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“EN EL TOCAR ESTÁ LA VIRTUD”:

THE EROS OF HEALING IN LA LOZANA ANDALUZA

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Abstract: This article examines eroticized medical discourse in the novel La Lozana andaluza (1528) in order to argue that the protagonist appropriates humoral teachings regarding the hygienic use of coitus in such a way as to present transactional sex as a medical service. While other critics have examined Lozana's role as a diseasing healer in the past, they have tended to regard the sexual nature of her healing as metaphorical. In contrast, this article demonstrates that her role as prostitute is integral to her medical interventions. Lozana's eroticized textual encounters with medical professionals and patients show that Delicado appropriates the language of academic medicine to highlight the female body's potential to facilitate male corporeal wellbeing.

La Lozana andaluza (1528) chronicles the fictional life story of the Cordovan prostitute Lozana who, after an attempt upon her life, escapes to Rome where she earns a living as a prostitute, procuress, and purveyor of medicinal and beauty products to her clients in the flesh trade and to the city's elite courtesans. This enigmatic character is perceived as enchantingly beautiful even though her body is marked by visible signs of *mal francés*, or syphilis.¹ Paradoxically, Lozana functions throughout the text as a healer, treating the very disease from which she suffers. Despite her illness, she does not lack for clientele as a prostitute, attracting men from a wide range of professions including the fictionalized author.

The historical author, Francisco Delicado, also suffered from *mal francés* and published a treatise on the benefits of guaiacum bark to treat it. The prologue states that the writing process alleviates pain, and the novel contains a number of reflections on the disease, its effects and potential cure (170). Delicado maintains throughout *La Lozana andaluza* that the only true cure lies in the newly discovered guaiacum, or 'holy wood,' to whose praise he devotes his medical treatise, and which he credits with his own recovery after twenty-three years of illness (*La Lozana* 485; *El modo* 57). Lozana voices this opinion, stating that the greatest absurdity one could utter would be to promise to cure *mal francés* since the only true remedy is holy wood, and that "no hay tan asno médico como el que quiere sanar el griñimón, que Dios lo puso en su disposición", highlighting the shortcomings of professional medicine in the face of the disease's epidemic spread (439; 454). However, despite these assertions, Lozana frequently intervenes to cure *mal francés* in fellow characters.

¹ Though some critics employ the term 'syphilis' (García Verdugo; Dangler; Cruz; Herrero Ingelmo and Montero Cartelle; McInnis-Domínguez), also a character name in Fracastoro's sixteenth-century epic poem, it did not appear as a diagnostic term until the mid-eighteenth century (Quétel 5). Delicado's writing, like that of many of his contemporaries, employs numerous designations for this malady including *mal francés*, *mal de bubas*, *greñimón*, and *mal de Nápoles*. The illness referred to is roughly the same as the modern equivalent yet encompassed a variety of similar ailments such as gonorrhea that would fall into separate diagnostic categories in modern clinical practice and thus is anachronistic to the early modern period (French and Arrizabalaga 249; Arrizabalaga, Henderson and French 1; Stein 3-4). In order to maintain a sense of historical distance, I employ the Spanish term *mal francés*.

This essay investigates Lozana's paradoxical relationship with illness and healing; although Lozana states repeatedly that her therapeutic methods are fraudulent, other characters, including three fictionalized medical professionals, consistently regard her as a skilled healer. I demonstrate that her perceived role as a competent practitioner is not an ancillary to her profession as prostitute, but rather depends on the erotic character of her interactions with male characters. My central argument is that Lozana's therapeutic interventions depend on the healing potential of erotic touch. Rather than acting in opposition to academic medicine, Lozana uses the language of humoral theory, particularly the tenet that coitus can serve a hygienic purpose, for ludic effect and to illustrate the female body's potential to facilitate male corporeal well-being. In order to establish this, I first examine Delicado's juxtaposition of Lozana's healing practice with a stereotypical characterization of greedy and inept doctors that undermines the authority of professional medicine to demonstrate that these encounters are eroticized. I then turn to an analysis of Lozana's practice to illustrate that she is well versed in the language of academic medicine and turns this discourse to her advantage by presenting transactional sex as a medical service.

I am not the first to explore the subject of medical discourse in this novel. Critics such as Enriqueta Zafra and Jean Dangler recognize Delicado's interest in therapy. These authors maintain that the act of reading *La Lozana andaluza* diverts the mind (127; 130); furthermore, Dangler proposes that Delicado uses Lozana's characterization to uphold the superiority of professional medicine over female folk healers as part of what she sees as a pattern of using negative fictional portrayals to "eradicate the active practice of traditional woman healers" (49). While Dangler acknowledges that Lozana enjoys some therapeutic success, she concludes that overall Delicado's portrayal is ironic and recriminatory (154-73). Yet, as Meghan McInnis-Domínguez rightly points out "there is no evidence that Lozana actually infects anyone with her syphilis, while there are numerous allusions to her success as a healer" (326). However, McInnis-Domínguez attributes Lozana's characterization to a critique of the "Spanish State's view of alterity

and disease” that condemns the marginalization of New Christians from medical practice and other fields (312). Indeed, the overt sexuality of *La Lozana andaluza* is often taken as metaphorical; a critique of the corruption of the church in Rome (García Verdugo 21-70; Damiani 85-114; Wardropper 476),² or cryptojudaic criticism of the Spanish blood purity laws (Da Costa Fontes; McInnis-Domínguez; Márquez Villanueva; Damiani 13-14; Serrano Poncela 39-41; Hernández Ortíz 115). While Lozana may be a *conversa*, she is undoubtedly a prostitute, and her therapeutic interventions are often overtly sexual in nature; consequently, I contend that sexuality and prostitution are intrinsic to the perceived success of Lozana’s healing.

Francisco Delicado was a Spanish cleric residing in Rome about whom no information exists outside of his own works. He published a prayer guide for Spanish priests visiting Rome for the Jubilee year in which he describes himself as the priest of the church of Santa Maria in Posterula before which he served in the nearby Santa Maria della Pace (Ugolini 485). Both of these churches border on the Pozo Blanco neighborhood where Lozana initiates her stay in Rome as well as the Via del’Orso, home to the elite courtesans, which also figures prominently in the novel (Lawner 8). As a result, Delicado probably had direct contact with the milieu of prostitution that he depicts so vividly in *La Lozana andaluza*. Though McInnis-Domínguez and Louis Imperiale regard him as a professional physician, there is no evidence to support this conclusion (321; 5).³ Delicado does not explain where he developed his medical knowledge, though he implies in his treatise that he is an outsider to professional medicine since he implores the physicians at the university in Rome to validate his expertise in the letter that prefaces

² García Verdugo argues that Delicado’s representation of disease is both metaphorical and real (21-70). While Delicado’s genius rests in his ability to produce a text that functions on multiple levels simultaneously, I disagree with her conclusion that the work as a whole is a didactic denunciation of the sins of Rome. Such a reading depends too heavily on the end materials that were most likely added after the sack of the city in 1526 and the author’s flight to Venice. Instead, I interpret the text as primarily ludic and erotic in nature, and most likely written, as Delicado asserts, in 1524.

³ As Dangler asserts, “it is unknown whether he held university degrees and licenses” or had formal medical training (201), though some medical training often accompanied clerical formation. Also see Sirasi (48-78).

his work (*El modo* 56-57). Instead, he gained proficiency from direct and extended experience as a patient and his reading of treatises on *mal francés* by Von Hutten and other contemporaries (Herrero Ingelmo and Montero Cartelle 4). *La Lozana andaluza* functions primarily as a ludic text through which Delicado promises his readers “placer y gasajo” that will allow fellow sufferers to laugh along with the author thus alleviating the pain of disease (170). Like much of the wordplay in the novel, *placer* and *gasajo* evoke the sexual register; *gasajo* in particular references the pleasure experienced during coitus (Dangler 149-50).⁴ Throughout his novel, Delicado demonstrates a preoccupation with sickness and health that is subtended by and conflated with erotic desire.

Furthermore, Delicado displays familiarity with humoral medical epistemologies that considered well-being to be dependent on each individual’s complexion, or balance of the four humors (black bile, yellow bile, blood and phlegm) and their accompanying qualities (cold, wet, hot, and dry). According to the humoral schema, illness arose when balance was disturbed and wellness was restored by a return to equilibrium (Galen *The Art of Medicine* 165; *The Best Constitution* 290-2).⁵ Delicado’s work indicates his faith in humoral constructs, yet also antipathy toward the medical profession through negative stereotypes of the Golden Age physician who was “both desperately needed and thoroughly detested ... frequently by the same patient” (Solomon 44). Even as legislation reinforced physicians’ dominance over medical practice (Dangler 19-25), doctors regularly served in early modern literature as objects of satire that portrayed them as “money-grubbing, ignorant misanthropes” with little regard for their patients’ welfare, an archetype embodied by Delicado’s fictionalized doctors (Slater and López Terrada 227; López Terrada 185).⁶

⁴ While Dangler points out these meanings of the word *gasajo* she chooses to focus instead on the possible etymological link with the Arabic *gasa* or fine silky cloth (150). However, given the erotic nature of the text, the sexual subtext is undeniable.

⁵ For more on humoral theory’s contributions to fifteenth- and sixteenth-century understandings of illness, see Kaye 128-239; Arikha; and Sirasi 1-16.

⁶ The negative stereotypes of doctors found so commonly in fiction from the period arose in part from their inability to effectively treat *mal francés* and their reliance on painful

Indeed, the three fictionalized medical professionals who appear in the novel are incompetent hacks who regard Lozana as a threat to their livelihood. Lozana encounters a physician and a surgeon in the home of the elite courtesan Madona Clarina, a client of Lozana's cosmetic business. Upon seeing Lozana they ask her "¿qué especiería es ésa que debajo lleváis?" and beg her for medical knowledge, exclaiming eagerly "¿Hay curas? ¿Hay curas? ¡Danos parte!" (451). The hyperbolic ignorance of these practitioners, who beg Lozana to keep them abreast of their profession continues throughout the interaction. They relate two anecdotes that expose the ineptitude of medical professionals in contrast to Lozana's apparent proficiency, particularly with regard to diseases that affect the sexual organs. The first of these recounts the legend of a magical spring with the power to heal the "partes inferiores", such that "los medicos de aquel tiempo no podían medicar sino de la cintura arriba" (453). In response, the region's doctors plugged up the spring. The physician concludes, "esto digo que debíamos hacer, pues que ni de la cintura arriba ni de la cintura abajo no nos dais parte" (453). In this analogy, Lozana, like the spring, heals without effort or expertise, but rather through innate ability; furthermore, like the spring she is particularly adept at treating genital complaints. The second folktale recounts how a poor doctor, upon entering Andújar, found it to be a location rich in radishes and promptly left again; given that radishes prevent illness, he immediately realized that he would be unable to ply his trade there. The physician concludes,

me habéis llevado de las manos más de seis personas que yo curaba que, como no les duelen las plagas con lo que vos les habéis dicho no vienen a nosotros, y nosotros, si no duelen las heridas, metemos con que duelen y escuezgan porque vean que sabemos algo cuando les quitamos aquel dolor. Ansimismo, a otros ponemos ungüento egipciaco, que tiene vinagre. (453)

This statement reveals the contrast between Lozana and these medical professionals: while Lozana alleviates pain, the doctors deliberately create suffering by adding substances to their patients' wounds, such as Egyptian ointment made with copper acetate, vinegar and honey that was used to

treatments with terrifying side effects, such as mercury (Arrizabalaga, Henderson and French 139-42; French and Arrizabalaga 252-7; Stein 60-1; Dangler 48).

cauterize wounds and treat corneal ulcerations (Galiano). In response, Lozana disdainfully compares them to veterinarians. The doctors further state that although versed in the best methods to ensure patient health, they do not advocate them since to do so would render their own services unnecessary, alleging that “si los dicimos nosotros, no tornarán los pacientes, y así es menester que huyamos de vos porque no concuerda vuestra medicación con nuestra cúpida intención” (453-54). Delicado implies here that medical professionals deliberately withhold healing from their patients out of cupidity.⁷ Lozana is likewise driven by economic gain, but her methods seem to at least ameliorate suffering if not effect a permanent cure.

Lozana later reveals that the purpose of her visit is to bring Madona Clarina tooth powder and eye medicine, for which Clarina rewards her richly (456). Consequently, while the medical professionals frequent Clarina as clients, she turns to Lozana to meet her medical needs. Moreover, the surgeon and physician rely on Lozana to intervene on their behalf with Clarina; Lozana concludes that she will assist the doctors in gaining the courtesan's sexual favors so that they can “medicarse en su fuente” (454). This statement contains sexual innuendo (Williams 133), and also returns the conversation to the first story of the enchanted spring that heals the “partes inferiores”, in this case alleviating male sexual desire, thus linking the medical and sexual registers by appropriating the lexicon of humoral theory to condone transactional sex (454).⁸ While the doctors in this scene are equated with

⁷ This accords with a rhetorical strategy frequently employed by medical authors who present themselves as the only trustworthy practitioner in contrast to their competitors (Solomon 44-70). However, Delicado does not construe Lozana as a trustworthy provider either. The only figure who could be taken for a reliable expert in *La Lozana andaluza* is the fictionalized author, but he limits himself to commenting on Lozana's practice rather than offering suggestions.

⁸ Lozana frequently makes statements consistent with the defense of legalized prostitution as a lesser evil that prevailed across Europe until the mid-sixteenth century (Karras 247). For example, she proposes the foundation of a *taberna meritoria*, a retirement home for prostitutes who have aged out of the profession, concluding that, without a system of legalized prostitution “redundará que los galanes requieran a las casadas y a las vírgenes desta tierra...porque se quiere dejar hacer tal oficio a quien lo sabe manear” (391). She warns that without prostitutes, men will seduce otherwise honorable women, who will then give their family's jewels and money to their lovers. This and similar statements allow Lozana to present herself rhetorically as providing a service to society by channeling sexual desire to an appropriate outlet.

veterinarians, Lozana is twice compared to the renowned physician Avicenna (190; 304). The risibly incompetent medical professionals serve as a foil to Lozana's deceptive yet surprisingly effective healing practices.

Physicians, considering any contact with female genitalia distasteful, left the regulation and treatment of genital complaints primarily in the hands of female healers (Dangler 27). In contrast to the pathetic medical professionals, Lozana appears throughout the text as a competent healer, particularly of ailments affecting the sexual organs. Soon after her arrival in Rome, she seeks a post as housekeeper to a courtesan, who recounts that since she gave birth her *madre*, or uterus, meanders around her body like a snake (286). This description illustrates the widespread belief in the 'wandering womb' that could become unmoored from its normal location and drift about the body, causing damage to other organs (Laquer 110; Dixon 53). Lozana prescribes the following cure:

sahumaos por abajo con lana de cabrón, y si fuere de frío... ponelle un cerote, sobre el ombligo, de gálbano y armoniaco y encienso, y simiente de ruda en una poca de grana, y esto la hace venir a su lugar, y echar por abajo y por la boca toda la ventosidad. Y mire vuestra merced que dicen los hombres y los médicos que no saben de qué procede aquel dolor o alteración. Metelle el padre y peor es, que si no sale aquel viento o frío que está en ella, más mal hacen hurgándola. Y con este cerote sana, y no nuez moscada y vino, que es peor. (286-7)

The use of fumigation to tempt the womb back to its proper location was a common medical practice dating back to antiquity (Dixon 16). However, its usage varied according to the particular form of genital ailment. Bernardo de Gordonio, author of the medical manual *Lilio de medicina* (originally published in Latin in 1480), distinguishes between three 'passions' of the womb: suffocation, collapse, and 'precipitation', in which the womb leans to one side (315-18). Lozana's treatment, consisting of placing noxious odors under the womb, accords with Gordonio's advice for a 'precipitated' womb: rather than placing sweet-smelling odors below the womb, as one would for suffocation, one places a foul odor beneath the genitals accompanied by a sweet smell at the nose to tempt the womb back into a central position (317). Following standard medical thinking, Lozana attributes the courtesan's

uterine disorder to an imbalance of the complexion due to an excess of cold and gassy qualities. Gordonio recommends using rue, one of the ingredients in Lozana's charm, to treat both excessive gassy qualities and for uterine complaints (318). Although she follows the advice of medical texts authored by male physicians, Lozana asserts her superiority over 'men and doctors' who are unable to pinpoint the cause of this female illness. Furthermore, she contradicts the prescriptions of other practitioners who, she claims, recommend nutmeg and wine to heat the womb; in fact, this remedy appears as a bath in the *Lilio de medicina* for precipitated womb (Gordonio 318).⁹ In this interaction, Lozana establishes her superiority at treating genital ailments compared with male medical professionals even as she employs the language and tools of academic medicine. The courtesan, impressed with Lozana's remedy, immediately hires her as a companion. Consequently, Lozana demonstrates her mastery of the discourse and practices of academic medicine in the treatment of female illness.

While Lozana treats female ailments, particularly gynecological ones, her client base is principally made up of male customers who avail themselves of her sexual and therapeutic services. Significantly, Delicado's fictionalized double, the *autor*, figures prominently among these; while he is initially reticent to accept Lozana as a medical practitioner, he is gradually convinced by his fellow characters to regard her as a competent healer. In one episode, Lozana's emissary, Rampín visits the author at home since he is suffering

⁹ Lozana's advice both accords with and refutes her predecessor Celestina's, who tells the prostitute Areúsa, in bed with menstrual cramps, that "como las calidades de las personas son diversas, así las melecinas hacen diversas sus operaciones y diferentes. Todo olor fuerte es bueno, así como poleo, ruda, asientos, humo de plumas de perdiz, de romero, de moquete, de incienso. Recebido con mucha diligencia, aprovecha y afloja el dolor, y vuelve poco a poco la madre a su lugar. Pero otra cosa hallaba yo siempre mejor que todas, y ésta no te quiero decir, pues tan santa te me hazes..." (Rojas 205). This advice demonstrates that Celestina, like Lozana, is familiar with the humoral tenet that each individual body has a unique complexion, and thus remedies will result in differing effects, and recommends the use of strong smells to reposition the uterus, even mentioning some of the same herbals that Lozana recommends. However, Celestina's insinuations that sexual intercourse with Pármeno will alleviate Areúsa's pain contradicts Lozana's advice that coitus will worsen uterine complaints. Celestina and Lozana both employ the lexicon of humoral medicine to facilitate sexual encounters.

from what is initially described as foot pain.¹⁰ Although the author's disease is not directly named, Rampín's commentary makes clear that the fictionalized author suffers from *mal francés*. Rampín cites Lozana's auspicious record in curing the disease when he asks the patient, "¿no queréis vos hacer lo que hizo ella para su mal, que no cuesta sino dos ducados? ... mirá, ya ha sanado en Velitre a un español de lo suyo ... con su ungüento" (255). This ointment, whose potency is substantiated by the recovery of the Spaniard in Velitre, will reappear in her later ministrations to the Canon (285-86). After offering to procure medication on behalf of the author, Rampín goes on to declare that Lozana restored a courtesan named Faustina to health, stating that Lozana "[la] tomó por muerta y la sanó" (256). This episode appears out of chronological order with the rest of the narrative (the only one to do so) and is titled "información que interpone el autor para que se entienda lo que adelante ha de seguir" (250). Given that the only new information conveyed to the reader is Lozana's role as healer of *mal francés*, it seems that Delicado uses this episode to foreshadow Lozana's increasing involvement in therapeutic ministrations.

Although the *autor* does not avail himself of the medicinal treatments Rampín offers in this episode, he later seeks out Lozana's medical attention, becoming the first in a series of male clients who Lozana promises to cure of *mal francés*. He visits Lozana at home to interrogate her regarding her medical practice in a scene that has been interpreted as a rejection of Lozana as a healer (Delicado 378-84; Dangler 136-42). However, as McInnis-Domínguez demonstrates, the author rejects only the supernatural components of her practice rather than denigrating her abilities as a healer overall (McInnis-Domínguez 325). Furthermore, in the scene immediately following, the author witnesses a succession of satisfied clients leave Lozana's house claiming to be cured of illnesses ranging from indigestion to hemorrhoids. Among them is a woman whom Lozana treated for *mal de madre* with a "cerote para poner al ombligo" made of "gálbano y armoníaco, que consume la ventosidad" reminiscent of the remedy used to

¹⁰ The foot commonly serves as a phallic referent in the literature of the period (Allaigre 251).

cure the courtesan earlier in the text (385). At the scene's close, the author's friend Silvano recollects seeing Lozana successfully cure a man who had been poisoned and an outbreak of plague. This exposition of therapeutic accomplishment serves to convince the author that Lozana is a competent healer despite his disapproval of her more superstitious methodologies.

Lozana's therapeutic contacts occur predominantly and with increasing frequency in the third section of the novel, once she has established herself as a prostitute and purveyor of cosmetic products to the elite courtesans. As the medical and sexual registers become increasingly intertwined, Lozana depends on erotic touch to effect corporeal restoration. Lozana's sexualization of medical lexicon stems from the medieval tradition that masks sexual desire as an illness in order to make it a fit topic for discussion, such that physical ailments frequently function as a code for erotic longing. In *La Celestina*, for example, desire figures as physical pain; Calisto's desire for Melibea is disguised as a toothache (161), while Melibea's yearning for Calisto is couched as "desmayos y ... dolor de corazón" (238).¹¹ Similarly, in *La Lozana andaluza*, erotic cravings often figure as a sickness that only Lozana can heal. In one episode, Lozana offers her services to a client named Coridón, who asks her to cure an "enfermedad" (433); namely, his unquenched longing for the lovely Polidora. Lozana adopts the language of medical prescription in her response, beginning her amorous advice with "récipe el remedio..." (435). Her 'prescription' is sexual, consisting of an elaborate ruse by which Coridón will disguise himself as an old woman in order to infiltrate Polidora's house in her husband's absence and "gozar de quien tanto amas y deseas penando" (436). In this episode, lovesickness figures as an illness, as it does in much of the literature of the time.¹² *La Lozana andaluza* satirizes this familiar trope to portray sexual desire as a physical ailment with coitus as the cure.

The lexicon of lovesickness in *La Celestina*, and to a greater extent *La*

¹¹ Like the foot, teeth carried erotic connotations in the period (Alzieu, Jammes and Lissorgues 172; 201). On erotic longing in *La Celestina*, see Gerli. For representations of sexual desire as illness see López-Terrada 188-9.

¹² For the history of lovesickness, see Wack. On lovesickness in *La Celestina*, see Castells.

Lozana andaluza, parodies the idealization of courtly love and lovesickness in prescriptive literature, poetry and chivalric novels. *Amor hereos*, or lovesickness, is an elite male illness; as Gordonio declares, “dízese [amor] hereos porque los ricos e los nobles, por los muchos plazerres que han, acostumbran de caer o incurrir en esta passion” (107). As this statement illustrates, humoral theory conceived of desire as originating from a buildup of superfluous fluids, often, as here, brought on by a rich diet, linking the pleasures of the table to erotic pleasure. Much of the humor of celestinesque and picaresque fiction derives from its imitation of the discourse of nobility for satirical purposes, whether to defend the ‘honor’ of the *pícaro* as in *Lazarillo de Tormés* or *Guzmán de Alfarache*, or to mock the idealization of love. While in *La Celestina*, the discourse of lovesickness is voiced by the noble protagonists Calisto and Melibea, *Celestina* also parodies the concepts and language of courtly love in her role as go-between to ignoble couples such as Pármeno and Areúsa or Sempronio and Elisa, as for example when she tells Areúsa that Pármeno “ha siempre vivido penado por ti”, and implores her to satisfy his desires since “pues viendo su pena, sé que no le querrás matar”, thus casting Pármeno in the role of suffering courtly lover (207). In *La Lozana andaluza*, the mockery is even more pronounced given the absence of elite women from the novel; instead, the male protagonists use the imagery and language of courtly love to ‘seduce’ prostitutes and courtesans, as for example when Lozana swears to one of her lovers that “no quise bien a hombre en este mundo sino a vuestra merced” and he replies that “si vos mandáis, sería yo vuestro por servir de todo” (310-11). The irreverent treatment of love in these works suggests that, for their authors, no distinction is made between love and lust.

The satirical portrayal of lovesickness in celestinesque fiction draws on medical discourse and folk traditions that tout the medical benefits of coitus. Bernardo de Gordonio describes several remedies for *amor hereos* or lovesickness: if the afflicted young man is rational, an older man should speak with him and instruct him in morality, but if he is irrational he should be beaten so that the pain will take his mind off his desires; if these methods fail, he should copulate with many women so that his original love interest

will no longer strike him as special (108). The restorative potential of sexual release is further attested to by the folk belief that intercourse with a virgin could cure *mal francés* (Schleiner 189). Furthermore, coitus served a hygienic purpose within humoral theory since expulsion of semen provided one means to balance the humors and thus the complexion. The anonymous Catalan treatise *Speculum al foderi* (15th century), for example, quotes Galen's teaching that for strong and healthy men "l'usar del foder... aprofita a les humors e tira la humiditat que és molt calent, que s'engendra per ella en lo cos febre o altres accidents" (60). Likewise, the *Tractado del uso de las mugeres* (1572) states that coitus stabilizes the humors since "[durante] el coito ... se expelle lo superluo de la postrera digestion, ordenado para la conseruacion del indiuiduo y especie ... necesario para la salud del cuerpo y la gouernacion y regimiento del" (Nuñez de Coria fol. 1v). Coitus was not universally advantageous since, as with all medicines, its effects differed depending on the complexion of the patient. Furthermore, even for the subset of men who benefitted, the need for moderation was always stressed. Authors of medical treatises concur that only men of a hot and moist complexion could safely engage in intercourse, and serious damage could be incurred by men of an unsuitable complexion, particularly phlegmatic men (Gordonio 109; *Liber menor* 58; *Speculum al foder* 50-51). For men of a sanguine complexion, the most common among young males (Cadden 152), or those who overindulged in the food and drink, sexual intercourse was one mechanism to expel excess heat and moisture from the body, though many authors acknowledge that it is immoral. Humoral theory asserts that noxious substances build up in the semen if not discharged since semen accumulates "en su lugar natural y con él el pene se pone en erección y se enciende el deseo, ya que la eliminación de las materias nocivas para el organismo exige la operación de la erección" (*Liber menor de coitu* 87). According to Gordonio, since male and female ejaculates were a purer form of fluid than blood, they corrupted easily and were more noxious when broken down (304). Consequently, sperm retention was a dangerous medical condition. Given that Lozana's clients seek her out precisely because they are afflicted with sexual desire, her services can be constructed, at least ludically, as a medical intervention.

The use of medical terminology to describe sexual need appropriates humoral theory to construct lust as an illness that can be cured through coital release. Lozana explicitly references the argument that erotic release cleanses the body and balances the humors when, expressing frustration with a client who complains about the cost of her services, she exclaims "[i] cuántos he visto enfermos de los riñones por miseria de no esponder! Y otros que piensan que por cesar han de vivir más, y es al contrario, que *semel in setimana* no hizo mal a nadie" (363). Here, she portrays prostitution as a therapeutic service, voicing the common belief that seminal retention could result in renal disease and urging men against sexual miserliness; instead, they should safeguard their health by engaging the services of prostitutes. Likewise, she scoffs at the idea of salubrious abstinence, instead lauding the benefits of weekly sexual activity. Thus, Lozana's services as a prostitute are also medical, alleviating her clients' privation and preventing the dangerous buildup of fluids. Female healers traditionally took on the role of regulating and treating matters of sexual hygiene (Dangler 27), among them prostitutes, who practiced rudimentary forms of birth control and dispensed pharmaceuticals to male and female clients (Perry 208-09). Prostitutes' role as informal apothecaries rests on humoral discourse that portrayed the regular release of sperm as a regulatory system for male health, as well as the moral defense of prostitution as a lesser evil that allowed an outlet for male sexual impulses that might otherwise lead to greater evils such as the rape of virtuous wives and daughters or sodomy.¹³ This gave the prostitute a social function as an escape outlet for excess male sexuality that, while not licit, was less perilous than adultery with a 'virtuous' woman. Thus, Lozana's vocation as prostitute and procuress was not at odds with her identity as a healer.

The ludic prescription of coitus appears in another episode, in which a client named Trujillo states that he is ill (*malo*) and that only sexual intercourse can cure him. Lozana visits him at home, where he is confined to his

¹³ At the time Delicado wrote, legalized prostitution in Spain was regulated within a system of municipal brothels outside the city center (see Karras, Monzón, and Perry). In Rome (in contrast with other Italian city-states) prostitution was legal and unregulated in all areas of the city, though prostitutes paid fines (see Cohen, Larivaille, and Storey).

bed. Trujillo treats her with comic deference given their client/provider relationship. He begs, “vuestra merced me perdone que yo había de ir a homillarme delante de vuestra real persona y la pasión corporal es tanta que puedo decir que es interlineal. Y por eso me atreví a suplicalla me visitase ... y con su visitación sane” (410). Here again, Delicado satirizes the language of lovesickness; Trujillo states that his intense physical passion can only be alleviated by Lozana’s erotic visit. A humorous dialogue ensues between Lozana and Trujillo that is entrenched in phallic imagery; when Lozana remarks that his illness must have been long, Trujillo cheekily replies that it is more broad than long, indicating that he has an erection. Echoing the Canon’s language, he declares “quiero ponella en vuestras manos” (411).¹⁴ The antecedent to the direct object *la* is *mercancía*. Like so many other passages of *La Lozana andaluza*, this one is steeped in double-entendres; Lozana’s sexual services are euphemistically referred to as a customs house that will inspect Trujillo’s ‘merchandise’ (461). It soon emerges that his illness is due to retention of sperm since prolonged desire for “muchos días” has resulted in genital swelling (411). As a result, Trujillo states “tengo lo mío tamaño”, or engorged with excess fluids; yet this does not prevent him from feeling desire for Lozana since he states that “despues que venistes, se me ha alargado dos o tres dedos” leaving his member further swollen and in need of release (411). Trujillo insists on tactile and corporeal remediation, saying “meté la mano, y veréis si hay remedio” (412). Lozana follows his instruction to caress his genitals, meanwhile admiring his ‘valiant’ member. Throughout this scene, the sexual innuendo makes clear that the encounter is erotic. The episode culminates with the figuration of Lozana’s vagina as a healing relic when Trujillo states that “yo he oído que tenéis vos muy lindo lo vuestro, y quierolo ver por sanar” (412). This exchange makes clear that it is Lozana’s vagina that will restore him to health. When Lozana coyly asks him if he would be content merely to see it, he again insists on the power of touch, alleging that “los tocos y el tacto es el que sana que así lo dijo Santa Nefija, la que murió de amor suave” (412).¹⁵ Thus, Trujillo insists throughout

¹⁴ The Canon’s words are “desde agora lo pongo en vuestras manos” (286).

¹⁵ For more information regarding Saint Nefisa, see Pellegrini 246-52 and Giles “The Erotic Legend.” Giles recognizes Lozana’s role as erotic healer, yet sees her portrayal as ironic,

the interchange that he will only be healed of his illness, which is sexual in nature, by an erotic encounter.

The repeated references to Saint Nefisa, the patron saint of prostitutes, reinforce Lozana's role as sexual healer. Nefisa, Lozana explains, "daba a todos de cabalgar en limosna", prostituting herself in order to collect alms (414).¹⁶ Like Saint Nefisa, Lozana uses her body for erotic charity (Giles 116), and both comparisons to Santa Nefisa appear in episodes that focus on sexual healing.¹⁷ A Canon whom Lozana cures of *mal francés* is the first to make this correlation, stating that Lozana is "más hábile" than the burlesque pseudo-saint (284). The courtesan treated for *mal de madre* laments the death of the patroness of prostitutes, and hopes that Lozana "es ella que habrá resuscitado" (284). The inclusion of this eroticized mock saint creates a hagiographical parody in the novel that has been studied by Surtz and Delicado Puerto; moreover, the framing of mentions of Santa Nefisa within therapeutic episodes suggests that Lozana's quasi-miraculous medical ability is founded on eros. The episodes with the Canon and Trujillo in which Santa Nefisa appears explicitly link the sexual act to Lozana's role as a healer, and underscore her medical role with the intimation of miraculous powers.

The treatment of *mal francés* through erotic touch emerges in another cure enacted in the antepenultimate *mamotreto*. After Lozana establishes a reputation as an efficacious healer, clients seek her out at home including four grooms afflicted with "encordios" (471). According to Covarrubias' dictionary, these are sores that appear on the groin and are an "enfermedad sucia y asquerosa, embaxadora del mal francés" (515). These grooms declare that they have come "a que nos ensalméis" (471). Dangler defines an *ensalmadora* as a "popular woman healer who invoked the incantation known as the *ensalmo*, a logotherapeutic, secular prayer to influence

overlooking her textual success.

¹⁶ Since women were often described as similar to horses in Golden Age literature, equestrian terms often served as double-entendres for the sexual act, as does *cabalgar* in this context (Alzieu, Jammes and Lissorgues 332).

¹⁷ Santa Nefija, alternatively spelled Nefisa or Nafissa, appears in Aretino's *Ragionamenti* as a Roman prostitute who performed acts of sexual charity on the Ponte Sisto bridge (21-2), a place that figures in *La Lozana andaluza* also as a location for destitute street-walkers.

preternatural powers and persuade them to relieve a patient's affliction" (20). However, *ensalmos* could also be accompanied by medicinal treatment; Covarrubias defines an *ensalmo* as "cierto modo de curar có oraciones, vnas vezes solas, otras aplicando juntamēte algunos remedios" (748). Lozana's methods accord with Covarrubias' description; she dispenses *ensalmos* in the form of chants or incantations along with ointments, medicines, and cosmetic treatments. While in the fictionalized author's home, Rampín gives an example of an *ensalmo* for *mal francés* that Lozana will recite over him so that "cuando nace sea sano" (256). In this particular episode with the grooms, the demarcation between medical and sexual registers is once again blurred; the clients relate that they come for treatment with their *tencones* (testicles) in hand, and, the speaker adds, "y yo, huérfano, a que me beséis" (471). This groom is an orphan in that he lacks a *madre* or uterus, and wishes to be 'kissed', a common euphemism for coitus in *La Lozana andaluza*.¹⁸ The men then offer her payment in the form of a sword and stirrups, erotically charged symbols that they will trade for "melecinas" (472).¹⁹ Lozana insists that she must lay her hands on them in order to enact healing. She declares, "diré las palabras y te tocaré, porque en el tocar está la virtud" (473). As they approach her individually, she touches their genitals and exclaims admiringly over each. Meanwhile, she chants aloud, "Santo Ensalmos se salió, y contigo encontré, y su vista te sanó; así como esto es verdad así sanes d'este mal, amén" (473). In this rhyme, Lozana anthropomorphizes the logotherapy she enacts, yet she seems to indicate that her verbal dexterity is secondary to the tactile function of her healing. The prayer serves to reassure her customers through ritual, yet also insists on the need for palpability by making the prayer corporeal.²⁰ Her eroticized parody of healing prayer concludes with the assurance that the grooms' illness "no será nada," thus promising that the cure will be successful (473).

¹⁸ See, for example, 230; 412.

¹⁹ The sword is a common phallic referent (Cela 442). Stirrups refer to the female role in intercourse, often described as being 'ridden' (Cela 176-7); Cela notes that *cabalgar* occurs seventeen times in *La Lozana andaluza* as a synonym for 'copulate' (177).

²⁰ This medicalized personification is similar to the portrayal of Saint Pox in Sebastián de Horozco's poem "La cofradía de Santo Grillimón". For more on this trope in Horozco's text, see Weiner.

Lozana's sexualized healing of *mal francés* emerges in another episode in which she cures a Canon who is both client and butler to the courtesan treated for *mal de madre*. The canon asks for Lozana's medical advice to treat a genital outbreak. Like many other afflicted characters in the novel, Lozana and Delicado's fictionalized double the *autor* among them, the canon never explicitly names his disease as *mal francés*. The symptoms he describes, however, leave little doubt about the nature of his illness. The canon complains that "ha veinte días que soy estado para cortarme lo mío, tanto me duele cuando orino, y según dice el médico, tengo que lamer todo este año, y a la fin creo que me lo cortarán" (285). The reference to 'lo mío,' along with painful urination, identifies the illness as genital. In the Canon's estimation, the doctor's intervention is futile, since he will be left to suffer without cure (a connotation of the verb *lamer* seen in the expression *llevar qué lamer*), ultimately resulting in the loss of his member. Lozana consoles him and assuages his castration anxiety by promising a gentler medical model.²¹ She begs him, "prométeme de no dalle en manos de médicos, y dejá hacer a mí, que es miembro que quiere halagos y caricias, y no crueldad de médico cobdicioso y bien vestido" (286). Lozana's entreaty doubles as an erotic jest through her promise to caress his member, and references the trope of the avaricious doctor discussed earlier. The canon concludes, "desde agora lo pongo en vuestras manos," prolonging the suggestive badinage by placing himself metaphorically in her care, but also physically placing his member in her hands (286).²² In addition to her erotic touch, Lozana prescribes him to "haced que lo tengáis limpio, y untaldo con pupulión, que de aquí a cinco días no ternéis nada" (286). Lozana prescribes the use of *pupulión*, an opioid cream meant to reduce pain.²³ Moreover, Lozana promises results with unheard of speed. Standard treatments for *mal francés* using mercury or guaiacum generally relied on a forty-day duration (Arrizabalaga, Henderson and French 189). Unlike Lozana's treatment, mercury and guaiacum were intensely painful since they were accompanied by severe fasting, purging

²¹ While this is perhaps an irrational fear, castration was used as a treatment for some ailments such as hernia (Kuefler 286).

²² The antecedent of *lo* here is the earlier *lo mío*, or the Canon's penis.

²³ Gordonio also recommends the use of opioids to treat genital pain (308).

and sweating. Despite the unorthodoxy of her methodology, Lozana's cure appears to be effective, at least in the opinion of her fellow characters; both Silvano and Rampín attest that the Canon's cure is successful (283; 304).²⁴ Though Lozana does not explicitly prescribe coitus, the erotic banter certainly suggests it. Delicado thus presents erotic touch and coitus as medical services rendered through the medium of Lozana's body.

Delicado, through the erotic healer Lozana, constructs the female body's potential to restore the male, in accordance with his assertions in the end materials that God created women for male pleasure. The parody of medical text and theory contributes to the ludic nature of the novel that downplays the seriousness of *mal francés*, describing it as a terrible disease that tortures the body yet one that is neither incurable nor permanent. Indeed, Delicado writes at a historical moment in which many authors believed the resolution of this scourge to be near at hand. Von Hutten (1533), Nicolás Monardes (1575) and others announced that the disease would soon be eradicated by the newly discovered guaiacum, a viewpoint that Delicado shared. Additionally, astronomical evidence suggested to early modern thinkers that the disease would dissipate once the causative conjunction of stars had shifted; Pere Pintor, physician to Pope Alexander VI, for example, predicted in the 1490s that the epidemic would end in 1500 (French and Arrizabalaga 270). Delicado subscribes to a similar belief; his character Divicia asserts in her summary of the disease's origins that "este año de veinte y cuatro son treinta y seis años que comenzó. Ya comienza a aplacarse con el leño de las Indias Occidentales. Cuando sean sesenta años que comenzó, allora cesará" (432). By this calculation, the epidemic began in 1488 and would terminate in 1548. Delicado conceives of the disease as diminishing in force in the face of the guaiacum cure, and as a temporary affliction that will fade out in the near future. The therapeutic language of humoral theory underlie the end materials to justify Delicado's authorial ethos and signal hope for the alleviation of *mal francés*. Delicado declares that he writes with

²⁴ If there was any doubt that erotic touch was indeed a part of the Canon's "treatment", the title of the *mamotreto* eliminates it, as it announces Lozana's pregnancy after her encounter with the clergy member, a pregnancy that is later confirmed by Silvano (283; 304).

“sana intención” (492). The word *sana*, though frequently understood as evidence of Delicado’s didactic intentions to depict vice in an attempt to spur readers towards virtuous behavior, conveys his resolution to help other sufferers of *mal francés* think through possible cures and to give hope for corporeal restoration. Similarly, Delicado’s statement that Lozana ended her days *santamente* on the island of Lípári, known in the era for its therapeutic baths, may allude to the *sana/santa* dualism and thus to a textual cure for Lozana.²⁵

Lozana’s approach depends not merely on her ointments and chants but rather a combination of these methods with the erotic touch that defines her services as a sexual practitioner. She has at least three textually documented successes: the canon, the man from Velitre, and the courtesan Faustina.²⁶ Healing not only supplements Lozana’s work as a prostitute, but rather depends on it; she heals through erotic touch and all of those she treats (with the possible exception of the Spanish man from Velitre) double as her clients in the sex trade. Her ministrations draw on humoral theories of balance to construct her sexual services as medical interventions in which she cures male patients through the medium of her own body. As Dangler, Bubnova and others have shown, the novel is layered with contradictory meanings. Dangler concludes that “while *La Lozana andaluza* is not a clear

²⁵ Most critics understand Lozana’s retirement to Lípári to signal repentance from vice, constructing a hagiographical reading of Lozana as penitent. They argue that the island is a metaphor for either heaven (Macpherson 214), or the cave of Mary Magdalen (Zafra 122). Dangler, in contrast, sees a medical interpretation wherein Lozana may undergo treatment in the island’s baths (172). Delicado’s conclusion is profoundly ambiguous: while Lozana declares her intention to leave Rome for Venice in the last sketch, and is depicted en route there in the frontispiece, the end materials describe her as ending her days in Lípári. Given that Lozana never expresses remorse, I believe the island’s medical symbolism takes precedence.

²⁶ Whether these are literal successes or merely perceived successes is open to interpretation; given that patients often relapsed, determining when a patient was cured presented grave difficulties. At the time that Delicado wrote, the disease was still relatively new and considered by many to be curable. Delicado certainly considered his own cure to be complete (485), and was optimistic regarding the potential for curing and even eliminating the disease. Lozana’s textual cures, however, are more likely to be perceived than real; as I argued earlier, medical language often functions as a rhetorical game to justify erotic encounter under the guise of ‘medicine’, and Lozana herself does not seem to share other characters’ assessments of her abilities.

condemnation of women on Delicado's part, it is not a 'defense' of their worth either" (173). Delicado's concern lies not with women's innate worth, but rather with their use value to men, demonstrated by a subtext that harnesses the language of academic medicine to construct a ludic defense of sexual release through prostitution. Delicado insists on the erotic capacity of the female body to enliven and remediate the male. In a postscript entitled "como se excusa el autor ... en laude de las mujeres", he states that women are a "jardín que Dios nos dio para recreación corporal, que si no castamente, al menos cautamente lo gozásemos", adding that women can be enjoyed "en laude a su Criador, máxime a quien lo sabe moderar" (484). These statements indicate that Delicado sees moderate sexual activity as beneficial to male health and belie his claims to didacticism. In doing so, Delicado elides female experience and agency, portraying woman as a receptacle for male excess just as the argument in favor of legalized prostitution that depicts transactional sex as a means to purge and divert excess lust enacts a similar strategy to portray the female body as a receptacle for male waste. In this way, female vice allows the male body to restore balance. Delicado creates a character that draws on the medieval construct of the female body as both enticing and abhorrent (Miller 1-7), yet he highlights why the grotesque is also desirable: the seeping and open female body allows the male to retain its pristine limits. Thus, Delicado portrays Lozana, and coitus more generally, as a pharmakon, or curative poison, that, in controlled doses, may cure the same ailments it causes.

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