

‘I would cure you’: Self-help Advice on Love in Sidney and Shakespeare’

(8800 words)

Setting aside the fancy (pleasing though it is) that Elizabethan and Jacobean society pullulated with hot lovers, critics have offered a range of weighty explanations for the popularity of the literature of obsession, from attracting the attention of the monarch, to artistic rivalry, to making subjectivity the subject of study.¹ This article suggests a more tongue-in-cheek approach to advice on love in Sidney and Shakespeare, based on recent reappraisals of the use to which self-help books are put. Readers approach these as refreshing fantasies of a radical potential change in lifestyle, but with little intention of putting most (if any) of their advice into practice. From this perspective, *Astrophil and Stella* (1591) depicts a lover who encourages counsel only to resist it, a move which gives a new view of the love-cure game played between Rosalind and Orlando in *As You Like It* (1599).

Today’s self-help books share similar techniques to cure the unhappily obsessed. In some cases, this is a serious business, of course: bibliotherapy can be an effective way to allow people to understand their mental condition, so they cease to be merely objects of advice and treatment. When readers re-describe their own situations to themselves in different genres, or recognize similarities in texts by others, including fictional ones, they may come to understand the perceptions and angles they have been obsessed by, and hence change any persistently unrealistic and inflexible thinking on their part. Moreover, such readers may be comforted by recognizing that they are part of a community of affect, as they find out how similar problems bedevil others as well as themselves.²

A rapid survey of the self-help shelves in my local bookshop suggests that, after careers, love relationships are probably the best-selling topic of advice. Like myself, most prospective buyers were lurking and flicking - half-abashed, half-fascinated - through titles like *Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus*, *The Complete Book of Rules: Time-tested Secrets for Capturing the Heart of Mr Right*, and *He's Just Not that Into You: the No-excuses Truth to Understanding Guys*, excusing ourselves in part by also skimming parody versions, such as

¹ For surveys of some of these approaches, see M. Spiller, *The Development of the Sonnet: an Introduction* (London, 1992), pp. 81-174; S. Regan, *The Sonnet* (Oxford, 2019), pp. 1-70.

² P. Davis and J. Billington, ‘The Very Grief a Cure of the Disease’, *Changing English*, 23 (2016), 396-408.

He Just Thinks He's Not that Into You: the Insanely Determined Girl's Guide to Getting the Man You Want!)³

Such self-help books have been damned for encouraging their readers in an a-political and shallow narcissism, which was merely a form of identity shopping.⁴ Conversely but simultaneously, they have also been attacked for aiming to shape an individual suited to a neo-liberal economy. Capitalism requires a flexible workforce, and self-help provides tools for people to produce themselves in line with notions of what a useful self should be. This critique has been extended into the political sphere, commentators arguing that a hyper-responsible self has become linked to the liberal governance of populations, as self-determining individuals fuse ethical and political domains, and are persuaded to choose to become more productive.⁵ Finally, self-help books have been criticized for creating in their readers a perpetual sense of being personally lacking in some way, initiating a 'contagion of insufficiency', before offering directions on how to fill that gap, so 'the belabored self is overworked as both the subject and as the object of its own efforts at self-improvement'.⁶

In the last fifteen years, however, another strain of feminist cultural studies has turned from theoretical to empirical research, investigating (through focus groups and interviews) how the genre is approached by real readers.⁷ These studies speak of how self-help can offer to

³ J. Gray, *Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus* (1992; London, 1999); E. Fein and S. Schneider, *The Complete Book of Rules: Time-tested Secrets for Capturing the Heart of Mr Right* (1995; London, 2000); Greg Behrendt and Liz Tuccillo, *He's Just Not that Into You: the No-excuses Truth to Understanding Guys* (2004; London, 2005); Danielle Whitman, *He Just Thinks He's Not that Into You: the Insanely Determined Girl's Guide to Getting the Man You Want* (Philadelphia, 2007).

⁴ S. Brinkman, *Stand Firm. Resisting the Self-improvement Craze*, trans. T. McTurk (Cambridge, 2017), pp. 15-29, 73-85.

⁵ S. Riley et al, 'The Gendered Nature of Self-help', *Feminism and Psychology*, 29.1 (2019), 3-18; H.M. Rimke, 'Governing Citizens Through Self-help Literature', *Cultural Studies*, 14 (2000), 61-78.

⁶ M. McGee, *Self-help Inc. Makeover Culture in American Life* (Oxford, 2005), pp. 16, 18; E. Illouz, *Saving the Modern Soul: Therapy, Emotions, and the Culture of Self-help* (Berkeley, 2008), pp. 61-88.

⁷ For instance, B. Blum, *The Self-help Compulsion: Searching for Advice in Modern Literature* (New York, 2020), pp. 41-4, 211-23; P. Neville, 'Helping Self-help Books: Working Towards a New Research Agenda', *Interactions: Studies in Communications & Culture*, 3.3 (2012), 361-79; S. Knudson, 'Crash Courses and Lifelong Journeys: Modes of Reading Non-fiction Advice in a North American Audience', *Poetics*, 41 (2013), 211-35; S.

develop a sense of agency in the individual, one which need not be confined to her productive capacity, but can be used for wider political purposes. Moreover, these books give shape to inchoate and problematic situations. They reveal them to be common troubles, which many people can and do overcome, and researchers admire the way such books, often lent between readers, can create an affective and interpretative community. Asserting that change can be planned and implemented through the exercise of will power, careful reasoning, and training in feeling and perception, the books offer an enchanting prospect of project-based learning. Their programmes look like they can be acted on easily because they are incremental and practical. They insist that a reader engage with them actively, first by entrancing her with the spectacle of her own abasement, creating what will be a usable narrative of her past problems and actions to explain her present worries. Then they move into therapeutic realism: isolating her big misconceptions, and dealing with them in discrete steps. Studies point to the substantial amount of homework the books ask of a reader, who accordingly generates her own textual content by considering the questions, rules, and examples in the context of her own life. Such work is stressed to be painful and laborious, so each book asks a reader to divide her self into two: material to be worked on, and coach, editor, or observer to do that shaping. She becomes the heroine of her own escape story.⁸

The style of a self-help book is designed to encourage the reader to act on its advice, rather than dispassionately judge the validity of its prescriptions. It is voiced in a popular rather than scholarly way: written to be read and applied, not to advance cumulative understanding of a field. The books appear pleasingly personal and experimental, rather than exhaustive and accurate. They are, Sandra Dolby argues, part of a didactic tradition of teaching, moving, and delighting, rather than part of a scholarly tradition.⁹ The text tends to praise the knowledge it offers as new, significant, and a surprise even to its author, who has learned this material through personal research and experience, and who now appeals to the reader to look inside

Mclean and B. Kapell, 'She Reads, He Reads: Gender Differences and Learning Through Self-help Books', *European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults*, 6.1 (2015), 55-72.

⁸ R. Hazleden, "'You have to learn these lessons sometime': Persuasion and the Therapeutic Power Relations in Bestselling Relationship Manuals', *Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies* 24 (2010), 291-305; R. Hazleden, 'Love Yourself': the Relationship of the Self with Itself in Popular Self-help Texts', *Journal of Sociology*, 39 (2003), 413-28; pp. 415-23.

⁹ S. Dolby, *Self-help books: Why Americans Keep Reading Them* (Urbana, 2005), pp. 27-8.

herself to see the truth of what is being asserted.¹⁰ Examples and stories are given, as magnified moments for the reader to empathize with. Other experts are cited, in collaborative mode, as author and reader work through issues together. Corpus linguistics shows how often, in the books, ‘you’ will be addressed directly, and exhorted to actively improve your life.¹¹ The pronoun is most frequently collocated with the words ‘are’, ‘have’, ‘can’, ‘will’, ‘want’, ‘do’, ‘may’, ‘need’ to act, and often followed by imperatives about modes of thinking (‘consider’, ‘remember’, ‘imagine’). The content offered is split into short sections (chapters tend to be under ten pages, for instance), to allow the reader to take a non-linear approach, as she moves between topics that strike her. Each section typically ends with lists of conclusions, questions to the reader and activities for her to take forward. The page layout is equally as fissiparous, mashing up typeface and font size, and inserting bullet-points, images, boxes, glossaries, bibliographies, and dialogues.¹²

Perhaps the most striking reversal of the reputation of today’s self-help books - partly as a result of parallels drawn with Janice Radway’s studies into how romances are read, rather than what their content is like – is how research increasingly acknowledges that the genre can give moments of pure pleasure.¹³ Wendy Simonds, for instance, interviewing self-help readers, describes how they relish the excitement of opening a new book, talking of their sense of total possibility with such a tool in hand. ‘Reading self-help books... can be a means of obtaining instant gratification, with no special concern for content’, she concludes.¹⁴ Beth Blum notes how readers enjoy the books’ affirmative element, the promises of transformation, of increased agency, culture, and wisdom. Beth Blum notes their pleasurable cooperative ‘guerrilla aesthetic’, which allows readers to take what they need and ignore the rest, moving in and out of the contents in a spirit of experiment. Observation and play-testing of the advice offered will be done at first hand, by the reader.¹⁵ Dolby speaks of the genre as a sort of folk wisdom, which intends to give amusement or escape as much as education. Self-help books are, she considers, satisfyingly formulaic, with their psuedo-fables, step

¹⁰ Hazleden, ‘Persuasion’, pp. 294-8.

¹¹ J. Koay, *Persuasion in Self-improvement Books* (Cham, 2019), pp. 26-36.

¹² Knudson, ‘Non-fiction Advice’, pp. 217-30.

¹³ J. Radway, *Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy, and Popular Literature* (1984; Chapel Hill, 1991), pp. 86-102.

¹⁴ W. Simonds, *Women and Self-help Culture: Reading Between the Lines* (New Brunswick, 1992), p. 32.

¹⁵ Blum, *Advice*, p. 61.

programmes, and U-shaped narratives, in which a problem is recognized (or created), and then triumphantly overcome.¹⁶

Historians of self-help sometimes gesture towards early modern Protestantism, viewed as a force to move the self into a state of grace in life and work, but always end by asserting that the self-help genre is a distinct cultural product of the nineteenth century onwards.¹⁷

Religious historians of the early modern period might disagree, given the aims, methods, and textual forms of popular texts of practical divinity and devotion.¹⁸ While the evidence needed for a detailed reception history of advice texts is difficult to find for the earlier periods, scholars can show how, for instance, the London turner Nehemiah Wallington (a compulsive diarist and note-taker) bought books by religious experts to solve his doubts, interspersing notes from them with own thoughts and observations. Far from locating Protestantism in a splendidly spiritual isolation, historians conclude that the early modern godly repeatedly resorted to clerical experts in piety.¹⁹

Wallington was fond of drawing up plans of reform for himself and his household, with step-change programmes based on those in such popular domestic handbooks as *Of Domesticall Duties* (1622) by William Gouge (celebrated preacher at Blackfriars, London). Gouge discusses the duties of each role in a household (husband, wife, and children; master or mistress and servants), framed mostly as a matter of maintaining suitably caring and respectful attitudes towards their own, and others', positions. However, the articles which Wallington's household eventually signed up to are far more pragmatic: they focus on actions rather than attitudes, and impose a cash fine if a fault is committed. Thus, where Gouge speaks movingly of how husbands and wives should pray together as a 'mutuall dutie which one oweth to the other', giving each other every blessing and help they can, and always being 'mindfull of one another', Wallington's list says baldly and briskly:

¹⁶ Dolby, *Self-help books*, pp. 4-5, 74-5.

¹⁷ McGee, *Makeover Culture*, pp. 15, 25-9; Illouz, *Saving the Modern Soul*, pp. 40-1; T. Aubry, *Reading as Therapy: What Contemporary Fiction Does for Middle-class Americans* (Iowa City, 2011), pp. 25-6.

¹⁸ C. Sullivan, *Shakespeare and the Play Scripts of Private Prayer* (Oxford, 2020), pp. 65-84; M. Patterson, *Domesticating the Reformation: Protestant Best Sellers, Private Devotion, and the Revolution of English Piety* (Madison, 2007), pp. 99-258.

¹⁹ P. Seaver, *Wallington's World: a Puritan Artisan in Seventeenth-century London* (London, 1985), pp. 5-6, 79, 185; L. Busfield, 'Doubt, Anxiety, and Protestant Epistolary Counselling: the Letter-book of Nehemiah Wallington', *Studies in Church History*, 52 (2016), 298-314.

First, that we pray all together every morning & evening if we can convenient, or else by our selves. If not to pay to the poors box a penny ...

4. That they that lie till six o'clock upon the Lords' Day, then they pay a farthing ...

8. If any counsel [conceal] the faults of the ware, or use words of deceit, or take more for the ware than it is worth, then to pay to the poors' box a half-penny.

9. If any tell a lie, then to pay one penny ...

To these laws we all set our hands: NW [Nehemiah Wallington], GW [Grace Wallington], James Wells, Obediah Sely, Theophilus Ward, Susan Patie.²⁰

Such self-contracting was a practice which, Wallington says (ruefully), 'made some conformity of the life of Grace in me, although it were painful and some what chargeable unto me'.²¹ In making his system so concrete and detailed, and by levying a different fine for each broken resolution (ranging from a farthing for each time he was idle at work to 2d for failing to take an opportunity to teach godly ways to members of his household), Wallington was nudging himself to action: definite, near-at-hand results are more likely to be appreciated and acted on than those which are unclear and far-off.

Fantatising about how one might become godly, and drawing up the rules to make oneself so, is pleasant and easy. Judging whether they have been kept is a more mortifying and exacting activity, so writers of practical divinity find it necessary to insist on that this homework is part of the process. Richard Rogers (the Puritan lecturer at Wethersfield, Essex) speaks of how

as the Steward of some Noble mans house doth not make a generall reckoning and account of much money laid out, but writeth the particulars, daily and hourelly, as he giveth out and receiveth ... so and much more ... doth the wise man looke daily to his waies, and through the day ... So will hee even set downe many parts of his life in

²⁰ W. Gouge, *Of Domesticall Duties* (1622), p. 235; 'Writing Book' of Nehemiah Wallington (1654), in L. Cowen Orlin, ed., *Elizabethan Households: an Anthology* (Washington, 1995), pp. 31-2. On spiritual self-covenants in diaries, see A. Cambers, 'Reading, the Godly, and Self-Writing in England, circa 1580-1720', *Journal of British Studies*, 46 (2007), 796-825; p. 806.

²¹ N. Wallington, *The Notebooks of Nehemiah Wallington, 1618-1654. A Selection*, ed. D. Booy (Aldershot, 2007), p. 48.

writing also, such as are principally to be kept in record (as Gods benefits and his own sinnes) as he is able, and all to help him to be better directed in it.²²

Wallington ‘found it a hard worke to Examin al my thought, words and Actions of the day and if for one day how much harder is it to examin a weeke or a monthe’.²³ He finds such self-reflexive internal auditing exhausting: ‘I would have Examined my Examinations but it was to hard a worke for mee’.²⁴ His diaries show him setting up programmes, again and again, and then failing in them: ‘I find it by woful experience that I am intangled and have laid to heavie a burden on myselfe that I am not able to beare’; ‘I did draw out Artickles and tied myselfe with many penelties which I was never able to perform’; there is a ‘breach of my covenants ... made unto God’; ‘my heart smote me (as it doth many times) for breaking promise or vows which I have made’, and ‘I brooke all my porposes: promises and covenantes with my God’ on occasions varying from eating a pear without saying grace beforehand (against his ‘promise’) to mourning the death of his daughter.²⁵

And yet Wallington continues to make such resolutions, more or less gothic in elaboration. It would seem that he and his household are recreated – in both senses – when they solemnly swear to regulate their behaviour, even though they anticipate subsequent failure.²⁶

Shifting sector to look at political counsel tends to give the same impression. Research into this mode focuses on the grave content and uses of advice. As Francis Bacon solemnly pronounced in ‘Of counsell’, giving advice is the greatest of responsibilities, since one is taking another person’s life in hand.²⁷ Scholars cite Seneca’s epistle 94 on how advice supplements the fallible reason and will, since nature alone does not teach what ought to be done in every circumstance, and even then the best course is known, it may not be taken.²⁸

²² R. Rogers, *Seven Treatises, Containing Such Direction as is Gathered Out of the Holie Scriptures* (1603), pp. 308-9.

²³ Wallington, *Notebooks*, ed. Booy, p. 16.

²⁴ Wallington, *Notebooks*, ed. Booy, p. 23.

²⁵ Wallington, *Notebooks*, ed. Booy, pp. 22, 23, 27, 48, 49, 270.

²⁶ Such contracts are a feature of group formation in youth, J. Kerrigan, *Shakespeare’s Binding Language* (Oxford, 2016), pp. 68, 78.

²⁷ F. Bacon, *The Essayes or Counsels, Civill and Morall*, ed. M. Kiernan (Oxford, 1985), p. 63.

²⁸ J.F. Ruys, ‘Introduction: Approaches to Didactic Literature – Meaning, Intent, Audience, Social Effect’, in J.F. Ruys, ed., *What Nature Does Not Teach: Didactic Literature in the Medieval and Early-modern Periods* (Turnhout, 2008), pp. 1-42.

Many of the best-known works by seventeenth-century moral philosophers read like self-help manuals, says Aaron Garrett. They focus on justifications and techniques for the happiness, care, and cultivation of the self, reasoning that if they change their readers' self-understanding, they will transform what sort of life those readers will lead. Convincing reasons are put into concise and memorable maxims for use in daily life, removing the need to go back over the antecedent arguments.²⁹ Jacqueline Rose explores such texts' awareness that the giving and taking of advice was a matter of altering power relations, as the adviser moved above and below the sovereign in the act of offering counsel.³⁰ This culture of counsel is dramatized: not only in terms of content, but also in reflections about the giving and receiving counsel (how decisions are affected, who to rely on, and what happens if this is done), Ivan Lupić shows. Plays put the humanist counsellor into a truth-telling game, which is uncertain in its ultimate effects. Counsel, he concludes, is the mode by which Renaissance selves subject themselves to fashioning.³¹ He points to how much of Stephen Greenblatt's discussion of self-fashioning deals with counsel, as it 'invariably crosses the boundary between the creation of literary characters, the shaping of one's identity, [and] the experience of being molded by forces outside one's control'. With this self-reflexiveness comes 'perpetual self-estrangement'.³²

These studies take political counsel very weightily indeed, as a powerful force bearing down on another person's attitudes and actions. They occasionally consider pleasure, but from an Horatian point of view, where teaching, moving, and delighting are bound together.³³ What they do not consider is whether political texts have the potential for pleasurable sceptical engagement by readers. Yet who could read, say, Bacon's advice about 'the Small Wares,

²⁹ A. Garrett, 'Seventeenth-century Moral Philosophy: Self-help, Self-knowledge, and the Devil's Mountain', in R. Crisp, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Ethics* (Oxford, 2013), pp. 229-33, 255-62.

³⁰ J. Rose, 'The Problem of Political Counsel in Medieval and Early Modern England and Scotland', in J. Rose, ed., *The Politics of Counsel in England and Scotland, 1286-1707* (Oxford, 2017), pp. 1-44.

³¹ I. Lupić, *Subjects of Advice: Drama and Counsel from More to Shakespeare* (Philadelphia, 2019), pp. 2-15.

³² S. Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-fashioning from More to Shakespeare* (Chicago, 1980), pp. 3, 31.

³³ For instance, P. Kewes, "'Plesures in lernyng' and the Politics of Counsel in Early Elizabethan England: Royal Visits to Cambridge and Oxford', *English Literary Renaissance*, 46 (2016), 333-75.

and Petty Points of Cunning' in managing great affairs (such as the seating arrangements of a council room, with square tables for open discussion, long tables for guided talk), without enjoying a fantasy career, pretending to consider seriously how to plant a country, or put on a masque, or advise the queen.³⁴

Research into early modern texts of practical advice is a little less austere. It recognizes that readers are not expected to learn exactly how to carry out a task (glaze a window, enter up an accounts ledger, run an estate, or whatever), but to master (and enjoy mastering) some of its elementary principles.³⁵ Practical didactic texts use similar technical means as their twenty-first century counterparts to entice readers to engage with the content: a dialogue form, direct address, a personal and encouraging tone, typographic and sorting devices to allow a change between skimming the whole text and sinking into sections which the reader finds most salient, and so on.³⁶ For instance, medical dialogues create a pleasant learning environment: speakers take subjective stances ('to me, it seems'), ask each other for information, utter enthusiastic ejaculations and pious wishes, and introduce new topics as though they have just come to mind.³⁷

There is some limited proof that early seventeenth-century readers did, in fact, use didactic texts for pleasure.³⁸ The most detailed study of this possibility is Rebecca Bushnell's work on gardening books. This genre, even while it declared itself to be down-to-earth, showed itself to be full of 'dreams about what might be as much as about what is'. The books offer their reader a new identity: each can see himself as a person of acute senses, witty, godly, and the

³⁴ Bacon, *Essayes*, p. 72.

³⁵ E.H. Ash, *Power, Knowledge, and Expertise in Elizabethan England* (Baltimore, 2004), pp. 15-16.

³⁶ E. Tebeaux, *The Emergence of a Tradition: Technical Writing in the English Renaissance, 1475-1640* (Amityville, 1997), pp. 35-90, 175-236; N. Glaisyer, 'Popular Didactic Literature', in J. Raymond, ed., *The Oxford History of Popular Print Culture, vol. 1: Cheap Print in Britain and Ireland to 1660* (Oxford, 2011), pp. 510-19.

³⁷ I. Taavitsainen, 'Authority and Instruction in Two Sixteenth-century Medical Dialogues', in M. Peikola et al, eds., *Instructional Writing in English: Studies in Honour of Risto Hiltunen* (Amsterdam, 2009), pp. 105-24.

³⁸ Stronger evidence can be found in the lengthier and more numerous accounts of reading which survive from the late seventeenth century, N. Glaisyer and S. Pennell, 'Introduction', in N. Glaisyer and S. Pennell, eds., *Didactic Literature in England, 1500-1800: Expertise Constructed* (Aldershot, 2003), pp. 3, 14-15.

creator of things of use and beauty, as he orders and refines on nature.³⁹ Bushnell notes how the books signal themselves as pleasurable fantasies through their titles (dainty conceits, novelties, recreations, cabinets, and so on), their breezy tone, and their illustrations, in which leisure and work are carried on in the same frame.

Might this element of pleasurable fantasy also occur in early modern counsel on the topic so cherished by today's self-help books: how to find true love? And might the same revolution in approach towards such advice be recognized: from taking counsel gravely and acting on it seriously to enjoying the games produced by merely pretending to take it? And is that why so many of us were willing to loiter, in full view, at the self-help shelves in the bookshop, a community of apparently shameless losers?

Arlene Hochschild argues that social roles - including those of lover and counsellor - are ways of describing what feelings people think they owe and are owed (for instance, as a mother or a bride). Where there is a gap between expectation and reality, the role-holder tends to use two main forms of emotion work to bridge it: self-exhortation to feel the 'right' thing, and formal training in perceiving a situation from the other person's point of view. Neither, Hochschild considers, is sustainable in the long run, since they produce burn-out and (in Greenblatt's words) perpetual self-estrangement. Other people, too, may try to elicit what they see as appropriate responses out of a defaulting role-holder, by, for instance, scolding, mocking, shunning, cajoling, or teasing her. Expectations between people about the feelings they should have or show are always, therefore, in a state of mutually acknowledged improvisation, as people try to move into a role, then fall out of it, then are nudged back in again.⁴⁰

There are plenty of early modern collections of model letters and essays which sketch the social role of the lover. However, most leave that lover firmly stuck in an obsessive and unsuccessful courtship.⁴¹ Letter collections tend to conclude that, as Angel Day says, 'even in

³⁹ R. Bushnell, *Green Desire: Imagining Early Modern English Gardens* (Ithaca, 2003), pp. 13-16, 56-74. See also L. Moretti, *Pleasure in Profit: Popular Prose in Seventeenth-century Japan* (New York, 2020), pp. 11-12, 19-21.

⁴⁰ A. Hochschild, *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling* (1983; Berkeley, 2012), pp. 35 ff.

⁴¹ For instance, N. Breton, *Conceyted Letters, Newly Layde Open* (1618), B1v-2r, B3v-B4r, C2v-C3r, F2v-3r; A. Day, *The English Secretorie* (1586), pp. 232-50; *The Prompters Packet of Private and Familiar Letters* (1612), I5r-K7v; [W. Fulwood], *The Enimie of Idlennesse*

the very writing of his letter, the lover him selfe is sometimes scarce certaine of his owne conceipts', so there is nothing to be done.⁴² In fact, one woman tells her besotted lover that, outright: 'if you were not a foole, you would not runne so from your wits, as to write you care not how, upon an imagination you know not what: mine eyes be mine owne, and if your heart be not yours, shall I winke because you are wilfull?'⁴³ Nor do essayists offer much help: the lover, they conclude, might end up becoming more civil, clean, and well-spoken as a result of trying to please his mistress, but he has lost a proper sense of proportion in putting her before the rest of his concerns in life. Best then, Bacon argues, to confine the emotion to a small area of life: lovers should sever love 'wholly, from their serious Affaires, and Actions ... [to] be true, to their owne Ends'.⁴⁴

One would have to turn to medical psychology of the period for advice on how to deal with love. Physicians such as André du Laurens and Jacques Ferrand start with the symptoms: love deranges the body (making the figure lean, the face pale, and the eyes sunken), the emotions (causing them to plunge between hot and cold), the mind (corrupting both perception and reasoning), and the behaviour (a round of weeping, sighing, restlessness, and self-isolation).⁴⁵ Their cures are part Ovidian, part medical. Ovid's poem on the remedies for love recommends waiting until the intractable lover wants to leave loving and so is willing to listen to counsel. At this point, he should take up physical diversions (such as hunting or husbandry or travelling) to 'deceive' himself he is interested in things other than the relationship. He should avoid rumination by seeking out company. He should also bring to

(1568; 1582), pp. 267 ff.; T. Gainsford, *The Secretaries Studie* (1616), pp. 1-10. Love advice could end up in surprising hands: Brian Twyne, the antiquary appointed as Oxford University's first archivist in 1633, owned a copy of *Delectable Demaundes ... in ... Matters of Love*, D. Pearson, 'The English Private Library in the Seventeenth Century', *The Library*, 13 (2012), 379-99; p. 383.

⁴² Day, *Secretorie*, p. 232.

⁴³ Breton, *Letters*, F3r.

⁴⁴ Bacon, *Essayes*, ed. Kiernan, p. 33; W. Cornwallis, *Essayes* (1600), D7r-E1v; G. della Casa, *The Rich Cabinet*, trans. T. Gainsford (1616), pp. 84v-87r.

⁴⁵ A. du Laurens, *A Discourse of the Preservation of the Sight: of Melancholike Diseases; of Rheumes, and of Old Age* (1599), pp. 117-20; J. Ferrand, *Erōtomania, or A Treatise Discerning the Essence ... and Cure of Love* (1610), trans. E. Chilmead (1640), pp. 106-33. See also R. Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1610; 1632), ed. T.C. Faulkner et al, 6 vols. (Oxford, 1994), 3.141 ff. For a survey of the precursors of such texts, see L. Dawson, *Lovesickness and Gender in Early Modern English Literature* (Oxford, 2008), pp. 13-27.

mind his mistress's faults (after intercourse, say, cataloguing her physical blemishes by pouring over her body in full daylight), or even make some up (Ovid reminiscences fondly about persuading himself that his mistress had ugly legs), or provoke her to display social, temperamental, or intellectual defects.⁴⁶ Such mental first aid reappears in the early modern studies of love melancholy, to which were added some physical cures: sexual intercourse, if allowable (even if simply in a dream), and if not, then baths, opiates, and purges.⁴⁷ Ferrand's editors point out that the latter physical cures might also have a psychological effect: during them, the patient cannot isolate himself; moreover, the disgust and pain aroused by laxatives and emetics might become associated with his love.⁴⁸

Some literature offers similar counsel. One of John Lyly's heroes recasts Ovid's list of remedies for the present: the lover must work at law, physic, divinity, or turn 'to martial feats, to iusts, to turnays, yes, to al torments', rather than giving in to desire. 'What more monstrous can there be, then to see a younge man abuse those giftes to his owne shame which God hath given him for his owne preferment? What greater infamy, then to conferre the sharpe wit to ye making of lewde Sonnets'? He should retrain his perceptions and trains of thought. For instance, be the mistress 'never so comely call hir counterfaite, be she never so strayght thinke hir crooked ... If she be well sette, then call hir a Bosse, if slender, a Hasill twigge, if Nutbrowne, as black as a coale, if well couloured, a paynted wall'.⁴⁹ These programmes are cooperative ones, involving friends and a physician. Cathy Shrank, looking at mid-century sonnets, shows how an author will sometimes pose alternately as green lover and sage adviser, gregariously rather than introspectively 'staging ... moralising role-plays'.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ Ovid, *The Remedies for Love*, in *The Art of Love and Other Poems*, trans. J.H. Mozley, rev. G.P. Goold (1929; Cambridge, 1979), pp. 187 ff. This advice is retained in *Ovidius Naso his Remedie of Love*, trans. F.L. (1600) and *The Remedies of Love*, trans. T. Overbury (1620).

⁴⁷ Du Laurens, *Discourse*, pp. 121-24; Burton, *Anatomy*, 3.201-37; Ferrand, *Erōtomania*, pp. 321-36.

⁴⁸ J. Ferrand, *A Treatise on Lovesickness*, trans. and ed. D.A. Beecher and M. Ciavolella (Syracuse, 1990), pp. 123-38.

⁴⁹ J. Lyly, *Euphues: the Anatomy of Wyt* (1578), in *The Complete Works of John Lyly*, ed. R. Warwick Bond (Oxford, 1902), 1.251-2, 254. Bond cites a parallel in *Much Ado About Nothing* (3.1.59-70), where Hero accuses Beatrice of taking this self-cure, p. 172.

⁵⁰ C. Shrank, "'Matters of love as of discourse': the English Sonnet, 1560-1580", *Studies in Philology*, 105 (2008), 30-49; pp. 39-40.

The advice duly appears in *Astrophil and Stella* – but what is unusual about the sequence is its focus on shameless repudiation of that counsel. Running alongside the Petrarchan register of agony and ecstasy is a contrasting one of merely social embarrassment. Words like ‘shame’, ‘scorned’, ‘disgraced’, ‘blush’, ‘idle’, ‘fond’, ‘shent’, and ‘reprove’ fill the sequence. Katherine Duncan-Jones considers this is because the sequence shows how ‘social embarrassment’, ‘the fear of losing dignity’, ends the affair: Astrophil and Stella ‘stand apart, finally, not because they are chaste or star-crossed, but because they are social cowards’.⁵¹ However, one might argue that it is the shamelessness of not ending the affair, rejecting all the advice offered, which Astrophil highlights as his greatest tribute to Stella. Ewan Fernie argues that shamelessness can be a form of ‘achieving a perverse integrity’, since it puts the self outside the rules of conscience and society, and accepts the truth of a situation. Thus Falstaff, for instance, is ‘a fantasy of invulnerable selfhood’, and Cordelia, as she shamelessly refuses to speak her love, a heroine of realism.⁵²

In his repudiation of good counsel, Astrophil is entranced by the spectacle of his own self-abasement (rather more so than with the image of his mistress). As he says,

When most I glorie, then I feele most shame:

I willing run, yet while I run, repent;

My best wits still their owne disgrace invent (S. 19).⁵³

The sequence goes out of its way to show how proud his is of his public failures. He cannot act: ‘In Martiall sports I had my cunning tride’, but

Stella spide, ...

My heart then quak’d, then dazled were mine eyes,

One hand forgott to rule, th’other to fight.

Nor trumpets’ sound I heard, nor friendly cries;

My Foe came on, and beat the aire for me,

⁵¹ K. Duncan-Jones, ‘Philip Sidney’s Toys’, in D. Kay, ed., *Sir Philip Sidney: an Anthology of Modern Criticism* (Oxford, 1987), p. 77.

⁵² E. Fernie, *Shame in Shakespeare* (London, 2002), pp. 96, 98, 179.

⁵³ All references to *Astrophil and Stella* are taken from *The Poems of Sir Philip Sidney*, ed. W.A. Ringler, Jr. (Oxford, 1962), and given in the body of the text.

Till that her blush taught me my shame to see (S. 53).

He cannot think:

Pardon mine ears, both I and they do pray,
So may your tongue still fluently proceed,
To them that do such entertainment need (S. 51).

He cannot talk politics. On being asked about six international crises, all he can say is that

These questions busie wits to me do frame;
I, cumbred with good maners, answer do,
But know not how, for still I thinke of you (S. 30).

This absence of mind is so noticeable (his mind, not his mistress, is the absent presence) that it starts to offend acquaintances. In sonnet 23,

The curious wits, seeing dull pensiveness
Bewray it selfe in my long settled eyes,
Whence those same fumes of melancholy rise,
With idle paines, and missing ayme do guesse.

They first speculate he is ruminating on art, or politics, or career, but soon their attitude hardens:

Because I oft in darke abstracted guise,
Seeme most alone in greatest companie,
With dearth of words, or answers quite awrie,
To them that would make speech of speech arise,
They deeme, and of their doome the rumour flies,
That poison foule of bubling pride doth lie (S. 27).

Ross Knecht argues that *Astrophil and Stella* shows love as a language with its own grammar, one which is learned, social, and acculturated.⁵⁴ Astrophil is put through a course of instruction to rectify this emotion, with talking cures repeatedly and separately proffered by his friends, by Stella, by personified virtues, and by himself.⁵⁵ Catalogues of misperception are outlined, to help him recover his sense of proportion. Sonnet 5 lists the rungs in the neo-Platonic ladder of love: ‘eyes are form’d to serve / The inward light’, the mistress ‘An image is, which for our selves we carve’, ‘true Beautie Vertue is indeed’, and ‘on earth we are but pilgrims made’. Sonnet 18 lists the worldly ‘goods’ Astrophil is mis-using by his obsession: ‘My youth doth waste, my knowledge brings forth toys, / My wit doth strive those passions to defend’, a line which is also taken by Stella in Sonnet 62, as she urges him to a ‘nobler course, fit for my birth and mind’. Sonnet 21 brings the two lines of argument together:

mine own writings like bad servants show
 My wits, quicke in vaine thoughts, in vertue lame:
 That Plato I read for nought, but if he tame
 Such coltish gyres, that to my birth I owe
 Nobler desires, least else that friendly foe,
 Great expectation, weare a traine of shame.

Sonnet 14 follows the angle of practical divinity: ‘Desire / Doth plunge my wel-form’d soul even in the mire / Of sinfull thoughts, which do in ruine end?’ Sonnet 4’s Virtue ‘setst a bate betweene my will and wit’ (as Stella does too, in Sonnet 61); Sonnet 56’s Patience gives ‘large precepts’ on bearing Stella’s absence; Sonnet 10’s Reason tries to turn Astrophil’s ‘powers of thoughts’ to poetry, astronomy, and theology.

On the basis of these sonnets, Thomas Roche has read the sequence as a ‘negative example’ of human desire, from a Christian perspective.⁵⁶ Alan Sinfield likewise points out how Astrophil makes an explicit rejection of virtue from the start, and continues to do so, regardless of being regularly reminded of the other pathways. He embarks on a programme of

⁵⁴ R. Knecht, *The Grammar Rules of Affection: Passion and Pedagogy in Sidney, Shakespeare, and Jonson* (Toronto, 2021), pp. 47-52.

⁵⁵ On responses to Stella as tutor, see J. MacArthur, *Critical Contexts of Sidney’s Astrophil and Stella and Spenser’s Amoretti* (Victoria, 1989), pp. 100-2.

⁵⁶ T. Roche, Jr., ‘*Astrophil and Stella*: a Radical Reading’, in Kay, ed., *Sidney*, pp. 188, 194.

self-deception, demonstrated by his abuse of logic (and syntax), his evasive wit and jokes, his claim to be overcome by a superior force, and his deliberate misreading of situations.⁵⁷

Astrophil repeatedly attempts an Ovidian cure by slighting Stella's 'Tyrannie', and describing love as 'hell' and 'poison' (Ss. 2, 16). This rouses him to some self-exhortation: 'I may, I must, I can, I will, I do / Leave following that which it is gaine to misse' (S. 47) - which proves to be as short-lived a tactic as Hochschild warned it would. The same bathetic comedy occurs in *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia* (1593), where Musidorus lengthily rebukes Pyrocles for a 'slackening of the main career ... so notably begun and almost performed'. But 'Pyrocles' mind was all this while so fixed upon another devotion that he no more attentively marked his friend's discourse than the child that hath leave to play marks the last part of his lesson'. When Musidorus finds out that this distraction is due to love, he sternly enlarges on his argument. Pyrocles should 'separate' himself from himself, to audit his own proceedings. Love is unfit for a man of high rank and talent to succumb to, being a passion of 'lust and idleness ... a certain base weakness', full of 'unquietness, longings, fond comforts, faint discomforts, hopes, jealousies, ungrounded rages, causeless yieldings'. Thus, if 'reason direct' us to stop then 'we must do it; and if we must do it, we will do it; for, to say "I cannot", is childish, and "I will not", womanish'.⁵⁸

The outcome of this multi-agency mission, however, is complete failure: Astrophil's response is almost always passive-aggressive. He creates his own core values, admitting that others are important – but just not to him (a matter he pointedly evades arguing about). As others speak, 'Meane while, my heart confers with Stella's beames' (S.51), and if he does answer, he knows 'not how, for still I thinke of you' (S. 30). When he can be bothered to notice them, Astrophil is dismissive or even scornful of those who offer advice. They are mocked for being full of 'grave conceits', which he, 'irkt', has to listen to (S. 51), as being 'busie wits' (S. 30), and as taking 'idle paines and missing ayme' (S. 23). Lupic points out the period's anxieties about relying on flattering counsellors, who might lead the ruler astray. Sidney's counsellors are signalled as credible by their brusque and peremptory mode: "'Foole", said my Muse to me, "looke in thy heart and write", "'Foole", answers he' (Morpheus), "'What

⁵⁷ A. Sinfield, 'Sidney and Astrophil', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 20 (1980), 25-41; A. Sinfield, 'Astrophil's Self-deception', *Essays in Criticism*, 28 (1978), 1-18.

⁵⁸ Pyrocles's response is based largely on the idea that 'if we love virtue, in whom shall we love it but in a virtuous creature', P. Sidney, *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia*, ed. M. Evans (1977; London, 1987), pp. 110-11, 132-4, 136.

now sir foole”, said he, “I would no less, /Look here, I say””, and ““Scholler”, saith Love, “bend hitherward your wit”” (Ss. 1, 32, 53, 19). Nevertheless, Astrophil is ungrateful: to him, they seem to offer ‘lead’n counsels’ and ‘cold stuffe’ (S. 56), which he finds mere ‘brabbling’ (S. 10). Even the friendliest of words are received as bitter ‘Rubarb’ (S. 14) or ‘caustiks’ (S. 21), drugs of the sort du Laurens and Ferrand might administer.

Moreover, Astrophil deliberately and joyfully points out how ingeniously he can misread some of the advice thrust down his throat. Sonnet 63 registers Stella’s meaning, then ignores it. She,

Least once should not be heard, twise said, No, No ...
... Grammer’s force with sweet successe confirme,
For Grammer sayes (O this deare Stella weighe,)
For Grammer sayes (to Grammer who sayes nay)
That in one speech two Negatives affirme.⁵⁹

In Sonnet 67, it is Hope’s text which he refuses to read accurately:

Looke on againe, the faire text better trie:
What blushing notes doest thou in margine see? ...
Hast thou found such and such like arguments?
Or art thou else to comfort me forsworne?
Well, how so thou interpret the contents,
I am resolv’d thy error to maintaine,
Rather then by more truth to get more paine.

In Sonnet 69, whatever agreement has been concluded between Stella and himself, where ‘she give but thus conditionly / This realme of blisse, while vertuous course I take’, Astrophil hints he will not keep his side: ‘No kings be crown’d, but they some covenants make’.

⁵⁹ A double negative only makes a positive in Latin; in English, ‘No, no’ implies emphasis. The phrase was picked out by Brian Twyne, M. Garrett, *Sidney: the Critical Heritage* (London, 1996), p. 166.

But why then does Astrophil *keep on* registering or even provoking advice on controlling love, only to dismiss it as too dull to listen to? Studying early modern love melancholy, Marion Wells and Lesel Dawson have both independently concluded that love lyrics are more concerned with the absence of the beloved object than the object itself, so constantly renew this loss.⁶⁰ Sidney's 'cure' poems, however, appear to relish keeping open a social, not a psychological, wound. He enjoys eliciting advice - and enjoys the power of dismissing it, even more.

Eight years after *Astrophil and Stella* was published, *As You Like It* was first played. In Arden, love has a sticky quality, and there are numbers of people trying to wash it off. Few of the studies on Shakespeare's use of Ovid spend much time on the *Remedia amoris*, but it is this text, not the *Ars amatoria* or the *Metamorphoses*, which lies behind the play's love cures.⁶¹ Traditional remedies are applied at first. Phoebe has tried to cure Silvius by absence ('I fly thee, for I would not injure thee', and 'Come thou not near me', 3.5.9, 3). Then, since he continues to cling on to her, she resorts to exasperated logic:

Now I do frown on thee with all my heart;

... why now, fall down;

Or if thou canst not, O, for shame, for shame,

Lie not, to say mine eyes are murderers (3.5.15-19).

Rosalind - determined before she sees the pair to act as a love counsellor, and 'prove a busy actor in their play' (3.4.54) - also tries to bring Silvius to see sense ('You are a thousand times a properer man. / Than she a woman', 3.5.52-3). Failing this, she makes sure Silvius can hear her briskly realistic summaries of the limits of Phoebe's attractions, as the Ovidian

⁶⁰ Dawson, *Lovesickness*, pp. 8 ff.; M. Wells, *The Secret Wound: Love-melancholy and Early Modern Romance* (Stanford, 2007), pp. 37-40, 114-20. See also D. Sokolov, "'Love gave the wound, which while I breathe will bleed'": Sidney's *Astrophil and Stella* and the Subject of Melancholy', *Sidney Journal*, 30 (2012), 27-50.

⁶¹ For instance, there is a single reference to the work in J. Bate, *Shakespeare and Ovid* (Oxford, 1993), pp. 33-4, and none in W.C. Carroll, *The Metamorphosis of Shakespearean Comedy* (Princeton, 1985); A.B. Taylor, ed., *Shakespeare's Ovid: the Metamorphoses in the Plays and Poems* (Cambridge, 2000), A. Lafont, *Shakespeare's Erotic Mythology and Ovidian Renaissance Culture* (Farnham, 2013), H. James, 'Shakespeare's Learned Heroines in Ovid's Schoolroom', in C. Martindale, ed., *Shakespeare and the Classics* (Cambridge, 2004), pp. 66-85.

counsel recommends: 'I see no more in you / Than without candle may go dark to bed', 'I see no more in you than in the ordinary / Of nature's sale-work', and the pretended aside, 'I must tell you friendly in your ear / Sell when you can. You are not for all markets' (3.5.39-40, 43-4, 60-1). Rosalind concludes by determining to bring her worst aspect to Phoebe's notice, repeatedly: 'as fast as she answers thee with frowning looks, / I'll sauce her with bitter words' (3.5.69-70).

In Shakespeare's principal source, Thomas Lodge's *Rosalynde. Euphues Golden Legacie* (1590), the only time any character reasons against love is when Rosalynde tries to talk herself out of the state on the basis of financial prudence; there is no offer to cure Rosader of his love.⁶² When Shakespeare's Rosalind comes to deal with Orlando, however, the cure is foregrounded. Both immediately fall into the same medical register: 'my physic', 'some good counsel [for] ... the quotidian of love', 'tell me your remedy', 'I profess curing it by counsel', 'did you ever cure any so?', 'thus I cured him', 'I would not be cured', and 'I would cure you' (3.2.347, 353-4, 355-6, 390, 391, 405, 409, 410). This provokes Rosalind's professional diagnosis of Orlando's external symptoms (complexion, eyes, demeanour, and clothes), from which she concludes that he loves himself more 'than seeming the lover of any other' (3.2.371), which Orlando, like Astrophil, simply dismisses.

Rosalind is somewhat dismissive of the talking cure offered by her 'old religious uncle', which was to 'read many lectures' about the faults of women, so she selects exemplifying the issues through role play as a more effective therapy. She also passes quickly over one of the aversion therapies covered by Ferrand: that carers 'whip and cudgel' lovers, 'thinking by torturing the flesh and externall parts, to extinguish their inward flames'. Ferrand is cautious about using this on those already in love, since it tends to produce a masochistic and priapic response. Rosalind hints at how this might turn into sado-masochism ('love ... deserves a dark house and whip' but that the whippers are also in love, 3.2.386-90), and hurries on.

She settles on what the lover-counsellors find most effective: showing off the worst qualities of the beloved, as being 'effeminate, changeable, longing and liking, proud, fantastical, apish, shallow, inconstant ... [willing to] now like him, now loathe him; then entertain him, then forswear him' (3.2.395-401), contradictions which were so crisply outlined by Musidorus. This inserted example outlines a step programme she has successfully delivered before. She

⁶² G. Bullough, *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*, vol. 2 (New York, 1958), pp. 174-5.

emphasizes the homework demanded from the patient: 'he was to imagine me ... I set him every day to ... At which time would I ... [X] ..., now ... [Y], then ... [X], now [X] ..., then [Y]' (3.2.392-401). As Astrophil and Musidorus have already found out, this offer of self-help turns into a battle between conditional modal verbs: 'I would I could make thee believe I love', 'I would not be cured, youth', 'I would cure you' (3.2.372, 409-10).

When Rosalind starts her course, a few scenes later, Orlando is met as promised: with nagging for being late, then threatened with cuckolding, then told his love-making might run thin, then told love will not kill him, and then brought back to cuckolding again. Finally, having 'married' Rosalind, he is reminded that she will continue to be as fantastical as she promised in the earlier scene: 'I will weep for nothing, like Diana in the fountain, and I will do that when you are disposed to be merry. I will laugh like a hyena, and that when thou art inclined to sleep' 4.1.145-8). The scene is structured around taking steps through a programme of 'what ifs', each new one signalled by the chorus of 'I am your Rosalind', 'Am I not your Rosalind?', and 'I will be your Rosalind' (4.1.61, 83, 105), to which (as before) Orlando simply and stolidly replies that 'my right Rosalind' (4.1.59, 102, 149) is very different.

But why does Orlando keep coming back for more of the same treatment, both in these scenes and in his final promise to return a little later? And why does Rosalind keep offering aversion therapy when she does not want it to succeed? Critics sometimes compare her actions with Cleopatra's technique for flirting: if Antony is 'sad, / Say I am dancing; if in mirth, report / That I am sudden sick', she tells Charmian (whose tip, 'In each thing give him way; cross him nothing', gets the inevitable reply, 'Thou teachest like a fool, the way to lose him', 1.3.3-10). Such a reading makes the Arden scene into a game of cementing a separate in-group, that of marriage, from which even Celia is excluded. More often, though, the critical emphasis is on how Rosalind is instructing Orlando in what does to make up a healthy relationship. For instance, William West argues that the play depends on counter-factual fantasising. In the case of love, the what ifs include exploring what happens if the Petrarchan lover is made to understand, as in these two scenes, that love must recognize the reality of the character of the beloved, over time, through challenges and games.⁶³ Katherine Larson, discussing conversational ploys in *Love's Labour's Lost*, argues that games are not necessarily ephemeral and bounded spaces. While one would expect that hierarchies in real

⁶³ W. West, *As If: Essays in As You Like It* (New York, 2016), pp. 89-95.

life are maintained, in some vestigial and unacknowledged way, it is also the case that expectations which are set up during the game can leak back to change real life.⁶⁴ Marjorie Garber, Catherine Bates, Maurice Hunt, and others likewise see Rosalind as the tutor, managing a dull-witted Orlando into realism, responsibility, and marriage.⁶⁵ Indeed, so many critics lean over her shoulder to criticize him, that it seems unfair. Rosalind, like her twenty-first century contemporaries, keeps bringing the issue back to the ethical responsibility to be true to the self. Self-help here is a job of work, being coached in appropriate behaviour, where the self contracts with itself to go through the programme. Orlando is being offered a chance to retrain his inner thoughts, to change into a self-controlled citizen, able to about to link his personal goals to social order - yet he is at least as dismissive as Astrophil about such a love cure.

In *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, Falstaff quotes the first line of the second song from *Astrophil and Stella*, 'Have I caught thee, my heavenly jewel?' (3.3.39, 56), as he woos his love 'tyrant' (3.3.45), Mistress Ford. This is Falstaff speaking, 'one who is well-nigh worn to pieces with age' (2.1.20) and not Master Fenton, who 'writes verses, ... smells April and May' (3.2.62), which suggests an appreciatively sardonic reading of Sidney by Shakespeare. Sidney's *Defence of Poetry* described laughter as 'a scornful tickling', depending on a disparity noticed between expectation and reality, and is the principal attitude, exuding superiority, which is projected by these lovers.⁶⁶ Arguably, Orlando and Astrophil both enjoy provoking advice so they can reject it, with duper's delight. Their audacity encourages the audience to do the same: to sample taking judicious counsel, then back off from the hard work and responsibility it lays on them. The situation offers a double pleasure, first of

⁶⁴ K. Larson, 'Conversational Games and the Articulation of Desire in Shakespeare's *Love's Labour's Lost* and Mary Wroth's *Love's Victory*', *English Literary Renaissance*, 40 (2010), 165-90.

⁶⁵ M. Garber, 'The Education of Orlando', in A.R. Braunmuller and J.C. Bulman, eds., *Comedy from Shakespeare to Sheridan: Change and Continuity in the English and European Dramatic Tradition* (Newark, 1986), pp. 102-12; C. Bates, 'Love and Courtship', in A. Leggatt, ed., *Cambridge Companion to Shakespearean Comedy* (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 103 ff.; M.A. Hunt, *Shakespeare's As You Like It: Late Elizabethan Culture and Literary Representation* (New York, 2008), pp. 19-22.

⁶⁶ P. Sidney, *A Defence of Poetry* (1595), in *Miscellaneous Prose of Sir Philip Sidney*, ed. K. Duncan-Jones and J. Van Dorsten (Oxford, 1973), pp. 115-16.

imagining following a self-help programme to become a new you, and then an even more enticing moment, of deciding not to bother.