

# SANTILLANA AND THE PROBLEM OF THE RENAISSANCE

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The place of the Marqués de Santillana in the definition and history of the Spanish Renaissance is a complicated one. While as a writer and a patron he undoubtedly contributed to the extension of erudition in the fifteenth century, both his poetry and his poetic theory are firmly tied to the conventions of that time. His sonnets are particularly problematic: metrically deficient and stylistically close to contemporary *cancionero* poetry, they reflect an eclectic approach to imitation, and while permeated with petrarchisms as decorative devices, they do not struggle to appropriate Petrarch as a single, privileged model. Because of their limited diffusion, they were largely forgotten, and were not a source of inspiration to Boscán, Garcilaso, and the other poets who reintroduced the form in the second quarter of the following century, for whom direct competition with Petrarch symbolized the *translatio* of empire and culture from Italy to Spain. Yet an excessive critical emphasis on close imitation of Italian models overlooks the importance of eclecticism in Santillana's theory and practice, the Italian theoretical antecedents for the eclecticism, and the distancing effect from the Petrarchan sources introduced by Santillana's eclectic borrowing.

Santillana's eclecticism receives implicit theoretical justification in the literary principles expounded in the "Proemio e carta," where the list of modern poets is linked by analogy to the poets of the ancient past. As is well known, this prologue served as a preface to an anthology of his own works that the poet sent to Peter, the Portuguese constable, in the late 1440s. At this point Santillana had completed most of his literary works and was at the height of his political and military fortunes. Thus, although the prologue accompanied a gift of poems that Santillana modestly referred to as "youthful," it represents the mature views of one of the major literary figures of the century.<sup>1</sup> The prologue has three parts: an introductory theory of poetry, a history of classical poetry, and a description of modern vernacular poetry, and each section in its own way provides theoretical ground for his eclecticism. The modest disclaimer, apologizing for sending these youthful works, quotes from St. Paul's first letter to the Corinthians on the passage from childhood (13:11, "When I was a child . . ."); Santillana declares that these small poems ("obretas," 439)

were a nobleman's pastime, and hopes that the slim volume will please the recipient. He then provides a Horatian explanation of the nature of poetry:

¿E qué cosa es la *poesía*—que en el nuestro vulgar gaya sciencia llamamos—syno un fingimiento de cosas útiles, cubiertas o veladas con muy fermosa cobertura, conpuestas, distinguidas e scandidas por çierto cuento, peso e medida? E çiertamente, muy virtuoso señor, yerran aquellos que pensar quieren o dezir que solamente las tales cosas consistan e tiendan a cosas vanas e lasçivas: que bien commo los fructíferos huertos habundan e dan convenientes fructos para todos los tiempos del año, assý los onbres bien nascidos e doctos, a quien estas sciencias de arriba son infusas, usan de aquéllas e del tal exerçio segund las hedades. (439-440)

Santillana here enters a dialogue with those who would condemn poetry for moral reasons; what is interesting is that he does not defend it because of an intrinsic moral value, acknowledging that each poet might use his skill in accordance with his age (perhaps again alluding to the youthful works the original *cancionero* contained), and thus conceding that some poetry might indeed contain "cosas vanas e lasçivas." Rather, the defense of poetry is based on its heterogeneity, the possibility of its being used for "cosas útiles." As such the content of poetry is not the distinguishing issue for Santillana, but instead the formal question of casting a discourse into verse. As Julian Weiss suggested, "fingimiento" here does not necessarily entail fiction or false representation, but rather creation in the Greek sense of *poesis*, that is, following the rules of a craft or art. The essence of poetry then is not the content but the veil or "fermosa cobertura," that can be placed over any subject matter; in part, with the words "scandidas por çierto cuento, peso, e medida" Santillana attempts to claim for poetry the quantitative status of music, as Encina too would later attempt (see Weiss 190-91). This does not mean that poetry must necessarily be sung, but that meter is, as in music, its distinguishing characteristic, and that which grants it the same intellectual status.

The primary importance of poetic form becomes even clearer in the following paragraph:

Quánta más sea la exçelencia e prerrogativa de los rimos e metros que de la soluta prosa, syno solamente a aquellos que de las porfias injustas se cuydan adquirir sobervios honores, manifiesta cosa es. E, asy, faziendo la via de los stoycos—los quales con grand diligencia inquirieron el orígine e causas de las cosas—me esfuerço a dezir el metro ser antes en tiempo e de mayor perfección e más auctoridad que la soluta prosa. (440)

The Stoics may have located the primacy of poetry in its antiquity, but its distinguishing characteristic is again its meter, the quality that places it in opposition to "la soluta prosa," within a bipolar system of verbal art. Once more the poet avoids the opportunity to create a hierarchy based on moral distinctions between kinds of poetry; his intention is to celebrate the superiority of verse over prose, whatever the kind. Without a moral hierarchy Santillana can thus address the formal category that includes all poetry, hinting at the importance of eclecticism to his poetic theory.

The ability to distinguish between poetry and prose is necessary for the next section of the prologue, an account of ancient poetry in the Bible, in Greece, and in Rome; where before he privileged form over ethically useful subject matter, he now avoids the issue of divine inspiration, and as such links sacred texts and the pagan poets. What made Moses the first poet was not the revelation he received, but that at least sometimes he wrote in verse, "el primero que fizo rimos o canto en metro aya seydo Moysén, ca en metro cantó e profetizó la venida del Mexías" (441). Similarly, in assessing subsequent Biblical figures, Santillana rigorously adheres to his formal criteria: Joshua, David, and Solomon are poets, as is some of the account of Job, but Santillana does not extend poetic qualification to the entire Bible.<sup>2</sup> After these Old Testament writers came the Greeks, including Homer, whom Dante called the "sovereign poet." The Greeks were succeeded by the Roman poets Ennius and Virgil; together all these ancient writers constitute the sublime style. Among the types of poetry they composed were epithalamia, bucolics, and elegiac poems to be recited at funerals, and even emperors such as Caesar and Octavian did not disdain the composition of poetry. By emphasizing the variety and social prestige of ancient poetry, Santillana again defends his own eclecticism; praise for the ancient emperors leads him to discuss more recent patrons of poetry, and King Robert of Naples is particularly praised for his support of Petrarch, who at his court wrote many sonnets and eclogues.<sup>3</sup>

Mention of Petrarch in turn serves to mark the transition to the third section of the prologue, where Santillana moves on to an account of modern poetry. The mediocre style was practiced by the great vernacular writers, Arnaut Daniel and Guido Guinizelli, whose works Santillana confesses not to have read, but who are said to have invented *terza rima* and the sonnet.<sup>4</sup> They were succeeded by Dante, who wrote the *Inferno*, *Purgatorio*, and *Paradiso*, Petrarch and his *Triumphs*, Cecco d'Ascoli, and Boccaccio. French writers that followed include the authors of the *Roman de la Rose*, Guillaume Machaut, and Alain Chartier. Santillana prefers the Italians for their genius, their use of embellishments, and their stories which they sing in the manner of Orpheus, but he acknowledges that the

French are more careful in following the rules of poetry ("arte"). Only after this discussion of the French and the Italians does Santillana finally discuss the Spaniards, a rubric that includes Catalans, Valencians, Aragonese, Galicians, and Castilians, categories more political and historical than linguistic. The Catalans he cites range from the twelfth century troubadour Guillem de Berguedà to Santillana's contemporary Ausias March, with a concentration of late fourteenth and early fifteenth century poets. The art of poetry was next practiced in the kingdoms of Galicia and Portugal, where its exercise reached such a level of proficiency that poets from all over Spain, whatever their nationality, composed in this language. Old Castilian works he mentions include the *Libro de Alexandre* and the *Libro de buen amor*; newer Castilian poets include King Alfonso the Wise and others who in fact antedate his so-called old Castilians. The section on the new Castilians is the longest of the prologue; here Santillana mentions many *cancionero* poets, singling out for special praise Francisco Imperial (whom he calls not just a *trobador*, but a *poeta*), Santillana's own uncle Fernán Pérez de Guzmán, and his brother-in-law Fadrique de Castro, praised as much for his patronage of other poets as for his own works.<sup>5</sup> In this final section Santillana also gives the *incipits* of many of the poems cited, a practice earlier used only for Petrarch and Jordi de San Jordi, and which shows not only Santillana's familiarity with the poets' work, but also his worry that others might know these works but not their proper author. The prologue concludes with an exhortation to the recipient to continue his literary studies.

One of the most striking features of Santillana's preface is his limited knowledge of the classics. On the one hand, some discussion of classical literature seems necessary to Santillana, in order to create a universal category of poetry, yet his acknowledged use of secondary sources makes it clear he feels no need to pretend to a direct familiarity with the ancients.<sup>6</sup> The notion that poetry began with the Hebrews is based on Biblical poetics, but Santillana is plainly not promoting a theory of divine inspiration, for he excludes the prophets and the New Testament writers, which would give greater strength to such a theory. The result is a rather superficial account of chronological precedence, as gleaned from other sources presented in order to place the discussion of modern poetry in a universal context. Yet this in itself is extremely significant; as Weiss noted, "the underlying purpose of Santillana's survey [of literary history] is rhetorical: it would not have been written had it not supported his argument in a number of important ways" (218). Santillana finds it necessary to place contemporary poetry in the context of an understanding, however rudimentary, of classical literature. Castilian writers are listed last but this it is not an expression of his estimation of their worth, and if last does not mean better, neither does it mean worse. The result is a flatten-

ing out of literary history, without highs and lows, where the formal category of style replaces hierarchies of utility, inspiration, or chronology. As in the case of Daniel and Guinizelli, temporal precedence does not necessarily signify superiority, and all antecedents are worthy of interest. Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio are singled out for special praise, but there is no notion that Italian literature is consequently superior to Castilian, nor does the erratic succession of Provençal, Italian, French, Catalan, Portuguese, and Castilian poets imply a westward *translatio*. Chronologically speaking, the French and Italian writers he mentions by and large do come before the Spanish, and while he mentions a contemporary Catalan, there are many more contemporary Castilians. Although Weiss maintains that "Santillana seems conscious of surveying the history of verse from one of the peaks in its development" (220), in Santillana's preface there is little sense of the writer being at a key, transitional moment in Spanish literature, nor does he worry that his poetry might one day be forgotten. Santillana's canon is essentially a diverse list of predecessors, the collective antecedents for his own diverse creations.

Even a bare-bones list, however, begs some questions with which one can see Santillana struggling. Although a general historical model is notably absent from the prologue, the outline he follows is the familiar Renaissance concept of history. The gap between the ancient Latin writers and the moderns is acknowledged, and while not glossed with any rhetoric of a rebirth, it at least intimates a concept of a Middle Age, and of a break in continuity. Significantly, it is King Robert's patronage of Petrarch that provides a rhetorical, if not chronological, transition between the ancients and the moderns, and despite Arnaut Daniel, the Italians are seen as the most significant innovators. Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio, "escruiieron en otra forma de metros en lengua ytálica que *sonetos* e *canciones morales* se llaman. Estendieronse—creo—de aquellas tierras e comarcas de los lemosines estas artes a los gállicos e a esta postrimera e occidental parte, que es la nuestra España, donde asaz prudente e fermosamente se han usado" (445). Here one can see the suggestion of a westward movement, as sonnets and *canciones* spread from the Italians to the "lemosines" and from there to the French. Spain is the westernmost part of Europe and thus last to receive the movement, but it is not therefore inferior, and it has already made good use of these forms (an argument he makes in spite of being the only Spanish writer of sonnets at the time). His eclecticism moreover has a considerable presence in Renaissance poetic theory. In Italy, for example, Angelo Poliziano and Gianfrancesco Pico della Miranda both argued polemically for an eclectic approach to poetic imitation, a view upheld by Count Ludovico de Canossa in Castiglione's *Cortegiano*. In France, too, while Du Bellay argued for a limited canon of models, his poetic practice was much more

eclectic, and his contemporary Thomas Sebillet adopted views much closer to Santillana's, emphasizing the parallels between Biblical, classical, and contemporary poetic genres. Santillana is not as concerned with imitation per se, nor with the problem of poetic genres, but his eclectic approach to predecessors, as evidenced in the "Proemio," is as typical of at least one strain of Renaissance literary theory, as is the stricter imitation theory of the following century.

While in the "Proemio e carta" Santillana presents Italian poetry as renowned, he does not accord it a privileged position in literary history. Similarly, in his sonnets he practices an eclectic form of imitation and allusion that, while often employing Petrarchan elements, does not accord them any greater weight than those taken from other sources. Santillana collected Italian books and commissioned translations of Italian works, but an appraisal of his relationship to Italy must also take into account his most innovative works, the sonnets "al itálico modo." Forty-two of these have survived, the first 17 written by 1444 and the remaining 25 probably during the last 14 years of the poet's life. About half of the sonnets are love poems; the other half are more or less equally divided between political and religious topics. Traditional criticism has focused on the poems' metrical deficiencies, the use of oxytonic and dodecasyllabic lines, and the varying rhyme schemes employed by the poet.<sup>7</sup> These have generally lead to a devaluation of their worth on the grounds that Santillana had not fully mastered the form. Modern criticism, beginning with Lapesa, and continuing with López Bascañana and Colombí-Monguió, has reevaluated the relationship of the poems to Petrarch, emphasizing links not only to the *Rime sparse* but to the *Trionfi* and the prose works. While this approach is more fruitful, it nevertheless tends to discount the distancing from Petrarchan sources introduced into the poetry by Santillana's eclectic borrowing.

An example of this can be found in Santillana's first sonnet:

Quando yo veo la gentil criatura  
qu'el cielo, acorde con naturaleza  
formaron, loo mi buena ventura,  
el punto e hora que tanta belleza  
me demostraron, e su fermosura,  
ca sola de loor es la pureza;  
mas luego torno con ygual tristura  
e plango e quéxome de su crueza.

Ca non fue tanta la del mal Thereo,  
nin fizo la de Achila e de Potino,  
falsos ministros de ti, Ptholomeo.

Assí que lloro mi serviçio indigno  
e la mi loca fiebre, pues que veo  
e me fallo cansado e peregrino. (51-52)

Lapesa, López Bascuñana, and Colombí-Monguió have all seen significant Petrarchan details in this poem. López Bascuñana notes that the temporal structure ("When I . . .") is a common one in both Petrarch and Santillana, as is the adjective *gentil* (31, 33). Earlier, Lapesa went farther, noting that Petrarch's sonnet 13 begins with the word *quando* and then moves on to a common Petrarchan topos, praise of the time he first saw Laura, "I bendico il loco e'l tempo et l'ora / che sì alto miraron gli occhi mei" (5-6); this becomes, in Santillana, "el punto e hora que tanta belleza / me demostraron" (4-5). He also sees that, after a turn away from Petrarch in the first tercet, "los últimos versos recobran el más genuino carácter petrarquesco," and that "cansado e peregrino" derives from "stanca vecchierella peregrina" (*Rime sparse* 50) (186). One could add that the first seven words of Santillana's poem echo almost precisely the opening of Petrarch's sonnet 291, "Quand'io veggio dal ciel scender . . ." But where in Petrarch this is a description of the dawn, which moves the poet and leads him to sigh "Ivi è Laura ora," Santillana makes the descent from heaven a literal apparition of his beloved, removing the implicit metaphor dawn/woman. The nature of what Lapesa calls a turn away from Petrarch in the first tercet is also worth re-examining. In these verses the poet compares the beloved's cruelty to the classical examples of Tereus, who violated his sister-in-law Philomela; Aquilas, Pompey's murderer; and Potinus, who conspired against Ptolemy (see notes in Santillana, *Los sonetos*, 60). The comparison with these rapists and murderers seem overly strong, and none of them are canonically Petrarchan. Here Santillana shows off his erudition but at the same time employs a palette of allusions that is much broader than that of his supposed model, and which threatens to reduce the specificity of Petrarch's influence. Rather than being an imitation of Petrarch, the poem becomes a mosaic of details garnered from Santillana's wide reading.

Santillana's use of allusion is one of the major issues that both unites him to and separates him from Petrarch. To López Bascuñana, "ambos citan con profusión nombres de personajes históricos o mitológicos" (31), and she goes on to give a list of all the proper names used by the Spaniard. Yet many of these are learned allusions to historical and Biblical figures (e.g., Lavinia, Noah) that are not drawn from Petrarch's tightly controlled repertory of allusions, while still others are figures that Petrarch cites but only in the broader context of the *Trionfi*, such as Sampson, David, Hercules, Phaedra, Helen, Dido, etc. So too Santillana's vocabulary often incorporates military and feudal terminology that is infrequent or absent from the *Rime sparse*, but more common in the *Trionfi* with its allegory based on triumphal processions. Once again the net effect is of a much broader range of linguistic and literary codes, from which Santillana picks and chooses details.<sup>8</sup>

In the sonnet under discussion, the beloved is described as coming from heaven, "qu'el cielo, acorde con naturaleza / formaron" (2-3). While this is not necessarily unpetrarchan, it has strong echoes of a poem by another Tuscan poet, Dante's "e par che sia una cosa venuta / da cielo in terra a miracol mostrare" from his famous sonnet "Tanto gentile" (*Vita nuova* 50; ch. 26:7-8). Combined reminiscences of Petrarch and Dante (among others) also recur in a related, but far more complicated sonnet, possibly Santillana's most famous:

Quando yo soy delante aquella dona,  
a cuyo mando me sojudgó Amor,  
cuydo ser uno de los que en Tabor  
vieron la grand claror que se razona,  
o que ella sea fija de Latona  
segund su aspecto o grand resplandor;  
assí que punto yo non he vigor  
de mirar fixo su deal persona.

El su fablar grato, dulce, amoroso  
es una maravilla çiertamente,  
e modo nuevo en humanidad;  
el andar suyo es con tal reposo,  
honesto e manso su continente,  
ca, libre, bivo en catividad. (61)

As in the first sonnet, the metaphorical basis of this poem is the sight of the beloved (in this case, blinding), and that it immediately enslaves him; again, Santillana elaborates this point through a series of allusions. That in the first quatrain, to Mt. Tabor, site of the Transfiguration, has been the subject of some controversy, for if the poet is one of the Apostles looking on, then that makes the beloved Christ. As the anonymous author of the manuscript rubric complained: "En este catorzésimo soneto el actor muestra que, quando él es delante aquella su señora, le parece que es en el monte Tabor, en el qual Nuestro Señor apareció a los tres discípulos suyos; e por quanto la estoria es muy vulgar, non cur[o] de la escriuir" (*ibid.*). Foster also criticized the use of sacred imagery for profane ends and associated it with the general cultural decline and the waning of the Middle Ages. To Lapesa, however, it is merely an instance of divine hyperbole; he characterizes it and the subsequent turn to pagan mythology as "meros recursos literarios, aunque la mezcla de lo religioso con lo profano se integre en un sistema coherente de ideas, a diferencia a lo que ocurría en la filosofía amorosa del 'dolce stil novo'" (184). One might add that although the traditional identification of Mt. Tabor with the Transfiguration antedates St. Jerome, it is not mentioned in the Bible, and there is no particular canonical source for this comparison. Rather, this is an

instance, as was the first sonnet, of the poet adapting his own general erudition to the requirements of the poem.

The same happens in the poem's second quatrain, which has received less attention, although it is one of the poet's most Petrarchan allusions: Latona, who is mentioned in Petrarch's sonnet 43, was the mother of both Apollo and Diana. The former, in his pursuit of Daphne, is a prototype of the poet—

Il figliuol di Latona avea già nove  
 volte guardato dal balcon sovrano,  
 per quella ch'alcun tempo mosse invano  
 i suoi sospiri, et or gli altrui commove (*Rime sparse* 43:1-4)

—while the latter too plays an important part in Petrarch's collection, for Acteon's fatal glimpse of her, alluded to in Santillana's poem, is the mythological episode that closes *canzone* 23. That Petrarch refers to Apollo as "il figliuol di Latona" may have suggested "fija de Latona" to Santillana; in any case, although references to Diana as Latona's daughter are common throughout Latin literature, including the *Aeneid*, the *Metamorphoses*, and Ovid's *Heroides*, Petrarch never uses the phrase. One instance in the *Aeneid* is perhaps significant, however. In book one, when Aeneas first sees Dido, there is an extended simile describing the Carthaginian queen leading a procession in terms of Diana and her hunters; the simile is so long that one can lose track of whether it is Diana or Dido being described, and in his gloss on the simile, Villena specifically explains that Diana is "fija de Lathona" (192). The location of this simile in book one is important because it occurs very shortly after another key description, that of Venus being transfigured before Aeneas's eyes, from the old woman into the goddess who is also his mother: "Dicho esto, bolvióse. Mostrando aquel rosado cuello, resplandesció; e los cabellos suyos sueltos tendidos en el ayre dexaron olor diuino muy suaue. Abaxó las faldas soltándolas fasta en tierra, e en su andamio paresció claramente deesa" (Villena 163). This description of Venus, with her blond hair being scattered by the wind, became the *locus classicus* for all the Renaissance poems about an epiphanic vision of beauty, including Petrarch's,

Erano i capei d'oro a l'aura sparsi  
 che 'n mille dolci nodi gli avolgea,  
 e l'vago lume oltra misura ardea  
 di quei begli occhi, ch'or ne son sí scarsi. (*Rime sparse* 90:1-4)

and subsequent poems by Santillana himself (e.g., sonnet nine), as well as Garcilaso, Herrera, Góngora, etc. For his transfiguration poem, Santillana thus combines his general erudition (the first quatrain) with

veiled allusion to specific places in the Latin and Italian tradition, compounding mythologies in his evocation of the experience of pure beauty.

Thus, the pairing of Biblical and Petrarchan, Christian and pagan references may be “merely” literary, but it is also emblematic of Santillana’s allusive universe, employed to give substance to the base metaphor. The same thing happens in the tercets of Santillana’s sonnet. The emphasis on the woman’s speech (“el su fablar grato”) and movements (“el andar suyo”) again echo the *Aeneid* and Petrarch’s sonnet 90:

Non era l’andar suo cosa mortale,  
ma d’angelica forma; et le parole  
sonavan altro, che pur voce humana.  
Uno spirito celeste, un vivo sole  
fu quel ch’i’ vidi. (*Rime sparse* 90:9-13)

This basis for Santillana’s poem in turn again recalls Dante’s sonnet, where “li occhi no l’ardiscon di guardare” (50; ch. 26:4). So too does the description of the beloved’s graces:

Ella si va, sentendosi laudare,  
benignamente d’umiltà vestuta. (. . .)  
e par che de la sua labbia su mova  
un spirito soave pien d’amore,  
che va dicendo a l’anima: Sospira. (50; ch. 26, 5-6, 12-14)

Santillana’s “modo nueuo en humanidad” also recalls Dante’s “che Dio ne’ ntenda di far cosa nova” (*Vita nuova* 19).<sup>9</sup> The allusion to Beatrice, considering her subsequent role in the *Divine comedy*, completes the circle: Petrarch’s Laura may lead to subtexts in the classical, pagan tradition, but Dante’s beloved, when correctly understood, leads us back to Christianity, and thus to the evangelical transfiguration in the opening lines of Santillana’s poem. Finally the sonnet ends with an antithesis (“libre, bivo en catividad) that, while perfectly Petrarchan in form, as a poetic commonplace could have any number of sources.<sup>10</sup>

In the two sonnets discussed so far, classical and Dantean references underlay the more superficial and evident Petrarchan allusion. The reverse happens in a third sonnet:

Fedra dio regla e manda qu’e[n] amor,  
quando la lengua non se falla osada  
a demostrar la pena o la dolor  
que en el ánimo afflicto es enplentada,  
la pluma escriba e muestre ell ardor  
que dirruye la mente fatigada;

pues osa, mano mía, e sin temor  
 te faz ser vista fiel enamorada;  
     e non te piensses que tanta belleza  
 e sinçera claror quasi divina  
 contenga en sí la feroçe crüeza,  
     nin la nefanda sobervia maligna;  
 pues vaya lexos inútil pereza  
 e non se tema de ymagen benigna. (56)

As the rubric tells us, in this poem the author shows how he should not have dared to speak to his lady of the love he bore, but should have written about it, as Phaedra did to her beloved Hippolytus, in Ovid's book of epistles. Indeed, *Heroides* 4 opens with an introduction in which Phaedra defends herself for writing a letter; what modesty forbids her to say, love commands her to write ("las cosas que verguença estorva dezir, el amor las mandó escrevir, como no sea cosa segura menospreçiar las cosas qu'el amor mandó, pues que rreyna sobre los grandes señores y tiene poderío sobre los dioses," Rodríguez del Padrón 87). Yet the *Heroides* are not the only reason for the stricture of silence; part of the motivation comes from the poetic tradition on which Santillana was drawing. Silence, as an adjunct to secrecy, was an important part of the love-code in Provençal poetry, one grounded in the social milieu from which it arose. Alfonsi, in her thematological/lexical analysis of troubadour lyric, connects secrecy to the key question of *mezura*, self-control, and further notes that the same lexemes are used "by the poet who must secret his love from his lady, for fear of displeasing her through such a revelation" (233). Dronke (in a passage quoted by Kendrick, 161) also notes that "the secrecy of *amour courtois* springs rather from the universal notion of love as a mystery not to be profaned by the outside world, not to be shared by any but the beloved." The *Vita nuova* exemplifies such a situation: Dante's desire for secrecy leads to his use of a "screen lady," and is due mainly to his fear of ridicule from "molti pieni d'invidia [chi] già si procacciavano di sapere di me quello che io volea del tutto celare ad altrui" (ch. 4). But the silencing of the poet, with its concomitant sense of secrecy, discretion, forbidden speech, and eventual sublimation into writing, became important features of Petrarch's *Rime sparse*, and from the beginning of the collection he developed what was a commonplace of courtly love into a poesis of deep social, emotional, and aesthetic significance.

The topos of the silenced poet first appears in the important sonnet five of the *Rime sparse*. In it, the poet for the first time alludes to the myth of Daphne and Apollo, and tells us, albeit obliquely, his beloved's name, as he establishes the goals or purpose of his poetry:

Quando io movo i sospiri a chiamar voi  
 e'l nome che nel cor mi scrisse Amore,  
 LAU-dando s'incomincia udir di fore  
 il suon de' primi dolci accenti suoi;  
 vostro stato RE-al che'ncontro poi  
 radoppia a l'alta impresa il mio valore;  
 ma "TA-ci" grida il fin, "ché farle onore  
 è d'altri omeri soma che da' tuoi." (*Rime sparse* 5:1-8)

Laura's name is here given in a Hermetic fashion, broken down into syllables that are then incorporated into words that describe the poet's relationship to her: he is, not surprisingly, too LAU-d her for her RE-gal state. Yet he is also silenced and threatened with death, and these are much more problematic features, for the syllable incorporated into the word *TA-ci* is not necessary to her name; only in this poem is her name given as *Laureta* rather than *Laura*.<sup>11</sup> Within the poem two related reasons for the silencing are given: that Petrarch is perhaps not the poet whose task it is to praise her, and that Apollo, god of poetry, will be jealous of any mortal who dares to praise green boughs, implicitly of the laurel tree that was once the nymph Daphne. Petrarch must cease his praise because "farle onore / è d'altri omeri soma che da' tuoi." The word *omeri* means shoulders, but is also recalls Dante's "Omero poeta sovrano" (*Inferno* 4:88), the ur-poet and the first soul identified for the Pilgrim after passing through the gates of Hell. Thus the more fitting shoulders belong to another poet, one more worthy or more capable than Petrarch, perhaps Homer, perhaps Dante himself. But why should Petrarch emphasize in one of his first sonnets this need to keep silent?

Within the *Rime sparse* the notion that Petrarch's praise of Laura could lead to forbidden speech is clarified in a poem related to sonnet five, the famous *canzone* 23. This poem in many ways recapitulates those preceding it; at the beginning, the poet is once again not yet touched by love, "Nel dolce tempo de la prima etade . . . lagrima ancor non mi bagnava il petto / né rompea il sonno" (*Rime sparse* 23: 1, 27-28). This prelapsarian state is brought to a sudden end when love takes as his ally a lady "ver cui poco giamai mi valse o vale / ingegno o forza o dimandar perdono" (35-36); together, Love and the Lady succeed in transforming him from a man into a green laurel. Thus Petrarch emphasizes the element of speech as something to which Laura is impervious, while recalling the Apollo/Daphne myth first evoked in the closing lines of sonnet five. Throughout *canzone* 23, Petrarch continues to stress the powerlessness of speech as a means of affecting Laura. The poet is successively transformed, like Cygnus, into a swan, whose shrill voice is incapable of moving Laura with its song; Laura then opens his chest and presents his own heart to him, saying "Di ciò non far parola" (74). Later, not recognizing her, he confesses

the truth and is turned, in imitation of Byblis, into a stone; after she has pitied him and restored him to his first state, he confesses yet again, and in appropriate imitation of Echo, is turned to rock.

The poem ends in Petrarch's admission to the reader of the sexual nature of his love. Like Acteon, he spies on his beloved bathing; in the closing, he compares himself to Semele and Ganymede, and wishes to be like Jupiter descending on Danae. This disclosure has been anticipated by the erotic nature of the myths alluded to earlier in the poem, and taken as a whole the myths provide an erotic gloss to the problem of his silencing. Although the final confession is made only to the reader, and not to Laura, it provides a rationale for her insistence on his silence; the poet's voicing of his desire reveals his initial failure to adhere to the social code of discretion, while his use of mythology, as roundabout ways of communicating his desire, demonstrates a subsequent internalization of that code. His repeated rejection and transformations attach to his silencing a set of emotions including desire, fear, and shame. Yet in addition to explaining the silencing in sonnet five, *canzone* 23 also invigorates it with a new, aesthetic dimension, "ond'io gridai con carta et con incostro" (99). In this line the poet draws an important connection between the silence imposed on him and his recourse to paper and ink. By doing so he moves beyond the troubadour lyric, which was always composed with an oral performance and a specific social situation in mind. With the silence imposed on him by Laura, Petrarch's poetry becomes a text primarily intended to be read, and thus free of any particularized time, space, and event.<sup>12</sup>

The ramifications of his silencing and its related issues extend throughout the *Rime sparse*, and only a few connections will be outlined here. As already noted, in sonnet five and *canzone* 23, silencing, represented by the verb *tacere*, plays an important, mediating role between the general semantic field of speaking (*parlare, dire, cantare*, etc.) and that of writing (*scrivere, penna, carta, inchiostro*). In its most concentrated form, the conflict can appear in a single antithetical line, as in *canzone* 71: "la doglia mia, la qual *tacendo i' grido*" (l. 6; emphasis mine).<sup>13</sup> Silencing is also fundamental to the character of his poetry because its mediating role between speaking and writing is essential to the collection: without it, there could be no collection, only a miscellany of poems all composed for a specific performative occasion. It is writing that joined together Petrarch's rhymes, which otherwise would, like his sighs, be scattered to the winds and be inaudible today. At the same time, writing gives a new meaning to "scattered," for if it preserves the poems, it also concomitantly deprives us of the poet's presence, and isolates him from us. Thus they are scattered anew in a different way, throughout his book and throughout his readers, who may, like Laura and Apollo, pass harsh judgment on his

ability.

Coming back to Santillana, we see in his sonnet a similar preoccupation with the role of writing in relation to courtly love, to chivalry, and to orality. Phaedra's reason for writing is self-serving, an excuse to communicate an adulterous and technically incestuous passion, but nothing in Santillana's poem identifies her with that narrative context, or distinguishes her from the figure of the courtly beloved who steers her lover towards the more discreet form of communication. This beauty, which in a poem like the first and the fourteenth sonnets can be like a trap that leaves the lover blinded and a prisoner of love, here is a sign of actual benevolence, "non se tema de ymagen benigna" (l. 14). Moreover, in this poem, as in sonnet 13 ("Calla la pluma e luze la espada"), Santillana is concerned with the relationship of arms and letters, but while they are in opposition in the later poem, the language of sonnet seven repeatedly invokes the parallel between these two manual activities. Thus when the tongue lacks daring, the hand must show its ardor, the hand must dare and fearlessly make itself seen, it must not fear the possibility of ferocious cruelty, and must distance itself from useless sloth. If Santillana does not anticipate Garcilaso in singing with the beloved's voice, he does in alternately taking up the pen and the sword. Finally and most importantly, here (as in sonnet 13) there is the clear notion of poetry as an act of writing. As we have seen, the transition from the immediacy of oral performance and communication to the more distant and mediated medium of writing, is a major preoccupation of Petrarch's. For Santillana too, composing sonnets is a consummately writerly act, for as a new genre that he learns only through reading the Italians, it is removed from the residual orality and musicality of the traditional Spanish lyric genres. Hence the density of erudition and intertextuality in his sonnets, greater than in the *canciones*, *villancicos*, and other lyric poems: the sonnets are meant only to be read, and the act of writing them encodes them from the start with a sign of his learning.

The combination of Petrarchan and unpetrarchan language and imagery continues into Santillana's later sonnets. For example, in sonnet 23 there are typically Petrarchan details, cited by López Bascañana, such as "¿seré yo culpado / si moriré por vos, dona gentil" (6-7) and "la vuestra figura, / angélico viso e forma exçelente" (10-11), which particularly echoes, both semantically and phonetically, Petrarch's "l'angelica figura e'l dolce riso" (*Rime sparse* 149:2), yet these expressions of admiration coexist with scholastic and thus anti-Petrarchan terminology such as "non digo 'a fortiori' mas de grado" (l. 8). Many more examples of this kind of combination could be adduced; the result is that, while Petrarch is certainly a major presence in the allusive universe of Santillana's sonnets, he must share that spot with a number of other poets, and in the poems his

idiom must cohabit with other languages. The effect, as noted earlier, is of Santillana marshalling all his erudition, all his linguistic resources to meet the demands of a given poem, rather than to the work of a select predecessor who is his poetic father. Petrarch can often become a source for details, in what Lapesa characterized as a "poesía ornamental" (198).

It is, indeed, easy to overestimate Petrarch's role in Santillana's poetry, for, again citing Lapesa, in his sonnets the Castilian poet fits into the Petrarchan formal mold all the themes of courtly love (187). The effect of the sonnets, on a modern reader, is of a peculiar reading of Petrarch that emphasizes what is most medieval, courtly, and even feudal in his poetry. That reading was typical of the fifteenth century, but its inscription into Castilian poetry remained, as all students of Spanish literary history know, an aborted effort. As Di Camillo noted (98), Santillana admired the Italians but in the "Prohemio e carta" could only describe their superiority in terms of musicality. Thus Santillana's attempt to duplicate the musicality of Italian in Spanish, by writing sonnets and adopting the hendecasyllable, only resulted in adding new variations to the repertoire of metrical rules, rather than supplanting them. The next century would stress the Italians' use of imagery and the hendecasyllable's capacity for adopting any stylistic level, but in terms of imagery, Santillana's sonnets belong to the same general category as his poetry in traditional Castilian genres, particularly the *canciones*. Received by his successors as simply metrical innovations, his sonnets were not sufficiently appealing, and his lead was not followed. As Di Camillo puts it, "si estos poetas [que siguieron a Santillana] leyeron a Dante, etc., no apreciaron en ellos las bellezas que aquél descubrió. . . . Si únicamente Santillana se lanzó a la empresa, ello de por sí ya indica su alto nivel de madurez crítica" (98). Those few sixteenth-century authors who knew Santillana's poems found them praiseworthy but primitive, not only because of the metrical aberrations but because the definitive naturalization of the Italian poetry in Spain was based on very different aesthetic grounds.

But it is also possible to underestimate Petrarch's role in Santillana's sonnets. If Santillana takes ornamental details from Petrarch or Machaut, that does not mean he cannot also enter a dialogue with a broad range of predecessors. The sixteenth-century imitators of Petrarch in Italy and in Spain wrote in the political and cultural context of an Italian collapse that made the Spanish appropriation of Italy possible, and was also responsible for the elaboration of the very neo-Ciceronian imitation theory that shaped the reception of Petrarch. By contrast, in mid-fifteenth-century Castile there was no dream of Italian conquest, nor, even in Italy, an elaborate theory of strict Petrarchist imitation, and the absence of a preoccupation with strictly following models allowed Santillana to practice a much freer, more eclectic type of imitation that was very much of the Renais-

sance. In this context, the contrast between Petrarch's sonnet five and Santillana's sonnet three can be our guide to a more correct understanding. Laura silences Petrarch with the threat of his inferiority to those worthier shoulders, ostensibly Homer's but more likely Dante's and Virgil's. On the other hand, when Phaedra orders Santillana to take up his pen and write, hers is a benign image; like Venus revealing herself to Aeneas, she is not just a goddess, but also his mother, and as such she welcomes him into the company of the other poets whose writing he can only read, Virgil and Ovid, Petrarch and Dante. Santillana's may not be a profound Petrarchism, but neither is it a mere use of decorative devices. Rather, he uses allusions to his predecessor's work to establish his own difference, and to launch himself into the canon.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup>The original manuscript sent by Santillana to the Constable of Portugal has not been preserved, and so it is impossible to judge whether the works that it accompanied were truly juvenilia, or whether Santillana was employing the topos of false modesty; see Weiss 166-81. The prologue does appear in the principal source for Santillana's poetry: the fifteenth century manuscript thought to be the one sent by Santillana to his nephew Gómez Manrique (now University of Salamanca 2655). Its presence in this and other manuscripts substantiates an intended function that went beyond the merely dedicatory.

<sup>2</sup>Curtius characterizes Santillana's preface as a combination of the "eulogy of poetry" and "Biblical poetics" topos, citing the dependence on St. Isidore and Cassiodorus and comparing the preface to Encina's "Arte" in this regard (549). For a dissenting view on the question of Biblical poetics, see Di Camillo, 100.

<sup>3</sup>Here occurs one of Santillana's typical mistakes, which nonetheless shows a desire to prove his erudition. Anxious to display his knowledge of Petrarch's work, he quotes the first line of the sonnet "Rotta è l'alta colonna e'l verde lauro," but asserts it marks the death of King Robert rather than that of Cardinal Giovanni Colonna.

<sup>4</sup>Santillana at this point digresses briefly to consider the base style, practiced by those "infimos . . . que syn ningund orden, regla nin cuento fazen estos romances e cantares de que las gentes de baxa e servil condición se alegran" (444). The need to discuss the base style is again a consequence of his emphasis on formal criteria and his eclecticism; whether *romances* refers to the ballad form or to verse narrations is unclear; see López Estrada 106-8 and bibliography therein.

<sup>5</sup>That Santillana repeatedly praises patrons is significant, given his own sponsorship of humanist translations, for it suggests a theory of indirect authorship that would atone for his own inability to read Latin.

<sup>6</sup>Santillana's knowledge of classical literature, at least in translation, in fact went beyond those authors mentioned in the prologue, as can be seen from Schiff's description of his library. For example, Ovid is not mentioned in the prologue, even though Santillana owned a Spanish translation of Berçuire's *Ovide Moralisé* (see Schiff 86-86), and in a letter to his son Pedro González de Mendoza, Santillana

mentions commissioning a translation of the *Metamorphoses* (*Obras completas* 457; see also Schiff lxxxiv and xc-xci) even as he regrets his failure to learn Latin (456). For a contrary view of Santillana's knowledge of Latin, see López Grigera.

<sup>7</sup>It is thought that the first 17 were the poems sent by the poet to Violante de Prades in 1444, and such internal evidence as exists for this group points to composition between 1438 and 1444; as to the other 25, all the ones that can be dated were written in the 1450s. Thus the traditional early/late division has not been contradicted, although there is no way of knowing if any of the undated poems were written earlier than is supposed. For a thorough discussion of the dating, classification, and metrical criticism of the sonnets see Kerkhof and Tuin in Santillana, *Los sonetos* 52-57.

<sup>8</sup>Raw data for a more thorough stylistic analysis of Santillana's sonnets can be found in Solà-Solé, who also contrasts his results to a control group of sonnets by Golden Age poets from Boscán and Garcilaso to Quevedo. He notes (27-28) the high incidence of proper names (2.16 per poem versus 0.75 for the control group), and how 16.6% of these are Biblical, a category that almost disappears in the control group. He also observes (28-29) the preponderance of military terms, religious terms, and terms of suffering in Santillana, and the relative absence of terms of joy, parts of the body, and of words referring to kisses.

<sup>9</sup>That Santillana knew the *Vita nuova* is admittedly problematic; Schiff, in his catalog of the remnants of Santillana's library, found only two manuscripts which in turn contained only the *canzoni* from the *Vita nuova* (273-74, 329-31). Yet he also records (321) only one manuscript of the *Rime sparse*, containing only the poems *in morte*. Clearly Santillana's reading must have gone beyond those items that survived intact in the library of the Dukes of Infantado in the late nineteenth century.

<sup>10</sup>On Santillana's use of poetic clichés, see Colombí-Monguió, and the notes to Santillana's sonnet 19 in *Los sonetos* 81, where the seemingly Petrarchan antithetical poem "Lexos de vos e çerca del cuydado" is shown to be a close imitation of a poem by Machaut.

<sup>11</sup>See Barolini on the importance of the concepts contained in "this famous play on the beloved's name, parsed as LAU-RE-TA, far from being a frivolous gesture toward rhetorical virtuosity" (20), and on the dialectic between unity and fragmentation throughout the collection.

<sup>12</sup>For a similar reading of *canzone* 23 but which does not extend the analysis to other poems in the collection, see Kerrigan and Braden 164-67.

<sup>13</sup>Noferi links this line to the crucial role of inexpressibility in the collection: "Ma questo in realtà è il prezzo del biglietto d'ingresso nel perimetro del Canzoniere, poichè il testo non solo, ovviamente, è un testo poetico: è esso stesso, metalinguisticamente, interrogazione sulla possibilità di dire l'indicibile e l'interdetto, di includere il 'silenzio' nella parola, di immettere il muto 'clamor cordis' nella lettera clamante della scrittura, (giusta il verso emblematico 'la doglia mia, la qual tacendo i' grido') nel paradosso della produzione in atto della parola impossibile" (6).

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