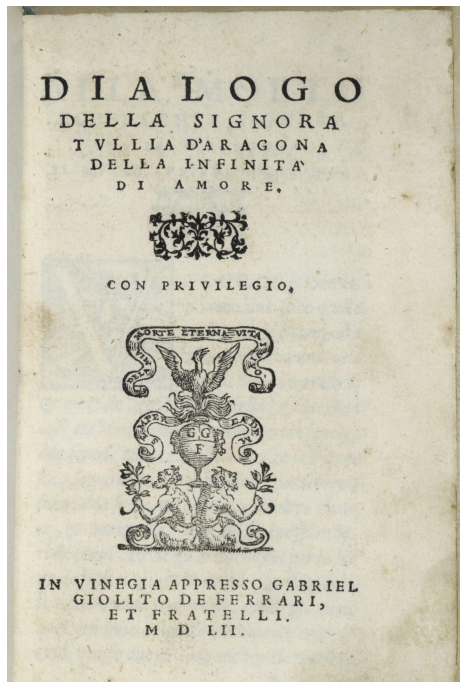

The Nature of Love

Tullia d'Aragona and *Romeo & Juliet*

Project Vox

Dialogue on the Infinity of Love (1547)



- Published fifty years before Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, Tullia D'Aragona writes herself in conversation with Benedetto Varchi, an illustrious man in Florence.
- Responds to a 1542 dialogue written by a prominent male Renaissance writer, which argues women are only capable of an animalistic, irrational love.
- Against this, d'Aragona shows that women are capable of rational love
- The excerpts for this lesson focus on what it means for love to be rational and centered on the Good.

Title page to the re-edition of D'Aragona's dialogue published in 1552

Source: LUNA: Folger Digital Image Collection.

Historical Context

Renaissance Philosophy

- Characterized by a return to ancient texts and the focus on the *vita activa*—the active life where philosophical topics and social practice intersect, as exemplified by d'Aragona's dialogue on how to love ethically
- Likely because of its practical focus, Renaissance philosophy is generally excluded from traditional philosophy syllabi

Women in Renaissance Philosophy

- D'Aragona belonged to a privileged tradition of women intellectuals whose status as noble courtesans enabled access to literary and philosophical circles.
- Women philosophers at this time were recognized not as philosophers but as writers. Literary genres offered socially acceptable platforms for philosophical ideas.

Exit Ticket

Is the love between Romeo and Juliet true love? Why or why not?