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**[INSERT FIGURE 6.1 ON PRECEDING PAGE, FULL PAGE]**

**6.1 Otho Vaenius, *Amorum emblemata* (Antwerp: Typis Henrici Swingenij, 1608), 57:**

**Cornelis Bol I after Otto van Veen, vignette of emblem 29, copperplate. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Estampes et photographie, 4-TE-56.**

**6**

**Cupid and the Bear: Emblems of Creation and Images of Seduction in Sixteenth-Century  
Art Writing and Love Imagery**

*Romana Sammern*

Perpolit incultum paullatim tempus amorem. / Ursa novum fertur lambendo fingere foetum, /  
Paullatim & formam, quae decet, ore dare: / Sic dominam, ut valde sit cruda, sit aspera, amator /  
Blanditijs sensim mollit & obsequio.<sup>1</sup>

Otto van Veen

Along with his pupil Peter Paul Rubens (c. 1577–1640), the painter and poet Otto van Veen (1556–1629; also known as Otho Vaenius) was one of the most significant painters of the Southern Netherlands. Together with his collection of sacred love images, *Amorum divini emblemata* (*Emblems of Divine Love*) (1615), the profane *Emblemata amorum* (*Emblems of Love*) was among the most influential emblem collections of its time and helped establish the popular genre of love emblem books, which spread throughout Europe in the first decades of the seventeenth century.<sup>2</sup> Van Veen published 124 emblems of love for an international audience. Notable humanist scholars, such as Hugo Grotius (1583–1645) and Philipp Rubens (1574–1611), contributed laudatory poems, as did Daniel Heinsius (1580–1655), who printed the very first collection of Dutch love emblems in 1601. Four different versions combined Latin verses with Dutch, French, English, and Italian lines, respectively, and were all published in 1608. Cornelis Bol I (c. 1576–1621) engraved the plates of the *editio princeps* in Latin, Italian, and French after van Veen’s design.<sup>3</sup>

Emblem 29 of van Veen’s *Amorum emblemata* shows Cupid in contemplation (fig. 1). Resting on his bow on a forest path, the god of love is watching a bear lick its cub. The accompanying verses explain the emblem’s motto: “Time gradually completes a neglected love.”<sup>4</sup> The image refers to the antique topos of the she-bear and her young. According to the entry on bears in Pliny’s *Natural History*, a she-bear gives birth to a shapeless and eyeless lump of flesh, which the mother bear then shapes with her tongue.<sup>5</sup> In the Early Modern period, the story was known in the context of both love imagery and art literature. In the latter, the story of the she-bear was regarded as a metaphor for the arduous task of writing and revising a text. In the early sixteenth century, Titian used it for his *impresa* *Natura potentior ars* (Art is more

powerful than nature) to represent the act of perfecting nature through art.<sup>6</sup> Van Veen's emblem, however, sets the topos of the she-bear and her young in the context of courtly love, presenting it as a process of seduction that lovers can manipulate. Similarly to the bear licking her cub, in love imagery, the flattering words and gentle kisses offered by a lover may have an effect on—or, in a sense, shape—the courted person's affections.

The *Emblemata amorum*, as a whole, are well known in emblem studies and art historiography as a junction of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century love imagery.<sup>7</sup> In the iconographical studies of Mario Praz and subsequently those of Anne Buschhoff, emblem 29 with Bol's vignette of Cupid and the bear has been considered as only one of van Veen's many *loci communes*. Philological studies trace the imagery of the she-bear and her young from ancient literature and pseudo-hieroglyphs to French emblem books and Venetian love literature.<sup>8</sup>

Combining text and image, love emblems are important tools and materials of analysis for iconographical and iconological studies in the tradition of Erwin Panofsky. They provide pictorial riddles of the semantic knowledge of their time that, in a way, simultaneously decrypt and encode meaning.<sup>9</sup> Besides their significance in the fields of iconography and semantics, love emblems also stand at the convergence of art, art theory, and love literature. Art, love, art theory, and love imagery are closely connected, as is shown in Pliny's account of Butades of Sicyon's daughter, who, out of love, invented portraiture when she drew the outline of her departing lover's shadow on the wall.<sup>10</sup> Metaphors about a beloved person's portrait being painted on one's heart<sup>11</sup> or falling in love at the sight of a portrait were popular topoi in medieval and early modern culture.<sup>12</sup> Recent studies on the link between creativity and sexuality in the early modern period show that this idea is not limited to analogies. Instead, concepts of love were deployed in image and text when artists, theorists, and beholders thought about art and art production.<sup>13</sup>

Continuing along these lines of inquiry, my paper will focus on van Veen's *Emblemata amorum* in the Italian context—beyond the ancient (Ovid) and modern (Alciati) influences, which have been recently stressed by John Manning and Els Stronks<sup>14</sup>—and will juxtapose it with the metaphor of the she-bear in sixteenth-century art literature and seventeenth-century obscene literature. Instead of using the love emblems as tools for the semantic analysis of pictures, the love emblems themselves will be considered as agents of cultural knowledge in which ideas from love imagery, literature, and art theory overlap and create new meanings.

The imagery of the she-bear and her cub is well known by art historians as both an art-theoretical image of invention and mimesis as well as a metaphor used in sixteenth-century Venetian love imagery.<sup>15</sup> Reading van Veen's love emblem alongside the popular obscene dialogue *La Retorica delle Puttane* (*The Whore's Rhetoric*) (1642) by the Italian writer and former Augustinian canon Ferrante Pallavicino (1615–1644), my paper stresses the sexual implications of the topos, which are closely linked to contemporaneous ideas of art production, creation, and creativity.<sup>16</sup> It also draws on recent studies of the link between creativity and sexuality in early modern culture.<sup>17</sup> Pallavicino's *Retorica delle Puttane* is well known to literary historians and historians of sexuality, but, in his study on libertine literature in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, James Turner notes that Pallavicino uses terms from art theory to describe prostitution, declaring it an art form, while he considers the prostitute to be both artist and artwork.<sup>18</sup> More recently, Ulrich Pfisterer has argued that Pallavicino, in his novel *Il Principe Hermafrodito* (*The Hermaphrodite Prince*) dating from 1640, deploys narrative devices related to art theory and the experience of images on the part of the beholder.<sup>19</sup>

By the sixteenth century, the art-theoretical history of the connection between rhetoric and the principles of painting already spanned two hundred years. Leon Battista Alberti had based his

first art-theoretical treatise, *De pictura (On Painting)* of 1435/1436, on the framework of rhetoric. In their treatises, the Venetians Paolo Pino (1548) and Lodovico Dolce (1557) systematically related painting to rhetoric, making the junction a commonplace of sixteenth-century art literature.<sup>20</sup> Cardinal Gabriele Paleotti, the bishop of Bologna, took up this link in his theological treatise *Discorso intorno alle imagini sacre e profane* (Discourse concerning sacred and profane images) of 1582 and related rhetorical persuasion explicitly to painting. My paper argues that Pallavicino parodies this tradition by connecting rhetoric with prostitution and underpins it with terms from contemporaneous writings about art to provide a critique of mimesis. Besides descriptions of pictures, in his *Retorica delle Puttane*, he also refers to “artwork” (*artificio*), “execution” (*esecuzione*), “to fantasize, to imagine” (*chimerizzare*), “to represent oneself” (*raffigurarsi*), and “to portray” (*ritrarre*).<sup>21</sup>

Taking Marsilio Ficino’s dictum of love as the “master of all the arts”<sup>22</sup> literally, both Otto van Veen and Pallavicino draw on tropes from sixteenth-century art literature and emblem books that stress the carnal implications of seduction as well as the physical involvement of fantasy and imagination in art production and desire. This paper suggests that both van Veen’s and Pallavicino’s solutions give evidence of their knowledge of sixteenth-century writings on art and love literature, and, more importantly, that the two shared a common humanistic range of knowledge that involved literature as well as art theory. Van Veen deployed the topos of the she-bear licking her young into shape to link writing about art and love literature on a pictorial level; my reading of Pallavicino’s *Retorica delle Puttane* enhances this point.

### **Pallavicino’s *La Retorica delle Puttane***

Pallavicino’s *La Retorica delle Puttane* is a satirical dialogue between an old procuress and a

young girl on how to become a successful prostitute that parodies Jesuit rhetoric as it was taught in schools in sixteenth-century Europe.<sup>23</sup> It combines themes from contemporary popular obscene literature with aspects of love literature and concepts of natural history and art theory. Alongside Pietro Aretino's *Ragionamenti (Dialogues)*, pseudo-Aretine's *La puttana errante (The Wandering Whore)*, and Alessandro Piccolomini's *Raffaella*, it was part of a courtesan's instruction in the canon of early modern obscene literature.<sup>24</sup>

Soon after it was first published anonymously in Venice, *La Retorica delle Puttane* gained scandalous popularity. Ferrante Pallavicino, a young, well-educated Augustinian canon from Padua living at the Convento della Carità in Venice,<sup>25</sup> was suspected to be the author. Several satirical publications against the Roman Catholic Church appeared between 1641 and 1642, which took aim particularly at Pope Urban VIII Barberini, the Jesuits, and the papal Inquisition. These included such obscene books as *Il principe hermafrodito* and *La Retorica delle Puttane*, as well as the satirical writings *Il Corriero svaligiato (The Post-Boy Robbed of his Mail)* and *La Baccinata*, which included indirect attacks at the pope.<sup>26</sup> Though published anonymously, they were all instantly ascribed to Pallavicino. Consequently, he was prosecuted by the papal nuncio and forced to go into hiding. After *La Retorica delle Puttane* was published, he had to leave Venice. In 1643, he was caught and imprisoned on papal property near Avignon. During his imprisonment, another blasphemous book was published in Geneva in 1644. This pro-Protestant satire, *Il divortio celeste (The Celestial Divorce)*, in which Jesus files for divorce from the Roman Catholic Church, cost him his head.

### **The Prostitute's Art of Seduction**

*La Retorica delle Puttane* presents prostitution as a cycle of erotic seduction and the fulfillment

of sexual desire. Alongside the traditional schema of rhetoric, it views the arts of rhetoric and prostitution as being of equal significance.<sup>27</sup> Instead of the effective and persuasive language characteristic of rhetoric, it presents an art of persuasion that involves the physical body and mind of both the orator/prostitute and the audience/client.<sup>28</sup>

One of the core topics in *La Retorica delle Puttane* is eloquence—the art of fluent and persuasive speaking, which is the foundation of classic rhetoric.<sup>29</sup> Pallavicino describes eloquence as the art of persuasion through the accomplished and purposeful commitment of the whole body.<sup>30</sup> For this, a prostitute had at her disposal her body (*natura*) and its artificial embellishment (*arte*), which could be complemented through exercises (*esercizio*) and imitation (*imitazione*; of nature, i.e. other prostitutes).<sup>31</sup> Thus, Pallavicino locates the core questions of the prostitute’s art of persuasion as lying between the imitation and perfection of nature—a concept introduced in aesthetics by Aristotle with his works *Poetics* and *Physics*.<sup>32</sup>

Though a man’s desire was not seen as being easily influenced, a prostitute was expected to develop a wealth of techniques to enhance her appearance through the manipulation of mental images.<sup>33</sup> Primarily, Pallavicino explains, men frequent prostitutes because they can present themselves as ideal lovers by mimetically mirroring men’s desires onto their own bodies. Anticipating his every wish, a prostitute promises to fulfill her client’s sexual fantasy (for example, having sex with a virgin).<sup>34</sup> Contrary to this main thesis, however, Pallavicino admits that a prostitute is most successful in her attempts at seduction when she embodies ideas that are born of her own imagination. The power of her imagination enables her both to anticipate her client’s desires and to convince him to desire that which she performs.

### **Chimerizing Desire: Fantasy and the Body**

I would argue that, by suggesting prostitutes embody their own fantasies as well as reflect their clients' desires, *La Retorica delle Puttane* ridicules and questions the origin and relation between fantasy, images, and imagination. The only constant factor is the persuasive power of imagination—though the work does not distinguish clearly between imagination and fantasy. Pallavicino promises that, once a prostitute learns to control and channel her imagination, she can seduce any man and satisfy even the most lascivious of appetites. To describe this process of embodying male desire, he uses the Italian verbs *chimerizare* and the reflexive form *chimerizarsi*.<sup>35</sup> The verb *chimerizare*, which can be translated as “to imagine” or “to fantasize,” derives from the chimera, a mythical creature composed of a lion’s head, a goat’s body, and a serpent’s tail. Traditionally, the chimera referred to or symbolized fantasy and was used to describe the creative processes of inventing and shaping. In his treatise on poetry, for instance, Horace uses the figure of the chimera to introduce the topic of the generation of ideas. However, he also uses the chimera as a negative example of the exaggerated mixing of styles.<sup>36</sup>

In the Early Modern period, the chimera symbolized the creative power of fantasy.<sup>37</sup> According to Carlo Battisti and Giovanni Alessio’s Italian etymological dictionary, the verb *chimerizare*, meaning “to invent,” was first used in the sixteenth century, most likely by Venetian art writers.<sup>38</sup> Lodovico Dolce, for example, used it in 1565 in his treatise on colors to refer to “fantasy,” in the sense of “to imagine.”<sup>39</sup> Nevertheless, its use was closely linked with sensual, physical perception. “To fantasize” meant to receive impressions gathered through physical perception and to combine them in a new or different manner. In a negative sense, it could create distorted ideas, illusions, and false conclusions. In a positive sense, “to fantasize” could also signify the act of inventing and creating, which promises the generation of new knowledge. In 1567, the Umbrian sculptor Vincenzo Danti, for instance, enthusiastically

compared chimeras with the fine arts. In his view, both the fine arts and chimeras are not confined to merely imitating nature. Instead, both are so well composed of different parts of natural things that they actually create something entirely new.<sup>40</sup>

Using the figure of the chimera, Pallavicino plays with both the creative (positive) and the deceptive (negative) connotations of “fantasy.” On the one hand, he recommends that the prostitute deceive and simulate false illusions.<sup>41</sup> On the other hand, he uses the term *chimerizare* satirically, linking it with fundamental questions of artistic design.<sup>42</sup> In the first lesson of the *La Retorica delle Puttane*, for instance, he recommends following “truths and verisimilitudes” (*vere e veresimili*)—a common rule in art theory and poetics.<sup>43</sup> He also suggests that, depending on her needs, the prostitute embody the opposite of “truths and verisimilitudes.”<sup>44</sup> The prostitute should invent a credible narrative around her profession with the aim of maximizing profits. A pretty woman with good manners, for instance, may tell a heart-rending story of impoverishment to disguise her financial interest.<sup>45</sup> By maintaining a probabilistic appearance, a façade of devoutness and modesty, she projects the image of the unfortunate beauty being saved by a wealthy client.<sup>46</sup>

Traditionally, depicting the probable was a fundamental condition of poetics.<sup>47</sup> Pallavicino relativized this by advising prostitutes to follow and counter it at the same time—for example, when it comes to payment.<sup>48</sup> In doing so, he reduces a key problem of art theory—the question of how to depict truths and probabilities—to absurdity.

Despite an ambiguous and satirical use of *chimera* and *chimerizare*, the terms clearly refer to concepts of creativity and artistic invention. Comparable to Vincenzo Danti’s confrontation of the arts and chimeras, which both prove capable of composing something entirely new out of parts of different natural things, the ideas prostitutes invent are derived from various models.<sup>49</sup>

Like a practitioner of the fine arts, a prostitute imitates nature and fashions new forms of seduction from it.<sup>50</sup> *La Retorica delle Puttane*'s concept of mimesis is an eclectic one, which derives its models of imitation from a wide range of sources—that is, the most successful prostitutes one could observe in public. Public spaces, in which prostitutes could broaden and train their imagination, provided an inexhaustible source of inspiration. In fact, in the best tradition of art theory, the novice in prostitution would choose the most appealing and useful features from a group of exemplary prostitutes in order to combine them into new forms of seduction.<sup>51</sup>

In sum, Pallavicino uses *chimerizare* to mean the ability to create something new or never seen before. His work describes the creative process, from the intellectual generation of an idea to its practical realization. More specifically, *chimerizare* also refers to the prostitute's method of invention, namely inventing what she believes her client's imagined sexual desires to be. *Chimerizare* also implies performing men's assumed sexual fantasies. The prostitute's poetic power lies in this ability to embody sexual drives. Thereby, Pallavicino explains the origin of sexual desires and their fulfillment by means of representation (by the prostitute) and sensual perception (by her client) and, in this way, declares it a matter of perception in terms of *aisthesis*. He illustrates this in his satirical interpretation of the ancient anecdote of the she-bear and her young, suggesting to the prostitute to "imagine (or feign) herself" as both the she-bear and the she-bear's "lump of flesh." "The she-bear shapes herself with her tongue and, in doing so, attains perfect form."<sup>52</sup>

### **The Topos of the She-Bear: Love, Creation, and Sex**

This interest in the bear's birth was based on a misinterpretation of a passage originating in

Aristotle's *History of Animals* in which one reads, "the newly born cub of the she-bear is ... smooth and blind, and its legs and most of its organs are as yet inarticulate."<sup>53</sup> Based on this, Pliny and others assumed that the unshaped cub was formed solely through the mother bear's licking.<sup>54</sup> This interpretation was popular throughout the Middle Ages up to the early modern period, when it was applied to such various fields as writing on art, popular literature, and Marian and love imagery.<sup>55</sup>

[INSERT FIGURE 6.2 HERE]

**6.2 Franz von Retz, *Defensorium inviolatae virginitatis Mariae*, redaction C (Basle: Johann and Conrad Hist, ca. 1484), 218v: vignette, woodcut. Bayerische Staatsbibliothek München, no. 4 Inc.s.a. 644, urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb00027055-2.**

In the fourteenth century, the topos was used to illustrate the virgin birth of Jesus Christ (fig. 2). Analogizing the she-bear's tongue to speech (*os*), the Viennese Dominican Franz von Retz (also known as Franciscus de Retza; 1343–1427), in his *Defensorium inviolatae virginitatis beatae Mariae* (In Defense of the Unviolated Virginitate of the Blessed Mary), argues that the archangel Gabriel was able to maintain Mary's virginity during the conception of Christ just as the bear shapes its young with its tongue.<sup>56</sup> Both the she-bear's licking and the archangel's words have the power to generate or manipulate the shape of the material world.

The figure of the she-bear and her cub was also known in humanistic contexts. The fifth-century treatise on hieroglyphs by Horapollon, rediscovered in 1419, compared the formation of a bear's young with the formation of man. The licking bear became known as a hieroglyphic depiction of a man who is born misshapen but later receives a normal form.<sup>57</sup> Accordingly, in the

earliest French emblem book, Guillaume de la Perrière's (1499–1565) *Le theatre des bons engins* (c. 1539), emblem 98 compares the bear's licking with the process of civilizing a human being through education.<sup>58</sup> The picture of emblem 98 shows one of the first printed depictions of the she-bear licking her young (fig. 3).

[INSERT FIGURE 6.3 HERE]

**6.3 Guillaume de la Perrière, *Le theatre des bons engins* (Paris: Denis Janot, 1539), 97v: vignette of Emblem 98, woodcut. Herzog August Bibliothek Wolfenbüttel, M: Lm 2057.**

Similarly, the licking bear in emblem 43 of Denis Lebey de Batilly's (1551–1607) collection of *Emblemata* (1596) represents the cultivation of the mind through education (fig. 4).<sup>59</sup> Bear and cub are set in a more elaborate landscape, which echoes the comparison of nature and art by contrasting a forest in the countryside with a fortified city in the background. This imagery positions the licking bear at the convergence of body, creation, formation, and art.

[INSERT FIGURE 6.4 HERE]

**6.4 Denis Lebey de Batilly, *Emblemata* (Frankfurt: Theodore de Bry, 1596). Theodore de Bry after Jean Jacques Boissard, Vignette of emblem 43, copperplate. Herzog August Bibliothek Wolfenbüttel, M: Uk 35.**

As mentioned above, the topos of the she-bear and her young was also a metaphor used in love literature. The Paduan humanist Sperone Speroni (1500–1588), for instance, used the carnal unity of the she-bear and her young in his *Dialogo dell'Amore* (*Dialogue of Love*) (1543) to

depict the compatibility of spiritual and physical love.<sup>60</sup> Speroni explains that the she-bear's mind guides her tongue; licking is linked to a mental process that connects body and mind. Only the bear's intellectual tongue is able to form the unshaped young (her own flesh) and to perfect it.<sup>61</sup> In his conception of absolute love, the bear's licking represents the meaningful unity of body and mind. Mere physical love remains raw just as mere spiritual love remains without substance; both forms of love need each other for meaningful consummation. Only through the union of body and mind can untamed carnal desires be cultivated and shaped, thereby leading to the creation of sensuous experiences.<sup>62</sup>

Otto van Veen's emblem 29 (fig. 1) discussed above simplifies this imagery of perfect love by reducing it to a configuration of love that grows over time. The bear's licking is no longer used to refer to love as an absolute union of body and mind but to the manipulative power of courtship as a union of intellect and sensuality (with sexual allusions). The anecdote of the she-bear and her young became an image of successful seduction in the context of love.

[INSERT FIGURE 6.5 HERE]

**6.5 Johannes Bolland (et al.), *Imago primi saeculi Societatis Iesv a provincia Flandro-Belgica eiusdem Societatis repraesentata* (Antwerp: Balthasar I Moretus, 1640), 465: vignette by Cornelis I Galle, copperplate. Bayerische Staatsbibliothek München, Res/2 Jes. 12, urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb10869378-5.**

The context of persuasion comes full circle with contemporaneous Jesuit rhetoric. Cornelis Galle the Elder's copperplate of the she-bear licking its cub (fig. 5) in Johannes Bolland's handbook of Jesuit imagery, *Imago primi saeculi Societatis Iesv* (Image of the First Century of

the Society of Jesus), reprises the picture of the bear and her young in a landscape known from the sixteenth-century emblem books discussed above.<sup>63</sup> Here the topos of the she-bear licking her cub figures as an emblem of how the community may be persuaded by the cleric's rhetoric (tongue).

In Pallavicino's satirical narration of the topos, the bear's licking parallels persuasion. Ironically, the bear's tongue questions oration as a central feature of rhetoric and alludes to the prostitute's sexual qualities.<sup>64</sup> Beyond these satirical implications, the topos' variation in *La Retorica delle Puttane* deals with the metaphor of the she-bear in an intellectual context, as is the case in Speroni's *Dialogue of Love*. However, instead of the idea of perfect love between two people, *La Retorica delle Puttane* treats the idea of intentionally creating erotic desire. While Speroni's creative "licking" refers to the spiritual cultivation of physical love, Pallavicino's stresses the artificial process of creating illusionary love or desire.<sup>65</sup> Sincere feelings would threaten a prostitute's financial profit.<sup>66</sup> Thus her authenticity and credibility are conditioned by a constant adjusting to and even anticipating of the client's desires.

As previously mentioned, in Pallavicino's version of the metaphor, the she-bear does not have a cub; rather, the bear shapes herself into form and, out of it, is able to create something new. In the process, *La Retorica delle Puttane* ties the topos of the she-bear to the genesis of creativity and art. This opens Pallavicino's parody to questions of artistic creation that can be traced back to Venetian seventeenth-century art literature.<sup>67</sup>

Since antiquity, the anecdote of the she-bear and her young has been known in art literature as a metaphor for the time-consuming task of rewriting involved in writing a text.<sup>68</sup> In the context of art-theoretical questions of imitation, Titian uses it in his impresa *Natura potentior ars* (Art improves nature), which Battista Pittoni and Lodovico Dolce published in their collection of

*Imprese* (1562) (fig. 6).

[INSERT FIGURE 6.5 HERE]

**6.6 Battista Pittoni and Lodovico Dolce, *Imprese di diversi prencipi, duchi, signori e d'altri personaggi et huomini letterati et illustri* (Venice: s.n., 1562), Vignette of Titian's impresa by Battista Pittoni, copperplate. Wien, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, 74.G.78.**

**Credit line: © ÖNB Vienna.**

The accompanying text by Titian's friend Dolce stresses the superiority of Titian's artistic creation over nature.<sup>69</sup> In this context, the bear licking its cub represents art itself, which competes with and completes the work of nature. In his handbook of symbols, *Iconologia* (1603), Cesare Ripa (ca. 1555–1622) mentions the she-bear as an example of invention.<sup>70</sup> In short, in the context of art making, the topos of the she-bear examines the relation between art and nature, artist and creation.

Pallavicino's interpretation of the she-bear theme stresses the moment of artistic creation, as the prostitute is able to create new forms/shapes of seduction from her own self. In the context of sixteenth-century art literature, the choice of the topos points to the idea of the prostitute as an artist who forms herself—her physical shape—into an image.<sup>71</sup> Reversing both the topos of living sculptures and the topos of artworks as lovers, Pallavicino's interpretation is exaggerated in *La Retorica delle Puttane* in a section on coitus, in which he criticizes over-passionate prostitutes who may confuse their clients' bodies with blocks of marble by reminding them of the vulnerability of the human body: "It is almost as if you were working around a block of marble and moving yourself with such impetuous violence around it that you could sometimes

damage your lover, but it is human flesh with delicate limbs.”<sup>72</sup> Just like the sculptor who works in stone, the prostitute’s art of persuasion lies in being able to materialize her sexual imagination through the client’s body.

Furthermore, the she-bear’s licking not only concerns the prostitute but also the body of her client. As she forms herself into what she believes her client’s fantasy to be as reflected by her body, the physical manifestation of her imagination also affects the man’s imagination. In the process, the prostitute not only shapes herself but also the man’s imagination—the material of her work as a sculptor.<sup>73</sup> In this case, sexual desire is a product of visually manipulated stimuli. Regarding Pallavicino’s concept of mimesis, the prostitute, as the artist of herself, does not imitate but produces images using her body. The question of the origin of sexual desire is left open. Instead, this model sets in motion a cycle of interaction between images, bodies, and pictures in the context of production, display, and perception. As a popularized representation of both artist and image, the prostitute is used here to enhance the discussion of the status of pictures and their perception. As Pallavicino points out, by using the topos of the she-bear, the prostitute’s charms not only originate in her outward appearance, but, more precisely, in her effect as an artwork.

## **Conclusion**

Beginning in the fifteenth century, the image of the she-bear licking her young into shape became a popular pictorial representation of the cultivation, education, and formation of man. Although depictions of the mother bear with her cub were quite similar to one another, they emerged in two different contexts as emblems. Firstly, from Marian to Jesuit imagery, the bear’s licking represented the formative power of persuasive speech. Venetian love writings such as

Speroni's *Dialogue of Love* resumes this tradition. Referring both to body and mind, the bear's tongue is no longer a metaphor, but takes on a physical quality that describes the cultivation of carnal desire. Secondly, in the context of art production, the topos of the bear licking her cub was employed to describe the difficult process of revising a text. In his *impresa* for his friend Titian, Lodovico Dolce used the idea of the bear's licking to refer to the procedural nature of art making, but transformed this into a metaphor for art itself and the rivalry between art and nature.

In this context, both Pallavicino and Van Veen play with the ambiguous meaning of the bear's tongue, referring to persuasive speech as well as sensual touch. The imagery of the licking she-bear in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries referred to processes of creation and production that involve both mind and body, the power of imagination, and the physical involvement of transferring ideas into the material world through the vivid representations of fantasies—performed by either a lover, a prostitute, or an artist.

Known as a pictorial emblem of education and cultivation, the licking bear is used by Otto van Veen in his bestseller *Amorum emblemata* to link art literature with love literature on a pictorial level; *La Retorica delle Puttane* sharpens this imagery. Describing prostitution as a form of image creation through the embodiment of sexual desire, Pallavicino's concept of the chimera connects fantasy with the intellectual task of invention and composition in the artistic process. Thus, prostitution (as a satirical idea of perfected love) was considered to be a form of artistic production and display. Accordingly, the prostitute, as both an ideal lover and artist, presents herself as a projection screen for desires which simultaneously model her. Her appearance is not a passive response to a client's demands but, as a product of her art, is used to create images. The anecdote of the she-bear links this imagery of seduction and persuasion with embodiment as an aesthetic technique. In Pallavicino's original usage, the iconography of the

licking bear is explicitly sexualized, whereas, in van Veen's *Amorum emblemata*, it is transposed into the context of courtship. In this way, the link between creativity and sexuality characteristic of Renaissance culture manifests itself in the imagery of the art of love.

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<sup>1</sup> Vaenius (1608), 56: "Time gradually completes a *neglected* love. It is reported that the mother handles the new bear by licking and gradually forming it with its mouth. This is also the case with the lover, whose flatteries and compliance gently softens his mistress, though she be cruel and rough." Translations, unless otherwise indicated, are by the author.

<sup>2</sup> Manning (2002), 169–76; Stronks (2012).

<sup>3</sup> For this analysis, I referred to a copy of this edition in Latin, Italian, and French, held by the Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Estampes et photographie, Paris, no. 4-TE-56. Hollstein (1949), 7; Landwehr (1970), no. 693; for the edition in Latin, Italian, and French, no. 694; Praz (1975), 106–107. See also, with further references, Buschhoff (2004), 17–20. See also the English verses of the Latin, English, and Italian edition of 1608, "The beare her young-ones doth to shape by licking bring, / Which at the verie first but lumps of flesh are thoght, / So by kynd louing artes loue is to fassion broght, / How so at first it seem a strange vnformed thing." Landwehr (1970), no. 696.

<sup>4</sup> *Perpolit incultum paulatim tempus amorem.*

<sup>5</sup> Pliny the Elder (1855–57), vol. 2, 305–306 (8.54.126): "Hi sunt candida informisque caro ... sine oculis, sino pilo; ungues tantum prominent. hanc lambendo paulatim figurant." ("When first born, they [the cubs] are shapeless masses of white flesh ... their claws alone being prominent. The mother then licks them gradually into proper shape.")

<sup>6</sup> See note 15 below.

<sup>7</sup> See especially Porteman (1996); Montone (2003); Buschhoff (2004); Manning (2002), 169–70; Stronks (2012).

<sup>8</sup> Praz (1975), 106–107; Buschhoff (2004), 66.

<sup>9</sup> See, for further references on the study of love emblem books, Buschhoff (2004), 21–48; and for twentieth-century historiography of emblems in general, Becker (1996), 176.

<sup>10</sup> Pliny the Elder, *Naturalis Historia*, 35.43.151.

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<sup>11</sup> Wolf (1999).

<sup>12</sup> Freedberg (1989), 333–38.

<sup>13</sup> See especially Finucci (2001); Begemann and Wellery (2002); Goldberg (2009); Pfisterer (2014b); Pfisterer (2014a).

<sup>14</sup> Manning (2002), 167–68; Stronks (2012), 63–66.

<sup>15</sup> Suthor (2004), 15–27; Peter (2008); Ulrich Pfisterer (2011), 226–28; Nichols (2013), 118–19; Sass (2016), 262–70.

<sup>16</sup> For Renaissance employment of the topos of the she-bear and her young in macaronic literature, see Spackman (1991). On the topos in *La Retorica delle Puttane*, see Filzmoser (2014), 38–44.

<sup>17</sup> See note 13 above.

<sup>18</sup> Turner (2003), 85–97; see for further references Turner (2006) and Filzmoser (2014), 31–50.

<sup>19</sup> Pfisterer (2012a), Pfisterer (2012b).

<sup>20</sup> Pino (1960); Dolce (1960). Rosen (2009), 149–59. For Dolce, see note 39 below.

<sup>21</sup> Pallavicino (1992), *passim*.

<sup>22</sup> Ficino (1987), 3.3. See Leinkauf (2009).

<sup>23</sup> For editions, translations, and adaptations, see esp. Pallavicino (1992), 156–63. An English translation edited by Paolo Fasoli, *Ferrante Pallavicino: The Whores' Rhetoric / The Postman Robbed* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press) is forthcoming. Pallavicino himself alludes to Jesuit rhetoric by repeatedly referring to “Cipriano,” i.e., Cypriano Soarez’s (1524–1593) handbook of rhetoric, *De arte rhetorica libri tres*, first published in 1560. Soarez’s book became the leading textbook for Jesuit rhetoric in the seventeenth century. In her edition of Pallavicino’s *La retorica delle puttane*, Coci gives a concordance between Pallavicino’s and Soarez’s books; Pallavicino (1992), 191–98; Turner (2003), particularly 72–78. See also, with further references, Zandrino (2003), 93, 101–10; Fasoli (2012).

<sup>24</sup> Turner (2003), 31.

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<sup>25</sup> For Pallavicino's life, see also, with further references, Coci, introduction to Pallavicino (1992), ix–cxix, ci–cv, lxi–lxxx; Muir (2007), 63–107; Gareffi (2014).

<sup>26</sup> Pallavicino described the etymology of the Barberini family's name as “the barber who cut the beard of Christ” and, among other things, accused Pope Urban VIII Barberini of using the Wars of Castro and his intrigues to increase the Barberini family's power/influence in Italy. Muir (2007), 86–90.

<sup>27</sup> On prostitution in early modern Venice, Jones (2010); Ruggiero (2011).

<sup>28</sup> On ideas of seduction in Renaissance culture (“amor cortigiano”), see also, with further reading, Henry (2010); Kohl et al. (2014); Steigerwald (2014), 266–74.

<sup>29</sup> Lausberg (1998), 21–22, §38.

<sup>30</sup> See, for instance, Pallavicino (1992), 24–25: “... e chi si vende fa che si venda a gusto e discrezione del compratore: l'aver similmemente per oggetto il guadagno dimostra la necessità di piegarsi in tutte le forme e aggiustarsi in tutti quei gradi onde può trarsi riguardevole avanzo” (the necessity to bend oneself in all the forms and adjust oneself in all the degrees that can be to one's considerable advantage). Turner (2003), 77, notes that *gradi* (“degree”) ambiguously refers to both (the client's) social status as well as sexual positions.

<sup>31</sup> Pallavicino (1992).

<sup>32</sup> Blumenberg (1981). For Pallavicino's philosophical training in Padua, notably under the Aristotelian scholar Giacomo Zabarella, see Zandrino (2003), 106–107.

<sup>33</sup> Pallavicino (1992), 29.

<sup>34</sup> Pallavicino (1992), 22.

<sup>35</sup> Pallavicino (1992), 22, 29.

<sup>36</sup> Horace, *Ars poetica*, vv. 1–9.

<sup>37</sup> Chastel (1980); Thimann (2002), 44–48, 54–57. The second edition of the Florentine *Vocabolario degli Accademici della Crusca* (Accademia della Crusca, 1623), 177, defines chimera as a representation of invention, “Mostro favoloso: appresso di noi invenzion fantastica.” In contrast, in the entry “orco,” the mythical creature was

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treated as a monster (ibid., 562). On the relation of mimesis and imagination in Renaissance art writing, see Kemp (1977).

<sup>38</sup> Battisti and Alessio (1951), vol. 2, 901. The Florentine Accademia della Crusca did not add the verb *chimerizzare*, meaning “immaginarsi cose vane, Stillarsi il cervello,” to its dictionary until the eighteenth century. *Vocabolario degli Accademici della Crusca* (Accademia della Crusca. 1729–38), vol. 1, 477.

<sup>39</sup> Dolce, *Dialogo, nel quale si ragiona delle qualità, diversità, e proprietà de i colori* (Venice: Sessa, 1565), reprinted in Dolce (1913), 119. Also, in his *Dialogo della Pittura*, he quotes the introductory verses on invention from Horace’s *Ars poetica*. Dolce (1960), 167–68. Similarly, Cristoforo Sorte uses *chimerizzare* in the polemic preface of his treatise *Osservazioni nella pittura*, printed in 1580 in Venice. Sorte (1960), 273.

<sup>40</sup> Danti (1960), 235: “... l’arte del disegno può ... tutte le cose che si veggiono imitare o veramente ritrarre; e non solamente le cose celesti e naturali, ma l’artificiali ancora di qual si voglia maniera; e, che è più, può fare nuovi composti e cose che quasi parranno tal volta dall’arte stessa ritrovate: come sono le chimere, sotto le quali si veggiono tutte le cose in modo fatte che, quanto al tutto di loro, non sono imitate dalla natura, ma sì bene composte parte di questa e parte di quella cosa naturale, facendo un tutto nuovo per sé stesso.” (“...the art of design...can imitate and truly portray all things that can be seen; and not only celestial and natural things, but also artefacts of whatever kind they may be; and, what is more, it can make new compounds and things that seem sometimes almost invented by art itself: such as chimeras, which in their entirety are not imitated from nature, but composed partly of this, partly of that natural thing, making up a whole which itself is new.” Translated in Klein (1966), 101.

<sup>41</sup> Pallavicino (1992), 22.

<sup>42</sup> Pallavicino (1992), 22.

<sup>43</sup> Pallavicino (1992), 22. Zantwijk (1992).

<sup>44</sup> Pallavicino (1992), 22.

<sup>45</sup> Pallavicino (1992), 43.

<sup>46</sup> Pallavicino (1992), 44.

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<sup>47</sup> See Lausberg (1998), 515, §1180. See Thimann's discussion of the term *favole* in sixteenth-century art writing: Thimann (2002), 43–73.

<sup>48</sup> Pallavicino (1992), 45.

<sup>49</sup> See note 40 above.

<sup>50</sup> See, e.g., Pallavicino (1992), 24.

<sup>51</sup> Pallavicino (1992), 29.

<sup>52</sup> “Fingetevi la massa informe dell’orsa, a cui ora, dandosi con la lingua distinzione di membra, s’aggiunge anche perfetta forma.” Pallavicino (1992), 26.

<sup>53</sup> Aristotle (1994a), vol. 1, 908.

<sup>54</sup> See note 5 above, Pliny, *Naturalis Historia*, 8.54.126; e.g., Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 15.379–381; Ambrose, *Hexameron*, VI, 4; Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae*, 12.2.22.

<sup>55</sup> Hünemörder (2002).

<sup>56</sup> Franciscus de Retza, *Defensorium inviolatae virginitatis beatæ Mariæ* (Basel: Johann and Conrad Hist, c. 1484), n.p. See Strauch (1937); Henkel and Schöne(1976), 441–43.

<sup>57</sup> Horapollo (1595), II, 112, no. 83: “Hominem, qui initio quidem informis natus sit, sed postea formam acceperit, innuunt depicta ursa praegnante. Haec namq[ue] sanguinem primum condensatum [et] concretum parit, hunc postea propriis fovens foemoribus, efformat, linguaq[ue] lambens perficit.” (“How a man who is at first deformed. When they would symbolize a man born deformed at first, but that afterwards acquired his proper shape, they delineate a pregnant bear, for it brings forth (a mass of) thick and condensed blood, which is afterwards endued with life by being warmed between its thighs, and perfected by being licked with its tongue.” Horapollo (1840), 137.) See Praz (1975), 106.

<sup>58</sup> La Perrière (1539), fol. 98r.

<sup>59</sup> Denis Lebey de Batilly, *Emblemata* (Frankfurt: Theodore de Bry, 1596), no. 43. Landwehr (1972), no. 399.

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<sup>60</sup> Speroni's *Dialogo dell'Amore* takes place between the historical figures Tullia d'Aragona, a Roman courtesan, her lover, the poet Bernardo Tasso, and the mediators Nicolò Grazia and Francesco Maria Molza. Grazia defends the compatibility of spiritual and physical love. Sperone Speroni, *Dialoghi* (Venice, 1560). For a modern edition, see Possi (1996), 511–63.

<sup>61</sup> Speroni, *Dialoghi*, 19–20. See Suthor (2004), 21–27.

<sup>62</sup> Suthor (2004), 21–22.

<sup>63</sup> Praz (1975), 380; Manning (2002), 195–96.

<sup>64</sup> Pallavicino stresses this in the fifteenth lesson. Treating speech and facial expression, he attaches less importance to content than vocal sound. See Pallavicino, *Retorica*, 87–92. Cf. Turner, *Schooling Sex*, 84, who points out the analogy of tongue and kiss.

<sup>65</sup> Pallavicino (1992), 27.

<sup>66</sup> Pallavicino (1992), 29; see also *ibid.*, 68–75. Therefore (75), a prostitute had to protect herself against the powerful effects of love (“violenze di Cupido”) by always bearing money and profit in mind (“si tratti in guisa che s'avventi la mano all'oro prima di volere por piede nel cuore”).

<sup>67</sup> Sperone already used art-theoretical imagery to describe the embodiment of love. See Suthor (2004), 22.

<sup>68</sup> Suetonius' *Vita Vergili* is the first known work to connect the topos of the she-bear and her young with art. Suetonius (1914), 454–55: “Cum ‘Georgica’ scriberet, traditur cotidie meditados mane plurimos versus dictare solitus ac per totum diem retractando ad paucissimos redigere, non absurde carmen se ursae more parere dicens et lambendo demum effingere.” (When he was writing the ‘Georgics,’ it is said to have been his custom to dictate each day a large number of verses which he had composed in the morning, and then to spend the rest of the day in reducing them to a very small number, wittily remarking that he fashioned his poem after the manner of a she-bear, and gradually licked it into shape.) For the reception of the topos in early modern literature, see Wilson-Okamura (2010), 101–102; for art literature, see note 15 above.

<sup>69</sup> Pittoni and Dolce (1562), Titian's *impresa*, (not paginated). For discussions of the motto, see note 15 above.

<sup>70</sup> Ripa (1603), 240.

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<sup>71</sup> Turner (2003), 85–87. This is reminiscent of contemporaneous self-portraits of female artists such as Artemisia Gentileschi's self-portrait in the Royal Collection at Windsor Castle, who depicted herself as both an artist and as a personification of *pittura* (painting). See Kruse (2009).

<sup>72</sup> Pallavicino (1992), 93: “...e quasi che lavori intorno ad un marmo si muove con impetuosa violenza, che talvolta danneggia l'amante: si tratta di carne umana e di membra delicatissime . . .” For the topos of living sculptures, see Hinz (1989); and, most recently, on classical rhetorics and the *enargeia* (vividness) of artworks, Eck (2015), 32–43.

<sup>73</sup> Cf. Turner (2003), 85.

#### Illustrations:

6.1 Otho Vaenius, *Amorum emblemata* (Antwerp: Typis Henrici Swingenij, 1608), 57: Cornelis Bol I after Otto van Veen, vignette of emblem 29, copperplate. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Estampes et photographie, 4-TE-56.

6.2 Franz von Retz, *Defensorium inviolatae virginitatis Mariae*, redaction C (Basle: Johann and Conrad Hist, c. 1484), 218v: vignette, woodcut. Bayerische Staatsbibliothek München, no. 4 Inc.s.a. 644, urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb00027055-2.

6.3 Guillaume de la Perrière, *Le theatre des bons engins* (Paris: Denis Janot, 1539), 97v: vignette of Emblem 98, woodcut. Herzog August Bibliothek Wolfenbüttel, M: Lm 2057.

6.4 Denis Lebey de Batilly, *Emblemata* (Frankfurt: Theodore de Bry, 1596). Theodore de Bry after Jean Jacques Boissard, Vignette of emblem 43, copperplate. Herzog August Bibliothek Wolfenbüttel, M: Uk 35.

6.5 Johannes Bolland (et al.), *Imago primi saeculi Societatis Iesv a provincia Flandro-Belgica eivsdem Societatis repraesentata* (Antwerp: Balthasar I Moretus, 1640), 465: vignette by Cornelis I Galle, copperplate. Bayerische Staatsbibliothek München, Res/2 Jes. 12, urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb10869378-5.

6.6 Battista Pittoni and Lodovico Dolce, *Imprese di diversi prencipi, duchi, signori e d'altri personaggi et huomini letterati et illustri* (Venice: s.n., 1562), Vignette of Titian's *impresa* by Battista Pittoni, copperplate. Wien, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, 74.G.78. 109 © ÖNB Vienna.