Notes

Chapter One


2. Dombey and Son, chap. 16.


5. Prestyle = readily; craddantlye = cowardly.


16. Aries 114. See also Jordan, figs. 67-70.

17. Aries 119. See Jordan's chap. 6 and figs. 103, 117-25, although Jordan does not always differentiate among the Summons, the Apocalypse, and the Triumph.

18. We may remember that the Restoration thought Shakespeare a rustic, the nineteenth century thought Donne a barbarian, and even today, some readers persist in calling Chaucer "childlike."


22. See Tristram, plates 10 and 19.


26. See, for example, the portrait of Sir Brian Tuke, illustrated in Weber, 137.

27. Illustrated in Reinhardt, 73; Russell, 154-55.

28. STC 6222. Farnham has an illustration of this broadside facing p. 293, but it is reduced to too small a size to be entirely legible.

29. STC 6223.

31. STC 6444.

32. STC 5569.


42. George Herbert, "Death," in Lewalski and Sabol, 375–76.

## Chapter Two


2. Ibid., 82.


4. See O'Connor, 18–24; Spencer, 22.

5. STC 789. I have chosen this version because it is the most accessible to the modern scholar, and because a late abridgement usually indicates which part of a book a given society has found most useful or appealing.
6. One may draw a homely analogy here with the pains of childbirth or athletic training. Because such pains have a goal, they are viewed differently—more constructively—than pains associated with disease or accident. In fact, people who have been trained to "cooperate" with goal-oriented pains, to use them as gauges of progress toward the goal, generally report that the gauging process itself distracts the mind to a certain extent from the physical pain.

7. Friends were obviously expected to play a large role during death. In addition to their sections of the Ars moriendi tracts, they were also provided separate manuals to read aloud to the dying, such as the 1498 Doctrynall of Deeth (STC 6932), which is especially directed toward helping Moriens through his bodily pain.

8. STC 6035a.

9. Note that invoking the testimony of the "good pagans" is not new to the sixteenth century; the earliest Artes contain references to them as well. But the reaction against old tradition, coupled with enthusiasm for new learning, does change the emphasis somewhat.


14. O'Connor points out that "in the 1563 ed. little hands in the margin often emphasize anti-Catholic passages" (Art of Dying Well, p. 195, n. 174).

15. "[T]he heavy-handed, unembellished statement and restatement of doctrinal theses is effective only in so far as the reader is already a committed Christian, emotionally predisposed to respond to dogma itself—and Calvinist dogma at that. However effectively instructed, the unregenerate will remain outside the pale" (Craft of Dying, 146).


17. STC 23474.


19. STC 18024.

20. STC 22949.

21. STC 17294. Versions of the acrostic appear in medieval woodcuts also; the new items are the emblems stressing new life.

22. STC 18073

25. STC 12495.
26. Fifth edition, 1612, STC 12318, p. 660. Overwhelmed by Greenham's eloquence, the reader may not notice how faulty this arithmetic really is. Fourteen from thirty-five yields not sixteen, but twenty-one; furthermore, once we have subtracted thirty-five years for sleep, we must not continue to count fourteen whole years for youth—only seven. But as Greenham points out, none of what we are counting exists anyway, so why make a fuss?

Chapter Three

1. Burgess Meredith et al., Caedmon, TC 1031 (n.d.).
3. For illustrations of this artistic convention, see especially Boase, Death in the Middle Ages, 18-26.
4. The Chester Mystery Cycle, ed. R. M. Lumiansky and David Mills (London: EETS, 1974), ll. 89-90, 93-96. All references to the Chester plays will be to this edition.
5. See Caxton, Arte and Crafte, esp. A2v-A3v and A4v.
6. Ludus Coventriae, or the Pleie Called Corpus Christi, ed. K. S. Block (Oxford: EETS, 1922), ll. 57-58, 68. All references to the N-Town plays will be to this edition. However, for ease of reading, I have made certain emendations in spelling; for the thorn and yok, as usual, I give th and y, respectively; I have also shortened initial ff to f, changed initial h in third-person plural pronouns to th, changed x to sh as appropriate phonetically, omitted initial h in words like "anger," and inserted punctuation where a pause is indicated in mid-line.
7. The nine-line stanza used by the Wakefield Master has many similarities to the "bob and wheel" of the Gawain poet, and the use of alliteration and verbal portraiture is often reminiscent of Piers Plowman.
8. The Towneley Plays, ed. George England and Alfred W. Pollard (1897; rpt. London: EETS, 1952), ll. 550-54, 577-79. All references to the Wakefield plays will be to this edition.


11. The manuscript itself was destroyed in 1922, but fortunately a photograph of it had earlier been included in an 1891 edition of the account rolls onto which a scribe had copied the play.

12. In Non-Cycle Plays and Fragments, ed. Norman Davis (London: EETS, 1970), II. 243-58. All references are to this edition. I have taken some liberties with the spelling, but only where the original would be incomprehensible to the modern reader, as in the inconsistent alternations of v and u.

13. One of the interesting points about this early play is that the King of Life’s folly endangers not only his own soul but his entire kingdom. To be sure, his kingdom may here be understood as the state of being, but the motif of the foolish king will later take on more importance in the secular moralities (e.g., Magnyfycence, Respublica, and New Custom) as well as in the Elizabethan chronological plays and Shakespeare’s great histories. The Pride of Life, then, may be considered one of the first dramatic attempts to see the human creature as a microcosm of the world, long before the burgeoning of androcentric imagery in the Tudor age.

14. In English Morality Plays and Moral Interludes, ed. Edgar T. Schell and J. D. Shuchter (New York: Holt, 1969), II. 2785-91. All references are to this edition, although I have retained the original “Humanum Genus” rather than using the translated “Mankind,” which may be confused with the name of the hero of Mankynd.

15. Death’s last colloquial sententia is very like that uttered by the Bishop in Pride of Life when he decries the abuses of the day: “Thai farit as ficis in a pol- / The gret eteit the smal” (361-62). The similarity may indicate a connection between the two plays—perhaps in time, perhaps in locality, perhaps in a common source.
Chapter Four

3. This type of learning process—the formulation of questions—is not only pedagogically but doctrinally sound. In the balance between presumption and despair, we remember, Moriens is cautioned to bear in mind that "none is certayn, yf he be dygne or worthy to haue desuered the loue of god, or the hate of god" (Caxton, *Arte and Crafte*, A4r-v); that is, one must continually reexamine one's conscience and avoid assuming that one is a sharer in God's omniscience.
4. In Schell and Shuchter, II. 47-51. All references are to this edition. Note, by the way, what has happened to "the big fish eat the small" by this time. The original fresh imagery has faded into what is now obviously a stock phrase.

Chapter Five

1. A symbol may be defined as an object or figure that represents something or someone other than itself; an allegory, on the other hand, announces itself as itself. Thus, a skeleton that declares, "I hatte Dreary Deth" is an allegory, while a skull inscribed "Memento Mori" is more properly termed a symbol. The two may be combined, of course; the Dreary Death may carry an hourglass and dart, or may become a metaphor in absentia, as when we speak of the cold hand of death. For a good treatment of the subject, see Angus Fletcher's *Allegory: The Theory of a Symbolic Mode* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell Univ. Press, 1964).
3. Among these are Adversity in *Magnificence*, Divine Correction in *The Satire of the Three Estates*, Nemesis in *Respubliza*, God's Visitation in *Trial of Treasure*, Correction in *Tide Tarrieth No Man*, Rumor in *Nice Wanton*, God's Judgment in *The Longer Thou Livest*, and Severity in *Like Will to Like*. Oddly enough, there are death-figures in some of these plays, but they are not the ones that Houle lists: Confusion in *The Longer Thou Livest*, Time in *Trial of Treasure*, and devil and hangman in *Like Will to Like*. (The English Morality and Related Drama ([n.p.]: Archon Books, 1972), 167-68.)


6. Indeed, in *Tide Tarrieth No Man*, one of the Vices does report the death of another, and then, caught in the paradox between allegory and reality, immediately corrects himself:

   Courage: Out, alas, these tidings are ill!
   My friend Master Greediness hath ended his days! . . .
   Why, fool, Greediness will never die
   So long as covetous people do live!

   (In Schell and Shuchter, ll. 1653-54; 1665-66.)

7. One of the best recent discussions of these troublesome times is given by G. R. Elton in *Reform and Reformation: England 1509-1558* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977). For the changes in doctrines, see especially pp. 256-60, 274, 287-88, and 366. Elton manages a surprisingly objective account of a time that still—after four hundred and fifty years—calls forth invective and bitter partisanship among otherwise rational scholars.


10. STC 7896.


12. Among these plays are *Mankind* (ca. 1485), *Mundus et Infans* (ca. 1510), *Hicksoomer* (ca. 1516), *Youth* (ca. 1516), *Lusty Juventus* (ca. 1550), and *Nice Wanton* (ca. 1550). The various Wit and Wisdom (or Wit and Science) plays deal more with secular education than with religious salvation.
13. All references to the two Wager plays are to the Regents Renaissance Drama Series edition, ed. R. Mark Benbow (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1967).


15. I have used the text given in Dodsley's Old English Plays, ed. W. Carew Hazlet (1874; rpt. New York: Benjamin Blom, 1964), vol. 3. References in parentheses to "Dodsley" in all cases will include volume and page numbers; no line numbers are given in the text.


18. The choice of Inclination as the main Vice in Trial of Treasure may remind us of the Carthusian's rueful comment, in Lydgate's Dance of Death, that despite all preparation each man "Dredeth to dy / by kyndeli mocioun / / After his flessheli / Inclynacioun" (356-57). Throughout Trial, Just "bridles" Inclination (with a real bridle), and may therefore be said to achieve, among other things, a loss of the "dred" of Death. Whether or not Trial's playwright had this episode of the Dance in mind will, of course, never be known. But the publication of the Dance together with the Time-centered Fall of Princes in 1554 makes the speculation an interesting one.

19. As early as the reign of Queen Mary, the emblematic figure of Time had begun to infiltrate the stage. In Respublica, the Vice Avarice comments sardonically on the impending arrival of Truth by describing Truth's father:

Avarice: Old Time's daughter? That shuttle-brained tall long man
That ne'er standeth still but flyeth as fast as he can,
Much like as he swummed or glided upon ice? . . .
I know him; he carrieth a clock on his head,
A sand glass in his hand, a dial in his forehead. . . .
Old Time the eavesdropper? I know him, pardee!
An ancient turner of houses upside down
And a common consumer of city and town.
Old Time's daughter, quoth he? I shrew his naked heart!
Many of my friends hath he brought to pain and smart.

(In Schell and Shuchter, 1355-56; 1360-61; 1363-67.) Avarice, as we might expect, pays dearly for his disrespect toward Truth and Time.

20. Calvin, Institutes, III.iii.22. This is not to suggest that ignorance was considered an excuse. Ignorance was a sign of reprobacy, too, in that the soul had not been given the grace to know the truth. But seeing truth and denying it was considered even worse.
21. In this context, Ignorance is much like Corceca in Book 1 of The Faerie Queene: the "blind devotion" that is actually ignorance of religious truth, and therefore the mother of superstition.

22. Benbow gives the physician the name "Master Flebishiten," a name not included in the original text but one used to the Physician by Covetous. I think Benbow has made an error here. "Flebishiten" is obviously a deliberate malapropism of "Physician," and Covetous, as the Vice, is ridiculing the good Physician by mispronouncing his name. Every time Covetous uses this term, the Physician rebukes him for "jesting." Wager uses the same device in Longer to show Moros's folly and incorrigibility.


24. Spenser was later to use this type of debate with Despair to shattering effect in The Faerie Queene. Redcrosse knight is no more match for Despayre's specious reasoning than is Wastefulness; but he, like his predecessor, is saved at the last gasp by an emblem of faith, in his case, Una.


27. Institutes, III.xx.31. The medieval view had been that even the speaking of the words might open the heart to grace, or at least focus the mind on God. But under the Calvinist system, Philologus cannot benefit from what we may call the medicinally preventive effect of his words.

28. Such withdrawal, while common to minority groups, is itself a result of a double bind: if the ruling society excludes the minority, the only way the minority can assert its existence is to exclude the ruling class in turn, and to insist on its own customs as the mark of excellence.

29. Hamlet insists that Horatio remain alive to tell his story; and even in the early Appius and Virginia, the martyred virgin's reward is represented on stage by Reward, Fame, and Memory, who decorate her tomb:

Reward: I grant him that the learned pen shall have the aid of me,
To write in learned verse the honour of her name.

Fame: And eke it shall resound by trump of me Dame Fame.
[Here let Memory write on the tomb.]

Memory: I Memory will mind her life: her death shall ever reign
Within the mouth and mind of man, from age to age again.

(Dodsley, 4:154)

30. The good are taken away to the Elysian Fields in The Spanish Tragedy; the wastrel King Edward II asks God to receive his soul; Richard II bids his soul mount to heaven; Horatio asks "flights of angels" to sing Hamlet to his rest; and so on.

32. The intervening lines are a long "ubi sunt" litany: "Where's . . . but in my triumph," indicating at least a familiarity with the Triumphs of Death.


34. This folkloric motif has analogues in almost every literature: the mistletoe that kills Baldur; Achilles' heel; and the mustard-seed parable of the Bible. In the fairy tale, the hero (usually a youngest son) discovers that a pin will destroy a magically erected wall that whole armies have been unable to batter down or scale. Interestingly enough, the motif has been used even in modern fairy tales: a magic wall is destroyed by a pin in L. Frank Baum's The Lost Princess of Oz.

35. I have used as my text The Dramatic Works of Thomas Dekker, 2 vols., ed. Fredson Bowers (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1953), but have modernized spelling and punctuation.

36. Costuming plays an important part in this drama. Virtue and Vice wear allegorical costumes:

Enter Vice with gilded face, and horns on her head: her garments long, painted before with silver half-moons, increasing by little and little, till they come to the full; in the midst of them in capital letters this written: CRESCIT EUNDO; her garment painted behind with fools' faces and devils' heads, and underneath it in the middle this written: Ha, ha, he. . . . After her comes Virtue, a cockscomb on her head, all in white before, and this written about the middle: SIBI SAPIT; her attire behind painted with crowns and laurel garlands, stuck full of stars, held out by hands thrust out of bright clouds, and among them this written: DOMINABITUR ASTRIS.

(S.D. 1.3.1)

Furthermore, the fruits of Vice and Virtue are represented both by literal apples and by more costuming: the apples of Vice produce the stock comic horns on a character's head, and the apples of Virtue remove them.

37. The division of sons into good and bad in this play is not as marked as it would have been in the moralities of the 1560s and 1570s. Even Andelocia has his virtuous moments, and Ampedo some weaknesses. We are probably seeing more folkloric than Calvinistic influence: the older sons who come to nothing and the disregarded younger son who kills the dragon.


39. Tom Stoppard notwithstanding, I exclude Rosencrantz and Guildenstern—as well as Polonius—from the list of innocent bystanders. Espionage is a
dangerous business, and death in the performance of these duties may be sad, futile, or even unfair, but it is scarcely accidental.


41. Conversely, Death may arrive as the most likely suspect: the State's mighty messengers, hangman, jailer, and arresting officer.

42. In *Locrine*, the ghost of Albanact strikes food out of Humber's hands to keep him from eating, although death by starvation seems a bit vindictive even for a ghost.


44. (Tudor Facsimile Texts; rpt. New York: AMS Press, 1970), L4v. I have modernized spelling and punctuation.

45. The departure from Calvinist theology is evident even here; Calvin would deny the efficacy of penance.


47. In *The Works of Thomas Nashe*, vol. 3, ed. Ronald B. McKerrow (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1910), 246. Note the unusual reference to "good deeds" in the last line, which harks back to the medieval *Everyman*. (I have modernized the spelling and punctuation in *Summer's Last Will and Testament* with regret; the rhymes, especially in the second lyric, are more pleasing to the eye in the original.)

**Chapter Six**


2. Marlowe, *Doctor Faustus*, ed. John D. Jump, Revels Plays (London: Methuen, 1962), Prologue, 15:20. I will use this edition throughout my discussion (chapters 6 and 7), because I consider it the best available modern-spelling edition. However, I have worked cautiously with this text, comparing it frequently with Fredson Bowers's old-spelling version in *The Complete Works of Christopher Marlowe*, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1973), which appears to be textually more thorough and as nearly accurate as any twentieth-century reconstruction of the play can hope to be. As above, I will cite the scene and line numbers in the Revels Edition, followed by a colon and the line numbers in the Bowers edition.

3. The debate has gone on so long and so voluminously that it would be futile to attempt a representative bibliography here. For a sampling of advo-

4. Until act 5, Tamburlaine's "dares" are limited to heroic boasts in the conditional mood:

Though Mars himself, the angry god of arms,
And all the earthly potentates conspire
To dispossess me of this diadem,
Yet will I wear it in despite of them.

(2.2.58-61)

Zenocrate, were Egypt Jove's own land,
Yet would I with my sword make Jove to stoop.

(4.4.71-72)

5. Selimus, ll. 1757, 2345, 2539. I have, as always, modernized the spelling for the sake of consistency.

6. Compare the flyting speech that Faulconbridge makes about King John in Shakespeare's play:

Bastard: For at hand . . .
Is warlike John; and in his forehead sits
A bare-ribbed Death, whose office is this day
To feast upon whole thousands of the French.

(King John, 5.2.173-78)

Of course, only a few short scenes later, Death will feast on King John, who will describe himself merely as "a scribbled form, drawn with a pen / Upon a parchment" (5.7.32-33).

7. Bajazeth, Zabina, and Arabia are given "seemly" burials at the end of the play, but almost as an afterthought; Tamburlaine either ignores or boasts over their bodies first and leaves them strewn about the stage until the last five lines of the play.

8. "The Ultimate Source of White, Red, Black and Death?" Notes & Queries; n.s. 5 (April 1958): 146-47. Cutts, it must be noted, is forced by this theory to pass too lightly over the "pale" horse of Death itself.


10. Shakespeare apparently recognized the shock value of a human voice speaking the "too late." Richard II, in the midst of his capricious and suspect banishing of Bolingbroke and Mowbray, says, "After our sentence plain­ing comes too late" (Richard II, 1.3.175). However, Richard shortly does revise his sentence for Bolingbroke; "Such is the breath of kings" (1.3.215).


15. Suffering and Evil, 117.


17. "Tamburlaine, the 'Scourge of God,'" in Ribner, ed., Tamburlaine, 198.


20. Lydgate, Dance of Death, LXXX.

21. See Lupset, Dieyng Well, 279-80: "[A]s Epicure saith, if it be an extreme soore Payne, it is shorte. For no vehement Payne can be longe."

Chapter Seven


5. Rozett suggests that Marlowe's audience was heavily inclined to the Calvinist side of the predestination issue within the Church of England, and so would have seen Faustus's actions as incurably reprobate rather than as a matter of free will (*Doctrine of Election*, 209-46). However, as I show later, the most Calvinist branch of the church would by this time have been avoiding plays, and the official Anglican preaching had already begun to condemn the doctrine on which this view was based.


8. "Time and the Timeless in *Everyman* and *Dr. Faustus*," *College English* 22 (1960): 11.


13. Since such a trope makes the audience assume more knowledge than that of the speaker, it is difficult to understand how some critics can continue to urge Faustus's opening soliloquy as a mark of his superior mind. Even the groundlings in the audience know more than Faustus does at this point.

14. It is interesting to note that this passage predicts, too, the eventual Puritan and Cavalier uses of predestination in the mid-seventeenth century: the "strange arithmetick" and the carpe diem philosophy discussed in chapter 2.


18. STC 6621, 85.

20. Perkins, A Discourse of Conscience, 63.
21. B-Text, which Bowers gives in prose. The A-Text omits lines 3–4 and gives line 2 as “For he hath given to me all his goods.”
22. Notice, too, that Faustus does not leave his goods to a worthy cause, as Epaphroditus does in the Sicke Mannes Salve, but bestows them entirely on Wagner, the equally unregenerate Clown.
25. The Cardinal, it is interesting to note, has a dying soliloquy similar in many ways to that of Faustus. Mistaking King Henry for the Summons of Death, and with Gloucester’s death on his conscience, he cries out:

Died he [Gloucester] not in his bed? Where should he die?
Can I make men live whether they will or no?
Oh, torture me no more! I will confess.
Alive again? Then show me where he is.
I’ll give a thousand pound to look on him.
He hath no eyes, the dust hath blinded them.
Comb down his hair. Look, look! It stands upright,
Like lime twigs set to catch my winged soul.

(3.3.9–16)

Compare Faustus’s “Couldst thou make men to live eternally / Or being dead raise them to life again” (1.24–25: 52–53); “See, see where Christ’s blood streams in the firmament” (xix.146; 1939); and “Look, sirs, comes he not? comes he not?” (xix.29–30: 1826).

Chapter Eight

1. This chapter addresses only the issue of approaches to death, and deals with the other important issues—good governance, justice vs. mercy, etc.—only as they are revealed through the death summons.
2. Cinthio, Hecatommithi, 8.5., ed. Geoffrey Bullough, in Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare, vol. 2 (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963), 425. All references to Bullough are to this volume; where Bullough gives the old spelling, I have modernized it.
3. The only remnant of the figure is the Duke’s “He hath released him, Isabel, from the world. / His head is off, and sent to Angelo” (4.3.114–15). But the Duke offers comfort immediately afterward, and knows, besides, that Claudio is still alive.

5. The *Mirror of Mans Lyfe*, STC 14093, D3v.

6. *A Dialogue of Dying Wel*, trans. R. Verstepan, STC 19815, A8r-v. Petrus's (or his translator's) reference to the wailing "wretch" may remind the reader of Lupset's coward: "What nowe John! dothe not he seeme unto you a shamefull cowarde, and a fearfull wretche, a playn kikkes without an harte, that with moche intercession, with many prayers desyretethe a lyttelle delay of death?" (Dieyng Well, 281).

7. Compare the final couplet of the 1604 broadside-acrostic, *Map of Mortalitie*: "And feare not death: pale oughlie though he be. / Thou art in thrall, he comes to set thee free." (See chapter 2.)


10. Arden *Measure for Measure*, intro., boxxvii.

11. STC 1403, 186-87; 188-89.


14. Whether the Duke knows, at this point, that he will save Claudio's life along with his soul is a fruitless speculation. However, that he does plan to continue his sermon is evident from his parting words: "Dear sir, ere long I'll visit you again" (3.1.46).


16. *The Arte or Crafte to Lyue Well or to Deye Well* (Anon., ca. 1506), STC 793, F. lii.

17. See Rosalind Miles, *The Problem of Measure for Measure* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1976), for an excellent account of the centuries-long argument over Isabella's denunciation of her brother.


20. Ibid.

21. Critics who defend Claudio's willingness to lay down Isabella's honor for his life may well take note that even Angelo expects better of him and understands what Claudio's society would demand of him in such a crisis.


23. I do not agree with Lever's substitution of "sisters stood" for "sisterhood" in this line. It seems just as likely that "sisterstood" in F was a typo, since it was corrected to "sisterhood" in F2 and subsequent editions.
24. By caviling upon a few points, I do not mean to undercut the value of Miles’s work. Her book is a logical and objective grappling with the problems of the play and its audiences.

25. See, for example, 3 Henry VI, 2.5; Richard II, 3.4; 2 Henry IV, 2.4; and Henry V, 4.1.

26. When I say that the bed-trick “does not work,” of course, I do not mean that it does not work for Shakespeare; I mean that it does not work for the Duke. Furthermore, although the new problems posed by its failure provide more rigorous teaching and testing of the characters than the Duke originally planned, we cannot deny that some grave psychic damage is risked along the way. Some modern productions recognize this risk by having Isabella stand stunned and alone at the end of the play instead of going off happily with the Duke. As much as I dislike this sort of tampering with Shakespeare’s conventional endings, at least it recognizes that there has been some strain before the happy ending, a strain that cannot suddenly be relieved by the grin and skip that Isabella gives at the end of the recent—otherwise excellent—BBC production.

27. As for Lucio’s cry that “Marrying a punk . . . is pressing to death, / Whipping, and hanging” (5.1.520-21), can we really see Lucio choosing death before dishonor? Like the other characters in the play, he has tried to order his own destiny—in this scene, by requesting whipping instead of hanging. After the Duke first offers him both and then remits both, all Lucio can bargain for is a remission of the marriage as well. But he, too, must learn to live with someone else’s idea of justice and mercy.

28. Like all proverbs in another language, this is a difficult one to translate accurately. “Me h shtarbt nisht azoi gring; me h lebt un mittchen zich” is, really, a response to both “These troubles will kill me” and “I wish I were dead.” The use of the reflexive verb “Mitchen zich” also implies that the troubles or griefs are the function of oneself—not necessarily in the sense of assigning blame, but in the sense that the human condition is inherently a condition of trouble, that we breathe in pain as we breathe in air. But we continue to breathe.

Chapter Nine

1. Don D. Moore’s John Webster and His Critics, 1617-1964 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1966) gives an excellent account of trends in the controversy up to the mid-1960s. Since then, some of the more interesting works on the play are Peter B. Murray’s A Study of John Webster (The Hague: Mouton, 1969), which takes a friendly approach to the
Duchess and sees the play almost as a religious allegory; Joyce E. Peterson's *Curs'd Example: "The Duchess of Malfi" and Commonweal Tragedy* (Columbia: Univ. of Missouri Press, 1978), which sees the Duchess as a bad ruler and wicked woman; Nicholas Brooke's *Horrid Laughter in Jacobean Tragedy* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1979), chap. 4, which places the play in the school of the theater of the absurd; and Jacqueline Pearson's *Tragedy and Tragicomedy in the Plays of John Webster* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1980) and Lee Bliss's *The World's Perspective: John Webster and the Jacobean Drama* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1983), both of which view the Duchess's triumph as only partially overcoming her antiheroic world. Don D. Moore has published an expanded summary of pre-twentieth-century Webster criticism in the Critical Heritage Series (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981).


4. Since Lucas's first proposal of this interpretation of Ferdinand's behavior, no critic has been able to ignore the possibility, even if he or she does not entirely agree with it.

5. Tristram, *Figures of Life and Death*, 156.

7. All references are to the Revels Plays text, ed. John Russell Brown (London: Methuen, 1964), which I consider to be the best available modern-spelling edition. The standard old-spelling edition is still that of Lucas.

8. During the revival of Renaissance drama in New York City in the mid-1960s, I was amused to overhear this reaction among my fellow playgoers at two different performances. Of course, twentieth-century Americans unused to Jacobean conventions may not embody the reactions of blasé Jacobean, but the point is worth noting.


11. See, for example, Leech, Ornstein, Brown, and Whitman. Brown, in particular, suggests that the Duchess's ghost may even have appeared at line 42, in a sudden "great light" similar to that in The Second Maiden's Tragedy (xxxv). But I think this unlikely. Delio can hear the Echo, and should therefore be able to see it if it is visible. Furthermore, too many of Antonio's other superstitions are called into question during the play to lend credence to this one.

12. Chappell, The Garden of Prudence (1595), STC 4999, B3r.


15. See Bliss, 151-58, for a very good analysis of Bosola as a troubled, torn man always hard at work to rationalize his Machiavellian role.


17. Doebler, "Continuity in the Art of Dying," 211.

18. Keith Thomas, in his Religion and the Decline of Magic (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1971), documents the increase of fortune-telling and astrology in sixteenth- and especially seventeenth-century England, as dependence on a central church gave way to pluralism and to the more individualistic and less ritualized denominations of Protestantism. Although clearly favoring the Protestant position, Thomas attributes the growth of predictive superstition primarily to a search for a higher authority than the new churches were willing to claim as churches.

19. In another neat reversal, the horoscope is not only a disordering agent but is patently false. The son for whom is predicted a "short life" and "violent death" (2.3.61-63) survives his whole family and is presented to the audience by Delio at the end of the play as "this young, hopeful gentleman" (5.5.112).
20. One may sometimes be reminded of the Walrus and the Carpenter in Through the Looking-Glass:

"I weep for you," the Walrus said:
"I deeply sympathize,"
With sobs and tears he sorted out
Those of the largest size,
Holding his pocket-handkerchief
Before his streaming eyes.

As Tweedledee reminds Alice, even the weeping was a ploy: “You see he held his hankerchief in front, so that the Carpenter couldn’t count how many he took” (Lewis Carroll, Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking-Glass [New York: Illustrated Editions, n.d.], 165-66). Bliss maintains that act 5 of The Duchess of Malfi could easily be called “Bosola’s Revenge” (158).

21. The numerous rhymed sententiae in the play are interesting in themselves. They are distinctly inferior to the rest of Webster’s verse—including the other rhymed verse—and often seem to have little to do with the context. In view of their uncharacteristically poor craftsmanship, and of the fact that so many of them are given to Bosola or other characters of doubtful integrity, it is tempting to see them as red herrings drawn across the audience’s path along with the wax dummies, the coincidences, and the Echo.


23. See, for example, Leech; Peterson; and James L. Calderwood, “The Duchess of Malfi: Styles of Ceremony,” Essays in Criticism 12 (1962): 133-47. Gunnar Boklund, too, comes to see the Duchess as a holy martyr during her death scene; see The Duchess of Malfi: Sources, Themes, Characters (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1962).

24. Lucas, for example, refers to her as a “Mater Dolorosa” (28), while Murray speaks of her in terms of both Job and the Holy Family.

25. Doebler, 208-09.


27. Lupset, Dieyng Well, 267.

28. Soldiers in combat often have recourse to the unanswerable question. In Vietnam, the standard reply to reprimands was: “So what are you going to do to me? Send me to Vietnam?” No matter how many times one heard (or said) this, it remained funny. And it could not be answered. The Jews, too, have a tradition of answering a question with another question. A classic story told about any given persecution, but especially about the Holocaust, is this one: The storm troopers are beating up a Jew. When they stop to rest, the leader tries to goad the Jew by asking, “Tell me, Jew, who caused the war?” The Jew answers promptly, “The Jews and the
pretzel-baker's!" The storm trooper, puzzled, asks, "Why the pretzel-bakers?"
And the Jew responds, "Why the Jews?"
29. Lupset, 267.
30. Chesterton, Ballad of the White Horse, in Collected Poems, 239.
31. Dent, John Webster's Borrowings (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1960);
see also Brown's note to the passage in the Revels edition, and Muriel West,
The Devil and John Webster, esp. 206-10.
32. Robert Freeman Whitman identifies Webster's figure with death alone,
pointing out that when Bosola enters, directly after these lines, the Cardinal
says, "Now! art thou come?" (5.5.7); that is, Bosola is the human representa­
tion of the Summons. But Whitman oversimplifies. To explain the
"rake," he must make Antonio its human counterpart, since Bosola is carry­
ing the body, and such literalism detracts from the genuinely frightening
symbolism that Webster has chosen.
33. Ellis-Fermor, The Jacobean Drama: An Interpretation (London: Methuen,
1936), 180.
34. Rabkin, introduction to Twentieth Century Interpretations, 5.

Chapter Ten

1. Petrus Luccensis, Dialogue, C3v. This is only a small portion of the two-
and-a-half-page address to the skull. Although this English translation of
the Dialogue is dated 1603, the work was originally published in Latin in
1529, and was soon translated into French. I quote it here not only because
of its intrinsic verbal charm but also because it is representative of a large
class of early sixteenth-century works on the subject.
2. It is possible that Shakespeare had such an image in mind when he had
Northumberland say, in a more secular context, "Even through the hollow
eyes of death / I spy life peering" (R11, 2.2.270-71).
3. I have often wondered whether Shakespeare expected his audience to asso­
ciate this opening apostrophe with "Alas, poor York," the sarcastic words
of Margaret as she tortures the Duke of York in 3 Henry VI (1.4.84). If
so, then the audience would next have expected a parody, and would have
been even more unsettled by the quiet pathos of the statement "I knew
him, Horatio" that follows.
4. Higgins, "The Influence of Calvinistic Thought in Tourneur's Atheist's
Ornstein, "The Atheist's Tragedy and Renaissance Naturalism," Studies in
6. Theodore Spencer thinks the symbol already obsolete in The Atheist's Tragedy, calling the graveyard scene "atmosphere for atmosphere's sake" (Death and Elizabethan Tragedy, 188). But if the play is seen in the allegorical terms that I have outlined, the atmosphere serves a definite function.


8. Dekker, Dramatic Works, 4 vols., ed. Fredson Bowers (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1953), vol. 1. All references to Dekker's plays are to this edition. I have in all cases modernized spelling and punctuation.


10. Spencer, Death and Elizabethan Tragedy, 186.

11. Note, too, how many changes Webster has Bosola ring on this speech in The Duchess of Malfi. See my chapter 9, especially Bosola's speeches at 4.2.124-33 and 4.2.186-95.


13. Compare Avarice's speech on Time in Respublica: "That shuttle-brained tall long man," quoted at length in chapter 5, n. 19. The audience here is expected to realize that Avarice is playing with fire.

14. I have deliberately avoided mentioning the playwright's name in this discussion, for the simple reason that I cannot say with any certainty what it is. The controversy has by now settled down to two names: Tourneur and Middleton. I am inclined to see the hand of Marston at work in some of the physical horrors and the scurrility of Vindice's invective, but there is as much evidence for and against this speculation as there is about any other. Lacking any more definitive evidence than is available at this time, I must echo Lawrence J. Ross and "state with some confidence that [I do not know who wrote The Revenger's Tragedy]" (introduction to the play, Regents Renaissance Drama Series [Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1966], xviii). Readers who wish to take up the controversy will find good summaries of the arguments in Ross's introduction, xiv–xix; Peter B. Murray, A Study of Cyril Tourneur (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1964), 144-59; and Samuel Schoenbaum, Middleton's Tragedies (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1955), 153–82. The battle continues to rage, although scholars are not always averse to changing sides; at the 1980 meeting of the South Central Renaissance Conference (Monroe, La.), Samuel Schoenbaum announced that he now favored Tourneur rather than Middleton as chief candidate for authorship.


19. All references are to Ross's Regents Renaissance Drama Series edition.
22. Daniel J. Jacobson has suggested that the stage direction, "Thunder," is an erroneous interpolation made by J. Churton Collins in his 1878 edition of the play. According to Jacobson, Vindice's "There it goes!" is simply an ejaculation indicating satisfaction with or delighted anticipation of his own plans. ("'There It Goes'—or Does It?: Thunder in The Revenger's Tragedy and a Catch-Phrase in Shakespeare, Marlowe, and Middleton," English Language Notes 13 [1975]: 6-10.) I cannot entirely agree. "There it goes!" without any referent is too much of a disjunction in tone at this point (from indignation to satisfaction); and if we assume a slight pause before the exclamation, to allow for a shift in thought, then Hippolito's protest, obviously directed at Vindice's hysteria, comes too late and is therefore inappropriate. It is apparent that Vindice has heard something in answer to his prayer, and whether Hippolito hears the thunder or not, he certainly sees Vindice hearing something.
23. This scene, with its elaborate play on words meaning either release from prison or release from life, may owe a good deal to the Measure for Measure tradition.
24. Ross substitutes Youngest Son for Junior in his edition "for clarity's sake" (intro., xxxii), and probably for the sake of avoiding modern connotations of diminution and comedy.
27. One of my students has advanced an interesting (but unpublished) theory that one of the ironies surrounding Vindice is that he need not have killed at all; that the rivalries and hostilities among the members of the court would have led them to destroy each other anyway.
28. Nicholas Brooke has suggested that the shudder at Vindice and his society grows out of a "horrid laughter" peculiar to the drama of the Jacobean period. His study of this laughter is a good one, even if it does not take into enough account the horrid laughter present in earlier traditions as well. See Brooke's Horrid Laughter in Jacobean Tragedy (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1979), especially chap. 2.

31. The ineptitude of Middleton's handling of the skull in *The Witch* is one of several reasons for my reluctance to accept him as the author of *The Revenger's Tragedy*. It is hard to imagine anyone doing such a good job with a particular image in 1607 and such a wretched job two to eight years later.

32. I have used the Revels edition, ed. Anne Lancashire (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1978).

33. The Lady's ghost also wears a crucifix, displayed on a white dress rather than a black one. The contrast is interesting: white = correct usage; black = wrong usage. The ghost's crucifix is a sign of her spiritual state rather than an object that she venerates. But the Tyrant's kneeling before a crucifix indicates idolatry.


36. Drew-Bear notes that many cosmetics used by Elizabethan and Jacobean women were corrosives that caused foul breath and shriveled or spotted skin and that sometimes were used at full strength as poisons. She adds, "The increasing use of poisoned cosmetics in Jacobean tragedies also reflects the period's fascination with Italy as the center of both poisoning and cosmetics (the best ceruse came from Italy), as well as actual poisoning attempts like that on Overbury and the bizarre attempts to poison Queen Elizabeth and the Earl of Essex by anointing the pommel of her saddle and the arms of his chair" (89).


Chapter Eleven


4. As with all attempts at labeling, critics other than Huebert have made as good a case for calling this drama "mannerist" as he has made for "baroque."


7. Thomas Marc Parrott and Robert Hamilton Ball point out that Ford was not considered to be among the elite of the New Wave: "There is nothing to show that Ford was either a popular or an influential dramatist. His plays were not welcomed with a chorus of commendatory verses by fellow playwrights, nor were they in sufficient demand to warrant a reprinting." (A Short View of Elizabethan Drama [1943; rpt. New York: Scribner, 1958], 251.)


10. "Despair," for instance, is in Glapthorne's play more allied with the "strangeness" of the courtly love romance than with the theological despair of the moral allegory.


13. Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher, *Valentinian*, 5.1, 5.2, in *Dramatic Works*, 4 vols., ed. Fredson Bowers (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1966). The arithmetic in these two scenes is somewhat amiss. Aretus says that he has taken the poison "two hours before" the Emperor (5.1.4); but when he addresses the Emperor, he tells him, "Thou hast now / A short half hour, no more, and I ten minutes" (5.2.67-68). In actual playing time, the Emperor outlasts Aretus by twenty lines. (Note: All references to the Fletcher canon are to the Bowers edition, but I have modernized the spelling.)

14. One charge against our own early western and crime films was that they made death look too easy: a shot, a puff of dust from the victim's clothing, a spin, and a fall. Where, asked the prosecution, was the pain? How were our children to understand that killing hurts? Were we not promoting a callousness in the audience to the effects of violence? Obediently, film producers began showing those effects: the screams of anguish, the blood and froth of punctured lungs, slow-motion analysis of the progress of bullet or knife—and very shortly, we had a new cause of complaint: too much
violence, too much graphic bloodshed and pain. While the factions continue to argue, audiences continue to ignore them, and the violence remains popular in either form.


17. The scene in which Penius commits suicide in expiation of his martial sin (4.3) is a miniature art of secular dying: a debate over the correct instrument to use. First, Penius says that he will hang himself. Petillius objects, pointing out that hanging is a "dog's death, / An end for slaves" (134-35). Very well, then, says Penius, what about poison? No, replies Petillius, that is "the death of rats, and women, / Lovers, and lazy boys that fear correction" (139-40). They finally agree on the sword.

18. It is tempting to speculate on Coriolanus and Bonduca as answers to each other. But the dating of the two plays is too uncertain for any valid conclusions; Coriolanus has been dated anywhere from 1607 to 1610, and Bonduca from 1609 to 1625.

19. When I speak of "mental defectives," I do not refer to lunatics, who were barely considered human at the time, but rather to the minimally retarded, those who, like Bergetto in 'Tis Pity and the Ward in Women Beware Women, seem almost like children themselves.

20. STC 18024, p. 51. Interestingly enough, this passage comes directly after the conventional examination of how "good pagans" managed to live well without benefit of Revelation. The implication is that if even good pagans knew that "to be" was superior, Christians should certainly know better, and if they espouse "not to be," they are not just ignorant but "wicked."


23. Lupset, Dieyng Well, 279.


28. Of the three tetrameter couplets, the first recalls Nashe's "Brightness falls from the air" dirge in Summer's Last Will and Testament (283); the second, Shakespeare's "Fear no more the heat o' th' sun" lyric in Cymbeline (4.2.258–81); and the third, the Mutabilitie Cantos of Spenser's Faerie Queene.


30. Farr, John Ford and the Caroline Theatre (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1979), chap. 5.

31. Even Shirley, whom many scholars have claimed as a convert to Roman Catholicism, and who should therefore be expected to have a more favorable view of repentance (see esp. Stephen J. Radtke, James Shirley: His Catholic Philosophy of Life [Washington, D.C.: Catholic Univ. of America, 1962]), does not give repentance good publicity in The Traitor. When Amidea wounds herself to forestall the Duke's lustful advances (3.3), the Duke is so amazed at her virtue that he repents and determines to amend his life; but this repentance lasts only until the beginning of the next act, when Lorenzo suggests a new way for him to get at Amidea. Lorenzo himself pretends repentance for his sins, but only to save his own life and have a chance to take Sciarra's. Even Depazzi renounces his part in the plot only because he is afraid of capture, not because he thinks he is doing anything wrong. And the Duke's dying cry for more time in which to pray is simply the stalling device used by other villains of the time.

32. Eliot, Murder in the Cathedral, in Complete Poems and Plays, 1909–1950 (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1971), 196. Thomas à Beckett, here, has just made the same distinction between martyrdom and suicide that Chesterton makes in Orthodoxy: "A martyr is a man who cares so much for something outside him, that he forgets his own personal life. A suicide is a man who cares so little for anything outside him, that he wants to see the end of everything." (Orthodoxy [London: Bodley Head, 1908], 117.)

33. Huebert, John Ford, 57.

34. Herbert, "Death," in Lewalski and Sabol, 376. A recent article in Harper's describes a similar overreaction toward death-longing among the lunatic fringe of the modern hospice movement (Ron Rosenbaum, "Turn on, Tune in, Drop Dead," Harper's, July 1982, 32–42). The antihospice bias of Rosenbaum's discussion is evident in his use of terms like "drop-dead chic" and "death 'n' dying" (the latter term implying that the whole subject is mental junk food), and he seems to suggest that if we fight the idea of death hard enough, we will not die; but he does have some valuable points to make about the extremes to which people may go when they fall in love only with the trappings of an idea and lose sight of the context.

36. Huebert, *John Ford*, 66. Penthea has earlier asked her brother to kill her.

37. I cannot agree with critics such as Huebert and Parrish who see the Friar as an overlegalistic inhibitor of Giovanni’s natural passion; seventeenth-century audiences did not have our apparent tolerance of incest. Indeed, the whole of Fletcher’s *A King and No King* turns on the horrible dilemma of Arbaces’s passion for the woman who everyone thinks is his sister, and nowhere is there any hint that the situation is acceptable because love forgives all. Also, among Fletcher’s plays, Lelia’s wickedness in *The Captain* is seen at its apex when she propositions her father (4.4); and in *Cupid’s Revenge*, even the rake Leucippus is horrified when Bacha—once his mistress and now his stepmother—suggests that they resume their old dallying (3.3). In Massinger’s *The Bondman*, one of the signs of chaos ensuing from the slaves’ revolt is the incestuous flirtation between Corsica and her stepson (2.2). Audiences may have been fascinated by the subject, but they hardly seem to have condoned the act.

38. Guthrum, in Chesterton’s *Ballad of the White Horse*, uses this phrase just before he speaks of sending forth death in order to forget death (see my chapter 6): “But every flower, like a flower of the sea, / Smelleth with the salt of death” (*Collected Poems*, 230).

**Epilogue**


3. Ed. Elliott M. Hill (New York: Garland, 1979). I have modernized spelling and punctuation. At the risk of sounding like a typical “discorer” of a neglected play, I should like to suggest that *Nero* has both a balance of paradox and a certain quirkiness that might lend it to profitable revival—if not as a stage performance, since much of the action is static, then at least as a radio play.