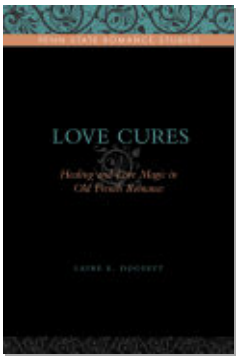
5. Love and Medicine in the Roman de Silence



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LOVE AND MEDICINE IN THE *ROMAN DE SILENCE*

THE COMPLEX SET OF *Tristan* materials analyzed in the previous two chapters continues to play a role in the works that come after them. The nature and import of that role will be the subject of the two chapters to come. We have seen that although the versions of Thomas and Béroul and the *Folie Tristan de Berne* differ in emphasis, they all reflect the domain of empirical practice in the high Middle Ages. For their portrayal of empirical practitioners and their practices, the authors depend for their inspiration hardly at all on previous literary works and very heavily on the world around them. Thomas, in keeping with his rational approach overall, focuses on the rational aspects of empirical practice, showing the specifics of healing, wound management, and the effects of a love potion. At the moment when Tristan and Iseut recognize their love, Thomas plays on the similarity between feelings of being in love and the effects of certain plant-derived substances that promote euphoria and well-being. Béroul's stance on interpretative freedom applies as well to the claims about amatory magic in his work: Béroul's *Roman de Tristan* thereby reflects the ambiguity inherent in empirical practice. Ambiguity is pushed even further in the *Folie Tristan de Berne*, in which Tristan, in a moment of doubt, questions Iseut's love and accuses her of using love magic against him. Although Iseut succeeds in convincing Tristan that she loves him as much as ever, the *Folie* highlights the mistrust that can be bred by an empiric's exclusive knowledge. One of the biggest barriers to recognizing Iseut's capacity as an empiric has been the mistaken assumptions of modern critics about the scope and nature of empirical practices and practitioners in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. We saw this with respect to Thessala of *Cligés* in Chapter 2. Once Thessala's position vis-à-vis empirical practitioners of her time is established, we can see her ability to apply empirical practice to undermine the marriage politics at court.

In the previous two chapters we saw how the beloved who is also an accomplished empiric subtly influences the image of the beloved. In the

work of Thomas, the healing skills of the empiric accrete to the beloved and may appear to result simply from the beloved's salubrious presence, while in Béroul and the *Folie Tristan de Berne* the ambiguity of empirical practice can raise questions and even foster resentment.

The *Roman de Silence* further shows how empirical practice can be recast in the service of love. This later thirteenth-century[1] romance has occasioned considerable critical attention in the last two decades, much of it centered on the character of Silence, a daughter born to Cador and Euphemie during a time when King Ebain of England had decreed that no daughter could inherit property. Silence's parents conspire to raise her as a boy in order to circumvent the inheritance problem. Silence, who excels at the various skills that young aristocratic boys are usually taught, experiences a happy childhood. A crisis occurs in adolescence, however, which the reader hears articulated in an argument between Nature, who made Silence skillfully with the finest ingredients available for beautiful women, and Nurture, who defends Silence's ability to learn and perform courtly skills. Nurture, with the help of Reason, wins this early battle. Only after Silence gains recognition as a jongleur and a knight is she revealed to be a woman by Merlin at King Ebain's court. Not surprisingly, the work has inspired considerable criticism, much of it focusing on questions related to gender and sexual identity.[2]

1. In the introduction to his edition, Lewis Thorpe offers the last half of the thirteenth century as the admittedly imprecise date for the work. See his introduction to *Le Roman de Silence: A Thirteenth-Century Arthurian Verse-Romance by Heldris de Cornuälle* (Cambridge: W. Heffer and Sons, 1972), 10.

2. These include: the personification of nature as an anti-misogynist element in Suzanne Conklin Akbari, "Nature's Forge Recast in the *Roman de Silence*," in *Literary Aspects of Courtly Culture: Selected Papers From the Seventh Triennial Congress of the International Courtly Literature Society*, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, 27 July–1 August 1992, ed. Donald Maddox and Sara Sturm-Maddox (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1992); the anti-misogyny of the work in Kathleen J. Brahney, "When *Silence* Was Golden: Female Personae in the *Roman de Silence*," in *The Spirit of the Court,* ed. Burgess and Taylor; the poem's consideration of gender as socially constructed but the ultimate closing off of that possibility in Simon Gaunt, "The Significance of Silence," *Paragraph: A Journal of Modern Critical Theory* 13, 2 (July 1990): 202–16; and the potential for women readers to question the misogynist pronouncements of the text in Krueger, 101–27. Sharon Kinoshita describes gender's relationship to the feudal aristocracy as the romance's euphemization of the feudal politics of lineage. See Kinoshita, "Heldris de Cornuälle's *Roman de Silence* and the Feudal Politics of Lineage," *PMLA* 110 (1995): 397–409). Gender as a force in forming and perpetuating the dynastic marriage system of feudal aristocracy is found in McCracken, "'The Boy Who Was a Girl': Reading Gender in the *Roman de Silence*," *The Romanic Review* 85, 4 (1995): 517–36. Other readings of gender include the instability of Silence's name and identity, which challenge the gender-signifying system and correspond to the ambiguity of the writing process in Erin F. Labbie, "The Specular Image of the Gender-Neutral Name: Naming Silence in *Le Roman de Silence*," *Arthuriana* 7, 2 (1997): 63–77; the ability of queer theory to interrogate the work's participation in or challenge to hegemonic gender norms in

Other issues scholars have addressed include the poem's approach to language, the role of Merlin, the work's relationship to generic conventions, the implications of the work's codicological context, the moral implications of the episodes of reward and punishment, and the manuscript's potential to call into question modern text editing practices.[3] The *Roman de Silence*, like the Tristan legend, is set in England, though the work's language is Picard.[4] Although we know nothing of the author from other sources, the first editor of the work, Lewis

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Elizabeth A. Waters, "The Third Path: Alternative Sex, Alternative Gender in *Le Roman de Silence*," *Arthuriana* 7, 2 (1997): 33–45; the ambiguous status of language as it relates to sexual identity in Michèle Perret, "Travesties et Transsexuelles: Yde, Silence, Grisandole, Blanchandine," *Romance Notes* 25, 3 (1985): 328–40; the work's depiction of heterosexual and homosexual desire in Kathleen M. Blumreich, "Lesbian Desire in the Old French *Roman de Silence*," *Arthuriana* 7, 2 (1997) 47–62; the modernity of the issues confronted in the work in Edward J. Gallagher, "The Modernity of *Le Roman de Silence*," *The University of Dayton Review* 21, 3 (1992): 31–39; the instability of the medieval gender system as evidenced by characters other than Silence in Lorraine Kochanske Stock, "The Importance of Being Gender 'Stable': Masculinity and Feminine Empowerment in *Le Roman de Silence*," *Arthuriana* 7, 2 (1997): 7–34; and the possibilities of reading ideology in a text that suggests Silence's queerness in Robert L. A. Clark, "Queering Nature and Naturalizing Class in the Roman de Silence," *Arthuriana* 12, 1 (2002): 50–63.

3. A number of critics have discussed language. For Peter Allen, the work contains fundamental ambiguities of words and gender. See Allen, "The Ambiguity of Silence: Gender, Writing, and *Le Roman de Silence*," in *Sign, Sentence, Discourse: Language in Medieval Thought and Literature*, ed. Julian N. Wasserman and Lois Roney (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1989). Suzanne Kocher focuses on the ambiguity in rhymes with *apieler* and *celer.* See Kocher, "Undermining Oppositionality: *The Romance of Silence*'s Nature/Nurture Debate Complicated by the Rhymes of *Apieler* (to Name) and *Celer* (to Conceal)," *Romance Languages Annual* 7 (1995): 95–99. Loren Ringer describes the polyvalence of many words in the text in "Exchange, Identity, and Transvestism in *Le roman de Silence*," *Dalhousie French Studies* 28 (1994): 3–13. R. Howard Bloch argues that it illuminates medieval poetics and the role of the trouvère especially as they pertain to silence, language, and desire in "Silence and Holes: The *Roman de Silence* and the Art of the Trouvère," *Yale French Studies* 70 (1986): 81–99. Kate Mason Cooper reads the work as a commentary on women's role in poetry in "Elle and L: Sexualized Textuality in *Le Roman de Silence*," *Romance Notes* 25, 3 (1985): 341–60.

On Merlin, see Gloria Thomas Gilmore, "*Le Roman de Silence:* Allegory in Ruin or Womb of Irony?" *Arthuriana* 7, 2 (1997): 111–23; Sarah Roche-Mahdi, "A Reappraisal of the Role of Merlin in the *Roman de Silence*," *Arthuriana* 12, 1 (2002): 6–21; and Lorraine Kochanske Stock, "Civilization and Its Discontents: Cultural Primativism and Merlin as a Wild Man in the *Roman de Silence*," *Arthuriana* 12, 1 (2002): 22–36.

Caroline A. Jewers treats generic conventions in "The Non-Existent Knight: Adventure in *Le Roman de Silence*," *Arthuriana* 7, 2 (1997): 87–110. For codicology, see Keith Busby, *Codex and Context: Reading Old French Verse Narrative in Manuscript*, vol. 1 (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2002), 415–20. Thanks to Professor Busby for allowing me to see this work in manuscript form. Reward and punishment is discussed by Heather Lloyd, "The Triumph of Pragmatism: Reward and Punishment in *Le roman de Silence*," in *Rewards and Punishments in the Arthurian Romances and Lyric Poetry of Mediaeval France: Essays Presented to Kenneth Varty on the Occasion of His Sixtieth Birthday*, ed. Peter V. Davies and Angus J. Kennedy (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1987). On text editing, see Regina F. Psaki, "The Modern Editor and Medieval 'Misogyny': Text Editing and *Le Roman de Silence*," *Arthuriana* 7, 2 (1997): 78–86.

4. Thorpe, 10.

Thorpe, suggests that Heldris lived in northern France near what is today the Franco-Belgian border.[5] A small number of critics have entertained the notion that Heldris was a woman, but so far this argument is only speculative.[6]

The first third of the *Roman de Silence* has garnered somewhat less attention than the gender-bending activities Silence carries out in the remainder of the work. The narrative follows a pattern, also seen in works such as *Cligés* and the *Roman de Tristan*, in which the first third of the narrative relates the story of the hero's (or heroine's, in Silence's case) parents. As we saw in the Tristan narrative, Blanchefleur conceives Tristan out of wedlock. She leaves Cornwall with Rivalin but dies at sea when Tristan is born. The baby is christened "Tristan" from the French *triste* or "sad" to reflect these unhappy beginnings. This first third of the work hints at the sadness, transgressive love, and the role of sea travel in the remainder of the story. The first third of *Cligés* similarly relates the love story of Alexandre and Soredamor, who will become the parents of Cligés. A tripartite structure in which the opening section anticipates important themes and motifs in the rest of the work is common in Old French verse romance. The opening section of the *Roman de Silence* follows this structure by relating the story of Silence's father and mother, Cador and Euphemie.[7] This part of the text reaches forward in that it has consequences for the remainder of the narrative, but it also reaches backwards because it borrows and retransmits romance elements, including but not limited to those used in the depiction of love.

We saw in the introduction that a complex web of intertextual relationships is considered inherent to romance composition. A number of critics have pointed out that the *Roman de Silence* was influenced by both Latin and vernacular works or traditions.[8] In the episodes of Cador and Euphemie, critics

5. Thorpe, 17.

6. Akbari, 45; Stock, "Importance of Being Gender 'Stable,'" 20; Sarah Roche-Mahdi, "Introduction," in *Silence: A Thirteenth-Century French Romance* (East Lansing, Mich.: Colleagues Press, 1992), xi.

7. Critics have noted the conventional treatment of Cador and Euphemie's love (Ringer, 7; Lloyd, 78).

8. Thorpe declares that the final episodes involving Merlin were inspired by *L'Estoire Merlin* (28–30) but says we cannot expect to find much other than brief mentions of other works (15, 32). Roche-Mahdi argues for influence by 'Grisandole' in "A Reappraisal of the Role of Merlin in the *Roman de Silence*," *Arthuriana* 12, 1 (2002): 6–21. Roche-Mahdi also points out a clear debt to the *Roman de Sept Sages* and to three main female characters of the *Roman d'Enéas*, Dido, Lavine, and Camille, who serve as models respectively for Eufeme, Euphemie, and Silence. See her introduction in Heldris de Cornüalle, *Roman de Silence* (xiv–xvi; xiii). Psaki concurs with Thorpe that aside from *L'Estoire*, the sources are "general and diffuse." See her introduction to Heldris de Cornuälle, *Le Roman de Silence*, trans. Regina Psaki (New York: Garland, 1991), xxxv. Lynne Dahman describes the

have pointed out the role of the Tristan legend and Ovidian love casuistry and the debt to *Cligés*.[9] Other critics have shown that *Cligés* itself is dependent upon the *Roman d'Enéas* for its portrayal of love;[10] the *Roman de Silence* may thus owe a debt to only the *Roman d'Enéas* or to both the *Roman d'Enéas* and *Cligés*. A line of influence runs from the Ovidian texts to the *Roman d'Enéas* (which although inspired for its plot by Virgil's *Aeneid* relies heavily on Ovid for its presentation of love,)[11] through *Cligés*, and into the *Roman de Silence*. While it is clear that Heldris knew some if not all of these antecedent works, I argue that in matters pertaining to healing and love the author adds a new dimension to the conventions. This dimension comes both from empirical practice and from its portrayal in the *Tristan* works. Thus for the *Roman de Silence* my argument differs somewhat from that for *Cligés* or the *Tristan* romances. For the earlier works, I sought to show that the portrayal of empirics' actions draws heavily on practices of the time. For the *Roman de Silence*, I argue that empirical practice in the text is heavily influenced by the *Tristan* materials, but that it also retains a strong connection to actual practices of the time.

The *Roman de Silence* furthers the image of a female empiric who is also the beloved, and in the process it goes so far as to establish the physical body of the beloved as medicine. The text staunchly and unequivocally insists on Euphemie's knowledge and skills as an empiric in line with what we have seen in *Cligés* and the *Tristan* materials. It does not hesitate, however, to press that role into service to elaborate the image of the beloved. The appropriation of healing capacities to bolster the image of the beloved has the potential to conflate healing with the beloved's solace and in so

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relationship between *Silence* and hagiography in "Sacred Romance: Silence and the Hagiographical Tradition," *Arthuriana* 12, 1 (2002): 113–22. Lorraine Kochanske Stock discusses intertextuality in "Civilization and Its Discontents: Cultural Primitivism and Merlin as a Wild Man in the *Roman de Silence*," *Arthuriana* 12, 1 (2002): 32–33, and in "Arms and the (Wo)man in Medieval Romance: The Gendered Arming of Female Warriors in the *Roman d'Enéas* and Heldris's *Roman de Silence*," *Arthuriana* 5, 4 (1995): 56–83.

9. Lloyd, 78. On *Cligés*, see Kinoshita, "Heldris de Cornuälle's *Roman de Silence*," 407 n. 10. Kinoshita also notes that Chrétien himself uses Ovid heavily in *Cligés.*

10. See, for example, Alexandre Micha, "*Enéas* et *Cligés,*" 237–43; Gustave Cohen, *Un Grand Romancier,* 43–61, 77–78, 176, 213; Blumenfeld-Kosinski.

11. On Vergil, see John A. Yunck, who proposes that the *Enéas* poet "was working with a manuscript of Vergil before him" but that the adapter transforms episodes "especially in *sen*, or theme, or attitude" to fit the twelfth-century French public. See his introduction to *Eneas: A Twelfth-Century Romance*, trans. and intro. John A. Yunck (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974), 7. For a summary of the arguments, see Raymond J. Cormier, "The Present State of Studies on the *Roman d'Enéas*," *Cultura Neolatina* 31 (1971): 7–39. Ovid is treated by Yunck, 81 and Faral, 125–54. Erich Auerbach argues that although the elements in the Enéas poet's description of love derive from Ovid, the style is not at all Ovidian (214–15).

doing to call into question the capacities of female empirics. Unlike the *Tristan* story, the *Roman de Silence* applies no love potion to catalyze Cador and Euphemie's love, who come to realize their feelings without a special draught. However, I will show that the vocabulary of potion/poison and drunkenness that suffuses the description of Cador and Euphemie's love aligns specifically with that of Tristan and Iseut. Despite the absence of the physical potion, the conception of love in the Tristan materials has gained ascendance to the point that the potion no longer needs to be materially present to shape the representation of love. This narrative can dispense with the potion's ability to uncover latent love because there are no social strictures that prevent the marriage of Cador and Euphemie. The *Roman de Silence* pushes associations between the representations of love and empirical practice further than we have seen in the works that inspired it, and in so doing it forges an even stronger link between the two domains. Finally, as in the other works considered, the *Roman de Silence* addresses concerns of courtly marriage through the depiction of three marriages. The work implies that couples who have reason to be loyal to each other have more potential to contribute to a stable court than those who lack loyalty.

Sickness and Healing in the *Roman de Silence*

The *Roman de Silence* appropriates from the *Tristan* legend the dragon-slaying episode as a means for the hero to gain recognition. We first meet Cador just after a fierce dragon has attacked a group of King Ebain's men as they ride through the forest to Winchester. The dragon immediately burns to death some thirty men and eats their bodies. Dismayed, King Ebain offers to the knight who can defeat the dragon a county and the woman he chooses in marriage. After Cador quickly rises to the challenge and slays the dragon, a feast is given at Winchester to celebrate. However, that night after the meal, Cador falls ill. He is in pain and changes color because of the effects of the dragon's venom (579–82). The next morning, King Ebain finds Cador looking pale and sickly and acts immediately. He summons Euphemie because "El païs n'a si sage mie," (594) ("She was the wisest doctor in the land").[12] We have previously seen this level of knowledge attributed to Iseut's mother and Iseut herself in the different Tristan materials. Gender seems to play no role in this

12. All quotations and translations of this text from Heldris de Cornüalle, *Silence: A Thirteenth-Century French Romance*, ed. and trans. Roche-Mahdi.

designation, for as with Queen Iseut of Ireland, Euphemie is not recognized as the best female doctor in the land but simply as the best doctor.

Further, Euphemie is named a *mire*, a title which is given to healers in general. We have seen it applied to Iseut, Iseut's mother, the unsuccessful doctors in Tristan, Thessala, the Salernitan physicians, and Iapus of the *Roman d'Enéas*. In keeping with the standard practices of the high Middle Ages, however, it does not indicate that the healer trained in a medical school.[13] We recall from earlier discussions that neither a degree nor formal training is the sine qua non of medical practice in the high Middle Ages. In fact, Edward Kealey has found evidence of a female healer named Euphemie practicing in England around the time of composition of the *Roman de Silence*.[14] While geographical distance and the historical Euphemie's role as head of a religious house suggest that the empiric Euphemie was likely not the inspiration for the romance character, the resemblance is nonetheless striking.

That the *Roman de Silence* makes no issue of a woman practicing medicine seems all the more important because of this text's bald pronouncements on women's and men's roles. When Silence reaches adolescence she witnesses a debate between Nature, Nurture, and Reason. As a youth, Silence has already become accomplished at the skills such as wrestling, jousting, and fencing that a boy must learn to be successful at court (2494–96). Around this time in Silence's life, Nature appears and informs him that all of his actions contravene Nature's intentions, saying that he—the text uses masculine pronouns for Silence in this section—was made for beauty and that this beauty cannot be appreciated when Silence constantly runs around outside practicing sports. Nature tells Silence "Va en la cambre a la costure" (2528) ("Go to a chamber and learn to sew!"). A gender ideology in which boys learn jousting and wrestling and girls learn sewing is explicitly stated in the *Roman de Silence*, yet no claim is ever made that healing falls outside

13. Thus I disagree with Lasry's contention that Euphemie's medical practice gives her the power and status equal to that of a man (228). For an argument that places more weight on the use of terms to designate practitioners, see Peggy McCracken, "Women and Medicine."

14. Edward J. Kealey, *Medieval Medicus: A Social History of Anglo-Norman Medicine* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981) 191 n. 10. Kealey points out that Muriel Joy Hughes provides the wrong dates for Euphemia (*Women Healers*, 117) and that the correct ones are given in Dom David Knowles, C. N. L. Brooke and Vera C. M. London, *The Heads of Religious Houses: England and Wales, 940–1216* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 222. Critics have commented on Euphemie's name as it relates to King Ebain's evil wife, Eufeme. See Allen, "The Ambiguity of Silence," 100; Jewers, 99; Bloch, "Silence and Holes," 96; Roche-Mahdi, xx, and L. K. Stock, "Importance of Being Gender 'Stable,'" 20. Lasry suggests that Euphemie cannot be identified with a real person (231).

women's prescribed roles. To the contrary, the text suggests an affinity between women and healing.

As with the other texts we have examined, the *Roman de Silence* only hints at how Euphemie might have acquired her healing knowledge. In a general description of her worthiness, she is praised for her lineage, her beauty, and the fact that "Des.vii. ars ert moult bien aprise" (403) ("She was well versed in the seven arts"). The seven arts comprised the liberal arts curriculum, combining subjects from the *trivium* and the *quadrivium*. It would have been unusual, but certainly not impossible, for a girl to have studied these either in a convent or with a tutor. Convent subjects included the *trivium*, music, and in some cases basic medical training.[15] Yet the *Roman de Silence* supplies no details of Euphemie's studies and does not even mention that she studied medicine. While it is true that a university student would have to complete a liberal arts curriculum before taking up the study of medicine, theology or law,[16] as a woman, Euphemie would have been barred from all university study.

Although the *Roman de Silence* is dated a full century after the works we have previously considered, and although by the latter part of the thirteenth century, medical study was established in northern France (formal organization of medical study at the University of Paris exists from 1231) and Norman England,[17] we recall from the background chapter that medicine continued to be learned in informal settings through apprenticeship-like relationships throughout the Middle Ages and beyond. In actual practice, learned medicine and empirical medicine shared many of the same techniques.

Around the time of the composition of the *Roman de Silence*, the faculty of medicine at the University of Paris was just beginning its long campaign to attempt to limit practice of medicine in Paris and the vicinity by anyone who lacked a degree in medicine.[18] Records from the University of Paris

15. Ferrante, "The Education of Women," 12. We recall Hildegard of Bingen's medical acumen as demonstrated by her writings on natural sciences and herbal simples, although whether she practiced or not is debated (Stoudt, 20). In addition, Abelard instructs Heloise that there should be an Infirmarian who has knowledge of medicaments and a woman who has knowledge of blood-letting at the convent to treat the women (Stoudt, 18). For the original quotation, see *The Letters of Abelard and Heloise*, trans. Betty Radice (New York: Penguin, 1974), 215.

16. Kibre and Siraisi, 126.

17. For Paris, see Bullough, *Development of Medicine,* 69. On Norman England, Bullough argues that medical education was never particularly important in Oxford and so documentation is scarce. He finds men who know medicine associated with the university as early as the late twelfth century and in increasing numbers in the thirteenth. See his "Medical Study at Mediaeval Oxford," *Speculum* 36, 4 (1961): 600–612.

18. In the kingdom of Sicily there were laws requiring examination in order to practice as early as the twelfth century (Siraisi, *Medieval and Early Renaissance Medicine,* 17–18). The

reveal that in 1271, the faculty of medicine under the leadership of Dean J. de Racheroles declared that "ne aliquis Judeus vel Judea in aliquam personam fidei catholice cyrurgice seu medicinaliter operari presumat" ("no Jew or Jewess presume to operate surgically or medically on any person of catholic faith").[19] Then the faculty noted a problem with "quidam manualiter operantes," ("certain manual operators")[20] who lack understanding of the causes and reasons of medicines, and thus declared that those without advanced training were endangering their patients. The faculty sought to halt these practitioners in Paris and its surroundings. First it stated that

> firmiter inhibemus ne aliquis cirurgicus seu cyrurgica, apothecarius seu apothecaria, herbarius seu herbaria per juramenta sua limites seu metas sui artificii clam vel palam seu qualitercumque excedere presumat, ita quod cyrurgicus se nullatenus intromittat nisi de manuali practica et ut ad ipsum pertinet; apothecarius autem seu herbarius nisi solum de confectione sua et de administratione solum magistris in medicina facienda vel de quorum licentia constiterit facultati.
>
> [we strictly prohibit that any male or female surgeon, apothecary, or herbalist, by their oaths presume to exceed the limits or bounds of their craft secretly or publicly or in any way whatsoever, so that the surgeon engage only in manual practice and as pertains to it, the apothecary or herbalist only in mixing drugs which are to be administered only by masters in medicine or by their license.][21]

Further, those mentioned should not visit the sick to administer other medicines. Monica Green points out that this statute says nothing against women as practitioners.[22] In fact it suggests that female surgeons, herbalists, and apothecaries are hardly exceptional.

The statute implies that the faculty had previously asserted its authority when it states that "quoddam statutum nostrum dudum factum per predictas

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faculty of medicine at Montpellier sought limits on practice in 1220 (Bullough, *Development of Medicine*, 104).

19. *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis*, vol. 1, ed. H. Denifle (1889; rpt., Brussels: Culture et Civilisation, 1964), 489. The translation is in Thorndike, *University Records,* 83.

20. *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis*, vol. 1, 489; trans. Thorndike, *University Records*, 84.

21. *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis*, vol. 1, 489; trans. Thorndike, *University Records*, 84.

22. "Women's Medical Practice," 448.

litteras officialis videlicet et etiam regalium vallatum seu etiam confirmatum nomine facultatis per juramenta nostra confirmamus" ("[we] confirm a statute of ours made long since, supported by the said letters of the Official and also by royal ones, strengthened and confirmed too in the name of the faculty by our oaths").[23] The editor of these university statues notes that the earlier documents have never been found.[24] For "dudum," Thorndike gives "long since," but the definitions for *dudum* range from "a little while ago" and "not long since" to "some time ago" and "a long while ago."[25] Thorndike's translation therefore obscures the ambiguity of the time relationship in the statute. Pearl Kibre has found evidence of more ambiguity with respect to time in later attempts to limit practitioners. It was not until 1311 and 1322, well after the composition of the *Roman de Silence*, that regulations prohibited those not approved by the medical faculty from practicing medicine in Paris; further, these regulations claimed to have some two centuries of precedence. Kibre notes, however, that, "[b]oth the authenticity and dating of such a statute appear doubtful since so far no text of such a pronouncement seems to have been found."[26] As Kibre suggests, this was the first attempt of many spanning a period of more than three hundred years during which the faculty of the medical school attempted to curb unlicensed practice. Their repeated appeals to kings, popes, and bishops reveal the extent and the futility of their efforts.[27] Moreover, those accused, as in the case of Jacqueline Félicie in 1322, pointed out that many others were practicing in Paris without a license.[28] Thus, although the issue will become increasingly important throughout the fourteenth century, the first stirrings of this controversy near the end of the thirteenth century do not register in the *Roman de Silence*. Moreover, the regulations concern Paris and its environs, while it is believed that *Silence* was composed in northern France near the Belgian border.[29]

Perhaps as a result of the disputes over legitimate practice by the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century, a hierarchy of practitioners based

23. *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis*, vol. 1, 489; trans. Thorndike, *University Records*, 83.

24. *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis*, vol. 1, 490.

25. *Cassell's Latin and English Dictionary*, compiled by D. P. Simpson (New York: Collier Books, Macmillan, 1987), 74.

26. She adds that the term may be a figurative attempt to establish the statute's past. See "The Faculty of Medicine at Paris," 2.

27. Kibre, 7–18.

28. Kibre, 10.

29. Lewis Thorpe, introduction to *Le Roman de Silence*, 17.

on formal training began to assert itself.[30] Yet here again, the *Roman de Silence* appears just before the issue arises and bears no trace of it. Instead, the depiction of Euphemie depends on the depiction of Iseut in the *Tristan* romances and on contemporary empirical practices.

There is, however, one transformation in medical thought in the high Middle Ages that deserves some attention. In the intervening hundred years or so between *Cligés* and *Tristan* on the one hand and the *Roman de Silence* on the other, the content of medical training underwent dynamic changes. There is evidence that medicine as taught in the universities began to veer away from the form practiced in the *Roman de Silence.* We recall Kristeller's assertion that Salernitan medicine of the early twelfth century shows a movement away from practice to theoretical instruction. This split spread across western Europe with the growth of scholasticism. The beginnings of the transformation can be seen when the Salerno school shifts its focus from compiling recipes to writing commentaries on existing works.[31] By the fourteenth century, medical education at Paris focused on disputes and defenses of classic treatises.[32] The stress on theory contributed to the professionalization of medicine.[33] Benjamin Lee Gordon writes, "the best doctor was the one who could quote the greatest number of authorities, especially in the classical languages."[34] As with the question of licensing practitioners, the issues of theory and practice were not yet developed at the time of the *Roman de Silence*, though they would become far more contentious in the half century after the work. By the early fourteenth century, surgeons in Montpellier were disparaged by their physician colleagues because of their empirical approach.[35] This separation was created in part by medical texts, translated from Arabic that arrived in European medical schools during the high Middle Ages that placed a strong emphasis on the theoretical causes of disease.[36] As formal medical study solidified in the thirteenth century, medical masters wanted to change medicine's status from a mechanical art (such as hunting or agriculture) to a science (linked

30. Siraisi, 20.

31. Kristeller, 156–57.

32. Stephen D'Irsay, "The Teaching and Practice of Medicine in the Medieval University of Paris," *Bulletin of the Society of Medical History of Chicago* 4 (1928): 42–43.

33. Bullough, *Development of Medicine*, 81, 110.

34. *Medieval and Renaissance Medicine* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1959), 267.

35. McVaugh, introduction to Arnaldi de Villanova, *Opera Medica Omnia,* vol. 3, *De Amore Heroico, De Dosi Tyriacalium Medicinarum* (Barcelona: University of Barcelona Press, 1985, 68.

36. Danielle Jacquart, "The Introduction of Arabic Medicine into the West: The Question of Etiology," in *Health, Disease, and Healing in Medieval Culture*, ed. Campbell, Hall, and Klausner.

to philosophical inquiry).[37] The speculative status accorded to medicine by its entry into the university would be forfeited if physicians used manual techniques.[38] Despite this new strand of medical thought, the theory/practice divide was not neat and clean, as several writers pointed out the continued value of practical approaches.[39] This same kind of divide occurs in the developing drug theory of learned medicine in the late twelfth century and thirteenth century.[40] Because theory became "so complex as to be unworkable," practical knowledge of herbal applications continued to be transmitted in both oral and written forms throughout the Middle Ages.[41] Even some masters such as Nicholas of Montpellier decried the loss of traditional knowledge in the face of the new theories.[42] Empirical approaches may well have fostered empirics' confidence.[43] Barred from universities, women could claim only the practice side of the developing theory/practice dichotomy.

The *Roman de Silence* focuses on Euphemie's observable actions and therefore emphasizes the practical elements of her healing. She begins by assessing the patient's situation:

> Ses bras manie, son pols taste,
> Puis dist al roi qu'el le garra
> Ainz .xv. jors qu'il n'i parra.
>
> (596–98)

> [She took his arm and felt his pulse,
> then she told the king she would cure him
> within two weeks, so well that there would be no trace of illness.]

37. Danielle Jacquart, "La Pratique dans les oeuvres médicales de la fin du Moyen Age," *Colloque internationale d'histoire de la médecine médiévale*, vol. 1 (Orléans: Société orléanaise d'histoire de la médecine, Centre Jeanne d'Arc, 1985), 57.

38. Vern L. Bullough, "Status and Medieval Medicine," *Journal of Health and Human Behavior* 2 (1961): 206. Surgeons too began to eschew manual work in the fourteenth century. As a result, different kinds of medical practitioners divided further and barber surgeons took over work that surgeons disdained (206–8).

39. Jacquart, "La Pratique," 57–59; Park also points out that the divide was not complete (79).

40. Riddle, "Theory and Practice." In this article, Riddle implies that only men practiced empirical medicine, but there is ample evidence that women did also, as in the Parisian statutes above that suggest that male and female surgeons, apothecaries, and herbalists also engaged in empirical practice.

41. Riddle, "Theory and Practice," 172, 178–81.

42. Riddle, "Theory and Practice," 181.

43. Riddle, "Theory and Practice," 184.

Euphemie's use of the pulse for diagnosis falls within standard medieval healing practices.[44] Only after taking the patient's pulse does Euphemie tell the King how long it will take to cure Cador. Pulse theory, like urine theory, generated complex systems that took up entire treatises, comparing the pulse, for example, to the motion of animals or measuring its meter or other musical qualities.[45] Such arcana probably had little influence on most practitioners, for whom "the act of taking the pulse put the physician in a profound and literal sense in touch with the ebb and flow of vitality in his patient."[46] Euphemie's use of the pulse as a diagnostic indicator therefore places her solidly among empirical practitioners of her time.

Having assessed the patient, Euphemie immediately sets about the healing process by preparing a room:

> Un lit fait faire li mescine
> En une des plus maistres canbres.
> Li pavemens estoit fins lambres:
> Selonc le cambre ert li vergiés
> U li mie et li clergiés
> Ont fait planter erbes moult chieres
> Qui viertus orent de manieres.
>
> (612–18)

> [The girl had a bed prepared
> in one of the very finest chambers.
> The pavement was made of beautiful marble.
> Next to the room was the garden,
> where both physicians and clerics
> had planted many precious herbs
> with many healing virtues.]

Not only is the sickroom comfortable, but it lies close to the herb garden that will furnish plants to help Euphemie heal Cador. The fact that Euphemie will apply herbal lore in the healing process further indicates her status as an empiric. In addition, this quotation reminds us of the diversity of healers

44. Siraisi notes that pulse and urine are "the main diagnostic tools of the medieval physician" (58).

45. Siraisi, 127.

46. Siraisi, 127, 125.

at the time: both doctors (*mires*, the general terms for healers) and clerics planted such gardens because both took on healing responsibilities in the community.[47] Clerics remained active in healing throughout the Middle Ages, but in the early twelfth century the Church limited the activity specifically of monks and non-secular canons.[48] Despite the growth of a class of professional healers in France that began around the later half of the thirteenth century, Wilson points out that in even until the nineteenth century in rural France convents and monasteries were known regionally for having the best supply of medicinal herbs from their gardens.[49]

Documents show that medical gardens existed throughout the Middle Ages.[50] Jerry Stannard has classified medieval gardens, including the kitchen garden for cooking, the medicinal garden (both of which were found at private homes and religious houses),[51] and the patrician garden, which was "the garden associated with prosperous householders, urban and rural alike. Above all else, such a garden was a mixed garden" that included ornamentals.[52] The castle garden of *Silence* could have been either a patrician garden or a strictly medicinal one, depending on what other plants grew there. Stannard notes that "all of the plants for which we possess medieval garden records did, in fact, serve two or more purposes."[53] In any event, the romance clearly states that the garden's function is healing, one that is commonplace in both manors and religious houses. This herbal lore came from sources "empirical, local, folkloric and handed down by oral tradition" and "elements derived from Greek medicine by way of written sources."[54] Plants grown in gardens often substituted for wild plants or oriental exotics, if the latter proved impossible to obtain, but the results were equally efficient.[55]

47. Kibre (3) cites the growth of monastic medical study and treatment from the sixth century onward. See also Park, 76–77.

48. For a careful study of Canon law pertaining to clerical limits on medical study and practice, see Daniel W. Amundsen, "Medieval Canon Law on Medical and Surgical Practice by the Clergy," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 52 (1978): 22–44.

49. On professional healers, see Park, 83; S. Wilson, 365.

50. Opsomer-Halleux, 95–96.

51. Stannard, "Alimentary and Medical Uses," 75–76.

52. Stannard, "Alimentary and Medical Uses," 76.

53. Stannard, "Alimentary and Medical Uses," 74.

54. Siraisi, 141. For corroboration of this position, see Riddle, "Folk Tradition and Folk Medicine," and Stannard, "Alimentary and Medical Uses," 71–74, in which Stannard counts 350 species "known in late Roman times and used for alimentary and/or medicinal purposes [that] were available and known by name by the twelfth century" (74). See also Stannard, "Medieval Herbals," and Stannard, "Magiferous Plants."

55. Opsomer-Halleaux, 105.

After the *Roman de Silence* sets the scene for Euphemie's healing, it tarries little on the process, stating simply that only Euphemie touched him during this time and that she cured him within a week (624–28). Whereas Iseut's mother took as long as forty days to heal Tristan and Thessala needed two weeks to restore Fenice from her disastrous encounter with the Salernitians, Euphemie accomplishes her goal in only a week. Despite a lack of detail for the healing process, Euphemie's recognition in the community, pulse-based diagnosis, implied knowledge of the preparation and application of medicinal herbs, and success in healing establish her competence as an empiric.[56] Both the diagnostic skills and herbal lore coincide with practices that historians of medicine describe as common to the time. As we have seen in the other romances, the poet/narrator avoids a complex technical discussion of healing that would not suit the tone of the narrative and for which, in all likelihood, he lacked the requisite knowledge. Instead the practices included are ones that any non-specialist who observed an empiric at work could relate. Thus in the *Roman de Silence* actual empirical practices of the high Middle Ages directly contribute to the depiction of healing in the work. Further, Euphemie's healing is thoroughly practical at a time when university faculty began to privilege theory in medicine.

Before turning to the episodes in which Cador and Euphemie fall in love, we should consider three ways in which the *Roman de Silence* seems to question Euphemie's healing abilities. First, Euphemie states to Cador that she served him "en liu de mie" (938). Roche-Mahdi translates this "as physician" and not literally as "in place of a doctor." Given the numerous parallels between empirical practices of the time and Euphemie's actions, the relative lack of importance of titles for practitioners at the time, and the reference to Euphemie as the best doctor in the land, this one verse hardly seems to call into question Euphemie's practice.[57] Secondly, some critics have pointed out that once Euphemie marries Cador, she never heals again,[58] which could be construed as a loss of power. While no plot elements involve

56. I see the depiction of Euphemie's empirical skills as part of the *Roman de Silence*'s challenge to the assumption that misogyny was ubiquitous. Regina Psaki discusses other ways in which this romance calls that received notion into question in her introduction to Heldris de Cornuälle, *Le Roman de Silence*, xvi.

57. Cf. McCracken, who reads "*in the place of* a (male) doctor" ("Women in Medicine," 249).

58. For example, Blumreich, 50.

healing after the Cador episode, it is unlikely that the respect Euphemie received for her work would have instantly dissipated. Given the recognition accorded her work and the life-threatening nature of injury and illness, it is reasonable to assume that in actual practice, those in need would continue to seek out an empiric after she married. However, the plot of *Silence* turns in an entirely different direction once Cador and Euphemie marry. With the birth of their daughter, they are depicted only in their role as parents; Euphemie's healing skills no longer play a central role the narrative because she no longer plays a central role. Accordingly, we should not assume that she has lost her ability to heal.

Finally, the *Roman de Silence* elevates Euphemie's healing to a kind of courtly skill such as music, jousting, or conversation. When the narrator introduces Euphemie, he says that she stands above all other women, "N'a feme el regne qui li valle" (398) ("Not a woman in the realm was her equal"), that she is beautiful, her father is an important Duke, and then, as we saw above, that she has studied the seven arts. Presented in this way, Euphemie's education contributes to her image as a very desirable courtly maiden, one whose healing abilities match Cador's bravery and fighting skill. From the earliest mention of the two characters, the narrator insists on their equality: they are both noble and have skills and character traits that set them apart and indicate their suitability for each other. When they finally speak of their love for each other, Cador says: "Altressi tost prendrés baron, / Con, jo, amie, feme a per" (1002–3) ("You shall take a noble husband / precisely when I take a wife who is my peer"). As is often the case in romance, Cador and Euphemie are seen as a fitting couple because of their superlative attributes. Just as Cador demonstrates his worth as a courtly young man when he slays the dragon, Euphemie demonstrates her worth when she heals Cador from the dragon's venom. While almost every romance requires a young man to prove his knightly skill, this skill is only rarely answered by a maiden who proves her healing abilities. Usually women show merit in their looks, courtly behavior, and lineage. Thus Euphemie's healing abilities have the potential to be reduced to an accouterment of a seemly maiden, compared to singing and politeness. Here we should recall that the extensiveness and rarity of her healing skills set those abilities apart from the usual coterie of accomplishments that enable courtly maidens to attract well-matched suitors. Nevertheless, as we will see, the *Roman de Silence* operates a subtle appropriation of Euphemie's healing capacities in order to elaborate the image of the beloved.

Love as a Drug

The narrator of the *Roman de Silence* explicitly attributes Cador's symptoms to the dragon's venom and smoke (581–82). Yet these symptoms come on only after Cador has spent the evening longing for Euphemie and after the narrator's statement that one must suffer in love. At the banquet given to celebrate the slaying of the dragon, Cador talks to Euphemie and feels his heart stir anew. However, Cador does not yet speak of his love. Instead, he must suffer for her (571–74). Their love also shows the paradoxical qualities found in conventional representations of romantic feelings in the Middle Ages: it emboldens Cador sufficiently to kill a fierce dragon, but leaves him too afraid to tell Euphemie that he loves her. In contrast to the dragon, Euphemie is described as not his enemy (550) and ready to give herself to him (553) if he would ask. Cador's love for Euphemie exists before they have sustained contact: when the King announces the reward for slaying the dragon, "Amors tolt Cador l'esmaier" (412) ("Love took Cador's fear from him").

Unlike Tristan and Iseut, Cador and Euphemie do not consume a love potion before they recognize their love. Instead, the poet relies on the Ovidian motif of the arrow:

> Cador se plaint qu'Amors le grieve.
> Amors que fait? .i. dart soslieve
> Qui plus est trençans d'alamiele,
> Si l'a feru sos la mamiele.
> "H[e]las!" fait il, "qui si me point?"
> Et Amors priés del cuer se joint
> Et tant li grieve l'envaïe
> Qu'il gient, et crie: "Aïe! Aïe!"
>
> (679–86)

> [Thus Cador complained that Love was giving him grief.
> And what did Love do? He took up a dart
> sharper than a lance's point,
> and struck Cador just beneath the breast.
> "Alas!" he cried. "What has pierced me so?"
> And then Love pressed him close to the heart,
> and this attack hurt him so
> that he moaned and cried, "Ah! Ah!"]

Cador's two problems, sickness from the dragon's venom and his lovesick feelings, have separate and distinct sources: poison and Love's arrow. Yet despite the separation of the causes, the fact that Cador falls ill only after the banquet, where he speaks with Euphemie and revisits his feelings for her, suggests a parallel between love and some kind of poison/potion (we recall that the two words in English are only one in Old French).

This parallel is reiterated at several points. First there is the severity of the new illness. Although Euphemie succeeds in healing Cador in only eight days, she brings about a new problem:

> Mais ele l'a mis en gregnor,
> Car li alers et li venirs,
> Li maniiers et le tenirs
> Qu'ele i a fait, com a malage,
> A fait l'amor en li plus sage
> . . . . . .
> "E las!" fait il. "Vient cho d'amer,
> Si grans mals et tels amertume?"
>
> (630–635, 640–641)

> [But she had made him worse as well,
> for her comings and goings,
> the way she handled and held him
> when he was sick,
> made love for her grow strong in him . . .
> "Alas!" he said, "Is that what comes of love?
> Such dreadful pain and such bitterness?"][59]

Euphemie's careful ministrations awaken love in Cador, a love that causes him pain. Thus, as Cador says, "Ele m'a fait d'un mal delivre, / Mais d'un moult gregnor voir *m'enivre*" (659–60, emphasis mine) ("She has saved me from one malady, / but now, truly, a much worse one *poisons me*"). Cador's use of the verb *to poison* echoes the effects of the love potion drunk by Tristan and Iseut without actually including the potion itself. The romance thus deploys the Tristanian notion that feelings of love and those of intoxication are very much alike without actually exposing the couple to the vagaries of amatory

59. Roche-Mahdi points out the clear reference to Thomas's puns on mer/amer/amour (323).

magic that we saw in the *Folie Tristan de Berne,* in which the ambiguity of those practices led to Tristan's belief that their love and suffering were not equally shared.

Cador insists further on the potion-like effects of love when he says that he is either *drunk* or gone mad—"Car *ivres* sui et esmaris" (661, emphasis mine)—since he continues to suffer despite having been healed. Euphemie too applies the metaphor of poison to describe her illness:

> Del venim vos ai fait delivre,
> Dont vos envemina la guivre.
> Et jo m'en sui si *enivree,*
> Ja n'en cuic estre delivree.
> L'enfertés est sor moi venue
> Que entor vos me sui tenue.
>
> (939–44)

> [I saved you from the venom
> with which the dragon poisoned you.
> And *from that I became so delirious*
> I don't think I can be cured.
> I caught the disease
> from being around you.]

Both Cador and Euphemie describe the feelings of love as a kind of drunkenness or poisoning, using terms such as "m'enivre"("poisoned"), "ivres" ("drunk"), "enivree" ("intoxicated") as though they had in fact drunk a potion. Thus *poison* is a sign with more than one potential referent: it refers back to the dragon and to the feelings of being in love associated with the potion consumed by Tristan and Iseut. Although Heldris exploits the arrow as the *mechanism* to incite love in the *Roman de Silence*, taking inspiration from the Ovidian conceit or from its expression in the *Roman d'Enéas*, the *effects* of falling in love are the same as they were for Tristan and Iseut after they drank the potion.

We can see this most clearly in the *Folie Tristan d'Oxford*, another reworking from Thomas.[60] With the same main plot lines as the *Folie Tristan de Berne*, the Oxford *Folie* also depicts Tristan disguised as madman in his return

60. Joseph Bédier, "La Folie Tristan d'Oxford," in *Les Deux Poèmes de la Folie Tristan*, ed. Joseph Bédier (Paris: Société des anciens textes français, 1907), 2.

to Mark's court, where he retells Iseut their love story. Iseut questions the madman before her about the possible cause of his affliction:

> "N'est mie vair, einz est mensunge;
> Mais vus recuntez vostre sunge.
> Anuit fustes *ivre* al cucher
> E l'*ivrece* vus fist sunger."
> "Vers est, d'itel baivre sui *ivre*
> Dunt je ne quid estre delivre."
>
> (*Folie Tristan d'Oxford*, ed. and trans. Rosenberg, 457–62, emphasis mine)[61]

> ["It's a lie, not the truth;
> you're just retelling a dream.
> You were *drunk* going to bed last night
> and your *drunkenness* made you dream."
> "I am *drunk*—true—but on such a drink
> that I cannot soon expect to be sober."]

Tristan explains that he is intoxicated, but from the love potion and not from an alcoholic beverage as Iseut suggests. This passage forges another link between the feelings of intoxication and those brought about by the potion. In short, Tristan suggests that the love he feels for Iseut is a kind of drug. He repeats this formulation a few lines later when describing how they drank the potion:

> Quant en haute mer nus meïmes,
> Ben vus dirrai quai nus feïmes.
> Li jur fu beus e fesait chaut
> E [si] nus fumes ben en haut.
> Pur la chalur eüstes sei.
> Ne vus menber, fille de rai?
> D'un hanap beümes andui:
>
> Vus en beüstes e j'en bui.
> *Ivrë* ai esté tut tens puis,
> Mais mal *ivrece* mult i truis.
>
> (*Folie Tristan d'Oxford*, ed. and trans. Rosenberg, 467–76, emphasis mine)

61. All quotations and translations of this text from "Folie Tristan d'Oxford," ed. and trans. Samuel N. Rosenberg, in *Early French Tristan Poems*, vol. 1, ed. Lacy.

[I'll tell you what we did
once we out on the high sea.
The day was beautiful and hot,
and we were resting on the deck.
The heat made you thirsty.
Don't you, daughter of a king, don't you remember?
We both drank from the same goblet;
first you drank and then I.
I have been *drunk* ever since,
more *drunk* than I should ever have become.]

Tristan claims that he has suffered from this drunkenness from the moment he imbibed the potion, and in his bid to gain Iseut's recognition, he characterizes it as a bad drunkenness. These references further characterize the love Tristan feels for Iseut, the love of which they became conscious after drinking the potion, an experience much like being drugged.

In contrast, the mounting distrust that arises because of Tristan's interpretation of the potion seen in the *Folie Tristan de Berne* (discussed in Chapter 4), never appears in Heldris's tale. Love creates a need for Cador and Euphemie to see each other and talk to each other, and in this narrative that desire is not blocked. We are told that they love each other from the earliest mention of each in the story, though neither can tell the other. When they finally breech the subject of love, Cador speaks so that Euphemie will understand: "Or savés qu'il nel laira mie / Ne parolt ensi qu'ele l'oie" (916–17) ("Now you know that he will not fail / to speak so that she can hear him"). Indeed the problem between Cador and Euphemie in the *Roman de Silence* is just that, silence.[62] Once they have spoken of their love, their misunderstanding vanishes:

Il n'ont mais entr'als nule error;
Ainz sevent ore la verror,
Qu'il est amis et ele amie.

(1155–57)

[There is no longer any misunderstanding between them;
from now on they know the truth,
that they are friends and lovers.]

62. Bloch discusses this in light of the work's commentary on poetry, language, and desire ("Silence and Holes," 89–91).

Although both fear admitting their love for the other, the time spent together and their talk increases their love for each other:

> Car puis qu'en parler ont delit
> Si croist l'Amors moult de petit
> Por cho que il ensanble soient."
> Mais amant qui ne s'entrevoient
> Et forssalent que d'an en an,
> N'ont mie d'assés tel ahan
> Que d'iestre apriés et consirrer.
>
> (753–59)

> [For where there is delight in speech,
> love grows from very small beginnings,
> as long as lovers are together.
> But lovers who don't see each other
> or arrange to meet, except from year to year,
> never have enough of that sweet labor
> of being close and observing each other.]

Cador and Euphemie's situation is thus in contrast to lovers such as Tristan and Iseut, who see each other only rarely.

The *Roman de Silence* reiterates the idea that Cador and Euphemie feel as though they have drunk a potion by depicting Cador's symptoms in love as very similar to those of the dragon's poison. Once in love, Cador suffers:

> Vellier la nuit, jaindre, pener,
> Qu'Amors le prent a demener,
> Fai le fremir, suer, tranbler.
> Pis que fievre li puet sambler.
>
> (719–22)

> [He was awake all night, suffering, groaning,
> for Love had seized control of him,
> made him shiver, sweat and tremble.
> It was worse than the symptoms of a fever.]

The dragon's poison caused pain that woke Cador in the night and caused him to change color, the same effect that love has on him. The benefits of the healing Cador that has undergone seem to have deserted him, and he

believes he cannot be healed, saying "Nen ai confort de guarison" (678) ("I have no hope of being cured").

Euphemie also suffers because of her love for Cador. As the narrator says, "En la sofrance a tant d'amer" (772) ("She finds such bitterness in suffering"), and she believes that caught the disease from Cador (782). The more she thinks of him, the worse it grows (785–86). Although her symptoms are detailed with less specificity, Euphemie also feels pain from love, groaning and trembling from its effects, saying she is neither dead or alive (775–78).

Romance plots allow the audience to revel in the pain caused by love and often reward the listener or reader with the lover's attainment of the beloved. Having drawn unmistakable parallels between the feelings love causes between Cador and Euphemie and those between Tristan and Iseut by suggesting that love feels like a drink/drug/potion/poison, the *Roman de Silence* then proposes Euphemie's body as the agent of healing. The woman who healed Cador from his earlier ailment will herself become the medicine to remedy Cador's lovesickness.

When Cador is struck by Love's arrow and the king hears his outcry, the king responds to the fact that Cador suffers from the dragon's poison. The narrator, however, lets on that more is at issue:

> Mais ne set u li mals li tient
> Ne de l'enferté qui li vient
> Dont nen avra la *medecine*
> Se Dex nel fait et la *mescine*
> Quil gari de l'autre enferté.
>
> (711–15, emphasis mine)

> [but he didn't know where the malady had struck
> or that he had succumbed to an illness
> for which there is no *cure*
> except from God and the *girl*
> who healed him of his other hurt.]

Clearly Cador's current problem stems not from the toxic dragon's poison but from contact with Euphemie. Only she can cure the lovesickness that her presence has caused.

The narrator plays on three words in this passage. According to Greimas, *mecine* means "remedy," "healing virtue," or even "enchantment." Its near homophone, "medecine," meaning "remedy," gradually replaces

mecine, though at the time of this text both words are in use, and both appear in this text. Both are homophones or near homophones of *mecine* or *meschine*, meaning young woman. This word has a masculine form, *mechin*, which is not used for Cador. Instead, Cador is called by name or is called a *baceler.* The feminine form, on the other hand, repeatedly designates Euphemie: thirteen times in some 1,100 lines of verse (395, 544, 612, 625, 656, 714, 733, 840, 875, 1039, 1250, 1276, 1536). This word is the most common designation of Euphemie in the text: its repeated use to refer to her reiterates the idea that Euphemie herself serves as medicine to the suffering young man. Although this quotation describes a reciprocal exchange in love, the homophones repeatedly echo the idea that Euphemie is Cador's medicine. As if to emphasize this, of the ten lines in which "mecine" falls at the end of the line, it is rhymed with "medecine" in four of them. For example:

> S'il voelent garison avoir
> Dont covient il par estavoir
> Et lui garir par la *mescine*
> Et li avoir par lui *mecine*.
> U cascuns d'als son per garra,
> U la mecine n'i parra.
>
> (873–78, emphasis mine)

> [If they want to be cured
> then it will be necessary
> for him to be cured by the *girl*,
> and for her to take her *medicine* from him.
> Either each of them will cure the other,
> or there will be no curing.]

The same rhyme occurs when Cador describes the effects of Euphemie's healing and his resulting lovesickness:

> Jo li puis bien amor rover,
> Mais or me poroit reprover
> Son traval et sa *medecine*,
> Et poroit penser la *mescine*
> Que folie ai en li veüe,
> Que por cho ruis que soit ma drue.
>
> (653–58)

[I could reveal my love to her,
but her efforts and her *medicines*
might then be a reproach to me:
the *girl* might think
that I had found her behavior unseemly,
and that I want her for my mistress.]

Cador is aware that he loves Euphemie although he fears to tell her, and that his love results (albeit indirectly) from Euphemie's healing.

Both Cador and Euphemie see their skills falter in the face of love. Cador's bravery evaporates; he complains that even though he could kill the dragon because love empowered him, he is unable to tell Euphemie of his love for her (649–51).[63] Euphemie finds herself equally hindered because although she could heal Cador from the effects of the dragon's poison, she is powerless against the effects of love:

Amors m'a mis en noncaloir,
Ars ne engiens n'i puet valoir.
Jo doins as altres medecine
Mais moi ne valt une fordine
Quanque jo sai dire et canter.

(787–91)

[Love has made me incapable of action.
Neither my learning nor my native intelligence can help me.
I prescribe medicine to others,
but all my fancy accomplishments
aren't helping me one bit.]

Cador and Euphemie's mutual helplessness before love constitutes yet another similarity between them, further indicating their suitability.

Once Cador confesses his love for her, Euphemie knows they need some kind of medicine:

"Bials dols amis," dist la *meschine*,
"Nos convenroit une *mechine*,

63. Ringer notes Cador and Euphemie's communication difficulties (9).

Car nos avons une enferté.
Mais or me dites verité.
Coment cis mals est apielés?
Se vos savés nel me celés."

(1039–44)

["Dear, sweet friend," said the *girl*,
"we really need some *medicine*,
for we both have the same disease.
But now tell me, truly,
what is the name of this malady?
If you know, don't keep it from me."]

Although Euphemie states tentatively what they need, social custom demands that she not ask outright for Cador to kiss her. While she seems to understand the situation quite well, and has shown in the healing episodes that she is quite capable of taking control of a situation and bringing it to a good outcome, Euphemie becomes coquettish at this point, hiding her knowledge and letting Cador take the lead. Cador explains that even though he is young, he has heard older men talk of the disease of love, for which a kiss can be exceedingly beneficial (1045–56). Euphemie's transformation into the medicine for the ailing Cador is completed in the long description of the kiss the lovers share after they finally admit their love for each other:

Li uns prent l'autre par la destre,
Et escalfent si del tenir
Qu'il ne se pueënt abstenir
Ne mecent les boces ensanble.
Sans dire font, si com moi sanble,
De fine amor moult bone ensegne,
Car li baisiers bien lor ensegne,
Et li qu'il trait paine et martire,
Et lui qu'ele l'aime et desire,
Car n'est pas baisier de conpere,
De mere a fil, de fil a pere:
Ainz est baisiers de tel savor
Que bien savore fine amor.

(1090–1101)

[Each takes the other by the hand—
they are so carried away by this
that they cannot prevent themselves
from putting their mouths together.
It seems to me that, without speaking,
they are giving a fine demonstration of courtly love,
for kissing teaches them both a good lesson,
both her who causes him pain and torment,
and him whom she loves and desires.
For this is not a comradely kiss
of mother to son, of son to father;
no, it is a kiss of such savor
that it savors much of courtly love.]

The kiss becomes the unspecified medicine that Euphemie said they needed in verse 1040. As the description continues, the narrator explains that such kisses only make them want more (1120–124).

The "medecine"/"mecine" rhymes suggest the corporeal medicine that Euphemie can offer Cador to heal his lovesickness. The link made between solace in love and healing is also reinforced by rhymes with Euphemie's name. Euphemie is first described as "Qu'el mont n'avoit plus bele mie, / Et si l'apielent Eufemie" (401–2) ("the most beautiful girl in the world, / and they called her Eufemie"). In these lines then, "mie" is used for "ami," a term that often denotes the beloved in romance.[64] Later, when a doctor is needed, "Envoie lués por Eufemie: / El païs n'a si sage mie" (593–94) ("At once he sent for Eufemie: / she was the wisest doctor in the land"). Because she arrives and begins her diagnosis by observing the pulse, it is clear that "mie" here has its other meaning, doctor.[65] The potential for slippage between the beloved and empirical practice in this text is heightened by the fact that "mie" can mean both "friend/lover" and "doctor."

We also see this when Euphemie tells Cador that he is her "ami" or "friend":

"Amis, cho saciés vos sans falle,
Qu'ai[n]si sui jo l[a] vostre amie

64. Greimas, 387.
65. Greimas, 387.

Et qu'el mont fors [vos] nen a mie
Qui ma dolor puist estancier,
Ma santé rendre, n'avancier."

(1150–54)

["Beloved, I want you to know
that I love you truly,
and that there is no one else in the whole world,
who could assuage my grief,
restore me to health, promote my well-being."]

Read another way, the center line of the quotation says "there is no other *doctor*" (emphasis mine). Euphemie thus claims Cador to be her doctor in love, her cure for love's pangs.[66] Moreover, her use of the word "mie" for Cador insists on the reciprocity of their love. Although most of the passages point out the link between Euphemie and medicine, here she extends this link to Cador and medicine.

To summarize, we see that in the *Roman de Silence* healing comes from the person, presence, and solace of the beloved (and to a lesser degree, from the lover). The representation of Euphemie as the medicine for the lovesick Cador co-opts Euphemie's healing skills and knowledge. Her success as a healer of one kind of illness reinforces the notion that she will be able to heal another kind of illness. The difference between the two kinds of healing is that one relies upon Euphemie's skills and knowledge while the other does not. When Euphemie's success in healing is appropriated into the cure of the lovesick Cador, this enhances the salubrious effects of the beloved but subtly effaces empirical knowledge.

In many respects, the love story of Silence's parents, Cador and Euphemie, follows the love story between Tristan and Iseut. Both couples are well matched because they possess qualities that the court values: good lineage, courtly skills, and good looks. Both couples meet when the hero seeks medical attention for a poisoning resulting from battle, and both heroes receive ministrations from a heroine widely reputed for her healing knowledge and skill. Both fall in love and describe that love as very painful, a condition that needs attention from the beloved but one that does not depend

66. Peggy McCracken comments further on "ami" in the context of healing ("Women and Medicine," 250).

upon her medical knowledge. Although the *Roman de Silence* avoids the difficulties engendered by the love potion itself, it models the love Cador and Euphemie feel on the love brought about between Tristan and Iseut by the love potion. We see this first and foremost in the descriptions of love as a kind of poison: both Cador and Euphemie feel the venomous effects of love. Thus the *Roman de Silence* carefully takes advantage of the metaphor of love as a kind of poison, but avoids the potential mistrust of and ambiguity surrounding a love brought on by a potion/poison.

The dragon's poison, like Euphemie, is a sign with different referents. The poison came from the dragon, but it recalls that of the potion consumed by Tristan and Iseut. On the one hand, Euphemie's knowledge and skills enable her to heal serious medical conditions; on the other, she heals Cador's lovesickness with the most practical of means, her body. These two entirely different approaches meet and are literally embodied in the female empiric. Euphemie's body thus becomes the sign that points to widely divergent referents.[67] She occupies a contested site that male empirics do not. Neither defined entirely by her training nor by her love for Cador,[68] Euphemie incarnates both these functions which mutually influence each other. In the *Roman de Silence* the position of the female empiric who is also the beloved presents a paradox, as it did in the *Roman de Tristan*.

Although the *Roman de Silence* depicts the God of love as the instigator of Cador and Euphemie's love and although their symptoms of lovesickness closely approximate those found in the works by Ovid and Ovidian derivatives, this romance offers a representation of the healing of lovesickness through the beloved similar to what we saw in the Tristan romances. While precursors such as Ovidian texts and the *Roman d'Enéas* describe Amors, the God of Love, as a healer, they never show the healing process. In contrast, the *Roman de Tristan* of Thomas, both *Folies Tristan* and the *Roman de Silence*, show the source of healing as the beloved—in these cases, a beloved who is an extremely capable empiric who successfully heals other medical problems. I am not arguing that this is the *only* possible influence that feeds into the image of the beloved, but that it is an important one. Not only do these empirics carry out healing practices of the time, their healing abilities (and in the case of the works other than the *Roman de Silence,*

67. Perret points out instances of sign/referent instability with respect to Silence (334).
68. On Euphemie's training, cf. Lasry 230. On Cador, cf. Roche-Madhi, 20.

their magical practices) transform love as represented in romance by strongly reinforcing the link between healing other ailments and healing lovesickness and the link between feelings of love and those resulting from certain pharmaceutical agents.

These characters are never just empirics or just the beloved who eases suffering in the lover, but hybrids of the two. As their capacities as empirics shade into their portrayal as the beloved, they become a corporeal cure for lovesickness. Could this representation of female empirical practitioners who heal by the application of their own bodies contribute to the growing divide between medical theory and practice wending its way into the newly formed and expanding and professionalizing faculties of medicine? We have seen that empirics command respect in the community for their highly sought out and valuable information and skills. In the late twelfth century there is very little to suggest that female empirics were seen any less positively than their male counterparts, though this position begins to erode around the beginning of the fourteenth century. At that point, learned physicians seek to draw a clear distinction between themselves and other healers—male, female, Jewish, empiric, surgeon, apothecary, and so forth—who lack university training. During the thirteenth century, however, empirics, including female empirics, garner no opprobrium. Even so, the ambiguous position of the beloved who is an empiric and whose empirical practices are appropriated into the discourse of love that is produced and consumed through romance may work subtle changes that feed into the later evolution of medical institutions.

Moreover, Euphemie's practical healing abilities serve the depiction of love at a time when university-trained doctors begin to denigrate practical approaches. Excluded from universities, women can only learn to heal in practical ways, and therefore will become marginalized by the growing profession as the theory's new validity becomes more accepted. The link between healing and love portrayed in romance may also contribute to the fourteenth-century increasing marginalization of empirical healers. In the end, the text takes seriously Euphemie's ability to heal, but knowledge as the source of healing is de-emphasized while the focus becomes the body of the beloved. The result contributes to an essentialist view of femininity that includes healing and nurturing as female traits. In this way, romance provides an image that may contribute to the erasure of the empiric's knowledge while the mystery of love remains.

The empiric as beloved takes on a highly contested role central to medieval literature with the power to fascinate that has lasted nearly a millennium.

In the characters of Iseut and Euphemie, the beloved—who, according to the lover, has almost limitless powers—appropriates healing abilities for the mysterious purposes of love. Just as love works mysteriously, we recall that empirical knowledge does too—through hidden powers of plants or other substances known only to some. Because of the ubiquity of the female beloved in medieval literature, who has great powers but who applies empirical knowledge in only a few cases, empirical knowledge stands to be obscured behind the simple power of love.

Even as Euphemie's knowledge is pressed into service as an aspect of the beloved, the narrative represents Euphemie's desire in a positive way. Rather than depicting female desire as a destructive force at court, the *Roman de Silence* in this episode reveals how it can bring about a desired marriage at court, one that produces offspring and ultimately contributes to the stability of the court. Thus, although the text appropriates in some ways Euphemie's empirical knowledge, it simultaneously uncovers evidence of Euphemie's desire, in spite of considerable evidence of the opposite in numerous other medieval texts.[69] This raises the question of courtly marriage politics.

Marriage Politics at Court

As with *Cligés* and the *Roman de Tristan,* we can read the *Roman de Silence* in terms of the marriage politics at the time. The work includes three marriages: at the beginning King Ebain marries Eufeme and Cador marries Euphemie, and at the end King Ebain takes Silence as his new wife after disposing of the unfaithful Eufeme.

King Ebain promises his knights that whoever slays the dragon will be able to choose his own wife; he also promises Euphemie that if she cures Cador from the noxious effects of the dragon poison she will be able to choose her own husband. In both cases these abilities are awarded to someone who accomplishes a very difficult task. It would seem, then, that at King Ebain's court, having a say in one's marriage partner is quite rare—not at all standard practice, despite the fact that Canon law had mandated consent of the parties

69. Alexandre Leupin, *Barbarolexis: Medieval Writing and Sexuality*, trans. Kate M. Cooper (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989). However, as Roberta Krueger notes, desire is dangerous in Ebain's wife, Eufeme (121).

for a century.[70] Yet despite the king's promise, settling the marriage takes place only through indirect statement and in consultation with the barons.

Cador and Euphemie come before the king at the same time and request that he grant what he has promised (1210–217; 1232–36). The king declares that he will do so and convenes his barons (1237–50). Thus what appeared to be a private matter between the two lovers and the king is, in fact, opened up to his counselors. This suggests that even when King Ebain grants the unusual freedom to pick one's marriage partner, this freedom is quite limited because the marriage of important members of the court has implications for the survival of the whole court: therefore the barons must be involved in the decision and must approve of it.[71] This model of governance places the needs of the community before those of the individual, and consensus plays an important role, though it is possible than an agreement is forced by the more powerful party.

At this point in the *Roman de Silence*, nothing indicates that Ebain's barons harbor resentment or ill will (although troubles arise later). They act in accordance with the king, and they act in a concerted way. Cador's and Euphemie's behavior suggests that they understand that the king's grant does not give them *carte blanche*: without the approval of the greater community, no marriage will take place. Thus although Cador and Euphemie wish to marry because of their love, this is not enough to secure the marriage. They do not speak of their love to the king but instead wait for the king's direction, which comes after consultation with his barons. The king registers that the two who appear before him are, as is often the case in romance, well matched. He wants to marry them ("Jes voel ensamble marier"; 1277), but adds that because he has given his word they must be willing (1279–81). He therefore asks one of his barons to speak with Cador and Euphemie in

70. Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society*, 333. Christopher Callahan expresses surprise at this flouting of Canon law in "Canon Law, Primogeniture, and Marriage of Ebain and Silence," *Romance Quarterly* 49, 1 (2002): 12–21. Sharon Kinoshita argues simply that the king's interests take precedence in the romance as the genre allows for the expression of concerns facing thirteenth-century nobility in "Male-Order Brides: Marriage, Patriarchy, and Monarchy in the *Roman de Silence*," *Arthuriana* 12, 1 (2002): 64. See also her "Heldris de Cornuälle's *Roman de Silence*."

71. In contrast, Heather Lloyd suggests that the king is hindered by his hastily declared inheritance law and acts to prevent a challenge to it (79). Yet the text suggests no limitation on the part on the king, who comes off appearing magnanimous by promising to grant the land of Euphemie's father that she cannot inherit to Cador upon Renald's death if Cador marries Euphemie (1292–99). Rather than being challenged, Ebain simply arranges the inheritance as he wishes and as his kingly prerogative permits.

order to point out the advantages of this marriage.[72] The Count of Chester volunteers to counsel Cador and Euphemie and prays as he hastens to them that Saint Amant will cause love to spring up between them (1330–334). The count, however, spies them in whispered conversation with lowered eyes and understands he will not need to convince them to marry (1391–1404). Once the count explains the king's wishes, the lovers quickly accept the offer (1433–83). The most important feature that King Ebain and the barons want to see is an equally matched couple. They appear to believe that this symmetry will create the most stable marriage that will in turn promote the stability of the community as a whole. Although Tristan and Iseut were in equals in lineage, looks, and courtly behavior, Iseut's arranged marriage to Mark to secure peace between Cornwall and Ireland prevented anyone from ever imagining a marriage between the two despite their similarities. The *Roman de Silence*, as in all the narratives that rewrite the *Tristan* story, contains no insurmountable obstacles. In fact, it contains no obstacles at all, since the king favors the wedding. This is unlike *Cligés*, and as we shall see in the following chapter, *Amadas et Ydoine*, in which the couple's attempts to overcome the obstacles furnish many of the adventures of the narrative.

The *Roman de Silence* shares another aspect of love with the *Tristan* narratives with its reference to and definition of a *fin amans* ("noble lover"). As Cador and Euphemie wait impatiently for the outcome of the barons' council with the king, they contemplate their options should the suggestion that they marry other people come back to them:

> Cador a dit, "Que c'est tolt nient!
> Se on droiture ne nos tient,
> Amie, j'en ferai mervelle,
> Car mes corages me conselle
> Que en essil o vos m'en voise,
> Tolt a laron, sans faire noise."
>
> (1345–50)

> [Cador said, "It doesn't matter
> if they don't deal fairly with us, love,
> I'll give them a surprise,

72. Cf. Brahney, who argues that Cador and Euphemie's marriage heralds possible equality between women and men (56).

for my innermost being counsels me
to seek exile with you,
in all secrecy, without making a noise."]

In a clear allusion to Tristan and Isuet's sojourn in the forest, Cador suggests that they flee the court and go into exile to be together. Euphemie, unlike the *Silence* narrator and probably many audience members, claims never to have heard of such an idea. Cador's ability to suggest this plan convinces her that he is truly suffering from lovesickness. Yet she imagines that forest exile may be necessary to follow Love's commands:

Mais jo certes ne m'esmervel
S'en bos vois o vus u en lande,
Car Amors le rueve et conmande
Que cascuns doie assés savoir
Cho qu'aime s'il le puet avoir
Certes qu'a cho cil qui bien ainme,
S'il sor icho quiert plus et claimme,
Il nen est pas bien fins amans.

(1360–67)

[As for me, I certainly wouldn't think it strange
to wander with you in forest or field,
for Love so orders and commands
that each should know well
that if he can have the one he loves,
if the lover has his beloved
and seeks and demands more than this,
he is surely not a noble lover.]

According to the dictates of Amors, the God of love, being together—whatever the cost—is paramount. Euphemie states that she would be willing to contravene social expectations in order to show her love. Her attitude toward loyalty in love parallels that of the lovers in Thomas's *Tristan* and in *Cligés*.

The *Roman de Silence* depicts the same conflict we see in all the romances under consideration: the lovers are pitted against the demands and expectations of court life. The court does not recognize love alone as a sufficient motivation for marriage; all the romances under consideration suggest (though to differing degrees) that individual desire in love can clash

disastrously with dynastic interests. The couple even entertains the notion that they might need to leave the community in order to give expression to their love. Perhaps they would never have the temerity to undertake such a bold and dangerous action, but love does leave them emboldened enough to at least contemplate it. Love as conceptualized in this way operates on the same principle as the community: loyalty is its highest value, but the loyalty is directed to the beloved and away from the community if the two conflict.

The set of romances that derive from the Tristan story open up the space for the court to grapple with the issue of the couple in love whose union runs counter to the needs, wishes, or desires of the court. The *Roman de Silence* foregrounds the tension between love and politics precisely because of the importance of the issue at the time.[73] The tension between individual and community will can be seen as early as 1160 in the *Roman d'Enéas*, in which in the love of Dido for Enéas has no political advantage and therefore brings no marriage, while the love of Lavinia and Enéas complements their political union.[74] Thomas's *Roman de Tristan* concludes in tragedy, of course, because the conditions that bring about Iseut's marriage to Mark cannot be changed. In *Cligés* the conditions appear inalterable, but Fenice and Cligés contrive a plan to be together, in a manner similar to that of Amadas and Ydoine, as we will see in the following chapter. These romances therefore register the problems that result from women's lack of voice in marriage politics and propose, in the case of *Cligés* and *Tristan,* responses through the application of empirical practices. Cador and Euphemie, on the other hand, have no real limitations placed on their desired union. They merely have to wait for approval from the community's leaders.

This loyalty and desire to be together despite a heavy cost differs sharply from Ovid's *Ars Amatoria*, which depicts "love" as serial dalliances that have the qualities of a game. Love is not constructed as an art, as a controlled dance to which the dancers know the steps and respond to each other in well-understood choreographed moves that allow for little or no deviation from the known pattern. Seeking out a lover and attempting to enter this dance with her serves as a means to alleviate boredom and add interest to life through the conquest and inherent danger of secret meetings. This kind

73. In a different vein, Sharon Kinoshita argues that the *Roman de Silence* hides the fact that Cador and Euphemie's marriage is politically advantageous for King Ebain because the couple's love masks the political expediency ("Heldris de Cornuälle's *Roman de Silence*," 398).

74. Raymond Cormier points out the differences between these love affairs, "Present State," 29, 34.

of love does not threaten to undo the bonds that hold the urban Roman community together. Although the lovers risk getting caught and would face penalties, they never contemplate escape from society in order to be together. Instead the poet/narrator of the *Ars* seems to thrive on danger, counseling the beloved to have her maid claim that her husband has suddenly arrived home (*Ars* III: 607) or to dull the senses of the house servants through drink or drugs (*Ars* III: 645–48). Love, as Ovid depicts it, transgresses social rules, but it does not call into question the basic structure of the society. Instead, it seems to bolster that structure because it provides an outlet for feelings that society defines as transgressive by acknowledging them with a wink and a nod.

In contrast, in the romances that adapt the Tristan story, the couple's loyalty to and love for each other goes before any other consideration. Their goal is to be together long-term, even if this runs counter to the wishes of the society. The love of these romances menaces the very structure of the society by depicting escape as an option. In these works love is not a sophisticated, urbane pastime of the *cognoscenti*, but an organizing principle of life even in the face of social structures that oppose it. I attribute this new aspect of love to Tristan and Iseut's stunning and dangerous departure for the forest. Feudal society depends heavily on mutual dependence and cooperation; to leave it is to expose oneself to great danger. Béroul drives home the dangerous nature of their flight by insisting on the deprivation they suffer, while in Thomas and its derivatives (especially Gottfried), love becomes a sustaining force that counters deprivation so that their forest time becomes an idyll. The motivating force of this love, however, is not foreign to the feudal system. Instead, it forms the core of that system: loyalty, but loyalty between the beloved and lover and not between lord and vassal.

Although the *Roman de Silence* hints at the problems that love and marriage can cause at court, Cador's and Euphemie's love never faces the challenge of conflicting loyalties. It is in the marriage politics of the second part of the work that such disputes take center stage. Impersonating a man, Silence travels widely and, like Tristan, gains respect at court for his ability in jousting and music. He is so successful that Ebain's wife, Eufeme, desires to take him as a lover.[75] Silence must, of course, refuse in order to avoid being

75. I use the masculine pronoun for the time in which Silence impersonates a man since the romance does the same.

unmasked. The angry queen accuses him of rape, but rather than kill him the king only sends him to France. Silence later returns to successfully help put down a rebellion of certain counts. The queen once again solicits Silence's love and accuses him when Silence refuses. In order to appease the queen, the king sends Silence to capture Merlin. Merlin completes the denouement by revealing Silence's true identity and that of the queen's lover, disguised as a nun. Both the false nun and the queen are executed, and the king grants women the right to inherit again after hearing Silence's explanation for why she perpetuated her disguise. One other consequence is that the king takes Silence as a wife upon the advice of his barons, "Par loëment de ses princhiers, / Qu'il plus ama et plus tint ciers" (6679–80) ("on the advice of his / most loyal and trusted advisers").[76]

Why would the advisers suggest this marriage? Certainly there is the advantage to the kingdom.[77] Yet, one might expect that Silence's successful war exploits would make her the least desirable of women and regarded with suspicion by the court. Simone de Beauvoir's famous dictum that one is not born a woman, but becomes one, barely applies to Silence, for Nature reclaims what was hers in only three days, removing any indication that Silence had lived as a man (6669–74).[78] Silence's physical attributes and successes do not hinder the perception that she would make an excellent wife, a surprising outcome if there ever was one. What accounts for this unusual turn of events? At the moment of Silence's confession the king provides the following explanation of his benevolent response:

> Silence, moult estes loials.
> . . . . . .
> Silences, ses qu'as recovré
> Par cho que tu as si ovré?
>
> (6630, 6637–38)

76. Although as Lorraine Kochanske Stock points out, Heldris distances himself from the narrative at this point by adding that this is what the story of Silence says ("Importance of Being Gender 'Stable,'" 28–29).

77. Sharon Kinoshita argues that Silence is "conscripted" by Ebain to be used to further his realm at a time (the thirteenth century) when preserving feudal lineage became more important to a king than physical defense ("Heldris de Cornuälle's *Roman de Silence*," 406).

78. *The Second Sex*, trans. and ed. H. M. Parshley, intro. Margaret Crosland (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1952, 1993), 281.

[Silence, you are very loyal.
. . . . . .
Silence, know that you have saved yourself
By your loyal actions.]

Silence's loyalty then is the key factor in the open and willing reception the unmasked Silence receives at court, including the proposal to marry the king. Silence stands in sharp contrast to the disloyal queen who took a lover.

This episode reveals a vast difference in the text's treatment of men and women. The king praises Silence for her loyalty, and this alone is enough to make her a suitable match.[79] Yet he states unequivocally that because of her virtue, Silence is an exception to the rule: "Il n'est si preciose gemme, / Ne tels tresors com bone feme" (6633–34) ("There is no more precious gem / nor greater treasure, than a virtuous woman"). That there are only a few good—that is, loyal—women stands as a basic misogynist principle applied to all women at this point in the narrative. In contrast, men are assumed loyal until proven otherwise. The behavior of the Count of Chester serves as an example. We recall that this count volunteers to take to the couple the king's message that he wishes that Cador and Euphemie marry. The count supports King Ebain and seeks to help the king obtain a marriage that will further the community. However, it is also the Count of Chester who rebels against King Ebain when Silence is in France. Silence returns to help quell the revolt, and ends by cutting off the count's right arm, after which the count is captured and the other rebels capitulate (5625–38). Although the romance thus shows that men can be quite rebellious, such behavior is described as exceptional while for women it is expected.

King Ebain has encountered resistance before, having already defeated three counts. These three join the Count of Chester in his attempt to help rout the king (5403–5). The narrator stakes a clear position against the rebellious counts:

Mais jo vos di li tors fu lor.
Car le .iii. et li cuens de Cestre
Volrent par force segnor estre

79. Robert S. Sturges has noted the role of loyalty in love and the feudal system in "The Cross-dresser and the *Juventus:* Category Crisis in *Silence*," *Arthuriana* 12, 1 (2002): 48.

Desor le roi, qui nen ot cure
De perdre vilment sa droiture.

(5406–10)

[But I want you to know that they were in the wrong,
for the three counts and the Count of Chester
wanted to usurp supreme power
from the king, who didn't care
to lose his rights illegitimately.]

Although the king has been victorious over the other counts, the Count of Chester is no easy match. He unhorses the king (5496), and as the two fight among clashing and dying knights, the king is almost captured, "Se li rois n'a proçaine aïe / La le prendront la gens haïe" (5519–20) ("If the king didn't get help soon, / the enemy would capture him right then and there").[80] Help comes, of course, in the form of Silence, whose amputation of the count's arm results in his capture and the end of the battle.[81] In so doing, Silence restores power to the king and demonstrates outstanding loyalty to him.

It is this same loyalty, I posit, that motivates Silence revealed as a woman to say to the king, "Faites de moi vostre plaisir" (6628) ("Do with me what you will"). A number of critics have responded to Silence's acquiescence at the moment she stands revealed in her true sex.[82] In the context of the question of loyalty, I see it as acting in accordance with the feudal principles that have motivated Silence throughout the work. Having been caught in a lie to her lord, she indicates her subordinate position to him and her recognition of the fact that by feudal custom a vassal who was caught lying to his lord forfeited all rights. Because Silence has never lived any role other than that of a male in the feudal system, this statement comes not from an

80. Stock points out the many indications of Ebain's weak rule ("Importance of Being Gender 'Stable,'" 9–19).

81. Kinoshita shows the parallels between Ebain's struggle and eventual ascendance over the barons and the situation of Henry III in thirteenth-century Norman England ("Male-Order Brides," 66–69).

82. Stock reads it as a fabliau plot, matching an older man with a young, fertile bride ("Importance of Being Gender 'Stable,'" 17). For Roche-Mahdi, it is the moment of righting the upside-down gender system created by the character of Silence ("Reappraisal of the Role of Merlin," 15–20). Callahan sees in it a chance for Silence to trade her precarious position as a heiress for stability (Callahan, 12–21). For Krueger, Silence loses status and experiences repressed sexuality (123). See note 2 in this chapter for more articles that treat the significance of gender in the work.

acknowledgment of a woman's subordinate position, but from the vassalic acquiescence that Silence has lived by all her life.

As Lorraine Stock points out, Ebain commends his new wife for her outstanding service as a knight.[83] Moreover, the king explains that he will reverse his earlier rule on female inheritance because of Silence's loyalty.[84] Thus, Silence is the perfect wife because she is so unlike any typical wife. King Ebain does not seem to want a wife, yet he is obliged to have one for the succession of his kingdom. The *Roman de Silence* therefore implies that a woman with the ability to produce an heir is a political necessity, but that one who understands (or even exemplifies) the loyalty of feudalism makes the best choice. At the same time, the romance registers the fact that, as we saw in *Cligés*, women are shut out of the feudal system. The oft-repeated misogynist view of women as lacking virtue, combined with their exclusion from the chivalric code, serves the society poorly since women are crucial for its continuation. Yet the romance implies that Ebain believes that Silence's success as a knight cancels out her ostensibly inherent female lack of virtue. In this case Silence stands on (feudal) form. This form may be the only thing holding King Ebain's kingdom together, since he repeatedly shows himself to be weak, unwise, and ineffectual.[85] Had Silence not stood on form, not followed the dictates of the feudal system, Silence might have joined forces with the Count of Chester and defeated Ebain to take the kingdom! But instead Silence outshines the rebellious count. She is more loyal than he is.

Silence is also more loyal than Ebain's first wife, Eufeme.[86] The circumstances of their marriage deserve analysis. Having fought a long and costly war with Norway, counselors suggest a marriage between Ebain and Eufeme, the daughter of King Begon of Norway (145–65). This exchange will bring peace to the two lands (173–76). King Ebain accepts the idea in part because he has suffered for the love of her (185), a love that arose from the descriptions he had heard of Eufeme (197–98). As other critics have

83. "Importance of Being Gender 'Stable,'" 18.

84. Clark also notes this (56).

85. The narrator states the opposite in the introduction, proclaiming Ebain's justice and promotion of chivalry. Psaki's reading of the narrator as unaware of the complexities of the tale he tells offers a useful analysis of the gap between the events and the narrator's comments on them. See her introduction to *Le Roman de Silence*, xxv, xxxvi.

86. Roberta Krueger perceptively analyzes King Ebain's misogynist outburst upon hearing of his wife's treachery (101–11).

pointed out, Eufeme is war booty.[87] She arrives in England by ship along with a host of other treasures from Norway. The narrator insists that Ebain and Eufeme begin their relationship in a very courtly manner:

> En Engletiere prendent port.
> Le rois Ebains n'a nient de tort
> De cho qu'il vint contre sa drue.
> Quant il le vit, gent le salue;
> Cele li rent moult biel salu,
> Cho a le roi moult bien valu.
> Le rois demeure a li baisier
> Et puis sil fait bein aäsier,
> Car son cuer ot un poi amer
> De la lasté et de la mer.
> Tier jor apriés l'a esposee,
> Car forment l'avoit golosee.
>
> (237–48)

> [They reached the English port.
> King Evan omitted none of the niceties
> when he came to greet his beloved.
> When he saw her, he greeted her gallantly;
> she returned his greeting courteously,
> which was most pleasing to the king.
> The king lingered to kiss her
> and then saw to her comfort,
> for her heart was a little bitter
> from the tiring journey across the sea.
> Three days later he married her,
> for he had yearned for her for a long time.]

King Ebains considers Eufeme his "drue" or "beloved." They greet each other in a courtly manner and he kisses her; he makes sure she is put at

87. Stock, "Importance of Being Gender 'Stable,'" 20; Blumreich, 52; Brahney considers the episode's similarity to those in epic (55). For Lasry, the marriage follows the dictates of the feudal system (231); Jewers notes that it is "described in masculine terms" (99).

ease because she suffered from seasickness on the voyage; three days later he marries her because he desires her so much. After a few words on the lengthy festivities, the narrator moves on to other matters.

Despite the auspicious beginnings, Eufeme takes a lover and is executed when Merlin reveals her transgression. We can surmise from the above description of the courtliness of their initial meeting that courtliness did not suffice. The only feelings mentioned are those of Ebain for Eufeme. She does not reciprocate: instead, she is said to have a bitter heart, or to be somewhat heartsick, from the voyage. What is clearly lacking is the third term in the wordplay, the word for "love," which after Thomas's *Tristan* we expect to find used in conjunction with "mer"/"amer" ("sea"/"bitterness"). This term shows up only later with Cador and Euphemie, when bitterness ("amer") rhymes with love ("amer") in verses 639–40. Furthermore, Eufeme imbibes no potion of any kind while at sea to lessen the feelings of heartsickness. Cador and Euphemie do not consume a potion either, but as we have seen, they do not need to because the echo of the love drug appears periodically in the references to the intoxicating effects of love on both of the lovers. When compared to the marriage of Cador and Euphemie, that of Ebain and Eufeme seems doomed from the start. The *Roman de Silence* suggests that Eufeme lacks any reason to show loyalty in her marriage to Ebain and so takes a lover.

In the end, then, the *Roman de Silence* pronounces in favor of loyalty—loyalty between men, for the rebellious knights are put down, and between men and women, since Silence's loyalty makes her an ideal wife for the king, whose previous wife was disloyal.[88] Because Silence offers the best of both worlds—she has demonstrated the loyalty of a knight in battle but has the requisite female body to produce heirs—she is the ideal wife.[89] Love brought about such loyalty between Cador and Euphemie while feudal alliance forged it between Ebain and Silence.

88. In Peggy McCracken's argument that the conflation of the queen's sexual desire and political influence threatens male sovereignty, she also points out that Silence desires no one in the work, and therefore is less threatening (*The Romance of Adultery,* 146–70, esp. 148).

89. McCracken argues that Silence's body must be integrated into the society ("'The Boy Who Was a Girl,'" 524) and that Silence's marriage to the King "implicitly guarantees lineage and succession" (531).

Conclusion

The *Roman de Silence* offers a female empiric whose empirical skills and knowledge are conflated with those of the beloved through the application of her body as medicine for the lover's lovesickness: the poet drives this home through the rhymes "medecine"/"mecine." Her function as medicine is required because she becomes the antidote to the poison/potion that is suggested as the means by which love works. The female empiric as the cure for love's ills further elaborates this Iseut-based figure in romance in a way that depends heavily on her knowledge, but simultaneously co-opts it to enhance the beloved. Thus the presentation of female empirics is paradoxical. Euphemie would never have been called to treat Cador were she not well known and well respected for her empirical practice. Although the text acknowledges her practice, it also becomes the vehicle for expression of her love for Cador: her body becomes medicine and she must pretend to have little or no knowledge of love in the process of falling in love with Cador. Euphemie's empirical knowledge is appropriated to flesh out the representation of love, allowing a strong link to be made between healing a poisoned body and a lovesick one. Euphemie's healing skill is never denied, but the knowledge that makes it possible is hidden behind the image of the beloved. Moreover, in the context of the rise of theory in medical education, its practical bent marks her knowledge as less prestigious than that of a university-trained doctor, setting up a hierarchy that may contribute to women's increasing exclusion from the practice of medicine in the century to come.

Although Heldris had extensive knowledge of earlier literary traditions, he reworked them to create new conceptions of the beloved and her entrance into marriage. Because Cador and Euphemie's love leads to marriage, it invites comparison with the other marriages in the narrative. Neither the marriage of Ebain and Eufeme nor that of Ebain and Silence comes about because of mutual love. Eufeme has no stake or interest in her marriage and therefore shows no loyalty to it. Silence, on the other hand, has demonstrated extensive loyalty to King Ebain and therefore appears to be the ideal candidate for marriage. In the end, loyalty, either through *fin'amors* or through feudal allegiance becomes the sine qua non of marriage in the *Roman de Silence*. As we will see, this same centrality of and fascination with loyalty appears in *Amadas et Ydoine*, despite its many differences from the other romances we have examined.