Ever since Ugo Foscolo (1778-1827), like a Winckelmann redivivus, entrusted with the mission of "opening a new sense" (1) in the realm of literature, tore the scales off the eyes of the practitioners of Italian criticism, and taught them how to detect in the baffling labyrinth of the work of art, those aspects (passional, sensuous, sentimental, intellectual) which are peculiar to the soul-structure of the writer, and which reveal it (2), it has been constantly acknowledged that Petrarch's unique achievement, the new, original contribution which he makes to European poetry, is the introspective character of his lyricism, the inner-directed quality of his poetic vision.

Paradoxically, that unique contribution, that unicum, which former historians used to ascribe to the subjectivism deemed to be typical of the Weltanschauung of the Renaissance, is a phenomenon bearing the hallmarks of medieval culture. (3) It is a flower which blossoms from the soul of medieval mysticism, which unfolds its petals in the hothouse climate of a meditative, inward spiritualism, with its minute, scrupulously attentive dissection of the faculties of the soul. That unicum cannot be conceived apart from the Augustinianism which so deeply pervades the long-protracted medieval "Twilight".

The influence which St. Augustine exerted upon Petrarch (4) was considerably more intense and pervasive, than that by which he affected Dante. For Dante, it was the "augustinismopolitique" (5) as Arquillière calls it, which held the greater appeal; consequently, it was in the De Civitate Dei rather than the Confessions (6) that he found inspiration.

Petrarch's ideas on the greater merit, dignity, and profitableness of religious versus secular literature, on Grace and freewill, on the immortality of the soul; on the advisability, for theologians, to perfect themselves in the study of classical literature; his conviction of the superiority of Plato over Aristotle (Dante, instead, places Aristotle at the summit of thought and knowledge) are of Augustinian derivation. Two of Petrarch's Latin works, the Secretum and the De Ocio religiosorum, owe their incentive to the writings of St. Augustine. As for Augustine's Confessions, the model on which the Secretum is patterned, Petrarch states that it was no less than animae dimidium meae. It is the Confessions which he carries in his knapsack when he climbs to the top of Mount Ventoux (1336): it is the Confessions of which he makes a present to his beloved brother Gherardo. Addressing St. Augustine, Petrarch writes: "whenever I read your Confessions, I am torn between two contrary passions, hope and fear... and I seem to read, not the story of another human pilgrimage, but that of my very own (sed propriae meae peregrinationis historiam).

A diligent scholar (7) has taken the trouble to count how many times Petrarch quotes Augustine: he finds the number to be no less than 1200!

The specific elements, in St. Augustine, which Petrarch found intensely congenial, and which predestined the Confessions to become the poet's livre de chevet, have been brought out by Alfred Mézières (8). "In reading the Saint's narrative of his transgressions, in perusing the painful recital of the agitations of that ardent soul, of its impetuous dashes toward virtue, followed by crises of dejection and relapse, in contemplating those alternatives between contrition and helpfulness, Petrarch could not help recognizing his own feelings. He too sheds tears on his own powerlessness, he too strives to shake off the shackles of the past,
he too craves to master his own experiences, to subdue his own passions; and always the homo vetus, the former individuality, the prior form of himself, which he deludes himself into believing that he has overthrown and conquered at last, arises again, to illumine the distressful presence of his vices” (9).

Augustine, then, is, for Petrarch, the maître de la vie intérieure (or, shall we say, his sentimental Doppelgaenger — the mirror reflecting the image of his own inner self). As Virgil is, for Dante, the escort through the dreary infernal regions, so Augustine is, for Petrarch, the voice of his moral conscience, the companion and guide, through the intimæ penetraliae animi. Petrarch studied the impressive pages in memory contained in Book X, chap. VIII, of the Confessions: and authenticated in himself the truthfulness of them. One fragment reads: “In the cells of our memory, things are preserved distinctly under general headings, each having entered there by its own avenue: for instance, light and colors and forms of bodies, by the eyes; by the ears, all sorts of sounds; all smells, by the avenue of the nostrils; all tastes, by the mouth; and the sensations of the whole body, either outwardly or inwardly to the body. There, present with me, are heaven, earth, sea, and whatever I can think of, besides what I have forgotten” . . . “There also I meet with myself, and recall myself, and remember when and where, and what I have done, and in association with what feelings. Out of the same store do I myself combine with the past, continually, ever fresh semblances and images of the things I have experienced, or the beliefs which I have drawn from these experiences: and thence I infer future actions, future events and hopes: and on all of these I reflect, as if they were present” (10).

We find a clear repercussion of these words in Petrarch’s letter reporting on his ascent to Mount Ventoux; and in the beautiful initial lines of one of the sonnets of the Canzoniere: Anima, che diverse cose e tante Vedi, odi, e leggi, e parli, e scrivi, e pensi . . . (Canzoniere, Part I, CCIV)

It is Augustine who directed Petrarch’s vision to the inner psychological world. In the De Remediis we find a particularly pertinent passage: “At no time are you a totality, at no time a unity. I see you as dissentient from yourself, as a force uninterruptedly tearing yourself to pieces. Cast your glance inwards: you shall observe yourself now to will, now to unwill; to love, to hate, to blandish, to threaten, to scoff, to deceive, to dissemble, to jest, to weep, to pity, to forgive, to grow angry, to glide away, to reach the lowest level of dejection, to rise to highest pitch of exultation (11), to waver, to halt, to march forward, to step backward, to commence, to leave off, to doubt, to err, to be taken in, to bewail your own ignorance, to express in words, to forget, to remember, to envy, to admire, to feel disgruntled and listless, to experience contempt and suspiciousness . . . Nothing is more uncertain than the succession of our moods” (here Petrarch anticipates a favorite idea of Montaigne’s), “our existence never stops fluctuating from beginning to end. Is there any need to refer to the four passions, Hope, Joy, Fear, Sorrow? Alternately blowing, like intermittent gusts of wind, amid rocks, far away from the harbor, these passions harass the ship of our soul, and toss it now here, now there” (12).

In the Secretum, Petrarch’s uncanny power of inner searching reaches its apex. There is a cruel, relentlessly stubborn will to absolute sincerity. With unspiring firmness of utterance, as the scalpel of self-analysis bares deeper and deeper layers of the soul-substance, the poet pulls up, root and branch, the conscious and unconscious rationalizations and justifi-
cations which the ego constructs, disguising its impulses, ungovernable feelings, flinchings of the will. (13)

I have mentioned conscious and unconscious rationalizations. In reference to the unconscious ones, the question arises why, in his application of the psychoanalytical technique to the dissection of an artist's personality (14), Siegmund Freud selects Leonardo da Vinci (15) rather than Petrarch. (Had Freud read the Canzoniere? Perhaps he did not: and the answer is as simple as that). Petrarch would have supplied Freud with a much richer set of data on such phenomena as dreams, frustration, repression, ambivalence, rationalization, and sublimation (16). The whole of Petrarch's poetry is a document of the process of repression and sublimation of an intense sensuality (or, to employ Freud's term, libido), which, although kept under strict surveillance by the super-ego (the moral conscience), flashes forth again and again in aesthetic transfigurations. Such are, for instance, the myth of Apollo's pursuit of Daphne (Laurum-Laura), and the symbols of Endymion, of Acteon, and Pygmalion.

One of the major motifs of Petrarch's Canzoniere is that of time. Naturally, the racing swiftness of Time's course is the oldest refrain of world-poetry. The Lebensangst, however, the anxiety connected with the awareness of that transiency, is something which, in Petrarch, assumes a singularly original and modern form: a form which a 20th century reader at once recognizes as existentialist. With unerring sagacity. Professor Bosco has "spotted" the essential text where this anxiety is verbalized. It is Petrarch's letter to Philippe de Cabassole. (17)

In a crucial passage, the existential hallucination, the Lebensangst, attains its paroxism. (18) With a gesture of weird detachment from his own self, of delirious dédoublement, Petrarch notes: "Just as my pen is now moving, just so am I now being urged on, impelled, but much more swiftly, by the march of time . . . I had reached this point in my letter; and while I was thinking whether or not I should add something, I had paused, and with my pen pointing downwards, I was absentmindedly tapping the paper. This tapping gave me a chance to reflect that between one and the other tiny time-segment (tempusculum) of this sort of rhythmical mensuration which I was performing, I myself was flowing with time: was being wasted away, subtracted from, consumed, and, properly speaking, was dying." (19)
This theme runs with obsessive frequency throughout Petrarch's poetry. Here is a superbly worded example:

Il tempo fugge, e non s'arresta un'ora,
E la morte vien dietro a gran giornate,
E le cose presenti e le passate
Mi danno guerra, e le future ancora:
E il rimembrare e l'aspettar m'accora . . .

Così mancando vo di giorno in giorno,
Si chiusamente, ch'io sol me n'accorgo,
E quella che, guardando, il cuor mi struggye . . .

(Canzoniere, Part I, Sonnet LXXIX)

Petrarch concentrates on the analysis of a single feeling: love. While this fact confers on the Canzoniere a grandiose monotony, it is a monotony which, on closer examination, dissolves itself into a prismatic polymorphism of variants.
If a motto could be chosen, to synthesize by a catch word the Canzoniere of Petrarch, the following could be suggested: *nobil, praeter animum, mirabile*. Of this *mirabile*, a great number of transformations and facets are presented. The gamut of moods runs from visionary wonderment and admiration to ecstatic desire; from the elation of hope to the agony of hesitant incertitude; from disappointment and the agonies of despair to the flexuous roamings of rêverie, to a yearning for the tranquillity of oblivion, to sudden exaltation and equally sudden timidity, elegiac self-reproach, self-delusion, *taedium vitae*, delight in grief (*voluptas dolendi*): ("io mi son un di quei che il pianger giova!") regret, lassitude, languor, the simultaneous postulation of solitude and the horror of loneliness ("tal paura ho di ritrovarmi solo!") wish of self-suppression and half-hearted recoil against it. None of these moods appears in isolation. Often two (or even three) are set in opposition, made to combat one another; or they are intermixed, compounded in isolation and temporary juxtapositions. In the depiction of contrasting *états d’âme*, Petrarch finds the definitive (shall we say: classical?) expressions destined to govern five centuries of European lyrical poetry.

The beauty of Petrarch’s poetry stems, mainly, from its psychological plentitude. Some interpreters have observed (and, I think, rightly) that in spite of (or, rather, precisely because of) his great skill as a self-analyser, it is not possible for Petrarch to project himself into, to participate, in the inner world of another human being. He lacked "dramatic sense", i.e., was incapable to *mettre sur pieds un personnage*. When Beatrice, with indignant jealous displeasure, appearing to her poet, in Earthly Paradise, scolds Dante for his infidelities, the reader feels that he is in the presence of a woman of flesh and blood; in the *Canzoniere*, Laura never acquires concrete objectivation, she never throbs with a distinctly autonomous existence; she is miles removed from being a *dramatis persona*. When, after reading the *Canzoniere*, we close the book and try to visualize the physical appearance of the "goddess", we find it extremely hard to frame a tangible image out of the idealized touches, blurred with deliberate and delicate vagueness, with which Petrarch has suffused her.

At times, the exacerbation of Petrarch’s solipsism results in a claustrophobic anguish. In his secluded quarters at Oxford’s Brasenose College, where Walter Pater, having steeped himself in the skepticism of Hume and the immaterialism of Berkeley, meditates on the nature and meaning of the Italian Renaissance, the mood of existential anxiety created by the solitude of the soul immersed in its own cell, the same mood that Petrarch has described in his letter to Philippe de Cabassole, has its counterpart in a strikingly poignant page, where it is raised and transposed onto a philosophical plane. Pater writes:

"Experience, already reduced to a group of impressions is ringed around, for each one of us, by that thick wall of personality through which no real voice has ever pierced its way to us, or, from us, to that which we can only conjecture to be without". "Every one of those impressions is the impression of the individual in his isolation, each mind keeping, as a solitary prisoner, its own dream of a world. Analysis goes a step farther still, and assures us that those impressions of the individual mind to which, for each one of us, experience dwindles down, are in perpetual flight; that each of them is infinitely divisible also; all that is actual in it, being a single moment, gone while we try to apprehend it; of which it may ever be more truly said that it has ceased to be, than that it is. To such a tremulous wisp constantly reforming itself on the stream, to a single sharp impression, with a sense in it (a relic more or less fleeting) of such moments gone by, what is real in our life fines itself down" (20).
It is one of the major paradoxes of Petrarch's personality that his talent for introspection should be matched by an acute sensorial susceptibility. He registers with consentient plenitude the plastic and pictorial pageant of the external world. It was his familiarity with the classical masterpieces of the Augustan age — especially with the poems of Virgil, Ovid, Horace — which developed that sensorial endowment to the finest vibrancy and precision. If, in the realm of the inner life, St. Augustine is Petrarch's spiritus rector, Virgil is his master in the domain of the perceptions of the forms of the outward world. The standardized catchword: Petrarch is the progenitor of Humanism, acquires concrete appropriateness and validity, when we consider that he is the lineal ancestor of the major Humanistic poets of the Quattro-Cinquecento: Poliziano, Sannazaro, Pontano; Marc'Antonio Flaminio, Giovanni Cotta, Sadoletto, Navagero, Vida. (21) Reading Petrarch's Latin poems, we are tempted to believe that his real vehicle of expression is the Latin tongue. But, naturally, even a cursory glance at the Canzoniere presses upon us the conviction that, instead, his natural instrument is the volgare. We are faced with a bilingualism so faultless, so patent, as to arouse both admiration and bewilderment. Among the moderns, only Giovanni Pascoli (1855-1912) presents us with an analogous phenomenon (22).

I have referred to the relation in which Petrarch stands to the great Virgilians of the succeeding two centuries. In a like manner, I may add, he anticipates the painters and sculptors of the Quattrocento; such men as Botticelli, Signorelli, Mantegna, Pollajuolo, Verrocchio. When, in the Canzoniere, we come across the magical evocation of the apparition of Laura:

Eran i capei d'oro a l'aura sparsi,  
che in mille dolci nodi li avvolgea . . .

or chance upon kindred lines, for instance:

il crine  
negletto ad arte, e inanellato ed irto . . .

we are at once reminded of the arrangement (or of the artful disorder) of the hair of the feminine mythological figures of Botticelli (the Three Graces, especially the one at the left, of his Primavera at the Uffizi), or of those infinitely fanciful hairdos cherished by Leonardo (23). Those ringlets of curls fluttering in the breeze represent a detail of these artists' taste, which is curiously foreshadowed by Petrarch. It is on iconographical peculiarities like these, that Aby Warburg, the great German historian of Italian Renaissance art, bases the principles of his exegetical method (24). On perusing Petrarch's Africa, our attention is arrested by his description of the group of the Three Graces. Venus appears floating in mid-sea in her conch-shell, and she is accompanied by them:

Nudisque tribus comitata puellis,  
Quarum prima quidem nobis aversa, sed ambae  
Ad nos conversos oculos vulurusque tenebant,  
Innexae alternis percandida brachia nodis.  
(Africa, III, 215-218)

These lines tell us that Petrarch may have seen the Roman group of the Three Graces (2nd century B.C.?) now preserved in the Museo dell'Opera in Siena, in which the central Grace is seen from the back ("nobis aversa"); in Petrarch's portrayal, instead, it is the first Grace who is presented as "nobis aversa"). It is a matter of common knowledge that the
group of Siena Graces is the model of the tablet painted by the youthful Raphael, when he
was under the influence of Timoteo Viti, around 1500. The Raphael tablet is now an item
of the collections of the Musée Condé at Chantilly (France). (25)

At times, Petrarch draws with lightly limned contours the figure of Laura framed within
a landscape simplified to its essential lines, almost (as Francesco Flora phrases it) in the
style of a Japanese draughtsman:

Dove porgo ombra un pino alto od un colle,
Talor m'arresto, e pur nel primo sasso
Disegno collo mente il suo bel viso . . .

Notice that, in this quotation, the disegno (according to the pure doctrine of Leonardo, a
document hidden in the lap of the future) is cosa mentale: Petrarch disegna collo mente.

Were it my purpose to expiate on a topic, seldom treated satisfactorily be Petrarchan
scholars, i.e., his feeling for Nature (trying to establish, for instance, which is the place of
Petrarch in the history of the Naturgefuehl), I would, when it came to exemplifying, suffer
from a veritable embarras de richesse. I would have to mention, among others, the splendid
description he gives of a sudden, violent storm at Vaucluse (it is the subject of an epistola
metrica (26) where Petrarch displays a grandeur of versification not inferior to that of
Milton), the scene of the mysterious fluvial ablutions of the women of Koeln, the view of
the cascades of the Rhine, the account of the strange supper at Luzzara; or the panoramic,
aerial survey of the Tuscan and Ligurian coasts from the mouth of the Magra northwards,
sparking in the Tyrrenrian sunlight.

In reading the Trionfi, one cannot help being impressed with the ever-present prophecy
of the advent of Andrea Mantegna. I am thinking, of course, of the Triumph of Caesar, on
which Mantegna worked from 1482 to 1492, and which is at present one of the proud trea-
suries of Hampton Court in England. Perhaps Petrarch's description of Scipio's Triumph in
the Africa was known to Mantegna, so close is the correspondence between Petrarch's ren-
dition of the processional scene, with its filing past of captive elephants, military emblems,
and spoils of the conqueror's plunder. (27) And who can escape being reminded of Signor-
elli's picture of the god Pan (formerly in Berlin, destroyed during World-War II), when, leaf-
ing through the Africa, he comes across the following:

Cornua tollentem caelo faciemque rubentem
Pectora sideribus distinctum Pana videres:
Hisبدا crura rigent, pedibus terit antra caprinis,
Et pastorali baculum fert more recurvum;
Texta sibi ex calamis sona ingens fistula septem . . .
(Africa, III, 194-198)

The plastic-pictorial details of this fragment are superb. The god's horns raised to the sky,
his red-hued face, his bristling, hairy legs, the dance-like beat of his goatish hooves on the
floor of the cave, and that "rod, hook-shaped in the pastoral fashion". We almost seem to
hear the clangent sound of the ingens fistula, the large-sized Panpipe, the tubular instrument
cut out of seven reed-stems. The shaggy chest of the God is covered with a celestial arabesque,
made up of the emblematic signs of the Zodiac. Everything, in this figuration, is exquisite,
instinct with chromatic and volumetric sense, while the ingens fistula seems to create the in-
visible but pulsating background out of which, as from an "iconogenetic" mood of the poet,
the figuration arises. A phrase of Leonardo helps us to grasp the full significance of this picture. Says Leonardo: “music is the figuration of the invisible”. Here, in this portrayal of Pan, painting-sculpture, line, color, volume, mass, are the morphic transpositions of the invisible musical pattern traced by the Pan-pipe. (28).

There is in Petrarch’s Africa an outstanding passage (to be found in Book III, lines 87-105) where Petrarch’s keen interest in precious stones is expressed. (29) In this passage, the verses are saturated with pictorial chroma, whose luxuriance is not inferior to that which produces a riotous refulgence in the interior of Byzantine basilicas.

Niveis suggesta columnis
Atria fulgebant. Fulvo distincta metallo
Regia praefulgens . . .

Ordine gemmarum vario radiabat in orbem.
His croceos, illic virides fulgere lapillos
Adspiceres, altoque velut sua sidera tecto.
Signifer in medio sinuosi tramitis arcus
Assidue faciebat. Ibi, ceu lumina se septem
Quae vaga mundus habet, septem faber ordine gemmas
Clauserat ignenio, nondum lapis, optimus Athlas . . .
. . . tectumque serena
Luce coruscabat. Medio carbunculus ingens
Equabat solare jubar, largoque tenebras
Lumine vincebat . . .

(Africa, III, 87-105)

To empathize the pictorial mood which Petrarch is trying to convey, there is nothing more appropriate than quoting a splendid segment of John Keats’ Endymion: it is true that it has been Keats’ intention to tone down the gorgeousness of his “chroma”, so as to evoke the sensation of a mysteriously crepuscular atmosphere shot through with the glintings of precious gems: nevertheless, the pictorial magnificence achieved independently from Petrarch, is strikingly similar:

One faint eternal eventide of gems.
Aye, millions sparkled on a vein of gold . . .
Outshooting sometimes, like a meteor-star,
Through a vast antre: then the metal woof,
Like Vulcan’s rainbow, with some monstrous roof
Curves hugely: now, far in the deep abyss,
It seems an angry lightning . . .

anon it leads
Through winding passages, where sameness breeds
Vexing conceptions of some sudden change;
Whether to silver grots, or giant range
Of sapphire columns, or fantastic ridge
Athwart a flood of crystal.

(Endymion, Book II, 224-239)

This passage is a morsel for the connoisseur and a feast for the eyes. The vibrant snow-whiteness of the columns is set against the contrasting copper-reddish pigment of the metal with
which the walls are covered; these walls are studded with manifold gems, sending forth an orbicular radiance; blazoned in the middle of the vaulted ceiling, the magic, emblematic Signifer, leads the sinuous dance of the planets, each of them being imaged by a precious stone of different hue, on a background of green and saffron-hued tiles: while in the centre of the roof a colossal carbuncle, whose powerful luminosity equals that of sun, dispels the environing darkness.

With a style akin to that of Paolo Uccello, he selects for special accenting the humble, realistic, rustic detail of a country-scene: oxen returning, unyoked, from the scene of their labors: fields, hills furrowed by the plough:

Veggo la sera i buoi tornare sciolti
daie campagne e dai solcati colli . . .

Here the beauty results from that epithet, that past participle, "solcati" (furrowed), which is a touch intended to bring out, with the desired visual precision, the appearance of distant farms at sunset, on hill-slopes freshly broken up by the ploughmen.

No less remarkable is Petrarch's sense for the characterizing color of a fluvial scene. In one of the Epistolae Metricae (I, sect. II), describing the Sorgue river, he writes this intensely expressive line:

Alveus ut virides vitreo tegit amne smaragdos . . .
(the stream's bed covers with its glass-like waters its green emeralds . . .)

In order fully to realize the beauty and fidelity to truth of this line, one must know that the Sorgue is distinguished from all other rivers by the greenish color (a unique kind of greenish color) of its waters. In other words, the loveliness of that line consists in the fact that it is a sheer, literal, unaltered transcription of the truth, of a reality of nature. Mézières, who is intimately familiar with the Provençal landscape, describes the Sorgue as possessing "une couleur merveilleuse, dont je n'ai retrouvé nulle part, ni dans les Pyrénées, ni en Italie, ni en Espagne, ni en Orient, les teintes douces et transparentes. Le lac de Zuerich est moins pur: le lac de Gôme plus bleu, la Méditerranée plus foncée; les fleuves célèbres, le Penée, l'Alphée, L'Achélous, sont plus argentés . . . L'Arno, le Tage, le Guadalquivir, le Rhône, plus troublés. La Sorgue seule, d'un vert tendre à la surface et jusqu'au fond de son lit, ressemble à une plante verte qui serait fondue dans l'eau. C'est comme une herbe liquide qui court à travers le prés". (30)

But I must not leave the impression that in Petrarch the inner-directed vision and his sense for the pictorial-plastic elements seldom or never, conmingle. Petrarch's contribution consists in the creation of a new literary and artistic genre: the genre of "landscape drenched with the artist's mood". Paysage comme état d'âme. He steep external nature with his psychological moods, sensitizes nature to the extent of giving free play to what Ruskin calls, with a famous phrase, the "pathetic fallacy". For Petrarch, (Arturo Pompeati emphasizes) Nature "lives only insofar as it lends itself to the reflection of his soul-states", insofar as it is made to become the mirror of the restless mutations of the poet's inner feelings.

It is characteristic of the Canzoniere that, while each of its component units is autonomous, each, in a mysterious fashion, is organically related to, interwoven with, the whole of which it is a part. The multiplicity, the richness of psychological notations, the consummate stylistic perfection with which the poet conveys them is something not only unique in 14th century Italian literature, but thoroughly unprecedented in European literature. It marks a
turning-point in the domain of lyrical expression. The novelty of Petrarch's achievement appears all the more startling when we compare the almost Debussyian refinement (ever ondoyant et divers) of the psychological modulations of his poetry with the angular massiveness, the towering proportions of the supernatural epos of the Divine Comedy, the titanic progeny of the Romanesque Dante (31).

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Notes:

1 Foscolo's pioneer significance in the history of Petrarchan appreciation is generally recognized by modern Italian scholarship, and, (as the most informed and probing of the experts on the changing fortunes of that appreciation emphases) stands out in clearcut profile when viewed against the background of the contributions of Foscolo's closest 18th century antecedents. "If we ponder that his most proximate Settecento predecessors were Muratori, Gravina, Tiraboschi, G. Gozzi, Alfieri (and, among non-Italians, De Sade), we are able to gauge the full strength of the new impact exerted by Foscolo on Petrarchan studies. Not only does an authentic, adequate Petrarchan appreciation owe its inception to him ... but some of the most recurrent, most productive motifs of 19th century Petrarchan criticism have their models, and, at times, their earliest formulations, in Foscolo's Saggi" (B.T. Sozzi, Petrarcha, Storia della Critica 5, Palermo, 1963, pp. 67-68). Ettore Bonora authoritatively joins the vulgata opinio when he says: "Foscolo's essays remain one of the milestones of Petrarchan criticism" (Petrarcha, in: I Classici italiani nella storia della Critica, ed. by W. Binni, Firenze, 1954, vol. I, p. 123). The texts of Foscolo's Saggi are printed in the Edizione Nazionale, vol. X a cura di C. Poligno, Firenze, 1953. On Foscolo as a critic, the path-blazing pages of G. A. Borgese preserve their value: while substantial remarks stud the chapter Introduzione alla critica foscoliana in Mario Pubini's book Romanticismo italiano. Among older treatments, not to be overlooked is E. Levi, I Saggi sul Petrarcha di U. Foscolo (in: Bibliofilia, XI, 1909). From a number of later investigations, I select: Bianchi, D., Gli Studi del Foscolo sul Petrarcha, Torino, 1927 (in: Studi sul Foscolo, edito a cura della Università di Pavia, pp. 451-524); P. P. Trompeo, Petrarcha e Foscolo (in his: La pantofola di vetro, Napoli, 1952); Nicoletta Festa, Foscolo critico, Firenze, 1953; and Adelia Nòferi, I tempi della critica foscoliana, ibid., 1953.

2 Natalino Sapegno, for instance, characterizes Petrarch's lyrical poetry as a dialogue of the poet with his own soul: a voluptuous pleasure of getting lost in, of straying through, those sinuous meanders and labyrinths of the inner spiritual life, of getting to know better and better that ob-


3 This was already hinted at by Ernst Troeltsch. Tracing the links between the individualism of the Renaissance and that of late Antiquity and of Christianity, he points out that the proto-modern aspect of individualism already appears fully developed, stamped with all its essential characteristics, "precisely at the early dawn of the Renaissance, in the mystic-reformatory movements and revolutionary upheavals of the late Middle Ages, in a mixture of Augustinian, Neoplatonic-sectarian and politico-social themes" (E. Troeltsch, Renaissance und Reformation, in: Deutsche Vierteljahrschrift für Literaturwissenschaft, und Geistesgeschichte, I, 1923, p. 282). The question of medieval introspection has, since, been masterfully illuminated by Etienne Gilson.
He points out that "on ne peut étudier de ce point de vue les textes du Moyen Age, sans être frappé de l'importance extrême qu'y prend la question de la connaissance que l'âme peut avoir de soi-même. Au XIIIe siècle, on n'a que l'embarras du choix... Comment l'âme intelligente se connaît-elle-même et ce qui est en elle; voilà la Question 87 de la Première Partie de la Somme théologique de Saint Thomas. Si l'âme se connaît, ainsi que les dispositions qui sont en elle, par son essence, ou seulement par ses actes, c'est le problème que se pose Mathieu d'Acquasparta. Vers la même époque, Roger Marston précise la même question... Un peu plus tard, Olivi reprend l'examen de la difficulté dans le livre II, Question 86, de son Commentaire sur Pierre Lombard... Rien ne serait plus aisé que d'aller longuer la liste" (E. Gilson, L'Esprit de la philosophie médiévale, 2nd ed., Paris, 1948, chap. 2. "La Connaissance de soi-même," pp. 228-29. See also: P. Pourrat, Christian Spirituality, vol. II, The Middle Ages, Westminster, Md, 1953-55.

4 It has often been observed that of the three Patristic authorities repeatedly cited by Petrarch, i.e., St. Augustine, St. Jerome, and Ambrose, St. Augustine is, by the Italian poet, rated distinctively above his fellow-saints. In Augustine (Pierre de Nohlac underlines), Petrarch found the most thorough classical culture, joined to religion and placed at the service of the Christian ideal. It is to St. Augustine that Petrarch owes his taste for religious literature (prior to his contacts with him, the Italian poet's predilection was directed exclusively to the secular Latin writers). Nohlac quotes: "Is liber" (St. Augustine's Confessions) me mutavit catenus, non dico ut vitia prima dimitterem (quae vel hac utinam acetae dimiserim), sed eo ut sacras litteras nec spernerem nec odissem, immo vero me paulatim horror ille mulceter, et invitas aures recusantesque ad se oculos traheret". (Pierre de Nohlac, Petrarch et l'Humanisme, Paris, 1907, Chap. IX, pp. 191-94). An influence almost as profound as that left on Petrarch's soul by the Confessions was exerted on him by Augustine's De vera religione. On reading this work, he found a "new delight, like the traveller who, on a pilgrimage outside his own country, meets with new cities which attract and fascinate him". (I borrow this quotation from Giovanni Martellotti's Petrarcha Umanista, a penetrating article contributed by him to G. Petronio's Antologia della critica letteraria, Bari, 1963, vol. I, p. 453). On St. Augustine and the world of Latin classicism, see the excellent M. Testard, St. Augustin et Cicéron, Paris, 1958.

5 I am referring to H. X. Acquillière, L'Augustinisme politique, essai sur la formation des théories politiques du Moyen Age, Paris, 1955. For the dissimilar role that Augustine's ideas play in the intellectual world of, respectively, Dante and Petrarch, see: C. Calcatera, S. Agostino nelle opere di Dante e del Petrarcha, Suppl. to the Rivista di Filosofia Neoscolastica, XXII, 1931.


7 According to Pierre de Nohlac, St. Augustine is quoted 600 times in Petrarch's Letters and 600 in his other works. The most important among Petrarch's Augustinian citations are:

8 Alfred Mézières lived from 1826 to 1915. He was a Sorbonne Professor, député et sénateur of Meurthe et Meuselle, and a member of the Académie française. He wrote books on Shakespeare, Dante, Petrarch, Goethe, and Mirabeau. Mézières’ Pêtrarque (first ed. 1867) released the strong polemical reaction expressed in De Sanctis’ Saggio critico sul Petrarca (1869).

9 A. Mézières, Pêtrarque, étude d’après de nouveaux documents, 2nd ed., 1968, pp. 411-12. The nouveaux documents referred to by Mézières are in the edition of Petrarch’s letters by G. Fracassetti (F. Petrarcae Epistolae De rebus Familiaribus et Variae, Firenze, 1859-63, in 3 vols.) (To be distinguished from Fracassetti’s Italian translations of these Epistolae, i.e., from his Lettere di F. Petrarca, 1863-1867, 5 vols.)

10 Augustine, Confessions, Book X, chap. VIII. A modern reader of Proust’s À la recherche du temps perdu cannot help, in perusing these passages, to be struck by Augustine’s awareness of the unintentional survival, in the ‘mnemonico’ rubrics (the word ‘rubric’, in connection with the “mind”, i.e., memory, appears on the first page of Dante’s Vita Nuova) of the human mind, of the “forgotten” components of our experience. Augustine’s remark about the “presentness of the past” is equally startling, and similarly valid. Both of Proust’s mémoires, the mémoire volontaire and the involontaire, are predicated upon that presentness of the past to which, to my knowledge, Augustine is the first to draw our attention.

11 There exists an evident analogy between Petrarchan words, and Goethe’s Himmelbochjauchzend-Zum Tode betrubet.

12 Foreword to Book II of the De remediis utrisque fortunae.

13 In order to meet again with this uncompromising lucidity, this unsparing firmness of utterance, this cutting “surgical” hardness, we must turn to Montaigne, Pascal, Rousseau, Leopardi, Amiel, and Gide. These names indicate the main “stages of the spiritual itinerary traversed by the quest for one’s own identity, the quête de soi.” Petrarch’s ancestors on this inner path are Richard de St. Victor and the Cistercian mystics. The Abbé Combes has discovered an interesting link between Petrarch and Pascal in the person of Robert Ciboule (1403-1458). Ciboule’s major work bears the significant title: Livre de saincte meditacion en cognoissance de soy. (See: E. Gilson, L’Esprit de la philosophie médiévale, 2nd ed., p. 233, note 2.)

14 Among the psychoanalytical studies on artistic creativity, the most notable seem to me those by Kris (1952), Greenacre (1958-1963), Jones (on Shakespeare), Sterba (1954), Marie Bona-parte (on E. A. Poe), Eissler (on Goethe), Simoneau (on Rilke). On this genre of writing, see D. Schneider, The psychoanalyst and the artist, NY, 1954.


16 The author of the only book hitherto devoted to the problem of the psychoanalytical study of Italian literature—Michele David—points out that we are not warranted “to assert that Petrarch has been studied according to psychoanalytical criteria; although his enormous production, the evident autobiographical character of his works, the sexual problem he posits so openly, and in such a determinate way insofar as the whole of European literature and sensibility are concerned, afford study-material exceptionally propitious to a critic equipped with the needed psychoanalytical theory and practice”. (M. David, Letteratura e psicanalisi, Milano, 1967, pp. 97-98.


18 Familiaræ, XXIX, 1, 10.

19 Familiaræ, XXIV, 1. There is, in Gabriele d’Annunzio, a passage where he voices the same Todesangst expressed by Petrarch in his letter to Philippe de Cabassole. Thus far, the likeness between the two documents humains has, to my knowledge, been unperceived. D’Annunzio writes: “... non v’è aroma di fronda apollinea che valga contro la quotidiana morte. E certo vi sono giorni in cui meno si muore, altri in cui più si muore. Da che lutto e soffro, non mi son mai sentito morire come oggi. Me sembra di avere alla punta del cuore quel piccolo varco onde gemono le gocciole eguali della clessidra funebre. (G. d’Annunzio, Esquie della giovenezza, from the Faville del Maglio, in: G. D’Annunzio, Poesie Teatro Prose, a cura di M. Praz e L. Gerra, Milano-Napoli, 1966, p. 1162).


22 On Pascoli’s Latín Poetry, consult Valgimigli, Pascoli e la poesia classica, 1937; Gandiglio, G.
Pascoli poeta latino, 1924; and A. Moccino, L'arte dei Pascoli nei Carmi latini, 1924. The latest study is that by C. Goffis, Pascoli antico e nuovo, Brescia, 1969. Imporant are the re-
searches of Berchiesi, Paratore and Traina. The texts are collected in G. Pascoli, Poesie Latine, a cura di Manara Valgimigli, Milano, 1954.
23 These hairdos so intensely fascinated Kate Steinitz (the former Librarian of the Elmer Belt Library of Vinciana, whose holdings are now housed at the University of California, Los Angeles), that, when she was entrusted with organizing a Leonardo Exhibit at the Los Angeles Public Library, she betheherself of recruiting some Hollywood actresses, whom she had previously instructed on how to compose their hairdos in the way they are portrayed in the Leonardo drawings. According to reports, the actresses with these Leonardesque hairdressings were the real "hit" of the show.
25 On the iconography of the Graces, see: T. Krause, Musen, Gratien, Horen, Halle, 1871. The group of the three Graces was repeatedly represented in Hellenistic sculpture and in Pompeian painting (the Museo Nazionale in Naples possesses a fine example of the "Pompeian" Graces). The original portrayal of the group goes back to the third century B.C. In this portrayal, the Graces appear naked, two of them facing the onlooker, and the central one, embracing the other two, with her back turned to the spectator. There are numerous replicas of this original, the best known being at Siena, Paris (Louvre), Cyrene, Rome (Vatican Museum). The archetype was an inspiration for all later portrayals, from Renaissance to Neoclassicism (Botticelli, Tintoretto, Rubens, down to Canova and Thorwaldsen). See: Grande Dizionario Enciclopedico, Torino, 3rd ed., 1909, vol. IX, p. 431.
26 Epistolae Metricae, I, 10. For other landscape descriptions, may I refer to the same work, Epistola, III, sect. IX; Epistola, I, Sect. 1. These two epistles are addressed, respectively, to Guglielmo da Pastrengo and to Francesco Barba. I am quoting from Fracassetti's edition.
27 Goethe's famous description (1825) entitled Julius Caesars Triumphzug, gemalt von Mantegna is one of the finest pieces of art criticism that he ever penned. It is easily procurable in J. W. Goethe, Schriften zur Kunst, Zweiter Teil, published by the Deutsche Taschenbuch Verlag, Munchen, 1962 (pp. 192-211).
30 Mézières, op. cit., nouvelle ed. 1895, pp. 80-81.
31 In the current phraseology of criticism, it is customary to speak of the Gothic element in Dante's art. But the essence of the Gothic is expressed by its countless, minutely arborecent designs, its plenxus of complicated, patiently chiseled architectural traceries. Romanic art, instead, strikes the onlooker by its squarely built massiveness, its robust, "tetragonal" monumentality, with which it would be more fitting to compare Dante's art. If I may transpose the simile into musical terms: Dante is closer to Leoninus and Ferotinus, than to Guillaume de Machaut.