

Kosinski's introduction (16, note 1). Here, Christ appears to the visionary holding a book. On the clasps are written words which cause Margaret to meditate on Christ's passion. "The inside of this book was like a beautiful mirror, [...] In this book appeared a delightful place, so large that the entire world seems small by comparison" (43-44). This book showed the glorious body of Christ, a body "so noble that one could see oneself reflected in it, more clearly than in a mirror" (45).

The life of Beatrice of Ornacieux, for whom Margaret may have been novice-mistress in the charterhouse of Parmenie, is another type of mirror, the account of the spiritual sufferings and the graces and miracles of an exemplary holy woman. Yet, even here, there is an emphasis on the special validity of a woman telling her own story. After a description of Beatrice's miraculous escape from a locked room in order to join her sisters at matins, the narrative ends:

When the vicar and the prioress arrived they ordered her in the name of the obedience she owed them to confess how she had gotten out. And she confessed everything exactly the way it has just been told (62).

The letters (actually selections from her letters) manifest the changes of voice described above, and include other accounts of visions, some of them erotically passionate. The collection ends with three stories about Margaret obviously added after her death; here another person is describing her life as a mirror. Every one of these texts speaks to the issues raised by Lomperis; what is more, they raise crucial questions about scholarly definitions of literature and history.

The series in which this book appears, The Focus Library of Medieval Women, is dedicated to publishing a variety of medieval women's literary works. Christine de Pizan's "Letter of Othea to Hector" was also published this year, and works by Bridget of Sweden, Hrosvit of Gandersheim, and a collection of fourteenth-century German convent literature are projected between now and 1992. These will join the already-published collections by Elizabeth Petroff, Katharina Wilson, and Peter Dronke as invaluable resources for teaching and scholarship. It will be a gift to feminist scholarship in general if they receive the attention they deserve as examples of medieval women's literature.

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Mary F. Wack, Lovesickness in the Middle Ages. The 'Viaticum' and its Commentaries. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990.

This study of medieval medical views of lovesickness stemming from Constantine the African's chapter on love in his eleventh-century translation/paraphrase of Ibn al-Jazzar's Zad al-musafir into Latin (Viaticum), and the ensuing commentary tradition, is, especially in two major respects, truly exemplary. First, because of its interdisciplinarity, and second, because it is based upon painstaking manuscript research. Part Two (179-265) offers annotated working editions of Constantine's chapter in the Viaticum and the commentaries on it by Gerard of Berry (c. 1200, Paris), Egidius (Giles of Portugal? c. 1220), Peter of Spain (later Pope John XXI, in two versions, c. 1250) and the physician, Bona Fortuna (c. 1300-1320, Montpellier?). Part One (3-176) consists of eight interpretative chapters: the first, on the background of passionate love in antique and early

medieval medical, literary and religious sources, and the last, an attempt to situate medical thought on lovesickness within the social context of the late Middle Ages, framing six chapters, each of which analyses an individual medical text. Arranged chronologically, these chapters trace a particular example of the reception of Arabic medicine by Western European university culture throughout the thirteenth century. The two versions of the commentary by Peter of Spain occupy two chapters, since it is here, for the first time, that gender is overtly introduced into medieval medical discourse on love.

The designation “heroic” love (amor heros or hereos), which may have originated as a scribal corruption of Constantine’s eros, eriosis, entered the linguistic mainstream with Johannes Afflacijs’ (?) Liber de heros morbo (c. 1100) and, by 1200, became semantically entrenched with Gerard of Berry’s specification: “heroes dicuntur uiri nobiles qui propter diuicias et molliem uite tali pocius laborant passione” (202). Sufferers of the disease are thus primarily noble men. From this point on (Gerard’s commentary was composed in the same milieu as Andreas Capellanus’ De amore, and Ovidian lore, by this time, also entered the scientific discussion of love), medical discourse on lovesickness overlaps with the non-medical courtly love tradition.

With class and gender carefully circumscribed, a subtext begins to emerge, which has to do with the exclusion of women, except as instruments in cures (the prescription of therapeutic intercourse, put most crassly: “plasters or women are applied to the testicles,” 95) or as a metaphor for pathology. The striking maleness of the medieval medical tradition, only partially attributable to the androcentrism of Constantine’s text, distinguishes it from literary and religious accounts or even visual representations of love languor which are equally distributed between the sexes, as well as from pre-Salernitan and Renaissance medical descriptions of the disease in which women figure as subjects.

Following Constantine, medieval commentators divide their descriptions of the disease of love into causes, signs or symptoms, and cures. Causality is discussed in terms of which body part is most affected by love, the brain (due to a malfunction of the estimative faculty resulting in an “overestimation” of the beloved), the heart (in the Aristotelian view, the seat of emotion), or the testicles (as the locus of sexual desire). Constantine’s chapter on love attributed the disease to factors both psychological (the sight of beauty) and physiological (the need to expel excess humors). This book offers a brilliant analysis of how, using hierarchical metaphors and the language of male governance to describe the interaction of mental faculties (58-59), medieval authors were concerned to localize lovesickness, as a disease of aristocratic males, in the brain, that is, at the top of physical, social, and sexual hierarchies. The homology between the hierarchy of internal body parts and the external social order, moreover, may explain the “descent” from brain to uterus in the transformation from “heroic” malady to hysterical suffocation (123). “Overestimation” of the beloved corresponds to the idealization of the female and the inversion of gender and social roles familiar from the literary topos of courtly love service, subjugation to eros entailing social abasement (72-73).

The larger question of gender and the social construction of disease also informs descriptions of the signs of love. In addition to physical symptoms, such as dessication, jaundiced appearance, and sleeplessness, are changes in behavior which feminize (and infantilize) the lover: mood swings, passivity and speech loss, signifying a lack of

rationality and control and the inability to participate in adult male social discourse (63-65). A third category, nervous disorders of the pulse and breathing which occur when the beloved is mentioned (including Galen's famous diagnosis of lovesickness in a wealthy Roman's wife by the "pulse test" which revealed her secret passion for the dancer Pylades — at the same time the first diagnosis of psychosomatic illness), remained absent from medical writing until the later thirteenth century (135-36).

Cures, accordingly, — baths, good food, wine, therapeutic intercourse, music and poetry, sports, travel, business affairs and litigation — are calculated to restore the body and distract the mind (xii). A good deal of debate centers around the efficacy of wine and song to provide solace or cause further depression. Most authors favor the contemplation or company of other beautiful women over vilification of the beloved (a "talking cure" as old as Ovid, which, as the author puts it "easily became a lightening rod for clerical misogyny," 70) as a means of correcting the error in the estimative faculty. As an instance of divergence in medical and moral-theological opinion, the recommendation of therapeutic intercourse for lovesick men and for sexually unfulfilled women deserves further study. What appears to be male exploitation of women in the clerical context of university medical education, may constitute a vindication of female sexuality in other settings, for example, in other types of medical writing or in literary or legal sources.

Thus Peter of Spain's concern to establish the exact extent of female sexual pleasure ("The Measure of Pleasure: Peter of Spain on Men, Women, and Lovesickness"), fascinating in itself as an example of scholastic medicine's attempt to come to terms with female eroticism, can be explained as an effort to rationalize the absence of women as sufferers of the "noble passion" rather than either as reflective of medical practice involving female patients or, the opposite extreme, as merely the result of scholastic logic's tendency to generate its own topics (122). Here, as in the final chapter on recreating a context for the lover's malady, it is essential to heed the author's own caveat (145, 148): because of the textuality of a tradition oriented towards theory and authority (university teaching) and the dearth of actual evidence about medical practice, it is extremely problematic to draw conclusions from texts about clinical reality. With Bona Fortuna's instructions to the physician and anecdotes from personal experience, however, we do see the development of passionate love from literary fantasy to social behavior (146).

A final, more speculative, chapter contextualizes the medieval tradition socially and psychologically in Freudian terms as the working through of collective anxieties (ambivalence towards the mother and a class-specific fear of female revenge) in masculine university discourse (itself a means of asserting mastery and control over the unruly feminine other). The argument is compelling, yet it is hard to see how, if lovesickness is primarily (not exclusively) a male malady ("Gender and Lovesickness"), we can interpret it in a Freudian manner as hatred of the female object/mother. And given this interpretation, how can we explain the appropriation of lovesickness for female literary figures and by female mystics? These and other important questions which go beyond the scope of this book are raised in a final section on women and lovesickness.

The book bogs down at certain points, as the author herself concedes, but the fault

lies in the nature of scholastic medicine: "such dialectic acrobatics may have tested the extent to which the play of logic usefully enhanced medical discussion" (97). In reaching beyond the confines of a single discipline and beyond the literary canon to uncover primary textual evidence, Mary Wack's study of medieval lovesickness stands as a model for future research on gender and culture in the Middle Ages.

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Mary Erler and Maryanne Kowaleski, editors, Women and Power in the Middle Ages. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1988

This collection of essays, many originally presented at a Fordham Center for Medieval Studies Conference in 1985, explores a wide range of women's activities in the Middle Ages. The authors consider women appearing in rural courts, disappearing from rolls of citizens, sealing documents, running households, brokering patronage, loving lovers (and even husbands), writing stories, and creating books. In evaluating these varied endeavors, the authors attempt to formulate definitions of power more expansive (and ultimately inclusive) than the traditional equation of power with public authority. The result is a collection which contributes much to our knowledge of women in the Middle Ages and raises numerous significant issues for reflection and further research.

The best of these essays focus on changes in women's access to power. Martha Howell's study of citizenship lists in northern European towns in the late Middle Ages is a good example. From changes in the number of women enrolled and a comparison of enrollment rates in different towns, Howell charts the emergence of a new definition of citizenship of profound significance for women and for the entire subsequent political development of the West. Jane Tibbetts Schulenburg, in another fine contribution, surveys changes in the number and type of female saints over the entire Middle Ages and connects them to increased centralized authority and the more circumscribed role of aristocratic families in the church. These essays and others in the collection contribute to a vital reexamination of the development of order and institutions in medieval Europe. Significant new works, such as R. I. Moore's The Formation of a Persecuting Society, underscore the need to understand more fully how some people's power became institutionalized and legitimized in western society at the expense of that of others. While these essays contribute to this broad and ongoing reevaluation of medieval history, they also suggest several problems which demand greater attention.

The first is the dichotomy of "public" versus "private" spheres. Despite fleeting acknowledgments of the inadequacy and difficulties of employing this division in the Middle Ages, authors in this volume frequently resort to it. Their difficulties and unease at times in doing so suggest that the dichotomy itself should become a focus of research and reflection. How were public and private understood and defined over the Middle Ages? Why do some activities, like penance, become more "private" and others, like law, become "public"? The household seems a fruitful point of departure for feminists. How did its definition and roles change over the Middle Ages? In what ways, roles,