## THE GOLDEN AGE SONNET: METAPHOR AND METONYMY, WITH A DIFFERENCE

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n studies of Spanish Golden Age poetry, it is customary, and quite valid, it would seem, to seek elements that distinguish the so-called Lrenaissance sonnet from the so-called baroque sonnet. Within this process, Garcilaso de la Vega and, to a far lesser extent, Juan Boscán, serve to exemplify the Renaissance, and Góngora, Lope de Vega and Quevedo, the Baroque, with Fernando de Herrera occupying a transitional, mediating—and, for some, mannerist—middle space. On a microcosmic level, two carpe diem sonnets-Garcilaso's "En tanto que de rosa y azucena" and Góngora's "Mientras por competir con tu cabello"—demonstrate the difference between the two extremes. Garcilaso elicits a connection—and, significantly, an equilibrium—between the beauty of nature and the beauty of the love object. Góngora seems consciously to violate the conventional carpe diem concluding allusion to old age, as well as the theological comfort of eternal life, by contrasting the resplendence of youth with physical death. He thus disrupts the balance of nature and the balance of the intertext to make a poetic statement: his love object is superior to the world around her, but she is no less subject to decay, to destruction. Garcilaso's sonnet contains a commentary on the paradoxical nature of change; nothing is constant but mutability, the poet informs us. Góngora, for his part, effects a paradoxical contrast between the supernatural divine, one could be led to believe-beauty of the woman and the mundane fate that awaits her. (For representative studies of the two sonnets, see Aznar Anglés, Calcraft, di Pinto and Gerli.) A key component of Góngora's poetic project, I would submit, is his willingness to reshape traditional metaphors, in order to advance the notion that this figure of equality is insufficient to express the magnitude of his subjects and of his thoughts. His Polyphemus, for example, is hyperbole made hyperbolic; his Polifemo is a rhetorical obstacle course aimed at a cultured minority (see Friedman, "Creative Space"). I would like to argue that Góngora's poetic subversion represents the intensification of a poetic phenomenon present in the sixteenth-century sonnet, a denial of sorts of the metaphor in favor of metonymy, but metonymy with a difference. My sample texts will be sonnets by four poets whom manuals of literature might list as "de segunda categoría."

CALÍOPE Vol. 5, No. 1 (1999): pages 47-58

The theoretical dialogue on metaphor and metonymy finds its inspiration, of course, in the rhetorical tradition itself (see Lanham; Burke, esp. Appendix D; and Quinn, who looks at Burke in the context of Hispanic literature), but the studies of Roman Jakobson and the reception of his working hypotheses seem to assure its continuity. In "The Metaphoric and Metonymic Poles," a section of the longer essay, "Two Aspects of Language and Two Types of Aphasic Disturbances," Jakobson associates metaphor with similarity, the substitutive mode, Russian lyric songs and image production in romanticism and symbolism. Metonymy, in turn, relates to contiguity, the predicative mode, the heroic epic and realism (76-78; Jakobson's "Linguistics and Poetics" appears in Sebeok 350-77). As Jakobson notes and as history has borne out, the dichotomy "has obvious application to psychopathology, psychology, linguistics, poetics and semiotic" (79; see Bohn and Waugh). With respect to poetic effect, Stephen Ullmann is not alone in asserting that "metonymy lacks the originality and the expressive power of metaphor," even though he adds that "this does not mean that metonymy has no expressive force at all and that it cannot give rise to genuine images" (177). There is, as the range of commentary suggests, a certain slipperiness to metonymy. Brenton Campbell broadens the base of the figure to argue that

metonymy, which may be defined as a reversal of a whole entity and one of its parts . . . , includes not only those relationships traditionally regarded as metonymic or synecdochic, but also those of qualitative opposites or contiguities. This means that irony, litotes, hyperbole, and meiosis can, along with synecdoche, be classified as particular types of metonymy. (163)

Peter Schofer and Donald Rice, in contrast, present the case for "a radical limitation of traditional concepts of metonymy" (137) that would emphasize causality and eliminate spatiality as a defining characteristic of metonymy. Referring to notational schemata, Leon Surette inverts the Jakobsonian model to propose that metonymy is the trope of substitution and metaphor the trope of combination (v. esp. 568-70). In a 1994 essay, Russell Grigg places metonymy in the context of a tripartite view of metaphor (substitution metaphor, extension metaphor and appositive metaphor).

It is important to recognize that the theme of metaphor versus metonymy is both fascinating and destined to endure, dialectically speaking. The categories alternately become more flexible and more rigid, more comprehensive and narrower. The greater the quantity of associative fields one considers, the greater the possibility for variations, discrepancies and contradictions. In a chapter entitled "Turns of Metaphor" in *The Pursuit of Signs*, Jonathan Culler examines the privileging of metaphor over me-

tonymy. He assesses the impact of Jakobson's model on such theorists as Stephen Ullman, Paul de Man, Umberto Eco and Gérard Genette, and on the continuing debates regarding the phenomenon of figurality in general. There is in the discussion, I believe, an undercurrent that points not only toward a reconciliation of the terms but toward a strengthening of Jakobson's shaking of the conventional hierarchy in the direction of metonymy; the focus is not necessarily on displacement but rather on a modified sense of proportion (see also Culler's earlier Structuralist Poetics, esp. 55-74, 161-88). My view is that the polemic is ultimately metarhetorical, which makes it ideological as well as tropological. I will outline an approach that proposes that metonymy disrupts the similitude and the symmetry of metaphor; in other words, that metonymy deconstructs metaphor on the poetic and rhetorical levels. The poets in question use metonymical associations based on contiguity in order to establish connections from which they will then, paradoxically, distance themselves.1

The first sonnet is by Francisco de Figueroa (1536-1617?), born in Alcalá de Henares, who studied in Italy and who did military service there and in Flanders. Arthur Terry cites Petrarch and Garcilaso as his primary sources, but notes that "no model is known" for this sonnet (109). (Christopher Maurer cautions that the sonnet has also been attributed to Pedro Laínez [179].)

Quien ve las blancas y hermosas rosas de mano virginal recién cogidas, y con diversos tallos retejidas, guirnaldas bellas hacen y olorosas; quien gusta de las aves más preciosas las tiernas pechuguillas convertidas en líquidos, manjares y comidas süaves, odíferas, sabrosas; y quien panales albos destilando la rubia miel de la amarilla cera, a lo que al gusto y vista más provoca, pues tal es de mi ninfa el rostro, cuando mi vista de la suya reverbera y bebo las palabras de su boca. (Terry 110)

What interests me most about this poem, with respect to the trajectory that I have outlined, is the fact that it is completely earthbound. The imagery is rather unique and quite sensual; the woman described is a feast for the eyes, a delight for the senses, good enough to eat, as it were. She is not only visually exciting, but an object of substance, whose words the speaker drinks up. That is, she excels in form and content. The laudable chasteness and the exuberant richness combine as the poet draws a ver-

bal picture of the lady in question, who is neither a deity transformed by metaphor into a holy temple nor a tender morsel and nothing else. The key phrase, for me, is "bebo las palabras de su boca," which presents the mouth as the locus of carnal desire and intelligence. The moment that the dominant attribute of "the white and beautiful roses gathered by a virginal hand" becomes their fragrance, the passage to the senses opens, to opulence on all sides and to tasty, sticky, tempting liquids.

Figueroa deviates somewhat from Garcilaso's use of metaphor. He depicts the love object in words reminiscent of the Petrarchan system starting with the white rose and ending with "tal es de mi ninfa el rostro" but the process tends toward the evocative power of metonymy. The shift from the virginal hand in the first quatrain to "las tiernas pechuguillas convertidas /en líquidos, manjares y comidas /süaves, odoríferas, sabrosas" in the second would seem to rouse one's attention, to shift from observation at a respectful distance to a relishing of the enticing presence of the woman. The sumptuous repast offers a vehicle for the celebration of beauty, but the main course—breast of chicken, heavily garnished operates on several figurative planes. It could be argued that the realm of the senses suffices for Figueroa to delineate the cause and effect of his love, at times with the transposition of the two characteristic of metonymy. Rhetoric and nature contribute the resources necessary to his poetic project, without the need of a supplement of a higher order. The five senses define the parameters of the portrait, which finds an analogy and a focus in the banquet motif and which reserves a place in this structure for the mind of the lady who inspires the speaker's passion.

The second sonnet is by Francisco de la Torre, whose works were first published by Quevedo in 1631, according to Elias Rivers, "as part of the latter's characteristically reactionary campaign to revive in the seventeenth century, as an antidote to baroque complications of style, the relatively simple renaissance style associated with Salamanca" (348-49). Terry surmises that de la Torre wrote his major poems in the 1560s and '70s (126). In a book-length study published in 1982, Gethin Hughes surveys the controversies of de la Torres's life and art, and Manuel Alvar's 1987 edition of the *Entretenimiento de las Musas* contains biographical data as well as commentary on the poetry (see also Wardropper 49). Sonnet 23, which some critics, as Antonio Zamora Vicente points out, have regarded as the source of sonnets by Torquato Tasso and Edmund Spenser (Torre 29-30), is a paean to beauty:

Bella es mi ninfa, si los laços de oro al apacible viento desordena; bella, si de sus ojos enagena el altivo desdén que siempre lloro. Bella, si con la luz que sola adoro la tempestad del viento y mar serena; bella, si a la dureza de mi pena buelve las gracias del celeste coro.
Bella si mansa, bella si terrible; bella si cruda, bella esquiva, y bella si buelve grave aquella luz del cielo cuya beldad humana y apacible ni se puede saber lo que es sin vella, ni vista entenderá lo que es el suelo. (Rivers 87-88)

The quatrains and the first tercet of the sonnet convey—simply and elegantly—the speaker's appreciation of the "nymph"'s beauty, whether she be in motion or in tranquility, tender or disdainful. The repetition of "bella, si ..." underscores the all-encompassing devotion of the speaker, and the sets of antitheses emphasize, in a like vein, that his love is unconditional. While the hair imagery of verses 1 and 2 echoes the second quatrain of Garcilaso's Sonnet 23, the allusion to the calming power of her "light" and to the "graces" (or to the "mercy") of the celestial chorus points beyond the earthly domain. This lady is capable of interacting with the heavens, of functioning as angel and devil, as princess of light and of shadow. Because she remains beautiful no matter what her propensity at a determined moment, lightness must certainly win out. The second tercet reflects both the influence of Garcilaso's recourse to paradox and a movement toward what could be termed the spiritual supplement. One cannot know heaven unless one has seen her, yet once she has been observed, one cannot know what the earth is. The world cannot contain the exquisite woman. Heaven's light reveals her beauty and, in turn, reveals itself through her; in short, the illuminated becomes illuminating.

As in the case of Figueroa, de la Torre blends the conventional with the unconventional. Tradition is replete with references to women as symbols of contrasting traits, of polar oppositions. Less frequent, perhaps, but still part of tradition is the figure of the woman who retains her beauty whether she displays kindness or wrath, fire or ice. The poetic speaker who accepts his suffering with resignation—as part of the courtship ritual, as part of the prerequisites of love—is likewise hardly a novelty. Nor is the heavenly gaze per se. What may be unusual is the addition of a second sphere of influence. The anaphora built around "bella, si..." introduces the critical figure of antithesis and the underlying irony that the beauty is unaffected by behavior. "[L]as gracias del celeste coro" in verse 8 hints of what will become apparent at the end of the sonnet. The secular dimension of beauty acquires an unexpected aura of spirituality. The woman is not a clichéd deity—a terrestrial goddess—because a man

adores her, but instead she provides access to a heavenly light that simultaneously foregrounds her gifts and amplifies the frame. The metaphor of the hair as strands of gold evolves into the metonym of reciprocal light. The expansion of the frame does not denote competition but interdependence, whereby feminine pulchritude, as an end in itself, is converted into a mirror to heaven and a piece of heaven on earth.

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The third sonnet is by Diego Hurtado de Mendoza (1503-1575), born in Granada, a literary associate and friend of Garcilaso and Boscán, and holder of diplomatic posts in London, Venice, Rome and Siena. Hurtado de Mendoza is the author of *La guerra de Granada* and has been nominated on occasion as the author of *Lazarillo de Tormes*. Terry judges that "[h]is Italianate poems owe a good deal to Petrarch and Tansillo" (59; see Darst). Luis Díaz Larios and Olga Gete Carpio, editors of the poetry of Hurtado de Mendoza, inform us that the following sonnet, entitled "A un retrato," has been linked to Petrarch's Canzone 5 and to a 1542 portrait by Titian (Hurtado 269 n.):

Tu gracia, tu valor, tu hermosura, muestra de todo el cielo retratada, como cosa que está sobre natura, ni pudiera ser vista ni pintada.

Pero ya que en el alma tu figura tengo, en humana forma abreviada, tal hice retraerte de pintura, cual amor te dejó en ella estampada.

No por ambición vana o por memoria de ti, ni para publicar mis males, no por verte más veces que te veo; mas por sólo gozar de tanta gloria, señora, con los ojos corporales, como con los del alma y del deseo. (Terry 62)

The message of Hurtado de Mendoza's sonnet could be expressed as follows: The relationship between the portrait and its subject is not metaphorical but metonymical. The poet accentuates the paradoxical connection through the word retratada in verse 2—"muestra de todo el cielo retratada"—where its meaning is drawn from, extracted. The work of art is emblematic, evocative, but always less than—inferior to—the real object, the signified. The portrait offers a view that is perforce partial, able to capture the form but not the essence of the woman, for that essence cannot fully be represented. The soul can retain and the mind can recollect—just as the work of art can render—only a reduced ("abrevïada") vision of the lady. Given that she has left her mark on his soul and on his desire, it is fitting that she be similarly inscribed—estampada, stamped, sealed—on canvas.

I would contend that Hurtado de Mendoza's sonnet makes explicit what is implicit in de la Torre's sonnet, namely, that representation of the beloved woman—in painting, in poetry, in the memory—invariably assumes a lack, a distinction between what we see and feel and the plenitude that applies only to the province of the divine. The portrait is not equal to the lady, not due to deficiencies in the artist's craft but to the nature of art. The painter can approximate the features of the subject, but certain qualities remain out of reach, "sobre natura." The portrait affords, then, a third means of approaching—summoning—the full picture that is ultimately unattainable. Recognition of the incompleteness of the portrait does not indicate dissatisfaction on the part of the poetic speaker, who acknowledges the larger presence—the spiritual overlay—without diminishing the value of that which is available to him, since he may derive great pleasure—"gozar de tanta gloria"—"con los ojos corporales." Rhetorically speaking, not only does metonymy displace metaphor, but hyperbole disengages itself from earthbound parameters to suggest a heavenly perfection to which mere mortals cannot strive.

The fourth, and final, sonnet is by Francisco de Medrano (1570-1607), a native of Sevilla who had ties with the Jesuit order and with the University of Salamanca. As Rivers mentions, Medrano "occupies, chronologically, a position between Herrera and Góngora" (347). The selected sonnet is entitled "A Juan de Arguijo, contra el artificio," in which Dámaso Alonso hears echoes of Fray Luis de León as well as of secular poets (Medrano 256-57 n.):

Cansa la vista el artificio 'umano, quanto mayor más presto: la más clara fuente y jardín compuestos dan en cara que nuestro ingenio es breve y nuestra mano.

Aquel, aquel descuydo soberano de la Naturaleza, en nada avara, con luenga admiración suspende y para a quien lo advierte con sentido sano.

Ver cómo eternamente un río, cómo el campo se tiende en las llanuras, y en los montes se añuda y se reduçe, grandeza es siempre nueva y grata, Argío; tal, pero, es el autor que las produçe: joh Dios, immenso en todas sus criaturas! (Rivers 246)

This poetic declaration against artifice, or artificiality, cites the obvious contrast between man-made creations and objects in nature, which are, of course, the work of God. Fountains and formal gardens, no matter how elegant and well conceived, are testaments to limited ingenuity and dexterity: "... dan en cara /que nuestro ingenio es breve y nuestra mano."

Better the sovereign randomness—"aquel descuido soberano"—of nature, which sets forth endlessly running rivers and open landscapes and whose range is unstructured, unrestricted, eternal. Perhaps the factor that most conclusively separates the inventions of men and women from that which God has wrought is size. Mortals tend to reduce, to confine, to restrain, whereas God avoids frames and borders; there is grandeur to His work, "siempre nueva y grata."

It would be possible to catalog Medrano's sonnet as a commentary on the inadequacy of art to grasp its models. Art is imitation, in a pejorative sense, for man's attempt to emulate God is destined to fail, destined to flaunt its inferiority. The sonnet has an anti-metaphorical thrust, in that the formal garden, for example, can never equal the natural gardens produced by God. Here, the poet moves away from the formula—exemplified in the sonnets of de la Torre and Hurtado de Mendoza that we have looked at—which might be articulated as "metonymy equals metaphor plus a supplement," a supplement that justifies the difference between the earthly and the divine. In the poem, Medrano would seem to point, in an amended lexicon of rhetoric, to negative metonymy (not unrelated to the theoretical category of negative hermeneutics).2 case, the discrepancy between the signifier and the signified is so profound-and the supplement so extensive-that difference overpowers similitude. Element A no longer evokes element B but rather highlights the disparity—the dissimilarity—between the model and the imitation. Ironically, the poet employs the word autor to comprehend God's task. As an author, the poet must simulate a simulation, must use artifice to describe the shortcomings of artifice in a composition dedicated to a fellow poet. By distancing himself from the critical signifiers—and the critical agent of signification—he, whether wittingly or unwittingly, aids in the deconstruction of the metaphor (see Friedman, "Deconstructing"; for an alternative, and highly suggestive, argument, see also Jayne). There is only one viable author, and at the end of the process there is, to a degree, no viable metaphor.

The objective of this particular juxtaposition of sonnets is to propose (modestly, to be sure) that the guiding trope of Golden Age literature—the metaphor—is by no means a pat figure. Garcilaso, in a poem such as Sonnet 23, may wish to strike notes of harmony and symmetry between vehicle and tenor, but among the poets of his and succeeding generations there is a consistent and increasing tendency toward imbalance, toward ruptures in structure, toward the creation of literary and ideological edges, so to speak. In a subtle fashion, the sensual imagery of Figueroa's sonnet hints of these edges. In his most famous *carpe diem* sonnet, Góngora projects the principle of difference as a competition between the desired lady and nature. The balance is broken, but the message applies resound-

ingly to the here and now. The controlling metaphors of the period—life as a dream and the world as a stage—have tremendous analogical importance, but there is an irrefutable distinction between this world and the next, and therefore the analogy breaks down when it is carried to the maximum limit, that is, when the relative is confronted by the absolute. De la Torre, Hurtado de Mendoza, and Medrano stress this confrontation by recasting metaphor as metonymy, a figure which retains the analogy but inserts a hierarchy—informed by theology and also by neoplatonism, among numerous other systems-into the equation. De la Torre and Hurtado admonish us to be cognizant of a higher order that subordinates our insights, however intense and decisive they may be, to divine knowledge, and our influence, however commanding, to divine authority. Medrano goes one step further by discrediting the correspondence between the original and the imitation. "Cansa la vista el artificio 'umano" becomes an example of what Stanley Fish has designated the "self-consuming artifact," of rhetoric conspiring against itself; the poem can be but a simulacrum—a trace—of its origins, yet at the same time it can be the vehicle that conveys this crucial message.

In summary, the four-stage process that I have introduced (and illustrated through the analysis of four sonnets representative of the various stages) starts with the use of earthbound metaphors, whose confusion of cause and effect suggests ("evokes") metonymy. The second stage shows a movement from metaphor toward metonymy. The metaphor, the hair that equals strands of gold, becomes the hair as conductor of light. The projection of light on the hair raises the gaze heavenward. The woman becomes a sign of heaven on earth, and thus she is unattainable. The third stage accentuates a shift from metaphor to metonymy. The painting evokes a divine nature that the work of art itself cannot reproduce. The poet looks at the painting in a positive light; he praises its evocative powers rather than lamenting what the artist cannot accomplish. The fourth stage expands the frame of reference in order to demonstrate a more radical shift. The natural (produced by God) vies against the artificial (produced by man). Man's invention can pattern itself after but not reproduce what God has created. Natural phenomena are earthly signs of God's creative power. Man's creative talents can evoke these earthly objects and their celestial counterparts, but any comparison merely confirms the vast superiority of God's work. I believe that it may be worthwhile for scholars to examine, and to reexamine, the role of metaphor in Golden Age poetry. Undertaking such an enterprise, I have looked at variations on the theme of analogy, and I have found a place in this rhetorical drama for metonymy and for its paradoxically benevolent twin, which I have named negative metonymy. I would hope that critics of a higher order might wish to pursue some of the points that I have argued.

## **Notes**

<sup>1</sup>My argument has been influenced by the works cited above and by two booklength studies, David Lodge's *The Modes of Modern Writing* and Jane Hedley's Power in Verse: Metaphor and Metonymy in the Renaissance Lyric, although my particular reading of the metaphor/metonymy dichotomy moves in a different direction. Lodge's study, subtitled Metaphor, Metonymy, and the Typology of Modern Literature, focuses primarily on texts in English in an effort to explore (and, to a degree, to systematize) the nature and the transformations of figural language. Hedley looks at lyric poetry in England to argue that "early Tudor poetry is metonymic, that the collective orientation of Spenser, Sidney, and their Elizabethan contemporaries is metaphoric, and that Donne's and Jonson's lyrics bring metonymy once again to the fore" (2). For Hedley, the shift from Elizabethan metaphoric writing to the metonymic writing of Donne and Jonson is expressed as reaction and innovation within the institution of English 'poesy'" (13). The stopping point here, appropriately, is the metaphysical conceit and the dialectic implicit in this complex phenomenon (171-76).

<sup>2</sup>See, for example, Newton, who cites theorists, among them Paul Ricoeur and William V. Spanos, who "have argued that hermeneutics should not only reject the view that the purpose of hermeneutics is to restore a text's past meaning in its own terms but should use modern concepts to question and undermine that meaning" (192). See also Leitch 182-210, esp. 197 ff.

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