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Tom Rutter

Marlowe, Hoffman, and the Admiral's Men

It can hardly be wrong to identify Marlowe with the Admiral's long career as much as we do Shakespeare with their opposites.¹

The data suggest that, while the Admiral's Men started out, unsurprisingly, with Marlowe as a strong presence in their repertory, they quickly cycled his work out of rotation, as they would have done with any play—old or new. . . . I had been skeptical about the “defining feature” claim, but I did not expect to find that Marlowe had become irrelevant by late 1596.²

The two statements above represent diametrically opposing views about the significance of Christopher Marlowe's plays in the repertory of the Admiral's Men. For Andrew Gurr, Marlowe's plays were of central importance to the company from 1594, when someone or other “chose to give one of the duopoly companies

¹ Andrew Gurr, Shakespeare's Opposites: The Admiral's Company, 1594-1625 (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2009), 199.

² Holger Schott Syme, “The Meaning of Success: Stories of 1594 and Its Aftermath,” Shakespeare Quarterly 61.4 (2010): 490-525, 504-5.

[the Lord Chamberlain's Men and the Lord Admiral's Men] all of Shakespeare and the other all of Marlowe," until 1642, when "Tamburlaine and Faustus continued to appear at the Fortune"; in the intervening period, Marlowe's plays (along with Thomas Kyd's The Spanish Tragedy [1582-92]) remained "the beating heart of the company's repertory."³ Holger Schott Syme, however, takes issue with all of these assertions. Like Roslyn Knutson in the same issue of Shakespeare Quarterly, he highlights the lack of evidence for a shadowy figure (Gurr elsewhere suggests the Master of the Revels, Edmund Tilney) allocating William Shakespeare's and Marlowe's plays to the Lord Chamberlain's and Lord Admiral's Men in 1594, when events were set in train that would give those two companies a dominant position in the 1590s theater.⁴ Furthermore, he points out that whatever the literary

³ Gurr, Shakespeare's Opposites, 171, 197.

⁴ Syme, "The Meaning of Success," 491-92; Andrew Gurr, "Venues on the Verges: London's Theater Government between 1594 and 1614," Shakespeare Quarterly 61.4 (2010): 468-89, 484; Roslyn Knutson, "What's So Special about 1594?" Shakespeare Quarterly 61.4 (2010): 449-67. Knutson writes, "I cringe at the idea that the Lord Admiral and the Lord Chamberlain divvied up players, playhouses, and repertory as though they were so much chattel to

prestige of Marlowe then or since, "the idea that Marlowe's plays formed the backbone of the Admiral's Men's economic fortunes" is highly questionable: Even in the company's first season at the Rose Theater, when "the Admiral's Men relied on Marlowe's plays almost 19 percent of the time," "those performances were less lucrative than the company's non-Marlovian offerings," and they declined both in frequency and in their takings thereafter. Finally, he views the hypothesis that new plays written for the Admiral's Men imitated the style of Marlowe's successes as ultimately unverifiable, given that most of those plays have been lost to posterity.⁵

While Syme's arguments about the declining profitability of Marlowe's plays, derived as they are from Philip Henslowe's theatrical records, are hard to dispute, they do not preclude further comment. In the inaugural number of Marlowe Studies: An Annual, Paul Menzer notes that the continued willingness of the Admiral's Men to perform those plays in spite of relatively low takings may itself be significant: "Perhaps motives other than the pecuniary influenced some of their decisions: sentiment, envy, status anxiety, and nostalgia." Menzer notes the spate of

be disposed according to political whim." "What's So Special about 1594?" 467.

⁵ Syme, "The Meaning of Success," 500, also 504n37.

revivals and augmentations of old plays in 1601-2 in which the company engaged—The Jew of Malta, The Spanish Tragedy, The Massacre at Paris, and others—and links this policy to Edward Alleyn's temporary return to the stage. He also suggests, however, that it may have represented a concerted attempt by the Admiral's Men at "promulgating the canonization of writers in their own repertory and promoting their plays as 'classics,' rewriting English theatre history to portray themselves as conservators of English dramatic heritage."⁶ This essay takes Menzer's argument a stage further: I will argue that a sense of corporate identity of a kind similar to that which he suggests, and based in particular on the plays of Marlowe (as well as The Spanish Tragedy), informed not only the revival of old plays, but also the production of new ones. My case in point is Henry Chettle's The Tragedy of Hoffman; or, Revenge for a Father (1603), a play whose profound but problematic relationship with Hamlet (1600) has frequently been remarked upon. I shall argue that one way of making sense of this relationship is by seeing Hoffman as a rewriting of Hamlet in a manner in keeping with the Admiral's Men's existing repertory.

⁶ Paul Menzer, "Shades of Marlowe," Marlowe Studies: An Annual 1 (2011): 181-92, 190, 187.

Hoffman was not printed until 1631, but it apparently dates from about 1603, since Philip Henslowe lent Thomas Downton of the Admiral's Men five shillings "to geue vnto harey chettell in p[ar]te of paymente for A tragedie called Hawghman" on December 29, 1602.⁷ Although Henslowe records no further payments for the play, his accounts continue only until March 1603, so Chettle presumably completed it shortly thereafter.⁸ While it is to be hoped that Emma Smith's recent Penguin edition of the play as

⁷Philip Henslowe, Henslowe's Diary, ed. R. A. Foakes, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002), 207.

⁸The title page refers to performances "at the Phenix in Druery-lane," indicating that the play was revived after the opening of that theatre in 1617. Harold Jenkins points out that the Phoenix was occupied by Queen Henrietta's Men, not by the Palsgrave's Men (who evolved out of the Admiral's Men); this raises the (currently insoluble) question of whether the Admiral's Men ever actually performed Hoffman. However, since Henslowe's records indicate that Henry Chettle wrote it for the Admiral's Men, this problem does not invalidate my overall argument that he did so with a view to its appropriateness for that company's repertory. See Henry Chettle, The Tragedy of Hoffman, ed. Harold Jenkins (Oxford: Malone Society, 1951), v. Subsequent references cited as Hoffman by line number.

one of "five revenge tragedies" will give it a greater prominence on academic curricula, Hoffman is still rather less familiar than, say, The Spanish Tragedy or The Revenger's Tragedy (1606), so a brief synopsis is offered below.⁹

The play centers on Clois Hoffman and his attempts to take revenge upon the Duke of Luningberg (modern Lüneburg in Lower Saxony) and his family for the killing of Hoffman's father. These begin when the Duke's son Otho and his servant Lorrique are shipwrecked near the cave where Hoffman lives: Hoffman makes Lorrique swear to aid him in his project of revenge, and the two kill Otho with the same burning crown that was used to execute Hoffman senior.

Hoffman spends much of the rest of the play passing himself off as Otho at the court of Otho's uncle the Duke of Prussia, who has never met his nephew. The Duke of Prussia makes Hoffman his heir in place of his foolish son Jerome, and Hoffman with the help of Lorrique masterminds the killing of Lodowick, son of the Duke of Saxony; the Duke of Austria; the Duke of Prussia; and Jerome, who is tricked into poisoning the Duke of Prussia

⁹ Emma Smith, ed., Five Revenge Tragedies (London: Penguin, 2012). The volume also includes Thomas Kyd's The Spanish Tragedy, the first quarto of Hamlet, John Marston's Antonio's Revenge (1602), and Thomas Middleton's The Revenger's Tragedy.

and himself while attempting to poison Hoffman. Upon succeeding to the dukedom of Prussia, Hoffman is told of the death of Otho's father—unusually in this play, by natural causes—which obliges him to travel to Luningberg, where Otho's mother, Martha, is bound to see through his disguise. He is diverted from his intention to kill her in her sleep by admiration of her beauty, and therefore he has to explain to her that he has been passing himself off as her son in order to spare her grief.

It is Hoffman's failure to kill the Duchess that precipitates his downfall. The Duke of Austria's daughter Lucibella, who was betrothed to Lodowick and has gone mad after his death, inadvertently leads Mathias, the Duke of Saxony, and Saxony's brother Rodorick to Hoffman's cave, where they overhear Lorrique showing Martha the grave of her son. Lorrique is forced to confess and agrees to betray Hoffman by leading him to the others under the pretext of an assignation with Martha; Hoffman suspects Lorrique's infidelity and kills him, but nonetheless goes to meet the Duchess at the cave, where he is killed by means of the burning crown. Unfortunately, the play appears to break off during his final speech, presumably because the last page of the manuscript from which it was derived was lost or illegible.

In his study of revenge tragedy, John Kerrigan describes Hoffman along with The Revenger's Tragedy as "the two plays most

immediately imbued with the spirit of Elsinore," and the considerable similarities between Chettle's tragedy and Hamlet have been frequently noted by critics (two recent examples are G. K. Hunter and Janet Clare),¹⁰ some of which are apparent from the plot summary above. Hoffman is a revenge tragedy, set in northern Europe, about a son avenging his father's death. It includes a female character, Lucibella, who goes mad after the death of a loved one and who is clearly modeled on Ophelia: She sings popular songs and talks of "going to the riuers side / To fetch white lillies, and blew daffadils" (1433-34), although instead of committing suicide she is restored to sanity by the prospect of punishing Hoffman. As in Hamlet, wine is used as a murder weapon, and also as in Hamlet, the hero has complicated feelings about his mother—in this instance, his adopted mother the Duchess of Luningberg, who he initially wants to murder but subsequently wishes to rape. Hoffman explicitly presents his

¹⁰ John Kerrigan, Revenge Tragedy: Aeschylus to Armageddon (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1996), 9; see also G. K. Hunter, English Drama, 1586-1642: The Age of Shakespeare (Oxford: Clarendon, 1997), 6:435; and Janet Clare, Revenge Tragedy of the Renaissance (Tavistock, England: Northcote/British Council, 2006), 49.

desire as incestuous: "new made mother, ther's another fire / Burnes in this liuer lust, and hot desire" (1909-10).

In its political subtext, too, Hoffman shares a considerable amount with Shakespeare's play, displaying a nagging and very topical anxiety (in 1602) about the problem of succession. Ferdinand, the Duke of Prussia, explains that he wears mourning dress not for his wife or nephew, but on account of his son: "A witlesse foole must needs be Prussias heire" (290). It is for this reason that he responds with such relief to the news that Otho (really Hoffman) has survived the shipwreck: "Otho liuing, wee'l disinherit our fond sonne: / And blesse all Dantzike, by our sonne elect" (376-77). Jerome himself, the disinherited heir who boasts that he has "bin at Wittenberg" (276) and acts like a fool, serves as a kind of parody of Hamlet (although here the folly is no act). At the same time, the comically-treated insurrection Jerome raises in support of his claim to the throne recalls the "rabble" of Laertes's supporters, whose "Caps, hands, and tongues applaud it to the clouds, / 'Laertes shall be king, Laertes king'"¹¹; we are told, "All on Ieroms side cast vp their caps and cry a Ierom" (Hoffman, 1187-88 [s.d.]). Chettle's

¹¹ William Shakespeare, Hamlet, ed. G. R. Hibbard (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987), 4.5.104-5. Hereafter cited as Hamlet.

play, like Shakespeare's, suggests the possibility of succession being determined by popular violence.

This concern with succession is not limited to the court of Prussia. After the death of the Duke of Austria and the apparent death of his daughter Lucibella, Rodorick is relieved to find that the latter shows signs of life, observing that "if I could but yet recouer her, / T'would satisfie the State of Austria, / That else would be disturb'd for want of heires" (1074-76). And throughout the play, the graphic stage image of the skeleton adorned with "the iron Crowne that burnt his braines out" (105-6) embodies the notions of kingship and mortality that entwine in the concept of succession.

Notwithstanding these similarities, however, commentators have insisted on the contrasts between the two plays: Percy Simpson writes emphatically of Chettle, "It is as if, conscious that he was not alone in the field, he made up his mind to produce something distinctive, so that no playgoer could confuse the two dramas and ask, if he was recalling an episode, 'Was it Chettle or Shakespeare?'"¹² As Clarence Valentine Boyer pointed out nearly a century ago, in Clois Hoffman "the avenger has become a villain," an innovation that Fredson Bowers lauds as a

¹² Percy Simpson, Studies in Elizabethan Drama (Oxford: Clarendon, 1955), 167-68.

dramaturgical "master stroke."¹³ Bowers also notes that Hoffman's vengeance is politically questionable, given that his father was "legally executed as a pirate," and says that Hoffman's own "moral sense is atrophied."¹⁴ His lack of scruple and of "psychological insight," in Clare's words, makes him a very different sort of protagonist to Hamlet. As Hunter argues, "Hoffman's melancholy does not puzzle his will with moral conundrums, but rather allows him to 'plume up his will' by devising a string of ingenious deceptions and deletions, not simply of his father's enemies but of whole pages out of the *Almanach de Gotha*."¹⁵

This simultaneous likeness and unlikeness of Hoffman to Hamlet is one that critics have interpreted in several ways. For Simpson, it is an attempt to capitalize on the "current demand" for revenge tragedy circa 1602 while offering a distinctive

¹³Clarence Valentine Boyer, The Villain as Hero in Elizabethan Tragedy (London: Routledge; New York: Dutton, 1914), 141; and Fredson Thayer Bowers, Elizabethan Revenge Tragedy, 1587-1642 (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1959), 127.

¹⁴Bowers, Elizabethan Revenge Tragedy, 127, 129.

¹⁵Clare, Revenge Tragedy, 50; Hunter, English Drama, 1586-1642, 435.

"counter-attraction."¹⁶ For Bowers it is a crucial development in the evolution of revenge tragedy as a form, a "bold step" of "taking the Kydian hero revenger and carrying him to his logical conclusion as villain."¹⁷ For Eleanor Prosser it marks a stage in a different historical process, whereby "the condemnation of revenge becomes progressively explicit in the theatre."¹⁸ Another way of approaching the question, however, is to see Hoffman as an attempt to assimilate Shakespeare's groundbreaking and influential drama to the theatrical heritage of the Admiral's Men.

Even before its action has begun, Hoffman has advertised its kinship to Hamlet through the alternative title, "A Revenge for a Father." In Hoffman's opening speech, this relationship is underlined by specific verbal echoes. His assurance that "with a hart as aire, swift as thought" he will "execute iustly in such a cause" (9-10) calls to mind Hamlet's expressed desire "that I with wings as swift / As meditation or the thoughts of love, / May sweep to my revenge" (1.5.29-31), while Hoffman's interpretation of thunder and lightning as an expression of

¹⁶ Simpson, Studies in Elizabethan Drama, 165, 167.

¹⁷ Bowers, Elizabethan Revenge Tragedy, 126.

¹⁸ Eleanor Prosser, Hamlet and Revenge (Stanford: Stanford UP; London: Oxford UP, 1967), 63.

heavenly discontent, "That I thus tardy am to doe an act / which iustice and a fathers death exites" (16-17), recalls Hamlet's words to the Ghost in Gertrude's closet, "Do you not come your tardy son to chide, / That, lapsed in time and passion, lets go by / Th'important acting of your dread command?" (3.4.99-101). Yet while both of those speeches of Hamlet are uttered in the presence of the Ghost, Hoffman's are spoken before the more tangible "remembrance" (8) of his father's actual decayed corpse, which we are later told he "stole down . . . from the gallows at Leningberge" (104-5). Rather than requiring supernatural agents to prod him into action, Hoffman has evidently taken matters into his own hands, and later in the first act, he carries out his vengeance upon Otho of Luningberg both in front of his father's remains and using the same technique of killing by means of a burning crown that was used on Hoffman senior. While the notion of vengeance as a repetition of the original crime and the use of fetishized objects are ubiquitous features of revenge tragedy, the specific motif of the suspended corpse, as has been repeatedly pointed out, is shared with The Spanish Tragedy, and in both plays the revelation of the gruesome object is made into a theatrical coup: Hoffman "strikes ope a curtaine where appeares a body" (8-

10 [s.d.]).¹⁹ Verbal allusions to Hamlet are thus accompanied by a striking visual allusion to Kyd's older play, a staple in the repertory of the Admiral's Men and of course recently augmented with "adicyons" in 1602, presumably for another revival.²⁰

This is only the first of a number of allusions to The Spanish Tragedy in the course of Hoffman. As Lukas Erne has pointed out, the name Chettle gives to the Duke of Prussia's foolish heir Jerome echoes that of Hieronimo.²¹ Jerome speaks in prose, violates courtly niceties in his rudeness to the Princes of Saxony and Austria, and loudly complains that "my mothers death comes somewhat neere my heart" (271-72) (all this in his

¹⁹ See Bowers, Elizabethan Revenge Tragedy, 125; Lukas Erne, Beyond "The Spanish Tragedy": A Study of the Works of Thomas Kyd (Manchester: Manchester UP, 2001), 39; and Clare, Revenge Tragedy, 53.

²⁰ Henslowe, Diary, 203. Henslowe's records indicate that after being performed by Lord Strange's Men between March 1592 and January 1593 (17-19), The Spanish Tragedy was revived by the Admiral's Men in 1597 for performances on January 7, January 11, January 17, January 22, April 21, May 4, May 25, July 19, and October 11 (51-60), after which time his records of performances of this and other plays largely cease.

²¹ Erne, Beyond "The Spanish Tragedy," 39.

first speech), as well as having been at Wittenberg, and thus clearly fancies himself as a Hamlet, which makes it rather ironic that he takes his name from Kyd's protagonist. Although Lucibella resembles Ophelia in her madness, as a female revenger she is the counterpart of Kyd's Bel-imperia, whose name she partially shares, and the circumstances in which Lodowick is murdered and she herself wounded appear to allude to Kyd's play. The lovers are sleeping on a bank of flowers where "Nature, or art hath taught [the] boughs to spread, / In manner of an arbour" (848-49); Kyd's Horatio is murdered in a bower where he is embracing Bel-imperia, after which his killers "hang him in the arbour."²²

Another moment in the play that seems calculated to recall The Spanish Tragedy comes at the end, when Hoffman is at the mercy of his antagonists and the Duke of Saxony suggests that they "Cut out the murtherers tongue" (2567). The threat, fortunately, is not carried out, permitting the villain some lengthy dying speeches, but it irresistibly calls to mind Hieronimo's biting out of his own tongue in the climactic scene of Kyd's play. Admittedly, we get something similar at the end of Antonio's Revenge, when the conspirators pluck out Piero's

²² Thomas Kyd, The Spanish Tragedy, ed. J. R. Mulryne, 2nd ed. (London: A & C Black; New York: W. W. Norton, 1989), 2.5.53 s.d.

tongue, but John Marston himself is surely pastiching Kyd here. By 1602, other dramatists writing for the Admiral's Men had alluded to this gesture: In A Knack to Know an Honest Man (1594), for example, the servant Gnatto says of his master "He spake as though hee would spit his stomp in my mouth," and in Lust's Dominion; or, The Lascivious Queen (c. 1600) Eleazar promises the Queen "I'll tear out my tongue / From this black temple for blaspheming thee."²³ Viewed alongside these two plays, Hoffman seems to be participating in a conscious attempt to construct a repertorial identity through repetition of a notorious trope.

Despite these apparent references to Kyd and others, however, there are other respects in which Hoffman violates the expectations that its opening allusions both to The Spanish Tragedy and to Hamlet create. For one thing, the protagonist's reference to his tardiness proves entirely misleading. Delay is crucial to Kyd's and to Shakespeare's revenge tragedies, even though it stems from different causes (Lorenzo's control of access to court in the former, Hamlet's much-discussed scruples

²³ H. De Vocht, ed., A Knack to Know an Honest Man (Oxford: Malone Society, 1910), 1163-64; Thomas Dekker, The Dramatic Works of Thomas Dekker, ed. Fredson Bowers (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1953-61), 4:1.1.114-15.

in the latter). In both instances, it means that the hero achieves his vengeance at the climax of the play, offering a belated resolution for him and for the audience once internal and external obstacles have been overcome. In Hoffman, by contrast, the play is barely two hundred lines in before the protagonist has established himself on his vengeful career with Otho's death; as Boyer notes, "By this one act . . . the avenger's real task is done."²⁴ Structurally, this is much more akin to The Massacre at Paris, in which the violence is underway by about line 170 with the killing of the Old Queen, or to the sequence of conquests we get in Tamburlaine the Great, than to the deferral of gratification in Shakespeare or Kyd.

Indeed, it is arguably the Marlowe plays in the Admiral's repertory, more than The Spanish Tragedy, that offer the pattern for Hoffman to follow, not least in Chettle's treatment of the protagonist. At the outset, his play seems calculated to elicit a degree of sympathy for Hoffman: Its allusions to Hamlet and The Spanish Tragedy might lead one to assume a morally upright avenger in the tradition of Hamlet or Hieronimo, while Hoffman's promise to "execute iustly" (10), and his insistence that "myne's a cause that's right" (12), bespeak a confidence in the legitimacy of his revenge. Yet Otho's servant Lorrique, after

²⁴ Boyer, The Villain as Hero, 142.

being made to swear to aid Hoffman in his revenge, immediately recognizes that his master is "A true villaine" (102), and Hoffman's recapitulation to the doomed Otho of how his father was executed for piracy makes his revenge problematic. Even if Hoffman senior was treated ungratefully by the Dukes of Luningberg and Prussia and "Compeld to . . . liue a pirate" (163-64), and even if, as his son complains, "wretches sentenc'd neuer finde defence, / How euer guiltlesse bee their innocence" (222-23), it remains the case that he was outlawed for debt and tried and punished for a crime he did commit. As such, Hoffman junior is avenging not a private wrong but the public execution of justice, and later on Lorrique offers a choric commentary on his claim of legitimacy: "this Clois is an honest villaine, ha's conscience in his killing of men: he kils none but his fathers enemies, and there issue, 'tis admirable, 'tis excellent, 'tis well 'tis meritorious, where? in heauen? no, hell" (661-64). Coming from an entirely amoral character, who to save his life will "turne any thing . . . rather than nothing" (213), these lines close down the possibility that revenge might be acceptable. Instead, Chettle recalls the self-justification of the regicidal Friar in The Massacre at Paris, "I have been a great sinner in my days, and the deed is meritorious," implying

that Hoffman has fallen prey to a comparable sanctimonious delusion.²⁵

Not only is Hoffman's course of vengeance morally illegitimate: It is notably asymmetrical, taking in not only Otho but the Duke of Prussia, the Duke's heir, the Duke of Austria, and Lodowick, not to speak of the near death of Austria's daughter Lucibella and the fatal silencing of Lorrique. His murder of Otho's mother Martha is prevented only by a sudden access of lust, and he embroils himself in German politics by having himself made heir to the dukedom of Prussia. As such, Bowers's insistence that "Chettle's protagonist is strictly a combination of the characteristics of the Kydian hero and villain, with no outside influence operating from Marlowe" seems overstated, and his comment on The Jew of Malta is surely applicable to Hoffman: "in Kyd's plays the revenge, once conceived, runs through the whole and reaches its culmination in the catastrophe, whereas Barabas's revenge ends to all practical purposes in the second scene of the third act. The rest of the play is given over to his attempts to save himself from the

²⁵ Christopher Marlowe, The Massacre at Paris, "Dido Queen of Carthage" and "The Massacre at Paris," ed. H. J. Oliver (London: Methuen, 1968), (23.27-28).

consequences of his revenge and to become master of Malta."²⁶ While Hoffman dies with his revenge technically incomplete, since Saxony, Lucibella and Martha are still alive and Luningberg died of natural causes, he does boast that he has "prosper'd in the downefall of some fiue" (2590), while lust and ambition have made him, like Barabas, go some way beyond his original intention.

Within the Marlovian œuvre, The Jew of Malta is an especially appropriate play to read Hoffman against, not least because "the brothers Mathias and Lodowick are clearly meant to recall the paired characters of the same names in The Jew of Malta,"²⁷ and in both plays Lodowick dies at Mathias's hand due to the protagonist's machinations (although Chettle's Mathias is still alive at the end). Barabas, like Hoffman, has an understandable cause for animosity in the form of state-sanctioned mistreatment, and in combination with the legitimate accusations of hypocrisy he levels at his enemies, his affection for his daughter, and his own energy and inventiveness, this helps to create a degree of audience sympathy for him. In both plays, however, the initial sympathy largely evaporates as the villains become increasingly bloodthirsty and cartoonish. This feature of

²⁶ Bowers, Elizabethan Revenge Tragedy, 275, 105.

²⁷ Erne, Beyond "The Spanish Tragedy", 39.

The Jew of Malta has sometimes been seen as a defect, or even as evidence of revision, but it seems to have appealed to Chettle, who modulates Hoffman's character from a dutifully avenging son to a gleefully sadistic intriguer who promises a tragedy that "Shall passe those of Thyestes, Tereus, / Iocasta, or Duke Iasons iealous wife" (409-10).²⁸ He offers the audience a sequence of entertainingly inventive killings, such as encouraging Lodowick to escape in disguise in order to evade the supposed malice of Ferdinand only for Lodowick to be wrongly identified as a fictitious Greek who has eloped with Lucibella and murdered by Mathias.

Another core element of The Jew of Malta that Chettle incorporates in Hoffman is the relationship between the central character and his henchman. Like Ithamore, who sees in Barabas "the bravest, gravest, secret, subtle, bottle-nosed knave to my master that ever gentleman had" (Malta, 3.3.9-11), Lorrique applauds his master as "an excellent fellow / A true villaine fitter for me then better company" (Hoffman, 101-2). This admiration does not preclude betrayal on both sides. In a

²⁸ On the question of revision, see Christopher Marlowe, The Jew of Malta, ed. N. W. Bawcutt (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1978), 39-47. All subsequent references to The Jew of Malta are from this edition.

characteristic gesture, Barabas promises to make Ithamore his heir only to drop the mask and observe to the audience, "Thus every villain ambles after wealth, / Although he ne'er be richer than in hope" (Malta, 3.4.52-53). That he has other plans for his servant is suggested by the menacing promise, "I'll pay thee with a vengeance, Ithamore" (3.4.116). Similarly, Hoffman promises Lorrique that when his revenge is complete he will "seat thee by my throne of state, / And make thee riually in those governments, / That by thy secrecy thou lift'st me to" (Hoffman, 734-36), but then explains, "I will preferre him: he shall be prefer'd / To hanging peradventure; why not?" (750-51). Both servants turn against their masters, Ithamore led into blackmail by Bellamira and Pilia-Borza and Lorrique siding with Hoffman's enemies once he has been forced to confess his crimes. And both are killed by them, Lorrique at the climax of a scene of nicely worked-out tension. Both, finally, survive long enough to denounce their employers, Ithamore causing Barabas to regret having been so sparing with his poison (Malta, 5.1.22-23). The similarity between the two characters' roles in their plays, and between their respective career trajectories, is strong, though it is worth noting that Ben Jonson was to do something similar with Mosca in the Lord Chamberlain's / King's Men play Volpone (1606)—a salutary reminder that influence takes place between, as well as within, repertorial boundaries.

The other obvious parallel between Chettle's play and The Jew of Malta is in the treatment of the two protagonists' eventual demise. Both instances illustrate the biblical precept that "He that diggeth a pit, shall fall into it,"²⁹ a verse recalled by Lorrique's lines, "Fox you'l be taken, hunter you are falne / Into the pit you dig'd (Hoffman, 2292-93). Barabas, of course, plans for Calymath and his entourage to fall "Into a deep pit past recovery" (Malta, 5.5.36) only to end up in it himself when Fernese double-crosses him, while Hoffman is inevitably dispatched with the same burning crown used on his father and on Otho. The fiery torments of both suggest the pains of hell that presumably lie in store, and they also permit lengthy and unrepentant final speeches that include helpful running commentaries: "But now begins the extremity of heat / To pinch me with intolerable pangs" (Malta, 5.5.86-87); "boyle on thou foolish idle braine, / For giuing entertainment to loues thoughts" (Hoffman, 2597-98). It is noticeable that the downfall of both villains is attributable to a sudden and unexpected need to be loved: Hoffman in his desire for Martha, and Barabas in the very un-Machiavellian concern that "Malta hates me" (Malta, 5.2.30), which leads him to side with Ferneze.

²⁹ Ecclesiastes 10:8 (Geneva).

As the parallel with Volpone indicates, we do not have to invoke repertorial identity to explain the similarities between Hoffman and The Jew of Malta. In this instance, though, it seems appropriate. By 1602 the Admiral's Men had a decade-long tradition of performing and reviving Marlowe plays, and as I have argued, dramas like Captain Thomas Stukely (1605) and Patient Grissil (1603), to varying extents and in varying ways, interact with that heritage.³⁰ Gurr has also shown in

³⁰ Henslowe records performances by the Admiral's Men of The Jew of Malta on May 14, June 4, June 13, June 23, June 30, July 10, July 22, August 5, August 7, September 2, October 20, and December 9, 1594 (21-26), January 9, January 18, January 29, February 2, February 17, April 20, May 14, and June 21, 1596 (34, 36-37, 47); of The Massacre at Paris on June 19, June 25, July 3, July 8, July 16, July 27, August 8, August 17, September 7, and September 25, 1594 (22-24); of 1 Tamburlaine on August 28, September 12, September 28, October 15, October 17, November 4, November 27, December 17, and December 30, 1594, and January 27, February 17, March 11, May 21, September 15, and November 12, 1595 (23-29, 31, 33); of 2 Tamburlaine on December 19, 1594, and January 1, January 29, February 18, March 12, May 22, and November 13, 1595 (26-29, 33); and of Doctor Faustus on September 30, October 9, October 21, November 5, November 20,

Shakespeare's Opposites (2009) how, for example, George Chapman's play The Blind Beggar of Alexandria (1596) burlesques several Marlovian roles.³¹ After the turn of the century, and its move to the Fortune Theater, the company seems to have made the decision to keep that heritage relevant and new: It commissioned additions to The Spanish Tragedy in 1601 and Doctor Faustus in 1602, and purchased "divers thing[es] for the Jewe of malta" and costume materials for The Massacre at Paris in 1601.³² The temporary return of Edward Alleyn from retirement in 1600 must have served as a potent reminder of the company's past, while it has been argued that the revival of the children's companies after 1599, by diversifying the theatrical marketplace, made the

December 8, December 20, and December 27, 1594, January 9, January 24, February 8, April 31 (sic), June 5, September 11, and September 26, 1595, February 13, April 19, May 5, June 12, July 3, October 28, November 4, and December 17, 1596, and January 5 and (approximately) October 13, 1597 (24-28, 30-31, 34, 36, 47, 54-55, 60). On Captain Thomas Stukeley and Patient Grissil, see Tom Rutter, "Marlovian Echoes in the Admiral's Men Repertory: Alcazar, Stukeley, Patient Grissil," Shakespeare Bulletin 27.1 (2009): 27-38.

³¹ Gurr, Shakespeare's Opposites, 22-24.

³² Henslowe, Diary, 182, 206, 170, 183-85.

Admiral's Men more aware of their core theatrical values.³³ In this environment, I would suggest, it is understandable that Chettle should have produced a revenge tragedy that rewrote Hamlet in a way strikingly indebted to the dramatic structures and techniques of the Admiral's Men's most celebrated playwright.

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³³ See S. P. Cerasano, Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, s.v. "Alleyn, Edward (1566-1626)," accessed December 13, 2012, <http://www.oxforddnb.com>; and Andrew Gurr, Playgoing in Shakespeare's London, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996), 154-58.