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Shakespeare and the theatricalization of passions

Abstract: *Theatre, at a dialogical level, presents encounters and clashes of different perspectives, world-views, styles, languages, ideologies. In Shakespearean theatre the word, from a rhetorical point of view, becomes someone else's word to be disputed. The rhetorical aim of this dispute is to attain pathos through ethos. The actor, like a skillful orator, arouses passions in the mind and in the soul of his audience. In Shakespeare's theatre, passions are a real poetic practice, in particular in the great tragedies and in the romances. The paper will investigate different, and opposite, ways of the theatricalizing passions in* Antony and Cleopatra *and* The Winter's Tale.

Keywords: *passions, Shakespeare, Wright, Antony and Cleopatra, The Winter's Tale.*

> "The Passions of the mind,
> That have their first conception by misdread,
> Have after-nourishment and life by care..."
> *Pericles* 1.2.11-13

1.0. The English early modern period sees a recovery of Aristotelian and Ciceronian rhetoric. In the second half of 16th century two influential rhetoric treatises were published. The first, Henry Peacham's *The Garden of Eloquence* (1577), is a version of Latin handbooks of rhetoric[1], a dictionary of rhetorical terms where for each entry examples and usage are given, with reference to previous treatises by Cicero, Quintilianus, Erasmus, and Thomas Wilson. The second, Abraham Fraunce's *The Arcadian Rhetoric* (1588), starts from Peacham's work and aims at analyzing and explaining rhetoric: "the Praecepts of Rhetorike made plaine by examples, Greeke, Latin, English, Italian, French, Spanish" (Fraunce 1588, A1). Rhetoric, as Aristotle emphasized, is the best means to arouse passions.

1 "When of late I [...] saw many good bookes of Philosophy and precepts of wysedome, set forth in english, and very few of Eloquence: I was of a sodaine mooved to take this little Garden in hande" (Peacham 1577, Aii verso).

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Aristotle was the first to identify a typology of passions, classifying them as social and psychological types. In the second book of *Rhetoric*, Aristotle argues that rhetoric is the most suitable means to present the passions that affect human mind. He defines the passions as "all those feelings that so change men as to affect their judgements, and that are also attended by pain or pleasure. Such are anger, pity, fear and the like, with their opposites" (1984, 2195).

The passions manifest themselves at the intimate level ("what state of mind"), at the interpersonal level ("against whom", "for whom"), and at the rhetorical level ("On what grounds"). Moreover, as Aristotle writes in *Rhetoric* II.12, the passions will manifest themselves according to age (youth, maturity, old age):

> Young men have strong passions, and tend to gratify them indiscriminately. Of the bodily desires, it is the sexual by which they are most swayed and in which they show absence of self-control. They are changeable and fickle in their desires, which are violent while they last, but quickly over. […] They are hot-tempered and quick-tempered, and apt to give way to their anger. […] Bad temper often gets the better of them, for owing to their love of honour they cannot bear being slighted, and are indignant if they imagine themselves unfairly treated. While they love honour, they love victory still more; for youth is eager for superiority over others, and victory is one form of this. (1984, 2213).

Elderly passions have characteristics opposite to those of the young people (*Rhetoric* II,13):

> They are cynical; that is, they tend to put the worse construction on everything.Further, their experience makes them distrustful. […] They are small-minded, because they have been humbled by life. […] They are cowardly, and are always anticipating danger; unlike that of the young, who are warm-blooded, their temperament is chilly; […] They love life; and all the more when their last day has come, because the object of all desire is something we have not got. They lack confidence in the future; […] They live by memory rather than by hope, […] talking of the past, because they enjoy remembering it. Their fits of anger are sudden but feeble. Their sensual passions have either altogether gone or have lost their vigour. […] Old men may feel pity, as well as young men, but not for the same reason. Young men feel it out of kindness; old men out of weakness. (1984, 2214)

The passions of maturity will be situated between the passions of the young and those of the old (*Rhetoric* II, 14). Men of maturity

> have neither that excess of confidence nor too much timidity, but the right amount of each. They neither trust everybody nor distrust everybody, but judge people correctly. Their lives will be guided not by the sole consideration either of what is noble or of what is useful, but by both; neither by parsimony nor by prodigality, but by what is fit and proper. […] The body is in its prime from thirty to thirty-five; the mind about forty-nine. (1984, 2215).

The manifestation of passions passes through the correct arrangement of speech: "For it is not enough to know *what* we ought to say; we must also say it *as*

we ought; much help is thus afforded towards producing the right impression of a speech." (Aristotle 1984, 2238). In this respect, the *elocutio* (the choice of words and their combination)[2] and the *actio* (pitch, harmony, modulation and rhythm of the voice, body movement) are extremely important.

This positive view of the passions was rejected by Zeno and the Stoics. For them, the passions are an irrational and unnatural perturbation of the mind, mistakes and diseases, aberrations of a degenerated reason[3]. Among the stoics, Andronicus classified four macro-passions (pain, fear, desire and pleasure)[4], twenty-seven types of passions, and three states of mind[5]. For the Stoics, the end is the eradication of the passions, in order to reach, through virtue, the state of imperturbability, the *ataraxia*. On the contrary, the Epicureans emphasized pleasure as one's objective. The passions are the first step of the speculative research; desires become passions, and passions are enduring desires.

St. Augustine rehabilitated the individual and the body, which are both God's workmanship. He distinguished between vices and passions, only the excess is reprehensible[6]. Thomas Aquinas in his *Summa Teologica* focused greatly on passions (Aquinas 1982, 720-826). He divided passions into two categories: concupiscible – love, desire, hatred, loathing, pleasure, pain, delight, and sadness (Aquinas 1982, 733-792) – and irascible – hope, despair, boldness, anger, fear, rage (Aquinas 1982, 792-826). Concupiscence is a desire for what is pleasant[7]. Irascible passions arise and terminate in concupiscible passions[8].

In Early Modern England, the treatise that more than others analyzes the passions was written by Thomas Wright at the end of sixteenth century, and published in 1601[9]. In the 1604 edition, Wright presents a real guide to signs and

2 Tropes such as hyperbole and periphrasis, and rhetorical figures such as antithesis, asyndeton, epithet, and simile, contribute to the magnificence of *elocutio*.

3 "Passion is impulse which is excessive and disobedient to the dictates of reason, or a movement of soul which is irrational and contrary to nature" (Long and Sedley 1987, 410).

4 "Distress is an irrational contraction, or a fresh opinion that something bad is present, at which people think it right to be contracted. Fear is an irrational shrinking, or avoidance of an expected danger. Appetite is an irrational stretching [desire], or pursuit of an expected good. Pleasure is an irrational swelling, or a fresh opinion that something good is present, at which people think it right to be swollen" (Long-Sedely 1987, 411; see also Von Armin 2004, 1159)

5 Among which there are thirteen species of fear, twenty-five of pain, and five of pleasure. (Von Armin 2004, 1161-1165).

6 "At present, there is no need to develop at length and in detail the doctrine contained in Sacred Scripture-fount of Christian faith-concerning passions, namely, that the mind is subject to God to be ruled and aided while the passions are subject to the mind to be tempered, tamed, and turned to the uses of righteousness" (Augustine 1952, 84).

7 "Concupiscence is a desire for that which is pleasant" (Aquinas 1982, 749).

8 "All the irascible passions terminate in the concupiscible passions and thus it is that the passions which are in the irascible part are followed by joy and sorrow which are in the concupiscible part" (Aquinas 1982, 724).

9 The manuscript of *w* was completed in 1598, when Thomas Wright, a former Jesuit priest, was confined in Bridewell. Wright's treatise had five editions, 1601, 1604, 1620, 1621, 1630. 1630 edition, published after Wright's death, provides a translation of the table and an index ("An alphabetical Table, Containing all the principall things mentioned in this Booke"). The

symptoms of the passions, emphasizing the pathetic power of language and the rhetorical manipulation of the emotions[10]. According to Wright, the passions are not dissimilar from the humors that form our body[11]. In Early modern England, the man, following the medieval vision of the world, was believed to be composed with four elements: earth, air, water, and fire. Earth was cold and dry, the air warm and humid, the water cold and humid, the fire warm and dry. The right balance among these four elements determines the individual character and the temperament, which derives from the humours: blood (liveliness), phlegm (calmness), yellow bile (anger), black bile (melancholia). The right balance of the humors results in a good temperament: "If the humors be kept in a due proportion, they are the preservatives of health, and perhaps health itself" (Wright 1604, 17). If the balance among the humors is destroyed, then we have immediately physical and mental disorder[12].

The four humors and the ways they react in the body affect the mind, engendering different passions[13]. Every passion brings muscle activity in the heart and in the movements of the humors towards and from the heart. The passions go with two of the four primary physical qualities: warm, cold, humidity, and dryness. So, anger was warm and dry, desire and the erotic love were warm and humid.

In *Antony and Cleopatra* Iras and Charmian show their lust and their inclination to erotic desire, in the second scene of the first act, first Charmian in an exchange with the soothsayer and Alexas (38-44), then Iras in a dialogue with Charmian (49-55):

> Charmian Prithee, how many boys and wenches must I have?
> Soothsayer If every of your wishes had a womb,

1604 edition is divided into six books, with the fifth book rewritten and devoted to the rhetoric of passions. See the critical edition edited by William Webster Newbold (Wright 1986) and the facsimile edition edited Thomas O. Sloan (Wright 1971).

10 *The Passions of the Minde* has a much more direct emphasis on the passions than do other contemporary treatises on the same subject: Lemnius *The Touchstone of Complexions (1565)*, trans. T. Newton 1581; Stephan Batman *Batman Vpon Bartholome* (1582); Timothy Bright *A Treatise of Melancholy* (1586); Pierre de la Pramaudaye *The French Academie*, trans. T. Bowes 1586; Juan Huarte *The Examinations of Mens*, trans. Richard Carew 1594; Sir John Davies *Nosce Teipsum* (1599); Philemon Holland (tr.) *The Philosophie, commononlie callled, The Morals* (1603); Pierre Charron *Of Wisdom: Three Books*, trans. Samnson Lennard (1608) Anthony Nixon *The Dignitie of Man* (1612); Robert Burton *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621); F. N. Coeffetau *A Table of Humane Passions* (1621); Nemesius *The Nature of Man*, trans. Edmond Grimeston (1636); Edward Reynoldes *A Treatise of the Passions and Faculties of the Soule of Man* (1640).

11 "[...] methinks the passions of our mind are not unlike the four humours of the bodies [...]" (Wright 1604, 16-17).

12 "or if blood, phlegm, choler or melancholy exceed the due proportion required to the constitution and health of our bodies, presently we fall into some disease; even so, if the passions of the Mind be not moderated according to reason and that temperature virtue requireth, immediately the soul is molested with some malady" (Wright 1604, 138).

13 "Passions engender Humours and Humours breed Passions" (Wright 1604, 64).

And fertile every wish, a million.
CHARMIAN Out, fool I forgive thee for a witch.
ALEXAS You think none but your sheets are privy to your wishes.
[…]
IRAS (*Holds out her hand*) There's a palm presages
chastity, if nothing else.
CHARMIAN E'en as the o'erflowing Nilus presageth
famine.
IRAS Go, you wild bedfellow, you cannot soothsay!
CHARMIAN Nay, if an oily palm be not a fruitful
prognostication, I cannot scratch mine ear[14].

Othello, after Iago has told him to have seen the handkerchief he gave to Desdemona in Cassio's hand (3.3.440-442), in the next scene addresses his wife "testing" her hand: "Give me your hand. This hand is moist, my lady./ [...] This argues fruitfulness and liberal heart:/ Hot, hot and moist." (3.4.36-39).

It seems clear, from these examples, that in these plays passions are closely identified with physiology.

Starting from the Thomistic system, which divided human soul into vegetative (nourishment, growing and reproduction), sensible (external and internal senses, reception of sensible forms, imagination[15], estimative power, memory), and rational (intellectual memory, desire, intellect), Wright divides the passions into concupiscible and irascible:

CONCUPISCIBLE	IRASCIBLE
love	hope
desire or concupiscence	fear
delight	despair
hatred	boldness or presumption

14 All the quotations from Shakespeare are from the Arden 3 complete edition (Shakespeare 2020). Note at lines 49 and 54 the pun on "palm" as "palm of the hand" and "palm" as the tree that, unlike the "oily palm" was a symbol for chastity.

15 Thomas O. Sloan notes that renaissance theoreticians distinguished only three powers inside the "inward apprehension", common sense, imagination, and memory. "Batman divided the inner wit in *imaginativa* (including common sense) *estimativa* and *memorativa* (*Batman Vpon Bartholome*, fol. 15r). Davies gives to 'Imagination or common sense' the power of receiving sense impressions and composing forms; to 'Phantasie' part of the imaginative power of retaining forms, particularly those no longer present to the senses, and the estimative power; and to 'memory' the power of serving as 'storehouse of the minde' (*Nosce Teipsum*, pp. 46-47). Nixon has three dimensions i. common sense, fantasy, imagination; ii. reason (the estimate power), and iii. memory (*Dignitie of Man*, p. 28). The importance of the estimative power, whether distinguished from the others or not, as a kind of animal 'reason' must not be overlooked." (Sloan 1971, XXVII).

abomination	anger or Ire
sadness or pain	

Each concupiscible passion tends towards an object or detaches from it. Love, desire, pleasure, tend all towards goods: love towards an absolute good, desire towards a future, or not yet possessed, good; pleasure tends towards an actual, or possessed, good. Hatred, abomination, and sadness detach themselves from the evil: hatred from the absolute evil, abomination from a future, and not yet possessed, hatred, sadness from actual, and possessed, evil. The irascible passions, concerning events around the concupiscible passions and their objects, cause a movement towards good and a detachment from the evil. Wright, in order to explain the passions of the mind, gives the example of the wolf and the sheep:

> But now, put case the Wolf should see the shepherd about his flock armed with a guard of dogs; then the Wolf, fearing the difficulty of purchasing his prey, yet thinking the event, though doubtful, not impossible; then he erecteth himself with the passion of hope, persuading him the sheep shall be his future spoil after the conquest. And thereupon contemning the dogs, despising the shepherd, not weighing his hook, crook, stones, or rural instruments of war, with a bold and audacious courage, not regarding any danger, he setteth upon the flock, where in the first assault presently a mastiff pincheth him by the leg. The injury, he imagineth, ought not to be tolerated, but immediately inflamed with the passion of Ire procureth by all means possible to revenge it. The shepherd protecteth his dog and basteth the wolf (as his presumption deserved). The wolf, perceiving himself weaker than he imagined and his enemies stronger than he conceaved, falleth suddenly into the passion of Fear (as braggers do, who vaunt much at the beginning but quail commonly in the middle of the fray), yet not abandoned of all hope of the victory; therefore he stirreth up himself and procedeth forward; but in fine, receiving more blows of the shepherd, more wounds of the dogs, awearied with fighting, fearing his life, thinking the enterprise impossible, oppressed with the passion of Desperation, resolveth himself that his heels are a surer defence than his teeth, and so runneth away. By this example we may collect the other five passions of the invading appetite: hope, boldness or presumption, anger or ire, fear, and desperation. (Wright 1604, 22-23).

So, the wolf and the sheep experience all the five concupiscible passions, and only the wolf experiences the five irascible passions.

The passions, which have to be under the rational mind control and guide men towards goodness and virtue, manifest themselves through language, body movements, and the action:

> A man therefore furnished himself with the passion or affection he wisheth in his auditors, shewing it with voice and action, although his reason be not so potent, hath no doubt a most potent meane to persuade what he lists. Wherefore Demosthenes, as of all Oratours the prince of action, so he defined, that the principal part of an Oration was action, the second the same, the third no other than action. (Wright 1604, 175-176).

2.0. Theatre, at a dialogical level, presents encounters and clashes of different perspectives, worldviews, styles, languages, ideologies. In Shakespearean theatre the word, from a rhetorical point of view, is, or could become, someone else's word to be disputed[16]. The rhetorical aim of this dispute is to attain pathos through ethos. The actor, like a skillful orator, arouses passions in the minds and in the souls of his audience, as Thomas Wright suggests:

> [...] for most part orators and stage-players agree; and only they differ in this, that these act feignedly, those really; these only to delight, those to stir up all sort of passions according to the exigency of the matter; these intermingle much levity in their action to make men laugh, those use all gravity, grace, and authority to persuade. (Wright 1604, 179).

Thomas Dekker in the prologue to *If It Be Not Good* Play*, The Diuel is in it* (1612) emphasized the passional function of theatre, where the playwright arouses the audience's passions by means of the actor, in that the poet

> Can give an Actor, Sorrow, Rage, Ioy, Passion,
> Whilst hee againe (by selfe same Agitation)
> Commands the Hearers, sometimes drawing out Teares,
> Then Smiles and fills them both with Hopes & Feares. (Dekker 1612, A4 verso).

The rhetoric of drama and the rhetoric of passions have the same purpose, that of achieving pathos through the speech act (action). This is the most significant element of a rhetoric of passions, the affective expressivity of discourse, its pathetic power over the listener. Fraunce in his treatise emphasized the importance of the voice, of the intonation, and of the pronunciation in the movement of passions:

> By the kinde of voyce which belongeth to whole sentences, all kindes of figures and passionate ornaments of speach are made manifest. [...] The voyce is more manly, yet diuersly, according to the varietie of passions that are to bee expressed. (Fraunce 1588, H7 recto).

The actor in his simulation of rhetoric "acts out – as Keir Elam argues – kinesically, phonetically, syntactically, and the movement of passions" (Elam 1992a, 149). Thomas Heywood in his *An Apology for Actors* (1612) argued that the actor has "to speake well, [...] to observe his comma's colons, & full poynts, his parentheses, his breathing spaces, and distinctions" (Heywood 1612, 13). This in rhetorical terms means that:

> The most effective figures in the expression of the passions are not semantic figures, the tropes, nor the so-called figures of thought, but, on the one hand, those figures of orientation and appeal intimately related to movements of the body, and that allow

16 See Serpieri (1986), 112-113.

> the speaker to simulate dialogue and direct address, and, on the other, those material, phonetic, syntactic, punctuational figures classed generically as the schemes. (Elam 1992a, 150).

The actor's, and the orator's, rhetorical means will be all those rhetorical figures used for an elegant conversation: *excusitatio*, apostrophe; figures of omissions: *ellipsis*, *zeugma*, *detractio parenthesis*, *reticentia* (Elam 1992a, 150-151).

What all these rhetorical figures share is not the embellishment of speech (eloquence and *elocutio*), but, conversely, as Keir Elam argues, the "*myse-en-scène* of inarticulateness, made up of hesitations, digressions, omissions, self-interruptions, and the general fragmentation of the body of discourse", engendering what could be named *inelocutio* (Elam 1992a, 151).

3.0. In Shakespeare's theatre, passions are a real poetic practice[17], in particular in the great tragedies and in the romances[18], such as *Macbeth* (1605-1608), *Antony and Cleopatra* (1607), *Coriolanus* (1609)*, Pericles* (1607-1608), *The Winter's Tale* (1610-1611). *The Winter's Tale* and *Antony and Cleopatra* theatricalize passions in diametrically opposed ways. In *The Winter's Tale*, the passion entrusted to Leonte's actions and movements, is, rhetorically speaking, a monological passion, which shows violently an unjustified and arbitrary jealousy, almost pathological. It is a passion that is theatricalized not through the *actio* and the *elocutio*, but through its denial, an inexpressive *inelocutio*. Conversely, in *Antony and Cleopatra* there is a staging of opposite passions: love and desire, hatred and jealousy, which rhetorically are realized through a dialogical exchange through *actio* and *elocutio*.

3.1. *The Winter's Tale*, from a pathetic point of view, appears as the theatricalization of what could be defined as inexpressive ineloquence. Leonte's language abounds of inelocutive rhetorical figures, such as those of omission (*ellipsis*, suspended *detractio*, *zeugma*), interruption and digression (*paraposiopesis, interruptio, interpositio* or *parenthesis*). *Parenthesis*, according to Peacham, happens

> when a sentence is set asunder by the interposition of another [...] When a sence is cast betweene the speeche before it be all ended, whiche, although it giveth some strenght, yet when it is taken away, it leaveth the same speech perfect enough. [...] If they be very long they cause obscurity of the sense (Peacham 1597, Gi recto)

It is the *interpositio*, or *parenthesis*, that characterizes Leonte's language of passions. It occurs 363 times in the Folio text[19], marked typographically with parenthesis.

17 On emotions on English early modern stage see Paster (2004) and Escolme (2013).

18 Even though it cannot be demonstrated that Shakespeare knew Wright's treatise, it is curious how he is involved in the debate on passions. Both Wright and Shakespeare show a deep interest in the relationship between passion and mind, more pragmatically by Wright, more symbolically by Shakespeare. As Keir Elam argues, Shakespeare and Wright explore "the modes of manifestation of passion, [...] the persuasive powers of language. [...] Both [...] explore the confine between logos, pathos and ethos" (Elam 1992a, 147).

19 The folio text, according to Greg (1955, 415), comes from a transcription by Ralph Crane, the King's Men scrivener. Ralph Crane, as it is clear from other texts transcribed by him (*The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *2 Henry IV*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Measure for Measure*,

Leontes uses it 74 times, 30 in 1.2 and 19 in 5.1. The second scene of the first act is focused on Leontes's jealousy that, from a rhetorical point of view, is characterized by the usage of parenthesis, by rhetorical figures such as *antanaclasis*, *interrogatio* (oriented towards himself), *ellipsis*, and *zeugma*. Both in the monological exchange with his son and in the dialogue with Camillo jealousy arises, together with anger and rage, and a feeling of vengeance. Leonte's language, made of false starts and non sequitur, fully reflects a person who is affected by the passion of jealousy. Pierre Charron argues that jealousy "breeds a most unhappy Curiosity; makes us busy and inquisitive to our own Ruin; desirous and impatient to know" (Charron 1729, 117-118)[20]; Robert Burton in *The Anatomy of Melancholy* summarizes the behaviour of the jealous man:

> he hunts after euery word he heares, euery whisper, and amplifies it to himselfe, with a most iniust calumny of others, he misinterprets every thing is said or done, most apt to mistake and misconster, he pries in euery corner, followes close, obserues to an haire: Besides all those strange gestures of staring, frowning, grinning, rolling of eyes, menacing, gastly looks, broken pace, interrupt, precipitate, halfe turnes. (Burton 1621, 682).

Leontes dissects every single word, searching the most hidden meaning in order to justify his jealousy for Hermione. There is here a process of semanticizing his idea of being betrayed. First, he affirms his aversion for what is happening ("O, that is entertainment / My bosom likes not, nor my brows", 1.2.118-119), with an emphasis on the pun brows/horn[21], then asks his son "Art thou my boy?" (1.2.120), as if he needed a confirmation of his paternity, that could prove to be false – as he will believe it is the case with the newborn baby. In the end the pun on "neat" ("We must be neat – not neat, but cleanly", 1.2.123) refers again to his supposed condition of cuckhold.

Notably, from a pathetical point of view, Leontes continuously shifts semantically, rejecting the first meaning, always searching for a subtext that could confirm his suspicions:

> CAMILLO Business, my lord? I think most understand
> Bohemia stays here longer.
> LEONTES Ha?
> CAMILLO Stays here longer.
> LEONTES Ay, but why?

The Tempest) was obsessed by the use of parenthesis. Nonetheless, the usage of parenthetic interjection was common in Early modern English and "in the speech the brackets correspond to actual breaks in the speaker's anything but linear discourse" (Elam 1992, 69).

20 Charron's treatise was first translated in 1608 by Samson Lennard and had twelve editions. The treatise was known before its publication in Henry, the Prince of Wales's circle. As for *The Passions of the Minde*, also for *De la sagesse* Shakespeare's direct knowledge cannot be proved.

21 "brow: seat of the imaginary horns of the cuckold" (Williams 1997, 56); "Brow: in reference to cuckoldry planted there" (Partridge 1968, 72).

CAMILLO To satisfy your highness, and the entreaties
Of our most gracious mistress
LEONTES Satisfy?
Th' entreaties of your mistress? Satisfy?
Let that suffice.
[1.2.227-233]

The mere invitation to his son to play acquires another meaning, connected to a supposed betrayal ("thy mother plays", 1.2.186), emphasized again in the lines that precede Hermione's exit. These lines are first a violent apostrophe oriented towards Hermione, but at the same time also towards himself through the aside, then a burst of anger (irascible passion):

Go to, go to!
How she holds up the neb, the bill to him,
And arms her with the boldness of a wife
To her allowing husband! (*Exeunt Polixenes and Hermione*)
Gone already.
Inch-thick, knee-deep, o'er head and ears a forked one!
Go play, boy, play. Thy mother plays, and I
Play too; but so disgraced a part, whose issue
Will hiss me to my grave. Contempt and clamour
Will be my knell. Go play, boy, play, there have been,
Or I am much deceived, cuckholds ere now
[1.2.181-190]

3.2. *Antony and Cleopatra* displays at the level of thymic and pathetic structures a clash among antithetic perspectives related to the two topological zones of the play, Rome and Egypt:

ROME	EGYPT
Octavius	Antony
public duty	private pleasure
past (Antony was a glorious captain)	present (Antony is the fool of a prostitute)
logos	eros
logic	passion

Since the first scene, *Antony and Cleopatra* displays the foundation of its rhetorical fabric, a rhetoric based on the incommunicability between the two zones and models of the play. Logos vs. eros is the opposition both at topographical level

(Rome/Egypt) and at the level of the choice between logic and passion. On the one hand, Egypt with its madness, private pleasure, passion, eros, and the negation based on litotes; on the other hand, Rome and Caesar, with hierarchical elements, public duty, rationality, and logos.

The dialogical passionateness, which permeates all the tragedy, is characterized by rhetorical and epistemological choices. Antony, refusing to hear the raison d'état (the messenger from Rome, 1.1.19), shows another vision of the world, alternative to that of Caesar, turning himself from the object of history into the subject of it, minimizing everything connected to the world of logos ("Grates me the sum", 1.1.18). Such transformation passes also through the choice of rhetorical modalities such as the hyperbolic amplification, as when Antony shows his option and devotion to eros as an all-absorbing experience:

CLEO. If it be love indeed, tell me how much.
ANT. There's beggary in the love that can be reckoned.
CLEO. I'll set a bourn how far to be beloved
ANT. Then must thou needs find out new heaven, new earth.
[1.1.14-17]

Cleopatra, after the arrival of the messenger, reveals her jealousy through mockery, the main rhetorical modality in this scene, with which she ties Antony to herself. The mockery amplifies Antony's erotic rhetoric:

CLEO. Antony
Will be himself.
ANT. But stirred by Cleopatra.
Now for the love of Love, and her soft hours,
Let's not confound the time with conference harsh:
There's not a minute of our lives should stretch
Without some pleasure now.
[1.1.43-48]

The founding principle of eros, the pleasure, is amplified by a space-time metaphor (lines 47-48), amplification that goes beyond the here and now, if we accept Warburton's reading "new" instead of "now" (line 48). The pleasure, the concupiscible passion par excellence, must always be, hyperbolically new, different. The hyperbole, to which the rhetoric of power was connected in *Julius Caesar*, is here the figure through which the concupiscible passions manifest themselves: anger, jealousy, delight, hatred, desire, pleasure, sadness.

Cleopatra's passions are always shown at the dialogical level, even in the absence of the passional object. It is just *in absentia*, through memory, that the Queen of Egypt articulates most of her speeches. When *in presentia*, she restrains herself, confining herself to the end of it, leaving room to the others. It is through memory

that Cleopatra manifests her passions, eroticizing her passional object through a hyperbolic description:

> I dreamt there was an Emperor Antony.
> .....
> His legs bestrid the ocean; his reared arm
> Crested the world: his voice was propertied
> As all the tuned spheres, and that to friends;
> But when he meant to quail, and shake the orb,
> He was a rattling thunder. For his bounty,
> There was no winter in't: an autumn 'twas
> That grew the more by reaping. His delights
> Were dolphin-like: they showed his back above
> The element they lived in. In his livery
> Walked crowns and crownets; realm and island were
> As plates dropped from his pockets.
> [5.2.75-90]

Reality must be narrated, filled with sense, otherwise it loses its meaning. The hyperbole clashes with a reality represented by Octavius Caesar. Dolabella's reply ("Gentle Madam, no", line 94), dictated by the reality that can never coincide with the dream, becomes for Cleopatra a lie:

> You lie up to the hearing of gods!
> But if there be or ever were one such,
> It's past the size of dreaming. Nature wants stuff
> To vie strange forms with fancy; yet t'imagine
> An Antony were nature's piece, 'gainst fancy,
> Condemning shadows quite.
> [5.2.94-99]

The object of Cleopatra's desire is placed on a mythical level, where eros and passion, defeated by the rationality of logos, cannot be annihilated.

All the tragedy is permeated with passions, with the wild eros that absorbs the reason and distracts the rationality of logos. Also Enobarbus's speech in 2.2 will be a great delight of the word, through which reality is altered and modified, arousing wild passions in the hearer: desire, envy, pleasure, hope. Cleopatra's passions cannot ever be satisfied or rewarded ("There's not a minute of our lives should stretch / Without some pleasure now", 1.1.46-47). The ending of the tragedy appears as the achievement of the pure pleasure, the *ataraxia* according to the stoics. Cleopatra will perform her death in the last scene, a death where eros is sublimating into Thanatos, with an overlapping of death and passion, already seen in the play[22]:

22 *Antony and Cleopatra*, the tragedy of love and eros par excellence, has 87 occurrences of words referring to the isotopy of death: *death* (32), *die* (18), *dead* (28), *dies* (9); whereas it has 49

I have seen her die[23]
twenty times upon far poorer moment: I do think
there is mettle in death, which commits some loving
act upon her, she hath such a celerity in dying"
[1.2.148-151]

So, desire is boundless ("The sea hath bounds, but deep desire hath not", *Venus and Adonis* 389), and deceptive; it is erotic and spiritual attraction, it is quest, game, play, madness, craving appetite, death.

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occurrences of *love* (*loves*, *love's*).
23 There is here a pun on the sexual meaning of "die": "to experience a sexual orgasm" (Partridge 1968, 93); see also Williams (1997, 98).

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