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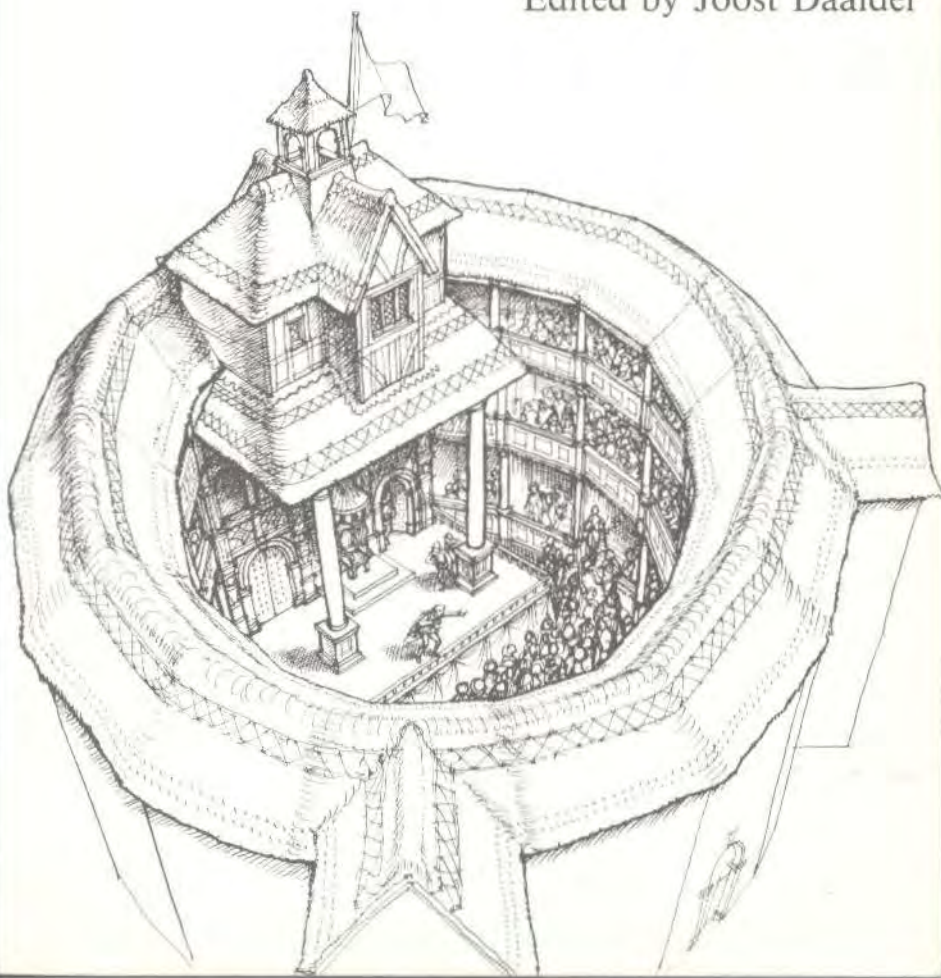


New Mermaids

Seneca
Jasper Heywood

Thyestes

Edited by Joost Daalder



THE NEW MERMAIDS

General Editors

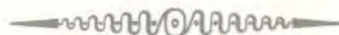
BRIAN MORRIS

Principal, St Davids University College, Lampeter

BRIAN GIBBONS

Professor of English Literature, the University of Leeds

Thyestes



LUCIUS ANNAEUS SENECA

Translated by

JASPER HEYWOOD (1560)

Edited by

JOOST DAALDER

Senior Lecturer in English

Flinders University of South Australia

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PREFACE

AS ONE RECENT commentator has pointed out, 'We are in the midst of an extraordinary Senecan Renaissance'; another states that 'no other single writer of the ancient world has exercised a comparable influence on both the prose and verse of subsequent literatures.' But the modern reader, whether able to read Latin or not, generally has not been well served with editions that help him to understand Seneca's tragedies. In the case of *Thyestes*, there is not even one to aid an aspiring Latinist, and though there have been useful translations in the Loeb series (by F. J. Miller) and in the Penguin Classics (by E. F. Watling: *Seneca, Four Tragedies and Octavia*), they leave a great deal unexplained. One purpose of the present edition is to guide and stimulate those interested above all in Seneca—chiefly those who have no Latin, but also those who can read it without being experts.

While this purpose by itself is actually twofold, this is also an edition of an Elizabethan translation of Seneca, which makes one's task different again from someone who presents and/or comments on a text either in Latin or in modern English. Heywood's English poses its own problems to a modern reader of English, and particularly to one who does not or cannot compare Heywood's text with Seneca's Latin (which, moreover, came to Heywood in a version quite different from, for example, Loeb's).

As an editor, I have nevertheless greatly enjoyed working on Heywood's rendering rather than a modern one because I agree with those who believe in the intrinsic merits of Heywood's translation as well as with those who find it especially interesting within the context of the English Renaissance—the period of Seneca's greatest impact on English literature. The resemblances between Seneca's sensibility and that of some of the best thinkers and writers belonging to the Renaissance are, I believe, of extraordinary importance to us if we are to understand our own plight. Modern translations do not (and cannot) enable one to see such connections.

Thyestes as known to the Elizabethans is now best revealed through Heywood's translation (although the Latin texts available to him are fascinating, and helpful where annotated). The English version printed in 1560 was brilliantly edited by De Vocht in 1913, but in an 'old spelling' text and only for scholars. A modernized text was prepared by McIlwraith in 1938, but it offers little annotation and contains some curious inaccuracies as a result of a casual approach to

the Latin. The 1581 reprint of the 1560 text has been made available to modern readers, but without the aid of modernization or notes.

Of necessity, the present edition has a substantial introduction and extensive notes; its modernization, too, is designed to make the 1560 text more readily available than hitherto. I had to think of the various requirements of quite different readers; but, while I have recorded the most important differences between Loeb's Latin and the texts Heywood used, I have been very mindful of the needs of those who know neither Latin nor Elizabethan English.

Apart from the editions or translations mentioned, I have consulted Ascensius' 1513 edition (known to Heywood and valuable for extensive notes) as well as all other printed editions that Heywood may have used and to which I could gain access. Amongst modern editions/translations, I have found helpful Theodor Thomann's *Seneca, Sämtliche Tragödien* (Vol. II, Zürich 1969). Seneca scholars C. D. N. Costa and William Calder III have generously helped me with enquiries. I also thank Graeme Hetherington and his colleagues for information. My former student Amanda Biggs gave me extensive notes on several plays which she has compared with *Thyestes*. Unfortunately, I have not found much space for incorporating her valuable material, but I owe a general debt to it, and she has both confirmed and extended my own understanding of the relationship between Seneca and Renaissance dramatists. I owe a tremendous debt to many helpful librarians, particularly in the Bodleian Library and the English Faculty Library, Oxford; the British Library; the Cambridge University Library; Eton College; and not least Flinders. Many of the books and articles I mention were of great value to me, even if I disagreed.

It is a special pleasure to record my gratitude to the general editors, notably Brian Morris and Roma Gill, for their persistent encouragement and help. They have done more for me than any editor could reasonably expect, and I am strongly in their debt.

I cannot adequately acknowledge what I owe to my wife, who has had to put up with more than *she* could reasonably expect, as have my children, though their fear that I might come to imitate *Thyestes* has proved unjustified.

Adelaide
1981

J. D.

ABBREVIATIONS

- 1560 The first (octavo) edition of Heywood's *Thyestes* (1560)
 1581 Thomas Newton's *Seneca His Tenne Tragedies* (1581), including *Thyestes*
 Asc J. B. Ascensius' edition of Seneca's *Tragoediae*, Paris 1913
 Costa C. D. N. Costa ed., *Seneca* (1974)
 DV H. De Vocht ed., *Jasper Heywood and His Translations of Seneca's 'Troas', 'Thyestes' and 'Hercules Furens'...* (Louvain 1913; repr. Vaduz, Austria, 1963)
 G Seb. Gryphius' edition of Seneca's *Tragoediae*, Lyons 1541
 H Heywood
 HF Heywood's *Hercules Furens* (Latin-English), 1561
 L The Loeb Latin-English edition of Seneca, chiefly Vol. IX, *Tragedies II* (1917; repr. 1968)
 Lat. Seneca's Latin
 Letters *Seneca: Letters from a Stoic*, transl. R. Campbell (Harmondsworth 1969; repr. 1977)
 McI A. K. McIlwraith ed., *Five Elizabethan Tragedies* (1938; repr. 1961), including *Thyestes*
 ODEP *The Oxford Dictionary of English Proverbs*, 3rd ed. (Oxford 1970)
 OED *The Oxford English Dictionary*
 O'K John J. O'Keefe, *An Analysis of Jasper Heywood's Translations of Seneca's 'Troas', 'Thyestes', and 'Hercules Furens'*, Loyola University of Chicago, Ph.D., 1974
 S Seneca
 s.d. stage direction, scene heading

Shakespeare references are to Peter Alexander's ed. of *The Complete Works* (1951; repr. 1966). Other references to Renaissance plays are to New Mermaids editions where possible.

INTRODUCTION

SENECA AND THE BACKGROUND
TO 'THYESTES'

SOME PLAYS appear to have a life of their own largely independent of their author or period of creation, while others bear more clearly the stamp of a definite personality and, at least in part, seem to be related to historical events which mattered to the writer. Seneca's plays are for all times and were no doubt, like his writings in general, written with that intention. It would be wrong to see them merely as personal revelation or disguised political comment. Nevertheless, most readers will probably agree that the plays gain in interest—and perhaps in meaning and value—if we briefly look at Seneca's life, his personality and period, and the question of the relationship between the plays and their context.

A good deal is known about Seneca—more, for example, than about Shakespeare—and, although on the one hand studious and retreating, he was on the other hand very much a public figure, both in his actions and his writings. The writings are probably most readily approached in the form offered by *Seneca in Ten Volumes* (Latin and English on facing pages), part of 'The Loeb Classical Library' (Harvard University Press and William Heinemann Ltd).¹ Some of the essence of Seneca is found in *Letters from a Stoic*, Robin Campbell's Penguin translation² of a selection of Seneca's important but delightfully conversational *Epistulae Morales*—moral 'letters' (actually short essays) addressed to the rather obscure Lucilius. Seneca's life and time have been discussed by many scholars, such as (recently) Pierre Grimal and Miriam T. Griffith, who also comment on aspects of his personality and thought, while a highly stimulating and comprehensive picture is presented by Marc Rozelaar, who offers a cogent view of the tragedies in their context, as does William M. Calder III.³ The reader interested in the history of Rome during Seneca's lifetime will

above all wish to turn to Tacitus' absorbing *Annals*,⁴ which give an account nearest to Seneca in time and generally found reliable, although scholars continue to disagree about the accuracy of some facts as reported by Tacitus and others.

Seneca was almost certainly born in 1 A.D., at Corduba in Southern Spain. His father, called Lucius Annaeus like him, later referred to as 'Rhetor', had an extraordinary interest in, and gift for, rhetoric, but because of its importance in politics rather than for cultural reasons. His own wish to become a Roman senator came to nothing, but he was ambitious for his three articulate sons, and not least because, although wealthy, he was a provincial. His wife Helvia had the appetite for literature and philosophy which became so marked a feature of the life of her most famous son.

Seneca is known for showing contradictory tendencies—for example, apparent enjoyment of such things as power and wealth which in theory he disapproved of. One might hazard a guess that part of the explanation of the paradox is to be sought in his relation to his parents, on the assumption that with one part of his mind he followed his father, and with another his mother. This area for research is thoroughly explored by Rozendaal (particularly in pp. 1-176), and only some aspects—not necessarily always fully in accord with Rozendaal—will here be considered.

Seneca appears to have been exceedingly close to his mother. His father, who was much older than his mother, saw Seneca's younger brother Mela as a favourite, despite the fact that Mela had a taste for philosophy (he was the father of the poet Lucan). The situation must have been complex indeed, but it seems likely that Seneca and Helvia in part based their bond, in which an erotic aspect was not lacking, on rejected love. Seneca was anxious and a hypochondriac, although genuinely ill with, amongst other things, chronic asthma. This situation must have intensified his dependence on his mother, while his asthma may have been in part psychosomatic, and indeed was perhaps to some extent a cry for help directed towards his mother. Apparently, it is not always possible to separate the over-protected child from the asthma patient.

Apart from fear, a person in this situation may also develop an

¹ The Loeb Seneca has been prepared over a number of years, but is now complete, and widely available at the time of writing (1980).

² Harmondsworth 1969; repr. 1977.

³ See P. Grimal, *Sénèque: sa vie, son oeuvre...* (Paris, 3rd rev. ed. 1966) and the more extensive *Sénèque: ou la conscience de l'Empire* (Paris 1978, 2nd impr. 1979); M.T. Griffith, 'Imago Vitae Suae' in Costa (1-38), a useful introduction followed by her

valuable tome *Seneca: A Philosopher in Politics* (Oxford 1976); M. Rozelaar, *Seneca—Eine Gesamtdarstellung* (Amsterdam 1976). Everything written by W.M. Calder is instructive and thought-provoking, but perhaps especially (and certainly for the non-specialist) his 'Seneca: Tragedian of Imperial Rome' (*The Classical Journal*, Oct.-Nov. 1976, 1-11), to which I refer.

⁴ Also available in the Loeb series.

aggressive drive, for example when he considers himself not spoiled sufficiently; but in Seneca's case it seems probable that above all his desire for power sprang from a wish to outdo his father. His knowledge of both fear and aggression, whether as personal emotions or observed in others, must have increased as a result of his political experiences in imperial Rome. His practical ambition, no doubt inherited from his father and probably developed partly out of rivalry with him, had plenty of opportunity to test itself out against emperors themselves inclined towards megalomania, and, if frustrated, it must have turned into fear or sought an outlet in his writing—an activity that we associate with Seneca's relation to his mother, but in which he could also use such rhetorical skills as his father approved of for other purposes. He tried to overcome his fear, or his lust for power, by stressing again and again, as part of his philosophical thinking, that one should be indifferent towards such emotions, but his obsessive concern with them shows a truly divided mind.

It is necessary, however, to say more about the practical circumstances. Seneca was clearly trained to a high standard in grammar and rhetoric, and it was probably in part as a result of real ability that he became quaestor (a sort of treasurer) when his aunt, who had looked after his health during a stay in Egypt, recommended him after 31. (This aunt, on his mother's side, had also first brought him to Rome.) Seneca held a number of other relatively important offices, but his real influence was on the personal rather than the official level.

His oratorical skills were such as to arouse the jealousy of the emperor Gaius 'Caligula' (37–41), a man sufficiently insane to be capable of entertaining an essentially paranoid distrust. His predecessor Tiberius, for that matter, was also highly suspicious, and distrust, whether mad or not, characterized much that went on at the court of the emperors with whom Seneca had contact. For example, the notorious Nero, under whom Seneca gained most of his power, was apt to take steps against people who 'admittedly did not hate the emperor, but were nevertheless considered capable of doing so' (Tacitus, *Annals*, XV, 71). However, almost as whimsically as he feared Seneca, Caligula decided to spare him. And not long after this Caligula was murdered, a deed in which Seneca took no part but of which he approved. We must realize that Seneca's standards, and those of his time generally, were not necessarily those of our own, although, in view of the violence of our own time, we may well wonder whether the difference is as large as many appear to have been in the habit of believing. In Seneca's defence we need not, in this instance, examine his psyche—his reaction can without difficulty be shared by, for example, those who would have justified the assassination of people like Hitler.

Claudius, who succeeded Caligula, was not quite as despotic, but

hardly less of a threat, because he had trouble making up his mind about things and allowed himself to be guided by those who used him for their own selfish and cruel ends. At the instigation of Claudius' wife Messalina, Seneca was banished to Corsica (in 41), charged with having an affair with Caligula's sister Julia Livilla. There may have been no truth in this, and the accusation perhaps sprang from fear that Seneca was getting too influential, supposedly using a liaison with one of Messalina's rivals as a power base. Certainly his connection with the other sister, however, Julia Agrippina—later Claudius' wife⁵—did bring Seneca into prominence after his exile. In any case, Seneca saw the banishment as unjust, and, despite his many assertions to the contrary,⁶ the life of an exile in practice proved very unattractive. Even so, he wrote a good deal, and produced a work containing a eulogy on Claudius—no doubt to effect the repeal of his banishment—which many have found hypocritical. In reality, however, this kind of approach was perfectly obvious and natural at the time and can only be judged as such; and Seneca's philosophy had no great difficulty justifying a compromise with evil on the basis that the end justifies the means.⁷ His very mixed feelings about power furthermore no doubt found their root in the psychological situation described earlier. Once Agrippina was married to Claudius,⁸ Seneca was recalled (49), to become the tutor of her son, the later Nero.

The political situation had already become one of constant intrigue and murder, and was to get worse. Some would like Seneca to have remained at Corsica, but the fact is that almost certainly less good would have occurred if he had done so, and of course the chance to use his brains and to wield power in practice appealed to him no less than to many other people who express a preference for 'the quiet life'. Perhaps Seneca's return proved tragically wrong, like that of Thyestes.

Agrippina was an effective schemer, and, once she was Claudius' wife, managed to persuade him to adopt, in 50, her son Nero (the offspring of a former marriage) in preference to the emperor's son Britannicus, who happened to be younger. Once Nero was Claudius' more-or-less logical successor, Claudius was no longer of use to Agrippina, and was poisoned. It was then easy to put Nero on the throne in 54. It is difficult to discover with hindsight just how much

⁵ In a marriage widely regarded as incestuous because Claudius was also her uncle.

⁶ Cf., in *Moral Essays* II in the Loeb series, *De Consolatione ad Helviam*, addressed to Seneca's mother from Corsica, in which the simple life is defended in terms not unlike those of Thyestes or the Chorus (notably in XI).

⁷ Cf. e.g. Rozelaar, 304–5.

⁸ Claudius' embarrassingly licentious, but also dangerous, wife Messalina had been got rid of in 48.

Seneca may have contributed as an accomplice to such events or at least how much he may have known about them. Even partial or complete complicity cannot be seen as something simple. There were good reasons why Seneca and many other people wished to see Claudius dead; on the other hand—to mention merely one further consideration—that does not mean that the actual event was not traumatic. As tutor to Nero, one of Seneca's tasks was to be a 'ghostwriter' to the new government, and he wrote Claudius' funeral speech. It is possible that people laughed at this because it ineffectively and hypocritically attempted to present Claudius in a favourable light despite, for example, his absent-mindedness, but more likely Seneca, as a crafty rhetorician, evoked this ridicule through deliberate ironic strategy. That would have fitted his dramatic talents, and soon after he indulged that more openly in the humorous *Apocolocyntosis*—not the 'apothecosis', but the 'pumpkinification' of Claudius.

Seneca may really have believed that things would improve under Nero, and the more so because of his own influence as a 'friend' of the emperor, supported by Burrus who was a sort of co-regent with effective military power to back him. Whatever Nero's own psychology under these circumstances, for some years the empire was governed quite well. Nero moreover was nothing like the monster he later became. Although Seneca had started or even completed his *De Ira* before A.D. 49, his notions about anger (i.e. 'de ira') and related emotions must have been based on his own youth and on knowledge of Nero's predecessors; and *De Clementia*, written for Nero specifically, must have sprung from the supposition that it was possible to teach Nero clemency, even though that does not imply that Seneca was totally optimistic about his chances of success, or that Nero's subsequent tendency to show *ira* rather than *clementia* must come as a total surprise to us. The two documents must be taken together as on the one hand consistent, on the other hand revealing a typically Senecan preoccupation with opposites, resulting from his realistic knowledge as well as his wishful thinking. And in the end there is always the notable attempt of this Stoic philosopher, like others, to gain equilibrium by maintaining that one must show total indifference no matter what happens, concentrating on the inalienable part of one's being, which is not really affected by, for example, the anger of one's rulers or the erratic gods. Better to stay out of harm's way by living in a humble cottage than to seek wealth or power, but the wise man cannot suffer anyway, and the argument can also be put the other way round. Who hopes for nothing will lose nothing, but that is also true of fear.

That advice, however, is of more use—if it can really be acted upon—to the victims of cruel emperors than the emperors themselves who, though certainly fearing others just as they inspire them with

fear, above all need to show clemency. But Nero, who had not been surrounded with this in practice and who was not checked by modern notions of democracy or restraint, killed Britannicus as a possible threat (55), and developed obsessive feelings about his mother, who tried to rule with him and stood in the way—even incestuously—of his union with a woman called Poppaea whom he preferred to his legal wife Octavia. Even Nero was not mentally at ease after he had ensured Agrippina's death (59), but his practical behaviour much deteriorated. This development must have affected Seneca the more strongly because he not only knew that his own wellbeing was dependent on the emperor, but also because he genuinely seems to have believed in the principle of imperial government—in which the character of the emperor is all-important. Certainly Seneca cannot be assumed to have had any part in Octavia's pitiful death, or in that of Burrus, who perhaps was not murdered and with whose passing Seneca lost a great deal of his power (62). Seneca elegantly and deftly asked Nero's permission to withdraw from court, but was refused, presumably because Nero was concerned about his reputation, although his conduct was otherwise wholly capricious and tyrannical and he boasted that no previous monarch had realized just how much freedom of action he had. Seneca spent much time writing, but eventually Nero's opportunity to get rid of him presented itself when he could accuse him, justly or not, of having taken part in a conspiracy against the emperor's life. Seneca was offered the opportunity to take his own life and did so theatrically although courageously (65).

Whatever one's opinion about Seneca's character—and it must be considerably less negative than a historically or psychologically obtuse approach has often led it to be—it will be obvious that much of his life and time is found back in *Thyestes*. Probably one circumstance explaining why Seneca and his plays are again enjoying high esteem is that persons like Nero and Seneca are not untypical of our age. We are not inclined to measure the past with confident Victorian standards, and our own time has known plenty of Hitlers and Stalins, as well as torn personalities like Seneca who, instead of simple virtue or dishonesty, display considerable doubt, inconsistency, complexity of view, and neurotic tension between fear and greed. I do not suggest that ours is a particularly attractive time to live in, merely that it makes Seneca relatively accessible. Even such simplicity as Seneca advocates (indifference to suffering, life in the country, etc.) is, we can feel, in fact part of a complex urbanized existence. Without some understanding of such an existence in Seneca's time we are likely to misread his plays.

Those plays embody his experiences, no doubt, but not in a restricted or unimaginative way. Just as Seneca's philosophy is less clear-cut and consistent than it seems (and therefore is not summar-

ized here),⁹ so we must be even more careful not to reduce the plays to a formula which we consider to represent one particular strand of thought or incident. It is all too easy, for example, to see Atreus as merely a picture of Nero, or Thyestes as one of Seneca.

Even so, such parallels do suggest themselves and are surely not fanciful so long as we respect the complexity of both Seneca's character and of art in general. Also: of *his* art in particular, for there would have been good reasons for such art to be complex. In addition to seeing Seneca's own intrinsic ambivalence, we must realize that he was trained to see two sides of every question. A student of rhetoric had to be able to offer arguments and counter-arguments on such themes as 'The penalty for rape is either death or marriage to the wronged girl. In one night, a man rapes two girls: one demands his death, the other, marriage' (Costa, 99). Apart from having an interest and extraordinary skill in thinking about such bizarre propositions, however, Seneca's mind had to contend with quite astonishing events around him.¹⁰ Even the main incident of *Thyestes* is not only rooted in lost Greek and Roman plays called *Thyestes*, but also in the real story of the noble Mede Harpagus narrated by Seneca in *De Ira* III, XV ('On Anger', *Moral Essays* I in the Loeb series, p. 293):

I doubt not that Harpagus also gave some such advice [to be moderate] to his king, the king of the Persians, who, taking offence thereat, caused the flesh of Harpagus's own children to be set before him as a course in the banquet, and kept inquiring whether he liked the cooking; then when he saw him sated with his own ill, he ordered the heads of the children to be brought in, and inquired what he thought of his entertainment.

Closer to home, and about six centuries later, Seneca witnessed very similar situations that, like the one just described, make quite unwarranted the many attacks on him as too 'sensationalist' or 'gruesome'. The incident of a man eating his children could easily be used for a camouflaged presentation of equally true horror stories of, for example, a man killing his half-brother (as, in effect, Nero did through having Britannicus poisoned), or his mother (Agrippina). It would not have been difficult for a sophisticated audience that understood the nature of the fiction to see its allusions to reality, while

⁹ For an attempted survey of medium length, cf. H.B. Timothy, *The Tenets of Stoicism, Assembled and Systematized, from the Works of L. Annaeus Seneca* (Amsterdam 1973). Although useful, Timothy's account does not seem to me to do sufficient justice to the inner tensions (e.g. about 'God' and 'Fate') in Seneca's thinking, which is exploratory and informal rather than systematic. This is not to suggest that there is no core to be identified. Cf. also A.L. Motto, *Seneca* (New York 1973), 49-81.

¹⁰ In other words, the topic for a rhetorical exercise could have a close match in reality, making the exercise far less 'artificial' than many Victorian or early twentieth century critics thought.

yet it could not be *proved* that such an allusion was intended, so that what Seneca was doing, in his drama, carried only very limited political risk. I am inclined to think that the murder of Agrippina was at least one event in Seneca's mind. For soon after her death, there was a solar eclipse (30 April 59), and Rome was hit by celestial fire (Tacitus, *Annals* XIV, 12). No doubt Seneca, in his play, saw a similar connection between man's deeds and their effect on the universe; and, like Tacitus, he may well have thought that the gods did not intervene, in this process, on behalf of good, for, like Nero, Atreus does not get punished for his crime.

It would be easy to multiply instances of cruelty—particularly harmful because aimed at close relatives in a royal family—that Seneca may have had in mind,¹¹ but it is not necessary to explore all the possibilities here, and it must be confessed that we do not really know when Seneca wrote *Thyestes*. However, that should not prevent us from seeing the play, and what Seneca intended, as closely related to a context rather than divorced from it. I am persuaded by the arguments of Rozelaar (598 ff.) and others that it was Seneca who wrote the 'history play' *Octavia*, as traditionally believed;¹² and I have no difficulty accepting the fact that in it Seneca explicitly presents himself, Nero, and other historical persons. The play (whoever wrote it) is very similar in mode to Seneca's other tragedies, and not only points at the political implications in those, but is itself as evasive and ambiguous. We need not assume that Nero saw a performance, although he may well have done. The important point is that Nero, like Seneca, can be viewed in more than one way, and, as Calder says, 'Things are written so that different people will understand them on different levels' (5). The understanding of a Seneca play did not and does not simply depend on intelligence, but also on what the spectator or reader *wishes* to see, and if he happened to see something that he did not like, one could readily suggest that one had intended the opposite. Irony, for example, is a potent tool for a dramatist like Seneca. Calder rightly refers (8) to the conclusion of the dialogue between Atreus and his servant (Act II), which he translates as, 'I need no warning. In my heart dwell loyalty and fear but more—loyalty', commenting, 'Seneca says that he is bound to his sovereign more by loyalty than by fear; but the slightest pause before the delivery of the last word makes it clear that the other word is meant. On the other

¹¹ E.g. Caligula killing a man's son and then forcing him to drink a toast 'although he seemed to be drinking the blood of his son' (*De Ira*, II, xxxiii, 4).

¹² There are two chief groups of Seneca manuscripts, 'E' and 'A'. 'A', which often contains more forceful readings, includes *Octavia* as Seneca's, and its arrangement was the one generally accepted in the Renaissance.

hand, if challenged, Seneca, like Pilate, need but reply "quod scripsi, scripsi." ('What I have written, I have written.')

HEYWOOD

Jasper Heywood was born in London in 1535. His father was John Heywood, the writer of interludes and epigrammist, from whom Jasper may have derived an interest in dramatic technique, debating, and pointed expression. His mother was related to Sir Thomas More, which perhaps partly accounts for his principled religious views as a Catholic, as well as for his learning. His sister was the mother of John Donne.

Heywood was sent to Oxford in 1547, where he went through the regular curriculum of Grammar and Logic, took the B.A. in 1553, and proceeded, M.A. in 1558. An excellent student, he was elected a probationer fellow of Merton College in 1554, but in 1558 had to resign his post because of misdemeanour, though still in the same year he became Fellow at All Souls, where his three Senecan translations were completed, *Troas* (1559—the first translation of a Seneca play in England), *Thyestes* (1560), and *Hercules Furens* (1561). He also wrote a few short poems.

Heywood's brother Ellis almost certainly left England before Elizabeth came to the throne in 1558, and it is not necessary to assume that Jasper departed from All Souls in 1561 because a change of religion accompanied Elizabeth's ascension to the throne. The indications are that he was on good terms with her as a former page, and he dedicated *Troas* to her and the other translations to prominent men who were not of his religious conviction. But he may have hoped for advancement which did not come his way, and, after a stint at Gray's Inn (to which many young men with aspirations in law and literature came), he left for Rome where in 1562 he entered the Society of Jesus as a priest. It seems no pure accident that a fervent Catholic like Heywood (or his brother before him) chose this path when he did.

Heywood's life after this is less of our concern, since *Thyestes* had already been published, but a brief account may nevertheless be of some relevance and interest, particularly because it would seem to confirm what one would conclude both from the events described so far and from his Senecan translations. A very formidable intellectual, Heywood became a professor in several subjects at the Jesuit University of Dillingen in Bavaria (from 1564). He was at the same time an intense person, of great moral seriousness and uncompromising, leading a life difficult for others and himself. After prolonged quarrels concerning usury, he is supposed to have shown some degree

of mental instability, frequently being assaulted by imaginary apparitions of the devil and fears about the future of the Society on the one hand and periods of relative composure or indeed 'fits of unusual devotion and tears of unction' (DV, xix) on the other. It seems highly likely that the combination of character traits exhibited made Seneca a congenial author, as no doubt did the circumstances of Heywood's life.

In that we may note above all the insecurity caused by political and religious events, which of course a sensitive, earnest and independent mind would have found both absorbing and vexing. Apart from the general situation and the vicissitudes of Heywood's brief career in England, there was the dispute about usury in a foreign environment, and a not dissimilar theological one when Heywood became leader of the dangerous English Jesuit Mission in 1581. Recalled to the Continent in 1583, he was arrested¹ on the English coast; although he was not executed like others, he suffered imprisonment and subsequently permanent exile. After a period in France he proceeded to the Jesuit house in Naples, where he once again became embroiled in controversy. After much pain, physical and mental, he died there in 1598.²

'THYESTES' AS A RENAISSANCE PLAY

The play presented in this volume is not merely classical, but also one translated (with an intriguing addition) by an Elizabethan. One question that arises is how Seneca came to be of such interest to the Elizabethans, another how we are to read the play as itself a Renaissance artefact, which (I shall argue) has a good deal in common with important plays by artists like Shakespeare. The two questions are, in my view, connected, in that I consider the resemblance between Seneca's play, Heywood's, and, say, several of Shakespeare's, to be very close. Despite what are, of course, also very significant differences, it seems to me that the way we read a Shakespeare play need not essentially differ very much from the way we read *Thyestes*. In terms of their historical circumstances, their training and artistic structuring, as well as their concerns and 'world picture', Seneca and Shakespeare have many fundamental similarities. To give some indication, at least, of this fact, I shall later offer some critical analysis of *Thyestes* in relation to Shakespeare. But first, I will tackle the

¹ In 1581, Elizabeth had proclaimed the death penalty for Jesuits.

² Full accounts of Heywood's life are provided by DV (vii–xix) and O'K, whose first two Chapters (1–42) are admirably detailed.

general matter of Seneca's influence on the Renaissance—notably in tragedy—in an all-too-brief survey.

I

Time was, not so very long ago, that the influence of Seneca on Renaissance drama was seen as established beyond dispute. The consensus as reflected in critical writings does not appear to have been markedly affected even now, but the matter has proved sufficiently controversial to need some argument here rather than what might, in earlier decades, have been simply a survey of established opinion and work done. In this part of our discussion, we shall also be able to have a look at what generally I regard as 'externals' or 'fragments' rather than aspects of *basic* significance. For example, much of the debate has centred on such questions as whether or not Seneca was responsible for the use of the ghost in Renaissance tragedy, or the five-act structure, without (it must be stressed) much thought about the question of *function*.¹ As has been remarked by some recent critics,² Seneca's plays as plays have received scant attention; they are, indeed, widely misunderstood despite confident claims that we all know what they are. Even so, though a consideration of the ingredients which I shall say something about means comparatively little on its own, it does help to build up a cumulative picture of correspondences, and it will help to make a case against those who have been at pains to minimize Seneca's influence—generally, one must add, in profound distaste for him.

Furthermore, we must see the question of influence within a context much wider than is often allowed. For example, while the 'anti-Senecans' in this debate generally argue that it is difficult to feel sure that we can extricate Senecan elements from others, they tend to underestimate the very variety of the cultural world of which he was a crucial component. Though critic A might wrongly say, wishing to see Senecan influence, that a play is little more than Senecan, critic B, as his opponent, may just as onesidedly say that the play is essentially medieval and English. It is easy to overstate classical influence on the Renaissance; but it is just as dangerously tempting to go to the other extreme. In particular, critic B's inclination is to suggest that, if in the combination 'XY' it is difficult to distinguish

¹ This is not to deny the value of studies like Gisela Dahinten's *Die Geisterszene in der Tragödie vor Shakespeare* (Göttingen 1958), but to suggest that they do not sufficiently consider the *total* structure and intention of plays in which ghosts occur.

² Cf. the very useful survey by A.L. Motto and J.R. Clark, 'Senecan Tragedy: A Critique of Scholarly Trends', *Renaissance Drama*, n.s. VI (1973), 219–35, in which this point is rightly prominent.

between 'X' and 'Y', only one of the two is likely to be present. But a writer may well absorb 'Y' (a Senecan element) exactly because it resembles 'X' (a medieval one). Furthermore, if a dramatist absorbs 'Y' as part of a play, there is additional reason for believing 'Y' to be an element additional to 'X', especially if the play is acclaimed, a focus of recent attention, and readily available, as was the case with Seneca's tragedies.

But let us look at these factors and others somewhat more concretely. The case for Senecan influence was made towards the end of the nineteenth century by people like J.W. Cunliffe in *The Influence of Seneca on Elizabethan Tragedy* (London 1893, repr. 1965), the most widely discussed, but by no means the only, book dealing with the subject. Others, for example, were (in English) H.B. Charlton's *The Senecan Tradition in Renaissance Tragedy* (first published 1921 in *The Poetical Works of Sir William Alexander*, ed. by Charlton and L.E. Kastner; re-issued separately in Manchester, 1946; repr. 1974), and F.L. Lucas's *Seneca and Elizabethan Tragedy* (Cambridge 1922, repr. 1972). Cunliffe notably, but also others, including scholars not here quoted, did much to establish Seneca as instrumental in shaping Renaissance tragedy, and I add that I find his and Charlton's book, especially, still significant and persuasive.³

The attack on such work was led very largely by Howard Baker in his *Induction to Tragedy* (Louisiana 1939, repr. 1965), which is supported, and to some extent enlarged upon, by G.K. Hunter in *Shakespeare Survey* 20 (1967), 17–26, and in C.D.N. Costa ed., *Seneca* (London 1974), 166–204. (Both essays are reprinted in Hunter's *Dramatic Identities and Cultural Tradition*, Liverpool 1978.) I shall now first briefly answer these critics,⁴ but, in the process, move towards my own view.

Baker, writing after Willard Farnham's *The Medieval Heritage of Elizabethan Tragedy* (Oxford 1936, repr. 1963) which did provide a very valuable and scholarly antidote to the classicists, does the best he can to demolish the case for Seneca's influence even though, significantly, it is Seneca, rather than for example Ovid, whom he singles out for his onslaught. The book is extraordinarily partisan and onesided, and resorts to some very odd reasonings to make its case. Where Baker and Hunter are unfortunately on common ground with

³ The influence of Seneca on a good dramatist like Marston is surely pervasive and, if anything, should have been shown in greater detail in Cunliffe's volume. I stress this in order not to show an undue concern with *Selimus*, *Gismond of Salerne* etc., although Senecan borrowings are abundant in such plays. But cf. also e.g. Ben Jonson's *Sejanus*.

⁴ Peter Ure, in 'On Some Differences between Senecan and Elizabethan Tragedy', *Durham University Journal* XLI (1948–9), 17–23, is interesting but curiously divided in attitude.

the 'Senecans' is that their attention focuses on such things as 'the tragedy of blood', 'violence', 'sensational, hollow rhetoric', 'the revenge theme', 'the ghost', 'five acts', 'choruses', and 'isolated verbal parallels'. Baker spends much time on the ghosts in the metrical English tragedies that 'come back to this world to recount their "falls"' (109) when discussing *The Spanish Tragedy* although, in that play, the Ghost of Andrea is of a wholly different kind. He dwells also on 'complaining' ghosts in *The Mirror for Magistrates*, where (113) 'Buckingham goes so far as to say that his fall was deserved' (cf. by contrast Hamlet's father and Tantalus!). *The Mirror* was neither a play nor as close in time to Shakespeare's *Hamlet* as were recent editions of Seneca's plays either in Latin or in English. I am not suggesting that there are no similarities at all between Baker's ghosts and Elizabethan ones; only, that he cannot persuade one that these 'English' ghosts were more important to the Elizabethans than Seneca's.

It is occasionally believed that Baker 'proved' that the Thyestean banquet was not an influence on Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*, but Baker proved nothing of the kind. He did show the importance of Ovid for this play. But even he has to admit (122) that 'only in *Andronicus* and *Thyestes* is the number of victims the same'. The fact is soon brushed aside. It does not occur to Baker that Shakespeare, in his all-encompassing imagination, would readily have conflated *Thyestes* with the *Metamorphoses*, or indeed that Seneca himself is aware of the resemblance between the relevant stories. Many parallels between *Thyestes* and *Andronicus* are totally ignored in Baker's account.

It is neither necessary nor possible to go into similar detail about Baker's other points. They rest on false comparisons, special pleading, suppression of evidence. I briefly mention a few other things. The five-act division may derive from Terence as readily as Seneca, but that is not to say it is taken from Terence only. Although Baker's view on this is supported by T.W. Baldwin in *Shakespeare's Five-Act Structure* (Urbana, 1947), Baldwin is just as prejudiced, saying that, in comparison with Terence, of Seneca 'a very few editions managed to suffice' (151). Without denying Terence's popularity, I find this an astonishing statement: the truth is simply that Seneca was very widely read and highly praised; that many printed editions were produced from 1474 on, and that it was standard practice, even in early Seneca editions, to divide the play into five acts. Not that I find the issue as such a very important one, and the same goes for the Chorus. But Baker's comments about that are as superficial as those of his predecessors. The point is not whether only Seneca could have introduced such scant use of the Chorus as 'actor' as there is in English tragedy; rather, that the Senecan Chorus is instrumental in the total

shaping of non-realistic speeches in the Elizabethan drama which concentrate on the inner workings of the human mind.⁵ But let the reader for himself examine Baker's Chapter III.

As for Hunter, things do not seem much better. The starting point of his *Shakespeare Survey* article is a critique of Cunliffe as attaching too much importance to verbal parallels. But for one thing Cunliffe placed those parallels within some sort of context; for another, the parallels should be grouped hierarchically according to the degree of their persuasiveness. There are so many possible ones that I decided eventually not to try and list them comprehensively for this edition. One problem, for example, is that Seneca's influential *sententiae* ('wise sayings') occur very often in his writings; one does not necessarily feel that one can claim that what looks like a borrowing from *Thyestes* cannot come from another text. But this is not to say at all that there is no definite influence. For example, Marston confirms that fact by quoting from Seneca's Latin, so that we can only conclude that it is Seneca of whom he is thinking (cf. Cunliffe, 98 ff. and 128 ff.). The circumstance does not exactly help those who (as is common) try to confine Seneca's influence—if admitted—to a period well before 1600. Nor can such parallels (or, rather, *quotations*) be dismissed. Below this group of unassailable borrowings, there is one hardly less convincing though as yet not studied with great care: passages in English which could only have been translated from Seneca. Since it is often acknowledged, and rightly, that *Macbeth* is possibly Shakespeare's most obviously Senecan play, it is as well to refer to an example in that. It should be emphasized that, of course, there is no reason for thinking that only *Thyestes* influenced Shakespeare in this tragedy. One definite source, as B.R. Rees points out in 'English Seneca: a Preamble' (*Greece and Rome*, Oct. 1969, 119–33), is to be found in Seneca's *Hippolytus* (or *Phaedra*). Cf., in *Macbeth*,

Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood
Clean from my hand? No; this my hand will rather
The multitudinous seas incarnadine,
Making the green one red.

(II.ii. 60–3)

Professor Francis Johnson, Rees explains (121), has commented that 'the note to *oceanis* (*Hipp.* 717) in editions of Shakespeare's time read: *Non ipse Neptunus, universo mari suo*'. Surely Seneca—and only Seneca—can be Shakespeare's primary source here; and obviously Shakespeare in this instance used Seneca's Latin.

⁵ See Wolfgang Isemann's excellent *English Tragedy Before Shakespeare* (London 1961), concerning the development of dramatic speech.

Conclusively, the notion that the listing of parallel passages proves nothing, or almost nothing, is mistaken. Even if this Shakespearean borrowing in *Macbeth* is not as direct as it seems, it is unmistakably from Seneca. And that fact is given even greater force if we consider the context within which the borrowings took place. In his article for Costa's volume, Hunter (167) attacks Charlton for considering 'that the Italian imitators of Seneca [prior to Elizabethan tragedy] made him more horrific and "romantic" by combining his form with material from the *novelle*, and therefore brought him closer to Elizabethan taste. This means that, in Charlton's view, something called "the Italian Seneca" is present in Elizabethan borrowings of horrific *novelle* materials. The logical flaw in the argument is perhaps too obvious to require much elaboration.' On the contrary, it is the logical flaw in Hunter's argument which does require elaboration (though not much). There can be no doubt that Italy was a potent influence on English literature in the Renaissance. That being so, it is highly likely that the Elizabethans imported not only Seneca himself, but Italian elements with him.⁶ And in this case, one would not necessarily have to suppose that the two elements can never be separated.

The truly significant point that Charlton is making, in fact, is that the impact of Italian literature (which is not in dispute) is an *additional* reason for believing that Seneca influenced the Elizabethans—that one way in which he came to England was through Italy. Since much of Hunter's reasoning is along these odd lines, I trust I may be forgiven for now going into the question of context without mentioning all of his points specifically. I shall later come back to Hunter's remarkable claims (170) that, 'The perspectives of the ordinary world are essential to Shakespearean tragedy; they are quite absent from Seneca. . . . Shakespeare's ethic is Christian, and Seneca's is not. . . [ante] Seneca's plays stress the malevolent power of fate to bring men beyond what they had thought of as the final limits of cruelty and injustice'.

The influence of Seneca as a philosopher was wide and prevailing during much of the period from antiquity stretching through the 'dark ages' into the Renaissance, although his reputation varied somewhat from one time to another.⁷ Even the plays were not unknown, 'but very little is heard of them after Boethius until the first edition by Treveth in 1300' (Rees, 122). Those who so insistently want us to believe that things seemingly Senecan in the Renaissance are rather to be seen as

⁶ There is a translation of *Thyestes* by Lodovico Dolce (1547), which Heywood may have known though he does not appear to have been influenced by it. Dolce's version of *Jocasta* was the one translated by George Gascoigne.

⁷ Cf. e.g. G.M. Ross, 'Seneca's Philosophical Influence', in Costa (116-65); R.G. Palmer, *Seneca's De Remediis Fortuitarum and the Elizabethans* (Chicago 1953). For the prose style, cf. G. Williamson, *The Senecan Amble* (1951, repr. Chicago 1966).

'medieval' and 'English' are all too apt to forget that there is every likelihood that they are in fact talking about what is Senecan anyway (Chaucer, to mention only one great and certainly influential medieval English author, greatly admired Seneca's 'morality'). But, while already considerable before then, Seneca's stature grew enormously at the end of the fifteenth century and after. In England, he was commended by leading intellectuals both in the early part of the sixteenth century and much later; indeed, although his reputation was greatest in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, it lasted well into the eighteenth, and did not suffer a serious decline until the aberration of the nineteenth. The praises sung by Renaissance thinkers are a startling contrast to the condemnations of later critics who appear to think that their own negative feelings must surely have been shared by the Renaissance writers whom they admire but who clearly also admired Seneca. The influence of Seneca as a prosewriter, as regards both content and style, has been thoroughly investigated and does not appear to be in dispute. It would be most odd, in the light of this, if Seneca the dramatist was not taken very seriously. No-one, for that matter, doubts the Senecan impact on plays like *The Misfortunes of Arthur*. It is around one or two of the major authors like Shakespeare that the controversy centres—but, for all his originality, Shakespeare was not an isolated phenomenon out of touch with less important plays preceding him.

Apart from all this, there are additional factors to be considered, but I shall not attempt to put them all into relation to each other even though I consider every single one of them relevant to the matter of influence. For all the importance of Cicero or Ovid during the sixteenth century, Seneca's rise was precisely (if only in part) an anti-Ciceronian reaction at the end of the fifteenth century. He was printed many times and in many countries; this fact must indicate popularity and must at the same time have encouraged it. Indisputably, Seneca was the only classical tragedian whose works were in common circulation—any speculation about the influence of Greek tragic drama as distinct from his is beside the point, and only he conveyed it insofar as he was, or attempted to be, 'Greek' at all.⁸ The renewed interest in the classics was part of what is conventionally called 'the revival of learning', an undoubted process in sixteenth century England even if due stock is taken of whatever was 'native', and it must be added that the English were very keen to learn from

⁸ Much misguided energy has gone into comparisons of Seneca and his supposed Greek models, although there is no reason whatever for thinking that he wished to emulate them instead of writing a quite different kind of drama of his own. C.W. Mendell's *Our Seneca* (New Haven etc. 1941) is entirely based on this kind of thinking, and shows very little interest in 'our' (English?) Seneca.

continental (and not just ancient) authors, being by no means insular in their intellectual interests. They firmly looked at Seneca as one of their own, as seems evident from expressions like 'our Seneca' (Ascham) or 'English Seneca' (Nash), and the enthusiasm of Heywood's Preface.

Whatever has been thought since 1861,⁹ students of Heywood's generation thought of the plays as written for acting, and the fact that they were performed not only reflects a degree of popularity amongst a small but influential group, but also, and more importantly, must have been an experience to interest those involved in *drama*, either as writers or otherwise.

Even if read more often than acted, Seneca was the only *tragic* dramatist at all familiar to most Elizabethans. The importance of that unique and novel distinction surely is not easily overstated. It is suggested that we 'should...notice that there was only one translation of each tragedy in the period 1540-1640, and that the one complete edition of 1581 enjoyed only one printing' (Hunter in *Shakespeare Survey*, p. 21). But, once an efficient translation had been made available, why should the job soon be done again? Moreover, the 1581 edition was itself largely a reprint: including its appearance in this text, *Troas* was printed *four* times in all. And, chiefly, Hunter is looking at this with anachronistic eyes. The surprise is not that there should not have been more translating done than there was, but that it was extensive at all at a time when few people were able to read, when the author involved was both a dramatist and an intellectual, and when most of the people who *could* both read and be expected to take an interest were also normally those who understood Latin. That was the common situation amongst the dramatists, who, in a discussion of dramatic influence, are the only readers we need to consider.

The peak of Seneca's overall influence (which is, incidentally, a general European phenomenon)¹⁰ may be placed roughly around 1600 and thus well after Heywood's pioneering translations. This would suggest that one's critical suspicion that Seneca's influence on *Titus Andronicus* is superficial but that on *Macbeth* profound is in tune with

⁹ When Gaston Boissier began to wonder whether Seneca wrote for the stage: cf. S. Fortey-J. Glucker, 'Actus Tragicus: Seneca on the Stage', *Latomus* XXXIV (1975), 699-715, which is symptomatic of the recent trend back towards Renaissance thinking. See e.g. Rozelaar, esp. 481-540, who effectively answers O. Zwielerin, *Die Rezitationsdramen Senecas* (Meisenheim/Glan 1966). Even so, Seneca's art is surely verbal at least as much as theatrical: Clemen observes (41-2), 'There are plenty of intermediate steps between a speech-stage and an acting-stage, and it is among these that the true character of the Elizabethan theatre is to be sought.' This seems true also of Seneca.

¹⁰ For a comprehensive survey of Seneca's impact on several nations, see Jean Jacquot (ed.), *Les Tragédies de Sénèque et le Théâtre de la Renaissance* (Paris 1964); and cf. Ross's article.

history. The notion that the older emphasis on comparatively early plays does not take us far and that we should consider later ones instead was first formulated in a much-neglected article by H.W. Wells,¹¹ who mentions plays ranging from 1599 to 1611. Those were the years when Shakespeare's main tragedies were written, and I will draw especially on those in discussing *Thyestes* as, fundamentally, a Renaissance play as much as a classical one.

II

Wells, seeking explanations for Seneca's popularity in the Renaissance, finds these primarily in 'his success in representing his own times and foreshadowing the new temper springing up in the world about him. Like the Elizabethan poets...he witnessed a period of marked material progress and spiritual decay: vast, cruel and unscrupulous world ambitions on the one side and the loss of a religious and moral faith on the other... This means that the tragedy of Seneca is a spiritual progenitor of the Elizabethan tragic mind which culminates in *Hamlet*. Seneca's disillusionment, pessimism and pervasive melancholy is therefore a part of the background against which *Hamlet* stands' (76-7). He goes on to point out that the plays had relevance to the political problems of the Renaissance, referring to the fact that the beginning of Act II of *Thyestes*, 'of all Seneca's plays the most popular among Elizabethans', contains 'some of the best known "Machiavellian" commonplaces'; and he sees Seneca as a spokesman for 'a new individualism' (78).

This analysis of the overall resemblance between such concerns in Seneca's plays and those of the Elizabethans seems to me correct,¹² although one must add immediately that there will be other very important aspects to look at, and that a *preoccupation* with "Machiavellian" commonplaces' or 'a new individualism' does not necessarily imply approval.

Still, one way of looking at *Thyestes* is in terms of the contrast between the ambitions of Atrous on the one hand and the 'loss of a religious and moral faith on the other'. Certainly cruel heroes like Richard III, Macbeth and Tamburlaine exhibit traits similar to those of Atrous. The loss of faith evident in *Hamlet* seems to me also characteristic of the temper of *King Lear*—one play, at least, which

¹¹ 'Senecan Influence on Elizabethan Tragedy: a Re-Estimation', *The Shakespeare Association Bulletin*, Jan. 1944, 71-84.

¹² One may add that ours, too, has been a period of what Wells calls 'marked material progress and spiritual decay', which might be one reason for the current Senecan Renaissance, something quite recent though impressively foreshadowed in T.S. Eliot's 'Seneca in Elizabethan Translation' (1927; repr. in *Selected Essays*, London 1932 and many times after), and R.M. Gummere's fascinating *Seneca the Philosopher and his Modern Message* (Boston 1922).

like *Hamlet* is not very profitably discussed, as Hunter would have us do, in terms of the 'perspectives of the ordinary world' supposedly 'essential to Shakespearean tragedy' and which surely shows exactly 'the malevolent power of fate to bring men beyond what they had thought of as the final limits of cruelty and injustice' which Hunter wishes to see as exclusively Senecan.

But, before exploring the larger questions of the nature of evil and its place in the universe in both Seneca and Shakespeare, it may be wise to say a little more about the specifically political aspects, and some religious ones in relation to them. *Thyestes* is for one thing a play about kings and government. Evil in the play assumes a colossal status because the stakes for both Atreus and Thyestes are high and because, once it affects a king, it will inevitably damage the state and the universe. As in, say, *Richard III* and *Macbeth*, the evil of the protagonists cannot be seen as a merely private or restricted matter. For the state to function well—indeed, for the universe to do so—it is crucial that kings behave properly. Seneca's attitude, however, like Shakespeare's or Marlowe's, also is in part one of considerable admiration for an ambitious and clever king, and, although the king has obligations to others, there is no suggestion that the very idea of a monarchy is bad. On the contrary, a strong monarchy is essential for order, and one of the reasons for the disasters of *Thyestes* is that the monarchy is contested. That situation was a familiar one to Elizabethan audiences. For example, *Gorboduc* (1561–2), is largely preoccupied with the competing claims of two brothers (cf. Atreus and Thyestes). This reflects the concern felt about the events surrounding the reigns of Henry VIII's daughters Mary and Elizabeth, who did not inherit the crown through hereditary rights but through an Act of Parliament and who showed how wildly things could fluctuate if the question of succession (and hence of power) was not unequivocally settled. *Richard II*, although not portraying a conflict between two brothers or a difference between two sisters, shows what uncertainty arises if a weak king is threatened by 'a new individualism' in the shape of a relative who shows that might is right in practice even if not in theory.

This last point is also one of the more striking ones in *Thyestes*. Our sympathy may well be with Thyestes, but, accepting the *name* of king only, like Lear or in some senses Richard II, he enables the opportunism of Atreus to triumph. The attitude of the dramatists to such a situation seems ambiguous. Not only do they allow us to feel sympathy (if not admiration) for the kings 'in name', but also admiration (if not sympathy) for the cleverness of their opponents. And considerable doubt attaches, in the end, to the question whether might *is* right even from its own narrow perspective. Bolingbroke suffers, both in his mind and because people rebel against him. Atreus

may seem safe, but throughout the play he fears plots against him, and we cannot be confident that he is not going to be punished for his crime. Seneca probably supposed his audience to know that later Thyestes' son Aegisthus would kill Atreus; and—in less worldly terms—we must remember that Atreus' crime outstrips that of his grandfather Tantalus and that Tantalus, as we can see at the beginning of the play, suffers in hell on account of his crime.

This play, like those of Shakespeare, was not written to embody one particular view which we can conveniently label, e.g. 'Christian' or 'pagan' or 'Stoic'. Rather, Seneca, like Shakespeare, explores various possibilities. A play allowed one to do this in troubled and dangerous times: it could be interpreted in more than one way, as Shakespeare shows in his handling of the play-scene within *Hamlet*, although no doubt Shakespeare calculated his risks more carefully than did his protagonist.

But not only was the Renaissance a time of political upheaval; it knew considerable religious uncertainty. People like Atreus or Henry VIII were able to show that one could take very bold steps which, unexpectedly, the gods did not immediately punish. On the contrary, although Henry treated his wives in a way Atreus would have approved and daringly asserted his own power against that of Rome, England grew more prosperous. But that is not to say that men were agreed in their religious views, and felt no anxiety. The impact of religious debate and turmoil on the continent, and the fact that in England the 'official' religious view changed according to who happened to be in power, could only further undermine religious confidence.

It is with such events in mind that we must consider the importance of a recent book by Joel B. Altman, *The Tudor Play of Mind* (Berkeley etc., 1978). Altman's central thesis, as I see it, is that Tudor plays are not to be understood as presenting a onesided picture of things, but that, on the contrary, the Renaissance mind was rhetorically trained to see both sides of a question and did so. It is never to be forgotten that in this respect Tudor education was very like Seneca's own. We may, in fact, expect such training to have shaped a similar outlook to his. What Altman might have stressed more, is that the background against which this intellectual activity took place was also one to encourage a questioning spirit, both in Seneca's time and that of the Tudors.

Therefore, it is not easy, and not necessary, to try and provide a definite answer to some of the important questions that one might ask about authorial attitudes in Senecan or Renaissance drama. Of course, rather than making us intellectually lazy, such plays stimulate us if we are receptive to them. We should examine them thoroughly to see just what questions they ask and what responses they seek to produce. We

should not rule out the possibility that one kind of answer is finally preferred to another, but we should not too quickly decide that we know the answer.

Thus the ending of *Thyestes* as Seneca provides it should probably leave us less permanently perplexed than we might at first feel inclined to be. It is no doubt *meant* to be perplexing.¹³ Will Atreus really have the upper hand as much as seems to be the case, or will the gods punish him, as Thyestes hopes at the end of V.iii? Just what is Seneca's attitude to the two heroes anyway?

One argument that can be advanced is that Seneca is largely on Thyestes' side. After all, upon his return from exile Thyestes gives us familiar Stoic views resembling those of Seneca in many other places. And what Thyestes says seems sensible and even attractive. It is no doubt true that the glitter of court blinds one to its treachery and threats. The wise man rather puts up with what appears to be the hardship of the simple life of a beggar, but which in fact gives him emotional security. It is right to value one's children and brother. If one sins, one may get punished by the gods: Thyestes asks for such punishment as a result of his own misdeeds as well as Atreus'.

Certainly it is difficult to feel as much sympathy for Atreus' position. But sympathy is not the only emotion at issue. There is the painful question to be asked: is Thyestes' judgement of *reality as it is* borne out by the facts? And perhaps, from this point of view, Atreus, however horrifying, inspires us with awe not just because of his cruelty or even his cleverness, but because, even though in some respects insane, he manages to make things go his way—at least superficially. Of course it is true that Atreus tricks Thyestes, but it may be, after all, that Thyestes should have shared more of Atreus' suspicion of other people. Thyestes holds forth at length about the true kingship of the controlled mind as against the false kingship of him who gives in to passion for luxury and power: but as soon as Thyestes' own reaction is tested—once he is tempted by Atreus' offer—his philosophy, despite anxiety and debate, makes way for both the pull of fate and his own weakness. Seneca *in practice* never seems to be optimistic about man's ability to resist what soon becomes an over-powering force. One can argue that Thyestes' surrender is the result of a fault, but one can also say that the fact that it takes place casts grave doubt on the validity of his philosophy. And perhaps the gods do punish crimes, but it may also be that what happens is first and foremost the product of man's actions. Possibly a power greater

¹³ I take it that Heywood found it so, and (a) wished to establish Thyestes as primarily responsible for the crime, (b) could not bear the thought of gods not intervening. These feelings seem to lie at the root of his addition (scene 4). We should accept the uncertainty of Seneca's ending.

than Atreus will drive him into hell like Tantalus, but what meanwhile we know—*what we have actually seen*—is that the crime jointly committed by Atreus and Thyestes is capable of affecting the universe. It may be one of the play's greatest ironies that Thyestes has unwittingly demonstrated, by eating his children and the aftermath of that, how even the course of the stars is dictated by man apparently with the support of gods who do not oppose evil but condone or even encourage it.

I do not contend that there is any single Shakespeare play quite like this. But I do suggest that the way things are seen and presented is fundamentally close to that of some of Shakespeare's greatest plays. I have already referred to *Richard II*, but *King Lear* shows an even more devastatingly similar view to Seneca's. The common ground of exploration in particular concerns the notion of 'good' as distinct from 'evil', and the power of each in relation to the universe. What Shakespeare comforts us with is not, I believe, a Christian view, but, on the contrary, the Senecan idea that good is, although powerless to shape events and unassisted by benevolent gods, capable of enduring and protecting itself so long as it is contented with what I have just called 'the hardship of the simple life of a beggar'. At court and as king, Lear does not 'know himself' (cf. *Thyestes* Act II, the end of Chorus' speech). The only way he can master the hard lessons to be learned is by suffering on the heath. He finds out what Thyestes knows but does not act on, viz. that such a 'natural' life, despite all its pain, is preferable to that of someone who deludes himself into thinking that he can be happy as king. One of the interesting findings is that it is at court where one can trust no one and is deceived and lonely, but that *reliable* contact with others can only be established in the harshest of circumstances. As soon as he comes back to court, Thyestes loses his children—indeed, takes part in destroying them; only when acquiring proper vision, like Gloucester who must first lose his eyes, does Lear come to recognize his true daughter.

Obviously, Hunter's distinctions between Senecan and Shakespearean drama do not make much sense when the plays are seen in this way, but one must quarrel with him in particular when he sets up a supposedly Christian attitude for Shakespeare in contrast with what he imagines Seneca's to be. Like Shakespeare, Seneca does arrive at a view of what is good as distinct from evil, though in both cases it takes considerable effort to come to an understanding of a difficult truth. But even more remarkable than the ethical is the metaphysical outlook of both authors. What entitles us to the view that *Lear* is specifically Christian in this respect? Surely very little. The *possibility* is kept open, as in *Thyestes*, that there are gods, but we cannot be too sure that they are not merely the invention of the human mind. Even if they have some sort of objective existence, there is no guarantee at

all that the 'gods are just', as Edgar claims in *Lear* (V.iii. 170). It does appear that evil gets punished. But it is telling that the very sin to which Edgar refers us (Gloucester's sexual lapse) seems trivial in comparison to his punishment or the evil of Edmund. And the gods give very little evidence indeed of supporting virtue, allowing Cordelia to die.

Seneca is often considered in relation to a central preoccupation, in Elizabethan drama, with revenge. But in this area, again, the discussion has often become misleading as a result of undifferentiated views. Seneca tends to be associated with 'blood' and 'cruelty', whereas someone like A.P. Rossiter holds, in *English Drama from Early Times to the Elizabethans* (1950; repr. London 1969), that 'By English standards revenge was murder. . . .' (169). With respect to the greatest of Renaissance revenge plays, *Hamlet*, this attitude leads us away from seeing any common ground at all. Time and again critics who believe that Shakespeare must have seen revenge as murder are tempted into arguing that Shakespeare, with Hamlet, has considerable qualms about the appropriateness of Hamlet's task as urged upon him by the Ghost of his father. Much of the argument of Gareth Lloyd Evans' interesting 'Shakespeare, Seneca, and the Kingdom of Violence'¹⁴ is along these lines, I can only agree that there is a possibility that Hamlet's hesitation is condoned by Shakespeare; but predominantly I find that Hamlet's procrastination is to be seen as a rationalization for cowardice and mental paralysis on his part. In Act I, he admits that the ghost is 'honest' (v. 138). Despite his waverings later, he correctly wonders in IV.iv. 44-6, 'Why yet I live to say "This thing's to do" / Sith I have cause, and will, and strength, and means, / To do. . .'; when finally he does kill his uncle, there is no sign whatever that Shakespeare disapproves.

A major difference between Hamlet and Atreus is that Hamlet is too lethargic about his revenge while Atreus is too enthusiastic. It is too simple to suggest that Seneca approves of revenge while Shakespeare does not. Both authors can see the justice of the 'an eye-for-an-eye' attitude, but both also deplore the effect that the idea of revenge has on the revenger. It produces insanity in both Atreus and Hamlet, although the insanity is limited in effect, and different in emphasis. This seems due, in part, to the difference between Thyestes and Claudius. As presented in *Thyestes*, it is the nominal hero who is ineffective, melancholy, and too thoughtful for his own and the world's good, although morally preferable to Atreus. In *Hamlet*, the nominal hero is also the true hero who is the focus of attention and who is to be responsible for the major action—although paradoxically he does not produce much of it. In *Thyestes*, the revenger is also the

¹⁴ In T.A. Dorey and D.R. Dudley (eds.), *Roman Drama* (London 1965), 123-159.

morally more villainous character, whereas in *Hamlet* that role is reserved for Hamlet's opponent. In part, therefore, *Hamlet* is *Thyestes* inverted; this does make for quite a different play, in which a world-weary attitude gains more prominence. Even so, we can see Shakespeare as varying Seneca rather than as parting company from him.¹⁵

In *Othello*, we can more immediately see a structural resemblance with *Thyestes*, in that the Othello-Iago combination inherits much of the villainy, cleverness, sick imagination and sadistic revenge-impulse of Atreus, and, like him, at the same time dominates the play. Even the sincere belief that there is a grievous wrong to be revenged, leading to ritualistic acts, is evident in both cases. At the same time, a comparison between *Othello* and *Thyestes* also shows that *revenge*, as such, is something existing chiefly in the minds of characters in the plays, while it is *evil* with which the dramatists are primarily concerned. Othello has no reason for revenge other than that he believes Iago and is confronted by a set of circumstances which makes his reaction understandable though wrong. Iago is more intrinsically evil and sadistic, like Atreus, but has some slight basis for feeling wronged, e.g. because Othello has passed him over. Atreus has more solid ground for revenge, but his evil is utterly disproportionate to his justification.

Clearly, then, the dramatists are more interested in what happens psychologically than in any neat correlation between a misdeed and an appropriate or inappropriate punishment for that. It is because revenge interested Seneca less than appears that it is *Macbeth* which has, of the major Shakespearean tragedies here discussed, the most profound resemblance to *Thyestes* as far as the hero and his wife are concerned, and in its overall structure and method of treatment.

C. J. Herington, in his masterly critical essay 'Senecan Tragedy' (*Arion* V, 1966; repr. Niall Rudd, ed., *Essays on Classical Literature Selected from Arion*, Cambridge 1972) appears to give the best recent analysis of the form and content of the plays. He distinguishes three movements in the course of the plot: 'The Cloud of Evil (this coincides with a formal division, The Prologue); The Defeat of Reason by Passion; finally, The Explosion of Evil, consequence of that defeat' (197). This scheme, I believe, also underlies *Macbeth*, and we can see it in other Shakespeare tragedies, though less immediately. In

¹⁵ I am well aware of the more usual approach to Hamlet via Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy*, but that play by itself is very Senecan, and there is no need to suppose that there is no close connection between a play in which the hero is 'a revenger of blood' and another in which 'the protagonist is a villain' (cf. F.T. Bowers, *Elizabethan Revenge Tragedy 1587-1642*, 1940; repr. Gloucester, Mass., 1959, 270-1). A peculiarly interesting aspect of Kyd's play is the fact that its language is poised between that of Heywood and that of Shakespeare.

Macbeth, we would have to add a movement not characteristic of Seneca, 'The Restoration of Order', which modern critics have often made much of, and which does, of course, offer a different view of life. However, we cannot be confident that this last movement necessarily shows God's hand as much as is often thought. For one thing, the conclusion satisfies our perfectly earthly wish for revenge: Macbeth is dead, and there will be a new and better king. For another, the audience's attention—and much of its sympathy—stays with Macbeth as a far more human and interesting person than his rather lifeless opponents. Even so, the possibility, at least, remains open that God is furthering good; and the future looks brighter than at the end of *Thyestes*.

But despite this difference and many others, the parallels between the plays—and I do not even principally mean verbal ones—are highly significant and interesting.¹⁶ Let us consider merely some of the more striking resemblances which are too often and too easily overlooked.

'The Cloud of Evil' presents itself in the form of Tantalus (plus Fury), or the Witches. We may add to this as a potent factor that in both plays there is a set of circumstances in earthly affairs which triggers off the opportunity for evil. In *Thyestes*, the kingdom hovers uneasily between Atreus and Thyestes as the result of past misdeeds, while in *Macbeth* it is torn by a rebellion. The ambitious heroes, Atreus and Macbeth, have singularly gullible victims in Thyestes and Duncan. Lady Macbeth is absent from *Thyestes*, but some of her function is taken over by Tantalus and the Fury as more complex figures than the witches. We should not, moreover, look for physical equivalents, but for mental ones. Both plays are predominantly symbolic in mode, or use personifications or artificial speakers,¹⁷ rather than attempt to present characters that we can immediately recognize as life-like. This is not to suggest, of course, that there is no realistic element in, for example, the way the minds of Atreus and Macbeth work, or in the graphic descriptions of some of the events or settings.

Like the ghost in Hamlet, Tantalus's ghost is most obviously that of a close relative of the hero seeking revenge through him, but it

¹⁶ Close verbal parallels with other plays by Seneca are presented in Kenneth Muir's *The Sources of Shakespeare's Plays* (London 1977), 211 ff. Almost certainly Shakespeare consulted the Elizabethan translations as well as Seneca's Latin. See also Geoffrey Bullough's *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*, Vol. VII (London 1973), 451 ff. For an account of non-verbal resemblances, see Paul Bacquet, 'Macbeth et l'influence de Sénèque', *Bulletin de la Faculté des Lettres de Strasbourg*, May-June 1961, 399-411. I agree with some of Bacquet's points, but not with his overall approach.

¹⁷ Cf., in *Macbeth*, characters like the Old Man in II.iv, or even Malcolm and Macduff as presented in IV.iii.

should be immediately observed that it is in fact the Fury who is more actively evil and who propels him. If we are to understand Atreus (or Macbeth), we should see that Tantalus, after his own misdeed, is profoundly unhappy, and that his attitude to the new crime of the play is one of vacillation. Indeed, he has a positive distaste for the atrocity envisaged. Seneca is saying that Tantalus, like Macbeth, has a capacity for committing evil but also recoils from it; that he suffers after it and while contemplating the prospect of it; and that he needs to be whipped into action, mentally speaking, if he is not to refrain from it. The Fury, like Lady Macbeth, represents unmitigated, enthusiastic evil although even the power of that has a fascinating lure which makes the weakness of characters like Tantalus and Macbeth more understandable to us.

The element of revenge, in both plays, is quite subordinate to that of ambition and unjustified lust for evil. Of course Atreus has a motive for revenge, which Macbeth has not, but, combining in himself much of the drive of both Macbeth and his wife, Atreus' interest is primarily in making his power truly absolute, outwitting his brother, and satisfying a sadistic streak which is less obvious in *Macbeth*. Even so, it is there found, in the Witches, in Macbeth's attitude when fighting rebels at the beginning of the play, and in Lady Macbeth's unnatural cruelty.

Evil, both plays indicate, is something both inside us and external. The Witches are probably not merely a symbol for the evil in Macbeth's mind, but also a force outside him which attracts him like a magnet. The plays do not resolve the question whether man is fully in command of his own actions or steered by powers (the Witches, the Fury) which he cannot control. It seems that those powers, while strong, will not succeed in their operation unless man himself makes an initial choice. It cannot be argued in defence of Macbeth that he did not *know* the distinction between good and evil, and that he did not have a choice. Although Atreus is closer to Lady Macbeth, the conflicting possibilities confronting him are presented to us in the crucial first Act of *Thyestes*, and after that in the dialogue between Atreus and his servant. Again, we should realize that Atreus as a character is of less interest to Seneca than is the debate which must reveal to us the issues involved. But even if we see the servant as separate from Atreus rather than as a part of his mind, there is the fact that the inner workings of his mind are reflected in a form very close to Shakespearean soliloquy, and that he has hesitations about his action ('But why, my mind, yet dread'st thou so at last . . .?', II. 108). He is not incapable of 'piety' towards members of his family (cf. II. 148 ff.). Seneca emphasizes to us, as does Shakespeare, that man *does* have a choice, and that even the worst creatures hear the voice of good inside them. At the same time, the temptation of evil, as presented by

a spirit like the Fury or a woman like Lady Macbeth, is enormous. Even Thyestes yields to it, although with him the pull is stronger in the other direction—something no doubt learned as a result of his absence from court, but also intrinsic. Seneca is not suggesting that all men are the same, or, as Hunter (Costa, 174) astonishingly asserts, that 'there is no assurance of a mind or society outside the criminal mind'. Such a view not only rests on a onesided interpretation of the character of Atreus, but pays no attention at all to that of Thyestes and his touching concern for his children. It does not come to grips with the way Seneca (like Shakespeare) constructs his play as, amongst other things, a series of parallels that constantly invite us to gain insight by comparison. For example, Atreus predominantly veers towards evil, but even he hesitates and has a vestige of feeling for some immediate relatives; Thyestes predominantly veers towards good and has strong intrinsic affection for his children and his brother, but even he makes the wrong choice.

The process according to which a character comes to a choice is seen as something of a mystery. The ingredients involved are presented clearly, but it is not obvious how, finally, the balance is tipped. It may seem that Macbeth merely listens to his wife when he moves from 'We will proceed no further in this business' (I.vii. 31) to 'Bring forth men-children only' (I.vii. 72); more likely, the final decision is, as in Seneca, to be seen as the product of a highly complex combination of circumstances, external influence, and aspects of character make-up. But once a choice in favour of evil action has been arrived at, we do indeed see 'The Explosion of Evil' which is Herington's third phase. In both plays, good is often curiously impotent anyway; but when man opts for evil that force—which in any case also exists outside him—is of staggering strength and intensity, not only destroying perfectly innocent victims (particularly, in both plays, children), but infecting other people, and causing chaos in the universe (darkness in both plays, Duncan's horses eating each other, etc.). The notion that evil is contagious like a disease is particularly important, and perhaps not always immediately apparent. We see it, however, in Banquo's cowardice, and in the fact that Thyestes' son Phylisthenes feels more attracted to power than he does; in both cases, the lesser evil is no doubt in part the result, even if indirectly, of the greater evil that has come to dominate the kingdom.

At the same time, we become aware, not only of the pathetic nature of good, but also of the obsessive, restless, unhappy nature of evil. Even amidst his gloating, Atreus complains (V.iii. 89), 'My wrath beguiled is'. And common to both plays also is the notion that the evil man constantly has to persuade himself with such strange reasonings as 'Things bad begun make strong themselves by ill' (*Macbeth* III.iii. 55), and forever lives in paranoid fear of others (Banquo, Thyestes).

Also, the evil man is always pretending, and the contrast between 'appearance' and 'reality' is a central notion in both Seneca and Shakespeare.

To drive home their contrast between good and evil, both authors repeatedly use irony of an artistically most satisfying kind. It is in the nature of good not to suspect evil while yet evil is never far away. In *Thyestes*, the Chorus is treated with some irony: by no means always close to the action or understanding it, the Chorus is apt to show a naivety which can only highlight the power of evil, for instance when it claims at the end of Act III that 'No greater force than piety may be' (line 4), while Atreus' plot is already well under way despite appearances to the contrary. Thyestes' son (III.i. 84) says to Thyestes, '... this, father, is to you my last request' without realizing the literal truth of his words. Only a genius like Shakespeare can rival such ironies with (I.iv. 13 ff.) Duncan's statement 'He was a gentleman on whom I built/An absolute trust...' followed by 'Enter MACBETH...' and then by 'O worthiest cousin!'

A few brief remarks will have to suffice about the imagination in both authors. In these two plays, I think it is Seneca's which is the stronger, or which at least hits one with more surprise. In part, I suppose this is due to the fact that Seneca's tragedy is even more dependent than Shakespeare's on the report of action rather than on events presented on the stage. The audience's imagination is reached through words, and therefore brought into more dynamic play. The description of the place where Atreus commits the murder of his nephews is a typical example (IV. 18 ff.), and, despite Baker (130 ff.), it is this passage which Shakespeare plainly—and not unsuccessfully—imitates in *Titus Andronicus* (II.iii. 92 ff.), understanding its symbolic function though unable to match its intensity. Part of the impact in Seneca's version derives from the length of his description, from his loving attention to detail.

But in that attention to detail there is also another factor involved. Generally, horror in Shakespeare is of the crudely sensational kind typical of much in *Titus Andronicus* and often associated with Seneca though totally unlike him. In *Macbeth*, the hero is prone to violence and imagines it vividly (I.iii. 130 ff. and II.i. 33 ff.), but his fascination with the abomination is less prolonged and less obviously physical in emphasis than Seneca's own in describing Atreus' actions. Or, to take an example from *Lear*, the blinding of Gloucester's eyes, however painful to us, is dwelt on with less artistry than Seneca displays. One can only conclude that the sensations involved were more familiar to Seneca, who manages to depict what commonly we experience in nightmares rather than daily life. Notable is an obsession with things or people tottering, doomed to collapse though slow to do so, for example the palace 'shaking as in waves it stood' (IV. 75), or young

difficulty here is his neglect of *set alow*, which, if he had observed it, would have led to the conclusion that *humi iacentem* is connected with *casam* and has nothing to do with L's misleading punctuation or translation.

Very often, unjust verdicts arise from a misunderstanding of Heywood's English. The reader needs to consider this very precisely. For example, with reference to I.32-3, 'From brethren proud let rule of kingdom flit/ To runagates; and swerving state of all unstable things. . .'. O'Keefe asserts that Heywood 'garbles the meaning here by translating "repetantque profugos" as a reference to the instability of life' (152). Not so, if it is understood that *runagates* means 'fugitives'. Somewhat further (84-5) 'inferque tecum proelia et ferri malum/ regibus amorem. . .' attracts the attention of O'Keefe, who claims (153) that Heywood 'confuses these verses badly, "and of th'unhappie swoorde/ all loue to kynges. . ." . . . He takes "malum" with "ferri," not with "amorem"; and he fails to understand that "ferri. . . amorem" means "lust for the sword." But O'Keefe does not have his eye on Heywood's English, which contains *Ill*, not *all*. *Ill love* is an exact rendering of *malum amorem*, and even in the version which O'Keefe imputes to Heywood—and which O'Keefe syntactically miscomprehends—we have to see the connection *love. . . of. . . sword*, to which Heywood merely (and not inappropriately or fancifully) adds *th'unhappie*.

Enough will have been said to indicate that the modern reader should not be inclined to confuse his own ignorance or inaccuracy with Heywood's competence. What Heywood shows at the very least is an uncommon ability to understand and translate Seneca accurately as a sixteenth century scholar using different Latin texts and a different language from today's. If we wish to criticize him, we shall have to find other reasons for doing so. In fairness to O'Keefe, it should be said that some of his work is better than would appear from this summary.

Opinions are somewhat divided about the desirability of the closeness of Heywood's *Thyestes* translation. It is generally agreed that it is a good deal less free than his rendering of *Troas* (1558; published twice in 1559 and again in, probably, 1563). I am inclined to agree with DV that the freedom 'may result from a less perfect knowledge of the Latin original. . .' (xxviii), though no doubt several of the departures were intentional, as Heywood partly explains in his 'Preface'; he appears to have aimed at something reasonably intelligible to his readers, and O'Keefe interestingly suggests that he may have had a performance of *Troas* in mind. At all events, whether the comparative freedom of the *Troas* translation was wholly within Heywood's control or not, several critics have preferred it as both more independent than his *Thyestes*, and less difficult to understand.

The first point is something we cannot confidently discuss until we know more about his handling of G and Asc in the case of *Troas* and have studied the printing (about which Heywood complains) with care, but, assuming even that Heywood was closer in *Thyestes* only because he wanted to be, it is difficult to see why the freedom of *Troas*, deliberate or not, should be preferred. Such a preference seems to be based on a nineteenth century admiration for 'originality', and the idea that there is something less than respectable in following a Latin text closely in one's English translation is altogether foreign to Heywood's general ideal and that of his age. Those who do not greatly concern themselves with Latin-English translation as an activity generally have little idea of the real art which a good rendering requires: an ability to enter into the spirit and language of the original and to convey what one sees into a different medium which will sometimes allow one to retain elements of the original fairly easily but often requires the use of quite different words or syntactical patterning. Above all, as Heywood's 'Preface' to *Thyestes* shows, his wish was to pay due respect to a great classic and to preserve the value of what Seneca wrote; if we at a later stage of civilization treasure whatever is 'new' and divorced from an intense understanding of the past the loss is ours. The English Renaissance, like all great periods of culture, understood what it needed to take from foreign and older authors to make life richer, yet also what it had to 'anglicize'; and in this process the many translations from authors like Seneca play a highly significant part.

However, one may well wish to argue that Heywood's adherence to the Latin in *Thyestes* makes his English unduly difficult to comprehend. In this charge there is some justice. Admittedly, he translates some names in a way presumably designed to make identification easier (e.g. L 272 *Odrysia-Thracian*, L 815 *Eoos-Aurora*), and some of his elaborateness may also help his readers, e.g. L 779 *artos suos*, lit. 'his limbs', which Heywood translates (IV.157) as 'limbs to which he once gave life'—to make plain that Thyestes is not eating his own arms and legs, but his children's ('his' in a different sense). But, as even an experienced editor like McIlwraith shows in some astonishing modernizations, it is likely that a modern reader who does not consult a Latin text while reading Heywood will—often disastrously—get the sense wrong, as with L *Agnosco fratrem* which clearly means 'I know my brother' (V.iii. 37), where McIlwraith has 'I know, my brother'. Most often, even a contemporary of Heywood who might have understood the words more readily than we frequently do, would have found the relationship between them, the syntax, especially difficult, although the word order of sixteenth century English was more flexible than ours. As McIlwraith complains, Heywood was particularly fond of inversions, even in his

introductory material, 'where there can be no defence that he was influenced by the word-order of a Latin original' (x). Of course a modern edition like the present one should comment on such instances wherever necessary; however, it was not Heywood's *intention* to make his translation—leave alone his own verse—obscure.

What an 'English' inversion like 'That I thee dare attempt to send him to' (which McIlwraith objects to) probably indicates is what it seems to me Heywood's practice as a translator consistently reveals, viz. that he considered the word order of Latin to have merit as such, even though the title page of *Hercules Furens* asserts about that translation that 'ye may see verse for verse turned as far as the phrase of the English permiteth' (my italics). The problem is not so much that the word order of Heywood's time does not 'permit' what he does, but that he only partly succeeds in reaching the reader who does not know Latin. On the other hand, I do not object as strongly as McIlwraith and many others to Heywood's adopting much of the word order of his source (examples are so numerous as not to need quoting). The objection, as in the case of Milton, often rests on the feeling that what we are offered is not 'true English'. But, however unusual, most of Milton's or Heywood's constructions are possible English ones. For Heywood, an advantage was that any reader wishing to use his translation as a means of learning Latin could do so more easily if the word order in the translation was fairly similar. But above all we should be openminded about what 'true English' is or should be—such a notion may well vary according to time, or the purpose of individual artists. The Renaissance clearly experimented very much more than our own time with the possibility that the syntax and vocabulary of English might be enriched by Latinizing it to some extent, and, although this has not happened as much as Heywood's language suggests he might have wanted, English is none the poorer for having been influenced by languages like Latin or French. Furthermore, his adhering to Seneca's word order was one instrumental factor in giving a native audience a taste of what Seneca—himself a master in the arrangement of words—wrote like, and the very fact that the reader has to pay attention makes him more alert to a word order which heightens the intensity of what is being said through such things as unexpected emphasis and caesura (which certainly does not always occur after the fourth foot of the iambic fourteener, and the placing and force of which may well have influenced those who came to prefer blank verse for their writing).

Certain extraordinarily beautiful arrangements in Seneca do, of course, get lost in the translation, like L 613–4:

quem dies vidit veniens superbum,
hunc dies vidit fugiens iacentem.

H translates:

Whom dawn of day hath seen in pride to reign,
Him overthrown hath seen the evening late.

(III, Chorus, 68–9)

These are careful lines, not least aesthetically, but lacking Seneca's subtly varied near-repetition. However, Heywood has managed to produce that just before (65–6):

What your inferior fears of you amiss,
That your superior threats to you again.

Thus, like other excellent translators, Heywood works on the principle that where one cannot retain the original's effect in one's own language in one place, one will try to do so in another instead.

Obviously, Heywood not only wished to be exact, but also to get close to Seneca in the overall effect of his translation. In this he is not only the best of the Elizabethan translators, but most strongly bears out the accuracy of C. J. Herington's observation that Newton's 1581 collection 'comes nearer than any later English translations to capturing those qualities of Senecan poetry which most grip a reader of the Latin original.'³

Disappointingly, Herington adds to this that the English language was 'still gross, with a rustic tendency to redundance and verbosity.' If this was so in a marked degree, it would be surprising for Heywood to approximate the courtly sophistication of Seneca's language as much as he does. It is nevertheless true that, as Herington points out, the fourteener which Heywood dominantly uses is longer than Seneca's six-foot line, but it is a mathematical exaggeration to suggest that therefore 'padding becomes inevitable'. Very occasionally, Heywood adds 'fillers' like to *sight* ('to be seen'), but the effect of redundance or verbosity which Herington points to is, insofar as it exists, the result of an effort to introduce certain rhetorical touches which are no doubt meant to match Seneca's, like the heavy alliteration (which makes the language *sound* verbose), or 'doublets' like *clip and coll*, III.2.35.

This kind of alliterative phrase is not necessarily as early as we might think: the last relevant OED quotation, under *coll*, shows that the expression was still used in 1708. Furthermore, though monosyllabic, strong, and perhaps Anglo-Saxon in feel, *coll* is of Romance derivation, a fact which Heywood (knowingly or not) exploits in using it where Seneca has the noun *collo*. The fact remains that the preponderance of such phrases in Heywood's *Thyestes* translation

³ Cf. the first pages of 'Senecan Tragedy' as repr. in N. Rudd's *Essays on Classical Literature* (Cambridge 1972), 169–219.

superficially does cause the language to appear 'rustic', but it is obviously not 'gross', and any verbosity is almost certainly the result of calculated stylistic effect. Indeed, one gets the impression that Heywood's language is used with conscious conservatism: the authors of the medieval *Piers Plowman* and other alliterative poems had used alliteration as a structural principle, but Heywood produces the kind of emphasis—through metrical stress and frequency of choice—which makes these phrases look 'classical', or more precisely 'traditionally English'.

The instance of *coll* imitating the sound of *collo* is by no means atypical. In a great many places, which O'Keefe usefully lists,⁴ Heywood employs words of Latin derivation to imitate his source. Like O'Keefe, however, he probably did not realize that some of the apparently 'Latin' words are not to be seen as 'derived from... Latin' (O'K, 215), for example *midst* for *medio* (L 203), or *quakes* for *quatit* (L 260). The important point is nevertheless that no doubt Heywood saw such words as at least close to Seneca, or—and in many cases rightly—as of actual Latin derivation. Most of such words existed in English well before Heywood, but he was probably amongst the Renaissance writers who confirmed their existence in the language. Some words which are not recorded in OED as existing before Heywood were probably new or fairly recent when he used them, e.g. *dire*. There are not many of these. The chances are that he did not consider himself (and was not) conspicuously modern when using words of Latin origin familiar to us, but selected them as close to Seneca; and—as it turned out—these Latin words came to look more normal in the language than the old-fashioned 'doublets' like *clip* and *coll* which, together with such words as *peise*, largely disappeared.

The reader who comes to a language like Heywood's from Shakespeare's will probably find the former both more medieval and more Latinate than he would have expected. There are things in Heywood's language which Shakespeare could use, both in his earlier plays and his later ones. But it is absurd to blame Heywood for not writing more like Shakespeare than he does. The reader of Milton will perhaps think Heywood less of an oddity. But all such linguistic comparisons with later writers are beside the point in that there was in no sense an obligation on Heywood to try and anticipate what they might be doing. His language is entirely satisfactory for what it is—something quite different from both medieval and later Renaissance writers. Although 'old' in most of its essential ingredients, Heywood's language—and that of most of his contemporaries—was new in the way it combined them, building a firm structure of 'new'

⁴ In Ch. VIII, where O'K also presents a tremendous amount of other useful material, notably on rhetorical figures involving repetition of words etc.

Latinate syntax, a 'new' heavy iambic rhythm accentuated by alliteration which used to be part of an older prosodic system, rhyme (soon to be displaced), adventurous use of enjambement, and a diction both curiously medieval and (in other places) timeless though hardly innovative. Some of these ingredients, whether old or new in Heywood's time, proved of use to the mainstream of English poetry after him, while others, as in Spenser's case, are perhaps to be seen as the end of an old tradition rather than the beginning of what in most cases came after. Still, the fact that one thinks of Milton or Spenser may suggest that Heywood is not so easy to pigeonhole as a Shakespeare reader will be tempted to think. And his language, with all its heaviness,⁵ proved to be an excellent vehicle for creating a Senecan world in English. For example, the physicality of the 'English' vocabulary combined with the jolts caused by the Latinate syntax may account for much of the effect of intensity in what happens, while the ponderous, heavily accentuated long lines fit a mood of sombre reflection. But an exact analysis of the various aspects of Heywood's language, and their function, must further be left to the reader.

⁵ I concede that there is a certain elegance, tightness, and pointedness to Seneca's language which H rarely captures. Perhaps that makes him seem more 'sincere' and 'moral'; but his artistic skill is generally underrated as a result of prejudice.

NOTE ON THE TEXT AND HEYWOOD'S PROSODY

THE EARLIEST and most authoritative text of Heywood's translation of *Thyestes* appeared on 26 March 1560, printed as an octavo by what had been the press of Thomas Berthelet, who died in 1555. The publication may have been supervised by Thomas Powell, Berthelet's nephew and printer of the third edition of *Troas*, the Seneca play which Heywood had already translated in 1558 and which first appeared in 1559, printed twice that year by the notorious Richard Tottel. In his 'Preface' to *Thyestes*, Heywood complains at length about Tottel's work, and we may assume that he made sure of finding a better printer for his second translation. Conceivably the Berthelet printer, aware of Heywood's comments in the 'Preface', saw his task as a challenge. At all events, he went on to produce a text that, significantly, Heywood did not find reason to quarrel with when he subsequently published his translation of *Hercules Furens* (1561).

Heywood's satisfaction seems justified when the 1560 text of *Thyestes* is considered in terms of such things as consistency of spelling, clarity of punctuation, etc., and as a translation of Seneca; there is no reason for believing that the reprint of *Thyestes* included in Thomas Newton's collection *Seneca His Tenne Tragedies, translated into Englysh* (London, Thomas Marsh, 1581) is in any sense more authoritative than 1560. Indeed, there is no indication that Heywood took part in Newton's project at all, and he was not in England at the time Newton wrote his Dedication (24 April 1581). The 1581 quarto has been reprinted facsimile (Da Capo Press, etc.; Amsterdam & New York, 1969), and any reader can therefore fairly easily verify the truth of DV's claim (xlvii) that the punctuation is 'anarchical'. Several of the lexical variants make nonsense of the text, both intrinsically and as a translation, e.g. in Act II, 10, *woods* (1560)—*woundes* (1581). It is unthinkable that Heywood would have sanctioned such alterations. However, I do not feel that either my own comparison or that of DV (cf. 303-5) bears out entirely DV's claim that 'Many of the inaccuracies and shortcomings with which Heywood has been charged are due without any doubt to Newton's negligence' (xlvii). Certainly 1581 is either more slovenly or peculiarly 'emended' in several places, but someone reading Heywood's translation in 1581 or shortly after, as many famous or obscure dramatists of the period are likely enough to have done, would not have been led intolerably astray—except in the punctuation—by the *Thyestes* of the *Tenne*

Tragedies. Sometimes (though rarely) 1581 provides a superior form, such as *doubtfull* for *doubteull* (II. 118).

But in such an instance 1581 merely confirms what one can deduce from 1560, and I have never followed the evidence of 1581 where it is at odds with 1560, which provides the source for this edition. There are several copies of 1560 known, both in Britain and the United States. DV knew of three, two in the British Library: C.34.a.8.2.—on which DV and I have both primarily based our text—and G. 9246. DV also considered a copy in the Britwell Court collection, since dispersed, and I consulted copies in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, and at Eton College. Together, therefore, we have examined five different copies as examples, and our findings are identical in that the copies clearly belong to the same printing (there is no question of re-printing). Although there is evidence of some very slight correction while the printing took place, there is only one significant variant, in IV. 58, where C.34.a.8.2 rightly has *geuen*, as a correction of *geuer*. The physical condition of the copies varies somewhat, and C.34.a.8.2 is in excellent state; but, although comparison between the copies is a necessity, one of the others might also have served. Readers who have no access to 1560, either in a library or for example on microfilm, are exceptionally well served by DV's excellent transcript, which aims to get as close to 1560, in all matters of detail, as is humanly possible.

The present text, according to New Mermaids practice, is a modernization. 1560 uses a variety of letter-types (mostly black-letter), which, however beautiful, it is hardly practical to reproduce in a modern text—and the black-letter, especially, is difficult for many of today's readers. DV already to a considerable extent modernized in the direction of uniform Roman type, but the present edition in this—and in most—respects conforms wholly to standard modern practice, although some of the lay-out has been retained (as in the heading of the Dedication).

There are also, however, some significant variations in the arrangement of the printed matter on the page. Two of these will be most immediately striking to readers used to either DV or McIlwraith's text. DV, following 1560, in the body of the text inserts the names of speakers in abbreviated form and within the line, thus (I. 23):

Shall Minos idle be. Meg. goe fourth
thou detestable spright,

an arrangement which does not make for clarity (and which, incidentally, must have been extremely awkward to actors/speakers in Heywood's time). McIlwraith retains the abridged forms but detaches them from the lines by putting them in the margin. It occurred to me

that an enormous gain in clarity could be achieved—in a text characterized by (a) many long paragraphs and (b) rapid one-line or part-line dialogue—through centralizing the speech headings not only at the beginning of a scene, where 1560 does it, but right through the text; and this practice has been adopted. It is not likely that Heywood really preferred the cluttered arrangement of 1560 and would have disapproved of this modernization, which also allowed names to be spelled out in full, and avoided what would otherwise, in this edition, sometimes have been very long lines, each consisting of fourteen syllables plus a speaker's name.

For, a second major step was to print Heywood's fourteeners in full as in 1581, and not in the 8+6 syllable division adopted in 1560 and followed by DV and McIlwraith. In McIlwraith as well as in 1560 itself, the reason for this division is no doubt the purely practical one that the size of the—very small—page did not allow otherwise (1560 is an octavo). It is sometimes thought that Heywood deliberately constructed his lines on an 8+6 basis, but careful consideration of his prosody (which must here become part of our study of the text and its modernization) reveals that this cannot have been so. Most conspicuously, he would surely not have chosen a line division like this:

And dryue my hande: let gredy pa-
rents all his babes deuowre,

which is the way 1560 breaks up II. 102. This instance is exceptional, but only in that it more strikingly than most shows that Heywood must have been forced into the unnatural *pa-/rents* through the size of the page, not through a prosodic choice. The most immediately obvious pause is, of course, the one after *hande*; not because the colon is necessarily always the same as ours in function, but because it here, as often, is placed where there is a marked break in both the grammatical pattern and the speech rhythm. Actually, Heywood uses considerable variety in his breaks, as random sampling will show from a modernized text that does not force the reader to pause after the eighth syllable:

I not what greater thing my mind—and more than wont it was,
Above the reach that men are wont to work—begins to swell,
And stay'th with slothful hands. What thing it is I cannot tell,
But great it is. Be't so: my mind, now in this feat proceed;
For Atreus and Thyestes both it were a worthy deed,
Let each of us the crime commit.

These lines open the speech from which our previous example came. Naturally, the 8+6 division does occur, but by no means exclusively or mechanically. Indeed, much of the prejudice against

fourteeners (Heywood's dominant measure) seems to rest on curious notions of arithmetic in connection with English phrasing. Regularly, we are told that decasyllabic verse is 'natural' in English, often with the implication that we actually speak in groups of ten syllables. But a reader who *hears* the lines would be more struck—as in much decasyllabic verse—by the fact that they consist of quite varied phrases, and functionally and rhetorically so—as in the case of the brusque, decisive 'Be't so' in a line where the pause after 'mind' is only weak though that word is the eighth syllable.

It was a pleasant feature of 1581 to print the fourteeners without breaking them up into the tiresome and arbitrary 8+6 format. I think it will be granted that the play as now printed is far less remote from an Elizabethan blank verse play than the arrangement of 1560 would suggest; only a bias against rhyme would object to its now occurring at the end of each line, bringing out the couplet structure that Heywood in fact uses—as distinct from a curious 8-6-8-6 'quatrain' (with rhyme pattern a-b-c-b) that confronts the eye in 1560 but which can only be analyzed into rhyming fourteeners. The essential flexibility of the way lines are divided between two speakers in a dialogue is now also brought out. Some highly spectacular examples of Seneca's famous stichomythia (dialogue in alternate lines, or part-lines) are revealed; cf. 1560:

Ser. What sworde? Atr. To little that. Ser. what fire?
Atr. And that is yet to light,

with:

What, sword?	SERVANT
Too little, that.	ATREUS
What, fire?	SERVANT
And that is yet too light.	ATREUS

which is line 82 of Act II. While this procedure takes up more space, the structural division of the line—and its unity—is at once apparent, and all in all space is saved by printing fourteeners as fourteeners.

Heywood does use what are clearly quatrains *designed* as such in some decasyllabic passages (speeches by the Chorus, or otherwise of a reflective nature, as in V.ii) rhyming a-b-a-b etc., although effective avoidance of over-emphasis on the rhymes (there is a good deal of enjambement) makes many readers at first unaware of the fact that

they are not reading blank verse, which some seem to see as the only legitimate prosodic form in English Renaissance drama.

After these comments on Heywood's phrasing and lines, something should be said about his rhymes and what might be described as his alliterative iambic 'thump'. At this point, the modernization of individual sounds (rather than the division of lines) will be considered.

Alliteration, which is a hallmark of Heywood's verse, was popular at this period, probably in part because *Piers Plowman* had been reprinted (three times in 1550). However, while in so-called 'alliterative' verse—like that of *Piers Plowman*—the prosodic stresses are essentially those of speech rhythm, there can be no doubt that Heywood and his contemporaries were writing iambic verse, and of a very regular kind at that. There is, of course, no difficulty about retaining alliteration in a modernized text; accentuation and syllabification, as well as rhyme, are a different matter.

Pronunciation in Heywood's time was significantly different from our own in certain respects, and it is impossible to understand his prosody, or to modernize the text, without some knowledge of the relevant facts. Not all of the facts are known in any case, and, to be realistic, most of us will probably not bother to discover in elaborate detail what is known. Even so, it should be understood, for example, that what may to us look like odd rhymes are in Heywood perfectly normal and would strike us as such if only we knew exactly what his English sounded like. This general observation needs to be made, even if only because no modernization can create a perfect awareness of Heywood's rhymes. (For that matter, analysis of an 'old-spelling' text like 1560 does not necessarily give the modern reader a very complete idea either.) In several instances, whether sounds since Heywood have changed or not, the words still rhyme. The chief difference, in many places, is that Heywood indicates the rhyme very exactly through his spelling. For example, in the 'Preface', we are immediately struck, in 1560, by such forms as *sprights-delights*, the modern equivalents of which still rhyme aurally, but not visually as in Heywood. In other cases, the spelling in 1560 matches a perfect aural rhyme where this is not so in modern English, e.g. ('Preface' 67 and 68) *wheare-heare*. In this instance, modern English has both a different spelling and a different sound (*where-hear*). It would, I feel, be merely confusing to signal the 1560 rhyme in a modernization by either keeping the old forms or some sort of adaptation like *where-here*; although *here*, as a spelling, would no doubt immediately suggest an old aural rhyme (in a modernization of a 1560 text), the fact remains that *here* constitutes quite a different word from *hear*. Almost always, therefore, the old forms have simply been modernized on the assumption that the average reader will realize that Heywood does

rhyme, and in a very precise fashion. Occasionally, it seemed helpful rather than a hindrance to keep (or slightly modify) an old form, thus in IV. 67, *gret* (=great) from 1560 *grette*, to rhyme with *set* (*sette*). Choices of this kind tend to become a matter of editorial discretion rather than any rigid principle—there is no other way. Most frequently, I have favoured modernization because of clarity of sense. My only regret is that the beautiful exactitude of 1560's spelling (and it may well be Heywood's) is not retained in rhymes like *sprights-delights*. Indentation to indicate rhyme has however been ignored without sadness.

As for accentuation and syllabification, the former of these does not, in Heywood's case, offer much problem. It is known that accentuation could differ from that of most English dialects today, but Heywood in this respect is peculiarly modern, although one or two cases of unexpected accentuation, in tune with the metre, would seem to occur (cf. *détestable* in I. 23). But even words of 'Romance' origin normally seem to be stressed as they would be by most speakers now.

Syllabification certainly differed significantly. In many instances, this is shown by the spelling in 1560, which can be easily modernized. Perhaps the most striking phenomenon is the way Heywood varies verbal forms in *-ed* according to the metre. *Vice versa*, since this variation does produce a very systematic iambic pattern, we can also confidently assume that such prosodic smoothness was in his mind. For example, line 20 of the 'Preface' is printed thus in 1560:

Jt seemde he had byn lodged long
among the Muses nyne.

The 'line' (8+6 broken up) is a perfectly regular iambic one so long as it is realized that *seemde* forms one syllable, but *loded* two. The spelling indicates this, and is in tune with the metre.¹ There is more than one way in which the fact can be indicated in modern English; for this edition, the method that has been chosen is to print *seem'd* and *loded*. This means that the reader's expectation should be that *-ed* is to be sounded unless the spelling 'd shows that it must not be. (Of course forms like *burnt* are simply retained in modernization.)

A similar procedure has been adopted in other comparable instances. Thus in the 'Preface', 112, 1560's *sugred* no doubt indicates the pronunciation *sug'red*, and has been so modernized; *sugar'd*, although also disyllabic, would be further remote from the 1560 version. In 194, *glyttryng* becomes *glitt'ring*. Forms of this kind are used with such consistency where the metre demands them, that it is

¹ For a further discussion of the relationship between spelling and metre, and of early Tudor prosody generally, see my 'Wyatt's Prosody Revisited', *Language and Style*, X (1977), 3-15.

highly probable that these, at least, are Heywood's own and that they were closely followed by the printer—one sign of the care of the latter's work. In cases like 178, *powre*, the 1560 form is here presented as *pow'r*. Generally, 1560's handling of the distinction between shorter and longer forms is metrically predictable. There are, however, some surprises. Thus in I. 41 it is impossible to know whether 1560's *murdered* should be read as *murder'd* or *murd'ed*, although either the one or the other seems required by the metre. I have—in the absence of evidence—not attempted to come to a decision. But in IV. 149 I have turned 1560 *easily* into *easy'ly* because while (a) the metre suggests a disyllabic form, it is (b) very likely that the *e* is mute since, though *e* for *i* is common in the sixteenth century, it would have been possible for Heywood to use *i* if he had wanted the syllable to be sounded. At all times, however, I have believed that the shortened forms should only occur in the modernization where they are clearly justified by what occurs in the 1560 text. Thus, although the prosody makes clear that Heywood must normally have pronounced *heaven* as *heav'n*, I have not on my own initiative converted *-en* into *'n*.

Even so, the reader will have no difficulty deciding from the present text (which in the presentation of syllabification closely follows the model of 1560) how, accentually and syllabically, the lines are to be pronounced. There is a firm relationship between the metre and the speech rhythm, with the accents at both levels generally reinforcing each other; the alliteration tends to give even stronger weight to the stressed syllables. This prosodic ideal is not atypical of the period c. 1560 (cf. e.g. Gascoigne), and I believe that it is often misunderstood or unfairly rejected because it does not correspond to the somewhat later practice which most readers know better, whereby alliteration became less fashionable and the metre and the speech rhythm did not march together so much.² However, emphatic though the stresses in Heywood are, they are not offered with total or unfunctional monotony. There are, moreover, many ways in which prosody in English can be handled, and we should be openminded about all of them. The sonorous tightness of the verse, in which rhyme of course also plays a part, is not at all an unfitting match for the Latin, and the oft-criticized fourteeners in their very length give an effect of stateliness often not inappropriate in a Seneca translation.³ Close comparisons reveal that at times Heywood unquestionably follows the

² The mode preferred by most readers is that of such flexible blank verse as used by e.g. Marlowe and Shakespeare well after 1560, but of course anticipated, in some of its major aspects, by Surrey, who wrote before Heywood.

³ Fourteeners in fact approximate Seneca's own line-length in most of the play, that of 'Trimetri Iambici' as indicated in G's headings. H tends to translate line for line ('verse for verse'—title page of *Hercules Furens*)—another very good reason for printing his fourteeners as such.

sound structure of the Latin to some extent, but his general procedure is to use his own (and contemporary) prosodic English devices for a versification no doubt meant to offer some form of equivalence to that of the Latin rather than an imitation. His achievement seems the more impressive when it is remembered that the use of regular alliteration, fourteeners, and rhyme, must have severely restricted the choice between several possible translations which were nevertheless intended to be faithful.

A few more points need to be made about the modernization. One of them influences our understanding of Heywood's pronunciation and hence prosody. In this text, forms like *Alphëus*, *Boötes*, etc., are regularly used to 'translate' a variety of forms like *Alphéus*, *boötes* used in 1560 to indicate that e.g. *Alphéus* is trisyllabic, with stress on the marked vowel.

Capitals are employed somewhat inconsistently in 1560, though perhaps *god* is normally looked upon first of all as 'pagan god' and thus not necessarily printed as *God*. The punctuation is not easy to generalize about, though it is not haphazard, as it often is in 1581 (where one largely learns to disregard it). The old virgule (/) had disappeared as what appears to have been a metrical/rhythmical marker at least as much as a grammatical one. Its function seems to have been substantially taken over by the comma, which in some cases has clearly a purely grammatical function, and in others can hardly be seen as anything but a metrical/rhythmical marker (as, often, at the end of lines, in 1560, that do not need any punctuation). Possibly, but not necessarily, Heywood's printer was in part responsible for the punctuation, but, for what it is, it has a fairly complex yet intelligible set of functions. The colon, for example, typically denotes a fairly strong break. So does the point, but not invariably. It will be realized, from all this, that Heywood's punctuation, although careful and worth keeping where this can be done without confusion to a modern reader, nevertheless would (without very elaborate explanation) often seem very odd, and possibly misleading, in what is otherwise a modernized text. I have kept, or converted, what I could, but only if it systematically helped an understanding of the grammar, as modern punctuation is meant to do in educated English. In practice, I suppose the effect is not only one of greater clarity, but also creates less of a clutter, though I would not wish to exaggerate the difference between 1560 and the present text in this regard. In the bulk of the text, it was not difficult to place the marks with certitude, since the grammatical relations in Heywood's English could be deduced from comparison with his Latin source. It was thus easy to correct some misleading marks in McIlwraith, who for III. 59, *nor, Jove shet out*, produces the totally mistaken *nor (Jove shet out!)* as though the sense of the Latin does not matter. (Cf. also his negligent confusion of *dense* and

dens in I. 104; and other instances.) The Latin, or otherwise the context, also generally settles the sense of ambiguous 1560 forms like *others* (= *other's*, *others*, or *others'*).

There are not, in our sense of the word, real 'stage directions' in Heywood's text, even though I have used 's.d.' for what may be seen as a mixture of 'stage direction' and 'scene heading'. Heywood's method—characteristic of his Latin source(s)—is to follow a five-act division (not employed in a modern text like Loeb), in which the scenes, sometimes explicitly called such, are primarily indicated by the listing of the speakers (as Heywood calls them) in it. These are mentioned at the beginning, and the implicit assumption of the 1560 text is that the first speaker mentioned will also deliver the first speech. Since this is not current practice, I have consistently produced the name of this speaker, between square brackets (indicating editorial addition). I have not, however, added any other 'stage directions' to what is offered in 1560, since, in view of what one readily recognizes as Heywood's custom in the matter, it is unnecessary to have things like '[Enter] Atreus', followed by '[Atreus]'. Nor does there appear to be any justification for imagining that one should state that characters are e.g. ['carrying plates'], etc. Where a fairly clearly implied direction of this kind may be deduced from the context, I have included my suggestions in the notes. But it seems to me to be one of the great attractions of the text as it stands in 1560 that a producer can use it as a basic script rather than something unduly restrictive. The Latin texts used by Heywood mention Seneca's metres, but, although this suggests that those who read them could develop a notion of Latin prosody from them much earlier than is often thought (since the first printed Latin texts date from the last quarter of the fifteenth century), this edition did not seem the place to include this information, which, for that matter, can be found in several books.

While this account of the modernization in relation to the matter of Heywood's prosody is not entirely complete (and cf. the notes to the text on some individual problems), it is reasonably comprehensive, and readers who want to study this matter in further detail are advised to consult copies of 1560, or otherwise DV's marvellous transcript.

FURTHER READING

1. Seneca

- O. Regenbogen, 'Schmerz und Tod in den Tragödien Senecas' (Vortr. d. Bibl. Warburg 7 [1927/28], Leipzig 1930, 167–218)
 C.J. Herington, 'Senecan Tragedy' (*Arion* V, 1966; repr. N. Rudd ed., *Essays on Classical Literature Selected from Arion*, Cambridge 1972, 169–219)
 E. Lefèvre ed., *Senecas Tragödien* (Darmstadt 1972; incl. two essays on *Thyestes*)
 C.D.N. Costa ed., *Seneca* (London 1974; several essays)
 W.M. Calder III, 'Seneca: Tragedian of Imperial Rome' (*The Classical Journal*, Oct.–Nov. 1976, 1–11)
 M. Rozelaar, *Seneca—Eine Gesamtdarstellung* (Amsterdam 1976)

2. Seneca and the English Renaissance

- Many literary histories discuss the subject; see further especially:
 R. Fischer, *Zur Kunstentwicklung der Englischen Tragödie* (Strassburg 1893)
 J.W. Cunliffe, *The Influence of Seneca on Elizabethan Tragedy* (London 1983; repr. 1965)
 H.B. Charlton, *The Senecan Tradition in Renaissance Tragedy* (1921; repr., with this title, Manchester 1946; repr. 1974)
 F.L. Lucas, *Seneca and Elizabethan Tragedy* (Cambridge 1922; repr. 1972)
 T.S. Eliot, 'Seneca in Elizabethan Translation' (1927; repr., with this title, in *Selected Essays*, London 1932 and after)
 Howard Baker, *Induction to Tragedy* (Louisiana 1939, repr. 1965)
 H.W. Wells, 'Senecan Influence on Elizabethan Tragedy: a Re-Estimation' (*The Shakespeare Association Bulletin*, Jan. 1944, 71–84)
 G.K. Hunter, 'Seneca and the Elizabethans: a Case-Study in "Influence"' (*Shakespeare Survey* 20, 1967, 17–26)
 A.L. Motto and John R. Clark, 'Senecan Tragedy: a Critique of Scholarly Trends' (*Renaissance Drama* n.s. VI, 1973, 219–235)
 G.K. Hunter, 'Seneca and English Tragedy' (1974; in Costa, above)
 J.B. Altman, *The Tudor Play of Mind* (Berkeley 1978)