臺大文史哲學報　第七十八期
2013年5月　　頁209~236
臺　灣　大　學　文　學　院

The Pathogenic Female Tongue: A Galenic and Paracelsian Diagnosis of *Macbeth*[*]

Lin, Ying-chiao[**]

Abstract

This paper argues that Shakespeare exhibits in *Macbeth* a certain pre-existing cultural anxiety about female rhetoric in positioning the woman's tongue in the play as less a dramatic representation than a pathological socio-cultural locale, one that "sickens" and thus threatens male subjectivity. With its power to transgress and transform, the female tongue remains a pathogenic site in the early modern era. In *Macbeth*, this tongue may be seen as the source—or rather as a metaphor or metonym for the source—of rhetorical infiltration that infects the (especially male) self like a disease, attacking it from the inside (Galen) and/or from the outside (Paracelsus). On the one hand, armed with malevolence which she will pour into her unwary husband's ear, Lady Macbeth could be characterized as the "breeder of poison." She triggers in Macbeth the inner passion for rebellion, even for going against or inverting the natural order. On the other hand, from the Paracelsian pathological standpoint, the evil words spoken by witches are incarnated as agents of infection that invade a healthy individual's body, or healthy socio-political organism, like the very "seeds" (in modern terms the germs) of evil. The witches' cauldron has alchemically transformed this body, not by purifying it into gold but by corrupting and corroding it, killing it, bringing it to the edge of death.

Keywords: *Macbeth*, female tongue, pathogenic, Galen, Paracelsus

---

101.02.06收稿，101.11.25通過刊登。

* This paper was funded by a grant from the National Taiwan Normal University. My debts of gratitude go to the anonymous reviewers for their highly valuable comments and suggestions, which have contributed greatly to the betterment of the current material.

** Associate Professor, Department of Foreign Languages, National Taiwan Normal University.

> "*Tis true, it was a Woman's tongue,*
> *That has, like poison, done me so much wrong. . . .Ill words are worse than poison now and then.*"
> --- anonymous, *Anatomy of A Woman's Tongue* (1639)

> "*Physitians take great notice of the tongue, judging thereby of the health or sickness of the body: so our words shew plainly the quality of our souls.*"
> --- William Gearing, *A Bridle for the Tongue* (1663)

The female "tongue" is thought to have been associated not only with sexuality but with irrationality by a number of medieval and early modern philosophers and poets. The latter even thought the female tongue was evil, satanic, and that it had a potentially subversive socio-political power, while "man" was correlated with God and rational order. That is, woman's tongue was thought to be the origin of turmoil and upheaval in both the public and the private domains. In Chaucer's fourteenth-century *Canterbury Tales*, the eloquent Wife of Bath, champion of modern-day feminists, knows too well the power of the tongue of a "nagging wife" to drive her husband from home, as well as to turn "black into white" in domestic arguments. In Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew*, the successful "taming" of a woman/wife is said to entail the man's governing of the wife's tongue, such that this tongue must abide by the law of (her) man rather than the law of (her) nature. The malcontent protagonist Vindice in *The Revenger's Tragedy* mocks women's penchant for gossip: "Tell but some woman a secret over night, / Your doctor may find it in the urinal i' the morning" (I. iii; 85-6). The extreme case is perhaps found in Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*, where the raped Laviana's tongue is cut out, permanently depriving her of the power of speech. In Milton's *Paradise Lost*, the whispered words of our first mother Eve are regarded as the source of Adam's taste for the forbidden fruit, and the cause of mankind's painful mortality.

Such discourses of and upon the female tongue in medieval and early modern English literature tell us much about conventional—and mainly male patriarchal—thinking with regard to it. While Chaucer may be taking a more positive view of it, the woman's tongue seems often to have been seen as the somatic, the emotional and non-rational source of women's wicked desire to rebel against men. Indeed, in the early modern era this evil female tongue was conceptualized in specifically moral and medical terms as a center and source of *contamination*. In Jonathan Gil Harris's words, "[i]n an overwhelming number of instances, […] it was specifically the female tongue that early modern male writers regarded as poisonous—an association that acquired a dubious legitimacy through repeated appeals to medical authority" (107-8). In several works of the early modern era, especially the anonymous yet well-known *The Anatomy of a Woman's Tongue*, the female tongue is poisonous, for

its "utterance possesses an innate transformative power, a capacity to intervene in and change the existing order of things" (Harris 108). The power to transform/alter the passions of the listener with words is analogous to the act of physiological poisoning of the hearer-subject.

In this paper, I will suggest that Shakespeare exhibits in *Macbeth* a certain pre-existing cultural anxiety about female rhetoric in positioning the woman's tongue as less a dramatic representation than a pathological socio-cultural nexus, one that "sickens" and thus threatens male subjectivity. Thus I will argue that *Macbeth* is a play filled with the plagued rhetoric of women, a rhetoric that triggers or unleashes the unbridled ambitions of Macbeth: the unrestrained movement of the women's tongues parallels Macbeth's unbounded desire. With its power in early modern thinking to transform and transgress, then, its power as a pathogenic site, the female tongue in *Macbeth* may be seen as the source—or rather as a metaphor or metonym for the source—of a rhetorical infiltration that infects the (especially male) self like a disease, attacking it from the inside (Galen) and/or from the outside (Paracelsus). Lady Macbeth promulgates the internal imbalance of humors in her husband and by extension in the state, while the witches serve as an outer force of invasive, virulent "seeds." Therefore this essay will explore the concept of the female tongue as a source of infiltration in Tudor and Stuart culture. It will interpret Lady Macbeth as an "interior cause" in terms of her Galenic humoral diagnosis, and the witches as intrusive agents of disease in terms of a Paracelsian reading or diagnosis.

1. The Female Tongue and Early Modern Medicine

In the early modern period, the tongue was perceived as an "unruly" and "untamed" member, an organ of speech that had a will of its own, even to the point of speaking out against the socio-political order. Thinkers and writers of the era perceived the tongue as a body part that transgressed the bounds of corporeal confinement. As Thomas Adams puts it in *The Taming of the Tongue* (1629), a sermon on the abusive use of language in which he imagines this organ's destructive, unlimited force: "The hand spares to hurt the absent, the tongue hurts all […]. The hand reacheth but a small compasse, the tongue goes through the world" (152). Compared to other bodily parts, even the eye and the ear, the tongue moves wildly and restlessly: "The eye, the eare, the foote, the hand, though wilde and *unruly* enough, have been *tamed, but the tongue can no man tame"* (Adams 149). The tongue is said to have the invasive, corrosive and deadly power of poison, for it

poisons our ears. "[The tongue] is both passive, and active: it is inflamed, and inflameth others. It is both *in it selfe* poisoned, and a poysoner of others" (qtd. Spargo 116).[1] St. James says of the human tongue in his Epistle that "*It is* an unrulie euil, ful of deadlie poyson" (3: 8). Richard Turnbull takes the tongue as a microcosm of evil in his sermons on the *Epistle of St. James*:

> By their tongues, adulterous & leacherous persons, first tempt the chastity of others, and with their words agree vpon the wickednesse. By the tongue, lying, dissembling, flattery, & counterfeiting is committed. By the tongue, slaunder, backbiting, swearing, blasphemie and periurie, is vttered. By the tongue, false sentence is pronounced, either to the condemning of the righteous, or absoluing of the wicked: both which are abhominable before the Lord. By the tongue men are ledde into errour through false doctrine, drawne to wicked ess by lewde counsel.[2]

We may think Turnbull is referring only to "adulterous & leacherous persons" here, and not specifically to men or women, although the ambiguous final sentence—"By the tongue men are ledde into error"—could be read as fitting easily with those other assaults on women's evil power to verbally lead men astray. Although, as Erasmus remarks in his *Lingua* (1525), the tongue may deliver both demonic and divine discourses, this "little member" (Adams 144) is often linked with poison and hellfire, particularly when it is a woman's tongue.[3]

Woman's untamed power of speech in English Tudor and Stuart culture has been displayed in a number of medical and literary narratives, and thus the need for restraining this force is also easily found in the narratives of this period. Helkiah Crooke, in *Microcosmographia: A Description of the Body of Man* (1616), for example, speaks of the tongue's natural and built-in "controls." In Crooke's words, our tongue was created by "our wise Creator" in such a way that it is enveloped "with many Teeth, with Lippes," for God "restrained it with a *Bridle*, that being so carefully attended it might not runne before the minde, which first ought to consulte

1 John Abernethy, Bishop of Cathnes, *The Poysonous Tongue* (1622), quoted in John Spargo, *Juridical Folklore in England*: Illustrated by the Cucking Stool.

2 *An Exposition upon the Canonicall Epistle of St. James* (London, 1606), fol. 161. I am indebted to J. L. Simmons for this citation.

3 My discussions of the significance of the tongue in the early modern period in western society have mainly relied on the scholarship of J.L. Simmons 56-68, and Stallybrass "The Jacobean Theater of Consumption: The Revenger's Tragedy" (1991: 210-20). For the ambivalence of the tongue, I am indebted to Harris 108, Carla Mazzio 54, 71.

and deliberate before the Tongue pronounce any thing" (italics added, 628-29).[4] This necessary "bridling" of the tongue in Crooke finds significant echoes among his contemporaries. Phineas Fletcher speaks of the malign female tongue and of the absolute necessity of restraining it, in order to prevent woman (or the female tongue) from wielding her/its "enchanting art" in *The Purple Island* (1633):[5]

> Curb'd her with iron bit, and held from ranging,
> And with her strong bonds her looser steps enchaining,
> Bridled her course, too many words refraining,
> And doubled all his guards, bold libertie restraining. (sig. H3)

This "bold libertie" of the female tongue can only be "curb'd" with the "iron bit" used to violently "bridle the course" of a horse. While patriarchal males fear the subversive power of women's speech, they also see women as subhuman creatures, or as needing to be treated as such—to be civilized, domesticated, "tamed." Man's rationality and iron bit limit woman's potentially unlimited freedom. And yet:

> For close within he sets twice sixteen guarders,
> Whose hardned temper could not be soon mov'd:
> Without the gate he plac'd two other warders,
> To shut and open the door, as it behov'd:
> But such strange force hath her enchanting art
> That she hath made her keepers of her part,
> And they to all her slights all furtherance impart. (sig. H3)

The subtle and wily rhetoric ("enchanting art") of woman's tongue, its "strange force," is of course able to charm and win over, "make of her part," her male

4 Crooke's *Microcosmographia* is a collection of the findings of major acknowledged authorities on anatomy, including those of anatomists like Avicenna and Vesalius. The section on the sense organs located in the head is to be found in the eighth book of *Microcosmographia* (1616).

5 The lesser poet Phineas Fletcher's *The Purple Island, Or the Isle of Man*, with twelve cantos and more than one hundred pages, is a detailed and Galenic-based treatment of the human body.

'keepers" or "guarders," those gleaming white phallic teeth that indeed surround our tongue and even "bite" into it.

Another allegorical discourse focusing on the female tongue's "corruption" is found in Thomas Tomkis's play *Lingua, or the Combat of the Tongue and the Five Senses for Superiority* (1607). As the title suggests, the play depicts Lingua's struggle against the five senses (hearing, sight, touch, taste, and smell). In fact, here Lingua ("tongue" and also "language") wishes to obtain for herself "the dignitie of a sense" (sig. F3). This "combat" threatens to destroy the bodily organization of Microcosmus, the microcosm or world. As the only female character, Lingua represents women in general who are, once again, being blamed for their supposed skill, indirection and deceitfulness in "speech." Thus Lingua is accused of "high treason, and sacriledge, against the most honorable Common-wealth of letters; [for] shee hath most vilye prostituted the hard misteries of vnknowne Languages to the profane eares of the vulgar" (sig. F3) and "has made rhetoric wanton" (sig. F3). Accused of being a prostitute who brings alien and dangerous words or thoughts, subversive thinking ("vnknowne Languages") to the common people ("eares of the vulgar"), and who therefore disturbs the linguistic order ("made rhetoric wanton"), Lingua powerfully embodies the powers of rhetorical contamination of the female tongue.

Physiologically, the tongue is a corporeal site that may serve as an index of the health of the body as a whole. Erasmus says, in the early sixteenth century: "Doctors infer the symptom of sickness not only from a man's appearance but also from his tongue. Surely the most reliable symptoms of a sick or healthy mind are in the tongue, which is the appearance of the mind"[6] Perhaps due to its power to confuse the passions, the tongue is the primary indicator of a "sick or healthy mind," that is, of disease, whose symptoms first appear in it. The theory of the origin of disease in sixteenth-century England inherited much from medieval and early modern medical theory, mainly from Galen's humoral theory, which derives from an early stage of Greek medicine. It is in a Hippocratic treatise, *On the Nature of Man*, that we first hear of the standard four humors: blood, phlegm, choler or yellow bile, and black bile or melancholy.[7] These humors account for bodily health via both nutrition and

6 See Fantham and Rummel, 326.

7 As Hoeniger remarks, "In the surviving literature, the doctrine of the four humors first occurs in *De natura hominis* (On the Nature of Man), a treatise that Aristotle attributed to Hippocrates' son-in-law, Polybos" (103). For the Galenic humors, see Nancy G. Siraisi, "On the humors," 104-06; Vivian Nutton, "Medicine in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages" in *The Western Medicine Tradition* (1995); Hoeniger 71-117. More recent study can include critics like Michael Schoenfeldt and Gail Kern Paster. For Paracelsian

our complexion. In a normal condition, the food we ingest is transformed (concocted, literally "cooked") into blood, the two biles, and phlegm.[8] As blood nourishes the whole body, it is thought that the humors generate body parts. As for complexion, the four humors, in Nancy Siraisi's words, "collectively were the means whereby an individual's overall complexional balance was maintained or altered." Thus, Siraisi continues, "the balance of humors was held to be responsible for psychological as well as physical disposition" (106). That is, human psychic and physiological health is decided by the balanced distribution of the four humors. This Galenic view of the human body as a semi-porous container of "entirely fungible" (Paster 9)[9] fluids attributes disease to the excess of a certain humor, that is, to *dyscrasia* (a state of imbalance).

This traditional Galenic theory, which considered the inner humoral imbalance to be the etiological basis of disease, was rejected by the ontological conception of disease proposed by the sixteenth-century Germen-Swiss physician Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim, who Latinized his name as Paracelsus. The latter grounded his "natural philosophy" on cosmic chemical principles, and took outside agents which invaded the human body, rather than the inner humoral system, to be the origin of disease. In Hoeniger's words, "Paracelsus rejected humoral pathology, teaching instead that most diseases are due to external causes (coming from the skies or due to earthly corruption) that introduce the 'seeds' of the illness into a part of the body, most often an organ" (121). Thus in the early modern period, the inner humoral imbalance of scholastic Galenism gave way to a Paracelsian empiricism that emphasizes the exterior cause, the "seed."[10] This revolutionary shift from an

theories, see, for example, Walter Pagel's *Paracelsus: An Introduction to Philosophical Medicine in the Era of the Renaissance* (1982).

8 In the words of Hoeniger: "According to Galen, the humors are formed during an early state of the nutritive process and in turn contribute fundamentally to it. After the preliminary digestive stage in the stomach, […] the chyle is passed on to the liver, the central organ of nutrition. There, during the second stage of concoction, it is transformed into blood as well as smaller but sufficient amounts of yellow and atrabilious bile. These humors then pass through the veins, furnishing all parts of the body with the nourishment they require" (103).

9 As Paster puts it, "Galenic physiology proposed a body whose constituent fluids, all reducible to blood, were entirely fungible. Not only did blood, semen, milk, sweat, tears, and other bodily fluids turn into one another, but the processes of alimentation, excretion, menstruation, and lactation were understood as homologous" (9).

10 According to Stephanie Moss, "the concept that the seeds of disease were present in nature before the Fall was a particularly subversive aspect of Paracelsian ideology, suggesting an imperfect world at the Creation. It is precisely these seeds, however, that

"epistemological" to an "ontological" understanding of disease may have partly resulted from the emergence of a new disease, syphilis, which raged across Europe beginning from the late fifteenth century (the 1490s, and it was in 1492 that Columbus discovered "the New World"). The discovery of the outside agent of this contagious disease gave further force to the more modern Paracelsian view. As W. A. Murray points out, Paracelsus also "combined the practice of medicine with that of alchemy, which he understood not as the making of gold, but as the making of remedies to refine and purify and protect the human body from the diseases of mortality" (37).[11] Paracelsian medicine is based on the idea that the base metals and minerals that are initially poisonous can be distilled into a purer form for greater therapeutic benefit.

In the context, then, of the early modern English belief that women's tongue was a site of putrefaction and disease, I will explore the role of the female tongue in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. I will argue that the tongues of Lady Macbeth and the witches become a "poison" to the once invulnerable Macbeth, contaminating his warrior-like self. In the play, the female tongue transgresses the boundaries of, transforms and plagues this embodiment of male subjectivity.

2. Lady Macbeth: Tongue of Thick Blood and Black Bile

Janet Adelman points out in *Suffocating Mothers* (1992) that "the whole of the play [*Macbeth*] represents in very powerful form both the fantasy of a virtually absolute and destructive maternal power and the fantasy of absolute escape from this power" (131). Following one point of her observation, I argue that, as an extension of the above, the driving force underlying that registered "absolute escape" is the oppression of female language, particularly represented by Lady Macbeth's tongue that threatens to "suffocate" her husband's male subjectivity. Lady Macbeth's words, in her earlier appearance, dominate the soundscape of the whole play. She acts as the generator of monstrous words, words that enclose and enwrap Macbeth like a suffocating womb, giving birth to a maddened male subject who is unable to escape

have gained Paracelsus the epitaph of 'father of modern medicine.'" Moss affirms that his "seed" theory "is considered the first articulation of modern notions of germs and viruses" (166n15).

11 My application of the Paracelsian view focuses on the effects of the witches' use of language; this is not discussed in Murray's article, though it also uses Paracelsian theories to analyze Macbeth.

her acoustic dominance over his mind/head/bodily castle. As the concept of human nature in the Renaissance is that body and soul are closely related and that they affect one another, the "Renaissance psychology is a physiological psychology" (Babb 1). Lady Macbeth's oppressive rhetoric, the direct expression (as "female tongue") of her inner or domestic passions, disturbs, infects and distracts Macbeth. This view coincides with the Galenic medical viewpoint which diagnoses disease based on the interiority of human body. Yet Lady Macbeth—the source of her husband's disease—turns out to be herself suffering from excessive inner emotions, and again is best understood via the Galenic humoral theory as a victim of melancholy.

The opening soliloquy of Lady Macbeth unfolds the female arch-conspirator as suffering from a disturbance of the mind characterized particularly by emphatic masculinity, frenzy, and witchcraft-like possession,[12] and with them the so called "Elizabethan Malady"—that is, melancholia, a Galenic based humoral disorder caused by excessive black bile which leads to her somnambulism, madness, and perhaps suicide. Melancholy, to borrow Lawrence Babb's terms, "means 'black bile,'" "may accurately be applied to any bilious humor which is black," and "is cold and dry, black, thick, sluggish, semi-excremental (for it is the dregs of the blood)" (21). Furthermore, "[c]ertain black bilious humors arise from the scorching or burning of normal humors by unnatural heat, which is due to such causes as improper diet, physiological disorder, or immoderate passions" (Babb 21). In the case of Lady Macbeth, the cause of her melancholic malady is clearly her "immoderate passions" that produce excessive black bile. For the early modern physician Luis Mercado, "[n]othing certainly engenders melancholy more quickly or more readily causes existing melancholy to linger than passions of the mind, for they both dry the body and disturb the spirits and humors beyond nature" (qtd. in Babb 24).[13] This early modern medical observation also fits the view of Robert Burton in his *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621): "the mind most effectually works upon the

12 Lady Macbeth is clearly associated with the witches, particularly via her invocation of the "murth'ring ministers," which suggests the practice of witchcraft. See Stallybrass, "Reading the Body and the Jacobean Theater of Consumption," (1991: 196). However, Carol Thomas Neely notices that Lady Macbeth and the witches are both connected and disconnected at the same time, as she puts it: "The witches are then ambiguously associated with and dissociated from Lady Macbeth" (58). Both serve as the "cultural scapegoats" of unnaturalness; however, both contrast each other with the difference between the natural and the supernatural (57-59).

13 For this quote, I have borrowed from Babb's translation of *Opera* (1608), a treatise by the Spanish physician Luis Mercado (1513-1606).

body, producing by his passions and perturbations miraculous alterations, as melancholy, despair, cruel diseases, and sometimes death itself" (288). We see Lady Macbeth's "miraculous alternations" in her drastic change from an authoritative orator to a melancholic sleep-walker, who is betrayed by her own tongue that openly testifies to her guilt.

Lady Macbeth is first ushered onto the stage as a willful, dominating, aggressive woman and wife, calculating and plotting "the nearest way" for her husband (and by extension herself) to win the crown. The soliloquy has already staged her as a strong wife who obstinately detects and determines her husband's mental disposition as feminine and thereby ill-suited for the plan she has in mind; she wants him to possess that kind of extreme ambition that must be accompanied by a kind of "illness" (evilness, the illness of evil) or even, perhaps, a kind of madness that is close to wickedness:

Lady M. —Yet do I fear thy nature:
It is too full o'th'milk of human kindness,
To catch the nearest way. Thou wouldst be great;
Are not without ambition, but without
The illness should attend it. (I. v; 16-20) […]
That I may pour my spirits in thine ear,
And chastise with the valour of my tongue
All that impedes thee from the golden round.
(italics added, I. v; 26-28)

This is an incurable "moral disease," where "immorality" (or wickedness or the pursuit of evil) really means a kind of disorder of the body-mind. The body-mind must be out-of-control (or disordered, chaotic) to achieve what it wants. Here Lady Macbeth is taking control of her husband, "ordering" him with the "valour" of her tongue, a tongue grown phallic like a powerful fighting weapon threatens his male subjectivity, and perhaps even becomes hardened by the heating flames of "unnatural heat" rising up inside her to the point of scorching the organism of the whole kingdom and of nature as well as of Macbeth. From the beginning she is pictured as a woman who knows how to exercise the power of her tongue/words to turn her husband's "milky" weakness into a "bloody" strength. She also grants full power to her words, her woman's tongue, in a way that reminds us of Lingua and those other women whose 'irrational" tongues were feared by men.

Lady M. That I may pour my spirits in thine ear,
And chastise with the valour of my tongue
All that impedes thee from the golden round.
(italics added, I. v; 26-28)

Lady Macbeth's rhetorical power goes beyond mere persuasion. She would transform the listener's inner passions. She would "pour" into Macbeth's ear not just her words but her "spirits," and she herself also desires the outcome, "the golden round." To "chastise with the valour of my tongue/ All that impedes thee from the golden round" suggests a kind of "purgation" and one that is directly achieved through the force of *lingua*, the force of a woman's irrational and even magical tongue.

Pouring her wicked language into Macbeth's ear, in effect urging him to become king by killing the present king and anyone who might stand in his way, she triggers in him the passion for rebellion, even an inversion of the natural order. This threat to the "natural order" of male subjectivity actually was that more "metaphysical" crime that women's rhetoric was thought by men, in Tudor and Stuart England, to be capable of inciting. To achieve this she becomes—perhaps especially in men's view—asexual, again disturbing the "natural order," in this case that of gender, like Lingua in her battle with the five senses:

Lady M. Come, you Spirits
That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here,
And fill me, from the crown to the toe, top-full
Of direst cruelty! Make thick my blood,
Stop up th'access and passage to remorse; […]
Come to my woman's breasts,
And take my milk for gall, you murth'ring ministers, […]
Come, thick Night,
And pall thee in the dunnest smoke of Hell.
(italics added, I. v; 40-51)

Perhaps then we have more than gender-crossing in Lady Macbeth's scheme here;

we have her transgressing of the worlds of the living and the dead, her conjuring up of the agents ("ministers") from the world of hell with her spell-like speech. The "smoke of Hell" invokes the image of hellfire, and perhaps we could even see her mouth here as the entrance of hell. Her words project an inner image of an angry flame that would set an inward fire in Macbeth, the burning of the castle from within. Anger is "the impulse to fight for the fulfillment of desire or aversion" (Babb 4), and the passion of *anger* manifested by this imperative mode of speech employed by the agitated speaker recalls the analysis of this passion by Tobias Venner,[14] who says it "stirreth vp the naturall heat, breedeth choler, and inflameth the blood and spirits [. . . and] vehemently heateth the bodie, drieth it, and resolueth the strengths" (225-26).

However, the implied unnatural heat, as opposed to the healthy natural heat,[15] in Venner's description is medically associated with the burning of the passions, and thus we have that dryness of the brain associated not with anger (choler) but with melancholy (Hoeniger 208), more specifically the so-called "burned melancholy" or "melancholy adust." As Hoeniger says, "[t]he burning of the humors blackens them into a form of melancholy far more malignant than ordinary melancholy. Galen speaks of black bile being produced by burned yellow bile (*xanthe chole*) or by burned thick blood. The qualities of such melancholy, or as it also was called by renaissance writers, 'black choler adust,' are alternatively hot and cold." Hoeniger goes on to say that "[t]his conception of burned melancholy also helps explain why anger was associated with melancholy rather than with choler" (326).

Lady Macbeth dismisses, then, all that is associated with a mother's nurturing "milk," wishing this milk to become "gall"—"take my mild for gall, you murth'ring ministers"—and wishing her blood to be 'made thick." Thick blood was taken, as we have seen, as a product of the melancholic humor, and "gall" was the term for yellow liver bile which is very bitter; the choleric humor was associated with bitterness of spirit, rancor, brazen boldness, impudent assurance. The invocation of the "thick Night" is assimilated with the image of the black humor. If viewed medically we may see it as the overspread of black melancholy inside her veins, her "thick blood." For the melancholic humor produces thick, unhealthy blood as compared to the "hot, thin, clear blood" produced as a consequence of courage and

14 Venner (1577-1660), in Babb's words, "was a physician of Bath" (195).

15 The natural heat, or radical heat, according to André du Laurens, "is the principall instrument of the soule, for it is it that concocteth and distributeth our nourishment, which procureth generation […]. This heate being a naturall bodie hath neede of nourishment, the humour which is called the radicall moisture, is the nourishment thereof" (170).

intelligence (Siraisi 105).[16] This black humor affects, in André du Lauren's words, the "most noble powers, and principally the imagination, presenting unto it continually blacke forms and strange visions" (92). Furthermore, because of the conflict between the dryness of the brain (as if it were being "cooked") that is caused by melancholy and the moist vapor produced by sleep, the melancholic suffers from insomnia (Hoeniger 208). "Consumed" by her thick blood, however, Lady Macbeth does not seek the therapy of bloodletting (the common method of "purging" the blood); rather, she pushes her husband to commit murder, to shed blood in her own lust for power, and this inevitably brings about her final breakdown.

Furthermore, in the soliloquy quoted above, Lady Macbeth is perhaps giving up her own milk (motherhood, nurturing, human kindness), her gender (through becoming asexual or becoming male), her thin or pure blood (justice, intelligence, health) to the Spirits of the Night in order to be transformed into a cruel murderess (murderer). We also might say that she would give up her maternal power of conceiving a child, for now, given her "medical condition," her only offspring must be abnormal, monstrous, evil; indeed her uterus may now become unfit for the harboring of an embryo.[17] This particular body organ of uterus and women's melancholy were considered deeply associated in the early modern medical treatises, and the Greek word for "uterus," *hysteros*, also provided the name for "hysteria," a woman's "mental disease." Carol T. Neely says that woman's melancholy "is acknowledged in the special phlebotomy instructions given for melancholy that is caused by uterine congestion" (16).[18] Armed with such malevolence which she now

16 Siraisi has provided a further discussion of the "quality" of blood (105-06).

17 Regarding the concept of the uterus and its relation to the disease hysteria, in Hoeniger's words, Galen "rejected the fanciful notion of the uterus wandering about like an animal" found in "Plato's Timaeus and the Hippocratic treatises"; however, he "too saw the cause of the illness as poisoned blood in the uterus, produced by excess black bile." Galen's interpretation of the development of the disease hysteria was that "unhealthy vapors rise from the uterus, causing toxic effects on the higher organs, the blood vessels, and the pneumata or spirits." Furthermore, "[t]he swelling of the organs impedes breathing, and in acute cases the vapors rise to the head, causing dizziness and disturbing the brain" (321).

18 For women, "the uterus is a most important organ, and brings the whole body to sympathize with it" (Hunter and Macalpine 131-32). Besides, the organ also explains mental perturbations: "How dreadful, then, are the mental aberrations, the delirium, the melancholy, the paroxysms of frenzy as if the affected person were under the dominion of spells, and all arising from unnatural states of the uterus" (Hunter and Macalpine 132). Carol T. Neely also indicates that there is a "definitional clarity" in women melancholy in the early modern England, as it is also called with other terminology like madness, the mother, melancholy, lovesickness, and distraction (70n1). The treaties on melancholy are

will pour into her unwary husband's ear, Lady Macbeth could be characterized as the "breeder of poison."[19] The words she utters are like drops of black bile dripping into Macbeth's ears even as they immerse the interiority of the castle, turning the former into an inflicted subject and the latter a darkish hell.

Most of Lady Macbeth's lines in the play are spoken directly to Macbeth, words that command, coax, prick, manipulate, and intimidate, words that are as hard as the "undaunted mettle" (I. vii; 74) in the husband-listener's ears, as unclean as her thickened blood. In the three main communications between them concerning the act of murdering the king (I. v, I. vii, II. ii), the audience hears Lady Macbeth speak words which are as sharp as the imaginary dagger that kills Duncan and threatens to emasculate Macbeth himself. Her eagerness to see her husband murder Duncan and become king in his stead is shockingly expressed in her first conversation with her newly-honored husband, just returned from the battlefield. Acknowledging that Duncan will stay in their castle only overnight, she growls: "O! never/ Shall sun that morrow see!" (I. v; 60-61). We are surprised at "[t]he swiftness of the time scheme" which "is reflected in the swiftness of the language" (Jacobi 334). Leaving no time or rhetorical space for Macbeth to reply, she is in control of both his actions and his words, directing him to "look like th'innocent flower,/ But be the serpent under't," for "you shall put / This night's great business into my dispatch," and "Leave all the rest to me" (I. v; 65-68, 73-74).

Lady Macbeth seems to be willing to shoulder the guilt herself at first, in order to appease Macbeth's fear. However, if indeed she had felt any real guilt in the first place, she appears more hardened in their second meeting, when Macbeth tries to withdraw ("We will proceed no further in this business," I. vii; 31). He is now bitten by her poisoned tongue, as she humiliates him ("live *a coward* in thine own esteem, / Letting 'I dare not' wait upon 'I would,'" italics added, I. vii; 42-43) and directly calls into question his masculinity ("to be more than what you were, you would/ Be so much more the man," I. vii; 50-51). The violence of her words reaches its peak when she says that if she had promised to kill her own baby as solemnly as he had promised her he would kill the king, she would keep her promise:

---

mainly focused on men; for example, Timothy Bright's *Treatise of Melancholie* (1586) "is addressed to a male friend and because both melancholy [natural melancholy and spiritual despair] are always attributed to men, the condition continues to be almost exclusively associated with them, as the all-male figures of melancholy we have seen in Burton's frontispiece to the *Anatomy of Melancholy* make visible" (Neely 16).

19 Margaret Miles elaborates on this term in her study of the representations of childbirth and the (mainly male) "terror" of female reproductive organs in traditional cultures (145-62).

Lady M. I have given suck, and know
How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me:
I would, while it was smiling in my face,
Have pluck'd my nipple from his boneless gums,
And dash'd the brains out, had I so sworn
As you have done to this. (I. vii; 54-59)

Lady Macbeth's shocking words dominate the scene and overwhelm Macbeth. As if her speech has deafened him and left him swimming in silence, he can now offer only the most feeble justification for himself—"I dare do all that may become a man; / Who dares do more, is none," I. vii; 46-47). This suggests that normally, unlike his wife, he would cling to some degree of reason and moderation— and to ask, "If we should fail?" (I. vii; 59). His wife then proceeds to go through the details of the plot, showing him that it is foolproof and thereby gaining his approval. The scene ends with Macbeth saying he is ready to commit the murder ("I am settled, and bend up/ Each *corporal agent* to this terrible feat," italics added, I. vii; 80-81), showing that he feels he must force his own body, his passions out of its/their normal state to commit this horrible act of transgression. Metaphorically, Lady Macbeth, with her omnipresent and oppressing tongue, has turned herself into Macbeth's voice residing in his inner body, making the warrior's speech a mere ventriloquism of her words. Macbeth has lost his voice to Lady Macbeth's tongue of black bile and thick blood, and accordingly both his mind and his subjectivity.

Lady Macbeth resorts to more than just her evil rhetoric when she poisons the two chamberlains. Again it may imply that she is the source of all contamination, the interior, "corporeal" center of a plague that spreads from inside the castle, blocking the normal circulation of the pure, royal, golden blood of Duncan and its potentially healthy intermingling with the blood of Macbeth. For as we have seen, Macbeth too has been infected by the contagion of evil, and after he commits the actual deed he feels that he "hath murdered sleep." While he is overwhelmed by a sense of guilt so great that, like a vast stain of blood, it cannot be washed away—"Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood/ Clean from my hand?" (II. ii; 59-60)—Lady Macbeth takes the "bloody business" as a trivial thing, replying matter-of-factly to her husband: "A little water clears us of this deed" (II. ii; 66). A little earlier she has said to him:

Lady M. Infirm of purpose!
Give me the daggers. The sleeping, and the dead,
Are but as pictures; 'tis the eye of childhood
That fears a painted devil. (II. ii; 51-54)

Her own heartless reaction to the regicide eventually drives Macbeth into a manic state in which he commits even more murders.

In the end, however, Lady Macbeth is defeated by her own excessiveness, that is, by the chaotic state of her passions, by her extreme melancholia which is unnatural and thus damaging to a healthy body. Or, perhaps at one point, she is defeated by her own unbridled tongue that first serves as the phallic sword capable of piercing into Macbeth's ears and now turns back to claim her life.[20] She seems to be a woman totally lacking in a knowledge of herself, of her own mind, unable to realize the dangers of this double-edged tongue, which is as uncontrollable and perilous as her inner passions. Lady Macbeth's collapse has been an inward one, just as has her self-distracted husband's. Thus we get one of the most haunting scenes in the play: the insomniac Lady Macbeth's sleepwalking scene. She is observed by the Doctor and the Gentlewoman in Act V, scene i, and they note that "her eyes are open […] but their sense are shut [….] Look, how she rubs her hands." Here she might represent the inner physiological state of her husband, who has "murdered sleep" and "shall sleep no more" (II. Ii; 42). In Galenic medicine, sleepwalking (Lady Macbeth) and hallucination (Macbeth) are closely associated: both are symptoms of melancholy and are the result of a disorder of the senses and the brain. She has become, or rather her body and psyche have become, as unsettled and unhinged as her untamed tongue and as weak as the light of the taper she holds in her hand as she walks in a sleep yet eludes her.

3. The Alien Tongue of the Witches: The Satanic Invasive Agent

Unlike Lady Macbeth's worldliness and interiority, the three witches are featured by their unnaturalness, as the other-worldly or alien beings, going beyond the knowledge of the castled human mind. This is how Shakespeare describes his three witches near the beginning of the play: "So wither'd and so wild in their attire,/ That look not like th'inhabitants o'th'earth" (I. iii; 40-41). Witches were thought to

20 My point here is inspired by an anonymous reviewer's comments.

have supernatural powers, and to be capable of casting spells and pronouncing curses that could bring about unnatural transformations. Thus their "evil" was often observed in their disruption of the natural order (i.e. blurring of the worlds of life and death) and also, as in the case of *Macbeth*, of the socio-political order.[21] Insofar as they were commonly considered to be the messengers of Satan, to "speak for Satan," witches could easily be imagined as possessing (or being) the mouths or tongues of hell.[22] As such, they had great power to speak out against and to disrupt the political, patriarchal, religious order that had been granted by God and, through him, the monarch (Harris 121).

However, if "witchcraft and political rebellion were readily identified with each other in the inscriptions of Tudor and Stuart authority" (Harris 121), it was above all the wicked *language* of Satan and witchcraft (as opposed to the sacred words of the Holy Scriptures) that was thought to be rebellious, seditious, treasonous. Such language was banned as part of a 1581 act which prohibited "sedicious Wordes and Rumors uttered against the Queenes most excellent Majestie."[23] Yet the "invasion of the body politic" by diabolical language was also seen as being analogous to the invasion of the healthy body by disease, or its disruption and confusion by certain passions. The "foreignness" of the outside invader was an *idée fixe* in early modern European thinking, and this held true for the Paracelsian understanding of the micro-organisms that caused disease; for Paracelsus, "the four humours and complexions could not explain the large variety of diseases," so he "emphasised the intimate relationship between man and the outside world" (Pagel 129).[24] Thus from a Paracelsian pathological standpoint the evil words spoken (as in curses and spells) by witches were incarnated as agents of infection that invaded a healthy individual's body, or healthy socio-political organism, like "seeds" (in modern terms, germs) of

21 Peter Stallybrass, however, argues that witchcraft beliefs "imply and legitimate their opposite, the 'natural.'" He claims that "witchcraft beliefs are less a reflection of a real 'evil' than a social construction from which we learn more about the accuser than the accused, more about the social institutions which tolerate/encourage/act on those accusations than about the activities of those people (in England, mainly women, mainly poor) who were prosecuted as witches" (2005: 190) However, my study here relies more on the early modern view of witches.

22 In the trial, in Jonathan Harris's words, "of Margaret and Phillippa Flower for witchcraft in 1619, for example, Joan Wilmott, a witch, testified about the details of the oral infiltration that had constituted her satanic compact" (119).

23 See Ewen 12-21.

24 Walter Pagel (1958) gives detailed and remarkable elaborations upon Paracelsus's medical theory.

evil from the outside.

In *Macbeth*, therefore, the central "weapon" of the witches, as too of Lady Macbeth, is their words, voices, and tongues. Unlike Lady Macbeth's active, direct, hardened language, the witches' words seem to be more passive in their riddle-like indirection, thus more seductive to a listener like Macbeth. Nevertheless, Macbeth remains cautious when he first hears these voices ("This supernatural soliciting/ Cannot be ill; cannot be good," I. iii; 130-31). The witches' speech to Macbeth at the play's beginning entices and solicits him, solicits his body and his passions, encouraging him to be more ambitious. The language of these weird sisters is paradoxical, as is clear from their first utterance: "Fair is foul, and foul is fair" (I. i; 11). This echoes a statement in Krämer and Sprenger's *Malleus Maleficarum* (1486) about witches: "as she is a liar by nature, so in her speech she stings while she delights us" (126).[25]

Of course, Macbeth chooses to listen only to "fair" words, words which he thinks could have no foul consequences. Perhaps we could take this paradoxical "fair-foul" or "cure-poison" dichotomy embedded in the witches' language to suggest that while the body (innocent listener) itself/himself may be fair (healthy), the foul food (words) will poison him. If so, then we come back to a central point in Paracelsus: "There is no poison in the body, but there is poison in what we take as nourishment. The body is perfectly created, but food is not" (*Essential Readings* 50). Also, "a person eating meat, wherein both poison and nourishment are contained, deems everything good while he eats. For the poison lies hidden among the good and there is nothing good among the poison" (Paracelsus, *Paramirum* 29). That is, there is a certain interchangeability between the poison and the remedy, as exemplified by the fact that, in modern medicine, antibodies taken from diseased blood are used to fight the disease itself, and the fact that Paracelsus' most recommended cure for syphilis was the chemical element mercury, known to be poisonous. "Poisonous action and remedial virtue are intimately bound up with each other in such substances as arsenic" (Pagel 145). Aspiring to become a greater self, to undergo a sort of self-overcoming, perhaps, Macbeth takes these poisonous words as his nourishment, first unintentionally and then through the force of his own will, as if addicted.

The witches' Satanic words easily enter Macbeth's receptive ears, engendering wild fantasies, and yet the words are vapor-like and intangible like the witches themselves, who while seemingly possessing a visible corporeal form "vanished . . .

25 Peter Stallybrass says that the most influential of all the Renaissance witchcraft treatises is Krämer and Sprenger's *Malleus Maleficarum*. He has associated this work with Macbeth with regard to the concept of women and witchcraft (2005: 204).

[i]nto the air" and "[m]elted as breath into the wind" (I. iii; 80-82). For the witches themselves are shapeless bubbles; as Banquo says, "The earth hath bubbles, as the water has,/ And these [the witches] are of them" (I. iii; 79-80). The witches' words, like their formless shapes, which only confuse us, are like bubbles of air, elusive and ephemeral. This air-like quality of the witches also reminds one of the essential role of air in producing acoustic effects, which can perhaps help to explain the immediate attachment of Macbeth, as the *listener*, to those airy creatures. Paracelsus also notes that *air* is known as "the medium of normal life in the universe as well as in man and as the vector of disease agents" (Pagel 141).

As the agents of dark night (Hecate's spirits or fairies) and "murth'ring ministers" (I. v; 45), the three witches give the play the loud thunder of its opening, where thunder suggests moral chaos, disorder, "disease" at the macrocosmic, sociopolitical and microcosmic (biological) levels.[26] Macbeth's two encounters with the witches, who like Lady Macbeth direct him along his fateful path, disrupt his judgment and behavior. It is as if he has eaten "the insane root./ That takes the reason prisoner […]" (I. iii; 84), as Banquo says when warning his friend about the witches' power. Having been drugged once by the witches' intoxicating words, the addicted Macbeth still seeks for a second time the advice of these "secret, black, and midnight hags" (IV. i; 48).

We get a mischievous Paracelsian iatrochemical setting in Act IV, scene i, in which the witches appear for the second time, now accompanied by their cauldron. For this is a more explicitly alchemical scene, one combining the complex images associated with alchemy: medicine, the occult, astrology, magic and witchcraft. Here Macbeth actually desires what he thinks the alchemist's cauldron can give him: the transformation or purification of ordinary metals into gold. Pure gold, the final stage of alchemical distillation, is something that Macbeth sees both in Duncan's golden crown and "his golden blood" (II. iii; 110), that is, his royal, clean and healthy blood. The speech of the three apparitions conjured up by the witches seems to promise just such an alchemical cure for Macbeth, one that will affirm and secure his newly-won throne. For as gold is to common metals, so is immortality to our mortal body. On

26 As the order of the cosmic body is analogous to that of the human body in early modern thought, so the disease of epilepsy, also called the "sacred disease," is considered to be a "storm" by Paracelsus, "an alchemical reaction manifest Neoplatonically in both microcosm and macrocosm," a medical view contrary to the Galenic perception of epilepsy as a bestial disease (Moss 160-61). Literary works discussing Macbeth as a victim of epilepsy include, to name a few, that of Hoeniger (his epilepsy is witch-inspired) and Aubrey C. Kail's *The Medical Mind of Shakespeare*, and there are also analyses of this disease in other Shakespeare plays such as *King Lear* and *Othello*.

the other hand, Macbeth's appeal to the unorthodox, non-traditional practices of the witches is comparable to Paracelsus's revolutionizing attitude in the face of the authoritative Galenic medical theory. The witches' way of curing at one point might be reminiscent of the "old wife" who "searches wood and field for the individual plants, learning their colours, forms, taste, scent and species, and, according to her experience of their virtues, administers the surest remedy" (Pagel 296)[27]; this fits the Paracelsian model of using medicines from outside (from nature) to cure diseases caused by outside agents, alien germs.

Macbeth's vision of the three phantoms conjured up by the witches also conforms to the Paracelsian "optical" model of the ontology of disease. For Paracelsus, diseases are "regarded as entities in themselves distinguishable by specific changes and causes" (Pagel 137). In contrast to the Galenic "internal" doctrine of humoral pathology, according to which "the sick individual determines the cause and nature of disease," this Paracelsian view considers "the individual disease that conditions the patient and manifests itself in a characteristic picture" (Pagel 137). That is, Paracelsus "visualizes each disease as endowed with a body […], so there is a relationship between a given disease and the place where it occurs" (Pagel 137). The three apparitions are each "endowed with a body" that discloses the particular "disease" it suggests. The images of the three phantoms, the three "diseases," could in fact be correlated with the three chemical causes of disease in the individual: salt, sulfur, and mercury.[28]

The first phantom is an armed head that gives words of warning ("beware Macduff," IV. i; 71); this could suggest mercury, "the prototype of a pathogenic agent, as it stands for change in general—a change for the worse as well as a change for the better" (Pagel 146). In the case of Macbeth, the first specter represents the potential or imminent changing of his corporeal/political body, a deterioration. Then the second and third phantoms might represent the elements of salt and sulfur. While salt is associated with permanence, resolution and taste, and Macbeth will have a "taste" of death in his final resolution, sulfur stands for fire or flame, implying the

27 The medicinal concept in this quote is adopted from Agrippa of Nettesheym (1487-1535), the author of *Occult Philosophy* and a contemporary of Paracelsus. According to Pagel, "Agrippa had been encouraged in the study of 'Occult Philosophy' and the writing of his book by Trithemius, one of the earlier teachers of Paracelsus" (296).

28 The attribution of the three phantoms to the three chemical elements here is somewhat arbitrary. (Pagel spells sulfur, or sulphur as "sulpher.") However, the three principles or tria prima are also meant "to account for all things." To demonstrate their existence, Paracelsus burnt a twig: "the vaporous fumes denoted mercury, the flame was sulfur, and the final ashes were salt" (Debus 57).

physiological/political disorder brought by the coming war.[29] However, both "prophecies" seem to negate the terrible fate they nonetheless name by predicting that Macbeth shall be harmed by "none of woman born" and "shall never vanquish'd be, until/ Great Birnam wood to high Dunsinane hill/ Shall come against him" (IV. i; 80, 92-94).

It is exactly this predication of his downfall on the occurrence of "unnatural" and seemingly *impossible* events that relieves Macbeth of his fear ("Sweet bodements! good!" IV. i; 96), though of course he is himself the agent of unnatural (chaotic, evil) deeds, of a chaotic reordering of the state. He thus feels free to commit more crimes.

Armed with this new "confidence" (III. v; 32) by the words of the witches (the Paracelsian "outside agents") rather than through using his own judgment and intellect, this "wayward son […] shall spurn fate, scorn death, and bear/ His hopes 'bove wisdom, grace, and fear" (III. v; 11, 30-31), as predicted by Hecate. The witches have of course given Macbeth a false sense of security with their double-tongued language, their rhetoric of "fair is foul and foul is fair." Thus the morally and linguistically bewitched Macbeth is led to his further evil deeds, including the killing of Lady Macduff and her young son, which in turn gives more force to the revolt against him—as if he were a plagued body attacked by an ever-increasing number of external "seeds."

For Macbeth, ironically enough given his own turn toward the "unnatural," could not imagine that there might be such unnatural phenomena as a man "not born of woman" or the coming of a forest to Dunsinane Hill—and yet the triumphant Macduff "was from his mother's womb/ Untimely ripp'd" (V. viii; 15-16), and his soldiers, attacking Macbeth's forces, camouflaged themselves by carrying branches from the trees of Dunsinane forest in front of them. These in fact true and prophetic words of the three "artificial sprites" did indeed "by the strength of their illusion […] draw [Macbeth] to his confusion" (III. v; 27-29). Macbeth, upon learning that Birnam wood had "really" moved to Dunsinane, condemns the witches' misleading language: "the'equivocation of the fiend, /That lies like truth" (V. v; 43-44). Later he curses their language again when Macduff claims that he was not "of woman born" in the normal way—which actually presents us with a tricky (double-tongued, witch-like) equivocation on the meaning of "birth," just as the coming of the forest to the hill depends on an equivocation on the sense of "come."

Now disenchanted with the witches and their ironically "validated" power of

29 For the suggestive meanings of the three chemical elements mentioned here, see Pagel 133-34, 146-47.

prophecy, of prophetic utterance, Macbeth's corporeal-and-political body threatens to collapse. The witches' cauldron has alchemically transformed this body, not by purifying it into gold but by corrupting and corroding it, bringing it to the edge of death. This also means the loss of everything he once had, as he realizes when about to fight the English troops single-handedly:

> *Macbeth.* As honour, love, obedience, troops of friends,
> I must not look to have; but in their stead,
> Curses, not loud, but deep, mouth-honour breath,
> Which the poor heart would fain deny, and dare not.
> (V. iii; 25-28)

This mere "mouth-honour breath"—as opposed to a genuine sense of honor, and of being honored by others—suggests once again the potential falseness of the (of anyone's) "mouth" and "voice" and "mere words," and may also hint at the dependence of our own life on "mere breath" and the inevitable drawing of our "last breath."

4. Conclusion

In early modern patriarchal and Christian communities the female tongue remained the locus of infection, a pathogenic site that trespasses and, eventually, sorcerizes the male body politic. The encompassing, engulfing force of Lingua is clearly demonstrated in *Macbeth*, where the female tongue is equally fatal when attacking from inside or from outside the listener and his immediate "world": Lady Macbeth's scolding words are spoken inside the castle and the witches' "unnatural" speech comes from outside of it. As the corporeal tongue is traditionally conceived or gendered as phallic, the exercise and indeed embodiment of it by Lady Macbeth and the three weird sisters violates the order of the patriarchal authority, for language like rationality is traditionally the male domain. Both forms of female tongue in the play become a chaotically omnipresent, overwhelming destructive force shattering the male cosmic/political/religious order. Their rhetoric, feared (Lady Macbeth) and dangerous (the witches), represents the two sides of "female language" when it is used on or against men: emasculating and flattering. While at one point Lady Macbeth's emasculating words hurt Macbeth more deeply than the wounds he got on the battlefield, the witches' enticing, enchanting language inflates his ego (his imagination, his ambition) beyond reasonable limits.

The wife's words of blame disrupt Macbeth's "sleep" and thus disturb his inner humoral imbalance (Galen); the witches' enticing words, though initially they promise a sound sleep, turn the hearer's dream into a nightmare through the force of their invasive and virulent "foreignness" or "otherness" (Paracelsus). The death of Lady Macbeth and the vanishing of the witches may imply the at least temporary weakening of the evil power of the female tongue, the ultimately positive or restorative effects of which on the male political order (body politic) we see near the end of the play. After the witches disappear and before Lady Macbeth's mad sleepwalking scene, which precedes the news of her suicide, Macduff elaborates to Malcolm the physician's report on King Edward's curative powers:

> A most miraculous work in this good King,
> Which often, since my here-remain in England,
> I have seen him do. How he solicits Heaven,
> Himself best knows; but strangely-visited people,
> All swoln and ulcerous, pitiful to the eye,
> The mere despair of surgery, he cures;
> Hanging a golden stamp about their necks,
> Put on with holy prayers: and 'tis spoken,
> To the succeeding royalty he leaves
> The healing benediction. With this strange virtue,
> He hath a heavenly gift of prophecy;
> And sundry blessings hang about his throne,
> That speak him full of grace.[30] (IV. iii; 147-59)

30 Sir John Charles Bucknill, one of the earliest critics writing on Shakespeare and medicine, verified the historical fact of King Edward's curing sessions: "The touching for the king's evil [the disease], which is so minutely described in this play, was performed by Edward the Confessor, the first of our kings who exercised this miraculous gift. He was, however, by no means the last, for the practice descended so near to these present times of unbelief as the life-time of Samuel Johnson, who was, himself, actually touched by the royal hand for this purpose" (194). The curing of scrofula, or "the King's Evil," in *Macbeth* is carefully analyzed by Hoeniger (275-86). However, critics tend to regard the King's power of healing as the praxis of a holy physician, as opposed to Macbeth the bad doctor (Tomaszewski 185), the devilish tyrant bringing suffering and disease (Hoeniger 276). Here, on the other hand, I would simply contrast King Edward's therapy and words with the female tongue and "therapy," and take them as being on the same level.

The King of England's healing powers are sacred, holy, for in the tradition of the divine power of kings he speaks "holy prayers" to the "strangely-visited people" that he miraculously cures. Closely tied to this notion of the divine nature of corporeal healing is the fact that he "hath a heavenly gift of prophecy." This is then an opposite force to the forces of Satan and Chaos represented by the evil tongues of the witches and Lady Macbeth; it is the force for (male, rational, logocentric) Goodness that Macbeth has been acting against—even if in a sense unknowingly, as he is driven to act by those female tongues, those female prophecies. Thus with this sacred language of God, the divine legacy of "the succeeding royalty," with this "healing benediction" we have the return of light to the kingdom after a period of darkness, of order after disorder.

Macbeth displays a complex cultural pathology in its depiction of male ambivalence in the context of an encompassing female rhetorical power, a power which is (for men) both desirable and destructive, curative and poisonous. This female *lingua*, tongue, speech, rhetoric is an irrational and even paradoxical force which mixes or identifies fair and foul, good and evil, and thus engulfs and confuses the more "limited" male rational speech. Macbeth is in some sense the ventriloquist's puppet or doll of these articulate women, his wife and the witches, though the impassioned and deceptive speech emanating from their unbridled monstrous tongues is ultimately just noise, "sound and fury, signifying nothing." If female words are but poison in the guise of cure—as witchcraft itself may have seemed to be in the early modern English culture—they may ultimately also be restorative, cure in the guise of poison. But at the end of the play the ultimate remedy is more clearly located in the King's touch and prayers, where healing lies in the words of God and acts of benevolent virtue.

Works Cited

Adams, Thomas. *The Taming of the Tongue.* In *The Workes of Tho. Adams. Being the Summe of His Sermons, Meditations, and Other Divine and Morall Discourses*. London, 1629.

Adelman, Janet. *Suffocating Mothers: Fantasies of Maternal Origin in Shakespeare's Plays,* Hamlet *to* The Tempest. New York: Routledge, 1992. Print.

Babb, Lawrence. *The Elizabethan Malady: A Study of Melancholia in English Literature from 1580 to 1642.* East Lasing: Michigan-State UP, 1951; rpt. 1965. Print.

Bucknill, John Charles, Sir. *The Medical Knowledge of Shakespeare*. 1860; rpt. Ithaca: Cornell University Library, 2009. Print.

Burton, Robert. *The Anatomy of Melancholy*. Ed. A.R. Shilleto. 3 vols. London, 1926-27. Print.

Crooke, Helkiah. *Microcosmographia: A Description of the Body of Man; Together with the Controversies Thereto Belonging.* London, 1615.

Debus, Allen G. *The Chemical Philosophy: Paracelsian Science and Medicine in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries.* Vol. I. New York: Science History Publications, 1977. Print.

Du Laurens, André (Laurentius). *A Discourse of the Preservation of the Sight: Of Melancholike Diseases; Of Rheumes, and of Old Age*. Trans. Richard Surphlet. London, 1599. Ed. Sanford V. Larkey. Shakespeare Association Facsimiles 15. London: Oxford UP, 1938.

Ewen, C. L'Estrange. *Witch Hunting and Witch Trials: The Indictments for Witchcraft from the Records of 1373 Assizes Held for the Home Circuit A.D. 1559-1736.* London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co, 1929.

Fantham, Elaine, and Erika Rummel, eds. *Collected Works of Erasmus*. Trans. Elaine Fantham. Toronto: U of Toronto, 1989. Print.

Fletcher, Phineas. *The Purple Island, Or the Isle of Man.* Cambridge, 1633.

Harris, Jonathan Gil. *Foreign Bodies and the Body Politic: Discourses of Social Pathology in Early Modern England*. New York: Cambridge UP, 1998. Print.

Hoeniger, F. David. *Medicine and Shakespeare in the English Renaissance*. Newark: U of Delaware, 1992. Print.

Hunter, Richard, and Ida Macalpine. *Three Hundred Years of Psychiatry, 1535-1860*. Hartsdale: Carlisle, 1982. Print.

Jacobi, Derek. "Macbeth." *Players of Shakespeare 4: Further Essays in Shakespearian Performance*. Ed. Robert Smallwood. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998. 193-210. Print.

Kail, Aubrey C. *The Medical Mind of Shakespeare*. Balgowlah: Williams & Wilkins, ADIS Pty, 1986. Print.

Mazzio, Carla. "Sins of the Tongue." *The Body in Parts: Fantasies of Corporeality in Early Modern Europe*. Ed. David Hillman and Carla Mazzio. New York: Routledge, 1997. 53-80. Print.

Miles, Margaret. *Carnal Knowing: Female Nakedness and Religious Meaning in the Christian West.* New York: Vintage, 1991. Print.

Moss, Stephanie. "Transformation and Degeneration: The Paracelsan/Galenic Body in *Othello*." *Disease, Diagnosis, and Cure on the Early Modern Stage*. Ed. Stephanie Moss and Kaara L. Peterson. Burlington: Ashgate, 2004. 151-70. Print.

Murray, W. A. "Why was Duncan's Blood Golden?" *Shakespeare Survey: An Annual Survey of Shakespearian Study and Production*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1966. 34-44. Print.

Neely, Carol Thomas. *Distracted Subjects: Madness and Gender in Shakespeare and Early Modern Culture*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2004. Print.

Pagel, Walter. *Paracelsus: An Introduction to Philosophical Medicine In the Era of Renaissance*.Basel: S. Karger, 1958. Print.

Paracelsus. *Paracelsus: Essential Readings*. Ed. and Trans. Nicholas Goodrich-Clarke. Northamptonshire: England Crucible, 1958. Print.

---. *Volumen medicinae paramirum*. Trans. Kurt F. Leidecker. *Supplement to Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 11. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins P, 1949.

Paster, Gail Kern. *The Body Embarrassed: Drama and the Disciplines of Shame in Early Modern England*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1993. Print.

Shakespeare, William. *Macbeth.* The Arden Shakespeare. Ed. Kenneth Muir. New York: Metheun & Co. Ltd., 1984. Print.

Simmons, J. L. "The Tongue and Its Office in *The Revenger's Tragedy*." *PMLA* 92 (1977): 56-68. Print.

Siraisi, Nancy G. *Medieval and Early Renaissance Medicine: An Introduction to Knowledge and Practice*. Chicago: Chicago UP, 1990. Print.

Spargo, John. *Juridical Folklore in England: Illustrated by the Cucking Stool.*

Durham: Duke UP, 1944.

Stallybrass, Peter. "*Macbeth* and Witchcraft." *Focus On Macbeth*. Ed. John Russel Brown. Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982; rpt. 2005, 189-210. Print.

---. "Reading the Body and the Jacobean Theater of Consumption." *Staging the Renaissance: Reinterpretations of Elizabethan and Jacobean Drama*. Ed. David Scott Kastan and Peter Stallybrass. New York: Routledge, 1991. 210-20. Print.

Tomaszewski, Lisa A. "'Throw physic to the dogs!': Moral physicians and medical malpractice in *Macbeth*." *Macbeth: New Critical Essays*. Shakespeare Criticism Vol. 32. Ed. Nick Moschovakis. New York: Routledge, 2008. 182-191. Print.

Tomkis, Thomas. *Lingua: Or the Combat of the Tongue, and the Five Senses for Superiority*. London, 1607. Ed. John Farmer. Amersham: Tudor Facsimile Reprints, 1913.

Turnbull, Richard. *Exposition upon the Canonicall Epistle of Saint James*. London, 1606.

Venner, Tobias. *Via Recta ad Vitam Longam*. London: 1628.

女性口舌病原論：診斷《馬克白》

林 熒 嬌*

摘 要

本文論述莎氏作品《馬克白》中潛存一種對於女性言論的焦慮，此點表現於劇中女性人物的口舌描述，它較不是一種戲劇呈現，卻是一個病態的社會文化處所，它威脅著男性主體，並使其「染病」。女性口舌在現代早期文化中，因其僭越與改變之能力，被視為是一病原地。在《馬克白》中，女性口舌可視為言論上暗寓或轉寓之污染原，如同疾病般感染主體，從體內（蓋倫腺體說）與體外（帕拉塞爾賽斯學說）侵襲主體。劇中，馬克白夫人將其狠毒直灌馬克白之耳，可謂「毒物之孕育者」。她慫恿馬克白的內在叛逆之情緒，甚至攪動自然秩序。另方面，女巫的語言，從帕式醫學觀點看，它們如同外來入侵的病原媒介，侵害個人乃至社會政治健康個體，即如「病毒」。而女巫的鍊鍋並非如馬克白預期，帶來煉金般的解藥，卻使他腐敗、墮落地步向窮途末路。

關鍵詞：《馬克白》 女性口舌 發病原 蓋倫 帕拉塞爾賽斯

* 國立臺灣師範大學國際與僑教學院外語學科副教授。