The King shows Balthazar to the Ambassador as proof that he is still alive. Balthazar whispers to Bel-Imperia that the only reason he's still alive is that he loves her, and then tells the Ambassador how well he's being treated. The King commands that everyone sit down to enjoy the banquet and wonders where Hieronimo is, saying he promised to provide them with entertainment. Hieronimo then appears, accompanied by three actors whom he presents as great kings and warriors in England. The King accepts the stories of the warriors as representative of his own status as a warrior, drinks a toast to Hieronimo, and leads everyone off to a banquet.

Scene 5 - The Ghost asks Revenge why he's being made to sit through a celebration of the man who killed him. Revenge tells him that from that moment on, the joy of all the characters is going to be transformed into misery.

Act 1, Scenes 4 and 5 Analysis

After the establishment of the subplot in Act 1 Scene 3, the action of the main plot is set in motion in this scene with the first appearance of Bel-Imperia and the introduction of

Balthazar's attraction to her. This attraction, along with the apparent friendliness between Lorenzo and Balthazar, on first glance appears to be somewhat unlikely, but it must be remembered that for most of the characters in the play, their choices are grounded in a desire for advancement, for power and influence and control. This desire manifests throughout the play in lies and manipulation, such as that practiced by Villuppo in the previous scene and here by both Lorenzo and Bel-Imperia. Lorenzo's actions can easily be interpreted as courting favor with Balthazar, who has a high degree of status and influence both in Spain and in his home kingdom. At the same time, in her soliloquy Bel-Imperia reveals her similar desire to use Horatio to take her revenge on Balthazar. The play's ultimate point is that all these manipulations will ultimately come to nothing because justice, one way or another, will be served.

Hieronimo's presentation of the three warriors is less relevant to the story of the play now than it would have been to the audience at the time when it was first presented. British plays at the time *The Spanish Tragedy* was written were presented at the Court, governed at that point by Elizabeth I. This means that Hieronimo's presentation glorifying English warriors was, in that context, intended as adulation of both England and the monarchy. They would have worked particularly well on Elizabeth, who was easily flattered.

The very brief Act 1, Scene 5 primarily functions as an indication that the play's period of exposition is over, and the real drama is about to begin. On another level, because the speaker is characterized as Revenge, it can be understood that the motivating force behind everything that goes on is, in fact, the desire for revenge. In other words, because Revenge is showing the Ghost this story, the reason that the story is being shown has to do with revenge. The point of the play, however, is that the principle of genuine justice is ultimately more powerful than that of revenge.

Act 2, Scenes 1 and 2

Act 2, Scenes 1 and 2 Summary

Scene 1 - This first part of the scene is written in rhyming verse. Lorenzo assures Balthazar that in time, Bel-Imperia will love him. Balthazar lists the reasons why he is to blame for her resistance, instead of her. Lorenzo says he knows a way to make it Bel-Imperia love Balthazar, and summons Bel-Imperia's servant, Pedringano.

The rest of the scene is written in blank, un-rhyming verse. When Pedringano runs in, Lorenzo reminds him of how he saved him from punishment for interfering in the relationship between Bel-Imperia and Andrea, and then tells him he will reward him well if he helps with a particular task. When Pedringano agrees, Lorenzo asks who Bel-Imperia is in love with. When Pedringano says that since Andrea's death he doesn't know Bel-Imperia's mind the way he used to, Lorenzo draws his sword and threatens him. Pedringano confesses that Bel-Imperia is in love with Horatio, saying he's seen the love letters she sent him. Lorenzo warns him he'd better be telling the truth, and Pedringano swears that he is. Lorenzo tells him to keep him posted about everything that goes on between the two lovers, and Pedringano promises he will. After Pedringano goes out, Balthazar expresses his doubts about whether the plan will work, speaking resentfully, and with clever imagery, about his resentment of Horatio and his determination to win Bel-Imperia. Lorenzo goes out with him, saying he'll only be free to love Bel-Imperia once Horatio is out of the picture.

Scene 2 - Pedringano shows Balthazar and Lorenzo to a hiding place where they can observe without being seen. As they watch, Horatio comes on with Bel-Imperia, asking why she still seems upset even though she's admitted her affection for him. Bel-Imperia speaks in poetic language, says that she needs time for her wounded heart to rest. Without the others hearing, Balthazar speaks about how miserable he is seeing the woman he loves courted by another man, but Lorenzo tells him to be patient. As Bel-Imperia and Horatio speak romantically to each other and make plans to marry, Lorenzo and Balthazar interject pointed and increasingly resentful comments that remain unheard. Bel-Imperia and Horatio return to the banquet, and Lorenzo comments that Horatio's soul is soon to be sent to "eternal night." In other words, he's about to die.

Act 2, Scenes 1 and 2 Analysis

The reason for the two different styles of writing in Scene 1 is clear. The first part of the scene, written in rhyme, is essentially romantic, while the second half is concerned with plotting, revenge, and emotions/actions unrelated to love. This latter style of language seems much more aggressive and muscular, coming across as more fitting for what the characters are discussing - violence, betrayal of confidence, and manipulation. Lorenzo in particular is revealed to be a highly ruthless and determined character, although it's not entirely clear what, if anything, he stands to gain by being so violently supportive of

Balthazar's gains. There is the previously discussed possibility that he's currying favor with a future king but because the point is never addressed outright, it remains in the subtext, or unspoken motivation for word and action.

Language is also used to define the character of Balthazar. His long speeches in Scene 1 are filled with indecision as he vacillates back and forth between determination to win Bel-Imperia's love, and doubt that it will be possible, between believing in Lorenzo's plan and doubting it will work. He comes across as weak and easily led, not at all the warrior prince that other people speak of him being. The question at this point is how genuine are Balthazar's feelings? Does he really care, or is he only interested in a political marriage? It seems likely, at this point, that his goal is the latter.

Lorenzo is, by contrast, as steely as the sword he points in Pedringano's face, determined and forceful. The contrast between the two characters is vividly defined, with the result that their relationship is among the most clearly defined in the play. Meanwhile, his reference to Horatio's death foreshadows the killing of Horatio in Act 2 Scene 4.

Language is used to different effect yet again in Scene 2, in which Bel-Imperia and Horatio speak with increasingly poetic intimacy. It is very revealing that Bel-Imperia dominates the scene, both by the length of her speeches and by the fact that it is she who makes the decisions about when and where to marry. The most revealing fact of all is that while Horatio's few lines are almost entirely written in the rhyming romantic verse of Act 2 Scene 1, Bel-Imperia's lines actually contain very little verse. This suggests that in spite of the romantic imagery they contain, she feels less inclined to romance than Horatio, an idea that reinforces the previously discussed suggestion that she's in the relationship more to use him than to love him.

Act 2, Scene 3

Act 2, Scene 3 Summary

The King asks Castile, Bel-Imperia's father, how she feels about being courted by Balthazar. Castile tells him that Bel-Imperia is only pretending not to love him, and that it's only a matter of time before she comes around. The King tells the Portuguese Ambassador to tell the Viceroy that the marriage between Bel-Imperia and Balthazar will cement the new peace between their two countries, and that if they have a son he will be king over both. The Ambassador promises to do so, tells the King that Balthazar has already sent his regards and the ransom has been paid, and then goes out.

The King then tells Castile to convince Bel-Imperia to open her heart to Balthazar, saying if she doesn't she's doing both herself, and her country, a disservice.

Act 2, Scene 3 Analysis

This brief scene reinforces the sense that manipulation is everywhere in this kingdom, defining the motivations and actions of all the characters. It's interesting to note, however, that while it becomes clear what the King is doing and why, it's never made clear whether Balthazar is in on the plan. This raises an interesting sense of doubt in the minds of the audience, increasing the potential for belief that no one, even the apparently hapless Balthazar, can be trusted, and that the result will not be good.

Act 2, Scenes 4, 5 and 6

Act 2, Scenes 4, 5 and 6 Summary

Scene 4 - Pedringano accompanies Horatio, who is again speaking in rhyme, and Bel-Imperia, again speaking in blank verse, as they go for a walk at sunset. Bel-Imperia tells Pedringano to watch the gate and make sure they are not disturbed, but Pedringano, in an aside, reveals that he's going to fetch Lorenzo and goes out. Horatio asks why Bel-Imperia is so nervous, and Bel-Imperia says she can't explain, but simply feels apprehensive. He calms her down, and together they speak in rhyming verse about their love and that they're prepared to die for each other. At that moment Lorenzo, Balthazar, Pedringano, and Lorenzo's servant Serberine come in, all disguised. As Bel-Imperia calls for help, Lorenzo tells Balthazar to grab her. He does, and Lorenzo and the others tie a noose around Horatio's neck, hang him from a nearby tree, and stab him. Bel-Imperia cries for help from Hieronimo, leading Lorenzo and the others to drag her off.

Scene 5 - Hieronimo, dressed in his nightshirt, comes out to investigate the noise. When he first sees Horatio's body he doesn't recognize it, but when he takes the body down he recognizes Horatio's clothes, cries out, speaks in poetic language about the violence done to his son's body, and asks in rhyming verse what Horatio had done to deserve such a death. Isabella comes in, realizes what's happened, and adds her voice to Hieronimo's lament. They recall how happy Horatio was at dinner that night, and that he'd recently been rewarded for his deeds by the King. Hieronimo suddenly talks about the body as being that of a stranger, and asks a servant to run to fetch Horatio. The servant identifies the body as Horatio's, Hieronimo laughs and says the body is someone else's, Isabella tells him it isn't, and Hieronimo tells her he's ashamed of her for thinking their son is dead. He then asks for a light so he can see the murdered man's face, realizes it really is Horatio, and returns to his grief. As Isabella closes Horatio's eyes, Hieronimo finds one of his handkerchiefs, stained with blood. He vows to keep it with him until Horatio's death has been avenged. He urges Isabella to be calm and conceal her grief, so that he'll be better able to conduct his investigation. They carry Horatio's body away, speaking a dirge in Latin as they go.

Scene 6 - The Ghost of Andrea complains again to Revenge about what he's seeing, saying that instead of watching his best friend being slain he should be watching the death of Balthazar. Revenge tells him to be patient, saying that before long he'll see what he wants to see.

Act 2, Scenes 4, 5 and 6 Analysis

The use of rhyming language in this section again provides clues to the emotional states of the characters, revealing Horatio to be as romantic as ever and Bel-Imperia as becoming more romantic as she moves from blank verse to rhyme. It seems she's

falling in love with Horatio in spite of her previously expressed determination to use him. What's intriguing in Scene 5 is the way Hieronimo's language also moves from blank verse to rhyme, but he certainly isn't in a romantic frame of mind when he does it. The suggestion here is that rhymed verse is employed not only when characters are feeling romantic, but when characters are in a high state of any kind of emotion, including grief. The corollary to this is the idea that blank verse is employed when the emotional state of the characters is not only lower, but buried beneath ideas or intellectual concepts, such as the desire for revenge or power or influence, or beneath the plotting necessary to achieve those desires. This is perhaps an explanation of why Lorenzo speaks almost exclusively in blank verse, and why Bel-Imperia goes back and forth between the two. She obviously has ideas and an intellectual perception of what she wants to accomplish, but as previously mentioned discovers that she does in fact have feelings for Horatio.

The same clues to the characters' emotional states can assist in understanding what Hieronimo is going through as he begins his descent into madness. His traumatic discovery in this scene clearly triggers that descent, with the shifting between blank and rhyming verse illustrating its beginnings as he veers violently between intense emotions and trying to cope with the situation calmly and rationally. Particularly noteworthy is how his mad assertion that the body in his arms is NOT that of Horatio is written - in blank, rather than rhyming verse. It's possible to understand from this that he's trying to convince himself that his son isn't dead, make him believe it intellectually as opposed to feeling the gut-wrenching agony he's experiencing emotionally. Rhyme returns again in his comments about the handkerchief and his urgings to Isabella to be quiet, indicating that his quest for justice is more emotionally based than, for example, Lorenzo's plotting, which is almost exclusively written in blank verse.

The mention of the handkerchief, meanwhile, foreshadows the moment late in the play when, after he's taken his revenge, Hieronimo shows it to the King as explanation for why he did what he did. Another piece of foreshadowing occurs in the brief Scene 6, in which Revenge again tells Andrea's ghost to wait patiently for the revenge he so clearly desperately desires.

Act 3, Scene 1

Act 3, Scene 1 Summary

The Viceroy comes in, accompanied by Villuppo and other members of the court. He complains, in blank verse, about how miserable he is following the death of Balthazar. A Courtier comments that he is surprised that Alexandro could be filled with such hate, but Villuppo says it was obvious during the battle that Alexandro's friendship with Andrea was false. The Viceroy tells him to stop talking about it, and orders that Alexandro be brought to him so he can be executed.

Guards bring Alexandro in. He again protests his innocence, but the Viceroy refuses to listen, ordering him to be burned. As Alexandro is tied to the stake, he proclaims that Villuppo will be punished for spreading such lies about him. Villuppo angrily calls him a killer just as the Ambassador rushes in with news that Balthazar is alive, giving the Viceroy letters from him. The Viceroy reads them and orders that Alexandro be released. As Alexandro expresses his gratitude, the Viceroy demands that Villuppo explain himself. Villuppo apologizes, saying he only did it because he wanted to increase his favor with the Viceroy. The Viceroy says he will be executed, and as he's taken off, the Viceroy tells Alexandro that he'll be publicly exonerated. He also makes plans to meet with the King of Spain to discuss peace treaties.

Act 3, Scene 1 Analysis

The essential purpose of this scene, as is the case with the Villuppo subplot in general, is to illuminate and foreshadow events in the main plot involving Balthazar, Lorenzo, Bel-Imperia, and the revenge for the murder of Andrea. The true villain is revealed and the true victim is redeemed in the same way as these events occur at the climax of the main plot at the end of the play. This scene, therefore, marks the climax of the subplot, and also marks the first statement of the play's core theme, that one way or another justice will eventually be served. This is the point made by Revenge in his conversations with Andrea, and dramatized by the action of the main plot.

At the same time, because this scene and subplot can be interpreted as a microcosm of the main plot, Villippo's explanation of why he did what he did can be seen as an explanation for Lorenzo's parallel activities. As previously mentioned, he is after power and influence in the same way. In other words, this entire scene not only tells its own story, but also serves to foreshadow developments in the main story, including the ending of the play. In the same way as death comes as the end for the prime manipulator here, it also comes for the prime manipulators in the main plot. The source of that death is different - here it comes by royal decree, while in the main plot it comes at the hands and manipulations of Hieronimo. The principle and the theme remain the same - justice will be served.

Act 3, Scenes 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7

Act 3, Scenes 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 Summary

Scene 2 - Hieronimo comes in, speaking a lengthy soliloquy rich with emotionally violent imagery of how miserable he is following the murder of Horatio and of his plans for seeking revenge on his killers. He discovers and reads a letter apparently left for him by Bel-Imperia revealing that Horatio was killed by Balthazar and Lorenzo. He tells himself it must be a trap and resolves to pay no attention to it, and then resolves to find out whether the information is true. He sees Pedringano and calls to him.

Pedringano appears, followed by Lorenzo, who reveals that Bel-Imperia has been hidden away by Castile. He tells Hieronimo that any message he has for her can be passed on through him. The implication is that he's eager to know Hieronimo's plans in the wake of Horatio's death. Hieronimo evades his repeated invitations to tell him why he wants to talk to Bel-Imperia, and goes out. Lorenzo, meanwhile, has noticed the letter Hieronimo was holding, and tells Pedringano he believes it was written by Serberine. Pedringano says it couldn't have been, saying he's been with Serberine ever since Horatio was killed. Lorenzo refuses to believe him and plots to kill Serberine, giving Pedringano a bag of gold and promising to arrange for Serberine to be in a certain place at a certain time. Pedringano agrees and goes out. Lorenzo then summons another servant and gives him a message to give to Serberine. The servant runs out, and in soliloquy Lorenzo reveals his plans for soldiers to watch the place where Pedringano and Serberine are to meet so that Pedringano will be arrested and therefore eliminated. He goes on to say it's better for servants to die than to live and perhaps endanger the lives and plans of their masters.

Scene 3 - Pedringano comes in with a pistol, praying in soliloquy for good fortune and reassuring himself that if he's caught, Lorenzo will support and protect him. Soldiers appear, wondering what they're supposed to be watching for and hiding when they see Serberine approach. Serberine comes in, wondering where Lorenzo is. Pedringano shoots him. The Soldiers hear the shot and grab Pedringano, questioning him about why he fired, and planning to take him to see Hieronimo, the marshal. Pedringano is led off, shouting defiantly.

Scene 4 - Conversation between Balthazar and Lorenzo reveals that it's early the following morning, and that Lorenzo is concerned that their plot to kill Horatio has been revealed to Hieronimo. He begins to reveal his plans concerning Pedringano and Serberine, but then his servant rushes in with the news that Serberine has been killed by Pedringano. Balthazar reacts with shock, leading Lorenzo to tell him that Pedringano's actions mean he's dangerous, and must be executed for his crime sooner rather than later. Balthazar goes out, and Lorenzo speaks in soliloquy about how successful his plan is, reveling in the fact that no one will ever know he was behind it. A messenger appears with a letter from Pedringano, revealing that he's in prison and asking for Lorenzo's help. The messenger goes out and Lorenzo calls again for his

servant, instructing him to tell Pedringano that Lorenzo has gotten him a pardon and that it's contained in a box he gives to the servant, a box that Pedringano is to keep closed. The servant goes out, and Lorenzo speaks again in soliloquy about how the success of all his plans depends upon this moment, and about how he must carefully select Pedringano's executioner.

Scene 5 - The servant opens the box, finds it's empty, and speaks in soliloquy about what an ironic joke it is that Pedringano will go to his execution believing he's been pardoned.

Scene 6 - Hieronimo comes in with a deputy, complaining that he must continue to do his job even though he's completely heartsick with grief. Pedringano comes in, accompanied by the servant, guarded by several soldiers, and expressing gladness that he's got a chance to protest his innocence. Hieronimo demands that he confess, and Pedringano admits that he did kill Serberine but then makes a joke about this being the place set for his execution. Hieronimo tells him to be serious, saying he's to be executed. A Hangman appears and prepares to hang Pedringano. As he does so, Pedringano makes several jokes, the Hangman becomes impatient, and Pedringano tells him the box contains his pardon. Hieronimo comments on how awful it is that murderers don't take their crimes seriously and tells the Hangman to hurry and do his job. Pedringano makes a few more jokes, and the Hangman leads him away to his death. The deputy orders that the body be taken down but left unburied, saying such a disgrace is suitable for someone who does the kind of awful things Pedringano did.

Scene 7 - Hieronimo again speaks in poetic soliloquy about the intensity of his grief. The Hangman comes in with a letter he says proves that Pedringano was only acting on the orders of others, and therefore shouldn't have been executed. The Hangman asks that Hieronimo protect him from being executed for executing an innocent man. Hieronimo agrees. The Hangman goes out, and Hieronimo reads the letter. He discovers that Balthazar and Lorenzo were behind Horatio's murder, realizes that the letter he found earlier wasn't a joke after all, and speaks in anguish about his hopes that those who killed his son will be punished. He speaks of his plan to go to the King, tell him everything that has happened, and plead for justice.

Act 3, Scenes 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 Analysis

The most immediately apparent element of this section is Lorenzo's ruthlessness, his determination to succeed in his plans at whatever cost. His complete disregard for human life, for the loyalty of his servants, and for any kind of integrity combine to portray him as exactly the kind of person true justice is meant to punish. There is an increasing sense of suspense here, as the question arises as to when, whether and how he's going to face the consequences of his crimes. At the same time, however, the brief soliloquy by the servant in which he talks about the empty box being a good joke can be seen as an ironic comment on the emptiness of Lorenzo's actions. In the same way as a "joke" is being played on Pedringano, Revenge, the spirit accompanying the Ghost of Andrea,

who watches and motivates the actions of the characters, is playing a joke on Lorenzo. As the story will eventually bear out, Revenge is not nearly as clever as he thinks he is.

The darkness of Lorenzo's actions is heightened by the contrasting attitudes of other characters, particularly Pedringano and Hieronimo. In the case of Pedringano, his loyalty and faith in his master are positive attributes, even though, as a result of that loyalty he ends up killing an innocent man and is killed. There is a clear and defining contrast here with Lorenzo, who has no loyalty to anyone but himself and faith in nothing but his own ambition. An even more clear defining contrast can be seen in Hieronimo, whose deepening grief and sensitivity to the suffering of both his son and Pedringano marks him as a man of compassion, as opposed to Lorenzo who has no compassion whatsoever. The thematically relevant point here is that evil is certainly powerful, and just as certainly difficult to face down. Within the context of the play as a whole, however, the point of establishing such evil is that even someone as dastardly and as clever as Lorenzo will eventually face appropriate justice.

There's a question of logic in Scene 7; when and how did Pedringano have the chance, or the inclination, to write his letter? He clearly has complete faith, even until the end, that he will be pardoned, and therefore in the text itself has no reason to write such a letter. The only possible answer is that it happened offstage, where it couldn't be seen by the audience. It must have gone like this - after the Hangman led him off to be executed, Pedringano opened the box, realized there was no pardon there and that there was no hope for him, pleaded to write the letter, wrote it without showing its contents to the Hangman, and was executed.

Act 3, Scene 8

Act 3, Scene 8 Summary

Isabella considers taking herbal remedies that her Maid has told her will ease her troubled thoughts and calm her tears, but then says there's no medicine for her heart. The Maid tries to calm her, but Isabella imagines herself flying to heaven where she will find Horatio, having become an angel. Her thoughts then return to the men who killed her son, and she runs out in a near-insane search for them.

Act 3, Scene 8 Analysis

The noteworthy element in this brief but intense scene is the imagery of the Christian heaven, a very different kind of imagery from the majority of afterlife imagery in the play which, as has been discussed, is that of classic Roman myth. One possible explanation for this shift in imagery is the nature of Isabella's grief, pure as it is and unconcerned with revenge the way her husband, Hieronimo's, is. Revenge in this context is a much more pre-Christian concept; Christianity being more concerned with redemption and forgiveness.

Act 3, Scenes 9 and 10

Act 3, Scenes 9 and 10 Summary

Scene 9 - Bel-Imperia speaks in soliloquy about her frustration with her brother, Lorenzo, for keeping her prisoner and with Hieronimo for being so slow in taking revenge for Horatio's death. A servant comes, calms her, and leads her out.

Scene 10 - A servant reassures Lorenzo and Balthazar that Pedringano is indeed dead, and Lorenzo issues orders that Bel-Imperia be freed. As the servant goes out, Lorenzo tells Balthazar to be cunning, careful, and jesting when he meets Bel-Imperia. Bel-Imperia then comes in, berating Lorenzo for having her imprisoned and demanding to know why he did it. She interrupts repeatedly as Lorenzo explains that he did what he did to preserve her honor, saying that if the Portuguese Ambassador and the King had seen her alone with Horatio so soon after Andrea's death might have ruined her reputation. He adds that her grief at Andrea's death has reawakened the wrath of Castile, her father, who was angry that she loved Andrea at all. He then tells Bel-Imperia to consider Balthazar, referring to how much he loves her. Balthazar compliments her extravagantly, they banter about who loves whom and why, Bel-Imperia has the last word and goes out, having convinced Balthazar she doesn't love him. Lorenzo resolves to follow her, and he and Balthazar go out, as Balthazar speaks poetically about how wounded he is by her indifference.

Act 3, Scenes 9 and 10 Analysis

Again Lorenzo's ruthlessness comes to the forefront of the action as it becomes clear that he doesn't even have scruples about lying to his sister. His character is becoming darker by the minute, becoming a character that deserves to have justice served on him. In other words, simply by being who he is, Lorenzo is reiterating the play's thematic point that true justice is ultimately served. Meanwhile, his strength of character, albeit his black character, is defined by contrast with the retiring, easily manipulated Balthazar, who seems to be playing no active role in his own life and also seems to be more than willing to go along with whatever Lorenzo decides. Caught in the middle of it all is Bel-Imperia, who clearly has the potential to be as strong-willed as her brother Lorenzo. Because she's a woman in a time when women were not allowed to exercise their will, must submit to the frustrations of being told what to do. She fights back as well as she can y refusing to love Balthazar), but as the action of the play reveals, she is allowed only limited freedom to do so.

Act 3, Scenes 11 and 12

Act 3, Scenes 11 and 12 Summary

Scene 11 - In the company of a pair of visiting Portuguese, Hieronimo muses on the idea of what it is to be a son, and on what a good son Horatio was - never rebelling, loving his parents, and honoring his country. He also muses on his hopes that Horatio's death will ultimately be revenged, and then asks the Portuguese to leave him alone. They ask him to direct them to Lorenzo's home. He talks at poetic length about the way to find Lorenzo is to take the path of a guilty conscience "unto a forest of distrust and fear" and to the "rocky cliffs" of despair and death, where they will find Lorenzo bathing in "boiling lead and the blood of innocents." The Portuguese go out, laughing at him and calling him mad.

Scene 12 - Hieronimo, left alone, imagines himself pleading for justice first before the King, and then before a fiery god of the underworld who will do justice for Horatio's death. For a moment, he considers killing himself, but then realizes that if he does there will be no one left to avenge his son's death. He resolves to approach the King, and then to kill both Balthazar and Lorenzo.

The King comes in with the Ambassador, Castile, and Lorenzo, discussing whether the Viceroy has received the letters he sent. Hieronimo cries out for justice, Lorenzo tries to keep him quiet, and Hieronimo withdraws. The Ambassador tells the King that the Viceroy was glad to receive his letters and overjoyed to hear that Balthazar is alive. He approves of the idea of marriage between Balthazar and Bel-Imperia, and already has plans for uniting the two kingdoms under their rule. He then offers the ransom due to Horatio for Balthazar, and the King issues orders that the ransom be handed directly to Horatio. It is understood at this moment that the King has no knowledge of Horatio's death.

The sound of Horatio's name causes Hieronimo to emerge from his hiding place shouting for justice. Lorenzo tries again to get him to leave, Hieronimo says Lorenzo can not and will not interfere with him, and then, in madness, starts digging in the ground so that Horatio can emerge from his grave and show the King his wounds. The King asks what's wrong with him, and Lorenzo says that Hieronimo has gone mad because he himself covets the ransom. The King sympathetically tells Lorenzo to give it to him. Lorenzo tells him it should be given to someone more sane, but the King insists. He then tells Castile and the Ambassador to join him in discussing the time and place for the wedding between Bel-Imperia and Balthazar. They go off in conversation, leaving Hieronimo alone.

Act 3, Scenes 11 and 12 Analysis

This section is defined by Hieronimo's deepening madness, with his digging for Horatio's body, and his simultaneously revolting and poetic imagery describing Lorenzo's evil marking his most intense moments of insanity so far. There are more such moments to come, as the unavenged murder weighs heavier and heavier on his mind, driving him further and further into lunacy. At this point, however, the dramatic impact of Hieronimo's mental and emotional state is increased by the somewhat unbelievable fact that the King has no idea Horatio is dead, a point made clear by his reference to having the ransom given to him. Questions of how it is possible that he does not know aside, the point here is that pressure on Hieronimo increases with the King's lack of knowledge.

Because Hieronimo is so clearly not in his right mind, any hopes that he has of being believed when he says Horatio is dead, and therefore any hopes he has for justice, are clearly not going to be realized. This sense of futility in his quest develops further as the action of the play continues to unfold, sending Hieronimo even deeper into madness until his final, desperate, murderous act of revenge in the play's climactic scene. His digging with a knife, in fact, foreshadows the moment in the play's climax when he drags forth the unburied and rotting body of Horatio as evidence of Lorenzo's guilt. The irony in this scene, of course, is that the King goes on calmly making plans for the marriage of Balthazar and Bel-Imperia, making plans for the future while the pathetic Hieronimo, whose only future now consists of an ever increasing thirst for revenge, falls deeper into despair and frustration.

Orchestrating all of this is Lorenzo, who is, at this point, thinking two or three steps ahead in every situation and remains completely in control. Aside from defining his villainy even further, this also develops the story's suspense as the idea of seeing Lorenzo eventually get what he deserves becomes more and more appealing, and more and more necessary for the ultimate definition of the play's theme.

Act 3, Scene 13

Act 3, Scene 13 Summary

As he reads from a book, Hieronimo speaks in soliloquy about his right to have revenge for the murder of Horatio, his uncertainty about how to achieve it, and his decision to mask his grief and anger with politeness, good manners, and patience.

Three citizens come in, seeking justice from Hieronimo in his position as marshal (sheriff). The first two present matters relating to property, while the third presents a matter calling for justice in his son's murder. This reminds Hieronimo of what happened to Horatio, and he brings out the bloody handkerchief (Act 2, Scene 5). He speaks again about his grief, hands over his gold and several other possessions to the first two citizens, berates himself for not taking his revenge more quickly, and then calls on the Third Citizen to inspire him to do so. He tears apart the documents presented by the first two citizens, who protest and then chase him off. He eludes them and returns, coming face to face with the Third Citizen, mistaking him for Horatio, telling him to return to the underworld, and saying that he, Hieronimo, will soon follow. When the Citizen says he's not Horatio, Hieronimo first accuses him of being an avenging goddess in disguise. Then he returns to sanity, recognizing the signs of grief in the Citizen's face and inviting him into his home, where they and Isabella will sing a song of grief for their dead children.

Act 3, Scene 13 Analysis

The first part of this scene is a good example of how soliloquy can be used to explore and define a character's thought process. Rather than going further into Hieronimo's emotional state, which he's already done frequently and is about to do again, his first soliloquy in the scene defines his decision making process within the context of that emotional state. In other words, the soliloquy focuses on what he's going to do and how he's going to do it, rather than on how he feels. This last is dealt with quite vividly in the latter part of the scene, in which his conversation with the Third Citizen reveals an even greater depth to his grief and also his increasing dissociation from reality. It's becoming more and more difficult for him to retain a hold of his insanity, an aspect to his character that simultaneously increases suspense and defines the action for the rest of the play.

An appendix to this edition of the play includes a scene added after the play was first produced and published, the authorship of which is disputed. This "addition" is similar in content to the scene with the Citizen, exploring a similar situation (two fathers, two dead sons) but in a different context. In the addition, the second father is a painter and Hieronimo details in poetic language how he wants his grief to be expressed in a portrait.

Act 3, Scenes 14 and 15

Act 3, Scenes 14 and 15 Summary

The King, accompanied by Castile, Bel-Imperia, Lorenzo and Balthazar, greets the Viceroy and his court. As part of his speech of welcome, he announces that Bel-Imperia and Balthazar are to be married the next day, unless the Viceroy disapproves. The Viceroy agrees to the marriage, bestows his crown upon Balthazar, and announces his resolve to withdraw from public life and devote himself to prayer. He, the King, Bel-Imperia, Balthazar and the two courts go out, leaving Castile alone with Lorenzo.

Castile says he's heard rumors that Lorenzo has somehow wronged Hieronimo, and is keeping him from seeing the King. As Lorenzo protests, Castile warns him that Hieronimo is held in very high regard at court, and Lorenzo risks damaging his own reputation if the rumors are true. Lorenzo says he's only kept Hieronimo from the King because he's so unstable, adding that it would be a good thing if the two of them could be reconciled. Castile resolves to make it happen, and sends a servant to fetch Hieronimo.

Bel-Imperia and Balthazar return, with Balthazar speaking about how happy he is that they're marrying. Castile, who is Bel-Imperia's father, asks why she seems so unhappy, saying that her disloyalty in loving Andrea has been forgiven and that she should rejoice in her new and better love. Before Bel-Imperia can respond, the servant returns with Hieronimo, who greets them all in Horatio's name. Castile tells him of the rumors he's heard, and Hieronimo draws his sword, saying angrily he'll fight anyone who says he's unhappy with Lorenzo. This can be understood as an example of Hieronimo's previous decision (Act 3, Scene 13) to behave well in order to assist his plans for revenge.

Castile tells Hieronimo to put away his sword, invites him to his home to make peace, and invites him to embrace Lorenzo. Hieronimo agrees, saying they can easily become friends again. Castile leads the way to his home and everyone goes out - but Hieronimo lingers, speaking in brief soliloquy about how he believes that anyone who shows him more affection than usual betrays him.

Scene 15 - The Ghost of Andrea becomes upset, saying that from what he sees, he believes Hieronimo to be joining forces with Lorenzo. Revenge, who has been asleep, wakes up and reassures him that everything is unfolding as he's planned, saying that as soon as the wedding between Bel-Imperia and Balthazar takes place, justice will be served. The Ghost calms down and thanks Revenge, who tells him he'll get exactly what he wants.

Act 3, Scenes 14 and 15 Analysis

Scene 14 serves, essentially, to raise the stakes for Hieronimo, increasing the pressure on him to take action sooner rather than later. The wedding of Bel-Imperia and

Balthazar, the potential union between Portugal and Spain, and Lorenzo's sly reassurances to Castile all create the sense that the political and social world, reshaped by the murder of Horatio, is going on exactly as Lorenzo planned. It's becoming more and more difficult for Hieronimo to get the kind of revenge he wants. As Lorenzo is increasing in influence, through the wedding of Bel-Imperia and Balthazar, so Hieronimo's influence is decreasing, along with the likelihood of anyone paying attention to him or his complaints. It's interesting to note, however, that at this point, Hieronimo's capacity for manipulation kicks in. Insane or not, he's still got enough of his wits about him to pretend to the King and to Castile that everything's fine. There is the suggestion here that he's setting a plan in motion, a suggestion that increases the play's level of suspense and sets the stage for the intrigue and climaxes in Act 4.

In Scene 15 it becomes clear that for some reason the Ghost of Andrea doesn't seem to understand what Hieronimo is planning. Revenge, however, knows exactly what's going on, something else that suggests Hieronimo has a plan in the works - a plan that includes the spirit of Revenge. It could be argued that Revenge hasn't been sleeping at all, but has instead been waiting for the right moment. That moment is about to come.

Act 4, Scene 1

Act 4, Scene 1 Summary

Bel-Imperia berates Hieronimo for being so slow in taking revenge. She accuses him of not loving his son, says she's only marrying Balthazar out of duty, and adds that if she had her way she'd be ending the lives of Horatio's killers herself. Hieronimo realizes the letter he found earlier which he thought was a trap (Act 3 Scene 2) was actually a truth, begs Bel-Imperia's pardon, and asks for her help in planning his revenge. Bel-Imperia gives him her support, but before he can explain his plan, Balthazar and Lorenzo approach. After an exchange of greetings, they ask for Hieronimo's help in creating an entertainment for the Viceroy. Hieronimo says that when he was a student he wrote a play, rediscovered it recently, and had hopes of getting Balthazar, Lorenzo, and Bel-Imperia to act in it before the King. He comments that this is the perfect opportunity, the other three agree, he outlines the story (love betrayed and avenged), and says he'll play a key role - a vengeful king who hangs himself at the end of the play. As he hands out the parts and describes the costume, Balthazar suggests a comedy might have been a better choice. Hieronimo says a tragedy is more suited to a high-born audience like the King and the Viceroy, and Lorenzo agrees. After agreeing that they'll find their own costumes, Lorenzo, Balthazar and Bel-Imperia go out. Once they're gone Hieronimo speaks in brief soliloquy how his plan will bring about his revenge.

Act 4, Scene 1 Analysis

The first thing to note about this scene is Bel-Imperia's admission that she knows she's marrying the man who killed the man she loved. It can be understood from the conversations between the King, Castile and the Viceroy that the marriage is taking place for political rather than romantic reasons, which means that it can be understood here that Bel-Imperia also understands this. This is one of the reasons she's desperate for Hieronimo to help her out of this situation - she's a woman in a man's world and can't do it herself. The main reason, of course, is that she believes it is Hieronimo's responsibility as the father of a murdered man.

The main component of this scene, however, is the groundwork it lays for the play's upcoming climax. After such a long period of slowly simmering suspense, there is the sense here that the action is kicking into higher gear, building towards the final, revengeful confrontation between Hieronimo and Lorenzo. Hieronimo's appearance with the play might seem a little convenient, but can be rationalized if it's understood that presenting the play has been his plan for some time, and that the conversation in this scene is merely his chance to present that plan. That being said, in spite of his previously obvious insanity, he's still in enough control of himself that he's able to mask his true feelings about Lorenzo and Balthazar, and also able to realize his mistake about Bel-Imperia. His insanity is clearly not complete, but is just as clearly not far off.

The play that Hieronimo outlines has obvious parallels to *The Spanish Tragedy*, which raises the question of whether any of the other characters recognize them. Balthazar seems to be too unintelligent, and Lorenzo seems too self-satisfied, for anything other than what's immediately before them to be apparent. Bel-Imperia, however, because she knows of Hieronimo's intent towards revenge, probably does sense that something is going on, but just as probably doesn't know exactly what. A director of a stage production might, in fact, stage her with a knowing glance at Hieronimo to indicate that she realizes what he is up to. In any case, the overall sense of this scene is that the action is definitely moving forward.

Act 4, Scenes 2 and 3

Act 4, Scenes 2 and 3 Summary

Scene 2 - Isabella comes in, speaking in soliloquy about her hatred for the tree from which Horatio hung himself and the garden in which the tree grew. She takes out a knife and starts cutting down the plants as she continues her soliloquy, referring to how she seems to be the only one taking any kind of revenge for Horatio's death. Finally, she uses the knife to kill herself, saying that in the same way as the tree will now die, the breast with which she nursed her son is also dead.

Scene 3 - As Hieronimo sets the stage for the performance of his play, Castile comes in to see how things are going. Hieronimo says they're going well, gives him a copy of the script so he and the King can follow along, and then asks that Castile throw him the key to the King's box seats once they're settled. Castile agrees, and goes out. After a brief conversation with Balthazar about a cushion for the King, Hieronimo speaks in soliloquy about how knowledge of Isabella's suicide is spurring him even more powerfully than the death of Horatio to take his revenge.

Act 4, Scenes 2 and 3 Analysis

In the brief but very intense Scene 2, the depth of Isabella's grief is explored in a poetic soliloquy that has a resonance beyond a straightforward exploration of a character's emotional or intellectual process. Her assault on her garden is a symbol of how murder is itself an assault on nature. The killing of one human being by another goes against the natural order in the same way as Isabella's destruction of her once-beloved garden goes against her natural order. This idea, that violence of human beings is unnatural, is reinforced in the scene's final moments in which Isabella kills herself - another unnatural act. There is, of course, irony in the speech's central section, in that Hieronimo is actually doing a great deal to avenge Horatio. Isabella simply doesn't know about it, and herein lies the play's true tragedy, that an innocent grieving woman ends her life because her husband didn't tell her his plans.

In the equally brief Scene 3, Hieronimo puts the last piece of his plan into place with his request to Castile for the key, and then in soliloquy reveals his determination for revenge is even stronger now that two lives have been lost. The sense of suspense that arises as the result of this scene is quite strong, propelling the action effectively into the following climactic scene.

Act 4, Scenes 4 and 5

Act 4, Scenes 4 and 5 Summary

Scene 4 - The King, the Viceroy, Castile, and their various courts take their places for the play. As Castile tosses Hieronimo the key to their box, the King passes around Hieronimo's book, and the play begins with a love scene between the characters played by Balthazar and Bel-Imperia. The Viceroy, the King and Castile comment that the scene was so passionately played because of the feelings Balthazar and Bel-Imperia have for each other. The next scene is a dialogue between the characters played by Lorenzo and Balthazar, in which they proclaim their mutual love for the character played by Bel-Imperia but insist that their loyalty and friendship for each other will prevent any tension or difficulty. Hieronimo, playing the part of a king, insists that if Lorenzo's character is a rival, he should be eliminated and then stabs him. Bel-Imperia's character proclaims her grief, Balthazar's character expresses his desire to comfort her, Bel-Imperia's character stabs him in fury, and then stabs herself in grief. The Viceroy and King comment on how realistic the acting was, and ask what's next for Hieronimo's character.

Hieronimo steps out of the play, explains that what's happened wasn't an imaginary story, shows the decayed body of Horatio, explains that Balthazar and Lorenzo plotted to kill him and did, and asks whether the Viceroy grieves the same way for Balthazar, his dead son, as he did for Horatio. He then shows Horatio's handkerchief, explains that he set up the play as a means of taking his revenge and determined that Bel-Imperia should die as well out of sensitivity to her grief. He pronounces an end to both the play and his revenge and runs out to hang himself. The King, the Viceroy and Castile shout for the door to their box to be broken down, and it becomes possible to understand at this point why Hieronimo asked Castile for the key - to prevent them interrupting the action as the characters were being stabbed.

The King, the Viceroy and Castile rush down into the playing area, grab Hieronimo before he can climb into the noose, and demand to know why he did what he did. Hieronimo says again that Lorenzo and Balthazar conspired to kill Horatio. Castile asks who helped him accomplish his revenge and Hieronimo says nothing, presumably to protect the reputation of Bel-Imperia. The King asks why he doesn't speak, and Hieronimo says he'll say no more, and bites out his own tongue. The King reacts with horror and disgust, but Castile reminds him that Hieronimo can still write. Hieronimo gestures for a knife so he can prepare a quill pen, a knife is brought, and Hieronimo uses it to stab both himself and Castile, who is presumably being punished for fathering a monster like Lorenzo.

As Castile dies, the King mourns the loss of all possibility for heirs to his kingdom. Meanwhile, the Viceroy mourns the death of Balthazar and commands that the body be taken back to Portugal, saying there's no place for any Portuguese in Spain. In effect,

he's saying that the truce between the two countries is ended. The bodies are removed in procession, with the King and the Viceroy walking solemnly behind.

Scene 5 - The Ghost of Andrea comments that his desires have been realized. He lists the ways the other characters died, refers to the places of peace in the underworld to which he'll lead Horatio, Bel-Imperia, Isabella and Hieronimo, and the tortures to which he'll lead Lorenzo, Balthazar, Pedringano and Serberine. Revenge, speaking in rhyming verse, says that it is time to go and lead both friends and foes to their deserved ends.

Act 4, Scenes 4 and 5 Analysis

This scene contains the play's climax, the high point of both its dramatic action and thematic statement. In terms of the latter, justice is finally served as the guilty, Lorenzo and Balthazar, are punished for their crimes. It could be argued that Bel-Imperia also meets her rightful end, because she has been so rapidly unfaithful to the memory of her apparently much-beloved Andrea by loving Horatio. Hieronimo even performs justice on himself, ending his own life in retribution for ending the lives of others. In this sequence of deaths, the play's thematic point about the inevitability of justice is made fully and graphically.

That being said, the events that get them there are ironic to the point of being humorous - the obvious parallels between Hieronimo's play and the *Spanish Tragedy*, the fact that none of the "actors" (Lorenzo, Balthazar and even Bel-Imperia) seem to realize they exist, and the comments by the watchers. Meanwhile, Hieronimo's act of biting out his tongue is typical of the gruesome kind of bodily mutilations common in British theatre at the time. Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*, written within a couple of years of this play, was filled with similar acts - the cutting out of the heroine's tongue and the severing of her hands among them. Early Elizabethan audiences were a bloodthirsty crowd.

Scene 5 can be seen as an Epilogue in the same way as Scene 1 can be seen as a Prologue. Another parallel between the two scenes can be found in Scene 5's detailed list of the fates of the characters, both good and bad - specifically, the areas in the Underworld to which the Ghost and Revenge will conduct them. There are references throughout to both peaceful communities and the tortures of the underworld, as well as its restful fields and flaming pits. The play's thematic point is made one last time in another aspect here - the "good souls" go to the good places, while the "bad souls" go to the bad places. Ultimately, the play is saying, everyone gets what they deserve.

Characters

Alexandro

Alexandro is a noble in the Portuguese court. He is falsely accused by Villuppo of accidentally causing the death of Balthazar in battle. He is condemned to death by the viceroy, but the truth eventually comes out, and Alexandro is released.

Ambassador of Portugal

The ambassador of Portugal acts as a liaison between the courts of Spain and Portugal.

Balthazar

Balthazar, the prince of Portugal, kills Don Andrea in battle, and thus becomes the object of the desire for revenge exhibited by Andrea's ghost. Balthazar falls in love with Bel-Imperia, angering the ghost still further, since Andrea was Bel-Imperia's lover. Balthazar is frustrated by Bel-Imperia's lack of affection for him, and he participates in the murder of Horatio, whom Bel-Imperia loves, in order to remove his rival. In the play-within-the-play, Balthazar plays the role of Soliman, the sultan of Turkey. He is stabbed to death by Bel-Imperia.

Bel-Imperia

Bel-Imperia is the daughter of Don Ciprian, the duke of Castile, and the brother of Lorenzo. She was Don Andrea's lover before he was killed in battle by Balthazar. After Andrea's death, Bel-Imperia falls in love with Horatio. She hates Balthazar, since he was the cause of her lover's death. Bel-Imperia writes a letter to Hieronimo, informing him of who killed Horatio, and she expects him to carry out his revenge against the murderers. In the play-within-the-play, Bel-Imperia plays Perseda. She kills the character Soliman, played by Balthazar, and then stabs herself to death, even though her suicide is not called for in the role she is playing.

Christophill

Christophill is Lorenzo's servant.

Don Ciprian

Don Ciprian, duke of Castile, is the brother of the king of Spain, and father of Lorenzo and Bel-Imperia. He plays little part in the main action, although he does rebuke

Lorenzo for thwarting Hieronimo's access to the king. Don Ciprian then effects what he believes to be a reconciliation between the two. Although the duke is innocent of any involvement in the death of Horatio, Hieronimo kills him after the play-within-the-play is over.

Duke of Castile

See Don Ciprian

Ghost of Don Andrea

Andrea was a Spanish courtier who was in love with Bel-Imperia. He was killed in battle by Balthazar, and his ghost now demands revenge against Balthazar. The ghost and the personified figure of Revenge emerge from the underworld and watch all the events of the play unfold at the Spanish court.

Hieronimo

Hieronimo is the knight marshal of Spain and the father of Horatio. Filled with grief at Horatio's murder, Heironimo vows to take revenge on his son's killers. But before he acts, he wants to make sure he knows for certain the identities of the guilty men. He does not take Bel-Imperia's word for it when she writes him a letter telling him what happened. Hieronimo decides to watch and wait, and not to betray his suspicions to anyone. He is finally convinced of the guilt of Lorenzo and Balthazar when an incriminating letter is found on the body of the hanged Pedringano. But still Hieronimo is frustrated; he cannot understand why heaven does not hear his call for justice and vengeance. He goes almost mad with grief, and contemplates, but ultimately rejects, suicide. Hieronimo goes to the king demanding justice, but Lorenzo interrupts him before he can explain himself. Finally, Hieronimo devises a form of revenge by means of a performance of a tragic play he wrote when he was young. He ensures that the two guilty men play characters who are killed. During the course of the play, Hieronimo really kills Lorenzo and ensures that Balthazar is killed by Bel-Imperia. When the play ends, Hieronimo brings out the dead body of Horatio and explains himself to the shocked audience. He tries to hang himself, then bites out his tongue rather than divulge the full story to the king. He stabs the duke of Castile and then stabs himself.

Don Horatio

Don Horatio is the son of Hieronimo and a friend of Andrea's. Horatio defeats Balthazar in single combat during the battle between the Spanish and Portuguese armies. He then takes the place of the dead Andrea in Bel-Imperia's affections. Horatio is killed by Lorenzo and Balthazar because he is an obstacle to the marriage between Balthazar and Bel-Imperia.

Isabella

Isabella is Hieronimo's wife. Grief-stricken over the murder of her son Horatio, and the delay in exacting revenge against his killer, she eventually goes mad and commits suicide.

King of Spain

The king of Spain is an honorable man. Although he celebrates the Spanish victory over Portugal, he does not behave vindictively towards the defeated foe. He treats Balthazar, the captured prince, generously, and welcomes Balthazar's proposed marriage to Bel-Imperia, since this will cement an alliance between Spain and Portugal.

Lorenzo

Lorenzo is the son of the duke of Castile, and Bel-Imperia's brother. He is an evil, scheming character who will stop at nothing to ensure that Bel-Imperia elevates her status by marrying Balthazar. He plans and takes part in the murder of Horatio, and then arranges for two of his accomplices, Pedringano and Serberine, to be killed. Lorenzo plays the character of Erastus in the play-within-the-play. He is killed by Hieronimo.

Pedringano

Pedringano is a servant of Bel-Imperia. Lorenzo uses him to advance his scheme against Horatio, and also persuades him to kill Serberine. Pedringano is then arrested, and Lorenzo buys his silence by promising him a pardon. But Lorenzo double-crosses him, and Pedringano is hanged.

Don Pedro

Don Pedro is the brother of the viceroy of Portugal.

Revenge

Revenge is the personified abstraction of the desire of Don Andrea to be revenged on Balthazar. When Don Andrea's ghost becomes frustrated at the events he witnesses, which do not seem to be leading in the direction he wants, Revenge promises him that revenge will come; all the ghost must do is wait.

Serberine

Serberine is a servant of Balthazar who is killed by Pedringano on the instructions of Lorenzo.

Viceroy of Portugal

The viceroy of Portugal is deceived by Villuppo into believing that his son Balthazar was killed in battle. When he finds out that he has been deceived, the viceroy condemns Villuppo to death. The viceroy mends relations with Spain by agreeing to pay tribute. He also consents to the proposed marriage between Balthazar and Bel-Imperia. The viceroy is a spectator at the play during which his son is killed.

Villuppo

Villuppo is a Portuguese nobleman who gives the Viceroy false information about the fate of Balthazar. He insists that the Prince was killed in battle, even though he knows this is not true. When his lie is discovered, Villuppo is put to death.

Themes

The single theme of the play is revenge. The theme appears in many different aspects of the plot, with varying degrees of moral justification. It is introduced at the very beginning, when the ghost of Andrea wants revenge on Balthazar for having killed him in battle, although there is nothing the ghost can directly do to bring it about.

The next character who wants revenge is Bel-Imperia, whose desired victim is also Balthazar, since he killed her lover, Andrea. Initially, she plans to use Horatio as her means of vengeance, and when Horatio is murdered, she has a double motive for revenge.

The third example of the desire for revenge is Balthazar, who wants revenge on Horatio for taking him prisoner in battle and being an obstacle to Balthazar's attempt to win Bel-Imperia.

The last and most important example of the revenge theme is Hieronimo, who seeks revenge for the slaying of his son, Horatio. Hieronimo's wife, Isabella, shares his desire.

Even though Horatio's murder does not occur until late in the second act, Hieronimo's revenge is the main focus of the play, as it is he who has suffered the greatest wrong. It might be argued, for example, that Andrea has little cause to seek revenge on Balthazar, since they met on the battlefield in a fair fight. But Hieronimo has what anyone might regard as just cause. Also, the audience has witnessed the murder of Horatio directly□in contrast, the audience has only been told about the death of Andrea□which gives this aspect of the plot more emotional force.

Once the revenge plot is in place, the question becomes how it is to take place. Whose responsibility is it to exact revenge? Hieronimo's first thought is that he will do it himself. But Isabella introduces the idea that "the heavens are just" and that time will bring the villains to light, and, presumably, to punishment.

Not long after this, in act 3, scene 2, Hieronimo, frustrated at not knowing the identity of the murderer, severely questions the notion of cosmic justice. In lines 9—11, he appeals directly to the "sacred heavens," saying that if the murder

Shall unrevealed and unrevengéd pass,

How should we term your dealings to be just,

If you unjustly deal with those that in your justice trust?

Immediately after this appeal, Hieronimo finds the letter from Bel-Imperia, informing him that the murderers are Balthazar and Lorenzo□which suggests that the wheels of cosmic justice are in fact responsive to his plight. However, Hieronimo is beginning to believe that he must carry out the vengeance himself. But he is very concerned about the idea of justice. He does not want to strike until he is certain of the guilt of those

whom he suspects. When Hieronimo finally comes upon incontrovertible proof of the identity of the murderers, he thanks heaven because he believes it is the gods who have refused to let the murder go unpunished.

Still concerned with justice and how to execute it, Hieronimo resolves to take his case to the king and seek secular justice. It is only the intervention of Lorenzo that stops him explaining the whole story to the king. With the failure of this strategy, and after briefly considering the Christian idea that revenge should be left to God, Hieronimo decides to take vengeance into his own hands. Even then, he believes that his solution to the problem is in fact "wrought by the heavens." Most modern readers feel that Hieronimo goes too far, since he also kills the duke of Castile. The duke is innocent of any wrongdoing; he is killed simply because he is Lorenzo's father.

This excess on the part of Hieronimo makes it difficult to argue that he is merely the agent of divine justice. It appears that he has stepped over the line that divides a just avenger from a murderer and a villain. His final actions also suggest that any human attempt to enact justice is fraught with danger and prone to error. An example of the fallibility of human justice occurs in the trial and execution of Pedringano. Pedringano may deserves his fate, but the legal process he goes through fails entirely to establish the fact that he was acting on the orders of Lorenzo, who, at least in this instance, escapes punishment.

Style

Dramatic Irony

The play consistently employs dramatic irony, a situation in which one or more characters acts without full knowledge of the facts, but those facts are known by the audience. For example, in act 1, scene 3, the viceroy of Portugal mourns the son he believes to be dead, but the audience knows Balthazar is alive. In act 2, scene 2, when Bel-Imperia and Horatio declare their love for each other, the audience knows that a plot is already in motion to destroy their love. Indeed, in that same scene Lorenzo and Balthazar, unseen watchers, state explicitly what awaits the two lovers. The audience is also aware that after Pedringano has murdered Serberine, the pardon Pedrigano so confidently expects, and on which he bases his words and actions, does not exist.

There is also a dramatic irony that frames the entire play, since on several occasions, the figure of Revenge tells the ghost of Andrea what the outcome will be. The audience is not allowed to forget this, since those two characters remain on stage throughout the play. The effect of this dramatic irony is to show that, even while the characters are plotting to avoid or hasten certain events, their fate is already determined, though unknown to them. The characters may think they are in control of their situation, as Lorenzo and Balthazar do, but they cannot escape the destiny that is marked out for them.

Stichomythia

The play frequently employs a rhetorical device known as stichomythia, which Kyd derived from Seneca, the Roman writer of tragedies. Stichomythia is a quick-fire dialogue between two or more characters, in which each character gives a one-line response. The responses often echo the words of the previous line. An example occurs in act 2, scene 3, lines 24—30 in the dialogue between Bel-Imperia, Balthazar and Horatio:

BEL-IMPERIA: Why stands Horatio speechless all this while?

HORATIO: The less I speak, the more I meditate.

BEL-IMPERIA: But whereon dost thou chiefly meditate?

HORATIO: On dangers past, and pleasures to ensue.

BALTHAZAR: On pleasures past, and dangers to ensue.

BEL-IMPERIA: What dangers and what pleasures dost thou mean?

HORATIO: Dangers of war and pleasures of our love.

Anaphora

Another frequent device is anaphora, the repetition of a word or words at the beginning of each line of verse, as in Lorenzo's speech in act 2, scene 1:

'In time the savage bull sustains the yoke,

In time all haggard hawks will stoop to lure,

In time small wedges cleave the hardest oak,

In time the flint is pierced with softest shower□'

Alliteration

Alliteration, the repetition of initial consonants, is another frequently used device. It occurs, for example, in Hieronimo's speech at the beginning of act 3, scene 7, where he questions where he can run to with his woes, "woes whose weight hath wearied the earth?" The blustering winds, he continues, have "Made mountains marsh with spring-tides of my tears, / And broken through the brazen gates of hell."

Historical Context

After Kyd had shown the way with *The Spanish Tragedy*, the revenge play became extremely popular on the Elizabethan stage. John Marston's *Antonio's Revenge*, Christopher Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta*, and Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* and *Hamlet* are some of the most outstanding plays of this type.

The revenge play was adapted from the work of the Roman playwright Seneca (4 b.c. to a.d. 65). Seneca wrote nine tragedies, based on Greek models, but his plays were meant to be recited rather than performed on a stage. They consisted mainly of long speeches, and action was described rather than presented directly. Seneca's theme was revenge and retribution, and his subject matter was lurid; his plays feature crimes such as murder, incest, and adultery, and there is much blood, mutilation, and carnage. Ghosts appear frequently, and the plays end in a horrible catastrophe. Seneca emphasized that man was helpless to avert his tragic fate, but if he could meet it with stoic resolve he would in a sense remain undefeated.

Seneca's plays held great appeal all across Renaissance Europe. In England, the first original English tragedy based on Seneca's model was *Gorboduc*, by Thomas Sackville and Thomas Norton, which was first performed in 1562. During the 1560s, many translations of Seneca's plays, and original plays based on Seneca, were written by university playwrights. Another Senecan revival occurred during the 1580s, in the work not only of Kyd but also of George Peele.

The Senecan basis of *The Spanish Tragedy* can be seen in Kyd's theme of murder and revenge, the presence of a ghost, and a bloody trail of events. At one point, Hieronimo even carries a copy of Seneca's play *Agamemnon* in his hand and quotes from it. But Kyd and his contemporaries made one important change to the Senecan tradition. In *The Spanish Tragedy*, typical Senecan horrors (the hanging and stabbing of Horatio, and Hieronimo's self-mutilation, for example) are shown directly on stage rather than being merely reported by a messenger. This appeared to satisfy the more crude instincts of an Elizabethan audience that regularly enjoyed such violent spectacles as public hangings and whippings, bear-baiting and the like. It also made for an exciting, action-packed spectacle.

The Elizabethan enthusiasm for revenge plays was for the most part a dramatic interest only. Although in these types of plays, revenge is presented as an honorable, even sacred duty (Hamlet, for example, never doubts his duty to avenge his murdered father), Elizabethan society did not sanction acts of private revenge. A murder committed to avenge the murder of a close relative was treated no differently in Elizabethan law than any other murder. The punishment for an avenger was the same as for the original murderer.

However, despite the insistence by the authorities, secular as well as religious, on the rule of law, family feuds did take place in Elizabethan England, and almost always took the form of the duel. There were other instances as well in which revenge, although

officially condemned, might be countenanced. If a known murderer could not be brought to justice because of lack of evidence that could be presented in court, or if a man's high position in society enabled him to put himself above the law, the average Elizabethan might have had some sympathy and tolerance for an act of private revenge.

Critical Overview

The Spanish Tragedy was extremely popular during the last decade of the sixteenth century and was performed well into the seventeenth century. It was also successful as a printed book, with six editions printed between 1602 and 1633. According to Thomas W. Ross, in his edition of the play, it was "the most prodigious success of any drama produced and printed between 1580 and 1642," dates that would include all of Shakespeare's works. Translations of the play were performed in Europe; a performance was recorded in Frankfurt in 1601. The play was so well known in England that certain passages, such as Hieronimo's extravagant expressions of grief and Andrea's speech in the prologue, were subject to many parodies by other playwrights, who must have known that their audiences would recognize the allusions to the earlier play.

However, *The Spanish Tragedy* has not been performed by professional companies since 1642, and was largely forgotten until historians of drama discovered its importance in the early twentieth century. They realized that the play was a seminal work that revealed much about the development of tragedy, and especially revenge tragedy, in Elizabethan England.

Modern scholars have claimed that *The Spanish Tragedy* has more than mere historical interest. J. R. Mulryne, in his introduction to the New Mermaid edition of the play, notes that it is "remarkable for the astonishingly deft and complete way in which Kyd has transmuted his theme into drama, by way of the intricate tactics of his play's structure." Mulryne claimed that a professional production would show that the play "deserve[s] its place as one of the first important English tragedies." Philip Edwards, in *Thomas Kyd and Early Elizabethan Tragedy*, declared that in conception, although not in execution, *The Spanish Tragedy* was "more original, and greater, than [Shakespeare's] *Richard III*. It is one of those rare works in which a minor writer, in a strange inspiration, shapes the future by producing something quite new."

Criticism

- Critical Essay #1
- Critical Essay #2

Critical Essay #1

Aubrey holds a Ph.D. in English and has published many articles on sixteenth-century literature. In this essay, Aubrey discusses the parallels between The Spanish Tragedy *and Shakespeare's* Hamlet*.*

The short life of Thomas Kyd is shrouded in obscurity, and *The Spanish Tragedy* is one of the very few works that can be confidently ascribed to his pen. Many scholars believe that Kyd also wrote a play called *Hamlet*, and they speculate that probably about a decade later William Shakespeare drew on Kyd's play, which they refer to as the "Ur-Hamlet," for his version of the famous revenge drama. Unfortunately, as of 2004, no trace of an "Ur-Hamlet" by Kyd has been disovered, so the matter has not been resolved beyond any doubt. However, the link between Kyd and Shakespeare does not entirely depend on the tantalizing idea that Kyd wrote a version of *Hamlet*, since *The Spanish Tragedy* also offers some striking parallels with Shakespeare's great tragedy. In both plays, as Fredson Thayer Bowers points out in *Elizabethan Revenge Tragedy, 1587—1642*, "the theme is of the problems of life and death and of the mystery of a soul in torment." In addition to murder and revenge, both plays employ ghosts, madness, the hesitation of the hero, and a play-within-a-play as dramatic devices.

Shakespeare often puts these devices to more subtle or more effective dramatic use than his predecessor. An example is in the employment of the anguished voices from beyond the grave. In both plays, a ghost appears in the first scene, his purpose being to demand vengeance for his untimely death. The ghost of Hamlet's murdered father, however, is more integrated into the dramatic action than Kyd's Don Andrea. Whereas Don Andrea is a mere uncomprehending spectator, given to complaining to Revenge but taking no direct part in the action, the ghost in *Hamlet* is a more active presence. Not only does he appeal directly to Hamlet to carry out his vengeance, he also reappears at a vital moment later in the play (during Hamlet's confrontation with Gertrude in act 3, scene 4) to remind Hamlet of his task. In other words, Shakespeare replaces Kyd's static ghost with one who serves as a goad to action on the part of the protagonist.

One difference between the two plays is that in *Hamlet*, the murder that is to be revenged has already taken place when the play begins. While it is true that in *The Spanish Tragedy*, Don Andrea has already been killed when the play begins, his desire for revenge, even though it is presented in the very first scene, is essentially peripheral to the main plot, and the play could function perfectly well without it. The principal revenge theme is introduced only near the end of act 2, with the murder of Horatio, since Kyd first has to spend time developing the enmity for Horatio on the part of Lorenzo and Balthazar that leads to the murder. Once the murder has taken place, the parallel between Hieronimo and Hamlet becomes clear, since both seek to avenge the murder of a close relative. And in doing so, they both hesitate.

The hesitation of the hero and his delay in carrying out his revenge was a staple of the Elizabethan revenge play, and it was Kyd who set the pattern in *The Spanish Tragedy*.

When Hieronimo finds Bel-Imperia's letter saying that Lorenzo and Balthazar are guilty of Horatio's murder, he is not convinced. Fearing the letter may be a trap, he resolves to investigate further: "I therefore will by circumstances try / What I can gather to confirm this writ." Hieronimo here resembles Hamlet; Hamlet also, to justify his delay, convinces himself that the source of his information about the murder□the ghost of his father□may be unreliable, a devil sent to deceive him in order to damn his soul. He therefore resolves, like Hieronimo, to gather more reliable evidence. In this speech he is already reproaching himself for his inaction, wondering why, even though he has good cause, he "Must like a whore unpack my heart with words / And fall a-cursing like a very drab." Hamlet sounds very much like Hieronimo, who still does not act, even when further evidence comes. Instead, he spends his time questioning and debating and feeling guilty about it: "But wherefore waste I mine unfruitful words, / When naught but blood will satisfy my woes?"

There are two more striking parallels between Hamlet and Hieronimo. In the speech quoted above, Hamlet reacts to the words recited by the First Player, who has tears in his eyes as he relates the grief of Hecuba at the sight of her murdered husband, Priam. Hamlet contrasts the grief shown by the actor, about a long-ago event that can mean nothing to him personally, to his own muted response to his father's murder, which should in truth be far greater than that shown by a mere actor. This incident echoes a plot device used by Kyd in *The Spanish Tragedy*, when another character acts as a foil to show Hieronimo the inadequacy of his own response to his situation. The incident comes in act 3, scene 13, when Hieronimo encounters an old man, Bazulto, who is petitioning the king for justice for his murdered son. Observing Bazulto, Hieronimo feels ashamed of his own reaction. In similar fashion to Hamlet, Heironimo reasons that if someone from the lower class of society can mourn and seek redress in the determined way that Bazulto does, how much more effectively should he, Hieronimo, the Grand Marshal of Spain, react? He says, "Then sham'st thou not Hieronimo, to neglect / The sweet revenge of thy Horatio?"

The second striking parallel between the two characters occurs when, in each play, the murdered man returns, or appears to return, to remind the revenger of his purpose. In *The Spanish Tragedy*, this occurs later on in the scene mentioned above. Hieronimo is so maddened by his grief that he mistakes Bazulto for the dead Horatio:

And art thou come, Horatio, from the depth,

To ask for justice in this upper earth?

To tell thy father thou are unreveng'd,

To wring more tears from Isabella's eyes,

Whose lights are dimmed with over-long laments?

So too in *Hamlet*, act 3, scene 4, the ghost of Hamlet's father returns to rebuke his son for failing to carry out his promise of revenge.

Both Hieronimo and Hamlet soliloquize extensively, in speeches that probe their difficult situation and their reaction to it, and explore questions of justice and revenge, life and death. Both characters at one point consider suicide, and both reject it (although Hieronimo does in the end take his own life). Since Shakespeare was a greater poet than Kyd, and was also able to probe the human condition more profoundly than his predecessor, Hamlet's soliloquies have stood the test of time and contain some of the best known passages in the English language. In contrast, Hieronimo's long speeches, in which he laments and questions, often strike modern readers as artificial and bombastic, and therefore lacking emotional impact. But in their day, these speeches were much admired for their rhetorical skill, and it seems likely that were a professional company to stage *The Spanish Tragedy* today, an accomplished actor might well, despite the different tastes of a modern audience, be able to create the emotional intensity in the role that Elizabethan audiences appeared to relish.

Intensity there certainly is, which manifests in yet another parallel between *The Spanish Tragedy* and *Hamlet*: the theme of madness. This is another convention of the revenge play, and the madness of the revenger may be real either real or feigned. Hieronimo's madness appears genuine□he appears mad not only in the scene mentioned earlier, but also in act 3, scene 11, when he encounters the two visitors from Portugal□whereas Hamlet's madness is feigned. Madness also appears in secondary characters in both plays, and in both cases it is coupled with suicide. In *The Spanish Tragedy*, Isabella goes mad and kills herself; in *Hamlet*, the victim is Ophelia.

The play-within-the-play, orchestrated by the revenger, is also common to both plays, although the contexts are very different. In *Hamlet*, the purpose of the play-within-the-play it is to reveal the guilt of the murderer; in *The Spanish Tragedy*, it is to allow the revenger to carry out his revenge. Since a play-within-the-play does not appear to have been an established convention of revenge plays, this would appear to be a direct borrowing by Shakespeare from Kyd. It is not difficult to imagine Shakespeare in the audience at a performance of *The Spanish Tragedy*, taking note of Kyd's ingenious innovations. Or perhaps Kyd's "Ur-Hamlet" employed the same device, and Shakespeare adapted it from there. Such details of course will never be known. And since *The Spanish Tragedy* is the template of revenge plays, it is not at all surprising that it presents parallels with *Hamlet*, the greatest revenge play of them all. But nor should it be forgotten that, although Kyd's work was quickly overshadowed by Shakespeare's, *The Spanish Tragedy* stands in its own right as an original, subtle and moving work of art.

Source: Bryan Aubrey, Critical Essay on *The Spanish Tragedy*, in *Drama for Students*, Thomson Gale, 2005.

Critical Essay #2

Goldfarb has a Ph.D. in English and has published two books on the Victorian author William Makepeace Thackeray. In the following essay, Goldfarb explores the significance of the Alexandro-Villuppo episode in The Spanish Tragedy*.*

What a nightmare world of murder, revenge, deceit, and betrayal does Thomas Kyd create in *The Spanish Tragedy*. As Hieronimo says in act 3, scene 2, his world is "no world, but [a] mass of public wrongs / Confus'd and fill'd with murder and misdeeds"—all this before Hieronimo contributes to the accumulation of murders by engineering the deaths of Balthazar, Lorenzo, and the duke of Castile, which are then followed by the suicides of Bel-imperia and himself. Earlier in the play, Lorenzo sends the servants Serberine and Pedringano to their deaths, being especially deceitful in the way he handles Pedringano. And, of course, there is the treacherous murder of Horatio, which sets the main action in motion and is that act that Hieronimo is specifically referring to. Why does Kyd pile on the death and destruction in this way? What point is he trying to make? Or is he just out to create a bloody spectacle?

One approach to answering this question is to look at the one episode in the play in which a practitioner of deceit fails in his attempt to engineer someone's death. This is the episode involving Villuppo and Alexandro at the Portuguese court, the Portuguese subplot which most commentators ignore and which, in the words of one commentator (G.K. Hunter in a 1965 article), is "famous for its irrelevance."

It is true that the episode has little to do with the main plot, with its focus on Hieronimo's actions in response to the murder of Horatio. Indeed, in a play that is already fairly long, why does Kyd bother to insert two brief scenes about an intrigue in Portugal? To some critics the two scenes are a useless or unnecessary digression, but at least two commentators have written complete articles tussling with the question of why they are there.

In 1969, Ken C. Burrows wrote an article listing several ways in which the Portuguese episode connects to the main plot, focusing mostly on a comparison of Hieronimo and the Portuguese viceroy. A decade earlier, William H. Wiatt also pointed to similarities between Hieronimo and the viceroy, noting that they both receive information accusing someone of killing their sons: the viceroy hears Villuppo accuse Alexandro of shooting Balthazar in the back, and Hieronimo receives a letter from Bel-imperia saying that Lorenzo and Balthazar have murdered Horatio. The viceroy acts swiftly and nearly sends an innocent man to his death. Hieronimo is more skeptical about the information he receives, and the point of the Portuguese episode, according to Wiatt, is to show that Hieronimo is justified in waiting because accusations can sometimes be false.

The accusation Hieronimo reads in Bel-imperia's letter is not false. The audience has just seen Lorenzo and Balthazar kill Horatio, so they know the accusation is true. In contrast, having seen Balthazar alive at the Spanish court, the audience knows that Villuppo's accusation is a lie. The situations contrast so much that it is hard to believe

that Kyd's aim was to make a general point about being skeptical about accusations. Indeed, the assumption that both Burrows and Wiatt make, that the Portuguese subplot creates a parallel between Hieronimo and the viceroy, does not ring true despite the fact that both men grieve over the loss, real or imagined, of a son. Kay Stockholder, in a 1990 article, seems closer to the truth when she notes parallels between Hieronimo and Alexandro.

In the Portuguese scenes, Alexandro, after being accused of murder, cannot make himself heard by the viceroy. Stockholder notes that this foreshadows Hieronimo's later failure to get the Spanish king to listen to his call for justice over the death of Horatio. More generally, Hieronimo and Alexandro both occupy similar situations as loyal servants at court who suddenly suffer reversals of fortune. However, there is one crucial difference: Alexandro is saved from execution and restored to favor whereas Hieronimo ends up dying in a bloodbath.

Why, in a play where the innocent and guilty alike perish, does Alexandro survive? Alexandro himself has an explanation: it was his innocence that saves him, he says. However, as Kay Stockholder points out, his innocence would not have helped him if the ambassador had arrived a minute later. Philip Edwards, in a 1985 article, sees the last-minute reprieve as "a satire on the operations of human justice and divine intervention." In opposition to those who see the play as depicting a caring Christian providence, Edwards sees Kyd's work as "a denial of God's care for man." The characters may call on Heaven, but Heavenly agents never appear in the play; the supernatural characters who do appear come from another direction altogether: the Underworld. Kyd depicts Pluto, Proserpine, the three judges of Hades, and the strange creature called Revenge, but never Christ or God or the saints who Hieronimo thinks have blessed his plan for revenge. It is as if, in Kyd's world, the infernal powers have taken over. For Edwards, this means that Kyd's play is a work of "dark pessimism"□and so it might seem, except for the nagging fact that the innocent Alexandro does survive.

For Edwards, Alexandro's survival is something of a cosmic joke, or perhaps a joke by Thomas Kyd against those who believe there is a benevolent force running the cosmos. For Stockholder, Alexandro's survival seems to be mere chance; a minute later and he would have been dead. The point is that the ambassador who saves Alexandro does not arrive a minute late; he arrives in time. Is that pure chance, or is Kyd suggesting there is some other reason why the innocent Alexandro survives whereas Hieronimo, in so many ways like him, ends up part of the general bloodbath at play's end?

It may be useful to look more closely at what Alexandro says and does, especially in the second scene of the Portuguese subplot at the beginning of act 3. Brought in to be executed, Alexandro is advised by a kindly nobleman that he should still hope. In response, Alexandro says, "'Tis heaven is my hope." A moment later, the ambassador arrives to save Alexandro, and the volatile viceroy shifts his wrath from Alexandro to Villuppo. The viceroy not only orders Villuppo to be killed in Alexandro's place, but he also orders extra torments laid on for Villuppo. At this point, there is an interesting stage direction saying "Alexandro seems to entreat," as if Alexandro is graciously asking the viceroy not to be too harsh towards the man who almost had him killed.

It has been remarked (for instance by Steven Justice in a 1985 article) that the word "mercy" does not appear anywhere in *The Spanish Tragedy*. Indeed, mercy is not a quality much in evidence in Kyd's play. If there is ever a merciful moment in it, it is this one, in which Alexandro seems to entreat the viceroy. Mercy, of course, is a conventional Christian attribute. Does this mean that Alexandro is the only truly Christian character in the play? His resting his hopes on Heaven similarly suggests a Christian approach to life.

Resting one's hopes on Heaven in Christian theology would include leaving vengeance to God, an idea mentioned in the play itself by Hieronimo in his famous speech at the beginning of act 3, scene 13. In this speech, Hieronimo begins by quoting from the well-known New Testament passage that says that vengeance belongs to the Lord, and he goes on to say, "Ay, Heaven will be revenged of every ill."

Though he quotes this Christian warning to leave vengeance to Heaven, by the end of that same speech, Hieronimo has vowed to avenge Horatio's death himself and to do so in a secretive, deceitful way. He will not wait for Heaven to act; he will not follow the model of Alexandro. Instead, he will become more like the man he hates, Lorenzo, practicing the same sort of deceit and taking the law into his own hands. All of which is a bit strange since Hieronimo is knight marshal (a high law officer) and is noted for his devotion to justice. Why does he abandon the natural course of justice here in favor of private revenge?

It could be argued that since the murderers he wants brought to justice are the nephew of the Spanish king and the son of the Portuguese viceroy, he would have little chance in a court of law. It is true that when Hieronimo does try to approach the king about the murder, he is shooed away by Lorenzo, the king's nephew. Still, his efforts to reach the king seem almost half-hearted, undercut perhaps by some incipient madness on his part, all very understandable but still unfortunate. It is not necessary to condemn Hieronimo as a villain as Fredson Bowers did many years ago in his book *Elizabethan Revenge Tragedy*; as Peter B. Murray says in his book on Kyd, Hieronimo remains a sympathetic character despite his misguided actions. His actions, in the context of the play, do seem misguided; they certainly lead to a horrifying conclusion.

Another character in a similar situation is Hieronimo's wife, Isabella. She too, despite her grief and anguish over Horatio's death, at first counsels Christian patience and reliance on Heaven. "The heavens are just," she says at the end of act 2, scene 5, adding that "murder cannot be hid" and that "Time," as "the author of both truth and right," will "bring this treachery to light." According to Ronald Broude in a 1971 article, this statement of Isabella's expresses the theme of the play: it is best to let time bring justice. However, like her husband, Isabella cannot wait. In act 4, impatient over the king's failure to bring justice, she attacks the grove of trees where Horatio was killed, taking revenge on the place as her husband will soon take revenge on the persons, and then she kills herself.

Broude points out one character who does wait patiently, at least at one moment. This is Bel-imperia, who when imprisoned by her brother says, "Well, force perforce, I must

constrain myself / To patience, and apply me to the time, / Till heaven, as I have hoped, shall set me free." In the very next line she is set free: patience and time, and trusting to Heaven, have done their work, just as they seem to have in the case of Alexandro.

Hieronimo, however, is not patient. Nor does he continue to look to Heaven. As Lukas Erne notes in his 2001 book *Beyond "The Spanish Tragedy,"* Hieronimo turns more and more to the infernal forces as the play goes on. In act 3, scene 12, he promises to "marshal up the fiends in hell" to be avenged on Lorenzo. In scene 13, he vows:

I'll down to hell, and in this passion

Knock at the dismal gates of Pluto's court,

Getting by force, as once Alcides did,

A troop of Furies and tormenting hags

To torture Don Lorenzo and the rest.

Not much Christian forbearance there.

Erne says, disagreeing with Edwards, that Kyd's play does not so much depict "a cosmic drama about a world deserted by God as the personal drama of Hieronimo deserting God." There is something in this. Mostly Kyd seems to present a world without God, a world controlled by the infernal powers, where murder and betrayal rule supreme. Perhaps his point is that this is only the world as created by those who turn to the infernal powers and take vengeance into their own hands. Perhaps he is saying there could be a different sort of world, if only there were more people like Alexandro, more people who put their trust in Heaven and forgave their enemies.

Source: Sheldon Goldfarb, Critical Essay on *The Spanish Tragedy*, in *Drama for Students*, Thomson Gale, 2005.

Topics for Further Study

Research the English attitude towards Spain in Elizabethan times. Analyze ways in which this attitude sheds light on the play.

Does Hieronimo retain the sympathy of the audience until the end of the play, or does he become a villain too? Does his madness cloud his judgment?

Research the work and influence of the sixteenth century political philosopher, Niccolo Machiavelli. In what sense might Lorenzo be considered a Machiavellian figure?

What is the difference between revenge and justice? Are the two concepts sometimes merged? Can revenge ever be justified?

Compare and Contrast

1580s: Spain is the leading world power. In 1588, the English fleet defeats the Spanish Armada, and so prevents an invasion by Catholic Spain of Protestant England.

Today: Spain and Britain are mid-level European powers. Both are members of NATO and the European Union.

1580s: Elizabethan authors do not own the copyright to their work; they are poorly paid by the theater companies to which they sell their work, and they do not receive royalties from the publisher. Plays are often published anonymously, and pirated or corrupt editions appear, sometimes based on an actor's memory of the script or a copy made by a spectator during a performance.

Today: Strict copyright laws define ownership of a literary work, and legally enforceable contracts define the amount of royalties an author receives. Plagiarism or infringement of copyright is illegal and offenders may be prosecuted.

1580s: London is the largest city in Europe, with a population of over 100,000. Many foreigners come to live in the city, taking advantage of lenient immigration laws and the willingness of employers to hire aliens. Whenever unemployment rises, Londoners tend to blame the presence of foreigners.

Today: With a population of 7,172,036, London remains one of the most populous cities in Europe, along with Moscow, Istanbul, and Paris. Patterns of immigration have changed over the centuries, and London is now a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic city. Ten percent of the population is Indian, Bangladeshi, or Pakistani; 5 percent is African, and 5 percent come from the Caribbean.

What Do I Read Next?

The plays collected in *Four Revenge Tragedies: "The Spanish Tragedy," "The Revenger's Tragedy," "The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois," and "The Atheist's Tragedy"* (Oxford World's Classics, 2000), edited by Katharine Eisaman Maus, show how the Elizabethan revenge tragedy was treated by dramatists such as George Chapman (*Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois*), Cyril Tourneur (*The Atheist's Tragedy*) and the author of the anonymous *The Revenger's Tragedy* (which is sometimes ascribed to Tourneur or Thomas Middleton).

M. C. Bradbrook's *Themes and Conventions of Elizabethan Tragedy* (2d ed., 1980) deals with the conventions which gave Elizabethan drama its special character. Bradbrook also analyzes individual plays by Marlowe, Tourneur, Middleton, and John Webster. There are many allusions to Kyd and to Shakespeare.

English Renaissance Drama: A Norton Anthology (2002), edited by David M. Bevington, Lars Engle, Katharine Eisaman Maus, and Eric Rasmussen, is an extensive collection of twenty-seven plays written in Elizabethan and Jacobean England. Playwrights represented include Marlowe, Middleton, Webster, and Ben Jonson.

A New History of Early English Drama (1998), by John D. Cox and David Scott Kastan, is an innovative collection of twenty-six essays on early modern English drama, up to 1642. The essays cover such topics as the conditions under which plays were written, produced and disseminated. The emphasis is not on individual authors but on the place of the stage in the wider society, and how it was impacted by religious, civic and other cultural factors.

Further Study

Clemen, Wolfgang, *English Tragedy before Shakespeare*, Methuen, 1961, pp. 100—12.

This is an analysis of the long set speeches in *The Spanish Tragedy*. Clemen shows Kyd's originality in integrating these speeches with the structure of the plot and in presenting them in a more dramatic fashion than their Senecan models.

Freeman, Arthur, *Thomas Kyd: Facts and Problems*, Clarendon Press, 1967.

This is the most comprehensive account of Kyd's life and works. It includes detailed discussions of the date and sources of *The Spanish Tragedy*, as well as its style, structure, stage history, parodies, textual additions, and critical reception.

Harbage, Alfred, "Intrigue in Elizabethan Tragedy," in *Essays on Shakespeare and Elizabethan Drama, in Honor of Hardin Craig*, edited by Richard Hosley, University of Missouri Press, 1962, pp. 37—44.

Harbage argues that one of Kyd's distinctive and influential achievements was his introduction into tragedy of the element of intrigue, in which the action is complicated. In doing this, Kyd also employs comic methods, thus creating a kind of "comitragedy."

Johnson, S. F., "*The Spanish Tragedy*, or Babylon Revisited," in *Essays on Shakespeare and Elizabethan Drama, in Honor of Hardin Craig*, edited by Richard Hosley, University of Missouri Press, 1962, pp. 23—36.

Johnson argues that in the play, Spain is equated with the Biblical Babylon, which God promises to destroy. Hieronimo's vengeance is therefore just, since it brings down the king of Spain, whom many English Protestants regarded as being in league with the Antichrist, the pope.

Murray, Peter B., *Thomas Kyd*, Twayne's English Authors Series, No. 88, Twayne, 1969.

Murray sketches the literary and historical background of the play and then analyzes it scene by scene in terms of the development of action, character and theme. The final chapter considers the play's relation to the tragedies that followed it, with attention to the additions to Kyd's play that were published in 1602. Murray also includes a chronology and an annotated bibliography.

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Murray, Peter B. *Thomas Kyd*, Twayne Publishers, 1969, pp. 54, 127.

Shakespeare, William, *Hamlet*, edited by Harold Jenkins, Arden Shakespeare ed., Methuen, 1982.

Stockholder, Kay, "'Yet Can He Write': Reading the Silences in *The Spanish Tragedy*," in *American Imago*, Vol. 47, No. 2, Summer 1990, p. 101.

Wiatt, William H., "The Dramatic Function of the Alexandro-Villuppo Episode in *The Spanish Tragedy*," in *Notes and Queries*, n.s., Vol. 5, 1958, pp. 327—28.

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Introduction

Purpose of the Book

The purpose of Drama for Students (DfS) is to provide readers with a guide to understanding, enjoying, and studying novels by giving them easy access to information about the work. Part of Gale's□For Students□ Literature line, DfS is specifically designed to meet the curricular needs of high school and undergraduate college students and their teachers, as well as the interests of general readers and researchers considering specific novels. While each volume contains entries on □classic□ novels

frequently studied in classrooms, there are also entries containing hard-to-find information on contemporary novels, including works by multicultural, international, and women novelists.

The information covered in each entry includes an introduction to the novel and the novel's author; a plot summary, to help readers unravel and understand the events in a novel; descriptions of important characters, including explanation of a given character's role in the novel as well as discussion about that character's relationship to other characters in the novel; analysis of important themes in the novel; and an explanation of important literary techniques and movements as they are demonstrated in the novel.

In addition to this material, which helps the readers analyze the novel itself, students are also provided with important information on the literary and historical background informing each work. This includes a historical context essay, a box comparing the time or place the novel was written to modern Western culture, a critical overview essay, and excerpts from critical essays on the novel. A unique feature of DfS is a specially commissioned critical essay on each novel, targeted toward the student reader.

To further aid the student in studying and enjoying each novel, information on media adaptations is provided, as well as reading suggestions for works of fiction and nonfiction on similar themes and topics. Classroom aids include ideas for research papers and lists of critical sources that provide additional material on the novel.

Selection Criteria

The titles for each volume of DfS were selected by surveying numerous sources on teaching literature and analyzing course curricula for various school districts. Some of the sources surveyed included: literature anthologies; Reading Lists for College-Bound Students: The Books Most Recommended by America's Top Colleges; textbooks on teaching the novel; a College Board survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; a National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; the NCTE's Teaching Literature in High School: The Novel;and the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) list of best books for young adults of the past twenty-five years. Input was also solicited from our advisory board, as well as educators from various areas. From these discussions, it was determined that each volume should have a mix of □classic□ novels (those works commonly taught in literature classes) and contemporary novels for which information is often hard to find. Because of the interest in expanding the canon of literature, an emphasis was also placed on including works by international, multicultural, and women authors. Our advisory board members□educational professionals□ helped pare down the list for each volume. If a work was not selected for the present volume, it was often noted as a possibility for a future volume. As always, the editor welcomes suggestions for titles to be included in future volumes.

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- Author Biography: this section includes basic facts about the author's life, and focuses on events and times in the author's life that inspired the novel in question.
- Plot Summary: a factual description of the major events in the novel. Lengthy summaries are broken down with subheads.
- Characters: an alphabetical listing of major characters in the novel. Each character name is followed by a brief to an extensive description of the character's role in the novel, as well as discussion of the character's actions, relationships, and possible motivation. Characters are listed alphabetically by last name. If a character is unnamed□for instance, the narrator in Invisible Man-the character is listed as □The Narrator□ and alphabetized as □Narrator.□ If a character's first name is the only one given, the name will appear alphabetically by that name. □ Variant names are also included for each character. Thus, the full name □Jean Louise Finch□ would head the listing for the narrator of To Kill a Mockingbird, but listed in a separate cross-reference would be the nickname □Scout Finch.□
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In addition, each entry contains the following highlighted sections, set apart from the main text as sidebars:

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- Topics for Further Study: a list of potential study questions or research topics dealing with the novel. This section includes questions related to other disciplines the student may be studying, such as American history, world history, science, math, government, business, geography, economics, psychology, etc.
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When quoting a journal or newspaper essay that is reprinted in a volume of DfS, the following form may be used:

Malak, Amin. □Margaret Atwood's □The Handmaid's Tale and the Dystopian Tradition,□ Canadian Literature No. 112 (Spring, 1987), 9-16; excerpted and reprinted in Drama for Students, Vol. 4, ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski (Detroit: Gale, 1998), pp. 133-36.

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Adams, Timothy Dow. □Richard Wright: □Wearing the Mask,□ in Telling Lies in Modern American Autobiography (University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 69-83; excerpted and reprinted in Novels for Students, Vol. 1, ed. Diane Telgen (Detroit: Gale, 1997), pp. 59-61.

We Welcome Your Suggestions

The editor of Drama for Students welcomes your comments and ideas. Readers who wish to suggest novels to appear in future volumes, or who have other suggestions, are cordially invited to contact the editor. You may contact the editor via email at: ForStudentsEditors@gale.com. Or write to the editor at:

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