broad definitions of Mannerism for the composers working in Avignon and similar courts during the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries? Like their Italian counterparts two centuries later, these Mannerists concentrated upon secular music, working with genres, forms, contrapuntal styles, and concepts of dissonance that had been perfected by their mid-fourteenth century predecessors. Their self-conscious experiments with notation and rhythmic complexities, their daring forays into hitherto unknown harmonic realms and their attempts to create individualistic styles marked them as being Mannerists, even if their contemporary theorists might not have dwelt upon that theme in their writings. This earlier manifestation of Mannerism had one interesting link with the later one, for Francesco Petrarca, whose lyrics inspired so many Mannerist composers in the sixteenth century, hovered around Avignon for years, repelled by it and yet unable to abandon it.

The bibliography is simply superb, including fifty-three pages of primary sources in addition to the extensive listing of secondary sources. The printing of the book is pleasing and the engraving of the musical examples exquisite. The two indices (names and titles) are certainly helpful, but for some unknown reason there is no subject index. Consequently, since the Council of Trent was neither a work nor an author it is listed in neither index. It is also unfortunate that the publisher did not furnish footnotes instead of the troublesome end-notes, particularly since the author has relegated to these notes lengthy translations of excellent quality (tending to be more literal than poetic), important titles and dates, and interesting digressions. The reader is forced to turn several hundred pages every twenty seconds in order to obtain this important information.

It is refreshing to read a major study in which the world of music is viewed in terms of a single theme (Mannerism), for this approach forces us to consider new and important questions, to reevaluate well-known compositions, to read the treatises in a new way, and to make new connections between the Italian madrigalists and theorists. Professor Maniates can rest assured that, though not an easy one to read, this study will stand as one of the classics of our discipline for years to come.

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Charles A. Hallett and Elaine S. Hallett. *The Revenger's Madness: A Study of Revenge Tragedy Motifs*. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska 1980. Pp. xii, 349. \$21.50 (U.S.).

The thesis of *The Revenger's Madness* is strong, original, well sustained. It argues that the way to understand the continuing power of Elizabethan revenge tragedy through three generations of playwrights and indeed (in *Hamlet*) through almost four centuries of alert response in theatre and study, is not discovered by debate on the rights and wrongs of revenge in theological, legal, or moral terms, but by a close examination of the theatrical experience whereby the audience enters into the mind of

the revenger, entertains the impulse of revenge, acts upon it, and undergoes the consequences. From this perspective, the familiar conventions of revenge plays – the ghost, the madness of the avenger, his delay, the play-within-the-play, the multiple murders, the death of the avenger – will be seen not as arbitrary though effective theatrical contrivances but as a cluster of dramatic elements cohering and mutually supporting one another as the act of revenge is fully realized. If the working of justice must be seen as a rational legal system within the will and providence of a just God, the impulse and the act of private revenge (no matter what the provocation) must on the contrary seem an irrational act that can occur only when inordinate passion overthrows reason. What better device could be contrived by a dramatist to startle both protagonist and audience out of habitual rationality than to figure the call to revenge in the uncanny apparition of a ghost? The eerie tempter and the growing pressure of unreasoning vengefulness break down the pales and forts of reason and so isolate the avenger in a world of his own that a play-within-the-play becomes the dramatically appropriate device to draw the audience into sharing the experience of the protagonist. And, since revenge itself is always an act of excess and a destruction of the moral character, it is likewise appropriate that the revenge play should end in an excess of deaths, including that of the revenger.

In the opening pages of the book I was afraid that the argument might be lost through inexactitude of terminology. Revenge, on four consecutive pages, is called an “emotion,” a “passion,” an “urge,” and a “course of action”; only later on is it termed a “motion of the heart” and a distinction drawn between vengeful thoughts and an act of revenge. A paragraph devoted to Hamlet’s “grief” would have been the stronger if the more generalized sense of the word in Shakespeare’s time (distress, perturbation of mind) were admitted: his mother’s marriage is as much a “grief” to Hamlet as his father’s death. However, these confusions prove minor as the argument unfolds.

The main line of the argument – the psychological and dramatic coherence of the motifs of revenge tragedy – is the main contribution of the book to criticism: likely, I think, to be a permanent one. I should not end the review without singling out some more specific passages for comment.

Concerning the treatment of *The Spanish Tragedy* I have some reservations about details. Don Andrea is naturally a bitterly disappointed ghost, despoiled of life and youth and hope and the love of Bel-Imperia, but he did die in battle and was not “cruelly murdered”; and if *The Spanish Tragedy* is a “five-act tragedy,” I would be most interested to see the lost fifth act. The concluding remarks on the play, concerning a form of dramatic irony in which the audience not only knows more than the protagonist but learns more, are admirable, especially this:

Although Hieronimo’s play-world contained a high degree of illusion, it has the effect of exposing the communal fantasy and bringing the community (at least temporarily) into closer alignment with the ideal. The revenger, in his passion to do justice, exceeds the mark by such an extent that the act of retribution, in its grotesqueness more than in its justice, serves as the impetus to reawaken the community to a new sense of the urgency for order. (160)

Marston explicitly links revenge with excess in the speech of the ghost: his interest is in the psychology of revenge, not its morality. This is well observed, but we might

pause to remember that *Antonio's Revenge* comes very early in Marston's career and that in this case the dramatist may have been the one to learn from the imaginative experience of revenge, since the morality of *The Malcontent* and *The Fawn* cannot be faulted.

From the discussion of *Hamlet* I take only the question of Ophelia's madness. G.B. Harrison is quoted as saying, "let the poor girl go mad; we always have a mad scene in a Revenge Play." The authors counter this by arguing that it is the revenger's madness that is obligatory, others are only incidental; that Ophelia's madness is static whereas the revenger's evolves with, and as, the action of the play; that Ophelia's mind is totally gone but the revenger's remains capable of ordering a world. This distinction strikes me as quite conclusive.

The "purest" revenge tragedy is undoubtedly *The Revenger's Tragedy*, and here the authors make an initial point of high value:

In an extremely subtle study of the revenger's psyche, he makes the world of the play itself a projection of the maddened mind of Vindice. So successful has he been in presenting, through Vindice's eyes, a world bereft of all decency, all human feeling, a world full of a 'loathing and disgust of humanity' as it would have existed in the obsessed imagination of the revenger, that commentators have taken Vindice's vision for Tourneur's and deemed Tourneur mad. (80)

Their subsequent discussion of the "sealed-off room" of Vindice's obsession carries the argument further and is perhaps the most useful critical observation in this useful, agreeably written and often illuminating book.

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Dorothy G. Coleman. *Rabelais: A Critical Study of Prose Fiction*. New York and London: Cambridge University Press, First paperback edition, 1979. Pp. ix, 241. \$7.95.

Rabelais, like Proteus, escapes the grasp of those who attempt to seize him from one single angle or perspective. The essential significance of his work eludes critics, whether they be the so-called 'Ancients' who explain it through exhaustive research into the sources both ancient and contemporary of each of his statements and allusions, emphasizing content at the expense of form, or the 'Moderns' whose studies limit themselves generally to a careful and often penetrating analysis of the text. Taken together all such studies contribute enormously to our understanding and appreciation of Rabelais; separately they have a tendency, however, to diminish the vast scope and depth of his knowledge, wisdom and artistry. The essence of Rabelais's work is a dynamic dialectic in which, without cancelling each other out, opposites coexist, arousing in his readers a constantly-evolving and ever-changing response. What is truly great in his work is distorted by a single unified approach.

An example of such a work which, while indeed significant and contributing greatly to our appreciation of Rabelais, is weakened by an attempt to find in Rabelais a unified focus which explains his work, is Dorothy G. Coleman's book