DOROTHEA HEITSCH

Writing as Medication in Early Modern France

Literary Consciousness and Medical Culture

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This book is dedicated to Hassan Melehy.

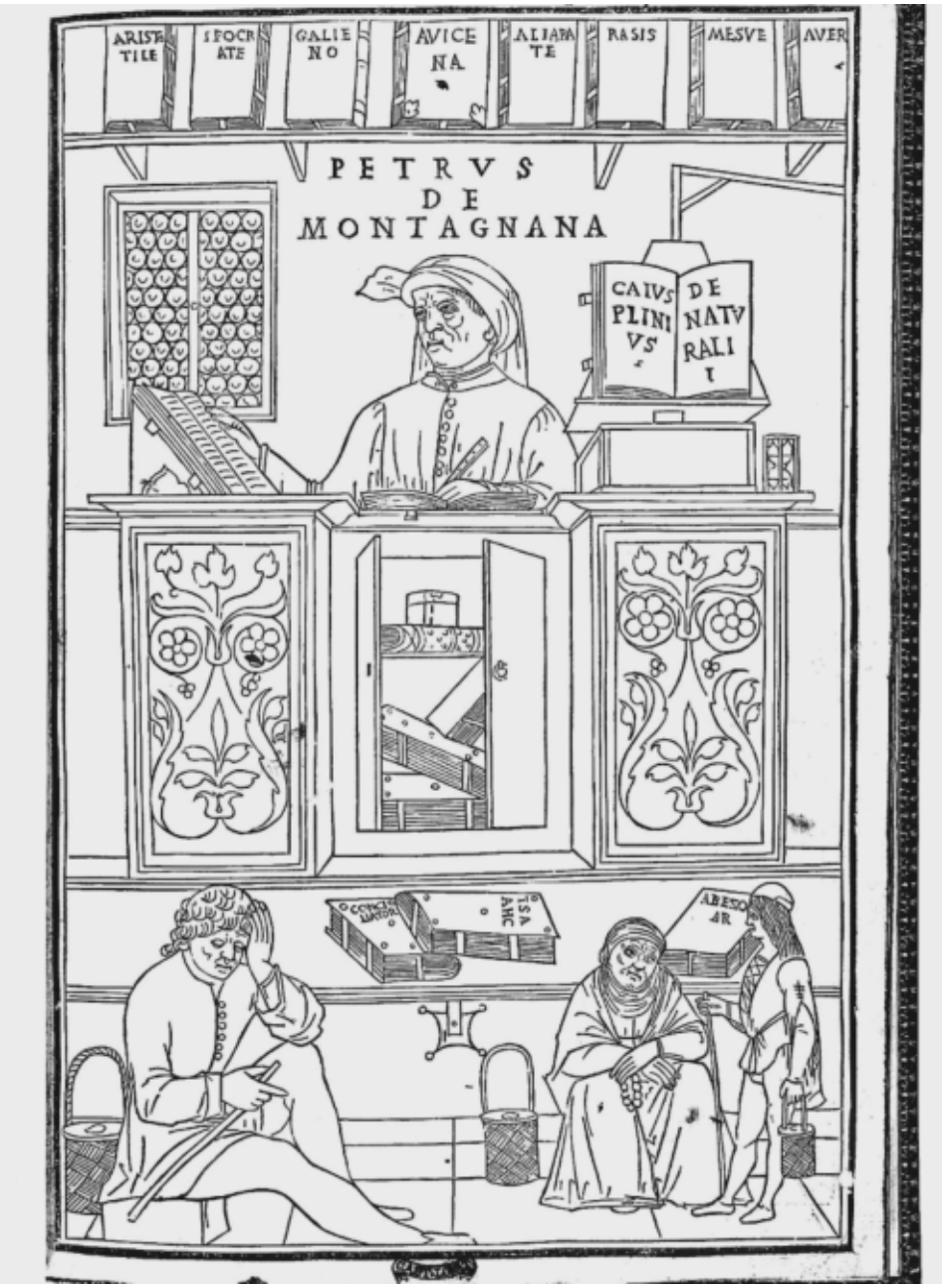

Figure 1. Petrus de Montagnana from (pseudo-)Ketham, *Fasiculo de Medicina*. Venice: Zuane & Gregorio di Gregorii, 1494.

Introduction

In the essay "De l'oisiveté" Michel de Montaigne draws an extended comparison between overly fertile soils that need to be put to work through seeds, women's bodies that require semen in order to produce children, and minds that must be occupied by a definite subject in order not to run wild. Recently retired, as he expresses it, he found that his idle mind gave birth to so many imaginings that he decided to write them down hoping to shame his mind in time. The *Essais* are thus a symptom, diagnosis, and remedy in addition to being a potential poison because they prolong and indulge the folly that Montaigne intends to cure. Likewise, Hélisenne de Crenne, in her novel *Les angoysses douloureuses qui procedent d'amours*, illustrates the many torments that love can cause by spinning a skillful net of fiction drawn from epic quests, love treatises, confessions, and medico-poetic discourses. Though the title page explicitly mentions the therapeutic intent of this work, that is, to prevent readers from succumbing to lovesickness, the author's virtuosity in prolonging the pleasure of writing and reading is such that subsequent editions reinforce the warning through a little moral poem. François Rabelais elaborates this idea even more in the prologue to *Gargantua* in which, in the guise of the quack Alcofribas Nasier, he advertises his outwardly lascivious book as a precious pill box whose content may have harmful and beneficial effects. Montaigne, Rabelais, and Crenne all share this ambivalent perspective on writing that is linked to the notion of the pharmakon, both poison and remedy, familiar from Plato's *Phaedrus*, in which Thoth offers writing as a memory aid to King Thamus, who then refuses it because it furthers forgetfulness. The therapeutic and detrimental aspects of putting pen to paper thus have a long tradition that many Renaissance writers and readers explore. The exploration takes place in the context of the immense growth of the theory and practice of medicine in the sixteenth century,[1] in which the term 'medication' becomes a word of central importance, developing a range of meanings until it receives its modern sense of curing, salving, and healing in Randle Cotgrave's *Dictionarie of the French and English Tongues* (1611).

More than half a century before Cotgrave, Charles Estienne, in his *Dictionnaire français-latin* (1539), had translated the French 'mistionnement,' a term used to describe mixing, with two Latin equivalents, the first 'adulteratio' (corrupted mixture), the second 'medicatio' (a therapeutic substance). In his *Dictionarium latinogallicum* published the previous year, he had given two French equivalents for the Latin 'medicatio,' one being 'medecinement' and the second being 'remediement.' The former could be potentially ambiguous, since the Renaissance term 'medeciner' does exist and has negative

[1] I use the term 'medicine' with caution, because it is itself contested (John V. Pickstone, "Ways of Knowing: Towards a Historical Sociology of Science, Technology and Medicine," *The British Journal for the History of Science* 26.4 [1993]: 433–58). For the early modern overlap of different branches of knowledge, such as medicine, alchemy, and natural history, for example, see Anthony Grafton and Nancy Siraisi's edited volume *Natural Particulars: Nature and the Disciplines in Renaissance Europe* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999).

connotations, while the second noun definitely means a healing substance or activity.[2] 'Médication' thus is a polysemous term; it was imported from Latin into French at the beginning of the fourteenth century, it denotes the ensemble of remedies used for therapeutic purposes, and it derives from 'medicari' and ultimately from 'medicus,' both doctor and quack.[3] The historical process by which the Latin terms 'medicatio' and 'adulteratio' denote a mingling and blending may have to do with the act of mixing plant-based remedies or with one of the original Latin meanings of using vegetable juices to prevent corn diseases.[4] Interestingly, the French term 'médication' does not show up in Estienne's or in John Baret's multilingual dictionaries, possibly because the more frequent synonym used in the sixteenth century was 'medecine,'[5] but it exists in Middle French, then again in Cotgrave's dictionary with a wholly positive meaning,[6] and in modern French it designates the use of therapeutic substances for treatment.[7] The current English meaning of medication is more or less neutral, denoting a medicinal substance or medicament used in therapy, according to the *American Heritage Dictionary*, as well as the act or process of medicating or of mixing with medicinal substances, according to Chambers's *Twentieth Century Dictionary*, though in popular usage 'my medication(s)' has an ambiguous quality often due to the sheer quantity of drugs prescribed, which is evident when we google the term.

The polysemous nature of medication determines the textual corpus I analyze in *Writing as Medication in Early Modern France: Literary Consciousness and Medical*

[2] A good example is Montaigne's *Essais* in which we do not find 'medecinement' and 'remediement.' Yet 'medeciner' occurs four times and always in a pejorative or mocking context, whereas 'remedier' occurs twice with more serious connotations.

[3] Alain Rey, *Dictionnaire historique de la langue française* (Paris: Le Robert, 1998) and *Grand Larousse de la langue française* (Paris: Larousse, 1971–78).

[4] Charlton T. Lewis, *A Latin Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford Clarendon Press, 1995): "Medicatio, -onis. A healing, cure; hence in agriculture, a besprinkling with vegetable juices, e.g., of lentils, to preserve them from the corn-worm, Col 2, 10, 16." This would then also explain the entry in the online *Semantic Atlas English-French, French-English* in which 'medication' is explained as cure, drug, medicament, medicinal drug, medicine, remedy, treatment, but also as irrigation in the medical sense of clysters.

[5] According to Ambrogio Calepino's *Dictionum latinarum et graecarum interpres* (Haguenau: 1522 [1502]), which stipulates that 'medicina,' 'medicamen,' and 'medicamentum' mean the same thing ("Medicina, medicamen, medicamentum, medela idem significant"). Calepino's dictionary across eleven languages, *Ambrosii Calepini Dictionarium undecim linguarum* (Basel: Sebastian Henricpetri, 1598 (1590), gives for 'medicatio' the three French terms 'medicament,' 'medecine,' and 'remede.' In this way it is also used as a synonym in Montaigne's *Essais*, in which 'medecine' corresponds to 'médication': "non plus qu'en l'autre medecine" (*Les essais de Michel de Montaigne*, ed. by Pierre Villey and V. L. Saulnier [Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1978], I.30, 200).

[6] Likewise in Florio's *Queen Anna's New World of Words, or Dictionarie of the Italian and English Tongues* (London: Printed by Melch. Bradwood, for Edw. Blount and William Barret, 1611): "Medicatione. A curing by Phisike."

[7] *Grand Larousse de la langue française*. On the other hand, the term 'pharmace,' according to Florio's *World of Wordes* (1598), means not only "a medicine, a remedie, all kind of dregs good or evil" and "that part of physicke that cureth with medicines," but it is "also taken for a sorceresse or enchanteresse."

Culture. A number of early modern French authors for whom the production of a literary work results in a substance used in therapy (with or without success) and for whom the act of writing constitutes an attempt at medicating (themselves or their readers) are the focus of this study. The corpus considered consists of literary works in the vernacular by several writers from France—some canonical, some less so—with a known interest in medicine, as well as two women writers:[8] Hélisenne de Crenne, whose oeuvre has seen intense discussion for the past twenty years, and Marie de Gournay, who has interested scholars for a little longer. The study's theoretical references are found in Plato, Aristotle, Galen, and Ficino—who constitute basic reference points for Renaissance readers—and in important alternatives to accepted Western medical discourses, such as John Mesue (Yūḥannā ibn Māsawayh) and Leone Ebreo (Judah Abravanel).[9] The latter emphasizes, among other things, the role of the body in cognitive functions and illustrates how knowledge-making may depend on physical interaction (chapter 1). Successively, I explore Crenne together with the 'pneumo-physiology' found in Galen and the 'dolce stil novo' (chapter 2), François Rabelais's anatomy of Epistemon with Plutarch and the anti-Arabist Champier (chapter 3), and debates among natural philosophical poets on the transmigration of souls (chapter 4). I also read Gournay in relation to Juan Huarte's humoral theory and Jean d'Espagnet's alchemical philosophy (chapter 5) and Michel de Montaigne in light of Jacques Dubois's linguistic, philosophical, and Arab-influenced medical approaches (chapter 6). While much space is dedicated to France, I do maintain a broader perspective through this body of texts that clearly extends beyond the French book market.

Though he is not part of the French canon, Ebreo informs the work of all authors in this study. For one, because most of them are historical readers of the *Dialoghi d'amore*; and, then, because the humanist interweaves the medical and the literary, fuses body and mind in embodied cognition, imagines mating souls with their appetitive faculties, examines medical 'eros' between a male and a female interlocutor and 'eros' as a medical case in a male protagonist, creates a cosmic androgyny through a mystic, all-encompassing circularity, and performs both a 'medicalization' of love dialectic and a 'sexualization' of encyclopaedism. As a result, Ebreo is always in the background for the Renaissance readers and writers in this study because he does not promote an inevitably fallen, imprisoned, and dissonant soul in the imperfect matter of the body but offers instead some

[8] It may be necessary to mention the women writers explicitly in this context, not only because there seems to be a feminine approach to medical practice (Pickstone, "Ways of Knowing," 456–57), but also because within the Western cultural tradition women have historically been more defined by their bodies and bodily functions; see, for example, Thomas Laqueur, *La fabrique du sexe: Essai sur le corps et le genre en Occident* (Paris: Gallimard, 1992) and Evelyne Berriot-Salvadore, *Un corps, un destin: La femme dans la médecine de la Renaissance* (Paris: Champion, 1993). Yet it should likewise be noted that scholarship has shown how early modern women contributed to the redefinition of their own bodies (Evelyne Berriot-Salvadore, *Les femmes dans la Société française de la Renaissance* [Geneva: Droz, 1990]) and to the rise of the vernacular (see, for example, June Hall McCash, "The Role of Women in the Rise of the Vernacular," *Comparative Literature* 60.1 [2008]: 45–57).

[9] See Figure 1, Petrus de Montagnana from (pseudo-)Ketham, *Fasiculo de medicina* (Venice: Zuane & Gregorio di Gregorii, 1494). Of particular interest to me is the medical library at the top of the image.

thought experiments that allow for a mitigated view of the otherwise corrupting restraints of the senses that harmonize the supposed discordance of body and soul and that do not merely lead to intellectual perfection or, potentially, to divine contemplation through poetic, Bacchic, prophetic, and erotic fury, but to the perfectibility that consists in acknowledging the physical and human aspect of cognition in a model of distribution or dispersion.

In fact, the French writers in this study are interested in *cognition* and in a particular form of it that we find poetically and philosophically expressed in Ebreo's *Dialoghi d'amore*, that is, embodied cognition or embodied knowledge-making.[10] It stages the physical aspect of the interlocutors Philo and Sophia (the beauty that one of them sees in the other and the effect it has), the causal role that the body plays in their dialogic interaction concerning love, the physically constitutive function of corporeal beauty in cognitive processing, and a dynamic faculty of the soul that I describe as appetitive. It also creates, through the mere representation of two individuals and their characteristic way of speaking, a materialist psychology and a material expression of inwardness.[11] And among the four models in a taxonomy of relations between body and environment developed for early modernity, it corresponds best to the one of dispersion: in this model of distributed cognition, "the embodied mind extends across the environment in its functional reliance on culture and artifice," the passions are seen "as simultaneously internal and external and [do] not necessarily map onto an individual subject," but emotion and thought become intersubjective.[12] The most important conduit in this model would be air in its early modern definition as cosmological medium, world soul, and human soul.[13] In many cases, the writers in this study provide factual evidence of familiarity with Ebreo's *Dialoghi*, which I point out at the end of chapter 1; in some cases, such as in chapter 4, I

[10] A useful introduction to this concept is found in the entry by Robert A. Wilson and Lucia Foglia, "Embodied Cognition," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2011 Edition), Edward N. Zalta, ed., http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fa112011/entries/embodied-cognition/, and, more specifically, see the introduction by Christopher Lawrence and Stephen Shapin to their coedited volume *Science Incarnate: Historical Embodiments of Natural Knowledge* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1998).

[11] A way of analyzing early modern subjectivity that was pioneered by Gail Kern Paster who notably showed how the notion of female inconstancy was derived from the way women's bodies interacted with the environment (*The Body Embarrassed: Drama and the Discipline of Shame in Early Modern England* [Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1993]). Building on her work, Michael Schoenfeldt showed how "self-discipline not only entailed the forced assimilation of corporeal urges to societal pressure but also produced the parameters of individual subjectivity" (*Bodies and Selves in Early Modern England*: *Physiology and Inwardness in Spenser, Shakespeare, Herbert, and Milton* [Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999], 15).

[12] Mary Floyd-Wilson and Garrett A. Sullivan, eds., *Environment and Embodiment in Early Modern England* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 6. The other three models being similitude as exemplified by the work of Timothy Reiss, exchange exemplified by Paster and Schoenfeldt, and counteraction.

[13] See, for example, Sergius Kodera, "Disease, Infection, Cognition: Air as Universal and Daemonic Mediator in Renaissance Aristotelianism and Neoplatonism," *Disreputable Bodies: Magic, Medicine, and Gender in Renaissance Natural Philosophy* (Toronto: Center for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2010), 133–70.

establish its likelihood. But primarily all writers engage in a literary exchange, that is, in the use of similar arguments, stylistic devices, categories, images, or concepts.[14]

Second, like Ebreo, a number of the writers presented here are either humanists with medical training or physicians with a humanistic education and could therefore be called *medical humanists*.[15] In addition, all of them are interested in and informed by the natural and psychological philosophy of their day and many of them write works that can be considered as literature or that help develop an early modern literary consciousness.[16] And so they often emphasize the transformative power of their reading or writing experience (and may encourage us to live our own). One such example is the emotional reaction that Gournay experienced upon discovering Montaigne's *Essais*, the hellebore that was recommended to remedy her supposed obsession, and the salutary decision she then made to meet the author and to launch her writing career. Another example is Montaigne's deep mourning after the untimely death of his friend Etienne de La Boétie and the subsequent consolation he felt upon drafting his essays. A third instance is the (early) modern readers' surprise at the jokes in Rabelais's oeuvre that the author explicitly intended to stimulate the therapeutic affects, such as laughter.[17] In describing and exemplifying such transformative literary experiences the medical humanists in *Writing as Medication* differ, for example, from those discussed in some recent volumes on literature and medicine.[18]

Third, the writers in this study may regard themselves as analysts adept at dissecting sometimes body parts, sometimes textual passages, thus participating in a development of *medical culture*. In this they complement Andreas Vesalius who praised the manual work of anatomists and their expert use of the hand, the most important instrument for those who trust their own eyes more than the authoritative texts.[19] Later, William Harvey put it similarly, stating that in the course of numerous dissections of live animals he tried

[14] This is also what distinguishes this study, on one hand, from a project in the history of medicine, and on the other hand, from an 'Ebreian' reading of the French writers in which I might, for example, be looking for quotes from the *Dialoghi* in Montaigne's *Essais*—a potentially futile undertaking, because Montaigne makes fun of Ebreo (see chapter 1, this volume).

[15] So defined by Hiro Hirai, *Medical Humanism and Natural Philosophy: Renaissance Debates on Matter, Life, and the Soul* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 3. François Rabelais and Jacques Dubois would be prime examples of this category.

[16] For this term, see chapter 8 in Hugo Friedrich, *Montaigne* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1991) and the conclusion to this volume.

[17] All of these issues have been discussed in scholarly literature. On Rabelais's laughter, for example, see chapter 3, note 7, this volume.

[18] Florence E. Glaze and Brian K. Nunce, eds., *Between Text and Patient: The Medical Enterprise in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Florence: SISMEL/Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2011) or Stephen Pender and Nancy Struever, eds., *Rhetoric and Medicine in Early Modern Europe* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2012). Both volumes initially caught my eye because they operate a constant transfer between text and medical practice, yet they emphasize either the medical case study or the importance of reading and rhetoric to the healing process.

[19] "Nihil pestilentius irrepere potuisset, quam quod aliquando [...] medicina eousque lacerari cepit, quod primarium eius instrumentum manus operam in curando adhibens, sic neglectum est, ut ad plebeios ac disciplinis medicae arti subservientibus neutiquam instructos, id quasi videatur esse demandatum." Andreas Vesalius, *De humanis corporis fabrica libri septem* (Basilea, 1543), 2r.

first and foremost to determine the sense and the role of the movements of the heart because he saw with his own eyes—"per autopsiam"—and not through books and writings of others.[20] The interplay between authoritative medical texts, both classical and contemporary that are often juxtaposed with a goal to challenge hierarchies, and (auto)diagnosis provides the dynamic to my study, where medical learning is appropriated and even exploited by literature and literature is enriched or put to the test through conversations with passages and facts drawn from the contemporary medical corpus. Medicine being part of the humanistic project is of inherent interest as a complement: for many artists and authors of the European Renaissance, such as da Vinci, Ficino, Reuchlin, Agrippa, and Paracelsus, nature itself constitutes an immense living organism with a vegetative soul, earthen skin, rocky bones, and veins of water; the cosmos is thus an animated being of which man, the microcosm, is a part. Knowledge of this environment can be gained by reading and describing, analyzing and experimenting,[21] but also by faith and magic; consequently the skilled practitioner as well as the poet or philosopher may become a magician. This is why the physician may bring to his task a poetic sensibility that enables him, for example, to establish analogies between the stomach (the 'natural alchemist' of the body) and the microcosm, or to display an alchemical aesthetics, as it were (like a master who distills both in the course of the alchemical work and in the metaphysical realm).[22] But it is also why we have virulent critiques of medicine, such as Agrippa von Nettesheim's *De incertitudine et vanitate scientiarium* (1527), which is by no means the first such text, but has precursors in Roger Bacon, Nicholas of Cusa, Petrarch, Paracelsus, and others.[23] Montaigne likewise makes the uncertain nature of the discipline his topic in the "Apologie de Raimond Sebond."[24]

[20] William Harvey, *Exercitatio anatomica de motu cordis et sanguinis in animalibus* (Frankfurt am Main, 1628), chapter 1.

[21] According to three of Pickstone's ways of knowing (*Ways of Knowing*, 10–20).

[22] Jean-Marc Mandosio, "L'Alchimie dans les classifications des sciences et des arts à la Renaissance," in *Alchimie et philosophie à la Renaissance: Actes du colloque international de Tours (4–7 Décembre 1991)*, ed. by Jean-Claude Margolin and Sylvain Matton (Paris: J. Vrin, 1993), 11–41 (19). Schoenfeldt discusses a number of digestive metaphors from mainly English literary sources (*Bodies and Selves in Early Modern England*, 25–32).

[23] Indeed, the status of medicine remains uncertain from Pliny and Celsus through many early modern figures such as Anton Francesco Bertini, Robert Burton, Bernardino Ramazzini, or Lionardo Di Capoa who all replay and originate controversy and recognize false starts and theoretical hubris. A wonderful basic source is Nancy Fontaine Osborne's *The Doctor in the French Literature of the Sixteenth Century* (New York: King's Crown Press, 1946): in five chapters dedicated to the doctor, the apothecary, the charlatan, remedies and cures, and medical practices Osborne offers a wealth of literary portraits, anecdotes, and contemporary critiques. Angus Gowland dedicates some space to humanist critiques of medicine in *The Worlds of Renaissance Melancholy: Robert Burton in Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2006, 100–122). For broader reading, see Solomon Posen's two volumes titled *The Doctor in Literature* (Oxford: Radcliffe Publishing, 2005) and Dominique Brancher's study *Équivoques de la pudeur. Fabrique d'une passion à la Renaissance*, Geneva: Droz, 2015, 41–44 and passim.

[24] *Dictionnaire de Michel de Montaigne*, ed. by Philippe Desan [Paris: Champion, 2004], 645. For more on Montaigne's critique of medicine, see chapter 6, this volume.

Fourth, all of the writers compose *literature* and fashion themselves as writers in response to the medical learning with which they are familiar.[25] Such writers are not first and foremost engaged in theological pursuits. They do not primarily develop 'divinae litterae,' that is, advanced instruction, theology, knowledge, and commentary of the Bible. Instead, they engage in 'litterae humaniores,' which emerge from what is considered preparatory instruction—Latin grammar, commentary of secular authors, Latin poets, rhetoric—in short, nontheological writing.[26] Indeed, according to some humanists, it is the body that must be considered a veritable bible to be studied or nature as it is rather than as it is described in the printed pages of Galen. So recommend, for example, da Vinci and also Ebreo who has his character Philo suggest that Sophia recognize the ingenuity and wisdom of human anatomy.[27] At the same time, writers like da Vinci and Ebreo affirm their subjectivity as authors, which has led one critic to name Clément Marot or the Rabelais of the *Tiers livre* the first authors per se, whereas another scholar makes a case for Martin Luther.[28] Though not everyone will agree with such claims, it is evident that, during the 1530s in France, a writer like Crenne is utterly conscious of being an author, of both producing and posing as a literary subject in quest of authorship.[29] The attentive

[25] This point concerning the birth of the literary profession and the relationship between literature and the sciences could be approached from a different angle, namely by looking at the debates held in Italian and French academies in the way that Frances Yates exemplified it in her work. Yet following her lead in this context would result in a very different study than the one I am offering here.

[26] This is also the reason why I do not see the relationship between 'science' and 'religion' as the main focus of chapter 4 on Renaissance soul-searching. Likewise, I make the medical aspect in Rabelaisian transmigration the focus of chapter 3, though I am of course aware that there are theological issues that could be addressed.

[27] *Les carnets de Léonard de Vinci* (Paris: Gallimard, 1942), 31. Leo Hebraeus, *Dialoghi d'amore*, ed. by Carl Gebhardt (Heidelberg: Winter, 1929), 115r: "Conosci bene, massimamente se vedessi la Notomia del corpo humano, & d'ogn'una de le sue parti, con quanta sottilità d'arte e sapientia è composto & formato, che in ciascuno di quelli ti si presentaria l'immensa sapientia, providentia, & cura di Dio nostro Creatore (Come dice Iob) Di mia carne veggo Dio"; *Dialogues of Love*, trans. by Cosmos Damian Bacich and Rossella Pescatori (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2009), 312: "You know it well, and you would stand even more amazed when you see the anatomy of the human frame and of each of its parts, with how much cunning ingenuity and wisdom it is contrived and fashioned, for in every part the immense wisdom, providence, and care of God the creator is revealed. As Job says, 'In my flesh I see God.'"

[28] Yves Delègue, *La perte des mots: Essai sur la naissance de la 'littérature' aux XVIe et XVIIe siècles* (Strasbourg: Presses Universitaires de Strasbourg, 1990), 81, and his *Le Royaume d'exil: Le sujet de la littérature en quête d'auteur* (Paris: Obsidiane, 1991), 33, 37. In *L'intention du poète: Clément Marot 'autheur'* (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2014), Guillaume Berthon has recently filled in many details concerning Marot's work as writer and editor. Alain Viala made the case for Luther as the first author (*Naissance de l'écrivain: Sociologie de la littérature à l'âge classique* [Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1985], 96).

[29] In the sense in which Foucault meant it when he asked at what point the writing subject begins to function as an author ("Qu'est-ce qu'un auteur?" *Bulletin de la Société française de Philosophie*, 63.3 [1969]: 73–104)). I would like to state in this context that I continue to read Hélisenne de Crenne's work as that of one early modern woman writer, unlike Anne Réach-Ngô, *L'Écriture*

pursuit of writing as a profession together with its technological side, which enables distribution and ownership, gives rise to a new class of 'men of letters.'[30]

Fifth, the writers in this study actively and consciously contribute to the *formation of the French language*.[31] While the unfolding of a descriptive, empirical method that is promoted during the European Renaissance by the advent of the book has been analyzed by Lorraine Daston, Katherine Park, Anthony Grafton, Nancy Siraisi, and Brian Ogilvie, to name a few,[32] the importance of language itself for the rise of empirical inquiry in early modern medicine and the natural sciences has been less frequently discussed.[33] Yet it is in part the desire to access existing knowledge and, if possible, to make it available to a wider public through translation that encourages the humanists to master foreign languages and rhetoric as well as to nourish the emerging vernacular, even though they

éditoriale à la Renaissance: Genèse et promotion du récit sentimental français (1530–1560) (Geneva: Droz, 2013). See also chapter 2, this volume, note 29.

[30] Lucien Febvre and Henri Jean Martin suggest that it is a 'neologism' to use the term 'man of letters' before the advent of printing (*L'Apparition du livre* [Paris: A. Michel, 1971]). For more on this term, especially with regard to women writers, see conclusion, this volume.

[31] In that they are like Charles Estienne and Jacques Grevin, or Jean Canappe, Jean Liebault, Ambroise Paré, André Du Laurens, and Jacques Ferrand. For the latter two, see Radu Suciu, "Discours savant et séduction littéraire chez André Du Laurens," in *Vulgariser la médecine: Du style médical en France et en Italie (XVIe et XVIIe siècles)* (Geneva: Droz, 2009), 55–76, and, in the same volume, Michel Jeanneret, "Un médecin poète: Jacques Ferrand et son *Traité* (...) *de la mélancolie érotique*," 77–91.

[32] Brian Ogilvie, *The Science of Describing: Natural History in Renaissance Europe* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2006); Anthony Grafton and Nancy Siraisi, *Natural Particulars: Nature and the Disciplines in Renaissance Europe*; Lorraine Daston and Katharine Park, eds., *Wonders and the Order of Nature 1150–1750* (New York: Zone Books, 1998).

[33] Though there is some scholarship on the role of the vernacular in France, especially around Louise Bourgeois Boursier, a practicing Parisian midwife who wrote manuals on obstetrics and childbirth, such as *Recit veritable de la naissance de Messeigneurs et Dames enfans de France*, 1626 (see Valérie Worth-Stylianou, "'Que tout cela eust mieux esté en latin, que en François': L'emploi de la langue française dans la diffusion du savoir obstétrical au XVIe siècle en France," in *Pratique et pensée médicales à la Renaissance*, ed. by Jacqueline Vons [Paris: De Boccard, 2009], 173–86) and there also has been interest in some other vernacular medical treatises on human reproduction by François Rousset, Jean Liebault, Jacques Guillemeau, Jacques Duval, and Louis de Serres (see Valerie Worth-Stylianou, trans., *Pregnancy and Birth in Early Modern France: Treatises by Caring Physicians and Surgeons (1581–1625)* [Toronto: Center for Reformation and Renaissance Studies , 2013]). For the Spanish context, Michael R. Solomon gives an interesting case study of Luis Lobera di Avila's *The Garden of Health* (1542) in which a vernacular manual is framed with Latin marginal glosses that supposedly serve to conjure up the authoritative presence of the physician ("Spectacles of Erudition: Physicians and Vernacular Medical Writing in Early Modern Spain," *Digital Proceedings of the Lawrence J. Schoenberg Symposium on Manuscript Studies in the Digital Age* 1.1, http://repository.upenn.edu/ljsproceedings/v011/iss1/6). The same scholar also analyses the role of vernacular medical writing as an early modern form of self-help in *Fictions of Well-Being: Sickly Readers and Vernacular Medical Writing in Late Medieval and Early Modern Spain* (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 2010).

are often equally seduced by a strong preference for eloquence.[34] Jacques Dubois (Jacobus Sylvius), anatomist and one of Vesalius's initial teachers, while translating into humanistic Latin and annotating a series of medical texts found in the collection *Opera de medicamentorum purgantium delectu castigatione, & usu, libri duo* (1542), also wrote a French grammar, albeit in Latin, *In linguam Gallicam isagoge* (1531). Symphorien Champier, feeling that some medical practitioners of his time did not know Latin well enough to acquire the necessary skills, offered to remedy this lack by publishing his herbal in French (*Myrouel des apothicaires et pharmacopoles*, ca. 1525).[35] Jacques Peletier du Mans wrote works on mathematics in addition to his *Art poétique* (1555) and the first French translation of Horace's *Ars poetica* (1545). The pleasure and pride such authors took in developing and using the French language informed many literary depictions of the body, the mind, and the conditions of nature. At the same time, their medical skills, knowledge, and interests necessitated and promoted a preoccupation with language formation. In emphasizing this reciprocity in my work I differ, for example, from the scholars mentioned above.[36]

The aims of *Writing as Medication in Early Modern France* are to contribute to, and to complement discussions on, the link or disparity between the physical body and the mind, pre-Cartesian depictions of the mind, the emergence of medical discourses in early modern (French) culture, and the study of the emotions. This book also seeks to determine early modern notions of 'author' and 'literature' as well as to trace the popularization of medical discourses in early modern France and Europe in the literary examples mentioned. *Writing as Medication in Early Modern France* is situated between the history of science and the observation of (human) nature. Its methodology therefore consists in a careful reading of medical and philosophical treatises that were often written by the teachers, friends, or acquaintances of the authors chosen or by the authors themselves, such as in the case of Ebreo or Rabelais, who both practiced medicine while the latter also edited and furnished commentaries of Hippocrates and Galen. In this way there emerges a set of intellectually versatile authors who are well informed about discussions

[34] One example of inspiration through the letter would be Geofroy Tory's *Champfleury* (1529), a work that seems to render Lucretian atoms concrete through the printed letter. An interesting case that goes against the wave of translations into the vernacular is the 1564 Latin version of Ebreo's *Dialoghi*, which Saverio Campanini discusses in "De Leone Ebreo à Leo Hebraeus: Un texte philosophique de la Renaissance et l'impact de sa traduction latine," in *Traduire de vernaculaire en latin au Moyen Age et à la Renaissance: Méthodes et finalités*, ed. by Françoise Fery-Hue (Paris: L'Ecole des Chartes, 2013), 221–47.

[35] "Et pource que les Cirurgiens François lesquelz sont et prennent leur cirurgie de Montpellier, communément ni entendent ni sçavent parler latin, mais ont leurs livres, comme Guidon, de Vigo, Gourdon, translatez en françoys, et aussi la pluspart des Appothiquaires sont ignorans la grammaire et n'entendent latin, si n'est le latin de cuisine ou bien passé par le crible et non par l'estamine, j'ay bien voulu rédiger les erreurs par eulx faictz, les quelles j'ay escript en latin à mon livre Castigationum, et réduire par manière de épithomé en nostre langue gallicane, affin que les Appothiquaires et Cyrurgiens Barbiers n'ayent cause de ignorance envers Dieu et le monde" (*Le Myrouel des apothiquaires et pharmacopoles*, [Paris: Welter, 1894], 23–24). For a good survey on the status of Champier's intended readers, see Franck Collard and Évelyne Samama, eds., *Pharmacopoles et apothicaires: Les "pharmaciens" de l'Antiquité au Grand Siècle* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2006).

[36] See note 18, above.

in the medical fields of their time and who are aware that medicine is at the basis of the anthropological project of humanism.

Methodology

In between fact and fable, the writers in this project may, of course, promote the popularization of medicine in the sense in which Roy Porter analyzed it for the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries when great sociocultural forces transformed early modern Europe:

> the deployment of printing as what Elizabeth Eisenstein has called "an agent of change," and the rise of the book trade; the spread of formal schooling and standardized education; the growth of literacy and the reading habit, with its accompanying conviction in the authority of the book; the development of the family ideal; the rise of authorship as a vocation, a sideline, a religious calling, a bid for fame, the forging, in the new nation-states of Europe, of serviceable vernaculars, shared by learned élites and common people alike, in place of the earlier dependence upon Latin as the language of learning, including medicine.[37]

I am aware that medical writing in the vernacular or literary writing about medical issues cannot be equated automatically with an intention to popularize.[38] But it is clear that the literary pieces I discuss are not exclusively destined to be read by doctors, far from it, or a university-educated international readership. Taking my cue from Porter, I use popular not as the contrast between high and low culture or written and oral, not popular in the sense of protecting and educating the public as in Laurent Joubert's *Erreurs populaires au fait de la medicine et regime de santé* (1578), but in the sense that the writers take up medical problems in literary texts in order to test hypotheses, experiment with new findings, develop the French language, and find their own voice as authors. In this emergent 'popular' science it is medical culture that engenders texts and (in)forms literary consciousness.

I would affirm that I do not examine a coherent community, such as the Lyon poets, the Poitiers group, or Parisian writers, although I realize that the 'res publica literaria' of a region or of an imagined community may contribute through constant exchange to the universalization of the findings of that particular circle. Instead, I choose a series of texts or problems that may illustrate a prescientific mentality, speaking with Lucien Febvre, or obey certain epistemic principles, as Michel Foucault explained.[39] But, above all, the writers in this study engage in a discussion of sensory experience and a questioning of data that is then interpreted according to literary principles. Likewise, they pay particular

[37] Roy Porter, *The Popularization of Medicine, 1650–1850* (London: Routledge, 1992), 4

[38] This has been shown for France by Andrea Carlino and Michel Jeanneret's coedited collection *Vulgariser la médecine*.

[39] Lucien Febvre, *Le problème de l'incroyance au XVIe siècle: La religion de Rabelais* (Paris: Michel, 1942). Michel Foucault, *Les mots et les choses: Une archéologie des sciences humaines* (Paris: Gallimard, 1966).

attention to the body as a data-producing entity, to the body as reason-producing matter. If therefore this study can demonstrate that it is fruitful to examine Ebreo in tandem with a number of French Renaissance writers, and not always in chronological order, then the reasons for such a reading should be that he asks a number of pertinent questions: What are the relations between flesh and spirit, body and soul, their effects on health and illness, and their roles in human dysfunction and repair? What are emotions, how do they originate and how do they affect human interaction? How do emotions influence our view of the world and our metaphysics? What are the effects of emotions on ethics and aesthetics? What is emotional intelligence and what is its relationship to our physical awareness and our analytical abilities? How does the brain receive images and how do they in turn influence speech or discourse in general as well as our bodily reactions?

All these questions are played out in the works I discuss in chapters 2 through 6, which do not pretend to be exhaustive of all writing going on at the time, but rather offer a cohesive picture of the problematic mapped out above. The first chapter thus is of a different status than the following ones, where I examine sixteenth-century French literary authors and read them either alongside particular medical texts or discourses, or alongside broader sets of discourses about the soul. In other words, with Ebreo's embodied cognition as background material I approach Crenne's lovesickness and her ensuing death experience that leads to literary immortality, Epistemon's death and reawakening, the natural philosophical poets' fascination with transmigration, Gournay's humoral view of the individual and her alchemical approach to social interaction, and Montaigne's evacuative strategies. While the literary samples in this reading are meant to be representative, I do draw on much more of an individual author's work than the initial episode that serves as an entrée for each chapter's problematic. I thus propose to look at the medical components these particular authors explore or at the medical problems they appropriate in order to determine what they may contribute to the concept of the early modern literary. I do this in six chapters that can be read either as independent essays or serve as links in the overall argument: this structure corresponds to the diversity of topics and writing styles within the study of early modern cognition.

In developing the ensuing six chapters I bear considerable debts, and not merely to those historians of science who have determined several paradigm shifts for the sixteenth century.[40] I am also indebted to the philosophers who have pointed out how descriptions of mental states gradually change throughout that time.[41] But I equally draw on the historians of medicine who have developed approaches to the intellectual atmosphere of

[40] Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1962). This has more recently inspired Hanne Andersen, Peter Barker, and Xiang Chen's *The Cognitive Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2006).

[41] Most importantly, Michel Foucault, *Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique* (Paris: Plon, 1961). I appreciate Foucault in the sense that he built on Nietzsche's making the body central to philosophical discussions, for example, in Zarathustra's statement that soul is merely a word to designate something on the body (Friedrich Nietzsche, *Sämtliche Werke. Kritische Studienausgabe*, ed. by Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari [Berlin: de Gruyter, 1988], vol. 4, 39). Foucault also determined the end of the eighteenth century as the moment when medicine becomes a science (*Naissance de la clinique: Une archéologie du regard médical* [Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1972]).

the Renaissance, who have described the importance of humoral theory, and who have defined notions of the mind before the rise of neurology.[42] In addition I have learned from the modern scientists who have tried to come to terms with the mind-body dichotomy stipulated by Western intellectual history.[43] I build on the scholars of literature and intellectual history who have linked not only science and literature but also, and more specifically, literature and medicine, which is now a fully established field of research.[44] In sum, in *Writing as Medication in Early Modern France* I discuss a group of Renaissance writers who regard literary writing (and reading) as curative—both on the textual level and from a readerly perspective—while borrowing from medical discourse and while choosing to compose in the vernacular. All of them are interested in and informed by the natural and psychological philosophy of their day and all of them write works that can be considered as literature or that help develop an early modern notion of what is literary. This book therefore analyzes medicine as a place of cultural encounters and is a complement to studies that privilege the Cartesian exploration of the mind-body relationship.[45]

[42] Andrew Cunningham, *The Anatomical Renaissance: The Resurrection of the Anatomical Projects of the Ancients* (Aldershot: Scolars' Press, 1997); Noga Arikha, *Passions and Tempers* (New York: Ecco, 2007); Carl Zimmer, *Soul Made Flesh* (New York: Free Press, 2004).

[43] See above all the work by Antonio Damasio, *Descartes' Error* (New York: Putnam, 1994); *The Feeling of What Happens* (Orlando: Harcourt, 1999); *Looking for Spinoza* (Orlando: Harcourt, 2003); *Self Comes to Mind* (New York: Pantheon, 2010).

[44] With a division at the annual meeting of the Modern Language Association of America, for example; this developed from a discussion group in 1974, when the initial division and group structure was established, into a division almost immediately in 1976. The MLA also published a volume titled *Teaching Literature and Medicine*, ed. by Anne Hunsaker Hawkins and Marilyn Chandler McEntyre (New York: Modern Language Association, 2000).

[45] These are some of many points in which I set my work apart from the research on the history of the body that has been done over the past decades, such as Marie-Christine Pouchelle, *Corps et chirurgie à l'apogée du moyen âge* (Paris: Flammarion, 1983); Francis Barker, *The Tremulous Private Body: Essays on Subjection* (London: Methuen 1984); Michel Fehler et al., *Fragments for a History of the Human Body* (New York: Zone, 1989); Drew Leder, *The Body in Medical Thought and Practice* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1992); Lucy Gent and Nigel Llewellyn, *Renaissance Bodies: The Human Figure in English Culture, c. 1540–1660* (London: Reaktion Books, 1990); Gail Kern Paster, *The Body Embarrassed: Drama and the Discipline of Shame in Early Modern England* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1993); Jonathan Sawday, *The Body Emblazoned: Dissection and the Human Body in Renaissance Culture* (London: Routledge, 1996 [1995]); Andrew Cunningham, *The Anatomical Renaissance*; David Hillman and Carla Mazzio, *The Body in Parts: Fantasies of Corporeality in Early Modern Europe* (New York: Routledge, 1997); Peter G. Platt, *Reason Diminished: Shakespeare and the Marvelous* (Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1997); Darryll Grantley and Nina Taunton, *The Body in Late Medieval and Early Modern Culture* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000); Gail Kern Paster, Katherine Rowe, and Mary Floyd-Wilson, eds., *Reading the Early Modern Passions: Essays in the Cultural History of Emotion* (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 2004).

Chapter Summaries

In this introductory chapter I show that Ebreo's *Dialogues of Love* (*Dialoghi d'amore,* 1535—written ca. 1502) provides an essential background for the French authors in this study: he not only is a mediator between Neoplatonic, Christian, Arab, and Hebraic theories of cognition for the wider European and non-European context but he also describes what could be called a process of embodied knowledge-making in the context of linguistic, intellectual, and medical currents prevalent in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Europe. Ebreo offers an epistemology in which the soul functions as mirror and link between the higher and lower spheres; cognition happens by way of a detour, an anti-Platonic foray into the physical world, which is potentially re-created and performed in the dialogues between a desiring male instructor (Philo) and an inquisitive and supposedly ignorant female student (Sophia). In discussing the world, these two interlocutors develop an ideology of embodied cognition that is grounded in Platonism and in which all being is fused in a circle of love turning from God to matter and returning back to God: in this way, all parts of the entire universe, including their own mating souls or those organs' individual faculties, are poetically connected by an artist creator. In developing this trajectory, Ebreo defines a number of medico-philosophical concepts, such as love, cognition, copulation, transmigration, soul, and the androgyne; these concepts are part of an anatomy of love and desire, the most fundamental of human emotions. This, I argue, is what makes him particularly interesting to French Renaissance readers.

One of the key elements of Ebreo's dialogues is the ironic illustration of lovesickness embodied by Philo who is so blinded by theories that he is prevented from ever recognizing Sophia throughout their lengthy conversation. Consequently, chapter 2 is a discussion of female love-melancholy as a physical illness that draws on a proliferation of humanistic treatises on lovesickness and its treatment in order to elaborate a body of diagnosis that eventually results in the corpus of a text, a three-part epic quest materialized in a small, white, bound volume at the end of a novel. Marguerite Briet alias Hélisenne de Crenne appropriates Galenic and stilnovist 'pneumo-physiology' in order to depict her heroine's sickness, which the latter, though she succumbs to it, overcomes by composing a literary work. Briet's narrator creates her own distinctive literary style, poses visibly as an author, and emphasizes the appetitive soul as the prime mover of her plight, not realizing that her object of love, Guenelic, is unaware of the suffering he causes, unlike her husband who watches her mental and physical struggle. The text of the *Angoysses douloureuses* constitutes a diagnosis as well as a symptom since it features the overlong and wordy expression of a choleric lovesick mind that stretches a never-ending quest into the beyond; whether it is also a therapy for the (fictitious) writer is doubtful, because Hélisenne dies over its composition having to content herself with literary glory, but that it is intended as preventative therapy for mostly female readers is expressly stated at the beginning of the book. That Marguerite Briet would have enjoyed writing her three-volume confabulation immensely, which in its tripartite structure is not unlike Ebreo's *Dialoghi*, can be assumed.

In chapter 3, I dissect the death of Rabelais's Epistemon and his rebirth, which is prompted by a practice illustrating a medical quarrel of the time. Like Philo-Sophia in Ebreo's *Dialoghi d'amore*, the character and sign Epistemon can be read in multiple

ways: literally as the patient healed by the Panurgic cure, as an allegory of Christian and Neoplatonic rebirth, as moral interpreter of other worlds, and, anagogically, as the incarnation of a spiritual panacea for the new age. Writing in the wake of Symphorien Champier, an anti-Arabist, Rabelais, the doctor trained in the Arab-influenced medical school of Montpellier, plays on the quarrel between Arabist empiricists and observationist innovators.[46] Like Philo and Sophia, Epistemon performs a concretization of linguistic, medical, moral, and philosophical concepts. He embodies a readerly transformation experience through his reawakening due to the wonder drug invented by Panurge, a medication that can also be read as the cure-all represented by Rabelais's book, which reflects an epochal shift.

What does it mean to explore medical learning in a particular literary genre? Which genres lend themselves best to an exchange between medical and literary cultures? Certainly poetry serves less frequently as a complement to medical learning than prose, shown by the relatively limited number of works dedicated at least partly to depictions of the soul, which I analyze in chapter 4. Here I draw on a group of natural philosophical poets who play out the notion of metempsychosis in order to test the relationship between body and mind and between fact and fiction in conversation with the (factual and fictitious) anatomy of the brain. I trace Ebreo's cosmoeroticism through a corpus of encyclopaedic verse that begins, by way of introduction, with Maurice Scève's perfectible human mind, then moves to Peletier du Mans's scientific-amorous journey through the spheres, from here to Pierre de Ronsard's endeavor to map out the limits of what the human mind may grasp, then on to Guillaume Du Bartas's all-encompassing appetitive soul in order to finally arrive at René Bretonnayau's depiction of the human soul and its receptacle as a universe. This chapter best illustrates that for poets the mind is an adventure, partly anatomical, partly imaginary, that inspires them to create inner landscapes and myths shaped by the (physical) interaction of the appetitive soul with its environment.

Chapter 5 features Marie de Gournay who, drawing on theories by Juan Huarte de San Juan, develops her self-portrait as temperamentally, that is, physically or constitutionally suited to writing and seizes on the alchemical construct of an androgynous soul in order to establish herself in a male-centered professional universe. By describing her temperament in physiological terms as warm and dry, qualities associated with the masculine, she redefines herself and her social and literary roles and inserts herself into a discourse reserved for men. She further problematizes the ambient misogyny, which assumes masculine superiority over the feminine by alluding to alchemy in her writing and, presumably, by practicing that art. Jean d'Espagnet, her acquaintance and one of many fellow alchemists, stipulates that in alchemy, perfection can only be achieved by the conjunction of masculine and feminine principles, often portrayed as Sol and Luna; this runs counter to the Aristotelian principle of man as the perfected state of being. Hence, her mentor Montaigne and she can become a perfect reincarnation of Philo and Sophia, the quintessential androgyne, through their soul's appetitive faculties. In this way, Gournay's use of alchemy as a method and metaphor may point to a form of authorization, to a mixture of temperaments in conversation, and to a way of writing reminiscent of Montaigne's *Essais* that represents, after all, an alchemical process.

[46] For the connection between Champier and Rabelais, see chapter 3, this volume ("Toward an Anagogical Interpretation: B. Symphorien Champier and François Rabelais").

In chapter 6 I read Montaigne alongside Jacques Dubois's medical annotations to the *Opera de medicamentorum purgantium delectu* by John Mesue (Yūḥannā ibn Māsawayh), a key work of pharmaceutics consulted widely until the late seventeenth century. As an interested amateur, Montaigne displays impressive knowledge of contemporary pharmacology and purgative practices. He also explores what it means for the writer to be afflicted with certain maladies, to have a family history of problems associated with the kidney or bladder stone, and he elaborates, in the course of composing the *Essais*, how he learns to purge his bladder in the way he purges his bowels in the way he purges his mind. Therapeutic purging thus becomes a way to describe not only corporeal, but also mental processes and leads me to determine the physical aspects in the essayist's description of the soul, a material soul that resides in a thinking body due to a reversal of hierarchies that we also find in Ebreo. The idea of evacuative strategies resurfaces in a number of Montaigne's metaphors and essays, such as the one on repenting, and constitutes an integral part of his intellectual project.

Writing as Medication in Early Modern France constitutes an inquiry into the so-called Scientific Revolution, but from a literary angle. In the conclusion, I seek to draw the implications of my study for early modern research, for modern discourses, as well as for some scientific research projects connected with my topic, such as inquiries into attractions among human beings or cognitive and neurobiological processes in sense experience and mood disorders. In this way, I hope to show that early modern writers who thought about their physical, mental, and emotional selves might contribute to a genealogy of modern psychology or psychiatry. The writers in this study are important contributors, experimenters, fact finders, teachers, mediators, excavators, anatomists, and analysts in the process. Their competencies as Hellenists, Latinists, and linguists are often equaled by their skill in the medical fields in which they work. And though the different branches of modern historiography, literature, linguistics, medicine, biology, anatomy, or psychology are about to be formed and developed, these writers are still sufficiently steeped in the Aristotelian notion of philosophy, that is, a love of wisdom that integrates all these fields.[47]

And where else should we start the quest for wisdom but with the anatomy of the soul? As for Montaigne, the workings of the mind, that is, intellection and imagination are fascinating to the writers discussed in this book who, however, all consider the body indispensable for cognitive processes. The set of authors I examine are curious about the medical debates of their day and aware of the therapeutic possibilities of their texts, they contribute to the rise of the vernacular, they write literary texts destined for a nonspecialist readership, and they are interested in what we might call embodied cognition. In exploring the body-mind relationship they all share stock images from the poetic tradition that they link to a contemporary medico-philosophical apparatus. These stock images frequently consist in common Neoplatonic themes, which, in the cases discussed, are not transmitted by Marsilio Ficino and Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, but transformed and subverted by Ebreo's theory of embodied knowledge-making. Hence, Ebreo's role in intellectual history is weighty because as a philosopher, poet, and medical practitioner he creates an anatomy of love in which the soul and its functions sometimes take precedence

[47] Cunningham, *The Anatomical Renaissance*, 13–14.

over the body, sometimes are subordinate to it, and in which the mental and physical permeate each other on all levels of human existence. Consequently, we need to look at his influence in early modern France and explain why it may be fruitful to read the *Dialoghi d'amore* rather than Pico and Ficino together with the literary and medical texts in this study.

Leone Ebreo's *Dialoghi d'amore*: Appeal and Reception

The reason why the *Dialoghi d'amore* provoked so much interest among early modern readers may lie in the fact that in this text Ebreo presented thoughts, images, and topoi that were fashionable and current in humanistic debates in an open-ended and cornucopian literary form—dialogism—that allows for polyphony of viewpoints and poetic voices as well as for a multiplicity of interpretations.[48] Obviously, Platonic dialogues and their Neoplatonic revisions are the points of reference that first come to mind.[49] However, within the vast production of humanistic dialogue,[50] Ebreo's work is unique for several reasons. Given that in Plato's *Symposium* Diotima figures as a mere muse, and given that in many humanistic dialogues a group of male interlocutors participate in discussions, it is Ebreo's Sophia confronted with Philo's desire who will inspire Baldassarre Castiglione and Tullia d'Aragona, for example, to include female interlocutors in their own work.[51] Thanks to Sophia, Ebreo introduces not merely a novel spin on the Platonic as well as the medieval Jewish dialogue tradition,[52] but the philosophical banter between a lover and his lady is one of the reasons why the *Dialoghi* can also be read as courtly literature.[53]

[48] Cornucopian here refers to an abundance of words and sources.

[49] Ebreo did own Ficino, according to James Hankins, *Plato in the Italian Renaissance* (Leiden: Brill, 1991), 2: 742. For one discussion of Renaissance Platonic dialogue, including the *Dialoghi d'amore*, see Sabrina Ebbersmeyer, *Sinnlichkeit und Vernunft: Studien zur Rezeption und Transfomation der Liebestheorie Platons in der Renaissance* (München: Fink, 2002).

[50] See, for example, Dorothea Heitsch and Jean-François Vallée, eds., *Printed Voices: The Renaissance Culture of Dialogue* (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2004), and Anne Godard, *Le Dialogue à la Renaissance* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2001).

[51] See, for example, Menahem Dorman, "Léon l'Hebreu et Baldassarre Castiglione [Hebrew]," in *The Philosophy of Leone Ebreo: Four Lectures*, ed. by Menahem Dorman and Zvi Levy (Haifa: Ha-Kibbutz Hameuchad), 43–46.

[52] While presenting a woman philosopher: Abraham Melamed, "Women as Philosophers: The Image of Sophia in Y. Abravanel's *Dialoghi d'Amore*," *Jewish Studies* 40 (2000): 113–30. See also in this context Aaron W. Hughes, "Epigone, Innovator, or Apologist: The Case of Judah Abravanel," in *Epigonism and the Dynamics of Jewish Culture*, ed. by Shlomo Berger and Irene Zweip (Leuven: Peeters, 2008), 109–25, and "Translation and the Invention of Renaissance Jewish Culture: The Case of Judah Messer Leon and Judah Abravanel," in *The Hebrew Bible in Fifteenth-Century Spain*, 245–66.

[53] Hava Tirosh-Samuelson, "Jewish Philosophy on the Eve of Modernity," in *History of Jewish Philosophy*, ed. by Daniel H. Frank and Oliver Leaman (London: Routledge, 1997), 523; Aaron W. Hughes, *The Art of Dialogue in Jewish Philosophy* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2008), 109. In this context, we should also keep in mind the tradition of 'trattati d'amore' whose most recent analysis occurs in Ian Moulton's *Love in Print in the Sixteenth Century: The Popularization of Romance*

Furthermore, within the history of ideas, Ebreo may be grouped with Agrippa von Nettesheim's and other authors' praise of women,[54] but equally with treatises on the dignity of man, such as Petrarch's and Pico's, for example,[55] and more generally with humanistic definitions of man in relation to the animals, such as Anselm Turmeda's *Disputa de l'ase*, or yet again with texts that celebrate human creativity as almost divine, like Nicolas of Cusa's *De coniecturis* and *De docta ignorantia*. Though, according to Gregor Reisch's *Margarita philosophica*, cognition may be based on the senses, man, thanks to his soul, may also partake of eternity and immortality and is therefore endowed with immortal features. Therefore, man is a 'vinculum mundi' ('copula'), according to Pico and Ficino, because his soul both ties the elemental, spherical, and angelical cosmos together and contains the microcosm;[56] Ebreo, however, enlarges the notion of the all-encompassing link or band to his signature term of a cosmic 'copulation.' He thus inquires into issues that were not previously addressed in Spanish Jewish philosophy—such as attaining supreme harmony through desire—and in this way he is perceived as having an Aristotelian naturalist bent where the intellectual-spiritual as well as the physical dimensions are stressed in the contemplation of poetic love.[57] Indeed, on a philosophical level, Ebreo has been described as an Averroistic Maimonidean who uses the genre of dialogue to present a syncretistic worldview.[58]

In addition, Ebreo's *Dialoghi* may bear a debt to the *Consolatio philosophiae* by Boethius, to Alain de Lille's *De planctu naturae*, to Augustine's *Soliloquia*, Andreas Cappelanus's *De amore libri tres*,[59] and, which has been less discussed, to medieval

(New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); Moulton does not read Ebreo, but concentrates on Castiglione, Mario Equicola, Antonio Tagliente, and Jacques Ferrand.

[54] Giovanni Boccaccio, *De mulieribus Claris*; Agrippa von Nettesheim, *De nobilitate et praecellentia foeminei sexus declamatio*. In France, such praise led to a particularly intense 'querelle des femmes' within the European dimension of this quarrel in which the relative merits of the sexes were debated.

[55] Francesco Petrarca, *De remedius utriusque fortunae*; Giovanni Pico de la Mirandola, *De hominis dignitate*; Bartolomeo Facio, *De excellentia ac praestantia hominis*; Giannozzo Manetti, *De dignitate et excellentia hominis*; Ambroise Paré, *Des animaux et de l'excellence de l'homme*. For some thoughts on French humanistic treatises on the dignity of man, see Eugène Bellec, *La thématique de la dignité de l'homme en France dans la seconde moitié du XVIe siècle* (Villeneuve d'Ascq: Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, 2000).

[56] Ficino, *Théologie platonicienne de l'immortalité des âmes*, ed. by Raymond Marcel, 2 vols. (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1964), 16.1, 3.2; Pico, *Heptaplus: Or, Discourse on the Seven Days of Creation* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1977).

[57] Jerry Nash, *The Love Aesthetics of Maurice Scève* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1991), 98.

[58] For an analysis of Ebreo's syncretism and its possible reasons, see Arthur M. Lesley, "Proverbs, Figures, and Riddles: The Dialogues of Love as a Hebrew Humanist Composition," in *The Midrashic Imagination: Jewish Exegesis, Thought, and History*, ed. by Michael Fishbane (Albany: State U of New York P, 1993). Averroism is a remnant of Aristotelianism that Ebreo may inadvertently sustain in his work, according to Alfred Ivry, "Remnants of Jewish Averroism in the Renaissance," in *Jewish Thought in the Sixteenth Century*, ed. by Bernard Dov Cooperman (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1983), 243–65.

[59] See Angela Guidi, *Amour et Sagesse: Les* Dialogues d'amour *de Juda Abravanel dans la tradition salomonienne* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 68–73.