

Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* and the (Re-)Invention of Tragedy: A Response to Angelika Zirker and Susanne Riecker

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Abstract

In their contribution, Zirker and Riecker provide a comprehensive survey of how Shakespeare used his sources, especially Plutarch's *Life of Caesar* and *Life of Brutus*, when writing *Julius Caesar*. Their claim that Shakespeare had to overcome the historical “fettters” of Plutarch and the generic fetters of tragedy, however, can be questioned. Shakespeare was not in any way fettered by his sources but in a position to pick and choose from the rich “banquet” of historical and literary material on offer in the Renaissance.

The same applies to the genre of tragedy, which was a rather loose concept and did not fetter Elizabethan dramatists in any way. *Julius Caesar* can even be considered to mark a new departure, in that Shakespeare invents, or re-invents, a tragic pattern which he would repeat in *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *King Lear* and *Macbeth*. It involves a central hero who makes a mistake which causes enormous suffering and will result in the hero's self-recognition and death. This pattern, of course, resembles that of classical Greek tragedy, as summarized by Aristotle. While Elizabethan scholars did not usually have direct access to the Greek tragedians, Plutarch's *Life of Brutus* may be considered the “missing link” between Greek and Shakespearean tragedy, as it contains all the features of tragedy mentioned.

In a rich and well-researched contribution, Angelika Zirker and Susanne Riecker provide a thorough and comprehensive survey of the ways in which Shakespeare made use of his historical sources when writing *Julius*

Caesar. As Zirker and Riecker explain, Shakespeare used many of the details reported in Plutarch's *Life of Caesar* and *Life of Brutus* in a creative way, "to the effect of a structural re-configuration of the historical matter and, more importantly, the relation of the characters involved" (134). This structural reconfiguration manifests itself, among other things, in his divergence or specification of "Plutarch's order of events leading up to the assassination" (135), in the "acceleration and temporal condensation of the events" (135-36), in producing "a heightened sense of anticipation" (137), in his extended usage of "the fire imagery as used by Plutarch" (138), and in giving Calphurnia's dream (as reported by Plutarch) "a more urgent spin" (140). Most notably, Shakespeare introduces numerous references to Christian motifs, as Zirker and Riecker demonstrate in great detail (140-43), and makes Caesar use a memorable Latin tag when speaking his last words, instead of the Greek words reported by Suetonius or the address to Casca found in Plutarch (144).

What I would like to question, though, is Zirker's and Riecker's use of the "fettters" image. Zirker and Riecker contend that Shakespeare manages to achieve a "creative liberation from the fettters presented by history and the main source text" (135) and the "generic restraints of tragedy" (135). I would like to argue that the "fettters" and "restraints" imagery is quite out of place here because it provides a wrong idea of how we should conceptualize either Renaissance culture in general or Shakespeare's dramatic art in particular.

Let us look at the historical "fettters" first: Plutarch provided the material for Shakespeare to work with; he does not put fettters on him. No one demanded of Shakespeare to adhere to the details of his sources or the particulars of historical "truth." If Plutarch had not written the "Life of Brutus" and "Life of Caesar," or if Shakespeare had not had access to North's translation, he would not have enjoyed greater liberty. On the contrary: his scope of creativity would have been much restricted. In order to expand or contract, to deviate from or to rearrange Plutarch's text it needed to be available in the first place. If we were to look for an apt metaphor to describe Shakespeare's use of his sources, I would choose that of a rich banquet, or buffet, with Shakespeare being free to choose the most tasty bits.

In Andrew Marvell's "Dialogue of the Resolved Soul and Created Pleasure", Pleasure invites the Soul to partake of "nature's banquet" (*Complete Works* 25, l. 14). Similarly, the Renaissance dramatist could partake of culture's banquet, a buffet whose sumptuousness was unprecedented in European history. To Shakespeare this banquet was made up of the Latin instruction received at the Stratford-upon-Avon grammar school (which included Virgil and Ovid as well as Cicero and, quite probably, Erasmus; cf. Mack 12-14), the religious disputes which obviously rendered Shakespeare's hometown (with a Catholic-leaning town council but Protestant ministers and a strictly Protestant landlord) an exciting intellectual battleground (Cf. Greenblatt 87-117), the Kenilworth entertainments of 1575 (which Shakespeare certainly witnessed), performances by travelling actors, the aristocratic life and libraries (possibly) of the Hoghton family in Lancashire (see Honigmann) and (quite probably) the Pembroke family in Wiltshire (Kullmann, "Poeticising Emotion" 245-55), the contact with his fellow-dramatists and university wits as well as the law students of the Inns of Court in London and the ubiquitous debates concerning the conflicts of Puritanism and High Church liberalism as well as those surrounding the issue of the Queen's legitimacy. The book market, to be sure, constituted a banquet by itself, as it included numerous translations from Latin, Greek, Italian, French and Spanish, thus opening up avenues to worlds beyond England, beyond the world of commoners and beyond Christianity.

One of the dishes on offer was the story of Caesar's assassination—and what a wonderful story it was (and still is, of course), raising as it does fundamental ethical and political questions: Was the murder of Caesar justified? Was Caesar a tyrant or a benefactor? Was Brutus honourable? What is more important, friendship and loyalty, or the welfare of the state? Is the old Roman republic or the imperial constitution initiated by Caesar's successors the better political system? Suetonius and Plutarch did not answer these questions, and thereby provided posterity with endless food for thought.¹ Apart from the political questions Caesar's assassination raises, it provides great drama, with Caesar entering the senate as prospective king, and being attacked by 23 of his closest friends. The story of Caesar's assassination was omnipresent in early modern England and a favourite of

London dramatists of the 1590s (see, for example, Ronan), and may well have been a story a grammar school teacher like Thomas Jenkins of Stratford could have transformed into a theatrical play and asked his Latin scholars to perform (cf. Greenblatt 27-28).

Shakespeare, to be sure, was bound to stick to the basic cornerstones of this story: Caesar was murdered on the Ides of March; his murderers included Brutus and Cassius who attempted to restore Rome's republican constitution but were defeated in the battle of Philippi. These cornerstones, however, should not be called "fetters"; they offered manifold possibilities of political, ethical and psychological speculation. Furthermore, they were instruments to reach out to audiences not quite as educated as the dramatist was himself, but knowledgeable enough to have heard of Rome, and of Caesar. Beyond these cornerstones Shakespeare was at liberty to provide his own visions of politics as well as the dramas of friendship and married life (see Zirker and Riecker, 145-48), and the personal tragedies resulting from lacking self-knowledge and wrong decisions.

With regard to the genre of tragedy Shakespeare was not fettered by any restraints, either—for the simple reason that there were no such restraints. Tragedy was, as David Scott Kastan notes (esp. 5-6), a very loose concept.² Its only definite generic feature was obviously that the protagonist or title character dies in the course of the play. It is true that sets of rules for the genre of tragedy were available. Educated Elizabethans could read Seneca's tragedies, either in the Latin original or in an English translation (*Seneca His Ten Tragedies*, 1581). They would have been able to follow Senecan models when writing tragedies of their own. There would also be a set of classicist rules, based on Renaissance (mis-)interpretations of Aristotle's *Poetics*, available in English in Sidney's *Defence of Poetry* and Puttenham's *Art of English Poesy*. Few (if any) Elizabethan dramatists, however, chose to follow these rules (see Burrow 9-10). Thomas Kyd and William Shakespeare, it is true, were inspired by Seneca to write *The Spanish Tragedy* and *Titus Andronicus*; inspired, that is, not fettered.³ Both dramatists adopted the gruesome plots involving multiple killings and the eating of human flesh, but neither adhered to the "unities" of time and place.

At the same time we can certainly determine structural features which connect *Julius Caesar* to other Shakespearean tragedies, most notably to

those often denominated "great": *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *King Lear*, *Macbeth*. In all of these tragedies there is a central hero, a man of high rank and admirable qualities, who makes a mistake, a mistake which is due to a miscalculation and a lack of self-knowledge. This mistake then brings about enormous suffering to many people, not least, however, to the tragic hero himself, and will ultimately result in the hero's recognition of his mistake and his death at the end of the play. The audience is invited to sympathize with this hero and to share his sufferings.

The critic who first provided an outline of this tragic pattern was, of course, A. C. Bradley. As Bradley notices, Shakespeare's tragedies (except for the two "love-tragedies" [2], *Romeo and Juliet* and *Antony and Cleopatra*) are about one person, a person of "high degree" (4, cf. 13), whose story is characterized by "exceptional suffering and calamity" (3) and leads up to this person's death, thus becoming "a chief source of the tragic emotions, and especially of pity" (3). The hero's calamities, Bradley explains, "proceed mainly from actions, and those the actions of men" (6); and the hero "always contributes in some measure to the disaster in which he perishes" (6), his deeds being "characteristic deeds," they issue from his character (7) and often follow upon an "inward struggle" (12). These deeds are invariably due to a "fatal imperfection or error" (15) or at least "some marked imperfection or defect" (25).

If we apply this concept to *Julius Caesar*, two things become obvious: First: The play's hero is Brutus, not Caesar. It is Brutus whose miscalculation brings about suffering and destruction, in spite of his good intentions and high-mindedness. His introspection (2.1.10-34) prefigures that of tragic heroes like *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* (see Kullmann, "Ambiguities of Honour" 171-72). It is he, not Caesar, whose fortunes the spectator follows with pity and fear.⁴ While Caesar marches to his destruction like an automaton, "a blind victim of the fate to come" (Greene 26), Brutus ruminates over his decision to kill Caesar. His wife justifiably fears for his safety, and we, as the audience, fear with her. We pity Brutus for being driven out of Rome and for quarrelling with Cassius, we fear his final overthrow at Philippi, and we may accept his end after listening to Octavian's final speech. These observations do not invalidate Zirker's and Riecker's remarks about the par-

allelism found in the characters of Caesar and Brutus (144-45). While Caesar, however, only experiences a brief moment of recognition in the moments before his death, Brutus' career is consistently marked by caution and doubt, and his obvious realization, triggered by the appearance of the ghost of Caesar, his "evil spirit" (4.3.280), that he has made a mistake is clearly dramatized.

The fact that the play is called *Julius Caesar*, rather than "Marcus Brutus," should not bother us. To advertise his play Shakespeare obviously decided to build on his audience's foreknowledge and expectations (as Zirker and Riecker remark as well [137]), and Caesar was certainly better known than Brutus. We could compare this title with that of *A Merchant of Venice*. While the merchant in question is by no means the most important or the most interesting character of the play, the title aptly produces the background image of the famous Italian city of commerce and trade. Shakespeare's tendency to build upon audiences' previous knowledge can also be seen in *The Comedy of Errors*, which replaces the city of Epidamnus of the Plautine source with Ephesus, which was known from the New Testament.

Second: The structure of *Julius Caesar* marks a new departure in Shakespeare's career. Rather than following an established pattern (let alone being fettered by such a pattern), he creates a new one.⁵ In none of the previous tragedies do we find this interplay of nobility, good qualities, mistakes, suffering, recognition, death and the arousal of pity and fear, which would become a hallmark of the "great tragedies" mentioned.

Speaking of "mistakes," "recognition," "pity" and "fear" we allude, of course, to the uncanny resemblance of Shakespeare's tragedies with Classical Greek tragedy, most notably the tragedies of Sophocles, like *King Oedipus*, *Antigone*, and *Electra*, and their treatment in Aristotle's *Poetics*.⁶ In providing his sketch of the structure of Shakespeare's great tragedies, Bradley implicitly followed Aristotle, who also contended that a tragic hero is a man of high moral and social standing (1454a-54b) who because of a mistake (*hamartía*, 1453a) brings about suffering and destruction, raising pity and fear in the audience, who will, in the end, be released from these emotions (*kátharsis*, 1449b). The plot of a tragedy, according to Aristotle, should contain elements of the fearful and pitiable. This can best be achieved if something happens which is not expected but nevertheless appears as a

logical consequence of previous happenings (1452a); pity and fear are intimately connected with an unexpected turning (*peripéteia*) and a recognition (*anagnórisis*) (1452a).

It has often been remarked that Bradley's notion of a character flaw which triggers the tragic chains of events in *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *King Lear* and *Macbeth*, does not quite correspond to Aristotle's notion of *hamartia*, which may refer to a flaw in the hero for which the hero is not personally responsible, like the facts that Oedipus unwittingly killed his father and married his mother (see, e.g., Burrow 1-2). We should, however, note that the element of character is not absent from the Greek notion of *hamartía*.⁷ Oedipus is not just punished for his inadvertent crimes but also for his hubris, which makes him seek for the origin of the plague with everybody but himself. In this, he does resemble Othello, or Lear.⁸

It was Wolfgang Schadewaldt, the German classical scholar, who most memorably put to words the resemblances between Greek and Shakespearean tragedy. According to Schadewaldt, *Oedipus* and *King Lear*, as well as *Hamlet* and *Electra*, are connected by "some kind of secret blood relationship" ("Shakespeare und die griechische Tragödie" 8; my trans.). Both Oedipus and Lear, Schadewaldt contends, are victims of "Verblendung," 'blindness' ("Shakespeares 'König Lear'" 34), and in the course of the respective plays give words to the utmost abyss of despair, while retaining their royal dignity (29-32). In sharing their suffering, audiences are confronted with the basic facts of the human condition and will learn to endure it ("Shakespeare und die griechische Tragödie" 13, "Shakespeares 'König Lear'" 30).⁹

But how did Shakespeare learn about the Greek concept of tragedy? We can dismiss Schadewaldt's naive notions that Shakespeare's "small Latin and less Greek" allowed him to imbibe ideas of the tragic by reading classical sources, or that conversations "with learned men like Ben Jonson" provided him with insight into these ancient Greek conceptions ("Shakespeare und die griechische Tragödie" 26; see also Harvey 267). There is no trace of the Sophoclean concept of tragedy in Jonson, nor was Sophocles within easy reach of learned Elizabethans. As all students of Classical Greek will confirm, the language of the Greek tragedies is particularly chal-

lenging, and while learned poets like Sidney and Chapman read and understood Plato and Homer, Sophocles seems to have been out of reach.¹⁰ The first translation of *King Oedipus* which allowed English readers an insight into Sophocles' tragic art was obviously Theobald's, published in 1715.

We could, of course, argue that Shakespeare's genius or his deep and unprecedented "humanity" made him develop a concept of tragedy (single-handedly, so to speak) which happens to be similar to that of those other experts in humanity, the Greek tragedians. Our awareness, however, that Shakespeare, for all his excellence, was only human (see Greenblatt 216) should make us look for a different explanation. This leads us back to the banquet image mentioned above: what Shakespeare excelled in was a cultural eclecticism based on the vast buffet or storehouse of Renaissance discourses and artefacts.¹¹ Within this storehouse we should therefore look for a "missing link" between classical Greek tragedy and Shakespeare's own concept of the tragic which we first come across in *Julius Caesar*.

This missing link, I would like to suggest, is Plutarch's "Life of Brutus", which Shakespeare read in Sir Thomas North's translation. Plutarch's Brutus embodies all the qualities which in Aristotle's *Poetics* characterize a tragic hero. He is of noble descent (242-43), very learned (243-45), and his moral qualities are considered perfect:

But this Marcus Brutus [...] having framed his manners of life by the rules of vertue and study of philosophy, and having employed his wit, which was gentle and constant, in attempting of great things: methinks he was rightly made and framed unto vertue. (242)

His love of liberty and hatred of tyranny are noble qualities (277-79, see also "The Comparison of Dion with Brutus" 316-17)—qualities which set him apart from the other conspirators who are driven by ambition, egoism and spite (280, see "The Comparison of Dion with Brutus" 317). Cassius, in particular, is described as "a hot, choleric, and cruel man, that would oftentimes be carried away from justice for gain" (279). When Brutus finds himself engaged in a civil war against Mark Antony and Octavius Caesar, his military conduct is characterized by fairness and "courtesy" (281, 284,

302). When he realizes that he has lost, he acknowledges his own responsibility (310) and resorts to the noble act of ending his own life (312), while his victorious adversaries recognize his nobility (312-13).

As indicated above, Plutarch carefully avoids passing judgment on whether the murder of Caesar was justified, but it is obvious that this act was at least morally questionable. It is evil men, like Cassius, who persuade Brutus to take a leading part in the assassination ("The Comparison of Dion with Brutus" 314); and when comparing Brutus to his Greek counterpart, Dion (who killed Dionysius, the Syracusan tyrant), Plutarch points out that Dionysius was undoubtedly evil and tyrannical (315), unlike Caesar, who "it seemed he had rather had the name and opinion only of a tyrant than otherwise that he was so indeed" (315). Caesar, moreover, had saved Brutus's life and honoured him "above all his other friends" (316). The implication is that Brutus, in spite of his noble intentions (317-18), should not have given in to his friends' persuasions, and that this is his fault, his *hamartía*, for which he is finally punished. He put too deep a trust in his friends' moral and political reasoning, as well as in his own ability to set things right after the potential tyrant has been removed. As with Agamemnon and Orestes, the descendants of Tantalus, his decision to act may have been influenced by his ancestry: Plutarch begins his account with a reference to Junius Brutus, who reputedly "put down the Tarquins from their kingdom of Rome" (242). Even though Marcus Brutus does not share his ancestor's "sour stern nature, not softened by reason" (242), he may not have been able to shed this hereditary predisposition.¹²

Plutarch's account also resembles Greek tragedy in its plotting and its management of pity and fear. As in Aristotle's concept of tragedy, there are unexpected turnings, which, however, appear as the logical consequences of previous actions (such as the expulsion of Brutus and his friends from Rome in the aftermath of Caesar's murder). Before we read of the final battle at Philippi we are told of his military successes so that the battle constitutes a *peripéteia* or turning-point, which goes along with Brutus' recognition (*anagnórisis*) of his failure and guilt. Following Brutus' career we pity his misfortunes, we are on his side when reading about his quarrels with his evil friends (286-88), we share his fears when he encounters his "evil spirit" (289).¹³

I would like to suggest that it was mainly from this text that Shakespeare learned about the Greek conception both of personal tragedy and of the main dramaturgical possibilities of the tragic genre. He may also have taken from Plutarch two features which ancient Greek tragedies do not necessarily possess. One of them concerns the ethical quality of the hero's tragic mistake. Aristotle contends that the best kind of tragic plot is one in which the hero commits a deed without at first realizing how terrible it is, like Sophocles' Oedipus, who later learns that he has killed his own father (1454a). Unlike Oedipus, however, who has killed his father inadvertently, Plutarch's Brutus knows he is killing a friend. It is only later, however, that he realizes that his decision to kill Caesar was based on an error of judgment.¹⁴ Similarly, Hamlet, Othello, Lear and Macbeth know they are killing, or rejecting, a person close to them, and only realize later that they should not have done so. The reason why Brutus (in Plutarch *and* Shakespeare) allows his friends to persuade him to kill Caesar, in spite of his better judgment, is obviously rooted in his friendliness and nobility, i.e. in his character. As with Shakespeare's later heroes of tragedy, his good qualities are commingled with a tragic flaw which leads to a fatal error.

The other innovative feature which Shakespeare may have taken from Plutarch's "Brutus" is the dramaturgical one of controlling the readers' / audiences' sympathies. In Sophocles' *King Oedipus*, this king is decidedly unlikeable for most of the play. It is only after his recognition of his tragic mistakes that we pity him. In his "Life of Brutus," by contrast, Plutarch from the beginning presents Brutus as an admirable person whose fortunes we sympathize with, no matter which mistakes he will make in his subsequent career. In this he becomes the prototype of the Shakespearean type of tragic hero, which will recur in *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *Lear* and *Macbeth*. We not only fear for and pity these heroes, we also sympathize with them, no matter how absurd their errors of judgment (*Othello*) or how heinous their crimes (*Macbeth*) may be.¹⁵ With the deaths of these heroes we are finally released from our contradictory feelings, and may perhaps experience an Aristotelian *kátharsis*. Far from liberating himself from generic fetters, Shakespeare used Plutarch's tragic "Life of Brutus" as an inspiration to invent (or re-invent) a tragic recipe of his own, which happened to resemble the Sophoclean/ Aristotelian conception of tragedy and would

become constitutive for later conceptions of the tragic in post-Renaissance Europe.¹⁶

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NOTES

¹As Nicholas Grene notices, “ambivalence in literature is a much cherished modern virtue, but many of the ambiguities of *Julius Caesar* Shakespeare inherited from his classical and Renaissance sources. There was no single tradition of interpreting the events leading up to and following the assassination of Caesar, no one orthodox evaluation, moral or political [...]. In Shakespeare’s main source, Plutarch, the movement from Republic to Empire is regarded with very mixed feelings” (14).

²See also Martin Coyle’s assessment: “Tragedy and its central figure, I suggest, are [...] constantly overlaid with motifs, new signs, and new values in a world where drama is reinventing itself as part of a burgeoning leisure industry and competing with other forms of popular entertainment such as bear-baiting” (24-25); as well as Burrow 5-6 and 11.

³Harold Bloom contends that “*Titus Andronicus* certainly derives much of its badness from Seneca” (80). Of course, *Titus Andronicus* is not a “bad” play—it may work wonderfully well in performance. Like Seneca’s tragedies, however, it produces horror rather than pity and fear, i.e. those characteristics which Shakespeare’s “great” tragedies share with Sophocles and ancient Greek tragedy. On *Titus Andronicus*, see Bevington 54, and Miola, who devotes a whole chapter on *Titus Andronicus* as “the most Senecan of Shakespeare’s plays” (13-32).

⁴Bradley (2n) also considers Brutus the one and only “hero” of *Julius Caesar*. See also Bevington 58: “Brutus, whom traditional neo-Aristotelian criticism inevitably singles out as the play’s tragic protagonist, is a man of noble and even worthy intentions whose seemingly best qualities help to undo him”; and Nevo 98-99: “It is Brutus’ career in the play that follows the characteristic Shakespearean trajectory”.

⁵See also Andreas Mahler’s assessment: “*Julius Caesar* is Shakespeare’s first ‘experimental’ tragedy” (182), set to deconstruct “the ancient phantasmagoria of a brotherhood of love” (183). It is certainly part of Brutus’ and the audience’s tragic experience that this brotherhood of love is finally found illusory.

⁶Pursuing the fetters/banquet imagery I would like to argue that the Renaissance buffet even had the Greek concept of tragedy on offer. That Shakespeare was not fettered by it can be seen from the fact that he was apparently the first English dramatist to partake of this particular dish.

⁷Cf. also Schadewaldt, “Shakespeare und die griechische Tragödie” (18) who defines character in Sophocles as a propensity to a certain fate.

⁸Colin Burrow notes that “Greek ethical thought was also part of the amalgam that made Shakespearean tragedy, even if Shakespeare, as seems likely, never read a word of Sophocles in Greek” (17), and goes on to quote an example from Plutarch’s “Life of

Coriolanus." See also David Bevington, who comments on the resemblance between *Othello* and *Macbeth* and "Aristotle's definition of tragedy" (63-65).

⁹Cf. Poole, who also notices resemblances between Greek and Shakespearean tragedy, comparing, for instance, the dramatization of fear in Aeschylus' *Oresteia* and *Macbeth* (15-53), and the dynamic of questions and answers in Oedipus and Hamlet (88-125). Poole does not look for influences on Shakespeare but explains the resemblances by the generic features of tragedy: "[Tragedy] embodies our most paradoxical feelings and thoughts and beliefs. It gives them flesh and blood, emotional and intellectual and spiritual substance. Through tragedy we recognize and refeel our sense of both the value and the futility of human life, of both its purposes and its emptiness" (239). Other classical scholars who comment on the similarities between ancient Greek and Shakespearean tragedy include Michael Ewans (446-51), M. S. Silk, and George Steiner (540-42). None of them, however, offers any suggestion as to how Greek notions of tragedy found their way into Shakespeare's dramatic output.

¹⁰Some English readers may have read one of the Latin translations published on the Continent, or even studied the original (see Harvey), but if they did, this reading does not seem to have left any major impact on English letters, at least before the eighteenth century.

¹¹Greenblatt uses a different and perhaps even more pertinent image to characterize Shakespeare's eclecticism, stating that "he was a brilliant poacher—deftly entering into territory marked out by others, taking for himself what he wanted, and walking away with his prize under the keeper's nose" (152).

¹²John Harvey, who contends that Shakespeare may have known Sophocles, draws attention to the complexities of characterization, of protagonists and antagonists, in both Sophocles and Shakespeare (263). I should like to argue that these complexities are also present in Plutarch's "Life of Brutus."

¹³As Poole contends, "tragedy is founded on the relationship between sufferer and spectator" (14).

¹⁴Ruth Nevo draws attention to the fact that "in all the Roman plays which are derived from Plutarch 'evil' is limited to the inherent limitations of human knowledge [...]. Thus in *Julius Caesar* the catastrophe comes about not on account of vice, or depravity, or knavery, but simply through errors of judgment" (96). This indicates that the gap between *King Oedipus* and *Julius Caesar* is not that great. We may wonder if the mistakes made by Hamlet, Othello and Lear could also be described as "errors of judgment."

¹⁵As Bradley notes, the "spectacle" of Macbeth's "inward torment compels a horrified sympathy and awe which balance, at the least, the desire for the hero's ruin" (15).

¹⁶This includes Schiller, whose *Don Carlos*, *Maria Stuart* and *Wallenstein* clearly follow the tragic pattern inaugurated by Shakespeare; see, for example, Steck and Birkner.

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