

**REPETITION AND EXPANSION IN THE TWO
REDACTIONS OF THE «CANCIONES QUE TRATAN
DEL EJERCICIO DE AMOR ENTRE EL ALMA
Y EL ESPOSO CRISTO»**

JANE E. ACKERMAN

The poem, «Canciones que tratan del ejercicio de amor entre el alma y el Esposo Cristo», has always compelled its readers to penetrate its surface. The *lira* that introduces the *Cántico espiritual*¹ is filled with pleasurable images of sunlight, scented breezes, green valleys, and riverbanks. Dialog between lovers creates a sense of immediacy, as if readers were actually witnessing what was said. Allusions to fulfillment in love draw the reader into the poem. Finally, the many exotic phrases from the Song of Songs, so laden with potential for allegorical meaning, coexist in the poem with metaphors seemingly designed to echo liturgy and secular love poetry.

The text frustrates understanding as much as it compels it. Though the forty-stanza *lira* begins at a moment in which Bride and Bridegroom are separate and apparently ends in one of union, the progression of speeches does not move toward one clear emotional climax. Settings change rapidly. Any chronology in the poem seems to be disrupted by changes in tense. Allusions to past moments of union are mixed yearning as well as with suggestions of love in the present. Except in the most general way, images from the Song of Songs do not point to the meanings usually associated with them in contemporary devotional literature.

The text violates the usual norms of development and pushes language near the point of absurdity, but over the centuries its readers have responded by continuing to pursue its meaning. The Discalced Carmelite nuns with whom Saint John stayed after his imprisonment asked him to explain the poem even before he had finished it. Some so avidly wanted to understand the text that they took feverish notes as the Saint

¹ Although the entire work has a long history of being referred to as the *Cántico espiritual*, most witnesses in Saint John's sanctification trial refer to the poem as *las canciones* or *las canciones de la Esposa*. In this article, I will designate the poem with either its full title in the Sanlúcar manuscript, «Canciones que tratan del ejercicio de amor entre el alma y el Esposo Cristo», or with the shortened form, «Canciones». The traditional title, *Cántico espiritual*, will designate the entire treatise. Fr. Eulogio (Pacho) de la Virgen del Carmen discusses poem and treatise title in the introduction to his edition of the *Cántico espiritual* (Madrid: Fundación Universitaria Española, 1981, pp. 11-13.

spoke². Modern readers of the « Canciones » also have revealed a strong desire to understand the poem: over the years, critics have tended to subordinate examination of its linguistic and structural nature to study of its doctrinal content, that is, to explanation of what the poem is about. Most examinations of the « Canciones » treat only the relation of the poem to its prose commentary³.

In order to help his readers approach the experience manifested in the lyric, Saint John began his prose explication of the first part of the « Canciones » quite soon after leaving prison in 1577. As he wrote the commentaries he deliberated over the ending of the poem, adding its final eight stanzas in two parts over a period of approximately five years. « All this », observes Colin Thompson, « strongly suggests a dynamic *Cántico*; not a single work written at one specific time, but a poem and a prose exposition which developed and grew beyond its genesis during Saint John's imprisonment. The work continued to mature in his mind from 1578 to 1584, and beyond that date, the evidence... points to a further expansion in the commentaries »⁴.

Thompson and other modern scholars assert that a whole second manuscript family, alternately designated as the second redaction of the *Cántico espiritual* or as CB, comprises the Saint's attempt to recast the poem and its prose commentary in forms more intellectually accessible to readers. It is generally conceded that stanzas in the second redaction of the « Canciones » are rearranged to match more obviously the stages of spiritual purgation, illumination, and union that organize Saint John's prose treatises on mysticism⁵. For a long while, however, critics did not accept his authorship of the CB version, usually basing their belief on the assertion that the poem CB was obviously inferior to CA in literary quality. Saint John's authorship of CB is accepted now by many who study the texts, but there are still those who believe that the poetic text was vitiated by its more conceptual arrangement⁶, though the difficult task of assessing the literary quality of the poem is not near completion.

I propose to examine accessibility of meaning in the « Canciones » and to see how changes in exposition affect the quality of CB. In both

² Fr. Eulogio (Pacho) de la Virgen del Carmen, *San Juan y sus escritos* (Madrid: Cristiandad, 1969), p. 210.

³ Domingo Ynduráin, « Introducción », San Juan de la Cruz, *Poesías* (Madrid: Cátedra, 1983), p. 23. See also Cristóbal Cuevas, « Estudio preliminar », San Juan de la Cruz, *Cántico espiritual. Poesía*. (Madrid: Alhambra, 1979), p. 79.

⁴ Colin Thompson, *The Poet and the Mystic. A Study of the Cántico espiritual of San Juan de la Cruz* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1977), p. 27.

⁵ For example, Fr. Eulogio (Pacho) de la Virgen del Carmen, « La clave exegetica del 'Cántico espiritual' », *Ephemerides Carmeliticae*, 11 (1960), 341.

⁶ Dámaso Alonso emphatically affirms this in *La poética de San Juan de la Cruz (desde este ladera)*, 3rd ed. (Madrid: Aguilar, 1958), pp. 153, 218. Cuevas summarizes the history of critical response to « Canciones » CB in the introductory study to his edition (pp. 18-20). See also Fr. Eulogio, « La clave exegetica... », 11 (1960), pp. 340-41 and 349.

versions, Saint John's *lira* impedes recognition of the usual linear patterns of logical, temporal, or spatial development. I hope to show that the work unfolds by means of another expository strategy, that of repetition and expansion. The major thematic process in the poem—the female speaker's identification of her beloved—develops by means of what Dámaso Alonso refers to as «undulations» and what Fr. Eulogio de la Virgen del Carmen identifies as «cycles»: ⁷ as the poem unfolds, the Bride's process of knowledge is elaborated through the accumulation and repetition of detail.

After a look at reiterative pattern in the first complete version of the poem, I will compare the texts of «Canciones» CA and CB, particularly examining the notion that CB was made poorer by its rearrangement. I will attempt in this latter section to show 1) that repetition and expansion continue to be the expository pattern of the *lira* in CB, 2) that the second redaction preserves the thematic process of identification, and 3) that certain effects on the reader are intensified in the second redaction. The degree to which patterns in the first text are respected in the second supports the argument in favor of Saint John's authorship of «Canciones» CB, and may be an index of its literary quality.

Versions of the «Canciones» used for comparison are those of the manuscript CA dated 1584 which belongs to the Carmelite convent in Sanlúcar de Barrameda and the manuscript CB belonging to the Carmelite sisters of Jaén. Marginal notations in the Saint's handwriting plus its early date qualify the Sanlúcar manuscript as the most authoritative version of CA. The Sanlúcar poem will be compared with the version of the lyric appearing in CB. Saint John's notations, which nearly all occur in the prose commentary, are incorporated particularly well in the CB manuscript from Jaén ⁸.

1. *Repetition and Expansion in CA.* More than one critic has examined Saint John's writings for influence from the East. In the thirties, Miguel Asín Palacios compared his work with that of Moslem contemplative writers ⁹. More recently, Luce López Baralt has compared the con-

⁷ Dámaso Alonso, *Poesía española* (Madrid: Gredos, 1950), pp. 299-305, and Fr. Eulogio, «La clave exegetica...», 11 (1960), p. 314.

⁸ Thompson, p. 39. For the present study, I have consulted the manuscript in Sanlúcar de Barrameda, its photographed edition by Fr. Silverio de Santa Teresa, *Cántico espiritual y poesías de San Juan de la Cruz según el código de Sanlúcar de Barrameda* (Burgos: El Monte Carmelo, 1928), and its recent edition by Fr. Eulogio (Pacho) de la Virgen del Carmen, *Cántico espiritual* (Madrid: Fundación Universitaria Española, 1981). Analysis of CB depends on the 1924 edition by Matías Martínez de Burgos, *El Cántico espiritual según el ms. de las Madres Carmelitas de Jaén*, Clásicos Castellanos 55 (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1924), the 1978 edition by José Vicente Rodríguez, *Cántico espiritual 1578-1586 Segunda redacción - CB*, 2nd. ed. (Madrid: Espiritualidad, 1979), and the MSS. 6624 and 8492 of CB housed in the Biblioteca Nacional in Madrid.

⁹ Miguel Asín Palacios, *El Islam cristianizado. Estudio del sufismo a través de las obras de Abenarabi de Murcia* (Madrid: «Plutarco», 1931) and «Un precursor hispanomusulmán de San Juan de la Cruz», *Al-Andalus* 1 (1933), 7-79.

tradictory, infinitely allusive style of his commentaries with a similar use of language in the mystical writings of the Sufi Ibn-'Arabí de Murcia¹⁰. The Bible, however, is the oriental work which has shaped Saint John's poetry most obviously. Details of his life point to the literary influence: not only did the Saint's university training prepare him for biblical study but, according to witnesses during proceedings for his sanctification, he read the Holy Book at every spare moment throughout his life, and customarily spoke to fellow Carmelites on the meaning of scriptural passages cited from memory¹¹. Saint John's writings contain quotations from nearly all the books of the Bible, especially the poetic texts and the Gospels¹². He often sang psalms as he went about his work and, according to tradition, asked that the Song of Songs be read to him moments before he died¹³.

The « Canciones » give ample evidence of his particular love of the Song of Songs. Even in a country, period, and religious order which especially favored the biblical text as a literary source, the « Canciones » stand out for their dense use imagery from the Song of Songs¹⁴. Some stanzas are near translations of passages from the older text. Distribution of speeches among Saint John's speakers as well resembles dialog among the Canticle Bride, Bridegroom, and Daughters of Jerusalem. Most important to this study, the « Canciones » are organized in patterns of repetition highly similar to those found in the Song of Songs.

Repetition is a characterizing feature of the poetic books of the Bible. Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Songs, books which were favored by Saint John¹⁵, all contain various kinds of repetition. Psalms and the Song of Songs are particularly distinctive for their use of repetitive parallelism. Also called anaphora, repetitive parallelism sets forth an idea and reiterates it immediately: « As a rule [anaphora] is not a mere repetition of the same words; usually synonymous expressions or new images are employed to reiterate and emphasize what has already been said or to enlarge on it[,] and sometimes a contrasting phrase is used to reinforce the meaning of another

¹⁰ Luce López Baralt, « Los lenguajes infinitos de San Juan de la Cruz e Ibn-'Arabí de Murcia », in *Actas del Sexto Congreso Internacional de Hispanistas*, eds. A. M. Gordon and E. Rugg (Toronto: Dept. of Spanish and Portuguese, 1980), 473-77.

¹¹ Jean Vilnet, *La Biblia en la obra de San Juan de la Cruz* (Buenos Aires: Desclée de Brower, 1953), pp. 14, 37.

¹² Vilnet, pp. 216-23.

¹³ Vilnet, p. 39. See also Cuevas, p. 63.

¹⁴ Twenty-four treatises on the Song of Songs were written in Spain between 1500 and 1679 (Fr. José María de la Cruz Moliner, *Historia de la literatura mística en España*, Burgos: El Monte Carmelo, 1971, pp. 61-62). Most contemporary poets used the Song of Songs in devotional lyrics. Some of those who use images from the Song are José de Valdivielso, Lope de Vega, Juan López de Ubeda, Bernardo de Laredo, Pedro Calderón de la Barca, Francisco de Quevedo, and Miguel de Cervantes.

¹⁵ Vilnet, p. 28.

phrase by way of antithesis »¹⁶. Cant. 3.1-4 contains many examples of parallel repetition:

1 In my bed by night I sought him whom my soul loveth: I sought him, and found him not.

2 I will rise, and will go about the city: in the streets and the broad ways I will seek him whom my soul loveth: I sought him, and I found him not.

3 The watchmen who keep the city, found me: Have you seen him, whom my soul loveth?

4 When I had a little passed by them, I found him whom my soul loveth: I held him: and will not let him go, till I bring him into my mother's house, and into the chamber of her that bore me¹⁷.

The passage is united and developed by what is repeated. A mounting emotional tension originates in the first verse, where the phrase, *I sought him* is repeated exactly and developed by the words *and found him not*. Changes are rung on the phrases *him whom my soul loveth* and *I sought him... I found him not* until the Bride's exclamation in verse 4 *I found him* initiates a series of possessive statements (*I held him... I will not let him go*). Syntax (*I will rise and will go about the city... I will seek*), meaning (*into my mother's house, and into the chamber of her that bore me*), or rhythm may be emphasized through parallels¹⁸.

The poems that comprise the eight chapters of the Song of Songs are united by larger patterns of repetition than this. Images of the garden, scent, roes and harts, doves, wine, vineyards, and trees appear throughout the anthology. Though these metaphors are rarely elaborated, their frequent recurrence strongly associates their elemental attractiveness with the couple. In addition, refrain-like passages of several lines' length reappear throughout the book (cf. Cant. 2.6, « His left hand is under my head, and his right hand shall embrace me », which is repeated exactly in 8.3. Cant 3.5 repeats 2.7; 6.1-2 resembles 2.16-17 and 8.14; 5.6-7 reiterates 3.1-4). Though the anthology has eluded explanation according to logical pattern, the repeated sentences produce an impression of balance and completion.

¹⁶ Robert Kessler, *Some Poetical and Structural Features of the Song of Songs*, ed. John MacDonald (Leeds, England: Leeds Univ. Oriental Society, 1965), p. 50.

¹⁷ This and subsequent quotations from the Song of Songs will be drawn from the English translation of the Vulgate made at Douay in 1609, « Solomon's Canticle of Canticles », *The Holy Bible Translated from the Latin Vulgate* (Baltimore, Md.: John Murphy, 1914), pp. 691-96.

¹⁸ George Buchanan Gray, *The Forms of Hebrew Poetry* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1915), p. 4, and « Hebrew Prosody », *Encyclopædia Judaica*, Vol. 13, pp. 1200-01. Marvin Pope reviews critical studies of parallelism and other patterns of the biblical text in *Song of Songs. A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1977).

Frequent and varied repetition in the Song of Songs does not contribute to kinds of textual development that Western readers usually expect. From the first verses, the lovers are already beautiful, already desire each other fully, and already have enjoyed each other's presence. They assume no particular identities as the work progresses. Their beautiful bodies, though highly praised, do not become easier to visualize. Physical movements are not extended into journeys, and events seem to have little connection with one another. Instead of adding to narrative or description, repetition in the Canticle develops the reader's impression of the emotions felt by Bride and Bridegroom. As phrases, metaphors, and passages are repeated, the accumulation verbally enacts the intensity of their love. The effect is much like that of a note insistently struck on the piano.

It would seem that the « Canciones » and the poems anthologized in the Song of Songs affect readers similarly, washing them with wave after wave of imagery. Indeed, the *lira* uses many of the same kinds of repetition that produce intensity in the Song of Songs. Particular images reappear throughout the « Canciones » (notably the lovers' eyes, flowers, breezes, mountains, places of entry, scent, riverbanks, the dove, and the hart). Saint John's extraordinary mastery of alliteration, stress, and consonantal rhyme often underlines his ideas with a mesmerizing regularity of sound. Some stanzas even appear to expand by means of anaphora¹⁹.

These textual devices, however, are accompanied by a large-scale reiteration much like the repetition and expansion of ideas in the Song of Songs. Where repetition in the older text permits the reader to sense the depth of love, in the « Canciones » it establishes processes in both the reader and the Bride who speaks in the text. The process for the reader is associative rather than linear. Critics often have noted that chronology in the lyric dissolves at the very moment of the first encounter between principal speakers in stanza 12. Rather than being part of a narrative, the Bride's stunned response to her Bridegroom's eyes in stanza 13 is the first in a series of events which relate to each other conceptually but which do not comprise a story. Fr. Eulogio de la Virgen del Carmen remarks concerning the poem's temporality, « la visión directa del itinerario espiritual no se proyecta como progresión constante y continua. Entre las etapas marcadas por el *antes* y el *después*, aparecen intersticios temporales evidentes. Los momentos culminantes de la historia amorosa del alma están separados por intervalos de duración indefinida »²⁰. Saint John has absorbed the circular patterns of exposition found in the Song of Songs. True to doctrine concerning

¹⁹ In *Poesía española*, Alonso notes that in his poetry as a whole, Saint John tends to use reiteration to emphasize concepts (p. 282). Thompson analyzes particular effects of repeated sound, imagery, and phrasing in the « Canciones » (pp. 91-111).

²⁰ Fr. Eulogio, « La clave exegética... », 11 (1960), p. 317.

mystical experience, the Bride's spiritual progression is presented a-chronologically.

The process of coming to know the Beloved is described in all literature that treats contemplation as a movement of the soul toward union with the Other. Western contemplative writers such as John Ruysbroeck and Meister Eckhart assume that the soul and God are on a continuum of being²¹, that changes in the soul are early stages of a movement that ends in participatory knowledge of God. Coming to know one's imperfections, coming to be one's own more perfect self ends in the revelation of the nature of the Divine Being. The famous metaphors of dark knowledge («Que bien sé yo la fonte que mana y corre / aunque es de noche»), of vision («Descubre tu presencia, / y máteme tu vista y hermosura»), or of transformation into the beloved («¡O noche que juntaste / amado con amada, / amada en el amado transformada!») designate the end of the mystic process of identification of, with, and in God. This movement of coming to know the Beloved organizes the «Canciones».

The Bridegroom's nature is revealed in four phases of «Canciones» CA²². The first three describe his effects on the Bride and on her fellow creatures:

- 1) Stanzas 1-14: In response to the Bride's questions, creation gives testimony of the Bridegroom. She describes her initial knowledge of him after he appears to her.
- 2) Stanzas 15-20: The Bride describes more intimate and transformative effects of the Bridegroom's presence on her after she enters the winecellar.
- 3) Stanzas 21-24: The Bridegroom's love adorns the Bride. His eyes give her grace.

The fourth phase details the entry of lovers into union (or a series of unions):

- 4) Stanzas 25-39: All creation is warned away from where the lovers are. They celebrate private love.

The phases are united in theme and structure. Each of the first three builds to an affirmation by the Bride concerning the Bridegroom's

²¹ F. C. Happold, *Mysticism. A Study and an Anthology*, rev. ed. (London: Penguin, 1979), pp. 65-67.

²² It would be reductive and arrogant to proceed as if the textual pattern described below were the key to the «Canciones». The lyric obviously is intended to evoke a complex fabric of response in the reader. For the examination of other patterns in the text, the reader is encouraged to consult, among others, the articles by Manuel Ballester, «La búsqueda y lo escondido en el 'Cántico espiritual'», in *Culture et religion en Espagne et en Italie aux XV^e et XVI^e siècles* (Abbeville: F. Paillart, 1980), 175-96 and Fr. Eulogio, «La clave exegetica del 'Cántico espiritual'», *Ephemerides Carmeliticæ* 9 (1958), 307-337 and 11 (1960), 312-51.

nature. The fourth phase, stanzas 25-39, is distinguished by its greater length, its shift to a pattern of contradictory motifs, and its lack of emotional climax.

1a. Subpoem 1: Stanzas 1-14. Subpoem 1 repeats and expands two ideas, the Bride's increasingly intense desire for the Beloved and his increasingly direct imprint on her:

- 1-4 Bride's questions to Beloved, to shepherds, to creation: Where is my beloved?
- 5 Creation affirms his effect on it and provokes response in the Bride.
- 6-11 The Bride pleads with the Bridegroom for revelation. She is dissatisfied with all save his presence.
- 12 The Bridegroom's eyes stun her. He speaks to her.
- 13-14 *Culmination*: She responds to the revelation with stammered words that identify the one she loves.

The Bride's many questions to the Beloved, to shepherds, and to creation surrounding her crystallize in stanzas 6-11 as petitions directed to the Bridegroom (cf. Cant. 1.6 « Shew me, O thou whom my soul lovest, where thou feedest where thou liest in the midday, lest I begin to wander after the flocks of thy companions »).

In stanza 5, creation (*las criaturas*) responds by affirming that the Bridegroom already has touched it with his gracious presence:

Mil gracias derramando
pasó por estos sotos con presura,
e, yéndolos mirando,
con sola su figura
vestidos los dejó de hermosura²³.

The description in stanza 5 of the past effect of the Bridegroom's glance (both a conventional neoplatonic metaphor for essential union²⁴ and a biblical emblem of God's favor) introduces the more particular, present-tense impact of the Bridegroom on the Bride in stanzas 12-14. Readers apparently witness the moment of encounter between the two speakers: in stanza 11, the Bride ardently begs to see the eyes of the Bridegroom²⁵. In stanza 12 she cannot sustain their gaze:

²³ This and other passages from the first redaction of the « Canciones » will be drawn from the edition by Fr. Eulogio (Pacho) de la Virgen del Carmen, *Cántico espiritual* (Madrid: Fundación Universitaria Española, 1981).

²⁴ Ynduráin, p. 73.

²⁵ In his stanza-by-stanza study of CB, Ynduráin notes concerning stanza 12 that the lovers' gaze is a metaphor for their transformation: « ¿ qué ojos ve? ¿ Los suyos propios o los de su amante? En el proceso de transformación y asunción identificadora, cabe decir que a la amada le asoma ya el alma a los

Apártalos, Amado
 que uoy de buelo.
 EL ESPOSO
 Buéluete, paloma,
 que el cieruo vulnerado
 por el otero asoma
 al ayre de tu buelo, y fresco toma.

Stunned, she praises him in a rich, inchoate series of nouns. This series, which enigmatically describes the nature of the Beloved, is the culmination of the first phase of the «Canciones». By moving from lesser to greater effect, from past to present, from secondary actors (*las criaturas*) to the interaction of principals (the Bride and Bridegroom), readers are prepared to witness a moment of revelation.

1b. *Subpoem 2: Stanzas 15-20.* The following five stanzas develop another pair of motifs, that of the response by those whom the Bridegroom touches and that of the site of union:

- 15 The Bride describes the royal bed.
 16 She asserts that the Maidens respond to traces of the Bridegroom by darting after him.
 17-20 *Culmination:* Not the physical circumstance but what happened in the winecellar is described. The Bride responds to the Bridegroom's greater gifts of sustenance and shared knowledge by giving herself to him.

Again, two topics are woven together in a general movement from less to greater detail, from lesser to greater importance. Though it pertains to both lovers, the «lecho florido, / de cuevas de leones enlaçado» of stanza 15 is a place of union without actors. The winecellar of stanzas 17-18, in contrast, is described in terms of presence: «En la interior bodega / de mi Amado beví, .../... y yo le di de hecho / a mí, sin dejar cosa». Stanza 15 is a static picture; stanzas 17-18 are the kinetic, though enigmatic, description of an encounter that changes the Bride. Though it obviously is a more private place, we know nothing of the winecellar itself. Its description is subordinated to the Bride's affirmations concerning the effect of the Bridegroom's presence.

In a similar pattern of development, the response of the maidens to the Beloved in stanza 16 introduces his effect on the Bride in 17-20. Meanings of the *toque de centella*, *abodabo vino*, and *emisiones de bálsamo* which stir the maidens are unclear, but the group of nouns suggests the complex effect of the Bridegroom on the women. The Bride receives more lavish gifts than they, for she is allowed to enter a special precinct where she enjoys longer contact with the Beloved. Though

ojos, de manera que en sus mismos ojos ve los del amado, y viceversa: su belleza es ya la belleza del amado» (p. 87). Ynduráin examines the motif for its roots in Neoplatonic love literature.

she then follows and loves the Bridegroom as do the maidens, her transformation is greater than theirs («yo le di de hecho / a mí, sin dejar cosa »).

Thus in the first two phases of the lyric, the nature of the Bridegroom is conveyed by the Bride's explanation of two apparently unrelated events and an impression of his transformative power is built up through repetition. During the first twenty stanzas, questions to the creatures precede questions to the creator, a past encounter introduces a present one, an empty bed introduces a place in which transformation occurs, the eager response of young women to signs of the Bridegroom foreshadows the powerful response of the Bride not to his signs but to his very presence. The pattern is simple and dramatic: the reader is prepared through repetition to grasp the magnitude of the Bridegroom's effect on his chosen Bride.

1c. Subpoem 3: Stanzas 21-24. Stanzas 21-24 are united by the topic of the Bridegroom's effect on the female speaker's beauty:

- 21 The Bride's hair is adorned with garlands.
- 22 She describes her attractive hair and eyes.
- 23 The Bridegroom's eyes bestow grace upon her.
- 24 The Bride's darkness is turned to beauty by his glance.

The section consists of a chain of metaphors. In the enigmatic stanza 21 which begins the series, it is not clear why the Bride adorns her hair, who helps her make the garlands, nor whom she addresses:

De flores y esmeraldas,
en las frescas mañanas escogidas,
haremos las guirnaldas
en tu amor florecidas,
y en un cabello mío entretegidas.

Without solving these riddles, stanza 22 picks up the motif of the Bride's hair from the last line of 21. The Bride metonymically affirms her beauty by affirming the attractiveness—just as the biblical Bridegroom declares in Cant. 4.9—of «one of her eyes and one hair of her neck». Stanza 23 in turn picks up the motif of the loving glance from the end of 22. Here and in stanza 24, the Bride explains that her beauty (like the beauty of creation in stanza 5) was bestowed by the Bridegroom's gaze:

Quando tu me mirauas,
su gracia en mí tus ojos imprimían;
por eso me adamauas,
y en eso merecían
los míos adorar lo que en ti vían.

No quieras despreciarme,
 que, si color moreno en mí hallaste,
 ya bien puedes mirarme
 después que me miraste,
 que gracia y hermosura en mí dejaste.

Affirmations of the Bridegroom's transformative effect are repeated with increasing clarity in 23 and 24. The four stanzas together amount to the Bride's declaration that the beauty of her nature derives from the Bridegroom, and that their love is of one essence. Like Christ who loves himself in the created world, the Bridegroom loves what he has given of himself to the Bride.

The three subpoems that occupy stanzas 1-24 resemble each other in structure and thematics. Each contains a simple pattern of repetition and expansion that culminates in an event followed by an assertion concerning the nature of the Beloved. The structure of the «Canciones» differs from that of the Song of Songs most strikingly in its inclusion of these transformative events. In subpoem 1, the Bridegroom's nature is conveyed by the Bride's response to his powerful eyes, in subpoem 2 by the change that occurs in the Bride when she shares his nature (cf. «En la interior bodega / de mi Amado beví...»), and in subpoem 3 by a description of the beauty that the Bride receives from him.

To a greater and greater degree, the Bride's affirmations about the Bridegroom have become affirmations about herself. Though she has spoken nearly exclusively (for twenty-two of twenty-four stanzas), it is the Bridegroom's presence or absence that gives the Bride her identity in the poem. This manner of characterization is strongly reminiscent of the Song of Songs and is another instance of Saint John's absorption in the biblical book. The Bridegroom also emerges as a «negative presence» in the Song. He is more yearned for than possessed, more described in invitation or in memory than in presence. The Canticle Bride's praise of him, her yearning, and her darting movements in search of him convey the magnitude of his attractiveness. She, too, exists in his praise and in her response to him. The lovers are inextricably fused in both poems of love. In both texts, description of the Bride does little to individualize her and much to evoke the grandeur of the Bridegroom.

1d. Subpoem 4: Stanzas 25-39. The motif of obstruction alternates with that of transformative, generative union throughout the last fifteen stanzas of «Canciones» CA:

- stanza 25 Hindrance: The vixen must be caught. No one should appear on the mountain (or in the forest).
- stanza 26 Hindrance: The north wind should stop. Flowing movement and union: The south wind should blow and the Bridegroom will enter.
- stanza 27 Union: The Bride has entered the garden and is embraced by the Bridegroom.
- stanza 28 Past union and past regeneration: The Bride was be-

- trothed and restored under the apple-tree.
- stanzas 29-30 Hindrance: All of creation is enjoined not to touch the wall, nor disturb the Bride.
- stanza 31 Hindrance: The nymphs of Judea are also enjoined not to pass the outskirts nor touch the threshold.
- stanza 32 Hindrance: The Bridegroom is begged to hide, not to speak, but to look for the Bride.
- stanzas 33-34 Union: Two doves return to the ark and to the riverside. The female lived, loved, and was guided by her mate in solitude.
- stanzas 35-37 Union: The Bride urges the Bridegroom to shared activity.
- stanzas 38-39 Nature both is part of union and is left outside.

In stanzas 25, 26, 29-30, 31, 32, and 39, Bride and Bridegroom repeatedly tell someone or something to go no further. In stanza 25, the Bride states, «Codednos las raposas... / no parezca nadie en la montaña», in 26, «Detente cierço muerto...», and in stanzas 29-30 the Bridegroom adjures «las aves ligeras, / leones, cieruos, gamos saltadores, / montes, valles, riberas, / aguas, aires, ardores / y miedos de las noches veladores: / ...no toquéis al muro...» The Bride in turn commands the nymphs of Judea, «morá en los arrabales, / y no queráis tocar nuestros umbrales», and begs the Bridegroom, «Escóndete, Carillo» (stanzas 31-32). The poem ends in negation: «nadie lo miraua, / Aminadab tampoco parecía» (stanza 39).

These commands alternate with allusions to fruitful union in a largescale pattern of stop and go, affirmation and negation, rejection and invitation. Literally seeming to encompass all creation, the positive statements occur almost as frequently as negation: «ven, austro,... / aspira por mi huerto» (stanza 26), «Entrado se a la Esposa / y a su sabor reposa» (stanza 27), «Debajo del mançano, / allí conmigo fuiste desposada» (stanza 28), «ya la tortolica / al socio deseado / en las riberas verdes a hallado» (stanzas 33-34), and «Gocémonos... / entremos más adentro en la espesura... / y el mosto de granadas gustaremos» (stanzas 35-37).

The oscillation between themes has several effects in subpoem 4. First, the large block of reiterated movement interrupts an expectation created by an earlier pattern. Subpoems 1, 2, and 3 culminate in the Bride's assertions about her increasing knowledge of her Beloved. In all three, repetition and expansion is arranged to highlight a significant event. Subpoem 4 does not build to such a culminating assertion or event, and any expectation developed in the reader that the poem would end in such a way is disrupted by the pattern-change. The movement back and forth from suggested union to verbal obstruction builds a tension that is not resolved by the end of the poem. Instead, the *lira* ends in the much-commented, apparently nonsensical, anticlimactic allusions to Aminadab and to horses descending to water. While repetition in subpoems 1, 2, and 3 carries the reader forward in knowledge of the

lovers, repetition in subpoem 4 would seem to block it.

Stanzas 25-39 relate to the rest of the subpoems in terms of another kind of repetition, the restatement of major motifs from earlier stanzas. For example, subpoem 4 expands the motif of the *locus amoenus* which was introduced with the shared bed and the winecellar of subpoem 2. In the last part of the poem, the lovers are united on the mountain or in the forest (stanzas 25, 32, 35, 36, and 39) and in a garden (stanzas 26-28). As references to places of union accumulate, the reader receives an impression of multiply-celebrated love.

Subpoem 4 as well repeats and expands the motif of *las criaturas*. Allusions to animals, breezes, flowers, and countryside fill the last subpoem but are used paradoxically, for creation both is warned away from the pair and is used to describe their love: «Estamos ante la concepción de la naturaleza como estímulo y como lazo, cuya superación integradora se produce al final del camino espiritual, cuando la Esposa descubre en ella un don del Amado, que le ha de servir de recuerdo y deleite—'naturaleza a-graciada a transformada por la gracia'»²⁶. The exhortation to the winds in stanza 26 exemplifies this double usage: «Detente, cierço muerto; / uen, austro ,que recuerdas los amores...».

Lastly, the power of the Bridegroom's eyes is reiterated and expanded in subpoem 4. The motif first occurs in subpoem 1, where the Bride yearns for sight of his eyes (cf. «¡O christalina fuente, / si en esos tus semblantes planteados / formases de repente / los ojos deseados...!») only to be rewarded with a gaze so powerful that she begs the Bridegroom to turn his eyes away. In subpoem 3, the power of his eyes is specified in her declaration that his glance transformed her beauty. The motifs of sight and hiddenness proliferate in subpoem 4 just as do those of the *locus amoenus* and the created world. In stanza 32, which seems designed as a counterpoise to the Bride's first words of the «Canciones» («¿ Adónde te escondiste, Amado, / y me dejaste con gemido?») and to her early entreaties to be shown her Beloved, she now begs that he hide himself:

Escóndete, Carillo,
y mira con tu haz a las montañas
y no quieras decillo;
mas mira las compañías
de la que ua por ínsulas estrañas.

From this point stanza 32, the Bride insistently asks to be hidden from the world while begging for her Bridegroom's presence. Even the last stanza of the poem is filled with allusions to vision, to hiddenness, and to negation of sight: No one saw «it» («Nadie lo miraba»), the mysterious figure Aminadab is not seen, and horses come within eyesight of water. By repeating the motifs of hiddenness and vision, Saint John compels the reader to consider what at once can and cannot be seen.

It is, I believe, an intended paradox that so much of the «Canciones» points to revelation, if in a circular way, and yet readers ultima-

²⁶ Cuevas, p. 45.

tely have their «textual fields of vision» blocked. Aspects of the Bridegroom's nature experienced and affirmed by the Bride in the earlier part of the poem are counterweighted by the heavy emphasis in sub-poem 4 on secrets, hiddenness, and private enjoyment of the Beloved. As he does in other writings concerning contemplative union, in «Canciones» Saint John leaves the reader desirous of but without knowledge of the unveiled God. «El desaparecido no es uno que simplemente 'no está ahí'», says Manuel Ballesteros of the one whom the Bride seeks in the poem, he is «el que... casi asoma y late por detrás del muro...»²⁷. The reader's experience of Saint John's writings and most particularly his lyrics, in some way resembles the soul's process of regeneration in knowledge of the Divine Being.

2. «Canciones» CA and CB. The following observations concerning repetition in the poem CB will support the frequent assertions that the second poetic text was rearranged to better correlate with stages of spiritual growth described in the prose commentary and that Saint John is its author. The latter point usually is argued not from the text of the poem but from comparison of the prose commentary CB with the Saint's notes in the margins of the Sanlúcar prose explication. A third assertion commonly made in studies of the *Cántico espiritual*, that the second version of the poem is inferior to the first in literary quality, will be challenged, though a complete case will not be argued; only one major criterion of quality will be considered here, that of the ability of the text to shape its readers' expectations. Since «Canciones» CA and CB principally differ in stanza order, what follows will treat the effect of this rearrangement on patterns of repetition and expansion, on the theme of the Bride's growth in knowledge of her Beloved, and on the manner in which the new version speaks to its readers' experience.

2a. *Subpoem 1*. The first subpoem of the «Canciones» CA is essentially retained in CB. Its one phrase change, in which the second line of stanza CA 8 is emended from «¡O alma!, no viuiendo donde viues» to «¡O vida!, no viuiendo donde viues» does not alter the sense of its stanza. Stanzas from CA are retained without variation of order, and thus the twined repetition of the motifs of the Bride's desire and the Bridegroom's effect is also preserved.

Subpoem 1 CB contains an important addition, the new stanza CB 11 inserted between CA 10 and CA 11. A satisfying explanation has never been discovered for the presence of CB 11 in CB manuscripts and even in some late copies and printed editions of CA (usually designated CA'), but its absence from Saint John's emendations of CA Sanlúcar. In placement and content, the new stanza specifies the important motif of the Bride's desire for the Bridegroom's gaze which first appears in CA

²⁷ Ballesteros, p. 192.

10, which is repeated in CA 11, and which culminates in the Bride's experience of her Bridegroom's glance:

- CA 10 ... uéante mis ojos
 pues eres lumbre dellos,
 y sólo para ti quiero tenellos.
- Descubre tu presencia,
 y máteme tu uista y hermosura;
- CB 11 mira que la dolencia
 de amor, que no se cura
 sino con la presencia y la figura²⁸.
- ; O christalina fuente,
 si en esos tus semblantes plateados
- CA 11 formases de repente
 los ojos deseados
 que tengo en mis entrañas dibujados!
- Apártalos, Amado,
- CA 12 que uoy de buelo...²⁹

Changes of subpoem 1 in CB amplify the pattern of repetition rather than disrupt it.

2b. *Subpoems 2 and 3.* In «Canciones» CA, the second subpoem (stanzas 15-20) develops the motifs of place of union and response to contact with the Bridegroom. The third subpoem CA (stanzas 21-24) describes the influence of his eyes on the Bride's beauty. Just as the integrity of subpoem 1 CA was not disturbed, so neither is the internal order of subpoem 2 and 3 CA affected in the CB version. However, these two subpoems are inverted in order of appearance and are moved as a block to reside in CB stanzas 24-33. The deployment of the untouched subpoems greatly contributes to an impression of union in the last stanzas of CB, a fact which will be elaborated later.

2c. *Subpoem 4.* Subpoem 4 (CA 25-39), suffers major disruption during revision. Not all of it is changed, however. As with the other subpoems, the texts of particular stanzas are not altered and grouping of thematic material is maintained. The last six stanzas of CA, those that describe the reunion of doves, the invitations of the Bride («Gocémonos», etc.), and the two final stanzas in which nature seems to exist outside of the threshold of the lovers, retain their internal order and final position (33-39 in CA, 34-40 in CB due to the insertion of CB 11).

The order of stanzas 25-32 of subpoem 4, stanzas which in CA contain nearly all of the pattern of hindrance and union, is radically altered, and the block 25-32 is moved as well. The effect of the relocation on the poem as a whole can be demonstrated by a diagram based on the first lines of stanzas:

²⁸ Thompson, p. 33.

²⁹ *Cántico espiritual*, pp. 899-900.

CA

Sanlucar

- Esposa 1 ¿ Adónde te escondiste... ?
 2 Pastores, los que fuerdes
 3 Buscando mis amores
 4 ¡ Oh bosques y espesuras !
 Criaturas 5 Mil gracias derramando
 Esposa 6 ¡ Ay !, ¿ quién podrá sanarme ?
 7 Y todos cuantos vagan
 8 Mas ¿ cómo perseveras... ?
 9 ¿ Por qué, pues has llagado... ?
 10 Apaga mis enojos
 11 ¡ Oh, christalina fuente
 Esposa 12 Apártalos, Amado...
 Esposo Vuélvete, paloma
 Esposa 13 Mi amado, las montañas
 14 La noche sosegada...

- 15 Nuestro lecho florido
 16 A zaga de tu huella
 17 En la interior bodega
 18 Allí me dio su pecho
 19 Mi alma se ha empleado
 20 Pues ya si en el ejido
 21 De flores y esmeraldas,
 22 En sólo aquel cabello
 23 Cuando tú me mirabas
 24 No quieras despreciarme

- Esposo 25 Cogednos las raposas
 26 Dentente, cierço
 27 Entrádo se a la esposa
 28 Debajo del manzano
 29 A las aves ligeras
 30 Por las amenas liras
 Esposa 31 Oh, ninfas de Judea
 32 Escóndete, Carillo

- Esposo 33 La blanca palomica
 34 En soledad vivía
 Esposa 35 Gocémonos, Amado
 36 Y luego a las subidas...
 37 Allí me mostrarías...
 Third 38 El aspirar del aire
 Person 39 Que nadie lo miraba

CB

Jaen

- Esposa 1 ¿ Adónde te escondiste... ?
 2 Pastores, los que fuerdes
 3 Buscando mis amores
 4 ¡ Oh bosques y espesuras !
 Criaturas 5 Mil gracias derramando
 Esposa 6 ¡ Ay !, ¿ quién podrá sanarme ?
 7 Y todos cuantos vagan
 8 Mas ¿ cómo perseveras... ?
 9 ¿ Por qué, pues has llagado... ?
 10 Apaga mis enojos
 CB11 Descubre tu presencia
 12 ¡ Oh christalina fuente
 Esposa 13 Apártalos, Amado...
 Esposo Vuélvete, paloma
 Esposa 14 Mi amado, las montañas
 15 La noche sosegada...

- 16 Caçadnos las raposas
 17 Detente, cierço
 18 Oh, ninfas de Judea
 19 Escóndete, Carillo
 Esposo 20 A las aves ligeras
 21 Por las amenas liras
 22 Entradose ha la
 23 Debajo del manzano

- Esposa 24 Nuestro lecho florido
 25 A zaga de tu huella
 26 En la interior bodega
 27 Allí me dio su pecho
 28 Mi alma se ha empleado
 29 Pues ya si en el ejido
 30 De flores y esmeraldas.
 31 En sólo aquel cabello
 32 Cuando tu me mirabas
 33 No quieras despreciarme

- Esposo 34 La blanca palomica
 35 En soledad vivía
 Esposa 36 Gocémonos, Amado
 37 Y luego a las subidas
 38 Allí me mostrarías...
 Third 39 El aspirar del aire
 Person 40 Que nadie lo miraba

Stanzas of subpoem CA are moved by pairs, and, while dialog between Bride and Bridegroom is rearranged, the new speech patterns continue to develop the governing theme. The new arrangement (stanzas 25-32 CA become stanzas 16-23 CB) repositions all of the allusions to hindrance at a much earlier moment in the poem. Two stanzas that detail union, CA 27-28, are moved out of the block of hindrance to reside in CB 22-23.

Stanza order in CB divides the poem into three phases which, if we limit ourselves to the structural and thematic elements so far discussed, may be called 1) initial revelation: CB 1-15, 2) repeated hindrance of the outside world: CB 16-23, and 3) many instances of union that bring knowledge of the Bridegroom's nature: CB 24-40. The stanzas which repeat and expand the motif of hindrance now occupy the center of CB, clearly dividing the Bride's experience of her Bridegroom's glance (CA 12, CB 13) from her reports of transformation in the winecellar and increase in beauty. These latter events now join a group of invitations to the Bridegroom to share love in hidden, lofty caverns. CA 27-28, which detail the union of lovers in a garden, are placed between allusions to union and the now-central phase of obstruction. The first lines of CA 27 (CB 24) have a new transitional role: in CB, « Entrado se a la Esposa / en el ameno huerto deseado » points beyond its own meaning within the stanza to the multiple references to union which end the poem CB.

This study of repetition in CA and CB offers one more proof that the lyric is reordered in a tripartite structure. However, it raises doctrinal questions, for the three new blocks of repetition in CB do not coordinate with the Bride's progression in knowledge. As several critics have noted, Saint John's commentary to CA stanza 27 sketches the Bride's progression through stages of spiritual growth. In the passage from the commentary, Saint John indicates that what I have designated as subpoem 1 contains two phases in the advancement toward contemplative union. CA stanzas 1-4 (« desde la primera cancion hasta aquella que dice: *Mil gracias derramando* ») have to do with mortification and CA stanzas 5-12 (« hasta la que dice: *Apártalos, Amado* ») have to do with « las penas y estrechos de amor » which culminate in spiritual betrothal²⁹. Saint John's statement is generally interpreted to mean that the first eleven and a half stanzas comprise the Bride's experience of the purgative and illuminative ways. The remaining twenty-seven and a half stanzas of « Canciones » CA and CB—that is, subpoems 2, 3, and 4 in CA and 2 and 3 in CB—treat the unitive way, in which the Bride receives « grandes comunicaciones y muchas visitas de su amado ». In both versions of the commentary, the transformative state of spiritual matrimony is entered at the moment the Bride utters the significant phrase, « Entrado se a la esposa / en el ameno huerto deseado », the phrase that Saint John moves in CB to introduce references to union.

Stanza order in CB strongly emphasizes a void, already inherent in CA, between the Bride's experience of her Beloved and the reader's experience of the poem. Repetitive patterns in CB shape the reader's

encounter of three distinct phases of text—initial revelation, repeated hindrance of the outside world, and repeated, transformative union. The prose commentaries CA and CB as well as the Bride's own avowal of change in the poem, indicate that her movement through three phases of spiritual advancement—purgation, illumination, and union, or « mortificación », « penas y estrechos de amor », and « grandes comunicaciones y muchas visitas del Amado »—outstrips the reader's labored movement through an enigmatic text. The reader of both « Canciones » CA and CB would seem to witness her change during the process of the poem—to be present at the moment of her shattering encounter with the Bridegroom in stanza 12, and to read her descriptions of increasing transformation. The reader, in contrast with the Bride, must struggle with a bewildering text full of incomplete sentences, half-drawn scenes, and commands to go no further. Part of the excellence of the poem in either version lies in its ability to draw the reader into a process that follows but does not equal the Bride's.

It is obvious that changes in « Canciones » CB are extremely conservative. They have been made by someone highly sensitive to patterns and nuances in the CA version, I would argue, Saint John himself: CB not only harmonizes with doctrine in the commentaries but is rearranged in a way that conserves nearly all of the groupings of motifs found in the original. Patterns of repetition and expansion which I have called subpoems are kept intact in spite of rearrangement (cf. the inversion of subpoems 2 and 3). As well, the pattern of dialog between the two principal speakers in the last subpoem is a perfect new alternation of voices and topics.

Finally, the Bride's process of identification of (and with) the Bridegroom remains the major movement of the poem CB. The block of stanzas describing hindrance that are moved to a central position in CB function as a puzzling, emphatic interruption of her assertions, but the expanded phase of union that occupies CB 22-40 develops the Bride's experience. It seems to have its own pattern of repetition. Once again, description moves from lesser to greater effect, from less to greater detail concerning the Bridegroom's transformation of the Bride. After the Bride's allusions to past contact with the Beloved in CB 23, her indirect references to union in CB 24, and her description of the Bridegroom's effect on others in CB 25, she repeatedly affirms his direct, transformative effect on her throughout the remainder of the poem. The Bride's growth in knowledge is represented in much the same way in « Canciones » CB as it is in CA, though the rearrangement of stanzas seems designed to emphasize her resultant state, not her process; in their multiplicity, the descriptions of love that end the « Canciones » CB evoke a totality of union not evident in « Canciones » CA.

What can be said of the quality of CB? The internal magic of the stanzas or the marvellous allusiveness of such phrases as *la soledad sonora* is not lessened in the second version. Patterns that guide the reader however, are greatly altered in CB. In the first version of the « Canciones », assertions concerning the nature of the Bridegroom accumulate

in subpoems 1, 2, and 3, leading the reader to expect further knowledge of him, though subpoem 4 frustrates that desire. In «Canciones» CB, in contrast, the Bride's report of her first encounter with the Bridegroom is interrupted by the phase of obstruction only to expand into multiple examples of union. In the new version, the textual disturbance is experienced as only temporary, for beyond it the reader encounters nearly all references to fruition that the poem contains.

Stanza order in «Canciones» CB emphasizes this fruition while that in «Canciones» CA seems intended to compel the reader to encounter the limits of the text. Surely particular readers with particular inclinations of the soul and mind will be spoken to by one or the other lyric, by CB, which ends in wave after wave of allusion to union, or by CA, which moves toward manifestation but ultimately avoids its literary representation. Patterns of repetition in the first version shape readers' expectations in ways that speak to our twentieth-century taste for open-ended, paradoxical texts. As well, the block of negation that ends «Canciones» CA has more to do with the doctrine of dark knowledge than does the affirmative structure of CA. But in either version, the «Canciones» successfully engage their readers in active response, whether that response be curiosity about the startling images and changes of tense, admiration of the musicality in the text, recognition of its geometrical precision, delight in its plenitude, or apprehension of the spiritual experience described. Saint John of the Cross has written two versions that communicate in different ways. «Deification», says Fr. Juan Arriero, «establishes between the soul and God a multitude of marvellous relations. Although these relations cannot be portrayed adequately by any manner of expression, yet the Fathers attempt to explain them by a variety of images which, if taken together, will give us a more approximate and true concept by which we can soar about all symbols to ponder and admire in silence what cannot be expressed in words or represented by any kinds of images»³⁰.

³⁰ Fr. Juan Arriero, *The Mystical Evolution in the Development and Vitality of the Church*, trans. Fr. Jordan Aumann, Vol. 1 (Rockford, Ill.: Tan Books, 1978), p. 143.