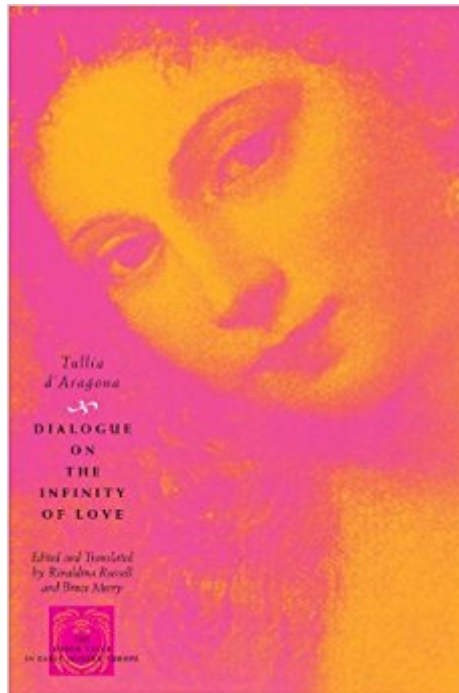


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Dialogue On The Infinity Of Love (The Other Voice In Early Modern Europe)



Synopsis

Celebrated as a courtesan and poet, and as a woman of great intelligence and wit, Tullia d'Aragona (1510–1556) entered the debate about the morality of love that engaged the best and most famous male intellects of sixteenth-century Italy. First published in Venice in 1547, but never before published in English, *Dialogue on the Infinity of Love* casts a woman rather than a man as the main disputant on the ethics of love. Sexually liberated and financially independent, Tullia d'Aragona dared to argue that the only moral form of love between woman and man is one that recognizes both the sensual and the spiritual needs of humankind. Declaring sexual drives to be fundamentally irrepressible and blameless, she challenged the Platonic and religious orthodoxy of her time, which condemned all forms of sensual experience, denied the rationality of women, and relegated femininity to the realm of physicality and sin. Human beings, she argued, consist of body and soul, sense and intellect, and honorable love must be based on this real nature. By exposing the intrinsic misogyny of prevailing theories of love, Aragona vindicates all women, proposing a morality of love that restores them to intellectual and sexual parity with men. Through Aragona's sharp reasoning, her sense of irony and humor, and her renowned linguistic skill, a rare picture unfolds of an intelligent and thoughtful woman fighting sixteenth-century stereotypes of women and sexuality.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

As part of a series on important women writers in the period 1300-1700, this booklet provides the first English translation of an important Renaissance dialog on the nature of human love. D'Aragona

(1510-56), a wealthy courtesan and poet, daughter of a Roman courtesan and (probably) Cardinal Luigi d'Aragona, argues that human sexual drives are irrepressible and that a moral form of love must recognize both its sensual and spiritual aspects; here she challenges Catholic teaching and the prevailing Platonic philosophy of her day. Russell (European languages, Queens Coll.) and Merry (modern languages, John Cook Univ., Australia) have produced a lucid and lively translation; the useful introduction gives an analysis of the dialog. For academic collections. ?Bennett D. Hill, Georgetown Univ., Washington, D.C. Copyright 1997 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Text: English (translation) Original Language: Italian --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

The introduction to this volume, from the Other Voice series out of the University of Chicago Press, by Rinaldina Russell is exceptionally good. It is helpful in tracing the path of Tullia d'Aragona's education that took her to the understanding that allowed for the writing of this tract, and it is a tract, a philosophical tract, argued in the most proper dialogic method with Tullia as the antagonist. The argument is stated: "Is there love within limits?" While this argument deals with the subject, love, it is not really about love. Varchi, the protagonist of this argument, maunders around in his "questio" dialogic method, in a manner that I kept thinking of as Renaissance scholasticism, with the incessant splitting of hairs, carping about the meanings and comparative meanings of words used in the dialogue. Footnotes in the book were a must and were handled well, giving the reader all she needed to prevent confusion in the narrative and giving edification and reminders of the philosophical questions implied and their premises. The purpose is not to solve the question, or come to an answer, but to investigate, peruse, belabor, and fragment in the best dialogic manner. This disassembly accomplished, the true cleverness in the arguments comes in one-up-manship, catching the other out in misspeaking, and revealing the true nature of love, which is its difficulty.

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