

“THESES” OF THE DOCTORAL DISSERTATION -

THE METAMORPHOSIS OF “PASSION” IN THE CULTURE OF THE MIND: EARLY MODERN CONFIGURATIONS

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The dissertation examines the metamorphosis of *passion* in early modern English culture and arrives to the conclusion that a “semantic shift” took place in the sense of the word around 1600. The meaning of the technical term *passion* covering all the affections of the soul began to change in the direction that, by 19th century, lead to its sense of exaggerated emotional behaviour, intense emotion and amorous feeling (*eros*) in particular. Thus substantive *passion* as a hyperonym tends to be replaced by *passion* in an adverbial sense. The dissertation seeks to demonstrate that this change was inseparable from and was partly induced by the intercultural context of early modern humanism. It was in this configuration that different senses of *passion* could collide: its Classical senses, its Stoic overtones heightened in the second half of the 16th century, and the Christian-Humanist (partly Augustinian, partly Protestant) approach to the passions. An overview of broader context of the conceptual change (Plato, Aristotle, Stoic tradition, Saint Augustine, Thomism) was necessary in order to better grasp its significance. The dissertation was founded on the hypothesis that such a semantic change reflects and entails far-reaching ethical, anthropological, and theological issues and stakes. Therefore, in order to better explore these issues, it sought methodological inspiration in the term *care for the self* of the late Michel Foucault. This term and other aspects of Foucault’s work provided the inspiration for a conceptual framework for grasping these fields in an interrelated way as well as for giving a philosophical horizon to the research undertaken: the early modern metamorphosis of *passion* understood as part of a history of the critical ontology of human nature.

The theme of *passion* in early modern English culture is rich and multifaceted: the word itself as well as the topic is ubiquitous in the poetry, drama, epics, moral and medical treatises of the period. I sought a vantage point on this theme that would allow for a coherent delimitation of the issue with clearly defined contours. To my surprise, a relatively small number of studies have tried to explore and explain the early modern transformation of *passion* in the English language. While handbooks and encyclopaedias on the history of concepts indicate the change (although dating it a bit later) most studies in historical semantics are limited to describing the change without giving it a broader conceptual context and attempting an explanation. Therefore in the introduction I present an overview of the

semantic history of *passion*: I indicate the latent classical and modern senses that is to say the Biblical, philosophical, psychological-moral senses on the one hand, and the modern sense based on emotional intensity on the other hand. To put it briefly: there is a transition by means of a synecdoche-like change from a substantive hyperonym to a noun defined in an adverbial sense. Surveying the entry *passion* of the *Oxford English Dictionary* allowed me to take stock of the historical material behind the different layers of meaning and to make a draft formulation of the direction of the change: from the generic, hyperonym-like sense to the sense based on intensity and signifying amorous-sensual attraction.

(FOUCAULT) In order to grasp the significance of the semantic change I turn for methodological inspiration to the writings of Michel Foucault, in particular, his operative term, *care for the self*. In Foucault's view, the history of ethics, rather than being a series of moral systems based on prescriptions, is the history of ethical problematisations based on practices of the self in which the crucial question is how the subject conceives itself as a subject matter of ethics. This explains Foucault's scepticism toward all approaches based on an ahistorical universalism of human nature. His philosophical ethos (an interpretation of the Kantian Enlightenment) seeks to circumvent anthropological universals, seeks to explore the historical contingency of the subject's ethical practices in order to contribute to a historical ontology of human nature. In this approach, historical interrogation analyses the limits in order to see that "in what is given to us as universal, necessary, obligatory what place is occupied by whatever is singular, contingent and the product of arbitrary constraints?" I adapt somewhat liberally the Foucauldian approach adding also that the discursive techniques of the *care for the self* operate in the medium of language as well by using and reforming language. Thus behind the metamorphosis of the sense of *passion* there are anthropological, moral and theological issues: exposing these can be seen as part of the critical – because historical – ontology of human nature. Perhaps paradoxically, I depart from the Foucauldian criticism of humanism in order to grasp the contingency of human nature in the very context of historical humanism, the movement between the necessary and the contingent.

(INTERCULTURAL) The metamorphosis of *passion* could come about around the turn of the 16th century because the different cultural traditions such as the different streams of classical and late antiquity, the different periods of Christianity (early, medieval and early modern) interacted in the context of early modern humanism. Therefore, in order to grasp the early modern change, a brief review of the major stages of the classical prehistory of *passion*

seemed indispensable to me: I devoted separate chapters to the Platonic, Aristotelian, Stoic and Augustinian uses of the term. Although I am not a classical-philologist but I sought to consult the original texts using modern commentaries as well in order to expose the respective uses of *πάθος* / *pathos*, *passio* in the works of the authors named above. This presentation was motivated by the aspiration to understand the early modern change of *passion* in an inter- (and partly intra-) cultural context. The exposition of classical prehistory is therefore an architectonical element of the dissertation in order to highlight the importance and significance of the semantic change. In order to describe this phenomenon in a plastic manner, I introduced the heuristic terms “localism” / “globalism” as a rough and schematised typology for the anthropological, moral and, ultimately, ontological attitudes in order to highlight the stakes behind changes in the meaning of *passion*. In my use of these words, they express ontological attitudes referring to the basic structure of the human psyche and existence as well. “Globalism” refers to a conception of the world that sees homogeneity, a deeply seated unity of mode of being and hence proposes a singular model to follow for all beings and in all contexts. This ontological assumption is implicit in the insistence on supremacy of reason (including freedom of decision and of the will), the advocacy of moral autarchy (*hegemonikon*) and of psychological monism and, underpinning these, in a deterministic universe animated in all its parts by a singular *logos*. This monolithic “globalist” view can be contrasted with the “localism” of heterogeneity, of diversity of mode of being, of different regimes of ethical concern that – in its Christian version – may even entail a renouncement to moral autarchy and considers it as blasphemous and contrary to the nature of the soul and to the workings of divine grace. The “localist” attitude regards being as heterogenous without seeking to unify the different modes of being. Rather it allows them to exist in a spatially and temporally displaced manner and seeks ways of transitions between them. Accordingly, it accepts that different ethical thrusts and psychic needs may prevail in different modes of being. I introduced this pair of terms as a heuristic device and typology. Closest to the “globalist” attitude are the Stoics, in particular in the Stoicism of Chrysippus; the “localist” attitude can be best detected in the Platonic model of the tripartite human soul that mirrors tripartite society (including canalisation among the parts), in the Aristotelian *phronesis* that takes account of the cognitive consequences of human finitude and that is always deployed in given human contexts and situations, in the Augustinian delimitation of the *here* of human life from the hoped *there*: our fallen state versus the blessed, the human city and the City of God. The rich prehistory of *passion* also revealed that although all these authors use it as a hyperonym but there are diverse ontological, anthropological and moral assumptions

involved. The early modern period – and precisely by virtue of its intercultural character – played a pivotal role in opening up the semantic richness and plenitude of the different cultural traditions: the clashes of the latent and diverging senses of *passion*, along the dichotomy of “globalism” / “localism” contributed to the beginning of the semantic change around 1600.

(**EARLY MODERN “SEMANTIC SHIFT”**) Approaching the early modern period, I build on the study of Heli Tissari (2003), Hans-Jürgen Diller (2005) and others as well as the Toronto database of *Lexicons of Early Modern English 1450-1750 (LEME)* in order to expose in detail and on the basis of concrete textual evidence the direction of early modern semantic change. I also discuss modern commentaries and translations of classical, medieval and early modern texts (Sorabji, Knuuttila, Brown, Brennan) and highlight the fact that some of the conceptual ramifications of semantic change seems to go unnoticed or at least unreflected and unexplained in these works. I argue that the history of *passion* is a rather substantive part of the history of affectivity: the prehistory of emotion. I also contend that one of the essential factors of this early modern semantic shift of *passion* is the appearance of *émotion* / *emotion* in the *Essais* of Michel de Montaigne and following him, in the work of his English translator of Italian origin, John Florio. I radicalise Hans-Jürgen Diller’s arguments concerning the prehistory of *emotion* and I propose that although the predecessor of *emotion* as a hyperonym is *passion* but the two terms entail completely different ethical, anthropological, and ontological connotations and therefore there is a conceptual discontinuity between them. Of course this change has not come about in a revolutionary manner: the classical and modern senses of *passion* continue to live side by side. On the one hand, although the modern sense of *emotion* appears in Montaigne / Florio but it only becomes widespread in English by the 18th century, on the other hand, the classical sense of *passion* prevails (primarily in philosophical discourse) until the 19th century. At the same time, as evidenced by the *LEME* database the highest density in the turnout of the word *passion* in early modern English lexicons’ entries can be registered between 1590s-1610s. The semantic shift of *passion* can be attested in a lexicon (Edward Philips, *The New World of English Words*, London), and the new sense of *emotion* is present in many lexicons since 1611 (Randle Cotgrave, *A Dictionary of the French and English Tongues*, London, 1611; Thomas Blount, *Glossographia or a Dictionary*, London, 1656; Edward Phillips, *The New World of English Words*, 1658; Elisha Coles, *An English Dictionary*, London, 1676; John Kersey the younger, *English Dictionary*, London, 1702). Not unrelated to these developments is the intensive preoccupation with *passion* at the

turn of the 16th-17th century: a great number of passion-treatises and other moral studies on the passions or related to them were published in English (for example Timothy Bright, De la Primaudaye, Huarte, Davies, Wright, Davies of Hereford, Coffeteau, Burton). These works employ *passion* in the classical sense and two types of accepted uses can be distinguished: the Aristotelian – Thomist and the Ciceronian – Augustinian:

Using the scheme of 11 passions as listed by Saint Tomas Aquinas	Using the Ciceronian – Augustinian tetrachord
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Thomas Wright, <i>The Passions of the Mind in General</i> (1601); - Robert Burton, <i>Anatomy of Melancholy</i> (1621) - Pierre Charron, <i>Of Wisdome</i> (1606) translated into English by Sampson Lennard; - Nicolas Coffeteau, <i>A table of humane passions</i> (1621) translated into English by Edmund Grimeston 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Thomas Rogers, <i>A philosophicall discourse, entitled, The anatomie of the minde</i> (1576); - De La Primauday, <i>The French Academy</i> (1586); - Timothy Bright, <i>A Treatise of Melancholie</i> (1586); <i>Batman vppon Bartholome, his booke De proprietabus rerum</i> (1592); - Juan Huarte, <i>The Examination of Mens Wits</i>, translated by Richard Carew, 1596 - Sir John Davies, <i>Nosce Teipsum</i>, (1599); - John Davies of Hereford, <i>Microcosmus, the discovery of the little world</i>, (1603); - Anthony Dixon, <i>The dignitie of man</i> (1612).

Based on historical evidence, the semantic shift of *passion* – in conjunction with the appearance of the new sense of *emotion*– can be briefly described in the following way. In its classical sense, *passion* covers the (eleven or four) *affections of the mind* as a technical hyperonym. Due to Stoic influence in particular it is understood as *perturbatio animi* (trouble/vexation/perturbation/disturbance of the mind), *vitium*, (fault, defect, vice) and *morbi*. (For the latter cf. also the tradition of Galenic medicine and moral medicine.) This broad, technical sense started to gradually give way from 1600 to a different sense of *passion*. This new sense did not exclude the broader, technical sense until the 19th century but the latter became increasingly confined to scholarly discourse and rearrangements began to take place even there in the late 17th century. The new sense of *passion* was partly more limited in the sense that it did not function any more as a collective term referring to the four or the eleven

passions. It retained its characteristic reference to anger/choler with some changes in its moral evaluations but, even more importantly, it came to refer to ‘amorous feeling’, ‘passionate love’ (*eros*), even ‘mutual affection’ understood as sympathy, fellow-feeling. But there is also another shift at work that could be described as a move away from a *substantive* (and collective) noun (a hyperonym) that refers to certain states of the mind or soul to an *adverbial* sense signifying a certain (excessive) level of any mental state. To put it briefly: from *what* to *very*. Thus the change concerns two important, interrelated aspects of the word: on the one hand, not all affective states will be referred to as *passions* but only some (in particular *amorous feeling*, *mutual affection*), on the other hand, for something to qualify as a *passion*, it has to be strong and intensive – so much so that *passion* is even used in the adverbial sense (*passionate love*). While the shift to ‘amorous love’ is a narrowing of the word, this “adverbial shift” could be characterized more as a loosening from the substantive meaning. The adverbial shift could be described as a *synecdoche-like change* where a part of the original substantive sense (and one that was marginal in the tradition), namely the *excessive character* of the mental states referred to came to predominate. The rhetoric figure best describing this change is synecdoche (*pars pro toto*) whereas, the other change, of narrowing of the word could be seen as a *totum pro parte* synecdoche: one of the passions, namely ‘amorous love’, replacing the collective sense.

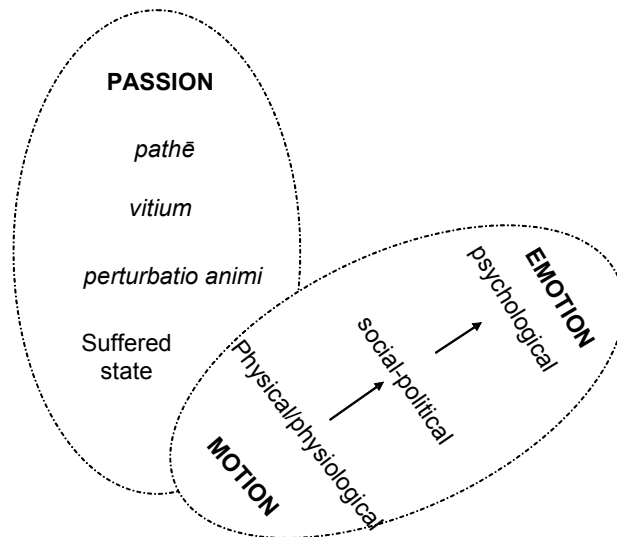
(**STOIC – CHRISTIAN DEBATE**) Building on various studies (for example Monsarrat (1984), Braden (1985), Bouwsma (1990), Strier (2004)) I interpret the debate among Stoic, humanist and Christian strains of thought in the second half of 16th century from the point of view of how the different positions put forward could have an impact on the semantic change as described above. Although the stoic program of extirpation of the passions was already refuted by humanists well before the 16th century (cf. Salutati – Zambeccari correspondence, Petrarch) but in the 16th century, Erasmus, Luther and Calvin argued against the ideal of having no passions on theological grounds. Opposing a “globalist” rationalist self-rule (autarchy), these “localist” Christian-humanist authors are more receptive to human fallenness and the vicissitudes of human nature: instead of a moral autarchy they emphasise (based on the Pauline letters and Augustine) divine salvation and dependence on divine grace, the double nature of man (both fallen and redeemed-righteous). The criticism of stoic “senselessness” can also be traced on a popular register: a common verbal pun in Renaissance English assimilates the Stoics with ‘stocks’: a wooden carving, an imitation of men, not the ones God made (cf. also Lyly, Shakespeare). The debate also brought to the

surface the problem that purely *rational* action cannot be simply opposed to *passionate* if *passion* continues to have a negative connotation – there are legitimate affective states of the soul whose denomination requires another hyperonym devoid of negative connotations. As some passions (or we could say today, “affects” and “emotions”) became legitimate, the single word *passion* could no longer denominate this morally heterogeneous field and the situation called for a semantic rearrangement or reconfiguration. This is the *trouvaille* in French of Michel de Montaigne *Les Essais* (1595) and in his English translation by John Florio Montaigne (*The Essays of Michael Lord of Montaigne*, 1580, 1597; 1603).

(MONTAIGNE) After situating Florio’s translation in the translation practice of the period and starting from Florio’s “Preface to the Reader” and analysing the most relevant *loci* from my point of view, I come to the conclusion that the translator is aware of Montaigne’s innovation with *emotion* and he himself insists on introducing it into English even at the cost of using such an “uncouth term”. He must have been aware that the new word cannot be assimilated to *passion*. Before the occurrence in Florio, *emotion* meant “political, social agitation; a tumult, popular disobedience” (Sir Geoffrey Fenton, 1579, *OED*). It is in Montaigne / Florio that the first use in the modern, psychological sense can be witnessed. In seeking to account for the conceptual bases of the linguistic innovation I argue that it suits Montaigne’s descriptive-phenomenological attitude, his insistence on and adherence to his own (physical and corporeal) experience and disposition (*chez soy / in mine own place; being close and near unto my self*). If one wants a guard against the tempest of the passions, the latter is the best recipe – but why at all do we want to regulate human nature in the name of some abstract ideal? The fideist Montaigne uses the *corpus* of the ancients (the Stoics among them), their descriptions and diagnosis for a “localist” description of human nature. In parallel with the use of *passion* that entails a conceptual grouping and evaluation (*perturbatio animi*) he starts to employ the neutral *emotion* – in line with the humanist ethos that does not discard the accumulated knowledge of the ancients and lets the different senses and connotations live side by side.

After exploring the conceptual background of the Montaigne’s innovation, I survey the statistics of the turnout of *passion* and *emotion* in the French and the English texts and I analyse selected key passages. These prompt me to conclude that Florio seems to be conscious and is relatively precise in rendering the new psychological and collective sense of *emotion*. Florio’s precision does not always mean literal coincidence with the original French: it is sometimes an interpretive translation spelling out the new sense of the innovative,

“uncouth term” for the destined audience’s linguistic-cultural context. Based on the analyses of the respective *loci* the following semantic-conceptual change can be sketched:



The above figure is a tentative (indeed very tentative) and seeks to illustrative the point that movement is at the root of both *passion* and *emotion*: the *motions* of the sensitive soul in Aristotle, of the sensitive appetite in Saint Thomas Aquinas, “mental emotions” or “motions of the mind” in Saint Augustine (*animi motibus*). Montaigne transfers ‘motion’ present in the classical senses and used as the physical-physiological description of *passion* into a psychological and – what is more important - metaphoric use in which ‘motion’ is the *vehicle* of the metaphor and ‘emotion’ is its *tenor*. (I am using the classical terms of I. A. Richards (1936)) Motion becomes the vehicle for certain mental phenomena. Another important aspect of the change is that the direction of the ‘motion’ begins to change: in classical ‘passion’ this movement is “suffered” (Aristotle), it is caused by external objects (Aquinas). In the modern perspective of ‘emotion’, the *movement comes from the subject itself* (cf. also H.-J. Diller).

(**BACON**) Bacon can be seen as a different example of the early modern reinterpretation of classical heritage: instead of inventing new terms he relies on certain strains of this heritage (Aristotle’s ethical outlook, his optimism in the force of habits, a faculty psychology of Thomist inspiration, the Ciceronian practice of *cultura animi*) in order to provide tools in ethics for a *care for the self*. His aim is not a phenomenological self-

description but rather, in his *Advancement of Learning* (1605), an encyclopaedic and programmatic stock-taking of human knowledge: what can knowledge be used for, in particular ethical, moral self-knowledge? Thus, Bacon wishes to improve not only the state of science and knowledge but of the scientist's self-knowledge as well. Although a critic of certain trends in humanism (mainly its focus on words rather than matter), his "Georgics of the Mind" aims to give a method (that he finds lacking in Aristotle) for ethics that relies ultimately on learning and eloquence in moving the will. Rhetoric and learning are thus instrumental in making the affections obedient. His *Essays* bring these general considerations to concrete human situations by engaging their reader in a "medicining of his mind" in a reciprocal relationship of counsel and self-inspection. Bacon's example also showed the importance of discursive practice in the *care for the self* and the flexibility of adapting different cultural traditions to concrete, local human contexts. He elaborates the Cicero-inspired *cultura animi* because he considers that traditional moral philosophy lacks the kind of empirical, practical knowledge on which to base an efficient moral culture. Therefore he registers the need for diagnosing the particularities of "the diversity of complexions and constitutions", for identifying the diseases and then for proposing the cures. His *Essays or Counsels Civill and Moral* (1625) seek to promote this kind of *cultura animi* or *Georgics of the Mind* in the reader by adapting moral principles and engagement to concrete human situations. In this dedication to Prince Henry, referring to Seneca, Bacon compares the *Essays* to grains of salt giving appetite rather than offending the Prince with satiety. This comparison seems to refer to the open-ended nature of their reading; the Renaissance reader, be it prince, courtier or simple subject is implicitly called to active engagement with his or her self. In this way, the *Essays* provide an accompaniment for the culture of the mind as they are "observances and exercises" for "fixing the good hours of the mind" in order to restore "the mind unto virtue and good estate" and thereby become prepared for affronting the passions that are *diseases of the mind*.