

INFORMATION TO USERS

This reproduction was made from a copy of a document sent to us for microfilming. While the most advanced technology has been used to photograph and reproduce this document, the quality of the reproduction is heavily dependent upon the quality of the material submitted.

The following explanation of techniques is provided to help clarify markings or notations which may appear on this reproduction.

1. The sign or "target" for pages apparently lacking from the document photographed is "Missing Page(s)". If it was possible to obtain the missing page(s) or section, they are spliced into the film along with adjacent pages. This may have necessitated cutting through an image and duplicating adjacent pages to assure complete continuity.
2. When an image on the film is obliterated with a round black mark, it is an indication of either blurred copy because of movement during exposure, duplicate copy, or copyrighted materials that should not have been filmed. For blurred pages, a good image of the page can be found in the adjacent frame. If copyrighted materials were deleted, a target note will appear listing the pages in the adjacent frame.
3. When a map, drawing or chart, etc., is part of the material being photographed, a definite method of "sectioning" the material has been followed. It is customary to begin filming at the upper left hand corner of a large sheet and to continue from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. If necessary, sectioning is continued again—beginning below the first row and continuing on until complete.
4. For illustrations that cannot be satisfactorily reproduced by xerographic means, photographic prints can be purchased at additional cost and inserted into your xerographic copy. These prints are available upon request from the Dissertations Customer Services Department.
5. Some pages in any document may have indistinct print. In all cases the best available copy has been filmed.

**University
Microfilms
International**

300 N. Zeeb Road
Ann Arbor, MI 48106

8505908

Harris, Mary Arthurlene

SOME ELEMENTS OF STRUCTURE IN THE POETRY OF BLAS DE OTERO

The University of Oklahoma

Ph.D. 1984

**University
Microfilms
International** 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106

THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA
GRADUATE COLLEGE

SOME ELEMENTS OF STRUCTURE
IN THE POETRY OF
BLAS DE OTERO

A DISSERTATION
SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

By
MARY ARTHURLENE HARRIS
Norman, Oklahoma
1984

SOME ELEMENTS OF STRUCTURE
IN THE POETRY OF
BLAS DE OTERO
A DISSERTATION
APPROVED FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF
MODERN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES

By

James H. Abbott

Leifur H. Huseman

Mary E. Davis

Melvin B. Tolson Jr.

James P. Artman

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My thanks must first go to my departed father who gave me the vision of excelling academically and to my mother and several brothers and sisters who, at one time or another, provided financial help during my years of study and had continued faith in my abilities.

I convey thanks also to Dr. Feiler, Dr. Dunham, and Ms. Janice Thom for their generous help in time of need. To Dr. Daopu Numbere, who was always kind, understanding and supportive, I remain extremely grateful.

A special word of appreciation goes to Dr. James Abbott, the Chairman of my Committee for his patience, his guidance, his willingness to offer assistance academically, financially and emotionally. Without his help I could not have made it this far.

I express my gratitude to the University of Oklahoma Foundation for a Tuition Scholarship for Fall '84, to the members of my Committee for taking the time to read my dissertation and to recommend corrections and changes, and to Cynthia Sharp who typed the final copy.

To all of you, and others I have not mentioned, who

played a part in the realization of this academic achievement,
I say a sincere "Thank you."

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. THE LEXICAL ORGANIZATION	15
III. THE PRONOMINAL STRUCTURE	33
IV. THE INTRODUCTORY EPIGRAPH	40
V. THE EVOLUTION IN VERSE FORM	48
VI. CIRCULAR POEMS	58
VII. POEMS WRITTEN AS CONVERSATIONS/ DIALOGUES	65
VIII. POEMS WITHOUT PUNCTUATION	72
IX. INTERCALATED QUOTATIONS AND CLICHÉS	78
X. PARALLELISMS AND CORRELATIONS	85
XI. PHONIC AND RHYTHMIC STRUCTURAL ELEMENTS	93
XII. CONCLUSION	110
BIBLIOGRAPHY	113

ABSTRACT

Blas de Otero figures among the more eminent poets of the post Civil War period in Spain. He began as a personal, religious poet who evolved to social poetry and later reverted to personal, meditative poetry. This study examines the lexical, pronominal, formal, phonic and rhythmic features that accompany the thematic evolution in Otero's poetry.

Chapter one, the introduction, gives biographical facts about the poet and situates him in his historical, literary and political era. It includes a statement about the existing literary criticism of Otero's works and names the works and articles of Formalist, Structuralist, and traditional criticism that form the basis of this eclectic study. Chapters two and three are a structural description of the lexicon and the pronouns that support the themes of his collections: the search for God expressed in Cántico espiritual, Redoble de conciencia and Ancia, the social struggle for peace, freedom and progress in Pido la paz y la palabra, En castellano and Que trata de España, the transitional period in Mientras, and the poet's meditation on his life, his travels, and his approaching death in the final poems of

Expresión y reunión.

Chapters four through ten treat some elements of the formal structure of Otero's poems, which aim at reaching the masses: the use of epigraphs, the change in verse from the lira and the sonnet to free verse and hybrid forms, circular poems, poems structured as dialogues and conversations, poems without punctuation, those with intercalated quotations and frases hechas, and others that make use of parallelisms and correlations.

Chapter eleven examines the poet's use of sound patterns to create meaning in poems and in word plays, and his use of the enjambement to quicken or slow down the pace of a poem, to accommodate its natural rhythm or for emphasis on key words.

Chapter twelve, the conclusion, is a summation of the aspects of Otero's poetry discussed in the study and a comment on his established position among the poets of postwar Spain.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Although Blas de Otero Muñoz is a well-known poet of the post Civil War period in Spain, factual biographical information about him is limited primarily to autobiographical references in his poetry, to data included in studies by Emilio Alarcos Llorach, Dámaso Alonso, José Luis Cano, José María Castellet, Sabina de la Cruz and María García de Ifach, and to information published in El País when the poet died in 1979.¹ Otero was born into a middle class family in Bilbao on March 15, 1916. He studied with the Jesuits in this city until his family moved to Madrid in 1925. In Madrid, he pursued two degrees: one in Law, which he completed, and another in Arts and Letters, which he abandoned. He fought in the Civil War, first as a member of the gudaris and after a short stay at a campo de depuración, he joined the Nationalist forces.

After the Civil War, Otero served as legal counsel to a metallurgical factory in Vizcaya. He later abandoned this post, devoted himself to poetry, and won such literary prizes as the Premio de la Crítica and the Boscán, Fastenrath and

International Prizes. The poet taught sporadically, worked in a mine for a period of time, and travelled through Spain, France, Switzerland, China, Russia and Cuba.

In 1952, Otero joined the Spanish Communist Party (El Partido Comunista Español) and remained an active member for the rest of his life. He died of a heart failure on June 29, 1979, and was survived by his widow, Sabina de la Cruz. He was buried in the Cementerio Civil in Madrid in accordance with his wishes.

Otero began his poetic career by publishing four poems in the magazine Albor in 1941. In 1942 his first collection of poetry, Cántico espiritual, appeared, and in 1943 he published "Poesías en Burgos" in Escorial.² He thus arrived on the literary scene during the aftermath of the Spanish Civil War (1936-39) and in the midst of the Second World War.³ Dámaso Alonso, in his Poetas españoles contemporáneos, writes of the emotional and intellectual climate of Spain during this period which produced what he calls "poesía desarraigada." He describes it as a time when poets, including himself, were searching for order and stability in a chaotic, incomprehensible world in which everything and everyone seemed monstrous, where hate and injustice reigned.⁴

Sabina de la Cruz, Emilio Alarcos Llorach and Santiago Daydi-Tolson offer a similar perspective in their studies, which situate Blas de Otero in the literary atmosphere of

the times. Sabina de la Cruz sees the vacuum which the individual poet felt as an echo of a collective catastrophe, a crumbling of traditional religious values caused by war and destruction.⁵ Alarcos Llorach and Daydi-Tolson describe the melodious formal poetry fostered by Franco's regime as a panacea for the harsh realities of postwar Spain, against which poets such as Dámaso Alonso and Blas de Otero revolted.⁶

The writers permitted to publish and subsidized by the government in the immediate postwar period were those who concentrated on the revival of a classical style in imitation of Garcilaso and on religious themes in the manner of José García Nieto, Vicente Gaos and José María Valverde. This style, termed Garcilasismo, emphasized form and musicality, so that the possibility of using poetry to convey a practical message was of no importance for those poets who, in accordance with the dictates of the ruling Franco party, chose to be lulled by melodious verses and to soothe the populace with musicality, rendering them oblivious of the bloodshed, atrocities and suffering occasioned by the Civil War.

In addition, the garcilasistas chose religious themes as a means of eluding further the realities of the postwar period. Alarcos Llorach maintains that they dedicated their verses to a Superior Being, to a God in whom they truly believed or whom they created as a refuge from their

personal anguish.⁷ Here again, the wishes of Franco's government were served since the composition of religious poetry meant a postponement of the concern for the immediate present and signalled the recognition and promotion of the Catholic religion which the dictatorship held as one of its principles.

Soon, however, there arose a reaction to this melodious, formalistic, religious poetry as Spanish poets, and even the public, clamoured for a more sincere poetry. In this respect, two poets, Vicente Aleixandre and Dámaso Alonso, were the forerunners with works that were both published in 1944. Aleixandre's Sombra del paraíso marked a return to the realities of postwar Spain, depicting her as a lost paradise and thus expressing a personal emotion which every bereaved Spaniard who had seen his country collapse before his eyes understood.⁸ Although it was not intended to formulate a social protest, Alonso's Hijos de la ira communicated a disillusionment with the world and with being human which all Spaniards could share. But more importantly, it abandoned poetic formalities and expressed the poet's deepest emotions in terms that bordered on everyday language and that made his poetry more true to life.⁹ These two works of Vicente Aleixandre and Dámaso Alonso became a point of reference for later poets including Blas de Otero, Gabriel Celaya, Eugenio de Nora and José Hierro, all of whom addressed the social problems of postwar Spain.

The appearance of Otero's first collection of poetry, Cántico espiritual, in 1942, places him in the group of religious poets of the postwar era. This collection, published during the celebration of the centenary of San Juan de la Cruz, is an imitation of his mystic poetry, whose desire was a union with God. The religious trend continues in Angel fieramente humano (1950), Redoble de conciencia (1951), which won the Premio Boscán in 1950, and in Ancia (1958), for which Otero received the Premio de la Crítica in 1959 and the Premio Fastenrath. In these collections, the poet finds himself in a devastated world, and he seeks comfort and answers to his questions from the Divinity. There is, however, a marked difference between Otero's religious poetry and that of the postwar pseudoclassical group. Like Dámaso Alonso's Hijos de la ira, Otero's collections stand out because of their sincerity in portraying the author's uneasiness in the world. Dámaso Alonso recognizes the similarity between Otero's search for answers and his own search when he cites him as a representative of his "poesía desarraigada."¹⁰ Otero's works deviate further from the norms of the religious poetry prevalent at that time by not concentrating totally on the poetic self, but rather by extending the spectrum of religious invocation to include the author's fellow men.

The inclusion of others in his religious works becomes even more important as they lead to the works of social

concern, Pido la paz y la palabra (1955), En castellano (1959) and Que trata de España (1964), in which the masses become the principal subject, as the poet joins the struggle for peace, justice, liberty and prosperity. God fails to satisfy Otero's needs in the religious works, and the dissatisfied poet ridicules and finally dismisses Him as inconsequential in a world pervaded by war and injustice. Having lived through the Civil War and the rampage and power of Franco's dictatorship, the poet now addresses the situation of Spain and her people. Spain was in economic ruin; little international help was forthcoming, and the poor people suffered most, working hard for meagre wages which could hardly supply their basic needs. These poor people were in need of a spokesman to voice their protest. Moreover, the strict government censorship of writers was another cause for protest by a poet who had been forced to publish one of his collections of social poetry, En castellano, in France with an accompanying French translation and under the title Parler Clair.¹¹ These were two reasons for which Otero condemned the conditions he witnessed in his country.

Following his poetry of social concern, Otero's literary production tapers off. The years 1963-69 mark his travels through communist countries: China, Russia, Cuba. Upon his return to Spain he composed Mientras (1970) and scattered poems which were later collected and included in

the anthology Expresión y reunión published by Alianza in 1981. These later compositions show a change in the poet: his social outbursts diminish as he meditates on his life, his works, his struggles and his approaching death.

Although Otero wrote religious, "desarraigada," and social poetry, it is not possible to situate him entirely within these tendencies.¹² Besides the coincidence with these trends, the poet shares bonds with poets and literary traditions from other countries and epochs. He confesses the influence of San Juan de la Cruz and Fray Luis de León especially on his Cántico espiritual, but he denies any influence of Unamuno, even though his existential crisis in Angel fieramente humano, Redoble de conciencia and Ancia is reminiscent of that of his compatriot's.¹³ Alarcos Llorach also refers to other poetic traditions with which Otero's works coincide in expression and content.¹⁴ These include the Old Testament's portrayal of a God of revenge, Quevedo's serious criticism of Spain, Antonio Machado's clarity and precision and César Vallejo's social preoccupations.

The critical bibliography of Otero's poetry is not extensive, since few critics have made in-depth studies of his compositions. Four studies are worthy of mention. Alarcos Llorach, following Dámaso Alonso's suggestions about the possibilities for a stylistic analysis of Otero's works,¹⁵ has made an appraisal of the poet's compositions up to the year 1955 in La poesía de Blas de Otero.¹⁶

Moraíma de Semprún Donahue has examined themes, imagery and style as indicative of the poet's concern for humanity in Blas de Otero en su poesía.¹⁷ In 1980 a collection of eight articles, Blas de Otero: Study of a Poet, ranging in topic from the works of Blas de Otero, to imagery, literary models and structure in these works, was edited by Carlos Mellizo and Louise Salstad.¹⁸ The most recent study was done in 1983 by Itziar Zapián and Ramón Iglesias who analyzed stylistic and thematic aspects of Otero's works in Aproximación a la poesía de Blas de Otero.¹⁹ In addition to these studies, other articles have appeared which focus on one or more aspects of thematic content, style, imagery or structure.

Three dissertations have been written on Otero's works. Geoffrey Barrow's dissertation, "The Primitive Rebel: Aspects of the Poetry of Blas de Otero" (Brown, 1971) studies Otero as a social poet, with a moral, humanitarian calling, a poet who generalizes his personal discontent with and protest against the political situation of his time to include the inmensa mayoría, and who desires a utopia where all are free and equal. In his dissertation, "Evolución temática y estilística en Blas de Otero" (Colorado, 1973), José Gómez Rabanal traces thematic and stylistic evolutions in Otero's poetry up to Mientras. Finally, Sylvia Rose Sherno shows how Otero uses his poetry to destroy the myths of history, Spain, love, God and self, and to present his

vision of unity with men in "The Poetry of Blas de Otero: 'Una Unidad Revolucionada'" (Univ. of California, L. A., 1978).

None of these studies has presented in a systematic way an analysis of the lexicon and the pronominal structures that accompany the evolution in themes in Otero's works from his first collection, Cántico espiritual, to the final poems of Expresión y reunión. Neither has anyone examined on one occasion and in detail the several formal structures, the phonetics and rhythm of poems as further manifestations of the evolution of Otero's works, as testimony of his poetic ideals and his compositional capabilities. This dissertation provides such a study. It draws ideas from existing critical analyses of Otero's poetry, develops and consolidates them along with original material to provide a new perspective on the author's works. Its purpose is, therefore, that of pointing out various elements of structure that combine to form the poetic whole.

Several works on literary theory have been instrumental in the formulation of the ideas expressed in this dissertation. Among them are general works on methods of criticism, namely Cómo se comenta un texto literario by E. Correa and F. Lázaro Carreter, Lázaro Carreter's Estudios de poética (la obra en sí), Theory of Literature by René Wellek and Austin Warren, and A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature by Wilfred G. Guerin, Earl G. Labor, Lee Morgan and John B.

Willingham.²⁰

The various categories of structural elements established are due in part to the Formalist and Structuralist approaches applied by Roman Jakobson and Claude Lévi-Strauss, Michael Riffaterre and Yuri Lotman in their analyses of poetry.²¹ These approaches which treat the text as a complete whole containing everything necessary for its poetic appreciation and composed of interrelated structural patterns, pointed the way to the lexical, pronominal, phonic and rhythmic aspects of Otero's works, and to the recognition of the formal features of his poems.

Dámaso Alonso and Carlos Bousoño's Seis calas en la expresión literaria española provides the basis for chapter ten, which deals with parallelisms and correlations.²² Jonathan Culler's criticism of the failure of the Structuralist approach to connect the structures observed to the content of the text prompted the decision to relate the structures described in the course of the dissertation to the poetic effect.²³

The study is divided into ten chapters. Chapters two and three involve an analysis of the vocabulary and the pronominal structure that support the evolution in theme in Otero's collections from Cántico espiritual to the final poems of Expresión y reunión. Chapters four through ten examine some formal structures of the poems and note evolutions, changes and modifications that accompany the thematic

and idealistic change in the poet. Finally, chapter eleven treats some uses of the phonic and rhythmic structure of the poem: sound patterns, word plays and enjambement, to express meaning and to underscore ideas.

Notes

¹ Emilio Alarcos Llorach, La poesía de Blas de Otero (Salamanca: Anaya, 1966), pp. 7-9. Dámaso Alonso, Poetas españoles contemporáneos (Madrid: Gredos, 1958), p. 372. José Luis Cano, Antología de la nueva poesía española (Madrid: Gredos, 1972), p. 199, and "Blas de Otero y el soneto heterodoxo," in Blas de Otero: Study of a Poet, eds. C. Mellizo and L. Salstad (Laramie, Wyoming: Univ. of Wyoming, 1980), p. 11. José María Castellet, Un cuarto de siglo de poesía española (Barcelona: Seix Barral, 1966), p. 540. Sabina de la Cruz, Introd., Expresión y reunión, by Blas de Otero (Madrid: Alianza, 1981), pp. 6-48. Moraíma de Semprún Donahue, Blas de Otero en su poesía (Chapel Hill: Univ. of N. Carolina Press, 1977), pp. 13-20. María García de Ifach, Cuatro poetas de hoy (Madrid: Taurus, 1960), p. 135. Rosa María Pereda, "Ha muerto Blas de Otero," El País, 30 June 1979, p. 20.

² Blas de Otero, "Cuatro poemas," Albor, 6 (1941). Cántico espiritual, Cuadernos del Grupo Alea, primera serie núm. 2 (San Sebastián: Gráfico-Editora, S. L., 1942). "Poesías en Burgos," Escorial, 34 (1943), 221-24.

³ For information on the Spanish Civil War see George Orwell, Homage to Catalonia, introd. Lionel Trilling (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1952), John A. Crow, Spain: The Root and the Flower (New York-Evanston-London: Harper & Row, 1963), Salvador de Madariaga, Spain: A Modern History (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1958). For a discussion of the impact of the wars and the economic situation on the philosophical and literary world, see Gemma Roberts, Temas existenciales en la novela española de postguerra (Madrid: Gredos, 1978), pp. 22-31.

⁴ Alonso, pp. 370-71.

⁵ Cruz, p. 14.

⁶ Alarcos Llorach, pp. 19-21. Santiago Daydi-Tolson, The Post-Civil War Spanish Poets (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1983), pp. 2-8.

⁷ Alarcos Llorach, p. 20.

- ⁸ Daydi-Tolson, p. 4.
- ⁹ Daydi-Tolson, p. 7.
- ¹⁰ Alonso, p. 371.
- ¹¹ Blas de Otero, Parler Clair, trans. and prologue Claude Couffon (Paris: Pierre Seghers, 1959).
- ¹² Alarcos Llorach, p. 23.
- ¹³ Leopoldo de Luis, Antología de la poesía religiosa (Madrid: Alfaguara, 1969), pp. 141-43.
- ¹⁴ Alarcos Llorach, pp. 24-25.
- ¹⁵ Alonso, p. 379.
- ¹⁶ Emilio Alarcos Llorach, La poesía de Blas de Otero (Salamanca: Anaya, 1966).
- ¹⁷ Moraíma de Semprún Donahue, Blas de Otero en su poesía (Chapel Hill: Univ. of N. Carolina Press, 1977).
- ¹⁸ Carlos Mellizo and Louise Salstad, eds., Blas de Otero: Study of a Poet (Laramie, Wyoming: Univ. of Wyoming, 1980).
- ¹⁹ Itziar Zapián and Ramón Iglesias, Aproximación a la poesía de Blas de Otero (Madrid: Narcea, S. A., 1983).
- ²⁰ E. Correa and F. Lázaro Carreter, Cómo se comenta un texto literario (Salamanca: Anaya, 1967). F. Lázaro Carreter, Estudios de poética (la obra en sí) (Madrid: Taurus, 1976). René Wellek and Austin Warren, Theory of Literature (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1956). Wilfred G. Guerin, Earle G. Labor, Lee Morgan and John B. Willingham, A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature, 2nd ed. (New York-Hagerstown-Philadelphia-San Francisco-London: Harper & Row, 1979).
- ²¹ Roman Jakobson and Claude Lévi-Strauss, "Les chats de Baudelaire," L'Homme, 2 (1962), 5-21. Michael Riffaterra, Describing Poetic Structures: Two Approaches to Baudelaire's 'Les chats,' in Structuralism, ed. Jacques Ehrmann (New York: Doubleday & Co. Inc., 1970), pp. 188-230. Yuri Lotman, Analysis of the Poetic Text, trans. D. Barton Johnson (Ann Arbor, Michigan: Ardis, 1976).

²² Dámaso Alonso and Carlos Bousoño, Seis calas en la expresión literaria española (Madrid: Gredos, 1951).

²³ Jonathan Culler, Structuralist Poetics (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1975).

CHAPTER II

THE LEXICAL ORGANIZATIONS

As Blas de Otero's themes change from Cántico espiritual to the final poems of Expresión y reunión, so too does the lexicon which accompanies these themes. In his first collections, Cántico espiritual, Angel fieramente humano, Redoble de conciencia and Ancia, where the theme is a search for God, the vocabulary is mystical and existential, denoting a struggle with God which eventually leads to heated words of doubt and defiance. When the poet turns to social themes in Pido la paz y la palabra, En castellano and Que trata de España, he changes his vocabulary to coincide with his desire to be counted with the masses and to proclaim their struggle for justice and their hope for the future. In Mientras and in the final poems of Expresión y reunión, his vocabulary expresses a preoccupation with death, although he still maintains a few words that designate his social commitment.

Cántico espiritual¹ voices a desire for a mystical union with God which Otero reinforces with the repeated use of words connected with dawn, mystic vocabulary, verbs

of active seeking and the preposition hacia. The poet sees the promise of a union with God as the dawn of a new day, and this gives rise to many nouns and verbs related to dawn, such as alba, albor, alborada, aurora, alborece and amanece. The hand of God reminds the author of the "Calofrío del alba de verano" (CE 36), and waiting for God deepens his "cauce de alborada" ("Intima lira" CE 37). He speaks of his union with God as "Subiendo . . . hacia mi aurora" ("11" CE 14), and his suffering soul, which he describes as "un carro rodando hacia la aurora" ("11" CE 14), urges God to come quickly to him.

The poetry of Cántico espiritual furthermore reflects the mystic terminology of San Juan de La Cruz in the use of words and expressions such as ansia, suspiro, anhelo, abandono, suplicio, poseído, noche sosegada, adolezco y peno y muero, éxtasis, posesa, traspasada. Otero states his anxiety to be in the presence of God when he refers to his "pequeñez de hombre de ansias indecibles" ("2" CE 21). Similarly, he expresses his longing for a mystical union with the verb suspirar: "Suspiro por el orbe / pendido de mi alma . . . ("9" CE 35). The poet's song is looking for somewhere to "pender las manos de su anhelo" ("3(1)" CE 23). Suffering causes him to rejoice: "qué dichosa mi alma en su suplicio" ("2" CE 14), and he describes his poetry as having the ability to leave a man " . . . lejano, poseído, ausente" ("11" CE

24). Otero wishes for a peaceful night when he will be able to understand the true meaning of "la noche sosegada" ("5" CE 28), and when he speaks of his joy in reading religious literature and of the effect that has on him, he says: "me adolezco y peno y muero" ("6" CE 30). He therefore encourages his soul, which is "posesa . . . de Dios" ("Intima lira" CE 38), to receive God.

Like the mystic vocabulary, verbs of active seeking, as well as the preposition hacia denoting approach, emphasize Otero's struggle to reach God. In "11," for example, four of these verbs, and the preposition, occur in five lines of poetry:

busco la nada por seguirte a Ti.
De pronto, agitaré mis alas viejas
y se harán primitivas para el salto.
Mas salto, no. Subir poquito a poco²
peldaño tras peldaño hacia tu cumbre.
(CE 13)

As these verbs, buscar, seguir, agitar, subir, and the preposition hacia confirm, Otero is searching and following, hoping to gradually ascend towards a union with God.

In Angel fieramente humano, Redoble de conciencia and Ancia,³ the author continues the search for God begun in Cántico espiritual, but on this occasion he does so with an awareness of man's mortal nature and the exasperating silence of an absent God. His vocabulary centers on man's

condemnation to die, his loneliness and his fear of death, the suffering, despair and vacuum he sees in his life, and the continued silence of God which increases the poet's doubt and uncertainty, and which culminates in a denial of man's ability to achieve immortality.

The omnipresence of death accounts for the use of the words muerte, morir, and mortal. Otero describes himself and man, the victims of death and their mortal nature, in these terms:

Doy señales de vida con pedazos de muerte.
("Hombre en desgracia" AFH 54)

esclavos de la muerte
("A Eugenio de Nora" AFH 62)

y yo . . . / gritando no morir
("Gritando no morir" RC 120)

Pero mortal, mortal, rayo partido
Yo soy, me siento, me compruebo.
("Mortal" AFH 49)

and he emphasizes his loneliness and the solitude of mankind with the adjective solo, the adverb sólo, and the noun soledad:

Sólo el hombre esta solo . . .
("Lo eterno" AFH 12)

Solo está el hombre.
("Vivo y mortal" AFH 44)
("Canto primero" AFH 60)

esta angustia de ser y de sabernos
a un tiempo sombra, soledad y fuego..
("Mortales" AFH 80)

The nouns miedo and frío convey the fear and chill instilled in the poet by the threat of imminent death. He confesses:

tengo miedo de Dios.
("Hombre en desgracia" AFH 154)

. . . el miedo crece.
("Tierra" RC 111)

Estoy temblando, tengo frío. Oh Dios
si supieses qué frío y cuánto miedo
tiene el hijo del hombre.
("Hoja nueva" A 79)

Likewise words of agony, ansia, ansiedad, agonía, express the suffering Otero endures in his search for God:

Sólo el ansia me vence.
("Impetu" AFH 52)

Pero te amo
a besos de ansiedad y de agonía.
("Tú, que hieres" AFH 78)

and the despair and vacuum he sees in his existence causes him to use words such as la nada, el vacío, desolación y vértigo, abismo, and the prefix des-, as Alarcos Llorach mentions.⁴ The author pursues woman's body through nothingness: "a traves . . . de la nada" ("Ciegamente" AFH 26). He finds himself at the edge of an abyss struggling with death: "luchando, cuerpo a cuerpo, con la muerte, / al borde del abismo . . . " ("Hombre" AFH 41), a dangerous position which introduces the two nouns, desolación and vértigo, sometimes placed together:

. . . el vértigo de ser hombre hasta el fondo.
("Hombre en desgracia" AFH 54)

Desolación y vértigo se juntan.
("Vértigo" AFH 39)

The prefix des- points to the negative aspects of life. Man is not arraigado, but desarraigado in the world ("Lo eterno" AFH 11). The poet does not speak of amor but of desamor (AFH 13), not of esperanza but of desesperanza ("Tierra firma" A 55) and of desesperación ("Cap. 10 Lib. 11" A 70), not of consuelo but of desconsuelo ("No puede" AFH 48).

The author's continued search for God is expressed by a series of verbs and verbal expressions that intensify as the search becomes more desperate. They range from the verb buscar to the expression gritar a voces. The following examples show this gradation:

. . . busco y busco un algo
("Igual que vosotros" AFH 37)

. . . estoy clamando a Dios
("Hombre" AFH 41)

. . . lucho / a voz en grito
("Poderoso silencio" AFH 76)

gritando a voces y llamando a golpes
("A Eugenio de Nora" AFH 61)

These verbs, buscar, clamar, luchar a voz en grito and gritar a voces, show that Oteró has added a strong vocal element to his search in an effort to be heard by God.

However, God continues to remain silent, despite the poet's attempts at communication, and this introduces the noun silencio. Otero describes God's silence as immortal, empty, and powerful:

tu silencio inmortal . . .
 ("Mortal" AFH 50)

. . . vacío / silencio
 ("Estos sonetos" AFH 73)

Poderoso silencio
 ("Poderoso silencio" AFH 76)

To convey the horror and uncertainty of his earthly life, Otero uses indefinite expressions, the subjunctive, the verbs poder ser and parecer, and negatives. In attempting to describe his search for a God whose presence he does not feel, he uses the indefinite expressions algo, and qué sé yo. "Igual que vosotros" utilizes these expressions throughout, and it would be worthwhile to quote at least the first two stanzas:

Desesperadamente busco y busco
un algo, qué sé yo qué, misterioso
 capaz de comprender esta agonía
 que me hiela, no sé con qué, los ojos.

Desesperadamente, despertando
 sombras que yacen, muertos que conozco,
 simas de sueño, busco y busco un algo,
qué sé yo dónde, si supieseis cómo.
 (AFH 37)

The use of algo and qué sé yo communicate the fact that the poet is searching for something which he cannot define.

Moreover in "Basta" Otero voices his doubt of the existence of God by using the subjunctive:

Imagine mi horror por un momento
que Dios, el solo vivo, no existiera
o que, existiendo, sólo consistiera
en tierra, en agua, en sombra, en viento.
(AFH 105)

The subjunctives no existiera and sólo consistiera, mark the poet's chilling supposition that God may not even exist, or that he may be dissolved into various forms.

Two poems make extensive use of the verbs poder ser and parecer. The first two stanzas of "Final" (AFH 91), which uses poder ser, state:

Puede ser que estemos ya al cabo de la calle.
Que esto precisamente fuese el fin
o el cabo de la calle.
Puede suceder que aquí precisamente
se acabe el cabo
de la calle.

Puede ser que estemos ahora llegando,
que hayamos estado aquí antes,
y todo puede ser,
y puede ser que no sea esta calle.

The repetition of puede ser, and the analogous expression puede suceder, supports Otero's uncertainty of his situation in life, his inability to determine where he is headed or whether he has reached the end. The verb parecer, used with the past subjunctive in "Hijos de la tierra," again addresses the poet's uncertainty and insecurity in life:

Parece como si el mundo caminase de espaldas
hacia la noche enorme de los acantilados

Parece como si el mundo me mirase a los ojos,
que quisiera decirme no sé qué, de rodillas:

Parece como si el mundo se acabase, se hundiera.
Parece como si Dios, con los ojos abiertos,
a los hijos del hombre los ojos les comiera.
(RC 147-48)

These opening lines of the first, third, and fifth stanzas depict a chaotic world, headed towards death and annihilation at the hands of a devouring God.

Finally, the negatives nunca and jámas negate man's ability to achieve immortality in these lines:

Pero, mortal, el hombre nunca puede,
nunca logra ascender adonde el cielo
la torre esbelta del anhelo excede.

Nunca, jamás, el hombre.
("No puede" AFH 48)

Mortal man will never satisfy his yearning, never be immortal.

Pido la paz y la palabra, En castellano, and Que trata de España⁵ mark Otero's dismissal of God from his preoccupations and his concentration on the situation of Spain and the Spaniard. He becomes more conscious of his mission as a spokesman for peace, free speech, against poverty and injustice, and a harbinger of a hopeful future. His vocabulary portrays his identity with the masses, his love and criticism of Spain, his poetic mission, and his vision of a bright future. The poet shows his identity with

the masses in the nouns he uses to address them: compañeros ("Aceñas" PPP 23), hermano, camaradas, amigos (QTE 66), and by the introduction of colloquialisms, proverbs and songs. He uses such expressions as ¡aúp! ("Ellos" PPP 45), ¡iqué cabrón! ("Parábola en forma de rúbrica" EC 95), Ojo! ("Oros son triunfos" EC 111), requitonto ("Canción diecinueve" QTE 126), and the proverb "A falta de pan, buenas son tortas" ("Cartas y poemas a Nazim Hikmet" EC 151). In a section of Que trata de España entitled "Cantares," regional and traditional songs serve as the basis for the author's compositions. Of this section, Sabina de la Cruz writes: "Todos los poemas aquí giran o se eslabonan sobre canciones: cante jondo, cancionero tradicional . . . o bien canciones regionales."⁶

Furthermore, in his return to the reality of Spain and his countrymen, Otero confronts his native land, commenting both on his love for her and his awareness of her plight. The result is a love/hate vocabulary which Miró terms: "la doble visión de España, la heróica y la popular, la que tuvo un ayer alegre, esperanzado, y espera su mañana, y frente a ella, la de la sangre fratricida, el silencio y el presente sombrío. . . ."⁷ Spain at her best is for Otero a mother, virgin land, and beautiful:

madre y maestra mía
("Hija de Yago" PPP 20)

madre inmensa ("Juntos" PPP 40)
 tierra virgen ("Silben los vértices" PPP 66)
 Tierra hermosa ("Patria aprendida" EC 121)

As a subject of anxiety, she is backward, unkempt and weeping, a thorn, sombre, arduous, wretched, brutal and spurious:

retrocedida España ("Sobre esta piedra edificaré" PPP 18)
 patria despeinada en llanto ("Posición" PPP 31)
 espina de mi alma ("Proal" PPP 44)
 lóbrega España ("Vencer juntos" PPP 48)
 ardua España mía ("En nombre de muchos" PPP 55)
 España miserable ("Teruel-Yonne" EC 95)
 la brutal España ("Cartas y poemas a Nazim Hikmet" EC 151)
 espúrea España ("Quiero" EC 149)

These two attitudes of admiration and condemnation fuse together and result in paradoxical descriptions of Spain, as in the following examples:

triste, espaciosa España
 ("Hija de Yago" PPP 20)

patria triste y hermosa
 ("Juntos" PPP 39)

terrible, hermosa España
 ("Fuera" EC 96)

libre y maniatada España
 ("Quiero" EC 149)

madre y madrastra mía
 ("Por venir" QTE 18)

España miserable y hermosa
 ("Por venir" QTE 18)

bella y doliente patria
 ("Por venir" QTE 18)

España sombría y heroica
 ("Heroica y sombría" QTE 19)

patria perdida recobrada
 ("Patria perdida" QTE 33)

As the poet endeavours to combat the ills he sees in his country, certain words become commonplace in reference to his writings and his mission. These words include realidad, verdad, paz, palabra, libertad, and to a lesser extent, revolución. Otero's desire is to portray reality and truth, and he uses the words realidad and verdad to support this goal:

La realidad palpita evidentemente,
 ("Evidentemente" QTE 37)

La realidad me llama con la mano.
 ("Copla" QTE 38)

Ahora diré la verdad.
 ("No espantéis el ruiseñor EC 138)

The word palabra reminds the reader that this is the author's weapon to achieve his end:

Ni una palabra
brotará de mis labios
que no sea verdad.

("Ni una palabra" PPP 58)

Si he perdido la vida, el tiempo, todo
lo que tiré, como un anillo, al agua,
si he perdido la voz en la maleza,
me queda la palabra

("En el principio" PPP 13)

His social mission of achieving peace and liberty introduces paz and libertad:

Para el hombre. Paz. Para el aire. Madre, paz.
("Hija de Yago" PPP 20)

Paz / para el día
("En el nombre de España, paz"
PPP 65)

Libertad en el aire
y en la tierra,
("Libertad real" QTE 143)

Not only does Otero work for peace, justice, and freedom, but he also nurtures a dream of a bright future with words like victoria, esperanza, alba, aurora, mañana, and fe. He writes:

La victoria está clara.
("Ellos" PPP 45)

Yo ofrezco mi vida a los dioses
que habitan el país de la esperanza.
("Un vaso en la brisa" PPP 53)

Prefiero fabricar un alba bella
para mí solo.

("Yo soy aquél que ayer no más
decía" PPP 35)

Doy con los labios en la aurora.

("Vencer juntos" PPP 48)

Mañana / brillará España.

("Todavía" QTE 96)

Mi fe es más firme que la Torre Eiffel.

("Ellos" PPP 46)

This vocabulary of hope for the future also includes such verbs
of faith, perseverance and overcoming as no darse por vencido,
creer, seguir, avanzar, llegar, alborear, brillar, and the
neologism enfenixarse:

No esperéis que me dé por vencido.

("Un vaso en la brisa" PPP 53)

madre, aun no nos damos por vencidos.

("1 Tierra" QTE 155)

Creo en el hombre

("Fidelidad" PPP 70)

y comienza . . . a seguir

laborando por todos

("Escrito con lluvia" QTE 49)

avanza, avanza hacia la luz,
el pie del pueblo

("Ellos" PPP 45)

llegaré por mis pies . . .

a la patria del hombre:

("Juicio Final" PPP 37)

en nombre de la luz que ha alboreado:
alegría.

("En nombre de muchos" PPP 55)

Arboles abolidos
volveréis a brillar
al sol.

("Arboles abolidos" PPP 62)

y al fin un fuego donde enfenixarte.
("Yotro" EC 176)

Also of note with regard to Otero's vocabulary of faith and hope is the use of the future tense to support his faith in the future and in his country. Considering the fact that very few of the lowly people read his works, Otero sees a change in the future: "ya me leerán" ("Noticias de todo el mundo" QTE 47), he assures himself. The future tenses in his words: "Sé / que mañana / hará sol, será de todos / España" ("Atardece, el cielo" QTE 110), show his belief in the ability of Spain and the Spanish people to overcome their problems.

Mientras⁸ is a work of transition and recapitulation in which the poet continues to write of his love/hate relationship with Spain, his art and its mission. As such, the lexicon is a continuation of that found in Pido la paz y la palabra, En castellano, and Que trata de España. The author's identification with the masses continues in the words camarada and compañero ("Morir en Bilbao"), and in the insertion of colloquial expressions and lines from a popular song in the poem "Mira por dónde, estás en Bilbao." He also continues to use words such as paz ("Una especie de"), and palabra ("Ergo sum") that exemplify his desire for peace, as

well as those that express his struggle luchar ("Penúltima palabra"), no darse por vencido ("Una luz anaranjada"), and his hope, alba, amanece ("Indemne").

In the final poems of the anthology, Expresión y reunión,⁹ Otero meditates on his life, his struggles, and his death, and again refers to his art and his hope for the future. The words he uses are, therefore, those that have become associated with his writings: paz ("Me complace más que el mar" ER 237) which defines his purpose in writing, muerte, morir ("Por ahí pasa la muerte" ER 226 and "Qué es el morir" ER 226-27) that show his preoccupation with death, and alba ("Medialba" ER 240) which represents hope for the future. He abides by his decision to write for the masses and continues to use the words compañero and camarada ("Siete" ER 238), to insert colloquial expressions, in this case vulgarities ("Túmullo de gasoil" ER 231-32, "Tu vientre y otros resabios" ER 264), and to introduce lines of popular songs as in "Me complace más que el mar" (ER 237) where a line from Martí's Versos Sencillos, included in the song "Guantanamera," forms the title of the poem.

On the whole, Blas de Otero's lexical organization provides a key to the themes of his collection. The predominance of words connected with dawn and mysticism, verbs of seeking, and the preposition hacia in Cántico espiritual point to a mystical quest. Likewise in Angel fieramente humano, Redoble de conciencia and Ancia, words

that deal with man's mortal nature and his desire for immortality, the suffering caused by his sense of loneliness and the emptiness of his life, his uncertainty in the face of a silent God, indicate a struggle for answers and for survival, and an unsuccessful attempt at a divine solution to an earthly problem. As with the religious themes, the social themes of Pido la paz y la palabra, En castellano, and Que trata de España are diffused in the lexicon.

Colloquial vocabulary, words like paz, palabra, verdad, and others expressing faith, hope and perseverance, convey the poet's solidarity with the people, his adoption of their cause and his hope for the future. His paradoxical descriptions of Spain portray his love for and criticism of his country. The vocabulary of Mientras marks a transitional phase with a diminution of words found in the social collections, while the final poems of Expresión y reunión show a return to personal themes with the reappearance of morir and muerte, words associated with death, together with the continued use of words like paz and alba, that support the poet's concern for the people and their future.

Notes

¹ Blas de Otero, Cántico espiritual, Cuadernos del Grupo Alea, primera serie, núm. 2 (San Sebastián: Gráfico-Editora, S. L., 1942). All further references to this collection appear in the text with the abbreviation CE.

² The underlining in quotations from Blas de Otero's works throughout the course of this study has been added for emphasis.

³ Blas de Otero, Angel fieramente humano. Redoble de conciencia (Buenos Aires: Losada, 1960), and Ancia (Barcelona: A. P. Editor, 1958). References to these collections appear in the text with the abbreviations AFH, RC and A, respectively.

⁴ Emilio Alarcos Llorach, La poesía de Blas de Otero (Salamanca: Anaya, 1966), p. 62.

⁵ Blas de Otero, Pido la paz y la palabra. En castellano, in Con la inmensa mayoría (Buenos Aires: Losada, 1960), and Que trata de España (Paris: Ruedo Ibérico, 1964). References to these collections appear in the text with the abbreviations PPP, EC and QTE, respectively.

⁶ Sabina de la Cruz, Introd., Expresión y reunión, by Blas de Otero (Madrid: Alianza, 1981), p. 25.

⁷ Emilio Miró, "España, tierra y palabra en la poesía de Blas de Otero," Cuadernos hispanoamericanos, 356 (1980), 292.

⁸ Blas de Otero, Mientras (Zaragoza: Javalambre, 1970). References to this collection appear in the text with the abbreviation M. The collection is divided into sections with unnumbered pages. The quotations will, therefore, refer to the sections in which they are found.

⁹ Blas de Otero, Expresión y reunión (Madrid: Alianza, 1981). References to this collection will be cited with the abbreviation ER.

CHAPTER III

THE PRONOMINAL STRUCTURE

The pronouns an author chooses, according to Yuri Lotman, become a model of relationships.¹ Roman Jakobson points out specifically that "poetry of the second person is imbued with the conative function and is either supplicatory or exhortative, depending on whether the first person is subordinated to the second one or the second one to the first."² Both statements provide the basis for an assessment of the pronominal structure of Otero's poetry. However the relationships this poet establishes are even more complex. His poetry of the second person directed towards God is supplicatory and also defying; towards Spain and the Spaniard, it is both exhortative and critical, and towards Cuba and his Cuban lover, it embodies love and admiration. Moreover, Otero creates a unity between himself, Spain and the Spaniard by the fusion of the first and second person pronouns in his poems of religious and social concern.

Cántico espiritual is structured pronominally mainly on the yo and the Tú. The poet as yo addresses God as Tú in terms of adoration and entreaty, as in the following

lines where he speaks of the long period he has been waiting for a mystical experience:

Aquí te siento yo, aquí me llenas
con tu aire de adentro y tus campanas,
estoy llamando a Tí desde seis anos
de soledad, para que Tú me cundas.
Estoy llamando a Tí con este cántico
para que Tú respondas y me lleves.
("11" CE 14)

The yo is definitely in subordination to the Tú as the poet expresses his gratitude to God for finally heeding his supplications and granting him a mystical experience.

The pronominal structure of Angel fieramente humano, Redoble de conciencia, and Ancia is still primarily that of the yo, Blas de Otero, addressing the Tú, God, with instances of the plural nosotros and vosotros forms. Unlike in Cántico espiritual, the yo does not assume an attitude of prayer and entreaty with regard to the Tú, but one of rejection and defiance. The lines that follow exemplify this:

Me haces daño, Señor. Quita tu mano
de encima. Déjame con mi vacío,
déjame. Para abismo, con el mío
tengo bastante. Oh Dios, si eres humano,

compadécete ya, quita esa mano
de encima. No me sirve. Me da frío
y miedo. Si eres Dios, yo soy tan mío
como tú. Y a soberbio, yo te gano.
("Lástima" AFH 13)

The author would have nothing to do with a God who cannot add meaning to his life, and the verbal expression, haces

daño, along with the familiar singular commands, quita, déjame, déjame, compadécete, quita, show his rejection of the Divinity.

Meanwhile the use of the nosotros and vosotros forms in these collections allows the poet to identify with all humanity:

Posteriormente, entramos en la Nada
Y sopla Dios, de pronto y nos termina.
("Tabla rasa" EC 113)

Oh, sed, salid al día!
No sigáis siendo bestias disfrazadas
de ansia de Dios. Con ser hombres os basta.
("Canto primero" AFH 60)

The presence of the first person plural entramos and the object pronoun nos in the first quotation suggest that both the poet and his fellow men share in an empty existence which may be terminated at any moment by God. He therefore exhorts men, in the second quotation to abandon their search for God, with the commands sed, salid, and no sigáis.

As the subject matter changes from a preoccupation with God and immortality in Cántico espiritual, Angel fieramente humano, Redoble de conciencia and Ancia to a concern for humanity in Pido la paz y la palabra, En castellano and Que trata de España, so too does the direction for the familiar form of address in the singular. It now serves as the medium of address to Spain, imploring and encouraging her. Otero as yo entreats Spain: " . . . Ungenos,

madre, haz / habitable tu ámbito" ("Hija de Yago" PPP 20), and he urges her to rise again: "ponte tu traje colorado danza. ataca canta" (Poeta colonial (1964)" QTE 185).

The poet uses the vosotros form to communicate with his readers, his countrymen, and the geography of Spain. He directs the initial poems of both Pido la paz y la palabra and En castellano, which begin with the words "Aquí tenéis," to his readers ("La inmensa mayoría" PPP 9: "Aquí tenéis mi voz" EC 70), and he tries to ensure that he has their attention by speaking to them directly with familiar command forms such as mirad ("Soledad tengo de ti" EC 118), ved ("Caniguer" EC 71), sabed ("Belleza que yo he visto" QTE 41), and oíd ("En la primera ascensión" QTE 177). He also encourages his countrymen to build for the future, using plural familiar command forms: "Aventad / el ayer, mañanead / ardidamente, / ¡Fortificad abeles!" ("Entendámonos" EC 147).

Furthermore, the poetic yo combines with the tú and the vosotros to form the nosotros and thus seal the bond between Otero, his countrymen and Spain:

Mucho he sufrido: en este tiempo, todos
hemos sufrido mucho,
Yo levanto una copa de alegría en las manos,
 en pie contra el crepúsculo.

Borradlo. Labraremos la paz, la paz, la paz,
 a fuerza de caricias, a puñetazos puros.
 Aquí os dejo mi voz escrita en castellano
 España, no te olvides que hemos sufrido juntos.
 ("Aquí tenéis mi voz" EC 80)

The conglomeration of the yo (he sufrido, yo levanto, dejo mi voz), the tú (no te olvides), the vosotros (borradlo, os), and the nosotros (hemos sufrido, labraremos, hemos sufrido), demonstrates the oneness of Otero, Spain and the Spaniard with regard to their shared suffering and their mission to struggle for peace.

The poems in Mientras are not addressed to any person or group in particular, but on at least one occasion the poet uses the vosotros form to prod men on when he tells them: "Enfrente / está el futuro: es todo lo que os dejo" ("Penúltima palabra").

The dominant pronoun in the final poems of Expresión y reunión is the yo with a few instances of the tú. The yo, Otero, meditates on his life, as is the case when he considers his former dislike for Bilbao:

Yo, cuando era joven,
Te ataqué violentamente,
Te demacré el rostro.
("Bilbao" ER 232-33)

The tú form addresses places and the woman he loves. To Bilbao, which he now appreciates as a result of his travels, he expresses his love:

y te llamo desoladamente desde Madrid,
porque sólo tú sostienes mi mirada,
das sentido a mis pasos
sobre la tierra.
("Bilbao" ER 232)

Likewise he uses the tú form to let the woman he met in Cuba know that her memory makes his misfortunes in life bearable: "Entre enfermedades y catástrofes / entre torres turbias y sangre entre los labios / así te veo así te encuentro" ("Lo fatal" ER 252).

The pronominal structure of Otero's works run parallel to his thematic evolution. He begins with the yo and the Tú in the mystic poetry of Cántico espiritual, and gradually introduces the nosotros and vosotros forms in Angel fieramente humano, Redoble de conciencia and Ancia as he becomes more aware of the destiny he shares with men. This leads to the social collections, Pido la paz y la palabra, En castellano, Que trata de España, where the nosotros form is of major significance as the poet works toward a unity with Spain and the Spaniards. The almost complete absence of pronouns of address in Mientras prepares the way for a return to the yo and the tú in his last collection, Expresión y reunión, in which he writes of personal topics, as he did in his first collections.

Notes

¹ Yuri Lotman, Analysis of the Poetic Text, trans. D. Barton Johnson (Ann Arbor, Michigan: Ardis, 1976), p. 82.

² Roman Jakobson, "Closing Statement: Linguistics and Poetics," in Style in Language, ed. Thomas A. Sebeok (New York-London: John Wiley & Sons Inc., 1960), p. 357.

CHAPTER IV

THE INTRODUCTORY EPIGRAPH

Blas de Otero uses the epigraph to introduce four of his collections and forty-five poems in these collections, ranging from Angel fieramente humano to Expresión y reunión. His use of the epigraph does not vary from the original purpose of this type of inscription, whose name is derived from the Greek epi (upon) and graphein (to write), and whose purpose is primarily explanatory. His principal purpose in using the epigraph is to orient the reader and to give his poems some additional force while lending authority to his writing. At times the epigraph simply summarizes the theme of his poems to give the reader a point of departure for understanding the content of the poem. At other times, it functions in the same fashion at the beginning of a collection to indicate the poetic ideals in the light of which the poet wrote the poems of that collection or of his collections as a whole.

Still another type of epigraph serves as the basis for a reworking of this fragment taken from other writers to form an original poem for Blas de Otero. María Muñoz,

writing of this aspect of Blas de Otero's use of the epigraph, says:

El uso de fragmentos literarios en calidad de epígrafes se complica . . . , con una particular orquestación del motivo ajeno . . . con variaciones y complicaciones del tema, con una renovación del contenido y todo ello sin que la cita deje de reconocerse.¹

Finally, Blas de Otero uses quotations from his own works as epigraphs. In using his previous works as a source, he reinforces ideas expressed in earlier works in the final poems in Expresión y reunión.

Epigraphs that summarize a poem's content are identifiable in "Tierra" (AFH 111-12), and "Palabras reunidas para Antonio Machado" (EC 152). With a quotation from the book of Job (3:10): "Quia non conclusit ostia ventris,"² Otero prepares the reader for the content of "Tierra," a poem in which he writes of his own suffering and anguish as he contemplates death as inevitable:

HUMANAMENTE hablando, es un suplicio
ser hombre y soportarlo hasta las heces,
saber que somos luz, y sufrir frío,
humanamente esclavos de la muerte.

Detrás del hombre viene dando gritos
el abismo, delante abre sus hélices
el vértigo, y ahogándose en sí mismo,
en medio de los dos, el miedo crece.

Humanamente hablando, es lo que digo,
no hay forma de morir que no hiele.
La sombra es brave y vivo es el cuchillo.
Qué hacer, hombre de Dios, sino caerte.

Humanamente en tierra, es lo que elijo.
 Caerme horribilmente, para siempre.
 Caerme, revertir, no haber nacido
 humanamente nunca en ningún vientre.

The poet, continually pursued by death, establishes a parallel between Job's statement and his own preoccupations. Like Job, he sees the only escape in not having been born at all.

Similarly in "Palabras reunidas para Antonio Machado," Otero uses the quotation from Machado's Proverbios y Cantares: "Poned atención: / un corazón solitario / no es un corazón" as an epigraph to reinforce the content of his poem. The quotation which states that humans need each other for a worthwhile existence also has a parallel idea in lines two, three, and four in Otero's poem: "pero no soy, / solo, / nadie." The poem further elaborates on the idea expressed in the epigraph and in these lines by referring to the literary influences which helped to mold Machado, including the romancero, the cancionero popular, Gómez Manrique, Fray Luis de León, Quevedo, Gonzalo de Berceo. Supported by these traditions and literary figures, Otero feels he now has the stature to address Machado, whom he could not address on his own merits.

In addition to using epigraphs to alert the reader to the content of his poems, Blas de Otero also uses them at the beginning of entire collections to explain the content of these collections as well as his attitudes about poetry

itself. For example, he introduces Angel fieramente humano with a modified quotation from Rubén Darío: "Yo no soy un poeta de mayorías; / pero sé que, indefectiblemente, tengo / que ir a ellas" (RC 9). The actual words used by Darío in the prologue to Cantos de vida y esperanza: "Yo no soy un poeta para las muchedumbres. Pero sé que indefectiblemente tengo que ir a ellas," which affirm the elitism of the modernistas, undergo an ironic twist as Otero uses them to reflect his change in orientation from themes of a personal nature in Cántico espiritual to an awareness of the need to include humanity in his poems, and to direct his poetry to the masses and to their social and political problems.

In his endeavour to communicate with the masses, the power of the word becomes very important for the poet. His attention to the importance of the word as the foundation for his social poetry is uppermost in his mind when he selects and varies a quotation from Bécquer's Rima IV as an introduction to Mientras. While Bécquer equates poetry with nature, science, emotion, love, and woman, Blas de Otero equates it with the word, and says, "Mientras haya en el mundo una palabra cualquiera, / habrá poesía."

Another epigraph, this time at the beginning of Pido la paz y la palabra, also summarizes the poet's attitude towards his poetry and his social struggle. Lines from Cervantes' Quijote (Part 11, Ch. 74): "-¡Ay! - respondió Sancho lloran- / do -. No se muera vuesa merced, señor mío,

sino tome mi consejo ...," which Sancho uses to encourage his master not to allow himself to die without a struggle, allow Otero to state his intention to choose life and to maintain hope in his ability to bring about a change in his country. Moreover this epigraph becomes a sort of leitmotif and is continued on two other occasions ("Me llamarán, nos llamarán a todos" PPP 41 and "Quiero" EC 148) at the beginning of poems that express a struggle for life.

The epigraphs which orient the reader toward the themes and tendencies of poems and collections are closely related to those which, through elaboration or variation, become a new composition for Otero. In Que trata de España, for example, the poet quotes from Augusto Ferrán's Soledad:

No os extrañe, compañeros,
que siempre cante mis penas
porque el mundo me ha enseñado
que las mías son las vuestras.

By making a few changes in the poem, he reorients the theme:

Hermano, camaradas, amigos,
yo quiero sólo cantar
vuestras penas y alegrías,
porque el mundo me ha enseñado
que las vuestras son las mías.
(QTE 66)

The change in the first line from "compañeros" to "Hermano, camaradas, amigos," is more effective in showing brotherhood with the masses. Likewise the change from "mis penas" in the second line of Ferrán's composition, to "vuestras penas

y alegrías" in the third line of Otero's, and the reversal of the possessive pronouns of the final line, "que las mías son las vuestras" to "que las vuestras son las mías," underscore the orientation of the poem from egocentric, in which Ferrán radiates towards others, to altruistic. While Ferrán projects his emotions to others, Otero accepts the problems of the masses and makes them his own.

In addition to frequently citing other writers in his epigraphs, following a literary precedent which gives authority to his poetic statements, Blas de Otero also draws on his own works as a source. In the final poems of Expresión y reunión he quotes, as epigraphs, statements from his previous writings. For example, a quotation from his prose work Historias fingidas y verdaderas serves as an epigraph for a sonnet of the same title. The quotation is the last paragraph of "Manifiesto": "un hombre recorre su historia y / la de su patria y las halló similares / difíciles de explicar."³ The poem reiterates in verse form what the poet had expressed earlier in prose. It states:

Estas historias que se acercan tanto
a la verdad, son puro fingimiento:
no ostentan otro firme fundamento
que la verdad que veo y toco en cuanto

escribo y finjo que soñé: vi tanto,
tanta realidad se llevó el viento,
que imaginé ya fútil aspaviento
vida, sueño, verdad, historia, espanto.

Nací en España, y en España apenas
engendra la razón sino hórreos sueños
y lo que existe, existe a duras penas.

Tal fue la historia de mi vida: imagen
 real y semejanza de los sueños
 de mi patria. Compruébenlo y barajen.
 (ER 243)

Both the prose and the poetry communicate the poet's frustration when he contemplates the reality of Spain and compares it to his dreams of her salvation. His attempts to understand his country result in more frustration, and he realizes, near the end of his life, that her image is based on pretense. By establishing the relationship between his shattered dreams and Spain's proclivity to create only "hórreros sueños" from reason, perhaps echoing Goya, the poet summarizes his own life struggle and offers to pass his experience on to others when he says "Compruébenlo y barajen."

These various categories of epigraphs, whether they summarize the content of poems or the attitude of the poet towards his poetry, or serve as the material for a variation on their lines, are indicative of the thematic evolution in Otero's works, his innovative capability and his attention to this aspect of a literary tradition.

Notes

¹ María Muñiz, "'Que trata de España': la trilogía de Blas de Otero," Papeles de Son Armadans, 66 (1972), civ.

² The King James version offers this translation:
"Because it shut not up the doors of my mother's
womb. . . ."

³ Blas de Otero, Historias fingidas y verdaderas
(Madrid: Alianza, 1980), p. 106.

CHAPTER V

THE EVOLUTION IN VERSE FORM

In his early collections of poetry, Otero uses mainly the lira and the traditional sonnet to express the religious thematic content of his work. As the theme changes to a greater awareness of the social problems of man, the author abandons the lira, modifies the sonnet, and introduces other verse forms to make his poems more intelligible to the average man and to approximate his speech.

In Cántico espiritual Blas de Otero relies primarily on the lira, devoting an entire section, twenty pages of a forty-four page collection, to this traditional verse form whose name is derived from Garcilaso de la Vega's use of the word in his "Flor de Gnido." Since the Spanish mystics, especially San Juan de la Cruz, and religious poets like Fray Luis de León, used the lira in their poetry, Otero felt attracted to this form when he wrote Cántico espiritual reflecting his inspiration in both the title and the metrical form. In fact, one of his liras "(1)" treats the mystical experience of ascension to union with God:

DE abajo nace el canto.
 De abajo nace y sube hasta la altura.
 Cerrado a cal y canto,
 con su ventana pura,
 se adolece oteando la hermosura.

Inclina la cabeza
 como si fuera rama sobre el suelo;
 y sueña en la belleza,
 la brisa, el alto cielo
 donde pender las mano de su anhelo.

La sangre que recorre,
 como suelto navío, por sus venas,
 divisa el alta torre
 ceñida en las almenas,
 arroja por la borda ancla y cadenas,

y vuela presurosa
 a recoger su afán en su llamada.
 Llegada allí, reposa,
 le llega el alborada
 y se mece en su puerto, acompasada.
 (CE 23)

The twentieth century poet, using a traditional verse form, continues a theme of the Spanish mystics in his search for God and spiritual union. Although the lira predominates in this collection, Otero also writes two villancicos, three poems in hendecasyllable verse and three sonnets, adhering to previously established metrical norms.

The sonnet, a minor form in Cántico espiritual, replaces the lira as the predominant verse form in Angel fieramente humano, Redoble de conciencia and Ancia. Sabina de la Cruz notes that sonnets make up 50% of the first collection and 66% of the second.¹ Otero begins with the classical 11-syllable line, seen in "Hombre" (AFH 41):

Luchando, cuerpo a cuerpo, con la muerte,
al borde del abismo, estoy clamando
a Dios. Y su silencio, retumbando,
ahoga mi voz en el vacío inerte.

Oh Dios. Si he de morir, quiero tenerte
despierto. Y noche a noche, no sé cuándo
oirás mi voz. Oh Dios. Estoy hablando
solo. Arañando sombras para verte.

Alzo la mano, y tú me la cercenas.
Abro los ojos: me los sajas vivos.
Sed tengo, y sal se vuelven tus arenas.

Esto es ser hombre: horror a manos llenas.
Ser - y no ser - eternos, fugitivos.
¡Ángel con grandes alas de cadenas!

In adhering to an established metrical form, the poet limits his expression to a prescribed number of syllables and a set rhyme scheme. José Luis Cano believes that Otero felt a need to restrain himself when he wrote these collections:

¿Por qué esta preferencia por el soneto
en el poeta vasco? . . . por la necesidad
que el poeta siente de refrenar la pasión
que le arrastra, la tensión emocional, en
unos límites que le impidan "cualquier
vuelo extraviado de verbosidad."²

The poet himself seems to confirm this when he writes in "Su íntimo secreto":

El soneto es el rey de los decires..
Hermoso como un príncipe encantado,
con una banda azul, cuadriculado
para que dentro de él ardas, delires.
(ER 223)

and also in "Estos sonetos" where he says that he quells his mortal anguish in his sonnets:

Estos sonetos son las que yo entrego
 plumas de luz al aire en desvarío;
 cárceles de mi sueño; ardiente río
 donde la angustia de ser hombre anego.
 (AFH 73)

Although the sonnet is the most frequently used form in these three collections, there are also, as Sabina de la Cruz mentions, free verse ("Plañid así" RC 141, "Encuesta" A 68-69, "A punto de caer" A 67), and versicles ("Mundo" A 142-44, "Cap. 10 lib. 11" A 70-71).³

Having made extensive use of the sonnet in Angel fieramente humano, Redoble de conciencia and Ancia, Otero finds its restrictiveness unsuited to the subject matter he wishes to address in later collections, and proposes its liberation:

Hagamos que el soneto se extienda, respire como
 un mar sin riberas,
 el endecasílabo está gastado, romo, mordisqueado
 cual aquella carta mía a los dioses,
 demos espacio, elasticidad al soneto y el
 endecasílabo.
 (Todos mis sonetos 133)

Meanwhile he begins his search for a new method of expression, a means of reaching the common man. As he says in "Y el verso se hizo hombre":

Ando buscando un verso que supiese
 parar a un hombre en medio de la calle,
 un verso en pie - ahí está el detalle -
 que hasta diese la mano y escupiese.
 (A 126)

This verse must be short: "corto en palabras. Ley de los poemas / míos" ("Gallarta" PPP 26); every word must mirror truth, and every syllable must be necessary:

Ni una palabra
brotará en mis labios
que no sea
verdad.
Ni una sílaba,
que no sea
necesaria.

("Ni una palabra" PPP 58)

Sabina de la Cruz describes Otero's ideal as "Un verso, corto, escueto, despojado de retórica, apoyado única y espléndidamente en el ritmo y la palabra."⁴

The poet begins the renovation of his verses in Pido la paz y la palabra with lines of restricted length, as in "Espejo de España":

Avila
Toledo.
Lágrimas
de piedra, ardiendo
en la cara
del cielo.
Alba
de Tormes. Cierro
los ojos. Pasa
un agua en silencio.
Lenta, ancha
como el tiempo.
El Toboso. Criptana.
Veo
una mancha,
Lejos.
Lanza
y rocín, en sueños,
avanzan.
Oh espejo
de España.

Yermo
 yelmo. Bajada
 del Pozo Amargo.
 Cierro
 los labios
 de la patria.

(PPP 21-22)

Otero simply lists the names of places and the memories and associations they provoke in lines of no more than six syllables. However, there still remain poems of lengthy lines ("Hija de Yago" PPP 19, "Posición" PPP 30), and a few cases of the traditional sonnet) "Yo soy aquél que ayer no más decía" PPP 34).

In En castellano the short poems continue with many compositions of only two lines, the shortest of which forms the authors slogan: "Escribo / hablando" (EC 88). Here again, as in Pido la paz y la palabra, traces of the classical sonnet remain ("La soledad se abre hambrientamente" EC 178-79), as well as lengthy free verse "Muy lejos" EC 124, "Cartas y poemas a Nazim Hikmet" EC 150-51).

Otero comes closer to attaining his ideal in Que trata de España, where poems are short as in the "Cantes" (QTE 65-67), and where the sonnet appears, for the most part, in a modified form with lines of varying length. "España" (QTE 121), for example, cited by Cano as a "soneto heterodoxo,"⁵ contains lines of ten to fourteen syllables, as the figures to the right indicate:

A veces pienso que sí, que es imposible 12
evitarlo. Y estoy a punto de morir 11
o llorar. Desgraciado de aquél que tiene patria 14
y esta patria le obsede como a mí. 10

Pregunto, me pregunto: ¿Qué es España? 11
¿Una noche emergiendo entre la sangre? 11
¿Una vieja horrorosa plaza de toros 12
de multitud sediente y hambrienta y sin salida? 14

Fuere yo de otro sitio. De otro sitio cualquiera. 14
A veces pienso así, y golpeo mi frente 12
y rechazo la noche de un manotazo: España, 14

aventura truncada, orgullo hecho pedazos, 13
lugar de lucha y días hermosos que se acercan 14
colmados de claveles colorados, España. 14

Otero also modifies the sonnet by the use of the 8-syllable line. Sabina de la Cruz refers to "Y dijo de esta manera" where the second line of the second quartet has eight syllables and the word tenía in the final tercet introduces lines of a cante jondo, again of 8 syllables:⁶

Será porque he tenido mala suerte.
Será que no sé hablar si me distraen.
Pero por qué son tan azules las paredes
del día, por qué diablos no son paredes.

Será porque el azul tiene una «l»
garbosa y muy elegante,
o será porque el día se defiende
entre cuatro paredes intocables.

Será porque he tenido mala suerte
y me ha tocado siempre conformarme,
pero por qué lo mismo y por qué siempre.

Será que no sé hablar si no es del aire,
y el aire sabe que eso me entretiene
... tenía

Mi calabozo tenía
una ventanita al mar,

donde yo me entretenía
 viendo los barcos pasar
 de Cartagena a Almería...
 (QTE 69)

The critic sees a further modification of the sonnet by the insertion of an extra six-syllable line in "Crónica de una juventud," where Otero speaks of the swift passage of his youth:⁷

¿Quién dirá que te vio, y en qué momento
 en campo de batalla, convertido
 el ibero solar? Ay! en el nido
 de antaño oí silbar
 las balas. (Y ordené el fusilamiento
 (QTE 157)

Recognizing the modification he has made in the sonnet by varying the length of the lines and by inserting extra lines, the poet offers this comment on the relationship between his sonnets and the traditional ones:

. . . aunque la configuración es la misma
 que la tradicional, endecasílabos en dos
 cuartetos y dos tercetos, creo que muchas
 veces es la sola apariencia lo que conservan
 los muchos que he escrito.⁸

The final poems in Expresión y reunión are written as versicles, free verse and sonnets. The sonnets are few and classical (ER 234-35) and free verse predominates.

In addition to innovations in verse forms beginning with Angel fieramente humano and continuing throughout his collections of poetry, Blas de Otero also includes prose

selections among his poetry, again pursuing his goal to write as people speak. He inserts in Ancia two prose sections: "Otra historia para niños" (A 100-01) and "La Monse" (A 102-03). In En castellano he includes "Papeles inéditos" (EC 81) and "Ultimas noticias" (EC 162-63), and in Que trata de España he injects "Coillure 1959" (QTE 169) and "De playa a playa" (QTE 171). His attraction to prose as a vehicle of expression later results in Historias fingidas y verdaderas, a work entirely in prose.

The evolution in theme and a change in the concept of his poetry from an expression of personal anguish to a voicing of the human struggle, causes Otero to shift from the lira and the traditional sonnet to a sonnet which includes lines of 6, 8, 10, 12, 13, and 14 syllables and popular songs, and from other lengthy verses to short, free verse. While he never abandons completely the traditional sonnet and other forms of arte mayor, they are gradually outnumbered by short compositions in free verse.

Notes

¹ Sabina de la Cruz, Introd., Todos mis sonetos, by Blas de Otero (Madrid: Turner, 1977), p. xii.

² José Luis Cano, "Blas de Otero y el soneto heterodoxo," in Blas de Otero: Study of a Poet, eds. C. Mellizo and L. Salstad (Laramie, Wyoming: Univ. of Wyoming, 1980), p. 12.

³ Sabina de la Cruz, Introd., Expresión y reunión, by Blas de Otero (Madrid: Alianza, 1981), p. 16.

⁴ Cruz, Introd., Expresión y reunión, p. 18.

⁵ Cano, p. 13.

⁶ Cruz, Introd., Expresión y reunión, p. 27.

⁷ Cruz, Introd., Expresión y reunión, p. 27.

⁸ Antonio Nuñez, "Encuentro con Blas de Otero," Insula, 23 (1968), 3.

CHAPTER VI

CIRCULAR POEMS

Circular poems, which appear with relative frequency in Blas de Otero's works, are structured to begin and end with the same lines. The poet gives an introduction which he develops in the body of the poem, ending with a repetition or a slight variation of the beginning lines. The reiteration of the opening lines at the end of the poem emphasizes the theme of the poem while at the same time creating a circular movement which may be repeated again and again. The conclusion is, therefore, another beginning.

"Pido la paz y la palabra" (PPP 56), typical of the pattern introduction-development-introduction, begins with the statement:

Pido la paz y la palabra.

The development of the poem elaborates on the change in the poet's vocabulary, giving examples of words he used in his first works as he sought to find God, and those he now utters in his social collections:

Escribo
 en defensa del reino
 del hombre y su justicia. Pido
 la paz
 y la palabra. He dicho
 «silencio»,
 «sombra», «vacío»,
 etc.
 Digo
 «del hombre, y su justicia»,
 «océano pacífico»,
 lo que me dejan.

The poem concludes with a repetition of the opening words
 which underline Otero's poetic mission:

Pido
 la paz y la palabra.

Blas de Otero uses the circular structure to reiterate
 his plea for peace in another poem, "En el nombre de España,
 paz" in the same collection (PPP 64-65). He begins by
 asking for peace:

EN EL NOMBRE DE ESPAÑA, PAZ.

The development of this poem comments on man's perilous
 condition and commands Spain to rise to the occasion, to
 herald a new day, a day of peace:

El hombre
 está en peligro. España,
 España, no te
 aduermas.
 Está en peligro, corre,
 acude. Vuela
 el ala de la noche
 junto al ala del día.
 Oye.

Cruje una vieja sombra,
vibra una luz joven.
Paz
para el día.

And the poem concludes reiterating the call for peace:

En el nombre
de España, paz.

In other circular poems, especially those concentrated in Que trata de España, the introduction becomes a sort of estribillo for short compositions such as "Canción cinco," which begins with a presentation of a solitary soul crossing the bridges of Zamora:

Por los puentes de Zamora,
sola y lenta iba mi alma.

The development which follows specifies the bridge and heightens the loneliness of the poet.

No por el puente de hierro,
el de piedra es el que amaba.

A ratos miraba el cielo,
A ratos miraba el agua.

The opening lines which are repeated again in the conclusion now have a different tone, as Bousoño points out.¹ Because of the development in the intervening lines, the sadness of the first two lines becomes more intense in these final lines:

Por los puentes de Zamora
lenta y sola, iba mi alma.
(QTE 94)

The intensity of the final lines of a circular poem may also be due to a variation in the opening and closing lines, "Anda" (EC 102), a poem composed mainly of commands exhorting Spain to move forward, exemplifies this. It begins with the words:

ANDA,
levántate,
España.

The poem then develops on a parenthetical note which explains that Spain must rise to peace:

(Ponte
en pie
de paz.)

In the conclusion the author reverses the order of the three opening words and adds the conjunction y:

España
levántate
y anda.

The reversal of the introductory words at the end of the poem strengthens the command and emphasizes the difference in meaning between the first and second anda: come on versus walk. Biruté Ciplijauskaitė comments on the difference in meaning of these two words and the effect this contrast has:

"Lo que empieza como una exhortación coloquial se vuelve mandato casi evangélico:"² The expression "Come on and walk" changes to the command Jesus gave to the cripple in Mark 2:9 "Arise . . . and walk," thus creating an image of Spain as a paralytic in need of a miracle.

In still another type of circular poem, the author accentuates his theme by rewording his introductory statement in the conclusion. Ciplijauskaitė notes that, in these cases, "el nexo entre el primero y el último verso es a veces sólo implícito, de concepto."³ "Pluma que canta" (EC 130-31), which provides an example of this category of circular poems, begins with a comment on the freedom of movement of the air through the pages of a book, air signifying Otero's obsession with liberty:

Sin embargo,
el aire (esta obsesión de aire alegre y libre)
entra en el libro, abre las páginas, mueve
el verso diecisiete, silba entre sus sílabas,

In the section that follows, Otero depicts Spain's gloom:

y si supierais como me ahogo en la O,
es como si España toda fuese una sola horrorosa plaza
de toros,
blanca de sol
comido poco a poco por un espantoso abanico
negro.

The conclusion, like the introduction, comments on the freedom of the air, this time as it sways the poplar:

(Sin embargo,
se mueve
algo de aire, mira aquel álamo...)

The circular poems, on the whole, mark a further step in the direction of the masses with the use of one of the most ancient poetic procedures, and underscore Otero's message of peace, hope and liberty.

Notes

¹ Carlos Bousoño, Teoría de la expresión poética, 4th ed. (Madrid: Gredos, 1966), pp. 256-58.

² Biruté Cipliauskaitė, "Sobre la estructura del poema en Blas de Otero," in Blas de Otero: Study of a Poet, eds. C. Mellizo and L. Salstad (Laramie, Wyoming: Univ. of Wyoming, 1980), p. 24.

³ Cipliauskaitė, p. 25.

CHAPTER VII

POEMS WRITTEN AS CONVERSATIONS/DIALOGUES

Because of the intended communicative nature of his poetry, Otero is continually in dialogue, either with God (Cántico espiritual, Angel fieramente humano, Redoble de conciencia, and Ancia) with Spain and his fellow men (Pido la paz y la palabra, En castellano, and Que trata de España), or with himself (Expresión y reunión). This constant dialogue affects the structure of his poems. Some begin as though the poet were initiating or renewing a conversation, some have the structure of a one-way conversation; others appear to be two-way conversations where both voices, the poet's and the addressee's, are audible, while a few show the poet in dialogue with himself.

Poems which give the impression that the poet is initiating or renewing a conversation include "Que cada uno aporte lo que sepa" (RC 139), "Silben los vértices" (PPP 66), "Condal entredicha" (EC 122), and "Entendámonos" (EC 146). The first poem, "Que cada uno aporte lo que sepa," begins with the words, "Acontece querer a una persona," as though the poet were commencing a narration, and then

proceeds to speak of the devastation brought upon Europe and Spain by the Second World War. "Silben los vértices," "Condal entredicha," and "Entendámonos" begin with the words y bien, pues bien, and entendámonos, as though he were resuming a conversation.

"Segunda vez con Gabriel Celaya" (EC 158-59) depicts the structure of a one-sided conversation. María Muñiz refers to this poem as an example of a dialogue with an invisible person.¹ The poem begins with the author looking out into the street at the passers-by and promising that he will write to Celaya some day. He then presents a situation where he and Celaya are sitting together drinking beer and discussing the latter's suggestions on writing, his Antología Pequeña, and his letter, injecting jovial remarks and cordial invitations to drink and smoke. But Celaya's voice is never heard. Otero writes:

Hoy,
sencillamente, hablemos. Tú me dices
que escriba, que publique. Te equivocas.
Escribo cuanto quiero
y cuanto puedo.
Publico, qué caray, lo que me dejan.

Bebamos otra jarra. Camarero,
mas cerveza.

Como te iba diciendo, estoy contento
tic tac. Tu Antología
Pequeña es un gran libro. (Dios nos libre
de libros grandes y de chicas feas.)
Un libro que se abre
solo: lo mismo que la ola.

¿Quieres fumar?

En fin

hablando
de tu carta, qué disparates
dices.

Another example of this type of one way conversation is
"Paso a paso" (A 156), the first two stanzas of which read:

Tachia, los hombres sufren. No tenemos
ni un pedazo de paz con que aplacarles;
roto casi el navío y ya sin remos...
¿Qué podemos hacer, qué luz alzarles?

Larga es la noche, Tachia. Oscura y larga
como mis brazos hacia el cielo. Lenta
como la luna desde el mar. Amarga
como el amor: yo llevé bien la cuenta.

In this poem the poet appears to be presenting the suffering
of men to a listener, Tachia, who again is not heard.

Unlike the poems where only the poet's voice is
audible, some poems are a complete two-way conversation,
structured on the dialogue between two audible voices.

"Dije" belongs to this category:

Dije: Mi soledad es como un árbol
alto, de oro y de dolor, tan puro
que apenas puede contenerse en aire,
ay, si un aire le hollase allá en lo último...

Dijiste: trenza tu dolor al mío,
como una larga cabellera en júbilo:
hunde tus sueños en mi sangre; inclina
tu sed de Dios. Mi reino es de este mundo.

Dije: Mujer, mi mal no tiene origen:
sufro, no sé por qué. De esto hace mucho....
Apenas puedo con mis pies, si un hilo,
ay si un hilo me asiese así, de súbito.

Tú, pensativamente: El tiempo es plata
de amor, entre mis brazos y los tuyos.

Abre tu soledad. Deja que el llanto
suceda y sueñe como un llanto músico.

Dije: Como las rosas, has sabido
como las rosas asomarte al muro
de mi dolor. Tan rosamente, el aire,
ay, el aire rozó jamás el mundo...
(A 111-12)

The words dije and dijiste introduce the lines of the poet and those of his lover who offers him comfort in his loneliness.

"Cartilla (poética)" (QTE 39-40), provides another example of a two-way conversation. The poem begins:

La poesía tiene sus derechos.
Lo sé.
Soy el primero en sudar tinta
delante del papel.

La poesía crea las palabras.
Lo sé.
Esto es verdad y sigue siéndolo
diciéndola al revés.

La poesía exige ser sinceros.
Lo sé.
Le pido a Dios que me perdone
y a todo dios, excúsenme.

La poesía atañe a lo esencial
del ser.
No lo repitan tantas veces,
repito que lo sé.

These first four stanzas, as Alarcos Llorach notes, are a dialogue between the poet and the defenders of pure poetry.² The purists state the abstract tenets of their poetry: the creation of words, sincerity, the essence of being, to which the poet replies "Lo sé" in a tone that becomes increasingly

impatient and which María Muñiz describes in this way:

" . . . alguien pretende convencernos de una perogrullada, y nosotros vamos contestando, cada vez mas irritados: 'Lo sé', 'Sí, ya lo sé', 'Pero si ya lo sé!' etc. Lo mismo en Otero."³

After listening to the purists in the first four stanzas, Otero then expands on what he considers the duties of poetry:

Ahora viene el pero.

La poesía tiene sus deberes.
Igual que un colegial.
Entre yo y ella hay un contrato
social.

Ah las palabras más maravillosas,
«rosa», «poema», «mar»
son m pura y otras letras:
O, a...

Si hay un alma sincera, que se guarde
(en el almario) su cantar.
¿Cantos de vida y esperanza
serán?

Pero yo no he venido a ver el cielo,
te advierto. Lo esencial
es la existencia, la conciencia
de estar en esta clase o en la otra.

Es un deber elemental.

The poet, in this part of the dialogue where he is the main speaker, lets the defenders of pure poetry know that his poetry will have a social function, that of writing about life in the various classes of society.

Finally, there is the poem which is a conversation between Otero and his inner self. "Me complace más que el mar" (ER 237) is such a poem. A few lines taken from this

poem depict the author leaning against the seawall of Havana and asking himself a series of questions regarding his thoughts, his destination, and his abode:

en qué piensas, adónde irás cuando te pares y prosigas tu
 marcha,
 vas a subir por el Prado, o por Aguila, o irás hacia la
 Rampo, tú el vasco universal pero sin presumir tanto
 como el moguereno,
 tú trotamundos, poeta maldito de la burguesía y de la po-
 licía y simplemente de la CIA,
 qué haces ahí en el malecón, de espaldas a Miami como
 Maceo o cualquier ciudadano decente,
 dónde habitas, si es que habitas en algún sitio, en el Ha-
bana libre, en la Víbora, en el Riviera,
 o sencillamente en medio de la Revolución . . .

These poems, structured as conversations and dialogues are intended to bring Otero's compositions closer to everyday speech and situations. As María Muñoz says: "No basta con decir que Otero ha introducido el habla en la poesía; al contrario; lo que ha hecho ha sido diluir por entero su poesía en el habla."⁴ Otero writes as people speak and establishes contexts of communication for these patterns of speech.

Notes

¹ María Muñiz, "'Que trata de España': la trilogía de Blas de Otero," Papeles de Son Armadans, 66 (1972), cx.

² Emilio Alarcos Llorach, "Al margen de Blas de Otero," Papeles de Son Armadans, 85 (1977), 125.

³ Muñiz, p. cviii.

⁴ Muñiz, p. cvii.

CHAPTER VIII

POEMS WITHOUT PUNCTUATION

The poems with very little or no punctuation demand that the reader provide the necessary punctuation marks. In most cases this is relatively easy since the linear structure of the poem is what one would expect, and, as such, one applies the rules of punctuation as necessary. In other cases, the reading demands more of the reader by presenting various word combinations. "Ni Vietnam" is one unpunctuated poem which can be read without much difficulty.

Una mañana de humo y pájaros desperdigados
estando en el sanatorio
estando yo en el jardín
jadeando entre dientes como en medio del amor
una mañana de barca balanceada
estando con los cinco sentidos resbalados
doliéndome como un caballo
apareciste entre las ramas
apareciste como el arcángel San Gabriel en vestido
de verano
una mañana muy ladeada
tu sonrisa cadena rota
tus piernas de plástico doloroso
estando en el sanatorio
todo lo veía como si hubiera tomado ácido
como alrededor de la fuente de Londres
con su castillo de baraja
con Zulema en su pequeña habitación extrañamente
decorada

y estando en el sanatorio
 apareciste con sandalias rojas y una pluma en la mano
 izquierda
 estando con los ojos divagados
 y sonreí con esfuerzo
 y el mundo no tenía ni vietnam ni planchas ateridas
 maravillosa mañana
 para añorarla estando en el sanatorio
 (ER 252)

This poem, which expresses a nostalgia for a loved one, and whose lines are complete sentences or dependent clauses, does not pose any problem for the reader. Referring to the relative ease with which one overcomes unpunctuated poems such as this one, Alarcos Llorach writes:

. . . porque si en el bloque de contenido que manifiesta el poeta no hay por dentro pausas, sí existe en cambio una jerarquía de relaciones entre sus elementos simultáneos y son estas las que en la proyección lineal de la expresión quedan explícitas en parte gracias a los rasgos que representamos gráficamente con puntos y comas.¹

In other cases, however, the unpunctuated poem does not lend itself to such an easy reading. There are possible variations in word combinations, and these possibilities force the reader to re-read in an effort to find a satisfactory version. Muñiz refers to this process when she says:

En más de una poesía el autor nos deja a solas con un texto en el que faltan todos o casi todos los signos de puntuación. Se trata de un particular método para obligarnos a repetir la

lectura cosa que Otero persigue con insistencia y por todos los medios. Y puesto que fragmentos enteros se relacionan potencialmente tanto con lo que precede como con lo que sigue, cada uno de nosotros lo interpreta de acuerdo con su estado de ánimo del momento y con el substrato significativo que ha tomado forma en la primera lectura; pero entonces surge la pregunta: ¿lo habré leído bien?, y uno vuelve a empezar y aparece una nueva interpretación posible.²

The possibility of various readings is applicable to
"Españahogándose" (QTE 30):

Cuando pienso
en el mar es decir
la vida que uno ha envuelto denenvuelto
como
 olas
 sonoras
y sucedio que abril abrió sus árboles
y yo calleajaba iba venía
bajo la torre de San Miguel
o más lejos
 bajaba
las descarnadas calles de Toledo
pero es el mar
quien me lleva y deslleva en sus manos
el mar desmemoriado
dónde estoy son las márgenes
del Esla los esbeltos álamos
amarillos que menea el aire
no sé oigo las olas
de Orio Guetaria
Elanchove las anchas
olas rabiosas
es decir la vida que uno hace
y deshace
 cielos
hundidos días como diamante
una guitarra en el Perchel de noche
la playa rayada de fusiles
frente a Torrijos y sus compañeros

The punctuation is basically clear until the reader reaches

the lines:

 las anchas
 olas rabiosas
 es decir la vida que uno hace
 y deshace
 cielos
 hundidos días como diamante

As María Muñoz notes, there are at least three possible versions of these lines.³ The first presents "cielos hundidos, días como diamante," as an explanation of "la vida que uno hace y deshace:

1. Las anchas olas rabiosas, es decir, la vida
 que uno hace y deshace: cielos hundidos, días
 como diamante

The second treats "que uno hace y deshace cielos hundidos días como diamante" as an elaboration on "la vida":

2. Las anchas olas rabiosas, es decir, la vida:
 que uno hace y deshace cielos hundidos días
 como diamante

and the third version places "cielos" within exclamation marks:

3. Las anchas olas rabiosas, es decir, la vida
 que uno hace y deshace, ¡cielos! hundidos días
 como diamantes.

All three readings are acceptable; each changes the content of the lines, and each reader will settle for the version he or she considers best.

The omission of punctuation marks is another way of reflecting the language of the masses who tend to run words together without pauses, relying on the context and implicit grammatical rules for an accurate interpretation of their utterances. It also involves the reader in the poem as he or she tries to obtain a satisfactory version of the unpunctuated lines. The author can use this to his advantage since retaining the attention of the reader means that he is more likely to communicate his message. Unpunctuated poems, therefore, serve Otero's purpose in two ways; first by permitting him to approach the common people's speech, and secondly by attracting the reader's attention to his message.

Notes

¹ Emilio Alarcos Llorach, "Al margen de Blas de Otero," Papeles de Son Armadans, 85 (1977), 124.

² María Muñiz, "'Que trata de España': la trilogía de Blas de Otero," Papeles de Son Armadans, 66 (1972), cxx.

³ Muñiz, p. cxx.

CHAPTER IX

INTERCALATED QUOTATIONS AND CLICHÉS

Otero constantly writes lines that are either direct quotations from literary sources or from the Bible, or are reminiscent of them; a process which José Luis Cano terms "incrustación"¹ of quotations. This practice may be, as Bousoño suggests, in the Renaissance tradition of citing well-known sources to lend authority to one's own writings,² and is, as Blanco Aguinaga says, a way of further identification with humanity: "si la realidad vivida íntimamente se abre hacia el prójimo, ¿por qué no cederá el poeta - modestamente - el espacio de su voz a otras voces compañeras?"³

The poet inserts many of the quotations into his poems since they best express the concept he is developing.⁴ His lament over the state of Spain in "Sobre esta piedra edificaré," and his consciousness of the possibilities for the country, evoke some lines from the Cid: "Dios, qué buen / vasallo, / si oviesse buen..." (PPP 17). Words from Larra's "Día de difuntos de 1836" summarize the two faces of Spain, the heroic and the defeated: "Aquí yace / media

España. / Murió de la otra media" ("La va buscando" EC 98), and a rearrangement of the words of Fray Luis de León, "Acude, corre, vuela," used in "Profecía del Tajo" to call King Rodrigo to action, urges Spain to rise:

España, no te aduermas.
Está en peligro, corre
acude. Vuela
el ala de la noche,
junto al ala del día.

("En el nombre de España, paz"
PPP 64)

At other times Otero changes the quotations to accommodate the subject matter he is treating. The primary example is the expression "la inmensa minoría," used by Juan Ramón Jiménez to refer to the elitism of poetry,⁵ which Otero changes to "la inmensa mayoría" thus serving his purpose of solidarity with the masses. His belief in the ideals of Spain brings to mind the words of Quevedo, "Poderoso caballero / es don Dinero," which he modifies to include the figure representative of Spanish idealism: "Poderoso caballero / es Don Quijote" ("Letra" EC 109). But he also wants to add action to Don Quijote, so he unites him on one occasion, not with Sancho, as Cervantes does, but with San Ignacio: "Fundir a Don Quijote y San Ignacio: / de aquél, el ideal, de éste, la actio," a new unity which he expresses visually in the title of the poem: "Don Quijote y San ...Ignacio" (EC 110). However, the poet still names Sancho for his practicality and puts him on the same level

as Don Quijote with words formerly applied to Queen Isabel and King Ferdinand: "Tanto monta, monta tanto / Don Quijote como Sancho" (QTE 122).

Otero gives a stunning answer to a biblical verse to explain his shift in theme from a search for immortality to solidarity with men when he replies to the question asked in Mark 8:36, "For what shall it profit a man, if he should gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" with the words: "he comprendido que aprovecha más salvar el mundo que ganar mi alma." ("Papeles inéditos" EC 81). His view of writing as his main purpose in life causes him to change Descartes' words: "Pienso luego soy" to "Escribo; luego existo" ("No quiero que le tapen la cara con pañuelos" (QTE 44).

A further extension of the intercalation of quotations is what Sabina de la Cruz calls the technique of collage.⁶ Using this technique, Otero intertwines quotations from one or more sources with his original compositions. For example, "Una carta" (QTE 180), alternates between the poet's words and a letter written by an uneducated woman to her brother, a soldier. While another poem in Mientras ("2") alternates the poet's words with those of a tape "Biografía de un cimarrón." A third poem "La muerte de don Quijote" (QTE 131-34), which, as Donahue mentions, speaks of the decadence, injustice, lack of freedom and of ideals in Spain, exploits this technique of collage.⁷ In it Otero interweaves, as he tells the reader at the end of the book, lines from the Quijote, Rubén Darío,

César Vallejo, Waldo Frank, and Heinrich Heine.

In including clichés in his poems, Otero sometimes follows a method which Carlos Bousoño describes as the "ruptura en el sistema formado por una frase hecha," and which he explains as follows:

[La ruptura] se produce, al quebrantar, en algún punto, en efecto, la fiel reproducción de un sintagma complejo, que nos llega, en principio, como un bloque tópico, de antemano construído y dado. La frase hecha actúa entonces como una falsilla de la que, de pronto, se aparta el poeta, cobrando por ello la entera expresión otro sentido, colocado, además, éste, de súbito, fuera de la "lengua" y, por tanto, con posibilidades poéticas.⁸

Otero uses this procedure in "A Eugenio de Nora," when, in speaking of the presence of death, he writes:

Tú y yo cogidos de la muerte, alegres
vamos subiendo por las mismas flores:
(AFH 62)

The expression "cognidos de la muerte" reminds the reader of cogidos de la mano, and he assimilates both to form a picture of two people hand in hand with death. Bousoño gives this analysis: "notamos que la expresión 'cogidos de la muerte' está realizada sobre el módulo 'cogidos de la mano,' con la consecuencia de significar, si se me permite la traición que supone una reducción tal al plano lógico, algo de este tenor: 'cogidos de la muerte como si fuésemos cogidos de la mano.'"⁹

"Que cada uno aporte lo que sepa" (RC 140) offers another example of this "breaking of the system." The call to war is expressed in the following line:

En 1939 llamaron a misa a los pobres hombres.

"Llamaron a misa" replaces the cliché llamaron a filas, and the reader arrives at a meaning for the first expression by establishing a point of contact between misa and filas. Since misa involves a celebration of the Eucharist preceding the death of Christ, "llamaron a misa" comes to mean that the men were going to their Last Supper and inevitably to their death. Donahue explains this connection: "como la ceremonia de la misa representa el sacrificio y la sangre de Cristo, según la creencia cristiana, así los combatientes de las guerras son holocaustos inocentes."¹⁰

Besides these clichés which break the established system, there are others whose meaning becomes ambiguous because of the context. In these cases, two possible meanings arise: The one given the expression in everyday speech, and another intellectualized version which seems to fit the context. With regard to this process of intellectualization, Alarcos Llorach writes: "Otero usa de ellas las [frases hechas] repristinándolas, esto es, analizándolas, haciendo revivir el sentido de sus elementos y produciendo así un efecto expresivo inesperado."¹¹ He cites the example of the expression "al cabo de la calle" used in "Final" (AFH 91):

Puede ser que estemos ya al cabo de la calle
Que esto precisamente fuese el fin
o el cabo de la calle
Puede suceder que aquí precisamente
se acabe el cabo
de la calle.

"Al cabo de," he notes, would generally refer to being informed about something, but in this poem it appears to be more effective if interpreted analytically: at the end of the street, street being life.¹²

A further example of this process of intellectualization is the expression "no se salva ni dios" in the poem "Me llamarán, nos llamarán a todos" (PPP 42). The inevitability of death represented in the statement "(Aquí / no se salva ni dios)," which by itself means that no one escapes death, is followed by the words "Lo asesinaron." The object pronoun Lo causes the reader to think of the preceding dios not as any and every one, but as God who, in the person of Jesus, was crucified. María Muñiz supports this interpretation when she remarks: "La expresión 'ni dios' se desmonta, el componente 'dios' se independiza y se convierte en el punto de referencia de la frase que sigue: 'Lo asesinaron.'"¹³

By quoting well-known sources and by using clichés Otero accentuates his unity with the masses. He does not, however, stifle his poetic capabilities, but displays his originality in the ways in which he inserts them into his poems.

Notes

¹ José Luis Cano, "El tema de España en Blas de Otero," Insula, 221 (1965), 9.

² Carlos Bousoño, "Un ensayo de estilística explicativa," in Homenaje universitario a Dámaso Alonso (Madrid: Gredos, 1970), p. 75.

³ Carlos Blanco Aguinaga, "El mundo entre ceja y ceja: Releyendo a Blas de Otero," Papeles de Son Armadans, 85 (1977), 177.

⁴ Many critics have made reference to the quotations taken from Larra, Fray Luis de León, Juan Ramón Jiménez, Descartes and Quevedo. They include Emilio Alarcos Llorach (La poesía de Blas de Otero (Salamanca: Anaya, 1966), p. 98), Moraima de Semprún Donahue (Blas de Otero en su poesía (Chapel Hill: Univ. of N. Carolina Press, 1977), p. 181), Bousoño, (pp. 72 & 77), Edmund King ("Blas de Otero: The Past and Present of 'The Eternal,'" in Spanish Writers of 1936, ed. Jaime Ferrán and Daniel P. Testa (London: Tamesis, 1973), pp. 127-28), Emilio Miró ("España, tierra, y palabra, en la poesía de Blas de Otero," Cuadernos hispanoamericanos, 356 (1980), 287), and María Muñoz ("'Que trata de España': la trilogía de Blas de Otero," Papeles de Son Armadans, 66 (1972), civ).

⁵ Juan Ramón Jiménez, Poesía (en verso) (1917-1923) (Madrid: Taurus, 1981), p. 37.

⁶ Sabina de La Cruz, Introd., Expresión y reunión, by Blas de Otero (Madrid: Alianza, 1981), p. 27.

⁷ Donahue, p. 182.

⁸ Bousoño, p. 70.

⁹ Bousoño, p. 71.

¹⁰ Donahue, p. 175.

¹¹ Alarcos Llorach, p. 88.

¹² Alarcos Llorach, p. 90.

¹³ Muñoz, p. cxvi.

CHAPTER X

PARALLELISMS AND CORRELATIONS

Parallelisms and correlations form the basis for many of Otero's poems, and these techniques play an important role in accentuating the thematic aspects of the poet's works, especially in Pido la paz y la palabra and the later collections. Alarcos Llorach defines parallelism as " . . . la reiteración de secuencias . . . cuyos elementos se organizan conforme a un mismo esquema sintáctico (y naturalmente sus contenidos psíquicos, si no son iguales, son equivalentes o análogos)." ¹ Dámaso Alonso states that a poem is correlative when " . . . en cada línea un elemento cualquiera . . . es correlato de los demás elementos de su misma columna." ² Otero's parallelistic and correlative poems conform to these definitions.

The poem "En nombre de muchos" (PPP 54-55), makes use of parallelisms and correlations to underline the call to happiness for man, the world, and Spain:

Para el hombre (A₁) hambreado y sepultado (B₁)
en sed - salobre són de sombra fría,
en nombre de la fe (C₁) que he conquistado (D₁):
alegría (E₁)

Para el mundo (A_2) inundado (B_2)
de sangre, engangrenado (B_3) a² sangre fría,
en nombre de la paz (C_2) que he voceado (D_2):
alegría (E_2).

Para ti, patria (A_3), árbol arrastrado (B_4)
sobre los ríos, ardúa España mía,
en nombre de la luz (C_3) que ha alboreado (D_3):
alegría (E_3).

The formula is:

A ₁	B ₁	C ₁	D ₁	E ₁	
A ₂	B ₂	B ₃	C ₂	D ₂	E ₂
A ₃	B ₄	C ₃	D ₃	E ₃	

A ₁	el hombre	B ₁	sepultado	C ₁	la fe
A ₂	el mundo	B ₂	inundado	C ₂	la paz
		B ₃	engangrenado		
A ₃	ti, patria	B ₄	arrastrado	C ₃	la luz

D ₁	he conquistado	E ₁	alegría
D ₂	he voceado	E ₂	alegría
D ₃	ha alboreado	E ₃	alegría

Since this poem consists of five difference correlative columns it is what Dámaso Alonso and Carlos Bousoño call a "correlación progresiva con cinco pluralidades."³ The first series (A) indicates the recipient and the second (B) lists the negative aspects of the recipient. The third (C) introduces the positive element desired, and (D) mentions the action that the poet has taken to achieve the end in the first two stanzas, and the result in the last. The fact that the fifth series (E) consists only of alegría, makes this the most important word of the poem, thus stressing the author's call to happiness.

"Fidelidad" (PPP 70) expresses Otero's belief in man, peace, and his country despite the horrible things he has witnessed, with parallelisms and correlations:

Creo(A₁) en el hombre(B₁). He visto(C₁)
 espaldas(D₁) astilladas a trallazos,
 almas (D₂) cegadas avanzando a brincos
 (españas²(D₃) a caballo
 del dolor y del hambre). Y he creído(E₁).

Creo(A₂) en la paz(B₂). He visto(C₂)
 altas estrellas(D₄), llameantes ámbitos(D₅)
 amanecientes; incendiando ríos
 hondos, caudal humano
 hacia otra luz: he visto(C₃) y he creído(E₂).

Creo(A₃) en ti, patria(B₃). Digo
 lo que he visto(C₄): relámpagos(D₆)
 de rabia, amor(D₇) en frío, y un cuchillo(D₈)
 chillando, haciéndose pedazos
 de pan: aunque hoy hay sólo sombra, he visto(C₅)
 y he creído(E₃).

The formula is a hybrid one of progressive and repetitive correlations:⁴

A ₁ B ₁ C ₁	A ₂ B ₂ C ₂	A ₃ B ₃ C ₄
D ₁	D ₄	D ₆
D ₂	D ₅	D ₇
D ₃	C ₃	D ₈
E ₁	E ₃	C ₅
		E ₃

A ₁	Creo	B ₁	el hombre	C ₁	he visto
A ₂	Creo	B ₂	la paz	C ₂	he visto
A ₃	Creo	B ₃	ti, patria	C ₃	he visto
				C ₄	he visto
				C ₅	he visto

D ₁	espaldas	E ₁	he creído
D ₂	almas	E ₂	he creído
D ₃	españás	E ₃	he creído .
D ₄	estrellas		
D ₅	ámbitos		
D ₆	relámpagos		
D ₇	amor		
D ₈	cuchillo		

Through the use of parallelisms and correlations in this poem the words creo, he visto, and he creído stand out above the rest, supporting the poet's belief in man, peace and his country.

By means of parallelisms and correlations Otero depicts his awakening to the struggle for a restored Spain in the following poem:

Dormir(A₁), para olvidar(B₁)
España(C₁).

Morir(A₂), para perder(B₂)
España(C₂).

Vivir(A₃), para labrar(B₃)
España(C₃).

Luchar(A₄), para ganar(B₄)
España(C₄).

(QTE 115)

The scheme is:

A ₁	B ₁	C ₁
A ₂	B ₂	C ₂
A ₃	B ₃	C ₃
A ₄	B ₄	C ₄

A ₁	Dormir	B ₁	olvidar	C ₁	España
A ₂	Morir	B ₂	perder	C ₂	España
A ₃	Vivir	B ₃	labrar	C ₃	España
A ₄	Luchar	B ₄	ganar	C ₄	España

The progressive correlations show the poet's passage from passivity, dormir, morir / olvidar, perder, to activity, vivir, luchar / labrar, ganar, to secure the future of Spain, the country given prominence in this poem by being the only entry in column C.

Finally "Cantar de amigo" (ER 233) uses parallelisms and correlations to highlight "the singleness of theme, that is, the consecration of the poet's life to searching out the unknown and bearing witness to it."⁵

¿Dónde está Blas de Otero(A₁)? Está dentro del sueño(B₁), con los ojos abiertos(C₁).

¿Dónde está Blas de Otero(A₂)? Está en medio del viento(B₂), con los ojos abiertos(C₂).

¿Dónde está Blas de Otero(A₃)? Está cerca del miedo(B₃), con los ojos abiertos(C₃).

¿Dónde está Blas de Otero(A₄)? Está rodeado de fuego(B₄), con los ojos abiertos(C₄).

¿Dónde está Blas de Otero(A₅)? Está en el fondo del mar(B₅), con los ojos abiertos(C₅).

¿Dónde está Blas de Otero(A₆)? Está con los estudiantes y obreros(B₆), con los ojos abiertos(C₆).

¿Dónde está Blas de Otero(A₇)? Está en la bahía de Cienfuegos(B₇), con los ojos abiertos(C₇).

¿Dónde está Blas de Otero(A₈)? Está en el quirófano(B₈), con los ojos abiertos(C₈).

¿Dónde está Blas de Otero(A₉)? Está en Vietnam del Sur(B₉), invisible entre los guerrilleros(C₉).

¿Dónde está Blas de Otero(A_{10})? Está echado en su lecho(B_{10}), con los ojos abiertos(C_{10}).

¿Dónde está Blas de Otero(A_{11})? Está muerto(B_{11}), con los ojos abiertos(C_{11}).

The formula is:

A_1	B_1	C_1
A_2	B_2	C_2
A_3	B_3	C_3
A_4	B_4	C_4
A_5	B_5	C_5
A_6	B_6	C_6
A_7	B_7	C_7
A_8	B_8	C_8
A_9	B_9	C_9
A_{10}	B_{10}	C_{10}
A_{11}	B_{11}	C_{11}

A_1	Blas de Otero	B_1	dentro del sueño
A_2	Blas de Otero	B_2	en medio del viento
A_3	Blas de Otero	B_3	cerca del miedo
A_4	Blas de Otero	B_4	rodeado de fuego
A_5	Blas de Otero	B_5	en el fondo del mar
A_6	Blas de Otero	B_6	con los estudiantes y obrerors
A_7	Blas de Otero	B_7	en la bahía de Cienfuegos
A_8	Blas de Otero	B_8	en el quirófano
A_9	Blas de Otero	B_9	en Vietnam del Sur
A_{10}	Blas de Otero	B_{10}	echado en su lecho
A_{11}	Blas de Otero	B_{11}	muerto

C_1	ojos abiertos
C_2	ojos abiertos
C_3	ojos abiertos
C_4	ojos abiertos
C_5	ojos abiertos
C_6	ojos abiertos
C_7	ojos abiertos

C₈ ojos abiertos
 C₉ invisible
 C₁₀ ojos abiertos
 C₁₁ ojos abiertos

The repetitive structure of this poem gives the impression that wherever Blas de Otero may be, dead or alive, his eyes are always open, and he is always aware of what is happening.

Parallelisms and correlations, therefore, enable Otero to verbalize his thoughts simply and yet poetically. this pattern with its several repetitions which is, as Riffaterre says, "the basic relationship underlying poetry,"⁶ is common in popular compositions and, probably for this reason, is frequently used by the poet who wishes to write for the masses.

Notes

¹ Emilio Alarcos Llorach, La poesía de Blas de Otero (Salamanca: Anaya, 1966), p. 121.

² Dámaso Alonso and Carlos Bousoño, Seis calas en la expresión literaria española (Madrid: Gredos, 1951), p. 51.

³ Alonso and Bousoño, pp. 54-55.

⁴ Alonso and Bousoño, pp. 57-59.

⁵ Geoffrey R. Barrow, "Autobiography and Art in the Poetry of Blas de Otero," Hispanic Review, 48 (1980), 226.

⁶ Michael Riffaterre, "Describing Poetic Structures: Two Approaches to Baudelaire's 'Les chats,'" in Structuralism, ed. Jacques Ehrmann (New York: Doubleday & Co. Inc., 1970), p. 189.

CHAPTER XI

PHONIC AND RHYTHMIC STRUCTURAL ELEMENTS

Repetition and contrast in sound

Alarcos Llorach notes that the sequence of sound patterns which is arbitrary in ordinary speech where it functions independent of the psychic content to convey meaning, allows visual, tactile and sentimental associations in poetry, where it becomes an expression of the poetic content. The meaning of a poem, therefore, lies not only in the words, but also in the sequence and variation of the phonic material whose rhythm is a result of the basic principle of repetition and contrast.¹ Roman Jakobson subscribes to this statement when he writes: "The superaverage accumulation of a certain class of phonemes or a contrastive assemblage of two opposite classes in the sound texture of a line, of a stanza of a poem acts like an 'undercurrent of meaning.'"² An examination of three of Otero's poems shows that he uses phonic repetition and contrast to convey meaning in his compositions.

"Mademoiselle Isabel" (AFH 17) is one example where the reiteration of a few phonemes creates the atmosphere of the poem:

Mademoiselle Isabel, rubia y francesa,
con un mirlo debajo de la piel,
no sé si aquél o ésa, oh mademoiselle
Isabel, canta en él o si él en ésa.

Princesa de mi infancia: tú, princesa
promesa, con dos senos de clavel;
yo, le livre, le crayon le... le..., oh Isabel,
Isabel... tu jardín tiembla en la mesa.

De noche te alisabas los cabellos,
yo me dormía, meditando en ellos
y en tu cuerpo de rosa: mariposa

rosa y blanca, velada con un velo.
Volada para siempre de mi rosa
--mademoiselle Isabel--y de mi cielo.

In this poem, an evocation of a female figure from the poet's childhood, Otero creates a dream-like atmosphere through the repetition of e's (31 times), l's (30 times), and s's (26 times), as the following list shows:

1st quartet	Mademoiselle, Isabel, francesa mirlo, piel aquél, ésa, mademoiselle Isabel, el, el, esa
2nd quartet	princesa, princesa promesa, senos, clavel le, le, le, le, Isabel Isabel, tiembla, la mesa
1st tercet	alisabas, los cabellos ellos rosa, mariposa
2nd tercet	rosa, blanca, velada, velo volada, rosa mademoiselle, Isabel, cielo

The combination of the sibilant s, the liquid l and the vowel e produces what Sabina de la Cruz calls " . . . una suavidad alada, muy adecuada al clima de evocación ensoñadora de este personaje femenino de la infancia del poeta."³ These sounds create the "undercurrent of meaning" to which Jakobson refers in his article.

While the repetition of sounds in "Mademoiselle Isabel" reinforces the dream-like evocational tone of the poem, the repetition of other sounds may have a different effect. In "León de noche" (PPP 32), for example, the repetition of phoneme b, the nasal n, the harsh sounds of ch, [k], r, and the vowel u, creates an atmosphere of insistence, violence and death:

- 1 Vuelve la cara, Ludwig van Beethoven,
- 2 dime qué ven, qué viento entra en tus ojos,
- 3 Ludwig; qué sombras van o vienen, van
- 4 Beethoven: qué viento vano, incógnito,
- 5 barre la nada ... Dime
- 6 qué escuchas, qué chascado mar
- 7 roe la ruina de tu oído sordo;
- 8 vuelve, vuelve la cara, Ludwig, gira
- 9 la máscara de polvo,
- 10 dime qué luces
- 11 ungen tu sueño de cenizas húmedas,
- 12 vuelve la cara, capitán del fondo
- 13 de la muerte: Tú, Ludwig van Beethoven,
- 14 león de noche, capitel sonoro!

In lines 1-5 the predominance of b's and n's, together with the interior anaphora of qué, reinforce the urgency of questioning:

Vuelve, van Beethoven,
 qué ven, qué viento entra en
 qué sombras van o vienen, van

Beethoven, qué viento vano, incógnito
barre, nada

Lines 6-9, heavily weighted with the harsh sounds of ch,
[k], and r, augment the undercurrent of violence:

escuchas, chascado mar
roe, ruina, sordo
cara, gira
máscara

and the accumulation of the back vowel u in lines 10-14
heightens the sombre topic of death:

luces
Ungen tu sueño, húmedas
vuelve
muerte
Tú, Ludwig

Alarcos Llorach, who has studied the effect of phonic
repetition in some of Blas de Otero's poems, has pointed out
the echo effect and the interior rhyme in this poem, and the
alliteration of the above mentioned phonemes which, he says,
adds to the tone of deep mystery in the poem.⁴

A further example of the repetition of contrasting
phonemes which reflect and reinforce the major theme is
"Cuerpo de la mujer" (AFH 21). In this sonnet, the poet
summarizes his search for a meaningful spiritual life
through a physical union and the resulting solitude he
experiences when his search is unsuccessful. While Alarcos
Llorach refers to the phonic impact of this sonnet, where

interdentals and vibrant sounds predominate in the first quartet, sibilants in the second, and dental occlusives and nasals in the tercets, a closer analysis may add to its significance.⁵

Cuerpo de la mujer, río de oro
donde, hundidos los brazos, recibimos
un relámpago azul, unos racimos
de luz rasgada en un frondor de oro.

Cuerpo de la mujer o mar de oro
donde, amando las manos, no sabemos
(si los senos son olas) si son remos
los brazos, si son alas solas de oro...

Cuerpo de la mujer, fuente de llanto
donde, después de tanta luz, de tanto
tacto sutil, de Tántalo es la pena.

Suena la soledad de Dios. Sentimos
la soledad de dos. Y una cadena
que no suena, ancla en Dios almas y limos.

The first quartet is composed mainly of interdentals and vibrants:

cuerpo, mujer, río, oro
brazos, recibimos
relámpago azul, racimos
luz rasgada, frondor, oro

The second quartet contains a number of sibilants:

las manos, no sabemos
(si los senos son olas) si son remos
los brazos, si son alas solas

The first tercet uses dental occlusives and nasals:

fuente, llanto
donde, después, tanta, tanto
tacto sutil, Tántalo

and the second tercet combines sibilants, dentals and nasals:

suena, soledad de Dios, Sentimos
soledad de dos, un cadena
suena, Dios, almas, limos

The vibrants, interdental and sibilants in the two quartets support the positive elements of physical love by forming such positive images as "río de oro," relámpago azul" and "alas solas de oro." The predominance of dental occlusives and nasals in the two tercets mark the poet's disillusionment with carnal love by their use in the composition of expressions such as "fuente de llanto." "Tántalo," and "suena la soledad de Dios."

Otero has certainly composed poems that confirm the assertions of Alarcos Llorach and Jakobson. His use of phonic repetition and contrast in the poems analyzed, along with the words themselves, are instrumental as bearers of meaning and help to communicate both the tone and the thematic content of these poems.

Play on words

Otero's consciousness of the possibilities of sound patterns is also illustrated in the several methods by which he effects word plays. Ricardo Senabre Sempere and Alarcos Llorach have studied these word plays to some extent, but have left room for additional commentary on some of their more salient examples and on new examples which contribute

further to the poet's use of this device in his works.⁶

Alarcos Llorach defines the play on words in this manner:

El juego de palabras consiste en que dos contenidos desemejantes, a veces dispares, se expresan con dos series fónicas muy parecidas, sólo distinguidas por un sonido o dos. El contraste entre la semejanza fónica y la disparidad semántica es lo que produce la resonancia expresiva, esto es, la reiteración sonora no viene acompañada de una paralela reiteración del significado, y éste resulta intensificado.⁷

The phonic similarity and the accompanying disparity in meaning to which he refers is applicable to Otero's use of paronomasia, that is, changing a word by replacing, adding or eliminating one or more phonemes, as in the following examples:

en medio de los dos, el miedo crece.
("Tierra" RC 111)

Suena la soledad de Dios. Sentimos
la soledad de dos.
("Cuerpo de la mujer" AFH 22)

Esas manos que son trojes
del hambre, y de los hombres que arrebatas.
("Lástima" RC 114)

un hombre, a hombros del miedo
("Hijos de la tierra" RC 147)

Tres años: y cien caños de sangre Abel
("Hija de Yago" PPP 20)

Otros vendrán. Verán lo que no vimos.
("Yo soy aquél que ayer no
más decía" PPP 35)

In each of these cases, the phonic parallelism established

between two words intensifies their meaning and importance and makes them the most conspicuous words in that line. The first example appears in a description of man, terrified and caught between the abyss and the vertigo of death. Medio and miedo, underline this terror and the presence of the abyss and the vertigo. Dios and dos in the second example heighten the poet's loneliness as he searches for God through woman's love, only to find his solitude doubled in a futile quest. The third example, where hambre and hombres stand out because of their phonic similarity, refers to the author's attempt to rid himself of a God who makes men hungry for him (hambre), and who snatches these same men (hombres). Example four again paints the picture of man (hombre), in fear (a hombros del miedo), being led innocently to his death. Five stresses the devastation of the Civil War which lasted three years (años) and accounted for the enormous shedding of blood (caños). Finally, Otero expresses his hope for the future by underscoring the words vendrán and verán in example six.

Another method of word play pointed out by Alarcos Llorach involves homophones which follow each other.⁸ The play on these homophones again supports the thematic concept:

alzo la frente frente al mar,
 ("Litografía de la cometa" EC 168)

Hoy hilo, hilo a hilo, la esperanza
 o ojos cerrados, sin perder el hilo.
 ("Virante" A 160)

Escucha
 el alba abriéndose paso - a paso - entre los muertos
 ("Paso a paso" A 175)

In the first case, the play is on the juxtaposed noun la frente and the preposition frente as the poet turns to the sea to voice his deep distress over his country. In the second, the play on the combination of the verb hilo, the adverbial expression hilo a hilo, and the noun, hilo, shows the poet's patience as he spins the yarn of hope, and the breaking up of the expression paso a paso, together with the preceding abriéndose paso, in the third case, emphasizes the slow but sure arrival of a bright future.

In yet another type of word play, Otero joins words to communicate an impression of simultaneity in the titles of his poems. "Españahogándose" (QTE 30), for example, combines España and ahogándose to epitomize the author's feeling that he is drowning in Spain. "Colorolor" (QTE 102), composed of color and olor, is the title of a poem which speaks of colors and odors associated with Spanish cities and rivers.

The author also analyzes words to achieve a play on their meaning:

sin norte, Norteamérica,
 ("Hijos de la tierra" RC 147)

Tierra
 de Campos, parda
 tierra de tristes campos.
 ("Tierra" QTE 92)

In "sin norte, Norteamérica," he interprets the norte of Norteamérica, which usually refers to the cardinal point, as a metaphorical indication of a country with a sense of direction. By placing sin norte before Norteamérica, the poet disputes this fact, saying that North America, like the entire world, does not know where it is headed. In the second example, he reduces the name "Tierra de Campos" to its constituent parts and qualifies each part with an adjective which, to him, makes the description of this gloomy place more accurate. Tierra de Campos is not only a land of fields, but a dreary land of sad fields ("parda / tierra de tristes campos").

Otero's play on words also takes the form of dilogía, that is, playing on the double meaning of a word. In an example cited by Ricardo Senabre Sempere:⁹

Quisiera ir a China
para orientarme un poco.
(EC 91)

orientarme may be interpreted both as "to find my bearings" and "to immerse myself in Oriental culture."

Finally, the poet's play on words may be a case of retruécano, as in the following example where he criticizes contemporary society:

claro, la sociedad de consumo es la
que consume a la sociedad
("O nos salvamos todos o que
se hundan ellos" M)

His position here is that the consumer society winds up destroying the social establishment, which is what he sees happening in Madrid.

The various methods of word play which Otero uses generally highlight words that are important to the thematic content of his poems and support his criticism of Spain, Spanish society and the world at large.

Enjambement

As Alarcos Llorach demonstrates in his study of Otero's poems, the enjambement, or "dislocación del ritmo fluyente" as he calls it, serves many purposes. It may cause an acceleration or reduction in speed of the rhythm, may make words prominent, anticipate a closing line, break a cliché, or accommodate the true rhythm of a poem.¹⁰

In Otero's early collections, the enjambement produces a quickening, a sense of violence, which reflects the theme of the frantic search for God. "Mortal" (AFH 49), where eight of the fourteen lines continue into the following lines, provides an example:

- 1 No se sabe qué voz o qué latido,
- 2 qué corazón sembrado de amargura,
- 3 rompe en el centro de la sombra pura
- 4 mi deseo de Dios eternecido.
- 5 Pero mortal, mortal, rayo partido
- 6 yo soy, me siento, me compruebo. Dura
- 7 lo que el rayo mi luz. Mi sed, mi hondura
- 8 rasgo. Señor: la vida es ese ruido
- 9 del rayo al crepitar. Así, repite
- 10 el corazón, furioso, su chasquido,

11 se revuelve en tu sombra, te flagela
 12 tu silencio inmortal; quiere que grite
 13 a plena noche..., y luego, consumido,
 14 no queda ni el desastre de su estela.

The more violent lines 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, and 12, which contain words like rompe, rasgo, crepitar, furioso, chasquido, se revuelve, flagela, connoting violence, are marked by enjambement. Along with the syntactic pauses in these lines, the enjambement helps to create "una marcha acezante, cortada, violenta," ¹¹

The use of the enjambement which quickens the pace of the early poems, has just the opposite effect in the final poems of Expresión y reunión where it slows down the pace to fit the meditative aspect of poems such as "Camino" (ER 225):

1 Después de tanto andar, paré en el centro
 2 de la vida: miraba los caminos
 3 largos, atrás; los soles diamantinos,
 4 las lunas plateadas, la luz dentro.

 5 Paré y miré. Saliéronme al encuentro
 6 los días y los años: cien destinos
 7 unidos por mis pasos peregrinos,
 8 embridados y ahondados desde adentro.

 9 Cobré más libertad en la llanura,
 10 más libertad sobre la nieve pura,
 11 más libertad bajo el otoño grave.

 12 Y me eché a caminar, ahondando el paso
 13 hacia la luz dorada del ocaso,
 14 mientras cantaba, levemente, un ave.

At this point, Otero has achieved a degree of serenity, and

this tranquility gives the poem the tone of a tempered conversation, in which the verbs parar and mirar emphasize the lack of haste as the poet recapitulates his life. The overall serene note of the poem carries over to the enjambements (lines 1, 2, 5, 6, 12), which represent visually the idea of stopping and looking, and extend the pauses in these lines.

On other occasions, Otero uses the enjambement to accentuate key words. The following poem is an example:

Patria
perdida
recobrada
a golpes de silencio,
plaza de la estación, en Córdoba
blanco muro
de Aldea del Rey,
todo perdido
en la lucha,
recobrado
a golpes de palabra.

("Patria" QTE 33)

Here the poet considers his lost country and foresees her day of redemption. The most important words are patria, perdida, and recobrada, which are prominent because of their isolation in the poem as a result of the enjambement. This same use of the enjambement to stress important words of a theme applies to "Arboles abolidos" (PPP 12):

Arboles abolidos
volveréis a brillar
al sol. Olmos sonoros, altos

álamos, lentas encinas,
 olivo en paz,
 árboles de una patria árida y triste,
 entrad
 a pie desnudo en el arroyo claro,
 fuente serena de la libertad.

This poem again expresses a hope for a better future of peace and prosperity in Spain. The words that are central to this theme are marked by enjambement: volveréis, the future tense expressing hope, brillar / al sol, the verb and symbol associated with hope, olivo / en paz, the symbol and vocabulary of peace, and the command entrad embodying the call to action.

As a further thematic support, the enjambement may simply indicate an anticipation of the closing line of a stanza which forms an estribillo throughout the poem,¹² as in "Mis ojos hablarían si mis labios" (EC 15-16):

Mis ojos hablarían si mis labios
 enmudecieran. Ciego quedaría
 y mi mano derecha seguiría
 hablando, hablando, hablando.

Debo decir «He visto», y me lo callo
 apretando los ojos. Juraría
 que no, que no lo he visto. Y mentiría
 hablando, hablando, hablando.

Pero debo callar y callar tanto,
 hay tanto que decir, que cerraría
 los ojos, y estaría todo el día
 hablando, hablando, hablando.

Dios me libre de ver lo que está claro
 Ah, qué tristeza. Me cercenaría
 las manos. Y mi sangre seguiría
 hablando, hablando, hablando.

In addition to the reiteration of "hablando, hablando, hablando," showing the poet's inability to remain silent, in the final lines of each of the four stanzas, the author further emphasizes the importance of these words by introducing them with an enjambement. The verbs seguiría, mentiría, estaría, and seguiría hold the reader in suspense while he waits for a completion of the syntactical unit.

An enjambement may also break a frase hecha, in which case "la suspensión de la pausa métrica nos depara la sorpresa iluminadora del verso siguiente,"¹³

Que mi fe te levante, sima a sima
he salido a la luz de la esperanza.
Hombro a hombro, hasta ver un pueblo en pie
de paz, izando un alba.
("Anchas sílabas" EC 128)

In the third and fourth lines of this stanza, the expression en pie is broken by the following de paz since Otero wishes to suggest that the Spanish people should not only stand tall but stand tall in peace.

Finally, an accumulation of enjambements may be a way of accommodating the true rhythm of a poem, as is the case with "Crecida" (AFH 67-69), a poem which Alarcos Llorach has analyzed in detail, pointing out the repetition and contrast of themes and subthemes:¹⁴

Con la sangre hasta la cintura, algunas veces
con la sangre hasta el borde de la boca,
voy
avanzando

lentamente, con la sangre hasta el borde de los labios
 algunas veces,
 voy
 avanzando sobre este viejo suelo, sobre
 la tierra hundida en sangre,
 voy
 avanzando lentamente, hundiendo los brazos
 en sangre,
 algunas
 veces tragando sangre,
 voy sobre Europa
 como en la proa de un barco desmantelado

As these lines show, the enjambement between the short and long lines, together with the repetition of the words sangre and voy avanzando, create, as the critic says, the sensation of a freshet advancing through sustained and successive thrusts, which is what the title of the poem suggests.¹⁵

Otero shows himself to be adept at recognizing and utilizing the phonic and rhythmic possibilities of the Spanish language. Sound patterns, play on words, and the enjambement, all support various aspects of the thematic content of his poetry. These are basic techniques of his compositions which persist throughout his works and which make his poems attractive both to the scholars who study these techniques, and to the masses who appreciate them without further analysis.

Notes

¹ Emilio Alarcos Llorach, La poesía de Blas de Otero (Salamanca: Anaya, 1966), pp. 139-40.

² Roman Jakobson, "Closing Statement: Linguistics and Poetics," in Style of Language, ed. Thomas A. Sebeok (New York-London: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1960), p. 373.

³ Sabina de la Cruz, Introd., Expresión y reunión, by Blas de Otero (Madrid: Alianza, 1977), p. 16.

⁴ Alarcos Llorach, p. 147.

⁵ Alarcos Llorach, p. 145.

⁶ Ricardo Senabre Sempere, "Juegos retóricos en la poesía de Blas de Otero," Papeles de Son Armadans, XLII (1963), 137-51. Alarcos Llorach, pp. 140-44.

⁷ Alarcos Llorach, pp. 140-41.

⁸ Alarcos Llorach, pp. 143-44.

⁹ Senabre Sempere, p. 144.

¹⁰ Alarcos Llorach, pp. 102-04.

¹¹ Alarcos Llorach, p. 105.

¹² Alarcos Llorach, p. 109.

¹³ Alarcos Llorach, p. 104.

¹⁴ Alarcos Llorach, pp. 117-21.

¹⁵ Alarcos Llorach, p. 110

CHAPTER XII

CONCLUSION

Structural elements in Blas de Otero's poetry support the major themes and change with them. His lexicon begins with words that express his personal quest for God in Cántico espiritual, Angel fieramente humano, Redoble de conciencia, and Ancia and then, as he becomes aware of his social mission, his vocabulary reflects this mission and gradually accommodates the language of the people, including their songs, proverbs and colloquialisms in Pido la paz y la palabra, En castellano and Que trata de España. This mixture of popular and social language continues somewhat in the transitional work, Mientras, and in the final poems of Expresión y reunión where the poet returns to personal themes with words that show his preoccupation with death.

The pronominal structure also follows the thematic evolution. It goes from the mystic and existencial yo in Cántico espiritual, Angel fieramente humano, Redoble de conciencia, and Ancia, through the familiar tú and vosotros to the collective nosotros in Pido la paz y la palabra, En castellano and Que trata de España, and finally, through a

transition in Mientras, returns to the meditative yo in Expresión y reunión.

Elements of formal structure support the poet's themes and portray his recognition of his duty to write for the masses. He manipulates the introductory to summarize and reinforce his themes. His adherence to the lira and the sonnet in his early collections, and the later modification of these verse forms, along with the extensive use of short, free verse starting with Pido la paz y la palabra, show his desire to be concise and direct. The presence of circular poems which underscore his concerns, especially in Pido la paz y la palabra, En castellano and Que trata de España, and of others that bear resemblance to the spoken word by means of their structure as conversations or dialogues, or their lack of punctuation, confirms that Otero uses whatever devices he can to reach the common man and to approximate his speech. Likewise the intercalation of quotations and clichés mark an attempt to attain solidarity with all humanity, while, at the same time, they show the poet's inventiveness. The use of parallelisms and correlations again enables the author to emphasize his themes, in this instance, with an ancient poetic device, well known to the masses.

In the area of phonology and rhythm, Otero displays his skill in his ability to exploit sound patterns, word plays, and the enjambement to create meaning in his poems, to

underline important words and to accentuate his thematic concepts.

All these features of this poet's work represent a formula for success which he has deservedly achieved for his forceful, though limited, production. Studies by well established critics such as Emilio Alarcos Llorach, Dámaso Alonso, and José Luis Cano, attest to Blas de Otero's importance among Spanish poets of the post Civil War period. The Boscán prize for poetry, the Premio de la Crítica, the Fastenrath Prize and the Premio Internacional give him concrete recognition. Both critical analyses and literary prizes assure him a place among the best poets of the postwar era in twentieth-century Spanish literature.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

- Otero, Blas de. Ancia. Pref. Dámaso Alonso. Barcelona: A. P. Editor, 1958.
- . Ancia. Madrid: Visor, 1971.
- . Angel fieramente humano. Madrid: Insula, 1950.
- . Angel fieramente humano. Redoble de conciencia. Buenos Aires; Losada, 1960.
- . Antología (y notas). Vigo: E. Moreiras, 1952.
- . Cántico espiritual, Cuadernos del Grupo Alea, primera serie, num. 2. San Sebastián: Gráfico-Editora, S. L., 1942.
- . Con la inmensa mayoría. Buenos Aires: Losada, 1960.
- . "Cuatro poemas." Albor, 6 (1941).
- . En castellano. In Con la inmensa mayoría. Buenos Aires: Losada, 1960.
- . En castellano. México: Universidad de México, 1960.
- . En castellano. Barcelona: Lumen, 1977.
- . Esto no es un libro. Puerto Rico: Univ. of Puerto Rico Press, 1963.
- . Expresión y reunión. Madrid: Alfaguara, 1969.
- . Expresión y reunión. Introd. Sabina de la Cruz. Madrid: Alianza, 1981.
- . Hacia la inmensa mayoría. Buenos Aires: Losada, 1962.

- . Historias fingidas y verdaderas. Madrid: Alfaguara, 1970.
- . Historias fingidas y verdaderas. Introd. Sabina de la Cruz. Madrid: Alianza, 1980.
- . Mientras. Zaragoza: Javalambre, 1970.
- . País. Ed. and Prologue José Luis Cano. Barcelona: Plaza-Janés, 1972.
- . Parler Clair. Trans. and Prologue Claude Couffon. Paris: Pierre Seghers, 1959.
- . Pido la paz y la palabra. Santander: Cantalapiedra, 1955.
- . Pido la paz y la palabra. In Con la inmensa mayoría. Buenos Aires: Losada, 1960.
- . Pido la paz y la palabra. Barcelona: Lumen, 1975.
- . "Poemas para el hombre." Egan. Suplemento de Literatura del Boletín de la Real Sociedad Vascongada de Amigos del País, 1 (1948), 3-9.
- . Poesía con nombres. Madrid: Alianza, 1977.
- . "Poesías en Burgos." Escorial, 34 (1943), 221-24.
- . Que trata de España. Barcelona: R. M., 1964.
- . Que trata de España. Paris: Ruedo Ibérico, 1964.
- . Que trata de España. La Habana: Editora Nacional de Cuba, 1964.
- . Que trata de España. Madrid: Visor, 1977.
- . Redoble de conciencia. Barcelona: Instituto de Estudios Hispánicos, 1951.
- . Todos mis sonetos. Introd. Sabina de la Cruz. Madrid: Turner, 1977.
- . Verso y prosa. Madrid: Cátedra, 1974.

Secondary Sources

Books

- Alarcos Llorach, Emilio. La poesía de Blas de Otero. Salamanca: Anaya, 1966.
- Alonso, Dámaso. Poetas españoles contemporáneos. Madrid: Gredos, 1952.
- , and Carlos Bousoño. Seis calas en la expresión literaria española. Madrid: Gredos, 1951.
- Aub, Max. Una nueva poesía española. México: Imprenta Universitaria, 1957.
- Barrow, Geoffrey. "The Primitive Rebel: Aspects of the Poetry of Blas de Otero." Diss. Brown 1971.
- Bousoño, Carlos. Teoría de la expresión poética. Madrid: Gredos, 1966.
- Cano, José Luis. Antología de la nueva poesía española. 3rd ed. Madrid: Gredos, 1972.
- , El tema de España en la poesía española contemporánea. Madrid: Taurus, 1979.
- , Lírica española de hoy. Madrid: Cátedra, 1974.
- , Poesía española del siglo xx: de Unamuno a Blas de Otero. Madrid: Guadarrama, 1960.
- Castellet, José María. Un cuarto de siglo de poesía española. Barcelona: Seix Barral, 1969.
- Chandler, Richard E., and Kessel Schwartz. A New History of Spanish Literature. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1961.
- Chatman, Seymour. Approaches to Poetics. New York-London: Columbia Univ. Press, 1973.
- Correa, E., and F. Lázaro Carreter. Cómo se comenta un texto literario. Salamanca: Anaya, 1967.
- Crow, John A. Spain: The Root and the Flower. New York-Evanston-London: Harper & Row, 1963.
- Culler, Jonathan. Structuralist Poetics. Ithaca: Cornell

- Univ. Press, 1975.
- Daydi-Tolson, Santiago. The Post-Civil War Spanish Social Poets. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1983.
- Donahue, Moraíma de Semprún. Blas de Otero en su poesía. Chapel Hill: Univ. of N. Carolina Press, 1977.
- Galan, Joaquín. Blas de Otero, palabras para un pueblo: Tres vías de conocimiento. Barcelona: Ambito literario, 1978.
- González, José M. Poesía española de posguerra (Celaya, Otero, Hierro: 1950-1960). Madrid: EDI-6, S. A. 1982.
- González Muela, Joaquín. Gramática de la poesía. Barcelona: Planeta, 1976.
- Guerin, Wilfred L., Earle G. Labor, Lee Morgan and John R. Willingham. A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature. 2nd ed. New York-Hagerstown-Philadelphia-San Francisco-London: Harper & Row, 1979.
- Ifach, María García de. Cuatro poetas de hoy. Madrid: Turner, 1965.
- Lázaro Carreter, Fernando. Diccionario de términos filológicos. Madrid: Gredos, 1953.
- . Estudios de poética (la obra en sí). Madrid: Taurus, 1976.
- Lotman, Yuri. Analysis of the Poetic Text. Trans. D. Barton Johnson. Ann Arbor, Michigan: Ardis, 1976.
- Luis, Leopoldo de. Antología de la poesía religiosa. Madrid: Alfaguara, 1969.
- Madariaga, Salvador de. Spain: A Modern History. New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1958.
- Mellizo, C., and L. Salstad, eds. Blas de Otero: Study of a Poet. Laramie, Wyoming: Univ. of Wyoming, 1980.
- Navarro Tomás, Tomás. Arte del verso. México: Compañía General de Ediciones, S. A., 1959.
- . Métrica española. Syracuse, New York: Syracuse Univ. Press, 1956.
- Orwell, George. Homage to Catalonia. Introd. Lionel

- Trilling. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1952.
- Rabanal, José Gómez. "Evolución temática y estilística en Blas de Otero." Diss. Colorado 1973.
- Ribes, Francisco. Antología consultada de la joven poesía española. Santander, 1952.
- Riquer, Martín de. Resumen de versificación española. Barcelona: Seix Barral, 1950.
- Roberts, Gemma. Temas existenciales en la novela española de postguerra. Madrid: Gredos, 1978.
- Sherno, Sylvia Rose. "The Poetry of Blas de Otero: 'Una Unidad Revolucionada.'" Diss. Univ. of California, Los Angeles 1978.
- Stamm, James R. A Short History of Spanish Literature. New York: New York Univ. Press, 1979.
- Wellek, René, and Austin Warren. Theory of Literature. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1956.
- Zapián, Itziar, and Ramón Iglesias. Aproximación a la poesía de Blas de Otero. Madrid: Narcea, S. A., 1983.

Articles

- Alarcos Llorach, Emilio. "Al margen de Blas de Otero." Papeles de Son Armadans, 85 (1977), 121-46.
- . "La poesía de Blas de Otero." In Blas de Otero: Study of a Poet. Eds. C. Mellizo and L. Salstad. Laramie, Wyoming: Univ. of Wyoming, 1980, pp. 1-10.
- Albornoz, Aurora de. "Blas de Otero, hoy, mañana." Insula, 392-93 (1979), 6.
- Alín, J. María. "Blas de Otero y la poesía tradicional." Archivum, XV (1967), 275-89.
- Barrow, Geoffrey R. "Autobiography and Art in the Poetry of Blas de Otero." Hispanic Review, 48 (1980), 213-30.
- . "Una velada paradoja: Historias fingidas y verdaderas de Blas de Otero." Papeles de Son Armadans, 85 (1977), 253-71.

- Bary, David. "Sobre el nombrar poético en la poesía española contemporánea." Papeles de Son Armadans, 44 (1967), 161-89.
- Blanco Aguinaga, Carlos. "El mundo entre ceja y ceja: Releyendo a Blas de Otero." Papeles de Son Armadans, 85 (1977), 147-96.
- Bleiberg, Germán. "Blas de Otero: Angel fieramente humano." Insula, 54 (1950), 4-5.
- Bousoño, Carlos. "La poesía de Blas de Otero." Insula, 71 (1951), 2.
- ". "Un ensayo de estilística explicativa." In Homenaje universitario a Dámaso Alonso. Madrid: Gredos, 1970, pp. 69-84.
- Cano, José Luis. "Blas de Otero y el soneto heterodoxo." In Blas de Otero: Study of a Poet. Eds. C. Mellizo and L. Salstad. Laramie, Wyoming: Univ. of Wyoming, 1980, pp. 11-17.
- ". "El tema de España en Blas de Otero." Insula, 221 (1965), 8-9.
- ". "En la muerte de Blas de Otero." Insula, 392-93 (1979), 7.
- ". "La poesía de Blas de Otero." Insula, 145 (1958), 6.
- ". "Poesía de Blas de Otero." Insula, 292 (1971), 8-9.
- Carballo Picazo, Alfredo. "Sobre unos versos de Blas de Otero." In Homenaje universitario a Dámaso Alonso. Madrid: Gredos, 1970, pp. 253-64.
- Carrero Eras, Pedro. "Nuestro descubrimiento de Blas de Otero." Insula, 392-93 (1979), 7.
- Cernuda, Luis. "Antonio Machado y la actual generación de poetas." In Crítica, ensayos y evocaciones. Barcelona: Seix Barral, 1970, pp. 167-72.
- Ciplijauskaitė, B. "Sobre la estructura del poema en Blas de Otero." In Blas de Otero: Study of a Poet. Eds. C. Mellizo and L. Salstad. Laramie, Wyoming: Univ. of Wyoming, 1980, pp. 19-27.

- Cohen, J. M. "Spanish Poetry since the Civil War." Encounter, XII, No. 2 (1959), 44-53.
- Davidson, Hugh M. "Sign, Sense and Roland Barthes." In Approaches to Poetics. Ed. Seymour Chatman. New York-London: Columbia Univ. Press, 1973, pp. 29-50.
- Del Villar, Arturo. "La palabra en guerra por la paz de Blas de Otero." La Estafeta Literaria, 632 (1978), 8-12.
- Donahue, Moraima de Semprún. "Otero, el labrador de la palabra." Papeles de Son Armadans, 85 (1977), 219-32.
- Erlich, Victor. "Roman Jakobson: Grammar of Poetry and Poetry of Grammar." In Approaches to Poetics. Ed. Seymour Chatman: New York-London: Columbia Univ. Press, 1973, pp. 1-27.
- Esteban, Claude. "Blas de Otero." Mercure de France, CCCL (1964), 662-66.
- Fernández Alonso, María del Rosario. "La poesía de Blas de Otero o el sentimiento de la muerte en carne viva." In Una visión de la muerte en la lírica española. Madrid: Gredos, 1971, pp. 348-58.
- Fish, Stanley E. "What is Stylistics and Why Are They Saying Such Terrible Things About It." In Approaches to Poetics. Ed. Seymour Chatman. New York-London: Columbia Univ. Press, 1973, pp. 109-52.
- Galán, Joaquín. "Blas de Otero, agonía del humanismo." Papeles de Son Armadans, 85 (1977), 233-51.
- González Muela, Joaquín. "Un hombre de nuestro tiempo: Blas de Otero." Revista Hispánica Moderna, XXIX (1963), 133-39.
- Guereña, Jacinto Luis. "La alentadora poesía de Blas de Otero." Nueva Estafeta, 14 (1980), 66-70.
- "Poesía oteriana." Cuadernos hispanoamericanos, 286 (1974), 210-14.
- Jakobson, Roman. "Closing Statement: Linguistics and Poetics." In Style in Language. Eds. Thomas A. Sebeok. New York-London: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1960, pp. 350-77.

- , and Claude Lévi-Strauss. "Les chats de Baudelaire." L'Homme 2 (1962), 5-21.
- Kermode, Frank. "The Use of Codes." In Approaches to Poetics. Ed. Seymour Chatman. New York-London: Columbia Univ. Press, 1973, pp. 51-79.
- King, Edmund L. "Blas de Otero: The Past and Present of 'The Eternal.'" In Spanish Writers of 1936. Ed. Jaime Ferrán and Daniel P. Testa. London: Tamesis, 1973, pp. 125-38.
- Leiva, Raúl. "Blas de Otero, conciencia poética de España," Cuadernos americanos, 184 (1972), 209-24.
- Luis, Leopoldo de. "Expresión y reunión (1941-1969) de Blas de Otero." Papeles de Son Armadans, 56 (1970), 313-17.
- Martínez Ruiz, Florencio. "Blas de Otero, liberado del contexto." ABC, 6 June 1981, pp. VI-VII.
- Miró, Emilio. "Blas de Otero, Enrique Badosa, José Infante." Insula, 305 (1972), 6.
- , "España, tierra y palabra, en la poesía de Blas de Otero." Cuadernos hispanoamericanos, 356 (1980), 274-97.
- , "La obra de tres poetas: Celaya, Otero, Caballero Bonald." Insula, 282 (1970), 6.
- Muñiz, María L. "El poeta y la patria en la trilogía de Blas de Otero 'Que trata de España.'" In Estudios ofrecidos a Emilio Alarcos Llorach. Vol. II. Oviedo: Univ. of Oviedo, 1978, pp. 401-14.
- , "'Que trata de España': la trilogía de Blas de Otero." Papeles de Son Armadans, 66 (1972), xcix-cxxi.
- Núñez, Antonio. "Encuentro con Blas de Otero." Insula, 259 (1968), 1, 3-4.
- Ohmann, Richard. "Literature as Act." In Approaches to Poetics. Ed. Seymour Chatman. New York-London: Columbia Univ. Press, 1973, pp. 81-107.
- Pereda, Rosa María. "Ha muerto el poeta Blas de Otero." El País, 30 June 1979, p. 20.
- Rangel Guerra, Alfonso. "La poesía de Blas de Otero." Humanitas, 2 (1961), 269-98.

- Richards, I. A. "Poetic Process and Literary Style." In Style in Language. Ed. Thomas A. Sebeok. New York-London: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1960, pp. 9-23.
- Riffaterre, Michael. "Describing Poetic Structures: Two Approaches to Baudelaire's 'Les chats.'" In Structuralism. Ed. Jacques Ehrmann. New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1970, pp. 188-230.
- Rodríguez-Puértolas, J. "Blas de Otero o la voz de España." Norte, 3 May 1969, pp. 45-52.
- Senabre Sempere, Ricardo. "Juegos retóricos en la poesía de Blas de Otero." Papeles de Son Armadans, XLII (1963), 137-51.
- Stixrude, David L. "La espontaneidad en los poemas de Ancia." Papeles de Son Armadans, 85 (1977), 273-95.
- Todorov, Tzevetan. "Structuralism and Literature." In Approaches to Poetics. Ed. Seymour Charman. New York-London: Columbia Univ. Press, 1973, pp. 153-68.
- Tomachevski, B. "Sur le vers." In Théorie de la littérature: Textes des formalistes russes. Ed. Tzevetan Todorov. Paris: Seuil, 1965, pp. 154-70.
- Tomé, Jesús. "La poesía de Blas de Otero en su circunstancia." Revista de Estudios Hispánicos, Río Piedras, Puerto Rico, 7 (1980), 147-52.
- Vázquez, Francisco. "Humanismo existencial y dimensión social en Blas de Otero." Arbor, 345-48 (1974), 87-93.