

Discourse Desired: Desire, Subjectivity, and *Mouvance* in *Can vei la lauzeta mover*

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Can vei la lauzeta mover is a *locus classicus* of desire in medieval literature. As one of the two most famous poems in the troubadour corpus (the other I have in mind is Jaufré Rudel's *Lancan li jorn*), *Can vei* is cited and anthologized not only as an exceptionally accomplished but also a paradigmatic love lyric, standing near the beginning of a vernacular tradition that culminates in Dante and Petrarch. In *Can vei*, the poet portrays his complete powerlessness in the face of desire, his loss of identity through love and his metaphoric death and exile, which he attributes to his lady's cruelty. Bernart de Ventadorn's modern reputation as the archetypal "courtly lover" rests to a large extent on this poem and, for generations of modern readers (including myself and my students), it is one of the first Occitan lyrics encountered in the classroom: the exquisite opening image of the falling lark and the famous stanza that contains an allusion to Narcissus are enticing points of entry into the tradition. The centrality of *Can vei* in modern reception of the troubadours is further guaranteed by a number of influential readings and by the fact that it was so widely disseminated in the Middle Ages, surviving as it does in twenty manuscripts with citations in a number of romances and didactic texts.

Modern readings of *Can vei* focus on desire and identity: in love poetry, the two can hardly be considered separately. Trained in the techniques of close reading or "explication de texte," critics have elaborated their interpretations on the basis of a progression of ideas from stanza to stanza: their view of the first-person subject of the text and of his desire is produced from this progression. And yet the critical text of *Can vei* that has been disseminated in the twentieth century

follows a stanza order only found in two manuscripts, and other versions of the poem were far more widely diffused in the Middle Ages; a rather different view of "Bernart," of the "subject" of *Can vei*, emerges from these versions, and a rather different view of his desire.

In this essay I hope to illustrate, through an examination of *Can vei*, the difficulties of charting the relationship between the desiring subject and the text in medieval love poetry when the text in question, if it survives in more than one manuscript, may be subject to *mouvance*.¹ I will begin with a brief account of *Can vei* in its modern incarnation, followed by a selective outline of its critical reception, before looking more closely at the status of the text that modern critics have used. Taking my cue from Amelia E. Van Vleck's work on the textuality of troubadour lyric, I shall then turn to the poem's medieval manifestations and offer a reading of just one "alternative" version.² My reading of this version will of course be grounded in a particular sequence of stanzas and in the progression of ideas that it produces: when a poem is read or performed, a linear sequence of stanzas is inevitably imposed. However, what I hope to show is that if the text and structure of a poem are unstable, the status of the subject and of his desire is in consequence problematic. I would thereby like to reiterate a cautionary truism of medieval studies that medievalists nonetheless frequently forget: namely, that our view of any medieval text is shaped by its medieval transmitters and by its modern editor(s). Since transmitters, medieval and modern, have determined the form of the texts that we know, the desires of readers are always already inscribed in medieval texts. The "desiring subject" of a medieval love lyric is consequently inherently plural, the text always already invested with subjectivities and desires other than the author's. If, in my own comments on *Can vei*, and in my accounts of other critics' readings, I have recourse to terms such as "the poet" or "Bernart" to designate the text's first-person subject, this is simply because they are difficult to avoid and because the consistent use of "scare quotes" is cumbersome. But I hope that the extent to which the subjectivity of "the poet" or "Bernart" is occluded and problematized by a complex manuscript tradition will emerge from my discussion.

There are three principal editions of Bernart de Ventadorn's *cansos*: Carl Appel's in German (1915), Stephen Nichols et al.'s in English (1962), and Moshé Lazar's in French (1966). For *Can vei*, as with many of the poems, Nichols and Lazar follow Appel closely; neither notes that the manuscripts offer divergent stanza orders. Appel's edition has been reproduced (directly or indirectly) in all the main scholarly anthologies that contain the poem. Here is his text.³

- I
Can vei la lauzeta mover
de joi sas alas contral rai,
que s'oblid' e•s laissa chazer
per la doussor c'al cor li vai,
5 ai! tan grans enveya m'en ve
de cui qu'eu veyau jauzion,
meravilhas ai, car desse
lo cor de dezirer no•m fon.
- II
10 Ai las! tan cuidava saber
d'amor, e tan petit en sai!
car eu d'amar no•m posc tener
celeis don ja pro non aurai.
tout m'a mo cor, et tout m'a me,
e se mezeis et tot lo mon;
15 e can se•m tolc, no•m laisset re
mas dezirer e cor volon.
- III
Anc non agui de me poder
ni no fui meus de l'or' en sai
que•m laisset en sos olhs vezer
20 en un miralh que mout me plai.
miralhs, pus me mirei en te,
m'an mort li sospir de preon,
c'aissi•m perdei com perdet se
lo bels Narcisus en la fon.
- IV 25 De las domnas me dezesper;
ja mais en lor no•m fiarai;
c'aissi com las solh chaptener,
enaissi las deschaptendrai.
pois vei c'una pro no m'en te
30 vas leis que•m destrui e•m cofon,
totas las dopt' e las mecre,
car be sai c'atretals se son.
- V
D'aisso•s fa be femna parer
ma domna, per qu'e•lh o retrai,
35 car no vol so c'om deu voler,
e so c'om li deveda, fai.
chazutz sui en mala merce,
et ai be faih co•l fols en pon;
e no sai per que m'esdeve,
40 mas car trop puyei contra mon.

- VI Merces es perduda, per ver,
 (et eu non o saubi anc mai),
 car cilh qui plus en degr' aver,
 no•n a ges, et on la querrai?
 45 a! can mal sembla, qui la ve,
 qued aquest chaitiu deziron
 que ja ses leis non aura be,
 laisse morir, que no l'aon!
- VII Pus ab midons no•m pot valer
 50 precis ni merces ni•l dreihz qu'eu ai,
 ni a leis no ven a plazer
 qu'eu l'am, ja mais no•lh o dirai.
 aissi•m part de leis e•m recre;
 mort m'a, e per mort li respon,
 55 e vau m'en, pus ilh no•m rete,
 chaitius, en issilh, no sai on.
- VIII Tristans, ges no•n aures de me,
 qu'eu m'en vau, chaitius, no sai on.
 de chantar me gic e•m recre
 60 e de joi e d'amor m'escon.

I When I see the lark beat its wings against the sun's ray, and when it forgets itself and lets itself fall because of the sweetness that invades its heart, ah, such an intense longing takes hold of me that no matter whom I see joyful, I am amazed that my heart does not at once melt from desire.

II Alas, I thought I knew so much about love, and I know so little, for I cannot stop loving the woman from whom I will have no favor. She has taken from me my heart and my very being, and herself and the whole world, and when she took herself away from me, she left me nothing but desire and a longing heart.

III I never had any power over myself, nor was I my own from the moment she allowed me to look into her eyes, into a mirror that pleases me greatly. Mirror, since I gazed upon you deep sighs have killed me, for I lost myself just as the fair Narcissus lost himself in the fountain.

IV I despair of ladies; never more will I trust them; for just as I used to respect them, now I will despise them. Since I know that not one of them helps my case with the woman who destroys and confounds me, I fear and mistrust them all for I know they are all the same.

V Thus my lady seems just like a woman, which is why I reproach her with it, for she does not want what one must want and she does what is forbidden

her. I get no mercy, and have behaved like the fool on the bridge and I do not understand what is happening to me except that my aspirations were too high [literally: "I went too far uphill"].

VI There is truly no mercy and I knew nothing of this, for the one who ought to be most merciful is not at all, and where then should I seek it? Ah! How bad it looks to whoever sees her, that she lets this desiring wretch, who will have nothing good without her, die without helping him.

VII Since neither beseeching nor begging for mercy, nor any right that I have, get me anywhere and since she does not like my being in love with her, I will not tell her this any more. Thus I leave her and give up. She has killed me and I reply as if dead, and I go away, since she will not retain me, wretched, in exile, I know not where.

VIII Tristan, you will have nothing from me, for I go away wretched, I know not where. I give up and stop singing and remove myself from joy and loving.

This version of *Can vei* offers a well-crafted and coherent sequence of themes and metaphors. The poem opens with the lark flying up a ray of sunlight towards the dazzling vision that is the object of its desire: its ecstasy as it flies towards the sun is so intense that it loses all sense of itself and falls backwards. As with the lark, the poet's desire deprives him of self-control (5–8), a theme that is continued in stanza 2, where the poet becomes pure desire (15–16), and further developed in stanza 3 with the comparison to Narcissus. Stanzas 4, 5, and 6 then express despair at the lady's frosty responses, and stanza 7 rounds the main body of the poem off with the image of exile as metaphoric death, echoing "m'an mort li sospir" in stanza 3 as well as the end of stanza 6 where the poet says his lady is killing him. The *tornada* concludes the poem with an address to "Tristan" (who was of course exiled and who died for love) and with the poet saying he will abandon song.⁴ The progression of the poem is evident: the first three stanzas equate desire with powerlessness and loss of selfhood, the poem then shifts to a sustained sequence of stanzas voicing despair, and finally the poet claims that his lack of satisfaction in love is the equivalent of death and exile. If he criticizes his lady (25–40), the prevailing mood is nonetheless one of submission to her will (49–56).

The poem is further bound together by a pattern of images of rising and falling: the lark (1–4), Narcissus falling into the fountain (23–24), the fool falling off the bridge (38),⁵ who is evoked after the poet has "chazutz en male merce" (37), and the poet rising too much "contra mon" (40). The poet's disappearance into exile in stanza 7 is thus

underscored by a pervasive metaphor of falling and consequently marks all the more vividly the poet's sense of loss of identity, a notion introduced in stanza 2 ("tout m'a me") and further developed with the comparison to Narcissus. Like the lark and Narcissus, the poet is in love with an unobtainable image, and this supplies a further pattern to the metaphors, which help construct the first-person subject. As Sarah Kay has shown, the Narcissus simile in stanza 3 need not necessarily evoke self-love: Narcissus, in the Middle Ages, was an *exemplum* of unrequited love, not of self-love, and the image he saw in the fountain was not himself but an image of perfection, so Narcissus may be evoked here to figure the self's relation to the other, rather than the self's relation to the self.⁶ The poet loves and needs his *domna* as other, but he is careful to distinguish between this ideal image, a figure within his own discourse, and real women, who are denigrated (25–40).

If the poem movingly evokes the loss of self through love and the pain caused by desire when union with the beloved is not achieved, the final stanzas seem to shift the realm of love from the private into the public. Whereas the poet's loss of control over himself has been apparent throughout, stanza 7 introduces a new sense of loss: the loss of social identity. As an exile, he is removed from the world that gives him his identity, and in the *tornada* this is equated with ceasing to sing. The complete despair of the lover unloved climaxes with his falling silent: in the courtly world of poetry, he ceases to exist. This is clearly a conceit, in that all troubadours fall silent at the end of their songs, but the effect here is powerful: the lady's unwillingness to gratify the poet's desire leads to his obliteration from the poetic universe.

Perhaps the most influential reading of this rich poem is Erich Köhler's in an article published in 1964 in which he argues that the troubadour lyric represents "la projection sublimée de la situation matérielle et sociale de la basse noblesse."⁷ Köhler's thesis has been refined or contested by a number of critics, and I do not intend to defend or criticize his approach here, only to set his reading of *Can vei* in context.⁸ For Köhler, the frustration of the "courtly lover" is a sublimated expression of the frustration of the lower nobility, more particularly of the *iuvenes* (landless young nobles) who are thought to have populated twelfth-century courts.⁹ The *domna* of the *canso* represents less a real object of erotic desire than the power and social position she stands for metonymically through her connection with her husband, the *senher* of the court. Köhler's aim is to show the relationship between "superstructure poétique" and "infrastructure sociale": amorous desire mediates frustrated social ambition, and love service is equivalent to feudal service.¹⁰ In Köhler's view, courtly literature enables the creation of a shared ideology

for a class otherwise in danger of disintegration. His choice of *Can vei* as a vehicle to illustrate his argument is iconoclastic: he chooses the most lyrical and enchanting of troubadour songs in order to show the ideological underpinning of even the most haunting of personal poetry. In a *tour de force* of close reading and critical demystification, Köhler turns the metaphors of the poem inside out to argue that, rather than articulating a sense of isolation and lonely individuation through disempowerment, *Can vei* expresses a sublimated desire for social integration. The Narcissus simile enables the poet to glimpse "celui qu'il voudrait être," and the structure of the poem as a whole is governed by a shift from personal to social concerns, culminating in the image of exile and in the use of the verb *retener* (line 55), a feudal term.¹¹ The use of a feudal term to describe the bond between poet and lady is symptomatic of the "real" theme of the poem. The poet fears less rejection by his "lady" (a construct of his own discursive framework) than his putative failure to find a place within the courtly social order. Köhler is critical of modern ideas of the individual: "la pensée romantique et post-romantique part de la disjonction fondamentale de la société et de l'individu, et elle finit nécessairement par croire que tout sentiment sincère doit s'exprimer contre la société." For Köhler, "toute *canso* réussie formellement est un gage d'intégration de l'individu à son univers."¹² The desire expressed in *Can vei* is consequently the desire of a group, and the "subject," if not a collective subject, is certainly a subject with whom a group of men identify.

Other important readings of *Can vei* have been more oriented towards the idea of the individual, sometimes as a reaction to Köhler's thesis. For many critics, *Can vei* is a *cri de coeur*, expressing deep personal feeling, articulating sometimes a desire for, sometimes a fear of, loss of identity. Thus, in Frederick Goldin's powerful reading, Bernart seeks the fulfillment of oblivion (stanza 1) through union with an image of perfection of his own creation (stanza 3), which is figured through the Narcissus simile; whereas for Leslie Topsfield, Bernart eschews the escapism of the imagination, since his "*Jois* is here in this world, visible, tangible, to be known through his senses and expressed through the living image."¹³ Sarah Kay's judicious account of the mirror image and of the Narcissus simile is more concerned with emotion as an effect of the rhetoric of the poem, rather than as its source, but like Goldin and Topsfield she prefers to see "social vocabulary" as illustrative of "an individual relationship" rather than as a sign of any (perhaps unconscious) engagement with class tensions.¹⁴ Another feature of the text that has elicited critical interest in relation to the poet's sense of self is paradox. Thus, for Jean-Charles Huchet, the song records "un moment où le monde vacille pour le sujet

qui se sent appelé à disparaître afin que règne ce qui fait sa joie et son malheur.”¹⁵ Paradoxically, the subject can only register his existence by enacting his obliteration. As R. Howard Bloch puts it, “Bernart uses his voice to renounce song”: *Can vei* thus seems to show that the *canço* is always predicated on unrequited desire, which in turn leads to what Bloch calls a “despoliation of the self.”¹⁶

The readings I have just schematically outlined are all generated by reading the poem as a sequence of ideas. For example, Köhler insists on the absolute logic of the *enchaînement des idées*, and particularly on the structural importance of the position of stanza 4, which marks the transition from the personal to the social, while Goldin talks about the “clear progression” of the poem.¹⁷ Whereas none of the other critics I have mentioned acknowledges that alternative stanza orders for *Can vei* exist, Kay and Huchet draw the mobility of stanza order in transmission into their discussion, but only to make a plea in favor of what Kay calls “the stanza-ordering traditionally adopted,” Kay to stress the structural importance of stanzas 3 and 4 at the center of the poem, and Huchet to argue that “la troisième strophe constitue bien le cœur de la *canço*”; both suggest that Bernart’s songs frequently turn around what Kay calls a “central image” and Huchet “un noyau central.”¹⁸ Like Köhler, Kay argues for a “greater ‘objectivity’ in the latter part of the poem,” but whereas Kay correctly observes in a note that “the ordering i–ii–iii–iv is found in three MSS, the ordering i–ii–iv–iii in seven, of which two do not contain stanza vi and six omit stanza vii,” Huchet erroneously asserts that the stanza order of the edition he uses (Lazar’s) is that of the majority of manuscripts.¹⁹ Neither critic lists or considers alternative stanza orders.

Before turning specifically to the question of stanza order, it is worth highlighting a few of Appel’s editorial decisions at crucial points in the poem with a view to illustrating the extent to which modern readings depend on his value judgments about Bernart’s poetic practice. For all critics, the nub of the poem is Appel’s stanza 3 with the Narcissus simile. It is therefore noteworthy that the scribes of five manuscripts apparently failed to recognize the reference to Narcissus, offering the following readings: *C* “marcesis,” *E* “marsilis,” *N* “marselius” (with “Narcisus” added by a later hand in the margin), *R* “marsili,” *a* “narcilis.” In addition, *MPSU* read “narcisus,” *Q* “narcis,” and in *V* the last part of the line is missing. The original reading was in all likelihood “Narcissus,” which is attested in the other nine manuscripts that transmit the stanza, but these variants may well indicate that the reference to Narcissus was not as crucial to an understanding of the poem for medieval transmitters as it has been for modern critics.

A striking feature of Appel’s text, related to the Narcissus simile, is that the lady’s eyes are the mirror in which the poet sees the perfect vision that is the object of his desire: in other words, the lady is the mirror of perfection, not the image of perfection. The subtlety of this in Appel’s text depends upon the wording of lines 19–20. These lines create an equivalence between the lady’s eyes and the mirror, which is subsequently transformed through the simile into the mirror of Narcissus. But Appel’s text here derives from a small number of manuscripts. *AGLPSV* read “de mos holhs,” *C* “a mos holhs,” *M* “Qe li plac qem laisset vezer,” *N* “Ca sos bels oils mi fes vezer,” *R* “pus elam mostret son voler.” Furthermore, the preposition *en* is missing in *QU*, with the missing syllable supplied by a scanning first-person object pronoun before the verb in *QU* (*Q* “Qant me laisset sos oils veder”), giving the completely different sense that the poet sees his lady’s eyes in a mirror. The precise wording that elicits modern readings of stanza 3 is thus only found in *DIKoa*, of which only *DIKO* appear to have registered a reference to Narcissus. The image in Appel’s text is arresting, but its basis in the manuscript tradition is far from secure, and in many medieval versions of *Can vei* the equivalence between the lady’s eyes and Narcissus’s mirror is not suggested.

Apart from the Narcissus simile and the mirror image, another key element in the poem for modern readers is the ending, and critics comment admiringly upon the verbal echo between lines 55–56 and line 58 in the *tornada*.²⁰ This type of verbal echo is common in troubadour lyric and would seem to be a compelling reason for adopting at least the 7–8 sequence of Appel’s edition. However, a study of the manuscript variants reveals that the “echo” is weaker in medieval versions of *Can vei* than in Appel’s, even in the two manuscripts that place Appel’s stanza 7 immediately before the *tornada* (*QU*). There are three elements in the echo: “e vau m’en . . . no sai on” / “qu’eu m’en vau . . . no sai on” (lines 55–56 and 58), the repetition of “recre” (lines 53 and 59), and the repetition of “chaitius” (lines 56 and 58). Whereas the first two elements are common to almost all versions that have the *tornada* (*U* reads “rete” in line 59), the repetition of “chaitius” only occurs in one (*E*), which does not place the *tornada* after stanza 7 but after stanza 3 (see below). Otherwise, “chaitius” is found in the last line of stanza 7 in *ADEFGIKLMPQS* (*CRU* “faiditz”; *N* “Marrig”; *V* “E mexil e res”; *O* “Cais en exil”; *a* “chazutz”), but in the second line of the *tornada* we read “marritz” in *AGLPQSU* (“chaitius” in *CO*, though this produces no echo; no *tornada* in *DIKMNRVa*; Appel omits the variants for *U* in these lines). There clearly is an echo between the *tornada* and the text, but it is debatable whether this is as strong as Appel’s text suggests and whether

the echo is with a stanza fixed in the preceding position or with a stanza in the middle of the poem.²¹ My point in dwelling on these seemingly trivial details is that Appel offers us a finely wrought, seamless poem, but that some of the elements that modern readers have most admired are to a certain extent of his confection and are not found in many medieval redactions, if at all.

Appel seems to have had a clear idea of what constituted a good poem and then to have set out to create one from a complex manuscript transmission. He saw the possible subtleties of one way of presenting the Narcissus simile and mirror image, so he edited accordingly; he thought there should be a verbal echo between the final stanza and the *tornada*, so he made sure there was one; he structured the poem around an aesthetically pleasing shift from desire to despair. I have no doubt that these operations were deliberate. A fine latter-day troubadour, Appel was in many respects a more meticulous transmitter of *Can vei* than the medieval scribes who copied it. After all, did any of them scour Europe to transcribe and collate twenty different versions of the poem? But behind his work—veiled rather than concealed—lie a number of competing versions of *Can vei* that actually circulated in the Middle Ages.

The stanza orders found in the manuscripts are as follows:

12345678	QU
12347568	C
12435768	O
1243576	MR
124357	Na
143675	I
1243675	K
1243756	V
12456738	E
12467358	AGLPS
124673	D
12	WX

In addition, stanza 7 is in *F*, and extracts from *Can vei* are cited in a number of didactic and narrative texts.²²

The two manuscripts that transmit the stanza order Appel adopts are both relatively late (fourteenth-century) Italian manuscripts that frequently display similarities, as they do for this poem. Indeed, for *Can vei*, the fact that both manuscripts intervert lines 37–40 and 45–48, garbling in a similar fashion lines 46 and 48 in the process (Appel's line numbering: 46 *Q* "asses oils chattiu desiron," *U* "Ai sos oils chaitiu

desiron;" 48 *Q* "Lais mor sem no ma bon," *U* "Las morz serai si non maon," *Q* being hypometric in 48), and have a garbled first half of line 44, suggests that they derive ultimately from a common source (44 *Q* "et ieu ola qerrai," *U* "E ren mais on lai qerai," both hypometric). Neither is a "good" manuscript that any editor would choose as a base manuscript, and a perusal of the texts they offer of *Can vei* makes it clear why. Both are riddled with linguistic peculiarities (for example, intervocalic [z] written "d" in both, thus in line 1 *Q* "laudetta," *U* "lauderta," line 3 *QU* "chader"), and with errors. Apart from the mistakes already listed, and giving the scribes the benefit of the doubt for "variant" readings that make sense, a number of other "variants" in both manuscripts suggest faulty transmission. These are as follows.

Q: 1 "ueu" (for "vei"); 7 "mai" (producing a pronoun with no apparent grammatical function); 24 "lo bel narcis en la fon" (hypometric); 27 "char tener"; 28 "deschar tenrai"; 38 (line 46 in this manuscript) "E ai far ben de fols un pon"; 49 "En uer midon" (which garbles the syntax of the stanza); 52 "Qe mam"; 57 "Tristezi" (*GLPS* read "Tristeza" here).

U: 6 "ia usion" (suggesting the scribe misunderstood "iausion" in his source); 12 "ias" (producing a reflexive pronoun with no grammatical function); 13 "Tot mal cor et tolt ma se" (hypometric); 22 "isospirs"; 55 "E uau men sil nom rete" (hypometric); 58 "Qe uau men maritz e non sai on" (hypermetric); 59 "rete" (for "recre").

To give credence to the stanza order transmitted by these two manuscripts when they are otherwise defective transmitters of the poem, possibly deriving from a common source, is not the soundest of editorial practices.

The mobility of stanza order in transmission is common in the troubadour and *trouvère* love lyric. This led Paul Zumthor to argue that the stanza was an autonomous unit in the *trouvère chanson*, that its internal structure was more susceptible to fruitful analysis than its position in a song, and that "rarement, l'ordre de succession des éléments est significatif comme tel."²³ Recently, Amelia Van Vleck has refined Zumthor's argument. She suggests that some troubadours used complex, patterned rhyme schemes that require a particular stanza sequence in order to fix this sequence in transmission and thereby to safeguard a linear argument.²⁴ For example, Bernart de Ventadorn's *Tant ai mo cor* (Appel and Nichols 44, Lazar 4) uses a form called *coblas capcaudadas*. It has the rhyme scheme abababaccbb with "c¹" as a constant rhyme word (*amor*): the "ab" rhyme sounds change each stanza, but the "b" rhyme of

stanza 1 becomes the "a" rhyme of stanza 2, which introduces a new "b" rhyme, which in turn become the "a" rhyme of stanza 3 and so on. Only one sequence for the stanzas is possible if the rhyme scheme is to be observed. Although there are textual variants within lines, the rhyme words are relatively stable, and there is no transposition of stanza order, even though the poem is transmitted in eleven manuscripts: the poem has a clear logical progression and structure.²⁵ On the other hand, Van Vleck argues that when troubadours use stanzaic forms that do not impose a particular sequence on the poem, such as the *coblas unissonans* of *Can vei* (stanzas that have the same rhyme scheme with the same rhyme sounds), transposition in transmission is the norm and that even when a rhyming device that ought to impose a particular sequence is used, transposition still occurs for some songs.²⁶ Agreeing with Zumthor that the stanza is the important structural unit in a courtly lyric, Van Vleck nonetheless argues that sequence *is* important to any given reading or performance, provided we recognize that the sequence in question could be the work of a performer or scribe.²⁷ She notes briefly that the stanza order of modern editions of *Can vei* is found only in two manuscripts and comments "one cannot safely perform the kind of literary analysis that relies on linear development without first ascertaining that a particular linear development is part of what constitutes 'the text'."²⁸

Highlighting the role of the scribe or performer in the transmission of a troubadour poem, and consequently in the production of the texts we know, renders the status of the subject of any poem, and of his desire, problematic. Whose desire then is articulated in *Can vei*? And in which poem? I do not seek to deny the existence of an "author" for *Can vei*. Somebody composed it and I have no objection to calling him "Bernart de Ventadorn," but we can only speculate as to the form of the original text, since the texts we read have undergone transformation at the hands of at least one scribe, probably more, and this in addition to any modifications that took place in performance. And yet it is striking that the manuscripts themselves often seek to portray troubadour songs as "subjective," as autobiographical, as recording lived experience and feelings.²⁹ On the one hand texts change, on the other their transmitters claim their authenticity as witness to the troubadours' lives. This apparent paradox is eliminated, however, when we remember that troubadour *cansos* are fictional representations of someone's desire, not spontaneous articulations of desire. "Real feelings" give *Can vei* its power to move, but they are the object of representation in the poem as well as its inspiration: they have been appropriated by listeners, transmitters, editors, and readers, to be then invested with their own desires. Within the fictional frame desire produces the text, but if we take

a step outside that frame, we realize that desire is also an effect of the text's rhetoric. When the rhetoric is differently organized, a different image of the subject and of his desire emerges. The "Bernart de Ventadorn" of any one manuscript is different from that of any other. The "Bernart de Ventadorn" of a modern critical edition is different from that of any medieval manuscript.³⁰ Thus, as Jean-Charles Huchet has suggested (and this despite his apparent defense of the authenticity of a modern edition of *Can vei*), every act of transmission is also an act of appropriation of the subject of the poem: "Chaque version manuscrite sera trace d'un sujet évanoui. La transmission constitue un temps indispensable dans la constitution du sujet."³¹

Reading Appel's edition of *Can vei* as an expression of someone's desire, whether this is understood as desire for social integration, identity, or a woman, is to read the poem as if it were a modern poem, signed by its author in a printed book, where the identity of the author is controlled and produced by an institutional and legal framework of publishers, birth certificates, and copyright. If the poem that modern critics have read reflects any one person's desire with any certainty, it is Carl Appel's, since his edition is not a medieval redaction. The astute readings of modern critics are a tribute to his work, and it is not surprising if they share his view of what constitutes a good poem, since they are, broadly speaking, part of the same culture. However, the dangers of reading only the modern critical edition are that our interaction with the medieval versions of *Can vei* will be completely filtered through the modern sensibilities that governed the editorial process and that we will consequently miss the dissonances between modern sensibilities and medieval texts that can make reading medieval texts such an exciting experience.

Although I am insisting on the validity of multiple versions of *Can vei*, the poem is not subject to infinite variation through *mouvance*. Key thematic features and links seem to have determined the poem's transformation into different forms, and, despite the high degree of variation in stanza order, in other respects the text shows a degree of stability. There are no "apocryphal" stanzas, clearly added during transmission: every stanza is attested in almost all the manuscripts, and even the *tornada* is in ten. Furthermore, there are few variants that produce different versions of complete stanzas.³² This suggests that the text of the poem was well known, but the transposition of stanzas is in consequence all the more striking since the same textual material is deployed to produce different poems. Thus, just as the versions of *Can vei* that have survived have been subject to the desires of transmitters, so the articulations of desire they transmitted through the poem were

determined by the substance of the poem they read in their sources. Does the poem then invite some forms of transformation yet resist others? And to what extent is the mobility of stanzas part of the aesthetics of the culture that produced the poem?³³

If the stanzas are autonomous units, it is nonetheless apparent that certain sequences of stanzas recur in a number of different versions. For example, putting stanzas 1 and 2 aside since they always open the poem, the most common sequence is 1–2–4 (fourteen manuscripts, as opposed to 1–2–3 in only three). This means that despair—and also hostility to women—is introduced earlier in the poem and that the line “De las domnas me dezesper” glosses not the Narcissus image but the stanza on the poet’s powerlessness. This is perfectly logical, but it produces a different progression from that discerned by modern critics. Other common sequences are 6–7 (as in Appel, eleven manuscripts, linked by allusions to death) and 3–5 (ten manuscripts). This last pairing is interesting on two counts. First, it brings together two stanzas with images of falling; secondly, in five manuscripts (*AGLPS*), it brings them together at the end, thereby displacing the Narcissus image from the center or *noyau* of the song. Indeed, in a further two manuscripts (*DE*), stanza 3 comes at the end of the poem, though in both of these after stanza 7, so that the image of exile (a social state) is displaced by the more personal meditation on identity. My point is not that the transposition of stanzas prevents logical progression in the poem but that it produces a different logic. That the pieces of the jigsaw seem able so successfully to make different pictures may suggest the stanzas were composed with some degree of mobility in mind, though perhaps with ideal pairings suggested by content (such as 6–7 and 3–5). At the very least, the series of metaphors of falling, the references to death, and the syntactic autonomy of the stanzas mean that logical connections emerge when the stanzas are transposed. Even when a stanza appears to be syntactically linked to what has gone before (such as stanza 5 which opens “D’aisso”), the referent is vague enough to allow for mobility.

As autonomous syntactic units, all the stanzas have a finely wrought internal structure. All exploit the conventional division of the *cobla* into *frons* and *cauda*, with the rhyme scheme abab/cdcd marking a shift between the two halves that is often reflected in the content. Thus, for example, in stanza 1 there is a shift from metaphor (the lark) to exposition, whereas in stanza 3 the shift is from exposition to *exemplum* (Narcissus). Rhyme is exploited to highlight key ideas. Thus, the “a” rhyme position is occupied predominantly by infinitives that stand metonymically for the content of the stanza:³⁴ for example, “mover”/“chazer” in stanza 1, “poder” (which is used as a noun here)/“vezer” in

stanza 3. The “b” and “c” rhymes, are on the other hand, often used to mark subject/object relations, the “b” rhyme because many of the rhyme words are first person verb forms (10 “sai,” 12 “aurai,” 26 “fiarai,” and so on), the “c” rhyme because some of the rhyme words are pronouns (13 “me,” 21 “te,” 23 “se”).³⁵ The stanzas are carefully executed, formally balanced units, and their internal coherence seems to be recognized in relatively stable transmission.

The most widely diffused medieval version of *Can vei* is in *AGLPS*; the stanza order they transmit is supported by *D* (which is identical but lacks this version’s final stanza and the *tornada*) and to a certain extent by *E*, which has the sequences 1–2–4 and 6–7–3 as in *AGLPS*. Here is a version of *Can vei* based on *A*. I have resolved common abbreviations but followed *A*’s practice of writing elided vowels in full. I have allowed “i” for [j] to stand but written [v] as “v,” rather than “u,” for legibility. The modifications I have made are otherwise all to correct what are almost certainly copying errors.³⁶

- | | | |
|-----|---|---------------------------------|
| I | Qan vei la lauzeta mover
de ioi sas alas contra•l rai
que s’oblida e•is laissa cazer
per la doussor c’al cor li vai. | |
| 5 | Ai! Tant grans enveia m’en ve
de cui que veia iauzion,
meravillas ai car desse
lo cors de desirier no•m fon. | |
| II | A las! Tant cui[a]va saber
10 d’amor e qant petit en sai,
car ieu d’amar no•m puosc tener
cellei don ia pro non aurai.
Tolt m’a mon cor e tolt m’a se,
e mi meteus et tot lo mon,
15 e qan si•m tolc no•m laiset re
mas desirier e cor volon. | MS: “cuiua”

MS: “Cellui” |
| III | De las dompnas mi desesper:
jamais en lor no•m fiarai,
e aissi cum las suoil captener,
20 enaissi las descaptenrai.
Pois [vei] c’una pro no m’en te
vas lieis qe•m destrui e•m cofon,
totas las dopti e las mescre,
car ben sai c’atretals si son. | MS: no “vei” |

- IV 25 Amors es perduda per ver,
et ieu non o saubi anc mai,
que cil que plus en degra aver,
non a ies, et on la qerrai?
Ai! Cum mal sembla qui la ve,
30 E az aqest caitiu desiron,
qe ia ses lieis non aura be,
laisse morir, qe no•il aon.
- V Puois ab midonz no m•pot valer
Dieus, ni merces, ni•l dreitz q'ieu ai,
35 ni a lieis no ven a plazer
Qu il m'am, ia mais no lo dirai.
E si•m part de lieis e•m recre:
mort m'a e per mort li respon,
e vau m'en s'ella no•m rete,
40 caitius, en issill, no sai on.
- VI Anc non agui de mi poder,
ni non fui meus de lor en sai
qe m laisset de mos huoills vezer
en un miraiil qe mout mi plai
45 Miraiills, pois me miriei en te,
m'ant mort li sospir de prion,
E aissi•m perdiei cum perdet se
lo bels Narcisus en la fon.
- VII D'aisso fai ben femna parer
50 ma dompna, per q'ieu lo retrai,
e ar non vol so qe deu voler,
e so c'om li deveda fai.
Cazutz sui e mala merce,
et ai be faich co•l fols e•l pon,
55 e non sai per que m'esdeve,
mas car poiei trop contra amon.
- VIII Tristan, non avetz ies de me,
qe vau m'en marritz, no sai on,
de chantar mi lais e•m recre,
60 e de ioi e d'amar m'escon.

Whereas Appel's version produces a progression from desire to despair, from the personal to the social, the progression here is quite different. In Appel's text, death, exile, and silence are brought together in stanzas 7 and 8 to produce a powerful image of a solitary and unhappy poet that

concorde well with the post-romantic notion of the alienated artist: he fades into a dignified despair that deprives him of his social identity and ultimately prevents him even from speaking. Here the poet goes on speaking after he has evoked exile. The Narcissus stanza that immediately follows becomes an exposition of past feelings rather than an explanation of present mood. If Narcissus is taken as an evocation of oblivion and loss of selfhood, then the last line of stanza 7 (my numbering) offers a sharply individuated image of the poet battling against the world: this would seem to support Köhler's view of the troubadour as socially frustrated, but perhaps not his ideas on integration. However, if Narcissus is also taken as an *exemplum* of unrequited love (as he surely should be), then the end of the poem expresses intense misogyny since "D'aisso fai ben femna parer" (line 49) becomes a gloss on the Narcissus simile.³⁷ This picks up on the central *noyau* of this version: here, Appel's stanzas 4 and 6 are brought together as stanzas 3 and 4 to produce a sustained attack on women and on the poet's lady in particular. The whole poem is less focused on the lover, more focused on the inadequacies of women. Whereas Appel's "Bernart" falls silent in a moment of moving pathos, receding gracefully into metaphoric exile, manuscript A's "Bernart" stomps off angrily, and his renunciation of singing is determined by his anger. Even the address to Tristan fits this mood with an assertive present tense "avetz" rather than a plaintive future "auretz."

This version fits the conventional stereotype of a "courtly" poem a good deal less well than Appel's. It is, however, in its misogyny, a perfect example of the reflexes that feminist scholarship has imputed to the troubadour lyric.³⁸ If desire is initially the dominant theme, misogyny and anger dominate the end. Both versions might in fact reflect something of the subjectivity of someone we might call "Bernart," but we might also consider the import of the fact that the less "courtly" version had more currency in the Middle Ages and that circulation in this form was no impediment to the song's popularity. Medieval tastes were clearly somewhat different from Appel's.

I am not proposing that modern readers simply replace Appel's *Can vei* with my "alternative" version from A. I am suggesting rather that multiple versions of *Can vei* need to be considered differentially in order to assess the poem's production, transmission, and reception, and that an understanding of the text's mobility is crucial to a sense of how subjectivity and desire are inscribed in and constructed by it. But the return to manuscript redactions that this entails has methodological ramifications that perhaps exceed my consideration of subjectivity and desire in this one poem. That I have chosen to offer an "alternative"

version of *Can vei* that lends itself to a reading informed by a feminist epistemology is, of course, an act of appropriation reflecting my own desire to read and present medieval texts in a particular light. And yet, if I have reinvented A's text for this article, I have not invented it. Appel made his version of *Can vei* conform to his view of "courtly" poetry and he thereby occluded (no doubt unintentionally) a number of ideological and formal features of the poem that are of interest to modern scholars. Medieval texts can, of course, be recuperated for feminist readers (or queer or postcolonial readers for that matter) without their being re-edited, but who knows what new texts, or new versions of old texts, await rediscovery? Scholars seeking to revise or challenge conventional views of the Middle Ages cannot afford to rely on existing editions: they need philology as much as they need theory.

To return to *Can vei*, it is clear that the expectations of modern readers and the form of the text that they have used have conspired to render the poem more "courtly" in its modern reception than it was in its medieval transmission. The different text of *Can vei* produces a different image of the poem's desiring subject and of his desire, a different view of courtliness. *Can vei* has acted as a mirror for modern concerns and sensibilities from Carl Appel onwards. It offered in the Middle Ages and offers now a discursive mold into which readers can pour their own ideas about desire. A desire for a discourse of desire has determined its reception and transmission.³⁹

Notes

1. The term "mouvance" was coined by Paul Zumthor to denote how medieval texts are transformed in transmission; for a definition, see *Essai de poétique médiévale* (Paris: Seuil, 1972), 507. See also Rupert T. Pickens, "Jaufré Rudel et la poétique de la mouvance," *Cahiers de Civilisation Médiévale* 20 (1977): 323–37, and *The Songs of Jaufré Rudel* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute, 1978); and Amelia E. Van Vleck, *Memory and Re-creation in Troubadour Lyric* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 71–90, on *mouvance* in troubadour poetry. Pickens argues that troubadours composed knowing that their work would be transformed by performers and transmitters. For Pickens, different manuscript versions of the same lyric constitute separate poems. His approach is exemplified by his own edition of Jaufré Rudel, which offers multiple versions of poems that survive in more than one manuscript. For Pickens, it is pointless to try to distinguish authorial redactions from later *remaniements*; for a critique of this position, see Sarah Kay, "Continuation as Criticism: the Case of Jaufré Rudel," *Medium Aevum* 56 (1987): 46–64. Pickens's approach represents a strong challenge to the two traditional methods of editing troubadour lyrics: the so-called Lachmannian method, which aims to reconstruct a single original, and the so-called Bédieriste, which aims to reproduce as closely as possible one "good" version. According equal value to all

versions, however, is a questionable procedure. Some manuscript versions of some songs (such as *QU*'s of *Can vei*) are clearly faulty.

2. See Van Vleck. I am not, however, entirely in agreement with Van Vleck's thesis: for example, she attributes *mouvance* largely to oral transmission and to changes made for performances, but I would attribute a greater role to written transmission and prefer to look at the composition of the *chansonniers*, rather than imagine oral performances that may have preceded them. However, Van Vleck's work has obviously shaped my thinking in this essay. I am indebted in a more general way to the work of other scholars, for example "new philologists" such as Cerquiglini, Hult, and Masters as well as "old philologists," not least Carl Appel, whose edition of Bernard de Ventadorn is monumental and remains unsurpassed, and also John Marshall. See Bernard Cerquiglini, *Eloge de la variante: histoire critique de la philologie* (Paris: Seuil, 1989); David Hult, "Reading It Right: The Ideology of Text Editing," *Romanic Review* 79 (1988): 74–88; Bernadette A. Masters, "The Distribution, Destruction and Dislocation of Authority in Medieval Literature and its Modern Derivatives," *Romanic Review* 82 (1991): 270–85, and *Esthétique et manuscriture: le << Moulin à paroles >> au moyen âge* (Heidelberg: Winter, 1992); and John H. Marshall, *The Transmission of Troubadour Poetry* (London: Westfield College, 1975). As Marshall writes: "Editors of medieval texts are, as a race, not to be trusted" (11).

3. See Carl Appel, ed., *Bernart von Ventadorn: seine Lieder* (Halle: Max Niemeyer, 1915), poem 43; Moshé Lazar, ed., *Bernart de Ventadour: troubadour du XII^{ème} siècle: chansons d'amour* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1966), poem 31; and Stephen G. Nichols Jr., et al., eds., *The Songs of Bernart de Ventadorn* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1962), poem 43. Lazar and Nichols only modify minor details of Appel's text. It is hard to work out exactly how Appel produced his text, but having adopted the stanza order of *QU*, he appears to have worked from a number of manuscripts for the text (at least *ACEI*). His earlier edition of *Can vei* is similar to his 1915 version but has a slightly different orthography; see Carl Appel, *Provenzalische Chrestomathie* (Leipzig: Reisland, 1895), 56–57. I can locate no justification of his choice of stanza order. Appel comments of *Can vei* (Appel, *Bernart*, 250) that although the complexity of the manuscript tradition makes the construction of a stemma unthinkable, the text can nonetheless be established with a degree of certainty because of the agreement of large numbers of manuscripts. This is a view that is broadly endorsed by Michael Kaehne, *Studien zur Dichtung Bernarts von Ventadorn*, 2 vols. (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1983), 2:235–37, who proposes one correction to Appel's text, suggesting that line 50 should read: "Deus ni merces ni dreihz qu'eu ai." While acknowledging that the stanza orders in the manuscripts make it difficult to recreate the logic of Bernart's poem, Kaehne goes on to endorse Appel's choice of stanza order (*ibid.*, 2:236–37). Anthologies that include *Can vei* are too numerous to detail, but see for example Martin de Riquer, *Los trovadores*, 3 vols. (Barcelona: Ariel, 1975), 1:384–87, who also offers a convenient list of the sigla that are conventionally used to designate Occitan *chansonniers* (1:12–13), together with a brief, tabulated description. The translation of *Can vei* in this essay is my own. I have consulted microfilms of *AQU* and otherwise worked from Appel's variants (1895 and 1915).

4. "Tristans" in line 57 is thought to be *senhal* (a code name for a real person) and not simply a reference to the literary character. A substantial amount of scholarship has been devoted to identifying the person concerned. Whereas Lazar (274 n. 11) thinks the *senhal* designates the poet's lady, there is a general consensus that it designates the contemporary troubadour Raimbaut d'Aurenga and that *Can vei* is part of a poetic exchange with Raimbaut and with Chretien de Troyes. See Maurice Delbouille, "Les

senhals littéraires désignant Raimbaut d'Orange et la chronologie de ces témoignages," *Cultura Neolatina* 17 (1957): 64–72; Costanzo di Girolamo, *I trovatori* (Turin: Bollati Boringhieri, 1989), 120–41; Kaehne, 2:243–50; Maria Luisa Meneghetti, *Il pubblico dei trovatori: ricezione e riuso dei testi lirici cortesi fino al XIV secolo*, 2nd ed. (Turin: Einaudi, 1992), 101–6; Don A. Monson, "Bernart de Ventadorn et Tristan," in *Il Miglior fabbro: Mélanges Pierre Bec* (Poitiers: CESC, 1991): 385–400; and Aurelio Roncaglia, "Carestia," *Cultura Neolatina* 18 (1958): 121–37.

5. The "fool falling off the bridge" is generally taken to be proverbial: see Appel, *Bernart*, 156. But for a different interpretation, see Thomas D. Hill, "The Fool on the Bridge: *Can vei la lauzeta mover* Stanza 5," *Medium Aevum* 48 (1979): 198–200.

6. Sarah Kay, "Love in a Mirror: An Aspect of the Imagery of Bernart de Ventadorn," *Medium Aevum* 52 (1982): 272–77; see also Frederick Goldin, *The Mirror of Narcissus in the Courtly Love Lyric* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967), 27, and, on the self-self and self-other configurations in medieval treatments of Narcissus, Jane Gilbert, "Comparing Like with Like: Identity, Identicalness and Difference in Selected Medieval French and English Narratives" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Cambridge, 1993), 87–130.

7. "Observations historiques et sociologiques sur la poésie des troubadours," *Cahiers de Civilisation Médiévale* 7 (1964): 27–51.

8. See Simon Gaunt, "Marginal Men, Marcabru and Orthodoxy: the Early Troubadours and Adultery," *Medium Aevum* 59 (1990): 55–72; Ingrid Kasten, *Frauentrost bei Trobadors und Minnesängern im 12. Jahrhundert* (Heidelberg: Winter, 1986), 130–41; Sarah Kay, *Subjectivity in Troubadour Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 40–41 and 112–31; Ursula Liebertz-Grün, *Zur Soziologie des "amour courtois"* (Heidelberg: Winter, 1977), 97–108; Linda M. Paterson, *The World of the Troubadours: Medieval Occitan Society, c.1100–1300* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 28–36; and Aurelio Roncaglia, "*Trobar clus*: discussione aperta," *Cultura Neolatina* 29 (1969): 5–55. Specifically on Köhler's reading of *Can vei* (although he makes reference to a German version, rather than the article in French that I have used), see Kaehne, 2:237–41.

9. Köhler's 1964 article needs to be read in conjunction with Georges Duby, "Dans la France du Nord au XII^e siècle: les 'jeunes' dans la société aristocratique," *Annales* 19 (1964): 835–64, and Erich Köhler, "Sens et fonction du terme 'jeunesse' dans la poésie des troubadours," in *Mélanges Crozet*, 2 vols. (Poitiers: CESC, 1966): 1:569–83, as well as the critics cited in the previous note.

10. Köhler, "Observations," 29 and 40.

11. *Ibid.*, 47–51, quotation on 49.

12. *Ibid.*, 41.

13. Goldin, 96–101; Leslie T. Topsfield, *Troubadours and Love* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 129–30.

14. Kay, "Love," 285 n.38.

15. Jean-Charles Huchet, *L'Amour discourtois: la "Fin'amors" chez les premiers troubadours* (Toulouse: Privat, 1987), 197.

16. R. Howard Bloch, *Medieval Misogyny and the Invention of Western Romantic Love* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1991), 146–47 and 145.

17. Köhler, "Observations," 51; see also 42–43 on the importance of stanza order in troubadour lyric generally; Goldin, 97.

18. Kay, "Love," 278–79; Huchet, 195–96.

19. Kay, "Love," 281 and 284 n.32; Huchet, 195. See also Kaehne, 2:236–37, for further justification of the order Appel adopts. A number of critics suggest stanza order is

crucial in *Can vei*; for example, see Peter E. Bondanella, "The Theory of the Gothic Lyric and the Case of Bernart de Ventadorn," *Neophilologisches Mitteilungen* 74 (1973): 369–81, and Nathaniel B. Smith, "*Can vei la lauzeta mover*: poet vs. lark," *South Atlantic Bulletin* 40 (1975): 15–22.

20. For example, see Goldin, 101; Huchet, 196; Kaehne, 2:236–37; Kay, "Love," 278; and Köhler, "Observations," 50. For other examples of such echoes, see Jean-Marie-Lucien Dejeanne, ed., *Poésies complètes du troubadour Marcabru* (Toulouse: Privat, 1909), poem 17; Pickens, *Songs*, 5:1.

21. Echoes between the *tornada* and the text need not be with the last stanza. For example, see Appell, *Bernart*, poem 44, ll. 45–48 and 73–76; this in a poem where the stanza order is fixed by the verse form.

22. For details, see Appel, *Bernart*, 249, and Lazar, *Bernard*, 273.

23. Zumthor, 193.

24. Van Vleck, 117–26.

25. See Simon Gaunt, *Gender and Genre in Medieval French Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 152–58, and Van Vleck, 119–21.

26. Van Vleck, 91–121.

27. *Ibid.*, 128.

28. *Ibid.*, 97.

29. See Kay, *Subjectivity*, 2–3. This conflicts with Zumthor's view of medieval lyrics: "l'aspect subjectif de la chanson (le sens du *je* qui la chante) n'a pour nous d'existence que grammaticale" (192), on which see Kay, *Subjectivity*, 5–6.

30. The view of a troubadour in a manuscript is shaped by the songs that are anthologized in it, by the texts of these songs in it, by any *vidas* or *razos* (short prose narrative texts that frame the lyrics in a biography), and by the other troubadours anthologized in the manuscript. The comprehensiveness of modern editions and the fact that they devote a single volume to the work of just one troubadour produce a different view. My view then of the "identity" of troubadour poets differs from many scholars in that I think that taking any given text to be exclusively the work of a named poet, and consequently drawing conclusions about that poet, is highly problematic. My position is also different from Zumthor's (cited in the previous note) in that I think that the view of the poet's identity that emerges from the manuscripts is important to the aesthetic of the medieval lyric. Along with Kay, *Subjectivity*, 1, I take subjectivity to mean "above all the elaboration of a first-person (subject) position in the rhetoric of courtly poetry."

31. Huchet, 44.

32. On "apocryphal" stanzas in Jaufré Rudel's lyrics, see Kay, "Continuation." For an example of substantially "rewritten" stanzas see Dejeanne, *Marcabru*, iv.

33. This is (at least by implication) the view of Pickens, Van Vleck and Zumthor.

34. I take the idea of rhyme as metonymy from Sarah Kay, "Derivation, Derived Rhyme and the Trobairitz," in *The Voice of the Trobairitz: Perspectives on the Women Troubadours*, ed. William D. Paden Jr. (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania University Press, 1989), 158.

35. Interestingly, in line 13 of *ACMU*, read "se" rather than "me" with a consequent change of "se" to "mi," in the following line. See the text of *A*, above.

36. Lines 19, 30, 47, and 51 appear hypermetric, but *A* writes "et" when the conjunction is to be scanned as a separate syllable; see lines 26 and 54. *A*, a thirteenth-century Italian manuscript, is thought to be a "good," even a "hypercorrect" manuscript, that is a manuscript in which the scribe has corrected mistakes in his sources and regularized the texts: the assignment of the letter "A" to this manuscript is in itself a recognition of its relative freedom from error (see Marshall, 9), though not of course a

guarantee of the authenticity of its texts, if by "authenticity" is meant "proximity to that the original author wrote." I have not translated *A*'s text as, despite the different stanza order, the reader can use my translation of Appel's version in conjunction with my discussion of the variants (above).

37. As Kaehne, 2:239, notes, this is the only instance of *femna* in Bernart's surviving corpus. The word may in itself have misogynist overtones. The misogynist gloss to Narcissus here suggests an intriguing parallel to the *Romance of the Rose*, where Guillaume de Lorris famously turns the Narcissus story against women; see Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, *Le Roman de la Rose*, ed. Armand Strubel (Paris: Livre de Poche, 1992), lines 1504–7.

38. See E. Jane Burns, "The Man Behind the Lady in Troubadour Lyric," *Romance Notes* 25 (1985): 254–70; Gaunt, *Gender*, 122–79; and Kay, *Subjectivity*, 95–101.

39. I would like to thank Joan Haahr, Ruth Harvey, Sarah Kay, and Linda Paterson for their helpful comments on a first draft of this article.

Loc Aizi/Anima Mundi: Being, Time, and Desire in the Troubadour Love Lyric

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The earliest use of the Old Occitan expression *loc aizi* occurs in Jaufre Rudel's famous song of distant love, where the lyric "I" wishes that he might see his beloved "truly, in pleasant places ["en locs aizis"] so that the chamber and garden might seem [to him] forever a palace" ("Veraiamen, en locs aizis, / Si qe la cambra e·l jardis / Mi resembles totz temps palatz!").¹ This wish may strike us as extravagant. Seemingly not satisfied with the conventional erotic setting of "cambra" or "jardis"—chamber or garden—the troubadour immediately superimposes a second and metaphorical vision ("totz temps palatz") upon the original true sight ("veraiamen") of the first. In so doing, he ensures the integrity of his distant love, who is removed from the poetic present to the subjunctive similitude of reverie. Equally importantly, having constructed his "pleasant place" from a real garden transfigured as everlasting palace, Jaufre well expresses what I take to be the fundamental nature of the troubadour *loc aizi*. In this unstable threshold place of mutual love, a fragile construct of desire, opposites meet and are for an instant reconciled—near and far, temporal and eternal, self and other, aspirant and ideal, becoming and Being. "Life is not possible without an opening into the transcendent," writes Mircea Eliade:² the *loc aizi* of the troubadour love lyric, a vernacular *locus amoenus* accessible only in dream, vision, or memory, transforms ordinary time and space to connect *sai* and *lai*, abolishing the distance and disproportion separating the lover and the idealized lady of the *canso*.

My discussion of the *loc aizi* in the poetry of three troubadours—Jaufre Rudel (fl. 1125–48), Bernart de Ventadorn (fl. 1150–80), and Raimbaut d'Aurenga (fl. 1144–73)—takes as its starting point Peter