Bernhard Huss

Luigi Groto's *Adriana*: A Laboratory Experiment on Literary Genre

English translation by Martin Bleisteiner

The present paper examines Luigi Groto's tragedy *Adriana*, with occasional references to the author's dramatic oeuvre in general, and to his second tragedy *Dalida* in particular. An analysis of the *Adriana*'s poetics reveals that two different generic templates were superimposed in the play's composition: implementing a poetic program which will be illuminated in the following pages, Groto transferred Petrarchan lyricism to the genre of tragedy. The issue we are dealing with thus pertains to two thematic fields at the same time, namely the *Poetics of Early Modern Drama*, and the *History of Genres / Cross-fertilization between Genres*. If we subsequently focus our attention on the *Adriana*, this is only due to constraints of space: as it were, Groto's dramatic oeuvre as a whole could well be called a large-scale laboratory experiment on literary genre. Given its sheer volume, however, – it consists of the published plays *Dalida* (1572), *Il pentimento amoroso* (1576), *Adriana* (1578), *Emilia* (1579), *Il tesoro* (1580), *Calisto* (1582), *Alteria* (1584), and the "dramma sacro" *Isac* (first printed in 1586, but premiered as early as 1558[1]), while other works remained unpublished and were consequently lost, among them several tragedies[2] – a more comprehensive survey will have to be deferred to another occasion.

Unlike today, Luigi Groto – often called "Cieco d'Adria" in reference to his blindness – was an extremely well-known literary figure during his lifetime. A quote from Ben Jonson's *Volpone* illustrates Groto's popularity quite succinctly: when the eponymous protagonist claims that, "The poet | as old in time as Plato and as knowing | Says that your highest female grace is silence," Lady Would-Be replies: "Which o' your poets? Petrarch? Or Tasso? Or Dante? | Guarini? Ariosto? Aretine? | Cieco di Hadria? I have read them all" (3.4.76–81).[3] The fact that Groto ranks among the most illustrious exponents of early modern Italian literature in this passage shows that he has rightly been called a "weit

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1 See Marzia Pieri. "Il 'laboratorio' provinciale di Luigi Groto." *Rivista italiana di drammaturgia*, vol. 4, 1979, pp. 3–355, p. 5, incl. n. 8.

2 Groto's own references to unpublished plays in various prefaces and letters indicate that he was working on a *Ginevra*, an *Isabella*, a *Progne*, and a *Mirra* in 1560/1561 and 1572; see Pieri, "Il 'laboratorio'," p. 18, n. 30.

3 See Ben Jonson. *Four Comedies*, edited by Helen Ostovich. London: Longman, 1997.

ins 17. Jahrhundert hinein [...] in ganz Europa berühmte[r] Mann" ("a famous man, till the seventeenth century well-known everywhere in Europe").[4] Groto (1541–1585),[5] a prolific author despite his physical affliction, was far more than a simple man of letters from the provinces: public authorities commissioned a series of political speeches from him; he penned numerous letters, which were edited at the beginning of the seventeenth century in three anthologies; he composed (lost) dialogues as well as commentaries on scholarly texts on topics as diverse as astronomy, geology, and agriculture; he revised Ariosto's *Cinque canti* and Boccaccio's *Decameron*, and supplied a commentary to those works. Yet from today's perspective, his place in literary history was ultimately secured by his substantial *Rime*[6] and his plays, which received considerable attention in his time.[7]

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4 Andrea Mott-Petavrakis. *Studien zum lyrischen Werk Luigi Grotos. Interpretation und literarhistorische Einordnung seiner Rime* (Hamburger Romanistische Dissertationen 23). Hamburg: Romanisches Seminar der Universität Hamburg, 1992, p. 9. For a brief history of the reception of Groto's œuvre during and after his lifetime, see Françoise Decroisette. "'Pleurez mes yeux!' Le tragique autoréférentiel de Luigi Groto, l'Aveugle d'Adria (1541–1585)." *Cahiers d'Études Italiennes*, vol. 19, 2014, pp. 165–184, pp. 165–167; see ibid. 182–184 for a basic overview of Renaissance and modern editions, a list of early modern translations of the *Pentimento amoroso* and the *Emilia* into French, and a selection of the most pertinent recent research. All translations are mine.

5 Giovanni Benvenuti. *Il Cieco di Adria. Vita ed opere di Luigi Groto*. Sala Bolognese: Forni, 1984 provides a biographical outline and a short characterization of Groto's works in his brief study. For further biographical sketches and additional information on Groto's social background, see Franco Rizzi. "Le socialità profonde: La famiglia di Luigi Groto Il Cieco d'Adria." *Luigi Groto e il suo tempo (1541–1585)*. Vol. 1: *Atti del convegno di studi, Adria, 27–29 aprile 1984*, edited by Giorgio Brunello and Antonio Lodo. Rovigo: Minelliana, 1987, pp. 23–60; Mott-Petavrakis. *Studien zum Werk Grotos*, pp. 9–13; Valentina Gallo. "Groto (Grotto), Luigi (detto il Cieco d'Adria)." *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiani, vol. 60, 2003, pp. 21–24. An early biography by Francesco Bocchi. *Luigi Groto (Il Cieco d'Adria), nato 8 settembre 1541 – morto 13 dicembre 1585. Il suo tempo, la sua vita e le sue opere*. Adria: Eredi Guarnieri, 1886 has not been completely superseded by more recent research; among other things, it supplies a catalogue of editions from 1586 to 1886 (pp. 93–104) which is still very useful.

6 For a more detailed discussion and further reading, see Bernhard Huss. "Luigi Grotos *Rime*: Manierismen als implizite Metapoesie." *Manierismus. Interdisziplinäre Studien zu einem ästhetischen Stiltyp zwischen formalem Experiment und historischer Signifikanz*, edited by Bernhard Huss and Christian Wehr. Heidelberg: Winter, 2014 (*GRM*, Supplement 56), pp. 71–92 and Bernhard Huss. "Figura auctoris und Selbstreferenz des poetischen Diskurses bei Luigi Groto." *Germanisch-Romanische Monatsschrift*, vol. 64, no. 4, 2014, pp. 407–427. (Italian version forthcoming in the proceedings of the conference "IV Col·loqui internacional Mimesi: Metaficció – Renaixement & Barroc," Universitat de Barcelona, 3–4 October 2013, edited by Josep Solervicens and Antoni Lluís Moll).

7 Contrary to what the cliché of Cinquecento "closet drama" might suggest, most of the plays mentioned above were actually performed on stage; on the dates of individual performances,

Publications on Groto's dramatic oeuvre are few and far between; one notable exception is the *Adriana*, which Ariani's modern edition has reinterpreted and made accessible.[8] However, subsequent research has mainly focused on the question of whether Shakespeare had access to Groto's play and whether he used it as a source for his *Romeo and Juliet*.[9] This reticence on the part of researchers stands in marked contrast to the response Groto's plays elicited

see Luciana Zampolli. "'Una scena di perpetua durevolezza': le projet théâtral de Luigi Groto, l'aveugle d'Hadria." *Théâtre de cour, théâtre de ville, théâtre de rue. Actes du Colloque International, 26–28 novembre 1998*, edited by Robert Horville, Olinda Kleiman and Godeleine Logez. Lille: Université de Lille 3, 2001, pp. 93–104, p. 94, incl. n. 4–11; Barbara Spaggiari. "La presenza di Luigi Groto in Shakespeare e negli autori elisabettiani." *Italique*, vol. 12, 2009, pp. 173–198, p. 189 f., n. 12; on the two tragedies *Adriana* and *Dalida* in particular, see Pieri, "Il 'laboratorio'," p. 23, n. 39, as well as Giulietta Bazoli. "Groto e Shakespeare: un confronto possibile?" *Quaderni Veneti*, vol. 39, 2004, pp. 7–27, p. 26, n. 64 on the *Adriana*.

8 Besides Ariani's edition of the *Adriana* with the accompanying introduction and commentary (Luigi Groto. "Adriana." *Il teatro italiano II: La tragedia del Cinquecento 1*, edited by Marco Ariani. Turin: Einaudi, 1977, pp. 281–424), see also the important chapter on the *Adriana* as a prime example of Mannerist tragedy in Marco Ariani. "Il Manierismo e la dissoluzione della struttura tragica." *Tra classicismo e manierismo. Il teatro tragico del Cinquecento*, Florence: Olschki 1974 (Accademia Toscana di Scienze e Lettere "La Colombaria," Studi 31), pp. 179–230, pp. 212–230. For further information on the *Adriana*, especially on its Petrarchan stylemes, which I discuss in more detail below, see Bernhard Huss. "Petrarkismus und Tragödie." *Der Petrarkismus – ein europäischer Gründungsmythos*, edited by id. and Michael Bernsen. Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2011 (Gründungsmythen Europas in Literatur, Musik und Kunst 4), pp. 225–257, pp. 240–244.

9 Giancarlo Cavazzini. "Dall'*Adriana* a *Romeo and Juliet*: problemi di un rapporto." *Luigi Groto e il suo tempo (1541–1585)*. Vol. 1: *Atti del convegno di studi, Adria, 27–29 aprile 1984*, Rovigo: Minelliana, 1987, pp. 337–353 and Bazoli. "Groto e Shakespeare" are only two fairly recent examples of studies that focus on the Shakespearean angle. Given the overall scarcity of research on Groto, the fact that this question has been revisited time and again over the course of far more than a century means that valuable resources have been diverted from more pressing issues; Michele Biancale. *La tragedia italiana nel Cinquecento*. Rome: Tip. Capitolina D. Battarelli, 1901 is an exemplary case in point: concerning the *Adriana*, his chapter on Groto (pp. 223–247) confines itself to a handful of fairly vacuous condemnations of the play, with all other references to the text being about the possibility of Shakespeare using it as a source (the general tendency, expressed on several occasions, is that it is quite unthinkable for a genius of Shakespeare's stature to have adopted anything from an inferior author like Groto). For the most thoughtful observation known to me in regard to this issue, see Gabriele Baldini. "Teatro classico italiano e teatro elisabettiano." *Atti del Convegno sul Tema: Il teatro classico italiano nel '500 (Roma, 9–12 febbraio 1969)*, Rome: Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, 1971, (Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, Quaderno 138), pp. 149–159, p. 153, who draws attention to the presence of the famous nightingale in the lovers' parting scene in Shakespeare's version which can already be found in Groto's play. Strangely enough, this crucial detail has been overlooked by researchers time and again.

among his contemporaries: public reception was lively indeed, at least as far as the dissemination of plays in print was concerned,[10] and both of his trage-dies went through multiple re-editions throughout the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.[11]

Groto is an exceptional phenomenon among the playwrights of his time. Like many of his peers, he was a member of several academies – namely the *Addormentati* of Rovigo, the *Pastori frattegiani*, and the *Illustrati* of Adria, a society which he himself had founded.[12] Unlike most of his fellow writers (an-other notable exception would be Giambattista Giraldi Cinzio in Ferrara), Groto personally supervised stage productions of his plays: the author simultaneous-ly served as dramaturg and director. Groto also appeared on stage as an actor in productions of *Isac* and *Emilia*, and the 1584/85 season saw him perform the title role in Orsatto Giustinian's production of Sophocles' *King Oedipus*, the much-noticed opening premiere of the Teatro Olimpico in Vicenza.[13] Groto's plays were performed in various public settings in Adria: *Isac* was staged in the church of Santa Maria della Tomba, *Dalida* in the Loggia of the Palazzo Civico (and later in Verona), *Il pentimento amoroso* in the Palazzo Pretorio (later in the Palazzo Civico), and *Adriana* in the Loggia of the Palazzo Civico as well as later in Venice.[14] Groto also had a stationary theater built in Adria, presumably out of wood, in which the premiere of his comedy *Emilia* took place on 1 March 1579.[15]

In a word, Groto was a true "man of the theater."[16] Arguably, this is even more true of him than of his more famous colleague from Ferrara: Groto con-

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10 On the early publication history of Groto's plays, see the synopsis in Zampolli, "'Una scena di perpetua durevolezza'," pp. 103 f.

11 Groto, "Adriana," pp. 282 and 284 list a total of ten editions of the *Adriana* before 1626; so does Pieri, "Il 'laboratorio'," p. 23, n. 39, who also gives a total of eight editions for the *Dalida* up until 1646.

12 Decroisette, "'Pleurez mes yeux!'," p. 168.

13 See Groto, "Adriana," p. 281.

14 Additional information is once again to be found in the publications listed in notes 6 and 10. For further details on all plays, see also the thorough references in the annotations to Pieri. "Il 'laboratorio'," as well as the summary in Decroisette, "'Pleurez mes yeux!'," p. 168.

15 Ibid., pp. 168 f.

16 See Pieri, "Il 'laboratorio'," p. 4: "Per questo egli è uno dei pochi scrittori cinquecenteschi che, privo dei vincoli e della protezione di una corte, curi lo spettacolo in ogni sua fase, dalla stesura del testo all'allestimento e talvolta alla interpretazione, e che metta in scena pressoché tutti i suoi componimenti, instaurando un rapporto non episodico con un pubblico socialmen-te composito." On the similarity between Groto and Cinzio in terms of their unusually compre-hensive dramaturgical involvement, see also Birgit Ulmer. "Tragödientheorie als Wirkungs-ästhetik in Giambattista Giraldi Cinzios *Orbecche* und *Altile*." *Renaissancetheater. Italien und die europäische Rezeption / Teatro del Rinascimento. Italia e la ricezione europea*, edited by Rolf Lohse. Tübingen: Narr, 2007, pp. 193–213, p. 209.

sciously experimented with any and all available dramatic genres, which were considered distinct in Renaissance theoretical discourse and whose boundaries were subject to extensive scholarly discussion.[17] While *Dalida* and *Adriana* represent the genre of tragedy, Groto also explored pastoral drama with *Calisto* and *Il pentimento amoroso*, comedy with *Emilia*, *Il tesoro*, and *Alteria*, and biblical drama with his *Isac*. In the preface to the *Emilia* (amidst numerous ostentatious gestures of humility), the author himself raises the claim that what sets him apart from his fellow playwrights is the fact that he has not only accomplished the notoriously difficult feat of being an established writer of both tragedies and comedies, but that he is also the only writer to have succeeded in the pastoral genre as well: "E tanto più temerario si scoprirebbe il mio ardire, che havendo io già dato fuori il pentimento amoroso, nuova favola pastorale, parrebbe ch'io presumessi d'abbracciar non pur una ò due, ma tutte & tre insieme queste Sceniche, & si diverse professioni."[18]

By exploring the full spectrum of genres that the Secondo Cinquecento had at its disposal, Groto puts the productive potentials of the three major dramatic registers to the test: his experiments involve tragedy, comedy, and pastoral drama. Groto is uncompromising in the way in which he investigates the extent and the limits of each genre; the *Emilia*, for example, can be regarded as a comedy with an affinity for tragedy.[19] To call Groto's approach experimental, however, does not imply consent to the notion of experimentalism that Rolf Lohse has fairly recently sought to attribute to Renaissance Italian drama:[20] for Lohse, the term experiment implies the creation of "something new" that eludes previous norms and breaks away from existing models. Too one-dimensional to be applicable to the Renaissance and rather unreflecting at that, this idea of what constitutes an experiment is ultimately the result of

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17 For a detailed discussion of the contemporary theoretical distinction between tragedy and comedy, see Paola Mastrocola. *L'idea del tragico. Teorie della tragedia nel Cinquecento*, Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino, 1998 (Iride 18), pp. 71–116.

18 Luigi Groto. *La Emilia, comedia nova di Luigi Groto Cieco di Hadria. Recitata in Hadria, il dì primo di Marzo. MDLXXIX*, Venezia, Francesco Ziletti, 1579, fol. a4ᵛ (and f., n.p.). See also Luciana Zampolli. "La réflexion théâtrale de Luigi Groto: de la critique des codes à l'autoreprésentation." *Le théâtre réfléchi. Poétiques théâtrales italiennes des Intronati à Pasolini*, edited by Françoise Decroisette. Saint-Denis: Presses Universitaires de Vincennes, 2000, pp. 29–49, p. 39; Decroisette, "'Pleurez mes yeux!'," p. 169.

19 See Salvatore Di Maria. "Groto's *Emilia*: Fiction Meets Reality." *The Poetics of Imitation in the Italian Theatre of the Renaissance*. Toronto, Buffalo and London: University of Toronto Press, 2013, pp. 84–104, esp. pp. 96 f., 104 (where, however, the aspect of genre history remains somewhat underdeveloped in favor of content-related observations).

20 See Rolf Lohse. "Sperimentalismo nel dramma del Cinquecento." *Renaissancetheater*, edited by id., pp. 215–229, esp. pp. 215–218, 227 f.

inappropriate progressivism. Groto is an exponent of Renaissance Mannerism who, in his "provincial laboratory" (as Pieri so memorably put it in 1979), subjects the individual ingredients provided by the literary repertoire of his day to an experimental "stress test" in order to investigate their ability to react and amalgamate with each other. Not only do Groto's literary experiments have a strong impact on his literary practice in terms of *inventio*, *dispositio*, and *elocutio*, triggering a process of radical refunctionalization – his works also reflect upon the tenets of contemporary normative poetology, which Groto explores in what could perhaps be called selective "test assemblages." What will prove to be the case for the tragedies is also strikingly true for the *Rime*, where Groto stretches the normative precepts of orthodox Bembism to the utmost: Petrarchan diction and Petrarchan topics are subjected to antithetical and oxymoronic hyperbole until they reach breaking point. Manifesting itself in relentless experimentalism, Mannerism's tendency to carry the subdivision and differentiation of lyric formulae to the extreme reveals the possibilities *and* the limitations of the set of rules governing the literary system.[21] Generally speaking, the functionality of the various generic categories is investigated by Groto *in actu*, an activity that includes an examination of each individual genre's capability to cope with infiltration by "alien" elements (e.g. by the epigrammatic tradition that finds its way into lyric Petrarchism in the vernacular). In poetry, Groto's linguistic-stylistic radicalization is a reflexive response to the exigencies of Bembist literary doctrine, whose precepts are pushed to the very limit of their applicability. The norms prescribed by the prevalent system are thus renegotiated and strained to the point where it becomes questionable how long and in which direction the "official" literary code can still be developed.

The direct connection to late-Renaissance Mannerism is evident. The Secondo Cinquecento's propensity to experiment with literary forms – especially when faced with the considerable regulatory burden imposed by contemporary poetology – is directly linked to the Renaissance "philologization" of the engagement with literature, to the ever-increasing awareness of the problems that afflicted early modern discourses on literary theory.[22] The acting out of Mannerist idiosyncrasies in the literary text, and an experimentalism that has sometimes been interpreted as a provocation are thus by no means mere symptoms of a subjectivist and individualistic *distancing* from rules. To be sure, there have been attempts to establish such an antagonistic stance as a constituent

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21 For a detailed discussion, see Huss. "Luigi Grotos *Rime*."

22 See Aldo Scaglione. "Cinquecento Mannerism and the Uses of Petrarch." *Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, vol. 5, edited by Osborne Bennett Hardison. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1971, pp. 122–155, p. 134.

feature of Mannerism,[23] and a pronounced hostility towards rules also ties in nicely with Lohse's thesis of progressivism in regard to literary experimentation. Yet authors produce their literary Mannerisms against the backdrop of a body of theory that aims at an aesthetic fixation in terms of literary production and textual composition. This normative body is reflected in their works, which gain metapoetical significance in turn – the critical tension between the text itself and the conditions that enable it is a central component of the experiments taking place in Groto's "laboratorio provinciale" ("provincial laboratory").

The strain placed on literary parameters and methods of textualization by such an experimentalist approach potentially entails the risk of a disintegration of normative precepts.[24] This is not to say, however, that a Mannerist like Groto is pursuing a complete break with the rules,[25] a unilinear struggle against the norm,[26] a kind of anti-normative "escape." Rather than that, his goal is to subject the formal framework within which he operates to a final test of its resilience.[27] This is the reason for his "ambiguo rapporto di fedeltà-trasgressione rispetto ai modelli" ("ambiguous relation of fidelity-transgression

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23 See for example Wylie Sypher. *Rinascimento, manierismo, barocco*. Padua: Marsilio, 1968, p. 146 (and passim).

24 See Gustav René Hocke. "Manier und Manie in der europäischen Kunst." *Merkur*, vol. 10, 1956, pp. 535–558, pp. 556 f.; Sypher, *Rinascimento*, p. 131.

25 Cf. Scaglione. "Cinquecento Mannerism," p. 127, who posits that a "restiveness toward the 'rules' as guidelines to be surpassed and violated" is a characteristic trait of Mannerism as a whole.

26 For such a notion of Mannerism, see Gustav René Hocke. *Manierismus in der Literatur. Sprach-Alchimie und Esoterische Kombinationskunst. Beiträge zur Vergleichenden Europäischen Literaturgeschichte*, Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1959, p. 239 (Mannerism always constitutes an "Aufstand gegen Regelzwang"); Arnold Hauser. *Der Manierismus. Die Krise der Renaissance und der Ursprung der modernen Kunst*, Munich: Beck, 1964, p. 25 (and passim); Tibor Klaniczay. "La lotta antiaristotelica dei teorici del manierismo." *Tiziano e il manierismo europeo*, edited by Rodolfo Pallucchini. Florence: Olschki, 1978 (Civiltà Veneziana, Saggi 24), pp. 367–387.

27 On poetological stress tests, as well as on the negotiation of the normative framework in Mannerism and its significance for literary theory, see also Amedeo Quondam. *La parola nel labirinto. Società e scrittura del Manierismo a Napoli*, Bari: Laterza, 1975, pp. 1–22; Gerhard Regn. "Barock und Manierismus. Italianistische Anmerkungen zur Unvermeidbarkeit einer problemlastigen Begriffsdifferenzierung." *Europäische Barockrezeption*, edited by Klaus Garber. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1991 (Wolfenbütteler Arbeiten zur Barockforschung 20.2), vol. 2, pp. 879–897; and James Mirollo. "The Mannered and the Mannerist in Late Renaissance Literature." *The Meaning of Mannerism*, edited by Franklin W. Robinson and Stephen G. Nichols. Hanover: University Press of New England, 1972, pp. 7–24, pp. 16–18 (who evaluates Mannerism as a "parasitic" and "parodistic" literary current straining against High Renaissance rules of art).

to the models"),[28] and this is the explanation for the apparent paradox that Hauser has attributed to Mannerism in general, namely that (according to Hauser) it implies a "lotta continua contro il formalismo e contro quello che si potrebbe definire il 'feticismo' dell'arte" ("a continuous fight against formalism and against what could be defined as 'fetishism' of art") on the one hand, while being "un'arte formalistica" ("a formalistic art") on the other, "feticistica, affettata, estranea all'indole del soggetto creatore" ("fetishist, affected, alien to the genius of the creative subject").[29] The relationship between Groto's experiment and the repertoire of tradition-bound methods that it draws upon is highly complex: what is being created in the author's alembic is not something *new* in the sense of unilinear progression – as it were, his experimental set-up is designed to put the existing ingredients under pressure in order to produce hitherto unknown alloys, compounds, and distillates.

Cinquecento tragedy is particularly well suited to this type of experimentation, as Fabio Ruggirello quite rightly points out: "Il teatro tragico, destinato a diventare nel Seicento una delle espressioni più significative di un'estetica incentrata sul ruolo del fruitore, nel Cinquecento si presta ad essere territorio di intraprendenti sperimentazioni." ("The tragic theater, destined to become, in the seventeenth century, one of the most significant expressions of an aesthetics focused on the role of the recipient, in the sixteenth century proves to be a territory of eager experimentation.")[30] In Groto's particular case, and especially in regard to the stylistic layout of the *Adriana*, the production of tragic texts indeed proves to be "una fucina di elaborate esperienze formali" ("a forge of elaborate formal experiences").[31]

The *Adriana* is designed as a tragedy of compassion. The evocation of what Aristotle has termed ἔλεος, in Italian the affect of *pietà*, is the play's main

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28 Edoardo Taddeo. *Il manierismo letterario e i lirici veneziani del tardo Cinquecento*. Rome: Bulzoni (Biblioteca di Cultura 56), 1974, p. 60.

29 Arnold Hauser. "L'alienazione, chiave del manierismo." *Problemi del manierismo*, edited by Amedeo Quondam. Naples: Guida, 1975, pp. 157–175, p. 171.

30 Fabio Ruggirello. "L'occulta virtù' del testo. Deissi ed ostensione nel teatro tragico cinquecentesco." *Italica*, vol. 83, no. 2, 2006, pp. 216–237, p. 216. The approach of Oster is not at all helpful in this context. Her not always independent study fails to substantiate the tentative thesis contained in its title "Klassizismus als Experiment": nowhere does it achieve a conclusive explication of the nexus between "classicism" and "experiment" (a nexus which, I would argue, can hardly be fully understood without taking Mannerism into account), see Angela Oster. "Klassizismus als Experiment. Tragödie und Theater(un)kultur im Kontext der italienischen Renaissance (mit einem Ausblick auf die französische Klassik)." *Ethos und Form der Tragödie. Für Maria Moog-Grünewald zum 65. Geburtstag*, edited by Niklas Bender, Max Grosse and Steffen Schneider. Heidelberg: Winter, 2014 (*GRM*, Supplement 60), pp. 85–136.

31 Pieri, "Il 'laboratorio'," p. 23.

concern. Compared to the *Poetics* itself, but also to interpretations of Aristotle that were widespread in the Italian Renaissance,[32] this approach must appear somewhat reductive and one-sided. In fact, the *Adriana* is the direct result of an experiment in which one of the fundamental tenets of Aristotelian poetology is split up and replaced by a dichotomy: Groto's project detaches the twin affects of ἔλεος and φόβος.[33] Having created an experimental diptych in the pastoral domain (*Calisto* as a somewhat risqué piece reminiscent of satyr plays, *Il pentimento amoroso* as a nod towards comedy),[34] Groto proceeds to write out another antithesis in the field of tragedy. The preeminent tragedies of the Cinquecento (such as Giraldi's *Orbecche* and Speroni's *Canace*) maintain a certain distance to the tragedies of classical antiquity as a matter of principle,[35] but Groto increases this distance considerably by embarking upon "due spericolate avventure formali significativamente lanciate in opposte direzioni" ("two audacious formal adventures, significantly launched in opposite directions").[36] Contemporary theory held that the affects of *compassione* and *spavento* belonged together, even though a distinction between *tragedia affettuosa* (παθητική) and *tragedia accostumata* (ἠθική) was maintained with an eye on Aristotle's *Poetics* (Chapter 18).[37] Groto, on the other hand, separates ἔλεος and φόβος, assigning them individually to a tragic diptych consisting of the *Adriana* as a tragedy of *compassione* and the *Dalida* as a tragedy of horror. Clearly, this is no unconditional affirmation of Aristotelian doctrine.[38] What

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32 See Brigitte Kappl. *Die* Poetik *des Aristoteles in der Dichtungstheorie des Cinquecento*. Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, 2006 (Untersuchungen zur antiken Literatur und Geschichte 83), who offers some fundamental reflections regarding this issue.

33 For a more detailed discussion, see Bernhard Huss. "Luigi Grotos tragisches Diptychon aus Mitleid und Schrecken: *La Adriana* und *La Dalida*." Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen und Literaturen, vol. 252, no. 1, 2015, pp. 83–104.

34 See Pieri, "Il 'laboratorio'," pp. 16 f., and the overarching argument that is made there.

35 On this issue, see Marco Ariani. "La trasgressione e l'ordine. L'*Orbecche* di G. B. Giraldi Cinthio e la fondazione del linguaggio tragico cinquecentesco." *La Rassegna della Letteratura Italiana*, vol. 83, 1979, pp. 117–180, p. 117.

36 Pieri, "Il 'laboratorio'," p. 17, who is not referring to the opposition between "compassion" and "horror" here, but rather to the generic templates of Senecan tragedy vs. pathetic love tragedy (ibid. 17 f.). Herrick 1965 noticed the dichotomy between the two plays even earlier: the *Adriana* is subsumed under the category of sentimental-pathetic "Gothic and Romantic Tragedies," whereas the *Dalida* is discussed in the chapter "More Blood" (i.e., in the context of the tragedies of horror that followed in the wake of the *Orbecche*).

37 See Nicolò Rossi. "Discorsi intorno alla tragedia." *Trattati di poetica e retorica del Cinquecento*, edited by Bernard Weinberg. Bari: Laterza, 1974, vol. 4, pp. 59–120, pp. 117 f.

38 On Groto's dissociation from basic parameters of the classicist norm, see Zampolli, "La réflexion théâtrale," pp. 30–37.

we encounter here is exactly the same Mannerist attitude that I have already demonstrated in the context of the *Rime*: Groto seizes every opportunity a certain (sub)genre provides in terms of representation and effect. Differing radically from the rational and moderate plays in the tradition of Trissino's *Sofonisba* with their attempt to functionalize an "Aristotelian" form for the domestication of passions,[39] Giraldi's *Orbecche* inaugurates the poetics of the tragedy of horror in exemplary fashion for the Renaissance.[40] Once the tragedy of horror and the tragedy of compassion have become identifiable as distinct subgenres, Groto promptly puts their respective potentials to the test.[41]

The *Adriana* is frequently considered a "typical" Mannerist tragedy – if not *the* Mannerist tragedy – of the Cinquecento.[42] In the *Adriana*, the pathetic love story that forms the basis of the "Romeo and Juliet" paradigm (gleaned from the Romeo-e-Giulietta novellas by Luigi Da Porto and Matteo Bandello) is relocated to the ancient city of Adria. Adria is under siege: the city is surrounded by King Mezenzio's Latian army, a state of affairs that has a very unfortunate impact on the budding romance that has developed between his son, Latino, and Adriana, the daughter of Adria's king, Atrio. Meeting secretly in the besieged city, the lovers carry on their amorous involvement even after Latino accidentally kills Adriana's brother in combat without realizing the identity of his adversary. With the death of Adriana's brother, the political situation has become highly volatile. To remedy the dangerous lack of a successor, Adriana's parents arrange her marriage to the heir to the Sabine throne. Adriana sees

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39 See Marzia Pieri. *La nascita del teatro moderno in Italia tra XV e XVI secolo*. Turin: Bollati Boringhieri, 1989, pp. 137 f.

40 For a basic discussion of this issue, see Maraike Di Domenica. "Manierismus vs. Aristotelismus. Zur ästhetischen Subversion regulativer Prinzipien in den Horror-Tragödien der italienischen Renaissance." *Manierismus. Interdisziplinäre Studien zu einem ästhetischen Stiltyp zwischen formalem Experiment und historischer Signifikanz*, edited by Bernhard Huss and Christian Wehr. Heidelberg: Winter, 2014 (*GRM*, Supplement 56), pp. 93–111. On Giraldi's groundbreaking role, see Marco Ariani. "L'*Orbecche* di G. B. Giraldi e la poetica dell'orrore." *La Rassegna della Letteratura Italiana*, vol. 75, 1971, pp. 432–450; Marco Ariani. "Ragione e furore nella tragedia di G. B. Giraldi Cinthio." *Tra classicismo e manierismo. Il teatro tragico del Cinquecento*, Florence: Olschki, 1974 (Accademia Toscana di Scienze e Lettere "La Colombaria," Studi 31), pp. 115–178; Ariani. "La trasgressione."

41 *Nota bene*: these subgenres can only be defined on a typological scale, i.e. in terms of a certain predominance of compassion over horror, or vice versa. They cannot be distinguished in the sense of a mutually exclusive presence of each of the two affects.

42 For a statement to this effect, see for example Cavazzini, "Dall'*Adriana* a *Romeo and Juliet*," p. 345: "Con la stesura dell'*Adriana*, Luigi Groto ci fornisce il reperto più consapevole e tragico di tutta la drammaturgia del Cinquecento, presentandoci la tragedia manierista nella sua forma più matura"; see also ibid., p. 348.

only one way out: She follows the seemingly helpful advice of a magician, who offers to concoct a powerful potion that will leave her unconscious for several hours. Once presumed dead, so the plan goes, she will escape from the city after her "funeral" to live happily ever after – in secrecy, to be sure, but reunited with Latino. Adriana swallows the narcotic. According to plan, she is thought dead by all and sundry and promptly laid in her grave. Contrary to the magician's scheme, however, Latino is left uninformed about what is really going on: he arrives at Adriana's grave convinced that she is indeed dead. Confronted with the "corpse" of his beloved, Latino poisons himself in desperation. Yet shortly before he dies, Adriana awakes – when Latino succumbs to the poison after a last intimate dialogue between the two lovers, Adriana stabs herself to death next to Latino's lifeless body. In the end, the city of Adria is destroyed by a flood deliberately caused by Latino's father. This all-encompassing cataclysm bridges the chasm that separates the play's temporally remote setting from the present, a move for which the prologue has prepared the audience from the very outset: ultimately, the Adria of Groto's contemporaries represents nothing more than the pitiful remains of former glory; the tragedy's action has given the audience a glimpse of the last days and hours of the present city's mighty predecessor.

My claim that the *Adriana* constitutes a "tragedy of compassion" is substantiated as early as in the first lines of the separate prologue[43] preceding the play:

[1]   Se mai tragedia agli occhi vostri offerta,
       indi pietoso umor per forza trasse,
       propizi spettatori, questa, ch'oggi
       viene a farvi di sé dolente mostra,
[5]   può trar dal petto vostro e da le ciglia
       un'Etna di sospiri, e un mar di pianto.
       Tra per l'autor ch'a voi la ordisce, e trama,
       pien d'ogni oscuro, e tragico accidente,
       che chiusi avendo in nube eterna gli occhi,
[10] meraviglia non è, s'eterna pioggia
       di lacrime ne sparge, e altrui le move;
       e per color che 'n lei vanno introdotti,
       i piú fedeli, e piú infelici amanti,
       che trafigesse mai lo stral d'amore,

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43 In deploying such a prologue, Groto follows the example of Giraldi's *Orbecche*; on the poetological significance of this self-positioning, see Zampolli, "La réflexion théâtrale," pp. 30–32.

[15] anzi d'amor non già, ma stral di morte;
e alfin per la città, dove s'adempie
la mestissima istoria.[44]

Metapoetical statements right at the beginning of the text proclaim the emotional effect that the *Adriana* is designed to achieve: more than any other play, so the text itself declares, this is a tragedy capable of evoking "pietoso umor," that is, tears of compassion (line 2) – in fact, as the hyperbole in line 6 informs us, the anticipated result is nothing short of a "Mount Etna of sighs" and a "sea of tears." Conflating the fictional world with metapoetical aspects and with the self-fashioning of the empirical author – a move typical of Groto[45] – the text claims that the eternal "rain of tears" ("eterna pioggia | di lacrime," 10 f.) to be created is in no small part due to the eternal clouding of its author's eyesight. The intention of the play is thus made quite obvious: its goal is the evocation of one of the two Aristotelian affects, namely compassion (*pietà*, ἔλεος – significantly, horror is omitted). This feeling of compassion is not to be engendered by a particularly brutal plot, as would be typical for a tragedy of horror along the lines of Giraldi Cinzio's *Orbecche*, but rather by the sentimentalist presentation of a "mestissima istoria" (17), a "singularly sad story." The play's action is so singularly sad because the protagonists' love story takes such a singularly unhappy course – as it were, the two lovers are the most unhappy couple ever, "i piú fedeli, e piú infelici amanti, | che trafigesse mai lo stral d'amore" (13 f.).[46] For one thing is certain: this is a love story with a

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44 "[1] If ever a tragedy presented to your eyes | by force extracted pitiful liquids from them, | then, well-disposed spectators, this one which | comes today to present itself to you painfully, | [5] is able to extract from your chest and from your eyelids | a Mount Etna of sighs and a sea of tears: | This might be due to the author who creates and weaves it for you, | full of all sorts of dark and tragic incidents, | and who has his eyes closed in an eternal cloud, | [10] so that it is no wonder if he sheds | an eternal rain of tears and causes it in others; | it might also be due to those who are introduced in the play, | the most faithful and most unhappy lovers | ever transfixed by the arrow of love, | [15] no, not the arrow of love but rather the arrow of death; | finally it might be due to the town where the singularly sad story | fulfills itself."

45 For a detailed discussion, see Huss, "Grotos tragisches Diptychon;" see also Zampolli, "La réflexion théâtrale," pp. 30, 38, 40–42; Luciana Zampolli. "Les voyages du témoin: le 'destinataire privilégié' de *L'istoria novellamente ritrovata di due nobili amanti* (1524) di Luigi Da Porto à *La Adriana* di Luigi Groto (1578)." *Les traces du spectateur. Italie, XVII*e *et XVIII*e *siècles*, edited by Françoise Decroisette. Saint-Denis: Presses Universitaires de Vincennes, 2006, pp. 63–82, p. 72 incl. n. 29.

46 The play's lachrymose love plot can be traced back all the way to the novelistic basis on which Groto constructs his tragedy of compassion. Matteo Bandello's version of the story (Seconda parte, Novella IX of the 1554 collection) significantly carries the title "La *sfortunata morte* di *dui infelicissimi amanti* che l'uno di veleno e l'altro di dolore morirono, con varii accidenti" (italics added), thereby gesturing towards the "tragic" ending appropriate to a som-

fatal ending; the prologue leaves no doubt about that, when it informs us that this is the type of story in which the arrow of love ("lo stral d'amore," 14) turns into an arrow of death ("stral di morte," 15).

At this point, in addition to having recognized the play's references to the sombre novellas of Da Porto and Bandello, the knowledgeable audience of the Cinquecento may well have guessed at the stylistic and generic register that would subsequently be deployed in the staging of this "singularly sad story."[47] After all, the coupling of sighs and tears ("sospiri," "pianto"), the antithesis of "amore" ("love") and "morte" ("death"), the image of the "stral d'amore" ("arrow of love"), and the linking of "stral" ("arrow") and "morte" ("death") were devices only too familiar to theatergoers and readers from Francesco Petrarca's omnipresent *Canzoniere* (*Rerum vulgarium fragmenta*).[48] As the sty-

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bre novelistic love plot. Both Da Porto's and Bandello's novellas repeatedly and explicitly state that both texts feature a plot conducive to the evocation of *pietà* (Luigi Da Porto. *Giulietta e Romeo novella storica. Aggiuntavi la novella di Matteo Bandello su lo stesso argomento, il poemetto di Clizia Veronese, ed altre antiche poesie, col corredo d'illustrazioni storiche e bibliografiche*, edited by Alessandro Torri. Pisa: Nistri, 1831, p. 46: "la misera e pietosa morte di questi amanti"; Matteo Bandello. "Novella IX: La sfortunata morte di dui infelicissimi amanti che l'uno di veleno e l'altro di dolore morirono, con varii accidenti." *La seconda parte de le novelle*, edited by Delmo Maestri. Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso, 1993 [Contributi e Proposte 6], pp. 58–85, p. 58: "un pietoso caso e infortunio grandissimo," ibid., p. 84: "il pietoso caso degli sfortunati amanti"). Yet both novellas share more with the *Adriana* than just the affective charge that becomes visible in the recurring theme of compassion and pain revolving around the amorous fortunes of the protagonists: the strong emotional involvement of Adriana's parents, who attempt to secure their daughter's consent to an unwanted marriage with threats and openly displayed anger only to mourn her excessively once she is dead, can be encountered both in the novellas *and* in the *Adriana*. It is evident that the *Adriana* is a transgeneric derivate based on features of the novella, namely its bias towards *pietà* and its specific approach to the modeling of affects and to the structuring of the plot (in both genres, the implementation of these aspects into language is achieved via the deployment of Petrarchan formulae; see also the following note for additional details).

47 Groto's text is not alone in drawing on lyrical Petrarchism, as I will go on to show. The two novellas also avail themselves of Petrarchan elements, albeit to a lesser degree. Both Da Porto and Bandello deploy the Petrarchan repertoire in various passages of their novellas, especially in the context of Romeo and Giulietta's amorous affects. In Bandello's version, the closing speeches that Romeo addresses to the allegedly dead Giulietta (Bandello, "Novella IX," p. 82) and that Giulietta addresses to the well and truly dead Romeo (ibid., p. 84) are particularly striking in that they amass an oxymoronic series of Petrarchan antitheses such as *gioia–dolore*, *allegrezza–dolore*, *dolce–amaro*, *vivo–morto*, and *vivere–morire*. From a poetological vantage point, and in light of literary predecessors such as Speroni's *Canace*, the amalgamation of Petrarchism and tragedy (a more detailed discussion will follow promptly) must clearly have suggested itself to Groto when he accessed his novelistic hypotexts.

48 Concerning "sospiri" and "pianto," cf. *RVF* 207.96 ("pianto, sospiri e morte"), 332.45 ("i sospiri e 'l pianto"; ibid. at line 46 also the conjunction of "tears" and "rain," "pioggia") –

lemes of the *Canzoniere* are so prominently displayed in Groto's works, it is hardly surprising, in light of the sixteenth century's penchant for "literary programs," that the same repertoire is also present in the poetry of the very originator of "orthodox" High Renaissance Petrarchism, that is, in Pietro Bembo's *Rime*.[49] The prologue bears out the assumption that the love story between Adriana and Latino is not only aimed at the evocation of ἔλεος, but that it follows an essentially Petrarchan configuration: while the text emphasizes that the depicted pair of lovers is ideally suited to inspire feelings of compassion in the audience ("Questo pensier [...] | de' movervi a pietà di questi amanti, | che però per se stessi anco pòn farlo" – "This thought [...] | must move you to feel compassion with these lovers, | who, however, are able to cause this effect by themselves, too," lines 48–50), the situation of the protagonists is simultaneously referred to with the term "sweet yoke" ("Anzi fu dolce il giogo ..."; what follows is an explicit enumeration of parallel cases from literary history, such as Pyramus and Thisbe or Hero and Leander). The "sweet yoke" is, of course, a textbook example of the ever-popular Petrarchan motif of the pains of love. Indeed, we encounter it right at the beginning of one of Petrarch's most famous sonnets: "L'aura celeste che 'n quel verde lauro | spira, ov'Amor ferì nel fianco Apollo, | et a me pose un dolce giogo al collo" ("The heavenly breeze which breathes in that green laurel, | where Love wounded Apollo in the side | and put a sweek yoke on my neck"; *RVF* 197.1–3). As we can see, Groto's text clearly marks its Petrarchan references. The poetic agenda that the text outlines here could be summed up as follows: in order to turn tragedy into an efficient vehicle for the Aristotelian affect of compassion, the *Adriana* relies on a Petrarchan formula in the portrayal of its central and originally novelistic plot element, namely the young couple's amorous relationship.[50] What we are dealing with

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Groto's turn of phrase in l. 6 is aimed at a *superatio* of the Petrarchan affects of mourning. Regarding the antithetical junction of "amore" and "morte," cf. *RVF* 39.2, 40.1, 212.11, 266.5 f., 270.106, 274.2, 307.4. For the "stral d'amore," cf. *RVF* 87.11, 151.8, 216.7, 241.4; for the "stral di morte," cf. *RVF* 296.8. Salvatore Di Maria. *The Italian Tragedy in the Renaissance. Cultural Realities and Theatrical Innovations*, Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell UP and London: Associated UP, 2002, p. 45 f. suggests that the deployment of Petrarchan diction could have triggered an "effect of recognition" in the audience, thereby reinforcing a particular attitude towards the play – a very interesting thought that we cannot pursue here in any further depth. See Francesco Petrarca. *Canzoniere*, edited by Marco Santagata. Milan: Mondadori, 1996.

49 For "sospiri" and "pianto," cf. *Rime* 17.23; for "amore" vs. "morte," *Rime* 114.13 f., 142.207, 148.1 f.; for "stral d'amore," *Rime* 13.1 f., 82.8, 99.6 f., *Stanze* 7.6 ("lo stral d'Amor").

50 A brief remark in Pieri, "Il 'laboratorio'," p. 21 indicates a certain awareness of this strategy, although this line of thought unfortunately remains unexplored – as Pieri argues, Groto deploys "un intreccio novellistico assai compassionevole, che gli permette di metter a frutto le sue risorse di petrarchista consumato" in the *Adriana*.

here is thus an experiment on genre: the lyrical register suitable for the depiction of the pains of love, familiar from the works of Petrarch and Bembo, infiltrates a tragedy that is ultimately derived from the tradition of the novella, and which is specifically designed to evoke *pietà*.[51] As we shall see, this program is implemented all through the text. In an expositional dialogue with her nursemaid (1.1), Adriana herself describes the hitherto unknown experience of love with the help of a chain of oxymoronic concepts, whose Petrarchan origins are so evident as to make lengthy explanatory enumerations superfluous:

> Fu il mio male un piacer senza allegrezza,
> un voler, che si stringe, ancor che punga.
> Un pensier, che si nutre, ancor che ancida.
> [65] Un affanno che 'l ciel dà per riposo.

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51 At this juncture, we cannot elaborate in any more detail on the fact that Groto also implants references to several other genres into tragedy (see for example Zampolli, "Les voyages du témoin," 69). The references to *topoi* from the epic domain that Groto has integrated into the play (for example: comprehensive reports on the martial goings-on outside the city walls [1.2], Adriana's first encounter with Latino in the mode of teichoscopy [1.1], the "Aeneid-like" names of Mezenzio and his son Latino), as well as from the field of *romanzo* and *poema eroico* (for example: the disguise that leads to the death of Adriana's brother at the hands of Latino, who is unaware of his adversary's identity and has no intention of killing his beloved's kin [1.3, 2.2]), lend the events of the love plot an air of romance that is far removed from the "mood" of a sombre tragedy of horror in the tradition of Seneca, a model that Groto radicalizes in the *Dalida*. Latino's killing of Adriana's brother offers the perfect occasion to showcase Groto's genre-transgressing technique of montage: Groto derives the overall motif from said Romeo-and-Juliet novellas, but he rebuilds it by drawing on the *topos* of a martial duel with a disguised or unrecognized adversary, a staple feature of romance and epic. In Da Porto's and Bandello's versions, Romeo kills T(h)e(o)baldo Cappelletti, Giulietta's cousin. Da Porto has the killing take place in the fierce melee of a street fight, and explains it by Romeo's furious anger (Da Porto. *Giulietta e Romeo*, p. 27: "vinto dall'ira [...] di un sol colpo in terra morto lo distese," an event which the narrator classifies as "omicidio"). Bandello, on the other hand, moves towards an exoneration of Romeo in ethical terms: here, Romeo's behavior in the encounter with Adriana's relative is conciliatory at first – only after being provoked and attacked does he join the fatal scuffle (the narrator's version matches Romeo's own account, given when the latter is already fatally poisoned and placed in the family vault of the Cappelletti, next to Tebaldo's corpse [Bandello. "Novella IX," pp. 67 f., 82 f.]). In Groto's version, the killing finally takes place in complete ignorance of the victim's identity, in accordance with the familiar pattern of epic and romance. Latino's bloody deed leaves him ethically untainted, as befits a protagonist in a tragedy of compassion (however, this set-up is far less compatible with the Aristotelian concept of the tragic protagonist as someone who is neither completely good nor completely bad). Precisely because the *Adriana* is a tragedy of compassion and not a tragedy of horror, Groto has good reason not to make use of the gruesome motif of placing an only apparently dead Adriana next to her relative's putrefying corpse, a fate that befalls Giulietta in Bandello's version.

Un ben supremo, fonte d'ogni male.
Un male estremo, d'ogni ben radice.
Una piaga mortal, che mi fec'io.
Un laccio d'or dov'io stessa m'avvinsi.
[70] Un velen grato ch'io bevei per gli occhi.
Giunto un finire, e un cominciar di vita.
Una febre, che 'l gelo, e 'l caldo mesce.
Un fel piú dolce assai, che mele o manna.
Un bel foco, che strugge, e non risolve.
[75] Un giogo insopportabile, e leggero.
Una pena felice, un dolor caro.
Una morte immortal piena di vita.
Un inferno, che sembra il paradiso.[52]

Yet the incorporation of Petrarchan registers into a tragedy of compassion is not the result of an ingenious proto-baroque *bizzarria*, of a poetic *capriccio* – rather than that, Groto's experiment constitutes an intensified reaction to normative poetological tendencies (this conforms precisely to the poetics of Groto's *Rime*, whose pointed Mannerisms likewise attempt to make full use of the leeway that the Bembesque set of rules for lyric diction provides[53]). The origin of these normative tendencies is twofold, as I will briefly show: they derive both from poetological Aristotelianism and from Pietro Bembo's attempt to cast Petrarch as the stylistic epitome of poetical language.[54]

In Aristotle's famous definition in the sixth chapter of the *Poetics* (1449b), ἡδυσμένος λόγος is listed as one of the basic characteristics of tragedy. Modern German translations of the *Poetics* differ in their interpretation of this passage. Manfred Fuhrmann translates ἡδυσμένῳ λόγῳ as "in anziehend geformter Sprache" ("written in an appealing style"),[55] whereas Arbogast Schmitt renders it as "in kunstgemäß geformter Sprache" ("written in artful diction").[56] The

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52 "My malady was a pleasure without joy, | a willing which is grasped even though it stings, | a thought that one nurtures even though it kills, | [65] a labour which heaven donates for relief, | the highest good, fountain of all evil, | the most extreme evil, root of all good, | a lethal wound, inflicted on me by myself, | a loop of gold by which I have enchained myself, [70] a pleasant poison which I drank with my eyes, | the end and the beginning of life bound together, | a fever that mixes ice and heat, | a bile much sweeter than honey or manna, | a beautiful fire which destroys but does not dissolve, | [75] a yoke, unbearable and light, | a happy torment, a dear pain, | an immortal death full of life, | a hell which seems to be paradise."

53 For further details, see Huss, "Luigi Grotos *Rime*."

54 For a more detailed discussion of this problem, see Huss, "Petrarkismus und Tragödie."

55 Aristotle. *Poetik*, translated and edited by Manfred Fuhrmann. Stuttgart: Reclam, 1994, p. 19.

56 Aristotle. *Poetik*, translated and edited by Arbogast Schmitt. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2008 (Aristoteles: Werke in deutscher Übersetzung, 5), p. 9.

fact that each of the two translations highlights a different aesthetic aspect – reception vs. production – is indicative of the need to interpret the Aristotelian dictum regarding the style appropriate to tragedy. The Cinquecento responded to this need in its exegesis of Aristotle, in its stylistic debates, and in its theory of tragedy. In keeping with Alessandro de' Pazzi's Latin translation of the *Poetics* (1536),[57] commentators frequently render ἡδυσμένῳ λόγῳ as "sermone suavi." [58] Within the poetological frame of reference of the Renaissance,[59] this translation effectively points away from the noble and elevated literary register, gesturing instead towards what could be termed a "lyrical" style appropriate to a medium – or perhaps even lower – register.[60] The feature "sweet and lyrical" is detached from its ties to specific segments of tragic syntax, and projected onto the language of tragedy as a whole. The early commentary by Maggi and Lombardi is a case in point: both interpreters are fully aware of the fact that Aristotle's treatment of tragedy is characterized by segmentation and differentiation as far as the deployment of various media and the corresponding usage of appropriate language are concerned. Yet the *suavitas* of tragedy is a given for Maggi and Lombardi – even outside the choral passages that constitute "lyrical parts" in the narrower sense. The use of *rhythmus* and *har-*

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57 The decisive passage is quoted in Bernard Weinberg. *A History of Literary Criticism in the Italian Renaissance*, 2 Vols., Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1961 (Midway Reprints: 1974), vol. 1, p. 372 ("sermone suavi"). Pazzi's desire to do justice to the etymological roots of ἡδυσμένος in ἡδύς ('sweet,' 'pleasant') is evident here. In 1498, Giorgio Valla still rendered the passage as "iucunda oratione," although he follows this with a definition of the appropriate diction for tragedy via the attributes "suavis" and "oblectabilis" (quoted at length ibid.).

58 See for example Francesco Robortello. *In librum Aristotelis De arte poetica explicationes. Paraphrasis in librum Horatii, qui vulgo De arte poetica ad Pisones inscribitur.* Munich: Fink, 1968 (Florence: Torrentino, 1548) (Poetiken des Cinquecento 8), pp. 52, 55; Vincenzo Maggi and Bartolomeo Lombardi. *In Aristotelis librum* De poetica *communes explanationes.* Munich: Fink 1969 (Venezia: Vincenzo Valgrisio, 1550) (Poetiken des Cinquecento 4), pp. 96 f., 99 f.; Antonio Riccoboni. *Poetica Aristotelis latine conversa.* Munich: Fink 1970 (Padua: Paulus Meietus, 1587) (Poetiken des Cinquecento 22), pp. 7 (translation), 29 f. (paraphrase, the passage is rendered as: "suavi sermone, qui fiat suavis, & iucundus"). This interpretation also finds its way into more general poetological discussions of the Cinquecento; see for example Antonio Sebastiano Minturno. *L'arte poetica.* Munich: Fink 1971 (s.l.: Valvassori, 1564) (Poetiken des Cinquecento 6), p. 74: "la qual si fà con soave parlare."

59 For Aristotle himself, ἡδυσμένος λόγος has nothing to do with the categories of a multilayered poetics of style. The amalgamation of his particular turn of phrase with such categories is a phenomenon that is typical of the Renaissance reception of Aristotle, where the establishment of intricate connections between Aristotelian theorems and traditional notions of stylistic decorum is standard procedure.

60 See Hermann Lindner. "Mittlerer Stil." *Historisches Wörterbuch der Rhetorik* 5, Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 2001, pp. 1366–1372 and "Schlichter Stil." Ibid., vol. 8, 2007, pp. 502–509.

monia in the spoken verses of tragedy (for Maggi and Lombardi: its specific properties in regard to language and metre) is sufficient to create *suavitas*, and the spoken passages of tragedy thus qualify as *carmen* in their own right.[61] By contemporary standards, however, this ubiquitous *suavitas* can be interpreted as a typically lyrical characteristic.

A strong current in the Cinquecento's exegesis of Aristotle, which in turn played a key role for the literary practice of Italian Renaissance tragedy,[62] thus attaches a stylistic label to tragedy which – despite the best efforts of commen-

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61 In this context, see Maggi/Lombardi. *In Aristotelis librum*, p. 99 ("At primum quid sibi per SUAVEM SERMONEM velit, declarat, quod scilicet numerum, & harmoniam, & melos habet. per numerum autem, atque harmoniam, metrum: per melos vero, chori cantus intelligit. Et quoniam sermonis suavis sunt plures species, ideo subiungit, quomodo species illae in diversis Tragoediae partibus reperiantur, quasdam absolvi metro dicens: hoc est in aliqua Tragoediae parte sermonis suavitas est, metri tantum causa, ubi chorus non canit: quaedam vero pars suavem sermonem habet, quoniam accedit cantus"). For Maggi and Lombardi, *metrum* is the result of the deployment of *numerus* and *harmonia*, and this linguistic-metrical configuration is what justifies the equation of *sermo suavis* and *carmen* in the first place: "carmen [...] sermonem suavem esse apertum est" (ibid., p. 96). The term *carmen* is somewhat narrower in scope, however, in that *sermo suavis* also includes the "melic" choral parts: "nam etsi carmen sermo suavis sit, non tamen quivis suavis sermo carmen tantum est: cum praeter carmen interdum contineat & melos" (ibid., p. 99). *Suavitas* is thus ubiquitous in tragedy.

62 Attempts by Rolf Lohse. "Lizenz zum Fingieren. Dichterische Freiheit und Zeitgeschichte in der italienischen Tragödie des 16. Jahrhunderts." *Fiktionen des Faktischen in der Renaissance*, edited by Ulrike Schneider and Anita Traninger. Stuttgart: Steiner, 2010 (Text und Kontext 32), pp. 211–232, pp. 212, 216 (and passim), and Enrica Zanin. "Pourquoi la tragédie finit mal? Analyse des dénouements dans quelques tragédies de la première modernité." *Cahiers d'Études Italiennes*, vol. 19, 2014, pp. 45–59, to relativize the significance of poetological Aristotelianism for the production of tragedies in the Cinquecento have to be rejected as unfounded. Both authors employ a tendentially monolithic notion of Aristotelianism which pushes the plural positionings that characterize sixteenth-century discussions of literary theory into the background, acting as if Renaissance Aristotelianism and 'pre-Aristotelian' (a catchphrase which usually covers late antiquity, the Middle Ages, and parts of the quattrocento) theoretical discourses were mutually exclusive to a large extent. Yet it is quite clear that Renaissance Aristotelianism represents a multi-layered, fragile, often contradictory, and non-coherent 'system,' the lofty claims of Aristotelians in regard to genre classification notwithstanding. A superficial look at theoretical reflexion in the Cinquecento is more than sufficient to show that literary practice stands in an unusually close relationship to historic theory formation in this particular historical context (Giraldi Cinzio's theoretical texts and their relationship to his tragedies are a case in point; the same holds true for Speroni's theoretical deliberations and his *Canace*). My statements above are intended to demonstrate that a play like the *Adriana* can only be explained appropriately if its relationship to the theoretical discourse it so strongly reflects is taken into account. It goes without saying that friction and ruptures between historic literary theory and literary practice do exist – they are not a valid counterargument in this context, however.

tators to do justice to Aristotle's phrasing – is actually far better suited to lyric poetry, at least from the perspective of contemporaries well-versed in the poetology of stylistic stratification. This means that a productive correlation between the genre of tragedy on the one hand, and the stylized lyricism of Petrarchan provenance on the other, begins to emerge – a theoretical potential that Groto will indeed put into practice.

From a different angle, Pietro Bembo's theoretical deliberations further contribute to this interaction. In conformity with the treatise *De compositione verborum* (Περὶ συνθέσεως ὀνομάτων) by Dionysius of Halicarnassus,[63] Bembo's *Prose della volgar lingua* (1525) proclaims as stylistic ideal a balanced blend of "gravità" ("gravity") and "piacevolezza" ("amenity," "pleasantness").[64] In the second book of the *Prose*, "gravità" and "piacevolezza" are treated as stylistic effects devoid of semantic and content-related implications. From Chapter 9 on, Bembo provides an in-depth explanation of how both "gravità" and "piacevolezza" are created via the deliberate deployment of "suono" ("sound"), "numero" ("rhythm"), and "variazione" ("variation"): they are the combined result of appropriate sound effects, the author's usage of rhythm and rhyme, and a technique of skillful variation. When it comes to striking the perfect stylistic balance in verse, Bembo's normative role model is Francesco Petrarca, whereas Giovanni Boccaccio serves an analogous function in the domain of prose. In the context of tragedy, this has a rather noteworthy effect: the very author whom Bembo casts as the model for stylistically elevated tragedy composed in verse – Petrarch – is decidedly *not* an author of *gravitas*, as would befit the *stylus gravis* which alone is suitable for tragedy according to traditional notions of stylistic decorum.[65] This issue is connected to a fundamental problem that haunts Bembism's relationship to "elevated" topics. Even though Bembo pushes the traditional doctrine of three stylistic levels as far into the background as possible, he nonetheless establishes a distinction right

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63 See Claudia Berra. "L'idea di stile dagli *Asolani* alle *Prose*." Prose della volgar lingua *di Pietro Bembo*, edited by Silvia Morgana, Mario Piotti and Massimo Prada. Milan: Cisalpino, 2000 (Quaderni di Acme 46), pp. 277–302, pp. 284–290; see also Rosa Casapullo. "I termini della critica e della retorica nel II libro delle *Prose*." Ibid., pp. 393–408, p. 397 and passim.

64 See Pietro Bembo. *Prose della volgar lingua. L'editio princeps del 1525 riscontrata con l'autografo Vaticano latino 3210*, edited by Claudio Vela. Bologna: CLUEB, 2001, esp. Book 2 (passim), as well as passages from Book 1, such as ibid., p. 44 (Chapter 1.18).

65 For a concise overview, see Bernhard Huss. "Gattung/Gattungstheorie." *Der Neue Pauly. Enzyklopädie der Antike*, vol. 14: *Rezeptions- und Wissenschaftsgeschichte*, edited by Manfred Landfester. Stuttgart and Weimar: Metzler, 2000, cols. 87–95, and "Literaturtheorie." *Der Neue Pauly. Supplemente* 9: *Renaissance-Humanismus. Lexikon zur Antikerezeption*, edited by Manfred Landfester. Stuttgart and Weimar: Metzler, 2014, cols. 558–566.

at the beginning of the second book between (a) "materia grande" ("grand subject-matter"), to be represented with words ("voci") which qualify as "gravi, alte, sonanti, apparenti, luminose" ("grave, high, sounding, effulgent, radiant"); (b) "(materia) mezzana" ("intermediate subject-matter"), with "voci mezzane e temperate" ("intermediate, temperate words"); and (c) "(materia) bassa e volgare" ("low and vulgar [subject-matter]"), with "(voci) lievi, piane, dimesse, popolari, chete" ("light, humble, simple, popular, calm [words]").[66] Although the *Prose* painstakingly avoids any content-dependent restrictions on the poetic choice of language from that point on, Bembo is nonetheless forced to link the lexis of three stylistic levels to the semantics of three corresponding levels of subject matter in the passage above. What is more, Bembo lacks an author capable of serving as a role model for elevated topics (where Bembo compares Virgil and Petrarch, both appear as representatives of a "middling" style),[67] and he keeps his distance from serious, elevated, difficult topics in poetry as a matter of principle, preferring balanced and "middling" topics instead.[68]

Concerning the tragedy of the Cinquecento, this leads to the conclusion that, while the doctrine of different stylistic levels and their corresponding subject matter is still in force, no author capable of acting as an adequate model for the elevated genre of tragedy can be named for the Italian language. Without offering any explicit commentary, Bembo places Petrarch in this vacant position by setting him up as the prototype for *all* poetry in verse, and thus also as the prototype for tragedy *per se*.[69] Combined with the fact that commen-

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66 Bembo. *Editio princeps*, pp. 61 f. (Chapter 2.4.13).

67 Carlo Dionisotti's commentary on the deliberations in Chapter 1.18 of the *Prose* is thus highly apposite: "al Virgilio delle *Georgiche*, non dell'*Eneide*, corrisponde il Petrarca delle *Rime*" (Pietro Bembo. *Prose della volgar lingua, Gli Asolani, Rime*, edited by Carlo Dionisotti. Milan: TEA, 1989, p. 121, n. 5).

68 Dante, of whom the text says "sarebbe stato più lodevole, che egli di meno alta e di meno ampia materia posto si fosse a scrivere, et quella sempre nel suo mediocre stato avesse scrivendo contenuta" (Bembo. *Editio princeps*, p. 103, Chapter 2.20.17), clearly serves as a negative example in comparison to Petrarch, and also to Boccaccio; see Bernhard Huss. "'Esse ex eruditis, qui res in Francisco, verba in Dante desiderent.' Francesco Petrarca in den Dante-Kommentaren des Cinquecento." *Questo leggiadrissimo poeta! Autoritätskonstitution im rinascimentalen Lyrik-Kommentar*, edited by Gerhard Regn. Münster: LIT, 2004 (Pluralisierung & Autorität 6), pp. 155–187, pp. 159–161.

69 The fact that this raised a major problem for tragedy as a whole has hardly ever been noticed with any degree of clarity; in addition to Huss, "Petrarkismus und Tragödie," however, see also Michael Nerlich. "Zur Sonderstellung der italienischen Bühnendichtung im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert." *Romanische Forschungen*, vol. 79, 1967, pp. 62–94, esp. 82–91 and the conclusion: "Letzten Endes scheitert das Drama in Italien an der zu starken Tradition: der zwangsläufig seit Petrarca entwickelte dichterische Führungsstil kann sich zwar noch das Epos erobern,

taries on Aristotle's *Poetics* defined the style of tragedy as *sermo suavis*, the transfer of Petrarch's poetical authority to tragedy via the implementation of a *stile dolce e soave* could now appear to be warranted by Aristotelian tradition. Such a transfer, however, depends on the Bembistic postulate that Petrarchan stylemes and their semantic implications are clearly distinguishable, free from content-related ballast, and thus transferable without problems to more humble or more elevated subject matter.

That is by no means the case: stylistic Petrarchisms are always fraught with the semantic connotation of a painful, self-referential contemplation of emotional sensitivities. In spite of this, Groto performs their transfer into tragedy with considerable emphasis. In a similar vein to Sperone Speroni's *Canace*, equally experimental and much discussed at the time, Groto avails himself of his chosen stylistic means via an expansion of the melic-Petrarchan line of tradition. Like the *Canace*, the *Adriana* is characterized in stylistic terms by a strong influx of wholly unmasked Petrarchisms. From within their poetic register and completely unfettered by the stylistic "heaviness" that the poetology of the tragic demands to satisfy its desire for *gravitas* and *magniloquentia*, the *Adriana*'s Petrarchan stylemes are free to exert their influence on the staging of the ἔλεος-evoking amorous setbacks that befall the unfortunate couple – a pair of lovers who, as we should keep in mind, are *only* of interest due to the pains of love they experience, and not because they are, say, the *dramatis personae* of a moral exemplum, or the victims of a spectacular fall from an exalted position in the social hierarchy. It is only fitting that the pains of love be expressed in antitheses clearly modeled on the Petrarchan/Petrarchist pattern that I have already discussed in the examples above.

This is where the difficulties arise: the massive deployment of Petrarchan stylemes can and does impede the evolution of the tragic plot. I shall illustrate this problem with two distinctive examples, the first of which is taken from the first scene of the first act. Adriana has just confessed her love for Latino to her nursemaid, only to be advised to desist from pursuing the relationship for a whole variety of reasons. This is Adriana's riposte:

> O sventurata me. Che dunque faccio,
> quinci frenata da' consigli tuoi,
[400] quindi spronata dal crudel tiranno,
> ch'è amaro, ed è da noi chiamato Amore?
> Perderò dunque la vita, e la fama?
> Lascerò dunque il mio amator, piú caro

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scheitert aber bei dem Versuch, sich auch der *tragedia* zu bemächtigen und verhindert somit auch deren (gelungene) Herausbildung" (p. 94).

a me, che l'onor mio, che la mia vita?
[405] Per cui solo son io cara a me stessa?
Trarrò l'amante mio dunque in periglio?
Lascerommi morir priva di lui?
Porrò la mia nutrice in questa nave?
Porrò, per salvar lei, me sola in mare?
[410] Tradisco il padre mio donde ebbi il sangue?
Lascio il mio sposo, da cui spero il seme?
Darò la morte a chi mi die' la vita?
Torrò me dunque a chi mi dà se stesso?
Sprezzo chi meco ebbe commune il ventre?
[415] Lascio che meco avrà commune il letto?
Sprezzo colei, da le cui viscere esco?
Lascio colui, nel cui cuor vivo impressa?
Tradirò il mio paese, dove nacqui?
Lascerò il mio signor, nel cui cor vivo?
[420] Ahimè, che questi eserciti fan guerra
minor d'intorno a queste belle mura,
che al cor mio intorno i miei vari pensieri.
Ma io (per dirti il ver), cara nutrice,
non volea, che cosí mi consigliassi.
[425] Ben consigliata esser volea del modo,
che può darmi ottenuto il mio desire.[70]

Adriana's reply, saturated with Petrarchisms and buckling under the load of a Mannerist quota of antithetical and oxymoronic stylemes, unfolds the emotional state of indecision from its beginning to line 419 (that is, for the duration of more than 20 lines), a condition that she refers to as "i miei vari pensieri" (line 422) towards the end of that passage in a gesture towards the Petrarchan

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70 "Alas! Unhappy me! What shall I do then, | here bridled by your counsel, | [400] there spurred by the cruel tyrant | who is bitter [amaro] and whom we call Love [Amore]? | Shall I thus lose my life and my renown? | Will I thus abandon my lover, dearer to me | than my honor, than my life? | [405] My lover, who alone makes me appreciate myself? | Will I thus put him at risk? | Will I agree to die without him? | Will I put my nurse in this boat? | Will I put out to sea alone, in order to save her? | [410] Shall I betray my father who has donated my blood to me? | | Shall I quit my bridegroom whose seed I hope to attain? | Will I give death to the one person who gave me life? | Will I take myself away from the one who gives himself to me? | Shall I despise him who shared the womb with me? | [415] Should I abandon the one who will share the bed with me? | Can I disdain the one from whose viscera I came to life? | Could I leave the one in whose heart impressed I live? | Will I betray my country where I was born? | Will I abandon my lord in whose heart I live? | [420] Alas, these armies make less war | around these beautiful walls | than make my various thoughts around my heart. | But to tell the truth, my dear nurse, | I would not have wished that sort of a counsel from you. | [425] I had wished advice about the best way | to obtain what I desire."

contrariety of affect. What we encounter up to this line is "Petrarchan stasis" of the type that Andreas Kablitz has succinctly described in reference to Torquato Tasso's *Il re Torrismondo*: "Petrarcas lyrische Sprache ist wesentlich Affekt-repräsentation, sie ist damit auch wesentlich monologische Rede, und diese Eigenart bleibt nicht ohne Folgen für die Struktur des auf der Bühne geführten Gesprächs. Personenrede ist hier zu erheblichen Teilen Selbstdarstellung, eine gar nicht enden wollende Exposition von Befindlichkeiten, in denen das Geschehen selbst seine Wirkung wie seine Bedeutsamkeit erst zu gewinnen scheint."[71] The effusion of lyrical paradigms is briskly cut short by Adriana's last four lines. The nursemaid's counsel (developed over exactly 147 lines) and Adriana's own subsequent deliberations are declared null and void, which causes the plot to relapse: as it were, around 180 lines brimming with Petrarchisms have added nothing to the syntagmatic development of the tragedy; nothing has "happened" except on the level of language.

Time, too, seems to come to a standstill on many occasions in this tragedy, especially when the protagonists are discussing the love they feel for each other. My second example is taken from the dialogue between Adriana and Latino in the third scene of Act Two – Latino has just given voice to his conviction that separation will eventually prove inevitable for the lovers. Adriana replies:

> E s'io star non potea non dirò un giorno,
> ma un'ora pur senza vedervi, or, come
> tanto da voi starò spazio lontana?
> E se pensando al partir vostro solo,
> [85] tanto ho dolor, che fia quando partiate?
> Che fia quando poi siate al fin partito?
> Ogni dí mi parrà maggior d'un anno.
> Il sol zoppo, il ciel orbo, il giorno notte,
> la notte inferno, l'aria tenebrosa.
> [90] Amare l'acque, e vedova la terra.
> Saran le luci mie prive di luce,
> dove entrerà, per non uscirne, il pianto.
> Dond'uscirà, per non entrarvi, il sonno.

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71 Andreas Kablitz. "Tragischer Fall und verborgene Wahrheit. Torquato Tassos *Re Torrismondo*." *Tragödie. Idee und Transformation*, edited by Hellmut Flashar. Stuttgart and Leipzig: Teubner, 1997 (Colloquium Rauricum 5), pp. 84–109, pp. 95 f. ("Petrarch's lyrical diction is essentially a representation of affects; it is, therefore, also essentially monologic diction, and this peculiarity has certain consequences for the structure of the dialogue to be staged in the scene. Here the direct discourse of the characters is largely self-representation, an infinite exposition of inner states on which the effect and significance to the dramatic action are based.")

Con voi verrà il cor mio, resterà il seno.
[95] Alfin né morta resterò, né viva.
Non morta, sentirò pur troppo affanno.
Non viva, lungi da la vita mia.
Ite veste, ite gioie, ite catene.[72]

Adriana's response is characterized by emotional stasis. The paradigmatic accumulation and variation of antithetical images is no longer even capable (as in the previous example) of expressing a true wavering between conflicting options, a necessity of coming to a decision, a "Hamlet-like" situation – it merely strings endless pairs of opposites together, expressing the single theme of the pains of love over and over again. Whereas tragedy can "typically" be expected to promote the syntagmatic development of its plot, narrative momentum is suspended here to allow for a variation of elements that ultimately derive from the exact same conceptual paradigm. As a result, the paradigmatic renders the syntagmatic inoperative – a process that calls to mind the "typical" plot of comedy as Rainer Warning so impressively described it.[73] The achieved effect is miles away from levity or comical failure, however. Quite to the contrary, the apparatus of repetition supplied by the *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta* relentlessly perpetuates a situation of suffering without the least hope of rescue.

Endlessly repeating the literary paradigms of painful love, this poetic-cum-tragic elegism runs the risk of dismantling the very principles of Aristotelian poetology:[74] "Luigi Groto, coerentemente con la sua definizione di poetica conte-

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72 "And if I have not been able to live an hour, let alone a day | without seeing you, how could I now | exist so far away from you? | And if I suffer so much just imagining | [85] your departure, what will happen if you depart in fact? | What will happen if you finally will have departed? | Each day will seem to me longer than a whole year: | the sun limping, the heaven blind, the day night, | the night hell, the air dark, | [90] bitter the waters, widowed the earth. | My eyes will be bereft of daylight, | where weeping will enter and not leave anymore, | which sleep will leave and not enter any more. | My heart will go with you, my breast will remain. | [95] In the end I will not be dead, nor alive, | not dead, even though I will feel far too much pain, | not alive, even though far away from my life. | Leave me, robes, leave me, joy, leave me, chains!"

73 See Rainer Warning. "Elemente einer Pragmasemiotik der Komödie." *Das Komische*, edited by Wolfgang Preisendanz and Rainer Warning. Munich: Fink, 1976 (Poetik und Hermeneutik, 7), pp. 279–333.

74 Groto's *Adriana* would thus conform to what Marco Ariani has postulated as a basic trait of Mannerist tragedy: the temporal and spatial coordinates of a syntagmatically organized plot structure dissolve, and discourse takes on a life of its own through the constant repetition of lyric/melic elements; see esp. Ariani. "Il Manierismo," p. 182 (on Speroni's *Canace*: "dissolve ogni chiarezza di dibattito etico-ideologico in un cantabile continuato," "una specie di *dissoluzione melica della situazione tragica*," italics in the original), pp. 184, 187 (again on the *Canace*: "il liquefarsi della situazione agìta in un raziocinare melico arguto ma immotivato ideologica-

nuta nel prologo tesa a dissolvere in via definitiva la precettistica aristotelica, costruisce una tragedia assolutamente eterogenea, non solo per la consapevole frantumazione delle unità spazio-temporali, ma anche e soprattutto per la ossessiva ricerca formale di un linguaggio che diventa esso stesso il centro propulsore del ritmo scenico."[75] The stringency of discursive reasoning, the argumentative order of replies, the motivated – that is, the "probable" and "necessary" – progression of the plot are all severely curtailed.[76] As it were, the plot's substance disappears under a thick layer of lyrical diction,[77] while the massive presence of linguistic Petrarchisms and their extensive deployment and conceptual intensification, which the text almost seems to relish, ultimately erode the cohesion of the tragic action. As we have seen, the tragedy of tears indulges in the broad exposition of a world of thought firmly grounded in a Petrarchan substrate. Another clear example of this is the monologue in which Latino seeks to justify his unintentional killing of Adriana's brother (2.2): riddled with antitheses, fraught with a multitude of concepts, and demonstratively drawing on the stylistic repertoire of Petrarchan love poetry, this block of text is a monolithic 349 lines long, completely uninterrupted by any reply on the part of Adriana. Here, the advancement of the tragic plot clearly takes second place behind the unfolding of Petrarchan language. With its overwhelming mass of text, running to almost 140 tightly printed pages, the play is unable to make good on the demand of plausibility raised by Aristotelian doctrine.

A rather curious impression emerges: retardation of the plot coincides with an overexpansion of the unity of time.[78] The imprecise temporal markers that

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mente"), p. 215 (on the *Adriana*: "la *dissoluzione spazio-temporale* del genere tragico," italics in the original).

75 Cavazzini, "Dall'*Adriana* a *Romeo and Juliet*," p. 347.

76 See Nicola Mangini, "Il teatro veneto al tempo della controriforma." *Luigi Groto*, edited by Brunello and Lodo, pp. 119–137, pp. 123 f.

77 See Ariani, "Il Manierismo," pp. 204, 216.

78 On top of this, the Aristotelian notion of unity of time is overtly thwarted by Groto himself: the prologue claims (lines 78–90) that the supposed author found the "istoria" concerning the two protagonists "scritta in duri marmi," along with a note containing the charge to put this history into writing. According to the prologue, the task given included permission for the tragic *dispositio* of events, authorization for the necessary overstretching of the unity of time, as well as an anticipatory justification of the un-classical usage of a tragic prologue. The result is of course the play itself, whose plot is available to the reader in the form of the text, or to the audience in the form of a performance on stage. In a clear case of metalepsis, Adriana herself voices this future task for an "author" at the end of the play's *azione*, that is, in the depths of antiquity: it is her wish to have her own unhappy love story chiselled "in duri marmi" so as to motivate "qualche autor, mosso a pietà, negli anni | avvenir" to bring it up to date with the help of drama and theater: "la riduca in forma, ch'ella | possa rappresentarsi a' fidi amanti" (5.8.59–69); see also 5.8.114–117, where the Mago assures that he will pass on this

the text provides make it difficult to determine the exact duration of the main plot – a minimum of two days and two nights, perhaps even an additional day, has been suggested[79] – and unity of place is obscured by a copious mass of language suffused with Mannerisms.[80] Given the absolute centrality of the amorous misfortune around which the play's Petrarchism revolves, a centrality which relegates the workings of the plot to a position of secondary importance compared to the comprehensive discussion of affects, the construction of a properly Aristotelian story arc with a tangible tragic transgression (ἁμαρτία) at its center turns into an impossibility. Permanently busy discussing their emotions, the characters do not so much transgress – they simply misunderstand each other. A misunderstanding is the cause of lethal catastrophe; death by technical failure casts its shadow ahead over the lovers' final conversation. The audience's lachrymosity that results (or at least, the lachrymosity that the text is explicitly trying to evoke) is tantamount to a comprehensive feeling of ἔλεος; if any kind of tragic catharsis is to be found here at all, we ought to be fully aware of the pronounced distance from "orthodox" Aristotelianism that results from the almost complete absence of tragic horror.[81]

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assignment of textualization to the unknown future author (on this metalepsis, see Zampolli 2000, pp. 33 f.; Zampolli 2006, pp. 70 f., 73 f.). Here, Luigi Groto receives the cue to write his story from the very characters populating the plot that he himself has invented. This "strange loop" amounts to a flagrant breach of contemporary notions regarding Aristotelian plausibility.

79 See Bazoli, "Groto e Shakespeare," pp. 23 f., incl. n. 60.

80 Hence the erroneous conclusion in Marvin T. Herrick. *Italian Tragedy in the Renaissance*. Urbana, IL: The University of Illinois Press, 1965, p. 215: "The last act of *Hadriana* is somewhat unusual among neoclassical Italian tragedies because in it the scene changes several times between the city of Adria and the enemy camp." Contrary to what Herrick believes, Latino does not move back and forth between his encampment and the city of Adria in the fifth act. Unity of place is in fact maintained, although the Petrarchan deluge makes this feature of the text somewhat difficult to discern.

81 Zampolli, "La réflexion théâtrale," p. 33, diagnoses an elimination of Aristotelian catharsis at the end of the *Adriana*, although the issue is not elaborated in any depth. Decroisette, "'Pleurez mes yeux!'," p. 177 draws a connection between the *Adriana* and Lorenzo Giacomini's medically and physiologically founded concept of catharsis (see "De la purgazione de la trage-dia." *Trattati di poetica e retorica del Cinquecento*, edited by Bernard Weinberg. Bari: Laterza, 1972, vol. 3, pp. 345–371) – yet the two Aristotelian affects are once again conceptualized jointly and discussed alongside a further range of "purged" emotions in Giacomini; see esp. p. 362: "E quindi si convince l'error di coloro che giudican la compassione riguardare altri, il timore noi stessi, dicendo Aristotile il timore esser verso i simili a noi, cioè verso le persone tragiche a le quali veggiamo soprastare gravissimi mali, che caduti dànno spavento e compassione a noi, i quali temendo o compassionando ci purghino da affetti o più tosto da appassionamenti e 'concetti tali,' cioè di tristezza, di sospetto, di sollecitudine, di affanni, di desperazione, et insomma di tutto lo stuolo degli affetti dogliosi simili o congiunti a la compassione et al timore."

Yet Groto finds a use for Petrarchan stasis which goes beyond a portrayal of the trials and tribulations that this "mestissima istoria" holds in store in matters of love: the mournful stasis in terms of plot development overflows into a mourning for the state of the world as a whole.[82] Framed by the prologue and the closing scene, the permanent lamentation that is woven into the fabric of the play's language is transformed into a deep cosmological pessimism that no longer confines itself to the love-related suffering of individual characters, but encompasses misery on a far grander scale. The lament of the individual expands and turns into a lament for a "doomed mankind," as the text makes clear on the penultimate page: "Non lacrimate, donne, il vostro male, | tutta piangete a un tempo la cittate, | ché 'n danno universale | si disdicon le lacrime private" ("Do not beweep, women, your misfortune, | rather bewail the town, all together! | For in the face of universal disaster | private tears are inappropriate"; 5.9.90–93).

Arguably, the calculated exploitation of the semantic potential inherent in a tragedy interwoven with Petrarchan elements is what makes the *Adriana* so compelling. The play aligns itself with its "horrible sister" *Dalida* in that any "learning effect" the plays may cause can only consist in an all-encompassing *meditatio mortis*, far removed from the ideologies that govern the behavior of the characters in the fictional world. The affective reward for this *meditatio* is a form of ἔλεος far exceeding a mere reaction to character-related aspects of the plot, or a certain emotional response elicited by the tragic characters. It is rooted in the grim acknowledgement of the inevitable vulnerability of human existence. In each and every one of the countless manifestations of the *conditio humana*, misery steadily renews itself – at best, there are gradual differences. Personal suffering is only a tiny element in the big picture of Groto's tragic arrangement: the demise of the two protagonists is but a remote echo of the far greater demise of the city of Adria, which Latino's father brings about with a gratuitous act of revenge scantily motivated by a dream vision (5.9.29–33). Adria and its surroundings will fall victim to deliberate inundation – all characters in the fictional world will drown in the approaching flood shortly after the curtain has fallen,[83] and the ancient city of Adria will be destroyed.[84] The

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82 And not just for the deplorable state of the city of Adria, as Zampolli, "Les voyages du témoin," p. 75 would have us believe.

83 The muffled roaring of the flood is already audible as the action draws to a close: "Udite già il rumor che a noi s'appressa, | qual di molte moline accolto suono, | o come di celeste orribil tuono" (5.9.103–105).

84 On the "αἴτιον [...] del tutto ribaltato, in quanto della città di Adria non si canta l'origine e l'edificazione, ma la sua distruzione," and on the play's fixation on catastrophe that is thereby revealed, see Marco Ariani. "Introduzione." *Il teatro italiano* II: *La tragedia del Cinquecento*, edited by Marco Ariani. Turin: Einaudi, 1977, vol. 1, pp. VII–LXXX, p. L. On the expansion of

city's demise is in turn only a miniscule scene from the dismal panorama that showcases the utter futility of human existence. This quasi-existentialist structure acts as the indispensable sounding board for the lovers' lament, giving it relevance in the first place.[85] Unmotivated and unfathomable disaster in combination with inescapable "danno universale" ("universal damage") are the constituent parts of such darkness, a darkness in which disaster never ends.[86] Ultimately, *this* is the counterpart to the perpetual paradigmatic variation of tragic diction in the *Adriana*: the deeper, "ideological" purpose of disabling the syntagmatic structure lies in an all-encompassing pessimism that only ever expects to encounter the immutability of ubiquitous disaster.

Both the play's love plot and its "cosmic" perspective, its overall outlook on a world described as a fundamentally tragic place, are deeply marked by the resigned declaration of inescapable contingency. This declaration is behind the death of the pair of lovers, just as it motivates Adria's utterly senseless destruction, which flies in the face of the war objectives of both sides. Groto inscribes this extreme variety of a tragic worldview into the space made available by the fragmentation, modification, and partial suspension of Aristotelian norms. So black is this worldview, so impenetrable the darkness of its pessimism, that any attempt to tap into the genre's powers to exemplify issues of moral philosophy is simply out of the question, no matter how customary such an activity may have been with Groto's contemporaries. If anything, this feeling of pessimism is enhanced even further by the explicit connection that the play establishes to the stale and gloomy present of its Adriatic audience.[87] The *Adriana* quite literally leaves no way out – considering the scope of its tragic program, the reaction of its addressees may well be panic and claustrophobia. If an audience can feel locked into a black cage, Groto accomplishes this with his extraordinary blend of sheer tragic impact and a Petrarchan-cum-lyrical proclamation of pain in the everlasting night.[88] Only the infiltration of tragedy

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the theme of suffering from the protagonists themselves to a collective level, see Zampolli, "Les voyages du témoin," p. 75.

85 In this context, Cavazzini, "Dall'*Adriana* a *Romeo and Juliet*," p. 345 places particular emphasis on the role of the dark, devastated, and catastrophic landscape bereft of meaning which the text evokes as the surroundings of its immediate setting.

86 The play ends with the words: "Sol mai non giunge un mal, giungono molti, | sempre in drapel raccolti. | Per poco mai fortuna non comincia | a perseguire un misero. Ella il preme, | e mentre ei piange, in tanto | gli apparecchia cagion di novo pianto" (5.9.127–132).

87 On the historical situatedness of Groto's plays (including a "somber" comedy such as the *Emilia*), see Di Maria, "Groto's *Emilia*," esp. pp. 88 f.

88 At least in regard to Groto's two tragedies, this "ideological darkness" raises the question of whether Zampolli, "'Una scena di perpetua durevolezza'," esp. pp. 98–100 is correct in assuming that Groto's dramatic project is intended as an "educational program" for the city of

with a persistent lamentation cast in the stylized language of Petrarchism has made it possible to plunge the genre into such utter darkness. Groto's experiments with the generic repertoire that he finds at his disposal may not have produced anything completely new – what they accomplished, however, is an undreamed-of expansion of what can be considered radically tragic, above and beyond the confines of orthodox Aristotelianism.

Adria with a "pedagogic function," or whether this postulation is the result of an uncritical acceptance of Groto's own (strategic) invocation of the contemporary *topos* of *miscere utile dulci* (Horace, *Ars poetica* 343 f.). Ultimately, what is at stake here is the fundamental and unresolved problem of how the hopelessness of the tragic perspective on the world relates to the lives of its addressees and to the reactions that it provokes.