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Reading the Lovesick Woman in Early Modern Literature

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Reading the Lovesick Woman in Early Modern Literature

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in Comparative Literature

by

Allison Brigid Collins

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Reading the Lovesick Woman in Early Modern Literature

by

Allison Brigid Collins

Doctor of Philosophy in Comparative Literature

University of California, Los Angeles, 2020

Professor Massimo Ciavolella, Chair

In early modern Europe, love was not a feeling, but a physiological change in the body. In its extreme, love was love*sickness,* a deadly disease. Love makes the patient a desiring subject who seeks to author his own experience. The disease raises the stakes: if he cannot fulfill his desire, he will die. Yet lovesickness decreases the subject's agency because sickness makes the patient an object to be "read" and diagnosed by outside authorities. This paradox of increased agency and decreased control is particularly fraught when the patient is a woman. My dissertation analyzes the representation of lovesick women in early modern literature. While scholars have claimed lovesickness empowers women, I argue that the disease highlights the potential for female agency, but ultimately subjects women to external interpretation and control.

A lovesick patient's body may speak for her through its symptoms, or she may voice desire. The first two chapters look at these two types of speech, with the first analyzing how narrators read lovesick female bodies and the second considering how women express

lovesickness. Chapter one argues that in Ludovico Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso,* Margaret Tyler's *The Mirror of Princely Deeds and Knighthood,* and Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queene,* the narrators underscore the act of reading the lovesick woman. Lovesickness makes her body legible, and the narrators, in turn, interpret the value of her desire based on how it affects the narrator's control. Chapter two turns to the lover's voice, examining female lovesickness in Gaspara Stampa's *Rime* and María de Zayas y Sotomayor's *Novelas amorosas y ejemplares* and *Desengaños amorosos.* Both authors connect the disease to female authorship, with Stampa using it to grant her speaker authority/authorship and Zayas using the diagnosis as a misreading that the patient must correct in order to achieve authority. These texts show constant anxiety about how vulnerable women's bodies and voices are to misreading; this anxiety recalls how the narrators in chapter one read and interpreted lovesick women as a way to maintain their control.

The last two chapters turn to how lovesickness is used to rewrite desiring bodies. Chapter three analyzes lovesickness as a mechanism of control in Fernando de Rojas's *Celestina* and William Shakespeare's *As You Like It.* In both texts, the disease enables female characters to seize interpretive control. In interpreting others, they also rewrite them, reshaping or creating desire. The texts cast doubt on the merits of this re-writing. The final chapter examines Shakespeare's *Two Noble Kinsmen,* in which outside authorities exert interpretive control to justify an unsettling "cure." Men misdiagnose the Jailer's Daughter with lovesickness so they can impose their desired narrative upon her body. Love and lovesickness are separate: while female desire is positive and creative, its diagnosis as a disease leads to medical, masculine control and a bed trick tantamount to a rape. Desire no longer produces interpretive possibilities or competition for control; instead, control obliterates women's agency and forecloses possibilities rather than creating them.

The lovesick female body invites diagnosis, an act these texts compare to reading. To be diagnosed, read, and interpreted is to risk being misinterpreted and rewritten. The patient's agency yields to the doctor's control much like an author's intentions become subject to a reader's interpretation. This study of female lovesickness thus adds to gender studies and medical humanities, as well as to critical work on the history of authorship and readership.

The dissertation of Allison Brigid Collins is approved.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Introduction

Love hurts. We know this from movies, songs, radio talk shows, personal experience. But in the early modern era, love didn't just hurt—love killed. Love was love*sickness,* a diagnosable medical condition. If today, "dying of love" is pure metaphor, in the early modern era it was entirely literal. The disease had a strict pathology, affecting the body in patterned ways. Renaissance love began with sight: the image of the beloved object physically entered the lover's eye and impressed itself upon the imaginative center of his brain. But with lovesickness, the image did not proceed on to the evaluative function as normal. It became lodged, creating a dangerous obsession as the beloved was literally imprinted onto the patient's mind. The patient could not eat, could not sleep, could not think of anything other than his beloved. Some cures were behavioral: distract yourself, hang out with friends, or get fresh air and exercise (not all that different from what a modern teen magazine might recommend after a bad break-up). Others were physical, such as purging excess blood. The most recommended cure was to fulfill the patient's desires—in other words, have sexual intercourse. As a result, when a man was lovesick, the condition could serve as a seduction technique, forcing the beloved to fulfill his desire in order to save his life. But when a woman was lovesick, did the same rules apply? Renaissance women were supposed to be chaste, silent, and obedient; did lovesickness offer a rare chance to express desire? Or, alternatively, did pathologizing female desire place it under medical, and therefore masculine, control? My dissertation pursues these questions by analyzing the representation of lovesick women in early modern texts from England, Spain, and Italy.

Dying of Love: The Medicine

Love as an illness has its origins in classical Greek medicine with Galen (129-210 AD), who established the symptoms and diagnostic process. Galenic medicine connected the body's complexion to the soul's disposition, integrating what we today would consider physical and psychological illnesses. Therefore, although Galen classified love as a disease of the soul, it manifested in bodily symptoms because body and soul were inseparable (Wack 8, Wells 29). In Galen's *De Praecognitione*, he relates an anecdote about diagnosing female love melancholy. Galen relates the case of the wife of Justus (never named other than by reference to her husband), the earliest medical example of a lovesick female patient. She was experiencing insomnia and lethargy, and, given her lack of fever, Galen concluded the cause was melancholy. However, the patient refused to communicate the reason for her sorrow. Then one day, he happened to be taking her pulse while a maid mentioned that Pylades was dancing that day. Galen writes, "Her expression and facial colouring changed, and observing this and putting my hand on her wrist, I found that her pulse had suddenly become irregular in several ways, which indicates that the mind is disturbed" (103). He concluded her problem was not just melancholy, but love melancholy.

Galen emphasizes that in the absence of the patient's confession, the physician must read and interpret her body. Additionally, he does not disclose what steps he took to cure her. The point of this story is not the patient or the disease, but the physician's cunning: the female patient's body had a secret, and the male doctor figured it out. Classical literature offers a similar story with a male patient, Antiochus, whose lovesickness for his stepmother, Stratonice, is likewise revealed by a racing pulse. In this case, the physician, Erasistratus, reports his diagnosis

to the patient's father. Antiochus's father divorces his new wife so that his son can marry her.[1] In these classical instances of diagnosing lovesickness, the male patient's case ends in erotic fulfillment while the female patient's case ends with silence. From the earliest texts on the disease, a gender disparity begins to emerge. Female lovesickness lets the physician display his prowess without much attention paid to the patient or her outcome, while male lovesickness requires a solution—specifically, erotic fulfillment.

While the concept of love as disease appears in Galen, the passage on the disease is short, and does not fully outline causes, symptoms, and cures; Arabic medicine first fully articulates the psychopathology of the condition. Major figures in outlining the etiology and pathology of love as sickness from the early Western and medieval Arabic traditions include Oribasius (325-403), Paul of Aegina (fl. 650), Rhazes (c. 850-923), and Avicenna (980-1037).[2] Although some details change from scholar to scholar,[3] the symptoms remain consistent: pale complexion, insomnia, lack of appetite, and obsession over the beloved. Cures include distractions like conversation with friends, walks in the fresh air, or challenges at work. Because the disease is associated with melancholy, or the humor of black bile, cures also include rebalancing the body's humors via purgatives, blood-letting, and therapeutic intercourse.

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[1] For more on this story in classical and Renaissance iterations, see Beecher and Ciavolella 48-51, Neely 104-5, and Wack 15-18.

[2] For more detail on the texts in Western and Arabic traditions between Galen and Constantinus Africanus, see Beecher and Ciavolella 59-70, Wack 10-14, 31-38.

[3] Some debates include whether the disease is of the body or the soul; whether it is located in the mind, heart, or genitals; whether it results from an overproduction of black bile (melancholy) or from the heat of desire burning blood or semen and thus producing toxic vapors; and whether it results from the internal imbalance of humors which impacts the lover's reception of the sight of the beloved, or from the sight of the beloved herself impacting the lover's humoral balance. For a detailed discussion of the various aetiologies of lovesickness in Renaissance medicine, see Beecher, "the Lover's Body", 4, and Dawson 19-27.

The Arabic medical concept of *amor hereos* entered the Western cultural imaginary via Constantinus Africanus's *Viaticum* (1087), a standard text on medical reading lists at universities and arguably the most influential text on lovesickness in medieval Europe. The *Viaticum* defines lovesickness as a mental illness: "The love that is called 'eros' is a disease touching the brain. For it is a great longing with intense sexual desire and affliction of the thoughts" (Viaticum I.20 in Wack 187).[4] The cause can be suppressed humors or the sight of a beautiful object which, in turn, causes suppressed humors: "Sometimes the cause of this love is an intense natural need to expel a great excess of humors … Sometimes the cause of eros is also the contemplation of beauty" (Viaticum I.20 in Wack 189).[5] Constantinus's definition sparked many commentaries, such as Arnald of Villanova's *Tractatus de amore heroico* (1280) and Gerard of Berry's gloss on the *Viaticum* (c. 1237). As the concept of lovesickness spread into the Christian medieval world, this new context introduced some new problems: first, lovesickness took on a moral connotation, as obsession with an earthly body entailed distraction from God, the proper object of love. Additionally, the highly recommended cure of therapeutic intercourse was problematic in a Christian context that defined extramarital sex as sin. While some medical texts were less concerned with the moral dimension, as lovesickness entered into the zeitgeist, philosophical and literary texts explored the social and spiritual side effects of the disease. With the rise of Neoplatonism and efforts to find compatibility between Christianity and classical philosophy, interest in lovesickness surged, most famously in Marsilio Ficino's (1433-1499) commentary on Plato's *Symposium*. New texts and commentaries on the condition included the writings of Ficino as well as texts by Mario Equicola (c. 1470-1525), Luis de Mercado (1520-1606), André du

[4] Amor qui et eros dicitur morbus est cerebro contiguous. Est autem magnem desiderium cum nimia concupiscentia et affliction cogitationum.
[5] Aliquando huius amoris necessitaas nimia est nature necessitas in multa humorum superfluitate expellenda … Aliquando etiam eros causa pulchra est formositas considerata.

Laurens (1558-1609), Jacques Ferrand (c. 1575-?), and Robert Burton (1577-1640). These texts were widely popular and disseminated across Europe. Furthermore, lovesickness was not restricted to the elite or even to the literate: case notes from doctor Richard Napier, whose clientele ranged from the rural poor to the Duke of Buckingham, report patients complaining of love melancholy (Dawson 30, Covington 137). By the sixteenth century, love as a disease had a well-established medical history in Western Europe, both as a textual phenomenon and as a lived reality for many patients.

As a modern reader, it is easy to dismiss the rhetoric of lovesickness as metaphor. But as Katharine Maus, Gail Kern Paster, and other scholars have amply demonstrated, early modern culture was fundamentally material, and the psychological and physiological were inseparable (Maus 196, Paster *Humoring the Body* 23-24, Paster et al 16-18). Because psychological pain was also physical, the pain of love was always literal and material. Another challenge these texts pose for a modern reader is the distinction between love and lovesickness. A tempting modern parallel is sadness and depression: the first an emotion, the other a pathological condition. However, early modern culture would not have categorized these as separate experiences, but as points along the same spectrum of experience. Love and lovesickness were not separate conditions. Physiologically, love was a disruption of the humors, a shift in one's material condition. This fact was epitomized by the common image of the beloved imprinted or engraved on the lover's heart or mind;[6] not just metaphorical, this image was a material fact in the pathology of lovesickness. In short, love was always a bodily change; the question is just how

[6] On this trope in Petrarch and Bembo, see Aileen Feng, *Writing Beloveds,* pp. 166-169. On the history of this trope and its use by Cavalier poets, see Dosia Reichardt. This specific trope is also part of the larger heart-as-book metaphor; see Gary Ettari on its use by Spenser and Sidney. This secular trope has a religious parallel in the anatomies of saints' bodies, which often find symbols of the Passion inscribed on saints' organs; see Katharine Park, *Secrets of Women,* chapter one.

toxic that change was. Happy love was lovesickness in remission, constantly finding its cure in erotic fulfillment; the humors do not build to a toxic level—first, because melancholy, or black bile, does not increase in happy, reciprocal love, and second, because excess humors are expelled via intercourse. If Romeo and Juliet hadn't encountered each other in the balcony scene and realized their love was reciprocal, both would have been bedridden and ill in no time. Although there is no exact pinpoint at which love tips the scales into lovesickness, the reader can identify lovesickness when a patient explicitly says he or she suffers it, and when love is accompanied by the medical symptoms of insomnia, lack of appetite, and depression. Additionally, love frequently becomes lovesickness when there is a barrier to the relationship: if fulfillment is impossible, then the humors build without any possibility or release. Because the present study is interested in how the medical context informed literary representations, I limit myself to instances of love that include specific medical symptoms, most of which explicitly mention love as a disease and represent diagnosis and/or treatment. Nevertheless, it is worth emphasizing that in the broader early modern understanding of love, love was always a material, embodied experience and was consistently described as such.

Dying of Love: The Literature

Lovesickness had enormous influence on Western literature from antiquity through the Renaissance. From Biblical texts and ancient epic to medieval romance and Renaissance lyric, the idea of love as an embodied, deadly experience appears constantly. Of course, different cultural moments interpreted the disease differently and used it for various purposes. Lovesickness as a medical fact, when used in literature, opens up themes of sexuality, control, disorder, morality, and gender, as the following brief survey will demonstrate.

The ambiguity of lovesickness and its potential to serve multiple narrative purposes is particularly well illustrated by its appearances in the Bible. The bride in the *Song of Songs* complains she is languishing of love (2:5, 5:8). In medieval exegesis, the love poetry of the *Canticles* is often described as an allegory for the love of God for his Church, with the Bride/Church's lovesickness symbolizing a longing to leave the material world and join God in the spiritual world. While the lovesick bride is a woman in the text, interpreting her allegorically as the figure of Ecclesia replaces the female body with the body of the Church. Later, Neoplatonists interpret the *Song of Songs* in light of the ladder of love in Plato's *Symposium:* lovesickness teaches the lover the proper way to passionately love God, with love of earthly things providing a first step on the path to true love and union with God. These interpretations allow space for lovesickness as a positive religious experience. In contrast, in the Book of Samuel, lovesickness is associated with sin, violence, and transgression of taboos. Amnon, suffering for love of his half-sister Tamar, fakes illness in order to rape her and cure himself of the disease. The cure is all too successful: "Then Amnon hated her with intense hatred. In fact, he hated her more than he had loved her" (2 Samuel 13:15). The illness is real, but he fakes another illness to gain access to his beloved. The love is real, but the cure eradicates both his illness and his love. The story of Amnon and Tamar, like that of Antiochus and Stratonice in the secular tradition, focuses on the men making the decisions rather than the abused women passed from man to man. Antiochus respects the proper hierarchical order and is rewarded with his beloved, while Amnon disrupts the order and is condemned for his behavior. Interpretation of this episode, particularly in the early modern era, foregrounds the parallel between the diseased individual body and the disrupted political body, whereas the *Song of Songs* tradition invokes the parallel between the lovesick body and the Body of Christ. These two threads in Biblical

lovesickness logically follow from aspects of the condition: an emphasis on desire invokes a positive longing for union, while an emphasis on disease invokes a sense of disorder and danger.

In secular literature, classical lyric and epic poetry also offers many instances of lovesickness, including some of the most famous female cases. Sappho provides a succinct description of the bodily experience of lovesickness, as well as the earliest known female voice on the subject:

> He seems to me to be equal to the gods, that man, whoever sits opposite you and listens to you speaking so sweetly and close to him, and hears too your tempting laughter. Truly that makes the heart in my breast pound, for when for a moment I look at you, I cannot speak at all; my tongue breaks, and a subtle flame runs immediately beneath my skin. My eyes see nothing at all and a roaring fills my ears. Sweat pours down me, and shaking seizes me all, paler than grass I am, and little short of dead I seem to me. (Sappho 31, trans. Christina Clark)

The poem, transmitted to the Middle Ages and Renaissance via the Latin translation and commentary of Longinus,[7] depicts the physical experience of love in a litany of symptoms: pounding heart, frozen tongue, burning sensation, loss of vision and hearing, sweat, shivers, and pale complexion. Christina Clark has argued that the speaker presents herself as out of control of her body, a gendered experience in Greek culture: women were thought more susceptible to erotic emotion, more unstable and permeable to outside influences (15). Lovesickness takes control over the passive sufferer's body, and in any patriarchal society, to be subjugated to external control is to be placed in a feminine position. This political gender dynamic takes center stage in Virgil's *Aeneid,* as Queen Dido falls desperately lovesick over Aeneas, who is himself

[7] For a full discussion of the dissemination of Longinus in the early modern manuscript and print traditions, see Refini, Chapter Two.

feminized and made passive by his dalliance with her. Aeneas must be shamed and made to abandon his feminine passion, to prioritize the masculine, epic pursuit of Troy—and to leave Dido to her suicidal melancholy. Women in classical literature are frequently subject to extreme, usually tragic, lovesickness; this trope reinforces stereotypes of hysterical, passive women.

While classical heroines frequently suffer lovesickness, classical heroes are far less likely to experience love as an overwhelming illness. Instead, the illness proves the strength of their love and helps persuade friends to assist them and women to accept their advances. Ovid's *Ars Amatoria* offers the following advice to the would-be lover*:*

> Palleat omnis amans: hic est color aptus amanti;
>
> Hoc decet, hoc stulti non valuisse putant…
>
> Arguat et macies animum: nec turpe putaris
>
> Palliolum nitidis inposuisse comis.
>
> Attenuant iuvenum vigilatae corpora noctes
>
> Curaque et in magno qui fit amore dolor.
>
> Ut voto potiare tuo, miserabilis esto,
>
> Ut qui te videat, dicere possit "amas." (I.729-738)
>
> [But let every lover be pale; this is the lover's hue. Such looks become him; only fools think that such looks avail not…Let leanness also prove your feelings; nor deem it base to set a hood on your bright locks. Nights of vigil make thin the bodies of lovers, and anxiety and the distress that a great passion brings. That you may gain your desire be pitiable, so that whoso sees you may say, 'You are in love.']

This passage demonstrates lovesickness in a more comic vein: lovesickness offers men a seduction technique, not a reason to lament. Of course, key to the comedy is that this lover is

faking illness. A man actually dying of love is no laughing matter. Additionally, the ability to fake lovesickness implies its cultural ubiquity: anyone can recognize and read these symptoms, and thus the performance of these symptoms garners pity and, hopefully, sexual fulfillment. While there are local exceptions, as a general trend in classical literature, women's lovesickness is serious and life-threatening, while men's lovesickness is often a comic seduction tool; experiences of love and control thus tie into larger gender conventions of the time.

In the Western Middle Ages, lovesickness appears frequently and prominently in literary texts, with noblemen as the primary sufferers. Ovid's advice is picked up by the medieval love tradition. Andreas Capellanus's rules of love similarly insist that lovers must be ill to prove their passion:

> XV. Every lover regularly turns pale in the presence of his beloved.
>
> XVI. When a lover suddenly catches sight of his beloved his heart palpitates. …
>
> XXIII. He whom the thought of love vexes eats and sleeps very little. …
>
> XXX. A true lover is constantly and without intermission possessed by the thoughts of his beloved. (185-186)

While the tone of Capellanus's text is hotly debated, when this model of love is picked up in courtly love literature, the tone is decidedly not ironic, but deadly serious. Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde,* modeled on Boccaccio's *Il Filostrato,* provides a typical example of this injunction in action: Troilus falls lovesick, Pandarus notices and inquires about his illness, and agrees to help him because the illness proves the strength of his love. In persuading Criseyde to entertain his love, Pandarus emphasizes Troilus's illness, urging pity and compassion as well as the life-saving power of her love: "but for to save his lif, and elles nought, / … thus am I dryven" (II.575-576). The medieval experience of love necessarily includes lovesickness: to love is to

suffer; to suffer is to incite pity; and to incite pity is to build toward reciprocal love, or at least erotic fulfillment. Male lovesickness provides the standard model of falling in love, expressing love, and seeking reciprocation in medieval literature.[8]

As lovesickness and the courtly love tradition became intertwined, both worked to establish a gendered dynamic of desire. In the courtly love model, the male knight is reduced to helpless submission before his goddess-like, untouchable mistress. As feminist scholars have noted, this dynamic advances "an ideology of femininity that disempowers women in love by claiming to empower them" (Burns 24).[9] To put it more colloquially, put a woman on a pedestal and you put her in chains. Love purportedly elevates the beloved object, but still reduces her to being an object, with all subjectivity and agency reserved for the male supplicant. Moreover, lovesickness subverts the male lover's proper social position, reducing the powerful to the helpless and the rational to the unstable. As Mary Wack writes, "the elevation of the object entails a loss of inner control and governance in the noble subject, a degradation of the mental faculties. This lowering is paralleled by the feminization and infantilization of the lover's body and behavior. The lover's state of disease, in other words, transgresses the usual structures of gender and power. As a 'heroic lover' and noble man he is at the top of the hierarchy, yet is also somewhere 'below' as a patient unmanned by love" (152). Because love unmans the lover, it creates a problem that can only be solved through conquering and dominating the beloved object. The cure is not just about fixing an illness, but about restoring the patient's gendered social function. Further, that cure comes at the expense of female agency, with the male body's "need"

[8] In addition to informing literature, lovesickness informed literary interpretation: the Florentine physician Dino del Garbo's interpretation of Guido Cavalcanti's poem *Donna me prega* in light of lovesickness arguably serves as the first piece of medical humanities criticism.
[9] See also Sarah Kay, *Subjectivity in Troubadour Poetry,* especially chapter three.

for sex taking priority over the female body's autonomy. Thus, the medical condition offers poetic opportunities to explore gender and control.

The interest in, and representation of, lovesickness continues well into the Renaissance, particularly in the popular genres of lyric poetry, romance, and drama. The uses of the disease shift in the early modern era. Medieval courtly love focuses on the ways in which love disrupts the social order: lovesickness upsets the body in parallel to how individual desire disturbs sociopolitical hierarchy. While early modern love stories are still interested in the sociopolitical implications of desire, lovesickness also becomes a site to explore how love disrupts the individual's order and stability. A key figure in this transition of love from an exterior problem to an interior one is Petrarch. Petrarchan tropes such as the blazon, the paradox of burning and freezing, the idealization of the beloved, and the turning inward to examine one's painful experience of desire all clearly connect to the disease of love: to be lovesick is to obsess over the beloved's image and to experience physical repercussions as a result of that obsession, which is exactly the experience Petrarch represents. Additionally, Petrarch connects the disease of love to textual productivity. To be a poet is to be lovesick, and to explore that lovesickness verbally both in representing one's own bodily experience and in waxing rhapsodic about the beloved's body. While lovesickness is connected with speech as early as Sappho, Petrarchism crystallizes this connection and brings it front and center. Additionally, Petrarchism heightens the gender dynamic of lovesickness. The Petrarchan lover, reduced to a miserable state of subjection, worships the untouchable *donna angelicata* from afar. The male speaker is the subject of love while the female beloved is its object, an inaccessible and mute thing of beauty that can never be penetrated or accessed in any real way. The beloved is an occasion for the lover's self-exploration, the woman a spur to male poetic creation rather than an actual character in the

drama of love. Petrarch takes the gender dynamic of courtly love, exacerbates the distance between lady and lover, and focuses on the lover's interior experience, on how he suffers for the lady. The gender dynamic proves extremely difficult to reverse. Petrarchan love requires that the beloved reject the lover's sexual advances, and according to gender stereotypes, men don't refuse sex the way women do. Additionally, part of the pain in Petrarchan love is the reversal of hierarchy, the dominant man reduced to submissive, passive supplicant. In contrast, because women are supposed to be submissive and passive, female lovesickness simply confirms gender roles and does not upend the status quo. Petrarchism exacerbates the gendered tendencies in courtly love, further centering the male lovesick experience and silencing and objectifying women. As the Petrarchan model of love becomes the dominant literary paradigm of romance, lovesickness gets louder and women get quieter.

Given how commonly lovesickness appears in medieval and early modern texts, it has received surprisingly little critical attention. Massimo Ciavolella's *La 'mallatia d'amore' dall'Antichità al Medioevo* is, to my knowledge, the first full monograph on the subject. Fifteen years later the first English monograph on the subject appeared: Mary Wack's study of lovesickness surveys the medical tradition and its textual transmission from antiquity to the middle ages, focusing primarily on Constantine's *Viaticum* and its commentaries. Wack concludes by acknowledging her study's limited discussion of women and noting the sharp increase in examples of female lovesickness in the sixteenth century; recent work on lovesickness and gender has taken up this area of research. Laurinda S. Dixon, analyzing the lovesick maiden genre of Dutch painting, argues that the images reinforce medical claims about incapacity of the female sex. Carol Thomas Neely, in contrast, argues that lovesickness destabilizes gender roles by equalizing all sufferers. I am not convinced that female lovesickness

is as similar to male lovesickness as Neely suggests, nor that it grants women agency. While Lesel Dawson shares my interpretation of female and male lovesickness as distinct, she agrees with Neely's positive view of female lovesickness, suggesting that the condition may offer pleasure and empowerment. Neely and Dawson's work pioneered the textual study of lovesickness and gender. However, their studies are restricted to English texts and almost exclusively consider drama. Because the medical discourse circulated widely, there was a shared community of knowledge across Western Europe. My project shares Neely and Dawson's questions about gender and lovesickness, but extends those questions to a wider range of genres and cultures, analyzing female lovesickness in the broader European context. In doing so, I find that lovesickness serves less as a clear-cut space for female empowerment, and more as a means through which writers explore questions of female agency and patriarchal control.

The Early Modern Body: Humors, Anatomy, and Gender

Studies of lovesickness contribute to the larger critical conversation around the early modern body, an area that has received richly deserved attention in the past few decades. During the Renaissance, classical Galenic ideas about the body encountered new science: the humoral body underwent the dissecting knife of the anatomist. While the humoral body was permeable and in constant flux with the world around it, the dissected body was delimited, partitioned, an interior divorced from the outside world. With new medical technology came new ways of understanding the body and its relationship to the world. While this was true for both genders, the early modern era showed increasing interest in the female body. Medieval medical culture largely treated women's bodies as their own secret purview; then, by the seventeenth century, women's bodies became the objects of medical, masculine analysis and control.

The humoral body consists of blood, black bile, yellow bile, and phlegm, and the balance or imbalance of these components causes health or illness, respectively.[10] Each humor bears the qualities of hot or cold and wet or dry. Additionally, the humors correspond to organs within the body and elements outside it, and the body's humors are at the mercy of external factors. In this understanding of the body, inside and outside are constantly in contact. The body is not a contained unit; it is permeable. Additionally, humors impact what modern terminology would call emotions. Today we say mental and emotional stress can cause physical symptoms like a headache or sore back, with a non-physical cause leading to a physical effect. An early modern individual made no such distinction: the stress and the soreness were the same experience, both the result of material turmoil in the body. This materialism creates conceptual challenges for the modern reader, deeply entrenched in four hundred years of Cartesian dualism. Moreover, the language used for these experiences has remained consistent despite the shift in meaning. We still burn with anger and desire and drown in sorrow, but we do so metaphorically; early modern individuals did so literally. To fall in love in an early modern body, then, was to physically shift, to have one's body materially and substantially changed. Moreover, because the humoral body was permeable, speech, environmental changes, or even shifts in diet could make someone fall in or out of love.

The humoral body and its passions were moved not just by material elements, but by language. Speech and reading were considered capable of moving the audience, with "moving" signifying a humoral, physical shift. According to the conception of reading as a material act, writing could literally touch or move readers, and moralists were anxious about the potential

[10] For further discussion of early Renaissance physiological understanding, see Siraisi, chapter four, especially pp. 104-106.

danger of that process.[11] Polemicists railed against the dangers of poetry and theater, both able to incite audiences toward lust and other sins.[12] Because reading has such power, content must be chosen judiciously, particularly for vulnerable readers like young women, as Juan Luis Vives advised. Writers like Philip Sidney and Edmund Spenser sought to defend poetry from those anxious about the material power of the word, emphasizing its potential to stir the reader to virtuous action and fashion gentlemen.[13] Reading is an impactful, shaping experience: high risk, high reward. This risk is higher with certain texts and readers. Helen Smith connects the early modern conception of reading as a corporeal act to contemporary ideas of gender: "Women readers in early modern Britain … were understood to assimilate and transform the text as part of their bodily regimen in ways that both responded to and altered their emotional and physical state" (427). Reading with a humoral body, especially a female humoral body, was a transformative and passionate act.

The humoral body in general, and specifically the humoral model of reading, has resonance for the topic of lovesickness. While lovesickness may not seem like a contagious disease, it becomes one because reading can stir the passions. To read of humoral excess is to risk humoral imbalance, much like reading of the lust of Lancelot and Guinevere moves Paolo and Francesca to imitate their adulterous example in Dante's *Inferno.* Additionally, because reading is such a fraught humoral activity, it requires the rational counter-balance of interpretation: select the right books, and read correctly, in order to keep your humors balanced. Women were considered especially susceptible readers, thus it is little surprise when we see

[11] See Katharine A. Craik, *Reading Sensations,* especially the introduction.
[12] For an expansive survey of writings by antitheatricalists and those concerned about the moving powers of poetry, see Katharine Craik and Tanya Pollard 8-22.
[13] For a comparison of the idea of moving reading in Sidney, Spenser, and Milton, see Barbara Lewalski, "How Poetry Moves Readers."

women in the following chapters fall lovesick through hearing or reading a story as opposed to through seeing a beautiful man. Lovesickness as a contagion, particularly as a disease that women catch, is repeatedly connected to reading, language, and humoral ideas of the moving word.

The humoral body functioned in the world in a fundamentally different way than the modern body; what did this mean for the gendered body? Women were considered colder and wetter than men; this fact was not just a physiological observation but a value judgment, since heat and moisture were considered superior qualities (Reid 472-473). As Gail Kern Paster writes, "the coldness and sponginess of female flesh, relative to the flesh of men, became traits of great ethical consequence by explaining the sex's limited capacity for productive agency, individuality, and higher reasoning" (*Humoring the Body* 78-79). Medicine is neither objective nor neutral; how we understand a medical fact and create meaning around it is shaped by cultural assumptions and norms. The humoral account of the gendered body confirmed cultural assumptions about women's weakness and irrationality, framing them as more vulnerable to the passions. Because of their biological vulnerability, women needed more control, but lacked the ability to self-govern in the way men did; thus, the medical reading of women's bodies justified male control over women.

In addition to being considered more susceptible to the passions, the female body was coded as excessive and leaky under humoral medicine. Menstruation was understood as excess seed that needed expelling each month, a problem specific to the female body and its intrinsic failure of humoral self-regulation. Humoral discourse, Paster explains, "inscribes women as leaky vessels by isolating one element of the female body's material expressiveness – its production of fluids – as excessive, hence either disturbing or shameful. It also characteristically

links this liquid expressiveness to excessive verbal fluency. In both formations, the issue is women's bodily self-control, or, more precisely, the representation of a particular kind of uncontrol as a function of gender" (*The Body Embarrassed* 25).[14] Women's bodies overproduce fluid just like they verbally overproduce text. Because of this lack of self-control, women needed to *be* controlled, to be brought to produce less fluid, less text. By framing women as inherently excessive, the medical paradigm calls for reducing them, containing them by making them less. This imperative for women to stay contained, stay silent, and stay passive is directly challenged when a women is lovesick. Lovesickness is inherently a disease of excess: excessive desire, as well as excessive melancholy. In men, it is an upheaval of a normally well-ordered and balanced body, but in women, it is an upheaval of an already unstable and ill-regulated body: excess upon excess. The condition may have the same symptoms, but the stakes and the cultural significance of the disease differ.

Under the humoral system, women were marked as insufficient; thus, as anatomical dissection increased in the Renaissance, doctors encountered the female anatomy with preconceptions that informed their interpretation of what they saw. Medical texts tended to feminize the interior of any anatomical corpse, and, by marking it as feminine, indicated it as alien and conquerable (Sawday 9). Additionally, the female anatomy, especially the uterus, was of frequent interest to anatomists. One need only think of the frontispiece of Andreas Vesalius's *Anatomy* (1543) and the female body laid bare with the anatomist's finger pointing at her exposed womb: his ability to make visible the space of reproduction serves as the highlight, the front page image to tempt readers to engage with the text (see fig. 1 below). The female interior space needed to be laid bare through violence in order to be accessed and understood. These

[14] For a more detailed discussion of the consequences of humoral medicine on gender construction, see Paster *Humoring the Body* 77-86.

Fig. 1. Vesalius, Andreas. De humani corporis fabrica libri septem: Vesalius Conducting an Anatomical Dissection. 1539-1541. Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia. *Artstor*, library.artstor.org/asset/HUCB_SHARE_109913105879. Accessed May 2019.

violent means were justified by the pursuit of knowledge, and that knowledge itself becomes a kind of control, an imposition on the body by an outside authority.

In addition to the specifics of gendered humoral medicine and anatomy, the early modern era saw broader shifts in the cultural norms and language around women's medicine. Women were shut out of the healing professions as medical knowledge became institutionalized in all-male universities and guilds starting in the thirteenth century (Siraisi 27). As male physicians took over the previously female-dominated realm of women's healthcare, they needed to understand and control the female body's interior. The language around women's healthcare reflects these cultural changes, as Monica Green demonstrates. In the thirteenth century, she identifies a shift from the term "diseases of women" to "secrets of women." Then, in the fourteenth century, the term "women's secrets" begins to refer specifically to reproduction, with all other aspects of the female body's health and function suddenly irrelevant (25).[15] Green also notes a shift in the term "women's secrets" from meaning secrets women keep about their bodies to secrets about the female body that are kept from women themselves: as men took over the realm of medical, anatomical knowledge, they discovered the secrets of the female body that even women themselves could not know. The stakes in this shift were palpable, as women now required male assistance to understand the workings of their own bodies: "The 'secrets of women,' like other genres of secrets, offer a means both to explain and, to the extent that that knowledge itself is a kind of power, to control" (Green 15; see also Park 93). As men came to dominate women's healthcare, women became objects of knowledge, not its possessors (Park 82).

[15] Mary Fissell points to a similar preoccupation with the female reproductive body in "cheap print" in seventeenth century England, arguing that these texts reassert men's authority over women (10).

In sum, the humoral body was permeable to the world, deeply impacted by its surroundings and sensory experiences. This was particularly true for the female body, believed to be more susceptible to the vicissitudes of passion. The female body was also a locus of new medical knowledge and shifting cultural positions, newly laid bare to the male physician and male anatomist. The female body was an object to understand by medical means, to shape with humoral forces. This dissertation connects work on the humoral female body to work on the masculine medical gaze newly imposed on that body. With constructions of the female body in flux and men seeking knowledge and control over that body, and especially that body's sexuality, how did writers represent the female body? Lovesick women offer a heightened example of the sexualized, pathologized female body. Their humors are in flux, easily swayed by language, reading, and other sensory experiences. Women's bodies were imagined to be permeable and passionate, which, as this dissertation will demonstrate, affected the ways in which women fell lovesick. They were also subjected to a medical gaze, interpreted by outside authorities. Visible symptoms led to diagnosis, and in diagnosis, an outside authority asserted greater knowledge of the subject's body than the subject herself. Diagnosis then led to treatment, with the physician taking control of the desiring subject's body. Lovesick women thus offer a case study in the intersections of gender, the humoral body, and the agency of the desiring subject; moreover, the lovesick female body has a strong connection to humoral ideas of moving reading, a connection that has not been previously explored.

Women as Idea(l) in Renaissance Texts

Before we can examine the textual construction of women in love, we must establish the construction of women more broadly in Renaissance texts. The simplest version is rather bleak: women were inferior to men physically, morally, and intellectually, and ought to be subject to

their fathers and husbands. They should be chaste, silent, and obedient. The position that women are inferior to men goes back to Aristotle, who both claims that a woman is an imperfect man and who, in explaining conception and generation, attributes form to the male seed and matter to the female.[16] Aristotle's ideas of female inferiority were widely accepted in the Renaissance, and were further bolstered by misogynist attitudes in the Christian tradition.[17] Biblically, women were created second, leaving them permanently in the position of the second sex. Moreover, in the second account of creation in Genesis, the creation of woman is upon Adam's urging—she is created of him and for him, whereas man is created directly in God's image. The female position as second, helpmate to Adam, leads to the advice that women be subservient and silent, advice we see explicitly in passages from the New Testament: "let wives be subject to their husbands," advises St. Paul's letter to the Ephesians, and "let women keep silence in churches," enjoins Paul's letter to the Corinthians. Early modern advice books and conduct manuals addressed to women frequently echoed this advice. Even humanists who supported the education of women, like Juan Luis Vives, maintained the injunctions of obedience and chastity. This is not to say that historically, all Renaissance women were chaste, silent, or obedient, nor that all Renaissance thinkers wished them to be (#notallRenaissancemen); it is simply to say that the ideal Renaissance woman, according to polemical texts, should not be lovesick, should not express her lovesickness, and, above all, should not seek the physical cure of sexual intercourse.

Scholarship on Renaissance gender has highlighted both this image of the ideal woman and the ways in which writers, especially women writers, pushed back on it. Scholars such as Ruth Kelso, Ian Maclean, and Suzanne Hull argue that the discussion of women and their proper

[16] For a fuller survey of Aristotle's attitudes on women, see Horowitz 183-213.
[17] For a survey on early modern attitudes toward the female body as akin to a disabled body, see Juárez-Almendros, chapter 1.

roles in the Renaissance was limited and uniform; the cultural norm, they argue, paints a picture of Renaissance women as inferior beings, subject to men. In contrast, Constance Jordan and Pamela Benson have complicated this simplistic picture. The literary and historical archive both contain women that defy restrictive paradigms of the second sex, including texts in defense or praise of women, finding feminism, or at least "profeminism," in the Renaissance. Joan Cammarata examines how real women navigated the image of the ideal woman: "In defiance against the sole identity of females as obedient wife or nun, women make use of religion and community to embrace the misogynistic image of the ignorant woman and have it work for them" (5). Like Cammarata, I am interested in these individual instances of defiance or negotiation, in how the particulars complicate the broader discourse. Perhaps women were not supposed to experience or voice desire, but when we zoom in, we find many instances of women in literature doing exactly that. Rule breaking, desiring women were not just present, but prominent in the archive. These case studies add to our understanding of the ways in which women were constructed in Renaissance texts, which in turn adds to our understanding of the cultural purchase of desire, gender, and the intersection between the two.

This project focuses on women's speech and women's sexuality, areas of gender rebellion that were often linked in the early modern era. Scholars have noted the frequent connection between women and speech, pointing to both the injunction of silence and the persistent association between overly verbose women and sexually promiscuous women. There is, of course, a connection between bodies and texts more generally. We speak of texts as bodies, as a corpus. Likewise, we read bodily signs and compare bodies to blank pages, to a *tabula rasa*. This analogy is particularly frequent with female bodies. Adding to the association between women's bodies and language, women are stereotyped as overly verbal: scolds, nags, gossips.

Patricia Parker points to the persistent connection between copious textuality and the dilated female body, be that body fat, pregnant, or otherwise excessive. The dilated female body discussed by Parker corresponds to the one we see in humoral medicine: whether it's the body, its liquids, its speech, or its desires, the issue with women consistently seems to be excess. Textuality and corporeality are linked and gendered, and, when gendered, are also sexualized. Mary Ellen Lamb points out that early modern culture frequently sexualized women's language in order to prevent women from writing or reading (3). Jacqueline Pearson adds that women readers were troped not just as oversexed, but as insane (86). Women should be read and not read, should be written upon and not write—not just because they ought to be silent, but because reading and writing were deemed promiscuous. The need to contain speech relates to the need to contain the female body and its sexuality.

In short, the female body was a fraught cultural signifier, connoting secrecy and knowledge, textuality and silence, promiscuity and chastity. The female body was instructed to be silent, chaste, and obedient, but that very injunction implies the potential for it to be the opposite: verbose, promiscuous, independent. The anxiety around the behaviors and meanings of the female body, particularly in connection to sex and desire, offer rich opportunities for study. How and what did the desiring female body signify? How were its meanings constructed or contained?

In studying female lovesickness, this project draws medical humanities, gender studies, and the history of reading. While studies of the gendered humoral body have demonstrated how medicine served to condemn and contain the female body, critics have seen lovesickness as an exception to that pattern. Previous studies of female lovesickness have focused on English drama and have argued that lovesickness empowered women: the desire gave them subjectivity, and the

disease demanded that their desire be taken seriously. However, the disease also makes their desire subject to outside authorities. This project complicates those previous studies, demonstrating that lovesickness can empower women's voices, but it can also silence them, and it can give women subjectivity, but it can also objectify them. Additionally, this project connects the paradox of the lovesick woman to early modern ideas of reading and interpretation: just as the lovesick woman can lose control over her body and its significance when outside physicians "read" and diagnose her, so too can an author lose control over his or her text and its meaning when outside readers interpret it or are moved by it in unanticipated ways. This project thus complicates previous readings of female lovesickness while connecting medical humanities criticism to the history of reading and interpretation.

What does it mean to be a female body in love, and how has that changed over time? How do cultures express, judge, and contain female desire? Why and how are love and illness connected to textual production and interpretation? In particular, the texts examined in this study connect the act of diagnosing the body to the act of reading a text, with the vulnerability of the female body to diagnosis and therefore control presented as a metaphor for the vulnerability of the author's text to his or her reader's interpretation; given this frequent analogy, how does the lovesick woman connect to issues of agency in authorship and readership? The desiring female body offers a space for both male and female authors to explore literary anxieties around interpretive control and transformative reading, as well as cultural anxieties around women's textually and sexually productive bodies.

The first two chapters focus on how the female body is spoken about and how it speaks, with chapter one analyzing how narrators frame and value female desire in the third person and chapter two considering how women express and value their own lovesickness. While the

narrator in Ludovico Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* (1532) leans towards a misogynist presentation of female desire (to comic effect), Margaret Tyler's *The Mirror of Princely Deeds and Knighthood* (1578), a translation of Diego Ortúñez de Calahorra's *Espejo de príncipes y cavalleros* (1555), presents female desire as an opportunity for female strength. Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queene* (1590, 1596) walks a middle path, depicting female desire as a positive force when it serves patriarchal ends while presenting that desire as beyond female understanding or control. In all three texts, the narrators teach the reader how to interpret the lovesick woman's body. The women themselves have various capacities to read their own bodies and to control how their bodies are read. The second chapter looks at how women express and value their own desire, asking if lovesickness is an authorizing force or an oppressive one for female writers. The two writers examined draw opposite conclusions: Gaspara Stampa (1523-1554) uses her suffering in love to validate her authorial voice in her lyric poetry, while in contrast, María de Zayas y Sotomayor (1590-1661) presents lovesickness as an oppressive misreading of the female body used to justify male control. Her protagonist is instead liberated by an interior, religious turn, and tells a story in which lovesickness is used to justify the speaker's selfish ends. There is a constant anxiety about misreading in both texts, an anxiety that echoes the connection between lovesick women and narrative control in chapter one.

While the first two chapters analyze how speech frames the lovesick body, the final two chapters examine how lovesickness discourse is used to actively impact the body. Chapter Three considers not just lovers, but the go-betweens who seek to cure—or more often, incite—lovesickness. In Fernando de Rojas's *Celestina* (1499), characters vie for control over language, and through language, over the lovesick body; in William Shakespeare's *As You Like It* (performed c. 1599, published 1623), women take control of the discourse of lovesickness and

use it to shape the story they want to live out. In both texts, these attempts to seize control by manipulating others are suspect; in *Celestina,* they end in tragedy, while in *As You Like It,* the characters can only achieve a happy ending by mutually relinquishing control. Chapter Four turns from causing lovesickness to curing it. In John Fletcher and William Shakespeare's *The Two Noble Kinsmen* (performed c. 1614, published 1634)*,* the desiring female body becomes a site of narrative competition. In madness and in health, the Jailer's Daughter keeps trying to write her own story while the authoritative male figures around her keep silencing it. Diagnosing her body allows them to rewrite her narrative, imposing their preferred meaning on her body. The play depicts lovesickness as a tool for control over women, one that curtails creative possibilities.

In these four chapters, the dissertation traces the relationship between lovesick body and text, moving from how lovesickness is spoken about to how it speaks to the interaction between the two. Considering questions of gender, medicine, and literature, this project situates female desire within the early modern understanding of the female body and the social and cultural stakes of that understanding. I argue that female lovesickness is a means of control, whether women use it to assert agency or men use it to diminish women's agency. These texts connect control over bodies to control over text: when the interpreter is in control, the woman lacks agency, but if the patient can control how she is interpreted, then she is able to maintain both agency as a desiring subject and a degree of authorial control.

Chapter One

Speaking of Women: The Value of Female Desire in Renaissance Romance

Physiologically, men and women suffer identical symptoms of love melancholy—sighing, weeping, obsession, pale complexion, insomnia, etc. However, female characters fall in love differently than their male counterparts. While male lovesickness starts with the sight of a beautiful woman, female lovesickness frequently starts with speech from or about the beloved. This model of love evokes the anxieties of humanists and physicians about the dangers of moving stories, particularly for female audiences.[18] As the more permeable sex, women's bodies are more subject to humoral changes, thus women readers are physically transformed by their experiences with text. Desire for stories easily lapses into sexual desire, with both presented as a dangerous appetite for knowledge. Being a reader makes the female body subject to love, and falling in love in turn makes the female body an object to be read. In the three episodes considered in this chapter, each narrator's commentary teaches the reader how to read the female body and judge its lovesickness and, by extension, how to judge the larger cultural significance of female desire.

This chapter analyzes female desire and its expression or silencing in three romance texts: Ludovico Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* (1532); Margaret Tyler's *The Mirror of Princely Deeds and Knighthood* (1578), a translation of Diego Ortúñez de Calahorra's *Espejo de príncipes y cavalleros* (1555); and Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queene* (1590, 1596). All three texts were hugely popular in their day, making them useful cultural touch points. Additionally, all have influential first-person narrators who offer guidance to the reader. Each of these narrators describes a woman falling lovesick, diagnosing that sickness, and speaking about her

[18] On the bodily experience of female readers, see Helen Smith.

experience. What women say, whom they say it to, and how they say it all determine whether female lovesickness ends in dynastic marriage or in madness and loss. I will argue that the more female lovesickness confines itself within patriarchal strictures, the more accepted it is. While the *Furioso* presents female desire as a textually destabilizing force, the *Mirror* presents female desire in a proto-feminist light, and *The Faerie Queene* walks a middle path, depicting female desire as serving patriarchal ends while presenting that desire as beyond the abilities of a woman to understand or control.

The narrator is key to framing these evaluations of female desire, teaching the reader how to evaluate lovesick women. Ariosto's narrator famously intrudes on his text, inserting personal accounts as well as reactions to the behavior of the characters. While the narrator's view does not necessarily reflect the poet's, the narrator's reactions are constantly visible and inflect a reader's experience. The narrator battles with his characters for textual control and breaks into outrage when that control slips away. While Tyler's source text has a detached third person narrator, Tyler's translation employs a female first person narrator engaged in a close relationship with the characters, often directly addressing them; rather than directing the reader, the narrator guides the characters. Spenser's narrator, like Ariosto's, visibly steers his reader through the text. Although more neutral than Ariosto's narrator, Spenser's narrator nevertheless teaches the reader how to manage the text, suggesting the meaning to make out of his language and foregrounding the role of textual interpretation. In their responses to the episodes of female desire, these three narrators model for the reader how to evaluate female lovesickness. The narrators also underscore the connection between narrative itself and female desire, as stories cause female lovesickness and narrators explicitly read, interpret, and value that lovesickness.

The Dangers of Female Desire: Ariosto's Angelica

For most of the *Orlando Furioso,* Angelica is an object, rather than subject, of desire. The poem opens with Christian and pagan knights chasing her through a forest, immediately establishing her as desirable and elusive. The blonde princess from Cathay spends the majority of the poem fleeing would-be suitors, including an impotent hermit, an over-excited Ruggiero, and the titular hero Orlando. No matter how gallant the knight, she remains uninterested. Then, in canto nineteen, she encounters a wounded foot soldier in the forest and, while healing him, falls in love. When Orlando learns of this, it leads to his madness, which, in turn, will lead to Angelica's unceremonious exit from the poem.

Critics often frame Angelica's role in the poem in terms of the men who pursue her. As such, she is rarely considered in her own right, but is instead connected to the knights who objectify her. Even in studies entirely dedicated to Angelica, such as Deanna Shemek's, her role is defined in terms of the men: Angelica, Shemek argues, is the ultimate signifier of sexual alterity. When she ceases to be an object through which the knights work out their understanding of gender and desire and becomes a desiring subject in her own right, she ceases to be of use to the poem and must be removed from it (Shemek 127). Studies that examine Angelica's experience of desire focus on her choice of love object, asking if she's being punished by being paired with Medoro; this critical question likewise frames her role in the poem solely in terms of her connections to men.[19] Rather than examining Angelica's lovesickness in terms of the masculine narratives in the poem, this chapter proposes to examine Angelica's lovesickness on its own terms. Discussions of lovesickness in the *Furioso* are primarily concerned with Orlando

[19] For example, see Wiley Feinstein and Ita MacCarthy. For Feinstein, the lukewarm attitude with which the narrator presents Medoro in the initial episode does not take away from Medoro's value as a love object; he claims that his merit makes up for his low birth (Feinstein 29). Similarly, for MacCarthy, *fede* is the poem's ultimate value, Medoro is the ultimate example of *fede*, and Angelica is the ultimate prize (63). As such, the night raid episode justifies Angelica's desire, while also reframing the purpose of epic as a prelude to romance.

rather than Angelica, despite the fact that Angelica's lovesickness precedes, and indeed causes, Orlando's.[20] How does Angelica fall lovesick, and how do the narrator and the poet represent her desire? Exploring this question illuminates how love, gender, and story telling are integrally connected in the *Furioso:* love inspires stories, stories inspire love, and the experience of both love and stories is impacted by gender.

While some scholars have argued that falling in love with Medoro frees Angelica from her subordination to male desire and grants her subjectivity,[21] attention to lovesickness in this episode reveals that Angelica is far from liberated by the experience. Additionally, the connection between lovesickness and storytelling in the episode highlights that Angelica's attempts to assert agency are specifically textual acts: falling in love grants her not just subjectivity, but an interpretive role and the right—in fact, the medical need—to speak. Angelica falls in love by receiving Medoro's story and reinterpreting it, reading it in a romance vein and thereby creating a competition between her as interpreter and the narrator as author. The narrator seeks to maintain his epic authority despite her romance reception. Although Angelica takes action on a plot level, the narrator consistently minimizes her role and presents her as passive. Her body is illegible to her beloved, and the narrator leaves her speech unreported; Angelica, it seems, took too much control over the narrative as a lovesick reader, so the narrator regains control by cutting off her speech and interpreting her desire in a negative light. The lovesick Angelica and the narrator compete for linguistic authority over her desiring body and its connotations. Neither Angelica nor the narrator comes across particularly well in the episode: her desire is excessive, as is his outrage. In presenting the tension between Angelica and the narrator

[20] On Orlando's lovesickness, see Massimo Ciavolella and Marion Wells. On the love madness of Orlando, Bradamante, and Rodomonte, see Elissa Weaver.
[21] See Deanna Shemek 127, Ita Mac Carthy 62, and Valeria Finucci 140-141.

for textual and interpretive authority, the poem emphasizes the power of stories to spark desire, and the power of desire to destabilize and redirect stories.

When Angelica stumbles across Medoro, she has been wandering through the forest recalling her past suitors with distaste: "si sdegna a rimembrar che già suo amante / abbia Orlando nomato, o Sacripante" (XIX.18.7-8) [she disdains to remember that her lover / might have been named Orlando or Sacripante (translation my own)] and repenting her love for Rinaldo, since "troppo parendole essersi avilita,/ ch'a riguardar sí basso gli occhi volse" (XIX.19.3-4) [it now appears to her a grave offence / thus to have yearned for an inferior]. Cupid lies in wait beside Medoro—who, unlike the knights Orlando and Sacripante, is actually her social inferior—to take his revenge (XIX.19.5-8), thus framing the upcoming episode as punishment for her arrogance and ingratitude toward her suitors. Scholars debate whether Angelica's love for Medoro is a punishment or a prize: Wiley Feinstein and Ita Mac Carthy argue that Medoro proves a worthy lover, while others argue that his low class status debases Angelica. These opening stanzas suggest that since Angelica scoffs at her previous suitors, Love will punish her by making her fall for someone *really* inferior. Yet Medoro's low status is not highlighted in the remainder of the episode. Indeed, Medoro himself is almost entirely beside the point, as the narrative focuses on Angelica, her suffering in love, and her extravagance in fulfilling her desire. Angelica's desire is intended as a punishment, but the punishment is less about desiring an embarrassing object and more about the experience of the desire itself. Love is its own punishment, causing her physical pain and impeding her agency.

While Angelica metaphorically falls in love because of Cupid's piercing arrow, she actually falls in love through hearing a story. Medoro's story ignites pity and love in Angelica:

Quando Angelica vide il giovinetto

languir ferito, assai vicino a morte,

che del suo re che giacea senza tetto,

piú che del proprio mal si dolea forte;

insolita pietade in mezzo al petto

si sentì entrar per disusaste porte,

che le fe' il duro cor tenero e molle,

e più, quando il suo caso egli narrolle. (XIX.20)

[And when Angelica, who onward pressed, / Beheld the youth left there to die alone, / Who for his king's unhallowed death expressed / More sorrow and regret than for his own, / Compassion, unfamiliar to her breast, / Entered by portals now for long unknown, / Melting therein her heart, so hard and cold, / The more so as she heard his tale unfold.][22]

Although the stanza begins with Angelica seeing Medoro, it is his expression of regret for his king's death that moves Angelica to compassion and his story that softens her heart. The sight of his illness moves her because of the context of his tale; his compassion toward his king inspires hers toward him, and her compassion leads to love. This is the kind of moving tale that moralists such as Juan Luis Vives caution against: the story inflames the overly susceptible female listener with love.[23] Stories are sensual, impactful, moving. This makes them particularly dangerous for any reader whose reason cannot control their passions—namely, women.[24] In earlier passages, Angelica was not susceptible nor easily moved; part of Love's punishment lies in making her more permeable to passion, a passion inflamed by her reception of a story.

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[22] This translation is from Barbara Reynolds' edition. All further translations are from this edition unless otherwise noted.

[23] On Vives' cautions against women reading romances in *Instruction of a Christian Woman*, see Heidi Hackel *Reading Material* 84 and Catherine Lucas 17-20.

[24] For more on literature's ability to move the passions, see Katherine Craik, Helen Smith, and Joseph Pappa.

In addition to evoking the medical model of the passions, the passage evokes the literary model of Virgil's *Aeneid* in which Dido falls in love with Aeneas through hearing his story of the fall of Troy. Men's epic exploits make them attractive to women (or at least male epic authors imagine this to be the case), such that epic narration leads to romance digression when received by a female listener. Listening to the story changes Angelica, physically softening her heart, and Angelica's reception of his epic tale in turn converts the story into a pastoral romance. Angelica is thus both transformed by the story, and transforms the story.[25] But the specter of Dido haunts the passage, leaving open the question of Medoro's abandoned epic responsibilities. Does he belong in this new narrative? Can Angelica and romance successfully contain him? We have no insight into Medoro's take on any of this. In the *Aeneid,* the narrator takes a back seat while Aeneas narrates his own story at length, to which both the reader and Dido listen attentively. In the *Furioso,* in contrast, the narrator conceals Medoro's version of the events, reporting how his story affected Angelica but not sharing Medoro's narration of the story itself. Because we only hear the narrator's version, Angelica seems to fall in love because of the narrator: the story of Medoro's loyalty, which the narrator expounded in previous cantos, ignites Angelica's passion. Angelica interprets a story the reader already knows in a new light, responding with lovesickness that recasts that formerly epic story as a romance episode. The narrator's story of an epic episode now becomes, through Angelica's reception and interpretation, part of a romance plot; her lovesick reaction co-opts his words and reframes them. Her lovesickness thus creates a competition between her and the narrator for narrative control.

[25] As Helen Smith explains, in the early modern physiology of reading, "The reading body is granted an active force, less receiving the text than working upon it in a powerful, outwardly directed process" (416). This material model of reading draws on the general theory of the humors, as well as the extramission model of vision in which eyes emit beams that impact the object as well as receive it and take on the image of the object as a physical impression in the viewer's mind (Hackel 415-416).

While her reception reframes his story, suggesting her power as a reader, the narrator in turn minimizes Angelica's healing act and avoids presenting it as powerful or even fully in her control. The narrator minimizes medical descriptions and foregrounds sexual connotations in this passage, while also distancing himself from her healing, vaguely reporting her search for an herb: "fosse dittamo, o fosse panacea, / o non so qual" (XIX.22.3-4) [if dittany, or if a panacea / it was, I cannot say]. He does not know what plant she uses to heal Medoro, and glosses over her knowledge. In relating that she knows the art of surgery, the narrator praises the general study of that art in India, not Angelica's own study: "E rivocando alla memoria l'arte / ch'in India imparò già di chirugia / (che par che questo studio in quella parte / nobile e degno e di gran laude sia)…" [And she began to call to mind her skill/ In medicine, which in India she learned, / Where, for their knowledge how to cure and heal, / Doctors deservedly much praise have earned] (XIX.21.1-4). This passage frames her knowledge as a cultural byproduct rather than a personal ability. He quickly transitions to the visual and tactile components of the healing, describing her pressing the herb into Medoro's wound: "Pestò con sassi l'erba, indi la prese, / e succo ne cavò fra le man bianche; / ne la piaga n'infuse, e ne distese / e pel petto e pel ventre e fin a l'anche:" (XIX.24.3-6) [The precious plant she pounds between two stones. / Then, gathering the juice in her white hands, / She pours some in his wound, and some *she smooths* / Over his chest and belly *and finally to his groin* (translation modified)]. The image of her white hands aestheticizes her contribution and minimizes the actual healing. The narrator may not specify what herb she uses, but he is quite clear about her white hands traversing Medoro's chest, stomach, and groin. She applies the medicine first to his wound, then all over his body; the distinction between the two acts implies that the second application goes further than medical purposes require, that smoothing the liquid over his chest and groin is separate from applying it as a cure for the wound.

The sexual connotations supersede the description of Angelica's medical knowledge and healing practice.

Angelica's lovesickness parallels Medoro's recovery, suggesting her dependence on him as she loses bodily strength. As she works to heal Medoro, Angelica falls lovesick: "ma in minor tempo si sentí maggiore / piaga in questa avere ella nel core" (XIX.27.7-8) [But not before there opens in her heart / A deeper wound, causing a keener smart]. Her wound is "maggiore" than Medoro's wound—the narrator expresses its size in comparison to Medoro, thus framing our understanding of her body in relation to his. Once she falls lovesick, her suffering is severe:

> Assai piú larga piaga e piú profonda
> nel cor sentí da non veduto strale,
> che da' begli occhi e da la testa bionda
> di Medoro aventò l'Arcier c'ha l'ale.
> Arder si sente, e sempre il fuoco abonda;
> e piú cura l'altrui che 'l proprio male:
> di sé non cura, e non è ad altro intenta,
> ch'a risanar chi lei fere e tormenta. (XIX.28)
> [A wider and a deeper wound by far, / *in her heart she felt from an invisible arrow,* / fashioned from Medoro's golden hair / And handsome eyes, *which Love had aimed* with skill; / *She burns, and always the fire abounds;* / More for his malady than her own ill / She cares, intent alone on healing one / Who pain on her inflicts equal to none. (translation modified)]

Angelica's wound is caused by an arrow constructed from Medoro's body parts ("begli occhi e … testa bionda") and aimed at Angelica by Cupid: his body functions as a weapon that

metaphorically penetrates her chest, implying the penetration that will cure the pain caused here. This metaphor parallels the medical understanding in which the image of Medoro literally enters Angelica's body and imprints itself on her mind and heart, causing the painful lovesickness symptoms we see here. The last three lines all contrast her suffering with his, emphasizing her lack of care for herself in contrast to her efforts to heal the man who causes her pain. His body triggers her pain, and her healing of his body contrasts with the worsening of hers:

> La sua piaga piú s'apre e piú incrudisce,
> quanto piú l'altra si ristringe e salda.
> Il giovine si sana: ella languisce
> di nuova febbre, or agghiacciata, or calda.
> Di giorno in giorno in lui beltà fiorisce:
> la misera si strugge, come falda
> strugger di nieve intempestiva suole,
> ch'in loco aprico abbia scoperta il sole. (XIX.29)
> [Her wound enlarges and more grievous grows, / Now burning hot, now icy cold, while his / Shrinks ever smaller as the edges close. / He becomes well, the while she languishes. / Daily his comeliness more lovely shows. / She every hour more ill and wasted is / And, like a snowflake on a sunny day, / Consumed by love bids fair to waste away.]

The narrative of his improvement paralleling her decline almost implies that she gives him her strength, that his body's gain results from her body's loss. Part of this relates to her role as a healer: she must be continually exposed to his body in order to heal it, and his body's presence worsens her lovesickness. In being his caretaker, she sacrifices her own bodily health, subordinating her body's needs to his. This model is also gendered. We do not have comparable

stories of male healers caring for female love objects, nor of male bodies sacrificing their health to better the health of a female body. Her command over his body's health equals her lack of command over her own body. This lessening of her power mitigates any potential threat in her powerful role as healer: her power over his body is countered by her lack of control over her own.

As Angelica wastes away from lovesickness, she concludes that only language can save her. She breaks gendered social convention and expresses her desire in hopes of mitigating it:

> Se di disio non vuol morir, bisogna
> Che senza indugio ella se stessa aiti:
> E ben le par che di quell ch'essa agogna,
> Non sia tempo aspettar ch'altri la 'nviti.
> Dunque, rotto ogni freno di vergogna,
> La lingua ebbe non men che gli occhi arditi:
> E di quell colpo domandò mercede,
> Che, forse non sapendo, esso le diede. (XIX.30)
>
> [If of her longing she is not to die, / She must herself ask help without delay; / And well she knows that she cannot rely / On him she loves the needed words to say. / So, all restraint and modesty put by, / Her tongue, no less her eyes, dares now to pray / For mercy; from that blow she begs him save her / Which the fair youth, perhaps unknowing, gave her.]

She takes the privilege of speaking first, but only because she is on the verge of death and therefore cannot wait for him to speak. The language emphasizes her dependence and pressing need: "se … non vuol morir", "bisogna / che … se stessa aiti", "non sia tempo aspettar." Angelica's speech is presented as a medical necessity, which lessens her potential agency in this

moment. The narrator also judges that speech, describing Angelica as "rotto ogni freno di vergogna" in taking this action and thereby implying that she should feel some shame in this moment. Some critics have seen Angelica becoming an empowered desiring subject in this episode. [26] Far from empowered, Angelica desperately begs for mercy from the blow Medoro gave her. She makes that request with her tongue and her eyes, thus situating speech in her body. The pleading of her body gains added significance as the narrator tells us Medoro may not realize the condition she suffers from ("forse non sapendo")—Medoro is unable to read and interpret Angelica's body, even though her symptoms are visible. This is unusual: the lovesick body's symptoms conventionally draw the attention of a nurse, companion, or the beloved. Lovesickness lets the body speak, providing meaning without language. Angelica's body, so frequently read, misread, and written over by the men in the poem, here goes uninterpreted and unnoticed. She must speak, must prompt him to see her condition and understand his own role in it. The narrator himself, of course, is able to both read Angelica and make that reading available in his speech. The body requires language as a supplement, a way to elicit, to interpret, to invite. Language, in short, gives meaning to the body.

But whose language gets priority in the process of making meaning? Angelica's body has been misread and misinterpreted before, despite her efforts to guide the reader. She interprets her body for Sacripante after he presumes she is no longer a virgin, insisting that is not the case in

[26] Ita MacCarthy reads the Medoro episode as a rare instance of liberation and subjectivity for Angelica, as well as an example of positive, fulfilled erotic desire (62-63). Deanna Shemek similarly reads Angelica as becoming a subject through desire, thus escaping male objectification, but takes a less wholly positive reading than MacCarthy of this shift in Angelica's role. By becoming her own subject, Angelica breaks the illusion of her as an ideal, thus necessitating her exit from the poem (118). Valeria Finucci reads Angelica's dalliance with Medoro as giving her desire and purpose rather than her usual narcissism, but sees this desire as inappropriately aimed at Medoro and as a way to have a man get her out of the text; for her, the episode is limited in its agency, and any agency she gets is meant to be condemned and not celebrated (140-142).

order to incite him to provide her with safe passage. The narrator intervenes here with a snarky comment about how ridiculous one would have to be to believe Angelica a virgin: "Forse era ver, ma non però credibile / a chi del senso suo fosse signore" (I.56.1-2) [It may be true, but no man in his senses / would ever credit it]. From the very first, Angelica's self-interpretation is at odds with the narrator's evaluation of her. Sacripante is not the only man to misread Angelica's body: Ruggiero misinterprets her naked body as a willing body. Unable to prevent him through speech, she flees via the magic ring. Angelica's body signifies in a way she cannot fully control, a fact she laments in her longest speech in the poem, when she curses her beauty and the trouble it has caused (VIII.40-44). To be misread is to be in danger of domination by the reader/knight; Angelica provides an interpretive guide in an attempt to keep control of her body and her story. But the narrator asserts contrasting authority, reframing and actively condemning Angelica's language and use of her body in the Medoro episode and elsewhere. If control over the body is asserted through language, if words are how we give a body its meaning, then whose words take priority: the person with the body, or the person evaluating that body? This question is particularly pressing in a patriarchal culture. Women's bodies, especially women's desiring bodies, threaten inheritance structures. If men cannot wholly control those bodies, they can at least control the interpretation of those bodies, as the narrator attempts to do in this episode. The narrator functions here as an overly active reader, reshaping a story in interpreting it.

The narrator does not report Angelica's dialogue, only the inner turmoil that leads her to make the declaration. By glossing over the speech act, he rejects the direct expression of female desire, instead launching into a diatribe sympathizing with Angelica's scorned lovers (XIX.31-32). The male narrator's voice overwhelms Angelica's in order to directly address the men who pursued Angelica as object: conte Orlando, re di Circassia, re Agricane, Ferraú, "o mille altri

ch'io non scrivo" [oh thousands of others who I do not write of] (XIX.31.1, XIX.32.2, 5). In drawing attention to the unnamed men, the narrator also draws attention to his act of writing, reminding the reader that he determines who is included or excluded. The attention to those he excludes is particularly significant in that at this very moment he excludes Angelica's text. He draws our attention to what is not said, to the stories not told, to the language that is not allowed to introduce new meanings into the poem. Even as the narrator rages about his lack of control over Angelica, the poet subtly reminds us of the narrator's control in the act of writing. The narrator identifies the men she should have loved, condemning her as ungrateful and seeking to recruit the reader into the same view:

> Mostratemi una sola cortesia
> che mai costei v'usasse, o vecchia o nuova,
> per ricompensa e guidardone e merto
> di quanto avete già per lei sofferto. (XIX.31.5-8)
> [Show me one single favor, if you can, / What recompense, what kindness can you name, / What gratitude, what mercy has she shown / For sufferings for her sake undergone?]

Angelica is "ingrata" (XIX.32.7), failing to recompense the sufferings of the men who desired her. The narrator demonstrates the proper cause and effect relationship: a man of worth desires a woman, so she repays his desire. The system is one of debt and payment, not desire and reciprocation. Her lovesickness disrupts the proper female response to male desire, which, according to the narrator, would involve a rational evaluation of the ways in which men suffer for her and a reward, or at least a display of mercy, for those sufferings. She is physically dying of love, yet still the narrator reframes her body as a reward for a male subject rather than a subject in its own right. While Angelica teaches Medoro how to read her body's symptoms, the

narrator teaches the reader a very different version of how to read—and judge—Angelica's body. The narrator invites the reader into the story, asking him to write a different version and construct a grateful Angelica. We are invited to defend her, but the parameters the narrator creates for that defense insist upon the grateful woman as the good woman. There is no space to defend Angelica's choice or agency, only to defend her against the claim of ingratitude. Therefore, her value is still predicated on her behavior toward her knightly suitors. The reader is invited to actively participate in the construction of meaning through fashioning alternate meanings, alternate stories—alternate stories that the narrator wishes were the case, stories that would make Angelica a model female who prioritizes male desire rather than a rebellious woman who prioritizes her own desire. In interpreting Angelica for us, in serving as both a reader and a writer, the narrator attempts to fully seize control of the interpretive process.

The narrator's frustration continues in his description of the consummation of the relationship as he implies that Angelica gives her virginity to the wrong man:

> Angelica a Medor la prima rosa
> coglier lasciò, non ancor tocca inante:
> né persona fu mai sí aventurosa,
> ch'in quell giardin potesse por le piante. (XIX.33.1-4)
> [She lets Medoro pluck the morning rose / Which no despoiling hand had ever touched; /
> No one so fortunate that garden knows, / No one its virgin flowerbeds has smutched.]

The narrator depicts Angelica's sexual experience as a loss, and that loss as a man's gain. This situation directly parallels her earlier lovesickness: the desire caused her body's loss and Medoro's body's benefit. The focus then moves to the nonexistent men who came before, the ones who did not enter her garden. The narrator again introduces alternate potential narratives,

the stories that could have been told and, perhaps, *should* have been told. He rails against and silences Angelica and frames her virginity as a prize given to the wrong man. Yet are we intended to agree with the narrator? After all, he cheekily doubted her virginity at the opening of the poem, yet here he objects to the way in which she loses it, forcing him to acknowledge that her body did have the integrity he snidely suggested it lacked. He has mistakenly framed her body in the past, so why should we accept his evaluation of it now? Who gets authority over Angelica's body and its meanings? Angelica attempts to speak about her body but that text remains private, unshared with the reader and therefore unable to assert authority. The narrator likewise attempts to assert authority, but the poem gently underscores his unreliability.

Unreliable as he may be, the narrator is our vehicle for the story, a story that continues to censure Angelica's desire and its fulfillment. The narrator describes her honeymoon as an excessive pursuit of sexual fulfillment: "Piú lunge non vedea del giovinetto / la donna, né di lui potea saziarsi; / né per mai sempre pendergli dal collo, il suo disir sentia di lui satollo" (XIX.34.5-8) [No further than his face her glances went, / For of his love she could not have enough. / Unceasingly she hung upon his side, / Yet her desire was never satisfied.] Marriage ought to provide fulfillment and a cure for lovesickness, yet the narrator describes her desire as constant and insatiable. This description is also entirely one-sided: Medoro's experience is not mentioned, and there is no indication that he shares her desires. Although we later learn that he carved a love poem into a cave during this interlude, in the initial episode, his agency is completely absent. Further suggesting that the relationship is not fully mutual, the narrator compares a cave they honeymoon in to that of Aeneas and Dido, again invoking that decidedly unhappy epic romance (XIX.35). Angelica loses dignity in her pursuit of desire, and the allusion hints that she may also lose any joy she currently experiences. She also loses language: Angelica

does not speak again for the rest of the poem. She is now just a silent body, and a deflowered, spoiled body at that.

Angelica's power in healing and speech, her agency in enacting desire—the narrator mitigates our understanding of each of these, ostentatiously constraining her potential agency and subjectivity. But we as readers are not intended to accept the narrator without question. His language is patently excessive, and he himself suffers at the hands of an ungrateful woman, condemning his beloved for the same sin he condemns Angelica for. We also have reason to suspect this narrator is not in total control of his linguistic power.[27] After all, Medoro's story makes Angelica fall in love, and who produced that story if not the narrator? Words have power in both their production and reception, and just as Angelica cannot quite control how her body signifies despite her attempts to do so, the narrator cannot quite control how his narration affects bodies despite his attempts to do so. Ariosto crafts an out-of-control narrator competing with the objects of his narration, and pinpoints a woman speaking about and acting on her desire as a particular point of tension. In the episode of Angelica and Medoro, language and bodies run amuck as speech causes lovesickness and lovesickness in turn licenses speech that goes too far. The narrator blames Angelica not only for her own lovesickness, but for Orlando's madness, which is sparked by this episode. Excessive, mad love, which destabilizes the status quo and the prevailing rule of reason, seems to always be a woman's fault, whether she is the subject or the object.[28] The issue of love seems fundamentally related to narrative more broadly in the poem.

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[27] I agree with Robert Durling that Ariosto, as a poet, retains consummate control over his poem, and find the narrator's expressions of instability and disclaimers of lack of control to be ironic evidence of the poet's forceful hand. For more on the narrator and Angelica, see Durling 121-123, 159-161, 173-174. See also Daniel Javitch 51-52 on the technique of interlacing as a reminder of the poet's control even, or especially, in moments that seem erratic.

[28] Some critics would argue that Angelica's purpose in the poem is to be an elusive object of desire that sparks the various knights onto their digressive paths, thus emphasizing the divisions

As Elissa Weaver has shown, stories about love spark unstable reactions and madness consistently throughout the text. While female desire poses a particularly fraught issue, the broader connection between stories and desire, particularly the way reception can reframe a story's intended meaning, echoes throughout. In Ariosto, speech spurs on the disease, and the disease in turn seems to tip the scales in favor of excessive or inappropriate speech, with both desire and text spinning out of control. In contrast, in Tyler's text, speech and desire are still connected but with a much greater emphasis on restraint. Tyler's narrator will find a way to work with the lovesick woman, presenting lovesickness as an opportunity for feminine strength.

Strength in Submission: Tyler's Olivia

While Angelica and her narrator compete for interpretive authority, Olivia and her narrator in *The Mirror of Princely Deeds and Knighthood* work in concert. Tyler's text is the first romance translated by a woman published in England, as well as the first complete English translation of a Spanish romance (Uman and Bistué 309). In the preface, Tyler defends her translation on the grounds that men dedicate texts to ladies and gentlewomen:

> And if men may, and do, bestow such of their travails upon gentlewomen, then may we women read such of their works as they dedicate unto us. And if we may read them, why not farther wade in them to the search of a truth? And then much more, why not deal by

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between the knights that must be reconciled in order to achieve Christian unity. She dismisses the knightly values of prowess and courtliness in choosing Medoro, a foot soldier, and, in her final removal from the poem, redirects the attentions of the knights from chivalric feats toward epic, unified, and therefore proper, feats. However, if this is her function in the poem, then why is she so harshly criticized for falling in love? If the criticism is class based, why is class not highlighted in the passage? I contend that her lovesickness is a precursor to Orlando's madness, another version of excessive desire that upends bodily and linguistic control. The issue is not her love object, it is the act of love itself, an act which creates narrative distraction and digression and which challenges proper, decorous values. That challenge, that act of upending, seems to me to be the poem's primary interest.

> translation in such arguments, especially this kind of exercise being a matter of more heed than of deep invention or exquisite learning? (50)

In short, she claims, "it is all one for a woman to pen a story as for a man to address his story to a woman" (50). Tyler uses translation to bridge the concepts of reading and writing, highlighting the interpretive act common to both.

Tyler's preface has eclipsed the actual text in most scholarship. The few scholars who examine the text itself assert that the feminist stance of the preface carries into the romance. Tina Krontiris claims Tyler opposes the dominant ideologies and practices of marriage and class, specifically the double standard women and men are held to in terms of sexual relations (30). However, Krontiris does not explore whether these facets appear in the Spanish original or are unique to Tyler's translation. Deborah Uman and Belén Bistué find that Tyler remains largely faithful to her original source, often following it almost word for word, but makes minor changes that highlight the female perspective (313). Victoria Muñoz adds that, "Tyler's translation, moreover, expands and comments upon her female characters' roles as both predators and preys of sexual desire" (11). As a translator, Tyler creates her text through both reading and writing; every shift to the source text is both an interpretive act and an assertion of authorship. I agree with Krontiris, Uman and Bistué, and Muñoz, and examine how Tyler's translation functions on a local scale, particularly how she presents female desire through a pro-woman lens. This chapter accepts the dominant reading of Tyler's translation as proto-feminist and offers a specific example by comparing Tyler's presentation of Olivia to that of her source text, paying particular attention to how the narrator evaluates her lovesickness and connects it to narrative production and reception.

Olivia's story appears in the second half of the romance, which depicts the exploits of Rosicleer. Rosicleer reaches the English court while King Oliverio is holding a joust among the suitors for his daughter Olivia's hand. Rosicleer arrives in the company of the wise man Artimodoro, who has King Oliverio knight the unnamed young man. Rosicleer sees and falls in love with Olivia, then jousts with and defeats two giants, as well as every knight who challenges him, over the two days of the tournament. Olivia awards the prize to Rosicleer. While the plot follows Rosicleer, Tyler's narrator focuses on Olivia's perspective. In her presentation of the lovesick Olivia, Tyler shifts her source text to create a passive female strength comparable in value to masculine, active knighthood. Tyler achieves this by capitalizing on Olivia's lovesickness, depicting her excessive physical suffering so as to highlight Olivia's strength as comparable to Rosicleer's.

Olivia reacts to Rosicleer by immediately falling in love, yet despite submitting to love, Olivia maintains elements of reason. Olivia is wounded as she listens to the wise man report Rosicleer's story: "And thou, fair princess, being within the hearing of the wise man's speech, did not spare to lend thine ears to another man's tale and thine eyes to another man's bravery, that thy succours being far from thee, thy heart had not the power to repulse thy adversary, love being the only occasion of thy unrest" (144).[29] Like Angelica, Olivia is impacted through listening: she lent ears to the wise man's speech, and the narrative—not even spoken by Rosicleer, but spoken *about* Rosicleer—inspires love. While the English focuses on hearing, mentioning speech, hearing, and ears three times but eyes only once, the Spanish source focuses

[29] C.f. *Espejo*: "Y no con poca atención la hermosa infanta lo mirava; que como oviesse oído lo quel sabio le havía dicho, y su grande y estremada dispusición, con la grande riqueza de sus armas, no dexava de pensar en sí quién aquel cavallero pudiesse ser, paresciéndole quel coraçón se le alterava con su vista" (23).

instead on sight.[30] In the source text, her heart changes with the sight of him, but the English translation emphasizes her reception of the speech about his bravery, suggesting a rational judgment of his value that corresponds with her submission to love. Additionally, Olivia submits to lovesickness willingly: she actively "did not spare to lend [her] ears … and eyes" (144), suggesting the choice to surrender. Tyler adds this willingness, drawing our attention to Olivia's role in her own lovesickness. Olivia is overwhelmed partly because she is willing, and partly because she lacks power, as indicated in the statement that her succours were far away. In the *Espejo,* there is no sense of absent succours or the heart lacking power: impressed with what she sees, her heart transforms. Tyler adds in her willingness to listen as well as her inability to resist, so that Olivia's lovesickness results not just from being overwhelmed by Rosicleer, but from something about Olivia herself and the way she listens to the story. Tyler's Olivia has more agency, which Tyler codes within a culturally acceptable expression of feminine weakness and submission.

Tyler intensifies Olivia's physical suffering and explicitly pairs it with Rosicleer's, comparing her symptoms to his and elevating the value of her suffering by comparison. Watching Rosicleer duel with the giant Candramarte, everyone fears for Rosicleer,

> Amongst them, the fair and beautiful Princess Olivia, although as yet altogether unacquainted with Rosicleer, was a spectator neither careless nor curious, but as one without hope, she only wished well to Rosicleer, whose bruises were as deep-set in her

[30] Critics have observed this association between hearing and seduction or deceit in other contemporary texts as well. See Simonds, Wall.

sides as they were imprinted in Rosicleer's flesh. And every wagging of the most huge and monstrous Candramarte's weapon struck a salt tear from her fair eyes. (151)[31]

Tyler adds the bruises to the English text, wounding Olivia's body in an analogous way to Rosicleer's. Their flesh suffers the same wounds to the same degree. This dynamic is a stark contrast to Angelica, who got worse as Medoro got well, while Olivia suffers not just because Rosicleer suffers, but exactly as he suffers. Tyler increases the mutuality in Olivia and Rosicleer's experiences through shared physical symptoms. Olivia bears this pain, a pain as real and deep as Rosicleer's, with complete forbearance, shedding tears silently. She does not have access to the experience of knighthood, but in sharing Rosicleer's wounds, her body participates in the process, and she withstands the same test of fortitude that he does.

Tyler pairs Olivia's increased physical fortitude with increased verbal power. Olivia gives a public speech early in her story, exceeding the typical gendered limits on speech and agency. Olivia frames her speech as dictated by her father's charge, and modestly insists she is not up to the task: "Although far more honourable than I am able to sustain, yet by me assumed neither to resist his will nor yet against my desire, for it is commendable of itself to be a commender of virtue and never too much may I commend it" (153).[32] This comment is entirely added by Tyler; in the Spanish, Olivia simply reminds her audience of the task set by her father and performs that task. Here, Olivia says "by me assumed neither to resist his will *nor yet against my desire*" (153, emphasis added)—Tyler gives Olivia space for her own desire, not only her father's. Tyler's additions also address cultural restrictions on female judgment, specifically

[31] C.f. *Espejo*: "Pues la hermosa infanta Olivia, aunque no conosciesse a Rosicler, no del todo libre ni assosegada la batalla mirava; que muy pagada de sus altas cavallerías y buen parescer, gran dolor en su coraçón sintía, viéndole puesto a punto de se perder" (43).

[32] In an entirely different vein, the Spanish reads "Sabed, cavallero novel, quel rey mi señor me ha mandado que yo dé estas joyas de mi mano a aquel cavallero que mejor me paresciere haverlo hecho en estas fiestas" (48).

judgment about knighthood. Olivia says that in choosing who to give the jewels to, "the disposing is more than hard, because it pertaineth to judgement in deeds of arms, whereunto my sex is not sufficiently abled" (153).[33] The princess notes her gendered limitations but proceeds anyways, conferring the prize upon Rosicleer (153). Olivia further judges him after he reveals his face—a revelation that follows her request, suggesting her control not just over her own actions but also, to some extent, over Rosicleer's:

> You needed not by your favour, Sir Knight, to have been ashamed of your face. And yet such as it is, it is far inferior to your manhood; but this is beyond the compass of my commission. Now, come you near and receive at my hands the glory of your worthiness, which your good fortune yeildeth you. (153)[34]

This entire passage, in which Olivia openly and actively praises Rosicleer's face and manhood, is Tyler's addition, replacing one sentence in the *Espejo:* "Pues acercaos a mí, cavallero. Gozaréis de la gloria que vuestra bondad os otorga" (49) [Come closer to me, knight. Rejoice in the glory that your goodness grants you]. The Spanish is rather suggestive, especially paired with the narrator's description of Olivia as "toda turbada con el rezio golpe y impresión quel amor hizo en su coraçón" (49) [thoroughly moved with the hard blow and impression that love made on her heart]. In the Spanish, her response is determined by the description of her love, and the invitation that he approach and rejoice in his prize implies the larger prize of herself. In the English, Olivia takes larger liberties, evaluating the knight's performance and person. She also emphasizes that he receives his prize "at [her] hands", reinforcing her agency. Olivia is supposed to judge the tournament, but she judges him, specifically his face and manhood, and instructs

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[33] There is no comparable moment in the *Espejo*.

[34] C.f. *Espejo*: "Y toda turbada con el rezio golpe y impresión quel amor hizo en su coraçón, con la mayor consolación que pudo, dixo:
- Pues acercaos a mí, cavallero. Gozaréis de la gloria que vuestra bondad os otorga" (49).

him in how to judge himself. Olivia follows the conventions of acknowledging obedience and insisting that her task is beyond the scope of her feminine skill, but she also asserts opinions, expresses desires, and creates space for her own agency. Tyler acknowledges gendered conventions and restrictions while showing how Olivia surpasses them.

Tyler adds to Olivia's physical symptoms of lovesickness, increasing her bodily suffering, but does so in a way that empowers Olivia and foregrounds her strength. Lovesickness always hurts, but Olivia's physical symptoms go above and beyond. The narrator compares Olivia's strength in suffering love to the strength of a knight in battle. During the tournament,

> … as Rosicleer thus pled his cause at the bar, so gentle Cupid attended upon his mistress, faithfully serving him and beating into her head the remembrance of his acts and the beauty of his personage that, the windows of her desire being set wide open, she viewed her fill, wishing yet to see his face, thereby to comfort herself if his visage were answerable to his virtue. (145)[35]

The imagery is violent, as Cupid beats the memory of Rosicleer into Olivia's head. In the Spanish, Cupid's messengers tempt her with Rosicleer's compelling attributes—not a remotely aggressive image. Tyler adds the violence as well as the description of Cupid as "gentle," creating a paradox of "gentle Cupid" beating her that highlights the unusual brutality in Olivia's suffering. Unlike the Spanish original, which conveys temptation and the potential for future submission, the English frames Olivia's reaction as a violent attack by Cupid inspiring a desire to see his face, to know his virtue. This desire shifts her body, as her eyes become "windows of her

[35] C.f. *Espejo*: "La qual, en este tiempo, como los mensageros de Cupido la començassen a tentar, mirando con grande atención su tan estremada dispusición y las altas cavallerías que aquel día avía hecho, paresciéndole ansí armado ser el mejor de quantos havía visto, ya tenía abierto la puerta y rendidos todos sus sentidos, para que visto su rostro descubierto ser conforme a su gran bondad, sin ninguna resistencia pudiesse el amor entrar en su libre coraçón, a hazerla subjecta" (26).

desire" set open by Cupid's efforts so she can "view her fill." Desire is a physical suffering that Olivia withstands and responds to with the physical act of gazing upon her beloved.

Tyler's changes to the text emphasize not only Olivia's strength in love, but also her control over the experience and her willing submission to the painful symptoms of lovesickness. When Olivia sees Rosicleer's face, she willingly gives up her self and her strength:

> When the Princess Olivia saw him so fair, as already Love had made a wrack in the most secret part of her heart by the view of his knighthood, so now the same breach being made wider by the second assault in his beautiful looks, Love entered with banner displayed and finding no resistance, took possession wholly of her heart, and swore all that he found to be his true prisoners. Thus lost she her liberty. (153)[36]

The physical "wrack" in her heart results in an emotional surrender: Love "find[s] no resistance" and "t[akes] possession wholly of her heart." The note that she does not resist, added by Tyler, suggests her agency in her own imprisonment, echoing the hint of agency in her first submission to his story. She first fell lovesick upon his arrival because her heart lacked the power to resist, and here she sees his face and loses her liberty because her heart does not resist, whether or not it has the power to do so. Angelica was conquered by love, her heart softening because it was pierced. In contrast, Olivia gives in to love, letting herself be physically conquered and willingly succumbing to the disease. In the Spanish, Olivia's heart alters at the first report from the wise man (23), she opens the door to her senses and removes resistance pending seeing his face (26), and love enters because she has already left the door open (49). Love enters the open door of her heart, a much calmer image than the English. Tyler's military language makes Olivia's suffering

[36] C.f. *Espejo*: "Pues quando la infanta Olivia le vio delante sí con tanto estremo, como ya las partes de su coraçón con las altas cavallerías que le avía visto hazer fuessen abiertas, de tal manera tuvo lugar el amor de entrar en él, que del todo quedó hecha su prisionera y subjeta, sin que esperança alguna de libertad jamás tuviesse para se soltar" (49).

of love comparable to Rosicleer's knightly exploits, drawing direct parallels between their activities in a way the Spanish did not. She chooses to submit to love—perhaps a tactical defeat?—and loses her liberty willingly and gracefully.

Tyler's narrator explicitly connects Olivia's submission to love to her gender, highlighting the feminine rather than the personal in her experience and connecting her story to a broader medical truth about women and men in love:

> By so much the more in worse case than the princess was, as the infirmity of her sex did lessen her pain by yielding at the first. And the magnanimity of his courage to have the mastery did in the end make the deeper impression in his flesh, like as in nature the hardest fight is between the hardiest, and sooner shall the cannon shot deface the high towers than break through a rampire of wool or flax: and so the issue proved in him. (156)[37]

In this passage, completely added by Tyler, the narrator again notes Olivia's agency in submitting to love, her choice to yield. Because, as a woman, Olivia fully submits to the experience of Love, her sickness is both worse and better—worse in that she cannot fight it, but better in that pain decreases since she does not struggle. Rosicleer receives the deeper impression, although that impression is not in his mind but in his flesh, an unusual medical note that again suggests Tyler's efforts to frame Olivia and Rosicleer's experiences of lovesickness as somewhat compatible with reason and restraint. Olivia's yielding is here ascribed not to her individual weakness or choice, but to her gender. Differentiating lovesickness along gender lines was common in medical texts, but they focused on which sex was most prone to lovesickness rather than which suffers most. For example, Jacques Ferrand cites Galen, Chrysippus, Aristotle,

[37] There is no comparable moment in the *Espejo*.

and "daily experience" in his conclusion that "without doubt the woman is more passionate in love and more frantic and rash in her folly than man…, since the woman does not have the rational powers for resisting such strong passions" (311). Instead of presenting female lovesickness as the result of weak reasoning, as Ferrand does, Tyler reframes lovesickness as a physical weakness that leads women to yield. She also compares their suffering in love, but not the quality of their love. This passage, entirely added by Tyler, accepts contemporary claims of women's weakness, but recasts those aspersions, interpreting Olivia's experience of desire for the reader in positive terms. Olivia's feminine yielding at the first makes her case of lovesickness less painful than Rosicleer's, but no less valid or valuable.

In addition to the shift in the way the narrator positions the lovesick woman, the translation shifts the representation of the couple: they communicate. Tyler notes moments of shared experience, establishing a mutuality that is absent from the source text: "But Lord, what alteration both of you felt by the interchange of your looks, which served likewise for messengers to tell your tales betwixt you!" (144).[38] The language emphasizes similarity and exchange: both of you, interchange, likewise, betwixt. Additionally, the narrator addresses the couple directly, adding intimacy and framing the two as one unit. The pair uses looks as "messengers to tell [their] tales," communicating through eyes rather than signs or words. Love creates a language of the body and the gaze, a language that conveys not just any messages but specifically stories—and, as we saw in the *Furioso,* stories are fundamental to falling in love.

[38] C.f. *Espejo: "*Yo no con poca atención la hermosa infanta lo mirava; que como oviesse oído lo quell sabio le havía dicho, y su grande y estremada dispusición, con la grande riqueza de sus armas, no dexava de pensar en sí quién aquel cavallero pudiesse ser, paresciéndole quel coraçón se le alterava con su vista.
Que como Rosicler viesse que la mirava, con un nuevo y súbito cuidado quedó como enajenado, pareciéndole ser privado de todos sus sentidos" (23).

Tyler's version creates a reciprocity and joint experience the source text lacks: the Spanish specifies only Olivia as altered, and then focuses separately on Rosicleer's emotion upon seeing Olivia look at him. Additionally, Tyler's version draws on humoral language to emphasize the physical shifts both participants feel as they exchange looks, both of them altered by the experience. That mutual alteration benefits Rosicleer: "And yet I cannot deem but that this love so enraged his courage against Brandagedeon, as otherwise I may think he had not done so well" (144). Tyler takes what in the Spanish was Rosicleer's motivation and empowerment via Olivia's beauty and shifts it so that he takes heart as a result of their shared experience. In adding the exchange and the narrator's voice, Tyler increases the mutuality and explicitly attributes Rosicleer's success in the tournament to that mutuality.

In addition to communicating via their looks, the couple develops a language of love signs. We see this in the passage discussed above, in which the couple's looks are metaphorically described as messengers telling tales—moving stories that stir the passions. The couple is able to change each other without need for speech. Similarly, they are able to communicate without text as the episode proceeds. Rosicleer, entering for the second day of jousting, vaunts before Olivia: "But that which liked the princess best was a conceit devised in the pencel of his spear, being a burning torch, the wax dropping from it, signifying thereby the misery of lovers, with this posy underneath in Roman letters: '*Extinguo* and *Extinguor*'" (147).[39] Tyler adds the description of the emblem, which enriches the role of symbols in this passage. In the *Espejo,* Rosicleer vaunts and Olivia enjoys seeing him, but the narrator does not attempt to bridge these individual experiences. In the *Mirror*, the conceit joins the lovers in a figurative language of images. Additionally, the banner depicts a coded message that requires interpretation, implying that

[39] This passage is added by Tyler; there is nothing comparable in the Spanish.

Rosicleer can rely on Olivia's skills as a reader. The emblem's meaning is not immediately clear to the whole audience; its significance depends upon each party's interpretation and understanding. In contrast to Angelica, who reinterpreted Medoro's epic night raid in a romance vein and upset the narrator, Olivia interprets in a reliable, stable way. That interpretation is somewhat circumscribed, however; the narrator tells us what the emblem signifies, thus placing the narrator in a position of authority over the "correct" interpretation and framing Olivia as a good reader rather than an interpreter who seizes control over meaning, as Angelica did. Olivia does not determine the equation, but she is part of the equation, and the fact that she and Rosicleer share a system of communication fosters a sense of mutuality and privileged speech. But I don't want to get overly carried away with a feminist reading here—nor, it seems, does Tyler: Rosicleer designs the system of communication, and Rosicleer transmits messages. Olivia receives his communication and follows his lead, but does not respond. Her ability to read is powerful but her voice is limited.

Although Olivia yields to lovesickness, she does not yield to its cure (sexual fulfillment), and, in preserving her chastity, she asserts agency over her body and controls the way it is read. Unlike Angelica, Olivia is concerned with maintaining her chastity and successfully keeps her body inscrutable and inaccessible. The narrator praises her for this modesty, particularly in the face of the pains of lovesickness:

> But as again to the princess, in all this subjection to Love and his laws, her honesty is chiefly to be noted, which for all that both the remedy was above her capacity and the pain likely to overcome her patience, yet bore out the brunts thereof in such modesty,

rather by sufferance than striving withal, that neither could Rosicleer ever assure himself of her liking, nor any of her servants wring it out by the manner of her disease. (156)[40]

Olivia succeeds in keeping herself illegible. The pains of love are again emphasized, as we are told Olivia lacks the "capacity" to achieve a "remedy," and that the physical brunts of love were likely to overcome her patience, yet never did. While her restraint and honesty are noted briefly in the Spanish, the *Espejo* spends only a sentence on Olivia and then discusses Rosicleer's suffering. In fact, Tyler adds almost all of this paragraph—her subjection to Love, the pain beyond reasonable patience, the idea of sufferance rather than striving—, shifting the simple depiction of the honest princess to a rich portrait of a woman submitting quietly and modestly to the excessive pain of love and maintaining modesty by maintaining illegibility. Rosicleer cannot be certain Olivia returns his affections because she guards her secret well, and her symptoms do not make her disease comprehensible to her servants. She is clearly sick, but that sickness will not yield to interpretation by those around her. Olivia controls her language, her body, and the way her body signifies, and she uses that control in culturally approved ways. Her silence prioritizes her modesty over her desires, and in the face of her complete subjection to Love—a submission that the text consistently emphasizes—she upholds her honesty with patient sufferance.

Of course, at some point, Olivia must speak; when she does, she chooses the appropriate audience of her maidservant Fidelia, thereby confessing to someone who can alleviate her suffering without endangering her modesty. Tyler's narrator approves:

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[40] C.f. *Espejo*: "Y como la preciada infanta fuesse tan cuerda y honesta que ningún favor ni señal de amor, estando en su presencia, le mostrava, el amoroso desseo le causava tanta pena que como atónito y fuera de sí le parescía que andava. Y aunque muy gracioso y conversable con sus amigos era, ninguna cosa desseava más que la soledad, por poder mejor gozar de sus profundos pensamientos, sin que ninguno le impidiesse" (56-57).

> And as it is natural for the patient to communicate his grief with the physician, judging this some ease where the principal remedy wanteth, so the fair princess as unacquainted to being in such passions, not being able at the first to counsel herself otherwise, thought it best to discover her grief to one of her gentlewomen named Fidelia, the faithfullest and most secret of her household, the which many times had importuned her to know the cause of her sorrow. (166)[41]

Tyler's narrator validates Olivia's choice of speech and choice of addressee (a far cry from Ariosto's narrator). Like Angelica, Olivia expresses desire in order to alleviate her near-mortal disease. But unlike Angelica, Olivia speaks to a female confidante, not her beloved. In contrast to Angelica's speech, which the narrator portrayed as ungrateful and unfair to her other suitors, Olivia's speech is portrayed as natural, rational, and modest. This presentation is in keeping with the source text, in which the narrator similarly casts the confession as a natural choice; however, in the *Espejo*, Olivia cannot conceal her illness and this spurs her to confess it, whereas in Tyler's version, Olivia cannot counsel herself and therefore thinks it best to reveal her situation. Although a minor shift, the desire for counsel rather than the inability to conceal increases Olivia's narrative and bodily control.

Throughout the episode, Tyler's translation consistently increases Olivia's grace and strength and adds in moments of reason and intelligence absent from the original. Additionally, Tyler makes the relationship more mutual than in the source text, adding opportunities for the lovers to communicate as well as Olivia's experience of the same physical suffering as Rosicleer.

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[41] C.f. *Espejo*: "Y como sea natural cosa del paciente querer comunicar su mal, teniendo esto por el postrer descanso donde falta el principal remedio, la hermosa infanta, como nueva en semejantes passiones, ni pudo tanto encubrir su mal que no se oviesse de descubrir a una su donzella, llamada Fidelia, que era la más fiel y secretaria que tenía. A la qual, que muchas veces la importunasse que le dixesse la causa de su tristeza… " (86).

Tyler's narrator lingers over Olivia's suffering, but presents that suffering to a purpose rather than voyeuristically or sadistically. Because the text has emphasized Olivia's physical suffering, Olivia's steadfast refusal to consider cures outside marriage or marriage outside political norms, a stance she upholds throughout the text, is all the more impressive. Even after love transforms her, she remains committed to her moral and political responsibilities. Because of the changes Tyler makes, Olivia becomes a positive model of female lovesickness and an example of how lovesickness provides an opportunity for women to experience desire and show strength and forbearance (albeit restricted by gendered social norms). When suffered in accordance with cultural constraints of modesty, lovesickness offers opportunities for distinctly feminine strength.

Angelica and Olivia both fall in love through hearing, and both suffer love in a deeply physical way. Why is Olivia's lovesickness an admirable sign of strength while Angelica's evidences weakness and physical indulgence? Angelica is an "other," a princess from Cathay in an Italian text and therefore a more viable space to explore transgression. Interestingly, Olivia in the Spanish original is an "other" through being English, while in Tyler's translation, she shifts to being a representative of the culture of the author and readership, thereby taking on a new role. Angelica may pose a broader cultural threat as an outsider, while as an insider, Olivia becomes a representative of English womanhood and thus must conform to certain standards. Additionally, Tyler presents her narrator as female, creating a further kinship between the narrator and Olivia. It would be overly simplistic to say that Tyler's narrator is more sympathetic to Olivia than Ariosto's is to Angelica because the narrator is feminine; Olivia is also presented more positively and unproblematically as a character, and her love serves a fundamentally different function in the text as part of the end goal rather than a distraction from it. Olivia shares in the narrator's identity and project, while Angelica was antithetical to both, thus Olivia can be

allowed a measure of narrative control in that she furthers, rather than threatens, the text's ends. Olivia's lovesickness serves the text while Angelica's upends it; additionally, at no point does Olivia's lovesickness result in striving for control other than control over her own chastity—exactly the form of female control and agency Elizabethan culture celebrated.

In addition to judging the value of female lovesickness in opposite ways, the two texts create different connections between lovesickness and reading. In both cases, the desire to be read and sexual desire are connected—Angelica's open text is equivalent to an open body, while Olivia's modest illegibility is conflated with her chastity. While both texts draw on the humoral physiology of moving stories, Tyler's text draws less attention to the act of reading than Ariosto's. She praises the lovesick woman's ability to remain illegible, but on the whole, the female body is a full subject with agency rather than a passive object to be read and interpreted. In a broader sense, however, interpretation and reading have a significant role in the *Mirrour* because Tyler's text is a translation, and she frames that entire translation as a gendered act of reading. Women produce texts because they are readers. In Ariosto, women are read and, ideally, silenced. Men's lovesickness reduces women to objects, and when women's lovesickness makes them desiring subjects, it's a cause for outrage. Ariosto's narrator tries to mitigate Angelica's acts of reading and healing, rewriting her in his interpretations of her behavior. In contrast, in Tyler, women have a lot more control over reading, whether that's Olivia hiding her lovesickness or Tyler interpreting the *Espejo* by producing her own version of it, Although Tyler takes on an authorial role and therefore agency, framing her translation as an act of reading still genders and mitigates that agency. Women can be authors if authorship is a version of reception, but they still cannot create or express themselves freely. The same holds true with lovesickness: female desire is sanctioned when women are respondents to and receivers of love, as Olivia is, rather than

lovers in their own right, as Angelica is. Women can have agency only if that agency is a direct response to a male desire. Tyler manages to create agency within that position of respondent, to cultivate subjectivity and action within the passive position. But the conventions of gender remain intact: power to read and not be read is not the same as power to speak or create, and the power to respond to or reciprocate love is not the same as the power to initiate it. Female desire is circumscribed by male desire, a dynamic that will hold particularly true in the next section.

Interpretation as Control: Spenser's Britomart

Reading *The Faerie Queene* is supposed to be a transformative experience. As Spenser states in the Letter to Ralegh, the text's purpose is to fashion a gentleman, thus the power of stories to shape the reader is inherently implied in his project.[42] Yet as several critics have pointed out, that transformative reading experience seems to be reserved for masculine readers.[43] As we see in the case of Britomart, women in the text prove weak and ineffective readers, unable to handle either interpretation or transformation. Britomart is the only figure in this chapter who falls in love by sight rather than story, as well as the only figure unable to narrate her own experience without outside assistance; she is also the figure most insistently read and interpreted by outsiders, serving primarily as an interpretive object rather than active subject.

In *The Faerie Queene,* Britomart, disguised as a knight, travels throughout Faerieland in search of her beloved Artegall. Although she has never met him, the couple is destined to produce a great line of English monarchs leading to Queen Elizabeth. As we learn in a flashback sequence, Britomart fell in love with Artegall after seeing him in Merlin's magic mirror. She struggles with her feelings, turning first to her nurse, Glauce, and then to Merlin for assistance. After consulting with Merlin, she learns of her epic destiny and journeys to Faerieland to seek

[42] See Barbara Lewalski 757-763.
[43] See Erin Goss, esp. 260-262.

Artegall and fulfill their telos. Like Olivia, Britomart suffers lovesickness[44] for a particular poetic and dynastic purpose, thus she works in concert with, rather than against, the narrator. Yet like Angelica, Britomart's body is at the center of competing narratives and interpretations. Angelica and her narrator compete for authority over the presentation of her desire; in contrast, Britomart removes herself from the contest entirely, letting others interpret her body without her input. While Angelica willingly confesses to Medoro and Olivia willingly confesses to Fidelia, Britomart confesses under duress to both Glauce and Merlin. Not only is she unwilling, but the multiple confessions suggest that she needs multiple experts to assess and treat her illness.

Most critical work on Britomart focuses on her experience in the House of Busirane, with her episode with Malecasta and her encounters with Artegall running a close second. The episode on which this section focuses—the origin story of her lovesickness—has been largely neglected in favor of her time as a knight in Faerieland. Yet, as I will demonstrate, Britomart's initiation into love is essential to understanding her role as reader and her role within the narrative. When critics do address Britomart's lovesickness, they tend to read it in positive terms because of her privileged epic position. Marion Wells interprets Spenser as pushing back against contemporary misogynist treatments of the female body in love (221). Lesel Dawson similarly claims that Britomart's lovesickness is ennobling, akin to male lovesickness (130). These

[44] While I will treat Britomart's illness as lovesickness, other scholars have contradicted this claim. Elizabeth Spiller sees Britomart not as lovesick, but as suffering from a pseudo-pregnancy (74). Basing her argument on similar symptoms/textual evidence, Jessica Murphy argues that Britomart is not lovesick, but rather greensick, and that this poses a more threatening form of uncontrollable female desire. I accept the narrator's reference to Britomart's "loue-sicke hart" (III.ii.48.6) at face value. Moreover, I disagree with Spiller's assessment of the duration of Britomart's suffering, and disagree with Murphy's claim that Britomart cannot be lovesick over an image of a man. Love from afar was a common trope in the period; what differentiates lovesickness and greensickness is not the relative concreteness of the love object, but its individuality – Britomart is ill over one specific love object, which is the medical definition of lovesickness.

readings (which would apply quite well to Tyler's Olivia) assert a more feminist presentation of Britomart's lovesickness than Spenser's text supports. While Britomart's love is positive for the poem as a whole, the episode in which she experiences lovesickness presents her as ignorant and dependent on others to interpret her body and desires. Britomart's love only receives a place of honor in the poem after Merlin reframes her suffering as epic. Her ignorance of her own experience in this episode connects to her role as reader and interpreter elsewhere in the poem; just like she struggles to read images of erotic desire in the House of Busirane,[45] she struggles to read her own desire for Artegall. Additionally, she serves as an object to be read and interpreted without asserting any readings herself. Unlike the other women in this chapter, Britomart is unable to read her own body; lovesickness makes her body foreign and removes her authority over her interior experience. Spenser's narrator frames female lovesickness as both positive and negative: her desire is a problem, but because she lets Merlin interpret and solve that problem, her desire is incorporated into epic in a productive and appropriate way.

Britomart's experience of falling in love appears as a flashback from the perspective of her current heroic journey rather than in chronological order. The reversed order of events highlights the role of reading in ascertaining Britomart's experience: the narrator shows her symptoms before explaining the cause, thereby demanding more interpretation on the reader's part. While we watch Angelica and Olivia fall lovesick in real time, with Britomart, we learn about her history and her condition after the fact. Only after she unhorses Guyon, rescues Redcrosse, accidentally inspires Malecasta's lust, and is exposed as a woman does Redcrosse ask

[45] Jeff Dolven explores Britomart as reader in the House of Busirane and sees this as an exploration of the possible connection between ignorance and innocence (166-171). Susanne Wofford likewise reads Britomart as a figure for the reader in the House of Busirane (9), and connects this to the issue of allegory vs. figure. Patrick Cheney and Judith Anderson interpret her abilities as a reader more positively, with the House of Busirane as a pivotal point in her readerly education (Cheney 24-25, Anderson 81-82).

Britomart why she is traveling in this land disguised as a knight. Her reaction suggests lovesickness, but only suggests it, leaving the reader responsible for drawing conclusions:

> Thereat she sighing softly, had no powre
> To speake a while, ne ready answere make,
> But with hart-thrilling throbs and bitter stowre,
> As if she had a feuer fit, did quake,
> And euery daintie limbe with horror shake,
> And euer and anone the rosy red,
> Flasht through her face, as it had beene a flake
> Of lightning, through bright heuen fulmined;
> At last the passion past she thus him answered. (III.ii.5)

Britomart sighs, cannot speak, sobs, shakes, and changes color, all in standard lovesickness fashion. The narrator particularly emphasizes the loss of speech, saying she had no power to speak as well as that she could not make a ready answer. Yet we witness these symptoms without learning their cause, an inverse of the order in the other women's stories. Additionally, the description of her symptoms compares them to a "feuer fit," with the medical analogy inviting diagnosis and interpretation. The narrator shows us signs of her body's illness prior to offering us a guide to their interpretation or an explanation of their cause.

Because the narrator highlights the power of language, he sets the reader up to pay attention to what is said, how it's said, and how speech affects the body. Before we know what causes Britomart's physical response, we learn that words in praise of Artegall alleviate it:

> His feeling wordes her feeble sence much pleased,
> And softly sunck into her molten hart;

Hart that is inly hurt, is greatly eased

With hope of thing, that may allegge his smart;

For pleasing wordes are like to Magick art.... (III.ii.15.1-5)

The placement of the hurt in her heart insinuates that she is lovesick, but the word "love" still has not been used. Before the narrator identifies the cause of Britomart's lovesickness or names the disease as such, he describes the symptoms and how they are eased. Those treatments specifically relate to language's effect upon the body: words physically enter her heart and provide pleasure and ease, functioning akin to magic. The power of language over her body parallels the impact of language on Angelica and Olivia, but the order of events differs; while language causes the other women's loves, for Britomart, it helps cure it, or at least alleviate its symptoms. This shifts the role of language in the narrative of lovesickness, emphasizing its restorative powers rather than its contagious qualities. In the *Furioso,* language is a site of competition for control between Angelica and narrator. It is dangerous and explosive, and silencing female language proves to be the narrator's preferred strategy. In the *Mirror,* both the narrator and Olivia show textual control that negotiates within—but does not actively subvert—patriarchal norms. Language incites desire, but because the lover's silence controls that desire, it poses no narrative threat. Here, language does not incite love, but soothes its pains and situates it within a productive context. Rather than serving as a *pharmakon,* both contagion and cure, language in this episode is purely palliative.

In the flashback sequence that conveys Britomart's experience of falling in love, she remains passive, with the language emphasizing love as an experience imposed on her from the outside. The description of love's initial physical impact as she gazes in the magic mirror is unconventional, compared to grafting rather than the traditional arrow:

Sith him whylome in *Brytayne* she did vew,

To her reueald in a mirrhour playne,

Whereof did grow her first engraffed payne,

Whose root and stalke so bitter yet did taste,

That but the fruit more sweetnes did contayne,

Her wretched dayes in dolour she mote waste,

And yiled the pray of loue to loathsome death at last. (III.ii.17.3-8)

The narrator describes the initiation of her lovesickness as a growth of "engraffed payne." In engrafting, a section of a stem with leaf buds is inserted into the stock of a tree (as opposed to growing a fruit tree from the seeds, which will result in a variation on the original fruit rather than a replication of it). The grafting image suggests potential productivity.[46] Britomart's lovesickness, imposed upon her body from the outside, has the capacity to bear fruit. Additionally, as Vin Nardizzi points out, grafting was associated with poetry, and both were artificial means of creation, of imitating or augmenting nature. The sweet fruit produced by Britomart's bitter grafted pain could be literary production or biological reproduction, either a result of her lovesickness. In both cases, the image of grafting implies an imposition from the outside; Britomart does not create on her own, but is the tree implanted upon, a vessel for production who cannot independently produce anything herself. Grafting emphasizes the outside hand that enables the production, limiting Britomart's role in the sweetness or death that will grow out of her current condition. While love marks the interior turn of the desiring subject for both Angelica and Olivia, with Britomart, the pain grows inside her but the narrator does not

[46] For more on grafting as a natural and artificial process in the early modern imagination, see Nardizzi 93-95.

suggest any accompanying inward turn or subjective awareness, emphasizing the outside imposition but not the internal shift. The description of her falling in love mitigates her agency.

The depiction of Britomart's lovesickness continues to minimize her self-awareness. Britomart looks at Artegall's image, but does not recognize its effect upon her:

> The Damzell well did vew his Personage,
> And like well, ne further fastned not,
> But went her way; ne her vnguilty age
> Did weene, vnwares, that her vnlucky lot
> Lay hidden in the bottome of the pot;
> Of hurt vnwist most daunger doth redound:
> But the false Archer, which that arrow shot
> So slyly, that she did not feele the wound,
> Did smyle full smoothly at her weetlesse wofull stound. (III.ii.27)

This stanza contains an astonishing number of negations: unguilty, unwares, unlucky, unwist, did not feele, weetlesse. Britomart does not understand what she is experiencing, with her innocence bordering on ignorance. While Angelica and Olivia struggled to conceal their loves, Britomart is unable to even identify her struggle. Lovesickness symptoms are well established in the zeitgeist, thus most patients struggle to conceal them, knowing how easy the disease is to read from the outside. Britomart, in contrast, cannot read her own circumstance. The narrator implicitly asks us to be more aware of Britomart's situation than she herself is, to use our wits as she fails to use hers. The reader witnesses Cupid slyly shoot his shot, putting the reader in an almost conspiratorial position. As a bystander, the reader has more knowledge of Britomart's body than she does herself. Far from creating a sense of interiority by giving her a secret pain to conceal,

love's wound emphasizes her lack of an interior turn, her failure to interrogate or even recognize her own experience. Lovesickness marks Britomart's body, leaving it waiting to be read, but that reader will not be Britomart herself.

The poem consistently emphasizes Britomart's failures of interiority and self-knowledge in her experience of lovesickness. Britomart looks into a magic mirror without understanding what she is looking for or at, suggesting her limited visual perception and comprehension. Similarly, it is at night, when sight and perception are most limited, that Britomart experiences her first symptoms of love. Britomart lays down to sleep, **"**But sleepe full far away from her did fly: / In stead thereof sad sighes, and sorrowes deepe / Kept watch and ward about her warily…" (III.ii.28.5-7). Her suffering is described with language of vision: sighs and sorrows keep watch and ward, suggesting that her symptoms have more vision or insight than she herself does. Additionally, her symptoms use that power of vision to watch her, as they are externalized "about her" rather than within her. When the narrator does attribute vision to Britomart, he suggests that she sees false visions. In the moments when she is able to sleep,

> Streight way with dreames, and with fantastic sight
> Of dreadfull things the same was put to flight,
> That oft out of her bed she did astart,
> As one with vew of ghastly feends affright:
> Tho gan she to renew her former smart,
> And thinke of that fayre visage, written in her hart. (III.ii.29.3-8)

Her sight is "fantastic" and located in her dreams. She is thinking about "that fayre visage," but that image is "written in her hart," making it not an image but a textual product. Although the lover's name or image engraved in the heart is not an unusual trope, the pairing of "visage" with

the term "written" complicates matters. The language of text overlays the language of vision and images, framing Britomart's heart as a *tabula rasa* on which her lover's image is engraved. "Written" implies text rather than image, thereby suggesting the name is inscribed on the heart. But Britomart does not know the name that goes with the visage. She has no language to put to her love object, a fact foregrounded by the references to writing. Britomart's lovesickness is, at least at this point, nonverbal and largely inaccessible, a stark contrast to the previous two figures discussed in this chapter.

Another character is the first to name Britomart's experience as love, which reinforces Britomart's passivity and limited comprehension. Her Nurse, Glauce, notices her sleepless nights and ventures a diagnosis:

> Ay me, how much I feare, least loue it bee,
> But if that loue it be, as sure I read
> By knowen signes and passions, which I see,
> Be it worthy of thy race and royall sead… (III.ii.33.1-4)

Glauce reads Britomart's body and interprets the "knowen signes and passions" that she sees as indicative of love. Britomart's body offers these clearly visible external indicators that Glauce then interprets. Glauce's ability to read both signs and passions suggests a privileged knowledge and understanding of Britomart's state—one Britomart herself lacks. The passage emphasizes Glauce's act of reading and seeing, pointing to the "knowen signes" that any reader could easily identify. Britomart, by comparison, lacks not just reading and interpretive skills, but basic knowledge of signs and their meanings. Britomart is unable to identify her interior experience while Glauce easily identifies it based on external signs, reinforcing the sense of Britomart as object to be read rather than desiring, self-aware subject.

Once Glauce has named her fear that Britomart is in love, after some hemming and hawing, Britomart gets to the heart of the problem—it's not that the love object is unworthy of her, but that the love object may not be a person at all. Britomart's tortuous language reflects her confusion about what she feels and toward whom:

> But since thy faithfull zele lets me not hyde
> My crime, (if crime it be) I will it reed.
> Nor Prince, nor pere it is, whose loue hath gryde
> My feeble brest of late, and launched this wound wyde.
>
> Nor man it is, nor other liuing wight;
>
> For then some hope I might vnto me draw,
> But th'only shade and semblant of a knight,
> Whose shape or person yet I neuer saw,
> Hath me subiected to loues cruell law: (III.ii.37.6-38.5)

She frames her love as a crime but qualifies that assessment with the parenthetical "if crime it be," adding a level of uncertainty to her description. Additionally, she says she will "reed" her crime, suggesting that she must interpret the text of her experience before she can communicate it to others. The naming and unnaming, paired with the verb "reed," highlight the role of interpretation. Similarly, she provides a series of statements of what her love object is *not* before revealing what it *is*: not prince, nor peer, nor man, nor other living wight, until finally we learn it is a "shade and semblant." Britomart hesitates and hedges, unwilling to commit to language about an experience that she is still uncertain of: "vnwares the hidden hooke with baite I swallowed" (III.ii.38.8). She does not understand either her love object or the process whereby she fell lovesick until after the fact, when she is already subjected to love. The emphasis on

love's law also hints at the role of reading and text: the law is a written code that restricts and contains the body and its actions in society. Her body has been shaped by a new text, and she frames herself as passive in becoming subject to this text and its control. It is this law that would make her experience a crime, and her lack of familiarity with this law leaves her uncertain about what exactly constitutes a crime. Britomart is reluctant and passive in her account of her own experience, drawing attention to her lack of understanding and minimizing her agency as either author or reader.

As if to overcompensate for her lack of awareness when she fell in love, Britomart describes her lovesick symptoms in gory detail:

> Sithens it hath infixed faste hold
> Within my bleeding bowels, and so sore
> Now ranckleth in this same fraile fleshley mould,
> That all mine entrails flow with poisonous gore,
> And th'vlcer groweth daily more and more;
> Ne can my ronning sore finde remedee… (III.ii.39.1-6)

This description is graphic: bowels, fleshly mold, entrails, ulcer. She depicts her lovesickness as excessively material, marked by disease and decay in terms that go well beyond the usual languishing. Lovesickness customarily has a gentle, aesthetic quality—think of Angelica wasting away like a snowflake in the sun, delicate and pale. Additionally, the traditional bodily symptoms of lovesickness are externalized and performative, e.g., pallor, tears, sighing. Internal bodily symptoms like the running ulcer described here are far less common. Even Olivia, who had more physical suffering than average, suffered from visible bruises rather than the internal, invisible pains Britomart describes here. Melancholy was sometimes associated with stomach

pain,[47] but the focus on bowels, mold, ulcers, and running sores would be unusual for melancholy and even more so for love melancholy. Her language about her body's experience of lovesickness runs so far afield from the norm that critics such as Jessica Murphy and Elizabeth Spiller have concluded this is not lovesickness at all, but some other condition. Yet as we know, Britomart is not a strong reader, and her descriptions and interpretations are unreliable. I contend that this passage demonstrates her inability to properly recognize and voice her own physical experience. The way she frames her body here is excessive and toxic, lacking understanding of her disease and its manifestations. Her flawed understanding of her own body requires reframing and reorienting, thus the narrator and outside interpreters prove more reliable guides to Britomart's internal experience of love than Britomart herself.

Adding to the sense of Britomart's confusion, the subsequent stanza recounts an immaterial languishing that is more in keeping with conventional lovesickness, and thus entirely incongruous with the bodily experience she described:

> But wicked fortune mine, though minde be good,
> Can have no end, nor hope of my desire,
> But feed on shadowes, whiles I die for food,
> And like a shadow wexe, whiles with entire
> Affection, I doe languish and expire.
> I fonder, then *Cephisus* foolish child,
> Who hauing vewed in a fountaine shere
> His face, was with the loue thereof beguyld;
> I fonder loue a shade, the body far exyld. (III.ii.44)

[47] See Sullivan, especially chapter 3.

In the previous stanza she was too material, all blood and gore, while here she loses her body, fading away in an abstract and romanticized fashion. She feeds on shadows, dies for food, and, like a shadow, languishes, an experience she compares to that of Narcissus. In loving an insubstantial form she herself loses substance. We see this most in the final line's ambiguous modifier: is it her body or the shade's that is far exiled? The comparison to Narcissus is particularly salient here, as the line between her own body (or lack thereof) and her love object's body (or lack thereof) blurs: to be like Narcissus is to love not just an insubstantial image, but an insubstantial image *of self.* Britomart was gazing in a mirror when she first encountered her love object, and fears she is losing herself in an image that not only has no outside body, but is not "other." This is a much more complicated problem than the parentage issue Glauce fears Britomart suffers from; rather than a problem of who the beloved is, this is a problem of what the beloved might be and how that beloved exists in relation to Britomart. The problem is uncertainty and immateriality; the solution lies not in sex with the beloved or in the relief of confessing to a confidante, but in authority and certainty about her body, her beloved's, and the relationship between the two.

While Glauce easily read Britomart's lovesickness, the nature of her love proves more complex than expected, with the initial reading requiring repeated revision and reinterpretation. Glauce vows to help her find the knight and tries to heal Britomart. She makes these efforts with confidence, but she fails, and the narrator explains that "loue, that is in gentle brest begonne, / No ydle charmes so lightly may remoue" (III.ii.51.6-7). With no cure, Britomart wastes away:

> She shortly like a pyned ghost became,
> Which long hath waited by the Stygian strond.
> That when old *Glauce* saw, for feare least blame

Of her miscarriage should in her be fond,

She wist not how t'amend, nor how it to withstond. (III.ii.52.4-8)

In seeing Britomart's body worsen, Glauce begins to doubt her remedies and loses interpretive authority over Britomart's body. Interestingly, Britomart's body is described in a simile and classical allusion before we move into Glauce's sight and loss of understanding; perhaps as Britomart becomes more literary, she requires assistance from a more lettered authority. The narrator, then, maintains omniscience regarding Britomart's condition and Glauce's failings not just because he is the narrator, but because as narrator, he has a privileged literary role and literary knowledge. Britomart's body is a text, and it needs a writer rather than a healer; writing itself serves as a form of healing, a rewriting of what is wrong in the body.

As it becomes clear that Glauce's reading of Britomart's body requires revision, she recruits a new narrative authority to diagnose and treat Britomart. Glauce suggests that they go see Merlin, who made the mirror in which Britomart saw her beloved. As Britomart remains silent, Glauce tells Merlin she cannot read Britomart's illness: "what thing it mote bee, / Or whence it sprong, I can not read aright: / But this I read, that but if remedee, / Thou her afford, full shortly I her dead shall see" (III.iii.16.5-8). She can read the disease, but cannot read it *aright,* emphasizing the role of interpretation. Either unable or unwilling to diagnose the disease, Glauce nevertheless has opinions about how to cure it: when Merlin says all Britomart needs is "leach-crafte" (III.iii.17.5), Glauce disagrees, saying no leach's skill could ameliorate this "deepe engraffed ill" (III.iii.18.3). The lettered, male authority and the female folk healer vie back and forth in an extended exchange, offering competing readings of who Britomart is and what she suffers from. Glauce knows more than she shares, trying to conceal Britomart's identity and love from the male authority. She willingly seeks out Merlin's support, but hesitates to fully reveal

the secrets of Britomart's female, lovesick body. Merlin is undeterred, easily identifying her illness, identity, and cure, indicating his superior insight into the situation despite this feminine misdirection. Of particular interest for our purposes is the fact that at no point does Britomart interject. She lets the two figures compete in assessments of her body without weighing in on her own experience. Authority arises not from experience, but from interpretation, a skill Britomart herself lacks.

While the other characters compete to interpret her body, Britomart remains silent, but her body speaks for her, confirming Merlin's authority. After Merlin identifies Britomart, the narrator tells us that "The doubtfull Mayd, seeing her selfe descryde, / Was all abasht, and her pure yuory / Into a cleare Carnation suddeine dyde" (III.iii.20.1-3). Merlin descries Britomart, correctly reading and naming her, and Britomart affirms his reading through her involuntary bodily response. "Descry" suggests both the act of observing and the act of proclaiming something publicly, making it known. The word entails Merlin's understanding as well as his speech, and both make Britomart blush, abashed. Her blush is compared to Aurora rising at dawn and blushing because "she did lye / All night in old *Tithonnus* frosen bed, / Whereof she seemes ashamed inwardly" (III.iii.20.5-7). The simile invokes a sexual shame as well as a failure of intellect: Aurora, the goddess of dawn, loved the mortal Tithonus, and wished for his immortality, but forgot to request eternal youth. Britomart's blush at Merlin's identification of her is comparable to the blush of a woman leaving the bed of her old lover, suggesting a sense of shame in the love object that resounds back as a sense of shame in one's self. The language emphasizes this inward turn of the shame, but does not commit to this reading, using the hedging language of "seeming." Aurora's blush is read and interpreted hesitantly, thus by extension, Britomart's blush may not be as simple as it appears. Yet without any language, the blush is all

we have to go on, the body speaking but leaving itself open to interpretation. We can read it by semblance or simile, interpreting the sign based on similar signs rather than any deeper knowledge about Britomart's experience. Our reading strategy is limited, informed more by literary precedent and comparison than by specific, localized knowledge.

Although she never reasserts authority over her own body, Britomart's text does confirm Merlin's authority as she accepts the narrative within which he places her. Britomart first speaks after Merlin's second, longer prophecy, when she asks about her progeny:

> Ah but will heuens fury neuer slake,
> Nor vengaunce huge relent it selfe at last?
> Will not long misery late mercy make,
> But shall their name for euer be defaste,
> And quite from off the earth their memory be raste? (III.iii.43.5-9)

Afraid that their names will be defaced, Britomart wants a testament to her progeny, a living name to carry on their memory. Britomart shows an epic concern for memory and lineage, moving from confusion about her body's experience to an absolute commitment to a textual legacy for her descendants. Merlin has reframed her narrative, taking Glauce's romance suggestion that she is lovesick due to supernatural evil and rewriting it as an epic prophecy in which her lovesickness will lead to union with Artegall and a long-lasting dynasty. Britomart's response accepts this generic reformulation of her story and her place within that story. Based on Merlin's prophecy, she will not only re-genre but re-gender herself, adopting the guise of a knight. In that assumed masculine role, Britomart takes on a more active and assertive position, pursuing Artegall and her destiny across Faerieland. Until then, she is unable to read her own destiny, unable to understand her own body. Merlin maintains interpretive power.

Throughout Britomart's initiation into love and desire, her inability to read and her failure to turn inward are emphasized. She fails to interrogate and thus to articulate her experience coherently, leaving her at the mercy of competing interpretations by outside readers. Their authority and the reader's view is privileged over her own. Her only real action is to accept Merlin's account of her experience and the narrative it belongs in, as she accepts his diagnosis, his identification of her, and his script for her future actions. It could be argued that Merlin's authority comes not from Britomart's lack, but from his position as a famed wizard whose knowledge is, by definition, superior. However, Britomart's interpretive powers are consistently lacking throughout the poem, most notably when faced with the tapestries in the house of Malecasta. Britomart has gender troubles and reading troubles that, I contend, are linked to each other and to her lovesickness. We can see in this early episode the gendered tensions around authority and the female body, as Glauce and Merlin compete to define Britomart's body, identity, and significance. This competition centers on how Britomart's body is read, a heightened issue because of her own failures as a reader. Julia Walker has pointed to Britomart's inability to read the tapestries in Malecasta's castle as "a failure of awareness which amounts to suppression of knowledge" (178), specifically sexual knowledge. We similarly see this failure of awareness in her sexual awakening in the mirror episode. As men and insightful readers, Merlin and the narrator have the most authority over the text of Britomart's body, while Britomart herself has limited authority over both body and text, a problem that is gendered and sexualized. The failures of her sexual knowledge also relate to her allegorical function: Britomart symbolizes chastity. Can chastity be a good reader of bodies? Or is chastity fundamentally dependent on curtailing particular connotations, evading sexual undertones, reading bodies only in an acceptable, decorous mode? Spenser presents Britomart's knowledge of bodies, including her

own, as severely limited, and her desire as debilitating lovesickness that requires the extreme cure of adopting a false identity. Recruited into epic, she takes on a masculine position and an active role, but still maintains her limited reading abilities. Additionally, in adopting the masculine guise, she evades the problem of her desiring female body by repressing it still further; rather than pursuing self-knowledge and self-awareness, she only gets more out of touch with her own body and creates a further discrepancy between exterior and interior, between semblance and reality. Merlin's solution repositions Britomart in a new story but does not help her read her own body or desires. She is an actor in his narrative rather than the author of her own.

These three case studies explore how sixteenth-century women were imagined to fall lovesick, what happens once they're in love, and how that love gets judged. In all cases, speech is integrally connected to desire. For Angelica and Olivia, speech causes them to fall in love. For all three, there is a significant burden of silence; speech is essential to achieving a cure but speech is, culturally, an untenable option. The only one to speak of her desire to her beloved—Angelica—achieves her sexual desires, but is roundly condemned for this, and even if we take the narrator's condemnation with a grain of salt, the destabilizing force of her desire remains palpable. Partly because of this mandate of silence, women's bodies also serve as texts to be read, with their symptoms speaking for them in ways they are not allowed to speak for themselves. Interestingly, women's bodies are never read successfully by the beloved, only by the narrator or the confidante. Culturally and medically, women's bodies were marked by inaccessibility and secrecy in the Renaissance. Their bodies require a skilled reader and interpreter; in Spenser, even the woman herself is not considered competent to read and interpret her body. This illegibility opens up the space for women's bodies to be rewritten and written over. Ariosto's narrator tries to impose silence and illegibility on Angelica by talking over her,

and then removing her from the poem entirely. He actively manages the reader's judgment and silences his narrative competition, playing the role of an over-anxious author who can allow no space for potentially subversive readings in his text (a role the poem gently pokes fun at). Spenser's narrator rewrites Britomart's account of her own experience and incorporates her desire into male-dominated, patriarchal epic. In order to move towards her happy ending, Britomart has to become more masculine, accepting an epic quest in disguise as a male knight. At no point does she gain reading or interpretive power, and this failure of reading directly relates to failures of authorship and agency. Spenser's narrator steers his reader carefully, and Merlin's guidance of Britomart mirrors that process, with a strong authorial presence managing readerly interpretation every step of the way. In Tyler's text, Olivia's body remains unreadable, and this illegibility is essential to the narrator's praise: unread and uninterpreted, Olivia maintains control over herself and her story, a fact the narrator admires and codes as feminine. This is perhaps a nod to Tyler's own preface, which depicts the female translator as both reader and author: creating a new text is the logical extension of being a reader, so the best way to avoid being written is to avoid being read.

This chapter has explored how narrators frame and respond to lovesick women, arguing that they present the disease in ways that foreground the controlling power of interpretation and that uphold contemporary assumptions about patriarchy. The next chapter turns to women writers and how they represent lovesickness in the first person. Chapter Two examines instances of the lovesick female body speaking for and representing itself. While this chapter has explored tensions between narrator and character, akin to those between author and reader, the next chapter turns to broader anxieties about misreading as narrative control and the direct bodily consequences such misreadings can have.

Chapter Two

Speaking as a Woman: Women Writers and Lovesickness

This chapter analyzes how two female writers connect lovesickness to female interiority and a female authorial voice: the first depicts lovesickness as enabling the voice, the second as silencing it. Gaspara Stampa (1523-1554), writing in the Petrarchan tradition, connects her lovesick pain to her poetic prowess, using her suffering in love to validate her authorial voice. Although she plays with the conventions of pain enabling authorship, in leaving her descriptions of pain abstract, she shifts the focus from body to mind and voice, thus subverting the standard early modern association of men with the mind and women with the body. María de Zayas y Sotomayor (1590-1661), writing in the Boccaccian tradition, dismisses any notion that lovesickness is valuable or validating. She instead presents a woman silenced by love and liberated by an interior, religious turn—still facilitated by illness, but emphatically *not* lovesickness. Both writers use illness to create space for female interiority and the female voice; while Stampa roots that authority in lovesickness, Zayas dismisses lovesickness as a source of authority and condemns it as dangerous.

Critics have observed that both writers invoke female communities as alternatives to heterosexual desire. Heterosexual desire can create same-sex community: lovesickness often results in confession to a confidante, and with both Olivia and Britomart, heterosexual desire deepens female friendships. But this is usually a temporary situation, with heterosexual bonds ultimately taking precedence over, and replacing, homosocial friendship. In the conventional pattern, lovesickness requires a helper or friend, but only as a stopgap until the sexual cure is achieved; Stampa and Zayas do not follow this convention. Stampa addresses female readers and

often asks them to mourn or join in a chorus with her, using her pain as a gathering force. However, she also uses her pain to emphasize her superiority over other women. Women provide a foil for her speaker's excellence, putting into relief the intensity of her pain and the superiority of her poetry. In contrast, Zayas' text creates a space in which only women are allowed authority and concludes with women selecting the female community of a convent over the world of men. Lovesickness creates female rivalry and ruins friendships, while other illness facilitates female friendship. That friendship emboldens the voice of the protagonist and leads her to remove herself from the sexual economy by entering a convent. For Zayas, part of the problem with lovesickness is its disruption of female bonds. For Stampa, this is less a problem than an opportunity to set herself apart from—more specifically, above—other women.

Making Herself an Exception: Female Lovesickness and Voice in Gaspara Stampa

Stampa's *Rime,* published posthumously in 1554, consists of 310 love poems, primarily sonnets, tracing the vicissitudes of the speaker's love affairs. Her primary love object is the Count Collaltino, who is above the speaker in status and is often absent, situations she laments throughout the sequence. She also falls in love with a second man late in the sequence, an unusual incident in a Petrarchan sonnet sequence that prioritizes her experience of her desire over its object. As is typical of a Petrarchan sequence, her desire for her beloved and her desire to produce poetry are connected, even conflated. Stampa's longing for poetic glory is explicit and insistent throughout the sequence, as is her lovesick pain and suffering.

Critics often describe Stampa as critiquing the masculine structures of Petrarchan discourse in order to create new opportunities for female speech. Patricia Phillippy argues that Stampa turns away from the Petrarchan repentance narrative and creates a distinctly female dialogic/choric voice, combining Petrarchan tropes with the Ovidian model of the *Heroides* (93-

94); like Juliana Schiesari before her, Phillippy sees Stampa as creating space not just for her own female voice, but for women's voices in general. More recently, Fiora Bassanese argues that Stampa uses the opportunity for reflection that Petrarchan poetry invites while also manipulating it to foreground her gender (163-164). These studies have usefully demonstrated Stampa's learned, intertextual approach, as well as the gender dynamics that inform it. This chapter broadens the focus from Petrarchism; while this chapter does examine the Petrarchan influence on Stampa, it considers textual allusions and generic conventions as one subset of a larger strategy for how the speaker communicates desire. I find that lovesickness authorizes and validates the sonnet sequence's speaker. Additionally, looking at how the female lyric speaker navigates gender independently rather than in contrast to a male lyric "I" reveals the ways in which Stampa as poet falls short of the feminism many critics have attributed to her.

Stampa's speaker elevates her voice beyond the constraints culturally imposed on women, but does not similarly celebrate or even condone the female body. Some critics have noted that Stampa allows space for the body and eroticism in a way Petrarch fundamentally does not (Bassanese 165-168); while this is true overall, the body emphasized in the sequence is not Stampa's, but her beloved's. In his work on Stampa's use of the hagiographic tradition, Justin Vitiello suggests that the speaker presents herself as concrete and the body of her beloved, the Count, as abstract. However, I read her presentation of her body as abstract, or at least vague. She references her body's pain but does not ground it physically in any details, in contrast to the Count's body, which the speaker anatomizes in classic blazon fashion. He has eyes, hands, cheeks; she has pain, but no specific symptoms like an aching heart, a lack of appetite, or an inability to sleep. By analyzing her representation of her lovesick body, her representation of her lover's body, and the connection she establishes between these bodies and the speaker's voice,

we see that the lovesick body's pain validates her poetry. However, while she frequently references the lovesick body's pain and suffering, she avoids representing the body itself, a fact brought into relief by her frequent representation of the male body. In medieval and early modern constructions of gender, women are frequently associated with the body and men with the mind (Potkay et al 13). The carnality of women contrasts the reason of men. Stampa uses the trope of lovesickness to acknowledge a corporeal experience while avoiding the language of corporeality, subverting the usual gender dynamic by aligning the female speaker with the mind and the male beloved with the body.

In subverting the male-mind and female-body associations, Stampa's text has the potential to make a broad feminist statement, which some critics argue she does. Critics have claimed that Stampa, both as speaker and as poet, challenges restrictions to female authority and essentialist models of womanhood.[48] Yet feminist readings of Stampa obscure the extent to which the speaker exalts her own voice by excluding other female voices. While Stampa's speaker certainly challenges the restrictions placed on her as a woman, she also presents herself as exceptional. Stampa draws attention to the limitations placed on women, but she defends only her speaker against these limitations, not her sex as a whole. Additionally, while the speaker gathers a community of women in many of her poems, that community is entirely focused on her. Stampa's speaker's lovesickness grants her poetic authority, allowing her to subvert gender tropes; the same allowance is not granted to other women in her text, making this not a general

[48] Fiora Bassanese argues that the rhetoric of Petrarchism grants Stampa's speech authority, and she uses that authority to express herself and her gender in ways that challenge the canonical Petrarchan approach to women. Judith Rose argues that Stampa challenges essentialist versions of womanhood and frames writing as the essential response to the situation of the woman. Also looking at the connection between female body and feminine discourse, Mary B. Moore argues that Stampa creates a feminine subjectivity through her use of wit, claiming that her self-deprecating attentions to her female body challenge gendered concepts of matter and form, uniting both male and female under her feminine discourse (93).

statement about the female body and mind, but rather a specific assertion of the power of lovesickness to elevate her female voice. Stampa's speaker emphasizes her pain to elevate her voice while keeping her body abstract. This strategy reverses the gender trope associating men with the mind and women with the body. In addition, the speaker creates a gendered dynamic between herself and her audience, and especially other poets as audience. *She* exceeds gender norms, at least with her female audience, but forces those norms on other women.

From her first sonnet, the speaker defines her poetry by the pain it expresses: "…in queste meste rime, / In questi mesti, in questi oscuri accenti / Il suon de gli amorosi miei lamenti, / E de le pene mie tra l'altre prime" (1.1-4) [in these troubled rhymes, / in these troubled and these dark accents, / the sound of my amorous laments / and sufferings that vanquish all others']. Her love's pain shapes her poetry, her amorous laments and sufferings, as particularly emphasized by the references to accents and sounds. Stampa's speaker's production of poetry depends on her pain, and she asserts the value of her poetry based on the pain and suffering that inspire her rhymes: "Poi che la lor cagione è sì sublime" (1.8) [for what / gives rise to my laments is so sublime.]

Even when she draws on the modesty topos and expresses frustrations with an inability to write or express herself, her pain remains a source of validation, a justification for her desire to speak. She roots the need for justification in her gendered body, as sonnet 8 indicates:

> Se così come sono abietta, e vile
> Donna, posso portar sì alto foco;
> Perche non debbo haver' almeno un poco
> Di ritraggerlo al mondo, e vena e stile? (8.1-4)

[If, a lowly, abject woman, I / can carry within so sublime a flame, / why shouldn't I draw out at least / a little of its style and vein to show the world?]

The opening reference to her vile, abject womanhood reminds us that her gendered body was culturally considered anathema to the production of brilliant verse. She frames this association not as a falsehood, but as all the more reason to be impressed that she carries the potential for such verses, loving more deeply and sublimely than her gender should. In framing the poetic inspiration as a metaphorical flame carried within the lowly body, the text distinguishes the female vessel from the sublimity it contains, accepting the premise that the female body is lesser while asserting the speaker's capacity to exceed those limits. The speaker's experience of painful love is restrained, practical, and presentational: the pain has a purpose. The body is relevant as a means to justify the text, a way to evade criticism for entering into this poetic position as a woman. Love's pain gives her something worth saying, yet, she laments, it does not help her speak:

S'Amor con novo, insolito focile,
Ov'io non potea gir, m'alzò à tal loco;
Perche non può non con usato gioco
Far la pena e la penna in me simile? (8.5-8)
[If love has lit a new and unheard-of spark / to raise me up to a place I'd never gained, / why, with equally uncommon skill, / can't it make my pen and pain the same?]

It is love's task to elevate her poetry just as it has increased her suffering. Even as she attributes her poetic spark to Love's control, we get a sense of immense interior control, of her confidence in her ability to manage and channel this poetic flame. Additionally, in saying that love fails to elevate her pen, she implies that the products of her pen are her own, not attributed to love.

Rather than objectifying her, lovesickness makes her a subject, and she maintains the subject position by minimizing her body while connecting her pain to her voice and writing.

Stampa's speaker consistently resists portraying her physical experience in concrete details throughout the sequence; she repeatedly references pain, but leaves that pain largely in the abstract. In sonnet 27, she writes,

> Altri mai foco, stral, prigione, ò nodo
> Si vivo, e acuto, a sì aspra, e sì stretto
> Non arse impiagò, tenne, e strinse il petto,
> Quanto'l mi' ardente, acuto, acerba, e sodo. (27.1-4)
> [Fire this lively, arrows this sharp, / prison or knots this bitter and constraining / never burned or punctured, confined and tightened / any breast as mine: sharp, bitter, firm, and ardent.]

She describes her intense burning pain, the sharp arrows, the constraining and bitter knots, and only at the end situates them in her breast. The speaker describes the pain, but delays locating it in her body, elaborating on the pain while still resisting the material, bodily location of that pain. It is also worth noting that although the translation "breast" has a predominantly feminine referent, the Italian "petto" is gender neutral, meaning chest or breast; thus, when she locates her pain in a body part, she picks one that could be gendered but describes it in neutral terms, eliding her gender even as she mentions it. Stampa's speaker consistently keeps her body vague, and the manner in which she does that here, paired with the frequent material details she provides about the male body, suggests that part of the reason for keeping this body vague is gendered. To keep herself a subject rather than an object, she avoids rooting her identity in anything physical and material.

This pattern of evasion continues throughout the sequence. The speaker's experience follows fairly standard lovesickness tropes: she suffers, her heart is wounded, she burns, she weeps, she sighs. However, she skips the more concrete physical symptoms of lack of appetite and insomnia, keeping her symptoms more passionate and abstract. Additionally, while she occasionally burns and freezes, far more often, she just burns. Fire is a constant image throughout the poems, both for her suffering in love and for her poetic inspiration, but it is not paired with the opposing image of ice as is typical of a Petrarchan lover. The lack of ice keeps the reader's focus on the burning flame of love, which is identical, in Stampa, to the flame of poetic inspiration. The metaphors in which she describes her pain not only avoid referencing her gendered body, but also emphasize her poetic voice.

When the poems do include bodily specifics, they focus on the Count rather than the speaker herself. In sonnet 150, she gets specific about love's symptoms in order to wish that her beloved suffered in this way:

> Larghe vene d'humor, vive scintille,
> Che m'ardete, e bagnate in acqua, e'n fiamma
> Sì, che di me homai non resta dramma,
> Che non sia tutta pelaghi, e faville;
> Fate, che senta almeno una di mille
> Aspre mie pene, chi mi lava e'nfiamma,
> Né di foco, che m'arda sente squamma,
> Nè d'humor goccia, che da gli occhi stille. (150.1-8)
> [Vast springs of tears and living sparks / That burn me and bathe me in water and flame, / So not a single ounce of me remains / That's not transformed to fire and lake: / Make him

feel at least one of the thousand / Pains that so drenches and scorches me; / Not even a hair on his skin feels the flame, / Not even one teardrop falls from his eyes.]

She dissolves into water and fire in her tears and desire, losing her body in the experience of love's pain. Stampa focuses on the consumption and loss of herself, her transformation into something other than a body, and in doing so, avoids talking about her body. Yet when she moves to the wish that the Count feel this pain, we move into a literal body: his skin, his eyes. Her suffering is described metaphorically and metaphysically, with moments of literal bodily description appearing quite rarely. The speaker's experience lives in the realm of metaphors and abstractions, emphasizing her pain while resisting rooting that pain in a body; in contrast, the beloved is almost all body, an assemblage of attractive limbs that proves unfeeling and unresponsive. In writing his body as an object to be anatomized and witnessed while keeping her own abstract and removed, she controls the narrative and makes him a material object, herself an ephemeral interior, only accessible when she grants us that access through the text.

Stampa's speaker's abstraction of her body and emphasis on her voice becomes even clearer through the contrast to her material depiction of the Count's body. In sonnet 7, she offers a female audience an image of her beloved: "Chi vuol conoscer, Donne, il mio Signore, / Miri …" (7.1-2) [Ladies, if you'd like to know my lord, / Picture…]. She holds up the image of her beloved for the consumption and knowledge of female readers, drawing attention to her act of creating his image in text for the reader's benefit. There is a sense of control over both the act of creating him textually and the reader's reception of that text as she tells them what to picture, transmitting an image to them with her words. She begins with his abstract qualities, from a sweet aspect to youth to mature intellect to the image of glory and valor (7.2-4), but soon details specific physical qualities:

Di pelo biondo, e di vivo colore,

Di persona alta, & spatioso petto;

E finalmente in ogni opra perfetto,

Fuor ch'un poco (oimè lassa) empio in amore. (7.5-8)

[His hair is blond, his skin a lively color, / He's tall of build, broad-shouldered and broad-chested, / And finally in every way he's perfect – / Just (woe to me) a little cruel in love.]

His hair, his skin, his shoulders, his chest—she discovers his body in detail. She may briefly note his intellect, but all other descriptions of him here emphasize the visual, material parts of his body. The speaker also emphasizes the mismatch between his physical perfection and his cruelty in love, thereby praising his material side and criticizing his emotional behavior. In contrast to the description of the male body, which emphasizes specific material details, her description of her own body in a self-blazon remains abstract, recounting but not showing her pain:

E chi vuol poi conoscer me, rimiri

Una Donna in effetti, & in sembianti

Imagin de la Morte, e de' martiri.

Un'albergo di fe salda e costante,

Una, che perche pianga, arda, e sospiri,

Non fà pietoso il suo crudel'amante. (7.9-14)

[And if you'd like to know me, picture this: / A woman whose looks and acts alike / Convey images of suffering and death; / A resting place for firm and constant faith; / And one who though she cries and burns and sighs / Can't make her cruel lover merciful.]

She describes herself in terms of what qualities and experiences she conveys rather than in concrete, physical description. The reader could picture any woman who looks like death, any

woman who is faithful, any woman who is lovesick. The speaker's identity is subsumed by that of lovesick lover, making her a generic instance of a larger category in contrast to the Count's detailed individuality. Her body is described very differently from the beloved's, with hers less literal, less physical. We see a similar pattern in sonnets 55 and 56, in which she recruits sculptors to create her lord and herself in statues. In 55, she emphasizes the hands that form creation and asks them to portray "Qual'è dentro ritrarlo, a qual'è fore" (55.10) [what lies within him, what without], specifically his two hearts, one his and one hers. In contrast, when she asks for a statue of herself in sonnet 56, the request is marked by negatives and absences: "viva senz'alma, e senza cor nel petto" (56.3) [alive without a soul, my breast without a heart]. His statue is marked by abundance, while hers is marked by lack. He can be witnessed, with both his interior and exterior carved out of text and stone; she cannot. Love's suffering denies her a body or erases her body, in contrast to the Count's detailed material body.

In sum, Stampa's speaker depicts pain as essential to her poetry, validating her voice and motivating her to speak. Yet while pain is essential to her poetic production, she carefully keeps that pain abstract, divorced from physical realities. When she does reference body parts, they belong to the Count, whose body is anatomized for the audience's consumption. Stampa thus uses the trope of lovesickness to authorize her speaker as poet while reversing the gender trope of masculine mind and feminine body. In becoming a lovesick poet, she adopts a masculine role, minimizes any focus on her female anatomy, and avoids objectification. This privilege of subjectivity and authorial agency does not, however, extend to all women, as the next section will demonstrate; the speaker herself exceeds gender norms thanks to her lovesickness, but that illness sets her above other women, whom she subjects to standard gendered conventions.

Seizing control over interpretation, Stampa's speaker instructs her audience on how to judge her poems based on her glorious pain. The sequence opens with a direct address to her audience, defining what her poetry is and how she wishes them to receive it:

> Voi ch'ascoltate in queste meste rime,
> In questi mesti, in questi oscuri accenti
> Il suon de gli amorosi miei lamenti,
> E de le pene mie tra l'altre prime,
> Ove fia chi valor' apprezzi, e stime,
> Gloria, non che perdon, de' miei lamenti
> Spero trovar fra le ben nate genti;
> Poi che la lor cagione è sì sublime. (1.1-8)
> [You who hear in these troubled rhymes, / in these troubled and these dark accents, / the sound of my amorous laments / and sufferings that vanquish all others' – / wherever valor is esteemed and prized, / I hope to find glory among the well-born: / glory and not only pardon, for what / gives rise to my laments is so sublime.]

She teaches her reader what to hear in her poetry, defining her desired audience by its mode of receiving her text. She tells them what they will hear: her pain, which is higher than anyone else's. The emphasis on her pain as first ("prime") highlights the sense of competition with other poets. She also tells them how to judge her poetry based on that pain: because the pain causing her poetry is so sublime, they should judge the poetry as worthy of glory. She defines her audience by what they hear in her text and how they evaluate it, implying that the noble reader will hear the greatness of her pain and poetry, thus anyone who does not see her greatness must

not be sufficiently noble, must not properly esteem valor. The height of her pain will bring her valor and glory, as the properly well-born audience will correctly read and acknowledge.

While the first poem asserts the sublimity of her pain, in most of the sequence, Stampa restricts her assertions of greatness to comparisons between herself and other women. She repeatedly suggests that her lovesick suffering exceeds that of other women specifically (89.5-8, 90.5-8, 123.1-4, 130.1-4), and that the intensity of her suffering establishes her right to be a poet. She makes a gendered comparison establishing her superiority:

> Nè, qual' io moro, e nasco, e peno, e godo,
> Mor' altra, e nasce, e pena, & ha diletto,
> Per fermo, e vario, e bello, e crudo aspetto,
> Che'n voci, e'n carte spesso accuso, e lodo. (27.5-8)
> [And what I die for and bear, suffer and enjoy, / by another woman has never been borne; / a face fickle and steady, beautiful and cruel / that in speech and on the page I praise and accuse.]

The comparison focuses on actions, and specifically repeats each verb in the claim that no other woman has suffered so. We then learn the cause of the suffering: his beautiful and cruel aspect. His face leads to her suffering, which leads to her poetry. The connection between superior suffering and superior poetry becomes more explicit a few poems later:

> Quantunque nel passato, e nel futuro
> Qual l'une acute, e l'altra qual vivace
> Donne amorose, e prendi qual ti piace,
> Che sentisser giamai nè fian, nè furo.
> Perche nasce virtù da questa pena… (32.5-9)

> [never in the past or future, have / love-stricken women ever felt, nor will they /
> ever feel, the arrow so acutely, / the fire so alive, as I – take whom you will: /
> because from this suffering, virtue is born…]

In keeping with her resistance to foregrounding her speaker's bodily experience, she focuses syntactically on the loving pains of the other women: they, not she, are the subjects of the verbs. She establishes the strength of her pain through contrast to other lovesick women across time. She bears more, and in bearing it, she gains virtue and strength from suffering. The Italian *virtù* entails virtue as well as virtuousity, moral fortitude as well as capacious ability.[49] Stampa most often seems to invoke the latter definition, connecting her suffering in love to her poetic production and her voice. Ann Rosalind Jones connects this capacity to gender roles, claiming that in her sonnets Stampa reverses gender expectations and acquires masculine capacities like self-discipline and virility (135). Yet here, the speaker frames the masculine quality of virtù as a quality other women will envy; she may present herself as masculine, but she distinctly does not present herself within a male community or as a rival to men. The value ascribed to suffering in this poem evokes what we saw with Olivia in Chapter One: love's suffering provides an opportunity to display strength. The speaker frames that suffering in comparison to other women, emphasizing the virtue the speaker gains from her extreme pain while limiting that virtue to a feminine sphere. Attention to lovesickness reveals how the speaker uses pain to validate her poetry and establish her superiority over her gender: because she suffers so strongly, because her desire is so painful, she is able to take on masculine, poetic *virtù*.

Stampa's speaker not only takes on the masculine quality of *virtù* through her lovesickness, but situates herself among, and even above, past poetic greats on the grounds of her

[49] For more on the masculine connotations of Stampa's use of the term throughout the sequence, see Moore 74.

suffering in love. The first line of the sonnet sequence, "Voi ch'ascoltate in queste meste rime," is a direct echo of Petrarch, implicitly setting her in conversation or competition with past poets. The echoes do not stop with the first line, as a comparison to the Petrarch illustrates:

> Voi ch'ascoltate in rime sparse il suono
> di quei sospiri ond'io nudriva 'l core
> in sul mio primo giovenile errore,
> quand' era in parte altr' uom da quel ch' i' sono:
> del vario stile in ch' io piango et ragiono
> fra le vane speranze e 'l van dolore,
> ove sia chi per prova intenda amore
> spero trovar pietà, non che perdono. (Petrarch 1.1-8)
>
> [You who hear in scattered rhymes the sound of those sighs with which I nourished my heart during my first youthful error, when I was in part another man from what I am now: / for the varied style in which I weep and speak between vain hopes and vain sorrow, where there is anyone who understands love through experience, I hope to find pity, not only pardon.]

Both poets connect their pain to their poetic production. Yet while Petrarch's speaker says he repents the lovesick verses and minimizes them as scattered rhymes in varied style, Stampa's capitalizes on her sublime pain, a quality that puts her first rather than requires an apology ("e de le pene mie tra l'altre prime" (1.4)). She is also explicit about the desire for glory, borrowing Petrarch's term "non che perdono" but rejecting it in favor of glory rather than pity. Love's pains in Stampa are not cause for apology or pity, but for celebration. This connection continues with other poetic rivalries in the sequence as Stampa's speaker sets herself among the company of not

only Petrarch, but also more ancient precedents. Yet she shows no anxiety about this company, instead using them to comfort herself for her inability to describe her beloved since they, too, would have struggled to represent him:

> Ma, perche chi cantò Sorga e Gebenna,
> E seco il gran Virgilio, e'l grande Homero
> Non basteriano à raccontarne il vero
> Ragion, ch'io taccia à la memoria accenna. (114.5-8)
> [But since he who sang Sorgue and Monginevro, / along with the great Homer and Virgil, / would hardly be enough to tell the truth, / reason *suggests that I be silenced by memory*. (translation modified)]

In invoking Petrarch, Homer, and Virgil, she implicitly sets herself in their company: none of the four has sufficient skill to describe her beloved. Reason suggests that she silence the memory, muted less by this comparison to the great poets than by the daunting nature of her beloved object. The emphasis on rationality as a spur to silence implies that its opposite, the passions, spur poetry. Instead of falling silent, she turns to describing her joyous pains, which make her singular among others: "Però mi volgo à scriver solamente / L'historie de le mie gioiose pene, / Che mi fan singolar fra l' altra gente…" (114.9-11) [Thus do I turn to write of this alone, / the stories of my joyous griefs / that make me unique among all others…]. The seeming modesty before her beloved conceals the real move to foreground her experience, her voice—a move justified by joyous pains of lovesickness. These pains make her singular, as her language insists ("solamente," "singolar"); no longer one of the greats, she has moved beyond them to stand alone, her pain validating not just her use of her voice, but that voice's singular greatness.

While her pain makes her singular among the great male poets, a special member of a community, her pain makes her the envy of other women. Stampa's speaker imagines her potential glory through the eyes of some envious woman, crafting the reaction of her imagined audience:

> E spero ancor, che debba dir qualch'una,
> Felicissima lei, da che sostenne
> Per sì chiara cagion danno sì chiaro.
> Deh, perche tant'Amor, tanta Fortuna
> Per sì nobil Signor' à me non venne,
> Ch'anch'io n'andrei con tanta Donna à paro? (1.9-14)
> [And I hope some woman will be moved to say: / "Most happy she, who suffered famously / for such a famous cause! / Oh, why can't the fortune that comes / from loving a lord like him be mine, / so such a lady and I might walk side by side?]

Stampa's speaker presents her suffering as the cause of the other woman's envy and the reason for her fame. This woman imagines community with Stampa, dreaming of walking side by side with her as an equal. This dream entails both the idea of superiority, as she becomes what other women aspire to, and the idea of community and equality among women. However, the speaker's dream is not to take part in a female community: her dream is for another (lesser) woman to aspire to be her equal. Indeed, she scripts the way that other woman will express such a desire, writing out what desires she hopes to inspire and how those desires will be expressed. Stampa writes out the way she wishes her readers—specifically, her female readers—to react to her text, asserting textual control by writing out how she will be read by this particular audience.

While the woman in sonnet 1 dreams of walking side by side, in sonnet 16, Stampa's speaker crafts an explicitly envious relationship between her female readers and herself:

Così vorrei haver concetti e detti,
E parole à tant'opra appropriata;
Sì che fosser da me scritte e cantata,
E fatte conte à mille alti intelletti.
Et udissero l'altre, che verranno,
Con quanta invidia lor sia gita altera
De l'amoroso mio felice danno. (16.5-11)
[I'd like to find the saying and conceits, / the words to fit the work so I might / write them down and sing them, and have / a thousand learned intellects take note / along with all those women who someday / will die with envy when they hear how proud / I went around, rejoicing in my amorous pain.]

In public, she suggests, she presents herself as happy in her lovesick pain, a fact that will fill the women with envy. While in sonnet 1, the envy was aspirational, here it is destructive, making women beside themselves. Again, the women envy not the lovesickness itself, but the writings and songs that gain her notice, the words she produces and the respect they garner. Her readers will envy her writing, writing made sublime by the power of its subject: lovesickness for the Count. This connection between lovesickness, poetry, and female rivalry recurs throughout the sequence as the speaker repeatedly invokes a contrast between her own intense suffering and that of other women. She writes of women who envy her for her famous suffering (1, 16, 119) and insists her pain makes her surpass all other women (89, 130, 254). Her poetic glory, her lovesick suffering, and the rivalry or audience of women are causally connected: the comparison to other

women illustrates her suffering, her suffering authorizes her poetry, and the women who read that poetry acknowledge its superiority.

Stampa's speaker's addresses to women follow a distinctly different pattern than her addresses to men, marking men as fellow authors and women as passive readers. Excluding addresses to Love, the Count, and religious figures, there are thirty-one poems directly invoking an audience. Of these, thirteen address women and eighteen address men. Of the poems addressing women, only three address a named audience: sonnet 173 recruits Procne and Philomel to join in her laments, sonnet 224 expresses a desire to stand alongside Sappho and Corinna, and sonnet 255 invokes nymphs to sing in praise of La Barozza, a contemporary Venetian woman. When she does invoke named women, they are primarily classical or mythological figures, and she seeks to have them join her poetic project. The exception is sonnet 255, in which she invokes nymphs to sing praises of a contemporary woman in her stead, thereby removing herself from the female community of singers. The other ten poems address women in general, inviting them to enjoy her blazons (7), asking them to acknowledge her superiority (90), asking them to weep with her (86, 151), and warning them about love (64, 83, 121, 143, 286, 290). In contrast, the poems to men almost all address one named contemporary of hers. She defers to the skill of the male poets (227, 228, 234, 235, 240, 241, 248, 267, 272) and thanks them for dedicating poems to her, an unworthy subject (237, 250, 258, 259, 265, 270). She several times suggests having the men write on her behalf to eke out her insufficient skill (227, 240, 241, 260). The men are named poets and she defers to their superior skill, while the women are readers who may sympathize with her or benefit from her experience. Additionally, the poems addressed to women are far more likely to emphasize her pain and corresponding poetic prowess, while the poems addressed to men do not mention her pain and emphasize her

insufficient voice. They focus on the men's style, rhymes, and craft, invoking the language of technical virtuosity in contrast to the language of love and lament in the poems addressed to women. Granted, her self-deprecation in poems to men follows standard cultural practices of exchanging poems within a learned community. Many of the poems addressed to men are clearly part of two-sided poetic conversations in which both poets employ the modesty topos and praise the other's skill. But the gendered contrast is nevertheless compelling: when speaking to women, she never engages the modesty topos, and she emphasizes her suffering and her poetry. Even when she invokes famous women by name, she does not defer to them, and in fact asks them to defer to her, to prioritize her pain and her voice. In short, men are writers while women are readers, and readers with a constrained model of reception at that.

In the sequence's frequent addresses to women readers, the speaker directs them in how to read and respond to her poetry. She offers her experiences as a cautionary tale, warning others to avoid the tribulations of love (64, 83, 121, 143, 286, 290). In several places, she asks women to weep for her (86, 151). Critics such as Schiesari and Phillippy claim that these moments create a chorus of women joined in mourning. But given that the women are convened by, and for, Stampa, how is this chorus of women a gesture of feminist solidarity? In sonnet 86, she writes,

> Piangete Donne, e poi che la mia morte
> Non move il Signor mio crudo e lontano,
> Voi, che sete di cor dolce & humano,
> Aprite di pietade almen le porte.
> Piangete meco la mia acerba sorte,
> Chiamando Amor', il ciel empio inhumano,
> E lei, che mi ferì, spietata mano,

Che mi vegga morir'e lo comporte. (86.1-8)

[Ladies, weep, and since my death moves not / my lord who's cruel and far away, then you, / who possess hearts that are sweet and humane, / at least out of pity open your gates. / Weep with me my bitter fate, / Call heaven evil and Love inhuman, / And the hand that wounded me, dispassionate, / As he sees me die and does not stop it.]

Women's hearts are more amenable to pity than her beloved's, hence the selection of them as readers: the feminine community provides a sympathetic audience. Their offerings are somewhat limited, however, as indicated in the "almen" [at least]: she wants more than pity, and from a better audience, but must settle for pity from the ladies. She does not seem to fully trust these readers, given how much direction she provides on their reaction. The speaker instructs the women on what and how to weep in lines 5 through 8, telling them how to frame her fate, heaven, love, and Collaltino's hand. Furthermore, she offers a quote for them to repeat in lines 12-14:

E poi ch'io sarò cenere e favilla,
Dica alcuna di voi mesta e pietosa,
Sentita del mio foco una scintilla,
Sotto quest'aspa pietra giace ascosa
L'infelice e fidissima Anassilla,
Raro essempio di fede alta amorosa. (86.9-14)

[And since I'll soon be dust and ashes, / may one of you inspired by sparks from my flame / say with a voice sad and compassionate: / "Under this rough stone lies hidden / the loyal, most unhappy Anasilla, / rare example of great and amorous faith."]

She creates a text through which they will memorialize her in her own words. She even specifies herself as their poetic inspiration: maybe her fire will help them feel, in which case they will speak this text she provides. The image is rather patronizing, as her flame offers them a measly few sparks; they rely on her for fire, and her flame is far greater than theirs. Similarly, in sonnet 151, she solicits a chorus of women and offers them a script:

> Piangete Donne, e con voi pianga Amore,
> Poi che non piange lui, che m'ha ferita;
> Sì che l' alma farà tosto partita
> Da questo corpo tormentato fuore.
> E se mai da pietoso, e gentil core
> L'estrema voce altrui fu essaudita;
> Dapoi ch'io sarò morta, e sepelita
> Scrivete la cagion del mio dolore. (151.1-8)
> [Weep, ladies, and may Love weep with you / (since he who wounded me does not cry), / so that my soul will more quickly take flight / beyond this tormented body. / And if someone with a compassionate / heart ever fulfilled another's dying wishes, / then when I am dead and buried, please / record this reason for my sorrow:]

The first quartet suggests that weeping will facilitate her soul's exit from her body, so their lamentation of her pain will help alleviate that pain. The reference to her body appears in the context of a desire to move beyond that body. Although this reference prioritizes her soul rather than her voice, we quickly turn to poetic production. She asks them to write the reason for her sorrow, but then writes it herself, giving them the script for her eulogy:

> Per amar molto, et esser poco amata,

Visse, e morì infelice, & hor qui giace

La piu fidel' amante, che sia stata.

Pregale viator riposo, e pace;

Et impara da lei sì mal trattata,

A` non seguir' un cor' crudo, e fugace. (151.9-14)

[She loved much and was unloved in turn; / for this she lived and died unhappy, now / she lies here, most faithful lover of all time. / Traveler, I pray you, stop and find peace, / and learn from her who was so poorly treated: / never follow a heart that's fickle and cruel.]

The speaker gathers women and encourages them to use their voices, yes, but she offers them a text that prioritizes her. She invites them to read and to respond, but only if they follow her model script, only if in reading, they give her complete interpretive and textual control. The script she offers them singles her out as the most faithful lover, making her an exemplum for future travelers. While becoming an exemplum might be seen as a removal from individuality, Stampa's speaker maintains her voice by scripting the eulogy as well as the reaction to her monument. She elevates her voice to such a degree that it determines the voices of others. Schiesari has argued that Stampa creates a space for a female community of poets (168-169), but she neglects the complete control Stampa's speaker asserts over other women's voices. In approaching Stampa through a feminist lens, critics obscure the extent to which she celebrates her own voice through the exclusion of other feminine voices. Women are her audience, serving as caretakers or sympathetic ears rather than fellow poets or collaborators—in other words, unless the woman is Stampa's speaker, women take a passive, conventionally feminine role in

Stampa's poetry. Women read her text and follow the script she crafts for their reactions, giving Stampa full authorial control over her text's creation and reception.

While the speaker uses her pain to justify her poetry, she goes farther than that, situating herself within poetic rivalries. She invites comparison between herself and Petrarch, Homer, and Virgil, confident that such a comparison will turn out in her favor. She uses these comparisons and allusions to teach her audience how to read her poems and how to evaluate both her lovesick pain and the poetry it inspires. She takes on particular control when addressing the female audience, crafting their emotional response, scripting their textual response, and confidently asserting the envy she will inspire in other women. Far from creating a collaborative female community, Stampa invokes other women to set herself apart, to claim the authority and authorial power conventionally denied to her sex. Lovesickness lets Stampa's speaker become a poet, and her ability to survive that pain and produce text inspired by it sets her above her sex, in the company of canonical male poets. In contrast, I argue, María de Zayas presents lovesickness as a manipulative force constraining women's bodies and silencing women's voices.

Escaping Interpretation: Female Lovesickness and Agency in María de Zayas

Published almost a century after Stampa's *Rime* (1554), María de Zayas' *Novelas amorosas y ejemplares* (1637) and *Desengaños amorosos* (1647) depict two *saraos* of storytellers. In the *Novelas amorosas,* the group gathers on the occasion of Lisis's illness, sharing stories to entertain and comfort her. Lisis suffers from quartan fever as well as trouble in love: her former lover, don Juan, has rejected her in favor of her cousin, Lisarda. To save face after this rejection, Lisis entertains the advances of a new suitor, don Diego. Although the narrator promises to pick up the sequel with a tale of Lisis's subsequent marriage to don Diego and don Juan's comeuppance, the narrative in the *Desengaños* instead resumes with Lisis once

again ill. The *sarao* in the *Desengaños* is purportedly to celebrate Lisis's engagement to don Diego, but we see hints that this will not be the outcome when Lisis decides that only women may tell tales, and that their tales must be true stories of disillusionment. The text ends with Lisis telling her own tale, a task she was denied in the *Novelas,* then opting to remove herself from the world of men and enter a convent.

Critics generally agree that Zayas's representation of the female body is integral to her feminist message (unlike Stampa, who aligns her female speaker with the abstract and the mind more than the body). Lisa Vollendorf argues that Zayas uses a "corporeal feminism that engages and politicizes the female body in order to mobilize male and female readers and society at large to enact reform that would improve the treatment of women" ("Fleshing out Feminism" 89). Violence against the female body in the text, Vollendorf claims, bears witness to the injustice of the gender hierarchy in early modern Spain ("Reading the Body Imperiled" 277). This violence ranges from the more obvious examples of women beaten and raped to the more subtle examples, such as the illness of our protagonist, Lisis. Vollendorf reads Lisis as lovesick and interprets her "body as the text upon which the difficulties of love are written" ("Reading the Body Imperiled" 276). In keeping with Vollendorf's claim, this dissertation has argued that gender hierarchy and the implications of lovesickness for the female body are closely connected; however, in this particular text, Lisis's love and her bodily illness are actually carefully separated. Lisis's illness, the reason for the gathering and the textual production, relates to love but is not actually lovesickness. Rather than showing how lovesickness literally, physically harms Lisis's body, Zayas shows how the *idea* of lovesickness—lovesickness as a diagnosis and way of reading—harms women. While other scholars have focused on the literal female body as vulnerable, this chapter focuses on the connections between the female body and the body as

text. The female body is vulnerable to physical violence, as Zayas clearly shows. Yet this physical vulnerability connects to a broader, more subtle vulnerability: the female body as text is open to interpretation and, therefore, control.

Much like critics on Stampa have seen female community as a driving interest, scholars of Zayas point to her connection between female community and female agency. Julia Farmer writes, "the *Desengaños* represent a response to the narrative threats to female solidarity implicitly posed by the *Novelas amorosas y ejemplares.* By configuring the development of her collections as she does, Zayas in fact crafts an intricately structured commentary on the dangers of women whose pursuit of male love interests leads them to violate their bonds with other women" (248). I agree, and claim that Zayas uses lovesickness as a way to criticize the dangers of heterosexual desire and prioritize female communities. In the *Novelas amorosas*, Lisis loses her body and voice due to love(sickness), while in the *Desengaños*, she recovers agency via illness while condemning lovesickness in the story she narrates. In contrast to the imposing dangers of male desire, Zayas presents communities of women as healing for the body and empowering for the voice. This section will begin by looking at Lisis in the frame narrative, considering her as reader of other tales and author of her own experience, as well as an object read and interpreted by others on account of her illness. It then turns to Lisis's tale in the *Desengaños,* in which lovesickness serves as part of a larger strategy by the protagonist to manipulate narratives and seize control. In the frame narrative, Lisis loses agency and authorship because of the cultural constraints of lovesickness and the pressure on women to prioritize heterosexual desire; in the story she tells, she highlights the dangers of lovesickness, setting the audience up for her decision to renounce the sexual economy and enter the female community of a convent.

"Juntáronse a entretener a Lisis, hermoso milagro de la naturaleza, y prodigioso asombro de esta corte (a quien unas atrevidas cuartanas tenían rendidas sus hermosas prendas), la hermosa Lisarda, la discreta Matilde, la graciosa Nise y la sabia Filis, todas nobles y ricas, hermosas y amigas…." (23) [*There gathered to entertain Lisis,* lovely miracle of nature and prodigious marvel of this court, whose lovely qualities *had succumbed* to a daring quartan fever: the lovely Lisarda, the discreet Matilde, the entertaining Nise, and the wise Filis, all noble, wealthy, beautiful, and friends, … (54, translation modified)]. So begins the *Novelas amorosas*, with a group of women gathering to tell stories on the occasion of Lisis's ill health. Although she is our first named character, Lisis is also the object rather than subject of this sentence: the other women actively gather to entertain her. She is both the focus and the passive recipient, the protagonist and the audience. Her fever provides the occasion for the *sarao*, but also removes her from participation, classifying her as audience rather than author: her mother puts her in charge of finding musicians rather than preparing a tale. In other words, her illness gives others the occasion to speak, but silences Lisis herself. Lisis begins the *Novelas* as a reader and audience member, receiving tales and interpreting them through her interludes.

As an audience member, Lisis is nevertheless center stage, and proves an astute performer, able to both display and conceal her passions. In particular, Lisis must alter her visible passions to comfort don Diego, the suitor she entertains after don Juan has abandoned her in favor of her cousin, Lisarda. As don Juan sings a song about jealousy, Lisis watches with perturbation:

> Quien mirara a la bella Lisis, mientras se cantó este romance, conociera en su desasosiego la pasión con que le escuchaba, viendo cuán al descubierto don Juan reprehendía en él las sospechas que de Lisarda tenía, y a estarle bien respondiera. Mas

cobrándose de su descuido, viendo a don Diego melancólico de verla inquieta, alegró el rostro y serenó el semblante. (107)

[Whoever looked at the beautiful Lisis, while he sang this romance, would recognize in her unease the passion with which she was listening, seeing how openly don Juan reprehended in it the suspicions that she held about Lisarda, and she would have responded had it been seemly. But recovering from her lapse, seeing don Diego melancholic to see her unquiet, she cheered up her face and made her semblance peaceful (translation my own)].

Lisis is moved by the song, her passions shifted by don Juan's words. The intention of the *sarao* is to comfort her physically through language, so the humoral effect of stories is essential to the entire structure of the text (in typical Boccaccian fashion), but don Juan's song has a detrimental rather than comforting effect. Her discomfort at the song is easily visible, but she shifts her semblance in order to cheer up don Diego, modifying her countenance to suit his desires. She does not correct her disquiet itself, only the appearance of it, a correction that is sufficient to remedy don Diego's melancholy. Her exterior performs for the male audience while her interior remains unchanged. Moved by the song, she reacts as a passionate audience member, but conceals her passions in order to soothe don Diego, indicating both her status as passionate reader and her ability to conceal those interior experiences.

Not only does Lisis conceal her reactions as audience member, but she shifts her presentation of herself as author to suit don Diego. On night four, she sings a lament about ungrateful men:

Por los filos hirió Lisis a don Juan con las tres décimas, y aun don Diego se entristeció de oírlas; mas Lisis con mil discretas palabras le aseguró, dándole a entender no ser suyos

> los versos, sino ajenos, y que por no ponerse a hacerlos se había aprovechado de ellos, con lo que el amante quedó contento. (264)
>
> [With the strings (of her instrument) Lisis wove the three stanzas for don Juan, and even don Diego grew sad to hear them; but Lisis with a thousand wise words reassured him, giving him to understand that they were not her verses, but another's, and that in order not to have to write them herself she had made use of them, with which the lover remained content. (translation my own)]

Since all the other verses she sings are original to her, this story seems unlikely. Additionally, the initial description of her weaving the stanzas provides an image of creation and production, not one of repeating or sharing someone else's creation. Not only does she weave the stanzas, she does so explicitly for don Juan, emphasizing her act of creation for a specific audience. Lisis wove the stanzas, but denies her authorship in response to Diego's sadness. The narrator emphasizes the wisdom in her words, thereby reminding us of her textual power and suggesting that these words are a careful choice: she decides to assure him in this way because of her wisdom rather than because it is true. Lisis erases herself as a poet in order to make space for Diego's desires. Similarly, on the fifth night, she again begins her song with the preamble that the verses are not her own (334). The situation doesn't silence her completely, but it does deny her authorship, prioritizing Diego's interpretive needs over her creative authority. Even if we are meant to take Lisis's assurances as true, the need to hedge her performance for the sake of don Diego's ego remains. If these are someone else's verses that she physically performs, giving those words life through her body and voice, they become partly hers in that action. Publicly denying authorship, separating herself from the verses she performs, mitigates her role in the

textual production and performance. Lisis forecloses interpretive possibilities around her agency and authorship for the sake of Diego's comfort.

Lisis's ability to change her visible passions in the *Novelas amorosas* suggests the discrepancy between her interior experience and her exterior performance, her ability to manipulate the ways others read her. In the *Desengaños*, this emphasis on Lisis's interiority, particularly as facilitated by illness, continues, and we spend more time on her interior passions and the cause of her illness. Part one ends rather abruptly, with the promise of a part two that will show don Juan's ingratitude and Lisis's marriage to don Diego. But when the *Desengaños* appear a decade later, they inform the reader that Lisis grew exceedingly ill after the last *sarao* ended. The narrator attributes Lisis's illness to multiple explanations:

> …y así, o que fuse alguna desorden, como suele suceder en los suntuosos banquetes, o el pesar de considerarse Lisis ya en poder de extraño dueño, y que por sólo vengarse del desprecio que la parecía haberle hecho don Juan, amando a su prima Lisarda, usurpándole a ella las glorias de ser suya, mal hallada con dueño extraño de su voluntad, y ya casi en poder del no apetecido, se dejó rendir a tan crueles desesperaciones, castigando con verter perlas a sus divinos ojos, que amaneció otro día la hermosa dama con una mortal calentura… (391)
>
> [And thus, either due to some upset, as often happens at sumptuous banquets, or to Lisis's sorrow for believing herself to be in the power of an unfamiliar lord, and only to avenge herself of the disdain she believed don Juan had visited upon her by loving her cousin Lisarda, usurping all the glories of being his, badly paired with a master alien to her affections, and being almost in the power of one she did not desire, she let herself

surrender to such cruel desperation, chastising her divine eyes by exuding pearls, that the next day the lovely lady awoke with a mortal fever. (197)]

Physically, she surrenders to despair and cries herself into a fever. The narrator suggests a potential physical cause for her suffering in the disorder that often follows banquets, although, given the time and space devoted to the non-banquet options, it seems likely that we are intended to interpret the cause as emotional. The string of potential emotional issues runs from being in the power of a new lord to vengeance for Juan's love for Lisarda to not desiring don Diego. Love is noticeably absent as a potential cause. In fact, love only comes up in the description of don Juan and Lisarda. Critics have called this fever lovesickness, but the narrator states that the issue here is *lack* of desire, not its excess. Moreover, the major concern is power; even the issue of Lisarda gaining Juan's attention and affection is phrased as usurpation, invoking ideas of governance. Lisis's primary concern is agency, not love.

As Lisis' health worsens, she retreats into her interior, specifically her soul, and the narrator prioritizes her self-knowledge over others' perceptions/interpretations: "Aumentábase el mal de Lisis, faltando en todas las esperanzas de su salud, y más a la bien entendida señora, que como era quien le sentía y sabía mejor las circunstancias de él …" (392) [Lisis's illness worsened, and hope for her improved health wanted in all, and more so in the discreet lady herself, the one who felt and knew most about its circumstances… (198)]. The narrator explicitly attributes greatest knowledge of her body to Lisis herself. The use of both verbs, "sentía" and "sabía," suggests a connection between experience and knowledge: in having the sensory experience of her illness, she also has the best intellectual understanding of it, a connection that hints at empiricism. This model gives Lisis interpretive control over her body, as she needs no other source of interpretation or support to understand her experience of her body. Additionally,

she acquires self-control and self-understanding specifically in the context of a disease—a case when the body most needs to be understood and when outside authorities often try to assert control over diagnosing and treating the body. The narrator tells us the patient has the greatest understanding of her disease, a privileged level of knowledge directly contrasted to the knowledge of the outside viewers who seek to diagnose her.

Lisis's illness offers her interiority and agency, emphasized by her choice to conceal her inward experience with a different outward show:

> …tuvo lugar su divino entendimiento de obrar en su alma nuevos propósitos, si bien a nadie lo daba a entender, guardando para su tiempo la disposición de su deseo, mostrando a don Diego y a la demás familia, cuando se hallaba con mejorados accidentes, un honesto agrado, con que enfrenaba cualquier deseo, y sólo le tenían puesto en verla con salud. (392)
>
> […her divine intelligence had the opportunity to formulate new plans in her soul, although she told no one about them, awaiting the right time to reveal the disposition of her desire, showing to don Diego and the rest of her family, at those times when she found herself in better condition, that she was modestly pleased at his attentions, with which she controlled all desire, and they, for their part, had desire only to see her recover her health. (198)]

Lisis conceals her newly formulated plans from don Diego and her family, distinguishing exterior desires from interior reality. She manages exterior and interior, masculine and feminine, secular and divine, controlling her behavior so as to suit don Diego's expectations. Because of her illness, she turns inward, developing a rich interior life. This interior experience diverges from her outward behavior, which continues to serve the needs of her family and don Diego. In

other texts, we have seen illness make the body an object vulnerable to outside interpretation; in contrast, Zayas uses illness to facilitate a rich interior life and to emphasize how Lisis's internal experience is inaccessible to, and unreadable by, outside authorities.

Lisis begins the *Novelas amorosas* as a reader and audience member, relegated to the role of respondent and denied the role of author. Although she has a rich internal life and is clearly textually productive, she conceals this, hiding her passions and denying her authorship to suit the audience. The contrast between her rich interior and her passive exterior heightens in the *Desengaños* as the narrator gives us greater insight into her interior turn and contrasts her own experience with the interpretation of others. These interpretations frequently impose misreadings on her, particularly misreadings that assume her disease is lovesickness. As we have seen, Lisis's main concern is not desire, but its lack. However, those around her interpret her body and her text in terms of the men in her life, a fact Zayas highlights and criticizes.

Although Lisis is not allowed to produce a fictional narrative in the *Novelas amorosas*, she produces love laments, which serve as interludes between the stories. On the one hand, she produces texts and asserts agency as an author. On the other hand, the audience refuses to allow for the possibility that these texts are creative, instead interpreting her poems as autobiographical indexes to her personal suffering. The audience repeatedly assumes that her poems reference her disappointed love for don Juan, who is now pursuing her cousin, Lisarda. Lisis may have a voice, but the imaginative possibilities for that voice are constrained by her audience. Her authority (emphasis on author) comes exclusively from personal experience, in contrast to every other storyteller in the text, who all have the privilege of fiction, which allows for a multiplicity of interpretations (as is evidenced in the *sarao* attendees debating meanings after the stories). Not only do they interpret her poems as autobiographical, but also that autobiography is confined to

heterosexual desires and jealousies; at no point does anyone present assume Lisis has an interior experience other than desire for a man. Lisis's voice is constrained as her audience exclusively interprets her text in terms of the men in her life and the feelings they imagine her to have about those men.

Although the narrator's language emphasizes Lisis's desire for control and self-governance, particularly in the opening to the *Desengaños,* other characters perceive her illness as lovesickness. In particular, Don Juan's narcissistic interpretation foregrounds the male perspective on the female body's experience: "Bien sentía el ingrato don Juan ser él la causa de la enfermedad de Lisis, pues el frío de sus tibiezas eran la mayor calentura de la dama" (392) ["The ungrateful don Juan was well aware that he was the cause of Lisis's illness, since the coldness of his tepidity caused the lady's greatest fever" (198)]. In his interpretation of her illness, don Juan takes ownership over her body by ascribing himself as cause of her illness. The narrator did not attribute Lisis's illness to him; she's not sick of longing for don Juan, she's sick over her powerlessness. The condition of her body gives him something to read, and he reads himself into the narrative incorrectly. His misinterpretation demonstrates that female bodies are (mis)read in ways that prioritize men, and that lovesickness specifically offers him the opportunity to read her story and body as ultimately about him rather than her.

Taking things even further than don Juan, don Diego seeks to physically act on his interpretation of Lisis's body as an object for his own possession. Diego responds to both her illness and her recovery with a desire to physically possess her:

> Más de un año duró la enfermedad con caídas y recaídas, sin tratarse en todo este tiempo de otra cosa más de acudir a la presente causa, padeciendo don Diego, el achaque de desesperado: tanto, que ya quisiera de cualquiera suerte fuera suya Lisis; por estar seguro

de él; mas si alguna vez lo proponía, hallaba en la dama un enojo agradable y una resistencia honesta, con que le obligaba a pedir perdón de haber intentado tal. (392) [The illness continued for over a year, between lapses and relapses, during which time the only thing anyone thought about was to attend to the present concern, which left don Diego ailing with desperation, so much so that he wished Lisis to be his no matter how, to be sure of winning her. But if at any time he broached the topic, he found in the lady a pleasant anger and a modest resistance that obliged him to beg forgiveness for having insisted in this way. (198)]

Diego wishes to possess Lisis by any means necessary, implying that he seeks sexual fulfillment regardless of their marital status. Significantly, the bodily fulfillment is described in terms of possession, which is exactly what she fears earlier in the text. The text frames desire for the body as a desire to take possession and control. That control is navigated through speech: he proposes his desires and she counters them with text such that he has to beg forgiveness. The offer and refusal are all textual, with speech offering a path to control over the body. Speech as a path to control continues when Lisis regains her health: "…y apenas la vio don Diego con entera salud, cuando volvió de nuevo a sus pretensiones, hablando a Laura y pidiendo cumpliese la palabra de darle a Lisis por esposa" (393) […and scarcely did don Diego see her with perfect health than he returned once more to his suit, speaking to Laura and asking that she keep her promise to give him Lisis as his wife. (199)] Diego desires to possess her, and to do so, he speaks to her mother rather than her, eschewing her agency in the matter entirely. Don Diego's desire is concentrated on physicality and possession as enabled by speech. Don Juan interpreted her body in terms of himself, while don Diego takes it a step further, seeking to rewrite her body and author himself as possessor of it.

While the men read her body in terms of themselves, the women have a positive effect on her through mutual affection and collaboration. While don Diego's desires were possessive and self-serving, in contrast, Lisis's relationship with her new servant, Zelima, is more symbiotic:

> Con esta hermosa mora se alegró tanto Lisis, que gozándose con sus habilidades y agrados, casi se olvidaba la enfermedad, cobrándose tanto amor, que no era como de señora y esclava, sino de dos queridas hermanas: sabía muy bien Zelima granjear y atraer a sí la voluntad de Lisis, y Lisis pagárselo en quererla tanto, que apenas se hallaba sin ella. (393)
>
> [Lisis was so happy with this lovely Moor that, enjoying her abilities and pleasing ways, she almost forgot her illness, acquiring such love for her that it was not like that of mistress and slave but rather that of two beloved sisters. Zelima knew well how to win and attract Lisis's affections, and Lisis knew how to repay her by loving her so that she was almost never apart from her. (199)]

Lisis's relationship with Zelima, who herself has suffered the vicissitudes of love and fortune, entails mutual love, even within a slave-servant relationship; there was more ownership and possession with Diego than with Zelima here. This mutual affection, this sisterhood, helps Lisis recover her health: "Sanó Lisis, convaleció Lisis, y volvió el sol de su hermosura a recobrar nuevos rayos;" (393) [Lisis recovered, Lisis convalesced, and the sun of her beauty acquired new rays (199)]. This relationship leads Lisis to concentrate on female community in the *Desengaños:* when Lisis suggests the *sarao,* she insists that only the women will speak, and the tales will deal with the ways men have abused women (393-394). Lisis thus crafts an event that gives women exclusive narrative authority and that focuses on true tales of men deceiving women. In doing so, Lisis both elevates female community and implicitly condemns how men

use agency and authority. In the *Desengaños,* female community is healing and generative, and it frees the audience of false illusions; male readership is misguided and possessive, requiring constraints to prevent their abuses of power.

Lisis begins the *Novelas amorosas* as the target reader and audience member for all the text to follow. Yet even in this constrained capacity as reader and respondent, she finds agency in the ability to conceal her emotions and manipulate how others see her and understand her authorship, crafting a careful distinction between the exterior that others read and her interior experience. This distinction heightens in part two as her relapse into illness facilitates an interior, spiritual turn. As her self-knowledge deepens and her control over how others see her heightens, the narrator draws attention to the misguided ways in which the other characters, especially the men, read and interpret Lisis's text and body. Her poems in the *Novelas amorosas* are all interpreted biographically, neglecting any experience she might have outside of heterosexual desire. In the *Desengaños,* the male audience interprets her as lovesick, an object to be diagnosed, desired, and possessed. The female audience, in contrast, helps Lisis create a productive textual community, entering into a collaboration aimed at criticizing the same male impulse toward objectifying and possessing women that we see in Juan and Diego's attitudes toward Lisis. In Lisis's story, the last to be told in the *Desengaños,* she specifically highlights the role lovesickness plays in manipulating the female body. Yet rather than do so by showing a woman ruined by lovesickness, she shows a woman manipulating the discourse of lovesickness to excuse the violent results of her desire.

Lisis tells the story of Florentina, a lovesick protagonist who uses her disease as an excuse for her adulterous behavior. Don Gaspar, who has loved Florentina from afar, finds her covered in blood on the streets. After she has recovered sufficiently, she recounts how she came

to be in that position. Florentina's story begins with an emphasis on her close relationship to her stepsister, foregrounding the female bond interrupted by Florentina's love for her sister Magdalena's husband, don Dionís. She confesses her love to him and they begin a protracted affair. Things are going well until a confessor refuses to absolve Florentina, at which point she turns to her maid for help. The maid and Florentina plan to frame Magdalena for adultery by arranging for don Dionís to catch her in a compromising position, with an undressed male servant in her bedroom. They succeed, and the ruse results in an enraged don Dionís slaughtering everyone in the house, including himself. Florentina escapes with her life only because a slave who loves her interrupts the attack, enabling her to flee. Florentina's duplicity leads to a mass murder and nearly to her own death. Florentina exploits the way her body speaks and capitalizes on the fact that others read it. Zayas uses lovesickness to show its downside, demonstrating how lovesickness is an interpretation of bodies that serves as an excuse. She situates this excuse within Florentina's broader strategy of manipulating narrative in order to gain control and achieve her desires.

In describing her passion, Florentina presents herself as lovesick, using the disease as a defense for pursuing her sister's husband. When Florentina recounts her love for her stepsister's husband, she foregrounds her experience of lovesickness and defends the disease against skeptics, perhaps protesting a bit too much. She begins with the sensory experience: "Oíle tierno, escuchele discreto, mirele galán, considerele ajeno, y dejeme perder sin remedio, con tal precipicio, que vine a perder la salud…" (777) [I heard him speak tenderly, I listened to him speak discreetly, I saw him gallant, I held him to be another's, and let myself be hopelessly lost, [falling] so headlong that I eventually lost my health… (302)]. She heard, she listened, she saw. Because of this physical experience, she moves to the mental activity of considering him

another's, and finally, losing herself without remedy, specifically without remedy for her health. This is a typical lovesickness progression, moving from the sensory experience to the cognitive dysfunction and, finally, loss of health entirely. Florentina takes care to specify that her lovesickness was not metaphorical but an actual physical experience:

> … donde conozco que acierta quien dice que el amor es enfermedad, pues se pierde el gusto, se huye el sueño y se apartan las ganas de comer. Pues si todos estos accidentes caen sobre el fuego que amor enciende en el pecho, no me parece que es el menos peligroso tabardillo, y más cuando da con la modorra de no poder alcanzar, y con el frenesí celoso de ver lo que se ama empleado en otro cuidado. (777)
>
> […in which I recognize that the one who says love is an illness is right, for it ruins taste, scares off sleep, and takes away all desire to eat. And if all these casualties fall upon the fire that love ignites in one's breast, I do not find it to be the least dangerous fever, and more so when it meets up with the torpor of being unrequited and the jealous frenzy of watching what one loves busy with another affection. (302)]

In framing love as an illness, she defers to an outside authority she has heard speak of lovesickness. The opinions of others confirm her experience of the disease as real. She cites more symptoms: lack of appetite and insomnia. She then turns to her particular experience of watching the beloved in another's arms, seeking pity for her circumstances. Florentina's recounting of her lovesickness insists on her pain, belabors the point of the disease's reality, references outside authorities to confirm her claims, and solicits sympathy through the description of her jealousy. Florentina's insistent defense of her lovesickness suggests that she uses her bodily suffering to defend the actions she will take in order to remedy that suffering.

Florentina takes a page out of Gaspara Stampa's book in further suggesting that her lovesickness is worse than that of others. She also connects the severity of her ill condition to her inability to speak: "Y más rabioso fue este mal en mí, porque no podía salir de mí, ni consentía ser comunicado, pues todo el mundo me había de infamar de que amase yo lo que mi amigo o hermana amaba;" (777) [And this anguish was more rabid in me because I could not escape myself, nor did it allow itself to be expressed, for everyone would have defamed me for loving what my friend or sister did. (302)] Her anguish is worse because she can neither escape nor communicate her experience for fear of her reputation. Her inability to speak, unlike Stampa's, is not about a failure of words, and unlike Olivia's and Britomart's, is not about remaining modest and chaste. Moreover, her concern is not for her sister's reaction, but for the reaction of the outside world and the damage to her reputation. The text hints that Florentina's concerns and morals are suspect, demonstrating both her efforts to use lovesickness to excuse her actions and the selfish motivations behind her seemingly modest silence. This is no Olivia suffering in silence; this is a calculating speaker controlling the account of her choices so as to garner maximum sympathy.

Florentina's defense of lovesickness has one major flaw: don Dionís happily fulfills her desires, thereby curing her of her melancholy and restoring her to health, as she herself reports: "Cobreme en mi perdida hermosura, restituime en mi donaire" (783) [I recovered myself in my lost beauty; I restored myself in my wittiness (307)]. Yet she clearly does not demonstrate herself as recovered when it does not suit her. When she seeks the maid's help, the maid responds, "El remedio que hallo cruel es; mas ya es remedio, que llagas tan ulceradas como éstas quieren curas violentas" (785) ["Cruel is the remedy I imagine, but it is indeed a remedy, for wounds as ulcerous as these require violent cures" (309)], drawing on the metaphor of illness. The use of

the medical language reminds the reader that Florentina is not, in fact, lovesick anymore, thanks to another sinful bodily cure: extramarital sex. The cure the maid offers is entirely beside the point. Therefore, even if lovesickness offered an excuse for the cure/sin of adultery with her brother-in-law, it does not excuse her actions framing Magdalena. Her happy sexual escapades also result in Magdalena's corresponding melancholy in a sort of humoral transfer. Heterosexual desire has disrupted the sisters' happy bond and made the sorrow of one of them inevitable. I want to pause here to think about Lisis as the story-teller, depicting a woman whose desire broke her bonds with another woman and whose illness facilitated her sexual fulfillment. Lisis's illness was not lovesickness, but everyone thought it was; here she suggests that to pursue the cure for such a disease is to court disaster and to irreparably harm bonds between women. In telling this story and casting Florentina in an unforgiving light, Lisis implicitly celebrates female bonds over the dangers, both moral and physical, of heterosexual desire. She also highlights the ways diseases and diseased bodies are open to interpretation, and how that interpretation can have real, dangerous consequences.

Florentina's use of lovesickness as a defense ties into her larger strategy of manipulating stories and shaping interpretation to suit her needs. When Florentina finally confesses her illness to don Dionís, she interprets her own act of speaking and imagines how he will interpret her text, thus taking full interpretive control over the narrative. She tells Dionís,

> ….he llegado a tiempo que es más mi pena que mi vergüenza. Y así, tenme por libre, admírame atrevida, ultrájame deshonesta, aborréceme liviana o haz lo que fuere tu gusto, que ya no puedo callar. Y cuando no me sirva de más mi confesión, sino que sepas que eres la causa de mi tristeza y desabrimiento, me doy por contenta y pagada de haberme declarado. (782)

> [I have come to such a state that my pain is greater than my shame. And so believe me to be overly free, wonder at my daring, insult me as immodest, abhor me as lascivious, or do whatever you please, for I can keep silent no more. And though my confession may serve me for nothing more than informing you that you are the cause of my sadness and surliness, I feel contented and compensated for having spoken out. (306)]

She imagines his reaction, voicing how he will think of her; given all the interpretation around women's bodies in this text, it seems significant that she offers him an interpretation in advance of her actual confession. Furthermore, he approached her because he had seen her melancholy; he has "read" her condition, and here, she tells him how to interpret it. Florentina uses language to frame her body and herself for male consumption, pre-scripting his interpretation, even though that interpretation seems to malign her body. Additionally, she frames her speech as a necessary response to her pain and an attempt to ameliorate it. The phrasing "haberme declarado," an idiomatic expression for confessing love, literally suggests that speech constitutes her, specifically speech about him: she has declared herself in the act of naming him as cause of her suffering, in defining herself in relation to him. In revealing her lovesickness, Florentina frames her act of speech as well as Dionís's reception of it, thus seizing narrative control.

Florentina's recounting of her disease is not her only moment as an unreliable narrator; indeed, she draws attention to her ability to craft her story in her own favor. She recounts how she engineered her confessions so as to receive absolution despite her continued sins:

> Y si bien algunas veces, en el discurso de mi mal estado, me había confesado, algunas había sido de cumplimiento. Y yo, que sabía bien dorar mi yerro, no debía haber encontrado confesor tan escrupuloso como este que digo, o yo debí de declararme mejor. (784)

> [And although sometimes, in the course of my evil doings, I had gone to confession, sometimes it had been formulaic. And I, who knew well how to gild my error, must not have found a confessor as scrupulous as this one I am about to tell about, and I must have declared myself with more skill. (308)]

In confession, she narrates her behavior, but she gilds her confession, coloring the story to suit her purpose. Florentina acknowledges her power to manipulate the story for audience effect, a particularly striking comment given that she is narrating at this moment. If she has altered the truth in confession, then why would she be honest with don Gaspar? Her text is suspect.

Florentina's silent body proves just as manipulative and suspect as her text. In the frame narrative that introduces her first person account, don Gaspar finds Florentina bleeding in the street, takes her inside and brings her a confessor and a surgeon. Despite Florentina's request for confession, she cannot speak because of her weak condition. Her body cannot allow speech, and without language, her body tells its own story that the men around her read as victimhood—a story that her subsequent speech will contradict. She gets absolved without confession on the stipulation that she'll speak when she can. Florentina receives unmerited absolution on multiple occasions, both because her body suggests a truth her narrative cannot uphold and because her confession elides her body's actual behavior. Then, after finishing her story, we are told, "Calló con esto la linda y hermosa Florentina; mas sus ojos, con los copiosos raudales de lágrimas, no callaron, que a hilos se desperdiciaban por sus más hermosas mejillas, en que mostraba bien la pasión que en el alma sentía, que forzada de ella se dejó caer con un profundo y hermoso desmayo … (791) ["The lovely and beautiful Florentina fell silent at this, but her eyes were not silent, shedding torrents of tears that cast themselves down her more than beautiful cheeks in threads, by which the suffering of her soul was manifest, and overcome by it, she let herself fall

into a profound and lovely swoon…" (314)]. Her body continues to speak after her voice has stopped, as her tears physicalize her soul's passion and make it legible. This is not the first time her body communicates as she falls silent, and last time, her silence willfully allowed her body to be misread; why should we trust our ability to read her body now? Whether in a performance or in her text, Florentina is capable of manipulating her audience to bring about her desired end. Her story succeeds in doing exactly that, earning her pardon from His Majesty and an inheritance that pays her dowry to enter a sumptuous convent.

Florentina excuses her behavior through lovesickness, but that excuse is unconvincing. This strategy contributes to her larger manipulation of narrative and interpretation in order to control those around her, whether that's don Dionís, her confessors, or don Gaspar. Through her textual manipulation and calculated bodily performance, Florentina arranges a cure for her lovesickness and a happy ending for herself, despite the mass murder her behavior caused. Why is Lisis telling this story about the dangers of narrative control and lovesickness as an excuse for bad behavior? How does this story inform our understanding of Lisis's own relationship with lovesickness and interpretation? Lovesickness has been imposed on Lisis, a misreading of her condition; the story she tells highlights the dangers in reading lovesickness into a female body, in how it can be used to justify immoral behavior. More broadly, misreadings and manipulative interpretations allow Florentina to get away with murder. Lisis has been willfully misread by those around her; the consequences have been far less, but the point—that interpretation entails control, and control enables violence—remains salient. Lisis connects sexual desire to desire for control, and further suggests that to get control and enjoy her desires, Florentina must betray female community. She returns to it at the end, entering a convent just as Lisis does. Removal from the world of men frees women from being controlled and from asserting control. Finally, as

a story of disillusion, Lisis's tale depicts don Gaspar being disabused of his blind affection for Florentina and finding another, more appropriate path to marriage. To tell this story is, like Florentina, to manipulate a tale in order to bring about a desired outcome. Lisis implies that she, like Florentina, is not worthy of male affection and thus will remove herself from that world. But as we know from the opening, her actual concern is that she does not reciprocate Dionís's affections. Lisis plays with the trope of the femme fatale in the story of Florentina, showing the dangers of lovesickness and textual control, in order to manipulate her own story, to justify her removal from the world of men on terms the men will accept.

In Zayas, lovesickness interprets the female body by framing all of its actions as reactions to men. Lovesickness reduces Lisis to an object to be cured through sexual fulfillment, making her a pawn of the men in the story. The narrator clearly demonstrates that Lisis is not lovesick, that she has a rich interior life that is not exclusively dominated by concerns of heterosexual desire, and that she flourishes as an author and an agent in female communities. Rejecting lovesickness and embracing female community enables subjectivity and authorship. Stampa, in contrast, manipulates the trope of lovesickness to create space for her authorial voice. She uses lovesickness to create a subject position for herself and to elevate herself above other women. While Stampa solves the problem of female lovesickness in a way that celebrates her own voice and minimizes the challenges of having a female body, Zayas highlights the problem of female lovesickness as one created by men, a problem of misreading and misdiagnosis. Both writers identify the trap that lovesickness creates for women: it reduces them to objects to be diagnosed and offers the possibility of subjectivity while rapidly foreclosing it by making that subjectivity dependent on their relationships to men. They find different ways out of the trap: Stampa by insisting on her subjectivity and objectifying the male beloved, and Zayas by rejecting

heterosexual desires in favor of female communities of storytellers and healers. The authors considered in the next chapter show similar interest in the manipulative force of lovesickness. Rather than focusing on lovesickness as a lens through which women's bodies are read and controlled, the writers in the next chapter turn to lovesickness as a lens through which women read and rewrite the bodies of those around them.

Chapter Three

Putting Words in Her Mouth: Language and Bodies in *Celestina* and *As You Like It*

The previous chapters looked at narrators and female patients interpreting female lovesickness, examining the profound anxiety around the desiring female body as a site of misreading. This chapter turns from reading to writing, examining how lovesickness is used to rewrite desiring bodies. Chapter three analyzes lovesickness as a mechanism of control in Fernando de Rojas' *Celestina* (1499) and William Shakespeare's *As You Like It* (performed c. 1599, published 1623). Lovesickness in these texts is both a female experience and a tool used by women to manipulate male desire. The disease enables female characters to seize interpretive control over bodies and language: in interpreting others, they also rewrite them, molding desire into new forms or creating new desire. The female characters examined in this chapter serve as go-betweens, and thus seize power over the love relationship in a different way because they are authoritative facilitators. Celestina is recruited to cure Calisto's lovesickness, thus he cedes authority to her. She in turn takes control over Melibea's body, inciting her lovesickness so that Melibea becomes dependent on Celestina for the cure. After Celestina's death, the lovers vie for control over their own and each others' bodies. In *As You Like It,* Rosalind adopts a male disguise and functions as her own go-between, offering to "cure" Orlando's love by having him woo her. By playing a role rather than engaging in courtship as herself, she seizes control over the situation and directs and scripts Orlando's performance as a lover. Lovesickness enables this control over bodies because the disease is susceptible to outside diagnosis, interpretation, and treatment. Additionally, because the humors can be exacerbated or alleviated through language,

control over language results in control over bodies. The texts challenge these attempts at control, highlighting their dangers in Celestina's case and their failures in Rosalind's case.

Shaping the Narrative: Lovesickness in Celestina

Fernando de Rojas tells the reader that the novel-in-dialogue[50] *Celestina,* initially titled the *Comedia de Calisto y Melibea,* is his continuation of a manuscript he found in the library at the Universidad de Salamanca. Rojas claims he found the first act and wrote the subsequent fifteen that were included in the first edition, which was published in Burgos in 1499. A second, extended version with 21 acts, with the title amended to the *Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea,* was published in Sevilla in 1501. Despite the change in title, the added acts do not shift the tone or conclusion of the story, but rather extend the middle of the narrative. The text depicts the lovesickness of a young nobleman, Calisto, who employs the go-between Celestina to arrange his sexual encounter with his beloved, Melibea. Celestina proceeds to cause Melibea's lovesickness, overcoming her fierce initial resistance, and arrange the couple's mutual cure. All three protagonists die violently: Celestina is murdered, Calisto falls off a ladder while leaving Melibea's balcony, and Melibea commits suicide.

Does *Celestina* teach its reader a didactic lesson about the dangers of desire, or does it mock medieval literary modes of love? The basic plot lends itself to interpreting the text as a lesson in the dangers of desire: the lovers and their procuress die violent deaths, suggesting the violence of desire itself.[51] Yet the language of the text is notoriously slippery: it is all dialogue, so there is no narrative guide, and it is too long to be performed, so there are no interpretive

[50] Although formatted in dialogue like a play script, the text is far too long to have ever been performed and scholars assume it was never presented.

[51] The seminal critical reading of the text as didactic comes from Marcel Bataillon's *La Célestine selon Fernando de Rojas* (Paris, 1961). See also Theodore Kassier, June Hall Martin, and Marlen Bidwell-Steiner. For readings that push back against a didactic reading, see María Rosa Lida de Malkiel, Stephen Gilman, and M.J. Ruggiero.

guides in the action of performance. The tone certainly carries a flair of irony, and Calisto's lovesickness in particular is hard to take seriously. The reading of Calisto's plot as a *reprobatio amoris* is fairly common (Bidwell-Steiner 137, Bienvenido Morros Mestres 77-99): scholars note that others try to correct and curb Calisto's desires to no avail, and that his desire leads to his demise. But does the text present this as a lesson about the dangers of desire, as David William Foster suggests (491)? Is it mocking Calisto's particular brand of love, as June Hall Martin and Marlen Bidwell-Steiner claim (Martin 112-113, 140; Bidwell-Steiner 135)? Or might it parody the genre of *remedium amoris* itself, which so often suggests "cures" that only exacerbate the illness, as Enrique Fernández argues (79-86)? I agree with Bidwell-Steiner's claim that didacticism and parody are not mutually exclusive, and that the line between tragedy and farce breaks down by gender, with Melibea's story line as true tragedy and Calisto's as more of a parody. If Calisto's lovesickness is a medieval literary remnant subject to parodic mockery, Melibea's lovesickness strikes a new note, carrying more authenticity and with that, a desire for agency and control. The text's commentary on gender and desire is integrally connected to not just the literary and moralistic tradition of love texts, but the medical tradition as well. Any claim about the dangers of desire in the text needs to consider the medical dynamics of lovesickness, and especially its connection to language: if the text presents lovesickness as a danger to be avoided, it does so by presenting the disease as a contagion that can be spread through speech.

The role of language in the notoriously slippery text has received significant critical attention. George Shipley argues for the capacity of speakers in the text to revive conventional images in new ways, particularly pointing to Celestina and Melibea's abilities to exploit ambiguity (326-330). This ambiguity leads to confusion and tension in the text, as other scholars have shown. Carlota Fernández-Jáuregui Rojas argues that "*Celestina* presents itself as if ideas

and language, intentions and words, are necessarily in conflict" (387). She suggests that Calisto loses the ability to distinguish between things and their signs, between intention and interpretation (389). Madeline Sutherland points to a similar problem, but locates it in the beginning of the text. She argues that Calisto starts the piece failing to distinguish Melibea from God, marking the inevitability of conflict as difference collapses into untenable sameness (183). Meaning is unstable in the text, alternately connected to and divorced from language. This remaking and unmaking of meaning creates constant opportunities for characters to seize narrative authority, as I will demonstrate. Additionally, the role of language is integrally connected to desire in the text, as Robert Folger has shown. He argues that the text depicts lovesickness caused by language as a didactic lesson to warn readers against the dangerous ways love can distort one's senses and cognitive faculties (Folger 23-24). I agree that the text carries a warning, but not against lovesickness; rather, the text demonstrates the dangerous competition for textual authority, and links this textual authority to control over the body because of the pathology of desire. In other words, the problem is not lovesickness itself, but the way it is used to wield control over others. Because lovesickness is a highly suggestible state, caused and cured by language, Celestina uses the disease to enhance her narrative power. In taking power over language, she also takes power over the body. When Celestina dies, Calisto tries to take authorial and bodily control, and when he dies, Melibea takes on authorial control. Desire and narrative authority are interwoven, as characters interpret and author competing versions of desire in attempts to seize control.

Calisto recruits Celestina to cure his lovesickness. His disease thus leads to his dependence on her: he physically needs her to arrange his cure. Celestina takes further control over Calisto, making him dependent on her for information and interpretation as well as the

physical arrangement. Celestina frames herself as Calisto's translator, describing Melibea's behavior and telling him how to understand it. When he asks about Melibea's reaction, she compares it to bulls entering the fight. Calisto is upset, doubting her interpretation of the signs: "¿y a essas llamas señales de salud? Pues, ¿quáles serían mortales?" (352) [And you call *those signs of health*! What would *deadly ones* be like? (66, translation modified)], he asks, and adds "pues todo esso más es señal de odio que de amor" (353) [*all this is* a sign *more of* hatred than love (67, translation modified)]. Calisto doubts Celestina's proffered interpretation. In response, she acknowledges Melibea's ire, but interprets Melibea's rage as a sign of desire (354). She explains that rejection indicates love in noblewomen:

> Que a quien más quieren, peor hablan. Y si assí no fuesse, ninguna diferencia havría entre las públicas que aman, a las escondidas donzellas, si todas dixessen 'sí' a la entrada de su primer requerimiento, en viendo que de alguno eran amadas. Las quales, aunque están abrasadas y encendidas de vivos fuegos de amor, por su honestidad muestran un frío esterior, un sosegado vulto, un aplazible desvío, un constante ánimo y casto propósito, unas palabras agras, que la propia lengua se maravilla del gran sofrimiento suyo, que la fazen forçosamente confessar el contrario de lo que sienten. (353-354)
>
> [*Those who love the most, speak the worst.* If that were not so, there'd be no difference between the love of prostitutes and that of these sheltered damsels, that is, if they all said 'yes' the moment they saw they were being courted. Even though they're on fire with love, modest maidens show a cold face to it, a calm demeanor, a tranquil indifference, a firm spirit and a chaste purpose, and utter words so bitter that their tongues marvel at their hardihood in saying the opposite of what they mean. (67, translation modified)]

Celestina interprets Melibea for Calisto, reading her verbal rejection as evidence of her body's love. She separates women's external speech from their internal desire, thus making Calisto reliant on Celestina for accurate interpretation of Melibea's speech and behavior. Her reading here elides lovesickness, which offers reliable symptoms to be read and interpreted, instead suggesting that women can control the ways in which their bodies signify. In translating for him, she constructs an alternative semiotic system in which "no" means "yes" and rejection means desire. She rewrites every word Melibea says, interpreting Melibea's feelings for Calisto positively, thereby making Calisto dependent on Celestina for this, and future, interpretation.

Celestina draws attention to this dependence, emphasizing her own control. When Calisto expresses doubts about whether Melibea will succumb to his desires, Celestina responds curtly, "Calla, señor; que el buen atrevimiento de un solo hombre ganó a Troya. No desconfíes, que una muger puede ganar otra" (364) [Hush, sir. The daring of one man alone took Troy. Don't despair, for a lone woman can take *another* (73, translation modified)]. Although we might think she is comparing Calisto to the man who took Troy, the second statement clarifies that is it she, not he, who enables access behind the wall. She compares herself to Odysseus, invoking the idea of the Trojan horse and penetration through deception. The comparison obliquely implies her powers of textual interpretation and creation: Odysseus is known for his rhetoric, but also his double talk, as in the episode of the Cyclops and his naming of himself as "no man." Additionally, she uses gender to establish her power and Calisto's need for her: only a woman can interpret a woman's desires, just as only a woman can persuade another woman to act on those desires. Similarly, after Celestina has won over Melibea and reports the good news of her lovesickness to Calisto, Celestina does not let Calisto forget who is responsible for Melibea's submission. When Calisto is skeptical, Celestina retorts by emphasizing her powers: "¿No mirarías a quién has puesto

entremedias? … Mira, mira, que está Celestina de tu parte, y que, aunque todo se faltasse lo que en un enamorado se requiere, te vendería por el más acabado galán del mundo" (463) [Why not take into account the person you've got for an intermediary? … Remember, Celestina is with you! Even though you lacked everything a lover should have, she'd pass you off for the most accomplished gallant in the world! (125)]. Her selling abilities are the point—just as she interprets Melibea for Calisto, she interpreted Calisto for Melibea, persuading her that he is an accomplished gallant. *She* has subdued Melibea, and this hand-off of control and agency is not from Melibea to Calisto, but from Melibea to Celestina to Calisto. Celestina has crafted Calisto's complete dependence on her for a cure; her narrative control earns her control over what the story is, how it is understood, and how bodies behave within that story.

Calisto is lovesick from the start and eagerly submits to Celestina's control in hopes of achieving his desired cure. A bad reader, he relies on Celestina not just for information, but for interpretation. By cultivating this increasing dependence, Celestina increases her authority. She seizes complete interpretive control, and her only challenge is trying to make Calisto be quiet and listen. Melibea provides a different challenge: Celestina must use language not to manipulate the lovesick body, but to actually cause lovesickness in the body and then persuade Melibea to accept sex as the cure for this condition. Not only is the task harder, but Melibea has much more textual prowess than Calisto. She puts up a fight, competing with Celestina for interpretive control over lovesick bodies. Although she ultimately loses the fight, the competition for textual control draws attention to the power of language to interpret and shape reality, as well as the specific ways disease makes the body susceptible to language.

Celestina repeatedly invokes the power of lovesickness in seeking to enhance her control over Melibea. In preparing for the meeting, Celestina conjures Pluto, seeking demonic assistance

in softening Melibea's heart: "y se le abras y lastimes del crudo y fuerte amor de Calisto, tanto que despedida toda honestidad, se descubra a mí y me galardone mis passos y mensaje" (309) [And *open her heart and strike her so* with the strong and cruel love of Calisto that, forsaking all modesty, she will bare herself to me and reward me for my effort and my message. (44, translation modified)]. She wishes for Melibea to become fully lovesick and discover her disease to Celestina. Lovesickness is an essential step, as she does not just wish that Melibea succumb to her will, but that she burn with love. The disease also seems to be the element that makes her forsake her honesty, that compels her to open herself to Celestina and, by extension, Calisto. Celestina likewise draws on the role of lovesickness in her conversation with Melibea. She capitalizes on the burden lovesickness creates on the beloved: she presents Calisto as a man on the verge of death, suggesting that Melibea is both cure and cause and therefore responsible for his condition. Emphasizing the deadly nature of the disease, she says: "Yo dexo un enfermo a la muerte…" (326) [I come from one who is sick unto death… (52)]. Celestina not only describes Calisto as on the verge of death, but insists that Melibea can cure him with "sola una palabra" from her "noble boca;" the cure comes from language situated in her body. Celestina builds toward the body itself as medicine: "Por qué no daremos parte de nuestras gracias y personas a los próximos, mayormente quando están embueltos en secretas enfermedades, y tales que donde está la melezina salió la causa de la enfermedad?" (328) [Why not share our blessings *and bodies* with our neighbors, especially with one who is sick of a secret malady, such a strange disease, indeed, that it can be cured only by what caused it (53, translation modified)]. Not only does Celestina urge Melibea to share her body, but she pairs the claim that her body is restorative with the claim that it is the source of the sickness. In this new version of Melibea's body that Celestina crafts, she is the blessed cure as well as the cause of the illness; this trope of

lovesickness puts the beloved in the uncomfortable position of both being to blame for the disease and being the only means to a cure. Like the *pharmakon,* she contains these opposites, both poison and medicine; this ambiguity leaves her empty of identity, able to be both because she is neither.[52] Because Calisto's body is lovesick, Celestina can rewrite Melibea's body as an object that causes and cures disease, an object that bears responsibility for Calisto's body regardless of Melibea's own desires or intentions. Celestina writes this story around Melibea's body so as to manipulate her into serving Celestina's desired narrative, rewriting Melibea in terms of Calisto and only Calisto.

Despite Celestina's attempts to use the rhetoric of lovesickness to seize control, Melibea rejects Celestina's interpretation and reframes Calisto's disease in her own terms. Melibea utterly dismisses Celestina's claims of his severe illness, retorting "¡De locura será su mal!" (328) [His disease must be madness (translation my own)]. Calisto's disease, in Melibea's account, is the result of his own failure of rational power. It is not a physical ill, and thus not something she is required to, or even able to, cure. Further dismissing the idea that he needs a cure from her, Melibea remarks, "Pues avísale que se aparte deste propósito y serle ha sano" (330) [Tell him to forget this goal and he'll be cured (translation my own)]. "Forget about her and move on" is a mental cure, in keeping with Melibea's designation of his disease as "de locura." It is not, of course, the cure Calisto is interested in, nor is it a cure that Celestina can provide. Melibea further connects Calisto's problem to issues of perspective and language: "Pues sabe que no es vencido sino el que se cree serlo, y yo quedé bien segura y él ufano; de los locos es estimar a todos los otros de su calidad. Y tú, tórnate con su mesma razón, que respuesta de mí otra no havrás, ni la esperes" (330) [*He knows that no one is conquered unless he thinks himself to be so,*

[52] See Derrida, esp. 127, 169.

and let me remain well secure and he proud; these madmen always think everyone else is mad. Take that answer to him and don't expect any other (54, translation modified)]. She proposes that he change the story about his disease, seizing power over his physical condition through changing the narrative he constructs around it. Melibea resists the script Celestina imposes on her and instead reinterprets Calisto's condition in mental rather than physical terms, and, therefore, as a problem she need not help solve.

This interpretive battle over what lovesickness is and where it is located results from Celestina's request for just a word, which, she says, could heal this man on the verge of death. Melibea returns to the original request for words, asking what words Celestina could possibly want from her that would do Melibea any good: "¿Qué palabra podías tú querer para esse tal hombre que a mí bien me estuviesse?" (331) [What can you say in that fellow's defence that would please me? (55)]. In asking this question, Melibea returns textual authority to Celestina by inviting her to elaborate further. This opening lets Celestina reframe her initial request—not words of love or encouragement, but a prayer, totally innocent. Satisfied by the reinterpretation of Calisto's needs, Melibea now faults Celestina for her insufficient use of language ("¿por qué me dixiste en tan pocas palabras?" (332) [why didn't you say so in the first place? (55)]). Celestina insists honesty doesn't need too many words ("porque la verdad no es necessario abundar de muchas colores" (332) [because truth doesn't have to be painted in many colors (55)]). Words are thus associated with coloring the story, with altering or shaping the truth. This encapsulates the use of language we have seen throughout the text: the abundance of language entails an abundance of versions and perspectives, a multiplicity of interpretations and constructed realities. Having laid bare this function of language, the battle ends with Celestina requesting more language: a prayer. Interestingly, Melibea tells Celestina they are out of time

and gives her the *cordón* but not the prayer. There is no more time for words, she says, so Celestina must return tomorrow if words are still necessary. Melibea holds on to her words, resisting giving those up on the first visit. When words are handed over to the reader, the reader gets to interpret them, an issue this scene has highlighted. Melibea attempts to maintain textual control, unwilling to part with language and the influence it entails.

In Melibea's first soliloquy in the text, we learn that Celestina's tactics have worked and she has fallen in love. Although she does not specify what triggered her illness, she does curse herself for not submitting in the first meeting with Celestina, which suggests that the disease had already begun in that initial encounter. She desires Calisto, but she also desires to maintain her chastity. She prays, "No se desdore aquella hoja de castidad que tengo assentada sobre este amoroso desseo, publicando ser otro mi dolor, que no el que me atormenta" (440) [*Do not tarnish the leaf of chastity that* I have laid over *this amorous desire*, *displaying my pain as something else, not that which torments me* (113, translation modified)]. She calls the veil of chastity laid over her desire an *hoja,* meaning leaf or sheet of paper. While this is primarily an allusion to the fig leaf of Genesis, the textual association is tempting, depicting her chastity as a textual covering, and specifically one that can be written upon. She conceals lovesickness textually, reinterpreting and falsely displaying chastity that writes over her actual bodily condition. Her wish is not to change her experience, but to control how the illness manifests and how it is received by others. She recommended that Calisto change the story he told himself about his illness; when she herself suffers, she hopes to control the story perceived by others, wishes for her lovesick body to be misread and misinterpreted. Melibea's gendering of this anxiety is consistent with the patterns of lovesickness we have seen in other texts: Olivia, Britomart, and Lisis likewise attempt to conceal their passions while the lovesick men in the

same texts suffer no such burden. The pressure to conceal female lovesickness heightens the role of interpretation and reading, making the secrets of women dangerously legible; characters respond to their new legibility by trying to make the signs ambiguous, trying to control the way their bodies are read and interpreted.

Once Melibea is lovesick, she abandons her insistence that the disease is pure madness and accepts its physical side. Melibea locates her illness in her heart and the corresponding symptoms in her body, a shift from her earlier insistence that Calisto's illness was in his mind:

> Mi mal es de coraçón, la ysquierda teta es su aposentamiento, tiende sus rayos a todas partes. Lo segundo, es nuevamente nacido en mi cuerpo, que no pensé jamás que podía el dolor privar el seso como éste haze; túrbame la cara, quítame el comer, no puedo dormir, ningún género de risa querría ver. La causa o pensamiento, que es la final cosa por ti preguntada de mi mal, ésta no sabré dezir te…. (443-444)
>
> [My pain is in *the* heart, under the left breast, but it sends its pangs to all parts of my body. I never thought a pain could be so sharp as to drive me out of my senses, as this one does! It takes the color from my face and destroys my appetite; I cannot sleep, nor can I bear to hear any kind of merriment. Finally, if it was caused by some secret thought, I can't think *how to say it to you*: … (115, translation modified)]

The reframing of the disease marks a move toward the bodily, away from the rational and the abstract; in other words, she adopts the language Celestina used for lovesickness and writes her experience using the terms Celestina provided. Melibea adopts Celestina's language of the body, ascribing the classic litany of lovesickness symptoms to herself. Additionally, she pinpoints the moment she fell ill as Celestina's demand for the prayer: "…ni otra cosa puedo sentir que fuesse, salvo la alteración que tú me causaste con la demanda que sospeche de parte de aquel caballero

Calisto, quando me pediste la oración" (444) [The only thing it could have been was the tumult you stirred up in me with your suspicious request in behalf of that gentleman, Calisto, when you asked for the prayer (115)]. She pinpoints the cause of the disease as Celestina, not Calisto, and specifically Celestina's request for language. That request physically altered her, and she blames Celestina for this change. Language—moreover, language *about* language, the request for the prayer—caused the alteration in Melibea's body, leading to her lovesickness.

As Melibea and Celestina battle for control over Melibea's honor and how she will pursue a cure for her illness, the competition centers on the use of language. Melibea takes comfort in hearing Celestina: "¡O qué gracioso y agradable me es oÿrte! Saludable es al enfermo la alegre cara del que le visita" (442) [How comforting it is to hear you! The visitor's cheerful face is good medicine for the patient (114)]. She then puts her heart in her hands and says she relies on "la virtud de tu lengua" [the virtue of your tongue] for its cure, presenting Celestina's speech as curative. Celestina asks for speech in turn, saying "por ende, cumple que al médico, como al confessor, se hable toda verdad abiertamente" (443) [It's as necessary, therefore, to speak truthfully to your physician as it is to your confessor (115)]. She wants Melibea's full, open text and compares this to confession to a priest. Melibea hedges as she seeks a remedy, qualifying her request with interjections such as "tal que mi honrra no dañes con tus palabras" (X.ii, 444) [provided that you don't damage my honor with your words (translation my own)] and "qualquiera remedio otro darías sin temor, pues te pido le muestres, quedando libre mi honrra" (445) [you have my leave to give me any medicine whatever, provided my honor is safe (116)]. A subtle shift begins as Celestina weakens her resolve, threatening to remain silent if Melibea fears the remedy so much (444-445). First Melibea fears that Celestina's words will

harm her honor, but then she fears the remedy itself will harm her honor. The focus on language moves towards a focus on the physical body and physical medicine.[53]

Celestina works to get Melibea to give up the caveat of her honor, insisting that her disease requires suffering for its cure. After she says she needs to get the medicine from Calisto's house and Melibea resists, Celestina explains: "Tu llaga es grande; tiene necessidad de áspera cura, y lo duro con duro se ablanda más eficacemente. Y dizen los sabios que la cura del lastimero médico dexa mayor señal y que nunca peligro sin peligro se vence. Ten paciencia, que pocas veces lo molesto sin molestia se cura, y un clavo con otro se espele y un dolor con otro" (447-448) [You've got a deep wound and it needs severe treatment. What is hard is soonest softened by something that is also hard. The learned say that a cure made by a soft-hearted surgeon leaves a bigger scar, and that a danger is never met without danger. *You must be patient, for a troublesome disease is rarely cured without trouble, and one nail is driven out with another, one pain with another* (117, translation modified)]. Pain, she insists, is necessary to drive out pain, thus Melibea's insistence on maintaining her honor is impractical. The emphasis on pain keeps focus on the body, framing the cure Melibea needs as entirely physical. The innuendo throughout frames that pain as sexual, implying the pain of lost virginity. With Calisto, she promises the pleasure of fulfillment and reframes harsh words of rejection as indications of love; she inflames his desire and reliance on her by promising him exactly what he wants. With Melibea, she does not promise any sweetness or even relief, but only prepares her to accept greater pain, a pain she implicitly (but not subtly) connects to sexual intercourse. Her strategies for physical control are gendered. Melibea has suggested lovesickness is worse for women

[53] George Shipley argues that in this shift toward language, Melibea mimics Celestina's rhetoric from act iv; see pp. 328-331. While he sees this as evidence of their collaboration in communication, I see it more as evidence of Celestina's influence and control over the narrative.

because of the cultural pressure to remain chaste and silent; Celestina adds that lovesickness's cure is painful for women.

Celestina's persuasions are more effective than she realizes, particularly in how naming Calisto affects Melibea. The lovesick sufferer tends to react strongly to the name of his beloved; in fact, the lover's reaction to the beloved's name is often used as a diagnostic tool.[54] When Celestina says the cure requires something from Calisto's house, Melibea still insists, "No traygas de su casa cosa para mi provecho, ni le nombres aquí" (447) [Don't bring *me* anything from his house and *don't name him in this one* (117, translation modified)]. Melibea reacts to Calisto's name with increasing violence. After her first insistence that he not be named, when Celestina persists, Melibea cries "¡O, por Dios, que me matas! ¿Y no te tengo dicho que no alabes esse hombre, ni me lo nombres en bueno ni en malo? (448)" [My God, you're killing me! Haven't I told you not to praise that man in my presence, *nor name him to me for good or for bad*? (117, translation modified). Melibea's assertion that his name is killing her is no idle threat: she actually loses consciousness upon hearing him named as the cure. Michael Gerli interprets the swoon as "the body's mute response to the overwhelming acknowledgment of her passion for him" (54), suggesting that the body loses both the capacity for language and control over itself in the wake of her passion. Her body's response results from specific language: his name. Naming is dangerous, as it incarnates and localizes desire in an individual body—hence the medical associations of the lover's bodily changes (rapid pulse, trouble breathing, blushing) with the beloved's name. Despite these conventional associations, Celestina is surprised and alarmed when Melibea faints, suggesting that Celestina has not anticipated Melibea's reaction to her

[54] When Galen is diagnosing a female patient, he notices that upon hearing the name of the dancer Pylades, her color drains and her pulse races, leading Galen to diagnose her as lovesick. The physician Erasistratus similarly diagnoses Antiochus's lovesickness when his pulse races in the presence of his stepmother, Stratonice.

verbal manipulation. Celestina fears that Melibea will die, in which case she will also be killed, or that Melibea will awaken and reject further discussion of her disease and the cure, since that "cure" has knocked her unconscious. Melibea's faint is the first substantial threat to Celestina's control, the first suggestion that her language has impacted Melibea's body in a way she did not intend. Conversely, the faint proves helpful rather than harmful to Celestina's cause: upon awakening, Melibea explains that she fainted because her reputation, restraint, and modesty are all lost in the face of her desire for Calisto. "Muchos y muchos días son passados que esse noble cavallero me habló en amor; tanto me fue entonces su hablar enojosa quanto, después que tú me le tornaste a nombrar, alegre" (451) [When that noble gentleman spoke to me of love some days ago, his words troubled me, but now that you've named him, I find them full of joy (119)]. Celestina has changed the way Melibea receives language, specifically Calisto's name. His text on its own was insufficient to move her, but with Celestina's intercession, Melibea's anger at his words has entirely converted to joy. Melibea is clearly conquered, and Celestina's text physically overwhelms her body, but Celestina is not fully in control of Melibea's submission. This is the first time Celestina loses control of the bodies of those around her; it will not be the last.

In Celestina's absence during Melibea and Calisto's meeting, Melibea attempts to regain textual control and take charge of her own narrative. Melibea tells Calisto how she was won over, recounting a different version of falling in love than she previously told Celestina. Melibea reports an interest in Calisto that predates Celestina's intervention: "tu mucho merecer, tus estremadas gracias, tu alto nascimiento ha nobrado que, después que de ti hove entera noticia, ningún momento de mi coraçón te partiesses. Y aunque muchos días he pugnado por lo dissimular, no he podido, tanto que en tornándome aquella muger tu dulce nombre a la memoria, no descubriesse mi desseo y viniesse a este lugar y tiempo, donde te suplico ordenes y dispongas

de mi persona segund querrás. (479-480) [Ever since I learned who you were, my lord Calisto, and your high worth, your great gifts and exalted birth, you have been in my heart at every moment. I strove for some days to hide it from myself, but when that woman mentioned your sweet name to me I could no longer conceal my feeling, nor could I forbear coming here to you. And now I beg you to dispose of my person as you will (132-133)]. In this version, Celestina brought Calisto's name to her memory and helped Melibea get to this point at which she submits her person to Calisto's agency.[55] She frames Calisto's merits as the cause of her love, merits she has not previously mentioned either with Celestina or by herself. The language here also draws on contemporary models of women's secrets in that she locates him in her heart and then frames it as hidden from herself, even though it is part of her own body. The idea of concealing passions returns, and in this account, the implication is that hiding the passion makes it stronger, building to the point where she cannot control it any longer. Having lost control over herself, she actively submits to Calisto's control. Of course, Melibea at no point in this scene seems out of control; on the contrary, she begins by faking resistance in order to test his affections, suggesting complete control over her performance and text. It is less Calisto himself and more the idea of Calisto and her own desire that proves all-consuming, and even then it's that idea *as voiced by Celestina* that makes her lose control and consciousness in Act X. Melibea feigns a loss of control

[55] Robert Folger argues that Celestina produces an image of Calisto in Melibea's mind during their meeting (9). In this way, he is able to take all of Melibea's versions of falling in love as true (16-17). While I agree with him that, if she were lovesick already at the start, she would not have been able to conceal her love in the first meeting with Celestina, I am less persuaded by his reading of this passage as referring to the image of Calisto she "saw" during that first meeting with Celestina. Knowledge of lovesickness adds to our understanding, removing the possibility that she is faking her aversion to Calisto at the beginning of the text, as Folger points out. But lovesickness alone is not enough to answer every question about the text. We need to connect the medical, bodily ideas to the language, and allow for the possibility that Melibea can manipulate versions of her own narrative.

intentionally, framing a version of her love for Calisto's consumption and submitting to him on her own terms.

Melibea may have verbal control, but Calisto has physical control and does not hesitate to capitalize on that, even over Melibea's objections. In their second meeting (this one with a ladder, so they can meet face to face), Melibea experiences firsthand Calisto's new insistence on control. She asks him not to push his way up the ladder, but he does. Calisto takes her in his arms, saying, "Mora en mi persona tanta turbación de plazer, que me haze no sentir todo el gozo que poseo" (514) [I am beside myself with such perturbation of pleasure that I cannot feel all the joy I have! (150)]. The phrasing "gozo que poseo" entails both experiencing the emotion of joy and possessing Melibea as a joyous object. Calisto has always been most interested in his own experiences. However, the veil of courtly love provided at least a semblance of respect for her; that veil is gone.[56] Melibea resists, stating that she has placed herself in his hands ("me fié en tus manos" (514)) in the trust that he will not destroy her. Calisto dismisses this request: "Señora, pues por conseguir esta merced toda mi vida he gastado, ¿qué sería, quando me la diesse, desechalla? Ni tú, señora, me lo mandarás ni yo podría acabarlo comigo. … Nadando por este fuego de tu desseo toda mi vida, ¿no quieres que me arrime al dulce puerto a descansar de mis passados trabajos?" (514-515) [Mistress, I have risked my life to win this favor. What sense would there be in rejecting it now *that you're giving it to me*? You cannot *tell* me to do so, nor could I so betray myself. … *I have been swimming* in this hot sea of desire *all my life*. Would you *have me not seek your dear port, to rest from my heavy labors*? (150, translation modified)]. Calisto plays the lovesickness card, citing his previous suffering as a reason he cannot resist her and, implicitly, as proof that he deserves this reward. He again draws on the dual nature of his

[56] See Foster 485 for a more extended discussion of this function of courtly love in the text.

beloved as cause and cure: he suffers, swimming in desire for her, and now approaches her body as a port of rest. She causes his suffering and her presence now provides his respite, thus justifying his actions in seizing that respite regardless of her feelings. Rojas exposes the violent desires at the heart of the courtly love project, revealing the lust that is tenuously contained by the verbal fiction of a power dynamic in which the woman holds sway.[57] Calisto uses lovesickness to justify his insistence on sexual fulfillment, despite the fact that he no longer seems lovesick nor has he complained of any symptoms since learning Melibea returned his affections. Sex is not a cure in this moment because Calisto is no longer ill. Calisto uses his illness and Melibea's own words as persuasion, reminding her that she has granted him this mercy and thus cannot tell him not to take it: her past words have erased her agency, and consent cannot be revoked. Her language shifted his access to her body and his ownership over it, constructing a new reality verbally that he now physically enacts.

Melibea fruitlessly tries to maintain her physical boundaries, seeking to divorce language from body in order to protect herself. Melibea tells Calisto, "¡Por mi vida, que aunque hable tu lengua quanto quisiere, no obren las manos quanto pueden!" (515) [On my life, although your tongue may say whatever it wants, your hands will not take whatever they can (translation my own)]. She acknowledges the power of speech but denies its actual, physical effects; this seriously misunderstands how speech has shaped the body thus far in the text. Melibea mistakenly insists that language can restrain the body when, in fact, it does exactly the opposite. Granting Calisto control over her body in the previous scene was a performative speech act that he holds her to. His granting himself that same power ushers in the physical inevitability. Words

[57] In addition to love as a disguise for lust, feminist critiques of Petrarchism and its precursor, *fin' amor*, have drawn attention to the gendered power dynamics in this structure of love. See Heather Dubrow, chapter 2; Aileen Feng; and Jane Burns.

have a powerful physical effect that spins out of control. Carlota Fernández-Jáuregui Rojas argues that Calisto has lost the ability to distinguish between things and their signs, to allow for any distinction between intention and text; thus, Calisto's failing here results from his limits as a reader and his dogged insistence on Melibea's verbal submission in the previous scene as a literal, physical submission (387-389). This failure of reading is, I would add, willful—Melibea produces new text, new signs in this scene that Calisto refuses to consider as he pushes to literally embody the figurative submission Melibea's text produced previously. Calisto is forcefully creating the version of events he wants, not just textually but in embodied practice. His resistance toward ambiguity or linguistic intention connects to his demanding physical desires: he curtails interpretive meaning so as to seize physical control. Celestina's verbal manipulation nearly killed Melibea, causing her to lose consciousness. Melibea's own verbal submission gets her more than she bargained for: seeking to claim agency through choosing Calisto, she lost agency in submitting, and here that verbal submission has very real physical consequences. Trying to gain narrative, textual control but failing to understand how that control impacts the body proves a dangerous mistake for both Celestina and Melibea.

Having lost her agency through language, Melibea tries to use language to regain it. After their sexual encounter, Melibea initially expresses disappointment: "¿Cómo has quesido que pierda el nombre y corona de virgen por tan breve deleyte?" (516) [How could you have caused me to lose my name and virgin crown for such a brief delight? (translation my own)]. The physical encounter leaves her unsatisfied. Yet within moments, she is begging him to return: "Señor, por Dios, pues ya todo queda por ti, pues ya soy tu dueña, pues ya no puedes negar mi amor, no me niegues tu vista de día, passando por mi puerta. De noche donde tú ordenares, sea tu venida por este secreto lugar, a la mesma ora, por que siempre te espere apercebida del gozo con

que quedo, esperando las venideras noches" (518) [In God's name, my lord, since you are now all I have and I am your mistress and you cannot deny my love, do not fail to pass my door by day and let me see you! You may see me by night whenever you will! *Come to this secret place at the same time because I always await you prepared for the joy that I anticipate, awaiting the coming nights* (151, translation modified)]. Melibea draws on the performative power of language that she sought to deny a few moments ago. Since language creates physical reality, she capitalizes on that, constructing herself as his mistress and therefore his responsibility. Because of what has passed between them, she says that now she utterly exists for him, and he owes her his bodily company in recompense for that fact. Melibea's lovesickness only seems to have been exacerbated by the sexual encounter, possibly because it was so unsatisfying; if the desire has not been satiated, then the humoral balance has not been restored. She defers to him consistently, framing her desire in response to his: "Señor, yo soy la que gozo, yo la que gano; tú, señor, el que me hazes con tu visitación incomparable merced" (585) [My lord, I am the one who joys, the one who wins; you, lord, the one who does me incomparable mercy with your visitation (translation my own)]. Melibea reframes her role from dominating, unreachable beloved to the piteous lover who receives affection as an unmerited grant of mercy. She also scripts his role as the superior lord who charitably grants her his attentions. In reversing their roles, making herself submissive and him authoritative, she corrects the gender role reversal lovesickness initiated. Love made Calisto passive, submissive, feminine, at the mercy of women's whims; now that Melibea reciprocates his love, she puts herself in that position and elevates Calisto. She takes on agency in desire, textually shaping both her role and his. In doing so, she uses that agency to give over control, a fact all the more underscored by Celestina's framing of Melibea's desire as submission earlier in the text. The text thus presents the gendered dynamics of lovesickness as a

mechanism for not only subjugating women, but making women complicit in their own subjugation.

In addition to taking narrative control, Melibea situates herself within a set of literary comparisons. When Melibea's parents desire to arrange a marriage for her, she tells Lucrecia that she is not willing to insult the institution of marriage by entering into it as a non-virgin. She says she has no desire to follow the example set by unchaste literary women: "No quiero marido, no quiero ensuziar los ñudos del matrimonio, no las maritales pisadas de ageno hombre repisar, como [muchas] hallo en los antiguos libros que leÿ que hizieron, más discretas que yo, más subidas en estado y linaje" (548) [I don't want a husband, I don't want to dirty the bonds of matrimony, nor retrace marital footsteps with another man, like many women more discreet than I, higher in status and lineage, did, as I find in the antique books that I read (translation my own)]. She cites the incestuous Myrrha, Semiramis, Canasce, and Tamar, along with the unnatural Pasiphae. These are traditional examples of the excessive and unnatural desires of women, with the exception of Tamar, who, Melibea acknowledges fleetingly, was raped: "y aun aquella forçada Thamar" (549) [and even that forced Tamar (translation my own)]. The Tamar comparison reminds the reader of the coercive function of male lovesickness: Tamar's brother, Amnon, was lovesick and faked a worse illness to coerce her into sex, and when she refused, he raped her. This narrative is notably similar to that of Melibea and Calisto. For Melibea to blame Tamar for her rape and hold her up as an example of incest is to miss both the point of the Biblical story and the parallel to her own situation. The gendered logic here blames women not just for their desires, but for being objects of desire. Additionally, when she interprets these narratives as stories of shameful women and includes herself in their ranks, she contributes to a narrative of female desire as dangerous, excessive, and wrong. Melibea engages with the literary

history of lovesickness in a way that frames her desires as excessive and unnatural, positioning herself in a long line of women blamed for their desires.

Death in this text offers a final opportunity for speech, for self-narration. Celestina and Calisto both die crying out for confession. Although there are religious reasons for this, given the text's focus on narrative and control, it is still noteworthy that two figures exit the text crying out for the opportunity to confess, to narrate their own stories as a final act. Melibea actually does confess, seizing authorship and agency in her final moments. With both Celestina and Calisto gone, Melibea takes on the role of author, and in doing so, takes ownership of the entire situation. Prior to her suicide, Melibea explains herself to her father. She again compares her actions to literary examples, this time others who have caused their parents pain (595-596). In her version of events, Melibea takes full responsibility for Calisto's death and the present situation: "De todo esto fuy yo la causa" (598) [I was the cause of all of this (translation my own)]. She also blames lovesickness, specifically Calisto's: "Era tanta su pena de amor y tan poco el lugar para hablarme que descubrió su passión a una astuta y sagaz muger, que llamaban Celestina. La qual, de su parte venida a mí, sacó mi secreto amor de mi pecho" (599) [Such was his suffering in love and so little his opportunity to speak with me that he made his passion known to an astute and sage old woman called Celestina. She came to me in his behalf and persuaded me to reveal my secret love (157)]. In her final version of this story, Melibea emphasizes Calisto's pain, exacerbated by his inability to speak to her, which led to Celestina's intervention. She reaffirms the narrative she told Calisto in which her love preceded the encounter with Celestina, but still makes Celestina essential to what ensued. The emphasis on her love as secret implies that the danger arises when love is made known. Verbal confession leads to bodily submission, as she reports. In completing her story, she wishes to offer her father

comforting words: "Algunas consolatorias palabras te diría antes de mi agradable fin, coligidas y sacadas de aquellos antigos libros que tú, por más aclarar mi ingenio, me mandavas leer; sino que ya la dañada memoria, con la grand turbación, me las ha perdido, y aun porque veo tus lágrimas mal sofridas decir por tu arrugada haz" (601-602) [I would offer you some words of consolation before my longed-for death, words taken from the books you had me read to give light to my mind, save that my tortured memory and my grief have caused me to forget them, and the tears I see coursing down those wrinkled cheeks (157)]. She wishes to impart knowledge from texts as her last act, but is too moved to remember them. Celestina and Calisto ran out of time to narrate their own confessions, while Melibea, in contrast, is ready to die because she has lost the ability to speak, and specifically to speak other people's words. This suggests the many ways in which her voice is circumscribed, controlled, and even scripted by others. She takes complete ownership over what happened, insisting no less than three times that she was the cause of all this, but we still end with the impression that she is constituted of other people's words; once she has lost those words, she gives up the ghost.

Lovesickness creates a relationship between body and text that allows a person with verbal control to manipulate the physical reality of others. Language shapes desire, stoking its flames or mitigating its force. Celestina capitalizes on this fact, increasing Calisto's lovesickness and causing Melibea's. While Calisto eagerly accepts her control, Melibea puts up a struggle, trying to maintain her own textual prowess and narrative frame. Ultimately, language undoes her, and she spends the rest of the story trying to regain her power over text, which proves only to be possible once both Celestina and Calisto are dead. Even then, her version of the story adopts the terms Celestina and Calisto proposed. Melibea accepts the role she was cast in and asserts her willing submission. The text keeps reminding us, though, that this role has literary precedent.

Her words are in response to someone else's, and she is not in control of this story no matter how much she insists that she is. We have seen women seize narrative agency in other texts: Tyler's Olivia controls access to her story, and Zayas's Lisis does the same. Melibea's attempts to do so run cold in comparison, especially when Celestina and Calisto's seizures of narrative have a corresponding bodily effect. Their stories change bodies, while Melibea can impact only herself. The text doesn't really sanction any of these seizures of control. But this does not mean the text censures desire. The disasters that play out are not just about desire and its fulfillment, but rather are focused on the manipulative use of language, on attempts to seize control of the story that ultimately undo the story. Characters who use language to exacerbate lovesickness and manipulate the bodies of others often successfully shift those bodies, but are rarely achieve their larger ends, and no one gets to enjoy their limited successes for long. The text especially questions the use of lovesickness as gendered coercion: Melibea adopts the rhetoric of Celestina and Calisto and rewrites her identity and her life's narrative using their words, their constructions of her. This subtle critique of the gendered coercion of lovesickness becomes even more explicit in Shakespeare's *As You Like It.*

Scripting the Performance: Lovesickness in As You Like It

Shakespeare's *As You Like It,* a pastoral comedy published in the 1623 First Folio, was first entered in the Stationer's Register in August of 1600, and was likely first performed in 1599. The play follows Rosalind, daughter to a banished duke, and Orlando, second son of a lord. They meet at court and fall in love, but shortly after, Rosalind is banished and Orlando also must flee his brother's house for his own safety. While Rosalind is disguised as a man, they meet in the Forest of Arden, and she proceeds to educate him on how best to pursue his beloved Rosalind. In classic Renaissance comedy fashion, misadventures ensue, including a local

shepherdess falling in love with Rosalind. The play concludes with regained identities, restored family bonds, and a round of happy marriages. The harmonious ending emphasizes a restoration of balance that is paired with the focus on humoral imbalance and gendered upset throughout the play. Lovesickness provides the language through which the play explores the destabilizing effects of love as Rosalind seeks to contain the instability of gender and desire.

Given the consistent discourse of lovesickness and humors in the play, it is surprising that only a few medical humanities scholars have drawn attention to this. Gail Kern Paster reads the beginning of the play as emphasizing Rosalind's melancholy and situates the liberation of her male disguise within the context of her physiological transformation from cold melancholy to hot desire (122). I would add that Rosalind also seeks to enforce a humoral shift in Orlando as well as managing and manipulating the humors of Silvius and Phoebe. While Paster notes how humoral discourse informs our understanding of the play's set-up, Carol Thomas Neely connects lovesickness to the critical question of the final marriages (122). Neely argues that through its depiction of lovesickness, *As You Like It* undermines marriage as an institution, implying it is insufficient to contain the humoral heat of desire. While I agree that the play presents the challenges of managing desire, I argue that it criticizes not the institution of marriage, but the specific management strategies Rosalind uses in her attempts at control. In her interactions with Orlando in the Forest, Rosalind uses lovesickness in an effort to gain interpretive control. Rosalind draws attention to the misogyny in lovesickness conventions while also capitalizing on the discourse for her own ends. Ultimately, the play undermines lovesickness as a means of control and proposes a happier version of mutual love achieved through harmony.

Attention to lovesickness can also help untangle the critical problem of Rosalind's performance as Ganymede. Why does she adopt the misogyny cure? Who is being changed in

this process—Orlando or Rosalind herself? Many critics see the performance as a way for Rosalind to teach Orlando to be a better lover. Marjorie Garber and Wolfgang Iser see Rosalind as curing Orlando of his Petrarchism by performing its misogynist, objectifying tendencies (Garber 102-112, Iser 325). Paster and Helen Whall see the performance as a test, a patently excessive performance of femininity that Orlando must withstand and reject, affirming his faith in his true Rosalind (Paster 124-125, Whall 41). Stephen Cohen emphasizes the cuckoldry lesson: through a comic and figurative cuckolding, Rosalind teaches Orlando that women cheat on men who fail to treat them well (Cohen 21). On the other hand, some critics see the love cure as a chance for Rosalind herself to change. Cynthia Lewis argues that Rosalind manipulates the male fear of cuckoldry as a way to "[achieve] a balance of power with her new husband and, by extension, with male society at large" (47-48). Clare Kinney sees the forest scenes as creating a female language—a banter Rosalind and Celia share that Orlando never proves capable of—, but sees this creative potential as ultimately reinscribed into male lyric and patriarchal marriage (310-313). Lewis and Kinney suggest Rosalind negotiates patriarchal constraints using protofeminist methods. I would add that Rosalind not only negotiates gendered conventions, but also calls attention to them, rejecting the coercive dynamics of masculine lovesickness in particular. To correct these dynamics, Rosalind attempts to seize control of both the discourse of love and its physical performance. However, I share Nathaniel Strout's view that her efforts are unsuccessful, and that the play celebrates Oliver and Celia's courtship as the ideal model of mutual love. In this section, I argue that Rosalind's misogyny cure is part of her larger effort to reinterpret Orlando's worldview, challenging his understanding of himself as lover and Rosalind as beloved. Rosalind capitalizes on medical ideas of lovesickness in order to enact a "cure" that she hopes will enable her to assert control over Orlando. The play depicts her efforts as well as

their limited success, ultimately promoting a model of love and marriage that draws on harmony rather than competition or control.

Rosalind tries to take control over her relationship with Orlando from the beginning, scripting their roles: "Gentleman, / Wear this for me – one out of suits with fortune, / That could give more but that her hand lacks means" (1.2.234-236). Rosalind offers Orlando a chain and asks him to wear it for her, invoking an old chivalric trope: carrying one's lady's sign so all one's feats may be attributed to her honor. Telling him to wear the chain for her is, in the chivalric model, akin to telling him to conduct his future feats in her name. In addition to defining their relationship model by framing him in terms of her, she frames herself as lacking and defines herself as someone without means or fortune. Rosalind thus takes charge of defining him as a chivalric knight and herself as his lady; she seeks control of their love story and their respective identities. While Orlando is muttering an aside to the audience about his inability to speak, Rosalind thinks that he calls her and Celia back:

> He calls us back. My pride fell with my fortunes.
>
> I'll ask him what he would. – Did you call, sir?
>
> Sir, you have wrestled well and overthrown
>
> More than your enemies. (1.2.241-244)

Rosalind very much makes the first move here.[58] She asks him to wear her chain, thus framing him as hers and imposing the model of their relationship even before he fails to speak. She authors herself as "out of suits with fortune," lacking means and pride, thus playing low status while still seizing textual control. Her response to love is to script both of them, writing him as

[58] As Clare Kinney points out, Rosalind articulates desire more frankly in a first encounter than any other Shakespearean woman except Miranda in *The Tempest.*

hers and herself as overthrown; these efforts will continue throughout the play, as Rosalind textually shapes the world around her, to various degrees of success.

While Rosalind begins scripting the rules and roles of their relationship, Orlando cannot manage to speak at all. Unlike the inexpressibility topos in Stampa's lyric poetry, in which the poem paradoxically speaks about her speechless state, performance offers the opportunity to actually embody speechlessness, as Orlando does when Rosalind offers him her chain. Orlando is stunned into silence, remarking upon her exit, "Can I not say, I thank you? My better parts / Are all thrown down, and that which here stands up / Is but a quintain, a mere lifeless block" (1.2.238-240).[59] Orlando interprets his own behavior—or, more accurately, he asks about how to interpret what is happening with his speech, and observes himself silenced but has no explanation as to why. His "better parts," presumably his mental capacities of thought and speech, are defeated by an external force that leaves him an inanimate object used for target practice. Orlando later identifies the cause of his speechlessness as a bodily impediment, again external:

> What passion hangs these weights upon my tongue?
> I cannot speak to her, yet she urged conference.
> O poor Orlando, thou art overthrown!
> Or Charles or something weaker masters thee. (1.2.246-249)

Orlando frames the disruption as external rather than internal, a weight upon his tongue rather than a wound within his heart. The phrasing hints at lovesickness—he mentions "passion," he frames the cause as an external impact upon the body, and he suggests mastery by an outside force—but Orlando does not draw this conclusion. He does not even identify the cause of his

[59] As Hallett Smith points out, speechlessness is also a divergence from Shakespeare's source text; in the Lodge text, the lovers immediately produce and exchange poems (78-9).

reaction, vaguely attributing the blame to "or Charles or something weaker," suggesting a lack of understanding about his body and his passions. He struggles to interpret his experience of love, asking questions and offering observations but going no further. The evidence is there—cannot speak, overwhelmed—but the analysis of what that evidence means is lacking, marking Orlando as a weak reader who fails to interpret at all, let alone assert interpretive control.

When Orlando recovers his voice in the forest and writes a series of love poems, he neglects to represent his experience as a lover. In fact, the first poem does not use the first person at all (3.2.85-92). The second poem opens with a discussion of Orlando as poet, but he frames himself as a civil poet, proposing to show "civil sayings" on "the life of man" and "violated vows / 'twixt the souls of friend and friend" (3.2.124-131)—not exactly the love poem likely to make a lady weak in the knees. After the poem transitions into praising Rosalind, the speaker's role drops out until the conclusion, when he announces, "Heaven would that she these gifts should have, / And I to live and die her slave" (3.2.150-151). The phrasing avoids his experience and focuses on destiny and decree, on heaven's assignment of their roles rather than his experience as lover. He does not comment on his suffering, and certainly does not present himself as lovesick. While Calisto's entire character was consumed in expressing the suffering of his love, Orlando seems only occasionally interested in his role as a lover, and even then that interest seems academic rather than passionate (a fact evinced by his utterly milque-toast poetry).

In addition to constructing a rather lackluster version of himself as a lover, Orlando constructs a Rosalind who has little to nothing in common with the character he met.[60] He bears witness to "the fair, the chaste and unexpressive she" (3.2.8-10). Editors often read "unexpressive" as "inexpressible," but it most properly means non-speaking, a description which

[60] See Ronk 267, Kinney 306.

has no bearing on the Rosalind who Orlando encountered earlier in the play. Orlando's poetic Rosalind is like a jewel, she is prettier than a picture, she is the fairest of the fair (3.2.85-92); these generic platitudes tell us nothing about the real Rosalind.[61] Additionally, by examining her solely through comparisons, Orlando separates himself from the reality of her body and objectifies her; she is a picture or jewel, not a female body. In his second poem, Orlando constructs a Rosalind out of literary women, writing that she consists of "Helen's cheek but not her heart, / Cleopatra's majesty, / Atalanta's better part, / Sad Lucretia's modesty" (3.2.142-145). This is the closest Orlando comes to a blazon, and in anatomizing his beloved's body, he points to other women's bodies and abstract traits. Significantly, these figures all connote anxiety about female sexuality, and particularly female sexuality in political and military contexts. Martha Ronk has pointed out that Orlando frames Rosalind's essence as something to be read (267); I would add that he then fails to read or interpret, mentioning the figures but not analyzing them. Orlando does not engage with Rosalind in his poems, instead resorting to oblique mythological references and vapid comparisons, authoring a vague new version of Rosalind and failing to read the one he has actually encountered.

While Orlando constructs his poetic version of Rosalind, Rosalind in her new disguise as Ganymede likewise takes a turn at interpretation, reading Orlando's body for evidence of lovesickness and finding it lacking. When Orlando tells Rosalind-Ganymede that he is "love-shaked," he asserts a reading of his bodily state that invites a diagnosis; in turn, she retorts:

> R: There is none of my uncle's marks upon you. He taught me how to know a man in love, in which cage of rushes I am sure you are not prisoner.
>
> O: What were his marks?

[61] For more on simile as indicating the inability to know things in and of themselves in *As You Like It,* see Robert Watson, "As You Liken It."

> R: A lean cheek, which you have not; a blue eye and sunken, which you have not; an unquestionable spirit, which you have not; a beard neglected, which you have not - but I pardon you for that, for simply your having in beard is a younger brother's revenue. Then your hose should be ungartered, your bonnet unbanded, your sleeve unbuttoned, your shoe untied, and everything about you demonstrating a careless desolation. But you are no such man. You are rather point-device in your accoutrements, as loving yourself than seeming the lover of any other. (3.2.353-369)

The symptoms Rosalind cites—a lean cheek, a sunken eye, a careless desolation and self-neglect—are all standard medical symptoms of lovesickness. Lovesickness communicates suffering in a legible system of signs, offering proof of love through evidence of bodily disorder. Rosalind capitalizes on this fact by taking on the role of diagnostician, reading Orlando's body and rejecting his claims. Orlando's poetry can protest all it wants, but his body leaves Rosalind in doubt. Rosalind itemizes the symptoms he lacks, offering implicit stage directions for how he should comport himself moving forward. Additionally, she pardons him for his insufficiently neglected beard, thereby asserting the right to judge and either condemn or pardon. A pardon is a generous way for her to seize power, but it's still a power play. Finally, she determines that these absent symptoms add up to a lack of the identity he claims: "you are no such man," she insists, rejecting his identity as a lover in terms that also call into question his masculinity. In doing so, she makes him dependent on her interpretation, urging him to persuade her that he is in love and providing a set of behaviors he should adopt in order to do so. By rejecting his claims of lovesickness, Rosalind seizes interpretive control over him and uses that control to direct his future performance as lover.

Rosalind proposes to cure love "by counsel" (3.2.388), using language to theoretically provide a remedy while actually seizing control over Orlando's textual and bodily performance of love. Rosalind proposes a performed version of the misogyny cure in which she will demonstrate the ills of womankind in order to dissuade Orlando from his love:

> O: Did you ever cure any so?
>
> R: Yes, one, and in this manner. He was to imagine me his love, his mistress, and I set him every day to woo me. At which time would I – being but a moonish youth – grieve, be effeminate, changeable, longing and liking, proud, fantastical, apish, shallow, inconstant, full of tears, full of smiles; for every passion something and for no passion truly anything, as boys and women are for the most part cattle of this colour; would now like him, now loath him; then entertain him, then forswear him; now weep for him, then spit at him; that I drave my suitor from his mad humour of love to a living humour of madness, which was to forswear the full stream of the world and to live in a nook merely monastic. And thus I cured him, and this way will I take upon me to wash your liver as clean as a sound sheep's heart, that there shall not be one spot of love in't.
>
> O: I would not be cured, youth.
>
> R: I would cure you, if you would but call me Rosalind and come every day to my cote and woo me.
>
> O: Now, by the faith of my love, I will. (3.2.389-410)

Rosalind proposes a version of the misogyny cure, which dissuades the male lover from inappropriate worship of a female body; while traditionally, the misogyny cure entails a discussion of women's negative traits, Rosalind takes it further by proposing to perform these

characteristics for Orlando.[62] As Cynthia Marshall points out, this proposed performance capitalizes on the power of interpretation, specifically symbolism: "what is the love cure but a glorification of the symbol's substitutive power, an intoxicating revelry in the capacity of language to construct a character, a relationship, a love affair?" (379). This possibility of constructing a new reality through language depends upon interpretation, on a shared understanding of the symbols and their meaning—an understanding that Rosalind determines. She will write and perform a new version of Rosalind, one who is excessive, changeable, and, in a very literal sense, maddening. She can thus seize control of both Orlando's experience of love and a new version of Rosalind, controlling Orlando's lovesick body by authoring and performing a particular version of the female beloved.

Although medically recommended, in literature, the misogyny cure primarily functions as reverse psychology, increasing rather than alleviating the lover's passions: for example, in *Celestina,* Sempronio attempts an extended misogyny cure that only exacerbates Calisto's desire and results in the decision to recruit Celestina as go-between. Rosalind's own reported experience as a healer comically foregrounds the cure's failings, since the man she claims to have cured moved to a hermitage where he suffers from a "living humor of madness." Given this past "success," along with her vested interest in having Orlando enamored of her, it is reasonable to assume that Rosalind intends to intensify Orlando's insufficient lovesickness through her language.[63] Like Celestina with Calisto, Rosalind-Ganymede aims to take control of the lover's condition for her own gain; but while Celestina aims for material gain, Rosalind's aims are personal and emotional. Rosalind serves as her own go-between while in the guise of Ganymede,

[62] For more on the misogyny cure in *As You Like It,* see Neely 123-127.
[63] As Lewis points out, Rosalind-Ganymede proposes less a cure than "a methodical intensification of Orlando's love-madness which Ganymed identifies as, to date, superficial and unconvincing" (50).

allowing her to teach Orlando to love in a way that suits her without reliance on outside assistance. Where Calisto ceded control to Celestina, Rosalind takes control, using the discourse of lovesickness as a means to rewrite Orlando's text and direct his bodily performance of love.

Despite Rosalind's direction, Orlando continues to fail to perform lovesickness as scripted. When Orlando is late to their first counseling session, Rosalind-Ganymede chastises him for failing to prove his claims of love:

> Break an hour's promise in love? He that will divide a minute into a thousand parts, and break but a part of the thousand part of a minute in the affairs of love, it may be said of him that Cupid hath clapped him o'th'shoulder, but I'll warrant him heart-whole. (4.1.40-44)

If Orlando can comfortably betray his promise, then he is "heart-whole"—unwounded, unscarred, not lovesick, which is the same as to say not in love at all. He is not simply a bad poet; he fails to perform lovesickness, and therefore is unpersuasive to Rosalind as a lover.[64] Her negative interpretation of his behavior continues through Act Four scene one, but her control over his behavior remains limited. He has misguided ideas about how to behave that she repeatedly corrects, but Orlando does not often listen or follow her directions. The sphere in which she most successfully maintains control is interpretation: she has control over meaning, over what the purpose of kissing is or what marriage signifies, even if she lacks control over Orlando's behavior as a lover. In fact, Rosalind draws attention to the importance of

[64] Maurice Hunt and Grace Tiffany have suggested that Rosalind teaches Orlando how to purge himself of excessively literal Petrarchism (Hunt 21-22; Tiffany 230-231); however, Rosalind actually insists that he make his metaphors literal and live out the words he speaks. See also Cantor 70 for a discussion of the Orlando-Ganymede scenes as free of stock romantic language, and Fowler 5-6 for a reading of Rosalind's pastoral instruction of Orlando.

interpretation in creating meaning, particularly in love stories. Rosalind re-reads literary history in order to reject Orlando's claims that he will die of love:

> The poor world is almost six thousand years old, and in all this time there was not any man died in his own person (videlicet, in a love-cause). Troilus had his brains dashed out with a Grecian club, yet he did what he could to die before, and he is one of the patterns of love. Leander, he would have lived many a fair year though Hero had turned nun, if it had not been for a hot midsummer night; for, good youth, he went but forth to wash him in the Hellespont and, being taken with the cramp, was drowned, and the foolish chroniclers of that age found it was Hero of Sestos. But these are all lies. Men have died from time to time and worms have eaten them, but not for love. (4.1.86-99)

Although Rosalind seems to contradict her earlier pro-lovesickness claims, as many critics point out, this is actually a new point about gender: men should be lovesick, but they should not use lovesickness as an excuse to call women murderers. Catherine Belsey has pointed to this speech as evidence that Ganymede mocks and is skeptical of passion, while the undisguised Rosalind is deeply passionate (10); however, the issue here is not the validity of passion, as Rosalind-Ganymede does not doubt that these men were in love. The issue is interpretation. A club caused Troilus's death, and drowning caused Leander's death; the chroniclers reframe these facts in order to blame women. Rosalind takes issue not with lovesickness as a bodily experience, but with the literary trope of men blaming women for lovers' deaths.[65] Her objection gains significance in the context of Orlando's claim, immediately prior to this speech, that he will die if rejected by Rosalind; she has no wish for his death and even less desire to be blamed for it.

[65] This objection appears in the Spanish tradition in Cervantes' *Don Quijote* with the episode of Marcela. Like Rosalind, she defends women from the claims that they are to blame for men's deaths from lovesickness. Unlike Rosalind, she herself has no interest in or experience of love.

The chroniclers, like Orlando, use lovesickness as a gendered coercion, a way to urge women to fulfill male desires and then blame women if men suffer either before or after the fulfillment of said desire. The situation Rosalind critiques is exactly what we saw in *Celestina,* in which lovesickness was used to coerce women into sex. Rosalind rewrites lovesickness from a female perspective, demanding it as bodily proof to validate men's words of love but rejecting the blame placed upon women whose lovers die.

Ironically, Rosalind repeats the idea that led her to vehemently chastise Phoebe earlier in the play. When Silvius calls Phoebe an executioner, Phoebe dismisses his claims, insisting her dislike causes him no actual, physical harm. She even offers him the opportunity to *fake* a love wound, to perform lovesickness in keeping with his protestations of suffering: "Now counterfeit to swoon – why now fall down! / Or if thou canst not – O, for shame, for shame - / Lie not, to say mine eyes are murderers" (3.5.17-19). Phoebe wants proof, and if Silvius cannot provide it, he cannot blame her for suffering he fails to demonstrate. She insists that he prove he is actually experiencing pain through bodily evidence:

> Now show the wound mine eye hath made in thee.
> Scratch thee but with a pin, and there remains
> Some scar of it; lean thou upon a rush,
> The cicatrice and capable impressure
> Thy palm some moment keeps. But now mine eyes,
> Which I have darted at thee, hurt thee not,
> Nor I am sure there is no force in eyes
> That can do hurt. (3.5.20-27)

Phoebe rejects Silvius' framing of her body as harmful based on the condition of his body, which is, as she reads it, unharmed. She reasserts authority over her own body, authoring a version of eyes that cannot harm anyone. She takes textual control from Silvius just as Rosalind tries to take it from Orlando. Both Phoebe and Rosalind-Ganymede object to the empty use of Petrarchan metaphors, insisting on their literal application: you cannot claim to be dying of love when your body shows no evidence of symptoms, and you cannot interpret me as your executioner if you're not actually dying, or if the reason you are dying has nothing to do with love or with me.

Rosalind's excessive focus on adultery throughout the play offers a response to this coercive dynamic: if women cannot have interpretive control over male bodies and cannot choose how to respond to those bodies' desires, then at least women can seize control over their own sexuality, fulfilling their own desires by other means. When Orlando is late for their meeting, Rosalind says she would prefer to be wooed by a snail because "he brings his destiny with him … Why, horns – which such as you are fain to be beholding to your wives for; but he comes armed in his fortune and prevents the slander of his wife" (4.1.46-56).[66] Horns take the female body's behavior and make it manifest on the male body, producing a sign everyone knows how to read. But the snail's pre-existing horns protect his wife from slander and allow her to behave as she will. The woman's behavior becomes legible only on the husband's body, not her own. A good husband, like a snail, keeps this behavior illegible: the snail's horns are interpreted as part of his anatomy, not evidence of his wife's sexual activities. Rosalind-Ganymede earlier complained about the invisible nature of Orlando's lovesickness, his failure to embody love; this passage exploits men's illegible bodies to protect and enable female sexuality.

[66] For more on cuckoldry and horns, see Claire McEachern.

Women can seize control of how men's bodies are interpreted and avoid leaving any evidence of their own desire open to interpretation.

Rosalind goes on to equate female adultery with speech, with both offering control and agency:

> R: Make the doors upon a woman's wit and it will out at the casement. Shut that and 'twill out at the keyhole. Stop that, 'twill fly with the smoke out the chimney.
>
> O: A man that had a wife with such a wit, he might say, 'Wit, whither wilt?'
>
> R: Nay, you might keep that check for it till you met your wife's wit going to your neighbour's bed. (4.1.157-158)

An adulterous woman is one who lets her tongue run away from her, with excessive speech and excessive sexuality conflated. Both the speech and the sexuality evade male control. She emphasizes the role of women's speech in evading masculine constraint by controlling interpretation: "You shall never take her without her answer unless you take her without her tongue. O, that woman that cannot make her fault her husband's occasion, let her never nurse her child herself, for she will breed it like a fool!" (4.1.162-164). Women in this joke have immense textual authority, used to the detriment of men. Women's wits replace their bodies, rewrite their faults, and pass that ability on to their children, twisting their behavior in a way that reflects back upon their husbands. This situation directly parallels the lovesickness dynamic: if men write their desires in such a way as to blame women, then women can, and will, do the same. Female adultery is the response to coercive male lovesickness, a way to center one's own desire and use it to physically impact and control others. The interpreter holds the power, determining how desire is understood and valued. Since bodies cannot be controlled, as Rosalind is learning in her encounters with Orlando, the next best option is to control the way those bodies are understood.

While Rosalind seeks to shape the norms of lovesickness and the understanding/interpretation of love that her beloved holds, Phoebe seeks to understand and interpret her own experience of love. Rosalind seeks control over others through interpretation; Orlando fails to interpret anything at all and has no control; Phoebe seeks control over herself through interpretation. Moreover, she does so by reference to literature: "Dead shepherd, now I find thy saw of might: / 'Who ever loved, that loved not at first sight?'" (3.5.82-83). Thus Phoebe begins being a lover by being a reader, referencing the "dead shepherd" Christopher Marlowe and quoting his poem *Hero and Leander*. In Marlowe's poem, this quote follows the account of Hero and Leander's mutual, instantaneous love and completes the narrator's meditation on love as fated and irrational:

> It lies not in our power to love or hate,
> For will in us is over-rul'd by fate. …
> The reason no man knows, let it suffice,
> What we behold is censur'd by our eyes.
> Where both deliberate, the love is slight:
> Who ever lov'd, that lov'd not at first sight? (I.167-176)

Rosalind-Ganymede has gone on at length about the irrational vision of a lover, seeing without judgment; Phoebe's allusion to Marlowe invokes the same idea that judgment is anathema to love, specifically love's eyes. In quoting the text, Phoebe highlights her role as a reader, but she also highlights her limitations as a reader, both by suggesting she could not understand Marlowe's lines until she had lived them and by selecting a quote that, in context, asserts the limited reason of lovers.

In recounting Ganymede's effect on her, Phoebe interprets his body and behavior in a way that calls further attention to her limits as a reader. She begins with his words and their impact upon the listener: "he talks well" and "words do well / When he that speaks them pleases those that hear" (3.5.111-113). The value of words is not in themselves but in the effect they have upon the hearer. When she moves to praising his body, she still connects it to his speech and its effect upon her: "The best thing in him / Is his complexion; and faster than his tongue / Did make offence, his eye did heal it up" (3.5.116-118). His language and body both affect her here, as his tongue offends but his eye heals, with the body compensating for the language. Words are central even in her discussion of bodies: she points to Ganymede's tongue, lip, and cheek, all parts of the face that create speech. In the conclusion of her anti-blazon, she claims, "There be some women, Silvius, had they marked him / In parcels as I did, would have gone near / To fall in love with him" (3.5.125-127). To mark is to notice, both visually and aurally. Phoebe's experience of Ganymede, both seeing his body in parcels and listening to his words in parcels, has caused her love. Of course, the qualification "in parcels" is important, since she has not seen the fullness of Ganymede's body, nor is what she thinks she has seen actually there.[67] Ronk points out that the play calls attention to the multiple representations of Rosalind—Orlando's poetic version, Phoebe's version here, Rosalind's own performance of herself during the love cure—and emphasizes how each representation falls short (267). These rewritings of Rosalind all lack insight, lack authority; I would add that they are all colored by love, emphasizing the perspective shift that comes with desire. Phoebe's limited understanding of

[67] In another sense, however, she has seen the body more accurately than anyone else because the performer would have been a young man playing the part of a woman playing a man. When it comes to Rosalind-Ganymede, the audience is always seeing double or triple, and Orlando and Phoebe assert competing claims on which of these multiple bodies is "true." Nevertheless, within the world of the play, Rosalind is a woman, and therefore Phoebe's love object is an imaginary body rather than the real, female Rosalind.

Ganymede's body and excessive reaction to his words cause her ill-fated love, and the revelation of Rosalind's body will prove corrective.

Phoebe's reading of Ganymede's body and speech, and her own reaction to both, shows an effort to regain control in a distinctly different way from Rosalind. In her speech's constant tension between statement and denial, we see attempts to control her reaction and the way that reaction manifests. She and Rosalind both read and interpret their beloved, but while Rosalind uses that interpretation to try and control Orlando, Phoebe turns the reading back upon herself, analyzing her reactions and seeking to gain control over herself. Rosalind interprets Orlando's behavior in order to assert control, but does not question her own reaction, even though Celia prompts her to do so both in the court scenes and in the forest. Phoebe is not a good reader and not that adept at seizing control of the narrative, but her attempts to do so move away from Rosalind and Orlando's more selfish models of love and toward a version of a love story that accommodates both parties—one that crafts a story about a relationship rather than about a lover in isolation. While I am not suggesting that the play celebrates Phoebe's version of love as a model for imitation, I am suggesting that it moves us forward in an understanding of love. Phoebe's analysis of her lover and her experience of love offers a new kind of reading that builds towards the idea of a harmonious and balanced relationship.

As the play approaches its culmination, the lovers are battling for textual and physical control, constantly reading and interpreting each other as well as the principle of love itself—what it should look, feel, and sound like. How can these battles be resolved? In many medical texts, the misogyny cure culminates in provoking physical revulsion. The coup de grace occurs when the friend or physician holds up a menstrual napkin as proof that the beloved lady is

disgusting.[68] In *As You Like It,* the napkin soaked in Orlando's blood serves a comparable function.[69] Oliver reports,

> And now he fainted,
>
> And cried in fainting upon Rosalind.
>
> Brief, I recovered him, bound up his wound,
>
> And after some small space, being strong at heart,
>
> He sent me hither, stranger as I am,
>
> To tell this story, that you might excuse
>
> His broken promise; and to give this napkin,
>
> Dyed in his blood, unto the shepherd youth
>
> That he in sport doth call his Rosalind. (4.3.147-155)

The trope of the lovesick swoon appears frequently in early modern literature, as we saw in *Celestina,* and often functions as a revelation, a loss of physical consciousness that points to a higher consciousness or truth. Orlando faints at the sight of his wound and cries out Rosalind's name. At this story and the sight of the bloody handkerchief, Rosalind, too, swoons.[70] They both have overwhelming physical responses to this conventional medical sight, suggesting a significant humoral shift as they lose control of their bodies. The swoon at the sight of blood attests to the strength of their affections as love takes control over them. They not only lose the

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[68] See Robert Burton, *Anatomy of Melancholy* III, 201-2. For a discussion of the implications of this misogynistic trope, see Lesel Dawson 198.

[69] Bloodletting is also a common cure for lovesickness that could be alluded to in Orlando's loss of blood. However, because of the focus on the misogyny cure throughout the play, and because Orlando does not need to be less but more lovesick, I do not read this as an instance of bloodletting.

[70] Peter Erickson reads this as a sign of Rosalind's feminine weakness, a step toward her submission of control (71); however, Rosalind does not cede control here, instead continuing to battle for how that swoon should be interpreted.

ability to speak, they fully lose consciousness. Additionally, the bloody napkin provides the ocular proof of love that Rosalind has sought throughout the play. Rosalind's reaction mirrors Orlando's and simultaneously weakens her disguise and suggests her true gender.

Both Rosalind and Orlando strive to regain control after their swoons by interpreting their own wounds. Orlando sends his story with Oliver, framing his body's wound as an excuse for his missed appointment. Rosalind-Ganymede insists her swoon was counterfeit, framing her bodily reaction as a superficial performance. In Rosalind and Orlando's encounter after their respective swoons, they offer competing interpretations of his body's wounds:

R: O my dear Orlando, how it grieves me to see thee wear thy heart in a scarf!

O: It is my arm.

R: I thought thy heart had been wounded with the claws of a lion.

O: Wounded it is, but with the eyes of a lady. (5.2.18-24)

Rosalind takes the idea of Orlando's wounded heart seriously for the first time, and he seizes on that opportunity to insist that the heart's wound is from a lady while the arm's wound is from a lion. Orlando is impatient with the game and insists on the reality of his lovesickness. Rosalind responds to his impatience with a comment about her "counterfeit" swoon. Just as Orlando insists on maintaining interpretive control over his body and its wound, Rosalind is anxious to maintain her disguise, to insist that her feminine faint was a performance of femininity rather than an actual medical response. As their love game begins to come apart at the seams, the body becomes the site of interpretive tension, requiring language as a supplement just as earlier, Orlando's love poetry required bodily performance as proof. The wound alone is meaningless, as are the words without a corresponding wound. Meaning also depends on audience, not just author: Orlando's wounded heart has no meaningful significance until his desired audience

understands it as he intends it. The lovers need their beloveds to accept their interpretations of their bodies, to buy into the stories they are crafting.

While Rosalind and Orlando struggle to cede interpretive control, Oliver and Celia offer a positive example of mutuality.[71] Orlando is incredulous at the report of Oliver and Celia-Aliena's courtship: "Is't possible that on so little acquaintance you should like her? That but seeing, you should love her? And loving, woo? And wooing, she should grant? And will you persever to enjoy her?" (5.2.1-4). Orlando's account verbally separates Oliver and Celia-Aliena: Oliver sees, loves, woos, and persevers to enjoy her, while Aliena merely grants his courtship. Oliver's response corrects Orlando's one-sided image of love, portraying his and Celia-Aliena's love as mutual: "Never call the giddiness of it in question, the poverty of her, the small acquaintance, my sudden wooing nor her sudden consenting. But say with me, I love Aliena. Say with her that she loves me. Consent with both that we may enjoy each other" (5.2.5-9).[72] While Orlando asks, "will *you* persever to enjoy *her,*" Oliver amends this idea to "*we* may enjoy *each other,*" offering an example of the mutual joy in love. Not only does he reinterpret Orlando's take on the relationship, but he also provides a script, telling Orlando what to say and what not to say. That script entails communal agreement: say with me, say with her, consent with both. Yet again we have a character putting words in Orlando's mouth because the words he comes up with on his own are mistaken.

Rosalind, too, reports the fast love of Celia-Aliena and Oliver, and she takes this lesson in mutuality even further:

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[71] For more on the role of mutuality in *As You Like It,* see Nathaniel Strout.
[72] Julie Crawford argues that this moment affirms the necessity of kinship bonds to formalize/authorize heterosexual marriage in the play (120-122). However, kinship is not mentioned or invoked in this passage. The emphasis is on mutuality and consent.

> For your brother and my sister no sooner met but they looked; no sooner looked but they loved; no sooner loved but they sighed; no sooner sighed but they asked one another the reason; no sooner knew the reason but they sought the remedy; and in these degrees have they made a pair of stairs to marriage, which they will climb incontinent or else be incontinent before marriage. They are in the very wrath of love and they will together. Clubs cannot part them. (5.2.28-40)

Rosalind uses plural pronouns, not distinguishing between Oliver's wooing and Celia's granting as Orlando does. Additionally, what Orlando terms wooing, Rosalind breaks out into sighing, asking one another the reason, and seeking the remedy. This progression conveys mutual lovesickness: they see the bodily symptom of a lover's sigh in one another, verbally ask about its cause, and, confirmed in that cause as lovesickness, offer each other a remedy of fulfillment of desire, thereby converting lovesickness into happy love in a few rapid moments. Mutual love cures lovesickness when both lovers share a remedy. That remedy requires body and language to match, as they do in the sighing and seeking a reason: the body provides evidence of love and the words confirm that evidence. Their language is also shared as they ask the same question of each other, engaging in the same language of love. While Rosalind and Orlando are in love throughout the play, their language is constantly mismatched and their bodies do not match their language (Orlando for lack of lovesickness, Rosalind because of her disguise). They also never coalesce into a "we" but remain two separate entities vying for textual and physical control. Celia and Oliver offer an instructive contrast, a case of mutual love without competition.

In order for Rosalind and Orlando to reach a happy conclusion, they must cease vying for control over interpretation and bodies. They need to be able to enjoy each other. So, how does

this happen? Rosalind-Ganymede's disguise has been weakened by her faint. Moreover, Orlando is fed up with their game now that he has seen Oliver's example:

> O: But O, how bitter a thing it is to look into happiness through another man's eyes! By so much the more shall I tomorrow be at the height of heart-heaviness, by how much I shall think my brother happy in having what he wishes for.
>
> R: Why, then, tomorrow I cannot serve your turn for Rosalind?
>
> O: I can live no longer by thinking. (5.2.42-49)

Having seen real, embodied happiness, the prospect of playing out a fantasy is no longer sufficient. Orlando has thus far made do with the Rosalind constructed through similes in his poems and the (as he thinks) young shepherd boy who pretends to be Rosalind to "cure" his love, passing time with fictions both literary and performed. Now that he disavows these versions, Rosalind rapidly offers another, abandoning "idle talking" in order to "speak to some purpose" (5.2.50-53). She offers him a happy ending: "If you do love Rosalind so near the heart as your gesture cries it out, when your brother marries Aliena shall you marry her" (5.2.60-62). The lingering "if" retains the need for interpretation, for contingency and multiple possibilities. But she concedes that his gesture now matches his language, accepting his current performance of love as proper evidence, and offers him Rosalind's real body as recompense for his own bodily state of love. The problem of lovesickness and control over bodies, it seems, has been solved. She accepts his gestures of love and offers her own in return, a bodily performance of truth to match his.

If the other problem in their relationship thus far has been vying for control, especially textual and interpretive control, then the solution is mutuality like we see with Celia and Oliver. The lovers must author collaboratively—as Oliver puts it, "say[ing] with" each other—, must

share a text and its performance. Although she orchestrates the entire situation, Rosalind does cede control at the last minute, submitting herself: "To you I give myself, for I am yours" (5.4.115). As the present tense indicates, Rosalind gives herself because she is his already, a performative speech act that reaffirms a pre-existing reality. She both authors herself as his and implies that this grant is unnecessary, is already a part of her. Orlando replies, "If there be truth in sight, you are my Rosalind" (5.4.116). He still clings to the "if," uncertain if his perspective on bodies is reliable; nevertheless, both of them frame her as his. This is his final speech act in the play, followed by Rosalind's assent to the previous compact: "I'll have no husband, if you be not he / Nor ne'er wed woman, if you be not she" (5.4.121-122). Neither of them speaks again. In fact, nobody gives any sort of mutual consent to the wedding; Phoebe has to assent to marry Silvius, but there are no actual words of marriage, a fact made all the more noticeable by Rosalind-Ganymede and Orlando's fake wedding earlier. Hymen creates the couples without their participation in the process.[73] The end is jarring, a rapid series of restorations to former positions and a series of blessings upon couples who do not reply. For a play jam-packed with wordplay to end with so much silence is almost alarming, certainly unsatisfying. Until now, characters without control have spun language to try and exert some; it seems that restoring social harmony ends textual creativity. Although this loss is perhaps most noticeable with Rosalind, the loss extends further; none of the lovers continues to produce poetry, and none of the courtiers spins off any witty repartee. Harmony, it seems, comes at a cost.

Yet before we write off the ending of the play as a bittersweet commentary on competition and creativity, we do get one final fix of wordplay: the epilogue. Rosalind's epilogue is notoriously destabilizing, calling into question conventions of gender, performance,

[73] See Nathaniel Leonard for more on the invocation of marriage in the absence of an actual wedding in Shakespeare's comedies.

desire, and text. Rosalind begins with the idea that "It is not the fashion to see the lady the Epilogue" (Epilogue 1-2). She is playing an inappropriate role—nothing new for Rosalind. She entertains the possibility of not having an epilogue at all, concludes she must have one, and proceeds to "conjure" the audience (Epilogue 11). In her conjuring, she divides interpretive and evaluative responsibility along gender lines: "I charge you, O women, for the love you bear to men, to like as much of this play as please you. And I charge you, O men, for the love you bear to women (as I perceive by your simpering none of you hates them), that between you and the women the play may please" (Epilogue 11-16). Women have the freedom to like what they wish, while men must conform their liking to eke out the women's and add up to a happy whole. Thus the male and female interpretations create a complete and pleasing play, an idea that complement's the play's urging of harmony and mutual collaboration. Additionally, the speaker charges them based on their love for each other, thus linking interpretation and desire (a link we have seen throughout the play). We could end here, with the play jointly and happily interpreted and the coupling of the genders making all even. But, of course, we do not, as the speaker suddenly draws attention to his role as performer, and a performer of another gender at that: "If I were a woman I would kiss as many of you as had beards that pleased me, complexions that liked me and breaths that I defied not. And I am sure as many as have good beards, or good faces, or sweet breaths will for my kind offer, when I make curtsy, bid me farewell" (Epilogue 16-21). Desire destabilizes the happy division of interpretation, and that desire itself depends upon interpretation: the boy actor, if he was a woman, would only kiss those bodies s/he read as having good beards, good faces, and sweet breaths. Desire, gender, and interpretation continue to swirl around each other in a playful flurry of confusion. The confusion is contained by the "if", by the textual fiction that enables multiple realities and hypotheticals to co-exist. In *Celestina,*

stories and their versions compete and follow sequentially, but do not co-exist; with only one story allowed at a time, the loss of textual control entails loss of bodily control and results in death. Clinging to the "if" allows *As You Like It* to evade this tragedy and relish in comedic possibility and creation.

Both *Celestina* and *As You Like It* display gendered stereotypes around lovesickness, drawing attention to how the disease is used to coerce or blame women. While Melibea fully embraces the conventions of the disease and accepts blame for the entire series of events, Rosalind rejects the gendered conventions and seeks to exploit lovesickness by claiming medical authority and using it to direct Orlando's behavior. While lovesickness places a burden on women, it also creates opportunities for them to seek agency and control. Because the humoral body is permeable, language can unbalance or rebalance the humors; this is particularly true when the humors are already out of balance, as in a lovesick body. While in previous chapters, language has shaped interpretation of the body, here, the interpretation has real, physical results. Because textual power has embodied consequences, interpretation takes on a more fraught role as characters use it to seek control over one another. These texts highlight the competition for control over text and body that lovesickness discourse facilitates, but neither suggests that this competition is desirable. In *Celestina,* using verbal prowess to take control of the story and others' bodies consistently proves deadly: Celestina's increasing efforts at control end in her murder, Calisto's bodily conquest of Melibea leads to his accidental death, and Melibea's full narrative control is her last act before her suicide. Taking control of the narrative and the bodies that inhabit it is dangerous business. Nobody dies of lovesickness, but desire enables machinations of power that have real, destabilizing effects. In *As You Like It,* Rosalind seeks to control interpretations and behavior at every turn, but fails to change Orlando's love and instead

incites Phoebe's love. Rosalind's efforts to create a properly lovesick Orlando result in, at best, a man who sends an excuse when he's late. The play offers a model of mutual lovesickness with Oliver and Celia, holding up an example of harmony and collaboration in contrast to Rosalind and Orlando's control and competition. The power dynamics that lovesickness facilitates in both texts are noted as, at best, unhelpful to the relationship, and at worst, deadly. The next chapter extends this consideration of the dangerous control lovesickness enables, looking at the specific intervention of medical figures who silence the lovesick woman and reconstruct her narrative for their own ends.

Chapter Four

Her Word Against Theirs: Competing Narratives in *The Two Noble Kinsmen*

In the first two chapters, lovesickness opens the female body up to being diagnosed and read in ways that make it subject to outside control. Simultaneously, it gives women subjectivity and agency as they have a secret to conceal and a desired object to strive for. Thus, lovesickness inspires the desire for authorship but makes the body a text to be read. The previous chapter turned from lovesickness and reading to lovesickness and writing, analyzing how women use lovesickness to diagnose others and thereby seize the same control imposed on women in previous texts. This chapter continues to explore the connection between lovesickness and authorial control, examining the contrast between the female character's account of her love and the narrative imposed on her by the diagnosing physician. John Fletcher and William Shakespeare's *The Two Noble Kinsmen* (performed c. 1614, published 1634) presents a competition to frame the lovesick female body, with the Jailer's Daughter offering her own account of love which differs from that of the men who diagnose and cure her.

The main plot of the play follows the newly married Theseus and the love triangle between his sister-in-law, Emilia, and two knights he captured in battle, Palamon and Arcite. While imprisoned by Theseus, both knights fall in love with Emilia; she has no particular interest in either man. Arcite is banished but returns in disguise, while Palamon escapes from prison with the help of the Jailer's Daughter. Palamon and Arcite are caught dueling by Theseus, who tries to compel Emilia to choose one of the knights, but she demurs. Theseus agrees to let the men hold a tournament to resolve the issue. At the tournament, Arcite triumphs, but is thrown from his horse and, with his dying breath, gives Palamon his blessing to marry Emilia. This chapter focuses on

the subplot of the Jailer's Daughter, who falls in love with Palamon and helps him escape from prison. After she loses him in the forest and goes mad, the local physician proposes that they cure her with a bed trick. He recruits the Wooer to pretend to be Palamon and sleep with her to cure her madness. Our last image of the Daughter is her fearful acceptance of the Wooer-as-Palamon's proposal, pleading with him not to hurt her. While the audience later hears that the Daughter has been cured and is to marry the Wooer, we never see this happy ending enacted and are left with the unsettling image of her walking off to bed with a man who is not who he purports to be.

The depiction of lovesickness in *Two Noble Kinsmen* departs significantly from the depiction of the disease in the play's source text, Geoffrey Chaucer's "The Knight's Tale." In Chaucer's original, when Arcite and Palamon look out of their prison tower one morning, they see Emily, and are promptly stricken with love's wound. Palamon sees her first, and his strong reaction startles Arcite, who asks, "Cosin myn, what eyleth thee,/ That art so pale and deedly on to see? (lines 223-224). The loss of complexion is our first clue at lovesickness, which Palamon confirms in his report of being hurt "thurgh-out myn yë/ In-to myn herte" (239-240). Arcite follows fast behind, spying Emily through the window: "if that Palamon was wounded sore, / Arcite is hurt as muche as he, or more" (257-258). In contrast, the play presents the knights falling in love, but does not depict that love as a disease. In Chaucer's text, Arcite's lovesickness worsens in his banishment, growing to mania:

> His sleep, his mete, his drink is him biraft,
> That lene he wex, and drye as is a shaft.
> His eyen holwe, and grisly to biholde;
> His hewe falwe, and pale as ashen colde,

And solitarie he was, and ever allone,
And wailling al the night, making his mone.
And if he herde song or instrument,
Then wolde he wepe, he mighte nat be stent;
So feble eek were his spirits, and so lowe,
And chaunged so, that no man coude knowe
His speche nor his vois, though men it herde.
And in his gere, for al the world he ferde
Nat oonly lyk the lovers maladye
Of Hereos, but rather lyk manye
Engendred of humour melancolyk,
Biforen, in his celle fantastyk. (503-518)

His lovesickness, marked by typical symptoms of lack of appetite, insomnia, pale complexion, and weeping, physically consumes him and changes his body and voice. The narrator notes that his condition was so severe as to seem like mania produced from melancholy humor, affecting his brain function. Physically, his lovesickness has changed him so much that he is not recognized when he returns to Athens. Although the disease emphasizes the nobility of Arcite's love, he prays to the wrong god prior to the tournament, seeking aid from Mars while Palamon wisely seeks aid from Venus. Arcite's lovesickness is emphasized by the text, but not rewarded with fulfillment. *The Two Noble Kinsmen* transfers the manic lovesickness from Arcite to the Jailer's Daughter. Fletcher and Shakespeare thus take a Chaucerian narrative that prioritizes male courtly desire and move the disease of love onto a lower class woman, shifting the disease's purpose and value. While Arcite's mania in Chaucer enables his return to Athens and his pursuit

of Emilia, the Daughter's madness places her at the mercy of others: first the Schoolmaster organizing the morris dance, then her father and the Wooer, and finally a physician. Additionally, while Arcite's lovesickness culminates in death, the Daughter's madness ends with sexual fulfillment with a man pretending to be her beloved. While less tragic, perhaps, it is certainly more problematic. We also never see her regain her faculties as Arcite does. Lovesickness ennobles Arcite in Chaucer and helps him toward his goal; the same cannot be said of the Jailer's Daughter in Fletcher and Shakespeare's version.

Because the Jailer's Daughter's subplot is the most significant departure from the source material, critics consider it essential to the meaning of the play as a whole. Order and eros are key themes in the play, both of which feature prominently in the Daughter's storyline. Scholarship broadly falls into two camps: either the Jailer's Daughter embodies the values of order and eros, depicting their triumphs, or she marks their cost, emphasizing their limits. In the first camp, critics focus on the Jailer's Daughter's value in terms of romance and its attendant imagination and creative expression.[74] Critics who see the Jailer's Daughter as marking the cost of the play's values more often emphasize the disorder of her madness than its creative potential, as well as the violence in her "cure."[75] The play consistently connects the Daughter with fantasy

[74] In Charles Frey's reading, the Jailer's Daughter both creates space for romance and ironizes it in her outcome (136). Similarly, Susan Green argues that the two cruxes of the play are Theseus and the Jailer's Daughter, as they offer opposite yet interdependent models of imagination. Focusing on class as linked to creative expression, Douglas Bruster reads the Jailer's Daughter as the consciousness of the play, marking court oppression of folk culture.

[75] Madelon Lief and Nicholas F. Radel read the play in terms of tension between reality and a desire to impose order on reality, with the Jailer's Daughter as an extreme instance of disorder. Jeanne Addison Roberts reads the play as presenting the struggle between Venus and Mars as well as the struggle between Venus and Diana, with the Jailer's Daughter showing the limits of Venus, since her excessive desire desperately needs the restraint of wedlock (Roberts 141-142). Drawing a similar conclusion, Nichole DeWall argues that the Jailer's Daughter is a stand-in for Ariadne in the play, reminding the audience of Theseus's past transgressions and the costs of love. I'm not fully persuaded of the association with Ariadne, but agree with the claim that the

and artistic production, as critics in both camps have noted; I argue that the play predicates this creative ability upon her body's status as female virgin in love. The values of eros and imagination are connected and gendered by the play, as the Daughter's plotline highlights. Order likewise is gendered, with male legal and medical discourse serving as a curb to female love laments and antics. The Daughter, I contend, provides a space in which to celebrate the value of unfettered feminine desire and its imaginative, creative force, while also serving as the body on which masculine order is violently imposed—a cost the play notes with sympathy and poignancy.

While many critics focus on how the Jailer's Daughter reflects and refracts the themes of the main plot, others focus exclusively on the presentation of her madness, diagnosis, and cure. Maurice and Hanna Charney detail the typical conventions of female madness on the Elizabethan stage: loose hair, singing, flowers (451-453). They see this motif as used in *The Two Noble Kinsmen* as "completely convention" and lacking "psychological nuances" (Charney 458). Recent work has challenged this superficial view of the Daughter's madness by grounding the literary representation in medical culture. Carol Thomas Neely looks at the historical significance of the Daughter's treatment, arguing that the cure via therapeutic intercourse presents the tension between new ideals of companionate marriage and the desire to control women's bodies (69-90). The play shows the limits of the medical theory when applied in practice, exploring the social, familial, and personal costs of the marriage cure. Lesel Dawson

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Daughter's inclusion in the play marks the destructive potential of love. A significant factor in the Daughter's identity that DeWall overlooks is class difference; it matters that Ariadne is a princess and the Jailer's Daughter is not. Ariadne is deserted by a man who owes her something, while Palamon owes the Jailer's Daughter little to nothing because nothing can possibly happen between the two of them. Also looking at sources of the play, in his piece on the use of Chaucer, Misha Teramura points to the Jailer's Daughter as a mark of the extreme destructive potential of eros, since her love for Palamon threatens not just her bond to her father but his life itself (567-568).

similarly sees the play as critiquing the cure, but offers a different diagnosis of the Daughter's condition: greensickness, a disease in which female virgins suffer suppressed menses and disordered appetite as their wombs fester, overripe, from lack of use (79). In diagnosing her with greensickness rather than lovesickness, Dawson shifts the disease from a specific desire for a specific love object to a general desire whose cure is erotic fulfillment with any sexual partner. Greensickness was often used to justify fathers arranging marriages for their daughters, a way to channel female desire into male control, which is what Dawson sees happening in the play: "her madness suggests how dependent she is upon masculine reason, as well as the male organ, to restore her to sexual and psychological health" (90). I share Dawson's view of the play's critique of patriarchal constraints on female desire, but disagree about the illness: the Daughter has one specific love object, and her madness is not connected to her menstrual cycle. If she were greensick, the bed-trick cure would be medically appropriate, but because she is not, the use of this cure is misguided and unsettling, a fact the play underscores repeatedly. Moreover, the Daughter's desire is not always or only a problem. Because medical humanities critics have focused primarily on her madness and treatment rather than the full scope of the Daughter's experience, the extent to which the play presents her desire as positive and generative has gone unnoticed. When we examine the Daughter's soliloquies prior to her madness, we see that the play insistently refuses to present her desire as an illness. Indeed, the Jailer's Daughter's desire is healthy and positive. Her madness arises not from love, but from other, external causes.

The play roots creative production within the desiring female body, presenting female love as a positive, generative force. Both in and out of her madness, the Daughter imaginatively creates female communities that generate art. In her madness, men seek to control her by interpreting her story and diagnosing and curing her body. Because they read her body as

lovesick, they are able to enact a cure that prioritizes not what she wants, but what *they* want *for* her, manipulating her into their version of a happy ending. As the Schoolteacher, the Doctor, her father, and the Wooer all exert control over the Daughter's mad body, the play calls attention to the fundamental problems in their diagnosis and cure. The female body in love creates new narratives and performances; in response, the men around that body interpret it as diseased, creating a counter-narrative that justifies silencing and controlling the female body. The competition for control over the Daughter's body is also a competition for control over narrative. She keeps trying to write her own story and the authoritative male figures around her keep silencing, erasing, or rewriting it; I maintain that in its presentation of this competition, the play sympathizes with the Jailer's Daughter.

Scripting the Self: Female Desire and Creative Production

In the Prologue and the Jailer's Daughter's narrative, the play crafts a connection between the female body and creative production. The Daughter's experience of love is positive, productive, and utterly unpathological. Although she goes mad, the play definitively does not attribute her madness to desire itself, but rather to the circumstances she experiences in the forest. Additionally, both in and out of madness, the Daughter envisions her love as a force for female community and collaboration, prompting alternate narratives in direct competition with the masculine, dominant narrative. Female desire is a positive, generative force at odds with the masculine world it inhabits.

From the first words of the prologue, *Kinsmen* connects virginal female bodies with artistic performance, and in doing so, highlights the body's ability to deceive its audience. The Prologue opens, "New plays and maidenheads are near akin: / Much followed both, for both much money gi'en, / If they stand sound and well" (Prologue 1-3). The comparison begins with

an audience for both, then turns to the commodification of both. But, of course, there is a caveat: they need to stand sound and well. This caveat is drawn into question by the subsequent comparison, which points to a new wife's seeming modesty:

> And a good play,
> Whose modest scenes blush on his marriage day
> And shake to lose his honour, is like her
> That after holy tie and first night's stir
> Yet still is Modesty and still retains
> More of the maid, to sight, than husband's pains. (Prologue 3-8)

Her bodily appearance deceives the viewer about her status. The prologue emphasizes the role of sight in the woman's seeming maidenhood, implying the invisibility of virginity—or, more accurately, the appearance of virginity when it is not actually there. Bodies perform, blushing and shaking and retaining modesty "to sight." In this comparison between plays and female virginity, the female body is an unreliable source of information. Virginity becomes a performance subject to the eye of the beholder; as we follow the Jailer's Daughter's desiring body, this tangled relationship between bodily truth and performed bodily deception will recur, highlighting the multiple narratives and interpretations that give competing meanings to the female body.

Although the prologue suggests that sight and evaluation can be unreliable, and contemporary medical discourse would lead us to expect such unreliable judgment from anyone in love, the play emphasizes the Jailer's Daughter's rationality as she falls in love with Palamon. In the first scene with the Jailer's Daughter, she expresses her respect for both Palamon and Arcite. When her father misidentifies the two knights, his Daughter corrects him (2.1.51-2).

Additionally, she notes, "It is a holiday to look on them. Lord, the difference of men!" (2.1.55-56). She does not yet reveal an emotional reaction, but displays an ability beyond that of the Jailer to visually identify each knight.[76] When she first recounts her affections in a soliloquy,[77] she asks, "Why should I love this gentleman?" (2.4.1). She then cites her own low status as a reason her love is unlikely ever to be requited: "'Tis odds / He never will affect me: I am base" (2.4.1-2). She also offers herself counsel: "To marry him is hopeless; / To be his whore is witless" (2.4.4-5). Her ability to question her passion and advise herself against acting on her desires suggests her continued cognitive function; she may be in love, but that love has not overrun her reason or morals. She narrates for the audience a step-by-step build toward love, emphasizing her sensory and cognitive experiences in the way she tells her story. Her experience begins with sight, the conventional first step of love in the Renaissance: "First, I saw him" (2.4.7). The description moves quickly from sight to judgment, explicitly connecting the two: "I, seeing, thought he was a goodly man; / He has as much to please a woman in him, / If he please to bestow it so, as ever / These eyes yet looked on" (2.4.8-11). She cognitively evaluates the sight of him as pleasing. Her positive evaluation then moves to a conventional step toward love: "Next, I pitied him – / And so would any young wench, o' my conscience, / That ever dreamed, or vowed her maidenhead / To a young handsome man" (2.4.11-14). The account remains almost detachedly rational, asserting that any young virgin like her would feel the same pity for his condition. She justifies her affections by relating them to the affections of other young virgin women. Lastly, she expresses love: "Then, I loved him, / Extremely loved him, infinitely loved

[76] In comparison to the Daughter's confident distinction between the men, Emilia is unable to distinguish the knights and select one as a love object. Her lack of distinction proves fatal: in the play, unlike in the Chaucerian source text, the final battle only occurs because when Theseus prompts Emilia to select one of the knights to marry, she is unable to make a choice.

[77] Interestingly, it is only after the knights have seen and fallen in love with Emilia that the Jailer's Daughter likewise suffers love.

him!" (2.4.14-15). In this clearly articulated ladder of love, there are no symptoms of lovesickness. She voices her rational assessment and reasonable pleasure, evaluating his body and imagining the future pleasure it might provide without complaining of any bodily symptoms. Far from causing her pain, love increases her pleasure in her body: "Once, he kissed me. / I loved my lips the better ten days after" (2.4.25-26). Her desire is not pathologized nor presented as irrational. She is self aware, articulate, and, unlike every other woman in love considered thus far, in no pain. It is possible that as a lower class character, she lacks the cultural privilege of lovesickness; but in lacking such privilege, she gains the possibility of an extreme love that sparks joy rather than pain, that leads her to celebrate her body for its potential pleasures rather than suffer because of its desires.

When she does experience bodily symptoms usually connected to love melancholy, she attributes them neither to love nor to melancholy, creating a narrative that excludes lovesickness. After she has helped Palamon escape and is unsuccessfully seeking him in the forest, the Jailer's Daughter describes physical suffering for the first time:

> … I am moped.
>
> Food took I none these two days;
>
> Sipped some water. I have not closed mine eyes,
>
> Save when my lids scoured off their brine. Alas,
>
> Dissolve, my life! Let not my sense unsettle,
>
> Lest I should drown, or stab, or hang myself. (3.2.25-30)

Scholars often define "moped" as a lower class term for melancholy (MacDonald 160-163, Dawson 82-83, Neely 84), but the OED does not indicate any such connotations, and a search of *Early English Books Online* reveals that the term crosses classes fairly consistently in the

seventeenth century. Instead, "moped" is often connected with madness, suggesting that this term indicates her wavering reason.[78] Her fear of losing her senses confirms this connection. Additionally, although she describes classic melancholy symptoms—no food, no sleep, weeping and desperation—, she does not attribute them to either love or melancholy. She does not describe a loss of appetite, but a lack of food and water. Similarly, is she sleepless, or is it the noises and fears of the forest that keep her awake? She fears her senses will unsettle; over Palamon, or due to her current conditions? The text leaves it ambiguous. In fact, this speech does not mention love at all. Paired with her earlier healthy love, her madness is presented not as the result of love or melancholy, but as the result of her treatment at the hands of Palamon, which led to her current physical circumstances. Her isolation, her hunger, and her fear unsettle her senses far more than love of Palamon ever did. Female desire is not inherently dangerous or unhealthy; the actions (or inactions) of men make it so.

In addition to narrating her experience of love, the Jailer's Daughter asserts narrative control over Palamon, framing him in terms of her body. She does not actually name the object of her desire as Palamon until seventeen lines into her speech: "And yet he had a cousin fair as he too, / But in my heart was Palamon…" (2.4.16-17). In this first revelation of which knight she loves, the Daughter locates Palamon within her heart. In placing him within her own body, she takes a degree of ownership over him and his body. Her love progresses: "I love him beyond love and beyond reason, / Or wit, or safety; I have made him know it" (2.6.11-12). She frames

[78] A search for the term "moped" in texts printed between 1473 and 1700 reveals 38 occurrences in 31 texts (texts referring to individual printings; several of the texts are the same). A majority of the references to "moped" connect it with, or define it as, madness (21 out of 38 instances of the term, or 55% of results). In terms of class context, most references refer to men or Christians in general. When the class of the moped individual is noted, it includes military officers, students or educated men, ministers, translators, surgeons, and monks. In none of the references located in the *EEBO* search was "moped" connected specifically to a lower class individual.

her love as extreme enough to make her risk everything by liberating him from prison, which could imply lovesickness and irrational desire. Yet in context, this is not a description of her love, but a justification for freeing the prisoner despite the risk to her father, the Jailer. Her rationale for her actions is the irrationality of love, yet in the very act of offering that rationale, she maintains elements of reason. Adding to the sense of her reason and control, she says she has *made* him know it, a choice of words that emphasizes her coercion as she imposes knowledge (by implication, carnal knowledge) on Palamon. In addition to implying coercion, "to make" can imply creation. She will create herself within, or force herself upon, his knowledge. This intention becomes more explicit when she expresses concern over his failure to sexually engage with her:

> …Let him do
> What he will with me, so he use me kindly –
> For use me so he shall, or I'll proclaim him,
> And to his face, no man. (2.6.28-31)

She offers her body up for his use provided that he uses her kindly; while she submits to him, she retains agency by placing restrictions on how he uses her. His failure to use her makes him "no man," a fact she asserts the right to proclaim. Not only does she take agency over her body, but she declares her power to rewrite his masculinity.[79] That masculinity is rooted in sexual performance: to fail to "use" her is to require redefinition, to erase his masculine identity. Rosalind-Ganymede asserts some authority over Orlando's body, but only in regards to assessing

[79] This passage evokes the first scene in which one of the queens says Theseus must avenge them before he enjoys his nuptial bed because otherwise he will be too distracted; sexual engagement with a woman alters manhood significantly in this text, shifts priorities and identities. While the Queen fears sex will make Theseus choose love, not war, thereby eschewing his manhood, the Jailer's Daughter says for Palamon to *fail* to choose sex with her is to lose his manhood.

his lovesickness and only while dressed as a man; the Jailer's Daughter takes on far more authorship and agency, defining Palamon's identity as a man and doing so based upon his relationship to her body specifically. In the narrative she crafts, his manhood depends upon her evaluation, as she insists on her right to rewrite his identity based on his sexual treatment of her.

Much like she rewrites Palamon's manhood, she imagines women rewriting the story of her body after her death. The Jailer's Daughter envisions her love as an opportunity for female community and textual interpretation:

> If the law
> Find me and then condemn me for't, some wenches,
> Some honest-hearted maids, will sing my dirge
> And tell to memory my death was noble,
> Dying almost a martyr. (2.6.13-17)

She first defines this community with the casual "wenches" but amends it to "honest-hearted maids," emphasizing virginity. The Daughter imagines this community singing for her death, honoring her as "noble" and "almost a martyr." Significantly, she is not dying of love's pains. This is not the usual end a lovesick patient imagines for herself; love doesn't directly kill her, but indirectly leads to her execution under the law. This imagined end is consistent with the absence of lovesickness symptoms: the Daughter is not languishing of love, thus for love to kill her would require an outside force. The law condemns her for her actions, but the women's dirge will construct a counter-narrative around her body, ascribing positive value to her love and her body's death. The dirge is tinged with fiction in the note of "*almost* a martyr" (emphasis added): "almost" suggests the role of interpretation and approximation. This version of events insists upon shades of gray, much like the prologue insists on seeming. The Jailer's Daughter's interest

in narrative production is particularly noteworthy given that she is a new addition to an old story, the only piece the playwrights fully add to the Chaucerian source text. Almost as if to overcompensate for her absence from the original tale, she creates two narratives for herself, the legal condemnation and the recuperative dirge. As the piece of this story who lacks a storied history, her character shows a strong interest in memory, poetry, and narrative, and locates their production in a folk community of women. Her love authorizes feminine textual creativity, a creativity pitted directly against the masculine authoritative text of legal discourse.

The Daughter imagines herself as the leader of women in love gathered for artistic production. While the first female community the Daughter imagines commemorates her love, the second shares the experience of love for Palamon. When the Wooer reports overhearing the Daughter's madness in the woods, he quotes her stated plan to bring a community of women with her to seek pardon for Palamon:

> 'His shackles will betray him, he'll be taken;
> And what shall I do then? I'll bring a bevy,
> A hundred black-eyed maids that love as I do,
> With chaplets on their heads of daffadillies,
> With cherry-lips and cheeks of damask roses,
> And all we'll dance an antic 'fore the Duke
> And beg his pardon.' (4.1.70-76)

While the previous group gathered with honest hearts to commemorate her death, this group of women, again designated as "maids," bond in their love for Palamon. The Jailer's Daughter remains the defining factor: these are women "that love as [she does]," emphasizing her love as the standard by which other loves are measured. She is also the one bringing the bevy, leading

the action these women will take. Her love and leadership serve as a gathering call and a spur to performance. While her body and her love previously inspired narrative production in the dirge passage, this time, female love more generally inspires creation. She is the leader, but she extends the capacity for artistic production to all maids who love as she does. In that communal action, the women again engage in a performative task, this time a dance rather than a song. She calls the dance an antic, implying grotesqueness, monstrosity, or caricature (OED); the sense of disorder evoked by "antic" contrasts with the order of the law from which they seek pardon, countering masculine reason with feminine disorder. The dirge likewise responded to a legal issue; this pattern pits creative interpretation and performance against the law, firmly aligning desiring feminine bodies with the former and masculine bodies with the latter. Yet things in this play are never straightforward; I have analyzed this passage in terms of the Jailer's Daughter as speaker, but this is all quoted text spoken by the Wooer. This image of female community and production comes from a male voice ventriloquizing female text. Her vision of female production of counter-narratives is co-opted by a man, who performs her story of a performance. She imagined a female performance for a male community, in which feminine disorder leads the masculine law to bend. The Wooer takes this story and uses it in a new context as a story of the Daughter's disordered mind and body and her need to be restored to order.

When she rejoins society after the solitude of the forest, she continues to envision female communities, but she now imagines herself on the outside of the group. The Jailer's Daughter distinguishes herself from other women in love: "All the young maids / Of our town are in love with him, but I laugh at 'em / And let 'em all alone; is't not a wise course?" (4.1.125-127). She repeats "all" (*all* the young maids, let 'em *all* alone), emphasizing their community in contrast to her singularity. No longer the leader of a female community, she is the outside exception, unable

to bond with the women who share her plight in love. Why? What has changed? For one thing, she is now surrounded by men who seek to reinstate her into her "proper" role. As the imaginative world recedes, as she re-enters a full social world with inhabitants other than her own hallucinations, she loses the kinship she created with other women. To return to society is to accept being defined as the nameless Daughter, solely characterized by her relationships with the men in her world, and thus entails the loss of female community and companionship, even if that community was sheer fantasy. Moreover, after she returns, women are no longer the agents of creative production, only of sexual reproduction, as she envisions not women, but their castrated male children producing music:

> There is at least two hundred now with child by him –
> There must be four – yet I keep close for all this,
> Close as a cockle; and all these must be boys
> (He has the trick on't) and at ten years old
> They must be all gelt for musicians
> And sing the wars of Theseus. (4.1.128-133)

The narratives she imagines no longer correct or rewrite situations, but instead accept the dominant narrative: instead of women memorializing her body or begging pardon for Palamon, she now envisions castrated boys singing to Theseus about his accomplishments in war. Creative production here reproduces history rather than offering an alternate narrative. This shift is connected with sterility, as the boys producing this music are *castrati.* Female sexual lack was similarly envisioned as generative, but while the female virgins created counter-narratives, the gelded singers are limited to representing the world as it has been. Thus not only is the role of women as creators diminished, but the possibilities of textual creation more broadly have been

curtailed by her return to the town. Although women retain a connection to creation in this passage in that they reproduce, the sex of the children is determined by Palamon, which suggests the limited role of women in creating children.[80] The return to a male dominated world places limits on female creativity: they can reproduce, but not produce, and their children can produce, but only if their bodies are sterilized and their creative production is limited to songs representing the masculine history of war.

The Jailer's Daughter's imagined female community continues to get bleaker as the specter of male surveillance and control increases. While women in love remain bonded as a community, she now imagines them bonded in death: "We maids that have our livers perished, cracked to pieces with love, we shall come there and do nothing all day long but pick flowers with Proserpine" (4.3.22-25). These women, who were not deflowered in life, pass time in the afterlife picking flowers. The passage emphasizes the emptiness of this activity, saying they "do nothing all day long." This passage is her first indication that love is a disease or disruption to the body, and it comes in the latter half of the play when she is not only mad, but back within the society of her father, Wooer, and Doctor. She does not present her desire as deadly until surrounded by men who assume it is. Additionally, although desiring women still form a community, rather than producing songs or dances, they pick flowers. The image of picking flowers is not violently destructive, but it is antithetical to the image of creation, curtailing the possibility of growth and cutting off flowers that will wither and die off the vine. Additionally,

[80] According to Aristotle, women provide only the matter for creation, offering up raw material and a vessel for gestation, while men provide the form, determining what the child will be and playing the dominant role in producing the child. Palamon's exceeding ability to produce male children evokes the Daughter's earlier complaint that if he did not sexually use her, he was no man; here, his excessive manliness determines the sex of his children. Yet that is immediately curtailed by their castration and their production of songs celebrating the wars of Theseus – wars in which Palamon was defeated and imprisoned. Whether the issue is excess or insufficient sexual activity, the end result is an unmanned Palamon.

she frames this community of maids from the perspective of a male witness, telling the Jailer and the Doctor to visit the underworld, and "Then if it be your chance to come where the blessed spirits are, there's a sight now!" (4.3.21-22). She introduces this community of women as something for a male audience to witness. While the audience for the female communities she imagines has consistently been male, in previous cases, the women performed with a purpose, re-scripting narratives and seeking pardon; here, they are sheer entertainment, and are witnessed rather than actively choosing to perform. Love has thus far provided a creative communal force, but in her final vision of female community, love kills women and leaves them eternally picking flowers in silence, a sight to behold rather than storytellers to hear. Furthermore, this community is led by Persephone. Persephone is not a figure of unrequited love; she is kidnapped by Hades and kept in the underworld half the year, returning above ground to her mother for spring and summer. In her absence, Ceres' mourning results in fall and winter. The deflowering of Persephone's body deflowers the world, moving the seasons as a result of her abduction. A reference to Persephone is a reference to female loss as a result of male violence and manipulation, which takes on added poignancy coming from the Jailer's Daughter, who is constantly surrounded by men. The allusion to Persephone and the framing of a male audience underscore male surveillance and control as a curb to female creativity and community.

In sum, the Jailer's Daughter falls in love and goes mad, but the correlation is not presented as causation. She has immense creative control over how her body and Palamon's are presented and interpreted, both before and after her madness. Additionally, both in and out of madness, the Jailer's Daughter connects the virginal female condition to creative production, both verbal (the dirge) and physical (the antic). The desiring female body is a site of generation, as well as an opportunity for feminine community and counter-narratives that correct the

masculine interpretation and its condemnation of female desire. The creation of community, and that community's creation of alternate narratives, may be the element of female desire the play presents as most powerful, most in need of control. The danger of female desire is not just that it allows daughters to select husbands for themselves other than the men their fathers have planned on. It allows broader possibilities, creating connections among women that lead to the production of alternate worlds. Desire creates an opportunity for female bonding and commiseration, as well as for creative production as a legitimate alternative to sexual reproduction. Female desire's ability to create thus extends far beyond the ability to procreate, therefore to repress or contain female desire (as the society around the Daughter will try to do) is not just to manipulate the body, but to contain the voice and creative expression as well. While she is on her own, the Daughter's desire is a powerful creative force, pitting itself against the dominant masculine worldview by envisioning alternate narratives; but what happens when that dominant worldview is represented not by an imagined Duke, but by actual figures around her? The next section will examine how the men around her diagnose, interpret, and "cure" her body, and how the narrative they create around her body suppresses her own self-representation.

Interpreting the Condition, Controlling the Narrative: The Jailer's Daughter and the Doctor

While the Daughter spends much of the first half of the play in solitude, when she returns to society, she is immediately surrounded by men directing and diagnosing her body. The Daughter is recruited into a morris dance and silenced, removing her verbal creative power. She is diagnosed and treated by a Doctor, who builds an elaborate deceptive scheme around her in order to persuade her to accept her father's preferred suitor in the guise of Palamon. The play emphasizes how the Daughter's agency diminishes and the men around her manipulate her as they construct a false story that will have real consequences for her body.

In her solitude, the Jailer's Daughter imaginatively creates worlds, but when her mad body returns to society, the re-imaginings and alternative narratives disappear. In fact, in her first social encounter, her body is exploited for aesthetic purposes: the morris dancers manipulate her mad body for their performance.[81] In Act 3 scene 5, she comes in singing and the countrymen and schoolmaster are all thrilled she's mad, because her dancing will save their show: the countryman says, "I warrant her, she'll do the rarest gambols" (3.5.76). Her mad body becomes a moving object within a performance.[82] Additionally, the countrymen celebrate her for the dancing, not the singing, so her silenced body is the desirable body. The Schoolmaster emphasizes this, saying she must be "persuade[d] … to a peace" (3.5.88). The morris dance may celebrate bawdiness, but the Daughter's voice and its constant innuendos must cease for the dance to proceed. In her imagined dance before the duke, the antic was paired with begging pardon: the narrative supplemented the physical performance, and that narrative specifically sought to rewrite the end of Palamon's story. Now, rather than being the one doing the persuading, she is the one being persuaded, lured into silence and recruited into serving someone else's show, someone else's story. It is odd that during the performance itself, no lines refer to the Daughter or her role, which was thought to be so essential. She gets erased, subsumed into the company without further comment after having been introduced as exceptional. There is no indication after the performance that she did, in fact, make the show as the countrymen believed

[81] For a reading of the morris dance as an exploration of Moorish exoticism mapped onto English folk traditions, see Sujata Iyengar. For an overview of morris dancing and gender, both in early modern England and in recent productions, see Elizabeth Zeman Kolkovich.

[82] While Sujata Iyengar sees the dance as signifying a gendered power struggle (89-91), Elizabeth Zeman Kolkovich argues that the text not only accepts the role of women as central to the morris dance, but holds up the dance as a sanctioned subversive space for female control in contrast to the antiquated Athenian patriarchy (172). Kolkovich points out that women motivate the dance even before the Daughter enters (171). While her point about gender is well taken, as is Iyengar's broader point about the morrisdance as an exotifying practice, we still need to figure out how the Daughter's madness inflects these raced and gendered meanings.

she would. Her voice is silenced and her body passes without comment, suggesting that her body follows the choreography and does not stand out. The performative context of the morris dance neutralizes the signifying power of her madness. Perhaps without language, there are no longer markers of madness. Perhaps to control her body is also to not just control, but erase her narrative.[83]

In her absence, men diagnose and interpret her body, offering linguistic containment for her madness in parallel to the physical containment of the morris dance. The first to notice any upheaval in her condition is the Wooer, who asks her father, "Was she well? Was she in health? Sir, / When did she sleep?" (4.1.34-35). Due to the Wooer's questioning, her father recognizes that she has been behaving strangely:

> I do not think she was very well, for now
> You make me mind her: but this very day
> I asked her questions, and she answered me
> So far from what she was, so childishly,
> So sillily, as if she were a fool,
> An innocent, and I was very angry. (4.1.34-41)

The Jailer credits the Wooer with bringing his daughter to his attention, as he "ma[d]e [him] mind her," suggesting that it takes another man to make him recognize his own daughter's condition. He frames her condition in terms of his own anger at her responses, making her behavior significant primarily, if not solely, because of how it affects men. The Jailer moves

[83] In production, one could shift this theory from a "perhaps" to a certainty by emphasizing her erasure, blending her in with the other performers. Some productions have gone further, removing her from the stage entirely during the performance (see Kolkovich 173, 177n15). However, the opposite is also possible; one could stage this scene with the Daughter's performance exuberantly disruptive, allowing her to upend the performance of the dance.

quickly from the symptoms to the cause: “Either this was her love to Palamon, / Or fear of my miscarrying on his ‘scape, / Or both” (4.1.49-51). We have seen that the Jailer’s Daughter is not mad of love; nevertheless, the men around her are quick to interpret her madness as lovesickness. In the Jailer’s assessment, the forces impacting the female body and mind are all male and can only be imagined as male. He does not acknowledge her role in Palamon’s escape, limiting the consideration of her agency and the attendant guilt that may contribute to her madness. This scene offers an alternate version to the Daughter’s imagined dirge: while she envisioned a community of women rewriting her body’s narrative to celebrate her love, here, we have a community of men interpreting her body, creating a narrative that rewrites her love as illness and her agency as passivity.

The Wooer and Jailer bring in a Doctor to assist her, expanding the community of male authorities interpreting the female body. The Doctor reads her symptoms and diagnoses her. In fact, he repeatedly reads and re-reads her body, constantly shifting the narrative around her. The Doctor initially assumes that her madness is connected to her menstrual cycle: “Her distraction is more at some time of the moon than at other some, is it not?” (4.3.1-2). Her father answers in the negative, telling the doctor that her distraction is constant. His first narrative around her body, which lays the blame for the condition on her female biology, is contradicted by her actual behavior. The Doctor then diagnoses her with “not an engrafted madness but a most thick and profound melancholy” (IV.iii.47-49). The initial negation suggests changing his mind, or at least weighing multiple potential options, and the closeness of those options plants a seed of doubt in the audience’s mind about how he makes the distinctions, again suggesting multiple possible interpretations of her body’s condition. “Engrafted” invokes the common lovesickness image of the beloved’s likeness impressed upon the mind or engraved in the heart of the lover. Yet he

dismisses this as cause, instead attributing her symptoms to melancholy, a humor that can be re-balanced and thus is within the purview of his profession. Despite this diagnosis, he then says he can't help her: "I think she has a perturbed mind, which I cannot minister to" (4.3.58). Yet within a few lines he changes his mind and offers a controversial cure. The doctor repeatedly goes back and forth in his diagnosis of her condition and his own role as physician. His inconsistent interpretations frame and reframe her body and illness before finally settling on a reading that enables him to script a cure.

The Doctor draws on performance in his proposed cure, seeking to control her reality via deception and thereby manipulating not just her body, but the entire world she inhabits. The Doctor designs a poorly lit set, casts actors in the drama, proposes that they make the play a musical, suggests adding flowers to the Wooer's costume, and offers a script and blocking (4.3.72-92). His strategy is for the Wooer to pretend to be Palamon and to speak of love, because "This will catch her attention, for this her mind beats upon; other objects that are inserted 'tween her mind and eye become the pranks and friskins of her madness" (4.3.76). Her madness misunderstands and reshapes everything other than mentions of her obsession. He seeks to exploit that reshaping function of her madness in order to persuade her to accept the Wooer under the name of Palamon.[84] This is an accepted cure for lovesickness with a long tradition in the literature, but, as we saw, her madness was not caused by lovesickness. The cure does not

[84] Todd Pettigrew compares the Doctor to the physician who refuses to treat Lady Macbeth and points out that both ailments have spiritual elements, but the difference in the doctor's willingness to risk a physical cure lies in status. Because the Jailer's Daughter is socially insignificant, the Doctor can risk an experimental treatment; Pettigrew writes, "The Doctor in *Kinsmen* can afford to be bold, to try a complex cure because the Jailer is in no social position to exact retribution upon him should the cure not work out" (65). In this reading, the Jailer's Daughter is an opportunity for the Doctor to flex his restorative powers with little personal or professional risk. The text does seem to call attention to the extent to which he is flying by the seat of his pants, changing his mind about the diagnosis and the possible cure to apply. However, the text does not connect these moments to her class status.

match the cause, but instead matches the Jailer's desired outcome, ultimately bringing the Daughter and the Wooer together; as the Jailer states, "I was once, sir, in great hope she had fixed her liking on this gentleman, my friend" (4.3.63-64), a hope the Wooer confirms that he shared (4.3.65-67). The Jailer's phrasing emphasizes that the Wooer is *his* friend, subtly framing his wishes for his daughter as primarily self-interested. Scholars have discussed how the Jailer's Daughter's desire creates an imaginary world and recruits actors into living out her fantasy (Wagoner 110-111, Frey 136). While her desire, as we have seen, does create new worlds and possibilities, the Doctor creates competing worlds, ones compatible with the desires of other men. This charade is not what the Jailer's Daughter's desires actually tend toward, and the manipulation of her fantasy through this twisted performance is deeply suspect.[85] Drawing further attention to the dishonesty of this proposed cure, the Wooer expresses his wish "that both she and I at present stood *unfeignedly* on the same terms" as before (4.3.66-68, emphasis added). Feigning is exactly what the Doctor suggests, and the Wooer's wish for genuine affection underscores the problem with performing affection. The Doctor justifies his plan with the claim that "It is a falsehood she is in, which is with falsehoods to be combated. This may bring her to eat, to sleep, and reduce what's now out of square in her into their former law and regiment" (4.3.92-95). The falsehoods themselves aren't the cure; they are the way to prompt her to eat and sleep, to begin restoring her normal bodily function. He describes bodily function in terms of order, with legal and military language. We have seen the Daughter herself pit legal discourse against the feminine discourse of love, allying love with creative production and female agency. The Doctor's language here reminds us of that and frames the return of her senses into masculine

[85] The performance cure is something we see in *As You Like It* as well, but the participants are all equally knowledgeable about the conditions of the game, and the claims for this method's success are not specifically medical.

rational order as a loss: to return to law and regiment is to "reduce" her mind's current status, to make her less so that she fits into the role this group of men cast her in in the story they construct around her.

Given that the previous role of female community was to create a counter-narrative to masculine discourse, it is particularly significant that the Doctor enlists a female community to assist in the performative cure of her madness. The Doctor asks the men to figure out who her female friends are and engage them in this charade as well: "Learn what maids have been her companions and play-feres and let them repair to her with Palamon in their mouths, and appear with tokens, as if they suggested for him" (4.3.89-92). The Jailer's Daughter has, in her imagination, inspired performances and gathered and led dances, yet here she is the victim of a deceptive performance, recruited into a scene she does not know is false. Additionally, this performance will feed lovesickness rather than cure it: many medical texts counsel friends to dissuade lovers from their obsession,[86] but the Doctor proposes the exact opposite. The use of the female community harkens back to the Daughter's fantasies about women in love generating community and art, but perverts that model as women exploit her love to manipulate her body. The Doctor's scripted cure distorts female community, repurposing it to suit masculine ends.

The Doctor consistently controls and manipulates bodies, both in practice and in interpretation. The practices he encourages escalate to include intimate encounters, as he tells the Wooer that he should have kissed her more, "for there the cure lies mainly" (5.2.8). The Doctor frames the cure as sexual, euphemistically telling him to "fit her home" (5.2.11). The euphemisms quickly become more explicit, to her father's dismay:

Doctor: Lie with her if she ask you.

[86] For example, see Burton 204-226.

Jailer: Whoa there, Doctor!

Doctor: Yes, in the way of cure.

Jailer: But first, by your leave,

I'th' way of honesty.

Doctor: That's but a niceness.

Ne'er cast your child away for honesty.

Cure her first this way; then if she will be honest,

She has the path before her. (5.2.18-23)

The Jailer insists on honesty, which the Doctor dismisses as irrelevant. To interpret this charitably, the Doctor prioritizes her physical health over her moral health, urging the Jailer to take any means to heal her. Once the Jailer has exited, however, it becomes clear that the Doctor sees honesty not as less important than health, but as something daughters simply do not possess: "You fathers are fine fools. Her honesty? / An we should give her physic till we find *that*!" (5.2.28-29). The Doctor dismisses the idea that the daughter has honesty at all. He interprets her bodily status without any evidence in support of his claim, rewriting—or more aptly, erasing—her virginity. He rewrote her madness as love madness in order to frame her body within a male-dominated context, and here, he rewrites her body as unlikely to be honest in order to justify the cure he proposes.

Despite the Doctor's extensive manipulation, the Jailer's Daughter is skeptical, primarily because the Wooer-as-Palamon returns her affections despite her class; she might be willing to accept the re-interpretation of the Wooer's body, but the rewriting of her own body and its status is harder to believe. The Jailer's Daughter expresses doubts:

Daughter: Are not you Palamon?

Wooer: Do not you know me?

Daughter: Yes, but you care not for me. I have nothing

But this poor petticoat and two coarse smocks. (5.2.82-84)

Even in her distraction, the Daughter questions the idea that Palamon would return her affections, remaining aware of the class difference.[87] She hesitates to buy into this fiction, thereby reminding the audience that it is a fiction. Her suspicion arises because of his willingness to engage with her: "you care not for me." When he says he will have her, she again questions it, seeking additional reassurance:

Daughter: Will you surely?

Wooer: Yes, by this fair hand, will I.

Daughter: We'll to bed then.

Wooer: E'en when you will. (5.2.85-87)

The promise that assuages her fears is "by this fair hand," which could refer to his own hand or hers. If hers, he attributes a class-inflected adjective to her hand, drawing attention to her class related fears about his affections. If his, then there are problems with the oath, since his hand isn't the hand he says it is. Whether his or hers, the body provides sufficient assurances to overcome her fears.[88] The body provides proof that performance does not, and brings her body to the point that it will accept his. Her phrase "we'll to bed then" is somewhat ambivalent, as it could suggest that they will go to bed when he has (meaning possesses, or marries) her, or that because he has promised, they'll go to bed now. Either way she places conditions on their sexual encounter. Mad or no, she has concerns about her honesty that contradict the doctor's assessment

[87] Lawrence Babb claims the Wooer easily convinces her (130), but her reluctance here belies that reading.

[88] C.f. Phoebe's hands in *As You Like It,* so marked by class that they lose their claim to the feminine gender.

of young women. Even after the Wooer has comforted her, she seeks further reassurance from the Doctor and Jailer, asking both if they think he intends to have her (5.2.92-94). Once she has accepted all these assurances, when he kisses her, she still rubs it off (5.2.87-88), a stark contrast to her earlier reaction to Palamon's kiss (2.4.25-26). His kiss once made her love her lips the better, with their bodily interaction reframing the value of her own body. Here, no such reframing occurs as she scrubs off the evidence of the kiss and chides, "Oh, sir, you would fain be nibbling" (5.2.87). Even once she has accepted him verbally, her reaction to his body indicates a continued skepticism of his identity. Her hesitation does not prevent her from fulfilling the role that the Doctor has cast her in, but it does serve to remind the audience that this is a role, that she is not in fact getting what she wants and her "reality" has been shaped by a group of men, all of whom have a stake in the narrative crafted around her body.

In the Daughter's last moments on stage, after she accepts the Doctor's version of the Wooer's body, the over-presence of the Doctor reminds us that, despite seeming to take initiative, she has no real control or agency. Her fear and powerlessness darkly underscore the ending of sexual fulfillment. Even when the Daughter seems to take some agency over her body by suggesting activities to the Wooer, the exchange subtly reminds the audience of the male control at work here and its attendant risks. When the Daughter says, "And then we'll sleep together" (5.2.110), the Doctor prompts the Wooer, "Take her offer" (5.2.110). The shared line between the Daughter and Doctor is eleven syllables with a feminine ending. Taking the meter as a guide, there is not a pause for the Wooer to turn to the Doctor for advice or approval, thus indicating the Doctor's eagerness to encourage the sexual encounter. The Doctor seems to insert himself into this exchange unnecessarily, underscoring his overly imposing role in orchestrating this situation. Additionally, the extra syllable suggests his undue enthusiasm: his text exceeds

metrical boundaries in parallel to his behavior as a physician exceeding conventional boundaries. Adding to the sense that the Daughter has lost her agency and creative power, Michael Wagoner points out that she speaks immediately upon entering in every scene she's in except the first one and last two (112). As men take control of her life, she speaks when spoken to rather than of her own volition. Additionally, her last lines express fear of getting hurt, both physically and emotionally:

Daughter: But you shall not hurt me.

Wooer: I will not, sweet.

Daughter: If you do, love, I'll cry. (5.2.111-112)

She strives to script her ending here, asking the Wooer-as-Palamon not to hurt her, but acknowledges her inability to control that ending and emphasizes her passive, reactive role in their encounter. Sujata Iyengar observes, "As she consents to the marriage, she gives up what little control she has over her own destiny, moving from an imperative ('you shall not') to a conditional ('if you do'), which assumes that her lover will break his vow and force her tears" (99). As a result, the audience never sits easy with the Daughter's fate, nor are we encouraged to forget the ruse and buy into the romance. Her fear of bodily harm reminds us that this is not just a game or performance; there are real stakes in the culmination of this farce, and even if she is cured, that cure will come at great cost, erasing her virginity along with her madness.

While the Daughter is off being "cured" by the false Palamon, the real Palamon remembers and speaks of her for the first time; in doing so, he is vague about her illness and centers on himself, further emphasizing that she is defined and valued in terms of her connections to men. Upon the executioner's block, Palamon asks the Jailer about his daughter:

Your gentle daughter gave me freedom once;

You'll see't done now forever. Pray, how does she?

I heard she was not well; her kind of ill

Gave me some sorrow. (5.4.24-27)

Palamon focuses on himself, defining her in terms of the freedom she provided him. He also emphasizes his own reaction to her illness as giving him "some sorrow." The focus on her giving him freedom and her illness giving him sorrow both center his experience rather than hers. In response, the Jailer provides good news: "Sir, she's well restored / And to be married shortly" (5.4.27-28). We hear (but never see) that she is cured and about to marry the Wooer, both facts described in syntax that leaves the Daughter passive. In both her presence and absence, the men around her define her in terms of her relationship to other men, contradicting her frequent visions of herself as an active leader at the center of groups of women.

By the play's end, her speech is silenced, her female community is lost, and her body's value is predicated on her virginity, which Palamon and his Knights pay for; they are deceived, as her body is not, in fact, virginal, evoking the conditions of deception and bodily performance laid out in the Prologue. Because of the news of the Daughter's impending marriage, Palamon offers her a dowry and his knights follow suit:

Palamon: Commend me to her and, to piece her portion,

Tender her this.

Knight 1: Nay, let's be offerers all.

Knight 2: Is it a maid?

Palamon: Verily I think so.

A right good creature, more to me deserving

Than I can 'quite or speak of.

The knights: Commend us to her. (5.4.31-35)

Palamon and his knights contribute to her dowry under the assumption that she is a maid. They take Palamon's word that she is likely a virgin, which she is not. This moment offers the final fiction constructed around her body. Her body, which has been framed and reframed throughout the text, is in this moment constructed in her absence as a virginal object, and therefore an object of value. A group of men pay for her body because of a fictional condition of that body. Her story ends where the prologue began, with the female body deceiving the audience about its virginity (without any effort on her part) and men profiting off this deception. The story around her body—a story she played no part in authoring—has more value than the body itself. Indeed, the only reason the body has value is because of the narrative men construct around it. The Daughter imagined the desiring female body as the center of a community, as the cause of artistic production; in its final sum, it is an object for the use of men, defined in her absence, exchanged as a commodity whose value is primarily in its lack.

Despite being one of the most famous literary instances of love madness, the Jailer's Daughter actually offers a surprisingly healthy model of falling in love. She has no physical symptoms and no melancholy tendencies until she is abandoned alone in the woods, marking not desire but despair as the cause of her madness. The play does not pathologize her desire, but instead depicts desire as an opportunity for female community and creation, an opportunity she imaginatively explores both in madness and in health. *Kinsmen* retells a masculine courtly story, and in doing so, celebrates female, lower class desire as a healthier and more generative alternative to the toxic masculine desire we see in Palamon and Arcite. Fletcher and Shakespeare locate the strongest example of love in a marginalized body—lower class, female, and mad. But while she offers the most positive example of desire, she also is a victim of that desire as the men

around her use it to manipulate not just her body, but her entire perception of the world around her. They reframe her love as lovesickness and her madness as love madness, and in pathologizing her desire, enable the "cure" and ending that they themselves define as happy. Lovesickness is no longer a female experience, but now a tool used by men to control the female experience.

In connection to the narrative this dissertation has traced, which starts with female desire as fundamentally toxic, the idea of a lower class woman experiencing love, not lovesickness, offers an interesting step forward. Her love is not fundamentally dangerous and unhealthy, and it is not her desire that authorizes men to step in and control her body for her own good. Love is positive, generative, community-building. It offers opportunities for both authorship and agency. Sex is less positive; it may be restorative, but it is also coerced, commodified, and generally uncomfortable throughout the play. As we move further into the seventeenth century, female desire will lose the connection to healthy love and become conflated with hysteria, erotomania, and nymphomania. These diseases are far less likely to be cured by the happy consummation of two lovers, and far more likely to be cured by external control and medical manipulation. The story of female desire ceases to be one of tension between author and reader, desiring agent and interpreting physician; instead, the focus is on the outside figure controlling the desiring female body. *Two Noble Kinsmen* foreshadows that coming shift while still celebrating the woman as potential agent, depicting positive female love and the ways men reframe and pathologize that love to orchestrate their own desires.

Conclusion

This dissertation has asked how the lovesick female body is spoken about, how it speaks, and how women's speech and bodies are interpreted. When narrators speak about female desire, chapter one demonstrates, they value it negatively when it conflicts with male desires and positively when it aligns with the desires of the male heroes, feminine models of chastity and restraint, and the goals of the poem. There is likewise a range of possibilities for the lovesick female speaker: lovesickness can justify her expression of desire and elevate her voice's authority, as with Stampa, or it can be an imposed diagnosis that silences her and oppresses her agency, as with Lisis and the Jailer's Daughter. Women can use lovesickness for their own purposes, seeking to manipulate the humors of those around them, or they can be victims of that same manipulation. The later we go chronologically—the *Desengaños* (1647)*, Two Noble Kinsmen* (1613)—, the more likely it is that the text opts for the latter possibility, using lovesickness to interpret and control women. In short, this dissertation argues that female lovesickness is a means of control, whether women use the disease to assert agency or men use it to diminish women's agency.

The texts connect this battle for control to the tension between authorial control and readerly textual interpretation, since the lovesick woman is, because of love, a desiring subject who seeks to author her own experience and, because of sickness, an object to be "read" and diagnosed by an outside authority. Lovesickness makes the body legible; once the body becomes a text, it is vulnerable to outside interpretation and therefore outside control, a fact the writers grapple with. As we saw with the narrators in chapter one, control over interpretation provides the means not just to frame the value of an object or person, but also to redirect and rewrite the

narrative. In chapter two, the women writers take opposite strategies toward narrative control, with Stampa seizing lovesickness as a means to control and Zayas rejecting it. There is a constant anxiety about misreading or silencing in both texts, an anxiety that echoes the connection between lovesick women and the need for narrative control in the romance epics of chapter one. The last two chapters shift from anxieties about narrative control to active attempts to manipulate and change the story. In chapter three, this anxiety about misreading produces narrative guides, go-betweens who facilitate the interpretation of the female body. Celestina and Rosalind-Ganymede both use language to create lovesickness. Here, language does not just control the interpretation of the body, but materially shifts the body itself, a dangerous state of affairs. While chapter three focuses on competition for narrative control in causing lovesickness, chapter four focuses on competition for narrative control in diagnosing and curing lovesickness. Try as the Jailer's Daughter might to control her own story, her illness makes her subject to interpretation, misreading, and rewriting as those around her perform a false reality in order to shift her actual bodily experience. Reading in the early modern era is a high-stakes activity in which both reader and text are subject to transformation. Comparing the lovesick female body to a text open to interpretation highlights the vulnerable state of both body and text and emphasizes the power inherent in interpretation.

To make desire a disease is to make the lover's body subject to external control. Diagnosis interprets the body, giving it meaning; the act implies that the individual is insufficient to understand or name her own bodily experience. Diagnosis leads to treatment, which puts the physician in control of the body. To make a woman's desire a disease, to make it diagnosable and treatable, makes it not just subject to, but dependent on, external control. Her body can be analyzed and acted upon under the justification that medical professionals know better as she

becomes dehumanized under the Foucaldian 'medical gaze.'[89] Additionally, lovesickness as a disease automatically puts the female patient at the mercy of outside forces: restoring her internal balance is only possible through erotic fulfillment, which requires the action of her beloved. A diseased woman is at the mercy of the diagnosing physician; a desiring woman is at the mercy of her beloved; a lovesick woman is both, doubly subject to control by others. The writers examined in this study highlight that dynamic, exploring how lovesickness creates an urgent need for agency and action while simultaneously placing the woman in a fundamentally passive, impotent position.

The lovesick woman's body offers a text to be read. She herself seeks to author that text, or at least voice the guide to its interpretation. Lovesickness is often the impetus to authorship, with desire leading to subjectivity and, if not agency itself, a wish for agency. Simultaneously, lovesickness makes the body more legible to an outsider, inviting or even demanding diagnosis, which puts the self-authored text at risk of misinterpretation, misreading, or even rewriting. Authors explore this upheaval, this opportunity for interpretive control and authority to change hands. They also tease out the tension between authorship and interpretation, in how misreading can actually change the story—the Jailer's Daughter's misdiagnosis has material consequences, a threat we also see in Lisis's misdiagnosis and Britomart's failure of self understanding. The body of the text, like the female body, is unruly, slippery, possessed of a superfluity of meanings. The slipperiness of both bodies and texts logically results from humoral medicine: in humoral models, readers transform texts just as texts transform readers. Similarly, the female body is vulnerable to outside eyes and outside understandings that, in diagnosing and interpreting, seize control. Yet this dynamic is unavoidable: neither the text nor the lovesick woman can function in

[89] Although Foucault locates this gaze's origin in the late 18th century, we clearly see the phenomenon he describes at play in these texts, suggesting that his dates merit reconsideration.

isolation. An outside reader, a social engagement, is necessary; both require the very thing that puts them at risk. The vulnerability of self to engagement with the "other" resonates subtly but impactfully in these texts, with the pressure to conceal and the desire to reveal in constant tension. While any disease makes the body legible through diagnosis, lovesickness is particularly compatible with the metaphor of writing and reading because of the social element to the disease. The text—vulnerable before the reader yet longing to be read—offers a poignant parallel to the silent, lovesick woman.

In the seventeenth century, lovesickness becomes less personal and more medical, as evidenced by the physicians in the texts by Zayas and Fletcher and Shakespeare. After this shift, lovesickness is more likely to be an instrument that enables others to impose on their bodies with the plausible deniability of providing a "cure." As female desire becomes pathologized, lovesickness is replaced by greensickness, hysteria, and nymphomania.[90] The first in vogue is greensickness, or chlorosis. While the symptoms are similar, lovesick women desire a specific beloved object while greensick women desire sexual contact in general. Greensickness takes away the subjectivity and individuality that lovesickness offers, making desire a problem of appetite. This is underscored by the symptom of pica: while a lovesick patient lacks appetite because her only nourishment is the beloved, a greensick patient eats non-food items because her appetite is excessive and disordered. Because the cure for greensickness is sex rather than sex with one specific beloved, the disease justifies arranged marriage. A similar illness, suffocation of the mother, is likewise associated with toxic virginity. Boyd Brogan reports the rising frequency of cases of "the mother" in 1630s England, a condition marked by the symptoms of

[90] While critics generally agree that historically, hysteria was used to pathologize feminity, new feminist criticism sought to reclaim hysteria as a positive value. See Elaine Showalter, "Hysteria, Feminism, and Gender," and her edited volume *The New Feminist Criticism*. For a recent revisiting of this work, see Cecily Devereux, "Hysteria, Feminism, and Gender Revisited."

paralysis and/or choking (4-5, 9). The condition was by no means exclusive to England; it originates in Hippocratic texts, which circulated across the continent, and it frequently appears in early seventeenth century Spanish texts.[91] While greensickness emphasizes the disordered appetite of a virgin that a father's arranged marriage can set right, suffocation of the mother emphasizes the inaction in virginity, the passivity made so extreme as to render a woman unconscious. Because the woman is unconscious, the cure here shifts towards the physical and biological more so than the social: the "midwife's cure" entails the medical practitioner inserting her fingers into the vagina to open the cervix and release the womb's toxins (Brogan 4-5). With greensickness, the cure via marriage restores the woman to her proper place in the social order; with suffocation of the mother, the cure physically manipulates her body to restore her biological order. The problem becomes the female body *in and of itself* rather than in social relation to other bodies. Within another century, the predominant feminine ailments become hysteria and nymphomania, pathologizing female desire by associating it not with love, but with sex, and not with the mind or heart, but with the genitals (Cryle 3). Women's desire becomes a medical, biological problem. Additionally, while pathological desire is initially related to love, as it is increasingly gendered female, it is reframed from love to lust. This reframing makes desire/disease a moral issue as well as a biological one (Groneman 6). Similarly, as Katharine Hodgkin points out, when melancholy is reframed as feminine, it ceases to be an intellectual sign of genius and instead becomes a bodily, biological defect (6).[92] Ultimately, female lovesickness

[91] See Juárez-Almendros 23 on the Hippocratic origins of the disease. On its etiology from ancient texts through the nineteenth century, see Siddall. For more literary examples of the condition in continential Europe, see Dulsey, esp. 10-11, on opilación in Lope de Vega's *Acero de Madrid* and Molière's *Le Médecin Malgré Lui*. On the condition in Lope's *Carlos V en Francia*, see Bunn 37.

[92] See also Elaine Showalter, "Representing Ophelia," 81 and Juliana Schiesari, *The Gendering of Melancholia,* 14.

declines as both a diagnosis and literary motif in favor of other versions of pathologizing female desire. Because lovesickness has often been read as empowering for women, its connection to hysteria and nymphomania has not been recognized. When we consider female lovesickness as a more flexible condition, equally able to empower and silence, then in the broad historical context, it serves as a sort of crossroads for female desire that, ultimately, ends up veering towards hysteria. While more research on these connections is needed, the findings of this dissertation complicate previous histories of women's medicine and suggest promising connections for future study.

The analogy between lovesick female body and text likewise ties into a larger historical narrative around authorship, readership, and the body. This dissertation studies a historical moment marked by the rise of female readership and texts directly addressed to that readership, as well as a growing shift in concepts of authorship as the printing press allows for a more stable and public text. Thus the anxieties around an author's control over interpretation, and the ways those anxieties were expressed in gendered terms, are historically specific. Moving into the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, gender norms and concepts of authorship shift, and we see the rise of the melancholy masculine genius and the cult around the ailing author.[93] The concept of melancholy genius, in which a surplus of black bile is directly correlated to scholarship and creative production, goes back to Aristotle, but resurges strongly in the Romantic period. Much recent work has demonstrated the fascination with melancholy among the Romantic poets and its connection to artistic inspiration.[94] Later, Freud suggests that melancholy directly causes the creativity of the artist, although that privileged connection, as Janice Stewart points out, seems

[93] See Helen Deutsch, "Symptomatic Correspondences."
[94] See Susan Wolfson on melancholy as creative fuel for romantic poets. On the medical dangers of melancholic literary genius, see Sharon Ruston.

only to be available to male melancholics (Stewart 142-143). Peter Toohey links Rufus of Ephesus's model of the melancholy thinker to the character of Mr. Casaubon in George Eliot's *Middlemarch* and to Orhan Pamuk's self-representation in *Bildungsroman, Istanbul,* arguing for the reappearing affiliation between melancholy and scholarship in Western culture (Toohey 236-240). Melancholy and creativity are persistently connected, both in literary criticism and in literature. While the connection persists, how that connection functions and how it is culturally understood change. Lovesickness as a subsection of melancholy, one that is similarly connected to ideas of creative production and readerly interpretation, could add to our understanding of the overlapping histories of medicine and authorship. In particular, female lovesickness as a site of tension between readerly and authorial control suggests areas for further research into gendered concepts of authorship and transformative reading in the early modern period.

In conclusion, this dissertation has demonstrated that female lovesickness is a complicated site of tension between empowerment and subjugation, between subjectivity and objectification, between speech and silence. These tensions between female desire and male control, and the impulse to pathologize that desire, persist today. Indeed, lovesickness is making a comeback: Takotsubo's cardiomyopathy, or broken heart syndrome, is a stress-induced heart attack primarily associated with grieving widows. Love, it seems, is still a disease, and that disease is still gendered. The past decade or so has seen an outpouring of films and young adult novels in the "terminal romance" genre: love stories centered on a dying young woman and the man who falls in love with her. Typically, the encounter with the dying girl catalyzes the young man's positive transformation. Women, desire, and disease are still entangled, and the combination, in this genre, tends to deny the woman subjectivity and instrumentalize her for the benefit of the man's narrative. There is something sexy about a dying woman, something about

the illness replacing any real personality that is romanticized and fetishized. The ways our society imagines, represents, and pathologizes female desire have far-reaching implications and deep-seeded roots. Love, like gender, is a social construct that has changed over time. At the risk of sounding unromantic, there is much to be gained from deconstructing and contextualizing love.

Additionally, female lovesickness is a tool with which writers explore issues of authorship and reception, looking at the vulnerability of language to interpretation. If female sexuality is a kind of contagion, so is female textuality, with reading and writing likewise pathologized. This dissertation has primarily considered what the analogy between female body and text means for the lovesick woman, but the analogy also has significance for the writer making it. Does this analogy implicitly feminize the author, as well as the text? Do we father books, or mother them? What kind of intercourse generates a text, and how is desire involved in textual production and interpretation? If textual creation is tinged with desire, is it also, then, tinged with disease—or is that only the case for female authors, for texts addressed to female readers, for feminine genres? In addition to opening up questions about writing as creation, disorder/madness, and an erotic, gendered act, the association between lovesick women and text raises questions about the ambiguity inherent in both writing and medicine. Lovesickness evokes the *pharmakon:* the cause is also the cure, and the illness bears a strong association with writing and interpretation. The *pharmakon* is gendered and associated with sex and desire in tangled, compelling ways, inviting questions about how sexual difference may inflect written communication and how disease functions to destabilize or reorient meaning. I suggest that writers of both genders are anxious about control over their text, anxious about their own status, anxious about how desire and disease play into the act of writing. Like the women they write

about, they desire speech, and they desire for that speech to reach their audience; but like the women they write about, they run the risk of being misread, misinterpreted, and dismissed—perhaps particularly dismissed on gendered terms. Think of the claims leveled against Ariosto's *Furioso*: too disordered; too chaotic and digressive; too emotional, lacking rational unity; malformed; inferior. Are these not the same complaints leveled against the female body? Authors use the lovesick female body to explore the gendered constraints upon writers, as well as to push back against these constraints, inviting desire, disease, and disorder into prominent positions in their texts.

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