

Sir Philip Sidney's account of the nature of tragedy emphasizes the facility with which the genre can convey the nature and implications of providential punishment. It is he argues

... high and excellent Tragedy, that opens the greatest wounds and showeth forth the ulcers, that are covered with tissue; that maketh kings fear to be tyrants, and tyrants manifest their tyrannical humours; that, with stirring the affects of admiration and commiseration, teacheth the uncertainty of this world, and upon how weak foundations gilden roofs are builded...

Sir Philip Sidney, *An Apology for Poetry*, ed. Geoffrey Shepherd (London: Thomas Nelson, 1965), 117-18.

Thomas Beard, in *The Theatre of God's Judgements*, posits tragedy as a condition (or even a precondition) of human experience. Tragedy is again associated with punishment, "concerning the admirable Judgement of God upon the transgressors of his commandments" as the title of the book emphatically states.

Thomas Beard, *The Theatre of God's Judgements* (London: Adam Islip, 1579), 210.

In Pierre Boaistuau's *Theatrum Mundi*, an important and frequently reprinted work, both tragedy and theatre figure as important images of human life. The world, Boaistuau argues, is "no other thing than a very Theatre of miserie". He also posits that birth is a sad and nasty business:

Is [man] ... anye other thing than the similitude of a poore worme that commeth out of the earth? With what clothing is he covered, making his most glorious entrie into the pallaice of this worlde? Only with blood, in which he is bathed and covered, which is nothing else than the Image and figure of sinne, which by the blood is signified in Scripture.

Woman, then, becomes the instigator of the tragic action of human life by giving birth. In giving life, she is also responsible for inflicting mortality. Boaistuau goes on to state implicitly the link between women and tragedy:

... if we consider attentively all the miserie of our nativitie, we shall find the olde Proverbe true, which sayth, that we are conceived with filth and uncleanenesse; borne in sinne and grief, and nourished with care and labour. Heere therefore you may see the first action of the tragedye of the lyfe of humanes.

Pierre Boaistuau, *Theatrum Mundi*, trans. John Alday, ed. Thomas East (London: Thomas East), 2; 51; 52.