

NECROPOLITICAL RESISTANCE IN EARLY MODERN DRAMA: VIOLENCE
AND DEATH AS AGENTIVE ACTS IN KYD'S *THE SPANISH TRAGEDY*

by

Madison Jansen



A thesis

submitted in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts in English Literature

Boise State University

May 2020

© 2020

Madison Jansen

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

BOISE STATE UNIVERSITY GRADUATE COLLEGE

DEFENSE COMMITTEE AND FINAL READING APPROVALS

of the thesis submitted by

Madison Jansen

Thesis Title: Necropolitical Resistance in Early Modern Drama: Violence and Death as Agentive Acts in Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy*

Date of Final Oral Examination: 02 April 2020

The following individuals read and discussed the thesis submitted by student Madison Jansen, and they evaluated their presentation and response to questions during the final oral examination. They found that the student passed the final oral examination.

Matthew Hansen, Ph.D. Chair, Supervisory Committee

Reshmi Mukherjee, Ph.D. Member, Supervisory Committee

Jennifer Black, Ph.D. Member, Supervisory Committee

The final reading approval of the thesis was granted by Matthew Hansen, Ph.D., Chair of the Supervisory Committee. The thesis was approved by the Graduate College.

DEDICATION

To Nate. You have been the most amazing support throughout my educational journey and I could never have written this without you. Thanks for being my partner through all my late-night theoretical rants and, occasionally, tears.

To Eli and Riley. You made this considerably harder, but I wouldn't have it any other way.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you to Dr. Hansen for all of the time you put into helping me develop this thesis. Thanks to Dr. Mukherjee and Dr. Black for your valuable insight and feedback. Thanks to Sarah and Katie for all the time you spent helping me brainstorm these ideas and helping me to get them down on paper.

ABSTRACT

Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* has been widely-read by the academic community, but not always for its own sake. Its influence on the Revenge Tragedy genre, and Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, have been common topics, sometimes at the expense of readings that engage with the play itself. This thesis continues a tradition of applying the ideas of Michel Foucault to the Early Modern era in order to interrogate the role of power, knowledge, and sovereignty. This thesis explores the way that Michel Foucault's theory of biopolitics, and the related concepts of necropolitics and necroresistance, create significant new ways of understanding the characters and themes of Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy*. I first examine Bel-Imperia's presence in the text, as both a woman and a political pawn, and argue that her physical body exists in a contested space, serving as both a location for control and a means of resistance. By reinterpreting her role in the revenge narrative and her suicide through a political lens, we can more fully appreciate her violent actions as expressions of agency in pursuit of a calculated goal. Additionally, when we look at the stories of Hieronimo and Horatio through a necropolitical lens, it foregrounds the centrality of class in the conflict of the play. Through a close reading of Horatio's murder, I argue that Horatio and Hieronimo represent the threat of social mobility to the insular aristocratic class embodied by Lorenzo and Balthazar, and Horatio's murder serves as a reassertion of absolute sovereign control. Hieronimo's violent actions carry different implications when we are able to read them as not only acts of vengeance, but also, to some extent, of revolution. Ultimately, I argue that applying biopolitical theories to *The Spanish Tragedy*, and other plays from the Early Modern era, presents scholars with an opportunity to differently appreciate the relationship between agency and violence, and make sense of the seemingly senseless violence that often characterizes these works.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|----|
| DEDICATION | iv |
| ACKNOWLEDGMENTS | v |
| ABSTRACT..... | vi |
| CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION..... | 1 |
| Conversations Within Biopolitical Theory | 4 |
| Biopolitics in the Early Modern Era | 8 |
| Foucauldian Scholarship in Early Modern Drama..... | 11 |
| Conclusion | 14 |
| CHAPTER TWO: NECROPOLITICS AND GENDER | 16 |
| CHAPTER THREE: NECROPOLITICS AND CLASS | 29 |
| CHAPTER FOUR: CONCLUSION..... | 41 |
| Bel-Imperia and Beatrice-Joanna: Women as Commodities | 42 |
| Death and Politics in Shakespeare's <i>Antony and Cleopatra</i> | 51 |
| Conclusion | 54 |
| REFERENCES | 56 |

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Early Modern English dramatists have provided the academic community with such rich material that the scholarly conversations surrounding many productions from this time period continue to support lively and diverse critical engagement. The rise of Critical Theory over the last half-century has served to enrich and expand the possibilities previously open to scholars and provided fresh avenues of interpretation for Early Modern texts. Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* (1587), seems particularly ripe for a reading that brings a new perspective to a play that has been widely-read by the academic community, but not always for its own sake. *The Spanish Tragedy's* influence on the Revenge Tragedy genre, and Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, have been common topics of discussion, sometimes at the expense of readings that engage with the play itself. I believe Kyd's play resonates in productive ways with Foucauldian theories of biopolitics, biopower, necropolitics, and necroresistance. By applying these modern theoretical frameworks to Kyd's play, the methods of violent resistance employed by the characters Bel-Imperia and Hieronimo take on new implications. I argue that by applying these critical lenses to the play, we can uncover new ways of understanding how sovereignty, agency, and violence interact with each other, and reveal new meanings within Kyd's often brutal and sensational narrative.

Kyd's play tells a multi-layered story of death and vengeance that begins when Balthazar, son of the Portuguese Viceroy, kills Andrea, a Spanish knight, during his capture in battle. Balthazar is taken back to Spain as a prisoner of war, where he quickly becomes infatuated with Bel-Imperia, the niece of the King of Spain. Bel-Imperia has no interest in Balthazar's advances, as she mourns the death of Andrea, her lover. In order to spite the foreign prince, Bel-Imperia initiates a relationship with Andrea's friend, Horatio, the son of Hieronimo, the Spanish Knight

Marshal. Infuriated by her disinterest in Balthazar, Bel-Imperia's brother, Lorenzo, conspires with the Portuguese Prince to murder Horatio and imprison Bel-Imperia. From within her confinement, Bel-Imperia writes a letter in her own blood to Hieronimo telling him that Lorenzo and Balthazar are the ones who have murdered his son. Bel-Imperia and Hieronimo, in absence of legal recourse, carry out a plot to avenge Horatio's death, killing Balthazar and Lorenzo during the performance of a play written in order to bring about their deaths. After accomplishing their revenge, Bel-Imperia and Hieronimo both take their own lives in an escape from further retaliation.

The Spanish Tragedy has proved itself to be a play with enduring critical value, as readings of the play have continued to evolve with the changing trends of scholarship. Traditionally, many scholars read the play for its commentary on revenge. Despite the fact that it was written in the context of Protestant England, and set in Catholic Spain, *The Spanish Tragedy* employs a pseudo-pagan frame narrative. Critics frequently focus on this dynamic within the play, as well as the relationship between religion and revenge. Frank Ardolino, in "Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy*" (2009) draws out Biblical parallels in Hieronimo's revenge, arguing for his actions as a sort of collective, national justice. Steven Justice, in "Spain, Tragedy, and *The Spanish Tragedy*" (1985), similarly examines the fraught opinions on revenge within the Early Modern period, writing

The political polemics of the 1580s, and the religious vocabulary that informs them, show that the judgment of the play falls less on Hieronimo than on a kind of society, that the tragedy results from a way of life. Kyd uses revenge tragedy to give form to popular images of Catholic Spain, and Hieronimo's tragedy is that the Spanish court of *The Spanish Tragedy* allows him no acceptable choice (272).

Justice's article combines religious discourse with analysis of the impact of international relations on the text. Like many Early Modern English revenge tragedies, the action takes place outside of England, which leads to interesting questions about how the geographical setting impacts the meaning of the play.

Many recent historical readings of *The Spanish Tragedy* explore nuances of Early Modern society and international relations. These kinds of readings engage the action and themes within Kyd's play in cultural-historical contexts or make arguments about how Kyd's play might influence our understanding of other historical texts. Often these papers don't deal exclusively with *The Spanish Tragedy*, but look at a wider range of plays from the same era in order to forward a hypothesis about an aspect of Early Modern life. Scott Oldenburg's "The Petition on the Early English Stage" (2017) compares scenes of petition in Early Modern plays, such as *The Spanish Tragedy* and *The Second Part of Henry the Sixth*, in order to develop a better understanding of this social practice, and highlight portions of these plays that are often overlooked in preference to scenes seemingly more critical to the plot. Timothy Rosendale's "Agency and Ethics in *The Spanish Tragedy*" (2015) foregrounds contemporary religious upheaval between Catholics and Protestants in the later sixteenth century to examine how *The Spanish Tragedy* wrestles with questions of agency and free will, despite its pagan religious frame. While "Ethos, Empire, and the Valiant Acts of Thomas Kyd's Tragedy of 'the Spains'" (2001) by Eric Griffin provides a deeply historical reading that argues for greater attention to be given to the backdrop of international conflicts that likely shaped Kyd's depictions of Spain and Portugal. In a similar vein, Carla Mazzio's "Staging the Vernacular: Language and Nation in Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy*" (1998) brings a historical and linguistic emphasis to the conversation. She examines the significance of speech, language, and nationality within the action, arguing that the failure of speech at the end of the play speaks to a national anxiety about identity and language. All of this important work has expanded conversations about *The Spanish Tragedy* into new territory and are foundational to my own reading of the play's exploration of gender, agency, and violence.

In addition to new historical explorations, scholars are also approaching *The Spanish Tragedy* through a variety of modern theoretical lenses, as well as giving more attention to

traditionally neglected characters like Bel-Imperia. Adrienne Redding's "Liminal Gardens: Edenic Iconography and the Disruption of Sexual Difference in Tragedy" (2015) pairs Bel-Imperia with *Titus Andronicus*'s Livinia to explore gardens and outdoor spaces as sites for transgressing gender roles and violently reasserting them. Paul Piatkowski in "Ghost Parrot(ing): Re/Deconstructing Order through Psychic Mimesis, Revenge Justice, and Conjunction in Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy*" (2016) deconstructs repetition in the play to reinterpret the role of ghosts and memory. Piatkowski's article builds on John Kerrigan's seminal book *Revenge Tragedy: Aeschylus to Armageddon*. Kerrigan places Hieronimo, the play's central male protagonist, in conversation with John Piker's *Horestes* (1567) and Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (c. 1600), demonstrating that revenge is innately tied to memory. While acknowledging the historical surroundings of the text, scholars who lean into a theoretical perspective that prioritizes readings not based in the understanding of the original audience or the intentions of the author have significantly contributed to the field. These theory-based readings bring fresh ideas to a play that has been the subject of study for hundreds of years, and allow us to see it with new eyes. These approaches have served as a model for my own biopolitical reading, and have enhanced my understanding of the characters through their nuanced analyses of the way that gender and mourning function in the *The Spanish Tragedy*.

Conversations Within Biopolitical Theory

In the footsteps of these scholars, I believe the theories of biopolitics and biopower open up fresh possibilities for how we are able to interpret the political use of violence in *The Spanish Tragedy*. This field of study originates from Michel Foucault's essay, from the introduction to *The History of Sexuality* (1976), "Right of Death and Power over Life." In this influential essay, Foucault argues for a different way of understanding how power and control have evolved over time. Further developing ideas first explored in *Discipline and Punish* (1975), Foucault undermines a view of history that sees modernity as true "progress" compared to more

“primitive” ages. Instead, he sees the exercise of power over bodies as something that has changed forms, rather than disappeared. He argues that the rise of more benevolent beliefs about power and government have resulted in changes in the way control is exerted over individuals, but that ultimately those changes are no less violent or repressive than in the past. Foucault characterizes this shift as the difference between “the ancient right to *take* life or *let* live”, versus the modern power to “*foster* life or *disallow* it to the point of death” (emphasis in original, 43).

He writes

“Deduction” has tended to be no longer the major form of power but merely one element among others, working to incite, reinforce, control, monitor, optimize, and organize the forces under it: a power bent on generating forces, making them grow, and ordering them, rather than one dedicated to impeding them, making them submit, or destroying them (42).

No longer are subjects controlled by only “deduction,” or the power of the sovereign to take life and property, but rather it becomes the role of the sovereign to “foster” life, resulting in many social and political mechanisms that serve to produce the results desired by the sovereign. While the motivations and goals of the state are completely transformed by this shift toward prioritizing the life of the subject, Foucault does not paint it as an improvement, but merely as the next step in the evolution of power.

In addition to this change in goals, Foucault also avers that the power of control is dispersed, no longer residing in the physical body of an all-powerful sovereign, whose will is directly or indirectly involved in the control of subjects. Rather, he argues, “a power whose task is to take charge of life needs continuous regulatory and corrective mechanisms...Such a power has to qualify, measure, appraise, and hierarchize, rather than display itself in its murderous splendor...the law operates more and more as a norm... A normalizing society is the historical outcome of a technology of power centered on life” (48). Under this understanding of history, means of control have shifted away from relying solely on the law, manifest and concentrated in a singular, sovereign entity. Instead, control has been distributed, in true democratic fashion, to the

population at large. It has come to monitor itself through reinforcing normative identities and behaviors. By looking at mechanisms of power through this lens, which he labels bio-power, Foucault created a theoretical framework that foregrounds the physical body as the target for a state that wishes to “foster life” and has provided a starting point for other theorists to examine the nuances and implications of this perspective on control.

Particularly significant to my reading of *The Spanish Tragedy* are the extensions of Foucault’s ideas by Achille Mbembe and Banu Bargu, whose important interventions in biopolitical considerations of violence and self-harm frame theories of necropolitics (Mbembe) and necroresistance (Bargu). Mbembe, in his essay, “Necropolitics”(2003), examines the place that death holds within a biopolitical framework. Through analysis of the biopolitical “logic” of slavery, Mbembe illustrates an embodied example of Foucault’s concept. He writes,

As an instrument of labor, the slave has a price. As a property, he or she has a value. His or her labor is needed and used. The slave is therefore kept alive but in a *state of injury*...Slave life, in many ways, is a form of death-in-life...This power over the life of another takes the form of commerce: a person’s humanity is dissolved to the point where it becomes possible to say that the slave’s life is possessed by the master (emphasis in original, 170).

In this illustration, the slave’s life is valued only to the degree that their life serves the needs of their owner. The biopolitical justification of slavery becomes the prioritizing of white life and well-being over the lives and freedom of slaves. Mbembe suggests that this particular state of being, “death-in-life,” has dramatic implications for how we understand resistance to power. He later writes, “Referring to the practice of individual or mass suicide by slaves cornered by the slave catchers, [Paul] Gilroy suggests that death, in this case, can be represented as agency. For death is precisely that from and over which I have power” (186). Acknowledging the agentive qualities of suicide in these situations is essential because structures of slavery were designed to remove any possibility for self-determination of actions. Slave owners attempted to remove the possibility of control over one’s own life and body, destroying the possibility for agency, as the

slave's life was meant to be completely subservient to the orders and expectations of the owner. Yet the act of suicide, in these circumstances, could become a way for slaves to exert the power of self-determination. By seeing the agency in these horrific moments, we can acknowledge and value the power that slaves claimed and exercised over their own lives, despite attempts to remove all potential for agency from them. When life cannot be understood as freedom, Mbembe argues that the act of suicide takes on political implications. It becomes not only an escape from an existence of "death-in-life", but a way of striking back at the slave owner: by destroying their own body and thus depriving the master of their body's use as a commodity, the slave takes control of their life in the only way left to them.

Mbembe also explores how this conception of agency as a form of violence and self-harm applies to modern suicide bombers in the Middle East. In order to frame this discussion, Mbembe proposes an opposition between the "logic of survival" and the "logic of martyrdom" (182). The "logic of survival" dictates that the preservation of one's own life is the ultimate goal, even at the expense of the lives of others. By contrast, Mbembe writes, "In the logic of 'martyrdom,' the will to die is fused with the willingness to take the enemy with you, that is, with closing the door on the possibility of life for everyone" (183). Additionally, he asks "What intrinsic difference is there between killing with a missile helicopter or a tank and killing with one's own body?...The body does not simply conceal a weapon. The body is transformed into a weapon" (182-183). When the body becomes the location of state control, Mbembe believes we can read additional implications into violent acts of resistance. The body itself becomes contested space and harming it harms those who have an interest in controlling it. Within Mbembe's framework, some kinds of suicide and self-harm can become a means of exerting individual agency and subverting power structures.

Banu Bargu's concept of necroresistance, developed in her book *Starve and Immolate: The Politics of Human Weapons* (2014), builds upon Mbembe's ideas, continuing to look at other

real world examples of the ways that people utilize their bodies as sites for subversion of and resistance to sovereign power. Like Mbembe, Bargu challenges the reader to reconsider what we understand about the power dynamics at play between oppressors and movements of resistance when it comes to perpetuating violence. She writes, “With biopolitics, the body (whether individual or social) is reconfigured as the intermediary through which life can be accessed and regulated. Necropolitical resistance transforms the body from a site of subjection into a site of insurgency, which by self-destruction presents death as a counterconduct to the administration of life” (85). Necroresistance understands the body as the location of sovereign control, and uses that space for its own purposes. If fostering life has become the goal of the sovereign state, necroresistance sees the opposite, destroying one’s own life becomes a form of agency and resistance.

Biopolitics in the Early Modern Era

Conceptually, necropolitics and necroresistance apply in surprising ways to the story of *The Spanish Tragedy*, as the revengers, Bel-Imperia and Hieronimo, repeatedly employ violence against others and themselves, to pursue their goals. Yet, applying biopolitical theories to an analysis of the Early Modern time period is not without difficulty, as the historical and political contexts share few commonalities. Foucault specifically sees the biopolitical shift happening throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, while Mbembe and Bargu both draw on modern terror movements, and modern technologies of repression and control, to make their arguments. In light of these details that make the application of biopolitical theories questionable when paired with an Early Modern text, I employ a transhistorical approach to the context of *The Spanish Tragedy*. I will elaborate on several historical parallels that I believe support a reading of *The Spanish Tragedy* based on biopolitical theory, but ultimately, I also argue for priority to be given to the utility of such a reading and the implications it has on the way we understand these characters within the present day.

One connection I wish to illuminate between theories of biopolitics and the text of *The Spanish Tragedy* considers how gender and biopolitics affect one another. Foucault sees the actions of sovereignty shift to the management of life within the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but I argue that there are parallels that can be seen much earlier when we consider the way that many societies have sought to control women and the reproduction of life. Looking specifically at Bel-Imperia, I frame her position within the play as both an object of biopolitical control and an agent of necropolitical resistance.

Her status within the play is explicitly tied to her role as seemingly the sole female relative of the King of Spain. The management of her body was not simply a moral, or personal act by her male relatives; it was a political act of physical control. Frank Whigham, in his book *Seizures of Will in Early Modern Drama*, writes in his analysis of *The Spanish Tragedy*, “Aristocratic marriage is one of the group’s central strategic provisions for its social reproduction, of its position, its values, and its authority. Such family relations are not static structures but *practices*” (emphasis in original; 27). Arranged marriages among social elites were directly about the management of women’s physical bodies, preserving them as a conduit for reproducing the type of material life—as well as “position,” “values,” and “authority”—that were necessary for reproducing the sovereign line. As a result, Bel-Imperia’s physical body can be read as a contested physical space, a body that the sovereign has an interest in using as a means of “generating forces, making them grow” and, in a very literal sense, “fostering life” (Foucault, 1976, 42-43). Because the control exerted over Bel-Imperia has these biopolitical implications, I see it as particularly productive to apply the necropolitical theories of resistance to her actions. While existing within a world that differs widely from the one that Foucault, Bargu, and Mbembe theorize about, her situation resonates with the kinds of power, control, and resistance that embody the spirit of their work.

Building upon this biopolitical understanding of Bel-Imperia's role within the play, I also wish to suggest that if one character from the Early Modern period can be seen to intersect in fascinating ways with the concept of biopolitical control and resistance, there are likely other parallels that could make this type of scholarship valuable. While Foucault marks the eighteenth century as the beginning of this movement, it makes sense that similar threads, though perhaps on a smaller scale, could be found in time periods before this. Foucault's focus is on history as an overarching narrative, a narrative that undermines the twentieth-century belief in our own progress and superiority over earlier times. While acknowledging the particular relevance of biopolitics to our understanding of the modern nation-state, my reading of *The Spanish Tragedy* makes a case for the value of finding particular points of applicability within the Early Modern period, in order to open up new avenues of understanding characters who act to subvert the power structures of their time and place, such as Bel-Imperia and Heironimo. Michaela Bronstein, in her article "Ngũgĩ's Use of Conrad: A Case for Literary Transhistory" (2014), provides an appeal for this type of transhistorical approach to literature, writing

I examine what I am calling literary transhistory: the study of literature's traveling in time not as a flight from historical relevance but as an invitation to affiliation with multiple historical moments. This is literature embedded in history, but not always and only the history of its moment of production; this is literature that makes an aesthetic appeal to the future, but an appeal that has political uses (412).

By approaching *The Spanish Tragedy* this way—acknowledging the uniqueness of its political moment, but also opening up the possibility of uncovering new relevance for modern readers—we can make a case for the application of biopolitical and necropolitical theory not based exclusively on the overwhelming historical parallels or precedent, but at least partially due to possibilities opened up by our current political and philosophical moment.

Foucauldian Scholarship in Early Modern Drama

While biopolitical theory has remained largely unexplored within Early Modern literary and cultural studies, other elements of Foucauldian thought have already contributed substantially to the discourse in the field. One of these conversations surrounds the treatment of violent spectacle, particularly executions, as an exhibition of state power, drawing from Foucault's earlier book *Discipline and Punish*. Molly Smith's article, "The Theater and the Scaffold: Death as Spectacle in *The Spanish Tragedy*" (1992), is one example of a critic dealing with these dynamics of violence and power within *The Spanish Tragedy*. While distinct from biopolitical theory, the ideas explored in *Discipline and Punish*, as well as "The Theatre and the Scaffold," ask questions about the theatrical nature of public execution, how sovereignty interacts with state sponsored violence, and ways that power dynamics in public spectacles of torture and death can be subverted through resistance. Smith's article draws out the parallel between the theatricality of an execution and the display of violence on the stage, and examines the moments of death on display within *The Spanish Tragedy*, offering a reading of these moments that consciously engages with Foucault's theories on the power dynamics at work in these moments of violent performativity.

Lorna Hutson, in her article, "Rethinking the 'Spectacle of the Scaffold': Juridical Epistemologies and English Revenge Tragedy" (2005), questions some scholarship within this framework, but acknowledges, "Michel Foucault's work has reversed a traditional assumption of literature's opposition to, or detachment from, regimes of government" and "[has] brought to the traditional critical preoccupation with [Early Modern Drama's] violence a new awareness that spectacles of legally inflicted pain are demonstrations of sovereign power" (30). Hutson asserts that many scholars of Early Modern English Drama working with Foucault's "Spectacle of the Scaffold," fail to acknowledge the differences between the French judicial system and the English judicial system during this time period. While Foucault famously begins *Discipline and Punish*

with a fulsome description of the brutal torture and execution of Damiens, convicted of attempted regicide in 1757 France, which Early Modern English literature scholars frequently use as a starting place for discussing the theatricality of violence in drama, Hutson calls attention to the significant differences that emerge between the judicial systems of France and England, particularly in the way that each deals with evidence and methods of conviction. She argues that the English judicial system during this period was moving strongly in the direction of empowering a community-based jury with power over evaluating evidence and issuing convictions, rather than the secretive and torture-based system used in France. Because of this, the nuances surrounding the analysis of executions as the exercise of sovereign power become more complex, since the sovereign is, in some way, acting less directly upon the “body of the condemned”.

I see the foregrounding of these juridical distinctions as another connection between Early Modern England and the biopolitical shift. One move that necessitates the shift toward the biopolitical management of life is the dispersal of power from a single, embodied sovereign into a variety of other mechanisms that together work to manage the lives of subjects. A precursor of this can be seen in the way that Hutson discusses the evolution of jury trials in England. She claims that Foucault’s *Discipline and Punish* is relevant to particular situations, “the political spectacle of intense pain that reaffirms the body of the king and hence the body politic” (33), while in England she describes the growing power of the community jury and public trial and the “ongoing struggle between bench and jurors, between the official definitions of culpability, and the views of the community” (42). What we can see here is not simply the erosion of sovereign power, but its growing insidiousness as it is dispersed throughout and collectively monitored by the community rather than imposed in a top-down way. This provides additional support for the application of biopolitical questions to the Early Modern period, as Hutson outlines the beginning of this change in the justice system. As Foucault argues, this kind of dispersal of power merely

conceals the workings of sovereign control and shifts toward community normalization as a mechanism for managing subjects, rather than truly resulting in a diminishing of power and control.

The discussion of these details of sovereignty and its position within the Early Modern period make up a significant portion of recent scholarship in the Foucauldian tradition. Through the lens of *Discipline and Punish*, as well as other texts, Early Modern scholars have been fascinated by the workings of power displayed in dramatic texts. Philip Lorenz's *The Tears of Sovereignty: Perspectives of Power in Renaissance Drama* (2013), represents one recent example of this branch of investigation. By drawing heavily upon the theories of Foucault and Giorgio Agamben, particularly upon the ideas of the "zones" of life and the concept of absolute sovereignty, Lorenz develops historical and literary links between modern theory and the political climate of English Renaissance drama. Lorenz traces the evolution of sovereignty during this time, writing

What [this book] attempts to make visible is a series of co-implications between sovereignty's baroque stagings and its contemporary (both seventeenth and twenty-first century) theorizations...these events suggest less a narrative of historical "development" than an allegory of sovereignty's ongoing migrations and deformations, as the concept moves from early to late modernity. One general trajectory these follow is from sovereignty's representation in the symbolic body of the sacred king, into increasingly fragmented, abstract, and disembodied forms (19).

While Lorenz's reading centers the relationship between sovereignty and theology, and looks at different historical moments of resistance than will be privileged in this thesis, his book represents one of the prominent efforts of scholars to grapple with the role of power in the Early Modern period through the lens of modern conceptions of sovereignty.

The recent scholarship of Maggie Vinter is also relevant to this discussion, as her work represents one way of looking at death in Early Modern drama that closely relates to my own use of necropolitical theory. In her book, *Last Acts: The Art of Dying on the Early Modern Stage*

(2019), Vinter situates an understanding of death on the Early Modern English stage within a historical and religious moment, while also reading it through a modern lens that centers the interactions between institutions of power and their subjects. Vinter examines how a religious context that continued to stigmatize suicide paradoxically encouraged individuals to take control of their own behavior in death—to die well, especially in spritual terms—and the way we can see echoes of those practices in on-stage deaths of the era.

My own analysis will deal with issues of power and death in ways that continue the work of Lorenz, Vinter, and others, but with the explicit application of necroresistance to the moments of violence in *The Spanish Tragedy*. By looking at this play as one with innately political implications, both through Bel-Imperia's role as a pawn for her family to use in furtherance of social and dynastic goals, and through the dynamics of social advancement that are foundational to the story of Horatio and Hieronimo, I believe their violence and revenge carries weight that has yet to be fully explored. While engaging with the historical moment that frames *The Spanish Tragedy*, the biopolitical reading I employ will provide a new position from which to understand the purpose of the frequently gruesome and sensational violence the play contains and achieve a new appreciation for these unique revengers.

Conclusion

Building on the theoretical framework outlined here, Chapter Two of my thesis will apply theories of necroresistance to an in-depth reading of Bel-Imperia. Bel-Imperia stands as a uniquely ambiguous female character within the scope of Early Modern English Drama, both for her active role in the play's revenge plot and for the ambivalence with which Kyd draws her, fruitfully complicating as he does character traits that would seem to be strikingly negative within the historical period. Reading Bel-Imperia through the lens of necroresistance allows us to differently understand her character and the implications of her actions, particularly the letter written in her own blood and her suicide. Without making an argument based on authorial intent,

close engagement with the text of the play leaves room for readers to read deep significance and meaning into Bel-Imperia's character and actions.

Chapter Three of my thesis will foreground the social position of Horatio and Hieronimo, and how a political reading of Horatio's murder opens up possibilities for reading dramatic parallels into the concluding violence of the play. In addition to Hieronimo's self-mutilation, I will also examine the implications of his display of Horatio's dead body and the role that corpses play in the world of *The Spanish Tragedy* more broadly. Chapter Three will connect these ideas through a lens of class-based oppression, looking for ways that, even in death, the oppressed can strike back against their oppressors.

Chapter Four of my thesis will offer a way forward for continuing study of the interactions of biopolitical theory and Early Modern English Drama with a particular focus on issues of female agency. By briefly examining some ways that biopolitics are at work within *The Changeling* by Thomas Middleton and William Rowley (1622), and *Antony and Cleopatra* by William Shakespeare (1606), I offer suggestions for pairing biopolitics with Early Modern English Drama that open up new avenues of scholarship and fresh ways of interpreting these classic texts.

Collectively, this thesis will outline some valuable ways of expanding critical engagement with Early Modern English Drama in new directions, and show how the transhistorical application of biopolitical theory could provide a useful method for uncovering previously unconsidered facets of plot and character. Particularly when considering instances of violent resistance in the frequently bloody Revenge Tragedy genre, the theories of necroresistance and necropolitics can help to reveal moments of agency in places where it has previously been overlooked.

CHAPTER TWO: NECROPOLITICS AND GENDER

In bringing biopolitical theories into conversation with *The Spanish Tragedy*, the first character who is drawn to the forefront is Bel-Imperia, the niece of the King of Spain and the co-avenger of Horatio's murder. Bel-Imperia occupies a unique place in the play, both because of her behavior, which is unconventional for the Early Modern period, and because Kyd does not seem to frame her transgressive behavior as an entirely negative characteristic. By highlighting two particular moments that embody Necropolitical resistance—first the letter Bel-Imperia writes to Hieronimo in her own blood, and then her suicide—I hope to draw out some ways that we can better appreciate this transgressive character and the political significance of her actions throughout the play, in a way that much traditional engagement with the play has overlooked.

Historical scholarship on *The Spanish Tragedy* largely failed to give Bel-Imperia and her role serious critical attention. Pamela Allen Brown summarizes the traditional scholarly consensus, in “Anatomy of an Actress: Bel-Imperia as Tragic Diva” (2015) by saying, “[Bel-Imperia's admirers] are outnumbered by others who find her desires distasteful and her self-interest suspicious...Some seem put out that Bel-imperia is resolute, achieving exactly what she sets out to do, dissembling and recruiting allies to achieve her goal—and being applauded for it” (53). Brown then formulates her own historically-based argument for understanding Bel-Imperia as an English representative of the actresses who were rising to fame in countries where women were accepted into the performing arts. While these foreign actresses were not entirely approved of in England, she argues that this perspective accounts for some of the appeal that Kyd has inarguably written into this complex character.

While not all scholarly engagement with Bel-Imperia has been negative, much less critical attention has been paid to her actions than those of Hieronmio. The reading of Michael Henry Levin in “‘Vindicta Mihi!’: Meaning, Morality, and Motivation in *The Spanish Tragedy*” (1964) represents a good example of how Bel-Imperia’s role has been dismissed over time. He writes, “Mercurial and melancholic, amorous, clever, coy, and scornful by turns, she is the eternal female—and her femininity has iron in its soul” (319). While his view is not innately negative, it is remarkably gendered in ways that feminist scholars would take issue with. He sees her character as defined by emotion, shifting and “mercurial” rather than a serious and deliberate player in the revenge plot. The attention given to her change in affection from Andrea to Horatio in the beginning of the play, and the discomfort that some scholars have with her willingness to frame love as something to be used in pursuit of other ends, override the considerable contributions she makes throughout the plot through careful and calculated action.

But in recent years, there has been a shift toward engaging more thoughtfully with Bel-Imperia as a character. Adrienne Redding, in “Liminal Gardens: Edenic Iconography and the Disruption of Sexual Difference in Tragedy” (2015) reads Bel-Imperia as a character whose subversion of gender roles is brought back into patriarchal control through the linking of the female body with garden spaces and tragedy. Redding writes a compelling analysis of the significance of “Edenic” gardens and outdoor spaces with the necessity of reasserting control through violence, through an analysis of *The Spanish Tragedy* and *Titus Andronicus*. She argues, “Both Bel-Imperia...and Isabella, wife of the knight marshal of Spain, perform actions in garden spaces that make visible their disruption of cultural expectations of the sexual difference upon which definitions of male and female relied, resulting in waves of destruction” (144). While Redding is not critical of Bel-Imperia in this role, she is not optimistic about the way the action of the play wishes the viewer to interpret this sexual disruption, claiming that in each case, the garden is also the scene of patriarchal victory and control. Roxanne Grimmer and Jeanie

Warnock provide similarly favorable readings of Bel-Imperia, heavily influenced by feminist theory. While Kristine Steenberg, in her essay “Gendering Revenge in *The Spanish Tragedy*: Feminine Fury and the Contagiousness of Theatrical Passion” (2016) does not necessarily condemn Bel-Imperia as a character, she sees her as a symbolic representation of revenge, and its emotional excesses, as an essentially feminine characteristic, that can be read as corrupting the male-coded concept of justice, as embodied in Hieronimo. Many of these authors focus exclusively on Bel-Imperia’s early scenes—her choice of Horatio as a lover, and their scene together in the garden—and see her role come mostly to a close by the end of 2.4, when the threat she poses to her family, in the form of independent sexuality, has been effectively contained. With the application of biopolitical theory, particularly the branches of necropolitics and necroresistance, we can venture significant ways of rereading the conclusion of Bel-Imperia’s story that center her continued agency in contested space, and offer possible readings to combat claims that the play necessarily reaffirms patriarchal control.

Working up to this reading of Bel-Imperia’s later actions in the play, Frank Whigham’s analysis of Bel-Imperia, in *Seizures of the Will in Early Modern English Drama* (1996), provides an excellent foundation for understanding the implications of her early actions, and how tracing the trajectory of those initial scenes can help us to more thoughtfully read the conclusion of the play. Whigham argues that she is framed as a politically-conscious, disruptive character from the very first lines of the play, when Don Andrea introduces her to the reader (23-25). One of the keys to reading Bel-Imperia, according to Whigham, is understanding the severity of her early transgressions. While a modern reader might have a general sense that Bel-Imperia’s pre-marital entanglements, with men below her in social station, were culturally frowned upon, Whigham provides evidence for understanding her actions, and those of her lovers, as nothing short of treason, with all the political implications that implies. He reports, “The statute of 28 Henry VIII c. 24...[forbids] anyone to ‘espouse marry or take to his wife any of the Kings’ children...[or any

of the lawful children] of the King's Brothers or Sisters...[or defile or deflower any of them not being married]'" (brackets in original, 25), and that defiance of these statutes constitutes an act of high treason. Further, Whigham also highlights Kyd's surprising stance toward his treasonous characters, particularly Bel-Imperia, writing

However, Kyd actively occludes the legal placement of the event as a criminal matter, of state...his aims can be specified more clearly in relation to petty treason—seen as ideological murder, of social authority....Bel-Imperia's dissident sexual relations are certainly murderous, not literally of her superiors, but of their sustaining ideology. Kyd foregrounds her actions as ideological treason—not only against the statutes of the realm, but against the status, kinship, and gender norms that ground much of the statutes' cultural authority (emphasis in original, 26).

This framing of Bel-Imperia's decisions to engage in (and likely to initiate, as well) relationships with Don Andrea and Don Horatio, presents us with a way of extending this interpretation to incorporate biopolitical theory. Bel-Imperia's body is itself a location of state control, both legally, ideologically, and socially, and it is through physical and sexual acts that she strikes back at the apparatus of power.

Bel-Imperia's worth within the world of the play is explicitly linked to her ability to marry and produce children in service of the state. Act 2, Scene 3, reveals her relatives planning her future as a wife and mother, as well as the implications of her marriage on their own prospects. Castile, her father, says

Although she coy it as becomes her kind,
 And yet dissemble that she loves the prince,
 I doubt not, I, But she will stoop in time

 Yet herein shall she follow my advice,
 Which is to love him or forgo my love (2.3.3-8).

She is accused by her father of being "coy" and dissembling, in a way that he specifically associates with women ("her kind"), meaning that her words and desires are dismissed. While she seems to have expressed to her father that she does not wish to marry Balthazar, her protests are

disregarded, or seen as simply the proper feminine response. Whether or not he believes her desire not to marry Balthazar to be genuine or feigned, Castile expects the result to be the same. He says “she will stoop,” “follow my advice,” “or forgo my love”. What is expected of her is obedience and subservience, conveyed through the visually powerful word “stoop.” Later in the same scene, the King of Spain comments, “If she neglect him and forgo his love,/She both will wrong her own estate and ours” (2.3.46-47). The cost being weighed by her father and uncle here is in money and status, as captured through the use of the word “estate.” She cannot be allowed, through feminine caprice, to injure the standing of her family. Her value to them is transactional and tied to her acceptability as a wife to powerful neighboring countries, such as Portugal. She becomes a commodity that Lorenzo and Balthazar are ultimately willing to kill to control.

The de-humanizing effect of political and arranged marriage is explored in another context by sociologist Ci’han Ahmetbeyzade, as she discusses the cultural justification of honor killings in Turkey, in her article “Gendering Necropolitics: The Juridical-Political Sociality of Honor Killings in Turkey” (2008). She writes, “The chastity of a woman resides in her virginal state. It necessarily implies that her body does not belong to her, but to her community, and she does not have any claim over her own life and existence...Lacking sovereign power over her own existence, her value lies in her capacity to service and support the patriarchal order” (189). Ahmetbeyzade’s description shows remarkable parallels to Bel-Imperia’s situation in *The Spanish Tragedy*, as we can see her value to her family resides in her ability to be traded with other nations and reproduce legitimate heirs. Though her station as a member of the royal family likely affords some benefits relative to women of other classes during this time, women’s legal standing under English common law in the Early Modern period maintained that they were in a position of legal dependence upon their male relatives or husbands (“Women and the Law”). Living within a system of this type of patriarchal control, how are we then able to differently understand Bel-

Imperia's acts of resistance to the control of her brother and father from a necropolitical perspective?

Bargu's concept of necroresistance becomes increasingly applicable to Bel-Imperia as the play progresses. In her comparison of modern hunger strikes in Turkey with Foucault's opening to *Discipline and Punish*, the 18th century execution of Damiens, Bargu outlines the shared way that these violent deaths serve as powerful illustrations of the interaction between sovereignty and resistance. She writes,

In the [case of Damiens], violence is deployed by the state; in the [case of Turkish hunger strike participants], against it. The difference in the directionality of the violence, of course, transforms the two death-events into opposites: in the former, violence functions to restore, affirm, and display the power of the state, whereas in the latter, violence functions to contest and challenge it... Both death-events delineate the body as the site of the exercise of power (42).

In the same way, Bel-Imperia's body becomes the location of this type of contest, between sovereignty and resistance. First, Bel-Imperia's very choice of partners can be read as a form of resistance to control. Especially in her choice of Horatio, she reflects "Yes, second love shall further my revenge./I'll love Horatio, my Andrea's friend,/The more to spite the prince that wrought his end" (1.4.66-68) Her choices to pursue Andrea and Horatio, men below her in social standing, with no political use to her family members, can be read as deliberate acts of rebellion against the rules she is meant to live by. She seems to love both of these men, but does not hide the way she also uses these relationships to manipulate and subvert authority. From early in the play she shows awareness of the political machinations that surround her, and a willingness to use the resources at hand, including her sexuality, to undermine her oppressors.

Her degree of oppression, and also resistance, intensifies after Horatio's death. Bel-Imperia witnesses his sudden, violent murder—that itself is a kind of torture—and pleads for Horatio's life. Immediately, her brother Lorenzo says, "Come, stop her mouth, away with her" (2.4.63). Bel-Imperia is physically silenced, restrained, and isolated by her captors. Whigham

(1996) reads this scene as largely the conclusion of Bel-Imperia's significant contributions to the contests of will taking place, writing, "they 'stop her mouth' plugging the ideological leak, as befits one who has been neither chaste, silent, nor obedient, and bundle her away to concealing disciplinary enclosure" (51). Yet, I argue that it is essential to take our knowledge of Bel-Imperia's character before this scene, and carefully extend it to reinterpret her later actions, despite the fact that they take up fewer lines in the text.

The significant moment where Bel-Imperia's resistance crosses into the realm of necroresistance comes in the form of the bloody letter. Placed in this state of torment, isolated, imprisoned, and having just witnessed the murder of someone she loved, Bel-Imperia writes a letter in her own blood to Hieronimo, detailing the murder of Horatio. This is reported to us second-hand, when Heironimo is alone on stage, saying

What's here? A letter? Tush, it is not so.
 A letter written to Hieronimo!
 "For want of ink, receive this bloody writ.
 Me hath my hapless brother hid from thee;
 Revenge thyself on Balthazar and him,
 For these were they that murderéd thy son (3.2.24-29).

While her motive for inciting revenge is certainly personal, the resulting action is decidedly political as well. She calls on Hieronimo to revenge himself upon the prince of another nation and her own brother, a member of the Spanish royal family. Moreover, she does this by spilling her own blood. While this happens off stage, this action denotes significant physical pain and suffering in service of this confession, as we can imagine her repeatedly stabbing her own arm with a knife "for want of ink." Bel-Imperia is left with nothing but her own body, and even her control of that space is contested. Yet, in these circumstances, she chooses to strike back at her captors, telling their secret, by using her own body. Mbembe, in his analysis of suicide bombers, writes, "The body does not simply conceal a weapon. The body is transformed into a weapon"

(183). Through the writing of the letter in her own blood, and the pain that would have accompanied that action, Bel-Imperia weaponizes her knowledge and weaponizes her body.

This reading of the bloody letter allows us to continue to see Bel-Imperia in the politically subversive role she occupies throughout the play. As one of the more far-fetched elements of the plot, it would be easy to skip over the importance of the letter and read it as a melodramatic plot device, just as many readings of Bel-Imperia have focused on her early shift in affection as a sign of her decision-making being ruled by inconsistent emotions. By looking at Bel-Imperia's oppression in necropolitical terms, her choice of blood as a weapon, literally and figuratively connected with her body and her life, gains significance. It is not dramatic excess; it signifies her agency and commitment to resistance, in the face of overwhelming force. She sheds her own blood, a preview of her later suicide, to fight back.

A necropolitical reading continues to push back against attempts to read Bel-Imperia as a woman driven to hysterics by her feelings. While she mourns throughout the play, first for Andrea, then for Horatio, she repeatedly reflects on the deliberate choices she makes. As quoted previously, she phrases her attraction to Horatio as a deliberate choice, pursued in order to revenge herself on Balthazar. In her dissertation, Jeanie Warnock writes, "Kyd depicts her love as a natural need for comfort and consolation and recognizes its power as a healer of sorrow and loss. Unlike the self-immolating heroines of tradition, who are entrapped within their excessive grief, she continues with her life" (141). While she grieves and takes steps toward revenge after Andrea's death, Bel-Imperia is not a slave to her grief. The same can be said of her demeanor in nearly every scene after Horatio's death, as well. During the monologue that takes place during her imprisonment she says, "Well, perforce, I must constrain myself/To patience, and apply me to the time./Till heaven, as I have hoped shall set me free" (3.9.12-14). This level tone is highlighted even more when looked at in contrast with the preceding scene, which displays the growing

insanity of Isabella, Horatio's mother. While both speak of revenge, Bel-Imperia takes deliberate, calculated steps toward her goal, while Isabella rants with little purpose or direction.

As the tension escalates, Bel-Imperia's feigned agreement to marry Balthazar is bookended by her solitary reflections in Act 3, Scene 9, and her impassioned speech to Hieronimo in Act 4, Scene 1. These speeches ensure the reader does not believe that thoughts of revenge have slipped her mind, but she again approaches the problem with determination and care. She says to Hieronimo

Nor shall his death be unrevenged by me,
Although I bear it out for fashion's sake:
For here I swear in sight of heaven and earth,
Shouldst thou neglect the love thou shouldst retain,
And give it over and devise no more,
Myself should send their hateful souls to hell (4.1.23-28).

Described here, the way she interacts with Lorenzo and Balthazar prior to this speech represents another calculated course of action. While never explicitly agreeing to it in the text of the play, she goes along with the arranged marriage, standing on stage, but silent, as the King and the Viceroy discuss the details of the arrangement in Act 3, Scene 14. She chooses to "bear it out for fashion's sake," allowing the marriage to go forward, while continuing to work through plans of revenge. It is through her manipulation of the circumstances, and her acceptance of her impending marriage to Balthazar, that the revenge plot is able to come to fruition. She consistently chooses to be patient and collected in her methodical search for revenge.

By establishing that Bel-Imperia is inclined to calculated action and deliberate pursuit of politically subversive ends throughout the play, it is necessary to interpret her actions in the play's climax through the same lens. During the final scene, her lines are mediated by the script written by Hieronimo to accomplish their revenge, and then her actions are interpreted by him, as well. However, I believe by continuing to privilege her political awareness and desire to

undermine the power structure that seeks to control her, we can read her suicide as consistent with her behavior throughout the play, rather than taking for granted Hieronimo's interpretation.

During the play within a play, when the long-anticipated revenge is finally played out, Bel-Imperia continues to defy gender conventions as she holds the knife to stab Balthazar, then herself. Grimmett mitigates the importance of Bel-Imperia's revenge, noting that Hieronimo still plays a directorial role in the violence. She argues that "even this most transgressive position remains carefully predefined and severely limited in duration...Bel-Imperia kills only in accordance with the masculine authority of Hieronimo's play script" (37). While true to a point, I believe it is significant that Bel-Imperia goes against Hieronimo's wishes and kills herself as well, during the play within a play. Hieronimo later says,

Poor Bel-Imperia missed her part in this:
 For though the story saith she should have died,
 Yet I of kindness, and care of her,
 Did otherwise determine of her end (4.4.140-43).

He explains that he did not intend for her to die in the course of the play, only to feign suicide. Bel-Imperia diverged from his script, killing herself in reality. Next, however, Hieronimo interprets this action for us, saying, "But love of him whom they did hate too much/Did urge her resolution to be such" (4.4.144-45). Hieronimo reads her decision as a result of her love for Horatio, or "him whom they did hate too much". But why should we allow Hieronimo's interpretation to speak for her action, when that seems in contrast to her character throughout the rest of the play? While this may be one way of understanding Bel-Imperia's actions, I believe that we can also read this action as an act of resistance in its own right.

Throughout the play, Bel-Imperia has shown awareness of, and disdain for, the political system she finds herself within. Warnock writes, "Her style of death also links her to the Renaissance tradition of suicides as a defiance of tyranny...But Kyd inverts the whole tradition by having Bel-Imperia use suicide to revenge her lover's death, not protect her own and her

husband's honour" (157). Looking at her revenge and suicide through a necropolitical lens allows us to take this understanding one step further. Not only is her death unusual in that it does not seem to be in service of preserving the patriarchal order, but it actively subverts the power structures around her.

Bel-Imperia's death forms a contrast with other female deaths on the Early Modern English stage, including Isabella's from earlier in the play, and the well analyzed deaths of Ophelia in *Hamlet* and Livinia in *Titus Andronicus*. Isabella's suicide, while also an on-stage stabbing, accomplishes little in terms of advancing the plot, and certainly has no larger political implications. Isabella says, "I bestir me—to no end./And as I curse this tree from further fruit,/so shall my womb be cursèd for his sake" (4.2.34-35). She connects the loss of her son to the loss of her purpose as a mother, punishing her "womb" and "hapless breast" (4.2.38). But she openly acknowledges the emptiness of destroying the arbor and her own body as a means of revenge, knowing that the true revenge is out of her hands and left to the work of others.

Ophelia's ambiguous death or suicide is even more mediated than either Bel-Imperia's or Isabella's, as the reader only receives a second-hand account through Gertrude's description of it (4.7.137-154). While her death serves plot purposes, in advancing the feud between Laertes and Hamlet, even this significance seems limited, as they are able to put this behind them and "exchange forgiveness" (5.2.271) before they perish. While other interpretations can be, and have been, put forward regarding Ophelia's death, it is much more difficult to see it as an action taken to forward a goal of political or social resistance. Her death resolves her madness in a way that does not force the characters around her, particularly Hamlet or Laertes, to deal with the consequences. Finally, Livinia's murder is directly tied to the concept of honor killing, with her death explicitly described as a way to cleanse her family of shame. Just before the murder Titus asks Saturninus about the practice of father's slaying their raped daughters, and after Saturninus agrees with the principle, Titus kills her, saying, "Die, die, Livinia, and thy shame with thee,/And

with thy shame thy father's sorrow die" (5.3.45-46). Whether we read more or less acceptance and knowledge of her impending death into Livinia's final moments, the text is largely complicit in the need for Livinia to die, rather than continue to live in her visibly broken state.

When looking at Bel-Imperia's suicide, the particulars of the situation seem to align in a way that gives her death both symbolic meaning and practical consequences. Because her family has treated her as a political pawn, Bel-Imperia's death has political ramifications. It seems too simple to define her last action as mere grief, when that seems contrary to the way she exists throughout the play. I propose that just as she shows awareness of ways to resist control in her life, she shows the same consciousness in her death. As the means of asserting control constrict around her, she is left with one way to escape both the grief she is experiencing, and a life without freedom. Mbembe writes, "Referring to the practice of individual or mass suicide by slaves cornered by the slave catchers, Gilroy suggests that death, in this case, can be represented as agency. For death is precisely that from and over which I have power" (186). In Bel-Imperia's case, she recognizes the extent to which her family sees her as a commodity to be exchanged for certain kinds of economic and political security. I believe we can read her suicide as an additional act of revenge against those who would have used her in this way, removing her body from the reach of their political schemes. The King exclaims, after Castile's death, "What age hath ever heard such monstrous deeds?/My brother, and the whole succeeding hope/That Spain expected after my decease!"(4.4.202-04). The deaths of Lorenzo and Bel-Imperia characterized as a loss of "the whole succeeding hope" of the royal line. Without anyone to inherit or continue the family, the loss of Bel-Imperia is the loss of the possibility for the patriarchal lineage to continue. As with her decisions to engage romantically with Andrea and Horatio, Bel-Imperia's suicide has political consequences. To believe she is ignorant of these is to do her character a disservice. Her death strikes an additional blow to the state, the sovereign, and her family line.

This reading of Bel-Imperia through the lens of necropolitics, gives us a different way of understanding both her suffering and her resistance. I believe this deeper analysis of some of her violent actions can give us an even greater respect for this fascinating character, who uses violence and her sexuality to combat a patriarchal society determined to control her.

CHAPTER THREE: NECROPOLITICS AND CLASS

Critical engagement with Hieronimo in *The Spanish Tragedy* has been more robust and varied than the discussion of Bel-Imperia, but presents some new possibilities and implications when paired with biopolitical and necropolitical theory. While Hieronimo's position does not carry the gendered associations that inform Bel-Imperia's role in the play, Hieronimo does exist in a unique and critically-rich social position, as someone who is meant to be the representative of the sovereign's judicial power, while simultaneously remaining vulnerable to injustice. He occupies a social middle-ground between the royal family and the lower classes, since his title is highly honored, but something he has earned for himself not inherited. To bring Hieronimo into conversation with necropolitics, I will focus on Hieronimo's use of Horatio's dead body during the final scene and on his self-mutilation when he bites out his own tongue. By examining first the position he occupies in relation to the sovereign, and then examining the ways that he strikes back against that power, I will argue that Hieronimo's revenge, like Bel-Imperia's, can be understood as an Early Modern foray into necropolitical resistance to authority.

In order to situate Hieronimo within his historical and cultural context, many scholars have interrogated the implications of his social status. Some scholars have leaned into the foreign setting of *The Spanish Tragedy* and the political relationship between England and Spain in order to propose readings of Hieronimo that position him as a representative of foreign distortions of justice. Timothy Turner (2013) writes, "Hieronimo's rank in the Spanish Court as Knight Marshal [is] a title the English would associate with torture and summary justice" (277). These would have been viewed negatively by the English, despite the fact that, as Turner points out, torture was not unheard of in England during Elizabeth I's reign. Some readings of the play that

primarily emphasize the relationship between Spanish and English judicial systems, and the role the Knight Marshal had in Spanish torture practices, allow critiques within the play to fall only on what would have been foreign and barbaric to an English audience. Turner argues, however, that there is room for critiques of the justice system to be applied closer to home, especially in England's torture of Catholic missionaries, rather than allowing Kyd's critiques to be entirely compartmentalized into a distant issue (279-280).

While critics have reckoned with how much Hieronimo's Spanish nationality would have affected the original audiences, and by extension, how it should affect us today, this question has not always been directly tied to the larger question of the play's moral stance toward vengeance. Steven Justice (1985) describes *The Spanish Tragedy* as possessing "unavoidable ambivalence" (271) in this regard, lacking any explicit moralizing on the subject, and inviting critical engagement. Scholars, such as Justice, Turner, Steenbergh, and Hammersmith, read *The Spanish Tragedy* alongside other Early Modern English Revenge Tragedies, in an attempt draw out what message, moral or otherwise, these playwrights would have their audience draw from their nuanced creations. Hieronimo's sympathetic position, "sinned against if sinning" (Justice, 1985, 271), has fueled broad discussion about how the reader should feel about his violent acts of retribution.

Connected to this conversation about how revenge functions in the play, Hieronimo has also been studied through the lenses of Trauma Studies and New Historicism as a mourning father, both in a religious and psychological sense. Emily Shortslef (2019), for example, reads it as significant that Hieronimo believes he hears Horatio call for help, when the audience knows in reality it was Bel-Imperia who called. She writes, "Kyd's play offers an account of trauma that highlights the fantasy scenarios it sets in motion, scenarios which both disavow and compensate for trauma by putting something in the place of radical loss" (472). She, and other critics like Thomas Anderson (2006), place the trauma dealt with in *The Spanish Tragedy*, particularly in its

use of Don Andrea's ghost and Hieronimo's mourning, as the reckoning of Early Modern English playwrights with the impact of the Reformation and the loss of Purgatory (Anderson, 146-147). John Kerrigan (1996) also looks at the function of revenge, repetition, and objects as they relate to remembering and mourning a loved one. These represent a rich conversation that engages deeply with the concept of grief, especially Hieronimo's, as it is present in the play.

When international relations, religion, and trauma have not been foregrounded, other critics have examined Hieronimo and his family, as well as Don Andrea, as representatives of a new and rising class within Early Modern society. Christopher Crosbie (2008) argues that Hieronimo represents what he calls a "middling" class, that Kyd himself would likely have identified with, as someone who rose out of humble origins, but who gained prominence and status through his work. Crosbie writes, "Kyd situates Hieronimo and Horatio as rising members of the 'middling sort,' marking them as outside the aristocratic echelon their innate ambition prompts them to challenge" (4). The conflict between the insular and hereditary aristocratic class and this "middling class" is embodied in *The Spanish Tragedy* both through Bel-Imperia's scandalous choices in lovers and through Hieronimo's inability to receive justice for his son through traditional judicial channels.

Crosbie also connects Kyd's play to the concept of *oeconomia*, based on Kyd's translation and expansion of *The Householder's Philosophy* (*The Works of Thomas Kyd*, 1588), a manual that advocates for merit-based social advancement and discusses strategies for household management in pursuit of economic success. While these connections make for a fascinating reading in the Marxist tradition, there are also some interesting connections between Crosbie's analysis and biopolitical theory. The *oeconomia* that Kyd expounds upon in his translation pushes back against a belief that innate worth or ability is tied to the established class structure. Crosbie writes, "The society Kyd inhabits, the one he reflects in his translation of *The Householder's Philosophy*, and the one he creates in *The Spanish Tragedy* are all ordered by the dialectic

implied in this contrast between privilege and merit, between entrenched power and laboring aspirants” (7). Crosbie sees these social themes as central to Kyd’s work.

When applied specifically to *The Spanish Tragedy*, it is also possible to see these themes not only from an economic point of view, but also from a physical one. By looking at how the body plays a role in the social politics at work in the play, Horatio’s relationship with Bel-Imperia is drawn into the foreground. Both of them physically embody their families’ potential for social advancement. Their relationship, as previously discussed, illustrates how Bel-Imperia’s choice of a lover threatened her ability to serve as a means of replication of social values and status for her aristocratic family. But a similar, inverse, truth applies to Horatio, since his death prevents him from functioning as an agent of social change on behalf of his family. Crosbie points out that the loss of Horatio was a loss of a future for Hieronimo and Isabella’s household. He writes of Horatio’s family,

Rising and talented yet daily laboring and occupying “a house too small” for the captured Portuguese prince, the protagonists may be ambitious, but they have also become functionally static, lacking the promise of any additional advance beyond their present condition...a situation [that] becomes especially acute for Hieronimo and Isabella once Horatio is killed, a scenario the third addition of the 1602 quarto further develops when Hieronimo describes Horatio as “the very arm that did hold up our house. / Our hopes were stored up in him” (32–33).

The loss of Horatio is a closing off of possibilities for his family. He cannot continue their advance, either through marriage or otherwise, because he is killed by Lorenzo. His murder serves as a reinstitution of the existing social strata and an attempt to snuff out the “middling” class “pressing against (and threatening to unsettle) aristocratic prerogative” (Crosbie, 3).

Drawing on this understanding of the political position of Hieronimo’s family, a necropolitical reading of Hieronimo’s actions relies on a strongly political reading of Horatio’s murder. As previously discussed in relation to Bel-Imperia, the murder scene can be read as Lorenzo’s reassertion of authority over Bel-Imperia’s physical and political body. I believe a

parallel claim can hold true as it relates to Horatio, as his murder serves to reinforce the power of the sovereign and the aristocratic class, represented by Lorenzo and Balthazar, against the threat of social mobility that Horatio and Hieronimo represent. If Horatio's murder is meant as a method of control over Hieronimo, and symbolically others seeking change in class hierarchies, then we must differently read the way that Hieronimo pushes back against this attempt to quell ambition.

The initial conflict between Lorenzo and Horatio arises over the reward for Balthazar's capture. As Crosbie notes in his analysis, Horatio is not given charge of Balthazar as a prisoner because of the size of his family's household and estate. Horatio goes on to form his romantic connection with Bel-Imperia. Balthazar runs through the connection between these events in his tirade at the end of 2.1. He says

I think Horatio be my destined plague!
 First in his hand he brandishèd a sword,

 And by my yielding I became his slave.
 Now in his mouth he carries pleasing words,

 And through her ears dive down into her heart,
 And in her heart set him where I should stand.
 Thus hath he ta'en my body by his force, (2.1.120-130).

Balthazar sees Horatio as a threat both to his aristocratic station, since being in Horatio's power has reduced him to a "slave," and to his manhood, since he describes this loss of Bel-Imperia's love as a direct assault on his own body. These lines reveal a revulsion to the idea of Balthazar being displaced from a position that he sees as rightfully his, a revulsion that is tied to his romantic hopes as well as his own view of his relative political position in relation to Horatio.

Lorenzo readily agrees with Balthazar's assessment of the situation and is the one to take concrete steps toward the violent removal of Horatio from his sister's life. Lorenzo says to Balthazar, "Do you but follow me and gain your love;/Her favor must be won by his remove" (2.1.135-136). And Balthazar later exclaims, as he and Lorenzo observe the couple secretly

meeting, “Ambitious villain, how his boldness grows!” (2.2.41). The match is unacceptable to Lorenzo and Balthazar for personal reasons of control in Lorenzo’s case, but also due to the political nature of the match and the implications of Horatio’s recurring ambition, as shown in his dispute with Lorenzo over the capture of the Prince and his audacity to continue a relationship with Bel-Imperia.

When looked at in this way, I suggest that we can read Horatio’s hanging in 2.4 as a clear reassertion of the sovereign power that Lorenzo and Balthazar see themselves enacting. They do this through their choice of hanging as a means of execution and through the theatrical elements of the event, including their decision to leave Horatio’s body hanging in the arbor. Molly Smith (1992), as previously discussed, provides scholars of *The Spanish Tragedy* with a compelling argument about the way death and performance interact within the play. She begins by noting, “No other play of the Renaissance stage dwells on the spectacle of hanging as Kyd’s does,” and continues, “In Kyd’s treatment of the body as spectacle, we witness most vividly the earliest coalescence of the theatrical and punitive modes in Elizabethan England” (217). Additionally Nelya Babynets (2015) writes in her own analysis of the role of dead bodies in *The Spanish Tragedy*,

A clear comprehension of the dramatic importance of death in Kyd’s tragedy requires the knowledge that the image of a condemned man swinging at the end of a rope was the most common penal spectacle of late Medieval and Renaissance Europe...the sight of a man swinging on a rope, suspended “between life and death, heaven and hell”... represented an effective [rhetorical] medium for obliterating the imagined remoteness of death (Babynets).

Invoking the closeness of death served as a way for the state to exert its power over the population, making the public execution a site for the negotiation of sovereign power. Smith details the wide-ranging influence of hangings at the permanently constructed Triple Tree in Tyburn, which was constructed in 1571, as they were attended by men, women, and people from all social classes. Those who were killed at this site included religious martyrs and those

convicted of treason (218-219), which meant the theatrics carried overt political implications. Smith writes, “Public execution’s social relevance depended so fully on its proper enactment through the collusion of all participants, including the hangman as an instrument of the law, the criminal as a defier of divine and sovereign authority, and spectators as witnesses to the efficacy of royal power and justice” (226). Because of the political nature of the spectacle of public execution, and because its depiction would have tapped into the widespread ethos surrounding hanging among the play’s original observers, I argue that its use by Lorenzo and Balthazar serves the biopolitical purpose of managing the rising “middling” class, while also reasserting patriarchal dominance over Bel-Imperia.

In order to analyze Horatio’s murder through the lens that Smith suggests, and to further explore the ways that this scene sets up Hieronimo’s later acts, we must consider the audience of the hanging. Smith, in her use of Foucault’s *Discipline and Punish*, discusses the necessity of audience to public execution, arguing that he claimed, “in the ceremonies of the public execution, the main character was the people, whose real and immediate presence was required for the performance” (57). In the case of Horatio’s murder, Bel-Imperia seems the most obviously targeted audience member, since she is the only one whose presence is “real and immediate.” However, I argue that the way Lorenzo addresses Horatio’s dead body, and leaves him hanging in the arbor of Hieronimo’s house suggests another motive as well. After Horatio has been strung up, Lorenzo says, “Although his life were still ambitious proud,/Yet is he at the highest now he is dead” (2.4.60-61). Lorenzo’s return to the idea of ambition in this significant moment reinforces the class-based antagonism between them that is not entirely connected to his relationship with Bel-Imperia. Lorenzo mocks the concept of social progress by quipping that Horatio is now more elevated, in death, than he ever was in life. By reinforcing the theme of social ambition in the final moments of the scene, and leaving the body suspended in plain sight to be immediately

found by Hieronimo, I argue that we can read Hieronimo as an indirect audience member of this spectacle, a co-target of Lorenzo's exercise of power.

This reading changes how we understand Hieronimo's quest for revenge. If Horatio was merely a casualty of Bel-Imperia's rebellion and collateral damage in Lorenzo and Balthazar's reassertion of control over her, then Hieronimo does not exist as a victim of sovereign oppression and violence in the same way. If we instead see Horatio, and by extension, Hieronimo, as representing their own kind of threat to sovereignty, based in upward class mobility, then Hieronimo's actions throughout the rest of the play take on their own political connotations and Horatio's corpse takes on different symbolic meaning. Instead of representing arbitrary, careless violence by those in power, Horatio's corpse represents a figure of insurrection, a victim of a political murder, as well as a personal one. As Hieronimo repeatedly displays Horatio's body, through the emblem of the bloody handkerchief and in the flesh at the end of the play, he reminds the audience of the bloody cost of social ambition, as well as the source of his own motivation to strike the next blow.

Additionally, by reading Hieronimo as a part of the intended audience of his son's murder, there are more parallels that we can read into the execution of the play-within-a-play that Hieronimo uses as the vehicle for revenge. There is a repetition of the father/son relationship as a place of vulnerability and location for retaliation, as well as a reversal of the location of power. The way Hieronimo creates the spectacular occasion for his revenge reveals something of his motives. Whether as an extension of his role as an administrator of justice, or not, Hieronimo cares who witnesses the murders of Lorenzo and Balthazar. He does not seek to murder them stealthily, but creates a public event where he knows the fathers of each of his victims will be present. To understand this dynamic, Smith calls attention to the way that Foucault acknowledges the power of the different players interacting within a public execution. She writes,

[P]articipants in public executions and hangings remained acutely aware of [the audience's] profound relevance both to the authorities who orchestrated the performance and to the spectators who viewed it. Such awareness frequently resulted in conscious attempts by victims to manipulate and modify the distance that separated criminals from onlookers. In such circumstances, the formal efficacy of the execution diminished considerably and events could easily transform into celebration of the condemned victim's role as a defier of repressive authority (220-221).

Smith sees this very dynamic at work during the play-within-a-play, as “we witness a conscious manipulation of distance and framing, dramatic exposition of the precarious nature of public spectacle itself as an illustration of royal and state power” (221). Hieronimo doubles the crime that he, himself, was a victim of, as he makes two fathers, Castile and the Viceroy of Portugal, the audience to the murders of their sons. Significantly, he does not simply end his performance when the victims of his revenge perish. He speaks directly to his audience after the faux play's supposed conclusion, saying as he reveals the dead body of his son, “See here my show. Look on this spectacle!” (4.4.89). The true performance is not over, but just beginning.

Hieronimo's long speech in 4.4 explicitly draws out both his own intentions and the interplay between death, revenge, and power at work in *The Spanish Tragedy*. Here, Hieronimo summarizes for his on-stage audience the way he found his son's murdered body, the way he has kept a bloody handkerchief nearby to reinforce his need for vengeance, and the way he has orchestrated the play-within-a-play to carry out his plans. He begins

Haply you think—but bootless are your thoughts—
 That this is fabulously conterfeit,
 And that we do as all tragedians do:
 To die today, for fashioning out scene—

 And in a minute, starting up again,
 Revive to please tomorrow's audience (4.4.76.82).

Here, Hieronimo frames performativity as an act of service to the audience. The performers must “revive to please” in the future, their continued life given purpose by their audience's pleasure. Yet, in this specific case, the performers will not revive, since all the players have perished in

reality. Their performances are explicitly designed to displease the audience, in this case the royalty looking on. By explaining himself in this way, Hieronimo not only places himself against the already deceased Lorenzo and Balthazar, the direct targets of his revenge, but against the political power structures embodied before him in the figures of the royal families, his audience. While avenging his son was the direct motive, he also clearly frames his actions as something designed to displease his audience. Hieronimo sees the murder committed by Lorenzo and Balthazar as a crime connected to the political dynasties of their families, making them targets for his vengeance as well.

Within this scene, I argue that Hieronimo's display of Horatio's body and the way he bites out his own tongue can be read as acts of necroresistance. Just as I've argued in my reading of Bel-Imperia's bloody letter and suicide, I see Hieronimo's actions in this climactic scene as a deliberate doubling and reversal of violence as a means of resistance to sovereign control. Bargu (2016) writes, as quoted previously, "The difference in the directionality of the violence...transforms...death-events into opposites: in [one] violence functions to restore, affirm, and display the power of the state, whereas in the [other], violence functions to contest and challenge it" (42). Hieronimo creates a duplicate violent event that is designed to undermine the power of the state through the vehicle of the weaponization of the physical body, both his son's and the dramatically murdered corpses of Balthazar and Lorenzo. He creates a spectacle, a word he uses twice in this scene, for the purpose of making his audience, and the sovereign power they embody, the victims of the power he was himself a victim of. By taking on the role of public executioner, Hieronimo usurps the power that killed Horatio. He then takes Horatio's body and employs it as an instrument of terror. He says, after describing Horatio's murder,

And grieved I, think you, at this spectacle?
 Speak, Portuguese, whose loss resembled mine;
 If thou canst weep upon thy Balthazar,
 'Tis like I wailed for my Horatio (4.4.113-116)

Rather than continuing to allow Horatio's body to become a symbol of his own vulnerability and suppression, Hieronimo appropriates this visual as a weapon to increase the distress of those he holds responsible for murdering his son.

At the conclusion of Hieronimo's monologue, when his attempt at suicide by hanging is interrupted, we see the power dynamics of the scene shift. Hieronimo is stopped from ending his own life and captured. The traditional powers of sovereignty attempt to reassert control. The King of Spain does this through physical means, threatening, "I will make thee speak" (4.4.164), and when Hieronimo refuses, "Fetch forth the tortures!" (4.4.183). Hieronimo, however, does not concede this space to the King. He argues, "What lesser liberty can kings afford/Than harmless silence? Then afford it me./Sufficeth I may not, nor I will not, tell thee" (4.4.180-182). Hieronimo characterizes his silence as "harmless," yet it is clear that control over his own speech holds real value both to Hieronimo and to the King, who seeks to compel it with torture.

Hieronimo places such a high degree of value on his own silence, now that his planned monologue has concluded, that he proceeds to bite out his own tongue. He acknowledges his own vulnerability while also refusing to cede control of whatever power he can locate around him, particularly in his ability to deny the King of Spain what he seeks. In Hieronimo's final lines of the play, he says,

Thou mayest torment me, as his wretched son
 Hath done in murd'ring my Horatio,
 But never shalt thou force me to reveal
 The thing which I have vowed inviolate;

 First, take my tongue and afterwards my heart. [He bites out his tongue.] (4.4.186-192)

This action, like Bel-Imperia's bloody letter and the display of Horatio's body have often been looked at as evidence of Kyd's inclination toward gratuitous violence. Carla Mazzio (1998), in her analysis of this moment as a failure of the possibility of language, describes how many critics have called attention to the "sheer sensationalism of the act" (221). Even footnotes in the play

comment, “Since Hieronimo has seemingly revealed all, it is hard to guess what secret the King now wants to know about,” concluding that this action’s main purpose is that it “affords Hieronimo one last heroic gesture of defiance” (70). Yet, like those previous moments, I argue that Kyd’s particular positioning of the body, living and dead, as a place of contested control and agentive potential, makes *The Spanish Tragedy* rich ground for readings that foreground the necropolitical implications of all these actions. Hieronimo’s biting out of his own tongue does not exist as a stand-alone moment of the play. It can be read as a continuing weaponization of the body against sovereign control, reinforcing the way he identifies sovereign control as a part of what he is fighting against in the revenge he carries out. He does not see the conflict as having been resolved by Lorenzo and Balthazar’s deaths; he sees their deaths as part of a larger act of resistance and subversion that he continues fighting through self-mutilation, the murder of Castile, and his own suicide.

Without acknowledging the larger political context of Horatio and Hieronimo’s position in society it is easy to miss some of the implications of the way violence functions in *The Spanish Tragedy*. Tracing the political motivations of Horatio’s murder and following those through to the conclusion of the play, I argue that we can see Hieronimo’s later actions through a different and fascinatingly necropolitical light. Hieronimo is powerfully aware of the dynamics of power at play between performers and audience, sovereign and subject, and repeatedly uses violence to manipulate these relationships to serve his own political ends. Reading Hieronimo’s actions as both personally and politically motivated reveals new ways to read his actions in a way that thoughtfully engages with the dramatic significance of Kyd’s use of violent resistance, self-harm, and death.

CHAPTER FOUR: CONCLUSION

In the two previous chapters I have argued for the applicability of, and the value of, combining biopolitical theory with Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy*, claiming that this philosophical lens opens up new possibilities for interpreting this fascinating text in ways that significantly contribute to the field of study. I want to now offer a beginning look at how this line of thinking could be extended to other Early Modern English plays. The preliminary analysis contained in this chapter will interrogate how the claims of this thesis might interact with other Early Modern texts, continuing to deepen our understanding of *The Spanish Tragedy's* position in modern scholarship, as well as propose some lines of inquiry where biopolitical theory might develop new ways of understanding other plays from this era.

When expanding my focus beyond *The Spanish Tragedy*, I will first look at the trajectory of female characters in other tragedies that followed in Kyd's artistic footsteps. Looking most closely at *The Changeling* by Thomas Middleton and William Rowley (1622), I will argue that gendered biopolitical power dynamics reveal the truly unique nature of Bel-Imperia's character within the time period. While other writers adopted many of Kyd's conventions and themes, they largely did not replicate his inclusion of a morally ambiguous and agentive female character like Bel-Imperia. By applying the same kind of analysis to *The Changeling* that I have applied to *The Spanish Tragedy*, the distinctions between Bel-Imperia and Beatrice-Joanna come into sharp relief, making even clearer the singular position that Bel-Imperia occupies.

Next, while Bel-Imperia is the clearest example of the kind of subversive female character that might particularly interest present-day scholars, similar moments of agency and power are present in other Early Modern plays. I will look briefly at Shakespeare's *Antony and*

Cleopatra, specifically the final scene of Cleopatra's suicide, to propose an initial argument for the necropolitical function of her actions, while also raising questions about how her inconsistent performance of gender might interact with the biopolitical elements at work in this scene and throughout the play.

Bel-Imperia and Beatrice-Joanna: Women as Commodities

The Spanish Tragedy, which was written in the mid- to late-1580's, is separated by a significant amount of time from *The Changeling*, which appeared in 1622. Kyd's play is largely credited with establishing English revenge tragedy as a genre that would be overwhelmingly popular during this time period. *The Changeling* certainly comes out of that tradition, though it does not feature revenge to the same extent that other plays do. Stevie Simkin (2006) uses both Bel-Imperia and Beatrice-Joanna as examples of the "rise of the tragic heroine" (93), that he claims is characteristic of the Early Modern Tragedy. Within that shared space, I believe biopolitical theory can give us a language to help evaluate the similarities and differences between the two characters, as a way of mapping the trajectory of the tragic heroine over this time period. While some traits of Bel-Imperia's reappear in many Early Modern Tragedies, other elements of her characterization seem to have fallen by the wayside by the time Middleton and Rowley wrote *The Changeling*.

Sexual politics play a significant role in *The Changeling* and *The Spanish Tragedy*, creating a natural point of comparison between the two. Simkin argues that as the Early Modern Revenge Tragedy developed, the focus of the drama shifted over time away from a purely national and state interest. He writes

The increased prominence of female characters in the drama's serious tragic register is concurrent with the increased focus on sexual politics in the plays...The emergence of sexuality as a frequent, central issue in the drama can also be associated with the move into the private and domestic sphere. There is a shift from debates around patriarchal power in matters of state politics to the exercise of patriarchal power in personal sexual politics, and the way that power is threatened and subverted or reinforced (94).

When looked at through this perspective, *The Spanish Tragedy* might be seen to embody a tension between these two emphases, introducing personal stakes into the narrative, but not focusing on them exclusively. While Bel-Imperia occupies a position in the royal family, and matters of succession are certainly at work, there are also times when the political nature of her sexual expression is not explicitly foregrounded. While I have previously argued for the political nature of her rebellion, the time spent developing the romance between Bel-Imperia and Horatio seems to suggest real emotion at work in the scene, pushing it out of the purely political and into the personal sphere. *The Changeling*, as a later entry into the genre, falls more solidly on the personal side of this divide. While still dealing with an aristocratic setting, the drama focuses on the local and personal stakes for the characters, rather than national and political ones.

Unlike *The Spanish Tragedy*, *The Changeling* focuses not on royalty, but on a solidly upper-class wealthy family. It centers around Beatrice-Joanna, the daughter of the governor of a city called Alicante. Beatrice seems somewhat reluctantly engaged to marry Alonzo, a match that her father enthusiastically anticipates, especially after she becomes quickly smitten with Alsemero, a visiting nobleman. The interests being negotiated between characters are not matters of succession, but rather alliances for purposes of wealth and influence. Conspiring with Alsemero, she tells her servant, De Flores to murder Alonzo. After killing him, De Flores makes it clear that he will not accept money as a form of payment for the murder. Instead, he blackmails Beatrice into sleeping with him. Now engaged to Alsemero, Beatrice becomes terrified that it will be discovered she is not a virgin, so she again enlists De Flores to help her substitute her maid, Diaphanta, in her place on the wedding night. When the plan eventually unravels, De Flores kills Beatrice and then himself, ending the play with a purging of the transgressive characters.

Despite the differing scopes of each play, Bel-Imperia and Beatrice-Joanna make an interesting comparison because of the many character traits and narrative positions they share, while being cast in very different lights within the worlds they inhabit. Like Bel-Imperia,

Beatrice-Joanna is intended for an arranged marriage of her father's preference, but instead falls in love with someone else. This defiance of paternal control is based very clearly, for both women, on independent sexual desire. The women defy their intended match and pursue other romantic relationships, without the knowledge and approval of their fathers. Yet the results of these desires have very different consequences for each woman.

While I have argued that a biopolitical reading of *The Spanish Tragedy* allows us to see the play's posture toward Bel-Imperia as largely positive, without the expected reassertion of state and patriarchal power over her as a subversive female character, *The Changeling* does the opposite. By looking at the response to Beatrice-Joanna's rebellious behavior through a biopolitical lens, we can see even more clearly how the play shuts down the danger she poses to the existing power structures through violence, male control, and misogyny, both external and internalized.

Central to understanding Beatrice-Joanna and *The Changeling* is understanding the role she embodies in the world of the play, as a vehicle for perpetuating and creating male relationships. This can be most clearly articulated by using feminist anthropologist Gayle Rubin's "exchange of women" framework (1975). Rubin writes, "If it is women who are being transacted, then it is the men who give and take them who are linked, the women being a conduit of a relationship rather than a partner to it" (909). It is this economic and homosocial function that Beatrice ultimately comes to occupy. Rather than functioning as an active partner in the relationships being formed and dissolved throughout the plot, she is a means to an end. For her father, she is an opportunity to forge an alliance with another family and gain a son, and for Alsemero, Alonzo, and Tomazo, she creates the possibility of alliance and the continuation of a paternal line.

The attitude of the central male characters toward Beatrice is made explicit throughout the text of the play. The opening lines of *The Changeling* depict Alsemero's initial infatuation

with Beatrice, as he claims, “I love her beauties to the holy purpose,/...The church hath first begun our interview,/And that’s the place must join us into one” (1.1.6;10-11). While he initially swears his ardent love for, and desire to marry Beatrice, this sentiment from Alsemero does not last throughout the play. Other characters are quickly revealed to have very different concerns in regards to her marriage. When her father, Vermandero, encounters Alonzo and Tomazo, he says

You’re both welcome,
[*To Alonzo*] But an especial one belongs to you, sir,
To whose most noble name our love presents
The addition of a son, our son Alonzo (2.1.97-100).

His focus is on the impending relationship between himself and Alonzo, rather than on the relationship between Beatrice and Alonzo. And later in the same scene, Tomazo tries to convince Alonzo of the dire stakes of marrying someone who may be in love with someone else. These concerns are not based in emotion, or the success of the relationship itself, but on the issue of lineage. He says

She lies but with another in thine arms,
He the half father unto all thy children
In the conception; if he get ‘em not (1.2.138-140).

While Alonzo seems to feel some emotional attachment to Beatrice, Tomazo urges him to think of the results of their union, in terms of child-bearing. He attempts to use the continuation of their family line as his strongest condemnation of Beatrice, urging his brother to consider his own honor and progeny, as well as that of their family, in asking him to break off his engagement to Beatrice.

By the end of the play, it is no surprise that her death is not met with much mourning, since her marriage to Alsemero has already been accomplished. Through the things he has experienced, Alsemero claims he has gained “knowing friendship” (5.3.13) with Tomazo, and tells Vermandero, “You have yet a son’s duty living” (5.3.27). In the concluding lines of the play he summarizes

All we can do, to comfort one another,
 To stay a brother's sorrow for a brother,
 To dry a child from the kind father's eyes,

 Brother a new brother, father a child;
 If these appear, all grief's are reconciled (Epilogue: 1-3;7-8)

He calls attention in these lines to the male bonds that have been forged between himself and Tomazo, in their “new brother” relationship, and between himself and Vermandero, as he has gained a new child. The grief caused by Beatrice’s corruption and death are ultimately inconsequential to the living men around her, since the bonds that she existed to create have been accomplished. Her marriage has given her father the “son” that he desired, and the ending tone of the play suggests that the new relationships that have been formed through this series of events has “reconciled”, or redeemed, the loss of life that has occurred.

Within this framework, where women and their sexuality was intended to serve a very specific economic purpose between men, the desire to break out of constricting sexual expectations and gender roles was met with violence and the reassertion of patriarchal control. This can also be seen in Bel-Imperia’s storyline, though the male characters do not as explicitly articulate these goals as they do in *The Changeling*. Her brother, Lorenzo, responds to her assertion of sexual desire, by violently ending Horatio’s life and physically confining Bel-Imperia. Unlike the ending of *The Spanish Tragedy*, however, I argue that the conclusion of *The Changeling* leaves no room for reading the kind of continued resistance and subversion that Bel-Imperia enacts. Lisa Hopkins (2002) writes, “In [*The Changeling*], women’s bodies, and especially their procreative powers, take center stage, and women’s bodies, with their ability to change shape and hide secrets, represent a threatening nature which the taxonomies and structures of patriarchally-conceived culture must at all costs control” (12). By focusing on the specific mechanisms of control exerted in *The Changeling*, we are able to see the biopolitical implications at work in the text of the play. As with Bel-Imperia, the structures of the patriarchy employ

whatever means are at their disposal to control the lives of women, including their potential for procreation.

The nature of the regulation Beatrice experiences is inherently biopolitical, aimed at management, surveillance, and restraint of her physical body, rather than the governing of it, at least initially, through rule of law and force. Hopkins frames this play within the historical context of contemporary views about gender and women, including the rising influence of scientific knowledge about women's bodies on the culture as a whole. She writes, "This emphasis on female nature and female bodies is partly to be ascribed to changes in medical ideas about women, which led to a much stronger emphasis on their biological distinctiveness from men. Citing the labeling of the Fallopian Tubes and Clitoris, upon their discovery by the Early Modern medical community, Hopkins posits that scientific knowledge quickly became used in the "pathologisation" and "criminalisation" of women (12-13). These moments are the precursors to shifts Foucault would later write about in "Right of Death and Power over Life." The examples of the implementation of biopolitical control that he pinpoints in the Victorian and Modern periods, such as "the hysterization of women, which involved a through medicalization of their bodies and their sex (50)" are larger aftershocks of a kind of control that began much earlier. While I have already argued for the presence of these biopolitical precursors in my analysis of *The Spanish Tragedy*, they are even more clearly at work in the plot of *The Changeling*, through the transformation of virginity into a scientifically measurable condition.

Beatrice's virginity, both in its presence and its absence, is theatrically emphasized much more clearly than anything in *The Spanish Tragedy*. While many scholars, such as Frank Whigham, have argued that Don Andrea's claim that "In secret I possessed a worthy dame" (*The Spanish Tragedy*, 1.1.10), can be read to imply a sexual relationship (*Seizures of the Will in Early Modern English Drama*, 23-25), there is little else clearly stated on that topic, either by Bel-Imperia, or by her brother and Balthazar. By contrast, Beatrice's virginal state becomes a topic of

discussion from early in the play, when she uses it as an excuse to her father to put off her impending marriage by a few more days, when she says

I cannot render satisfaction
 Unto the dear companion of my soul,
 Virginitie, whom I thus long have lived with,
 And part with it so rude and suddenly.
 Can such friends divide, never to meet again,
 Without a solemn farewell? (1.1.197-202)

In this opening scene, both through her dialogue here, and her association with the church in the opening lines, purity and virginity are essentialized in Beatrice's physical body. This essential characteristic, upon which rests the assurance of authentic patrilineal progeny, proceeds to become a source of anxiety both for Beatrice and for her new fiance, Alsemero.

While outside the scope of what I will focus on in this thesis, biopolitical theory could also contribute to the scholarship surrounding the scene where De Flores coerces Beatrice into sleeping with him. Critics, such as Deborah Burks (1995), consider this scene to depict a rape that would have, within the context of Early Modern England, served to establish Beatrice as someone irreparably damaged and incapable of serving the homosocial function required of her. They correctly argue that true consent cannot exist within an environment of coercion, making any result of this interaction an assault. However, other critics such as Frances Dolan (2011), have proposed that emphasizing this scene as rape prevents us from analyzing Beatrice's potential for agency within these circumstances. She proposes, "If we can reclassify a character from rape victim to powerful agent, Beatrice-Joanna would be a likely candidate" (7). Biopolitical theory could prove to be a valuable framework from which to approach this conversation, as it would help us to examine how Beatrice manipulates and commodifies her own physicality to accomplish her goals. But for the purposes of this thesis, I accept the more common reading proposed by Burks, and will mostly address the fallout from this event, not that scene itself.

Later in the play, Beatrice's discovery of the virginity test firmly centralizes the female body as a place of contested control, and the ensuing action shows a battle for power and knowledge between sexes that ultimately leads to Beatrice's downfall. The scene with Alsemero's closet features the kind of pseudo-scientific creations that resulted from the increasing medicalization of female bodies, in an attempt to reveal feminine mysteries, and thus sources of power, to a male gaze. Throughout this scene the relationship between knowledge and power is clearly illustrated. Beatrice knows that she is no longer a virgin, after the assault by De Flores, and wishes to conceal this knowledge from Alsemero, who she claims "Before whose judgement will my fault appear/Like malefactors' crimes before tribunals./There is no hiding on't" (4.1.7-9). Yet she discovers that Alsemero has his own source of knowledge, previously unknown to her, when she discovers the exact means by which he ultimately tests her virginity through a clear potion. When Beatrice acquires this new knowledge, she now has the power to subvert the test itself, through performing the actions she now knows should be triggered by the liquid. Hopkins writes, "The rifling of Alsemero's closet becomes a means whereby she can read, pre-emptively, his own reading of her when she learns that rather than relying on innate and impersonal 'judgement' with which she had so Foucauldianly credited him" (16). What follows is her use of knowledge to undermine the patriarchal means of control, especially through her performance of virginity when she imitates the effects that she witnessed Diaphanta experience. By putting on this show for Alsemero she undermines this mechanism for surveillance and regulation of female sexuality. This moment in particular can be read as a kind of admirable resistance and subversion of patriarchal power.

However, I argue that Beatrice's resistance is less meaningful than Bel-Imperia's because while she does seek to undermine Alsemero's virginity test, she does so while still internalizing the meaning of the test itself. Within *The Changeling*, Beatrice experiences a dramatic character shift after De Flores assaults her. The loss of her virginity seems to change the essence of her

character. Simkin notes that this could have been read as a revelation of her true nature. He explains that the proper response to rape, in Elizabethan and Jacobean drama, was suicide. He writes, “If a woman values her life above her chastity, ‘her deviation is a sign of moral and spiritual corruption’. By portraying Beatrice-Joanna as a young woman in some kind of erotic thrall to De Flores...the play clearly marks her out as a unchaste woman, and one embodying a corrupt and unnatural sexuality” (139). Beatrice, and the other characters in the play, wholeheartedly embrace this essentialized view of women and sexuality. Within the logic of the play, the characters do not question that Alsemero would be able to discover that Beatrice is no longer a virgin when they spent their wedding night together. However, they find it perfectly plausible that he would be unable to tell one woman from another when they execute the plan for Diaphanta to take Beatrice’s place. The implication of this is that virginity, within the world of *The Changeling*, exists more fully than either of the female characters who possess it, since its absence is more obvious than the difference between two distinct people. This cultural construct is not one that Beatrice questions or seeks to change. Her attempts to undermine the test do not reject the validity, relevance, or values inherent in such a potion, but rather she further internalizes these ideas through her use of Diaphanta and her view of herself.

Unlike Bel-Imperia, who can be read as actively undermining the patriarchal values around her, through her choice of romantic partners, potential pursuit of sexual experiences, and continued efforts to destroy her brother, Balthazar, and her family line, Beatrice’s rebellion remains surface level. She does not, early in the play, seek to abide by the cultural expectations placed on her, but she cannot ultimately escape them. Social control mechanisms come to define her responses to situations and she ultimately condemns even her own actions as diseased and corrupted, when she says to her father, “I am that of your blood was taken from you/For your better health...Let the common sewer take it from distinction” (5.3.159-160;162). In her dying words she describes herself as diseased blood, whose loss will improve her father’s health. In this

conclusion, Hopkins argues “[Women] pay for [pursuing their sexual desires] with their death and leave behind them a cultural legacy of even further entrenchment of the practice of defining and describing women’s nature as reified and physiologically conditioned” (11). While we can see many strong parallels between the situations faced by Bel-Imperia and Beatrice-Joanna, Middleton and Rowley’s play shows a much stronger willingness to cast judgement on its female characters’ behavior, while one of the strengths and unique contributions of *The Spanish Tragedy* is its striking ambivalence regarding its heroine’s moral choices. Bel-Imperia’s successful defiance and tenuous escape from a patriarchally prescribed order stands out in contrast with Beatrice-Joanna’s violent destruction and self-condemnation.

Death and Politics in Shakespeare’s *Antony and Cleopatra*

Moving away from comparisons with Bel-Imperia and *The Spanish Tragedy*, there are other characters and texts that could provide fruitful opportunities for applying biopolitical and necropolitical readings to Early Modern English drama. Within Shakespeare’s work, I believe that *Antony and Cleopatra* might provide a particularly valuable starting place for refocusing critical discussion on different elements of the text through the work of Foucault, Mbembe, and others. In this preliminary reading I argue that the character of Cleopatra, and her much discussed suicide, could benefit from uncovering moments of biopolitical resistance in the text, in order to interrogate how she uses her death to serve a political purpose, while also pinpointing possible shortcomings to her actions of resistance.

As with any Shakespearean text, critics have read Cleopatra’s suicide and reached a diverse range of conclusions about what the final scene of the play says about her character. Richard K. Sanderson (1992) suggests, “Cleopatra’s suicide—which reaches for deification—is an extension of the infantile, omnipotent, wishful thinking in which she has indulged throughout the play and is thus her perfect fulfillment” (204). But in contrast to this more critical view, Jacqueline Vanhoutte (2000) claims,

This decision earns her the homage of her most assiduous critic: Caesar, fond of describing the living Cleopatra as a ‘whore’ (3.6.67), refers to the dead one as ‘bravest at the last’ and ‘royal’ (5.2.333-34). Readers of the play have followed suit. The queen of Egypt herself is the subject of conflicting commentary, but her ‘end’ typically earns critical applause. Even those who denounce Cleopatra’s conduct as sinful tend to find her suicide splendid (153).

A biopolitical lens would seem in line with the latter consensus, emphasizing her rebellion and political motivation, but I argue that this perspective could also offer some explanation for why her actions have been read so favorably. By also taking gender, and race into account, Cleopatra’s suicide can be seen as subversive, but only to a point.

Act 5, Scene 2 of the play contains a great deal of action, with frequent entrances and exits by characters, and an array of different discussions. Readers may easily come to different conclusions regarding Cleopatra’s motives based on which passages they emphasize and their preexisting perceptions of the character. She frequently oscillates between performed submission, rage, and defiant resolve. There is certainly room for a reading that can be critical of Cleopatra’s theatricality and excess, or a reading that centers her love for Antony and her desire to be reunited with him. Bargu (2016) observes that, “Necropolitical resistance transforms the body from a site of subjection into a site of insurgency, which by self-destruction presents death as a counterconduct to the administration of life” (85). It is this transformation, from “subjection” into “insurgency” that Cleopatra explicitly seeks, and many of her actions throughout the scene are given heightened significance when viewed in this light.

I argue that the most consistent motive presented for her suicide is political, rather than romantic. While she does frequently invoke Antony’s death and presence in the afterlife, especially in the climax of her death, exclaiming, “I am again for Cydnus/To meet Mark Antony” (5.2.224-225), it is ultimately the battle for conquest that drives her to her death. She describes her desire to die in brutal terms (5.2.48-61), and receives confirmation from Dolabella of the plan to “lead me then in triumph” (5.2.108), as a trophy of his victory. Later she imagines the details

of what her return to Rome might look like, herself as an “Egyptian puppet” (5.4.204). It is this theme, not her thoughts of Antony, that return throughout the scene and operate as a driving force for her actions. Finally she resolves “To fool their preparation and to conquer/Their most absurd intents” (5.2.221-222). Though she is in the position of a conquered monarch, she sees her own death as a way to undermine the intentions of her enemy, Caesar. She phrases this specifically in terms of power and control, seeing this as a way for her to “conquer” Caesar.

The preparations she makes for her suicide are also significant necropolitically. Cleopatra instructs, before her death, “Show me, my women, like a queen” (5.2.223). Her dress and appearance, as an element of her physical presentation, contribute to the revolutionary message she intends to send to Caesar. She wishes to appear a “queen” in her death, a desire that is still connected with her intent to see herself as the conqueror in this contest. In a longer analysis, I believe a deeper analysis of the physical way Cleopatra presents herself, as a way of undermining biopolitical power structures around her, could yield a much deeper analysis of how she uses her wealth, femininity, and beauty as sources of biopower.

The cause of her death, and assurance of its political impact and meaning, is sealed when Caesar discovers her body. He says, “She levelled at our purposes, and being royal,/Took her own way” (326-327). Caesar immediately connects her death with the frustration of his own “purposes” for her, showing that Cleopatra’s actions have hit the mark.

However, the tone of admiration from Caesar opens up an additional question that further research could investigate. Are there biopolitical reasons for the largely favorable reception of Cleopatra’s suicide? What makes it seem like a fitting and agentive end? I would tentatively posit that gender performance is intimately tied to this question. Throughout the final scene, Cleopatra clearly evokes femininity. While at other times she makes statements like, “My resolution’s placed, and I have nothing/Of a woman in me. Now from head to foot/I am marble-constant” (234-236), that equate her resolve and demeanor to masculine traits. By further developing claims

about Cleopatra's acceptance and performance of seemingly contradictory gendered stereotypes, we can add an additional complication to understanding why this character and her actions have continued to resonate with audiences for centuries.

Conclusion

The rich plot, text, and characters of plays like *The Spanish Tragedy*, *The Changeling*, and *Antony and Cleopatra* have supported scholarly conversation for hundreds of years, and our understandings of them have continued to evolve over that time. Critical theory is just one of many valuable tools that scholars have at our disposal to help begin new branches of this ongoing conversation. While there are complexities and difficulties to applying modern political theories, like biopolitics and necropolitics, to the Early Modern world, I have shown here that the results of this transhistorical combination can be transformative to our understanding of the characters and the worlds they occupy.

For readings of Bel-Imperia, new perspectives are particularly significant due to the lack of scholarship previously engaging with her role in *The Spanish Tragedy*, particularly in accomplishing the revenge plot, on a complex level. The play, surprisingly, does not condemn her desire for sexual independence, or the remarkably active role she takes in carrying out vengeance. I have argued that due to her gender and political position, her physical body exists in a contested space, serving as both a location for control and a means of resistance. She uses her choice of romantic partners as a way to undermine the personal and political control being exerted upon her. After Horatio's death, she employs methods of necropolitical resistance to weaponize her body in order to avenge Horatio and escape the role her patriarchal society confines her to, ultimately through death. By framing her actions in the light of her political awareness and motivations, we can more fully appreciate her violent actions as expressions of agency in pursuit of a calculated goal, rather than summing up her story, as Hieronimo does, by seeing her only as a mourning lover.

Additionally, when we look at the stories of Hieronimo and Horatio through a necropolitical lens, it foregrounds the centrality of class in the conflict of the play. By tracing the antagonism between Horatio, Lorenzo, and Balthazar to its source, we find that it is rooted in class hierarchies that are being unsettled by Horatio's upwardly mobile family. His relationship with Bel-Imperia only compounds the threat that Horatio, and Hieronimo by extension, poses to the aristocratic characters. By reading his murder as both a personal attack, and a political statement, Hieronimo's pursuit of vengeance and use of Horatio's body as a symbol become transformed. His resistance becomes a political counterstrike, not simply a matter of personal vindication. The doubling of Horatio's murder in the play-within-a-play, the display of his body, and Hieronimo's biting out of his own tongue, carry different implications when read through this necropolitical framework, and help to make sense of some of the excess present in the climactic scene.

By highlighting the political consciousness of Bel-Imperia and Hieronimo, we are better able to understand the significance of their violent actions as not only acts of vengeance, but also, to some extent, of revolution. I have argued that putting necropolitical theory into conversation with *The Spanish Tragedy* reveals some valuable new interpretive stances toward these influential characters from Early Modern English drama. My aim has been to demonstrate the value of these new readings and to interrogate some possible ways that these approaches could be fruitfully extended into other texts from the era. Arguably because of the sensationalist approach to violence present in many revenge tragedies, I hope that this framework of reading can help us to understand the sense in seemingly senseless acts of violence, by viewing them as extreme, but reasonable, acts of politically-motivated resistance.

REFERENCES

- Ahmetbeyzade, Ci'han. "Gendering Necropolitics: The Juridical-Political Sociality of Honor Killings in Turkey." *Journal of Human Rights*. 7.3 (2008). 187-206.
- Anderson, Thomas P.. *Performing Early Modern Trauma from Shakespeare to Milton*, Routledge, 2006.
- Ardolino, Frank. "Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy*." *The Explicator*, vol. 67, no. 3, 2009, pp. 178-183.
- Babynets, Nelya. "Theatrical Corpses in *The Spanish Tragedy*: Props or Protagonists." *Consciousness, Literature and the Arts*, vol. 16, no. 3, Dec. 2015.
<http://www.dmd27.org/babynets.html>
- Bargu, Banu. *Starve and Immolate: The Politics of Human Weapons*. Columbia University Press, 2016.
- Bevington, David M, et al, editors. *English Renaissance Drama: A Norton Anthology*, 1st edition. W.W. Norton, 2002.
- Bronstein, Michaela. "Ngũgĩ's Use of Conrad: A Case for Literary Transhistory." *Modern Language Quarterly*, vol. 75, no. 3, 2014, pp. 411–437.
- Brown, Pamela Allen. "Anatomy of an Actress: Bel-Imperia as Tragic Diva." *Shakespeare Bulletin: A Journal of Performance Criticism and Scholarship*, vol. 33, no. 1, Mar. 2015, pp. 49–65.
- Burks, Deborah G. "'I'll Want My Will Else': The Changeling and Women's Complicity With Their Rapists." *ELH*, vol. 62 no. 4, 1995, p. 759-790.
- Campbell, Timothy C, and Adam Sitze, editors. *Biopolitics: A Reader*. Duke University Press, 2013.
- Crosbie, Christopher. "Oeconomia and the Vegetative Soul: Rethinking Revenge in *The Spanish Tragedy*." *English Literary Renaissance*, vol. 38, no. 1, 2008, pp. 3–33.
- Dolan, Frances E. "Re-reading Rape in *The Changeling*." *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies*, vol. 11 no. 1, 2011, p. 4-29.

- Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Vintage Books, 2nd Edition, 1995.
- Foucault, Michel. "Right of Death and Power over Life." Campbell and Sitze. 41-60.
- Greenblatt, Stephen, et al, editors. *The Norton Shakespeare*, 2nd edition. W.W. Norton & Company, 2009.
- Griffin, Eric. "Ethos, Empire, and the Valiant Acts of Thomas Kyd's Tragedy of 'the Spains.'" *English Literary Renaissance*, vol. 31, no. 2, 2001, pp. 192–229.
- Grimmett, Roxanne. "'by Heaven and Hell': Re-Evaluating Representations of Women and the Angel/Whore Dichotomy in Renaissance Revenge Tragedy." *Journal of International Women's Studies*. 6.3 (2006). 31-39.
- Hammersmith, James P. "The Death of Castile in *The Spanish Tragedy*". *Renaissance Drama* vol. 16, no.1, 1985, 1-16.
- Hopkins, Lisa. *The Female Hero in English Renaissance Tragedy*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2002.
- Hutson, Lorna. "Rethinking the 'Spectacle of the Scaffold': Juridical Epistemologies and English Revenge Tragedy." *Representations*, vol. 89, no. 1, 2005, pp. 30–58.
- Kerrigan, John. *Revenge Tragedy : Aeschylus to Armageddon*. Clarendon Press, 1996.
- Kyd, Thomas. *The Spanish Tragedy*. Bloomsbury Publishing, 2009.
- Kyd, Thomas, et al. *The Works of Thomas Kyd*. Edited by Frederick S Boas, Clarendon Press, 1901.
- Justice, Steven. "Spain, Tragedy, and The Spanish Tragedy." *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, vol. 25, no. 2, 1985, pp. 271–288.
- Levin, Michael Henry. "'Vindicta Mihi!': Meaning, Morality, and Motivation in The Spanish Tragedy." *SEL Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, vol. 4, no. 2, 1964, pp. 307–324.
- Lorenz, Philip. "Introduction: The Body is Burning—Sovereignty, Image, Trope". *The Tears of Sovereignty: Perspectives of Power in Renaissance Drama*. Fordham University Press, 2013.
- Mazzio, Carla. "Staging the Vernacular: Language and Nation in Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy*." *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, vol. 38, no. 2, 1998, pp. 207–232.

- Mbembe, Achille. "Necropolitics." Campbell and Sitze, 161-192.
- Middleton, Thomas, and William Rowley. *The Changeling*. Bevington, et al. pp. 1593-1657.
- Oldenburg, Scott. "The Petition on the Early English Stage." *SEL: Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, vol. 57, no. 2, 2017, pp. 325-347.
- Piatkowski, Paul. "Ghost Parrot(ing): Re/Deconstructing Order through Psychic Mimesis, Revenge Justice, and Conjuraction in Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy*." *Intertexts*, vol. 20 no. 2, 2016, pp. 113-134.
- Pikering, John. *Three Tudor Classical Interludes : Thersites, Jacke Jugeler, Horestes*. D.S. Brewer, 1982.
- Redding, Adrienne. "Liminal Gardens: Edenic Iconography and the Disruption of Sexual Difference in Tragedy." *Comitatus: A Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, vol. 46 no. 1, 2015, pp. 141-169.
- Rosendale, Timothy. "Agency and Ethics in *The Spanish Tragedy*." *Early Modern Literary Studies*, vol. 18 no. 1&2, 2015.
- Rubin, Gayle. "The Traffic in Women." *Literary Theory: An Anthology*, 3rd edition. Edited by Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan. Blackwell Publishing, 2017, pp. 901-924.
- Sanderson, Richard K. "Suicide as Message and Metadrama in English Renaissance Tragedy." *Comparative Drama*, vol. 26, no. 3, 1992, pp. 199-217.
- Shakespeare, William. *Antony and Cleopatra*. Greenblatt, et al. pp. 1417-1495.
- . *Hamlet*. Greenblatt, et al. pp. 1080-1168.
- . *Titus Andronicus*. Edited by Jonathan Bate. Arden Shakespeare, 2004.
- Shortslef, Emily. "The Undemanding Dead: Fantasy and Trauma in *The Spanish Tragedy* and Post-Reformation Revenge Drama." *ELH*, vol. 86 no. 2, 2019, pp. 467-494.
- Simkin, Stevie. *Early Modern Tragedy and the Cinema*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.
- Smith, Molly. "The Theater and the Scaffold: Death as Spectacle in *The Spanish Tragedy*." *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, vol. 32, no. 2, 1992.
- Steenbergh, Kristine. "Gendering Revenge in The Spanish Tragedy: Feminine Fury and the Contagiousness of Theatrical Passion." *Doing Kyd: Essays on The Spanish Tragedy*,

edited by Nicoleta Cinpoș and Philip Edwards, Manchester University Press, 2016, pp. 53–71.

Turner, Timothy A. "Torture and Summary Justice in 'The Spanish Tragedy.'" *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, vol. 53, no. 2, 2013, pp. 277–292.

Vanhoutte, Jacqueline. "Antony's 'secret house of death': Suicide and Sovereignty in *Antony and Cleopatra*." *Philological Quarterly*, vol. 79, no. 2, 2000, pp. 153-175.

Vinter, Maggie. *Last Acts: The Art of Dying on the Early Modern Stage*. Fordham University Press, 2019.

Warnock, Jeanie. *Heroic but Unchaste: Thomas Kyd's Bel-Imperia and Traditional Elizabethan Conceptions of Women*. Ottawa: National Library of Canada, 1992.

Whigham, Frank. *Seizures of the Will in Early Modern English Drama*. Cambridge University Press, 1996.

"Women and the Law." *Harvard Business School*. 2010. Accessed 17 December 2019.
www.library.hbs.edu/hc/wes/collections/women_law/