

Early Modern Literature in History

General Editors: Cedric C. Brown, Professor of English and Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Humanities, University of Reading; Andrew Hadfield, Professor of English, University of Sussex, Brighton

Advisory Board: Donna Hamilton, University of Maryland; Jean Howard, Columbia University; John Kerrigan, University of Cambridge; Richard McCoy, CUNY; Sharon Achinstein, University of Oxford

Within the period 1520–1740 this series discusses many kinds of writing, both within and outside the established canon. The volumes may employ different theoretical perspectives, but they share an historical awareness and an interest in seeing their texts in lively negotiation with their own and successive cultures.

Titles include:

Cedric C. Brown and Arthur F. Marotti (*editors*)

TEXTS AND CULTURAL CHANGE IN EARLY MODERN ENGLAND

Martin Butler (*editor*)

RE-PRESENTING BEN JONSON

Text, History, Performance

Jocelyn Catty

WRITING RAPE, WRITING WOMEN IN EARLY MODERN ENGLAND

Unbridled Speech

Dermot Cavanagh

LANGUAGE AND POLITICS IN THE SIXTEENTH-CENTURY HISTORY PLAY

Danielle Clarke and Elizabeth Clarke (*editors*)

'THIS DOUBLE VOICE'

Gendered Writing in Early Modern England

James Daybell (*editor*)

EARLY MODERN WOMEN'S LETTER-WRITING, 1450–1700

Jerome De Groot

ROYALIST IDENTITIES

John Dolan

POETIC OCCASION FROM MILTON TO WORDSWORTH

Henk Dragstra, Sheila Ottway and Helen Wilcox (*editors*)

BETRAYING OURSELVES

Forms of Self-Representation in Early Modern English Texts

Sarah M. Dunnigan

EROS AND POETRY AT THE COURTS OF MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS AND

JAMES VI

Andrew Hadfield

SHAKESPEARE, SPENSER AND THE MATTER OF BRITAIN

William M. Hamlin

TRAGEDY AND SCEPTICISM IN SHAKESPEARE'S ENGLAND

Elizabeth Heale
AUTOBIOGRAPHY AND AUTHORSHIP IN RENAISSANCE VERSE
Chronicles of the Self

Pauline Kiernan
STAGING SHAKESPEARE AT THE NEW GLOBE

Ronald Knowles (*editor*)
SHAKESPEARE AND CARNIVAL
After Bakhtin

Anthony Miller
ROMAN TRIUMPHS AND EARLY MODERN ENGLISH CULTURE

Arthur F. Marotti (*editor*)
CATHOLICISM AND ANTI-CATHOLICISM IN EARLY MODERN
ENGLISH TEXTS

Jennifer Richards (*editor*)
EARLY MODERN CIVIL DISCOURSES

Sasha Roberts
READING SHAKESPEARE'S POEMS IN EARLY MODERN ENGLAND

Mark Thornton Burnett
CONSTRUCTING 'MONSTERS' IN SHAKESPEAREAN DRAMA AND EARLY
MODERN CULTURE

MASTERS AND SERVANTS IN ENGLISH RENAISSANCE DRAMA AND CULTURE
Authority and Obedience

<p>The series Early Modern Literature in History is published in association with the Renaissance Texts Research Centre at the University of Reading.</p>

Early Modern History: Society and Culture
Series Standing Order ISBN 978-0-333-71472-0
(*outside North America only*)

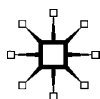
You can receive future titles in this series as they are published by placing a standing order. Please contact your bookseller or, in case of difficulty, write to us at the address below with your name and address, the title of the series and the ISBN quoted above.

Customer Services Department, Macmillan Distribution Ltd, Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 6XS, England

Tragedy and Scepticism in Shakespeare's England

William M. Hamlin
Department of English
Washington State University

palgrave
macmillan



© William M. Hamlin 2005

Softcover reprint of the hardcover 1st edition 2005 978-1-4039-4598-3

All rights reserved. No reproduction, copy or transmission of this publication may be made without written permission.

No paragraph of this publication may be reproduced, copied or transmitted save with written permission or in accordance with the provisions of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988, or under the terms of any licence permitting limited copying issued by the Copyright Licensing Agency, 90 Tottenham Court Road, London W1T 4LP.

Any person who does any unauthorized act in relation to this publication may be liable to criminal prosecution and civil claims for damages.

The author has asserted his right to be identified as the author of this work in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

First published 2005 by
PALGRAVE MACMILLAN

Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 6XS and
175 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y. 10010

Companies and representatives throughout the world

PALGRAVE MACMILLAN is the global academic imprint of the Palgrave Macmillan division of St. Martin's Press, LLC and of Palgrave Macmillan Ltd. Macmillan® is a registered trademark in the United States, United Kingdom and other countries. Palgrave is a registered trademark in the European Union and other countries.

ISBN 978-1-349-52334-4 ISBN 978-0-230-50276-5 (eBook)

DOI 10.1057/9780230502765

This book is printed on paper suitable for recycling and made from fully managed and sustained forest sources.

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Hamlin, William M., 1957–

Tragedy and scepticism in Shakespeare's England / William M. Hamlin.

p. cm. – (Early modern literature in history)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

1. English drama (Tragedy)—History and criticism. 2. English drama—Early modern and Elizabethan, 1500–1600—History and criticism. 3. English drama—17th century—History and criticism. 4. Shakespeare, William, 1564–1616—Philosophy. 5. Shakespeare, William, 1564–1616—Tragedies. 6. Scepticism—History—16th century. 7. Scepticism—History—17th century. 8. Scepticism in literature. I. Title. II. Early modern literature in history (Palgrave Macmillan (Firm))

PR658.T7H35 2005

822'.05120903—dc22

2004062851

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
14 13 12 11 10 09 08 07 06 05

*For my mother,
Florence Ruth Greathouse
and to the memory of my father,
William Carl Hamlin*

This page intentionally left blank

Contents

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	ix
<i>A Note on Citation, Quotation and Abbreviation</i>	xi
Introduction: Engaging Doubt	1
Part One The Reception of Ancient Scepticism in Elizabethan and Jacobean England	13
1 The Continental Background	15
2 Crossed Opinions: The Elizabethan Years	29
3 Seeming Knowledge: The Jacobean Years and Beyond	72
Part Two Fools of Nature: Scepticism and Tragedy	117
4 Literary Adaptation: Sceptical Paradigms, Sceptical Values	119
5 Casting Doubt in <i>Doctor Faustus</i>	144
6 <i>The Spanish Tragedy</i> : Doom and the Exile of Justice	155
7 The Plague of Opinion: <i>Troilus and Cressida</i>	167
8 Temporizing as Pyrrhonizing in <i>The Malcontent</i>	184
9 <i>Mariam</i> and the Critique of Pure Reason	195
10 False Fire: Providence and Violence in Webster's Tragedies	210
11 <i>The Changeling</i> : Blood, Will and Intellectual Eyesight	220
12 Criterion Anxiety in <i>'Tis Pity She's a Whore</i>	233
<i>Notes</i>	247
<i>Select Bibliography</i>	265
<i>Index</i>	288

This page intentionally left blank

Acknowledgements

Generous grants from the British Academy, the Huntington Library and the Renaissance Society of America enabled me to spend many months pursuing my enquiries on both sides of the Atlantic. A year-long fellowship from the National Endowment for the Humanities gave me precious time during which I finished the preliminary draft of this book. Parts of my typescript, in various earlier forms, were delivered as papers at the Shakespeare Association of America, the World Shakespeare Congress, the Renaissance Society of America and the International Marlowe Conference; earlier sections of chapters were published in *Studies in English Literature*, *Comparative Drama*, *Montaigne Studies*, *Sixteenth Century Journal* and *Early Modern Literary Studies*. I thank the respective journal editors and conference organizers for extending me multiple opportunities to present my ideas over the past half-dozen years.

More fundamentally, however, I acknowledge with gratitude the collaborative spirit of an international community of librarians and students of early modern history, philosophy and literature. Colleagues, friends and people I may never meet have answered my queries, given thought to my hunches, read sections of my typescript and, more generally, taken the time to help me make this a better book than it might otherwise have been. I have profited immensely from conversation and correspondence with dozens of scholars, among them Julia Annas, Richmond Barbour, Ben Bertram, Tom Bishop, Victoria Burke, Alberto Cacicedo, Stuart Clark, John Cox, Bob Darcy, Gail Fine, Tom Flanigan, A. C. Hamilton, James Hankinson, Peter Holbrook, John Lee, Fritz Levy, Ian McAdam, Nick Moschovakis, Charles Nauert, Melissa Norton, Matt Prineas, Theodore Rabb, Roger Sale, Garrett Sullivan, Virginia Mason Vaughan, Russell Wahl, Jonathan Westphal, Frank Whigham and Charles Whitney. Elisabeth Leedham-Green at Cambridge University Library responded with wit and alacrity to scores of questions, and Stuart Adams introduced me to the rich literary holdings of the Middle Temple. I also learned enormously from the knowledge and able assistance of Muriel McCarthy at Archbishop Marsh's Library, Dublin; Sarah Bendall and Fiona Wilkes at Merton College, Oxford; William Hodges at the Bodleian; Tony Trowles at Westminster Abbey; Norma Potter at All Souls College, Oxford; Guy Holborn at Lincoln's

Inn; Laetitia Yeandle at the Folger Shakespeare Library; James Anthony at the Warburg Institute; Stuart Seanoir at Trinity College, Dublin; Matthew Phillips at Christ Church College, Oxford; Adrian Blunt at the Inner Temple; David Wykes and Brian Rackley at Dr Williams' Library; Roger Lovatt at Peterhouse, Cambridge; Suzanne Eward at Salisbury Cathedral; Gabriel Linehan at Lambeth Palace; Jill Cogen and Virginia Renner at the Huntington; Christine Butler and Sarah Newton at Corpus Christi College, Oxford; and Robert Smith, Frances Harris and Hilton Kelliher at the British Library.

I am grateful to the late William Elton for inviting me to write on scepticism in early modern England for his *Shakespearean International Yearbook*. I am equally indebted to Arthur Kinney, who encouraged and guided me in my edition of *The Sceptick for English Literary Renaissance*. Robert Ellrodt, Luciano Floridi, Drew Jones, Brian Vickers, Robert Pierce and Germaine Warkentin have been particularly steadfast correspondents during the years in which this book has taken shape, offering astute commentary and shrewd advice. Debbie Lee, Tim Steury, Nick Kiessling, John Snyder, Michael Hanly, David Fuller and Stan Linden have been the staunchest of friends. At Palgrave, Paula Kennedy has infinitely eased the latter stages of book production, and Andrew Hadfield and Cedric Brown have been the best of all possible series editors: fair-minded, judicious, quietly and steadily supportive. Finally, I thank Charles Frey, Verena Theile, Moti Feingold, Patrick Cheney, Richard Popkin and David Bevington, each of whom took an abiding interest in my project, read more of my typescript than I had any right to expect, and provided invaluable criticism and unflagging encouragement. I am profoundly in their debt.

To the members of my family – my wife, Theresa Jordan, and our sons, Michael and Christopher – I can say little that will not seem immediately inadequate. I will say none the less that, while it may not always have been apparent, I have been sustained and immeasurably heartened by their understanding, patience and indomitable good spirits.

A Note on Citation, Quotation and Abbreviation

In an effort to keep my notes as brief as possible I have limited citations to surname and page number, adding cue-titles when necessary. Full citations can be found in the bibliography. For works cited frequently I rely on standard abbreviations, a list of which appears below. I have appended a separate list of journal abbreviations at the head of the bibliography.

Advancement: Francis Bacon, *Of the Proficiency and Advancement of Learning*, in Francis Bacon, ed. Brian Vickers (Oxford, 1996), 120–299.

Apology: Michel de Montaigne, *An Apology for Raymond Sebond*, tr. M. A. Screech (Harmondsworth, 1987).

BCI: Elisabeth Leedham-Green, *Books in Cambridge Inventories*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, 1986).

CLC: David Shaw, ed., *The Cathedral Libraries Catalogue*, 2 vols. (London, 1998).

Cotgrave: Randle Cotgrave, *Dictionarie of the French and English Tongues* (London, 1611).

CS: Charles B. Schmitt, *Cicero Scepticus: A Study of the Influence of the Academica in the Renaissance* (The Hague, 1972).

CWE: *The Collected Works of Erasmus*, ed. James K. McConica, et al. (Toronto, 1974–).

Essais: Michel de Montaigne, *Les Essais*, ed. Pierre Villey, rev. V.-L. Saulnier, 3 vols. (Paris, 1992).

Essays: M. A. Screech, tr., *Montaigne: The Complete Essays* (Harmondsworth, 1991).

Florio: John Florio, tr., *The Essayes of Michael, Lord of Montaigne* (London, 1603; New York, 1933).

HS: Richard Popkin, *The History of Scepticism from Savonarola to Bayle* (Oxford, 2003).

IMD: Louis I. Bredvold, *The Intellectual Milieu of John Dryden* (Ann Arbor, 1934).

KLG: William R. Elton, *King Lear and the Gods* (San Marino, 1966).

LP: Diogenes Laertius, *The Life of Pyrrho*, in *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, tr. R. D. Hicks, 2 vols. (London, 1925), 2:474–519.

M: Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Mathematicians (Adversus mathematicos)*, tr. R. G. Bury (Cambridge, MA, 1933–49).

- PH: Sextus Empiricus, *Outlines of Pyrrhonism (Pyrrhoniaron hypotyposeon)*, tr. Julia Annas and Jonathan Barnes (Cambridge, 1994).
- PLRE: Robert Fehrenbach and Elisabeth Leedham-Green, eds., *Private Libraries in Renaissance England* (Binghamton, 1992–).
- RP: Brian Copenhaver and Charles Schmitt, *Renaissance Philosophy* (Oxford, 1992).
- Sceptick: William Hamlin, ed., 'A Lost Translation Found? An Edition of *The Sceptick* (c. 1590) Based on Extant Manuscripts', *English Literary Renaissance*, 31:1 (2001), 34–51.
- SE: Luciano Floridi, *Sextus Empiricus: The Transmission and Recovery of Pyrrhonism* (New York, 2002).
- SR: Paul Kocher, *Science and Religion in Elizabethan England* (San Marino, 1953).
- Tilley: Morris Palmer Tilley, *Dictionary of the Proverbs in England in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Ann Arbor, 1950).
- WFB: *The Works of Francis Bacon*, ed. James Spedding, Robert Ellis, and Douglas Heath, 14 vols. (London, 1857–74; Stuttgart, 1963).

Due to considerations of length I have been obliged to leave out many notes and bibliographic citations that I would otherwise have included; I have also truncated a number of quotations in the interests of concision. Readers may contact me with questions.

Because there are various available translations of such classical texts as Sextus Empiricus' *Outlines of Pyrrhonism*, Cicero's *Academica* and Diogenes Laertius' *Life of Pyrrho*, I normally cite passages not by page but by book and section number; readers using different translations may therefore find passages with relative ease. For the sake of convenience I treat the two parts of the *Academica* as a single work, distinguishing between the two only in my notes.

Montaigne and Bacon pose special problems. In the case of Bacon's *Advancement of Learning*, I quote from the 1996 Oxford edition prepared by Brian Vickers; otherwise I rely for the most part on the 14-volume *Works of Francis Bacon*, edited by James Spedding and Robert Ellis. For important Latin treatises not translated in the *Works* – specifically the *Temporis, Cogitata, and Redargutio* – I use Benjamin Farrington's English renditions from 1964.

Quotations in French from Montaigne's *Essays* are drawn from Pierre Villey's magisterial edition, revised and corrected by V.-L. Saulnier. Unless otherwise noted, quotations and titles in English derive from M. A. Screech's 1991 Penguin translation. Quotations from John Florio's Elizabethan version are always designated by the abbreviation 'Florio'.

As the twelfth chapter of Book Two of the *Essays* – the ‘Apology for Raymond Sebond’ – occupies one-sixth of the entire work and has often been printed as a separate volume, I refer to it herein as the *Apology*, italicizing it for readerly convenience.

With regard to titles and proper names I normally opt for English familiarity. Hence I use Peter Ramus rather than Pierre de la Ramée, *On the Nature of the Gods* rather than *De natura deorum*, *Essays* rather than *Essais*. Such a choice entails minor inconsistencies for which I take full responsibility.

All unattributed translations from Latin and French are my own.