

# Love, Lovesickness, and Melancholia<sup>1</sup>

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Love, lovesickness, and melancholia, these three terms have not always enjoyed the banal symbiosis that they do in our era.<sup>2</sup> Love was not always associated with lovesickness.<sup>3</sup> Yet on occasion it could be. Love's onset, especially if unconsummated, often brought lovesickness; and once this

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<sup>2</sup> The following works are cited by author's name and date of publication: D. A. Beecher and M. Ciavolella (eds. and trans.), *Jacques Ferrand. A Treatise on Lovesickness* (Syracuse 1990) (= Beecher and Ciavolella 1990); S. W. Jackson, *Melancholia and Depression: From Hippocratic Times to Modern Times* (New Haven 1986) (= Jackson 1986); R. Klibansky, E. Panofsky, and F. Saxl, *Saturn and Melancholy: Studies in the History of Natural Philosophy, Religion, and Art* (London 1964) (= Klibansky 1964); J. Pigeaud, *Folie et cures de la folie chez les médecins de l'antiquité gréco-romaine: "la manie"* (Paris 1987) (= Pigeaud 1987); P. Toohey, "Some Ancient Notions of Boredom," *ICS* 13 (1988) 151-64 (= Toohey 1988), and "Some Ancient Histories of Literary Melancholia," *ICS* 15 (1990) 143-61 (= Toohey 1990a), and "Acedia in Late Classical Antiquity," *ICS* 15 (1990) 339-52 (= Toohey 1990b); M. F. Wack, *Lovesickness in the Middle Ages: The "Vaticum" and its Commentaries* (Philadelphia 1990) (= Wack 1990).

<sup>3</sup> On lovesickness generally Wack 1990 cites: H. H. Biersterfeldt and D. Gutas, "The Malady of Love," *JAOS* 104 (1984) 21-55; H. Chrohn, "Zur Geschichte der Liebe als 'Krankheit'," *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 3 (1905) 66-86; M. Ciavolella, "La Tradizione dell' 'aegritudo amoris' nel 'Decameron'," *Giornale storico della letteratura italiana* 147 (1970) 496-517, and *La "malattia d'amore" dall' Antichità al Medioevo* (Rome 1976); A. Giedke, *Die Liebeskrankheit in der Geschichte der Medizin* (diss. med. Düsseldorf 1983); E. Rohde, *Der griechische Roman und seine Vorläufer*<sup>3</sup> (Leipzig 1914); H. Schadewaldt, "Der *Morbus amatorius* aus medizinhistorischer Sicht," in *Das Ritterbild in Mittelalter und Renaissance* (Düsseldorf 1985) 87-104; J. J. Winkler, *The Constraints of Desire: The Anthropology of Sex and Gender in Ancient Greece* (New York 1990).

*pestis*<sup>4</sup> was established its frustration could easily induce a viral recurrence.<sup>5</sup> Nor was lovesickness necessarily associated with melancholia. Yet, at least in the eyes of some, an attack of lovesickness could not easily be distinguished from an attack of depressive melancholia. The focus of this paper will be on the tenuous relationship among these three conditions, but especially on lovesickness<sup>6</sup> and melancholy.<sup>7</sup>

Why? It is a matter of origins and precedents. The combination of these emotions represents a powerful theme for Western literature, if not always Western experience. The theme was especially prominent in the literature of the Middle Ages.<sup>8</sup> During that period the literary theme of lovesickness, assuming the proportions almost of a textual epidemic, received considerable medical attention.<sup>9</sup> In this paper some of the more prominent ancient examples of lovesickness will be examined. The questions repeatedly to be asked are: Do these examples, first, have any basis in ancient medical thought and, second, do they have any resemblance to medieval and modern love-melancholy?

Three tentative conclusions will be offered. First, the depressed, fretting, passive, and physically ill lover (sometimes termed the love-melancholic), though present in ancient literature, is more a cliché of medieval and modern literary experience. The dominant reaction to frustrated love in ancient literature was manic and frequently violent. Second, lovesickness, in its literary depictions, mirrors the distinctions which the ancient medical writers posited for melancholia itself: There was a depressive type and there was a manic type. Third, the depressive variety of lovesickness becomes more frequent late in antiquity, perhaps during the first century after Christ. (Thus it is coeval with the "literary discovery" of depression.)<sup>10</sup> The form my discussion will take is as follows. After a brief outline of the prevailing ancient medical interpretations of lovesickness (Section I), illustrations will be provided of the corresponding literary

<sup>4</sup> Virgil's word; Dido is apostrophized at A. 1. 712 thus: *praecipue infelix, pesti devota futurae*. Compare Val. Fl. *Arg.* 7. 125. Here a feverish lap dog is being compared to lovesick Medea: *aegra nova iam peste canis rabieque futura*.

<sup>5</sup> By, for example, rejection, enforced separation, jealousy, or being cuckolded.

<sup>6</sup> There have been a number of terms used for this condition. Jackson (1986, 352) lists the following: love-melancholy (Robert Burton's term), lovesickness, love-madness, *amor hereos*, *amor heroicus*, heroic love ("hereos," "heroicus," and "heroical" are corruptions of the Greek word for love, ἔρως), the malady of hereos [*sic*], the lover's malady, erotomania.

<sup>7</sup> I take lovesickness (or love-melancholy, as it came to be known) as the product of *unconsummated* or perhaps unseasonably frustrated love. Thus jealousy is not here at issue. Bitinna in Herondas 5, for example, exhibits neither an unconsummated nor an unseasonably frustrated love relationship. The same point could be made of the soulful amatory frustrations of Roman elegiac poetry (thus Propertius 1. 5, 1. 9, and 1. 19, or Tibullus 2. 4 and 2. 6). More on elegy below, notes 22 and 30.

<sup>8</sup> See, most recently, Wack 1990, and Beecher and Ciavolella 1990.

<sup>9</sup> See Jackson 1986, and Beecher and Ciavolella 1990.

<sup>10</sup> Toohey 1990a.

portraits (Section II). Section III will look at examples of manic lovesickness which do not correspond to the medical views. In the fourth section I will attempt to show how both forms of lovesickness match prevailing ancient notions of melancholia.

# I

Ancient medicine has very little to say of lovesickness. What is said (confined to Aretaeus, Galen, Oribasius, Caelius Aurelianus, and Paul of Aegina) interprets lovesickness as a depressive illness whose symptoms, but not etiology, match those of depressive melancholia.<sup>11</sup> Aretaeus of Cappadocia (c. A.D. 150), for whom melancholy was a depressive rather than a manic illness, describes one man who "appeared to the common people to be melancholic." In fact his trouble was merely a case of "serious dejection due to unrequited love."<sup>12</sup> His doctors, like the common people, must have assumed the illness was melancholy, for their treatments were unsuccessful. The truth of Aretaeus' diagnosis was demonstrated by the man's cure. This took place when he declared his love to his beloved.

Aretaeus' distinction may seem to us to be hair-splitting. He was, however, a humoralist and attributed melancholia to a superfluity of black bile (in Greek μέλαινα χολή). The sufferer in this instance was the victim, not of an excess of black bile but of a psychological disturbance.

Galen (c. A.D. 130–200) was also a humoralist. One finds, therefore, the same careful distinction. Galen describes lovers as sometimes "emaciated, pale, sleepless, and even feverish."<sup>13</sup> In one instance he discusses his treatment of a woman who exhibited symptoms of sleeplessness at night and restlessness during the day, taciturnity, and, when Galen consulted her, a reaction as follows: "She turned her face away, threw her clothes over her body and hid herself away completely."<sup>14</sup> Galen's diagnosis? "Either she was tormented by melancholy, or she was grieving over some cause she did not want to confess." Subsequently he discovered that love was the problem. He discovered that her pulse rate rose when mention of the stage dancer Pylades was made. Although easily confused with depressive melancholia, the real origin of the woman's condition—and love melancholy generally—is psychological rather than physical (brought on, that is, by an excess of black bile).<sup>15</sup> Two other writers are of

<sup>11</sup> Brief recent surveys in Beecher and Ciavolella 1990, Jackson 1986, and Wack 1990.

<sup>12</sup> Jackson 1986, 353, who cites as his reference F. Adams (ed. and trans.), *The Extant Works of Aretaeus, The Cappadocian* (London 1856) 300.

<sup>13</sup> Jackson 1986, 353, citing G. C. Kuhn (ed.), *Claudii Galeni Opera Omnia*, 20 vols. (Leipzig 1821–33) XVIII 18. Wack 1990, 7–9 provides an excellent discussion.

<sup>14</sup> The passage is quoted in Beecher and Ciavolella 1990, 51.

<sup>15</sup> It is also worth pointing out that Galen seems to have felt that "excessive vehemence in loving" was a condition related to lovesickness (Jackson 1986, 353, citing P. W. Harkins [trans.] and W. Riese [intro. and interpret.], *Galen. On the Passions and Errors of*

significance in this matter. Oribasius (A.D. 326–403) and Paul of Aegina (fl. c. A.D. 640), in their discussions of lovesickness, present what seems to be a shared view of lovesickness. Oribasius, the physician to Julian the Apostate, treated lovesickness as a distinct illness and attributed to it symptoms such as sadness, insomnia, hollow eyes, an inability to cry; and sufferers “appeared to be filled with voluptuousness, and their eyelids, the only part of the body not weakened, were continuously blinking.”<sup>16</sup> For Paul of Aegina the lovesick were “desponding and sleepless.” He describes them in his discussion (*On Lovesick Persons*) in terms very similar to those of Oribasius.<sup>17</sup>

Caelius Aurelianus (5th cent. A.D.),<sup>18</sup> who translated the Trajanic medical writer Soranus of Ephesus, believed that lovesickness manifests many of the symptoms of depressive melancholy: “unhappiness, mental anxiety, tossing in sleep, frequent blinking of the eyes, and disturbances of the pulse . . . ‘it manifests itself now in anger, now in merriment, now in sadness or futility, and now, as some relate, in an overpowering fear of things which are quite harmless.’” Wack, whom I am quoting,<sup>19</sup> links the preceding reference to anger with Caelius’ statements elsewhere correlating melancholia with anger. (On this topic see Section IV of this paper.) Although not humoralist,<sup>20</sup> it may be possible that Caelius and Soranus were conscious of a tradition of manic lovesickness.

The description of lovesickness in all of these writers presents a condition that, while not technically melancholia, shows the outward signs of the illness in its depressive phase. Aretaeus and Galen are at pains to point this out. (Caelius’ comments on anger may offer the only modification.) Centuries later Avicenna (A.D. 980–1037) makes the very same point.<sup>21</sup> The link, therefore, between lovesickness, depression, and melancholia is a vital one. Lovesickness, according to the major surviving medical view, was a condition typified by sadness, insomnia, despondency,

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*the Soul* [Columbus, OH 1963] 48). The significance of this suggestion is something to which I will return.

<sup>16</sup> Jackson 1986, 354, citing U. C. Bussemaker and C. Daremberg, *Oeuvres d'Oribase*, 6 vols. (Paris 1851–76) V 413–14. See too Wack 1990, 10.

<sup>17</sup> Jackson 1986, 354, citing F. Adams (ed. and trans.), *The Seven Books of Paulus Aeginata*, 3 vols. (London 1844–47) I 390–91.

<sup>18</sup> Caelius made a Latin translation (*De morbis acutis et chronicis*) of a lost text by Soranus of Ephesus, who worked in Alexandria during the Trajanic and Hadrianic periods. For a text see: I. E. Drabkin (ed. and trans.), *Caelius Aurelianus. On Acute Diseases and on Chronic Diseases* (Chicago 1950). Pigeaud 1987 has an extensive discussion of this author. See too Wack 1990, 11.

<sup>19</sup> Wack 1990, 11–12.

<sup>20</sup> Drabkin (above, note 18) 561. Klibansky 1964, 48 quotes the text: “melancholica dicta, quod nigra fella aegrotantibus saepe per vomitum veniant . . . et non, ut plerique existimant, quod passionis causa vel generatio nigra sint fella; hoc enim est aestimantium magis quam videndum veritatem, vel potius falsum sicut in aliis ostendimus.”

<sup>21</sup> Jackson 1986, 354–55.

dejection, physical debility, and blinking. Aretaeus and Galen do not seem to have thought of the condition as a specific illness (unlike melancholia), but rather as a vague psychological disturbance presumably best cured by therapeutic intercourse. Oribasius and Paul of Aegina conceived of lovesickness as an actual illness, but not one based upon an excess of the black bile.

## II

Depictions of depressive lovesickness are not common in ancient literature.<sup>22</sup> Perhaps the earliest unambiguous example is to be found in Theocritus' second idyll.<sup>23</sup> Here Simaetha has fallen in love with Delphis. The description of her initial infatuation is remarkable. Lovesickness is like a fever and it causes Simaetha to become frenzied (ἐμάνην 82). Yet, as the emotion lays hold of her, she becomes ill and takes to bed (82–86). After ten days her skin has become dull and sallow, her hair has begun to fall out, and she has been reduced to skin and bone (88–90).<sup>24</sup> The cure comes when the slave-girl Thestylis coaxes Delphis to Simaetha's home. Love-making provides the remedy. The outlines of the condition of depressive lovesickness are all present in this story: taking to bed, physical debility

<sup>22</sup> The point needs to be stressed that the concern here is with lovesickness, not with love in general. Hence discussions or expostulations such as those of Plato in the *Symposium* or *Phaedrus*, of Sophocles, *Antigone*, 781 ff., of Plautus, *Trinummus* 223–75 and 668 ff. (where the stress is less on the subjective experience than it is on the deleterious effects of love on aristocratic young men and their families—though at 669 love is said to make men *morosi*) are not germane to my argument. The same point may be made concerning D. H. Garrison's useful discussion of love in the Hellenistic epigram: *Mild Frenzy: A Reading of the Hellenistic Love Epigram*, *Hermes Einzelschriften* 41 (Wiesbaden 1978). Other passages, while offering witness to lovesickness, lack detail. Such a one is provided by Horace, *Odes* 3. 12, a description, according to Quinn, of a lovesick Neobule. Quinn terms this a "cliché" and compares Sappho 102 L–P. Into this category should be placed such productions as Propertius 1. 5 and Ovid, *Amores* 1. 6 (and note Barsby's comments ad loc.). See also notes 7 and 30.

<sup>23</sup> Polyphemus is also lovesick for Galatea in *Idyll* 11 (a model for Corydon in Virgil's *Eclogue* 2). Theocritus, however, does not detail the physiology of his condition. At lines 10–11 he is said to love "not with apples, or roses, or ringlets, but with downright frenzy (ὀρθαῖς μανίαις)." That sounds hardly depressive. Nor do lines 15–16, where he has "deep beneath his breast an angry wound which the shaft of the mighty Cyprian goddess had planted in his heart" (translation Gow). The only hint of a Simaetha-like passivity is suggested in lines 14–15, where he is described thus: He "alone on the wrack-strewn shore, would waste away with love as he sang of Galatea." "Wasting" (here the verbal form is κατετάκετο) is typical of the depressive lovesick. (In Ovid's depiction of the lovesick Cyclops his emotion seems to be a violent one, see *Met.* 13. 867–69.) There may be a hint of a Simaetha-like lovesickness in the case of Gryllus, the admirer of Threissa in Herondas 1. 49–60. Unfortunately the picture here too is very sketchy.

<sup>24</sup> W. V. Clausen, *Virgil's "Aeneid" and the Tradition of Hellenistic Poetry* (Berkeley 1987) 101, points out that the baldness is a symptom of a "morbidity excited condition" and compares Hesiod, *Catalogue* fr. 133. 4–5 M–W and Virgil, *Ecl.* 6. 51.

leading to emaciation and, potentially, death, and a dramatically altered complexion. The cure is sexual congress.

It is noteworthy that this Alexandrian tradition does not take firm root within the literary tradition (as it survives) until the first century of our era.<sup>25</sup> That tradition is inaugurated by Valerius Maximus (5. 7 ext. 1), who recounts the famous ancient example of Antiochus, the son of King Seleucus, who fell in love with his young stepmother Stratonice. Antiochus, either unwilling or unable to reveal his passion, fell ill, took to his bed, and began to waste away.<sup>26</sup> The physician Erasistratus, called to attend Antiochus, noticed how, when Stratonice entered the room, his pulse and breathing quickened, and how he flushed. Erasistratus realized that the cause of Antiochus' troubles was frustrated love. King Seleucus so loved his son that, on hearing Erasistratus' diagnosis, he passed on his wife Stratonice to Antiochus. That selfless action afforded the cure.

There are many variations of this story, within and without medical literature.<sup>27</sup> Plutarch's variant version is undoubtedly the most influential (*Demetrius* 37. 2-3). In Plutarch's account Antiochus takes to bed and begins deliberately to starve himself as a means of controlling his passion. But whatever Antiochus' motives, the symptoms he displayed were those of a depressive melancholic: physical debility, emaciation, a pallid complexion alternating with one flushed, laboured breathing, and a disturbed pulse rate. Love, lovesickness, and melancholy are inextricably intertwined.

Such lovesickness is not confined to the popular Antiochus and Stratonice story. A narrative clone may be found in the Vandal poem, the miniature epic, *Aegritudo Perdicae*.<sup>28</sup> This story concerns a young man, Perdica, who was studying in Athens. Just before leaving for home he

<sup>25</sup> The most famous example of lovesickness is Sappho's *phainetai moi* ode (31 Campbell), which seems to aim to describe thwarted sexual desire. (Catullus' adaptation, C. 51, ought to be compared.) The symptoms of the speaker's lovesickness are speechlessness (9), a burning sensation on the skin (9-10), loss of vision (11), ringing in the ears (11-12), cold sweat (13), trembling (13-14), pallor (14-15), and a near-death experience (15-16). Many of these symptoms will be seen in later descriptions (e.g. Theocritus 2. 106 ff.). Whether this experience was depressive or manic, however, cannot be known: The last stanza of the poem is incomplete; nor does Sappho tell us what followed this experience. Worth comparing are Ibycus 286 and 287 Campbell, where the onset of love seems especially violent (in 286. 10-11 the word *mania* is used, significantly associated with darkness, ἐρεμνός 10). In 287 Ibycus trembles at love's coming. The onset of love in Archilochus is equally prepossessing. Compare 112 and 118 Campbell.

<sup>26</sup> Plutarch, in his version, attributes the story to a Greek physician, Erasistratus, who lived in the first half of the first century B.C. I see no reason why we ought to believe Plutarch's attribution. The story has the ring of the literature of the Roman empire.

<sup>27</sup> Beecher and Ciavolella 1990, 48-51 provide references to a number of these. See also Wack 1990, 17 ff.

<sup>28</sup> Text: F. Baehrens, *Poetae latini minores* V (Leipzig 1914) 112-25. For a discussion see D. F. Bright, *The Miniature Epic in Vandal Africa* (Norman, OK 1987) 222-44, and Wack 1990, 4-5.

neglected to sacrifice to Venus and Cupid. He was rewarded with a dream-image with which he fell in love. The image was of his mother. Lovesickness not only caused him to reject food, but also produced insomnia, fearfulness, and physical debility. His mother called a doctor, Hippocrates, who, by feeling for Perdica's pulse, discovered that it increased when his mother entered the room. Realizing the cause of the illness he resigned the case. Despite his mother's ministrations Perdica became more and more sick: He became pallid, emaciated, his nose, the tendons in his arms, and his ribs became protuberant. In the end he decided to hang himself. Once again lovesickness manifests itself in a depressive manner, and one that is easily confused with melancholia.<sup>29</sup>

A lovesickness which may be confused with depressive melancholy figures in Ovid's story of Echo and Narcissus (*Metamorphoses* 3. 339–510).<sup>30</sup> The nymph Echo had fallen in love with the handsome young Narcissus. He fastidiously rejected her love. Echo's reaction to the rejection may be compared to that of Perdica. She became grief-stricken (395), anxious and insomniac (396), was unwilling or unable to eat (397),

<sup>29</sup> A possible contemporary parallel comes from the Vandal poet Reposianus, who, in his miniature epic, *The Intrigue of Mars with Venus* (text and translation: J. W. Duff and A. M. Duff [eds. and trans.], *Minor Latin Poets* [repr. London 1961] 524–39), depicts a lovesickness (here effected by jealousy) which is depressive, but also manic. The poem describes the famous affair of Venus with Mars and their punishment by Vulcan. It is the love of Vulcan for Venus which is frustrated. When he discovers his wife's infidelity his reaction is a bizarre mixture of depression (160: "and now half benumbed"—*iam quasi torpescens*) and mania (161–62: "he growls aloud, and groaning mournfully strikes his sides to their very depth and wrathfully heaves sigh on sigh unceasing"—Duff and Duff adapted; the Latin is: *ore fremit maestoque modo gemit ultima pulsans / ilia et indignans suspira pressa fatigat*). But anger quickly wins the day (160: *vix sufficit ira dolori*).

<sup>30</sup> Discussion in Beecher and Ciavolella 1990, 53–54. It is sometimes suggested of Narcissus' pining away that "the *topos* is the familiar one of the lover who wastes away with passion." Knox (*Ovid's "Metamorphoses" and the Traditions of Augustan Poetry*, Cambridge Philological Society, Suppl. 11 [Cambridge 1986] 22), who makes this claim, cites in support Ovid, *Ars* 1. 735; cf. *Am.* 1. 6. 5, 2. 9. 14; Propertius 1. 5. 21–22; Theocritus 2. 88 ff. Knox's parallels raise an important problem: To what extent is lovesickness to be seen in Roman elegy? Narcissus, I believe, has a real parallel in Sимаetha (Theocritus 2), but does he in Gallus (Propertius 1. 5)? In Gallus' case, we ought to point out, wasting does not indicate unconsummated or unseasonably frustrated love (so 1. 5. 13–21; see above, note 7). Nor, in its detail (we should include 1. 5. 13–21), is its description as specific and as ample as, say, that of Theocritus. There is also the problem of "sincerity." Elegy is such a deliberately unrealistic, literary (Gallus' situation is an ironic reversal of Phaedria's at Terence, *Eunuch* 46–49), and hence ironic genre, that it is very difficult to take Gallus seriously (thus I follow P. Veyne, *Roman Erotic Poetry: Love, Poetry, and the West*, trans. D. Pellauer [Chicago 1988], e.g. 31 ff. or 132 ff.). Compare Propertius 1. 1. 21–22 (*en agedum dominae mentem convertite nostrae / at facite illa meo pallete ore magis*). Baker (*Propertius* I [Armidale 1990]), for example, seems to take this as an example of the pallor brought on by wasting and lovesickness (thus another instance of Knox's *topos*), and cites Plautus and Aretaeus in support. But lines 33–34 of the same poem seem to identify such pallor as the result of too much love-making. It is that very sort of complication which makes elegy such an unreliable and ironic witness.

and, like Perdica, her bones became protuberant (though in a slightly different manner). Narcissus was punished (406) for his heartless behaviour. He caught sight of his own reflection in a pool and fell in love with it (407 ff.). Like Echo he became weak (469, 488–90), unable to eat (437), and gradually starved to death.<sup>31</sup> He was transformed into the flower bearing his name.<sup>32</sup>

Depressive lovesickness figures large in the following, rather different illustration. This one comes from the life of Marcus Aurelius (ruled A.D. 161–80) in the *Historia Augusta* (*Marcus Antoninus* 19. 12) and repeats an alarming story concerning the conception of the brutal emperor Commodus (ruled A.D. 177–92).<sup>33</sup> It runs as follows:<sup>34</sup>

Some say, and it seems plausible, that Commodus Antoninus, his son and successor, was not begotten by him, but in adultery; and they embroider this assertion, moreover, with a story current among the people. On a certain occasion, it was said, Faustina, the daughter of Pius and wife of Marcus, saw some gladiators pass by, and was inflamed with love for one of them; and afterwards, when suffering from a long illness [*aegritudo*], she confessed the passion to her husband. And when Marcus reported this to the Chaldaeans, it was their advice that the gladiator should be killed and that Faustina should bathe in his blood and in this state lie with her husband. When this had been done the passion was indeed allayed, but their son Commodus was born a gladiator, and not really a *princeps*.

If it is not wholly clear in this version whence Faustina's illness derived, my preceding discussion ought make this plain. Like Antiochus or Perdica, Faustina was so love-struck by the gladiator that she fell ill and took to her bed. Frustrated love has produced a state of physical enfeeblement. We cannot be sure that this was depressive, but the mention of a "long illness" (*longa aegritudo*—the noun often means "lovesickness") points to this. The cure may seem remarkable. Yet a little thought will indicate that it offers a

<sup>31</sup> The novelty of this description may be underscored by comparing it with another case of frustrated love in the *Metamorphoses*. Byblis fell in love with her brother (9. 454–665). Declaration of love to him was followed by rejection. Her reaction was not Antiochean pining, but violent and unrestrained madness—she became a Bacchante (9. 635 ff.). The exertion of her Bacchic travels eventually caused her to die. She metamorphosed into a fountain.

<sup>32</sup> In Longus' *Daphnis and Chloe* 3. 23, Daphnis tells Chloe a variant version of the legend. Here Echo repulsed Pan's advances. In an excess of frustrated love he caused the local shepherds and goatherds to go into a frenzy (*mania*) and rip her limb from limb. Earth buried these limbs in a variety of places where, henceforth, echoes became possible. Pan's reaction is one of manic lovesickness, which variety I will discuss in the next section. On the history of the Narcissus legend see L. Vinge, *The Narcissus Theme in Western European Literature up to the Early 19th Century* (Lund 1967).

<sup>33</sup> The tale is repeated by Aurelius Victor, *Caes.* 16. 2.

<sup>34</sup> Translation (but here slightly adapted) and Latin text: D. Magie (ed. and trans.), *The Scriptores Historiae Augustae*, 3 vols. (repr. London 1953).

variation on a standard method of curing lovesickness, sexual congress with the beloved. In this instance it is therapeutic intercourse by proxy. Faustina, coated with the blood of the unfortunate gladiator, undergoes with him a type of sexual union through the proxy of the ineffectual Marcus Aurelius.<sup>35</sup>

Perhaps the most striking examples of lovesickness seeming to ape melancholy are to be found in the ancient novel.<sup>36</sup> Chariton (writing maybe in the middle of the first century A.D.), Xenophon of Ephesus (writing in the second century), and Heliodorus (third or fourth century) provide descriptions of frustrated young lovers which, in their similarities, seem to indicate that love melancholy had become a literary topos.<sup>37</sup>

Let me take Chariton first. The hero and heroine of this novel, Chaereas and Callirhoe, spot one another at a public festival of Aphrodite and fall in love at once. The effect of love on Chaereas was dreadful: He was too weak to stand, and began to waste away; he looked set to die (1. 1). The effect on Callirhoe was worse, because, unlike Chaereas, she would not admit her condition to her parents: She lay on her bed, head covered, crying, and when marriage (not, she thought, to Chaereas) was proposed, she became speechless, sightless, and almost expired (1. 1). Chaereas and Callirhoe were saved from death in the nick of time. They married.

Xenophon's description of the love of Habrocomes and Anthia in his *Ephesian Tale* is more detailed. The youngsters fall in love at a festival of Artemis. Habrocomes in love (1. 5) was worn out, insomniac, weary-eyed, of altered complexion; he was moaning, weeping, and praying pitifully; eventually his body wasted away and his mind gave in. Things were no better for Anthia (1. 5), whose beauty was quickly fading. Had their parents not consulted the Delphic oracle and settled on marriage (1. 6) Habrocomes

<sup>35</sup> A comparably macabre example may be found in Quintus Smyrnaeus' *Posthomerica* when Achilles develops a necrophiliac lovesickness for Penthesileia. After he has killed the Amazon warrior (1. 654 ff.), he gazes on her corpse and is smitten (716–21, cf. 666–68) by love (719, cf. 671–74) and by grief ("deadly grief [*aniai*] devoured his heart"—720). His reaction was not violent, but passive, at least until provoked by Thersites (722 ff.).

<sup>36</sup> Maehler (above, note 1) is very useful on this topic.

<sup>37</sup> Less striking instances may be found in Longus' *Daphnis and Chloe*, after Chloe has been abducted by the Methymnaeans (2. 20), when Daphnis, in the despair of frustrated love, casts himself onto the ground, languishing and waiting for death (ἐνταῦθα περιμένῳ κείμενος . . . θάνατον 2. 22). This is not quite melancholy, yet the passive desire for death resembles the despair of Antiochus or Perdica. Melancholy is more evident in Book 3. Here Daphnis and Chloe are kept from the pastures and their meetings by the harsh weather of winter. Their reaction: "They had long and sleepless nights, now they had sad and pensive days, and desired nothing so much as a quick return of the spring, to begin their regeneration and return from death" (3. 4, Edmonds' translation). Similar reactions take place in Book 4: Chloe, thinking Daphnis has forgotten her, weeps, complains, and thinks only of death (4. 27); Daphnis, after Chloe has subsequently been spirited away by Lampis, sinks into a similar state of despair (4. 28).

and Anthia, who lay ill and in critical condition, would certainly have died (1. 5).

Xenophon's portrait has an approximate parallel in an interesting passage to be found in his near contemporary Apuleius. In his *Metamorphoses* Lucius relates a tale which he had heard of a beautiful young stepmother who had fallen in love with her handsome stepson. Hippolytus-like he virtuously rejected her overtures. Frustrated love changed to hate, and the stepmother responded by fabricating a charge of fratricide which almost succeeded. But what matters here is the description provided by Apuleius of the young woman's feigned or real love-wracked condition (10. 2):

her countenance was pale, her eyes sorrowful, her knees weak, her rest disturbed, and she would sigh deeply because of the slowness of her torment; there was no comfort in her, but continual weeping and sobbing; you would have thought that she had some fever, except that she wept unreasonably . . .

This could as well be the description of the far more appetizing Habrocomes or Anthia.

Only one of the lovers in Heliodorus' *Aethiopica* shows full-blown signs of depressive lovesickness. This is the fair-skinned Ethiopian Charicleia.<sup>38</sup> Charicleia had seen the young Thessalian Theagenes (3. 5) in the procession of atonement to Neoptolemus at Delphi. She was at once love-struck (3. 5). Calasiris, her subsequent guide, took her languishing in bed, her moist eyes, and her headache (3. 7) for the effects of the evil eye (3. 7-9) and promised to help cure it. But her condition continued to deteriorate (3. 19): "The bloom was fleeing her cheeks, and it was as if the fire in her glance was being extinguished by the water of her tears." Theagenes and Charicleia saw one another a second time when Theagenes ran in the Pythian games (4. 3-4). The effect was catastrophic. Charicleia became still worse and her whole household was reduced to tears (4. 5). Calasiris unsuccessfully attempted to cure her with incantations, incense, and laurel (4. 5). Charicleia was subsequently examined by a doctor (4. 7). Arcesinus the physician discovered at once that the root of the problem was love:

Can you not see her condition [*pathos*] is of the soul and the illness [*nosos*] is clearly love? Can you not see the dark rings under her eyes, how restless is her gaze, and how pale is her face—although she does not complain of internal pain? Can you not see that her concentration wanders, that she says the first thing that comes into her head, that she

<sup>38</sup> Theagenes suffers too, though not so badly. At the banquet for Neoptolemus (3. 10) he is distracted and gloomy and, later, he confesses to Calasiris that he is near to death. Calasiris describes his condition at the beginning of 3. 11 in terms redolent of medical depression—he is full of *χάσμη ἀδημονούση* (presumably "troubled depression" or perhaps "troubled ennui") and he is also suffering from a humoral imbalance (he is *ἀνώμαλος*).

is suffering from an unaccountable insomnia, and has suddenly lost her self-confidence? Charicles, you must search for the man to cure her, the only one, the man she loves.

Charicleia's *nosos* is finally cured by union with her beloved, Theagenes.

What especially interests in Heliodorus' description of the effects of lovesickness are the indications that Arcesinus the physician initially took her problem to be a superfluity of the black bile. He tells Charicles (4. 7) that he has discovered no excess of humours (οὐ γὰρ χυμῶν τις περιττεύει). The humour in question can only have been black bile, μέλαινα χολή. Further indication that Charicleia's lovesickness could be confused with depressive melancholy is suggested by Arcesinus' testing her pulse (4. 7). That seemed to give the game away.<sup>39</sup> Arcesinus' pulse test seems to mirror that applied by Galen and that which we have seen in the stories of Antiochus and Stratonice, and Perdica.<sup>40</sup>

Depressive lovesickness, as I hope my brief survey has demonstrated, is not at all common in the literature of the classical world. One of the earliest unambiguous examples comes from Theocritus. The majority of ancient examples, however, are to be drawn from the first century of our era and later. Their appearance coincides approximately with the earliest medical discussions of the condition. While Theocritus may demonstrate that depressive lovesickness was a condition from which people must always have suffered, the remaining instances suggest that, as a sociological phenomenon to be taken seriously, depressive lovesickness is "discovered" in the early imperial era.

### III

Although the doctors may have thought lovesickness a depressive condition, that is not the way it is depicted in the majority of ancient literary descriptions. Lovesickness, displayed in a violent or manic fashion, receives descriptions in almost all of the periods of ancient literature. It is a dominant amatory cliché. One of the best representations of the experience may be found in Apollonius Rhodius' depiction of the love of Medea for Jason. The symptomatology of Apollonius' portrait is explicit and consistent. The initial attack of love produces a violent physical reaction. Subsequent frustrations recapitulate, though in a more pronounced manner,

<sup>39</sup> Noted by R. M. Rattenbury, T. W. Lumb, and J. Maillon, *Héliodore. Les Ethiopiques (Théagène et Chariclée)*<sup>2</sup> II (Paris 1960) 12 n. 1.

<sup>40</sup> Another example of this type of lovesickness is alluded to by T. Hägg, *The Novel in Antiquity* (Oxford 1983). It is the story of Paul and Thecla in the apocryphal acts (see E. Hennecke, *New Testament Apocrypha* II [London 1965] 353–64). Hägg points out (160) that "Thecla's first reaction when she hears Paul preaching in the neighboring house—she does not touch her food or drink, she worries her family by her distracted behaviour—is reminiscent of the purely physical manifestations of awakening love in, for instance, the *Ephesiaca*."

this emotional reaction. The descriptions, as we will see in the next section, match those used of melancholy but, of course, lack the precision of humoral diagnosis.

Medea's infection is precipitated by Hera.<sup>41</sup> Wishing to help Jason succeed in gaining the fleece from King Aietes, she persuades Aphrodite to have Eros make Medea fall in love with Jason (*Argonautica* 3. 36–110). When Eros wounds Medea (3. 284–98) the subjection to love is sudden and complete:

He [Eros] shot at Medea. Speechlessness (ἀμφασίη) overcame her. And he sped back from the high-roofed hall laughing, and the shaft burnt in the girl, deep below her breast, like fire (φλογὶ εἵκελον). Continuously she cast bright glances at the son of Aeson. In the turmoil her clever wits left her breast. She had lost her memory. Her heart was flooded with this sweet agony (ἀνίη). As a working woman, who spins for a living, piles brushwood on a smouldering log to spread light through her home in the dark, while she works nearby, and, as the great blaze, kindled from a little brand, reduces the twigs to ashes, so, enfolded within her breast, did woeful love (οὐλος ἔρωος) stealthily smoulder. Her soft cheeks turned from white to red in the whirl of her mind (ἀκηδείησι νόοιο).

The description of Medea's reaction, though incomplete, gives a fair idea of the violence of her response. The imagery bears this out: Eros' shaft is "like fire," Medea's heart is full of "agony," the shaft causes, furthermore, forgetfulness, mental turmoil (ἀκηδείη), and pallor alternating with rose-coloured flushing.<sup>42</sup>

Once Medea's condition has been established it is not allowed to run its course. Her love is frustrated in two ways. First, loyalty to and fear of her father Aietes initially restrain her from succumbing to the emotion. Second, Jason's own fecklessness threatens to prevent her love reaching its obvious conclusion. In response to both, Medea's reaction is violent. *Argonautica* 3. 444–71 shows how she is affected by loyalty and fear. She is wracked by contradictory emotions: She cannot remove Jason's image from her imagination (453–58); she fears for his safety (459–60), but mourns him as if he were already dead (460–61); she hopes he will escape unharmed (464–68) but, if he does perish, that he will know of her sympathy (468–70). These contradictions seem to be the result of the illicit nature of Medea's passion: Love impels her to hope for Jason's success, but this, she knows, will be at the expense of her father Aietes. Medea's "lovesickness" results in part from a conflict between αἰδώς and ἔμερος (3. 653). The former dictates loyalty, the latter that she follow her longing for Jason. This ambivalence is especially evident in the dream-sequence at 3.

<sup>41</sup> On love in Apollonius see G. Zanker, "The Love Theme in Apollonius Rhodius' *Argonautica*," *WS* 13 (1979) 52–75.

<sup>42</sup> This latter description may be compared to those of Antiochus.

616–32<sup>43</sup> and in her actions (645–68) after the first monologue (636–44). She hesitates to leave her room, but hangs on its exit. She casts herself writhing onto her bed. She weeps. Finally, Chalciope hurries to her (670 ff.). She manages to disguise her willingness to assist Jason as concern for Chalciope's sons, who are now in the company of the Argonauts (681 ff.). There follows the description of another bout of anguish. The symptoms of her condition are becoming more and more explicit (755–65):<sup>44</sup>

Her heart throbbed quickly within her breast . . . a tear of pity ran from her eyes, and within her unceasingly agony wore her away as it burnt through her skin along her nerve endings right up to the muscles of the neck beneath the head, where pain is the most severe whenever tireless love (ἀκάματοι ἔρωτες) casts pain into one's mind (πραπίδες).

Despite this physical anguish Medea does not, like Antiochus or Faustina, take to bed. She makes her decision. Ἐρπétω αἰδώς ("let shame perish" 3. 785), she states. She will betray her parents. Medea herself gives a name to the condition: It is ἄτη, violent delusion.

In *Argonautica* 4 there is no longer a conflict between αἰδώς and ἔμερος. Medea has abandoned Colchis.<sup>45</sup> Her passion is frustrated now by the fecklessness of Jason, who seems likely to give in to the threats of the pursuing Colchians. Near the beginning of this book Medea's lovesickness is described with real precision: Her eyes are filled with fire, her ears ring, she clutches at her throat, she pulls at her hair, groans, is suicidal (16–23). These physical woes seem partly the product of frustrated love, partly fear.<sup>46</sup> Later, when the Colchians manage to cut off the Argo's party (303–38), Jason, sensing that their situation is hopeless, strikes a deal (συνθεσίη) with the Colchians. They will keep the fleece, but leave Medea on a nearby island with its priests of Artemis. Judges can later arbitrate her future (339–49). Medea's reaction to this treachery is not to swoon, nor to take to bed, nor to begin a wasting illness, nor even to contemplate suicide, rather it is to threaten violence. She wrathfully argues that Jason is under oath to protect her (358–59, 388). If abandoned she threatens she will curse him.

<sup>43</sup> She dreams that Jason had taken on the contest, not to gain the fleece, but to win her. Medea even dreams that she fought Aietes' bulls in his stead (R. L. Hunter, *Apollonius of Rhodes. Argonautica, Book III* [Cambridge 1989] 164 notes the sexual symbolism of fighting the bulls). In the dream Medea must decide, her father dictates, whether to award the stranger the fleece. Aietes would not, for Jason had not fought. Against his wishes she awards Jason the fleece.

<sup>44</sup> The translation follows the line order of Hunter's commentary (previous note).

<sup>45</sup> At the beginning of the book (4–5) Medea flees from the palace to join Jason: The poet asks whether her action is the result of ἄτης πῆμα δυσίμερον ("ill-desired woe resulting from ἄτη") or a φόβον ἀεκελίην ("unseemly panic").

<sup>46</sup> Fear is her motive according to A. R. Dyck, "On the Way from Colchis to Corinth: Medea in Book 4 of the *Argonautica*," *Hermes* 112 (1989) 455–70, and Zanker (above, note 41) 64.

Jason at once backtracks and hatches a plan to murder the leader of the Colchians, Medea's brother Apsyrtus (395–420). There follows a most extraordinary personal intrusion into the narrative (445–51):<sup>47</sup>

Wretched Love, great woe and great object of hatred for humans, from you destructive strife, groaning, and wailing, and countless other pains pierce us. Rise against the sons of our enemies, god, in the way that you cast hateful madness (στυγερή ἄτη) into Medea's heart. For how then with awful death did she overcome Apsyrtus? My song's task next is to tell that.

Medea's lovesickness then reaches its apogee of violence. The bloody murder of Apsyrtus follows. In the thrall of passion Medea, it seems, will go to any length.

I have dwelt at such length on this version of the Medea story because it provides such a detailed (and moving) instance of the violent power of passion. Medea's lovesickness—and there can be no other word for it (she is still a virgin, and a young one at that)—leads her to remarkable acts of violence. In Apollonius' reading of the emotion of lovesickness, the onset of love and, later, its frustration can lead to violent physical and emotional disorders. It can lead, furthermore, to acts of violence, even murder. Not only does Apollonius graphically illustrate its effects but he also editorializes on its dangers.

Love in Apollonius' version of the story of Medea is a typical, if extreme instance of what seems to have been the prevailing ancient view of the dangers of lovesickness. Let me give a few other examples to illustrate and to bolster this contention. Dido suffers like Medea. Her love, like that of Medea, has been thrust upon her by divine scheming (*Aeneid* 1. 657 ff.).<sup>48</sup> Dido's infection is likened to a wound (*Aeneid* 4. 1–2, 67) and it burns like fire (2, 66). Like any love-melancholic Dido becomes insomniac (5) and anxiety-ridden (9 ff.). But, like Medea, she sees giving in to her passion as a form of betrayal (27; cf. 172)—and giving way to the passion results in exactly this (86–89, 193–94). Also like Medea she is betrayed, in her case by Aeneas. The "betrayal" comes after Jupiter sends Mercury to Aeneas (237–78): Aeneas must remember his mission and cease from Carthaginian affairs. But before Dido meets Aeneas she senses that treachery is afoot. Her reaction is not depressive, but manic. (Her reactions, though not strictly relevant to a discussion of frustrated, unconsummated love, are so much of a kind with those of Medea, that they deserve to be detailed.) Dido rages through the city like a bacchant (300–03) to meet Aeneas. (This was the action of Ovid's Byblis and Valerius

<sup>47</sup> Val. Fl. *Arg.* 6. 469 ff. (not quite the same point in his narrative) moralizes on the destructiveness of love. Here Valerius is describing the girdle Venus lends to Juno. With this she causes Medea to fall in love with Jason.

<sup>48</sup> Venus' intention powerfully uses the imagery of fire: *donisque furem / incendat reginam atque ossibus implicet ignem* 1. 659–60; note also 1. 712–22.

Flaccus' Medea.) Dido, her love frustrated and after an unsuccessful attempt at persuading Aeneas to delay sailing (416–49), again reacts violently: She sets about planning her own death (450–552). Notice that Virgil compares her to those embodiments of violent anger, Pentheus and the manic melancholic Orestes (469–73),<sup>49</sup> and, elsewhere, stresses her anger (531–32; note that it is linked with love [*resurgens / saevit amor*])—this is not just a matter of insulted pride or broken covenants.<sup>50</sup> Dido's soliloquy, delivered as she watches the Aeneadae sail away, shows no relaxation of anger (590–629): She summons the sun, the gods, and the Furies to avenge her, on Aeneas first, then on all of his descendants. Soon afterwards she suicides.

Of Virgil's other love-blighted, if not lovesick, protagonists such as Corydon (*Eclogue* 2),<sup>51</sup> Cornelius Gallus (*Eclogue* 10), or Orpheus (*Georgics* 4),<sup>52</sup> it is only Orpheus who gives signs of real depressive melancholy.<sup>53</sup> Yet even he meets a most violent end (*Georgics* 4. 523–27). Perhaps Virgil's amatory reservations are based on Epicureanism. Lucretius' famous descriptions and rejection of love and its effects (*De rerum natura* 4. 1037–1287) seem in line with Virgil's view of lovesickness as a dangerous, violent *pestis*.<sup>54</sup> For the Epicurean Lucretius love is "a disease of the soul that slowly pervades the entire body, just like madness, and that must be eradicated before it completely upsets the physiopsychological balance of the man."<sup>55</sup> Most important for the present discussion is Lucretius' opinion that the onset and effects of love do not produce a state of depressive enfeeblement, but madness. Lucretius is to the point: Love is a madness (*rabies* 1083) and a dangerous one at that (1079–83). His contemporary Cicero does not tell us of lovesickness, but he has his suspicions of love. In the *Tusculan Disputations* 4. 75 he notes of love that "of all disturbances of the soul there is assuredly none more violent . . . the disorder of the mind in love is in itself abominable." Horace's *Satire* 1. 2, another Epicurean diatribe against love (which might as well be

<sup>49</sup> The comparison is important. Orestes is singled out in the canonical discussion of manic melancholia, the pseudo-Aristotelian *Problema* 30. See Toohey 1990a. In Val. Fl. *Arg.* 7. 144–52 Medea, initially inflamed by the love of Jason, is compared to Orestes *furens*.

<sup>50</sup> 4. 531–32: *rursusque resurgens / saevit amor magnoque irarum fluctuat aestu*.

<sup>51</sup> Nor are the characters of *Eclogue* 8 passive, depressive figures.

<sup>52</sup> Scylla, in the *Ciris*, is not Virgilian (see R. O. A. M. Lyne, *Ciris: A Poem Attributed to Virgil* [Cambridge 1978]). But she is very like Apollonius' Medea in her total surrender to love (ἔμπερος) and her swift betrayal of her father Nisus to her beloved, King Minos.

<sup>53</sup> The lineaments of the pattern may be found in Virgil's allusion to depressive, metamorphic love at *Aeneid* 10. 189–93 (the transformation of Cynus). The allusion is perhaps too brief for proper discussion.

<sup>54</sup> For a discussion see Beecher and Ciavolella 1990, 52–53.

<sup>55</sup> Beecher and Ciavolella 1990, 52.

designed as advice for Corydon in *Eclogue* 2), reproduces the same vision of love, if not lovesickness, as a type of dangerous mania.<sup>56</sup>

There exist in ancient literature many other examples of manic lovesickness.<sup>57</sup> Here I will confine myself to a final pair of illustrations which test this conclusion. These concern the lovesickness of Phaedra as it is depicted by Euripides (*Hippolytus*) and by Seneca (*Phaedra*).<sup>58</sup>

Euripides' heroine (sometimes compared to Dido) is certainly lovesick.<sup>59</sup> She has fallen unexpectedly in love with her stepson Hippolytus. The infatuation has been caused by Aphrodite, who, angered at Hippolytus' insulting behaviour (*Hippolytus* 12 ff.), intends to use Phaedra's love to bring him down. Phaedra's love is, of course, frustrated, for the object of her desire is the son of her still living husband Theseus. What are the symptoms of her lovesickness? Initial impressions suggest a condition which might easily be confused with depressive melancholia. Like Simaetha, Antiochus, and Perdica, Phaedra has become bedridden (131–34), debilitated (198–202), seems to be unable to take food (135–38), she is pallid (174–75), and inconsistent in her wants (176 ff.). If her symptoms continue she will die (138–40). But it emerges as the drama continues that these symptoms are feigned (391 ff., 400–01, 419 ff.). Phaedra, mindful of αἰδώς (385), of τιμή (329), of σωφροσύνη (399), and of τὰ ἐσθλά (331), has determined, like Plutarch's Antiochus, to preserve her honour and to disguise the ἔρωρ by starving herself to death. It seems, however, that the real symptom of lovesickness, if it is allowed to manifest itself, is mania.

<sup>56</sup> A few random examples: Sallustius *insanit* over freedwomen at l. 2. 48–49. Amatory frustration is alluded to in a colourful manner at l. 2. 71 (*mea cum conferbuit ira*) and at l. 2. 118 (*malis tentigine rumpi*).

<sup>57</sup> Ariadne, love-blighted and frustrated in Catullus 64, eventually works herself into a frenzy and, like Dido or Valerius' Medea, is *furens* (124 and 54) and is compared to a bacchant (61). Ariadne, of course, has presumably consummated her love and, therefore, does not quite fit within the parameters of this paper—see above, note 7. Scylla in the pseudo-Virgilian *Ciris* will go to any length to consummate her love for Minos. Medea in Ovid's *Heroides* 12 is frenzied rather than depressed. Much, much later the Roman emperor Caracalla fell in love with his stepmother Julia, who, "as if through carelessness, had uncovered the greater part of her body" (*HA, Caracalla* 10). He was encouraged by her complacency: "His disordered madness was given strength to carry out the crime and he contracted the marriage which . . . he alone should have prohibited." The description and language used of Caracalla's emotions might be compared to those used of a mad (*furiosus*) slave who is said to have attacked Hadrian (*Hadrian* 12).

<sup>58</sup> Ovid, *Heroides* 4 provides us with an ironic letter from Phaedra to Hippolytus. But here we have a portrait of a loose-living Roman *matrona* whose love or lust, though apparent, hardly exhibits the symptoms of real lovesickness. H. Jacobson, *Ovid's Heroides* (Princeton 1974) 142–58 is helpful.

<sup>59</sup> Her condition is sometimes linked with *hysteria*; see M. R. Lefkowitz, "The Wandering Womb," in *Heroines and Hysterics* (London 1981) 12–25, at 19 ff. But whether ancient hysteria ought to be considered a manic or depressive disease (in the same way as lovesickness or melancholy) I am not sure. By the time of Galen, at any rate, some descriptions are of the depressive order; see I. Veith, *Hysteria: The History of a Disease* (Chicago 1965) 31 ff.

Thus at 188–238 Phaedra seems to be caught off guard by the nurse and reacts in a manic fashion (206, and note 241 ἐμάνην). She admits as much to the chorus at 243–48. And, after the nurse indicates Phaedra's love to Hippolytus (601 ff.), her reaction to the nurse—she does not meet Hippolytus—is angry and violent abuse (682 ff.). Her off-stage suicide follows soon after, and soon after that Theseus returns to discover the body and, with it, the note which mendaciously dooms Hippolytus to a most violent death. It is significant that the contents of the letter seem to declare themselves in a most vehement manner (877–80). From these indications, therefore, it appears that the real nature of Phaedra's lovesickness is manic. What are we then to make of the early, seemingly depressive symptoms? I suspect that here an audience saw Phaedra's illness not as the direct result of lovesickness but merely as indicating a means of attempting a suicide which would guard her honour against the onset of desire. The *modus moriendi* here is the common ancient tactic of *inedia*—starvation.<sup>60</sup>

Seneca's Phaedra also exhibits a form of lovesickness which is best described as manic, rather than depressive. Seneca's depiction of Phaedra's condition, however, is not as carefully constructed as that of Euripides. Seneca is at times more rational: Phaedra's passion, for example, can be explained away as resulting from the neglect (*Phaedra* 91 ff.) of an adulterous husband (97–98); nor does Phaedra make much of an effort to hide her passion from the nurse: At times it seems that it is all that she can talk about (218–21, 225, 241). Yet Seneca does skimp logically. Phaedra's decision to look after her good name (her *fama*; Euripides' Phaedra was concerned with τιμή, but also αἰδώς and σωφροσύνη) seems rather an afterthought (250–54, 258–60).

What are the symptoms of Phaedra's lovesickness? In the early parts of the play it is a violent madness (a *furor*; see 184–85, 186–87, 268, and especially 339 ff.). Later, after she has determined to guard her *fama*, she begins to suffer a wasting illness (360–86), which seems in its symptoms to match those of Antiochus and Perdica. Yet it is unclear in Seneca's version whether these symptoms are feigned or whether they are simply the result of a prolonged starvation aimed at suicide. At any rate, the wasting illness does provide her with a chance to be alone with Hippolytus and to declare her love. That she may have been feigning the illness is confirmed by her reaction to Hippolytus' rejection. Once spurned she becomes angry (824–28) and guilefully dooms Hippolytus by claiming (868 ff.) that he had raped her. *Furor* overcomes her in the end as well. After Hippolytus' death

<sup>60</sup> A. J. L. van Hooff, *From Autothanasia to Suicide: Self-Killing in Classical Antiquity* (London 1990) 45–46 argues: "*inedia* is the ancient method for attracting attention for grief, open or hidden. Phaedra could not reveal her unbecoming love for her stepson Hippolytus. 'I abstain from food' (*asiteo*); such will be 'the renouncing of life (*apostasis tou biou*)' . . . Frustration in love leading up to voluntary starvation is a theme in the ancient novel: on one occasion Chaireas is convinced that Kallirhoe is in love with Dionsysios. He decides to abstain from food . . ."

is reported she comes on stage mad (1156) and suicides. Thus, the Senecan portrait of Phaedra's lovesickness is persistently, if not unequivocally, manic.

Lovesickness, as I hope these admittedly random examples may have demonstrated, was capable of producing a manic rather than a depressive reaction. Space precludes a demonstration of the following point, yet my own reading of the literature of the classical periods indicates that this type of lovesickness, in most ancient contexts, is the dominant form.

#### IV

While ancient medical theory seems in practice to recognize only one form of lovesickness, I hope to have demonstrated that in the literary sources there were two distinct forms, the medically recognized depressive form, but also the more widespread manic form. I would like to focus now on the relationship of this manic lovesickness with ancient concepts of melancholia.

Ancient medical theory focused on two forms of melancholia. There was, of course, a depressive form, but the more prevalent type was violent and manic. The information on this matter has been examined elsewhere.<sup>61</sup> Perhaps it will suffice here to point to the evidence of the pseudo-Aristotelian *Problema* 30. 1.<sup>62</sup> The author of the *Problemata* maintains that melancholia is the product of a superfluity of black bile. Black bile is a mixture of cold and hot. Melancholics, accordingly, fall into two broad groups, those in whom the black bile becomes very hot and those in whom the black bile becomes very cold. Where the black bile is hot, one would expect what we term the manic phase of this condition; where the black bile is cold, one would expect the depressed phase. Subsequent theorists, whether humoralists or not, associate the illness with one, the other, or both of the two poles, mania and depression. So Celsus, Soranus of Ephesus, and Caelius Aurelianus all associate the disease with depression. Aretaeus of Cappadocia and Galen, on the other hand, allow the bipolarity of the *Problemata*.

How does this information relate to ancient concepts of lovesickness? The two types of melancholia mentioned in the *Problemata* and depicted later in various medical contexts seem to match the two types of lovesickness I have been attempting to describe. Just as melancholia could be manic or depressive, so could lovesickness be manic or depressive. The congruence is remarkable and perhaps tells us something of the popular perceptions of melancholia and lovesickness. This curious congruence, however, may provide an explanation for two other features of ancient

<sup>61</sup> Toohey 1990a (with bibliography) outlines the evidence epitomized here.

<sup>62</sup> A reproduction of the Greek text with translation and comments may be found in Klibansky 1964, 18–29.

lovesickness, namely the paucity of descriptions of the depressive form of lovesickness and, second, the relatively late appearance within literary texts of this condition.

It has been argued elsewhere that the depiction of melancholia as a depressive illness rather than as a manic illness is not common in ancient literature and, furthermore, that what occurrences there are appear late in the tradition. They seem to begin seriously in both popular literatures at about the time of Seneca.<sup>63</sup> The same tendencies seem to be observable in the ancient descriptions of lovesickness. Medical discussions of lovesickness, as we have seen, are all relatively late and describe the condition as depressive and as not unlike melancholia—also treated as a depressive illness. Of the literary descriptions of lovesickness provided here, the examples of manic lovesickness are distributed throughout most periods. The descriptions of depressive lovesickness, however, begin in earnest with Valerius Maximus, who wrote under the Roman emperor Tiberius (ruled A.D. 14–39) and continue sporadically over subsequent centuries. Descriptions of melancholia as a depressive disease seem to begin seriously at approximately the same time as do descriptions of depressive lovesickness.<sup>64</sup> The parallel between melancholia and lovesickness, therefore, allows us to be more precise in categorizing and dating the phases of the ancient perceptions of lovesickness and perhaps love itself.

## V

After Florentino Ariza saw her for the first time, his mother knew before he told her because he lost his voice and his appetite and spent the entire night tossing and turning in his bed. But when he began to wait for the answer to his first letter, his anguish was complicated by diarrhea and green vomit, he became disorientated and suffered from sudden fainting spells, and his mother was terrified because his condition did not resemble the turmoil of love so much as the devastation of cholera. Florentino Ariza's godfather, an old homeopathic practitioner who had been Tránsito Ariza's confidant ever since her days as a secret mistress, was also alarmed at first by the patient's condition, because he had a weak pulse, the hoarse breathing, and the pale perspiration of a dying man. But his examination revealed that he had no fever, no pain anywhere, and that his only concrete feeling was an urgent desire to die.

<sup>63</sup> Toohey 1990a. I stress popular, for the medical perception predates the literary expression. Celsus, for example, was conscious of the depressive nature of melancholia. Perhaps the perception of the real force of depression dates to the third century, during which period, Pigeaud 1987 has argued, there was a soul-body split in medical thought.

<sup>64</sup> Toohey 1988 also dates the earliest descriptions of boredom to this period.

This passage comes from Gabriel García Márquez's *Love in the Time of Cholera*.<sup>65</sup> I have reproduced it to illustrate a simple point. This description of a depressed, fretting, passive, physically ill lover—almost a cliché of modern literature<sup>66</sup>—might as easily be of an ancient depressive melancholic as of a victim of cholera or lovesickness. The dominant ancient concept, as I hope to have shown, was a violent one. Thus, we see the origins or the “discovery” of Florentino Ariza's hackneyed condition above all in the literature of the early empire. It has its best parallels in the Greek novel.

A second observation concerns the passivity of the *inamorati* of the first and second centuries of our era. Is this really passivity or is it in fact the result of a literature that interests itself in the young and inexperienced and in love-relationships that violate societal taboo? The depressed lovers of the Greek novel are usually young and inexperienced. One might easily blame their sense of powerlessness on their age and social station. Had they been older, more experienced, and more capable of attaining their own ends, then might their frustration have manifested itself as anger, rather than melancholy? Is the “discovery” of depressive lovesickness merely the product of a literature that takes more of an interest in the emotions of a more vulnerable class? There are, in the texts mentioned above, several instances that vitiate such a supposition. Chariton's Dionysius, Callirhoe's first suitor after her abduction by the pirates, offers one example. He is a man full grown. Recently widowed, wealthy, friend of kings, and the father of two children, he might have been expected to react to frustration in anger, rather than in the depressed manner he does (*Chaereas and Callirhoe* 2. 4). Similarly Theocritus' Simaetha. She seems to be the victim of neither age nor inexperience. Anger, therefore, might be expected to be the reaction to her infatuation with Delphis. It was not. Medea, on the other hand, offers an example, especially in Valerius, of an angry reaction to frustrated love. Like Callirhoe or Anthia or Charicleia, she is young and inexperienced. The likelihood of her being able to marry the foreigner Jason is remote. Her response, therefore, might be expected to be one of depression. It was not. Youth and inexperience act as an inaccurate means of predicting the reaction to love's onset and initial frustration. The same point might be made of a love that violates societal taboo. Here I am thinking of Marcus Aurelius' wife Faustina, or Perdica, or Phaedra, or Ovid's Byblis (especially *Metamorphoses* 9. 635–40). It could be argued that, were their affections expressed openly, they might run the risk of detection and punishment. Hence their depressive inversions. But let us compare Medea. The taboo against a relationship with Jason is every bit as strong as that, say, against

<sup>65</sup> Gabriel García Márquez, *Love in the Time of Cholera*, trans. Edith Grossman (New York 1988) 61–62.

<sup>66</sup> I have not yet seen M. Di Battista, *First Love: The Affections of Modern Fiction* (Chicago 1991).

Marcus Aurelius' wife (who could, after all, have had a clandestine affair). Love for Medea meant betrayal of her father and her family. She knew this from the beginning. Yet her reaction was not one of powerlessness, but, especially in Valerius' version, of strong anger. What is noteworthy in the stress on passivity in love is, I contend, not its being confined to the young or to taboo-breakers, but its efflorescence in the first and second centuries of our era.

A third observation deserves to be made. It is curious that love-melancholy begins to gain real currency at the same time, approximately, as descriptions of depressive melancholy become current. It is equally curious that it is the same period which begins to show descriptions of "boredom" in the modern sense of the term. These peculiar congruences may tell us something about the prehistory and even archaeology of affective states. They show also how closely allied were the emotions of anger, depression, boredom, and love. Perhaps of more interest is that they suggest that there took place in the first or second century of our era a shift in the perception of the symptoms of such affective states as love, lovesickness, and melancholia. This has, I suggest, some bearing on the notion of the "discovery" of depressive love-melancholy.

Finally, there is Paul Veyne. In a brilliant article in 1978 he argued that such an affective shift, at least as far as love is concerned, is evident in the early empire. He believes that, with the weakening of the extended, aristocratic Roman family system, romantic love rather than family compulsion became the means for securing marital obeisance from women.<sup>67</sup> It would be easy to interpret love-melancholy as another aspect of the new stress on romantic love (which seems above all a passive condition; as love itself became romantic, so did lovesickness become depressive). The active, frequently violent emotions of the lovesick are slowly, but never wholly, replaced by the passivity of Antiochus, or of Habrocomes, or of Florentino Ariza.<sup>68</sup>

Veyne's explanation for the affective shift has been, and probably rightly, rejected.<sup>69</sup> Most, however, accept the existence of such a shift.

<sup>67</sup> P. Veyne, "La famille et l'amour sous le haut-empire romain," *Annales: économies, sociétés, civilisations* 33 (1978) 35-63 and again in his chapter in G. Duby, P. Ariès, and P. Veyne (eds.), *A History of Private Life I* (London 1987).

<sup>68</sup> The remarkable condition of *acedia*, at least in its fourth-, fifth-, and sixth-century manifestations, bears a very close resemblance to depression and lovesickness. It is curious that lovesickness receives one of its best descriptions in the *Aegritudo Perdicae* in Vandal North Africa at approximately the same time monks and lay folk were being ravaged by the *morbus* of *acedia*. There can be no easy explanation for this coincidence except perhaps to remark that the first and fifth centuries of our era were most dangerous and demoralized periods. Perhaps in such periods that sense of passivity which seems a congener of these conditions is especially prevalent and encourages these *pestes*? On this phenomenon see Toohey 1990b.

<sup>69</sup> Veyne has been corrected, notably by R. P. Saller and R. D. Shaw, "Tombstones and Roman Family Relations in the Principate: Civilians, Soldiers, and Slaves," *JRS* 74

What was its cause? Space precludes consideration of the issue here. But it does not preclude the observation that the interrelation of lovesickness with melancholia, depression, and boredom seems sufficiently strong to demand an explanation which provides a cause not just for the affective shift in the perception of frustrated love, but also for depression and boredom. Veyne's exhilarating thesis may tell us something about the "discovery" of romantic love and even of lovesickness, but it tells us nothing of the interrelated "discoveries" of its congeners, depression and boredom.<sup>70</sup>

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(1984) 124-46, at 134-35; there is also S. Dixon, "The Sentimental Ideal of the Roman Family," in Rawson (above, note 1) 102 ff. There is now S. Treggiari, *Roman Marriage: Iusti Coniugales from the Time of Cicero to the Time of Ulpian* (Oxford 1991).

<sup>70</sup> P. Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (London 1988) 16 n. 51 states that, although Saller and Shaw correct Veyne "on important points," his is "an exceptionally thought-provoking study."