

SHAKESPEARE AND SENECA TRAGEDY

Shakespeare's tragic characters have often been seen as forerunners of modern personhood. It has been assumed that Shakespeare was able to invent such lifelike figures in part because of his freedom from the restrictions of classical form. Curtis Perry instead argues that characters such as Hamlet and King Lear have seemed modern to us in part because they are so robustly connected to the tradition of Senecan tragedy. Resituating Shakespearean tragedy in this way – as backward looking as well as forward looking – makes it possible to recover a crucial political dimension. Shakespeare saw Seneca as a representative voice from post-republican Rome: in plays such as *Coriolanus* and *Othello* he uses Senecan modes of characterization to explore questions of identity in relation to failures of republican community. This study has important implications for the way we understand character, community, and alterity in early modern drama.

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Note on Texts

When quoting from unedited early modern texts, I have silently modernized i/j and u/v, including in titles. In some cases, I have consulted copies of early modern books in the University of Illinois Rare Book and Manuscript Library, but in most cases I have consulted the copies of early modern books available online via the *Early English Books Online* database (<https://search.proquest.com/eebo/index>).

References to the OED are drawn from the online version of the *Oxford English Dictionary*: www.oed.com/.

Unless otherwise noted, all quotations and references to Shakespeare's texts come from the second edition of *The Oxford Shakespeare: The Complete Works* (Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor, *et al.* eds., [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005]). Citations referring to this text will be given parenthetically throughout.

For the Roman writers I engage with throughout this book – Seneca, of course, but also Cicero, Ovid, and Virgil, I use both the Latin text and the English translation from the following Loeb Classical Library volumes unless otherwise noted, and citations will be given parenthetically:

- Cicero, *De Officiis*, trans., Walter Miller, Loeb Classical Library 30 (1913, rpt. edition, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005).
 Ovid, *Heroides. Amores*, trans., Grant Showerman, rev. G. P. Goold, Loeb Classical Library 41 (2nd edition, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977).
 Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 2 vols., trans., Frank Justus Miller, rev. G. P. Goold, Loeb Classical Library 42&43 (rev. editions, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977, 2004).
 Ovid, *Tristia. Ex Ponto*, trans., A. L. Wheeler, rev. G. P. Goold, Loeb Classical Library 151 (rev. edition, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996).
 Seneca, *Epistles*, trans., Richard M. Gummere, 3 vols., Loeb Classical Library 75–77 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1917–1925).
 Seneca, *Moral Essays*, trans., John W. Basore, 3 vols., Loeb Classical Library 214, 254, 310 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1928–1935).

- Seneca, *Natural Questions*, trans., Thomas H. Corcoran, 2 vols., Loeb Classical Library 450, 457 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971–1972).
Seneca, *Tragedies*, ed. and trans., John G. Fitch, 2 vols., Loeb Classical Library 62, 78 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002–2004).
Virgil, *Eclogues. Georgics. Aeneid: Books 1–6*, trans., H. Rushton Fairclough, Loeb Classical Library 63 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1916).
Virgil, *Aeneid: Books 7–12. Appendix Vergiliana*, trans., H. Rushton Fairclough, Loeb Classical Library 64 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1918).