

Handout 1: D'Aragona Defines Love

Tullia d’Aragona, born in Rome around the turn of the 16th century, was a philosopher, poet, and *cortegiana honesta* [honorable courtesan], or a sex worker, recognized and praised for her intellectual abilities. In this excerpt from her *Dialogue on the Infinity of Love*, she defines love.

Excerpt from Tullia d’Aragona’s <i>Dialogue on the Infinity of Love</i> (1547)		
“Love,” according to what I have frequently heard from other authorities, as well as by my own understanding of it, is nothing other than a desire to enjoy with union what is truly beautiful or what seems beautiful to the lover.		
For d’Aragona, love is...	Rewrite in your own words:	Think of one real-world example:
A desire		
to enjoy with union		
what is truly beautiful		
or what seems beautiful to the lover.		

Respond:

1. What kind of beauty do you think d'Aragona has in mind? Why?
2. What is the difference between something truly beautiful and what seems beautiful? How are we to tell the difference? Why do you think d'Aragona includes both in her definition?

Reflect:

3. Do you think Romeo and Juliet love each other in the way d'Aragona describes? Why or why not?
4. Does everything we love have to be beautiful in some way, or can we love things that are not beautiful at all? Can you come up with an example of something you love that does not seem beautiful or is not truly beautiful?