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THE TRANSGRESSION OF BOUNDARIES IN THE POETRY OF
FRANCESCO PETRARCA AND GASPARA STAMPA

By

ISABELLA BERTOLETTI

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Comparative Literature in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

1999

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CHAPTER ONE

BEGINNINGS

Petrarch is now chiefly celebrated as the author of Italian poetry, the *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta*, and to a lesser extent known through the allegorical dream vision *Trionfi*. It was, however, the unfinished epic poem in Latin *Africa* on the theme of the second Punic war that earned him the crown of poet laureate in a solemn ceremony held in Rome in 1341. Petrarch had entrusted his copious literary output in Latin (both in verse and in prose, which by far surpasses his production in the vernacular) to transmit his world view, his devotion to classical antiquity (and aspiration to revive it), his moral legacy, and fame with posterity.

It is well known that Petrarch harbored ambivalent feelings when it came to his vernacular *Fragmenta*. Although he announced that he had abandoned these poems because they reminded him of his youthful mistakes, he worked on countless drafts of the lyrics throughout his life (he was still in the process of renumbering the last 30 poems of the collection when he died) and was secretly determined to be a great poet in the vernacular.

At a delicate juncture in the history of the Italian vernacular, while Italy was not unified (and would not be for approximately six centuries after Petrarch's death) he wrote most copiously in Latin as a way of self-preservation. Petrarch was dismayed by the inexorable ticking of time with its power to dismember and obliterate. He dreaded all forms of self deracination and cultural marginality, which became epitomized by his exile and

nomadic life. He knew, though, that in order to be culturally significant his texts would have to be emulated and manipulated. His fame with posterity was secured with the very vernacular text that he was to present to a country which lacked a jurisdictional territory (and a people who lacked a country), the text which he deemed most vulnerable to be maimed by vulgar hands and recited with crude inflections.

Petrarch bound together his *Fragmenta* into an collection to tell a multi-faceted story: on one hand Petrarch exploited ingredients he inherited from an amorous tradition which ranged from Ovid, the troubadours, the *Roman de la Rose*, the *dolce stil novo* and Dante. On the other hand, the *Fragmenta* presented Petrarch with the opportunity to rescript literary history, in particular vis à vis his immediate predecessor, Dante. As the self appointed poet of a new age, he wrote love poetry which acquired monumental importance and has reverberated in virtually every European poet as a lasting and inescapable model.

While the *Fragmenta* exposed the most intimate and seemingly individual nuances of Petrarch's moral crisis, insisting on the uniqueness of his predicament, he was careful to include in the collection poems on themes other than his passion for Laura (politics and friendships, for instance), poems which would document the power of the vernacular to function in the real world not just in matters of the heart. A relentless collector on classical knowledge, Petrarch accumulated heterogeneous elements into unpredictable associations. He composed lyrics in which historical and personal memory converge and combined them into a corpus which was extremely stratified and yet flattened into a monotone that so much

disagreed with the vernacular employed by Dante. With a voice that seems frozen beyond the circumstances of life, Petrarch still entices his readers into the enchanted garden of the *Fragmenta*. His voice reverberates in internal echoes which allow us to discover elements that were read in the past and then forgotten in the vertiginous variety of many others; it is a voice, moreover, bound to the multiple and eclectic external reverberations of centuries of readers and emulators, one that has travelled the labyrinth of historical circumstances through which a text or an author reach us (and we reach them).

In sonnet # 90 Petrarch describes his beloved in flight: her blond hair is scattered and knotted by the wind: “Erano i capei d'oro a l'aura sparsi/ che 'n mille dolci nodi gli avolgea.” (90. 1-2).¹ Fleetingly, words attain the unimaginable: they make time stand still and arrest Laura's escape.² One image suffices to reveal the poet's immoderate love and exhibit the ephemerally of the woman who inspires it. This image, furthermore, alludes to the strategy he adopts to execute his lyrical project in its entirety. The poet writes his *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta* out of compulsion to redress his most immediate longings for a woman who eludes him; then he scrupulously collects and orders the poems in which he depicts his efforts. Laura's hair, at times flowing in the wind, at times knotted by it, provide the link between the defining themes of the text and its formal logic. While the *Fragmenta* provide Petrarch with momentary release from his relentless obsession, they also renew the emotions that they should redirect; thus the poet defines the primary elements that fuel his poetry as tears and rationality, emotion and logic (“piango e ragiono” [1. 5]) in the sonnet

that inaugurates the collection.

The *Fragmenta* received Petrarch's steady application until the year of his death; however, he repeatedly swore indifference to them (his dismissive remarks about his lyrics as *nugae* are well known). By designating them as *fragmenta* or "rime sparse," moreover, he implicitly meant to underplay the study he put into the organization of the sequence. The poems, tenuously threaded to suggest an amorous plot, notoriously lack any auxiliary unifying links (such as the prose commentary employed by Dante in his *Vita nuova*). They are, instead, pronouncedly separated by enigmatic moments of silence, which culminate in the seven blank pages that appear in manuscript Vaticano Latino 3195 between poem # 263 and # 264.³

As to the story that propels the *Fragmenta*, the reader is immediately invited to join the poet on his interminable pursuit after Laura's disheveled locks, moving sinuously along meandering trajectories, called upon to absorb Petrarch's surroundings by committing them to memory. The world of the *Fragmenta* is depicted through a narrowly circumscribed vernacular word-arsenal.⁴ Petrarch's deployment of a limited vocabulary can be attributed to his astute tactic of arresting his ever elusive Laura; he relinquishes, however, his words to the oscillations of paranomasia: Laura saturates his poetic universe because she becomes also the *lauro*, *l'aura*, *l'auro*.⁵ Words, in turn, fashion individual poems which take a position within the larger context of a lyrical sequence predicated on the simultaneous avowal and disavowal of unity. Epiphanic moments of resolution succumb to the

impermanent cosmos manufactured by the larger discontinuous structure of the *Fragmenta*; the infinitely varied and notoriously slippery combinations of fragments both invite and undermine a coherent story.

Laura torments Petrarch with the frustration of an empty embrace ("Beato in sogno, e di languir contento, d'abbracciar l'ombra e seguir l'aura estiva," [212, 1-2]);⁶ her physical unavailability drives Petrarch into a state of emotional paralysis, and yet she is the indispensable motivation of a poetic corpus which will earn him the laurel and circulation among crowds of readers. The key question to address is not what the *Rime sparse* are about, but rather what position they individually adopt towards the fluidity of perception that they depict with so much virtuosity. Moreover, since they fashioned one of the most widely read, translated, imitated and commented vernacular poetic texts, thus one that would be historically adaptable and susceptible to all of the variables associated with a work's circulation, transmission and reception, the *Fragmenta* seem to have been historically, hopelessly, caught in the paradox epitomized by Laura's flight and by her scattered and knotted hair, eternally inviting attempts at rescripting their signification.⁷

Before the story of the *Fragmenta* even starts to unfold the reader is faced with the identity of a poetic compilation that programmatically announces itself as split: the collection bears a Latin title (*Rerum vulgarium fragmenta*) and a vernacular body. Petrarch presumably chose the classical and unchanging language to underscore the impermanence and scatteredness of what was going to follow in the vernacular. This was a title that the

poet, furthermore, revised from a previous one containing the words *fragmentorum liber*, having thus already withdrawn from the idea of gatheredness.⁸

The opening sonnet verifies the complicated nature of Petrarch's project: in spite of its privileged (and carefully pondered) inaugural capacity, it does not firmly situate the poet; by extension, this sonnet thrusts the reader onto a slippery terrain:⁹

Voi ch'ascoltate in rime sparse il suono
 di quei sospiri ond'io nudriva il core
 in sul mio primo giovenile errore,
 quand'era in parte altr'uom da quel ch'i' sono: (1, 1-4)

The sonnet introduces an incoherent self besieged by an inner *dissidio* who swings between lucidity and emotion, incapsulated in the utterances "piango" and "ragiono," moments at odds with one another that require the poet to admit to his psychic disintegration and rhetorical meltdown ("di me medesimo meco ragiono"). The scattered form of the lyric sequence is punctuated by a subject whose attitude of repentance is partial, incomplete, and yet, seemingly, Petrarch inaugurated his lyrical sequence with this sonnet in order to suggest that identity should be undivided, static and finished. Petrarch both anticipates and postpones the unequivocal closure that would perfect the subject by making it whole and endowing the poetic body with permanence; he teases the reader with the phantom of a conversion which would structure the reading of the text in a manner comparable to the use of a vanishing point to organize spatial perspective, while the signifying horizon vanishes at every point where its multiplicity and dispersal take effect.

In an unpersuasive palinodic move the poet, like Guido da Montefeltro in Dante's *Inferno*,¹⁰ entertains the fallacious position of recanting a crime (yet undisclosed) and looking for absolution before sinning. It is, in fact, only in sonnet # 2 that Petrarch confesses his offense, his "errore," and then proceeds to reiterate it throughout the scattered rhymes.¹¹ The recantatory mood of sonnet # 1 (*recantare* indeed comprises etymologically both the element of renunciation and repetition), is literalized by the reiteration of the "giovenile errore." Petrarch presents a curious double version of his *innamoramento* which corroborates to the chronic irresolution of its story line:

Per fare una leggiadra sua vendetta
 e punire un di' ben mille offese,
 celatamente Amor l'arco riprese,
 come uom ch'a nocer luogo e tempo aspetta.
 Era la mia vertute al cor ristretta
 per far ivi e ne gli occhi sue difese,
 quando 'l colpo mortal là giu' discese,
 ove solea spuntarsi ogni saetta. (2, 1-8)

Era il giorno ch'al sol si scoloraro
 per la pietà del suo fattore i rai
 quando i' fui preso, et non me ne guardai,
 che i be' vostr'occhi, Donna, mi legaro.
 Tempo non mi pareo da far riparo
 contr'a' colpi d'Amor; pero m'andai
 secur, senza sospetto; onde i miei guai
 nel commune dolor s'incominciaro. (3, 1-8)

Literal and syntactical echoes ("Era...quando") call attention to the fact that one poem reproduces (though reflected by a distorting, anamorphic mirror) the other. The presentation of the initial Ovidian scene of wounding in # 2 is accommodated to a Christian setting when

3 uncovers the liturgical occasion (Good Friday) that made the poet unarmed and thereby brings the drama of the Fall to bear on his amorous experience.¹² In this way Petrarch brings to bear two major, though eclectic, intertexts: profane and sacred, Ovid and the Bible; he sacrilegiously intersects incompatible versions of the same occurrence and thus ushers the reader into a domain of shifty value systems.

Petrarch favors this strategy throughout the *Fragmenta*; he cultivates the unpredictable association of disparate literary fragments. He borrows, for instance, from the *Aeneid* and the *Metamorphoses* in his portrait of Laura: her flowing hair and elusive demeanor strikingly evoke Vergil's Venus (when she materializes, disguised as a huntress, to assist her son Aeneas and departs, hastily, as he is about to recognize her) and Ovid's Daphne (narrowly escaping Apollo's rapacious attentions as she becomes transformed into a laurel).¹³

The *Aeneid* and *Metamorphoses* rehearse the myth of the origin of Rome but support diametrically antithetical attitudes towards it. Ovid insolently retells the events related by Vergil and radically curtails them; his work openly refrains from celebrating the story of Aeneas and aligns it to the many other tales that come before and after it. In the process, Ovid's *Metamorphoses* do not advance a unified mythical universe and capsize the Augustan moral world-view.¹⁴

To find a suitable opening to his lyrical collection Petrarch daringly interfaces secular and religious registers. By evoking the figure of the Passion and examining his private suffering against the redemptive suffering of Christ, he implicitly compares his

wounds as an unrequited lover to the wounds of Christ on the cross. Suffering is advanced as the condition for writing and his poetry, pouring out of a torn subject, seems to almost to hemorrhage from his wounds.¹⁵

As the sequence unfolds the poet's world, dimmed by the eclipse brought about by Christ's passion in # 3, is illuminated and enlivened by the woman who is born in sonnet # 4, who becomes his new, personal sun, yet one connected to Christ by the irreverent comparison of human birth to the mystery of creation and incarnation:

Que' ch'infinità providenzia ed arte
 mostrò nel suo mirabil magistero,
 che criò questo e quell'altro emisfero
 [...]
 di se', nascendo, a Roma non fe' grazia,
 a Giudea si', tanto sovr'ogni stato
 umiltate esaltar sempre gli piacque!
 Ed or di picciol borgo un sol n'a dato,
 tal che natura e luogo si ringrazia
 onde si' bella donna al mondo nacque.¹⁶

This initial sequence hardly equips the reader with enough elements to construct a romantic plot. Yet it dispenses a useful lesson in the difficulties and incongruities that overrun the collection. It introduces the reader to a time when all first things take place ("primo giovenile errore" [1. 3]; "primero assalto" [2. 9]; "s'incominciarono" [3. 8]; "al mondo nacque" [4. 14]) but it postpones the point of view of conversion (the metaphorical death of the poet) which would make its subject complete (born again) and give the story retrospective coherence. With its allusions to physical death (both in sonnet # 2 and # 3), however, it reminds the reader of customary narratives of conversion where the beginning

}

and the epilogue always concur.¹⁷

In poem # 5 the sequence culminates with the simultaneous naming and scattering of the woman (who has thus remained unidentified): "LAUdando" (5. 3); "REal" (5. 5); "TAcI" (5. 7); "LAUdare et REverire" (5. 9); "morTAl" (5. 14). "Laureta" is clearly not vulnerable to the arrows of love (she is not wounded by them), she invades every facet of the poet's universe but in the form of graphic signs, a pure signifier composed and decomposed at the poet's will. The final syllable of her name, in the poem's final line, coincides with the poet's last breath and her death ("il fin").

The sonnet advances the centrality of the Ovidian tale of Apollo and Daphne to the metaphorical fabric of Petrarch's passion. Like Apollo, Lord of Delphi, who speaks through the incoherent mouth of the Sibyl, Petrarch's language gives ambiguous, unsettling signs. The poet, who now chooses to identify with Apollo (the Sun), confuses the system of identifications established by the preceding poem (where Laura was his sun); furthermore, he banalizes the spectacle of Christ's crucifixion (when the sun was reverently concealed) and displaces it with the audacity of his professional endeavor:

se non che forse Apollo si disdegna
ch'a parlar de' suoi sempre verdi rami
lingua morTAl presuntuosa vegna. (5. 12-14)

It is Laura, not the mystery of the incarnation, who exceeds his grasp and requires stronger shoulders (the "omeri," a reverent allusion to Petrarch's greatest mentor, Homer).

NOTES FOR CHAPTER ONE

1. All references to Petrarch's poetry are from Giovanni Ponte, ed. *Francesco Petrarca. Rime sparse*. (Milano: Mursia, 1978); the source of all translations is Robert M. Durling ed. and transl., *Petrarch's Lyric Poems* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1976). I will refer to the lyrical collection as *Fragmenta* (from the Latin title given by Petrarch, *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta*) or as *Rime sparse* (from the first verse of sonnet # 1). All further references to the *Rime sparse* will be included in the text with poem and line number.

2. This image is endlessly rehearsed in the *Fragmenta* as the source the poet's passionate condition: "torna a la mente il loco/ e 'l primo di' ch'i vidi a l'aura sparsi/ i capei d'oro, ond'io si' subito arsi." (127, 83-85). Also: "Le chiome a l'aura sparse, e lei conversa/ indietro veggio, e cosi bella riede/ nel cor come colei che tien la chiave" (143, 9-11); "Qual ninfa in fonti, in selve mai qual dea/ chiome d'oro si fino a l'aura sciolse?" (159, 5-6). Bernini's marble depiction of Daphne's flight from Apollo testifies to an enduring fascination with this prototype of fleeting woman. The masterpiece was created for Cardinal Borghese in 1622-25 and marvelously captures the paradox implicit in the nymph's escape: half way between her human and arboreal forms, this elusive object of desire is forever, mockingly, frozen just beyond Apollo's reach. See Charles Scribner III *Gian Lorenzo Bernini* (NY: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1991): 64-65.

3. These scattered poems both vaunt discrete radiance and aggregate to fashion an elaborate artifact. They are interchangeably exquisite, isolated, entities or threaded like the pearls that sometimes adorn Laura's hair:

e le chiome or avvolte in perle e 'n gemme,
allora sciolte e sopra or terso bionde,
le quali ella spargea si' dolcemente
e raccogliea con si' leggiadri modi
che, ripensando, ancor trema la mente. (196, 7-11)

Petrarch's denunciations of his vernacular poetry, alluded to as *nugae* or *nugellae*, are scattered throughout his Latin writings. An eloquent example of Petrarch's attitude is in a letter addressed to Boccaccio (*Seniles* XVII, 3), where he declares that his vernacular texts do not merit serious attention. For a comprehensive account of manuscript Vaticano Latino 3196, which bears the marks of Petrarch's obsession with the orderly transcription of his poems and was the basis of the final draft of the *Rime*, V.L. 3195 ("transcriptum in ordinem") see: A. Romano, *Il codice degli abbozzi (Vaticano Latino 3196) di Francesco Petrarca* (Rome: Bardi, 1955); on the subject of ordering, C. Cochin, *La chronologie du Canzoniere de Petrarque*. (Paris: Bouillon, 1898); R.S. Phelps, *The Early and Later Forms*

of Petrarch's "*Canzoniere*." (Chicago: U of Chicago, 1925); B. Martinelli, *Petrarca e il Ventoso* (Bergamo: Minerva Italica, 1977); the authoritative text on the ordering of the sequence is E. H. Wilkins, *The Making of the "Canzoniere" and Other Petrarchan Studies*. (Roma: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 1951) esp. 98-99; for a revisionary reading of Wilkins see: T. Barolini "The Making of a lyric Sequence: Time and Narrative in Petrarch's *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta*." *MLN* 104 (1989): 1-38; an invaluable source of information is Durling's edition and translation of the *Rime*; also, Thomas P. Roche, *Petrarch and the English Sonnet Sequence*. (NY: AMS Press, 1989) esp. ch. 1; Mary Fowler "The Autographs of Petrarch's *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta*" *The Library* 2nd series (1994): 61-100; Adolfo Jenni, "Un sistema del Petrarca nell'ordinamento del *Canzoniere*." *Studi in onore di Alberto Chiara* (Brescia, 1973). For the facsimile of V.L. 3196 and 3195, see: *L'originale del Canzoniere di Francesco Petrarca, Codice Vaticano Latino 3195 riprodotto in fotocopia a cura della Biblioteca Vaticana*. (Milano: Hoepli ed., 1905); *Il manoscritto Vaticano Latino 3196; autografo di Francesco Petrarca riproduzione in eliotipia a cura della Biblioteca Vaticana*. (Roma: Stabilimento Eliotipico Martelli, 1895).

4. The authoritative discussion of Petrarch's language is presented by Gianfranco Contini, "Preliminari sulla lingua di Petrarca" which introduces Francesco Petrarca *Canzoniere* (Torino: Einaudi, 1966), and discusses Dante's "plurilinguismo" and "poliglottismo massimale" and pits it against Petrarch's "unilinguismo" and the "classicità" of the poet "chiuso in un giro di inevitabili oggetti eterni sottratti alla molteplicità della storia." p. xvii.

5. Petrarch's words confront the reader with so many possibilities of interpretation that they sabotage signification itself. They signal both the absolute inadequacy of the sign to its referents and the failure of every attempt at containing, regulating the sign. On the significance of Laura's transformation and Petrarch's use of paranomasia see: Giuseppe Mazzotta "The *Canzoniere* and the Language of the Self," *Studies in Philology* 95 (1978): 227; Francois Rigolot "Nature and Function of Paranomasia in the *Canzoniere*" *Italian Quarterly* 18 (1974): 31; on Petrarch's use of puns to hide Laura's name, Nancy Vickers "Diana Described: Scattered Woman and Scattered Rhyme." *Critical Inquiry* 8 (1981): 265-279.

6. This is itself a recurrent experience of Aeneas, who fruitlessly attempts to embrace his mother (Book I) and the ghosts of his wife (Book 2) and his father (Books 5, 6). See: Elizabeth Belfiore, "'Ter frustra comprensa' Embraces in the *Aeneid*." *Phoenix* 38:1 (March 1984): 19-30.

7. For discussion of Petrarchan instability see: Adelia Noferi, *L'esperienza poetica del Petrarca* (Florence: Le Monnier, 1962); Marco Santagata, *Dal sonetto al Canzoniere*

10. Guido da Montefeltro's episode appears in Canto 27 of Dante's *Inferno*. See: T. Barolini, "The Making of a lyric Sequence." *MLN* 104 (1989): 30.

11. Etymologically to recant or retract (*recantare*) means to reject but also repeat. For a discussion of # 1, see: Alfred Noyer-Weidner "Il Sonetto I *Lectura Petrarce* IV, 1984 (Padua 1985) 330-36. On the use of the absolute vocative (voi) Petrarch's definition of his audience, see: Contini *Letteratura italiana delle origini* 580. Peter Hainsworth "Metaphor in the *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta* in *The Languages of Literature in Renaissance Italy* ed. P. Hainsworth, Valerio Lucchesi, Christina Roaf, and J.T. Woodhouse (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988) sees innovation as less significant than the sophisticated, self conscious "recombination after recombination of the elements of a relatively closed system." (p.7) This infuses poetics with instability as well as richness.

12. He has fallen in love on Good Friday, therefore his passion is problematized from the onset by its association with the crucifixion of Christ. Christ's sacrifice is overshadowed and displaced by romance. Sonnet # 3 establishes a critical Christian subtext which is explicitly recalled in a poem commemorating the eleventh anniversary of the event, when the poet invokes the powerful image of the cross in an attempt to find the strength to give up his mundane love interest and be penitent: "reduci i pensier vaghi a miglior luogo,/rammenta lor come oggi fusti in croce" (62.13-14). For the parallels between # 2 and # 3 see: Marco Santagata "Connessioni intertestuali nel *Canzoniere* del Petrarca," *Strumenti critici* 9 (1975): 89. For # 3 and # 62 see: Dennis Dutschke "The Anniversary Poems in Petrarch's *Canzoniere*," *Italica* 58 (1981): 88. On the boldness of the evocation of these 2 epiphanies: Massimo Fortini "Laudando s'incomincia: Dinamiche di una funzione petrarchesca," *Italian Quarterly* 23 (1982): 21. Sara Sturm-Maddox discusses the "cosmic disturbances associated with the death of Christ" presented in # 3. *Petrarch's Metamorphoses: Text and Subtext in the "Rime sparse"* (Columbia: U. of Missouri Press, 1985) 111.

13. Virgil: "dederatque comam diffundere ventis," (I, 319) *Virgilio 'Aeneis'* tr. Guido Vitali, intro. Ezio Savino (Milano: Mursia, 1986)--"had given her hair/to the disheveling wind;" (p. 15) Virgil's *Aeneid* tr. R. Fitzgerald (NY: Vintage, 1990). Ovid: "Et levis impulsos retro dabat aura capillos."--"Her hair streamed behind her in the light breeze...his breath touched the locks that lay scattered on her neck." (p. 43) Ovid's *Metamorphoses* tr. Mary M. Innes (NY: Penguin, 1955). For Petrarch's exegesis of Venus appearing to Aeneas see: Adelia Noferi "La costituzione della parola impossibile: Note al Sonetto CXLIII del *Canzoniere*," *Studi Petrarcheschi* 8 (1976): 206-8. See also Thomas M. Greene discussion (esp. pgg. 111 and following) in *The Light in Troy: Imitation and Discovery in Renaissance Poetry*. (New Haven: Yale UP, 1982). On the use of Ovid (as

well as Dante and Guinizelli) see: Giuseppe Mazzotta, "The *Canzoniere* and the Language of the Self." *Studies in Philology* 75 (1978): 271-96. Also: Peter Hainsworth *Petrarch the Poet* (London, 1988); also, P. Hainsworth --- "The Myth of Daphne in the *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta*" *Italian Studies* 34 (1979): 36; Mary Barnard, *The Myth of Apollo and Daphne from Ovid to Quevedo: Love, Agon and the Grotesque* (Durham, 1987); Sara Sturm Maddox, *Petrarch's Metamorphoses: Text and Subtext in The "Rime Sparse."* (Columbia: U of Missouri Press, 1985). On the motif of the breeze see: G. Contini "Prehistoire de l'aura de Petrarque" *Varianti e altra linguistica* (Turin, 1970) 193-9 and Cesare Segre "I sonetti dell'aura" *Lectura Petrarce* III (1983) (Padua 1984) 58-78. For antecedents in classical Arabic love poetry, Barbara Spaggiara "Il tema 'west-ostlicher' dell'aura," *Studi Medievali* 26 (1985) 234-41.

14. On the Ovidian subtext see: Peter Hainsworth. *Petrarch the Poet* (London, 1988) and his "The Myth of Daphne in the *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta*" *Italian Studies* 34 (1979): 36; Mary Barnard *The Myth of Apollo and Daphne from Ovid to Quevedo: Love, Agon and the Grotesque* (Durham, 1987); Sara Sturm Maddox. *Petrarch's Metamorphoses: Text and Subtext in the 'Rime sparse.'* (Columbia: U of Missouri, 1985) esp. ch 2.; T. Roche *Petrarch and the English Sonnet Sequence* (NY: AMS Press, 1989) esp. 9-32. On Ovid's revision of Virgil, see: Daniel Javitch: "The *Orlando Furioso* and Ovid's Revision of the *Aeneid*." *MLN* 5 (1984): 1023-1035.

15. The Greek term *pathos*, rendered by Cicero as *perturbatio animi* and by Seneca with *affectus* begins, at least with Ambrose to be designated as *passio* and merges with the meaning of *passio* as condition of subjugation to an external power (for instance, in Augustine's *Confession* IX, 4 and VIII, 5 & 10, where it is viewed as degeneration and perversion. This connotation betokens at the same time Petrarch's weakness of the will and abandon to sin and hints the *passio*, which evokes the suffering of Christ and martyrs, which redeem the sinner. For an excellent discussion see: Remo Bodei, *Ordo amoris* esp. 76-77.

16. Poem # 4 is discussed by Thomas P. Roche *Petrarch and the English Sonnet Sequence* (NY, 1989) 22-25: for a discussion of the role of the sun see Peter Hainsworth, "Metaphor in Petrarch's *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta*," in *The Language of Literature in Renaissance Italy* (Oxford, 1988), 6.

17. In the *Metamorphoses* the tale of Daphne and Apollo is the first event in Ovid after the flood, thus it stands also for a new beginning of sorts.

CHAPTER TWO

MOURNING LAURA

Laura is introduced both as the object of Petrarch's enamored pursuit and as the inspiration of his lyrics; yet the poet never presents her in her entirety. Conspicuously missing from the two sonnets where he recalls his *innamoramento*, she is given birth in sonnet # 4 and vanishes, as soon as she is named, in the linguistic scattering of sonnet # 5. Significantly, there is very little mention of her in Petrarch's extensive Latin writings, and no mention at all in the oration delivered by the poet on the occasion of his highest professional achievement, his coronation as poet laureate in Rome in 1341, where he alludes, instead, to the mythological story of Apollo's consecration of the laurels as a result of his pursuit of a nymph who assumes arboreal form in a metamorphosis effected to escape his possession, as the paradigm of the poet's pursuit of his laurels.

Laura's image throughout the *Fragmenta* is that of a different order of being, a flickering apparition with attributes rather than features; she seems to exist only as a name, one that, moreover, is likely to be manipulated and conceal her in the recesses of paranomasia. Laura's shimmering figure comes in and out of focus and her full description, the poet would have us believe, transcends his descriptive capacity ("manca l'ardir, l'ingegno et l'arte," [309. 14]). Thus Petrarch relies on the enumeration of a limited number of formalized discrete physical attributes that he reiterates hypnotically and never coalesce into a portrait.¹ The fragments of Laura's anatomized body are radiant centers that Petrarch

sprinkles throughout the scattered rhymes: her "bella ignuda mano" (200.1), "bel giovenil petto" (37.102), "begli occhi" and "bel guardo sereno" (37.74 & 83), "piedi" (292. 2) and, of course, "chiome d'or" (159.6).² Frequently her ephemeral presence can be only surmised obliquely, through the faint traces left by the imprint of her foot ("et del bel piede alcun vestigio serbe" [162. 4]), an abandoned glove ("candido leggiadretto et caro guanto," [199. 9]), her veil ("si' mi governa il velo," [11. 12]).³ Laura's personality is equally hard to define. Petrarch grants her a narrow range of expressions: she laughs ("dolce ride" [159.14]), sometimes she sings like a siren ("quel celeste cantare che mi disface" [220.10]; "questa sola fra noi del ciel sirena" [167.14]), her melodious voice seduces the poet ("di dolcezza i sensi lega" and "l'anima[...]raffrena" [167. 9; 167. 11]).⁴ Petrarch tells us that she speaks (her "dolce parlare" [205.3] and "l'accorte parole" [37.86]), that her words command reverence and were instrumental in his *innamoramento* ("fanno altrui tremar di meraviglia" [200.12]), but we have negligible access to the content of her utterances. It is the poet who recollects her words ("voi diceste allora" [87. 9]), or imagines what she meant to say when he encountered her ("parea dir" [33. 13]; "ne la fronte a Madonna avrei ben letto" [331. 52]). Paradoxically, Laura grows increasingly available (and loquacious) after she dies, when she appears in the poet's dreams ("in sonno" [250.1]).⁵

The poet's mental image of Laura becomes the sensual basis of his love and he is unable to sublimate this love into a symbolic occasion for elevation. Intermittently penitent, Petrarch recognizes the danger of a desire that has caused his own spiritual degeneration

into a fragmented being. In his most directly personal work, the scathingly introspective *De secretu conflictu curarum mearum*,⁶ Petrarch undertakes a prolonged attempt at spiritual healing. During a three day dialogue between himself and his spiritual mentor, St. Augustine, he searches his soul and portrays his secular and spiritual aspirations competing in a struggle that endures as a lingering conflict rather than ending in conversion. In the *Fragmenta*, analogously, he correlates his long and painful pursuit of Laura to a continuous struggle which fails to produce a definitive religious epiphany.

Like Actaeon, in the first *canzone* of the collection, #23 (the *canzone delle metamorfosi*)⁷ Petrarch envisions himself on a hunt when he sights a woman and secretly watches her. While his Ovidian predecessor, who has dared to look at Diana bathing naked, is punished by being transformed into a stag and becomes prey to his own hunting dogs, the price of Petrarch's voyeuristic transgression is his subjection to metamorphoses but not his dismemberment. His escape and wild mutations ("ratto mi trasformo/ed ancor de' miei cani fuggo lo stormo") do not compromise his ability to compose poetry but rather fuel his talent. Petrarch's self-assertion as a poet hinges on his expurgation of Diana's angry words from his text, thus on his softening of what could amount to Laura's might. While she does not cause his body to be mutilated, "he repeatedly, although reverently, scatters hers throughout his scattered rhymes."⁸

Petrarch employs the well established poetic convention of the *blazon*,⁹ a descriptive tactic which celebrates the woman by granting isolated attention to her anatomized

attributes. This procedure admits that the poet (and his readers) enjoy a certain voyeuristic gratification at the expense of Laura (display in the Latin sense of *displicare*: "to scatter" but also "to unfold[...]to view[...]to exhibit to be seen, to exhibit it ostentatiously"¹⁰). While his poetry is ostensibly addressed to her, arguably Petrarch negotiates his literary transactions exclusively with his audience; moreover, he seem to carry them out in a merchandizing framework:¹¹ the *blazon* relies on the effective enumeration (and itemization) of a plethora of bodily fragments from which the male poet gains the rhetorical opulence that translates, pragmatically, into his professional gratification and material profits--hence the nexus of assonances that links Laura, *lavoro*, *valor*, *lauro*, *l'auro* (Laura, labor, worth, laurel, gold). Petrarch devises a Laura and displays her body to an audience that will bestow renown (the laurel) and material compensation on him. Commerce of sex supplies currency of fame.¹²

Petrarch thus scatters the woman he has delivered to life throughout the *Rime sparse* (and throughout the world, if he had his way): "del vostro nome se mie rime intese/fossin sì lunghe, avrei pien Tyle et Battro/ la Tana e 'l Nilo, Atlante Olimpo et Calpe." (146. 9-11). He is, however, himself the subject of his poetry, admittedly (in sonnet # 1) one divided, unstable and dispensed through the prismatic lens of his *vario stile*. The *Rime*, thus, are replete with inconsistencies and easily accommodate diverse angles of interpretation. Laura is depicted in a variety of ways, both benign and ruthless, gentle and stony, indeed the reason and the incarnation of the poetic oxymoron that exemplifies Petrarchan poetics.¹³

The broad scenario of violence introduced by the scene of the *innamoramento* is

consistent with a long and well established amorous literary tradition that ranges from Ovid, to Andreas Capellanus' *De Amore*, and is radicalized by the intensely brutal lady depicted in Dante's *Rime petrose*¹⁴. Petrarch proposes variants on the conventional theme of *innamoramento* as wounding and love as warfare ("ristretto in guisa d'uom ch'aspetta guerra" [110. 2]),¹⁵ but goes out of his way to devise an especially demonic beloved who can potentially choke his poetic energy.

If we return to sonnet # 2 we see that, while inspired by the tale of Apollo and Daphne in the *Metamorphoses*, it offers a revision of Ovid's account: there both characters are wounded--albeit by different arrows-- Apollo struck by one made of gold that produces passion, Daphne by one made of lead that produces aversion, thus both somewhat bound to the same emotional scenario. In Petrarch's version he is the solitary victim, while Laura is untouched, impenetrable, invulnerable:

Ma voi, che mai pietà non discolora
et ch'avete gli schermi sempre accorti
contra l'arco d'Amor che 'ndarno tira. (44. 9-11)

She is free while the poet, compelled to bondage, becomes increasingly pale and thin ("S'i son pallido o magro[...]" [264. 61]), teary eyed ("umidi gli occhi sempre" [269.11]; "gli occhi umidi et bassi" [306. 7]), his nights sleepless ("Il sonno è 'n bando, et del riposo e nulla;\ ma sospiri et lamenti infin a l'alba," [223. 9-10]; "Fuggito è 'l sonno a le mie crude notti" [332. 31]). Laura reigns ("chi nel mio cor siede monarca" [235. 3]) while his voice systematically fails ("in voci interrotte a pena intese" [224. 6]), turns into nonsense ("fallaci

ciancie." [359. 41]).

In the *canzone delle metamorfosi*, while he advances his identification with Acteon (twisting Acteon's fortune to his advantage) he also posits a potentially commanding, lethal lady, a far cry from the evanescent Daphne and one well beyond the literary convention of cruelty who actively antagonizes him like an imperious goddess who responds to male pursuit with vengeance, not in flight.¹⁶ After ripping the poet's chest open with her bare hands she takes his heart and bids his silence:

Questa che col mirar gli animi fura
m'aperse il petto el' cor prese con mano,
dicendo a me: "Di ciò non far parola." (23. 72-74)

Petrarch is thus made the subject of consecutive transformations and narrowly escapes the threats to his poetic enterprise.¹⁷

This incident is variously reiterated and the poet who seems to revel in reexamining Laura's mastery over him: "mi vedete straziare a mille morti" (44. 12); "O bella mano che mi destriggi il core" (199.1). Laura's commanding presence in # 23, moreover, matches that of the God of Love who, in # 2, seems to be the primary instigator of Petrarch's *innamoramento*. We discover, in fact, that the God uses her eyes as weapons and that without her, after her death, he is left powerless over the poet:

Indarno or sovra me tua forza adopre
mentre 'l mio primo amor terra ricopre
[...]
L'arme tue forono gli occhi onde l'accese
saeete uscivan d'invisibil foco [...] (270. 44-45; 76-77)

Laura's commanding gaze generates a radical reversal of the traditional regime of male scopophilia that seems operative in Petrarch's use of the *blazon*: her piercing eyes ("occhi pungenti" [147. 8]), time and time again, produce the arrows that penetrate the poet¹⁸: "[...]il colpo de'vostr'occhi/ Donna, sentiste a le mie parti interne/ dritto passare [...]"(87. 5-7); "i begli occhi ond'i fui percosso" (75. 1); "Ma voi, occhi beati, ond'io sofferesi quel colpo ove non valse elmo ne/ scudo" (95. 5-6). "Dagli occhi vostri uscio 'l colpo mortale" (133. 5). His spiritual well being is entirely in her hands:

et fera donna che con gli occhi suoi
 et con l'arco a cui sol per segno piacqui
 fe' la piaga onde, Amor, teco non tacqui,
 che co quell'arme risaldar la poi. (174. 5-8)¹⁹

Laura's depiction as a doe ("Una candida cerva sopra l'erba/ verde m'apparve con due corna d'oro" (190. 1-2)²⁰ recasts the significant leitmotif of hunting under a different light and adds to the complexity of Laura's characterization in the *Fragmenta*.

In the *Secretum* (p. 235) Franciscus recalls the hunt that provides the setting to the blossoming passion of Aeneas and Dido in Book IV of Vergil's *Aeneid*. He confesses, astonishingly, that he identifies with Dido roaming helplessly thorough the streets of Carthage (when Vergil tells us that she resembles a deer roaming wild with pain after having been struck by a shepherd's arrow: "qualis conecta cerva sagitta," IV, 69). He does not see himself, as could be expected, as Aeneas, the seducer and hunter.²¹ In the *Fragmenta*, similarly, the stag who functions as a recurrent surrogate of the poet is injured:

"Et qual cervo ferito di saetta" (209. 9) while the white doe (Laura) remains unharmed. The poet, moreover, explicitly identifies with Dido driven to suicide by her amorous sorrows: "Di me son fatti i miei pensier diversi:/ tal già qual io mi stanco/ l'amata spada in se stessa contorse;" (29. 36-38).

Dido's amorous trials are recalled by Petrarch to channel the sympathy and compassion we might feel for the queen to his own condition as a rejected lover. In the *Aeneid*, however, our indulgence towards the Carthaginian sovereign is curtailed by Virgil's admonitions against unbridled love, which is depicted as a force of disorder. Dido is doubly imprudent because she is a queen and her amorous recklessness carries egregious historical consequences (her curse on Aeneas and his progeny, before she commits suicide, resonates on the battlefields where Romans and Carthaginians shed their blood). Petrarch, furthermore, implicitly absolves Dido's most immediate, private, shortcoming, the perjured oath of chastity toward her first husband Sychaeus.

Laura's display of restraint, conversely, wins her the honor (in the *Triumphs*) of parading in the company of Lucretia and Penelope, two egregious champions of womanly loyalty, and of disarming the god of Love: "queste gli strali/ avean spezzato e la faretra a lato/ a quel proterco, e spennacchiate l'ali" (*Triumphus Pudicitie*, 133-135²²). She then leads a triumphant procession to place the laurel crown on the altar of chastity ("Ivi spiego/ le gloriose spoglie/la bella vincitrice,/ ivi depose le sue vittoriose e sacre foglie" 184-186). The poet mistakenly perceives her *asprezza* as cruelty and attempts to interfere with her

unyielding authority, up to the last poem in which she is reported alive, # 265: "Aspro core et selvaggio et cruda voglia\ in dolce umile angelica figura" (265. 1-2). It is too late when he realizes that her unnerving, uncompromising poise was the source of his salvation:

Or comincio a svegliarmi, et veggio ch'ella
per lo migliore al mio desir contese,
et quelle voglie giovenil accese
temprò con una vista dolce e fella.
Lei ne ringratio, e 'l suo alto consiglio,
che col bel viso et co' soavi sdegni
fecemi ardendo pensar mia salute (289. 5-11)

Franciscus discusses the subject of Laura's unwavering virtue in the *Secretum*: her inner coherence, pitted against the spiritual fragmentation that torments the poet, magnifies his weakness: "Contra autem illa propositi tenax et semper una permansit" (p. 222).²³ Her composure, moreover, earns the applause of Augustine as the only seemly behavior: "Profecto animus iste femineus quid virum deceret admonebat[...]"(p. 222). Against the lofty background of Augustinian orthodoxy, and of Petrarch's simultaneous commitment to a view of agency (and authorship) as resolved, coherent and self continuous and disclosure of his failure to achieve them (in the *Rime* as well as in the *Secretum*), Laura's exemplary rectitude is exceptional. What makes it truly extraordinary, furthermore, is that Petrarch (in the *Rime*) does not hesitate to echo a very widespread misogynist motif (avowed by Virgil in the very episode of Dido and Aeneas which Petrarch correlates to his enamored condition [*Aeneid*, IV. 569-70]: "Varium et mutabile semper\ femina")²⁴) and describes women as vacillating: "Femina è cosa mutabil per natura" (183. 12). Mutability, conversely, is a much

more apt depiction of the poet's demeanor, his endless pursuits, fragmentation, wavering spirituality, fluidity of impersonation (in # 23 and throughout the *Fragmenta*).²⁵ Her virtuosity (in the etymological sense of the word) and his failures betoken a more significant transgression of roles along gender lines whereby (just as a pursuit or a hunt become reversible) Petrarch fulfills a prophecy voiced in *Triumph Cupidinis* (III, 162) and identifies with the position of woman: "l'amante ne l'amato si trasforma."²⁶

The implacably personal tale of Petrarch's amorous afflictions (suggestively designated by Augustinus in the *Secretum* as a plague, "tuam pestis" [p. 224]), unfolds against the background of a real epidemic breakout, the Black Death, which swept through Europe twice during Petrarch's life (in 1348 and again in 1361) with devastating consequences and which was for all survivors an overwhelming reminder of the uncertainty of life.²⁷ Petrarch's *Familiars* and *Seniles*,²⁸ an immense epistolary corpus addressed to real and imagined recipients that Petrarch organized and revised with zeal equal to that which went into his vernacular poems, is replete with instances where he confesses his vulnerability to the emotional horrors of the catastrophic event and admits his despair. The dedicatory letters to both, indeed, bring his response to the tragedies of epidemic loss to the forefront and thus locate his introspective writing within a large, historical perspective:²⁹

Ecce, iam fere omnia tentavimus, at nusquam requies[...]Tempora, ut aiunt, inter digitos effluxerunt; spes nostre veteres cum amicis sepulte sunt. Millesimus trecentessimus quadragessimus octavus annus est, qui nos solos atque inopes fecit. (*Familiars*, 1. 1)

Olim Socrati meo scribens questus eram quod etatis huius annu ille, post

millesimum trecentessimus quadragesimus octavus, omnibus me prope solatiis vite amicorum mortibus spoliasset [...] Quid nunc primo et sexagesimo faciam anno, qui cum cetera ornamenta ferme omnia, tum id quod carissimus unicumque habui, ipsum michi Socratem, eripuit? (*Seniles*, 1. 1).

Petrarch's *Rime* also introduce his reaction to the devastating event, since the death of Laura occurs during an outbreak of the great epidemic of 1348.³⁰ The death of Laura and Petrarch's *innamoramento*, in fact, are the two single events of the *Fragmenta* presented with chronological certainty. This is a striking deviation from the habitual ambiguity of the temporal framework of the *Fragmenta*:

Mille trecento ventisette, a punto
su l'ora prima, il dì sesto d'aprile,
nel laberinto in trai, ne veggio ond'esca. (211.12-14)

Sai che 'n mille trecento quarantotto,
il dì sesto d'aprile, in l'ora prima
del corpo uscio quell'anima beata. (336.12-14)

Petrarch's love blossoms at a specific point in his life and is suddenly (and prematurely) affected by the woman's death, which strikes at another unique moment. Petrarch's lyrical collection, thus, is condemned to exist in time, haunted, furthermore, by a stunning, almost insolent coincidence: Laura's death occurs on an anniversary of the day in which the poet first saw her, a symmetry blatantly advertised by Petrarch's identical presentation of the two dates in the final *terzine* of sonnets # 211 and # 336. It is no accident, moreover, that the date of the poet's entry into the labyrinth of love (his spiritual death) and Laura's physical death are coordinated with Christ's death on the cross (*feria sexta aprilis*) and allusions to

his resurrection: the poet has fallen in love on Good Friday, thus his personal tribulations shape up against the larger framework of Christ's crucifixion.³¹ Petrarch relies on the loaded symbolic potential implicit in the *feria sexta aprilis* to construct the moral fabric that underlies the whole collection of the *Fragmenta*. Since the collection is punctuated with fifteen poems commemorating his first encounter with Laura (which later converges with her death, # 30, 50, 62, 79, 101, 107, 118, 122, 145, 212, 221, 266, 271, 278, 364, ranging from 1334 to 1358), each anniversary is a reminder of Laura's enduring hold over Petrarch's life. Dead or alive, Petrarch's perception of time is dangerously scanned in relation to her. In a letter addressed to Livy (a pagan), however, Petrarch poignantly bids his farewell and dates his writing in relation to the birth of Christ: "anno ab Illus ortu quem paulo amplius tibi vivendum erat ut ceneres vel audires natum, MCCCLI." (*Familiares*, XXIV. 8)

Even when she is alive Laura seems to be dead and mourning the essential ingredient to formulate a poetics which identifies in human frailty the stimulus behind human endeavors. When Petrarch depicts Laura at her most glorious, as in the frozen erotic tableaux presented in sonnet # 90 (the quintessence of Laura throughout the *Rime*), he has to concede to the unyielding beat of the present, aptly rendered by the reiteration of the word "or" ("ch'or ne son si scarsi" [90. 4]; "et se non fosse or tale" [90. 13]). By slicing time and solidifying it he testifies to time's relentless melting: Laura's shimmering golden hair, scattered and knotted by the wind, her luminous eyes, her bearing, her voice, belong to a previous time and state of being in the way Petrarch's fragmented self is always linked to its

past and imagined through metaphors of loss and desire.

In a letter addressed to Phillip, Bishop of Cavaillon (*Familiars* 24. 1) writing (and reading) are expressly equated by Petrarch with death:

Continue morimur, ego dum hec scribo, tu dum leges, alii dum audient dumque non audient; ego quoque dum hec leges moriar, tu moreris dum hec scribo, ambo morimur, omnes morimur, semper morimur, numquam vivimus dum his sumus[...] (p. 1245)

In the *Fragmenta* Petrarch using metaphors reminiscent of Laura to describe the inescapable ticking of time, since his days move swifter than a deer ("I di' miei piu' leggier che nessuno cervo" [319. 1]), time flies and beguiles him: "O tempo, O ciel volubil che fuggendo/inganni i ciechi et miseri mortali" (355. 1-2), death is around the corner "come la vita/ fugge et la Morte n'è sopra le spalle." (128. 98-99).³² The transitory nature of time is punctuated by the dizzying rate of metamorphoses in *canzone* # 23. This composition is reassessed by its companion poem, # 323, as the end of the collection approaches, which depicts the demise of things known to be immortal and erects a poignantly enduring monument to impermanence. Death looms large over the *Fragmenta*, casting a large shadow which introduces and propels the narrative forward towards its fulfillment, marking the relentless passage from frailty to silence, eternity, and disintegration in poem 366.³³

In a desperate attempt to evade the inexorability of time and the anxiety provoked by the unrepeatable events with which it is studded--it has already brought Laura and will invariably usher the poet (and his work) to a state of oblivion--Petrarch looks for solutions to confine his dispersion and steady his course. Augustinus admonishes him, in the

Secretum, that he renounce earthly (thus impermanent) pursuits. The Saint, thus, discredits the apparatus of courtly rationalization embraced by Franciscus to justify himself, whereby his love for Laura should be a path to salvation. Augustinus clearly spells out the incompatibility of the poet's infatuation for Laura (the creature) and his claims of devotion towards the Creator: "Ab amore celestium elongavit animum et a Creatore ad creaturam desiderium inclinavit." (p. 216). The poet, at times, is painfully conscious of the action he must take in order to correct his mistakes. In the envoy of a powerfully penitential *sestina* "A la dolce ombra de le belle frondi" (142), echoing "Giovane donna sotto un verde lauro" (30) with palinodic intentions, he explicitly lays out his path to redemption from the idolatrous desires explored in the former poem:

Altr'amor, altre frondi, et altro lume,
altro salir al ciel per altri poggi
cerco (che n'e ben tempo) ed altri rami. (142. 37-39)

The insistence on the word "altro" echoes Augustine's telegraphic statement in the *Secretum*: "transformatum sum in alterum Augustinum," (p. 112) and contextualizes this as a moment of sought conversion. Petrarch is aware of his moral obligation to replace his double object of desire Laura/lauro with the "altri rami" of the tree/cross of Christ. The intermittently penitential moments in the *Rime* reiterate this view: "cosa bella e mortal passa e non dura" (248.8); "che' mortal cosa amar con tanta fede/ quanta a Dio sol per debito convensi,/ più si disdece a chi più pregio brama." (264)³⁴ Throughout the *Fragmenta*, in fact, Petrarch displays a keen awareness of his moral situation. This

knowledge, however, does not inspire a radical and permanent change of the kind advocated by Augustine in the *Secretum*. His inability to change is candidly confessed in the concluding line of a poem that echoes the *Secretum* and, just like the prose dialogue, closes with a failed conversion: "et veggio 'l meglio, et al peggior m'appiglio" (264.136). Petrarch's lack of resolution is underscored by the strategy displayed in the organization of his lyrical sequence. In fact, merely three poems after invoking the "altri rami," he critically places a sinful poem that he concludes with the statement: "sarò qual fui, vivrò com'io son visso" (145. 13).

Petrarch remains transfixed by Laura's beauty and attempts to steady his course by disguising conversion with petrification. Under Laura's Medusa-like ability he turns into stone ("l volto di Medusa,/ che facea marmo diventar la gente." [179. 10-11]; "et que belli occhi che i cor fanno smalti" [213. 9]).³⁵ He otherwise attempts to secure the evanescent goal of his desires by solidifying it into an object of religious worship. In either case, unwilling, or unable, to give up his investment in a mortal object, he accommodates his sinful predicament to a monumentalization of his passion. His sin, primarily, is not that of having strayed from religion for a worldly passion, but that of having made his love into a religion.³⁶

Petrarch openly admits to his propensity to commit the sin of idolatry by comparing his adoration of Laura to an old pilgrim's veneration of the *Veronica* in St. Peter's--the cloth carrying the imprint of Christ's image at the time when he was walking on Golgotha to be

crucified--:

et viene a Roma, seguendo 'l desio,
 per mirar la sembianza di colui
 ch'ancor lassu nel ciel vedere spera.
 Così, lasso, talor vo cercand'io,
 Donna, quanto e possibile, in altrui
 la disiata vostra forma vera. (16.9-14)³⁷

Petrarch's presentation of the Veronica raises crucial questions about Petrarch's spiritual claims and opens his poetry, which conveys them, to charges of moral perversion. The significance of the cloth is predicated on the simultaneous belief in the truth of an incarnated God and the view that it does reproduce, perfectly, its body. Petrarch daringly employs the reliquary for poetic effects by inverting its legitimate claims: Christ figures as mere metaphor or image ("sembianza") while Laura has become a type of Christ ("forma vera").³⁸ Petrarch's desire to experience and enjoy the visible (Laura), furthermore, supersedes his duty to extrapolate the narrative of the crucifixion from the Veronica, one established, in a fashion that is reminiscent of the *Rime's* gathering of scattered fragments, on the requisite of organizing scattered stains into a plot that bespeaks a dramatic event.

Laura, momentarily collected into visions of static monumentality and transcendental perfection often becomes an ornate reliquary: "vedi quant'arte dora e 'mperla e 'nostra/ l'abito eletto e mai non visto altrove," (192. 5-7), "Muri eran d'alabastro e 'l tetto d'oro,/ d'avorio uscio, et fenestre di zaffiro" (325. 16-17). She is even transformed into a jewelled cross: "duro lauro/ ch'a i rami di diamante et d'or le chiome" (30. 23-24), decorated with "topacii" (30.37),³⁹ revered by the poet as a shrine "l'adoro e 'nchino come cosa santa"

(228.14).

In an astonishing letter to Giovanni Colonna (*Familiars* [1.4]) Petrarch relates an anecdote involving the emperor Charlemagne and his implication in a case of necrophilia from which he extrapolates a lesson that applies to the plight of the devoted lover. Like Dido in the *Aeneid* (thus like the poet) Charlemagne is hopelessly infatuated with a woman of inferior rank "muliercula." He shamelessly neglects both his public and his private duties. His impeccable public image is ruined and his own spiritual salvation jeopardised ("neglecta fama, cui plurimum inservire consueverat, et posthabitis regni curis, aliarum rerum omnium et postremo sui ipsus oblitum"). When the woman suddenly dies, while everybody secretly celebrates the emperor's deliverance from disgrace, he secretly refuses to concede to the inevitable and embalms the woman. Charlemagne carries on ghastly trysts with her body which, uncannily comparable to Laura's idolatrous metamorphoses, he clads with purple cloths and covers with jewels:

cuius nec morte lenitus furor, sed ipsum obscenum cadaver et exangue translatus est, quod balsamo et aromatibus conditum, honustum gemmis et velatum purpura diebus ac noctibus tam miserabili quam cupido fovebat amplexu. (p. 261)

Petrarch extrapolates from this episode a general illustration about the enslaving power of love (certainly one suitable to his enamored condition): "Quid est autem regnum nisi iusta et gloriosa dominatio? contra, quid est amor nisi feda servitus et iniusta?" In the *Rime*, though, he acknowledges his inability to disassociate himself from the mundane force of love, and concedes that his devotion is enduring, constant and all consuming, even after Laura's death.

While he remains silent about his own longings to possess a dead female body, absolutely passive, fixed and available, he identifies with Orpheus, the poet/musician, on a longing quest for his dead wife Euridyce:

Or avess'io un si' pietoso stile,
 Che Laura mia potesse torre a Morte,
 Come Euridice Orphea sua senza rime,
 Ch'i vivrei anchor più che mai lieto!⁴⁰

In the *Familiars* Petrarch's frequentation of Orpheus' story is made manifest by his open admiration of Orpheus' rhetorical and musical gifts (which is echoed in the *Rime*: "Nulla al mondo è che non possan i versi:/ Et li aspidi incantar sanno in lor note" [239. 28-28]) as well as his power to recover life from the world of the dead:

Non si mille linguis adamantinis in sempiternum loquar aut Orphea dulcis flebilibus
 ad lyram querimonis saxa permulceam, unquam michi redibit amicus meus;
 irremediabile iter ingressus est.(Fam VIII. 10)⁴¹

This tribute to the power of poetry is understandable, since Petrarch is engaged in a prolonged campaign to sway an unresponsive woman and, furthermore, his readers are invited into his lyrical sequence as a sympathetic audience (the term "pietà" reverberates throughout the collection). Most urgently, Petrarch is invested in gaining mastery over the disordering force of death. The representation of death and containment of its devastating effects, which is so central to the economy of the *Fragmenta*, is in itself a poetic project that presents Orphic difficulties. Death, like Laura, is a signifier of absence that incessantly recedes towards an unreachable signified.

In the last poem, # 366, while professing to close wounds and tantalizing the reader

with completion, Petrarch recasts old themes: Christ's flesh dripping innocent blood for the atonement of the guilty becomes the product of the old poetic oxymoron ("virginità feconda" [366]). The poet, who has blasphemously displaced the wounds of Christ on the cross for his own gaping body and transformed Christ into a figure for his erotic torment,⁴² is forever subjected to the woman who has crucified him ("con saldi chiodi fisso" [45. 9])⁴³ on the mirror where her narcissistic desires begin and end ("veggendo in voi finir vostro desio;" [46. 11]). Her lethal arms ("belle e crude braccia/ che m'ancidono a torto" [171.1-3]) have replaced the outstretched arms of Christ, sacrificed on the cross to save humanity ("Quelle pietose braccia/ in ch'io mi fido veggio aperte ancora," [264. 14-15]).⁴⁴

The wounded human body with its exposed orifices remains incomplete, impure, open to view and becomes the model for the organization of the text, with its dual beginnings, partial recantations, inconsistencies. This is a text, furthermore, that is traversed by a palpable fissure, the puzzling seven blank pages left by Petrarch (like an open sore) between poem # 263 and # 264, for no apparent reason since the announcement of Laura's death does not occur until # 267. The text, seemingly unfinished, arrives to its readers in its pure materiality as a dismembered corpse, entrusted with a story which can fall apart as soon as it is assembled.⁴⁵

Staking his claim to life eternal, Petrarch evades the narrative replication of his earlier, spiritual death through sin, the effects of eros on his identity, and, at the same time, he eludes his secular undoing by the literal bindings and unbinding of a disseminated

manuscript. In order to fulfill an aberrant fantasy and transcend his post lapsarian sexual and mortal body (the sight of putrefaction decay and corporeal incompleteness) Petrarch tenders his limbs to public viewing, turning himself into a poetic spectacle (like Christ and Laura), and makes a reliquary of the woman who has caused his agony. In the way a saintly body contained in shrines will be restored to eternal wholeness and harmony in Paradise, the idol of Laura is the vehicle whereby his dismembered body and the extension of his self into a fragmented extra corporeal existence (the *Fragmenta*) will be collected in the beyond, as a vehicle of his future worldly *fama* and his secular salvation.⁴⁶

NOTES FOR CHAPTER TWO

1. On the fragmentation of woman as it pertains to standardized descriptive techniques recommended to medieval figurative artists see: Alice M. Colby, *The Portrait in 12th Century Literature* (Geneva, 1965). Serenella Baggio "L'immagine di Laura" *Giornale Storico della Letteratura Italiana* 156 (1979) 334, discusses Simone Martini's portraits of Laura, alluded to by Petrarch in the *Rime* (# 77) in terms of Neo Platonism; on the monumental influence of *Petrarchismo* in defining the standard of female beauty in the visual arts, see: Elizabeth Cropper "On Beautiful Women, Parmigianino, *Petrarchismo* and the Vernacular Style." *Art Bulletin* 18:3 (1976): 374-394. For discussions of Laura's description in the *Rime* in terms of Petrarch's poetics of fragmentation and idolatry/fetishism see: Peter Hainsworth, *Petrarch the Poet* 120-21; Sara Sturm-Maddox, *Petrarch's Laurels* 25; Nancy Vickers "Diana Described," *Writing and Sexual Difference* 106, also Nancy Vickers "Remembering Dante: Petrarch's 'Chiare fresche et dolci acque,'" *MLN* 96 (1981):1-11; James V. Mirollo, *Mannerism and Renaissance Poetry: Concept, Mode, Inner Design* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1984): 99-159; Robert Durling "Petrarch's 'Giovane donna sotto un verde Lauro.'" *MLN* 86 (1971): 1-20, and also his "Introduction" to *Petrarch's Lyric Poems*, 1-33; John Freccero "The Fig Tree and the Laurel: Petrarch's Poetics," *Diacritics* 5 (1975): 34-40; Giuseppe Mazzotta, "The *Canzoniere* and the Language of the Self," *Studies in Philology* 75 (1978): 271-96.

2. Laura's corporeal fragments are scattered throughout the collection. For the most developed example of Laura's description, see *canzone* # 127 (especially ll. 49; 57-65; 77-8); for good examples of Laura's features, see # 291; # 49; # 348. Sara Sturm-Maddox reviews the distinguishing elements of the physical description of Laura as well as her confined repertoire of actions. "Petrarch's Siren: 'Dolce Parlar' and 'dolce canto' in the *Rime sparse*." *Italian Quarterly* 103 (1986): 5-19. For a discussion of the fragmentation of Laura's body focusing on poem #23 and its connection to the structure of the lyrical sequence see: Nancy J. Vickers, "Diana Described: Scattered Woman and Scattered Rhyme" in *Writing and Sexual Difference* ed. Elizabeth Abel (Chicago: U of Chicago, 1982); the atomization of Laura is also discussed by Roland Greene *Post Petrarchism* (Princeton UP, 1991) 112.

3. For a reading of Laura's absence, see: Robert Pogue Harrison, "The Death of Beatrice and the Petrarchan alternative," in *The Body of Beatrice*. (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins UP, 1988): 93-109. For Petrarch's mode of seeing: Paul Colilli "Petrarch's theology of the veil" (PhD Dissertation, University of Toronto, 1983); John Freccero "The Fig Tree" 39 postulates that in the void created by the lady's absence he elevates the verse to the level of love surrogate when the laurel crown replaces Laura's favors as the motive for poetic creation. The Petrarchan lyric thus suffers a loss of referential function and becomes and

exercise in poetic self objectification; Mazzotta "The Canzoniere and the Language of the self" 285.

4. Sturm-Maddox, "Petrarch's Siren," 5.

5. For instances of her post mortem utterances, see poems # 279, 302, 341, 342, 226, 359. In # 359 and 362, she offer the poet assurance that she is waiting for him in Paradise. Francesco De Sanctis, *Saggio critico sul Petrarca* (Turin: ed. degli Struzzi, 1983) offers acute readings of the poems "in morte" and a paradise centered on Laura, because without her it does not appeal to his imagination.

6. All quotations are from: Francesco Petrarca *Secretum* ed. Enrico Fenzi (Milano: Mursia, 1992). I will include all page numbers in the main text. The principal sources of Petrarch's *Secretum* are Augustine's *Confession* and Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy*. Lady Philosophy cures Boethius of his despair, in the *Secretum* Veritas brings him Augustine "healer of passion." He then proceeds in Book I to meditate on death as a means to elevate his concerns from earthly to eternal pursuits, Book II examines Petrarch's personal moral and psychological ills, Book III explores his most serious ills, his love for Laura and quest for fame. The treatise closes with Petrarch still irresolute and overloaded by sensual afflictions. The bibliography on the dialogue is predictably vast. Petrarch's assiduous frequentation of biblical texts and of the works of Augustine is well documented. See: K. Foster *Petrarch, Poet and Humanist* (Edinburgh, 1984) 157-8; P. de Nolhac *Petrarque et l'Humanisme* (Paris, 1982, 1907), the 1907 edition contains a chapter on the poet's knowledge of the church fathers; C. Calcaterra *Nella selva del Petrarca* (Bologna, 1942) contains a useful chapter on "Sant'Agostino nelle opere di Dante e Petrarca" which stresses the influence of the saint beyond the *Secretum*; on Petrarch's library, see: B. L. Ullman "Petrarch's Favorite Books," *Transactions of the American Philological Society*, LIV (1923) 117-38; A. Noferi "Letture di Petrarca," *L'esperienza poetica del Petrarca* (Firenze, 1962) 55-66; 253-84 offers a suggestive correlation of the lyrical poetry and *Secretum*; E. Baffi "Sulle citazioni del *Secretum* petrarchesco" *Quaderni dell'Istituto di filologia Latina* (Università di Padova, Facoltà di Magistero) II, (1972): 73-92 studies Petrarch's sources. For an evaluation of Petrarch the humanist, see E. Garin *L'umanesimo italiano* (Bari, 1954) 25-35, P. P. Gerosa *Umanesimo cristiano del Petrarca: Influenze agostiniane, attinenze medievali* Torino, 1966 which discusses elements pertaining Petrarch's christian thought; Hans Baron, *From Petrarch to Leonardo Bruni* (Chicago, 1968), also Baron *Petrarch's "Secretum;" Its Making and Its Meaning* (Cambridge, Mass, 1985) for the work's date. On the relation with the *Rime* A. Noferi, "Alle soglie del *Secretum*" in *L'esperienza poetica del Petrarca* (Firenze, 1962) and N. Ilescu *Il Canzoniere petrarchesco e Sant'Agostino* (Roma, 1962); M. Santagata *I frammenti dell'anima. Storia e*

racconto nel "Canzoniere" del Petrarca (Bologna, 1992) places the *Rime* at the center of the same literary project that inspires dialogue. On Petrarch's 'accidia' Wilkins "Petrarch's *accidia* and the Adamantine chains" *Speculum* XXXVII (1962) 589-94, which offers rich anecdotal evidence of Petrarch's biography to explain the dialogue; for an excellent psychoanalytic study of the dialogue, see: Gordon Braden, "Love and Fame: The Petrarchan Career." *Pragmatism's Freud: The Moral Disposition of Psychoanalysis* ed. J. Smith and W. Kerrigan (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1986) 126-58. For an important analysis of the *Familiars* that demonstrates Petrarch's propensity to write letters late in his life and attribute to them early dates (thus his inclination to write an ideal, a posteriori autobiography, see: G. Billanovich *Lo scrittoio del Petrarca* (Roma, 1947) and Billanovich, "Petrarca e il Ventoso" *Italia medioevale e umanistica* IX 1966): 389-401.

7. In this song he is subjected to multiple transformations (he becomes a laurel, a swan, a stone, a fountain, an echoing rock, a deer), dead ends that signal a challenge to his poetic expression. Transformation and composition are presented as facets of the same ongoing experience of repetition, since they are all presented in the present tense and through the familiar equation of tears and song ("piansi or canto" 23. 230).

8. For the Actaeon episode, see: Nancy J. Vickers, "Diana Described," 109.

9. The blazon, according to Nancy J. Vickers, comes "from the French *blasonner* and the English 'to blaze'--'to proclaim as with a trumpet, to publish, and, by extension, to defame or celebrate.'" In Shakespeare's *Lucrece* Collatino has opened Lucretia to the gaze of others by describing his wife's beauty and virtue in heraldic, "blazoning" terms. His verbal display of his wife makes her vulnerable because it turns her into the focus of a rivalry between men and sets the stage for her rape. "The 'blazon of sweet beauty's best:' Shakespeare's *Lucrece*," 95 in Patricia Parker and Geoffrey Hartman eds. *Shakespeare and the Question of Theory* (NY: Methuen, 1987). Her argument is re-elaborated by Patricia Parker "Rhetorics of Property: Exploration, Inventory, Blazon," *Literary Fat Ladies: Rhetoric, Gender, Property* (NY and London: Methuen, 1987) 126-9.

10. Nancy J. Vickers, "The blazon," 96.

11. According to Vicker's study of Cellini's Nymph of Fontainebleau "The Mistress in the Masterpiece" *The Poetics of Gender* ed. N. Miller (NY: Columbia UP, 1986) "The sexual/aesthetic pleasure" that "unites the male artist, male patron, and male viewer" in mannerist production requires the "discomfort of its female subject." 36-37. For examples of the application of Rene Girard's concept of mimetic desire and its triangulated exchanges to feminist scholarship, see: Nancy J. Vickers "The blazon," 97 and her rich bibliography, 113. Luce Irigaray declares that "heterosexuality is nothing but the assignment of economic

roles: there are producer subjects and agents of exchange (male) on the one hand, productive earth and commodities (female) on the other." Luce Irigaray, *This Sex Which is Not One*. (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1985): 192. Gayle Rubin "The Traffic of Women: Notes on the 'Political Economy' of Sex." interrelates theories of Marx, Engels, Freud, Lévi-Strauss and Lacan on the question on the traffic of women to reconcile Marxism, anthropological and psychoanalytic explanations of women's oppression. In Rayna Reiter ed. *Toward an Anthropology of Women* (NY: Monthly Review 1975): 157-210.

12. "The poetic lady [is] created by the poet,[...] in turn creates him as poet laureate." John Freccero, "The Fig Tree and the Laurel: Petrarch's Poetics." *Diacritics* (1975): 37. Contemporaries of Petrarch doubted the real existence of Laura and assumed that she a figment of the poet's imagination. According to Boccaccio, while the poet declared his love for Laura in wonderful lyrics, she was not a real woman but functioned allegorically as a symbol for the laurel crown: "nam, prout ipsemet et bene puto, Laurettam illam allegorice pro laurea corona quam postmodum est adeptus, accipiendam existimo." Giovanni Boccaccio *De vita et moribus Domini Francisci Petracchi de Florentia secundum Iohannem Bochacii de Certaldo* in *Tutte le opere* ed. V. Branca (Milano, 1992): 908. Furthermore, the *Familiars* (II, 9, 20) include a letter where Petrarch voiced his protestations and responded to Giacomo Colonna's reservations as to the reality of a Laura whom he took to be a literary creation.

13. The well-established discussion of the Petrarchan oxymoron is Foster, *The Icy Fire: Studies in European Petrarchism*. On the paradoxical nature of Laura's characterization and how it both relates to the complexity of Petrarchan poetics and the tradition of Petrarchism, see the illuminating treatment by Heather Dubrow, *Echoes of Desire: English Petrarchism and its Counterdiscourses* (Ithaca and London: Cornell UP, 1995) esp. 15-40.

14. Augustine, in the *Secretum* also describes Petrarch's falling in love as a plague: "Cogita nunc ex quo mentem tuam pestis illa corripuit[...]" 224. For the relation of Petrarch to Dante *petroso* (and Arnaut Daniel) see: Domenico De Robertis, "Petrarca Petroso," *Revue des Etudes Italiennes* 29 (1983): 28; Shapiro *Hieroglyphs of Time* 74-75; Margaret Waller *Petrarch's Poetics and Literary History* (Amherst, 1980) 61-62; Robert Durling's indispensable introduction to Petrarch's *Rime* and Robert M. Durling and Roland L. Martinez, *Time and the Crystal: Studies in Dante's 'Rime Petrose.'* (Berkeley-Los Angeles-Oxford: U of California Press, 1990), which treats the four "rime petrose" as a coherent group and as a turning point in Dante's career between the *Vita Nova* and the *Commedia*. This book offers a novel reading which rejects Contini's view that their importance is exclusively stylistic and instead focuses on Dante's assimilation and use of astronomy and

astrology, anatomy to prove the essential role of this poems in Dante's fashioning of what they name "microcosmic poetics." (matched by their brilliantly microscopically close readings); on Petrarch's "oblique" imitation of Dante (which involves sameness and difference) see: Nancy J. Vickers "Widowed Words: Dante, Petrarch and the Metaphors of Mourning." in *Discourses of Authority in Medieval and Renaissance Literature*. ed. Kevin Brownlee and Walter Stephens (Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 1989) 97-108. C. Calcaterra *Nella selva del Petrarca* (Bologna, 1942) "La prima ispirazione dei *Trionfi*" includes a long excursus exonerating Petrarch from long standing accusations of envy against Dante; Sara Sturm-Maddox "The *Rime Petrose* and the Purgatorial Palinode." *Studies in Philology* (1987) 84: 119-133; for a powerful discussion of the *petrose* put in the context of the emergence of the Italian Lyric, see: Salvatore Battaglia, *Formazione e Destini della Lirica* (Napoli: Liguori) M. Santagata "Presenza di Dante comico nel *Canzoniere* del Petrarca," *Giornale Storico* CXLV (1969), 163-211; Howard Bloch, *Medieval Mysogyny and the Invention of Western Romantic Love* (U of Chicago, 1991) for the background in Mariology, social and liturgical reforms, change in property relations and relations between genders (pgg. 9-112) and discussion of Capellanus, 113 and ff.

15. For connection to the primordial wound suffered by the soul Freccero, "The Firm Foot on a Journey Without a Guide." *Dante: The Poetics of Conversion*. (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1986): 29-54. On wounding as a common and well-known definition of sin: Paul F. Reichardt "Gawain and the image of the wound" *PMLA* 99 (1984): 156. Richard of St. Victor, in his treatise (*De quatuor gradibus videntiae caritas*) identifies the following steps of love: 1. wounding, 2. binding, 3. unique obsession, 4. infinity (because unless the object of one's obsession is God, it is destined to be insatiable).

16. Marco Santagata "La canzone XXIII" *Lectura Petrarce* 1 (1981) (Padua, 1982). See also Adriana Cavarero, *Nonostante Platone* for a discussion and example of her brilliant "stealing" of women's stories from canonical male narratives.

17. See Sara Sturm Maddox *Petrarch's Laurels* 75-80; Maddox, *Petrarch's Metamorphoses* 35-40; Aldo Bernardo *Petrarch Laura and the Triumphs* 204-205.

18. For a discussion of the *canzoni degli occhi*, see: Ettore Bonora "Le 'Canzoni degli occhi' (LXXI-LXXII;LXXIII) *Lectura Petrarce* IV 1984 (Padova, 1985): 301. For the phallic charge in Beatrice's eyes, see also : Gerard Genot "Petrarque et la scene du regard" *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 2 (1972) 1-20, which examines it within the hierarchical framework of gazes in the *Commedia*: Beatrice eyes reflect the higher order, S. Bernhard and the final intermediary is the Virgin. Genot observes that the vertical orientation of this communication is replaced in Petrarch's poetry by a horizontal one (8).

The entitlement and restriction placed on the woman's gaze have received ample scrutiny by feminist film theorists, who have explored the subject within the framework of Freudian and Neo-freudian theories of voyeurism and fetishism and attempted to locate the position of woman as a spectator and confronted the failure of recent psychoanalytic (Lacanian) theory to account for woman's subjectivity. The seminal essay on the subject remains Laura Mulvey "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." *Screen* 16 (1975): 16-18, see also her "Afterthoughts on 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema' Inspired by *Duel in the Sun*." *Framework* (1981): 12-15. Also notable to locate and understand the main positions of the debate are: Mary Ann Doane. *The Desire to Desire: The Women's Film of the 1940s*. (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1987); Doan "Film and the Masquerade: Theorizing the Female Spectator." *Screen* 23 (1982): 74-87; Teresa de Lauretis *Alice Doesn't: Feminism, Semiotics and Cinema* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1984); E. Ann Kaplan, "Is the Gaze Male?" *Powers of Desire: The Politics of Sexuality*. ed. Ann Snitow et al. (NY: Monthly Review, 1983); Tania Modleski *The Women Who Knew Too Much: Hitchcock and Feminist Theory* (NY: Methuen, 1988).

19. According to Green, *The Light in Troy* 116-18, the hand that heals is the same as the hand that wounds.

20. Maria Luisa Doglio "Il sonetto CXC," *Lectura Petrarce* v, 1985 (Padua, 1986) 249-64.

21. The image of the stag/doe recurs in the epic. This white doe, in fact, recalls the exquisite, domesticated stag hunted by Ascanius, Aeneas' son, in an important episode of Virgil's *Aeneid* which precipitates war between the invading Trojans and native Italians. This incident, singlehandedly disrupting the beauty and natural harmony of the Arcadian setting of the Italian countryside, incriminates the Trojans by an act of violence which transforms it from fertile and life giving to a place of death (*Aeneid* VII, 483-502). It comes back again at the end of the epic (and at the end of the war) when the hero on the enemy side, Turnus, is being pursued by Aeneas and likened to a stag (XII, 749-51). Dido is featured in the *Triumphs* ("Triumphus Pudicitie v. 10 and ff. 156 and ff.). See: John O'Meara "Virgil and Saint Augustine: The Roman Background to Christian Sexuality" *Augustinus* 13 (1968) 307-26. Extremely useful are also the comments contained under the heading *piaga* in *Enciclopedia Dantesca* IV.

22. Francesco Petrarca *Triumphs* ed. Marco Ariani (Milano: Mursia, 1988).

23. For other egregious examples of Laura's sternness, see poems # 260 where her excellence is deemed to surpass that of all the heroines of antiquity, # 261, where she is the example of "senno, valor, cortesia," # 262, a stunning episode of Laura's correcting her own

mother, and an example of youth instructing age, # 263 presents the apotheosis of her honor.

24. All quotations are from Virgilio, *Aeneis\Eneide*. tr.. Guido Vitali, intr. Ezio Savino. 3 vols. (Milano: Mursia, 1986).

25. On Laura's impersonation, see Barbara Estrin.

26. On the theme of reciprocal transformation, see: *RVF*, XCIV 1, XXIII 38-39, LI 5-6, CCCLX 127-128, *Tr Cupidinis* III, 162 and Ovid's *Metamorphosis* IV 373-379.

27. For a general depiction of the obsession of all medieval people with the brevity of life and omnipresence of death and of their inexhaustible love for earthly things, see: Philippe Aries, *Storia della morte in Occidente dal Medioevo ai giorni nostri* tr. Simona Vigezzi (Milano: Rizzoli, 1978): esp. 44, 92, 94. See also Huizinga, *The Waning of the Middle Age*; Umberto Bosco, *Francesco Petrarca*. Bari: Laterza, 1968.

28. Quotations from the *Familiars* are in Francesco Petrarca *Opere* (Firenze: Sansoni Editore, 1975); for the *Seniles*, Francesco Petrarca *Le senili* ed. Guido Martellotti, tr. Giuseppe Fracassetti (Torino: Einaudi, 1977).

29. During the ravages of the epidemic he writes a doleful letter to his Socrates, Ludwig van Kempen (*Familiars* 8. 7) expressing his own despair.

30. Giovanni Boccaccio's descriptions of the effects of the plague on Florentine society in his *Decameron* are illuminating. According to Boccaccio Florence was a sepulcher, bodied were stacked up in streets emitting a disgusting stench of death and petrifying in the hot summer sun. The survivors (like Boccaccio and Petrarch) were stunned and overwhelmed by loss of family and friends. For the gloom and pessimism, as well as obsession with death, which followed the outbreak of this catastrophe epidemic, see: Millard Meiss, *Painting in Florence and Siena after the Black Death* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1951). During the summer months of 1348 more than half the inhabitants of Florence and Siena died of the bubonic plague. Never before or since has any calamity taken so great a proportion of human life. The plague struck again in 1363 and 1374. Meiss quotes the chronicler Agnolo di Turra (in his *Rerum Italicarum scriptores* xv, part 6, 555-6) who recounts burying his 5 children with his own hands "no one wept for the dead because everybody expected death himself." The plague, moreover, affected the character and class configuration of Florentine society, shrunken and driven to a stage of siege and chaos (the introduction to Boccaccio's *Decameron* is a valuable testimony). For some stunning and unprecedented representations of death see Giovanni del Biondo's depiction of a decayed

corpse consumed by snakes and toads and Francesco Traini's painting of the Triumph of Death (ca 1350) for the fresco in the Camposanto in Pisa which renders the intense suffering of the sick and their rotten flesh. These images are reproduced by Meiss *Art bulletin* 15 (1933): 168-71.

31. The flyleaf of Petrarch's treasured manuscript of Virgil's *Aeneid* contains an inscription that concern Laura's death and his *innamoramento*, a note that cannot have been intended for any eye other than his own: "Laura[...]first appeared to my eyes in y youth, in the year of our Lord 1327, on the sixth day of April, in the Church of St. Clare in Avignon, at matinis[...]" quoted and translated by E. H. Wilkins *Life of Petrarch* (Chicago, 1961); This note was transcribed by the best of Petrarch's early biographers Ludovico Beccadelli in his *Vita del Petrarca* (1569-71); see: G. Frasso ed. *Francesco Petrarca e Ludovico Beccadelli, Studi sul Petrarca* (Ente Nazionale Francesco Petrarca, Padova, 1983): 61-62. The two dates appear also in *Triumphus Mortis* I "L'ora prima era, il dì sesto d'aprile,/che già mi strinse, et or, lasso, mi sciolse:" 133-134. On Petrarch's conscious decision to link the two events, see: Foster *Petrarch, Poet and Humanist* (53-54); Sara Sturm-Maddox discusses the "cosmic disturbances associated with the death of Christ" presented in # 3, *Petrarch's Metamorphoses: Text and Subtext in the "Rime sparse"* (Columbia: U. of Missouri Press, 1985) 111. Marjorie O' Rourke Boyle, *Petrarch's Genius: Pentimento and Prophecy* (Berkeley: U of California, 1991) proposes a view of the poet as a theologian and poetry as a heavenly idea born in paradise and interprets Petrarch's conflation of Apollo with Christ. For Boyle the laurel symbolizes the poet's prophetic vocation and self-adulation equates prophecy. The poet foregrounds the underlying Christian dimension of his spiritual dilemma setting it during the *Feria sexta aprilis*. He selects it because of its power to evoke a network of significant references as the legendary date of the crucifixion of Christ as well as the date of the creation of Adam and of the Fall in Eden. A complex attitude towards temporality is implicit in the use of these references. In fact, the powerful center around which the associations gravitate is the image of the cross. God, for the believer, is incarnate in a historical being in order to undergo a historically conditioned experience. For the Christian believer Golgotha is a place of special symbolic significance because the whole drama of the human race evolves around it. It is the site of the crucifixion as well as the place where Adam had been created and buried. Thus the blood of the Savior falls upon Adam's skull, buried precisely at the foot of the cross, and redeems him. The widespread proliferation in the Middle Ages of visual images of the cross that propose this network of references attests to the fact that Petrarch is relying on the best known icon in his time. In # 181 the poet presents an allegorical version of his *innamoramento*: the setting is the Garden of Eden and Adam is a foil for the poet ("le note non fur mai, dal dì ch'Adamo/ aperse gli occhi, si soavi et quete" [the bird call was never so soft and quiet/since the day when Adam opened his eyes]; [181.7-8]). The theme of the Fall appears again in # 188: "Almo sol,

quella fronde ch'io sola amo,/ tu prima amasti, or sola al bel soggiorno/ verdeggia e senza par, poi che l'adorno/ suo male et nostro vide in prima Adamo." (188.1-4). The scene is made complete by Laura's threatening beauty, which is compared to Eve's, who was wrested from Adam's body in a metaphorical dismemberment which becomes the correlative of their separation after her death ("forma par non fu mai dal dì ch'Adamo/ aperse li occhi in prima; e basti or questo"[354. 12-13]), and by a serpent lurking in the grass ("Questa vita terrena è quasi un prato/ che 'l serpente tra' fiori et 'erba giace" [99.5-6]). For a discussion of the symbolic meaning of the *Feria sexta aprilis* in terms of Petrarch's personal mythology see Sturm-Maddox, 112-113, B. Martinelli, "*Feria sexta aprilis*: la data sacra nel *Canzoniere* del Petrarca." *Petrarca e il Ventoso* (Bergamo: Minerva Italica, 1977) 103-148 and Carlo Calcaterra, *Nella selva del Petrarca* (Bologna: Cappelli, 1942) 225-8.

32. The fleeting nature of time is evidenced by the transience of Laura's beauty (Augustinus in the *Secretum* reminds Franciscus of the exhaustion visible on her body because of her multiple childbirths, 208). In the *Triumphus Eternitatis*, moreover, heaven is envisioned to partake in positive aspects of earthly life, as a place of pleasure with no fear of its ending, without time, age, ugliness, where the blessed enjoy eternal fame and immortal beauty "con immortal bellezza eterna fama." 133. Among the vast bibliography of Petrarch and temporality, see: Aldo Bernardo "Petrarch's Autobiography: Circularity Revisited," *Annali d'Italianistica* 4 (1986): 63, Bosco. "Il senso della labilità" *Francesco Petrarca*; Teodolinda Barolini, "The Making," who connects his obsession with time to his invention of the lyrical sequence. See also J. Quinones *The Renaissance Discovery of Time* (Cambridge, 1972).

33. Gerhard Oexle "Die Gegenwart der Toten" *Death in the Middle Age* ed Herman Braet and Werner Verbeke (Leuven UP, 1983) 19-77.

34. On the opposition of cupidity and charity, see: D.W. Robertson, jr. "The Doctrine of Charity in Medieval Literary Gardens: A Topical Approach Through Symbolism and Allegory." *Speculum* # 26.1 (1951): 24-49. On the Augustinian opposition of *caritas* and *cupiditas*, see: G. I. Bonner "'Libido' and 'Concupiscence' in St. Augustine" *Studia Patristica* VI (1962) 303-314; P. Brown "The notion of virginity in the early church in *Christian Spirituality: Origins to the Twelfth Century* NY 1985 (427-443); ---*The Body and the Society. Men, Women and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (NY 1988) esp his discussion on the role of a unified will is pertinent to Petrarch, 396, 417-18,

35. Isidore of Seville explains that the Gorgons were 3 sisters of such beauty that they occasioned stupefaction in all who saw them (*Etym* XI, 3, 29); on Petrarch's susceptibility to Laura's paralyzing beauty, Martinelli *Petrarca e il ventoso* 236-7; K. Foster

"Beatrice o Medusa," *Italian Studies Presented to E. R. Vincent* ed. C.P. Brand, K. Foster U. Limentani. 48.

36. For a comprehensive recapitulation of the anniversary poems see: Thomas Roche, "The Calendrical Structure of Petrarch's *Canzoniere*." *Studies in Philology* 71 (1974): 152-172. See Robert M. Durling's seminal discussion of *sestina* #30 in "Petrarch's 'Giovane donna sotto un verde lauro.'" *MLN* 86 (1971): 1-20. In the article he highlights the connection between crucifixion and anniversary poem. In particular, he points out how the reading of sonnet 62 changes in hindsight one's understanding of 30. He makes, however, the mistake of identifying #62 as the second anniversary poem, a title that, in fact, belongs to #50. Teodolinda Barolini discusses this issue in "The Making of the Lyric Sequence: Time and Narrative in Petrarch's *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta*." *MLN* 104 (1989): 20.

37. Courtly love, according to D. W. Robertson, *A Preface to Chaucer* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962) 99 is essentially idolatrous in nature.

38. Sonnet 16 echoes Dante's words in *Paradiso XXXI*: "Qual'è colui che forse di Croazia/ viene a veder la Veronica nostra/che per l'antica fame non sen sazia" (103-5), Dante Alighieri, *La divina commedia* ed. Fredi Chiappelli (Milano: Mursia, 1989). The context, however, is wholly different. Dante is admiring San Bernardo's religious fervor, and getting ready to contemplate the image of the Virgin Mary. On Veronica and the pilgrimage see also M. Waller *Petrarch's Poetics and Literary History* 25 and Dante's *Vita Nova* XL which discusses his love as becoming idolatrous and her death in similar fashion to the imagery of the Rime as having caused an eclipse. For a discussion of the real and the figural and the rhetoric of the body exemplified by the Veronica, see: Louis Marin "The Figurability of the Visual: The Veronica or the Question of the Portrait at Port-Royal." *New Literary History* (1991) 22: 281-296 and Georges Didi-Huberman "The Index of the Absent Wound (Monograph on a Stain) *October* (1984) 29: 63-81.

39. For a discussion of this image see John Freccero, "The Fig Tree and the Laurel: Petrarch's Poetics." *Diacritics* 5 (1975): 5. The jewelled cross has also eschatological significance. In his article on poem 30, Durling points out that the New Jerusalem is described in Apocalypse 21 as being "decorated with 12 kinds of precious stones, including topaz." "Petrarch's 'Giovane donna'" 13. Also, see Robert M. Durling *The Figure of the Poet in Renaissance Epic* (Cambridge: Harvard U. Press, 1965) 247 for a discussion of the rhetorical figure of the *adunaton*, so often employed by Petrarch in his poetry, in terms of its apocalyptic implications.

40. For an exploration of the theme of necrophilia through various literary figures,

see: E. Bronfen, *Over Her Dead Body* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1992). See, also: B. Dijkstra, *Idols of Perversity* (Oxford- NY: Oxford UP, 1986).

41. On Ovid and Virgil's treatment of Orpheus see: Charles Segal, *Orpheus: The Myth of the Poet*. (Baltimore and London, Johns Hopkins, 1989): esp. 1-94.

42. Leo Steinberg, *The Sexuality of Christ in Renaissance art and in Modern Oblivion* (NY, 1983) offers a brilliant and provocative reading of Renaissance representations of Christ, the centrality of the mystery of the Incarnation and cultural repression of Christ's sexuality. For Christ to redeem humanity by his death he had to be thoroughly man in every aspect, thus the insistence with which artists represented his genitalia (which he connects to the debates about his circumcision).

43. For a Freudian reading of Laura's narcissism, see: Gordon Braden "Love and Fame: The Petrarchan Career" *Pragmatism's Freud: The Moral Disposition of Psychoanalysis* (Baltimore, 1986) 126-58, the theme is also discussed by Mazzotta "language of self" 278-82. On the various adaptations of the myth, and an interpretation of Narcissus as the paradigm of the evolution of a self consciousness alternative to that proposed by St Augustine, see: F. Goldin, *The Mirror of Narcissus in the Courtly Love Lyric* (Ithaca and NY: Cornell UP, 1967).

44. In the Incarnation God takes on a body to save humanity; he thus institutes the sacrality of the ordinary human body in its fragile physiology. The night before the violent destruction of his flesh Christ designates the ontological presence of his body in its manifestation as the Eucharist. The Eucharistic body and the resurrected body, each of them incorruptible, underwrite the ontological alliance of body and soul and the exclusion of the flesh, which is understood to fill out the body imprecisely. The Word having been made flesh, spiritual and somatic were necessarily intermingled and grounded religious experience. Petrarch, unable to disengaging himself from his earthly love appropriates the terminology of Christianity for his own cult of Laura. On the fascination with the suffering, the tears the bodily fatigue of Christ.

45. Readers have fallen into Petrarch's textual traps over centuries, as they have tried to impose a story on the organization of the lyrical sequence. From Pietro Bembo's 1514 edition until Mestica's in 1896 the two parts of the collection were altered (so that part II began with poem # 267) to accommodate the division to Laura "in vita" and "in morte." Carducci and Ferrari's edition (1989 reprinted by Sansoni in 1957) began part II with # 267 (though it acknowledged that it followed Mestica's editorial decision). For the editorial history of the manuscript see: Martinelli, pg. 256-58. On the drama of corporeal transgression, see: Carolyn Bynum *Jesus as a Mother*, 110-169.

46. Barolini argues that the poet devised a divided lyrical sequence to cope with the passage of time and the death of Laura. On the changes brought about by Christianity in the late Roman city, particularly with the entrance of relics when the bodies of dead saints began to occupy a position of increased importance, see: Peter Brown: *The Cult of Saints* (Chicago, U of Chicago Press, 1980) 4-5. For a complete study of the theological debates in Petrarch's age about reliquaries, see: Carolyn Walker Bynum, *The Resurrection of the Body*. (NY: Columbia UP, 1995). On the sociopolitical significance of the body and on the centrality of the body in the Middle Ages, seen as a period in which incarnational aesthetics governed (thus not a purely metaphysical period) see: Jacques Le Goff, *The Medieval Imagination* transl. Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1988): 83-106; Peter Brown *The Body and Society: Men, Women and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity*. (NY: Columbia UP, 1988).

CHAPTER THREE

PETRARCH AT A CROSSROAD

The *Fragmenta* end with a prayer addressed to the Virgin Mary "Vergine bella," where the poet appears to forsake the old habits of a deranged, restless life ("i' son intrato in simil frenesia" 'I have entered this madness' [244. 3]) and to renounce Laura, who has instigated them. At the end of his poetic and spiritual journey he seems to reach a safe harbor ("porto") and attain peace ("pace" is the last word of the collection).

Unsure of arriving at a destination, Petrarch has originally set out on a devious path the day of his *innamoramento*, which is recalled as the point when, disdaining the proper course ("utili oneste/vie sprezzai" [360, 17-18]) the poet entered, left foot first, into the kingdom of the God of Love ("il manco piedo/giovenetto pos'io nel costui regno" [360, 9-10]) a place where he became crippled ("zoppo e 'nfermo e lento" [239.36]) and, overtaken by passion, he was thrown into a state of perpetual anxiety ("e' mi tolse di pace et pose in guerra" 'he took me from peace and placed me in war.' [360, 30]).¹

Laura belongs to the Petrarchan outdoors and the poet frequently depicts the ground that was graced by her touch:

Lieti fiori, et ben nate erbe
 che Madonna pensando premer sole,
 piaggia ch'ascolti sue dolci parole
 et del bel piede alcun vestigio serbe,
 schietti arboscelli et verdi frondi acerbe,
 amorosette et pallide viole,
 ombrose selve ove percote il sole
 che vi fa co' suoi raggi alte et superbe. (162. 1-8)

Valchiusa, where his *innamoramento* unfolds, is a safely enclosed valley:

In una valle chiusa d'ogn' intorno,
 ch'è refrigerio de' sospir miei lassi,
 giunsi sol con Amor, pensoso et tardo; (116, 9-12)²

As the recipient of attentions denied to the poet, however, the pristine landscape becomes a sinister reminder of her absence and of her unyielding resolution, an imaginary rival and a constant source of pain. His bitter tears feed into the river Sorgue ("Valle che de' lamenti miei se' piena,/ fume che spesso del mio pianger cresci" [301, 1-2]) until its waters exceed the closed confines of the valley. The dilated boundaries of Love's dominion correspond to the space of Petrarch's interior searching and of his spiritual dispersion. ("tal ch'io depinsi poi per mille valli/ l'ombra ov'io fui,[...]"[66, 30-36]). While he wanders through a fantastic and exotic topography strangeness becomes a correlative of his enamored condition:

Mai non fui in parte ove s'è chiar vedessi
 quel che veder vorrei poi ch'io nol vidi,
 ne' dove in tanta libertà mi stessi,
 ne' 'mpiessi il ciel de' sì amorosi stridi;
 ne' giammai vidi valle aver sì spessi
 luoghi da sospirar riposti et fidi,
 ne' credo già ch'Amore in Cipro avessi
 o in altra riva s'è soavi nidi. (280, 1-8)

Propelled by Love he ventures into labyrinthine territories ("nel laberinto intrai, ne' veggio ond'esca." [211, 14]), vast, inhospitable places populated by menacing people:

Cercar m'è fatto deserti paesi,
 fiere et ladri rapaci,ispidi dumi,
 dure genti et costumi,
 et ogni error che' pellegrini intrica;
 monti valli paludi et mari et fiumi,
 mille lacciuoli in ogni parte tesi,
 e 'l verno in strani mesi
 con pericol presente et con fatica. (360, 46-53)

His *innamoramento*, befallen on the day of an eclipse³ has dulled his senses and left him blind ("e 'l sol vagheggio si ch'elli à già spento/ col suo splendor la mia vertù visiva [...] Cieco et stanco ad ogni altro c'al mio danno, [212, 5-6, 9]; "Ma 'l cieco Amor et la mia sorda mente/ mi traviavan[...]" [290, 9-10]). As he follows Laura's footsteps solely guided by the light she casts on his trail ("seguendo i passi onesti e 'l divo raggio." [204, 14]), Petrarch's endless meandering in the labyrinth scans the pace of both his intellectual disorientation and his surrender to moral perdition ("un lungo error in cieco laberinto/ [...] vostro, Donna, 'l peccato et mio fia 'l danno." [224. 4 & 14]).⁴ Hopelessly entrapped in a region which seems beyond the limits of the civilized and the chartered ("Le città son nemiche, amici i boschi" [237, 25-28]), he admits to having become himself a savage ("che mi fa in vista un uom nudrito in selva" [22, 17-18]; "ond'io son fatto un animal silvestro" (306, 5-8)).⁵

The poet's passion, thus, launches his journey into a universe that progressively degenerates into menacing "boschi:"

Per mezz'o boschi inhospitali et selvaggi,
 Onde vanno a gran rischio uomii et arme,
 Vo sicuro io, che non po spaventarme
 Altri che 'l sol ch'a d'amor vivo is raggi:
 [...]
 Ch'o' l'o negli occhi, et veder seco parme
 Donne et donzelle, et sono abeti et faggi. (176. 1-4; 7-8)

This landscape bears uncanny affinities to the territories that were navigated, survived and chartered by distinguished precursors: Augustine successfully withdrew from an "immensa silva" (*Confessions* X 35, 36) and Dante's from a "selva oscura." (*Inferno*, I.2).⁶ This ought

to be, therefore, a space of remarkably clear traits and coordinates. While Petrarch is amenable to recognize the authority of Augustine in the *Secretum*,⁷ (beautifully recapitulated in *canzone* # 264 which opens the second part of the *Fragmenta*) but is unable to follow his good judgement (the concluding line of # 264 finds him like Medea: "e veggio il meglio et al peggior m'appiglio"), he exercises selective amnesia when it comes to Dante. In an infamous letter to Boccaccio (*Familiare*, XXI. 15) Petrarch recalls that he saw the Florentine poet once, since he was roughly a contemporary of his father and grandfather and a victim of the same political climate: "Cum avo patreque meo vixit, avo minor, patre autem natu maior, cum quo simul uno die atque uno civili turbine patriis finibus pulsus fuit. " He admits that he dedicated his energies to locate and collect rare books, but never acquired Dante's *Commedia*, though it was easily available, because he held Dante's text in high esteem and feared that he would imitate it:

ego librorum varia inquisitione delectatus, nunquam librum illius habuerim, et ardentissimus semper in reliquis, quorum pene nulla spes supererat, in hos uno difficultate parabili, novo quodam nec meo more reperim [...] nichil rebat elegantius, necdum altius dedicare aspirare didiceram, sed verba ne si huius aut alterius dictis imbuerer, ut est etas illa flexibilis et miratrix omnium, vel invitus ac nesciens imitator evaderem.

Petrarch's daring exchange of a pilgrimage to see the Veronica with his journey to Laura brings about a poisoning of the traditional path to salvation:⁸ the wayfaring Christian pilgrim who regards life in this world as an extended figuration of the life in the next is displaced by the lover in search for his idolatrous object. The *Fragmenta*, nonetheless, are saturated with references to Dante's journey, particularly to the *Inferno*, given Petrarch's propensity to cloak his experience in nautical terms, and to openly identify with Ulysses:

Passa la nave mia colma d'oblio
 per aspro mare a mezza notte il verno
 enfra Scilla et Caribdi, et al governo
 siede 'l signore anzi 'l nimico mio; (189. 1-4)

[...]

Celansi i duo mei dolci usati segni,
 morta fra l'onde è la ragion et l'arte
 tal ch'i' 'ncomincio a desperar del porto. (189. 12-14)

In the preliminary letter of the *Familiars* Petrarch declares his affinity to the ancient seafarer and alludes to both Ulysses' distinctive desire for *kleos* and its tragic consequences in the *Inferno*: “Ulixeos errores erroribus meis confer: profecto, si nominis et rerum claritas una foret, nec diutius erravit ille nec latius. Ille patrios fines iam senior excessit; cum nichil in ulla etate longum sit, omnia sunt in senectute brevissima.” (p. 245) ⁹ Petrarch, furthermore, recurrently likens salvation to the survival of a shipwreck:

Più di me lieta non si vede a terra
 nave da l'onde combattuta et vinta,
 quando la gente di pietà depinta
 su per la riva a ringraziar s'atterra (26. 1-4)

Love, thus, has transformed Petrarch into a man stranded at sea, drifting at the margins of civilization. It is not by accident that his predicament should evoke Dante a time of crisis. In order to achieve his spiritual survival Dante was compelled to confront his own shortcomings and in the process unraveled the complex indebtedness of his private recollection to the shared memory of his culture in the making of his identity.

Dante eternally condemns Ulysses to the eighth circle of hell; yet his experience, at the outset of his infernal journey, overlaps that of the Greek sinner, and begins at the precise point where Ulysses' ordeal comes to an end. The pagan hero's audacious crossing of the

boundary of the dead (reminiscent of that of Orpheus) and impetuous progress towards the unknown is halted by the appearance of a ghostly mountain: “ m'apparve una montagna, bruna/ per la distanza, e parvemi alta tanto/ quanto veduta non aveva alcuna.” (*Inferno* XXVI, 133-35).¹⁰ Ulysses and his men die in shipwreck, swallowed by an infernal "turbo"(XXVI, 137). Dante, on the other hand, reaches the mountain of Purgatory ("al pie d'un colle giunto" [I, 13]) but survives death by drowning because he resigns himself to proceed through a different terrain:

E come quei che con la lena affanna,
uscito fuor del pelago a la riva,
si volge a l'acqua perigliosa e guata,
così l'animo mio, ch'ancor fuggiva,
si volsa a retro a rimirar lo passo
che non lasciò già mai persona viva. (*Inferno* I, 22-27)

Petrarch was the son of a white Guelph (Pietraco di Parenzo, called Petracco) who shared Dante's misfortune when the party was expelled from Florence. He was born in exile in Arezzo in 1304: “Ego, in exilio genitus, in exilio natus sum [...] Meminit haud ignobilis Italiae civitas, Aretium, quod pulsus patria pater magna cum bonorum acie confugerat.” (*Familiars*, I. 1). He spent most of his life moving from place to place and was painfully afflicted by his condition of homelessness.¹¹ In a letter to Severo Appennicola (*Familiars*, II. 3) Petrarch candidly discusses his peripatetic life. Exile emerges as his central and abiding preoccupation, the source of his intellectual calling and of the philological bend of his mind. The strategy he adopts to examine this very emotional subject, however, betrays the comfort he derived from his practice as a philologist. To begin with, Petrarch dissects "exile" as a signifier, thus etymologically, dispassionately. Having done this, he proceeds to

explore the repercussion of exile on his personal life and manages to find comfort in his intellectual analysis. Petrarch writes that exile (from "extra solum") alludes to a condition that is neither agreeable nor cruel; it indicates being outside the jurisdictional territory of one's native land. On second thought Petrarch concedes that this definition is lacking, because it admits no distinction between planned and coerced departures. He then presents two different types of outcasts: the "exul," who makes a show of his gloom, and the "peregrinus," who succeeds to remain composed and dignified in the face of adversity. This is the seemingly demeanor (and thus ought to be the goal to strive for) of the human being who is at peace with himself in spite of unfortunate circumstances.

In the *Rime* Petrarch eventually finds the "pace" that transforms his experience from that of the "exul" to that of the "peregrinus;" significantly, this is postulated as a point of arrival (the "porto" of canzone 366, when Maria becomes the novel guiding light of his perilous navigation) comparable to that found by Dante at the outset of his Infernal journey ("la riva"). The end of the collection, the reader can thus deduce, finally signals Petrarch's readiness to embark on the journey that will result in his salvation.

The *Rime*, otherwise, mark years spent by the poet travelling through domains seemingly at the extreme limits of imaginable experience, suspended in a space of tangibly harsh dangers where the bounds between reality and illusion are confused, and menacing forces (Love and Laura) connive, through violence or subterfuge, to annihilate him. The ups and downs of his emotions cause a series of seemingly infinite digressions from the main goal, the safe harbor of conversion, (and endlessly repeat the moment of original

displacement: "sarò qual fui, vivrò com'io son visso" [145. 13]) and subject him to the grotesque reshaping of his metamorphosed body, degenerations to ever lower states of being which postpone and parody conversion.¹²

The possibility of a return, a *nostos*, is predicated on the existence of a real or metaphorical home, an *oikos* which functions both as a point of departure and destination and sets a boundary between a meaningful, valuable ("oriented") experience of travel and one that is potentially boundless, anarchic, sinful (beyond jurisdictional territories). The setting of a defined goal sanitizes movement and guarantees the conquest and domestication of space within safe limits. Petrarch pauses at the threshold of his *Rime* and admits that he is only "in parte altro:" incomplete, still subject to change. With this statement the reader can anticipate that his journey through the "selva" will follow meandering paths which would be inconceivable to Dante and Augustine, for whom the destination is present on every step of the way, since the converted self of the writer has always already achieved the destination of the pilgrim.¹³ The double version of Petrarch's *innamoramento* is the immediate consequence of his divided objective; it is also the price paid by the reader who is denied a clear ideological anchor to evaluate Petrarch's apprehension by Love and his wanderings.

Barring a clearly defined goal to the poet's nautical adventures, the *Rime* point self-referentially to the metaphorical function of the text. The space of wandering and exile, indeed, is not solely filled with a well-established literary tradition; it is one that functions, more sweepingly, as the favored analogy for the operations whereby literature comes to life. Ever since Homer attributed "winged words" to Odysseus, thus tacitly suggesting a

connection between the hero's masterful use of rhetoric and his wanderings, literary composition has been variously correlated to a sea voyage.¹⁴ By identifying with Ulysses, Petrarch implicitly links his activity as a poet, his manipulation of *metaphorical* language (from *metaphorein*, travel) and his perpetual (and aimless) change of place; he unites his erroneous ways to the rhetorical strategies employed to develop poems built on internal oxymorons and associations of eclectic and incompatible intertexts, poems which he then gathered into a unified corpus whose most distinguishing feature is the presence of microscopic plots which contradict each other.¹⁵ In as much as Petrarch errs his poetry is neither immune nor privileged with regards to erring.

Petrarch's perspective is masterfully crystallized in the relentlessly circular and intricate beat of the *sestina*, indeed a metrical pattern revered by the poet who composed ten *sestine* for the collection (the last *sestina*, # 332, the only one set in the second part of the collection is an anomalous double poem: "doppiando 'l dolore, doppia lo stile" [332. 39]).¹⁶ The *sestina* epitomizes the circular movement of the whole collection; furthermore, Petrarch is suggestively prone to depict his most penitential moment in nautical *sestine*. Poem # 80 equates his life with a fragile vessel buffeted by powerful winds that drive him towards destruction and in the same breath wishes for the end of his exile and confesses to his inability to foreswear old habits:

S'io esca vivo de' dubbiosi scogli
 et arrive al mio esilio ad un bel fine
 ch'i sarei vago di voltar la vela
 et l'acore gittar in qualche porto!
 Se non ch'i' ardo come acceso legno,
 si m'e' duro lassar l'usata vita. (80. 31-36)
 [...]

Signor de la mia fine et de la vita:
 prima ch'i' fiacchi il legno tra gli scogli
 drizza a buon porto l'affannata vela. (80. 37-39)

Petrarch's longing for peace from the turbulence of the sea appears again in *sestina* # 237:

Di dì in dì spero ormai l'ultima sera
 che scevri in me dal vivo terren l'onde
 et mi lasce dormire in qualche spiaggia;
 che' tanti affanni uom mai sotto la luma
 non sofferse quant'io, sannolsi i boschi
 che sol vo ricercando giorno e notte. (237. 7-12)

[...]

Le città son nemiche, amici i boschi
 a' miei pensier che per quest'alta spiaggia
 sfogando vo col mormorar de l'onde
 per lo dolce silenzio de la notte. (237. 25-28)

Moving to the beat of his obsession, always identical to itself, the poet his caught in the paradox of correcting errata by repeating them, a paradoxical project which duplicates his recantatory attitude in sonnet # 1.

The *Rime* thus tell a static story and present themselves as an elongated fixation on Laura's enduring unavailability ("Che bench'i' sia mortal corpo si terra,/ Lo mio fermo desir vien da le stelle." [22. 23-24]).¹⁷ Petrarch, however, hoped that his display of Laura's implacable indifference would *move* his audience to feel "pietà" for him. The poet pleads with a sympathetic audience from the first sonnet of the collection and invokes a line of communication based entirely on his readers' complicity and indifferent towards their edification. In the *Secretum* this is one of the points of contention between Augustinus and Franciscus, and the saint repeatedly reproaches the poet for having pointlessly coveted the approval of masses who, like Laura, were ephemeral and windy ("non ad ventosum vulgi

plasmum" 104).

Petrarch, a self-proclaimed victim of displacement and love, finds solace recalling the kindred spirit of Dido. On the other hand, since he frequently designates the poetic act as a combination of emotion and articulation, tears and deliberation (in the inaugural poem, "piango e ragiono" [1.5]) he also implicitly connects his tale of afflictions with Aeneas' long account of his defeat and exile that results in the queen's seduction ("Qualis talia fando/Myrmidonum Dolopumve aut duri miles Vlixii/temperet lacrimis? [*Aeneid*, 2. 6-8]). In this episode, ironically, poignant words of admonition against seductive tales come from the mouth of the very man who perpetrates the offense: Aeneas vents his heartfelt condemnation of the masterful and deceptive rhetoric used by the Greek Sinon ("Talibus insidiis periurique arte Sinonis/credita res [...] [*Aeneid* II, 195-6]) that persuaded the Trojans to accept the Greek horse with its hidden content.

Petrarch, like Aeneas, is keenly aware that the power of rhetoric is mightier than the sword; he is also clearly familiar with the warning against the temptation of sensual narratives articulated by his avowed spiritual mentor, Augustine, in the *Confessions*, when the Saint recalls how the Virgilian tale of Dido and Aeneas moved him to tears for the lovers while neglecting his own spiritual wavering:

I was forced to memorize the wanderings of Aeneas[...]while forgetting my own wanderings; and to weep for the death of Dido who killed herself for love, while being dry-eyed for my own pitiful state[...]while I too followed after the lowest of Your creatures, forsaking You. (I, xiii)

Against the background this sinister lure of language (and its power to lead one astray), Petrarch simultaneously confesses to his vulnerability to a woman who is compared to a

siren,¹⁸ and aspires to move his readers to feel pity for the story of his trials.

In sonnet # 1, furthermore, Petrarch echoes Francesca, the sinner singled out by Dante from the crowd of fornicators and illicit lovers (which includes Dido) in the second circle of the *Inferno*. The presentation of her tale of youthful error ("Dirò come colui che piange e dice," [V. 126]), rouses Dante's wave of compassion and culminates with his fainting:

Mentre l'uno spirto questo disse,
l'altro piangea; si' che di pietade
io venni men così com'io morisse.
E caddi come corpo morto cade. (*Inferno* V. 139-142)¹⁹

Three expressions, "pietà," (ll. 82, 93, 117, 141 and, again in the beginning of Canto VI. 2), "leggere," (ll. 127, 131, 133, 138) and "amor" (ll. 100, 103, 106, 118, 125, 128, 134) dominate this episode.²⁰ Dante intends to evoke a viewpoint of empathy while exposing its perilous effects. At the same time, Canto V tenders a serious warning about language as the agent of damnation, and in particular a poignant critique of romantic literature and its irresponsible use.²¹ Francesca, who utters the word "leggere" four times in twelve lines, is presented as a reader of books, and reading is the activity that induces Paolo and Francesca to sin. Furthermore, Francesca's threefold anaphoric repetition of the word "amor" (ll. 100, 103, 106), vaguely implying a parody of the trinity, alludes to the erratic connotations of sexual disorder, a destructive, mad, obsessive force, like the whirl of passion that is reified in the infernal storm which frames the *contrapasso* of the episode, "La bufera infernal, che mai non resta,/ mena li spirti con la sua rapina;" (V, 31-32).²²

Dante's limited perspective ("la guerra'si' del cammino e si' della pietate" [*Inferno* II.

4-5]) accounts for his collapse, since this episode relates an event that took place before the heavenly enlightenment which energized his judgement and precluded subsequent lapses ("la mente che non erra" [II. 6]). The universe traversed by Dante (and the meaning of the story of his journey), however, assumes that the end (which Dante already knows) inhabits all the previous moments of the text and draws it to its inevitable conclusion: the beginning implies the end, and the end provides retrospective illumination for the previously obscure moments. Each sinner who rehearses a catastrophe for Dante provides a way-station on a pilgrimage towards purification and salvation.

Petrarch, on the other hand, wavers until the end of his poetic journey and never attains the kind of exemplary harshness displayed by Dante at the end of his Infernal voyage. There, no longer moved to compassion (*pietà*) towards his interlocutor, Dante refuses to rid Alberigo of the frozen tears that torment him. His peremptory refusal is sealed by an oxymoronic sentence "e cortesia fu lui esser villano" (*Inferno* XXXIII. 150): a seemingly cruel act signals his unshakable compliance to higher divine justice (expressed in terms of "cortesia" and reminiscent of the courtly tradition put on trial in Francesca's episode).

Petrarch, furthermore, admittedly consulted throughout his life a cluster of texts, ostensibly closer to his heart than the *Commedia*, without assimilating the lessons in steadfastness that they contained. In the *Aeneid*, for instance, Aeneas is overcome by passion for Dido but eventually leaves Carthage to fulfill his destiny in Rome, unmoved by Dido's pleas. Emotional repression thus serves a political cause and Vergil compares him to

an alpine oak tree assailed by northern winds which loses leaves and branches but clings onto the rock with its deep roots that reach all the way to hell "Ac velut annoso validam cum robore quercum/ Alpini Boreae nunc hinc nunc flatibus illinc/ eruere inter se certant; (*Aeneid* IV, 441-44). Augustine retraces Aeneas' trajectory from Carthage to Rome on the journey which eventually leads him to fulfill his spiritual calling as a teacher and a converted man. In Carthage, furthermore, a woman (his mother Monica) pleads with Augustine and, like Dido, pointlessly attempts to interfere with his plans . Augustine, like Aeneas, resorts to deceit and abandons her (*Confessions*, V, viii).

Dante feels compassion for Francesca but he does not absolve her. Petrarch, conversely, asks for absolution, "pietà, non che perdono," (l. 8), and has his readers' complicity entangled in his sinful domain without the benefit of an organizing principle based on the Truth. The accomplishment he vaunts in the initial poem as a mitigating circumstance to his failed conversion is a novel comprehension of the vanity of all earthly things: "l conoscer chiaramente/ che quanto piace al mondo è breve sogno" (l. 13-14). In the remaining *Fragmenta* he simply offers palliatives to coagulate and eternalize his situation: he becomes petrified by Laura (a fulfillment his name "Pettracco") or, conversely, he reifies Laura.

In his manual of Christian rhetoric, *De doctrina christiana* Augustine warns the exegete against the dangers inherent in the use and enjoyment of language through a revealing analogy with a quintessential Ulyssean journey:

To enjoy something is to cling to it with love for its own sake [...] Suppose we were wanderers who could not live in blessedness except at home, miserable in our wandering and desiring to end it and to return to our native country. We would need

vehicles for land and sea which could be used to help us to reach our homeland, which is to be enjoyed. But if the amenities of the journey and the motion of the vehicles itself delighted us [...] we should not wish to end our journey quickly, and, entangled in a perverse sweetness, we should be alienated from our country, whose sweetness would make us blessed. Thus in this mortal life, wandering from God[...]we should use this world and not enjoy it [...] so that by means of corporeal and temporal things we may comprehend the eternal and spiritual. (*DDC* 1.4)²³

Since in his lyrical collection Petrarch proposes (and vaunts) a safe harbor of conversion as his paramount goal, Augustine's warning aptly encapsulates the obstacles on Petrarch's path (his self indulgent deferrals and the strategies of his poetic composition).

A compelling Christian ending can narrowly limit the range of interpretations to which, much to Petrarch's dismay, his vernacular *Fragmenta* will be subjected. In the *Secretum* Augustinus, explicitly echoing Augustine in *De Doctrina Christiana*, argues that the single most important criterion in a virtuous interpretation of any text is to understand it allegorically, that is, to understand it in a way that conforms to Christian doctrine.²⁴ Augustine's treatise, indeed, contemplates the possibility of ambiguity arising from multiple contradictory readings of a text (the Scriptures) and proposes that it is faith in God which holds the text together, because God has already foreseen every possible interpretation:²⁵ "For what could God have more generously and abundantly provided in the divine writings than that the same words might be understood in various ways which other no less divine witnesses approve?" (III.xxvii.38). In the *Rime sparse*, Petrarch teases his readers with the phantom of an edifying interpretation but then seems to go out of his way to obstruct it. Inasmuch as he is informed about the diabolic power of language to corrupt, he toils to conceal from us thoroughly chartered paths and, instead, steers us to shipwreck and to

drown in his sea of words.

Petrarch's vernacular terminology is rather narrowly circumscribed by comparison to Dante's varied and rich vocabulary, but accumulates meaning as the collection unfolds, thus every word stores layers of significance along the axis of its uses, the way layers solidify to create a single sedimentary rock and can be decoded to retrace the phases of its geological history. Because these words increasingly lose any real connection with anything outside and beyond the purely fictional poetic universe created by Petrarch, his methodology of composition generates a peculiar process of circular referentiality.²⁶ Though he toys with a christian subtext, the *Rime Sparse* are highly visible fragments weakly strung together by a man-made artifice and not held together by faith in God. Because his texts successfully exchange aesthetic for ethical ambitions, they elude the totalizing interpretation championed by Saint Augustine: no reading is canceled out and all readings are suspended in tension with one another. Augustine can rest secure that his exegesis will invariably unveil "an a-textual signified which constitutes the meaning of the text."²⁷ Petrarch, on the other hand, openly questions the sincerity of his faith and undertakes the sinful and idolatrous project of making a kind of religion of his own art. His texts, therefore, are denied a reassuring message of final religious statement but instead promote a kind of perpetual and open-ended analysis.²⁸

NOTES FOR CHAPTER THREE

1. Sonnet # 134 offers a characteristic exposition of Petrarch's restlessness:

Pace non trovo et non ò da far guerra
 a temo et spero, et ardo et son ghiaccio,
 et volo sopra 'l cielo et ghiaccio in terra,
 et nulla stringo et tutto 'l mondo abbraccio.
 Tal m'à in pregion che non m'apre né serra,
 né per suo mi ritien né scioglie il laccio,
 et non m'ancide Amore et non mi sferra,
 né mi vuol vivo né mi trae d'impaccio.
 Veggio senza occhi, et non ò lingua et grido,
 et bramo di perir et cheggio aita,
 et ò in odio me stesso et amo altrui.
 Pascomi di dolor, piangendo rido,
 egualmente mi spiace morte et vita.
 In questo stato son, Donna, per voi.

Augustine's teaching (especially *De civitate Dei* [Book XIX]) inspires Petrarch to pursue peace as his highest goal (see *Familiars* [XIX, 18]). Isidore of Seville's *Etymologies* (I 3, 7) explains different modes of journeying in terms of the Pythagorean Y: its straight base represents the beginning of life, its bifurcation stands for the fact that everyone must make between spiritual health and perdition. The right way, which is most difficult, is the virtuous path that leads to salvation; the left path, which is effortless, leads one to sin; on the Pythagorean Y. Allusions to opposite paths abound in the writings of Petrarch: see his account of the ascent to Ventoux (*Familiars* IV, 1); *Bucolicum Carmen* XI 53, also, in *Fragmenta*, # 23. 13, 306. 1; 360 9-10; 286. 8. On the frequent use of the idea of a virtuous person as one who stays on the right path, and evil as lameness or inability to walk properly, see: G. R. Evans *Augustine on Evil* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1982) 154-164; on Augustine's interpretation of the Fall as a wandering off, see: Peter Brown *Augustine* 168-69. For discussions of the choice of a right path, see also: E. Panofsky *Hercules am Scheidweg* (Studien der Bibl. Warburg, Lipsia, 1930). With particular reference to Petrarch, the best study to date is Thomas Greene "Petrarch *viator*" 18-46, in *The Vulnerable Text* (NY: Columbia UP, 1986); T. E. Mommsen "Petrarch and the Story of the Choice of Hercules" (1953) in *Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 1959 175-196. For an exhaustive review of the theme of the journey up to Dante (and prehistory of Dante's Ulysses), see: Cesare Segre: "L'*itinerarium animae* nel Duecento e Dante." *Lecture classensi* 30 (1984): 9-32.

2. Gianfranco Contini discusses the spare catalogue of this generic landscape, "Preliminari sul linguaggio del Petrarca." Introduction *Canzoniere* (Torino: Einaudi, 1964);

see: F. De Sanctis *Saggio critico sul Petrarca* (Turin, 1983) on the identification of Laura and the landscape; on Valchiusa, see: W. T. Elwert "A Valchiusa." *Saggi di Letteratura italiana* 92-99. For a thorough review of the ideal landscape (*locus amoenus*) offered by antiquity, see: E. R. Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* tr. Willard Trask (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1953) 186-7; for a discussion of # 126, see Mazzotta "Petrarch's Song 126." On the landscape deployed by Dante petroso: Shapiro *Hieroglyph of Time* 111; Robert Durling in his introduction to the *Lyric Poems* notices that the poet never sees Laura indoors (6). For Petrarch's own views on the landscape as catalyst for Laura, see : *Familiars* VII, 3 (to Giacomo Colonna), *Bucolicum Carmen*, 10 for the coordinates of the place.

3. This is a recurring image, in fact Laura's death is also announced by an eclipse "in un punto n'e scurato il sole" (268. 17) and again "Lasciato hai, Morte, senza sole il mondo/ oscurato et freddo." (338. 1-2) ""Nel tuo partir [...] e 'l sol cadde del cielo" [352. 12-13] and in the Triumph of death II, 1-2 "La notte che segui l'orribil caso\che spense il sole[...]"

4. This place where restless passions without reason dominate, is also alluded to in *Penitential Psalm* I, 2 (which recalls in horror his entry into a harsh inaccessible place which stood for his moral and spiritual chaos). See also *Seniles* IV, 5. For the connection of Petrarch's *errare* to his *errore* (the "primo giovanil errore" of sonnet # 1), see: Martinelli *Petrarca e il Ventoso* 277-9. For a good discussion of the labyrinth, see: Gaetano Cipolla *Labyrinth: Studies on an Archetype* (NY-Ottawa-Toronto, Legas), he makes use of the psychological category of "inflation" and traces the image of the labyrinth from the Middle Ages to the present (he devotes a chapter to Petrarch and one to the episode of Ulysses); and Adelia Noferi "Il Canzoniere di Petrarca: Scrittura del desiderio e desiderio della scrittura," *Paragone letteratura* 296 (1974) which discusses the perimeter of *Rime* as the perimeter of labyrinth.

5. Enlightening, in this respect, are Petrarch's comments about the Fortunate Islands and "the other" and "the savage," and his discussion of "errare" in desert places, which identifies savagery as a state of wildness and total submission to natural instincts, seen also as lack of agriculture (and which could be extended to cultivation). See: Theodore J. Cachey Jr. "Petrarch, Boccaccio and the New World Encounter. " *SIR* 10: 45-59; Giorgio Padoan "Petrarca, Boccaccio e le Canarie." *Italia Medievale e Umanistica* 7 (1964): 264-277.

6. The word "selva" is prominently featured in poem # 22 (a poem which recapitulated the experience of his *innamoramento*). This is the first sestina of the collection and it appears as a rhyme word, it is thus repeated 6 times plus once in the envoy. "Selve e boschi" are discussed by Peter Hainsworth, "The Myth of Daphne in the *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta*." *Italian Studies* 34 (1979) 30-31. See also M. Shapiro *Hieroglyph of Time* (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota Press, 1980) 122. On Dante's "selva" see: Vickers "Re-

membering Dante" *MLN* 96 (1981) 11; John Freccero "Dante's Prologue Scene" *Dante Studies* 84 (1966) 9 reprinted in *The Poetics*. On the genealogy of the concept of "selva" and its transfigurations as a master metaphor (from Plato's *Timaeus* to Chalcidius' translation and commentary, chapters CCLXVIII-CCCLV are entirely devoted to "De silva") see: O' Donnell "The Meaning of Silva in the Commentary on the *Timaeos* of Plato by Chalcidius," *Medieval Studies* 7 (1945); J. Le Goff, "The Wilderness in the Medieval West," *The Medieval Imagination* tr. A. Goldhammer (Chicago and London: U of Chicago P, 1988); Franco Rella *L'enigma della bellezza* (Milano: Feltrinelli, 1990) 44-50; a very interesting discussion of the *silva* as a space of both psychological and cultural necessity, Robert Pogue Harrison, *Forests: The Shadow of Civilization* (U of Chicago), particularly astonishing is the range of material elaborated, from myth to fairy tale, architecture and painting, his discussion of literature ranges from Virgil to Dante, Boccaccio, Conrad Beckett and Sartre.

7. It is worthwhile noticing that Dante chooses Virgil and not Augustine to be his guide through his infernal pilgrimage and that the figure of Augustine is virtually absent from the whole *Divina Commedia*, with the exclusion of a brief appearance at the end of *Paradiso* (32.32) with Benedict and Francis, who receive lengthy treatments while he is mentioned in passing. This is a rather surprising turn of events since Dante's other writings (*Convivio*, *De Monarchia*, "Lettera a Can Grande della Scala") might have led his audience to expect a more substantial treatment of Augustine. Moreover, Petrarch immediately recognizes Augustine in the Proemio to his *Secretum*, while Dante does not recognize Virgil ("for his long silence) when the Latin poet first appears to his rescue in the *Inferno*. We are perhaps to assume that Augustine speaks to Petrarch all along.

8. One of the most blatant instances of Petrarch's desecralization of space is his account of the ascent on Mt. Ventoux (*Familiars* 4.1), motivated solely by his aesthetic gratification, ("because it is there" according to Morris Bishop, p.104). On this episode, see: Lyell Asher "Petrarch at the Peak of Fame." *PMLA* 108 (1993) 1050.

9. This is not just in the *Fragmenta*, ("si che, s'io vissi in guerra et in tempesta/ mora in pace et in porto." [365. 9-10], the storm and safe harbor are recurrent themes throughout his writings: *Familiars* VIII 4, 23; "In freto viximus moriamur in porto" *Familiars* II 5,6, *Epystolae Metraicae* I 14, *De vita solitaria* I. 316. In the *Secretum* his spiritual itinerary is defined as "peregrinatio" (114), and he remembers his own crying and hope to find safety and shelter in a protected harbor, (though he then went back and ended up shipwreck on the same rocks) "At quotiens postera inter eosdem scopulos naufragium passus sim, quotiensque, si destitutor, passurus intelligis." (174).

10. Dante Alighieri *Commedia: Inferno* ed. Emilio Pasqualini and Antonio Quaglio. (Milano: Garzanti, 1982). The relation of Petrarch to both Augustine and Dante has been

repeatedly noticed by critics who have eloquently detailed and explained the inspiration he received from his frequent visitation of Augustine's writings and his skillful use of salient infernal allusions to intensify his representation fit into a network of images that infuses the textual fabric of his writings as a constant thematic motif. See: Sara Sturm Maddox, *Petrarch's Metamorphoses* (Columbia: U of Missouri P, 1985) esp. ch. III, IV, V. On the connection between Dante the infernal pilgrim and Ulysses in Canto # 26, see: J. Freccero *The Poetics of Conversion* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1986) who connects the two episodes in terms of the renunciation of a circular narrative for a linear narrative of salvation. The image of the safe harbor, furthermore, is connected to the beginning of the *Aeneid*, where Neptune intervenes to thwart a storm and saves Aeneas from a sure death by drowning. The literature of Petrarch's relation to Dante is predictably massive. A useful discussions is found in, Robert Pogue Harrison, *The Body of Beatrice* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1988). On Petrarch's "oblique" imitation of Dante, which insists on sameness and difference, see: Nancy J. Vickers "Widowed Words: Dante, Petrarch and the Metaphors of Mourning." in *Discourses of Authority in Medieval and Renaissance Literature*. ed. Kevin Brownlee and Walter Stephens (Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 1989) pgg. 97-108. For a discussion of Petrarch's letter stating that he never read Dante (*Fam.* XXI, 15) see: Aldo Bernardo "Petrarch's Attitude Towards Dante." *PMLA* 70 (1955): 488-517.

11. "My parents were worthy people, of Florentine Origin[...]As they were expelled from their own city, I was born in exile in Arezzo, i the 1304th year of Christ's era [...]" : 7 Morris Bishop tr. *Letters from Petrarch* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1966). Petrarch's biography is discernible from his highly autobiographical writings (in particular *Coronation Oration*, *Posteritati*, which twists biographical data to construct his life on that of Dante, *Seniles X*, 2 addressed to the Archbishop of Genoa Guido Sette, *Familiares* and his *Testamento* (reprinted by T.E. Mommsen, "The Last Will: A Personal Document of Petrarch's Old Age." in *Medieval and Renaissance Studies* [1959] 197-236). For the chronology of certain episodes and identification of individuals alluded in the poetry U. Bosco *Francesco Petrarca* (Torino, 1946, 4th edition Bari, 1968); Bosco stresses the lack of historicity of Petrarch, the immobility of the subject and explores his obsessive treatment of the sense of transitoriness that pervades all earthly things. Wilkins *Life of Petrarch* (Chicago 1961) is a wonderful work of scholarship and faithfully records what is documented in his subject's writings. M. Bishop *Petrarch and his World* (Bloomington, 1963); T. G. Bergin *Petrarch* (NY, 1970) presents a popularizing account.

12. Leonard Barkan *The Gods Made Flesh: Metamorphosis and the Pursuit of Paganism* (New Haven, 1986). On the "civilizing process" as Norbert Elias has labeled it, whereby the "civilized" body was invented through corporeal canons formulated and transmitted over centuries and absorbed into the practices of every day life, see: Marcel Mauss's seminal essay "Techniques of the Body" *Economy and Society* 2 (1973): 73. Pierre

Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* tr. Richard Nice (Cambridge, London: Camb UP, 1977) has succinctly described this process: "the seemingly most insignificant details of *dress, bearing, physical and verbal manners* [...] treating the body as a memory, they entrust to it in abbreviated and practical, i.e., mnemonic, form the fundamental principles of the arbitrary content of culture. The principles embodied in this way are placed beyond the grasp of consciousness, and hence cannot be touched by voluntary, deliberate transformation[...]products of implicit pedagogy, capable of instilling a whole cosmology, an ethic, a metaphysics, a political philosophy through injunctions as insignificant as 'stand up straight' or 'don't hold your knife in your left hand.'" (p. 94) . A freely chosen act of defection from the proper path is described by St. Augustine in the *City of God* as a turn into something " of a lower degraded reality [...] contrary to the order of nature" (xii. 8), a case of perversion: "when the will leaves the higher and turns to the lower, it becomes bad not because of the thing to which it turns is bad but because turning is itself perverse." (xii. 6).

13. This moment is crystallized by Augustine in the *Secretum*, p. 112. Conversion is a problem of the will and an immediate irrevocable transformation once the subject has fully come to a resolution. Petrarch alludes to *Confessions* VIII, 5, 10 when his will become one. Sonnet # 1 voices a fundamental threat to the poet's inner subjective continuity. The first person is a frozen linguistic signifier inadequate to embrace both the narrating and narrated self of autobiographical writings (sinner and converted spirit in a conversational narrative). Genette has drawn attention to the important distinction between narrating and narrated I, in the autobiographical novel, in his study of Proust, G.Genette *Narrative Discourse* transl. J.C. Lewis (Oxford, 1980). See, also Leo Spitzer "Le style de Proust" *Etudes de Style* (Paris, 1970) esp. pp. 397-473 (formerly in German in *Stilstudien* 2 [1928]). "I" is a deictic signifier whose referent changes according to the circumstances of enunciation (Spitzer differentiates between "erzählendes ich" and "erzähltes ich," that is, narrating and narrated I). The referent of "I" varies according to circumstances; also, the identity of "I" varies according to the code of discourse (a personal letter, public speech etc.) The referent modulates with the conditions (speaker, tone audience) of its enunciation. Hence it falls into category of movable signifiers that linguists call **shifters**. The more a message becomes dissociated from the process of intersubjective communication--as it does in a narrative that is closed upon an inner logic, a text with its own mode of existence--the more the "I" loses referentiality. I becomes the vacant property of everyone and no one. On the "I" as a "shifter," see: Emile Benveniste *Problemes de linguistique general* (Paris, 1966), 237-50. Christian conversion is a deeper, ontological split between two states of being: it is not just new perspective on life but a total reorientation of one's ideology (a true being abjuring the experience in the flesh). A clear, though partisan, summary of Christian hermeneutics: A. J. Maas "Exegesis (Biblical)" in the *Catholic Encyclopedia* (NY: The Encyclopedia Press, 1913) esp 5: 93-94; also: E. Vance "Augustine's *Confessions* and the Grammar of Selfhood" *Genre* (1973) and Jean Starobinski "The Style of Autobiography"

Literary Style: A Symposium ed. Seymour Chatman (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1971).

14. Aristotle discusses metaphor as the application of an alien name by transference. E.R. Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* tr. Willard Trask (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1953) 128 likens metaphor literary composition to sea voyage. The connection of *metaphorein*/ transportation to metaphor is also noted and discussed by J. Derrida, "White mythology" *Margins of Philosophy* tr. Allan Bass (Chicago, U of Chicago Press, 1982) 23.

15. The penitential poems interspersed in the collection are habitually contradicted by the lyrics that precede and follow them (see, # 62, 81, 142, 264, 355, 364, 366).

16. The rhyme words of this poem are openly poetic. In its ambiguous last line either "pianto" or "morte" can function as subject (thus the double meaning of the double sestina). Petrarch rewrites the Dantesque *sestina* in elusive terms. Whereas Dante had congealed form and endowed the poem of a sense of completeness Petrarch turns it into a game. His key words are not repeated in pure sense, they repeat themselves with subtle changes. Some alterity enters the *sestina*, which becomes emblematic for the whole collection. # 22, the first *sestina*, does not quite congeal time and is, instead a poem full of anxiety, an Aube that anticipates separation. # 30 is another paradoxical *sestina* because it is an anniversary poem, thus its circular form is strongly crossed by a diachronic thread. On the *sestina* and Petrarch's propensity to make ample use of it, see: T. Barolini, "The Making of a Lyric Sequence: Time and Narrative in Petrarch's *Rerum vulgarij fragmenta*." *MLN* 104 (1989): 1-38; M. Shapiro, *Hieroglyph of Time: The Petrarchan Sestina* (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota Press, 1980).

17. See: U. Bosco *Francesco Petrarca* (Bari: Laterza, 1968), 9 and G. Contini "Preliminari sul linguaggio del Petrarca" *Canzoniere*. (Torino: Einaudi, 1964) who states that Petrarch is "chiuso in un giro di inevitabili oggetti eterni sottratti alla mutabilita della storia." (xvii).

18. For a thorough discussion of the power of deception of feminine language and song, see the voice "sirena" in the *Enciclopedia Dantesca* (Roma, 1976).

19. The ordeal of compassion prerequisite for Aristotelian tragic catharsis that will make a new man out of a bewildered pilgrim.

20. Dante's emotional response upon listening to his guide, Virgil: "Poscia ch'io ebbi 'l mio dottore udito/ nomar le donne antiche e' cavalieri,/ pietà mi giunse, e fui quasi smarrito."(V, 70-72); Francesca's appeal: "se fossi amico il re de l'universo,/ noi pregheremmo lui de la tua pace,/ poi che hai pietà del nostro mal perverso." (V, 88-93)

again Dante to Francesca: "e cominciai: 'Francesca, i tuoi martiri/ a lagrimar mi fanno tristo e pio.'"(V, 116-117); Dante retrospectively: "Al tornar de la mente, che si chiuse/ dinnanzi a la pietà de' due cognati,/ che di trestizia tutto mi confuse," (VI. 1-3).

21. On the textuality in Francesca's episode see: Renato Poggioli, "Tragedy or Romance: A reading of the Paolo and Francesca Episode in Dante's *Inferno*." *PMLA* 72 (1957): 313-38; Giuseppe Mazzotta *Dante Poet of the Desert* (Princeton, Princeton UP, 1979): 160-70; Ettore Bonora "Inferno, Canto V," *Giornale Storico della Letteratura Italiana* 99 (1982): 321-52; Teodolinda Barolini *Dante's Poets: Textuality and Truth in the Comedy*. (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1984): 4-14; Stephen Popolizio "Literary Reminiscences and the Act of Reading in *Inferno* V," *Dante Studies* 98 (1980): 19-33; Glauco Cambon, *Dante's Craft*. (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P., 1969).

22. For the best brief discussion of Dante's machinery of suffering and of the logic underlying Dante's representational mode, I referred to the heading *contrapasso* in the *Enciclopedia Dantesca* (Rome, 1970) 2: 181-3. See, also: Charles Singleton, "Journey to Beatrice." *Dante Studies* 2 (Cambridge, 1988): 47-69.

23. Saint Augustine *On Christian Doctrine* translated by D.W.Robertson (NY: Macmillan Publishing, 1958). *De Doctrina Christiana*, a text of seminal importance for Petrarch, Saint Augustine has discussed and emphasized how traditional rhetoric is not concerned with truth but plausibility. The Christian preacher, therefore, must be aware of the seductive power of language once its signifying nature is forgotten: "It is a mark of good and distinguished minds to love the truth within words and not the words. Of what use is a gold key if it will not open what we wish?" (IV.xi.26). In Book II he warns the exegete against the dangers of an idolatrous reading of the Old Testament, which he portrays as the inability of the reader to recognize and interpret the text allegorically, that is, to reject it as final revelation. Verbal idolatry is characterized, in essence, by an attitude of literal mindedness and a lack of ability to interpret signs. Saint Augustine explicitly states: "He is a slave to a sign who uses or worships a significant thing without knowing what it signifies. But he who uses or venerates a useful sign divinely instituted whose signifying force he understands does not venerate what he sees and what passes away but rather that to which all such things are to be referred." (II.ix.13). In his reflective moments Petrarch is prepared to admit to the sinful nature of his passion for Laura in the rhetoric used by Saint Augustine while discussing verbal idolatry ("cosa bella e mortal passa e non dura" [248.8]). The overtly idolatrous poetry (particularly, "Giovane donna sotto un verde lauro") inscribes the poet's veneration of Laura within the larger Christian iconography of the cult of the cross in an attempt to evade the temporal constraints of his love and of life. A side effect of this project (and certainly one very dear to the poet) is the eternalization of the poetic language that generates the icon. From an Augustinian point of view this is the cult of an empty and dangerous sign, which has no transcendent signified. For Petrarch, on the other hand, this is

a radical and essential determination because it affirms the autonomy of his poetic production.

24. For a discussion of the theory of reading implicit in the *Secretum* see: Victoria Kahn, "The Figure of the Reader in Petrarch's *Secretum*." *PMLA* 100 (1985): 154-166. Augustine of Hippo who, in *De Doctrina Christiana* has produced a seminal handbook of Christian rhetoric. There he states that he is not interested in the value of interpretation per se, but in defining it in a way that it may reinforce Christian faith. An Augustinian reader can understand only in one light: "whoever[...]thinks that he understands the divine Scriptures or any part of them so that it does not build the double love of God and of our neighbor does not understand it at all" (I. xxxvi, 40). Hermeneutics belongs to the sphere of theology; unlike poetics, which is concerned with the taxonomy and the interaction of poetic structures, hermeneutics is concerned with the meaning of specific texts. A hermeneutic reading is a means towards an end; it must be guided by a principle of intelligibility; when a text finally becomes transparent it also becomes superfluous.

25. Mark J. Jordan, "Words and Word: Incarnation and Signification in Augustine's *De Doctrina Christiana*." *Augustinian Studies* 11 (1980): 190. For a clear (but partisan) summary of Christian hermeneutics: A. J. Maas "Exegesis (Biblical)' in the *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (NY: The Encyclopedia Press, 1913) esp 5: 93-94.

26. The objects that inhabit Petrarch's universe (and that are the object of his idolatrous worship) are "created by the poet," and "in turn, [create] him as a poet laureate." Freccero, "The Fig Tree" 37.

27. Ann K. Clark, "Augustine and Derrida: Reading as Fulfillment of the Word." *The New Scholasticism* 55 (1981): 110.

28. Signs repeat themselves and "the reading of a sign is itself a sign." Clark, 111.

CHAPTER FOUR

ENDS

In the editions we currently read, the last thirty *Fragmenta* are arranged in a progression which strays from that of *Vaticano Latino* 3195; they observe, instead, the final marginal numbering that Petrarch noted on his manuscript but did not physically execute in a new ordering of the poems (*canzone* # 366 concludes the *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta* in both versions). We cannot speculate whether this was the definitive configuration of the collection, since Petrarch died; we have, nonetheless, a precious indication of the poet's editorial habits. This is also tangible evidence that he kept making changes on his vernacular lyrics until the end of his life (in spite of his protestations that he abandoned the *Fragmenta*). Furthermore, since the last thirty poems occupy a decisive point in the story told by the *Rime*, Petrarch's late intervention illustrates the significance he accorded to each poem's position in the overall constitution of meaning. The ethical position that this new arrangement proposes, moreover, markedly slants the tone of the ending towards repentance. The poems that are most responsible for a steady palinodic crescendo in the editions we now read (# 362, 363, 364, 365) used to occupy a much less significant position (from # 351 thorough 354) and thus used to expose Petrarch to many opportunities to relapse to his old ways.¹

Nevertheless, the ambiguous elements that saturate *canzone* # 366 admonish us (in either version) to suspect the poet's penitential demeanor. The poem's language persists in

evoking Augustine to authenticate the poet's conversion and in this way unmask its failure. A divided will persists at the end and the poet is still praying to achieve the coherent will that is a precondition of conversion, as we know from Augustine's *Confessions*, not its outcome:

Con le ginocchia de la mente inchine
 prego che sia mia scorta
 et la mia torta via drizzi a buon fine
 [...]
 Scorgimi al miglior guado
 et prendi in grado i cangiati desiri. (366. 63-65; 129-130)

This position is consistent with Franciscus' confession at the end of the *Secretum*, where he restates his inability to overcome moral impasse and Augustinus prays for him to reach a safe haven: "Deum oro ut euntem commitetur, gressusque licet vagos, in tutum iubeat pervenire." In the *Fragmenta*, thus, it is open to question whether the "porto" (and "pace") secured at the end of the collection (it is the very last word uttered) is an incidental site or a real point of arrival, whether the I of the poet finally steps outside of his literary discourse and thereby warrants for its ending (or whether the I is still wandering on the old poetic journey). The likelihood of Petrarch's odyssey being circular is corroborated by the reverberation of the *incipit* in the *explicit* ("quante lagrime ò già sparte" [366. 79]; "in rime sparse" [1. 1.]) which invites the poems to return to their beginning and restate the poet's restlessness.²

The organization of the *Rime*, which is so central to their overall meaning, is

predicated throughout its path on microcosms of instability. The little sequence formed by poems # 60-61-62, for instance, portrays the poet swinging between an attitude of repentance and one of idolatry: in sonnet # 60 he condemns the laurel ("tal che si secchi ogni sua foglia verde!" [60. 12]), in # 61 he blesses every aspect of Laura and everything graced by her touch, including his love poems to her (the word *benedetto* is repeated four times and introduces each quatrain and tercet): ("et benedette sian tutte le carte/ ov'io fama l'acquisto" [61. 12-13]), in # 62 he begs Christ on the cross for his forgiveness and his help ("reduci i penser vaghi a miglior luogo/ rammenta lor come oggi fusti in croce." [62. 13-14]).

Petrarch's poems, moreover, repeatedly state their own inability to end and thus challenge the possibility of a conclusion. The cluster of lyrics known as the *canzoni degli occhi* (# 70-73) is organized to be read as a brief narrative. This sequence comprises four *canzoni* that are both structurally and thematically homogeneous: they are metrically uniform, have an identical rhyme scheme and explore the relationship of writing to eros. Poem # 70 atypically ends without an envoy and the *congedi* of the following lyrics explicitly acknowledge Petrarch's inability to stop writing:³

Canzon, tu non m'acqueti, anzi mi infiammi
a dir do quel ch'a me stesso m'invola;
però sia certa de non esser sola. (71. 106-108)

Canzon, l'una sorella è poco innanzi
et l'altra sento in quel medesimo albergo
apparecchiarsi, ond'io più carta vergo. (72. 76-78)

At the end of # 73 weariness sets in and causes Petrarch to quit writing (though not thinking about Laura):

Canzon, i' sento già stancar la penna
del lungo et dolce ragionar con lei,
ma non di parlar meco i pensier miei. (91-93)

A new poem follows (sonnet # 74). This fact, alone, contradicts what the poet has just declared in the previous envoy; the sonnet, furthermore, offers a thematic (though paradoxical) bridge to the preceding songs since the poet, who keeps on writing, now reveals that he is tired of thinking his tireless thoughts of Laura: "Io son già stanco di pensar si come/ i miei pensier in voi stanchi non sono" (74. 1-2). With its rambling chain of dependent clauses the sonnet presumably mimics the weariness it proposes as its subject matter. These lines, though, depict a mind that is erratic only on its surface. Its thoughts are controlled and impeccably modulated by a *chiasmus* ("son/ stanco/ pensar/ pensier/ stanchi/ sono"). The sonnet closes by opposing emotion and method, and attests to the triumph of the poet's technical merits over the disordering drives of his desires ("Colpa d'Amor, non già defecto d'arte." [74. 14]). The poet alludes once more to his exhaustion in sonnet # 75, which brings the topic to full circle, and ends with the glorification of Laura's eyes as the energizing source behind his poetic enterprise ("perch'io di lor parlando non mi stanco." [75. 14]).

As the end of the collection nears the poet admits again to being tired (and now old as well): "torno stanco di viver, non che sazio." ('I return, weary of life, not merely satiated.'

[363. 14]); "Ormai son stanco," ('Now I am weary,' [364. 5]), and thus casts serious doubts on whether his palinodic conclusion is the expression of a momentous progression towards conversion or the random outcome of his running out of steam.⁴

By keeping his poems inside the circular logic of his lyrical sequence Petrarch safeguards them from the external forces of history. A letter to the defunct Quintillian (*Familiars XXIV, 7*) occasions Petrarch's invective against the devastating effects of time ("Agnovi etatem vestatricem omnium"). He alludes to a mutilated, disfigured copy ("discerptus et lacer") of Quintillian's *Oratory Institutions*, which is rendered as a dismembered body ("Vidi formosi corporis artus effusos: admiratio animum dolorque concussit") a corpse from the past which historicizes the dismembered limbs of Actaeon (and of Laura) as well as alluding to the form of the *Fragmenta*.

Petrarch's collection of *Fragmenta* tests the strategy and solution offered by sonnet # 74 on a broader scale, and presents itself as his universal attempt at containing fragmentation, of imposing an order and a structure onto what is seemingly chaotic (thus both his personal history and on history proper). This proves to be a task fraught with complications, since winds carry off words, "Il vento ne portava le parole" (264. 14) and poems physically do depart from the hands of their author and venture on a journey out of the unified body of the collection: "Se tu avessi ornamenti quant'ai voglia,/ potresti arditamente/ uscir del bosco et girar infra gente."(126. 66-68); "Sovra dure onde al lume de la luna,/ canzon nata di notte in mezzo i boschi,/ ricca spiaggia vedrai deman da sera."(237.

37-39);

Tu vedrai Italia et l'onorata riva,
 canzon, ch'agli occhi miei cela et contende
 non mar non poggio o fiume
 ma solo Amor, che del suo altero lume
 piu` m'invaghisce dove piu` m'incende,
 ne' natura puo` star contra 'l costume.
 Or movi, non smarrir l'alre compagne,
 che non pur sotto bende
 alberga Amor, per cui si ride et piange. (28. 106-114)⁵

As we know Petrarch's world view was profoundly affected by his experience of exile and brushes with death. His preoccupations manifested themselves both explicitly in the themes explored by his prose and poetry, and implicitly in the philological inclination that sustained his intellectual endeavors and compulsion to establish origins and roots. The prospect of releasing his language into the unknown, among alien hands, was appalling to Petrarch because it duplicated (and magnified) the weight of anxiety he associated with being vagrant and homeless. The vernacular poems must have appeared particularly susceptible to being sullied by the familiarity of other human beings, to fall prey to the vulgarity of the mob he frequently decried. Yet Petrarch was aware that language guarantees continuity because it is a social fact, and that an attitude of complete indifference to his vernacular audience would translate into the marginality of his work (a kind of exile that he dreaded far more vehemently than his paripatetic life).⁶

Petrarch alludes to his disdain for the mob who might access his Italian writings in the sonnet that inaugurates the collection, where he sketches a distinction between his

chosen public of experienced listeners, presumably those qualified to feel "pietà" ("ove chi per prova intenda amore") and the vulgar mob ("popol tutto"). As guarantee, he disseminates throughout the *Rime sparse* announcements about the socially (and professionally) elevating merits of his love for Laura: without her he would have become a hoarse growler of the courts and one of the horde "saria forse un roco/mormorador di corti, un uom del vulgo" (360. 116-17), Laura separated him from the throng "questa sola dal vulgo mi allontana." (72. 9). In the *Secretum* Franciscus restates this view of Laura ("Et iubes illam oblivisci vel parcius amare, que me a vulgi consortio segregavit" [p. 214]) but in this instance he must contend with an uncompromising interlocutor, Augustinus, who bitterly rejects the proposition advanced by Franciscus, who adopts a woman (any mortal creature, in the eyes of Augustine) to be the stimulus of an ennobling process (essentially dismissing the path of *stilnovismo* which was a stepping stone for Dante). He chides Franciscus, reminding him that Laura's sole influence on his personality (and legacy) was to intensify one of his flaws, his misanthropy: "Quod vero alta expectare docuit quod segregavit a populo, quid aliud fuit quam presidentem sibi et, unius captum dulcedine, contemptorem rerum omnium, fastidioseque negligentem reddidisse? (p. 216).

It is a well-known letter Petrarch wrote to Boccaccio (*Familiars*, XXI, 15) on the subject of Dante's *Commedia* and its immense popularity that most vividly exposes his anxiety that his vernacular *Rime* be exposed to the masses and vulnerable to their abuse. Petrarch decries Dante's use of a humble style ("popularis quidem quod ad stilum attinet,

quod ad rem haud dubie nobilis poete") to convey a sublime and momentous subject matter. He sneers at Dante's success because he regards popular favors as ephemeral and suspect ("ventosisque diu vulgi plausibus"), since the populace typically reward obscene art ("publicam sorte fleo, ad obscenas artes honestarum premia translata conspiciens"). According to this letter the *Commedia* had slipped away from Dante and now circulated in places of ill repute among unworthy people ("noster inter ydiotas in tabernis et in foro posse putas accidere?").⁷

Petrarch goes so far as to question Dante's integrity as the bearer of the important message contained in his literature ("its dico si quantum delectat ingenio, tantum moribus delectaret") and portrays Dante as an ambitious man, excessively eager to achieve notoriety and mindless of his other worldly obligations ("omnium negligens soliusque fame cupidus"). Petrarch's characterization of Dante as a man yearning to explore all human vices and virtues (the *Commedia* presents itself as their universal, encyclopedic compilation) and willing to pursue his private ambitions at the expense of his wife and offspring ("non amor coniugis, non natorum pietas ab arrepto semel calle distraheret") is curiously reminiscent of Dante's own rendition of Ulysses in the *Inferno*, in *canto 26*:⁸

né dolcezza di figlio, né la pietà
del vecchio padre, né 'l debito amore
lo qual dovea Penelope far lieta,
vincer potero dentro a me l'ardore
ch'ì ebbi a divenir del mondo esperto
e de li vizi umani e del valore; (*Inferno* 26. 94-99)

In a backhanded way, Petrarch feigns to applaud Dante and grant him the palm of vernacular eloquence ("sibi vulgaris eloquentie palmam dem"). In the same breath, however, Petrarch explains why he chose to abandon the vernacular, which had appealed to him as a young man; he feared that people would recite his verses and mar them:

et qua nulla poete presertim gravior iniuria, scripta eius pronuntiando lacerant atque corrumpunt [...] Nunc quod unum restat, queros et stomachor illius egregiam stili frontem inertibus horum linguis conspui fedarique; ubi unum, quod locus exigit, non silebo, fuisse michi non ultimam causam hanc stili eius deserendi, cui adolescens incubueram.

While Petrarch insinuates the dubious resemblance of Dante to his character Ulysses, in an imaginary letter addressed to Homer (*Familiare* XXIV, 12) he likens his own demeanor to that of Ulysses' devoted wife Penelope: "Ulixem tuum sua Penelope expectavit quam te ego."⁹ The subject of this letter is Petrarch's dedication to the classical past: he expresses grief at his ignorance of Greek and his longing to savor Homer's poetry in the original (let us recall that in the *Inferno* Vergil and Ulysses converse in Mantuan dialect). In the *Familiare*s, on the whole, Petrarch appears more intimate (and affectionate) when he composes letters for the dead; indeed, the last ten are addressed to great, albeit defunct, figures of Antiquity: Cicero, Seneca, Varro, Quintilian, Livy, Pollio, Horace, Virgil and Homer.

Penelope patiently waited for her husband's return for twenty years and managed to keep her suitors at bay by secretly weaving and unweaving the shroud that was to herald her decision. Her interminable work has a rhythm that is antithetical to that of war and of

adventure (the domain of her hero husband): her activity is both limited to the confines of the home and narrowly defined towards a goal. Weaving extends time with its repetitive and stable cadence; the ordinary rhythms of life are restored once the hero returns home. Ulysses, on the other hand, is perpetually propelled by his eagerness to achieve worldly renown (*kleos*) with his deeds and this takes him to all corners of the earth, even forbidden ones, to maximize his experience. Once he returns home, according to the tradition accepted by Dante, he cannot settle down in tranquility; already an old man, he sets off for a new, albeit fatal adventure.

In the *Fragmenta* Petrarch, like Penelope, exercises his artistic skill as a strategy of deferrals. On the other hand, his *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta* consistently allude to his spiritual and intellectual restlessness. Petrarch repeatedly acknowledges that he, also, has navigated along the coordinates of Ulysses' voyage, a voyage colored by the variables of diverse encounters with strangers. The vernacular, indeed, is a living and shifty tool that forces him into a domain of exchanges and confrontations and the *Fragmenta*, in this sense, depict the poet torn between his conflicting drives to difference and assimilation; in Ulyssean terms his ordeal is played out between the opposing forces of enmity and fellowship (the *hostis*, the outsider can be a friend or enemy and, conversely, the *hospes*, the host can accept the outsider or harm him). Petrarch's final "porto," though, the only *nostos* beyond the fluctuating world of the *Fragmenta*, is a world long gone, the classical world that he is patiently trying to recover and reconstruct (re-member) as a philologist.

Petrarch, taking his identification with Penelope further, insists that his lyrics are woven like a canvas ("buon tessor degli amorosi detti" [26. 10]; "la tela novella ch'ora ordisco" [40. 2]; "l'auro ch'Amor di sua man fila e tesse" [198. 2]; "quando i pensieri electi tessea in rime." [332. 47]), or into a spider web ("Quant'al mondo si tesse, opra d'aragna" [173. 6]), a statement echoed in the *Familiars* (XV. 5): "simillimumque est telis araneorum quicquid sub sole textitur." He thus alludes to Book VI of the *Metamorphoses* and to the story of Arachne, another master of the loom. Ovid recounts that Arachne arrogantly challenged Minerva in the art of weaving and made a masterful tapestry depicting scenes of libertine Gods (the same scenes found in the *Metamorphoses*). As a punishment for her insolence the goddess transformed her into a spider and tore her tapestry into shreds. Ovid depicts weaving as a highly competitive experience and Arachne as reckless ("temeraria" [*Metamorphoses*, 6. 32]). This account is echoed by Dante in his portrait of Arachne in the terrace of pride (*Purgatorio*, 12. 43), where he describes her as "folle". While Arachne's talent matches that of Penelope, with the presentation of her immoderate pride in her technical perfection we return full circle to Ulysses: Dante describes his last journey as folly ("de' remi facemmo ali al folle volo," [*Inferno*, 26. 125]),¹⁰ and thus allows for an implicit analogy of pride in the sphere of art and pride in the sphere of practical experience.

Arachne's fate testifies to the highly ambitious (and dangerous) nature of producing texts. Her tapestry, which unmaskes the violence and vengefulness of the gods, is flawless and provokes the rage of Minerva. It is also directly threatening of Ovid's text because it

makes it unnecessary. His story, in a way, captivates us because Arachne has already been silenced and transformed into a spider spinning incoherent webs. Petrarch, let us not forget, is himself busy at retelling tales from the *Metamorphoses*, and admits that his poetic enterprise is daring ("ardite imprese" [173. 13]; "l'alta impresa" [5. 6]). The poet, furthermore, openly discussed the sensitive (and involved) relations that develop between literary texts (and their authors). In his letter to Homer (*Familiare* XXIV, 12) he insists that he would be flattered by imitators, even if he were to be surpassed by them ("illud magis gravisurus tales imitatores fore qui superent"); this is because, he contends, imitation is a form of reverence and an act of love ("nemo enim nisi amet imitabitur") which binds authors in a familial connection akin to that between a father and a son ("Si enim genitor carnis filium se maiorem cupit, quid optare debeat pater ingenii?"). In the same letter he reproaches Virgil for not having properly acknowledged Homer and never mentioned his name, ("quod scilicet nulla usquam tui nominis mentio apud illum sit exuviis honestum et ornatum tuis), thus for having been a bad son (unlike Lucan, Ovid, Juvenal, Statius). In a letter to Boccaccio (*Familiare*, XXIII, 19) Petrarch praises his scribe Giovanni Malpaghini and again discusses the subject of imitation with an analogy to the relationship between a father and a son ("qualis filiis ad patrem") who may look dissimilar and yet be secretly connected ("sed est ibi nescio quid occultum quod hanc habeat vim"). In another epistle to Boccaccio (*Familiare*, 22, 2) Petrarch confesses that he committed to memory and appropriated all of the classic texts that most inspired him, so much so, that they become

part of his own body, his own marrow ("medullis affixa"). In the same letter, nevertheless, he argues for the necessity of individual talent to shine ("sum quem similitudo delectet, non identitas, et similitudo ipsa quoque non nimia, in qua sequacis lux ingenii emineat, non cecitas non paupertas'). In a letter to Tommaso da Messina (*Familiare* 1.8) he addresses the resistance of writers to using material that is not their own in well-known analogy between the toil of a writer and that of bees who manipulate the prime substance they extract from flowers into honey and wax. Imitation is transformation, it works within a shared language that predates the writer and gives legitimacy to his voice; creation is an act of imitation, an echo that renews what already exists in the form of recollection, resurrection, dialogue with the dead.

It is in light of these pronouncements that we can fully appreciate the meaning of Dante's nearly total absence from Petrarch's lyrics. Dante enjoys the unique distinction of surpassing Laura's evanescence. In the *Fragmenta* his name is uttered once, in sonnet # 287, along with those of Guittone d'Arezzo, Cino da Pistoia and Franceschino degli Albizi; his writing is explicitly quoted in one instance, in *canzone* # 70. This is an eloquent citation poem where Petrarch introduces the *incipits* of poems by his vernacular predecessors (Arnaut Daniel, Guido Cavalcante, Dante, Cino da Pistoia) at the close of each stanza. With this astute strategy Petrarch enlists himself in their literary legacy; we are, furthermore, to assume a kind of ascending order of quality culminating with Petrarch: in fact, he grants himself the honor of concluding the final stanza of the *canzone*, with a quotation from the

first *canzone* of the *Fragmenta*, (# 23, "Nel dolce tempo de la prima etade").¹¹

In poem # 70 we observe Petrarch as he unhinges finished artifacts and thus behaves in a way that may remind us of Penelope; but it is in the way Petrarch tears up texts created by others so that their central premise can be dismissed and a new text woven that he reminds us of Minerva (and Ovid) ; in turn, the new text succeeds in making us look at the predecessors in a different way. His insistence on turning so many beginnings (*incipits*) into epilogues and his conclusion announcing itself as a fresh start ("la prima etade") undermines and inverts the chronological order of obligation that binds Petrarch to the poets he is quoting. Petrarch emerges triumphant as the poet of the future over the past¹²

Dante is suggestively cast as the pulsating heart of the poem (physically at the center of it) but it is Dante *petroso*, writing the kind of poetry he had rejected in his "vita nova." Petrarch's self citation comes from *canzone* # 23, also a poem about youth, his own (let us recall that he was 23 when he met Laura in 1327). This is a gloomy poem assembled in ponderously dense stanzas (all of twenty lines and all hendecasyllabic) which emulate the weight felt by the defeated lover. This is, appropriately, the most Ovidian of Petrarch's poems, where he tells the story of his transformations (his Ovidian metamorphoses) but relates them all in the present tense; his metamorphoses become a cycle of repetitions which signal his inability to start afresh (to convert). In # 23 Petrarch is transformed, like Actaeon, into a stag but not torn to shreds by his dogs; by the time song # 23 is incorporated into song # 70, however, Petrarch displays his dexterity at tearing up the poetic bodies of others. As

its conclusion calls for a new beginning, poem # 70 (which lacks a proper *congedo*) functions as the prologue to the *canzoni degli occhi* (# 71-3) the sequence which most dramatizes the arbitrary nature of all endings.

In the *Secretum* Petrarch informs us that Laura's tragic death has a disordering effect on the natural flow of events: because the poet has come first to life, he ought to exit first: "Prius intravi, prius egrediar" (p. 208).¹³ We experience the effects of his disorientation most markedly in the *Fragmenta*, as the linear progression of temporality breaks down: he encloses poems which commemorate the anniversary of his first encounter with Laura (and of her death, which falls on the same day), poems which mark the passage of time, but deliberately sets two of these poems out of their proper order (# 122 commemorates the 17th year, #145 the 15th; # 221 marks the 20th anniversary, # 266 the 18th year).¹⁴ Furthermore, Petrarch invokes the healing power of Mary (in # 366) against the woman who caused his spiritual disintegration, but leaves a conspicuous aperture, a gaping wound, in his manuscript (the blank pages that separate # 263 and # 264). This division deliberately refuses to privilege poem # 267, which announces Laura's death, a tactical decision emphasized by making # 266 a poem that celebrates the 18th anniversary of his encounter with the woman (thus, setting it in the year 1345, three years before Laura's death).¹⁵

Petrarch's approach clashes with the Aristotelian prescription (in the *Poetics*) that a well built plot have a beginning, a middle and an end, that it be closed, homogeneous, centered and symmetrical, with a destination and a point of departure, that it subscribe to a

teleological point of view. Petrarch, moreover, openly disregards Augustine's argument against division as sinful ("My two wills, one old, one new, one carnal, one spiritual, were in conflict and in their conflict they wasted my soul." [*Confessions*, VIII, 135]). As the self-appointed poet of a "new age" Petrarch plays with the order of temporality and this serves his double purpose to shelter himself from the inevitable tragic events of history and to rescript, in the process, literary history. Furthermore he discriminately invokes Augustine side by side with Dante to re-open a deep cultural wound (the mediation between the love for a creature and the love for the Creator), a wound that Dante deemed definitively closed; the blank pages left in his manuscript are the tangible reminder of this lesion. The tercets of sonnet # 273 openly abandon the path set by Dante:

Deh non rinnovellar quel ch'ancide
 Non seguir più penser vago, fallace
 ma saldo et certo, ch'a buon fine guide.
 Cerchiamo 'l ciel, se qui nulla ne piace:
 ché mal per noi quella beltà si vide
 se viva et morta ne devea tor pace.

In the *Familiars* (1.9) Petrarch presents his view of rhetoric and establishes an intimate connection between eloquence and moral health. Elocution, he has learned from Cicero, must strive for uniformity (which Petrarch regarded lacking in Dante's *Commedia*); poor oratory, conversely, reflects internal disharmony, conflicting desires and produces bad behavior: "Quoniam nisi primum desudera invicem nostra convenient, quod preter sapientem scito nemini posse contingere, illud necesse est ut, dissidentibus curis, et mores

et verba dissideat.” It is in this letter, moreover, that Petrarch mentions Orpheus and contemplates and the power of words to produce events, to shape, mold and determine real human behavior.

In the second book of the *Secretum* Franciscus interprets the Aeolus' episode found in the first book of the *Aeneid*. Aeneas suffers shipwreck when Aeolus releases his winds (which are normally imprisoned inside a granite mountain) over the Mediterranean. The description of Aeneas dwarfed by the buffeting power of the storm (which is analogous to Petrarch's poetic self portrait as a passive agent of disorderly forces) climaxes in the first simile of the epic when Virgil evokes a scene of civil war. The destructive power of the storm is likened to that of an unruly mob (“ignobile vulgus” I. 149) thus the achievement of Neptune (who intervenes to subdue the winds and saves Aeneas) is anachronistically compared to that of Octavian (soon to be honored with the title of Augustus) who restrained the mob and interrupted the enmities and bloodshed that had been devastating Rome. Virgil depicts this man as one who naturally commands the respect of the crowd with his eloquence: instead of an army he uses his rhetorical gifts to silence them and soften their heart (“Ille regit dictis animos at pectora mulcet” [I. 153]). Franciscus interprets the Aeolous' episode allegorically: the winds, he maintains, symbolize passionate desire and anger which must be contained lest they ruin a person; the mountain symbolizes reason:

quasi diceret corpus atque animam et breviter totum hominem cui dominabuntur, in precipitium agent. Ex adverso autem montes regemque presidentem, quid nisi capitis arcem et rationem esse, que illic inhabitat? (p. 194)

The importance of personal self control is the motif underlying the episode of Petrarch's much discussed climb of Mt Ventoux (*Familiars* 4.1), the windy mountain, which clearly evokes the theme of the Aeolian mountain and where Petrarch retrieve into the personal sphere. We do not have to look far (the following letter), however, to find that Petrarch extends the notion of self control to the realm of the political, explicitly equating regal power and self rule: "Illum ego vere regem dixerim, qui non subditos modo, sed se ipsum regit ac frenat, qui exercet in passioned suas imperium [...] sic nullum altius quam se ipsum regere." (*Familiars* 4. 2).

In the *Fragmenta* Petrarch insistently evokes the analogy between his personal afflictions and the larger forces of history, and thus correlates the private perturbations of his soul with the forces pulling apart the fabric of the world (the plague, of course, comes to mind); he has ample opportunity to revisit the power of rhetoric to affect real events. He draws from one imagistic and linguistic arsenal to depict his private amorous tribulations and to survey the heath of the body politic of Italy. The obsession with which he scrutinizes his private world (*Amor*) mirrors his anxiety for Italy (*Roma*).¹⁶ The *Fragmenta* contain seven poems that openly discuss political subjects: #27, #28, #53, #128, #136, #137, #138; sonnet # 269 ("Rotta è l'alta colonna e 'l verde lauro") which offers a common lament for death of Laura and cardinal Colonna concludes his public lyrics.¹⁷ Petrarch encourages us to accept these poems as an indispensable section of the collection (and not to disconnect them from the other love songs). In the envoy of # 28 he tells his lyric to find the other

companion songs and confesses that love is not only hidden under a woman's veil "non smarrir l'altre compagne,/che non pur sotto bende/alberga Amor, per cui si ride et piange." Political and amorous songs are bound by Petrarch's concern with recovering classical eloquence; in all rhetoric is advanced as the medicine to modulate his thoughts and heal his soul torn between his conflicting desires (the theme of sonnet # 74) as well as the remedy for contemporary culture (unnaturally severed from its classical past).¹⁸ This grouping of lyrics reflects a totalizing design that defines the new intellectual as both a secular philosopher and a great master of amorous poetry.

The most famous political song, "Italia mia" (# 128) postulates the problematic of Italy as a nation. It is addressed to the warring lords in Italy who ravage her body with fratricidal warfare ("crudel guerra" [128. 11]). Throughout the song Petrarch revisits familiar themes: Italy violated by intestine wars is a mortally wounded body "le piaghe mortali/che nel bel corpo tuo sì spesse veggio" (128.1-3); the warring factions are compared to a divided will "Vostre voglie divise" (128. 55) which produces fragmentation "le fortune afflitte e sparte" (128. 59). Against the present disgraceful condition of Italians (which Petrarch likens to the sin of idolatry: "non far idolo un nome/vano, senza soggetto" [128. 76-77]), he introduces an orthodox Augustinian antidote. Thus Italians, as a nation, ought to reflect on the impermanence of life and inevitability of death ("Signor: mirate come 'l tempo vola/ et sì come la vita/fugge et la Morte n'è sovra le spalle," [128. 97]). This reflection should, in turn, effect a cultural awakening and inspire the study of history, and produce a

kind of conversion from the prevailing views ("in qualche onesto studio si converta" [128. 110]). The poem, like the *Fragmenta*, closes with a plea for peace "T vo gridando: Pace, pace, pace" (128. 122). Petrarch, moreover, weaves meaningful Virgilian themes into the fabric of # 128. The political factions that tear the country apart are evoked with an image which explicitly reminds us of Aeolus' winds ("venti contrari a la vita serena" [128. 10]), the poet invokes virtue as a deterrent against their raging furor ("vertù contra furore" [128. 94]) and casts God as the ultimate Neptune, whose will shall dominate material instincts (which have become inhuman) and energize the oratorical power of the poet who will be his emissary:

Rettor del cielo, io cheggio
 che la pietà che ti condusse in terra
 ti volga al tuo diletto almo paese:
 vedi, Segnor cortese,
 di che lievi cagion' che crudel guerra;
 e i cor' ch'endura at serra
 Marte superbo et fero
 apri tu, Padre, e 'ntenerisci et snoda;
 ivi fa' che 'l tuo vero,
 qual io mi sia, per la mia lingua s'oda. (128. 7-16)

Petrarch reminds Italians that God has provided for the impregnability of the peninsula: the Alps are a natural mountain barrier which encloses and shelters the body of Italy from uncivilized ultramontane people ("de l'Alpi schermo/ pose fra noi et la tedesca rabbia;" [128. 34-35]). In his letter to Homer (*Familiare* XXIV, 12) Petrarch returns to this image and further reflects on the distinguishing features of Italy's enemies: the barbarians

("barbari"), he repeats, are kept in check by Alps and Ocean ("a quibus non Alpe tantum aeria, sed toto utinam quod usquam est pelago disiuncti essemus"); what differentiates them from civilized people, above all else, is that they have never read Homer. Ignorance, he adds in the same letter, has reduced Italians to barbarism: Homer's work is now ignored by Italians and neighbors alike ("denique de tuorum numero librorum, quorum magna pars Italis ipsis, vicinis ac proximis tuis, inaudita est"). The same connection is implicitly invited in the *Rime*, where Petrarch, draws on the same imagistic arsenal to describe Christians and Muslims. On one hand he describes Italy as an old, idle and slow woman ("vecchia, oziosa e lenta" [53.12]) and on another occasion he petitions for a crusade against the infidel ("Turchi, Arabi e Caldei" [28. 54]) which he depicts as a naked, cowardly and slow ("popolo ignudo, paventoso e lento" [28.58]).

Petrarch views Italy breaking under the pressure of internal dark forces, he presents her infected body politic: Rome is a heap of ruins, the whole country is in a state of moral and political disorder, a cage in which predator and prey are forced to cohabitate ("Or dentro ad una gabbia/fiere selvagge et mansuete gregge" [128. 40-41]). As a whole the political songs (and the *Fragmenta*) define a theory of culture by sanctioning a specific and enduring myth of Italy (or at least one of ancient Rome and its underworld of heroes and deeds) and of the poet as a key inspiration in its revival:

Cesare taccio che per ogni piagga
fece l'erbe sanguigne
de lor vene [...] (128. 49-51)
[...]

Latin sangue gentile:
 sgombra da te queste dannose some,
 non far idolo un nome
 vano, senza soggetto;
 che 'l furor de lassù, gente ritrosa,
 vincerne d'intelletto
 peccato è nostro, et non natural cosa. (128. 74-80)

L'antiche mura ch'ancor teme et ama
 et trema il mondo, quando si rimembra
 del tempo andato e 'ndietro si rivolve,
 e i sassi dove fur chiuse le membra
 di ta' che non saranno senza fama,
 se l'universo pria non si dissolve (53. 29-34)

O grandi Scipioni, o fedel Bruto (53. 36)

Petrarch's project of recuperation of the classical tradition involves, again, the negotiations of his position between the *vulgus* and the chosen few. He renews the appeal of sonnet # 1 and calls to discriminate between a charitable elite ("fra magnanimi pochi" [128. 120]) and the contemptuous masses ("tra la gente altera" [128. 115]). Petrarch as the embodiment of the new committed intellectual submits a clear alternative to Dante's path purification: because his secular pilgrimage lacks the paraphernalia of transcendence, the text that depicts this journey remains divided and its end involves the cleansing of a youthful passion as a token of the poet's social disengagement from the vulgar crowd who had once derided him ("al popol tutto/ favola fui gran tempo" [1. 9-10]), and the progressive estrangement of his vernacular from all forces of social heterogeneity. On this journey it is language, alone, that becomes the model and the cornerstone for private and

public harmony.¹⁹

In his letter to posterity Petrarch extends the coordinates of this privileged intellectual. Estranged from the rabble and indifferent to quotidian politics, he is free to dialogue with the great cultural values of antiquity and, at the same time, to negotiate with contemporary power structures:

Ebbi la fortuna di godere la familiarità dei principi e dei re, e l'amicizia dei nobili, tanto da esserne invidiato. Tuttavia da parecchi di coloro che più amavo mi tenni lontano. Fu sí radicato in me l'amore della libertà, [...] I piú grandi re del mio tempo mi vollero bene e mi onorarono [...] e con certuni ebbi rapporti tali che in certo qual modo erano loro a stare con me; e dalla loro grandezza non ebbi noie, ma molti vantaggi.

With their the abrupt shifts from political to love rhetoric, from Roma to Amor (both from one poem to the next and within the most developed political lyrics) Petrarch's political outcries in the *Fragmenta* fail to produce action even among his carefully selected audience. Thus, as time passes by, he keeps writing against formidable odds in a language which lacks defined linguistic boundaries (Italian continues to be a language without a fixed grammar and vocabulary) and sending off his poems, unaccompanied, to a country that lacks a jurisdictional territory (Italy remains an abstract entity and does not become a nation in Petrarch's lifetime) a country where, moreover, nobody seems to listen:

Sopra 'l monte Tarpeio, canzon, vedrai
 un cavalier ch'Italia tutta onora,
 pensoso piú d'altrui che di se stesso.
 Digli: "Un che non ti vide ancor da presso
 se non come per fama uom s'innamora,
 dice che Roma ognora
 con gli occhi di dolor bagnati e molli,

ti chier mercé da tutti i sette colli."(53. 99-106)

Canzone, io t'ammonisco
 che tua ragion cortesemente dica,
 perchè tra gente altera ir ti convene
 et le voglie son piene
 già de l'usanza pessima et antica,
 del ver sempre nemica.
 Proverai tua ventura
 fra' magnanimi pochi a chi 'l ben piace;
 di' lor: "Chi m'assicura?
 I' vo gridando: Pace, pace, pace." (128. 113-122)

He thus condemns his songs to live in vagrancy, a tangible homelessness which will terminate (and secure "pace" to poet and poems alike) only when real cultural and political issues are settled.

Virgil in the *Aeneid* described "rumor" as a kind of winged monstruosity with multiple eyes, ears and tongues ("monstrum horrendum, ingens, cui quot sunt corpore plumae,/tot vigiles oculi subter (mirabile dictu),/tot linguae, totidem ora sonant, tot subrigit auris." [*Aeneid* 4. 181-183]). This force of disorder belongs to the imagistic cluster from which Virgil draws to depict other threatening forces of turmoil (war and love for instance), forces that unleash themselves unexpectedly lest they are kept under constant restraint. Here we are reminded, of course, of Aeolous' mountain, which is a helpful counterpoint to one of Petrarch's great anxieties, if not the greatest one of all. Petrarch's enmity of crowds and fear of their slander were matched solely by his insatiable ambition to be heard by his contemporaries (and his desire to attract and hold the attention of posterity), to become the

object of their reading and celebration, even if this involved making a spectacle of his inner struggle and employing a "vulgar" language.²⁰ In the *Familiare*s Petrarch writes that great men, like great mountains cannot be concealed "non possunt viri insigne nisi ut excelsi montes occultari." (*Familiare*s 13. 4). Indeed, it is in a fashion similar to the Aeolus and his mountain that he structures his vernacular career and his *Fragmenta*. It is their adamantine structure²¹ (and not the poet's conversion) that controls the internal *dissidio* of the poet; it is also through their air-tight organization that he negotiates the coordinates his reception and monumentalization across time. This is achieved through the poet's conscious manipulation of a tradition, of the present filtered through the past with pure poetics of the *ricordo*. In Petrarch's poetry the event (political or literary) becomes a petrified circular form. The palinodic sonnet which introduces us into the *Rime*, as we have seen, sets the pace for the organization of a collection characterized by repetitions, patterns, terms that relate to each other through resemblance and belatedness and in their relation contradict the uniqueness of an event. This is poetry where, in substance, nothing happens.²² The specular (ambiguous) structure introduced by the double *innamoramento* (sonnets # 2 and 3) is mirrored, in turn, by the two parts of the collection, which also present very little resolution. The poet's inability to move forward is signalled in the first part by the high proportion of *sestine* and "re-turns" ("Io mi rivolgo indietro a ciascun passo" [15.1]); in the second part, barring his conversion, he insists on the passing of all things, even those that should last forever (in # 323 Laura is devoured by beasts, a ship ends in shipwreck, the laurel is destroyed by

lightening, the earth opens and swallows a fountain, a Phoenix witnesses the destruction and commits suicide, Eurydice is bitten by a serpent) and on presenting double events: the possibility of a second love (# 270, 271, 280); the double celebration of Cardinal Giovanni Colonna and Laura ("un lauro verde, una gentil colonna" [266.12]); the double deaths Laura and Cardinal Colonna ("Rotta è l'alta colonna e 'l verde lauro" [269.1]); the double (and only) *sestina*, which ends with an ambiguous line with a double meaning ("prego che il pianto mio finisca morte" [332. 75] where it is impossible to establish whether the subject is pianto o morte.)²³

One of Petrarch's transformations, depicted in *canzone* # 23, is into a pure voice, an echo. Again Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, which is the source of this reference, presents many of the familiar coordinates of Petrarch's story and offers the best model for the way in which Petrarchism is set into motion. The nymph Echo, while she still had a body, fell in love when she saw Narcissus hunting for deer. Both characters are bound to the same emotional fixation (Narcissus is also in love with himself). He fled and out of grief she became disembodied into a pure echo, condemned (in a kind of Dantean *contrapasso*) to repeat the words uttered by others and eagerly await for Narcissus to utter these words. Narcissus, it is worthwhile noticing, did not survive and suffered death by liquefaction.

Yet Echo's dissemination of signifiers is not an obvious reiteration of fragments of speech uttered by others. Echo, within the limited range of action allowed to her, manipulates Narcissus' utterances: sometimes she repeats a whole sentence, sometimes only

words, sometimes fragments of a word; she distorts sentences, alters utterance, slides meaning. This tactic is akin to poetic use of *paranomasia*, a favorite tool of Petrarch's poetic trade, which destabilizes a statement with its union of orthographic identity and semantic difference (which displaces verbal into visual). *Paranomasia* makes a visual spectacle of the possibilities of poetic meaning, puts language into motion, initiates its endless drift and liberates its productive force. It testifies to the power of language to acquire a body of signifiers outside authorial reach. It attests, furthermore, to the echoes (some involuntary, some deliberate) which haunt language and make it resound with fragments of the past, crowd it with memories of other voices; the poet, speaking from the depths of a shared language, is made aware of the distance separating his work from his progeny and the future uses of his language, which will be difficult to trace and attribute to the original statement and subject.²⁴

With a story that goes nowhere, Petrarch wants to counter this drift and shelter his *Fragmenta* from history and from the pollution of the present. This, furthermore, explains the extreme monologism of his poems (with the exception of some distant, oracular voices, for instance in # 54 and # 81). Even the voices quoted anonymously in *canzone* 70 are employed to evoke the newness of Petrarch's love and of the poetry which narrates it. Yet, in his letters, Petrarch reveals that he is aware of the distance separating him spatially and temporally from posterity (*Seniles* 18). Speaking consists largely of circulating along with our own words, snatches of other people's conversation, half-remembered replies, turns of

phrases. To speak is to assign within the web of language one's own discourse to other speakers, it involves social commerce; to represent the words of another, whether or not one intends to quote that person, implies an acceptance of his or her alterity, not in a pure form, but assimilated and reformulated through the twin filters of the unconscious and of ideology.²⁵ Direct discourse becomes increasingly important in the *canzoni* that come in the second part of the collection, particularly at the end of it, at the point when the *Fragmenta* are about to be released into circulation, into time and alien hands: # 264 ("T vo pensando e nel penser m'assale") is based on the *Secretum* and portrays the inner conflict two thoughts (with Franciscus and Augustinus this was expressed in terms of two conflicting characters); # 268 ("Che debb'io far, che mi consigli, Amore?") presents a dialogue between the poet's self and Love; in # 325 ("Tacer non posso, at terno non adopre") the poet debates Fortuna; in # 359 ("Quando il soave mio fido conforto") he converses with his lady who appears at his bedside in a dream and comforts him (this poem introduces Dante's courtly solution); in # 360 ("Quell'antiquo mio dolce empio signore") the poet and Love argue their case before the tribunal of Reason (this is a mini drama which ends with the indictment of courtly love and Dante); in # 362 (which is a sonnet, "Volo con l'ali de' pensieri al Cielo") Laura and God speak to the poet.

Yet, throughout the *Fragmenta*, Petrarch employs a vernacular which is far from everyday language. The language of the *Fragmenta* is crystallized quotidian language, isolated and safeguarded from the fluctuations and contamination of everyday exchanges.

This aristocratic literary project is also a political one because it is grounded on a notion of literary Italian and (and of being an Italian) which are in turn based on the values of the political and linguistic world of Rome (and reversal of the negative space created after the invasion of that world by alien forces with dissonant voices). The ever shifting quality of the vernacular is classicized by Petrarch who single-handedly, with an obsessive and death like reconfiguration of the same, creates a new monological universe and launches it as normative. Against the forces of social heterogeneity and the multiplicity of terrestrial voices it is the poetic voice of Petrarch (and not the transcendental voice of the *One*) that raises like a granite mountain to dominate and harmonize all possibilities of discord and introduces "pace."²⁶

NOTES FOR CHAPTER FOUR

1. The following is an outline of the sequence of the last 31 poems of the *Fragmenta*; The left hand column follows modern editions (and final marginal numbering), the right hand column reproduces the order of VL 3195.

336

337=339

338=340

339=341

340=342

341=343

342=344

343=345

344=346 (337 through 351 were moved two digits)

345=347

346=348

347=349

348=350

349=351

=====
350=337

=====
351=361 (this becomes the penitential crescendo at the end)

352=363

353=365

354=364

=====
355=338

=====
356=352

357=353

358=354

359=355

360=356

361=357

362=358

363=359 canzone

364=360 canzone

365=361

366 canzone

2. For the connections between poems # 1 and # 366, see: F. Rico "Prólogos al *Canzoniere*. (*Rerum Vulgarium Fragmenta*, I-III). *Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa. Classe di Lettere e Filosofia*. serie III, XVIII (1988) 1071-1104 and G. Gorni "Petrarca Virgini (Lettura della Canzone CCCLVI "Vergine bella.") *Lectura Petrarce*, VII (1987): 65-72. The prayer to the Virgin that concludes the *Commedia* and the one at the end of the *Fragmenta* play an overlapping function and thus emphasize the different types of movements chosen by Dante and Petrarch to exit their respective texts: in Dante the movement is vertical or ascensional in Petrarch it is circular.

3. This is a point made by Teodolinda Barolini, "The Making of a lyric Sequence." *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta.*" *MLN* 104 (1989): 1-38.

4. On the block formed by *canzoni* 125, 126, 127, 128, 129 as another cluster which produces circularity in the collection, see: Teodolinda Barolini, "The Making of a lyric Sequence: Time and Narrative in Petrarch's *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta.*" *MLN* 104 (1989): 1-38.

5. In the *Secretum*, analogously, words are described (in a ways that are reminiscent of Laura) as fleeting ("Pretervolant enim illa, non insident." 129).

6. On Petrarch's contempt for the crowds see: Christopher Marting, *Lyric Public in Ovid, Petrarch and Shakespeare*, (Pittsburg: Duquesne UP, 1994), esp. chapter 4. The subject is also treated by Adelia Noferi, "Il *Canzoniere* del Petrarca: Scrittura del desiderio e desiderio della scrittura." *Paragone* 296 (1974): 5; Aldo Bernardo, "Petrarch and the Art of Literature." *Petrarch to Pirandello: Studies in Italian Literature in honor of Beatrice Corrigal*. ed. Julius A. Molinaro (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973): 40.

7. The *Commedia* receives the applause and coarse howls of vulgar people ("plausum et lanistrarum [...] fullonum et cauponum et lanistrarum") who ignore Homer and Virgil. Petrarch returns to the subject of the coarse vulgarity of the crowd in the *Seniles* (2, II, 1), again a letter addressed to Boccaccio, in which he depicts himself as the victim of the rabble and compares his admirers to dogs gathering round him wherever goes: "Me quocunqueluce media incedentem plebeia canum turba circumstrepit [...] Isti autem innumerabiles, inquieti, rauci, quique quos morsu nequeant tedio agitent immortali." Petrarch inaugurated the convention, among Renaissance humanists to both disdain Dante and the vernacular itself. This subject is discussed by Giuliano Tanturli, "Il disprezzo per Dante dal Petrarca al Bruni." *Rinascimento* 25 (2nd serie, 1985): 199-219. An insightful

analysis of Petrarch's anxiety of dissemination is presented by Maria Rosa Menocal, *Shards of Love: Exile and the Origin of the Lyric* (Durham & London: Duke UP, 1994): 178 and ff. Aldo Bernardo "Petrarch's Attitude Towards Dante." *PMLA* 70 (1955): 488-517 thoroughly analyzes other letters by Petrarch on the same theme; see also Nancy Vickers "Vital Signs: Petrarch and Popular Culture." *Romanic Review* 79: 184-95, on the enduring hold of Petrarchan conceits and images.

8. In the *Familiars* Petrarch claims that Ulysses' insatiable desire to know (which pushed him to explore the whole world) caused him to forswear peace: "quiescere poterat Ulixes, nisi inexplebile desiderium multa noscendi cunctis illum litoribus terrisque raptaret." (13. 4)

9. My discussion of Penelope is indebted to: Adriana Cavarero, *Nonostante Platone* (Roma, Editor Riuniti, 1992) especially chapter one ("Penelope").

10. Ulysses describes his last adventure (and his undoing) in terms of flight, thus alluding to the buffeting of the sinners in the Infernal storm. In the *Inferno* Ulysses and Guido da Montefeltro (who is the prototype of Petrarch's bad conscience in sonnet # 1, where he attempts to obtain absolution before sinning) are theologically on the same level, they are presented by Dante to illustrate fraud. Poetically, however, they are at antipodes (Guido uses tortuous sentences Ulysses straight-forward utterances). See: Piero Boitani, *L'ombra di Ulisse* (Milano: Il Mulino, 1992) esp, chapter 2. In hell, furthermore, Dante presents a kind of movement which differs from that of the buffeting storm and couples it with *amore*, the right kind of love (Beatrice intervenes on behalf of Dante, because "amor mi mosse" [*Inferno*, 2. 72]) and justice (on the door of hell we read with the pilgrim "Giustizia mosse il mio alto fattore;" [III. 4]). For an incisive discussion of motion, deviation, mutation and sin, see: Kenneth Burke, *The Rhetoric of Religion* (Berkeley: Berkeley UP, 1961): 63-4; 86-117. Burke explores the Augustinian opposition between "Caritas" and "Cupiditas" as they relate to movement: conversion is pitted against the parody of conversion, freedom against slavery to finite objects and bondage to incessant repetition. Italo Calvino eloquently discusses Ovid's Arachné in his *The Uses of Literature* (NY: HBJ, 1980): 151 ff. For a discussion of Dante's use of Arachne to signal his own awareness of his poetic perils see: Teodolinda Barolini, *The Undivine Comedy: De Theologizing Dante* (Princeton UP, 1992) esp. 130-132.

11. On the Medio Latin procedure of composing texts in which are quoted the *incipits* of famous and authoritative lyrics (*cum auctoritate*), see: I. Frank "La chanson 'Lasso me' de Pétrarque et ses prédecesseurs." *Annales du Midi* LXVI (1954): 259-68; M. Perugi *Trovatori a Valchiusa. Un frammento della cultura provenzale del Petrarca*

(Padova, 1985) 230-33; P.G. Beltrami "Appunti su 'Razo e dreyt ay si.m chant e.m demori'" *Rivista di letteratura italiana* V (1987): 9-39. Petrarch thought he was quoting a line by Arnaut Daniel; this line has instead been attributed to Guilhem de St. Gregori. Petrarch's high regard of troubadour poetry was the inspiration in the XVI century of an important chapter in Provençal philology: the commentators of the *fragmenta*, beginning with Bembo, sought after surviving Provençal manuscripts; on this subject see: S. Benedetti *Gli studi provenzali in Italia nel Cinquecento* (Torino, 1911). Barolini in her discussion of canzone # 70 signals use of other poets *incipits* as one of many strategies to subvert a clear closure, "The Making of a lyric Sequence: Time and Narrative in Petrarch's *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta*." *MLN* 104 (1989): 1-38.

12. Menocal, *Shards of Love*, 152. G. Mazzotta, "The *Canzoniere* and the Language of the Self." *Studies i Philology* 75 (1978): 271-196 provides a number of readings of Petrarch's poetics as reflected in the *Canzoniere* and particularly as they correspond or not to Dante. The Petrarch that emerges in the struggle with the problems of self is one whose poetics are those of fragmentation and for whom and in whom thematic criticism is insufficient. Language is the allegory of desire, a veil not because it hides moral meaning but because it always says something else, it is radically inadequate because it does not reflect faith; for Dante, conversely, language is the instrument of truth.

13. In poem # 246 the poet prays to die before Laura: "O vivo Giove/ manda, prego, il mio fine prima che il suo fine."

14. One of Petrarch's favored self-depictions is in an Orphic demeanor, as man who looks back. This underscores his complicated attitude towards temporality. The display of death others (namely Laura and Christ) in the collection, moreover, is not simply employed by Petrarch to ascertain his mortality in the light of their deaths, but to split time: a present death is reflected in the future under the form of inevitable happening. According to Walter Ong *Interfaces of the World*. (1977) "writing always carries an element of death" 239; all writing is preterite, points posthumously to the past, the immortality of texts is a paradox in that they carry on the existence of the creator as a surrogate, they imitate life without death. Petrarch, furthermore reminds us, intermittently, in the *Rime* of Christ on the cross. Christ died once on the cross but his death is liturgically reenacted during each celebration of the mass and in the yearly celebration of Good Friday and Easter, his death and resurrection establishes a certain contemporaneity of the event in the anamnesis which repeats it. Creation is a foundational myth, which breaks into the eternity generally attributed to the pagan world constitutes the presupposition of human history as a process, *civitas peregrinaria*, the time of individual salvation. Augustine does not oppose simple linear and

pagan circular time. The real conflict established by Christianity is between the *novum* or renewed time of any new beginning and cyclical repetition of what, like Lucretian time (III, 945), is always identical to itself. A. Momigliano contests the opposition between a Greek cyclical time and a linear Judeo Christian one, "Il tempo nella storiografia antica" in *La storiografia greca* (Torino, 1982) p. 64 ff.). See, also Remo Bodei, *Ordo Amoris*, 67 ff. On the Christian emphasis on the new to indicate the New Testament, see: C.A. Patrides, *The Phoenix and the Ladder. The Rise and Decline of the Christian View of History* (Berkeley and LA, 1964).

15. *Canzone* # 264, which opens with an ornamental initial, was deliberately conceived by Petrarch to inaugurate a new stage in the *Fragmenta*; furthermore, the first part of the collection begins and ends with a sonnet (# 1 and # 263) while the second begins and ends with a *canzone* (# 264 and # 366) signalling that Petrarch was progressing towards the highest metrical form.

16. At the end of Book One of the *Secretum* the internal *dissidio* that tears Petrarch apart is described as a civil war, at the end of Book Three internal and external peace are equated. Sonnet # 2 explains the subjective experience of love in terms of warfare. The analogy between psychological fragmentation and political war recurs throughout the *Fragmenta*. In sonnet # 44 Petrarch evokes the decapitation of Pompei: "Que' che 'n Tessaglia ebbe le man sì pronte/ a farla del civil sangue vermiglia/ pianse morto il marito di sua figli/ raffigurato a le fattezze conte; (44. 1-4). Petrarch concludes that whereas Ceasar wept when he was presented the head of Pompey, Laura is incapable of shedding a single tear as he is torn apart by a thousand wounds. In # 53 Rome is described as a sleepy old woman ("vecchia, otiosa et lenta" [12]) with scattered hair, a posture that reminds us of Laura ("le treccie sparte" [22]).

17. Petrarch's political poems, as a group, earned him enduring popularity; Machiavelli quotes # 53 at the end of the *Prince*. On the tradition of depicting Italy as a woman, see: Natalia Costa Zalessow, "The Personification of Italy from Dante Through the Trecento." *Italica* 68 (Autumn 1991): 316-331. On the resonance of Petrarch's political themes see, also, M. S. Sapegno "'Italia,' 'Italiani'" *Letteratura Italiana, V Le Questioni* ed. A. Asor Rosa (Torino, 1986): 187-208. On the poems on the papal exile in Avignon, known as the Babylonian captivity cycle (136-38), see: Ann H. Hallock "The pre-Eminent Role of *Babilonia* in Petrarch's Theme of the Two Cities." *Italica* 54 (1977): 290-97 and Wilkins, *Studies in the Life and Work of Petrarch*, 113. Also, see: Aldo S. Bernardo "The Importance of the Non-Love Poems in Petrarch's *Canzoniere*." *Italica* 27 (1950): 302-312.

18. The fundamental essay on Petrarch's figuration of a Dark Age, or Middle Age is Theodor E. Mommsen "Petrarch's Conception of the Dark Ages." *Speculum* 17 (1942): 226-242 (reprinted in *Medieval and Renaissance Studies* ed E. Rice [Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1959: 106-29]). In Mommsen's view the significance of the old metaphor of Darkness became revised by Petrarch with a change of emphasis from things religious to things secular; antiquity, so long considered as a "Dark Age" now became a time of "light" which had to be restored: the era following Antiquity, on the other hand was submerged in obscurity." (p. 228) Mommsen posits two explanations for Petrarch's use of "tenebrae:" A "[...] lack of sources" might have "prevented the historian shedding light on it?" or the metaphor might have been due to a perception that "'the lamps had gone out all over Europe' for a time of more than a thousand years?" Mommsen glosses over the first possibility and concludes that "Petrarch passed a very definite judgement of value upon the long era in question." Hanna Gray has suggested ("Renaissance Humanism: The Pursuit of Eloquence." *Journal of the History of Ideas* 24 (1963): 497-514) that Petrarch's "Dark Age" was not completely devoid of talented men but lacked the eloquence needed to preserve the memory of such men. A loss of eloquence meant the impairment of the collective memory. (p. 503). Panofsky cites Petrarch: "The slumber of forgetfulness will not last forever. After the darkness has been dispelled, our grandsons will be able to walk back into the pure radiance of the past." *Renaissance and Renascences in Western Art* (Uppsala, 1960): 10 and attributes gloomy ignorance not to Christian culture after the conversion of Constantine but to a loss of memory which scribal scholars attributed to fall from grace. See also: Albert Russell Ascoli "Petrarch's Middle Age: Memory Imagination History and the Ascent to Mount Ventoux." *SIR* X (1) pgg. 5 ff; Vittore Branca ed *Concetto, storia, miti e immagini del Medio Evo* (Florence: Sansoni, 1973); G. Mazzotta "Antiquity and the New Arts in Petrarch." *Romaninc Review* 79 (1988) 22-41, Marguerite Waller *Petrarch's Poetics and Literary History* (Amherst: U of Mass Press, 1980): 1-26 discusses Petrarch's writing as resisting schematic periodization and postulates a critique of periodization. The periodization schemes adopted by Renaissance political chroniclers and those developed by literati tracing cultural change is analyzed by Nicolai Rubinstein "Il Medioevo nella Storiografia Italiana del Rinascimento" *Concetto, Storia Miti e Immagini del Medioevo*, ed Vittore Branca (Florence, 1973): 429-48. Petrarch's conception of the age of light before the conversion of Constantine is discussed by Burke *Renaissance Sense of Past*, p. 2.

19. For the implications of language for politics and social structures (specifically as used by chroniclers of the crusades) see: Stephen G. Nichols : "Fission and Fusion: Meditations of Power on Medieval History and Literature," *Yale French Studies* 70. In his letters to prominent political rulers Petrarch takes up role of self-appointed ambassador of peace and tests the Orphic powers of language as civilizing agent and maker of social order,

the strength of human persuasion to promote peace (as in the first simile of the *Aeneid*). With the Doge of Venice, Andrea Dandolo, he commiserates the lamentable condition on Italy (*Familiars* 11.8) and echoes the Virgilian episode of contrary winds that must be ruled by Aeolus to encourage Italians to fight against their common enemy rather than among themselves (*Familiars* 18. 16). For a close textual analysis of the poem "Spirto gentil" as it relates to *Familiars* 10. 1 to Charles IV: Anna Voci "Per l'interpretazione della canzone 'Spirto gentil' of Francesco Petrarca." *Romanische Forschungen*, 91 (1979): 281-288. Song # 28 is an apostrophe to an unidentified figure who can arouse Italians with his eloquence to join other Christians to free Holy Land from Muslims and bring the world (again) under Roman hegemony.

20. In 1362 Boccaccio received a sinister prophecy from a Carthusian monk, Pietro Petroni, who intimated both his imminent death and the death of some of his closest friends, including Petrarch. He proposed that Boccaccio's only possibility of survival was that he abandon poetry and profane literature. In a state of panic, he decided to renounce writing and to devote himself entirely to a sacred life and holy pursuits. He wrote a letter to Petrarch offering to sell him his entire library. In the reply that Petrarch wrote to Boccaccio, he articulated an impassioned defence of the study of literature and suggested that the study of literature has never been incompatible with religion, as Jerome and Augustine have demonstrated:

an educated person in the full possession of his faculties [...] realizes what can be derived from such studies for the fuller understanding of natural things, for the advancement of morals and eloquence, and for the defence of our religion. I am speaking now of the man of ripe years, who knows what is due to Jupiter the adulterer, Mercury the pander, Mars the manslayer [...] and, on the other hand, to Mary the Virgin-mother, and to her son, our Redeemer [...] Neither exhortations to virtue nor the argument of approaching death should divert us from literature; for in a good mind it excites the love of virtue, and dissipates, or at least diminishes, the fear of death.

Petrarch, we must notice, adds in the same letter that he had given up those pursuits, "those studies which I turned my back upon so long ago, as well as literature in general." (*Seniles* 1,4). This letter is quoted by Millard Meiss, *Painting in Florence and Siena after the Black Death* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1951): 162-3.

21. I am borrowing the term used by Andrea Zanzotto in an essay written in 1976, "Petrarca tra il palazzo e la cameretta." *Fantasie di avvicinamento. Le letture di un poeta*. (Milano, 1991): 261.

22. On the difficulty of finding a history in the *Fragmenta*, see: Umberto Bosco

Francesco Petrarca. (Bari: Laterza, 1968). Hans Baron "The Evolution of Petrarch's Thought: Reflections on the State of Petrarch's Studies" *From Petrarch to Leonardo Bruni: Studies in Humanistic and Political Literature* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press) confronts the difficulties inherent in tracing the evolution of the poet's thought. He indicates two connected reasons for this: Petrarch kept making changes on his manuscripts and we have access only to his final version. Carlo Calcaterra "La concezione storica del Petrarca" *Nella selva del Petrarca* (1962) 418 ff suggests a spiritual change in 1342 due to his religious awakening; Theodore E. Mommsen, "Petrarch's Conception of the Dark Ages." *Speculum* 17 (1942): 226-242 (reprinted in *Medieval and Renaissance Studies* ed E.F. Rice jr. [Ithaca & NY, 1959]): 106-29 also intimates a "decisive change" in Petrarch's conception of history.

23. On the specularity of the two parts of the *Fragmenta* see: Peter Hainsworth, *Petrarch the Poet: An Introduction to the 'Rerum vulgarium fragmenta.'* (London: Routledge, 1988): 163. On the double events of Part II, see: Teodolinda Barolini, "The Making of a lyric Sequence: Time and Narrative in Petrarch's *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta.*" *MLN* 104 (1989): 1-38. Binary structures are the generative cells of the poetry: couples of synonym adjectives "mali indegni et empi" (365) (which sometimes grow into triple elements ["Chiare, fresche et dolci acque" (126. 1)]; among the configurations which nullify movement are Petrarch's antithesis and oxymora, *incipits* that mirror each others: "Cantai o piango" (229) "T'piansi o canto" (230).

24. For a description of Echo as a feminine subject who can only speak by altering the language provided by the other see: Claire Nouvet "An Impossible Response: The Disaster of Narcissus." *YFS* 79 (1991): 103-134. *Literature and the Ethical Question*, ed. Claire Nouvet. My application of the prototype of Echo to Petrarch's poetics is indebted to John Brenkman "Narcissus in the Text." *Georgia Review* 30 (1976): 309.

25. For the authoritative discussion of dialogism see: M. Bakhtin: *Marxism and philosophy of language; Esthetics and theory of the novel*. On Petrarch's use of direct discourse, see: Edoardo Taddeo "Petrarca e il tempo" *Studi e problemi di critica testuale*. 27 (1983) 103-4.

26. This is a secularized adaptation of Augustine's argument about peace as order: "the peace of all things is the tranquillity of order--and order is the arrangement of things equal and unequal in the patters which assigns to each its proper position (*De civitate dei*, 19, 13).

CHAPTER FIVE

EXCLUSIONS

In a letter addressed to Boccaccio in 1373 (*Seniles* 17. 3), Petrarch introduces his Latin translation of one of the tales from the *Decameron*. The tenth day's tenth story, which Petrarch chooses for this exercise, narrates of a woman of humble birth, Griselda. She endures years of cruelty from her powerful and despotic husband, Gualtiero, who subjects her to a series of gratuitous humiliations in order to test her obedience. After robbing her of her children, he announces his plan to marry a young girl, and requests that Griselda serve his new bride. In a final, theatrical act of public reconciliation, he reunites Griselda with the children he has himself stolen from her. This is a parody of enlightened rule: Gualtiero's behavior, Boccaccio tells us, is a travesty of magnificenza and a display of its bestial opposite: ("non cosa magnifica ma una matta bestialità").

Petrarch, clearly, was keen to exploit the analogy between the setting of Griselda's tale at the end of the *Decameron* ("at the end of your book, where, according to the principles of rhetoric, the most effective part of the composition belongs"[p. 193])¹ and his own. He deliberately set his translation as an epilogue to his vast epistolary corpus, as he perceived his own texts at an important juncture, about to cross a public threshold. This letter was his attempt at anticipating, preempting and resolving the dissensions that would arise from the reception of his own collected work (both in the vernacular and in Latin). Petrarch suggests that it is useful for an author to know his audience ("It is important to know for whom we are writing, and a difference in the character of one's listeners justifies a

difference in style" [p. 192]). He tells us that, in his view, the *Decameron* was a text "written in prose and for the multitude" (p. 191). Griselda's story, however, "differs almost entirely from those that precede it" (p. 192), so much so, that Petrarch committed it to memory and enjoyed reciting it to his friends. His "auditors," Petrarch tells us, were "delighted" (p. 192).

Petrarch's translation into an elite language (metaphorically depicted as a make over, "change of dress" [p. 193]), was a seemingly pointless exercise, given the response evoked by Boccaccio's tale (as it is in the vernacular) by reputable readers such as the poet himself and his friends. By his own admission (*Familiare*, XIII. 7) we know that Petrarch was looked upon as the highest tribunal before which any writer (particularly an aspiring one) could lay his work and be praised. What Petrarch's Latin rendition achieves, manifestly, is to set apart the public of this version of Griselda's tale from the otherwise wide readership of Boccaccio's vernacular prose. Petrarch obliquely alludes to the beginning of the First Day of the *Decameron*, when Boccaccio chooses women to be the privileged interlocutors of his vernacular tales:

Quantunque volte, graziosissime donne, meco pensando riguardo quanto voi naturalmente tutte pietose siate, tante conosco che la presente opera al vostro iudicio avrà grave e noioso principio, sì come è la dolorosa ricordanza della pestifera mortalità trapassata, universalmente a ciascuno che quella vide o altrimenti conobbe dannosa e lagrimevole molto, la quale essa porta nella sua fronte.²

He tells us explicitly about his own intent:

My object in thus re-writing your tale was not to induce the women of our time to imitate the patience of this wife, which seems to me almost beyond imitation, but to lead my readers to emulate the example of feminine constancy, and to submit themselves to God with the same courage as did this woman to her husband. (p.

194)

Petrarch was certainly happy to exploit both the thematic and structural issues raised by a tale which presents the exemplary behavior of a devoted wife (and facilitates the retrospective interpretation of Boccaccio's whole collection from a penitential advantage point). But his words reveal that he was also eager to relocate the intellectual and spiritual framework of Griselda's tale. He wanted to rescue it from circulating in the vernacular milieu of women (simple readers incapable of imitating the sublime *exemplum* of Griselda) to that of a select (and male) readership, possibly also unfit to behave like Griselda, but qualified to execute sophisticated acts of textual interpretation. This was, roughly, the life long project he had undertaken with the *Fragmenta*, one that would come to full completion more than a century after his death, with the reverential reading of his poems performed by Cardinal Pietro Bembo.

Though the *Fragmenta* were vernacular texts accessible to a wider readership than the Latin classics, they accomplished the severing of the literary vernacular from any other of its linguistic function. The style and subject matter of all poetry written under Petrarch's sway, and Bembo's powerful gloss, tended hereafter to privilege polished elegance and ban all references to the bare and harsh necessities of life. Sheltered from the fluctuations of quotidian exchange and idiosyncratic uses, Petrarch shaped Italian into a sensitive scale of social rank: it established the boundaries of a novel linguistic aristocracy and provided a guarded vehicle of upward mobility.

Boccaccio's fascinating tale, we should recall, animates a heated discussion among

the members of his fictional *brigata*. Before the text of the *Decameron* actually reaches the hands of his readers, Boccaccio seems to envision the dissenting interpretations that will arise from its controversial subject matter. Petrarch, otherwise so painfully attentive to issues concerning a text's reception and circulation, does not discuss this incident explicitly. He appends, instead, a gloss to his translation, where he proposes two interpretations external to Boccaccio from reputable readers of his Latin version of Griselda's story. He conceals their identity but tells us that these readers were men, that one is a Paduan, the other a Veronese (he was careful not to choose Florentines) and that they were friends of both poets. Petrarch thus masterfully simplifies the range of possible responses to Boccaccio's oeuvre into two simple (and sympathetic) positions to his own version: the first reader is moved to tears by Griselda's devotion; the second admits that he, also, would, if he knew the story to be true.

Petrarch's gloss of Boccaccio suggests that he attempted to construct an ideal community of readers for the tale of Griselda. This also reflects the obligation the poet felt at the end of his life with regards to his own compositions, at a time, presumably, when he was thinking over his own vernacular legacy. His painstaking editorial work on his book of lyrics tells us that he worked very hard at modulating their reception.³ As his texts were about to cross a public threshold he feared their position as objects of consumption, liable to be defiled, dismembered and scattered after his death.⁴ While the poet insisted on showing contempt for his vernacular *Fragmenta*, he secretly continued to write and organize them. In this way he offered his verses to be received as rightful participants in a written and fixed

tradition (the lyrical sequence). As he scrupulously organized them, his poems became the prime tools of his strategy of personal, temporal and poetic containment. At the same time, the lyrics were charged with a disruptive force, entrusted to carry out Petrarch's life long project be a poet "de la prima etade" (70. 50) and valorize the Italian (vernacular) lyrical tradition. Unbeknownst to Petrarch, he would be appointed poet of the first (and only) age in the sixteenth century, when the language of Italy was defined on the model and reverential imitation of the vernacular Petrarch has devised for his poems. Their logical port of arrival, to return to the metaphor of travel used by Petrarch throughout the *Fragmenta*, was Pietro Bembo's *Prose della volgar lingua* (1525).

With Bembo, *Trecento* Tuscan Italian gained preeminence over a territory that was divided (and would remain divided for centuries). Seemingly, Bembo's views inspired a purely cultural phenomenon that impacted the tastes of an elite of writers and literary critics. The success of Petrarch's aggressively homogeneous prototype, however, was an international phenomenon, one that was, furthermore, concurrent with the consolidation of European nation states.

The linguistic preeminence of southeastern English, Castillian Spanish and northeastern French were established by the political dominance of these regions over their neighbor. The Andalusian humanist Elio Antonio de Nebrija, author of the first grammar of Castillian Spanish (*Gramática de la lengua castellana*), was explicit about the complicity of language with ethnic and doctrinal purity and imperial power. His treatise, dedicated to Queen Isabella, opens with this acknowledgement:

Cuando bien conmigo pienso, mui esclarecida Reina, una cosa hallo I saco por conclusion mui cierta: que siempre la lengua fue compañera del impero, I de tal manera lo siguió que junta mente començaron, crecieron i fluorecieron, i despues i despues junta fue la caída de entrambes.⁵

The *Gramática* was published in Salamanca in 1492, a pregnant date which testifies to the role of philological restoration as an instrument of Empire. By 1492, under the leadership of Ferdinand and Isabella, Castile had grown into the most powerful kingdom in the Iberian Peninsula. In 1492, furthermore, Jews were expelled en masse from Spain, Columbus sailed off for the new world, and Grenada, the last Muslim outpost on the Iberian peninsula, was recaptured by Christian forces, putting an end to the most exceptional episodes of Jewish, Muslim and Christian cohabitation in European history.⁶ Nebrija alludes to birth of his nation and to the *reconquista* of Granada:

Assi que, despues de repurgada la cristiana religion, por la qual somos amigos de Dios o reconciliados con El, despues de los enemigos da nuestra fe vencidos por guerra I fuerça de armas [...] despues de la justicia i execucion delas leies que nos aiutan i hazen bivar igual mente enesta gran compañia que llamamos reino i republica de Castilla, no queda la otra cosa sino que horezcan lar artes de la paz. Entre las primeras es aquella que non enseña la lengua. (8-9)

In the prologue to his *Gramática*, Nebrija recalls the time when he presented Isabella with a first draft of his treatise. The Queen was versed in arms but still rather naive about the political use of language and its practical deployment. A man of the cloth, the Bishop of Avila, thus one thoroughly acquainted with the collusion of language to ideology, interjected in Nebrija's stead:

quando en Salamance di la muestra de aquesta obra a vuestra real majestadm I me pregunto que para que podía aprovechar, el mui reverendo padre Obispo de Avila ma arrebató la respuesta, I respondiendo por mi dixo: que despues que vuestra alteza metiesse debaxo de su iugo muchos pueblos barbaros I naciones de peregrinal

lenguas, I conel vincimiento aquellos ternian necessidad de recibir las leies quel vencedor pone al vencido I con ellas nuestra lengua, entonces por esta mi arte podrian venir en el conocimiento dellla, como agora nos otros deprendemos el arte dela gramatica latina para deprender el latin. I cierto assi es que no sola mente los enemigos de nuestra fe que tienen la necessidad de saber el language castellano, ma [...] todos los otros que tienen alguntrato o conversacion en España I necessidad de nuestra lengua. (10-11)⁷

In its recent history Sicily, like the Iberian Peninsula, had been at the cross-roads of social groups distinguished by considerable ethnic, religious and linguistic differences. These different groups cohabited amiably under the German Emperor Frederick II. Residing over Sicily, he had promulgated in 1231 a legal code, which was a model of enlightenment and broad mindedness (the Constitution of Melfi). It condemned heresy but displayed remarkable restraint when it came to the formidably diverse communities that made up the social fabric of the island (its sizable Jewish, Byzantine, Christian and Muslim groups) and revealed uncommon concern for the rights of women.⁸

The literary heritage that Petrarch reworked in the high vernacular of the *Fragmenta* was connected to the milieu that flourished in Sicily under Frederick II, and through it, to the courtly culture that had prospered among the heterogeneous peoples of el Andalus (and Provence).⁹ The multifaceted, polymorphous, heavily arabized culture of Frederick II's Sicily was the birthplace of the *Scuola Siciliana*, the first school of vernacular poetry in Italy.¹⁰ For centuries, furthermore, the goods that had enriched the intellectual (and material) life of Europe had come directly or indirectly via trade routes that led from the Middle East to the courts of Spain and Sicily; Arabs of Sicily and Spain developed a courtly life style legendary for its extravagance.¹¹

Petrarch did not hesitate to present his views on the historical period that preceded his own, a period that, roughly, encompassed the vernacular literary history of Italy from Frederick II to Dante. He spoke recurrently and always disapprovingly of this era, which he labeled the "Dark Ages." His life long mission, in fact, was to unearth and reclaim Europe's classical past. To this end the poet was tireless in his philological activity. When it came to his vernacular *Fragmenta*, despite his public protestations, Petrarch worked with extraordinary devotion (and the same philological bent of mind) in order to purge their language the many (and varied) echoes from his immediate vernacular past.

His lyrical identity was built on the systematic repudiation of other poets (Dante in particular) and the repression of all dissonant expressions. In a spirit of rigid Greek-Latin-Christian orthodoxy, he proclaimed his violent antipathy for those among his contemporaries who held Arabic authors in higher esteem than his beloved classics. His loathing of Arabic erudition (medicine and philosophy included) motivated his depiction of Averroes, the author of the most distinguished Medieval commentary on Aristotle, as a rabid dog ("perfidum canem rabidum," *Seniles* XV, 6) and his violent diatribe against Mohammed (in *De vita solitaria*).¹²

In the *Divine Comedy*, it is worthwhile recalling, Dante dropped Muhammad and Ali deep in hell, in the Eight Circle and ninth pouch of *Malebolgie* (thus among the schismatics, not the heretics):

Già veggia, per mezzul perdere o lulla,
com'io vidi un, così non si pertugia,
rotto dal mento infin dove si trulla.
Tra le gambe pendevan le minugia;

la corata pareva e 'l tristo sacco
 che merda fa di quel che si trangugia.
 Mentre che tutto in lui veder m'attacco,
 guardommi e con la man s'aperse il petto,
 dicendo: "Or vedi com'io mi dilacco!
 vedi come storpiato è Maometto!
 Dinanzi a me sen va piangendo Alì,
 fesso nel volto dal mento al ciuffetto. (XXVIII, 22-36)

The *Commedia*, however, is an enormously flexible text. Thus, it is possible for Dante to present a fiercely insolent portrait of the prophet and his nephew, while Saladin (the chivalrous sultan of Egypt and the most successful warrior against Christian forces at the time of the Crusades) is placed in Limbo with Avicenna and Averroes. The latter is depicted as the author of Aristotle's great comment "I gran commento" (IV. 144]), among the virtuous pagans and ancient philosophers he greatly admired.¹³

Petrarch, on the other hand, was an orthodox subscriber to the classical tradition, so much so, that he wrote most of his works in Latin. As for his vernacular verses, he blasted them as lesser accomplishments while he still (though secretly) tried to harmonize them by eradicating their internal heterodox components. His inspiration was, therefore, totally compatible with the loathing of ethnical and cultural diversity that is explicit in Nebrija's *Gramatica* and, to some extent, in Pietro Bembo's *Prose*.

Petrarch, we should recall, spent a total of ten days in Florence during his entire life. Cardinal Pietro Bembo, the self appointed arbiter of the Italian language, was a member of the Venetian upper class and spent only part of his adolescence in Florence while his father Bernardo was the Venetian ambassador at Lorenzo's *Signoria*. Bembo, nevertheless,

ventured to teach Florentines about their own vernacular classics. He fully shared Petrarch's views with regards to Dante's *Commedia* and attacked the work and its author.

Bembo elected, in its stead, the eminently imitable model of Petrarch's noble and polished style.¹⁴ His ideal vernacular, in spite of its refined and rarefied veneer, cleverly camouflaged a specific political agenda that would lastingly and thoroughly impact Italian letters.¹⁵ Italian was, henceforth, to be associated with the *Trecento* literary prestige of Florence, the heritage endorsed by Lorenzo de Medici. Giuliano had been in exile at the court of Urbino during Pietro's residence at the Montefeltro court. He had repudiated the forms of contemporary Florentine usage associated with the spoken and written forms of the Constitutional Republic from which the Medici had been banished from 1494 to 1498 and restored in 1512.¹⁶

His authoritative intervention in the *questione della lingua* (or question of language) marked the beginning of a process of marginalization of the *Commedia* within the context of the Italian literary canon, especially in relation to Petrarch, a trend which would not be fundamentally reversed for the next three centuries.¹⁷ Petrarch's hegemony translated, practically, into the cultural downward mobility of those (a majority of Italian writers and speakers) who were excluded by the winning orthodox model.

Bembo's philological activity in the field of the vernacular had culminated in the editions of Dante's *Commedia* and Petrarch's vernacular compositions (respectively in 1501 and 1502), which were the outcome of his collaborative effort with the Venetian printer Aldus Manutius.¹⁸ In the prologue to Petrarch's collected poems Manutius reflects upon the

vernacular used by Petrarch. He admits that it contains terms incomprehensible to contemporary ears and describes the long journey of the *Fragmenta* in Odyssean terms. Manutius reminds us that Odysseus returned to Ithaca transformed and aged to an extent that neither his family nor any of his subjects recognized him. He then explains that this was the fate of Petrarch's poems:

ma è a lei avvenuto quello che d'Ulisse si scrive che avvenisse, il quale lungamente stato lontano da' suoi, e vecchio a casa ritornando, non fue riconosciuto da persona.¹⁹

Petrarch's *Fragmenta*, furthermore, had provided a fertile field for commentators, imitators and detractors, a complex process that bespeaks both an intensely committed (and biased) audience who manipulated and enormously predisposed the reception of the lyrics. The *Fragmenta* were read according to multiple agendas and interpreted through extra textual issues of politics and patronage, which produced competing versions of Petrarch.²⁰

The earliest commentary was composed by Antonio da Tempo (Padua 1420s, published 1477) and interprets the poetry through biographical data, namely Petrarch's stay in Milan (from 1353 to 1361, the longest in Italy) as a public servant of Visconti's aristocracy. Antonio da Tempo's commentary inspired the collaborative gloss of Francesco Filelfo (dedicated to Filippo Maria Visconti of Milan in 1446) and Hieronimo Squarzafico (who completed the commentary in 1484). These works have philological merits and resulted in the most accurate text of the *Rime* and *Triumphs* before Manutius. However, they blatantly (and unapologetically) use the commentary to advertise monarchist sympathies and to support a central government in northern Italy. This was a view at odds

with the Florentine republican ideals attributed to Petrarch by Leonardo Bruni in his *Vita di Petrarca* (1436), the first biography of the poet, where Bruni had equated literary greatness and republican freedom.

The Venetian Editor Alessandro Vellutello (*Le volgari opere del Petrarca* [1525]) presented a different account of Petrarch in a phenomenally popular work that was reprinted 27 times by 1584. Vellutello rearranged the order of the lyrical sequence dividing poems into three sections (poems that present Laura alive, those in which she is dead and, finally, those on miscellaneous subjects, occasional and political themes). With this organization he constructed an ideal biography of Petrarch's life (as Vellutello surmised it from Petrarch's letters and prose work). Vellutello added notes, illustrations, even maps based on his own travels through Avignon and Vacluse; he sought to confer continuity upon the discontinuity of the *Fragmenta* and situated their literary value in a dramatic context:²¹

I Son. E le canz. Del Petr. Seguitando l'ordine de gli antichi testi sono stati in due parti divisi, cioè quelli che 'n vita, da quelli che 'n morte di ML fu giudicato che da lui fossero scritti da chi 'l primo ordine li diede. Laqual divisione, non havendo a quelli altro ordine posto, era poco necessaria, ma non, che ad altro ordine riducer li vogliamo, non solamente in due, ma in tre parti è di bisogno che li dividiamo. Saranno adunque nella prima parte posti tutti qielli, che veramente in vita di ML si riciniscon per la lor sentetia da lui esser stati scritti, e che de suoi felici e infelici amorosi effetti e accidenti trattano [...] Ne la seconda parte saranno posti tutti quelli, che dopo la morte di lei, tal morte propriamente, o per circoscrittione, o in altra forma parlano, et in queste due parti tutta l'opera sera contenuta. Ne la terza e ultima parte fuori de l'opera seranno posti tutti quelli, che 'n diversi tempi e altri soggetti, e a piu terze persone da lui furono scritti. Comincera la prima parte scritta in vita di lei da questo son. Era 'l giorno, ch'al sol si scoloraro. La seconda parte in morte cominciera da quest'altro son. Oime il bel viso, oime il soave sguardo. La terza e ultima parte cominciera da questa can. Italia mia, ben che 'l parlar sia indarno.²²

Vellutello's popularizing account of Petrarch encouraged commentators in his wake to pursue a blend of philological and philosophical interpretations that resulted in readings at odds with his own. Sylvano da Venafro (*Il Petrarca*, [Naples, 1533]), Giovanni Andrea Gesualdo (*Il Petrarca* [Naples, 1533]) and Bernardino Daniello (*Sonetti, Canzoni e Trionphy* [Lucca, 1541]) presented yet another Petrarch, one compatible with a Castiglione style courtier. They focussed on the rhetorical surface of the poetry and on themes of well bred amatory demeanor that would later dominate European Petrarchism and displace the political concerns of Da Tempo, Filelfo and Squarzafico. Venafro privileges the private moments of Petrarch's poetry and explores the neo platonic and Latin references; he argues against any reordering of the sequence and designs his commentary as a handbook for men who desire to devise a plan of action to win a woman.

Another group of commentators produced radical readings which depicted Petrarch as a pseudo-protestant, a man disdainful of scholastic cliché, drenched in St Augustine, scornful of Avignon corruption: Fausto da Longiano (Modena 1532) and Ludovico Castelvetro (Modena 1540s), both allegedly involved with the Lutheran circles in Modena and Antonio Brucioli (Ferrara 1548), linked to Calvinist sympathizers in Ferrara.²³

Given the innumerable versions of Petrarch, Bembo's interest in organizing his lyrics shaped up as an assignment of awesome proportions. And certainly, awesome was Bembo's impact by the time he was done with the *Fragmenta*: he single-handedly canonized Petrarch for Italy and the whole of Europe. His collaboration with Manutius on an edition of Petrarch's vernacular was an editorial breakthrough. Bembo based his text upon an

authoritative 14th century manuscript of the poems, though he claimed to rely on the final exemplar of Petrarch (now in the Vatican Library, VL 3195) which at the time belonged to a Paduan nobleman and was purchased by Bembo only in 1544.²⁴

Bembo's edition differed radically from any previous vulgate and commentary: his text improved on other versions of the *Fragmenta* from a philological perspective. Bembo explained all of the text's abbreviations, he regularized its orthography (divided words according to grammar, added punctuation, introduced apostrophes and accents). This was, furthermore, the first vernacular text to be printed in the Italic type that had been used by Manutius for Bembo's *Vergil*. The greatest novelty, however, was that Bembo freed the *Fragmenta* from all marginal glosses or commentary, foregrounding the unmarked essence of the text and allowing Petrarch's poetry to emerge from beneath a sea of exegetical commentary. The 1502 Aldine edition established itself as the vulgate for the next 300 years.

Pietro Bembo's *Prose della volgar lingua* was published in 1525 (nearly 25 years after the Aldine publication of the *Fragmenta*). With this text Bembo settled two centuries of disputes over the relative merits of Latin and of the vernacular and authoritatively established the protocols for the finest vernacular to be used in speaking and writing.²⁵

The dispute over what variety of Italian deserved to be elevated to canonical status (known as *questione della lingua*²⁶) was a predictable source of intense disagreements. Dante inaugurated the debates when he explained his views on the vernacular in his two treatises (one written in Latin and one in the vernacular), *De vulgari eloquentia* (1303-1305)

and *Convivio* (1304-1307).

According to *De vulgari eloquentia*, Dante did not consider Latin to have been, at any point, either a spoken language or the common origin of Romance languages. He accepted linguistic difference (and non-comprehension among human beings) as the result of human sin and Divine punishment; Latin *grammatica* was, in his view, the exemplary outcome of human endeavors to counter impermanence and uncertainty. Thus Dante proposed that the various Romance vernaculars (in which he identified stunning similarities) had not hatched from a common source but, rather, that Latin and its rules had been extrapolated and perfected by grammarians from the various spoken models at hand. His treatises pioneered a method that joined linguistic and grammatical issues with his examination of a tradition.

Dante acknowledged that all spoken languages undergo changes (a consequence of human transgression) and from this premise ventured to locate a vernacular of choice. He was faced with decisions of enormous consequence: was the vernacular to be established on the living expressions of a city or a region? Should it obtain its authority from an existing vernacular culture? What were the guidelines to select its *auctoritates*?²⁷ Dante, it is worthwhile recalling, explicitly articulated his theoretical positions on the Italian language from the point of view of his exile from Florence. In *De vulgari eloquentia* he introduced himself as a man detached from his origins, a citizen of the world who had experienced many places and dialects:

But I, who have the world as my fatherland just as the fish the sea, although I drank at the Arno before I cut my teeth and love Florence so much that for that love I

suffer unjust exile, I brace the shoulders of my judgement on reason rather than the senses. And although for my own delight and that of all my senses there is no more charming place on earth than Florence, I have read and reread the volumes of poets and other writers who describe the whole world in general and in detail; and reflected upon the different regions of the world from pole to pole and around the equator, and I have observed and now believe that there are more noble and delightful regions and cities than Tuscany and Florence, whose native citizen I am, and many nations and peoples who speak more pleasing and useful languages than Italians. (I. vi)²⁸

From this privileged, albeit sorrowful, viewpoint, detached from the precarious events with which history is studded, he outspokenly championed the expurgation of every local flavor, any marked regionalism characteristic of spoken idioms and of low class speakers. He condemned Tuscans and Florentines for the arrogance of their pretensions:

Let us come to Tuscans, who, mired in their vast stupidity, claim for themselves the honor of possessing the most illustrious vernacular. And not only foolish plebeians indulge in this notion, but even some of the most famous men, such as Guittone d'Arezzo [...] whose verses you will find, if you study them, not courtly but municipal [...] And since the Tuscans persist more than others in this drunken raving, it seems worthwhile and useful to call out and display the municipal vernaculars of Tuscany one by one [...] And so if we examine Tuscan dialects [...] there can be no doubt that the vernacular we are seeking is not among those which the Tuscan people have attained. (I. xiii).²⁹

Bembo's *Prose*, though, nowhere acknowledges Dante's theoretical positions or addresses the incongruity between Dante's abstract postulates and his poetic praxis.³⁰ Bembo, instead, maligns the breadth of Dante's vocabulary and the syntactical complexity of the *Commedia*. He disdained Dante's excessive linguistic eclecticism, his tolerance of plebeian expressions side by side with erudite ones. Bembo was averse to Dante's assimilation of all linguistic resources available (Archaic, Latin and Provençal terms happily coexist with northern, southern and Tuscan expressions) contemporary linguistic uses are

thus mixed up with historical and classical ones, with no apparent organizational principle or hierarchy. Only in *Paradiso* does Dante openly refer to the challenge inherent in describing the whole universe in the vernacular: “ché non è impresa da pigliare a gabbo/ descriver fondo a tutto l'unverso,/ né da lingua che chiami mamma o babbo.” (XXXII. 7-9).

What is more, he viewed Dante's propensity to experiment with language as a sinister manifestation of the ambitious range of subject matter in the *Commedia*. He emphatically declared his contempt for both:

quanto sarebbe stato più lodevole, ch'egli di meno alta e di meno ampia materia posto si fosse a scrivere, e quella sempre nel suo mediocre stato avesse, scrivendo, contenuta, che non è stato, così larga e così magnifica pigliandola, lasciarsi cadere molto spesso a scrivere le bassissime e le vilissime cose; e quanto ancora sarebbe egli miglior poeta che non è, se altro che poeta parere agli uomini voluto non avesse nelle sue rime [...] egli molto spesso ora le latine voci, ora le straniere, che non sono state dalla Toscana ricevute, ora le vecchie del tutto, e tralasciate, ora le non usate e rozze, ora le immonde e brutte, ora le durissime usando [...] e, talora, senza alcuna scelta o regola, da se' formandone e fingendone, ha in maniera operato, che si può la sua *Commedia* giustamente rassomigliare a un bello e spazioso campo di grano, che sia tutto di avene, e di logli, e di erbe sterili e dannose mescolato, o ad alcuna non potata vite al suo tempo, la quale si vede esser poscia la state si' di foglie, e di pampini, e di viticci ripiena, che se ne offendono le belle uve.(II, 20)³¹

In his early poetic and intellectual treatise, *La vita nova* (XXV, vi), Dante had admitted to the novelty of his vernacular compositions (“non è molto numero d'anni passati [...] noi non troviamo cose dette anzi lo presente tempo per cento e cinquanta anni”). He had also identified the connection between vernacular, love and his ambition that his amorous utterances be understood by a woman:

E lo primo che cominciò a dire sí come poeta volgare, si mosse però che volle fare intendere le sue parole a donna, a la quale rea malagevole d'intendere li versi latini. E questo è contra coloro che rimano sopra altra materia che amorosa, con ciò sia

cosa che cotale modo di parlare fosse dal principio trovato per dire d'amore.

By highlighting the generative bond between the new literature its linguistic requirements, Dante acknowledged the expanding and more diverse range of his vernacular audience.³²

Bembo was singularly offended by those passages in Dante's *Inferno* (from the *Malebolgie*: "e sí traevan giú l'unghie e la scabbia/come coltel di scardova e scaglie." [*Inferno*, XXIX. 82-83]) that least resemble the sweetness and harmony of Petrarch's polished style, whereby the poet filters reality and autobiographical data to produce a balanced and serene view of life. He was sickened by Dante's linguistic procedure because it sustained his propensity to survey (and represent) the diverse environments and facets of life. Dante's experimental proclivity, in turn, supported the phenomenal diffusion and adaptability of the text among wide and diverse segments of the population.³³

In the exhaustive program he outlined in the *Prose*, Bembo paid lip service to humanistic culture.³⁴ Latin, more than ever, was the model against which the vernacular had to be authorized. Bembo's linguistic and philological efforts aimed at a general recognition of a distinguished vernacular tradition worthy of canonization no less than the Latin and Greek culture idolized by the humanists.

Bembo's treatise depicts an erudite discussion in the house of Carlo Bembo, the brother of the author (and his spokesman) on three cold winter days (December 10, 11 and 12 of the year 1502, dating the text to the time of his collaboration with Manutius). Its participants are a group of friends: Ercole Strozzi (the noted Ferrarese humanist), Giuliano

de' Medici (the youngest son of Lorenzo and an exile in Urbino at the time of Bembo's residence at the court of Montefeltro), Federigo Fregosi (a distinguished courtier, diplomat and student of philology); by the time the dialogue appeared in print three of the four interlocutors had died: Carlo (in 1503), Ercole Strozzi (in 1508), Giuliano (in 1516). Federigo Fregoso is the only participant who survived the publication of the text (he died in 1541). The point of the exchange is to attempt to convince Strozzi, a humanist, of the merits and necessity of composing in the vernacular (and not in Latin).

The treatise alludes to a bitter northern wind that is blowing during the entire span of the dialogue, an allusion to a commonly held viewpoint that connected the emergence of the vernacular and the invasions of Italy by northern barbaric armies. This hypothesis had introduced a radical shift from Dante's conviction, because it accepted Latin as the common origin of all Romance vernaculars and explained linguistic change in secular, ethnic and political terms. According to this premise, the linguistic and cultural demise of *Latinitas* was the outcome of the invasion and fall of Rome. This was viewed as a secular Babel brought about by the encroachment of ethnical and cultural "impure forces."³⁵ Leon Battista Alberti, in the "Proemio" to book III of *Della famiglia* (1433-41) explains:

Fu Italia piú volte occupata e posseduta da varie nazioni: Galli, Giti, Vandali, Longobardi e altre simili barbare e molto asprissime genti. E, come necessità o volontà [...] i popoli [...] apprendevano quella o quell'altra lingua forestiera [...] credo con molti barbarismi e curruttela del proferire. Onde per questa mistura di dí in dí inselvaticí e viziossi la nostra prima cultissima ed emendatissima lingua.

Count Ludovico di Canossa, in Baldassar Castiglione's *Il libro del Cortegiano* (1528), analogously states:

[...] questa nostra lingua, che noi chiamiamo vulgare, è ancora tenera e nova, benché già gran tempo si costumi; perchè, per essere stata la Italia non solamente vessata e depredata, ma lungamente abitata da' barbari, per lo commercio di quelle nazioni la lingua latina s'è corrotta e guasta, e da quella corruzione son nate altre lingue; le quali, come i fiumi che dalla cima dell'Appenino fanno divorzio e scorrono nei due mari, così si sono esse ancor divise ed alcune tinte di latinià pervenute per diversi cammini qual ad una parte e quale dall'altra, ed una tinta di barbarie rimasta in Italia. (I. xxxii).³⁶

In the *Prose* Federigo Fregoso alludes to the incursion of barbarian armies and argues that the vernacular originated in violence and from the corruption of Latin by the foreign tongues: "Ella cominciamento pigliasse infino da quel tempo, nel quale incominciarono i Barbari ad entrare nella Italia e ad occuparla." (86)³⁷

The guiding principle of the *Prose* is that Latin, as it was perfected by Cicero and Virgil, be accepted as the absolute standard of structural and lexical refinement. The eminently conservative recommendation to vernacular writers is that they pursue a program of measure, regularization and standardized dignity along rigorous Virgilian and Ciceronian lines.³⁸

Bembo, with philological acumen unprecedented for vernacular texts, brokered the triumph of Petrarch and promoted a program of uniformity and aristocratic regularization.³⁹ When the ideal vernacular is defined, the proposed model excludes Dante and endorses a norm based on the Tuscan literary models of Petrarca (for poetry) and Boccaccio (for prose). At the end of book one Carlo Bembo states:

Ma quante volte avviene che la maniera della lingua della passate stagioni è migliore che quella della presente non è, tante volte si dee per noi con lo stile delle passate stagioni scrivere [...] e non con quello del nostro tempo. Perché molto meglio e più lodevolmente avrebbono e prosato e verseggiato, e Seneca e Tranquillo e Lucano e Claudiano e tutti quegli scrittori, che dopo 'l secolo di Giulio Cesare e

d'Augusto e dopo quella monda e felice età stati sono infine a noi , se essi nella guisa di que' loro antichi, di Virgilio dico e di Cicerone, scritto avessero, che non hanno fatto scrivendo nella loro; e molto meglio faremo noi altresì, se con lo stile del Boccaccio e del Petrarca ragioneremo nelle nostre carte, che non faremo a ragionare col nostro.⁴⁰

If the literary Italian of Boccaccio was considerably outdated by the time of the *Prose*, the *Fragmenta* had been composed, from their inception, in a highly artificial and already outgrown vernacular. Baldassarre Castiglione, who championed a different prototype for Italian (*lingua cortegiana*), has Giuliano de' Medici (one of the prominent guests gathered at the Montefeltro ducal palace in *Il Cortegiano*, and an advocate of Bembo's project) declare that Petrarch and Boccaccio would have expressed themselves differently had they lived in the 16th century:

È ben vero che molte parole si ritrovano nel Petrarca e nel Boccaccio, che or son interlassate dalla consuetudine d'oggi; e queste io, per me, non usarei mai né parlando né scrivendo; e credo che essi ancor, se insin a qui vivuti fossero, non le userebbono più. (I.xxxi).

Bembo, however, was indifferent to all vernacular usages and equally disdained the sophisticated language of the court of Rome, and the unrefined varieties he had heard throughout Italy. In the *Prose*, Giuliano maintains that the excellence of a language is assessed on its written tradition ("non si può dire che sia veramente lingua alcuna favella che non ha scrittore," [I: 14]), while Carlo Bembo crystallizes the anti naturalist and aristocratic prejudice of the discussion by proclaiming that a writer should please the dead more than the living ("a' morti più che a' vivi"), and intimating that he ought to disengage written language from popular usages ("distaccarsi [...] e dilungarsi" from "usanze del

popolo")."⁴¹

With its idiosyncratic preferences the *Prose* single handedly diverged written language from the living parlance of everyday experience and sanctioned the autonomy of literary writing.⁴² In its long and varied history the *questione della lingua* and the triumph of Petrarch came to represent complicated issues pertaining the interplay of language with social institutions and power.⁴³ By contrasting the divergent stylistic developments in Dante's epic ruggedness and Petrarch's lyrical smoothness Bembo transferred the original humanistic idea of one formal ideal language to that of the vernacular. The success of Bembo signaled the victory of elegance over realistic energy (Dante is condemned and so is any statement that cannot be voiced with decorum: "che tacer è quel tanto che sporre non si può acconciamente." [II, 5]), reflected a way of conceiving literature as a closed and aristocratic enterprise, and sanctioned the exclusive entitlement of an elite who could master and appropriate this vernacular.

The restoration of a monological principle of universal normativity carried grave implication for all of those who were barred from this model. Hereafter, the literary output in any other variant of the vernacular, artistic merits notwithstanding, was to be relegated to the margins of high culture while canonical Italian, recognizable only to a fraction of the population, was scrupulously shielded against any intrusion from the linguistic variants used by the vast groups forsaken by the privileged system. Wide segments of the population of the Italian peninsula, chiefly, women and the lower classes who had limited access to this specialized and carefully guarded literary language, were banished from the production of

high culture.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER FIVE

1. Quotations in English are from, *Petrarch, The First Modern Scholar and Man of Letters* (1893).

2. Giovanni Boccaccio, *Decameron*. Vol. 1 Intr. Antonio Enzo Quaglio (Milano: Garzanti, 1980), 9.

3. Canzone # 23 attests to the healing Petrarch attributes to his poems ("perchè cantando il duol si disacerba" [23. 4]); it also establishes the reciprocity of lyrics and life. The poet's memories, compiled and recollected under the sign of his recantation, testify to the ethical identity between the spiritual integration of the poetic self and a coherent organization of the writing.

4. Chapter XVI of E. Wilkins, *The Making of the Canzoniere and Other Petrarchan Studies*. (Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1951) is devoted to the tradition of the poems and the prehistory of Italian Petrarchism. P. Sambin, "Libri del Petrarca presso i suoi discendenti." *Italia medioevale e umanistica* (1958): 359-369 studies the dispersion of all of the poet's literary corpus after his death, its obfuscation through the many changes of hands. This ended in the second half of the 15th century with the recognition of his original manuscripts. Petrarch openly acknowledges his disdain for the common public who enjoyed, recited and disfigured Dante's verses, and expects the devotion of those he deems worthy of being included among his audience. Of his select readers he demands that they study his work with an unfettered mind, free of worries about family matters (even a daughter's impending wedding), lovers, enemies, property, money--real life, in short--:"Volo ego ut lector meus, quisquis sit, me unum, non filie nuptias non amice noctem non hostis insidias non vadimonium non domum aut agrum aut thesaurum suum cogiet, et saltem dum legit, volo mecum sit [...] Si conditio non placet, inutilibus scriptis abstineat. (*Familiares* XIII, 6. 23)

5. Antonio de Nebrija, *Gramatica Caslellana. Texto establecido sobre la ed. "princeps" de 1492*. Intro. D. José Ibañez Martín (Madrid: Edición de la Junta del Centenario, 1946): 5-6. See also, Alberto Varvaro and Carmelo Samonà, *La letteratura spagnola: Dal Cid ai Re Cattolici* (Firenze: Sansoni Editore, 1972): 164 and Walter D. Mignolo, *The Darker Side of the Renaissance: Literacy, Territoriality and Colonization* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1995), especially chapter 1 "Nebrija in the New World: Renaissance Philosophy of Language and the Spread of Western Literacy." In Italy, Nebrija had become familiar with Lorenzo Valla's thoughts on language. Valla saw language as a unifying force and instrument of Empire and predicated a role for Italy among emerging nations.

6. Francesco Gabrieli ("Arabi di Sicilia e Arabi di Spagna." *Al-Andalus* 15 [1950] 27-45) surveys the two classic texts on the subject of Muslims of Sicily and Spain: Michele Amari, *Storia dei Mussulmani di Sicilia* (in 2 volumes published in 1854 and 1872) and Reinhard Dozy, *Histoire des Musulmans d'Espagne* (published in 1861). According to Gabrieli: "La Sicilia [...] non è che una provincia letteraria della Spagna, per i due secoli, decimo e undicesimo, in cui le loro vicende corrono parallele nella unità spirituale del Maghrib." (35) After the *reconquista* of Sicily by the Normans (unlike what would happen in Spain) Christian and Muslim cultures continued to remain integrated: "i Ruggeri e i Guglielmi, seppero, vollero essere 're degli uomini delle due religioni [...] in una tollerante convivenza" (39). See also, Montgomery W. Watt, "Il contributo arabo alla cultura europea." *La coscienza dell'altro* (Florence: Cultura, 1974) and George Makdisi, "Interaction between Islam and the West." *Revue des Etudes Islamiques* 44 (1976): 287-309. Roger Boase's *The Origin and Meaning of Courtly Love: A Critical Study of European Scholarship* (Manchester, 1977) surveys the scholarship of nearly seven hundred years of Troubadour studies. From the pioneers in the field (an Italian, Giammaria Barbieri [1519-1575] and a Spaniard, Juan Andrés [1782-1822]) to the middle of the 19th century, the undisputed view as to the origin of Troubadour poetry was Arabist and postulated that the poetry originated in Muslim Spain. A total shift is perceptible in the latter part of the century, when the "Oriental" lineage is rejected. Boase outlines the main theories on the origin of troubadour poetry: Hispano Arabic, Chivalric Matriarchal (courtly love as juncture of Christian elements and primitive Germanic Celtic matriarchal), Crypto Cathar (poetry as reflection of the Albigensian Cathar heresy), Neoplatonic, Bernardine Marianist (love as a manifestation of spiritual mystical tradition), Spiritual folk ritual (inaugurated by A. Jeanroy Lancelot du Lac [Paris 1883]) and Feudal Sociological (which situates analysis in 12 century society and feudal structures), Dennis de Rougemont's argument of love lyric as intrinsically inimical of values and highly subversive poetry 125-6. On a Renaissance in the 12 century, see: Charles Homer Haskins, *The Renaissance in the 12th Century*. (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1924).

7. Over a century after Nebrija, Bernardo de Aldrete (also an Andalusian) composed a linguistic history of Castillian, *Origenes de la lengua castellana*. This text was published in Rome in 1606, a pregnant choice because it reflects Aldrete's propensity to emphasize the Latin origin of Castillian and the profound connection between Latin and Christianity. He transposed this connection to modern Castillian Spanish. In order to anchor his discussion of the vernacular (and of its pivotal role in the overseas colonial ventures of Spain), Aldrete faces the thorny issue of Spain's own history as a colonized land and of the "corruption" of its culture through Visigoth incursion and nearly eight centuries of Arab domination. He acknowledges the intimate complicity between language, politics and religion; thus he identifies the connection between the publication of Nebrija's grammar and the ejection of the Moors from Spain. In his view, while it was unavoidable that Spain's original *Latinitas*

should be adulterated, Christianity spared the peninsula from a total take over (cultural and otherwise) by the hands of Muslim forces.

8. Boswell, 288. On the history of southern Italy under Norman rule, see: Jean-Marie Martin, *La vita quotidiana nell'Italia meridionale al tempo dei Normanni*. tr. Maria Grazia Meriggi (Milano: Rizzoli, 1997).

9. In Bembo's *Prose* Federigo Fregoso supports the Provençal ancestry of vernacular Italian literature and culture (I: 7-11). Pietro Bembo, *Prose della volgar lingua*. In *Prose e rime* ed C. Dionisotti (Torino: UTET, 1966). There are obvious affinities between Ibn Hazm's heavily Platonized and Sufi inspired philosophy of love and the love ethic that began to flourish in the courts of Southern France about one century later. *The Ring of the Dove*, originally finished in 1022 is available in the English translation of A.J. Arberry (London: Luzac Oriental, 1953). Ibn Hazm (994-1064) was a Muslim from Cordoba. The obvious similarities between his treatise and *The Art of Courtly Love* (tr. John Jay Parry [New York & London: Norton, 1969]) by Andreas Capellanus attests the more than likely cross cultural encounters across the Pyrenees between Muslims and Christians. The classic discussion of the Islamic influence on courtly love is Denis de Rougement's *L'Amour et l'Occident*, 1939 (*L'Amore e l'Occidente*. tr. Luigi Santucci. [Milano: Rizzoli, 1996] especially 101-188).

10. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, furthermore, some of the most important works of Italian literature were in written in French (for instance, the *Trésor* of Dante's teacher Brunetto Latini and Marco Polo's account of his travels *Le divisament dou monde*). The language of love was Occitan, the language of the Troubadours, and was adopted by many poets (Sordello, for instance).

11. On the material and cultural richness of Sicily see: Umberto Rizzitano and Francesco Giunta, *Terra senza crociati*. (Palermo: Flaccovio, 1967), Thoman C. Van Cleve, *The Emperor Frederick II of Hohenstaufen, "Immutator Mundi."* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972); on the "baptized sultans" Frederick II and his grandfather Roger, see: Americo Castro, "The Presence of the Sultan Saladin in the Romance Literatures." *An Idea of History: Selected Essays of Americo Castro* Tr. and ed. Stephen Gilman and Edmund L. King (Columbus: Ohio State University, 1977). On Frederick II and the cultural milieu of Sicily, see: Francesco Gabrieli "Arabi di Sicilia e Arabi di Spagna." *Al-Andalus* 15 (1950) 27-45; Gabrielli, "Federico II e la cultura mussulmana." *Rivista di Storia Italiana* 64 (1952): 5-18; Maria Rosa Menocal, *The Arabic Role in Medieval Literary History: A Forgotten Heritage*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1987); Victoria Kirkham and Maria Rosa Menocal "Reflections on the 'Arabic' World: Boccaccio's Ninth Stories." *Stanford Italian Review* 7 (1987): 95-110; M. Asín Palacios *Dante e l'Islam*. Tr. Roberto

Rossi and Younis Tawfik (Parma: Nuova Pratiche Editrice, 1994); A. Cerulli, *Il Libro della Scala e la questione delle fonti arabo-spagnole della Divina Commedia* (Roma Vaticano, 1949); Silvestro Fiore, "Arabic Tradition in the History of the Tuscan Lauda and Ballata." *RLC*, 38 (1964): 5-17.

12. In *Seniles XVI* (to Giovanni Dondi) Petrarch states his "odi genus universum" for the whole culture and Arabic peoples. See: Francesco Gabrieli "Petrarca e gli Arabi." *Al-Andalus* 42 (1977): 241-48. Edward Said, as it is well known, has argued that the self identity of the West hinges in its definition and debased vision of the Orient as an absolute other. (See *Orientalism*).

13. "Averroism became virtually synonymous with atheism in the Late Middle Ages and Early Renaissance. The charge of Averroism was one of the mysterious accusations that could be made against a medieval thinker." (144) see Paul A. Cantor, "The Uncanonical Dante: The Divine Comedy and Islamic Philosophy." *Philosophy and Literature* 20.1 (1996): 138-153. Cantor discusses the episode in Limbo and provides valuable information about the accusations leveled against Dante. The poet was charged of flirting with heretic Arabic thought. See also: Miguel Asín Palacios, *Islam and the Divine Comedy*. trans. Harold Sutherland (London: Frank Cass, 1926) originally published in Spanish in Madrid in 1919. This book proposed the inflammatory position that Dante's work was heavily indebted to Muslim mythology and theology, imported from Spain by Dante's teacher Brunetto Latini, who was ambassador of Florence to Toledo and Seville (252-254). For an overview of the controversy activated by Palacios, see: Vicente Cantarino, "Dante and Islam: History and Analysis of a Controversy." *A Dante Symposium* eds William de Sua and Gino Rizzo (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1965) 175-98.

14. In Curtius' words, Petrarchism "was soon to flood Italy and France with 'sugared sonnets'" and spread "like an epidemic disease." Ernst Robert Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*: 225 and 396. In this magisterial study, Curtius tells us that Dante's work exemplifies both the end of the Middle Ages and its pinnacle. His *Commedia*, characterized by a structure which is compared to diamond-like hardened perfection, displays the most fecund powers of the imagination and encloses its own originality within the continuity of traditional culture and the structure of medieval thought: "It is a leaven which Dante casts into the tradition of the medieval West [...] The most immense frame of reference is required. From every point of his mythically and prophetically amplified experience connections run to every point of a given matter. They are forged and riveted in material as hard as diamonds [...] The world drama of the Latin Middle Ages is played for the last time in the *Commedia*--but transposed into a modern language." In comparison to Dante, whose talent Curtius designates as exceptional ("Dante is great." Curtius, 226), Petrarch and Boccaccio's literary accomplishments are "interesting." Dante's *Commedia*

tenders a comprehensive examination of human experience by way of a poetry overflowing with all the linguistic nuances required by a task of exceptional proportions, from the sublime to the most degraded. Curtius attributes the greatness of the *Commedia* to its inherent inimitability but reminds us of an age, the Renaissance, when Dante's strengths were met with hostility and became a liability to his enduring reputation. Benedetto Croce also described Petrarchism as a disease: "una malattia che corre i secoli" because it stifled any sense of individuality "Dal 200 al 500." *La letteratura italiana* v. 3 (Bari: La Terza, 1959): 341. Benedetto Croce, *Poesia popolare e poesia d'arte. Studi sulla poesia italiana dal Tre al Cinquecento* (Napoli: Bibliopolis, 1991) "Quando si vuol pensare al poeta che rappresenti l'estremo opposto del tono popolare, la mente ricorre subito a Petrarca." 67. The text contains a discussion of the women poets Isabella di Morra, Aurelia Roverella, Laura Battiferra, Vincenza Armani, Francesca Turrini Bufalini, Tullia d'Aragona and Veronica Franco.

15. A vernacular style influenced by Petrarch flowered all over Europe. At the Court of Grenada (1526) with Juan Boscán (who followed the lead from the Venetian humanist Andreas Navagero and attempted a Petrarchan style in Castilian); this was also the case with Garcislao de la Vega, a Toledo nobleman in Charles V entourage At the Fointableau and Loire courts of Francis I (during the 1530s) Melli de Saint Gelais and Clément Marot introduced the Petrarchan sonnet and experimented with Petrarchan figures; the bourgeois poet Jean Bouchet published 15 sonnets at Poitiers in 1536; at Henry II's Parisian court after 1549 Joachim du Bellay, Ronsard and members of the Pléiade shaped full Petrarchan sequences of songs and sonnets; at the Tudor court in England after 1527, Thomas Wyatt and Henry Howard Earl of Surrey produced translations and imitations of Petrarch.

16. The Medici were restored in 1512-13, and their victory was crowned by the election of Giovanni de Medici to the Papacy (Leo X). Bembo, it is worthwhile noticing, was not looking for financial gain but prestige. On the politics of Bembo's language William J. Kennedy, *Authorizing Petrarch* (Ithaca and London: Cornell U.P., 1994) 83-85.

17. Only in the 19th and 20th centuries, with Romanticism and Modernism respectively, renewed Dante's fame and fortune. See: Carlo Calcaterra, "Il Petrarca e il petrarchismo" in *Questioni e correnti di storia letteraria* (Milano, 1949).

18. On Aldus Manutius see: Martin Davies, *Aldus Manutius. Printer and Publisher in Renaissance Venice*. (Malibu, California: The J. Paul Getty Museum, 1995); Martin Lowry, *The World of Aldus Manutius. Business and Scholarship in Renaissance Venice* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1978); H. G. Fletcher, *New Aldine Studies* (San Francisco: B. M. Rosenthal, 1988). On the Aldine edition, see: S. Pillini "Traguardi linguistici nel Petrarca Bembo del 1501." *Studi di filologia italiana* 39 (1981): 57-76; G. Orlandi ed. *Aldo*

Manuzio editore. Dediche. Prefazioni. Note ai testi. Introduction by Carlo Dionisotti (Milano, 1975); Carlo Dionisotti, "Fortuna del Petrarca nel Quattrocento." *Italia Medioevale e Umanistica* 17 (1974): 61-113. On the phenomenal vogue of Petrarch in the Sixteenth century, see: V. Cian "Pietro Bembo postillatore del Canzoniere petrarchesco" *Giornale storico della letteratura italiana* 98 (1931): 255-90 and 99 (1932): 227-64 and L. Baldacci "Pietro Bembo: Dal *De imitatione* alle *Prose*" *Il Petrarchismo italiano nel 500*; B. Weinberg "The Sposizione of Petrarch in the early 500." *Romance Philology* 13 (1960) 374-86; Armando Petrucci "Alle origini del libro moderno. Libri da banco, libri da bisaccia, libretti da mano" in A. Petrucci, ed. *Libri, scrittura e pubblico nel Rinascimento* (Bari-Roma: Laterza, 1979).

19. *Aldo Manuzio Editore. Dediche. Prefazioni. Note ai testi.* Introduction by Carlo Dionisotti. Latin Texts with translations and notes by Giovanni Orlandi. Vol. 1 (Milano: Il Polifilo, 1975): 53-54. In the *Convivio* Dante envisioned the course of the new language (and the poetry he wrote in this language) on a perilous journey: "Lo tempo chiama e domanda la mia nave uscir di porto; per che, dirizzato l'artimone de la ragione a l'ora del mio desiderio, entro in pelago con isperanza di dolce cammino e di salutevole porto." (II, i, 1) 19. Petrarch, as we have seen, frequently employed the same maritime metaphor and shared Dante's longing to secure a safe harbor for his soul (and the vernacular *Fragmenta* which had depicted his spiritual struggle in painstaking details). Kennedy's erudite study shows how literary canons largely depend on the cumulative work of centuries of readers and commentators and are shaped on horizons of expectation far different from our own. For a related work on Dante and the Renaissance commentary tradition see the brilliant study by Deborah Parker, *Commentary and Ideology: Dante in the Renaissance*. (Duke University Press, 1993). Both Kennedy and Parker have amply demonstrated that the Renaissance commentary tradition is a genre that deserves to be studied with a clear theoretical discernment of wider issues of authorship and reception, and not merely utilized in an ancillary role to the primary text, to corroborate interpretations or settle dissensions. Parker's inquiry is grounded in a materialistic outlook and informed by H. R. Jauss's work on reception, "horizons of expectation" and by M. Bakhtin's study of dialogism and heteroglossia. The vast and varied body of commentary generated by the *Commedia* and the *Fragmenta* provides the ideal field to flesh out these theoretical assumptions and to verify a model of the historical adaptability of the text. Parker and Kennedy posit meaningful questions about the repercussions of shifting ideological domains and material elements in a text's circulation, transmission, reception and meaning. The most impressive venture to date has been undertaken by the Dartmouth Dante Project with a computerized data-base of Dante's commentaries.

20. See: Mary Fowler, *Cornell University Catalogue of the Petrarch Collection* (London: Oxford U.P., 1916): 71-110 and Mary Fowler and Morris Bishop, *Catalogue of*

the Petrarch Collection in the Cornell University Library (Milford, NJ: Kraus Thomson, 1974): 94-125. A comprehensive presentation of the commentary tradition is tendered by William J. Kennedy, *Authorizing Petrarch* (Ithaca and London: Cornell U.P., 1994). Carlo Dionisotti, "Fortuna del Petrarca nel 400." *Italia medievale e umanistica* 17 (1974): 61-113.

21. See: Gino Belloni, *Laura tra Petrarca e Bembo: Studi sul commento umanistico-rinascimentale al Canzoniere*. (Padova: Antenore, 1992): 58-88. This commentary establishes a rich and powerful sense of Petrarch's cultural milieu. Vellutello draws attention to biographical relationship between the author and his text (biography is the basis of the reorganization). This is balanced with his "Life of Laura" that sets the beloved in a quotidian context remote from any current society. He serves the aims of a purely commercial self-interest, professes ideological detachment and celebrates abstract ideal of national unit at odds with civic humanism of Florence or absolutism of Milan. Vellutello's edition *Le volgari opere del Petrarca* passed through six major printing and 23 reprintings at nine different publishers between 1525 and 1584.

22. The first page of Vellutello's commentary reads: *Il Petrarca con l'esposizione d' Alessandro Vellutello e con più utili cose in diversi luoghi di quella nuovissimamente da lui aggiunte. Stampate in Vinegia per Bartolomeo Zanetti Casterzagense, ad istantia di Messer Alessandro Vellutello e di Messer Giovannin Giolitto da Torino, Ne l'anno del Signore, 1538*. This is followed by an alphabetical table of all incipits; a Map of Vaucluse and Avignon; a dedication to Messer Augustino d'Oria. Then Vellutello places a biography of poet ("Vita e costumi del poeta) and one of Laura ("Origine di Madonna Laura con la descrizione di Valclusa e del luogo ove il poeta a principio di lei si innamorò"). What comes next is his explanation of the editorial decisions that structure the edition ("Divisione de son. E de le canz. Del Petrarca in tre parti.")

23. Brucioli dedicated his annotated *Sonetti, Canzoni, et Triomphy* (1548) to Lucrezia d'Este. Reprinted by Guglielmo Tovillio in Lyon in 1550, this commentary accompanied the first edition of the poems to be printed outside of Italy.

24. Gino Belloni, *Laura tra Petrarca e Bembo*, 72-73.

25. The *Prose* was the text responsible to elevate Petrarch to be primary example and model for poetic language and revived his vernacular career. The great linguistic arbiter of the later 16th century, Leonardo Salviati, found the Academy of the Crusca to separate the wheat from the chaff after which it is named and this Academy produced the first dictionary of the Italian language in 1612.

26. On the *questione della lingua*: R. A. Hall, *La questione della lingua* (New York,

1959): M. Vitale, *La questione della lingua* (Palermo, 1978 reprinted 1984): Claudio Marazzini, "Le teroie." Cesare Segre *Lingua stile e società* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1963): 355-82; Luca Serianni and Pietro Trifone ed. *Storia della lingua italiana. I* (Torino: Einaudi, 1993).

27. According to C. Dionisotti: "E' impossibile in una storia della lingua italiana sopravvalutare l'importanza di Dante [...] Dante significa la vittoria del toscano e la decadenza a dialetto di ogni altra parlata italiana." "Per una storia della lingua italiana." *Geografia e storia della lingua italiana*. (Torino: Einaudi, 1967), 167. Dante was keenly aware of the innovative nature of his enterprise and knew that there was no authority who could assist him to tread this uncharted linguistic path, (his study of the vernacular): "I must now put to the proof the rightness of my intention to investigate matters for which I have no support from any authority; that is, the successive variation of what was originally one and the same language." (I. ix). All quotations from Dante's *De vulgari eloquentia* are from: Marianne Shapiro ed. and tr. *De vulgari eloquentia. Dante's Book of Exile*. (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1990). Dante retraces the whole history of the world through the lenses of the *Scriptures*. He accepts the theory that Hebrew was a pre-lapsarian language (a thesis that he would contradict in *Purgatorio* XXVI, 124). His investigation spans from the creation of man and first Adamic language to contemporary literature: this is the broad historical and literary lineage in which Dante situates himself. He accepts the principle of mutability of all spoken languages, (which derives from the original human transgression and from Divine punishment). Non-comprehension among human beings, which is a result of sin, is countered by *grammatica*; while language is transmitted by senses (vocal organs and hearing) its main goal is reason. Dante proceeds from the general to particular: he surveys Europe and then narrows down the scope of his search to languages that present some common features: Italian, French and Provençal (the languages of sí, oil and oc). He then moves (I, viii) to extrapolate from common romance terminology (Dio amore mare terra cielo) that grammarians have inferred their rules of Latin from the various spoken varieties that existed. The most noble vernacular is not to be found in any spoken variety but by way of studying the finest poets who have come before Dante: examples are well chosen from the time of Frederick II, the poets of Sicily (Guido delle Colonne, Giacomo da Lentini, Rinaldo d'Aquino, which Dante had read in a tuscanized version), then Guinizelli with others from Bologna and the *stilnovisti*.

28. Marianne Shapiro, *De vulgari eloquentia*: 52. For a discussion of exile in Dante's treatise see the Introduction, 1-46.

29. Shapiro, 61.

30. Manuscripts of Dante's *De vulgari eloquentia* were extremely rare (three on the

whole circulated before the 16th century); from the 16th century onwards, though, the treatise became a regular point of reference. Gian Giorgio Trissino lent the only copy in circulation of Dante's *De vulgari eloquentia* to Bembo (even though Bembo does not mention him in his own Prose). See: Claudio Marazzini, "Le teorie," 237.

31. Pietro Bembo *Prose e rime* ed. Carlo Dionisotti (Torino: UTET, 1960). Bembo was singularly disturbed by passages such as Inferno XXIX (82-83): "e sí traevan giú l'unghie e la scabbia/ come coltel di scardova e scaglie." Bembo's statements are echoed by Giovanni della Casa in his *Galateo* (ed. P. Pancrazi [Firenze: Le Monnier, 1940]): "Le parole [...] vogliono essere chiare [...] ed oltre a cio' belle in quanto al suono e in quanto al significato;" and about Dante "io non sento perciò che di lui si dica per questa cagione bene alcuno" (XXII)

32. In *De vulgari eloquentia* Dante again underscores the intrinsic link between the new vernacular poetry and the erotic reflection which is features at its core. An essential requirement of this poetry, in his words, is that it be understood by a woman: "dico che manifestamente si può vedere come lo latino avrebbe a pochi dato lo suo beneficio, ma lo volgare servirà veramente a tutti. Che la bontà de l'animo, la quale questo servizio attende, e in coloro che per malvagia disusanza del mondo hanno lasciata la litteratura a coloro che l'hanno fatta di donna meretrice; e questi nobili sono principi, baroni, cavalieri, e molt'altra nobile gente, non solamente maschi ma femmine, che sono molti e molte in questa lingua, volgari e non litterati." 19. Marina Zancan analyzes Dante's statements in "La donna." *Letteratura italiana*. ed. A. Asor Rosa (Torino: Einaudi, 1983), V: 765-827. This essay explores the role of woman in formation of a vernacular Italian literature: woman is symbolic image of the new poetic tradition, the symbol of the intellectual procedure whereby secular intellectuals define their identity. The legitimization of a new literature in the vernacular and new social class of independent secular intellectuals (free from ecclesiastical pressures) takes place around the amorous themes and love poetry. The progressive abstraction of Beatrice goes hand in hand with the valorization of Dante's poetical choices, in turn, the image of a text's circulation among women readers, renews and redefines the larger sense of a text. The earthly love as intellectual experience, refined form of social living representative of that process of elevation on which was grounded the new secular culture and new social class.

33. In *Paradise* XXVI Adam tells Dante that even Hebrew is subject to fluctuation, contrary to what he had stated in his other treatises. Erich Auerbach's magisterial study of *Inferno* X comments on the stunning creativity of Dante's language, of its revolutionary charge, the variety of his sources, and employment of seemingly quotidian, spontaneous utterances, Auerbach "con la sua lingua ha riscoperto il mondo." G. Devoto, *Profilo di storia linguistica italiana* (Firenze, 1953): 58-59 describes Dante's *Commedia* as living

encyclopedia of styles and crossroads of various idioms.

34. In Benedetto Croce's view this marks the moment in which a poet decision to write in the standard (or in dialect) can be deemed a self-conscious act--in Croce's words a "self-reflective" act. I am here referring to Croce's landmark essay "La letteratura dialettale riflessa, la sua origine nel Seicento e il suo ufficio storico." *Uomini e cose della vecchia Italia* (Bari: Laterza, 1927). In this study Croce took a serious interest in dialect literature beyond partisan arguments and acknowledged a distinction between "letteratura dialettale riflessa," (one of cultured and self-reflective nature that presupposes a national literature), and "letteratura dialettale spontanea," (with which he designated folklore). His article was originally conceived as a response to an earlier study by Giuseppe Ferrari, "Saggio sulla poesia popolare in Italia," which had first appeared in French in two issues of the *Revue des deux Mondes* (June 1, 1839 and January 15, 1840) and was later reprinted in Italian in G. Ferrari, *Opuscoli politici e letterari* (Capolago: Elvetica, 1852). Ferrari saw dialect and popular culture as interchangeable elements, and, furthermore, considered them a resistance to the literary as well as national Italian spirit (a thesis that Croce would dispute). Croce's comprehensive discussion of popular literature is found in *Poesia popolare e poesia d'arte. Studi sulla poesia italiana dal Tre al Cinquecento* (Bari: Laterza, 1933), especially the introduction. For two seminal responses to Croce's arguments see: Mario Sansone, "Relazioni fra la letteratura italiana e le letterature dialettali," *Problemi e orientamenti critici di lingua e letteratura italiana* (1948) which discusses the devices and strategies employed by dialect writers, and speculates that dialect literature's relation to the standard is parasitic, and Pier Paolo Pasolini, "La poesia popolare italiana." *Passione e ideologia* (Milano: Garzanti, 1973) which analyzes popular culture employing an interpretative model which is sociologically informed. Croce dates the beginning of "letteratura dialettale riflessa" in the Baroque period, thus after Bembo's codification. In some recent reflections on the subject Croce's view has been disputed. Ettore Bonora, for instance, detects the kind of self-conscious linguistic awareness discussed by Croce in the second half of the 16th century. It is explicit in authors like Ruzzante and Folengo ("Poesia letteraria e poesia dialettale," *Retorica e invenzione* [Milano: Rizzoli, 1970] 261-7). Contini, on the other hand, (*La nuova questione della lingua*, 58) traces it to the original analysis of Dante's *De vulgari eloquentia* and speculates that it is only fully realized with the codification of Bembo. In my argument I follow Contini's suggestions. Though I will not discuss the development of Italian literature in dialect, it is my contention that when we approach women Petrarchiste in Italy and discuss their countercultural impact, we first have to contend with elaborate layers of exclusion engendered by the standard vernacular as it was established by Bembo's codification (that is, the self conscious adoption of this standard by a poet, man or woman and conversely, the exclusion of those voices, also of men and women, who did not conform to this narrow standard). See, also O. Pierangeli, ed. *La nuova "questione della lingua* (Brescia: Paideia, 1971) 58.

35. Italy was again invaded by Spain and by France and a unified vernacular was perceived as a tool that might facilitate political unity.

36. Baldassar Castiglione, *Il Libro del Cortegiano*. Introduction by Amedeo Quondam (Milano: Garzanti, 1991).

37. The text, furthermore, alludes to the survival of the honored relics of Rome, spared from the ravages of enemy nations and time "per le sue molte e riverende reliquie, infino e questo dì a noi dalla ingiuria delle nimiche nazioni e del tempo" (183) and likens the barbaric aggressions to contemporary incursions of tourists, visitors artists "Questa città [...] vede tutto il giorno a sé venire molti artefici di vicine e di lontane parti." (183)

38. Bembo consecrated the *Rime* as the hegemonic and stable index of the Italian lyrical language, the chosen repertoire for the grammatical and poetic tradition. The distinguishing elements of Petrarch's language are its uniform sublimity and tempered elegance. This is achieved by the poet's progressive elimination (in the painstaking labor of refinement that went into the drafts of the *Fragmenta*) of all elements, which were historically or geographically marked. The definitive studies of Petrarch's language are by Gianfranco Contini, "Preliminari sul linguaggio del Petrarca." defines Petrarch's language one of "fiorentinità trascendentale," xv. See, also his "Saggio d'un commento alle correzioni del Petrarca volgare" (1943) *Varianti e altra linguistica. Una raccolta di saggi* (1938-1968) 5-31. See, also, G. Contini *Un'interpretazione di Dante*. (1965) 369-405. Ugo Foscolo "A Parallel between Dante and Petrarch" *An Essay on Petrarch* had anticipated the authoritative discussion of Contini and focused on the issue of the vernacular as central point of congruence and difference between the two poets. Ugo Foscolo published four essays on Petrarch in English in London in 1823. The second essay represents an especially important step in the methodology of Petrarchan scholarship because it skillfully reconstructs the human and cultural background of the poet and interprets the poetry together with work of biographers and Latin works. Foscolo pays attention to ordering of various editions intensity of verbal games and refractions, his linguistic analysis anticipated Contini on the simplicity versus that of Dante; he also notices his scorn for the vulgar people. See: Mario Fubini "Il Petrarca artefice." *Studi della letteratura del Rinascimento* (Firenze, 1947) and Ettore Bonora "Lineamenti di storia della critica petrarchesca." in Walter Binni, *I classici nella storia della critica* (Firenze: La Nuova Italia, 1954). For the limited parameters of the lexicon of *Rime* we must turn to *Concordanze del Canzoniere di Francesco Petrarca* ed. Ufficio Lessicografico dell'Accademia della Crusca (Firenze, 1971), which record only 3275 items. For a systematic analysis of Petrarch's corrections, see: M. Vitale, "Le correzioni linguistiche del Petrarca nel *Canzoniere*." in *Studi di storia della lingua italiana* (Milano, 1992) 13-47. The most glaring example of Petrarch's intense

anti realism is evident in his extremely metaphorical and abstract representation of Laura, who is constantly evoked through details and a synecdochal procedure. M. Pozzi "Nota introduttiva" to Pietro Bembo *Prose della volgar lingua* in *Trattatisti del Cinquecento* 3-50.

39. "l'imitazione non e' un gesto spontaneo ma passa attraverso la mediazione teorica e pratica del Bembo: la proposta del modello del Petrarca si trasforma peraltro in codificazione di uno specifico sistema linguistico, rigidamente normativo e selettivo [...] che emargina nettamente esperienze di scrittura esterne ad esso [...] e controlla l'ambito delle pratiche discorsive, sia private che sociali." A. Quondam *Petrarchismo mediato* (Roma: Bulzoni, 1974): 212-214.

40. Bembo, *Prose*, 135.

41. Pietro Bembo *Prose*, 117-118. The discussion of linguistic change takes place in Book I. Strozzi describes a theory proposed by Leonardo Bruni in 1435 and refuted by Flavio Biondo. It holds that Latin grammar and syntax were far too complicated for the general population and that there existed a parallel simplified Latin more similar to Italian. Strozzi is horrified that this should become literary Italian because, from its inception it was a lesser or bastardized version of Latin. Federigo follows Biondo's refutation and answers to Strozzi. The lack of any written traces of this parallel language signifies that it never existed. Giuliano proposes *lingue cortigiane* and echoes contemporary theories in favor of eclecticism (proposed by Vincenzo Colli, *il Calmeta* [1460-1508]) in a lost treatise *Della vulgar poesia* and reiterated by Castiglione Ludovico da Canossa in *Il libro del Cortigiano*—making clear that this would be a cultured intra-national language very far from the language of the people. Carlo Bembo is horrified by Federigo and Giuliano: in his view *lingua cortegiana* leads to chaos, it takes new form every time Rome falls under a new papal administration, thus every time the keys of St Peter change hands "la cortigiana lingua, che s'era oggimai cotanto inispagnuolita, incontanente s'infranceserebbe." (109) See: Mario Vitale *La questione della lingua* (Palermo: Palumbo, 1960).

42. Curtius reminds us that the idea of a classic author (and its derivative concept of canon formation) was conceived on the basis of ancient taxation groupings whereby Roman society was classified according to property criteria. Aulus Gellius adopted preexisting fiscal categories when he evaluated the prestige of writers (and established their rank) by discriminating those of the elite (*classici*) from ordinary ones (*proletari*). Curtius locates, furthermore, the relation old/new within the tradition of Greco-Latin classicism and the origin of new literatures in vernacular in the nexus antique/modern antiquus/novus connected with the Christian tradition that build itself on the ruins of an old one. Thus canon formation ensures continuity of a certain tradition. (249-50). Enlightening in this respect is the entry *classicus* in Egidio Forcellini *Totius latinitatis Lexicon*, II (Prato, 1861):

"Adject. a classis, ad classem pertinens, quod ordinem seu partem populi significat [...] sed hoc sensu generali non reperitur hadibitum. Hinc classici scriptores translate vocantur, qui in prima veluti classe sunt, qui vulgo probantur, et auctoritatem legitimam ex comuni consensu obtinent." It outlines the connection between social class, universal favor and authority, by alluding at the word's contemporary metaphorical use in literary criticism, where the word is employed to indicate those "classical" writers who are both universally esteemed and, in turn, draw canonical authority from common consensus. Forcellini quotes Aulus Gellius, the first theorist and critic who has used the term *classicus* explicitly in this economic sense of class (*Noctes atticae*, XIX, 8, 15): "E cohorte illa dumtaxat antiquiore vel oratorum aliquis vel poetarum, is est classicus adsiduosque aliquis scriptor, non proletarius." This significant interchangeable function of monetary and literary currency established an enduring link between class extraction (high and low) and the social standing of cultural forms (classical and marginal authors). These entries are quoted and discussed by Alberto Asor Rosa "Il canone delle opere" xxix. Alberto Asor Rosa ed. *La letteratura italiana: Le opere* Vol. 1. (Torino: Einaudi, 1992). See, also, the entry in the Oxford English Dictionary. Also: Peter Stallybras & Allon White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (Ithaka, NY: Cornell UP, 1986): 1-3.

43. According to Antonio Gramsci: "Ogni volta che affiora, in un modo o nell'altro, la questione della lingua, significa che si sta imponendo una serie di altri problemi: la formazione e l'allargamento della classe dirigente, la necessità di stabilire rapporti più intimi e sicuri tra i gruppi dirigenti e la massa popolare-nazionale, cioè di riorganizzare l'egemonia culturale." *Quaderni del carcere* ed. V. Gerratana (Torino, 1975) III: 2346. Gramsci thus meditates on the political implications of a normative language, on the nexus that exists between language debates and the establishment of cultural dominance over lower social classes (hegemony); he thus concludes that every new incarnation of the *questione* has corresponded with changes in class or political alliances which have resulted in the need to reorganize Italian culture. For a discussion of language as the essential of social and cultural history language, see: Peter Burke and R. Porter eds. *The Social History of Language* (Cambridge, 1986), especially Peter Burke, "The Uses of Literacy in Early Modern Italy": 21-42 and Jonathan Steinberg, "The Historian and the 'Questione della lingua':" 198-208. Maria Rosa Menocal comments on the elitist nature of the canonization of the vernacular Italian: "Italian was and is a language decided on and arrived at by discussion and debate among the Italian intelligentsia." (84) "The Questione della lingua as an Impediment to the Understanding of Language History." *Canadian Journal of Italian Studies* 14 (1991): 83-92. Walter Ong, "Latin Language Study as a Renaissance Puberty Rite." *Studies in Philology* 56 (1959): 103-124 draws the distinction between Latin as the "father's tongue" and the vernacular as "mother's tongue." The peculiar history of the Italian canonization could justify the conclusion that Italian very much preserved the character of a father's tongue. The problematic nature of this elitism became pressingly manifest in 1861, when the

peninsula became politically unified after centuries of separation but only a minority of Italians could speak to one another in the same language. The *questione*, thus, moved beyond a strictly literary domain and a universal language became a desirable political adhesive and a vital agent of national sentiment. Nonetheless, when Alessandro Manzoni (1785-1873) was appointed in 1862 by the Minister of Public Education and drafted a program for a national language, he replaced an obsolete model with an equally arbitrary one. He arrested Italian in an alternative inattentive to historical development by endorsing the living language used in contemporary Florence, one that would consistently renew itself. This was going to be not a workable model since Florence was not the cultural capital of Italy and Florentine no longer the dialect with the greatest cultural authority. In Tullio de Mauro's estimate, 56% of the fundamental lexicon used in Italy in the 20th century is formed by vocabulary that dates back to the 13th century (15% of which was brought into use by Dante). *Storia linguistica dell'Italia unita*. 4th edition (Bari: La Terza, 1974), 219-220. Contini notes Petrarch's use of Latin, and not the vernacular, for his private annotations. In our century the *questione* has been recast in terms more sensitive to social, political and gender issues. With the creation of a *Commissione Nazionale per la Realizzazione della Parità fra Uomo e Donna* (National Commission for the Realization of Parity between Man and Woman) the Italian government has officially entered the controversy over the insidious and problematic connections of gender and language and in 1986 and 1987 published formal guidelines to be followed in order to refrain from using sexist language in Italian. Some updated reflections on this still ongoing debate can be found in the cultural pages of the major Italian newspapers. See, for instance, Tullio De Mauro, "Scusi, Lei che italiano parla?" *La Repubblica/Cultura* (June 10, 1992): 2-3, for a discussion of the ever growing varieties of Italian and the adjustment of the standards of acceptability. Also, Franco Brevini, "E il volgare va: da Dante a Mike." *Corriere della Sera/Cultura* (June 7, 1992): 1-2, which maps out the history of the Italian language from Pietro Bembo to our days.

CHAPTER SIX

PETRARCH REFRACTED

Near the end of Sperone Speroni's dialogue *Della dignità delle donne* (1537) Daniel Barbaro, a commentator of Aristotle and one of the founders of the *Accademia degli infiammati*, cites the insightful words of a woman. Beatrice degli Obizzi, wife of the Paduan gentleman Gasparo, is alleged to have remarked that because all human beings, men and women alike, bear the burden of the same original sin they are subjected to equal exigencies:

E forse per li peccati del primo padre, oltre misura presuntuoso,[...] volle Iddio che 'l piacere e l'onore umano fossero tra loro nemici, alla cui guerra (mentre viviamo) ci ha condannati. Finalmente (qual che sia la cagione) noi siamo in terra uomini e donne, quasi in mezzo di qualche teatro e d'ogn'intorno per ogni parte del cielo siedendo li dèi, tutti intenti a guardare la tragedia dell'esser nostro. Noi adunque, il cui fine altra cosa esser non dee che 'l compiacere agli spettatori, sotto tal forma dovemo cercar di comparer nella scena che lodati ce ne possiamo partire;¹

These words invite Beatrice's interlocutors, and the readers of the dialogue, to accept a fundamental equalizing principle. But in lieu of a predictable spiritual program of reparation, Beatrice proclaims that life is a stage and that this original human iniquity can be relieved by choreographing every gesture, even the most ordinary, as if it were to be surveyed by a higher tribunal of pagan "gods."

Multiple and diverse sources suggest that Beatrice's contemporaries would not find her observations exceptional. Increasingly, Renaissance society placed a high premium on the way people appeared, spoke, moved, dressed, as tangible markers of civility.² In the

fifteenth and sixteenth centuries etiquette manuals were published in exceptionally high numbers (and enjoyed unprecedented distribution). They decreed the proper behavior of men, women and children. For those who aspired to upward mobility these texts became indispensable primers of acceptable social behavior.

Proper linguistic manners were viewed as essential vehicles of correct deportment. Among the large volume of manuals on good behavior printed all over Europe, there were many that discussed verbal communication and dissected the nuances and social meaning of diverse speech acts.³ These treatises allow us a privileged insight into Renaissance communicative transactions: they tell us about who spoke (or ought to speak) to whom, about what, when, where and in what manner.

The vast popularity of Baldassar Castiglione's *Il libro del cortegiano* (1528), Giovanni Della Casa's *Galateo* (1558) and Stefano Guazzo's *Civil conversazione* (1574) provides a framework to gauge the proportions of this phenomenon and attests to the centrality of the topic of conversation in the civilizing process. We can surmise their impact both from the frequency with which these books were reprinted and the varieties of languages in which they were made available. By 1539 Castiglione's treatise existed in French and Spanish, by 1620 more than fifty editions had appeared in languages other than Italian. By the early seventeenth century Della Casa's work circulated in German, Spanish and had been translated twice into Latin while Guazzo's treatise had two French translations as well as English Latin and Dutch versions.⁴

As his title suggests, Guazzo viewed polite conversation (*civil conversazione*) as an indispensable instrument of social harmony:⁵ his discussion relates the proper way of conducting discourse to the larger requirements of a society in the process of building its agreeable forms of living. After three books dedicated to the celebration of the values of conversation and its theoretical exposition (where Guazzo proposes its different modes and appropriate usages according to different speakers and situations) Book Four stages an exemplary model of civil conversation. Guazzo tells us of a banquet held in Casale. The event was hosted by Vespasiano Gonzaga and attended by nine reputable guests (men and women).

One of their subjects purports to mold a perfect gentleman. It is proposed that this be achieved with a curriculum that includes practical training in arms (to prepare the gentleman both for war and its symbolic variants: hunting and tournament) as well as intellectual endeavors that emphasize the ethical values of courtliness, liberality and magnificence. Through the main interlocutors of this discussion (a physician and a *cavaliere*) Guazzo's dialogue contrasts two exemplary social types and worldviews: the novel bourgeois doctrine of self-made professionalism is pitted against the old ethics of the court. The balance between these positions is clearly tilted. Nobility is no longer viewed as a birthright but a process that requires steadfast effort: its ultimate goal is the intellectual (thus not physical) amelioration of man. What distinguishes a gentleman is no longer his ability as a warrior but his devotions to letters. This is proposed as the ideal

springboard to excellence in all other human endeavors. Annibale, the physician, thus crystallizes his praise of a new class and its cultivation:

Le lettere [...] spogliano l'uomo d'ignoranza, queste l'indirizzano nella vita, queste lo rendono benigno, mansueto, grazioso, amabile, queste nella prosperità gli danno meraviglioso ornamento, queste nell'avversità gli arrecano unico e incredibile conforto, e queste finalmente levandolo dal fango e fuori dalla feccia del volgo, gli servono di scala agli onori, alla dignità e alla contemplazione delle cose celesti e divine.⁶

Baldassar Castiglione's extremely influential *Il libro del Cortegiano* tenders a privileged insight into an ideal model of Sixteenth century Italian courtly life. The text is presented through words, the words of a *civil conversazione* of the kind outlined by Stefano Guazzo.⁷ Its the subject matter, however, testifies to the anxiety associated with the possibility that the elite prerogatives of the court be appropriated or mistaken for those of emerging social groups. Courtesy literature, in fact, advanced as a genre at a time when aristocratic identity was being encroached upon by a horde of young men not born to it.⁸

The point of *Il cortegiano* is to distill a core of *cortegiana* and its attributes ("regula universalissima" [1. 26]). Castiglione depicts the court as a place dominated by appearances, a world where the courtier's public image is his highest currency:

Il mare di segni di cui e costituito il cortigiano e dentro cui agisce produce un mare di parole che si findano e si legano con l'universo di infinite parole riportate, di parole altrui, dentro il quale tutto si consuma l'essere a corte. Catena vincolante dian fama buon guidizio e buona opinione e sempre che ha d'andare in loco dove sia novo e non conosciuto, procuri che prima vi vada la bona opinione di sé che la persona (II, xxxii, 241)⁹

Courtly conduct, we are told earlier in Book Two, is nothing but a form of prudent

dissimulation (“una certa avvertita dissimulazione” [2.40]), attentive to the risks of transgressing the limits of verisimilitude (“sempre avvertito di non uscir della verisimilitudine” [2.41]). According to Count Ludovico, good courtiership is achieved by concealing artifice (“nasconda l’arte”) and by making one’s behavior appear effortless (“senza fatica e quasi senza pensarvi” [1.26]). The slightest aspect of labor or care poses a threat to elite identity insofar as it reveals identity to be a web of seamlessly concealed affectations and a façade of dissimulated artifice. It thus becomes the ideological burden of the text to neutralize these traits of the courtier’s identity by investing them with an aura of grace. To accomplish this the text introduces the concept of *sprezzatura* (1. 26) the most valuable of courtly attributes, the essential core of courtliness.

Elegant conversation (“parlar piacevole”) defines the behavior of the courtier and is the primary vehicle of his complex dissimulation. Thus Castiglione’s protagonists spend much of Book One debating how the perfect courtier should speak; they return to the subject in Book Two in the chapters devoted on jokes and in Book Three when discussing the language of love.

At the end of Book II Bernardo Bibbiena recounts the tale of a practical joke perpetrated on two ladies of the court. A Bergamasque cowherd (appropriately named Castiglio) had been summoned on business. Though his unmistakable Lombard dialect immediately betrayed his rustic origin, the ladies were made believe that he was a Spanish courtier and a reputed trickster. The more he revealed himself to be a peasant, the

more they thought him noble and clever. It was with great difficulty that they were talked into accepting his true identity. The outcome of this episode reflects a cultural pressure that the traits of elite identity be kept separate from those of the common hoard (this accounts for the necessity that the peasant's imposture he discovered at the end). The nature of the misreckoning, however, betrays a pervasive aristocratic anxiety over the threat of upwardly mobile pretenders to authentic elite identity. In the process of assuming an ideal self, the courtier comes face to face with his vulgar other, a low class peasant who speaks dialect, and recognizes himself in him. The joke guarantees sprezzatura. Giovanni Della Casa explicitly addresses the inter-relatedness of polished manners to the development of civil society. Proper language is proposed as the instrument of civilized deportment, thus Della Casa dedicates a third of the thirty chapters of his *Galateo* to the discussion of language:¹⁰ “[...] a chiunque si dispone di vivere [...] nelle città a tra gli uomini, non sia utilissima cosa il sapere essere ne’ suoi costumi e nelle sue maniere grazioso e piacevole.” (I, p. 195) A gentleman must both curb his manners and restrain himself from naming tasteless habits: “temprare e ordinare i tuoi modi [...] è ciò si vuol fare mezzanamente [...] non solamente non sono da fare in presenza degli uomini le cose laide o fetide o stomachevoli, ma il nominarle anco si disdice.” (II & III, p. 195-196). All displays (and verbal allusions) of bodily functions are inhibited (visiting the bathroom, emitting odor, grinding teeth, whistling, scratching, singing with a bad voice, coughing or sneezing loudly and/or spraying all present, yawning with a gaping mouth)

and so are all the inappropriate subject matters of “favellare”: “[...] materia [...] non vuole essere frivola ne’ vile [...] non si dee anco pigliar tema molto sottile ne’ troppo squisito [...] si disdice il favellare delle cose molto contrarie al tempo ad alle persone che stanno ad udire [...] Né a festa né a favola si raccontino istorie [...] né di piaghe né di morti o di pestilenze.” (XI, p. 210-211).¹¹

Guazzo, Castiglione and della Casa introduce a world of extremely self conscious human beings, who watch each other’s every move and have a sophisticated vocabulary to talk about gestures. They paint a conformist milieu in which elite identity is conceived as a mode of imitative action.

It is against this background that we must read Bembo's *Prose della volgar lingua*¹² and understand its colossal success. In the Renaissance poets and literary theorists accepted the rhetorical model of *imitatio* advanced by Quintillian in his *Institutio Oratorio* (X. 2) and endorsed an ideal of artistic creation within a specific and defined context. The production of literature was locked within an inevitable and inescapable genealogy that established a text’s credentials. Advertising one's predecessor was essential to the success of any artistic endeavor (even when the relationship to a predecessor was one of defiance and not deferential duplication).¹³ Bembo was no different in this respect and composed a treatise on the subject of imitation (*De imitatione*) which nicely complements his work in the field of the vernacular. In this text, once again, he disputed the eclecticism of his contemporaries and advanced a program of

reverential imitation of unique and exceptional models along rigorous Ciceronian-Virgilian lines.¹⁴

The literature and, in particular, lyrical poetry written in the Renaissance reminds us consistently of the extent of Petrarch's success. The production of Petrarchan culture was impressive not just in terms of the sheer amount of new material composed, but from the stand point of their more rapid circulation and the utilization of new channels of transmission (the anthology, for instance). The exchange of Petrarchan sonnets became a means of communicating, of producing social networks.¹⁵ It is impossible to understand the impact of the *Prose* without the aid of the printing press which relayed Bembo's program and advertised Petrarch's poems: identical copies of books promoted linguistic standardization and consolidated the victory of the successful poetic contender.¹⁶ This new technology greatly facilitated the transmission of Petrarch's lyrics but also hastened their dispersion. Caught in an economy of endless repetition, the *Fragmenta* became the models of a language that did not correspond to anyone's native, spoken or municipal idiom and could be appropriated by everybody.

The more Petrarch's *Fragmenta* became popular the more they became unglued. What made the text imitable was its fragmentation: the poems became abstracted and decontextualized into *topoi*, grammatical and rhetorical figures, and a veritable arsenal to be deployed and adapted to endless new shapes. The activity of the grammarian and commentators dismembered the unity of the *Fragmenta* to make them more manageable

and readable and contributed to their capillary diffusion. In their history, long after Petrarch's death, the *Rime* kept revealing their internal paradoxes. It was within their agenda to elude organization and resist one, unequivocal interpretation, despite the attempts at containment of Bembo.¹⁷ The price of Petrarch's popularity was what the poet had feared the most in his lifetime, a loss of control over his readership. Disengaged from purely humanistic reflection he was ready to be adopted by common readers.¹⁸

During the first half of the sixteenth century the undisputed favorite author among the Italian literate public had been Aristotle (followed by Petrarch and Cicero). By the second half of the century, things changed radically. Petrarch's popularity soared undisputed, while Dante and Boccaccio moved up respectively to second and third place. Since the novel ranking placed the three vernacular texts discussed by Bembo at the top of every reader's list, it is safe to infer that the reading public was deeply influenced by his *Prose*. But this index, implicitly, alludes to the more fundamental changes impacting the production and circulation of the written word.¹⁹ At this point, publishing was an enterprise and the production of written culture a business. From the original draft to the final edition, a text would undergo complex and multiple levels of mediation (author, editor, printer, translator, etc.). The traditional career trajectory of a writer (with its limited alternative of affiliation to court or church) was superseded and writing would, henceforth, no longer be structured as a lonely activity, but would exist at the cross-road of tangled social mediations and intensely profitable economic exchanges.²⁰

The thriving Venetian printer Gabriel Giolito, to name a distinguished example, understood all the implications of his venture. He is famous for the adjective *divina* being permanently added to the title of Dante's *Commedia* (which he printed twice in 1536 and in 1555, with the commentary by Ludovico Dolce who proposed the use of the adjective).²¹ Giolito fully exploited the new and expandable market of writing, one where the defining line between reading public and producers of culture was increasingly becoming blurred. He realized, for instance, that apart from serving a theoretical and institutional function, Petrarch's poems had assumed an aesthetic purpose and that to be a literate person coincided with being a *petrarchista*.²² It is with an eye to this business opportunity (more than partisanship with Bembo) that he became the printer and promoter of the famous *petrarchini* (as well as anthologies of lyric poetry). These new pocket size editions of Petrarch's love lyrics (in *octavo* and printed in a very readable cursive) were designed to be small enough to fit elegantly and conveniently in the palm of one's hand. The wide circulation of *petrarchini* is not solely suggestive of the immense popularity of Petrarch. It tells us that poetic exercises absorbed new sections of the population, as producers of culture or, that, at least, the pretense to writing poetry was necessary to those trying to impress the accrements of culture.

In his introduction to one such portable editions (*Il Petrarca corretto da M. Lodovico Dolce et alla sua integrità ridotto*) Gabriel Giolito tells his readers:

Essendo le rime del leggiadrissimo M. Francesco Petrarca alli studiosi della lingua volgare veramente tali, quali alli studiosi della latina le divine opere di Virgilio,

eccovi o Lettori, che hora io ve le porgo non pure emendatissime, ma in così picciola forma stampate che ciascuno le potrà haver seco in tutti I tempi et luoghi senza incomodo o fatica alcuna. Però vostra cura sia di leggerle e di averle grate non meno per la eccellenza dell'autore, che per la comodità e la bellezza della stampa. Intanto aspettarate le Rime del reverendiss. Bembo, le quali doppo il Petrarca ottengono il primo loco.²³

Giolito, thus, invites his readers to appreciate his pocket edition on two separate counts, one academic and one aesthetic. He both proposes that their vernacular and poetic skills be refined on the model of Petrarch (as students of Latin had done with Virgil) and offers the *petrarchino* as a luxury item with value in and of itself. It is a functional volume that can be taken along at all times to prompt the right declaration for amorous occasions; what is more, its size permits its owner to flaunt it as a status symbol. Giolito's entrepreneurial spirit shines through at the end of his dedication. As it would happen in any other capitalist enterprise, he endeavored to serve the needs of his expanding reading public but also to generate their requirements, thus he advertise his next (indispensable) project on Bembo.

In the 16th century anyone who sought to display a patina of culture wrote sonnets or at least carried about a *petrarchino*, which became a part of the familial iconography of the period. Even Nanna, the old prostitute in Pietro Aretino's (1492-1556) *I Ragionamenti* (1534-35) recalls that she would pose for her suitors at her window "col petrarchino in mano, cantando con vezzi:/ 'Se amor non è, che dunque è quel ch'io sento?'"²⁴ And, on a different occasion, she remembers that she sang Petrarchan lines with other prostitutes

"cantando in compagnia di mille altre puttane e bertonni: "E tremo a mezza state ardendo il verno."

It was not unusual for sitters to be portrayed carrying a *Petrarchino* (for instance in portraits by Bergamasco Moroni and Andrea del Santo: "Ritratto di Maria del Berrettaio la fanciulla col Petrarchino"). A popular sixteenth century parlor game involved the enumeration of parts of the human body as described by an accompanying line from Petrarch (*Cento giuochi liberali ed d'ingegno da M. Innocentio Ringhieri* [1580]).²⁵

In fact, during the course of the festivities described in Guazzo's *Conversazione*, the guests at Casale play one such literary game.²⁶ A *petrarchino* is prominently placed at the center of the table and inspires their discussion. Petrarch is unanimously recognized to be the "gran maestro," and all guests praise the sublimity of his treatment of love and the wealth of details used to depict Laura. The *Cavaliere*, though, provocatively asks his friends to explain why Petrarch so uncharacteristically neglected to honor Laura's nose. Was it, perhaps, because her nose was homely and not worth mentioning?

Il Cavaliere [...] non sapeva per qual cagione Petrarca nel lodare l'altre parti belle di madonna Laura non avesse mai fatto menzione di questa: se forse egli non la tacque perch'ella avesse il naso o schiacciato o camuso o gibbutto o torto o smisurato in grossezza o in lunghezza.²⁷

Petrarch was right, Guglielmo answers, to be discreet about Laura's nose (which, he adds, was probably beautiful and well proportioned):

Quanto alla sua donna-rispose il signor Guglielmo-fosse toccato in sorte un naso deforme, si sarebbero adombrate tutte le altre due bellezze; ma voglio darmi a credere ch'ella l'avesse ben formato e di quella misura che in bellissimo viso si

richiede. E se non ne fece molto, non me ne meraviglio, conciosiaché non solamente egli [...] ma tutti i gravi poeti, lodando le bellezze del capo, cioè i capelli, la fronte, le ciglia, gli occhi, le guance, la bocca, le labbra e i denti, hanno sempre taciuto il naso e l'orecchie, forse perché essendo ricettacoli d'escrementi, avrebbero alquanto avvilita la maestà della reverenda poesia.²⁸

This episode serves a purpose that is far more significant than a moment of whimsy. It is in bad taste to name, describe and exhibit the nose; for a society invested in good manners the nose must be treated with discretion and handled with a handkerchief, (a newly introduced accessory). Petrarch single-handedly is elevated to be the absolute preceptor of language, style and manners.

Pietro Aretino was certainly answering contemporary efforts to impose rules of correct speech and manners in his dialogues, letters, plays of the 1520-30s. A zealous anti Petrarchan, he endeavored to bring to the forefront all of those plebeian and degenerate elements that had been at best glossed over if not forcefully blackballed by all contemporary literary idealizations along Bembian-Petrarchan lines.

In the Prologue to *La cortigiana*, a comedy about the vices and moral turpitude of the Roman clerical establishment, Aretino openly ridicules the literary aristocracy created by his contemporaries. He ironically alludes to their indifference to Dante (which he views as a blessing in disguise because it spares the Florentine poet from contemporary distortions) and mocks the Petrarchan vogue. Aretino tells us about the immoderate numbers of adoring poets writing in Petrarch's footsteps and coercing every possible meaning from his verses, they are as many as there are Lutherans (a parallel malady of his

time). Their egregious careers, Aretino tauntingly adds, might cause a shortage of laurels in the forest of Baccano (a village around Rome and, it was believed, a gathering place of low lives--also an allusion to the inane cacophony of the Petrarchan worshipers):

Forestiere: Può far Domenedio che i poeti ci diluvino come i Luterani?; se la selva di Baccano fosse tutta di lauri, non basterebbero per coronare i crocifissori di Petrarca, i quali gli fanno dir cose con i loro comentì, che non gliene fariano confessare dieci tratti di corda. E buon per Dante che con le sue diavolarie fa star le bestie in dietro, ché a questa ora saría in croce anch'egli.²⁹

Among the contemptible characters of *La cortigiana* a special place is reserved for the courtier, Signor Parabolano da Napoli. Aretino introduces him as a contemptible social climber, one of the many “che tolti da le staffe e da le stalle son posti da la sfacciata Fortuna a governare il mondo.”(p. 119). He spends his days tending to his narcissistic needs and in the slavish cult of Petrarch: “che sta da un vespro a l'altro come un perdonò a farsi nettare una cappa et un saio d'accotonato, e consuma l'ore in su gli specchi in farsi i ricci et ungersi la testa antica, e col parlar Toscano, e co 'l Petrarchino in mano, con un: sì a fé; con un giuro a Dio, e con un: bascio la mano, gli pare essere il totum continens.” (p. 136). It is men like Parabolano who have reduced courtliness to a perversion of breeding and elegance: “saper bestemmiare, vuol esser giocatore, invidioso, puttaniere, eretico, adulatore, maledicente, sconoscente, ignorante, asino, vuol sapere frappare, far la ninfa, ed essere agente e paziente” (p. 135), and the court to a perilous domain of petty competition, a place worse than hell:

Ed al mio tempo ci mangeremmo insieme l'un l'altro, e con tanto odio stiamo a un pane et a un vino, che non ne portano tanto i fuorusciti a chi gli tien fuori di casa [...]

[at the court] [...] non si ingrandiscono se non ignoranti, plebei, parassiti e ruffiani [...] egli è dunque meglio a stare ne lo inferno, che ne la corte di oggi di... Cento volte: perchè ne l'Inferno è tormentata l'anima a ne la Corte l'anoma e 'l corpo. (p. 146)

What is more, Parabolano's words betray him as an inferior Petrarchan:

Né cavalli, né giardini, né niuno altro piacere mi trae del core l'ostinazione, di quel vago pensiero, che in esso mi ha sculpita l'immagine di Livia; e son condotto a tale che il cibo mi è toscano, il riposo affanno, il giorno tenebre, e la notte, che pur dovrei quietarmi, mi affligge sì, che odiando me stesso bramo più tosto di morire, che vivere in questo stato [...] (p. 133-4) O beatissima notte, a me più cara che tutti i felici giorni, di cui godono gli amici de la cortese fortuna [...] O serena fronte, o sacro petto, o aurei capegli, o preziose mani, tesoro de la mia singolar Fenice. E' dunque vero che io sia fatto degno di mirarvi, di basciarvi e di toccarvi? o soave bocca ornata di perle senza menda, fra le quali spira nettareo odore, consentirami tu che io, che son tutto fuoco, immolli le mie asciutte labbra ne la celeste ambrosia, che dolcemente distilli? [...] (p. 210)

Pieter Aretino was the producer of the most famous piece of erotica created in the Renaissance, *Sonetti lussuriosi* (1527).³⁰ In 1524 Marcantonio Raimondi published sixteen engravings depicting sexual positions from famous drawings by Giulio Romano. Pope Clemente VII had Raimondi thrown in prison (from which he was released a year later while promising to burn the pornographic images). This episode whetted the appetite of Aretino, who wrote sonnets to accompany obscene engravings as soon as he heard of the arrest of Raimondi. With these sonnets he was self consciously subverting another world as fictive as that of the court, the world of sonneteers. We need to remember that by Aretino's time Italy had seen not only the apotheosis of Petrarch's sonnets but also two centuries of slavish imitation. The world of Petrarchan poetry is a world where love is never

consummated physically. In Aretino's poetry, on the contrary, love is depicted as nothing but consummation. The women in Aretino's sonnets do not conjure up goddesses or other sonneteers' ladies: they are famous courtesans (Lorenzina, Ciabattina, Beatrice). The last lines of the second sonnet remind us of the world of the courtiers and advancement. Aretino sets the world of sexuality in contrast to this, as an autonomous (and sincere) domain³¹ ("E crepi nel palazzo/ Ser cortigiano, e aspetti che 'l tal moia:/ Ch' io per me penso sol trarmi la fioa." [II, p. 47]).

In one way or another, all Renaissance literary production is in dialogue with Petrarch.³² Even Petrarch's detractors, who reacted against the tyranny of his mannered style did not elude his all-powerful sway, and accomplished to expose him in a new light. His words influenced every nuance of life.³³

Petrarch became an influence on music, art, courtly life and education in general. It is not accidental that Bembo's linguistic theories should be inspired by musical theory and, in turn, impact the development of Western music profoundly.³⁴ Petrarch's life-long commitment to music is well documented in his writings. His *Familiars* (1. 1; 9. 13) record his friendship with the most notable musicians of his age, Philippe de Vitry and the Flemish Ludwig von Kempen (Socrates). In his testament, Petrarch remembers Socrates and mentions his own lute. *De remediis utriusque fortunae* contains a dialogue on music carried out by Joy and Reason. Petrarch's *Fragmenta*, furthermore, are full of references to music: aside from the many allusions to the mythology of Orpheus, the

collection is introduced by a sonnet in which the poet's identity is closely linked to his ability to compose and emit sounds ("sono" and "suono") and the poems are brimming with references to musical instruments and terms (*lira, cetra, tromba, choro, concerto, voce*).³⁵

We find a reliable account of the prestige of music in court life in Baldassare Castiglione's *Il cortegiano* and its requirement that the courtier be trained to sing and play.³⁶ Bembo was drenched in the musical culture of his time and a careful student of musical treatises. Apart from Cicero and Quintilian, for the rhetorical theories he brought to light in the *Prose* he was largely following the precepts of Aristoxenos of Taranto, a disciple of Aristotle and the greatest musical theoretician of antiquity. A manuscript of Aristoxenos' *Scienza armonica* was available in Messina (in the library of the convent of Santissimo Salvatore, at the time the greatest in the world because it housed the bibliographical treasures rescued from Byzantium when the city fell to the Turks). Bembo's, who resided in Messina in 1492 to study Greek, owes much of the sophistication of his analytical tools to Aristoxenos' theories.³⁷

Book Two of his *Prose* (II: 35-38) reads as extended citation from Aristoxenos. Bembo proposes that the setting of words in a sentence be understood musically and acknowledges the dependence of words on their sound. He examines every nuance of the relation of tone, rhythm and meaning and rests his theory on a keen interest in the "affective" (and not signifying) quality of words, which is achieved through harmony and

rhythm (*suono e numero*) composed and decomposed with decorum and emotion (*decoro e persuasione*) in order to achieve *piacevolezza e gravità*.³⁸

Bembo was not alone in advocating the relationship between word and tone. Renaissance musicians endeavored to attain musical expression free from all preexisting melodies and adopted the precept that music should move and express the emotional and pictorial content of the text; language (which was to be clearly enunciated) was entrusted to be the vehicle of this expression of pathos.³⁹ Against the formal and inexpressive tunes of the *frottola* and high *melisma* of church music, Renaissance musicians aspired to achieve the effects that Bembo had discovered in the poetry of Petrarch. Composers would embrace the human word as their new guide and the text as the principal source of musical inspiration. Thus literary developments motivated musical choices, as musicians sought to find the values of poetry and emphasized expressive power of rhythm and sound over purely formal elements. To achieve these goals they turned to Flanders for the forms of the polyphonic madrigal and to Italy for the language of Petrarch.⁴⁰

In the dedication of his sixth book of madrigals for five voices to Lucrezia d'Este (the sister of his patron), Luzzasco Luzzaschi, the organist to the Duke of Ferrara, thus encapsulates the fundamentally poetic standards of Renaissance music:

[...] la musica e la poesia [sono] tanto simili e di natura congiunte che ben può dirsi [...] ch'ambe nascessero ad un medesimo parto di Parnaso [...] Né solamente si rassomigliano queste due gemelle nell'aria e nel semblante, ma di piú godono ancora della rassomiglianza degli abiti e delle vesti. Se muta foggie l'una, cangia guise anche l'altra [...] bene spesso musico il poeta e poeta il musico ci rassembra [...]

Onde ne siegue che se il poeta innalza lo stile, solleva eziando il musico il tono.⁴¹

To understand the extent of Petrarch's impact on the development of music, it suffices to say that his poetry held a monopoly over the whole production of madrigals (especially in Italy). Bernardo Pisano, Bembo's colleague at the Papal court in Rome, inaugurated the polyphonic madrigal genre with his *Musica sopra la canzone del Petrarca*, which was published in 1520 by Ottaviano Petrucci di Fossombrone.⁴² Petrarch's vogue in music peaked between 1530 and 1570: during this forty-year period roughly one thousand madrigals were published on Petrarch's texts. Petrarch's influence lasted well into the seventeenth century: in 1641, for instance, Monteverdi opened his *Selva morale e spirituale* with a citation from *Trionfo della morte* and from the first sonnet of the *Rime*.⁴³

To some degree, both the editorial explosion of Petrarch in print and, in general, the popularity of poetic anthologies was linked to the requirement that madrigalists draw from poetic texts (the first compilation, *Rime scelte di diversi autori* [1563-4] was the fruit of the collaborative efforts of Ludovico Dolce and Gabriel Giolito).

Petrarch's depiction of Laura in the *Rime*, furthermore, was accepted as the criterion used to form an opinion on beauty. Nearly all treatises composed in the sixteenth century to determine the traits of womanly beauty (*bellissima donna*), provided ideal features that read as a catalogue of Petrarch's stereotypes. Painters and poets eagerly complied and cherished the poetry that had provided the model. With these treatises, moreover, we return full circle from Petrarch's refraction to the fragmentation of Laura.⁴⁴

Federico Luigini da Udine's *Libro della bella donna* (which was printed in Venice in the 1540s) is one such text. Organized as a dialogue it depicts a group of men on a hunting trip. At the end of the day the men entertain each other in amenities and as the subject turns to their women, each one argues his own lady to be the most lovely ("ciascuno nel suo cantare voleva e faceva piú bella la sua di tutte le altre donne").⁴⁵ The next three evenings are spent designing a perfect beauty; whichever lady is judged at the end most like the paragon will be deemed *bellissima*: "una donna tale, quale forse non si vide giammai, cioè bella a perfezione [...] e chi alla fine verrà a dimostrare piú alla costei beltà le ricchezze e le bellezze della sua diva avvicinarsi che di qualunque altra, questi aggia vinto e tengasi per fermo lui aver la piú bella delle nostre donne."⁴⁶ A lady's hair is her most important feature and is the subject of much discussion and copious specifications: her locks must, of course, be golden, as Petrarch has shown:

[...] il Petrarca...chiaramente per mezzo di Laura, che tali gli avea, ce l'ha domostrato che avanti debbono essere in ogni modo [...] Questi crini adunque, di che noi abbiamo da ornare la donna nostra, saranno di colore che s'assomigli al forbito, puro e ben fino oro, perché invero le saranno dicevoli vie piú che se di altro colore essi fussero Onde in ogni luogo per gli scrittori poteete aver letto "auree chiome", "crini d'oro", e sí fatte voci. Il Petrarca nei sonetti "Onde tolse amore l'oro", e in quello "Se la mia vita", e in quell'altro "Amor ed io s'è pien", e "Laura, che l verde lauro" e nella canzonetta "Perché quel che mi trasse", e in quella sestina "Giovane donna", e in quella "Verdi panni" e "Chiare, fresche e dolci acque", e in mille altri luoghi chiaramente pre mezzo di Laura, che tali gli avea, ce l'ha dimostrato che aurati debbono essere in ogni modo.⁴⁷

Boccaccio's scathingly misogynistic *Corbaccio* alludes to the cosmetic expedients mustered by contemporary women to emulate the looks of Laura's hair:

Esse di malizia abbondanti [...] con quella ogni sollecitudine pongono a farsi maggiori. E primieramente alla libertà degli uomini tendono lacciuoli, sé, oltre a quello che la natura ha loro di bellezza o d' apparenza prestatato, con mille unguenti e colori dipingendo, e or con solfo e quando con acque lavorate e spessissimamente co' raggi del sole, i capelli, neri dalla cotenna prodotti, simiglianti a fila d'oro fanno le più divenire; e quelli, ora in treccia di dietro alle reni e ora sparti su per gli omeri e ora alla testa ravvolti secondo che più vaghe parer credono, compongono.⁴⁸

The rest of book one is devoted to fashioning the head of the lady. Book two is dedicated to the rest of her body. The body of a *bellissima donna* needs to fit the lay-out made classic by Petrarch. Luigini's description, thus, goes from head to toe: her eyes must be black (like the beloved of Horace, Propertius and Boccaccio as well as Laura, Angelica, Alcina, p. 236); the forehead "larga, alta, lucida e piena di divine bellezze" (p. 238, large, high clear and full of divine beauties) her cheeks must gracefully blend whiteness and rose ("bianco giglio e vermiglia rosa, purpureo iacinto e candido ligustro, p. 242); her neck must be as white and as fresh as snow and the breast "piccole, tonde, sode e crudette, e tutti simili a due rotondi e dolci pomi" (small, round, firm, unripe and completely like two rotound and sweet apples, 248-490). Book Three purports to rehearse her inner features ("dipingere e formare [...] alla parte di dentro").⁴⁹

In a gesture that resembles the fragmenting effect of Petrarch's verses, Luigini creates a verbal portrait of the ideal lady from poetic fragments, citing the various poets of the Italian vernacular tradition (and even classical authors) without distinction. Luigini validates his work by asserting that there is merit and benefit in contemplating the perfect beauty of women: it is an activity worthy of cultivated minds (of men), one, furthermore,

that assists man in his quest to transcend the contingencies of the real. Nevertheless, Luigini inadvertently exposes the mercenary implications of his procedure (which are disguised by Petrarch with so much virtuosity) in his dedication to his patron, Monsignor Giovanni Manini. Luigini implores him to be prudent. Unlike all his other endeavors, Luigini writes, this dialogue is inspired by a disinterested passion for beauty. The inevitable exchange of money between patron and artist (or, by extension, his public remuneration in the currency of celebrity) would spoil the spirit of the text and sully the reputation of this beautiful (though fictional) woman:

In sommo piacer la contemplazione di qualche bella e leggiadra donna...ho deliberato di farvi qui vedere una bellissima donna (e quale so ben io cha mai non vedeste adietro cogli occhi vostri) donna, dipinta e perfetta da cinque pennelli di cinque perfetti ed accorti signori [...] Ben si converrebbe, monsignore, che voi pagaste per guatar cosí bel ritratto [...] Ma io [...] non voglio che voi pagiate [...] questa donna, per sí fatto mezzo veduta, potrebbe chiamarsi, come l'antedetta Elena, "femina di mondo." (224)

In an equally notorious dialogue on female beauty (Agnolo Firenzuola's *Dialogo delle Bellezze delle donne* [1548])⁵⁰ the protagonist, Celso, (as distinguished predecessors: the painter Zeusi who portrayed Helen, Lucian and Trissino) verbally dissects the lovely ladies from Prato who join him for a stroll in the Tuscan hills to hear his proclamations of female beauty:

di tutte le loro piú eleganti fanciulle ne elesse cinque, delle quali togliendo da questa la piú bella parte e da quell'altra il simile facendo, ne formò la sua Elena...da cui eziando il magnifico messer Giovanni Giorgio Trissinmo, o fosse da Luciano, il quale la sua bellezza compose delle molte bellezze che egli ritrasse dalle eccellenti statue dei piú celebrati scultori che fossero stati sino al tempo suo, imparò il modo del suo ritratto; e cosí facendo noi tenderemo se di quattro belle

noi ne possiam fare una bellissima. (p. 483)

While the proportions of the *bellissima donna* can be measured and ordered, to define her “vaghezza” Luigini relies on the frame of mind of a Petrarch-like lover: “quella bellezza che ha in sé tutte quelle parti per le quali chiunque la mira forza gli è che ne diventa vago cioè disideroso [...] per cercarla e per fruirla sta sempre in moto col core, in viaggio co’ pensieri, e con la mente divien vagabondo.” (p. 513). Luigini's own beauty is aptly named Lucrezia, like the Roman matron who was raped because her husband did such a wonderful job of describing her to other men.⁵¹ This detail reminds us, again, of the potential sliding between fiction and reality of this kind of descriptive exercise and of the violence (physical or metaphorical) involved in the poetic or artistic dissection of a woman’s body. The ideal woman is represented as a collection of admired individual parts, an aggregation of fragments created in the complete absence of any real, living being. This is a process of double objectification: Petrarch’s poetry, which is used to represent the lady metonymically (Laura is usually present as a hand, eye, or even veil or a faint trace) is now used for its fragmenting quality in order to create yet another whole—which in its turn can never be completed.⁵² In metaphorical terms the ideal woman is like art itself: both created through the perfection of the incomplete, fragmentary, and perishable elements found in nature.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER SIX

1. Mario Pozzi, ed. *Trattatisti del Cinquecento* (Milano-Napoli: Ricciardi Editore, 1978), vol. II, p. 582. This quotation is discussed in the "Prefazione" vol. 1 p. ix.

2. I am referring to the broad, historical implication of this process (labeled by the renowned sociologist Norbert Elias the "civilizing process") whereby the "civilized" body was invented. This process was rooted in the premise that a highly controlled and repressed body is the privileged locus of internalization of all the norms regulating human exchanges, that is the locus of every operation of power and exercise in meaning. The work of Foucault and Bakhtin has extensively charted the underlying relation of the history of the body to that of the social, economic and political context. They have exhaustively exposed the concurrence of the establishment of bourgeois subjectivity and hegemony with the elaboration of new corporeal regulations, codified in new prescriptions of respectable behavior, norms of civility, new boundaries of embarrassment and shame. The shifting borders of the body correspond to the operation of new demarcations of social space: private, public, high, low. The corporeal canons formulated from the early modern period onwards have sunk into the practices of every day life, assimilated to the extent that they appear natural, unproblematic and neutral. They have become habits, in the sense outlined by Marcel Mauss in his seminal "Techniques of the Body." Bourdieu thus crystallizes the civilizing process: "the seemingly most insignificant details of *dress, bearing, physical and verbal manners* [...] treating the body as a memory, they entrust to it in abbreviated and practical, i.e., mnemonic, form the fundamental principles of the arbitrary content of culture. The principles embodied in this way are placed beyond the grasp of consciousness, and hence cannot be touched by voluntary, deliberate transformation [...] products of implicit pedagogy, capable of instilling a whole cosmology, an ethic, a metaphysic, a political philosophy through injunctions as insignificant as "stand up straight" or "don't hold your knife in your left hand." See: Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1977; Norbert Elias, *The History of Manners* (NY: Pantheon, 1988); Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality* Tr. R. Hurley (NY: Pantheon, 1978); Marcel Mauss, "Techniques of the Body" *Economy and Society* 2 (1973): 70-88; Peter Stallybrass P & Allen White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1986.) In the Renaissance Torquato Tasso studied the different kinds of dialogues circulating and provided a classification for them. See: Guido Baldassarri, "Il discorso tassiano dell'arte del dialogo." *La rassegna della letteratura italiana* 75 (1971): 93-134.

3. See: R. A. Hall *The Italian 'Questione della lingua.'* (Chapel Hill, 1942). My discussion is indebted to Peter Burke, *the Art of Conversation* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993). Chapter one, "The Social History of Language," provides an excellent overview of

linguistic theory; chapter two, "Language and identity" is about the *questione della lingua* and presents a comprehensive panorama of the many vernaculars heard in Italy during the Early Modern period (from Croat to German, Catalan, Greek, Hebrew, French) and of the complexities regulating speech acts among and between social groups (as well as of the difficulties inherent in reconstructing that picture) esp. p. 78 and ff.

4. Peter Burke, *The Art of Conversation* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993), 103. On the Renaissance dialogue, see: Jon R. Snyder, *Writing the Scene of Speaking. Theories of Dialogue in the Late Italian Renaissance* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989).

5. Stefano Guazzo, *La civil conversazione*. Vol 1 ed. Amedeo Quondam (Ferrara: Franco Cosimi Panini, 1993).

6. Stefano Guazzo, *La civil conversazione* vol. 1, 151.

7. The dialogue openly faces the thorny issues relative to the codification of Italian. A comprehensive discussion of the relationship between Castiglione's text and Renaissance culture is presented by G. Patrizi, "Il libro del Cortegiano e la trattatistica sul comportamento." Alberto Asor Rosa ed. *Letteratura italiana, III/2. Le forme del testo. La prosa*. (Torino: Einaudi, 1984): 855-90.

8. Fernand Braudel describes accelerated social mobility and the crisis of the aristocracy in the Italian context and throughout Europe during the sixteenth century in Chapter 5 of *The Wheels of Commerce* (New York: Harper and Row, 1982), 461-513.

9. All references to the text are from Baldassar Castiglione, *Il Libro del Cortegiano* Intr. Amedeo Quondam (Milano: Garzanti, 1991). Castiglione tells us that his courtier must learn to dissimulate ("dee vestirsi un' altra persona" [I, xix, 219]). There is a certain affinity with the portrait of the prince painted by Machiavelli, who must carefully choreograph of his public image and whose dissimulation become the most important trait of his public identity. The courtier, likewise, must conquer everybody's respect and admiration: "la bona estimazione, massimamente nella moltitudine, con la quale bisogna pur che l'om s'accomodi." (I, xxii, 118). Castiglione discusses at length the threatening role of chance (Fortuna) in maintaining a good reputation (II, xxxiii, 240-241). See: Elisabetta Soletti, *Parole ghiacciate, parole liquefatte. Il secondo libro del Cortegiano*. (Piacenza: Edizioni dell'Orso, 1990).

10. Arnaldo di Benedetto, ed., *Prose di Giovanni della Casa e altri trattatisti*

cinquecenteschi del comportamento. (Torino: Utet, 1970). The title of della Casa's treatise, *Galateo, ovvero de' costumi*, implies his dedication to Galatheus, the Latinized name of Galeazzo Fiorimonte, one of the judges in the Council of Trent, and the first to produce a vernacular commentary to the *Ethics* of Aristotle. Speech is treated as a form of manners. See: Antonino Sole, *Il gentiluomo cortigiano nel segno del Petrarca* (Palermo: Palumbo, 1990) especially, ch 3 "Riflessi etico sociali e letterari delle *Prose della volgar lingua* nel *Galateo*."

11. Della Casa cautions his reader against discussing his own dreams (XII), telling lies (XIII). He opposes excessive ceremoniousness ("artificiosi modi fuor del convenevole [...] inchinandosi e storcendosi e piegandosi in segno di riverenza" [p. 217]) and the use of imported, foreign terms ("forestiera e barbara e da poco usi spagnoleschi [...] trapassati in Italia." [p. 218]).

12. Casitiglione and della Casa employ a developed and highly self conscious vocabulary to discuss speech acts. Della Casa instructs his readers to speak in a manner that is pleasing, honorable and elegance (*piacevole, onesta, and leggiadra*); Castiglione directs avoidance of affectation and recommends abundance and wit (*linga pronta e mordace* rich of *detti* and *moti*). Other texts could be cited to support this view of the Renaissance as a period committed to socio-linguistic issues. One such texts is Benedetto Varchi's *L'Ercolano* (Florence, 1570) which employs at least eight terms to allude to small talk (*cicalare, ciarlare, cinguettare, cingottare, ciaramellare, chiacchierare* and *corncchiare...*). Varchi is cited by Peter Burke, *the Art of Conversation* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993) 98.

13. On the Renaissance ideal of imitation, see: Daniel Javitch, "The Imitation of Imitations in *Orlando Furioso*." *Renaissance Quarterly* 38. 3 (1985): 215-239. Javitch's thesis is that Ariosto, as an epic poet, "managed to assert his modern voice through *imitatio* while refusing to engage in competitive struggle." 215 Thomas M. Greene's magisterial treatment of the subject of imitation in the Renaissance is presented in *The Light in Troy: Imitation and Discovery in Renaissance Poetry* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982). He discusses the growing awareness of poets' difference from their predecessors and anachronism as the necessary ingredients that fuelled the poetics of *imitatio*. Greene identifies four main imitative strategies adopted by Renaissance poets (chapter 3) as a result of the fact that the practitioners of imitation become more aware of the distance from the past they developed four kinds of solutions: reproductive, eclectic, heuristic, and dialectical (the last two draw more attention to separation and present the text as locus of struggle between rhetorical semiotic systems).

14. On Bembo's ideal of imitation, see: *Le epistole De imitatione di Giovanfrancesco Pico della Mirandola e di Pietro Bembo* ed. G. Santangelo (Firenze, 1954); W. T. Elwert "Il Bembo imitatore." *Studi di letteratura veneziana* (Venezia-Roma, 1958); Dante della Terza, "Imitatio: teoria e pratica. L'esempio del Bembo poeta. in *Forma e memoria. Saggi e ricerche sulla tradizione letteraria da Dante a Vico* (Roma, 1979): 115-147. See, also G. Santangelo *Il Bembo critico e il principio d'imitazione* (Firenze: Sansoni, 1950).

15 See: Amedeo Quondam, *Petrarchismo mediato. Per una critica della forma "antologica."* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1974), especially his comments and statistical analysis of the imposing number of sonnets with an addressee (some with answers more or less "per le rime") are illuminating (esp. 217-219). On the unprecedented fortunes of Petrarch, Quondam remarks:

[...] sulle proporzioni dell'uso del sistema linguistico del petrarchismo. Basterebbe intal senso rinviare a certi testi canonici, dal *Cortegiano* al *Galateo* [...] per rilevarvi la parte che trova la recitazione e quindi il consumo della lirica. Più interessante sembra può essere osservare l'emergere di una produzione di testi in certi ambienti, quello delle cortigiane ad esempio [...] quanto proprio per misurare il grado d'adeguamento della professionalità cortigiana alle esigenze nuove che la domanda imponeva, un'esigenza di civile conversazione letteraria, di decoro culturale e quindi di sublimazione del rapporto mercenario tramite l'impiego della strumentazione petrarchistica [...] [il] sistema linguistico del petrarchismo non tanto per ciò che concerne il suo statuto teorico-istituzionale, ma soprattutto per quanto riguarda la sua funzione estetica e il suo uso come codice sociale. (p. 214-217)

16. Fernand Braudel *Capitalismo e civiltà materiale (secoli XV-XVIII)* (Torino: Einaudi, 1977): 292-315 (but especially the paragraph on pg. 305-6 "Stampa e grande storia") discusses the three technical innovations that most impacted the modern age: gunpowder, the compass and the printing press. On the printing press, see: Lucien Febler and Henry Jean Martin, *L'apparition du livre* (Paris: Michel, 1958) (Italian translation by A. Petrucci [Bari: La Terza, 1977]; English translation by David Gerald, *The Coming of the Book: The Impact of Printing 1450-1800* [London: N.I.B., 1976]); Herbert M. McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy. The Making of Typographic Man* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962); Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, *The Press as an Agent of Change. Communications and Cultural Transformation in Early Modern Europe* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1979) especially the first volume ("Introduction to an Elusive Transformation," and

"Classical and Christian Traditions Reoriented."). On the history of editorial habits, see: Christian Bec, *Les Livres des Florentines, 1413-1608*. (Florence: Olschki, 1984): 33, 49, 61, 98-101; Roger Chartier *The culture of Print in Early Modern France* (Princeton, 1989); Carlo Castellani, *La stampa in Venezia dalla sua origine alla morte di Aldo Manuzio seniore* (Trieste: Lint, 1973); L. V. Gerulaitis, *Printing and Publishing in Fifteenth century Venice*; Armando Pertucci, *The Coming of the Book: The Impact of Printing 1450-1800* tr. David Gerard (London: N.I.B., 1976); Armando Pertucci, *Libri scrittura e pubblico nel Rinascimento* (Bari: Laterza, 1979) (English version, *Writers and Readers in Medieval Italy* [New Haven: Yale U.P., 1995]). The emergence of the fortunes of Petrarch is available from the post mortem inventories of the collection of middle class libraries. These studies allow us to draw up some assessment of Dante's sliding popularity and Petrarch's ascendancy (from 24th position between 1423-1453 to first between 1467-1530) . See: Eistein and Quondam "La letteratura in tipografia." *Letteratura italiana* vol. 2 ed Asor Rosa (Turin: Einaudi, 1983): 555-686.

17. "There is nothing more quintessentially Petrarchan [...] than an attempt to go beyond Petrarchism." Heather Dubrow, *Echoes of Desire: English Petrarchism and its Counterdiscourses* (Ithaca and London: Cornell UP, 1995): 49. The quotation is from: Reed Way Dasenbrock *Imitating the Italians: Wyatt, Spenser, Synge, Pound, Joyce* (Johns Hopkins UP, 1991). Franco Sacchetti (in his *Il Trecentonovelle* ed. Valerio Marucci [Roma: Salerno Editrice, 1996] *Novelle* CXIV [p. 345] and CXV [p. 349]) depicts Dante, at the pinnacle of his career, obsessed with the poetry that has made him famous and its misuses by a popular audience. In the first *novella* Dante is strolling in Florence when he overhears a blacksmith busy at work in his shop who amuses himself reciting the poet's verses: "cantava il Dante come si canta uno cantare e tramestava I versi suoi, smozzicando e appiccando, che pareva a Dante ricever di quello grandissima ingiuria." (p. 345). Without uttering a word, but very irate, Dante seizes the man's tools and strews them into the street, as a kind of *contrapasso* for his transgression. The blacksmith is bewildered, and the poet finally explains: "Tu canti il libro o non lo di' comfo lo feci; io non ho altr'arte, e tu me la guasti" (p. 346). The blacksmith picks up his tools and resigns himself to sing about Tristan and a Lancelot. This tale makes us aware of two important and related issues: on one hand the book is perceived to be a written document and the patrimony of its author; on the other, it documents the existence of popular idioms, inflections and pronunciations that radically differed from the vernacular employed by Dante for his *Commedia*. Christian Bec, *Les Livres des florentines (1413-1608)* (Firenze: Olschki Editore, 1984) acknowledges as his point of departure the work of Armando Petrucci *Libri, editori e pubblico nell'Europa moderna. Guida storica e critica* (Roma and Bari: La Terza, 1977), especially a groundbreaking essay contained in Petrucci's

collection: Amedeo Quondam “Mercanzia d’onore”mercanzia d’utile’. Prodizione libraia e lavoro intellettuale a Venezia nel Cinquecento.” Bec charges the tendency of Italian literary criticism to look at the production of culture and in particular books as nothing other than a product of the spirit. This is a result of the hegemony of Croce, certainly, but also of the grounding of Italian national language and literature on the purified model of Petrarch, who had done his utmost possible to expurgate vernacular literature from dissonant voices and from references to real life. In Quondam’s estimate: “Non è forse riconoscibile [...] il segno camuffato ed anche degradato di una ideologia del lavoro culturale praticata (teorizzata) nel primato dello “spirito” quindi dell’autonomia dei suoi “atti” e dei suoi attributi rispetto alle componenti materiali del lavoro intellettuale? E tutto ciò non significa pur sempre la persistenza d’una ideologia organicamente idealistico-storicistica, secondo cui il libro il libro è l’*opera* dell’autore, autonoma in ogni caso dai meccanismi produttivi (l’editore) e dal mercato e quindi non ha certo bisogno di interventi pubblici, di programmazione ed organizzazione della sua storia anche futura: la sua lettura pubblica, se non la sua ricezione e diffusione?”(Quondam “Mercanzia” 55-56)

18. L’ “età dei canzonieri demolisce il *Canzoniere* nella sua forma originaria, per ridurlo a una narrazione riamata di casi amorosi.” G. Gorni “Le forme primarie del testo poetico.” *Letteratura Italiana III/i* (Torino: Einaudi,) 508. Inherent to the success of Petrarch’s poetry, furthermore, was the danger that even the most reverential imitations would duplicate the inconclusive, repetitive language that signaled his emotional paralysis and inability to move forward and change.

19. Amedeo Quondam, “Mercanzia” P. 61

20. Quondam remarks: “Tra l’ originale e la sua forma finale il libro diventava sempre più necessaria una mediazione: anzi, alcuni libri si presentavano esclusivamente come opere di mediazione, in cui l’ autore o gli autori non erano perfettamente distinguibili dal curatore (le “raccolte”, ovviamente...), e non a caso tanti frontespizi giolitini (ma più generalmente di cinquecentine) diventano estremamente complicati e prolissi: oltre al titolo e al nome dell’autore, spesso indicano il nome del traduttore, quello del curatore, eccetera...è anche il segno della necessità crescente della mediazione intellettuale nel lavoro editoriale [...]. (Quondam, “Mercanzia,” 95). “La strada del “letterato”non ha più un percorso necessario, tagliato da un bivio neanche tanto alternativo (corte/chiesa) [...] ha una nuova possibile direzione [...] percorsa da un volume formidabile di scambi [...] non è più, soprattutto, una vita privata [...] che Lodovico Dolce ad altri abbiano “albergato per un tempo sotto il tetto” di casa Giolito a Venezia

non è certo un episodio curioso [...] è il segno della nuova condizione storica del lavoro intellettuale, che descrive però i termini di stretta organicità tra nuova figura professionale e nuovo committente e quindi fra lavoro (a tempo pieno) nell'istituzione e lavoro "privato". ("Mercanzia," 100-101).

21. Again Quondam: "[...] pubblicare quaranta e più libri all'anno significa non più soltanto rispondere ad una domanda già esistente (come era per Giovanni [il padre] la domanda già esistente e pressochè tutta funzionale ad un pubblico predeterminato, di tipo prevalentemente universitario), bensì produrre direttamente il loro stesso consumo, produrre con il libro il suo pubblico e i suoi bisogni materiali, come ogni altra merce: progettare il libro dunque, come una merce che sia però nello stesso tempo "mercanzia d'utile" e "mercanzia d'onore", in grado cioè di soddisfare la sua doppia funzionalità economica e culturale." (Quondam, "Mercanzia," 67-68).

22. Quondam: "Giolito comprese il processo di ampliamento del campo sociale della scrittura, e in particolare comprese che tra "pubblico della poesia" e "poeti" non c'era più la separazione profonda d'una volta, ma che i due campi finivano sempre più per sovrapporsi: la folla crescente (e che chiedeva spazio tipografico per realizzarsi) dei petrarchisti tendeva ad assumere il volto e le proporzioni della folla degli "alfabeti." Quondam, 83.

23. *Il Petrarca corretto da M. Lodovico Dolce et alla sua integrità ridotto.* In Vinegia appresso Gabriel Giolito de Ferrari MDXLVII. Introduction by Gabriel Giolito "A i lettori" p. 2 This edition contains (in the order in which they appear): Trionfi; *Capitolo di M. Francesco Petrarca da lui medesimo rivisitato*; *Rime sparse*; *Rime a lui* (by Geri Giamfigliacci, Giovanni de Dondi, Sennuccio, Giacomo Colonna); Guido Cavalcanti "Donna mi prega: perchè voglio dore;" Dante "Cosi nel mio parlar vogl'io esser aspro."

24. Nanna quotes sonnet CXXXII, 1. (p. 139). Quotations are from: Pietro Aretino, *Ragionamento. Dialogo* (Milano: Garzanti, 1984) ed. and intro Paolo Procaccioli; the following includes a line from Petrarch (CXXXII, 14) and is from p. 196.

25. Cited by E. Cropper "On Beautiful Women", 385.

26. On games in the Renaissance, see: Scipione Bargagli, *I trattenimenti*, originally published in Venice by Giunti in 1581 now edited by Laura Ricco (Roma: Salerno Editore, 1989); also Innocenzo Ringhieri *Cento giuochi liberali e d'ingegno* originally published in Bologna in 1551 now available in an edition edited by Caterina

Monani (Foggia: Bastogli, 1990).

27. Stefano Guazzo, *La civil conversazione* ed. Amedeo Quondam (Ferrara: Franco Cosimi Pannini, 1993) vol. 1, 312. Amedeo Quondam, "Il naso di Laura: Considerazione del ritratto poetico e la comunicazione lirica." *Il Naso di Laura: Lingua e poesia lirica nella tradizione del Classicismo*, Saggi dell' Istituto di studi rinascimentali, Ferrara (Modena: Franco Cosimo Pannini Editore, 1991): 291-328. Quondam analyzes the poetic portrait and lyric communication and provides the clearest outline of the possible combination of *io/tu* relationship. The chief combinations in this relationship are the following: the poet may correspond to the protagonist and the lady to a woman in flesh and blood (a strategy of authenticity); the poet may not be the protagonist and the lady not a real person (conventionality); the poet is the protagonist but the lady is fictitious (imaginary situation); the poet is not the protagonist but the lady is a real woman (encomiastic situation). Quondam shows that the speaking *io* of the lyric is really a reflexive *si*, because in all possible identity combinations just described the poet speaks in the same way and the *donne*, whether real or imaginary, are always described in the same way. This vehicle of communication is, according to this discussion, not purely self referential, because it functions not only in amorous or erotic circumstances but also in more general social relations (the *tu* is doubled up as the poetry opens into a *voi*). The gendering of the relationship complicates it a great deal, because the poet's sense of self whose gendered identity runs parallel to his sexuality is reinforced by historical identity.

28. Guazzo, 312. See, also Daniela Romagnoli, Guerini e Associati eds. *La città e la corte. Buone e cattive maniere tra Medioevo e età moderna* (Milano, 1991), J.L. Lievsay, *Stefano Guazzo and the English Renaissance (1575-1675)* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1961); Carlo Ossola, *Dal Cortegiano all'uomo di mondo* (Torino: Einaudi, 1987) 137-151.

29. Pietro Aretino *Tutte le commedie* a cura di G. B. De Sanctis (Milano: Mursia, 1991).

30. L'Arétin, *Sonnets Luxurieux. Sur les XVI postures*. Translated from Italian by Alcide Bonneau and Paul Larivaille (Paris: Rivages poche Petite Bibliothèque, 1996). On Renaissance pornography, see: Lynn Hunt, ed. *The Invention of Pornography: Obscenity and the Origins of Modernity, 1500-1800*. (New York: Zone Books, 1993); Lynne Lawner, ed. and tr. *I modi the Sixteen Pleasures: An Erotic Album of the Italian Renaissance* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern UP, 1988); according to Burckhardt *The Civilization of the Renaissance Italy* (1860) pornography is inevitable epilogue of a glorious

but problematic age – the cult of antiquity as a form of paganism (esp. p. 160); Leonard Barkan, *Transuming Passion: Ganymede and the Erotics of Himanism* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1991)

31. David O. Franz, "*Festum Voluptatis:*" *A Study of Renaissance Erotica*. (Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 1989), 48-56.

32. Either working within his canon or revolting against it. While most Italian Renaissance writers were imitators and followers of Petrarch (Jacopo Sannazzaro [1455-1530], Matteo Maria Boiardo [1440-1494], Ludovico Ariosto [1474-1533], Michelangelo Buonarroti [1475-1564] Giovanni delle Casa [1503-1556] among others) who both expanded the confines and enriched the tradition of Petrarchism with new subtleties. This fashion, at its most subservient, culminated in the *centoni*, patchwork of quotations from Petrarch verses combined to produce new poems.

33. Della Casa sees beauty in the symmetry of all parts: "dove ha covenevole misura fra le parti verso di sé e fra le parti e 'l tutto. Quivi è la bellezza." Symmetry is an absolute standard by which della Casa judges both a beautiful human body and the gracefulness of human language and actions: "Né voglio io che tu pensi che ciò avvega de'visi e delle membra o de'corpi solamente, anzi interviene e nel favellare e nell' operare né più né meno." (XXVI, p. 253). Since disorderly behavior is a sign of bad manners ("disordinate e sconvenevoli maniere" [XXVIII, 253]), the gentleman does not fulfill his duty solely by performing good deeds, he must carry them out in style: "Non si dee adunque l'uomo contentare di fare e cose buone, ma dee studiare di farle anco leggiadre...nello andare, nello stare, nel siedere, negli atti, nel portamento e nel vestire e nelle parole e nel silenzio e nel posare e nell'operare." (*Il galateo*, XXVIII, P. 255-56)

34. This is in spite of Paul Oppenheimer's claim (*The Birth of the Modern Mind: Self Consciousness and the Invention of the Sonnet* [Oxford: Oxford UP, 1989]) that the break between song and poem, oral and written traditions, was a neat one and originated in the invention of the sonnet by Jacopo da Lentini. Augustine, Petrarch's mentor, had discussed the role and function of music at length. According to the Pythagorean tradition music was perceived to be based on a precise and rigorous order determined by the mathematical and numerical values of sound and rhythm. Sounds, according to this scheme, follow each other according to harmonies determined by symmetry according to the perfect relations of one fourth one fifth and one eighth (*De musica*, [I, 2 and following]); Augustine borrows from musical harmony to explain the inexplicable oneness of human and divine in Christ (*De trinitate* [IV, 2, 4]). Music unites words and sound to produce a whole that is greater than the single elements, to create the most moving affective experiences,

supplement the expressive quality of language alone (Augustine was discussing to the role of music in the liturgy of the Church). Words transcend the sphere of quotidian communication and elevates itself to the sphere of the sacred. See: Remo Bodei, *Ordo amoris*, 126. Petrarch openly identifies with Orpheus in the *Fragmenta*. Furthermore, he often alludes to music (poem # 1 clearly establishes a bond between "sono" and "suono"; Petrarch also frequently implores the soothing quality of his song/verse: "cantando il duol si disacerba" [23.4]) and his poems are punctuated by references to musical instruments and musical terms (lira, cetra, tromba, choro, concerto, voce). See: Giuseppe Mazzotta, *Petrarch* 145. It is self evident that music (like language) is bound to the temporal; while the flow of time resists reification music has the force to congeal temporality into something that survives independently, just as Petrarch attempted to petrify his words into an object immune to time.

35. See: Mazzotta, 145; Maria Picchio Simonelli, "Strutture foniche nel RVF," in *Francis Petrarch, Six Centuries Later. A Symposium*. Ed. Aldo Scaglione (Studies in Romance Languages and Literature, # 3). (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1975), 66-104.

36. Anton Francesco Grazzini (Il Lasca) describes in his *novelliere* (*Le cene*) a group of aristocratic youth who entertain each other during a snow storm in song "si diedero a cantare certi madrigali a cinque voci di Verdelotto e Arcadelte." (*Le cene*, [Firenze: Le Monnier, 1890]). The legendary concerts sponsored by the Venetian aristocrat Lady Polisena Pecorina were directed by Flemish composer Adrian Willaert, who was appointed choirmaster at San Marco in 1527.

37. Paolo Emilio Carapezza "Nella *Scienza Armonica* di Aristosseno la fonte della poetica del Bembo." 33-41 in Luca Zoppelli ed. *Le origini del madrigale. Atti dell'incontro di studio* (Asolo, 23 maggio 1987). (Asolo: Tipografia Asolana, 1990).

38. See: Bembo, *Prose*, ed. Dionisotti, 51-7. On *suono, numero e variazione* see: Bembo's *Prose* ed Dionisotti libro II ix and following 146. Among the many rhetorical and melodic convergences contemplated by Bembo: *gravità* is obtained by assembling clusters of consonants that lengthen syllables; closed rhymes, on the other hand produce *piacevolezza* (rhymes can generate *gravità* when they are far apart); *versi interi* (hendecasyllabic) promote slowness and thus *gravità*.

39. Medieval music was based on preexisting melodies fitted formally and rhythmically to polyphonic compositions for voices (the canon of the *cantus firmus*, which

were dominated by high melisma, which clouded language (*florid organum*). The first important fact crucial development in the history of western music took place around the year 1300, the contemporary labeled it *ars nova*, which was also the title of a treatise by the French musician Philippe de Vitry (ca 1320) a friend of Petrarch. In the *Convivio* (II.xiii.8-20) Dante tells us that planets represent the seven Liberal Arts. Music is exemplified by Mars because of its two properties: the first is proportion the second heat. Music is interpreted in its broadest sense, both as the music of language and the music of instruments; the proportional essence of music manifests itself both in unaccompanied words that accord well together and in songs. See: John Stevens, "Dante and Music." *Italian Studies* XXIII (1968): 1-18.

40. With its economic rise Antwerp became the leading center behind the great development of Renaissance musical settings. My discussion is indebted to Dean T. Mace, "Pietro Bembo and the Literary Origins of the Italian Madrigal." *Musical Quarterly* 50 (1969): 65-87. For the authoritative discussion of the Renaissance madrigal see: Alfred Einstein, *The Italian Madrigal* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1949) especially I: 109, 152. Einstein describes Petrarch as "the first modern poet, able to give expression to the most intimate, the most delicate, and the most sublime impulses of the soul, the first to put in perfect form the discordance of his own feelings." (1: 190). Also, on the literary quality of music, see: Einstein I: 121. For a historic overview, see: "Music in the Culture of the Renaissance." in Edward E. Lowinsky ed., *Music in the Culture of the Renaissance* (Chicago: U of Chicago Press, 1989). Paolo Fabbri ed. *Il madrigale tra Cinque e Seicento* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1986).

41. Quoted by Lorenzo Bianconi "Il Cinquecento e il Seicento." 319 in Alberto Asor Rosa ed. *La letteratura Italiana. Teatro, musica, tradizione dei classici*. v. VI (Torino: Giulio Einaudi, 1987), 319-357. Zarlino, the Venetian musical theorist (and disciple of Willeart, the author of *Musica Nova*) attempted to correlate of musical and emotional effects by seeking out the musical equivalents for words in a new tonal and rhythmic quality of verses, in order to obtain word or tone painting (*Institutioni harmoniche* [1558]).⁴¹ Following Plato, Zarlino advances the primacy of the written text (which is to be followed by harmony and rhythm). He then turns to Horace's *Ars poetica* and its discrimination of stylistic levels for diverse subject matters to propose that, if it is not acceptable for poets to employ tragic verse for comedy, musicians, likewise, should not match harmonies and texts that are unsuitable: a sorrowful text calls for a slow harmony, a merry text a quick and light hearted one; the declaration short and long syllables should be set to short and long tones.

42. This was the first printed collection of secular music that contained compositions by one author for four voices (instead of one shared coral book with 4 parts on 2 facing pages without the complete text only underneath the notes of the soprano). See: Maria Giovanna Miggiani "Bernardo Pisano tra musica e filologia." 65-79. Despite the title of the seventeen texts chosen by Pisano only seven are by Petrarch, they are short compositions for four voices which use only the first stanza (two of them also contain the envoy).

43. On the reception history of the first group of composers to make their impact on the world through the medium of mass publication-Verdelot, Arcadelt, Morales and Palestrina, see: Iain Fenlon, *Music, Print and Culture in Early Sixteenth-Century Italy*. (British Library).

44. For a survey of the tradition of Renaissance construction of femininity, see: Philip Sohm, "Gendered Style in Italian Art Criticism from Michelangelo to Malvasia." *Renaissance Quarterly* 58.4 (1995): 759; Elizabeth Cropper reconstructs a complex history of love and beauty that converges in treatises on beautiful women, documents literary and pictorial ideals of feminine beauty constructed on a set of beliefs articulated in treatises on women, ideal embodiment of feminine beauty. For a survey of Renaissance treatises on love, womanly beauty and manners, see, also: Paolo Lorenzetti, "La donna presso gli scrittori del Cinquecento." *Rivista d'Italia* VII (1914): 68-87; on the theme of female beauty as a synecdoche for art see: Jacqueline Murray "Agnolo Firenzuola on Female Sexuality and Women's Sexuality." *Sixteenth Century Journal* 20:2 (1991): 199-213; Mary Rogers, "The Decorum of Women's Beauty: Trissino, Firenzuola, Luigini and the Representation of Women in Sixteenth Century Painting." *Renaissance Studies* 2 (1988): 47-87.

45. Federico Luigini *Il libro della bella donna* in Giuseppe Zonta, *Trattati del Cinquecento sulla donna* (Bari: Laterza, 1913) 225. Zonta's compendium contains: Alessandro Piccolomini, *Dialogo de la bella creanza de le donne, de lo Stordito Intronato* (1538); Michelangelo Biondo, *Angoscia, Doglia e Pena le tre furie del mondo*; Luigini da Udine, *Il libro della bella donna composto da messer Federico Luigini da Udine; Il convito, di Messer Giovanni Battista Modio, ovvero del peso della moglie*. See: James Grantham Turner, *Sexuality and Gender in Early Modern Europe* (NY and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) especially "The Ambiguity of Beauty: Tasso and Petrarch."(133-157); Anne Christine Junkermann, "*Bellissima donna*: An interdisciplinary study of Venetian sensuous half-length images of the early sixteenth-

century." PhD Dissertation, UC Berkeley, 1988. Elisabeth Cropper describes these types as "beautiful monsters composed of every individual perfection." 376. Nancy J. Vickers reminds us in her inquiry into the poetic convention, comes "from the French *blasonner* and the English 'to blaze'--'to proclaim as with a trumpet, to publish, and, by extension, to defame or celebrate.'" "The 'blazon of sweet beauty's best:' Shakespeare's *Lucrece*," 95 in Patricia Parker and Geoffrey Hartman eds. *Shakespeare and the Question of Theory* (NY: Methuen, 1987). Her argument is re-elaborated by Patricia Parker "Rhetorics of Property: Exploration, Inventory, Blazon," *Literary Fat Ladies: Rhetoric, Gender, Property* (NY and London: Methuen, 1987) 126-9; Gail Rubin has analyzed the use of women as property to be either exchanged or to cement the bonds between men, see: Rubin, G. "The Traffic of Women: Notes on the 'Political Economy' of Sex." *Toward an Anthropology of Women* ed, R. R. Reiter (NY: Monthly Review P, 1975). For examples of the application of Rene Girard's concept of mimetic desire and its triangulated exchanges to feminist scholarship, see: Sedgwick, E. K. *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (NY: Columbia UP, 1985).

46. Zonta, 226.

47. Zonta, 230. Furthermore, hair must be "crespi" (curly) "lungi" (long), "folta" and "spessa" (luxurious and thick) like that of Alcina while Vergil's Camilla, Dido and Venus are evoked to corroborate that hair can be worn either up or loose. Ariosto's Isabella and Olimpia (as well as Laura herself) illustrate the power of hair to attract the hearts of men.(235). Nearly every literary beauty in the 15th and 16th centuries (juust as Ariosto's *belle donne*) is virtually indistinguishable from the next in appearance (despite their quite different personalities). Golden, long, flowing hair are a standard feature of the traditional Petrarchan woman adorning not only Petrarch's Laura but Ariosto's Alcina, Angelica and Isabella; Poliziano's Simonetta sports the same blowing blonde locks.

48. Giovanni Boccaccio, *Il Corbaccio* ed. Giulia Natali (Milano: Mursia, 1992), 52.

49. Zonta, 273.

50. For the text of this treatise, see: Agnolo Firenzuola, *Dialogo della bellezza delle donne, intitolato Celso* (written in 1542 and published in 1542) in Paola Barocchi, *Trattati d'arte del Cinquecento fra Manierismo e Controriforma*. 3 vol. (Bari, 1960), vol. 1; Agnolo Firenzuola, *Dialogo delle bellezze delle donne. Opere scelte*. Ed. Giuseppe Fatini (Torino: UTET, 1957); English translation, Firenzuola, *On the Beauty of Women*

Ed. And tr. K. Eisenbichler and J. Murray (Philadelphia, 1992). Firenzuola devotes several pages on the intellectual history of beauty and cites several key authorities (Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Ficino). In the “Orto della Badia di Grignano” of Prato a group of local beauties (Mona Lampiada, Mona Amorriscia, Mona Selvaggia and Mona Verdespina) were gathered and were evaluating the beauty of Mona Amelia (“stavano a ragionare di Mona Amelia della Torre nuova, la quale ancora era per l’orto, e chi di loro voleva ch’ella fusse bellissimam e chi ch’ella non fusse pur bella.” 477-8). Celso with “altri giovani pratesi” try to starlte the ladies and approach them in secret. (478).

51. On Lucrezia and the resurgence of her myth in the Renaissance, see: Stephanie H. Jed, *Chaste Thinking: The Rape of Lucretia and the Birth of Humanism* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press); Linda C. Hults, "Durer's Lucretia" Speaking the Silence of Women." *Signs* 16 (1991): 205-237; Tonia Caterina Riviello *Agnolo Firenzuola: The Androgynous Vision* (Roma: Bulzoni, 1986).

52. Junkerman, 138. Cropper calls attention to numerous sixteenth century female portraits (for instance Titian’s *La bella*, Giorgione’s *Laura*, Raphael’s *La Fornarina* and Parmigianino’s *Antea*) that seem to have to be conceived as generic images of beautiful women rather than portraits of specific individuals (as correlatives to the construct of the beautiful lady that was purely theoretical and not to be found in real life).

CHAPTER SEVEN

SILENCE

Girolamo Ruscelli's poetic treatise, *Del modo di comporre in versi nella lingua italiana* (first printed in 1559) is an instruction book intended for the novice or aspiring poet (one of the many who carried a *petrarchino*). Ruscelli carefully avoids addressing a specialized and privileged public of "dotti" and "intendenti," and paints a spirited and frivolous picture of the use of the literary text in a social setting. The sublime words of a poet, he suggests, are properly enjoyed within choreography of ingredients which include musical accompaniment and a beautiful woman delivering the words in agreeable sound:

La più grata e la più perfetta armonia che in questo modo per corso umano si possa udire è un componimento di bellissimo soggetto, spiegato con bellissime e ornatissime parole, in versi, e cantato con perfetta ragion di musica da graziosa e bella donna.¹

Considered in its historical setting, this is a somewhat problematic formula.

The Renaissance, as we have seen, was a world of self-conscious and carefully stylized speech acts. The newly fashioned culture of manners both legislated on topics that required glossing over and singled out categories of people who ought to be silent (and out of view). Stefano Guazzo, who so persuasively profiled a *civil conversazione*, reflects on the eloquence of silence ("si dice che, ch'un tacere a tempo avanza ogni bel parlare.")² Silence was enforced, by enlarge, according to principles of respect in a hierarchical society (and modulated the speech of children, courtiers and women). According to Giovanni Della Casa's early dialogue *Una questione piacevolissima: se si debba prender moglie* (1529) it

was women, or at least women of a marrying age, who were chosen to be shielded from public view:

[...] noi non vediamo le madri porre tanto zelo in nessun'altra cosa, quanta ne adoperano per evitare che le ragazze ormai da marito escano di casa, si mostrino in pubblico e possano in qualche modo essere guardate da qualche estraneo. Perciò piú delle volte sposiamo una ragazza della quale ignoriamo persino l'aspetto.³

In general, the language on femininity that emerged from the proliferation of conduct books for courtiers, gentry and a rising bourgeoisie appealed to a distinguished canon of misogynist authorities.⁴ Philosophical, religious and medical sources were invoked to corroborate negative attitudes toward women, and established a set of expectations with regards to their admittance to the social domain.⁵

Plato had proposed that women (at least those who were members of the elite of his ideal Republic) were as accomplished as men and fit to be active participants to the life of the state.⁶ Renaissance authors, however, generally favored a view of womanhood that was rooted in two essentialist ideologies: the Galenic-Aristotelian pessimistic account of women's psychology and her physiology and the Hebraic-Christian tradition of identifying Eve with the Fall. The steady and lasting sway of these theories sustained the radically misogynistic portrayals of women produced in the Renaissance.

In *The generation of Animals*, Aristotle defined gender by differentiating between form (masculine) and matter (feminine). On this basis he established women's physical and spiritual deformity and sanctioned their subjugation:

[...] The male provides the 'form' and the 'principle of movement', the female provides the body, in other words, the material [...] Just as it sometimes happens that deformed offsprings are produced by deformed parents, and sometimes not, so the

offsprings produced by a female are sometimes female, sometimes not, but male. The reason is that the female is as it were a deformed male; and the menstrual discharge is semen, though in an impure condition: i.e. it lacks one constituent, and the only, the principle of soul.⁷

In *The History of Animals*, he outlined a woman's psychological profile from humoral theory. The make up of a woman's body (in which cold and wet qualities prevail) binds her to the base instincts of her flesh and is imputed to determine her weakness, her incapacity for reasonable determination, her docility, gullibility and belligerence:

[...] For the manners of the females are more soft, they more rapidly become mild, and are more tractable and docile [...] For man has the most perfect nature of all animals [...] Hence woman is more compassionate than man, and has a greater propensity to tears. She is also more envious, more querulous, more slanderous, and more contentious. Further still, the female is more dispirited, more despondent, more imprudent, and more given to falsehood, than the male. She is, likewise, more easily deceived, and more apt to remember; and again the female is more vigilant, less active, and, in short, less disposed to motion, and receptive of less nutrient than the male. But the male, as we have observed, is more disposed to give assistance in danger, and is more courageous than the female.⁸

Following Aristotle, Galen (and later anatomists) argued that woman is imperfect because her body is colder, that her uterus is a flawed, inverted male organ and that the male semen is the essential to procreation (while woman provides subsidiary material for the development of a human being):

Now just as mankind is the most perfect of all animals, so within mankind the man is more perfect than the woman, and the primary instrument [...] The fetus needs abundant material both when it is first constituted, and for the entire period of growth that follows [...] Accordingly it was better for the female to be made enough colder so that she cannot disperse all the nutriment which she concocts and elaborates [...] This is the reason the female was made cold, and the immediate consequence of this is the imperfection of the parts, which cannot emerge on the outside on account of the defect in the heat, another very great advantage for the continuation of the race. For, remaining within, that which would have become the scrotum if it had emerged on the outside, was made into the substance of the uteri,

an instrument fitted to receive and retain the semen and to nourish and perfect the fetus.⁹

Of the two conflicting narratives of creation found in *Genesis* (in the order in which they appear, one in which God creates both sexes in his image, a second in which Eve derives from a rib of Adam) Christian theologians relied on the version that disfavored woman and connected her to the temptations in *Genesis* 3:

18. And the Lord God said, it is not good that man shall be alone [...] 21. And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept; and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; 22. And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. 23. And Adam said, this is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man. 24. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh. (*Genesis* Chapter 2, Verses 18-24)

26. And God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. 27. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him, male and female created he them. (*Genesis* Chapter 1, verses 26-7)

6. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. 7. And the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. 8. And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden [...] 16. Unto the woman [God] said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall have rule over thee. 17. And unto Adam he said, because thou hast harkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life [...] 19. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return. (*Genesis*, chapter 3 verses 6-19)¹⁰

Because woman is both corrupt and the agent of vice, she ought to be confined to the domestic domain: “10 Who can find a virtuous woman? For her price is above rubies [...]19. She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff.” (*Proverbs*, 31: 10-19). St Paul, seemingly favorable to women in *Galatians* 3: 28 (“[...] there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Jesus Christ”), proposes elsewhere rigidly hierarchical categories stating that “the head of every man is Christ, the head of a woman is her husband, and the head of Christ is God.” (I *Corinthians* 11: 3) and that women should be modest and silent:

11. Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. 12. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp the authority over the man, but to be in silence. 13. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. 14. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.(1 *Timothy* 2, 9-12)¹¹

Traditional misogyny, venomous among the medieval clergy, waned in the late Middle Ages as the social and legal status of women improved, in great part, owing to the elevating context of the cult of the Virgin. A climate unfavorable to women was renewed in Italy in the Early Renaissance by the codification of the institution of the bourgeois family and revival of traditional values of humanism:¹² the separation of public and private domains became the basis for social organization. Innumerable conduct books written at that time reveal a keen concern with the behavior and misbehavior of women. Woman was defined by the disposition of her sexuality in a way that man was not.¹³

Francesco Barbaro and Leon Battista Alberti exemplify contemporary views regarding the public circulation of women and reassert women’s responsibilities for rearing children and managing the house while being obedient. Barbaro’s influential

treatise *De re uxoria* (written in Latin in 1416 and first published in Italian translation in 1538) counsels a husband to teach his wife silence ("Women should believe they have achieved glory of eloquence if they will honor themselves with the outstanding ornament of silence).¹⁴ What is most significant, Barbaro expressly equates domesticity with the silence of women and their speech with whoring ("the speech of a noble woman can be no less dangerous than the nakedness of her limbs.")¹⁵ Leon Battista Alberti (*Della Famiglia* [1450]) adds that a woman's speech is a sign of her mental imbalance ("Sempre fu ornamento di gravità e riverenza in una donna la taciturnità: sempre fu costume e indizio di pazzarella il troppo favellare.")¹⁶ Alberti's treatise contributed to the manufacture of the bourgeois mythology of the domestic and to define a place for woman through the category of the economic.¹⁷ The third book, aptly titled "Oeconomicus" after Xenophon's Socratic discourse on the skilled household manager, betrays the degree of anxiety associated with keeping the public and private apart. It contrasts two points of view, that of the statesman and civic humanist Lionardo, and that of the experienced merchant, Giannozzo. Lionardo provides the rationale for the division of public (defined as "faccende di fuori"¹⁸ or "cose pubbliche" p. 340) and domestic ("le domestiche"). Circulation in the public domain, which is the jurisdiction of men ("trafficare tra gli uomini" p.340-1) is contrasted to the enclosing of the house, which is province of leisure and effeminization ("otio"). Allowed to roam, Giannozzo states, women cannot restrain their speech and their behavior ("ogni cosa posson le femine eccetto che tacere." 348); he thus recommends that the merchant keep his business a secret, protecting it even, or especially from the eyes of his wife:

E per levare ogni appetito se mai desiderasse vedere o mie scritte o mie secrete faccende, io spesso molto gli biasimava quelle femmine ardite e baldanzose le quali danno troppo opera in sapere e fatti fuori di casa o del marito o degli altri uomini.

To guarantee the secrecy of men's affairs, it was customary for theorists of manners to argue that women be forbidden to read and write.¹⁹ Ludovico Dolce states the matter clearly in his *Dialogo della Institutione della Donna* (Venice, 1553). While he outlines the civic and public requirements of man ("prudentia, eloquentia, peritia di governar Repubblica, ingegno, memoria, arte et industria di regger la vita, giustitia, liberalità, magnanimità") he recommends that woman foster no other attribute or skill but her chastity ("fuori che la castità [...] perciò che in femina questa vale per ogni altra eccellentia.")²⁰

The celebrated Spanish humanist Juan Luis Vives²¹ (a friend and correspondent of Thomas More and Erasmus of Rotterdam) composed a treatise, *The instruction of a Christian Woman*, for Mary, the daughter of his patron Catherine of Aragon, who would become the queen England. Vives' text was first published in Latin in 1523 and soon translated into French, German, Italian and English.²² While taking a positive view of women and their potential and advocating for the education of women, Vives' work recasts old and inflexible standards of behavior based on the traditional view of woman's inferiority, capriciousness and propensity to commit immodest acts:

[...] First let her understand that chastity is the principal virtue of a woman, and counterpoiseth with all the rest; if she have that, no man will look for any other, and if she lack that no man will regard other [...] it is to be judged of chastity in women, that she that is chaste is fair, well favoured, rich, fruitful, noble, and all best things that can be named: and contrary, she that is unchaste is a see and treasure of all illness. Now shamefastness and sobriety be the inseparable companions of chastity, insomuch as she cannot be chaste, that is not ashamed; for that is a cover and a veil to her face [...] Our Lord curseth an unchaste woman, saying, *thou hast the face of*

*an harlot, thou are past shame. Of shamefastness cometh demureness and measurableness(71-1).*²³

Vives reminds the reader of the dangers inherent in a woman's circulation:

as oft as a maid goeth forth among people, so often she cometh in judgement and extreme peril of her beauty, honesty, demureness, wit, shamefastness and virtue. For nothing is more thender than is the fame and estimation of women, nor nothing is more in danger of wrong [...] a woman should be kept close, nor be known to many, for it is a token of no great chastity or good name, to be known of many, or be sung about in the city in songs. (p. 71-72)²⁴

Thus, the goal of Vives' educational curriculum is to compel her to be silent and subordinate:

what she shall study? I have told you, the study of wisdom, the which doth instruct their manners and inform their living, and teacheth them the way of good and holy life. As for eloquence I have no great care, nor a woman needeth it not, but she needeth goodness and wisdom. Nor is it no shame for a woman to hold her peace, but it is a shame for her and abominable to lack discretion and to live ill. (p. 169)

She should be shielded from texts that might imperil her acquiescence and subservience:

When she shall be taught to read, let those books be taken in hand that may teach good manners. And when she she shall learn to write, let not her example be void verses, nor wanton or trifling songs, but some sad sentence, prudent and chaste, taken out of wholly scripture, or the sayings of philosophers, which by often writing she may fasten better in her memory [...] therefore a woman should beware of all these books, likewise as of serpents or snakes. (169-170)

Ovid is singled out as a particularly poisonous influence while Augustine, Ambrose,

Jerome, Plato, Cicero and Seneca are recommended as beneficial reading material.

Outlining a curriculum of studies for Battista Montefeltro, Leonardo Bruni proposed that she be trained to read Latin works of history, moral philosophy, and poetry (a program not dissimilar to the one humanists forged for men). Bruni, however, was as adamant as Vives that she be denied instruction in rhetoric:

[...] why should the subtleties of...rhetorical conundrums consume the powers of a woman, who never sees the forum? The art of delivery [...] [is] so far [...] from being the concern of a woman that if she should gesture energetically with her arms as she spoke and shout with violent emphasis, she would probably be thought mad and put under restraint. The contests of the forum, like those of warfare and battle, are the sphere of men.²⁵

Because female virtue was equated with chastity, the categories required to identify women as moral beings were essentially two--chaste and unchaste women. The Venetian scholar Modesta Pozzo (who published with the pseudonym of Moderata Fonte) was born to a family of citizens and raised in a privileged environment that nourished her literary talent. Corinna, the learned virgin in her dialogue *Il merito delle donne [...] ove chiaramente si scuopre quanto sieno elle degne, e piú perfette degli uomini* (Venice, 1600),²⁶ voluntarily casts herself aside in solitude to escape the rigid codification of womanly behavior and limitation on her intellectual pursuit.²⁷ Men, Corinna declares, “set themselves up as tyrants over [women], arrogantly usurping that dominion over women, that they claim is their right.” She prophesies the horrors of married life: “Women who are married-or martyred [...] -have endless sources of misery [...] [they] find themselves more constricted than ever before, kept like animals within four walls and subjected to a hateful guardian[...].”²⁸ Men, Corinna adds, cannot curb or dissimulate their duplicity and dishonesty when they interact with one another and their behavior is likely to be openly shameless and contemptuous in their dealings with women. This prompts her impassioned appeal for women’s autonomy and independence:

We are indeed senseless to suffer so many cruel deeds from them and not flee their constant, tacit persecution if us and their hatred of us as we would a raging fire [...] for even among themselves they deceive one another, rob one another, destroy one another, and try to do each other down.²⁹

In the Renaissance a woman's chastity could depend on more than her sexuality taken in the literal sense. To pursue her intellectual endeavors Isotta Nogarola, the erudite Veronese humanist, withdrew like Fonte's Corinna into a life of chaste seclusion within the confines of her maternal home.³⁰ Though she had followed the footsteps of saints and holy women in her self imposed exile inside a "book-lined cell," her letters inform us about her efforts at establishing intellectual contacts with the outside (male) world of humanism. For this she paid dearly: she was publicly vilified with charges of sexual misbehavior (charges which were warranted by her unnatural erudition):

*Before she made her body generally available for promiscuous intercourse, she had first permitted, and indeed even earnestly desired, that the seal of her virginity be broken by none other than her brother [...] she who sets herself no limit in this filthy lust, dares to engage so deeply in the finest literary studies.*³¹

The career of the Venetian scholar Cassandra Fedele, on the other hand, is illuminating with respect to which a woman's learning could be appropriated to advance the prestige of men (and then dismissed). Her extraordinary talents were initially encouraged by her ambitious father to serve his own self-advancement. Admired in her youth as a prodigy, and publicly praised by the likes of Poliziano with the words used by Virgil to compliment the warrior maiden Camilla, she was invited by Queen Isabella to join the court of Aragon. The Venetian Senate issued a mandate declaring her to be one of the great assets of the Republic and forbidding her to leave. Married at the age of thirty-three to a Vicentine physician, her intellectual pursuits were suddenly interrupted and she fell into anonymity. At her husband's death she was left destitute; her pleas for help met deaf ears within the Venetian establishment. She was called on again when she

was ninety-one to deliver a Latin oration on behalf of the Republic for the visiting queen of Poland. At this astonishing age she was no longer a threatening and troublesome female presence but, as she had been in her youth, a curiosity who could be safely paraded.³²

In his vastly influential primer on manners, *Il Cortegiano*, Baldassar Castiglione seems to depart from all traditional notions of womanhood. The “*donna di palazzo*” (Castiglione avoids the term *cortegiana*) who is fashioned in book three of the *Courtier*, is not only beautiful but also talented and educated. She is capable of participating in the literary conventions and amateur musical performances which began to occupy men's leisure at the court. She is expected to have a voice and use it in conversation with men.³³

From the outset, however, Castiglione preempts his dialogue of any real subversive intent and shrouds Urbino in an atmosphere of legend. He points out, for instance, that the court of Urbino was an exceptional environment³⁴ and that its vibrant intellectual transactions were short lived (the founding figure of the court, Federigo da Montefeltro is dead, and so are many of the distinguished members of the court). Even more eccentric are Castiglione's opening remarks about his subject matter: he is not presenting a first hand account of the events discussed, which took place while he was in England.³⁵ Introducing Book Three Castiglione, once again, reminds us of the exceptional nature of his subject matter and of its anomaly. The moral burden of his text becomes, explicitly, to revive the distinction of Urbino (which justifies its memorialization in a book):

la corte d'Urbino fosse a tutte l'altre della Italia superiore [...] ardisco di parlare con speranza di esser creduto, non laudando cose tanto antiche che mi sia licito fingere, e possendo approvar quant'io ragiono col testimonio de molti omini degni di fede che

vivono ancora, e presenzialmente hanno veduto e conosciuto la vita e i costumi che in quella casa fiorirono un tempo; ed io mi tengo obbligato, per quanto posso, di sforzarmi con ogni studio a vendicar dalla mortal oblivione questa chiara memoria e scrivendo farla vivere negli animi dei poster. (III, i, 259-60)

Guidubaldo, who had succeeded his *condottiere* father Federico in the stewardship of Urbino at the time depicted in the *Cortegiano*, was a man blessed with all virtues but tormented by poor health. By the time he turned twenty (and at the time of the events narrated in the *Courtier*) he was a man crippled by gout.³⁶ The social gathering depicted in the *Courtier*, thus, is a rather anomalous ceremony. While the duke, crippled by his condition, is confined to his bedroom, the highest-ranking woman in the palace, the duchess Elisabetta (with her close friend Emilia Pia, wife of Arturo da Montefeltro, a natural brother of Guidubaldo), entertains the guests:

ma perché il signor Duca continuamente, per la infirmità, dopo cena assai per tempo se n'andava a dormire, ognuno per ordinario dove era la signora duchessa Elisabetta Gonzaga a quell'ora si riduceva; dove ancor sempre si ritrovava la signora Emila Pia, la qual per esser dotata di così vivo ingegno e giudicio, come sapete, pareva la maestra di tutti, e che ognuno da lei pigliasse senno e valore.(I. iv p. 20)

The text acknowledges the unorthodoxy of this situation, but glosses over it. In Urbino, Castiglione has us believe, it was conceivable for women to fraternize with men without arousing suspicion or reproach:³⁷

[...] ogni volta che al cospetto della signora Duchessa ci radunavamo [...] pareva che questa fosse una catena che tutti in amor tenesse uniti, talmente che mai non fu concordia di volontà o amore cordiale fra fratelli maggior di quello, che quivi tra tutti era. Il medesimo era tra le donne, con le quali si aveva liberissimo ed onestissimo commercio; ché a ciascuno era licito parlare, sedere, scherzare e ridere con chi gli pareva: ma tanta era la reverenzia che si portava al voler della signora Duchessa, che la medesima libertà era grandissimo freno; [...] Per la qual cosa quivi onestissimi costumi erano con grandissima libertà congiunti ed erano i giochi e i risi al suo cospetto conditi, oltre agli argutissimi sali, d'una graziosa e grave maestà; ché quella modestia e grandezza che tutti gli atti e le parole e i gesti componeva della

signora Duchessa, motteggiando e ridendo, facea che ancor da chi mai più veduta non l'avesse, fosse per grandissima signora conosciuta. (I. iv p. 22)

After dinner the guests form a circle (alternating male and female visitors)³⁸ As the festivities proceed we cannot help but notice that, in spite of the extraordinary freedoms afforded to them, the distinguished women sitting in the circle speak very little and contribute even less.³⁹ These women have no threatening edge and their demeanor, if anything secretly tells a different story, one that implicitly confirms stereotypical (and incriminating) contemporary notions of female nature. The duchess, who is mistress of ceremony, refuses to choose an activity, and appoints Emilia Pia to carry out her obligation. Emilia Pia, in turn, is incapable of resolve and unburdens herself on the other guests:

[...] dopo molti piacevoli ragionamenti la signora Duchessa volse pur che la signora Emilia cominciasse i giochi; ed essa, dopo l'aver alquanto rifiutato tal impresa, così disse: "...ch'ognun proponga secondo il parer suo un gioco non più fatto; da poi si eleggerà quello che parerà esser più degno di celebrarsi in questa compagnia.

The noncompliance of both the Duchess and Emilia Pia occasions the first of Pallavicino's misogynistic outbursts. He is next in line and vents his frustration at what appears to be a woman's prerogative to be absolved from exerting herself: "che sempre sia alle donne lecito aver questa esenzione di fatiche, e certo ragion saria volerne in ogni modo intender la cagione." [I. vii p. 26]). Even more damaging, when it is time for Costanza Fregosa (the next woman in the circle) to propose an activity, the duchess interjects and excuses her. In so doing Elisabetta Gonzaga silences all women, denying them the right and duty of playing an active role in the courtly proceedings:

la signora duchessa subito disse: "Poiché madonna Emilia non vole affaticarsi in trovar gioco alcuno, sarebbe pur ragione che l'altre donne partecipassino di questa

comodità, ed esse ancor fussino esente di tal fatica per questa sera, essendoci massimamente tanti omini, che non è pericolo che manchin i giochi.”(I. vii, p. 27)

As the discussion turns explicitly on the subject of women, we discover that the court of Urbino, though idealized, welcomes male guests who harbor poisonous and misogynistic ideas: women are subjected to social injustice, a double standard is applied to their conduct and sexual hostility surfaced repeatedly.⁴⁰ When Ottaviano Fregoso explains that chastity was imposed on women because they are imperfect and fickle creatures who need to be restrained,⁴¹ Barnardo Bibiena, who steps in on their behalf, cannot help but notice the apparent indifference of the ladies over these matters.⁴² Challenged by an openly hostile reproach and provoked to retort, the women do not combat in rational debate but react with a gesture that is far more loquacious than words. The duchess makes a sign and the women playfully assail the men, as instruments of disorder, shattering the circle and the harmony of the evening:

[...] quelle donne, ben per averle la signora Duchessa fatto così cenno, si levarono in piedi e ridendo tutte corsero verso il signor Gapsaro, come per dargli delle busse, e farne come le Baccanti d'Orfeo, tuttavia dicendo: "Ora vedrete, se ci curiamo che di noi si dica male.(II. xcvi, p. 252)⁴³

Even more damning is the duchess' next action. She appoints a man, Magnifico Giuliano, to argue against Ottaviano and Gasparo, the most severe critics of women "Voi sete estimato protettor dell'onor delle donne; però adesso è tempo che dimostrate non aver acquistato questo nome falsamente." (II. xcvi, p. 253). Since it is unfeasible that any real human being measure up to the elegance and refinement of the ideal courtier that was fashioned in the preceding discussions, Giuliano proposes that the distinguished guests cast him an

equally perfect female companion.⁴⁴ Once more, the duchess refuses to contribute to this project and appoints Magnifico to mold a perfect "donna di palazzo."⁴⁵

Book Three of the *Courtier*, which is devoted to fashioning a perfect woman, reads as compendium of all stereotypical traits attributed to women in the Renaissance.⁴⁶ Beauty, which is required to the "donna di palazzo" to a degree it was not for the *courtier*, engenders (even in Urbino) the corollary requirement of enhanced circumspection, since it is a woman's burden to maintain a reputation beyond suspicion.⁴⁷ She must share some of the traits of the courtier ("la prudenzia, la magnaminità, la continenza"), but also secure the accoutrements of a bourgeois lady. Thus she must become a good administrator and a good mother: "[...] che si convengono a tutte le donne, come l'esser bona e discreta, il saper governar le facultà del marito e la casa sua e i figliolo quando è maritata, e tutte quelle parti che si richieggono ad una bona madre di famiglia." (III.v. p. 258). She must be always vigilant not to transgress the fixed boundaries ascribed to her: "[...] le bisogna tener una certa mediocrità difficile, e quasi composta do cose contrarie, e giunger a certi termini a punto, ma non passargli."⁴⁸

The "donna di palazzo" should possess a basic knowledge of many subjects, enough to enable her to please her interlocutors and maintain the decorum of conversation:

[...] notizia di molte cose; e sappia parlando elegger quelle che sono a proposito della condition di colui con cui parla e sia cauta in non dir talor non volendo parole che lo offendano [...] Non vada mescolando nei ragionamenti piacevoli e da ridere cose di gravità, né meno nei gravi facezie e burle [...] adornata dei boni costumi. (III. vi p. 268-9)

A program of education parallel to that implemented for the courtier is presented. The goal of this curriculum, however, is not the fashioning of a well-rounded woman. She must dabble in letters, music, the figurative arts and dance to serve in an ancillary position:

[...] dico che voglio che ella abbia cognizion de ciò che questi signori hanno voluto che sappia il cortegiano: e de quelli esercizi che avemo detto che a lei non si convengono, voglio che ella n'abbia almen quel giudicio che possono aver delle cose coloro che non le oprano; e questo per saper laudare ed apprezzare i cavaiieri più e meno, secondo i meriti. E [...] voglio che questa donna abbia notizie di lettere, musica, di pittura, e sappia danzar e festeggiare; accompagnando con quella discreta modestia e col dar bona opinione di sé ancora le avvertenze che son state insegnate al cotegiano. (III. ix. p. 272)⁴⁹

Gasparo, after paying lip service to the ladies present to the discussion, rejoins with an address that evokes a crushing canon of authorities and reads as a compendium of all inherited stereotypical attitudes toward women current in the Renaissance. A woman is a defect of nature, an imperfect creation (as a lame or blind person or an unripe fruit):

Che le donne siano animali imperfetti e per conseguente di minor dignità che gli omini e non capaci di quelle virtù che sono essi, non voglio altrimenti affermare, perché il valor di queste signore bastaria a farmi mentire; dico ben che omini sapientissimi hanno lassato scritto che la natura, perciò che sempre intende e disegna far le cose più perfette, se potesse, produria continuamente omini; e quando nasce una donna, è difetto o error della natura e contra quello che essa vorrebbe fare. Come si vede che d'uno che nasce cieco, zoppo, o con qualche altro mancamento e negli arbori molti frutti che non maturano mai, così la donna si po dire animale prodotto a sorte e per caso; e che questo sia, vedete l'operazion dell'omo e della donna a da quelle pigliate argomento della perfezion dell'uno e dell'altro.(III. xi. p. 274)

Arguing along Aristotelian lines Gasparo declares that every woman's secret desire is to be a man:

[...] come sapete essere opinion d'omini sapientissimi, l'omo s'assimiglia alla forma, la donna alla materia; e però, così come la forma è più perfetta che la materia, anzi le dà l'essere, così l'omo è più perfetto assai che la donna. E ricordomi aver udito che un gran filosofo [Aristotle *Problemata* iv] in certi suoi problemi dice: "Onde è che naturalmente la donna ama sempre quell'uomo che è stato il primo a ricever da lei

amorosi piaceri? e per contrario l'omo ha in odio quella donna che è stata la prima a congiungersi in tal modo con lui?" [...] perché in tal atto la donna riceve dall'omo perfezione e l'omo dalla donna imperfezione [...] universalmente ogni donna desidera esser omo, per un certo istinto di natura, che le insegna desiderar la sua perfezione."(III. xv. p. 278)

Magnifico, who acknowledges Gasparo's statement to be true, echoes the virgin Corinna in Moderata Fonte's dialogue when he explains that women want to be men only to be released from the oppression to which they are subjected:

Le meschine non desiderano l'esser omo per farsi più perfette, ma per aver libertà e fuggir quel dominio che gli omini si hanno vendicato sopra esse per sua propria autorità [...] that they remain emotionally attached, to turn Aristotle's argument upside down, is because they are less fickle...perché essendo il maschio caldo, naturalmente da quella qualità piglia la leggerezza, il moto e la instabilità; e, per contro, la donna dalla frigidità, la quiete e gravità ferma e più fisse impressioni.(III. xvi. p. 279)

This, sadly, it was an accurate portrait of life for many women. In Aretino's scathing parody of Castiglione's treatise, *La cortigiana*, Togna (on the stage and dressed up as a man) delivers a monologue on the predicament of being born a woman which reverberates and ratifies Magnifico's words:

O Dio perchè non sono io uomo, come paio in questi panni? ha pur una gran disgrazia chi nasce femmina, ed a che siam noi buone? a cucire, a filare ed a star rinchiuse tutto l'anno e perchè? per esser bastonate e svillaneggiate tuttodi e da chi? da un imbriaconaccio e da uno infingardaccio come il mio guarda feste; o poverette noi, quanti guai sono i nostri? Se 'l tuo uomo giuoca e perde, tu sei la mal trovata; se non ha i denari, la stizza si sfoga sopra di te; se il vino lo cava di gangari, tu ne pati la pena; e per più nostro affanno son gelosi. ch' ogni mosca che vola gli pare uno che ci faccia e che ci dica. E se nonfosse che noi altre abbiamo cervello in saper trastullarci, ci potremmo andare ad affogare [...] E se il confessore mi dà penitenza di questo ch' io faccio, possa io morire se ne dico pur una; dar penitenza a una sventurata che ha il marito stranio, giocatore, taverniero, geloso e cane de l'ortolano! [...] ⁵⁰

Magnifico, relying on scholastic terminology, responds to the accusations leveled against women by arguing that substance cannot receive of itself either more or less:

[...] come niun sasso po esser più perfettamente sasso che un altro quanto alla essenza del sasso [...] così un omo non po esser più perfettamente omo che l'altro, e conseguentemente non sarà il maschio più perfetto che femmina, quanto alla sustanzia sua formale, perchè l'uno e l'altro si comprende sotto la specie dell'omo e quello in che l'uno dall'altro son differenti è cosa accidentale non essenziale [...] dico che tutte le cose che possono intender gli omini, le medesime possono intendere anche le donne; e dove penetra l'intelletto dell'uno, po penetrare eziando quello dell'altra. (III. xii. p. 275)

Throughout this discussion the women are silent. This prompts Gasparo to ponder whether the topics debated are unintelligible to women: “Io non vorrei [...] che noi entrassimo in tali suttilità, perché queste donne non ci intenderanno.” (III. xv. p. 278). Emilia Pia’s reaction provides the unfortunate corroboration to Gasparo’s misgiving. Emilia, unable to comprehend the sophisticated philosophical argumentations delivered by Magnifico, urges him to abandon his disquisition on matter and form, which, she assumes, is giving the upper hand to the enemies of women. With this remark she unwittingly capitulates to them:

Uscite [...] di queste vostre 'materie' e 'forme' e ,aschi e femine e parlate di modo che siate inteso; perchè noi avemo udito e molto bene inteso il male che di noi ha detto il signor Ottaviano e 'l signor Gasparo, ma non intendemo già in che modo voi ci difendiate; però questo mi par un uscir di proposito e lassar nell'animo d'ognuno quella mala impressione, che di noi hanno data questi nostri nemici. (III. xvii. p. 280).

NOTES FOR CHAPTER SEVEN

1. Quoted by Amedeo Quondam, *Petrarchismo mediato. Per una critica della forma "antologica."* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1974), 222. Girolamo Ruscelli (1504-1566) was an independent editor who greatly contributed to the cause of Renaissance literary women; he prepared for publication four volumes of verse which contain works by Gaspara Stampa, Ippolita Mirtila, Maria Spinola, Virginia Salvi, Veronica Gambarà, Vittoria Colonna and Tullia d'Aragona. See Girolamo Ruscelli, ed. *Rime di diversi eccellenti autori*. Vol. 6 (Venice: Segno del Pozzo, 1553); Conor Fahy, "Love and Marriage in the *Institutione* of Alessandro Piccolomini. *Italian Studies Presented to E. R. Vincent*. Ed. C. P. Brand, K. Foster and V. Limantani (Cambridge, UK: W. Heffer and Sons, Ltd., 1962) 121-35 discusses Ruscelli's views on the social and literary relations between men and women and Ruscelli's neo-platonism. Luigini da Udine, in his dialogue *Il libro della bella donna composto da messer Federico Luigini da Udine* (in Giuseppe Zonta, *Trattati del Cinquecento sulla donna* [Bari: Laterza, 1913]) applauds women with analogous skills: "lei ha da essere di non poco onore, se di imparare a toccare o viuola o liuto [...] leggiadramente non si disdegnerà...quelle vaghe damigelle, appresso il Bembo, sonanti l'una di liuto con maravigliosa maestria, e l'altra di viuola...la nostra donna...non pur suonerà, ma canterà e danzerà ancora. (p. 296).

2. Quoted by Peter Burke, *The Art of Conversation* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993), 124. For a detailed discussion of silence in the Renaissance, see chapter 5 "Notes for a social history of silence." In his groundbreaking essay, "'Merzanzia d'onore'/'merczanzia d'utile'. Produzione libraia e lavoro intellettuale a Venezia nel Cinquecento," Amedeo Quondam examines the proliferation of Renaissance treatises concerned with the behavior of woman. The essay is included in Armando Petrucci, ed. *Libri, editori e pubblico nell'Europa moderna. Guida storica e critica* (Roma and Bari: La Terzam 1977), 87-88.

3. The quotation is from Arnaldo di Benedetto, ed. *Prose di Giovanni della Casa e altri trattatisti cinquecenteschi del comportamento* (Torino: UTET, 1970), 63. The original Latin title of the treatise is *Quaestio lepidissima an uxor sit ducenda*. Petrarch also considered the question of marriage in the epistle *Utrum expediat uxorem ducere* and by Giovanni Boccaccio in his *Corbaccio*. Della Casa finally accepts matrimony as an indispensable institution, though one that should be eschewed by men who hold public office. In the process, della Casa paints a grim picture of married life; home is a kind of perverted haven and refuge from the ferocity of the outside world:

Insoffribile per un uomo dell'avere ostile, turbolento, pieno di risse, di lamentele, di rimproveri e di tumulto quel luogo [...] da lui costruito come rifugio e porto riparatore delle molestie e delle faccende di tutti i giorni, e nel quale egli sia solito piacere quella quiete e quel quotidiano riposo che è necessario all'anima e al corpo? (p. 67)

The treatise assumes openly misogynistic tones: it includes a long tirade on the fleeting nature of beauty of women and on their repulsiveness: "Quante donne infatti noi vediamo

ogni giorno, dal cui contatto ti ritieni addirittura contaminato come da cosa ripugnante e immonda?" (p. 77) Della Casa goes on to compare a woman's embrace to "fango" or "fogna" her armpits and other bodily parts "ancor più brutte alla vista e insopportabili all'olfatto." (p. 79) His portrait of woman reads as a compendium of negative stereotypes of womanhood: he mentions woman's instable, fickle nature, her laziness, incompetence, weakness:

lei per natura essere varia mutevole e insieme schifiltoso: giacchè la donna si irrita e cambia umore per ogni minima offesa...è debole di per sé, e da un lato inabile, dall'altro pigra nei confronti di ogni fatica da intraprendere...ma anche indocile, bisognosa per di più di grande aiuto e di consiglio...Il genere femminile non è nemmeno utile in guerra, perchè il corpo della donna è stato dalla natura conformato e fatto in modo tale che è evidente che il loro ufficio è stato concepito per la pace e la tranquillità. (p. 81-91)

Perhaps in the most damning of all charges, woman is described as a developmental link between animan and human being (man), and thus should be confined the sphere of the domestic:

E cosa può valere negli affari pubblici l'ingegno e l'opera delle donne?[...] Poichè la loro mente non può contenere alcuna saggezza, ed è del tutto priva di ordine di razionalità, di capacità deliberativa. La donna è posta tra noi uomini e le bestie [...] molto più vicina alla rozzezza delle bestie di quanto non si avvicini alla compiutezza e perfezione degli uomini [...] L'indole della donna è piena d'ipocrisia, di frode, di malizia...le donne non fanno mai niente sinceramente, schiettamente, e, come si dice, in buona fede [...] Infatti, come attraverso certi loro trucchi falsificano la soavità del colorito, la lucentezza dei capelli, l'altezza del corpo, così coprono e dissimulano l'ambiguità dell'animo con la simulazione della semplicità. (p.93-95)

4. The research on Renaissance treatises concerning the behavior and misbehavior has been predictably vast. I have consulted: Conor Fahy, "Three Early Renaissance Treatises on Women," *Italian Studies* XI (1956): 30-55; Marina Zancan, ed. *Nel cerchio della luna. Appendici*.(I, II) 237-53; V. Gentili ed. *Trasgressione tragica e norma domestica. Esempari di tipologie femminili della letteratura europea*. (Roma, 1983) Appendice bibliografica 41-50; in Gentili's Volume, especially, F. Daenens, "Superiore perché inferiore: il paradosso della superiorità della donna in alcuni trattati italiani del Cinquecento." 11-41; M. D'Amelia "Marito e Moglie. Il dialogo della cura familiare di Sperone Speroni." *Memoria* 1 (1981): 76-86; F. Daenens, "Doxa e paradoxa: uso e strategia della retorica nel discorso sulla superiorità della donna." in *Studi sulla scrittura. Percorsi critici su testi letterari del XVI secolo*. Numero monografico di *Nuova DWF XXV-XXVI* (1985): 27-38; Ruth Kelso, *Doctrine for the Lady of the Renaissance* (Urbana, Ill: University of Illinois Press, 1956; reprint, 1978); Kelso devotes two chapters, "Training" and "Studies," to ideas about education for women in her survey of conduct books; see also her bibliography 326-424 followed by index at 465 which contains titles against women and

infavor; Constance Jordan, *Renaissance Feminism*. (New York, Cornell UP, 1990); Boxer, M.J. & Quataert, J.H. eds., *Connecting Spheres: Women in the Western World, 1500 to the Present*. (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1987); Giuseppe Zonta, ed. *Trattati del Cinquecento sulla donna* (Bari: Laterza, 1913); Joy Wiltenburg, *Disorderly Women and Female Power in the Street Literature of Early Modern England and Germany* (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1992); Lawrence D. Kritzman, *The Rhetoric of Sexuality and the Literature of the French Renaissance* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1991); Merry E. Wiesner, *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, U.K., Cambridge University Press, 1993); Sara F. Matthews Grieco, "Corpo, aspetto e sessualità." Natalie Zemon Davis and Arlette Farge, eds. *Storia delle donne in Occidente. Dal Rinascimento all'età moderna*. (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1995): 53-99; . G. B. Marchesi "'Le polemiche sul sesso femminile nei secoli XVI e XXV.'" *GSLI XXV* (1895): 362-369; the informative introduction to Galeazzo Flavio Capra, *Della eccellenza e dignità delle donne*. Edited by Maria Luisa Doglio (Roma: Bulzoni, 1988); Silvia Vegetti Finzi, "L'animale femminile," in *I labirinti dell'eros* (Florence, 1985), reproduced by Bono and Kemp in *The Lonely Mirror*, Evelyne Berriot-Salvadore, *Un corp, un destin. La femme dans la médecine de la Renaissance* (Paris: Honoré Champion Éditeur, 1993) which contains an appendix on the sources and treatises; Benedetto Vetere and Paolo Rienzi eds. *Profili di donne. Mito immagine realtà fra Medioevo ed età contemporanea* (Galatina: Congedo Editore, 1986) especially, Sara F. Matthews Grieco, "Mito ed immagine della donna nelle incisioni del Cinquecento francese: Il discorso morale sulla sessualità." 195-222; Patricia Lablame, "Venetian Women on Women: Three Early Modern Feminists." *Archivio Veneto* 5th ser. 117 (1981): 82-83; Ann Rosalind Jones, "Nets and Bridles: Early Modern Conduct Books and Sixteenth Century Women's Lyrics." in *Essays on Literature and the History of Sexuality*. ed. Nancy Armstrong and Leonard Tennenhouse (London: Methuen, 1987): 39-72; Merry E. Weisner, "Women's Defense of Their Public Role," in *Women in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance: Literary and Historical Perspectives*. ed. Mary Beth Rose (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1985): 1-27; Margaret King, "Thwarted Ambitions: Six Learned Women of the Italian Renaissance." *Soundings* 59 (1976): 280-304; Pamela Joseph Benson, *The Invention of the Renaissance Woman. The Challenge of Female Independence in the Literature and Thought of Italy and England*. (University Park, Penn.: The Pennsylvania State University Press). See, also the introduction to the ground breaking anthology of essays devoted to the revisionist reworking of Renaissance studies: Ferguson, M.W., Quilligan M. & Vickers, N. J. eds. *Rewriting the Renaissance: The Discourses of Sexual Difference in Early Modern Europe*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1986; on humanist treatises that speak of the virtue of female chastity and necessity of woman's position as the protector of the moral welfare of her family see the anthology and translations of representative humanist writers of the Renaissance edited by Benjamin C. Kohl and Ronald G. Witt, *The Earthly Republic: Italian Humanists on Government and Society* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1978).

5. Kate Aughterson ed. *Renaissance Woman. Construction of Femininity in England*. (London and New York: Routledge, 1995) provides an informative introduction and a comprehensive selection of texts about women.

6. In the *Timaeus*, however, Plato recants his views on equality and proposes the misogynistic postulate of woman's physiology (namely her "migrating uterus") which predisposes her to weakness, emotions, and instability. This, in turn, justifies her subordination. See: E. Cantarella, *L'ambiguo malanno. Condizione e immagine della donna nell'antichità greca e romana* (Roma: Edizione Riuniti, 1983); Mairo Vegetti, *Il coltello e lo stilo. Animali, schiavi, barbari e donne alle origini della razionalità scientifica*. (Milano: Il Saggiatore, 1979).

7. *The generation of Animals* ed. and transl. A.L. Peck, Loeb Library vol 366, (Cambridge, Mass: 1943) 95-7 Aristotle's system of thought rested on principles of duality: form (the inner design and unchanging quality of any object) was viewed as superior to matter; actuality over potentiality; action over inaction. The male principle was always associated with form, actuality and activity, the female always perceived as a defective, mutilated monstrous version of the male principle, and one that is morally inferior. A comprehensive system of combinations of elements was used to explain the universe and all its objects, including the functioning of the human body. The four elements (earth, fire, air, and water) were expressed in the human body as humors (black bile, yellow bile, blood and phlegm) in turn considered signs of psychological types (melancholic, choleric, sanguine, and phlegmatic). See: D. C. Stanton, *Discourses of Sexuality: From Aristotle to AIDS*. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan, 1992 especially Part One: "The History of Sexualoty": Reopening the Question"; Ian MacLean *The Renaissance Notion of Women: A Study in the Fortunes of Scholasticism and Medical Science in European Intellectual Life* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1980); Thomas W. Laquer "Amor Veneris, vel dulcendo appetur." *Zone 5: Fragments for a History of the Human Body*. Michale Feher, Ramona Naddaff and Nadia Tazi eds. (NY: Zone Books, 1989), focuses on the history of the clitoris in medical thought; Edward Muir and Guido Ruggiero eds. *Sex and Gender in Historical Perspective* tr. Margaret A. Gallucci, Mary M. Gallucci and Carole C. Gallucci tr. (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990).

8. Aristotle, *The History of Animals*, transl T. Taylor, 1812 vol. 6 p. 342 (book 9 ch 1).

9. Galen, *On the usefulness of the parts of the body*. transl. Margaret Tallmadge May (Cornell University Press, 1968) vol. II 630-2. Medieval philosophers while following Aristotle tended to reject this point because woman is part of God's intention. Accordin to Aquinas, it did not mean that she was equal: "For good order would have been wanting in the human family, if some were not governed by others wiser than themselves. So by

such a kind of subjection woman is naturally subject to man, because naturally in man the discretion of reason predominates." Thoman Aquinas, *Summa theologica* tr. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (NY: Benziger Brothers, 1947) part 1 question 2 "The Production of Women," article 2. According to Averroes (the Islamic physician d. 1198): "man is in most human activities more efficient than woman; though it is not impossible that women are in some activities more efficient, as is thought in respect of the art of practical music. For this reason, it is said that melodies are perfect if men invent them and women perform them." Averroes, *Commentary on Plato's "Republic."* tr. E.I. Rosenthal (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1956), 164-65. Isidore of Seville (d. 636) believed he had found explanations for the divergences in the etymologies of the various terms applied to the sexes. Man is called "vir" because of his greater force ("vis"). "Vis" is, in turn, the stem of virtue because men rules over women by force. A woman, in contrast, is called mulier a term said to be derived by softness ("molites") because she is softer ("mollier"). See: Isidoris, *Etymologiarum sive originum libri XX* ed. W.M. Lindsay (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1911. On Galenic medicine, see also: Ian Maclean I *The Renaissance Notion of Woman*; Thomas Laquer, T. & Catherine Gallagher C. eds. *The Making of the Modern Body*. (Berkeley & LA: U of California P, 1987) and T. Laquer, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud*. Cambridge: Harvard, 1990; Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass, "Fetishizing Gender: Constructing the Hermafrodite in Renaissance Europe." Julia Epstein and Kristina Straub, eds., *Body Guards: The Cultural Politics of Gender Ambiguity* (New York and London, Routledge, 1991)

10. In the *Scriptures* woman's menstrual flow is described as impure: "19. And if a woman have an issue, and her issue in her flesh be blood, she shall be put apart seven days: and whosoever toucheth her shall be unclean untill the even. 20. And everything that she lieth upon in her separation Inevitably, a corollary world of silent outcasts was engendered by such scrupulous codifications shall be unclean. 21. And whosoever toucheth her bed shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even. 22. And whosoever toucheth anything that she sat upon shall wash his clothes and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even." (*Leviticus*, Chapter 25)

11. Quoted by Peter Burke, *The Art of Conversation* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993), 130.

12. See: Joan Kelly Gadol, "Did Women have a Renaissance?" In Bridenthal & Koonz eds. *Becoming Visible: Women in European History*. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1977); R. Howard Bloch, *Medieval Misogyny and the Invention of Western Romantic Love* (Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, 1991) esp. 1-112. Protestant preachers revived the virulent misogyny of the early Middle Ages. John Knox, the renowned Scottish Calvinist reformer who fought publicly against Mary Queen of Scots ascending the throne, while attacking Queen Mary of England. His treatise *The first blast of the trumpet against the monstrous regiment of women* was first published in 1558. It

presents a venomous attack on woman's rule, which is by definition a defective, hideous contradiction in terms:

To promote a woman to bear rule, superiority, dominion or empire above any realm, nation, city is repugnant to nature, contumely to God, a thing most contrarious to his revealed will and approved ordinance, and finally it is the subversion of good order, and all equity and justice [...] For who can deny that it repugneth to nature that the blind shall be appointed to lead and conduct such as do see? That the weak, the sick and the impotent persons shall nourish and keep the whole and strong, and finally that the foolish, mad and frenetic shall govern the discreet, and give counsel to such as be sober of mind? And such be all women compared unto man, in bearing of authority. For their sight in civil regiment is but a blindness: their strength weakness: their counsel foolishness: and judgement frenzy, if it be rightly considered.

Quoted by Aughterson, *Renaissance Woman*, p. 138. For a very different position in this topic, one can consult Thomas Elyot, the English author of a *Defence of Good Women*, who justifies women's participation in civic life and even asserts their prowess in arms and Henricus Cornelius Agrippa, *Declamation on the Nobility and Preeminence of the Female Sex*. Translated and edited by Albert Rabil jr. (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago, 1996).

13. It was a common medieval practice to attribute masculine traits to outstanding women by adopting the classical notion of the *virago* "the female military hero who achieves equivalence, or indeed eminence, in the world by becoming not a great woman but, as it were, a man (*vir*)." King, *Women of the Renaissance*, 192. This, at least, was a model that broke women out of the alternative between Eve (temptress/family) and Mary (or saintly cloistered woman). Maddalena Scrovegni, the late fourteenth century Paduan humanist (the first of a lineage of women humanists) was depicted by a contemporary, the Veronese humanist Antonio Loschi as Chastity on the island of Scythia (the unapproachable kingdom of the Amazons).

14. Francesco Barbaro, *On Wifely Duties in The Earthly Republic: Italian Humanists of Government and Society* ed. Benjamin Kohl and Ronald Witt (Philadelphia: U. of Pennsylvania, 1978). 206. For the original *Francisci Barbari de re uxoria liber in partes duas*, ed. Attilio Gnesotto (Padua: Randi, 1915). In her survey of Renaissance conduct books Ruth Kelso (*Doctrine for the Lady of the Renaissance*) suggests that humanist men began to justify their involvement in growing city-states by appealing to classical defenses of engagement in the polis and displacing the Christian duties they were abandoning to women. Chastity, silence and withdrawal from the world were rewritten as specifically feminine qualities. Chastity, silence and withdrawal from the world were designated as specifically feminine qualities. Like Francesco Barbaro, the humanist Leonardo Bruni had intimated that only unchaste women would speak in public. In Book II of Stefano Guazzo's *La civil conversatione*, Annibal, who wants to discuss the

manners and protocols of conversing with a lady, is misunderstood by Guglielmo, who expects his mentor to discuss interactions with prostitutes. Guglielmo views speaking to a lady as akin to having sex with her. On the woman as grotesque and lower class gesticulating gaping open mouthed, circulating in the street, see: Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, who revise Bakhtin's notions of the grotesque and classical bodies by including gender in the application of these notions to cultural formations. *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression*. (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1986). Mary Russo explores the relation of "grotesque" to "woman" in "Female Grotesques: Carnival and Theory." *Feminist Studies/Critical Studies* ed. Theresa de Lauretis (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1986) 213-29.

15. Barbaro, 143.

16. Leon Battista Alberti, *I libri della famiglia* ed. Ruggiero Romano and Alberti Tenenti (Turin: Einaudi, 1969) 279. This passage is quoted Peter Burke, *the Art of Conversation* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993), 131.

17. See: Carla Freccero "Economy, Woman and Renaissance Discourse." 192-208 in Marilyn Migiel and Juliana Schiesari *Refiguring woman: Perspectives on Gender and the Italian Renaissance* (Ithaca and NY: Cornell UP, 1991). Luce Irigaray declares that "heterosexuality is nothing but the assignment of economic roles: there are producer subjects and agents of exchange (male) on the one hand, productive earth and commodities (female) on the other." Luce Irigaray, *This Sex Which is Not One*. (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1985): 192; Gayle Rubin "The Traffic of Women: Notes on the 'Political Economy' of Sex." interrelates theories of Marx, Engels, Freud, Lévi-Strauss and Lacan on the question on the traffic of women to reconcile Marxism, anthropological and psychoanalytic explanations of women's oppression. In Rayna Reiter ed. *Toward an Anthropology of Women* (NY: Monthly Review 1975): 157-210.

18. The following quotations are from: *Leon Battista Alberti: I primi tre libri della famiglia*, ed. F.C. Pellegrini and R. Spongano (Florence: Sansoni, 1946) For an English translation, see: *The Albertis of Florence: Leon Battista Alberti's 'Della Famiglia.'* ed. Guido Guarino: (Cranbury, N.J.: Associated University Presses, 1971).

19. C. Klapisch-Zuber, "The chiavi fiorentine di Barbablu." *Quaderni storici* 57 (1984): 776; also C. Klapisch-Zuber, *Women, Family and Ritual in Renaissance Italy* (Chicago, 1985). Galeazzo Flavio Capella *Della eccellenza et dignità delle donne*, 1525; For a defense of women, see also H. Cornelius Agrippa *De la nobiltà e preeccellentia del femminile sesso*, 1530; this text has been recently translated by Albert Rabil jr. *Declamation on the Nobility and Preeminence of the Female Sex* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1996), this translation includes an informative introduction Women are generally excluded from the process of codification their role is more ornamental.

20. Lodovico Dolce, *Dialogo della institutione delle donne secondo li tre stati*, was a very popular blueprint for the instruction of woman. It presents a dialogue between Flaminio and Dorothea. Flaminio already owns a preconceived truth about woman and dresses his thought with exempla. Dorothea plays a passive and secondary function and has no real dialectical or oppositional input. Dolce presents a canon of texts recommended and forbidden to women. To be avoided is Boccaccio's *Decameron*, while among recommended readings we find above all Petrarch, then Dante, Bembo, Ariosto, Sannazzaro Sperone Speroni and Castiglione. According to the Fourteenth century Tuscan writer Francesco da Berberino *Reggimento e costumi della donna* woman should not appear totally dumb but speak or be silent "according to the place and the time." Francesco da Berberino *Reggimento e costumi della donna* ed. G.E. Sansone (Turin, 1957), 12.

21. Central concern with domestic issues resurfaces again in the work of later humanists Vives and Erasmus; Both moderately sympathetic to women without going beyond usual prescriptions for women's behavior. More favorable *In Praise of Women* (1487) by the Italian humanist Bartolomeo Goggio provides a catalogue of illustrious women and argues that the sexes are basically the same. Humanist Mario Equicola *On Women* (1501) asserted the spiritual equality of women; Galeazzo Flavio Capra (Capella) *On the Excellence and Dignity of Women* defends worthiness of women; Henricus Conrelius Agrippa *On the Nobility and Preeminence of the Female Sex* is the most explicit treatise in favour of women. For an analysis of the mixture of liberalism and ultraconservatism in humanist educational theories as exemplified by Vives, see Gloria Kaufman, "Juan Luis Vives on the Education of Women, 1523." *Signs* 3 (1978): 891-97.

22. The text is from the 1540 edition translated by Richard Hyrde (book 1, ch 8, 11, 12; book 3, ch 7).

23. Quoted in Aughterson, ed. *Renaissance Women*. See, also: Juan Luis Vives *De la institutione de la femina christiana, vergine, maritata o vedova*, (1546) in Foster Watson, ed. *Vives and the Renaissance Education of Women* (New York: Longmans, Green & Co. 1912). Vives advocated education but not public life.

.24 Vives calls attention to one imperative, woman's obedience:

[...]Except per adventure she would say, she oweth none obedience, neither to father, nor to mother, nor to none of her kin. For if she obey them, she must needs obey her husband: in whom by all rights, by all customs, by all statuses and laws, by all precepts and commandments, both natural, worldly and heavenly she ought to account allthing to be...The woman is not reckoned the more worshipful among men, that presumeth to have mastery above her husband: but the more foolish and the more worthy to be mocked;...Also St Paul saith: *the head of the woman is the man* (1 Cor, 11).(p. 137)

25. Leonardo Bruni, *On the Study of Literature [De studiis et litteris]*. In *The Humanism of Leonardo Bruni: Selected Texts*, ed. Gordon Griffiths, James Hankins and Davis Thompson, 240-50. (Binghamton, N.Y.: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies/Renaissance Society of America, 1987). Bruni is quoted by Margaret King, *Women in the Renaissance*, p. 194.

26. See: Moderata Fonte *Tredici canti del Floridoro* (Venezia 1581) which exists in modern edition edited by Valeria Finucci (Modena, 1995), especially the introduction "Moderata Fonte e il romanzo cavalleresco al femminile" ix-xxxix. *Il merito delle donne* is available in a modern edition edited by A. Chemello with an informative introduction "Gioco e dissimulazione in Moderata Fonte," ix-lxiii; Patricia H. Lablame "Venetian Women on Women: Three Early Modern Feminists," *Archivio Veneto* 152 (1981), 81-109; Beatrice Collina, "Moderata Fonte e *Il merito delle donne*." *Annali d'Italianistica* 7 (1989): 142-64 which offers important archival information about her life; Paola Malpezzi Price, "A Woman's Discourse in the Italian Renaissance: Moderata Fonte's *Il merito delle donne*." *Annali d'Italianistica* 7 (1989): 165-81. Fonte's dialogue was published in 1600, after her death at the same time as Lucrezia Marinella *La nobiltà et eccellenza delle donne co' difetti e mancamenti degli uomini* (Venezia, 1600). Both treatises seem to be rejoinders to the misogynist G. Passi, *I donneschi difetti* (Venezia, 1599). A recent English edition of Fonte's dialogue with a good introduction and references to her other works is Moderata Fonte (Modesta Pozzo), *The Worth of Women. Wherein is Clearly Revealed Their Nobility and Their Superiority to Men* Edited and Translated by Virginia Cox (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997).

27. It seems to anticipate the extraordinary contribution of Arcangela Tarabotti, whose voice was raised in the seventeenth century to break the silence of her Venetian cloister and indicts both the tyranny of patriarchy and that of cloistered life, *Tirannia paterna e L'inferno monacale* (Elena Cassandra Tarabotti, assumed the name of Arcangela as a nun [1604-52]). *Inferno monacale* exists in a recent edition edited by F. Medioli (Torino, 1990). See: Ginevra Conti Odorisio *Donna e Società nel Seicento: Lucrezia Marinelli e Arcangela Tarabotti* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1979); Lucrezia Marinelli, *La nobiltà et l'eccellenza delle donne, co' difetti et mancamenti de gli Huomini* (Venice, 1601) objects to Tasso exclusion of exceptional women from the general category of women as imperfect males and complains about the implied condemnation of all women in apologies aimed at the vices of some women. See: Torquato Tasso *Discorso della Virtù Femminile e Donnesca* (Venice: Bernardo Giunti e fratelli, 1582). Laura Terracina had faulted Ariosto's depiction of women in *Furioso* (*Discorso sopra tutti i primi canti d'Orlando Furioso* (Venice: Ferrari 1550).

28. Moderata Fonte (Modesta Pozzo), *The Worth of Women. Wherein is Clearly Revealed Their Nobility and Their Superiority to Men* Edited and Translated by Virginia Cox (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997): 59 and 70.

29. Fonte, 61.

30. Ginevra, Isotta's eldest sister, was also highly erudite. Her intellectual career, however, came to a sudden halt when she married the Brescian Nobleman Brunuoro Gambarà at the age of twenty-one.

31. Arnaldo Segarizzi "Niccolò Barbo, patrizio veneziano del secolo XV e le accuse contro Isotta Nogarola." *GSLI* (1904) 43: 47-54 (passage quoted p. 53). See, King, *Women of the Renaissance*, p. 196. Margaret King suggests that in the Renaissance "an eloquent woman is never chaste" King "The Religious Retreat of Isotta Nogarola." 809. In 1437 Nogarola had contacted the Veronese compatriot Guarini, when he failed to respond she was publicly ridiculed by the women of her city (in a later letter to Guarini, she acknowledged that she has "transgressed those rules of silence especially imposed on women." See: Grafton and Jardine, 37-38.) At the summit of her literary career, in her epistolary exchange with the Venetian nobleman Ludovico Foscarini, Nogarola resignedly admitted the inferiority of woman as a extenuating circumstance for Eve's original sin.(see, King, *Women of the Renaissance*, 195-198). For the texts of women humanists see: Margaret L. King and Albert Rabil eds., *Her Immaculate Hand: Selected Works by and About the Women Humanists of Quattrocento Italy*. Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 20. (Binghamton: State University of New York, 1983). It is possible to identify letters, orations, invectives and other humanist genres of at least twelve aristocratic northern Italian Women writers active between the late 14th century and the early 16th century: Maddalena Scrovegni (1365-1429); Battista da Montefeltro Malatesta (1383-1450); Ginevra Nogarola (1417-c 1461/8); Isotta Nogarola (1418-1466); Costanza Barbaro (b. 1419); Cecilia Gonzaga (1425-1451); Costanza Varrano (1428-1447); Caterina Caldiera (d. 1463); Ippolita Sforza (1445-1488); Cassandra Fedele (1465-1558); Laura Cereta (1469-1499); Alessandra Scala (1475-1506); and recognize other twenty by name. These women were joined in their ranks by others who composed literature in the vernacular. This anthology signals real presence of women in culture and necessity to regulate their participation or access to it. See: Silvia Fiore R. "The Silent Scholars of Italian Humanism: Feminism in The Renaissance." *Interpreting the Italian Renaissance: Literary Perspectives*. Antonio Toscano, ed. (Stony Brook: Forum Italicum, 1991): 15-27. See also Patricia Lablame, "Women's Roles in Early Modern Venice: An Exceptional Case." *Beyond their Sex: Learned Women of the European Past*. ed. P. Lablame New York: NYU P, 1980; Anthony Grafton and Lisa Jardine *From Humanism to the Humanities* (Cambridge, Mass, 1986): 29-44. It was pathetically accepted by Elena Cornaro more than a century later: the highest ornament of a woman is her silence." 143 Laura Cereta, a fifteenth century Brescian woman who strove to assert herself outside her assigned

social role, understood the limitations levelled against women who "strive for no good but exist to adorn themselves and do not understand that their condition is one of servitude; these women of majestic pride, fantastic coiffures, outlandish ornament, and necks boud with gold or pearls bear the glittering symbols of their captivity to men who are proud enough to be free." King, "Book-lined Cells." 73

32. M. King, *Women of the Renaissance*, 198-202.

33. On the role of women in the *Cortegiano*, see: Adriana Chemello "Donna di palazzo, moglie, cortigiana: Ruoli e funzioni sociali della donna in alcuni trattati del Cinquecento." *La corte e il "Cortigiano."* *II. Un modello Europeo*; ed A. Prosperi "Centro Studi Europa delle Corti" Biblioteca del Cinquecento (Roma: Bulzoni, 1980): 113-32; G. Thomas M. Greene: "Il Cortegiano and the Choice of a Game." *The Vulnerable Text: Essays on Renaissance Literature*. (N.Y.: Columbia University Press, 1986) 46-60; Marina Zancan "La donna e il cerchio nel Cortegiano di B. Castiglione. Le funzioni del femminile nell'immagine di corte." in M. Zancan ed. *Nel cerchio della luna*. Essentially woman fulfills one function in the text of Castiglione: she guarantees the total order and the harmonization of the world of man. All quotations are from Baldassar Castiglione, *Il libro del Cortegiano*. Intr. Amedeo Quondam (Milano: Garzanti, 1991).

34. Built on a plentiful terrain, Urbino is depicted as a paradise on earth, the ideal setting to pursue human perfection: "pur di tanto ha avuto il cielo favorevole, che intorno il paese è fertilissimo e pien di frutti; di modo che, oltre alla salunrità dell'aere, si trova abundantissima d'ogni cosa che fa mestieri per lo vivere umano." (I. ii. p. 17). Urbino's greatest blessing, Castiglione tells us, was to be ruled by an outstanding man: Federico II da Montefeltro, *condottiero* turned Renaissance man ("il quale a' dì suoi fu lume della Italia." [I. ii, p. 18]), built a palace believed by many to be the most beautiful of Italy ("secondo la opinione di molti, il più bello che in Italia si ritrovi"). Federico collected many rare and precious objects to beautify his palace, but Castiglione singles out the bibliographic treasures gathered in the the extensive ducal library, for which the duke spared no expense: "Appresso con grandissima spesa adunò un gran numero di eccellentissimi e rarissimi libri greci, latini ed ebraici, quali tutti ornò d'oro e d'argento, estimando che questa fusse la suprema eccellenza del suo magno palazzo.(I. ii, p. 18)

35. Castiglione declares unambiguously: "recitaremo alcuni ragionamenti, i quali già passarono tra omini singularissimi a tale proposito; e benché io non v'intervenissi presenzialmente per ritrovarmi, allor che fur detti, in Inghilterra, avendogli poco appresso il mio ritorno intesi da persona che fidelmente me gli narrò, sforzerommi a punto, per quanto la memoria mi comporterà, ricordarli [...]" (I. i p. 17).

36. About Guido, Castiglione tells us: "Guido giunto alli venti anni, s'infermò di podagre, le quali con atrocissimi dolori procedendo, in pochi spazio di tempo talmente tutti

i membri gl'impedirono, che né stare in piedi né moversi potea; e così restò un dei più belli e disposti corpi del mondo deformato e guasto nella sua verde età [...]" (I. iii p. 19-20).

37. Castiglione's *Lettera al Frisia in difesa delle donne* attests to his interest in the subject of women. This letter is reminiscent of the work of Mario Equicola, who had defended women in his *De natura de amore*. It is also worthwhile recalling that women are not only present in Pietro Bembo's dialogue *Gli Asolani*, but are also active interlocutors. Their role is explicitly discussed in the introduction to the third day (III, i).

38. About the order of men and women: "E l'ordine di essi era tale che, subito giunti alla presenza della signora Duchessa, ognuno si ponea a sedere a piacer suo o, come la sorte portava, in cerchio, ed erano sedendo divisi un omo ed una donna, fin che donnev'erano, ché quasi sempre il numero degli omini era molto maggiore." (I. vii p. 25). During the days depicted by Castiglione, Urbino had been graced by the presence of exceptional guests (Pope Julius II and all of his cardinals and courtiers passed through Urbino returning to Rome after having conquered Bologna in 1506).

39. Marina Zancan ("*Le donne nel Cortegiano*," *La corte e Il Cortegiano*, vol I *La scena del testo* ed. Carlo Ossola (Rome, 1980) 219-249. in Giuseppa Saccaro Battisti ---vol II *Un modello europeo*. ed Adriana Prospero (Rome 1980) 113-132) argues that Castiglione proposes the court lady as an ideal which has no link to reality. The third book is not to be understood as a sort of guide to behaviour but as a focus for a display of male creativity. The *donna di palazzo* is and must remain an idea. That is, she exists on the philosophical domain from which women are excluded.

40. Count Ludovico observes that a woman's unblemished reputation is her highest currency ("e come nelle donne la onestà, una volta macchiata, mai più non ritorna al primo stato"), and Bernardo Bibbiena replies that men can live more dissolute lives with impunity because they make the rules: "perché noi stessi avemo fatta una legge, che in noi non sia vicio né mancamento né infamia alcuna la vita dissoluta e nelle donne sia tanto estremo obrobrio e vergogna, che quella di chi una volta si parla male, o falsa o vera che sia la calunia che se le dà, sia per sempre vituperata." (II. xc. p. 246).

41. Fregoso: "essendo le donne animali imperfettissimi e di poca o niuna dignità a rispetto degli omini, bisognava, poiché da sé non erano capaci di far atto alcun virtuoso, che con la vergogna e timor d'infamia si ponesse loro un freno, che quasi per forza in esse introducesse qualch bona qualità; e parve più necessaria lor fosse la continenza che alcun altra, per aver certezza dei figlioli." (II. xci. p. 246).

42. Bernardo interprets women's silence as a sign of their impassivity to any form of reproaches other than those levelled against their sexual ethics: "e poich'io

veggo le donne starsi così chete e supportar le ingiurie da voi così pazientemente come fanno, estimarò da mo innanzi esser vera una parte di quello che ha detto el signor Ottaviano, cioè che esse non si curano che di lor sia detto male in ogni altra cosa, pur che non sian mordute in poca onestà.” (II. xcvi, p. 252).

43. Gasparo is quick to notice this behavior and describes it with an allusion to a *condottiero*, Braccio Fortebraccio and his followers notorious for their violence: “Eccovi che per non aver ragione voglion valersi della forza ed a questo modo finire il ragionamento, dandoci, come si suol dire, una licenzia braccasca.” (II. xcvi, p. 252).

44. Giuliano: “Ma, se la cosa avesse da esser pari, bisognarrebbe prima che [...] il conte Ludovico e messer Federico, formasse una donna di palazzo, così come essi hanno formato il cortegiano con le perfezioni appartenenti ad omo; ed allor [...] penso che [...] dimostraria chiaramente le donne son così virtuose come gli omini.” (II. xcvi, p. 254).

45. Significantly, all deem this to be a worthy project because the lady fulfills an important ornamental function: “come corte alcune, per grande ch'ella sia, non po aver ornamento o splendore in sé, né allegria snza donne, [...] ancor il ragionar del cortegiano è sempre imperfettissimo, se le donne, interponendovisi, non danno lor parte di quella grazia, con la quale fanno perfetta ed adornano la cortegiana.” (III. iii. p. 263).

46. Honor again revolves around chastity and this revolves around issues of reproduction and continence (III. xxxvii, p. 308). Gasparo again: “dalla incontinenza delle donne nascono infiniti mali, che non nascono da quella degli omini [...] èssi prudentemente ordinato che ad esse sia licito senza biasimo mancar in tutte l'altre cose, acciò che possano mettere ogni loro forza per mantenere in questa sola virtù della castità, senza la quale i figlioli saiano incerti [...]”

47. Magnifico states: “Parmi ben che in lei sia poi più necessaria la bellezza che nel cortegiano, perché in vero molto manca a quella donna a cui manca la bellezza. Deve ancor esser più circunspecta [...] e far modo che non solamente non sia macchiata di colpa, ma né anco si suspizione, perché la donna non ha tante vie da difendersi dalle calunnie, come l'omo.” (III. Iv. P. 265).

48. The most modest sign by an honest woman is worth a thousand: “demostrazioni e carezze di quelle che così senza riservo mostran poca vergogna; e se non son impudiche, con que' risi dissoluti, con la loquacità, insolenzia a tai costumi scurili fanno segno d'essere.” (III. v. 258). By way of assurance the “donna di palazzo” is warranted that no one will question her intentions: “non è omo tanto procace ed insolente, che non abbia riverenzia a quelle che sono estimate bone ed oneste; perchè quella gravità temprata di sapere e bontà è quasi uno scudo contra la insolenzia e bestialità dei presuntuosi.” About the clothing of the “donna di palazzo: “deve aver questa donna

iudicio di conoscer quali sono quegli abiti che le accrescon grazia [...] Così, essendo un poco più grassa o più magra del ragionevole, o bianca o bruna, aiutarsi con gli abiti, ma dissimulatamente più che sia possibile; e tenendosi delicata e polita, mostrar sempre di non mettervi studio o diligenza alcuna." (III. viii p. 271).

49. Gasparo is appalled, and wonders if this new woman shall rule cities, legislate and lead armies while them men stay at home cooking or spinning: "che non vogliate ancor ch'esse governino le città e faccian le leggi e conducano gli eserciti; e che gli omini si stiano in cucina o a filare."(III. x. p. 272) Magnifico reminds the court that no less an authority than Plato had endowed the women of his Republic with such prerogatives: "Platone, il quale in vero non era molto amico delle donne, dà loro la custodia della città e tutti gli altri officii marziali dà agli omini? Non credete voi che molte se ne trovassero, che sapebbono così ben governar le città e gli eserciti, come si faccian gli omini?" (III. x. p. 273)

50. Pietro Aretino *Tutte le commedie* a cura di G. B. De Sanctis (Milano: Mursia, 1991): 205-6.

CHAPTER EIGHT

VOICES

In his *La institutione di una fanciulla nata nobilmente* (Anvers, 1555) Giovanni Bruto links the reading and writing of love poetry directly to the likelihood of women's sexual misbehavior, adducing female figures from classical literature as negative examples:

I am therefore of this advise, that it be not mete [...] for a Maiden to be [...] trayned up in learning of humayne arts, in whome a vertuous demeanor and honest behavior, would be a more sightlier ornament than the light of vaine glorie of learning [...] in such studies as yieldeth recreation [...] there is [...] daunger, that they will as well learn to be subtle and shameless Lovers, as connyng and skilful Writers, of Ditties, Sonnettes, Epigrames and Ballades. Let them be restrained to the care and government of a familie, and teach them to bee envious in following those [...] that to the prejudice of their good names have been desirous to be reputed Diotimes, Aspaties, Sapphoes and Corinnes.¹

Humanist treatises often reiterated a long misogynist history of writing about women; when they sanctioned the education of women (noblewomen) it was so that they become better wives and mothers and more virtue examples of the Christian ideals of chastity and obedience. Women were disciplined and controlled by exaggerating their virtuosity or their sexuality. Thus, women humanists were apostrophized in terms that evoked their chastity, or, conversely, accused of debauchery and castigated for the independence that supported their intellectual or creative achievements. It is hard to see, however, how women could have been fluent speakers (not to mention writers) in anything but their local dialect.²

Yet real women began to counter-argue against the early misogynist literature. The most illustrious rebuttal was compiled by Christine de Pizan (ca. 1365-1430) in her *Livre de*

la Cité des Dames 1404-1405).³ Pizan, allegedly the first professional woman writer in western history, unabashedly introduces herself at the outset of her treatise as a woman of learning:

One day as I was sitting alone in my study surrounded by books on all kind of subjects, devoting myself to literary studies, my usual habit, my mind dwelt at length on the weighty opinions of various authors whom I had studied for a long time. (p. 3)⁴

Having stated her credentials, she proceeds to evoke a painful (though necessary) turning point in her spiritual and intellectual life. Her erudition had exposed her to a barrage of cynical portraits of women and occasioned a moment of crisis and intense self-reflection. In the *Cité*, Pizan begins reading a misogynist text, Mathéolus' *Lamentations*, (a long XIII century Latin diatribe against marriage which was translated into French in 1370 by Jean le Fèvre) and is overtaken by grief. Her reading, she maintains, has persuaded that all women are inherently feeble-minded ("although my intellect did not perceive my own great faults and, likewise, those of other women because of its simpleness and ignorance, it was however truly fitting that such was the case"). The difficulty in dismissing Mathéolus' odious presentation is that Pizan, throughout her literate life, has encountered "a gushing fountain [...] of authorities" who corroborated his negative stereotypes. Experience compels to rely "on the judgement of others" instead than on what she "felt and knew." She is left loathing herself and "the entire feminine sex, as though we were monstrosities in nature [...] and, in my folly I considered myself unfortunate because God had made me inhabit a female body in this world." (p. 4-5)

Three allegorical feminine figures appear to rescue her: Reason, Rectitude, and Justice. They provide the material to build a new city:

[...] we three ladies [...] have come to you to announce a particular edifice built like a city wall, strongly constructed and well founded, which has been predestined and established by our aid and counsel for you to build, where no one will reside except all ladies of fame and women worthy or praise, for the walls of the city will be closed to those ladies who lack virtue [...] [a city that] will never be destroyed, nor will it ever fall, but will remain prosperous forever, regardless of all its jealous enemies. (10-11)

Writing the text is assimilated through this architectonic metaphor: the book is a city and the city is a book. Building the city from a new feminine viewpoint amounts to deconstructing male tradition and carving a new intellectual space for women by a woman and through women. Reason accompanies Christine to a "Field of Letters" and helps her excavate the first ditch with a "shovel of reason" (I, viii). She removes dirty, dark, large rocks (an allusion to the copiousness of false beliefs on women) and places new foundations. In Book II Rectitude provides the building blocks for the palaces, roads and towers of the new city, with the stories of women made exemplary by their virtue. Then Justice, in Book III, steps in to assist Pizan in populating the city with female saints and the Virgin Mary and announces that all women will be welcomed in this city, provided they possess nobility of soul (which replaces the traditional rights of birth of a male dominated society).⁵

Women's access to educational opportunities is a constant preoccupation of Pizan. Reason explains that, were girls to be sent to school and receive the same educational breaks, they would learn as well as men: "[...] I tell you again-and don't doubt the contrary-if it were customary to send daughters to school like sons, [...] they would learn as thoroughly and understand...as well as sons." (I. XXVII. 1, p. 63).⁶ With the right education, women would eloquently talk for themselves ("God endowed women with the faculty of speech [...] for had He not done so, hey would bet speechless." [28, 1. X]). The

laws of patriarchy have prevented the few learned women (like Christine) from writing books and subjected them to the shattering and poisonous deceptions circulated by men. It is imperative to revise this deceitful tradition and reexamine forgotten female founding figures of learning, civilization and arts.⁷ Reason, what's more, suggests that those men who oppose feminine education fear women's intellectual superiority and are motivated by their desire to demonstrate their knowledge of canonical authorities. This exposes a paradigm: there is a self-propelling and ever intensifying adhesive that links one male author to the next, endowing each with the authority that upholds the lineage of patriarchy: "[...] Others, in order to show they have read many authors, base their own writings on what they have found in books and repeat what other writers have said and cite different authors."(p. 18).

While Pizan declares herself "amazed" that there are men who write so scathingly about the women they owe their lives to, and oppose the education of wives, daughters and kin "because their mores would be ruined as a result." (II. 36), her text suggests that women are accomplices in the continuation of their daughters' subjugation. This is a negative, inverted restatement of the bond that links male authors with one another across time. Christine's own training, in fact, was fostered by her enlightened father, while her mother opposed and sabotaged it. In a most indicting disclosure, *Rectitude* reminds Pizan that her mother endorsed more customary domestic pursuits for her:

[...] not all men [...] share the opinion that it is bad for women to be educated. But it is very true that many foolish men have claimed this because it displeases them that women knew more than they did. Your father, who was a great scientist and philosopher, did not believe that women were worth less by knowing science; rather, as you know he took great pleasure from seeing your inclination to learning. The feminine opinion of your mother, however, who wished to keep you busy with spinning and silly girlishness, following the common custom of

women, was the major obstacle to you being more involved in the sciences. (II. 36. 4, p. 154-5).

Domestic feminine tasks, let us recall, are imputed by Reason to be a chief obstacle to women's intellectual endeavors: "[...] because they are not involved in many different things, but stay at home, where it is enough for them to run the household and there is nothing which so instructs a reasonable creature as the exercise and experience of many different things. (p. 63, 1.27).⁸ The misogynists had women to add to the vast arsenal supplied for them by a repressive tradition, which had stunted women's rights, educational opportunities and their social and creative possibilities. Furthermore, reading and writing remained, generally, elite activities well into the sixteenth century: the cost of one single printed volume was approximately the equivalent of a week salary for a teacher or a skilled artisan.⁹ In spite of these material limitations (which affected all) a woman composing poetry was likely to be seen as transgressing a multitude of ethical and moral codes. Yet upper class ladies appeared in public with a small elegant copy of Petrarch. In the Uffizi we find a *Girl with a Book* by Andrea del Sarto [1486-1531]; two portraits by Bronzino [1503-1572] show women holding books *Portrait of a Girl with a Book* and a portrait of Lucrezia Panciatichi; (he also portrayed the poet Laura Battiferri Ammannati).¹⁰

The widespread acceptance of the model of Petrarch by high society and the upwardly mobile class was displayed in the symbolic products of society, as the sway of Petrarch in the Renaissance went far beyond the composition of poetry and shaped music, art and courtly life in general. This model ratified the limited cultural role available to women for molding the aesthetic views of their society. Petrarch's lyrics (which were

poems distinctly created by a man) lent themselves to be imitated by a male voice, and to institute a legacy sustained by a predominantly male patronage system. The woman is presented as the silent and passive object of his celebration; implicitly, therefore, this tradition ratified and furthered the banishment of women from artistic performance.

The courtesan Tullia d'Aragona (ca. 1510-1556)¹¹ unequivocally brings to light the cultural prejudice inherent in the Petrarch's poetry. In her treatise *Dialogue on the Infinity of Love* (1547) which marks the unprecedented entry of a woman in the Renaissance debates on love,¹² she spells out the pivotal culpability of Petrarch: "[...] Just think what would have happened if Madonna Laura had gotten around to writing as much about Petrarch as he wrote about her: you'd have seen things turn out quite differently then!"¹³

In a peculiar and eloquent self-portrait from the late 1550s (*Bernardino Campi painting Sofonisba Anguissola*, in Siena, Pinacoteca Nazionale) the Cremonese painter Sofonisba Anguissola introduces herself in the mode of a painting being worked on by her (male) teacher. In its sophisticated collapsing of subject-object relation, this image encapsulates the fundamental dilemma faced by all Renaissance women who harbored artistic inspiration. The ascription to men of creative artistic powers virtually identical to the creation of human life found philosophical support in the Aristotelian dictum that procreation is male generated (and that the female provides the raw material which must be fashioned by man). The painted or textual portrait of a beautiful woman strengthened the male artist's sense of his creative powers at the expense of woman, who was condemned to be on the passive end of the metaphorical equation, as a lifeless vessel out of which man

makes art.¹⁴ In this self-portrait Sofonisba finds a way to think of herself as an active agent with creative power as opposed to seeing herself through the tropes and themes suited to the advancement of the career of a male image-maker. She plays out an active/passive role. Campi paints her and she is painted. However, the woman depicted on the easel is larger than the male figure, and her proportions secretly allude to a ghostly Sofonisba looming over this project, choreographing this scene and supervising both artist and subject.¹⁵

The success of a woman poet (like Tullia d'Aragona) depended directly upon the conventions of Petrarchism. This model exercised considerable ideological pressure on a woman who endeavored to be a poet (one that was compounded, in the case of Italy, by the tension encoded in Bembo's Italian). She was forced to operate within the Petrarchan frame of reference and her language had to be molded according to the protocol defined by the erotic fantasy of a male writer. Partaking in the distinguished tradition inaugurated by Petrarch, at the same time, bestowed authority and dignity to its participants; women, therefore, had to recreate it freely so that they could be both active lovers and boast their own artistic excellence, and not simply remain effaced objects of male desire. D'Aragona turned a potentially stultifying hurdle to her own advantage. She composed poetry (*Rime*, 1547) by appropriating the images and ideas of the male poetic code as a paradoxical source of empowerment. The very large number of women poets writing at this time is an eloquent testimonial to their creative solutions. This phenomenon is exemplified by the publication of the first anthology entirely dedicated to women poets, *Rime diverse d'alcune nobilissime e virtuosissime donne*,¹⁶ which was edited by Lodovico

Domenichi in 1559 for Busdrago of Lucca.¹⁷ It contained 331 compositions, mostly sonnets on religious or moral themes, and some Petrarchan sonnets by Cassandra Petrucci, Lucrezia Figliuzzi, Laudomia Forteguerra, Silvia Piccolomini, Virginia Martini Salvi. The poet Luisa Bergalli Gozzi, the first woman to assemble in 1726 a comprehensive anthology of women poets to date (*Componimenti poetici delle più illustri rimatrici d'ogni secolo* [Venezia: Antonio Mora, 1726] in two volumes),¹⁸ presents more than a hundred compositions by women poets up to the year 1575 (with the largest selections by Vittoria Colonna, Veronica Gambara, Gaspara Stampa, Chiara Matraini, Laura Battiferra). Bergalli acknowledged antecedents are Domenichi (for the “antiche”) and Teleste Cipriaffiano (for the “moderne”), though she purports to include the poets they have left out of their compilations. In her dedication to Pietro Ottoboni, at the outset of the second volume, she alludes to the prejudice met by women who aspire to a literary career: “[...] poichè mercè alla vostra erudizione, ed al vostro sublime intendimento lontano voi dal quale universale pregiudicio, che in noi donne regnar non possa talento, onde nelle bell'arti distinguerci e segnalarsi.”

Venice was a city of 102,000 inhabitants (the most populated in Italy) and, with its 493 printers/publishers, the publishing capital in Italy. Women constituted a section of the reading public and, for the first time, their writing appropriated a slice of the literary market. Through its publishing organization the city became the center most responsible for developing and disseminating a new type of the intellectual woman. Aldus Manutius published in 1500 (among the earliest classics in the vernacular) the *Epistole devotissime* by Caterina da Siena; Gabriele Giolitto de' Ferrari, who inaugurated his career in 1536,

became a catalyst for women authors who wanted to be associated with the most prestigious printing establishment of the time.¹⁹ Vittoria Colonna's *Rime*, which were first published in Parma in 1538 in 1540, entered in the editorial market of Venice with an edition by Comin di Trino and, in 1552, they were finally issued by Giolito in an edition curated by Dolce. All the prominent Italian intellectual women during the first half of the sixteenth century published their books in Venice: Tullia d'Aragona, Vittoria Colonna, Veronica Gambara, Lucrezia Gonzaga, Isabella Sforza, Laura Terracina. It is necessary to notice, however, that only one of the women promoted in Venice, Gaspara Stampa, was from the area of the Veneto. Moreover, and the sole edition of her poetry in Venice was edited by her sister and published after her death in 1554, in a semi private edition by Pietrasanta, a small publisher who did not command the same promotional power as Giolito. The other prominent woman, Maria Savorgnan, who was courted by Bembo and had a romantic correspondence with him (*Carteggio d'amore*), was never printed. Venice, thus, promoted a new idea of woman but not local women.²⁰ A second generation of women which include Veronica Franco, Laura Battiferri, Maddalena Acciaiuoli, Isabella Andreini, Chiara Matraini, Modesta Pozzo, Lucrezia Marinella, Maddalena Campiglia were associated with a new group publishers disseminated throughout Italy.

Courtesans actively partook in the tradition of Petrarchan lyrical composition. These independent women (as we have seen was the case of Tullia d'Aragona) enjoyed dynamic careers as poets and flaunted their erudition, success and economic independence in open defiance of societal injunctions of silence and chastity and exclusion from the public domain. Courtesans were plentiful, highly visible and prosperous in cities like

Venice, Florence and Rome. Stefano Infessua, a chronicler at the time of Innocent VIII, claimed on the basis of the 1490 census that 6,800 prostitutes practiced in Rome (out of a total population of 50,000²¹). Bernardino da Siena (a Catholic-Reformer and preacher) and the diarist Marin Sanudo estimated that between 10,000 and 12,000 courtesans lived in Venice in the early 16th century. While the courtesans of Rome were famous for their large numbers, accomplishments and beauty, their status was often precarious due to the periodic expulsions by the popes. When expulsions came, they often moved to Venice, where the tenor of life, with its wealth, masked balls and banquets, favored their trade.²² *Cortigiana onesta* or honest courtesan, was a term that became current both to designate a particular kind of woman (one who did not qualify the traditional mold of wife or nun²³) and to differentiate her from lesser prostitutes (*cortigiane di lume, meretrici* or *puttane*).²⁴

The emergence of a distinct class of elite prostitutes embodies a highly evolved conception of refinement. In the introduction to a novella about Isabella da Luna, one of the famous Roman courtesans, Matteo Bandello comments on the loquacity and quick wits of the Roman courtesans:

Sogliono ordinariamente le donne, còlte a l'improvviso, aver secondo i casi le risposte pronte e in un subito provvedere a quanto bisogna; e dando loro questo la natura, non deve esser dubio che più provide e più accorte saranno quelle che più averanno praticato.

The courtesan embodies the lavish splendor of the capital at the pinnacle of all of the most advanced magnificence and depravity:

Ma qual donne praticano più diversità di cervelli de le cortegiane de la corte di Roma? Quivi comunemente concorrono tutti i più belli e i più elevati ingegni del mondo, essendo Roma commune patria di tutti; quivi d'ogni sorte le buone lettere fioriscono, così latine come greche e volgari; quivi sono iureconsulti eccellenti filosofi e naturali e morali consumatissimi; quivi pittori si vedono miracolosi. Ci

sono scultori che nel marmo cavano i volti vivi, e i conflatore col metallo gittano ciò che vogliono [...] chi vuole farsi eccellente vada ad imparar a Roma. E perciò che [...] un medesimo terreno produce la rosa e l'ortica, così anco a Roma ci sono uomini buoni e tristi. Ma lasciamo il resto e parlerò delle cortegiane che, per dare qualche titolo d'onestà a l'essercizio loro, s'anno usurpato questo nome di "cortegiane". Sono per l'ordinario tutte più avide del denaro che non sono le mosche del mèle, e se casca loro nelle mani alcuni giovine di prima piuma, che non sia più che avveduto e scaltrito, vi so dire che senza oprar rasoio lo radono fin sul vivo e ne fanno anotomia.²⁵

The French courtier Brantôme, who visited Rome in the 1550s and was enraptured with Isabella, tells us that the Roman courtesans mocked the ladies of Rome because they lacked skill in repartee, though, behind closed doors, they engaged in the same sexual behavior: “Les courtisannes de Rome se mocquent fort des gentilles dames de Rome, lesquelles ne sont apprises à la parole comme elles; et disent que *chiavano come cani ma che sono quiete della bocca come sassi.*”²⁶ In this revealing remark Brantôme crystallizes for us the symbolic proximity of honest woman and courtesan. Sixteenth century views of female sexuality underlay the perceptions of all women: the thin boundary separating the honorable lady from the courtesan was based not so much on a woman's actual sexual conduct as on her public presence and vocal outspokenness. The role of the patrician woman was played out in terms of her structured visibility while the courtesan shaped a public career for herself. Assumptions about her sexuality followed. The courtesan becomes the logical extreme of the lady, her other face, enacting what, ultimately, is inherent in any woman's character, her fragile virtue and a natural penchant for vice, as it was standard fare in misogynist and satirical writings ²⁷

Vittore Carpaccio painted two Venetian courtesans (*Two Courtesans*, 16th century, Museo Correr, Venice) with their entourage of exotic servants, unusual pets and expensive

luxuries. This portrait informs us of the extent to which courtesans choreographed their lives into extravagant tableaux, which provided them with an aura of glamour and riches.²⁸ The opulent way of life of the famous Roman courtesan Lucrezia Cognati, who passed into history with the glorious pseudonym of “la bella Imperia,”²⁹ epitomizes the magnificence and extravagance of a courtesan’s material conditions at the pinnacle of her success. Her palace in Rome, which was frequented by the scholars and high prelates in the entourage of Pope Julius II, was so luxurious that it compared favorably with the dwellings of a noblewoman.³⁰ Matteo Bandello’s humorous anecdote concerning Imperia gives us a reliable idea of her beauty, notoriety and also insight into the domestic wealth and respect that she commanded: “Chi fosse l’Imperia cortegiana di Roma e quanto ai suoi giorni sia stata bella e senza fine da grandissimi uomini e ricchi amata, credo che la maggior parte di noi o per udità o per vista abbia conosciuto [...]” (p. 427).³¹ One of her generous lovers, Angelo dal Bufalo (“fu da lei ferventissimamente amato [...]” [p. 427]) had provided for her sumptuous dwellings. Her home, which was full of servants, was decorated with the finest and most expensive of objects:

[...] tenne quella in una casa onoratissimamente apparata, con molti servidori uomini e donne, che ai servigi di quella continovamente attendevano. Era la casa appartata e in modo del tutto provvista che qualunque straniero in quella entrava, veduto l’apparato e ordine de’ servidori, credeva che ivi una principessa abitasse. Era tra l’altre cose una sala e una camera e un camerino sì pomposamente adornate, che altro non v’era che velluti e broccati e per terra finissimi tapeti. Nel camerino ov’ella si riduceva, quando era da qualche gran personaggio visitata, erano i paramenti, che le mura coprivano, tutti di drappi d’oro riccio sopra riccio, con molti belli e vaghi lavori. Eravi poi una cornice tutta messa a oro ed azzurro oltramarino, maestrevolmente fatta, sopra la quale erano bellissimi vasi di varie e preziose materie formati, con pietre alabastrine, di porfido, di serpentino e di mille altre spezie. Vedevansi poi a torno molti coffani e forzieri riccamente intagliati e tali, che tutti erano di grandissimo prezzo.

A special place was reserved for her musical instruments as well as her Latin and vernacular books; Imperia was a composer of verses and a musician in her own right:

Si vedeva poi nel mezzo un tavolino, il più bello del mondo, coperto di velluto verde. Quivi sempre era o liuto o cetra con libri di musica e altri instrumenti musici. V'erano poi parecchi libretti volgari e latini riccamente adornati. Ella non mezzanamente si dilettaua de le rime volgari, essendole stato in ciò essortatore e come maestro il nostro piacevolissimo messere Domenico Campana detto Strascino, e tanto già di profitto fatto ci aveva che ella non insoavemente componeua qualche sonetto e madrigale. (p. 427-28)

When the Ambassador of Spain, drawn by her great reputation, visited her home, he was so impressed by her living accommodations that, having to spit and not being able to find anything ugly he did it in the face of his servant, the only homely thing in the room: “ed avendo voglia di sputare, si rivoltò ad un suo servidore e gli sputò nel viso dicendo: -Non ti dispiaccia, perciò che qui non è più brutta cosa del tuo viso.” (428).³²

When Imperia poisoned herself and was dying in horrendous anguish, Pope Julius II visited her on her deathbed and granted her his blessing and absolution. Popes and cardinals, indeed, were not immune to the charms of the Roman courtesans. On the occasion of celebrations for Lucrezia Borgia's marriage to Alfonso d'Este, which lasted for weeks, courtesans were chief providers of entertainment for the guests. In his personal diary Johan Burchard, the Master of ceremonies at the papal court of Alexander VI, describes the evening of October 31, 1501 as follows:

In the evening a supper was given in the Duke of Valentino's [Cesare Borgia's] apartment in the Apostolic Palace, with fifty respectable prostitutes, called courtesans, in attendance. After supper they danced with the servants and other present, at first in their clothes and then naked. Later candelabra with lighted candles were taken from the tables and put on the floors and chestnuts were scattered around them. The prostitutes crawled naked on their hands and knees between the candelabra picking up the chestnuts. The pope, the Duke and his sister, Donna Lucrezia, were all present to watch. Finally, prizes of silk doublets, shoes, hats and

other clothes were offered to the men who copulated with the greatest number of prostitutes. According to those who were present this performance duly took place in the public hall [...].³³

One can well imagine the effect these courtesans had on foreign tourists and travelers. Pietro Aretino, who produced a major treatise on the courtesan, his notorious *Ragionamenti*,³⁴ alludes to the naivete of travelers ("forestieri"). Nanna explains that they become easy preys to the tricks of astute city courtesan:

Quegli che vengono per veder Roma vogliono, viste le anticaglie, anche vedere le modernaglie, cioè le signore, facendo con esse il signore (ie spending a lot of money); e sempre io era la prima visitata da talibrigate: e chi dormiva la notte meco, ci lasciava i panni.(p. 150)

In the journals of his travels Montaigne, who visited Venice in the 1580s, mentions the city's courtesans and little:

He did not find here that famous beauty that they attribute to the ladies of Venice, and yet he saw the noblest of those who make a traffic of it; but it seems to him as wonderful as anything else to see such a number of them as hundred and fifty and thereabouts spending like princesses on furniture and clothes: having no other fund to live on except this traffic; and many of the nobles of the place even keeping courtesans of their expense in the sight and knowledge of all.³⁵

Extant catalogues of prostitutes suggest that the courtesans were a tourist attraction and that their business was prospering. In a 1535 anonymous dialogue, *La tariffa delle puttane, dialogo tra uno straniero a un gentiluomo in cui si indicano il prezzo e la qualità di tutte le cortigiane di Venezia, come pure i nomi delle ruffiane* (published by Antonio Cavallino) information is given to a foreigner by a gentleman of Venice. The *Forestiero* introduces himself in mock Petrarchan fashion, as one ensnared by Cupid to an extent that "chiaveria/Le puttane e bagasce d'ogni sorte." He pleads with a gentleman for information:

Pregovi, Gentilhuon, che 'l nome intiero
Mi vogliate far noto, ragionando

Delle degne tra voi d'ogni chieistero
 Madonne, che di lor copia prestando,
 Son dette per queste Cortegiane,
 Il prezzo e lor grandezza dinotando,
 ...E quali per condurci al dolce'effetto,
 Son le più sagge et accorte ruffiane. (p.170)

The *Gentiluomo* complies with a list of courtesans, their addresses and prizes (including a Laura “che arroege il titol di Petrarca,/Volto he di cazzo, e piscia spesso in letto./Per mezzo scudo il suo giardin si varca.” [p. 181]). In an anonymous 1570 *Catalogo di tutte le principali e più autorevoli cortigiane di Venezia*,³⁶ we find a comprehensive list of two hundred and ten names of courtesans with address and price.

Clearly it took more than beauty and sex to be a successful courtesan. The aura of gaiety with which they surrounded themselves, their capacity to create an atmosphere of beauty, luxury and glamour as well as their ability to entertain and to amuse company were all part of the fascination they exercised. Clothes were important tools of the courtesan's trade:³⁷ they functioned as lavish signifiers of expenditure beyond reasonable limits, as well as instruments of deception. As traditional markers of sexual difference and emblems of class, political position and social status,³⁸ clothes could make the courtesan appear what she was not. She engaged in games that involved the transgression of class and gender, paraded in the streets of Venice, Rome and Florence often indistinguishable from the lady of high society and, even, cross-dressing as a man.³⁹ Hence restraint was imposed on women's appearance and a stream of sumptuary laws attempted, in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century to keep pace with changes, detailing types of new garments and jewelry in order to prohibit them as means of curtailing private spending and public irregularity. Under the guise of preserving family fortunes and the traditional system of

capital accumulation but also by articulating perceived threats to traditional symbols of distinction.⁴⁰

In his notorious *Ragionamenti*, Pietro Aretino⁴¹ paints a comprehensive portrait of the life of a courtesan. The dialogue begins with a survey of the alternatives that society made available to a sixteenth century woman. Over three days the mother and godmother (Nanna and Antonia) of a young woman (Nanna) debate what life Pippa should lead. They consider the life of nuns, married women, and courtesans. They decide upon a career of prostitution, the most honest occupation, or, at least one that will not drive Pippa into a life of lies and deceptions:

Antonia: "Il mio parere è che tu faccia la tua Pippa puttana: perchè la monica tradisce il suo consagramento, e la maritata assassina il santo matrimonio; ma la puttana non la attacca né al monistero né al marito: anzi fa come un soldato che è pagato per far male, e facendolo non si tiene (crede) che lo faccia, perchè la sua bottega vende quello che ella ha a vendere [...] Gli ortolano vendono gli erbaggi [...] e i bordelli bestemmie, menzogne, cicnce, scandoli, disonestà, ladrarie, isporcizie, odi, crudeltade, morti, mal franciosi, tradimenti, cattiva fama e povertà." (p. 203)⁴²

Nanna educates Pippa in the second part, again on successive days. The fourth dialogue deals with the whore's trade, the fifth with the wiles of men, and on the sixth and final day, a nurse and a midwife discuss the bawd's trade. The sexual activity of whores is described but not nearly in so graphic a fashion as it has been the case with wives and nuns. Above all, because the life of whores is presented as a business and as such, there is little that can be described as pornographic. These pages, however, are brimming with precious information on how the seamier side of life really works. In order to groom her daughter and earn her "fama de la più valente e de la più graziosa cortigiana che viva" (223) Nanna outlines a curriculum that involves practical instruction in social decorum:

e tacendo e parlando, fà sì che il favellare e lo star queta paia bello ne la tua bocca; e accadendoti di rivolgerti ora a questo, ora a quell'altro miragli senza lasciva, guardamdogli come guardano i frati le moniche osservantine [...] E quando tu vuoi ridere, non alzar le boci puttanesamente spalancando la bocca, mostrando ciò che tu hai in gola: ma ridi di modo che niuna fattezza del viso tuo non diventi men bella; anzi accrescile grazia sorridendo e ghignando, e lasciati prima cadere un dente che un detto laido; non giurar per Dio né per santi.(p. 221-222)

and table manners:

E vedendo la insalata, non te le avventare come le vacche al fieno: ma fà i boccon piccin piccini, e senza ungerli appena le dita pòntigliin bocca; la quale non chinerai, pigliando le vivande, fino in sul piatto [...] e non empire il bicchiere fino all'orlo, ma passa il mezzo di poco: e ponendoci le labbra con grazia, nol ber mai tutto [...] E non masticare il pasto a bocca aperta, biascicando fastidiosamente e sporcamente [...] e finito di mangiare, non ruttare, per l'amor d' Iddio. (p. 222-23)

Behavior, that in general, must be staged in its utmost detail, as a work of art ("impara [...] ad arrossarti con arte, e i gesti, i modi e gli atti coi quali hai a ridere e a piangere ne lo abbassare gli ochhi nel grembo e ne lo alzarli dove bisogna." [308]). The setting in which she appears is crucial to the courtesan. Culture and opulence are fused in this context; on the right occasion the courtesan must be able to display her talents playing the lute and singing sonnets and madrigals, as well as discussing literary matters. Nanna values her daughter's education.⁴³ She recommends activities that include sawing, reciting and composing poetry, playing the lute, and urges Pippa to read (or pretend to be reading) the texts of Ariosto, Petrarch and Boccaccio:

non perder mai tempo, Pippa, và per casa, ficca due punti per un bel parere, maneggia drappi, smuscia un versolino da te imparato per burla, fa vista di leggere il *Furioso*, il Petrarca e il *Cento*, che terrai sempre in tavola.(p. 308)

Nanna, moreover, is aware of the power of language to arouse the sexual imagination, and that her daughter's profession depends upon fantasy ("Perché il punto nostro sta nel

cacciar carote, in far credere quello che non è e non può essere." [p. 315]). Nanna recalls her suitors wooing at her by quoting Petrarch and carrying a *Petrarchino* ("col petrarchino in mano, cantando con vezzi: 'Se amor non è, che dunque è quel ch'io sento?'" 139) but she is weary of women falling prey to the offensive phrases of poets. Pippa must be kind to them so that they will not tear her apart in their sarcastic verses, or, if they do, it will not seem that they are talking about her: "Io voglio che gli accarezzi senza dargliene mai fetta: e questo si fa perché non ti dileggino con la baia de la lor laude, e accò che. beffeggiandoti con la poltroneria del biasimo, non paia che dichino a te."(p. 273). Beneath the comedy, a realistic and enormously cynical picture of this world emerges in Aretino's dialogue. The courtesans were prey of a more degrading form of revenge, the *trentuno*, in which an unfortunate courtesan was sequestered and raped by thirty-one men and became the object of ridicule (which would destroy her career).⁴⁴ Nanna:

[...] ma chi se la cava per via di questi trentuni non ho veruna invidia; e ne ho provati anche io, pergrazia di chi me gli diede, qualcuni; e non ci trovo le beatitudini che la gente si crede, però che durano troppo. Ti confesso bene che, se dirassero la metà, sarebbeno una cosa sfoggiata, e farebbero un buon pro." (p. 75)

Even if a courtesan was successful in dodging these dangers, her life was inevitably downwardly mobile. Alvigia, the *ruffiana* in Aretino's *La cortigiana*, who has already treaded this descending slope, thus recalls its trajectory:

[...] Né Lorenzina, né Beatricicca, né Angioletta da Napoli, né Beatrice, né Madrema non vuole, né quella grande Imperia erano atte a scalzarmi al mio tempo. Le fogge, le maschere, le belle case, l'ammazar dei tori, il cavalcar i cavalli, i zibellini co 'l capo d'oro, i pappagalli, le scimmie, e le decine de le cameriere e de le fantesche erano una ciancia al fatto mio; e Signori, e MOnsignori, et Imbasciatori a iosa, ah, ah! Io mi rido che feci trarre fino a la mitera a un Vescovo, e la metteva intesta a una mia fantesca burlandoci del pover uomo [...] Vennemi poi una malattia, che non si seppe mai come avesse nome; tamen la medicammo per mal francioso, e diventai vecchia per le tante medicine, e cominciai a tenere camere locande, vendendo prima

anelli, vesti e tutte le cose de la gioventù; dopo questo mi ridussi a lavar camisce lavorate. E poi mi son data a consigliar le giovane acciò che non sien sì pazze, che vogliano che la vecchiezza rimproveri a la carne [...]" (p. 167).⁴⁵

NOTES FOR CHAPTER EIGHT

1. Thomas Salter's translation, London 1579; quoted in Kelso, *Doctrine for the Lady*, 59.

2. L. Masetto Zannini, *L'educazione femminile* (1980).

3. Christine de Pizan is the alleged first professional woman writer in western history. Her literary production was varied and included poetry, allegorical, moral, political works. She was born in Venice but lived in Paris all of her life. Her father Thomas had earned a degree from the University of Bologna and had been invited to join the court of Charles V to be his physician and astrologer (he was subsequently promoted to the rank of personal counselor). Raised within a privileged milieu, Christine had the distinction to be admitted to the Royal Library at the Louvre. Her life was devastated by a series of catastrophic events. Within 10 years she lost her father (ca 1380) and husband Etienne de Castel (1390). Widowed at the age of twenty-five with three young children to rear and a mother to care for, she turned to her writing. Against all odds, she had enormous success and earned the sponsorship of famous patrons, a veritable who's who of her time (which included the brother of Charles V, the Duke de Berry, Philippe of Bourgogne, queen Isabella of Bavaria, Louis of Orleans). Autobiographical references are scattered throughout her works. In the *Livre de la Mutacion de Fortune*, (*Oeuvres Poétiques de Christine de Pizan* ed. M. Roy [Paris: Didot, 1886]) she alludes to her personal change of fortune with the death of her husband, and her becoming a man: "Fort et hardi cuer me trouvoy./ Dont m'esbahi, mais j'espruvay/ Que vray homme fus devenu." (ll. 1359-61). The, a letter by Cupid to her followers, occasions Pizan's invective against deceitful lovers and the prevailing misogynistic tradition, which wins the day because there is no comparable feminine tradition to counter centuries of negative stereotypes:

Mais se femmes eussent les livres fait
 Je scary de vray que autrement fust du fait,
 Car bien scevent qu'a tort sont encoulpées,
 Si ne sont pas a droit le pars coupées,
 Car les plus fors prenent la plus grant part,

Et le meilleur pour soy qui pieces part. (ll.417-422)

On Pizan's city as allusion to Augustine *Civitas Dei*, see: C. Frugoni *Una Lontana città. Sentimenti e immagini nel Medioevo* (Torino: Einaudi, 1983); also Maureen Quilligan, "Allegory and the Textual Body: Female Authority in Christine de Pizan's *Livre de la Cité des Dames*." *Romanic Review* 79 (1988): 222-248 and Quilligan, *The Allegory of Female Authority* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1991). For a biography of Christine de Pizan, see: Régine Pernoud, *Christine de Pizan* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1982); C. Cannon Willard, "The Franco-Italian Professional Writer Christine de Pizan." *Medieval Women Writers*. K. M. Wilson ed. (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1984): 333-361. For the context of the *Cité des Dames*, see: R. Blumenfeld-Kosinski "Christine de Pizan and the Misogynistic Tradition." *Romanic Review* 81 (1990): 279-292; L. K. McRae, "Interpretation and the Acts of Reading and Writing in Christine de Pizan's *Livre de la Cité des Dames*." 81 (1991): 412-

433; S. Groag Bell, "Christine de Pizan (1364-1430): Humanism and the Problem of a Studious Woman." *Feminist Studies* 3 (1976): 173-184; on *the querelle des femmes*, K. Brownlee, "Discourses of the Self: Christine de Pizan and the *Rose*." *Romanic Review* 79 (1988): 222-248; E. J. Richards, "Rejecting Essentialism and Gendered Writing: The Case of Christine de Pizan." in *Gender and Text in the Later Middle Ages*. Ed. J. Chance (Orlando & Miami: University Press of Florida, 1996): 96-131; Charity Cannon Willard, *Christine de Pizan: Her Life and Works* (New York: Persea Books, 1984) esp. chapter four.

4. All quotations are from Christine de Pizan, *The Book of the City of Ladies* tr. Earl Jeffrey Richards (London: Picador, 1983) page numbers are in parentheses in the main text.

5. Pizan lashes out against Ovid and Jean de Meun (she had publicly partaken in the *querelle des femmes* on the *Roman de la Rose*) and accuses them of vulgarity and misogyny. The *Roman de la Rose* was the fruit of the collaborative effort of Guillaume de Lorris (who composed the initial 4000 verses, around 1235) and Jean de Meun (who added approximately 17000 verses in 1265). The second part, especially, contains didactic speeches on the usual misogynistic topics: (satirizing and incriminating women are greedy, lusty and manipulative, marriage miserable, etc.).

6. Among the illustrious founding figures singled out by Reason we see Cornificia (I. 28. 1) who "was sent to school by her parents" and "so devoted herself to study [...] that she became a consummate poet...and excellent in every field of learning."(p. 64) Proba, who rewrote Virgil, Sappho "expert and learned in several arts and sciences...in the midst of bestial and ignorant men."(I. 30. 1 p. 67), Carmentis, the daughter of the king of Arcadia who "established the Latin alphabet"(I. 32, 72), Minerva, Isis and others.

7. There seems to be a line of intellectual continuity between Pizan's treatise and Boccaccio's commendation of remarkable women in *De Claris Mulieribus* (1355-59). Boccaccio collects one hundred and six biographies of real and imaginary women taken from Greek and Roman sources (like Plutarch's *Moralia*) concerned with improvement of women and to reinforce woman's subordinate position. On the widespread fortunes of Boccaccio's text, see: Vittorio Zaccaria "La fortuna del *De mulieribus claris* del Boccaccio nel secolo XV: Giovanni Sabbadino degli Arienti, Iacopo Filippo Foresti e le loro biografie femminili." in Francesco Mazzoni ed. *Il Boccaccio nelle culture e nelle letterature nazionali* (Firenze: Olschki, 1978): 519-45. It is hard, however, to think of Boccaccio as a proto feminist. His collection of biographies of real and imaginary women features primarily personalities from pagan, Greek and Roman antiquity (only six examples are contemporary). While purporting to advance the cause of illustrious women, Boccaccio lets it be known that despite his extensive research he could not assemble a catalogue of contemporary deserving women: "In nostras usque feminas, ut satis apparet, divenimus, quas inter adeo perrarus rutilantium numerus est, ut dare ceptis finem honestius credam quam, his ducentibus hodiernis, ad ulteriora progredi." This statement, let us not forget, is

in line with Boccaccio's disdainful references to women's shortcomings in his *Corbaccio*, where he also maintains the scarcity of laudable contemporary women: "[...] in sul ragionare delle valorose donne venimmo; e prima avendo molte cose dette delle antiche, quale in castità, quale in magnanimità, quale in corporal fortezza lodando, condoscendemmo alle moderne. Fra le quali il numero trovandone piccolissimo da commendare, pure esso [...] alcune ne nominò [...]" See: Giovanni Boccaccio *De Mulieribus Claris* ed. V. Zaccaria (Milano: Mondadori, 1967) and P. A. Phillippy "Establishing Authority: Boccaccio's *De Claris Mulieribus* and Christine de Pizan's *Le Livre de la Cité des Dames*." *Romanic Review* 77 (1986): 167-193. For the *Corbaccio*, see: Giovanni Boccaccio, *Il Corbaccio* ed. Giulia Natali (Milano: Mursia, 1992).

8. The *exempla* used by Pizan to offer evidence of women's great achievements span from women of antiquity, female martyrs and saints to contemporary women (III, xix). Pizan both amends traditional negative accounts of women (Semiramides is refashioned to be a symbol of forcefulness; Dido and Medea undergo a similar make-over) and recontextualizes the lives of esteemed heroines (Lucretia's resolve to commit suicide, for instance, is Pizan's occasion to reflect on the cultural meaning of rape [II, xlv]). On the medieval use of cycles of (male) worthies, with particular concentration to the tapestry exhibited at the Metropolitan Museum (at the Cloisters) which was designed for the Duke de Berry in the 14th century, see: Margaret B. Freeman, "The Nine Heroes Tapestries at the Cloisters," *Metropolitan Museum Art Bulletin* 7 (1949): 243-60. On the medieval and Renaissance circulation of prints portraying female worthy cycles, see: Diane Russell and Bernardine Barnes eds., *Eve/Ave Woman in Renaissance and Baroque Prints* (NY: The Feminist Press at CUNY). On the historian's search for "women's worthies" (to match Burckhardt's infamous list of famous Italian women who contribute to a harmonious view of the Renaissance) see: Natalie Davis, "'Women's History' in Transition: The European Case," *Feminist Studies* III (1976): 83-103. Tommaso Garzoni's *Le vite delle donne illustri della scrittura sacra* ed. Beatrice Collina (Ravenna: Longo Editore, 1994), which was published in 1586 by Venetian Domenico Imberti and dedicated to Margherita d'Este Gonzaga (third wife of Alfonso II) is a religious work which profiles forty four biblical women from the Old and New Testament. Garzoni operates the opposite choice from his most illustrious predecessor Boccaccio (*De mulieribus claris*) who leaves all but few biblical figures (Eve, Athalia, Nicaule, Marianne) to avoid mixing sacred and profane (according to the Proemio). If Boccaccio's aim was to show that even pre-Christian women can furnish examples of virtue Garzoni's aim is complementary. What earns women the title of illustrious or conversely of obscure and laid? By enlarging the private virtues of modesty chastity faithfulness to husband modesty and care of domestic tasks. Garzoni's work includes a "Discorso sulla nobiltà delle donne" which is a theoretical synopsis of the characteristics of female nobility. In general, he reprocesses misogynist views of traditional virtue of chastity, obedience, and silence. On the genre of women's an important text was *Leggendario delle santissime vergini quale volsero morire per mantenere la sua verginità* (1532) which went through reprints in 1586, 1599, 1600. On the repertoire of illustrious women see: Ginevra Conti Odorisio *Donne e società nel Seicento* (Roma: Bulzoni, 1979).

A collection of various treatises was published in 1521 by Giovanni Ravisio Testore (Jean Tixier), and called *De memorabilibus et claris mulieribus: aliquot diversorum scriptorum opera* (Paris: Reginaldus Chauldière, 1520); the fact that this genre was deemed worthy of being anthologized testifies to the richness of the theme. See, also, Mary D. Garrard, *Artemisia Gentileschi: The Image of the Female Hero in Italian Baroque Art* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1989) especially chapter two; Linda C. Hults, "Dürer's Lucretia: Speaking the Silence of Women." *Signs* 16.2 (1991): 205-237.

9. See: Lisa Jardine, *Worldly Goods*, 160. In Venice in the early sixteenth century four small (unbound) Latin volumes in Italic types sold for one ducat; a two-volume edition of Euripides or Homer in Greek went for one ducat and a half. At the same time, a servant's yearly salary amounted to seven ducats, a professional master mason schoolmaster or lecturer in the humanities earned anywhere between fifty and a hundred ducats, a senior administrator approximately ninety.

10. The acceptance of the word *Renaissance*, and the traditional periodization of modern European history has been put into question in recent years. The metaphor was initially used by Giorgio Vasari in *The Lives of Great Painters, Sculptors, and Architects* (1550) to allude to the revival of antiquity and flowering of the arts and literature in Italy that occurred from the last decades of the fourteenth century to the last decades of the sixteenth century. In the 1860 seminal and widely influential study of the Italian Renaissance, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, Jacob Burckhardt brought the term to currency in his *Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* (1860): he identified its characteristics as a strong sense of individualism, technical and social creations, generally a period of expanded rights and opportunities for all of its denizens, and for that reason a high point in the history of Western civilization. This became the accepted attitude toward the period. In 1941 the Italian historian Eugenio Garin writes: "in quel rifiorire...dell'arte e del pensiero, quel rigoglioso sviluppo di ogni attività dello spirito...ove l'uomo celebra veramente se stesso, quella brama ansiosa di una vita piena e santa nella sua libera esplicazione." Eugenio Garin, *Il Rinascimento italiano* (Bologna, 1980, 2nd edition 1941) 11. Jacob Burckhardt briefly addressed the subject of women's condition in the Renaissance and maintained that they enjoyed unprecedented equality. When it came to their activity as poets, however, Burckhardt measured their caliber by the extent, to which they managed to approximate the male model, Petrarch, and mask their femaleness, thus testifying to the deeply rooted and enduring prejudice against them. A greatly enlarged image of the Renaissance has taken shape, with the articulation of the different experience of women and a more complete picture of their economic and social fortunes. In an influential 1977 essay entitled "Did Women have a Renaissance," the late Joan Kelly observed that while from roughly 1350 to 1530 important social innovations and new political structures took shape in Italy, women were "affected...adversely, so much so that there was no Renaissance for women—at least, during the Renaissance," 19. The notion of rebirth was challenged by the Marxist ideal that human actions and endeavors are subject to economic conditions. Thus directed to consider socio-historical

change over an extended period of time, they alternatively renamed the period “early modern” as a prefiguration of our own. See: Ottavia Niccoli, ed. *Rinascimento al Femminile* (Roma: Editori Laterza, 1991) Margaret L. King, “The Renaissance of the Renaissance Woman.” *Medievalia et Humanistica* 16 (1989); Ginevra Conti Oderisio “Matriarcato e patriarcato nel pensiero politico di Hobbes e Locke.” In *Matriarcato e potere delle donne*. Ed. Ida Magli (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1978): 37-56; ---*Donne e società nel Seicento: Lucrezia Marinella e Arcangela Tarabotti* (Biblioteca di cultura, 167. Rome: Bulzoni, 1979); David Herlihy, “Did Women have a Renaissance: A Reconsideration.” *Medievalia et Humanistica* (1985) 13: 1-22; Joan Kelly-Gadol, “Early Feminist Theory and the *Querelle des Femmes*, 1400-1789.” *Women, History, and Theory: The Essays of Joan Kelly. Women in Culture and Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984); Cropper Elizabeth. “The Beauty of Woman: Problems in the Rhetoric of Renaissance Portraiture.” in M. W. Ferguson, M. Quilligan and N. J. Vickers eds. *Rewriting the Renaissance: The Discourse of Sexual Difference in Early Modern Europe*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1986; Kennedy, William J. “Petrarchan Textuality: Commentaries and Gender Revisions.” in Kevin Brownlee and Walter Stephens eds. *Discourses of Authority in Medieval and Renaissance Literature*. Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 1989; Marilyn Migiel and Juliana Schiesari eds. *Refiguring Woman: Perspectives on Gender and the Italian Renaissance* Ithaca and London: Cornell UP, 1991; Toscano Antonio ed. *Interpreting the Italian Renaissance: Literary Perspectives*. Stony Brook, NY: Forum Italicum, 1991; Zancan Marina ed. *Nel cerchio della luna: Figure di donna in alcuni testi del XVI secolo*. Venice: Marsilio, 1983; William Kerrigan and Gordon Braden, *The Ideal of the Renaissance* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989) especially chapters one and two; Leah S. Marcus, “Renaissance/Early Modern Studies,” *Redrawing the Boundaries: The Transformation of English and American Literary Studies*. Ed. Stephen Greenblatt and Giles Gunn (New York: MLA, 1992); Pamela Joseph, *The Invention of the Renaissance Woman*(University Park, Pa: The Pennsylvania University Press, 1992); Edward Muir and Guido Ruggiero, eds. *Microhistory & The Lost Peoples of Europe. Selections from Quaderni Storici* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991). She argued that women in the Renaissance experienced a relative contraction of their rights, opportunities and social possibilities, she pointed to the numerous phenomena of the periods: the regulations imposed to female sexuality, the restriction of women’s access to work, education, the limited cultural roles available to women for molding the views of their society, the repressive ideology about women also displayed in the symbolic products of society, its art, literature and philosophy.

11. Ann Rosalind Jones, “Self-Commendation through Dialogue in Pernette du Guillet and Tullia d’Aragona.” *The Currency of Eros: Women’s Love Lyric in Europe, 1540-1620* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990) 76-117; ---“New Songs for Swallows: Ovid’s Philomela in Tullia d’Aragona and Gaspara Stampa.” *Refiguring Woman: Perspectives on Gender and the Italian Renaissance* Ed. Marilyn Migiel and Juliana Schiesari (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1991) 263-77; Rinaldina

Russell, "Tullia d'Aragona." In *Italian Women Writers: A Bio-Biographical Sourcebook*. (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1994) 26-34; Georgina Masson, *Courtesans of the Italian Renaissance* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1975) especially chapter five: "Tullia d'Aragona, The Intellectual Courtesan."

12. Giuseppe Zonta, *Trattati d'Amore del Cinquecento* (originally printed in 1912), reprinted in 1975 and 1980 (Rome and Bari: Laterza). Tullia's dialogue was published in Venice by Girolamo Muzio, a second edition was published by the prestigious Giolito in 1547 and a third edition in Napoli by Bulifon in 1694. Tullia deviated from the tenet of contemporary debates and refuses to privilege the sublimation of Eros as the Platonists had prescribed. The dialogue features Girolamo Muzio (1496-1576) her lover and publisher, Benedetto Varchi (1503-65) the most influential man of letters in Florence, who became her lawyer when she was summoned because of sumptuary laws, and Lattanzio Benucci.

13. Tullia d'Aragona, *Dialogue on the Infinity of Love*. Edited and translated by Rinaldina Russell and Bruce Merry (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1997) 69. This edition includes an informative introduction about the Renaissance and classical tradition of treatises on women as well as an information about Tullia's life and times. Benedetto Croce, *Poesia popolare e poesia d'arte. Studi sulla poesia italiana dal Tre al Cinquecento* (Napoli: Bibliopolis, 1991) states: "Quando si vuol pensare al poeta che rappresenti l'estremo opposto del tono popolare, la mente ricorre subito a Petrarca." 67 Croce discusses Isabella di Morra, Aurelia Roverella, Laura Battiferra, Vincenza Armani, Francesca Turrini Bufalini, Tullia d'Aragona, Veronica Franco.

14. Stephen Greenblatt has explored the self-fashioning of the Renaissance man "achieved in relation to something perceived as alien, strange, or hostile. This threatening other-heretic, savage, witch, adulteress, traitor, Antichrist-must be discovered or invented in order to be attacked and destroyed." *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, 9. For a feminist revision of Greenblatt, see: Margaret Waller, "The Empire's New Clothes: Refashioning the Renaissance." In Sheila Fisher and Janet E. Halley eds. *Seeking the Woman in Late Medieval and Renaissance Writings* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1989), 160-183 and M. Waller, "Academic Tootsie: The Denial of Difference and the Difference it Makes." *Diacritics* 17 (1987): 2-21; also David Norbrook, "Life and Death of a Renaissance Man," *Raritan* VIII: 4 (1989): 89-110; Gordon Braden, "Greenblatt's Trajectory," *Raritan* XIII: 1 (1993): 139-50.

15. On Anguissola see: Mary D. Garrard, "Here's Looking At Me: Sofonisba Anguissola and the Problem of the Woman Artist." *Renaissance Quarterly* XLVII # 3 (1994): 556-622; Sylvia Ferino-Pagden and Maria Kusche, *Sofonisba Anguissola. Renaissance Woman* (Washington D.C.: The National Museum of Women in the Arts, 1995); on women figurative artists in the Renaissance, see: Whitney Chadwick, *Women, Art, and Society*; Mary D. Garrard, *Artemisia Gentileschi: The Image of the Female Hero*

in Italian Baroque Art (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989). Vasari *Vite* documents the lives of Italian artists, and traces the developments of art from the 13th to 16th century culminating in the greatness of Michelangelo. The work was published in 1550 and revised in 1568. In the second edition Vasari mentions thirteen women enabling us to identify prominent women artists of Renaissance but also to decipher the context within which they produced art (he draws from a range of discourses on women from medical knowledge to medieval literature and antique sources). The woman artist, generally, is viewed as diligent not inventive (the mark of genius) and Vasari's judgements strongly subordinate intellectual skills to rigid prescriptions about virtue and deportment. Vasari draws his model after Pliny the Elder (ad 24-79) *Historia Naturalis*, which mentions six female artists of Antiquity (the first edition of *Vite* includes the women artists cited by Pliny). In the second edition he covers: Suor Plautilla (nun and daughter of painter Luca Nelli), Lucretia Quistelli della Mirandola (pupli of Alessandro Allori), Irene di Spilinbergo (who studied with Titian), Barbara Longhi (daughter of mannerist Luca Longhi); 5 female miniaturists; Sofonisba Anguissola (the most famous) and her sisters, three Bolognesi: Properzia de' Rossi, Lavinia Fontana, Elisabetta Sirani. See: Whitney Chadwick, *Women, Art, and Society* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1990); Nochlin Linda "Why have there been no great women's artists?" in Thomas Hess and Elizabeth Baker eds, *Art and Sexual Politics* (NY and London, 1971) reprinted in L. Nochlin, *Women, Art, Power and Other Essays* (NY, 1988): 145-78; T. S. R. Boase, *Giorgio Vasari: The Man and The Book* (Princeton, 1979).

16. This is documented by the feverish activity of 16th century publishing. The literary codification of Italian and the use of the press had increased readership and changed its character. The appearance of Vittoria Colonna's *Rime* in 1538 inaugurated a period of publishing for women. Most women's publishing occurred between 1538 and 1623 when 205 volumes went to the press. The activity of women of letters peaked between 1550-1563, during these thirteen years fifty-three volumes came out. 1563, the year when the Council of Trent closed, is characterized by a marked drop to 1.5 books per year. Activity was resumed between 1575-1612, but very slow pace, till Antonio Bulifon in Naples reissued the works of the best-known women poets. The fervor of publishing is also reflected in the high numbers of anthologies published (some of which include women). See: Amedeo Quondam, *Petrarchismo mediato. Per una critica della forma "antologica."* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1974). The object of this study is the genre of anthologies of poetry over time. It provides interesting data as to the varying degree of representation of the poetry written by Renaissance women: they have traditionally found scarce representation and, most remarkably, they have been kept separate from the mainstream (male output) of Petrarchan poetry.

17. The so-called Giolito collection was originally conceived by Gabriel Giolito de'Ferrari of Venice as a series of nine books, as we have it today gathers volumes printed in different cities by different publishers. The first two volumes edited by Domenichi for Giolito in Venice in 1545 and in 1547 (*Rime diverse di molti eccellentiss.*

autori nuovamente raccolte; Rime di diversi nobili huomini et eccellentissimi poeti nella lingua toscana); the third and sixth volume was edited by Andrea Arrivabene and published by the Venetian printers Segno del Pozzo (in 1550 and in 1552); Ercole Bottrigari prepared the fourth volume in Bologna in 1551 while Lodovico Dolce edited for Giolito the fifth and seventh volumes (*Rime di diversi illustri napoletani* [1552 and 1555] and *Rime di diversi Signori napoletani* in 1556); the eighth volume of the collection was prepared by Girolamo Riscelli *Il fiore delle rime dei poeti illustri* published by Marchiò Sessa of Venice in 1558 while the ninth edited by Giovanni Offredi for Vincenzo Conti of Cremona in 1560. Their importance to women's studies cannot be underestimated, although women were a small percentage of poets anthologized. Isabella di Morra came to light in 1552, 1555 1556 volumes for Giolito and Dolce. See: Marie Façoise Piéjus, "La première anthologie de poemes feminins: l'écriture filtrée at orientée." *Le pouvoir et la plume*. (Paris: Université de la Sorbonne Nouvelle, 1982) 193-213. See: Amedeo Quondam, *Petrarchismo mediato. Per una critica della forma 'antologia.'* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1974); Louise George Clubb and William G. Clubb, "Building a Lyric Canon: Gabriel Giolito and the Revival of Anthologists, 1545-1590." *Italica* 68, 3 (1991): 332-44; Lodovico Domenichi *Rime diverse d'alcune nobilissime et virtuosissime donne* (Lucca: Busdrago, 1559); Pietro Riberta Valenziano, *Le glorie immortali de' trionfi, ed eroiche imprese di ottocento quarantacinque donne illustre antiche e moderne* (Venice: n.p. 1695); Frate Maurizio di Gregorio, *Rosario delle stampe di tutti I poeti e poetesse antichi e moderni* (Naples, 1614 np); Francesco Agostino della Chiesa, *Theatro delle donne letterate* (Mondovì: Ghislandi and Rossi, 1620); Antonio Bulifon, *Rime di cinquanta illustri poetesse* (Naples: Bulifon, 1695); Fernanda Ascarelli, *La tipografia cinquecentesca italiana* (Florence: Sansoni Antiquariato, 1953); Carlo Dionisotti, "La letteratura italiana nell'età del Concilio di Trento. " In *Geografia e storia della letteratura italiana* (Torino: Einaudi, 1967), 182-204; Rudolf Hirsh, "Stampa e lettura fra il 1450 e il 1550" *Libri, Editori e Pubblico nell'Europa moderna* Ed. Armando Petrucci (Bari: Laterza, 1977; Rinaldina Russell, "Renaissance: Women's Publishing." *The Feminist Encyclopedia of Italian Literature* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Publishing, 1997).

18. See, also, Jolanda de'Blasi ed. *Antologia delle scrittrici italiane dalle origini al 1800*. (Florence: Nemi, 1930); Benedetto Croce, "Donne letterate nel Seicento," in *Nuovi saggi sulla letteratura italiana del Seicento* (Bari, 1931): 154-71; Ettore Bonora, "Le donne poetesse," in *Storia della letteratura italiana, IV. Il Cinquecento*. ed. E. Cecchi e N. Sapegno (Milano, 1966): 241-58; Carlo Dionisotti, "La letteratura italiana nell'età del Concilio di Trento" (1965) in *Geografia e storia della letteratura italiana* (Torino, 1967): 183-204; G. Leone, "Per lo studio della letteratura femminile del Cinquecento." *Convivium* ii (1962): 293-300; Paul Larivaille *La vita quotidiana delle cortigiane nell' Italia del Rinascimento*. Trad. Maura Pizzorno (Milano: Biblioteca Universale Rizzoli, 1989) *La vie quotidienne des courtisanes en Italie au temps de la Renaissance* (Paris: Hachette, 1975); Marilyn Migiel and Juliana Schiesari *Refiguring woman: Perspectives on Gender and the Italian Renaissance* (Ithaca and NY: Cornell UP, 1991); G. Toffanin "Le donne poetesse e

Michelangelo" in *Il Cinquecento. Storia letteraria d'Italia*. (Milano: Vallardi, 1929): 354-67; --"Petrarchiste del Cinquecento." *Annali della cattedra Petrarquesca*, VIII (1938): 41 ff; ---*Le più belle pagine di V. Colonna, G. Stampa, I. di Morra, V. Gambara*. (Milano: Treves, 1935). For some catalogues of lyrics, Luisa Bergalli *Componimenti poetici delle più illustri rimatrici di ogni secolo* (Venezia: A. Nora, 1726); P.L. Ferri *Biblioteca femminile italiana raccolta posseduta e descritta dal conte Pietro Leopoldo Ferri Padovano* (Padova: Crescini, 1842); I. De Blasi, *Le scrittrici italiane dalle origini al 1800* (Firenze, 1930) and the appendix in Zancan *Nel cerchio*.

19. On women poets in the sixteenth century, see: G. Toffanin, "Le poetesse e Michelangelo," *Il Cinquecento* (Milano, 1929) 354-67; Ettore Bonora, "Le donne poetesse," in E. Cecchi and Natalino Sapegno, *Storia della letteratura italiana. IV. Il Cinquecento* (Milano, 1966), 241-58; C. Dionisotti, "La letteratura italiana nell'età del Concilio di Trento." *Geografia e storia della letteratura italiana*. (Trono: Einaudi, 1967), 183-204; Marina Zancan, *Il doppio itinerario della scrittura. La donna nella tradizione lirica italiana* (Torino: Einaudi, 1998) esp 48 and following.

20. Zancan, *Il doppio itinerario*, 49. Zancan reminds us that the first edition of Savorgnan's works came out in 1959 (edited by Dionisotti); until then, she had remained completely ignored by scholars and literary critics.

21. See: Lynne Lawner, *Lives of the Courtesans. Portraits of the Renaissance* (New York: Rizzoli, 1987), for data on the Roman courtesans especially 5-6 and for Venice 14. Domenico Gnoli estimates on the basis of the 1527 census the figure of 4,900 out of a population of 55,035 (*La Roma di Leone X* (Milan: Hoepli, 1938) 196-97. In the *Retrato de la lozana andalusa* (printed in Venice in 1528 probably written in 1523-4) by Francisco Delicado, a cleric from Cordoba who moved to Rome perhaps because of his Jewish ancestry, Dovizia offers the preposterous figure of 30,000 courtesans in Rome. Written in the form of a dialogue and divided in picaresque episodes, the text follows the protagonist on her journey to Rome and through Rome and paints an extraordinary canvas o life in the brothels and among the Roman courtesans during the sixteenth century. See: Francisco Delicado, *Portrait of Lozana The Lusty Andalusian Woman*. tr. and intro. Bruno M. Damiani (Potomac, Maryland: Scripta Umanistica, 1987) and Carmelo Samonà, Guido Mancini, Francesco Guazzelli, Alessandro Martinengo *La letteratura spagnola: I secoli d'oro* (Milano: Sansoni, 1973).

22. Andrea Michieli called Squarzòla or Strazzòla describes Venice as a big brothel:
 Parmi Vinegia esser fatta un bordello
 poiché girar non posso in alcun lato
 ch'io non sia a voce o con sputo chiamato
 da qualche landra dietro al bel cancello.

Quoted by Rita Casagrande di Villaviera, *Le Cortigiane veneziane nel 500*. (Milano: Longanesi, 1968) 40. See, also Paul Larivaille, *La vita quotidiana delle cortigiane*

nell'Italia del Rinascimento (Milano: Biblioteca Universale Rizzoli, 1983) 60. Rome at the end of the fifteenth century was a city of celibates, the capital of Christendom and a capital of prostitution. The golden age of courtesans in Rome lasted from the end of the 15th century to the sack of Rome in 1527 (under Alexander VI, Julius II and Leo X); it was eventually crushed out by historical forces and moralistic impulses, stemming foremost from the Council of Trent, in 1545. However, when Brantôme visited Rome in 1555, he still noticed the gay life of the capital. When Pope Pius V in 156r wanted to exile the Roman prostitutes the city, conservators protested that (with their servants and entourage), their exodus would reduce the city population by nearly a half (25,000) considerably affecting the city's tax-base. The pope desisted. Under Pius IV (1559-65) and Pius V (1565-72), though, the courtesans had a much harder time than before. In Venice the life of glamour lasted until the end of the 16th century, when the Counter Reformation changed the temper of the times and these women were no longer accepted by society, far less did they play any part in the intellectual life of the city. See: Georgina Masson, *Courtesans of the Italian Renaissance* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1975) 11 and following. On the life of women in Venice see: James Davies *A Venetian Family and its Fortune, 1500-1900* (Philadelphia, 1975); Stanley Chojnacki "La posizione della donna a Venezia nel Cinquecento." *Tiziano e Venezia* (Vicenza, 1980) 65-70, and ---"Patrician Women in Early Renaissance Venice." *Studies in the Renaissance XXI* (1974) 176-203. Venetian women away sheltered from public sphere but had importance within the private world. Since women had no scope for action in civic, commercial or intellectual affairs, they compensated for this by asserting themselves through the only means at their disposal, their appearance -- by adopting a seductive or splendid presence they made themselves visible and claimed a social role. On the difficulties in locating patrician women in Venice, because they were obscured from view from the courtesans, see: Charles Yriarte, *La vie d'un patricien de Venise au XVIe siècle* (Paris, 1874) in particular "La femme venitienne au seizième siècle." 40-62.

23. Johann Burchard *Diarium sive rerum urbanarum commentarii* ed. L. Thuasne (Paris, 1984) II, 442-43. In April 1489 he made a note that the Roman courtesan Corsetta was arrested and imprisoned for several days because one of her servants Barbara--in fact a boy-- was walking around Rome indecently dressed as a woman. Burchard uses the term "cortegiana, hoc est meretrix honesta" to describe Corsetta (*Diarium*, 442). Honesty, as it is used here, has nothing to do with chastity but culture education and high manners. On this episode, see: Anne Christine Junkermann, "*Bellissima donna: An interdisciplinary study of Venetian sensuous half-length images of the early sixteenth-century.*" PhD Dissertation, UC Berkeley, 1988, 301. Masson reminds us that "the Greeks applied the word *hetaera* -- a companion -- to such women as Aspasia, Diotima, Thais [...] The Italian Renaissance produced similar types of women who were companions and mistresses [...] beautiful, much courtesan and often gifted women as whores." *Courtesans of the Italian Renaissance* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1975) 5. On Rome in the 16th century, see: Pio Pecchiai, *Donne del Rinascimento in Roma* (Padova: Milani, 1948); ---*Roma nel Cinquecento* (Bologna: Capelli, 1948); Peter Burke, *Scene di vita quotidiana nell'Italia moderna* (Roma-Bari:

Laterza, 1988); for Florence R. Trexler, "La prostitution florentine au XVI^e siècle: patronage et clientèle." *Annales ESC* 36 (1981): 983-1015; on Venice, Guido Ruggiero *The Boundaries of Eros* (NY and Oxford, 1985) discusses sex crimes in the *Serenissima*.

24. Research on the courtesans is predictably vast. I have consulted: Paul Larivaille *La vie quotidienne des courtisanes en Italie su temps de la Renaissance* (Paris: Hachette, 1975; Lynne Lawner, *The Lives of Courtesans* (NY: Rizzoli, 1987), Georgina Masson, *Courtesans of the Italian Renaissance* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1975), Rita Casagrande di Villaviera, *Le cortigiane veneziane nel Cinquecento* (Milano, 1968); Arturo Graf, "Una cortigiana fra mille." *Attraverso il cinquecento* (Turin 1888) 215-351; Alvise Zorzi, *Cortigiana veneziana: Veronica Franco e i suoi poeti*. Milano: Comunia, 1986; Antonio Barzaghi, *Donne o cortigiane? La prostituzione a Venezia documenti di costume dal XVI al XVIII secolo* (Verona: Giorgio Bertani Editore, 1980); L. A Ferrari, *Lettere di Cortigiane del secolo XVI* (Firenze: Libreria Dante, 1884); Romano Canosa and Isabella Colonnello, *Storia della prostituzione in Italia. Dal Quattrocento alla fine del Settecento*. (Roma: Sapere 2000, 1989); *Il gioco dell' amore. Le cortigiane di Venezia dal Trecento al Settecento*. Catalogo della Mostra. Venezia, Casonó Municipale Ca' Vendramin Calergi, 2 Febbraio-16 Aprile, 1990. (Milano: Berenice, 1990); Patrizia Cibin "Meretrici e cortigiane a Venezia nel '500." *Nuova DWF* (25-26): 1985: 79-102 (this is a special issue devoted to the writing by women in the sixteenth century); Anne Christine Junkermann, "*Bellissima donna: An interdisciplinary study of Venetian sensuous half-length images of the early sixteenth-century.*" PhD Dissertation, UC Berkeley, 1988; G. Poole "Alle origini della concezione borghese della donna." In *Famiglia e matrimonio nel capitalismo Europeo* ed. A. Manoukian (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1974); on the subject of prostitution is also devoted a monographic number of the journal *Memoria* # 17 (1986).

25. Matteo Bandello, *Novelle*. Intr. Luigi Russo (Milano: Biblioteca Universale Rizzoli, 1990) (Part II, novella 51 p. 381). Parabolano, in Aretino's comedy *La cortigiana*, reminds us of the many who come to Rome full of hope of a career and are ruined: "[...] Quanti vengono a Roma acconciamente, che ritornano a casa loro senza trovare chi pigli cura non pur di rifargli, ma disfatti se ne di far sì che non so fracassino a fatto et a fine?"p. 219. *La cortigiana* Pietro Aretino *Tutte le commedie* a cura di G. B. De Sanctis (Milano: Mursia, 1991. See, also, Masson Chapter Six: "The End of the Roman Golden Age."

26. P. de Brantôme *Les dames galantes* (ca. 1614) ed Pascal Pia (Paris: Gallimard, 1981) 237. In 1555 Brantome, the accomplished courtier, soldier and writer came to Rome attracted, as other travelers by the spectacle of courtesans. Isabella de Luna particularly intrigued him.

27. In the widely published *Il Vanto e il Lamento della cortegiana ferrarese* the courtesan imitates the lady. Speaking in the first person she boasts to the reader while at the peak of her career. She presents herself in her loveliness, gives a catalogue of her

Petrarchan beauties and tells of her beautiful clothes and ornaments, exactly the ones singled out by Venetian sumptuary laws. In the second part of the lament she speaks again, now in the misery of her decline. See the appendix to Hilde Kurz "Italian Models of Hogarth's Picture Stories," *Journal of the Warburg and Courland Institutes* XV (1952): 163-5.

28. This is apparent in the portraits of Raphael, *La Fornarina* (16c. Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Antica, Rome); Palma Vecchio, *La Violante* (16 c. Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna); Palma Vecchio, *La Bella* (16th century, Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum, Lugano); Titian's *La Bella* (16th century, Palazzo Pitti, Florence).

29. Messer Maco, in Aretino's *La Cortigiana*, falls in love with Camilla Pisana when he sees her at her window. He writes a letter to her full of crass Petrarchism, ridiculous blazon: "Salve regina [...] abbimi in misericordia, perché i vostri odoriferi occhi, e la vostra marmorea fronte che stilla melliflua manna mi ancide [...] E non si vede unquanco guance di smeraldo e capelli di latte e d'ostro che snellamente scherzano con il vostro uopo petto, [adatto petto] dove alloggiano due poppe in guisa di due rapucci (teste di rapa) et armonizzanti melloncini [...]" p. 152. Of the Roman courtesans, apart from Tullia d'Aragona, we remember Isabella di Luna, Beatrice de Bonis, Camilla la Pisana, Alessandra Fiorentina, Angela Greca, Madrema-non-vuole. See: Masson, "Chapter 2: Fiammetta and the First Great Courtesans," also "Chapter Four: Courtesans of the Golden Age." Masson details the role of the *mezzano*, a suave character with a veneer of culture who played the lute and carried a *Petrarchino*. He was the agent who negotiated the meetings between men and courtesans and brokered their deals. A *ruffiana* was a procuress and also a talent scout, often also a fortune-teller and a sorceress, an accomplished hair dresser and a beauty specialist, expert in hiding defects and concealing ravages of old age. (Masson, p. 27-8).

30. See: Masson, "Chapter Three: The Glorious Imperia." Imperia was the lover of Agostino Chigi (and bore him a son and a daughter-Margherita). Her beauty was a legend celebrated by poets and painters (she is alleged to be the model for Raphael's *Fornarina*). Chigi was probably the richest man in Europe. Born in Siena in 1466, he came to Rome in 1487 and led the life of a gay bachelor. He controlled banking and trading houses scattered all over Europe, Africa and the East and was the banker of kings and princes, (Pope Julius II endowed him of the noble title of Della Rovere and a coat of arms). Margherita, daughter that Imperia bore him, was legitimized by Pope Leo X and later married into the ducal family of Carafa. Chigi saw that her other daughter Lucrezia, be married well to Archangelo Colonna, a spice merchant of his native Siena. Imperia poisoned herself and died after tremendous suffering (but with the blessing of Pope Julius II) on August 15, 1512 in Rome at the age of 31. See, Pio Pecchiai, *Donne del Rinascimento in Roma: Imperia, Lucrezia, figlia di Imperia, la misteriosa Fiammetta* (Padova: CEDAM, 1958).

31. All quotations are from: Matteo Bandello, *Novelle*. Intr. Luigi Russo (Milano: Biblioteca Universale Rizzoli, 1990). Imperia's anecdote is contained in Part III, novella, 42. See, Graf 229.

32. Pietro Fortini, in a novella, describes a eighteen year old Roman courtesan: "era vestita di ricchissime vesti, con un numero infinito di pontali d'oro e gruppi di perle [...] con le splendide e ricche veste, con gioie e catene d'oro, pareva uno splendentissimo sole." Quoted by Pio Pecchiai *Roma nel Cinquecento* (Bologna: Cappelli, 1948) p. 95-6.

33. Quoted by Masson, 8. Also: *At the Court of the Borgia, Being an Account of the Reign of Pope Alexander VI written by his Master of Ceremonies, Johann Burchard*, ed. and tr. Geoffrey Parker (London, 1963) 194-5.

34. A good summary of the life and works of Aretino can be found in *A Concise Encyclopedia of the Italian Renaissance*, ed. J. R. Hale (New York and Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1981): 33-34.

35. Michel de Montaigne, *Travel Journals* transl. Donald Frame (San Francisco, 1983) 53 See: A. Graf *Attraverso il Cinquecento* 217-221. Thomas Coryat, writing about the courtesans in the seventeenth century: "Also, thou wilt find the Venetian *Cortezana* [...] so good rhetorician, and the most elegant discourser, so that if she cannot move the with all these foresaid delights, she will assay thy constancy with her rhetorical tongue. In Toby Cole, *Venice: A Portable Reader* (Westport, Conn, 1979) 119.

36. Reproduced in Rita Casagrande di Villaviera, *Le cortigiane veneziane nel Cinquecento* (Longanesi, Milano, 1968) 275 and ff. Both catalogues appear as appendixes to Antonio Barzaghi, *Donne o Cortigiane? La prostituzione a Venezia documenti di costume dal XVI al XVIII secolo*. (Verona: Giorgio Bertani Editore, 1980). 155-end.

37. The reputation for splendor and extravagance among Venetian women was well established by the end of the fifteenth century when the Milanese canon Pietro Cassola visited the city on his way to the Holy Land in 1494. He described Venetian women in his journal:

Their women appear to me to be small for the most part, because if they were not, they would not wear shoes--otherwise called *pianelle*-- as high as they do. For, in truth I saw some pairs of them sold, and also for sale, that were at least half a Milanese *braccio* in height. They were so high indeed that when they wear them, some women appear giants; and certain are not safe from falling as they walk, unless they are well supported by their slaves. As to the adornments of their heads, they wear their hair so much curls over their eyes that, at first sight, they appear rather men than women [...] These Venetian women, especially the pretty ones, try as much as possible in public to show their chests--I mean the breasts and shoulders--so much so, that several times when I saw them I marveled that their clothes did not fall off

their backs. Those who can afford it, and also those who cannot, dress very splendidly, and have magnificent jewels and pearls in the trimmings around their collars. They wear many rings in their fingers with great balass ribies and diamonds. Casola Pietro, *Canon Pietro Casola's Pilgrimage to Jerusalem in the year 1494*. Tr. by M. Margaret Newett (Manchester, 1907). 144-45; also quoted by Junkerman p 197. In his *Cronachetta* written in 1493 Marin Sanudo (*Crinachetta* ed. R. Fulin [Venice, 1880]) describes Venetian women in terms similar to Casola. Another description of Venetian men and women dating from about this period can be found in the small topographical guide to the city *Del sito di Venezia città* written by the humanist Marc' Antonio Sabellico written in 1502 (quoted Junkerman p 205). In a Venetian text of 1562 the clothing sported by women is described as such:

L'abbigliamento delle dame veneziane mariatte è abbastanza grazioso, e le loro vesti sono davanti e dietro rinforzate con stecche di balena; portano i capelli biondi per lo più acconciati in trecce e rialzati sulla fronte a forma di due corni alti quasi un mezzo piede, senza nessuna forma di ferro all'interno [...] e nulla portano sul capo se non un velo in crespo nero che scende ben oltre le spalle e non impedisce di vedere la bellezza dei capelli, delle spalle e dei seni, che mostrano fino allo stomaco. Paiono più alte degli uomini di un piede poichè calzano zoccoli di legno ricoperti di cuoio alti almeno un piede, sicché sono costrette ad avere una donna che le aiuti a camminare e un'altra che ne sollevi la coda, e camminando [...] vanno mostrando il seno, e questo sia le vecchie che le giovani.

Quoted by Larivaille, 100; see, also E. Rodocanachi, "La Femme de la Renaissance" *Histoire mondiale de la femme* (Paris: Nouvelle Librairie de France, 1966) II 213-305. Cesare Vercellio's 1590 engravings and commentary (*Habiti antichi e moderni di tutto il mondo*) explores the predilection of courtesans to wear, concealed under their long skirts, a pair of man's breeches. See: E. Rodocanachi *Le femme italienne à l'epoque de la Renaissance* (Parigi: Hachette, 1907) p. 174. On the courtesan's lavish costumes see: Rosita Levi Pizetsky, *Storia del costume in Italia* (Turin: Einaudi, 1964-69) vol. 3; on Venice in particular, Doretta D. Poli, "La moda nella Venezia del Palladio, 1550-1580," in Lionello Puppi, ed. *Architettura e utopia nella Venezia del Cinquecento*. (Milan: Electa, 1980): 219-22. For a fascinating inventory of a sixteenth century Venetian courtesan's belongings, Cathy Santore, "Julia Lombardo, 'Suntuosa Meretrize': A Portrait by Property." *Renaissance Quarterly* 41 # 1 (1988): 44-83; Giuliana Chesne Dauphiné Griffo, "Cronaca di mode illustri: Marin Sanudo e le vesti veneziane tra Quattro e Cinquecento." Dora Liscia Bemponad ed. *Il costume nell'età del Rinascimento* (Firenze: Edizioni Firl, 1988) 259-71. Doretta Davanzo Poli, "Inventario delle cose di Giulia Leoncini, cortigiana in Venezia nel secolo XVI." Dora Liscia Bemponad ed. *Il costume nell'età del Rinascimento* (Firenze: Edizioni Firl, 1988) 273-85; Stella Mary Newton, "The Dress of the Women of Venice" *The Dress of the Venetians, 1495-1525*. (Brookfield, Vt.: Gowler Publishing, 1988). 46-76

38. The historical study of clothes relates to levels of reality, that of dressing (*habillement*), which Roland Barthes identifies with speech in the Saussurian linguistic

system, an individual act by which the individual adapts to himself what is proposed by the group, and that the costume or clothing (*vêtement*), seen from a sociological or historical standpoint as an element within a system which is formal, normative and sanctioned by society. See: R. Barthes, "Histoire and Sociologie du vêtement" *Annales: ESC* (1957): 430-41 and *Le Système de la mode* (Paris, 1967), translated by Matthew Ward and Richard Howard as *The Fashion System* (London, 1985). Courtesans and prostitutes were required to wear a special distinctive dress and a voluminous veil. This costume is illustrated by Cesare Vecellio's *Habiti antichi et moderni di tutto il mondo* published in Venice in 1598. It shows a woman draped from her head almost to her feet, but, as the caption on the engraving says "with gold embroideries, the costume produced a very graceful effect." In the same book the author says that during the reign of the next pope Gregory VIII the courtesans were more richly dressed than Roman ladies.

39. On cross dressing: Vern L. Bulloch and Bonnie Bulloch. *Cross Dressing, Sex and Gender*. (Philadelphia, U of Pennsylvania Press, 1993); R. Dekker and L.C. Van de Pol. *The Tradition of Female Transvestism in Early Modern Europe*. (London: MacMillan Press, 1989); Marjorie Garber. *Vested Interests: Cross Dressing and Cultural Anxiety*. NY and (London: Routledge, 1992).

40. The Senate of Venice creates in 1513 a body to regulate the use of clothing of courtesans "Magistrato alle Pompe." In Florence they instituted visible markers of difference not just for prostitutes but to identify Jews. A law promulgated by Cosimo I 1546 made it mandatory for prostitutes to wear a yellow veil or in the least a yellow ribbon one finger high for maximum visibility. See: Rita Casagrande di Villaviera, *Le cortigiane veneziane nel Cinquecento* (Longanesi, Milano, 1968) 275 and ff; On the sumptuary laws, Diane Owen Hughes "Sumptuary Law and Social Relations in Renaissance Italy." *Disputes and Settlements: Law and Human Relations in the West* ed. John Bossy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983): 66-99. Paul *des courtisanes en Italie su temps de la Renaissance* (Paris: Hachette, 1975).

41. The dialogue, which is in line with the classic form by Lucian (*Dialogues of courtesans*) lays bare the fabric of Renaissance society for all to see. Debauchery is a system no more or less than those outlined by Bembo, Della Casa and Castiglione: Aretino merely proposes the ethical, social and spiritual dimension of the system of courtesy turned upside down. For other models of libertine career, see the tragicomedy *Celestina* by Ferdinando de Rojas translated by Alfonso Hordognez and frequently reprinted beginning with the first issue of 1505, and the picaresque novel *El retrato de la Lozana Andaluza* by Francisco Delicado (1528). Also, Alessandro Piccolomini *La Raffaella* (1539); Bartolomeo Gottifredi *Specchio d' Amore*. In a remarkable dialogue produced by a member of the academy of the *Intronati* of Siena, *La cazzaria* by Antonio Vignali (a.k.a. Arsiccio Intronato, ca 1525) Siennese sectional struggles are depicted in terms of competitions between Pricks, Cunts Balls and Asses. See: Franz, Chapter 3: "The Aretines: Initiation and Vilification." It offers an account of Niccolo Franco's *La*

puttana errante attributed to Aretino because he allowed his name on the title page to launch its notoriety. Drives its title from the actions of the protagonist, Maddalena, who describes her initiation into the world of sexuality and whoredom in a dialogue with Giulia. Another poem called *La puttana errante* composed by another of Aretino's followers Lorenzo Veniero; Veniero also wrote a poem titled *La Zaffetta*, about Angela Zaffetta, the noted courtesan of Venice. See: *Le Trente et un de la Zaffetta, texte at traduction litterale*. By Lorenzi Veniero (Paris: Lisieux, 1883). Another member of the Venier clan, Maffio, composed "La strazzosa" a satirical poem about a prostitute dressed in rags, which mock the canon of Petrarchan beauties: "Una zoia, una perla in le scoazze./Infinita bellezza in mille strazze!" (29-30). See: Tiziana Agostini Nordi and Valerio Vianello eds. *Contribiti Rinascimentali. Venezia e Firenze* (Abano Terme: Aldo Francisci Editore, 1982) and Guido A. Quarti, *Quattro secoli di vita Veneziana nella storia dell'arte e nella poesia. Scritti rari e curiosi dal 500 al 1900*. 2 vol. (Milano: Enrici Gualdoni, 1941).

42. Pietro Aretino, *Ragionamento. Dialogo* (Milano: Garzanti, 1984) ed. and intro Paolo Procaccioli.

43. On the educated courtesans Graf, *Attraverso il Cinquecento* 229-239. He cites several examples of courtesans receiving intellectual benefits from their contact with literary men—Camilla Pisana's book was corrected by Francesco del Nero, Imperia learned to compose poetry from Niccolò Campano, called Lo Strascino, and Tullia d'Aragona is reported to have spent whole nights reading studying and disputing with Varchi

44. Ludovico Zoppino referred with contempt to a courtesan as Antea Sfregiata (probably the model to Parmigianino's portrait now at the National Gallery, Naples). On the *sfregia*, see, Masson, 25.

45. Talanta, the protagonist of the name sake comedy, comments on the origin of her trade: "la industria de le mie pari nacque da lataccagneria di que' primi che ci fecero meretrici [...] Onde non siamo buone, perché essi furon pessimi, e però il fargli il peggio che si può, è una limosina. (p. 346). She thus describes the old age of the courtesan to her maid: "Ne viene la vecchiaia, Aldella; e come la fronte comincia ad incresparsi, le borse si serrano e gli amori si freddano." (p. 346). Orfinio (in love with Talanta) and Pizio discuss the courtesans. Orfinio comments on their capacity for dissimulation: "Va' e fidati di meretrici tu, va' e credi a le loro apparenze, e mentre con un sospiro finto tutte languide e tutte tenere ti gettan le braccia al collo, tienle per le tue, perocché il bacio, che la loro fraude in cotal atto ti stampa in bocca, ne fa fede." And Pizio adds: "[...] perocché la malizia è tanto di loro natura, quanto la bontà non è di loro costume [...] solo i bastoni e le spade fan gli amanti idoli loro [...] E si vede che la si lascia più vincere da questi, che da quelli che freddamente prodedono, e però sempre, come donna, è amica de' giovani, perché sono meno rispettivi, più feroci e con più audacia le comandano [...] La puttana, che ha in preda l'altrui affezione, signoreggia, comanda, ordina e veta; onde è forza, se caccia,

andarsene, se chiama, venire, se chiede, darle, se minaccia, temere.” (p. 355). Talanta’s rebuttal:

Perché noi femmine siamo il ferro che ferisce e l’unguento che risana le piaghe [...] Io ho imparato il tratto usatogli da la gatta, la sagacità de la quale, volendo trastullarsi col topo, ch’ella ha preso, quando gli pare, gli dà prima una di quelle strette, che lo lascia muovere e non fuggire. (p. 356)

Pizio, thus paints a word without courtesans:

Se le taccagne non fussero, i garzoncelli non saprebbero quel che fossero donne fino al tempo del torle; et alieni dai pensieri lascivi e da gli atti lussuriosi, se ne andrieno a le scuole et a l’arte, senza niuna perturbazione, e non invecchiando innanzi al tempo, sarebbero tali, quali i lor genitori gli desiderano. Oltre a ciò le mogliere avriano i lor mariti a desinare, a cena et a dormire, onde tra loro non saria rancore, né rissa, né gelosia, e senza mai sentirsi torcere un pelo, le vesti e le gioie non usciriano mai de’ forzieri, se non quando se ne volessero ornare; in tanto le madri et i padri ne l’essere non pur riverite, ma corteggiate da’ figliuoli, viverebbono e morirebbono non men beati che felici. (p. 360-1)

CHAPTER NINE

GASPARA STAMPA: IN SEARCH OF A PETRARCHAN LOVER

As we have seen Renaissance men were extremely eloquent on the subject of the silence of women. The widespread acceptance of Petrarch as a model for polite behavior (by both the elite and the upwardly mobile sectors of society) severely curtailed the role available to women to for molding their aesthetic views of society. Laura, presented in Petrarch's poems as an object of viewing more than a subject with a point of view, was hardly an auspicious model for women who endeavored to carve an artistic career for themselves. Surprisingly, however, women wrote poetry and participated in the Petrarchan conventions, appropriating Petrarch's accomplishments to meditate on their particular situation.

We are going to turn to the poetic works of Gaspara Stampa (?1525-1554). While both Gaspara Stampa and Veronica Franco (1546-1591) lived in Venice, a pivotal center in the transmission of Petrarch, circulated in the same milieu and composed lyrics that explicitly evoke the city, there is no mention of Stampa in the works of Franco, who was the younger poet. This is not a trivial fact, nor one that should be dismissed on account of the negligible generation gap that separates them. Their paths, oddly enough, intersected in 1913. This was the year of publication of an edition prepared by Abdelkader Salza for Laterza, which indelibly linked Gaspara Stampa with Veronica Franco and became a pivotal episode in their reception. This editorial project went hand in hand with Salza's groundbreaking research, presented to the public in a series of articles printed between 1913 and 1917,¹ which unearthed a wealth of data on Stampa and her artistic milieu.

Gaspara Stampa was not a native Venetian. Her date of birth, as mysterious as other particulars of her life, is generally set around 1525 in Padova. Her father, Bartolomeo Stampa, was a wealthy jeweler and provided his three children (Gaspara, Cassandra and Baldassare) with a good classical education and musical training. After his death Cecilia, the mother, moved the family to Venice and the siblings continued their studies with private tutors. While it is not certain when this move took place, a document dated September 1544 indicates that Cecilia was a resident of the Serenissima.² At some point the Stampa home became a *ridotto*, or salon, open to numerous artists, scholars, musicians, nobles and students in Venice's cosmopolitan scene. Though we do not know the origin of the family wealth, they were clearly well off, Baldassare studied at the university and they frequented the upper echelon of society. All three Stampa siblings are mentioned with praise in contemporary epistles and accounts. None of them seems to have married. Her poetry clearly indicates that she had a passionate and tumultuous relationship with Collatino, whom she met in 1548, a handsome feudal landowner from the Friuli region and a famous patron of the arts and artist as well as a military man. A collection of her poems was sent to him in France where he was campaigning in 1549. Their relationship ended badly and eventually Stampa found consolation in a new love, Bartolomeo Zen, member of a patrician family. According to a surviving death certificate she expired April 23, 1554. A few months later her sister Cassandra published her verses.

We do not possess an autograph critical edition of her work, and while Gaspara Stampa was alive only three of her sonnets (# 51, 70, 75) were published. They appeared in a 1553 anthology, *Sesto libro delle Rime di diversi eccellenti autori nuovamente*

raccolte et mandate in luce con un discorso di Girolamo Ruscelli (edited by Giovanni Maria Bonelli for the publisher Al Segno del Pozzo, Venice).³ This is itself an enigmatic fact. Gaspara, with her talents and beauty, had obviously forged for herself a public position at the center of Venetian society, one that was unconventional and contrasted dramatically with the highly restricted life of most Venetian women. Her contacts were impressive, as it transpires in her occasional verses, which she addressed to some of the most notable cultural figures of the time: Sperone Speroni, Luigi Alemanni, Domenico Venier, Trifone Gabriele, Giovanni della Casa.⁴ We have every reason to believe that Stampa would have aspired and endeavored to see her work circulated in print.

The fact that she published only three sonnets while she was alive is particularly curious, since Stampa lived in Venice. Since Aldus Manutius' groundbreaking collaborative venture with Pietro Bembo, the city had established itself as the capital of publishing and a center of Petrarchan diffusion. Seemingly, this was a most auspicious place for a woman artist. The Aldine Press had published in 1500 the epistles of by Caterina da Siena (one of the earliest classics in the vernacular, the *Epistole devotissime*). Gabriele Giolitto de' Ferrari, who inaugurated his career in 1536, became a catalyst for women authors who wanted to be associated with the most prestigious printing establishment of the time.⁵ Vittoria Colonna's *Rime*, which were first published in Parma in 1538 in 1540, entered in the editorial market of Venice with an edition by Comin di Trino and, in 1552, they were finally issued by Giolito in an edition prepared by Dolce. All the prominent Italian intellectual women during the first half of the sixteenth century published their books in Venice.

The legends surrounding the foundation of Venice emphasized the connections of the city to both sacred and profane female attributes. According to one version of the legend the *Serenissima* was brought into existence miraculously on the day of the Annunciation to the Virgin (25 March). Pure and inviolate, Venice was believed to be the Christian successor to Ancient Rome. To fuel its mystique further, Venice was associated (and almost homonymic) with Venus, the powerful pagan goddess of love, both believed to be miraculously born of the sea. Venice was perceived as being linked to women on a physiological-metaphorical level, because women were thought to be constitutionally more humid than men.⁶ Its famous masquerades and carnivals, its famous labyrinthine canals composed an endlessly available scenario: watery, dark, silent, Venice was perceived as a place of sensuality and treachery, duplicity and desire.⁷ Traditional discussion of Venice as a city of women have focussed on its courtesans the carnal milieu of carnival and Venice was usually cast as a voluptuous soft effeminate city also noted for its legendary freedoms.⁸ Venice promoted a new idea of woman but its predominant social practices were unfavorable to women who were, on the whole, paraded only when the city needed to advertise itself as a champion of freedoms.⁹ On these occasions the elegant noblewomen and sophisticated honest courtesans were flaunted, side by side, as female symbols attesting to Venice's tolerance of social diversity and its dedication to social justice. In addition to being a powerful and enormously rich republic Venice was effectively a police state with its notorious secret tribunals (the Council of Ten and the Council of Three).

The only complete edition of Stampa's poetry printed Venice was edited by her sister and published after her death in 1554, in a semi private edition by Plinio

Pietrasanta, a small publisher who did not command the same promotional power as Giolito. The circumstances whereby Stampa's texts were transmitted to us are both enlightening and intriguing. After about two hundred years of silence her work was resurrected in an edition issued by Luisa Bergalli and Apostolo Zeno at the request of Antonio Rambaldo di Collalto, a descendant of Count Collatino di Collalto, Stampa's beloved. The book (*Rime di madonna Gaspara Stampa; con alcune altre di Collaltino, e di Vinciguerra, Conti di Collalto: e di Baldassare Stampa. Giuntovi diversi componimenti di vari autori in lode della medesima*) was published in Venice by Francesco Piacentini in 1738. In Rambaldo's account of Stampa's life, which is included in the edition, she is depicted as a noble and honest woman consumed by love, who ends up betrayed by her lover and finally takes her own life. Rambaldo glorifies her unusual talent and erudition in Latin and Greek:

Scrisse le sue *Rime*, fuorchè alcune pochissime, tutte in laude di Collatino di Collalto conte di Trevigi. Ella in età d'anni ventisei incirca fortemente s'accese del predetto cavaliere, ornato di moltissimi pregi, e da lui per tre anni continui pare che fosse fortemente corrisposta, come si può raccogliere dalla tessitura delle *Rime* di lei [...] Cominciò a languire la Stampa tosto che il conte Collatino tratto da desiderio d'onore, si portò in Francia a guerreggiare sotto Arrigo II. La grandissima consolazione che recò a Gaspara il conte col suo ritorno in Italia fu di breve durata, poiché si cominciò a udir fama che avesse egli a maritarsi. Ella per questa ragione, tutta mortificata e sopra ogni maggior espressione addolorata, in pochissimi mesi e nel più bel fiore della sua età sua, che appena era oltre gli anni trenta, morì d'una infermità crudele e penosa, la qual credesi ancor che sia state effetto di veleno; e ciò occorre intono all'anno 1554.¹⁰

Antonio Rambaldo di Collalto's position is dictated by his self-serving motives, thus he views Stampa's poetry as a means to corroborate his highly biased interpretation of her life. Its partiality notwithstanding, this project rescued the poetry of Gaspara Stampa from oblivion and promoted her as an important presence in the Renaissance.

In the late Nineteenth century the third and fourth editions of Stampa's poetry were published. The near concurrence of the unification of Italy with these two editorial undertakings is not coincidental. They address the demands of an increased female reading public, on one hand, and on the other, they serve to define the new woman of a united Italy. The first of these editions, was realized in 1877 for "Collezione Diamante" (*Rime di Gaspara Stampa novamente pubblicate per cura di Pia Mestica Chiappetti*). In the "Prefazione" Chiappetti programmatically states:

Il vivo immaginare, la tenerezza dell'affetto, il delicato gusto dell'armonia e della grazia, onde si privilegia la donna, fanno sí che ella sentasi particolarmente inclinata alla poesia. E però vediamo le piú di quelle che si sono date agli studi, aver coltivato di preferenza la bellissima delle arti, e alcune esser venute per essa in gran fama. Fra queste primeggia Gaspara Stampa, l'emulatrice delle Vittorie e della Veroniche, non inferiore a quelle per ingegno e piú di loro infelice.¹¹

Stampa is presented as a cultured, noble and unlucky woman of the Colonna and Gambarara mold. In 1882 the poetry of Stampa was published for the fourth time in an anthology, *Rime di tre gentildonne del secolo XVI, Vittoria Colonna, Gaspara Stampa, Veronica Franco* (Milano: Sonzogno, 1882). This anthology was issued for the series "Biblioteca classica economica." In the "Prefazione" Olindo Guerrini reveals the pedagogical intent of his undertaking:

Le rime delle tre poetesse italiane che nel loro secolo furono reputate e tuttora paiono le migliori, escono alla luce unite per la prima volta in volume di prezzo mitissimo. Del che, siamo certi, ci saranno grati, non solo i numerosi e benevoli che hanno dato sí buona fortuna a questa *Collezione Classica*, ma ancora le donne, l'educazione delle quali va oggi crescendo di coltura, e non isdegna ricordare, ammirare ed ormai seguire, gli illustri esempi del passato.¹²

Salza's edition of Stampa's poems (the fifth) presents some noteworthy alterations.

This edition tends to subordinate, as in the previous ones, the work of the poet to an

interpretation of her life. But the coupling of Stampa with Veronica Franco, which is a novelty, clearly lends itself to a reading of her text, which is incompatible with that suggested in the previous editions. Salza's preoccupation, which is exemplified by his 1913 thesis on her identity as a courtesan, is to locate her poetry within a social milieu that explains her freedom of action and unorthodoxy.¹³

Salza, while acknowledging that the proximity of the first printed edition of Stampa's work to the poet's death can be viewed as an indication that it was based on her autograph, rearranged the order of the poems and thus explained his formal decision:

Rispetto all'ordinamento delle rime, non ho creduto di dovermi troppo allontanare da quello che esse hanno nella prima edizione, la quale fu evidentemente condotta sull'autografo. Parecchi anni fa fu proposta una nuova distribuzione delle rime della Stampa, come più convenientemente per seguire nel suo svolgersi la passione amorosa di G.S. e dare un ordine di tempo a' suoi versi: ma essa è tale che sconvolge quasi interamente l'ordine che le rime hanno nell'edizione del 1554, ne credo si possa sostenere che risponda alla più esatta **interpretazione psicologica del canzoniere della nostra poetessa** [...] Per queste ragioni ho dato il titolo di *Rime d'amore* alla prima parte del canzoniere, ponendo in fine di essa, distinti come sono nell'edizione 1554 dalle altre poesie, *I Madrigali* ed *I Capitoli*. Dalle *Rime d'amore* ho tolto un senetto, il 190 dell'edizione 1877, ponendolo tra le *Rime varie* (n. cclxxxiii), e la canzone 11, che non riguarda gli amori della Stampa, e che ho collocato anch'essa tra le *Rime varie* (n. ccxcvii). Invece tre sonetti che nelle precedenti edizioni erano tra le *Rime varie* (nn. lxii, lxii, lxiv delle *Varie* nell'edizione 1877), poiché si riferiscono all'amore di Collatino, ho trasportati fra le *Rime d'amore* ultimi fra quelle che cantano il signore di Collalto (nn. cciv, ccv, ccvi di questa edizione). **E una certa libertà mi son presa nella distribuzione delle ultime Rime d'amore, quelle che si riferiscono al cosiddetto 'secondo amore' della Stampa:** di conseguenza alle poesie dal n. ccvii al ccxxi di questa edizione, cioè agli ultimi quindici sonetti delle *Rime d'amore*, corrispondono rispettivamente i seguenti, segnati fra parentesi, dell'edizione del 1877: ccvi (ccii), ccviii (cciii), ccix (ccviii), ccx (ccix), ccxi (ccxv), ccxii (ccx), ccxiii (ccxi), ccxiv (ccxii), ccxv (cciv), ccxvi (ccv), ccxvii (ccvi), ccxviii (ccvii), ccxix (ccxiii), ccxx (ccxiv), ccxxi (ccxvi).¹⁴

Salza's reordering (and re-contextualization) of Stampa's poems is indicative of the facility of appropriation of the lyrical genre. In the specific case at hand, he imposed a

stronger chronological and penitential order replacing one man in Stampa's life with another and finally, superseding both with a strong masculine deity. Salza thus heavily predisposed Stampa's poems to a biased reading as a documentary source of an itinerary of perdition, (transgressive love) repentance and redemption.¹⁵ This itinerary, which suppresses the neoplatonic turn of the original ending and translates it into an orthodox religious conversion, molds Stampa to a model of Petrarch, which is itself questionable.

It is tempting to accept Salza's views on Stampa's presumed orthodox religious turn, since so many of her poems tease us with well-known spiritual imagery. She displays, for instance, a marked propensity to liken life to a sea journey:

La mia vita è un mar;
l'acqua è 'l mio pianto,
i venti son l'aure de' sospiri,
la speranza è la nave, i miei desiri
la vela e I remi, che la caccian tanto. (72.1-4)¹⁶

In this way she voluntarily interjects herself in a long and distinguished line of writers who have compared life to a maritime journey. In the lyrics of Petrarch (as it is the case in the writings of Augustine and Dante) this imagery is burdened by ponderous spiritual inferences. The space navigated by Petrarch in his poems, moreover, is figurative, not real, and always respects the protocols of a hierarchical system. We are constantly reminded of the abyss separating sacred and profane domains, chartered territories and forbidden ones. The all-powerful and controlling image of the unity and the fragment on the page faithfully translates into tangible, discernible terms, the spiritual dimension of the subject of the poetry and regulates the passage of time (Petrarch's and ours, the readers). Petrarch works out space (both private and historical) as an extension of his inner conflicts; thus the dialectics

of gathering and scattering mediate his relationship to his audience (present and future) and on the historical level, as a metaphor for Italy as a divided nation.

In Stampa's poems, however, we are faced with specific and tangible references to the Adriatic and while conventional her maritime allusions present Stampa with multiple opportunities to praise the beauty, wealth and magnificence of Venice:

De le **ricche, beate e chiare** rive
d'Adria, di cortesia nido e d'Amore,
ove sì dolce so soggiorna e vive,
donna, avendo lontano il suo signore,
quando il sol si diparte, e quando poi
a noi rimena il matutino arbore,
per isfogar gli ardenti disir suoi,
con queste voci lo sospira e chiama;
voi, rive, che l'udite, ditel voi. (244. 1-10)¹⁷

Venice is the site of her anguished wait for an absent lover. Stampa is firmly grounded in the material dimension of her *patria*. It is worthwhile noticing that the poet establishes the point of origin of her collection at the exact site where Petrarch's lyrics end (the final "porto" where he finds "pace"). The details of Stampa's love affair, and the chronicle of the betrayal of her lover, are rendered concretely and she avoids articulating love in universal terms. Venice (aptly nicknamed "Serenissima") is elsewhere presented as a site where love is fulfilled and not sublimated. In Stampa's symbolic universe (which differs radically from Petrarch's) the attainment of peace is feasible and coincides with the return of her lover (not with her renunciation of love). In sonnet # 103, echoing one of Petrarch's most blasphemous poems (# 139, "Benedetto sia 'l giorno, l'mese et l'anno") Stampa is reunited with Collatino and blesses ("benedico" is repeated twice) her past sorrows, which function in hindsight as a prolonged foreplay to their meeting:

Tutto il passato mal porre in oblio
 m'ha fatto la lor viva e nova luce,
 ove sol trova pace il mio disio. (9-11)

In the following sonnet, an *aube*, she sings of their night together:

O notte a me più chiara e più beata
 che i più beati giorni ed i più chiari,
 notte degna da'primi e da' più rari
 ingegni esser, non pur da me, lodata;
 tu le gioie mie sola sei stata
 fida ministra; tu tutti gli amari
 de la mia vita hai fatto dolci e cari,
 resomi in braccio lui che m'ha legata.(104. 1-8)

She admits her envy of Alcmena, wife of Amphitrion and lover of Jupiter, for whom the God postponed dawn. Stampa's lines evade the anxiety caused by Petrarch's mutually exclusive desires:

Sol mi mancò che non divenni alloro
 la fortunata Alcmena, a cui stè tanto
 più de l'usato a ritornar l'aurora.
 Pur così bene io non potrò mai tanto
 dir di te, notte candida, ch'ancora
 de la materia non sia vinto il canto. (9-14)

In the dedicatory letter that opens the collection ("Allo illustre mio signore") Stampa spells out the logic of her ordering of her scattered poems. In bringing together her literary efforts she is not driven by concern with her own redemption (or Augustinian hermeneutics). Because her implorations, disconnected from one another, have gone unheard, she has resolved to unite them for the sole purpose of invigorating her voice and strengthening her petitions:

Poi che le mie pene amorose, che per amor di V. S. porto scritte in diverse lettere e rime, non hanno possuto, una per una, non pur far pietosa V.S. verso di me, ma farla né anco cortese di scrivermi una parola, io mi son rissoluta di ragunarle tutte in questo libro, per vedere se tutte insieme lo potranno fare...(p. 79)

Stampa's opening sonnet, similarly, departs from slavish imitation of Petrarch and of his palinodic stance:

Voi, ch'ascoltate in queste meste rime,
 in questi mesti, in questi oscuri accenti
 il suon degli amorosi miei lamenti
 a de le pene mie tra l'altre prime,
 ove fia chi valor apprezzì a stime,
 gloria, non che perdon, de' miei lamenti
 spero trovar fra le ben nate genti
 poi che la lor cagione è sì sublime.
 E spero ancor che debba dir qualcuna:
 -Felicissima lei, da che sostenne
 per sì chiara cagion danno sì chiaro!
 Deh, perché tant'amor, tanta fortuna
 per sì nobil signor a me non venne,
 ch'anch'io n'andrei con tanta donna a paro? (1. 1-14)

While Petrarch looms large in Stampa's poetic endeavor, she rescues her poems, in one bold brushstroke, from Petrarch's spiritual prison relocating them into a setting that is secular, contemporary and realistic. Stampa's "meste rime," which displace Petrarch's emphasis on sacredness and fragmentation (his "rime sparse") introduce us instead to the poet's humble disposition. Her demeanor, however, does not prevent her from establishing her independence from the scenario proposed by Petrarch.

As a subject, Stampa is keenly aware of her immediate circumstances (both as a woman and a member of a lesser class than her lover is) that condemn her to a subordinate standing in society rather than to spiritual doom. Both in the dedication and the first sonnet we detect the premium Stampa places on her audience and on eliciting their sympathetic response. What is significant, given Stampa's propensity, elsewhere, to admit unabashedly the physical nature of her passionate relationship to Collatino, is her willingness to exchange

the material, corporeal presence of her lover for a written response from him. Stampa envisions Collatino in her poems as a reader (“*Leggendo in queste carte il lungo e grave/pianto*” [65. 5-6]) and asks her verses to reach her beloved in France (which is feminized and perceived as a rival) and to convey her pain. Again his return and his written reply are proposed as interchangeable:

Ricevete cortesi i miei lamenti,
e portateli fide al mio signore,
o di Francia beate a felici ôre,
che godete or de' begli occhi lucenti
E ditegli con tristi e mesti accenti
che, s'ei non move a dar soccorso al core,
o **tornando o scrivendo**, fra poche ore
resteran gli occhi miei di luce spenti. (66. 1-8)¹⁸

Stampa's introductory sonnet clues us into the importance for an ambitious poet of a public in attendance. The vocative “*voi*”¹⁹ is followed by a present tense (“*ascoltate*”), which is meant to make known that she commands an audience of sympathetic listeners. Stampa rejects the ethical perspective of divine judgement (Petrarch's “*vergogna*”), longing for earthly fame rendered by a specific audience of “*ben nate genti*.” Her grief and endurance, the substance of her private heroism (“*valor*”), deserve acclaim and approval (“*apprezzi e stime*”) as well as honor (“*gloria*”). Prominent members of society, evidently, listen to her. Throughout the lyrical collection, Stampa envisions and constructs a veritable community for her poems, an audience willing to listen and reply to her.²⁰

Though she pleads for forgiveness, she is looking for a type of exoneration that differs radically from the one sought by Petrarch. She is not abjuring or recanting a spiritual transgression; her preemptive request for leniency (“*non che perdon, de' miei lamenti*”) is a

rather a misleading disclosure about the nature of her lamentations, which cannot adequately measure up to her extreme tribulations.²¹ Among her listeners, clearly, she singles out women. While she is unable to obtain a response from the man she loves, the first sonnet proposes the direct voice of a woman (“qualcuna”) who consoles Stampa and even commends her situation. Women are, throughout her lyrical collection, dependable listeners: some share her knowledge of amorous anguish (“Voi, che per l’amoroso, aspro sentiero/donne care, com’io, forse passate;” [90. 1-2]), others, like Stampa’s own mother and sister (“madre e sorella” [61. 5]) hear her laments and cry with her. In two sonnets (which echo Petrarch’s #92 “Piangete, Donne, et con voi pianga Amore,” written on the death of the poet Cino da Pistoia) it is women who will actively mourn her suicide and keep her memory alive:

Piangete donne, e poi che la mia morte
non move il signor mio crudo e lontano,
voi, che sète do cor dolce ed umano,
aprite di pietade almen le porte.

[...]

-Sotto quest’aspra pietra giace ascosa
l’infelice e fidissima Anassilla,
raro essemplio di fede alta amorosa.(86. 1-4; 11-14)

Piangete donne, e con voi pianga Amore,
poi che non piange lui, che m’ha ferita
sì, che l’alma farà tosto partita
da questo corpo tormentato fuore.
E, se mai da pietoso e gentil core
l’estrema voce altrui fu essaudita
dappoi ch’io sarò morta e sepelita,
scrivete la cagion del mio dolore:
“Per amar molto ed esser poco amata
visse e morì infelice, ed or qui giace
la più fidel amante che sia stata.
pregale viator, riposo e pace,

ed impara da lei, sì mal trattata,
a non seguir un cor crudo e fugace.(151)²²

Collatino, who inspires so much personal and poetic virtuosity (“di cui convien che sempre scriva e canti” [17. 8]), is more distinguished in name than in deed.²³ Stampa’s prose dedication alludes to his silence, apathy and insensitivity. Stampa judges him an unworthy lover because he has transgressed proper courtly etiquette (“né anco cortese” [p. 79]). His indifference is especially damning since Collatino is repeatedly introduced to us as a man of letters. Among his many accomplishments in all worthwhile endeavors, he is distinguished by his wise, solemn and elegant speech (“un parlar saggio, grave e pelegirino”[6. 4]). Stampa singles out the beauty of his song:

Fra quell’illustre e nobil compagnia
di grazie, che vi fan, conte, immortale,
s’erge più d’altra e vaga stende l’ale
del canto la dolcissima armonia.
[...]
Il giuoco, il riso, Venere e gli Amori
si veggon l’aere far sereno intorno,
ovunque suoni il dolce accento fuori. (30. 1-4; 9-11)²⁴

and compare him to Orpheus’:

venga, per sua rarissima ventura,
una sol volta voi, conte, ad udire,
quando solete cantando addolcire
la terra e ‘l cielo e ciò che fe’natura.
[...]
E, visto poi quel che potete fare,
crederà ben che tigri, orsi e serpenti
arrestasse anche Orfeo col suo cantare. (31. 5-8; 12-14)

Stampa’s recognition of her beloved’s poetic ability is a highly equivocal tribute because Collatino does not write back “di risponder né questa (death) né quel

degnà,”(194. 11-12). He is inscrutable²⁵ to us and it is against his silence that we sample Stampa’s palpable anticipation as she looks, in vain, for a letter or a message:

che pur non le scrivete una parola (82. 11)

E se di vio no vien qualche conforto
o di lettera o di messo o di venire,
certo, signor, il viver mio fia corto; (200. 9-11)

We see her counting the days since their last correspondence, plunging into despair and denouncing his deception:

Son passati otto giorni, a me un anno,
ch’ io non ho vostre lettere od imbasciate,
contro le fé che voi m’avete date,
o fonte di valor, conte, e d’inganno.(142. 5-8)

The initial circumstances of Stampa’s love affair with Collatino, which are disclosed in the second sonnet of the collection, closely evoke Petrarch’s model (*Rime* # 3):

Era vicino il dì ch’ ‘l Creatore,
che ne l’altezza sua potea restarsi,
in forma umana venne a dimostrarsi,
dal ventre virginal uscendo fore,
quando degnò l’illustre mio signore,
per cui ho tanti poi lamenti sparsi,
potendo in luogo più alto annidarsi,
farsi nido e ricetto del mio core.
Ond’io sì rara e sì alta ventura
accolsi lieta; e duolmi sol che tardi
mi fe’ degna di lei l’eterna cura.
Da indi in qua pensieri e speme e sguardi
volsi a lui tutti, fuor d’ogni misura
chiaro e gentil, quando ‘l sol giri e guarda.

This sonnet, however, obviously collapses the complex (and dangerous) temporal/spiritual framework attained in Petrarch’s original. Stampa’s setting of her amorous beginnings at

Christmas time (in lieu of Holy Friday) relocates the event within the celebratory mood of the Christmas festivities and the propitiatory beginning of human life. Stampa abandons Petrarch's emphasis on death and sinning for a vision of personal redemption connected to the joyous and positive aspects of the incarnation. In Petrarch's lyrical collection death (which is a universal event) functions, on the symbolic level, as an intimation of his presumed conversion. Petrarch speaks in the past tense, narrating a story of transformation whose outcome, presumably, he already knows. Always attentive to the implications of disorder that can be drawn from a narrative built on loosely strung fragments, Petrarch attempts to counter disorientation by displaying Christ on the cross, an archetypal moment of individual sacrifice for universal reparation, which infuses the entire collection with retrospective meaning. Stampa, on the other hand, describes her circumstances from their beginning (and alluding to an important beginning) with no particular preconception about their ultimate bearing on her spiritual life. Her sole noticeable concern is connected to the difference in class between herself and her lover ("potendo in luogo più alto annidarsi" [7]). She resists the inevitable closure inherent in Petrarch narrative, one inevitably contingent on his overcoming the power of Love (and Laura's hold on his symbolic universe). We are far from Petrarch's reflections (inspired by Augustine in his moments of sincere repentance) on the misdirection of human love.²⁶ Stampa boldly supersedes this aspect of Petrarch's narrative bringing to the forefront, instead, the important role played by Mary with her miraculous, immaculate motherhood.²⁷

Stampa, moreover, begins her lyrical collection at the exact point where Petrarch ends (Petrarch's song to "Vergine bella") and is keenly interested in reminding her

audience of the symbolic burden implicit in the moment when the Creator was created by his creature: (“...il dì che 'l Creatore,/ che ne l'altezza sua potea restarsi,/ in forma umana venne a dimostrarsi,/ dal ventre virginal uscendo fore,” [2. 1-4]). The display of Mary’s motherhood and Christ’s sublime humility lends itself to address concerns central to Stampa’s personal and public undertaking: her anxiety as a woman artist and frustration with her class standing.²⁸ Stampa begins her story with an empowering metaphor that allows her to think of herself as an active agent with creative power as opposed to seeing herself through the tropes and themes suited to the advancement of the career of a male image-maker. In this way she makes her poetry free from a system cut off from the concrete roots of life (and from the feminine principle) to one connected to nature and its cycles: while death does not discriminate between the sexes, childbirth is an exclusive prerogative of woman.

In sonnet # 3, however, Stampa assumes the guise of a male poet, Hesiod. What is significant is her choice of a male poet who was rescued by his verses from a background of indigence and commonality:

Se di rozzo pastor di greggie e folle
 il giogo ascreo fe’ diventar poeta
 lui, che poi salse a sì lodata meta,
 che quasi a tutti gli altri fama tolle,
 che meraviglia fia s’alza ed estolle
 ma bassa e vile a scriver tanta pièta,
 qual che può più che studio e che pianeta,
 il mio verde, pregiato ed alto colle?
 la cui sacra, onorata e fatal ombra
 dal mio cor , quasi sùbita tempesta,
 ogni ignoranza, ogni bassezza sgombra.
 Questa da basso luogo m’erge, e questa
 mi rinnova lo stil, la vena adombra
 tanta virù nell’alma ognor mi desta. (3. 1-14)

Stampa's writing, analogously, elevates her to the heights of a "verde, pregiato ed alto colle." This ongoing play on the name of her lover Collatino goes hand in hand with Stampa's self presentation as the shepherdess Anassilla, a name derived from the river Piave (Anaxum) which flows in the hill of San Salvatore, feudal possession of Collatino: "Legga V.S. dunque, quando averà triegua delle sue maggiori e più care cure, le note delle cure amoroze a gravi della sua fidissima ed infelicissima Anassilla." (p. 79). Her demeanor is submissive (both in the preface quoted above and in the first sonnet of the collection). Stampa confronts herself (the presumed inactivity and leisure of her womanly world) against Collatino's "maggiori e più care cure," the activities of her lover in the historical world (which is conventionally defined as male). In spite of Stampa's elaborate pastoral scenario, we sample her keen interest in itemizing her earthly, domestic affairs. Stampa is concerned with a multiplicity of objects that distinguish her life. Her house that is "mesta" (exactly the term used in the first sonnet to define her verses) yet full of tangible (and copious) treasures:

[...] se accaderà giamai che la mia povera e mesta casa sia fatta degna del ricevere il suo grande oste, che è V.S., io son sicura che i letti, le camere, le sale e tutto racconteranno i lamenti, i singulti, i sospiri e le lagrime, che giorno e notte ho sparse, chiamando il nome di V.S. [...] (p. 79-80).

Stampa's recurrent use of the image of a nest (in sonnet # 2 she introduces both the term "annidarsi," and "farsi nido")²⁹ to allude to love, suggests the solution devised by Stampa in order to bridge her attraction to the pastoral world and her pragmatic ambitions. Stampa is faced with the mountain ("colle"), which constantly reminds her of Collatino's rank (and power over her). Her necessary ascent supersedes Petrarch's failed pilgrimage on Ventoux, one steeply ensconced within a traditional view of what constitutes a path to

enlightenment. The success of Stampa's ascent is measured in terms of her upward mobility. Her identity as a woman ennobled by hardship is inescapably bound up to the victory she will secure as a singer of songs dignified by experience:

S'Amor con novo, insolito focile
 ov'io non potea gir, m'alzò a tal loco,
 perché non può non con usato gioco
 far la pena e la penna in me simile? (8. 1-8)

The correspondence between her "pena" and her "penna" invites us to re-think Stampa's depictions of her love as a nest. Her pen, the sole instrument she has to express and release her amorous distress, is also a bird's feather. Pain inspires poetic work that, in turn, allows Stampa to soar to great heights, both professionally (Helicon) and socially (Collatino).³⁰ It is not by coincidence that we find multiple allusions to birds and bird flights in Stampa's poems:

Tu, che volando vai di rama in rama,
 consorte amata e fida tortorella,
 e sai quanto si tema e quanto s'ama,
 quando, volando in questa parte e 'n quella,
 sei vicina al mio ben, mostragli aperto
 in note, ch'abbian voce di favella:
 digli quant'è il mio stato aspro ed incerto,
 or che, lassa, da lui mi trovo lunge
 per ria fortuna mia e non per merto.
 Eco, soggiorni, il suon de'miei lamenti
 rendi a l'orecchie sue con voci rotte. (244. 10-20)

In sonnet # 13 she identifies with both the eagle and the dove. With her song Stampa is allowed to sample new horizons beyond the jurisdictional boundaries established for a woman. However, while her ambition and talent take Stampa from India to Mauritania, from pole to pole, a world where the subject can be fulfilled (as Collatino knows), in the end she is happy to remain on the shores of Venice, and entrust her poetic fortunes to it:

Chi darà penne d'aquila o colomba
 al mio stil basso, si ch'ei prenda il volo
 da l'Indo al Mauro e d'uno in altro polo,
 ove arrivar non può saetta o tromba?

[...]

Ma, poi che ciò m'è tolto, ed io poggiare
 per me stessa non posso ove conviene,
 sì che l'opra e lo stil vadan di pare,
 l'udiranno soltanto queste felici arene,
 questo d'Adria beato e chiaro mare,
 porto de'miei dilette e di mie pene (13. 1-4; 9-14)

Stampa is well aware that, above and beyond the anxiety provoked by Collatino's rank, she is faced with the arduous task of carving a position for herself outside the established male-female boundaries: the artistic achievements of a woman artist is exceptional and has few precedents. It is a path fraught with endless difficulties and dangers. Amor reminds Stampa in poem 59 that there is a great qualitative difference between the ceiling of Collatino's horizons and her own ("egli larghi, tu hai li cieli avari" [59. 11]). And indeed, Stampa's verses disclose moments of true despair and formidable anxiety, when her artistic activity appears to imperil rather than improve her condition. Stampa identifies with Icarus and Fetonte, who aimed too high and got burned for it:

Fetonte, Icaro ed io, per poter poco
 ed osar molto, in questa e in quella etade
 restiamo estinti da troppo alto foco. [166. 12-14])

In a more gloomy moment yet, Stampa identifies her fate with Procne and Philomela, sisters united by a gruesome violent story of dispossession and eventually transformed into a swallow and a nightingale. It is worthwhile recalling the story that Ovid presents in *Metamorphoses* VI., Tereus, the Thracian King, marries Procne and takes her to Thracia. Procne begs Tereus to bring her sister back. When the king complies and goes to meet

Philomela, he sees her and burns with sudden desire (Petrarch told us “si subito arsi”). He proceeds to rape her, holds her captive and mutilates her, cutting off her tongue so that she will not tell her story to the world. Philomela, however, is resourceful and weaves her tale into a tapestry that is delivered to her sister. In revenge, Procne kills her sons and feeds them to Tereus in a stew.

Cantate meco, Progne e Filomena,
 anzi piangete il mio grave martire,
 or che la primavera e 'l suo fiorire
 i miei lamenti e voi, tornando, mena,
 A voi rinnova la memoria e pena
 De l'onta di Tereo e le giust'ire;
 a me l'acerbo e crudo dipartire
 del mio signor morte empia rimena. (173. 1-8)³¹

Collatino is introduced to us in two reverse blazons where Stampa enumerates his considerable qualities but does not conceal his blemishes. In sonnet # 4, after describing his miraculous birth, she alludes to his icy coldness:

Quando fu prima il mio signor concetto,
 tutti i pianeti in ciel, tutte le stelle
 gli dièr le grazie, e queste doti e quelle,
 perch'ei fosse tra noi solo perfetto.
 Saturno diègli altezza d'intelletto;
 Giove il cercar le cose degne e belle;
 Marte appo lui fece ogn'altro uomo imbelle;
 (rispetto a lui ogni altro uomo e debole
 Febo gli empì di stile e senno il petto;
 Vener gli diè bellezza e leggiadria;
 eloquenza Mercurio; ma la luna
 lo fe' gelato più ch'io non vorria.
 Di queste tante e rare grazie ognuna
 m'infiammò de la chiara fiamma mia,
 e per agghiacciar lui restò quell'una.

In # 5 we see Collatino as Apollo:

Io assomiglio il mio signor al cielo

meco sovente. Il suo bel viso è 'l sole;
 gli occhi, le stelle, e 'l suon de le parole
 è l'armonia, che fa 'l signor de Delo.
 Le **tempeste**, le **piogge**, i **tuoni** e 'l **gelo**
 son i suoi sdegni e quando irar si suole;
 le bonacce e 'l sereno è quando vuole
 squarciar de l'ire sue benigno il velo.
 La primavera e 'l germogliar de' fiori
 È quando ei fa fiorir la mia speranza,
 promettendo tenermi in questo stato.
 L'orrido verno è poi, quando cangiato
 minaccia di mutar pensieri e stanza,
 spogliata me de' miei più ricchi onori.³²

Petrarch, repeatedly, invokes Apollo's endless pursuit of Daphne (and her eventual transformation into the laurel) as a useful model for his double quest of Laura and the Laurel. Collatino is a particular kind of Apollo, one given to tempestuous rage more than melodious song.³³ He is keenly interested in gaining celebrity and distinction, but his favored sphere of action is the domain of combat. Collatino is a soldier who has established his military credentials in France ("l' assenza di colui che Francia adorna."

[71. 8]) serving King Henry II:

Alto colle, gradito e grazioso,
 novo Parnaso mio novo Elicona,
 ove poggiando attendo la corona,
 de la fatiche mie dolce riposo:
 quando sei qui famoso,
 quando sei a Rodano e a Garona,
 a dir in rime alto disio mi sprona
 ma l'opra è tal, che cominciar non oso.
 Anzi, quando avverrà che mai ne canti,
 fia pura ombra del ver, perciò che 'l vero
 va di lungo al mio stil e l'altrui innati. (10. 1-11)

While Caesar and Cirrus are his models, Stampa laments his inability to imitate their clemency towards conquered people

Cesare e Ciro, i vostri fidi spegli
 in cui mai sempre, signor, vi mirate
 poi ch'a seguir le lor chiare pedate
 par che ciascu di lor v'infianni e svegli,
 perché, sì come è stato questi e quegli
 essempro di clemenza e di pietate,
 solo in questa virtù v'allontanate
 da que'due chiari ed onorati vegli?
 Perché non sète voi mite e clemente
 a me vostra prigion, vostra fattura,
 come fûr essi a l'acquistata gente?
 Anzi forse voi sète di natura
 mite con tutti, e meco solamente
 d'aspra e spietata. Oh mia somma sventura! (36. 1-14)

Stampa endlessly pursues him as Petrarch did Laura (and Apollo Daphne):

Dura è la stella mia, maggior direzza
 è quella del mio conte; egli mi fugge,
 i'seguo lui; altre per me si strugge,
 i'non posso mirar altra bellezza.
 Odio chi m'ama, ed amo chi mi sprezza. (40. 1-5)

And, true to antecedent, he remains indifferent:

E duolmi più ch'egli è da me sì lunge,
 ch' a poter richiamarlo ed a poterlo
 mover a pietà il mio gradar non giunge. (71. 12-14)

unmoved:

senza muover pietade a chi mi strugge,
 a chi contento I miei tormenti vede (73. 10-11)

While Stampa openly applauds those who compose verses (above those who are the silent recipients of lines) Collatino, who is a poet, never shows his talents with her:

Voi, che cercando ornar d'alloro il crine
 per via di stile, al bel monte poggiate con quante si fe'mai salde pedate
 anime sagge, dotte e pellegrine,
 in questo mar che non ha fondo o fine,
 le larghe vele innanzi a me spiegate,
 e gli onori e le grazie ad un cantate,
 del mio signor sì rare e sì divine:

perché soggetto sì sublime e solo
 senz'altra aita do felice ingegno,
 può per se stesso al cielo alzarci a volo.
 Io per me sola a dimostrar ne vegno
 quanto l'amo ad ognun, quanto lo còle
 ma de le onde sue non giugno al segno. (15. 1-14)

Stampa's repeated defeats at the hand of an unresponsive lover are a mark of the failure of her verses, which do not move him. In fact, she becomes silenced by his cold indifference ("Basta ch'io non so mai formar parola,/sì quel fatale e mio divino aspetto/la forza insieme e l'anima m'involà." [28. 9-11]), paralyzed by fear:

Se gran temenza non tenesse a freno
 la mia lingua bramosa e 'l mio disio,
 sì ch'io potessi dire al signor mio
 come amando e temendo io vengo meno,(187. 1-4)
 [...]
 Ma per troppo timore non oso farlo;
 così dentro al mio cor mi struggo e rodo,
 e sol con meco e con Amor ne parlo. (187. 12-14)

In the most extreme case, as we have seen, she identifies Philomela, raped and mutilated by her brother in law. All in all, Stampa is left exhausted, drained personally and artistically by the man who was hailed as the sole inspiration of her poetry:

Io non trovo più rime, onde più possa
 lodar la vostra beltà, vostro valore,
 e contare i tormenti del mio core; (184. 1-3)

In order to fully appreciate the difficulty of Stampa's position we must recognize that Stampa has been coerced into an impossible personal and professional bind. In order to sing about Collatino's worth she must become a singer of heroic epic and renounce love poetry. Collatino's family tree, with its two branches (an allusion to both Collatino

and his brother Vinciguerra) tells us of a family that has programmed its male off-spring to be soldiers:

Arbor felice, avventuroso e chiaro,
 onde due rami sono al mondo nati
 che vanno in alto, e son già tanto alzati(11. 1-3)
 [...]
 rami che vanno ai grandi Scipi a paro” (11. 5)

Like Aeneas, in book IV of Virgil's epic, Collatino is compared to a tree:

Sacro fiume beato, a le cui sponde
 scorgi l'antico vago ed alto colle,
 ove nacque la pianta ch'oggi estolle
 al ciel i rami e le famore fronde (138. 1-4)

Describing his valiancy, Stampa tells us, defies the highest poetic talents, minds of the caliber of Petrarch, Homer and Virgil:

Mille volte, signor, movo la penna
 per mostrar fuor, qual chiudo entro il pensiero,
 il valor vostro e 'l bel semblante altero,
 ove Amor e la gloria l'ale impenna;
 ma perché chi cantò Sorgia e Gebenna,
 e seco il gran Virgilio e 'l grande Omero
 non basteriano a raccontarne il vero,
 ragion ch'io taccia a la memoria accenna.
 Però mi volgo a scriver solamente
 l'istoria de le mie gioiose pene,
 che mi fan singolar fra l'altra gente:
 e come Amor ne' be' vostr'occhi tiene
 il seggio suo, e come indi sovente
 sì dolce l'alma a tormentar mi viene.(114. 1-14)³⁴

Stampa's love affair, it is necessary to notice takes shape along the distinct outlines of that of Aeneas and Dido in Book IV of the *Aeneid*. Collatino, engaged in combat for the king of France, follows the glorious footsteps of other honored sons of Rome:

Mentre, signor, a l'alte cose intento,
 v'onorate in Francia l'onorata chioma,

come fecer i figli alti di Roma,
 figli solo di valore e d'ardimento,
 io qui sovr' Adria piango e mi lamento,
 [...]

E duolmi sol che, sì come s'intende
 qui 'l suon da noi de' vostri onor, ch' omai
 per tutta Italia sì chiaro si stende,
 non s'oda in Francia il suono de' miei lai,
 che così spesso il ciel pietoso rende,
 e voi pietoso non ha fatto mai. (69. 1-5; 9-14)

Collatino's identity is essentially military ("del mio signor, del gran figlio di Marte,"[62.7]) and he is completely absorbed by his desire for glory and martial honors. This is to the exclusion of all other concerns, including his romantic obligations ("a la strada di gloria par che migre/...e l'ali di sua fama col difetto/d'infedeltà renda restive e pigre." [81.4; 7-8]).³⁵

Petrarch, let us recall, is keenly interested in the passion between the Carthaginian queen and Aeneas and fondly recalls Dido's amorous vicissitudes in order to divert the sympathy and compassion deserved by the queen to his private condition as a dejected lover. Within the overall economy of the *Aeneid*, however, our sympathy towards the queen is curtailed by Virgil's admonitions against unbridled love, which is depicted as a force of disorder. Petrarch does not willingly align himself to the symbolic order of the epic. In the *Secretum* as we have seen, Petrarch openly recalls the hunt that provides the setting to the blossoming passion of Aeneas and Dido in Book IV of Virgil's *Aeneid* and identifies with Dido roaming helplessly through the streets of Cartage. In the *Fragmenta*, in like fashion, an injured stag functions as the recurrent surrogate of the poet: "Et qual cervo ferito di saetta" ('As a hart struck by an arrow,' [209. 9]) while the white doe (Laura) remains unharmed.

The image of the stag/doe recurs in strategic episodes of the Virgilian epic. Ascanius, Aeneas' son, hunts down an exquisite, domesticated stag and precipitates war between the invading Trojans and native Italians. This gratuitous act of violence, single handedly disrupts the beauty and natural harmony of the Italian countryside and anticipates its transformation from a fertile and life giving Arcadian environment to a battlefield and a place of death (*Aeneid* VII, 483-502). At the end of the epic (and at the end of the war) the stag appears again in a simile when the hero on the defeated side, Turnus, is being hunted down by Aeneas and ends mercilessly slaughtered by him (XII, 749-51).³⁶

While assuming Dido as a kindred spirit, however, Petrarch frequently designates the poetic act as a combination of tears and reflection (in the inaugural poem, "piango e ragiono" [1.5]). Thus, in the ambiguous fashion that is typical of the *Fragmenta*, he also implicitly connects his words of sorrow to Aeneas' long account of his defeat and exile that results in the queen's seduction and downfall ("Qualis talia fando/Myrmidonum Dolopumve aut duri miles Vlixii/temperet lacrimis? [*Aeneid*, 2. 6-8]). In this episode, ironically, it is Aeneas who vents his heartfelt condemnation of the masterful and deceptive rhetoric of the Greeks and poignantly admonishes his listeners against seductive power of words. The Greek Sinon ("Talibus insidiis periurique arte Sinonis/credita res [...] [*Aeneid* II, 195-6]), he recalls, persuaded the Trojans to accept the Greek horse with its hidden content.

In the *Aeneid* Aeneas is overcome by passion for Dido but eventually leaves Carthage to serve his political and historical obligations in Rome, unmoved by Dido's

pleas. Virgil compares him to an alpine oak tree assailed by northern winds which looses leaves and branches by clinging onto the rock with its deep roots that reach all the way to hell ("Ac velut annoso validam cum robore quercum\Alpini Boreae nunc hinc nunc flatibus illinc\ eruere inter se certant;" *Aeneid* IV, 441-44). In Stampa's hands, this Virgilian imagery is appropriated to revolutionary aims. In sonnet # 92, it is she, not Collatino whose firmness of mind and resolve are compared to an oak tree, buffeted by passion and disappointment:

Quasi quercia di monte urtata e scossa
 da ogni lato a da contrari venti,
 che, sendi or questi or quelli più possenti,
 per cader mille volte e mille è mossa,
 la vita mia, questa mia frale possa,
 combattuta or da speme or da tormenti
 non da, lontani i chiari lumi ardenti,
 in qual parte piegar ormai si possa. (1-8)

In the following sonnet, Stampa paraphrases more faithfully the Virgilian narrative by comparing herself to a doe:

Qual fuggitiva cerva e miserella
 ch'avendo la saetta nel costato,
 seguita da due veltri in selva e prato,
 fugge la morte che va pur con ella,
 tal io ferita da l'empie quadrella
 del fiero cacciatore crudo ed alato,
 gelosia e disio avendo a lato,
 fuggo, e schivar no posso la mia stella (93. 1-8)

In sonnet 63, longing for her lover's return, Stampa threatens to commit suicide and shows that this action will be a stain on his reputation ("E, dove al monte faticoso ed erto/d'onor poggiate, temo non offenda/questa macchia il candor del vostro merto"[12-14]). Like Aeneas, Stampa is keenly aware that the power of rhetoric is mightier than

the sword. Unlike Dido, whose expressive range in the *Aeneid* is defined by the anathema she utters before she commits suicide, Stampa is a poet, one conscious of the power of her poetic words to make or unmake Collatino's *kleos*.³⁷

Stampa does not sidestep this opportunity to tarnish his reputation and, insistently, she reminds us of Collatino's shortcomings. In sonnet 27 Collatino is the recipient of her praises as well as the target of her accusations, both verbal and written ("che 'n voci e 'n carte spesso accuso e lodo"). In sonnet # 94 Collatino's purported conduct with Stampa reminds us of the final moment in Aeneas' epic career, when he is overcome by rage and slays Turnus, who is defeated and helpless, instead of sparing him:

A che, conte, assalir chi non repugna?
 [...]
 Sapete che co'morti non si pugna;
 Ché lo splendor d'un cavaliere offende,
 [...]
 Guardate che la fama de le tante
 vostre vittorie poi no renda oscura,
 signor, ques'una sola, e non ammante. (1; 5-6; 10-11)

Collatino, as Dido learned of Aeneas, is not a man of his word:

qual contra a' miei disir stella empia e cruda
 già mi vi tolse, ed or vi tien discosto
 contra la fé che foi mi deste pria? (84)

he is fickle:

La fé, conte, più caro e ricco pegno
 che possa aver illustro cavaliere,
 come cangiaste voi presto e leggiere,
 fuor che di lei d'ogni virtù sostegno?
 A pena vide il gallico regno,
 che mutaste con lei voglia e pensiero;
 ad Anassilla e 'l suo fedele e vero
 amor spirar da voi tutti ad un segno.

E piaccia pur a lui, che mi governa,
 che non sia la cagion di questo oblio
 novella fiamma nel cor vostro interna! (79. 1-11)

cruel (like “O Nerone, o Mezenzio, o Mario, o Silla” [12]) and unreliable in word and in deed (“perfido, ingrato in atto ed in favella;”[6]).³⁸

Stampa, on the other hand, is steady like a rock at sea (“salda come scoglio/immobilmente appresso del mio core,” [11. 9-10]) and made in the mold of exemplary faithful women (“Evadne e Penelope” [80. 3]³⁹). She is, most importantly, a novel Dido, one who more comfortable with the transgressive model established by Ovid in the *Heroides* than with the Virgilian version. Stampa writes rather than being written about, and prefers to recount her own story in lyrical and not epic-heroic terms. This is a story where her private heroism matters, one that openly questions the values of the epic-heroic mode.

Collatino is a lover unmoved, as hard as stone:

Rivolgete talor pietoso gli occhi
 da le vostre bellezze a le mie pene,
 sì che quanta alterezza indi vi viene,
 tanta quinsi pietate il cor vi tocchi.

[...]

E forse la pietà del mio tormento
 vi moverà, dov'or ne gite altero,
 non lo vedendo voi, qual io lo sento;
 così penosa io meno, e men voi fiero
 ritornerete, e cento volte e cento
 benedirete il ciel, che mi vi dièro. (22. 1-4; 9-14)

While this may be a desirable trait in the overall economy of the Virgilian epic, it is a behavior that has become outmoded in the Sixteenth century. As Collatino fails to strike the

delicate and exemplary balance between courtliness and war, he falls short of the standard established by the high authority of the king of France, his own leader:

O gran valor d'un cavalier cortese,
 d'aver portato fin in Francia il core
 d'una giovane incauta, ch' Amore
 a lo splendor de' suoi begli occhi prese!
 Almen m'aveste le promesse attese
 di temprar con due versi il mio dolore,
 mentre, signor, a procacciarvi onore
 tutte le voglie avete ad una intese.
 I'ho pur letto ne l'antiche carte
 Che non ebber a sdegno i grandi eroi
 Parimente seguir Venere e Marte.
 E del re, che seguite, udito ho poi
 che queste cure altamente comparte,
 ond'è chiar dagli espèri ai lidi eroi. (97. 1-14)

Stampa must ask the beloved to change, to remake himself in Petrarchan mold so that she can idealize him in a suitable poetic manner. Her retreat into the pastoral clearly sustains her anti war stance. She longs for a golden age of peace and harmony:

Allor le pastorelle innamorate
 avean mai sempre seco i lor pastori,
 dai qual non eran mai abbandonate. (242. 31-33)
 [...]
 Ne la quiete lor potea turbare
 l'émpto de le guerre amaro ed empio,
 che l'umane allegrezze suol cangiare:
 guerre cha fan di noi sì crudo scempio,
 guerre che turban sì l'umano stato,
 guerre soggetto d'ogni crudo esempio. (242. 39-44)⁴⁰

War, in Stampa's opinion, is the product of greed and she must sharpen her best poetic form to sing against it:

Ma poi quegli appetiti ingordi, insani
 di posseder l'altrui robe e l'avere
 da l'antica pietà si fêr lontani.
 quindi si cominciâr prima a vedere

le crude guerre e sprepi de l'armi,
 che fan, misere noi, tanto temere.
 Allor sonate i bellicosì carmi
 s'udiro per citade e per campagne
 contra' quai ogni stil convien che s'armi. (242. 54-62)

By not answering her pleas Collatino has made himself outdated, written himself off from her literary collection and confined himself to cultural oblivion. In her personal strife with Collatino, Stampa, like many contemporary social commentators of the like of Guazzo, Castiglione and Della Casa (to whom the collection is dedicated by Cassandra Stampa) she contrasts two exemplary worldviews. Courtliness, which is not a birthright but a process that requires steadfast effort is opposed to the old ethics of the feudal court. The balance between these positions is clearly tilted: what distinguishes a gentleman is no longer (exclusively) his ability as a warrior but his devotion to letters. Many of the manuals on good behavior that were printed all over Europe discussed verbal communication. The exchange of Petrarchan sonnets was accepted as an appropriate and dignified means of producing social networks. By siding with proper linguistic manners as essential vehicles of correct and indispensable instruments of social harmony, Stampa sings the end of Collatino's model of waring heroism, dooms his search for epic *kleos* and writes him out of history.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER NINE

1. We lack an autograph critical edition of Stampa's text. The first edition of Stampa's poems was edited by her sister Cassandra and published after her death, *Rime* (Venezia: Pietrasanta, 1554). A portrait of Gaspara Stampa introduces this edition, which is printed in italic characters with ornamental initials. The first 14 pages are not numbered, and contain a dedication by Cassandra Stampa "All'illustrissimo et Reverendiss. Monsign. M. Giovanni Della Casa, Arcivescovo di Benevento suo signore; the *Rime* in praise and those composed after the death of the poet by Benedetto Varchi, Giulio Stufa, Giorgio Benzzone, Torquato Bembo; following is the dedication by Stampa "Allo illustre mio Signore." Pages 1-176 contain *Rime di Madonna Gaspara Stampa* in the following order: pages 1-116 contain the poems reproduced by Salza in his edition (with the modifications that will be addressed) under title *Rime d'amore*; p. 117 (with an ornamental initial and a dedication "Al Cristianissimo re di Francia Henrico secondo" presents the sonnet "Sacro re, che gli antichi e novi regi." (sonnet # 246, the first of Salza's heading *Rime varie*) followed on p. 118 (also with an ornamental initial and dedicated to "Alla Cristianissima reina di Francia Caterina de' Medici") by the sonnet "Alma reina, eterno e vivo sole" (# 247). These two sonnets are followed, in turn, by the poems that Salza, with some modification in order, puts in the second part of his edition under the heading *Rime varie*. P. 153-67 present the *Capitoli*, which are grouped separate from the sonnets as are the *Madrigali* that follow on p. 168-76. On p. 177 there is a sonnet by Leonardo Emo to Gaspara Stampa (7) followed by 13 unnumbered pages (*Tavola, Errori incorsi nello stampare, Registro*). Salza's 1913 edition (G. Stampa e V. Franco, *Rime*. ed. A. Salza [Bari: Laterza, 1913]) was reproduced in the 1954 pocket version of Rizzoli, which was edited by Gustavo Rodolfo Ceriello on the occasion of the 400th anniversary of the poet's death. This edition follows the ordering of Salza and is now available in its 1976 printing with an introduction by Maria Bellonci. See also: A. Salza, "Madonna Gasparina Stampa Secondo Nuove Indagini." *GSLI LXII* (1913): 1-101. Pages 96-9 present a critical biography and offer an overview of Stampa in the eyes of critics. "Madonna Gasparina Stampa e la società veneziana del suo tempo. Nuove discussioni." *GSLI LXIX* (1917): 217-306 and *LXX* (1917): 1-60, 281-99. The first article by Salza stirred quite a controversy. Benedetto Croce intervened in defense of Salza's position in *La critica XI* (1913): 390-2 and in *Giornale d'Italia* 1 (February, 1914). For his position see also Croce, *Conversazioni Critiche. Serie Seconda*. (Bari, 1924): 223-7; and *Pagine sparse*, edited by G. Castellano, *Serie Prima. Pagine di letteratura e di cultura*. Napoli, 1919: 11-12. All quotations are from the 1976 edition. All references are indicated in parenthesis in the main text.

2. The most detailed critical discussion of Stampa's life and work to date is presented by Marina Zancan, *Il doppio itinerario della scrittura. La donna nella tradizione lirica italiana*. (Torino: Einaudi, 1998) especially pgg. 155-180; also extremely useful is her Nota Bibliografica 178-180. Stampa's earliest biographer was Alessandro Zilioli, *Historia delle vite de' poeti italiani* (ca. 1600); this was reproduced by Salza, "Madonna Gasparina Stampa Secondo Nuove Indagini." *GSLI LXII* (1913): 230-1. For a fictional epistolary

romance of Stampa's love life, which reflects the poet's reception in the mid Nineteenth century, see: L. Carrer, *Amore infelice di Gaspara Stampa. Lettere scritte da lei medesima*. (Venezia, 1839 reprinted 1851). Also, see: V. Olper Monis, "Gaspara Stampa nell'arte letteraria." *La favilla* XXIII 6-7 (1904): 177-84. E. Minozzi, *Gaspara Stampa. Studio*. (Verona-Padovam1893) proposes a new pattern to be given to the poems. On the life of Stampa, see: Eugenio Donadoni's monograph, *Gaspara Stampa, vita e opere* (Messina: Principato, 1919). His bias is manifest in the following statement: "Il suo libro è il documento di un palpitante cuore di donna, prima e più che una finzione di poesia" (p. 92). Benedetto Croce, "Problemi di letteratura italiana," in *Conversazioni critiche* 4th edition *Scritti di storia letteraria a politica* 10 (Bari: Laterza, 1950) writes of the poet: "Fu donna; e di solito da donna, quando non si dà a scimmiettare l'uomo, si serve della poesia sottomettendola ai suoi affetti, amando il proprio amante o i propri figli più della poesia." (225); F. Flamini, "Il Cinquecento." aa.vv. *Storia letteraria d'Italia. Scritta da una società di professori*. (Milano s.d.--but 1903): 200-1; G. Reichenbach, *L'altro amore di Gaspara Stampa (Giovanni Andrea Viscardo)*. Bologna, 1907, is devoted to identify her second love for Zen, (this research was contradicted by Salza -"Madonna Gasparina Stampa Secondo Nuove Indagini." *GSLI* LXII (1913): 88-92) and G. Reichenbach, *Gaspara Stampa* (Roma, 1923); A. Negri, "Rileggendo Gaspara Stampa" *Il Marzocco*. XVIII (1913), 42, 1-2 for an interesting point of view of a woman; E. Innocenzi Greggio, "In difesa di Gaspara Stampa." *Ateneo Veneto* XXXVIII (1915), 1-2: 1-158; G. A. Cesareo, *Gaspara Stampa donna e poetessa*, edited in 4 parts in *La Rassegna*. "Donne e donzelle nel Cinquecento" serie III, III (1918),4-5; 258-69; "La vita di Gaspara." (1918) 6: 328-66; "La fama della poetessa." IV (1919) 1-2: 1-17; "Le rime" (1919) 3: 121-35; G. Toffanin, "Le donne poetesse." *Storia Letteraria d'Italia. Il Cinquecento*. Milano, 1929: 354-67; Toffanin, "La poesia femminile del Rinascimento" *Le più belle pagine di Gaspara Stampa, Vittoria Colonna, Veronica Gambara, Isabella di Morra*. Edited and chosen by Toffanin (Milano, 1935); Toffanin, "Petrarchiste del Cinquecento." *Annali della cattedra petrarchesca*. XVI (1938) 8: 43-66; G. Macchia, "Quattro poetesse del Cinquecento." *Rivista Rosminiana* XXXI (1937) 2: 152-57. In the post war period Stampa's poetry is remembered in positive terms (though she is not the object of penetrating investigations): Walter Binni, "Gaspara Stampa." *Critici e poeti dal Cinquecento al Novecento*. (Firenze, 1951): 3-16; Luigi Russo, "Gaspara Stampa e il petrarchismo del '500." *Belfagor* XIII (1958) 1-20 offers a traditional view that lumps together Renaissance women poets into a relatively undifferentiated group of imitators and concludes that her poems are theoretically and stylistically elementary compared to the model of Petrarch; Francesco Flora, *Gaspara Stampa e le altre poetesse del '500*. (Milano, 1962); Ettore Bonora, "Le donne poetesse." *Storia della Letteratura Italiana*. ed. E. Cecchi and N.Sapegno, IV. *Il Cinquecento*. (Milano, 1966) 241-58; L. Baldacci, "Premessa." *Lirici del Cinquecento*. (Milano, 1975 2nd edition), XII-XXXI. From the Seventies new studies of the poet were inspired by a renewed interest in the writing of women: Allen Carlson, "Gaspara Stampa and Cinquecento Petrarchism: Innovations in the Transposition of Convention." *Dissertation Abstract International* XXXIX (1978); Fiora A. Bassanese examines her literary strategies in "The Feminine Voice: Gaspara Stampa." *Canadian Journal of Italian Studies*. III (1980): 81-88; on her background, milieu and literary activity,

see: Bassanese, *Gaspara Stampa*. (Boston: Twayne, 1982); Bassanese, "Gaspara Stampa (1523?-1554) in Rinalnina Russell ed. *Italani Women Writers: A Bio-Bibliographical Sourcebook* (Westport: Greenwood, 1994) 404-13; Bassanese "Gaspara Stampa's Poetics of Negativity." *Italica* 61 (1984): 335-46; Bassanese "What's in Name? Self-Naming and Renaissance Women POets." *Annali d' Italianistica* 7 (1989): 104-15; Bassanese "Male Canon.Femal Poet: The Petrarchism of Gapsara Stampa." in *Interpreting the Italian Renaissance: Literary Perspectives*. 43-54. (Stony Brook, NY: Fililibrary, 1991); L. Borsetto, "Narciso ed Eco. Figura e scrittura nella lirica femminile del Cinquecento: esemplificazione ed appunti." *Nel cerchio della luna*, 171-233 offers the myth of Echo and Narcissus as metaphore for the woman poet's encounter with Petrarchism, which she is forced to reproduce, becoming its vebal double. Her failure is the source of her novelty, a transgressive act of self-affirmation agaist the impositions of the canon; Marina Zancan, "Gaspara Stampa. La differenza: questioni di scrittura e di lettura." *Studi in onore di Vittorio Zaccaria*. ed. M. Pecoraro (Milano, 1987): 263-73; A. Carminati, "L'appassionata Gaspara Stampa, poetessa veneziana." *Ateneo veneto*. Nuova serie, XXVII (1989): 277-89; Patricia Phillippy, "Gaspara Stampa's *Rime*: replication and retraction." *Philological Quarterly*. LXVIII (1989) 1: 1-23; Marina Zancan, "L'intellettualità femminile nel primo Cinquecento: Maria Savorgnan e Gaspara Stampa." *Annali d'Italianistica*. VII (1989) 1: 42-65; P. Blanc, "Parallèle de Loise Labé et de Gaspara Stampa ou le sonnet et l'anmour entre la France et Italie: pour une approche contrastive des échanges culturels franco-italiens." *Franco-Italica Serie Storico-letteraria-Série-d'histoire-littéraire*, 1 (1992): 25-55; G. Braden, "Gaspara Stampa and the Gender of Petrarchism." *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*. XXXVIII (1996) 2: 115-39; Giulio Ferroni ed. *Poesia italiana: Il Cinquecento*. (Milan: Garzanti, 1978), proposes that Sixteenth century women poets speak through the language of others, and ventriloquize a voice that is not female; Luigi Malagoli "La nuova sensibilità e il nuovo stile: Gaspara Stampa." in *Le contraddizioni del Rinascimento* (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1968) 105-23 analyzes her use of hyperbole; Justin Vitiello "Gaspara Stampa: The ambiguities of Martyrdom." *MLN* (1975): 58-71 depicts her "critical ambiguity" and ironic twist whereby the poet humbles herself to exhalt herself and her art; Ann Rosalind Jones, *The Currency of Heros*, discusses her pastoral work in terms of Marxis feminist model of negotiation, tactic to resist the opression of dominant male dominated system; Baldacci Luigi ed *Lirici del Cinquecento* 2 ed. (Milano: Longanesi, 1975); Binni Walter, "Gaspara Stampa." in *Critici e poeti dal Cinquecento al Novecento* 3-16 (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1951).

3. In 1559 the three sonnets published in 1553 were reprinted in an edition edited by Lodovico Domenichi, *Rime diverse di alcune nobilissime e virtuosissime donne* (Vincenzo Busdraghi, Lucca) along with sonnet 290. In 1573 *capitolo* 298 published in anthology edited by Cristoforo Zabata, *Nuova scelta di rime di diversi begli ingegni* (Christoffore Bellone, Genova), see: Marina Zancan, *Il doppio itinerario della scrittura. La donna nella tradizione lirica italiana*. (Torino: Einaudi, 1998), 158 and Salza, ed. *Rime*, Note, 363-80.

4. Martha Feldman "The Academy of Domenico Venier, Music's Literary Muse in Mid-Cinquecento Venice," *Renaissance Quarterly* 44 (1991): 500-3. On the milieu of Gaspara Stampa Maria Bellonci gathers useful documentary information in her "Introduzione" to Gaspara Stampa, *Rime* (Milano: Biblioteca Universale Rizzoli, 1994, first edition 1954) 5-54. Perisone Cambio dedicated his 1547 *Primo Libro di madrigali a quattro voci* to Stampa and referred to "I mille e mille spiriti gentili e nobili, i quali udito havendo i dolci concerti vostri, v'hanno dato il nome di divina sirena." Salza "Nuove indagini," 18. Francesco Sansovino, son of the famous architect Jacopo, dedicated to her the edition of one of the academic lectures of Benedetto Varchi over a sonnet by Giovanni Della Casa (*Lettura di Benedetto Varchi sopra un soneto Della gelosia di Monsignor della Casa*): "...però tacendo le lodi fel Varchi e di Monsignor della Casa, solamente dirò che assai sè terranno amendue lodati, quando essi sapranno le cose loro da voi lodatissime essere e lette e tenute care..." (Bellonci, 56). Girolamo Parabosco dedicated her one of his *Lettere amoroze* (Venezia, Giolito, 1545): "Chi vide mai tal bellezza in altra parte? Chi tanta grazia? E chi mai sì dolci maniere? E chi mai sì dolci parole ascoltò? Chi mai sentì più alti concetti? Che dirò io di quell' angelica voce, che qualora perquote l'aria de'suoi divini accenti, fa tale e sì dolce armonia?...Potete adunque, bellissima signora Gasparina, esser sicura ch'ogni uomo che vi vede, v'abbia da rimaner perpetuo servitore..." (Bellonci, 57; also in Salza "secondo nuove indagini" 18-19). Otensio Lando remembered her in his *Sette Libri de Cathaloghi a varie cose* (Venezia: Giolito, 1552) as "gran poetessa et musica eccellente" (Salza "nuove indagini" 17-18). In 1552 Anton Francesco Doni dedicates "Alla virtuosissima Madonna la Signora Gaspara Stampa [...]" one of his *Pistolotti amorosi*. (Salza "madonna [...] e la societa.." LXIX (1917) 282-8). Letters address to Stampa by Orazio Brunetti (three in 1547) a man of letters from Friuli connected to Reformation circles, suggest that Stampa held a *ridotto* in her home and that she might have been associated with reformist circles (mentioned by Innocenzi Greggio, *In difesa*.35-6 and Salza "Società veneziana, LXIX 293-306 and LXX apendici-which contains the letters, 291-9). In one of such letters addressed by Brunetti to a Monsignor S. (probably Vittore Soranzo) he writes: "Se io non havessi per altro da ringratiare, Monsignor mio Reverendo, il gentile ridotto de la cortese et virtuosa Gaspara Stampa, per questo ho sommamente da ringratiarvelo, per haver acquistata l'intrinsichezza, oltre l'aver conosciuto molti altri gentilhuomini honoratiss., di V.S.R." (quoted by Zancan, *Il doppio itinerario*, 157). After the death of her brother Gaspara faced a period of intense spiritual crisis. A nun, Angelica Paola de' Negri (Virginia de' Negri, daughter of Lazzaro and Elisabetta Doria, woman of culture and renown) wrote to her a letter in 1544 from the convent San Paolo in Milan. This letter is quoted in its entirety by Salza in his "Madonna Gasparina Stampa Secondo Nuove Indagini." *GSLI* LXII (1913): 64-5 as evidence that Gaspara was a courtesan: "[...] ponete I vostri studi in essere ben casta, ben paziente, e piena dell' altre virtù sante; acciò ben possiate piacere al celeste sposo vostro [...] Sottraete qualche tempo all' altre occupazioni per spenderlo ai piedi del Salvatore vostro [...]" (quoted also by Bellonci, 55-56). Ippolita Mortilla dedicated her a sonnet in Domenichi anthology of 1559. Poems were dedicated to her by Carlo Zancaruolo, Girolamo Parabosco, Fiordiano Malatesta, Torquato Bembo, Leonardo Emo, Girolamo Molino, Benedetto Varchi, Giulio

Stufa, Giorgio Bemzone, as well as a sonnet against Gaspara (all reproduced by Salza, *Rime*, appendix, 187-97; see also, Zancan, *Il doppio itinerario*, 157. Lucrezia Gonzaga in a letter to Ortensio Lando praised her: "Ho letto più di mille fiato il sonetto composto dalla virtuosa Madonna Gaspara Stampa in lode vostra; il quale mi è paruto sì meraviglioso e da sì bella vena procedere, ch'io sono stata in forse, se doveva credere che d'alcuna donna fosse stato composto; poichè la marchesana di Pescara e la signora Veronica Gambata se n'erano volate al cielo; ed ancora ne starei dubbiosa, se non mi veniva a memoria di averla e veduta e udita favellare di tal maniera [...]"(Bellonci, 56)

5. On women poets in the sixteenth century, see: G. Toffanin, "Le poetesse e Michelangelo," *Il Cinquecento* (Milano, 1929) 354-67; Ettore Bonora, "Le donne poetesse," in E. Cecchi and Natalino Sapegno, *Storia della letteratura italiana. IV. Il Cinquecento* (Milano, 1966), 241-58; Rosenthal, *The Honest Courtesan* 210; C. Dionisotti, "La letteratura italiana nell'età del Concilio di Trento." *Geografia e storia della letteratura italiana*. (Trono: Einaudi, 1967), 183-204; Dionisotti hails Venice as the center of printing: "[...] si tenga conto che Venezia sola era in grado con la sua industria tipografica di produrre più libri di quanti se ne producessero in tutto il resto d'Italia, bene anche s'intende come e perché durante la prima metà del Cinquecento la letteratura italiana si sviluppasse su di una base generalmente settentrionale e specificamente veneziana." *Geografia e storia*, 170-71. Marina Zancan, *Il doppio itinerario della scrittura. La donna nella tradizione lirica italiana* (Torino: Einaudi, 1998) 48-108. Between 1538 and 1569 nineteen editions of Vittoria Colonna *Rime* were printed (see A. Bullock "Nota al testo" 258-68 V. Colonna, *Rime* (Bari: Laterza, 1982); in 1547 Tullia d'Aragona's *Rime* (Venezia: Giolito); in 1548-1567 (by various publishers) the eight volumes Laura Terracina, *Rime*; in 1553 some poems by Veronica Gambarà were published in Ruscelli's *Rime di diversi eccellenti autori bresciani* (Venezia: Pietrasanta); in 1554 Pietrasanta published Stampa; in 1555 Chiara Matraini *Prose e rime* were published (Lucca: Busdraghi); in 1559 thirteen poems of Isabella di Morra were included in Ludovico Domenichi's *Rime diverse d'alcune nobilissime et virtuosissime donne* (Lucca Busdraghi); in 1560 Laura Battiferri *Il primo libro dell'opere toscane* (Firenze Giunti). See: C. Dionisotti, *La letteratura italiana nell'età del Concilio di Trento*: "Il fenomeno della rigilgiosa letteratura femminile italiana a metà del Cinquecento si spiega anzitutto con l'improvvisa, larghissima apertura linguistica di quegli anni. Si erano spalancate le porte di una società letteraria ristretta e gerarchicamente ben differenziata [...]" (p. 191-2).

6. On the staged productions at the center of Venetian life, see: Margaret F. Rosenthal, "Venetian women writers and their discontents." in J. G. Turner ed. *Sexuality and Gender in Early Modern Europe* (New York and Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1993): 109. (107-132) This article contrasts the experiences and writings of two exemplary Venetian writers: Veronica Franco (1546-91) and Modesta da Pozzo alias Moderata Fonte (1555-92). Though they belonged to two different classes, one was a courtesan the other an honorable lady, Fonte, the respectable widow, rejects the institution of marriage *Il merito delle donne*

(1600) which enslaves women to the rule of the *paterfamilias* and favors chastity as *virtù*. While the two women never acknowledged one another's presence in their published works they both "denounce in their published works the unequal social practices of an authoritarian state that insists on suppressing an individual's needs and desires in the name of rationality and civic decorum." (p. 107) Franco, Rosenthal suggests "adopts the symbolic resonances of the profane Venus born from the seas, Fonte alligns herself with the virginal, ruling queen [...] Franco alligns her public eroticism with the sea-born Venus, whom she reclaims as her own from the city's ruling *paterfamilias*. For every year on Ascension Day, the doge, Venice's self-appointed secular bridegroom, marries the feminized sea (*la mar*)" (p. 110) . Edward Muir has described this "hydromatic rite" in *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice* (Princeton, 1981) 130-1; and 119-34. See also Margaret F. Rosenthal, *The Honest Courtesan. Veronica Franco, Citizen and Writer in Sixteenth-Century Venice*. (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1992); Franco Gaeta, "Alcune considerazioni sul mito di Venezia." *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 23 (1961): 58-75; Brian Pullan, *Rich and Poor in Renaissance Venice: The Social Institutions of a Catholic State to 1620* (Cambridge, 1971); David Rosand, "Venetia Figurata: The Iconography of a Myth," In Rosand, ed. *Interpretazioni veneziane: Studi di storia dell'arte in onore di Michelangelo Muraro* (Venice, 1984): 177-96; Margaret L. King, *Venetian Humanism in an Age of Patrician Dominance* (Princeton, 1986): 174-8; on the civic display of courtesans for important rituals, see: Lina Padoan Urban, "La festa della Sensa nelle arti e nell'iconografia," *Studi Veneziani* 10 (1968): 291-353; Guido Riggiero, *The Boundaries of Eros: Sex, Crime and Sexuality in Renaissance Venice* (New York, (1985).

7. Venice is the place where Shakespeare set his two plays with figures from marginalized groups-a black and a Jew . See: Tony Tanner, *Venice Desired* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1992).

8. Giacomo Cacciapaglia (quoted in *Scrittori in lingua tedesca a Venezia dal XV secolo a oggi*. [Venice, 1985]) attests to the survival of the myth of Venice into the 19th century. See: Tanner and Carla Vairo, "Venezia regno della seduzione femminile." In *Voyageurs étrangers à Venezia. Foreign Travellers in Venice. Viaggiatori stranieri a Venezia*. 139-58 (Geneva, 1981).

9. Another prominent woman, Maria Savorgnan, who was courted by Bembo and had a romantic correspondence with him (*Carteggio d'amore*), conspicuously remained out of print. See: Zancan, *Il doppio itinerario*, 49 and Marina Zancan "L'intellattualità femminile nel primo Cinquecento: Maria Savorgnan e Gaspara Stampa." *Annali d'italianistica* 7 (1989): 42-65. To understand this phenomenon we must keep in mind the politics of the city of Venice vis a vis its women and their broad discriminations between *donna onesta* and *meretrice*. The honest woman shaped by the literary treatises was one of noble birth is silent, as it is found in the exemplary definition presented by Ludovico Dolce, *Della institution delle Donne. Secondo li tre stati che cadono nella vita humana*. 1545 Gabriele Giolito de' Ferrari and reprinted repeatedly (1547, 1553, 1559, 1560). The other

woman is the *meretrix*, the prostitute. In a document of the time her position is defined primarily as one of irregularity, outside of the bounds of patriarchal supervision (that of a legitimate husband) this woman circulated and conducts business with one or many men: "Quelle veramente se intendino meretrice quale non essendo maritate haveranno comertio et pratica con uno over piú homeni. Se intendino etiam meretrice quelle che avendo marito non habitano con sui mariti, ma stanno separate et habimo comertio con uno over piú homeni." Quoted by P. Cibin, "Meretrici e cortigiane a Venezia nel '500." *Nuova DWF*, 25-26 (1985): 79-102.

10. "Memorie intorno alla vita di G. Stampa" in *Rime di Madonna Gaspara Stampa con alcune altre di Collatino e di Vinciguerra Conti di Collalto, e di Baldassare Stampa*, ed. Luisa Bergalli and Apostolo Zeno (Venice: Piacentini, 1738), xvii-xviii. This edition opens with two portraits, one of Gaspara Stampa and the other of Collaltino di Collalto. This is followed by a long dedication by Luisa Bergalli "A Sua Eccellenza il Signore Conte Antonio di Rambaldo" in which Gaspara, Collaltino and Rambaldo are equally praised. Bergalli's introduction is followed by Cassandra Stampa's dedication to Monsignor Giovanni della Casa and by a note "A' Lettori" which explains the protocols of this edition. Allusions are made to the Sixteenth century anthologies from which the poems by Collaltino, Vinciguerra, Baldassare are taken (and published together for the first time). This is followed by *Memorie di S. E. il Sig. Conte Antonio Rambaldo di Collalto, intorno alla vita di Gaspara Stampa e intorno a Collaltino e Vinciguerra II Conti di Collalto; Testimonianze autorevoli intorno a Gaspara Stampa*. This section includes Sansovino's preface to *Ameto*; a letter by Lucrezia Gonzaga to Ortensio Chiesa in his *Teatro delle Donne illustri*; and *Testimonianze autorevoli* about Collaltino, Vinciguerra and Baldassare Stampa. The next section reproduces poems dedicated to Gaspara Stampa (which are included in the 1554 edition, *Rime di poeti antichi on lode di Gaspara Stampa*). Added are poems by Girolamo Parabosco (III), Ippolita Mirtilla (I), Malatesta da Rimini (IV), and a sonnet by uncertain author (VIII) which in the first edition had been included with the poetry p. 131, and sonnet by Benedetto Varchi. Following the letter "Allo illustre" we have the *Rime di Madonna Gaspara Stampa* in the same order of the edition of Pietrasanta, (one sonnet by an unknown author # 8 is substituted with the one dedicated to Giovan Jacopo Bonetto, # 263) and the addition of the *Capitolo* published in the Genovese edition of 1573 (CCXCVIII) is placed at the end of the lyrical collection after the chapters and madrigals. To close the collection are the poems by Collaltino and Vinciguerra; poems by Baldassare Stampa; *Componimenti di diversi, in lode* of Gaspara Stampa (18 century poets, including Antonio Rambaldo di Collalto and Luisa Bergalli); documents and miscellaneous material relating to Gaspara, dedication by Sansovino of his *Ragionamento* and of the *Lettera di Benedetto Varchi sopra un Sonetto della Gelosia di Monsignor della Casa*, the letter of Paola de' Negri and that of Girolamo Parabosco

11. *Rime di Gaspara Stampa novamente pubblicate per cura di Pia Mestica Chiappetti* (Firenze: Barbera, 1877), x.

12. Bold mine. *Rime di tre gentildonne del secolo XVI, Vittoria Colonna, Gaspara Stampa, Veronica Franco* (Milano: Sonzogno, 1882) Originally p. 5. About the two editorial ventures, see: G. Ragone, "La letteratura e il consumo: un profilo dei generi e dei modelli nell'editoria italiana. (1845-1925) Marina Zancan, *Il doppio itinerario della scrittura*. (Torino: Einaudi, 1998) 72-98 and 165. Zancan points out that in the period that spans from the Eighteenth to the Nineteenth century (when Italy was unified) women authors were progressively pushed to the margins of mainstream literary studies. In the four volumes by Quadrio, *Della storia e della ragione d'ogni poesia 1739-52* and the six volume by Mazzucchelli, *Gli scrittori d'Italia 1753-63* women writers (who had already been catalogued by Luisa Bergalli in her edition of 1726) are copiously represented. So is the case with Girolamo Tiraboschi's *Storia della letteratura italiana* (1771-82); in the third book of the third tome paragraphs xvii-xxiv are devoted to the women poets of the Sixteenth century. With De Sanctis, after Italy was unified, this framework shifts markedly: in the pages of his *Storia della letteratura italiana* (written between 1870 and 1871, now ed. N. Gallo with introduction by N. Sapegno [Torino, 1958]) attention to the works of women is radically abridged. It is interesting to see who is left: Compiuta Donzella, Nina Siciliana, and Caterina da Siena, followed in the XVI century by the Vittoria Colonna, Gaspara Stampa, Isabella Andreini e Vincenza Armani. Women are almost entirely absent from the text that is conceived and destined to mold Italian national cultural identity and shape the next generations of Italian readers. The vast interest in Caterina is a new phenomenon. De Sanctis made use of the edition edited in 1860 by Caterina da Tommaso, Caterina da Siena, *Le lettere 4 vol* [Firenze, 1860] which was an editorial success, and features it to model an image of womanhood compatible with the dictates of the Catholic church. At the beginning of the Twentieth century the discourse on women was determined by the authoritative intervention of Benedetto Croce. In 1903 he established "La critica" and inaugurated his activity as a literary critic. In his *Note*, the critical interest that he devotes to the literature by women is a novelty compared to De Sanctis. His imprint on molding an image of the intellectual work of women can be noticed in numerous projects. Croce was the mind behind the series "Scrittori d'Italia" for the editor La Terza. Between 1912 and 1913 four volumes come to light in this series: two were devoted to women as writers and two to women as subject. These were the volumes: Caterina da Siena, *Libro della Divina Dottrina volgarmente detto Dialogo della Divina Provvidenza* (edited by Matilde Fiorilli, 1912); Gaspara Stampa e Veronica Franco, *Rime* (edited by Abdelkader Salza, 1912; two volumes edited by Giuseppe Zonta, *Trattati d'amore del Cinquecento* 1912 and *Trattati del Cinquecento sulla donna*, 1913). This is an important project. We must keep in mind that it was only 1983 when the next published text by a woman, *Rime* by Vittoria Colonna was printed. The four volumes assume the centrality of themes of love: sacred love (Caterina) and profane. Stampa was repackaged as a transgressive figure and was coupled by Salza with Veronica Franco, whose poems had in turn been printed for the first time in 1912 for a larger audience in the series "Scrittori nostri" of the published Carabba in Lanciano. In 1929 Croce was busy at work on Isabella di Morra and the women writers of the Seventeenth century ("Donne letterate nel seicento" *Nuovi saggi sulle letteratura italiana del seicento* (1931)

[Bari, Laterza: 1949]: 159-77. This project ended in the late Forties with his edition of the letters of Veronica Franco. The new wave of Italian women authors that appeared on the scenes in the Thirties were ignored by Croce, who was more interested in studying and recontextualizing the women of a remote past and returned to the present only in his portrait of Neera.

13. Zancan, *Il doppio itinerario*, 166. On the tendency of male critics to interpret Stampa's work in light of her identity as a woman and her biography, see: Eugenio Donadoni, *Gaspara Stampa, vita e opere* (Messina: Principato, 1919): "Il suo libro è il documento di un palpitante cuore di donna, prima e più che una finzione di poesia." 92. Benedetto Croce, "Problemi di letteratura italiana," in *Conversazioni critiche* 4th edition *Scritti di storia letteraria a politica* 10 (Bari: Laterza, 1950) states: "Fu donna; e di solito da donna, quando non si dà a scimmiettare l'uomo, si serve della poesia sottomettendola ai suoi affetti, amando il proprio amante o i propri figli più della poesia." 225. Salza rearrangement of Stampa's poems accommodates for his reading of her repentance (from her love affair with Collalto to Bartolomeo Zen and finally to God).

14. Bold mine. See: *Gaspara Stampa-Veronica Franco: Rime* ed. Abdelkader Salza (Bari: Laterza, 1913). *Rime d'amore* (I-CCXLV); at the end, separated from the other poems, *Madrigali* (CCXXII-CCXL), *Capitoli* (CCXLI-CCXLV) and *Rime varie* (CCXLVI-CCCXI); in the *Appendice*: 1. *Rime di diversi in lode e in morte di Gaspara Stampa* (I-XVIII); 2. *Rime di Baldassare Stampa* (I-XXXIV); 3. *Rime del conte Collaltino di Collalto* (I-XI); 4. *Rime del conte Vinciguerra di Collalto* (I-VII). The immediate distraction from the significance of the formal choices of the text that results in Salza's edition is pointed out by Ann Rosalind Jones, *The Currency of Heros: Women's Love Lyrics in Europe, 1540-1620* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1900), 214 n. 22.

15. The same function, roughly, was played in the reception of Veronica Franco by the sonnet "Ite, pensier fallaci e vana speme," which was attributed to her by Arturo Graf, *Attraverso il cinquecento* to document her repentance (and dismissed by Benedetto Croce in his "Introduction to the *Lettere famigliari*, where he attributes it to Gambara).

16. The word "mar" is used nineteen times: "ond'io scorgo, mirando, impresso e scolto/ un mar d'alti miracoli e diversi?" (12.4-5); "anime sagge, dotte e pellegrine,/ in questo mar, che non ha fondo o fine,(15.5-6); "Euro più fiero l'assale,/ può render queto il mar turbato pria./ Il giuoco, il riso, Venere (30.8-10); "Onde, che questo mar turbate spesso,/ come turba anco me la gelosia," (40.1-2); "vedete ch'io spargo sì cocenti/ da poter arrestar il mar co' venti,/ quando avien ch'ei più frema [...]" (59.3-5); "vicenda or l'altro or l'una./ Aer, mar, terra, ciel, sol, stelle e luna" (60.5-6); "La mia vita è un mar: l'acqua è 'l mio pianto,/ i venti" (72.1-2); "Qui, dove avien che 'l nostro mar ristagne,/ conte, la vostra misera Anassilla," (82.1-2); "menando vita libera e tranquilla,/ mirate lieto il mar e le campagne." (82.8-9); "Aspre tempeste ed importuni venti/ non n'impediran più del mar la via,/ or che le stelle mie m'han [...]"(108. 38-40); "Pommi ove

'l mar irato geme e frange,/ ov'ha l'acqua più [...] (111.1-2); *“fatto divenir una Chimera,/ uno abisso confuso, un mar, ch'avanza/ d'onde e tempeste una marina vera”* (174.13-15); *“ le cagion ch'io temo non pian piano/ cada nel mar del pianto, ov'era pria,/la vita mia [...]* (213.13-15); *“rai, luci divine,/ chiare voi stesse e questo mar beato.”* (249.14-15); *“Quel lume, che 'l mar d'Adria empie ed avampa/ di sì bei frutti e [...]*”(256.1-2); *“Anima, che secura sei passata/ per questo procelloso mar, per questa/ vita mortal senza provar tempesta, [...]*”(274.2-3); *“è seconda,/ dei più ricchi tesor, che 'l mar vostro aggia,/ ornate il crin e l'aurea treccia [...]*” (278.10-12); *“fronte/ con soggetto sì degno e sì sublime./ Un mar, che non ha fine e non ha fondo,”* (288.9-11); *“io, come i maggiori ingegni,/ entrando in tanto mar con poche sarte,/quanto si vuol, [...]*” (291.6-8).

17. **Bold mine.** The collection presents a staggering number (twenty four) of overt allusions to the Adriatic sea: *“stil, ch'indi m'è dato,/ risoneria fors' Adria oggi, e 'l suo lido.”* (12.11-12); *“ l'udranno sol queste felici arene,/ questo d' Adria beato e chiaro mare,/porto de' miei diletti [...]* (13.13-15); *“lontana dal bel viso santo,/ sopra il superbo d' Adria e ricco corno,/morte, téma ed orror avendo”* (48.6-8); *“ sol di valor e d'ardimento,/ io qui sovr'Adria piango e mi lamento,”*(69.5-6); *“me sola si compiacque,/ se fin gli scogli d'Adria, i lidi e l'acque/ san che voi sète [...]*” (77.7-9); *“per mio mal da prima vidi/ in queste rive d' Adria, in questi lidi/ dov'Amor mille lacci aveva ascosi”* (143.3-5); *“par che creda./ Tal qui, fra questi d' Adria almi soggiorni,/ io misera Anassilla, d'Amor preda [...]*”(146.12-15); *“l'afflitta e misera Anassilla/ lungo i bei lidi d' Adria iva chiamando/ il suo pastor, da cui 'l ciel [...]*”(201.10-12); *“De le ricche, beate e chiare rive/ d'Adria, di cortesia nido e d'Amore,”* (244.2-3); *“fra l'altre donne un sì bel volo,/ ch'Adria ed Italia e l'uno e l'altro polo/ tutto [...]*”(249.3-5); *“al vero Giove./ Ed io, rimasa qui dov' Adria regna,/ seguio pur voi e 'l mio nato paese [...]*”(250.9-10); *“Così d'Antenor quell'antica sede/ e questo d' Adria fortunato lido/ faccian de' vostri onor mai sempre fede.”* (253.13-15); *“non ha, per quel che s'ode fuore,/ Adria più ricco e più leggiadro pegno,/ io quanto posso [...]*”(254.4-6); *“sol col passo saldo e passo certo/ in questo d' Adria e fortunato seno/salite al monte faticoso ed erto.”* (254.13-15); *“Quel lume, che 'l mar d' Adria empie ed avampa/ di sì bei frutti [...]*” (256.1-3); *“e quei sì chiari, indegna opra dirai,/ d' Adria felice ed onorata riva.”* (262.14-15); *“sopra questi chiarissimi pastori,/ che me di gioia et Adria han d'onor pieno;”* (267.8-9); *“buon Socrate suo celeste e santo/ tutta Italia e tutta Adria in ogni stanza;”* (274.11-12); *“Ninfe, che d' Adria i più riposti guadi/ sacre abitate, e tu, [...]*” (278.1-2); *“ed or tal frutto rende,/ che n'è pieno Adria omai tutto, e lo sente,/ con quel disio [...]*” (282.4-6); *“Pastor, che d' Adria il fortunato seno/ di tanti onori e tanti pregi ornate [...]*”(284.1-2); *“rive/ sia vissa sempre come in ciel si vive./ Adria si lagna parte/ del tuo da lei partire,”* (299.40-42); *“diletti figli/ qual del tuo dipartir cordoglio prema,/ et Adria, che con lor t'onora ed ama.”* (300.11-13); *“affanni,/ d'ogni nostr'atra e torbida procella,/ Adria ha visto e veder spera ancor segno/ de la tua [...]*” (301.9-11).

¹⁸ **Bold mine.**

19. On the use of the vocative as suitable and compatible with musical intonation, see: Feldman, *City Culture*, 104-108. On Stampa's community of women, discussed within the context of the domestication and privatization of women on one hand, and exclusion of Laura from the poetry of Petrarch, see: Juliana Schiesari, *The Gendering of Melancholia. Feminism, Psychoanalysis and the Symbolics of Loss in Renaissance Literature*. (Ithaca and London: Cornell UP, 1992), esp. chapter 3, "Appropriating the Work of Women's Mourning: From Petrarch to Gaspara Stampa and from Isabella di Morra to Tasso." 160-190.

20. She amply documents this with her poems to distinguished men and women: Fortunio Spira (294); Luigi Alemanni (248); Sperone Speroni (253); Domenico Venier (252); Zanni (Bernardo or Jacopo Zane, 254); Girolamo Molino (260, 261); Michiel (Domenico, Michele or Marcantonio, 271); Giacomo Balbi (273); Leonardo Emo (275, 276); Nicoló Tiepolo (278); Giov. Andrea Guiscardo or Viscardo (280, 281); Marcantonio Soranzo (289); Ortensio Lando (292); Giovan Jacopo Bonetto (263); Vinciguerra II di Collalto (257, 258); Giovanna d'Aragona (290); Elena Barozzi Centani (278); Ippolita Mirtilla (296).

21. Her modesty as a poet is evidenced in the following lines:

così vorrei aver concetti e detti
e parole a tant'opra appropriate,
sì che fosser da ma scritte e cantate,
e fatte cònte a mille altri intelletti. (16. 5-8)

22. Even the God of Love does not disdain her and answers her pleas. In sonnets # 25 she is in dialogue with him:

- Trâmi - dico ad Amor talora - omai
fuor de le man di questo crudo ed empio,
che vive del mio danno e del mio scempio,
per chi arsi ed ardo ancor, canto e cantai.
Poi che con tanti miei tormenti e guai
sua fiera voglia ancor non pago od empio,
o di Diana avaro e crudo tempio,
quando del sangue mio sazio sarai? -
Poi torno a me, e del mio dir mi pento:
sì l'ira, il rimembrar pur lui, mi smorza,
che de' miei non vorrei meno un tormento.
Con sì nov'arte e con sì nova forza
la bellezza ch'io amo, e ch'io pavento,
ogni senso m'intrica, offusca e sforza.

23. Stampa seeks out gifted members in her community to assist her in constructing a realistic portrait of her beloved, one that will accommodate his many assets as well as a highly suspect inner feature, his double heart:

Voi, che 'n marmi, in colori, in bronzo, in cera
imitate e vincete la natura,
formando questa e quell'altra figura,
che poi somigli a la sua forma vera,(55. 1-4)

[...]

Ritraggete il mio conte, e siavi a mente
qual e`dentro ritrarlo, e qual è fore;
sì che a tanta opra non manchi niente.
Fategli solamente doppio il core,
Come vedete ch'egli ha veramente
Il suo e 'l mio, che gli ha donato Amore. (55. 9-14)

24. Since Collatino is a writer she suggests that he should take himself as the sole worthy subject of verses: "Quelle rime onorate e quell'ingengo/pari a la beltà vostra e al gran valore,/rivolgete a voi stesso in far onore/conte, come di lor soggetto degno;" (115. 1-4). In # 116, a blazon ("lodate" appears in anaphoric repetition in lines 1, 4, 9 she praises, among his attributes, his "stile", line 11. In # 118 she tells us that his elegant verses add to her passion and her pain: "senza cercar con pure rime ornate/d'aggiunger nove al cor piaghe e flagelli." (118. 7-8).

25. In the rare occasion when we sample his words, they are words of accusation. Collatino goes so far as to question Stampa's motives and her morals ("...m'accusa/di cosa, ov'io non ho già colpa alcuna?" [130. 3-4]). The same accusation Stampa, more plausibly, levels against him in 125 : "Tu hai mille altre donne" (125. 5). Collatino then censures her attempts at providing an explanation:

non vuol ch'io possa far mia scusa;
vuol ch'io tenga lo stil, la bocca chiusa,
come muto, o fanciul, piccolo in cuna. (130. 6-8)

and again: "[...] m'è pur vietato/che dir le ber mie ragion non possa," (131. 1-2). Against this regime of terror and censorship Stampa wants to shout her innocence ("fin che questa mia lingua averà possa/griderò sola in qualche speco o fossa/la mia innocenza e più l'altrui peccato" [131. 6-8]) and the falsity of slanderous remarks levelled against her (perhaps of being a courtesan: "L'innocenza, signor, troppo in sé fida,/ troppo è vloce a metter ale e penne/e, quanto più la chiude altri, più grida" [131. 12-14]). These are accusations by a lover who is gone once more by poem # 135 and who agrees to marry another woman:

Meraviglia non è, se 'n uno istante
ritraeste da me pensieri e voglie,
ché vi venne cagion di prender moglie,
e divenir marito, ov'eri amante. (179. 1-4)

26. We are far from Petrarch's reflections (inspired by Augustine in his moments of sincere repentance) on the misdirection of human love.

27. The necessity for Christ's blood to flow from the cross and repeal the effects of the original sin is, among other things, a reminder of Eve's sin (a subject at the core of so much misogynistic literature circulated in Stampa's time).

28. In fact, Stampa's stance is reminiscent of that displayed by Sofonisba Anguissola in her painting (*Bernardino Campi painting Sofonisba Anguissola*, 1550 in Siena, Pinacoteca Nazionale). Anguissola, let us recall, introduces herself in the mode of a portrait being worked on by her (male) teacher.

29. Judging from the staggering recurrence of the words "annidarsi" and "nido." (17 in all) it is an important lexical choice: "potendo in luogo più alto annidarsi,/ farsi nido e ricetto del mio core." (2.8); "Altero nido, ove 'l mio vivo sole/ prese da prima [...]" (37.1-2); "conte, d'ogni virtù nido e sostegno," (45. 8); "subito par ch'al nido si riporte;" (76.9); "O di tutte bellezze e grazie il fiore,/ nido di cortesia e d'ardimento," (119.6-7); "l'albergo de la vera cortesia,/ il nido di bellezza e leggiadra,/ la stanza de la gloria" (121.3-5); "fido albergo di cara libertate,/ nido d'illustre e riposata gente," (134.5-6); "se non che egli è pur quell'il bel nido,/ dove nasceste, io pregherei che fesse/ il ciel [...]" (135.9-11); "Verso il bel nido, ove restai partendo," (161.1); "Qual ne le più felici e calde arene,/ nel nido acceso sol di vario odore,/ d'una fenice estinta [...]" (215.6-7); "beate e chiare rive/ d'Adria, di cortesia nido e d'Amore,/ ove sì dolce si soggiorna e [...]" (244.2-4); "sì che, come ambedue produsse un nido,/ ambedue alzi un voi, vostra mercede," (253.9-10); "del vostro santo e saggio/ petto, d'ogni virtù nido e sostegno;" (255.6-7); "quasi di vero onor nido e ricetto." (280.8-9); "sovra questo famoso e chiaro lido,/ ove fan nido tante onorat'alme/ felici ed alme?" (297.3-4); "certo soccorso e fido/ per lo tuo chiaro nido,/ sì che sicuro e glorioso sia," (299.48-50).

30. This is supported by her repeated identification with birds. In # 48 she is like the swan. And while the swan "l'augel" sings his most beautiful song when he is about to die (according to legend) her death song is leaving Collatino unmoved. Like the magpie (who sings when she craves food) Stampa's lines are inspired by her desire of Colaltino:

la vena per sé muta e restiva,
 e fa che 'n queste carte adombri e scriva
 quanto aspramente Amor m'arde e trafige
 chi fa qual noi parlar la muta pica?
 chi 'l nero corvo e gli altri muti uccelli?
 La brama sol dhi quel che li nutrica.
 Però s'avien ch'io scriva e ch'io favelli
 narrando l'amorosa mia fatica

non son io no, son gli occhi vaghi e belli. (74. 6-14)

31. The story of Procne and Philomela is told by Ovid in *Metamorphoses* VI. It is a tale that has attracted a lot of attention from feminist critics and has also been fruitfully applied to the colonial predicament. See: Allen Grossman, "Orpheus/Philomela: Subjection and Mastery in the Founding Stories of Poetic Production and in the Logic of Our Practice." *Tri Quarterly* 77 (1989/90): 229-248; Nancy A. Gutierrez, "Philomela Strikes Back: Adultery and Mutilation as Female Self-Assertion." *Women's Studies* 16 (1989): 429-433; Elissa Marder "Disarticulated Voices: Feminism and Philomela." *Hypatia* 7 (1992): 148-166; Patricia Klindienst Joplin, "The Voice of the Shuttle is Ours," *Stanford Literary Review* 1 (1984): 25-53; Graham Huggan "Philomela's Retold Story: Silence, Music and the Post Colonial Text." *The Journal of the Commonwealth Literature* 25 (19990): 12-23.

32. Bold mine.

33. Stampa finds herself in the same position of Apollo pursuing an unmoved lover, but her movement is somewhat constrained, she is confined to the city of Venice or to Collatino's feudal possession. In his obstinate silence, in his deferrals, Collatino is also like the sun, an allusion to Apollo. But the natural sun is predictable, it sets and returns the following day, Collatino is not ("Ma l'altro torna, e rende luce e vita;/e del mio chiaro e lucido oriente/è 'l tormar dubbio e certa la partita." [18. 12-14])

34. Also:

Vengan quante fôr mai lingue ed ingegni,
 quanti fôr stili in prosa, e quanti in versi,
 e quanti in tempi e paesi diversi
 spirti di riverenza e d'onor degni;
 non fia mai che descrivan l'ire e sdegni,
 le noie e i danni, che 'n amor sofferesi,
 perché nel vero tanti e tali fêrsi,
 che pasan tutti gli amorosi segni.

[...]

Voi, ch'ad amar per grazia sète eletti,
 non vi doltete dunque di patire;
 perché i martir d'amor son benedetti. (24. 1-8; 12-14)

35. Patricia Anne Phillipy "Gaspara Stampa's *Rime d'Amore*: Recapitulation and Retraction." in *Love's Remedies: Palinodic Discourse in Renaissance Literature*, especially chapter 3, 92-135. See also her "'Altera Dido:' The Model of Ovid's *Heroides* in the poems of Gaspara Stampa and Veronica Franco." *Italica* 69 (1992): 1-18 and Phillipy "Gaspara Stampa's *Rime*: Replication with Retraction." *Philological Quarterly* 68.1 (1989): 1-23. Phillipy discusses Stampa's poetry and concludes that it strays from the model of Petrarch's ethical recantation toward a kind of palinode that is linked with gender and female

representation, a model of repetition and relocation inspired by Ovid's *Heroides*. The *Heroides* were the focus of discussion in the Venetian Academy of Domenico Venier. On the Academy, see also Feldman "The Academy," 500 and Salza "Madonna...." 21-31. Ovid was an influence on both Stampa and Veronica Franco. Though the Academy did not produce a translation of Ovid, "two Italian translations (and numerous Latin editions) were published by Venetian houses in the mid-sixteenth century. Both the translations of Remegio Fiorentino (1555) and Camillo Camilli (1587) us *capitoli in terza rima* [...] and both editions include prefatory "argomentary" that provide didactic as well as informational glosses to each epistle" Phillippi, *Love's Remedies*, 97. The following are the translations: Remegio Fiorentino, transl. *Epistole d' Ovidio di Remirgio Fiorentino, divisi in due libri, con la tavole* (Venice: Gabriel Gioliro de Ferrari, 1555); Camillo Camilli transl, *L'Epistole d'Ovidio tradotte in terza Rima da Camillo Camilli, con gli argomenti al principio di ciascuna* (Venice: G.B. Ciotti, 1587).

36. All references are from Virgilio, *Aeneis\Eneide*. tr.. Guido Vitali, intr. Ezio Savino. 3 vols. (Milano: Mursia, 1986).

37. This is a highly self-referential poem which ends ends in a river of tears that Stampa pours "che da quest'occhi verso." (l.14 an allusion to her poetic verses). In poem 138 she renounces her name for that of Anassilla, and commits to lavish Collatino with the poetic fame that will arise from her singing of his heroic deeds: "Tu mi dà nome, ed io vedrò se 'n carte/posso con le virtù che la mi rende,/al secol, che verrà, famoso farte."(138. 9-11). But in its specular and reverse version (# 139) it is the river Anaxus that takes its name form hers: "Fiume, che dal mio nome nome prendi/e bagni I piedi a l'alto colle vago/ove nacque il famoso ed alto fago/de le cui fronde alto disio m'accendi."(1-4)

38. He admits that he forgets her as soon as he leaves: "con queste proprie orecchie dor mi sento/che tanto pensa a me, quanto m'è presso/e, partendo, si parte in un momento/ogni membranza del mio amor in esso. (123. 11-14).

39. Both are heroic, epic women. Evadne appear in *Aeneid VI*, she burned herself on the pire of her husband Capaneo for the love she had for him. Penelope waited for Odysseus' return, of course is featured in the *Odyssey*.

40. This is a poem addressed to the beloved while he is at war in Mirandola, south of Bologna, ca 1551 Stampa laments not having fallen in love with a man less eager for military honor:

Da più lati fra noi, conte, risuona,
che voi sèt'ito, ove disio d'onore
sotto Bologna vi sospinge e sprona
per mostrare ivi il vostr'altro valore:

valor degno sì tanto cavaliero,
ma non degno però di tant'amore 1-6

[...]

Felice è quella donna, a cui li dèi
han dato amante men illustre in sorte,
e men vago di spoglie e di trofei;
col qual le sue dimore lunghe e corte
trapassa lieta, avendol sempre a lato,
fido, costante, valoroso e forte. 19-24

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