

# GARCILASO'S SONNET XXII: A RE-EXAMINATION IN THE LIGHT OF PHENOMENOLOGICAL ETHICS OF VALUES

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Sonnet XXII has been widely recognized as one of Garcilaso's more elusive poems because of the variety of ways in which its many ambiguities allow it to be interpreted. Yet one is encouraged by its apparent simplicity. The poem is as follows:

Con ansia estrema de mirar qué tiene  
vuestro pecho escondido allá en su centro  
y ver si a lo de fuera lo de dentro  
en apariencia y ser igual conviene,  
en él puse la vista, mas detiene  
de vuestra hermosura el duro encuentro  
mis ojos, y no pasan tan adentro  
que miren lo qu'el alma en sí contiene.  
Y así se quedan tristes en la puerta  
hecha, por mi dolor, con essa mano,  
que aun a su mismo pecho no perdona;  
donde vi claro mi esperanza muerta  
y el golpe, que en vos hizo amor en vano,  
*non esservi passato oltra la gona.*

The last line, which translates as "not having penetrated beyond your gown," is a direct quotation from Petrarch's Canzone 23.

Sonnet XXII has recently been discussed in some detail by Daniel Heiple (241-50) and by Elias Rivers in his review of Heiple's book (105-106). Rivers accepts Heiple's recognition of the contribution made by Rivers himself in his 1974 critical edition of Garcilaso's works (122-24), but he finally questions some of Heiple's observations on the basis of a study by Antonio Gargano. The current consensus is that Sonnet XXII presents, in the context of an unexpected encounter between the poet and the lady, an opposition between the poet's initial intention to behold the lady's inner beauty and his own susceptibility to the power of her sensuous, outer beauty, which hinders the poet's efforts to reach his goal. Shortly before Rivers' edition appeared, Ana María Snell published an article in which she discusses Sonnet XXII.<sup>1</sup> Snell's view of Sonnet XXII would seem to

deviate from the interpretations of Rivers and Heiple in that she sees the lady's modest action of shielding her breast from the poet's scrutiny as having the effect of hindering the poet's Platonic interest in her. In fact, she regards that professed interest on the part of the poet as being primarily hindered from within by the poet himself, for she considers the poet's idealistic claims to be a subtle disguise for sensual desire and the poem's irony to be its central feature. Except for Gargano, who appears unaware of Snell's study, subsequent critics have concurred with Snell in considering the poet to be flirtatiously feigning innocence, and they have all (including Gargano) shared Snell's view that this sonnet describes a moment when the poet's interest in the lady as a spiritual person was effectively thwarted by the impression made on him by her physical beauty, the result being her rebuff and the poet's present despair. Rivers affirms: "A nuestro parecer, *de vuestra hermosura el duro encuentro* (v. 6) podría quizá ser un golpe de mano con el que se tapó la dama el pecho (vv. 9-10 y 13); . . . Quizá más verosímil sea un sentido figurativo: su hermosura carnal era de por sí una cruel barrera para los ojos del poeta, quien quería verle el alma" (1974: 123). According to Heiple,

The lover, blinded by exterior beauty, could not see the interior virtue of his mistress, and in fact, in this external beauty he "sees" his hopes die: "donde vi claro mi esperanza muerta." These hopes are not the courtly desire of conquest, but the Platonic desire of an intellectually requited love. His love of sensual beauty and his inability to enter the door signify the death of Platonic love, further indicated by the fact that his love has not been reciprocated. Cupid's arrows have not passed the gown of the mistress, in the same way his vision, struck by her sensual beauty, could not pass the covering of the body. (248)

Like Rivers, Heiple would seem to assert that the primal power of the lady's physical beauty is represented as brutally arresting the poet's initial, more sublimated interest in her: "the irony of this sonnet indeed runs deep, for the door that closes out sensuality has become a door that shuts out the access to pure Platonic love" (Heiple 246). Heiple considers the hand in the first tercet to be that of Cupid (246-50). Rivers disagrees with this interpretation, favoring instead Gargano's view that the hand is that of the lady. Although disagreement on this point has not led to differences between Rivers and Heiple as to how Sonnet XXII as a whole should be interpreted, our own reading of the poem must favor here the interpretations of Rivers and Gargano. It seems to us that because the words "por mi dolor" immediately follow "puerta hecha," it would be more likely that at that instant the poet is contemplating not a "door" (access) opened by

love but a "door" that has been closed by the lady's resistance. In the present comments there is no need to dwell on differences between previous interpretations of this sonnet, since our main purpose is to consider the poem in a new perspective, that of the phenomenological ethics of values. It is, however, necessary that we set forth our own reading of the poem and explain the differences between it and the contemporary interpretive perspective on Sonnet XXII established by Snell, Rivers, Heiple, and Gargano.

Two elements in the interpretations by Rivers and Heiple cannot, we feel, be justified by the language of the poem itself, by the text. One is the assumption that in the brief period described by the poem, the poet at some point focuses his attention on the lady as an object of sensuous pleasure, even if such pleasure can be experienced visually. Another is that, even if the poet does turn his attention to the lady's physical beauty, his doing so would have had to conflict with his interest in her as a spiritual person. Although one can imagine that in the scene described by the poem these events might have occurred, we see no evidence in the text that supports the conclusion that either actually did. That the poet is cognizant of the beauty of the lady's breast or bosom is evident from the implications of lines 3-4: we are led to conclude that "en apariencia y ser igual conviene," (which we read as "matches . . . in appearance and being equal" or, "matches in appearance and [possessing] equal being," filling a possible ellipsis) means "equal in beauty." Yet the poet's recognition of the physical beauty of the lady's bosom need not imply a diminution of his interest in her inner disposition and personality. The lines ". . . si a lo de fuera lo de dentro / en apariencia y ser igual conviene" do seem to mean that he wondered whether he could find in her an inner beauty that matched the beauty of her outward appearance. However, in order for these lines to be interpreted to mean that at the moment in question the poet was moved to make the comparison only by the impression made on him by her physical beauty, he must be thought of as referring to an equal *degree* of beauty. It is more plausible that "en . . . ser igual conviene" refers to whether what is within the lady, her inner nature, has the same general *quality* as what is without. Also, if the question were one of degree (whether she is inwardly as beautiful as she is outwardly), his knowing the answer would involve the problem of applying the same standard of measure to types of beauty that are fundamentally different. That difficulty is eliminated if the poet is understood merely to be referring to whether she has a spiritual beauty that harmonizes with, corresponds to, her corporeal beauty, whether she *is beautiful both inwardly and outwardly*.

The specific sense assigned to the word "conviene" is clearly of fundamental importance. Does it mean "suits" in the sense of "is in keeping with" or in the sense of "matches?" What the poet seems to want to

know is whether the lady's inward beauty is as appealing and inviting as her outward beauty; but since he has directed his sight at her breast it is not clear whether what he has in mind when he refers to "lo de fuera" is her outward beauty in general or specifically the outward beauty of her breast. Also, we do not know whether he is looking at her breast because it is the location of her heart, the seat of the emotions, or whether he is aware, at that moment, of the physical beauty of her bosom; and if it is the latter, we do not know whether he is conscious of the beauty of her skin or the beauty of her bust. Snell (185) follows El Brocense in assuming not only that it is the latter but that the lady's breast is uncovered. The indefinite "lo de fuera" can refer to her appearance in general, or ambiguously to both the outward beauty of her bosom and her appearance in general. In any case, the internal beauty that the poet hopes to glimpse in the lady must be much richer than a soul that is merely not at variance with the lady's external beauty, not inconsistent with it. On the basis of the words "en . . . ser igual," we can conclude, as we have explained, that he must mean equal in kind (appealing and inviting). For this reason we have assigned to the word "conviene" the meaning of "matches" and not as "is suited to" or words to that effect. A definition of *convenir* in the *Diccionario de autoridades* is "Vale también pertenecer, ser a propósito y correspondiente a la naturaleza o calidad de alguna cosa" (it also means to belong, to be fitting and corresponding to the nature or quality of something). Also, in line 4 the poet says that he wondered if the lady's inward beauty matches her outward beauty "en apariencia" and being equal. One can only question how the poet could have anticipated that her inward beauty could "appear" to him at all. Perhaps he was referring to the possibility of her providing concrete evidence of her sensitive humanity by displaying delicacy in relation to himself—as opposed to what actually happened, her assuming that his look constituted a threat.

In any case, the interpretation we propose, that the poet is concerned with whether the lady's inward beauty is compatible with her outward beauty, is also consistent with the perspective of Renaissance classicism, the aesthetic orientation with which Garcilaso has traditionally been most identified. Renaissance classicism was grounded in a humanistic concept of natural human innocence and an ideal of beauty based on the harmony of body and spirit (*kalokagathia*). That ideal is acclaimed, for example, in Castiglione's *Il Cortegiano*, a work which we know Garcilaso to have held in the highest regard. Judging by the excellence of Garcilaso's verse, we have every reason to believe that he consciously embraced the classicist standard of an equilibrium of formal perfection and substance, of subjective appropriation and objective content. On the basis of these considerations, it seems even more unlikely that he would posit a fictional

situation in which inner and outer beauty are understood to be incompatible and thus to disorient the poet.

The only element in Sonnet XXII that could conceivably lead one to conclude that the poet's interest in beholding the lady's inner being has been overpowered by her sensuous appeal is the word "duro," in line 6. In fact, that word is, more than any other single element, decisive in determining one's interpretation of the poem. Snell does not address the issue, but Rivers reads the word "duro" to mean "cruel" or pitiless, apparently in the sense that the lady's sensual ("carnal") appeal has the effect of quashing the poet's initial, spiritual interest in her by provoking in him the compulsive unrestraint of sensual appetite. As can be seen from the passage cited above, Heiple takes the same view, suggesting that the impact of the lady's bosom (in the physical sense) on the poet was such as to disorient him and send him reeling, as it were, in an attitude of sensual fixation that prevented him from being able to attempt to concentrate further on the lady's soul. We will argue, however, that this interpretation is not entirely cogent.

If "duro" is understood to mean "cruel" or "pitiless," then the interpretations of Rivers and Heiple follow naturally enough. However, the word can also mean "resistant" or "forbidding," and when it is understood in this way, the poet can be seen as being brought up short not—we wish to suggest—because of any inherent antagonism between spiritual beauty and sensual appeal but because of resistance met with in the lady's *modesty*. The protective function of sexual modesty is described by Max Scheler as follows:

Modesty is, as it were, the "natural veil of the soul" in our entire sexuality. Nietzsche has justifiably emphasized Madam Guyon's words that modesty is "ce que enveloppe le corps." . . . clothes are only a crystallization of shame. They are also a symbolization of shame for bodies made in the arts. However, in a phenomenological focus, shame must be compared to a refined aura of invulnerability and untouchability felt to be an objective guard. (*Person and Self-Value* 23-24)

The lady's warding off the poet, probably in a reflex, causes *not* him but *her* to hinder love's claims, for she concentrates attention on the physical and then repels his attention because it is focused as it is. When the poet experiences a "duro encuentro" with her beauty that thwarts his look, he does indeed meet with sudden resistance to his forward advance. However, that resistance does not occur because the concrete sight of the lady's bosom caused the poet's initial innocent interest to be unexpectedly countered by a propensity in him that is incompatible with that innocence.

The poet's experience does not refer to an objective characteristic of the encounter itself but to his having encountered a resistance inherent to the essential character of the lady's beauty. Hers is a precipitous modesty that prevents him from glimpsing her spirit more fully. A detail of language that appears to have gone unnoticed in previous readings of Sonnet XXII is the poet's use of the word "de" instead of "con" in line 6. Because of the word "de" we read this line on the literal level as "your beauty's hard encounter" instead of "the hard encounter *with* your beauty." In doing so, we have tried to capture the nuance that the circumstance causing the poet's encounter with her beauty to seem "hard" is not the type of that beauty (for example, sensual beauty) nor any passionately arresting susceptibility to the voluptuous on the poet's part but that the impression of "hardness" is a function of the internal nature, the evaluating tendency and attitude of mind, of the lady. Also, the word "detiene" in line 5 implies the presence of an active subject. Such a subject can, of course, only be the lady, who is represented by the synecdoche "vuestra hermosura." This passage is reminiscent of the alternative reading of the line 4 of Garcilaso's Sonnet 23. There the lady's sensual appeal is seen as heightened by her beauty's restraining modesty:

En tanto que de rosa y d'azucena  
se muestra la color en vuestro gesto,  
y que vuestro mirar ardiente, honesto,  
enciende el corazón y lo refrena . . .

In any case, when the word "detiene" in Sonnet XXII is interpreted thus, the poet's respectful interest in the lady as a person is given as having been countered by a display of modesty on her part. This reading is consistent with the event referred to in the third stanza, the lady's shielding her bosom from the poet's eyes—an action that she evidently performs with such insistence as to abort further communication between herself and the poet and thus end the encounter. Interpreting the second stanza to mean that the poet's own reaction to the lady's beauty is what hindered his attempt to behold her soul is inconsistent with this explanation given by the poet himself in the third stanza, if that stanza is understood as meaning, as we agree with Snell (185) and Gargano (42) that it does, that the lady covers her breast with her hand.

Now that we have introduced our own perspective with regard to Sonnet XXII, let us consider the interpretation of Antonio Gargano. At present it stands as the uncontested, or "preferred," interpretation of Sonnet XXII, having been accepted by Alicia de Colombí-Monguió in a review article on Gargano's book and approved of by Rivers in a review article of

Heiple's book.<sup>2</sup> With characteristic tact, Rivers, in the course of faulting Heiple for not having taken Gargano's book on Garcilaso into account, extols Gargano's interpretation of Sonnet XXII in spite of Gargano's having, in that same interpretation, taken issue with Rivers' own views on the poem. Rivers attempts no defense of his own point of view, presumably because a review article on Heiple's book was not an appropriate forum. Yet, as we shall explain, what differences exist between Gargano's interpretation and Rivers' do not seem to us necessarily to resolve themselves so clearly in Gargano's favor.

Gargano (28) disagrees with Rivers' opinion that in Sonnet XXII the "disdain, or coy withdrawal" of the lady, whom Rivers had referred to as being "deliberately cruel," elicits in the poet not tragic suffering but "sophisticated frivolity" evidenced in his witty quotation of Petrarch in the last line (*Poems* 26-28). Gargano considers Rivers' interpretation to imply that the poem lacks depth (28-29), himself taking the view that the sonnet XXII is the account of a painful experience of frustration (41). It is our own view that the otherwise fine and suggestive analyses of Sonnet XXII by Rivers and Gargano, as well as of Heiple and Snell, share the limitation of not recognizing the central issue, the lady's modesty. If the possibility of focusing on the lady's modesty presented itself to these critics, they may have been reluctant to place an emphasis on it because of not wishing to suggest that the poet intended to "fault" the lady or blame her for the impasse, for it is not clear from the poem that the poet has such an attitude. However, while it may appear that in his poetic complaint the poet regards her modesty as excessive, her high degree of modesty can also appear to him, as we shall see, to be an attribute of her beauty in the same way that self-value is a complementary attribute of the spiritual person. By this perspective the poet, upon beholding the inaccessible lady's elegant modesty, is actually more smitten by her than ever: hence his grief and his complaint.

Gargano recognizes the importance of line 6, "de vuestra hermosura el duro encuentro," for a reading of the whole poem (35), but he interprets that line to refer to the obstacle constituted by the arresting effect upon the poet's eyesight of the beautiful, unclothed hand with which the lady shields her bosom (38-40). When the poet is dazzled and hence stopped by the external, corporeal beauty of the hand, his spiritual vision is overpowered and he loses sight of the lady's "breast" in the specific internal sense of "soul," notwithstanding the ambiguity that the word "breast" also suggests "bosom" in the physical sense (50, 40-41). Thus, "y el golpe, que en vos hizo amor en vano" (l. 13) refers to the poet's look and its failure to attain the desired results. But Gargano sees the failure not as being due to the lady's guarding herself from the poet's advances, as we ourselves do,

but as being the result of his weakness, his not being able to avoid tearing himself away from the beauty of the lady's hand and proceed inward ("Lo sguardo . . . dell'amante non ha saputo evitare de arrestarse troppo al di qua del cuore" (The lover's look was incapable of avoiding being stopped to a regrettable extent before reaching [this side of] her heart: 41). So it is, according to Gargano, that line 11, "que aun a su mismo pecho no perdona" has the meaning that the lady's hand does not "pardon" her own breast in the sense that it will not allow it to be seen (40). The overall perspective offered by the poem, Gargano maintains, is that, far from any "cruelty" on the part of the lady being the cause of the poet's failure, the poet himself must bear the shame ("smacco": 39) and the guilt ("colpa": 51) for his error and consequent painful frustration (41). Gargano emphasizes the influence ("genealogia") of two poems by Petrarch (Sonnet 257 and Canzone 70) on Garcilaso's poem, even going so far as to cite line 44 of Canzone 70 ("il bel che mi si mostra intorno") to substantiate his interpretation of Sonnet XXII as though it were a line from Garcilaso's poem (50).<sup>3</sup> As we mentioned, Colombí de Monguió agrees with the conclusions that Gargano draws on the basis of intertextual influences. The influence of these poems by Petrarch on Sonnet XXII is undeniable, but it is our view that the assumption (by Gargano or any other critic) that intertextual influences are so decisive as to determine or restrict even thematic dimensions of subsequent compositions must ultimately be regarded as arbitrary.

Like other critics who have analyzed Sonnet XXII, Gargano sees the poet-persona as having become transfixed by the arresting power of physical beauty, but as we shall discuss further, he displaces that conclusion in a peculiar manner. Rivers, in the paragraph emphasized by Gargano, does not enter into details as to what he thinks obstructs the poet's original intention of beholding the lady's spiritual beauty, but we must assume that Rivers' explanation is the one we cited previously: that the lady's "carnal beauty was itself a cruel barrier for the eyes of the poet."<sup>4</sup> Gargano interprets Rivers' reference to "the lady's disdain, or coy withdrawal" to mean that the lady responded to a courtier's voyeurism with what Gargano call "pruderie" (28). Actually, when Rivers discusses line 6 (*Obras completas* 123), not only does he weigh two possibilities for an interpretation of line 6 ("hard encounter" referring either to the blow with an open hand when the lady covers her breast or to the barrier constituted by her carnal beauty) without expressing a clear preference for either, but his words "coy withdrawal" do not by themselves have a definite meaning. "Coy" can mean either bashful or coquettish or a combination of both. Its most likely meaning in this context is a coquettishly assumed bashfulness. Now, "coyness" understood in this sense is the opposite of *pruderie* if by that term we are to understand "prudishness," i.e., overly modest behavior. Coyness is an af-



fectured modesty that is intended to spur the interest of the suitor by presenting to him the female's resistance with the covert intention of inviting the male to overcome it. It is not entirely clear from Gargano's use of the French term *pruderie* whether he is referring to the pseudo-modesty of coyness or to actual prudishness, but he probably means the former. He does make it clear (28) that he disagrees with Rivers' conclusion that a mundane instance of courtly flirtation is the subject of the poem. Gargano seems justified in his view if we consider that it is difficult to reconcile the light tone of the words "coy withdrawal" with what the poet in lines 10 and 12 refers to as the painful experience of his hope's death. If Sonnet XXII is not tragic, it is close to it, which is not to say that it does not also have an ironic and even humorous dimension as well. On the other hand, Rivers' idea of "the lady's disdain" would seem to go too far in the direction of emphasizing the deliberate nature of the lady's behavior: her action of fending off the poet's attention may seem brutal to the poet and it may indeed constitute a painful slight, but it need not be regarded as an act of disdain. Nor can we find in the poem a basis for regarding her modesty as being coquettish, even if it does have the effect of concentrating attention on herself as an object of desire. But Rivers' interpretation of the lady's being "deliberately cruel" and "disdainful" is not so inaccurate as Gargano claims if we see the lady as projecting her own preoccupation with the sensual (with the sensual preoccupations of others) onto the poet and as then rejecting him because of what she assumes to be his attitude. She would have placed her person at no significant risk if, before responding defensively, she had briefly hesitated in order to attempt to discern the nature of the poet's interest. Presumably, the poet would at that point have been able to satisfy his initial curiosity by seeing that the lady was not given to boringly mechanical behavior—that, indeed, her inner beauty *did* match her outer beauty. On the other hand, a defensive response on her part would not seem inappropriate if the poet's initial look at her breast revealed itself as a fixed gaze at her physical beauty, especially given the relatively austere official morality of the day. In that case Snell's view that the lady's reaction was justified (185) would follow logically. But we have no basis in the text of the poem either for attributing indelicate behavior to the poet nor, as we have mentioned, even for assuming that the lady's physical beauty was, at that moment, the basis of the poet's interest.

The main weakness in Gargano's interpretation of Sonnet XXII is his view that the lady's physical beauty, which arrests the poet's eyes, is the beauty of her hand. Considered in the abstract, such an explanation seems plausible enough, especially if we also postulate the context of a rarified cultural environment characterized by a high degree of restraint where sexual matters are concerned, or one so repressive as to impose rig-

orous norms of bodily shame. The problem is that the poem does not actually *say* that what consumes the poet's interest is the beauty of the lady's hand. It says "your beauty's hard encounter stops my eyes." True enough, the poem does not say "your physical beauty in general" either. It is not even made clear from the language itself that those words are specific even to the extent of referring to the lady's physical beauty. That much must be inferred. But the poet strongly suggests, with his eyes on the lady's breast and his reference to the beautiful appearance of what is without, that his consciousness of her physical beauty is not limited to a mere hand. One can only wonder where an interpretation that places such high value on the lady's hand could have come from. True enough, the lady's corporeal beauty was recognized by the poet prior to the moment referred to in the poem. But it seems to us that the problem with the prior interpretations of Sonnet XXII by Herrera, El Brocense, and Tamayo—that the poet was distracted from his intention to contemplate the lady's heart by her physical beauty—is that the image of the poet-persona thus suggested is not an image of the elegant and sophisticated man whose voice is heard in the poem; it is that of a green, goggle-eyed youth. Could it be that Gargano posits the idea that the poet is in awe of the lady's hand in order to prevent the poet from appearing libidinous? If this was Gargano's intention, he attains that end, but our interest in the poet as a personality is compromised in the process. Also, if the attention of the poet (of his "eyes"—a figure of speech that represents him as a receptive subject) is arrested and fixed by the great enthusiasm that he feels for the beauty of the lady's hand, how can that same hand simultaneously cause him (his eyes) to be sad? And if the poet were able to suspend his enthusiasm for the beauty of the lady's hand to the extent of feeling sad, would he not also have the presence of mind to be able to proceed beyond the lady's external beauty (the beauty of her hand) and glimpse her inner person? That he was not able to do so is evident from the poem, but what prevented him? The explanation, we wish again to assert, is not that the lady's hand continued to absorb the poet's attention; it is that the lady herself averted his efforts to connect with her spiritually. We have no basis for holding the view that she wanted to prevent him from seeing that she did *not* possess the inner beauty he sought to behold. We can, however, conclude that with her hand she fended off the poet's attention.

But what specifically could have been her motive in doing so? In relation to this issue a series of troublesome questions emerge. Did she perceive his behavior as being forward? After all, he did have his eyes directed at her breast. He claims that he was not paying attention to her physical beauty, that he was attempting to look beyond it to see if her spiritual beauty matched it. But how was she to know that such was the case?

Perhaps it is he himself who must assume responsibility for having offended the lady's modesty and provoked the response that he now complains has caused him so much pain. Or perhaps she did notice his reserve in regard to her sensual appeal and feigned a defensive reaction because her vanity was piqued or because she found his behavior to be too unaggressive. Or did she have some other reason for not wanting to encourage him? Was she married? Did she want to conceal her inner personality because she was naturally introverted? Answering such questions, of course, requires information that we do not possess, information concerning the lady as an individual and how she perceived her encounter with the poet.

One is tempted conveniently to dispel the quandary with a statement to the effect that the "point" of Sonnet XXII is to make us generally conscious of the intriguingly ambiguous nature of language and experience, that the poem "makes us think" and proves the futility of attempting to make onesided interpretations and taking dogmatic stances. However, in our conviction that nothing is resolved in ambiguity, we wish to assert that interpretations are only possible if certain "ground rules" are established, facts that everyone can agree upon. In the case of Sonnet XXII, we would first of all acknowledge that we do not consider the poem to be exclusively playful and ironic. The irony of the poet's being painfully repulsed by a delicate hand and of bitter despair being evoked in language that is wittily sophisticated and paradoxical correspond to only one dimension of this complex poem. When interpreted figuratively, the sonnet also has an earnest, even somber side. Given that perspective, we would hold that, if the poet continues to be in great pain, it must be because he loves the lady. If he loves the lady, it must be because he beholds in her at least the external evidence of an ideal ethos of personality.<sup>5</sup> We can surmise that there is an ideal ethos of individual personality that the poet discerns in her as a value of which she is the bearer, for it is this ideal ethos that the poet loves. On the other hand, we have no evidence on which to base any other conclusion where she is concerned. Hence we may conclude that any such speculations are not important to the theme of this particular poem.

Because of a similar lack of information to the contrary, we must accept the poet's word as to the nature of his interest in the lady at the time of their encounter, and we must take the view that, even if the lady *is* married, the nature of his interest in her, as it is given in the poem, is as yet not such as necessarily to threaten the lady's virtue or reputation. Also, the poem represents the point of view of the poet, and it does not claim to represent that of the lady: we are thus justified in limiting the basis of our interpretation of the poem to information that the specific perspective of

the poet is able to offer. On these general grounds we are able to narrow down the range of possible implications of the passage in question and arrive at the following view: in her exquisite and attractive modesty, the lady responded to what was actually a proper and respectful interest in her on the part of the poet as though his interest in her had been of a different nature, although she may not have actually seen his attitude as being different at all. She may have merely been startled.

If one does not assume that the beauty of the lady's hand monopolized the poet's attention merely on the basis of Gargano's assertion that there was a tradition of such motifs (though Gargano does not cite any specific precedent for this particular one), the idea of the poet's subordinating all interest in every dimension of the lady's beauty to a preoccupation with her hand seems quite preposterous. For that assumption must be based on the premise that the poet's initial interest in the lady's inner beauty was tentative at best, yet in the first words of the poem the poet declares that it was "con ansia extrema" that he felt moved to behold that beauty. If we transport ourselves imaginatively to the situation described, placing ourselves in the position of the poet and seeing through his eyes, we must naturally infer that he witnesses the physical presence of *the whole woman*—not just her hand or even the beauty of her body but also her face (likely her most beautiful physical feature) and her comportment. Actually, it is the eyes, not the breast, that are the "window to the soul"—yet the lady's eyes are never mentioned, presumably because Garcilaso wanted to distinguish her attitude from the receptive attitude of the poet (who is actually identified with his eyes). When the poet says that he placed his eyes on the lady's "breast" in order to "see her inner nature," he is speaking figuratively. The only way that he could really "see" the lady's spiritual being would be in various manifestations of her personality, of her spiritual personhood ("person" being understood here as a unity of acts)—not only those that are able to be perceived sensorially at the same time that they are interpreted intellectually, but those that linger in mental images and become comprehensible only as they are contemplated retrospectively. How can the beauty of the lady's hand, unclothed and beautiful as it may be, compete with such a rich set of impressions? And how, if we do not see him as being repulsed by her, could her merely raising her hand make him forget every other dimension of her being? If he is not a green youth or effetely hypersensitive, delicate, and easily discouraged, it seems that it would have required considerably more than the lady's raising her hand for his interest in knowing her better to be thwarted.

But are we not now drawing conclusions about the character of the poet for which we have no real basis in the poem, conclusions such as we have already refused to draw about the lady? The difference here is

that it is the poet who speaks, not the lady. The poem is an act-value of the poet, an utterance of his voice. One can base justified inferences as to his mentality and attitudes on implications of style and, in that way, assess some behavior patterns that would be attributed to him as being more plausible than others. Garcilaso has a distinct literary personality, and it is different, in some respects, from the literary personality of, for example, Petrarch, with whom Gargano wants closely to associate Garcilaso. Whereas the serene melancholy of Petrarch in his *Canzoniere* is given at times to representing the poet's general disposition as being somewhat shrinking or languishing, Garcilaso is more often recklessly impetuous and self-destructive; whereas in Petrarch love is often painfully timid and unassertive, love in Garcilaso is often an epic force. It was Vossler who recognized in the style of Garcilaso a heroic character that contrasts with the more secluded and withdrawn idyllic style of authors like Petrarch (97-98). Of course, both Garcilaso and Petrarch share their most important feature, a deep and tenacious anguish at not having attained a remote preferred value.

Gargano's notion of the captivating hand in Sonnet XXII may well suggest an additional general problem, or perhaps danger, in criticism that places a strong emphasis on intertextual influences. We have already mentioned the problem of assuming that a subsequent author has retained the thematic focus of the works from which he or she drew. A related fallacy is that in establishing the influence of one author upon another it is possible to lose sight of the extent to which the author who was influenced still managed to develop a distinct and original literary personality of his or her own.

Previous interpretations of Sonnet XXII have contemplated only the poet's advance toward the lady and have ignored the second dynamic, which, from the poet's point of view, is the crucial issue: whether the actual essence of the lady is harmoniously directed ("matched") by her ideal essence and whether that ideal essence is as the poet envisions it. If such were the case, instead of being mechanically predisposed by conventional, bodily shame to avoid a devaluation by curbing the sex-drive and hastily fending off the poet, the lady might well have been prompted by less rigid (less "hard") and more thoughtful feelings of psychic shame<sup>6</sup> to affirm the value of the love felt by the poet and to display a sensitivity to the requirement of a response of love, which is not to say that she should have given a response of love. She would thus have also displayed the autonomy of at least having the *potential* to advance toward the poet as well, even if, for whatever reason, she were not able to or did not want to do so. As Rivers and Heiple sense, the sonnet presents an opposition between a sensitive regard for the spiritual person and the disruptive power of crude sexual instinct. But that opposition is not given in the poem as incompatible ten-

dencies within the poet, as is generally thought; it is given in an opposition between the poet and the lady. It is not the poet who, on the occasion described by the poem, is represented as being determined by the material order of existence (sexual drive), but the lady. The purely sensuous sex drive differs from the spirituality of sexual love in being rooted in the physical order of nature, an order not directed by ends but mechanically and blindly ruled by cause and effect. Yet it is only through co-existing with the causally determined temporal process and minimizing conflict with it that the axiologically directed will is able to master natural causality and rise above it in order to actualize its own aims.<sup>7</sup> When such co-existence is hindered by subjection to rigid moral principles intended to guard against the "tyranny" of causal determinism, what was originally supposed to be avoided—determination by the temporal process—is indirectly brought about. Such is the fallacy of puritanical morality, which in Garcilaso's day ranged from an oppressive asceto-monasticism to the teachings of Savonarola and Calvin.<sup>8</sup> In any case, one might say that the lady in sonnet XXII was determined, if not by sensuousness directly, by a "presumption of sensuousness." The result of her conventional reflex of modesty is that the poet is prevented from seeing the contents of her soul, for that reflex also prevents her from revealing those contents.

Broadly speaking, the lady represents ontological determination, not axiological determination, and the impasse of the encounter described in the poem represents microcosmically the general human plight of a failure to achieve a synthesis between those two equally important preferential trends.<sup>9</sup> Seen allegorically, "the poet" ("the man") "longs to" transcend commitment to mere ideal being by setting down roots in the actual, just as "the lady" stands to transcend actual existence as such through the creative power of values. The poet does not conclude that the ideal essence of individual personality that he beheld in the physical beauty of the lady has no counterpart in the actual person, in her will's potential for self-determination through values, but rather that he was not able to discover whether it does or not. As he himself implies, his hopes of making that discovery, and perhaps his hopes for a love between them, perished in the impasse. For him to have gained such insight would have required that the lady not respond in such a way as to refuse what Scheler refers to as "an act of love of ideal oughtness [of the good that ought to be]" corresponding to the poet's *worthiness* to be loved. What the lady does instead is to give scope to "the negative value lying in the non-being of the positive value of responding love" (*Formalism* 537). For the poet to achieve his goal, the lady would have had to advance beyond herself to encounter the poet, not with defensive resistance ("hardness") but with sensitivity and moral solidarity.

We must insist that the issue here is not one of our or the poet's attempting to assert the poet's right to command the lady's love, for there is no such right and that claim cannot be made by anyone. The lady's apparently brusque response may make life a little worse for the poet, but it causes no diminution in his love for her, precisely because, as one who loves, his intuitive insight directs his attention beyond her actual, empirical personality and focuses it on her ideal essence. Surely in this poem especially it is suggested that love's being "requited" and its value affirmed does not necessitate that love itself actually be reciprocated but (we repeat) merely that there occur a *psychic act* of "coexperiencing the requirement of a response of love" (Scheler, *Formalism* 536), an act of relating to another as a person with real being and an individual identity, a personal essence, and not as a preconceived stereotype. Yet such response implies the possible understanding of a felt love, an experience that the conventional moral norms of a "group mentality" and, in this case, the lady's precipitous adherence to those norms have effectively negated, at least temporarily. For, according to those norms, "the other" has no givenness as a *person* but is a member of a hostile alien force, "'the enemy,' which is a complex of vital power" (Scheler, *Formalism* 314). But it would also be a mistake and an over-simplification for ourselves to carry an emphasis on normative considerations to the point of asserting that the poet's "point" in representing the situation described by the poem is merely that the lady is remiss and the poet unjustly wounded. Sonnet XXII, which treats the subject of feminine modesty, ultimately participates in the tradition of a rhetoric of praise intended as an invitation to intimacy; as such, it is an eloquent tribute to a lady's extraordinary appeal and to the power of her beauty. As Scheler observes,

Just as shame is the gift of a noble human being to preserve the most valuable inner feelings and protect them from any admixture with the low or bad, so also shame is a token of the capacity to love and of a strong drive. People who have little shame and are not shy often have a cold and empty nature. Conversely, strong modesty reveals increased *passion*, for which reason shame is so attractive to a noble person. (*Person and Self-Value* 70)

How are feelings of sexual modesty "a token of the capacity to love?" According to Scheler, having those feelings requires that one be capable of experiencing a tension between love, which is directed exclusively and discriminately toward one individual, and the purely sensuous sex drive, "the quantifying and generic principle of sexual relations" whereby one seeks relations with a multiplicity of members of the oppo-

site sex with little regard for their identity as individuals (*Person and Self-Value* 17 and 70). The lady's experience of that tension is evidenced in her modesty, and the poet's sorrow at the end of the poem is likely the passion that the lady's modesty has aroused in him. Similarly, the poet's agony and desperation at the rebuff represent him in a morally noble light, for they attest to the strength and vitality of his passion, to the uncompromising and exclusive character of his value-preferences. It is implied that his drive wellings, his abundance of the sexual urge, are "composed into one passionate stream, and thus they enter directly into an intentional relation to a person, for *one person*" (*Person and Self-Value* 70). However, drawing biological ("vitalistic") implications from the aesthetics of manners could lead to misplacing the proper emphasis in an interpretation of Sonnet XXII. We must remember that the undercurrents of an extraordinarily vital sexual energy that can be inferred on the basis of the behavior of the poet and the lady are able to be postulated only because it is also possible to infer a will effectively to dam such drives, for the capacity to do so is itself a sign of noble character. Any display of a common *predisposition* to the quantifying and generic experience of sensuous pleasure would be incompatible with the presumed high moral standing, the appeal as persons, of the poet and the lady, as well as with the elevated language of the poem. Her aversion at the prospect of discovering a lack of modest restraint in the poet may well be what explains the lady's having been moved to end the encounter prematurely.

Critics of Sonnet XXII would seem to have traditionally followed the example of the lady in the poem by seeing in the poet a predisposition for the sensuous that is not there—or, perhaps it would be better to say, one "that is not concretely evidenced in the poem," for in the sonnet the poet can be thought of as deliberately baiting us as readers, subtly inducing our natural tendency to project our own preoccupation with the sensual on the poet. In the tradition of the unsettling complexity of mannerist, or mannered, style, the poet creates an ambiguity and then plays on it and uses it to make the reader confront his own unconscious assumptions.<sup>10</sup> Certainly no seasoned reader of Garcilaso will be surprised by our advancing an interpretation of Sonnet XXII whereby the lady is assigned an ambivalent identity vis-à-vis the strivings of the poet. Far more uncharacteristic of Garcilaso would be what to date is the more established reading of this work, whereby the poet is seen to carry the obstacle to those strivings within himself. It is typical in Garcilaso for the poet's movement towards a higher determination through values to be brutally and categorically ("despotically") squelched by the determination of a lower, mechanical, finalistically contingent (accidental), yet "sovereign" natural causality. In Sonnet XXII the poet's experience of being preemptorily blocked by a standard of lower



determination is effected by the lady, who diverts attention in the direction of the sensuous and parries his overture in a manner that the poet compares to deflecting Cupid's arrows. Perhaps Cervantes had Garcilaso's sonnet in mind when in *Don Quijote* he wrote the poem sung by fifteen-year-old Don Luis. Let us recall that Don Luis has disguised himself as a mule lad in order to pursue his beloved Doña Clara, the "star" he follows as a mariner of love "sin esperanza / de llegar a puerto alguno." In one stanza Don Luis sings,

Recatos impertinentes,  
honestidad contra el uso,  
son nubes que me la encubren  
cuando más verla procuro. (I, 43)

The themes of unfounded suspicion and mutual distrust figure prominently in *Don Quijote*, especially in the interpolated narratives. Similarly, in Sonnet XXII as elsewhere, Garcilaso reveals himself not as a puritanical moralist, even of the Neoplatonist variety, but as participating in a current of secular humanism based on a constructive interest in the realities of human experience. In Garcilaso, that interest is compatible with Renaissance Hellenism in that sensuous beauty is not represented as being an obstacle to personal love of the sexes; the obstacle is an undue emphasis on the sensuous that results from the view that sensuous beauty is "sinful" and its effects so corrupting that it is best banished from human consciousness altogether. The spirit of early Reformism, which coincides exactly with Garcilaso's dates, is clearly suggested in such a perspective. Thus it is that Heine is able to observe, "The painters in Italy perhaps carried on a much more effective polemic against clericalism than the Saxon theologians. The voluptuous flesh in Titian's paintings—all of this is Protestantism. The loins of his Venus are much more fundamental theses than those the German monk posted on the church door in Wittenberg." (*Selected Works* 142-43) The theme of the elusive lady whom the poet pursues as he is only able to glimpse her in the distance is central to Garcilaso's love lyric. The poet's words from Canción 4, "voy buscando / a quien huye de mí como enemiga" could well refer to Garcilaso's own pursuit of the fleeing possibility of enjoying life in a world delivered from an austere morality that imposes subjection to appetite precisely through a repressive process of denying the senses their natural place in human experience. In broadly symbolic terms, the chastely demure lady in Garcilaso's lyric may be seen as standing for the causally determined and ultimately self-referential cyclical order of nature that incorporates and entraps "man"—the axiologically determined, teleological entity—and yet remains unreconciled to him. In

Sonnet XXII the poet makes clear from the beginning of the poem that what he originally sought was to pass beyond a sensuous experience. At the end he makes known his anxiety at having been frustrated in that attempt.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>The previous readings of the poem by El Brocense, Herrera and Tamayo are summarized by Rivers in his 1974 and subsequent critical editions of the *Obras completas* (122-23), by Gargano (33-36) and Heiple (243-46), who proposes a number of new, likely influences on Sonnet 22. Heiple mistakenly states (243) that Snell's interpretation expands on an idea advanced by Rivers. Actually, Snell's study appeared a year before the first, 1974 printing of Rivers' critical edition.

<sup>2</sup>See Alicia de Colombí-Monguió, "Review Article," and Elias Rivers, "Garcilaso de la Vega and the Italian Renaissance: Texts and Contexts / Review Article."

<sup>3</sup>Alicia de Colombí-Monguió quotes (101) the passage in which Gargano refers (50) somewhat misleadingly to this line from Petrarch, but since she does so without including the quotation marks from Gargano's text, the line appears to be Gargano's paraphrase of a line from Garcilaso's Sonnet XXII. The unintended effect is that while she strengthens the case for Gargano's interpretation and for her endorsement of it, she also adds to the general confusion.

<sup>4</sup>Rivers states this view in his edition of Garcilaso, *Obras completas con comentario* (1974: 123), and it re-appears in a new printing in 1981, the one we have already cited, a year after the publication of his book, *Poems*, containing the passage with which Gargano takes issue.

<sup>5</sup>By "ideal ethos of personality" we mean the individual-personal value-essence, the potential, ideal form of the distinguishing qualities (the value-character) of one unique person (see Scheler, *Formalism* 489-94, Hartmann II, 342-46, and Werkmeister 211).

<sup>6</sup>For a discussion of the distinction between "bodily shame" and "psychic shame," see Scheler, *Person and Self Value* 27 and 69-70. Our application of these terms bears the influence of concepts drawn from Scheler, *Formalism* 536 and Hartmann II, 457-59.

<sup>7</sup>For a discussion of the relation between the causal order, finalistic determination (determination of the means from the point of view of the end) and freedom of the will, see Hartmann I, 62-80.

<sup>8</sup>For a poignant exposé of the dehumanizing effects of repressive puritanism in sixteenth-century Spain (the case of Fray Francisco de Ortiz), see Selke, *El Santo Oficio de la Inquisición*.

<sup>9</sup>Related to this conclusion are Scheler's views concerning what he terms "the immanent tragedy of sexual love," which he regards as being necessitated by "extant coincidences between lower systems of values and those most generally accepted" (*Person and Self-Value* 64-66).

<sup>10</sup>The failure to recognize the subtlety of this technique for what it is has had the result of preventing certain problematic elements in the language of Sonnet XXII from receiving the scrutiny they deserve. One such element is the word "conviene" in line 4 that we have discussed above. Our reading of the sonnet has also been informed by our having made imaginative interpretations of the words "mano" and "perdona" in the first tercet, in the passage "essa mano / que aun a su mismo pecho no perdona." The hand, which is associated with activity and with the sense of touch, is a symbol of differentiating action. We would suggest that it can be regarded as an analogue of the will. The sense of line 11, must be that the lady's will, in repulsing the persona's making known his receptiveness to response in love and esteem, also stifles what is within itself, the word "perdonar" here meaning "to release" in the sense of "to permit to be shown" or "to reveal," i.e., "to give leave to." Taking "mano" to represent the lady's will, then, the meaning is that in her peremptory rebuff of him she is also forsaking her own deepest value-preferences, i.e., she is inconsistent with her noble will and high breeding. In line 11 the words "a su" — "its," referring to "hand" or "will" — could not mean "her," since the poet addresses the lady directly and nowhere refers to her in the third person. What is left, of course, is only the last antecedent noun: "mano." Hence our reading: "that hand that will not give leave even to what is within *its* own breast." And we are interpreting the word "pecho," as primarily a synecdoche for "value feelings." One of the entries that the *Diccionario de autoridades* has for "pecho," is "se toma muchas veces por la parte interior dél."

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