

TERESA OF AVILA

**THE
COMPLETE POETRY**

A BILINGUAL EDITION

By

ERIC W. VOGT

2021

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Teresa of Avila

The Complete Poetry.

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To the unborn

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FOREWORD

This book offers us a glimpse of the profound experiences of God expressed in the poems of St. Teresa de Avila, or “la Madre”. Through this new translation, the reader can join the saint in her quest for the living God.

Lovers always keep a poem or a song in their hearts that reminds them of their beloved. This can readily express the most profound sentiments of joy in the presence of the beloved, the pain over his absence, the longings for death, and even a certain hatred of life. This is also true among the mystics, the great lovers of God. For “la Madre”, her poems were not composed for their own sake; she wrote them to express the most basic desires of man: love and love of God.

In our society, words often lose their power to communicate. In the words of “la Madre”, we can rediscover heartfelt desire as the source of genuine communication. Her poems are simple expressions of joy, of loneliness, of human situations and life, but they are written with conviction and faith. They reveal the profundity of her experience of God, one which is also available to all of us because we have received the same gift of faith in baptism. The power of her words proceeds from the greatness of her faith.

But St. Teresa’s poems do not only deal with her mystic experiences. She was a woman truly in touch with her surroundings and the concerns of others. She was sensitive to the needs of her sisters and friends. Many of the poems she composed are didactic and devotional. These contributed to the spiritual formation of her daughters. She knew well the power of poetry with its rhythms and sounds that she employed to inculcate the deep doctrines of the spiritual life and the life of commitment to the Lord in the hearts of her daughters.

St. Teresa was a good teacher who knew how to instruct her children with the words of the Church’s celebrations by using verses to unfold to them the deeper meaning and beauty of the celebrations of the Liturgical season. How impressing were the descriptions of the liturgy when, during their recreations, the feasts would be deepened through the words of “la Madre”.

Her poems were also expressions of a life filled with joy; for to serve the Lord is to have found true and everlasting joy. The “Madre” would be seen bursting into joy and laughter in recreations with her daughters. She gave delight to her daughters through her verses. They in turn increased her joy when they put her verses into song. She herself did not want to see her sisters become melancholy, for this would create the impression that the One whom they were serving was an oppressor. She did her best to add the flavor of true joy in every community in which she lived and her poems were instruments to this end.

The poems of St. Teresa always speak of God. They speak of Him as something as natural as the air one breathes. She does not tender fanciful arguments to prove that God exists. Her poems express to us the reality of God himself because she herself has found Him. She herself is a living proof of God’s

love and power. This noble and yet simple woman of Avila has now become the woman totally captivated by Jesus. Her poems tell us to whom she belongs. May we discover in these verses that truly we belong to God.

✠ Jaime L. Cardinal Sin
Archbishop of Manila

Villa San Miguel
August 28, 1996

PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION, 2015

This year marks the 500th anniversary of the birth of Teresa Sánchez de Cepeda y Ahumada. She would be known later in her religious life as Teresa de Jesús and later, to distinguish her from other saints named Theresa, as Teresa de Ávila. This anniversary year has renewed sufficient interest in her life, and demand for her works, for this second edition to joyously come to light. Joyously, I say, not merely because it has offered me the occasion to update the select, annotated bibliography and correct errata, but also because now, two decades after publishing the first edition, it has blessed me with an opportunity to reflect on her and all my professional accomplishments as well as my personal gains and losses over the bulk of my professional career.

After these reflections, two famous lines from Spanish Golden Age literature stand out to illuminate them and give my life meaning near the end of my career. One, from Cervantes, sings through the centuries in the voice of his most homespun character, Sancho Panza, that wealth of proverbial wisdom and oracle of eternal Humanistic truth. When Don Quijote and Sancho Panza are entering the Sierra Morena, for Don Quijote to do penance, "in imitation of Beltenebros," he attempts to instruct his reluctant squire in the trials, hardships and virtues of knight errantry, referring to his heroes from books of chivalry. At the end of a crescendo of Don Quijote's zeal, Sancho seems to shrug, interrupting Don Quijote and, striking the most philosophical pose he can, says, (and not for the last time): "Cuanto más, que desnudo nací, desnudo me hallo: ni pierdo ni gano..."¹

It is a sentiment with which St. Teresa, a lover of food and devotee of St. Martha, would have heartily agreed, for she often expressed similar sentiments in various ways in her prose and in her poetry. Readers of her poetry will appreciate the resonance with Sancho's observation when they read, for instance, Poem II, *Vuestra soy, para vos nací*, and Poem IX, *Nada te turbe*. Her contemporary, St. Ignatius, would also agree, for his Soldiers of Christ are to "labor and not count the cost."

In our own times, similar messages frequently emanates from the Throne of Peter, whence his Holiness, Pope Francis, reminds and admonishes the world that we are all sojourners on this planet. We are living on borrowed time. Nothing is really, truly ours. We are living on a planet we have been charged *from the beginning* "to dress and keep" (Gen. 2: 15). Finally, hear the words of Jesus Himself: "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" (Matt. 16:26). Thus, dear reader, religious, secular or even non-believer: All of your achievements and works, as well as mine, will remain in *this* world and will continue in some way, to impact the world, for

¹ "Moreover, naked was I born, naked I find myself, I neither lose nor gain..." DQ I: xxv. There is a long-suffering temperament in Sancho, somewhat Job-like, as can be observed in DQ II: lv, when he again says nearly the same words after being pulled from a cave.

good or for evil. We will not take them or anything but ourselves, into the next world.

Readers who are old enough to recall the events of the last two decades following the publication of the first edition in 1996 will agree that the world has witnessed much evil and violence, and much of it committed in the name of "liberty" and worse, in the name of God. It is, increasingly, a world turned upside down, where what matters most is at the mercy of what matters the least, a world of top-down management in the social and economic sphere, a world of indifference, of fewer and fewer "haves" and more and more "have-nots." As Pope Francis repeatedly says, ours is a world desperately in need of an aggressive ministry to the poor and for those whose voices are ignored. In the forward to this volume, the late Cardinal Jaime L. Sin mentioned a related phenomenon -- that in our society words often have lost their meaning. To his observation, I add that when words mean only what those in power want them to mean, it occurs in conjunction with their denying or silencing a voice to those under their rule.

Similar inversions, like unto the lords of misrule, have taken root in academia, at least in the USA, where the Humanities programs are atrophying from lack of genuine interest (i.e., funding: there's always more for guns than for butter). I am personal witness to how those who accomplish much and most, are too often subject to the judgment of those who have accomplished little and who have published nothing. But *pulvis sumus et pulvis erimus*.

Regarding this second edition, no changes have been made to the English translation published in 1996. This gives me occasion to address a critique by the famous Golden Age scholar, Dr. Bárbara Mujica, which she published in a review of the first edition, in *Hispania*, in the September edition of 1998. She observed that, in Poem I, *Vivo sin vivir en mí*, "the translation of *el morir vengá ligero* is simply inaccurate; *ligero* here means "quickly," not "airy."

I hasten to say that I am genuinely grateful for Dr. Mujica's review; it was gratifying to read and I treasure it. She herself notes it is a minor matter, but her observation is a perfect opener to talk about the nature of language and what translation requires, and gives me a rare opportunity for me, as a translator, to offer a glimpse into the nature of the translation process, using this one example.

Of course, the word "*ligero*" is adverbial in the original and means "quickly." However, translators are working *into* a second language whose natural habits and expressions have to be obeyed or at least respected. Also, as noted by Gerardo Vázquez-Ayora, there exist "clouds" and "overlapping meanings," that is, a word has not only a dictionary meaning, like the core of an atom, fixed and identifiable, but also a cloud of connotations, whirling about that core, like electrons.² This reality gives rise, in the mind of translators, to a

² Vázquez-Ayora, Gerardo. *Introducción a la traductología*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1977, p. 27.

search, via free-association, to find a phrase in the second language that would be a likely choice for a native speaker faced with a similar communicative challenge. A common, high-frequency expression in English is "light and airy," a conveniently vague, almost Victorian, abstract description referring to something or anything -- like a spirit, a sprite or the angel of Death -- that moves along of its own accord, without resistance and hence, *quickly*, at its own mysterious pace. This phrase came to mind and, in the full light of knowledge that "ligero" here meant "quickly," the word "airy" felt right because it still made possible the swiftness of the Rider on the Pale Horse.

First and foremost, I thank God for giving me life and sustaining it, and my intellect, long enough to accomplish all I have as a publishing scholar, and for this opportunity and privilege to prepare this second edition. As I worked through the Sánchez bibliography, I came to realize that my translation is the only one to genuinely translate her poetry into the English language, a fact that makes me feel the weight of my responsibility for faithfulness to her words. I hope she is pleased.

Naturally, I am also grateful for the talents and energy of two research librarians, Liz Gruchala-Gilbert and Steve Perisho who, in this colder age of digital research, enabled me to identify books and articles to update the select, annotated bibliography. Finally, as was true twenty years ago, I am indebted to Dr. Alain Saint-Saëns for approaching me a few months ago about producing this second edition.

Eric W. Vogt
Seattle, Washington

July 9, 2015

PREFACE TO FIRST EDITION, 1996, REVISED

This edition of *The Complete Poetry of St. Teresa of Avila* was prepared with a number of audiences in mind. In trying to serve the needs of such disparately minded groups as scholars in various fields, religious, and general, non-specialist but pious readers, it is natural that some among them may judge this work deficient in some respect. Yet the lack of any faithful English translation of the complete verse of the first woman Doctor of the Church³ justifies as wide a dissemination as possible of this minor work.

³ St. Teresa was beatified on April 24, 1614, by Paul V, canonized on March 12, 1622, and named First Woman Doctor of the Church by His Holiness Pope Paul VI on September 27, 1970.

In the hope of establishing a *terminus a quo* for future study of St. Teresa's poetry, I have endeavored to provide enough ancillary information to satisfy the rigors of scholarship, but without suffocating its appeal to other readers. Scholarly readers are familiar with the editorial *apparatus* that have become as much a boon as a bane to modern scholars, much as legal precedent has become to lawyers and to us all: a foreword by a prominent authority in the field, a critical introduction to whet the mind's appetite, a bibliography, and notes, to name the usual requirements. The general, pious reader may wish to forego the introduction and delve immediately into the poetry of St. Teresa. The scholar may look to see if he or she has been cited or somehow included; alas, a disappointment to many, but quite unintentional to be sure. In the interest of scholarship, the selected, annotated bibliography includes some of the most recent publications in the field of *Teresiana*, as well as works of related interest. The pious reader, however, will be the best judge, for if my rendition in English succeeds in kindling the sentiments that inspired St. Teresa to write them four-and-a-half centuries ago, then my efforts will have been a success, and I shall have some reason to hope the same Spirit that originally touched her has assisted me in translating and presenting her charming verses to my readers.

In short, there is at least *something* substantive here for anyone interested in Spain of the sixteenth century, translation studies, religious history, poetry, hymnology, and other fields. As the pious reader will perceive immediately, many of the poems also may serve as excellent devotional or meditative tools.

The reader may be interested to know something about the genesis of this translation, for it has much to do with why St. Teresa is so appealing, so compelling, to those who are consciously engaged against the spiritual and intellectual mediocrity, complacency, apathy, inertia, adversity and vulgarity so pervasive in all walks of life. The historical, and even the biographical particulars about the obstacles she faced, matter less than her spiritual response to them, as bequeathed to us in her writings, for if anything of value is to be found in them, it is with this response we hope to identify, finding echoes in our own experience. Teresa's struggles to reform the Carmelite Order and restore it to its pristine rule, and her energy in spite of constant infirmity are much greater than most of us encounter, and serve as models to us all, but more so to those who share her transcendent view of existence.

The story behind an artistic work is inextricably bound with the life of its creator, his or her tastes and values, at least during the period of its creation. This is no less true of the story behind a translation. Translation is not a servile activity. Bound though it is by the requirement to be faithful to its original, it is a re-creation, a new work of art in its own right. The processes and circumstances of its genesis are the legitimate concerns of all who engage in similar or related endeavors in or out of academia.

My enjoyment of St. Teresa's verse began as an undergraduate student at the University of Hawai'i in the early 1970s. The deceptive simplicity of her expression, coupled with its warmth and homespun quality, made her an object of curiosity, as my interests in that period of Spain were beginning to manifest themselves. During that tender period in my intellectual development, her works became my port of entry into the literature, history and culture of Spain's classical period. Simply put, she stayed with me. Indeed, St. Teresa's poetry is an excellent primer for those who would read her other works. Whole lines often would occur to me, particularly the soothing lines of the frequently anthologized Poem IX: *Nada te turbe (Let Nothing Disturb You)*. If you ever need consolation in life, then her poetry is for you.

The translation began twenty years later, after certain phases in my life had given me need for solace, allowing me to undertake the task with the necessary maturity. As was the case with Fernando de Rojas' often debated authorship of *La Celestina*, published in 1499, during a two-week hiatus in his duties as *jurisconsultor*,⁴ I prepared the first draft of this work during a two-week sojourn in Manila, in 1991. But, as St. Teresa and other saints, sages and scholars teach, time is not enough. I savored the seclusion, and made use of a pen and a legal pad. Working two weeks day and night, I began and completed a draft of all thirty-one of St. Teresa's extant poems.

Upon returning to the United States, I prepared the manuscript in a matter of hours and set it aside, not from a desire to follow the wise and ancient practice of letting one's writing sit until it can be judged from a fresh perspective, but from a need to earn a living. I abandoned academia, which, in the midst of what was becoming known as the "Culture Wars," had grown hostile to anything and anyone publishing Eurocentric or Catholic works. People of European descent, particularly in the United States, too frequently have been portrayed variously as the originators, perpetrators, or beneficiaries of human suffering, and, in the period surrounding the five-hundredth anniversary of Columbus' voyage of discovery, were under attack on several fronts in academia and elsewhere. My own submissions to academic presses, while sought by Latin American presses, were met with indifference in the United States. Few in government, few in the media and almost none in academia were willing to vigorously defend the cultural heritage and contributions of western European civilizations. A plethora of publications over the past decade, academic and otherwise, bear ample testimony to this fact, but the most resounding proof of how blatantly hostile this environment had become can be found in an article by an incoming president of the Modern Language Association in 1992.⁵

⁴ Fernando de Rojas, *La Celestina*, ed. Angeles Cardona de Gilbert (Barcelona: Editorial Bruguera, S.A., 1974): 7.

⁵ Noting "manifold exclusions" in humanities programs, Houston Baker advocated "a revolt [to] produce an entirely different spectrum for the humanities of [the future]."

Fortunately for truth and fairness, that excessively zealous and revisionist era appears to be waning, unless the cultural dearth imposed by cuts in funding do not deal the death blow to the study of Arts, Letters, and Philosophy in the USA. In any event, the phenomenon of political correctness will collapse under the weight of its own absurdity.

Withal, I returned to academic life, and the poems came out again. After three years, I certainly was able to edit them impartially. The polished translation was finished within weeks and, with publication in mind, I began my study of them, of St. Teresa, and of her other works.

The value of the independence of mind afforded by the series of splendid isolations in which this present work was produced is one akin to the monastic experience, inasmuch as it can be experienced by a lay person. From an intellectual perspective, I found frequent comfort and secret delight in the words of George Steiner in his preface to the second edition of *After Babel*, his monumental work on the precise art of translation, to which I owe any views that might pass for a philosophy of translation. In it he states:

This book was written under somewhat difficult circumstances. I was at the time increasingly marginalized and indeed isolated within the academic community. This is not, necessarily, a handicap. Tenure in

Concerns about the progressive dismantling and destruction of traditional humanities programs by “other” voices, he glibly labeled as an “anxiety of displacement.” But rather than responsibly advocating greater inclusion of “other” voices without the displacement of the traditional canon and the programs that have taught them, Baker lamented that the “exclusively white, male, heterosexual, Western dominance” would not “disappear entirely [...] by spontaneous combustion.” Hence he called for an acceleration of this displacement, for a revolution (*after* showing at length how he had been one of the principle beneficiaries of the system he was condemning). Quoting an advertisement in the *New Criterion* calling for subscriptions from Eurocentric scholars, and claiming to speak “out of the most humanistic of motives,” reminding his audience that he was “speaking as a black man,” Baker labeled the advertisement “nauseating verbiage [...] the last breath of white, male Western anxiety engaged in a sputtering attempt to put out conflagrations that those of us who call ourselves NEW PEOPLE in no way started” *MLA Newsletter*, Vol. 24, No. 1 (Spring 1992): 3; the original emphasis has been retained. The political and intellectual atmosphere of the U.S. often is as fouled with lust for historical retribution, revisionism and social engineering by legislation as was the McCarthy era, with its ideological purges resulting from paranoia over the Red Peril. These worldly realities make the verses of St. Teresa (notably Poem XXII) a timeless reminder that the World and its promises are at best inconstant. The intellectual and spiritual hubris of the period in the 1990s, known as “the Culture Wars” was over-zealousness. It was -and is- correct and necessary to point out the facts, expose the evils of slavery, genocide and exploitation; but it was -and is- wrong of academics to displace, replace, revise, devalue or eliminate the great and the good about European or other civilizations.

the academy today, the approval of one's professional peers, the assistance and laurels in their giving, are not infrequently symptoms of opportunism and mediocre conventionality. A degree of exclusion, of compelled apartness, may be one of the conditions of valid work [...] In poetics, in philosophy, in hermeneutics, work worth doing will more often than not be produced against the grain and in marginality.⁶

In my wandering taste for reading, I discovered that Freud too, had written his benchmark work, *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900), in a period of involuntary separation from academia, which he described as “splendid isolation,” whence I borrow the term. Evidently, anything worth doing yields fruit only after much struggle and resistance from people and circumstances. This volume, small as it is, is the result of periodic labor over the years. If it has faults, they are mine; but I hope the verses of St. Teresa, rendered by me for the English-speaking world, will help, charm or instruct its varied audience.

There are many people who helped in sundry ways to get these verses to press. In summary form, I am grateful to the examples set for me by the professors I had in graduate school. However, I must point out thanks to a few individuals who were directly influential in preparing this collection. I thank Dr. Vern G. Williamsen, my doctoral advisor, who examined the translations; I thank Margaret S. Peden, for her comments on an early draft, but mostly I admire her example and encouragement as a literary translator. I am grateful as well to Fr. Winthrop Brainerd of St. Patrick's parish in Washington, D.C., for providing access to liturgical texts and his encouragement; to Fr. Stephen Payne, O.C.D., of the Institute of Carmelite Studies in Washington, D.C., for providing me with materials over the years; and to colleagues around the country, whose support calls to mind the sentiments expressed by Robert Frost in *Mending Wall*: “all men work together, whether separately or apart.”⁷ I owe a debt of gratitude to professors Gene Dubois, for his expertise in medieval Spanish literature; to the Teresian scholars Gillian Ahlgren, Elizabeth A. Lehfeltdt, Alison Weber, and Diane S. Williams. I am grateful to all of these fine minds, who liked the translation enough to wish to see it in print. Finally, I offer my warmest thanks to Dr. Alain Saint-Saëns of *The University Press of the South*, for his persistent encouragement and tireless efforts throughout the production process.

A Note on This Translation and Translation in General

A translation is strong evidence against the popular image of scholars as people who prefer to hoard knowledge and communicate only with their inner

⁶ George Steiner, *After Babel*, (1976; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992): ix.

⁷ Robert Frost, *Collected Poems* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1979): 33.

circle. While hermetic speech in all walks of life is inevitable and necessary to a degree, a translation liberates a text from the narrow audience who can read the original. Collectively, translations stand as confident, optimistic offerings to a new audience, as invitations to build a more global community by seeking out and appealing to our commonalities instead of emphasizing cultural and linguistic differences which, when misunderstood or misinterpreted, are often the cause of horrific upheavals. It may be that there are irreconcilable differences between individuals and nations. But, viewed from the intercultural perspective that translation proffers, and given the speed and ease of modern communication technologies, those who resist translation or deny the importance of language study are seriously jeopardizing the advancement of international, intranational, and intercultural understanding by blocking the communications that give us hope for peace and material prosperity.

This new English translation was prepared based primarily on the Spanish text of St. Teresa's complete works prepared by Luis Santullano,⁸ although other Spanish editions were compared to ensure a clear reading of the original. As anyone who has worked with manuscripts from Spain's Golden Age can testify, most discrepancies involved punctuation, as is to be expected when working with texts dating from a period when very little punctuation was used.

Unfortunately, there are few extant manuscripts of St. Teresa's verse dating from the sixteenth century. A fragment here, a fragment there, an autograph of a portion of a poem, do not promise much to the scholar interested in textual criticism of her original poems, and thus we are indebted to the work of the eighteenth century labors of Fr. Andrés de la Encarnación⁹ who was charged with collecting her poetic works in 1754. Therefore, no significant textual anomalies were found, since St. Teresa's poetry has been published consistently by various presses following the transcription of Fr. Andrés de la Encarnación.

This new translation was prepared while deliberately ignoring the works of any prior translations in English, mainly to avoid making hasty conclusions. In the interest of comparison, after several edits, previous translations were consulted, notably E. Allison Peers¹⁰ and the Carmelite Father Adrian J.

⁸ Santa Teresa de Jesus, *Obras completas*, ed. Luis Santullano (Madrid: Ediciones Aguilar, S.A., 1951).

⁹ *The Collected Works of St. Teresa of Avila*, vol. III, eds. and trans. Kieran Kavanaugh, O.C.D. and Otilio Rodríguez, O.C.D. (Washington, D.C.: Institute of Carmelite Studies, 1985): 372-373: "The pieces of paper on which her poems were written were easy to pass around and easy to lose. Thus we do not have the autographs [i.e., manuscripts penned by the author] of Teresa's poetry. Recently, however, the Teresian scholar Tomás Alvarez did find in some Italian monasteries the first autograph fragments of Teresa's poems. This discovery leaves scholars with hopes that more may be found."

¹⁰ *The Complete Works of Saint Teresa of Jesus*, tr. E. Allison Peers, 3 vols. (London: Sheed and Ward, 1944-1946).

Cooney's translation.¹¹ The net result of this isolated labor, it is hoped, is a fresh, modern, and original voice for St. Teresa's timeless words, in English. The homespun quality of St. Teresa's language previously alluded to is well known in the Spanish-speaking world and among scholars, and finding the appropriate English voice for her was a constant challenge in preparing this translation.

While the Peers' translation is good, it is half a century old. The three-volume work of the Carmelite fathers is a credit to their scholarship; however, the Cooney translation of St. Teresa's poetry which they incorporated, while faithful to her spirit and good poetry in its own right, is substandard.¹² It strays so far from the original that it can scarcely be considered a legitimate rendering of her words. The translation offered here is intended to enliven the assessment of such an important figure as St. Teresa, and to contribute to the renewed interest in, and appreciation for, the long-silent voices of the great women of Spain's Golden Age.

The reader who compares English translations of St. Teresa's poetry may be surprised to discover similarities and differences in wording. Differences between translations may or may not be a sign of error on the part of at least one of the translators. Only a true expert can make such a judgment. Similarities are not necessarily the result of slavish copying or plagiarism by a later translator. It is inevitable that two translators, although working independently, will employ precisely the same wording at times, for after all, they work from the same source language. To expect them to hit upon the same words throughout a work, however, is the height of folly.¹³ A good translator translates meaning, not grammatical structures and words alone.

The reader may also note the lack of consistent rhyme or regular meter in the English, and thus should be advised that the main principles that guided me were the overall flow and sense, and tone of her verse. I had no desire to pour the precious content of her verse, the essence and passion of her voice, into

¹¹ Incorporated by Kavanaugh and Rodríguez into their edition, *op. cit.*

¹² While the expressed intent of Fr. Cooney was "to provide a rendering that is both accurate and lyrical" (*op. cit.*, 273), he succeeded mostly in imitating her lyricism, albeit with great sensitivity. The following three lines from poem I: "Vivo ya fuera de mí,/ Después que muero de amor./ Porque vivo en el Señor," were inexplicably rendered: "Since I die of love,/ Living apart from Love,/ I live now in the Lord." Further comparisons, which the reader may make independently, will repeatedly demonstrate the advantage this new translation has over that of Fr. Cooney's.

¹³ An analogous fallacy, one often encountered by technical translators, is found in the request from monolingual administrators for a test of accuracy to be conducted via what they term "back translation," in which the technical material is read *aloud*, being simultaneously interpreted *back* into the source language from the translated text. The quality of a translation cannot be judged from such a grossly misinformed practice, based on simplistic notions about the nature of language. The nuances of language cannot be measured, appreciated, or corroborated like figures in a ledger.

prefabricated English strophic forms into which they would not fit. Moreover, I had no taste for inventing new strophic forms, for to have done so would have failed her, English prosody, and the reader. Those readers who are familiar with traditional Spanish strophic forms will note that St. Teresa was quite conscious of meter and rhyme, and the song format employing a refrain (for a formal treatment of her verse forms, see *St. Teresa's Versification*). In almost every case, the reader will be able to do a parallel reading, comparing the English with the Spanish line by line and, in the Spanish lines, discern the original form in which the original content was cast.¹⁴

“Correctness” and “completeness” in translation, those words so often summed up by the term “accuracy,” result from a translator’s grasp of, and ability to recreate, a complex combination of factors, best described as “context.” A “context” is a complex web of factors, including, but not limited to, narrative voice or tone, culture, history, and the particular circumstances which gave rise to the genesis of the original text. A simple analogy from everyday life: How *should* one, how *can* one, properly interpret a smile on a stranger’s face, or even on a loved one’s? Another that comes to mind: What does “I love you” *mean*? And *how* is it that the words convey what we think, wish, fear, or hope that they do? It should be obvious that just as gestures, words are open to diverse interpretations.

A translator, of course, is limited by the original. When a translator goes beyond what the original allows, or omits what the original conveys, there are problems. Fortunately, a written text is more stable than a smile, but not much. Consider for a moment how many translations there are of the Bible, or other sacred texts. Consider again how many interpretations there are of *each* of these translations. As is true of all successful communicative acts, translation is a two-way street. The public must trust the translator, and the translator must respect that trust.

Eric W. Vogt
Glendale, Arizona

May 28, 1996

¹⁴ In order to ensure that the bilingual format of this edition would be more readable, unlike other books published by *University Press of the South*, I have followed the common practice for bilingual edition of poetry and employed endnotes for the poems instead of footnotes. The notes themselves have been kept to a minimum.