

Veronica Giuliani: Writing and Rewriting

Monique Courbat

“Veronica Giuliani: scrittura e riscrittura”

Annali d'Italianistica: Women Mystic Writers 13 (1995) 333-349

Translated by Edward Hagman, O.F.M. Cap.

The immense literary output of St. Veronica Giuliani comes to more than twenty-two thousand pages kept in the archives of the monastery of the Capuchinesses in Città di Castello and in the episcopal archives (which are also at the Capuchiness monastery). This huge mass of pages includes diaries, autobiographical accounts, letters and poems.

There have been many studies on the spiritual life of St. Veronica Giuliani, as the bibliography shows. But with G. Pozzi, research leaves the area of pure theology, history or bibliography and focuses especially on the literary aspect of the autobiographical accounts (*Il 'parere' autobiografico di Veronica Giuliani*). My study also takes this approach. I propose to analyze the diary, in particular the phenomenon of the divided diary, as it appears during certain years while the saint was keeping a diary (“*I say it over and over, yet I say nothing*”).

I began my research using the complete edition of the diary and the autobiographical accounts by Oreste Fiorucci in five volumes, based on the Pizzicaria edition.¹

¹*Veronica Giuliani. Un tesoro nascosto (Diario)*, Vols. I-IV; (*Frammenti e OReperti*), Vol. V, ed. P. Pizzicaria, O. Fiorucci, Città di Castello 1969-1974. The so-called Pius IX account is found at the beginning of the first volume of the diary.

In 1987, Iriarte and De Felice published a new fifth volume containing all the autobiographical accounts (including the so-called Pius IX account), some unedited fragments and the poems. The editors' intention in this volume was to organize the accounts and fragments Fiorucci had published in a somewhat disorderly fashion. They also adopted new criteria for transcription, more faithful to the autographs.² And by using the same number five to designate their volume, the editors were hoping to completely replace Fiorucci's fifth volume—a most unrealistic hope when we recall that the proper task of scientific research is to recover and study every existing document. The sixth volume, which includes the saint's letters, edited by Iriarte and Fulvi, came out in 1989.³ In 1991 Iriarte published a very useful seventh volume; it contains analytic indexes and a complete bibliography of the editions and studies of the saint up to that time.⁴

This desire to reorganize Giuliani's writings and to retranscribe them using accepted philological criteria was inevitable, since Fiorucci's edition is quite unsatisfactory from a philological point of view. He does not reproduce the saint's words faithfully but interprets them or even omits them when he thinks they are not worth reproducing, either for reasons of brevity or content. Given the fact that the saint was practically illiterate, her text contains many syntactical and spelling errors. But Fiorucci's transcription of the autographs makes some very arbitrary linguistic changes. The editor respects none of the rules of philological transcription; his only criterion seems to be to make the text accessible to the ordinary reader. His comments are limited to paraphrases or to words of admiration for the saint's religiosity. There are no critical comments, either philological or theological. The phenomenon of the divided diary—where there are two different texts from the same date, distinguished only by the addition of the word *bis*—is apparently an irrelevant fact. As a result, the criteria that distinguish the two texts either escape the reader, or else the reader must be

²*Diario di S. Veronica Giuliani*, Vol V, ed. L. Iriarte and A. de Felice, Città di Castello 1987. I will use the date 1974 to refer to Fiorucci's Vol. V; I will refer to Vol. V by Iriarte and De Felice with the date 1984.

³*Diario di S. Veronica Giuliani, Lettere*, Vol. VI, ed. M.C. Fulvi and L. Iriarte, ed. Porziuncola, Assisi 1989.

⁴*Diario di S. Veronica Giuliani, Indici analitici, Bibliografia*, Vol. VII, ed. L. Iriarte, ed. Porziuncola, Assisi 1991.

satisfied with the editor's note which admits: "Whatever the reason for this may have been, I cannot say, not having the slightest clue" (*Diario I*, 775, n. 1).

Overcome with insatiable curiosity and a desire to understand these obscure phenomena, I went to Città di Castello to study the autographs. Thanks to this study, I was able to understand the phenomenon of the divided diary, which I will explain after I present the life and writings of the saint.

The Life of St. Veronica Giuliani

Veronica Giuliani, whose baptismal name was Ursula, was born December 27, 1660, in Mercatello, in the province of Marches. She was the last of seven daughters, two of whom died young. Since her father was commander of the military garrison of the papal legation of Urbino, the family enjoyed a certain social prestige.⁵ Veronica had a happy childhood and, although she was quick-tempered and capricious, the whole family adored her. From her autobiographies we know that she was precociously fond of religious practices.⁶ When she was seven years old her mother died. Her father left his daughters with his brother and went, first to Parma, then to Piacenza, where he became one of the duke's high officials. Two years later he summoned his daughters to Piacenza, where Veronica became part of the worldly environment. Disgusted by this lifestyle, and with a growing desire to become a nun, she returned to her uncle in Mercatello.

At the age of sixteen, against her father's will, she entered the monastery of the Capuchinesses in Città di Castello. But she was disappointed by the atmosphere of the convent. She thought the superior and the other sisters were petty and indiscreet; she trusted none of them (*Diario I*, 21). Very soon, however, Giuliani displayed an unusual spiritual activity that intrigued the confessors who were her guides. Here was a sister who seemed to be in touch with God, who was manifesting strange psychophysical symptoms such as anorexia and 'nervous withdrawal,' who would race madly through the garden and climb the pear tree from which, in a

⁵Fr. M. da san Marino, "La famiglia di santa Veronica Giuliani," in *Santa Veronica Giuliani, Dottore della Chiesa?*, 120.

⁶Santa Veronica Giuliani, *Un tesoro nascosto. Diario I*, ed. Oreste Firoucci, Città di Castello 1969, 1-168.

loud voice, she would call sinners to conversion. For this reason she aroused the curiosity of her confessors, who were at once eager to analyze the origin of these symptoms.

It was around 1690, by order of her confessor, that the saint began to express herself in writing (*Summarium*, 1117-18), first in the form of letters and then, after 1693, in the form of the diary and autobiography. This activity lasted for thirty-five years, until a few months before Veronica's death. During her writing activity, she was guided by no fewer than thirty-nine confessors, ordinary and extraordinary. But four of them played an especially important role in directing the writing of the diary and the autobiographies. During the regime of Bishop Eustachi, which lasted until 1716, she was ordered to write the diary and the autobiographical accounts by the Oratorian Girolamo Bastianelli (ordinary confessor from 1693 to 1694), and his successor Ubaldo Antonio Cappelletti (ordinary confessor from 1690 to 1693, from 1694 to 1699 and from 1702 to 1711). They were succeeded as directors by Carlantonio Tassinari (extraordinary confessor from 1677, ordinary confessor from 1700 to 1702, and again from 1711 to 1725) and the Jesuit Giovanni Maria Crivelli (extraordinary confessor from 1714 to 1716). Under Bishop Codebò, who replaced Bishop Eustachi in 1716, the directors were Tassinari and Crivelli (for the period between 1712 and 1724), and Vincenzo Segapeli and Raniero Maria Guelfi for the years that followed, until the day of the saint's death.⁷

When Veronica entered the convent at the age of seventeen she was practically illiterate. She learned to read and write from lessons in the convent and through the constant regular practice of keeping a diary. Her writing certainly reflects the spoken language, lacking punctuation and divisions between words. The saint often divides words incorrectly and, of course, makes many spelling mistakes. She wrote quickly and never re-read anything. "There are probably many mistakes because I don't know how to write, and besides I haven't time to re-read what I've written" (*Diario I*, 142), she admitted at the end of her accounts.

The conditions under which she wrote and the basic reasons for which she wrote make her unique with respect to ordinary writers. As for the reasons, the decision to write an account of her life and the diary was not hers; it was in response to orders received from the local bishop or her

⁷*Santa Veronica Giuliani, Esperienza e Dottrina mistica*, ed. L. Iriarte, Rome 1981, 39-43.

spiritual directors. Not only did they command her to write, they even set limits on the amount, frequency and content.⁸ This act of obedience was a cross for her. More than once she says: "Now, while I'm writing, I feel condemned to death, so great is the repugnance I feel."⁹ Later she would manage to accept when the order was delegated by God; no longer was she doing the will of her confessors but that of God himself.¹⁰ At that point the very act of writing becomes an essential part of her mystical experience, since the mystical act consists precisely in doing the will of God.

At the age of thirty-seven, on April 5, 1697, Veronica received the stigmata, which she tried to conceal from the community. When it was discovered, the mother superior denounced her to the Holy Office, which took very severe measures. The saint had to prove that her phenomena were of divine origin, since she was suspected of being possessed. The following year she was deposed as novice mistress and excluded from the community. She was a virtual prisoner until 1704, suffering cruel and inhuman treatment as if she were possessed. Then, however, she was re-elected novice mistress, but in 1712 and 1716, after being examined by the Inquisition, she was again condemned to several months of suffering and torture. In spite of all this, on April 5, 1716, exactly nineteen years after the stigmata, she was elected abbess. As leader of the convent, she displayed a great practical sense and organizational ability and undertook several repair and rebuilding projects. She was elected and re-elected to that office until the end of her life. She died at the age of sixty-nine on July 9, 1727. She was beatified in 1804 and canonized in 1839.

The Autobiographies

We know that Alfieri wrote two autobiographies, but Giuliani is unique in the history of autobiography for having written five. These five autobiographies were written at various intervals between 1693 and 1712, always by order of a new confessor. The first was composed in 1693 by order of her confessor Girolamo Bastianelli. It recounts her life from the age

⁸"I have been ordered under obedience to write every day" (*Diario V*, 143).
 "The bishop has given me strictest orders to write" (*Diario VI*, 290).

⁹*Diario II*, 632; see *Diario III*, 1108; *Diario V*, 176; *Diario I*, 63.

¹⁰"While I'm writing I seem to hear a voice within me saying: 'Describe everything, for that is what I want. All the things that I, your Spouse, am doing for you are graces and favors'" (*Diario I*, 502).

of three until the age of seventeen, when she entered the convent in 1677 (*Diario V*, [1987], 665ff). In 1699, Bastianelli's successor, Ubaldo Cappelletti, ordered the saint to compose a second autobiography that would describe her life from early childhood until the end of her first year of novitiate in 1678 (*Diario V*, [1987], 688ff). A year later, in 1700, the saint composed a third biography by order of Bishop Eustachi. It recounts her life from the age of three until the age of thirty, that is until 1698, including the climax of her mystical experience, the reception of the stigmata in 1697. This is the so-called Pius IX account.¹¹ The fourth autobiography, much shorter, summarizes in a few episodes her childhood and youth. Its date of composition was established by Pizzicaria-Fiorucci as 1714 (*Diario V* [1974], 84ff; *Diario I*, 724) and, more recently, by Iriarte as 1700, since the saint mentions there that she is forty years old.¹² The last biography, written by order of Bishop Codebò, dates from the end of 1720 and the beginning of 1721. It recounts her life from childhood until Good Friday, 1697, the day she received the stigmata. But having lost her memory, the narrator, who used to write in the first person, now delegates the writing to another person, our Lady. This second narrator dictates to the principal narrator the events that have happened, expressing herself (just as in the diary from those years) in the second person, using the pronoun *tu*:

After you received this grace, divine love began to give you other graces. You began to feel a desire to suffer, and you performed childish penances (*Diario V* [1987], 732).

Here we see another totally new phenomenon in the history of autobiography, the use of the second person. Prior to this, autobiographical practice had been to use only the first or third person.¹³

Although the autobiographies begin from childhood, they do not begin from the date of birth as is usually the case with modern

¹¹*Diario I*, 1-168. The reason for the name is that, for many years, this account was kept by the Pope. The first scholar and editor of Giuliani's work, F.B. Dausse (1884), named this account after the man who had recognized its value and preserved it.

¹²*Diario V*, (1987), 724ff, n. 2.

¹³For autobiography see Lejeune, *Annali d'italianistica* 4 (1984), *L'autografia. Il vissuto e il narrato*.

autobiography. Each account unfolds chronologically, with information either about her age or the particular period in her life. Otherwise it gives the exact year or even the precise date of events. From each period of her life the saint selects individual episodes to illustrate two currents in her life. These currents, which constantly intertwine, are: 1) her personal history relative to the external world and the path she followed before entering the convent; 2) her personal inner history relative to the supernatural world.

The first current lists episodes that show how external factors influenced Veronica's fondness for religious practices. She saw her family members praying and receiving communion. She saw her sisters preparing to enter the convent and making disciplines. Hearing the lives of the martyrs read to her, she felt a desire to imitate them. She made knots in her shoelaces and secretly beat herself; she slammed a finger in the door; she burned her hand in a brazier; she knelt before the sacred images in her home and prayed the Hail Mary; she built little altars and prayed to the Lord; she practiced charity by giving her new shoes to a beggar. Later, when she joined her father in Piacenza, she learned about life in the world. She learned how to wield a sword and wounded a young man; she went to the carnival dressed as a man and even allowed herself to be wooed. It was a lifestyle that did not please her for long but strengthened her desire to become a nun. This is followed by the story of her first years in the convent, which were depressing. She describes the medical treatments she received to heal the wounds due to frequent ecstasies; she mentions her nightly races through the garden amid snow and thorns, the food she refused, but which they forced her to take, the hostile atmosphere when she was under investigation by the Holy Office.

The second current recounts episodes of lively images that show how, even as a very young child, she was gifted with unusual sensitivity. When she knelt before the sacred images in her home, they would become alive. Jesus would begin to move, leave the Virgin's arms and come to her. She would see him take milk from our Lady, she would offer him her breast to feed him, and he would suck from her breast—all this when she was only four years old! When she picked flowers in the garden, Jesus would appear to her, saying that he was the true flower. Later she would carry on a conversation with the crucifix that spoke to her. She describes phenomena that occupied all her attention during her years in the convent: visions of the passion of Christ, visions of Jesus manifesting himself to her in her heart, communications with the Lord, etc.

In his study of the five autobiographies (*Il 'parere' autobiografico di Veronica Giuliani*), Pozzi goes through them synoptically, analyzing the variants and showing how the writer's view of herself does not change over the years. In fact it becomes stronger as she gradually comes to see herself as consistent—in other words, as she becomes aware that since childhood she has been possessed or moved by an Alter Ego who is God.

If spiritual autobiography is characterized by a conversion account, what we see here represents a break with the format of spiritual autobiography. Here the change in the subject does not take place through a conversion, but through a growing awareness of the motives that have influenced her attitudes in childhood, youth and as an adult.

The Diary

The diary begins in 1693, the same time as the first autobiography. But it does not always contain daily entries. At times it summarizes the experiences of two or three days, especially before the year 1700. After 1700, the intervals become longer; sometimes the gaps are as long as three months. When she resumes writing, the author selects a few special days from the months skipped and describes these retrospectively. The days may be described with detailed accounts, or they may also be merely summarized with a phrase such as: "I spent the day as usual," or "It was one of those precious days," or "There was something out of the ordinary, but I don't know how to describe it." The diary speaks exclusively of her mystical experience and the phenomena that accompany it. It tells of her raptures, divine communications and visions; and it analyzes the interior and physical effects that derive from them. It tells of the effects produced on her behavior, the penances, the meditations that form the basis of the experience. But there are also descriptions of internal sufferings, of being harassed by the devil and various tempters, of illnesses. On the other hand, external events, such as her election as abbess and her harassment by the Holy Office, are integrated into the realm of the divine. In other words, it is always through her conversations with the Lord that we learn about external events.

What follows is a brief presentation of Veronica Giuliani's mystical journey.

Although the divine presence manifests itself unexpectedly, attainment of the supreme goal, mystical union or mystical marriage, is always accompanied by an evolution and a transformation of the subject who

has the experience, until the subject is annihilated in God. Since God is pure Being and absolute Totality, the I recognizes that, compared to him, it is Non-Being and Nothing. From this comes an awareness of self in the form of Nothingness. In this process, as the I allows itself to be invaded by the Other, it must strip itself of every human power: intellect, will and memory. The process of becoming aware of oneself as non-being and nothing occurs many times in the diary:

Suddenly I understand my nothingness; and the more deeply I enter it, the happier I feel to be nothing, to be able to do nothing, to desire nothing, but only to be happy that God is all goodness, infinite goodness (*Diario II*, 14).

...my name, my being is nothing (*Diario I*, 927)

But to strip oneself of everything also implies annihilation of one's awareness of self as nothing. Awareness still presupposes the act of thinking, the ultimate guarantee that one is human:

I am absolutely content to find no satisfaction; but at once I feel myself stripped even of this, and this stripping brings me peace. Then all of a sudden I don't have even this. I rest in the will of God and feel that I'm being lifted up. Not that I would lose the will of God, but I don't need to feel that I'm resting there. And I'm content to remain there in a hidden way and not even to know it, just anxious for God to do his will; it's not important for me to know it. I live without thoughts. But I still have to strip myself of this. I don't know what is of me, and I don't have to think of myself or of another. I am being consumed and I can't tell who is consuming me. It is in me and I don't know what it is. Such a state: not able to say anything, to feel such things in me and not be able to do anything! I feel pains of death, I would cry out to the stars, the fire enters between my skin... I can't say anything else because I say nothing (*Diario IV*, 563).

Although the saint thinks, she grasps neither the object of knowledge nor the act of thinking. Pozzi explains that thought does not cease to exist but passes, suspended as it were, above the thinker. The exchange of knowledge is not between God and the soul, but between God and God in the soul (Pozzi, *Il 'parere'*... 185ff).

God speaks to you in you...and then he answers himself through you, and you...know nothing (*Diario IV*, 663).

The diary shows a gradual evolution in the splitting and destruction of the personal ego, ending with its total extinction. Beginning in 1720, the narrative eliminates use of the word 'I.' Its point of view detached from the person, it recounts what is happening in terms of 'you.' The last page of the diary ends with these words:

You knew nothing of all these things, and yet you consented to everything according to God's will and remained in your nothingness. Call a halt (*Diario IV*, 910).

The destruction of self-knowledge goes hand in hand with the destruction of memory, which also follows a progressive course. From 1693 to 1720 the narratives are often introduced by formulas expressing uncertainty with regard to perception and memory: "I seem to remember..." (*Diario I*, 39). During the last years of her life this uncertainty as to memory fades into total loss. That is why the narrator delegates the task of narrating to our Lady: "... I am beginning to write but I can't remember what I am supposed to write. Most holy Virgin...I beg you to help me remember what I am supposed to write..." (*Diario IV*, 713). Then, for the first time, our Lady begins to dictate: "Daughter, write this: 'I, being in the lap of my dear Mother...'" (*Diario IV*, 298). But even when our Lady is dictating, the I must be annihilated, and so it comes to be replaced by the pronoun 'you.' The style changes radically. Memory is ordered and its content assured; no longer are there expressions of uncertainty or doubt.

Not only the Lord's ways, but also his methods are infinite. God acts on each of his beloved in order that they might be annihilated in him and espoused to him, but he uses different methods with each one. Angela of Foligno, for example, abandoned herself to the love of God after a long and persistent courtship by the Lord. Others have felt a strong desire for union with God after he has manifested himself to them. With Veronica, the nuptial ceremony takes place relatively early, in 1696, but it is never definitive. After the wedding, the Lord removes the ring from his bride's finger, assuring her that the ceremony will be repeated after further transformation. In fact, the nuptial ceremony was repeated many times; in 1701 the saint could already count seventy. Why these long years of provisional marriage? Why this somewhat sadistic and cruel behavior on the part of the divine Beloved, who seems to draw and repel, to give himself but never definitively, to make promises and then break them? We should not judge the attitude of this Lover who, although apparently less passionate than his bride, is no less faithful. Rather we must stress the unique behavior

of this Spouse who seems to understand mystical marriage, not in the ordinary sense of the bond effected through an exchange of rings and a joining together, but rather as the total annihilation of the bride in the bridegroom. This requires the constant stripping away of everything human. In this sense, provisional marriage is part of a divine plan that is meant to teach. It allows the bride not only to taste what will one day be completely hers by right, but also to understand how every new stage gives rise to more intense states of blessedness. The many nuptial ceremonies with the exchange of wedding rings only confirm the progressive stages reached by the soul in its gradual journey toward eternal annihilation. God presents himself to Giuliani not only as a sophisticated lover, but also and above all as a master and teacher endowed with great pedagogical sensitivity. He does not abandon his pupil until she has learned the lessons of his *ars amandi*.¹⁴

It is in 1697 that God begins to manifest himself as teacher, saying that he wants to take his beloved into his school and change her in such a way that he can consider her worthy of being called his spouse. I am dwelling on this aspect of the divine *ars amandi*, because it is during the period between January and March 1697 that we find for the first time, in a continuous manner, the curious phenomenon of the divided diary. A single instance of it is found already in 1695 and, after the three consecutive months of 1697, it is found again between 1714 and 1717.

By "divided diary" I mean the phenomenon of two different accounts for one and the same day. If we look at the autographs, we see that the saint wrote her diary in individual fascicles of varying thickness, which she gave to the confessor when she reached the last page. When the diary is divided, there are two distinct fascicles with the same date, but with different accounts. In Fiorucci's edition, the texts of these two fascicles appear under the same date, but separated by the word *bis*.

If we examine the duplicate accounts, we see that they can be divided into two major groups. The first group includes the writings from before 1700 that appear in two versions, divided according to selected topics and written at the command of a single recipient. The second group includes the duplicate accounts from after 1700. These are written, no

¹⁴"O God! I see myself placed in this school and I find work there that makes me tremble" (*Diario I*, 782). "It seemed like I was in a school: I felt that I was learning everything...but many things I can't describe" (*Diario I*, 772).

longer at the command of a single recipient, but of two or even three. There are no essential differences between the different versions.

Comparison of the two parallel diaries written before 1700 reveals that the confessor at the time had the saint record certain events in a separate fascicle. This was in order to distinguish divine manifestations—characteristic of the subject's initiation and progress along the way of mystical union—from those of a physiological or psychological nature. The confessor wanted to group the strictly mystical experiences into separate fascicles. Moreover, using methods similar to those of modern psychiatrists, he had the saint write without interruption and without re-reading, in order to discern and understand better the origin and authenticity of these non-rational phenomena.

During the three years (1695, 1696, 1697) of double accounts prior to 1700, we can trace a mystical journey that takes place in two movements.

The first reflects the psycho-physical phenomena that manifest themselves in 1695 and 1696. There is an attitude of activity on the part of the saint, who aspires to mortification of the senses. She achieves this through practices of fasting and extreme penances. These practices are described on pages which the saint calls "the pages of human imperfections" and which are separate from the regular diary. In 1697, physical phenomena appeared after an attitude of passivity on the part of the saint, that is to say, with annihilation leading to the stigmata. While it is also the basis for the physical phenomena (since it is God who inspires the saint to practice mortification), the spiritual movement remains hidden during the first two years. Fasting, mortifications, penances—these were acts of the I upon itself, based on orders received from God. The third year, the stigmata appear, no longer through direct action of the I, but through the action of God upon the I, which participates passively, as shown by the examples cited above. Thus the psycho-physical phenomena culminate in 1697, with the reception of the stigmata on April 5.

The second movement reflects the spiritual journey and parallels the evolution of the physical phenomena. It is the story of the I that evolves, through splitting, from a state of I to a state of non-I, inasmuch as the I is annihilated in God. This process also culminates in 1697, with the nuptial ceremony of April 7.

In 1695 and 1696, the I is also split: into a human and altruistic I that struggles against a sensual and self-centered I. In other words, it is split

into an agent I and another I, which is disciplined into passivity with respect to the agent. In 1697, having mortified the ego, the agent I of the previous two years becomes passive; it submits to the action of God, an Alter Ego that is the loving and spiritual I. Through passive participation, the I that is acted upon by God will reach a state of self-annihilation and be transformed into God by recognizing itself as nothing.

The dialectic of this I, which is changed as it passes to a state of non-I, is reflected in the very form of the diary. We can see the analogy if we begin with the changes that take place during the first three months of 1697. This period is the culminating cycle of the experience. During this time the structure of the duplicate diary of 1695, 1696 and 1697 is repeated. Indeed, during the first three months of 1697 the I is split into an I and a non-I, the latter striving to eliminate the first. The "general confession before Jesus" on March 31 marks the end of the stage of I-splitting. The I begins the journey toward union, which is attained in the nuptial union of April 7. As to the form of the diary, it remains a single unit until January 17. From then until the end of March, it is divided into one diary that relates the natural and psychological experiences of an ordinary I, and another diary that relates the experiences of an extra-sensory I. The texts of the second diary are fuller than the accounts of the first, which are reduced to a few summary phrases of little importance. Like the evolution of the I, the diary remains divided until the end of March. In April, the second diary eliminates the first by integrating the latter into its undivided form. Reading only the first entry of the divided diary, we see that the narrative material is limited to the realm of the sensory. It evokes episodes belonging to the natural realm of daily experiences: penances performed, struggles against satanic powers, races through the garden. The second diary, however, presents a much richer narrative material. It moves exclusively in the extra-sensory realm and contains the entire journey of the I that finds itself in the divine school. It deals with mystical experiences in the stricter sense, especially the divine communications. These are no longer verbal messages, but are transmitted during raptures that occur within raptures:

In these few words I've said, I seem to have said everything wrong, and I haven't mentioned even a fraction of what is experienced in that second rapture. For the first [rapture], when God raises all things to himself, can be quite easily described; but when the soul finds itself in these raptures, and in the same rapture experiences another much higher than the first, it cannot understand whether God has communicated himself to it, or whether he has drawn it completely into himself. What it experiences in

this cannot be described. Better to keep silent than to speak (*Diario I*, 207).¹⁵

During the first months of 1697, the “pages of communications” (as the saint described the second diary) contain all the spiritual and supernatural phenomena associated with the divine communications. These include visions, divine operations and modifications of the I, which follows the Lord’s teachings in the school of *ars amandi*.

At this point we might ask how the confessor always managed to give the saint the second fascicle at just the right moment for her to describe her particular experiences. Or was the fact of receiving a second notebook with this possibility in mind what motivated the saint to have these experiences? If we analyze the texts of the undivided diary before the division of the narrative, we see that the Lord usually warned the saint several days in advance about new stages she would have to undergo. Based on these forewarnings reported by the saint, the confessor was able to provide extra paper.

The situation after 1700 was completely different.

In 1715, the bishop asked the extraordinary confessor, the Jesuit Crivelli, to come and examine the saint. His methods were extremely harsh and rough, and the saint did not like him at all. She used to refer to him, significantly, as the ‘Indian.’ During his presence in 1715, and again in 1716, the saint had to write a diary for him, sometimes for the bishop as well, and also for the ordinary confessor, Father Tassinari, with whom she had a very affectionate relationship. The diary from those years is no longer *divided* according to selected topics but is *duplicated*. This means that the saint would write the same experiences for all her recipients, but with differences in style, depending on the recipient. When writing for the spiritual director who tends to condemn her, she writes in a more detached way and is as impersonal as possible. When writing for the confessor to whom she feels close not only spiritually, but also humanly, she writes in a way that is more personal and sincere. Since the Jesuit confessor was not satisfied with sporadic accounts, he often asked the saint to describe the missing days retrospectively and attentively. All this work was too much for the saint; finally she had to ask another sister to copy the diary and send the copy to the ordinary confessor. During the 1720s, the duplicate writing continued

¹⁵On this subject, see Courbat 94ff.

for several years, since the ordinary confessor, Father Tassinari, was often laid up due to illness. He would then ask his colleagues to substitute for him, and so the saint had to write for the assigned confessor and again for the sick confessor.

The Writing

Concerning the question of how and when the saint wrote, we know from what she says that she almost always wrote at night: "At night I sometimes write more than two hours; during the day I don't have time" (*Diario VI*, 320). At night the saint would write down not only her daily experiences, but also those associated with the weekly wounding of her heart. The latter she would record immediately, with blood from the wound, on a separate sheet of paper. Besides the diary and the pages written in blood, she also wrote letters to the various confessors and, some years, autobiographical accounts as well. We should not forget that most of the raptures also took place at night and that the writer was often forced to interrupt her writing because of diabolical assaults.¹⁶ Moreover, the saint says that sometimes she did not stop writing even when in rapture.¹⁷ She wrote her diary on the sheets she received, sometimes limited in number. Before 1700, this varied from two to twelve sheets at a time. Again, we know from the saint's words that, before she wrote down her experiences, she related them orally to the confessor. Then she would write on her sheets of paper and, when she had filled the fascicle, she would give it to the confessor, who seems to have read carefully the episodes narrated. When he noticed that an event told to him orally by the saint was missing, he would ask her to write it down retrospectively. Often the saint did not date these episodes, or else they bore the date of the day she wrote them down. The saint would add them to the daily diary she was keeping, with some lines to separate them from the diary narratives. These texts would be introduced with a formula indicating that they were recollections and with some indication as to when the event occurred.

¹⁶"I can say no more, because they won't leave me alone: I've been lifted up more than twenty times" (*Diario VI*, 298).

¹⁷"I've written all of a sudden; I don't know how I've done it; I don't know if it is inside me or outside me; I feel that I'm completely in God" (*Diario II*, 1297). "While describing all these miracles of God's providence, I was outside myself for two hours" (*Diario II*, 231).

Giuliani usually began her fascicles with the complete date: day, month and year. She would fill the sheets to the bottom, being careful, however, to end the fascicle with a full day's narrative. If she noticed that there was not enough space for a new day, she would leave a blank space—between two lines and a page and a half. The opposite might also happen, namely, that she did not have enough paper.¹⁸ In that case she would organize her entry in such a way as to bring the account to an end, finishing the sentence in the vertical margin of the last page.

With regard to the double accounts, we can see from the autographs that sometimes the saint wrote in the diary first, other times in the fascicle of selected topics. The change of registers depended largely on the condition of the paper available and on the order in which she received the fascicles. For example, if she reached the end of the month and did not have a new fascicle to continue the diary, she would change registers, writing the month's final narratives on the sheets reserved for the strictly mystical experiences, or vice versa. Only rarely did she write the two registers in succession.

Besides being dependent on her supply of paper, she was also dependent on her own psycho-physical and mental state. There were raptures that sometimes occurred three in a row, and there were fantasies that kept her from writing methodically. Consequently she had to adapt her rhythm to these conditions. With no time to re-read, she could not always remember what she had already said and what she still had to write. And so she invented her own method to indicate (with lines separating the two texts) the change of registers and the passage from a later account to a present account. With these lines the writer could regain her bearings and quickly pick up the thread of the account. While before 1700 she received one fascicle at a time, after 1700 she often received more than one at a time, an amount that had to last a whole month. At the end of the month she would give them all to the confessor. To avoid mixing up all the sheets accumulated in the course of a month, the saint invented signs ranging from a simple cross, to a cross combined with dots and dashes, to a spiral. Upon coming to the end of a fascicle, she would put one of these signs at the bottom right-hand side of the last page. The same sign was repeated at the

¹⁸“I have no more paper” (*Diario IV*, 206). “I think today is probably the last time I'll write. I don't have any paper, please take care of it, Reverend Father. If I don't have any paper, what should I do?” (*Diario VI*, 258).

bottom left-hand side of the first page of the new fascicle, in such a way that the two signs met symmetrically. Using this method, the saint was able to give the fascicles to the confessor in chronological order.

All these conditions and limits imposed by confessors and paper created a paradox paralleling the conditions of the mystical experience itself. Let me explain. With regard to her writing, the saint was limited in such a way that what she did not want to talk about (her intimate experience, seeing that she was writing "out of obedience" and "with repugnance") she was forced to write about by order of church authority; and what she was trying to say, she was unable to put down in writing for lack of paper and time. Mystical experience itself involves the same paradox. What the mystic would like to say cannot be said because of the limitations of human language, and what is said in many words does not correspond to the actual experience. The attempt to report and record an ineffable (and thus inexpressible) experience is bound to be limited and conditioned by the fact that the writer is human. "I say it over and over, yet I say nothing" (*Diario II*, 608) is really the leitmotif of the diary.

And so for thirty-five years Giuliani writes the same story, repeated over and over. But mystical diaries usually end with attainment of the supreme goal, nuptial union. The fact that she repeated the journey toward mystical union many times until shortly before her death makes Giuliani an exceptional case in the history of the spiritual diary. She is not only a unique writer in the area of mysticism, she is also a unique case in the history of literature as far as the genres of diary and autobiography are concerned. Given the modifications she brings to the history of these literary genres, Veronica Giuliani must be seen as a revolutionary writer. The very experience she describes—with splits in her personality, until finally she recognizes herself in the pronoun *I* as well as in the pronoun *you*—could perhaps make her a precursor and realizer of Rimbaud's *Je est un autre*.

In conclusion and to return to my original remarks about the editions of Giuliani's writings, I support plans for a new edition.¹⁹ Besides reproducing the autographs according to philological rules of transcription, it should also take into account the double diary. It should place the two versions with the same date next to each other so that the reader can follow continuously the course the saint has chosen, whether mystical or psycho-

¹⁹Already in progress since 1994, begun by a group of Italian and Swiss scholars.

physical. Each version should have a commentary so that the reader will be able to recognize the intentions and interventions of the confessor, as well the changes in the saint's soul as it proceeds on its journey. Therefore an appropriate theological commentary is also necessary. Since the present editions stress commentary meant to clarify the saint's language, I believe that, besides illustrating the saint's spirituality, they should also present the human aspect of a writer influenced by confessors, by the amount of paper and by the various disturbances that prevented her from writing in a methodical way. In fact, I think the writer's great organizational ability and the personal tricks she devised to keep the large number of different accounts in order are worth consideration in their own right. In this way we avoid mythologizing a human being or reducing this person, whom a materialistic culture has difficulty understanding, to a psychotic or a schizophrenic. With a commentary on the two diaries that brings out the human as well as the spiritual aspect of the person, readers can see for themselves that besides the mental fog and the memory losses, besides the split I and the story of love with a divine Alter Ego, there is also a human being who remembers and chooses her topics with a perfectly clear mind, a human being who organizes her accounts with a distinct sense of order. In this way the phenomenon of mysticism will create even more problems for psychiatrists, but it will also make the saint more fascinating to curious and interested readers.

Bibliography

I. Writings of St. Veronica Giuliani

1. Autographs Consulted

Diario 1693-1695, Cartella n. 8, Archivio del Monastero delle Cappuccine di Città di Castello.

Diario 1695-1727, vols. 1-34, Archivio del Monastero delle Cappuccine di Città di Castello.

Diario, brani degli anni 1714 e 1715, Cod. Fiordelli, Archivio del Monastero delle Cappuccine di Città di Castello.

Relazioni 1693 e 1700, Cartella n. 8, Archivio del Monastero delle Cappuccine di Città di Castello.

Relazione 1699, vol. 10°, Archivio del Monastero delle Cappuccine di Città di Castello.

Relazione 1700, vol. 1°, Archivio del Monastero delle Cappuccine di Città di Castello.

Relazione 1720/21, Quaderno, Archivio Vescovile di Città di Castello, now transferred to the Archivio del Monastero delle Cappuccine di Città di Castello.

Fotocopie, vols. 1-77, Centro Studi Santa Veronica Giuliani, Città di Castello.

2. Editions Consulted

Diario di S. Veronica Giuliani, ed. L. Iriarte and A. De Felice, vol. V, ed. Porziuncola, Assisi, Città di Castello, 1987.

Diario di S. Veronic Giuliani, ed. M. Cittadini Fulvi and L. Iriarte, vol. VI, ed. Porziuncola, Assisi, Città di Castello, 1989.

Diario di S. Veronica Giuliani, ed. L. Iriarte, vol. VII, ed. Porziuncola, Assisi, Città di Castello, 1991.

Il Purgatorio d'Amore, ed. A. Minciotti, Città di Castello, 1980.

Scritti di Santa Veronica Giuliani Cappuccina nel Monastero di Città di Castello dal 1677 al 1727. Giornale della santa, Anno 1697, i primi cinque mesi, ed. M.F.B. Dausse, Città di Castello, 1884.

Un tesoro nascosto ossia Diario di S. Veronica Giuliani, Religiosa Cappuccina in Città di Castello, scritto da lei medesima, ed. Father Pizzicaria, vols. I-VIII, Prato, 1895-1905.

Un tesoro nascosto ossia Diario di S. Veronica Giuliani, Religiosa Cappuccina in Città di Castello, scritto da lei medesima, ed. U. Bucchioni, vols. IX-X, Città di Castello, 1928.

Un tesoro nascosto ossia Diario di S. Veronica Giuliani, Religiosa Cappuccina in Città di Castello, scritto da lei medesima, ed. O. Fiorucci, vols. I-V, Città di Castello, 1969-1974.

II. Studies on St. Veronica Giuliani

Sancta Veronica Giuliani vitae spiritualis magistra et exemplar tertio ab eius nativitate exeunte saeculo (1660-1960), Rome, 1961.

Santa Veronica Giuliani, Dottore della Chiesa?... Atti del Convegno di studi 29/30 aprile-1° maggio 1978, Città di Castello, 1979.

La Madonna in Santa Veronica Giuliani, Atti del Congresso di Loreto, 25 marzo 1982, Ancona, 1982.

Testimonianza e Messaggio di Santa Veronica Giuliani, Atti del Congresso Internazionale di Studi su Santa Veronica Giuliani, 27-30 ottobre 1982, 2 vols., Rome, 1983.

Esperta di Dio, Città di Castello - Perugia, 1983.

Riconciliazione e Penitenza nell'esperienze di S. Veronica Giuliani, Convegni di studi, Città di Castello 11-13 ottobre 1985, Città di Castello, 1986.

Il movimento religioso femminile in Umbria nei secoli XIII-XIV, Atti del Convegno Internazionale di studio nell'ambito delle celebrazioni per l'VIII centenario della nascita di Francesco c'Assi, Città di Castello 27-28-29 ottobre, Florence, 1984.

Courbat, M., *Dico e ridico e non dico niente. Il fenomeno del diario sdoppiato in Santa Veronica Giuliani*, Siena, 1994.

- Iriarte, L. (ed.), *S. Veronica Giuliani, Esperienza e Dottrina mistica*, Rome, 1981.
- Iriarte, L., "I confessori di Santa Veronica Giuliani," *L'Italia Francescana* (1989), 64, 389-416.
- Landini, C. A., *Fenomenologia dell'estasi. Il caso di una santa italiana*, Milan, 1983.
- Piccinelli, R., *La teologia della Croce nell'esperienza mistica di S. Veronica Giuliani*, Assisi, 1989.
- Pozzi, G. and Leonardi, Cl. (eds.), *Scrittrici mistiche italiane*, Genoa, 1988.
- Possi, G., *Il 'parere' autobiografico di Veronica Giuliani*, "Strumenti critici," n.s. II (1987), 2,54, 161-192.
- Pozzi, G., *Die heilige Veronica Giuliani—Sainte Véronique Giuliani—Santa Veronica Giuliani*, "Fidelis" 75 (1988), 2-12; 13-17; 18-26.
- Riese, Pio X da, *Santa Veronica Giuliani implicata inseguitrice di amore e di dolore*, Padua, 1985.
- Urso di, G., "Due castelli e due Sante. Parallelo parziale tra S. Teresa d'Avila e S. Veronica Giuliani," *Rivista Ascetica Mistica*, 51 (1982), 160-171.

III. Studies on Autobiography

- Annali d'italianistica* 4 (1984), ed. Dino S. Cervigni.
- L'autobiografia. Il vissuto e il narrato*. Quaderni di Retorica e Poetica I, Padua, 1986.
- Lejeune, Philippe, *Le Pacte autobiographique*, Paris, Seuil, 1975.