

A READING OF THE PARAYSO OF SOTO DE ROJAS

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The critical re-evaluation of Góngora in our century, launched by the Sevillian homage of 1927, brought in its train renewed interest in a number of minor poets who, dazzled by Góngora's achievement, had set out on their own down the trail he blazed. Though Góngora, by temperament a loner, showed no inclination to foster discipleship, the challenge of his daring descriptive lyricism, supported as it was by sheer genius, proved irresistible. A case in point is Pedro Espinosa. Góngora's *Soledades* had hardly begun to circulate, around 1613, before his own first *Soledad* was being penned. After four decades the challenge was still being felt in force. Pedro Soto de Rojas's *Parayso cerrado para muchos, jardines abiertos para pocos* dates from mid-century (1652).¹ In the interim, poet after poet, all inevitably of lesser stature, had sought to emulate Góngora's achievement.

I am using the term "emulation" advisedly in speaking of the attitude of the *gongorinos* toward Góngora. It stresses the element of willingness, even willfulness, in their cultivation of his *maniera*. This is not a case of surreptitious or unconscious influence, much less of influence struggled against. Emulation is a willing acknowledgement of the creative stimulus transmitted by a talent recognized as superior. Its purpose, of which it usually falls short, is to equal, even to outstrip, what that talent has achieved. The term has the further advantage of stressing the agency of the creating artist, thereby avoiding overextending the range of a concept like intertextuality. A corollary assumption in what follows is that in literary analysis critical objectivity or impartiality is neither attainable nor desirable. On the contrary, a critic's powers will be at their most effective if some degree of elective affinity draws him to the text.

Soto's hilltop *carmen* and the residence it contains (it is too small to be called an estate), closed to all but a very few, provide a personal precinct to which, in his later years, he has retreated permanently in frustration, embitterment and disgust at the world outside. A reading of his biography, so carefully documented by Gallego Morell (1948), makes it plain that he is himself partly to blame for his *desen-*

gaño. He is a disappointed clerical seeker after high office who is unable to secure any benefice beyond that of canon of the small collegiate church of El Salvador on the Albaicín. His unruly, irascible temperament helps explain the frequent, sometimes violent disputes with fellow clerics and the failure to obtain preferment despite prolonged and sometimes unauthorized stays in Madrid, one of which in fact eventuated in house arrest back home.

Soto's spiritual vocation is nevertheless undoubtedly genuine; his is not a basically secular spirit like that of his fellow canon Góngora. And he goes further in what would today be called a vocation for scholarship. He is the possessor of a thorough, if not always profound, humanistic, patristic and Biblical culture which he is not averse to displaying. (The margins of *Parayso* present an almost unbroken succession of abbreviated cross-references.) His omnipresent erudition can be highly specialized, though at the price of making it as much a weakness as a strength with respect to his performance as a poet. Poetry, in turn, if not a vocation, is an avocation to which he is strongly drawn.

The *soledad* Soto enjoys in his garden is one of aloneness verging on aloofness, not one of loneliness; of self-sufficiency vis-à-vis the rest of humanity and openness only to God. The formality of the garden is tempered for the reader by a curious effect of familiarity arising from its intimate significance for its designer and proprietor, the same familiarity surrounding Lope's references to the humble patio garden he tended himself and Fray Luis's to the garden planted by his own hand. No more than these is Soto's garden designed for display. The occasional touches of flamboyance in his presentation of it surely correspond to a strain in his nature not quite extinguished by his reclusion and reflect understandable self satisfaction on his part.

Soto's passion for gardening throws more light than has hitherto been noticed on the poetic art of his *Parayso*. In what follows, I shall be examining the function of the art and craft of horticulture in relation to other strains in his art elucidated (not always fully) in the criticism: the formal—a vision *sui generis* of overall design—, the stylistic, and the spiritual. I shall also inquire into the function of *soledad* in the garden as compensation for the bruising company of others.

Though there is no mention of *soledad* in Soto's carefully worded title, the phenomenon itself is omnipresent in the poem. In contrast to the unconfined settings of the imagined *soledades* of Góngora's two poems, *soledad* is here reduced to the restricted space of a small Granadan *carmen* dense with domesticated plant life of every order: herbs, flowers, shrubs, bushes, greensward, trees, groves, each specimen occupying its designated place. As often noted, however, there is no sign of a human presence: no observant wanderer as in

Góngora, no summoning voice as in Espinosa, much less any gardener in sight. Greenery has simply taken over, green in a fully nuanced range from the light shades of shoots and sprouts to the near-black of cypresses. It is not by accident that vegetative myths of metamorphosis keep turning up—Daphne, Syrinx, Hyacinth—culled from Ovid and other sources. The formal objects of human art present in Italian Renaissance gardens—painting, sculpture, architecture, décor—are not overlooked but they are subordinated to the live art of topiary characteristic of the Islamic garden and to the skilled manipulation of vegetative life in the interest of garden design. Art and nature are interwoven intimately but not indiscriminately. Luxuriance has been kept strictly within bounds. It is as if Soto, as gardener and as cleric, had kept constantly in mind God's injunction to Adam and Eve to keep Eden well trimmed (Gen. 2:15).

The element in Soto's makeup that, as much as any other, binds the divers aspects of his art together is one I shall provisionally call his green thumb. One could not apply such an attribute to Góngora despite the garden plot he looks forward to tending as a consolation prize on quitting Madrid. Nor would the Gongorine Espinosa, who has as keen an eye for blossom detail as any botanist, keener certainly than Góngora's, ever be called a dirt gardener. To both of them the flowers of anthologies surely had an appeal beyond that of natural bloom, as Espinosa's *Flores de poetas ilustres de España* attests.

Whether Soto ever actually accumulated dirt under his fingernails hardly matters today. His *aprobador*, the *licenciado* Ramón de Morales, does indeed show him harrowing the ground ("con el rejón en la tierra," *Obras* 372); he is also seen "tiserá en mano," rounding out his topiary shapes. In the documents unearthed by Gallego Morell we see Soto from time to time requesting permission of the town fathers to redirect the flow of the *acequia de Dindamar* through his flowerbeds so as to purify it for a fountain he is planning, or again asking to relocate *albercas* created by the dispossessed former *morisco* owners of the land. Modernly Soto has been called both *hortelano* and *jardinero*. Whether or not he calloused his own palms, it is easy to picture this aristocrat directing his head gardener at daybreak (in the poem he understandably extols the early hours as the best in the garden), and in effect closely supervising every aspect of design and cultivation. He surely had what can at least be called a green touch and he often speaks georgically—that is, like a true worker of the soil. He knows intimately the conditions his plants require for growth, which in his upper Andalusian climate and his hilltop microclimatae include taking account as much of shade and moisture as of soils.

An element of practicality—in fact it is as old in the Mediterranean basin as the *Works and Days* of Hesiod and the *Georgics*

of Virgil—enters the seventeenth-century Andalusian picture here. Soto's paradise is an unusual combination of the esthetic and the earthy. For all its spiritual overtones, he seems to have in mind the root meaning of *paradeisos*, a word picked up by the Greeks from the Persians: a pleasure garden; in dictionary terms, an "enclosed park or pleasure place." Fully to appreciate his "paradise" one would need to take account not only of herbals like the influential one included in the *Materia medica* of Dioscorides, referred to more than once in the margins of *Parayso*; or, I suspect, its updating in the great *De historia stirpium* of the Renaissance botanist Leonhard Fuchs; but also, as Gallego Morell, Emilio Orozco and Aurora Egido have done, of more utilitarian gardeners' manuals like that of Gregorio de los Ríos, head gardener to Philip the Second, published in Madrid in 1592.²

Trillo y Figueroa, Soto's intimate friend, in his introduction to the poem, makes a point (taken up by every modern critic) of equating its design with that of the garden. The few who have been privileged to see the garden, he says, and posterity with them, will, through the poem, be able to keep the garden before their mind's eye after its owner's death. Trillo does not share any of the misgivings we shall find in Soto as to whether *Parayso* is a poem at all. He states the poem's purpose in terms of the traditional divisions of both rhetoric and poetry:

El modo, idea, y argumento, es el mismo que en su composicion, y ornato, contiene el jardin y casa, sin hazer mas que reducir a numeros su fabrica, porque es tan elegante, que toda junta contiene un artificiosissimo Poema, compuesto de varios semblantes, fabulas, imitaciones y pensamientos, conceptos, figuras, exornacion y adorno, a quien solo faltaua pronunciacion que dijese, a questo soy. (*Obras*, 379)

In emphasizing that it is the *fabrica* of the garden that has been "converted into numbers" (put into metrical form), Trillo is evidently thinking in terms of Aristotelian or neo-Aristotelian poetics. The garden is already a poem in another guise—a medium more absolutely distinct from verse than a poem written in prose would be. Metrifying it only transfers its fashioning—its *poiesis* or *fabrica*—from a medium of growing greenery to one of words flowing rhythmically. To bring the poem-garden to actual life in human terms, only *pronunciacion* (*pronuntiatio*, delivery) is needed, announcing its animated existence ("a questo soy").

Trillo is adding markedly organic overtones to the traditional rhetorical terminology. He has in mind the two central divisions of

literary rhetoric. The term *fabrica*, in the connotation of *poiesis* as finished product, implies *dispositio*, arrangement, the layout of garden and poem. The aspects summed up as "exornacion y adorno" point to *elocutio*, flowers of rhetoric and blooms of plants.

As Emilio Orozco has pointed out (163 ff.) Soto is cultivating, in the wake of Góngora, a type of poetry, the purely descriptive, unfamiliar in Spanish letters before the Golden Age. Indeed, did descriptive poetry qualify as poetry at all? One detects vacillation on Soto's part between the Aristotelian poles of history—in this case, horticultural topography—and poetry. Despite the *culterano* stylistic garb he has assumed, he shows a certain proneness to record facts straightforwardly as facts. The circumferential measurement of his garden's walls, for example, however periphrastically he may phrase it, is "diez vezes cincuenta varas" (l. 64). He does not hesitate to give (l. 80) the exact local name of the mountains—the Alfacar Range—in which the stream arises that has been canalized to feed the water-courses of the gardens. The poem is strewn with specific local toponyms but perhaps most tellingly, his invocation in line 16, is to "Clio gloriosa," the muse of history, and in the opening lines it is as chronicler that he speaks:

Entre amargos fragmentos de murallas,
y periodos tristes de ruinas
que de los tiempos la horrenda historia
ofrecen sin ornato a la memoria . . .

Poem and garden fall into seven divisions called *mansiones* in both cases by Soto, and by Trillo y Figueroa in his Introduction to *Parayso, periodos, mansiones, o descansos*. The garden description unfolds as these come successively into view. (In Trillo's usage the term *periodo* seems to have regained something of the mobility fundamental to its Greek sense: a cycle in space, primarily, and in time.) Despite the absence of a promenader, such mobility supplies a curious ambulatory perspective, as if through a voiceover.

By the beginning of the seventh *mansion*, the culminating one, however, it is no longer Clio but the flute-playing muse, Euterpe, associated with the pastoral mode, whom Soto addresses: Euterpe rather than Erato, the lyre-player, muse of love-poetry, the lyric poetry par excellence, presumably because Soto feels he has moved far beyond the type of verse practiced in his early *Desengaño de amor*; Euterpe also because in his earlier cultivation of the pastoral eclogue he had included occasional descriptions of flowers and fruit (*Obras*, 177 ff., for example).

For Soto, as for his modern critic, the form of *Parayso* entails two questions: whether he is cultivating history or poetry, a matter already touched on; and, if the latter, whether equating the "green" poetry incorporated in his garden with the poem in words describing it, is for him (and his friend Trillo) simply an arresting manner of speaking. Or does he think of poem and garden as actually co-extensive in every way despite the distinctness of their mediums?

To revert to the first question, the matter of history or poetry remains unsettled for Soto during a large part of the writing. He must have known the discussions of the matter in the *Philosophia antiqua poetica* of López Pinciano (1596), though they do not seem to have said the last word on the subject for him. In one of the dialogues of this work, apropos of a long descriptive poem entitled precisely *Parayso* and introduced by one of the speakers as his own work, there is a lengthy discussion regarding whether its verse form qualifies it as poetry and not history. The decisive factor, it emerges, is whether it displays "imitación y verisimilitud"; if not, a mere description even of Aranjuez or the Escorial, just as they are, will be versified history, not poetry (vol. I, 265). This is the standard neo-Aristotelian position of the period. Since the poem in question describes Eden, *ceteris paribus*, it is of necessity a poem, for no one has ever seen that garden to describe its actual appearance. (By the same reasoning, the imaginary settings of Góngora's *Soledades* would open the possibility of describing them as poetry.) Considerations of this kind must have caused some hesitation on Soto's part, even if, as will be seen, meter was for him a crucial factor.

At the outset of *Parayso cerrado*, Soto is unquestionably thinking of himself as a writer of history. Till the middle of the poem he subdues the personal voice and even thereafter the voice that reaches us is usually the omniscient non-personal "voiceover" of the historian. Evidently Soto feels no pressing need to resolve the question. It is as historian that he meticulously indicates the precise number of steps to be taken up or down at every transition from one *mansion* to the next. Flowers are more than once classified by family—or as a post-Linnaean would say, by genus and species. Color is at times the taxonomic principle; when it is, are we in the esthetic realm or the botanical? The signs of the historian's orderly, linear factuality persisting into what seems increasingly to have been thought of as poetry show, I think, that the issue was not in his eyes an actual dilemma. His mind, for all its love of data and facts, is essentially a poetic one, concerned more with analogy than with classification, with affective and sensory linkages more than with rational ones, with the texture of poetry more than the issues of philosophy.

Soto must have come to feel that the Muse he describes in the *Mansion Sesta* as "ardiendo Clio en magestad y en pompa" (l. 836) was too grandiose and too associated with affairs of state to suit the privacy of his undertaking. Perhaps something in him anticipated from the start that this would be the case. At his initial invocation of Clio, he somewhat surprisingly employs a very old image of metamorphosis to tell her: "En la luz verdadera / O Clio gloriosa / el buelo alterna y arde mariposa . . ." (ll. 15-17; see Trueblood 1987).

In answer to the question of history and poetry, we should think, then, in terms of a movement away from the first and toward the second. What, then, of the professed identity of poem and garden? Here, despite the trenchancy of the language of both Soto and Trillo, their assumption of identity is essentially a verbal tour de force. Underlying it, however, is a conviction that order in greenery is "non-verbal" poetic order. Both, we may assume, are writing after the fact, as preliminaries usually are written, and both by now have convinced themselves (if Trillo indeed ever had any doubts) that *Parayso*, the verse composition, is a work of *poiesis*. It is a matter, then, of showing that the same is true of the horticultural artifact, that both conform to the order of poetic rhetoric. (This despite the phrase "sin ornato" with which Soto had begun, in line 4.)

Any attempt to construe Trillo's words literally in respect to the garden runs afoul of the lack of coordination between the asymmetries of the poem and those of the garden. The pattern of disparity in the extension of the seven divisions is not one and the same pattern. Nor is a steady progression upward evinced in either the topographical or the conceptual scheme underlying the *mansiones*. Though in poem and garden we end up, in the "mansion postrera / que al rubio Oriente en siete gradas sube" (ll. 942-43), at a high point—of outlook in the garden, of elevation of thought in the poem—, the *Mansion Quinta* has been specifically spoken of as the *cenit* (although it is said [l. 671] that from the Fourth to the Fifth one had to step down and although it is in the Fourth that the lofty neo-Platonic excursus is found).³ This excursus may have originally been meant to mark the climax of the poem. It would have come much closer to doing so had there been no soaring neo-Aristotelian epilogue at the end. Even so, as Elsa Dehennin has succinctly remarked (75), the poem "tiene un principio y un fin, aunque el centro es más bien incierto." She has also noted (76) more accurately than anyone that the precisely indicated up-and-down movement of what I have called the ambulatory viewpoint (no doubt it corresponds empirically to the lay of the land) reaches a peak as noted, in the fourth *mansion*, starts back down, then in the seventh *mansion* turns abruptly upward again.

From a purely formal viewpoint, Soto may have felt impelled to conclude on a religious note, as he had begun: at the entrance to the garden topiary representations of scenes from the book of *Genesis* are encountered. But it is a far cry from this lavish display to the spirituality of the ascent in personal prayer at the end. Nor is the latter, in fact, part of the *fabrica* of the garden. Though carefully connected with what precedes, it stands essentially on its own. The high point it marks in both garden and poem is uncoordinated even with the zenith found somewhere near the middle. In sum, the *mansiones* of garden and poem exhibit at best an *orden desordenada*, the order incorporating disorder characteristic of baroque art. Neither separately nor in association do they conform—nor could they be expected to— to any classical canon of beauty as balance.

A closer look at the neo-Platonic excursus to which I have been referring and the fourth *mansion*, in which it is embedded, will serve as an initiation into the complex personal and ideological currents of Soto's thought. Here, as at the end of the poem, his mind moves upward from the spectacle of the garden to the universal order he sees reflected in it. The *Mansion Cuarta* opens on an equivocal note:

Deste, pues, admirable de la tierra,
Hijo Imperial, corona es aseada,
cuarta mansion, que puesta en quinta grada,
se opone al cielo que le mueve guerra . . . (ll. 432-35)

There is an undercurrent of violence in these lines—that of the earthborn Giants (now buried under mountains) against the Olympian gods. It surfaces in the double meaning of “se opone”: both ‘faces’ and ‘wars upon.’ In the next lines Soto, as a Christian, quickly disavows the classical association that has sprung into his mind: “O quanto Polux yerra! / Que siempre està seguro / quien tiene al Cielo por defensa y muro.”⁴

“El cielo” of lines 435 and 438 turns out unexpectedly to be the connecting thread of these opening lines, being soon taken in the sense of most concern to the gardener: the meteorological (“ya claro azul sereno . . . ya pardo, ya mezclado” (ll. 440, 442). Even this sense proves transitory, as the ensuing thought of the starry night sky induces a reflective mood. Though troubled at first by memories of inner emotional turmoil (“En quantas lides fueron vencedoras / mis pasiones rendidas . . .” (ll. 451-52), the mood turns purely contemplative as the mind clears. With the “espiritu claro” of line 456, the way becomes clear to the neo-Platonic meditation proper, which begins at line 470.⁵

Soto makes no attempt to indicate in detail all the stages (in this case, descending) of the neo-Platonic ladder. (The poem is descriptive, not didactic.) He is content to evoke Mind, light, material form, and man as "epilogue" (ll. 470-78). But contemplation soon becomes troubled. An indication of disturbances to come is conveyed semantically by a linking of verbs with locatives improper to them: "Vuela por las escamas / engolfase en las plumas" (ll. 479-80). For the moment, though, harmony is regained; it is expressed neo-Platonically by a reconciliation of disparate orders: "general semejanza," despite "especial diferencia" (the gardener's genus and species?); "desigual trabazon," yet "correspondencia" (ll. 483-88). But harmony is then disrupted by violent incursions of savagery:

a la pesada tierra
 buelue las testas, visitò ganchudas,
 las pieles ya cerdosas, ya belludas,
 trompas que no conuocan, que hazen guerra,
 los colmillos tajantes,
 las conchas vigilantes,
 puas, garras cruentas boladoras,
 y quantos buscan las nocturnas horas . . . (ll. 489-96)

Heavy blackness has replaced the earlier transcending light. In the increasing rhetorical pace one senses angry emotion accumulating. Once again, though, Soto recoils from overt violence, regaining without transition an untroubled vision of mercy and justice, which makes him eager to

volver de aquesta a su luziente Esfera,
 pues quanto encierra del jardin la planta,
 es A. B. C. de aquella ciencia santa.
 La vista agradecida
 a tan dulces fauores,
 se buelue alegre a festejar las flores . . . (ll. 500-05)

The garden appears more than ever a refuge and a retreat from the brutality of the human world, clearly emblemized by the claws and fangs of the world of brutes.

The double-leveled sense of "su luziente Esfera" (l. 500) clearly refers to the neo-Platonic heaven and to the garden, which has, through the reflection in its flowers of the starry skies, acquired for its creator something of their transcendency. (The age-old image of flowers as stars is regenerated by this deeply religious gardener.) It is clear, all the same, that an untroubled neo-Platonic spirituality is

not accessible from the garden. The secular world keeps breaking too insistently into the inner world it shelters. Liberation of the spiritual self will have to await the more orthodox upward surge of the poem's epilogue, although even then, of necessity, delivery from the frictions of the secular world will not be definitive.

In analyzing the *Mansion setima* and the poem's epilogue, I will return to the issues just raised. To turn now to the question of style, and in particular *culteranismo*: cancellation of the "sin adorno" element announced in the opening lines appears to have been conceived by Soto as a way of reinforcing the status of *Parayso* as poetry; it meant elaborating the element of *elocutio*. In addition, it permits him to wield literary style, like Góngora, as a barrier to all but those in the know. In this sense his style corresponds perfectly to the walls that shield the privacy of his garden. But Soto's cultivation of the *culterano* style, unlike his cultivation of the garden, turns out to be inexpert. He had essayed the style previously only sporadically; now he has embraced it without reserve. Whatever weaknesses his performance as poet reveals stem mainly from inadequate blending of style with substance.

It goes without saying, to be sure, that Soto is capable of notable lyric refinement, as will be seen presently. A single example will suffice for the moment: his skillful manipulation of *chiaroscuro*: "Y oye la voz del Padre Poderoso, / que a la luz disfrazada corre el velo" (ll. 110-11). Or, in another context, via the same metaphorical vehicle with a more chromatically nuanced tenor:

A tanta hermosura corre el velo
de sus galas felpadas Cipariso,
bellisimo Proteo,
que executa en verdores su deseo. (ll. 156-59)⁶

In the culture of both mind and garden, Soto shows much concern with roots—roots etymological and roots botanical, roots genealogical as well. On the first page of his *Parayso* (*Obras*, 369), in the dedication to the Marqués de Mondéjar, he is already referring to the latter's grandfather as the "rayz generosa de estas esclarecidas ramas." Later (l. 997) we will find him referring conversely to the noble lineage (*prosapia*) of flowering plants. Both by temperament and through the overripeness of the mid-century baroque culture in which he is steeped, Soto is impelled to go down or back to the origins and sources of things, to pursue particulars and details for their own sake (not necessarily accurately or relevantly), sometimes even by departing from his customary philological precision to build on etymologies as freely as he might graft scions onto rootstocks.

In Soto's Forward, "Al que leyere" (*Obras* 370), the reader's attention is invited to "las [vozes] asperas si se colocaron con cuydadoso decreto." As befits a gardener, residents of whose vegetable kingdom do not always take kindly to cultivation, Soto appreciates the contrastive and even the shock effect of a certain roughness of stylistic texture. Such effects usually startle by injecting into tranquilly onrunning lines the discordant consonant clusters of unfamiliar words. Local place names of Arabic origin may be used metonymically. One whole line (930) abruptly reads "Daravenazes, Fargues, Xaraguies," with a marginal clarification that these are the "pagos de las frutas" replicated in a basket on the head of a marble statue. (This amounts to the verbal equivalent, geographically footnoted, of a plastic *frutero*.) Obscure foreign names suddenly appear: Amphytrite in a fountain "haze, asida a un caracol torcido, / catadupas sonoras al sentido" (ll. 528-29). She is spurting trumpet blasts evidently, but why are they "catadupas"? The word turns out to be the Greek form of a local Egyptian name for the cataracts of the Nile. The effect is striking but disproportionate. Soto's penchant for occasional stylistic harshness clashes here with his equally professed concern (*Obras* 370) that the "vozes, ò frases adoptiuas [parezcan] naturales." He is less jarring when less *recherché*, as when trumpets of flowers "escandalizan" (l. 1028), a purely imaginary conjuncture.

There is ample evidence of unusual concern with verbal art but Góngora's dexterity is missing. The result can be confusing or drily perfunctory. Of jasmine blossoms personified first as soldiers, then as *cupidillos*, Soto writes: "Dulzes rayos apuntan a los ojos / del olfato, y disparan al sentido" (ll. 868-69).⁷ Góngora would never have let a hyperbaton go so far astray. Occasionally Soto carries asyndeton to the point of non-functionality, or even non-intelligibility:

Parayso cerrado,
 azero que empuñò filos ardientes,
 Cherubin enojado,
 destierra inobedientes (ll. 100-03).

He can let the flexibility of the *silva* lapse into a jingle by handling its onrunning lines as if they were couplets:

El arbol por sin fruto condenado,
 del gran Iuez se le ofreciò doblado,
 y la tiniebla horrible
 le acompaña apazible (ll. 297-300).

A temperamental factor figures in Soto's failure to manage the full resources of Gongorine style: his lack of ready *ingenio*. The point has again been made by Elsa Dehennin. Citing Góngora's antithetical "desafíos a la mimesis" of the type "o púrpura nevada o nieve roja," in which neither member has any but a purely imaginary referent, she quotes only seemingly analogous but actually routine contrapositions in Soto of the type: "Si matizada esmaltes, / esmaltada matizes" (ll. 956-57) and deploras: "la pobreza dorada que embellece el mundo-paraiso con recursos poéticos en vías de codificación" (Dehennin 74).

Still, in fairness to Soto it needs to be pointed out that he compensates for his lack of imaginativeness in regard to the most refined types of syntactic contraposition, by a marked facility with *energeia* (*evidentia*): the reader often feels he is seeing with his own eyes. Whether inbred or acquired, such ability almost makes the reader feel he is seeing certain flowers, plants, garden prospects for the first time and allows him to pierce *culteranista* straitjackets. Soto can even enable us to visualize flowers he avoids naming directly, as in the case of the mysterious "Segundo" of the house of the *Alheli* (ll. 1019-23). (More on this below.) His interest in flowers is much more "existential" than allegorical; traditional floral symbolism plays little part in the poem.

In the face of the standard neo-Aristotelian position, Soto evidently saw metrical form as essential to his *poiesis*. Addressing the reader (*Obras* 370), he asks him to judge "si los versos y su cadencia vienen con la idea de los jardines y sus siete mansiones." The connection might be called more expressive than doctrinal; he is clearly speaking, unlike Trillo, not as a critic but as a poet anxious to maintain the mobility of his lines so as to keep his descriptive art—at least, its topiary segment—free of the static effects too frequent with ecphrasis. The opening of Góngora's first *Soledad*, with its link between feet of verse and the footsteps of a wanderer, is a likely subtext here.

The total movement of Soto's *Parayso* will be toward filling the void left by the absence of a *peregrino* of his own. Despite the lack of a protagonist, the percepts of the senses are pervasively present throughout the poem, surely owing to the keenness of Soto's own sensory receptivity. This is particularly true in the case of the two that Soto calls "[el] trascendiente, [el] perspicaz sentido" (l. 1029): the olfactory and the visual, to which a gardener is bound to be especially receptive. In applying such attributes to these senses, Soto hints that for him their suggestiveness does not stop at the purely physical. *Trascendiente* carries a certain spirituality with its suggestion of incense rising; *perspicaz* alludes to seeing beyond surface appearances.

For anyone capable of clearing the walls of the garden and the stylistic hurdles of the poem, the reward is a feast of the senses similar to the celebrations of them, one at a time, that were then in vogue on Flemish and Spanish canvases, and in the verse of Marino. In Soto's case we have, of course, the example of Góngora to thank, but most of all the peculiar groundedness of his own poetic outlook, his botanist's eye for the minutiae of growing things. The luxuriance evident throughout in regard to sight and fragrance culminates, like so much else in the poem, in the *Mansion Setima*, but before examining it a few words are in order on auditory percepts, less prominent but never merely perfunctory and occasionally very striking.

The sound of water running, gushing, falling as cascade or spray provides a treble descant throughout. Air and foliage constantly echo to birdsong in more than conventional fashion. Soto has listened to the birds singing in his garden and has sought to sensitively record their effect on him. A passage at the end of the third *mansion* (ll. 404-31) brings birdsong strikingly into the foreground. Soto has begun this *mansion* intent on underscoring "mellow fruitfulness" under the aegis of Vertumnus and Pomona; there is a veritable *bodegón* of the colors, shapes and fleshiness of pomegranates, pears, peaches, apples, quinces, grapes. Then, two thirds of the way through the *mansion* (l. 404), resonance is brought to the fore decisively with the song of the linnet.⁸

In the description which then follows of the *camachuelo* (the redpoll, a red-crested finch), the self-love of Narcissus acquires a new basis: instead of self-contemplation in water, the sound of one's own voice in the air. The *aplicacion* of the myth is ingenious and effectively compact:

Camachuelo Narciso
del agua no, del viento lisongero,
se escucha, y en su canto se enamora. (ll. 412-14)

With each birdsong described, acoustic effects, both explicit and phonic, are heightened. The process culminates with the nightingale, the effect of whose song is rendered in seventeen lines (415-31), which show Soto at the height of his powers. Although at one point the bird's *tiernos quexidos* are mentioned (l. 424), it is not the mythic *maerens Philomela* of Virgil and Garcilaso that is heard in these lines; Soto is focusing on the musicality of the song in and of itself.⁹ Though as a matrix for his description, he resorts at the beginning to the scholastic concepts of matter and form; he transcends such barrenness through an infusion of water imagery:

en la materia linfa, que es bolante,
 si en lo formal Océano elegante,
 el Ruyseñor, el Amfion con buelo,
 assido al blando ramo,
 sube en su voz y se avezina al cielo . . . (ll. 416-20)

The fluidity and the expansiveness of the bird's singing are caught in these lines, which pick up on the previous imagery of air as water, blurring the distinction between these elements and adding in Amphion a mythic referent. The imagery functions not only through an almost algebraic exchange of attributes, as occurs in *Góngora*. It seems to venture beyond such an exchange to suggest a more subtle fusion of subjects and media. One wishes Soto had more often allowed himself to wander down such impressionistic byways.

After the evocation in line 418 of music riding waves of water/air, line 419 anchors the discourse firmly back in the here and now. Yet the very next line transports us to the zenith of the song, for it is the descending song that is to be dwelt upon: four heptasyllables dropping off into a final hendecasyllable:

De firmes sostenidos,
 hecho de si reclamo
 con dulces passos baxa,
 y con tiernos quexidos
 arrastra regalando los sentidos. (ll. 421-25)

The six concluding lines of the passage, all but one an end-stopped question or exclamation, abruptly shift the tone from lyrically legato to colloquially staccato. The reader is plunged into the disquieting dark world of the "nocturno passeante" and the "espadachin enamorado," a new version of the earlier encountered world of "quantos buscan las nocturnas horas"¹⁰ The phrase "espadachin enamorado" marks a striking instance of Soto's propensity to roughen textures with an abrupt *salida de tono*. The phenomenon might be likened to a defensive self-inoculation (a *cura en salud*) intended to ward off the world's hostile obtrusiveness, to protect what is most dear to him.

The expression of the impact of the garden upon the "transcendent" and the "perspicacious" senses can best be treated, as noted earlier, in the context of a commentary on the *Mansion Setima*, the climactic one of the poem. In the initial invocation to Euterpe, the authorial voice acquires its most personal tone yet:

Euterpe disfrazada
 no me dexey, aunque en edad cansada,

tened vn poco el vuelo,
 passead la carrera,
 hasta salir de la mansion postrera . . . (ll. 938-42)

Stay the course with me over this final lap of garden and poem—indeed, of life itself—says this plea; sustain my waning strength to the end. The author has at this point stepped in, in his own person, filling the role of the missing protagonist more forthrightly even than in the excursus of the fourth *Mansion*. This last garden makes its presence felt first by its impact on the nose: “perfumes llueue, y ambares respira” (l. 946). The imprecision of this initial impression gives way as it becomes clear that a “snow shower” is descending from a (white) musk-rose bush and from jasmine, a climbing plant that we already know carpets the garden walls with fragrant white blooms. A gardener’s eye is clearly seeing and appreciating sensuously a particular corner of his garden. The eye (and nose) then drop to ground level, again registering first a general impression: “Mientras las flores bellas / retrato dan con alma a las estrellas” (ll. 951-52). The recurrent analogy between flowers and stars will prove to have been re-enlivened here by the religious subtext that underlies the whole *mansion*. There had already been a hint of the link in the earlier conceit that made the seventh garden “retrato, imitacion de nube” (l. 944) and Soto will provide others.¹¹

The softness of a flowered carpet is now insisted upon with tactile delectation because the carpet (the flowers in their beds) is intended for the buskin of Euterpe, who is at once addressed (l. 953), again in the second person plural. There is soon still another apostrophe to her: “Apazible tirana de las horas / que ofreci en vuestro nombre a las Auroras” (ll. 963-64). Soto then moves from evoking poetic composition to the ostensible business of the *mansion*: his own floral variation (to be examined in a moment) on the courtly love theme, for which there was an immediate precedent in Góngora’s *romance* “Del Palacio de la Primavera.”

Some 120 lines later the author again addresses the Muse in a voice that shifts from narrational to personal:

. . . todo viuiente
 llenarse (o quanto!) ves Musa elegante,
 puesto que eres maestra,
 hija del eloquente,
 alado mensagero,
 de Apostrofe vestida,
 color bien atendida
 buelve el passo ligero,

la voz buelve sonante,
 al soberano Actor, al tierno amante,
 y dile assi: Señor, cuya grandeza . . . (ll. 1081-92)

In these eleven transitional lines the second person noticeably shifts to the singular. The poem then concludes with a 55-line envoi or epilogue in the form of a prayer. The initial difficulties of the transitional lines are easy to resolve. Before elucidating the lines, a look at the pageantry that preceded (it might be called a combined fashion and flower show) is in order to bring out its visual and olfactory vividness.

The flowers are presented "en cònsulta indecisa" (l. 962), trying on their fanciest outfits as, in a kind of dress rehearsal—"por abril ensayo" (l. 970)—, they consider the best colors in which to greet the May. (At one point [l. 994] the "ensayo" is spoken of as for a wedding.) Color is thus highlighted from the start, to be quickly followed by fragrance.

The flowers' traditional queen opens the proceedings: "Purpureo diò su parecer la rosa" (l. 975). Her salutation welcoming the May pointedly excludes Saturn (i.e. Melancholy) but not "eloquente Mercurio" in calling upon the Olympians (ll. 970-80). Four flowers now step forth, grouped by color—first red, then purple—and noticeably by scent and even by what would now be called genus (*prosapia*). First, the *Clauel* and the *Melotisa*, two spice-pinks:

Mas galan el Clauel que presumido
 de grana se aduirtidò, y ambar vestido,
 y por de su prosapia, lado a lado,
 saliò la Melotisa de encarnado (ll. 995-98)¹²

The implication of line 998 in the present context is that another color might have been selected. (De los Ríos mentions three more.) As a garden designer Soto keeps in mind a complete range of color possibilities. (He will later remark pointedly of the tulip, then being imported extensively from Flanders: "Entre inmensas riquezas de colores / la virtud olvidò de los olores" [ll. 1070-71].)

The last two flowers of the initial foursome, the violet and the hyacinth, present themselves in the purple shades still most common today and evidently much prized by Soto:

Niña trabeseando la Violeta,
 se leuantò con el olfato vfana,
 Iacinto en esta Corte adelantado,
 de Telemon, que es vltimo trofeo,

la sigue, y su color con galanteo.
 Constantinopla se presenta vano,
 hermoçando purpuras de Tiro,
 en el galan de sus Estrellas giro (ll. 999-1106)

To make sense of Soto's circumlocutory way of stating his preference among purple floral shades, "vano" in line 1005 should be emended to read "en vano." The sense, though remaining cryptically condensed, can then be unraveled. The color of the flowrets of the hyacinth, once the curls of the unfortunate youth for whom the Greeks named the flower, surpasses even the famous purples of Tyre, or, metonymically, of Constantinople. In calling the flowrets "estrellas," Soto is alluding to the constellation into which the gods also changed the youth. The allusion forms one more link in the chain binding flowers and stars that subtends the whole poem and in particular the last *mansion*.

But how, critics have asked, can Hyacinth be "de Telemon . . . vltimo trofeo" (l. 1002)? (Egido asserts that Soto in fact means "Telamon" but fails to pursue this lead.) A laconic reference in the margin to the thirteenth book of the *Metamorphoses* provides the clue. In Ovid's work we read (ll. 394-98) that a hyacinth sprang a second time from the blood of Ajax, son of Telamon. The labored avoidance of the hackneyed primary etiology of the flower may show off the fine tuning of Soto's classical learning; artistically it is far-fetched and clumsy.

After an interim of slightly shopworn floral generalities (ll. 1007-13), which shows the flowers gathered in a *regio ramillete*—a bouquet fit for a queen—, attention to individual blossoms and flowering plants resumes. These are again introduced in a primarily botanical order. A sampling will reveal the vividness of their presentation.

The *Alheli* (gillyflower) comes first. Characterized by its usefulness to the pharmacist, it wears a *gauan de gualda*, a sign that we shall now be in the yellow range. Next comes its more elaborately arrayed *segundón* ("de su casa, el Segundo"). Though the flower is not otherwise identified, the arithmetical cast of its description as a rich spend-thrift spilling his hoard—"Mas que suma y que resta, multiplica," (l. 1023)—lets one visualize drifts of small coinlike flowrets.

The colors veer a little toward white with the "Mosquetas, Siringas, y Iazmines" (l. 1027). De los Ríos (74) lists the second-named as *seringa*; it is our syringa or mock-orange and its association with *Syrinx* is through the hollowness of its stalk. The attribution of trumpets to these blooms is conceivable but far-fetched visually and botanically. (The striking phonic effect that the wording nevertheless creates has already been noted.) When an "authentic" trumpet-

flower, the jonquil, subsequently appears in yellow and white (ll. 1048-49), the auditory conceit is dropped; Soto lets the visual impact speak for itself: "Con tela doble se vistiò el Iunquillo / de blanco y amarillo" (ll. 1048-49).

After the appearance of the jonquil, there is an abrupt shift (l. 1052) back into the purple sector of the color wheel, now on its blue side, with the larkspur (delphinium), called "knight's spur" (*espuela de caballero*) in Spanish:

De morado galan el Cauallero,
mas suaue enlazò,
que rigurosa,
Espuela pabonada, no de azero:
azul saliò y morado,
ginete ayroso, borcegui calçado
y a toda flor le pareciò delirio,
encrespase el Pelicano pomposo,
iunto al candido Lirio. (ll. 1052-59)

The conceit at the heart of this description takes the name of the flower as a synecdoche and focuses on the whole—the armored knight—rather than the part, the spur, to which alone there is a close resemblance in each flowret. The inversion, in the order of introduction, of the two parts of the flower's name—the whole, *Cauallero*, then two lines later, the part, *Espuela*—corresponds to the striking impact the tall spikes make before the eye settles on the flowrets. But it is the attribute of the spur—*pabonada, y no de azero*—that adds the most subtle chromatic note. According to the *Diccionario de Autoridades*, *pavonar* means "dar color azulado oscuro al hierro. Díxose por ser el color de los visos de las plumas del Pavón." The afterthought "no de azero" highlights the predominantly chromatic ground of the metaphor. The effectiveness of this Gongorine definition by elimination is enhanced by the implication of metallic highlights; the dark shade of the blue also places it appropriately close to purple. Perhaps most striking of all, Soto has caught to perfection the total chromatic quality of what could be called the classic delphinium: "blue petals shading into purple with transitional glints of both colors. No painter of *floreros*, such as the Blas de Ledesma whose canvases have been mentioned earlier in the poem (l. 768), would have been able in his purely pictorial medium to combine chromatic and verbal ingenuity as Soto has done.

Why the *Pelicano* in the next-to-last line of this long description? (Egido errs in writing "pelicano.") Rather than a bird, the term evidently denotes someone with white in his hair, in this case simply the

Cauallero. Soto clearly has a nurseryman's eye for what is now called the bee of the flowrets: the white cluster of stamens and pistil that stands out like a bee busy at the base of each of the small blue cones of bloom. The total effect is not unlike the whitecaps of waves; the tallness of the flower's spikes is also alluded to in the play on *encrespase*. The tall *Pelicano pomposo* is finally contrasted a little disparagingly with the simple whiteness of the *candido Lirio*, a flower that had been mentioned in passing just before the delphinium as "la noble Azuzena / cuya virtud en las distancias suena" (ll. 1050-51). It will be recalled that the white lily, symbolic of purity, had figured emblematically in depictions of the Annunciation since the early Renaissance. Its double introduction here is no caprice, as will be seen in a moment.¹³

The self-presentations over, three transitional lines follow:

La Magestad su omnipotente diestra
 abriò, con bendicion todo viuiente,
 llenarse (ò quanto!) ves Musa elegante. (ll. 1080-82)

The *Euterpe disfrazada* of the opening line of the *mansion* is being addressed once again—as already noted, now in the second person singular not previously employed. The sense, to judge from the context, is active: Euterpe disguising, Euterpe *as*, not *in* disguise. The one disguised will now prove to be simply the Virgin Mary. At the beginning of the *mansion* the phrase *Euterpe disfrazada* had evidently connoted in Soto's mind an idea of double identity but by now metamorphosis is taking over. It is all but complete by the time the *omnipotente diestra* is raised; if two lines later the "Musa elegante" is still being addressed, the likelihood is that Soto by this time is proclaiming Mary to be his one muse. If one makes this assumption, all that follows falls into place. The "eloquente / 'alado mensajero" (ll. 1084-85) is not the "eloquent" Mercury called upon earlier (l. 980) but the Angel of the Annunciation, Gabriel. A syncretism of pagan and Christian, of the kind that allowed the pagan deities to survive deep into the Christian era, seems to be taking place before our eyes.

But how can the Virgin Mary be described as "de Apostrofe vestida" (l. 1086)? The most cogent explanation is that Soto, with his usual philological exactitude, is using the term in an iconographical, not a rhetorical sense; both senses incorporate the root meaning of the Greek, a turning away. The term would here refer to Mary's shy, maidenly shrinking back from God's unexpected messenger, a pose familiar in pictorial art from the early Renaissance on, as the depiction of Mary became less hieratic and more human. If Soto is on doctrinally shaky ground in calling Mary the Archangel's daughter,

however figuratively he may be speaking, he seems unconcerned. It is not as a canon or Inquisitorial secretary but in the privacy of his "ageno de dotrinās monte" (l. 688) that he is speaking.

It is as intercessor, in any case, that Mary is being addressed, by a voice that, completing its modulation, is becoming a fervent personal one. In its urgency it puts into the Virgin's mouth the words addressed to God the Creator that she is to speak to him. From the opening paean to the concluding prayer, the personal overtones become increasingly dominant. The neo-Aristotelian scholastic cast of the thought is evident but the broad survey of God's universe that follows is personally adumbrated. Striking emphasis is laid on the presence of God's love in the nature (*natura naturata*) of the world he has created with such mathematical precision:

Tu, que con sabio proceder el modo
 amas en quanto obrò naturaleza,
 porque la hiziste en numeros cabales,
 en peso justo y con igual medida.
 Tu que assistiendo en los bolantes giros,
 que desplegaron a la luz tus dedos,
 de tu quietud no sales . . . (ll. 1095-1101)

Emphasis is not now on the *bolantes giros* (though named in l. 1099), as it was in the excursus of the fourth *mansion*, but on their unmoved Mover and on the full sweep of his *earthly* creation. One has the impression that Soto has finally hit the stride toward which he had been tending. This is especially so when he sees the Creator superseding Nature and taking direct charge of botanical processes, acting, one might almost say, like a dirt gardener:

Criador inefable,
 cuya temida mano vencedora
 retirada se encierra
 dentro de las entrañas de la tierra,
 adonde organizando las raizes,
 con mixtos elementos
 con sustancias, humores, calidades,
 muestra las repetidas variedades,
 en los verdes fructiferos sustentos,
 en formas de las flores, y matices,
 que sin pinzel colora,
 negando al mas cuydoso lo imitable.
 Tu que en este retazo lo agradable,
 recoges de las faldas, de la Aurora.

Y en este estrecho emisfero,
das a breve Epiciclo gran luzero . . . (ll. 1117-32)

The gardener's rootedness in the earth and his keen insider's eye for stem support, blossom design and floral pigment culminate remarkably in these lines. Even the baroque topos of God as peerless painter (l. 1127) is rejuvenated. The astronomical figure of lines 1131-32 reconciles for one last time the limitlessness of God's universe with the confines of Soto's *retazo*, the walled garden patch where he is writing (as the deictics of lines 1129 and 1131 show). The *gran luzero* of line 1132 re-articulates the view of the garden as a "luziente Esfera" introduced at the end of the excursus of the fourth *mansion* (l. 500).

As the prayer winds down, the personal voice becomes intimately confessional, revealing that the deep wounds left by personal conflicts have not healed:

Tu que si me castigas, me consuelas,
me atribulas, y animas,
me alegras, si me aflixes;
y mi muerte no quieres,
puesto que assi me estimas,
que a solas me corriges . . . (ll. 1133-38)

Each of the first three lines quoted makes words and acts of comfort and reconciliation a counterweight to those of reprimand, with the clear implication that the former are not to be found among men. The *a solas* of line 1138 points to the public and dishonoring character of the humiliations Soto has suffered as a result of legal and ecclesiastical reproofs and rebuffs, making clear that if he prizes solitude it is because it can be shared unreservedly with an understanding God—a God speaking both within his conscience and through the natural world that Soto's art has shaped protectively around him. A sense that true humility is welcome in God's eyes but unwelcome in men's pervades the few remaining lines of the poem. The total meaning of *Parayso* is contained in the concluding *exemplum*: *Puchritudo ab intus*—beauty comes from within. In the end it is with the central lyric strain in Soto's voice that his reader is left.

We have seen this voice move, with some hesitation and some shuttling from that of a chronicler or an impersonal narrator to a lyric voice with personal and confessional overtones. Soto, it might be said, has found himself in the course of composing his poem, has made it the expression of a unique outlook—a poem which, however flawed in execution, still remains a major contribution to seventeenth-century Spanish letters. He has found a descriptive mode all

his own, equidistant from Góngora's in the *Soledades*, from the pastoral eclogue (his term *mansiones* has an entirely different ring), even from the georgic as practiced by Hesiod and Virgil. He compensates for his lack of ready wit not only by his sensory alertness but, when at his best, by astuteness in making his classical culture and his philological learning stylistically operative. *Parayso*, his crowning achievement, fuses effectively the dominant concerns of his mature years: horticulture and divine love. The world of men makes its presence felt only *in absentia*, as it were.

In the end, the poem leaves one with a strong impression of Soto's capacity for, or at least his aspiration toward, reconciliation, of his voice's non-doctrinaire way of speaking and singing, once it has retreated into the seclusion of the "ageno de dotrinas monte." Not so much eclectic as inclusive and accomodating, it can rise to neo-Platonic heights at one moment, neo-Aristotelian at another. It builds into the fabric of the poem its hesitations between history and poetry, between Clio, Euterpe and the only seemingly missing Erato, between the esthetic and the earthy; between ecphrastic statuary of fountain and garden, and figures organically shaped in live greenery; between the varied greens of foliage and the broad color gamut of inflorescence. I would even go so far as to suggest that with his *Parayso* Soto is seeking to lift the standing of horticulture from the rank of mechanical art to that of liberal art, as El Greco, Lope, and Lope's painter friend Vincencio Carducho had attempted to do earlier for painting.¹⁴ That, however, is another story.

Notes

¹I have used the text of the original edition as reproduced by Gallego Morell (*Obras*, 1950) for all citations; the text found in ed. Egido (in both 1981 and 1993) is not reliable. I have regularly referred to Egido's cumulative line numbering, however, reproducing only exceptionally the numbering by page found in *Obras*. My only departure from the *Obras* text has been to reduce initial capitals of lines to lower case.

²The title of the manual reads: *Agricultura de jardines, que trata de la manera que se han de criar, gobernar, y conservar las plantas*. Remarking that for no one can gardening be too humble an occupation, De los Ríos addresses himself to both proprietors and journeymen. (He does warn the former to keep their best specimens away from the light fingers of the latter.) He excuses his colloquial vernacular with the remark that gardeners "no saben latin para poder [las plantas] conocer por la orden de los herbarios," but shows himself acutely aware of the confusing regional diversity of the resultant vernacular names. He dismisses this whole problem with naive linguistic chauvinism.

He will be naming plants, he says, "por los nombres comunes que todos los jardineros saben, y ellos como modernos les han puesto" (33). Just as for Soto sixty years later, *jardinero* is for him a very broad term. It takes in everyone who enjoys flower gardens—the smaller the better—both for the sensory pleasure they afford, especially to nose and eye, and for the satisfaction inherent in the imposing of *lazos*—the knot gardens of his British contemporaries—in intricate man-made patterns, upon Nature.

³The assumption that the seven ascending heavens of Moslem eschatology are a decisive factor in the disposition of the seven gardens of Soto's paradise needs more persuasive demonstration, in my view, than it has hitherto received.

⁴The Pollux in question is evidently not the twin of Castor, as Egido assumes, but the Greek author of an *Onomasticon*. I have not found in it the statement about the unreliability of Heaven to which Soto refers. It has perhaps survived only in the *Aetimologiae* of Fulgentius, to which there is a marginal reference. (The *Onomasticon* itself has survived only fragmentarily.)

⁵"Quando espiritu claro, / desdeñadas las mas alegres horas, / que sabe, y puede dar el tiempo auaro, / entre plumas del viento boladoras, / llega a la edad que mide tres edades, / eternidad de tres eternidades, / y lo que allá en su mente auia resuelto / ve criar de la nada, / no de materia, ò semen preparada, / con virtud de su espiritu profundo, / o su infalible ciencia, / o su inmensa prouidencia. / O con quererlo solo, / quatro sustancias con principio al mundo" (ll. 456-70). Noticeably, the understood third person subject (*espiritu*) referred to by the possessive *su* shifts in these lines (between its occurrences in l. 463 and l. 466) from the subjective self (*espiritu claro*) to the Godhead (*espiritu profundo*). The shift is not definitive, for later (ll. 479-99) the understood subject of the third-person verbs (*espiritu*) will clearly denote again the subjective self. Behind the vacillation one senses an awareness on Soto's part of his own mind as an aspect of universal Mind, the closest he can come temperamentally to a sense of union with the Godhead. Significantly, the excursus ends (l. 500: *su luciente esfera*) in a third person that appears to embrace both the self in its garden and God in heaven.

⁶Cyparissus is the cypress tree. One notes the contextual aptness of writing *verdores* rather than the more frequent *verduras*. Of *verdores* the *Diccionario de Autoridades* says: "Se toma tambien por la mocedad, ù juventud, ò las acciones de ella."

⁷Since Gallego Morell nowhere in *Obras* indicates what his criterion has been in regard to the reproduction of punctuation, one must assume that it is Soto who has left out a comma at the end of line 868. Even if one is supplied, however, the awkwardness remains.

⁸The varicolored linnet (*Gilguerillo*), first called in Gongorine terms, a "ramillete de plumas," then becomes oxymoronically "flor bolante del jardin canora." It is the listener's response to the linnet's song that is highlighted

from the beginning of the passage: "Suspenso tiene y de su voz colgado / al mas huesped, ò menos admirado" (l. 404).

⁹Significantly, María Rosa Lida did not see fit to include Soto's nightingale in her surveys of the *maerens Philomela* in ancient and in Spanish literature (1938 and 1939).

¹⁰The last two lines—"Quien tanto viò en el suelo? / Quien tal fineza en tan pequeño amante?"—contain an oblique reference to a Plutarchan *chria* of which Lope de Vega was also fond. See Trueblood 1974, 3 and 651, n. 3.

¹¹The concept of the garden as a reflection of heaven on earth, rooted in the double meaning of *parayso*, is a *leitmotif* of the poem, lapidarily summed up in the already cited lines: "Pues quanto encierra del jardin la planta, / es A B C de aquella ciencia santa"(501-02). By the end of the poem Soto will be rapturously attributing to the garden the glow of a bright star. (ll. 1131-32).

¹²Gregorio de los Ríos lists *melotisa* as *menotisa* (56) and connects it with the *clavellina*. Lope somewhere calls it *minutisa*. Egido's note on this word is beside the point.

¹³The catalogue of "noble" flowers ultimately takes brief notice of their lackeys: "Treboles, Angelinas, Papagayos" (l. 1075). The second plant eludes me; it does not seem to be angelica. The reference in the first and last cases seems to be to bicolor and tricolor liveries, respectively: clover comes in red and white; the variably tricolor amaranth (*papagayo*) is named for the three colors of some species of the bird. Soto may even be recalling the root meaning of *gayo*: varicolored. The self-presentations conclude with the herbs. Not noted for inflorescence, they are here simply menials; their function being utilitarian, not esthetic, they are not even individually named. Their medicinal value is recognized rather condescendingly in facile Gongorine puns and contrastive turns of phrase: "son valientes, / de hierro no, cargadas de virtudes / que si no venden vidas, dan saludes" (ll. 1077-79).

¹⁴On this subject, see Gállego, Chaps. VIII and IX. In "Al que leyere" Soto writes of himself: "Conseguirà su intento, inclinando a este ejercicio [gardening] y de el sacando alabanzas al Gran Criador con la apostrofe que acaba." I take these words to be more than lip-service.

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