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Article abstract

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Speech, Silence, and Storytelling: Marguerite de Navarre's *Heptameron* and Narrative Therapy

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Dans le prologue de L'Heptaméron, Marguerite de Navarre met en scène des personnages visitant les bains de Cauterets dans les Pyrénées pour des raisons thérapeutiques. Venus prendre les eaux miraculeuses du lieu pour guérir leurs divers maux, ces "malades" se trouvent incapables de rentrer après leur cure, en raison des fortes pluies qui rendent les rivières infranchissables. Ces personnages, qui vont devenir les narrateurs ou devisants des nouvelles, se réfugient dans un monastère en attendant la reconstruction des ponts détruits par la violence des eaux, qui s'avèrent maintenant dévastatrices, voire mortelles. Ils décident de raconter des histoires pour passer le temps et éviter les maladies causées par l'oisiveté et l'ennui. La cure thermale cède donc la place à la thérapie narrative dans le cadre du récit. Mais nous aurons lieu de nous demander, à l'aide des théories de l'approche narrative (établies par Michael White et David Epston et inspirées en partie par Michel Foucault), si le discours est toujours bénéfique dans le texte, ou s'il ne contient pas des éléments plus inquiétants, voire néfastes, comme les eaux de la montagne ou comme les médicaments, qui peuvent, selon le cas, guérir ou faire périr.

Since the emergence of narrative therapies (whether the talking cure of early psychoanalysts like Sigmund Freud or the more recent narrative medicine of internists like Rita Charon), there has been a rediscovery of the medical benefits of storytelling.¹ Indeed, such approaches rely on literary models and theories, and influence literary reception, making important contributions to our understanding of literature and human psychology. They also emphasize the importance of storytelling in the construction of identities, experiences, and realities. Far from being an idle pastime, storytelling has recently come to be

recognized as having wide-ranging health benefits and is increasingly used as a tool by doctors and clinical psychologists.² Yet, as narrative therapists inspired by Michel Foucault remind us, there can be a dark side to storytelling as well as various kinds of interpretative discourses, since stories and interpretations may also seduce, captivate, or “recruit” subjects into problematic patterns and disempowering realities.³ One wonders therefore whether some interpreters may not be overstating the case for the curative powers of narrative, or perhaps losing some of the richness of texts, by casting speech or writing as unambiguously positive and silence as totally negative. This study presents and problematizes some of the links between storytelling and narrative therapy by examining exemplary stories and readings of Marguerite de Navarre’s *Heptameron* in the light of theories regarding the curative powers of narrative.

“To speak or not to speak?” That is often the implicit question in Marguerite’s collection of *nouvelles*, whose very premise is the telling of tales by characters who can be described as patient(s): “patients” because they are described as *malades* and also “patient” because their progress has been interrupted by a traumatic encounter with the forces of nature—they are trapped by a deluge in the Pyrenees, where they had been taking healing baths—and, as a result, they must endure a long wait before they may return to their lives in the outside world. The frame of the *Heptameron* makes it clear that the telling of tales has a medicinal purpose. Indeed, even if it is not situated against the background of an illness such as the plague (like its predecessor, Boccaccio’s *Decameron*), the narrative pretext of Marguerite de Navarre’s volume is clearly a medical one. From the very first sentence of the prologue, the narrator-author identifies the characters in the frame (who soon become second-degree narrators) as *malades*. The characters on this first level of the text, who had been taking the medicinal waters of the mountains to cure their ailments, are stranded by a flood of biblical proportions that has destroyed all means of escape from their mountainous retreat. They are compelled to seek refuge in a monastery where they must bide their time while awaiting the rebuilding of bridges so that they may safely travel over the violent flood waters that have already killed many of their party (horses, servants, and one lady’s husband). The once curative waters that have overflowed, and that now isolate them and keep them from reaching their homes, no doubt also have a metaphorical function, reminding readers of the ambivalent forces of desire that plague humankind. Their forced retreat into the monastery of Nostre Dame de Serrance (itself an ambivalent

space⁴) gives these characters an opportunity to reflect on various ills of human existence as they pass the time and recount tales in order to avoid the incurable afflictions that could be brought about by idleness and *ennui*. Yet, one may well ask whether telling tales always has a curative function. Can the telling of tales not contain, like the mountain streams and rivers, and like all medicines, dimensions that are potentially both beneficial and harmful? Indeed, by exploring a few examples from Marguerite de Navarre's text, we shall see that the sixteenth-century author clearly illustrates some of the dangers and benefits of speech and silence, and that her subtle presentation of their ambivalence in the *Heptameron* can help us appreciate the complexities of various kinds of narrative and discursive practices.

In an article titled "La Guérison par la parole," Françoise Charpentier suggests that in the *Heptameron* silence kills.⁵ She affirms that whether the practices are part of an external, social cover-up (*celer*), or an internal, self-imposed secrecy (*taire*), silence generally leads to suffering and sometimes death. She sees speech as positive, describing it as a happy thing for lovers, and points out that an avowal or confession (*l'aveu*) is a welcome release that can have therapeutic effects (even if it is sometimes followed by death...⁶). Charpentier's primary example is taken from the 32nd *nouvelle* (N32) where she sees speech as liberating the characters from a kind of negative enchantment and reorienting them toward life and relationships. In this story, told by Oysille (Oisille), a man named Vernaige (or Bernage), who has been sent on an embassy to Germany, is lodging with a childless couple exhibiting odd habits and behaviours. Vernaige notices that the gentleman's beautiful wife has her hair cropped and is clad in black. She is silent and seems pale and sad. She drinks from a skull whose apertures are filled with silver. Vernaige wonders at this sight. His host explains that he is punishing his wife for adultery: he had killed her lover and resolved to punish her by locking her in the room where she used to meet her lover and where they enjoyed their illicit pleasures. As a further reminder of her sins, he had hung her lover's skeleton in her cupboard and made her drink from his skull so that whenever she ate she would be forced to confront "à disner et à soupper les deux choses qui plus luy doibvent desplaire: l'ennemy vivant et l'amy mort, et tout, par son peché" (297).⁷ When Vernaige speaks to the wife, she confesses with grace and humility that she feels great remorse for having wronged her husband. The husband's revelation and the wife's words of contrition open up a space for Vernaige to remind the man that he is perpetuating

a cycle of fruitless punishment, for their childlessness will put an end to their line. He urges a compassionate approach to the repentant wife, an approach that will allow the couple to ensure the continuance of their great house. In spite of the husband's initial resistance, Vernaige is ultimately successful: the husband takes pity on his wife and in the end they have many fine children. In this tale, Charpentier sees speech as breaking a kind of evil spell or negative enchantment in which the couple was caught. She sees Vernaige as a therapist who wakes them out of a deadly silence and brings them back to the symbolic order by returning them not only to the world of speech, but also to the realm of social relations.⁸

Charpentier's excellent reading of N32 provides a compelling argument, one that appears to work well in the context of this tale, for it is true that the German couple moves from silence to speech as part of their return to kinship and the realm of the symbolic. Yet, speech is not always advocated in the *Heptameron*, and the dangers of speaking are exemplified in a number of tales. Indeed, as we shall see, the relation to speech, silence, and storytelling is complex and ambivalent in many of the *nouvelles*, including N32, to which we shall return later.

There can be no doubt that speech is important throughout Marguerite's work. The narrative frame of the text privileges oral storytelling by introducing us to ten discussants or *devisants* who are each to recount one story per day during ten days—which would have made 100, had the author not died before completing the volume. Yet certain kinds of speech are clearly discouraged. In the fourth *nouvelle*, for example, a princess who successfully fends off a rapist is admonished to keep silent about it. When she tells her *dame d'honneur* what has happened, she is advised not to tell anyone of the attack, lest she besmirch her reputation. This injunction to silence reminds readers that women were (and still are) often blamed for their victimization and that the safest course for women was generally to disappear and avoid being an object of the gaze or a subject of conversation. As Ann Rosalind Jones puts it, the ideal woman of the Renaissance “was distinguished by what she did not do, or equally important, by what men did not do to her: she was unseen, unheard, untouched, unknown—at the same time as she was obsessively observed.”⁹ The dangers of speaking are also underscored in N62, where a young woman at court gives an account of a rape that turns out to be her own story. She lets the cat out of the bag, so to speak, and becomes an object of laughter when she inadvertently

switches to a first person narrative at the moment when she tells listeners about being discovered naked by her maids. We are told that she is unable to recover her honour. Telling the story of her own rape is read by the *devisants* as evidence that she enjoyed the encounter. Longarine, the narrator of the tale, states: “Je vous assure, Mesdames, que, si elle eust eu grant desplaisir à faire ung tel acte, elle en eust voulu avoir perdu la memoire” (453).¹⁰ The discussion of the *devisants* at the end of the narration does not lead to an ultimate verdict on her guilt or innocence, but demonstrates that by telling her story, which is read as a diversion, the lady is making herself vulnerable to what Liz Guild terms “interpretative violence.”¹¹ She is laying herself open to scrutiny, to judgment; putting herself at risk of being the object of a gaze and a discourse that are critical rather than compassionate.¹²

In spite of the complications noted above, Marguerite’s stories do break “the injunction to silence and invisibility” described by Jones¹³ in ways that are helpful for women. She does this not only by showing and telling us stories of rape and attempted rape, but also by demonstrating the ways in which women’s agency can function, either through their own cunning (as can be seen in N5, where the “bateliere” or ferrywoman cleverly outwits the monks who want to take advantage of her) or through the intervention of powerful women (such as Marguerite herself) who are in a position to rescue women victimized by corrupt clergymen. Such is the case of Marie Herouet (or Heroët) in N22. Indeed, in this tale, Charpentier’s thesis can work, if we see writing as part of speech: it is only because Sister Marie Herouet successfully sneaks a message to her brother after years of torment that she is able to break the silence that keeps her captive in a convent and subject to the relentless ordeals endured at the hands of a priest who is hell-bent on deflowering or destroying her. Thanks to her letter, she is able to receive help through the intercession of the Queen of Navarre. Justice therefore prevails in the end.¹⁴

The corruption, concupiscence, and cupidity of men (often churchmen) are important topoi in the text. The ills brought about by erotic love and desire (including the problems created by lascivious monks and priests) represent a crucial dimension of the work. “Amor est passio”¹⁵: love is a kind of suffering and a sickness from which no one is immune. Not only is love often portrayed as a contagious disease, spread primarily through the eyes, but the word “love” (*amour*) itself also seems fraught with danger as it is prone to all sorts of semantic slippage. It encompasses too many potentially contradictory definitions; it

can sometimes be used to suggest one thing (compassion) and then justify its opposite (brutal rape). The slipperiness of language often creates devastating problems for women, who can be lured into thinking that love is meant to provide the healing compassion of *agape*, when a sweet-talking seducer is really driven by the concupiscence of erotic desire. Speech, like love, can thus promote good or ill. Moreover, language can transmit love's beneficial or harmful dimensions. It can sometimes be used for compassion and healing (as we saw in Charpentier's reading of N32) and it can be used to seduce and manipulate (as illustrated in many of Marguerite's tales, and perhaps most notably in N10, which we shall examine later). The verbal can also assist the visual in the communication of lovesickness, as amorous discourses can often seem as infectious and devastating as "love's fatal glance."¹⁶ To be sure, speech does not always offer a miracle cure to the torments of love.

Nouvelles 9 and 50 are interesting examples to consider, because they provide illustrations of lovesickness and seem to have a complex relation to speech and silence. The ninth tale is told by Dagoucín, a proponent of Neoplatonic love (*parfait amour*). He seems to believe that ideal love is often best kept hidden. Yet, he tells us that his story exemplifies the dangers of too much concealment and secrecy. Through his "true story" he aims to show skeptics, such as the more macho Hircain (Hircan) and Saffredent, that lovers have indeed been known to die of perfect love.¹⁷ In this story, a young gentleman, with more virtue and beauty than means (or perhaps brains?), loves a young lady, to whom he dares not show his love because he believes she is out of reach, owing to her higher status. Nevertheless he serves her so perfectly, with such "honneste amytié," that she feels honoured by his attentions. Tongues begin to wag, however (through the malice of men, we are told), with the kind of gossipy storytelling that has nefarious ends. In order to avoid scandal, the lady's mother asks the young man to stay away for a time. During his absence, he hears that the girl is to be married to another suitor and, as a result, he begins to waste away until he is completely bedridden. The young lady's mother, who is described as charitable, hears of his condition and brings her daughter to see him. When the women are told the cause of the disease, the mother promises that if he recovers, his daughter will take him as her husband. He is skeptical and asks for the daughter to be allowed to embrace him. The mother pushes the girl to comply, though the young woman seems reticent. We are told that the anorexic lover embraces the cause of his death ("embrassa la cause de sa mort," p. 63) with such vigour that

he expires. Neither speech nor the embrace suffices to cure him. However, after her traumatic encounter with the cadaverous youth, the young woman seems to have caught the fatal disease, such that attendants have difficulty separating her from his corpse.¹⁸ We are told that she remains inconsolable and can never find happiness, whatever husband has been offered for her consolation.

Can the story in N9 be said to exemplify “perfect love” on the part of the young man (as Dagoucin insists), when his actions lead to such a destructive end for the lady? One wonders whether the youth’s problem stems from having been too secretive (as Dagoucin suggests), or whether the problem is not the reverse: that things would have had a better outcome had he remained silent. Not only does speech or his request not have a healing effect on him, but it also results in the contamination of his beloved (or at least unleashes in her symptoms that had previously been contained). She is now lovesick and bereft, and there is no hope of a cure for her. Indeed, as Margaret Harper’s reading implies, the skeptical youth who doubts the mother’s promise and opts “for a final moment of pleasure over a possible cure” could be seen as lacking in wisdom and judgment, as he has chosen short-term gratification (the embrace) over a long-term solution (marriage) that might have saved both him and his beloved.¹⁹

N50 has a similar theme and structure. Indeed, in some ways, it seems to mirror N9, but perhaps with more ironic and less noble elements, as the desire of the lover here is not for marriage, but sex. This story, told by Longarine, is given as another example of the power of passionate love. A young gentleman from Cremona becomes melancholic when he decides to stop seeing the object of his love (from whom he cannot obtain the favours he wishes, even though she loves him with all her heart). A doctor bleeds him in order to relieve his symptoms. This supposed cure is ineffective. The young woman, hearing of his plight and believing the gentleman’s love must therefore be true, sends a message telling him that she will grant his wish. This promise provides a miracle cure:

Le gentilhomme, qui au matin avoit esté seigné au braz, se trouva par ceste parolle myeulx guery qu’il ne faisoit par medecine ne seignée qu’il sceust prandre: luy manda qu’il n’y auroit point de faulte qu’il iroit à l’heure qu’elle luy avoit commandé, et qu’elle avoit faict ung myracle evydant, car, par une seulle parolle, elle avoit guery ung homme, où tous les medecins ne pouvoient trouver remede.²⁰ (390)

Ultimately, the meeting is so intoxicating that it brings about his early death. In the heat of passion, the gentleman is so oblivious to all else that he fails to notice his bandages coming undone. He bleeds to death as he tries to part from his lady. The description of his death points ironically to his pleasure (a conflation of *la petite* and *la grande mort*?) and could be read like a satiric reification of the codes of love (and of the Ficinian idea of the souls of lovers departing to live in the other²¹).

Et, plus yvre d'amour et de plaisir qu'il ne lui estoit besoing, cuydant chercher par ung costé le remedde de sa vye, se donnoit par ung autre l'avancement de sa mort. Car, ayant pour s'ame mis en oubly soy mesmes, ne s'apperceut de son braz qui se desbanda et la playe nouvelle, qui se vint à ouvrir, rendit tant de sang que le pouvre gentilhomme en estoit tout baigné. Mais, estimant que sa lasseté venoit à cause de ses excès, s'en cuyda retourner en son logis. Lors Amour, qui les avoit trop unyz ensemble, fist en sorte que, en deppartant d'avecques s'ame, son ame deppartit d'avecques luy, et, par grande effusion de sang, tomba tout mort aux piedz de sa dame, qui demoura si hors d'elle mesmes par estonnement, en considerant la perte qu'elle avoit faicte d'un si parfaict amy, de la mort duquel elle estoit la seulle cause.²² (390–91)

Beside herself with grief, the young woman kills herself with the man's sword, falling on the body of her lover. Here again, while the message initially seemed to proffer a miraculous cure (speech leading to an embrace), it ultimately offers no lasting remedy for the man, and only succeeds in bringing the beloved down with him. Ironically, both men (in N9 and N50) die "in pleasure,"²³ passing their deadly disease onto the women they say they love.

Nouvelles 9 and 50 seem like ironic illustrations or reifications of Dagoucín's words in the debate on love preceding the ninth story, which echo Neoplatonic theories: "je suis ferme en mon oppinion que celluy qui ayme, n'ayant autre fin, intencion ne desir que de bien aymer, laissera plustost son ame par la mort que ceste forte amour saille de son cueur" (57–58).²⁴ Indeed, Dagoucín hints that he himself is keeping a love secret and that he too would prefer to die rather than reveal it—a statement that gives rise to the question of whether men really have died of love rather than speak their minds, as Parlamente warns: "Donnez vous garde, Dagoucín, car j'en ay veu d'autres que vous qui ont plustost myeulx aymé

mourir que parler” (58).²⁵ Saffredent’s ironic quotation from the Feast of the Holy Innocents—“Non loquendo sed moriendo confessi sunt” (58)²⁶—which underscores the commonplace comparison between the religion of profane love (*eros*) and the “true” religion of love (*agape*), also serves to remind us that speech is not the only way to reveal what the heart contains and that we may involuntarily confess without speaking, as our bodies can betray us through other signs, whether through involuntary reactions, symptoms, or death.²⁷

The importance of silence and discretion to lovers is, of course, an old courtly topos, reiterated in Marguerite de Navarre’s rendition of *La Chastelaine de Vergi* (N70), for example, where the gentleman loses his love by speaking of it.²⁸ Indeed, speaking of love and its conquests also gets men and women into trouble in other ways (see for example N49, where the locker-room bravado of the gentlemen, who find out they share the same mistress, turns on them²⁹). To be sure, speech and storytelling sometimes prove more symptomatic of a problem (like a repetition compulsion, as can be seen in N57) rather than suggestive of a cure. Repeating the story of his fetishistic attachment to a lady’s glove keeps the Englishman of N57 stuck in his narcissistic position and makes him appear ridiculous to his audience: what he interprets as a story of conquest appears to others as proof of his impotence and failure.³⁰

What then might be Marguerite’s solution to illness, whether the trauma of rape, the maladies of loves, or other ills, be they physical, mental, spiritual, or social? Is there a single cure that will work? Looking retroactively at Marguerite’s prologue, we see that she has brought up a number of different kinds of therapies, from healing baths to reading scriptures (proposed by Oysille, the spiritual counsellor of the group), to sexual intimacy (proposed by Hircain), to storytelling, which can provide diversion, edification, and sometimes healing laughter to fend off the dangers of *ennui*. What we see is that Marguerite does not offer a single cure to heal all problems. Like a good doctor or therapist, Marguerite de Navarre illustrates that one should not apply the same treatment to different ills. One has to be sensitive to individual cases and contexts, rather than submit everyone to the same general laws or principles. Even the ultimate evangelical narrative therapy proposed in her morality play *Le Mallade*—prayer based on true faith to the *deus medicus*—does not seem to be the final word in the *Heptameron*.³¹ Indeed, as can be seen in the story of Marie Herouet (N22, discussed earlier), sometimes, even the *deus ex machina*

comes in the form of human intercession, through the agency of powerful women such as Marguerite de Navarre herself.

The only sure remedy proposed in *Le Mallade* (wherein illness may function as a metaphor for religious conflict³²) was a compassionate god that could cure all ills. Yet, in the *Heptameron* (a later work) Marguerite seems to suggest that to cope with the earthly realm portrayed in her *nouvelles*, the wisest course is not to expect to be rescued by a *deus medicus* or his representatives on earth (often represented as very flawed clergymen, if not wolves in sheeps' clothing), but to use one's own strength and wits like the princess in N4, the "bateliere" in N5, or Marie Herouet in N22, all of whom outwit or fend off the predatory men who would turn them into victims. In spite of the ills of the world (or perhaps because of them) Marguerite also seems to want her readers to follow the example of a wise and loving deity, listening and acting with compassion, rather than enacting harsh judgments in imitation of a more wrathful god. Although she does portray god-like intercession from royal personages such as herself (the sort of *regina ex machina* we saw in N22, for example), these mediations also suggest she may have wanted to educate her peers to use their powers responsibly, as in a kind of *speculum principis* or "mirror for princes." In her writings, Marguerite de Navarre repeatedly seems to be encouraging clemency and compassion, a reminder to all human beings (and perhaps especially those in positions of power) that we lack divine wisdom and insight and must refrain from judging others too harshly, lest we contribute (through "interpretative violence" or worse) to aggravating rather than healing the ills of the world she represents in her writerly mirror.³³

Furthermore, Marguerite also seems to be suggesting a kind of compassionate narrative therapy *avant la lettre*. Returning to our discussion of N32, it is interesting to note that despite Charpentier's pertinent statements regarding the relevance of Foucault's ideas to Marguerite's writings, in relation to what might be called "la littérature de l'aveu"³⁴ in particular, some of the negative discourses that generate the bleak realities enacted in the story—like the eloquent, deathly silence and repetition compulsions she designates through the "enchantment" metaphor—are elided in her analysis of the text (and let us not forget that spells or incantations are speech acts that attempt to conjure realities through linguistic means). Charpentier pathologizes the couple in N32, viewing them as perverse and sado-masochistic.³⁵ Yet Marguerite is not generally a harsh judge of her characters, and it seems unlikely that these characters could

change their behaviour so radically if there were something inherently wrong with them. Is it not possible to see what is happening as a problem generated by discursive practices, as narrative therapy would suggest, rather than a pathological problem residing in the people themselves?³⁶ Could we not also say that the husband is using what Foucault describes as “technologies of power” to control and punish his wife? Is his behaviour not sanctioned and made possible by early modern discourses and laws (patriarchal discourses that still exist in some parts of the world) regarding women in general, and adulterous women in particular, that give men virtually unlimited powers over the lives of their wives and their lovers? Could we not see the wife’s behaviour, her contrition and silent cooperation in her own punishment, which are marks of her obedience to her husband and of her submission to the discourses of patriarchy, as performances of the kind of self-denial and self-regulation Foucault describes as “technologies of self” that are powerful because they represent an internalization of such discourses?³⁷

It is perhaps not entirely without irony that it should be through yet another patriarchal discourse (though a more productive one) that Vernaise resolves the matter and brings the family back into the fold. Indeed, his solution is to advocate for a shift of views and discourses that will lead to a better, life-giving outcome for the individuals, the family, and society. He helps move the couple from a perpetual backward-looking perspective that keeps the couple stuck in the fruitless repetition of an old story (a script with a dead end) to a future-focused outlook and a novel story that can engender new possibilities by encouraging the re-generation and continuation of the patrilineal line; it is through this change in narrative focus that Vernaise manages to convince the husband to abandon what Michael White would call a “problem saturated story” of crime and punishment that keeps the couple tied to the past, and helps them to create a new life and future through an alternative plot with better outcomes for all within the confines of the social structures of the day. In that sense, Vernaise is very much like the narrative therapist who helps patients to deconstruct old stories and patterns that are self-defeating in order that they may re-author their lives according to more productive and empowering paradigms. Indeed one might say, using Bourdieu’s terms (cited by White below), that by “exoticizing the domestic”³⁸ in the portrayal of the German couple in N32, as well as other stories she writes about, Marguerite de Navarre is also acting as a kind of narrative therapist who brings to her readers’ attention the

kinds of larger cultural problems and practices that might otherwise remain unnoticed if they were not externalized, objectified, and opened up for scrutiny so that alternate plots or stories might then be created. As White explains, Bourdieu “is suggesting [via his notion of ‘exoticizing the domestic’] that through the objectification of a familiar world, we might become more aware of the extent to which certain ‘modes of life and thought’ shape our existence, and that we might then be in a position to choose to live by other ‘modes of life and thought.’”³⁹

As we have seen, by becoming aware of the negative story that was controlling their lives, the couple in N32 moves from silence to speech as part of their return to the symbolic (as Charpentier puts it), both in terms of their relation to social structures and in relation to communication. Moreover, they are able to create an alternative narrative (a “story of success” rather than a “sad tale”⁴⁰) by re-authoring their lives.⁴¹ By focusing on the problem story, rather than turning people into the problem, narrative therapists (like Vernaige and Marguerite de Navarre) can give people a sense of agency they do not have if they are identified with or as the problem. Indeed, I would like to suggest that Marguerite is not only putting in question what we might call smaller-scale, personal narratives (such as the one in N32 and others we have seen), which can be read as bizarre stories or anecdotes when read in isolation, but that she is also inviting readers to question and deconstruct large-scale stories or “dominant cultural knowledges” and discursive practices that shape reality and that are so often received or perceived as “truths.” Indeed, if we look at N32 (and the other stories examined here) through the lens of dominant cultural discourses that are put in question in both the *nouvelles* and in the frame of the *Heptameron*, we can see that what allows for such individual stories is the larger story of the battle of the sexes which is played out over and over in the text, a story that repeatedly pits men and women against each other, to the detriment of one or the other, or both.

Indeed, one of the large-scale detrimental or “problem saturated” stories exemplified in the *Heptameron*—the kind of story that has existed for such a long time and on such a grand scale that it often passes unnoticed and unquestioned (and that is the problem with so many negative or damaging stories: that they are not perceived as points of view, narratives, or discourses, but as the way things really are⁴²)—stems from the notion that love is a kind of war necessitating a battle of the sexes in which there must be winners and losers. *Nouvelle*

10 is a perfect illustration of the way in which Marguerite de Navarre puts this kind of dominant story in question, exploring the notion of love as a kind of conquest and bid for possession. The knightly Amadour (Amador) can be seen to create realities through discursive practices and actions that are reflections of a worldview he has internalized. We, as readers, are allowed to witness the ways in which he plots out his life around the dominant narrative of love as war.⁴³ He is described as an outstanding warrior (or mercenary soldier), who seeks out battles wherever he can find them,⁴⁴ and when he sets eyes on the very young Floride he appears to decide that she is to be a story of conquest and possession, despite (or perhaps because of) all obstacles:

Et, après l'avoir longuement regardée, se delibera de l'aymer, quelque impossibilité que la raison luy mist au devant, tant pour la maison dont elle estoit que pour l'aage, qui ne pouvoit encores entendre telz propos. Mais contre ceste crainte se fortifioit d'une bonne esperance, se promectant à luy mesmes que le temps et la pascience apporteroient heureuse fin à ses labeurs.⁴⁵ (68)

While the language of love is initially used in the text, it becomes apparent, as the narrative unfolds, that Amadour views Floride as enemy territory to be conquered by any and all means available to him. Thus, while in the beginning he uses subtle strategies and the language of *honneste amytié* in his attempt to secure the young girl's friendship, it eventually becomes clear that he will stop at nothing to enjoy the spoils of war to which he believes he is entitled. This long tale, narrated by Parlamente, allows us to witness over time the gradual escalation of his tactics: from clever forms of diplomacy (using his gift of speech or "bien parler" to ingratiate himself with her and her family, for example); to slowly laying siege (through his strategic marriage to Advanturade to secure his place in the household of the Comtesse d'Arande and through the infiltration of her social sphere by cultivating a friendship with Floride's beloved "filz de L'Infant Fortuné," for example); to cunning lies and manipulation (ultimately alienating Floride from her own mother, who is recruited by him into waging a campaign and then outright war against her daughter to his benefit); to ambushing his victim and using brute force to collect the spoils he believes are rightly his. Indeed, after having used much subtler means to curry favour, he eventually declares to Floride that he sees her as the fruit of his hard

earned labour and that he will stop at nothing to get what he believes he deserves: “Par Dieu, Floride, le fruit de mon labeur ne me sera point ousté pour voz scrupulles. Car, puis que amour, pascience et humble priere n’y servent de rien, je n’espargneray point ma force pour acquerir le bien qui sans l’amour [m]e la feroit perdre” (96).⁴⁶ It is worth noting that Amadour uses the word *bien* (as a noun, in the sense of goods or property) in order to describe what he believes he is owed, as it underscores his view of Floride as a kind of object or possession to which he is entitled, as a result of his efforts, while at the same time pointing ironically to the fact that his actions are not in the realm of what is *bien* in the sense of goodness (kindness, honesty, or integrity, which are all lacking in Amadour’s treatment of Floride). The *bien* that Amadour seeks can only come at Floride’s expense, because the story he is enacting, driven by the logic of war and military conquest, is predicated on the idea that one must win, by hook or by crook, to someone’s detriment. The words *amour* and *amytié* are also used ironically in this story, as so often happens in the text. They remind us that Amadour’s purpose is in direct opposition to Floride’s interests or her notion of *honneste amytié*; her view is radically different from his, so much so that she is ready to sacrifice her beauty to cure him of his concupiscence. This is, no doubt, because she has internalized “technologies of the self” in response to the escalating “technologies of power” used by men like Amadour, along with discourses that make women responsible for men’s feelings and actions toward them. The use of the words *amour* and *amytié* also underscores the semantic slippage in these terms that can be used to signify both the selfless compassion of *caritas* or *agape* or its opposite—the kind of brutal concupiscence that is so often used by characters and *devisants* to justify taking what they want by force—underlining the fact that speech itself is ambiguous and problematic; it can be used for compassion and healing or for duplicity and seduction, as we see through Amadour’s speech and actions in N10. Floride’s answer to this problem is to avoid speech and, like the princess in N4 (who is encouraged by her dame d’honneur to use “technologies of the self” to protect her reputation), she keeps silent about her attempted rape, because she understands only too well the dangers to women in speaking.⁴⁷ Yet, this does not seem to be Marguerite’s ultimate solution, for in writing these framed tales—in giving a voice to characters who might not be allowed to speak otherwise, allowing us to witness the ways in which personal and large-scale narratives create realities, and providing us with a dialogic model that allows for a choice of views

and interpretations—is she not creating a space for agency and for healing by reminding us that we may be able to choose or change some of the stories and discourses that run our lives, if only we can discern them?⁴⁸

In brief, like medical and religious practices, speech, silence, and storytelling all remain ambivalent in the text. They are comparable to the mountain rivers of the prologue or to Plato's *pharmakon*: they can be curative, damaging, or deadly. Yet ultimately, as we can see in N32, Marguerite's use of storytelling is optimistic and helps to give readers a sense of agency by encouraging us to see the possibility of "re-authoring" life, of rewriting potentially sad stories that seem determined to repeat themselves endlessly, into alternative narratives with more positive outcomes. Moreover, through the dialogic layering of positive and negative examples and commentaries throughout her tales and their frame, she invites us to reflect on our potential roles in aggravating or healing the ills of the world through speech and silence, through various discursive practices, and through the ominous powers of storytelling and interpretation that create and mediate our realities.

Notes

1. This article combines several papers presented at conferences. The first was written for "Patients' Tales: Narrations and Representations from the Other Side of Medicine," a workshop organized by Hélène Cazes at the University of Victoria on April 21, 2007. Different aspects were subsequently developed for the Congress of the Canadian Society for Renaissance Studies in Vancouver, on June 2, 2008, and for a session on Marguerite de Navarre organized by Nicolas Russell for the Sixteenth-Century Studies Conference in Montreal, on October 15, 2010. The author gratefully acknowledges the generous support of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.
2. For medical models, see James W. Pennebaker and Janel D. Seagal, "Forming a Story: The Health Benefits of Narrative," *Journal of Clinical Psychology* 55, no. 10 (1999), pp. 1243–54, as well as Rita Charon, *Narrative Medicine: Honoring the Stories of Illness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), and the articles in *Psychoanalysis and Narrative Medicine*, ed. Peter L. Rudnytsky and Rita Charon (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2008).

3. Michael White and David Epston are credited with forming the branch of psychology called "Narrative Therapy." For more information, see their *Narrative Means to Therapeutic Ends* (New York: Norton, 1990) or White's *Maps of Narrative Practice* (New York: Norton, 2007). Also cited in this study is White's more theoretical discussion of "Deconstruction and Therapy" in *Experience, Contradiction, Narrative & Imagination: Selected Papers of David Epston & Michael White 1989–1991* (South Australia: Dulwich Centre Publications, 1992), pp. 109–51.
4. It is noteworthy that Marguerite chooses a negative locus for the storytelling. Not only is the world presented as a place plagued by disaster, destruction, and violence (see Nancy Frelick's "Reading Violent Truths," in *Approaches to Teaching Marguerite de Navarre's Heptameron*, ed. Colette H. Winn [New York: Modern Language Association, 2007], pp. 113–17), but the abbey that provides the site for the storytellers in the first diegetic layer is far from providing an ideal haven from worldly problems: the abbot of Nostre Dame de Serrance (or Sarrance) is depicted as a greedy, unwelcoming hypocrite, whereas the abbot at Saint Sevin (or Saint-Savin, the other abbey presented in the prologue, the one most *devisants* leave in order to join the party at Serrance once they find out Oysille and Simontault are there) is described as a good, kind, and generous man—a contrast that further serves to underscore the less than ideal backdrop for the narrative.
5. Françoise Charpentier, "La Guérison par la parole. À propos de la XXXIIe nouvelle de l'*Heptaméron*," in *Marguerite de Navarre 1492–1992. Actes du Colloque de Pau (1992)*, ed. Nicole Cazauran and James Dauphiné (Mont-de-Marsan: Éditions InterUniversitaires, 1995), pp. 645–55. Charpentier repeats this affirmation in "Désir et parole dans les devis de l'*Heptaméron*," in *Les Visages et les voix de Marguerite de Navarre*, ed. Marcel Tetel (Paris: Klincksieck, 1995), p. 41.
6. The example given by Charpentier is the captain in N13 who reveals his love to the lady in a long poetic epistle and subsequently dies on a journey. She states: "la parole est un moment de bonheur [...] elle remplit parfois une fonction thérapeutique. Elle est une nécessité urgente pour le capitaine de galères : pour lui, c'est parler ou mourir—et aussi bien après l'aveu la mort peut-elle advenir" (speech is a moment of happiness...it sometimes has a therapeutic function. It is an urgent thing for the captain: for him it is speech or death—and also death can come after the confession) (Charpentier, pp. 645–46; my translation appears in parentheses).
7. The husband explains: "when she takes dinner and supper she sees the two things that must distress her most, her living enemy [her husband] and her dead lover, and all by her own sin" (p. 333). All quotations of Marguerite de Navarre's *Heptameron*

- are from the edition by Renja Salminen (Geneva: Droz, 1999), hereafter cited in the text. English translations are from P.A. Chilton's edition of *The Heptameron* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1984). Page numbers appear in parentheses. Please note that, despite inconsistencies in various editions (and often in the same edition), an attempt has been made to make the spelling of names consistent with those in Salminen's edition, unless clearly cited from another source (Chilton's translations appear in parentheses, as needed).
8. According to Charpentier, this *nouvelle* "illustre le pouvoir libérateur de la parole qui permet le retour à soi-même et à un ordre relationnel" (illustrates the liberating power of speech that allows for the return to oneself and to a social order) (p. 654; my translation). Charpentier is presumably using the Lacanian notion of the symbolic order, which structures and regulates relations and forms of exchange at all levels between signs (in language or communication, for example), and in culture or society (rules and laws of kinship, etc.). For more information see Dylan Evans, *An Introductory Dictionary of Lacanian Psychoanalysis* (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 201–03.
 9. Ann Rosalind Jones, "Surprising Fame: Renaissance Gender Ideologies and Women's Lyric," in *The Poetics of Gender*, ed. Nancy K. Miller (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), p. 79.
 10. "I can assure you, Ladies, that if this kind of act had been distasteful to her, she would have wanted to erase it completely from her memory" (p. 486).
 11. Liz Guild, "'Au commencement était l'amour'...", in *Women's Writing in the French Renaissance: Proceedings of the Fifth Cambridge French Renaissance Colloquium 7–9 July 1997*, ed. Philip Ford and Gillian Jondorf (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 89.
 12. For a detailed reading of this tale, see François Cornilliat and Ullrich Langer, "Naked Narrator: *Heptameron* 62," in *Critical Tales: New Studies of the Heptameron and Early Modern Culture*, ed. John D. Lyons and Mary B. McKinley (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), pp. 123–45. Cornilliat and Langer also discuss N4, which is explored in more depth, along with other stories of attempted rape or rape, in Patricia Francis Cholakian, *Rape and Writing in the Heptameron of Marguerite de Navarre* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1991).
 13. Jones, p. 79.
 14. As Mary B. McKinley explains, "Marie Héroet strikingly figures woman's appropriation of narrative, because she writes her story after she has been silenced and negotiates her own liberation by slipping her text to her brother, who, although

- nameless in the story, probably represents another writer, the poet Antoine Héroet, a courtier of Marguerite de Navarre." See "Telling Secrets: Sacramental Confession and Narrative Authority in the *Heptameron*," in *Critical Tales: New Studies of the Heptameron and Early Modern Culture*, ed. John D. Lyons and Mary B. McKinley (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), pp. 146–71, 159.
15. Andreas Capellanus: "Amor est passio quaedam innata procedens ex visione et immoderata cogitatione formae alterius sexus" ("Love is an inborn suffering which results from the sight of, and uncontrolled thinking about, the beauty of the other sex"). The original Latin and the English translation are from the first chapter of book 1 of the bilingual edition of *Andreas Capellanus On Love*, trans. P. G. Walsh (London: Duckworth, 1982), pp. 32–33.
 16. A phrase borrowed from the important study by Lance Donaldson-Evans, *Love's Fatal Glance: A Study of Eye Imagery in the Poets of the École Lyonnaise* (University, MS: Romance Monographs, 1980). For recent explorations of the contagions of lovesickness, see Donald Beecher's "Windows on Contagion" and Nancy Frelick's "Contagions of Love: Textual Transmission," both in *Imagining Contagion in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Claire Carlin (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp. 32–46 and pp. 47–62, as well as the seminal work by Mary Frances Wack, *Lovesickness in the Middle Ages: The Viaticum and Its Commentaries* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990). See also Donald Beecher and Massimo Ciavolella in their critical edition of Jacques Ferrand's *A Treatise on Lovesickness* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1990) and in the articles in *Eros and Anteros: The Medical Traditions of Love in the Renaissance*, ed. Donald A. Beecher and Massimo Ciavolella (Toronto: Dovehouse, 1992), as well as *Love and Death in the Renaissance*, ed. Kenneth R. Bartlett et al. (Toronto: Dovehouse, 1991).
 17. Like the lady in Chartier's *Belle Dame sans mercy*, these cynics insist that no one can die of love. For more on the *Belle Dame* as an intertext to the *Heptameron*, see Nancy Frelick, "Love, Mercy, and Courtly Discourse: Marguerite de Navarre Reads Alain Chartier," in *Mythes à la cour, mythes pour la cour*, ed. Alain Corbellari et al. (Genève: Droz, 2010), pp. 325–36.
 18. According to Margaret B. Harper, "While one case of lovesickness results in death, the young girl's latent condition manifests itself through tears, cries, and long-term misery. These specific symptoms are significant because both Aubery and Ferrand stipulate these signs among the external symptoms of love melancholy. The novella thus demonstrates not one but two cases of incurable lovesickness. Even though Aubery and Ferrand suggest that love melancholy can be cured through medical

- means, Aubery asserts that in extreme cases, the condition is ‘incurable de toute son essence,’” in “Renaissance Cures: Short Narrative Prose and Medicine from *Les Cent nouvelles nouvelles* to Montaigne” (Dissertation: University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1998), pp. 105–06.
19. Harper, p. 105.
 20. “The gentleman, who had been bled from the arm that morning, was restored to health far more effectively by this message than any medicine or blood-letting. He sent word that he would not fail to appear at the appointed hour, and that she had performed a manifest miracle, for by uttering a single word she had cured a man of a disease for which all the doctors had failed to find a remedy” (p. 424).
 21. See the *Commentarium in Convivium Platonis, De Amore* (II, 8) in Marsile Ficin, *Commentaire sur Le Banquet de Platon, De l’Amour*, trans. Pierre Laurens (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2002), pp. 42–49.
 22. “Love and pleasure intoxicated him beyond all bounds, and fondly believing that in his reach he had a remedy to save his life, he merely brought about his early death. In his passion for his mistress he was oblivious of himself, and did not notice that the bandages of his arm were coming undone. The recent wound opened and the blood gushed forth so profusely that the poor gentleman was soaked in it. Feeling himself overcome by weakness, he thought it must be due to his excesses, and decided to return home. Then Love, who had united them too closely together, brought about their separation, for as the gentleman departed from his mistress, his soul departed from his body. The flow of blood was so great that he fell at the feet of his lady. And she, beside herself with grief, stood aghast as she pondered the loss of so perfect a lover whose death she alone had caused” (p. 425).
 23. Harper, p. 107.
 24. “I am utterly convinced that if a man loves with no other aim, no other desire, than to love truly, he will abandon his soul in death rather than allow his love to abandon his heart” (p. 113).
 25. “Watch your step, Dagoucín. I’ve seen plenty of men who’ve died rather than speak what’s in their minds” (p. 114).
 26. As Chilton explains in a note, “Saffredent quotes from the *Oratio* for the Feast of the Holy Innocents: ‘not by speaking, but by dying have they confessed’” (p. 114).
 27. Regarding concealment and the heart in Marguerite de Navarre’s text, John D. Lyons remarks: “The heart is central to the discourse of desire, or rather the heart accounts for the apparent absence of this discourse within the lives of the characters. Rather than serving as primary motor of emotion or as the physiological receptor

- of an over-production of humors, the heart serves as the place of concealment of desires, intentions, or thoughts that cannot be expressed without some serious disturbance of the social order.” See “The ‘cœur’ in the *Heptaméron*: The Ideology of Concealment,” in *Les Visages et les voix de Marguerite de Navarre*, ed. Marcel Tetel (Paris: Klincksieck, 1995), p. 111. An instance of the betrayal of the secrets of the heart through the signs of the body in the *Heptameron* is the phenomenon of blushing, which is described as a kind of involuntary confession by Nora M. Peterson in “‘The Truth Will Out’: Blushing, Involuntary Confession and Self-knowledge in the *Heptaméron*,” *Renaissance and Reformation/Renaissance et Réforme* 32, no. 2 (2009), pp. 33–52.
28. As Lawrence D. Kritzman explains, “In the universe of the seventieth novella the act of revelation is an act of self-destruction. Unable to survive the power of the gaze, true love can only exist if secrecy is maintained.” See “Changing Places: Marguerite de Navarre and the Rhetoric of the Gaze (*L’Heptaméron* 70),” in *Les Visages et les voix de Marguerite de Navarre*, p. 77.
 29. See Nancy Frelick, “Female Infidelity: Ideology, Subversion, and Feminist Practice in Marguerite de Navarre’s *Heptaméron*,” *Dalhousie French Studies* 56 (2001), pp. 17–26.
 30. See Nancy Frelick, “Fetishism and Storytelling in *Nouvelle* 57 of Marguerite de Navarre’s *Heptameron*,” in *Distant Voices Still Heard: Contemporary Readings of French Renaissance Literature*, ed. John O’Brien and Malcolm Quainton (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000), pp. 138–54.
 31. For a detailed analysis of this play, see Colette Winn, “Témoignage de l’actualité du temps: *Le Mallade* de Marguerite de Navarre (c. 1535),” *Renaissance and Reformation/Renaissance et Réforme* 26, no. 4 (2002), pp. 91–111.
 32. In his edition, V. L. Saulnier suggests that this “farce,” which he sees as part of Marguerite de Navarre’s desire to reconcile old and new religions through her “grand plan de pacification religieuse,” was inspired by a Protestant play (Mathieu Malingre’s 1533 *Moralité de la maladie de Chrestienté*) that represented the new faith as a suffering patient and God as the only doctor. See Marguerite de Navarre, *Théâtre profane*, ed. V. L. Saulnier (Genève: Droz, 1978), pp. 4–5.
 33. See Marguerite’s desire for clemency in the sentencing of the characters in N1, for example, where she, as the Duchesse d’Alençon, is shown to eschew the death penalty for those who plotted against her and her brother, the King of France.
 34. Charpentier, pp. 646–48.
 35. Charpentier, p. 650.

36. One of the crucial concepts in narrative therapy is “externalizing the problem.” Rather than being objectified or identified with problems (traditionally, all too often defined as internal or inherent to the self, so that the person or relationship is seen as the problem), persons in narrative therapy are encouraged to see problems they experience as entities outside themselves: “the practices associated with the externalizing of problems may be considered counter-practices to cultural practices that are objectifying of persons and of their bodies. These counter-practices open space for persons to re-author or constitute themselves, each other, and their relationships, according to alternative stories or knowledges” (White and Epston, *Narrative Means to Therapeutic Ends*, p. 75).
37. Michael White discusses these “practices of power” and their deconstruction in his article on “Deconstruction and Therapy” (pp. 136–46). For Foucault’s seminar on “Technologies of the Self” (originally presented in Vermont in 1982), see *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault*, ed. Luther H. Martin et al. (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1988), pp. 16–49. For Foucault, “technologies of power [...] determine the conduct of individuals and submit them to certain ends or domination, an objectivizing of the subject” and “technologies of the self [...] permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality”; these generally function along with “technologies of production, which permit us to produce, transform, or manipulate things” and “technologies of sign systems, which permit us to use signs, meanings, symbols, or signification” as these “four types of technologies hardly ever function separately, although each is associated with a certain type of domination” (p. 18).
38. White borrows Bourdieu’s concept of “exoticizing the domestic” (in opposition to the history of “domesticating the exotic” in traditional anthropology) as a way of defamiliarizing or making strange (as Russian formalists might say) problems that have become too familiar to be properly distinguished or deconstructed. In “Deconstruction and Therapy” he states that “Many of the methods of deconstruction render strange these familiar and everyday taken-for-granted realities and practices by objectifying them. In this sense, the methods of deconstruction are methods that ‘exoticize the domestic’” (p. 121). He then quotes Bourdieu from *Homo Academicus* (p. xi–xii): “The sociologist who chooses to study his [sic] own world in its nearest and most familiar aspects should not, as the ethnologist would,

domesticate the exotic, but, if I may venture the expression, exoticize the domestic, through a break with his [sic] initial relation of intimacy with modes of life and thought which remain opaque to him [sic] because they are too familiar. In fact the movement towards the originary, and the ordinary, world should be the culmination of a movement toward alien and extraordinary worlds" ("Deconstruction and Therapy," p. 121).

39. White, "Deconstruction and Therapy," p. 122.
40. See Goffman quoted in White and Epston's *Narrative Means to Therapeutic Ends*, p. 163.
41. "Re-authoring involves relocating a person/family's experience in new narratives, such that the previously dominant story becomes obsolete," White and Epston, *Narrative Means to Therapeutic Ends*, p. 127.
42. As we could see with the analysis of N32, the belief that stories simply represent reality can keep people stuck in hopeless situations, wherein the only available future seems to be a repetition of the past. Narrative therapy empowers people by encouraging them to see reality as constructed by stories that can be changed and re-authored to produce different outcomes. As we have seen, re-authoring one's life is a powerful way to have agency by distinguishing one's stories through a process of defamiliarization (by "exoticizing the domestic" as Bourdieu suggests) that could perhaps be likened to the process observed by Russian formalists that allows one to perceive as alien what otherwise has become too familiar to be noticed or distinguished as coming from a particular (or peculiar) point of view. A great example is Victor Shklovsky's analysis of Tolstoy's use of a horse as narrator (in "Kholstomer") to highlight the peculiarities of human behaviour: see "Art as Technique," in *Russian Formalist Criticism: Four Essays*, ed. Lee T. Lemon and Marion J. Reis (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1965), pp. 12–15.
43. As Lawrence D. Kritzman observes, "A psychological confrontation mediated by images of war and sustained by the repetition of the verbs *guerroyer* and *deliberer* in the narrative delineates the interaction between the sexes as a form of battle in which men conquer and women are vanquished. 'Au bout de deux ou trois ans après avoir fait tant de belles choses ... [Amadour] imagina une invention très grande, non pour gainger le cueur de Floride ... mais pour avoir la victoire de son ennemye,'" in *The Rhetoric of Sexuality and the Literature of the French Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 50.
44. After describing his other superb qualities (grace, beauty, political acumen, and eloquence), Parlamente affirms that his greatest strengths or "vertuz," his most

valued traits, come from his boldness in war: “Mais ce qui le faisoit encores plus estimer, c'estoit sa tresgrande hardiesse, dont le bruict n'estoit empesché pour sa jeunesse. Car en tant de lieux avoit desja si fort monstré ce qu'il sçavoit faire que non seulement les Espaignes, mais la France et l'Ytallye estimoient grandement ses vertuz, pource que, à toutes les guerres qui avoient esté, il ne se y estoit point espargné. Et, quant son pays estoit en repoz, il alloit chercher la guerre aux lieux estranges, où il estoit aymé et estimé d'amys et d'ennemys” (p. 67). (“But what gained him even higher esteem was his fearlessness, which, despite his youth, was famed throughout all lands. For he had already in many different places given evidence of his great abilities. Not only throughout the kingdoms of Spain, but also in France and Italy people looked upon him with admiration. Not once during the recent wars had he shrunk from battle, and when his country had been at peace, he had gone to seek action in foreign parts, and there too had been loved and admired by friend and foe alike,” p. 123).

45. “For a long while he gazed at her. His mind was made up. He would love her. The promptings of reason were in vain. He would love her, even though she was of far higher birth than he. He would love her, even though she was not yet of an age to hear and understand the words of love. But his misgivings were as nothing against the firm hope that grew within him, as he promised himself that time and patient waiting would in the end bring his toils to a happy conclusion” (p. 123).
46. “Almighty God, Florida, I'm not going to have the just deserts of all my efforts frustrated by your scruples! Seeing that all my love, all my patient waiting, all my begging and praying are useless, I shall use every ounce of strength in my body to get the one thing that will make life worth living!” (p. 147). It is interesting to note that this language echoes Amadour's deliberation at the beginning of the tale, where he promises himself that with time and patience his “labeurs” would yield the desired end.
47. Colette Winn reminds us that not speaking was part of women's self-fashioning as models of feminine virtue and that it also provided protection for women. See Colette H. Winn, “La Loi du non-parler dans l'*Heptaméron* de Marguerite de Navarre,” *Romance Quarterly* 33, no. 2 (1986), pp. 165–66. While we may not go so far as to say, along with Winn, that this gave women a kind of self-affirmation (“Aussi paradoxal que cela puisse paraître, l'affirmation du moi pour la femme ne pouvait se faire que dans le silence. En refusant de parler, la femme gagnait le combat depuis si longtemps engagé; elle réussissait à se faire aimer, écouter et enfin respecter,” p. 166), it seems clear that the need for silence and for what

- Foucault terms “technologies of the self” (see n. 37 above) was internalized by many women, including Floride and the female characters in N4, for example.
48. As Floyd Gray points out in his excellent reading of this tale, Floride and Amadour (and the other characters) each seem to be following their own stories, even though these occasionally intersect, ultimately, with unfortunate consequences. He also states that Parlamente’s point of view as the narrator of N10 is ambiguous: both characters are seen as remaining virtuous, according to the different gendered models or ideologies they emulate. Furthermore, Gray affirms that both are blameless victims of the conflicts between these intersecting personal narratives, and addresses what he sees as the possible lesson of the tale in terms that are comparable to those of narrative therapy: “If neither is to blame, what then is the lesson of the story? Since there is no general agreement among the *devisants*, are we to conclude that there is none, that Marguerite means to amuse but not to instruct? Or does she expect us to be better readers than they are and realise that the fault lies elsewhere, not in the respective virtues of her protagonists but, rather, in their fatal confrontation? Taken separately, their stories are related to one another, but asymptotically, in that both Floride and Amadour are victims, less of unreciprocated desire, than of its impossible fulfillment. Their stories intersect nevertheless, and it is the story of their intersecting which is the subject of the tenth *nouvelle* and which the text, through its convolutions, describes as constrained and improper.” See Floyd Gray, “Reading and Writing in the Tenth Story of the *Heptaméron*,” in *Distant Voices Still Heard: Contemporary Readings of French Renaissance Literature*, ed. John O’Brien and Malcolm Quainton (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000), pp. 135–36.