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Affect and the Tomb in Robert Henryson’s
*The Testament of Cresseid*

Elizabeth Elliott

Abstract: The penultimate verse of Henryson’s *The Testament of Cresseid* suggests the possibility that Troilus raised a monument in memory of his former love, Cresseid: “Sum said he maid ane tomb of merbell gray” (Some said he made a tomb of gray marble, l. 603). Examining the political implications of this uncertain act of memorialization, this article considers how Henryson’s poem mobilizes the reader’s emotional response to constitute Cresseid as a mourned subject, whose subjectivity is recognized only insofar as its expression is limited to suffering and death. In doing so, the *Testament* also establishes a subjectivity for women that offers conditional tolerance predicated on respectable behavior, contributing to the historical production of sexual respectability in exclusionary terms as the province of elite white femininity.

Keywords: Testament of Cresseid, Robert Henryson, affect, mourning, gender, sexuality

1 I am grateful for advice and feedback received on earlier versions of this paper from participants in the workshop, “To speik off science, craft or sapience: Knowledge and Temporality in Medieval and Renaissance Scotland,” held at Freie Universität Berlin in 2015, members of the Scottish Network for Religion and Literature, Kate Ash-Irisarri, Lucy Hinnie, and the editors and reviewers at MFF.
Robert Henryson’s late fifteenth century poem, *The Testament of Cresseid*, occupies a transformative relation to Chaucer’s *Troilus and Criseyde*. Chaucer’s poem tells how the love affair between a Trojan prince and a young widow ends in the wake of a hostage exchange that leaves Criseyde among the Greeks, where she is seduced by Diomedes; it concludes with Troilus’s death on the battlefield. Henryson’s *Testament* diverges from its inspiration to offer an ending for Cresseid, in a narrative whose timeline runs parallel to that of *Troilus and Criseyde* but concludes before the death of Troilus. Henryson’s penultimate verse reports the rumor that Troilus raised a monument in memory of Cresseid:

> Sum said he maid ane tomb of merbell gray,  
> And wravit hir name and superscriptioun,  
> And laid it on hir graue quhair that sco lay,  
> In goldin letteris, conteining this ressoun:  
> “Lo, fair ladyis, Cresseid of Troy the toun,  
> Sumtyme countit the flour of womanheid,  
> Vnder this stane, lait lipper, lyis deid.”

(Some said he made a tomb of gray marble, and wrote her name and inscription, and laid it on the grave where she lay, in golden letters, containing this statement: “Lo, fair ladies, Cresseid of Troy the town, once counted the flower of womanhood, under this stone, lately one of the leprous, lies dead.”)

The uncertainty of Troilus’s act of memorialization is significant, raising questions as to the nature of the emotional response Henryson’s poem seeks to cultivate within its readers. To commemorate Cresseid’s death with such a monument is to affirm her value: the tomb’s design finds an analogue in Lydgate’s *Troy Book*, with Telephus’s memorial for his adoptive father, King Teutras, “of marbil gray ... Wip lettris riche of gold” (made of gray marble with

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costly golden letters). Golden letters typically illuminate the names of distinguished men, such as Marcus Manlius or Bernard Stewart. In Henryson’s own locality, the highly elaborate tomb of Robert I (1274–1329) at Dunfermline Abbey, in imported white marble with gilding, would have been a familiar example of prestigious funerary art, for a monarch himself reported to have suffered from leprosy. The possibility of Cresseid’s tomb as product of a public and ostentatious act of commemoration carries a political charge whose import emerges when approached through the lens of Judith

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Butler’s theorization of mourning. As Butler argues, “the differential allocation of grievability that decides what kind of subject is and must be grieved, and which kind of subject must not, operates to produce and maintain certain exclusionary conceptions of who is normatively human.”6 The tomb, then, recognizes Cresseid as a life whose loss is to be grieved, yet its existence, and thus the extent of Troilus’s grief, remains a matter of conjecture. Closer examination of how the Testament models and attunes an emotional response to the death of Cresseid indicates that the forms of subjectivity and humanity produced through the work of mourning are limited, the product of vested interests. Henryson’s Testament plays a part in a process that cultivates a gendered emotional practice, producing a “feeling self” whose coherence depends on the exercise of compassion toward subjects whose agency is severely restricted.

Analysis of the Testament as a poem that seeks to train a particular habit of feeling requires some contextualization in relation to medieval and contemporary theorizations of affect. Recent work in medieval affect studies calls attention to significant disparities between modern and medieval approaches to affect, feeling, and emotion. Influential modern taxonomies seek to distinguish between affect, defined as preconscious and preverbal bodily responses, and emotion, as affect’s mediation in culture and social practice. Pre-modern writing, however, points toward the interrelation of affect and emotion, and to the nature of feeling as a phenomenon constituted through the interaction of brain, body, and world.7 Pre-

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modern accounts of feeling in this respect coincide with modern theories of distributed cognition—a diverse body of approaches that understand cognition as a process that extends beyond the brain, in which the environment plays a role—and with theories of situated cognition that regard cognition as inextricable from the social and cultural contexts in which it unfolds. Work on emotion informed by these perspectives highlights the role of the environment in scaffolding emotion, both in the moment of a particular emotion’s occurrence, and diachronically, in enabling and structuring the development of an emotional repertoire.

Connecting the insights of these models of cognition with practice theory, Monique Scheer argues for the value of a methodology that approaches emotion as practice for the historical study of emotion. In identifying types of emotional practice, Scheer points to the importance of mobilizing practices, which seek to modulate or arouse particular feelings, in contributing to the acquisition and development of an emotional repertoire. Alongside ritual, Scheer identifies media use as a key example of emotional practice that contributes to the achievement, training, and articulation of particular modes of feeling. In Medieval Studies, recognition of the capacity of literary texts to function as “affective scripts,” generating

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and refining feeling, offers a means to trace how emotion is imbricated with the history of the subject and sociocultural environment, illuminating “the hows of affective history.” Henryson’s Testament can be approached in this context as a cultural artifact or technology that offers a script for emotional performance: a model for how to feel. This form of engagement is scaffolded by a religious culture that promotes deep investment in “material things that were sacralized by virtue of their functions as repositories and triggers of affect.” Sarah Salih’s analysis of another poem focusing on the matter of Troy, Lydgate’s Troy Book, might equally apply to Henryson’s Testament. It too is an “affect machine” that “reaches through time and space to allow … an affective identification with ancient Trojans,” promoting the formation of individual and collective identities.

The Testament’s capacity to make Cresseid imaginable as the focus of mourning and memorialization, to render her a grievable subject, depends on the poem’s ability to arouse compassion within the reader. Within the Testament, the practice of compassion is modeled in Troilus’s pivotal encounter with Cresseid. Although he is unable to recognize Cresseid, her appearance as a woman with leprosy, begging for alms, nevertheless stirs his memory, provoking an intense emotional response:

Ane spark of lufe than till his hart culd spring
And kendlit all his bodie in ane fyre;
With hait fewir, ane sweit and trimbling
Him tuik, quhill he was reddie to expyre;
To beir his scheild his breist began to tyre;
Within ane quhyle he changit mony hew;
And neuertheles not ane ane vther knew.
For knichtlie pietie and memoriall
Of fair Cresseid, ane gyrdill can he tak,
Ane purs of gold, and mony gay iowall,
And in the skirt of Cresseid doun can swak. (ll. 512–22)

13 Salih, “Affect Machines,” 150.
(A spark of love then sprang into his heart and kindled his whole body into fire; with hot fever, a sweat and trembling took him, to the point that he was ready to expire; his chest began to tire of bearing his shield; in a short time he changed many colors; and nevertheless neither one knew the other. Out of the compassion befitting a knight and in memory of fair Cresseid, he took a belt, a purse of gold, and many fine jewels, and flung them down into her skirt.)

Henryson’s depiction of this encounter reflects how apparently spontaneous bodily responses function as conditioned or skillful practices with particular significance: rather than being innate, they are “more fruitfully thought of as habits emerging where bodily capacities and cultural requirements meet.”

Although embodied and involuntary, Troilus’s response to Cresseid is nevertheless legible in terms of medieval emotional practice. The impact of Troilus’s feelings is profound and debilitating, almost causing him to fall from his horse “for greit cair oft syis” (out of great sorrow repeatedly, l. 525). On hearing of Cresseid’s suffering and death, “He swelt for wo and fell doun in ane swoun” (He was overcome with woe and fell down in a swoon, l. 599). This capacity for profound emotion, and especially in regard to love, is socially inflected: as Rachel Moss argues, such emotional performances work to uphold particular conceptions of heroic nobility, enforcing and maintaining hegemonic masculinity.

Rather than being emasculating, Troilus’s emotional display enacts a cultural script that resonates with an audience who share a collective investment in these idealized

masculine values. Although such values are specifically associated with elite men, they exert wider appeal as the object of aspiration and emulation, standards that medieval audiences can endorse even if they themselves are neither noble nor male.

The focal point of this episode lends further significance to Troilus’s emotional response. Compassion for those affected by leprosy held an important place in medieval Christian devotion, but scholarly understanding of the experiences and identities associated with the medieval disease has been complicated by its later history. The persistent association of leprosy with stigma and social exclusion into the twenty-first century is such that leprosy charities have long advocated for the complete avoidance of terms that perpetuate harm in the present, a position reflected in the language used to designate people affected by leprosy in this article.16 Present-day stigma is, however, not a medieval legacy, but rather the lasting effect of nineteenth-century constructions of leprosy, driven by colonialist interests and serving to justify colonialism. As a result, how “medieval histories of leprosy were written, and continue to be understood by people today, are part of a troubling imperial legacy.”17 More recent work on medieval leprosy indicates that people affected by the disease were not ostracized but instead retained ties to the wider community; marks of difference such as entry into a leprosarium and the wearing of distinctive clothing indicated the subject’s quasi-
religious status.\textsuperscript{18} Leprosy was often perceived as a mark of divine favor, conferring the privilege of correction during mortal existence, with use of the term “lazarous,” as employed in Henryson’s poem, underlining the prospect of resurrection to eternal life (ll. 343, 531).\textsuperscript{19} The performance of almsdeeds for those affected by leprosy recognized the sanctified status of sufferers and the spiritual efficacy of their prayers. Charity toward the leprous was also regarded as being more valuable because it required the benefactor to overcome material considerations such as the physical response provoked by aspects of the disease or, as Julie Orlemanski terms it, by the “visceral nature of the affective labor necessary to reverse disgust into love.”\textsuperscript{20} Acts such as kissing sufferers occupied an important place in medieval devotion as signs of compassion, and the emotional intensity of Troilus’s response strongly evokes this tradition.\textsuperscript{21}

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\textsuperscript{18} Leprosy and Identity, ed. Brenner and Touati, as a whole offers much important evidence in this regard, but see especially Carole Rawcliffe, “A Mighty Force in The Ranks Of Christ’s Army’: Intercession and Integration in the Medieval English Leper Hospital,” 95–129, at 103; and Lucy Barnhouse, “Good People, Poor Sick: The Social Identities of Lepers in the Late Medieval Rhineland,” 183–207, at 187, 188.


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is precisely one of “knightlie pietie,” distinguished as the devotional act of a noble in the quality of emotion it entails and in the material nature of its expression, both as it manifests in his body and in his gifts of gold and jewels (l. 519).

In presenting Troilus’s emotional response to Cresseid, the Testament offers its readers the opportunity to train their feelings, taking their cue from Troilus’s practice. Within the poem, Cresseid’s own reaction to Troilus models this process, in making Troilus’s feeling the agent of her moral transformation. Cresseid underlines the significance of Troilus’s compassion, in characterizing it as a gesture that “Hes done to vs so greit humanitie” (has done us such great kindness, l. 534). It goes beyond commonplace almsgiving, as a human act that recognizes the humanity of those affected by leprosy, and Cresseid’s realization that Troilus is behind it precipitates a conclusive reassessment of her own behavior, voiced in the repeated cry “O fals Cresseid and trew knight Troylus” (O false Cresseid and true knight Troilus, ll. 546, 553, and, with slight variation, 560). In its effects, however, as Felicity Riddy argues, Troilus’s act is not inclusive, but instead “constitutes difference, since in order for him to do what he does, Cresseid has to be where and what she is.”

The operation of compassion here can be examined productively through Sara Ahmed’s discussion of how the public discourse of compassion in the present fetishizes generosity as a character trait, “something ‘I’ or ‘we’ have, which is shown in how we are moved by others.” Compassion is the trait which marks Troilus as the apogee of aristocratic masculine values, but its utopian promise conceals the operation of power structures underpinning Troilus’s social status and economic privilege, and Troilus’s own role in Cresseid’s story. As in Ahmed’s analysis of charitable discourse, Troilus’s compassion is a gift that elides the giver’s own responsibility for suffering:

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the West gives to others only insofar as it is forgotten what the
West has already taken in its very capacity to give in the first place.
... [F]eelings of pain and suffering, which are in part effects of
socio-economic relations of violence and poverty, are assumed
to be alleviated by the very generosity that is enabled by such
socio-economic relations. So the West takes, then gives, and in the
moment of giving repeats as well as conceals the taking.24

Henryson’s Testament parallels charitable discourse in inviting the
reader to feel empowered by the experience of feeling sad about the
pain of others, of Cresseid and women like her, and to understand
that sorrow as the agent of change. The other is fixed “as the one who
‘has’ pain, and who can overcome that pain only when the Western
subject feels moved enough to give.”25 Cresseid’s capacity for change
depends on how others feel about her, and requires affirmation of
Troilus as the model of true feeling.

The satisfaction the Testament offers its readers, and especially its
male readers, in feeling that they share in the compassion that brings
about Cresseid’s change of heart, is more subtle than the spectacle
of misogynistic punishment. Cresseid displays her contrition
in condemning her own behavior, decrying her “wantones”
(wantonness) and how her “mynd in fleschlie foull affectioun / W as
inclynit to lustis lecherous” (mind in carnal, repulsive passion was
inclined to lecherous lusts, ll. 549, 558–59). Henryson’s Testament
validates her agency in the moment she exercises it to write herself
out of existence, in drawing up the testament that gives the poem its
name, leaving “corps and carioun / With wormis and with taidis to
be rent” (dead body and flesh to be lacerated by worms and toads, ll.
577–78). Anticipating and assenting to her own demise, Cresseid’s
testament incorporates a legacy for Troilus, the “royall ring” given to
her as “drowrie,” a love token returned to him “To mak my cairfull
deid wnto him kend” (to make my sorrowful death known to him, ll.
582, 583, 585). The return of the ring marks Cresseid’s endorsement

24 Ahmed, Cultural Politics, 22.
25 Ahmed, Cultural Politics, 22.
of Troilus’s feeling, provoking a new excess of overwhelming emotion, and perhaps, but only perhaps, the construction of a memorial.

Troilus’s feeling grants validity to Cresseid, though the extent to which she is valued remains uncertain. In this respect, the recognition the Testament offers her corresponds to the subject position Erin J. Rand formulates, the “mourned subject” whose emergence is predicated “on the condition of a mourning that has the ability to grant validity and subjectivity to those mourned.” Constitution as a mourned subject extends recognition at the expense of agency, as “the range of activities accorded to one who is mourned is essentially restricted to suffering and death.” Rand delineates the mourned subject position as one that becomes intelligible through public discourse, shaped through the construction and use of public memorials. Her specific concern is with the mourned subject position as one that afforded a limited form of social recognition to gay men during the early stages of the AIDS crisis. Although the contexts are not analogous, Rand’s analysis of the mourned subject position illuminates the limits of the recognition the Testament offers Cresseid, and the inimical nature of the pleasure it offers its readers.

Rand points to the particular role of public engagement with one form of activist work begun in response to the AIDS crisis as an expression of collective loss and a challenge to public silence: the NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt. For Douglas Crimp, the public acceptance of the quilt, in contrast to the hostility leveled at more militant forms of activism, like the work of ACT UP, is suspect:

That many in our society secretly want us dead is to me beyond question. And one expression of this may be our society’s loving attention to the quilt, which is not only a ritual and representation of

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27 The AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP) is a nonpartisan activist group committed to ending the AIDS crisis through direct action. For more information see the group’s official website, https://actupny.com/.
mourning but also stunning evidence of the mass death of gay men. It would, of course, be unseemly for society to celebrate our deaths openly, but I wonder if the quilt helps make this desire decorous.28

Rand connects Crimp’s words with Steve Abbot’s reading of the public response to the quilt: “We didn’t like you ... when you were wild, kinky and having fun. We didn’t like you when you were angry, marching and demanding rights. But now that you’re dying and have joined ‘nicely’ like a ‘family sewing circle,’ we’ll accept you.”29 The recognition the Testament offers to Cresseid is similarly predicated on her disavowal of pleasure and her death. Her agency is sanctioned only in her acquiescence to her fate. In imagining compassion for Cresseid and the possibility of a memorial, the Testament invites its readers to feel with Troilus and, in doing so, to participate in the co-production of the mourned subject position. At the same time, it makes feeling sorrow for Cresseid a productive labor in its own right, not only decorous but also the precondition for her reinscription into the social order.

As Rand argues, the production of the mourned subject position enacted through commemoration also serves to constitute subjectivity for the living, carving out a space for those susceptible to sharing Cresseid’s fate who are reminded that the acceptance they are afforded is only ever tenuous, a conditional tolerance predicated on respectable behavior. Henryson’s Testament underlines this in its final verse:

> Now, worthie wemen, in this ballet schort,  
> Maid for ʒour worschip and instructioun,  
> Of cheritie, I monische and exhort,  
> Ming not ʒour lufe with fals deceptioun:  
> Beir in ʒour mynd this sore conclusioun


Of fair Cresseid, as I haue said befoir.
Sen scho is deid I speik of hir no moir. (ll. 610–16)

(Now, worthy women, in this short poem, made for your honor and instruction, in charity I warn and urge you, do not mingle your love with false deception: Bear in your mind this bitter conclusion of fair Cresseid, as I have related earlier. Since she is dead I speak of her no more.)

In this address, the charity Troilus extends to Cresseid is mirrored in the charity the male narrator extends to the poem’s female readers, as he occupies the place of the feeling male subject whose emotions about others establish their social acceptance and its limitations. Cresseid’s fate offers an object lesson on the gendered consequences attached to mingling “lufe with fals deceptioun,” and her behavior within the Testament illustrates the limits of acceptability. This is especially evident as Henryson picks up the thread of Cresseid’s narrative, describing her rejection by Diomedes and how “desolait scho walkit vp and doun, / And sum men sayis, into the court, commoun” (desolate, she walked up and down, and some men say, into the court, common, ll. 76–77). Ambiguity within the language makes it unclear whether Cresseid moves within the common court, or has herself become common.30 The equivocation is significant: walking in public space underlines the implication of rumor here, as an action often connected with sex work both in late medieval civic ordinances and in present-day policing.31 As Rebecca Solnit observes in her history of walking: “Women have routinely been punished and intimidated for attempting that most simple of freedoms, taking

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30 Here “commoun” may modify either “scho,” suggesting that Cresseid has become common property, or “the court,” indicating a shared space: see editorial notes in Fox’s and Parkinson’s editions.

a walk, because their walking and indeed their very being have been construed as inevitably, continually sexual in those societies concerned with controlling women’s sexuality.” Cresseid’s walking functions as a mark of the inclination to “lustis lecherous” she later condemns within herself (l. 559). Her association with active desire is reinforced in the grievance she raises against Venus and Cupid for the loss of her status as “the flour of luipher in Troy” (the flower of love in Troy), leaving her “fra luifferis left, and all forlane” (kept from lovers and utterly forgotten, ll. 128, 140).

The nature of Cresseid’s transgression and punishment contributes to the historical construction of female sexuality as threat, positioning its containment and control as necessary to the social order, and for women’s benefit. Cresseid’s disease is instrumental to this process, though its significance is partially obscured by a historical tendency in modern scholarship on leprosy to emphasize the currency of medieval theories of sexual transmission: Carole Rawcliffe highlights the particular impact of this bias in Denton Fox’s influential edition of the poem. Within the Testament, the origins of Cresseid’s leprosy are overdetermined, as the poem invokes possible causes ranging from the astrological to retribution, or divine correction, enacted by the Christian god. Despite this ambiguity, however, leprosy’s effect on Cresseid’s body is the literal manifestation of the narrator’s moral judgment of her as being “with fleschelie lust sa maculait” (so stained with carnal lust, l. 81). It deprives her of “fairnes” and “bewtie,” leaving her “lustic lyre ouirspreed with spottis blak” (fair complexion covered with black spots, ll. 313, 339), “The quhylk befor was quhite as lillie flour” (the which before was white as lily flower, l. 373). The framing of Cresseid’s sexuality

33 Rawcliffe, Leprosy in Medieval England, 88.
in terms of blackness reflects the metaphorical function of blackness in a medieval Christian context as signifying a universal spiritual condition; associated with original sin and death, this conception of blackness carries implications that differ from modern racial thinking. At the same time, however, the representation of an inclination to carnal desire as the blackness of a woman’s skin participates in the historical construction of the racial economy analyzed by Kim F. Hall, in which “The blackness used to demonize and devalue women also heightens the brilliance and luster of the light used to praise them; both gestures are racial in that they link moral and physical states within a hierarchy of culture and ethnicity.” In this respect, Henryson’s Testament contributes to the history that frames purity and sexual respectability as the province of white femininity, associated with the absence of desire, and the concomitant hypersexualization of Black women and women of color.

In producing Cresseid as a mourned subject, who becomes acceptable insofar as she disavows her sexual desire and endorses her own suffering and death, the Testament also sets out the terms of social acceptability for “worthie wemen,” whose worthiness depends on their deference to men’s judgment, embodied in the narrator’s charity and Troilus’s compassion. Exercising judgment is positioned as a particular prerogative and responsibility for elite men, while the emphasis on benevolent intention makes subjection to judgment more palatable. The bargain of tolerance in return for living within the limits of respectability is pernicious, however, prefiguring its

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modern manifestations in offering a tainted gain for the few who have the capacity to meet this standard, and framing those who do not as a threat to their status; the disadvantaged are rendered doubly expendable.\textsuperscript{38} Acceptance of the principle of patriarchal control lends tacit approval to more aggressive forms of regulation: Carissa M. Harris’s powerful analysis of how the language of service and protection in chivalry and present-day policing overlaps with the complicity of knights and police in perpetrating and enabling sexual violence is indicative in this regard.\textsuperscript{39} The conjunction of walking, sex work, and blackness in Cresseid’s story anticipates the convergence of racism and anxieties surrounding sex work in the modern history of immigration control. Activists argue that contemporary sex work is a site where

race and gender \textit{co-produce} racist categories of exclusion: men of colour as traffickers; women of colour as helpless, seductive, infectious; both as threats to the body politic of the nation. These histories help us see that police and border violence are not anomalous or the work of “bad apples”; they are intrinsic to these institutions.\textsuperscript{40}

The disavowal of white women’s sexual agency inscribed within Cresseid’s testament has as its legacy the gendered racial profiling and endemic violence within policing, with particular impact on trans and gender-nonconforming people, documented in the present.\textsuperscript{41}


\textsuperscript{40} Molly Smith and Juno Mac, \textit{Revolting Prostitutes: The Fight for Sex Workers’ Rights} (London: Verso, 2020), 16.

\textsuperscript{41} See Ritchie, \textit{Invisible No More}, and Mogul, Ritchie, and Whitlock,
Rejecting the goal of tolerance opens up the possibility of changing existing systems and challenging systemic violence. As Erin J. Rand argues, it is necessary to risk losing the limited acceptance the mourned subject position offers in order to reimagine the conditions of subjectivity and enable new forms of action.42 Henryson’s Testament, and the gendered and raced model of sexual respectability it endorses, still resonates:

The absence of an affirmative theory of female promiscuity bespeaks the limitations of queer as well as feminist theory. Given the psychological and physical attacks to which women are uniquely vulnerable in a society premised on male supremacy, the always feminized, heteroerotic slut is a sad figure, neither as edgy as the gay male cruiser nor as empowered as the straight male playboy or philanderer.43

Calling for a re-examination of “the possibilities that open up when we accept and revalue female promiscuity,” Melissa E. Sanchez highlights the “fragility of the racial and sexual taxonomies that underpin the modern Western ideal of sincere, monogamous love.”44 Reconsideration of the Testament’s role in mobilizing emotion in the service of influential models of elite men’s compassion and women’s transgressive desire has the potential to contribute to this project, offering resources for rethinking the legacies of female subjectivity and sexual agency. In tracing the political impact of compassion as it is constructed within the Testament, this article exposes part of the history through which differences acquire their weight, settling over time: “‘sedimented histories,’ how histories become second nature, what bodies do not have to think (to think).”45 Against this background, the apparently natural and spontaneous responses

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42 Rand, “Repeated Remembrance.”
43 Sanchez, Queer Faith, 104.
44 Sanchez, Queer Faith, 104–5.
of sorrow and love emerge as skillful practices that function to train habits, shaping the historic development of paternalistic conceptions of charity in the global North, and of racialized ideals of the desirable woman as one who is only ever the passive object of masculine desire. Dismantling the mythologies underpinning these emotional practices is necessary reparative work and an incremental step toward making the transformation of our subjectivities and social conditions possible.