

REVENGE ON ELIZABETHAN STAGE: A FUSION OF SENECAN MELODRAMA AND MACHIAVELLIANISM

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Abstract:

Elizabethan audiences enjoyed watching bloodshed, revenge, supernatural, and gruesome elements on stage. Thomas Kyd brought the theme of revenge upon English stage, while it had been common in Senecan tragedy by directly incorporating the latter in *The Spanish Tragedy*. Senecan characters do not have a tragic flaw and are goaded by single motive, instead, they are obsessed by an overwhelming emotion (in *Thyestes*, for instance, Atreus is obsessed with revenge). In Kyd's work revenge motive encompasses the central theme of the play. As a humanist, Kyd tries to justify revenge though as he seems to have serious liking for this topic. For example, Hieronemo tries to explain all murders on the stage. *The Spanish Tragedy* is a revenge tragedy, even a modern tragedy where Kyd welded popular Senecan melodramatic elements into the plot and brilliantly unified the passion for retribution and that retribution ended with the exploration of Machiavellianism, which started with Lorenzo and terminated with Hieronemo. The author has tried to show that in *The Spanish Tragedy* melodrama and Machiavellianism go hand in hand while the emotion of *Thyestes* looms over it.

Keywords: revenge tragedy, melodrama, Machiavellianism, Senecan tragedy, Kyd, Seneca

Where drama is the composition and performance facing the direct and live audience, tragedy holds its position of the most majestic category of drama. Tragedy is an assemblage of calamitous events that result in great loss and misfortune and to speak more explicitly a story with an obvious sad denouement. What Aristotle summed up in his thesis *The Poetics* that became the eventual acknowledged meaning of tragedy:

“[...]an imitation of an action that is serious, complete and of a certain magnitude; in language embellished with each kind of artistic ornament, the several kinds being found in separate parts of the play; in the form of action, not of narrative; through pity and fear effecting the proper purgation of these emotions.”

According to Aristotle, a tragedy must have an idealized tragic hero of noble heritage who is imbued with the potential for magnitude but destined to fail. Regarding the separate parts of the play Aristotle referred the three unities of play- unity of time, place and action where this would not be a simple narrative rather an action followed by the unique experience of catharsis, which he termed as purgation of emotions. Seneca's view about tragedy is:

[...] a virtuous man struggling with misfortunes is such a spectacle as gods might look upon with pleasure; and such a pleasure it is which one meets with in the representation of a well-written tragedy. Diversions of this kind wear out of our thoughts everything that is mean and little; they cherish and cultivate that humanity which is the ornament of our nature; they soften insolence, soothe affliction and subdue the mind, to the dispensations of providence. (Taylor 317)

In fact, perfect tragedy is the noblest production of drama where it reflects very human nature and not surprisingly, this phase has been encouraged even in the most civilized nations of the world just because of its capability to entertain human mind in an intellectual way. And regarding revenge tragedy, it is believed that revenge is an innate human phenomenon. That's what we find in any revenge tragedy and Seneca initiated this segment of drama before the readers and audiences.

The revenge tragedy genre of English literature generally refers to a body of dramatic works written from the mid 1580s to the early 1640s, from the Elizabethan to the Caroline Period. Typically, these works feature such themes and devices as a wronged revenge-seeker, ghosts, madness, delay, sinister intrigue, a play-within-play, torture, multiple murders, and the realistic depiction of bloody violence on stage. (www.enotes.com/literary-criticism/revenge-tragedy)

Some literary researchers argued over the issue of the foremost influence on Elizabethan revenge tragedy that it came from Lucius Annaeus Seneca, a Roman statesman, philosopher, orator and dramatist. Though Seneca flourished in the first century A.D., his works were first translated into the English language in 1559 and by 1581 Senecan tragedies had disseminated extensively among the English literate. Elizabethan playwrights were predominantly engrossed to *Thyestes*, *Medea* and *Agamemnon* among Senecan Tragedies and all of which play up murder and betrayal and the ensuing quest to exact blood revenge on the villain.

However, revenge tragedy was not recognized as a specific literary genre until the 20th century. Most of the play researchers have agreed that though revenge tragedies put on show similar thematic aspects and dramatic devices, they don't focus on revenge always as the central theme of each play. Moreover, different playwrights implemented different literature based sources and using them ultimately they achieved the success in producing their utmost

skills in striking various kinds of revenge tragedies. In fact, the regime of English revenge tragedy covers itself as an output of the contemporary social, cultural and even political periods. Moreover, where moral obligation and revenge have a vice-versa relationship, there the topic of 'morality of revenge' is focused. If we examine the Christian belief, it is said in Bible by Lord Himself "vengeance is mine." So as a Christian believer one should be patient for the God's justice. That was the religious view of the earlier English people that everyone had to abide by the Christian code of belief and the Church. The revenge tragedies became popular to the mass people due to renaissance quintessence that provoked the ethical dilemma in seeking private revenge when denied public justice.

In recent years, critics have sought to understand the popularity of revenge tragedies from a cultural and historical standpoint. These commentators have observed that the revenge tragedy form appeared at a conspicuous time in English history, when people were beginning to question the fundamental relationship between religion and the universe, when the English nation was imperiled by the threat of the Spanish Armada, and when English society endured the uncertainty of succession between the reigns of Elizabeth I and James I. According to these critics, Elizabethan and Jacobean playwrights employed the revenge tragedy as the ideal vehicle by which to project their concerns about such provocative issues as a repressive religious tradition, political corruption, and social malaise (www.enotes.com/literary-criticism/revenge-tragedy). As public justice sometimes are denied both in Senecan and Elizabethan era, so private revenges are justified projecting drama. There is a common thing in these tragedies, all these happenings are not with the common people but with the highest ranked people of the state.

In Seneca's *Thyestes*, this revenge flows for several generations; a kind of family revenge and the theory is not 'an eye for an eye' strategy rather 'two eyes for an eye.' So in this play, the revenge what Atreus took on Thyestes, was too much according to his guilt- it could be an eye for an eye treatment. Only for making plot against him for the throne of Mycanae that Thyestes made seducing Atreus's wife, Aerope and persuading her to steal a golden-fleeced horned lamb that belonged to him, Atreus banished Thyestes, which he thought later on that it was not enough; then he called back his brother, Thyestes and decided to punish him in the most diabolical style.

Atreus caught and hacked the three sons of Thyestes- Aglaus, Orchomenus and Callileon, into pieces; not only that, he got the flesh cooked in a cauldron and served that in the grand feast in front of Thyestes:

Atreus: [...] I will do more.

I will yet see this father eat his fill

Of his dead offspring. Shame need not deter me; (5.890-893)

And the most pathetic is that after the dinner Atreus showed his brother the bloody limbs of his sons:

Atreus [exhibiting the children's heads]: Embrace your
Children, father! They are here
Beside you. Do you recognize your sons? (5.994-996)
Atreus: You, you yourself have dined on your sons' flesh!
You have consumed this monstrous banquet! (5.1037-1038)

This was so horrible to present even on the stage that the audiences be also horror-stricken. So, Thyestes fled away cursing the house of Atreus. But Thyestes ultimately justified the revenge.

On the other hand, Thomas Kyd in *The Spanish Tragedy*, revenge is not like the Greek or Roman revenge tragedies but it deals with the problem of justice. This is not the family revenge rather it is the matter of public justice where 'justice delayed, justice denied' and the failure of the social judicial system even in the high ranked people. If Horatio's murder be under the judicial process then it might not happen so much bloodshed at the end of the play. In *The Spanish Tragedy* vengeance came as the device of avenging the murder of Horatio, Hieronimo's son:

Hieronimo: Indeed,
Thou may'st torment me, as his wretched son
Hath done in murdering my Horatio,
But never shalt thou force me to reveal
The thing which I have vowed inviolate.
And therefore in despite of all thy threats,
Pleased with their deaths, and eased with their revenge. (4.4.185-190)

The topic of Revenge, as explained below, is central to *The Spanish Tragedy*. Michael Hattaway is right to protest against any attempt to explain the play's 'meanings' by quoting from the work of contemporary moral theologians and jurists, yet a sense of the immediately controversial nature of the topic is pertinent to an understanding of the frame of mind in which Kyd's first audiences would respond to the play's action, and to its protagonist, Hieronimo. Elizabethan law specifically forbade vengeance for personal injury, and the Bible ('Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord') appeared quite straightforwardly to reserve vengeance to God, not man. Yet contemporary writers, including orthodox theorists, expressed a certain sympathy for private vengeance, at least when the law was unable or unwilling to provide an effective remedy. Even the strict Francis Bacon admitted that 'the most tolerable sort of revenge is for those wrongs which there is no law to punish; else a man's enemy is still before

hand, and it is two for one. (Mulryne. xvi)

What we find in Kyd's play that revenge is not the wild manner for mere having revenge like Senecan style rather its not only a way to justice but also a sacred and solemn duty which may not be neglected. And for this reason, Kyd implies here a character Revenge itself that makes the association with the ghost of Andrea for seeking revenge of the death of Andrea on the battlefield at the hand of Balthazar. And like Andrea Bel-imperia wants revenge for the death Andrea, her lover and later for the murder of Horatio; whereas Balthazar seeks revenge on Horatio to win Bel-imperia's love, Lorenzo plans to murder Horatio and last but not the least, Hieronimo pursues revenge for the premature and terrible death of his son Horatio. So revenge revolves around the play maintaining Senecan style.

Tragedy and melodrama are alike in this, —that each exhibits a set of characters struggling vainly to avert a predetermined doom; but in this essential point they differ, that whereas the characters in melodrama are drifted to disaster in spite of themselves, the characters in tragedy go down to destruction because of themselves. In tragedy the characters determine and control the plot; in melodrama the plot determines and controls the characters. The writer of melodrama initially imagines a stirring train of incidents, interesting and exciting in themselves, and afterward invents such characters as will readily accept the destiny that he has foreordained for them. The writer of tragedy, on the other hand, initially imagines certain characters inherently predestined to destruction because of what they are, and afterward invents such incidents as will reasonably result from what is wrong within them (Hamilton 98).

Though melodrama is a debased form of tragedy, sometimes tragedy becomes more attractive to the audiences for melodramatic elements. In a tragedy the emphasis is on characterization and on the exploration of the human mind; in a melodrama, on the other hand, the playwright highlights on incidents and actions. Melodrama presents numerable happenings designed to startle the spectators rather to investigate the human motives. Specially in revenge play, the use of melodramatic elements heightens its chance of acceptability to the audiences, like supernatural elements, bloodsheds or murders, other theatrical devices to create a sensational effect.

If we scrutinize the Senecan melodramatic elements, we can compare and contrast in between Seneca and Elizabethan playwrights specially, Thomas Kyd, the most Senecan dramatist in British drama and William Shakespeare. Kyd followed the devices of Seneca almost perfectly. Both Kyd and Seneca introduce the play with the appearance of ghostly characters. In *Thyestes*, as the play opens the ghost of Tantalus appeared and lamented his own misfortune and shuddered at the horrible crimes to be committed by his descendants. The ghost of Tantalus was not a revenge ghost. His function was only to lend an atmosphere of horror.

On the other hand, in Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy*, the ghost is not detached character as in Seneca. He is actually in the primary action. The Ghost of Andrea reads out the Prologue along with the general motif of revenge. The Ghost of Andrea makes its entry in the very opening of the play and he is accompanied by another supernatural being named Revenge. Here Revenge itself is a character. Kyd has done a splendid job by focusing on the characters of the ghosts. Kyd has not confined the ghosts only to the Prologue rather he has made the Ghost of Andrea one of the Dramatis Personae. He has made the ghosts' entrance at the end of each act of the play, as if the Ghost of Andrea and Revenge are summing up the happenings of the act. Not only that, at the denouement of the play, the playwright justifies the revenge and makes the Ghost of Andrea the ultimate decision maker of the fates of the evil-doers and murderers of the play.

Not only that, in Shakespearean plays like *Hamlet*, the Ghost of Hamlet's father plays an important role for which Hamlet becomes sure that his father is killed; or even in *Macbeth*, we see the role of three witches and their stimulation to Macbeth's desire for grabbing power. So, supernatural attachment in a drama especially on Elizabethan stage plays a vital role to create a sensation among the audiences.

Turning to another basic of melodrama like murders and bloodsheds, we see Seneca introduces horror while Aristotle emphasizes the importance of Fear and Pity. Unlike Greek dramatists, he emphasizes violent spectacle. Scenes, which the Greeks would have banished from the stage -- stabbings, murders, and suicides are often the climactic onstage moments in Seneca's works. These feelings of horror the audiences get not only on stage but also off-stage. Like the description of the brutal murders of Thyestes', three sons are reported from the conversation between the Messenger and Chorus.

And Atreus also gives a shivering account of his brutality to his brother Thyestes. The audience is shocked just to hear about this cruelty which even they don't witness on stage:

Atreus: I did it all myself- drove in the sword
 To slay them at the altar, washed my hearth
 With sacrificial blood, cut off the limbs
 From the dead bodies, chopped them into pieces,
 And threw the pieces into boiling cauldrons
 Or had them slowly roasted on the fire. (5.54-59)

In *The Spanish Tragedy*, we are informed at the very beginning, of the death of Andrea, once a courtier at the Spanish court and a brave warrior, in the battlefield between the Spanish and the Portuguese armies. After that on stage the audiences witness the murder of Horatio when he is in lovemaking with Bel-imperia. This happens so sudden that Horatio couldn't resist it:

Lorenzo: My lord, away with her, take her aside.

O sir, forbear, your valour is already tried.

Quickly despatch, my masters.

They hang him in the arbour

Horatio: What, will you murder me?

Lorenzo: Ay, thus, and thus; these are the fruits of love.

They stab him. (2.5.51-55)

Afterwards, two more deaths are presented in full sight of audiences. Now according to Lorenzo's evil design, Pedringano shoots Serberine and kills him on the spot while after that Pedringano is taken into custody on a charge of murder and he is sentenced to death and executed by the hangman.

But the most terrible and shocking expression of horror we are forced to see on-stage through the play within the play (a device Kyd introduced for the first in English drama) "Soliman and Perseda" designed and directed by Hieronimo as a plan to avenge the death of Horatio. The climax of horror and of melodrama has reached its highest peak in this play within play, where Balthazar is to play the role of Soliman, the Turkish Emperor; Lorenzo of Erasto, the knight of Rhodes; Bel-imperia of Perseda; Hieronimo of Bashaw.

According to the plot of this play, Bashaw (Hieronimo) kills Erasto (Lorenzo) and Perseda (Bel-imperia) kills Soliman (Balthazar) to death and immediately afterwards Bel-imperia stabs herself to death. Though all these happenings are in real format, none of the spectators even the Spanish King and the Portuguese Viceroy are under the impression that these are only the fake actions performed in the conventional manner on the stage. After that Hieronimo appears on the stage with the dead body of Horatio and gives a long speech explaining the death of his son and the revenge he has contemplated. Then the soldiers arrest him and then he is asked the reason of these murders but Hieronimo bites his tongue off because he doesn't wish to speak more. And soon after using a trick he gets a knife in his hand and stabs the Duke of Castile and commits suicide stabbing himself, too. These shocking and dreadful feeling of horrors are piled up in this play. Kyd could project some of these murders off-stage. According to the taste of the contemporary audiences the murders are demanded on-stage and that Kyd thought essential to gratify the public satisfaction.

Further there are scenes of madness, which is also a category of melodramatic basics. Isabella, mother of Horatio, goes mad out of grief for her son's premature death and afterwards we get the news of stabbing herself to death being frenzied. Even Hieronimo himself becomes insane for couple of time after Horatio's murder. His insanity becomes apparent towards us when he talks with two Portuguese strangers and gives them an imaginary description of Lorenzo

bathing in the boiling lead and in the blood of innocents. Again, he begins to dig ground with a dagger, although this time it seems that he is feigning being mad. Once more, Hieronimo is in real madness when he mistakes an old man as Horatio and then as a Fury from the internal regions out of hallucination.

This state of insanity we also find in Shakespearean plays as *Macbeth*, *Hamlet* and *King Lear* where Macbeth hallucinates a bloody dagger in the air; Hamlet feigns as insane to unmask his father's killers and the old King Lear becomes insane out of wrath and panic due to the ill-manner and negligence of his daughters.

Rhetorical expression is regarded as a vital part of a melodrama. Like the very opening speech by the Ghost of Andrea is rhetorical. Again there is a scene where the audiences have the account of violent imagery that the Spanish General gives to his King of the battle, which happened in between Spanish and Portuguese armies. Again Balthazar's speech about Bel-imperia's indifference towards his woo for her is a rhetoric. Even the lamentation of the Portuguese Viceroy for his murdered son is a genuine rhetorical. And last but not the least Hieronimo's Soliloquies are the most marked rhetoric, where his obsession with revenge and with justice is clearly depicted. All these melodramatic facets as the appearance of ghosts, spine-chilling and blood-curdling scenes of bloodsheds and brutal murders have added to the total effect of horror and this work together to focus the action so that the audiences especially the Elizabethans are able to attach themselves with a sensational feeling as a part of the play.

For close to five hundred years, the name Niccolo Machiavelli has held a place in history and in philosophy that has been fervently debated for centuries. Some say that Machiavelli is the true statesman and his books hold the key to the most efficient form of governing, while others call him a barbaric monster, whose ideas and methods have given way to the schools of thought of fascism, Nazism, and other tyrannical forms of government. Machiavelli was born, lived, and died in a tumultuous period of time when his country was overrun with foreign invaders and parasites that were living on the resources Italy provided them. Before he perished, however, he managed to pen his thoughts about an ideal form of government in which all men would unite behind one leader, known in his work as *The Prince*, and bring the country into an era of glory.

Machiavelli also offered the advice to any Prince that they should be wary of whom they offend on their way into seizing power and they cannot trust even the friends that have helped them in attaining power because they might turn on the Prince and overthrow his leadership.

Seneca was Machiavellian in the treatment of his tragic theme of revenge long before Machiavelli was born. Hypocrisy and unscrupulousness are the Machiavellian traits that Seneca has made use in his play. In *Thyestes*, Atreus can be addressed a masterpiece of villainy who is more diabolical than Shakespeare's Richard III, Iago or Edmund; even more sinister than Kyd's

Lorenzo and Balthazar, Marlowe's Barabas. Atreus' revenge is gruesome and it was motivated when Thyestes has seduced Aerope, the wife of Atreus, and persuaded her to steal the golden fleece of a magical lamp, lying in Atreus' possession. And as a result, Atreus' takes revenge on Thyestes in a manner that is really horrible to be exposed. As a crime maniac Atreus is a cool-blooded and calculative murderer who doesn't know any artistry in villainy but crude and savage. He is a Machiavellian villain and thinks that all the methods are good enough for the achievements of his object. To take revenge on Thyestes, he slaughter Thyestes' three sons to the grove of Minerva according to the rites of sacrifice with as much indifference as if they are not human being rather animals.

If Atreus kills the three children and stops there, that would have been an act of cruelty, but he committs something extraordinary- he cut the bodies into pieces; savagely he separates the arms from the shoulders; he lays bare the joints and splits apart the bones; he put the severed limbs upon the spits and roasts them by slow fire:

Atreus: [...] Nay, but I will do more.
 I will yet see this father eat his fill
 Of his dead offspring. Shame need not deter me;
 Daylight is gone. Yes ... I need have no fear
 While heaven itself is empty; gods have fled;
 Would I could stop them, drag them back by force
 And make them see this banquet of revenge
 (5.891-897)

.....
 Now ... to watch his face! ... to see its colour
 Change, when he sees the faces of his sons!
 To listen to his first tormented cries,
 To see his body stiffen with the shock
 As if struck dead. This will be my reward
 For all my pains- I must not only see him
 Broken, but watch the breaking when it comes. (5.908-914)

A grand banquet is ready. The wide hall is illuminated. Thyestes is lying supine on gold and purple. He has drunk to his heart's content and the wine is mixed with the blood of his children. Unknowingly Thyestes has eaten the flesh of his own children. He doesn't get to know that he has quaffed the children's blood. But at this time he is missing his sons and he has a deep longing for meeting his sons. After appealing to Atreus he cries passionately and has asked his sons to come to him. Atreus has appeared with a covered platter in his hands and as he uncovers the platter, Thyestes sees the severed heads of his dearest sons. Thyestes becomes

mad in grief. But Thyestes' wailing can't move Atreus' heartlessness. He rather asks his brother to embrace and kiss his sons:

Atreus [exhibiting the children's heads]: Embrace your
Children, father! They are here
Beside you. Do you recognize your sons? (5.994-996)
Again he continues.
Atreus: But here are your dear sons,
Whom you have asked to see. Receive them gladly.
Kiss them, make much of them, and embrace them all.
Your brother will not stop you. (5.1016-1019)

Atreus now feels happy, proud and exultant because of his act of Revenge is almost completed. Atreus chuckles merrily and informs his brother Thyestes that he (Thyestes) himself has eaten his children's flesh. This is the Machiavellian trait of Atreus' character that he can go to any extent to fulfill his heart content. He acts like a heartless beast, wherever a beast may have some kindness in his heart but Atreus doesn't have this. And maybe that's why Atreus is one of the most striking Senecan characterizations.

Usually, there are some Machiavellian traits that are perfectly maintained by this type of villains like one's goal shouldn't be hampered by morality. As there is no morality, so power of Satan lasts for long than divinity. One can even commits murders to reach his goal. So the Machiavellian villains possess sly, devious and self-promoting minds with which they contrive elaborate strategies to achieve their own goals. They experience at least as much pleasure in their cunning and cruel means as in their self-serving ends. As an English playwright Kyd's first innovation in *The Spanish Tragedy* is the character of Lorenzo, the English archetypal Machiavellian villain. He is the first such character that may be differentiated from the typical tyrant villains like Iago or Tambourlaine.

Lorenzo here is the son the Duke of Castile and the nephew of the Spanish King. In spite of his aristocratic origin, he shows himself to be a thorough villain of the worst imaginable kind. He proves to be utterly unscrupulous, extremely cold-hearted and atrocious. But his villainy is not to gratify his personal ambition; rather he has done all these just due to his desire to bring about a matrimonial alliance between his sister Bel-imperia and Balthazar, the Portuguese Prince, who is his prisoner-cum-guest. But when he gets to know about the love relationship between Bel-imperia and Horatio, Lorenzo schemes to murder Horatio by Serberine and Pedringano:

Lorenzo: Ay, danger mixed with jealous despite
Shall send thy soul into eternal night. (2.2.56-57)

Lorenzo is so much shrewd person that he even doesn't let Pedringano and Serberine live who had been accomplices in the murder of Horatio and they had, actually carried out the murder under Lorenzo's instructions. He, offering Pedringano a big reward in the form of gold, tells to kill Serberine. He also arranges to catch Pedringano red handed and he is taken into the custody and then sentenced to death for the murder. Thus he makes scheme to remove his two witnesses at the same time. This is downright treachery; he causes deaths of two more men. Again the particular map Lorenzo devises to ensnare Pedringano, allowing him confidently to expect a pardon that doesn't come- he is instantly hanged- is an apparent example of a Machiavellian act.

On the other hand, Hieronimo get to know that Horatio, his son, is murdered under the instruction of Lorenzo and Balthazar accomplices him. To avenge the murder of Horatio, after getting no justice from the highest level of the state, he designs a plot along with Bel-imperia where they can have their justice. To set up an end of these villainy and treachery, Hieronimo also adopts Machiavellian theory. And Lorenzo falls into the trap laid by Hieronimo. He is tricked into accepting a role in the dramatic performance in which he has to die at last. In spite of all his shrewdness and cunningness, Lorenzo this time fails to realize Hieronimo's motives. As a result Lorenzo is murdered on stage as his role of Erasto is to die in the hand of Bashaw (Hieronimo) in the play "Soliman and Perseda:"

Hieronimo: O, good words!
 As dear to me was my Horatio.
 As yours, or yours, or yours, my lord, to you.
 My guiltless son was by Lorenzo slain,
 And by Lorenzo and that Balthazar
 Am I at last revenged thoroughly,
 Upon whose souls may heavens be yet avenged
 With greater far than these afflictions. (4.4.169-176)

Lorenzo, the first English Machiavellian villain, shows his genius for intrigue. So much shrewd he is that even he has made Balthazar a kind tool of his hand. Lorenzo, being a member of royal family doesn't have the generosity rather he even doesn't spare his own sister Bel-imperia and murders her lover, Horatio. Not only that he can go to any extent to execute his intrigues, wherever for his own safety he doesn't mind to trap his two accomplices, Serberine and Pedringano. They had to sacrifice their lives. Lorenzo can be treated thoroughly a Machiavellian villain. But Hieronimo as a revenge hero of this play has to implement the Machiavellian intrigues to avenge the justice. And that's what the audiences observe the tragic finale of this revenge of the bloodsheds where with the deaths of Lorenzo, Balthazar, Bel-imperia, Hieronimo and the Duke of Castile, the plot of the play achieves poetic justice.

As we've discussed earlier about the evolution of revenge tragedy, we get there the Elizabethan attitude toward revenge. In Middle ages and early Renaissance, there were mysteries, miracles, moralities and interludes and drama were confined into churchyard and performed by the clergymen where the hero represents all humankind and is surrounded by Personifications of virtues, vices, angels, demons and death- all the forces of good and evil, who battle for the possession of hero's soul. But later on in Elizabethan period, drama gets its flourish with the essence of Renaissance. Drama gets its masterminds in this era as Lyly, Peele, Greene, Lodge, Nashe, Kyd, Marlowe and the last but not the least William Shakespeare. Among these literary intellects, Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* achieved the recognition to be the first ever Revenge tragedy in English drama. He is the first dramatist to interweave the relation between plot and characters and to study their interaction.

Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy*, written for the newly emerged commercial theatre that represents a complete break with the medieval theatre tradition. The new Elizabethan theatre, freed from the compulsion to render only the official 'doctrine' of the Church, needed to search out a different intellectual and imaginative 'space' and explore an alternative, secular account of the human condition and of what was worth dramatizing. Revenge tragedy gets its popularity to the Elizabethan audiences the most because of the historical fact that people of contemporary England continued to feel a certain amount of sympathy for private revenge as distinguished from the legal justice. According to some critics of the Elizabethan times, the law was unable or unwilling to do justice on account of a lack of formal evidence and that's why an individual had the right to take over the functions of the law. And in *The Spanish Tragedy*, the revenge is taken by Hieronimo, Bel-imperia and the Ghost of Andrea, is an appropriate example of private revenge. Hieronimo tries to get the justice for the murder of his son, Horatio but he is denied for the lack of proper evidence and this instigates Hieronimo to achieve the private revenge, because when the justice is delayed, the justice is denied. And Kyd also knew that he would be successful to draw the public support for his revenge theme.

The Spanish Tragedy was very popular at that time and even today it has remained popular because of its high-pitched emotion and full-blooded melodrama and also for his excellent stagecraft. He knows how to use every opportunity for dramatic effect. He refers to stage areas such as a window or a place above and directs certain actions within the lines such as kissing, closing of eyelids, leaning, or falling. He directs the placement of characters on the stage, perhaps a seating of the court in hierarchical order or Balthazar's being led prisoner between his two victors, Horatio and Lorenzo. The naturalistic violence in the play is inventive during the Tudor period and includes hanging, stabbing, struggling, ranting of a supposed madman, and a biting out of the tongue. All these exciting and sensational projection of Senecan melodrama and Machiavellianism lead *The Spanish Tragedy* to possess a universal appeal which makes it even today theatrically a very effective play.

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