Chiara Matraini and Doña Catalina Clara Ramírez de Guzmán: Marginalized Poetic Voices of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines a portion of the work of sixteenth and seventeenth century poets Chiara Matraini and Clara Ramírez de Guzmán in order to determine possible reasons for their non-inclusion in the lyric canon of the time. A general background is provided for the development of the lyric genre in Italy and Spain as well as a summary of socio-historical influences which affected canonical acceptance of women poets. The Italian and Spanish lyric canons of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are examined, with particular emphasis on the seminal texts of Pietro Bembo in Italy and Fernando de Herrera in Spain and with special attention paid to the Petrarchan fashion which dominated lyric poetry at the time. Subsequently, the study then proceeds to a detailed textual analysis of poems from the corpus of both women. The conclusion reached is that Matraini and de Guzmán, while writing within what appears to be a traditional Petrarchan framework, to a degree subvert the canon established by Bembo and Herrera.

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Introduction

"È vero, la donna ancora non ha dato il capolavoro,
la donna poeta, forse, non lo darà mai. Finché essa
farà perno della sua vita, l'amore, e scopo del suo
amore il figlio, la donna, penso, non darà mai l'opera
perfetta, essa che fa opera perfetta di vita."
Camilla Bisi **Poetesse d'Italia**[1]

"en nuestra simplicidad no ay quien scriua en favor nuestro. y vosotros que teneys la pluma en la mano: pintays como quereys."

Braçayda to Torrellas
in **Grisel y Mirabella**
--Juan de Flores[2]

The above quotes embody the most prevalent prejudices and impediments which, historically, have hindered women's dynamic participation--or ready acknowlegement of any such participation-- in history and in the arts. The first, published in 1916, presents the long-standing preconception that woman was created to *procreate*, to produce the men which would be instrumental in defining history and the arts, and to produce the women which, in turn, would engender more men. A woman's *capolavoro* could be based solely upon a biological act, not upon an intellectual one.

Braçayda's words to Torrellas in the second quote, in what is representative of the pro- and anti-feminist literature which flourished in fifteenth-century Italy and Spain, reflected inescapable truisms: women's simplicity--that is their lack of educational and financial opportunities--had historically precluded their written self-representation and that men's writings were the primary sources of the written portrayal of women. This enabled men to mold opinions about women's intellectual and creative capacities which

are not only reflected in Bisi's words above, but which to some extent, continue today. They were also able effectively to limit the ability of women to enter into the intellectual and literary domains.

Due in great part to the attitudes exemplified in these quotes, women's contribution to the recording of history and to the creation of the art which reflects each historical age has been negligible--but, by no means non-existent. In sixteenth and seventeenth-century Italy and Spain, for example, women participated in the creation of lyric poetry but were largely ignored or patronized by the male-dominated culture which set the standards for excellence. In our own century, scholars and historians have uncovered or re-discovered poetic contributions by women of this Early Modern period and have been compelled to re-evaluate them as statements of individual expression, as mirrors of women's general experience during that time, and as products and reflections of an era as a whole--but from a viewpoint other than that (male) which has been canonically accepted--and acceptable--until recent times.

Lyric poetry of sixteenth and seventeenth-century Italy and Spain held a prominent position in the letters of the period and provides, for the modern reader, an important reflection of Early Modern society, with all its complex social conventions. However, the canon which brings this world to life is predominantly male-authored; thus this 'reflection' is coloured by an exclusively male perspective. Within this masculine poetic framework, woman's role continued to be (following the courtly love tradition) the object of man's desire, a virtuous or cruelly disdainful two-dimensional figure, one

who could be viewed as a literary catalyst within the *denouement* of the poetic discourse, but certainly not as an active participant in it.

Chiara Matraini of Italy and Doña Catalina Clara Ramírez de Guzmán of Spain were women who chose to reconfigure their story, "pluma en la mano", pen in hand, and thus rise above their two-dimensional status upon the written page. Not content to be written about, to remain the 'object', they chose to become 'subject' and 'verb'. They aspired to be more than Pygmalion's Galatea (the created); they desired to be creators in their own right. While adopting the only poetic language available to them--the masculine--each was able to manipulate it in a unique fashion and reflect her personal experience within her society. Neither poet received canonical recognition for her effort. Both women achieved limited admiration within their lifetime, but certainly their poetry was not given serious consideration until the latter part of this century. In this study I have set out to ascertain some of the socio-historical factors which contributed to these two poets being largely overlooked until recent times. Secondly, I conduct a textual study of representative poems from each poet's corpus to illustrate the richness and originality of their artistic idiom; the self-conscious attempts to subvert conventions of the poetic discourse of their time; the need to revisit their place within the canon.

The discussion will include an overview of the development of the lyric genre in both cultures and of the historical basis upon which society defined the limited roles and opportunities for women of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This will provide a perspective from which to evaluate the position of these two poets *vis à vis* the literary canon of their time. There will also be a discussion of the most prevalent and influential

poetic views of the period as advanced by Pietro Bembo in Italy and Fernando de Herrera in Spain, both of whom proposed the Petrarchan style as the purest poetic model. Bembo and Herrera were instrumental in defining poetic dogma in their respective cultures and each dictated the acceptable norms and fashions which established the canon. Canonic acceptance depended, in great measure, upon adherence to the precepts proposed by these two influential men of letters.

As samples of the work of Matraini and Ramírez de Guzmán, ten poems have been chosen from the opus of each of them. From the analysis of these poems, it will be possible to determine in what manner each poet either adhered to or deviated from the canonically accepted norms as exemplified by the then fashionable Petrarchan style. The choice of form, theme, semantics, linguistic style, and rhetorical devices will play significant roles in this investigation, as will, to some extent, each poet's country of origin and her possible access to the literary world of the period. It will become obvious that these two poets, while remaining within the structurally, thematically, and semantically accepted poetic standards, extended the boundaries of poetic discourse in order to give voice to a perspective which was uniquely feminine.

Upon a superficial reading, it would not be difficult to dismiss the poetry of Chiara Matraini and Doña Clara Ramírez de Guzmán, as many have done previously, as a charming exercise in poetic fashion, but with little to contribute of substance and value. I submit that upon careful analysis of their written words, both substance and value will be discerned. The voice of each woman will be heard as it reaches across the centuries to apprise the modern reader of an experience which is universally human while

simultaneously, and unequivocally, feminine. I further suggest that based upon this premise, the opus of both poets deserves to be reviewed and studied within an expanded canonical framework, one which includes possibilities other than the strictly masculine poetic paradigm. The added dimension should not dimish the integrity of the existing canon but, rather, aid in its completion.

[1] Camilla Bisi, **Poetesse d'Italia**, (Milano: Quintieri, 1916), 62.

[2] Juan de Flores, "Grisel y Mirabella," in **The Novels of Juan de Flores and their European Diffusion**. Ed. Barbara Matulka, Diss., (New York: New York University Centennial Series, 1931) 350.

Chapter I

Development of Lyric Genre in Italy and Spain

Women's poetic voice within the lyric genre of Early Modern Italy and Spain was minimal; to understand better the context for this lack of participation it will be helpful to trace the development of the genre in both countries, thus providing a basis for the examination of women's role within it.

1. Italy

Italy's role is of paramount importance in the development of the lyric genre[1] in Europe as a whole but the inception of this type of poetry in the Italian peninsula is to be found in part in the influence exercised by the French Provençal poets of the twelfth century: the troubadours. The first known French poet of this new school surfaced in the eleventh century--Guillaume de Poitiers, Duque d'Aquitaine (1086-1127). The characteristics which distinguished his poems and those of the other troubadours went on to influence the lyrical works of many countries, among which were Italy and Spain. This poetry is characterized by a varied and complicated metric system, a cultured vocabulary, and affected phraseology. The most important theme was the idealization of a woman, the object of the poet's desire, the beloved; it would be this aspect of troubadour poetry which the poets of the *dolce stil novo* in the late thirteenth century, would take and elevate into a spiritual realm.

Love was the force which dominated the artistic life of the troubadour, and continued to rule that of the poets which followed. This force was influenced in part by the theory of Andreas Capellanus, the prominent Medieval theoretician[2] of courtly love.

Written in the early part of the twelfth century, **The Art of Courtly Love** was Andreas Capellanus' definition of this all-powerful emotion: it was, for him, a passion based on sexual love (but not necessarily communicated by sexual action) which is born in the imagination of the lover upon beholding the beloved. In his own words: "Love is a certain inborn suffering derived from the sight of and excessive meditation upon the beauty of the opposite sex" (28). From this germination of emotion through vision follows desire; memory coupled with fantasy increases the feeling to the point of love.

In his imagination, the lover creates for himself a world of images that do not necessarily correspond to the reality of the beloved. The object of this love, a woman, increasingly acquires importance, is placed on a pedestal, and eventually is given divine qualities. The lover, following his 'new religion', does not deem himself worthy of the 'idol' he has created and tries to merit 'grace' or *mercede* from his beloved by elevating himself through virtue and valour (Nardi 13). The uncertainty and fear that this overwhelming feeling will not be corresponded, is the basis of the lover's great 'suffering' and 'torment', two words Andreas Capellanus employs freely as synonyms for 'love'. This extremely fatalistic and self-pitying view was to remain a key theme in lyric poetry throughout the ages.

In the hands of the troubadours, the poem became an elegant and cultured puzzle to be recited or sung in the various courts and cultural centres, not only of Southern France, but of other countries as well. Poets from these centres, in turn, appropriated the Provençal techniques and transferred them to their own language and from that developed

their own lyric poetry and their own schools, such as the *Minnesänger* of Germany and the Sicilian School of the court of Frederick II.

Troubadour poetry entered the Italian peninsula in two ways: first, because the Provençal troubadours travelled to various cultural centres and courts, enjoying the hospitality and protection of the lords they were visiting (this was especially true during the Albigensian persecution of 1209 by Pope Innocent III); second, because Genoa, owing to its geographical proximity to Southern France, served as a kind of gateway and was therefore very important in the diffusion of this new poetic expression.

Upon being introduced to the new poetry, a group of Italian troubadours adopted Provençal as their own poetic tongue, so that the first examples of this new style on the peninsula were not in any form of Italian. Among the group were Rambertino Buvalelli, from Bologna, Lanfranco Cigala, from Genoa, Bartolomeo Zorzi from Venice, and the most widely known--because of his role in Dante's **Purgatorio** VI--Sordello from Mantova.

It was not until the reign of Frederick II in Sicily that Italian poets adopted their own language as the medium for lyric poetry. According to Alan Deyermond this is in part due to the "collapse of the Provençal culture after the Albigensian Crusade in the early thirteenth century [which] helped to stimulate the composition of lyrics in the national tongue" (**Middle** 130). The court of Frederick II was a fertile ground for poetic development because its prosperity allowed for the more privileged pastime of cultural pursuits. Frederick II, a very learned man in his own right, surrounded himself with leading intellectuals and literati of the age who met to exchange ideas and knowledge.

From these gatherings there arose a particular poetic school--the Sicilian School--which cultivated the elements introduced by the French troubadours, but embedded them in its own idiom: Sicilian with traces of Latin, Italian, and Provençal.

Poets who gathered at Frederick's court were from many parts of Italy and almost all were functionaries or imperial courtiers, privileged participants of the courtly scene. The social status of those who made up the Sicilian School therefore influenced the direction poetry was to take. The poetry of these new poets reflected not only the techniques of the French troubadours but also the life of the court of which they were a part: it was ostentatious, cultured, and refined. Their poetry paid homage to courtly life and to women of the aristocratic elite.

The importance of the woman's role in courtly love poetry cannot be overstated. The beautiful beloved of gentle lineage became a remote, inaccessible decoration, an exemplary model of what womanhood should embody. The poets did not focus on the beloved's individuality or spirit and there was no attempt to provide a psychological development of her identity. In his **History of Italian Literature**, Francesco De Sanctis states: "This or that individual woman was no longer in question, but Woman in a fixed type with conventionalized form and features" (13). The woman became everyone's ideal 'Beloved', a stereotype which embodied universally accepted qualities, as Walter Binni explains: "secondo le esigenze di una vita di corte che tende più all'omogeneo che all'eccezionale" (1: 18). From this aloof and often disdainful object of passion, the grieving, frustrated poet/lover asks for pity or *mercede*[3] with which to alleviate his suffering and ultimately transforming it into joy.

Conformity was not limited to the conventional treatment of woman. It was also evident in these poets' neo-platonic view of love and in their experimental use of poetic language. Thus their poetry does not display a great deal of individuality; the poems tend to be repetitive and monotonous. De Sanctis comments on their mechanical nature: "They were not effusions of a soul imperiously crying for expression, but were just a distraction, a solace, an amusement, a fashion, a gallantry. Poetry was a recreation..." (15).

Notwithstanding their tendency towards uniformity, some poets are to be singled out: Giacomo da Lentini (il Notaro), Giacomo Pugliese, Pier de la Vigna, Guido delle Colonne, Stefano Protonotaro, Percivalle Doria, and Jacopo Mostacci. Although they achieved a place for themselves in Italy's early lyric tradition, there is little doubt that poetry was only a pastime for most of these courtiers and functionaries. As members of a school, however, they can be admired for delving into and experimenting with, problems of technique, language, and metre. They were the first, for example, to adopt the sonnet,[4] which was to become such an important staple in Italian lyric poetry. The most important legacy of the Sicilian School was to provide Italian lyric poetry with a solid basis ("una tradizione precisa" [Binni 1:19]) in terms of consistency of lexicon and metric forms from origins which were scattered and diverse.

After the fall of the Sicilian Court in 1250, with the death of Frederick II, the poetic heart of Italy shifted from Sicily to Tuscany through the efforts of Tuscan poets who had been part of the poetic circle of the southern court.[5] In this new ambience, the Sicilian model became more refined, complex, and political, reflecting the religious and moral passions of the time.

These changes were especially evident in the treatment of the theme of love with its focus on role of the Lady: the Tuscans moved above and beyond a desire for pity and *mercede* to a more complex spiritual dimension which culminated with the poetry of Dante. In the view of Guido Guinizzelli, for example, the beauty of woman reflects the intrinsic resplendence of her soul; it is a moral beauty (Nardi 22). The resulting love, therefore, transcends the sexual love described by Andreas Capellanus and earlier poets like Jacopo da Lentini. It is a '*fino amor*', a delicate sentiment, which can originate solely from a '*cor gentil*', a gentle and noble heart which is uniquely capable of the more refined emotions (Marti 136).

Despite the shifts in poetic philosophy, the desire for *mercede* remains. As the faithful attain grace through direct service to God, so the poet/lover secures it through service to the beloved. Understandably, this concept becomes the cause of great inner conflict: love of woman who has attained divine qualities versus love of God; sensual love versus theology.

Poets became captivated by the dichotomous aspect of love--sensual/spiritual--and this dichotomy inspired ample poetic treatment. Guinizzelli contributed a scientific and philosophical approach to the question, which moved the theme further away from the courtly love tradition that had characterized the Sicilian School. His was a "love that is breaking loose from chivalry and becoming material for theology and philosophy" (De Sanctis 1:48). The poet attempts to reconcile this dilemma in the last three lines of his famous *canzone*, "Al cor gentil rempaira sempre Amore" Challenged by a God angered at the praise the poet had lavished on his beloved, the poet explains himself thus:

"...<<Tenne d'angel sembianza

che fosse del Tuo regno;

non me fu fallom s'in lei posi amanza.>>"

(Contini II: 464)

According to Guinizzelli, the seemingly angelic creature (woman) must have come from God himself; therefore, how could the poet not love her?

The greatest contribution of the Tuscan poets to the development of Italian lyric poetry was the movement known as the *dolce stil novo.*[6] Guittone D'Arezzo (1230-1294) had dominated the poetic field for a time but his popularity waned in the late thirteenth century, his mechanical style of writing and reasoning having fallen out of favour. Instead, a new current of lyrical writers came to the fore: the representatives of the *dolce stil novo*. These included Guido Guinizzelli (1230?-1276?) of Bologna--considered the father of the movement--Guido Cavalcanti (1255?-1300), Cino da Pistoia (1270?-1337), Lapo Gianni (?-?), and Dante Alighieri (1265-1321). Their poetry was characterized by a sweetness or lightness of style ("rime <<dolci e leggiadre>>" Binni 1: 22) that emphasized the musical aspects of the Italian language. It was a style adopted by those who viewed poetry as, "a combination of genuine feeling and direct expression in verse, of any kind of love" (Shaw 129). In this new style the poets could express the sublime, the ideal, or the angelic but also could convey better their feelings of anguish and melancholy, a sense of death, and a fear of love (Marti 50). The poet's heightened interest in philosophy and logic also found an avenue of expression in this new style of writing.

It is in the **Divine Comedy** that Dante Alighieri first mentions the *stilnovisti* and their conscientious attempt to define a new style which would break with the old poetics. In **Purgatory** XXIV, Dante speaks of the new rhymes through the words of the poet Bonagiunta. First Bonagiunta recognizes Dante's importance in the development of the new style: "Ma dì s'i' veggio qui colui che fore / trasse le nove rime, cominciando / '*Donne ch'avete intelletto d'amore*'" (l.49-51). He then continues by discussing the barrier ('il nodo') which like a wall separates the old rhymes created by himself (Bonagiunta), Jacopo da Lentini, and Guittone d'Arezzo and the 'new style', as represented by the practitioners of the *dolce stil novo*, Guinizzelli, Cavalcanti, and Dante: "<<O frate, issa vegg'io>>, diss'elli, <<il nodo / che 'l Notaro e Guittone e me ritenne / di qua dal dolce stil novo ch'io'odo" (l.55-57).[7] Later, in **Purgatorio** XXVI, Dante credits Guido Guinizzelli as "il padre / mio e de li altri miei miglior che mai / rime d'amor usar dolci e leggiadre" (96-99), thus acknowleging Guinizzelli as the forefather of the *dolce stil novo*.

Another very important influence on Dante was exerted by Guido Cavalcanti, great mentor and friend, to whom he referred as "primo mio amico" (Alighieri **Vita** 59). Although sharing in poetic style of the *dolce stil novo*, Cavalcanti's poetry demonstrates a marked philosophical deviation from that of the other poets associated with the group. Whereas the majority of his contemporaries or predecessors believed that a Lady's love was sublime and ennobling, Cavalcanti's idea of love was perhaps closer to reality.[8] Although nourished by the 'ideal', this love was firmly rooted in real passion, the object of which was *mercede*; the poet's happiness or despair[9] hinged on the granting or

witholding of his Lady's favours (Shaw **Cavalcanti** 113); producing a more pessimistic and pragmatic view of love and of woman.[10]

It is Guido Guinizzelli, however, who captures the essential themes and emotions that preoccupied the practitioners of the *dolce stil novo* in his very important *canzone* on the nature of love, "Al cor gentil rempaira sempre Amore." Love can only make its home in the 'gentle heart' (in a spiritual sense, not automatically by lineage), the *cor gentil* previously mentioned. It is a love beyond the sensual realm: it is a spiritual endeavour which elevates the poet to his creator. This is achieved because the object of his love is the '*donna angelicata*', the woman whose great beauty (virtue) has ennobled her beyond the physical realm and who now, endowed with angelic attributes, can--like a spiritual guide--lead the poet to greater union with God (Marti 136).

The concept of the *donna angelicata* reached its culmination in the **Vita Nuova** by Dante, a work[11] designed to record and codify the poet's theory of love. Dante was a self-declared *stilnovista,*[12] and therefore, like Guinizzelli and Cavalcanti, was also immersed in the dilemma of having to reconcile his Christianity (love of God) and his poetic philosophy (love of Woman). The thematic and philosophical importance of the **Vita Nuova**, consists in the fact that the poet/philosopher was able to fuse the sensual and the spiritual by making Woman--in his case, Beatrice--his personal saviour.[13] Through special New Testament triggers--visual (darkening of the sun upon her death; Ascension-like return to Heaven), experiential (post-death earthquake), and numerical (emphasis on the number 'nine', as the result of 'three' times 'three')--the reader is reminded of Christ. Beatrice comes to signify Christ in Dante's life (Singleton 22), the Saviour who leads him

from the erroneous path of secular love to the just path of divine love (Nardi 40-41). Rather than angering God with his love for a woman, or having to defend his feelings, as did Guinizzelli, Dante the poet transforms her into the ultimate Christian symbol--his personal Christ. This role is continued in **The Divine Comedy** where Beatrice, allegorically taking over from Virgil, becomes Dante's guide through Paradise, until St. Bernard leads him to the climactic vision of God. This represents the climax of the theme of the '*donna angelicata*', as well as the uniqueness of Dante's poetic achievement. He had taken the lyric tradition, through allegory, to its most sublime height--to a vision of the Almighty--thus proving himself to occupy the position at the pinnacle of poetic achievment. This self-awareness appears to be his message in **Purgatorio** XI when he refers to the passing of poetic supremacy from one Guido to another (Guinizzelli to Cavalcanti), and indicates that one may already be born who will dethrone them both--himself.

The uniqueness and magnitude of Dante's achievement left little room for further develpment of the topos of the "*donna angelicata.*" It was perhaps for this very reason that Petrarch (1304-1374), chose to bypass Dante as his poetic model and build upon the poetry of Cino da Pistoia, a poet with fewer metaphysical concerns, who focused on a more human love and on a more personal expression.[14] It is through Petrarch that lyric poetry became the truly introspective, personal expression of the poet that was to define the genre, and raise it to its highest form. The poetry of his **Canzoniere** was written not to discuss philosophical, moral, or theological questions--although these, certainly, are also broached--nor was it a simple extension of the courtly love tradition. Petrarch's self-

conscious poetry highlighted the emotional and psychological response of the poet (Trinkaus 2) and through him, the reader. This calculated introspection indicates that Petrarch was very aware of his role as a creator and also of his possible place in posterity.[15] In a letter to his brother Gherardo (**Epistolae Familiares X, 4**) wherein he speaks of the nature of poetry, he defends the worthiness of the poet's craft and insists that the message encased in meter is just as valid as when found in more traditionally authoritative forms:[16] "Consider the underlying meaning alone, and if that is sound and true accept it gladly, no matter what the outward form may be. To praise a feast set forth on earthen vessels but despise it when it is served on gold is too much like madness or hypocrisy..." (Thompson 93).

In the **Canzoniere** he expressed his very personal feelings about Laura, his reactions towards her, his beloved, addressing her as a woman of this world rather than the spiritual icon of the *donna angelicata*. According to Walter Binni, Laura's uniqueness as a literary character rests in the fact that she symbolizes, in a very concrete way, all the beauty and perfection that can be attributed to the terrestrial world (1: 61).[17] Petrarch brought love back to the human level by chronicling his personal doubts, ecstasies, and delusions; through this painstaking documentation of his innermost emotions he made himself the centre of his own universe. The world of Petrarch is but "barely a tiny fragment of the vast Dantesque synthesis...but the small fragment has been turned into a perfect and rich thing in itself--a full, developed, analyzed world, complete and real, with every secret corner searched and characterized in its smallest details" (De Sanctis 1: 270).

Petrarch's great contribution to lyric poetry is to be found not only in his treatment of theme, but also in the realm of organization and technique. His **Canzoniere**, also known as **Rime Sparse**, was the first instance of a collection of poems organized as a coherent corpus by the poet who wrote them.[18] The **Rime Sparse** comprise 366 poetic compositions, including ballads, madrigals, sextets, with a manifested predilection for sonnets. Although this work is centered on his love of Laura, it does not tell a linear story, but rather meanders along the path of the poet's feelings and thoughts, recording impressions and states of mind depending on the circumstances existing in his life at any given moment. Much as the reader's life is in a constant state of flux, subjected to many pulls from contrary directions, so is the poet's life as chronicled in the **Canzoniere**. This rather personal and unique 'journal format'--personal and therefore presumably 'trustworthy', much like the **Vita Nuova**--became very popular and was imitated extensively by later poets.

Petrarch's lyrical techniques also became a model for future centuries. As De Sanctis points out, he did not hesitate to imitate ideas: *imitatio*[19] was vital to his craft. Petrarch borrowed many elements from the troubadours and from the classical Graeco-Roman tradition; he was, in fact, instrumental in rekindling the love of all things classical, a trend which affected poets for centuries to come. He was not as concerned with being original in his thoughts as he was with how he expressed them: "His form is not lovely for the sake of the idea behind it, but for its own sake; it is courtly, aristocratic, melodious, elegant. The word has its value not only as a sign but as a thing in itself, and the verse has its value not only as a sign answering to the idea, but is melody in itself, is

music" (De Sanctis 1: 281). As Petrarch himself imitated, those who followed imitated him: they imitated his images of juxtaposed contradictory elements (fire/ice, dark/light, storms at sea/peaceful ports); they imitated his penchant for the sonnet by adopting it as their preferred medium; they imitated his use of classical mythology. In subsequent centuries, emulation of Petrarch became in and of itself, an art form.

The fifteenth century became more intensely focused on humanistic concerns, characterized by shifting political and social priorities. During this period, there was an increased interest in Latin and classical studies, as well as in criticism and philology; there was a preoccupation with civic and moral questions, and a surge in epistolary exchanges, both of a private and of a public nature. There was also an overall defense and exaltation of new humanistic, and definitely more terrestrial, ideals. The preoccupation with religion, theology and the rewards of the afterlife to the detriment and neglect of the beauty of the present one, which had characterized earlier ages, was no longer of primary relevance (Binni 1:85).

Historians and literary critics agree that the fifteenth century was a time poor in literary achievement, but they disagree, however, on the reasons for it. Benedetto Croce describes it as a time when Italy found itself "impegnata nelle lotte politico-nazionali" (173), and involved in the "culto delle lettere e delle arti dell'antichità...[nelle] eleganti indagini e discettazioni dell'intelletto" (173), thus implying a time of preoccupation with national concerns and intellectual ideas. De Sanctis, on the other hand, regards the fifteenth century as a time when "The republics had fallen, and every species of intellectual struggle or political passion had ceased" (1: 372). He unceremoniously mocks

the period as one in which no original thoughts were produced and when "the content of the work had ceased to be important. What mattered was not the thing expressed but the manner of expressing it" (1:372).

Croce acknowledges only haltingly the merit of the poetry of the time. He speaks of "[i] componimenti che in quell'ammasso di documenti letterari pur hanno pregio o qualche pregio, e che conviene perciò trascegliere e mettere in luce" (174). He does not necessarily, however, dismiss the fifteenth century as being a "secolo senza poesia" (188), as did other historians. He discusses, instead, the lack of a particular poetic personality to define the period[20] (such as Dante or Petrarch earlier), and dwells on the lack of lyric poetry: "Il quattrocento...non ebbe personalità poetiche. Ripeté molto del vecchio, e non produsse se non scarsa poesia popolare, letteraria, burlesca, occasionale" (Croce 189). He refers to a mere 'trace' (184), of lyric poetry and attributes it to Savoiazzo and Bruscaccio da Rovezzano, and to more traditional, if undistinguished, lyric poets such as Alberto Orlandi and Cino Rinuccini (184-185).

Other historians and critics suggest that the *Quattrocento*'s emphasis on politics and philosophy resulted more in an age of ideas rather than a period rich in lyric output. Gianfranco Contini, for example, contends that: "Nel Quattrocento italiano,...soverchiano la letteratura i valori culturali" (**Letteratura italiana del Quattrocento** 126). He dismisses the poetic importance of the century and suggests that it is only through the efforts of Angelo Poliziano (1454-1494) and Matteo Maria Boiardo (1441-1494) that poetry of the fifteenth century "è raggiunta dalla grazia della vera poesia" (Contini **Quattrocento** 126).

Binni discusses the *Quattrocento* as two distinct phases, the first of which lays the humanistic foundation or base which is then expressed in poetic form in the last half of the century. He speaks of a transition from "una fase di studio e di preparazione culturale, filologica, filosofica ad una fase in cui, accanto all'approfondirsi e modificarsi delle forme di studio e di cultura, di filosofia, lo spirito umanistico si esprime poeticamente nelle opere, sopratutto in volgare, di molti poeti e prosatori" (Binni 1:94). This observation, is corroboated by the fact that not until the end of the fifteenth century do key literary figures reappear on the Italian scene. Some of the more notable ones were Leon Battista Alberti (1404-1472), Lorenzo de' Medici (1449-1492), Luigi Pulci (1432-1484), the already mentioned and highly regarded Angelo Ambrogini (generally known as Poliziano) (1454-1494), and Matteo Maria Boiardo (1441-1494).

As products of the Humanism of that century, these men were multi-faceted intellectuals: they were distinguished poets, theoreticians, grammarians, philosophers, artists, statesmen--exemplary Renaissance men. Their eclectic nature and interests were also manifested in their poetry through the use of varied forms: epic, sonnets, madrigals, pastorals. Rediscovery of classical studies during this Humanistic period facilitated one common thread in this eclecticism: most bowed to the simplicity, harmony, and ideal of Nature and thus made abundant use of the idyllic in their writing. The poetry of this period is replete with classical references and names, often set in bucolic surroundings (the **Stanze** and the **Orfeo** by Poliziano) (De Sanctis 422, Dionisotti 126). Also popular were chivalric themes, again depicting an ideal: life at court, ladies, knights, love, and jousts. These are best represented by Boiardo's narrative poem **Orlando Innamorato.**

Certainly, the fifteenth century was not one characterized by great introspection; it seems, rather, to have been a time for backward glances, a reflection of the desire to recall other periods judged to be, from a distance, more peaceful and harmonious.

With the sixteenth century came a revamping of the lyric genre largely through the influence of Pietro Bembo (1470-1547), the codifier of Petrarchism. He was a 'dictator of taste' (Binni 2: 19) who followed his own tenets in the poetry he himself wrote but more importantly who influenced other poets of the century. In his **Prose della volgar lingua** (1525), he defended the use of the vulgar tongue (Italian) as a legitimate literary medium, and also recorded his beliefs regarding acceptable standards of prose and versification, largely based on the works of Boccaccio (prose), and Petrarch (verse). In fact, because of Bembo, Petrarchism became the overwhelmingly popular fashion of the *Cinquecento*. Even the greatest of poets such as Ludovico Ariosto (1475-1533) and later, Torquato Tasso (1544-1595), used Bembo's guidelines, as formalized in the **Prose**, in their own lyric poetry, although in both cases immortality was earned by works of more epic proportions: the *Orlando Furioso* and *Gerusalemme Liberata* respectively.

Other poets may not have reached Ariosto's or Tasso's literary fame but nonetheless contributed greatly to the lyric canon of the sixteenth century. These poets, both male and female, all fell under the spell of Petrarchism to some degree. Among the male poets were Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475-1564), Galeazzo di Tarsia (1520-1553), Luigi Tansillo (1510-1568), and Giovanni della Casa (1503-1556). Women who wrote verse and developed a respected reputation for their efforts were, among others: Vittoria Colonna (1492-1547), Gaspara Stampa (circa 1520-1554), Chiara Matraini (1514-1597),

Veronica Gambara (1485-1550) and Isabella di Morra (1520-1546). There were numerous others who wrote during this period and who are included in the various *canzonieri* published at the time. For many of these--women of high social standing in society ("poétesses occasionnelles" [Piejus 200])--the writing of poetry was motivated by a desire to play out a sophisticated convention (Petrarchism) with predictably pedestrian results.

Unquestionably, lyric poetry occupies a most significant place in Italy's literary history: from the precursory attempts in the court of Frederick II, to its mature evolution unifying philosophical and spiritual concerns during the period of the *stilnovisti* (culminating with the poetry of Dante), to the melodious ease of self-conscious and introspective poetry achieved by Petrarch and imitated for centuries to come. The innovative nature of each period depended upon the perpetuation and, to some degree, the destruction of the last. This is of particular interest to the scope of this study, which will rely on the parameters of the established canon to analyize and draw conclusions from the poetry of those women not readily accepted within its boundaries.

2. Spain

The origins of lyric poetry in Spain are not as clearly documented as in Italy. They are enveloped in theory and speculation, owing to the scarcity of early manuscripts from which to establish clear parameters. The first known collection of Castilian lyric poetry is the **Cancionero de Baena** which was compiled in the fifteenth century but which featured poets from the previous century as well. As yet, it has not been definitively established when, prior to this collection, Spanish poets began cultivating the genre. The

prevalent theories attribute the origin of Spanish lyric poetry to three possible roots: the French provençal poetry, Arabic poetry and, more recently, Hebrew poetry.[21]

The predominant traditional theory suggests that Spanish lyric genre, like the Italian, may be a descendant of French troubadour poetry which developed in southern France in the twelfth century and from where it spread its influence. From this point of origin, Provençal poetry influenced directly that of Catalonia, a region that, because of its proximity, was a geographic and artistic extension of Provence. Such influence was undoubtedly exerted on the Catalan poets Ramón Llull (1235-1315) and Ausias March (?-1460?), whose poetry follows closely the Provençal courtly love tradition.

The region of Galicia, on the other hand, owes its introduction to troubadour poetry to the great influx of pilgrims along the route of Santiago de Compostela and to the support industries to which this pilgrimage gave rise. Among these support industries was that of entertainment; not only did Spanish *juglares*[22] follow the route to entertain the pilgrims, but the Provençal troubadours also found a perfect opportunity to share their art with a captive, thus possibly more receptive, audience.

Galicia itself was a very fertile ground for this new poetic form. It was a peaceful and privileged region which was home to a people prone to a "dulzura de lengua" (Alborg 85) which lent itself to the sentimental, refined quality of troubadour poetry. The language of the region, *gallego*, became the preferred language of many poets on the Iberian peninsula[23] and lost out only when it had to compete with Castilian in the thirteenth century.

In 1912 Julián Ribera proposed an Arabic-Andalusian origin for Castilian lyric poetry. There is evidence of an Arabic *Cancionero* compiled by Abén Guzmán in the late eleventh century or the beginning of the twelfth. There is further evidence that there existed other kinds of Mozarabic[24] poetry which can be considered precursors to lyric forms--the *zajal* and the *muwashshah*--very early strophic poetry which seem to date back to the ninth or tenth centuries. These, of course, would pre-date any influence by Provençal poetry.

Exact data on the early history of the *muwashshah* (written in Classical Arabic or Hebrew [Deyermond **Middle** 5]) eludes scholars to this day. The identity of the inventor of this form has been narrowed down to two very similar names (Muhammad ibn Hammud [Mahamud] al-Qabri and Muquaddam ibn Muʿafa al-Qabri) which dominate any discussion referring to its origins (Fish Compton 113). Historical records place these names in the late ninth century, but examples of *muwashshahs* dating from this time, have not been discovered[25]; the earliest examples appear two-hundred years later. Two twelfth-century Arabic literary historians concur that the elusive inventor of the form, a 'Muhammad', appropriated as basis for this new poetry, the traditional (oral) verses in the language of the ordinary people (Deyermond **Middle** 6).

Along with the earliest examples of the *muwashshsah*, a detailed analysis of their form and structure by the Egyptian Ibn Sana' al-Mulk in the late twelfth century has helped to reveal their popularity in those early years.[26] His analysis of the format also includes an affective characterization which binds it to the lyric genre. Linda Fish Compton paraphrases his description of the *muwashshah*: "...it is a measure of the mind.

It stirs people to heights of joy or sadness; it can tempt and charm, amuse or fill us with aversion" (4). Scholars also agree that due to the *muwashshah*'s unfamiliar stress-syllabic style, it would have been a very awkward poetry to recite and therefore must have been composed to be sung, thus providing another link with early lyric forms (Fish Compton 117).

In 1948, the discoveries of *kharjas* by S.M. Stern point to a possible Hebraic origin which might even pre-date the Muslim, a theory later supported by the investigations of Emilio García Gómez, who in 1952, published twenty-four newly-discovered *kharjas*, written in *romance*. In 1965 he re-published them with their respective Arabic *muwashshah*. These *kharjas* were final lines, written in Mozarabic, and attached to an Hebraic form of *muwashshaha*:

> Garid vos, ay yermanelas, com'contener é meu mali?
> Sin el habib non vivireyu ed volarey demandari.
>
> Juda Leví[27]

They were very short verses of love spoken in confidence by a young girl to her mother or to her sisters, although there is no indication that authorship would have been female; the female voice seems to have been merely a convention. They represent, however, a departure from the more traditional Arabic poetry where the mother/daughter convention is not prevalent. The love poem theme is rarely in keeping with the main theme of the *muwashshah*. This prompts Alan Deyermond to describe these final lines as "a kind of extended simile" (**Middle** 6), whereby the actual theme (usually homosexual love, friendship or encomium addressed to patrons) is re-phrased in the final lines (*kharjas*),

through the context of female love poetry--a context much like the *cantigas de amigo* found in the Galician-Portuguese tradition. This offers more proof, according to Deyermond, that the *kharjas* themselves are drawn from the popular oral lyric tradition of the time (**Middle** 6). Alonso agrees that the two parts of the poem do not necessarily follow a unique theme but that they are ultimately related: "la coplilla erótica, por medio de una comparación, se adapta al fin panegírico" (33). The language used in these *kharjas* was an archaic form of *romance*, a precursor of Castilian, and written in Hebraic script which has proven to be a challenge to scholars wishing to decipher these compositions.

According to Dámaso Alonso, *kharjas* form the "núcleo lírico popular" (61) in the Hispanic tradition, and also provide the basis for *muwashshahs* and *zajals*. Linda Fish Compton echoes this belief when she states that the *kharja* "is the cornerstone on which he (the poet) builds the rest of the *muwashashah*" (6). Alan Deyermond agrees[28] and refers to the "inward-looking nature of most *kharjas*"(**Middle** 8). He further delves into the lyric content of these final lines by noting that "almost all of the concrete objects mentioned are similes or metaphors. By contrast, references to the girl's heart or to the pains of love abound" (Deyermond **Middle** 8).

These and the majority of modern scholars agree that an Arabic/Hebrew connection or base for Spanish lyric poetry is a very strong possibility indeed. This is in contrast to scholars of the last century who as yet, had not the benefit of Stern's discovery. Menéndez y Pelayo, for example, expressed his belief that lyric poetry was a late development on the Iberian Peninsula, much later than the epic which dates back to the tenth century. George Ticknor dismisses the theory of those who during his own

lifetime speculated on an Arabic connection by stating pragmatically that the earliest Spanish *romances,*[29] by their "libertad, soltura y energía, su entonación cristiana, su lealtad caballeresca, anuncian desde luego un carácter del todo original e independiente, que cierra la puerta a la idea de que hayan debido su origen a la literatura brillante, pero afeminada, de un pueblo a cuyo espíritu se opuso desde un principio y de la manera más implacable todo lo que era español" (Ticknor 1: 134). In Ticknor's view, therefore, there is nothing "que justifique la pretensión entablada por algunos de que esta parte de la literatura española debe más que ninguna otra al trato, comunicación y superior cultura de los árabes" (134).

More modern scholars (Deyermond, Alonso, Fish Compton, García Gómez among others) also agree that this simple strophe, the *kharja*, began to appear in the first half of the eleventh century. According to Alonso, if this time frame is correct, they would constitute not only the first examples of lyric poetry on the Iberian peninsula, but possibly of all of Europe, pre-dating even that of Guillaume de Poitiers, considered to be the first provençal troubadour (26).

Primitive, evolving lyric forms included various genres. Already mentioned were the *cantigas de amigo*, written, predominantly in the female voice, and their counterpart, the *cantigas de amor*, written in the male voice. Both are a type of love poem and the latter often follow "broadly", (to use Deyermond's term, **Middle** 12), the courtly love tradition[30] found in Provençal poetry. These forms were quite prevalent in--although by no means restricted to--Galician-Portuguese writing of the thirteenth century. The *villancico* is another example of a very popular form of love poem, the origins of which

are nebulous at best, but which, once established, spanned the centuries covering the Medieval to the Early Modern era, specifically until the seventeenth century when it was replaced by the *seguidilla* (Deyermond **Middle** 21).

Other lyric genres included the *debate* or *disputa* wherein real personages, allegorical figures or even abstract forms entered into a moral or philosophical discussion. For example, the "Disputa del alma y el cuerpo" or "Denuestos del agua y el vino" both fall in this category and were assumed to be written in the late twelfth or early thirteenth century. The latter *disputa* is attached to another lyric poem, the "Razón de amor." The resulting composition represents the earliest extant Spanish lyric poem, preserved in its complete form (Chandler 200). Also around the twelfth or thirteenth centuries, hagiographic poems became popular. These were narrative poems of religious themes whose lyrical overtones and shorter lines distanced them from the heroic epic which might logically be thought to be their correct category. Examples of these types of poems would be the "Libro de la infancia y muerte de Jesús" and the "Vida de Santa María Egipcíaca." The detailed descriptive passages, especially in this last poem, evoke much later portraiture. The following lines make up one of the earliest known portraitures of a woman in Spanish literature (Alvar 365):

> Redondas habié las orejas,
> blanquas como leche d'ovejas;
> ojos negros e sobrecejas;
> alba fruente, fasta las cernejas.
> La faz tenié colorada,
> como la rosa cuando es granada;
> boca chica e por mesura,
> muy fermosa la catadura.
> Su cuello e su petrina,

tal como la flor dell espina.
De sus tetiellas bien es sana
tales son como maçana.
Braços e cuerpo e todo lo ál
blanco es como cristal.
En buena forma fue tajada,
nin era gorda nin muy delgada;
nin era luenga ni corta,
mas de mesura bona. 214-230 (Alvar 367)

The thirteenth century also saw the advent of one of Spain's foremost Humanist and patron: Alfonso X (1222-1284), known as 'El Sabio'. His thirst for knowledge led him to the investigation of many diverse subjects and the subsequent recording of his findings, using the vernacular[31]. These writings included works on science, law, history, language and even chess. Due to this expository predisposition, prose was his favoured medium[32] but, with his **Cantigas,** he contributed to the lyrical world as well. The **Cantigas** were a collection of 420 compositions in Galician, written on varied topics which included love (*cantigas de amor*), hate, and scathing satires (*cantigas d'escarnho e de maldizer*). The most important group within this collection, however, is the one based on a religious theme; many of the poems are narrative in nature and others are purely lyrical and actually written to be accompanied by music.

Until lyric poetry developed a unique and strong voice of its own in the fifteenth century, it was found interspersed amid other popular poetic forms: epic and narrative poetry,[33] hagiographic poetry and the *mester de clerecía*, written in the predominant metre of the time, the *cuaderna via.*[34] Lyrical sections are also found in the work of Gonzalo de Berceo[35] (1198?-1274?), a contemporary of Alfonso X and author of **La vida de Santo Domingo** and **Milagros de nuestra Señora**, and a little later in the works of Juan Ruiz

(1283?-1350?), the Arcipreste de Hita author of the **Libro de buen amor** (1330?). Within the almost two thousand verses which constitute this latter poem, are found a great variety of thematic elements ranging from the profane to the religious, the popular to the cultured. The poem is written in the popular style, the *cuaderna via,* interspersed with lyrical stanzas in the less learned, shorter, seven or eight syllable line. Sometimes these more lyric segments are used in juxtaposition to the *cuaderna via* within the same scene or episode of the poem, thereby making it "possible to see the encounters in double focus" (Deyermond **Middle** 113) and from different perspectives. Lyric poems were also incorporated in Pero López de Ayala's (1332-1407) **Rimado de palaçio**, a collection of poems of diverse themes and forms,[36] again, dominated by the *cuaderna via.*

Until the middle of the fourteenth century, cultivated lyric poetry was dominated by Portuguese and Castilian poets who preferred the Galician-Portuguese language for their own lyric compositions. With the decline of the lyric genre in Portugal,[37] Castilian lyrics "had a clear field in which to develop" (Deyermond **Middle** 130). It was partly due to this development that in the fifteenth century, lyric poetry began to flourish on the Iberian Peninsula. It was also a time of great political and social upheaval: as the power of the kings waned, that of the nobles rose and with this shift in power came an increase in their interest in the arts. This period included a focus on classical Greek and Latin cultures as well as a diminished influence from the French and an increased interest in all things and thoughts Italian.[38]

These Classical and Italianate currents coming together in a rich courtly ambience, created a climate receptive to new literary endeavours which tended to be much more

refined, artificial and mannered. The language itself was impregnated with Italianate words and expressions which reinforced the cultured quality of Castilian which by this time, as was seen above, had become the preferred idiom. The traditional seven or eight syllable lyrical forms present in the literature up to this point were considered to be of lower quality and according to the Marqués de Santillana, fitting only for "gente baja y servil" (Alborg 322).

The fifteenth century, most particularly during the reign of Juan II, became the culminating period for courtly love poetry. This was, in effect, a late manifestation of Provençal influence which had already enjoyed its peak in the thirteenth to mid-fourteenth century in the Galician-Portuguese lyrical tradition. The basis for this poetry, as in the courtly love poetry of the Sicilian School of the court of Frederick II, was the idealization of woman within the parameters of the world of the court. The frivolousness and the political intrigues of courtly life also inspired reactions of a more sober nature and gave rise to a more serious lyrical output which delved into moral questions or attacked, through satire, the superficiality of that particular existence (Alborg 324).

From the beginning of the fifteenth century, the new lyrical creations were gathered in *cancioneros*--anthologies of single or combined authorship which imitated a trend started by Petrarch one century before. The appellations *poetas de cancionero* and *poesía de cancionero* were used specifically to identify writers and works of the lyric realm. These anthologies were comprised mainly of two types of poems: the lyric *canción*, with its octosyllable lines and the *decir*, more narrative in nature, written in both the octosyllable and the longer verses of *arte mayor*. In terms of language development

they represent the definitive victory of Castilian over Galician, which had been favoured prior to that time.

The **Cancionero de Baena**, already mentioned, is the first known *cancionero*, dating back to 1445 and represents the first corpus to originate from the Castilian school of lyric poetry (Chandler 197). It was compiled by Juan Alfonso de Baena, scribe to Juan II, and includes not only his own poetry but that of fifty-six other poets. These authors he divided into two distinct categories: the greater representation was given to the Galician-Provençal poets of the older school, and the other group represented the new Italianate tendencies of the Dantean-Allegorical school, who used verses *de arte mayor*, the longer poetic lines typical of Italian poetry. Some of the names included in this collection were: Macías, Alfonso Álvarez de Villasandino, Micer Francisco Imperial, Ferrán Sánchez de Talavera and Gonzal Martínez de Medina, all generally regarded as minor poets.

Alfonso V of Aragon conquered the kingdom of Naples in 1443 and, as Frederick II had done in Sicily two hundred years before, he established there a literary court made up of Castilian, Aragonese, and Catalan poets who, during their time there, were influenced directly by important Italian Renaissance figures and who later brought their new-found enthusiasm and ideas to Spain and once there fuelled the already burgeoning Italianate tendencies.

Out of this court came another significant collection of poems, the **Cancionero de Stúñiga** which, although similar to the Cancionero de Baena (and surprisingly contrary to the Italian Renaissance influence in which it was immersed), incorporated more traditionally popular Spanish forms such as *glosas*, *motes*, *villancetes* and, above all,

romances. Overall the compositions were shorter and, the collection as a whole, more lyrical than the **Cancionero de Baena**. Among the poets included in this *cancionero*, were Lope de Stúñiga, Mosén Pere Torrellas and Carvajales, again, minor poets compared to those soon to follow.

Of the more notable poets of the fifteenth century, the Marqués de Santillana (1398-1458), Juan de Mena (1411-1456), and Jorge Manrique (1440-1479) hold the prominent positions. Santillana's role is particularly significant for he was an innovator in the literary world: he was the first to attempt, although not altogether successfully, the writing of sonnets in Castilian (using Dante's **Vita Nuova** and Petrarch's **Canzoniere** as models), and also the first to write a critical prologue to his poems--**Proemio e carta al condestable de Portugal** (1449), a sort of **Ars Poetica,**--thus authoring the earliest example of historical literary criticism in Spain. Juan de Mena, whose most celebrated work is the **Laberinto de la Fortuna** (1444), is considered a precursor to the *conceptismo*[39] of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. His later work was characterized by Italianate influences, Dantean-allegorical in particular. He was noted for his classical penchant and made liberal use of *cultismos*[40] and hyperbaton in his poetry. De Mena is also remembered for his insistence on elevating the Castilian language to an appropriate poetic level in his own work and encouraging the same in other authors. Jorge Manrique's lyrical poetry was based heavily on the courtly love tradition and distinguished itself by its complex imagery, paradoxes, and intricate play on words, anticipating in some aspects the *conceptismo* fashion of the sixteenth and seventeenth century.

The **Cancionero General** (1511), much broader in scope than previous *cancioneros*, was compiled by Hernando del Castillo. It presented over 1000 poems and included all poets known to Castillo since the time of Juan de Mena. Among these poets was Florencia Pinar, considered to be the first Castilian woman poet. Her inclusion in what was "the almost exclusively masculine preserve" (Deyermond **Middle** 200) of the *cancioneros* was a public validation of her as an author.[41]

In the late fifteenth to the early sixteenth century, the reign of the Catholic Monarchs (1479-1516) brought about a synthesis of the Italianate currents (Dantean-allegorical) and of the traditional poetic forms. The poetry under their reign was greatly influenced by the Humanism and Italianism encouraged by the monarchs (Chandler 211), but there coexisted as well a strong current of traditionalism--represented by poets such as Cristóbal de Castillejo (1490?-1550), Sebastián de Horozco (1510?-1580), Antonio de Villejas (1512?-1577?) and Luis Gálvez de Montalvo (1549?-1591?)--which fought to remain faithful to the traditional/popular poetic practices.[42]

Among the notable poets of modern penchant, the "renovadores" (Sainz de Robles 82) are Fray Íñigo de Mendoza (1420?-1490?), Queen Isabel's Franciscan preacher; Fray Ambrosio Montesino (1485-1514), also a Franciscan, (but one who attempted to vulgarize theological and the mystical concerns by writing about them in a popular lyrical form--*romance, villancico, canción*), and Juan de Padilla (1468-1522?) who, like Juan de Mena, was a Dantean imitator and was known for his allegorical poems.

The Spanish *Siglos de Oro*, or Golden Age, spanned the next two hundred years. The sixteenth century, specifically under the reign of Charles V (1516-1556), was the

time of greatest acceptance of foreign influence, Italian in particular and is reflected in the school of poetry (Italianate) established by Juan Boscán and Garcilaso de la Vega (Chandler 211). Neoplatonism was the primary philosophical influence and the courtly love poetry of the fifteenth century was overshadowed by one of a more pastoral and bucolic tradition. The period under Philip II (1556-1598) was politically isolationist in nature. It saw the gradual assimilation of Renaissance/Humanistic tendencies with Christianity.[43] At the same time the Counter Reformation fostered heightened interest in asceticism and mysticism and inspired a significant if belated movement--in relation to the rest of Europe--of mystic poetry, exemplified by the works of Fray Luis de León, San Juan de la Cruz, and Santa Teresa.

The late sixteenth century is also characterized by two distinct poetic currents within the Italianate vein: the Salamancan school of poetry, headed by Fray Luis de León and the Sevillian (Andalusian) school, led by Fernando de Herrera. The first school was defined by its emphasis on content rather than style, "una poesía de sentido hondo, razonadora y filosófica" (Díaz-Plaja, **Poesía lírica** 120) whereas the latter experimented with poetic form, through which was born "un lirismo, rico de formas, seducido cada vez más por la brillantez expresiva" (Díaz-Plaja, **Poesía lírica** 120).

In the realm of language, as Bembo had defended the use of the vulgar tongue in Italy in his **Prose della volgar lingua** (1525), Juan de Valdés (1501?-1541) did the same for Castilian in his **Diálogo de la lengua** (ca.1535) written in Naples. In this "first important linguistic treatise of the Spanish language" (Chandler 314), he supported the use of a the vulgar tongue. In contrast to the more complicated Italianate and Petrarchan

forms proposed by poets like Garcilaso de la Vega and Francisco de Herrera, he encouraged the use of a simple and plain language. Lore Terracini suggests that "el ideal democrático de la lengua conduce a Valdés al concepto de una poesía íntimamente ligada al lenguaje corriente" (López Estrada 202). Since the work remained unpublished until 1737, however, it had limited direct influence on the development of Castilian and on its use by other authors. It is, nonetheless, a valuable testimony to the condition of the Spanish language in the sixteenth century (Chandler 314).

The Italianate poetry of the sixteenth century replaced, at least temporarily, the simplicity of popular Spanish lyrical forms. Italian style, metric system and content were imitated. Poetry lines were no longer the traditionally shorter verses *de arte menor* but were replaced by lines of longer syllabic count, with preference given to the endecasyllable. Along with more complicated syntax and cultured lexicon, the preferred popular forms such as *romances*, were superseded by sonnets, tercets and other Italian models. The thematic focus, again in imitation of Italian lyric poetry, was on nature, Graeco-Latin myths, and Petrarchan love (Alborg 632-633).

Prominent among the poets of this Italianate period were Juan Boscán 1487?-1542), Garcilaso de la Vega (1501-1536), Diego Hurtado de Mendoza (1503-1575), Francisco de Aldana (1537-1578), Francisco de Figueroa (1515/20-1588), Gutierre de Cetina (1520-1557) and Hernando de Acuña (1520-1580?). Of these, the most celebrated was to be Garcilaso de la Vega who was the first Spaniard to use the sonnet form successfully. His travels through Italy, his reading of Petrarch and Bembo, and his close friendship with Juan Boscán (who also experimented with Italianate forms) were

influences which directed Garcilaso towards the Italianate style. The techniques with which others--such as Santillana and Boscán[44]--had experimented, Garcilaso was able to adapt easily to Castilian. He skillfully, manipulated language and verse with a "delicadeza expresiva" (Díaz-Plaja **Poesía lírica** 95), introducing, for the first time, "a genuine musicality" (Chandler 213) to Spanish poetry. His linguistic and technical mastery was coupled with "an elegance and extraordinary sweetness [which] were unknown up to his time" (Chandler 213). Ticknor describes Garcilaso's poetry as having "una gracia y elegancia de dicción, de que Boscán pudo hasta cierto punto ser el creador, pero que nunca llegó a poseer completamente como su amigo Garcilaso" (31).

Fernando de Herrera (1534-1597), a poet of merit in his own right, whose influence on the Spanish literary canon was comparable to Pietro Bembo's on the Italian, wrote an extensive commentary on Garcilaso's poetry, **Las Anotaciones** (1580), holding it up as a model (Petrarchan) to be emulated. Not only due to its own merit, therefore, but also due to the support of Herrera, did Garcilaso's poetry set a standard for the Italianate style which so greatly influenced the lyric poetry of that century.

Herrera's lyrical work represents a 'second' Renaissance phase in the development of Italianate poetry after the 'first' as represented by the poetry of Garcilaso and Boscán. His style was much more complex on all levels: lexical, linguistic, and syntactical. His greater use of *cultismos*, elaborate metaphors and his tendency to more structural complexities are actually the antithesis of Garcilaso's lyrical simplicity. These place Herrera between the classical Petrarchism he admired so much and the Baroque "intrincada selva" (Alborg 853) of the next century.

The seventeenth century, under the rule of three different monarchs--Philip III (1598-1621); Philip IV (1621-1665); Charles II (1665-1700)--, has been commonly known as the Baroque period. It is distinguished by political nationalization, and by an identity crisis which permeated the culture. The appearance of a rich, powerful nation, feared and respected by other countries was juxtaposed with the realities within Spain as experienced by the majority of her people: poverty and disillusionment. This contrast is captured well by Sainz de Robles: "aquí, la nobleza, la fe, el heroísmo, la gloria; allá, la pobreza, la humillación, la impotencia, la desesperanza" (113). The resulting confusion and disillusionment is reflected in the poetry of the time which is dominated by the two poetic fashions of *culteranismo*[45] and *conceptismo*. Again, Sainz de Robles expreses clearly the tumultuous nature of that poetry: "El español barroco renunció a expresarse ligeramente y con claridad; amó el zigzag, la desviación, los salientes, el énfasis, el retraimiento, la pomposa sobreabundancia, la extravagancia" (115). Although the view of some scholars is that the poetry of this period lacked the substance of earlier epochs,[46] it is a period considered the pinnacle of Spanish poetic achievement: "Lope, Góngora, Quevedo... gave Hispanic poetry a century of unsurpassed poetic excellence and diversity" (Branstone 12).

From a somewhat obscure beginning, to a 'turbulent' seventeenth century, Spanish lyric poetry demonstrates not only an adherence to the practices already established in earlier poetic schools (Arabic, Provençal, and Italian), but also a substantial degree of diversity and uniqueness. Once the lyric genre was established in the Iberian Peninsula, traditional as well as Italianate currents coexisted--not always harmoniously,

but certainly in such a way as to provide a rich and colourful tapestry of poetic achievement.

Conclusion

Both the Italian and Iberian peninsulas were hosts to great lyrical achievements over the five centuries discussed above and provided fertile ground for poets of each culture. The times of greatest lyrical production appear to have been those when the arts were most accepted and supported, be it at the court of Frederick II in Sicily or Juan II in Naples, during the time of increasing power of the nobles of fifteenth-century Spain, or within the exciting new political and thinking environment of late medieval Tuscan city-states. These periods were known for an appreciation of the arts and a fostering of intellectual exchanges between educated and cultured men which in turn led to the development and enrichment of the lyric genre in both Italy and Spain.

The fact that very few women are to be counted among the ranks of recognized, noteworthy poets, is one which cannot be denied and, perhaps more importantly, begs to be re-examined within the context of the established canon. In Italy, women poets such as Vittoria Colonna, Gaspara Stampa, and Veronica Gambara did achieve some measure of recognition and respect for their craft, despite their sex. They comprise, however, a small group in a literary world dominated by men. In Spain--with the exception of Florencia Pinar--there is no recognition of women writers in the *cancioneros*. As we shall see, this dearth of female representation does not reflect a void in the realm of women poets, writers, and thinkers; they did indeed exist. The inclusion or not of women poets into the established and male-dominated canon must then have been motivated by other factors.

An examination of the social conditions of women in the Early Modern era along with their poetry may aid in our understanding of whether these women were simply not worthy of inclusion from a purely literary perspective or to what extent sociopolitical factors exerted unpredictable influences on their literary acceptance.

[1] The following sources were used in this chapter to provide general background information needed to explain the development of the Italian lyric genre leading to the seventeenth century: Mario Marti, "L'una appresso de l'altra maraviglia" (V.N., XXIV,8): Stilnovo, Guido, Dante nell'ipostasi vitanovistica," **La gloriosa donna della mente: A Commentary on the *Vita Nuova***, Italian Medieval and Renaissance Studies 5, ed.,Vincent Moleta, (Firenze: Leo S. Olschki Editore, 1994); Joan M. Ferrante, "Dante's Beatrice: Priest of an Androgynous God", **Occasional Papers**, 2, (Binghampton, N.Y.: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1992); Marjorie O'Rourke Boyle, **Petrarch's Genius: Pentimento and Prophecy**, (Berkeley: Uuniversity of California Press, 1991); Rachel Jacoff, "Transgression and Transcendence: Figures of Female Desire in Dante's **Commedia**. For Diana Wilson," **Romanic Review** 79 (1988):129-142; Christopher Kleinhenz, **The Early Italian Sonnet: The First Century (1220- 1221)**, (Lecce: Milella, 1986); Bruno Nardi, **Dante e la cultura medievale**, (Roma: Laterza, 1983); Walter Binni and Riccardo Scrivano, **Storia e antologia della letteratura italiana, 1 & 2**, (Milano: Principato Editore, 1983); Eric Cochrane, **Historians and Historiography in the Italian Renaissance**, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981); Guglielmo Gorni, **Il nodo della lingua e il verbo d'amore. Studi su Dante e altri duecentisti**, Saggi di <<Lettere italiane>> 29, (Firenze: Leo S. Olschki Editore, 1981); Alberto Asor Rosa, **La lirica del Seicento**, Letteratura italiana Laterza, 28, ed., Carlo Muscetta, (Roma-Bari: Gius. Laterza e Figli, 1979); Charles TrinKaus, **The Poet as Philosopher: Petrarch and the Formation of Renaissance Consciousness**, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979); Giulio Ferroni, **Poesia italiana del Cinquecento**, (Milano: Garzanti, 1978); Gianfranco Contini, **Letteratura italiana del Quattrocento**, (Firenze: Sansoni Editore, 1976); Luigi Baldacci, ed., **Lirici del Cinquecento**, Classici della società italiana, 7, (Milano: Longanesi, 1975); Guido Favati, **Inchiesta sul Dolce Stil Nuovo**. (Firenze: Le Monnier, 1975); Alberto Asor Rosa, ed., **Il Seicento: la nuova scienza e la crisi del Barocco**, La letteratura italiana storia e testi, 5:1, (Roma: Editori Laterza, 1974; Mario Marti, **Storia dello Stil Nuovo**, (Firenze: Edizioni Milella, 1972); Gianfranco Contini, **Letteratura Italiana delle origini**, (Firenze: Sansoni Editore, 1970); Mario Marti ed., **Poeti del Dolce stil nuovo**, (Firenze: Le Monnier, 1969); Carlo Dionisotti, **Geografia e storia della letteratura italiana**, (Torino: Giulio Einaudi Ed., 1967); Giuseppe Toffanin, **Il Cinquecento**, Storia letteraria d'Italia, 6, (Milano: Casa Editrice Dr. Francesco Vallardi, 1966-7); Carlo Salinari, ed., **Il Cinquecento (2) e il Seicento**, 3, Antologia della letteratura italiana, ed. Maurizio Vitale, (Milano: Rizzoli Editore, 1966); Vittore Branca, ed., **Rimatori del Dolce Stil Nuovo**, (Milano: Società Editrice Dante Alighieri, 1965); Natalino Sapegno, **Antologia storica della poesia lirica italiana nei secoli XVI e XVII**, (Torino: ERI, 1964); Benedetto Croce, **La letteratura italiana**, Mario Sansone, ed. (Bari: Laterza, 1963); Benedetto Croce, **Saggi sulla letteratura italiana del Seicento**, Scritti di storia letteraria e politica, 1, (Bari: Laterza, 1962); Francesco de Sanctis, **History of Italian Literature, 1 & 2**, (New York: Basic Books Inc. 1959); Andreas Capellanus, **The Art of Courtly Love**, Trans. John J. Parry, (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1959); Daniele Ponchiroli, ed., **Lirici del Cinquecento**, Classici italiani, 33, (Torino: Unione Tipografico - Editrice Torinese, 1958); J.E. Shaw, **Guido Cavalcanti's Theory**

of Love, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1949).

[2] According to John Parry, Andreas Capellanus Capellanus may have been more of a secondary participant in the creation of **The Art of Courtly Love**, writing it under the direction of the Countess Marie de Champagne, daughter of King Louis of France and Eleanor of Aquitaine and great-granddaughter of William of Aquitaine (known as the first troubadour). It is partly due to her efforts that we owe the basis, at least, of the theory of courtly love. We know, for example, that she commissioned several works on the subject from other literary men, whom she provided with specific guidelines with regards to, not only subject matter, but style (Capellanus 15-18). The work, for example, of Chrétien de Troyes is much more openly erotic under the auspices of Marie of Champagne, than that which he wrote prior to and after collaboration with her. Even in **The Art of Courtly Love**, we find indication that Andreas Capellanus was not wholly in agreement with the subject matter as presented through the will of Marie of Champagne. He ends the book with a repudiation of love and women; this in itself could be merely an Ovidian convention, and one used by most participants in the courtly love literary tradition: Dante and Petrarch, for example. His vehement repudiation, however, is seen by scholars such as Joan Kelly-Gaddol as a "reaction to the pressure of Marie's patronage" (147).

[3] The *mercede* (mercy, pity), referred to by the poets of courtly love is merely a sign of acknowledgement from the object of their desire. This sign could be in the form of a mere look or word which of itself would be enough to convey to the poet that his love is not in vain, that he is loved in return, and that he is worthy of her love. (Spanish: galardón)

[4] The sonnet is a very tightly-structured poem comprising fourteen hendecasyllables which, in turn, are divided into two quatrains and two tercets. Its origins are clouded in controversy and governed by two dsitinct theories. One theory is that its structure is based on the popular Sicilian metric pattern, the *strambotto* and that the first poet to transpose it to courtly love poetry was Jacopo da Lentini in the thirteenth century. However, there appears to be no evidence of a basis in popular poetry for the two tercets. The second theory posits the sonnet as a development of the *canzone* stanza (based on the Provençal *canso*). Changes to the sonnet occurred quickly and by the end of the thirteenth century the rhyme for the quatrains had been established (abba abba). It was during the subsequent century that the tercet rhyme scheme of **cdc dcd** prevailed. This structure and particular rhyme scheme is the most common Italian form and will be the one which most concerns this study. (For a more detailed account of the origins of the sonnet on the Italian peninsula, see Christopher Kleinhenz, **The Early Italian Sonnet: The First Century (1220-1321)**, [Lecce: Milella, 1986]). Within this architecturally confined form, the author makes use of many poetic devices--repetition, metaphor, musicality of lexicon, syntactical complexities, etc.--to create difference, tension. "Surely one of the principal fascinations of the sonnet is just this tendency to leave its fictions inconclusive and interminate, with enough indications to trigger a reader's imaginings, but not so many as to close them off" Sandra L. Bermann, **The Sonnet Over Time: A Study in the Sonnets of Petrarch, Shakespeare, and Baudelaire**, (London: 1988) 4.

"The sonnet...crystallizes a moment in the flux of human existence", Lawrence Harvey, **The Aesthetics of the Renaissance Love Sonnet**, (Geneva: 1962) 84.

[5] Such poets included Arrigo Testa d'Arezzo, Compagnetto da Prato, Jacopo Mostacci (Pisa?), and Paganino (Sarzana?) (Contini 1:75).

[6] "Dolce stil novo" is a term first introduced in Dante's **Purgatory** XXIV: "di qua dal dolce stil novo ch'i' odo" (l.57)

[7] Quotes from the **Divine Comedy** are taken from Dante Alighieri, **La Divina Commedia**, C.H. Grandgent, ed., Revised by Charles Singleton, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972).

[8] In this most negative aspect, Cavalcanti's idea of love seems closer to that of Andreas Capellanus, as discussed on pp.3 and 4 of this study.

[9] "...preoccupation with the mental and physical anguish induced by love permeates his [Cavalcanti's] poetry and gives it a morbid and mournful quality which often mirrors the abject state of the lover" (Kleinhenz 139-140).

[10] Mario Marti acknowleges Cavalcanti's participation in the poetic tradition of Dante, Cino, (i.e. the *stilnovisti*) which will continue on to Petrarch and beyond. However, he also recognizes the more pessimistic tendencies of Cavalcanti: "La tradizione vi si riconosce, ma anche vi si risolve integralmente nella concezione di amore come passione dell'anima sensitiva, come potenza che toglie all'uomo la luce sovrana della ragione e lo consegna al torbido dominio dei sensi, esponendone a <<morte>> il cuore" (**Poeti** 119).

[11] The work is structured as a personal journal complete with *ragioni* (prose passages which carry the narrative), poetry, and *divisioni* (explanations of the poems [in the present tense] which function as the reader's guide to understanding the poetry's meaning). It is recognized as the earliest example of literary criticism in European literature.

[12] Dante, Guinizzelli, and Cavalcanti are the best representatives of the *doce stil novo.* This is evident not only in their use of the 'fresh new style' alluded to by Bonagiunta in **Purgatory XXIV**, but also because it is in their poetry that we first see the use of a more modern Italian.
Therefore, not only is their verse 'fresh' because the style is distinctive and new, but also because of the idiom itself. Moreover, personification, a rhetorical device rarely used prior to their time, takes on a more important role in their poetry and distinguishes it from that of their predecessors.

[13] It is important to note that Cavalcanti's lady, Giovanna, takes on a parallel allegorical role to that of Beatrice in the **Vita Nuova**. She, like her namesake Giovanni, (St. John), anticipates the arrival of the true Saviour, Beatrice/Christ, taking on a preparatory role. In **Vita Nuova** XXIV, Dante announces the presence of both ladies, who

are walking toward him. The first is Giovanna, "la quale era di famosa bieltade, e fue già molto donna di questo mio primo amico [Cavalcanti]" (**VN** 59), and who, because of her great beauty, was also called 'Primavera'. Dante goes on to explain the allegorical implication of the arrival of the two ladies: "tanto è quanto dire "prima verrà", però che lo suo nome Giovanna è da quello Giovanni lo quale precedette la verace luce" (**VN** 59). In other words, Giovanna, like John the Baptist, heralds the arrival of one who is greater in importance--Beatrice (Christ), perhaps as Cavalcanti, Dante's great friend and mentor, heralded the arrival of a greater poet: Dante.

[14] Of Cino, Marti says: "Il tipico linguaggio stilnovistico dell'uno [Cavalcanti] e dell'altro [Alighieri] egli rielabora in un impasto più cordiale ed umano, strappandolo alle ansie metafisiche, alle estasi teologiche misticheggianti, e riducendolo a misura d'effusione autobiografica" (**Poeti** 425).

[15] This awareness is obvious in his **Epistle to Posterity** (1351) in which he discusses not only the events of his life, but also his personal feelings and opinions. This awareness has earned Petrarch the reputation of being one of the first 'modern' men, a transitional figure from the Middle Ages to Early Modern times. Charles Trinkaus suggests that Petrarch "became a paradigm for posterity and thereby guided the transformation of late medieval culture into that of the Renaissance" (26). Marjorie O'Rourke Boyle sees Petrarch's 'awareness' in terms of the self-importance manifest in his writings: "His volumes thus comprised a journal of self-encounter and self-expression. The ascents of Ventoux, of the Capitoline, and of Parnassus itself were simultaneously a descent into himself: the external climb of poetry, the internal tunnel of psychology" (42-43).

[16] In this letter he is focusing primarily on the use of poetic language in the Bible.

[17] She is also widely believed to represent the poet's personal desire for immortality: the name 'Laura' is a symbol for the laurel wreath, traditional emblem of poetic glory.

[18] Dante's **Vita Nuova** can be viewed as a precurser to this type of personal poetic anthology; unlike Petrarch's **Canzoniere**, however, the chronological collection of poems was interspersed with explanatory narratives.

[19] *Imitatio*: A literary theory, practised from antiquity (it was advocated by Aristotle, Cicero, and Horace, for example) through to the eighteenth century, enjoying particular popularity as a practice during the Medieval and Renaissance periods. It involved the imitation of styles and themes of the 'masters' from whom writers were encouraged to learn everything about their craft. It was, in part, a high form of praise of the writer's predecessors and proof that s/he was well-steeped in the literary tradition, classical in particular. Giovanni Caravaggi, in his essay "Boscán y las técnicas de transición," says of Petrarchan imitation: "Además, la imitación de Petrarca fue intencionada, programática; pero eso no significa que se limitase a ser un calco pasivo; y por otra parte, en sí misma la imitación no se consideraba un acto negativo, sino estéticamente valioso, y en cierto

sentido impuesto por los cánones humanísticos" in Francisco López Estrada, **Siglos de Oro: Renacimiento**, (Barcelona: Editorial Crítica: 1980) 118.

[20] The *Quattrocento*, for Croce, is the century between 1375 and 1475.

[21] For a more detailed account of the historical development of the lyric genre in Spain see Daniel, L. Heiple, **Garcilaso de la Vega and the Italian Renaissance**, Penn State Studies in Romance Literatures, (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994); Ignacio Navarrete, **Orphans of Petrarch. Poetry and Theory in the Spanish Renaissance**, (Berkeley: University of California, 1994); Àngel Gómez Moreno, **España y la Italia de los humanistas. Primeros ecos**, Biblioteca Románica Hispánica, ed., Dámaso Alonso, Estudios y Ensayos, 382 (Madrid: Editorial Gredos, 1994); Elena Rossi, "Reconstructing Francisco de Figueroa's Chronology: New Findings," **Bulletin of Hispanic Studies** 70 (1993):219-236; Alan Deyrmond, **Edad Media: Primer Suplemento**, 1/1, Historia y crítica de la literatura española, (Barcelona: Editorial Crítica, 1991); Alan Jones and Richard Hitchcock, **Studies on the Muwaššah and the Kharja**, (Reading: Ithaca Press, 1991); Richard E. Chandler and Kessel Schwartz, **A New History of Spanish Literature**, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State UP, 1991); Antonio Prieto, **La poesía en la Edad de Oro (Renacimiento)**, Historia crítica de la literatura hispánica, 4, (Madrid: Taurus, 1988); Antonio Basanta Reyes and Luis Vázquez Rodríguez, **Antología poética de los siglos XV y XVI**, (Madrid: Ediciones Anaya, 1987); María Pilar Palomo, del, **La poesía en la Edad de Oro (Barocco)**, Historia crítica de la Literatura Hispánica, 5, (Madrid: Taurus Ediciones, 1987); Elias L. Rivers, "Problems of Genre in Golden Age Poetry," **Modern Language Notes** 102.2 (1987): 206-219; Rafael Lapesa, **La trayectoria poética de Garcilaso**, (Madrid: Ediciones Istmo, 1985); Jorge Checa Cremades, **La poesía en los siglos de oro: Renacimiento**, Lectura crítica de la literatura española. (Madrid: Editorial Playor, 1982); Antonio Prieto, **La poesía española del siglo XVI**, (Madrid: Ediciones Cátedra, S.A., 1984); Francisco López Estrada, **Siglos de Oro: Renacimiento**, Historia crítica de la literatura española, (Madrid: Editorial Playor, 1982); Michael E. Gerli, "La 'religión del amor' y el antifeminismo en las letras castellanas del siglo XV," **Hispanic Review**, 49 (1981): 65-86; Margit Frenk Alatorre, **Estudios sobre lírica antigua**, (Madrid: Editorial Castalia, 1978); Mirta Aguirre, **La lírica castellana hasta los Siglos de Oro, 1**, (La Habana: Editorial Arte y Literatura, 1977); Linda Fish Compton, **Andalusian Lyrical Poetry and Old Spanish Love Songs: The *Muwashshah* and its *Kharja***, (New York: New York UP, 1976); Juan Luis Alborg, **Historia de la literatura española, 1**, (Madrid: Editorial Gredos, 1975); Mauro Armiño, **Qué es verdaderamente el Siglo de Oro**, (Madrid: Editorial Sopena. 1973); G.E. von Grunenbaum, **Arabic Poetry: Theory and Develpment**, Third Giorgio Levi della Vida Biennial Conference, 14-16 May, 1971, (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1973); Guillermo Díaz-Plaja, **A History of Spanish Literature**, (New York: New York U.P., 1971); A.D. Deyermond **The Middle Ages**, (London: Ernest Benn Ltd., 1971); Emilio García Gómez, **Poemas Arabigoandaluces**, (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, S.A., 1971); R.O. Jones, **The Golden Age: Prose and Poetry: The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries**,

A Literary History of Spain, 2, (London: Ernest Benn Limited, 1971); Antonio Gallego Morell, **Estudios sobre [sic] poesía española del primer Siglo de Oro,** (Madrid: Insular, 1970); Willis Barnstone ed., **Spanish Poetry From its Beginnings Through the Nineteenth Century,** (New York: Oxford UP, 1970); Manuel Alvar, **Poesía española medieval,** 15, Clásicos Planeta, (Barcelona: Editorial Planeta, 1969); Angel Valbuena Prat, **Historia de la literatura española, 1,** (Barcelona: Editorial Gustavo Gili (1968); Federico Carlos Sainz de Robles, **Historia y Antología de la Poesía Española 1,** (Madrid: Aguilar, 1967); Elias L. Rivers, **Renaissance and Barroque Poetry of Spain,** (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1966); Dámaso Alonso, **Poesía española. Ensayos di métodos y límites estilísticos,** Biblioteca Romnánica Hispánia, ed. Dámaso Alonso, II, Estudios y ensayos, (Madrid: Editorial Gredos, 1962); Dámaso Alonso, **Primavera Temprana de la Literatura Europea,** (Madrid: Ediciones Guadarrama, 1961); Guillermo Díaz-Plaja, **Antología mayor de la literatura española,** 1 & 2, Thesarus Litterae: Antología labor de la literatua universal, (Barcelona: Editorial Labor, S.A., 1958); Ramón Menéndez Pidal, **Poesía árabe y poesía euorpea,** (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, S.A., 1955); Jorge Ticknor, **Historia de la literatura española,** 1, (Buenos Aires: Editorial Bajel, 1948); Guillermo Díaz-Plaja, **La poesía lírica española,** (Barcelona: Editorial Labor, S.A. 1937).

[22] *Juglares* were minstrels who travelled from town to town, or castle to castle, entertaining with songs which were at times lyrical in nature but were often narrative tales of great epic events. This was actually a form of primitive epic poetry, rather than lyric (Alborg 38-39).

[23] Alfonso X (El Sabio) who lived in the thirteenth century preferred Galician to Castilian because of what he considered to be its musical qualities. In fact, in Galician, he wrote his *Cantigas*--420 lyrical compositions of devotion to the Virgin.

[24] "the archaic dialect of Spanish spoken in the areas under Moorish rule" (Deyermond 4)

[25] According to James T. Monroe, the more modern *muwashashaha* and *ghazal*, or *zehel*, became unpopular during the tenth century because of a trend towards Neoclassical panegyric poetry, prevalent during the Caliphate of Córdoba. Although poets of the time used the forms, they were not considered worthy of publication or, certainly, recitation in the court. It was considered, at best, a hobby for more 'serious' poets (Monroe 136).

[26] Ibn Sana'al-Mulk's book **The House of Embroidery**, is not only a compilation of eleventh- and twelfth-century Andalusian (Arabic) *muwashshahs*, but a detailed explanation--his own theory, based on the examples which were available to him--of how they should be written (Fish-Compton xv).

[27] "Decid vostras, oh, hermanillas, ¿cómo refrenaré mi pesar? Sin el amado yo no viviré, y volaré a buscarlo" (Alvar 7).

[28] Deyermond says of the *kharjas* that "consideration of their social setting strengthens the case for believing that popular Spanish love-songs preceded and gave rise to the typical poetic forms of Moorish Spain, the *muwaššhaha* and the *zajal*" (**Middle** 7).

[29] Ticknor defines *romances* as a genre "tanto historiales como líricos, o sea la poesía del pueblo, desde los tiempos primitivos" (1 132).

[30] For a more comprehensive discussion of the term 'courtly love' and how it applies to the *cantigas*, see Deyermond **Middle** 12-14.

[31] Although Alfonso X preferred Galician for poetry, legal, scientific, and historical writing during his reign was changed from the traditional Latin to Castilian. Alan Deyermond gives two possible reasons for this switch: Alfonso's "determination to assert himself as the royal authority...(and) his equally intense Castilian patriotism" (88).

[32] Alan Deyermond suggests that this predisposition to prose had a great effect on the literature of the latter half of the thirteenth century. The "talented and ambitious men" (Deyermond 82), typically associated with monasteries, who had previously channelled their energies into writing poetry, were now attracted to the prosperous and culturally active court of Alfonso X. There, influenced by their ruler's predilection for prose and the Castilian language, they followed his lead and produced mainly expository works.

[33] Elena Rossi demonstrates the presence of lyric aspects in early epic poetry in two articles based on the epic fragment **Roncesvalles** ("Style and Pathos in the Spanish Epic *Planctus*: an Aesthetic Critique of *Roncesvalles*" Revista Canadiense de Estudios Hispánicos. 12,3 (1988): 429-495) and the **Infantes de Lara** ("Style and Pathos in the Spanish Epic *Planctus*, II: The *Planctus* of Gonzalo Gustios (*refundición* of ca. 1320" Revista Canadiense de Estudios Hispánicos. 18,1 (1993): 81-90). Rossi suggests that the treatment of grief of Charlemagne and Gonzalo Gustios, points to early stages of epic drama in the former and early presence of lyrical content in the latter.

[34] This meter was comprised of stanzas made up of fourteen to sixteen syllable lines with a caesura in the middle and a full rhyme (AAAA, BBBB, etc.) (Deyermond 58).

The two terms *cuaderna via* and *mester de clerecía* are sometimes used interchangeably (see Deyermond 58 and Chandler 33). The *cuaderna via* dominated poetic form in the first half of the thirteenth century and was re-instated with a renewed interest in poetry in the fourteenth century.

[35] Gonzalo de Berceo is the first poet to write in Spanish whose name has been recorded for posterity. He himself announces his identity in the introduction to his **Milagros de Nuestra Señora**: "Yo maestro Gonçalvo de Berceo nomnado" (Alvar 145).

[36] In the central part of this collection, Pero López de Ayala introduces verses of *arte mayor*, the longer poetic lines which were to become the predominant form of the fifteenth century (Deyermond 123).

[37] This decline is attributed to the death of King Dinis of Portugal (1261-1325) a committed patron and a great poet in his own right. The court at Lisbon ceased to be an influential poetic centre once his patronage had been extinguished (Deyermond 130).

[38] Francisco Imperial, a Genoese-Sevilian is credited with having introduced the art of Dantean imitation to the Iberian Peninsula. Sympathetic to Dante's allegorical School, he was the first Castilian to use the Italian 'endecasílabo' (Alborg 332).

[39] *Conceptismo*: a school of the sixteenth and seventeenth century which higlighted the importance of originality and intricacy of ideas and concepts. "In order to express their (*conceptistas*) brilliant mental concepts they employed cleverly turned metaphors, antithesis, puns, paradoxes, and conceits" (Chandler 223). This tendency was more prevalent in prose than in poetry but it is found in the works of certain poets, principally Francisco Quevedo.

Of De Mena's poetry, Sainz de Robles says, "poco interesantes, insufriblemente conceptuosas" (58).

[40] *Cultismos*: a learned, latinate word, often a neologism.

[41] Alan Deyermond has written more extensively on Florencia Pinar (including an analysis of two of her poems) in an article entitled: "Spain's First Women Writers" in **Women in Hispanic Literature: Icons and Fallen Idols**, Beth Miller, ed., (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 27-52. Specific and detailed reference to Pinar is found on pages 44-50.

[42] Not only did they diligently uphold their poetic roots, but did not miss the opportunity to satirize the Italianate trend. This is artfully exemplified by the following sonnet (the irony of the form chosen is glaring) by Cristóbal de Castillejo:

Oh musas italianas y latinas,
gentes en estas partes tan extraña,
¿cómo habéis venido a nuestra España,
tan nuevas y hermosas clavellinas?

O ¿quién os ha traído a ser vecinas
del Tajo y de sus montes y campaña?
O ¿quién es el que os guía o acompaña
de tierras tan ajenas peregrinas?

Don Diego de Mendoza y Garcilaso
nos trujeron, y Boscán y Luis de Haro,
por orden y favor del dios Apolo,

los dos llevó la muerte paso a paso,
el otro Solimán, y por amparo
solo quedan don Diego, y basta solo.

(Sainz de Robles 608)

[43] Sainz de Robles describes the uniformity achieved by Castilian poetry during this period: "A partir de 1550--aproximadamente--empieza lo que pudiéramos llamar el *segundo Renacimiento* de la poesía castellana. Ya no se lucha por la hegemonía de la tradición pura o por la del itálico modo. Las dos corrientes se han unido ya y mezclado y confundido hasta el punto de parecernos una sola, la *de siempre*, la castellana genuina" (94).

[44] "Lo que en la obra de Boscán es un ensayo de adaptación de las formas italianas, susceptible como en Santillana, de fracaso o de olvido, se salva definitivamente por la obra de Garcilaso de la Vega" (Díaz-Plaja **Poesía lírica** 94).

[45] *Culteranismo*: literary fashion of the seventeenth century (attributed in particular to the poet Góngora) characterized by the use of obscure vocabulary, latinisms and neologisms, and by overly-complex syntactical structures. These properties make it very similar to *conceptismo* (see note 30), but where the latter emphasizes the intricacy of ideas, *culteranismo* focuses more on linguistic complexity (Virgillo 380).

[46]Chandler and Schwartz remark that, "Old themes--war, love, fame, religion--were sterile, and no new ones arose to replace them. For lack of ideas, poets turned to complication the language and style of their poetry, avoiding the simple and natural and gradually adding greater stylistic complexity, ornamentation, and obscurity" (222); Sainz de Robles agrees that both *conceptismo* and *culteranismo* were nothing more than embellishments of techniques already existing in the Italiante style. Of *conceptismo* he complains: "no aporta, en general, nueva ideas, sino que las eternas *las cruza* para que así surjan distintas" (113-114); Jorge Ticknor makes no defense of either current, but attacks *culteranismo* with particular vengeance. He describes the poets exercising this technique as: "escritores que afectaban un estilo particular, elegante y falso, y que en defensa de su escuela y doctrina llevaron al último extremo la ridiculez, la extravagancia, el pedantismo y la afectación" (573).

Chapter II

Background to Women's Role in Lyric Poetry in Italy and Spain

> "...how far more convenient the Distaffe and Spindle, Needle and Thimble [are] for [maids] with a good and honest reputation, then the skill of well using a pen or writing a lofty verse with diffame dishonor, if in the same there be more erudition than virtue"
>
> **L'institutione di una Fanciulla nata nobilmente**
> Giovanni Bruto, 1553[1]

> "...la verdadera causa de no ser las mujeres doctas no es defecto del caudal, sino falta de la aplicación, porque si en nuestra crianza como nos ponen el cambray en las almohadillas y los dibuxos en el bastidor nos dieran libros y preceptores, fuéramos tan aptas para los puestos y para las cátedras como los hombres..."
>
> "Al que leyere" (Introduction)
> **Tres novelas amorosas**
> doña María de Zayas y Sotomayor, 1637

1. Early Influential Views of Women

The opposing viewpoints expressed in the above quotes exemplify the great controversy surrounding the role of women in the society of the Early Modern era. Although separated by more than one hundred years, they are representative of the dilemma faced by creative women from the fifteenth to the seventeenth century. In the first, Giovanni Bruto voices the general sentiment of the time regarding women's capacity and their appropriate place within society--one that clearly excludes active participation in literary endeavours. In the second, María de Zayas' complaint of lack of education for women and the limited opportunities available to them, bears witness to the fact that the position in which women found themselves had changed little in the

intervening years. Women who desired to participate more publicly in academic pursuits were at a distinct disadvantage.

While women of the early Modern era were the objectified inspiration of male lyric poetry, they were, paradoxically, without a voice of their own. This is supported by the fact that the overwhelming majority of authors found in the Spanish *cancioneros* or in the Italian publications of the Medieval and early Renaissance periods are male. In an attempt to explain this discrepancy, this chapter will portray the condition of Italian and Spanish women between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries and will discuss to what extent it influenced their participation or not in the literary world of the time.

Historians and scholars such as Constance Jordan, Joan Kelly, Kathleen Casey, Ruth Kelso, Ian MacLean, Mary Beth Rose, and Margaret King have investigated and reconstructed the historical realities of European women.[2] Through the examination of official court and municipal records, private ledgers and correspondence, and legal documentation and treatises of the times, they have re-focused attention on Early Modern Europe based on woman's experience. These scholars have been able to re-define woman's role and position in society during the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries and have challenged the long-accepted notion of the 'Renaissance' woman as one living within a world of expanded, individual opportunities much like her male counterpart. In contrast, they have found the Early Modern era to be one of setbacks to the general emancipation of women. Their studies help us to understand the factors which influenced female authorship (or its lack) during the Early Modern era.

A pioneer in this area was Joan Kelly, who in her essay "Did Women Really Have a Renaissance?" (1970), stated that the economic, political, and social developments which came to identify the Renaissance (more specifically in her study, the Italian Renaissance) were precisely those which "affected women adversely, so much so that there was no renaissance for women" (Bridenthal 139). According to Kelly, women "experienced a contraction of social and personal options" (Bridenthal 139) in an era considered to be the re-birth of individual expression. In **The Renaissance Notion of Woman** (1980), Ian Maclean agrees that woman's position suffered and progressively worsened during this time. He states that "at the end of the Renaissance, there is a greater discrepancy between social realities and the current notion of woman than at the beginning" (1).

Kathleen Casey, in "The Cheshire Cat: Reconstructing the Experience of Medieval Women", outlined women's increased involvement in economic, social, and political life in Europe during the feudal era and traced their eventual disassociation with most public life in the Early Modern era. In feudal societies, absentee husbands (through Crusades and wars) left women in charge of lands and estates, to make decisions involving all areas of governance. It was often a woman who collected taxes, sat in judgement over conflicts involving her dependants, raised armies and sometimes even led her troops in battle. Townswomen worked with men outside the home in many industries (textile, brewing, tavern-keeping, sword-making, smelting), some of which were later considered solely 'men's work'. Their control expanded through the inheritance of the

husband's rank as master in the guild, with the workings of which a woman would have been familiar after many long years of working alongside the spouse (Casey 229-233).

According to Casey, this greater power relied upon the understanding that it would not be abused, and would be used to support the patriarchal system already in place. As proof she notes that even when women had the opportunity (such as holding the majority membership in a guild) they did not use their power to better the lot of women as a specific group. Casey claims that this implies "an inability on the part of guildswomen to recognize that it lay in their power to do so" (Carroll 233). With the advent of a new economic, post-feudal reality, in which the guilds eventually edged out women's participation in all but the most rudimentary aspects of outside work, women lost any advantage gained during the Middle Ages: "Unable in some cases but in others unwilling to grasp public power, large numbers of women lost control over institutional adjustment to new relations of production" (Carroll 245). Based on the above, Casey also comes to the conclusion that it is erroneous to attribute "improvement in female status to the very period (Renaissance) in which the overall position actually was deteriorating."

Anne Pescatello, in "Latina Liberation: Tradition, Ideology, and Social Change in Iberian and Latin American Cultures," agrees with the opinion that women's position (specifically Spanish women in her study) in society deteriorated in Early Modern times. In her view, it was not only the changing economy and the "turbulent and uncertain conditions in medieval Iberia" (Carroll 162) which brought about a more restricted existence for women. She suggests that another factor was that after the Middle Ages there was a greater emphasis on the nuclear, patriarchal family system, of which the

primary importance was the care and education of the children. Pescatello concludes: "Within this new family milieu the position of the female seems to have changed; her role as a wife and mother became idealized in the sense that her world, her society had become prescribed and her duties were solely of the family rather that of the larger society" (Carroll 163). She became more isolated and subject to an increasingly more limited and confined moral code.

In **Renaissance Feminism: Literary Texts and Political Models**, Constance Jordan also cites economic, social, and political changes as factors contributing to the overall deterioration of status for women in the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries The shift from a more rural and feudal life (where absentee proprietors often relegated some measure of governing responsibility to the women of their family), to a more commercial existence in larger centres, allowed men to remain close to home and to maintain total control of their affairs, no longer needing the women in the family to govern in their stead As Jordan notes, "A woman who had enjoyed an effective autonomy, [...] was now required to live in accordance with what had always been recognized as the natural law of her inferiority but had until this time remained a moot affair, at least for many practical purposes" (14). According to Jordan, "Law and power had been at odds, custom empowering women to do things the law forbade; now law superseded custom" (14). Rather than a forward social progression enjoyed by many men after the Middle Ages, women maintained their limited social status or experienced an outright regression in rights and advantages.

Virginia Woolf states in her famous essay on women and fiction, that in order to write, "a woman must have money and a room of her own" (4). This prerequisite surely applies to all forms of artistic endeavour, the lyric genre included. As the aforementioned historians and scholars have clearly pointed out, women--with the exception of a few favoured by status, affluence, and some greater degree of autonomy--did not enjoy such privileges. It is, therefore, not surprising that so few women of the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries are represented as active participants in the literary world of the time.

2. Ideal Women

The predominant factor which determined women's limited involvement in literary pursuits In Italy and Spain was the undervalued position they possessed in their respective societies and the resulting lack of educational and social opportunities. The ideal woman was based on negatives: "she was distinguished by what she did not do" (Jones 91). She was not active in sexuality, in speech, in the public domain, or in any challenge of male authority. As Ann Rosalind Jones writes in "Surprising Fame: Renaissance Gender Ideologies and Women's Lyric," women were to be "unseen, unheard, untouched, unknown" (79) and because of this, occupied a "negative position" (79) in the culture of the time.

The low esteem with which the 'weaker sex' was regarded grew out of a foundation established in the teachings of the Church fathers (Saint Paul, Saint Augustine, Tertullian, Saint Jerome), and was largely supported by Aristotelian thought. According to the Greek philosopher, a female is an incomplete ('mutilated') male,[3] a

passive recipient--sexually and intellectually; she is matter. A male, on the other hand, is the completed image of God, the active force--physical and rational; he is reason, or form. Aristotle postulates that "the Form (male) is better and more divine in [his] nature than the Matter (female)" (Aristotle 133), the active is better than what is acted upon. In light of this, Constance Jordan writes: "As the male can in some sense be said to "fashion" the embryo from mere matter, he approaches a kind of divine creativity--a point surely not lost on readers who were accustomed to seeing God as the father of mankind and Christ as the husband of the church" (31). This sentiment is echoed by Saint Paul when he states: "he [man] is the image of God and reflects God's glory; but woman is the reflection of man's glory. [...] woman was created for the sake of man" (I Cor. 11:7-9).

However, views on the equality of the sexes are often contradictory and ambiguous. On the one hand, St. Paul repeatedly emphasizes woman's subordination before man: "Wives should regard their husbands as they regard the Lord [...] and as the Church submits to Christ, so should wives to their husbands, in everything" (I Eph. 5:21-24).[4] He also insists on their silence: "A woman ought not to speak, because Adam was formed first and Eve afterwards" (I Tim. 3:13-14). In his letter to the Galatians, however, he affirms women's spiritual equality: "there are no distinctions between [...] male or female: but you are all one in Christ Jesus" (3:28). Nevertheless, traditional interpretation of scriptures establishes woman was the transgressor in the Garden of Eden; her 'active' role at that time caused mankind's perdition and there is no question that because of this transgression, woman was to be subordinate to man. From this foundation it followed that silence, chastity, and submission to the will of fathers, husbands, brothers, and confessors

became the most desirable fundamental attributes in a woman. The running of a household and the raising of children were her primary roles.[5] The law and civil authorities viewed her as chattel--first of her father, then of her husband.

3. Importance of Silence

> "*Silent* women have little awareness of their intellectual capabilities. They live--selfless and voiceless--at the behest of those around them. External authorities know the truth and are all-powerful." [6]

Female participation in intellectual pursuits especially if in a public context was discouraged and was regarded as a sign of wantonness and disrespect for social structures. In "Patriarchal Territories: The Body Enclosed," Peter Stallybrass points out that silence was equated with chastity, and speech was considered by many men to be worse than promiscuity. It was a view often discussed in moral and legal treatises of the time in Italy and Spain and supported by the teachings and thoughts of classical philosophers and Church fathers. Stallybrass cites the Italian Francesco Barbaro, who writes in his treatise **On Wifely Duties,** (written in 1416 and translated into Italian from Latin in 1548): "the speech of a noble woman can be no less dangerous than the nakedness of her limbs" (127). The humanist Juan Luis Vives wrote in his **Formación de la mujer cristiana** (1523), "Pues no parece bien que la mujer regente escuelas, ni alterne con varones, ni hable en público.... Si es ella buena, le está mejor quedarse sentada en casa y de los otros desconocida. En las reuniones esté con los ojos bajos, vergonzosa y callada, de forma que la vean, sí, algunos, pero no la oiga nadie" (1001).[7] Fray Luís de León in **La perfecta casada** (1573) is in full agreement that women should be silent and enclosed: "Porque, así como la naturaleza, como dijimos y diremos, hizo á las mujeres para que encerradas

guardasen la casa, así las obliga á que cerrasen la boca" (100). Appropriately, to fulfill her role in society, a woman then was expected to be enclosed physically, sexually, and verbally: she was to remain in her home or convent, be chaste and, above all, be silent. In contrast, a harlot was distinguished by her linguistic "fullness"[8] and by her brazen frequenting of public places (Stallybrass 127). To be vocal and public, therefore, was to be immoral.

4. Convents

Notwithstanding the power enjoyed by abbesses during the Middle Ages,[9] convents epitomized the ultimate in physical and symbolic representation of enclosures. Their importance centers around the significance of virginity in western society. Woman was seen as the temptress by many of the Church fathers (St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Jerome); women's weak and carnally desirous natures made them a threat to the salvation of men. Mary Beth Rose, in **Women in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance**, discusses the medieval ecclesiastical preoccupation with the sexual purity of women (29). In order to transcend their unfortunate sexuality and assure personal salvation, women should lead a life of sexless perfection (Rose 31). Those who chose to remain virgins had to guard their state jealously. St. Jerome (ca.349-419) expressed this unequivocally in his **Letter to Eustochium** (his niece): not only did he stress the need to guard one's virginity, but emphasized that a bride of Christ should spend her earthly life fearing defilement, as virginity was her only true road to salvation (Rose 32-33): "I will say it boldly, though God can do all things He cannot raise up a virgin when once she has fallen" (St. Jerome 24). His bias is especially evident when he compares Eustochium to

her sister Blaesilla, whom he describes as being "before [Eustochium] in age but behind [her] in declining the vow of virginity" (27). After only seven months of marriage, Blaesilla is now a widow and has therefore "lost at once the crown of virginity and the pleasures of wedlock" (27). St. Jerome is unfaltering in his single-mindedness: "I praise wedlock, I praise marriage, but it is because they give me virgins" (30). It is not surprising that with strong advocates such as St. Jerome, virginity would come to play such a central role in the lives of women over many centuries.[10]

The purpose of convent life developed and changed over the succeeding centuries but the ultimate meaning of the physical enclosure did not. The women who voluntarily went to a convent or were forcibly placed there for lack of dowry or because of real or imagined social or sexual misconduct were to be chaste, silent, and removed from the public eye. Transgression could lead to severe punishment and yet more drastic enclosures (as in the case of the Nun of Monza, whose sexual transgressions within the convent walls led to her being encased in a living coffin for thirteen years[11]). At times it was a matter of exchanging one enclosure for another: women who did not want to participate in a forced marriage and the very real dangers of childbearing could sometimes opt for the monastic life which was considered an honourable alternative (Rose 41). At least in the enclosed space of the convent, a woman might find some semblance of autonomy, independence or power (i.e. abbesses) depending, of course, on her social status and extent of her dowry upon arrival.[12] Many women, especially those aspiring to more intellectual pursuits, were also able to find, in convents, an ambience conducive to reading, studying, and, in several cases, writing, activities which would have

been forbidden or, at the very least, strongly discouraged while living within a family structure.[13]

5. Education

If the ideal woman was to be private and silent, it is reasonable to infer that what was determined to be verbal promiscuity, as discussed above, would extend to the written word as well; hence, little attention was paid to the education of women of the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries. The lower classes could not hope to receive any but the most rudimentary form of instruction; it was only the upper classes that enjoyed the privilege of more extended schooling. Even noblewomen, however, were not guaranteed an education. Most women received instruction only in those things deemed necessary to their roles as wives and mothers: sewing, spinning, needlework, and the performing of household functions. Reading, commonly not encouraged, was limited to devotional books. A more comprehensive education was dependent upon the humanistic or liberal views of fathers. Although rare, there existed men who proudly encouraged their daughters to pursue a broader education; these either tutored the girls themselves or sent them to school with their sons (King 184).

During the sixteenth century women's education became the focus of a considerable polemic. The traditional view that the instruction of women was a wasted and undesirable effort was challenged, primarily, by the emergence of Protestantism which was based on the belief that each individual was to make his or her way to God through the reading of the Holy Scriptures. In light of this tenet, reading came to be considered a mandatory tool in personal salvation for men and women (King 170).

Individual humanists such as Desiderius Erasmus (1467-1536), Cornelius Agrippa von Netteshein (1486-1535), and Juan Luis Vives (1492-1540) also supported the granting of greater educational opportunities for the 'weaker sex'. The advocacy of these renowned humanists, however, was not always motivated by egalitarian ideals. Erasmus, for example, recommended learning for women because it counteracted idleness (King 181). We will see that Luis Vives shared his viewpoint but that Agrippa von Netteshein provided somewhat of an opposite perspective.

Juan Luis Vives, whose ideas and writings with regard to the education of women were influential throughout many countries in Europe,[14] primarily worked within a belief system which was confined to the status quo. In the prologue of **Formación de la mujer cristiana** (1523), he aligned himself with those who originally set down "los preceptos de la religión como de origen divino" (Vives 986)--St. Paul, St Jerome, St. Augustine, Tertullian, etc.--thereby ensuring a place for himself in the chain of authority. His personal recommendation, consistent with Protestant reasoning, was that women should have some knowledge of Latin so that they could read for themselves the Holy Scriptures, devotional works, and a few secular philosophers. This emphasis on the importance of reading and of learning some rudiments of Latin was certainly a step forward in fostering the education of women.

However, although Vives was an advocate of greater learning for women, he managed to open the door to their education only slightly since, at the same time, he specifically set limits to its goals and purpose. Vives believed that a woman should learn many things but only those which would be useful to her (King 165). After all, "Por lo

que toca a la doncella,.... no la queremos tan docta como honesta y buena" (Vives 990). Man, who was required to function in the public domain, was required to attain a broadly based knowledge while woman needed only those rudiments of learning which would enhance her morals and virtue and which would contribute to "preserve her sexual integrity" (Butler Holm 266). In Vives' words: "el cuidado exclusivo de la mujer es la pudicia. Toda vez que se hizo de ella adecuada exposición, parece que ya queda instruída suficientemente" (986). Woman did not need an education which cultivated the mind but only one which would encourage her to fulfil her duties within the domestic parameters established by her society.

Paradoxically, the many examples of females worthy of admiration and emulation that Vives extracts from history and mythology actually present women who have broken their 'private' boundaries and are remembered for venturing into the 'public' arena. Janis Butler Holm in "Struggling with the letter: Vives' Preface to The Instruction of a Christen Woman", points out: "Schematically, women's world is presented as necessarily limited and private, yet throughout the Instruction, it is chiefly women of considerable political, economic, religious, and/or intellectual power who are lauded as models of ideal womanhood" (273). Thus women were enticed into admiring women they could not dare to emulate.

Agrippa von Netteshein was motivated by more egalitarian ideals: he believed that there was no distinction between men and women's soul, reason or spirit.[15] In his view, both sexes were created for the ultimate goal of achieving salvation and should be held in the same regard. In fact, in **Sur la noblesse et l'excellence du sexe féminin, de sa**

prééminance sur l'autre sexe, published in 1537, he goes so far as to suggest the superiority of the female sex, a concept he bases on etymological and creational evidence. For his "révélation *scientifiquement* étymologique" (Agrippa 34), he shows that in Hebrew, a language he knew well and also taught, 'Adam' means *earth* and 'Eve' means *life*: "ergo la femme excelle autant par-dessus l'homme, elle lui est autant préférable que la vie est plus précieuse de la terre" (Agrippa 34). He also argues that the hierarchical nature of creation supports his radical theory. Since God began creating life from the least important (inanimate matter--water, rocks, minerals) to the most important (animate matter--plants, animals, and humans), it stands to reason that His last creation would be His best: woman[16] (Agrippa 37-41).

Having established his belief in woman's innate worth, Agrippa goes on to deplore the societal limitations which keep her in subjugation: "Ainsi, en vertu de ces injustes et détestables lois, les femmes sont contraintes de céder tout aux hommes" (Agrippa 106). This, he says, is not ordered by God, by Nature, by necessity or by reason, but by force of habit, by education (available to men but not to women) and, principally, by violence and oppression. She is kept as a prisoner ("on la tient comme prisonnière au logis" [105]) and treated as though she were incapable of a more serious and substantial occupation by teaching her nothing more than to handle a needle and thread. Agrippa believed that women, given the chance, would be quite adept at fulfilling roles in the public domain and should be allowed to participate in civic duties and especially in the proclamation of the Holy Word (Agrippa 105-106).

6. Intellectual Dignity: Italy

Social limitations and scholastic polemic notwithstanding, an increasing number of women were being educated during the Early Modern period. In Italy, they were active in the field of literary endeavours as well as in teaching. In her comprehensive study, **Women of the Renaissance**, Margaret King discusses the existence of women teachers between the fourteenth and seventeenth century in Italy (concentrated for the most part in and around Florence) who made up ten per cent of elementary school instructors. Some taught Latin grammar to boys and many taught reading in the vernacular. Teaching activity did not take place in a formal school setting (public domain) but in private households.

Learned women in Italy were not the norm but certainly did make inroads into the predominantly male academic world. Christine de Pisan[17] documents in **La Cité des Dames** (1405) that in the fourteenth century, Novella d'Andrea sometimes replaced her father, a professor of Canon Law, at the University of Bologna. De Pisan points out that, during these times, the young woman hid her great beauty with a veil so as not to distract her male students.

In fifteenth-century Italy, with the increasing importance of Humanistic interests, more women were permitted participation in classical studies. Girolamo Tiraboschi, in his fundamental **Storia della letteratura italiana** (1777-1781?), described that period as being "forse il più fecondo di tutti i precedenti in Donne celebri per sapere" (163).

Among the many intelligent women of that century who defied to some degree the prescriptions of silence and privacy, was Isotta Nogarola (1418-1466). Tiraboschi

described her as well-versed in all sciences, an excellent poet, and quite capable of participating and holding her own in the philosophical discussions of the "assemblee di eruditi" (168). Of particular renown was a dialogue, later published in Venice in 1563 (Tiraboshi 168), speculating on who bore the greater culpability in the Fall of humanity--Adam or Eve. As is to be expected, in Nogarola's version, Adam is the greater culprit--not a popular point of view considering the patriarchal social structure in which she lived.

Despite such potentially controversial views expressed in her writings, of which the above-mentioned is only one example, Isotta enjoyed the admiration and respect of many intellectuals of the time and came to be regarded as the ideal model of a Renaissance woman. There were dissenters, however. Nicoló Barbo, a Venetian nobleman of the fifteenth century, wrote this accusation of learned women with Isotta in mind: "an eloquent woman is never chaste; and the behaviour of many learned women confirms [this] truth," (Rose 12). Obviously he was not amused by her lack of respect for Christian tradition and by her flagrant overstepping of the prevailing boundaries of silence/chastity.

There existed other women of note of the fifteenth century remembered for their writings and public display of their thinking. After the death of her husband, Battista da Montefeltro (1384-1458), writing in Italian and Latin, composed sacred and secular poetry, and took part--successfully--in discussions with philosophers of her time: "lesse publicamente Filosofia e che venendo a disputa con altri Filosofi ne uscì vincitrice" (Tiraboschi 163). Costanza Varano (1426-1447) for example was able to secure the restitution of her family's wealth thanks to her well-written Latin epistles (Costa-

Zalessow 11). Laura Cereta (1469-1499) learned Latin and Greek from her father and later exchanged letters in the "stile erudito degli umanisti" (Costa-Zalessow 12) with women and men of her time. These Latin letters were collected by her in a manuscript which was copied various times and eventually published, in part, in 1640 (Costa-Zelessow 12) and then again in 1680 by Jacopo Filippo Tommasini, who also thought highly enough of her to write her biography (Tiraboschi 167). Cereta believed Nature impartial when distributing attributes to human beings and that cultural traditions teach women to rely upon and, therefore, care for and enhance their beauty to the detriment of their mind. In her writings she encouraged women to cultivate their minds with more rigorous study (Costa-Zalessow 12).

Tommasini published also, in 1636, the biography of Cassandra Fedele (1465-1567), who was also lauded extensively by the poet Poliziano. She too was well-acquainted with Greek and Latin, rhetoric, philosophy, and music. Tiraboschi informs us that she wrote verses in Latin which she sang while playing the 'cetera', published a book on Science, and that she publicly lectured at the University of Padova, although he reports this as heresay as no specific documentation could be found (6: 171-172). The fame of Cassandra Fedele's knowledge was extensive and her counsel was sought after by important heads of state such as Pope Leo X, King Louis XII of France, and Queen Isabel of Castille. According to Tiraboschi, the Republic of Venezia would not allow her to travel to Spain upon the invitation of the Queen because it was jealous of sharing "un sì pregevole suo ornamento" (6:172).

Despite these inroads into the world of academia, Italian women still lived in the midst of uneven educational opportunities. Eager, intelligent women often had to fight to acquire formal instruction. This is best exemplified by the sixteenth-century Venetian, Modesta da Pozzo. Her uncle Nicolò Doglioni, in a short biography which prefaces the publication in 1600 of her dialogue **Il merito delle donne**, informs us that his niece was taught the basics of reading and writing by nuns. The child possessed a remarkable memory, and an obvious affinity and talent for the written word; this was recognized, praised and encouraged by providing her with books to be studied on her own (Fonte 5). Nevertheless, not satisfied with her limited self-instruction, she was able to procure a more formalized education for herself by begging her brother to share with her what he learned each day in school. Later, under the *nom de plume* of 'Moderata Fonte', she actively championed women's intellectual capabilities and their right to be educated.

7. Intellectual Dignity: Spain

With the rise of Humanism in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth-century Spain, women acquired a previously unknown 'intellectual dignity' (Navarro 12). They were able to participate--although still in a limited manner--in the scientific and literary world which had previously been closed to them. The University of Salamanca accepted as students daughters of the nobility, of literati, and of the *bourgeoisie*. Many of these became known as *latinas*, for they studied the classics and wrote in Latin (Navarro 16).

On the one hand, the entrance of these women into a university setting represented a great step forward for the emancipation and educational freedom of Spanish women in general, but these educated women also became a source of ridicule up to and well

beyond the seventeenth century. Well-respected dramatists such as Lope de Vega in **La dama boba** (1613) and **La vengadora de las mujeres** (1621) and Calderón in **No hay burlas con el amor** (1636?) mocked what they saw as excesses by female pseudo-intellectuals.[18] In **No hay burlas con el amor**, don Juan de Mendoza describes doña Beatriz:

> De su ingenio es tan amante,
> que en todos los usos nuevos
> entra, y de ninguno sale
> [...]
> y con ser tan enfadosa
> en estas cosas, no es esto
> lo peor, sino el hablar
> con tan estudiado afecto,
> que, critica impertinente,
> varios poetas leyendo,
> no habla palabras jamás
> sin frases y sin rodeos,
> tanto, que ninguno puede
> entenderla sin comento. (Calderón 498)

Later on in the play an exasperated Don Pedro, Beatriz's father, admonishes her to end her pseudo-intellectual speech:

> Beatriz, bueno está:
> basta lo afectado ya,
> lo enfadoso basta, basta: (510)

In the same speech, he goes on to voice the status quo with regards to women's education:

> Aquí el estudio acabó,
> aquí dio fin la poesía.
> Libro en casa no ha de haber
> de latín, que yo le alcance.
> Unas <<Horas>> en romance
> le bastan a una mujer.
> Bordar, labrar y coser

sepa sólo: deje al hombre
el estudio... Y no te asombre
esto; que te he de matar
si algo te escucho nombrar
que no sea por su nombre. (510)

En **La dama boba**, Lope de Vega reflects similar sentiments and opinions, again through the character of the father, Octavio. Of his intellectual daughter Nise Octavio says:

Pero ver tan discreta y arrogante
a Nise, más me pudre y martiriza,
y que de bien hablada y elegante
el vulgazo la aprueba y soleniza. (Lope de Vega 72)

Octavio, like don Pedro, also offers his formula for the perfect wife:

Está la discreción de una casada
en amar y servir a su marido;
en vivir recogida y recatada,
honesta en el hablar y en el vestido;
en ser de la familia respetada,
en retirar la vista y el oído,
en enseñar los hijos, cuidadosa,
preciada más de limpia que de hermosa. (Lope 72-73)

The caricature of intellectual women was the source of very successful comic theatre for male dramatists, but it did little to legitimize women's authentic intellectual curiosity and zeal. A popular saying of the time sums up the prevalent feeling and indicates that these educated women were, overall, not taken seriously: "ni moza adivina, ni mujer latina" (Navarro 16).

Notwithstanding the negative reputation of many of these *latinas*, several were able to gain recognition in Spain and abroad. Francisca de Nebrija, daughter of Elio Antonio de Nebrija,[19] replaced her father at the University of Alcalá. Lucía Medrano

taught classical authors at the University of Salamanca. Beatriz Galindo dedicated her life to the study of philosophy, science, and above all, classical cultures; she taught Latin to Queen Isabel of Castille and advised her on matters of state. The Spanish aristocrat, Luisa Sigea who, like Francisca de Nebrija, was greatly influenced by her father,[20] became an integral part of the court in Lisbon, where she dedicated herself to her studies and wrote poetry in Latin and in the vernacular. As a result, her fame spread throughout all of Europe (Navarro 19). M. Maulde de la Clavière in **The Women of the Renaissance: A Study in Feminism** writes of Isabella Rosera who preached in the cathedral in Toledo and cites other women of high rank in fifteenth and sixteenth-century Spain such as Doña María Pacheco de Mendoza, the Marchioness of Monteagudo, Caterina Ribera, and Isabel de Córdoba who knew Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. He also cites evidence of two women professors of rhetoric at the Universities of Salamanca and of Alcalá, although their names have not survived.

8. Linguistic Developments

Along with increased access to education, two significant social and linguistic developments of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries also contributed to the greater participation of women in the literary arts in both Italy and Spain. The first was the increasing acceptance of the vernacular as a literary medium. In Italy, beginning with the poets of Frederick's court in Sicily and continuing with the great writers such as Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio, the vulgar tongue was gaining in status and literary validity. Pietro Bembo's views which so greatly influenced the attitude towards literature in sixteenth-century Italy, were also of paramount importance in "the formation of a national

tongue" (Bassanese 11), that is, of Italian, modelled primarily on the Tuscan vernacular. In his **Prose della volgar lingua**, published in 1525, he declares:

> Questo medesimo della nostra volgare M. Cino e Dante e il Petrarca e il Boccaccio e degli altri di lontano prevedendo, e con essa molte cose nel verso e nella prosa componendo, l'hanno tanta autorità acquistata e dignità, quanta ad essi è bastato per divenire famosi e illustri, non quanta per aventura si può in sommo a lei dare e accrescere scrivendo (Bembo **Prose** 11).

What Bembo viewed as validation of the vulgar tongue by the great writers of preceding centuries was also an opening of literary doors to women of such inclinations. Fiora Bassanese notes that "the emergence of the female writer in the sixteenth century was made possible by the growing acceptance of the 'volgare' as a suitable intellectual medium" (11). This view is shared by Carlo Dionisotti who states: "Il fenomeno della rigogliosa letteratura femminile italiana a metá del Cinquecento anzitutto si spiega con l'improvvisa, larghissima apertura linguistica di quegli anni" (192). Since women's educational opportunities were more limited than those of their male counterparts, validating the language with which these women were most familiar allowed them to take a more active literary role. They could not only read the important works which were to serve as models but could also compose their own thoughts in the language they knew best.

The second notable development which would facilitate Italian women's access into the literary world during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were the academies and the salons. These gatherings permitted the thinkers, literati, artists, and other interested members of society to engage in intellectual exchanges as well as in pastimes

of a more frivolous nature[21]. Ladies with much more leisure time than their counterparts of the lower classes kept salons known as *ridotti.*[22] Often, circles of "artistic cliques" (Bassanese 9) would form around one dominant personality which would sometimes evolve into a more formalized *accademia,*[23] with a focus on poetry, linguistic issues, and Italian literature. Society women of the sixteenth century were welcome participants at these gatherings where the great writers and thinkers of the time could come together and share their ideas and creations. For example, Gaspara Stampa became a member of the Accademia dei Dubbiosi in Venice (Bassanese 135n2), and Laura Battiferi Ammannati was accepted into the Accademia degli Insorditi in Urbino and into the Accademia degli Intronati in Siena (Forlani 68). Women's involvement with these functions enabled them to learn from those around them and share their own works. Literary *cenacoli* were also hosted by Tullia d'Aragona, Veronica Gambara, Franceschina Baffo, and Veronica Franco (de Maio 26), while Vittoria Colonna was known to have hosted a *cenacolo* of a more religious nature (De Maio 24).

The social status enjoyed by these and other 'socially visible' women of the era eased their way into the *accademie* and possibly into the literary world. In **Three Women Poets**, Frank Warnke contends that Medieval and Early Modern women who aspired to be artists required much more than great talent and an incredible determination to surmount the obstacles and prejudices placed in their path: he submits that it was also necessary for them to have a well-defined 'social identity' (12). Women of higher standing enjoyed better access to education and their social status often granted them a greater credibility in the eyes of their male counterparts. Ann Rosiland Jones agrees: "The

solitary poet goes unread; the famous poet is socially constituted, invented through the gaze, the commentary, the assessment of others" (92).

Warnke divides the major identities into four categories. Three of these were initiated in Medieval times: the *grande dame*, the *femme savante*, and the nun.[24] In contrast, the *cortigiana onesta*, originated in sixteenth-century Venice where it became "a recognized Venetian institution, enjoying not only toleration but indeed something that amounted to respect." (Warnke 15). Other northern Italian cities soon adopted the institution as their own as did the court of Lyon, in France (Warnke 15).

Warnke suggests that the role of the *cortigiana onesta* was comparable to the one of the ancient Greek figure of the *hetaira*, which appeared around the fifth century B.C. In the misogynist, patriarchal and military Greek society "The respectable woman was expected, in a sense required, to be obedient, industrious, available, and dumb--an agent for running the upper class male's household, bearing his children, and supporting the status quo" (Warnke 14). For a more interesting, exciting exchange, the *hetaira* emerged: a prostitute who could provide both physical and intellectual stimulation. The courtesan fulfilled the same role in Italian Renaissance society, gathering around her patrons and influential friends. An important distinction, however, between the *cortigiana* and a more common prostitute was her adherence to only one patron/lover at a time, who provided her with monetary support as well as "a position of quasi-respectability" (Warnke 15).

The *cortigiana onesta* (the 'honest courtesan') was, generally, a woman of some means and of good educational background, who provided sexual and intellectual companionship to her patrons. She could discuss topics of cultural and intellectual

complexity and could also entertain her patrons with music and literature, often of her own creation.

The male clientele was of paramount importance to the *cortigiana*, especially one who might aspire to literary recognition. Although no definite proof exists, it is generally believed that the women poets Gaspara Stampa, Tullia d'Aragona, and Veronica Gambara belonged to this 'social identity'. Anne Rosalind Jones, speaking of Tullia d'Aragona, points out that the poet's social and literary reputation depended upon her male clientele, those "Venetian and Florentine literati and courtiers with whom she traded sexual favours in return for literary recognition" (87). The courtesan did not attempt to defy public opinion which equated verbal forwardness in females with sexual promiscuity; she merely used it to her advantage and profited by it (Jones 91). Women in this category, to borrow Jones' phrase, were "notorious before they were famous" (92).

Whereas the *cortigiana* was a popular figure in the more secular sixteenth-century Italy, this particular 'identity' did not meet with acceptance in Spain and Portugal, where religious and moral constraints were much more rigid. The Iberian version, the *cortesana honesta*, followed the concept delineated by Baldassare Castiglione in the Third Book of **Il Cortegiano** without the sexual dimension which had been added and, for the most part, condoned in Italy.

The perfect woman of the court was prudent, generous, good, discreet, and, of course, a good wife and mother.[25] These were qualities which had already been established as necessary to all women, but Castiglione added others which would be of particular importance to a woman of the court: she should possess the ability to carry on

pleasant conversations on many diverse subjects so as to entertain "ogni sorte d'omo" (210); she should have a calming and modest way about her; she should demonstrate wit and intelligence, "una pronta vivacità d'ingegno" (210).[26] Castiglione's thoughts as expressed in **Il Cortegiano** became a code followed by ladies of the higher classes, who abided by the artificial and restrictive social conventions of court life; these were not women who openly challenged the code of silence and enclosure.

9. Women Poets: Italy

Although there is evidence of earlier feminine lyric poetry on the Italian peninsula--such as the three poems penned by the thirteenth-century 'Compiuta Donzella'--it is really during the sixteenth century that Italian women gained a relatively prominent place in the literary world. Prior to this time, writing by women consisted predominantly of religious prose: Angela da Foligno (1248-1309); Saint Catherine of Siena (1347-1380); Alessandra Macinghi Strozzi (1407-1471); Lucrezia Tornabuoni de'Medici (1425-1482), who also wrote a small number of poems of a biblical nature; Camilla Battista Varano (1458-1524); and Antonia Giannotti Pulci (1452c.-?), author of four sacred plays.[27]

Despite the traditional subordination of women in society and, as we shall see, the difficulties of publishing, the *Cinquecento* saw a proliferation of Italian women lyric poets when compared to past literary participation. A greater opportunity for their education, sanction of the vulgar as a legitimate literary medium, and greater social contact through the *accademie,* all joined together to provide fecund ground for women's creativity. Lyric poets of that century were Veronica Gambara (1485-1550), Vittoria

Colonna (1490-1547), the great friend of Michelangelo Buonarroti and the first woman to present her poetry as a corpus in a *canzoniere* (**Rime profane** 1538), Tullia d'Aragona (1510c.-1556), Chiara Matraini (1514-1597), Laura Terracina (1519-1577), Isabella di Morra (1520-1546), Gaspara Stampa (1523c.-1554), Laura Battiferri Ammannati (1523-1589), Veronica Franco (1546-1591), and Francesca Turini Bufalini (1553-1641).

What most of these women had in common was the friendship or mentorship of respected literary men. Vittoria Colonna and Veronica Gambara were widowed noblewomen, admired for their courage and dignity. Both enjoyed the company and respect of many illustrious friends and literati of the time: Pietro Bembo, Bernardo Tasso, and Ludovico Ariosto, to name only a few. Tullia d'Aragona, Veronica Franco and, quite possibly, Gaspara Stampa, as already discussed, were celebrated *cortigiane oneste* who benefitted from their involvement with the *accademie* and the salons of the times. The relationships forged in these circles provided support and mentorship which were invaluable to their success as writers.

10. Women Poets: Spain

In Spain, social and educational opportunities for women were even more limited than in Italy and, therefore, the challenge to women writers was greater. Ana Navarro, in her **Antología poética de escritoras de los siglos XIV y XVII**, traces evidence of female writers to the Roman and Muslim occupation of the Iberian Peninsula. Both these regimes were more tolerant of women's participation in literature than the Christian kingdoms. Thus we know of the existence of the Roman women poets Pola Argentaria and Teófila, and the Muslim al-Abbadiyya and Hafsa al-Rumay-Kiyya y Butayna. A *cantiga* by doña

Mayor Arias, dated 1403, a lament written about her husband's departure to Samarkand,[28] appears to be the earliest evidence of Christian women's writing. Its female authorship, however, cannot be completely substantiated, and therefore it is Florencia Pinar, at the end of the fifteenth century, who is considered the first female poet to write in Castilian.[29]

Confirmation of the existence of earlier women lyric poets in other cultures--Roman, Muslim and Provençal--prompts Navarro to contend that whenever the opportunity for education and participation in literature presented itself, women took advantage of it and became very willing participants. In view of this, it is understandable that as of the sixteenth century they would become more highly visible on the literary stage. It was during that period that the lyric poetry in Spain reached its apex. As was pointed out earlier in this chapter, the reign of the Catholic Monarchs brought about a greater interest in literature and Humanistic concerns and it was during this period in Spanish history that Castilian had established its linguistic dominance in the Peninsula. This last factor of its own had an enormous impact on women writers: just as the preeminence of the *volgare* had allowed Italian female poets to enter the lyrical arena, so the acceptance of Castilian as a literary medium permitted more women to participate by using the language with which they were most familiar.

With the advent of the Counter-Reformation in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century there came a general set-back in the educational and social opportunities that Spanish women had gained. Although feminist debates continued on the theoretical plane,[30] the reality of women's existence regressed to pre-Humanistic levels. The ideal woman became increasingly based on Fray Luis de León's **La perfecta**

casada (1573). In this work he describes the virtuous female as one with little God-given intellect,[31] one who should accept her lot in life within the confines of her house and under the control of her husband. Despite the few inroads made into higher education for women at the beginning of the sixteenth century, it now became an even more rare commodity. As a result, many women (who might not have under different circumstances), turned to convent life where greater access to reading and writing raised the level of education of nuns beyond that of most women.

Thus we note that in Spain, the greatest number of women poets of the sixteenth and seventeenth century--an era which became the richest in women's literary participation despite the bleak educational situation--are nuns. Among the most well-known are those women who belong to the mystic tradition of Spanish poetry, many of whom wrote secular poetry as well: Santa Teresa de Jesús (1515-1582), undoubtedly the most renowned Spanish woman writer of the time; Sor María de la Antigua (1566-1617), Sor Jerónima de la Asunción (1555-1530); Sor Marcela de San Félix (1605-1688), doña Luisa Caravajal y Mendoza (1566-1614);[32] Sor Luisa de la Ascensión (1565-1684); Sor Violante del Cielo (1601-1693), who wrote in both Portuguese and Castilian; Doña Ana Francisca Abarca de Bolea (1623/4-?); and Sor María de Santa Isabel, who wrote under the pseudonym of Marcia Belisarda.[33]

The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries boasted far more religious women poets than secular, but the latter category was also admirably represented. The most well-known of the secular poets is María de Zayas y Sotomayor (1590-?), an openly feminist writer who, like Modesta da Pozzo in Italy, challenged the imposed lack of educational

opportunities for women. Her poetry is interspersed within *novelas* which focus on the joys and disillusionment of love. Next to Santa Teresa de Jesús, she is the most widely recognized and published Spanish woman writer of that era. Doña Cristobalina Fernández de Alarcón (1576?-1646) was also very well-known during her life, but her fame has not withstood the test of time as has that of the two poets just mentioned. There remain only fifteen poems attributed to her. Poets who have not enjoyed such renown are Catalina Clara Ramírez de Guzmán (1611-1663) and Doña Leonor de la Cueva y Sylva (?-1650).

Although scarce, there is evidence of poetry composed by other women writers who participated in the popular custom of penning verses dedicated to famous personages, or commemorative poems in honour of special (usually royal) occasions--baptisms, weddings, coronations and deaths. During an era when publication of poetic works was difficult for Cervantes and Góngora (Navarro, p.50)--let alone for women poets--the practice of writing laudatory verses seems to have been one way of making oneself heard, of participating in some way in the literary process.

In conclusion, Italian and Spanish women lyric poets of the sixteenth and seventeenth century occupied, ultimately, a relatively insignificant position in the literary world of the time. Any discourse which analyzes not only their work, but their place as authors within the predominantly male literary context, must include a discussion of their social milieu and of the barriers which they faced in attaining literary inclusion. These barriers were firmly in place within the fabric of the sixteenth and seventeenth-century societies of Italy and Spain, having based their justification upon the thoughts and writings of antiquity. History has shown, however, that when educational opportunities

within those centuries expanded to include more participation by women--especially by those women whose social status permitted greater leisure and commanded the respect of important men of the literary milieu--they too became active participants in the world of letters, even though inclusion in the predominantly male canon was still an unattainable goal for the majority of women poets.

[1] Published in Ann Rosalind Jones, "Surprising Fame: Renaissance Ideologies and Women's Lyric," in **The Poetics of Gender**, (New York, 1986), p.76.

[2] For a more detailed discussion of women's position in Medieval and Renaissance societies see Margaret King, **Women of the Renaissance**, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991); Emilie Bergmann, "The Exclusion of the Feminine in the Cultural Discourse of the Golden Age: Juan Luis Vives and Fray Luis de León," in **Religion, Body and Gender in Early Modern Spain**, ed. Alain Saint- Saëns, (San Francisco: Mellen Research University Press, 1991); Constance Jordan, **Renaissance Feminism**, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990); Electa Arenal and Stacey Schlau, "*Leyendo yo y escribiendo ella*: The Convent as Intellectual Community." **Journal of Hispanic Philology** 8 (1989): 214-219; Romeo De Maio, **Donna e Rinascimento**, (Milano: Arnaldo Mondadori Editatore, 1987); Frank Warnke, **Three Women Poets**, (London: Associated University Press, 1987); Mary Beth Rose, **Women in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance (Literary and Historical Perspectives)**, (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1986); Ann Rosalind Jones, "Surprising Fame: Renaissance Gender Ideologies and Women's Lyric," in **The Poetics of Gender**, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986); Peter Stallybrass, "Rewriting the Renaissance," (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986); Christiane Klapisch-Zuber, **Women, Family and Ritual in Renaissance Italy** (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985); Antony Van Beysterveldt, "Revisión de los debates feministas del siglo XV y las novelas de Juan de Flores" (**Hispania** 64, 1981); Ian Mclean, **The Renaissance Notion of Woman**, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980); Sherrill Cohen, "Asylums for Women in Counter-Reformation Italy," in **Women in Reformation and Counter-Reformation Europe: Public and Private Worlds**," ed. Sherrin Marshall, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980); Patricia H. Labalme, ed. **Beyond their Sex: Learned Women of the European Past** (New York: New York University Press, 1980); Joan Kelly, "Did Women have a Renaissance?" in **Becoming Visible: Women in European History,** eds. Renate Bridenthal and Clauda Koonz, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1977); Kathleen Casey, "The Cheshire Cat: Reconstructing the Experience of Medieval Woman," in **Liberating Women's History: Theoretical and Critical Essays**, ed. Carroll Berenice, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1976); Petronella, Wilhelmina Bomli, **La femme dans l'Espagne du siècle d'or**, (Amsterdam: Martinus Mijhoff, 1950).

[3] See Aristotle, **Generation of Animals**, trans. A.L. Peck, (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1953) p.15.

[4] As suggested by Constance Jordan in **Renaissance Feminism** p.25

[5] Tertullian states in "The Apparel of Women": "Let whiteness flow from simplicity,... paint your eyes with demureness, your mouth with silence;... bow your heads to your husbands... Keep you hands busy with spinning and stay at home." **The Fathers of the Church**, (New York: Fathers of the Church Inc., 1959) p.149.

[6] From **Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice, and Mind** by Field Belenky, Mckvicker Clinchy, Rule Godberger, and Mattuck Tarule (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1986), 134.

[7] Emilie Bergman in "The Exclusion of the Feminine in the Cultural Discourse of the Golden Age: Juan Luis Vives and Fray Luis de León," in **Religion, Body and Gender in Early Modern Spain**. (San Francisco: Mellen Research University Press, 1991), dwells at length on the aspect of 'silence' in Vives' discusion of women, and of mothers in particular. She determines that "Vives' discussion is based on silence and absence, the silence and absence of women themselves" (128).

[8] This term is used by Stallybrass to represent the degree of a woman's participation in public speech and life.

[9] Many abbesses in the Middle ages enjoyed complete power--temporal and spiritual--over their territories and the people who lived within them. Unlike the feudal ladies who ruled in the name of their absent husbands, the abbess ruled in her own name, because of her station within the hierarchy of the abbey (Kelly-Gadol 145). For more information on the degree of power exercised by abesses in the Middle Ages, see also **The Lady was a Bishop** by Joan Morris (New York: MacMillan Co., 1973)

[10] The custom within the Christian tradition of consecrating virgins and giving them the veil appeared as early as the second century A.D. (Cita-Malard 13). They originally lived within the protective enclave of the family home but later gathered with other virgins and widows for a life of prayer and austerity. *Enclosures* were established by decree of Boniface VIII (1294-1303) to protect nuns from the barbarian invasions (Cita-Malard 14).

[11] The Nun of Monza actually received a life sentence, but only served thirteen years. Her sentence states: "Venga posta in una piccola cella dentro il detto monastero e vi sia rinchiusa; si ostruisca inoltre l'entrata di detto carcere con un muro, con pietre e calcestruzzo e sia completamente chiusa" (Vigorelli 676). She was subsequently walled into a tiny compartment measuring 'three arms wide, five arms long' (Vigorelli 41), with only two small openings, one for food, the other for fresh air and a little light.

For a very detailed account of the circumstances leading up to the incarceration of suor Virginia Maria de Leyva, including trial transcripts, see Giancarlo Vigorelli, ed., **Vita e processo di suor Virginia Maria de Leyva Monaca di Monza**, (Milano: Garzanti Ed., 1985).

[12] For more in-depth studies on convents see: Mary Beth Rose, **Women in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance: Literary and Historical Perspectives**, (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1986); Constance Jordan, **Renaissance Feminism Literary Texts and Political Models**, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990); Margaret King, **Women of the Renaissance**, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991); Cita-Malard, **Religious**

Orders of Women, (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1964).

[13] Certainly, even those women fortunate enough to be able to study and write within the convent walls were not immune to restrictions and censorship. Many a confessor either forbade such activities outright or exercised strict editorial rights. Some actually encouraged the writing for spiritual purposes then insisted on its destruction, as in the case of sor Marcela de San Felix and sor María de la Antigua (Olivares 13).

[14] Vives' treatise, **Instrucción de la mujer cristiana** (1523), circulated throughout Europe in 40 editions and was translated into English, Dutch, French, German, Spanish, and Italian (King 164).

[15] In **Sur la noblesse et l'excellence du sexe féminin, de sa préeminance sur l'autre sexe** Agrippa countered the notion of man's supremacy over woman based on Genesis 3:16 with the fact that the Resurrection nullified the blame placed on Eve in the Garden of Eden. He insisted that those who would delve carefully into scripture would find no longer a preferred sex: "...Dieu ne fait point acceptation des personnes: car en Christ ce n'est ni mâle ni femelle, mais nouvelle créature" (107).

[16] Agrippa likens the creation of woman to the introduction of a queen to her sumptuously prepared court: "il l'a faite la dernière, parce qu'elle devait être la reine de l'univers: si bien qu'avant de la lui créer il lui a bâti un palais. Dieu a donc introduit la femme dans le monde, comme dans la cour qu'il lui destinait, et qu'il avait orné, enrichi, paré, embelli avec une magnificence digne d'une telle monarque" (40).

[17] Christine de Pisan (1363-1431) was born of Italian parents but lived most of her life in France. She is the first known free-lance woman writer who championed the right of women to take their place with men in the intellectual world. Like Modesta da Pozzo, María de Zayas y Sotomayor, and Sor Juana de la Cruz after her, she proposed that were women allowed the same educational opportunities as men they would not only prove to be their educational equal, but in some cases, their intellectual superior. Her **Cité des dames** (1405) sings women's praises by recounting great deeds attributed to individual females throughout history. This in itself was nothing new, especially given the pro-feminist literature of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The importance of Christine de Pisan's work lies in her unique approach: she attempts to re-frame the feminine role in history by approaching it from a point of reference outside of patriarchy (see Jordan 104-116).

[18] Melveena McKendrick in **Woman and Society in the Spanish Drama of the Golden Age: A Study of the Mujer Varonil**, (London: Cambridge University Press, 1974, p.219), suggests that the mockery of the dramatists was directed at the *culteranismo* practised by the *latinas*. She suggests that, because women were educationally disadvantaged and were relative new-comers to the intellectual world, they may have been more gullible and used excesses in speech to attain 'instant culture'.

[19] Elio Antonio de Nebrija is the grammarian and rhetoritician who taught at various universities in Spain and penned the first known grammar of a vulgar tongue (Castilian) in Europe (Alborg 519).

[20] Diego de Sigea was well-versed in ancient cultures and languages and took a great interest in his daughters' Humanistic education (Navarro 18).

[21] Information on the *accademie* of the times can be found in Eric Cochrane, **Italy 1530-1630**, (London: Longman Group U.K. Ltd., 1988) pp. 63-64; Romeo de Maio, **Donna e Rinascimento**, (Milano: Arnaldo Mondadori, 1987) pp.23-26); Fiora A. Bassanese, **Gaspara Stampa**, (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1982) pp.9-11, 127n11.

[22] Gaspara Stampa's mother, Cecilia, for example, "opened her home as a *ridotto* inviting the young dandies, intellectuals and pseudointellectuals, musicians, poets, independent women, soldiers and prelates, nobles and foreigners that formed the gay centre of Venetian society" (Bassanese 7).

[23] *Accademie* were popular in fifteenth and seventeenth-century Italy beginning with the Platonic Academy of Florence and spreading quickly to other centres such as Rome and Venice. They were originally devoted to studies of a classical nature, but later evolved into groups whose primary focus was the discussion of Italian literature and all its manifestations (Bassanese 127n11).

[24] The *grande dame* was a medieval figure whose higher station in life (with its wealth, servants and greater opportunity for leisure) allowed her freedom to pursue her personal inclinations; the *femme savante* was a medieval *bourgeoise* (e.g. Christine de Pisan) who was respected and tolerated for her literary activity; the nun--in particular the woman of higher social standing, who was not required to work within the convent--could spend her time reading, meditating and writing (Warnke 13-15).

[25] The virtues of such a woman included: "la prudenzia, la magnanimità, la continenza e molte altre, e medesimamente quelle condizioni che si convengono a tutte le donne, come l'esser bona e discreta, il saper governar le facultà del marito el la casa sua e i figlioli" (Castiglione 210).

[26] "...dico che a quella che vive in corte parmi convenirsi sopra ogni altra cosa una certa affabilità piacevole, per la qual sappia gentilmente intertenere ogni sorte d'omo con ragionamenti grati ed onesti ed accommodati al tempo e loco ed alla qualità di quella persona con cui parlerà, accompagnando coi costumi placidi e modesti e con quella onestà che sempre ha da componer tutte le sue azioni, una pronta vivacità d'ingegno " (Castiglione 210).

[27] For more information on early Italian women writers, refer to Natalia Costa-Zalessow, **Scrittrici italiane dal XII al XX secolo**, (Ravenna: A. Longo Ed., 1982); Alma Forlani e Marta Savini, eds. **Scrittrici d'Italia**, (Roma: Newton Compton ed.,

1991), Luigi Baldacci, **Lirici del Cinquecento** (Milano: Longanesi, 1975); Ettore Bonora, "Il classicismo dal Bembo al Guarini", **Storia della Letteratura Italiana,** Vol. IV, Emilio Cecchi, Natalino Sapegno eds., (Milano: Garzanti Editore, 1966), pp.241-258; Benedetto Croce, "La lirica cinquecentesca", **La letteratura italiana,** (Bari: Editori Laterza, 1963); Carlo Salinari, ed., "Il Cinquecento" 3, **Antologia della letteratura italiana,** (Milano: Rizzoli Editore, 1966), pp.201-216. Girolamo Tiraboschi, **Storia della letteratura italiana,** Napoli: 1780).

[28] The poem is the wife's lament to the sea which has taken her love from her. It is distinguished from most male-written courtly love poems because of its focus on matrimonial love as opposed to adulterous love (Perez Priego 11).

[29] For more information on Spanish women writers in history see Miguel Angel Pérez Priego, **Poesía femenina en los Cancioneros** (Madrid: Editorial Castalia, 1989); Julián Olivares and Elizabeth S. Boyce, **Tras el espejo la musa escribe: Lírica femenina de los Siglos de Oro,** (Madrid: Siglo XXI de España Editores, 1993); Alan Deyermond, "Spain's First Women Writers" in **Women in Hispanic Literature: Icons and Fallen Idols,** ed. Beth Miller, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983) pp. 27-52.

[30] During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries there was a proliferation of misogynist and pro-feminist literature in both Italy and Spain, most of it, male-originated. The debate, begun with Jean de Meung's **Le roman de la Rose,** led to a series of writings which either attacked or praised women. Boccaccio wrote a scathing invective called **Il Corbaccio** and supposedly balanced it with a rather ambiguous 'defense', **De claris mulieribus.** Italian defenses were written by Ludovico Ariosto, Sperone Speroni, and Alessandro Piccolomini to name but a few. In Spain, writers such as Alfonso Martínez de Toledo and Pere Toroellas denounced women in their writings while others--Diego de Valera, Juan Rodríguez del Padrón, and Fray Martín de Córdoba--countered with elaborate defenses. Women writers also wrote in their own defense, beginning with Christine de Pisan in France in the fifteenth century and, notably, María de Zayas y Sotomayor in Spain, and Modesta da Pozzo and Arcangela Tarabotti in Italy.

[31] Fray Luis says: "...así como a la mujer buena y honesta la naturaleza no l hizo para el estudio de las ciencias, ni para los negocios de dificultades, sino para un solo oficio simple y doméstico, así les limitó el entender, y, por consiguiente, les tasó las palabras y las razones..." (León 100).

[32] Although Luisa de Caravajal rejected both marriage and convent life, she was imbued with passionate religious feelings and devoted her life to spreading the Catholic faith while actively seeking her own martyrdom (Navarro 33-34).

[33] Dates of Belisarda's birth and death are unknown. It is assumed she was born at the beginning of the seventeenth century and it is known she was still living in 1646.

Chapter III

The poetry of Chiara Matraini attests to the experiences of a poet whose life circumstances in sixteenth-century Italy did not correspond to those of the canonized female poets of the time. Her corpus attained some measure of recognition, but was certainly not considered among the core works of the era. To gain insight into why this so, it is necessary to examine her work within the context of the established canon.[1] The factors to be analyzed are those which determined literary canonization in the sixteenth century: the critical views of Pietro Bembo, the validation of use of the vulgar tongue as a literary medium, and the burgeoning world of publishing and its role in determining the canonical acceptance of the women poets of the era.

1. The Canon and Pietro Bembo

The sixteenth-century canon of lyric poetry was clearly influenced and defined by the "caposcuola" (Aurigemma 60), the Venetian humanist, Pietro Bembo (1470-1547). He is considered by critics and scholars[2] to be the chief authority by which the canon of the time was configured. As such, his beliefs and guidelines provide the framework for the analysis of the poetry of the Italian woman poet discussed in this study. His authority in this regard rests on the influence he exerted in resolving key linguistic issues which concerned writers and scholars of sixteenth-century Italy. It was Bembo who emerged as the clear victor in a literary battle of language and style which preoccupied the key literary figures of the time. He, above all others, influenced the criteria for good writing and thus set a standard which was closely followed and adhered to.

The Venetian nobleman first won the admiration and respect of his colleagues by solving one of the many language dilemmas of the era: which form of ancient Latin should replace the Medieval Latin the humanists no longer accepted (Cochrane 19). He solved this predicament by arguing a principle he would later apply to the 'vulgar' question: all great literature is a result of a language which has evolved to perfection and is used masterfully by certain authors[3]. Since the Romans themselves had believed Cicero (for prose) and Virgil (for poetry) represented the peak of elegant expression, then these two ancient writers should serve as the models for anyone wanting to write well in Latin, even in the sixteenth century (Cochrane 19).

The next language question to occupy him was that of the use of the vulgar tongue for literature and if this were indeed acceptable, which version of the vulgar tongue would be most suitable. Bembo's position on language represented a middle path between those who staunchly adhered to Latin as the only formal, literary language, those who preferred the spoken version of the Florentine vernacular as it had evolved up to the mid-sixteenth century, and the promoters of 'Italian', a "volgare cortigiano" (Cecchi 4 169), that is the vulgar idiom in the courts of the time, the Roman court in particular.[4] As he had done for the Latin question, he returned to his basic axiom of a perfectly evolved language exquisitely expressed by a master. Bembo declared himself a strong proponent[5] of the Tuscan *volgare*, as the primary medium for the writing of literature; not, however, the idiom spoken during his lifetime, but rather the Tuscan language as illustrated by the exemplary writers of the Trecento, as represented by Petrarch and Boccaccio in particular (Salinari 1287).

This codification of the vulgar tongue was outlined in convincing detail in Bembo's very influential **Prose della volgar lingua** (1525). In this work, the scholar promoted Boccaccio (for fiction) and Petrarch (for poetry) as the optimum examples; these were the masters upon whose writing writers should model their own. As he explained: "e molto meglio faremo noi altresì, se con lo stile del Boccaccio e del Petrarca ragioneremo nelle nostre carte, che non faremmo a ragionare col nostro" (Bembo **Prose** 41).

Bembo's **Prose** represented, in minute detail, his codification of the vulgar tongue, and also his enthusiastic endorsement of the Petrarchan style, a fashion which permeated and dominated the lyrical tradition of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The ideal values championed by Bembo were balance, measure, grace, decorum, and prudence, "valori...che si vedono incarnati esemplarmente nella lirica volgare del Petrarca" (Sole 6). Given the formalized atmosphere of the time, governed as it was by the courtly gentility of the **Cortegiano**, it is not surprising that these values were generally accepted, and that the precepts outlined by Bembo were so readily adopted.

His influence, therefore, was not limited to words on paper; more important, perhaps, was that Bembo's revival of the Petrarchan model helped to articulate the lifestyle of sixteenth-century aristocratic and intellectual circles. Antonino Sole calls the **Prose** "la più esemplare codificazione del petrarchismo cinquecentesco" (5), one which, in his view, not only upheld the optimum value of Petrarchan style and use of language, but reflected the behavioural and ethical values of the *gentiluomo* as defined in Castiglione's **Il Cortegiano**. Binni echoes this conviction by stating that the values

championed by Bembo "corrispondono alle esigenze più idealizzanti della civiltà rinascimentale non solo nel più preciso campo letterario, ma in quello del costume e del comportamento privato e socievole" (2: 22). Cecchi and Sapegno do not attribute to Bembo any great innovations, philosophical or literary, but do concede his role as reflector of the cultural realities of the time: "è però merito rilevante quello che (Bembo) ebbe di sapere indagare con grande lucidità i fatti culturali, e di riconoscere le ragioni storiche e ideali dell'arte e della letteratura" (162).

In sanctioning societal ideals as proposed by Baldassare Castiglione in **Il Cortegiano**, Bembo was also adding his support of the involvement of women in the arts. Castiglione had offered his model of the courtly woman in the second book of his famous codification of sixteenth-century court life:

> "voglio che questa donna abbia notizie di lettere, di musica, di pittura, e sappia danzar e festeggiare; accompagnando con quella discreta modestia e col dar bona opinion di sé ancora le altre avvertenzie che son state insegnate al cortegiano. E così sarà nel conversare, nel ridere, nel giocare, nel motteggiare, in somma in ogni cosa, graziatissima; ed intertenerà accommodatamente e con motti e facezie convenienti a lei ogni persona che le occorrerà" (**Il Cortegiano** 214).

Castiglione certainly offered woman a comprehensive role in the activities of the court; her duty to entertain (men in particular) with her knowledge of the arts was taken seriously. Woman's participation in that world was looked upon not only as desirable, but necessary. It follows that women who demonstrated an affinity for '*motteggiare,*'[6] and took this art more seriously than others, often took this love of word play to greater heights and became the female poets of the Cinquecento. As one who encouraged this

greater artistic inclusion through the ideals he supported, Bembo helped pave the way for women's participation in the poetic world.[7]

Bembo proved to be one of the key figures in the literary world of sixteenth-century Italy. Many attempted to follow Bembo's precepts in their own work, so that much of the poetry of the era is regarded by modern critics as too homogeneous and unoriginal. In the introduction to his **Lirici del Cinquecento**, Baldacci sums up a common complaint with regard to the Petrarchan fashion (although he himself affirms the revisionist aspect of the Petrarchan imitators of the sixteenth century [see xx-xxi]): "l'imitazione del Petrarca s'invescò negli allettamenti di una <<scienza>> d'amore; alla quale il poeta non pretendeva in buona fede di apportare elementi di esperienza personale, bensì si limitava ad esercitazioni di laboratorio" (xxix). Cornelio Castaldi da Feltre (1463-1537) sums up in rhyme what he sees as the monotony and the lack of originality of the Petrarchans:

> Leggo talor tutto un vostro volume,
> da capo a piedi ch'io non vi discerno
> d'arte o d'ingegno un semivivo lume.
> Altro disponimento, altro governo,
> altro che certi punti di ricamo,
> ci vuole a fare un suo lavoro eterno.
>
> (Cecchi, Sapegno vol.4, p.208)

Castaldi serves only as spokesperson for those who viewed Bembo's followers as mere regurgitants of formulaic rhymes, devoid of the spark of ingenuity and the fervour needed to raise the verses to the status of true and lasting poetry.

These criticisms are not without some validity given the quantity of very similar poetic output during the first half of the sixteenth century. Nevertheless, Bembo's

theories and direction in both linguistic usage and poetry were highly influential and guided over a century of poets. It is to these theories and to their application that we now turn.

In the **Prose della volgar lingua,** Bembo suggests that the fundamental basis of good writing is the use of the correct register of vocabulary to suit the level of the material being written about. He believes this to be more important than the theme itself; the loftiness or baseness of the subject matter is of no importance if the vocabulary does not suit it. Lofty themes require 'grave', 'high', 'luminous' words, whereas vulgar subjects need 'light', 'flat', 'popular' terms: "Da scegliere adunque sono le voci, se di materia grande si ragiona, gravi, alte, sonanti, apparenti, luminose; se di bassa e volgare, lievi, piane, dimesse, popolari, chete; se di mezzana tra queste due, medesimamente con voci mezzane e temperate" (Bembo **Prose** 55). Of equal importance, for Bembo, is the varying of these levels slightly within a work, in order to render it more interesting, less monotonous: "schifare sopra tutto la sazietà, variando alle volte e le voci grave con alcuna temperata, e le temperate con alcuna leggera" (**Prose** 55).

Beyond the correct register of vocabulary, a writer, in Bembo's estimation, should focus on three main aspects of the composition of his writing. These are 1) the *ordine*, that is, the order in which words are arranged (verbs, nouns, etc.); 2) the *giacitura*, which consisted of a word's masculine or feminine form, its use with or without preposition, the number of its syllables, the tense of the verb; 3) *correzione*, rearranging the elements until a harmonious unit is achieved.

Bembo also highlights the balance of the two qualities which, in his opinion, "fanno bella ogni scrittura" (**Prose** 63): these he termed '*piacevolezza*', (a pleasantness achieved through grace, lightness, mellifluous lexicon, and word games), and '*gravità*' (achieved through honesty, dignity, majesty, and grandeur). Again, these qualities depend upon the correct choice of vocabulary. According to Bembo, Dante erred too heavily on the side of '*gravità*' and Cino (da Pistoia) tended to overuse '*piacevolezza*'; Petrarch, on the other hand, was able to manipulate both aspects masterfully. In Bembo's own words: "Dove il Petrarca l'una e l'altra di queste parti empiè maravigliosamente, in maniera che scegliere non si può, in quale delle due egli fosse maggior maestro" (**Prose** 63).

According to Bembo, *piacevolezza* and *gravità* are attained through the sound of the words chosen, the metre, (that is the length of time given to each syllable, and as a result, the stress of each word), and with the variation of all the elements. The sound ('*suono*') for Bembo depends upon the vocalic constitution of each word in juxtaposition with the consonants, each with specific properties to enhance either the '*gravità*' or the '*piacevolezza*' desired. The 'a', for example, is a vowel of great 'dignity' (the best vowel) because its open-mouth positioning allows a greater amount of breath to escape, thus presumably contributing to its clarity[8]. It is followed by the 'e' which is second only to the 'a' in purity. The 'o' is a desirable vowel because when it is formed, the outward protrusion of the lips produces a sound which is full and round. The 'i' is considered 'weak and light', although of "dolce spirito" (**Prose** 64) and despite its inferior sound quality, is still considered "soave" (**Prose** 64). The 'u' takes residence at the bottom of

the list because the formation of this vowel produces a more restricted air flow, which detracts from its 'dignity'. Nonetheless, all the vowels are of great consequence; they, more than any other element, provide the desired sound in a word.

Bembo also provides great details regarding the properties of consonants: the 'z' provides a 'robust voice emission' (**Prose** 65n3); the 's' is not endowed with a pure sound, but it too is robust; the 'l' is soft, delicate and "piacevolissima" (**Prose** 66), the sweetest of all consonants while the 'r', on the contrary is harsh; 'm' and 'n' are positioned in between the latter two in terms of sound quality and have the effect of uniting the letters between which they are found; 'f' emits a sound full and robust; similar qualities pertain to the 'g' and 'c', but both are of much more immediate sound (i.e. clipped); the 'b' and 'd' produce sounds which are pure and slender surpassed only by the 'p' and 't', which are sounds "snellissimi e purissimi" (**Prose** 66); the 'q', on the other hand is characterized by a "povero e morto suono" (**Prose** 66), and is the most undesirable of consonants whose existence, ironically, relies upon the most undesirable of vowels, the 'u'.[9] According to Bembo, words take on the qualities of the individual letters which compose them; in order to produce a desired auditory effect (i.e. *gravità* or *piacevolezza*), a writer/poet should choose words within which the right mixture of vowels and consonants produce the coveted sound.

For poetry, *suono* is not only dependent upon the sound quality of each word, but on the rhyme scheme chosen. Again Bembo provides a very detailed discussion of the various rhymes in his **Prose**[10]. He discusses the three types of rhyme: *regolate* (e.g. tercets--ABA, BCB, CDC, DED, etc.), *libere*, or free verse, not tied to set rules (e.g.

madrigals), and *mescolate*, or mixed, (e.g. sonnets, where the number of lines and syllables is given, but where the rhyme scheme itself is up to the individual poet).The rhyme chosen also has a significant influence on the quality (*gravità* or *piacevolezza*) of the poem: the more distant the rhymes one from the other, the heavier, more 'grave' the quality; the closer the rhyme scheme, the lighter the tone of the poem. In Bembo's view, the maximum acceptable distance between rhymes is three to five lines, as Petrarch so consistently demonstrates (**Prose** 70). This correlation between closeness of rhyme and lightness of sound also comes to play in the length of the line: the shorter the verse, the closer any rhyme will be, "per ciò che le rime più possono ne' versi rotti[11] essere che negl'interi" (**Prose** 70). For this reason, poems with shorter lines have the ability of producing a lighter, sweeter sound: "ora più vago e grazioso, ora più dolce e più soave suono rendono che quelle che n'hanno pochi" (**Prose** 70). This closeness of rhyme does not, in Bembo's opinion, apply to internal rhymes within a verse. These, he thought, restrict the poet too severely in his choice of words. Rather than picking words according to the tenets established above, he is controlled by the "necessità della rima" (**Prose** 72), and the resulting verses are often "duri e asperi" (**Prose** 72). Again, his model was Petrarch who rarely used internal rhymes in his compositions.

Syllabic length and positioning of accented syllables also contribute as well to the overall tone of the line. Ponderous, heavy words are those whose accent falls on the last syllable, whereas light words are the proparoxytones, those on which the stress is found on the pre-penultimate syllables. In fact, placement of stress can override the *piacevolezza* or *gravità* achieved through vocalic means. For example, although a word has few

vowels--thereby rendering it 'heavy' ("pesante" [**Prose** 75]) in theory--it can be 'light' ("leggera" [**Prose** 75]) by virtue of the accented syllable appearing closer to the beginning of the word (*sdrucciola*/proparoxytone). The reverse, of course, is true of words which should be light through vocalic means but which are rendered heavy due to the stress falling on the last or very near the last syllable. Interjecting a '*sdrucciola*' amongst heavy words in a line can lighten the verse; again, the reverse is true when a 'tronca' is placed among many pleasant words (**Prose** 75).

The complex interplay of all the elements discussed above, along with the importance of varying these elements from time to time, were Bembo's directives for the realization of great poetry. He was trying to attain what Mario Marti calls a 'regulated purity', 'harmonious measure', 'formal and spiritual harmony' (Bembo **Opere**, Introduction xxxi). Bembo insisted upon striving for balance, harmony, and temperance through strict regularity of form (the Petrarchan form) and through the adherence to "the internal rules of composition" (McAuliffe 537). It was Petrarch who provided Bembo with these rules, with the traditional and formal base which so appealed to the latter's sense of harmony and balance.

Petrarchan imitation, however, was not limited to societal ideals and to the very technical, linguistic details outlined above; many other factors contribute to the creation of "the Petrarchan mood" (McAuliffe 534). One of the key components is the "Petrarchan oxymoron" (Ann Rosalind Jones **Assimilation** 141), or the abundant use of antithesis: light vs. dark, bitter vs. sweet, human reason vs. divine spirit, the suffering and inconstancy of this world vs. the joy and eternal salvation of the next, and the bondage of

the human senses on earth vs. the freedom of the "winged soul" (McAuliffe 535) in Heaven. This 'mood' is also identified by an introspective and sometimes confessional nature of poetic expression and a poetic voice which focuses on the torment or joy of the lover/poet contingent upon the beloved's attitude toward him. Petrarch's imitators modeled their beloved on his Laura and conferred to their objects of desire the same iconic status that Laura had gained in the **Canzoniere**. By the same token, as Laura was often portrayed as alluring, yet disdainful and unapproachable ('crudele nemica'), so is the beloved also presented in the poetry of the Petrarchans. The style is also characterized by frequent classical references and a structure based upon a dialogue with the absent lover. On a more structural and linguistic level we note the predilection for the sonnet form, and the parenthetical asides within the structure of the poem.[12]

The imitation of Petrarch and the adherence to the poetic conventions associated with him, are Bembo's primary considerations when judging poetry. As Dennis McAuliffe states: "Bembo is not interested in the poet's life-experience, he is interested in how well the poet has assimilated and is able to use the conventions of poetic usage that have been handed down to him" (537). This, of course, applies to whoever desired recognition as a writer: woman or man. If a sixteenth-century woman wanted to participate in the literary exchanges of the time, she "would have to use the accepted currency" (McAuliffe 535).

This 'currency'--the Petrarchan model--is a male model, one which Gary Waller calls "a theatre of desire" (242). In "Struggling into Discourse: The Emergence of Renaissance Women's Writing", Waller describes the absence of the female presence in

the Petrarchan paradigm as: "one in which men have the active roles and the women are assigned silent, iconic functions, and are notable primarily for their absence in the script" (242). Woman is merely a "focus of the gaze" (Waller 243); she does not take upon herself the act of 'looking', she is the passive object (of desire), not the active manipulator.

This negative presence poses a problem for women who attempt to write using the Petrarchan model for as Paola Malpezzi Price observes, by writing, women contradict "the role assigned to [them] by Petrarchan poetics" (190). In attempting to breach the gap between their role as passive 'object' within the poetry to active 'subject' and creator of it (Zancan, **Donna** 765), these women step out of their conventional function as ideal transformational icons--i.e. women as metaphors for spiritual and intellectual transformation for male intellectuals[13]--into a real world of poetic creation. There they are faced with reconciling existing and accepted norms of writing with their unique experience of life, one which has little resemblance to the role traditionally assigned to them by male poets.[14] They are now confined to a language and a structure which is gender specific and exclusive (male).[15] McAuliffe proposes that this is the reason why, in women's writings of the sixteenth century, excessive use is made of the "trope of tapinosis" (541), or 'false modesty'. These apologetic references, replete with self-abasement and humility can be interpreted as sincere expressions of insecurity, or as mere conventional apologies of women writers entering a man's domain.

If Bembo, the highly influential 'dictator of taste' (Binni 2: 19), religiously followed the tenets of Petrarchan style, how were women writers to fit into the rather

alien mould and still be recognized for their contributions? The fact that a number of Italian women were indeed acknowledged for their creative effort, and were published, attests to the fact that they must have adhered (at least to some extent, or superficially) to the poetic conventions promoted by Bembo and sanctioned by the majority of literati of the time. However, in light of the difficulties discussed, when examining poetry written by women, one needs ask: Are these women indeed using their own voice, a female voice? Is this possible when the only language available to them is male-originated and sanctioned? Is it possible, in fact, to write from an opposing gender viewpoint by using the techniques, topoi, and formal structures developed and sustained by male poets?

2. Publishing

In the sixteenth century, the role of the printing press greatly altered the world of letters in both Italy and Spain and for women writers this proved to have both positive and negative ramifications. There now existed the potential for more extensive circulation of the written word, but women did not necessarily reap the fruits of this new enterprise. Marie-Francoise Piejus discusses the implications of the publishing world focusing primarily on sixteenth-century Italian women poets in her study, "La première anthologie de poèms féminins: L'écriture filtrée et orientée." She points out that, in terms of a more widespread distribution, a printed book certainly had the advantage over a manuscript; simultaneously, however, it was also subjected to many more intermediaries who exerted control over the written product (193).

Within this modern and promising world of publishing, the sixteenth-century editor became a figure of primary importance; his decisions determined which works

would benefit from the newly-acquired technology which would guarantee greater distribution. However, his role was not as autocratic as might at first appear, for he found himself at the mercy of pressures from authors, the reading public, and, more significantly, the political and religious authorities[15] who insisted that their concerns be addressed when choosing appropriate material to publish.

Nonetheless, the sixteenth-century editor was endowed with immense power: it was his decision which brought writers to the public conscience (and possible immortality) or dismissed them into literary oblivion. Lodovico Domenichi, an editor and translator who worked with several important Italian publishers of that century, acknowledged this power when he stated that an author owed the editor/printer "la vita del nome e della fama... la gloria dello spirito e dell'intelletto."[16] A woman author had to depend on the good will and respect of the editor in order for her works to be published. Given her subordinate position in society, for her to be taken seriously required extraordinary talent or social connections, as Warnke's observations on 'social identity' have already illustrated.[17]

Anthologies,[18] popular at the time and invaluable for the promotion of some of the lesser known authors, were made up of works chosen by individual editors and based on criteria which fit their personal (or pressured) tastes and beliefs. It appeared that social status, and not necessarily talent, guaranteed a place in an anthology. Lodovico Domenichi's 1559 edition of **Rime diverse d'alcune nobilissime e virtuosissime donne**, an anthology of Italian women poets, boasts fifty-three different authors but includes very few of those who had already gained a literary reputation in Italy. The book is actually a

'who's who' of Italian aristocracy of the time--countesses, duchesses, marchionesses, and other women high on the political scale, through family and marital affiliations.

A compilation such as this could be viewed from two very distinct perspectives. On the one hand, a work dedicated to the presentation of poetry written by fifty-three women can be seen as an enormous step towards recognition of female talent and competence. From a twentieth-century perspective it is certainly an invaluable historic document demonstrating the degree of interest in poetry by women of the time.

However, a discerning reader might question Domenichi's choice of poets. Piejus, for example, points out that most of the women poets included in the anthology were unknown in literary circles of the time (199). She also notes that, with the exception of Vittoria Colonna and Veronica Gambara, several of the better-known women poets were either not included or were meagrely represented. Such was the case of Gaspara Stampa, of whom only five sonnets were included, an amount which certainly does not reflect the prominent and respected position she occupied in the literary society of the time. She and Tullia d'Aragona were women of doubtful social reputation and it could be speculated that they did not conform to the profile of 'nobilissime e virtuosissime donne' Domenichi was attempting to promote (Piejus 200).

Another possibility, however, is that the editor was guided by more practical considerations, such as not wanting to re-publish poems which had already been published in personal collections (Tullia d'Aragona, 1547; Laura Terracina, 1548; Gaspara Stampa, 1554; Chiara Matraini, 1555). It is also quite possible that he simply wanted to adopt--in a unique manner, to be sure, as no precedent existed for poetic

anthologies comprised of only female authorship--a popular social convention of the time, the praise of noble and virtuous women. According to Piejus, the inclusion of a great number of unknown women poets might also work in Domenichi's favour by offering fresh, new work, and moving into as yet uncharted literary waters: "le lecteur retirera ainsi de son ouvrage une impression de nouveauté, de richesse, de varieté" (201).

The trend towards an interest in women's writing did not continue to flourish past the sixteenth century. Carlo Dionisotti in **Geografia e storia della letteratura italiana** speculates on this phenomenon which took place in the middle of that century beginning with the publication of Vittoria Colonna's **Rime** in 1538 which, in his own words, "fu come una scintilla caduta nella paglia" (191). He attributes this unique event to an opening of the literary doors, especially in Florence. Up to that point the literary society had included writers such as Ariosto, Bembo and Castiglione but had excluded others, more undesirable, such as Machiavelli, Pietro Aretino and, of course, women writers (192). Dionisotti ascribes this less restrictive literary time to the popularization of the vulgar tongue and the diminishing interest in publishing classics. Whereas the main mandate of publishing houses had been the propagation of Latin texts, with a few exceptions made of the works in the vulgar tongue by such writers as Petrarch and Castiglione, in the late 1530s the balance shifted to a more equitable distribution of Latin and vulgar texts, with a dramatic decline in the publishing and re-issue of Greek texts (193-194). Due to this shift in linguistic focus, Dionisotti sees a proliferation of published writers who would not have been accepted into the stricter classical tradition of only a few years earlier.

In this literary rebellion of sorts, he also notes a general shift of importance from poetry to prose: "nella maggior facilità e libertà della prosa essi trovavano la misura adatta alla loro baldanza impaziente, ai loro esperimenti e capricci" (194). In a time when women writers clearly showed more ease with the medium of poetry, the shift to a more prose-oriented literature eventually excluded them. After participating in the novelty of the 'new' literature at its inception, they simply were no longer valued as serious contenders.

3. Chiara Matraini

Biographical certainties regarding Chiara Matraini are scarce.[19] The poet was born in Lucca in 1515 and died in or around the year 1604.[20] At sixteen years of age, Matraini was married to Vincenzo Cantarini, a union which produced at least one son. Matraini was widowed after twenty-five years of marriage and is believed to have had a relationship with Cesare Coccopani, a nobleman of Carpi, after the death of her husband. Luigi Baldacci strongly doubts that the beloved of Matraini's love lyrics was either Cantarini or Coccopani (**Lirici** 383); this leads to speculation that there may have been one other important relationship in her life. A sixteenth-century manuscript, for example, accuses her of being the mistress of a married man whose wife's family held a prominent position in Lucca (Malpezzi Price 189; Rabitti 141-145). Giovanna Rabitti suggests, in fact, that this relationship and Matraini's nebulous social status (she was neither a noblewoman nor a *cortigiana*) contributed to her being snubbed by certain editors during her lifetime and readily forgotten after her death.[21]

Matraini left a corpus of over 100 lyrics: love sonnets, madrigals, stances, and religious poems. She is also the author of a collection of letters, religious meditations and religious discourses (Malpezzi Price 189). Three editions of her **Rime** were published during the sixteenth century[22] and she is included in the second group of women writers and poets, who contributed to the fashioning of the Cinquecento literary corpus.[23] Although very little attention was paid to her work during her lifetime[24] and by subsequent historians, Luigi Baldacci was instrumental to the renewal of interest in this poet in the twentieth century through an article ("Chiara Matraini poetessa lucchese del XVI secolo") published in 1953.

Chiara Matraini's poetry follows in many ways the precepts of Petrarchism, but key departures from the prescribed formula[25] provide evidence of a unique approach to poetic writing. As Paola Malpezzi Price notes in "Chiara Matraini: Petrarchist or Anti-Petrarchist?," this poet's *canzoniere* adheres faithfully to the chronological framework established by Petrarch (190). She remarks that Matraini describes the progress of her terrestrial love--from its happy inception to the agony of loss through death, (thus echoing Petrarch's loss with Laura's death)--and its subsequent transformation into the more constant and gratifying love of God (Malpezzi Price 190). Beyond chronological development of her *canzoniere*, Matraini also maintains a similarity with Petrarchan poetic forms she prefers, choosing the sonnet as her favourite, although not exclusive, medium.

Within the poems themselves are found many similarities to the Petrarchan model. Matraini liberally borrows from Petrarch's repertoire of themes, images, metaphors, and

lexicon to express her own thoughts. She writes of the fire which consumes her ("l'interne mie fiamme", 64), of the passage of time ("Deh come'l tempo...", 95), of her attempts to escape from her desire ("Cerco'l foco fuggir, che meco porto", 80), of the life given her by her beloved, and of her desire for immortality through her lauding of him. In her poetry she presents the familiar ships trying to find shelter from the storm of love, the lover's metamorphosis into animal state, references to the eyes (described in the neo-platonic idiom as 'sol', 'luci', 'lumi', 'lucenti') as the gateway of love, and mirrors which reflect life and time. The lexicon is also a familiar one: *dolce, dolcemente, virtute, l'aura, soavemente, chiari, ghirlande, pensier, foco,* and *ardore*, to mention but a few words borrowed directly from the Petrarchan tradition. Despite the many similarities apparent in her poetry, the formulaic components are often implemented by Matraini with different results.

Her repetition of key words and symbols constitutes one of the most striking aspects of Matraini's use of *imitatio*. As Petrarch repeatedly uses the name of Laura (and its many derivatives,) throughout his work, so too Matraini uses paronomasia in a clear attempt to link her work with his. In the sonnet "Mentre l'aura celeste..." (106-107),[26] for example, a form of this word is repeated four times: 'l'aura celeste', 'suo bel Lauro', 'il suo bellauro' and 'almo thesauro'.

This direct imitation, however, is far surpassed by her adaptation of the technique in order to personalize her poetry. Matraini uses her own name, 'Chiara', in much the same manner that Petrarch uses 'Laura'. Throughout her opus we find references (often, many in the same poem) to her name: 'chiara', 'chiari', 'chiare', 'chiaramente', etc.

Similar to the previous poem cited, the sonnet "Quale splendido sol..." (109), uses a derivative of 'chiara' four times: 'Voi chiariti, chiarissimo', 'vostre chiare virtute', and 'il chiarissimo splendore'.

Despite the obvious link with the Petrarchan tradition, and the homage that she pays through *imitatio* to her predecessor, Matraini's use of this technique demonstrates a clear break with that same tradition. Petrarch is invoking/employing the name of his beloved to promote himself as much as to extol Laura: it is through the singing of her praises that he hopes to achieve immortality and fame. But Matraini, by her decision to implant her own name into the Petrarchan formula, is promoting herself much more directly. Whereas Petrarch relies on Laura, his beloved, for his renown, Matraini's self-assertive posture suggests that she is relying primarily on herself.[27]

In "Narciso ed Eco. Figura e scrittura nella lirica femminile del Cinquecento: Esemplificazioni e appunti," Luciana Borsetto pushes this thesis further. Borsetto refers to this "*nominarsi*" (208)--that is, insinuating one's name into one's poetry--as a means by which a female author can achieve some measure of power in writing through self-revelation within a text.[28] In her view, it represents "una specie di sogno inconfessato di potenza: il sogno del *dirsi*, unica portagonista dell'unica storia possibile. Quella della propria *scrittura*" (Borsetto 207). Through paronomasia, the female poet is revealing herself but is also drawing a parallel to the virtuous hero of her poem. In her poems Matraini represents herself under the emblem of 'chiarezza', a word associated traditionally with the concepts of fame, nobility by birth, and generally, an elevated social status (Borsetto 209). Thus, like the beloved, the poet is virtuous, and within this parallel,

she sets herself up as both the love object of the poem as well as its creator. Borsetto suggests that by transposing the Petrarchan equation (Laura--beloved/lauro--fame) to fit her own identity, Matraini becomes the beloved within her own poetry (208-209), at the same time object (focus) and creator. The duality now implied in the role of the beloved is at the same time Petrarchan (beloved=female) and non-conforming (beloved=male), while the role of the lover/poet is strictly non-conforming (female). As a woman writer, Matraini is expanding the horizons available to her within a masculine paradigm, and in the process is creating one which is more flexible and inclusive. She is, in essence, creating a female voice which better expresses her unique (poetic) experience as a female lover working with tools originally crafted for the use of male poets, by male poets (i.e. Petrarch).

Chiara Matraini does not hesitate to take full responsibility for her creations, despite her frequent recourse to the modesty topos; she is cognizant of her role as an artist and creator and often uses artistic terms normally reserved for the visual arts to describe her own craft. This is especially evident in the following sonnet, where both art and worship play important roles:

> Quai lampi à voi, di gloria ardenti, e chiari
> Apportar posso, ò quai ghirlande, ò fregi
> Degni de i vostri celebrati pregi
> Ond'à voi lode sian, del merito à pari?
>
> Troppo da i pensier miei vanno dispari,
> E dal vostro valore, e fatti egregi,
> Le debol forze mie; pur alti, e regi,
> I pensier son, ch'io per voi dolci, e cari.
>
> Questi, adunque, vi porgo, e vi consacro,

Devota à terra, in basso, humile stile,
Col cor acceso d'alto affetto ardente.

Ove sculto l'essempio, e'l simolacro
(Di voi vedrete, oggetto almo, e gentile)
A l'ingegno, à la mano, à la mia mente. (p.66)[29]

In the first quatrain there is a strict adherence to Bembo's teachings, and through the application of these techniques, the tone of the poem is established. The quatrain is replete with a's (14), i's (19), and e's (12), considered by Bembo to be vowels of great dignity (**Prose** 64); the register of vocabulary used--'apportar', 'gloria', 'celebrati', 'lode', 'merito'--complies with his precepts of *gravità*. Through the vocabulary chosen, the strophe is coloured by a tone of dignity and grandeur. At the same time, the *enjambment* of the first four lines imbues the quatrain with a breathless momentum rife with urgency; this serves to highlight the poet's frustration at not knowing how best to sing her beloved's praises.

Reference to the 'art' metaphor is found in the last tercet: the poet is 'sculpting' a representation or 'model'[30] (*l'essempio*) of her beloved. It is by no means an ordinary statue which Matraini is sculpting, however, but a *simolacro*, a statue representing divinity or a hero. This is in keeping with the overall theme of the sonnet in which Matraini is bemoaning her inadequacies ("le debol forze mie"[l.7], "in basso, humile stile" [l.10]) in trying to describe the object of her desire. His extraordinary virtues--which prompt her to elevate him to the status of a pagan icon--render this task a most difficult one.

To highlight the importance of the beloved's quasi-divine role, Matraini boldly paints the sonnet with idolatrous overtones. The first quatrain presents the image of bringing gifts (her praises) to the altar of her beloved: "Quai lampi à voi, di gloria ardenti, e chiari / apportar posso...." (l.1-2). Words such as 'gloria', 'degni', 'lode' serve to emphasize both the venerating tone of the sonnet and the disparity between herself, the unworthy lover, and the esteemed beloved. The first tercet in particular discloses a worshipful posture in the poem which is rather ambiguous, that is, both pagan and sacred:[31] the verbs 'porgo' and 'consacro' while following the pagan theme of the sonnet, also suggest the climax of the Eucharist in Catholic liturgy, the Consecration. In this metaphor, the poet presents herself as the devout celebrant ('devota à terra' l.10) of this love liturgy; her thoughts ("i pensier" ls.5 & 8) about her beloved are transformed into the Sacrificial Lamb which she then offers to him, her Divinity. In the portrait presented in the last tercet we find yet another link with the religious theme which precedes it. The beloved is described as 'oggetto almo' (l.11); while *almo* can be understood to mean noble or excellent, it can also signify that which nourishes life, providing another link with the consecration metaphor.

The above sonnet ends with a clear indication that the portrait Matraini is 'sculpting' is a private enterprise, meant for her personal 'diary' ('a l'ingegno, à la mano, à la mia mente' [l.12]), thus fulfilling another requisite of Petrarchism, the preoccupation with the self. Similarly, in the poem "Cerchin pur altri...", Matraini maintains the internal focus but then concludes by voicing a distinct desire for immortality through her craft:

Cerchin pur altri in bei pregiati marmi

Et in fini metalli, e in colori
L'amato volto indi goder di fuori
Fin che'l tempo di sè non lo disarmi.

Ch'io dentro à l'alma vivo, e bello parmi
Scolpir l'idolo mio, co'propri honori,
E come reverente ivi l'adori
Mostrargli in puri, affettuosi carmi.

In quell'io'l miro, e lo contemplo, e come,
Altamente conviensi à meriti suoi,
Et al bel foco mio, l'honoro, e amo.

E se favor mi drà seco, il mio nome
Chiaro, più d'altro, andar vedrà tra noi,
Sempre, la gente, al segno alto, ch'io bramo. (p. 65)

Matraini again avails herself of the artistic metaphor in this sonnet by 'sculpting' the portrait of her 'idolo' (l.6), the object of her desire. In the first quatrain, the poet emphasizes the artistic metaphor through her choice of vocabulary. She speaks of 'pregiati marmi' (l.1), 'fini metalli, e...colori' (l.2), the agents used by other artists to create their visual and plastic representations. These media (marble, metals and pigments) belong to the physical, exterior world. The first two are cold and hard, the last is intangible and prone to fading: all are impersonal and subject to the ravages of time. She notes that creations from these materials will be enjoyed "di fuori" (l.3)--from the outside--until time takes its inevitable toll, "Fin che'l tempo di sè non lo disarmi" (l.4). A finite existence is implied, not only for the portrait, but also for the love it represents. She, on the other hand (and in this she follows the introspection typical of the Petrarchan tradition), lives within herself "dentro à l'alma vivo" and prefers to manifest her love, by 'sculpting' the image of her beloved in her soul. She then translates this personal

representation of her love into a public manifestation by demonstrating to her beloved how reverently she worships him within herself through chaste, loving songs--in "puri, affettuosi carmi"--her love poems.

Through her choice of the militaristic verb 'disarmare', Matraini is acknowledging the power of the beautiful face of her beloved ("l'amato volto"[l.3]). The physical beauty has the ability to captivate those who look upon it, but the ravages of time will eventually 'disarm' it of its attraction (its weapon); the beauty of the physical portrait will weather away and be forgotten, a parallel to the previously established artistic metaphor.

By underscoring the physicality of art in the first quatrain, the poet then turns to the personal images which she creates with words, thus juxtaposing external and internal worlds. Matraini stresses the inward focus of her art in the second quatrain by the line 'Ch'io dentro à l'alma vivo' (l.5), but in the last tercet, she diverges from the personal focus, and clearly reveals her ulterior motive: fame. Like Petrarch before her, Matraini claims the immortality of her message and of her name through the medium of poetry. In the last tercet the poet informs the reader that people will know her name above others' because of the singularly important target ("segno alto" [l.14])--further extending the military simile introduced by 'disarmi'--that she has desired and to which she has directed her poetic efforts: her beloved. The poet's desire for recognition through her art becomes an unexpected contrast to her claims of "...io dentro à l'alma vivo" (l.5). The juxtaposition of the internal/external world of art introduces the parallel contrast between the poet's private self and celebrated self.

The search for immortality through the extolling of one's beloved is a well established topos within the Petrarchan tradition; Laura (young, beautiful, unapproachable, disdainful--rarely merciful[32]) provided a fecund source of inspiration. Petrarch was skilful in creating a poetic vehicle which would support and enhance his public persona, thus leading to the fame he desired. In Matraini's case, however, singing the praises of her beloved and the possible fame this could incur, is not the only laudable endeavour; it is also her own love--her personal, active love--which is worthy of proclamation. She loves and honours her beloved because of his virtues ("Altamente conviensi à meriti suoi" [l.10]), those attributes she admires from the outside ("In quell'io'l miro, e lo contemplo...[l.9]), and which are separate from her. However, in the following line of that same tercet, she draws a parallel between his perceived virtues and her personal feelings. This she achieves with the phrase, "al bel foco mio", in which the poet, through the word 'foco', polisemically refers to her beloved and to her own passion. Without hesitation or guilt ('bel'), the poet is claiming (and proclaiming) the passion she feels for her beloved and in no way does she subordinate her feelings to the merits of his virtues: the two are equally important and deserving of testimony. She loves and honours him as befits his great merits ('à meriti suoi') and her own capacity to love ('al bel foco mio').

The sonnet has now become a complicated interplay of exterior and interior images: portraiture through physical art vs. portraiture through words (poetry), the private/personal world of feelings vs. the public world of fame, the focus of inspiration of the beloved vs. an inspiration which is internal and self-directed. While basing the sonnet

on Petrarchan antithesis, Matraini has produced a unique creation. She has positioned her beloved on the high altar of love with such words as 'idolo', 'honori', 'reverente', 'adori', 'contemplo', but has attributed as much importance to her own very terrestrial, and passionate, feelings. She has kept within convention of Petrarchism by focusing on the introspective aspect of her love and art, but has ended the sonnet by expressing a resounding desire for public fame and immortality. Through the relative freedom of poetic discourse,--relative in that she, as a woman, was transgressing her boundaries by merely participating in the excercise, let alone by what she was saying--Martraini has made a public admission of passion and desire, not only for her beloved, but for recognition within the public arena. The poet is thus transgressing the limits of her gender threefold: by daring to enter in the literary world, by publicly striving for acceptance within it, and by her seemingly fearless and overtly public verbal display of passion.

Similar themes treated comparably are found in the poem "S'à voi tropp'alta...":

S'à voi tropp'alta, e gloriosa appare
La vera lode, ch'io v'appendo, e sacro,
Vivo mio chiaro ardente simolacro
Degno di lode assai più belle, e rare;

A mè par il contrario, e che dispare,
Vada, d'assai, lo stil mio rozzo, e acro,
Da vostri merti; ond'io v'ergo, e consacro
Quant'effetto d'honore il cor pò dare.

E temo, che col Tempo, il mondo dica
(Odendo la virtù vostra immortale,
E'l mio fioco cantare in basso stile)

Quest'ardio troppo, a tant'alta fatica
Alzar la mente; e gir con deboli ale,
A si divino oggetto, e si gentile. (p.68)

Once more Matraini begins the sonnet with an abundance of lofty and sacred vocabulary: 'alta', 'gloriosa', 'lode', 'sacro', 'simolacro'. The preponderance of a's and o's--15 of each in the first quatrain--adds to the sense of spaciousness and loftiness (a's), and to the sonorous tone (o's) of the sonnet, echoing once again, Bembo's precepts of vocalic properties (**Prose** 64). The upward motion of the quatrain is continued by a sweeping, wave-like phraseology enhanced by *enjambment* at the end of the first and third lines, by the internal alliteration based on the letter 'p' ('tropp', 'appar' [l.1]; 'appendo' [l.2]), and by frequent elision ('tropp' alta', 'gloriosa appare'[l.1]; 'chiaro ardente' [l.3]; 'lode assai' [l.4]). The uplifting motif is also sustained in the last tercet with the words 'alta', 'alzar', and 'ale', both by virtue of their meaning, and because they form an integral part of the assonance ('a') present in that tercet. The first line, in particular, boasts seven 'a's; these taper to one in the last line, in which vocalic concentration is shifted to 'i's and 'e's. The broad and lofty sounds of line twelve produced by the letter 'a' spiral ever tighter in an upward motion through the repetition of the thinner sounds ('i's and 'e's). Thus, Matraini has created an auditory representation of her efforts to elevate her beloved in the eyes of the reader. This vocalic orchestration also serves to underscore the 'lifting' implied by the phrases 'tant'alta fatica' and 'Alzar la mente' of lines twelve and thirteen. Through appropriate semantics enhanced by vocalic manipulation, the poet is leading the reader schematically to the pinnacle of her love and efforts--her gentle beloved--while simultaneously creating an atmosphere of reverence and adoration. This mood is sustained throughout the rest of the sonnet with the phrases 'virtù vostra immortale' (l.10) and 'divino oggetto' (l.14), and through verbs such as 'ergo, e consacro' (l.7).

More specifically, the sonnet can be said to resemble a sacred, liturgical hymn, in this case sung to Matraini's terrestrial deity. This choral aspect of the poem is indicated semantically by the words 'odendo' (l.10) and 'cantare' (l.11): the reader is meant to hear the song the poet sings of her beloved. An even more specific liturgical parallel is implied by the verbs 'ergo, e consacro' (l. 7) which, along with the already mentioned ('alta' [l.1]; 'alta' [l.12]; 'alzar' and 'ale' [l.13]), suggest the uplifting and elevating action of the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, an extra-liturgical celebration in which the Sacred Host, the physical representation of Christ's presence on earth, is elevated by the priest, above the bowed heads of the revering (unworthy) devout. This ritual is accompanied by the singing of the hymn *Tantum ergo Sacramentum,*[33] which the 'ergo, e consacro' of line 7 evoke.

Matraini is deifying her beloved as she sings his praises to her readers; this deification is achieved through the very structure of the sonnet, through semantics, and through liturgical parallelism. Nonetheless, she is at the same time bemoaning her rough, uncultured style which cannot do justice to her beloved's superlative virtues and merits. She speaks despairingly of "lo stil mio rozzo, e acro" (l.6) and of her "deboli ale" (l.11). The poet also implies a great effort on her part ('tant'alta fatica' [l.12]) as she tries to describe her beloved and her own love for him. Paradoxically, she represents herself as both the unworthy devotee and the high priestess[34] lifting her love on high.

The stance of humility Matraini has cultivated throughout the sonnet is contested in the first tercet by the adjective 'alta' of line twelve. It does not simply suggest, as previously stated, that a great poetic exertion was needed to adequately praise the

beloved; it also proposes that the poet's themes--the description of the beloved and her desire to ascribe to him the honour which is his due--are lofty and noble goals in and of themselves. Through extension, the adjective 'alta' additionally implies that she, the poet, is also praiseworthy and honourable for having undertaken such an exalted endeavour. Notwithstanding Matraini's stated fear of inadequacy and failure, she does not truly doubt that her message will survive the test of time and will be heard and will be talked about: "E temo, che col Tempo, il mondo dica / (Odendo la virtù vostra immortale, / E'l mio fioco cantare in basso stile)" (l.9-11). Moreover, by linking her laudatory endeavour with the liturgically sanctioned rite of the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, she is drawing a parallel between the long-term duration of her poetic efforts and the long-standing religious tradition of which she is also a part. As the priest elevates the Blessed Sacrament, she--a self-proclaimed priestess of love--is holding her Beloved high for all to worship as she does, through a laud of her own creation. The parallel Matraini draws suggests that she believes in the timelessness and constancy of her love, and also in her own poetic fame. She is very consciously manipulating her role as writer and creator, implicitly confident that she will not be forgotten.

The semantic links which bring to mind the familiar hymn *Tantum ergo Sacramentum*, not only represent Matraini's devotion and lauding of her beloved, but also may imply a subtle subversion of both a literary and political nature.The first part of the hymn is as follows: "Tantum ergo Sacraméntum, / Venerémur cérnui: / Et antíquum documéntum / Novo cedat ritui"[35] (Lefebvre 1808). Matraini is indeed 'adoring' her beloved from her stance of humility, as befits a lover, a religious devotee, and most

certainly, a woman. However, if we are to pursue the parallel with the lyrics of the hymn, we must ask ourselves whether Matraini is intentionally advocating a change from the current poetic and political norms: from which ancient forms ('antíquum documéntum') is she departing? Which newer rites ('novo ritui') are prevailing, or is she, the poet, endorsing? If Matraini is wishing her readers to consciously (or unconsciously) be reminded of this special hymn, is she, in fact, suggesting a departure from traditional paragons of poetry and of women's involvement within these? Is she positing a new role for women in the literary world? By her audacious appropriation of an important extra-liturgical event as a literary and boldly secular (love) parallel, is she attempting to justify her transgression of the prescribed norms? Or, more conservatively, is she simply making evident her own intellectual faculty?[36] A clear answer is not possible, especially after a time-lapse of four-hundred years, yet the reader may well speculate on the length to which this proficient woman might have gone to make certain political statements while simultaneously attempting to appear faithful to the existing paradigms.

In the sonnet "Quant'ho più da lontan", Matraini continues to concentrate on the portrait of her beloved, but the focus is now on separation and the constancy of love despite distance and the passing of time:

> Quant'ho più da lontan l'aspetto vostro,
> più lo sento ne l'alma a parte a parte
> scolpito e vivo, e'n ciascheduna parte
> insignorirsi del mortal suo chiostro.
>
> Nè poggio, sasso, o valle Amor m'ha mostro
> fin dove il Serchio arriva o dove parte,
> ch'io non vi veda con mirabil arte
> scritto il nome ch'adorna il secol nostro.

Così potesse del mio amor far fede
il cor che nel partir vi lassai in pegno,
ond'ugual fosse amor sempre tra noi;

ché si nel petto il bel nodo mi sede
ch'unqua nol cangerà tempo né degno,
ma sempre v'amerò viva e dapoi. (Baldacci #10, p.391)

As with the preceding sonnets, we are not given a physical description of the man she loves, but rather we are made keenly aware of the effect he has on the poet, and continues to have despite their separation. The description of the beloved is limited to very general comments in the fist quatrain: the poet 'feels' his face--his presence--in her soul, a face which is 'sculpted', ('scolpito'), therefore very consciously and minutely imprinted. However, this face is far from cold and lifeless as 'scolpito' would suggest, for the poet quickly juxtaposes this inanimate and static image by adding that it is also 'alive' ('vivo'). From here she uses personification, to bestow upon the portrait the power to insinuate itself into the very recesses of her soul 'ciascheduna parte' (l.3), and to become its lord, 'insignorirsi del mortal suo chiostro' (l.4). This last image serves a complex function as it leads the reader to a much more physical realm. Despite her beloved's absence, the poet feels ('sento' l.2) him within her as a live entity, penetrating her and appropriating her in a most physical manner. Matraini again seems to be combining the nobility of love with a much more sensual reality.

The tone of this sonnet, unlike the previous three, does not exemplify a triumphant tribute to a gloriously exhilarating and immortalizing love. It is rather one of sombre, terrestrial reality, made acutely poignant because of the pain of separation and of non-reciprocated love. Distance and distancing become key images in the poem, through

the repeated use of a form of the word 'parte'. The verbs 'partir', 'lassai', 'potesse' and 'fosse' also add to the sense of alienation, the first two by their very meanings, the last two by their subjunctive form, which implies a bittersweet regret of unfulfilled possibilities ("ond'ugual fosse amor sempre tra noi" [l.11]). She remains constant, however, and will always love him, despite the passage of time and death itself: "ch'unqua nol cangerà tempo nè sdegno, / ma sempre v'amerò viva e dapoi" (l.13-14).

The sombre tone of the poem is enhanced linguistically by a high concentration of single or clustered consonants, which only diminishes at the end of the sonnet. Whereas a greater number of vowels tend to open a word and make it lighter, the concentrations of consonants contribute to the heaviness or oppressiveness of tone and mood. This is particularly true in the first quatrain where we find seven examples of the letter 's'--a fricative to which Bembo ascribes a robust sound (**Prose** 22)--followed or preceded by a consonant. The heaviness of tone continues in the next quatrain through repetition of the liquid consonant 'r', through a series of double consonant groupings ('poggio', 'sasso', 'valle', 'scritto'), and with alliteration "Amor m'ha mostro" (l.5). The tercets continue the pattern of densely grouped consonants: we find 'potesse', 'lassai', 'fosse' and 'petto', alliteration of "amor sempre" (l.11) and "ma sempre **v'amerò viva**" (l.14), as well as the unusual combination and concentration of the letter '**u**' and consonants in "ond'ugual" (l.11) and "ch'unqua" (l.13).[37] Vocalically, the tone of the sonnet is also affected by the preponderance of the letter 'o' (46), which contributes to its solemn tone; the 'e's (40) and 'a's (36), although numerous, are embedded solidly within the consonant groupings and do not readily achieve the purity of sound for which Bembo lauded them. Hence, the

tone of the sonnet does not rise above a resigned sadness of unfulfilled love until the very last line, where Matraini professes her eternal love, not only in this world, but beyond: "ma sempre v'amerò viva e dapoi" (l.14). As the line proceeds, the vowels become increasingly less encumbered by consonant clusters. This illustrates her love which is able to soar beyond the pain of separation, to eternity.

In a sonnet reminiscent of Petrarch's "I dolci colli..." (321), Matraini likens herself to a burning bird, whose vain attempt to flee the flames which engulf her only lead her to burn more. In order to convey the feeling of her desperation, the poet adopts many of the same techniques employed in the poem previously discussed.

> Fera son'io di questo ombroso loco,
> Che vò, con la saetta in mezo [sic] il core,
> Fuggendo (lassa) il fin del mio dolore,
> E cerco, chi mi strugge à poco à poco.
>
> E com'augel, che fra le penne il foco
> si sent'acceso, onde volando fuore
> Dal dolce nido suo, mentre l'ardore
> Fugge, con l'ali più raccende il foco.
>
> Tal'io fra queste frondi, à l'aura estiva,
> Con l'ali del desio, volando fuore
> Cerco'l foco fuggir, che meco porto.
>
> Mà quanto vado più di riva, in riva,
> Per fuggir il mio mal con fiero assalto
> Lunga morte procaccio al viver corto. (p. 80)

Once more Matraini has chosen vocabulary overwhelmingly laden with o's (58)--'ombroso loco', 'mio dolore', 'foco'--in order to give a more robust vocal outlet to her lament and to her pain. It is an example of what Luigi Baldacci refers to as Matraini's tendency toward a "colorismo cupo" ("Chiara" 60), the dark, oppressive tones achieved

through semantics and sounds, the combination of which evoke an intense feeling and pain. Nevertheless, in contrast with the preceding sonnet, the vocalic quality of this poem is much lighter, for the vowels have not been buried amidst consonant clusters. The overall tone of the poem is less harsh and the poet's lament, therefore, is allowed to flow, aided in particular by the high concentration of l's, l being a consonant to which Bembo attributes a soft and delicate sound, "molle e delicata" (**Prose** 66). This greater fluidity provides the added effect of echoing the flight of the burning bird, although this escape is punctuated by several words with double consonants: 'saetta', 'lassa', 'strugge', 'penne', 'acceso', 'raccende', 'assalto', 'procaccio', and three uses of the verb 'fuggir'. These sporadic voiceless velar stops only serve to strengthen the image of the bird's, strong and desperate flapping of wings in order to flee its plight. The sense of urgency is also accentuated by the repetitive phrase "di riva, in riva" (l.12) which underscores the seemingly unending nature of her torment.

The poem is also a study in Petrarchan antithesis. The dark, evocative 'colourings'--'ombroso loco', 'dolore', 'frondi', 'morte'--are juxtaposed with the fire and light ('saetta', 'foco', 'acceso') and heat ('strugge', 'ardore') which consume the poet and which she cannot elude. The 'ombroso loco' which ends the first line of the first quatrain contrasts with 'l'aura estiva' with which the first line of the first tercet ends: the lover is trying to move from the dark shadows of unrequited love to a peaceful, fulfilled love, represented by the 'summer breeze'. The image of the 'dolce nido' (l.7), normally a cliché for safety, becomes, in Matraini's sonnet, a means to underscore the terror of the burning bird who must flee what should have been its haven from harm, thus providing an even

more poignant image through contrast. Matraini ends the sonnet antithetically by the chiasmus of the last line which juxtaposes the 'lunga morte' with 'viver corto'. This leads to textual ambiguities which range from the personal level to the theological: the poet could be referring to the long death of separation after a comparatively fleeting, life-giving relationship, to the contingency of life, or to the possiblity of eternal damnation as punishment for having lived a life too attached to human love.

Through the allusion to fulfilled love found in the phrase 'viver corto', the reader once again is reminded of the audacious honesty with which Matraini recounts her passionate nature, and of her fearlessness in portraying a much more forthright depiction of a love relationship between men and women, not generally found in the Petrarchan tradition within which she is writing. The love which so torments the poet is not represented as merely platonic and virtuous: Matraini does not hide the fact that she is burning with desire for her beloved. Not only does she employ freely Petrarch's own love nomenclature (she speaks of the ardour and the fire which are 'melting' her), but she boldly refers to her 'ali del desio' (l.10). With these wings of desire she is trying to escape her torment ('fuggendo (lassa) il fin del mio dolore' [l.3]), by attempting to find the one who can put an end to her suffering--'E cerco, chi mi strugge à poco à poco' [l.4]). The poet's language is overtly and unabashedly sensual; she does not attempt to hide her longing for her beloved, a yearning which strengthens the more it is denied ('più raccende il foco'[l.8]). As Paola Malpezzi Price summarizes, "Chiara Matraini...suggests that women are no cold symbols of virtue, but they are creatures of flesh and blood, who feel the power and the subjugation of the senses as strongly as men do" (194).

Sexual desire is a theme which resurfaces in Matraini's love lyrics under different guises. We have seen it as an invasive, overpowering force in "Quant'ho più da lontan...", and as an all-consuming fire which cannot be quenched in "Fera son io...." In the following sonnet, redolent of Bembo's "L'alta cagion, che da principio diede" (473), the burning bird metaphor is supplanted by the image of the sunflower which is constantly turning to face the sun--in Matraini's case, her beloved--giver of life.

> Com'elitropio al sol sempre mi giro
> a voi, luce gentil de gli occhi miei,
> né, d'altra vista l'alma o 'l cor potrei
> pascer giamai dovunque i' vado o miro.
>
> Per voi m'accendo, in voi sola respiro,
> né, se volessi ben, fuggir vorrei
> gli ardenti lampi a me sì dolci e rei
> che la strada a ben far sempre m'apriro.
>
> Così l'alta cagion che prima diede
> a le cose create ordine e stato
> dispose a voi il mio core e la mia fede;
>
> così poteste voi, lume beato,
> mirar quel che mortal occhio non vede
> in quell'alto pensier ch'al cor m'è nato. (Baldacci p.77)

The tone of this sonnet is much more self-confident than the last discussed above. Matraini does not want to escape from the bondage of love ("né...fuggir vorrei / gli ardenti lampi a me si dolci e rei" [l.6-7]), for this love does not cause her pain: it nourishes her and provides a reason for living. Words such as 'dolci' and 'gentil' describe the eyes of the beloved and soften even the passion of other descriptors (e.g. "ardenti lampi" [l.7]). The poet is secure and safe within the world of love which envelops her and she feels no need for escape.

In a classic neo-platonic rendition, the beloved is here represented as the centre of the poet's universe. He is the 'luce gentil' (l.2), the gentle light to which she is constantly drawn; for him she burns with desire and he is her sole reason for living "in voi sola respiro" (l.5). The sonnet is imbued with images of light and sight. Along with the 'luce gentil' already mentioned, Matraini speaks of "gli occhi miei" (l.2), "d'altra vista" (l.3), "gli ardenti lampi" (l.7), "luce beato" (l.12), and of the "mortal occhio" (l.13). The image is also carried in the verbs "miro" (l.4), and "mirar" / "vede" (l.13). The beloved is like the sun which gives light and life;[38] he is her reason for being and no other could ever nourish her soul and her heart in the same way: "né, d'altra vista l'alma o 'l cor potrei / pascer giamai dovunque i ' vado o miro" (l.3-4). The beloved, in what becomes a clear parallel with the *donna angelicata* topos, is also responsible for leading her along the path of salvation. His eyes are the "ardenti lampi" (l.7) which illuminate her way towards the path of righteousness: "che la strada a ben far sempre m'apriro" (l.8).

Throughout the sonnet Matraini develops the theme of a deified beloved upon whom she relies for spiritual guidance and salvation. The first line of the first quatrain establishes the image of the sunflower (the poet) turning toward the sun--not only **to**ward, but **up**ward. In the next ten lines, 'voi' accompanied by a preposition is found four times: "a voi" (l.2/l.11), "per voi / in voi" (l.5). This repetition not only emphasizes the beloved's centrality in the poet's life, but is reminiscent of the liturgical Doxology,[39] wherein the priest offers glory to God, through Christ. As opposed to the doxological 'Him', Matraini's use of 'voi' (you) is much more focused and immediate, bypassing any intermediary.[40] She is speaking directly to the sun of her universe, to her lord, the man

upon whom God had bestowed her heart and her faith. This sense of destiny is established immediately within the first tercet where Matraini confidently states that the love (and passion--"m'accendo" [l.5]) which she feels has been pre-ordained by God: "l'alta cagion che prima diede / a le cose create ordine e stato / dispose a voi il mio core e la mia fede" (l.9-11).[41] It is, therefore, a love which is not only inevitable, but just.

By the parallel construction of the two tercets, Matraini also confers upon her beloved the power of a supreme being. Both tercets begin with 'così': as God gave the beloved the poet's complete love, so does the beloved have the power to see what the mortal eye cannot ("mortal occhio non vede" [l.13]), that is, the great love which the poet/lover bears in her heart for him. The parallel construction places God ("l'alta cagion" [l.9]) and the beloved ("voi, lume beato"[42] [l.12]) on the same level. This is a profoundly controversial stance, notwithstanding the religious rhetoric prevalent in poetry at the time. Unlike Petrarch who, in poems such as **Canzoniere** XIII, deems Laura responsible for elevating him towards the higher power--"che mentre 'l segui al sommo ben t'invia" (47)--, Matraini actually places her beloved on the same level of importance as the 'sommo ben'. In so doing she is adapting the neo-platonic rhetoric of the tradition within which she is writing and is transforming it into a far more direct and personal representation of her earthly love: not only does her '*uomo angelicato*' light her way towards spiritual redemption, he <u>is</u> her spiritual and, simultaneously, her temporal redemption, the one who nourishes her body and soul. In so doing, Matraini alters the parameters of the neo-platonic tradition; her beloved is not only the means to redemption, he is the goal itself. This does not place the object of her desire on the same

transformational plane on which many male authors placed their beloved; her beloved becomes the end itself, not only the means. (See p.98 this chapter; also n.13).

In the sonnet "Inimica crudel...", Matraini returns to a more sombre perspective of love. Sleep has deprived her of her beloved, has separated her from the life-giving light which had sustained her during her waking hours. In this apostrophe to sleep, she bemoans her loss and censures the dark force which is responsible:

> Inimica crudel d'ogni mia pace,
> ombra, imago di morte, che m'ascondi
> i più bei chiari lumi, i più giocondi
> ch'accenda Amor con la sua ardente face:
>
> perchè qualor più mi diletta e piace
> il nettar dolce, in mar d'oblio l'affondi?
> e ne' larghi tuoi campi e più profondi
> rendi ogni mio desir sempre fallace?
>
> Ah, com'esser puó mai che non disperga
> la tua fredd'ombra il grande ardore e 'l vento
> di quei sospir ch'allor m'escon del petto?
>
> e Amor che dentro alle sue luci alberga
> non si desti e 'l mio chiaro almo soggetto
> non scopri, là 've ho 'l mio cor sempre intento? (Baldacci p.76)

The sonnet portrays an enraged, embittered lover lashing out at the source of her misery: the sleep which separates her from her beloved either physically or from her conscious imaginings of him. The mood is established by a series of forceful and rancorous epithets: sleep becomes a cruel enemy, "Inimica crudel" (l.1), a shadow, "ombra" (l.2) and an image of death, "imago di morte" (l.2). Matraini assigns culpability through the personification of sleep which hides ("ascondi" [l.2]) the beloved's eyes and which drowns "affondi" (l.6) the love which sustained and delighted her while she was

awake. (Again it is to be noted that Matraini readily and directly includes this more passionate aspect of love--"il nettar dolce" [l.6][43]--in her inventory of losses). In a sweeping indictment of slumber, the poet accuses sleep of 'always' dashing her desires: "rendi ogni mio desir sempre fallace" (l.8).

The sonnet is imbued with a sense of loss which is strengthened by the ample use of antithesis, the juxtaposition of the darkness of sleep to the images of light and life which characterize the beloved. While awake, his eyes are "chiari lumi" (l.3), "luci" (l.12) and "giocondi" (l.3); this last descriptor in particular emphasizes the spirit and delight he brings to her waking hours. The beloved's life force is now concealed within the obscurity of slumber, drowned in a "mar d'oblio" (l.6). The metaphor is strengthened by the verb "affondi" (l.10) and the adjective "profondi" (l.11), which highlight the image's darkness and gelidity, thus further enhancing the feeling of separation. The cold shadow of slumber ("la tua fredd'ombra" [l.10]) breeds alienation and is in stark contrast with the life which the beloved provides during the day, and with the heat of the passion ("il grande ardore" [l.10]) between the two lovers.

In the resolution phase of the tercets, Matraini has taken the same dark image and transformed it into a potentially positive force. The 'cold shadow', while continuing to carry the image of separation, becomes a possible--although not plausible--conduit for her own powerful love and passion ("il grande ardore e 'l vento / di quei sospir ch'allor m'escon del petto?" [l.9-10]). The poet manipulates the image of the expanding shadow to ask why it does not diffuse her own desire ('il grande ardore') so that her beloved may awaken--and with him, his love for her--and the two lovers may once more be reunited.

She portrays herself as the ever-vigilant, ever-desirous lover ('la 've 'l mio cor sempre intento' 1.14), always yearning for her beloved.

In the sonnet "Deh come'l tempo..." Matraini examines death from a personal perspective of time passed and of a life more fully lived. Reminiscent of Petrarch's "O tempo, o ciel volubil...",[44] it takes on a decidedly different approach and bespeaks an attitude quite removed from that of her predecessor. While Petrarch feels remorse for a life all too humanly lived, and erroneously focused on his temporal love for Laura, Matraini's sonnet is a simple expression of the realization of the passage of time, the proximity of death, and the need to turn to a more solid, spiritual path. It is also a touching self-portrait of a woman faced with the physical changes brought on by age:

> Deh com'l tempo sene fugge, e vola
> E di noi sempre se ne porta il meglio
> (Dicemi spesso il mio fidato speglio)
> E come ogni mortal cosa ne invola.
>
> Né dal pigro mio sonno anco una sola
> Volta, dopo molt'anni mi risveglio
> Ben ch'io mi veggia il crin canuto, e veglio
> E fuggir la beltà, che ne consola.
>
> In questo parla con le mente, e dice
> Un pensier, che di tema il cor mi punge
> Non tardar à trovar securo albergo:
>
> Che chi col tempo i passi non aggiunge
> Qual pellegrino stanco, e infelice,
> A mezanotte, il dì si trova à tergo. (p. 95)

Matraini, like Petrarch, is writing from the perspective of maturity and is expressing her need to turn to more spiritual pursuits. As in Petrarch's sonnet, the passage of time is represented by the image of flight conveyed by the verbs 'fugge' and 'vola' of

the first line. These, however, comprise the extent of the authors' similar treatment of the theme. Where Petrarch's tone is one of remorse for a life ill-spent, Matraini's exemplifies a much more pragmatic approach. Her treatment of the *tempus fugit* topos is subdued, her tone confessional: she seems, in fact, to be carrying on a reflective conversation with the reader, to be confiding in him or her. This confidential tone is established in the first quatrain by the aside of the third line, and is continued in the confessional nature of the tercets.

The author begins by acknowledging how her youthful beauty has waned with the swift passage of time. As Grazia Colli notes, time's unstoppable and fluid nature is emphasized in the first quatrain by the high concentration of e's and s's (41). The poet has been made aware of the changes because her 'trusted' mirror, much like a trusted friend and confidant, has revealed them to her ("Dicemi spesso il mio fidato speglio" [l.3]).[45] The second quatrain implies that, notwithstanding the passage of time, Matraini has not reawakened ("risveglio" [l.6]) even once ("Nè...anco una sola / Volta" [l.5-6]) from her 'pigro... sonno', that is, from her casual disregard for her spiritual well-being. This neglect of spiritual life was introduced in the first quatrain through the reference to vanity in the image of the mirror.[46] However, rather than expressing regret about her past life, Matraini speaks of her 'lazy sleep', ("pigro mio sonno" [l.5]). There is nothing to indicate a harsh or sudden awakening to the realities of age or of a life spent pursuing temporal love rather than God; the lazy sleep seems to evolve gently into a realization of the passage of time. A sense of urgency is more noticeable in the tercets, where Matraini personifies "un pensier", her intellect, which admonishes her to turn to God before it is

too late. The reader is now made aware that this is a preoccupation very close to her heart, "che di tema il cor mi punge" (l.10).

The poet's personal confession/revelation transcends her personal considerations as can be seen in the first quatrain by the use of the pronoun 'noi' with which the poet involves all of humanity. It implies a shared experience and a sense of comonality which is at once generalized and personal. Matraini's confidential stance involves the reader intimately, drawing the reader into the text, which is both a personal confession on the part of the poet and a general admonition to all.

As has been demonstrated, Matraini's opus outwardly makes use of many Bembist and Petrarchan elements and adheres closely to the fashionable poetic traditions of the time. Notwithstanding these roots, the poet regularly ventures into the world of complicated syntax, conceits, and metaphor often attributed to Mannerism.[47]

There exist definite manneristic elements (often to an extreme degree) in a portion of Matraini's poetry; she appears, in fact, to occupy a bridging position between the Mannerist and Marinist style which became popular near the end of the sixteenth century.[48] It was a movement which moved away from the classic introspection of the Petrarchan model which governed Renaissance poetics, to a more contrived, intellectually challenging art form, based on the elements of awe and the unexpected.[49] Matraini's Manneristic and at times Marinist tendencies, however, were always clothed in a Petrarchan veil. In this she fits into the Mannerist profile provided by Mirollo (see note 45). Luigi Baldacci is the only modern scholar to point out the duality of styles within Matraini's poetry with the phrase "petrarchescamente manierata" ("Chiara" 63), an

expression which succinctly describes the duality of Matraini's poetry: anchored in Petrarchan roots yet tinged with fresh poetic approaches.

Within the Petrarchan framework we have already noted Matraini's use of alliteration, assonance, chiasmus, paronomasia, and parallel constructions. To these we must add a variety of techniques which tend to make Matraini's poetry somewhat less lyrical and more obscure than that of her contemporaries. Baldacci, for example recognizes in her prose writing "tratti d'invenzione manieristica" ("Chiara" 59) thus indicating Matraini's inclination toward a complicated syntactical organization of her poetry which contributes to its frequently more obscure nature. In general her poems are also less lyrical than those of her contemporaries; they demonstrate a penchant for verbal puns and for a complicated syntax which also contributes to their obscurity.

In a sonnet composed as a response to an encomiastic poem written about her, Matraini plays on the topos of false modesty by suggesting the portrait is far too flattering. The poem is also a rejection of her admirer's attentions; the poet is hoping to minimize the potentially hurtful message by obfuscating it in Manneristic obscurity.

> Tropp'oltre ogni mio merito, ornata, e bella,
> m'avete, con la penna, e col pensiero,
> Dipinta, e avvivata di quel vero
> Spirito, ch'in voi si chiaro arde, e favella.
>
> E se questo d'accesa, alta facella
> Arso, e legato sotto il grande impero
> D'amor (contra di voi crudele, e fiero)
> Fate, essendo di lui l'anima ancella.
>
> Che saria poi, fuor del suo forte laccio,
> e del foco, onde sete acceso, e arso,
> Perchi'l pò far, nè vi vuol trar d'impaccio.

Ben credo, che saria nel mondo sparso
Già il bel nome di voi, con quanto hor taccio
Di vostra lode, nel mio dir sì scarso. (p. 48)

In the first quatrain the poet makes abundant use of hyperbaton to the point of splitting the past perfect tense of the verb: the auxiliary "avete" appears in line 2, whereas the past participles "dipinta" and "avvivata" are found in line 3. Matraini's unconventional manipulation of the verb is highlighted to an even greater extent in the second quatrain where "fate" appears in the last line (l. 8) after much circumlocution composed of side references and descriptions. The main premise of the second quatrain, "E se questo.../.../.../Fate" (l. 1-4), is tied in meaning with the beginning of the first tercet, "Che saria poi", which then introduces Matraini's flattering suggestion that were the lover to divert his attentions from her to other worthy endeavours, he would surely gain widespread recognition and praise. However, the two phrases are separated by a long and disjointed aside describing the burning lover imprisoned by indestructible chains of love. The unnatural verb placement coupled with the parenthetical asides[50] and abundant commas which interrupt the natural flow of the verse, render the poem inordinately disjointed and make a coherent and linear understanding of it extremely difficult. Due to this disjointedness, the reference to 'questo' in the fifth line is at first rather ambiguous: is the poet referring to 'spirto' of the previous line, or to something quite distinct, as in fact is the case? This ambiguity, created by the separation of the verb 'fate' from its introductory clause, can lead an unsuspecting reader in a completely different direction, and delay the ultimate moment of understanding.

It is in the second quatrain that Matraini changes focus of the sonnet from a modest refusal to accept the proferred praise of her correspondent, to an encomium of her flatterer. She turns the table on her admirer and suggests his praise of her is so inordinate that were he not enchained by Love (of her), he could direct his creative energies to far greater personal achievements. The images of the captured lover are conveyed by the words 'legato' and 'ancella' of the second quatrain and 'laccio' of the first tercet. The burning lover is being consumed 'arso' by an 'accesa, alta facella' (l.5) and the image is reprised in the first tercet by the words 'foco', 'acceso' and a repeat of 'arso' (l.10). The images, therefore, are traditionally Petrarchan. However, it is precisely the traditional elements of this sonnet which may lull the reader into a false sense of complacency and, paradoxically, impede an understanding of the poem.

The sonnet, in fact, is permeated with subversive treatments of the themes found within traditional love poetry. Matraini, the poet, is not the burning lover we have met in previous poems; she is the cause of the burning, as were the ladies in courtly love poetry. Nonetheless, she is not the cruel lady of the past: she is the 'alta facella'. Matraini represents herself, rather self-importantly, as a pure and lofty passion, a distinct contrast to the modesty she displayed in the first quatrain. The word 'alta' implies that the beleaguered lover has chosen a most worthy Lady upon which to bestow his esteem. Matraini the poet/lady/beloved may not desire her lover's attentions or reciprocate his love, but she does understand why he should feel as he does. She is simultaneously dismissing his advances and approving his excellent choice of Beloved. Matraini is employing the conventional roles of male-originated love poetry but is re-configuring

them in order to produce an unconventional outcome, one that is far more affirming of herself, the woman. She is the creator of the poem, but not the Lover. She is the Beloved of the poem, but not the cruel Lady, for she recognizes in herself a lofty and noble focus for any lover. She is employing the conventional topos of false modesty but is outrightly singing her own praises.

This self-encomium, however, is couched in contorted syntax, assertive[51] sounds, and lofty language in order to camouflage the message and to confuse the recipient. She does not reciprocate the feelings offered to her, but she also does not want to compromise her own dignity by playing the conventional role of the rejecting Lady: she makes her message known while simultaneously asserting her self-worth.

Matraini divests herself of any responsibility for the lover's predicament by blaming Love itself for his misfortune. It is Love which is represented as the cruel enslaver, who gives no options to his hapless victims. Love is 'crudele, e fiero' (l.7), he reigns mercilessly over his 'grande impero' (l.6), he entraps his victim in his 'forte laccio' (l.9) from which he does not want to set the sufferer free: 'nè vi vuol trar d'impaccio'. Thus Matraini becomes, like the Lover, a mere pawn in Love's selfish game and in attempting to demonstrate to him the benefits of diverting his focus from her, she is maintaining her elevated status as a most worthy object of desire, an 'alta facella', a 'lofty flame'.

The sonnet "Chiara, imagin, di sè" is also a study in Matraini's manneristic tendencies; in it we find extensive use of commas and parentheses to separate clauses and stop the natural flow of the poem. The sonnet is a touching self-portrait painted as an

aging woman whose eyesight is failing her, and who lives in a world of *chiaroscuro*. It is made all the more poignant by its position in the *canzoniere*; in the sonnet which precedes it, Matraini invokes the Supreme Being asking for sight for her soul, now that her eyes are no longer able to see.[52]

> Chiara, imagin, di sè, m'ha fatto, e ombra,
> E con la propria man formato ha'l volto,
> Mostrando, quanto habbia da lei ritolto
> Veloce tempo, ch'ogni cosa sgombra.
>
> Qual, perch'agl'occhi suoi le luci adombra,
> In questa frale imagine, ha rivolto,
> Poi ch'l pensiero (à meglior studio volto)
> gl'opprime e di dolor l'anima ingombra.
>
> Ma quantunque la forza, e'l poter grande,
> Del tempo sia (che i tempi, e nomi atterra)
> (Mentre le velocissime ali spande)
>
> Non però sia, ch'l ben che in lei si serra,
> Tempo, Fortuna, ò Morte à terra il mande,
> Con fiera, aspra, mortale, e lunga guerra. (p.99)

Immediately within the first line of the poem, we find evidence of mannerism through a concentration of poetic devices: anastrophe, asyndeton, a chiastic placement of the concepts of 'chiara' and 'ombra', and commas[53] which lead to a halting reading of the line. The contrasting concepts of light/dark applied to the same portrait also set a dichotomous tone for the sonnet which helps to explain the fragmentation of the writing style.

The dichotomy of the sonnet is further witnessed in the voice the poet chooses to convey her message. The third person narration suggests that the portrait itself is speaking to the reader, thus giving a third-hand account of the poet's role as artist, but a first-hand

description of itself. The portrait informs the reader that 'Chiara' has created her self-portrait with "la propria man" (l.2), by her own hand. The sonnet, lends itself to an alternate interpretation: that the poet is speaking directly through the poem. However, she does not speak of herself in the first person, but rather, in the third person: "Chiara, imagin, di sè, m'ha fatto" (l.1), ('Chiara has made me an image of herself [Chiara]'). This objective viewpoint is sustained through phrases such as "ha fatto" (l.1), "di sè" (l.2), "suoi luci" (l.5), "ha rivolto" (l.6). Instead of the intimacy of the first person, Matraini has chosen a more detached and disconnected discourse, which is mirrored in the structural disjointedness of the sonnet. These techniques underscore her altered view of reality, given the limiting condition of her failing eyesight.

Hyperbaton in the second and third lines ("formato ha" and "habbia ....ritolto") is continued in the last line of the quatrain with the displacement of "veloce tempo", which is actually the subject of the previous clause. The second quatrain continues in a similar vein: the verb ("ha rivolto") is found at the end of line 6, separated from the beginning of its phrase by two distinct clauses, thereby casting in great confusion the identity of the subject. Not by direct correspondence, therefore, but by mere assumption can we deduce that this subject is, in fact, Chiara herself: she has turned her eyes downward, perhaps inward into the portrait. The position of Matraini's eyes reflects the spiritual introspection suggested in the last two lines of the quatrain, where the poet speaks of having turned her thoughts (and it is important here to note the use of the verb 'volto' which echoes the 'rivolto' of the eyes in line 6) to a "miglior studio" (l.7), a more appropriate (more spiritual) focus. This forced introspection is the cause of great anguish for the poet, for it

opresses her eyes (hence, they are turned downward with the burden) and engulfs her soul with pain ("Poi ch'l pensiero.... /gl'opprime e di dolor l'anima ingombra" [l.7-8]). The three sets of parenthetical 'asides' found in the second quatrain and first tercet emphasize the overall sense of displacement and fragmentation, rendering linear comprehension almost impossible.

The tercets are more easily accessible to the reader, despite their asyntactic construction. This is especially true of the first tercet. Notwithstanding the great strength and power of Time which alters and destroys all things (metaphorically represented in line 11 as a bird expanding its "velocissime ali", the adjective 'velocissime' underscoring the rapidity of Time's passing), the poet has faith that the good within her will not be destroyed by Time, Fortune, or Death itself. The optimism implied in the tercets is Matraini's affirmation of life and of her unaltering faith in her beliefs. Although expressing some regrets about her personal life and the way in which she chose to live it, she does not completely renounce it, nor does she ultimately discredit herself for her faults. She has the self-assuredness that within her lies an inherent good ("il ben che in lei si serra" (l.12), which despite the battles and temptations of life ("fiera, aspra, mortale, e lunga guerra" (l.14), will not be destroyed by Time. Her self-portrait, therefore, although veiled in the obscurity of diminishing eyesight, is a realistic depiction and acceptance of herself and her life--both the good (chiara) and bad (ombra)--without descending into self-pity of self-mortification.

These two sonnets cited demonstrate a syntactically manneristic aspect to Chiara Matraini's poetry. They represent a noteworthy departure from the greater part of her own

compositions and may be considered extreme when compared to other Mannerist poetry of the period[54]. They raise questions for which there are no simple answers: Was she consciously manipulating the language in an attempt to navigate uncharted poetic waters? Was she simply aware and following the lead of other poets who had begun to veer from the more linear Petrarchan lyrical style? Are these excerpts merely an indication of an over-zealous poet of uneven writing skills? Luigi Baldacci appears to be the only scholar to have commented upon this tendency (albeit in a very minor acknowledgement)[55] and there is a need for further, detailed study of this area of the poet's writing, the scope of which exceeds the mandate of this study.

Conclusion

Chiara Matraini's role in the Petrarchan poetics of sixteenth-century Italy is one which demands review and re-evaluation. The corpus she left as legacy indicates she was a poet who attempted to adhere to the poetic dogma of her epoch in order to achieve a longed-for recognition in her field[56]. The poet chose to investigate themes which were well-established within the Petrarchan tradition: fame, the anguish and/or ecstasy of love, the unstoppable progression of time, separation, and its ultimate manifestation, death. Her overwhelming form of choice for her lyric poetry was the sonnet, and in this she followed closely the example of Petrarch and Bembo, not to mention the other Petrarchan poets of her century. Within the sonnet itself, Matraini availed herself liberally of the techniques of her mentors: vocalic and consonantal manipulation to create a specific mood or tone; generous application of Petrarchan antithesis to convey the duality of the themes explored; use of well-established metaphors; frequent adaptation of apostrophe and/or

dialogue form to suggest a more personal interchange with the beloved, as well as liberal use of parenthetical asides to underscore the intimacy of the poetry.

Notwithstanding the many similarities of Matraini's poetic corpus with the poetry of the tradition which she shared, there is noteworthy evidence of diversification and, frequently, a unique approach to treatment of themes and manipulation of the poetic techniques of the age. Within the parameters of the Petrarchan and Bembist standards which dominated lyric poetry at the time, she was able to exhibit individuality and a novelty of approach which was at once singular, female-focused, and, at times, subversive. Ann Rosalind Jones speaks of the unique quality of women's writing in the Early Modern period when she suggests that "women's equal access to discourse meant using it differently--not better or worse than men, but less predictably" (**Reading** 247).

As there have been several examples of portraits in this study, it is important to note that Matraini's description of her beloved is never physical. Unlike Petrarch, who was the first poet to bring the *donna angelicata* to the realm of human form, and to describe her in physical terms,[57] Matraini's description of the object of her desire centres on his virtues and merits, more in heroic and religious terms than in real ones.[58] In fact, the religious focus appears all the more pronounced in Matraini's poetry. Through religious vocabulary and allusion to liturgy, the beloved is not a mere guide leading the poet to redemption; he is transformed, in fact, to the centre of her universe, her god. Unlike Petrarch and Bembo who, in an outburst of frustrated anger, do not hesitate to regard their beloved as their enemy,[59] a cruel and heartless example of the disdainful *dame sans merci*, Matraini does not dwell upon the cruelty of her beloved. This might

perhaps be attributed to the fact that, unlike her male predecessors, she has chosen to write about a more realistic and fulfilled love.

The departure to a more intangible description of the beloved is rendered all the more noticeable because Matraini appears much more forthright in her acknowledgement of the physical aspect of the love relationship. Whereas Petrarch worships from afar, never achieving fulfilment with the object of his love, Matraini readily accepts her own passionate nature as well as the probability of passion within the love relationship. She has loved the object of her desire physically as well as spiritually and is recounting the completeness of that love. Not only is this stance a departure from the Petrarchan formula she is emulating, but it is also highly controversial: the public (even if subtle) admission of passion and eroticism, was not an appropriate channel of expression for a sixteenth-century Italian woman--especially one who aspired to recognition and acceptance within her society and within the literary world.

Despite her sporadic declarations to the contrary, Chiara Matraini is self-assured and aware of the power that writing bestows. Her poetry reveals a well-founded confidence in her own ability as creator. On more than one occasion she reminds the reader that her words will live on through the ages, thus assuring her immortality. The poet underscores the inevitability of her fame by assigning to her own identity a central role in her poetry. Through metonymic devices (supplanting her own name into the Petrarchan formula Laura/lauro), Chiara Matraini is bypassing the beloved as a means to immortality and is placing the onus directly upon herself--upon her own proficiency as a poet. This stance would most certainly be considered subversive in a society in which,

despite the lip-service paid to female power and accomplishments, women were still regarded as intellectually ornamental, as mere pawns or players in a cultured game. In such a patriarchal society, for a woman to be assured of her own expertise and future success could only be judged at best, as misguided, and at worst, as blasphemous against her true nature as ordained by God (see my discussion, Chapter 2).

Clearly, a key departure from Petrarchan tradition for Chiara Matraini was her foray into a manneristic style which would not become popular or acceptable until very late in her life, much later than her actual compositions. Notwithstanding this extension beyond the boundaries of Petrarchism, she certainly did not belong wholly within the Manneristic tradition, either; her metaphors--key to the baroque style--were nowhere near the obscure and challenging word games into which they later evolved under the Marinists. Nonetheless, it was perhaps her very distinctive manipulation of language which set her apart from her contemporaries and the tradition in which they were well-ensconced, and which contributed to her being overlooked by the literary establishment of her time.

Chiara Matraini's canonization was undoubtedly hindered by several obstacles: a rather nebulous social standing; an audacious treatment of the theme of love; an uneven adherence to the Bembist poetic dogma which regulated the canon; and a writing style which sometimes deviated from the Petrarchan formula into a more manneristic domain. This review of a representative sample of her poetry, however, presents the modern reader with new insights into the world of a self-confident sixteenth-century woman, one who

took her role of artist/creator very seriously, one whose unique contribution to sixteenth-century Italian poetics should receive greater acknowledgement.

[1] In "Subverting the Canon", Laurence Lerner speaks of "the Great Tradition, a body of literature that would enrich the life of any responsive reader" (349). This, when added to "favourable value judgements"(Lerner 350), creates the canon. These 'favourable value judgements' are cause for scepticism; who determines which values are to be represented? Undoubtedly this is a very politically-influenced decision. For this reason, Lerner also goes on to state that "Viewed as a whole, the canon can be seen as an instrument of power" (350). (See also Waller's views, n.14, this chapter). In **The Writing of Women**, Phyllis Rose concurs with Lerner when she suggests that "the process of cannon formation has nothing to do with innate literary merit and everything to do with the way certain works or authors rehearse the values of the dominant class" (4).

[2] See Carlo Salinari "Il Cinquecento," in **Il Quattrocento e il Cinquecento** (1). Antologia della letteratura italiana. (Milano: Rizzoli, 1966), 1285-1289; Ettore Bonora, "Il classicismo dal Bembo al Guarini," in **Il Cinquecento**, 4, Storia della letteratura italiana, (Milano: Garzanti, 1966); Walter Binni and Riccardo Scrivano, **Dal Cinquecento al Settecento**, 2, Storia e antologia della letteratura italiana, (Milano: Principato Editore, 1982), 19-30; Eric Cochrane, **Italy 1530-1630**, (London: Longman, 1988), 19-26; Luigi Baldacci, ed., **Lirici del Cinquecento**, 7, Classici della società italiana, (Milano: Longanesi, 1975), xv-xxviii; Pietro Bembo, **Bembo: opere in volgare**, Mario Marti ed., I classici italiani, (Firenze: Sansoni, 1961), XI-XLIII; Daniel L. Heiple, **Garcilaso de la Vega and the Italian Renaissance**, (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994); Carlo Dionisotti, **Geografia e storia della letteratura italiana**, (Torino: Giulio Einaudi editore, 1967), 82-83; Giuseppe Toffanin, **Il Cinquecento**, 6, Storia letteraria italiana, (Milano: Casa Editrice Dr. Francesco Vallardi, 1965), 85-99); Antonino Sole, **Il gentiluomo cortigiano nel segno del Petrarca**, (Palermo: G.B. Palumbo, 1992), 86-101; Marcello Aurigemma, **Lirica, poemi e trattati civili del Cinquecento**, Letterartura italiana Laterza, 19, (Roma: Laterza, 1979), 57-61.

[3] Bembo justifies his belief with an argument for the greater good of humanity: "Non è la moltitudine, Giuliano, quella che alle composizioni di alcun secolo dona grido e auttorità, ma sono pochissimi uomini di ciascun secolo, al giudicio de' quali, per ciò che sono essi più dotti degli altri reputati, danno poi le genti e la moltitudine fede, che per sé giudicare non sa dirittamente, e a quella parte si piega con le sue voci, a cui ella que' pochi uomini, che io dico, sente piegare" (**Prose** 40).

[4] For a more comprehensive discussion of the language polemic of sixteenth-century Italy refer to: Pietro Bembo, **Prose della volgar lingua**, Ed. Mario Marti (Padova: Liviana Editrice 1967) 3-44; Eric Cochrane, **Italy 1530-1630** (London: Longman, 1988) 19-26; Ettore Bonora "Il classicismo dal Bembo al Guarini," in **Il Cinquecento**, Storia della letteratura italiana. 4, eds. Emilio Cecchi and Natalino Sapegno, (Milano: Garzanti, 1966) 151-191; Carlo Salinari **Il Cinquecento**, Prima Parte, ed. Maurizio Vitale, Antologia della letteratura italiana, 2, (Milano: Rizzoli, 1966) 1286-1289.

[5] Carlo Dionisotti attributes this victory of vulgar over Latin almost exclusively to Bembo: "La riduzione a severa disciplina ciceroniana e virgiliana della libertà di cui il latino umanistico aveva goduto nel tardo Quattrocento, avvenne ai primi del Cinquecento contemporaneamente alla codificazione della lingua volgare, e non senza il decisivo intervento dello stesso uomo, il Bembo, che della codificazione volgare fu il principale responsabile" (82).

[6] *motteggiare*: the art of engaging in exchanges of joking, spirited, sayings, often biting. This activity also referred to the art of writing *motti*, which were brief and conceptual phrases, sometimes of symbolic meaning, and exhibited on crests and standards used for public display.

[7] In **Lirica, poemi e trattati civili del Cinquecento**, Marcello Aurigemma supports this statement: "Ed egli [Bembo] è deciso a dar l'avvio ad un dibattito di alto livello letterario, dove le donne (appunto per il tema dell'amore) possano avere il loro degno posto anche come intellettuali, ususfruendo di quella più ampia partecipazione del publico che fu la conquista della società rinascimentale" (18-19).

[8] "E di queste tutte miglior suono rende la A; con ciò sia cosa che ella più di spirito [respiro] manda fuori, per ciò che con più aperte le labbra nel manda e più al cielo ne va esso spirito" (**Prose** 64).

[9] For Bembo's detailed analysis of vowels and consonants see pp.63-66 of the **Prose.**

[10] See **Prose** pp. 67-70.

[11] *versi rotti*: shorter than 11 syllables.

[12] For an overview of the specifics of the Petrarchan style and of how it was imitated/adopted by various women writers refer to: Gary F. Waller "Struggling into Discourse: The emergence of Renaissance Women's Writing" in **Silent But for the Word: Tudor Women as Patrons, Translators, and Writers of Religious Words**. Ed. Margaret Patterson Hannay, (Kent: The Kent State University Press, 1985) 242-50 and, Dennis J. McAuliffe, "Vittoria Colonna and Renaissance Poetics, Convention, and Society," in **Rinascimento: Aspetti e problemi attuali** (Firenze: Leo Olschki Ed., 1982) 534-41.

[13] Marina Zancan in "La Donna" states: "Laura riprende le figure femminili che, nella lirica volgare, la precedono e dà loro un volto carnale ed umano, mantenendo tuttavia inalterata la funzione simbolica e totalmente astratta, di *metafora* di un procedimento intellettuale, ora rinnovato. Attraverso Laura...l'intellettuale letterato...si fa interprete e guida di una realtà intellettuale raffinata, formalmente perfetta e totalmente umana" (772).

[14] Gary Waller elaborates on the dichotomy faced by women poets. In his opinion these women "are writing within a genre entirely structured by male categories--by the distancing of the erotic by logic, by the fixing of the female as a body which is the subject of power requiring her passivity as the object of anguish or manipulation" (248). Sixteenth-century women had no model as an 'active' participant in the discourse of love other than the male. Marina Zancan concurs with Waller and goes on to suggest that women have a tendency to write using the voice of the context of which they are a part: "La donna...che per occasioni e per spinte diverse, prende la parola in ambito letterario, da un lato deve farlo all'interno di un sistema di valori che non ha direttamente partecipato a definire, dall'altro, per il fatto stesso di essere all'interno tende ad assumere le forme e la voce del contesto" (**Donna** 779).

[15] Waller sees in the male/female model discrepancy, the issue of power. According to Waller, "what power seeks to control is discourse since it is there that "reality" is defined by the society" (245). Those with the power (men) determine reality by their portrayal of it, using the language and structures which best uphold their version of reality. Therefore, he questions how women's reality can be discerned within the existing framework; he wonders "...how the excluded or marginalized voices of a culture can be heard within the seemingly replete language constituted by specific discursive practices, as those voices struggle against the power of a dominant system which tries to organize all of society's cultural activity" (Waller 245). (See also Lerner's views in n.1., this chapter).

[15] It must be remembered that the Inquisition was fully active during the sixteenth century in both Italy and Spain. Many writers were being accused of heresy based on the context of their writings. The Tridentine Index, issued in 1559 by Pope Paul IV, was enforced and later re-issued as the 'Index' in 1564 by Pope Pious IV. These were lists of 'heretical' books which all Christians were prohibited from reading. Catholic devotional books and the Latin *Vulgate* Bible were almost the only texts allowed to good Christians as three-quarters of all books printed in Europe during that time were censored (Dowley 417).

[16] Quoted in Piejus 193. Taken from **Dialoghi di M. Lodovico Domenichi, cioè D'amore, De' rimedi d'amore, Dell'Amor Fraterno, Della Fortuna, Della vera Nobilità, Dell'Imprese, Della corte et Della Stampa**, (Venezia: G. Giolito de'Ferrari, 1562) 376.

[17] In an article entitled "Opportunities for Scholarship in Eighteenth-Century British Literature", in **Women in Print**, eds., Joan E. Hartman and Ellen Messer-Davidow, (New York, The Modern Language Association of America, 1982), Katharine M. Rogers suggests that women authors were published or reviewed only because of their connections with well-known (most often literary) men, or for their extraliterary reputations--in other words, for reasons other than the merit of their creations (191). Although the criteria change slightly when speaking of earlier female writers from Italy or Spain (e.g. the 'extraliterary' activities in these countries might have been more

detrimental than beneficial to a budding artist wanting publication), the basic premise remains: very rarely were the works evaluated for themselves. The social context of the poet was undoubtedly of primary consideration, regardless of the era.

[18] A detailed analysis of the presence of women poets in the anthologies of the sixteenth century is found in **Petrarchismo Mediato: Per una critica della forma "antologia"**, L'analisi letteraria: proposte e letture critiche 11 (Roma: Bulzoni, 1974) 133-155, by Amedeo Quondam.

[19] See: Luigi Baldacci's **Lirici del Cinquecento** (Milano: Longanesi, 1975) 383; Giovanna Rabitti, "Linee per il ritratto di Chiara Matraini", **Studi e problemi di critica testuale** April 1981:155; Paola Malpezzi Price, "Chiara Matraini: Petrarchist or anti-Petrarchist? The Dilemma of a Woman Poet" in **Donna: Women in Italian Culture**, Ada Testaferri, ed. (Toronto: Dovehouse Ed., 1989) 189.

[20] Although Luigi Baldacci gives 1514 as the year of birth (383), more recent research by Giovanna Rabitti indicates date of birth to be June 4, 1515. Her research has also lead her to posit 1604 as the date of her death ("Linee per il ritratto di Chiara Matraini" in **Studi e problemi di critica testuale** 23 April 1981: 155).

[21] After listing a series of 'missing links' between the poet and the more famous and literate men of her time (there exists a lack of evidence of correspondence or poetic exchanges between Matraini and the most renowned contemporary literati) and the fact that she was not included in a compilation of rhymes by the women of Lucca--her contemporaries--, Rabitti postulates: "Può essere che tale indeterminatezza sia da addebitare alla quasi totale mancanza di notizie e documenti in proposito, ma, ricordando la tensione esistente tra la poetessa e la sua città, non è affatto azzardato ipotizzare che si tratti veramente di un disdegno reciproco" ("Linee" 164-165).

[22] For a complete study of Matraini's publication history, refer to Alan Bullock and Gabriella Palange, "Per una edizione critica delle opere di Chiara Matraini" in **Studi in onore di Raffaele Spongano**, (Bologna: Bari, 1980) 235-262. Paucity of biographical details, however, make it difficult to assign individual poems to specific events or periods of her life.

[23] Among the women poets considered to constitute the first group are (1530-1550): Vittoria Colonna, Tullia d'Aragona, Gaspara Stampa, Veronica Gambara and Laura Terracina. The second group wrote in the last few decades of the sixteenth century and into the early part of the seventeenth: Chiara Matraini, Isabella Andreini, Isabella Cervoni, Modesta da Pozzo and Lucrezia Marinelli (Chemello in **Cerchio della luna**, M. Zancan Ed., 97-98). Matraini seems to have been the only 'Petrarchist' of the second wave of women writers. While the others in her group did write poetry, they did not follow the *canzoniere* model and were best known for their prose work. See appendix III in **Cerchio della Luna** (254-264) for a list of publications attributed to women writers of

the sixteenth/seventeenth centuries.

[24] Baldacci informs us that the second edition of Matraini's **Rime** (Lucca) was introduced with no mention of a previous publication and that the third edition (Venice) carries the same name as the second but, again, does not mention any previous publications (384).

[25] As identified on pp. 96-97.

[26] Page references refer to 1555 edition.

[27] It must be added that Matraini was blessed with a name which was part of the Petrarchan lexicon and could, therefore, be used freely and be understood as a *double entendre*. Gaspara Stampa, for example, would have had been faced with a much more difficult task had she considered a similar technique.

[28] Borsetto refers to "autocitazione" (207) and "autoreferenzialità" (208).

[29] Chiara Matraini, **Lettere della signora Chiara Matraini, gentildonna lucchese, con la prima e seconda parte delle sue Rime**. (Lucca: Vincenti Busdraghi, 1595). Unless otherwise indicated, all future references to Chiara Matraini's poetry will be from this edition.

[30] *'essempio'* is an archaic term for a model, or person who posed for painters/sculptors.

[31] John Steadman discusses this ambiguity in **Redefining a Period Style: "Renaissance", "Mannerist" and "Baroque" in Literature**, (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1990), 13-33. Steadman stresses "the diversity of the Renaissance tradition, as opposed to a monolithic and oversimplified conception of the period" (13) and discusses "the Renaissance poet's ambiguous relation to the ancients, [and] the frequent overemphasis on allegedly "pagan" aspects of Renaissance culture" (13). Steadman believes that both the Reformation and Counter-Reformation had a catalytical effect on the literature of the era. In his opinion, "the metaphor of returning to a golden age paralleled the image of a recovered paradise and prophecies of a millennium. The ideal of recovering the original purity--in the human soul, in ecclesiastical doctrine and organization and liturgy, in the laws and principles of the poetic genres, or in the recovery and interpretation of ancient texts--underlies a wide variety of separate, but sometimes interrelated, disciplines" (16).

[32] We must keep in mind the difficult situation in which Laura found herself. In order to maintain her role as the pure, virtuous woman worthy of the poet's love, she could not show Petrarch, the lover, mercy (*mercede*), as this would surely lead him to sin (adultery). She must, therefore, maintain her position as merciless object of desire (*dame sans merci*), bestowing upon the lover only small signs and gestures which confirm her

awareness of his feelings. Refer to Petrarch's *Triumph of Death II* for Laura's own justification of her behaviour: "ma temprai la tua fiamma col mio viso, / perché a salvar te e me null'altra via / era, e la nostra giovinetta fama" (**Triumphi** 266-267).

[33] This hymn is the second part of *O Salutaris hostia* and is attributed to St.Thomas Acquinas in the thirteenth century who wrote it in celebration of the feast of Corpus Christi. Kenneth Donald Mackenzie in "Anglican Adaptations of Some Latin Rites" states that "Both the doctrine and the the cult have been immensely affected by the theology and still more by the hymns of St. Thomas Acquinas, and it would be difficult to over-estimate the influence of *O Salutaris* and *Tantum Ergo* in the formation of the Western attitude towards the Sacrament of the Altar" (743). In an explanation of the liturgical unfolding of the Sacrament, the **Saint John's Sunday Missal and Every Day Prayerbook** (Belgium: U.S. Breposl S.A., 1952) states that the "hymn *Tantum ergo Sacramentum* (is sung), all present making a profound inclination" (550). This stance of devotion is echoed in Matraini's personal 'hymn of devotion'.

[34] Despite the Christian nomenclature which permeates the sonnet, Matraini is here clearly portraying herself as a pagan priestess .

[35] "Lowly bending, deep adoring, / Lo! The Sacrament we hail: / Types and shadows have their ending, / Newer rites of grace prevail" (Lefebvre 1808).

[36] Ann Rosalind Jones suggests that "However the woman poet uses the language of spirituality, (...) she uses it to consolidate her reputation as thinking writer" (**Enabling** 243).

[37] With specific reference to undesirability of the sound combination in "q'unqua", see p.94, this chapter.

[38] For a more detailed discussion on the use of the 'sun' metaphor in Matraini's work, see Giovanna Rabitti, "La metafora e l'esistenza nella poesia di Chiara Matraini" in **Studi e problemi di critica testuale**, 7, Oct. 1983, pp. 122-134.

[39] "Through Him, with Him, and in Him, is to Thee, God the Father almighty, in the union of the Holy Ghost, all honour and glory" (**St. John's Sunday Missal** 263).

[40] Matraini's tendency towards very direct approach has already been documented through the discussion of a more immediate involvement in her own immortality (p.105-107), and in her allusions to a more fulfilled love relationship (pp.118-120).

[41] This is also a direct borrowing from Bembo's sonnet #38 "L'alta cagion, che da principio diede / A le cose create ordine e stato, / Dispose ch'io v'amassi..." (Bembo **Rime** 473)

[42] The use of the phrase 'lume beato' is also meant to remind the reader of Dante's use of the same words in the **Paradiso**, where he is confronted with holy beings in the presence of God. By this allusion, Matraini is perhaps attempting to minimize the possible affront caused by her suggestion that her beloved is on the same level of importance as the Supreme Being.

[43] This phrase is preceeded directly by the phrase "mi diletta e piace" (l.5), borrowed verbatim from Petrarch's sonnet "Come va 'l mondo! Or mi diletta e piace" (Petrarca p.418).

[44]

O tempo, o ciel volubil che fuggendo
inganni i ciechi e miseri mortali,
o dì veloci più che vento e strali,
ora ab experto vostre frodi intendo.

Ma scuso voi e me stesso riprendo,
ché natura a volar v'aperse l'ali,
a me diede occhi, ed io pur ne' miei mali
li tenni, onde vergogna e dolor prendo;

e sarebbe ora, ed è passata ormai,
di rivoltarli in più secura parte
e poner fine a l'infiniti guai.

Né dal tuo giogo, Amor, l'alma si parte,
ma dal suo mal: con che studio, tu 'l sai;
non a caso è vertute, anzi è bell'arte.

(Petrarca p.497)

[45] In **Herself Beheld: The Literature of the Looking Glass**, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), Jenijoy La Belle postulates that throughout literature women and mirrors have enjoyed a special bond: "the looking-glass scenes (...) reveal an intimate and significant relationship between the mirror and a woman's conception of what she is, what she has been, and what she will become" (2).

[46] La Belle states that "in European literature through the eighteenth century, a woman looking in a mirror only rarely escapes its traditional emblematic meaning--vanity" (**Herself** 14). In this sonnet, the mirror is used twofold: to reflect both the vanity implied in a self-centered life, and "the ever shifting process of self-realization" (**Herself** 10). In Matraini's sonnet the 'self-realization' is the gentle wake-up call finally heard by the poet through the medium of the mirror.

[47] A detailed discussion of Mannerism in literature can be found in James V. Mirollo, **Mannerism and Renaissance Poetry. Concept, Mode, Inner Design**, (New Haven:

Yale University Press, 1984); John M. Steadman, **Redefining a Period Style. "Renaissance", "Mannerist" and "Baroque" in Literature**, (Pittsburg: Duquesne University Press, 1990), and **The Lamb and the Elephant. Ideal Imitation and the Context of Renaissance Allegory**,(San Marino: The Huntington Library, 1984); Tibor Klaniczay, **La crisi del Rinascimento e il Manierismo**, Trans. Riccardo Scrivano, (Roma: Bulzoni, 1973). According to James Mirollo, the Mannerist stage in Italy took place "from the third decade of the sixteenth century, when the first generation of mannerists began to attract attention, to the fin de siècle in Italy" (**Mannerism** 20-21). Manneristic poets appeared to rebel against the prescribed purity and classicism of the poetic style prevalent in the Early Modern Period, to opt for a more conspicuously stylized (contrived) form or content. James Mirollo, in his study **Mannerism and Renaissance Poetry: Concept, Mode, Inner Design,** cautions against "unwieldly notions of universal mannerism, of an age of mannerism, of a mannerist soul or psychology, and even of mannerist authors and total output"(**Mannerism** 68). He prefers to view Mannerism as "a particular artistic sensibility that expresses itself in certain formal and stylistic ways, on occasion" (**Mannerism** 68). In other words, he believes that manneristic tendencies can surface occasionally in the works of authors generally identified with a more classic style of poetry, such as the Petrarchans. To emphasize the more structural focus of Mannerism, he suggests, for example, that sixteenth-century love poetry "courts mannerism by eschewing thematic expansion and settling for stylistic refinement or modulation" (**Mannerism** 68). John Steadman agrees by stating that "In the late Renaissance, one encounters a conscious effort on the part of poets to heighten the grand style by increasing its artificiality and reforming the traditional genres, in the interest of greater dignity and structural unity" (**Redefining** 43). On a thematic plane, scholars emphasize the more openly erotic aspect of Mannerist poetry. For example, Tibor Klaniczay in **La Crisi del Rinascimento e il Manierismo** suggests that Mannerism, with its emphasis on eroticism, appears opposite to the most important Renaissance cults--the Petrarchan poet's adoration of woman and his emphasis on Platonic love (43).

[48] Gianbattista Marino is credited with spearheading a new era in Italian poetry which began to gain momentum around 1590. For a thorough definition of Marinism, contrasted with Petrarchism, and for more specific examples of Marinistic use of poetic devices, see John Steadman, **Redefining a Period Style: "Renaissance", "Mannerist" and "Baroque" in Literature,** (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1990); Francesco Guardiani, **La meravigliosa retorica dell'*Adone* di Giambattista Marino** (Firenze: Leo S. Olschki Editore, 1989); W. Theodor Elwert, **La poesia lirica italiana del seicento: Studio sullo stile barocco**. (Firenze: Leo S. Olshki Editore, 1967) 54-116. See also Maurizio Vitale, ed., **Il Cinquecento (2) e il Seicento,** Antologia della letteratura italiana, 3, (Milano: Rizzoli Editore, 1966), 967-970; Mirollo, James, V. **The Poet of the Marvellous: Giambattista Marino** (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963); Benedetto Croce, **Saggi sulla letteratura italiana del Seicento,** (Bari: Giuseppe Laterza & Figli, 1962), 365-422; Natalino Sapegno, **Antologia storica della poesia lirica**

italiana nei secoli XVI e XVII, (Torino: Edizioni RAI Radiotelevisione italiana, 1964), 171-173.

[49] 'Marinism' is identified by complex metaphors, convoluted syntax, and the manipulation and variation of poetic devices in order to produce poetry which is intellectually stimulating by its complexity and obscurity. Theodor Elwert, in **La poesia lirica italiana del seicento: Studio sullo stile barocco** writes of Marinist use of metaphor: "La metafora deve essere...oscura, non immediatamente comprensibile.... Il lettore deve arrivare a capire solo dopo averci pensato un po' su, la soluzione gli deve venire come per un lampo di genio" (58-59). The poetic devices employed by Petrarch and his followers to provide clarification and resolution are conversely manipulated by Marinists in their search for wonder and surprise. Marinesque wit (*arguzia*) often focuses on the themes of life's details--daily activities (domestic and social) of the beloved; odd features of her appearance; disguises of the beloved; the kiss and/or sexual act (Mirollo **The Poet** 126). Natalino Sapegno describes the function of Marinist poetry as one of pure entertainment, one characterized by "ricerca dell'ingegnosità, dello stupore, del meraviglioso, dello strano" (172). The poetry resulting from this altered focus became an intellectual challenge, a conceptual game or puzzle.

[50] Elwert discusses the Marinist tendency to employ poetic devices which halt or alter the normal flow of the poetic thought: "Come elementi ritardanti godono di particolare favore nella poetica barocca tutte le figure retoriche di posizione che trattengono il flusso normale del pensiero, come la parentesi, che ha un'azione tanto più forte quanto più è lunga e quanto più strettamente connessi sono i due tronconi divisi...Parimenti molto frequente il capovolgimento dell'ordine normale delle parole (anastrofe) e la separazione di parti del periodo che sono sintatticamente collegate (iperbato)..." (65).

[51] There are thirteen words in this sonnet with double letters: *Tropp'oltre, bella, penna, avvivata, favella, accesa, facella, essendo, ancella, laccio, acceso, impaccio, taccio*. These endow the poem with a forceful and definite tone which helps to emphasize the poet's underlying message of self-worth and obvious self-reliance on her own merits, notwithstanding her modest objections to the contrary.

[52] Rè, del Ciel benignissimo, ben ch'io
Da te sia indegna di trovar mercede,
Risguarda, prego, in mè qual sia la fede,
Ch'ho ne la tua clemenza, e'l dolor mio.

E si com'a tua gloria, e giusto, e pio,
(Mosso da l'amor tuo (ch'ogn'altro eccede)
Facesti'n parte di tua gratia herede
Il cieco nato, onde poi gl'occhi aprio.

Così vogli (à tua gloria, e mia salute)

Dar luce a l'alma, e da quest'occhi infermi
Sgombrare le lunghe mie tenebre oscure.

Deh fà, che'l veder mio chiaro si ferme
In tè, somma bontà, dando virtute
A quest'egre, mortal mie luci inferme. (p.99)

[53] These commas found in the 1592 edition could very well be an editorial decision or a publisher's additions and not necessarily the work of the author herself.

[54] For many examples of such poetry see **Mannerism and Renaissance Poetry** (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984) by James Mirollo.

[55] Luigi Baldacci, "Chiara Matraini poetessa del XVI secolo," **Paragone** 42 (1953), pp. 59 and 63.

[56] In **The Writing or the Sex?** (New York: Pergamon Press, 1989) Dale Spender justifies this trend of women writers to conform to the established literary criteria by stating that "...it has been widely recognised within the women's literary history that women's words are being judged by men (and that it doesn't pay to antagonise them)" (20). She considers men the "gate-keepers" (2) in both the publishing and critical worlds and in a position (historically and actually) to accord or deny women access to these spheres based on their sex. She further suggests that "If a woman writer does not get published, or reviewed, then in many respects she does not exist in the literary community" (2). In order to be acknowledged, Matraini required first and foremost to be read and, therefore, published. If she adhered--outwardly, at least--to the pre-established paradigms, it was at least in part, an act of self-promotion.

[57] Laura is described in physical terms in several of Petrarch's poems: "quelle chiome bionde e crespe" (p.341); "e 'l bel viso.../ e le chiome or avvolte in perle e 'n gemme,/ allora sciolte e sovra or terso bionde" (p.340); and perhaps most completely in:

"Da' più belli occhi e dal più chiaro viso
che mai splendesse, e da' più bei capelli
che facean l'oro e l'sol parer men belli,
dal più dolce parlare e dolce riso,

da le man, da le braccia che conquiso
senza moversi avrian quai più rebelli
fur d'Amor mai, da' più bei piedi snelli,
da la persona fatta in Paradiso (p.490)

[58] There are disparate theories as to why this distinction in characterization exists. Ann Rosalind Jones supports a gender-based rationalization. She believes that women's characterization of men demonstrate a pronounced departure from the traditional male model of female depiction. She suggests that "in contrast to their male interlocutors, for example, women poets rarely address physical compliments to men. They praise masculine strength of mind and reputation rather than bodily beauty, a contrast that calls attention to the insistently masculine perspective built into Ovidian metamorphoses and Petrarchan *blasons*" (**Reading** 247). John Steadman, on the other hand, discusses human description in Early Modern literature from a standpoint of the period itself rather than one based on gender-originated distinctions. In **Redefining a Period Style. "Renaissance", "Mannerist" and "Baroque" in Literature**, (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1990), Steadman cautions against assuming portraiture is necessarily a reflection of personal human qualities. He states: "Though some writers and artists undoubtedly were interested in emphasizing personal uniqueness, many of them were largely concerned with achieving the appropriate decorum for particular social or moral types and physical or psychological temperaments. What may appear at first glance to be individualized portraiture may prove, upon closer examination, to be merely a traditional but highly specialized form of characterization according to type" (25). This assessment must be kept in mind when reading any portraiture of the time, including Matraini.

[59] See Petrarch "la nemica mia" (301); Bembo "la mia fatal nemica" (**Opere** 470).

Chapter IV

Doña Catalina Clara Ramírez de Guzmán wrote in the first part of the seventeenth century in Spain. Like Chiara Matraini, this Spanish noblewoman was not included in the canon of her era, and was undoubtedly marginalized even more, given the social situation in Early Modern Spain as discussed in the second chapter of this study. In anticipation of examining her work, it is important to place her within the broader context of the established canon of the period in Spain. Although the Spanish poetic tradition was not as clearly defined as the Italian one in the corresponding period (the traditional Spanish verse[1] was being challenged by the new, Italianate verse) it was the Petrarchan style, the Italian fashion, which had taken precedence over the traditional and which, in many ways, had become the unit of measure for poetic worthiness.

1. Petrarchism in Spain

Petrarchan poetic influence had been evident in the Spanish Peninsula since the late fourteenth century,[2] beginning its Iberian journey from Provençe through Catalonia and manifesting itself in the work of poets such as Lorenç Mallol,[3] Jordi de Saint Jordi, Ramón Llull, Melchior de Gualbes, and Ausias March, whose writings would later influence Castilian authors.[4] Petrarchan influence on Castilian poetry presented itself through the cultural, religious, and commercial ties which flourished between the Italian and Iberian Peninsulas in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.[5]The political, religious, and commercial connections resulted in increased frequency of travel undertaken by literati and humanists of both countries. These travels became "piedra de toque de

intercambios culturales y determinantes esencial de la adopción, por parte de los poetas españoles, de los nuevos módulos presentados por el petrarquismo italiano" (Manero Sorolla 55).

One exchange which proved to be highly influential ("un encuentro decisivo" [Prieto, **Poesía**, 12]) was the meeting in 1526 of Andrea Navagero, the Venetian ambassador, and Juan Boscán Almogáver. Boscan's views of poetry,[6] echo the Bembist beliefs which led to the codification of Petrarchan ideals in the poetry of sixteenth-century Italy: Petrarch's supremacy of poetic style, Dante's inferiority, feminine affinity for poetry, etc. Navagero[7] persuaded Boscán to attempt the the new, Italian poetic forms in Spanish.[8] Although Boscán himself did not possess the required technical finesse to master effectively the Italianate style,[9] he was instrumental in encouraging his friend Garcilaso de la Vega to experiment with Italianate poetic techniques thus contributing to Garcilaso's canonization.

Boscan's new poetic vision and desire to break with traditional Spanish lyric forms[10] is of fundamental importance to the acceptance of Italian and, more specifically, Petrarchan stylistic models. Significantly, it was Boscán who translated Castiglione's[11] **Il Cortegiano (Libro del cortesano)** in 1534, with later revisions provided by Garcilaso. Although the book was primarily a reflection of and a guide to courtly behaviour of sixteenth-century Italy--what Navarrete calls "the aesthetization of life" (**Orphans** 44)--, it was to have an impact[12] on Spanish letters similar to that already established in Italian sixteenth-century literature and previously discussed (see pp. 89-91). Navarrete asserts that "by translating Castiglione's work the poets [Boscán and Garcilaso] appropriated the

book's teaching making it available to Spaniards [...] thereby transferring the locus of its reception and influence" (**Orphans** 41).

The "poetic revolution" (Jones 33) instigated by Boscán and refined by Garcilaso produced poetry which contrasted significantly--but not completely[13]--with the more traditional forms. According to R.O. Jones in **The Golden Age Prose and Poetry**, this "new poetry" (33) possesseed a much more extensive lexical and rhetorical scope, and availed itself of the Petrarchan technique of using images taken from nature to mirror the poet's self-analytic examination. Jones believes this gave the poets' imagination greater freedom: "the universe becomes their stage. By contrast, the poetry of their predecessors is claustrophobic in atmosphere" (33). A renewed interest in classical writers also contributed to the enrichment of the new style. The result of these innovations produced poetry capable of expressing with greater depth a more extensive range of complex ideas, relating to both the inner and outer worlds of the poet.

Increased appreciation of Italian culture through travel, and heightened awareness of neoplatonic and humanistic ideals through the sharing of that culture, (in particular as found in the **Libro del cortesano**), combined to raise Italianate poetry to a prominent position in Spanish letters. Although the debate between men of letters over the merits of traditional Spanish lyric forms versus those of the new Italianate fashion never abated, the Italian forms did dominate Spanish letters for the next several hundred years (and effectively became part of the poetic fabric which is still evident to this day) thanks, in great measure, to the efforts of Fernando de Herrera.

2. The Canon and Fernando de Herrera

The validation and codification of Petrarchan poetics by Pietro Bembo in Italy was reflected to some degree in sixteenth and seventeenth-century Spain owing to the efforts of Fernando de Herrera (1534-1597).[14] There exist, in fact, many similarities between the two humanists who were to have such an impact on sixteenth-century lyric poetry of both peninsulas. Whereas most of Herrera's Renaissance counterparts in Spain had led a life divided between military and intellectual pursuits ('armas y letras').[15] Both humanists chose to pursue their intellectual interests within the career path of the Catholic Church but, while Bembo rose through the ecclesiastical ranks to Cardinal status, Herrera took only minor orders and remained within one parish all of his life (San Andrés). Similar to Bembo, Herrera enjoyed tremendous literary success and respect during his own lifetime based on the merits of his own poetic compositions and for the standards he helped to legitimize for other writers of Italianate predisposition.

Herrera, who became the leader of the Sevillian School of poetry,[16] was a humanist who adhered to the neo-platonic philosophy of love. Sainz de Robles describes him as an "idolatra de la forma, gran crítico y pensador profundo" (99). For his superb abilities as poet, historian, and literary commentator, he became known to his contemporaries as "el Divino" (Jones 94). He was criticized on occasion, however, for a doggedly, uncompromising adherence to his strict views on literature (Jones 95).

It is Herrera's views on lyric poetry as exposed in his **Anotaciones a las obras de Garcilaso** (1580),--"a work of inestimable importance" (Jones 94)[17]--which solidified the

future of Italianate lyric trends on the Iberian Peninsula. In this work, Herrera critiqued Garcilaso's poetry, and in so doing, revealed his personal theories on poetics.

The parallel lordship with Pietro Bembo is not without controversy among scholars; not only were Herrera's motives questioned after the publication of the **Anotaciones,**[18] but more recent scholars have also challenged his dominion over canonical determination of sixteenth-century lyric poetry. George Ticknor, writing early in the twentieth century, gives minimal mention of Herrera other than to credit him with reprinting Garcilaso's poetry "con muchas notas y adiciones, entre las cuales, en medio de mucho fárrago, se hallan noticias importantes para la vida del poeta" (2 32). He gives recognition instead to Lope de Vega who, according to Ticknor, "quizá contribuyó más que otro poeta alguno a confirmar el uso de los metros y manera italianos" (2 46).

More recently Ignacio Navarrete has reinterpreted Herrera's role in Petrarchan poetics of sixteenth-century Spain. While acknowlegding Herrera's contributions to the codification of poetic style, Navarrete posits that Herrera's **Anotaciones** is an attempt to "decenter" (137) Garcilaso's contemporary prominence as canonic pinnacle of Spanish poetry, a state parallel to the canonization of Petrarch in sixteenth-century Italy. This 'decentering' and demystifying of Garcilaso places the poet's efforts on a continuum: Garcilaso is portrayed as "just one more member of a poetic movement" (Navarrete, **Decentering** 25) in which Herrera himself hopes to participate.[19]

Regardless of whether or not Herrera's goal was to shift the poetic focus away from Garcilaso, he does place more emphasis on the progression of poetic achievement. Unlike Bembo, he acknowleges the great contribution of Petrarch but does not believe

that he nor any of his predecessors or followers represent the ultimate pinnacle of poetic achievement: the question of love is so vast and poetic discourse so varied and rich, that it is impossible for one person to ever realize a definitive version of it. In the **Anotaciones** Herrera explains: "porque es tan derramado y abundante el argumento de amor, y tan acrecentado en sí mismo, que ningunos ingenios pueden abrazallo todo, antes queda a los sucedientes ocasión para alcanzar lo que parece imposible haber ellos dejado" (311[20]). As Navarrete suggests, Herrera gives ample credit to his predecessors but allows room for his own contribution within the same poetic tradition. This recognition will be achieved not by following the example of only one great poet (e.g. Petrarch) but of the great poets throughout time: the classical poets and the Italian poets who contributed vastly to the poetic tradition he admires.[21] This more ambitious aspect of Herrera's profile is echoed by Cristóbal Cuevas who says of the poet: "De su ansia de autorealización saca la tenacidad que necesita para llevar adelante sus trabajos de humanista y poeta" (15).

Notwithstanding these detractors, Herrera's views on poetry constitute a parallel to Bembo's tenets as expressed over fifty years earlier and represent an affirmation of the new Italianate forms infiltrating the world of Castillian poetics. Like Bembo, Herrera praises the sonnet above all other forms: "Es el *Soneto* la más hermosa composición, y de mayor artificio y gracia de cuantas tiene la poesía italiana y española" (Herrera **Anotaciones** 308). He also acknowledges the sonnet's unforgiving, challenging, and rigorous nature in terms of both structure and content: "en ningún otro genero se requiere más pureza y cuidado de lengua, más templanza y decoro, donde es grande culpa cualquier error pequeño; y donde no se permite licencia alguna, ni se consiente algo, que

ofenda las orejas" (Herrera **Anotaciones** 308). Because of the sonnet's very singular and precise construct ("un perpetuo y pequeño espacio" [308]), Herrera believes that regardless of the topic, be it solemn or witty, this form must be characterized by clarity accompanied by cleverness, never by obscurity: "Y por esta causa su verdadero sujeto y materia debe se principalmente alguna sentencia ingeniosa y aguda, o grave, y que merezca bien ocupar aquel lugar todo; descrita de suerte que parezca propia y nacida en aquella parte, huyendo la oscuridad y dureza, mas de suerte que no descienda a tanta facilidad, que pierda los números y la dignidad conveniente" (Herrera **Anotaciones** 308). The poetic devices used to enhance the poem must, ultimately, aid in its clarification.

Herrera also believed, as Bembo did, that the level of language used in the sonnet should reflect the dignity of the form and for this reason should not condescend to pedestrian, everyday speech; alternatively, it should not be so complex as to "cansar el ánimo del que oye con dureza y oscuridad" (Herrera **Anotaciones** 308). In other words, the register of vocabulary must suitably reflect the theme of the poem. For example, a lofty and noble topic is to be conveyed through words which impart these notions through meaning and sounds: "¿Y quién no estima por molestia y disgusto oír palabras desnudas de grandeza y autoridad cuando importa representalla?" (Herrera **Anotaciones** 308). Herrera also adheres to Bembo's notions of '*piacevolezza*' and '*gravità*' (**Prose** 63); he proposes Garcilaso as a prime example of poetic excellence by conferring on this poetry the qualities of "dulce y grave" (Herrera **Anotaciones** 315), while acknowlegding the difficulty of attaining an appropriate measure of both within one's writing. Herrera admires those writers who are able to conform--successfully--their subject to a very

restricted form, rather than allowing the topic to dictate the form chosen. He considers the former a far greater challenge which demonstrates a superior writing ability.

Beyond form and appropriate level of vocabulary, Herrera--again paralleling Bembo's tastes--admires variation and complex, yet clear, manipulation of language. He advances the use of literary devices such as metonymy, antonomasia, anafora, and hyperbole (to name but a few which he discusses with great detail) so as to render verse less monotonous. The metaphor (when not overused), is of paramount importance to the art of good writing, and the visual metaphor, according to Herrera bears the greatest import of all: "las [metáforas] de los ojos son mucho más agudas y de mayor eficacia y vehemencia" (Herrera **Anotaciones** 319).

Herrera also discusses the qualities which consonants and vowels confer to poetry, although in far less detail than his Italian counterpart. The repetition of **o**'s and **a**'s, for example, assign a very solemn tone to a line of poetry because they are "grandes y llenas y sonoras y por eso hacen la voz numerosa con gravedad" (Herrera **Anotaciones** 315). In a similar manner, a line laden with consonants becomes heavy, slow, and solemn, "el verso que tiene muchas consonantes, es grave, tardo y lleno" (Herrera **Anotaciones** 321). Beyond linguistic content, Herrera also believes that a line of verse is aesthetically heightened by the interruption of its normal, linear pattern. Therefore, the splitting of a line (for example, by the use of *caesura* and *enjambment*) is "uno de los caminos principales para alcanzar la alteza y hermosura del estilo" (Herrera **Anotaciones** 309).

Herrera's precepts for the writing of good poetry in many ways echo those proposed by Bembo in Italy: a predilection for the sonnet form; heightened aesthetic

appreciation based on lexically structural innovations; appropriate linguistic register for the topic of the poem; an understanding of how the structure of words themselves and the sounds they produce affect the tone of the poetic creation. All of this Herrera discussed and ardently supported--within the context and limitations of the Castilian language.

3. Doña Catalina Clara Ramírez de Guzmán

Very few biographical details are known about Doña Catalina Clara Ramírez de Guzmán[22]. She was born in 1611 to a family of the nobility and had five siblings, three sisters and two brothers. According to Olivares and Boyce, her death is presumed to have occurred after 1663 (154). She left a legacy of one hundred and eighteen poems contained in two manuscripts, now housed in the Biblioteca Nacional.[23] She also authored a book titled **El extremeño** which, unfortunately, has been lost.

Ramírez de Guzman's poetry presents a remarkable departure from the work of Chiara Matraini and other Italian women poets. Although she uses the sonnet, it is by no means her preferred form; she appears much more at ease with the more traditional Spanish poetic patterns: *redondillas, romances, coplas, seguidillas, décimas*. This appears to be true of many Spanish women poets of the era and serves as a contrast to the general (albeit not exclusive) tendency of well-known contemporary male poets to prefer the more fashionable Italianate forms. A perfunctory investigation based on cultural and societal limitations of women of the Early Modern period indicates a possible, if somewhat obvious reason for the discrepancy: women in Early Modern Spain were certainly less likely than their male compatriots, or their female counterparts in Italy, to come into contact with academic societies. For this reason, their access to the prevalent

changes within poetic discourse of the time would have been extremely limited. Even those fortunate enough to benefit from an education would still find themselves restricted in their capacities for intellectual exchange. Therefore, in all probability, only a cursory knowledge of the sonnet form and of prevailing poetic (Petrarchan) tendencies would have been available to them.

Entrambasaguas y Peña agrees that Ramírez de Guzmán's relative provinciality and almost complete anonymity until this century is in great part due to the fact that she probably lived in Llerena her entire life, venturing only rarely, if at all, to larger centres. She most likely did not have the opportunity to come into contact with the more modern poetic fashions of her age. He gives this limited geographical existence, and the fact that her work was not published during her lifetime,[24] as reasons why her personal renown never extended beyond the boundaries of her own city (Entrambasaguas y Peña 37-38).[25]

Ramírez de Guzmán's geographical confines are also reflected in her poem: they are "de asunto local" (Entrambasguas y Peña 49), in which the poet chronicles and analyzes with wit and wry humour, the people and events of her surroundings. The subject matter of her poems includes reflections upon an unsuccessful dinner to which she was invited, a response in verse to a man whom her father had forgotten to pay, and the relating of events surrounding the celebration of the birth of the infante, don Felipe Próspero in 1657. There are also poems dedicated to a man who wrote badly, to a woman who curled her hair, and a couple of *décimas* dedicated to a sick lady who looked remarkably well after a treatment of blood-letting. Ramírez de Guzmán is more of a

chronicler of local and family events than a poet who aspires to lofty Petrarchan introspection on amorous themes or the ephemeral nature of life.

Notwithstanding this documentary quality of the poetry of Doña Catalina Clara Ramírez de Guzmán, there is evidence of a number of poetic features prevalent during her time and associated with the more Italianate fashion. In her poetry are found many neo-platonic references to '*ojos*', along with an uncommon focus on the varied aspects of 'seeing' and on being seen and perceived and the wearing of eyeglasses, or '*antojos*'.[26] She repeatedly focuses on antithesis (life/death; appearance/reality; light/dark) and treats well-accepted tropes such as *tempus fugit*, death, beauty, and the inconstancy of lovers.

More noticeable than these common features, however, is the dissimilarity we find in Ramírez de Guzmán's writing with regards to the Italianate trends. A primary distinction is the fact that her poetry is not organized in the form of a Petrarchan *canzoniere*, that is, a loosely chronological narrative, focussed primarily, although not exclusively, on a singular theme (Laura). On the contrary, her opus deals with an entire spectrum of themes and situations which are only rarely connected in a linear fashion. Included among her writings are odes to hope and fear, encomiastic poems about a friend and a fallen young soldier, and a tender portrait of the author's mother. On what may be considered a more frivolous side we find some rather tongue-in-cheek portraits including those of a very short man, of a woman sporting eyeglasses, and a deceptively amusing self-portrait. This offers a remarkable departure from the Petrarchan corpus which consists of a complete series of poems to the beloved, living and dead. In Ramírez de Guzmán's collection there is not one poem which deals directly and on a serious level

with personal love. This is not to say that Ramírez de Guzmán does not have a great deal to say about the relationship between man and woman; on the contrary, she discusses at length and unconventionally the social inconsistencies which may arise from that relationship. However, she does not adopt a serious poetic stance with regards to the question of love. This in and of itself is a most extraordinary digression from the traditional Petrarchan poetics, where the focus on an all-consuming love appears to be the primary motivation for the poetry.

Of particular interest to Doña Catalina Clara Ramírez de Guzmán is the relationship between reality and illusion, between what is apparent and what is not seen. This manifests itself in much of her poetry and in particular, in her portraitures. Of particular interest in this study will be the sonnet "Retrato, si eres sombra..." and the *coplas* "Un retrato me has pedido...", both written as a response to her view of herself in portraiture. These concepts also come into play in her descriptions of 'hope' and 'fear' in the sonnets "Es la Esperanza un apacible engaño..." and "Deja vivir, Temor...." The preoccupation with which she explores the concepts of reality and illusion is also noticeable in her many references to the sense of sight and to the eyeglasses which aid in discerning, and in bringing into focus, this reality. These allusions can be found particularly in the sonnet "Mirando con antojos...." In many of the poems of Ramírez de Guzmán, reality is opposed to, and superseded by, illusion which ultimately leads to deception, to *desengaño*.

The sonnet, "Moriste, joven...", is an encomium to a fallen soldier, killed in the bloom of youth. Ramírez de Guzmán relies heavily on antithesis and irony to emphasize the themes of life and death--and of life **in** death:

Soneto

A un caballero que murió muy mozo en la guerra, habiendo andado sobradamente bizarro en la ocasión que le mataron

Moriste, joven, en edad florida
dando vida a tu fama con tu muerte,
No te engañó, te mejoró la suerte,
pues pasas por la muerte a mejor vida.
Si la parca fatal, enfurecida,
cortó el hilo a tu vida, bien se advierte
que envidia fue, porque tu brazo fuerte
no le quitase el nombre de homicida.
No aclame el enemigo la victoria
de que agostó tan verde primavera,
al tiempo muerta y viva a la memoria.
Tu valor te mató, que no pudiera
otro que el lograr tan gran victoria,
y quiso echar el resto en la postrera. (p.155[27])

The first verse of the sonnet begins abruptly and directly with the word 'moriste' which sets the tone and establishes the theme for the poem. The remainder of the line is comprised of life-filled symbols ('edad florida') and vocabulary ('joven') which serve as contrast to its morbid beginning. The poet chooses to address the dead youth in a very direct and personal manner with the vocative of the second person singular; she thus attempts to inspire the reader's confidence by suggesting a rather intimate knowledge of the person and situation she is describing.[28] By addressing him as 'joven', she is emphasizing the soldier's youth and innocence, concepts which are also underscored by the phrase 'edad florida'. The visual metaphor emphasizes the promise lost when the

youth's life was truncated at its peak. It provides, as well, a stark contrast to the 'moriste' with which the line began.

An ironic tone is established in the first line of the poem by the simple statement that a life has been destroyed before having been fully lived. Irony is accentuated in the second line by the poet's suggestion that the youth's fame is posthumous, was born only through--and as a direct result of--his death, therefore insinuating it would not have been present otherwise. It is all the more ironic because of Ramírez de Guzmán's implication that the soldier himself actively participated in its unfolding: the verb 'dando' (l.2) implies the dead youth's complicity in his own doom and consequent renown. However, in the third line she shifts the onus of responsibility from the young man to Destiny, by suggesting that fate did not, in fact, betray him by forcing his early demise but, on the contrary, embellished his image--"No te engañó, te mejoró la suerte" (l.3). Syntactically, the point is emphasized by the internal rhyme ' te engañó/ te mejoró', which provides a crescendo within the line that climaxes on 'mejoró'. The young soldier's early death has rendered his life and exploits all the more poignant. Destiny has forced him, through death, to a better life beyond, a better life that will bestow on him religious salvation at the same time as secular glory: "pues pasas por la muerte a mejor vida" (l.4),

The second quatrain continues the accusatory tone against destiny. Now it is no longer luck ('suerte' [l.3]), but a 'parca fatal', a furious ('enfurecida'[l.5]) and ultimately lethal fate. The poet uses personification to depict an enraged destiny which, jealous of the young soldier's great strength and skill in the art of war, effects his premature death so as not to be overshadowed by the young man's abilities to kill. The title of 'murderer'

('homicida'1.8) would have been usurped by the audacious young man, had not Fate's lethal hand stepped in to curtail his success.

In the first tercet the poet suggests that Fate not be too eager to proclaim victory in the death of the young soldier for it is in fact the latter who has gained everlasting fame--hence, victory--by living on in people's memory. In these three lines, Ramírez de Guzmán returns to the juxtaposition of the images of life and death. The soldier's life and death are represented by metaphors taken from Nature: his life was a verdant Spring ('tan verde primavera' 1.10) now parched and dried ('agostó' 1.10) in death, both visual metaphors are in keeping with Herrera's precepts of good poetics. The life/death images are continued in the last line of the tercet where the poet acknowledges that the soldier's life is dead to Time but not to posterity, for he will be remembered by those he left behind.

With the last tercet comes another change in culprit for the murder of the young soldier. Once more Ramírez de Guzmán shifts the responsibility back to the dead soldier himself by stating that his own valour led to his death. The courage and military skills which are now his claim to renown were, in reality, his downfall. His valour was so great and all-encompassing, in fact, that it could not help but include himself among its victims. Personification also aids to underscore the personal tone of the sonnet: just as a furious destiny had cut short the thread of the soldier's life ("cortó el hilo a tu vida") in the fifth line, so too does valor actively kill ("Tu valor te mató" [l.12]).

Despite what may at first appear to be a standard encomium to a brave, fallen soldier, the poem actually becomes a not-so-veiled condemnation of war and its excesses, and of men's great zeal for it. The sonnet is full of clichés regarding the cruelty of Fate

which has taken a life before its time, but these seem to be forgotten or to become secondary when juxtaposed to the declaration of the last tercet. Death, she concludes, has improved the young soldier's lot overall. He will now always be remembered in a better, brighter light because of the very fact that his life was curtailed at such a young age. His fame is now assured for he died at the height of bravery or perhaps--in the eyes of the poet--of 'bravado'.

In the second quatrain Ramírez de Guzmán presents a competition between the "homicida", Destiny, and the possible usurper of that title, the young soldier himself. The parallel implied suggests no distinction between the two 'murderers', and therefore seems to be insinuating a more negative concept of the soldier's occupation than can be inferred from a superficial reading. For this reason, the use of the word 'victoria' (employed twice, once in each tercet, to speak of the young soldier's death) suggests irony, although naturally the word itself is an obvious part of the nomenclature of war around which the sonnet is based. This ironic nuance colours the context of the last tercet: his own valor, so intent on victory at any cost (thus reflecting the recklessness of youth) could not fail to achieve the ultimate victory--"no pudiera / otro que el lograr tan gran victoria" (ls.12-13)--, his own death.

As previously stated, Doña Catalina Clara Ramírez de Guzmán maintains throughout much of her poetry a keen interest in the concept of reality versus illusion. This becomes evident in her treatment of portraiture, and most particularly, in her self-portraits. In "Retrato, si eres sombra...", an apostrophe to a painting of herself, she explores these abstractions and finds reality wanting in the face of the power of illusion.

According to Olivares and Boyce, this imbalance is in keeping with the Baroque age in which "la ilusión suplanta la realidad" (34).

Soneto

A un retrato de una dama

Retrato, si eres sombra ¿cómo imitas
al sol de más lucientes resplandores?
Muerto, ¿cómo están vivos tus colores?
Sin vida, ¿cómo tantas vidas quitas?
Sin cuerpo muchas almas acreditas;
sin alma, ¿dónde forjas los rigores?
Si Clori es sin segunda en los primores,
¿cómo darle segunda solicitas?
Eres una apariencia que recrea
(gozada de los ojos solamente),
una ilusión alegre de la idea,
un engaño que finge en lo aparente,
una ficción que el gusto lisonjea,
mentira, al fin, que a la verdad desmiente. (p.156)

The sonnet is a study in paradoxes. Ramírez de Guzmán uses the quatrains to illustrate these contradictions while establishing a personal, confidential tone which engages the reader intimately in the subject of the poem. This intimacy is achieved with a deceptively disarming ingenuousness and innocence; the poet addresses the portrait directly using a personal tone (the second person familiar address) and poses to it questions regarding its dichotomous nature, thus attempting to grasp its true reality and function. In the first two lines she equates the portrait to (a) shade, "sombra" (l.1), (with its possible meanings: 'spirit', 'shadow', and 'absence of light') and juxtaposes this dark description with the neoplatonic concept of sun and light: "cómo imitas / al sol de más lucientes resplandores?" (l.2). Ramírez de Guzmán continues the list of opposites by

comparing the portrait to an inanimate (dead) object ("Muerto" [l.3]) which ironically and paradoxically brings to life such rich ("vivos" [l.3]) colours.

The contrasts which follow are based on the concept of 'lack', of negatives: the portrait is in itself lifeless, yet it kills--in the neoplatonic sense--those men who look upon it, for they are bewitched by love. The portrait does not have a body in any real sense yet somehow gives life to the soul of the person represented, just as it gave life to the colours within it. The poet continues the discussion linearly by making the lack of soul the focus of the next line: the portrait itself does not have a soul, yet how is it that it is able to convey that of its subject?

Ramírez de Guzmán introduces herself into the sonnet in line seven with the last question she poses the portrait. Using her poetic name of 'Clori' she continues her demand for logical explanations to her queries on reality versus illusion. If Clori, the author, is without second ('sin segunda' [l.7]) in beauty and virtue (description based on traditional encomiastic rhetoric), then why, she asks, is the portrait so beautiful that the 'real' Clori risks being relegated to a lower status, 'segunda' (l.8)--second only to her own portrait? Does the image of reality supersede the reality in question? Or, perhaps even more significantly, is the portrait which was born as her reflection, now her rival?

The quatrains form a coherent unit not only by theme and through the persistent questions with which the poet pummels the portrait, but also linguistically, structurally, and phonetically. For example, the vocalic quality of the poem is rich given the numerous **a**'s and **o**'s (46 and 35 respectively) found therein; these are vowels Herrera cited as being "grandes y llenas y sonoras" (Herrera **Anotaciones** 315) and contribute to the "gravedad"

['gravity'] (Herrera **Anotaciones** 315) of the tone. There is also a high number of **e**'s (48), most noticeably concentrated in the tercets, where a change in tone is needed to highlight the concluding statement.

The most conspicuous linguistic quality of the sonnet is the frequent and systematic use of alliteration based on the sound of the letter '**s**' (46). Once more this is particularly evident in the quatrains, where the poet is establishing the premise for her subsequent pronouncements:

> Retrato, si eres sombra ¿cómo imitas
>
> al sol de mas lucientes resplandores
>
> Muerto, ¿cómo están vivos tus colores?
>
> Sin vida, ¿cómo tantas vidas quitas?
>
> Sin cuerpo, ¿muchas almas acreditas?
>
> Sin alma, ¿dónde forjas los rigores? (ls. 1-6)

The methodical structuring of the alliteration is most noticeable in lines four to six, with an acknowlegement that the pattern was already evident in the second half of the third line. Lines 4, 5, and 6 which bridge the first and second quatrain begin with the letter '**s**', and semantically establish the idea of deficiency. The question segment of each line contains three points which form the alliteration, each found, symetrically placed, at the end of the main words. The fourth and fifth lines in particular present identical combinations of the endings in '**as**'. Other prominent segments of alliteration are apparent in line seven, "Si Clori es sin segunda" and in line eight, "segunda solicitas." The last one is to be found in the aside of the tenth line: "(gozada de los ojos solamente)."

The repeated fricatives add to the coherence and unity of the quatrains while simultaneously suggesting the confessional intimacy of a whispered enquiry, an enquiry made urgent and intense by the repetition of the interrogatory sentence structure. The pattern is less frequent in the tercets, for the poet is no longer looking for answers, but providing them. Thus the tone is by far more assured and deliberate.

The tercets, in fact, give Ramírez de Guzmán the opportunity to unmask the deceptive nature of the portrait she has been attempting to define. In neo-platonic terms she states that the portrait is "una apariencia que recrea /... / una ilusión alegre de la idea" (l.9), an 'image' which recreates an 'illusion' of an 'idea'--and at that, a 'happy' ('alegre') illusion, that is to say, coloured by feelings and therefore not possibly a true representation. The poet has described the portrait as being three times removed from the reality which inspired it: an image of an illusion of an idea. It is not a true nor a complete representation of the person it purports to depict and therefore can only be enjoyed, partially, by the sense of sight, "(gozada de los ojos solamente)" (l.10). The other senses cannot participate in the sensory feast that three-dimensional reality could provide; the poet views the representation in two-dimensional terms only.

Within the tercets, Ramírez de Guzmán continues to assign alternate designations to the portrait: it is an 'illusion of an idea', and a deception which pretends to be what, in reality, it is not ("un engaño que finge en lo aparente" [l.12]). As the poet had attributed to the portrait, in the quatrains, a dimension of lack, or negative value, she continues doing so in the tercets by the labels she assigns to it. The names she uses to describe the portrait--'apariencia', 'engaño', 'ficción', and finally, 'mentira'--all contribute to the

unmasking of the portrait's true nature. This last appellation, "mentira" (l.14), becomes Ramírez de Guzmán's final and scathing pronouncement on her topic, one at which she has arrived after exposing the inconsistencies of the portrait in the rest of the sonnet. In the poet's opinion, the painting of the woman (in reality, of herself), is ultimately a lie which contradicts the very truth it claims to represent. In other words, the poet is preoccupied with the very nature of reality and truth as it applies to women in general and to herself in particular. The portraits which were so fashionable a form of flattery and conceit during the Early Modern Period--requested by suitors, treasured by polite society--were, in fact, an 'illusion'. The real women they were meant to represent were far more complex than the portraits could possibly express; yet these (ultimately false) representations took on an inordinate importance in the minds of those who viewed them. The ideal beauty portrayed in the painting superseded the true beauty of the actual person; in its attempt to represent reality, the portrait became confused with reality itself. Ramírez de Guzmán, aware of this double-binded trap, attempts to expose the portrait for what it truly is, and in so doing, hopes to redirect focus to the significance of the actual subject, thus rectifying what had become an accepted form of deception.[29]

This theme appears also in the following *décima* adressed to her brother who has requested her portrait, quite possibly the self-portrait which will follow this discussion, "Un retrato me has pedido":

Habiendo enviado un retrato
en verso a su hermano, que
le escribió se le enviase

Que me retrate agora

mandais, sin considerar
que no se ha de retratar
quien ha dicho que os adora.
Mi amor Píramo no ignora
ni el alma que cuerda os dí
que si la copia es así
que ha de andar siempre con vos,
aunque una seamos las dos
tendré yo celos de mí.[30]

The short poem is an obvious expression of the fondness and devotion the poet feels for her brother. It is also an opportunity for her to comment further on the role of the portrait as medium. Although the portrait is a mere copy of herself, "la copia" (1.6), it is in fact more fortunate than she is for this 'copy' is able to accompany the beloved brother, whereas she cannot. She and the portrait are supposedly one and the same thing ("aunque una seamos las dos" [1.9]), but she recognizes and emphasizes their uniquenes and their separateness, as she has done in previous poems. It is for this reason that she ends the poem by admitting to feelings of jealousy for the portrait. The two are not one and the same; the portrait is the 'copy', the reflection, and yet **it** and not the real Doña Catalina is able to be with the beloved brother, hence, her jealousy. This, of course, echoes the feelings expressed in the previous sonnet where she laments the inordinately higher status accorded to the copy as compared to the actual subject.

Doña Catalina further reminds her brother at the beginning of the poem that she has bestowed upon him her love and her devotion which are real, unlike the representation of her physical self. She is suggesting, in a sense, a betrayal on the part of both the brother whose request she has granted, and of the portrait which is representing

her but which is (as in the poem "Retrato si eres sombra...") superseding her in rank and privileged opportunity.

Ramírez de Guzmán's great mistrust and disrespect of the function of portraits is even more obvious in a long series of *coplas* penned in response to a request for a poetic portrait of herself by a possible suitor.[31] "Un retrato me has pedido..." is a tongue-in-cheek self-portrait wherein the poet employs the conventional encomiastic and laudatory formulas evident in traditional portraiture and turns them around with whimsical aplomb to reveal the absurdity of the practice. Olivares and Boyce assert that "doña Catalina, en oposición a la convención cortés, pinta un retrato vulgar, poco apetecible, de sí misma en el que se mofa de los tópicos petrarquistas" (37). The poet is well aware of the rules of the poetic game, but chooses to turn them around in order to subvert the conventional male-originated poetic discourse. Her ultimate goal is not to paint an attractive representation of herself in order to be more desirable, but rather to render her appearance decidedly unattractive, thus discouraging the attentions of a suitor interested primarily in her 'ideal'.

Coplas

Retrato de la autora, habiéndosele pedido un galán suyo

Un retrato me has pedido,
y aunque es alhaja costosa
a mi recato,
por lograrte agradecido,
si he dicho que soy hermosa, 5
me retrato.
El carecer de belleza
con paciencia lo he llevado,
mas repara

en que ya a cansarme empieza;
y aunque lo niegue mi agrado,
me da en cara.
Pero, pues precepto ha sido,
va a un retrato reducida
mi figura;
y porque sea parecido,
ha de ser cosa perdida
la pintura.
No siendo largo ni rizo,
a todos parece bien
mi cabello,
porque tiene tal hechizo
que dicen cuantos lo ven
que es rebello.
Si es de azucena o de rosa
mi frente, no comprendo
ni el color;
y será dificultosa
de imitar, pues no le entiendo
yo la flor.
Y aunque las cejas en frente
viven de quien las murmura
sin recelo,
andan en traje indecente,
pues siempre está su hermosura
de mal pelo.
Los ojos se me han hundido,
y callar sus maravillas
me da enojos;
pero tengo dos neguillas
cuyo agrado me ha servido
muy de ojos.
Mis mejillas desmayadas
nunca se ve su candor,
y esto ha sido
porque están tan espantadas
las tales que hasta el color
han perdido.
De mi nariz he pensado
que algún azar ha tenido,
o son antojos;
pero a ello me persuado

porque siempre la he traído
entre los ojos.
Viéndola siempre a caballo,
mi malicia me previene
que lo doma;
y en buena razón lo hallo,
pues aunque lengua no tiene,
se va a Roma.
No hallaré falta a mi boca,
aunque molesto el desdén
me lo mande,
porque el creerlo me toca;
y dicen cuantos la ven:
"¡Cosa es grande!"
Pero aunque es tan acabada,
confieso que le hace agravio
un azar;
pues al que mejor le agrada
dicen que tiene en el labio
un lunar.
Mi garganta es pasadera,
y aunque no es larga, no estoy
disgustada;
pues en viéndome cualquiera,
ha de confesar que soy
descollada.
Tiene el que llega a mi mano,
aunque ella misma lo niega,
gran ventura;
pues llegue tarde o temprano,
a sus dedos siempre llega
a coyuntura.
Con todo tan poco valen,
aunque alegan con querellas
no ser mancas,
que cuando mejores salen,
nunca hallo quien sobre ellas
dé dos blancas.
Porque nada desperdicia,
dicen que es corto mi talle;
y he observado
que no es talle de codicia,
pues nadie puede negalle

que es delgado.
Que el mundo le viene estrecho
su vanidad ha llegado
a presumir;
y viendo su mal deshecho,
más de cuatro le han cortado
de vestir.
Pues no merece mi brío
quedarse para después;
ni el donaire
no encarezco por ser mío;
sólo digo que no es
cosa de aire.
A ser célebres sospecho
que caminan mis pinceles
cuando copio;
pues el retrato que he hecho
sé que no le hiciera Apeles
tan al propio.
Sin haberte obedecido,
el trabajo a mi despecho
ha sido vano;
pues tú cabal lo has pedido,
y todo el retrato he hecho
de mi mano;
y que tiene, es infalible,
algún misterio escondido.
Y yo peno
por saber cómo es posible
que, estando tan parecido,
no esté bueno.
Tal cual allá va esa copia,
y si me deseas ver,
yo bien creo,
según ha salido propia,
que te ha de hacer perder
el deseo.
Y si aqueste efecto hace,
temo que pareceré
confiada;
que aunque no me satisface
mi trabajo, quedaré
muy pagada. (p.182-185)

Ramírez de Guzmán begins the poem by acknowledging that she is creating this self-portrait upon request, and although it is going against her sense of modesty, she is doing it to please "por lograrte agradecido /.../ me retrato" (l.4-6). By this introduction she establishes a tone of reluctance which is supported by the rest of the poem. She complains that she has been forced to put up with her lack of beauty "con paciencia" (l.8), but that she is now beginning to tire of it, "mas repara / en que ya a cansarme empieza" (l.9-10). Notwithstanding this apparent unattractiveness, a portrait has been requested and she must comply ("pues precepto ha sido" [l.13]). Her reticence is again obvious in the choice of verb used to describe the process she must employ to carry out her mission: the poet's face must be reduced ('reducida') to a portrait. This alludes, primarily, to the plastic arts, for a typical portrait was a small, hand-held representation of the subject, therefore, forcibly 'reduced' to size; since the poet's portrait is going to be in written form, she also must find a way to fit the complexity of her reality, of her existence, to mere words on a page, reduced to the 'acceptable' formula. As the physical representation would be 'hopeless' ("y porque sea parecido, / ha de ser cosa perdida / la pintura" [1.16-18), by extension, so will her written portrait be a poor expression of her 'self'.

Despite the fact that Ramírez de Guzmán is forced to dissect herself verbally into her composite body parts for the sake of the request, she does not allow these distinct components to speak for themselves through traditional, well-understood, encomiastic metaphors. She breaks with tradition and goes a step further by explaining and qualifying the vocabulary concordant with her own purpose. The poet systematically describes the different parts of her body from her hair to her figure, much like an appraising look--from

top to bottom--and in keeping with the practice of conventional portraiture. These descriptions are sometimes proffered from her own point of view, while some are based on the comments of others. A few parts are depicted in terms of the customary metaphors assigned to them in poetry--but with a definite twist.

Throughout the self-portrait, the poet uses personification and paronomasia to make a mockery of the process. Her eyebrows are not perfectly alligned and therefore "andan en traje indecente" (l.34); their beauty, is never perfect: "pues siempre está su hermosura / de mal pelo" (l.34-35). Her eyes have sunken with age ("Los ojos se me han hundido" [l.37]), although her 'dos neguillas' (l.39) have served her well as eyes. With 'neguillas' the poet is alluding to a *double entendre* referring not only to her pupils, but to an illness which blackens the teeth, thus further suggesting a rather unattractive demeanor. Her cheeks are not the pure white ('candor') of poetic tradition but, rather, are 'desmayadas', dull and colourless due to fright, although the reader is left in the dark as to the cause of such terror: "están tan espantadas / las tales que hasta el color / han perdido" (l.46- 48). Her nose is so long that it reaches her mouth, "aunque lengua no tiene / se va a Roma" (l.59-60); her lip sports a mole, "tiene el labio / un lunar" (l.71-72).

The opinion of others is sometimes called upon as the basis for judgement. The poet's hair is neither long nor curly, but it is considered passable by others: "No siendo largo ni rizo, / a todos parece bien / mi cabello" (l.19-21). However, it also is endowed with 'hechizo', a word which Ramírez de Guzmán employs ambiguously: it suggests artificiality, witchraft, and a woman's charms. Her hair is so unmanageable, in fact, that people call it 'rebello', perhaps echoing their opinion of the poet and her rebellious stance

against many of the conventions which she blithely derides in her poetry. People's opinion is also instrumental in the poet's description of her mouth; if left to rely upon her own perceptions, the poet would not find fault with it, "No hallaré falta a mi boca" (l.61). However, she must capitulate and admit its inadequacy because others find it deficient (in beauty) by its considerable size, "¡Cosa es grande!" (l.66). Again the opinion of others is taken into consideration with regard to the poet's hands. She describes them in very obvious, functional terms: "Tiene el que llega a mi mano, /aunque ella misma lo niega, / gran ventura; /pues llegue tarde o temprano, / a sus dedos siempre llega / a coyuntura." (l.79-84). Regardless of there not being anything overtly wrong with them, they are still worth very little in the eyes of others for, when compared with other hands, no one pays any attention to hers, "Con todo tan poco valen, / aunque alegan con querellas / non ser mancas, / que cuando mejores salen, / nunca hallo quien sobre ellas / dé dos blancas" (l.85-90). The 'hand' in this section is also a metaphor for matrimony: he who solicits her hand in marriage is not only seeking her person, but the financial opportunity this union would afford. However, she, like her hand, is perhaps passed over for more profitable situations.

Ramírez de Guzmán mocks the traditonal poetic metaphors when discussing her forehead. She states that she cannot decide whether her forehead is best described as a lily or a rose, (both very common images), "si es de azucena o de rosa / mi frente, no comprendo" (l.25-26). As excuse for this deficiency in her descriptive powers she provides her lack of knowledge of flowers ("pues no le entiendo / yo la flor" [l.29-30]). This we know to be untrue given the beautiful description of her mother, through flora, in

the poem "El contar los verdes años."[32] The overt deception provides more reason to believe she is a very reluctant recipient of the attentions of the person who has requested the portrait.

After providing a less than appetizing representation of herself, the poet concludes with statements which are meant to assure both admirerer and reader, that it is in fact a most faithful portrayal, the best, in fact, that any portraitist could reproduce: "pues el retrato que he hecho / sé que no le hiciera Apeles / tan al proprio" (l.112-114). After all, she has painted this portrait herself, with her own hand "todo el retrato he hecho / de mi mano" (l.119-120), and she--of all people--should know herself intimately. The poet stresses that she has been unwaivering in her truthfulness because her admirer has demanded no less, "pues tú cabal lo has pedido" (l.118). She has been honest at his request and if the portrait is not to his liking, she is not to blame. The poet insists, however, that the portrait must be very good because the likeness is so exact. Ramírez de Guzmán is shedding culpability for her own subversive treatment of her task by shifting responsibility to the gentleman who requested it. If he is unsatisfied with the results, he must not truly be interested in the real 'her'.

Despite the dodging of blame, Ramírez de Guzmán is honest in expressing her goals to her admirer. She acknowledges that she has described herself in such an unorthodox way out of spite "Sin haberte obedcido, / el trabajo a mi despecho / ha sido vano" (l.115-117). The poet does not want to be pursued by this particular suitor, and if her portrait has destroyed in him the desire to see her true self ("te ha de hacer perder / el

deseo" [l.131-132]), then she will have been granted her wish and will have achieved her goal "quedaré / muy pagada" (l.137-138).

The poet's honesty extends to the admission that, due to the most intimate and personal nature of the portrayal, there are also secrets buried within it "tiene, es infalible, / algún misterio escondido" (l.121-122). This admission is itself enveloped within the *denoument* of the poem; it is not expanded upon, but is clear enough to force the reader to question the validity of the poet's adamant declarations of honesty. If there are 'hidden mysteries', one needs to ask what they are and why they are hidden and how their revelation would change the outcome of the poem. Would they, perhaps, make her appear more attractive in the eyes of her admirer? On the other hand, is she referring to her innermost feelings and beliefs, those intangible and most important aspects of her person which make her unique and special but which were not requested in a standard portrait, the focus of which are primarily looks? Certainly Ramírez de Guzmán has demonstrated her mistrust of the conventions which place almost sole importance on a woman's appearance. Here and elsewhere she has submitted statements which clearly suggest a woman's appearance may be, in fact, detrimental to her happiness in the long term.[33]

With this extensive, irreverent treatment of the portrait, Ramírez de Guzmán playfully mocks the societal conventions which govern it. A portrait was asked of her and she has chosen to paint it with words. She is well-aware of her facility with language and uses it to her advantage to give some rather serious opinions on the subject. Her playfulness is but thinly veiled anger: anger directed towards a society which places such inordinate importance on a woman's appearance and in that way limits her existence;

anger towards the individuals who abide by these conventions and who therefore feel it is their right to comment on the appearance of others based on a pre-determined, accepted standard; anger towards men who will base their desire to pursue a relationship upon the idealized, formulaic rendition of a woman's portrayal. Ramírez de Guzmán is demonstrating individualism, self-confidence, and an inordinate degree of self-worth in a society where women were not encouraged to demonstrate any of these qualities, indeed were considered heretical and immoral to do so privately or publicly.

The poet's outspokenness and open mistrust of love and men, manifests itself clearly in the seguidillas "Quiera quien quisiere." It is a vehement attack on the falsity of men in their dealings with women in the realm of love. There is no veiled mockery here, no tongue-in-cheek allusions to the absurdity of societal conventions. We find instead an unrestrained attack on the injustices suffered by women in the name of love, women who at times share in the men's culpability by their own naïveté. The poet places herself firmly within the Spanish poetic tradition by directing her *quejas*, her complaints, to her mother. She is also participating in a feminine rebuttal to the *coplas de maldecir de mujeres*, so popular in the sixteenth century.[34]

Seguidillas

Quiera quien quisiere,
que yo no quiero
que un amor se me pague
con unos celos.
Entendidos tengo,
madre, a los hombres,
que entretelan el ruego
con las traiciones.
No se duelan las damas

de sus suspiros
que por sombra del gusto
traen el olivido.
Quien creyere sus burlas,
de sí se queje,
pues los hace ingratos
la que los cree.
Si de darles gusto
se sacan penas,
conocida ventaja
tienen las feas.
Toque al arma el desprecio
contra los hombres,
porque mueran al yerro
de sus errores.
Todas las mujeres
vivan alerta,
que las ganan fulleros
con cartas hechas.
No hay un hombre en el mundo
que no sea falso,
no más piedra de toque
que un desengaño. (p.172)

The poet begins by distancing herself with inordinate vehemence from those who would participate willingly in the game of love; she does not count herself among them, for such participation can only lead to jealousy and pain. The alliteration of the first three lines, "**Qu**iera **qu**ien **qu**isiere / **que** yo no **qu**iero / **que** un amor..." serves to underscore the force of her negative feelings on the subject and to confront the reader immediately upon commencing the poem. The repetition of the voicelss velar stops ('**qu**') in such close proximity-- which in non-technical terms could be viewed as 'hard' sounds--force an unsuspecting reader to wonder at the insistence such a technique suggests and the wrath it underlines. In the next stanza the poet explains her anger to her mother (and to the reader): she understands the machinations of men who interweave their amorous

entreaties with betrayal. She goes on to advise women not to feel sorry for men who appear to suffer for love of them; once the reward of love and pleasure has been given, once the women have capitulated, it is quickly followed by neglect on the part of the recipient "por sombra del gusto / traen el olvido" (l.11-12).

Women are not merely innocent victims in Ramírez de Guzmán's poetic world. In the fourth stanza, she also places the blame on them for any pain received through betrayals of love. Those who gullibly believe the lies of men--their tricks ('sus burlas' [l.13])--have only themselves to blame "de sí se queje" (l. 14). It is these women's persistent faith in the falsehoods perpetrated by men which give these same men the opportunity for wrongdoing. In the eyes of the poet, the responsibility lies not so much in the actions of the men themselves--it is, after all, their nature to be deceitful--as it does with the women who allow these cruel hoaxes to take place, all the while cognizant of men's true nature. As with the first sonnet discussed, "Moriste, joven", Ramírez de Guzmán examines the issue at hand (in the former: premature death in battle; in the present poem, pain within the battle of love) from many perspectives, avoiding acquiescence to a simplistic view of the world. Both poems end by incorporating a surprising level of complexity which is belied by their seemingly straightforward, clearly focused beginnings.

The fifth stanza of the poem alludes to the poet's opinion of female beauty within society, a view already discussed in the self-portrait "Un retrato me has pedido." If pain can be the only outcome of pleasing a man "Si de darles gusto / se sacan penas" (l.17-18), then those women who are considered unattractive ("las feas" [l.20]) and who would

therefore not tempt the attentions of men, enjoy a decided advantage over those who are beautiful and are constantly in demand and at the mercy of men's wiles. Ramírez de Guzmán is once more demonstrating her unique viewpoint: feminine allure is not in the best interests of the women themselves for it is a value imposed upon them by men who trade in it as they would in any commodity--for their own gain. Those women who do not possess the accepted value are not allowed to be part of the game; in the poet's opinion, this leads to less heartache and is, therefore, advantageous in the end.

The sixth stanza begins the last stage of the vehement attack against men, which now unfolds in a far more direct manner than previously attempted. In her great zeal to end men's injustices against women, Ramírez de Guzmán sounds the battle call to all women, to alert them to the realities she has outlined in the first part of the poem so that they may steel themselves against men's treachery. She wants to rally the women's contempt for men, and hopes for retribution "porque mueran al yerro / de sus errores" (l.23-24). The poet admonishes women to be ever on the alert ("Todas las mujeres / vivan alerta" [l.25-26]) or suffer the consequences of their gullibility. To emphasize these consequences, the poet employs the metaphor of a dishonest card-player, a cheat, who wins only through trickery and false cards ("que las ganan fulleros / con cartas hechas" [l.27-28]), just as men win the hearts and favours of women under false pretenses and then betray them.

Ramírez de Guzmán ends this seventeenth-century anti-masculine diatribe with her most scathing statement: "No hay un hombre en el mundo / que no sea falso." The last word of the poem, in fact, is "desengaño" which encapsulates and subsumes her

entire thesis: men's treacherousness and women's gullibility only result in disillusionment and pain. Given the deceptive nature of men, she feels that, for women, the only defence is to steel themselves against these betrayals by being vigilant. Far from suggesting that women are mere victims in this ruthless game orchestrated by men, she proposes women are participators and facilitators who must mend their own ways and attitudes in order to protect themselves and to change the course of what has become accepted convention.

Although the poem is constructed in a simple, linear fashion (traditional rhyme scheme [abab], unclouded and uncomplicated metaphors), Ramírez de Guzmán is subverting the *status quo* by challenging its very right to exist. She is very clearly asserting her views and extending her suggestions for the betterment of her lot and that of all women in her society. The poet has isolated a wrong and is calling upon those of her sex to right it with tools they have at their disposal. She is asking women to use their intellect and base future actions and attitudes on well-documented past performances by men.

Certainly, this is not a unique topos given the times; the battle between women and men was being fought in other literary arenas of far higher profile than her own manuscripts. Lope de Vega had enjoyed great comic success through his theatrical poetry by basing entire plays[35] on the battle of wills between the sexes. Of course, Ramírez de Guzmán's goal in exposing what she perceived as men's treachery and women's complicity within it was altogether different. Her negative, personal attack on men did not utilize the words of a female character, written by a renowned male playright for the

purposes of entertainment and personal financial gain. She was speaking, undoubtedly, from personal experience and targeting the experiences of the women around her. It is in this light, that of a personal testimonial, that the reader must comprehend her words and her scathing attack.

As has already been stated, Ramírez de Guzmán did not adhere faithfully to the Petrarchan and neo-platonic traditions which were *de rigueur* during her lifetime. Her views on love, as she expressed them, were not in keeping with the more egocentric, introspective, nostalgic poetics of Petrarch and his followers. On occasion, however, the poet does venture into that world of emotion-laden Italianate discourse but never with the personal investment evident in those who truly believed in and followed the precepts of the new tradition. The sonnets "Es la esperanza", "Deja vivir temor", and "Cuando quiero deciros" are examples of her tribute to Petrarchism.

A la Esperanza

Es la Esperanza un apacible engaño
que no cumple el deseo y lo entretiene;
fantasma aduladora que previene,
gusto al fiar un año y otro año.
Tiénese por remedio y hace daño,
pues con él no se aplica el que conviene;
finge que puede dar lo que no tiene,
facilitando el bien con arte extraño.
Gozo soñado es, cuya alegría
en pena se convierte en despertando,
viendo ficción lo que verdad sería;
antojo que distancias acortando
hace lisonjas a la fantasía
y al fin aparta lo que va acercando. (p.158)

In this apostrophe to Hope, the poet avails herself of many of the techniques which have been identified with Petrarchism such as the use of antithesis, paradox, and paronomasia. She begins by describing hope as a gentle deception, "un apacible engaño," an oxymoron which prepares the reader for the contrasting marriage of ideas which follows. Hope never fulfills desire, it merely delays it, keeping s/he who yearns always in suspense, always awaiting fulfillment. Hope is a ghost, a phantom which simultaneously flatters--that is, provides encouragement that wishes and desires will come true--and warns, "fantasma aduladora que previene," (l.3). It is also a pleasure--"gusto" (l.4)--because it assures her that it will last through time, "al fiar un año y otro año" (l.4); it gives her that confidence in continuity. In this first stanza we have seen Hope expressed as a deception ('engaño'), a phantom ('fantasma'), and a pleasure ('gusto'): an intangible presence in the poet's life which, nevertheless, comforts her.

The dichotomous nature of Hope is elaborated upon in the second quatrain through personification: it considers itself a cure and a solution, "Tiénese por remedio" (l.5), but at the same time it effects pain, "hace daño" (l.5), for it pretends to be able to give that which, in reality, it cannot "finge que puede dar lo que no tiene" (l.7). It has a unique and strange ability ("arte extraño" [l.8]) to facilitate good, to ensure that propitious events will happen because of the good will of those who hope it to be so. For Ramírez de Guzmán, all these are aspects of Hope, although contradictory in nature.

The first tercet is a well-balanced equation of opposites. The ninth line begins with the metaphor "Gozo soñado"; the line ends with the word "alegría", which is tied to the dreaming state in which Hope places the poet; a state in which the mere possibilities

suggested by the dreams and desires elicit happiness. The tenth line begins with a chiastic contrast to the termination of the previous verse. The 'alegría' of line 9 has now been converted to the 'pena' of line 10, the two joined together by sinalefa thus emphasizing the tie which exists between them. The line ends with "en despertando", again providing a contrast to the dream/sleep state with which the tercet began. The last line of the tercet continues the play on opposites by the suggestion that upon waking one sees clearly the fiction or lie--"ficción" (l.11)--that the dream-state would have us believe to be the truth, "verdad" (l.11). The poet's use of the conditional form of *ser*, 'sería', serves to underscore the unreality, and subjectivity of this 'truth', which is dependant upon so many factors other than hope alone.

More contrasting concepts riddle the last tercet. It begins with the word 'antojo', a 'whim' or 'caprice', which distances what is desired while seeming to bring it closer, to shorten the breach between yearning and fulfillment: "distancias acortando" (l.12). The word also functions as a *double entendre* for it suggests 'antojos' (anteojos), or eyeglasses, which also alter (or refine) perceptions: they distance or make appear closer, as does Hope. Line 13 echoes the idea introduced in the third line of the first quatrain, that Hope is an adulator. It is a whim, which fawns upon fantasy, yet simultaneously deceives it, because in the end it creates even greater distance between reality and what is hoped for: "y al fin aparta lo que va acercando" (l.14).

Again we have witnessed Ramírez de Guzmán's intense preoccupation with reality versus illusion. Hope is something she must have in order to continue living/loving, but it paradoxically fuels a vision of reality which is, in effect, a fantasy

created by itself. Hope is a double-edged sword which provides the poet with the incentive to carry on and have faith, but which creates unrealistic expectations that will be dashed when reality does not coincide with the expectations raised. The poet see-saws between fantasy and reality, sleep and wakefulness, fiction and truth, propinquity and remoteness, pain and happiness; what gives all of these antitheses meaning, in human terms, is Hope.

Symbiotically tied to the sonnet on Hope, is Ramírez de Guzmán's invocation to Fear, "Deja vivir, Temor." Fear, as the obvious enemy of Hope, is addressed by the poet in a plea that she may be spared 'hope-lessness'. Thus, the drawbacks of hoping for that which may never take place, that the poet outlined in the previous poem, nevertheless remain preferable to yielding to Fear.

Soneto

Al Temor

Deja vivir, Temor, a mi esperanza,
que apenas nace cuando a penas muere;
y si no ha de lograr, deja que espere,
ya que está el bien del mal en la tardanza.
No tengo en sus promesas confianza,
mas le agradezco que adularme quiere;
no estorbes que me engañe si pudiere,
fingiendo que en mi mal habrá mudanza.
Si esperar la esperanza me entretiene,
deja tan corto alivio a mi tormento
que por lisonja el gusto lo previene.
No me niegues, Temor, tan corto aliento;
ya sé que el concederte me conviene,
que es seguir la esperanza asir el viento. (p.159)

The antithesis and paronomasia of the previous sonnet are once again apparent in this poem. After pleading with Fear in the first line to allow her Hope to exist, the poet launches into a paronomastic word play based on the word 'pena': "que apenas nace cuando a penas muere" (l.2)--hope is barely born before it begins a painful death: the minute we hope something good will happen, we begin to fear it may not. By personifying Fear, the poet highlights its great power; at the same time the personification enables her to distance herself from it by externalizing it: "Deja vivir" (l.1), "deja que espere" (l.3). It is Fear which holds her back, which clouds her happiness made of hopeful dreams. The phrase "deja que espere" (l.3) has a twofold meaning: let me hope / let me wait; the two are certainly not mutually exclusive in that they form an integral part of 'hoping'. These two meanings come together in the last line of the quatrain where the word 'tardanza' which ends the verse, refers to the delay inherent in the waiting process. Once more the poet combines paradoxical concepts, and gives light to her 'reductionist' views: "está el bien del mal en la tardanza" (l.4), there is good in the negative aspects of waiting because while one waits, the coming of disappointment is delayed, and in that delay itself lies 'good' ("bien").

In the second quatrain the poet continues to speak to Fear about Hope. She admits that she does not have complete faith in the promises of the latter, "No tengo en sus promesas confianza" (l.5), but as she stated in the previous sonnet, she appreciates the flattery she receives through Hope, that is, she is grateful for the mere fiction of its promises. Again she asks that Fear not impede her own self-deception in this regard, "no estorbes que me engañe si pudiere" (l.5), although the subjunctive 'pudiere' calls into

question whether the poet truly believes this is even possible. The idea of self-deception is continued in the last line of the quatrain which begins with the word 'fingiendo'--pretending, feigning--which supports the 'engañe' of the previous line. She is petitioning that she be allowed to maintain the pretense of believing, of hoping, that there will be change ('mudanza') in her pain.

The poet reiterates these sentiments in the tercets: "Si esperar la esperanza me entretiene / deja tan corto alivio a mi tormento" (l.9-10), if hoping for hope keeps me going, distracts me, then allow my pain to be eased if only a little, by my hoping. Once more the idea of time comes to play, for 'entretener' can also be intended as 'delaying' or 'detaining', which is then in keeping with 'esperar' and 'tardanza' of the last quatrain. Time is represented as well in the 'corto' of "tan corto alivio" (l.10), which is then echoed in the second tercet in a parallel construction when the poet, still addressing Fear, asks that it not deny her "tan corto aliento" (l. 12), that is, such a small amount of relief through hope. The poet ends the sonnet with an admission of her cognizance of the fact that her attempts to stifle fear, that is, to continue to hope, are in effect '**hopeless**', for to follow hope is like seizing the wind itself, "que es seguir la esperanza asir el viento" (l.14): an impossibility. Alliteration based on the letter '**s**' provides a unifying thread in the last line as well as a breathless quality which reinforces the concept of time and the urgency with which the poet is addressing Fear. It also is a tie to the "corto aliento" of line 12, where the more common meaning of 'aliento' is brought to the fore: breath.

Ramírez de Guzmán has built the sonnet around antithesis and paradox: life and death, good and bad, reality and illusion. She wants there to be Hope in her life, she wants

to overcome Fear which will impede it--notwithstanding her belief that this is a futile pursuit. Interwoven throughout this ambivalence is Time: there is the 'time' of waiting, which is inextricably involved with hope; there is the 'time' associated with the hopelessness she wants to avoid; there is the 'time' suggested with regard to her courage, 'aliento', which can also be understood as 'breath', and therefore another reference to the life-infusing quality of Hope, with which she began the sonnet.

'Aliento' and 'alivio del tormento' are concepts also found in the sonnet "Cuando quiero deciros." There are, in fact, several similarities with other sonnets which give the poem a rather repetitive quality. The poem is addressed to an absent friend and expresses the poet's desire to speak with her in order to share very personal thoughts and feelings. The use of the masculine voice and the intimacy present in the poem suggest that it might have been written upon the request of a suitor for his Lady. It is unique in that it is the poem which most closely resembles a Petrarchan love sonnet, in which intimate feelings of desire are expressed within the parameters of the Petrarchan formula.

Soneto

A la ausencia de una amiga, hablando con ella

Cuando quiero deciros lo que siento,
siento que he de callaros lo que quiero;
que no explican amor tan verdadero
las voces que se forman de un aliento.
Si de dulces memorias me alimento,
que enfermo del remedio considero,
y con un accidente vivo y muero,
siendo el dolor alivio del tormento,
¿qué importa que me mate vuestra ausencia
si en el morir por vos halle la vida
y vivo de la muerte a la violencia?

Pues el remedio sólo está en la herida;
mas, si no he de gozar vuestra asistencia,
la piedad de que vivo es mi homicida. (p.157)

The sonnet begins in much the same way as did the poem "Quiera quien quisiere", with the dominance of the hard sounds (*fortis velars*) '**qu/c**'. These, however, are not as relentless as they were in the former poem and are balanced in a relatively even chiastic placement in the first two lines of the sonnet, with the word 'siento' used as the linguistic fulcrum: "**Cu**ando **qu**iero deciros lo **que** **siento**, / **siento** **que** he de **ca**llaros lo **que** **qu**iero." The two lines give a visual representation of the poet's quandary: the first part of the first line expresses her desire; it ends with 'siento', what she feels. The second line begins with 'siento', ambiguous in that it can be a repetition of what she feels, or may express her feeling of regret that she cannot be more honest. The second line then ends with a repetition of her desire, a desire which will not come to fruition, but which will continue nontheless.The poet's feelings are of primary importance, thus their repetition and her attempt to distinguish between two different types of words: the language of feelings (our internal words), and those words "que se forman de un aliento" (l.4), those spoken outside of our bodies, carried with/on our breath, our sighs.

Throughout the sonnet there are references to the traditional Petrarchan antithesis based on life and death. Life is represented by 'aliento' of line 4, and in the parallel placement and linguistic similarity of 'alimento' of line 5. Ramírez de Guzmán nourishes ("me alimento" [l.5]) herself with "dulces memorias" (l.5), sweet memories. There are, of course, the more obvious references to life in the words "vida" (l.10), "vivo" (ls.7, 11, and 14), and "gozar" (l.13). Death is represented by "muero" (l.7), "dolor" and

"tormento" (l.8), "mate" (l.9), "muerte" and "violencia" (l.11), "herida" (l.12) and "homicida" (l.14). Throughout, the words are paired in paradoxical groupings: "con un accidente vivo y muero" (l.7), the poet lives or dies based on a twist of fate (this refers, certainly, to the relationship with the friend to whom she is speaking, but in broader terms, to life and death themselves); "siendo el dolor alivio del tormento" (l.8), her pain is a relief to her torment; "en el morir por vos halle la vida" (l.10), an expression of the typical Petrarchan topos of finding life through death (love for another); "vivo de la muerte a la violencia" (l.11)

Beyond the above examples of sonnets which conform to Petrarchism in principle and spirit, Ramírez de Guzmán also employs the sonnet as a medium to express her indomitable wit, already apparent in the coplas "Un retrato me has pedido" and others not dealt with in this study. In painting the portrait of a very short man, "Mirando con antojos tu estatura", the poet mocks the gentleman in question, both in physical and moral terms. This is not in itself an innovative stance, for as Olivares and Boyce remind us: "El tratamiento burlesco de ciertas personas por su peculiaridad anatómica es tradicional y tiene sus fuentes en la literatura clásica" (55). The uniqueness lies in the fact that the mocking is from a female perspective and directed towards a man, possibly a suitor. Perhaps Ramírez de Guzmán is expressing a point of view shared by many of the women who know this miniscule gentleman and is simply acting as their '*portavoce*'.

Soneto

A un hombre pequeño D. Francisco de Arévalo

Mirando con antojos tu estatura,

con antojos de verla me he quedado;
y por verte, Felicio, levantado,
saber quisiera levantar figura.
Lástima tengo al alma que en clausura
la trae penando cuerpo tan menguado.
Átomo racional, polvo animado,
instante humano, breve abreviatura:
¡di si eres voz!, pues nadie determina
dónde a la vista estás tan escondido
(que la más perspicaz no te termina)
o cómo te concedes al oído.
En tanto que la duda te examina,
un sentido desmiente a otro sentido. (p.198)

The first word of the sonnet, 'mirando', is an immediate reminder to the reader of the poet's preoccupation with perception. To place even greater emphasis on the sense of seeing, she adds 'antojos' to the equation; she is not relying solely on the naked eye but is looking at him through eyeglasses, a recurring image in her poems, as we have seen. Even with the help of a mechanical aid, the poet is left with "antojos de verla" (l.2), with a craving to see his height ('tu estatura'[l.1]). The verb 'ver' is repeated in the third line ("por verte") and 'levantar' also appears in different forms, the first in line 3 'levantado' and the second in line 4, 'levantar figura'. This repetition of the various forms of 'ver', 'antojos', and 'levantar' within the same quatrain emphasize the poet's preoccupation with seeing the miniature man and with his actual stature. The reader is constantly reminded of the theme of the poem; the fact that we do not lose sight of it, serves as a contrast to the poet's dilemma, that is, the difficulty she experiences in seeing her subject, (D. Francisco de Arévalo). The ending of the quatrain, "levantar figura", is especially inventive for it can be read on several levels. It is primarily a reflection of height of the man in question, for in order to see him standing, she would like to be able to lift her

head. For this, of course, there is no need. According to Olivares and Boyce, the phrase also acquires an astrological sense, "la hablante desea tener poderes de adivinación, así como del conocimiento astrológico, para *adivinar* dónde está el sujeto" (n.4 198).

The second quatrain introduces a broader perspective to the theme of the sonnet. This miniscule body, this "cuerpo tan menguado" (l.6), keeps imprisoned a tormented soul for which the poet feels sorry. From this the reader can infer that the soul within the diminuitive body is itself without moral stature, and for this reason deserves the poet's pity. The last two lines of this quatrain are made up of irreverent apostrophes, comprised of metaphors which focus on the minuteness and insignificance of the man before her. The poet calls her topic a 'rational atom' ('átomo racional'), 'an animated piece of dust' ('polvo animado'), a 'human instant' ('un instante humano'), and a 'brief abbreviation' ('una breve abreviatura'). She acknowleges her topic's humanity, but by accentuating his slightness, she also suggests that that too is in short supply, thereby supporting the notion introduced in the first two lines of the sonnet that he is not only wanting in height but also in moral fibre.

In the tercets Ramírez de Guzmán again changes direction by introducing a sense other than sight. Since the gentleman she is writing about is so small as to be unnoticeable by even the most keen of eyesights--"la más persipicaz"--and is not apparent to the eye ("a la vista estás tan escondido" [l.10]), she commands him to speak ("¡di si eres voz!" [l.9]) so that his whereabouts (and his very existence) may be determined and proven. According to the poet no one can see or hear him: "pues nadie determina / dónde a la vista estás escondido /... /o cómo te concedes al oído" (l.9-12). Because her senses

cannot perceive him (he can neither be seen nor heard), there is doubt cast upon his very reality. The poet personifies doubt (thus allotting to it more relevance than to her very topic) and suggests it is examining him ("la duda te examina" [l.13]) to determine his existence. His minuteness of stature and voice calls his very 'viability'--and more importantly, his moral worth--into question.

As has been demonstrated, Ramírez de Guzmán does not follow the courtly love or Petrarchan tenets of beauty and portraiture. She mocks the traditional formulae, irreverently and skilfully manipulating them to produce results opposed to their original earnest function. In "Un retrato me has pedido," she suggests she knows nothing of the flora to which feminine beauty is habitually compared. However, many of her poems are in fact a testimony to her great knowledge of, and appreciation for, Nature. In what is arguably her most sincere love poem, Doña Catalina honours her mother, Doña Antonia, through Nature, on the occasion of the latter's birthday. The most obvious departure from convention lies in the fact that the frame of reference is not masculine: the mother is not described or praised by a man, in order to express the effect she has on him. In this poem, rather than a woman being compared **to** nature from a masculine perspective, thus revealing and justifying her beauty, Nature recognizes and acknowledges the mother's superior loveliness and it is, in fact, compared to **her**. As Olivares and Boyce point out, in most male-originated love poetry, Nature becomes the measure for female beauty whereas in Doña Catalina's poem, the roles are reversed and the mother becomes the standard for natural beauty (88).

Romance

A los años de mi Señora Doña Antonia Manuela de Guzmán que cumplió mayo

El contar los verdes años
por primaveras floridas
no es para Antandria lisonja,
pues se debe de justicia.
Sin violentar la costumbre
de los tiempos repetida,
a fuer de flor nacío en mayo
igualada de sí misma.
Años cumple de su belleza
y de belleza cumplida,
liberal le da a la fama
los portentos que publica.
El ser hermoso milagro
sin novedad acredita,
pues la primavera siempre
celebra en mayo sus días.
La república olorosa
en verdes hojas rubrica
que esta maravilla sola
es la sóla maravilla.
Reina la aclaman las rosas
de su vistosa provincia,
y el clavel para jurarla
está de muy buena tinta.
En holocausto se ofrezca
la rosa más encendida,
que con los humos de hermosa
puede aspirar a servirla.
No intente su competencia
aunque adolezca de altiva,
que le servirán sus pies
sólo de quedar corrida.
Ni esgriman lucientes hojas
fragrancias desvanecidas,
porque en fragrante delito
con lindo aliento castiga.
En humilde reverencia
mudos obsequios le rindan,

pues de que nacieron juntas
es su vanidad bienquista.
No haya planta que a sus plantas
decorosa no se rinda,
que han pisado buena hierba
los pies que a sus pies se humillan.
Colores saca a las rosas
y en su presencia marchitan;
envidiosas al mirarla,
toda su esperanza espira.
Ojos de sus hojas hizo
la azucena, y deslucida
se desmayó, que a sus rayos
lo inanimado peligra.
Si se precian de la hoja
aún, no dejan defensivas
sus armas, sino se jactan
de haber quedado vencidas.
Espadas negras serán
las hojas blancas que esgriman,
porque a sus lindos aceros
son dichosas las heridas.
Que el animado jardín,
de tantos primores cifra,
matando con suavidades,
ostenta las flores vivas.
Lenguas de olor lo publiquen
flores que aplaudan su dicha,
y en el papel de sus hojas
sus alabanzas escriba.
Goce eterna primavera
luz a quien sombras no obligan;
radiante sol sin ocaso,
nueva Fénix sin cenizas.
La que nació fresca rosa
se conserva estrella fija,
burlando imperios del tiempo,
exenciones de divina. (p.189)

The *romance* is brimming with images and vocabulary suggestive of life and newness, this despite the advancing years of the mother.[36] We find 'verdes años', 'flor',

'nació,', 'hermoso milagro', 'novedad', 'verdes hojas', 'animado jardín, 'lenguas olorosas', 'fresca rosa', to name but a few. Encroaching age, as marked by each successive birthday celebration, is not a disquieting experience or sign, for the mother's age is calculated by counting "primaveras floridas" (l.2), not years. She was born in May, like the flowers of Spring and each birthday is a reminder of new life, not of approaching death. In fact, it is the season itself which celebrates **its** birthday through her "pues la primavera siempre / celebra en mayo sus días" (l.15-16). As the season as a whole commemorates and praises Doña Antonia, so too the individual plants: the rose, the queen of flowers, proclaims the mother Queen ("Reina la aclaman las rosas" [l.21]), and the carnation, in seconding the proclamation, cloaks itself in splendid colour ("y el clavel para jurarla / está de muy buena tinta" [l.23-24]) to honour her.

As the plants in the garden acknowledge the mother's beauty, they must also concede to her superiority to them in the primary areas of their domain: odour, colour, and brilliance. They cannot hope to smell better than she: "Ni esgriman lucientes hojas / fragrancias desvanecidas, / porque en fragrante delito / con lindo aliento castiga" (l.33-36); they should simply accept their secondary positioning and pay her silent homage: "En humilde reverencia / mudos obsequios le rindan" (l.37-38). In her presence the roses lose their hue and whither "Colores saca a las rosas / y en su presencia marchitan" (l.45-46), and in their envy upon seeing her, they lose all hope for their own beauty "envidiosas al mirarla, / toda su esperanza espira" (l.47-48). The lily transforms her leaves into eyes ("Ojos de sus hojas hizo" [l.49]), but faced with the mother's brilliance, she becomes overpowered and lifeless "deslucida se desmayó" (l.50-51).

In all facets of beauty traditionally ruled by flora, the mother has gained domain and Ramírez de Guzmán liberally employs military and political images and vocabulary to convey the victory. This becomes evident in her use of verbs such as "violentar" (l.5), 'aclamar' (l.21), 'jurar' (l.23), 'esgrimir' (l.33 & 68), 'matar' (l.63), 'peligrar' (l.52); in the nouns "república" (l.17), "provincia" (l.23), "delito" (l.35), "armas" (l.55), "espadas" (l.57), "aceros" (l.59), "heridas" (l.60) and "imperios" (l.75); and in the descriptors "defensivas" (l.54) and "vencidas" (l.56). She also pairs these more violent images with the benevolence associated with garden imagery, thus underscoring the importance of her goals and presenting a unified approach despite the disparate imagery. We witness this inordinate pairing in metaphors such as the following: "república olorosa" (17), "Espadas negras serán / las hojas blancas" (l.57-58); "lindos aceros" (l.59), "matando con suavidades" (l.63).

Linguistically, Ramírez de Guzmán uses a variety of techniques to bring together the two main themes of the poem, Nature and the mother's beauty. In keeping with the dichotomous approach already mentioned above, paronomasia is the most apparernt link between the two themes. This becomes obvious in such phrases as "maravilla sola / es la sola maravilla" (l.19-20); "fragrancias desvanecidas /... fragrante delito" (l.34-35), "ojas de sus hojas" (l.49), "No haya planta que a sus plantas..." (l.41), and "los pies que a sus pies se humillan" (l.44).

Doña Catalina continues the circularity implied in having taken a turn around the garden (the "animado jardín"[l.61]) at the end of the poem when she returns to her opening message: despite her advancing years, may her mother enjoy eternal youth, "goce

eterna primavera" (l.69). Doña Antonia is "luz" (l.70), "radiante sol" (l.71), "nueva Fénix" (l.72), "fresca rosa" (l.73) and "estrella fija" (l.74), all conventional metaphors for a beloved, used unconventionally in this poem because the love nomenclature is employed by a daughter, not a lover. With these metaphors is also implied a beauty in perpetuity: her light is not affected by shadows, she is a sun which does not set, and a Phoenix without ashes (l.70-73). The ravages of time will not affect the eternal beauty of the mother. Much like a deity, she is an exception to the impact of age and decay and she mocks the traditional reign of Time over age and beauty, "burlando imperios del tiempo" (l.75).

Conclusion

Doña Catalina Clara Ramírez de Guzmán was a poet whose opus was not integrated into the canon of seventeenth-century Spain and there exist many reasons which contributed to her exclusion. Perhaps the most important was sociological: she was a woman living within a misogynistic and repressive society which looked upon any degree of female independence and self-assuredeness as a threat to the tight fabric of a community held together by male supremacy. Although Ramírez de Guzmán appears to have enjoyed--at least within her own city, Llerena--far greater freedom of expression than most women, this would certainly not have extended much beyond the confines of her region. Societal attitudes coupled with the misfortune that her work was not published within her lifetime[37], have relegated her life and work to the realm of a provincial anomaly, most interesting to the modern reader for its historical value as a document--

editorialized, to be sure--of quotidian life of seventeenth-century nobility in a provincial town.

Beyond the socio-historical basis for exclusion is the fact that Doña Catalina did not conform to Italianate style as championed by Fernando de Herrera. She did not adapt wholeheartedly to the changing poetic conventions which he encouraged and acknowledged them in her own work only infrequently, favouring the more traditionally Spanish forms, both structurally and thematically. Her poetry has little of the solemn introspection associated with the Petrarchan tradition and is much more valuable as a reflection and analysis of events in her life and in the lives of the people around her.

Contrary to Petrarchan convention, her opus is not a linear grouping of poems arranged to form a narrative, nor does the poet allow it to revolve around Love and the Beloved. In fact, she very rarely addresses romantic love other than to experiment with the newer formulae (Petrarchan) of which she is undoubtedly aware, but to which she is not committed. She demonstrates, in fact, a great disrespect for the conventions and the games associated with this purportedly most important of domains. She openly speaks of her mistrust of men, makes a mockery of the etiquettes associated with the game or rules of love ("Un retrato me has pedido"); and freely allots blame to both men and women for the pains incurred in the perpetual quest for romantic fulfillment ("Quiere quien quisiere"). If she harbours deep romantic feelings for any man,[38] she does not choose to use her poetry as the means of its expression.[39] Nor do we find in her poetry open allusions to sexuality or desire,[40] as we do, for example in the poetry of Chiara Matraini and many of the Italian women poets.

Ridicule, liberally sprinkled with sarcasm, appears to be one of her primary motivations for the writing of poetry. It affords her the opportunity to demonstrate an irrepressible wit and love of language, and also to hone her skill in the manipulation of words. It is in this thematic and artistic sphere that Ramírez de Guzmán is clearly most at ease and in which she finds the most personal delight. A mere sample of the *jeux d'esprit* contained in her opus are the sonnet "Mirando con antojos", and the *coplas* "Un retrato me has pedido." Although Herrera, in his **Anotaciones** (308), did allow for variation in themes on the condition that the vocabulary used was of appropriate register[41], he himself did not trifle with humorous topics, and it is unlikely that he and other pure Italianists would give serious consideration to authors who did.

Opposing the preferences and dictates of Herrera and the Italianists, Doña Catalina uses the sonnet form only rarely. This she appears to do in an attempt to experiment with the forms of which she obviously has some knowledge, but not necessarily a commitment to. Her odes to Hope ("Es la Esperanza un apacible engaño") and Fear ("Deja vivir, Temor"), her apostrophe to the young dead soldier ("Moriste, joven") and to the portrait (Retrato, si eres sombra"), are technical, linguistic, and thematic experiments with what she knows are considered the more respected poetic tendencies of her epoch. That she allows herself more free rein within the traditional Spanish forms is certainly more in keeping with the preferences of her sex at that time, and also sets her apart from the mainstream.

Notwithstanding the more traditional focus, Ramírez de Guzmán's poetics do conform on several levels to the dictates of Herrera. Her metaphors are visually

stimulating and clever without being obscure; she breaks up lines of verse to disconnect the even flow, and makes use of *enjambment* to lengthen a clause--all to render the line, and ultimately the poem, more complex and interesting; she is able to apply a frivolous topic to a most serious of forms, the sonnet, thus supposedly earning the respect of Herrera for demonstrating great writing ability in such an achievement. Her use of classical references and foreign words, so encouraged by 'el divino', are limited, however, to the typical Early Modern penchant for the use of exotic names: 'Clori' (the author herself), 'Silvia', (the author's mother), 'Anarda', 'Tisbe', 'Píramo', and 'Lauro' (the author's sblings).

More Italianate trends are apparent in the poet's use of the Petrarchan antithetical approach, both linguistically and in her choice of metaphors. She frequently juxtaposes reality and illusion, and within this juxtaposition, the reader is made aware of the poet's preoccupation with the sense of sight and all which pertains to it--for example, the eyeglasses which can distort or make clearer. In this category is to be remembered the serious treatment "Retrato si eres sombra", in which the reality of the subject is obfuscated within the superficial appearance of the representation, and the more jocular "Un retrato me has pedido" which serves the same purpose, only in a far more indirect and devious manner. The sonnet "Mirando con antojos" also deals with perception, not only on a physical but on a moral plane.

If Doña Catalina Clara Ramírez de Guzmán was not better known and widely acknowledged during her lifetime, it is up to the modern reader to re-evaluate her work within re-defined paramaters. It is in retrospect, that the reader can appreciate the

historical value of the poetry of Doña Catalina as a detailed description of events and possibly of attitudes of her era. It is also from a perspective of four-hundred years later that her wit and independence can be admired and marvelled at, notwithstanding the fact that she was certainly respected by many during her lifetime and sought-after to apply her skill to their own literary needs. The modern reader can also appreciate the relative degree of independence the poet must have enjoyed in order to write, openly, about her view of the situations around her--often at the expense of those involved. This must have been a direct result of her belonging to a loving and unified family. Her poetry does not suggest any fear or frustration with regards to her family situation. She writes lovingly, humourously, and with great facility of both siblings and parents. Nowhere is this more evident than in "Al contar los verdes años," the tender poem written in homage to her mother on her birthday, and in "Que me retrate agora," addressed to her brother.

That Ramírez de Guzmán did not follow the fashionable poetic trends that many of her male counterparts were attempting to emulate may imply that she was not sufficiently well-versed in them to adopt them exclusively as her own. It may also suggest that the poet was sufficiently confident in herself, her intellect, and her station in life not to desire the Petrarchan laurel that has so attracted Petrarch, Bembo, Herrera, and Matraini. It is perhaps her greatest subversion to have remained true to her poetic heritage, all the while demonstrating a very personal--although not necessarily introspective--and infinitely lively uniqueness of character. It is in this light that Ramírez de Guzmán must be re-examined and surely given a more prominent place in the poetics of seventeenth-century Spain.

[1] Traditional Castilian verse forms included the *romance, décima, canción, seguidilla, redondilla,* and *copla.*

[2] For a detailed discussion on the origins and progression of Petrarchan influence in the Iberian Peninsula see: Daniel L. Heiple, **Garcilaso de la Vega and the Italian Renaissance,** (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994); Anne J. Cruz, **Imitación y transformación: El petrarquismo en la poesía de Boscán y Garcilaso de la Vega,** (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Co., 1988); María Pilar Manero Sorolla, **Introducción al estudio del petrarquismo in España,** (Barcelona: PPU, 1987); Ignacio Navarrete, **Orphans of Petrarch. Poetry and Theory in the Spanish Renaissance,** (Berkeley: U. of California Press, 1994); Rafael Lapesa, **La trayectoria poética de Garcilaso,** (Madrid: Ediciones Istmo, 1985); Antonio Prieto, **La poesía española del siglo XVI. I. Andáis tras mis escritos,** (Madrid: Ediciones Cátedra, 1984); Jorge Checa Cremades, **La poesía en los siglos de oro: Renacimiento,** (Madrid: Editorial Playor, 1982); R.O. Jones, **The Golden Age. Prose and Poetry. The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries.** A Literary History of Spain. (London; Ernest Benn Ltd., 1971); David H. Darst, **Juan Boscán,** (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1978); George Ticknor, **Historia de la literatura española,** 1, (Buenos Aires: Editorial Bajel, 1948).

[3] Mallol is thought to be the first to manifest Petrarchan tendencies, possibly as early as the middle of the fourteenth century (Manero Sorolla, 35).

[4] Jones describes March as "an influence not to be underestimated in sixteenth-century Castilian poetry" (92).
This, however, is not a universally accepted fact. George Ticknor, for example, plays down Petrarchan influence on March (Vol. I, 329). However, for a more thorough overview of Petrarchan influence on Catalan poets, see María Pilar Manero Sorolla's **Introducción al estudio del petrarquismo en España,** 33-37.

[5] Of primary importance are: the role of the Avignon papacies in promoting cultural and political exchanges (not to mention the fact that Petrarch himself resided in Vaucluse from 1357-1362); the Spanish Cardinal Egidio de Albornoz who, while living in Rome, saw a need for greater education for his fellow countrymen in Italy and whose efforts did much to that end (Ticknor states: "la educación de los españoles en Italia recibió grande impulso a las manos del cardenal...de Albornoz" [1 345]); Pope Benedict VII (the Spaniard Pedro de Luna) who surrounded himself with Spanish intellectuals from Spanish universities; cultural and political ties fostered by the court of Alfonso V in Naples and the Borgia Papacy of Alexander VI; commercial links (eg. through the ports of Sevilla and Genoa) which became what Manero Sorolla describes as "medio indirecto de numerosas relaciones y frutos culturales" (53).

[6] These are found primarily in his letter "A la Duquesa de Soma", which separates Book I & II of his **Poesías.** Prieto calls it "un manifiesto de la nueva poesía renacentista" (Prieto, **Poesía,** 12).

[7] Navagero was well-familiar with the Petrarchist poetic ideals held by Pietro Bembo for he was associated with a group which formed around the editor Aldo Manuzio, a circle of which Bembo was also a member. Manuzio had published two editions of Petrarch's **Rime**--edited by Bembo to emphasize the 'narrative' aspect of the love story--in 1501 and 1514. Copies of these editions found their way to Granada and were read by contemporary literary figures such as Boscán, who himself displays this "valor de narratividad" (Prieto, **Poesía**, 13) in *libro* II of his **Obras**.

[8] This can be viewed as echo of the efforts made by the Genoese-Sevillian Francisco Imperial in the late fourteenth century and early fifteenth century , who is credited with first introducing Dantean allegorical forms to Castile during the reign of Juan II. The marqués de Santillana (1388-1458) had been the first to write sonnets in the new Italianate style. Santillana was also one of the great poets from the court of Juan II, a court known for its transitional position between the traditional and the new poetic currents concurrently vying for a place in Spain. According to Sainz de Robles, it was a period in which "ni las antiguas escuelas poéticas habían acabado de consumirse, ni la naciente italiana daba aún frutos maduros" (42).

[9] Antonio Prieto suggests that Boscán's poetry in book II of his **Obras**, demonstrates a marked imitation of Petrarch in form, organization and content--yet although it follows, the narrative flow of the Petrarchan **Canzoniere**, does not achieve the "tensión amorosa petrarquesca que anima el **Canzoniere**" (**Poesía** 15). What Prieto does identify, however, is "una curiosidad poética conducida por la imitación" (**Poesía** 15). R.O. Jones describes Boscán's verse as "accomplished but without great distinction" (34), and states that it "never showed the suppleness of Garcilaso's" (34).

[10] Boscán shared this dissatisfacion with traditional Spanish forms with other prominent men of letters: Antonio de Nebrija, Juan del Encina, and Juan de Valdez (Navarrete **Orphans** 58).

[11] The role of Baldassare Castiglione (1478-1529) as papal Nuncio to Spain for Pope Clement VII beginning in 1525 (Navarrete **Orphans** 40, Manero Sorolla 56) provides a further Spanish-Italian link during a most formative time in Spanish poetic development. For an overview of the political and cultural ties of Italy and Spain during the sixteenth century refer to Elena Rossi's "Reconstructing Francisco de Figueroa's Chronology: New Findings", **Bulletin of Hispanic Studies**, LXX, (1993): 219-236.

[12] "Cultura literaria y experiencia de vida se conjugan estrechamente en esta obra" (Manero Sorolla 125).

[13] Checa Cremades points out that despite the innovations in lyric poetry in sixteenth-century Spain, there were aspects of the more traditional Spanish verse which were retained and incorporated into the new forms: "los nuevos poetas se nutren a su vez de

elementos cancioneriles: esta apropiación afecta a temas y motivos recurrentes de los **Cancioneros** y, quizá de forma más decisiva, a ciertos recursos retóricos y rasgos imaginísticos" (12).

[14]. For more on Fernando de Herrera and his position vis-à-vis lyric poetry of the Golden Age refer to: Fernando de Herrera, **Poesía castellana original completa,** Cristóbal Cuevas ed. (Madrid: Ediciones Cátedra, 1985), 11-102; Antonio Gallego Morell, **Garcilaso de la Vega y sus comentaristas,** (Madrid: Editorial Gredos, S.A., 1972) and **Estudios sobre poesía española del primer Siglo de Oro,** (Madrid: Insula, 1970); R.O. Jones **The Golden Age of Prose and Poetry The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries** (London: Ernest Benn Ltd. 1971), 94-98; Paul Julian Smith, **Writing in the Margin. Spanish Literature of the Golden Age,** (Oxford: Claredon Press, 1988), 57-72; Guillermo Díaz-Plaja, **La poesía lírica española,** (Barcelona: Editorial Labor, S.A. 1937), 136-144; Oreste Macrí, **Fernando de Herrera,** Biblioteca Románica Hispánica, 2, (Madrid: Editorial Gredos, 1972); Gaetano Chiappini, ed. **Fernando de Herrera y la escuela sevillana,** (Madrid: Taurus 1985).

[15] Díaz-Plaja describes Herrera as "un hombre puramente volcado en su profesión intelectual. Retraido, orgulloso, severo, pero leal y desinteresado, Herrera es un ejemplo vivo de vocación ideal y de cultura humanística" (137). Oreste Macrí bases his description of Herrera on the character sketch provided by the painter Francisco Pacheco (1571-1654) in his *Libro de verdaderos Retratos*. According to Macrí, Herrera was "de austeras costumbres y parco de palabras en las relaciones sociales, respetó el honor ajeno y desconoció la maledicencia y la injuria" (36). He further relates that "la aspereza de su carácter tan sólo se suaviza ante el culto a la amistad, en el íntimo entursiasmo del trabajo poético" (36).

[16] There existed at the time two major poetic schools: the one centered in Seville led by Herrera; the other in Salamanca, and led by Fray Luis de León. More information on the Sevillian School may be found in the already mentioned **Fernando de Herrera y la escuela sevillana** (Madrid: Taurus 1985), edited by Gaetano Chiappini.

[17] Many scholars agree: "el libro crítico más importante del renacimiento" (Armiño 37), "el más importante tratado de poética del siglo XVI" (López Bueno & Montero, in Rico, ed. **Historia crítica 2/1**, 236); "Sus **Anotaciones** a Garcilaso son tal vez el mejor texto crítico de nuestro Renacimiento" (Checa Cremades 18).

[18] Mauro Armiño agrees that the **Anotaciones** (and in particular the prologue, written not by Herrera but by Francisco de Medina) was considered a 'poetic manifesto', an attack on traditional Castilian poetry, which "provocó una polémica de carácter regionalista" (37),

[19] According to Ignacio Navarrete, Herrera's **Anotaciones** represented an attempt to "displace Garcilaso [and] was viewed as an attack on the forces controlling the canon" (**Orphans** 138). Primarily these were the universities of Salamanca and Alcalá and the Castilian nobility of which Garcilaso had been a part, but which Herrera--of humble origins and an Andalusian--was not. For Navarrete's theory, see **Orphans of Petrarch** (Berkely: U. of California Press, 1994) and "Decentering Garcilaso: Herrera's Attack on the Canon", **PMLA**, 106, Jan. 91: 21-33.

[20] Any future reference to Fernando de Herrera's **Anotaciones** as found in Antonio Gallego Morell's **Garcilaso de la Vega y sus comentaristas**, (Madrid: Editorial Gredos, S.A., 1972) will be noted in the body of the text as (Herrera **Anotaciones** p#).

[21] "Yo, si deseara nombre en estos estudios, por no ver envejecida y muerta en pocos días la gloria, que piensan alcanzar eterna los nuestros, no pusiera el cuidado en ser imitador suyo, sino enderezar el camino en seguimiento de los mejores antiguos, y juntando en una mezcla e éstos con los italianos, hiciera mi lengua copiosa y rica de aquelllos admirables despojos y osara pensar, que con diligencia y cuidado pudiera arribar a donde nunca llegarán los que no llevan este paso" (**Anotaciones** 311).

[22] Olivares and Boyce discuss previously published misconceptions regarding the true identity of Doña Catalina Clara Ramírez de Guzmán in note 1 of the introduction to her poetry in their anthology **Tras el espejo la musa escribe: Lírica feminina de los Siglos de Oro**, (Madrid: siglo veintiuno editores, 1993), p.153. All but one of the poems used in this study are taken from this anthology. A more detailed summation of her life and situation is offered by Joaquín de Entrambasaguas y Peña, in the only anthology existing of her poems, **Poesías de Doña Catalina Clara Ramírez de Guzmán** (Badajoz: Imp. de Aqueros, 1929). However, most of the information suggested is conjecture, based largely on the details found in the poems themselves. Details of lineage are also found in Antonio Carrasco García's **La Plaza Mayor de Llerena y otros estudios**, Collección Investigación y Crítica, 1, ed. Cristina Esteras, (Valdemoro: Ediciones Tuero, 1985), pp. 98-135.

[23] Manuscripts 3884 and 3917 of the Biblioteca Nacional.

[24] The lack of opportunity to publish poetry was not solely gender-related. Ana Navarro reminds us that: "La mayoría de los poetas de los Siglos de Oro encontraban grandes dificultades para la publicación de sus obras, que raramente veían impresas. Recordemos, por ejemplo, que de la mayoría de los autores importantes de la época--Cervantes, Góngora, Espinel, Argensola...--no existen impresos de su poesía" (50). For further reading on this subject she cites A. Rodríguez Moñino's **Construcción crítica y realidad histórica en la poesía española de los siglos XVI y XVII,** (Madrid: Castalia, 1965).

[25] Entrambasaguas y Peña points out that Doña Catalina Clara Ramírez de Guzmán was not even mentioned in the **Bibliotheca Nova** by Nicolás Antonio in which he listed all writers known to him in his time, including those women writers of less obvious talent than hers (38).

[26] "Si he de morir de no verte"(61), "Los cristales que en bosquejos" (175),"Tus ojos forman querellas" (188), "Mirando con antojos tu estatura" (198) are just four of the poems in the collection which deal directly with seeing and the wearing of eyeglasses.

[27] All poems discussed in this chapter (unless otherwise indicated) are taken from **Tras el espejo la musa escribe: Lírica castellana de los Siglos de Oro**, Julián Olivares and Elizabeth S. Boyce, eds., (Madrid: Siglo XXI de España Editores, 1993).

[28] It has been suggested by Joaquín de Entrambasaguas y Peña that the poem might be dedicated to the poet's brother, Don Pedro, a military man and an author.

[29] It must also be remembered that during the Siglo de Oro the portrait was considered a manifestation of the fleetingness of life. It represented an ephemeral beauty, one of questionable rapport with reality (as Doña Catalina is reminding the reader in this poem), and thus, a *desengaño*. The portrait would remain unchanged and timeless, while its subject would have to contend with the ravages of time.

[30] This poem is taken from **Poesías de Doña Catalina Clara Ramírez de Guzmán** (Badajoz: Antonio Arqueros, 1929), edited by Joaquín de Entrambasaguas y Peña, pp.135-136.

[31] There is some question as to the identity of the person requesting the portrait. Entrambasaguas y Peña relates that in the manuscript the word *hermano* is crossed out and replaced by *galán* (n58, 251). Given the subject of "Un retrato mandais....", he further suggests that the poet wrote it "a petición de su hermano don Pedro" (29). Regardless of the origin of the request, Ramírez de Guzmán takes advantage of the opportunity to provide a social commentary on portraiture and views on female beauty.

[32] Olivares and Boyce, 189.

[33] See "Quiera quien quisiere" p.186: "Si de darles gusto / se sacan penas, / conocida ventaja / tienen las feas" (l.17-20)

[34] María del Pilar Oñate in **El feminismo en la literatura española** (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1938, p.124) cites the following excerpt from a poem by Don Luis de Góngora (1561-1627) and gives us an idea of the kind of anti-female satire prevalent in Spanish literature in the sixteenth century. (In all fairness it must also be noted that the "mancebo orgulloso" of this poem is not spared Góngora's mockery.)

Mancebo orgulloso,

Que aunque barbaspeinas,
Es tu edad tan corta
Como tu experiencia,
Ni en amor confíes
Ni en mujeres creas;
Que su fe es fingida
Y su ley es secta.
Olvidadas quieren,
Queridas desprecian,
Lo bueno aborrecen,
Lo malo desean.
Octubre en tibieza,
Febrero en mudanza
Y marzo en la vuelta
.....

[35] See **La vengadora de las mujeres, La dama boba**, among others.

[36] The advancing age of the mother is in itself evidence of a departure from traditional love poetry, which emphasizes the beauty in *youth* of the woman.

[37] No specific reason is known for this omission. One can only speculate on the provinciality of her existence which limited access to and contact with larger centres where publication might have been facilitated.

[38] Entrambasaguas Y Peña discusses this very likely possibility in the introduction to her work, pp.31-37.

[39] She did, however, use her talents to write love poetry on behalf of others as the *romance* "Si he de morir de no verte," written for the suitor of another woman and which she prefaces with 'A unos ojos dormidos, en nombre de un galán'.

[40] The one exception perhaps being the sonnet to an absent friend "A la ausencia de una amiga, hablando con ella" (Olivares 157).

[41] Speaking primarily of the sonnet Herrera maintains: "Y por esta causa su verdadero sujeto y materia debe ser principalmente alguna sentencia ingeniosa y aguda, o grave, y que merezca bien ocupar aquel lugar todo" (Herrera Anotaciones 308).

Conclusion

The marginalization of Chiara Matraini and Doña Catalina Clara Ramírez de Guzmán from the literary canons of sixteenth and seventeenth-century Italy and Spain can be attributed, at least in part, to forces at play outside of personal poetic merit. As has been documented in the second chapter of this study, women of the Early Modern Period, for the most part, had limited access to social, educational, and publication opportunities, making their participation in the letters of the period more difficult and restricted. From this disadvantageous point of departure, their poetic proficiency and ouput was minimal and seemingly inconsequential when compared to that of their male counterparts during the same period. In fact, very little was known or discussed about most of these women until the current century. Even those women who, in their lifetime, achieved some degree of reputation for their craft, did so primarily due to their gender and social status;[1] there was more interest in the anomaly or aberration of a woman poet, than there was in her actual work. Little critical attention was paid to women poets (if, indeed, their work came to light), and certainly few were permitted to enter the male-defined confines of the literary canon.

This non-inclusion--beyond the societal restrictions and a refusal to acknowledge any serious potential of the 'weaker sex'--was exacerbated, as well, by the demands of the craft itself. Lyric poetry was a product of the courtly love tradition, a masculine paradigm which employed male language and perspective.[2] Those who advanced this poetry and professed to hold the key to the codes and techniques which would result in optimum results, embraced this male construct and left little room for diverse poetic

expression. Pietro Bembo[3] in Italy and Fernando de Herrera[4] in Spain came to be regarded by most literati and scholars of their time as the foremost authorities on the lyric genre, and both based their criteria for good poetic writing on the Petrarchan tradition. To be accepted into the canon of the time, therefore, a woman was required to use "the accepted currency" (McAuliffe 535), that is, she needed to speak the correct poetic language (masculine) and to follow the correct formula (Petrarchan).

Of the two poets which concern this work, Chiara Matraini in Italy was the more priviliged writer in terms of recognition. Her poetry was published three times during her lifetime and she enjoyed some measure of rapport with literary society of sixteenth-century Italy. She also had a distinct advantage over Doña Catalina in that she lived at the end of an historical period in Italy when women writers, and in particular, lyric poets, were fashionable, tolerated, and encouraged. She was not, however, among the most well-known for she posessed neither the correct amount of virtue, nor notoriety.[5]

Of the two writers, Matraini also comes closer to embracing--superficially, at least-- the most accepted poetic tenets of the time, in her case, those of Pietro Bembo, the "dictator of taste" (Binni 2: 19) of sixteenth and seventeenth-century Italian poetry. She embraced the preferred form (the sonnet), the sanctioned language and images (Neo-platonic), and the most prevalent themes (fame, love, desire, *tempus fugit*, separation, death). She also adhered closely to Bembo's more technical recommendations regarding the deliberate use of vowels and consonants to achieve specific moods or tones. Nonetheless, within the confines of these male-gendered formulae, and often through

them, Matraini was able to express herself with an individuality which highlighted a female perspective.

Matraini's own expression of the feminine manifests itself in particular through her subversion of the masculine poetic language. While speaking through the dynamics of male speech and poetic constructs, the poet is able to redefine the roles of poet/lover/beloved to reflect a more feminine perspective. In "Tropp'oltre ogni mio merito" she maintains the typical male construct in terms of relationship within the poem: the man is the lover; she, the woman, is the beloved. However, Matraini is also the poet, the active force, the creator. She uses this power to her advantage by not succumbing to the traditional female role; she does not describe herself as the disdainful, rejecting beloved, but rather as a woman worth the love being proffered to her.[6] She is simply choosing not to accept this love, and this rejection is couched--once again subversively--in flattery of the petitioner. In other words, she is well aware of the power she wields through her writing, and she manipulates it to achieve the best of both worlds--male and female.

Female sexual desire, itself a subversive concept in sixteenth-century Italy, is freely discussed by Matraini. In fact, she devotes several sonnets to this theme ("Quanto'ho più da lontan..." [p.117[7]], "Fera son io..." [p.120], "Com'eliotropo al sol..."[p.123]) and openly describes both her desire and her probable fulfillment within a relationship. Tied with this aspect of love, is Matraini's extensive use of pagan and/or liturgical and religious imagery[8] to express the depth and height of her love ("Quai lampi à voi..." [p.107], "S'à voi tropp'oltre... [p.113]). Her lover is the deity to whom she bows,

for whom she is the high priestess. He is the sun of her universe whom she follows like a flower ("Com'eliotropo al sol..." [p.123]) and who gives her life. Although this type of imagery was not uncommon in the poetry of the time, she does use it unhesitatingly and, certainly, at times, sacriligiously.

Beyond transgressing the poetic and feminine bounds of gender roles, sexuality, and religion, Matraini also pushed the technical boundaries of Petrarchism to what may have been an inadmissible level. Several of her poems (only two of which were discussed in this study, specifically "Tropp'oltre..." [p.131] and "Chiara, imagin di se..." [p.135]) display pronounced--and premature--manneristic tendencies within the Petrarchan framework which predominates in her opus. These sonnets are structurally complex and challenging and, for this reason, obscure in meaning. This extreme departure from Petrarchism made her unique among her female contemporaries, and quite possibly, this added transgression possibly hindered further her inclusion into the canon of the time.

Doña Catalina Clara Ramírez de Guzmán appears to have been even less a part of a literary world than was Matraini, for Spanish women of the seventeenth century were not as likely to be able to participate in the literary exchanges available to a few of the educated Italian women of the corresponding period. Perhaps it is for this reason that she does not manifest, even outwardly, a great attachment to the Petrarchan tradition, the Italianate style which was so fashionable on the Iberian peninsula during the Early Modern Period. Doña Catalina does not emulate closely the tenets advanced by Fernando de Herrera. In fact, she appears more drawn to the traditional Castilian lyric forms and does not faithfully follow the Italianate style (the sonnet[9]; introspective themes of love

and death; Petrarchan antithesis). The examples of the Italianate style appear to be (successful) poetic and intellectual experimentation; her overwhelming choice of the more traditional Castilian forms may simply represent a personal preference, one in keeping with other contemporary female poets.

However, Doña Catalina's conventional literary cloak hides her non-traditional views. This is especially true with regard to her ideas on the representation of women in portraits. In "Retrato, si eres sombra..."[p.170], Doña Catalina questions the validity of an illustration which takes on such inordinate importance *vis à vis* the reality (the person) it is impersonating, more specifically, herself. This subject, of course, is not unique given the widespread fascination with portraiture during the Siglo de Oro, however, it does bear the poet's personal mark with regard to her keen preoccupation with the topos of illusion versus reality.[10] Again on a personal theme, she subverts the common conventions of portraiture in "Un retrato me has pedido..." [p.176], by describing herself unflatteringly through a witty cascade of puns and other word games, while at the same time, outwardly following the traditional encomiastic formulae.

The strongest impression with which a reader is left upon reading Doña Catalina's poems is that she was a keen observer of the people and events around her. This is not surprising given her keen preoccupation with what is seen--or not seen (see n.10). Possibly her greatest achievement (and perhaps one of the reasons why she was not more widely known during and immediately after her lifetime[11]) was her ability to chronicle life in a provincial town in seventeenth-century Spain and to accomplish it with grace, wit, and a very obvious love of language. Both in her choice of poetic forms (*romances,*

seguidillas, coplas, etc.) and in her selection of what may be considered mundane themes (a very short man; her mother's birthday; a witty self-portrait), Doña Catalina presents the modern reader with a clear impression of who she was, and of what her life consisted. She does not make a pretense of subscribing to lofty subjects or affected phraseology, as was customary in the Petrarchan style. She prefers to speak plainly (if playfully) as befitting someone of intelligence, wit, and disarming directness. Even in her more serious moments ("Moriste, joven..." [p.166], "Retrato, si eres sombra..." [p.170], "A la Esperanza" [p.190], "Al Temor" [p.193]), Doña Catalina is not obscure, even though the metaphors she employs are by no means pedestrian. In her more humorous poems, Doña Catalina smiles at us across the centuries inviting us to laugh with her at the inconsitencies of life and at the characters which surround her and which, perhaps, remind us of people in our own lives.

Chiara Matraini and Doña Catalina Clara Ramírez de Guzmán were not included in the literary canons of their time primarily for socio-historical reasons: they were women, and as such not generally deemed worthy of inclusion on a legitimate level. As we have seen, they lacked the education, social connections, and, possibly, the monetary means to participate seriously in what was considered a man's domain. Notwithstanding these limitations, both poets demonstrated and acted upon a desire to participate actively in the literary world--perhaps for very different reasons. Matraini openly sought the laurels which had attracted Petrarch, and chose to work within the framework he had created, all the while singing with her own voice. Doña Catalina appeared more interested in depicting and in reacting to her limited world of Llerena, and in achieving her goal

with grace and wit, shunning, for the most part, the fashionable literary trends of the period. Both women, however, were able to convey from their own unique perspective a view of the life and soul of sixteenth and seventeenth-century Italy and Spain--a perspective which deserves greater study, acknowledgment, and inclusion in a redefined literary canon.

[1] See Chapter 2, pp. 72-75 and Chapter 3, pp. 99-102.

[2] See historical background documented in Chapter 1 of this study and in Chapter 2, pp. 97-99, and 100-101.

[3] See in particular Chapter 2, pp. 87-96.

[4]See in particular Chapter 3, pp.157-162.

[5] Refer to Frank Warnke's theory of the 'social identity' of women writers, pp. 68-70, and to Katherine M. Rogers' discussion of how women's extraliterary reputations could affect their publication opportunities, p.136, n.17.

[6] Discussed in Chapter 3, p.133-134.

[7] Page numbers in square brackets [ ] next to poems refer to this study.

[8] Refer in particular to Chapter 3, pp. 109, 114-117, and 124-126.

[9] Of 118 poems collected by Entrambasaguas y Peña, only six are sonnets (all part of the present study); the remaining poems are *silvas*, *romances, décimas, redondillas,* and *coplas*.

[10] Doña Catalina's preoccuation with illusion vs. reality is fully in keeping with the thinking of the Siglo de Oro. In her poetry this thematic fixation is supported by her lexical (over-)use of *antojos* (anteojos), *ilusión, fantasía, engaño, ficción*, and verbs such as *mirar*, and *ver*.

[11] The fact that she did not embrace the introspective and lofty Petrarchan themes advanced by Herrera would have set her apart to an even greater extent from the more 'serious' poetic contenders of the time. Not only was she a woman infringing upon a male-dominated domain, but she was also refusing to observe the laws which governed it.

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