

# GÓNGORA: "POETA DE BUJARRONES"

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In several of his caustic poetic diatribes against Góngora, Quevedo—hardly one to criticize on this score—vilifies the former's proclivity for writing about sodomites, anuses, and excrement. For example, in his *romance* "Poeta de ¡Oh, qué lindicos!" Quevedo accuses Góngora of being not only a Jew and a fool, but also: "Poeta de bujarrones / y sirena de los rabos, / pues son ojos de culo / todas tus obras o rasgos / . . . / musa de desatacados / . . . / almorrana eres de Apolo," thereby degrading the Cordoban poet's verse into excrement (Quevedo 2. 828).<sup>1</sup> In another series of *ad hominem décimas* against his poetic rival, titled "Ya que coplas componéis," the younger poet reports that: "De vos dicen por ahí / Apolo y todo su bando / que sois poeta nefando / pues cantáis culos así" (Quevedo 3. 826). In this witty and malicious conceit, Quevedo converts Góngora into a "nefarious poet" by ironically suggesting that the latter is guilty of the crime he textualizes, since the anus and homosexual desire were, and continue to be, conceptually linked (Bataille comes to mind).

Anuses and same-sex desire have crossed centuries, and yet, as Guy Hocquenghem has stated with regard to the twentieth century, the phallus continues to be the great signifier of heterosexual pleasure and power. All other forms of sexuality (especially sex acts without ejaculation) are denied, especially the anal. While the phallus is essentially social, the anus is essentially private (95-96). That is, in order for society to be organized around the great phallic signifier, the anus must be privatized. As a result, the anus has no social desiring function left because all its functions have become excremental, and only homosexuals make libidinal, desiring use of it (98). Hocquenghem links this privatization of the anus to the advance of Western capitalism, but such conclusions may have had a different expression and perception four hundred years ago, and certainly different referential bases.

This essay issues from Quevedo's criticism of Góngora's supposed penchant for the mock poetization of the anus and of sodomy in his satirical verse. I explore the connotations of this poetry's sodomitical discourse and the centrality of the anus within it as iconic signifier of the male homosexual, as well as the poetry's function as an alternate and antagonistic poetic stance towards serious verse and poetic deco-

rum. To begin, in an article from the early nineties, Claude Summers analyzes how the classical literature of homosexuality provided Renaissance writers with “a set of references by which homosexual desire could be encoded into their own literature and by which they could interpret their own experience” (8). However, in response to social, religious, and legal prohibitions, male homosexuality was Christianized and spiritualized (for example by Neoplatonists) and the sources for representations of passionate love between men were either discreetly de-eroticized or heterosexualized. Summers concludes that “Representations of homosexuality then as now were subject to containment, suppression, and denial” (8). This is certainly true for most early modern Spanish literature, where images of male/male erotic love are a rarity, but it is not true for satire, where images of male homosexuality are fairly common.

The explanation for this can be found in theoretical explorations of satire such as Gilbert Highet’s *The Anatomy of Satire*, Arthur Pollard’s *Satire*, Alastair Fowler’s *Kinds of Literature: An Introduction to the Theory of Genres*, and Margaret A. Rose’s *Parody: Ancient, Modern, and Post-Modern*. These critics agree that in the discourse of satire all is permitted and the unmentionable is freely mentioned, often without the buffer of euphemism, and always from a polemical or critical perspective. For this reason sodomy—the so-called *peccatum mutum*, the silent sin or “crime that could not be named among Christians”—was, in fact, textualized quite readily in satirical poetic discourse of the Spanish Baroque.

If this comes as a surprise to literary historians or readers, it is likely because until the advent in recent years of gender and sexuality studies and queer theory, such poetry was rarely anthologized, and even more rarely broached as a topic worthy of academic review. In Hispanism, until fairly recently the representation of sexual deviation in literature has been critically silenced and, concomitantly, the “outing” of revered canonical authors has been considered distasteful, or at best speculative.<sup>2</sup> The reasoning behind such censorship can no longer be sustained today, however, and in the past few years several books and essays have broached the topic with respect to Golden Age texts.<sup>3</sup> It is now recognized in many academic quarters (at least in the United States) that the practice of studying “deviant” sexual practices as they have been textualized in literature is a valuable and productive source for interpreting larger cultural issues. Because of this, Randolph Trumbach argues in an essay on sodomites and Western culture with respect to a subsequent historical period that:

We ought to study the historical forms of sexual behavior not simply because they are interesting in themselves, but rather because *sexual behavior (perhaps more than religion) is the most highly symbolic activity of any society*. To penetrate the symbolic system implicit in any society's sexual behavior is therefore to come closest to the heart of its uniqueness. (24; my emphasis)

Therefore, to examine what Cameron McFarlane has called the "complex signifying system" formed by the modes of representing the sodomite (33) reveals a good deal about the mentality and social/sexual mores of the age. This is because sexual behavior cannot be separated from the attitudes which determine and control its reception and assign to it categories of normativity and deviance. Given the above, this essay also explores the uniqueness to which Trumbach refers by elucidating the symbolic universe surrounding Góngora's representation of sodomy and anality in Spanish Golden Age poetic satire. My goal is to ascertain how these topics were constructed discursively; what they meant, both literally and metaphorically; and the relationship between them.

To begin, and in keeping with the expectations and reactions of seventeenth-century Spain's social audience, satire typically presents the sodomitical subject framed by the notion of misfortune. In the discourse of sodomy, this concept of *desgracia* is intimately related to the body's nether regions. Quevedo links the two in the most graphic way in his *Gracias y desgracias del ojo del culo*, commonly acknowledged as the *bête noire* of all his prose works. Here the most ardently scatological (despite what he says about Góngora) of Golden Age satirists lists and explains the fortunes and misfortunes of this least poetic part of human anatomy, and ends his mock treatise as follows:

Finalmente, tan desgraciado es el culo que siendo así que todos los miembros del cuerpo se han holgado y huelgan muchas veces, los ojos de la cara gozando de lo hermoso, las narices de los buenos olores, la boca de lo bien sazonado y besando lo que ama, la lengua retozando entre los dientes, deleitándose con el reír, conversar y con ser pródiga y una vez que quiso holgar el pobre culo le quemaron. (37)

Quevedo's concluding allusion to the conventional locus of male genital homoerotic activity and to the punishment suffered by accused sodomites (death and burning) transports his text from the realm of comic anal epistemology and sensual synesthesia to that of general homosexual, or sodomitical, cultural discourse.

Quevedo's text and numerous recent studies of homosexuality indicate that, although hidden from history, homosexuality was far from invisible in early modern Europe. As a result, the fact that Golden Age Spain acknowledged only the *pecado nefando*—the “nefarious sin” of sodomy—does not preclude the existence of what one would now call a homosexual subculture in that country. Such was the case for James I's sixteenth-century English court, notorious for its homosexual alliances as well as the king's attachment to his favorite, the Duke of Buckingham (see Lockyer and Bergeron). Trumbach has also affirmed that underground homosexual communities flourished in the large urban centers of eighteenth-century Europe. He notes that these communities shared not only behavioral patterns and modes of recognition, but also a distinct language. Such characteristics are, of course, typical of other secret and forbidden societies. London's so-called “molly-houses” were also gathering places frequented by cross-dressed men in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Halperin 8-9). With respect to Renaissance Spain, in the only monograph to date on the repression of homosexuality by the Inquisition, the historian Rafael Carrasco traces a similar subculture farther back, and confirms the existence of what he calls a homosexual ghetto in sixteenth through eighteenth-century Valencia (134-37). He bases his assertions on the testimony given by accused sodomites before the Inquisition regarding where homosexuals would congregate, who their partners were, their demeanor, and secret signs they used to recognize and communicate with each other. There was, it seems, a shared European semiotic of homosexual desire, and Spain played no small part in it.

In addition, in his highly influential study on male erotics in ancient Greece, David Halperin reaffirms that even though homosexuality and heterosexuality, as we currently understand them, are modern, Western, bourgeois productions, in the high middle ages, certain kinds of sexual acts started to be identified with certain specifically sexual types of persons. A “sodomite” begins to signify not merely the person who commits an act of sodomy, but one distinguished by a certain type of specifically sexual subjectivity which purportedly inclines such a person to commit those acts. Such inclinations notwithstanding, sodomy remains in the mentality of that time a sinful act which any person, given sufficient temptation, may be induced to commit (Halperin 8). The sin and subsequent punishment extended even to those who simply claimed to have sodomized another. For example, the *Fuero de Zorita de los Canes* includes the following stipulation: “Otroquesi, tod aquel que dixiere a otro: Yo te fodi por el culo; si pudiere seer prouado que assi es uerdat, amos deuen seer quemados. Si non, que sea quemado qui tan grand nemiga dixiere” (Cela 1, s.v. “culo”). This

stipulation reveals the grave social and legal implications of being publicly "outed" as a passive sodomite, whether true or not.

During the Christian Renaissance, "sodomy" was a general signifier which encompassed all the so-called sins "against nature:" masturbation, incest, anal intercourse between men or between a man and a woman, bestiality, or any sort of nonprocreative sexual behavior. According to Christian belief, and as Thomas Aquinas admonished in his *Summa Theologica*, sex was created by nature exclusively for procreation. Therefore any act that avoided conception or misspent the male seed was considered to be *against nature*. The Spanish legal historian Francisco Tomás y Valiente cites the mid-sixteenth-century Castilian jurist Antonio Gómez in this regard:

"si quis habet accesum ad quamlibet aliam speciem vel materiam non aptam nec determinatam a natura ad coitum et generationem secundum propriam speciem, committit delictum et crimen contra naturam". Es decir "si alguien realiza un acceso carnal que no está ordenado al coito natural y a la generación dentro de su especie, comete delito y crimen contra natura". Este es el concepto amplio del pecado o delito contra natura, más amplio que la pura relación sexual entre personas del mismo sexo. (38)

Gómez' broad definition of sodomy accommodates many forms of sexual activity which did not lead to fecundation, and were readily practiced in early modern Europe. One such "sodomitical" practice is satirized by Góngora in his *letrilla* "Ya que rompí las cadenas." Notwithstanding official proscriptions against such acts, this poem textualizes both male and female homosexuality as well as the practice of heterosexual anal sex as a means to conserve female virginity. This is doubtless one of the poems that Quevedo criticizes in the verses cited at the beginning of this essay. Following are the strophes in question:

De doncella con maleta,  
ordinario y estafeta,  
que quiere contra derecho,  
pasando por el estrecho,  
llegar entera a Colibre,  
*Dios me libre.*  
Y del galán perfumado,  
para holocaustos guardado,  
que hace cara a los afeites  
para dar a sus deleites  
espaldas, como cobarde,  
*Dios me guarde. (. . .)*

De doncella que entra en casa  
 porque guisa y porque amasa,  
 y hace mejor un guisado  
 con la mujer del honrado  
 que con clavos y gengibre,  
*Dios me libre. (Obras completas 35)*<sup>4</sup>

The poem is dated c. 1590 and is structured around the alternance of women and men who engage in a series of sexual misbehaviors or deviances, from whom the poetic voice begs God to ultimately distance and free him ("*Dios me libre / Dios me guarde*"). In the first stanza cited, the verses allude on the surface to the difficulty of crossing the pirate-ridden Strait of Gibraltar in safety to arrive at Collioure in the eastern Pyrenees of southern France. This important harbor was annexed to the Kingdom of Aragon from the twelfth to the seventeenth centuries, thus was Spanish territory at the time. Nonetheless, the expression "pasando por el estrecho" is an unmistakable allusion to the use of anal sex in order that the female partner's hymen might remain intact ("entera").

Immediately following is the "galán perfumado" through whom the poet links effeminacy with sodomy since he is destined to be consumed by the Inquisitorial flames ("para holocaustos guardado"). This male displays the emblematic traits assigned to homosexuals in early modern texts, especially in satire: effeminacy, cowardice, and debauchery. Cervantes uses such features to characterize the effeminate *galán*, Cornelio, in his novella *El amante liberal*, as I have discussed elsewhere (1999). In Góngora the male indulges in excessive person care ("afeites") and turns his back—both to flee as a coward and to assume the position of the passive partner in the sodomitical acts which are his pleasures ("sus deleites").

In the last strophe the poet describes the young serving girl who engages in lesbian sexual relations with her master's wife, thereby cuckolding him (*honrado* is often used in satire to mean cuckold). Here the joke lies in the word play with "guisa" and "guisado." Since *guisado* means brothel in thieves' slang, the girl both cooks and bakes for the family ("guisa y amasa"), but makes a spicier "stew" with her mistress than with cloves and ginger. This circumstance reflects a proverb collected in both Hernán Núñez and Correas: "La mala casada tratos tiene con su criada," and is similar to the situation poeticized in greater detail in Fray Melchor de la Serna's verse novella "El sueño de la viuda" (see my "The Mediation of Lesbian Eros in Golden Age Verse"). However, the sexual dalliances of mistresses are not limited to female servants in Golden Age texts. For example, in another *letrilla*, "Allá darás, rayo," Góngora ironically points to another erotic pairing common to

burlesque and satirical literature:

Con su lacayo en Castilla  
se acomodó una casada;  
no se le dió al señor nada,  
porque no es gran maravilla  
que el amo deje la silla,  
y que la ocupe el lacayo. (*Obras completas, letrillas* 113)

This poem's debasement of woman to the level of a beast to be ridden by master and servant is quite in keeping with the phallogentric, if not misogynistic, tenor of much Golden Age erotic/satirical poetry. This tone can be appreciated, for example, in Fray Melchor de la Serna's *Jardín de Venus*, probably the best-known collection of Spanish erotic poetry from this period.<sup>5</sup>

As can be appreciated from the foregoing, in early modern Europe the concept underlying the vague term "sodomy" was not specifically homosexuality, but the more general notion of sexual debauchery, to which in principle all people were subject. Gregory Bredbeck, echoing Foucault, who declares sodomy to be "that utterly confused category" (*An Introduction* 101), has pointed out in this regard that up to the seventeenth century, the specification of sodomy in English literature was a way to encompass a multitude of sins with a minimum of signs (13). Nevertheless, the unifying notion is the spilling of the male seed into an inappropriate vessel. As a consequence, within the broad realm of non-reproductive sexuality in early modern Europe, anal sex—whether performed by homosexual or heterosexual couples—was by far the most serious crime. Contemporary Spanish handbooks of penance reveal that no other forbidden sexual act was punished as harshly. In his *Avisos históricos*, for example, Pellicer reports two cases of sodomy punished by death. In October 1640 a man and his young partner were burned at the stake for the *pecado nefando*. In November 1644 a wife accused her husband of performing anal sex with her; he was burned to death two weeks later (Pellicer 88, 258-59). Further still, with respect to sodomy and the Inquisition, Carrasco exhaustively confirms that of all the crimes of the flesh, the *pecado nefando* was the most shameful and the most severely punished (7-8). Finally, Perry (1989) has written on the nefarious sin with respect to Seville, while Carrasco limits his scope to Valencia. Their research, however, provides ample evidence that such transgressions are not limited to the large cities of the period. It is for reasons akin to these cultural expectations that word play, *double entendres* and other verbal jokes concerning the anal passage are a *sine qua non* in homosexual satire of the Golden Age.

One revealing social frame for homosexual satire is the fact that early modern Spain often associated sodomy with Italians, since at the time men of that nation were stereotyped as effeminate and therefore homosexual. For example, in his *Vejamen* (BN Madrid, Ms. 3941, fol. 20), Anastasio Pantaleón de Ribera affirms referring to the Italian José Camerino, “Es demas desto visioso y Mujeriego, si bien es en esto virtud, por auer nacido en Pais donde los mas son Hombrieriegos” (cited in Carrasco 218). In fact, Italians were severely repressed by the Spanish Inquisition and composed 13.5% of the total number of men prosecuted in Valencia during the period 1566-1775 (a percentage equal to the number of clergy prosecuted). The majority of these men were impecunious soldiers, sailors, and vagabonds from Naples and Sicily whom the Spaniards viewed with great suspicion (Carrasco 217). Interestingly, the connection between homosexuality and Italians is made even in Italy at the time. In an essay on Burchiello’s “nonsense verse,” Alan Smith studies the nexus of poetry, politics, and sodomy in Quattrocento Florence, whose inhabitants were reckoned to be notorious sodomites. Not to be free of stereotyping, English Protestants popularized the figure of the Popish sodomite.<sup>6</sup> In this respect, Alan Bray has pointed out that the Protestant party was simply adapting to its own use the identification of religious with sexual deviation that the Catholic Church had already constructed during the twelfth century (19). What we have, then, are competing proto-national (for the time) claims of public and private memory and people’s need to create mythologies or narratives about themselves and, above all, the Other as deviant.

For this reason Góngora often draws a parallel between Italians, especially Genoese, and effeminate or sodomites.<sup>7</sup> For example, in his sonnet “Las no piadosas martas ya te pones” we read:

Delanteras forraste con cuidado  
de la húmida siempre delantera  
que lluvias españolas han mojado;  
aunque la Italia siente en gran manera  
que la trasera no hayas aforado  
habiéndolas ganado la trasera. (*Obras completas* 74).

Once again, sodomites and the anus are the unholy and inseparable pair. The same occurs in Góngora’s *décima* “Musas, si la pluma mía:” “que ginoveses y el Tajo / por cualquier ojo entran bien” (*Obras completas, décimas* 123, vv. 79-80); and in his *letrilla* “Vuela, pensamiento, y diles:”



Más que a cuantos tiene Europa,  
 tu casa negarles puedes  
 a unos pobres Ganimedes,  
 mucho lindo y poca ropa;  
 a quien la dorada copa  
 no les fíes muchos meses,  
 porque no son ginoveses  
 ya que quieren ser gentiles. (*Obras completas, letrillas 105, vv. 70-77*)

Ganymede is a conventional early modern reference associated with male homosexuality and it appears repeatedly in Golden Age satire. As Saslow has affirmed, "Ganymede was the single most appropriate, if not the exclusive, symbol of male-male love as it was then [in the sixteenth century] understood" (7-8). Góngora uses it, along with the emblematic term *Narcisos* (symbolizing male vanity of course) in the *letrilla* "A toda ley, madre mía":

Narcisos, cuyas figuras  
 dan por paga a los pobretes  
 que libran, en mojinetes,  
 mi yerro en sus herraduras;  
 Ganimedes en medidas  
 enamorados y bellos,  
 bien sé yo que para ellos  
 Vuesa merced no me cría. (*Obras completas, letrillas 108, vv. 17-24*)

This poem's narrator is a young girl who scans over and rejects as prospective lovers a series of masculine types (in this strophe narcissistic effeminates) mainly in order to satirize the nobility and the clergy.

In another sonnet, "Contra ciertos hombres, a quienes moteja de afeminados," Góngora's satirical pen turns to Castile, where sustained word play identifies three young men named Carrión, Olivares, and Tordesillas (which, of course, are also place names) as homosexuals.<sup>8</sup>

Hay entre Carrión y Tordesillas,  
 en Castilla la Vieja, dos lugares  
 de dos vecinos tan particulares,  
 que en su particular tienen cosquillas.  
 Todas son arrabales estas Villas,  
 y su término todo es Olivares;  
 sus campos escarchados, que a millares  
 producen oro, y plata a maravillas.  
 Ser quiere alcalde de una y otra aldea  
 Gil Rabadán; pero reprocha alguno  
 que aprieta a los rabeles el cerrojo.

Por justo y por rebelde es bien lo sea,  
 porque les dé lo suyo a cada uno,  
 y les mete la vara por el ojo. (*Obras completas* 85)

The first strophe may allow for a perverse reading involving male genitalia. But more pertinent to what I have been developing, much of the word play surrounding male homosexuality is based on variations or polyvalent and allusive derivations of the words *culo*, *rabo*, *arrabales*, *rabel*; all these terms signify anus, although a more direct and fitting translation for this context would be “asshole.” Here the young men’s *particular* or *parte cular* is ticklish, and obviously anal. The towns, and the three men, “todas son arrabales” from *rabo*. Carrión (Carrión de los Condes) is located north, and Tordesillas south of Valladolid in the heart of Old Castile. This geographical positioning allows the poem to be considered another *burla castellana* related to the anti-Madrid and anti-Valladolid verse written by the Andalusian poet. This mocking often centered around the two Castilian capitals’ rivers: the Manzanares and the Esgueva, which he ridiculed for their insignificant flow and filthiness in such intensely scatological poems as “Duélete de esa puente, Manzanares,” “¿Qué lleva el señor Esgueva?” and “¿Vos sois Valladolid? ¿Vos sois el valle.” In the poem under analysis here there is a double ghettoization of social formations that are already marginal: the town is outside and its sodomitical inhabitants are even farther away from any possible center.

The name Gil Rabadán is clearly another reference to *rabo*, or to the homophonous phrase “por el rabo le dan.” Moreover, this aspiring town mayor is identified as a sodomite: “que aprieta los rabeles el cerrojo.” With respect to this verse, it appears that Millé substituted the word “cerrojo” for “terrojo;” the latter appears on almost all the codices and in Ciplijauskaitė’s edition of Góngora’s sonnets. The emendation would seem to make sense given the poem’s context and the fact that the meaning of *terrojo* has been considered doubtful by most critics. However, in his *Diccionario del erotismo*, Cela lists “terre” with the meaning “culo” and cites the following Castilian proverb from Rodríguez Marín’s collection, “En los meses que no tienen *erre*, no te arrimes al terre,” with the accompanying gloss, “El vulgo sevillano suele llamar *terre* a las nalgas” (Cela 2, s.v. “terre”). The Andalusian connection supports the legitimacy of *terrojo* (terre-ojo), meaning “asshole.” “Apretar a los rabeles el terrojo (or ‘cerrojo’)” obviously means to sodomize another; this is a perfect example of the ambivalent and virtual significance of sexual language. Any object, or any repeated rhythmic action, can have a virtual sexual significance, most especially in erotic poetry. Here the eye of the lock is penetrated by

the young would-be mayor. To continue, "dar lo suyo" means copulation, and the dilogies "vara" and "ojo" in the last verse—"y les mete la vara por el ojo"—are clear within the sexual context of the poem and any possible subtext. The *vara* represents not only the mayoral staff of office, but is also a familiar metaphor for penis. In fact, one of the more memorable literary uses of *vara* with this meaning is when Preciosa, the protagonist of Cervantes' novella *La gitanilla*, tells doña Clara's fortune. In her ambiguous but highly obscene *buenaventura*, she describes the *tinienta's* fornicating husband as follows: "que es jugueteón el tiniente, / y quiere arrimar la vara" (*Novelas ejemplares* 1: 79). It should be remembered, if only for the sake of literary history, that Góngora's poem and other similar ones, although markedly homophobic and often misogynistic, do capture an essential part of the late Renaissance spirit: a sensuous flow of the erotic.

This poem could also have a pointed political significance given the tantalizing presence of the name Olivares. Gaspar de Guzmán, Conde Duque de Olivares, was Philip IV's favorite during the last five years of Góngora's life. Góngora's status as an outsider residing in the Castilian courts likely nurtured his penchant for the "menosprecio de corte" theme. The Count-Duke was an Andalusian aristocrat who had tremendous power, access to the crown as *privado*, and a questionable sexual reputation given the sodomitical circle that surrounded the king. All these facts point to the Count-Duke as possible referential and empirical model for the Olivares in the sonnet.

The lexical archcode I mentioned above with respect to the terms *rabo*, *ojo*, *cola*, and the word play they engender is rampant in satirical verse, as is the constant and perhaps obvious opposition of *adelante* and *atrás*. All of the above dialectics are evident and quite confrontational in the anonymous, but admittedly very Gongorine poem "A un puto."<sup>9</sup> The poem's discursive building blocks are the satirical referencés to *ojo*, *Fuenterrabía*, *rabel*, *cola* and *rabo*, in other words, to the anus and anality:

A un puto, sin más ni más,  
prendieron por delincuente,  
no por culpas de presente,  
sino por culpas de atrás.

Juzga su prisión antojo  
y que está sin culpa preso,  
pero yo sé que el proceso  
está que le llena el ojo.

El juzga que es niñería  
y que el Rey le ha de librar,  
porque supo pelear

en lo de Fuenterrabía.

A ratos, cuando quiere él  
mostrar sus habilidades,  
se ve que en sus mocedades  
fue muy diestro en el rabel.

No tiene esta gracia sola,  
que en guitarra es eminente,  
y, por si salta la puente,  
anda siempre con la cola.

Si el juez le quisiere librar,  
no hay razón por do no pueda,  
puesto que ya no le queda  
el rabo por desollar. (Alzieu *et al.* 250-51)

In this poem and the others under analysis here, terms such as *cola*, *culo*, *rabo*, *ojo*, *atrás* and their derivatives (*rabel*, *Fuenterrabía*, etc.) serve as an archcode and reading protocol that cues the listener or reader as to the homosexual (and anal) subject matter. Such a lexicon expands further the nomenclature of homoeroticism following the norms of Baroque discursive plurality, and what traditionalist criticism dismissively called the "corruption" of good taste and style by Baroque authors. If Góngora's acerbic fixations are now more apparent, one should not lose sight of the contexts, social and otherwise, that ratified his authority and poise as a poet.

Góngora's satirical/burlesque verse, as well as Quevedo's, was very much in accord with the homophobia prevalent at all levels of Golden Age society. In Spain the satirical response to gender bending pointed to what was ultimately perceived as a social danger: by abolishing the difference between the sexes, sodomy presented a challenge to the established social hierarchy. In other words, it really represented a disorder in sexual relations that could occur anywhere and become a force for social destabilization. At the same time sodomy presented a challenge to fundamental Christian religious beliefs since it accommodated sex for pleasure instead of procreation. In a sense, this poetry can be seen as one of the conceptual templates that have been the base for that type of discrimination well into the twentieth century, and once again the pedagogical nature of poetry can be called forth. Perhaps for similar reasons physiological explanations of homosexual behavior were omitted from early medical treatises in favor of ethical considerations. Jacquart and Thomasset have found that in France the origin of homosexual behavior was felt by physicians to be a corruption of the soul and to have no relationship with the physical body (162).

In Spain, those most often prosecuted for sodomy were members of the lower classes: soldiers, slaves, foreigners, beggars, vagabonds,

gypsies, Moriscos. The full weight of the law would fall upon such marginal individuals while well-known aristocrats and the clergy were more often protected and spared the humiliation of public scrutiny. One example of how the famous or simply the well connected were protected from prosecution is the case of the actor Cosme Pérez, the most famous seventeenth-century *gracioso de entremeses*. Creator of the theatrical effeminate Juan Rana, Pérez's own identity was inextricably linked with Rana's (see Thompson). The actor was apparently accused of sodomy and incarcerated for a brief time. A 1636 notice reproduced in Serralta states that:

En cuanto al negocio de los que están presos por el pecado nefando, no se usa del rigor que se esperaba, o sea esto porque el ruido ha sido mayor que las nueces, o sea que verdaderamente el poder y el dinero alcanzan lo que quieren. A don Nicolás, el paje del Conde de Castrillo, vemos que anda por la calle, y a Juan Rana, famoso representante, han soltado (82).

Another prominent suspected homosexual in literary and courtly circles was Juan de Tassis, Conde de Villamediana. The count was an aspirant to *privanza* at the court of Philip IV, a king notorious for his sexual excess (see Weimer). Once again, and there is no need to resort to presentism, societal contexts complicate an easy progression from life to literature, or a means for finding literature in life.

The preceding juncture is further complicated by the role of religion, another of what Althusser rightly calls ideological state apparatus. The issue of homosexuality among the clergy seems to have been acknowledged quite publicly at the time, and clerics were by no means exempt from penances (Bezler 193-200). In fact, the Jesuit Pedro de León claims in his 1619 "Compendio" (a report of the work he performed in Andalucía between 1578 and 1616) that sodomy was a serious problem among both the religious and secular clergy (Perry, *Crime and Society* 132). Carrasco also speaks of the exorbitantly high numbers of clergy prosecuted for sodomy by the Inquisition in Valencia (174-87). The majority of the condemned were friars accused of solicitation or what would today be called child abuse, often with the young novitiates in their charge.

Notwithstanding the overwhelming historical evidence regarding sodomy among men of the cloth, it appears that the subject was somewhat silenced in satire. The most famous exceptions occur, perhaps not surprisingly, in the picaresque novel. In *Lazarillo de Tormes* the Mercedarian friar's unspecified sins (the "cosillas" that Lázaro prefers not to disclose) are most likely nefarious. In *Guzmán de Alfarache* the Roman cardinal whom Guzmán serves as page has all the characteris-

tics of a latent homosexual (Márquez Villanueva 335). However, the subject is treated with subtlety and ambiguity in these texts, whose authors avoid the raw obscenity found in satirical poetry. Since the topic is by nature the most scandalous and therefore extremely taboo, this type of verse would of necessity be semi-clandestine and anonymous. Although I have found no poems in Golden Age Spanish verse protagonized by homosexual friars, fragments do exist to indicate that the topic might have been much more common, especially given the preponderance of anticlerical themes at the time. One brief example of the subject is found in a misogynist *letrilla* ("Si te quieres casar, Bras") attributed to Góngora. Its final strophe, advising a certain Bras against placing his love in *beatas*, warns against even more unpleasant torments to be administered by the priest and sacristan:

Y sin haçer testamento,  
 si regalarlas procuras,  
 tendrás capillas seguras  
 donde haçer tu enterramiento,  
 y por darte más tormento  
 el cura y el sacristán  
 alegras encajarán  
 çirios en tu candelero. (Carreira 210)

The use of *çirios* and *candeleros* points, once again, to the elusive and allusive nature of sexual language. As I have said before, in poetry such as this common terms and actions, here the insertion of an elongated object into a holder, have a virtual sexual significance.<sup>10</sup> The point is that Golden Age poetry displays an on-going contestatory discourse that, if not as abundant as the official one, certainly allows for putting into perspective what we still call canonical poetry.

The anal obsession evident in the foregoing poems and most others depicting sodomy reflects the commonly held early modern fears associated with the anus that satire attempts to exorcise. Arthur Gilbert has traced the anal sex taboo in Western Europe to the origins of Christianity, which completely separated body and spirit. St. Paul and others referred to the human body as a temple, a holy vessel. Sexual acts involving the anal passage were regarded as the ultimate form of evil, a pact with the devil, a violation of the upwardly striving Christian attempt to find salvation. Fear of anal sex was certainly as powerful a force in the Western imagination as fear of homosexual relations (Gilbert 65-66). If we are to believe the poetic traditions inscribed in the literary histories of more contemporary periods, to this day self-world dualism is still defined by such fears. There is a parallel to this profound dread of anal penetration in the Arabic world which, given

the racial and cultural composition of medieval and early modern Spain, is very pertinent here. In a study based on historical documents, legal tracts, medical treatises and literature, Everett Rowson points out that in the medieval Arabic world, passive male homosexuality (known as *ubna* or *bigha* and characterized by a desire to be penetrated) was uniformly considered sick, perverted, and shameful. Women's sexual pleasure was assumed (by men) to be linked correspondingly with their sense of generalized subordination. Therefore, if we are to believe what we read in satirical and/or erotic poetry of this period, heterosexual anal sex was viewed (once again, by heterosexual men) to be at least pleasurable, if not as pleasurable as intercourse, for women since they were "naturally" subordinate.

These assumed pleasures of anal sex for women are perhaps best illustrated in Pietro Aretino's *Sonetti lussuriosi*, a series of sixteen erotic sonnets that he wrote to accompany the Renaissance artist Giulio Romano's notorious images of heterosexual intercourse called "I modi." In sonnet 8 the woman responds to her partner, who desires anal sex, as follows:

Fottimi, e fa di me cio, che tu voi,  
Et in potta in cul, che me ne curo poco,  
Dove, che tu ti faccia i fatti tuoi;  
Ch'io per me ne la potta, et in cul ho'l foco  
Et quanti cazzi han muli, asini, e buoi,  
Non scemariano a la mia foia un poco;  
Poi saresti un da poco  
A farne'l ne la potta a usanza antica;  
Che s'un huomo foss'io non vorrei fica.

[Fuck me and do with me what you will both in my pussy and my behind; it matters little to me where you go about your business. Because I, for my part, am aflame in both places; and all of the pizzles of mules, asses, and oxen would not diminish my lust even a little. Then you would be a no-count fellow to do it to me in my snatch, in accordance with ancient ways. If I were a man, I wouldn't want pussy."] (Qtd. and trans. in Talvacchia 209.)

In contrast to Aretino's graphic representation of female desire, for a man to seek penetration (i.e. sexual submission to the great phallus) was inexplicable, and could only be attributed to various pathologies based on libidinal economies that were not the "norm." As a result of this phallocentric view of sexuality, the active male partner in anal sex is generally feared and the passive partner ridiculed in satire, while the woman who desires anal penetration is a recurring sexual fantasy in Golden Age erotic poetry.

In early modern Spain the homosexual was intimately and ultimately linked to the notion of alterity that played into the public phobias fanned by a Counter-Reformation atmosphere of social repression. And as Peter Stallybrass and Allon White have argued, a fascination with the excluded Other is not so much a sign of sickness in a society as a necessary element in the attempt of society to define itself by opposing itself to what it is not. Hence the sodomite becomes the foil against which "natural," heterosexual orthodoxy, both religious and social, fashions itself at a time when any form of heterodoxy was extremely dangerous.<sup>11</sup> As many scholars of gay studies have pointed out, perhaps with a gift for the obvious, homosexuality is always circumscribed by homophobia, and early modern Spain was not different.

As part of a preliminary conclusion, it must be allowed that even though the poetics of sodomy and anality—as employed by Góngora and others—teaches us a great deal about the intricacies of Renaissance mentalities, it is also relevant not to forget that we are dealing with a *literary* genre based on humor. Satiric poets manipulate language in order to exploit the ambivalent and loaded terminology of invective, sarcasm, irony, and mockery to control a range of tone and substance that varies from the obvious to the subtle (Bloom 1115). Because of this, Góngora's sodomitical poems are ultimately jokes (whether in bad taste or not) at the expense of others. As such, they are "far more likely to depend for their effectiveness on implicit, or indeed explicit, hostility, and may reveal just where societal attitudes are most uncompromising" (Rowson 53). Descriptions of sodomy in lyric poetry are, in the final analysis, part of an alternate and antagonistic literary stance toward such serious poetic movements as Petrarchism, and represent—albeit as an *ejemplo vitando*—the irruption into verse of the love which cannot speak its name. Thus satire embraces both the historically unthinkable (homosexuality) and the poetically unspeakable (the obscene language that inscribes it). With specific reference to Quevedo, therefore, Navarrete affirms that the homosexuality theme is a double violation of poetic decorum, since both the obscene lexicon used and the social attitudes represented have no place in the Petrarchist tradition (236-37). These poems rely on the violation of tradition, and as such it is useless to try to find the deterministic code that may rule them without exception. Resistant readers, in their disgust, make moral judgements, whereas (at most) they should admit to aesthetic judgments (Ruse 123). It does serve a purpose, however, to explore the criteria they follow and study how each poem is related to them. Ultimately, to admit such works into our canon permits us to elucidate further both the poetics of satire and the



sociology of early modern sexuality and deviance as they were textualized in Spain.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup>I cite from the Blecua four-volume edition of Quevedo's *Obra poética*, with volume and poem number indicated. The authenticity of these poems, along with those supposedly written by Góngora against Quevedo and of the purported enmity between the two poets, has been questioned recently by Amelia de Paz. Her arguments and conclusions do not weigh on my discussion here, however.

<sup>2</sup>Having said this, it should be noted that several critics and/or biographers have attempted to "out" that most canonical of Golden Age figures, Cervantes. See discussion in my article "Hacia el Cervantes del siglo que termina."

<sup>3</sup>See, for example, the essays included in Blackmore and Hutcheson and in Delgado and Saint-Saëns. In Spain, two recent books also contain essays or discussions of early modern homosexuality: Gómez Canseco, Zambrano and Alonso, and Vázquez García and Moreno Mengíbar. See also J. Ignacio Díez Fernández's recent article on representations of sodomy in Golden Age verse.

<sup>4</sup>All quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are from the Millé and Millé 6<sup>th</sup> edition (1967) of Góngora's *Obras completas*, following that edition's numbering.

<sup>5</sup>The *Jardín de Venus* is included in *Poesías de Fray Melchor de la Serna y otros poetas del siglo XVI* (2001). See María Cristina Quintero's analysis of misogyny in these poems, "The Rhetoric of Desire and Misogyny in *Jardín de Venus*."

<sup>6</sup>See additional texts equating homosexuals with Italians in Herrero García 349-52, and Schleiner for a discussion of homophobic slurs leveled by Catholics against Protestants and vice-versa in the post-Reformation period.

<sup>7</sup>Quevedo does the same thing in his anti-homosexual satirical verse. See, for example, "Epitafio a un italiano llamado Julio" and "Aquí yace Misser de la Florida" (Quevedo 2. 635, 637).

<sup>8</sup>According to Millé, the version that appears in *Quaderno de varias poesías de Don Luis de Góngora* from the Biblioteca de la Universidad de Barcelona has the epigraph cited above. In Ms. 10920 of the Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid the poem's epigraph reads: "A tres hombres, que se llamaban Carrión, Tordesillas y Olivares, indiciados de pecado nefando." Millé does not analyze the poem, but simply points out that certain passages are obscene. Such editorial prudery is unfortunately typical for this type of verse. Díez Fernández and Vélez Quiñones discuss this poem briefly in their articles.

<sup>9</sup>Alzieu, Jammes, and Lissorgues include this poem in their anthology of Golden Age erotic verse, saying that although the poem is anonymous, "huele a Góngora que trasciende" and that the attribution to him is realistic (251). However, neither Millé, Jammes nor Carreira include it in their editions. I include it here because it is so Gongorine and also because it is characteristic of Golden Age verse satires of sodomites.

<sup>10</sup>Other examples of *cirio*, meaning penis, are found in Alzieu *et al*; see poems 42, v. 10; 59, v. 13 and 131, v. 10.

<sup>11</sup>See the Introduction to Goldberg, *Reclaiming Sodom* and Katz on sodomy as a sociopolitical designation generally mobilized in the face of perceived threats to the social order.

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