Reading Garcilaso’s Love Sonnets in the Anotaciones: Relevance Theory and the Poetics of Failure*

CARLOS IGLESIAS-CRESPO

University of Cambridge

1 Introduction

The poet, historian and scholar Fernando de Herrera (1534–1597) was a central literary figure of the Spanish Quinientos, being the bridge between Garcilaso de la Vega’s Italianate Petrarchism and Luis de Góngora’s Baroque aesthetics, and whose magnum opus was precisely a commentary of the former’s poetry, Obras de Garcilaso de la Vega con anotaciones de Fernando de Herrera (Sevilla, 1580; hereafter Anotaciones). The critical consensus is that the commentary of Garcilaso’s poetry is only its selling point, as Herrera weaponizes it to advance his literary and intellectual agenda. In this sense, and to name but a few approaches, the Anotaciones has been analysed as: a coup against Garcilaso’s position in the canon that biases the reading of his poetry by shifting his perception as a courtier to that of an erudite scholar in Herrera’s image and likeness, triggering a virulent polemic in the 1580s and beyond;1 as a scholarly work torn

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1 See Juan Montero, La controversia sobre las ‘Anotaciones’ herrerianas. Estudio y edición crítica (Sevilla: Servicio de Publicaciones del Excmo Ayuntamiento, 1987); Ignacio Navarrete, Orphans of Petrarch: Poetry and Theory in the Spanish Renaissance (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1994); José María Micó, ‘Proyección de las Anotaciones en las
between the past (the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century humanist commentary) and the future (literary criticism); as a poetics-to-be, built upon a vast, syncretic repository of Classical, medieval and early modern authorities; and as an encyclopaedic miscellany aimed at a wide

polémicas gongorinas’, in Las ‘Anotaciones’ de Fernando de Herrera. Doce estudios, ed. Begoña López Bueno (Sevilla: Univ. de Sevilla, 1997), 263–78; Bienvenido Morros Mestres, Las polémicas literarias en la España del siglo XVI: a propósito de Fernando de Herrera y Garcilaso de la Vega (Barcelona: Quaderns Crema, 1998); Inoria Pepe, ‘Fernando de Herrera, creador del Petrarca español: las Anotaciones a la obra de Garcilaso’, Calíope. Journal of the Society for Renaissance and Baroque Hispanic Poetry, 10:1 (2004), 69–87; Pedro Ruiz Pérez, ‘El prólogo de Francisco de Medina a las Anotaciones: poesía, imperio y ciudad’, in Literatura, sociedad y política en el Siglo de Oro. Barcelona-Gerona, 21–24 de octubre de 2009, ed. Eugenia Fosalba & Carlos Vállol (Bellaterra: Univ. Autónoma de Barcelona, 2010), 117–45; Isabel Torres, Love Poetry in the Spanish Golden Age: Eros, Eris and Empire (Woodbridge: Tamesis, 2013); Paul Joseph Lennon, ‘Paratextual Subversion: Herrera and His Poetry in the Anotaciones’, Hispanic Research Journal, 16:3 (2015), 208–20; Guy Lazure, ‘Fashioning Fame: Fernando de Herrera’s Anotaciones As a Space of Knowledge’, Calíope. Journal of the Society for Renaissance and Baroque Hispanic Poetry, 23:2 (2018), 69–92; and Juan Montero, ‘Las Anotaciones de Herrera a Garcilaso como texto poético: aspectos materiales, editoriales y autoriales’, Calíope. Journal of the Society for Renaissance and Baroque Hispanic Poetry, 26:1 (2021), 1–18.

2 See José Almeida, La crítica literaria de Fernando de Herrera (Madrid: Gredos, 1976); Carmen Codoñer, ‘El modelo filológico de las Anotaciones’, J. Valentín Núñez Rivera, ‘Garcilaso según Herrera: aspectos de crítica textual en las Anotaciones’, and Ángel Estévez Molinero, ‘Los descuidos de Garcilaso en la perspectiva crítica de Herrera (con algunas notas sobre las “necedades” en las Anotaciones’, all in Las ‘Anotaciones’ de Fernando de Herrera, ed. López Bueno, 17–36, 107–34 & 135–56 respectively; Inoria Pepe & José María Reyes, ‘Introducción’, in Fernando de Herrera, Anotaciones a la poesía de Garcilaso, ed., con intro., de Inoria Pepe & José María Reyes (Madrid: Cátedra, 2001), 15–128 (pp. 17–32); and María Amelia Fernández Rodríguez, ‘“La mar en medio”: lectura y distancia en un soneto de Garcilaso según Fernando de Herrera’, Edad de Oro, XXIII (2004), 369–87.

3 See Robert D. F. Pring-Mill, ‘Escalígero y Herrera: citas y plagios de los Poetics Libri Septem en las Anotaciones’, in Actas del II Congreso de la Asociación Internacional de Hispanistas, celebrado en Nijmegen del 20 al 25 de agosto de 1965, coord. Norbert Polussen & Jaime Sánchez Romeralo (Nijmegen: Instituto Español de la Univ. de Nimega, 1967), 489–98; Andreina Bianchini, ‘Fernando de Herrera’s Anotaciones: A New Look at His Sources and the Significance of His Poetics’, Romanische Forschungen, 88:1 (1976), 27–42; Paul Julian Smith, Writing in the Margin: Spanish Literature of the Golden Age (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988); Ángel Luis Luñán Atienza, ‘Las Anotaciones de Herrera y las formas estilísticas de la tradición hermogeneana’, Hispanic Review, 68:4 (2000), 359–80; Ángel Luñán Atienza, ‘El estilo “afetuoso” en las Anotaciones de Herrera’, Revista de Literatura, LXVI:132 (2004), 373–88; and Esteban Torre, ‘Métrica, tropos y figuras en las Anotaciones de Fernando de Herrera’, Revista de Literatura, LXXVIII:155 (2016), 37–59. See also the following studies published in Las ‘Anotaciones’ de Fernando de Herrera, ed. López Bueno: Bienvenido Morros, ‘Las fuentes y su uso en las Anotaciones a Garcilaso’, 37–90; Cristóbal Cuevas, ‘Teoría del lenguaje poético en las Anotaciones de Herrera’, 157–72; Alberto Blecua, ‘La retórica en las Anotaciones: sobre Aftonio y Herrera con otras consideraciones’, 173–82; Begoña López Bueno, ‘Las Anotaciones y los géneros poéticos’, 183–200; and Inmaculada Osuna, Eva Redondo & Bernardo Toro, ‘Las traducciones poéticas en las Anotaciones de Herrera’, 201–38.
community of learned and lay readers, with multiple entries on rhetoric, poetics, philosophy, psychology, medicine, mythology, geography, history etc.⁴

In this article, I propose a new approach that will further our critical understanding of how the Anotaciones shapes the reader’s engagement with Garcilaso’s poetry. With the insights afforded by Relevance Theory, I will develop a cognitive-inflected approach to Herrera’s commentarial strategies to examine how they condition the interpretation of Garcilaso’s love sonnets.⁵ In order to do so, I will first explain how the principles of Relevance Theory support literary criticism, followed by a relevance-theoretic formulation of the cognitive dynamics of the commentary genre. From this vantage point, I will proceed to analyse the interaction between Herrera’s notes on the psychosomatics of love and Garcilaso’s ‘Soneto III’, ‘Soneto V’ and ‘Soneto VIII’, with an emphasis on the inferential manoeuvres and ostensive cues to relevance deployed by the Sevillian throughout the text. This perspective will allow me to hypothesize how Herrera carefully constructs a systematic, albeit fragmentary, interpretive model for the reading of Garcilaso which stylizes the latter’s love poetry as a poetics of failure.

In so doing, this article will also fill a gap in the field of Cognitive Literary Studies as applied to early modern Spanish literature, still in its early days in comparison with other subjects; indeed, despite the recent developments in the study of fiction, early modern Spanish poetry has been thus far neglected by scholars operating within a cognitive literary framework.⁶ Furthermore, although Relevance Theory has proved to be a versatile tool for literary criticism, Hispanicists, with the testimonial exception of Guillemette Bolens and Ángel Luis Luján Atienza, have yet to seize on its

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⁴ See Elías Rivers, ‘La poesía culta y sus lectores’, Edad de Oro, XII (1993), 267–80 (pp. 271–72); Juan Montero, ‘Las Anotaciones, del texto al lector’, in Las ‘Anotaciones’ de Fernando de Herrera, ed. López Bueno, 91–106; and Pepe & Reyes, ‘Introducción’, in Herrera, Anotaciones, ed. Pepe & Reyes, 36–51.

⁵ On Relevance Theory, see Dan Sperber & Deirdre Wilson, Relevance: Communication and Cognition, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995 [1st ed. 1986]); Deirdre Wilson & Dan Sperber, Meaning and Relevance (Cambridge: Cambridge U. P., 2012); and Billy Clark, Relevance Theory (Cambridge: Cambridge U. P., 2013).

⁶ In the last ten years, most cognitive approaches to early modern Spanish literature have focused on Cervantes above all, alongside research on other fiction and non-fiction prose works (María de Zayas, Bartolomé de Las Casas, Baltasar Gracián...) and some incursions into theatre and spectatorship. See Cognitive Cervantes, ed. Julien Jacques Simon, Barbara Simerka & Howard Mancing, Cervantes. Bulletin of the Cervantes Society of America, 32:1 (2012); Barbara Simerka, Knowing Subjects: Cognitive Cultural Studies and Early Modern Spanish Literature (West Lafayette: Purdue U. P., 2013); Cognitive Approaches to Early Modern Spanish Literature, ed. Isabel Jaén & Julien Jacques Simon (New York: Oxford U. P., 2016); and Cervantes and the Early Modern Mind, ed. Isabel Jaén & Julien Jacques Simon (London: Routledge, 2022).
potential—and yet, as I will propose in the following pages, the *Anotaciones* and its scholarship can greatly benefit from this approach.\(^7\)

As a caveat before I proceed, I must emphasize that I will not deploy this methodological framework in detriment to more traditional approaches; on the contrary, it will enrich and systematically work alongside and within a close reading of the *Anotaciones*. The strength of cognitive-inflected approaches to literature is that they allow us to expand and refine our interpretations and analyses ‘with improved understanding of how we process stimuli’.\(^8\) After all, as Terence Cave holds, ‘[l]iterature, in the broadest sense of the word, is among the richest of [human] cognitive artifacts’;\(^9\) any critical approach to literature that takes this assertion seriously ought to have the appropriate tools.

## 2 Relevance Theory, Literary Criticism and the Commentary Genre

Relevance Theory is a cognitive pragmatic theory that explains how communication is guided by considerations of *relevance* and carried out ostensibly and inferentially. Relevance is defined as ‘a property of inputs to cognitive processes’,\(^10\) achieved when the interaction between an input and an individual’s contextual assumptions yields worthwhile cognitive effects—such as improvements or revisions of knowledge, memory or imagination, to name but a few. Thus, ‘the greater the positive cognitive effects achieved, and the smaller the mental effort required (to represent the input, access a context and derive these cognitive effects)’, the greater the relevance at the time.\(^11\)

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7 On the application of Relevance Theory for literary criticism, see Terence Cave, *Thinking with Literature: Towards a Cognitive Criticism* (Oxford: Oxford U. P., 2016); *Reading Beyond the Code: Relevance Theory and Literature*, ed. Terence Cave & Deirdre Wilson (Oxford: Oxford U. P., 2018); *Pragmatics and Literature*, ed. Siobhan Chapman & Billy Clark (Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Co., 2019). See also the work of Guillemette Bolens, ‘Relevance Theory and Kinesic Analysis in *Don Quixote* and *Madame Bovary*’, in *Reading Beyond the Code*, ed. Cave & Wilson, 55–70, and Ángel Luis Luján Atienza, ‘Elementos para un análisis cognitivo del discurso poético’, *Verba Hispanica*, XXVI (2019), 213–22.

8 Neil Kenny, ‘Relevance Theory and the Effect of Literature on Beliefs: The Example of Injun Joe in Twain’s *Adventures of Tom Sawyer*’, in *Reading Beyond the Code*, ed. Cave & Wilson, 73–89 (p. 74). See also Lisa Zunshine, ‘Introduction to Cognitive Literary Studies’, in *The Oxford Handbook of Cognitive Literary Studies*, ed. Lisa Zunshine (Oxford: Oxford U. P., 2015), 1–9.

9 Cave, *Thinking with Literature*, 1. See also Víctor Bermúdez, ‘Teoría literaria y flexibilidad interdisciplinar’, in *Transversales: teoría literaria, ciencia, filosofía*, ed. Ulpiano Lada Ferreras, Laro del Río Castañeda & Guillermo Sánchez Ungidos, *Archivum*, LXX:1 (2020), 43–63.

10 Wilson & Sperber, *Meaning and Relevance*, 6.

11 Cave & Wilson, ‘Introduction’, in *Reading Beyond the Code*, ed. Cave & Wilson, 1–20 (pp. 4–5).
Relevance’s centrality in cognition and communication is grounded in two principles: the Cognitive Principle (‘Human cognition tends to be geared to the maximalisation of relevance’) and the Communicative Principle (‘Every act of overt communication conveys a presumption of its own optimal relevance’). These entail that successful communication requires the addressee’s attention, pre-emptively gained by the presumed relevance of the communicative-ostensive acts. These acts offer some evidence of the speaker’s intentions manifestly to convey a meaningful import that is always simultaneously explicit (explicatures) and implicit (implicatures), and that may be stronger (for instance, answering ‘yes’ to a direct question) or weaker (answering with a metaphor to the aforesaid question) depending on the inferential-interpretive possibilities elicited by the import —the greater the possibilities, the weaker the communication.

During comprehension, the hearer, who trusts the speaker to be optimally relevant, will use an inferential ‘comprehension heuristic’, following ‘a path of least effort in constructing an interpretation of the utterance’ and stopping once ‘the expectations of relevance are satisfied’. This is a sub-personal process which entails a simultaneous and mutual adjustment between explicatures and implicatures involving decoding; disambiguation; pragmatic enrichment; ad hoc conceptual modulation; hypothesizing about implications; supplying contextual assumptions; and backward and forward inferences between specific expectations of relevance, foregone conclusions and predictions enabled by memory.

Thus conceived, comprehension ‘is ultimately a metapsychological process involving the construction and evaluation of a hypothesis about the communicator’s meaning on the basis of evidence she has provided for this purpose’. To compute this intentionality, the hearer resorts to metarepresentations (e.g., the speaker means $x$ when she says $y$), the evolutionary, cognitive ability to entertain and track thoughts about other thoughts and utterances, thus contributing to developing successful inferential hypotheses. It follows that the hearer always carries a degree

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12 Sperber & Wilson, *Relevance: Communication and Cognition*, 260.
13 Wilson & Sperber, *Meaning and Relevance*, 6.
14 See Wilson & Sperber, *Meaning and Relevance*, 76–83 & 230–58 (especially p. 241); and Cave & Wilson, ‘Introduction’, in *Reading Beyond the Code*, ed. Cave & Wilson, 10.
15 Dan Sperber, Francesco Cara & Vittorio Girotto, ‘Relevance Theory Explains the Selection Task’, *Cognition*, 57 (1995), 31–95 (p. 51).
16 Dan Sperber, ‘Metarepresentation in an Evolutionary Perspective’, in *Metarepresentations: A Multidisciplinary Perspective*, ed. Dan Sperber (Oxford: Oxford U. P., 2000), 117–37 (pp. 132–33); and Wilson & Sperber, *Meaning and Relevance*, 12–16. For detailed examples, see Wilson & Sperber, *Meaning and Relevance*, 77–83.
17 Wilson & Sperber, *Meaning and Relevance*, 265.
18 Wilson & Sperber, *Meaning and Relevance*, 230–31; Robyn Carston, *Thoughts and Utterances: The Pragmatics of Explicit Communication* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), 43.
of responsibility for communication’s success, which indeed succeeds when
the hearer’s metarepresentation of the speaker’s meaning allows her to
infer an import which sufficiently resembles the one intended by the
speaker and which satisfies her expectations of relevance in combination
with her contextual assumptions and background knowledge, thereby
transforming her cognitive environment.19

This is by no means an extensive account of Relevance Theory; however,
this basic set of principles allows one to bridge crucial gaps with literary
studies, as Terence Cave and Deirdre Wilson have demonstrated. A literary
text is an ostensive-communicative act which demands attention and
carries its own co-textual presumptions of relevance. Thus, a literary text
is to be read as an utterance that has been ‘set adrift in time’ and therefore
requires ‘a continuing process of contextual resuscitation at any number of
levels, whether linguistic, factual, political, ideological, religious, ethical or
aesthetic’. This means that contrary to post-structuralist tenets, the author
is not dead, but undead, since the very ‘reading of literature presupposes
the agency of an author, or a group or series of authors (whether
identifiable or not), and this presupposition constrains in variable degrees
the act of understanding’.20

Of course, this position does not validate intentional fallacies; what it
defends is that, in our reading of literature, we contextually infer and
recover intentional aspects of the texts through the necessary historization
and hypothesizing of contexts and cognitive environments in time and
space, which enable the creation of plausible metarepresentations
motivated by a contract of trust—‘readers trust authors to be relevant, to
write something that will reward proportionally the readers’ efforts to
make sense of it’.21 Consequently, this ‘intentional “drift” ’ allows us as
readers, who moreover must assume a great deal of responsibility in the
production of a text’s meaning—Germanely enough to Barthesian post-
structuralism or Reader-Response Criticism—, to reap positive cognitive
benefits which can modulate our own context and cognitive environment
due to literature’s specific capitalization of a diachronic, higher-order
relevance.22

The above entails that literature allows for greater and more taxing
processing efforts to reap a wider array of cognitive effects from reading;
and yet, the reader always aims at economically optimizing her cognitive
effort, calibrating her heuristics against the literary work’s specific

19 Wilson & Sperber, Meaning and Relevance, 243–44; Carston, Thoughts and
Utterances, 43; Sperber, ‘Metarepresentation in an Evolutionary Perspective’, 122.
20 Cave & Wilson, ‘Introduction’, in Reading Beyond the Code, ed. Cave & Wilson, 13–15.
21 Kenny, ‘Relevance Theory and the Effect of Literature on Beliefs’, 86.
22 Cave & Wilson, ‘Introduction’, in Reading Beyond the Code, ed. Cave & Wilson, 15.
presumptions of relevance. In this sense, Cave and Wilson explain that ‘the difficulty of many religious texts and some literary and philosophical works is quite compatible with the search for optimal relevance’, since it can be the case that ‘there was no more economical ways of conveying exactly the intended effects’. Pertinently for literary criticism, form and style not only elicit specific expectations of relevance, but also contribute to the economization of the processing effort since ‘the more recently or frequently a word, a concept, a sound, a syntactic construction, or a contextual assumption has been used, the less processing effort it is likely to require’ in virtue of its salience and accessibility, and thus the greater its presumed relevance as a result of its priming.

These are the core premises that have guided the application of Relevance Theory to the study of authors from diverse periods and genres, spanning from Miguel de Cervantes and Robert Herrick to Emily Dickinson and Seamus Heaney. However, and pertinent to the study of Fernando de Herrera’s *Anotaciones*, there are still gaps in the scholarship pertaining to the commentary genre. Indeed, although this genre has been the subject of much philological scrutiny, a cognitive-inflected, relevance-guided approach to it is still wanting, notwithstanding the hermeneutical insights into the cognitive dynamics of reading that this perspective has to offer to literary critics and historians—especially when it allows the development of ‘a mode of analysis in which the dichotomy of (conventional) form and (propositional) content is set aside in favour of a focus on the dynamic instrumentality of literary form as an affordance for productive modes of thought and communication.’

23 See Terence Cave, ‘Towards a Passing Theory of Literary Understanding’, in *Reading Beyond the Code*, ed. Cave & Wilson, 167–84 (pp. 167–68); and Clark, *Relevance Theory*, 120.
24 Cave & Wilson, ‘Introduction’, in *Reading Beyond the Code*, ed. Cave & Wilson, 13.
25 Cave & Wilson, ‘Introduction’, in *Reading Beyond the Code*, ed. Cave & Wilson, 12.
26 According to Walter Glannon, priming can be broadly defined as ‘exposing a subject to a stimulus that influences a response to a later stimulus without the subject being aware of it’ (*The Neuroethics of Memory: From Total Recall to Oblivion* [Cambridge: Cambridge U. P., 2019], 35). The case for priming *a priori* the optimization of relevance and the reading of literature has been made by Kenny (*Relevance Theory and the Effect of Literature on Beliefs*, 76) and Karen H. Jobes, ‘Relevance Theory and the Translation of Scripture’, *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, 50:4 (2007), 773–97 (p. 784).
27 Cave, *Thinking with Literature*, 156. For philological approaches to the commentary genre, see Jean Cead, ‘Les Transformations du genre du commentaire’, in *L’Automne de la Renaissance, 1580–1630. XXIIe Colloque International d’Études Humanistes, Tours, 2–13*
Henceforth, I suggest that the commentary genre can be thought of as an ‘affordance-structure’ which enables the readerly calibration between two ostensive-communicative acts, thereby constituting a complex ecosystem inhabited by two authorial voices.28 The commentary’s relevance stems from its paratextual relationship with the commented text: it displays a highly ostensive, communicative behaviour which, according to the Communicative Principle, conveys a presumption of its own optimal relevance to balance out its extrinsic, ‘statutorily optional’ condition as a paratext.29 On these grounds, the reader expects the commentator to offer an optimally relevant interpretive metarepresentation of the commented author—which can be schematized as the ‘the author means y when he says x’—, wherefrom such reader will infer specific premises and implications for her reading which will compensate the cognitive effort.

Of course, the reader does not need to settle for the interpretation afforded by the commentary or to consider it definitive, let alone reliable: a sophisticated reader will be epistemically vigilant and will assess the ‘trustworthiness of the speaker and the reliability of communicated information’.30 Therefore, if the commentator satisfies the expectations of a reader who might remain epistemically vigilant throughout, it is highly probable that she will accept the commentator’s interpretation; if her expectations of relevance are not met, the reader will push her interpretation beyond the commentary or reject it altogether if deemed unreliable or untrustworthy. That said, due to the higher salience and accessibility of the commentarial metarepresentation in the face of its presumption of relevance—after all, the commentator ostensibly interprets the text for the reader, thereby economizing her cognitive effort—, the reader would not only be poised, but also very possibly biased in accepting the commentary’s interpretive insight.31

juillet 1979, ed. Jean Lafond & André Stegmann (Paris: Vrin, 1981), 101–15; Codoñer, ‘El modelo filológico de las Anotaciones’; Gérard Genette, Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation, trans. J. E. Lewin (Cambridge: Cambridge U. P., 2001 [1st French ed. 1987]); and Christina S. Kraus, ‘Introduction: Reading Commentaries/Commentaries As Reading’, in The Classical Commentary: Histories, Practices, Theory, ed. Roy K. Gibson & Christina S. Kraus (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2002), 1–27.

28 I am using the concept of genre as an affordance-structure as proposed by Cave, Thinking with Literature, 58. For the coexistence between authorial voices in the commentary, see Kraus, ‘Introduction’, in The Classical Commentary, ed. Gibson & Kraus, 6.

29 Genette, Paratexts, trans. Lewin, 324.

30 Cave & Wilson, ‘Introduction’, in Reading Beyond the Code, ed. Cave & Wilson, 17. See also Dan Sperber et al., ‘Epistemic Vigilance’, Mind & Language, 25:4 (2010), 359–93.

31 See Deirdre Wilson & Dan Sperber, ‘Relevance Theory’, in The Handbook of Pragmatics, ed. Laurence R. Horn & Gregory Ward (Maldon/Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), 607–32 (pp. 613–14). On the matter of cognitive bias, see Johan E. Korteling, Anne-Marie Brouwer & Alexander Toet, ‘A Neural Network Framework for Cognitive Bias’, Frontiers in Psychology, 9 (2018), Article 1561, 1–12; available at <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/
In sum, the commentary’s relevance is mediated by a greater processing effort, offset by the greater, wider array of cognitive positive effects afforded by the metarepresentational adjustment between the text and its paratext. This provides us with a productive framework to hypothesize how Herrera’s commentarial strategies shape the readerly engagement with Garcilaso’s poetry by exploiting specific instances of relevance proper to the dynamics of the commentary genre. More specifically, in the next section I will set out how Herrera calibrates and biases the reading of Garcilaso’s poetization of the psychosomatics of love in ‘Soneto III’, ‘Soneto V’ and ‘Soneto VIII’.

As Guillemette Bolens explains, “[a]n inference process can be “protracted”, for example when a narrative achieves relevance progressively, by increasing the manifestness of salient features incrementally.” My main hypothesis is that Herrera deploys this strategy in his commentary of the aforementioned sonnets, as suggested by its explicit and implicit intratextual cross-references and ostensive cues to relevance. Hence, the reading of ‘Soneto III’ and its annotations would prime and bias the reading of ‘Soneto V’, which in turn would do the same for ‘Soneto VIII’. When seen from above, a solid interpretive model for the psycho-physiological reading of Garcilaso’s love lyric emerges, warranted by a linear and progressive reading of the Anotaciones which renders Herrera’s notes optimally relevant for his readers.

3 The Relevance of Garcilaso’s Lovesick Mind in ‘Soneto III’, ‘Soneto V’ and ‘Soneto VIII’ According to Herrera

In his preface to the Anotaciones, Francisco de Medina, the renowned humanist and professor of Latin who sponsored Herrera’s intellectual project, praises the perceptual resuscitation of Garcilaso enacted by the Sevillian bard: ‘[Herrera] nos á puesto delante de los ojos al divino poeta Garci Lasso ilustrado con sus anotaciones.’ Read with the Renaissance aesthetics of illustratio in mind, this is no light statement, as it implies that Herrera has commented upon Garcilaso’s poetry with such authority, detailed profusion and insight that he will be able to bring it to life before

10.3389/fpsyg.2018.01561/full> (accessed 24 March 2022). According to these researchers, our ‘biological neural network’ displays strong, biased tendencies to focus on ‘dominant’ information that is readily available and accessible at the expense of other potentially (more) relevant information (5 & 7–8).

32 Bolens, ‘Relevance Theory and Kinesic Analysis in Don Quixote and Madame Bovary’, 56.

33 Herrera, Anotaciones a la poesía de Garcilaso, ed. Pepe & Reyes, 200. All quotations are taken from this edition and page references will be given parenthetically within the main text. For an in-depth analysis of the preface to the Anotaciones, see Ruiz Pérez, ‘El prólogo de Francisco de Medina a las Anotaciones’.
the readers’ eyes. From a cognitive perspective, this statement is optimally relevant for the reader: it manifests succinctly and directly the intentionality of Herrera’s literary-ostensive act (the Anotaciones) and pre-empts a wide array of positive cognitive effects (a privileged insight into Garcilaso’s poetry).

What kind of insight would one of Herrera’s coeval readers have expected to gain? A plausible answer is provided by the theoretical debates on the nature of lyric poetry among Renaissance scholars. As María José Vega explains, ‘las artes del Renacimiento observaban que lo que algunos denominaban poesía lírica no parecía imitar acciones, sino más bien afecciones’, which rendered its reading as ‘ocasional, asociativa e imaginativa: los ajenos amores recuerdan los propios, y el lector se deleita con este pensamiento’. This is indeed the opinion held by Herrera, who praises Garcilaso for being ‘mui afetuoso i suave’ and ‘admirable en mover los afetos’ (281) to pinpoint what he regards as lyric poetry’s final aim.

Love was among the most important of such affects, conceptualized as the result of a chain reaction kick-started by visual fascination in the Neoplatonic tradition of Marsilio Ficino’s De amore. Therefore, love and its psychosomatics would be a highly relevant and salient topic for a reader of the Anotaciones, as Arthur Terry notes: ‘Love, for Herrera, is so clearly the central subject of lyric poetry that he might well have argued that his concern for verbal refinement was an intrinsic part of the neo-Platonic search for beauty in which love is the prime instrument’. This is first made particularly manifest in the scholia of ‘Soneto III’:

La mar en medio i tierras é dexado
de cuanto bien, cuitado, yo tenía;
iéndom’ alexando cada día,
gentes, costumbres, lenguas é passado.

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34 Smith, Writing in the Margin, 45. For a broader discussion of illustratio (also known as evidentia or enargeia) in the period, see Heinrich F. Plett, Enargeia in Classical Antiquity and the Early Modern Age: The Aesthetics of Evidence (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2012).
35 María José Vega, ‘Poética de la lírica en el Renacimiento’, in Idea de la lírica en el Renacimiento (entre Italia y España), ed. María José Vega & Cesc Esteve (Vilagarcía de Arousa [Pontevedra]: Mirabel, 2004), 15–43 (pp. 16 & 22).
36 Luján Atienza, ‘El estilo “afetuoso” en las Anotaciones de Herrera’, 386; Montero, ‘Las Anotaciones de Herrera a Garcilaso como texto polémico’, 12.
37 See Peter Sloterdijk, Spheres, trans. Wieland Hoban, 3 vols (Los Angeles/South Pasadena: Semiotext[e], 2011–2016 [1st German ed. 1998–2004]), I (2011), Bubbles: Microspherology, 117–24.
38 Arthur Terry, Seventeenth-Century Spanish Poetry: The Power of Artifice (Cambridge: Cambridge U. P., 1993), 50. On the codes and practices of love poetry in the Quinientos, see also Alexander A. Parker, The Philosophy of Love in Spanish Literature 1480–1680 (Edinburgh: Edinburgh U. P., 1985), 40–43; and Paul Joseph Lennon, Love in the Poetry of Francisco de Aldana: Beyond Neoplatonism (Woodbridge: Tamesis, 2019), 7–47.
Ya de volver estoy desconfiado; pienso remedios en mi fantasía, i el que más cierto espero es aquel día qu’ acabará la vida i el cuidado.

De cualquier mal pudiera socorrerme con veros yo, señora, o esperallo, si esperallo pudiera sin perdello; mas no veros ya para valerme, si no es morir, ningún remedio hallo, i si esto lo es, tanpoco podrá avello.

The most relevant annotations to this poem are the glosses on the meaning of ‘fantasía’ and ‘con veros’. Commenting on the former, the Sevillian makes a number of psychological appreciations on the relationship between vision, figuration and imagination (299–300); on the latter, he makes a philographic point: ‘Entre los más grandes efetos i maravillas de Amor, es la más grande i poderosa la que procede de la vista de los que se aman, como aquí toca bien Garci Lasso, porque es un recordamiento i renovación del afeto amoroso’ (300). This creates a doubly implicit and explicit metarepresentation: it is implicit in the case of the imagination, as Herrera relies on his encyclopaedic exposition with no reference made to the commented text; on the other hand, he proceeds explicitly on the effects of erotic vision by ostensibly embedding Garcilaso into the explanation. These glosses are calibrated against the sonnet to produce an inferable interpretation of the speaker’s experience of love which meets the reader’s expectations, thus maximalizing its relevance through the cognitive momentum afforded by the rapid succession and quasi-chiasmatic repetition in the text of ‘remedios’ (l. 6), ‘fantasía’ (l. 6), ‘veros’ (ll. 10 & 12) and ‘remedio’ (l. 13).

Henceforth, in the speaker’s imagination, now modulated as the ad hoc concept FANTASÍA*, ‘se representan de tal suerte en el ánimo las imágenes de las cosas ausentes que nos parece que las vemos con los ojos i las tenemos presentes’ (300), namely the image of the beloved, in order to find ‘remedios’ for his painful longing (ll. 1–8). However, the figment of the imagination cannot compete with actual sense-perception: the former may depend on the stimulus ‘recordamiento’, but it cannot bring the ‘renovación del afeto amoroso’ of the latter. Consequently, the intradiegetic lover finds no remedy due to his cognitive failure, and despairs (ll. 9–14). This interpretation gains further traction by overlapping with the note to ‘si esperallo’ (l. 11), where Herrera metarepresents the authorial intention of Garcilaso by pretending to speak with the voice of the speaker, as the first person singular, the present tense, and the explicit address to the implicit hearer all imply: ‘Si pudiera esperar veros sin temor de perder esta vista, porque el amor, como dize Ovidio, es lleno de temor conoxoso’ (301).
In a way, this first commentarial metarepresentation offers an interpretive blueprint for Herrera’s embedding of Garcilaso’s love poetry, as the former establishes a key topic of the latter: the insufficiencies of cognition in the face of the speaker’s lovesick lament. However, this is not always the case, and ‘Soneto V’ offers an immediate counterexample of cognitive felicities in the exalted lover:

\begin{quote}
Escrito está en mi alma vuestro gesto
\quad i cuanto yo escrivir de vos desseo:
\quad vos sola lo escrevistes, yo lo leo
\quad tan sólo, que aun de vos me guardo en esto.
\quad En esto estoy i estaré siempre puesto,
\quad qu’ aunque no cabe ‘n mí cuanto en vos veo,
\quad de tanto bien lo que no entiendo creo,
\quad tomando ya la fe por presupuesto.
\quad Yo no nací sino para quereros;
\quad mi alma os á cortado a su medida;
\quad por ábito de la alma misma os quiero;
\quad cuanto tengo confieso yo deveros:
\quad por vos nací, por vos tengo la vida,
\quad por vos é de morir, y por vos muero. (308)
\end{quote}

In the reading of this sonnet, the previous scholia, now integrated into the cognitive environment of the reader as interpretive, contextual premises, interact with both Garcilaso’s text and Herrera’s notes, particularly those on ‘Escrito’ (l. 1) and ‘alma’ (l. 10) (308–09). Commenting on the former, the Sevillian acknowledges the polysemy of the term: ‘Esta voz está puesta en la misma significación que γράφειν en la lengua griega, que es escribir o pintar. Verbo común al pintor i al poeta’ (308). Although this first note may be reminiscent of the Horatian commonplace ut pictura poesis, this conceptual elaboration of ESCRIBIR and its semantic field is not the most accessible one in the face of neither the evidence provided by Herrera’s words, the context, nor the background premises computed by the reader. Instead, in line with the poetics of memory foreshadowed by the reflective nature of ‘Soneto I’ and its gaze into the past, present and future—in Herrera’s words, that sonnet was the ‘[p]refación de toda la obra i de sus amores i proposición con la contemplación i vista de lo presente i pasado’ (282)—, Herrera seems to conjure the rhetorical tradition of the arts of memory—incidentally initiated by Simonides of Ceos, who was also considered since Antiquity to have been the first who, in the context of his mnemonics, compared writing with painting.

39 Anne J. Cruz, ‘“Verme morir entre memorias tristes”: Petrarch, Garcilaso, and the Poetics of Memory’, Annali d’Italianistica, 22 (2004), 221–36 (pp. 229–32).

40 Frances Yates, The Art of Memory (London/New York: Routledge, 1999), 28.
In this tradition, which was well alive during Herrera’s lifetime, memory was often compared to ‘a written page or a wax tablet upon which something is written’, and mnemonics were sustained by the creation of mental places and impactful images, which were like conceptual tags that created lasting impressions on memory and could move the affects of the user. This implied that the *memoriosus* who wrote on his memory had to be skilled as a writer, since the images were often verbally composed and construed, and also as a painter, in order to create strong, visual impressions which could both codify the information that one wished to remember and elicit the emotions associated with it. When the impression was recollected—that is, read in the memory—, it entailed a ‘re-enactment of experience’ involving ‘cogitation and judgment, imagination, and emotion’. Therefore, this conceptual modulation of ‘Escrito’ becomes more accessible, and thus more relevant, than its Horatian counterpart when read against the quatrains in combination with an implicit note on the imagination and the explicit note on the soul.

Glossing the latter, Herrera lists different denominations for it and its corresponding functions, being the most important for the present discussion ‘mientras quiere, ánimo’ and ‘cuando se acuerda, memoria’ (309). The terminological amalgam enumerated by Herrera is not trivial, as the Sevillian chooses punctiliously the terms that he uses on each occasion throughout the *Anotaciones*. In this sense, *ánimo* is particularly salient, given that its repetition throughout the *Anotaciones* provides evidence of its higher and increasing relevance, furthermore allowing the reader to

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41 For an overview of the arts of memory in the early modern period, see Luis Merino Jerez, *Retórica y artes de memoria en el humanismo renacentista* (Jorge de Trebisonda, Pedro de Rávena y Francisco Sánchez de las Brozas) (Cáceres: Univ. de Extremadura, 2007). See also Fernando Rodríguez de la Flor, *Teatro de la memoria. Siete ensayos sobre mnemotecnia española de los siglos XVII y XVIII* (Salamanca: Junta de Castilla y León, Consejería de Educación y Cultura, 1996); Lina Bolzoni, *The Gallery of Memory: Literary and Iconographic Models in the Age of the Printing Press*, trans. Jeremy Parzen (Toronto/Buffalo: Univ. of Toronto Press, 2001 [1st Italian ed. 1995]); and Heinrich F. Plett, *Rhetoric and Renaissance Culture* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2004).

42 Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge U. P., 2008 [1st ed. 1990]), 18.

43 Merino Jerez, *Retórica y artes de memoria en el humanismo renacentista*, 61–70. For the Aristotelian rhetorical and psychological foundations of these impactful images, or *imaginés agentes*, see Carlos Iglesias-Crespo, ‘La metarretórica cognitiva aristotélica y su relación con el tratamiento de la memoria en la *Rhetorica ad Herennium*’, *Rhetoric. A Journal of the History of Rhetoric*, 40:1 (2022), 1–22, and Carlos Iglesias-Crespo, ‘*Energeia* As Defamiliarization: Reading Aristotle with Shklovsky’s Eyes’, *Journal for the History of Rhetoric*, 24:3 (2021), 274–89.

44 Bolzoni, *The Gallery of Memory*, 164–66.

45 Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, 76. See also Merino Jerez, *Retórica y artes de memoria en el humanismo renacentista*, 53–54.
infer retroactive associations with previous notes: commenting on visual metaphors in the scholia to ‘Soneto II’, Herrera explained that these ‘ponen casi en la presencia del ánimo las cosas que no pudimos mirar ni ver’ (292; my emphasis); apropos the imagination in the commentary of ‘Soneto III’, we are told that ‘por está se representan de tal suerte en el ánimo las imágenes de las cosas ausentes que nos parece que las vemos con los ojos i las tenemos presentes’ (300; my emphasis). Indeed, the soul—which, lest we forget, was the term which denominated the cognitive life of an individual since Antiquity—, is often framed as ‘ánimo’ in the Anotaciones notes on the psychology of love.

The definition of ánimo as the soul ‘cuando quiere’ would have further supported this inference. As it was understood at the time, the verb querer meant ‘apetecer alguna cosa, o tenerla voluntad, Latine velle. Dixose à quareiendo, porque lo que queremos lo vamos a buscar. Querido, el amado, o cosa amada’. On this basis, it is possible to infer two further implications. First, if the ‘ánimo’ quiere, it means that it displays an almost concupiscible inclination—an appetite—which overlaps with the sensorial, earthly erotism of Garcilaso’s poetry, confined to the human dimension of Neoplatonic love; second, if ‘lo que queremos lo vamos a buscar’, it must first be absent—hence the imagination’s mnemonic role in representing ‘imágenes de las cosas ausentes’ (300).

Consequently, a reader may infer the following interpretation of the poem from Herrera’s notes: the imagination allows the speaker to create a fi gment of his beloved’s face which, when read/recalled in the soul, moves him and offers him everything he wants and needs, even when it is an imperfect match for his lovesick eyes (ll. 1–6); nevertheless, the mnemonic impression is so strong that it moves him to profess a religio amoris towards the beloved that compensates for the potential insufficiencies of his cognitive experience (ll. 7–14). This interpretive possibility maximalizes the relevance of the contrast between ‘Soneto III’ and ‘Soneto V’ because their comparative processing, aided implicitly by the content primed by Herrera and explicitly by the manifest conceptual paths of his annotations, yields both an expansion and a revision of the assumptions about the literary, philosophical and psychological experience of love.

46 See Katharine Park & Eckhard Kessler, ‘The Concept of Psychology’, in The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy, ed. Charles B. Schmidt et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge U. P., 1988), 453–63.

47 Sebastián de Covarrubias, Tesoro de la lengua castellana, o española. Compuesto por el licenciado Don Sebastián de Cobarruvias Orozco, Capellán de su Magestad, Maestrescuela y Canónigo de la Santa Yglesia de Cuenca, y Consultor del Santo Oficio de la Inquisición. Dirigido a la Magestad Católica del Rey Don Felipe III, nuestro señor (Madrid: Por Luis Sánchez, impresor del Rey N.S., 1611), fol. 602; my emphasis.

48 See Álvaro Llosa Sanz, ‘El tacto invisible: relectura del Soneto VIII de Garcilaso: del eros fantástico a la fantasía erótica’, Hispanic Review, 77:4 (2009), 413–25 (p. 419).
Pertinently enough, Herrera has more things to say about love that further contribute to the optimalization of the relevance of this interpretive line. In the scholia to ‘Soneto VII’, the reader finds a long, digressive discourse on love ‘para el conocimiento d’ este soneto como para declaración de otros lugares’ (318). After a mythological exposition of its origins, Herrera moves on to present a psychology and philosophy of the experience of love, where we are told that ‘el amor entra por los ojos i nace del viso’ (320); here vision is so pivotal that it functions as the main criteria for the Platonic taxonomy of love according to the scholium: ‘aunque todo amor nace de la vista, el contemplativo sube d’ ella a la mente. El ativo i moral, como simple i corpóreo, para en la vista i no pasa más adelante; el deleitable deciende d’ella al tocamiento’ (322). And yet, although Herrera’s definition of love adheres to the principles upheld by the Ficinian and Petrarchist brands of Neoplatonism—‘el amor es desseo de gozar la hermosura’ (322)—his philosophical inclinations do not preclude him from qualifying it, noting that ‘el amor no es apetito o desseo, pero el apetito es acidente de amor, porque solo ai desseo o apetito cuando carece alguno de aquella cosa que ama […]. El desseo se sigue i causa del amor si está ausente el objeto’ (323).

In this sense, the discourse on love would become even more relevant by interacting with the previous ideas that Herrera has been developing on the experience of love. For instance, it is possible to infer that desire is a state experienced by a lover ‘cuando quiere’, thereby appealing to his ánimo, since it requires that its object must be absent—an interpretation that would moreover overlap with Ficino’s framing of desire as a longing for what one does not have. Moreover, the reader’s understanding of erotic desire would have also been conditioned by Herrera’s previous cognitive annotations: if love—as Herrera further comments—is described as blind ‘porque el amante se engaña muchas veces, cuando juzga de sí o de la cosa que ama’ (324; my emphasis), it implies that such confusion takes place in the imagination, as ‘[é]sta se engaña muchas vezes i se confunde en error más que los sentidos inferiores’ (300; my emphasis)—not to mention that the imagination represents in the lover’s mind the image of what is absent, thereby re-stirring the desire which triggered it in the first place. Therefore, the conceptual interaction between these background premises, further buttressed by their closely resembling ‘logical and contextual implications’, would result in ad hoc, pragmatic elaborations of love and

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49 Lía Schwartz, ‘Amor y deseo en textos de Fernando de Herrera, humanista, poeta neoplatónico y estoico’, Criticón, 128 (2016), 53–68 (p. 56).
50 Susan Byrne, Ficino in Spain (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 2015), 83.
51 Felipe Valencia, The Melancholy Void: Lyric and Masculinity in the Age of Góngora (Lincoln, NE: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 2021), 25.
52 Wilson & Sperber, Meaning and Relevance, 244.
desire; this, in turn, would maximalize their relevance for the reader by taking advantage of an ever faster cognitive processing due to the increasing manifestness of Herrera’s interpretive schema.

The ideas brought forth by Herrera about love and cognition are also notably salient in the reading of ‘Soneto VIII’, arguably Garcilaso’s quintessential psycho-erotological sonnet, ‘pués es allí donde se explicita para el lector lo que significa para el poeta una situación físico-psicológica de presencia y ausencia de la amada’.53 The sonnet goes as follows:

D’ aquella vista pura i excelente
salen espírpus vivos i encendidos,
i siendo por mis ojos recibidos,
me passan hasta donde ’l mal se siente.

Encuéntrans’ al camino fácilmente
con los mios, que de tal calor movidos
salen fuera de mí como perdidos,
llamados d’ aquel bien qu’ está presente.

Ausente, ‘n la memoria la imagino;
mi espíritus, pensando que la vián,
se mueven i s’ encienden sin medida;
mas no hallando fácil el camino,
que los suyos entrando derretían,
rebientan por salir do no ai salida. (333)

Herrera begins his annotations with a commentarial metarepresentation of the text which already delineates the contours of his reading by appealing once again to the relevance of vision in love and cognition: ‘El sugeto es la vista, i acrecienta su alabança con los maravillosos efetos que haze en él assí en presencia como en ausencia’ (333). From here, he proceeds to gloss over what Peter Sloterdijk has called ‘the radiocracy of the heart’54 i.e., the Neoplatonic erotology spearheaded by Ficino which described the transmission of hearty, vaporous spiritus radiated from the beloved’s eyes and received by the lover’s sight, which, as Herrera ponders, ‘atrae a sí con herviente espíritu los traspasamientos o transmigraciones de los amores’ (335). This results in the physiological attraction described in the quatrains, as recently analysed by Álvaro Llosa Sanz and Paul Joseph Lennon.

According to Llosa Sanz, the quatrains call for the intradietic presence of the beloved to presuppose ‘una correspondencia de miradas inicial (visio)’ with the speaker; the completion of the visual exchange would then give way to ‘una especie de transformación en los amantes, que se tienen,

53 Llosa Sanz, ‘El tacto invisible: relectura del Soneto VIII’, 421.
54 Sloterdijk, Spheres, trans. Hoban, I, 121.
físicamente por el intercambio de espíritus, el uno en el otro'.

Lennon partly echoes this interpretive line, although underlining Herrera’s reservations regarding the ‘quasi-sensual’ spirits of the Garcilasean lover, which ‘appear to mirror the same excited state as those of his beloved, as noted by the use of “calor” in line six’. In my opinion, the suggested exchange of spirits from the speaker back to his beloved does not hold in either Garcilaso’s text or Herrera’s commentary. As Sloterdijk’s work on Ficino’s De amore reminds us, the visual spirit received by the lover develops ‘a form of longing for its origin, for it longs to return to the heart from which it came, and through this striving it magically draws the entire person of Lysias with it towards Phaedrus’. Indeed, Ficino’s example noted that

Phaedrus pursues Lysias because his heart demands its humor back. Lysias pursues Phaedrus because the sanguine humor requests its proper vessel, demands its own seat. But Lysias pursues Phaedrus more ardently. For the heart can more easily do without a very small particle of its humor than the humor itself can do without its proper heart.

Sloterdijk observes that ‘[i]t is characteristic of Ficino’s time that he was only able to reproduce one half of this blood symbiosis’, because ‘the model based on the heart as the king of all organs, wastefully giving his blood to the extremities, remained so dominant that the seemingly logical notion that the blood sent forth could circuitously return to the sender was unable to develop’ until the findings of William Harvey in the first half of the seventeenth century. Conveniently, this hierarchy underscored a biopolitical point in ‘the age of strong monarchic ideas’, ‘for if the circulatory system were complete, one could no longer have imagined the king and the heart as absolute givers, but also as takers of gifts that flow towards them from the periphery’. As a result, Sloterdijk continues, ‘[t]hat explains why Ficino can ascribe a form of homesickness for the origin to the blood of Phaedrus in Lysias’s heart, yet does not outline any effective way for the spent blood to return to its source’. Sloterdijk concludes by noting how all the above ‘offers a new explanation for the asymmetry between the lover (erastes) and the beloved (eromenos), as it ‘attributes the inevitable inequality of the erotic interrelation to the fact that the enchanter and the enchanted cannot be exact mirror images of each other’.

55 Llosa Sanz, ‘El tacto invisible: relectura del Soneto VIII’, 416–18.
56 Lennon, ‘Paratextual Subversion’, 213.
57 Sloterdijk, Spheres, trans. Hoban, I, 121.
58 Marsilio Ficino, Commentary on Plato’s Symposium on Love, trans. Sears Reynolds Jayne (Dallas: Spring Publications, 1985), 161.
59 Sloterdijk, Spheres, trans. Hoban, I, 122–23.
I think that both Garcilaso’s quatrains and Herrera’s commentary are closer to this account, which would moreover connect with Susan Byrne’s and Felipe Valencia’s recent examinations of the capital role of Ficino’s *De amore* in shaping the erotic thought of the Spanish poets during the Quinientos—not to mention that this hypothesis points to a similar direction as Cristóbal Cuevas’ analysis of the similarities between Herrera’s conception of love and mysticism, as well as Lennon’s arguments in favour of Herrera’s Christianized Neoplatonism.\(^60\) All throughout the poem, the poetic yo remains a passive receiver, and the fact that his spirits ‘salen fuera de mí como perdidos, / llamados d’ aquel bien qu’ está presente’ (ll. 7–8) bears witness to the magnet effect whereby the lover is pulled towards the beloved. Moreover, it must be noted that the speaker remains always subservient, unable to mirror in the beloved the same process and thus precluding any possibility of effective circulation back to her, as inferable from the fact that the his spirits exit ‘como perdidos’ without destination upon being summoned—Germanely enough to the enthronement of the beloved first enacted by Courtly Love and continued by the Petrarchan tradition.\(^61\) Incidentally, Cuevas points out how Herrera’s thought on love ‘debe mucho, ciertamente, al platonismo acuñado por Ficino y los “filógrafos” que le siguen’.\(^62\) His scholia on this sonnet strongly suggest so, where the unreciprocated passivity of the poetic lover is continuously implied: ‘los ojos son heridos de la belleza’, ‘la vista [...] recibe más fácilmente las afeciones cercanas’ etc. (336). This would further condition the interpretation of Garcilaso’s quatrains as a case study in what Sloterdijk would describe as a subject ‘caught up in the atmosphere, and hence the blood circulation, of another’.\(^63\)

This interpretive possibility becomes even more relevant in Herrera’s commentary, where the physiological discussion is displaced by a psychological description of the experience of love:

> Es particular pasión de todos los que aman [...] hablar como presentes, i abraçar i llamar i quexarse. [...] Porque siendo representada a nuestros ojos alguna imagen bella i agradable, passa la efigie d’ ella por medio de los sentidos exteriores en el sentido común; del sentido común va a la parte imaginativa, i d’ ella entra en la memoria, pensando i imaginando

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\(^60\) See Byrne, *Ficino in Spain*, 50–108; Valencia, *The Melancholy Void*, 22–31; Cristóbal Cuevas, ‘Amor humano, amor místico: la concepción amorosa de Fernando de Herrera’, *Caligrama. Revista Insular de Filología*, 3 (1990), 7–29; and Lennon, ‘Paratextual Subversion’, 218.

\(^61\) See Sabatino Maglione, ‘Fernando de Herrera and Neoplatonism’, *Hispanófila*, 69 (1980), 45–71 (p. 49); and Parker, *The Philosophy of Love in Spanish Literature*, 42.

\(^62\) Cuevas, ‘Amor humano, amor místico’, 13.

\(^63\) Sloterdijk, *Spheres*, trans. Hoban, I, 122.
The description of the activity of those who love cannot but recall the previous notes on desire and the imagination, fulfilling the inferential, protracted build-up of the interpretive insights offered by the notes on ‘Soneto III’, ‘Soneto V’ and ‘Soneto VII’. Accordingly, the psychological explanation is the most relevant side of the argument, as it exploits all the background premises supplied by Herrera so far. Furthermore, Herrera’s description of the psychology of infatuation only strengthens its one-sidedness, for even if the desire for the beautiful image may transform a lover into his beloved, this is a metamorphosis granted by the unidirectional pull exerted by the latter upon the former—conceived either mystically or in Ficino’s terms—, thereby questioning the correspondence of the beloved in the quatrains and precluding the possibility of the erotic relationship defended by Llosa Sanz, where ‘las miradas prácticamente se tocan, en un tacto invisible’.

This situational uncertainty is only exacerbated in the tercets, especially when read against Herrera’s note on memory. This note’s relevance increases because of its ostensive connections with Herrera’s previous note on the imagination: the latter defended that thanks to the imagination ‘se representan de tal suerte en el ánimo las imágenes de las cosas ausentes que nos parece que las vemos con los ojos i las tenemos presentes’ (300); the former declares that memory is ‘una vista o miramiento […] de la forma concebida en el ánimo de las cosas pasadas i percibidas con el sentido o con el entendimiento’ (338). This connection would recall and further increase retroactively the relevance of the interpretation of ‘Soneto V’ along mnemonic lines, thus affirming memory’s central place in the poetic subject’s cognitive experience and insufficiency. Moreover, the reader would be poised to infer that the propensity of the speaker’s imagination to fall prey to itself previously asserted by Herrera also applies in Soneto VIII’s first tercet, as it evinces the deceitful, combined action of memory and the imagination: ‘Ausente, /n la memoria la imagino; / mis espíritus, pensando que la vían, / se mueven i s’ encienden sin medida’ (ll. 9–11).

Back to the tercets, Llosa Sanz proposes the following interpretation:

[...\] el poeta, arrastrado a la melancolía por la necesidad de recuperar continuamente el goce sensible mediante la memoria, suscita continuamente la aparición de esa imagen sensible que, finalmente, no lo contenta y le produce dolor. Pero este suscitar, que aparece como

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64 Cuevas, ‘Amor humano, amor místico’, 20–21.
65 Llosa Sanz, ‘El tacto invisible: relectura del Soneto VIII’, 419.
factor causante del dolor en numerosos poemas, nos sugiere también que el erotismo fantástico—pues la fantasía lo intermeda—de la imagen grabada por los espíritus pasa a convertirse en una fantasía erótica insistente y obsesiva que determina la salud y el destino del amante.66

Although my own interpretation of the tercets through the lens of Herrera’s commentary coincides with the above, I extend the diagnosis to the whole poem rather than restricting it to the tercets. The last tercet posits how the spirits fooled by memory ‘no hallando fácil el camino, / que los suyos entrando derretían, / rebientan por salir do no ai salida’ (ll. 12–14). The volta retroactively modifies the interpretation of the whole sonnet aided by Herrera’s paratext: the fact that the beloved’s spirits had melted, and thus blocked the possibility for circulation back to her—the speaker’s do not have the means to ‘abrir el paso’ by themselves (339)—not only condemns the speaker to the painful state described by Llosa Sanz—once again, the result of a cognitive failure, the impossibility of matching the actual perceptual experience of the beloved, as first proposed by ‘Soneto III’—, but also questions the initial possibility of it in her presence. This interpretation implies that the subject matter of the sonnet is the speaker’s unidirectional, and thus painful, infatuation with his beloved in spite of the ‘maravillosos efetos’ pandered by Herrera at the beginning. As Lennon suggests, such effects would rather befit the sonnet ‘Cuando en vos pienso, en alta fantasía’, which Herrera includes in his commentary: ‘Here the spirits triumph in a tableau that sees them successfully exit the eyes of the male and wind their way to the female beloved’.67 Consequently, the successful cognitive efforts of the Herrerian lover would highlight and subvert Garcilaso’s double failure: first in the quatrains, where it is weakly implicated, and then in the tercets, where the insufficiency is manifest.

4 Conclusion: Garcilaso’s Poetics of Failure

When read with Herrera’s eyes, Garcilaso’s love sonnets embody a poetics of failure which hinges on the cognitive insufficiencies of the poet’s lovesick mind. In ‘Soneto III’, the poet despairs because his imagination is unable to fulfil his desire, being an imperfect match for the actual gaze of his beloved. ‘Soneto V’ plays with this topic again but focuses instead on the obsessive response to this failure as a means to cope with it. Finally, ‘Soneto VIII’ entails both a reassessment and an actualization of the previous premises: the imagined figment of the beloved cannot fulfil the poet’s desire, but it is not entirely clear that the presence of the lady would make any difference whatsoever if no circulatory exchange of spirits can

66 Llosa Sanz, ‘El tacto invisible: relectura del Soneto VIII’, 420.
67 Lennon, ‘Paratextual Subversion’, 214.
take place. As a result, the longing for vision in ‘Soneto III’, the respite of devotion of ‘Soneto V’, and the memory of mutual fascination of ‘Soneto VIII’ emerge as delusions and chimeras, thus materializing the grip of melancholy over the codes of early modern lyric in the time of the Counter-Reformation: the lover’s mind responds to the beloved’s absence with lovesickness as the only possible language of love.  

This interpretation is the result of Herrera’s commentarial strategies, targeted at maximizing the relevance of his annotations by tapping into the reader’s expectations and cognitive biases through an astute protraction of the inferential-interpretive process that treats Garcilaso’s sonnets in linear progression, almost as if they were an ad hoc Petrarchan canzoniere. Weaving one strand at a time, Herrera calibrates Garcilaso’s verses with each other and with his annotations on perception, imagination, memory, love and desire. In so doing, he is advancing the goals of his literary agenda, encapsulated by the emblem which crowned the title-page of the Anotaciones: Non minus praeclarum hoc, quam illud. The critical consensus is that the emblem’s iconography (a helmet resting on a book and surrounded by laurel and ivy wreaths) announced the change of cultural paradigm which took place in the second half of the sixteenth century—‘ya es hora de que las letras españolas alcancen la dignidad que corresponde a las armas imperiales’, as Montero has recently summarized it. Hence, Herrera’s highly erudite and technical scholia bear witness to this desire, given the manifest, intellectual depth that they confer to Garcilaso’s apparent exercises in sprezzatura. However, the motto can also be interpreted as Herrera’s claim of his place in the Republic of Letters as an equal to Garcilaso at the very least. Accordingly, the poetics of failure which Herrera tailors for Garcilaso gains an additional significance as a propaedeutic for the high Neoplatonism and the learned and melancholic raptures of his own poetry, published straightaway in 1582: where Garcilaso once failed, the lover of Algunas obras would soon dare.*

68 For the connection between melancholy and lyric poetry, see Valencia, The Melancholy Void, 1–56.

69 Montero, ‘Las Anotaciones de Herrera a Garcilaso como texto polémico’, 5. On the aforesaid cultural paradigm shift, see Ruiz Pérez, ‘El prólogo de Francisco de Medina a las Anotaciones’, 123–42.

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ORCID

Carlos Iglesias-Crespo © http://orcid.org/0000-0001-6804-4964