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Pathopoeia: Toward a Poetics of the Soul from Tudor Rhetorical Treatises to Shakespearean Texts

Humoral vs. Rhetorical: Two Accounts of the Passions

Early modern understandings of the passions revolve around the problematic relations between body and soul.[1] *The Passions of the Minde in Generall* (1601, 2nd ed. 1604), a psychological treatise written by the English Jesuit Thomas Wright, provides the key to two different views of these relations that are at the basis of contemporary critical approaches. The first is the so-called *humoral* approach. If we attend to Wright's lengthy description:

> As the motions of our Passions are hid from our eyes, so they are hard to bee perceived; yet for the speculation of this matter, I think it most necessary, to declare the way and manner of them [...] First then, to our imagination commeth, by sense or memorie, some obiect to be knowne, convenient or disconvenient to Nature, the which being knowne (for *ignoti nulla cupido*) in the imagination which resideth in the former part of the braine, [...] when we imagine any thing, presently the purer spirites flocke from the brayne, by certayne secret channels to the heart, where they pitch at the doore, signifying what an obiect was pretended, convenient

1 The present research has been carried out under the auspices of the Research Project "English Poetic and Rhetorical Treatises of the Tudor Period" (FFI2010-19279).

> or disconvenient for it. The heart immediately bendeth, either to prosecute it, or to eschewe it: and the better effect that affection, draweth other humours to helpe him, and so in pleasure concurre great store of pure spirites; in payne and sadnesse, much melancholy blood, in ire, blood and choler; and not onely ... the heart draweth, but also the same soule that informeth the heart residing in other partes, sendeth the humours vnto the heart, to performe their service in such a woorthie place: in like maner as when we feele hunger (caused by the sucking of the liver and defect of nourishment in the stomacke) the same soul which informeth the stomacke, resideth in the hand, eyes, mouth; and in case of hunger, subordinateth them all to serve the stomacke, and satisfie the appetite thereof. Even so, in the hunger of the heart, the spleen, the liver, the bloode spirites, choler, and melancholy, attende and serve it most diligently. (Wright 1604, B4r-B4v)

In Wright's conception, a process that originates in the intellective soul takes immediate possession of the body through the workings of the animal soul, whose spirits animate a series of bodily reactions and effects. The soul acts as a herald, informing the heart and sending the humors to it. The passions are thus called — metaphorically — "the hunger of the heart." In consonance with Aristotelian ideas, body and soul, though independent of each other, seem to share one inseparable essence. Accounts like Wright's substantiate the "corporeal" or "humoral" turn in recent criticism towards what Gail Paster has labelled a "phenomenology of early modern passions." In Paster's words, "narratives of passion take place in an imagined physical and physiological environment epistemically prior to post-Enlightenment dualism" (Paster 2004, 244). Paster's work is representative of a challenge to dualistic interpretations of the early modern subject. Against post-Cartesian habits of imagining separate realms for body and soul, Paster draws attention to "the overarching unity of physical and psychological in early modern behavioral theory" (Paster 2004, 76). This embodied materiality of the passions should encourage interpretations that shun the risk of reading "abstraction and bodily metaphor" where "materiality and literal reference" to the body are meant (Paster 2004, 26). Thus in the First Player's tale in *Hamlet*, Paster suggests that we read Pyrrhus's passionate reaction, "roasted in wrath and fire," as proof of "an embodied subject spilling beyond the boundaries of

organized selfhood, a subject more like a material site, an intensity of desiring matter." (Paster 2004, 43)[2]

And yet, if passionate human beings were to be conceived as literally inflamed in a furnace of humors, then the allegorical logic behind many literary and emblematic representations would need to be put under question. How should we account for the status of love and sorrow in the following instance from Otto Vaenius' *Amorum Emblemata* (1608)?[3]

> *Sunt Lacrymae testes / Loues teares are his testimonies*.
> The teares of loue do serue for witnessing his wo,
> His ardent loue the fyre, the fournace is his harte,
> The wynd that blowes it, sighs, that rise from inward smarte,
> The limbeke his two eyes, from whence his teares do flow.
> (Vaenius 1996, Emblem 95)

Vaenius relies on previous emblematic sources in La Perriere's *Les theatres des bons ensigns* (1540, Emblem 79) and Daniel Heinsius' *Emblemata amatoria* (1607, Emblem 3). He presents a Cupid in tears facing a furnace connected to an alembic. But he alters this tradition, which has Cupid poking or blowing at the furnace, by diminishing the god's role as agent. His passive, enclosed body contrasts with the open, empty furnace. His real passions are, as Wright says, "hidde from our eyes," and we are invited to "speculate" on them through analogy. As self and furnace remain separate entities, the emblem invites allegorical reconstruction of the former through the latter. As George Puttenham puts it in *The Arte of English Poesie*, "*Allegoria* is when we do speake the *sence translatiue and wrested* from the owne signification, neuerthelesse applied to another not altogether contrary, but hauing *much conueniencie with it*" (Puttenham 1589, 155, X4r; second and third emphases added). Thus, the logic of Vaenius' analogy breaks if we elude the mediation of this rhetorical trope: the furnace enlightens our understanding of the self because it has "much conuenience with," but is "wrested from" the desiring self that the god embodies.

2 Hamlet 2.2.461. Unless otherwise stated, all other references to Shakespeare's works are cited from the Riverside edition. (Evans 1974) For a critique of this position, see Luis-Martínez 2010, 94–96.
3 For a complete list of sources and parallels, see the Emblem Utrecht Project. Dutch Love Emblems of the Seventeenth Century http://emblems.let.uu.nl/v1608095_compare_frame.html?position=left), last accessed 22 December, 2024.

Another instance — this one from Shakespeare's *King John* (1596) — shows a similar presence of allegory. In the play's last act, the Earl of Salisbury's formal lamentation over his decision to take arms on the French side against his own king after the death of Prince Arthur — a speech accompanied by the speaker's tears—is thus answered by the Dauphin:

> A noble temper dost thou show in this,
> And great affections wrestling in thy bosom
> Doth make an earthquake of nobility.
> O what a noble combat hast [thou] fought
> Between compulsion and a brave respect!
> Let me wipe off this honorable dew,
> That silverly doth progress on thy cheeks.
> My heart hath melted at a lady's tears,
> Being an ordinary inundation;
> But this effusion of such manly drops,
> This show'r, blown up by tempest of the soul,
> Startles mine eyes, and makes me more amaz'd
> Than had I seen the vaulty top of heaven
> Figured quite o'er with burning meteors (5.2.40-53).

The Dauphin's speech finds an apt gloss in Wright's treatise, this time favoring *rhetorical* over humoral explanation:

> For that we cannot enter into a mans heart, and view the passions or inclinations which there reside and lie hidden; therefore, as Philosophers by effects find out causes, by properties essences, by riuers fountaines, by boughs and floures the kore and roots; euen so we must trace out passions and inclinations by some effects and externall operations; and these be no more than two, words & deeds, speech and action: of which two, knowledge may be gathered from those affections we carry in our minds. (Wright H5r)

As Wright observes and as the Dauphin's words evince, a world of inner sensations is apprehended in the outer world at the rhetorical level of words (*elocutio*) and the no less rhetorical dimension of countenances, gestures, intonations, and

movements (*actio*). Speech and action are transmuted, both in Wright's account and in Shakespeare's speech, into spatial marks. Rhetorical matter becomes, as it were, the perceptible "riuers" whereby we trace the hidden "fountaines" of affections in the human soul. Salisbury's rhetoric constructs a similar geology of emotions whose allegorical accidents—"earthquake," "tempest," "inundation"—chart the play's woeful experience of history.

At hand Shakespeare had the tradition of rhetorical *progymnasmata*, or preparatory oratorical exercises, representing ethical qualities and passionate states, *ethopoeia* and *pathopoeia*. Drawing on classical rhetorical textbooks like Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria* (96 CE), 16th-century English rhetoricians made *pathopoeia* an entirely different category from *ethopoeia*, emphasizing in the former case the strength of the emotion, as well as its suitability for tragedy. For its part, *ethopoeia* was circumscribed to the imitation of milder emotions, and thus, its scope was confined to genres like comedy. (McDonald 1966, 53-54; Gill 1984, 160) Richard Sherry's *A Treatise of Schemes and Tropes* (1550) included *pathopoeia* among the "figures of sentence," described it as the figure "expressing of vehement affections and perturbacions," and distinguished "two sortes":

> The firste is called *Donysis*, or intencion, and some call it imaginacion, whereby feare, anger, madness, hatered, envye, and lyke other perturbacions of mynde is shewed and described, as in Ciceros invectives. Another forme is called *[O]ictros*, or commiseracion, whereby teares be pyked out, or pyty is moued, or forgeuenes, as in Ciceros peroracions, and complaintes in poets. (Sherry 1550, E2v-E3r)

The treatise's second edition (1555) slightly modified these definitions, amplifying the list of passions in the first kind to "feare, sorowe, anger, furye, hatred, envy, unbridled desyre, lust immoderate, hope or gladnesse", and adding that "[e]xaumples of these bee everye where in Tragedies." (Sherry 1555, F6r-F6v) The augmented edition of Henry Peacham's *The Garden of Eloquence* (1593) followed Sherry in differentiating two kinds, although, in tune with the rest of this treatise, the focus is oratorical rather than descriptive. Not just a mere figure, *pathopoeia* becomes "a forme of speech" whereby "the Orator moveth the minds of his hearers to some vehemency of affection, as of indignation, feare, envy, hatred, hope, gladnesse or sorrow." (Peacham 1593, U4r) The first kind demands

that "the Orator being moved himselfe with anie of these affections (sorrow excepted) doth bend and apply his speech to stir his hearers to the same." (Peacham 1593, U4r-U4v) For these purposes, a whole roster of figures like "*Exclamatio*, *Obtestatio*, *Imprecatio*, *Optatio*, *Exuscitatio*, [or] *Interrogatio*" can be employed by the orator. Comedy and tragedy are mentioned as possible sources for *pathopoeia*. The second kind involves the poetic complaint through the declaration of "some lamentable cause." The expression of grief is thus given literary preeminence: "To move compassion, lamentable histories are oftentimes used, and likewise the lively descriptions of wofull sufferings, and pitiful miseries, and how they may be artificially expressed." (Peacham 1593, U4r-U4v) *Pathopoeia* then aims at, on the one hand, expression of the speaker's affective world and, on the other, intervention in the hearer's emotions—in the case of the theatre, characters and spectators alike. Even if its emotional content ranges from lighter affections (Peacham mentions "hope" and "gladnesse" as suitable subjects of comic *pathopoeia*), prevalence is bestowed upon gravity and seriousness, with a special emphasis on grief.

Although not always distinguishable or separable, the two accounts of the passions expounded so far rely on kinds of knowledge that could be broadly characterized as effects of scientific or poetico-rhetorical methods. The present essay privileges the second approach, and emphasizes the rhetorical component in humoral descriptions of the passions. In what follows, different instances from different Shakespearean genres—lyric, narrative poetry, tragic and historical drama—are analyzed in the light of rhetorical *pathopoeia*. The aim is to emphasize the importance of the theory and practice of passionate expression as constitutive of Shakespeare's lyrical vision, on the one hand, and his novel ideas of dramatic genre—more particularly his fusion of tragedy and history—on the other.

"To the Contemplation of the Mind": Shakespeare's Amatory *Pathopoeia*

The above-mentioned arguments by Sherry and Peacham serve to explain that *pathopoeia* was considered a rhetorical strategy rather than a mere figure. More specifically, Sherry reminds us of its being one of the many kinds of "*enargia*, euidence or perspicuitie called also descripcion rethoricall," that is, "when a thynge is so described that it semeth to the reader or hearer [that] he beholdeth it as it were in doing." (Sherry 1550, E1v) In the *Institutio Oratoria*, Quintilian had relied on a vast previous tradition to stress in this art of vivid description the

ability to bring to the mind's eye that which is not present to our organs of sight. Quintilian invokes the Ciceronian terms *illustratio* and *evidentia* as appropriate translations of Greek *enargeia*, and defines it as that "which makes us seem not so much to narrate as to exhibit the actual scene, while our emotions will be no less actively stirred than if we were present at the actual occurrence [*quae non tam dicere videtur quam ostendere; et adfectus non aliter, quam si rebus ipsis intersimus, sequentur*]." (Quintilian 1927, 6.2, 434–437)

This capacity of words for vividly showing and moving the mind through the act of telling was also stressed in English works. Its most notable discussion is found in Puttenham who justifies his classification of poetic ornaments ("auricular" and "sensable" figures or tropes) in terms of two different sorts of verbal appeal:

> This ornament then is of two sortes, one to satisfie & delight th'eare onely by a goodly outward shew set vpon the matter with wordes, and speaches smothly and tunably running: another by certaine intendments or sence of such wordes & speaches inwardly working a stirre to the minde: that first qualitie the Greeks called *Enargia*, of this word *argos*, because it geueth a glorious lustre and light. This latter they called *Energia* of *ergon*, because it wrought with a strong and vertuous operation; and figure breedeth them both, some seruing to giue glosse only to a language, some to geue it efficacie by sence, and so by that meanes some of them serue th'eare onely, some serue the conceit onely and not the eare: there be of them also that serue both turnes as common seruitours appointed for thone and th'other purpose. (Puttenham 1589, R2r)

In the introduction to their recent edition of the *Arte*, Whigham and Rebhorn have stressed Puttenham's "slippage" from the visual to the aural in his description of poetry's ability to affect "the heart by impression of the eare." (C3r) The same occurs in this instance, which in these editors' opinion "deliberately redefin[es] the term [*enargeia*] to apply to the auditory rather than the visual." (Puttenham 2007, 44–45) If Puttenham reserves the term *enargeia* to what Linda Galyon has called "a non-cognitive power, operating only at the threshold of the ear" (Galyon 1981, 37), it is then the term *energeia* that seems to gather in his treatise at least part of the visual appeal of classical *enargeia*.

The distinction is engaging in the context of discussing the relations between the passions and poetic discourse: poetry can then, through a merely aural appeal, excite the passions physiologically (through "auricular figures"), engage in their mental *representation*, that is, in bringing forth what is absent to the presence of the mind (through "sensable figures" or tropes), or both—through the third, mixed category that Puttenham terms "sententious" or "rhetoricall" figures. (1589, Y4r) But it seems as hard to assess in practice the effects of a purely aural conception of *enargeia*—as mere excitement at a sensual or emotional level–as it is to understand passionate arousal as a solely physiological operation. As Puttenham's classification proves unclear (his very etymology of *argos* is inseparable from visual effect), rhetorical figures of the different kinds defined in his treatise are brought forth here as indistinctively affecting our understanding by excitation of our senses—our sight particularly.

Two instances from Shakespeare's non-dramatic poetry serve as illustrations of that other slippery realm where humoral and rhetorical conceptions of the passions come face to face. The first proposes a sequential reading of sonnets 44 and 45 in the attempt to question Paster's abovementioned claim that critics have traditionally read trope where literal reference to the humoral working of the passions should be understood:

> If the dull substance of my flesh were thought,
> Injurious distance should not stop my way,
> For then despite of space I would be brought,
> From limits far remote, where thou dost stay.
> No matter then although my foot did stand
> Upon the farthest earth remov'd from thee,
> For nimble thought can jump both sea and land,
> As soon as think the place where he would be.
> But ah, thought kills me that I am not thought,
> To leap large lengths of miles when thou art gone,
> But that so much of earth and water wrought,
> I must attend time's leisure with my moan,
> Receiving [nought] by elements so slow
> But heavy tears, badges of either's woe. (44)

The other two, slight air and purging fire,
Are both with thee, wherever I abide;
The first my thought, the other my desire,
These present-absent with swift motion slide.
For when these quicker elements are gone
In tender embassy of love to thee,
My life, being made of four, with two alone
Sinks down to death, oppressed with melancholy;
Until life's composition be recured
By those swift messengers returned from thee,
Who ev'n by now come back again, assured
Of [thy] fair health, recounting it to me.
This told, I joy, but then no longer glad,
I send them back again, and straight grow sad. (45)

To the extent that these poems present 1) a speaker possessed with desire, fluctuating between a lover's melancholy and hope, 2) a description or imitation of the motions of those passions, and 3) an attempt to affect the fictional addressee of those poems (the beloved), they must be considered an instance of rhetorical *pathopoeia*. To the extent that these are rhetorical exercises intended for a reader, *pathopoeia* should be read as one of Sherry's types of *enargeia*—that is, the representation of a passionate process "as it were in doing." Throughout its first two quatrains, Sonnet 44 develops the unlikely scenario of a human body ("the dull substance of my flesh") divested of its physicality to become mere "thought." The denial of this scenario—"thought kills me that I am not thought"—is endorsed rhetorically by *epanalepsis*, or repetition of a word at the beginning and end of a syntactic or metrical unit (for Puttenham a mixed, or sententious figure), and *amphibologia*—if we accept that the first "thought" means "sadness," whereas the second points to the act and the result of thinking. (Puttenham 1589, Z2r, Ff3r) In appearance, the sonnet invites the reader to interpret the fluctuations of grief and hope in the lover as mere effects of the imbalance and later "recur[ing]" of the humoral composition of the body. If "thought" means simply "grief," this reduction is operated by effect of the body's faulty constitution into "elements so slow" as mere "earth and water." Contrariwise, the lover's "thoughts" ("slight air") and "desire" ("purging fire") become the swift messengers between the lover and the beloved during the latter's absence, thus causing "melancholy" when they are

gone with the beloved, and joy and hope when they return with good news—a process depicted as the restoration of the lost equilibrium between the four humors.

The inevitable question arises as how literally the working of the humors in these sonnets should be taken in light of Paster's account of embodied passionate processes. Alternatively, these sonnets must be taken as illustrative of the descriptive energies and contemplative "efficacie"—the word is Puttenham's—of Renaissance allegory. As Henry Peacham defined it, "[t]he use of an Allegorie serveth most aptly to ingrave the lively images of things, and to present them under deepe shadowes *to the comtemplation of the mind*, wherein wit and judegement take pleasure, and the remembrance receiveth a long-lasting impression" (F2r, emphasis mine). In considering *pathopoeia* an allegorical exercise of poetic wit rather than a realist description of a physiological process, this reading accepts Stephen Booth's conclusion on these sonnets: "Shakespeare's primary attention is to the tenor of his statements, not to their vehicle—the technical details of traditional physics and medicine: a rigorous understanding of his conceit of the four elements demands that, being made of earth and water, the speaker should be oppressed with phlegm" and not melancholy—a possibility that Booth finds "ridiculous." (Booth 1977, 207) Shakespeare's unusual moistening of melancholy, traditionally a cold and dry humor, speaks to the fact that his force lies in creating a contrast between lightness and heaviness of mind through a malleable allegorical system rather than in propounding a literal or scientific account of how humors might embody the lover's passions. This system is presented to the reader as a "false semblant"—Puttenham's native term for allegory—of the ineffable truth of inner passionate processes. In the particular case of these poems, the aptness of the humoral tale as a plausible fiction justifies its "sence translatiue" and endorses its "conueniencie" as an object proposed "to the contemplation of the mind."

The second instance comes from a narrative poem, *Venus and Adonis* (1593), whose rhetorical and visual appeal has fascinated readers and critics.[4] By the end of the poem, an outburst of intense grief at the contemplation of Adonis's dead body impels the goddess to close her eyes and see no more:

4 For significant readings of the complementary modes of signification in the poem—the verbal and the visual—, see Gent 1974, and Hulse 1978.

As falcons to the lure, away she flies;
The grass stoops not, she treads on it so light,
And in her haste unfortunately spies
The foul boar's conquest on her fair delight,
Which seen, her eyes [as] murder'd with the view,
Like stars asham'd of day, themselves withdrew;
Or as the snail, whose tender horns being hit,
Shrinks backward in his shelly cave with pain,
And there, all smother'd up, in shade doth sit,
Long after fearing to creep forth again;
So at his bloody view her eyes are fled
Into the deep-dark cabins of her head... (1027–1038)

In a recent analysis of the concern with the visual in this poem, Richard Meek contends that in these two stanzas "the reader is compelled to imagine *what it is like not to see*" (Meek 2009, 47, emphasis added). In Meek's opinion, Shakespeare shows the potential of metaphor and simile to "disable vision," and nevertheless to "facilitate [our] understanding and empathy" with a character that refuses to see more in order to avoid pain (ibid). And yet, as the narrative continues, the focus is altered. Rather than what it is like not to see, this passage illustrates what it would be like to see that which is not accessible to our eyes—an act of *enargeia* making present what is hidden or unavailable. The poem continues:

... Where they resign their office, and their light,
To the disposing of her troubled brain,
Who bids them still consort with ugly night,
And never wound the heart with looks again,
Who like a king perplexed in his throne,
By their suggestion, gives a deadly groan.

Whereat each tributary subject quakes,
As when the wind imprison'd in the ground,
Struggling for passage, earth's foundation shakes,
Which with cold terror doth men's minds confound.
This mutiny each part doth so surprise
That from their dark beds once more leap her eyes... (1039–1050)

The whole process described here demands paraphrasing. As the eyes recede, prominence is bestowed to what happens inside Venus's body: her brain forbids her eyes to impress the passionate heart again, although the heart, still overwhelmed by the effect of what the goddess had previously seen, causes an inner turmoil which the rhetorical simile compares to an earthquake, at which the hidden eyes shake and are forced to open again. Colin Burrow has drawn attention to the "radically disturbing picture of the mind" that this passage offers (Burrow 2002, 40). The disturbing element is not only evident in its passionate arousal, but also in the fact that the allegedly invisible, inward mind is presented through the allegorical vehicle of a now visible, inner bodily organ—inwardness and inaccessibility being the marks of that "conueniencie" which, in Puttenham's description, makes these disparate realities of body and soul "not altogether contrarie" at a logical level. J. W. Lever has drawn attention to the "disparity between physical sight and the vision of the inner eye" in *Venus and Adonis*, a point that should serve as corollary of this commentary (Lever 1971, 121): allegory invites the reader to look inside the goddess' mind with the mind's eye (meaning here not only the eye with which the mind sees but the eye that sees the mind), thus proving that the figural potential of words in the imitation of the passions is much more enabling than disabling. The humoral depiction of the passionate self thus works as an allegorical pointer to its otherwise ineffable inwardness.

The Exception of Sorrow and the History Play

As stated above, Sherry and Peacham coincided in the classification of *pathopoeia* into two kinds, as well as in pointing to the abundance of examples of the first sort in tragic drama. That first kind involved the "imaginacion" or "shew" of violent emotions, a process that could be illustrated through a multitude of figures. A well-known instance from *Macbeth* (1606) discloses a mind torn between fear and ambitious desire through the use of "dilemma of *divisio*," a figure that, according to Peacham, occurs "when we divyde a thing into two partes, and reprove them both by shewing reasons" (1577, T2r):

> This supernatural soliciting
> Cannot be ill; cannot be good. If ill,
> Why hath it given me earnest of success,

> Commencing in a truth? I am Thane of Cawdor.
> If good, why do I yield to that suggestion
> Whose horrid image doth unfix my hair
> And make my seated heart knock at my ribs
> Against the use of nature? (1.3.130-137)

Macbeth's reaction to the Weird Sisters' prediction is expressed through alternate reproofs of "ill" and "good," thus stressing the importance of what J. B. Bamborough called "mixed" and "conflicting passions" in Renaissance tragedy. (Bamborough 1952, 43) Although the speech does not elude the description of the physical effects of fear, its full apprehension of Macbeth's divided mind is an effect of syntactic and semantic partition—and thus, Puttenham classified it as a "sententious figure," using bodily metaphor in his Anglicizing its name as "the Dismemberer." (Puttenham 1589, Bb3r)

However, the treatment of sorrow in a second, distinct category of *pathopoeia* in which instances from drama are not mentioned seems a less justifiable argument in the above-mentioned treatises. Contrary to this, the poetic "commiseracion" or "complainte" must be considered a constitutive element of tragedies and history plays. Wolfgang Clemen has argued that it was by influence of Senecan tragedy that English Renaissance drama integrated rhetorical lamentation as "an essential part of the events being enacted, whether these events were outward, physical actions or inward, spiritual processes." (Clemen 1961, 225) Such a conception puts grief in the ethical and emotional center of these plays. In this sense, Walter Benjamin's description of the European baroque *Trauerspiel*—or "mourning-play"—as a theatre of emblematic and rhetorical ostentation finds a practical model in Shakespeare's historical and tragic drama. Benjamin's differentiation of modern *Trauerspiel* from classical tragedy is established on grounds of the former's adoption of "historical life" as its true content to the detriment of the latter's focus on myth. (Benjamin 1977, 62) But for Benjamin history implies not only the choice of a historical subject: it is rather a mode of involvement in the play's universe, an experience of agency in a world divided between a hypertrophied faith in man's sovereign power and a pessimistic sense of his creaturely condition in the God-ridden present of post-Reformation Europe. The *Trauerspiel* addresses history as the staging of "the decisive confrontation between human-earthly perplexity and princely-hierarchical power." (Benjamin 1977, 84) The dissolution of action into lamentation—a principle which, according

to Benjamin, distinguishes *Trauerspiel* from tragedy—takes place upon a stage whose boards "metaphorically represent the earth as the setting created for the enactment of history." (Benjamin 1977, 119) Upon this stage mourning arbitrates between the inner world of feeling and the external world of action: "the confirmation of princely virtues, the depiction of princely vices, the insight into diplomacy and the manipulation of all political schemes" are observed in these plays through sorrow's perspective glass. (Benjamin 1977, 62)[5] The Prologue to Shakespeare and Fletcher's *Henry VIII* (1611) epitomizes, in the characteristically stern and concise verse of this play, an integral poetics of this mode:

> I come no more to make you laugh; things now
> That bear a weighty and a serious brow,
> Sad, high, and working, full of state of woe:
> Such noble scenes as draw the eye to flow
> We now present [...]
> Therefore, for goodness sake, and as you are known
> The first and happy hearers of the town,
> Be sad, as we would make ye. Think ye see
> The very persons of our noble story
> As they were living. Think you see them great,
> And follow'd with the general throng and sweat
> Of thousand friends; the then, in a moment, see
> How soon this mightiness meets misery;
> And if you can be merry then, I'll say
> A man may weep upon his wedding day. (*Prologue* 1–5; 24–32)

The archetypal narrative of the fall of the powerful is recreated in the repeated "now" of the speech, an adverb that connects the seriousness of the events onstage with the mournfulness it causes in the spectators. The gravity, excellence, and moving quality of the dramatic action—"sad, high, and working"—point to early modern definitions binding history and tragedy. Thus, the historical past subsides into the very "moment" in which tragic *peripeteia* transforms "mightiness" into "misery."

5 The classic Shakespearean instance binding sorrow to historical perspective is Bushy's consolation speech in *Richard II*. On this speech see, among others, Schickman 1977 and 1978; Gilman 1978, 88–128; and Luis-Martínez 2008, 683–685.

The awakening of grief in the spectator is made dependent upon the political nature and courtly setting of the play's matter.[6] Thus, Sir Philip Sidney argued:

> high and excellent Tragedy ... openeth the greatest wounds, and sheweth forth the V[l]cers, that are couered with Tissue: [it] maketh Kinges feare to be Tyrants, and Tyrants manifest their tiranicall humors: that with sturring the affects of admiration and commiseration, teacheth, the vncertainety of this world; and vpon howe weake foundations guilden roofes are builded. (1595, F3v-F4r)

Politics and mourning are thus fused in the "state and woe" of a historical action that nevertheless reclaims its position in the present of dramatic performance. As Thomas Heywood made clear in his *Apology for Actors*, "if we present a Tragedy, we include the fatall and abortiue ends of such as commit notorious murders, *which is aggrauated and acted with all the Art that may be*, to terrifie men from the like abhorred practises" (Heywood 1614, F3v; emphasis mine).

In their descriptions of the historical character of the new tragic drama of the Renaissance, Sidney and Heywood stressed its distance from classical tragedy. Rather than being a cosmic tribunal for the hero's trial around which the spectator is summoned, the stage of the *Trauerspiel* relies on the projection of the audience's inner emotions upon the feigned present of dramatic history—"[b]e sad, as we would make ye." In Benjamin's description, the spectator "learns how, on the stage, a space which belongs to an inner world of feeling and bears no relationship to the cosmos, situations are compellingly presented to him." (Benjamin 1973, 119) In accordance with this principle, what this prologue demands is a community of affections binding character, action, and spectator.

If Shakespeare's historical drama is thus understood as kin to the *Trauerspiel*, it is primarily for its representation of history as emotional experience rather than as mere fact, and for its reliance on rhetorical ostentation in its endeavor to depict this sort of historical consciousness. The main effect of this rhetoric of history is the dissolution of the lineal, sequential arrangements of the chronicle

6 "The disillusioned insight of the courtier is just as profound a source of woe to him as it is a potential danger to others, because of the use he can make of it at any time. In this light the image of this figure assumes its most baleful aspect. To understand the life of the courtier means to recognize completely why the court, above all else, provides the setting for the Trauerspiel." (Benjamin 1977, 97)

into the continuum of a dramatic present around which a web of experiential accounts of historical life are woven. This particular rearrangement reaches its most conspicuous form in *Richard II* (1595), a play whose action hinges upon multiple experiences of grief, culminating in Bolingbroke's absorption of the mournful load of Richard's fall: "Part of your cares you give me with your crown" (*R2*, 4.1.193), the usurper assures before making the definitive migration of Richard's sorrow to his own royal person the emblem of an illegitimate migration of the body politic to the new king:

> Lords, I protest my soul is full of woe
> That blood should sprinkle me to make me grow.
> Come mourn with me for what I do lament,
> And put on sullen black incontinent.
> I'll make a voyage to the Holy Land
> To wash this blood off from my guilty hand. (R2, 5.6.45–50)

The play closes with the prospect of purgation of Richard's mournful legacy, a prospect which nevertheless the opening lines of *1 Henry IV* finally cancel after a one-year delay:

> So shaken as we are, so wan with care,
> Find we a time for frighted peace to pant
> And breathe short-winded accents of new broils
> To be commenc'd in strands afar remote [...]
> But this our purpose now is twelve month old,
> And bootless 'tis to tell you we will go;
> Therefore we meet not now. (1.1.1–4; 28–30)

The optative mood of Henry's appeal to carry out in the present the postponed action of crusading—an action that will finally purge a mournful past and prevent new grief in the nation's future—is abruptly severed by the ambiguity of his expressed resolution—is bootlessness a predication upon the intention or the statement itself?—and by shifting the topic from delayed resolutions to urgent matters—"[t]herefore we meet not now." The refusal to carry out the purgative action aimed at suppressing mourning leaves in the rest of the tetralogy the burden of unhealed trauma—a feeling that the experimental and non-serial play

King John (1595–96) had already sketched in the mixture of overwhelming sorrow and wishful thinking of its closing speech:

> O, let us pay the time but needful woe,
> Since it hath been beforehand with our griefs.
> This England never did, nor never shall,
> Lie at the proud foot of a conqueror,
> But when it first did help to wound itself. (*KJ*, 5.7.110–115)

King John stands alone before readers and theatergoers, unsupported by a dramatic sequel. Whatever its spectators make of these lines seems more resistant to being interpreted in the light of progress from catastrophe to redemption, or from mourning to romance, than in the second tetralogy. *King John* may be no exception in the history play's need to envision better futures. And yet, it is certainly no exception to a Shakespearean idea of history as a sorrowful experience stuck in a congealed, hesitant present.

Docet affectus poeta per actiones: Enter the Intriguer

Whereas a focus on lamentation has the advantage of stressing emotional perspective and subjective experience, it risks ignoring the concern with action inherent to the genre in favor of an elegiac conception of history. The roles of action and affect in drama nurtured the debate in Renaissance poetic theory on the Aristotelian hierarchy of the dramatic constituents. Aristotle's theory of the preeminence of plot—*mythos*—over the other elements of tragedy was subject to contestation in 16th- and 17th-century treatises from Scaliger to Dryden. These reinterpretations insist on the primary role played by character—*ethos*—in dramatic design to the detriment of *mythos*. (Weinberg 1942, 340–341) Aristotle's affirmations that plot is the end of tragedy and that character-study is included for the sake of the action were subject to a profound revision.[7] Julius Caesar Scaliger's *Poetices libri septem* (1561) pioneered this critique in his discussion of mental and emotional dispositions (*affectus* or *pathos*) as primary objects of poetic imitation:

7 "The plot [mythos] then is the first principle and as it were the soul of tragedy; character [ethos] comes second." (Aristotle 1932, 6.19).

> So our inquiry is not as to whether the poet teaches character or action, but as to whether he teaches a mental disposition, or the outward expression of it. [...] The result of the inquiry is, then, that the poet teaches mental disposition through action [*docet poeta affectus per actiones*], so that we embrace the good and imitate it in our conduct, and reject the evil and abstain from that. Action, therefore, is a mode of teaching; disposition, that which we are taught. Wherefore action is, as it were, the pattern or medium in a plot, disposition its end [*Est igitur actio docendi modus: affectus, quen docemur ad agendum. Quare erit actio quasi exemplar, aut instrumentum in fabula, affectus vero finis*]. (Padelford 1905, 83; Scaliger 1581, VII.3, 902–903)

Representing the passions as the motivating force of *ethos*—which Scaliger understands in Aristotle's sense of inclination to a certain course of action (Aristotle 1932, 6.24)— entails a deep transformation of the early modern poetics of tragic drama. Primarily conceived as a didactic instrument, action hints at the invisible forces operating in a character's mind.

In his assessment of the impact of Scaliger's theory upon early modern drama, Walter Benjamin emphasized the arbitrating role of the intriguer: "the real purpose of drama was to communicate knowledge of the life of the soul, in the observation of which the intriguer is without equal." (Benjamin 1977, 98–99) Knowledge of the human soul allows for an arrangement of action in the history play in which events gravitate upon a spatial presence and a temporal present whose center is frequently the intriguer. He is the center in the epistemological sense, but also as a director of a *theatrum mundi* whose performances no longer have the gods as privileged spectators.[8] An action that centers around the intriguer has the effect of rearranging the temporal structure of chronicle history and the chronicle play. As Benjamin observes, "the *Trauerspiel* takes place in a spatial continuum, which one might describe as choreographic. The organizer of its plot, the precursor of the choreographer, is the intriguer." (Benjamin 1977, 95) In the world of Shakespeare's history plays the conception of historical time in terms that are primarily spatial becomes a fact when the intriguer makes its definitive entrance—an entrance emblematized by the Duke of Gloucester's central soliloquy in *3 Henry VI* (1592):

8 On the theatrum mundi as metaphor, see Righter 1962, 64–86.

> Why then I do but dream on sovereignty,
> Like one that stands upon a promontory
> And spies a far-off shore where he would tread,
> Wishing his foot were equal with his eye,
> And chides the sea that sunders him from thence,
> Saying, he'll lade it dry to have his way:
> So do I wish the crown, being so far off,
> And so I chide the means that keeps me from it,
> And so, I say, I'll cut the causes off,
> Flattering me with impossibilities. (*3H6*, 3.2.134–143)

Gloucester's words cast the passion of ambition as the ultimate referent of an allegory that measures the time of his political project in terms of physical movement in an imaginary landscape. The same idea is iterated a few lines later in the same speech: "And I—like one lost in a thorny wood, / That rents the thorns, and is rent with the thorns, / Not knowing how to find the open air, / But toiling desperately to find it out— / Torment myself to catch the English crown" (*3H6*, 3.2.174–179). Across its seventy-one lines, Richard's speech travels from the recognition of his passions as a mark of self-knowledge to the disclosing of his abilities to know the minds of others: "Then since this earth affords no joy to me / But to command, to check, to o'erbear such / As are of better person than myself, / I'll make my heaven to dream upon the crown, / And whiles I live, t' account this world but hell [...]" (*3H6*, 3.2.165–169).

Gloucester's self-discovery reveals a new spatial concern with the allegorical stages ("heaven," "hell") of his individual drama. *Pathopoeia* acquires new meanings in his speech: not only concerned with imitation of the speaker's minds, they theorize their performative capacity for representing self-discovery and for intervening in the experiential universe of others. As Thomas Wright explained, his study of the passions

> comprehendeth the chiefe obiect that all Philosophers aimed at, wherin they placed the most of their felicitie, that was *Nosce teipsum*, Know thy selfe: the which knowledge principally consisteth of a perfit experience euery man hath of himselfe in particular, and an vniuersall knowledge of mens inclinations in common [...] (Wright 1604, B3v-B4r)

In accordance with this, Gloucester expounds the political benefits derived from his newly discovered method:

> Why, I can smile, and murther whiles I smile,
> And cry 'Content' to that which grieves my heart,
> And wet my cheeks with artificial tears,
> And frame my face to all occasions.
> I'll drown more sailors than the mermaid shall,
> I'll slay more gazers than the basilisk,
> I'll play the orator as well as Nestor,
> Deceive more slyly than Ulysses could,
> And like a Sinon, take another Troy.
> I can add colors to the chameleon,
> Change shapes with Proteus for advantages,
> And set the murtherous Machevil to school.
> Can I do this, and cannot get a crown? (*3H6*, 3.2.182–194)

Richard's finding is manifold. In the sense that it operates at oratorical and dramatic levels, it is the discovery of the stage as the ultimate space for the enactment of history and the theatrical type that performs that enactment. By becoming a stage intriguer, the Duke replaces former conceptualizations of history in terms of allegorical spaces—the "far-off shore" or the "thorny wood" that understand historical life as a painful voyage—with a *theatrum mundi* where he acquires sovereign authority over the rest of the actors. At a psychological level, the art of playing is one that reverses the straightforward operations whereby words, faces and actions became indices to know the passions. As Wright himself recognized, "we may not say, that th[e] face is the root & core where the Passions reside, but only the rinde and leaues, which shew the nature and goodness of both the root and the core." (Wright 1604, C6r) By breaking the natural shortcut from the rind to the core, Richard embraces art as the guiding principle of the intriguer's psychological and anthropological wisdom: the "artificial tears" of his rhetorical *actio* match Peacham's abovementioned concern with the "artificially expressed" nature of the passions in oratory.

But Richard's lore would be purposeless without its practical application in the world of politics. His subversion of the standard humanist position on the need to know and rule the passions can be here expressed through contrast with Juan Luis Vives' argument in *De disciplinis* (1531):

> For what greater practical wisdom [*prudentia*] is than to know how and what the human passions are: how they are roused, how quelled? Further, what influence they have on the commonwealth, what is their power, how they can be restrained, healed, put aside, or, on the contrary, aroused and fomented, either in others or in ourselves? [*quos motus, quemadmodum continendi, sedandi, tollendi, aut contra exagitandi, & com[m]ouendi siue in aliis, siue in nobis ipsis?*] What knowledge can be preferable for the ruler of a state, or more expedient for any of his subjects to know? and what so delightful, in the highest degree! and what more conducive to the happiest kind of practical wisdom! (Vives 1913, 232–233; 1531, 136)[9]

Vives' call for practical wisdom is transformed by the intriguer's emotional intellect into the instrument of his will-power: "[h]uman emotions as the predictable driving mechanism of the creature—that is the final item in the inventory of knowledge which had to transform the dynamism of world-history into political action." (Benjamin 1977, 96) Emerging in this role in the final stages of a three-part episodic chronicle, the Duke of Gloucester announces a shift in dramatic method visible in the last part of the tetralogy, *The Tragedy of Richard III* (1593). This consists in the intensification of the theatrical medium as the vehicle toward the knowledge of the passions. As Richard and Buckingham devise a strategy to justify Hastings' execution, their conversation turns into a rehearsal in which director helps actor to polish his art:

> RICHARD
> Come, cousin, canst thou quake and change thy color,
> Murther thy breath in middle of a word,
> And then again begin, and stop again,
> As if thou were distraught and mad with terror?
> BUCKINGHAM
> Tut, I can counterfeit the deep tragedian,
> Speak and look back, and pry on every side,
> Tremble and start at wagging of a straw;

9 It needs to be emphasized that Vives' argument is part of his defense of history as a practical discipline for the instruction of the modern Christian prince.

> Intending deep suspicion, ghastly looks
> Are at my service, like enforced smiles.
> And both are ready in their offices
> At any time to grace my stratagems. (*R3*, 3.5.1–11)

The extent to which knowledge, manipulation and transformation of the passions become part of Richard's political choreography is made explicit in the play's opening soliloquy: "Plots have I laid, inductions dangerous, / By drunken prophecies, libels, and dreams / To set my brother Clarence and the King / In deadly hate the one against the other" (*R3*, 1.1.32–35). Transforming hatred into love (Lady Anne's in 1.2), fear into hope (Clarence's in the play's opening), suspicion into sympathy (the Mayor's after Hastings's execution in 3.5) are instances of the intimate connections between Richard's interventions in the characters' emotional world and the play's representation of the progress of history. These connections also reveal the mechanism that makes possible the paradoxical attractiveness of Richard as a villain, namely the contrast between historical deed and theatrical action. On the one hand, Shakespeare's reliance on the methods of humanist *historia* serves to present Richard's evil deeds as proofs at the service of the orthodox version of the Lancastrian myth of Tudor succession. (Grennan 1978, 23) On the other, Richard's theatrical command of human emotions lies at the heart of his seductive capacity to engage sympathy and attraction.

Toward a Poetics of the Soul

Thomas Wright's above-quoted report of the impossibility to "enter into a mans heart," or "minde," and "view the passions or inclinations which there reside and lie hidden," found its boldest deconstruction at the end of the Renaissance, in John Ford's *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* (1633), a play whose "concept of the heart as a text of desire" impels his protagonist to "rip up" his sister/lover's bosom in order to "read" the truth of her passions there. (Silverstone 2010, 83) Ford's play identified his protagonist's will to trespass the limits of human knowledge with tragic madness. The present essay has explored other ways through which the symbolic power of language can circumvent those borders. Puttenham's concern with the "lustre," "light," and "glosse" that the poetic word confers on our mental depictions of the otherwise hidden realities of the soul has presided over its first

two sections. *Pathopoeia* is there explored mainly as a method whose rhetorical efficacy was put at the service of the poet's attempt to illuminate the dark corners of the human mind. Its second half has somehow left aside *pathopoeia* as a method in order to explore its effects and functions in the shaping of dramatic genre—more specifically in the Shakespearean ideas of the history play. Cueing on Wright's interest in "speech and action" as the two external indices to the emotions, the analysis of drama must consider their inevitable intertwining in the shaping of emotional experience as a vehicle of knowledge. The role of the passions in the self's dramatic discovery of its position in the convoluted courses of Shakespearean history reveals forms of historical being that range from elegiac passivity to mastery of political intrigue. In exploring the Renaissance concern with both the form and the function of the passions, *pathopoeia* enables routes to track down the fascinating literary voyage from the "rinde and leaues" to the "root & core" of the self.

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