

**Reading Lope de Vega:
On Writing and the Articulation of Poetic Voice**

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Critical perspectives of Lope de Vega as poet and dramatist have varied over the centuries beginning with the 17th-century views of literary enemies (Góngora, Cervantes, Pellicer) to literary friends (Quevedo, Elisio Medinilla, Montalbán). The Neo-Classicism of the 18th-century saw Lope as curiously aberrant from rationalist principles while 19th-century scholars viewed Lope through romantic and nationalist agendas. Approaches of the 20th-century have presented us with multiple schools of criticism –biographical interpretations, stylistics analysis, new criticism, formalist, structuralist, semiotic, deconstructionist and speech-act criticism, as well as post-modernist critics of recent decades.¹ Given his prolific output as dramatist, interpretation of Lope’s poetics had been focused on the *Arte nuevo de hacer comedias*. Over time this focus shifted to the poetics of Lope’s lyric poetry, influenced originally by Montesinos’ classic essay in the edition of *Poesías líricas de Lope de Vega* (1925-26)² and more recently by the studies of Carreño, Gaylord Randel, López Grigera, Xavier Tubau and Sánchez Jiménez as well as annotated editions with introductory studies of Lope’s *Rimas* (Pedraza Jiménez; Carreño), *Rimas Sacras* (Carreño and Sánchez Jiménez), *Rimas humanas y divinas del Tomé de Burguillos* (Carreño; Rozas), *La hermosura de Angélica* (Trambaioli), *La Dragontea* (Sánchez Jiménez), and *Fiestas de Denia* (Profeti).

Analysis of Lope’s poetry has led ultimately to the questions of Lope’s self-representation. Critical focus thus has moved away from the past mid-century stylistic and new criticism concern for the autonomous explication of the text to a reading of Lope’s work within a broader historicist context –a re-orientation that does not eschew literary evaluation to the diminishment of biographic import or vice versa. Mary Gaylord Randel incisively framed the issue: “Can Lope’s verse be understood only in

¹ A comprehensive history of Lope criticism that goes beyond the *comedia* and includes his non-dramatic works –poetry and prose as well as his poetics– still eludes us. See the following works with extensive bibliographies for more detailed views of Lope criticism. Maria Grazia Profeti 2007 surveys Lope’s reception in the 18th century. Enrique García Santo-Tomás has provided three excellent studies of the history of criticism for Lope’s theatre: an edition with introductory study and overview of criticism of the *Arte nuevo de hacer comedias* 2006, a book on the canonical reception of Lope’s theater (2000) and a review article (2003, 1351-69) of the literary reception of major Golden Age dramatists. Also see the chapter “A Brief History of Reception” in Johnathan Thacker 2007. Antonio Carreño 1999 discusses Lope’s reception among late 19th-century and early 20th-century critics focusing principally on the generation of 1927. Diez de Revenga 1995 reviews re-discovery of Lope’s poetry for the period 1920-36. Sánchez Jiménez 2006 summarizes recent schools of Lope criticism under “románticos, estilistas y posmodernos” (3-11).

² See the remarks of Diez de Revenga (111-13) on the significance of Montesinos’ essay.

terms of biographical verisimilitude? What is at stake –for Lope and for us– in the tension between the stance (new critical, stylistic, formalist, semiotic) that would make the poetic text the central unit of significance, and the approach (historically far more prevalent in Lope studies) which looks for coherence at the level of biographical mimesis?” (1986, 225). Carreño has addressed the literary aspects of some of these issues by illustrating the paths of Lope’s personal and poetic versions of self in his *romances*, sonnets, religious and prose works.³ In discussing Lope’s projections of self as *Belardo furioso*, Daniel Heiple asserted the import of autobiography as a model for reading and assessment (Olney, Pascal, Bruss, GUSDORF), yet he ultimately accounted for the fact that “Lope’s appearances [...] must indeed be judged as literary and fictional rather than as autobiographical facts” (603). Sánchez Jiménez’s attempt at reading Lope’s non-dramatic poetry “biográfico modo” addresses the issue from a perspective that looks for “cómo, por qué y para qué se pinta Lope en su poesía” with a critical view that uses “las aportaciones de la crítica romántica, estilística y postmoderna” (2006, 11). David Garrison summarizes the issue succinctly –when Lope “takes the everyday events of his life and turns them into poetry, [his] objectives are ultimately artistic and not autobiographical” (46 n.1).

In the final analysis, however, Randel’s “disintegrative poetics” (1986, 224) whereby the reader is stranded between biographical readings and literary readings cannot be resolved by the acceptance of one over the exclusion of the other. Given the reader’s dilemma of moving between literary text as an entity unto itself and biographical explication pulling the reader to a context outside the text, it is my contention that we can find a resolution, at the risk of a tautological presupposition, by re-arranging our expectations and assumptions as readers of 16th- and 17th-century texts. We thus can accept that the intertextualities of fictive discourse allow for the intrusions of multiple nuances of self –both of author and reader– as well as the complexities within and without the text (linguistic, literary, socio-political and religious). Such a perspective would be expansive enough to consider as inherently relevant Renaissance rhetorical and imitative conventions: namely, the projecting of self through lyrical and grammatical personae, veiled biographical masks, feigned discourse with a conventionalized, mythical or real addressee, as well as the appropriation and re-writing of classical themes in deliberative, laudatory and meditative discourses.⁴ Renaissance poetic conventions of the written/speaking voice

³ See Carreño 1979, 1992, 1994, 1995, 1996 and particularly the introductory study to his *Rimas humanas* (XXV-CV) based on a number of previously written essays on Lope’s poetry.

⁴ Elizabeth Clark deftly addresses the issues of writing, texts, readers, and interpretation in a chapter entitled “Texts and Contexts” (130-55). Barry Jordan argues that reading is a process of negotiating discourses in a field of relationships, which for the Renaissance I take to mean the rhetorical context and constructs: “...reading, interpretation, and the production of meaning are matters of negotiation between the discourses of the text and those of the reader, which take place, not in a timeless vacuum, but in a field of relationships and forces and according to certain sites and positions in which the text is both produced and consumed” (28). Anthony Close discussing his approach to the comic in Cervantes, provides constructive counsel that I consider relevant to reading Lope: “A large accumulation of critical

within the poem (particularly in the sonnet, verse epistle, elegy, eclogue or *canCIÓN*) implicitly allow for the poet's intrusion of personal reality fictionalized in metrical verse. Lope readily confirms such complexity of self, writer and poem when he poeticizes the challenge: "Y así mis versos [...] serán guerra mortal de mis sentidos" (Carreño 1998, Soneto 149) or muses about the nature of letter writing equally applicable to the fictive diegesis of his poems: "No sé quién decía que las cartas eran oración mental a los ausentes, y decía bien, porque mientras se escribe se piensa en el sujeto a quien se escribe, se habla con él en el entendimiento, en quien se representa al vivo su imagen" (III: n.65).⁵

The appreciation of poetic style and inherent poetic elements of the text is thus not opposed to the appreciation of ironies of self-depiction and external referentiality. Of central importance is awareness of how Lope's chameleon-like, contradictory projections of private and public self were shaped by his multiple audiences, fictionalized or real: the *vulgo* of his plays, the recipients of his letters (the Duque de Sessa and Amarilis letters), the addressees of his verse epistles (Gaspar de Barrionuevo, Elisio Medinillo, et al.), and the readers and imagined audiences of his romance epics, sonnets, pastoral narratives, or religious panegyrics, *soliloquios* and meditations –not to mention Lope's awareness of the effect of his popular ballads upon those who repeated them in conversation or sang them in the streets. In this respect the observations of Wesling and Slawek provide insights relevant for reading Lope: "Every voice, including prayer, needs an ear, imagines an addressee. The audience is, as Walter J. Ong has insisted, always a fiction, and particularly with the temporal and spatial distances required by printed voice. So voice is projecting an audience, to an audience –also the audience is plainly influencing content and tone" (8). But in the case of the Renaissance lyric, the fictive as well as actual addressee/audience implies a reality beyond the text. The addressees of Lope's sonnets in the *Rimas* (1602) – mythical figures, fictive or real personages– are not meant to have the same stature

and theoretical shibboleths, from the image of Cervantes as Sphinx-like ironist to the alleged fallacy of pursuing authorial intentions to postmodernism's pronouncement of the death of the author, has taught us to be wary of treating authors as beings of flesh and blood, animated like the rest of us by opinions, purposes, and prejudices. However, we must not let ourselves be burdened by this baggage, which makes a singularly unhelpful handicap in the approach to the literature of the Spanish Golden Age. Many of its texts have a pronounced autobiographical or self-expressive slant, and are deliberately meant to be read in that sense" (12).

⁵ Citations to the letters from Amezáa's edition of Lope's *Epistolario* are made by volume followed by 'n' indicating letter number. My views on the written/speaking voice within the poem have been influenced by Donald Wesling's and Tadeusz Slawek's chapter "Toward a Philosophy of Literary Voice" (1-30). Refocusing the issues of text, persona and voice they indicate that "one intent of our argument is to struggle against the 'chirographic and typographic bias' in the structuralist/Derridian enterprise, something already tactfully resisted in Ong's work since the mid-1970's" (209 n.1). See also Jeffery Walker's review of *Literary Voice* which discusses and evaluates Wesling's and Slawek's "reply to Derrida's anti-phonocentrism" (81-84). William J. Kennedy's observations on voice, address, deconstruction and literary theory (1987, 214-30; 1991, 77-89) have also helped focus my orientation to Lope's poetic ambitions.

granted to recipients of biographical letters. Likewise Lope's epic voice textualized in the *Jerusalén Conquistada*, with its personal intrusions, or the verse epistles of the *Filomena* and *Circe* are not biographical statements of fact.⁶ By the same token the written poetic voice 'speaking' in these stylized genres does not isolate itself from the allusive resonance of actual circumstance or emotional temperament underlying and informing poetic voice. Carreño observes that Lope's conflict in the *Rimas* "deja sus huellas en el acto creativo: en la escritura que se fija como locución confidencial, oralizada, y en la secuencia reiterativa, fluída o en staccato, de los versos" (1992, 75). It is this complexity of voiced conflict in print that presents itself to us as readers and we weave our way through the text with its fictive embellishment as well as its allusive referentiality, discernable in the character of the written voice 'speaking' within the text. To be sure this voice we "hear with eyes," to use Shakespeare's allusion, is not the physical voice of Lope but rather as Garrett Stewart argues a text that we "silently ventriloquize [...] according to the linguistic conventions of [our] time" (38).⁷ Lope writing in praise of Maestro Pedro Díaz Morante (author of a manual for teaching penmanship) averred that sacred antiquity established the art of writing by graphic signs –silent voice without tongue informs through graphic letters– interpreters of the soul: "En accentos/ pintados muda voz sin lengua informa/ con las letras, intérpretes del alma" (Lope *Poesía VI* 646). In a fictive address to San Benito, nominal patron of the *Academia de Madrid*, Lope pleads with San Benito that his voice be heard: "Oíd mi voz, pues va de solo a solo" (Carreño & Sánchez Jiménez 418, v.14). Lope's entreaty however, is not directed solely to his immediate addressee within the poem, but to us as well, readers who 'overhear' this fictive conversation. Indeed critical language used currently when discussing lyric poetry, following the

⁶ The complexity of Renaissance assumptions about biography, poems, letters and diaries in relation to poetry and prose considered on a fictional level is perhaps best exemplified by a conversation between Don Quixote and Sancho Panza in the Sierra Morena (Part I: Chapter XXIII). They come upon a tattered suitcase that contains a diary along with clothing and money. Paging through the diary Don Quixote finds some poetry (a sonnet) and prose (a letter) which he reads aloud. Sancho's responses exemplify a minimalist approach to querying the texts: "Por esa trova [...] no se puede saber nada", confusion over the word "hilo" and clarification about the letter: "¿Carta misiva?" Don Quixote espouses a closer philological análisis, regarding the sonnet: "No dije sino *Fili* [...] y éste, sin duda es el nombre de la dama de quien se queja este soneto," and regarding the letter: "Esto es prosa, y parece carta; [...] En el principio no parece sino de amores." He admits that both sonnet and letter can only reveal so much about the writer. Prose and verse, for the reader of a diary, have a tenuous and not entirely self-revealing relationship with biography: "Menos por ésta que por los versos se puede sacar más de que quien la escribió es algún desdeñado amante." Some extra-textual occurrence, or more precisely some extra-diary occurrence –the actual appearance of a tattered and scantily clad Cardenio– provides added information about the writer, the fictive character of Cervantes's Sierra Morena narrative within a narrative.

⁷ Shakespeare's Sonnet 23 –"As an unperfect actor on the stage"– ends with the final couplet: "O learn to read what silent love hath writ/ to hear with eyes belongs to love's fine wit." Helen Vendler's perceptive analysis of this sonnet emphasizes as core concepts "The idea of *hearing with eyes* [...] prepared for by the idea of *speaking in silence*" (137). Supportive of my thesis about voice and text are the astutely argued observations of Garrett Stewart.

work of early 1950's and 1960's scholars (Ong, G. Wright, Moore, Ehrenpreis), has felt comfortable designating the 'persona' or a first person 'I' as a 'speaker' in the poem rather than using the graphological term of 'writer' forming and elaborating the poem.

Given this critical background my purpose in this essay is to discuss Lope's varied postures toward his acts of writing. Fueled by the conflicts of profane and sacred inspiration Lope embraced diverse and often divergent subject matter inviting critical views that have traditionally dichotomized his poetry into categories of popular and classical-Italianate, sacred or profane. To my mind this dichotomy unnecessarily compartmentalizes Lope's creative efforts and ultimately implies a process of poetic invention and rhetorical expression artificially divided on the basis of inferred disparate content or form. I propose that a more comprehensive view can be constructed if we approach his writing from a generative and functional perspective that takes into account the rhetorical constructs of speaker and audience and rhetoric's consequent strategies of discourse and performance designed to praise, blame, persuade, instruct, entertain or cause the admiration of recipients whether readers or listeners. Lope conceptualized his abiding need to compose verse using the rhetorical, poetical and philosophical language of the period circumscribed by the moral restrictions of religiously conservative Spain, suffused with Platonic commonplaces (*furor poeticus*, *amor poeticus*) rooted in Horatian-Aristotelian concepts (*ars/ingenium*, *res/verba*, *dulce/utile*) while guided by the linguistic and public rituals of rhetorical discourse and the motives of confessional introspection or prayerful meditation.⁸

Recent studies have attempted to refocus our understanding of Spanish Siglo de Oro poetics which has relevance to my discussion of Lope's views on writing and poetry. A thought-provoking study by Sofie Kluge reassesses the role that the "Christian-Platonic bias" of post-Tridentine Spain played in determining the Horatian-Aristotelian influence upon literary theory and practice –hence in Kluge's opinion the character of negative reactions to Góngora. On another front María José Vega Ramos urges a realignment of our traditional view of Renaissance literary theory taking into account an ethical poetics of the reader. Given Lope's continuous preoccupation with classical Renaissance genres and themes infused with the struggles of passion, *amor* and occasional eroticism on the one hand and his commitment to religiously inspired subject matter and biblical topics on the other –as well as his considered predilection for popular verse and song– it has not been difficult to categorize Lope at one level as a Baroque writer at odds with himself. Nevertheless, instead of merely dichotomizing Lope's poetic efforts into Baroque categories, I would argue that Lope's rhetorical concern for the reception of poetic expression was in continuous conflict with personal

⁸ Aurora Egido 2001 has provided an excellent overview of the rhetorical and poetic constructs supporting 16th- and 17th-century writing and letters. I use the terms Platonism and Platonic (following 16th- and 17th century writers) to distinguish from Neoplatonism or Neoplatonic, terms I use for early 3rd- century interpretations of Plato.

and societal pressures contending for literary status under the strictures of Spain's socio-religious mores and political ideologies. Such apparent conflicts, I maintain, are played out both in Lope's personal crisis of conscience and his struggle for literary prominence that to some extent were assuaged (if only temporarily and inconclusively) by his decision to enter the priesthood at the age of fifty-two and the publication and ultimate public rejection of what was to be his 'magnum opus' *La Jerusalén Conquistada*. Although capable of morally elevated as well as morally destructive behavior, he nevertheless believed in the power of a confessional sacramentality that exonerated one from condemnation through penance and reconciliation. Lope's religious poetry written in tandem with his plays and following upon his libelous verse and popular *romances* thus can be understood as deriving from a conscience molded from youth by catechetical beliefs, nurtured by enduring faith and attuned to the socio-religious expectations and political ideology of his audience. Robert Ricard's insight frames the issue: "Si queremos descifrar la triste y desconcertante aventura de su sacerdocio, debemos contrariar nuestra natural inclinación y renunciar a establecer una frontera entre lo profano y lo sagrado, o bien, entre el pecado y lo que no lo es, en el ámbito de la conducta moral" (254). As Menéndez Pidal intuitively perceived, Lope was a "fervoroso creyente en las eternas leyes de la moral y atrevido pecador contra ellas" (70). We must realize as well, that Lope imbued himself with a deeply religious, socio-political mindset, evident even before his ordination when in the *Isidro* he comments: "...cuanto escribo y digo se entienda debajo de la corrección de la Iglesia Católica Romana a que me sujeto" (210) –a statement crafted to appeal to the formalities of censure and realities of a politically religious post-Tridentine state. In *Pastores de Belén* (1612) Lope incisively described his own predicament and that of the audience for whom he wrote in the inherited philosophical language of a Tridentine-lapsarian view of morality with the idealized Platonic aspirations that cast aside "esta corteza bárbara":

Todo hombre es sujeto a las pasiones propias, mayormente a las concupiscibles, que turban de tal manera la claridad del entendimiento humano que le dividen y apartan de la principal senda a que la razón aspira, y le precipitan y llevan a los mayores desatinos, que de los libres pueden ser imaginados, y ellos después conocen, aunque tarde, y algunas veces sin fruto lloran y sienten. Es amor un exceso del deseo, y no, como Platón le define, un deseo de la inmortalidad, que cuando tan puramente se ama no da el espíritu parte de sus pensamientos al cuerpo; antes bien, *desasido de esta corteza bárbara*, vuela por superiores aires a la región más alta, a la mayor esfera, donde más puro fuego le vivifica y más sabrosa llama le fomenta. (155-56; italics added)

As such Lope's conflicting amorous, sexual and ascetical obsessions, as well as his social, moral and religious commitments are rehearsed and refashioned in his poetry,

shaped by the ambiguities of a Christian-Platonic bias, the idiom of Scholastic Aristotelianism and the socio-political conservatism of 16th- and 17th-century Spain. I have attempted to evaluate some of these ambiguities and conflicts in a study of Lope's postures toward writing versus defending poetry (Brown 2009a). Also relevant in the context of the conflicting subtexts of Lope's poetry and his sycophantic relation to the Duque de Sessa is Alison Weber's challenging reassessment of Lope's servility revealed as chafing conflict in some of the poems from the *Rimas sacras*. Jaime Fernández presents a more traditional apologia for Lope focusing on the *Epistolario* and *Rimas sacras*, while the contributions of Aranzta Mayo provide an enlightening re-assessment of Lope's religious poetry within his corpus of writing.

Michel de Certeau's conception that writing is authorized by the disappearance of speech (79), moves one to adduce that Lope at one level embraced writing as a compelling need to ground and sustain his voice through the formalizations of rhythm, rhyme and the poetic language that verse provided along with the conventions of classical and religious poetics. Many of Lope's acts of writing, protean as they were, become poeticized transformations of love, passion and eroticism in conflict with a religious asceticism that engendered remorse and the penitent prayer of poetry. Insightful studies by Aurora Egido (1995) and Carreño & Jiménez's introduction to their edition of *Rimas sacras* discuss Lope's many allusions to the process of writing (sacred and profane) and the transformations of such metaphors as *llantos*, *lágrimas*, *pluma*, *pincel*, *lengua*, *tinta*, *papeles*, *libros*, into symbols of *poesis* which, I maintain, act as graphic constituents of Lope's characteristic aural sensitivity for versification – legendary among his peers. In the *Fama póstuma* Montalbán writes: “Era tanta su inclinación a los versos, que mientras no supo escribir, repartía su almuerzo con los otros mayores, por que le escribiesen lo que él dictaba” (28). This impressive “maquina de trovar,” as José Manuel Blecua relates, moved Lope to turn a prose sermon into poetry: “Aquella maquina de trovar no se detuvo ante nada, y fue capaz de poetizar hasta un sermón oído a don Bernardo de Rojas, arzobispo de Toledo” (297). And as if introductory prose summaries for the Cantos of the *Jerusalén Conquistada* alone were somehow insufficient, Lope's need to versify made him re-fashion each one into the verse and rhyme schemes of a sonnet in order to heighten their meaning and impress by sheer genius.⁹

Poetic Voice and the Musicality of Verse

⁹ Upon Lope's death Phelipe Godínez praised Lope's fecundity in a funeral panegyric: “Tantos libros, tantas comedias, tantos versos divinos, tantos humanos, todo lo mejor, todo lo mas célebre, oro fue vital de fecunda vena, vena fue viva de oro fecundo” (156). Carreño has referred to Antonio de Sancha's emblematic characterization of Lope appearing in *Colección de las obras sueltas* (I: vi-viii) with a statement made by Ovid: “Su facilidad para el verso quedaría bellamente atrapada en la frase lapidaria de Ovidio ‘Quod tentabam dicere versus erat’ (Tristia, IV, x, v. 26)” (Whatever I attempted to say turned out verse). (Carreño 1996, 26). Translations from Latin throughout are mine.

Among the many references and citations in Lope's defense of poetry – "Cuestión del honor debido a la poesía" (590-600)– there appear key statements from Pierre Gregoire's *Syntaxeon* –a resourceful compendium with reflections on the nature of poetry. *Liber XIX In quo agitur de poetica* begins with an opening statement from Aristotle that characterized Renaissance views of the orality and rhythm of poetry in quiet contrast to Platonist views that were not lost on Lope:

Metra, inquit Aristot. in Poeti. partes esse numeri satis apparet; & sicuti numerus & harmonia natura insita nobis sunt, videtur & poesis naturalis, quae postea arte iuuatur (188). (Meter, says Aristotle in the *Poetics*, deals with elements of rhythm as is apparent and since rhythm and harmony are by nature inherent in us, it seems that the making of poetry is a natural activity assisted by art.)¹⁰

The opening statement "Al teatro" in the prologue to *La Dorotea*, echoes the concepts of inherent musicality but Lope, speaking through his pseudo-author, recasts them in the Christian narrative of poetry's origins and didactic ends inherited from Isidore of Seville:¹¹

Como nuestra alma en el canto y música con tan suaue afecto se deleita que algunos la llamaron armonía, inuentaron los antiguos poetas el modo de los metros y los pies para los números, a efeto de que con más dulçura pudiesen inclinar a la virtud y buenas costumbres los ánimos de los hombres; de que se

¹⁰ Lope also relied upon Gregoire's *Syntaxeon* (XII, iii-iv) in *El peregrino in su patria* (343-44 nn.485-86) when providing a brief 'disquisition' on the origin and nature of music. Claude V. Palisca in his chapter "Universal Harmony" discusses Plato, Pythagorean and Renaissance concepts of harmony ("harmonia est discordia concors," the music of the spheres, the role of *furor poeticus*) that Renaissance interpretations of Aristotle sought to re-define or overturn (13-28). Francisco Salinas the blind organist and professor of music at the University of Salamanca whom Fray Luis de León praised in his platonically inspired *Oda a Salinas* wrote a major Renaissance treatise *De musica libri septem* held in high esteem by his contemporaries. In the preface Salinas placed music in its commonplace position among the liberal arts, particularly emphasizing the uniqueness of speech and song as characteristic of the *vox humana* and arguing for the moral justification of music: "Inter omnium animantium voces merito vox humana principem locum obtinere censetur; quoniam ea sola loquendi & canendi facultate praedita est. [...] Musicam necessariam esse decernit propter honestatem, quam habet cum voluptate coniunctam. [...] Beata vero vita non in honestate solum, neque in voluptate, sed in honesta voluptate consistit. Musicam autem esse de numero iucundissimarum rerum omnes consentire" (fol. 4r). ("It is believed that among the utterances of all animate beings the human voice rightly holds the primary place, because it alone is bestowed with the faculty of speaking and singing. [...] Music is thought to be necessary because of the honesty which it possesses joined with pleasure. [...] The blessed life however resides not solely in honesty nor solely in pleasure, but in honest pleasure. For everyone agrees that music is about the harmony of most pleasant things.").

¹¹ Isidore of Seville provides the classic *locus* for Renaissance discussion of the origins of poetry and song in the *Etymologiae* Bk VIII, vii, 'De poetis,' where he cites Suetonius on poetry in pagan worship and hymns.

colige quan agreste y barbaro es quien este arte –que todos los incluye– desestima, respetado de los antiguos teologos, que con el alabaron y engrandecieron –aunque enganados– sus fingidos dioses, hasta los nuestros, con sagrados himnos el verdadero y solo. (50)

In addition to these observations Lope demonstrated a predilection for this same aspect of poetry in his defense of poetry –“Cuestion del honor debido a la poesa”. Quoting from the *Syntaxeon* in Latin he alluded to the nature and function of poetry, but immediately qualified it by insisting upon the unique tradition of rhythmic song and verse, supported as well by subsequent allusions to Horace, Olympus Nemesianus, Tibullus and Athenaeus:

Y si en su *Sintaxeos* Pedro Gregorio no parece sentir bien de ella [de la opinion de los doctos sobre la poesa], esto no lo niega a lo menos: Probo quidem artem omnino, ut pote quae in electione verborum et sententiarum ingenia acuat et exerceat, et quae ad optima etiam possit esse celebranda instrumentum, y *que no ha habido jamas entre barbaros, gentiles y cristianos culto divino sine aliqua metrica decantatione, como se vee en nuestros himnos santsimos y yo tengo referido en mi Isidro* (592; italics added). ([And if Pierre Gregoire in his *Sintaxeos* doesn’t think well of the opinion of scholars on poetry, at least he doesn’t deny it:] I entirely accept that poetry is an art, since it exercises and sharpens wits in the selection of words and ideas and as an instrument for celebrating best pursuits, [and that there has never been divine worship among barbarians, gentiles or christians] without any metrical song, [as can be seen in our holiest hymns which I have pointed out in my *Isidro*.])

Lope’s significant addition to the Latin citation highlights his esteem for metrical song –“*metrica decantatione, como se ve en nuestros himnos santsimos y yo tengo referido en mi Isidro.*” In the prologue to the *Isidro* he praised the effects of song alluding to the uplifting and emotionally cleansing purity of religious hymns: “A quin no levanta el espritu or el *Pange lingua*? A quin no obliga a llorar *Vexilla Regis prodeunt*? Qu cosa mas dulce que *O gloriosa Domina*? Y el *Ave Maris stella*?” (207). Most likely Lope had in mind the *cante llano* (plainsong) of Gregorian chant as well as the polyphonic versions of Tomas Luis de Victoria (1548-1611), Antonio Cabezon (1510-66) or Cristbal de Morales (1500-53,) accomplished 16th-century composers who set these traditional familiar religious hymns to music.¹² Given Lope’s

¹² Cabezon aside from his religious music had composed *Diferencias sobre el canto llano del caballero* for the organ, harp and vihuela based on the *romance* Lope later included in *El caballero de Olmedo* (See Jesus Bal y Gay [59] for the musical score of Cabezon’s piece). Tomas Luis de Victoria, one of the foremost composers of the period, spent the final years of his career as *maestro de capilla* at the convent of the *Descalzas Reales* in Madrid; among his compositions are versions of the *Ave maris stella*, *Pange lingua* and *Vexilla Regis prodeunt*. Audible versions of these compositions are accesible on the web as

associations with third order religious congregations and his later ordination to the priesthood we can imagine how religious song as well as the flourish of the organ gave inspiration to his poetic voice. Understandable as well is Lope's affection for music and its influence upon purity and plainness of style which earlier had found voice in his *romances*. While popular songs in the *comedias* were designed to please the *vulgo*, reference to religious song in the *Isidro* provided him the opportunity to wax euphoric about sacred hymns, their essential rhetorical design to praise God and inspire pure, chaste and well measured verse while effectively moving the listener to *admiratio*: "Luego justa cosa es y conveniente loar a Dios, a su madre y a los santos en versos, que así dijo David, *Laudate eum in Psalterio*; y cuando dice *Chordis, organo et cymbalis* me causó admiración que diga *bene sonantibus*. En que parece que siente que sean bien templados, y los versos buenos, castos y medidos. Yo creo que este precepto guardan pocos, y que yo podría ser culpado en esto" (209).

Much later in his career, speaking through Julio in a fictive academic discussion in *La Dorotea*, Lope commented about the rhetorical aspects of inspiration. He described a process of imitation –ultimately related to the musicality of verse– rhetorically emphasizing its constitutive, evolving and inter-related activities: reading, imitating, writing, erasing, re-writing (and rhyming in the case of poetry):

¿Como Compones? Leyendo
 Y lo que leo imitando,
 Y lo que imito escriuendo,
 Y lo que escriuo borrando;
 De lo borrado escogiendo. (IV, III, 348)

Essential to the process of writing for Lope was the process of re-writing, the concept of "borrar" –not mere erasure or deletion, but a selective, oftentimes repetitive procedure that arrived at the presentational version drawn from foundations of previous writing.¹³ The "borrador" is part of the component process that writing embodies. Yet writing was not merely putting quill to paper. There was the important role of orality and rhythm which in the implicitly inventive and characteristically rhetorical redaction of a poem drew from the internal 'sounding' of voice to find its preferred version. Lope continues: "...en lo borrado se conoce lo que se piensa; que quien no piensa no borra. Y así, *el que rimare hallará lo más perfeto: que de hallar*

noted below –the version of the *Vexilla Regis prodeunt* is a choral rendition, while the others are electronic renditions of Victoria's musical score: http://www.upv.es/coro/victoria/mid/Ave_Maris_Stella-impares.mid; http://www.upv.es/coro/victoria/mp3/Brunete-Vexilla_Regis.mp3; http://www.upv.es/coro/victoria/voces/Pange_Lingua_Gloriosi-s.mid.

¹³ In this respect consider the nineteen sonnets from Lope's *comedias* that were rewritten, however slightly, and placed in the 1602 edition of the *Rimas* (see Brown 1978, 224 n.14). Leo Cabranes-Grant reminds us that "Lope no cesa de escribir porque no teme repetirse. Es más: Lope se copia a sí mismo, termina siendo uno de sus propios modelos" (11). Felipe Pedraza Jiménez 1998 explores in depth Lope's re-writing and repetition with examples throughout his works.

se llamaron los versos trobas” (IV, III, 348. Italics added).¹⁴ Lope’s reflections, I suggest, reveal a process that considers the textuality of writing unified with the utterance of voice, versification and *canto*, prose and poetry –manifestations of imitation, *poesis* and song. Eminently classical as well as popular in origin and practice, Lope’s perspective embodies a humanistic triad of *ars, natura, exercitatio* – the pedagogical orientation inherited from rhetoric (Agricola, Erasmus, Sánchez el Brocense, et al.). Composition exercises designed to teach style and *copia verborum* also emphasized the oral aspect attendant to meter, rhythm and harmony when imitating models in prose or poetry. Operative as well in the generation of popular song and ballad was the imitation of melody, harmony, verse and rhyme.¹⁵ Antonio Carreño summarizes the duality of Lope’s poetic voice with his usual insight implying a unity of poetic intention and rhetorical purpose: “Lope de Vega se mueve en dos aguas: inmerso en el gran cuerpo de *Cancioneros* y *Romanceros* (tradicional) y en las nuevas formas métricas que difunde en voluminosas colecciones. [...] A caballo, pues, de dos retóricas –agudeza, concepto, sentencia breve; ritmo melódico– de dos formas líricas (octosílabo, endecasílabo) en cuyo patrón rítmico podría fácilmente acoplar la densidad de conceptos o el emparejamiento argumentativo que hilaba la *elocutio*” (1994, 87). Menéndez y Pelayo’s critical assessment of Lope’s poetry bequeathed a different perspective that in my view led to over-dichotomizing Lope’s popular versus erudite poetry: “En Lope hay dos hombres: el gran poeta español y popular, y el poeta artístico, educado, como todos sus contemporáneos, con la tradición latina e italiana. Estas dos mitades de su ser se armonizan cuando pueden, pero generalmente andan discordes, y, según las ocasiones triunfa la una o triunfa la otra. Con su alma de poeta nacional, Lope tiene conciencia más o menos clara de la grandeza de su obra” (II: 294).

Lope’s poetic voice I contend was neither in its conception nor in its development compartmentalized by or for that matter in conflict with its subject matter. Schooled and enhanced by the early practice of imitation and metrical playfulness, the search for poetic voice naturally followed the musical traditions of secular as well as religious song. Surrounded by popular music, the music of the court and the music of the

¹⁴ Ong in the foreword to Paul Zumthor’s *Oral Poetry* provides an interesting observation about the interrelation of voice, writing and song: “Voice without language (a shout, voice-control exercises) has a certain impotence, and so does language without voice, writing. The culmination of voice is not merely any use of language, but song” (i).

¹⁵ Although as Gaylord Randel maintains “Renaissance theorists did not distinguish clearly between the imitation of nature and the learned imitation of models. [...] In Lope [...] one finds the two kinds of imitation inextricably intertwined” (1986, 228). In this instance we see him emphasizing the imitation of models –reading and imitating what he reads. Early Renaissance grammars –Despauterius, Nebrija– contained a section devoted to meter and prosody which sought to inculcate sensitivity to the issues of rhythmic, periodic composition. Lope referred throughout his writing to the role of *metrica* and demonstrated his consummate skill in different verse forms, rhyme schemes and the musicality of his traditional as well as Italianate poetry. Aurora Egido insists “no sólo la lírica tradicional siguió su curso de oralidad y canto, sino que gran parte de la poesía culta no es únicamente letra, sino voz recitada en cenáculos cultos, en academias y universidades o en certámenes públicos” (1990, 10).

liturgy, whether walking the streets of Madrid, riding a mule in the *carnestolendas* festivities of Denia, reviewing the festivities and processions of Corpus Christi, attending mass in the cathedrals of Seville or Toledo, or listening to the singing of Blas de Castro in the privacy of his home, Lope filled his settings, routines and literary endeavors with music and song.¹⁶ Lope would have agreed with Pedro Cerone (author of *El Melopeo y Maestro* [1613], an encyclopedic compendium of music theory and practice frequently cited in Spain) when he wrote that one should prize singing since just as being a Christian made one an heir of heaven so music made one a companion of the angels: “Así como el hombre ha de estimar en mucho el ser Christiano, assi tambien ha de preciar algun tanto el saber cantar: porque si el uno nos haze herederos del cielo, el otro nos haze compañeros de los Angeles” (429). Lope was fond of citing Augustine that music was a divine gift: “Aludió San Agustín [...] a la música en una de sus epístolas, *Dei donum*” (Case 99); or combining classical with Christian heritage: “Dijo Homero que Júpiter ministraba a los músicos; que es lo mismo que decir San Agustín que era don de Dios” (Case 231). Presumably poetic voice and music were gifts to be perfected with practice, sustained by *ars* and *natura*, and developed by *ingenium* and *inventio*.

While the enveloping presence of music may have given wings to voice and inspired Lope’s desire for purity of expression, it is no less apparent that such an affinity inspired his transpositions of voice and pen into symbols of song and music. In *Pastores de Belén* Lope begins a poem recounting the angel Gabriel’s visitation to the Virgin Mary, invoking not the classical muses of inspiration but the triad of faith, voice and pen in order to sing and echo the praise of *Ave Maria gratia plena*. May faith contemplate, voice sing, and pen write: “Contemple, cante, escriba/ la Fe, la voz, la pluma,/ de tu salutación la salud nuestra”(129). In *Rimas sacras* Lope combines sonnets of remorse with laudatory *romances* and *glosas*, contemplative *llantos* and colloquies to *Cristo crucificado*, all prefaced by an introductory poem in which Lope calls for a Babylonian lyre (appropriated from Psalm 136 –Super flumina Babylonis

¹⁶ Regarding Blas de Castro see note 20 below. Lope off-handedly comments in a letter to the Duque de Sessa that the singing of his friend distracts him: “Me tiraba del entendimiento por los oídos, pues mientras escribía, estaba [Blas de Castro] cantando” (III: n.130). Felipe de Gauna describes the *carnestolendas* procession in Valencia welcoming Margaret of Austria the future wife of Phillip III, in which Lope was dressed as the comedic Italian figure Bottarga; along with the festive music one can imagine the laughter surrounding the event. Gauna writes: “Hazían quadrilla de desiseys luscidos cavalleros vestidos con Ropas turquescas de sed y horo de diferentes colores tan ricamente como se pueda encareser leuando delante dellos la mússica de las atabales y trompetas del seruicio de su magestad taniéndolos a buen son Regosixados de fiesta. [...] Yvan dos máscaras ridículas quel huno dellas fué conocida ser el poheta Lope de Vega, el qual venía vestido de botarga, ábito italiano que hera todo de colorado [...] con huna mula vaya ensillada a la gineta y petral de cascaueles, y por el vestido que traya y arsones de la silla leuaua colgando diferentes animales de carne para comer, representando el tiempo del carnal como fueron muchos conexas, perdisses y gallinas y otras aves colgadas por el cuello y cintura de su cuerpo que avía mucho que mirrar en ell” (Juliá Martínez, 542-43; see also Torres, 51 n.8; Carreño, 1996, 1).

illic sedimus et flevimus) to sing of Christ's redemptive compassion and mercy: "El instrumento del canto/ de Babilonia saquemos/ [...] / cantemos eternamente/ tus misericordias santas" (23-24: vv 10-11). He sings religious songs, reminiscent of strains from *Tantum ergo sacramentum* (the final stanzas of *Pange Lingua*) in adoration of the sacred Host: "En tanto que a tus aras inmortales/ sacrificio deseos, *himnos canto,*/ hostia de amor, Dios hombre" (455. Italics added). Lope struggles to find a new language of love to address *Cristo crucificado* resorting to metaphors of music to convey the ineffability of the speechless lover – "pausas de música süave" "tal vez suspensa" "tal aguda y grave" "aguarda los compases":

La lengua de amor, a quien no sabe
lo que es amor, qué bárbara parece;
pues como por instantes enmudece
tiene pausas de música süave.

Tal vez suspensa, tal aguda y grave,
rotos conceptos al amante ofrece;
aguarda los compases que padece,
porque la causa su destreza alabe. (159)

And by way of appropriation –characteristic of Lope's Christianized Platonism– he previously had interlaced the spiritual intonation of song with the devout symbols of writing (*llantos, lágrimas, suspiros*) in the amorous poetry of the *Rimas* (1602). His resounding chorus of pen and voice sought to elevate Lucinda to the Platonic heavens, "la pluma y lengua respondiendo a coros/ quieren al cielo espléndido subiros/ donde están los espíritus más puros" assured that his tears and verse would not suffer oblivion: "mis lágrimas, mis versos, mis suspiros/ de olvido y tiempo vivirán seguros" (Carreño 1998, Soneto 133).

Throughout Lope's religious, popular and classical/Italianate poetry the overt role of *canto* (aligned with the modes of laudatory and persuasive rhetoric as well as the motives of performance designed for popular entertainment) asserted its influence in fashioning his poetic voice. We see him combining motifs from biblical texts, religious and popular song, *villancicos*, *romances*, including as well metaphorical allusions to the poet-vates musicians of antiquity –Orpheus, Apollo, Jupiter– appropriating the amorous tropes of Petrarchan melancholy and Christianized Platonism in contrast to the light-hearted music and dance of his *comedias*. Indeed it could be argued that music and song lay at the base of Lope's poetic voice infusing silent text with the contemplative gravity of Italianate poetry as well as religious lament. In the case of the ballads and *villancicos*, oral tradition found voice renewed and formalized in poetry and sung in musical renditions. The many songs, *villancicos* and *letrillas* in Lope's prose and dramatic works, his *romances* popularly sung by admirers and put to music by accomplished composers, as well as *canciones* and

eclogues sung solo to the accompaniment of the *vihuela* or lute have been catalogued and commented upon in the works of Bal y Gay, Querol Galvaldá, Alín and Barrio Alonso, Umpierre, Whitaker, and Stein.¹⁷

We know Lope's thoughts about the novelty of staging a one act eclogue *La selva sin amor*, set to music by Italians Piccinini and Monanni at the court of Phillip IV and staged in 1627 by the *tramoyista* Cosimo Lotti.¹⁸ Whitaker describes Lope's interest in the rehearsals reported to Florence by the Italian ambassador: "Lope goes into raptures ('se ne va en dolcezza') when he hears his words sung to such music" (54). In the dedicatory preface to his published eclogue Lope described the scenery of Lotti at length, somewhat chagrined that "los oídos rindiesen a los ojos." His comments about the musicians and singers reflect the humanist ideals of the period that music should effectively represent the words and emotions of poetic text to an audience: "Cuya armonía cantaban las figuras los versos, haciendo en la misma composición de la música las admiraciones las quejas, los amores, las iras y los demás afectos" (651-52).¹⁹ Unfortunately the musical score of what has been considered Spain's first opera has not come down to us.

¹⁷ Alín and Barrio Alonso catalogue 410 instances of "cantables" in Lope's comedias listing them in order: 1-110 canciones cantadas, 111-35 canciones no cantadas, 136-68 glosadas e intercaladas, 169-77 embebidas, 178-97 citadas, 198-211 aludidas, and 212-410 no identificadas. The appendices deal with romances-ensaladas and canciones in autos. Louise K. Stein contextualizes the role and import of song in the *comedia nueva* (11-65) analyzing music in masques and early court spectacle plays (68-102) and alluding to Lope's work. She includes tables listing musical stage directions from a sample of over 100 of Lope's plays as well as a useful catalogue of extant 17th-century Spanish theatrical songs. Among plays discussed are Lope's *El premio de la hermosura* performed at the ducal palace of Lerma in 1614, *El vellocino de oro* and the performance of Lope's eclogue *La selva sin amor* (see note 18 below). See also Elizabeth Wright for an historical analysis of the import of the play. Umpierre studies the dramatic function of songs in Lope's theater. For Jesús Bal y Gay Lope's "obras están esmaltadas de las más finas observaciones sobre la música y los músicos de su tiempo. [...] La educación musical de Lope y su sensibilidad para el arte de los sonidos se revela en múltiples pasajes de su obra" (97). Sources for the music scores of the thirty canciones collected by Bal y Gay are listed in his commentary. The three volume study of Miguel Querol Gavaldá provides music scores for 52 "poesías cantadas en las novelas" (vol. I), 30 "poesías sueltas en música" (vol. II), and 50 "poesías cantadas en las comedias" (vol. III). Querol Gavaldá maintains that Lope studied music at the University of Alcalá as well as the University of Salamanca assertions that to date have not been documented from student rolls. According to Querol Gavaldá a summary listing of Lope's copious use of "palabras técnicas del arte musical," "nombres de danzas y bailes" and "instrumentos musicales" should be "datos suficientes para convencer a cualquiera que en Lope (como en Cervantes, Góngora, Calderón, Tirso de Molina y otros grandes escritores) la música formaba parte de su educación, y lo que es más, fue objeto de continuas experiencias estético musicales vividas personalmente por dichos escritores" (I: 11).

¹⁸ For details of performance and musical attribution to Filippo Piccinini and Bernardo Monanni see Whitaker.

¹⁹ Discussing 16th- and 17th-century poetics of musical composition Claude Palisca focuses upon works of the Italians Zarlino, Sadoletto, Pontio, Vincenzo Galilei (father of Galileo Galilei), and Pietro Cerone (longtime resident of Spain and Naples) that espoused the humanist ideals of *musica poetica*: "The composer addresses a message, like the author of a poem or an oration, to a reader or listener. The music amplifies, enhances, and interprets the message conveyed by the verbal text" (51). Galilei going

Lope was keenly aware of the role of music not only in the formation of his own poetic voice but also as a popular pastime and as cultivated courtly entertainment. Song and music enter naturally into his prose, poetry and dramatic works. The popularity of Lope's *Arcadia* was undoubtedly due to its numerous songs and verse forms. Of the twenty-four sonnets inserted into the narrative, to single out one of his many poetic forms, half of them are introduced as poems that are sung. By way of example Juan Blas de Castro, the musician and Lope's friend at the court of Alba (cast as Brasildo), sings the sonnet "Merezca yo de tus graciosos ojos" "acompañado del armonía de su vigüela de arco" (258).²⁰ Lope introduces the sonnet "Esparcido el cabello por la espalda" with Benalcio and Danteo "cantando el uno y tañendo el otro" (182). Frondoso and Anfriso in the hall of the seven liberal arts are transfixed by Music personified: "Y estando casi en extasis con la dulzura y diversidad de voces y instrumentos, vieron una gallarda y briosa dama que con alegre rostro les miraba tocando una sonora vihüela" (417). Music sings a poem that relates Renaissance commonplaces about music: "Están todas las cosas naturales/ ligadas en cadena de armonía,/ los elementos y orbe celestiales/ [...] / Consuelo el alma, alegre los sentidos,/ esfuerzo el corazón" (418). Lope presents to his awe-struck shepherds the classical figures and tenets of music: "Anfión y Alceo, estupendos profesores de aquel arte celestial y divino... [...] Pitágoras [...] las tres partes de la música, armónica, orgánica y métrica, la diversidad de los instrumentos y la correspondencia de los sonos, la armonía de las voces y la proporción y distancia de los números" (418-19).

In Lope's later work the characters of *La Dorotea* sing or play instruments as expressions of disposition and mood. Celia questions Dorotea who sings the poem *Si todo lo acaba el tiempo* to a melody of Juan de Palomares:

Celia: Pero, señora, nunca te he oído estos versos ni este tono. ¿Quién los hizo?

beyond *imitazione delle parole* wrote that "a composer should imitate the speech of actors in tragedies and comedies: their pitch, accents, gestures and rate of speaking" (64).

²⁰ Juan Blas de Castro (1560-1631), composer, singer and guitarist at the court of the Duke of Alba and later musician at the court of Philip III and Philip IV, set Lope's poems to music. Lope referred to him by the pseudonym Brasildo in *La Arcadia* and *Pastores de Belén*. "En Alba de Tormes, Juan Blas cantaba, tañía y ponía música a los versos de Lope de Vega, gentilhomme de cámara del duque, iniciando así una colaboración y una amistad que durarán toda la vida" (*Gran Enciclopedia Aragonesa online*). In Lope's *La bella malmaridada* Juan Blas appears singing his own songs along with other musicians. In letters to the Duque de Sessa Lope refers to "Juan Blas, a quien yo tengo el amor y obligación que vuestra excelencia ha echado de ver en nuestra amistad" (III: n.93). Lope eulogized him in "Elogio en la muerte de Juan Blas de Castro." Lope makes other references to Blas de Castro in *Los amantes sin amor*, *El caballero de Illescas*, *El acero de Madrid*, *El peregrino en su patria*, *Pastores de Belén*, *La Jerusalem conquistada*, *La Filomena*, *La Circe* and *La Dorotea*. See Luis Robledo's definitive study of the life and work of Blas de Castro with transcriptions of his music and the entry in *Grove Music Online*.

Dorotea: Los versos, Celia, yo; y el tono, aquel excelente músico Juan de Palomares, competidor insigne del famoso Juan Blas de Castro, que dividieron entre los dos la lira, árbitro Apolo. (V, X, 448)

Through his involvement in the theatre Lope came into contact with prominent popular musicians Juan de Palomares and *El Capitán*, Mateo Romero.²¹ Lope also had a longstanding relationship with Vicente Espinel, author of *Marcos de Obregón*, who was acclaimed as poet, musician and guitarist. Lope referred to him as his *maestro* in the dedicatory preface to *El caballero de Ilescas*, the most extensive text (along with the discussion of music in *El peregrino en su patria* taken from Gregoire [see note 10]) that reveals Lope's familiarity with the practice and theory of music and its implied influence upon the voice of the poet: "Pues la figura música, como V. M. sabe, es una señal representativa de voz, o de silencio de voz por la diversidad de los puntos, y de silencio por las pausas, haciéndola yo a este discurso, como músico práctico y no teórico" (Case 99). Lope presents Espinel as an unrecognized icon of musical and poetic talent ("[de] la musica especulativo y práctica [...] insigne monstruo" [Case 99]) while he relates classical and biblical commonplaces citing the usual musical icons and anecdotes referenced by Renaissance writers: Pythagoras, Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Boethius, Avicenna, Augustine, Basil the Great, mentioning as well one of his sources –"música de quien hace memoria Natal Cómite en su *Mitología*" (Case 98). Praising Espinel's "instrumentos, arte y dulzura" Lope compares him to contemporary musicians who receive their accolade, "tanto han florecido Guerrero, Tejada, Cotes, Filipe Roger y el capitán Romero [...] Palomares y Juan Blas de Castro" (Case 99).²²

Poems sung by solo or polychoral voices to the accompaniment of *vihuela* or guitar took on a musical life of their own, transforming Lope's poetic voice into the music of performance. As might be expected we have more information about Lope's *romances* and *villancicos* than about Lope's sonnets set to music –a topic that merits a separate study. Some sonnets that we know did make their way into music are alluded to by Alín and Barrio Alonso: "Hermosas almas, que al amor honesto" (sung at the end of *El premio de la hermosura* by Doña Catalina de Acuna playing Leuridemo

²¹ Juan de Palomares (c1573–*ante quem* 1609) was a popular guitarist and composer of whose work we have only three extant songs. Mateo Romero (c. 1575-1647) was a Flemish composer and musician of sacred and secular music who succeeded Felipe Rogier as *maestro de capilla* in the *Capilla Real* of Madrid. Romero was said to have tutored Phillip IV in music.

²² Francisco Guerrero (1528-99), one of the foremost composers of his era and the *maestro de capilla* of the cathedral of Seville, was known to Lope perhaps through the *tertulias* hosted by the painter Francisco Pacheco. Guerrero set one of Lope's *Soliloquios amorosos* to music ("Si tus penas no pruebo, Jesús mío" available on the CD *Entremeses del Siglo de Oro: Lope de Vega y su tiempo*); Alonso de Tejada (1556-1628) in his long career held numerous positions as *maestro de capilla* (Calahorra, Ciudad Rodrigo, Salamanca, Zamora, Toledo, Burgos) –his motets contain some of the earliest examples of polychoral writing. Ambrosio de Cotes (c.1550-1603), *maestro de capilla* at Granada, Valencia and Seville (after the death of Guerrero), composed motets, lamentations and masses. Felipe Roger (Rogier) (1562-96) the Franco-Flemish composer of Philip II's chapel was well known for his sacred as well as secular compositions.

[Stein 79]) and a sonnet in *Historia de Tobías* with the stage direction “responden dentro con música a los ecos de este soneto” (Alin & Barrio Alonso ix, n.3). Querol Gavaldá (II: num.56) provides the musical version by Juan Aranés (b.? d. after 1624) of sonnet 58 from Lope’s *Rimas*: “Dulce desdén, si el danno que me haces”. Regarding the sonnet form in general, it was Guerrero who in 1589 set Garcilaso’s well-known sonnet “En tanto que de rosa y azucena” to music. Enríquez de Valderrábano (c 1500 d. after 1557) arranged *vihuela* music for some nineteen sonnets in book six of his *Silva de serenas* (1547) identifying five titles: “Si tantos monteros,” “Dichosa fue mi ventura,” “Lo que queda es lo seguro,” “Gentil galans,” and “Viva la Margarita” but leaving the remaining sonnets unidentified. A collection of music for four and five voices by Juan Vásquez (c 1510 d. c1560) *Recopilación de sonetos y villancicos* (Seville, 1560) contained six sonnets, one from Garcilaso: “Gracias al ciel doy, que ya del cuello.” The vogue of what was known as the ‘art song’ in English circles and the Italian madrigal on the continent with its predilection for Petrarchan sonnets was a widespread trend. One well-known figure for example, Serafino Aquilano, who composed and sang his own poems, did not go unnoticed by Lope who praised the popular Italian madrigalist on a number of occasions: in his defense of poetry (Carreño 1998, 595), in sonnets 99 and 112 of the *Rimas* and in the *Arte nuevo de hacer comedias* (Carreño 1998, 250 n.8, 266). But unlike the English poet Phillip Sidney who himself composed eight of thirty-two *Certaine Sonnets* upon existing ‘tunes,’ Lope to my knowledge did not directly compose sonnets based on extant songs or madrigals with specific concern that the versification of a sonnet replicate the existing musical setting.²³ The madrigal that appears in *La Dorotea*, “Miré, señora, la ideal belleza,” (V, I, 386-88) has its own verse form that Lope adopted. In a different context, however, with a reversal of roles as it were, the previously mentioned nineteen sonnets from Lope’s *comedias* voiced by actors on a stage (note 13 above) were reclaimed by Lope as iterations of his own voice ‘re-canted’ in text rather than performed on stage.

Poetry and Poetic Prose

The musicality of poetry was not an exclusive characteristic unique unto itself. Renaissance theorists when discussing the nature of poetry were engaged in a polemic whether rhythm, measure and harmony characteristic of poetry applied also to prose. Aristotle’s comments in the *Poetics* fueled the debate: “There is another art which imitates by means of language alone, and that either in prose or verse.” (1447a 28).²⁴ Baxter Hathaway divided the polemic into two theoretical camps –those who identified poetry with verse (Calvalcanti, Cinthio, Scaliger, Castelvetro) and those who advocated that prose was also poetry (Trissino, Varchi, Minturno, Robortello) (88). Lope probably was aware of Spanish theorists (López Pinciano and Cascales) who

²³ See the studies of Frank J. Fabry for Sidney’s efforts to compose sonnets based on songs.

²⁴ I have followed S. H. Butcher’s translation.

equivocated about preferences. Cascales: “Yo no excluyo los versos de la poesía; pero tampoco los tengo por tan sustanciales, que sin ellos no se puede hazer el poema. Ay buena poesía sin verso, pero no sin imitación” (34). López Pinciano: “No es forçoso el metro al poeta [...] y no me pareciera mal que a la imitación con metro llamasen poesía perfecta, y, a la imitación sin metro y al metro sin imitación, poesías imperfectas” (I: 208). Lope apparently followed the counsel of the Italians (most likely that of Robortello) who placed the imitation of speech and language (*sermo*) through rhythm and harmony as the core of expressive writing (*poesis*) whether in verse or prose. As Robortello argued there were three elements to poesis –speech (voice), rhythm and harmony: “Postquam Aristoteles tria dixit esse in omni poësi, sermonem, rhythmum, harmoniam: & haec aut separatim, aut coniuncte” (13-14). (Aristotle later said that there are three elements to the poetic process: speech, rhythm and harmony, either expressed together or separately). The common definition provided by the *Diccionario de Autoridades* reflected the broader, more inclusive understanding of poetry: “*Poema*. s.m. En su riguroso sentido significa qualquier obra, en verso u prosa” (III: 310).

Lope’s various comments express a comfortable acceptance of the orality of poetic expression that was voiced and written in prose or verse and that was operative as well in his choice to compose *La Dorotea* in prose:

Pero puede assimismo el poeta vsar de su argumento sin verso [...] que el ornamento de la harmonía está allí como accidente y no como real sustancia. (*La Dorotea* 50)

De los metros y números no hay que tratar, porque el modo métrico y harmónico no es esencial al arte [...] *Potest enim poeta uti argumento suo, & per decentes similitudines discurrere sin versu* [...]. Luego la esencia de la poesía no es el verso, como se ve en Heliodoro, Apuleyo, las Prosas del Sanazaro y las Piscatorias del San Martino. (*La Circe* 1259)

A la Arcadía objetan el afecto. Aquella prosa es poética, que, a diferencia de la historial, guarda su estilo, como se vee en el Sanazaro. (Carreño 1998, 576)

Celia: ¿Poeta? Pues parezióme
prosa.

Nise: También ay poesía
en prosa... (*La dama boba* Acto I)

Inspiration, *Amor* and *Ingenium* in the shaping of Lope's Poetic Voice

Renaissance poets were considered endowed with genius inspired by the forces of nature and divinity. Plato's *Ion* (534) and *Phaedrus* (245a, 265b) along with Democritus' allusion to *enthusiamos* (Grube 16 n.2) were the classic texts for this understanding embellished by Renaissance Platonists who assigned the *furores*, *amor* and *ingenium* as sources of poetic inspiration represented by the muses, Apollo, Orpheus and Musaeus. Lope's familiarity with these commonplaces drew upon Ficino's commentaries (*Ion*, *Phaedrus* and *Symposium*) and León Hebreo's *Diálogos de amor* as well as Boscan's translation of Castiglione's *Courtier* –with particular importance assigned to Bembo's inspired praise of Platonic love in Book IV. Lope's "lecturas filográficas" according to Amezáa (II, 567-78) possibly included the Italian commentaries of Mario Equicola. An often cited touchstone for Lope's appropriation of Ficino's interpretations occurs in *La Dorotea*,²⁵ when César praises the poet Bautista de Vivar's inspired genius at improvising verse, (equally applicable to Lope himself). Lope has César explain Ficino's *furor poético* and its variations as the primary cause of inspiration:

César: Destos [poetas] tengo noticia y de Bautista de Vivar, monstro de naturaleza en decir versos de improviso con admirable impulso de las musas, y aquel furor poético que en su *Platón* divide Marsilio Ficino en cuatro partes.

Ludovico. ¿Cómo?

César. El primero es el poético, el segundo el misterioso, el tercero el vaticinio, y el cuarto el amatorio. De las musas es la poesía, el misterio de Dionisio, el vaticinio de Apolo y el amor de Venus. Cómo esto suceda, hallaréis en el mismo discurso. (IV, II, 327)

The Platonic frenzies described by Ficino as *furor poeticus*, *mysterialis*, *vaticinium*, *amatorius* frame Lope's self-conscious elaboration of what Carreño (note 3 above) and Sánchez Jiménez (2006) have characterized as his various mythical, literary and biographically inspired masks and personae. Lope draws upon this classic conception varying it at times with Christian symbols of inspiration to describe the motivating impetus for his poetic voice. For his amorous poetry he continuously related the inspirational power of *Amor* succinctly poetizing it throughout poems and plays. Dagenais discussed such a role for *Amor* as a creative process citing many examples (224): "Es todo amante poeta" (*Acero de Madrid*), "Todo el amor es poesía" (*La*

²⁵ The allusions to Plato and Ficino are favorites of Lope in *La Dorotea*. See for example Cesar's discussion of how to cure oneself of Love (V, III) and Morby's observations 406, n.61. James Holloway outlines Lope's move toward Platonism summarizing different positions taken by other critics.

corona merecida), “Ahora creo que el amor fue el primero inventor de la poesía” (*La Dorotea*), “Amar y hacer versos todo es uno” (*La Dorotea*).

As early as the writing of the *Arcadia* (published 1598) Lope presented a fictionalized academy of *cortezanos-pastores* and *rústicos-filósofos* in Book III (Morby 267-70) who discussed the fine points of erudition, inspiration and poetry. Lope offered an idyllic view of poetry serving up an array of comfortable commonplaces –platonian *furor* as inspiration, poetry as painting, poetry’s ends of pleasing and teaching, the concept of mimesis, the requirement of erudition and ornamentation. Later in his narration Lope presents the setting for Anfriso’s praise of the “famoso duque de Alba don Fernando y el nacimiento de su heroico nieto” describing Anfriso as “arrebatao de un furor poético (como Platón dijo, que no por arte, sino movidos de un divino aliento, cantaban los poetas estos preclaros versos, llenos de deidad y ajenos de sí mismos, que Aristoteles y Cicerón llamaban furia)” (Morby 426).

But Lope’s first portrayal of poetry and Platonic inspiration elaborated in the pastoral context of *Arcadia* is, I believe, deftly contextualized by his use of irony and humor. As examples, consider the introduction of Cardenio the *Rústico* who humorously trivializes the discussion of art and nature by alluding to the competing skills of his *mastín* and *manso* (notably offered as equally expert in *canto de órgano* and *de taner vigüela de arco*) or Cardenio’s well-know definition of Platonic love which Lope then proceeds to undercut: “Oíd groseros pastores,/ la definición de amor” [Book. IV; Morby 346-50]). Lope thus refuses to merely reiterate the mixed commonplaces of the humanistic tradition.²⁶ There stands against his idyllic portrayal of shepherds singing songs and discussing the nature of poetry the implied contrastive reality of Lope’s own literary world of competing poets and poems outside the confines of Alba de Tormes vying for prominence in postures of genius. This prompts the question: was not such a lyrical display of poetic talent part of the *Arcadia*’s appeal and popularity among Lope’s readers and admirers? (There were over sixteen editions in Lope’s lifetime.) And conversely, was not Lope’s presumption of a noble author displaying his superior poetic accomplishment a factor that aroused the ire of his detractors? (“Por tu vida, Lopillo, que me borres/ las diez y nueve torres de el escudo” (Góngora 534).)

Some years later in a literary environment that had changed radically, Lope would openly question the issue of *furor* and *mania* probing its relation to writing and *ingenium* and wryly insinuating such madness to the talentless Gongorist imitators surrounding him. In preparing dedicatory introductions to the plays of Parte XVIII (published 1623) Lope wrote a brief laudatory dedication for *El valor de las mujeres* which he addressed to friend and medical doctor Matías Porras. Then current conceptist poetry and (as Lope recounts to Porras) a recent *justa poetica* that attracted “tres mil y seiscientos y cuarenta papeles de versos” provides an opportunity to turn

²⁶ Alan Trueblood considers Lope’s treatment of Platonic ideas in the *Arcadia* as merely ‘lip-service’ maintaining that “Lope’s characters embroider on commonplaces” (144 n.8).

the popular (medical) theory of *mania* on its head and sarcastically critique the exuberance of poetic inspiration under the cover of *scientia*. Sardonicly Lope asks why Plato maintained that without *mania* “no puede hauer ingenio grâde,” particularly when the common medical definition of *mania* is an infection of the mind which damages the imagination –the most essential part of a poet’s talent. Lope’s ulterior meaning would be easily perceived by contemporaries aligned against the novelty of barbarous poets:

Mas pues V.M. es medico, me holgaría de saber: por que, o como se llama esta manera de escriuir Mania, sino es nôbre generico? y por que dize Platô, que sin ella no puede auer ingenio grâde, si su difinicion es, Infectio anteriores partis cerebro, cum priuatione imaginationis? Siendo la imaginativa la esencial parte del Poeta, la oficina de sus conceptos y pensamientos. (Case 209)

With mock seriousness and a bit of intellectual puffery Lope adds that probably such a meaning is due to an etymological explanation provided by Vives’ commentary on Book IX, xi of Augustine’s *De Civitate Dei* (which Vives in turn appropriated from Apuleius’ *De Socrate*). *Mania* comes from Augustine’s discussion of *Manes*, *buen Genio*, *Bonus Demon* (*animus virtute perfectus* –the soul perfected by virtue), not the dark side of *Lemures* and *Larvas* –by implication the dark side that produces so many mad poets:

De los Manes puede auer procedido, que Viues en la exposición de la ciudad de Dios de san Agustin, los tiene por el buen Genio, que llamauan Bonus Demon, los Antiguos, id est, animus virtute perfectus. q no aquella sombra, o madres de los Lemures y Laruas. (Case 209)

Lope extends his sarcasm with an example of a love-sick poet who writes ‘excellent’ verse, but yet is ignorant of what he writes having suffered from “la sequedad del cerebro” depriving him of imagination: “Vn hombre, q buelto loco de amores de vna señora Titulo, escriuio excelentes versos, siendo ignorâte, deue ser por la sequedad del cerebro, pero como no le ofendia la priuacion de la imaginación?” Lope pursues with doctor Porras this line of ‘medical skepticism’ raising the issues of insanity, the cerebral and humeral dispositions of poets, the insipidness of insanity that produces writing in ignorance –comments appropriated from Cicero’s Tusculan *Disputationes* but mordantly proffering a different subtext in reference to the insipid *ingenium* and madness of poets who produce “partos monstruosos” (a phrase used in the *Filomena*, “Papel de la nueva poesía,” 313):

Fue maxima de los Estoicos, *Omnes insipientes esse insanos*. Disputala Ciceron en el tercero de las *questiones Tusculanas*. El nôbre de insanía, significa *mentis aegrotationem*. Los filosofos llamaron enfermedad las

perturbaciones del animo, *Omnes insipientium animi in morbo sunt*: porque *Omnes insipientes insaniunt*, presumo que es *insanire* escriuir con ignorancia, y assi lo he visto en las obras de muchos... (Case 209)

Whether Lope actually accepted the theory of ‘poetic furor’ as elaborated by Plato through Ficino or he leaned to a more ‘naturalistic’ explanation found in Huarte de San Juan or López Pinciano is difficult to determine; more likely *furor poeticus* aside from acting as commonplace language for describing the process and interplay of inspiration, talent (*natura*) and the skill of the poet (*ars*), achieved value as a token of exchange for communication among his readers and peers. It was a means to assert his position and confirm his status as poet, erudite genius and playwright. It also points to a recognition of Platonic commonplaces that Lope would expand into conceptual justification and resolution of conflicts both poetical and spiritual.

Furor and Eros in the Genesis of Poetic Voice

Renaissance discussions about *mania* or *enthusiamos*, *furor poeticus* and *furor amoris* were meant to address the issues of poetry and the poet –focusing on poetic composition and the tensions of talent (*ingenium*) and skill (*ars*). The classic Horatian and Aristotelian conceptual dualities –*res-verba*, *docere-delectare*, *ingenium-ars*, *mimesis-imitatio*– were related in this discussion and extended to further dichotomies between ideal beauty and physical beauty, the human and the divine (*eros-agape*), and the scholastic transcendentals *Unum*, *Verum*, *Bonum* as reflected in nature and experience. The interplay of classically inspired commonplaces and the domain of religious commitment inspired by scholastic philosophy and post-Tridentine aspirations to virtue influenced conceptualizations of poetry –particularly its nature and function as related to the issues of morality.²⁷

Such didactic and ethically inspired positions would produce a Garcilaso *a lo divino* allowing at the same time a fluidity of concept evident in Lope (“que amor que no es de Dios es desatino,” *Laurel de Apolo* IV: v. 67) who felt as comfortable spontaneously writing religious poetry as well as suggestive love poetry. As I have indicated in another study,²⁸ Lope felt compelled in his defense of poetry to declare that “la poesía casta, limpia, sincera, aunque sea amorosa, no es ofensiva” (Carreño 1998, 595), the same terms that he used to describe his own praise of saintly Isidro “buenos versos, castos y medidos” (209).

²⁷ García Berrio argues that the two essential pillars of the Platonic conception of poetry were the idealization of *furor/ingenium* and the polemic of poetry as licit or immoral: “El tópico del furor, concepción idealista y mitificada del ingenio, constituía con el de la licitud o inmoralidad de la poesía las dos columnas básicas de la doctrina platónica del arte” (265).

²⁸ Regarding Lope’s defense of *poesía amorosa* with occasional excursions into eroticism see Brown 2009a, 362-66.

Yet, aside from the classically inspired rhetorical frame for writing poetry and the attempts to Christianize poetry, there remained one text that perhaps exercised dominion in the minds of contemporaries as a realistic, symbolic presentation of idealized Amor and Beauty implicitly working a contrary influence on the views of poetic inspiration and the practice of writing Platonic love poems. In the *Cortegiano* (Book IV) Castiglione framed Bembo's praise of ideal beauty and the relation of a young beautiful lady to an older man symbolizing the tension between human and divine, between idealized love and carnal love. In a discussion of beauty and love Bembo counseled the behavior of idealistic Platonism toward a beautiful woman guiding her along the path of virtue. Boscan's translation rendered the passage as follows:

Procure siempre de guialla por el camino de la virtud y verdadera honestidad, y haga que en ella no tengan lugar sino los pensamientos limpios y puros y apartados de toda fealdad de vicios. *Y así, sembrando virtudes en su alma della, cogerá grandes frutos de hermosas costumbres, y gustallos ha con entrañable deleite, y éste será el verdadero engendrar y juntar y exprimir la hermosura en la hermosura, lo cual, según opinión de algunos, es el sustancial fin del amor.* (347-48; italics added)

Immediately Castiglione presents Morello's sarcastic response by juxtaposing the realism of eros:

Respondió aquí Morello de Ortona: *El engendrar con efeto la hermosura en la hermosura me parece a mí que sería engendrar un hermoso hijo en una hermosa mujer; y por cierto yo creería que fuese más clara señal de amor acudir ella a su servidor en esto.* (347-48; italics added)

Although Castiglione rebukes Morello's earthy statements with the laughter they provoked ("rióse a esto el Bembo, y dixo: No nos salgamos de nuestros términos, señor Morello"), he nevertheless ironically contrasted the reality of ideal love with that of human sexual attraction between lover and beloved. Morello's unabashedly material interpretation of engendering love not by virtue, but by the ecstatic expression of physical love and its procreative result –embodies the human struggle between *Amor feralis* and *Amor Platonicus*.

The lesson intimated by Castiglione in Bembo's and Morello's exchange was not lost on Lope and his contemporaries. We can perceive its vestige in Lope's letters to the Duque de Sessa where he reveals the inventive and inspirational forces that impelled him to write –the conflicts of *amor platónico*, *amor feralis* and *amor divinus*. There are occasions when divine frenzy succumbs to passion and erotic pleasure. In contrast to the *Rimas sacras* where the protestations of *lágrimas* are metaphorically transformed into the symbols of *pluma* and *tinta*, the intimacy of a letter emboldens

Lope to characterize writing as an erotic activity with *pluma*, *tinta* and *papel* privately and titillatingly analogized in terms of coitus and scholastic philosophy:

Como todo se remite a la pluma, no puede la tinta tanto; que [se] echan ella y el papel como la hembra y el varón, el papel se tiende y la pluma lo trabaja, como la forma y la materia, que todo es uno. (III: n.315)

Characterizing his attraction to Marta de Nevares (Amarilis) in a letter to the Duque, Lope uses the metaphorical language of Platonism and Aristotelian psychology to describe his infatuation:

Holguéme, en parte, para que vuestra excelencia disculpase mi loco amor por sujeto de tantas gracias y partes, tan dignas de estimación en quien tuviera libertad y edad para agradecerlas: yo voy en esta materia con sola el alma, dejando ir el cuerpo a viva fuerza de la razón, si bien la causa no admitirá jamás el estilo platónico, porque es lo que se ve sólo un retrato mudo de la verdad de lo que se goza, si amor y privación no me engañan; que el uno ciega y el otro desatina, y siempre los gustos de la voluntad son más hijos de la imaginación que de la verdad. (IV: n.360)

Lope an older man finds himself involved with Amarilis/Marta de Nevares also advanced in age. Her graces “tan dignas de estimación en quien tuviera libertad y edad para agradecerlas” absolve him as it were of Bembo’s counsel for engendering virtue in a young, beautiful woman. Lope describes his infatuation with Marta de Nevares in the conventional terms of “loco amor” imprisoned by her beauty (“mi loco amor por sujeto de tantas gracias y partes”). He proceeds with a traditional trope of rhetoric to wryly fabricate a metaphorical *illusio* laden with the irony that, in effect, mocks any vestige of Platonic style –a soul (“con sola el alma”) whose body is released to the reign of reason (“dejando ir el cuerpo a viva fuerza de la razón”) when in actuality it is the body’s submission to passion that entraps his soul (Marta de Nevares by this writing had already borne his child). He extends the irony by juxtaposing enjoyment and truth –physical enjoyment (“lo que se goza”)– which is merely a mute portrait of the truth (“retrato mudo de la verdad”); mute because the delights of the will are more like children of the imagination than of truth and intellect. The conceptist contortion of language and circumstances that Lope relies upon here (well beyond any “estilo platónico”) is colored by the Aristotelian notions of passion and movement of the soul. In a different context, Burguillos will ironically clarify his ‘philosophical’ penchant this way: “Estima en más la verdad de Aristóteles que el respeto de Platón” (Carreño 2002, 341).²⁹

²⁹ Amezua (II: 413-535) as well as Rennert and Castro (223-36) provide contextual details of Lope’s most significant and longest-lasting love affair from 1616-32. Trueblood focusing the effect of this relationship on the composition of *La Dorotea*, sees the inspirational effects of a transformation from

Lope's submission to "loco amor" on one hand and his pretensions to Platonic purity on the other constantly fueled his conflicted expression moving from passion to the desire of ethereal transformation only to be pulled back down to the world of appetite and carnal desire. He once characterized the struggle by juxtaposing celestial Platonic love with the torment of sub-terrestrial love pithily expressed in a rhetorical metaplasm (Plutón/Platón): "Es este amor espiritual y casi platónico, pero que en el atormentarme más parece Plutón que de Platón" (III: n.262).

Repeating his favorite metaphor "soy alma todo" Lope etherealized perfect love distinct from love as a visible body in *La Circe*. Consonant with the conceptions of *ingenium*, inspiration and *furor amoris*, Lope attributes to genius the spiritual powers of omniscience that can teach the divine sciences of love ("voy de un genio acompañado/ que me enseña de amor ciencias divinas").

Quien dice que es amor cuerpo visible,
¡qué poco del amor perfeto sabe!
[...]
Yo, que *soy alma todo*, en peregrinas
regiones *voy de un genio acompañado*
que me enseña de amor ciencias divinas. (258; italics added)

In the well-known poem "A mis soledades voy" of *La Dorotea*, he again repeats his preferred Platonic metaphor "hombre que todo es alma" in conflict with the body: "Que un *hombre que todo es alma*/ Está cautivo en su cuerpo" (I, IV, 88). In his classic example of Platonism –the madrigal from *La Dorotea* "Miré, señora, la ideal belleza"– Lope practices the rhetoric of the *borrador* re-writing his favorite metaphor by deleting *hombre* and replacing it with *Amor*: "*Amor que todo es alma* será eterno" (V, I, 388; italics added).

Purity of expression: *Res/Verba* –"así me pasaba, y así lo escribía"

Lope's many allusions to his acts of writing, books and plays published or in progress, to his own *comedias* and those of his competitors, to his poetry recently approved for publication or enclosed with an accompanying letter provide an illuminating view of Lope the writer, master of his craft and guardian of his reputation. Embedded in Lope's letters to the Duque de Sessa are numerous comments about the process and designs of writing –some of them reflecting a consciousness for purity of

passionate love to tempered spiritual love given Amarilis' poor health and Lope's old age which he maintains accounts for Lope's Platonic aspirations. "A movement toward spiritual asceticism, leads Lope to seek with increasing earnestness, as the years with Marta de Nevaes go by, to lift his love for her to a Neo-Platonic plane. In the total context of his life, this is one strain only; it coexists with Tomé de Burguillos, with the opportunistic secretary of the Duke, with the breast-beating penitent" (191).

expression in order to attain the desired effects of persuasion and others that reveal a playful banter of dominance over rhetorical figures of expression.

Lope concisely expressed the foundation of experience over invention in a matter-of-fact simile, “así me pasaba, y así lo escribía,” grounded by amorous expression that eschewed rhetoric: “Donde habla amor puro no hay cosa más extranjero que los colores retóricos; así me pasaba y así lo escribía” (III: n.330).³⁰ Yet in the formal context of rhetoric as the discipline governing *res* and *verba*, Lope confesses a different allegiance. The implied conflict between relying upon de-rhetorized experience (“así me pasaba, y así lo escribía”) and using the formal rhetorical procedures of *inventio* (suggested by the *loci* of dialectic) dissolves when Lope discusses the conventions of writing regarding a *culto* sonnet in the fictional academy of *La Dorotea*. Speaking through César he opts for the traditional formalism of rhetoric (combining the functions of *inventio* and *imitatio*: “Porque como la inuención es la parte principal del poeta, si no el todo, y inuención y imitación sean también vna misma cosa” which according to Morby (320, n.74) uniquely pairs invention and imitation), a concept Lope presumably drew from Tasso’s defense of *Orlando Furioso*, given its absence from other Italian theorists. But in the context of a personal letter and in contrast to the literary needs of a fictional academy Lope’s impassioned description of “donde habla amor puro” discards the formalism of rhetoric and the precepts of invention and ornamentation (“no hay cosa más extranjero que los colores retóricos”).

Off-hand comments written to the Duque de Sessa –concern for copies of his *soliloquios* and *romances* (III: n.58), the correction of an error committed by an actor in reciting one of his sonnets in a *comedia* (IV: n.424), the recent publication of a religious pastoral narrative *Pastores de Belén*, (III: n.59)– demonstrate Lope’s sensitivity to his fashioned status as a writer of renown. Lope presents an intimate, playfully self-deprecatory posture that asserts his prolific creativity: “Porque comedias en mí es como paños en Segovia, color en Granada, guadamecías en Córdoba y vocablos nuevos en don Lorenzo” (III: n.38). There are moments of self-conscious reflection on the tools and rhetoric of writing bathed in humor and wit that characterize Lope’s observations about his profession as writer, poet and dramatist. In a letter to the Duque de Sessa he light-heartedly asserts that his comments in a previous paragraph have just created a new, never-before-seen rhetorical trope: “Esta figura retórica es nueva; no la supo Cipriano ni la imaginó Aristoteles” (IV: n.474) (Cipriano Suárez, the author of a popular 16th-century Jesuit manual of rhetoric, *De arte rhetorica*, 1562). Having petitioned for a chaplaincy Lope can jokingly compare his eloquence to Demosthenes: “Me advirtieron que podía pretender una de las capellanías [...]; hice la diligencia. Oré en el cabildo como un Demóstenes; honraron

³⁰ See my discussion of this passage in the context of the conflict between a restrictive view of morality and the inspiration of pure love. Lope describes the persuasive language of poetic expression in order to move the reader (or beloved) using the terminology of scholastic psychology: *efeto*, *mayor eficacia*, *el sujeto*, *mover la potencia*, *apetito*, *imaginación* (Brown 2009a, 366).

me mucho” (III: n.211). But there are limitations to rhetoric and its devices, as Lope confesses, particularly in prose and verse when involved with realistic depiction (*enargeia*): “Que ni prosas ni versos fueran suficientes, ellas con sus retóricas y ellos con sus energías” (III: n.343); “Pienso que los he encarecido mas que si dijera cuantas enargias han hallado la poesía y la retórica” (III: n.292).

Lope’s realistic assessment of rhetoric and its limitations in search of purity of expression, *verosimilitud* and amorous veracity make their way into casual, reflexive observations: “Volviendo pues a los celos, que a lo menos esta digresión no ha sido de buen retórico, pero ha sido de buen amante” (III: n.140); “Paréntesis ha sido largo, no es de retóricos; pero yo dejé llevar la pluma por el diseño de la verdad a la mejor condición” (IV: n.408).

Conclusion

In conjunction with Lope’s observations on writing and the allusions to the role of song and rhythm in poetic verse as well as prose, the trope of fictional academies provided an opportunity to rehearse different, sometimes contradictory, positions and opinions –initially seen through the personae of *pastores* in the *Arcadia* and subsequently through the academic banter of Julio, Cesar and Ludovico in *La Dorotea* (IV, II and III). The fictional academies act as a virtual stage revealing Lope’s shrewd attention to his audience, developing and changing as necessary his ideas about rhetoric, poetry, style, imitation and inspiration, in a word, about his modulating voice and *ingenio* as poet. Was it to be the plain language of traditional verse, the accepted gravity of Italianate genres and themes, the meditative postures of religious language or the public rhetoric of circumstantial verse? For Lope the ideal *academia* represented an opportunity for open discussion, exchange and/or rejection of critical ideas. In his mind the academies of Italy performed such an idealized role:

En las academias de Italia no se halla libertad ni insolencia, sino reprehensión y deseo de apurar la verdad. Si ésta lo es, ¿qué pierde, porque se apure, ni qué tiene que ver el soneto deslenguado con la oposición científica? No lo hizo así el Taso, reprehendido en la Crusca por la defensa del Ariosto; no así el Castelvetro por la de Aníbal Caro. (*Filomena* 873-74)

In point of fact the formal *academias* of Spain along with *Justas poéticas* played supportive as well as challenging roles to Lope’s different reflections on poetry made in prologues, epistles, poems and letters. To realize their significance we need only recall the *Arte nuevo de hacer comedias* delivered before the *Academia de Madrid* and the defense of poetry –“Cuestión del honor debido a la poesía”– that Lope possibly delivered before a group of learned writers and canons gathered at the palace of Juan de Arguijo. In the *Relación de las fiestas de Toledo* (1605) and the *Justa poética al bienaventurado San Isidro* (1620) –to name two of the more significant– aside from

making observations about poetic trends and introducing his alter ego *Tomé de Burguillos*, Lope took on the role of actor and poet reciting his own poems. As observed by Egido: “La letra se hace voz teatral, mostrando esa doble función poética que su escritura despliega, implícita y explícitamente, a lo largo de toda su obra. [...] Ese instante de Lope, poeta y actor a un tiempo, en la justa toledana, explica no poco de esa poética de la escritura común en su tiempo y que él desarrollaría también en sus versos” (1995, 121).

At the end of his poetic career Lope formulated an understanding of poetry that relied upon a longstanding Scholastic-Aristotelian tradition that categorized poetry as a rational science. This suited him conveniently given the conceptist ideological turn that Góngora had introduced upon the scene as my observations regarding Lope’s reliance upon Savonarola demonstrate (Brown 2009b, 39-41). Lope cited the treatise *Apologeticus de ratione poeticae artis* (1492) to substantiate his refined view of the role of logic in poetry –one could almost read ‘conceptist’ role in place of the term ‘logic’

pues ser filósofo y ser poeta son convertibles. Parte de la filosofía racional la llamó Savonarola, y así viene a ser al poeta precisamente necesario su conocimiento porque como no se puede saber la especie ignorando el género, ni el silogismo sin saber la lógica, ninguno puede ser sin ella verdadero poeta. ‘*Impossibili est* (dice [Savonarola] en su compendio) *quemquam qui logicam ignorat, vere esse Poetam*’” (It’s impossible [he –Savonarola– says in his compendium] for anyone who ignores philosophy to truly be a poet). (“Elogio al licenciado Soto de Rojas,” 101)

Yet in the face of polemics over poetry and the issues of the new versus the traditional (Gongorism vs. Garcilaso, Herrera, Fray Luis de Leon), Lope nevertheless held fundamental views about writing and composing a work of fiction that in their core were not estranged from many of his contemporaries. By way of example, as distant and rancorous as Lope and Cervantes were from one another in their later careers, they nevertheless were joined by a common Renaissance understanding of the fundamental tools and means requisite for writing fiction –poetry and prose. Lope maintained that a work of art should contain the qualities of perfect imitation, polished with the charms of truth and rhetorical figures, appropriately erudite as befits circumstances, be plausibly jovial, witty, filled with moral and natural philosophy that are clearly and marvelously presented by its subject matter. He challenged his critics to stop carping and prove that they could provide a better work than that exemplified by his *Dorotea*:

Al que le pareciere que me engaño, tome la pluma; lo que había de gastar en reprehender, ocupe en enseñar que sabe hacer otra *imitación más perfeta, otra verdad afeitada de más donaires y colores retóricos, la erudición más ajustada*

a su lugar, lo festivo más grave; con tantas partes de filosofía natural y moral que admira cómo haya podido tratarlas con tanta claridad en tal sujeto. (53; italics added)

While sardonically spoofing Lope's pretensions and literary vagaries in his prologue to *Don Quixote* Cervantes spurned any need to compete with Lope's style of writing and display of erudition. He nevertheless paused to summarize (through the voice of a friend) the essentials for a literary work. Although mocking Lope's arrogance, he implicitly reflected a commonality of artful purpose. The literary essentials of unadorned mimesis and plainness of expression –aspirations that Lope entertained and defended against the aberrations of novelty– were also entertained by Cervantes but indelibly stamped by his inimitable humor and comedic satire.

Sólo tiene que aprovecharse de la imitación en lo que fuere escribiendo; que cuanto ella fuere más perfecta, tanto mejor será lo que se escribiere. [...] No hay para qué andéis mendigando sentencias de filósofos, consejos de la Divina Escritura, fábulas de poetas, oraciones de retóricos, milagros de santos, sino *procurar que a la llana, con palabras significantes, honestas y bien colocadas, salga vuestra oración y período sonoro y festivo, pintando, en todo lo que alcanzáredes y fuere posible, vuestra intención; dando a entender vuestros conceptos sin intricarlos y escurecerlos.* (13-14; italics added)

The ultimate communality rested in a related view of the ends of fictive language: Lope –*imitación más perfecta, claridad en tal sujeto, festivo más grave, verdad afeitada de donaires y colores retóricos, erudición más ajustada a su lugar*; Cervantes – *aprovecharse de la imitación [...] más perfecta, con palabras significantes y honestas, período sonoro y festivo, conceptos sin intricarlos y escurecerlos.* When it came to poetry Lope and Cervantes drew from the same classical-rhetorical fountain channeled by Christian-Platonic ideals, although Cervantes' comic and burlesque penchant drew him to a different poetic and artistic discourse that still maintained unadorned clarity and simplicity of expression. At the end of his writing career Lope adopted a satiric persona in his final collection of sonnets, *Rimas humanas y divinas del Tomé de Burgillos* (1634), and presented a poetic voice filled with irony and self-critical humor that maintained a commitment to a plain style: “En lengua pura, fácil, limpia y neta,/ yo invento, amor escribe, el tiempo lima” (Carreño 2002, 133).

As a literary avatar of early modern Spain and believer in a unitary world-view supported by the language of classical rhetoric, the moral requirements of poetry and the Scholastic-Aristotelian designation of fictive discourse as part of rational logic, Lope could embrace the second element of the *res/verba* construct as a poetic as well as theological reality –the *verbum* that founded and unified both secular and spiritual experience. Lope's expression of personal experience (*res*) in the act of writing was at times spiritual, at times amorously erotic, at times secular and politically

circumstantial and at times thematically and rhythmically popular. In my portrayal of Lope's poetic voice the constructive trope of *res/verba* can be viewed as grounded not only in Lope's classical rhetoric but also in his religious belief. At the religious edge it is metaphorically sustained by the symbolism of the *verbum* (John's Gospel: I.14, "Et verbum caro factum est") and spiritually renewed and re-enacted by Lope in the Roman Mass at the consecration of *res* (bread and wine) into the *verbum: hoc est corpus meum*. At the secular edge, Lope's exuberant embrace of the resonance and sonarity of *verba* implies the gratifying articulation of voice in the generation of poetic text –thoroughly Scholastic in his ordering of the affective, imaginative and intellectual faculties and conceptually inimical to postmodern conceptions of the author banished from the text. In my opinion, Lope's syncretistic adherence to classical rhetoric and poetics, along with his Christian-Platonic predilections interrelated with Scholastic Aristotelianism placed him comfortably at ease with the personal autonomy of voice and the import of orality that fueled his "maquina de trovar" whether popular, religious, or secular song.

As a final observation, I draw upon Lope's politically motivated panegyric to the infant prince (*Al nacimiento del Principe* future king Philip IV) read aloud at the *Fiestas de Toledo* (1605). In a commemorative celebration that served the ends of state politics, religious ritual as well as personal ambition, Lope presided over the *justa poética* as master of ceremonies delivering the opening poem in which he appropriated the topos of arms and letters rejuvenating it with a post-Tridentine ethos –"El origen divino de las letras/en la reforma del primer mundo" (vv. 1-2). The declaimed panegyric iconically presents Lope straddling two worlds: the secular *res* and the sacred *verba* (the ephemera of state politics embellished by the rituals of rhetorical praise metaphorical heightened by the *verba* of Christianized Platonism) where *poesis* is implicitly conceived as grounded in the acts of imitation, invention and invocation – reading, writing, singing– with their enumerated and public designs iterated by the verbs "mueve, alegra, deleita, enseña, solemniza, extiende, ilustra, canta, ensalza, sube, adorna" and announced by the conviction that song is the same as poetry – meter and rhyme best fit for remembering and dramatizing experience:

Entre todos los géneros de letras,
parece que las cosas memorables
se remiten mejor a la poesía,
porque ella como es metro y consonancia,
número y armonía, mueve, alegra,
deleita, enseña, solemniza, extiende,
ilustra, canta, ensalza, sube, adorna
las cosas con diversas energías;
porque canto, es lo mismo que poesía. (vv.115-23; italics added)

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