Stage Violence in George Chapman’s

*Bussy D’Ambois*

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Elizabethan dramas present many violent moments—duels, murders, violent deaths, armed combats, and even mutilations. Horatio is hanged and Hieronimo and Bel–Imperia revenge his death in *The Spanish Tragedy*. The two planned deaths of Lorenzo and Balthazar by Hieronimo and Bel–Imperia explode by a chain of reaction, into five. Bel–Imperia stabs herself. Hieronimo bites out his tongue, and kills Duke of Castile and himself. The conquered Emperor of Turks, Bajazeth, brains himself against the cage where he has been imprisoned by Tamburlaine, while his queen Zabina runs against the same cage and also brains herself in *Tamburlaine the Great*. Othello smothers Desdemona with a pillow. Cornwall orders his servants, “Fellows, hold the chair,/Upon these eyes of thine I’ll set my foot” (V. vii. 67–68), and thus Gloucester is blinded in *King Lear*. In the final scene in *Hamlet* Fortinbras witnesses that “[This] quarry cries on havoc” (V. ii. 375). The Renaissance concept of tragedy, as defined by Thomas Heywood, necessitates stage violence, indeed:

If we present a tragedy, we include the fatall and abortive ends of such as commit notorious murders, which is aggravat and acted with all the art that may be to terrifie men from the like abhorred practices.²

Recent critics have seriously doubted if these instances of stage violence in Elizabethan tragedy had drawn its life-blood from Seneca or the “Senecan influence of the chorus, five-act structure, the nuntius, the ghost, ‘sensationalism’, and blank verse formation.”³ Bruce R. Smith writes, “When Seneca’s tragic heroes came out of retirement after more than a thousand years and mounted stages in Renaissance England’s schools and colleges, they confronted audiences who had a fresh curiosity about the drama of antiquity but who also enjoyed flourishing dramatic traditions of their own.”⁴ Charles A. Hallett and Elaine S. Hallett deny, in their study of Renaissance revenge tragedy where there is an abundance of stage violence, any specific influence upon the dramatists of the period either of Seneca, early Tudor drama, the villain-hero play, or satire. However, they trace the clues to the popularity of revenge tragedy to the tremendous Elizabethan interest in the effects of the passion of revenge upon the human psyche, which culminates into the avenger’s madness.⁵ Indeed, “expressiveness rather than formal beauty” and “the motions of souls, not their states of rest had become the themes of art.”⁶ The present study purposes to examine how George Chapman deals with stage violence in terms of “the motions of souls” in his *Bussy D’Ambois* as compared with William Shakespeare’s treatment of violence in *Titus Andronicus* and Ben Jonson’s in *Sejanus*.

The most gruesome moment in *Titus Andronicus* (1589–1594) arises when Titus forces Tamora to eat the bodies of her sons. The scene is, in fact, a revival of the sensations felt by Seneca’s *Thyestes* where Thyestes eats his sons cooked and served by Atreus. Thyestes, while eating, becomes aware of the disturbances inside.
What is this tumult that disturbs my vitals? What trembles in me? I feel a
load that will not suffer me, and my breast groans with a groaning that is not
mine. O come, my sons, your unhappy father calls you, come; this pain will
pass away at the sight of you—whence come their reproachful voices? 7

Atreus uncovers the platter, revealing the severed heads of Thyestes' sons. Atreus trium-
phantly declares: "Thyself has feasted on thy sons, an impious meal." William Shakespeare not
only caught the extraordinary emotions aroused by the physical violence but made the scene
more than "indiscriminate wading in blood." 9 Tamora's eating her sons cooked and served by
Titus to revenge his children certainly reminded the Renaissance mind of God's vengeance upon
the sinners in Jeremiah 19:9: "And I will make them eat the flesh of their sons and their daugh-
ters, and every one shall eat the flesh of his neighbor." 10 The horror and nausea felt at the sight
of the mother eating her own sons extend to moral and religious levels in the same way as
Heywood associates stage violence with moral lessons: the banquet is to be understood as a
visualization of Tamora's corruptions—her distorted sexual appetite, her bloody cannibalism,
and her damnation even in this life.

Shakespeare has deliberately built up the callous atmosphere toward the banquet of human
flesh, in which the spectators are deprived of ordinary human feelings. Early in the play Lucius
proudly talks of lopping limbs and throwing entrails into the fire of Tamora's son as if it should
offend no one and as if the victim were an unfeeling tree to be cut for fuel. In this light Aaron's
report of Lavinia's rape and mutilation is no more offensive than her brother's. Aaron tells
Lucius: "They cut thy sister's tongue, and ravish'd her,/And cut her hands, and trimm'd her as
thou saw'st" (V. i. 92-93). Marcus uncomprehendingly addresses Lavinia:

Who is this—my niece?—that flies away so fast?
Cousin, a word; where is your husband?
If I do wake, some planet strike me down,
That I may slumber an eternal sleep!
Speak, gentle niece; what stern ungentle hands
Hath lopp'd and hew'd and made thy body bare
Of her two branches, those sweet ornaments
Whose circling shadows kings have sought to sleep in,
And might not gain so great a happiness
As [have] thy love? (II. iv. 11-21)

The appalling condition of Lavinia's body bare of arms and Marcus' description of it as the lop-
ping and hewing of two branches of a tree are images so strikingly dissimilar that we find it dif-
ficult to yoke them together and feel the yoking absurd. At her bleeding form Titus insists he is
not mad:

Had I but seen thy picture in this plight
It would have maddened me: What shall I do
Now I behold thy lively body so? (III. i. 103-105)

The revenge has literary precedents in Ovid and Seneca, but Shakespeare makes his Titus
appear "like a cook" and welcome his guests to the bloody banquet and murders onstage. The
gristy humour works at the diners' sudden revulsion to hear that they have fed on the pie in
which Tamora's sons were baked. Titus repeats, "'Tis true, 'tis true" (V. iii. 63). The violence in *Titus Andronicus* is meant to be identical, indeed, with the reality of a civilly torn Rome, not a fiction, to the degree of callosity and absurdity.

The metaphor of lopping and hewing of the human body is a "pictorial literalization" of the body politic in discord. Rome, as Marcus describes, is "headless" (I. i. 186) and "by uproar sever'd" (V. iii. 68). Callosity threads through the recurring acts of physical acts of violence and amputation in the play. It intensifies the horror of Rome torn in discord. In the final scene Marcus appeals for reuniting Rome in terms of the image of broken limbs:

O, let me teach you how to knit again
This scatt'red corn into one mutual sheaf,
These broken limbs again into one body. (V. iii. 70–72)

The survivors of the Andronici family gather up the severed limbs and heads of their dead for proper burial, Tamora's body thrown "to beasts and birds to prey," (V. iii. 198) and Aaron alive "fast'ned in the earth" (V. iii. 183). Shakespeare's stage violence is, indeed, more than "indiscriminate wading in blood" or his study of the passion of revenge. It is to visualize the divided "body politic" onstage, the emotions arising from which are more complicated than pity and terror, too frequently verging upon absurdity contrary to reason.

Though in *Titus Andronicus* the rape and mutilation of Lavinia and Tamora's sons' executions are orally transmitted, much bloodshed is represented onstage in the final scene. Such representations of violence are mocked by Sir Philip Sidney: "two Armies fle in, represented with foure swords & bucklers, and the what hard hart will not receive it for a pitched field." His student, Ben Jonson, ridicules "th' ill customes of the age" which include players who "with three rustic swords,/And helpe of some few foot-and-halfe-foote-words,/Fight over Yorke and Lancasters long jarres ;/And in the tyring-house bring wounds, to scarres," and later condemns the customer "that will sweare, Ieronimo, or Andronicus are the best/ playes, yet, shall passe vnescepted at, ... as a man whose Judgement shewes it is constant, and hath stood still, these/fiue and twentie, or thirtie yeeres."

Both are the devotees of decorum and verisimilitude expounded by Horace and Vitruvius. What Horace bids the poet do is to "give fitting dues to every man" and "looks/On life, and manners, and make those his booke;/Thence draw forth true expressions." Horace also precisely forbids stage violence:

The businesse either on the Stage is done,
Or acted told : but, ever, things that runne
In at the eare, doe stirre the mind more slow
Than those that faithfull eyes take in by show,
And the beholder to himselfe doth render.
Yet to the Stage at all thou maist not tender
Things worthy to be done within, but take
Much from the sight, which faire Report will make
Present anon. Medea must not kill
Her Sons before the people : or the ill-
Natur'd, and wicked Atreus cooke to the eye

101
His Nephews intrailes: nor must Progne flye
Into a Swallow there: nor Cadmus take,
Upon the stage, the figure of a Snake.
What so is shewne, I not believe, and hate.17

Vitruvius says: “Decor demands the faultless ensemble of a work composed, in accordance with precedent, of approved details,”18 and condemns, in favour of the Greek “imitations based on reality,” the Romans who painted “monsters rather than definite representations taken from definite things.”19

In Jonson’s Sejanus, His Fall (1603), which depicts, as in Titus Andronicus, a Rome, falling from its ancient “noblesse,” where lawless ambition, sycophancy, and intrigue have become the norms of political life and where ancient aristocracy is made powerless by the New Men of Roman politics, we see, indeed, more of “old Rome” than in the original writer’s work.20 Jonson’s “To the Readers,” prefixed to the play, specifically refers to his observations upon Horace’s Art of Poetry which he promises to translate and publish “shortly.”21 Physical violences in Sejanus are usually reported though Silius commits suicide in front of the Senate to escape the coils of tyranny. Lepidus reports of Sabina’s executed body thrown into the Tiber:

I saw him now drawne from the Gemonies,
And (what increas’d the direness of the fact)
His faithfull dogge (vpbraiding all vs Romanes)
Neuer forsoooke the corp’s but, seeing it throwne
Into the streame, leap’d in, and drown’d with it (IV. 283–287)

All the hatred and spite of the aristocracy are piled up upon Sejanus, the New Man of imperial favour, not upon Emperor Tiberius, the very Machiavellian prince and the master villain, who controls Rome even in his absencia and makes no commitment to the persecutions and bloodshed, leaving the executions of tyrannous acts entirely in Sejanus’ hands. When Sejanus tries to ally himself with the royal family by marrying Tiberius’ daughter, Livia, the emperor rejects his fatal act of presumption: the emperor’s willing agent of terror has dangerously overreached his own base status. Sejanus is finally replaced by Macro, another New Man of imperial favour. Lacking Volpone’s magnificent eloquence and wit, Sejanus has a vast ambition, yet his spirit is mean: he collapses with a complaint and amazement before the Senate: “Why, Macro,/It bath beeene otherwise, betweene you, and I ?” (V. 669–670). The famous final scene of mob violence is reported: Romans, led by Macro, condemn Sejanus without evidence of a trial, shouting “Liberty, liberty, liberty,” and butcher and mutilate Sejanus’ body. Terentius reports “the popular rage” (V.776) to his friends, Arruntius and Lepidus, when a Nuntius comes with the news of the execution of Sejanus’ young son and daughter, which would “melt eu’n Rome,/And Caesar into teares” (V.835–836):

And because our lawes
Admit no virgin immature to die,
The wittily, and strangely-cruell Macro,
Deliever’d her to be deflowr’d and spoil’d,
By the rude lust of the licentious hang-man,
Then, to be strangled with her harmless brother. (V. 849–854)
Their mother’s curse fills the air. The most unintelligible part of the mob psychology, which Jonson hates most of all things, is that “the monster,/The multitude” (V. 880), after their furies are spent, begin to weep, “wish [Sejanus] collected, and created new” (V. 887), still their hands reeking with his warm blood. With the real villain—Emperor, intact, terrorized Rome does not change: in the world of the survival of the strongest in malice only one political assassin of imperial favour falls, to let rise another who “will become/A greater prodigie in Rome” (V. 751–752).

Jonson’s use of physical violence is, in fact, to express “the motions of souls, not their states of rest”: that is, to depict the eruption of inhibited impulses usually suppressed into the inmost recesses of the subconscious, under the necessity of political considerations, not only of the individual but of the multitude, who, upon the satisfaction of their hidden impulses, restore their sanity from irrational and beastly frenzy. Yet all these “worthy to be done within,” are reported, according to Horace’s dramatic dictum, along with the reporter’s or Jonson’s comment upon them. With the dreadful picture of the effect of milling upon human nature, Jonson approaches the problems of political corruptions in ancient Rome as a guide to the contemporary Jacobean England, so much so that Jonson told Drummond that he was “called before the Council for his Sejanus, and accused both of Popery and Treason’ by Lord Northampton.”

George Chapman, perhaps the “happy genius” mentioned by Jonson as collaborator in the stage version of Sejanus, deals with the same problems as Jonson had worked on in Sejanus from an opposite direction. Chapman attacks Machiavellism in the light of liberty and monarchical authority, probably as a disillusioned idealist. Robert Ornstein thinks that “if Chapman had written a play on the reign of Tiberius, his tragic hero would very likely have been, not Sejanus, but...Silius, who commits suicide before the Senate.” In Bussy D’Ambois (1604) Chapman presents, neither a Sejanus nor an ancient Rome but, the French adventurer, notorious for his duels and love affairs, and the French court under Henry III as a place of political intrigues, where men move through power and will and where women are “patterns of change to men” and “rule in men, not men in them” (IV. i. 18 & 21). In contrast with the English court held under the “old queen” (I. ii. 12) and the English kingdom revolving around her in “proportion and expression” (I. ii. 25), the French court is “a mere mirror of confusion” where the king and subject “Dance a continual hay” in the “rooms of state/Kept like...stables” (I. ii. 27–30). Monsieur, the king’s brother, sees “There’s but a thread betwixt me and a crown” and gets “resolved spirits” around him with a possible design upon the crown (I. i. 41 & 44). He seeks Bussy, as a promising “melancholy tool-villain” for his purpose, out of his “green retreat” (I. i. 45), reminiscent of “a green thought in a green shade” of Andrew Marvell’s “The Garden” (l. 48). In his eye Bussy is a melancholy malcontent, that is, A man of spirit beyond the reach of fear, Who discontent with his neglected worth Neglects the light and loves obscure abodes; But he is young and haughty, apt to take Fire at advancement, to bear state and flourish; In his rise therefore shall my bounties shine. (I. i. 46–51)

Although Bussy, poor with his clothes threadbare, despises “great men,” comparing them to
"those colossic statues,/Which, with heroic forms without o'erspread,/Within are nought but mortar, flint, and lead" (I. i. 15-17), and extolls virtuous men of poverty, believing "Who is not poor is monstrous" (I. i. 3), he accepts a thousand crowns from Monsieur with his decision to chastise the court like Hercules.26

I am for honest actions, not for great
If I may bring up a new fashion
And rise in court for virtue, speed his plow! (I. i. 128-130)

The French court or the "enchanted glass" (I. i. 88), where Bussy sees only devils, witnesses, as Montisurry reports, "great D'Ambois/(Fortune's proud mushroom shot up in a night) Stand like an Atlas under our king's arm" (III. i. 116-118).

Bussy's virtue, whether it means virtù (the ability to proceed without grace)27 or Christian patience or humility, is closely related to nature and the world of Saturn. The king clearly points out that Bussy is a "Man in his native noblesse, from whose fall/All our dissensions rise" (III. ii. 91-92), confronted with a fallen world, represented by the false greatness of the Guise and Monsieur (III. ii. 72-87). The man of nature, who cannot "strow [his] hate with smiles" (IV. ii. 175) like a politician, exercises his "manly freedom" (III. ii. 114) at once. He pays attentions to the Duchess of Guise before the eyes of her husband and the rest of the court. He fights a deadly fight with the courtiers who mock at his self-confidence and his new clothes. His encounter is not presented on the stage, but reported, through a Homeric rendering of the bloodshed, by the Senecan Nuntius: D'Ambois, "redoubled in his danger,/...at the heart of Barrisor seal'd his anger" (II. i. 92-93) and the foe fell like an oak uprooted by a storm. Sorrow, Fury, and Revenge enter the battle as in allegory. D'Ambois' killing of L'Anou is compared to "an angry Unicorn" nailing the jeweler "with his rich antler to the earth" (II. i. 124). Bussy emerged the sole survivor of the epic-like duel: "of the six, sole D'Ambois stood/Untouch'd, save only with the others' blood" (III. i. 131-132).

He even wins the king's pardon through Monsieur's pleading for his sake, calling him a man "In [whose] uprightness, worthy to survive/Millions of such as murder men" (II. i. 178-179). Bussy himself boasts of the superiority of his virtue to man-made laws:

When I am wrong'd and that law fails to right me,
Let me be king myself, as man was made,
And do a justice that exceeds the law. (II. i. 197-9)

Whether here is Chapman's vision of a kingless society or his idea that the man of virtue is ever outside of the orthodox moral order since kings and laws are necessary only to a corrupt world where evil men need to be forced to virtue,28 Bussy, in addition to the kingly favour, gains possession of the love of Tamyra, the paragon of chastity, whom Monsieur has been courting in vain.

The noble politician, who has "ignorantly rais'd him" (III. ii. 360) to greatness, now finds him uncontrollable: he fears him as "a man/That dares so much as a wild horse or tiger,/As headstrong and as bloody" (III. ii. 415) and sees his chance to destroy him by means of women. Tamyra's maid-servant, Pero, reports to Monsieur that she saw Bussy and Tamyra reading a letter together at midnight the previous night. Bussy's association with Tamyra is from the start linked with the coming of night and death; not with security, calm, and virtue, but with "a full
dissembling” (II. ii. 98) and Tamyra’s confusion in love passion: “I love what I most loathe and cannot live/Unless I compass that which holds my death” (II. ii. 121–122). Bussy, at her fear of her “own dark love” (II. ii. 96), insists upon the virtue of their love as a defense against “sin the coward,” swears absolute secrecy, and promises that Tamyra’s fame for chastity will never be tainted (III. i. 20–39).

Now, from his liaison with Tamyra arises a fatal conflict between Bussy’s claim to the nobility of the Golden Age and his inevitable involvement in the fallen world of policy and lies, which brings about his subsequent struggle to regain his spotless virtue and assert his dignity. Acts of violence are presented onstage as their “dark” and hidden love is exposed to his enemies. At the conjuring of the Friar, the go-between of the adulterous pair, Behemoth rises, as Mephostophilis does at the bidding of Faustus, appropriately for revealing the future of the love of night and darkness, from “that inscrutable darkness where are hid/All deepest truths and secrets never seen” (IV. ii. 68–69). Unlike Mephostophilis, the evil spirit raised from hell by Faustus’ necromancy, Behemoth is the Emperor of western spirits (IV. ii. 52), summoned by the Friar’s “power of learned holiness” (IV. ii. 45) and he predicts a violent future for the lovers: “If D’Ambois’ mistress dye not her white hand/In his forc’d blood, he shall remain untouch’d” (IV. ii. 151–152). Whether in this scene is witnessed “the corruption of the hero by a combination of feminine wile, perverted religion, and the power of hell”29 or Chapman’s interest in the occult as is shown in his “Shadow of Night,”30 Bussy complies with Behemoth’s advice “to curb his valor with [the Friar’s] policies” (IV. ii. 158) and Tamyra’s urge to follow it. He is resolved to appear what his virtue is foreign to: a smiling politician with a knife at his enemy, viz., Monsieur:

I’ll soothe his plots and strow my hate with smiles
Till all at once the close mines of my heart
Rise at full date and rush into his blood.
I’ll bind his arm in silk and rub his flesh
To make the vein swell that his soul may gush
Into some kennel where it longs to lie:
And policy shall be flank’d with policy. (IV. ii. 175–181)

His hope to outflank the empty politicians with “hellish facts” (IV. ii. 193) only proves that he is too “solid” and “whole” to let “the frantic puffs of blind-born chance...pipe through” (V. iii. 44–45) as they do through the politic men whose appearances always belie their inner vacancies. The Bussy of the first act, who was to “rise in court by virtue,” now must see the “frail condition of strength, valor, virtue/In [him]” (V. iv. 140–141) in competition in dissembling with the great men of policy.

Act V begins with Montsurry pulling Tamyra in by the hair, forcing her to reveal her lover’s name—a she–tragedy whose heroine is the victim of male jealousy and brutality. At her cry, “O, help me, father!” (V. i. 1), the Friar says to Montsurry: “Nor is it manly, much less husbandly,/To expiate any frailty in your wife/With churlish strokes or beastly odds of strength” (V. i. 14–15). He also warns:
It is a damn’d work to pursue those secrets
That would ope more sin and prove springs of slaughter;
Nor is't a path for Christian feet to tread,
But out of all way to the health of souls:
A sin impossible to be forgiven,
Which he that dares commit— (V. i. 30-35)

Tamyra rejects his demand to write to her lover, preferring any forms of torture, too violent to imagine:

Hide in some gloomy dungeon my loath'd face,
And let condemned murderers let me down
(Stopping their noses) my abhorred food:
Hang me in chains, and let me eat these arms
That have offended; bind me face to face
To some dead woman, taken from the cart
Of execution, till death and time
In grains of dust dissolve me; I endure:
Or any torture that your wrath's invention
Can fright all pity from the world withal.
But to betray a friend with show of friendship,
That is too common for the rare revenge
Your rage affecteth; here then are my breasts,
Last night your pillows; here my wretched arms,
As late the wished confines of your life:
Now break them as you please and all the bounds
Of manhood, noblesse, and religion. (V. i. 111-127)

By means of the horrible images, especially that of Tamyra bound face to face with the executed woman till her death and through her sly command of her own feminine beauty, she challenges Montsurry's "manhood, noblesse, and religion." The distracted Montsurry takes her adultery as a monstrous deed of cruelty and tries to administer justice for it with "the like cruel cruelty" (V. i. 130): he stabs her twice to no purpose, and then he puts her on the rack, giving her "the most madding pains" (V. i. 147). Tamyra writhes in pain and amazement:

O, who is turn'd into my lord and husband!
Husband! My lord! None but my lord and husband!
Heaven, I ask thee remission of my sins,
Not of my pains. Husband, O, help me, husband! (V. i. 151-154)

The Friar dies of shock at the brutalities inflicted upon Tamyra on the rack, with his last cry, "what rape of honor and religion!/O, wrack of nature!" (V. i. 155-156). At the sight of his death she is shaken and writes a message in her-own blood coming from her wounds, which summons Bussy to her chamber by the secret passage of the vault. At his discovery that the Friar was "the mean" between Tamyra and her lover, Montsurry disguises himself like the Friar and acts as the bearer of her message. Given the power to invoke Behemoth, Bussy, forewarned by Umbra Friar that "there are bloody deeds past and to come" (V. iii. 10), calls Behemoth again. The Spiritus appears with thunder and predicts: "if thou obey/ The summons that thy mistress next will send thee,/ Her hand shall be thy death" (V. iii. 56-58). He also reveals that
"Fate's ministers" are "politic" Monsieur and "the violent" Guise (V. iii. 84) who has continued to regard Bussy simply as a murderer and low-bred villain.

Knowing his destiny, Bussy walks into the prepared trap, open-eyed:

I must fare well, however, though I die,
My death consenting with his augury:
Should not my powers obey when she commands,
My motion must be rebel to my will,
My will to life. (V. iii. 70-74)

With thunder Umbra Friar appears and urges Tamyra to "be like the sun and labor in eclipses" and "with a sudden outcry of his murder,/Blow his retreat before he be revenged" (V. i. 3 & 8-9). When Bussy rises at the gulf and Guise and Monsieur above watch his approach in the same way as Lucifer, Belzebub, and Mephostophilis do "how [Faustus] doth demean himself on the last night of his life," Tamyra shouts to him: Away, my love, away! Thou wilt be murder'd" (V. iii. 22) as a true mistress should to her true servant. Undaunted at the term "murder'd," the hero boasts confidently: "Fate is more strong than arms and sly than treason,/And I at all parts buck'd in my fate" (V. iv. 39). Umbra joins the fight and frightens away two murderers, while Bussy kills the first murderer. In defense of Tamyra's "spotless name" which he has sworn to protect, Bussy fights with Montsurry, whom he has down, when Tamyra begs, "Favor my lord, my love, O favor him!" (V. iv. 70). Magnanimously, Bussy spares the cuckolded coward, when pistols are shot from behind him by Guise and Monsieur.

In his death Bussy rises to his greatest nobility. He realizes:

Man is of two sweet courtly friends compact.
A mistress and a servant: let my death
Define life nothing but a courtier's breath.
Nothing is made of nought, of all things made,
Their abstract being a dream but of a shade. (V. iv. 82-86)

His comparison of man to courtly lovers with his soul the mistress and his body the servant harks back to his fatal liaison with Tamyra, while his realization that the abstract of all things made is "a dream but of a shade" goes back to the Bussy of his first appearance when he meditated over the general fate of man: "Man is a torch borne in the wind, a dream/But of a shadow, summ'd with all his substance" (I. i. 18-19). He sweeps away Tamyra's helping hand. In his acceptance that in a love affair life is no more substantial than a courtier's breath, he restores his former virtue in his "green retreat" and resigns himself to the inevitable with dignity and great Senecan fortitude by standing to his death, propped on his sword, appropriate to the Herculean allusions:

Prop me, true sword, as thou hast ever done!
The equal thought I bear of life and death
Shall make me faint on no side; I am up
Here like a Roman statue! I will stand
Till death hath made me marble. (V. iv. 93-97)

At Umbra's request to forgive his murderers, he forgives them all and urges Montsurry to "be reconcil'd/With all forgiveness to [his] matchless wife" (V. iv. 121-122). Tamyra asks his for-
giveness for her betrayal, exposing her bleeding wounds in her bosom to Bussy:

Forgive it for the blood with which 'tis stain'd,
In which I writ the summons of thy death—
The forced summons by this bleeding wound,
By this here in my bosom, and by this
That makes me hold up both my hands imbru'd
For thy dear pardon. (V. iv. 125-130)

At her wounds or "This killing spectacle, this prodigy" (V. iv. 133), his heart is broken. He is now made "a falling star" (V. iv. 143), quenched and silenced. Umbra raises him to heaven:

Farewell, brave relics of a complete man,
Look up and see thy spirit made a star;
Join flames with Hercules and, when thou sett'st
Thy radiant forehead in the firmament,
Make the vast crystal crack with thy receipt,
Spread to a world of fire, and the aged sky
Cheer with new sparks of old humanity. (V. iv. 146-152)

Tamyra is torn between Bussy and Montsurrur: "If I right my friend,/I wrong my husband; if his wrong I shun,/ The duty of my friend I leave undone" (V. iv. 168-170). While she reveals herself as different from other women in whom "custom had benumb'd/All sense of scruple and all note of frailty" (V. iv. 180-181), she regrets having never dissembled enough but rather made sin a matter of conscience and complains most pathetically: "O husband! Dear friend! O my conscience!" (V. iv. 174) Montsurrur refuses, on the basis of his honour, Tamyra's plea for forgiveness and Umbra's urge for "the Christian reconcilement" (V. iv. 157) and orders her to leave his house. With images, fierce, dreadful, yet never gentle by any means, Tamyra promises to fly to the open deserts, "Like to a hunted tigress.../Eating [her] heart, shunning the stēps of men" (V. iv. 200-201). Whether she still loves Bussy with constancy or not is not clear in her last words, which only show her gnawing realization that she has behaved unwisely and lost both her husband and her honor in the court of policies and dissembling, as a result of her wavering between her adulterous passion for Bussy and her "vow'd faith" (V. iv. 174) for Montsurrur. Then, what does Bussy die for?

George Chapman, for all the problems of Bussy's virtue and his failure to condemn Bussy for his deviation from the course of virtue by trying to outflank policy with policy and his adulterous love for Tamyra, not only places Bussy in a far more favorable symbolic light, but also makes his enemies far worse and more corrupt than Bussy—treacherous, cowardly, jealous, and cruel. Umbra Friar praises Bussy highly, but he is severe with Montsurrur who tortures Tamyra out of jealousy and refuses the Christian reconcilement with his wife, even when Guise and Monsieur cannot bear her pathetic complaints. Monsieur, the would-be usurper of his brother's crown, describes Chapman's idea of Bussy's virtue better than any modern critic does. Even in this assassin's eye Bussy is a man

Young, learned, valiant, virtuous, and full mann'd;
One on whom Nature spent so rich a hand
That with an ominous eye she wept to see
So much consum'd her virtuous treasury.
Yet, as the winds sing through a hollow tree
And, since it lets them pass through, let it stand;
But a tree solid, since it gives no way
To their wild rage, they rend up by the root. (V. ii. 33-40)

With the violent image of the solid tree, in contrast with the hollow tree like the empty colossic
great man, uprooted by the winds, and that of a ship of war blown up, its powder taking a dis-
ordered spark, the politician predicts that Nature's gift of merit will effect the receiver's ruin (V.
ii. 13-15). Such a man's fall is doomed not through his "hamartia" but through his virtue. Bussy
is by no means intended for a hero of Christian virtue nor an Aristotelian protagonist under fate.
He is, Hardin Craig contends, a Senecan titan. In Seneca, he claims,

Man was sure to be beaten, but Seneca proposed to build up something with-
in the heart of man which would enable him to gain a pyrrhic victory over
fate. This doctrine is inherent in the stories of Hercules and Prometheus and
is closely allied with titanism.32

The frequent appearance of Herculean allusions and that of the epic simile of the solid tree
over against the hollow tree as well as the bloody predictions for the hero's future by Behemoth-
all represent the inevitable defeat of Bussy's attempt to pursue active virtue and goodness rather
than greatness in the actual court life of policy, forsaking his former life of inactive virtue.33 In
the French court the paragon of virtue falters before policy and physical violence, who ultimately
acts the role of Deianira who ruined Hercules with blood and deceit. Forgiving so magnani-
mously all who have betrayed and murdered him, he dies a more majestic death than Emperor
Vespasian's, propped on his sword. He is sufficiently strong in his fortitude, free will, and con-
stancy in love, so that he finally grows up so heroic to triumph over the evils and "Fate's
ministers," Monsieur and Guise, all ready to destroy him, only outwardly. As Monsieur has
foretold Guise of Bussy's worthy end before his unmanly murder of him, "Yet you shall see [the
proof of my argument]" (V. ii. 32), Monsieur's murder of him is his test on his virtue, which is
now revealed as complete manhood in its "native noblesse" as of the age of Saturn before Ori-
ginal Sin was committed, free, fearless, and above man-made laws, dictated only by Nature.
Bussy has to die because only in death, under Monsieur and Guise' eyes, he can prove the
dignity of his virtue, greater than policy and passion of love. It is no wonder that Chapman
should raise him to heaven like Hercules for his valor and like Launcelot for his constancy. The
more brutal and cowardly does the bloodshed become on the stage, Bussy comes off the more
heroic, his enemies the more wretched and hateful, and Tamyra the more pathetic. In the mean-
while the audience is the more involved in and sympathized with "the motions" of Bussy's soul
and his ruin and applauds his heroic exit as a piece of poetic justice, forgetting his defects and
adultery. Senecan "expressiveness" and deeds of violence in Bussy D'Ambois are, indeed, theatri-
cal devices to elevate the chivalric malcontent to a superhuman height, while reducing his opposing
great men of policy to the level of treacherous villains, allied to the devils, only as the
mediums to raise him to heaven, ultimately.

In Titus Andronicus the actual dismemberment of Lavinia or Tamora's sons does not take
place on the stage, but the other characters' descriptions of the hideous events with the similes

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of lopping and hewing trees and classical precedents are so callous and beyond imagination that they freeze any emotions in the audience, who bears the sights of the armless and tongueless Lavinia, and Tamora’s eating her sons, and the final four murders of Lavinia, Tamora, Titus, and Saturninus on the stage. Stage violence, indeed, presents, at a historical level, a dramatic resuscitation of ancient Rome in civil discord and terror and, at a symbolical level, a gruesome pictorial literalization of the divided “body politic” along with its agony and passion of revenge.

Sejanus, His Fall unfolds the deadly competition of power in politics between the New Men of imperial favour and the ancient aristocracy under the truly Machiavellian Emperor Tiberius. In Rome there is neither pity nor loyalty except in Sabina’s dog. The explosion of mob violence upon Sejanus’ executed body and his daughter and its sudden exhaustion into sanity do not need modern Freudian psychoanalysis. Acts of violence in Jonson are expressive of “the motions of souls” and at the same time the metaphor of political corruptions not only in ancient Rome but in contemporary England. For all Jonson’s observance of the Horatian decorum and his condemnation of Machiavellism and the multitude, his theatrical device of oral transmission of the bloody political intrigues and irrational frenzy, though at times unbearably tedious, penetrates so deeply into the imagination of the audience that Jonson suffered from the government suspicion of treason.

State problems of Rome in the remote past are no concern with Bussy D’Ambois, The play deals with the recently murdered political malcontent in the corrupt court of contemporary France. Chapman transforms the protagonist into a man, “in his native noblesse” of the golden age, fighting a losing battle with great men of policy who can dissemble their murderous hatred and anger with smiles. In order to raise him of no birth to the heroic stature like Hercules’ and deck him with his final triumph over “Fate’s ministers” in his death, Chapman employs stage violence. It exposes the reality of Bussy’s virtue as solid as his valor and constancy, while those of his enemies are unmasked as cowardly, mean, treacherous, and empty as their policies. Though Bussy’s first fight with Barrisor and others is reported by the Nuntius through his interpretation of it as an epic battle, the assassination of Bussy by Monsieur, Guise, and Montsurry is acted out on the stage by means of disguise, deceit, and hired gunmen over against Bussy’s sword. Tamyra is tortured by her jealous husband (the picture of a beautiful woman in torture will be enlarged into Websterian she-tragedies). As does Robert Greene’s “Brazen Head” or Christopher Marlowe’s Mephostophilis, Behemoth rises to prophesy the hero’s violent death. Bussy’s correspondence with the “emperor/Of that instrutable darkness” (IV. ii. 67–68) gives him some superhuman coloring. As in the pulley, the lower becomes the antagonists’ honor and policy, the higher the protagonist’s virtue and valor go up: the more brutalities and treacheries are inflicted upon Bussy and Tamyra writhing in pain, the “manless” (V. iv. 159) and devilish do the murderers appear, and the more manly and heroic stature does the man “in his native noblesse” assume, choosing certain death so as to comply with his love’s summons at the life and death crossroads like Hercules, fighting against “many hands” (Epilogue, 1. 1) with Umbra Friar as his aid, forgiving the murderers like Christ, and urging Montsurry for the Christian reconcilement with his wife, which he refuses. Finally, Bussy dies of his own virtue, transcending his love-passion, more magnificently than Emperor Vespasian, propped upon his sword.

Stage violence in Bussy D’Ambois, indeed, keeps in suspense the action of the drama, with
the audience's eyes and ears nailed to "the motions" and decisions of Bussy's soul and his activities accordingly. The audience is impressed with his heroic exit into heaven as a piece of poetic justice although the malcontent is, on the stage, beaten and slain, his virtue useless for any change in the French court for the better. Stage violence, after all, is not simply "indiscriminate wading in blood" nor a study of the passion of revenge either in Shakespeare, Jonson, or Chapman. Neither Senecan "expressiveness" nor Horatian decorum can give an exhaustive discussion of stage violence. However, Chapman more depends upon stage violence for his management of the action, more concerned with history at the personal level, than the other two, and thus, we may say, he prepares the way for the love-or-honor conflict in the protagonist's mind of the Restoration heroic tragedy.

Notes
8. Ibid., p.175.
11. Ibid., p. 37. My argument of the physical violence motif owes in part to Diehl.

17. Ibid., p.345.


19. Ibid., II, 105.

20. John Dryden says of Jonson's tragedies:

He invades authors like a monarch: and what would be theft in other poets, is only victory in him. With the spoils of these writers he so represents old Rome to us, in its rites, ceremonies, and customs, that if one of their poets had written either of his tragedies, we had seen less of it than in him"; in John Dryden, "An Essay of Dramatic Poesy," in *The Best of Dryden*, ed. Louis I. Bredvold (New York: The Ronald Press, 1933), p.435.


23. Ibid., p.4.


25. Lawrence Babb, *The Elizabethan Malady: A Study of Melancholia in English Literature from 1580 to 1642* (East Lansing: Michigan-State University Press, 1951), pp. 86-87. Here Bab points out that "the idea of melancholy tool-villainy appears also in certain episodes of the drama in which a man of high rank blunders in selecting his tool," and, applying his theory to Chapman's *Bussy D'Ambois*, he says that "Bussy proves to be a very unmanageable instrument, but undoubtedly, during the first act, the Elizabethan audience was as much deceived by appearances as was Monsieur."

26. Peter Bement, *George Chapman: Action and Contemplation in His Tragedies* (Salzburg, Austria: Institut Für Englische Sprache und Literatur, Universität Salzburg, 1974), pp. 130-131. Here Bement, after referring to F. S. Boas, A. S. Ferguson, Eugene M. Waith, and Raymond B. Waddington, says: "Chapman found in Hercules a convenient symbol for the fundamental ethical proposition that he puts to the test in this play: that man should seek true dignity in the active life. It had been Hercules that Chapman invoked in *The Shadow of Night* to 'cleanse the beastly stable of the world' and restore the Golden Age, and it is not surprising that...the chief episodes of the protagonist's career should be associated with the labours of Hercules."


28. Ibid., p.198.


Selected Bibliography


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