

THE DRAMA OF  
JOHN MARSTON  
CRITICAL RE-VISIONS

EDITED BY

T. F. WHARTON



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CHAPTER I

*John Marston at the 'mart of woe': the 'Antonio' plays*

*Rick Bowers*

In their recent book on English drama, Shepherd and Womack link early modern theatrical competition to a struggle for 'product identity'.<sup>1</sup> Certainly, as argued by critics like Agnew, Bruster, and Shershow, theatre and marketplace materially interanimated each other in the period.<sup>2</sup> Marston, however, seems to be the only dramatist self-conscious enough to realize that his drama competes in a 'mart' of reflexive professional play. Indeed, the *OED* defines the term 'mart' broadly as 'a city, region, or locality where things are bought or sold', quoting as figurative first use Marston's line near the end of *Antonio's Revenge*: 'Farewell, mart of woe' (iv.iii.177). The play involves spectacular celebration of revenge possibilities where recompense is made abruptly, horribly, ridiculously convenient, where – to quote one of the last lines of the play – 'Never more woe in lesser plot was found' (v.vi.59). I agree with Jonathan Dollimore that Marston's drama is 'Radical', but the serious philosophical intention that Dollimore attributes to the playwright seems to operate in an 'irony-free' zone.<sup>3</sup> And Marston is nothing if not ironic (although other attributes – importunate, outrageous, and gleefully intertextual – also spring to mind). In fact, to take Marston seriously is to understand that his thrust is basically sensational, not moral; a matter of contemporary theatrical and popular culture, not ethical consistency excavated from the classics.

The energies of *Antonio's Revenge* are not to be appreciated in considerations of causal plot structure or moral stance. Rather, the play aims at emotional involvement veering ever towards over-the-top absurdity. Balance and caution are rejected in favour of a delectably excruciating revenge, as signalled in Marston's earlier, more conventional, application in *The Scourge of Villanie* II: 'Hence idle *Cave*, vengeance pricks me on, / When mart is made of faire religion' (72–3). Like Christ, who snapped at the intolerable sight of

money changers in the temple, the revenger too must drive out the miscreants. But unlike the exercise of justice (divine or earthly), revenge – like theatre – must above all be *enjoyed* in a space created by parody that simultaneously inflates and deflates possibilities. All stances are understood to be slippery histrionic stances. Attempts at impartiality are renounced in favour of sensational emotional involvement where each moment is bounded only by itself in relation to its self-conscious representation. And repetition is joyfully pervasive. Like shopping at present-day K- or Wal-Marts, or Asda superstores, any transaction itself is less important than its convenient, self-serving, histrionic presentation.

But even sensitive critics of John Marston's drama tend to avoid *Antonio's Revenge*. Such avoidance, perhaps, enhances their reputation for sensitivity. The play itself is anything but sensitive. Rude, crude, and theatrically unglued (and the play is credited with first use of the metaphorical term 'unglued' at iv.ii.45<sup>4</sup>), *Antonio's Revenge* constantly overleaps boundaries of convention, expectation, taste. Such excessiveness is seen especially in the play's eccentric and overstated sense of language and action. Consider the very opening; the picturesque stage direction reads:

*Enter PIERO unbraced, his arms bare, smeared in blood, a poniard in one hand, bloody, and a torch in the other, STROTZO following him with a cord.*

Piero, the bloody, homicidal villain of the piece, outside of his daughter Mellida's bedroom at 2:00 a.m., maniacally and imperatively crows in triumph as follows:

Ho, Gaspar Strotzo, bind Feliche's trunk  
Unto the panting side of Mellida.  
'Tis yet dead night; yet all the earth is clutched  
In the dull leaden hand of snoring sleep;  
No breath disturbs the quiet of the air,  
No spirit moves upon the breast of earth,  
Save howling dogs, nightcrows, and screeching owls,  
Save meager ghosts, Piero, and black thoughts. (i.i.1–8)

Granted, the speaker of these lines is insane. He physically implicates his own daughter in fornication in order to further his own vengeful agenda. Such action makes perfect sense to him, as it does in the play itself, a play that deconstructs notions of sanity and society and the conventional cause-and-effect relationships that purport to hold a society together. *Antonio's Revenge* pitches itself at sane expectations

of interaction purposely to dislocate social and political comforts. And it does it all through an unremitting theatrical self-consciousness, a stylized sense of presentation that explodes consistent morality to retail revenge in all its mimetic ridiculousness.

Mark Thornton Burnett cites performance and anthropological critics in his shrewd observation: 'Marston experiments with performative styles to demonstrate the effect on individuals of a repressive society in which the use of language is strictly regulated.'<sup>5</sup> Presumably Marston's fellow student at the Middle Temple, John Manningham, noted the same tendency in Marston as he set down the following anecdotal entry in his diary for 21 November 1602:

Jo. Marstone the last Christmas when he daunct with Alderman Mores wifes daughter, a Spaniard borne, fell into a strang commendacion of her witt and beauty. When he had done, shee thought to pay him home, and told him she though[t] he was a poet. ' 'Tis true,' said he, 'for poetes fayne, and lye, and soe dyd I when I commended your beauty, for you are exceeding foule.'<sup>6</sup>

The anecdote clearly relates the obverse of fashioning an acceptable self. Rather, the figure of Marston in the story fashions an unacceptable self that both revels in and insists on the shocked attention that it accrues. And language is used with all the retributive power of a blunt instrument. To be at the centre of such retailed gossip, Marston either actually *did* insult the young woman as described or was eminently capable of doing so. In fact, the anecdote reads like an urban myth. The warning is implicit but nonetheless clear: beware of this funny, sarcastic bastard. Calculated to offend, his is an ironic, vituperative performance style that disregards restraint even in the most innocuous of situations.

Critics commonly make reference to the Cambridge frolic *The Return from Parnassus, Part 2* to identify Marston's satirical technique in terms of his well-known nom de plume: 'What, *Monsieur Kinsayder*, lifting up your legge and pissing against the world.'<sup>7</sup> But the terms immediately following strike me as more significant. Marston is referred to as a 'Ruffian' (269), 'royster doyster' (272), '*Aretine*' (278): 'Cutts, thrusts, and foines at whomesoever he meets, / . . . And at first volly of his Cannon shot / Batters the walles of the old fustie world' (273–84). Aggressive, offensive, daring, risqué, even avant-garde, Marston is set apart from all the other contemporary poets described in *Parnassus* by virtue of the fact that no positive classical references are made in relation to him. Aretine

and comic pornography, explosive rhetoric, vituperation, and disgust – such relations clearly and vigorously set Marston apart from his contemporaries.

This is not to follow Samuel Schoenbaum's biographical identification of Marston with the malcontented figures in his plays. Schoenbaum described Marston as some sort of maladjusted neurotic with a penchant for violence.<sup>8</sup> Of course Ben Jonson, capable himself of extreme behaviour, seems to have seen Marston in much the same way, judging by his mention years later in conversation with Drummond of Hawthornden that he 'had many quarrells with Marston beat him and took his Pistol from him' (*Works* I, 140). Jonson knew Marston personally, had been officially indicted with him over the excesses of their *Eastward Ho* collaboration, and was in direct competition with him for the entertainment penny of London playgoers. Such familiarity might well have bred Jonson's contempt. Besides, Marston's extreme pitch of dramatic situation within his plays, relentless linguistic faddishness, and crazed disregard for appropriate tonal balance, seems calculated to put conservative critics – Jonson among them – on edge, if not disturbingly off balance. But it is his critics, *not* Marston, who are off balance. Marston's drama amorally undermines, theatrically mocks, and constantly 'batters the walles of the old fustie world' of conventional expectations. He is the theatrical bad boy of his time, assuming his audience to be familiar and interactive with contemporary popular theatre, and using a variety of ironic techniques successfully to surprise, entertain, and emotionally unsettle that audience.

Jonathan Dollimore grants pride of place to *Antonio's Revenge* as a capital *R* 'Radical Tragedy' in his book of the same name because of the play's insistent breakdown of coherent human subjectivity and displacement of comfortable providentialism. Again and again, through linguistic outrageousness, musical surprise, Senecan quips, and extremely contrived dramatic situations, figures in the play call attention to their artifice. They regularly step outside their roles to comment on the action of the play, make comments totally inappropriate to the action involved, or disavow any sense of human rationality or social connectedness. In doing this, they connect most outrageously with the audience itself which is enlisted within the terms of the artifice. Marston's theatrical production represents the product itself. Consider Piero, as product, roaring centre-stage with one eye on the audience in self-conscious realization:

The bulk of man's as dark as Erebus,  
 No branch of reason's light hangs in his trunk;  
 There lives no reason to keep league withal,  
 I ha' no reason to be reasonable. (i.iv.25–8)

His thematic opposite, Pandulpho, the ostensible voice of Stoic endurance in the play, likewise 'sees the light' of his situation and is even more self-referential:

Man will break out, despite philosophy.  
 Why, all this while I ha' but played a part,  
 Like to some boy that acts a tragedy,  
 Speaks burly words and raves out passion;  
 But when he thinks upon his infant weakness,  
 He droops his eye. (iv.v.46–51)

According to G. K. Hunter, 'all the events in the play are equally surprising; . . . and the conclusion completes nothing but the thematic picture of a world of Hobbesian individualism'.<sup>9</sup> I would suggest, however, that the 'world' of Marston's play has more in common with the asserted display of Pirandello, Brecht, or Artaud. The speakers of Pandulpho's and Piero's lines really *are* boys playing dramatic parts. In his famous *Philological Quarterly* essay, R. A. Foakes called the situation 'fantastical'. I would agree and add that it is capital *T* 'theatrical'.<sup>10</sup>

And yet, critics still try to find the answer to Marston's drama as residing somewhere within conventional rhetoric, theology, or philosophy. In 'Stoicism and Revenge in Marston', G. D. Aggeler focuses on classical and biblical antecedents to read *Antonio's Revenge* as an ethical attempt to reconcile the duty of vengeance with lived morality through Stoicism. In Aggeler's reading, 'Pandulpho demonstrates his mastery over his own emotions by laughing at the murder of his son, Feliche.'<sup>11</sup> But Pandulpho not only laughs: he laughs and laughs and laughs. Three times within fifty lines in Act 1, scene v, Pandulpho is given the line 'Ha, ha, ha', echoing and exceeding in unglued passion the intolerable frustration of Titus Andronicus. Marston signals parodic excess in a key of maniacal declamation, as when Antonio, a copy of Seneca's *De Providentia* in hand (like Hieronimo and Hamlet, Antonio loves books), reads the Latin lines, scoffs venomously in reaction, and then throws himself to the ground groaning,

Behold a prostrate wretch laid on his tomb:  
His epitaph thus: *Ne plus ultra*. Ho!  
Let none out-woe me, mine's Herculean woe. (II.iii.131–3)

*Ne plus ultra* may well have been the motto alleged to have been inscribed on the Pillars of Hercules. In the theatre, however, one hears something quite different as in the blaring reflexivity of Pandulpho's protest:

Wouldst have me cry, run raving up and down  
For my son's loss? Wouldst have me turn rank mad,  
Or wring my face with mimic action,  
Stamp, curse, weep, rage, and then my bosom strike?  
Away, 'tis apish action, player-like. (I.v.76–80)

This is less a matter of neo-Stoicism than it is of frantic theatrical self-realization wherein the audience once again shares the irony of complicit theatrical understanding. To reach back through Seneca and Stoicism for Marston's resonances is to de-emphasize his more immediate sense of loud theatricalism and self-conscious parody.

In his full-length monograph on Marston's drama, George Geckle seeks to exonerate *Antonio's Revenge* from all traces of parodic absurdity by studiously linking its many parallelisms in *Thyestes*. But such a strategy satisfies only academic and readerly approaches; *Antonio's Revenge* operates more expressly within theatre and performance. Geckle's linkage traces what he considers to be Marston's ethical conclusion of 'woe' through a tradition that leads from Aristotle to J. V. Cunningham via the fourth-century grammarians Donatus, Evanthius, and Diomedes, as well as Sidney, Minturno, Cinthio, Castelvetro, Mazzoni, and Tasso – critics whom Marston 'may also have read'.<sup>12</sup> But Marston does not 'read' in such systematic and scholarly ways. Instead, he filches, twists, shouts, improvises, and parodies in a constant search for *dramatic* effect. His time signatures are not classical: they are immediate, disjointed, sensational. His characters have more in common with jugglers, clowns, dancers, and automatic mimes than they do with classical rhetoric. Classical rhetoric is used as *background* for sight gags. In 'Marston, Calvinism, and Satire', Scott Colley forces a conventional Protestantism too much, but is accurate in his observation that 'we can never hope to account for the full range of Marston's oddities by positing one simple or final cause'.<sup>13</sup> I would argue that Marston's 'oddities' be considered as theatrical assertions.

From the first, Marston is interested in local theatrical effect, in comic inflation/deflation, in absurd and discontinuous action critically self-conscious of the very genre of revenge. *The Spanish Tragedy*, *Hamlet*, *Titus Andronicus*, *Richard III*, *Thyestes* – Marston entangles all of them and more with intertextual wit and sophistication, verbal pyrotechnics, and entertaining stage action. The tone is set in the Pirandello-like Induction to *Antonio and Mellida*, actually part one of *Antonio's Revenge*, where the child actor playing Antonio frets about his ability to double as an Amazon, and is set straight summarily in Kydian terms on the duplicity of human nature: 'Not play two parts in one? Away, away; 'tis common fashion. Nay, if you cannot bear two subtle fronts under one hood, idiot go by, go by, off this world's stage!' (77–9). Boas long ago noted Hieronimo's phrase 'go by, go by' as contemporary theatrical parody: 'quoted over and over again as the stock phrase to imply impatience of anything disagreeable, inconvenient, or old-fashioned'.<sup>14</sup> Thus Piero's abrupt and newly fashioned opening entry in *Antonio's Revenge* (quoted above) – '*unbraced, his arms bare, smeared in blood, a poniard in one hand, bloody, and a torch in the other*' – is less an emblematic stage direction in the Senecan/Kydian mode than it is an outrageous attention-grabbing effect that explodes with irony (not to mention a Richard III-type exclamation) as Piero contemplates the availability of Antonio's newly widowed mother and exclaims:

By this warm reeking gore, I'll marry her.  
 Look I not now like an enamorate?  
 Poison the father, butcher the son, and marry the mother – ha!

(1.i.102–4)

This from the villainous figure whose moral awareness itself is farcically shallow. Piero, having murdered Pandulpho's son, feels a twinge of guilt in Pandulpho's presence and remarks matter-of-factly: 'Fore heaven he makes me shrug; would 'a were dead' (II.ii.26). Piero even gleefully manipulates his henchman Strotzo into a theatrical confession of all the killings, promising to exonerate him publicly at the last. The two of them take real pleasure in the contrived enormity of the effect they will create – elaborating on the emotion of their rhetoric, the duplicities of their presentation, and the seeming sincerity of Piero's magnanimous forgiveness – only to have Piero actually indulge in the sadistic pleasure of strangling Strotzo in front of all assembled upon receipt of the confession.

Conventional expectations are constantly undercut, as when Antonio, agitated by Pandulpho along with the ghosts of his father and Feliche, vows finally and emotively, 'Fright me no more; I'll suck red vengeance / Out of Piero's wounds, Piero's wounds' (III.ii.78-9). And Piero immediately enters '*in his nightgown and nightcap*', a touchingly ironic and harmless picture of concerned parenthood.

Antonio, out to revenge the death of his father, overshoots such domesticity in his grotesque and ritualistic killing of Piero's little son Julio. Revenge authority Fredson Bowers codified the scene as 'a purely gratuitous piece of business brought in merely to make the audience shudder'.<sup>15</sup> But the resonances of the scene run deeply through the monstrous irrationality of blood feud and human sacrifice as argued by René Girard in his study of *Violence and the Sacred*.<sup>16</sup> Extremity breeds extremes. Associations around consanguine terms such as 'brother', 'father', and 'sister' sung from the mouth of the innocent Julio only further enrage Antonio and compel his vengeance. In fact the scene retains, even stresses, overstated theatrical imperatives, as when Antonio, having just murdered Julio, responds to a significant and scripted groan '*from under the stage*' (III.iii.50) as follows:

Lo, thus I heave my blood-dyed hands to heaven,  
Even like insatiate hell, still crying; 'More!  
My heart hath thirsting dropsies after gore.' (67-9)

The paradoxical construction and stressed rhyme of the last few lines compresses and contains the whole overstated nature of the play in little: 'heaven, / Even like insatiate hell', and 'More / gore'. Ethical applications are de-emphasized in favour of theatrical extremities. And Marston's drama is especially successful in extremities.

As if to accent and disperse the excruciating theatricality of the preceding scene, Balurdo enters '*with a bass viol*' (III.iv.16) intent on serenading Maria on behalf of Piero. The pun is implicit visually and aurally: a 'bass viol'/base vile is neither a solo nor a romantic instrument. Neither is a beat of Marston's satire. But it certainly is contrived, self-conscious and visually stressed, as the child actor handles the oversized musical instrument. This is the same Balurdo who entered Act II '*with a beard half off, half on*' (II.i.20), accentuating his detached artifice. Indeed, in the middle of *Antonio and Mellida*, Balurdo enters '*backward, DILDO following him with a looking glass in one*

*hand and a candle in the other hand* (III.ii.118), suggesting the misdirection and well-lit ludicrousness of this comic figure from the very first. And at this point in *Antonio's Revenge*, Balurdo attracts further attention, as he very politely, in his own ridiculous words, makes a 'most retort and obtuse leg' (III.iv.19) to Maria.

Balurdo's stressed and repeated fascination with the phrase 'most retort and obtuse' has become a comic gag line, a recognizable *lazzo* that occurs throughout the play, even to the point of capping the outrageous assassination of Piero in Act v. During the obligatory masque, the revengers dance and whisper conspiratorially until suddenly Piero is bound to a chair, his tongue is plucked out, and a Thyestean/Titus Andronican dish of roast child is served up to him along with Antonio's arch comment: 'Here's flesh and blood which I am sure thou lovest' (v.v.49). Pathetically, the speechless Piero '*seems to condole his son*' (49); maniacally, the revengers fall over each other in Marston's stage direction: '*They offer to run all at PIERO and on a sudden stop*' (73). The revengers blurt their vilification at Piero: Antonio calls him, 'Scum of the mud of hell!'; Alberto: 'Slime of all filth!'; Maria contributes, 'Thou most detested toad' (v.v.65–6). And Balurdo is given the laughable last word, 'Thou most retort and obtuse rascal!' (67). Then, after three delectably retributive stabbings, '*They run all at PIERO with their rapiers*' (79).

Exclamatory, reckless, extreme, and disconnected – the language and action of the play moves quickly and with a self-aware sense of stylized improvisation. Herein the play's 'wholesale repetitiveness', of which T. F. Wharton once complained in *Essays in Criticism*,<sup>17</sup> asserts itself as a standard comic technique. Everything within the play is bounded self-consciously by performance. The first word of the revenge is given to Antonio in terms of drama: 'Let's think a plot; then pell-mell vengeance!' (IV.v.95). What better 'plot' than 'pell-mell vengeance'? Antonio even enjoys his initial stabbing of Piero with the rhetorical intensifier, 'Now, pell-mell!' (v.v.76). In each case a note of reckless disorder is unmistakable, as in Antonio's disconnected imperative just prior to the murder of Julio: 'Have at adventure, pell-mell, no reverse' (III.iii.24). The blustering popular slang term 'pell-mell' seems to cover all possibilities at the same time as it suggests the indiscriminate nature of the action. And yet, the characters of the play try always to assert the finest of discriminations. In this, and in their comic repetitions, lies much of the ridiculousness and conscious parody of *Antonio's Revenge*. Piero, in

fact, is first to use the term 'pell-mell' in the play, and he is especially stage-conscious as he spouts residual classical terms from *The Spanish Tragedy*:

O now *Tragedia Cothurnata* mounts;  
Piero's thoughts are fixed on dire exploits;  
Pell-mell! (II.v.45-7)

Even Richard III prefixed his last oration in similar terms: 'March on. Join bravely! Let us to it pell-mell – / If not to Heaven, then hand in hand to hell!' (v.iii.313-14). The pell-mell play of *Antonio's Revenge* follows hard in rigorous and overstated theatricality, a theatricality of absurd commotion that unsettles dramatic conventions and de-centres moral certainties.

Every theatrical revenger must somehow disguise himself, or otherwise evade responsibility, to face a corrupt and intolerable world. Antonio presents one of the most extreme strategies, as noted by the stage direction that begins Act IV: '*Enter ANTONIO in a fool's habit, with a little toy of a walnut shell and soap to make bubbles.*' His mimetic childishness plays to the metadramatic situation of the boy players involved. His costume and props visually shout his disposition. And Antonio shouts it too in determined ironic resolve: 'He is not wise that strives not to seem fool' (IV.i.25). But then Balurdo promised the same absurd function from the very first, significantly capping a discussion of performance art in the Induction to *Antonio and Mellida* as follows:

GALEATZO. [To Balurdo] Well, and what dost thou play?  
BALURDO. The part of all the world.  
ALBERTO. 'The part of all the world.' What's that?  
BALURDO. The fool. (28-31)

Moreover, in *Antonio's Revenge* nobody outpasses the 'foolish' principal. Pandulpho declares himself 'the miserablest soul that breathes' (IV.v.53), and Antonio – characteristically prostrate in grief (a repeated physical gag) – '*starts up*' (53) to set Pandulpho straight in lines of rhyme that draw attention to their artifice:

I scorn't that any wretched should survive  
Outmounting me in that superlative,  
Most miserable, most unmatched in woe.  
Who dare assume that, but Antonio? (IV.v.55-8)

Passion is asserted at the same time as it is undercut. Pandulpho began the scene with the curiously ambiguous line 'Antonio, kiss my

foot' (iv.v.1) as he laid the body of his dead son literally upon the body of Antonio. The revengers themselves inter Pandulpho's son through the helpful stage direction: '*They strike the stage with their daggers and the grave openeth*' (iv.v.64), going well beyond Hieronimo's lonely action in *The Spanish Tragedy*: '*He diggeth with his dagger*' (iii.xiii.71). Moreover Antonio, in excessive Kydian passion, bellows '*Vindicta!*', only to be undercut immediately by Balurdo's pathetic poor Tom-ish interjection, '*I am a-cold*' (v.iii.42).

Vengeance – collectively, sadistically, theatrically – perpetrated, Piero's body does not even have time to get cold before a hitherto unmentioned body of Senators enters officially to thank Antonio and his revengers for their act of revenge. This might best be considered as resolution *ex machina*. The first Senator even gestures towards the revengers' performance in Brechtian estrangement, calling them '*Well-seasoned props*' (v.vi.25).<sup>18</sup> As such, the revengers operate figuratively as redressive structural underpinnings but also practically as the very self-referential material of the drama itself. And, true to the theatrical nature of their enterprise, Antonio and his group merely adopt another role: monastic resignation, with all of its ironic moral resonance. Finally, a telling stage direction: '*The curtains are drawn; PIERO departeth*' (v.vi.36). Doubtless the virtuoso actor, who ranted and raved in the oversized part of Piero, exits under cover then returns to perform with Antonio and the others in the concluding scripted direction of the play: once again, as throughout, '*They sing.*'

The power of *Antonio's Revenge* is realized not through contested points of origin, presumed sources, or figurative ethical stances. I doubt that any audience ever made hagiographic connections between Antonio the revenger and Anthony the saint.<sup>19</sup> Nor do I believe that the play is an attempt to correct the amorality of the revenge genre by exposing Antonio's essential villainy.<sup>20</sup> If the play exposes anything essential about Antonio, it exposes throughout his essential theatricality and self-consciousness of representation. Indeed, as a revenge musical the play has more in common with stage strategies of Brechtian alienation and the Theatre of the Absurd than it does with excavations of classical thought and assertions of ethical consistency. Herein moral resolution is a scholarly afterthought; thematic consistency is a joke. The admittedly outrageous energies of the play are parodic, melodramatic, and satirical. And they are to be enjoyed as such. Even Marston's

thematic preoccupation with vomit has less to do with Juvenalian satire than it does with local, repeated, visceral and theatrical effect. And the overall effect of *Antonio's Revenge* is to provide a theatrically convenient 'mart' in which to perform a theatrically excessive 'woe'. Marston himself promised nothing more. And doubtless his audience – involved within the theatrical ironies, parodic effects, and energetic actions – expected nothing less.

## NOTES

- 1 Simon Shepherd and Peter Womack, *English Drama: A Cultural History* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), p. 63.
- 2 See Jean-Christophe Agnew, *Worlds Apart: The Market and the Theatre in Anglo-American Thought, 1550–1750* (Cambridge University Press, 1986); Douglas Bruster, *Drama and the Market in the Age of Shakespeare* (Cambridge University Press, 1992); and Scott Cutler Shershow, 'Idols of the Marketplace: Rethinking the Economic Determination of Renaissance Drama', *Renaissance Drama* 26 (1995), 1–27.
- 3 Jonathan Dollimore, *Radical Tragedy: Religion, Ideology and Power in the Drama of Shakespeare and his Contemporaries* (Brighton and Chicago: Harvester Press and Chicago University Press, 1984).
- 4 See Gair's note, p. 126; see also Appendix B, which lists and details Marston's use of words in *Antonio's Revenge*.
- 5 Mark Thornton Burnett, '“I will not swell like a tragedian”': Marston's *Antonio's Revenge* in Performance', *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 90 (1989), 311–20; p. 319.
- 6 Robert Parker Sorlien (ed.), *The Diary of John Manningham of the Middle Temple, 1602–1603* (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1976), p. 133.
- 7 I quote from J. B. Leishman's edition of *The Three Parnassus Plays*, pp. 241, 242, silently regularizing all *i/j* and *u/v* reversals.
- 8 Samuel Schoenbaum, 'The Precarious Balance of John Marston', *PMLA* 67 (1952), 1069–78.
- 9 G. K. Hunter, 'English Folly and Italian Vice', in John Russell Brown and Bernard Harris (eds.), *Jacobean Theatre* (London: Edward Arnold, 1960), p. 91.
- 10 My debt to Foakes's essay, 'John Marston's Fantastical Plays: *Antonio and Mellida* and *Antonio's Revenge*', *Philological Quarterly* 41 (1962), 229–39, will be apparent throughout. Marston himself referred to his technique as 'seriously fantastical' in his dedication to 'the most honorably renowned Nobody' in *Antonio and Mellida*. I would add a further 'fantastical' linkage within Marston's drama. In *What You Will* the character Quadratus expatiates upon contemporary poetry, valorizing the fantastical as follows:

fantasticness,  
 That which the natural sophisters term  
*Phantasia incomplexa*, is a function  
 Even of the bright immortal part of man . . .  
 By it we shape a new creation  
 Of things as yet unborn, by it we feed  
 Our ravenous memory, our [invention] feast:  
 'Slid, he that's not fantastical's a beast.

And Lampatho deflates him immediately with a Marston-like rejoinder: 'Most fantastical protection of fantasticness' (II.i.586–600).

- 11 G. D. Aggeler, 'Stoicism and Revenge in Marston', *English Studies* 51 (1970), 507–17; 509.
- 12 George Geckle, *John Marston's Drama: Themes, Images, Sources* (London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1980), p. 92.
- 13 Scott Colley, 'Marston, Calvinism, and Satire', *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England* 1 (1984), 85–96; 95.
- 14 F. S. Boas (ed.), *The Works of Thomas Kyd* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1901), p. 406, n. 31.
- 15 Fredson T. Bowers, *Elizabethan Revenge Tragedy 1587–1642* (Princeton University Press, 1940), p. 123.
- 16 Trans. Patrick Gregory (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977).
- 17 Wharton's piece capped off a notable controversy. In the early seventies, *Essays in Criticism* featured a 'Critical Forum' exchange about parody in English Renaissance drama. Richard Levin ('*The New Inn* and the Proliferation of Good Bad Drama', 22 (1972), 41–7) was countered in the same volume by R. A. Foakes ('Mr Levin and Good Bad Drama', 327–31), followed by Levin's reply ('The Proof of the Parody', 24 (1974), 312–17) and Wharton's article ('Old Marston or New Marston: the *Antonio Plays*', 25 (1975), 357–69). All parties, however, ended up focusing on Marston's dramaturgy, a point which must say something in itself about the power of irony, parody, and flexibility of interpretation in Marston's plays.
- 18 This meaning of the word 'property' is not recorded in the *OED* before 1685.
- 19 See Cynthia Lewis, '"Wise Men, Folly Fall'n": Characters Named Antonio in English Renaissance Drama', *Renaissance Drama* 20 (1989), 197–236.
- 20 See Philip J. Ayres, 'Marston's *Antonio's Revenge*: the Morality of the Revenging Hero', *Studies in English Literature* 12 (1972), 359–74; also Barbara J. Baines, '*Antonio's Revenge*: Marston's Play on Revenge Plays', *SEL* 23 (1983), 277–94.