

ON TEACHING
EARLY MODERN HISPANIC POETRY:
REFLECTIONS AND REMEMBRANCES

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To my father, Milton Davis, Jr., *in memoriam*.
"Nuestras vidas son los ríos
que van a dar en la mar que es el morir."

If it is true that we cannot teach what we do not know, surely the other side of that premise is equally true: consciously or not, we pass on to our students what we learned from our own teachers. To be sure, one's approach to teaching can also be informed to some extent by recent lyric theory (such as the essays in a collection edited by Chaviva Hošek and Patricia Parker), as well as by the work of other scholars. Nevertheless, it seems to me that from the perspective of a graduate student, no amount of theory or of reading literary criticism can take the place of the precious hours spent directly engaging the poetic text with the assistance of a knowledgeable and intuitive teacher. This is especially true in the case of early modern poetic texts, which are particularly multilayered and dense. Hence, I would like to open this essay by remembering three moments that were especially influential in forming my own understanding of poetology and Golden Age poetry. Certain presuppositions about early modern poems and poetic language that shape my teaching strategies today are directly traceable to these three intellectual experiences. While I realize that these presuppositions may not be undisputed in today's academy, I consciously hold onto them because in the end, they still seem valid to me and eminently useful to students.

The first of these is that poetic language is different from other types of literary expression and that the poetic function of language is specific. Unsurprisingly, this is shorthand for some of the fundamental assumptions of Prague School Structuralism. When these ideas came to me not intellectually, but almost with the power of a revelation, I had long been familiar with Roman Jakobson's work. In conversations with poets whom I had known over the years, I had also become aware that special rules seemed to govern the "verbal alchemy" of poetic

language, to use the Rimbaudian phrase. However, the full force of these ideas came to me in an evening stroll with one of my mentors, Eliana Rivero, during the 1992 meeting of the *Asociación Internacional de Hispanistas* at the University of California - Irvine. Our topic of conversation, on this as on many other occasions, was poetry. The burning question of the moment was "if poetic language is different, what exactly makes it so? *¿En qué consiste la poeticidad?*" Professor Rivero described a class of hers that had centered on this very question. She related how she had presented students a lyric text by Ernesto Cardenal, urging them to identify specific elements that made the text "poetic." With some coaxing, the students had been able to discover elements in Cardenal's condensed epigram that seemed particularly important in terms of their ability to set the language apart from the prosaic idiom of direct speech, a feat the more remarkable because in this text, a main feature of Cardenal's poetics is the deliberate use of a colloquial register.¹ According to the professor's account, the students immediately detected abundant examples of repetitions and echoes in the text, not merely verbal but conceptual ones. The parallelisms were equally easy for them to distinguish. With help, they were able to understand that the Jakobsonian principles of selection (similarity, metaphor), combination (contiguity, metonymy), and poetic reiteration were actively operating on many different levels of the poem. Because of the deceptively simple language used by the poet, however, in the end the students suggested that what ultimately made the text poetic was not so much its language as a particular subjectivity behind the words (a state of mind, an attitude that was palpable behind the apparently uncomplicated linguistic surface). The important thing about this exercise, from my perspective, was that the students were able to discover many elements in the text on their own, without having read much poetic theory in advance. The force behind that discovery, I would suggest, is the power of poetic language itself, which manages to suggest much more than its words can plainly denote. The intellectual excitement about poetic language that I felt as a result of the ideas exchanged in this conversation remains alive in me today. It influences not only the way I think and write about poetry, but also the way I teach it.

The second assumption I hold is that close readings of individual poetic texts are crucial for understanding early modern poetry. This conviction certainly did not come to me in a flash, but in the course of three graduate seminars I took with a professor who would later direct my dissertation on Quevedo's religious poetry, Gustavo Correa. The first was on Spanish mysticism; it was here that I came in contact with the verses of San Juan de la Cruz and with Dámaso Alonso's *La poesía*

de San Juan de la Cruz (desde esta ladera). Another course focused on the poetry of Garcilaso de la Vega, Fernando de Herrera and Luis de Góngora; the third, on the lyric poems of Lope de Vega and Francisco de Quevedo. The curriculum of all three seminars attempted to connect the work of the poets to larger cultural issues, such as mystical theology and the movement to reform the Carmelite Order, the artistic movements fostered by the Counter Reformation, and preoccupations about the European Baroque, in vogue at the time. However, the dominant theoretical approach of the 1970s (the New Criticism or its Spanish equivalent, *la Estilística*) constrained us to focus primarily on the intricate inner workings of the text. Typically, the students would present detailed explanations of one or two short poems (sonnets, *letrillas*, a segment of an eclogue, etc.) in each class session. This is undoubtedly the reason why my strongest memory of this learning experience is still that of detailed work with the poetic text. I recall, for example, the day that a classmate from the English Department who was carrying out a dissertation on connections between Richard Crashaw and Golden Age poetry presented meticulous readings of two sonnets from Lope de Vega's *Rimas sacras*.² To this day, I owe my understanding of the images of these sonnets (in particular, of one whose first line reads "No sabe qué es amor quien no te ama") to the efforts of that classmate and to the careful supervision of the professor, who always made sure we stayed on the right track. ("Traída por los cabellos," was the phrase Professor Correa used to describe an interpretation based more on the student's imagination than on anything in the text). On that day, my fellow student pointed out that a simile used by the poet to describe the beauty of Christ's hair ("tu cabello / como el cogollo que la palma enrama") was linked through polysemy with another image in the text ("tu mano el torno y en su palma el sello"), which could suggest not just the marks left in Jesus's palms by the nails of his crucifixion, but a desired relationship between the divine "potter" working at his wheel (*torno*), and human beings (the potter's clay). Such images, carefully worked out, do not just leave a lasting trace in the mind of students. If used as the basis for larger conclusions, they can also serve as an important gateway to the poetics of the writer. Given the pressures some of us may feel these days to link our work to anthropological or sociological concerns such as those that typify a lot of work in Cultural Studies, close readings may now appear old-fashioned or self-indulgent. Nevertheless, if the goal is to equip students with the tools they need to make sense of the poetry in the first place, close readings of Renaissance and Baroque texts remain indispensable. If students cannot first "crack" a Lopean or Quevedian sonnet, they will probably not be able to make the further stretch

required to attempt an original reading of the text. And this is true no matter which theoretical framework they eventually employ.

The third presupposition I make is that, unlike lyric poetry of other periods, it is very difficult to fully appreciate early modern Hispanic poetry without an awareness of the importance of poetic imitation during the Renaissance. This is another way of saying that the sixteenth century already had a poetic theory which we ignore at our own peril. Professor Alicia de Colombí-Monguió emphasized this point in a graduate course titled *Poesía de Renacimiento* taught at the University of Arizona in the early 1980s. I was fortunate enough to be able to sit in on some class sessions. The curriculum provided students in depth exposure to the Italian Renaissance theories of imitation that were so influential in shaping the poetic practice of the writers who form what we think of as the lyric canon of the Golden Age. Like other Argentineans of her generation, Professor Colombí has a strong training in the Classics. She is equally knowledgeable about the Italian Renaissance. Without raising the anxiety level of students who rarely had such training, she helped them trace the various ways that Greco-Roman and Italian texts reappeared, sometimes much transformed, in the new (Hispanic) text of the early modern period. Students without strong Latin, Greek or Italian learned that they could rely on respectable bilingual editions (for example, those of the Loeb collection, reliable translations of the classics into Spanish, and Robert Durling's bilingual edition of Petrarch) to determine whether a given early modern poem was a close imitation of the model (*a sequi*), or a more distant one (an "*imitación transformadora*," an exercise in *aemulatio*, or possibly an "*imitación dialéctica*"). An even greater challenge for students, as for literary critics, is the combination of several classical subtexts in the new poem. However, this form of imitation, which Professor Colombí referred to as "*imitación ecléctica*," deserves class time because it became the dominant mode of imitation in peninsular poetics.³ No one used the word "philology" in this class. Yet the effect of the work carried out was to expose poetic models, some of them fabulously old, that lay beneath the surface of early modern texts, actually creating their meaning in various ways. This seminar also provided students a first taste of what it meant to work in a way that was, by definition, transatlantic. Skilled in tracing the influence of Iberian poetics in early modern texts written in America, the professor included in her syllabus not only the greater part of the Golden Age poetic canon, but works penned in colonial Spanish America by writers such as Enrique Garcés (a translator of Petrarch in colonial Peru), Diego Dávalos y Figueroa (author of the *Miscelánea Austral*), and Diego de Hojeda. Since the epic is not usually present in Golden Age reading lists, Professor Colombí's

inclusion of a fragment of Hojeda's *La Christiada* also encouraged me to think that it might be possible to take a more serious look at longer poetic texts than the ones I had studied in graduate school. (This eventually led to my book, *Myth and Identity in the Epic of Imperial Spain*.) Some things have changed since the moment I am attempting to reconstruct [INC] from memory. On the one hand, various scholars have done important work on poetic imitation among Spanish poets of the Golden Age. On the other, something like a "boom" of scholarly works centered on the epic, many of which are transatlantic to one degree or another, is currently taking place.⁴ Yet it was the seminar of Professor Colombí-Monguió that opened up these areas of study for me. Her course curriculum instilled in students a deep appreciation for the interconnections between Renaissance poetic theory, Golden Age poetics, colonial Latin American writers, and the poets of Italy and of Greco-Roman antiquity.

In my view, then, these three components form the foundation of a graduate course on early modern Hispanic poetry: an awareness of how poetic language functions, the ability to trace transformations of classical subtexts at work in the early modern poem, and close readings of the early modern poetic texts themselves. Other elements come into play, of course, but I believe the solid ground is located in these three elements, which can be stressed in varying degrees and combined in different ways during a given academic term.

Thus, no matter what organization I choose for a given course on early modern poetry, I usually begin by adapting to the early modern period the exercise based on the Cardenal epigram, described above. This can be done by substituting a carefully chosen sixteenth- or seventeenth-century lyric poem. (Some of Garcilaso de la Vega's sonnets work well.) A similar effect can be achieved by presenting students with certain phrases from early modern poems that seem strikingly modern in their use of poetic language: "El aire se serena / y viste de hermosura y luz no usada" (Fray Luis de León, "A Francisco de Salinas"); "Las ínsulas estrañas, / Los ríos sonoros, / El silbo de los aires amorosos" (San Juan de la Cruz, "Cántico espiritual"); "Breve combate de importuna guerra, / en mi defensa soy peligro sumo" (Francisco de Quevedo, "¡Fue sueño ayer; mañana será tierra!"), etc. If one begins the course by engaging in this type of direct work with the poetic phrase, students may grasp, often for the first time, that there is something magic in this poetic language. Even if time limitations make it impossible to repeat the exercise later in the term, students may well have gained the confidence to confront early modern poetic texts because they have seen that they themselves are capable of making important discoveries about the stuff of which these texts are made.

The satisfaction they achieve from such work can serve to assuage, at least in part, whatever feelings of anxiety they may bring to early poetry.

The organization of such courses can vary according to the level and needs of the students. I frequently teach Golden Age poetry as a survey showcasing the fundamental texts of early modern peninsular poetry. That said, I always include a unit on women poets (in particular, María de Zayas y Sotomayor, Luisa de Carvajal y Mendoza, Leonor de la Cueva y Silva, and Ana Francisca Abarca de Bolea), using the fine anthology of Julián Olivares and Elizabeth S. Boyce, *Tras el espejo la musa escribe: Lírica femenina de los Siglos de Oro*. Thus, I teach the poetic canon but I also I teach non-canonical texts against the background of that canon. There have been times when I have organized an entire seminar around the concept of poetic imitation, using readings by Alicia de Colombí-Monguió, Anne J. Cruz, and Ignacio Navarrete as the theoretical foundation of the course. In this context, it is especially important to make students aware of the fact that Garcilaso's subtexts had already been identified in the sixteenth century by Francisco Sánchez de las Brozas and Fernando de Herrera. Even in the cases where I teach a straight survey of Golden Age poetry, I still dedicate at least one entire class session early in the course to the importance of poetic imitation for early modern poetry. In these cases, I make sure to bring handouts of specific examples, carefully chosen so that the Hispanic imitation of the poetic model will be obvious to those students who do not have strong skills in Latin or Italian (some of Boscán's close imitations of Petrarch, for example).

There are two other elements I attempt to include near the beginning of the survey of early modern poetry. The first of these is a fairly detailed discussion of basic concepts of Golden Age metric forms (in the sense of measurement of meter and composition of the poetic line). I doubt that I am alone in lamenting the thin training I received in what is known in Spain and Spanish America as *métrica*. If I had not heard an exquisite paper by Pablo Jauralde Pou on the significance of Góngora's occasional irregular poetic line at the 2001 meeting of the *Asociación Internacional de Hispanistas* in New York City, I might not feel so strongly about the value of including it in the syllabus for a graduate level poetry course. But, to paraphrase Jauralde Pou, just as a mechanic needs to know where the parts of an automobile go in order to get it running properly, it is important for students of poetry to know how a poetic line is put together, if only to be able to discern matters of greater import in the poetry (v. introduction to Varela et al. 10-11). Students may not show a lot of interest in this topic at first. However, once they have realized that *métrica* is something that is extremely important to poets, it is easier to convince them that it should

be important to them, as well. At this point, they are generally willing to try very hard to decide whether a given hendecasyllabic line is “heroico,” “melódico,” “sáfico,” and so on. In fact, trying to determine the pattern of rhythmic accents in a sonnet seems to appeal to the problem-solving side of the students’ minds. Until recently, we have relied on the *Métrica española* of Tomás Navarro Tomás to approach this subject. It goes without saying that Navarro Tomás remains a tremendously helpful resource, but I am looking forward to trying out the *Manual de métrica española* that Elena Varela Merino, Pablo Moïno Sánchez, and Pablo Jauralde Pou have recently published, the next time I teach Renaissance and Baroque poetry. This book, divided into a theoretical section and practical “Repertorios” of the many different metric forms, promises to be very helpful for students of Spanish poetry, generally, not just poetry of the early modern period. I have read the section on the hendecasyllabic line with profit, and I believe students can benefit from doing the same.

The other element that serves to initiate the course well is one that complements the work on *métrica*. Here, however, I seek out the expertise of a colleague in Hispanic linguistics. More than once, Professor Dieter Wanner, a specialist in Spanish historical linguistics, has generously attempted what he calls “a reconstruction of Garcilaso de la Vega’s phonetic system” for students in my poetry course. After reviewing the enormous fluctuations in pronunciation of different phonemes (and the graphs used to represent them) throughout the Iberian Peninsula during the sixteenth century, Professor Wanner focuses on the specific case of the poet in question (place of origin and social background), attempting to reconstruct for the students what might have been the pronunciation and speech patterns of Garcilaso, and by extension, their bearing on the composition of the poetic line. (For example, aspiration of an initial *h* of Latin provenance can affect measurement of meter in the line.) This information may be completely new for students, who generally receive Professor Wanner’s presentation with great enthusiasm. From it they take away a general idea of the instability of the Spanish phonetic system during the period that interests us, as well as some basic notions about how certain phonemes were pronounced at the court in Toledo, probably a fairly conservative linguistic environment compared to other parts of Spain at the time.

Everything I have said so far concerns the foundation for the course, as well as elements designed to spark students’ intellectual excitement about poetry during the early modern period. After these initial classes, the work on Golden Age poetic texts begins in earnest. On the first day of class, I send the students to the library in search of a *cancionero*-

so that they can see for themselves the difference between *cancionero* style poetry and the Italianate poetry that takes shape in the intellectual climate of sixteenth-century Spanish Humanism. I usually dedicate one lecture to the topic of Humanism (the curriculum and goals of the *studia humanitatis*), and one to the poetics of Petrarch and, in specific terms, the structure of the Petrarchan *Canzoniere*. Only after that lecture do I put forth a detailed explanation of the revolution in poetry carried out by Juan Boscán, Garcilaso de la Vega, and Diego Hurtado de Mendoza in sixteenth-century Iberia. I give special attention to the hendecasyllabic line and the new way it is accented “*al itálico modo*,” but also to the richness of concrete images and descriptions in this Italianate poetry, both completely uncharacteristic of fifteenth-century *cancionero* poems, with their simple meter and short lines. I do not expect students to master every detail of these innovations; I do hope they get a sense of how important they were, coming as they did at a time when Spain was in search of adequate cultural expression for its new geopolitical reality. The latter topic creates various possibilities to connect discussions of poetry to *Imperium* studies. I usually assign two scholarly articles (perhaps a “classic” and another more recent piece) per class session, but it is clear that the student research papers (one short one and a longer, final course paper) will require much more extensive research than what we can cover in class. All in all, we spend some three weeks on Boscán, Garcilaso, and Hurtado de Mendoza (most of it on Garcilaso). By the time we move into the next segment of the course, centered on Neo-Platonism and Spanish mysticism, I expect students to be conversant with a good number of Garcilaso de la Vega’s sonnets, the First and Third Eclogues, and the Fourth and Fifth *Canciones*.

In order to do justice to the magnificent poems of Fray Luis de León, students must first possess basic information about the development of the *lira* and the Horatian ode. The form of the *lira* is easy enough to learn (7-11-7-7-11, with variants), but its poetic difficulty may be underestimated by students if it is not pointed out by the professor. Just as Elias Rivers’s article on the Horatian epistle is fundamental for an understanding of the basic Horatian concepts (*beatus ille*, *aurea mediocritas*, etc.) that inform Fray Luis’s poetics, Begoña López Bueno’s article on the genre of the ode throws light on the process of how the Horatian ode practiced by Fray Luis later evolves into the Herrerian *canCIÓN*.⁵ At this point in the course, there also needs to be some discussion of Neo-Platonism as a force that opposed scholasticism in the context of the sixteenth-century academy. It is the Platonism in Fray Luis that explains the desire to transcend earthly, bodily limitations, a desire which seems omnipresent in his verses. The

Platonist impulse, which should not be confused with a desire for mystical union, creates an enormous sense of longing in the poems of the Augustinian friar. This nostalgic longing is most evident in poems such as "En la Ascensión," but its traces can be found through a careful reading of other poems, as well ("A Francisco Salinas," "Noche serena," and "A Felipe Ruiz," for example). I have found it very helpful to spend some class time explaining the stubbornly geocentric cosmology of Ptolemy in these classes. It is virtually impossible to understand some of Fray Luis's most important poems without basic knowledge of the Ptolemaic worldview. Excellent drawings of the same can be found in many Renaissance treatises of astronomy. Even professors can profit from reviewing this material. It is all too easy to forget the basic assumptions of a worldview that still would have been the norm for many of our poets.

It would not occur to me to teach Fray Luis de León as a mystic, although some students may arrive at the course with preconceived notions to that effect. It is only by reading the three great mystic poems of San Juan de la Cruz ("Noche oscura," the "Cántico espiritual," and "Llama de amor viva") that students can see for themselves the heavy erotic imagery that informs the mystic text. Once students grasp the fact that the metaphor of human erotic love is central to mystic writers, they are more capable of differentiating the poetics of San Juan de la Cruz from that of Fray Luis. I would be remiss if I did not also mention here the need to refer to San Juan's own explanations of mystical theology in his prose treatises. But it is usually the tortured life of the friar from Fontiveros that fascinates students more than his theological elucidations. They are moved by the realization that such beauty could emerge from such suffering. Carlos Saura's film *La noche oscura* can help students imagine the anguished circumstances of the imprisonment, but also the indomitable spirit, of the Discalced Carmelite. I would also recommend the biographical part of Gerald Brenan's *St. John of the Cross, His Life and Poetry*. It would be ideal to have sufficient time to study the minor works of San Juan de la Cruz, as well ("Tras de un amoroso lance," "Un pastorcico solo está penado," "Aquella eterna fonte está escondida"), especially since such poems underscore the importance of Golden Age *contrafacta* or "a lo divino" versions of amorous poetry. Clearly, this is information that students specializing in early modern literature and culture need to possess. On the quarter system it is difficult to include more than the three major mystic poems of San Juan de la Cruz, especially since each student must do two oral presentations (detailed analyses of poetic texts) during the term.

In the part of the course I sometimes refer to as “Final del Petrarquismo: Épica e imperio,” I attempt to achieve two things. On the one hand, I try to show students how Petrarchism reaches a culminating point in selected love poems of Fernando de Herrera. Herrera is critically important both for his Humanist erudition, singular in its time, and for the way he echoes Petrarch while at the same time stretching beyond the limitations of strict imitation of Petrarchan subtexts. On the other hand, I explain that Herrera’s historical poems are a vital link between peninsular lyric of the times and Spanish epic of the imperial age. That is why it is so important to spend time on such texts as the “Canción en alabanza de la diuina magestad por la vitoria del Señor don Juan,” Herrera’s celebration of the defeat of the Turks at Lepanto, and his “Canción 3” (“Cuando con resonante / rayo, i furor del braço poderoso”), written in homage to Don Juan de Austria after his suppression of the *morisco* rebellion in the Alpujarras. These are only two of Herrera’s historical poems that suggest the enduring prestige of the epic throughout the Golden Age, even among poets who excelled in the composition of shorter, lyric poems.

This is the point at which, in a survey of Golden Age poetry, I would have students turn to specific fragments of Alonso de Ercilla’s *La Araucana*, the most important Spanish epic of the times. It is impossible to do justice to the *Araucana* (or any other long narrative poem of the early modern period) in this piecemeal way. Nevertheless, a careful reading of Cantos 1 and 2 (Ercilla’s description of Arauco and the election of Cauplicán as leader of the Araucanos), Cantos 23 and 24 (Fitón’s cave and the vision of Lepanto), and Cantos 33 and 34 (the capture, suffering and death of Caupolicán), can give students at least a taste of the epic of the conquest. I should point out that these are not the same passages usually included in anthologized versions of Ercilla’s epic; rather, they are the passages that I believe establish the importance of Habsburg empire for Ercilla’s poetic project, at the same time that they suggest the ambivalent feelings of a soldier in the occupying army. It bears remembering that the epics of conquest are inherently transatlantic texts. This explains their appeal for students interested in transatlantic studies. I have found that a much better way to teach epic is in a separate seminar on epic and picaresque, in which students read the whole of the *Araucana*, followed by Quevedo’s *Buscón* as a parody of the epic. The epic’s status as a dislodged canonical genre makes it a challenge to include it in our teaching duties, but Ercilla’s text is worth whatever aggravation it may cause in terms of scheduling other courses on early modern literature or constructing the syllabus of a poetry survey.

As a rule, I dedicate the last three weeks of any survey of early modern poetry to the eminent poets of the Spanish Baroque: Lope de Vega, Francisco de Quevedo, and Luis de Góngora. It is important for students to know that with the arrival of the seventeenth century, poetic practice changes in important ways. While poetic imitation is still practiced, many of the subtexts are scattered. On the one hand, only familiar Petrarchist *topoi* remain in place of the prolonged and conscious Petrarchism practiced by sixteenth-century poets. On the other, tremendous innovations take place both in lyric genres and poetic style. Lope, Quevedo, and Góngora continue to compose sonnets, but these are generally not the consciously crafted imitations with which students are familiar from the early weeks of the course. In varying degrees, all three poets engage in the convoluted language, gorgeous metaphors and broken syntax that clearly suggest a new aesthetic. Students may require some assistance with these, the hallmarks of “la poesía nueva” of the seventeenth century. However, I do not mean to exaggerate the difficulty of teaching these poets. For instance, with appropriate guidance, students find the dazzling metaphors of Lope and Quevedo eminently intelligible, although additional material on Neostoicism will be necessary for a full comprehension of many works by Quevedo. The *Soledades* of Góngora, on the other hand, require supplementary help. In Spain, students of *Filología española* still use the prose version of the *Soledades* written by Dámaso Alonso to work their way through the *Soledades* for the first time. I, myself, would not think of teaching the *Soledades* without providing my students a photocopy of it. That said, it seems to me that it makes the most sense to have students begin their foray into Gongorine poetics not with the *Soledades*, but with the *romance* “En un pastoral albergue” (the Angélica and Medoro story), or the *Fábula de Polifemo y Galatea*. A good critical edition of the *Polifemo* with abundant notes (I still use that of Alexander A. Parker) can make the text much more accessible for students who are studying Góngora for the first time.

In these pages, I have attempted to outline very briefly one possible way of organizing a graduate level course that offers a full view of the most important texts of Golden Age poetry. No organization is perfect, of course, and there are many other ways to set up a course on early modern Hispanic poetry. Frequently, to emphasize one thing, one must cut something else from the syllabus. It is clear, for example, that one cannot develop a truly transatlantic course if at the same time one intends to teach most of the Golden Age lyric canon. Indeed, much more work needs to be done in developing transatlantic courses on early modern poetry that are deep, rigorous and complete. I myself cannot imagine teaching Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz without teaching

Góngora, or Juan del Valle Caviedes without assigning many Quevedo readings at the same time. The secret, I believe, lies in doing the research necessary to be able to teach such courses in a way that exposes not only the deep interconnections between individual poets such as these, but also a common poetics that during the seventeenth century flourished on both sides of the Atlantic. This endeavor may also turn up some interesting points of dissimilarity or tension in poetic practice among poets who share a great many assumptions, but who are writing at an enormous distance from one another. In return for the effort required to develop such courses, the rewards for students and professors alike would be immense. No matter which format we choose, however, the early modern poetry course will succeed as long as we transmit to our students a sense of celebration about the exceptional poetic texts we have the privilege of teaching.

Notes

¹The poetic text in question reads as follows: “Si tú estás en Nueva York / en Nueva York no hay nadie más / y si no estás en Nueva York / en Nueva York no hay nadie.” Ernesto Cardenal, *Epigramas* 33.

²The classmate was R. V. Young, whose dissertation was later published as a book, *Richard Crashaw and the Spanish Golden Age*.

³Colombí-Monguió summarizes Renaissance theories of poetic imitation in the last three chapters of her *Petrarquismo peruano: Diego Dávalos y Figueroa y la poesía de la Miscelánea Austral*.

⁴Evidence of the renewed interest in epic can be seen in the colloquium on “Epic Texts and the Colonial World,” which took place at Princeton University on November 7 & 8, 2003.

⁵This article appears in one of several collections of essays on Golden Age poetic genres written by the members of the Grupo P. A. S. O. (*Poesía española del Siglo de Oro*) and published by the Universidad de Sevilla. The title of these enormously helpful volumes are *La silva* (1991), *La oda* (1993), *Las “Anotaciones” de Fernando de Herrera: Doce estudios* (1997), *La epístola* (2000), and *La égloga* (2002).

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