

Summary

Love and Medicine. The Love Discourse in the Dolce Stil Novo Poetry

The object of the thesis is the reflection on the lovesickness (*aegritudo amoris*) in a poetic discourse of *Dolce Stil Novo* and in Medieval medical discourse. In search of the answer to the question concerning the existence of the possible relationships between a medical knowledge about the love suffering and its representations in the poetry, in the dissertation there have been conducted the comparative analysis of the *stilnovists*' poems—Guido Guinizzelli's, Guido Cavalcanti's, Cino's da Pistoia, Dino Frescobaldi's, Lapo Gianni's, Gianni Alfani's—with the philosophical, medical and optical treatises known in those times: *Peri psychēs* (*De anima*) of Aristotle, *Aphorismoi* (*Aphorismi*) of Hippocrates, *Peri chreias moriōn* (*De usu partium corporis humani*) of Galen, *Problemata* (*Problemata*) of Alexander of Aphrodisias, *al-Qānūn fī -ṭibb* (*Canon medicinae*) and *Kitāb al-Nafs* (*Liber de anima seu sextus de naturalibus*) of Avicenna, *Viaticum* of Constantine the African, *Glosule super Viaticum* of Gérard de Berry, *Questiones super Viaticum* of Peter of Spain, *Al-Kulliyat fī al-Tibb* (*Colliget*) of Averroes, *Tractatus de amore qui heroicus nominatur* of Arnau de Villanova, *Kitāb al-manāẓir* (*De aspectibus / Perspectiva*) of Alhazen and *Perspectiva communis* of John Peckham.

In the first chapters of this work – *Lo stato della questione, Il concetto di amore degli stilnovisti e dei medici: dall'eros alla malinconia, La malattia d'amore nel Medioevo, Gli stilnovisti e la trattatistica medica* – there is presented the state of research concerning the *Dolce Stil Novo* poetry, as well as the problem of love in Medieval medical science. Emphasis is laid on explaining—in the context of historical premises and research on the circulation of scientific texts—the possible familiarity with medical treatises and medical knowledge dedicated to love described by *Stilnovist* poets, which constitutes the basis for the analyses conducted in the dissertation.

Subsequently, in the chapter dedicated to the analysis, *The Love Suffering as a Matter of a Poetic Creation?*, the different forms of pain caused by the experience of love are demonstrated. The object of the analysis are the motifs such as: painful love wound, sadness, painful sights, fear and anguish, madness, and death anticipated by pallor and exhaustion of the enamored subject.

In the second chapter, *The Love and a Poetic Creation as Pharmakon?*, the emphasis is put on the “rhetorics of an irrational love” (*retorica dell'amore irrazionale*), strictly related to the notion of *pharmakon* and exposing the ambivalence of love: poison and medicine concomitantly. The analysis of the poetic texts focus on the images demonstrating the contradictions inscribed in the love experience, i.a. pain and pleasure, fever and joy, eloquent silence, and Eros-Thanatos.

Finally, the object of the last chapter, *The Love and a Poetic Creation as Therapy?* is the attempt to answer the question if the love and a poetic creation of the *Dolce Stil Novo* can be perceived as a medical therapy. Therefore, it stresses on the inseparable relationship of a love anguish and a creative process, during which the poet presents himself as an individual affected by a lovesickness and at the same time tries to dissociate from it, elaborating it

artistically with the imagination and the reason. In the consequence, in the area of the analysis are included the phenomena indissolubly connected to a creative act, the creation of the poetic images: imagining a beloved object in the mind and imagining a beloved object in the heart and showing a lady as the embodiment of the beauty (a radiant beloved, a beloved savior).

The presented dissertation makes it possible to conclude that the medical vision of love demonstrated by the treatises' authors and its artistic image created by the *stilnovists* present several common aspects. Notwithstanding, despite of numerous similarities, in the case of the *Dolce Stil Novo* the multiplicity of the sources of inspiration of different nature: literary, philosophical, theological has to be emphasized. This amalgama of the cultural images and experiences, in the meeting with a medical reflection, reveals the complexity of the *stilnovists*' vision of love. The sensibility and the poetic virtuosity of the *Dolce Stil Novo* exponents', visible in the sophisticated use of the rhetorical figures and the artistic transformation of the medical opinions, are manifested fully in the detailed representations of the affective states of an individual. The afore-mentioned descriptions of the mental condition of the enamored—conformed to the “poetics of the interior life” (*poetica dell'interiorità*) typical of the *Dolce Stil Novo*—result to be much more insightful and individualized in comparison with the descriptions included in the treatises, focused rather on characterizing the physiological phenomena concomitating the lovesickness. Moreover, the *Dolce Stil Novo* poems often illustrate the disintegration of the subject who, endowed with a particular metaconscience, simultaneously observes himself loving and himself writing about love. Just thanks to the afore-mentioned metaconscience, the *Dolce Stil Novo* texts bring different reflections concerning the writing which on the one hand allows to mitigate the lovesickness's symptoms, and, on the other hand, feeds on a persistent and never satisfied desire. For this reason, the *stilnovists*' poets—unlike the treatises' authors—discard the possibility of the complete healing from the lovesickness, because the satisfaction of the desire would cause the inevitable loss of inspiration.

Key words: *aegritudo amoris*, *Dolce Stil Novo*, philosophy, medicine, optics