CHAPTER EIGHT

'THE CRY OF THE ROYAL BLOOD': REVENGE TRAGEDY AND THE STUART CAUSE IN THE DUTCH REPUBLIC, 1649–1660

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On 9 February 1649 Charles I was executed before Whitehall Palace in London. The regicide and the subsequent abolishment of the monarchy in England marked the beginning of an intense propaganda campaign by royalist exiles on the continent, the like of which Europe had not often seen before. This campaign was targeted at two distinct markets. In the first place, publications in English were meant to keep royalist sentiments alive at home.¹ More importantly, royalists sought to acquire foreign support for an invasion that would restore Charles II to the throne, through publications in Latin and the European vernaculars. The Dutch Republic was pivotal in the royalist efforts. Not only did it serve as the bookshop for both markets, where the bulk of royalist publications were printed and dispatched,² it was also the single most important target nation for their propaganda.³

Officially, the Dutch had maintained a policy of neutrality in the English conflict between King and Parliament ever since it erupted in 1642. Yet behind the neutral façade, the political elite of the Republic

¹ In recent decades, royalist literature and propaganda have received ample attention. Consider, for example: Anselment, *Loyalist Resolve*; Potter, *Secret Rites and Secret Writing*; Maguire, *Regicide and Restoration*; Zwicker, *Lines of Authority*; Smith, *Literature and Revolution in England*; Wilcher, *The Writing of Royalism*. See also: Randall, *Winter Fruit*. Although Dutch pamphlets are occasionally discussed in some of these works, the effect of royalist publications on public opinion on the continent, on which the royalist cause depended so much, has hitherto been largely neglected. Notable exceptions are R. Priebisch, 'German pamphlets in prose and verse on the trial and death of Charles I', and Berghaus, *Die Aufnahme der englischen Revolution in Deutschland*. Paul Sellin's case study of the prefatory material to Salmasius's translated *Defensio Regia* does recognize the importance of Dutch material for the royalist cause and has been an important point of departure for this study. See Sellin, 'Royalist Propaganda and the Dutch Poets on the Execution of Charles I'.

² Hellinga, Duke, Harskamp and Hermans, *The Bookshop of the World*.

³ For an account of the royalist propaganda efforts in Scandinavia, see Murdoch, 'The Search for Northern Allies'.

had been utterly divided about the British troubles. Whereas the States of Holland and Zeeland had repeatedly shown their willingness to accommodate Parliament, the King could count on the warm-hearted support of the House of Orange, especially after William II succeeded his father Frederick Henry as stadtholder.⁴ William made restoring his brother-in-law Charles II to the throne of England one of the central aims of his foreign policy.⁵ If Orange could overcome Holland's resistance and gain power over the United Provinces, so both Commonwealth leaders in England and the English exiles on the continent believed, war against the English Republic would be a matter of time. With France being occupied by the domestic turmoil of the Fronde and the Franco-Spanish War (1635–1659) and Mazarin being deaf to royalist pleas, the most realistic scenario for a successful royalist invasion involved the mobilization of the resources of the United Provinces. The Dutch had to be convinced that they should assist the exiled son to vindicate his father, and Holland was the key.⁶

One of the major works designed to gain continental support for the royalist cause was Claudius Salmasius's *Defensio Regia* (*Defence of Kingship*, November 1649).⁷ Allegedly paid '100 jacobuses' by Charles II,⁸ the Huguenot Salmasius (1588–1653), professor at the Leiden University, became the front man of the continental royalist propaganda campaign after the execution. In his book, which rapidly gained fame, he argued not only against the regicide, but also in favour of the right of the Prince of Wales to succeed his father as king of

⁴ Cf. Geyl, *Orange and Stuart*, *passim*. Geyl's provocative, rather anachronistic argument that the Princes of Orange put their own dynastic interest in the Stuart cause before the national interest has been thoroughly revised by Simon Groenveld, who has convincingly argued that Frederick Henry was not the uncritical Stuart supporter Geyl portrayed him to be. See Groenveld, *Verlopend Getij*, *passim*. During the few years William II was in office, however, the Stuart interest was prominent on the agenda.

⁵ Kernkamp, *Prins Willem II*, pp. 68–78.

⁶ As argued by Sellin, 'Royalist Propaganda', *passim*.

⁷ The many editions of the *Defensio* are listed in Madan, 'A Revised Bibliography'.

⁸ At least this is Milton's claim in the *Defensio pro populo anglicano* (1651), which was translated into Dutch as *Verdedigingh des gemeene volcks van Engelandt tegens Claudius sonder naem, alias Salmasius Konincklijcke Verdedigingh* (Amsterdam: J. Janssonius [Madan], 1651) and in Milton studies is commonly referred to as his *First Defence*. Although Salmasius later denied the allegation (he wrote that the line 'sumptibus regiis' had only been added to the title page to add authority to his text and to prevent problems with the censor) there are no good reasons to disbelieve Milton and the claim on the title page.

England, Scotland and Ireland. According to the *Defensio*, European kings and princes should unite against the English ‘parricides’ in order to secure Charles II’s rightful inheritance. This was in their own interest, because rather than an attack on one dynasty, the execution of the king had been an assault upon the institution of monarchy, rightful government and indeed upon God himself. If no retaliation were to follow, continental governments would run the risk of incurring the same fate as the English king. Although this argument would ultimately fail to convince European governments, who adopted an attitude of ‘wait and see’ with regard to developments in Britain,⁹ it did provoke fierce reactions throughout Europe. In Holland in particular, where the English conflict was so intimately interwoven with domestic religious and political issues, Salmasius’s appeal reverberated loudly in the public sphere.

After forbidding the printing, importing and selling of all texts ‘damaging and disrespectful to either the king or the parliament of England’ in November 1649,¹⁰ the States of Holland banned the *Defensio* ‘in whatever size or language’ in January.¹¹ Despite the ban a Dutch translation of Salmasius’s book was printed in Leiden by Johan van Dalen in March 1650, albeit under a false imprint. Later editions appeared in Rotterdam, Utrecht and Antwerp.¹² In his article on the later Naeranus edition of the same translation, Paul Sellin has drawn attention to

⁹ Bonney, ‘The European Reaction to the Trial and Execution of Charles I’. According to Bonney, pp. 270–71, the great European powers ‘operated on the principle of state interest’, which dictated that a weak and divided England was more profitable than an uncertain invasion aiming to restore Charles II to the throne.

¹⁰ Grosheide, *Cromwell naar het oordeel van zijn Nederlandse tijdgenoten*, p. 26.

¹¹ Translated from the original Dutch: ‘in wat formaet ofte tale het soude mogen wesen’. See Knuttel, *Verboden Boeken*, p. 34 nr. 113.

¹² See Madan, ‘A Revised Bibliography’. There are four known Dutch editions of the *Defensio Regia* (Dutch: *Koninklijke verdediging, voor Kaarel den I*, etc.), all published in 1650. Three appeared in the United Provinces: the first was printed in Leiden in March under the false imprint of Antwerp (Van Dalen), which was followed by a Rotterdam edition in June (‘Johan van Rene’ = Johan van Neer = Johannes Naeranus). Van Dalen and Naeranus used the same translation. The only difference between their texts is the latter part, which is abbreviated in the earlier Van Dalen edition. An independent text appeared in Utrecht (unknown printer). According to the Short Title Catalogue Vlaanderen, a certain Arend van der Toppen’s translation was printed in Antwerp in 1650. I have not been able to compare the text of this edition—now in the Erfgoedbibliotheek Hendrik Conscience in Antwerp—to the other ones, but it is likely that it was independently translated and published for the Southern Netherlands. This would be confirmed by a statement made by Salmasius himself, who in his *Ad Johannem Miltonum responsio* claimed that three Dutch translations circulated ‘diversis auctoribus’ (See Grosheide, *Cromwell*, p. 21).

the prefatory poems that were added to the main text. Leading Dutch poets, including Vondel, Vos, De Decker, Oudaen and Brandt, here united with the Huguenot Stuart propagandist Salmasius in order 'to secure the soul of Holland' for the royalist cause.¹³ The Dutch editions of the *Defensio* are an interesting case for at least two reasons. First, notwithstanding the repeated ban, the editions proclaimed their status as royal propaganda with remarkable openness. The title pages of their translations boasted the royal coat of arms and, like the original, explicitly stated that the book was printed 'at the king's expense' ('op 's konings kosten'). In all likelihood the entire enterprise of publishing the Latin and vernacular editions was, in Sellin's words, 'an extensive, subsidized undertaking', which, apart from the Leiden professor, involved several Dutch printers, translators and poets.¹⁴ In the second place, the prefatory poems in the vernacular editions signal an alliance between the royalist propagandists in the United Provinces and several members of the literary elite of Holland. This essay is an attempt to come to an understanding of the significance of that alliance, from the political as well as from the literary perspective.

The regicide and the royalist propaganda effort in the United Provinces constitute an essential background for a correct understanding of the political impact of a sizeable body of literature in the 1650s.¹⁵ Both before and after the publication of the *Defensio*, the Stuart cause was embraced in hundreds of poems, plays and songs, written in the vernacular by authors ranging from the Orangist freethinker Jan Zoet to his Amsterdam Catholic enemy Jan Vos,¹⁶ and from the apothecary Jan Six van Chandelier to the influential Dordrecht diplomat and magistrate Cornelis van Beveren.¹⁷ Surely the variety of this group—

¹³ Sellin, 'Royalist Propaganda', *passim* and esp. p. 259.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 261.

¹⁵ For earlier accounts of Dutch reactions to the regicide, see Grosheide, *Cromwel naar het oordeel van zijn Nederlandse tijdgenoten*, and Scherpbier, *Milton in Holland*, pp. 41–56.

¹⁶ Zoet wrote at least eight poems related to the regicide in 1649–1651, among which *Het tooneel der Engelsze elenden* (1650, see below) and *Vorstelikke-Lijk-Staasy, gepast op de Dood van Carel Suart, Koning van Groot Britanje* (1649). Among many epigrams, Jan Vos' main contribution to the torrent of poetic comments on the regicide before the outbreaks of the Anglo-Dutch war was his *Britanje aan Europe* (1649).

¹⁷ Of the many poems in which Jan Six van Chandelier reflected on the regicide, his *Rariteiten te koop* (1649), which focuses on the magical qualities of the king's blood, is arguably the most interesting. See Jacobs, *J. Six van Chandelier*, 1, p. 272. Cornelis van Beveren was so attached to the English royal family that he gave his son the name of

socially, religiously as well as politically—raises questions about the motivations behind the Dutch support for the Stuarts.

To argue the connection between Stuart propaganda and this varied group of Dutch poets does not mean to imply that they were, like Salmasius, involved in an orchestrated campaign. Only some of the published texts can be linked to the English court in exile, and even then only tentatively. Reyer Anslo's *Kroonrecht door geweld verkracht* (*Divine Right Violently Ravished*, 1649), for example, was printed in plano with the royal coat of arms figuring prominently above the text.¹⁸ Although this does suggest some official involvement, the suggestion may well be a deliberate effect independently created by the author or the printer. In the absence of any evidence to the contrary, we must assume that these poets for the most part acted independently from the Stuart court. Nor is it likely that the House of Orange had a hand in the publication of a significant part of the pro-Stuart poetry. As we shall see, the Orange court was probably connected to the publication of two pro-Stuart engravings (both of which involved the collaboration of Jan Zoet) in or about 1650. It is unlikely, however, that poets like Oudaen or Vondel would have acted under the sway of the Orange court in this particular period, as they were (and still are) well-known for their dislike of William II.

If direct political interference cannot explain the torrent of pro-Stuart poetry, but made only a (numerically) minor contribution to it, how then can the appeal of the Stuart cause to such a broad range of independent authors be explained? Part of the answer is the multifaceted nature of that cause, its ability to keep diverse and at times conflicting ideologies together under the banner of royalism.¹⁹ Dutch

Karel after he had visited England in 1636. He is the C.V.B. who published four poems in a 1649 pamphlet in the Universiteitsbibliotheek Leiden (Thyspfl., 5370).

¹⁸ Knuttel, 6341–42, Reyer Anslo, *Karel Stuart, Koningh van Groot Brittanje, etc. of Kroonrecht door Gewelt verkracht: Formidosum regibus exemplum. Plebs furibunda ruit* (1649).

¹⁹ Historians of the English Civil Wars and Interregnum have come to realize that royalism was never a monolithic ideology, nor simply to be divided in the convenient dichotomy of 'absolutists' and 'constitutionalists'. Instead the term covered a broad range of people who rationalized their support for the king in such diverse ways as to cause frequent discord and conflict (See e.g. McElligott and Smith, *Royalists and Royalism*, pp. 1–15 and 66–88). In view of the fact that after, roughly, the battle of Naseby, English royalism was increasingly a continental movement, with its success depending on continental support, it is not misplaced to expand the term as to include continental supporters of the House of Stuart who coincidentally wrote and thought in another language. Whatever their motivations, what ultimately united both British

royalism also incorporated several potentially conflicting rationalizations. Some poets, most notably Vondel, embraced the 'absolutist' royalism that was abhorred by republican thinkers such as Milton and Schele, but which was a far cry from more moderate forms of royalism.²⁰ Others, such as Jan Zoet or Lambert van den Bosch, as well as Huygens, were driven by their Orangism—which in Huygens's case was supplemented with a personal loyalty to the king of England. Remonstrants and Catholics (Oudaen, Brandt, Naeranus) were united in their abhorrence of English Puritanism, which—not entirely without reason—they associated with their Dutch religious adversaries, the Counter-Remonstrants.

The major triumph of the Stuart propaganda was that it managed to unite these various groups and to make them forget, or at least be silent about, those aspects of royalism they did not like.²¹ Salmasius found a way to tap into different religious and political sentiments, and to bring them together in a way that may have appeared logically flawed to the minds of scholarly thinkers such as Heinsius,²² Schele,²³ and Milton, but which made great sense from the iconological viewpoint of mainstream poetic culture. His highly rhetorical use of the term 'parricide' for the execution of Charles I, for instance, provoked Milton's scorn ('Our fathers begot us. Our king made not us, but we him'), but the characterization had an immense iconic value in the patriarchal seventeenth century and was adopted by many Dutch poets immediately after the regicide. It placed the King's death in a line of infamous murders on heads of state, including Julius Caesar, William the Silent and Johan van Oldenbarnevelt. The parallel with that most recent 'father', Oldenbarnevelt, especially appealed to Dutch Remonstrant and Catholic poets, including, as we shall see, Joan Dullaert and Joost van den Vondel. The royalist propaganda to which Salmasius

and continental royalists was their zeal to restore Charles II to the thrones of England and Ireland.

²⁰ On Vondel's (theoretical) monarchism, see Van Dijkhuizen and Helmers, 'So Shall the World Go On'.

²¹ Joachim Oudaen is known to have regretted the plays and poems he wrote in support of the Stuart cause in later life. Cf. Melles, *Joachim Oudaan*, pp. 64–66.

²² In a letter to Gronovius, Heinsius famously wrote that Milton had pleaded an evil cause well, whereas 'Scribonius [Salmasius] has pleaded most abominably the cause of the unfortunate king'. Cited in Scherpbier, *Milton in Holland*, p. 10.

²³ Radboud Herman Schele wrote a fierce reply to Salmasius, *De iure imperii*, which was, however, published posthumously after the Restoration. See Schele, *De jure imperii liber posthumus*, ed. by Th. Hogers (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 1671).

contributed effaced ideological conflicts with time-tested analogies and imagery.²⁴ Throughout the 1650s, the theatrical and iconographical aspects of the Stuart cause continued to outweigh any sustained republican or Calvinist argument against it.²⁵

The portrayal of Charles I as a political and religious martyr in *Eikon Basilike* (*Portrait of the King*, 1649) is doubtless the best known example of the literary power of royalist propaganda. Gauden's book paved the way for the cult of Charles I, and eventually his canonization.²⁶ The image of Charles as a Davidic, god-fearing king was dissipated through countless editions of the *Eikon* in English as well as in the continental vernaculars,²⁷ and soon multiplied by numerous poets, including many Dutchmen. Even the analogy with the passion of Christ, implicit in the *Eikon*, but common enough in the early cult, was frequently accepted in Dutch poems. When Anslø, Brandt, Six van Chandelier, and many others alluded to Charles's *imitatio Christi*, they were following Gauden's lead, and considering the notoriety and the availability of the book, it is scarcely conceivable that they were doing so unwittingly.²⁸ Salmasius, too, employed the image, but he added an element that was absent or perhaps implicit in the *Eikon*: retaliation.

This article explores the royalist rhetoric of revenge that was employed by Dutch poets and playwrights in response to the regicide, in some cases before the publication of the *Defensio*, but mostly after it. In order to propagate the revenge of Charles II, these poets drew on the language and conventions of Senecan revenge tragedy. This genre was specifically suited to poets commenting on the English Civil War and the regicide, because it had always investigated the themes of tyranny, rebellion and (divine) justice, and had often pointed out the

²⁴ As Andrew Lacey writes with regard to Charles I's martyrdom: 'the theology and iconography of martyrdom it drew upon were common property [...] in the seventeenth century'. See Lacey, *The Cult of Charles the Martyr*, p. 9.

²⁵ Kevin Sharpe, 'An Image Doting Rabble', has even argued that the failure of the English Republic to find a convincing alternative to the powerful royalist imagery ultimately caused its downfall.

²⁶ Lacey, *The Cult of Charles the Martyr* is the definitive work about the cult and its cultural contexts in England.

²⁷ For the continental reception of the *Eikon*, see Madan, *A New Bibliography* and Gerritsen, 'The Eikon in Holland'.

²⁸ Geeraerd Brandt, 'Op de print van de Koningh van Engelandt,' Salmasius, *Koninklijke verdediging, voor Kaarel den I.* (Rotterdam: Naeranus, 1650), p. *6'; Jan Six van Chandelier, *Rariteiten te koop* (n. 17 above); Anslø, *Kroonrecht door geweld verkracht* (n. 18 above).

similarity between revenge and civil war.²⁹ To royalists, I will argue, it held a special appeal, because it was so easily integrated with the existing royalist iconography of the martyr king.

Topical appropriations of revenge tragedy reveal the extent to which Dutch literature of the period was engaged in political debate. It also shows the potential tensions that existed between an international political discourse and domestic politics. In the context of the States of Holland's persistent attachment to their policy of neutrality in the British conflict between King and Parliament—even during the first Anglo-Dutch war of 1652–1654—the literary support for the Stuart King in exile was problematic, and, as I will show, downright subversive at times of crisis. The fact that the royalist plea for revenge was so easily translatable into Senecan language and images also points towards a more fundamental interaction between literature and politics in this period of intense strife between monarchs and councils. The attraction of the royalist cause partly rested on the theatricality of kingship, and the dramatic appeal of the regicide only reinforced this attraction. But conversely, literary genres such as the martyr play and revenge tragedy also tended to favour monarchism. In the Dutch Republic of the first stadtholderless period, the abundance of royalist poetry and drama testifies to the cultural appeal of kingship, and the weakness of republican culture, as even republican poets such as Oudaen were attracted by the poetic and theatrical appeal of the King's cause.³⁰

THE GHOST OF CHARLES I: MARTYRDOM, SENECAN HORROR AND THE STUART CAUSE

The juxtaposition of the martyrdom of Charles I with a rhetoric of revenge may perhaps best be illustrated by Joan Dullaert's martyr play *Karel Stuart of Rampzalige Majesteit* (*Charles Stuart or Disastrous Majesty*, written 1649, printed 1652, performed 1653). Written directly after the regicide in 1649, this tragedy is a rather straightforward dramatization of the *Eikon Basilike*. Like the *Eikon*, Dullaert's play represents the King's trial and execution as an *imitatio Christi*, tracking his development from initial despair in the first act to trium-

²⁹ Cf. Kerrigan, 'Revenge Tragedy Revisited'.

³⁰ I rely here on Kevin Sharpe's argument with regard to England; see his 'An Image Doting Rabble'.

phant piety and resignation in the last.³¹ But although vengefulness is far from Charles’s mind in the action of the play—as in the *Eikon* he even forgives his executioners and prays for their salvation³²—it is not absent from the play. Converting her grief into anger (as revenge tragedy requires) the princess Elizabeth cries, ‘The blood flowing from his severed neck / cries woe and vengeance for the supreme God / and makes the Heavens thunder’.³³ In Elizabeth’s moving complaint, avenging the martyr king is a religious act, done in the service of God. The play, which shows Charles’s conformity with Christ, thus ends on a note of retaliation.

Vengeance was also prominent in the prefatory poem that Dullaert added to the first publication (1652) of his martyr play. The poem in question is a rather quaint sonnet which negates the image of the meek monarch and focuses on his ire.³⁴ Heavily drawing on Senecan imagery, it describes how, ten days after the trial, the ghost of the decapitated King appears before the judges who convicted him. With a withered appearance, fiery eyes and blood dripping from his hair, the ghost terrifies John Bradshaw and his Council. When they attempt to flee,

At once his head he from his severed neck did raise
Which, with an open mouth, and very cramped face
Thrice for vengeance cried: the judges’ hair stood on end.

Blood spilled freely from his corpse; and with a sad lament
And mournful wail, he quickly vanished from their sight
But in his place did leave, soul-sickening woe, and fright.³⁵

³¹ The main sources of the play are: *Eikon Basilike* [Dutch titles: *Konincklick Memorial* (Hartgers, 1649) and *Konincklijk voorbeeldt* (Naeranus, 1650)], *Engelsch Memorial*, and Vondel, *Maria Stuart* (1646).

³² ‘Ach Vader, wil u doch ontfarmen, / Met dees verweze Majesteit. / Vergeef het hen die my mishandlen, / En leer ’er ’t padt des deuchds bewandlen’. Dullaert, *Karel Stuart*, p. 11’.

³³ ‘Het bloed uit zijn doorkurve strot / Roept: wee en wraak voor d’Oppergod, / En doet den gantschen Hemel dav’ren’. Dullaert, *Karel Stuart*, p. K2^v. In poems by Westerbaen and several anonymous poets, the cry for vengeance is also articulated by the King’s grieving relatives. See, for example: Knuttel, 6336, Jacob Westerbaen, *Klachte van Henriette de Bourbon, Koninginne van Groot-Brittanjen over de dood van den doorluchtigsten en ongelukkigsten Koning Karel haren man* (1649); Thys., 5370, [Cornelis van Beveren] *Klachte Elizabets, Coninginne van Bohemen* (1649); and Knuttel, 6333, *Henriette de Bourbons ontstelde-Groot-moedigheid* (1649).

³⁴ For a short account of this prefatory sonnet, see Duits, ‘Horror als voorafje: de “Voorzangk” bij Joan Dullaerts Karel Stuart’.

³⁵ *Karel Stuart*, p. A1^v, my translation. The Dutch original reads: ‘Met beurde hy zijn hooft van d’afgehoute nek, / Dat met een open mondt, en heel benaauwd een trek, / Tot driemaal riep om wraak: des de moorders haren rezen. // Het bloedt sprongk uit

This, obviously, is the language of revenge tragedy. In his article on this poem, Henk Duits has proposed that the ghosts of Shakespeare's Old Hamlet and the brother of Geeraerd van Velsen in P.C. Hooft's tragedy *Geeraerd van Velsen* were the sources of Dullaert's horrific ghost, but obviously, Thyestes' ghost in Seneca's *Agamemnon*, as the common ancestor of all the revenge ghosts he mentions, is the more likely candidate. The direct literary model for Dullaert's sonnet, however, is neither Shakespeare nor Seneca, but Vondel.

In the preliminary pages of *Palamedes* (1625/6) Vondel too had conjured up the horrifying ghost of his titular hero who visited his judges. The close similarities between Vondel's prefatory poem and Dullaert's are unmistakable. Besides the sonnet form, the content of Vondel's poem is strikingly akin to Dullaert's. Like the ghost of Charles I, Vondel's Palamedes is covered with blood, he is abused, 'black and blue', and when his waking judges see him, their reaction closely resembles that of Bradshaw and his fellows:

They trembled with fear, fled not, rather flew
Then hence, then there, for his burning eyes.
He followed them, and left a bloodstain where he went [...] ³⁶

At the end of Vondel's poem, as in Dullaert's, Palamedes's ghost has left the 'parricides' to their own fears, to 'gnaw' at their own hearts.

The fact that Dullaert intertextually referred to the preliminary matter of *Palamedes* when he wrote his own sonnet about the ghost of Charles I is significant, because Vondel's tragedy was widely recognized as a political allegory, in which Vondel depicted Johan van Oldenbarnevelt/Palamedes as the innocent victim of the cruel ambition of François van Aerssen/Ulysses, Agamemnon/Maurits of Orange and the judges who convicted him.³⁷ Dullaert's echoing of *Palamedes*, then, suggests that the execution of the English king in 1649 reminded him of the death of the old Grand Pensionary of Holland in 1619. He

de romp, en met een droef gesteen, / En jammerlijke galm, hy flux van hen verdween, / Doch liet er, in zijn plaats, zielknagend' wee, en vrezen.'

³⁶ Vondel, 'Klinkdicht', *Palamedes of Vermoorde onnozelheit: Treurspel: Nunc casum lumine lugent* (Amsterdam: Abraham de Wees, 1652), p. B1^r. Translated from the original Dutch: 'Zy sidderden van schrick: zy vloten niet, maer vloogen, / Dan ginder heen, dan hier, voor't branden van zijne oogen. / Hy staptze na, en liet een bloetvleck waer hy tradt'.

³⁷ The allegory was instantly decoded by Vondel's contemporaries and brought Vondel into conflict with the authorities. In the 1707 'Amersfoort' edition of *Palamedes*, the allegory is explained in the notes.

was not the only one. The execution of Oldenbarnevelt had been a traumatic affair, which for the Remonstrants had become emblematic of the internal religious and political conflicts that continued to haunt the Dutch Republic in the 1650s. The implication of Dullaert’s allusion to *Palamedes*, therefore, is that both executions were comparable, and that the disruptive forces of domestic conflict that brought them about were similar.

The comparison between Oldenbarnevelt and Charles I was invited in other ways as well. Cromwell was commonly associated with Ulysses, Palamedes’s main opponent who feigned religious scruples to hide his burning ambition.³⁸ Indeed, in the play itself, Dullaert frequently called Cromwell ‘a Ulysses’. Vondel’s choice of words, too, was suggestive in the context of the aftermath of the English regicide. The judges of Palamedes/Oldenbarnevelt are called ‘patricides’ (‘vadermoorders’) and ‘wolves’ (‘wolven’), for instance, precisely the terms propagated by Salmasius and reiterated by Vondel and many other Dutch poets to denounce the regicides. The very Senecan rhetoric Vondel—himself probably inspired by Samuel Coster’s *Iphigenia* (1617)—had used against the Counter-Remonstrants in the 1620s, then, needed to be only slightly modified by Dutch Remonstrant royalists to become applicable to the English regicides. Time and again they would conflate the executions of 1619 and 1649 by using the same poetic material. A 1657 pamphlet even cited both Coster’s *Iphigenia* and Vondel’s translation of Seneca’s *Troades*, his *Amsteldamsche Hecvba* (*Amsterdam’s Hecuba*, 1626) in order to align the parricidal Cromwell with the Counter-Remonstrants.³⁹ When no less than four new editions of *Palamedes* were printed by Abraham de Wees straight after the outbreak of the first Anglo-Dutch War in 1652, the play simultaneously activated two contexts: the Dutch Truce Conflicts and the English Puritan revolution and regicide, thereby offering an interpretative framework that held a distinct, religious appeal to Dutch Remonstrants in their ongoing conflict with the strict Calvinist establishment. Politically, however, their adoption of a dynastic perspective instead of that of the States of Holland was less obvious.

³⁸ Grosheide, *Cromwell naar het oordeel van zijn Nederlandse tijdgenoten*.

³⁹ Knuttel, 7822, *Vergelijckinge tusschen Claudius Tiberius, Kayser van Romen, en Oliver Cromwel, Protector, of misschien toekomenden koninck van Engelandt, &c.* (1657).

The literary model of Dullaert's paratext reveals that the Dutch response to the regicide at times echoed Remonstrant poetry pertinent to the religious strife within the Netherlands. Yet Dullaert's ghost also had distinct political connotations, which are brought out by topical pamphlets on the regicide. The vengeful, Senecan ghost of the decapitated King appeared in many pamphlets and poems in the early 1650s. In the pamphlet *Wonderlijcke Geest des Conincx [...] wraeck begerende over eenen Jan Coke Advocaet, ende solliciteur voor den Republijcke van Engelandt* (*Miraculous Ghost of the King [...] Desiring Vengeance over John Cooke*, 1649), for example, the ghost of Charles I appears to John Cooke, the solicitor-general for the Commonwealth who acted as the King's prosecutor during the trial in January 1649.⁴⁰ Pamphlets like these provide an illuminating context for Dullaert's sonnet, as they suggest that the vengeful ghost of the King had a distinct persuasive, and hence political, function.

This is best illustrated by a similar pamphlet with the telling title *De geest van Karolus Stuart verscheenen aan de Nederlanden* (*The Ghost of Charles Stuart Appearing to the Netherlands*, 1649), which depicts Charles very much like Dullaert's ghost: as a bloody corpse carrying its own head.⁴¹ Here, however, the decapitated king does not terrify his judges, but rather his Dutch audience, as he complains about William II's sluggishness in coming to avenge him, and implores William to make haste. Was this a royalist critique of the stadtholder? Or was it rather an encouragement, and an attempt to prepare the minds of its Dutch audience for war? Possibly it was both. In any case, the poem employs a generic, literary image in order to argue for Dutch intervention in England. Whereas the image of the passive Martyr King provided Charles with a divine aura, and was tailored to arouse pity, representations of the King's vengeful ghost were specifically suited to being a call for action aimed directly at a Dutch audience.

The Ghost of Charles Stuart's explicit appeal to William II of Orange is implicit in many Dutch visions of a Stuart revenge in 1649–1650. Before he died suddenly of smallpox in November 1650, all royalist hopes centred on the young stadtholder William II, brother-in-law to Charles II. As indicated above, William held on to two firm principles

⁴⁰ Knuttel, 6328, *Wonderlijcke Geest des Conincx, Coninck over Engelandt, Schotlandt, en Eyrelandt, wraeck begerende over eenen Jan Coke Advocaet, ende solliciteur voor den Republijcke van Engelandt* (1649).

⁴¹ Knuttel, 6363, *De geest van Karolus Stuart verscheenen aan de Nederlanden* (1649).

in his foreign policy: to renew the war with Spain (which had ended with the Peace of Westphalen in 1648) and to support the Stuart cause. Eager to advance his own dynastic interests, William plunged himself and his House into debts on behalf of his royal friends. However, his own fortune (or rather credit) did not suffice to decide the struggle, and he was therefore continuously striving to gain domestic support for a war with the Rump and a renewed war with Spain. War, however, required the backing of the States General, and although William controlled most of the voting provinces, he was frustrated by the States of Holland, who had the power to block any decision of the general assembly. Holland and, initially, Zeeland treasured the English market and feared the effects of Parliament's strong navy on their trade in case of war. The States of both provinces had been determined to remain neutral in the English conflict during the 1640s, and continued this policy after the regicide. If the United Provinces were to put their weight behind the royalist cause, the States of Holland would somehow have to be forced to comply. William's raid on Amsterdam, in the summer of 1650, an audacious attempt to subdue the States of Holland and to gain complete control over the Republic, was instrumental in achieving this goal.⁴² Stirring up royalist sentiments among the populace was another, slightly more subtle, means to the same end. In 1649–1650, royalist visions of revenge were of special significance in the Dutch political context as they were aimed against, and designed to overcome, Holland's policy of neutrality.

The obvious problem with the Senecan rhetoric of vengeance as adopted by Dullaert and many pamphleteers, however, was the doubtful moral nature of revenge. Dutch revenge tragedies tended to emphasize unambiguously the fact that revenge belonged to God. Jan Vos (the playwright who had introduced Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* to the Amsterdam stage and the Dutch master of revenge tragedy) clearly recognized this problem. In the 20 sestets comprising *Brittanje aan Euroope* (*Britain to Europe*), Vos introduced Britain as a Senecan character rousing Europe to avenge Charles I.⁴³ Dressed in black (very

⁴² See for instance Groenveld, *De Prins voor Amsterdam*, pp. 13–22 and Kernkamp, *Prins Willem II. 1626–1650*, pp. 78ff.

⁴³ Jan Vos, 'Brittanje aan Euroope, toen Koning KAREL D'EERSTE vermoordt, &c', in Salmasius, *Koninklijke verdediging, voor Kaarel den I* (Rotterdam: Naeranus, 1650), KV, pp. **5^r–**8^r. The poem also appeared in *Verscheide Nederduytsche gedichten* (Amsterdam: Lodewyck Spillebout, 1651), pp. 79–82 and Jan Vos, *Alle de Gedichten van den poët Jan Vos* (Amsterdam: Jacob Lescaille, 1662), pp. 463–67.

much as Princess Elizabeth in Dullaert's play) Britain told the continent to mourn no more, but to rise to action and punish the regicides (ll. 1–6). The blood is already dripping in the first few lines, but Vos further enhances the horror of his poem in the fifth sestet, where he has Britain describe the continental army she envisages (ll. 31–36):

With tendons tightly stretch Lord Strafford's skin⁴⁴
 About his skull; scare the cruel tyrants
 And use his shins to strike the fearful drum
 You'll blow the hollow bones as you march on,
 Fairfax will be surprised by such a sound
 Of war, which will make his army flee.⁴⁵

Political retaliation is here couched in the language of revenge tragedy, the genre that earned Vos his reputation, and it is difficult to read this passage and its imaginative use of Strafford's body parts, without being reminded of Titus's revenge ('Hark, villains, I will grind your bones to dust, / And with your blood I'll make a paste / And of the paste a coffin I will rear').⁴⁶ Through this kind of verse, English revenge tragedy was recycled on the political stage, and applied to the English context. Interestingly, Vos explicitly states that moral reservations about revenge should now be temporarily put aside (ll. 103–05):

Vindictiveness, which long was libelled devilish
 Shall now be divine; for they who corrupt the law
 And shed the royal blood, deserve the heaviest punishment.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ The execution of the Earl of Strafford, Charles I's viceroy of Ireland, at the behest of Parliament in 1641, had been a traumatic affair for the king, who had been forced to sign the death warrant of one of his most loyal friends. After 1649, Strafford's death was usually seen as a pre-figuration of the King's, and the fact that Vos commemorates him in this context shows that he too absolved the king from any responsibility. By contrast, the campaign he envisages enables the royalists to avenge Strafford as much as the King.

⁴⁵ Translated from the original Dutch: 'Gy zult mijn Strafforts huilt, tot schrik der wreë tirannen, / Op Strafforts bekkeneel met taie peezen spannen, / En slaan met zijn gebeent op zulk een trom voor't volk; / In't trekken zult gy op zijn holle schonken blaazen; / Want zulk een krijgsgerucht zal Fairfax zelf verbaazen; / En 't leeger wegh doen vliën'.

⁴⁶ Vos's rendering of this passage in *Aran en Titus*: 'Dies zal ik u de neus flux uit uw' aanzicht bijten, / En al wat manlijk is van uwe lichaam rijten, / En stroopen u de huidt, al leevendig van 't lijf, / En steeken u aan 't spit; en schaffen 't helsche wijf, / Uw' godvergete moër, de gaargebraaden schinken: / En geeven haar uw' bloedt, met wijn doormengt, te drinken' (ll. 1887–92).

⁴⁷ Translated from the original Dutch: 'De Wraakzucht die altijd voor duivelsch is gelastert, / Die zal nu godtlijk zijn; want die de wet verbastert, / En 's Koninx bloedt vergiet, verdient de zwaarste straf'.

If Dutch audiences were to be convinced that they should ally themselves with Charles II, vengefulness, according to Vos, had to be re-evaluated. Hence, the image of the ghost of Charles I was complemented with images of his son as a just avenger.

Vos's *Britain to Europe* was first published as a prefatory poem in the Dutch edition of Salmasius's *Defensio Regia* and as such it both illustrates and reinforces one of the central arguments in that key text for royalist propagandists. The problem with which both Salmasius and Vos were struggling was essentially biblical in nature. The idea that God would be avenged on the regicides because they had violated the Divine Right of Kings was founded on several favourite biblical places of royalist Divine Right advocates, such as 1 Peter 2:17: 'Fear God, honour the King'. However, unambiguously anti-revolutionary as such royalist slogans may have been, they did not necessarily imply that Charles II was a just avenger. In his *Defensio Regia*, Salmasius cited Romans 12:19–13:1 to make that point:

Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.

(...)

...if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.⁴⁸

This biblical dictum, so central for royalists, shows that thinking about tyranny, obedience and revolution was very much intertwined with thinking about revenge, as the divine ruling against revolution was immediately followed by the warning that the rightful ruler was God's avenger.⁴⁹ In Salmasius's reading, there was no distinction between divine vindication and the revenge of Charles II, because Charles was merely God's avatar. Obviously, Vos's argument—albeit implicitly—relied on the same biblical context.

Yet both Salmasius and Vos glossed over one essential crux. In the case of civil war, when two or more authorities contest the sovereignty or rightfulness of the other(s), Romans 12–13 became utterly ambiguous, as the question as to who 'the powers that be' actually were was exactly what was at stake. If ultimate authority was to be found in Parliament, it was Parliament that would wield the sword of wrath, not

⁴⁸ Salmasius, *Koninklijke verdediging, voor Kaarel den I.*, p. 92.

⁴⁹ Kerrigan, 'Revenge tragedy revisited'.

the king in exile. Indeed, in the *First Defence*, Milton characteristically reversed Salmasius's argument by claiming that 'in the commonwealth, *all the magistracy* are by [God] entrusted with the preservation and execution of the laws, with the power of punishing and revenging; he has put the sword into their hands'. In Milton's reading, Paul's sword of wrath was the blade that had severed the king's head from his neck.⁵⁰ Even before Milton's reply, Salmasius knew that such a 'mad' interpretation of Paul's letter to the Romans was current among 'the prophets of England'. Yet he could never accept the authority of Parliament and therefore had to replace 'magistracy' with 'people' before he could rhetorically ask: 'who are the people they adorn with the name of power? Is it the entire people or a part of it? If entire, who are then to obey them? If a part, which part?'⁵¹ While reflecting on Salmasius's concern with revenge, Vos confronted the ambiguities of Paul's letter to the Romans in another way. By inscribing Charles I and Charles II into the genre of revenge tragedy, he could rely on the emotive power and authority of the form. The drama had always distinguished between bad avengers such as Aran and Tamora—who are driven by devilish ambition and deplorable vindictiveness—and good avengers, such as Lucius Andronicus, who are basically restorers of (divine) order.

Stuart political discourse and the dramatic genre of revenge tragedy, then, were confronted with the same moral ambiguity rooted in the Bible. Representing Charles as a generic, indeed iconic avenger was a means of effacing that ambiguity. In the elaborate allegorical

⁵⁰ Milton, *First Defence*, Chap. 3. Emphasis added. The entire passage shows that, for Milton, the magistrates act as defenders of the ultimate authority, religion. The church and the faithful need them as sword-bearers: 'God has not so modelled the government of the world as to make it the duty of any civil community to submit to the cruelties of tyrants, and yet to leave the church at liberty to free themselves from slavery and tyranny; nay, rather quite contrary, he has put no arms into the church's hand but those of patience and innocence, prayer and ecclesiastical discipline; but in the commonwealth, all the magistracy are by him entrusted with the preservation and execution of the laws, with the power of punishing and revenging; he has put the sword into their hands.'

⁵¹ Salmasius, *Koninklijke verdediging, voor Kaarel den I*, pp. 100–01. Translated from the original Dutch: 'Daar is een raazende uytlegginge der waarseggers van Engeland, van het gebod van Paulus, daar hy gebied, dat sy alle de machten onderworpen sijn, ende vermaanende, dat de macht van God gestelt is, niet te wederstaan is. Want dese macht verstaan sy van het volk. [...] wat is dat voor Volk dat sy met de naam van macht willen verstaan hebben? het geheele volk of een deel des selfs? Indien het geheele, wie sullen die sijn die het volk sullen moeten gehoorzamen [...]? Indien een deel, van wat deel sullen sy dat uytleggen?'

engraving on the broadsheet pamphlet called *Het Toneel der Engelsche Elenden* (*The Stage of English Miseries*) (see illustration 1) the idea that Charles II was part of a divine revenge plot is pointedly illustrated.⁵² Charles is here shown as a personification of St. George who fights the seven-headed dragon of revolution with a sword labelled 'Crown Right'. Ireland and Scotland kneel before him, and while Ireland appears to strap on his armour, Scotland hands him a gun that has two barely legible words written on it: 'provoked revenge' ('geterghde wraeck').⁵³ Charles's revenge is justified by the depiction of the execution of his father in the background. Dark clouds hang over the scaffold, yet it is lit up by four beams that testify to God's anger, his grief, and his pending revenge. Two read: 'Ire of God' ('Gramschap Gods'), the other two 'Woe, Woe' ('Wee-wee'), and: 'Revenge, Revenge' ('Wraak-wraak'). Above the armies fighting in heaven (a reference to the reported sightings in England of battles in heaven during the Civil War), small but central, is God's shining sword of wrath. Charles II has here become the chosen scourge of God.

Such divine support for royal revenge may also be found in one of the most outspoken political appropriations of Senecan revenge tragedy in seventeenth century Dutch drama, Jan Bara's *Herstelde Vorst, ofte geluckigh ongeluck* (*Restored Prince, or Fortunate Misfortune*, 1650).⁵⁴ Bara presents us with a British prince in mythical times called Rasimo, who is, early on in the play, visited by the ghost of his murdered father who rouses him to avenge his death: 'Satisfy my plea, go! Revenge!

⁵² Jan Zoet, *Het Tooneel der Engelsche elende* (Amsterdam: Hugo Allard, s.d.). Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, FM2054a. See also: British Library, Thomason 669f12 (88). EEBO 122153. *Atlas van Stolk*, nr. 2157. Van Kuyk mentions the pamphlet in his *Oude politieke spotprenten*, pp. 17, 152. See also: *The Abraham Cowley Text and Image Archive* (last accessed 31 March 2008): <<http://etext.virginia.edu/kinney/small/turningworm.htm>>. See also Cordes, *Jan Zoet*, pp. 265–67.

⁵³ The presence of Ireland in a role facilitating revenge suggests that the engraving was made before October 1649, by which time Cromwell had subdued Ireland. More likely, however, the pamphlet dates from early in 1650, when Charles agreed to the Scottish Covenanters' demands and became King of Scotland, which finally enabled him to come to action after having been stuck in Jersey for months. Because a second state of the plate shows Charles's coronation as King of Scotland, on 1 January 1651, *Het Tooneel* must have been in existence before that date. Of course, this does not rule out later reprints. Van Kuyk, *Oude politieke spotprenten*, p. 152, erroneously dates the broadside 1652; the *Atlas van Stolk* (Rotterdam: Atlas van Stolk, 1976) has 1651.

⁵⁴ Jan Bara, *Herstelde Vorst, ofte Geluckigh Ongeluck* (Amsterdam: L. Spillebout, 1650). I used the copy of the Royal Library in The Hague, sig. 760 E 69.

Ill. 1. *The Stage of English Miseries* (Amsterdam: Hugo Allard, 1650). Courtesy of the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (FM2045a).

Revenge! O, melancholy son!’ the ghost cries.⁵⁵ Rasimo, however, is hesitant to perform the revenge requested by his father. As a result of his hesitance, disaster strikes. In the end of the play, Ferrugo, a devilish captain in the English army, is able to cause a ‘terrible pestilence’ to settle ‘in the country’s marrow’. Eventually Rasimo is happily restored to the throne. Yet all is not well, as appears when another ghost arrives to bring an ominous prophecy to the decimated British court:

Here shall the axe be crimsoned by the Vice-Roy’s blood
The Archbishop’s head, and the King’s, shall be cut off
On this scaffold. Cold steel will run through their necks
To Holland’s great dismay, and France’s bitter grief;
Live long in peace, but mind the godforsaken heirs
Of this cruel captain.⁵⁶

Bara’s play abounds with topical allusions to the recent horrors of Civil War in England and its allegorical quality would not have been lost on contemporary readers and audiences. Captain Ferrugo, the devilish intriguer, is clearly a pre-figuration of Parliament’s martial heroes, Cromwell and Fairfax. Rasimo, on the other hand, is of course a type of Charles II, or, as the *Ghost of Charles Stuart* suggests, William II. When the main issue addressed by *The Restored Prince*, the question of whether the protagonist has the right to revenge his murdered father is answered unambiguously by a Voice from Heaven (which encourages Rasimo to pursue his just cause), this is not only a justification of Rasimo’s subsequent acts of revenge, but also of a royalist invasion of Parliamentary England.

With the exception of the more or less happy ending, the plot summary of *The Restored Prince* is, of course, vaguely familiar. And indeed, shades of *Hamlet* are present throughout the play. As in Dullaert’s sonnet, the similarity is probably coincidental. Seneca’s *Agamemnon*, in which the ghost of Thyestes pressures his son Aegisthus to revenge, is again the more likely source for the ghost, whereas with respect to the hesitant son Bara may even have been inspired by Geeraerd Brandt’s

⁵⁵ *Herstelde vorst*, p. A2^v, my translation. Orig. ‘Voldoe mijn beë, op! wraeck! wraeck! ô bedruckte Soon!’

⁵⁶ Translated from the original Dutch: ‘hier de Vice-Roy [Strafford] de bijle sal bebloeden, / Daer ’t hooft van Cantelbergh [Laud], en ’s Konings [Charles I] zijn geknot / Het stael door strot en neck gedreven op’t schavot, / Ten rou in Hollands-tuyn, en druck in’t Hof der Vrancken; / Leef lang in vreë, maer straft de god-vergete rancken / Van dese Capiteyn.’

popular *Veinzende Torquatus* (*Feigning Torquate*, 1644), which also closely resembled *Hamlet*, yet is widely believed to be a dramatization of one of Bandello's *Tragic Histories*. Nevertheless, Bara's echoing of Shakespeare is important in the sense that it shows how the royalists' appropriation of revenge tragedy interacted with existing discourses of revenge. For those who had read or seen topical plays like *The Restored Prince*, or even pamphlets like *The Ghost of Charles Stuart*, *Hamlet* or indeed any other Senecan revenge tragedy would have acquired poignant topical overtones.

Very similar to Bara's *Restored Prince* is Lodewijk Meyer's *Verloofde Koningsbruidt* (*The Royal Bride*, w. 1652), which also tells the story of a mythical regicide in Britain, followed by a complex revenge plot. *The Royal Bride* is vintage Senecan revenge tragedy in overdrive. Besides a *Hamlet*-like plot in which the ghost of the father is actually a disguised cousin of the avenger, it contains a cannibalistic scene in which the tyrant of Britain unwittingly drinks the blood of his murdered sons for wine—an obvious borrowing from Jan Vos's *Aran en Titus*.⁵⁷ Despite the onslaught at the British court, however, all ends well. Consider how one of the remaining noblemen introduces the rightful king, Atelstan, as a *deus ex machina* at the end of *The Royal Bride*:

My Lords, do not doubt that this is the Royal son
Our firstborn Prince, and the lawful heir to the throne.
Having the Tyrant's sword escaped, he kept himself
With this dear Queen concealed in Caledonia
All the while he patiently plotted with me
To force, with violence or craft, this raging tyrant
From his throne, and avenge his noble family.⁵⁸

In 1652, when Meyer wrote his play, there was only one king of Britain who had recently found shelter in Caledonia. And if Atelstan is, like Rasimo, a type of Charles II, it understandable that Meyer foregrounded the Queen of Caledonia as the 'royal bride' of the play's title:

⁵⁷ Meyer's editors offer evidence of several traces of *Aran en Titus* in Meyer's play and prefer it to Seneca's *Thyestes* as the source for the cannibalistic scene. Lodewijk Meyer, *Verloofde Koningsbruidt*. *Aran en Titus*, ll. 45–47.

⁵⁸ Meyer, *Verloofde Koningsbruidt*, pp. 153–54, ll. 1817–23. Translated from the original Dutch: 'Ghy Heeren, twijffelt niet; deeze is de Koningszoon, / Onze erffelijke Vorst, en wettigh oir der kroon, / Die, 't zwaerd van den Tiran ontvlucht, zich by Mēvrouwē, / In Kaledonien, bedekt'lijk heeft ghehouden, / En onderwijl met my staāgh onderling verstandt / Om met gheweldt, oft list, den woeden Dwingelandt / Te bonzen van den troon, en zijn gheslacht te wreken'.

by emphasizing the unwavering love and loyalty of the only Scottish character in the play to the lawful heir to the throne, Meyer celebrated the 'marriage' between Charles II and Scotland.

In the Dutch context, that 'marriage' was of particular importance. William II had engineered Charles II's agreement with the Scottish Covenanters in order to sway Calvinist opinion on his support of the Stuart cause. A war on behalf of a Presbyterian king would be easier to sell than a war on behalf of an Episcopal one. Dutch pamphlets frequently celebrated Charles's acceptance of the Scottish crown as a harbinger of his revenge on the regicides. The fact that his revenge would now also be a solid Protestant revenge was most pointedly illustrated in the second state of *The Stage of English Miseries*, which accompanied a description of the coronation (see illustration 2).⁵⁹ In this version, Charles is still prominently depicted as a generic avenger, but instead of the execution of his father, the background shows his coronation by the Marquess of Argyle. Moreover, he is now accompanied by the Church of Scotland minister Robert Douglas, who is reading a text captioned 'Proverbs 1:12': 'Let us swallow them alive'. Douglas's sober, Presbyterian attire serves to show that the aggression of his new son-king originates in a justified Protestant desire to punish the sinners to which Salomon's text refers. The Scottish alliance, then, offered hope for a happy ending in more than one way. But the religious sensitivities surrounding an allied Orange-Stuart revenge, which were highlighted by it, were sensibly glossed over by Meyer and his fellow playwrights in the early 1650s. *The Royal Bride* merely opposes Scotland's loyalty to the usurpation in England; the Scots' religious identity remains mythically irrelevant to the poetic scheme of things.

THE STUART REVENGE AND THE ANGLO-DUTCH WAR

The stadtholderless period, which began after William II's death on 6 November 1650, meant that Dutch assistance in a Stuart campaign was further away than ever. The States Party in Holland was now able to uphold its policy of neutrality in the English conflict without coordinated political resistance. The Stuart rhetoric of revenge had

⁵⁹ Atlas van Stolk 2158. *Kunstig vertoog en bondig verhaal van de krooning van zijne Maj. Karolus II, koning van Schotland, Yrland en Engelandt, binnen Scoone 1 Jan. 1651* (Amsterdam: Hugo Allard, 1651). Muller, 2045b.

remained without tangible results. When Charles II (now deprived of the support of his brother-in-law) and his Scottish army suffered a disastrous defeat in the Battle of Worcester in 1651, a Stuart revenge had become a distant dream.

The outbreak of the First Anglo-Dutch War in May 1652 opened new perspectives. Initially, little changed: the leading regents of Holland still did not want to commit themselves to the Stuart cause. An alliance with the scattered royalist forces, they believed, would add little to their strength, intensify the unwanted conflict with Parliament and, in addition, strengthen the Orangist party. Well-informed royalists knew that as long as the Anglo-Dutch conflict basically remained a war of trade, it offered little hope for a Stuart Restoration. Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon, for instance, claimed to be 'not wise enough to judge which would be best for us, that the Dutch should beat the English or the English the Dutch'.⁶⁰ As it was, a Dutch triumph would only strengthen the position of the royalists' opponents in the Dutch Republic, while an English victory would strengthen their enemies at home. A formal agreement between Charles II and the States General would change that.

When the course of the war proved disastrous for the Dutch, Holland's war policy came under severe pressure, and Orangist opposition in Holland quickly gained in strength. In the summer of 1652, Constantijn Huygens, in a letter to an English royalist exile, Lady Morgan, already hinted crisis might be coming which would stir up the populace against the States of Holland.⁶¹ In the tumultuous first half of 1653, that crisis culminated.⁶² In February, Grand Pensionary Pauw had sent a letter to Parliament in which he expressed Holland's desire for peace. Unfortunately for Holland, Tromp was routed in the Battle of Portland soon afterwards (28 February–2 March 1653 NS),⁶³ and an outright English victory rather than a diplomatic peace was at hand. In the meanwhile, Pauw had died, and Johan de Witt had been appointed as Grand Pensionary. One of his first deeds was a beginner's mistake: he sent another letter to Parliament, which was triumphantly published in England as the *Humble Prayer of the States of Holland*

⁶⁰ Cited from Geyl, *Orange and Stuart*, p. 91.

⁶¹ Rowen, *John de Witt*, 68. The letter to Lady Morgan is published in: Worp, *De Briefwisseling van Constantijn Huygens*, 5, p. 147.

⁶² Israel, *Dutch Republic*, pp. 713–26.

⁶³ Dutch: 'Driedaagse Zeeslag'.

for Peace on 18 March.⁶⁴ De Witt had humiliated himself without any result. Holland panicked, and royalist writers attempted to capitalize on popular hostility towards the States Party.

The Orangist upsurge of 1652–1653, which culminated in riots in many towns in Holland and Zeeland (including Dordrecht, The Hague, Rotterdam and Middelburg), and even led to a (temporarily) successful rebellion against the magistrate in Enkhuizen, revived Orangist plans for a Dutch-Stuart alliance. Alexander van der Capellen, Lord of Aartsbergen, and Guelders's delegate to the States General, outlined the Orangists' strategy as he pondered the 'difficult' and 'precarious' Anglo-Dutch war in his diary in the summer of 1653:

The opportunity has presented itself, and is still not altogether lost, to stir up dissension, old hatred and fire of internecine war [in England]. The King of Scotland, now fugitive, has had proposed and requested small assistance, to allow his interest to be asserted and defended with the occupation of one or another harbour. The Highlanders in Scotland have offered their harbours and people, with the request of assistance with regard to the supply of weapons, and munitions of war. The Irish have made, and still are making, like offers. Most of our provinces are inclined to accept these offers; old regents and good patriots judge that, by way of support, assistance, and use of the King's name and banner in some of our ships, revolt within the provinces [of England], and desertion of several naval captains with their ships shall be procured. Yet several regents in Holland are not to be moved to adopt this course, fearing that when the King will be restored in England, the young prince of Orange, through his mother born from the same blood, having grown, shall undertake something to their disadvantage; and because of this, they have favoured the cause of Parliament to the war, and have worked against those of the king. Ships and people engaged to the king's service, loaded with munitions of war, and to be sent over, were arrested, and have been made to unload and disperse. And they are rather persisting to the same maxims.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Published in Knuttel, 7389–90.

⁶⁵ Van der Capellen, *Gedenkschriften*, p. 395. Translated from the original Dutch: 'D'Occasie is soon geweest, ende noch niet al verdwenen, om dissentie, oude haet, ende vuur van inwendighen oorlogh te verwecken. De Koninck van Scotland, nu fugitif wesende, heeft doen voorslaen ende versoeken kleyne assistentie, om syne interesse te mogen doen gelden, ende patrocineeren met occupatie van d'een ofte d'ander haven. De Hoochlanders in Scotland hebben gedaen aanbiedinghe van haere Havens ende volck, met versoeck van assistentie in toevoer van wapenen, ende munitie van Oorloghe. D'Iren hebben gedaen, ende doen noch, gelycke presentation. Onse meeste Provincien syn daer toe genegen; ende wort by oude Regenten ende goede Patriotten geordeelt, dat, door de wegh van support, assistentie, ende gebruyck van 's Conincx

A former confidant of Frederick Henry of Orange, Van der Capellen was a prominent Orangist who also belonged to Huygens's circle.⁶⁶ In collaboration with Huygens, who as secretary to the former princes of Orange was in close contact with the courts of the Princess Royal and the Dowager Princess Amalia, he laboured to persuade the Hollanders that an alliance with the House of Stuart was the only way to win the war.⁶⁷

Propaganda was obviously part of this political campaign. In prose pamphlets, the argument forwarded by Van der Capellen, that such an alliance would cause dissension in the English navy and army, was repeated and developed.⁶⁸ The fact that *The Stage of English Miseries* is an accurate rendering of the Orangist argument, and actually depicts the offers made by Scotland and Ireland (albeit three years earlier, in 1650), strongly suggests that the court was involved in visual propaganda as well—the engraving may well have been reprinted. The Stuart court duly collaborated with the Orangists. On 21 March 1653 (NS), Edward Hyde, one of Charles II's chief advisers, wrote to John Kent, the royalist resident in Venice: 'the Dutch are instructed how necessary it is for them to join with the King, that they may carry on the war against the rebels prosperously'.⁶⁹ Once again, the Orange and the Stuart interest overlapped, and again, they attempted to persuade the populace and the regents of Holland to join them. Yet now they aimed

naem ende baniere in eenighe van onse Scepen, revolte in Provintien, ende afval van eenighe Sceeps Capiteynen met haer Scepen te wege gebracht sal worden. Edoch eenighe Regenten in Hollant syn niet te bewegen, om dien wegh te willen ingaen, uyt vreesse, dat de Coninck herstelt wordende in Engelandt, ende den Jongen Prince van Oragnen, uyt 't selfde bloet door syn Moeder gebooren synde, groot geworden synde, iets tot haer naedeel gedaen ende ondernomen sal worden; ende hebben daeromme de saken van het Parlement in Engelandt voor d'Oorloghe gefavoriseert, die van den Coninck tegengegaen, scepen ende volcke, die tot desselfs dienst aengenomen waeren, met munitie van Oorlogh geladen, ende overgesonden soudon worden, aengehouden, ende doen ontladen ende verstroeyen, ende continueeren noch al in deselve maximen.'

⁶⁶ Worp, *De briefwisseling van Constantijn Huygens*, 3, p. 105.

⁶⁷ Worp, *De briefwisseling van Constantijn Huygens*, 5, pp. 185–86.

⁶⁸ Cf. Knuttel, 7425–26. Anonymous, *Hoe veel den Vereenigde Provintien behoort gelegen te zijn, de her-stellinge van den Coninck van Groot-Brittangie. Uyt-gegeven op de tegenwoordige gelegentheyt van Oorlog tusschen hen, en de Engelsche Rebellen* (The Hague: Harman Cornelisz. for Samuel Browne, 1653).

⁶⁹ Hyde to Joseph Kent, 11/21 March 1653. Cited in Pincus, *Protestantism and Patriotism*, pp. 108–09.

to change the character of the war from a trade conflict into a religious war waged to avenge the martyr king.⁷⁰

In line with the date of Hyde's letter, the call for a Dutch-Stuart alliance peaked in March 1653. On hearing of the Dutch defeat, Charles wrote to the Dutch ambassador Boreel on 6 March that he was 'heartily sorry' for the Dutch losses and would gladly 'engage his own person' in the war if the States were willing to assign him some ships.⁷¹ It can hardly be a coincidence that the Dutch translation of a famous piece of Stuart propaganda was published practically simultaneously with Charles's magnanimous offer. Pierre du Moulin's *Wraak-geschrey van het Koning-lijke bloed, tot den Hemel, tegen de Engelsche vadermoorders* (*Cry of the Royal Blood to Heaven, Against the English Patricides*, orig. *Regii sanguinis clamor ad coelum*, 1652) was signed on 5 March 1653.⁷² Printed by Johan van Dalen, who had previously published two Dutch versions of Salmasius's *Defensio Regia*, the book was dedicated to Charles II, of whom Van Dalen proclaimed himself to be the 'most humble and loyal servant'. In all probability, then, this translation was the result of the Orange-Stuart campaign in Holland. The cry of the royal blood to which the title refers is taken from Psalm 94. According to Du Moulin, Charles I's blood still cried: 'O Lord God, to whom vengeance belongeth; O God, to whom vengeance belongeth, shew thyself'. The book's main concern, like the Psalm's, is the old enigma, why do the wicked prosper? Or, in this case, why do the regicides prosper? Du Moulin, in Van Dalen's translation, addresses the entire Christian world to support the cry of the royal blood, until 'it will draw revenge from heaven',⁷³ and show those who now laugh in God's face that wickedness will eventually be punished. In the Dutch

⁷⁰ Cf. Knuttel, 7426. *Hoe veel den Vereenigde Provintien behoort gelegen te zijn, de her-stelling van den coninck van Groot-Britangie* (Sam. Browne, 1653).

⁷¹ Cited from Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, p. 720. See also Geyl, *Orange and Stuart*, pp. 99–100.

⁷² *Wraak-geschrey van het Koning-lijke bloed, tot den Hemel, tegen de Engelsche vadermoorders* (Rotterdam: Johan van Dalen, 1653). Knuttel, 7361. I have used UBL, Thysspfl., 6141. The original, Pierre du Moulin's *Regii sanguinis clamor ad coelum adversus paricidas Anglicanos* (Den Haag: Adrian Vlacq, 1652) was published on the eve of the Anglo-Dutch war. Thomason 181:E.1396. Pierre or Peter du Moulin the Younger (1601–1684) a Huguenot (like Salmasius) who shared his father's anglo-philialia, and had an ecclesiastical career in England from 1628 onwards. He also authored *Ecclesiae gemitus sub anabaptistica tyrannide* (1649).

⁷³ Orig. 'tot dat het de wraak uyt den Hemel trekt'. Knuttel, 7361. *Wraak-geschrey van het Koning-lijke bloed*, 74.

Republic in 1653, there could be no mistake about the implications of this argument for the war of trade at hand.

Topical poetry embraced the sentiment that the war was about avenging the martyr king as much as it was about trade. Time and time again Dutch poets expressed the royalist view that the war was a war against regicides rather than a war against economic competitors. Even some passages in Huygens’s *Hofwyck*, which was published in 1653 and is usually presumed to be devoid of political allusions, had severe topical overtones. When the speaker in Huygens’s poem addresses God (ll. 1235–38), the language becomes reminiscent of the royalist rhetoric of revenge such as that of Du Moulin, and specifically that of the iconography of *The Stage of English Miseries*:⁷⁴

Let your provoked revenge be satisfied
By the downfall of our neighbouring people
Where your holy inheritance, your Church
Now lies smothered and drowned in royal blood [...]

Huygens’s use of the term ‘provoked revenge’ and his equating the royal cause with a divine cause in the midst of the Orange-Stuart campaign of 1653 left little doubts about his position. Significantly, the war and regicide penetrate even the tranquillity of Huygens’s estate.

But whereas Huygens’s loyalty to the Houses of Orange and Stuart was well-known, others joining the royalist choir in March 1653 had rather different credentials. As in 1650, Jan Vos contributed to the Stuart cause by way of an elaborate poem of 876 lines with marked Senecan elements, the *Zee-Krygh* (*Naval War*), which was also published in the spring of 1653.⁷⁵ At the beginning of this poem, Vos states that although Parliament started the war because they envied

⁷⁴ Translated from the original Dutch: ‘Laet dijn geterghde wraeck versaedt zijn in ‘t verderf / Van ons gebuerigh volck, daer nu dijn heiligh erf, / Dijn’ kercke, light gesmoort en in haer bloed versopen, / Haer Conincklicke bloed, en buijten hulp en hopen, / En buijten trouw en troost voor ewigh schijnt ontdaen, / ‘Ten zij ghij met de boos’ eens in ‘tgericht wilt gaen.’

⁷⁵ Jan Vos, *Zee-krygh tusschen De Staaten der Vrye Neederlanden, En het Parlement van Engelandt*, Vos, *Alle de gedichten I* (Amsterdam: Jacob Lescaille, 1662), pp. 299–332. In 1653 the poem was published as a separate pamphlet (Knuttel, 7322) and in the second part of the poetry collection *Verscheide Nederduytsche gedichten* (Amsterdam: L. Spillebout, 1653). Translated from the original Dutch: ‘[...] quam voor’t ledekant van zijn gevluchte Zoon: / Op, sprak hy, nu is’t tijdt van winnen, en van wreken. / De weêrwraak, om’t verlies van zetel, staf en Kroon, / Is Goddelijk: want Godt heeft u tot Vorst geschaapen / Het recht der Koningen bewaart men door het wapen. / De Leeuw van’t vrye Landt zal u het heerspoor baanen’.

the Republic's wealth, the ultimate cause of the war was the execution of the king. He describes how Charles I's execution by 'de bijl der dolle Londenaren' ('the axe of raging Londoners') caused Pluto to convene the Hellish Hordes in the underworld. There it is decided that Revenge should visit Parliament to cause war with the Dutch Republic, because the hellish reign in England must be buttressed by Dutch wealth. The Republic on the other hand will help to restore the rightful dynasty of the murdered king. This is revealed to Charles II by the ghost of his father, which

[...] came before the bedstead of his exiled son
 Rise, he spoke, the time has come to win and to revenge.
 Counter-revenge, for the loss of sceptre, throne and crown,
 Is divine, for God has created you as a Prince
 And the right of Kings is guarded by weaponry.
 The Lion of the free Country shall pave your way.⁷⁶

Paving the way for Charles's revenge, the Dutch lion is here presented as the guardian of the divine right of kings; the Dutch Republic and Charles II share a similar cause. Like Du Moulin's *Cry of the Royal Blood*, then, Vos's *Naval War* propagates an alliance between the Dutch Republic and the exiled Charles II, echoing the language of both the vengeful ghosts in the pamphlet literature and his own *Britain to Europe*.

When the *Naval War* appeared in March 1653, it was exceptional in two respects. In the first place, with Jacob Westerbaen's *Hollands vloeck aen het parlamentsche Engeland* (*Holland's Curse to the Parliamentary English*, 1653),⁷⁷ it was one of the longest topical poems on the war. A far more interesting and far more exceptional feature of the poem, however, is the fact that it was preceded by a dedication to Vos's patron Joan Huydecoper, one of the most powerful men in Amsterdam. Considering the poem's advocacy of the Stuart cause, and its affinity to royalist propaganda, the fact that Huydecoper was prepared to have his name attached to it was an important political message. It indicated that within the ruling elite of Amsterdam there was a movement towards an alliance between the Dutch Republic and

⁷⁶ Vos, 'Zee-Krygh', p. 329.

⁷⁷ J. Westerbaen, *Hollands vloeck aen het parlamentsche Engeland op het stuck van de zee-slagh gevallen tusschen de ammiraelen Tromp en Blaeck [...] op den lesten febr. ende den 1. en 2. maert, 1653*. UBL Thyspfl. 6168.

the exiled Charles II, an inclination towards a hardening of the war, and a move away from Holland's official policy.

The republication and performance of Dullaert's *Karel Stuart* can also be interpreted as a sign of Amsterdam's attitude towards the Stuart alliance.⁷⁸ The martyr play written shortly after the execution of the king four years earlier went through no less than ten consecutive performances in the Amsterdam theatre, the theatrical heart of the Dutch Republic, in March 1653.⁷⁹ As in the case of Du Moulin's *Cry of the Royal Blood*, the political implication of such performances could not have escaped the audience: the Dutch were not fighting a war against economic competitors, but against godless regicides. In 1652–1653, the imagery developed in the wake of the regicide had only gained in political urgency.

CONCLUSION

Having detailed the political impact of the royalist rhetoric of revenge, its main forms, and its poignancy in 1649–1650 and 1653, it is now time to consider its cultural significance. Dutch literary history has usually considered topical poetry and topical drama to be somehow separated from mainstream culture, 'incidental trifles' which should at best be mentioned in passing.⁸⁰ From the perspective of contemporaries, however, quite the opposite is true: for them, current events occupied centre stage, and the debates these inspired coloured their experience of literature. As the republication of *Palamedes* in 1652 indicates, literary genres such as Senecan revenge tragedy could suddenly gain in urgency as the horrors of civil war and regicide posed political and religious dilemmas.

Plays like Jan Bara's *Restored Prince* or Lodewijk Meyer's *Royal Bride* openly participated in the political discourse surrounding the English revolution. And, indeed, the topical significance of the generic elements such as the vengeful ghost or Senecan horror also affected the interpretation of other revenge tragedies that were not explicitly

⁷⁸ De Jong, 'Joan Dullaarts visie op de terechtstelling van Karel Stuart', p. 163 mentions the 'Three Days' Battle as a possible reason for the consecutive performances in March.

⁷⁹ See Oey-de Vita and Geesink, *Academie en Schouwburg*, pp. 121–22 and 159.

⁸⁰ Cf. Sellin, 'Royalist Propaganda', pp. 259–60.

topical. *Hamlet*, for instance, or Jan Vos's Shakespeare adaptation *Aran en Titus* (1638) also tended to equate the revenge of the rightful heir to the throne with divine vengeance. And what are we to make of Lambert van den Bosch's translation of Seneca's *Agamemnon* (1661)? Published shortly after the Restoration, this play, written by the staunch royalist Van den Bosch, also features the ghost of a father who urges his son to revenge, which surely evoked the tragedy of Charles I and the successful revenge of the modern Orestes, Charles II.

Dutch playwrights like Dullaert frequently fell back on examples dating from the Truce Conflicts not only because they provided handsome rhetorical and poetical models but also because the drama of those days constituted a frame of reference helping Remonstrant poets to interpret the unprecedented upheavals in England. The literary and theatrical parallels that were drawn between the executions of Van Oldenbarnevelt and Charles I, then, signify that a literary form such as Senecan tragedy was not only a propagandistic tool but also an interpretative framework. Whether the former or the latter function dominates in the texts discussed above is often difficult to say, but doubtless, political discourse was shaped to a considerable extent by cultural memory and pre-existing literary forms.

The frequent use of theatrical metaphors in literary texts about the regicide also suggests that the drama played a substantial part in shaping people's views of the regicide. The notion of the *theatrum mundi*, the assimilation of history and theatre, seems to have contributed to the poetic appeal of the Stuart cause. This was surely stimulated by the performative quality of Charles I's execution. Many scholars writing on the subject cite Andrew Marvell's *Horation Ode upon Cromwell's Return from Ireland* (1650), in which Charles is styled 'the Royal Actor', who nobly underwent his fate: 'He nothing common did or mean/ Upon that memorable scene'. It is less well-known that the comparison between the execution and a tragedy was a commonplace that was also frequently employed by commentators in the Dutch Republic.⁸¹ The Dordrecht poet Roemer van Wesel ('Romane'), for example, composed a poem with the telling title *De lijdende christus, treur-spel, Vertoont tot Londen, den 9en Febr. 1649* (*The Suffering Christ, Tragedy*

⁸¹ Cf. also title of the well-known description of the execution of Charles I, *Tragicum Theatrum actorum, & casuum tragicorum Londini publice celebratorum* (Amsterdam: Jodocus Janssonius, 1649).

Performed in London, on 9 February 1649, w. 1649) in which Charles performs the main part in a Passion play.⁸² We may consider the idea that the theatrical metaphor is not a metaphor at all, that Charles I was indeed perceived as an actor playing his role in a divine Passion play in a very real sense. And that his son, by extension, was the protagonist in a divine revenge tragedy. The Dutch confidence in his revenge then boils down to Horatio’s words in *Hamlet*: ‘Heaven will direct it’ (*Hamlet*, I.IV.68).

Eventually, heaven would. In a way, the (almost) bloodless restoration of Charles II, in 1660, confirmed the moral of revenge tragedy’s happy ending. Indeed, Charles’s procession through the Dutch Republic was all but a dramatic event, as the re-established king played his triumphant part to the cheers of a Dutch audience that had been enthused about the English monarch by a decade of royalist literature. The Dutch Republic, which had enjoyed the Senecan images of Charles II’s retribution for such a long period, now became the real stage of his return to power and grace. This outcome, conforming as it did to a cherished aesthetic form, obviously confirmed the belief in a just God and the Divine Right of Kings. Perhaps somewhat less obviously, it also encouraged the belief in the ultimate reality of theatre.

⁸² R. van Wesel, ‘De lijdende christus, treur-spel, Vertoont tot Londen, den 9en Febr. 1649’, in *Bloemkrans der verscheide gedichten* (Amsterdam: L. Spillebout, 1659), pp. 294–95.