

## Why Bad Things Happen to Good Shepherds: Providence and the Pastoral

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AT THE VERY OUTSET of Miguel de Cervantes's *Galatea* (1585), the reader confronts a poem imbued with the essence of pastoral angst, in that the emotional turmoil of unachieved or unrequited love is not only projected against the perfection of nature, but also set forth in the orderly and harmonious expression of hendecasyllabic verse. An unidentified speaker proclaims:

Mientras que al triste, lamentable acento  
del mal acorde son del canto mío,  
en Eco amarga, de cansado aliento,  
responde el *monte*, el *prado*, el *llano*, el *río*,  
demos al sordo y presuroso viento  
las quejas que del pecho ardiente y frío  
salen a mi pesar, pidiendo en vano  
ayuda al *río*, al *monte*, al *prado*, al *llano*. (165)

Although critics of the stature of José Manuel Blecua (149) and Francisco López Estrada have heard an echo of Garcilaso de la Vega's second eclogue (vv. 1721-22) in this stanza, it is clearly mistaken to conclude that "la Naturaleza armoniza con el estado de ánimo del pastor" (López Estrada 165n3), for the speaker goes on to state that the flowers about him

... son abrojos  
y espinas que en el alma se han entrado;  
no escucha el alto *monte* mis enojos,

y el *llano* de escucharlos se ha cansado;  
 y así, un pequeño alivio al dolor mío  
 no hallo en *monte*, en *llano*, en *prado*, en *rio*. (166)

There is, in short, a tension between the interior conflicts of Cervantes's shepherds and their idyllic setting, between their human nature and the natural world.

To Christian readers of Cervantes's time, this disparity or disconnect would likely be ascribed, not simply to the deleterious effect of hopeless love, but also to the explicitly pagan world of Spanish pastoral fiction, in which, despite allusions to familiar geographic landmarks, religious terms such as *God*, *church*, and *communion* are artificially recodified as *deity*, *temple*, and *holy oblation* (Cervantes, *Galatea* 223). This is, of course, an artistic convention, similar to the pseudo-classical names of the protagonists. The assumption of paganism nevertheless bears directly on the existence of pastoral actors, and indirectly on how their actions are perceived by Christian readers, in that paganism excludes them from the beneficence of God's Providence, on one hand, while, on the other, it absolves them of the obligation that all Catholic Christians have to exercise their free will. The latter was important as a touchstone of Counter-Reformation thought, which made the belief in free will a *sine qua non* of orthodoxy. As Desiderius Erasmus declared in 1524, in opposition to the stand taken by reformers and in particular Martin Luther, free will is essential, for it puts man "in a position to apply himself to, or turn away from, that which leads to eternal salvation" (b2r).<sup>1</sup>

In this assumption of paganism, pastoral fiction deviates from the only seemingly similar bucolic milieux described by moralists such as Francesco Petrarca (*De vita solitaria*, 1346), Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini (*De curialium miseriis*, 1444), Antonio de Guevara (*Menosprecio de corte y alabanza de aldea*, 1539), and Luis de León (*De los nombres de Cristo*, 1583), or even Don Quixote in his discourse on the Golden Age; all of whom infused Horace's *Beatus ille*—his paean to the contentment

1 "Porrò liberum arbitrium hoc loco sentimus, uim humanæ uoluntatis qua se possit homo applicare ad ea quæ perducit ad æternam salutem, aut ab iisdem auertere."

of rural life<sup>2</sup>—with Christian conceits to juxtapose the harmony and goodness of the natural world created by God to the artificiality, vices, annoyances, and deceit of the court and city. The chapter of Luis de León's work entitled "Pastor" is an especially good illustration, in that it not only begins by cataloging the virtues of country life, but moreover focuses on the moral effect that this divine beneficence should inspire in the residents of a pastoral setting. With the defects of civil society clearly in mind, Luis explains:

[L]o primero, la vida pastoril es vida sosegada, y apartada de los ruidos de las ciudades, y de los vicios y deleites dellas; [...] tiene sus deleites, y tanto mayores quanto nacen de cosas más sencillas, y más puras, y más naturales: de la vista del cielo libre, de la pureza del aire, de la figura del campo, del verdor de las yerbas, y de la belleza de las rosas y de las flores; las aves con su canto y las aguas con su frescura le deleitan y sirven. [...] Y a la verdad, los poetas antiguos [...] atendieron mucho a huir de lo lascivo y artificioso de que está lleno el amor que en las ciudades se cría, que tiene poco de verdad y mucho de arte y de torpeza. Mas el [amor] pastoril, como tienen los pastores los ánimos sencillos y no contaminados con vicios, es puro y ordenado a buen fin. [...] Y ayúdales a ello también la vista desembarazada, de que contino gozan, del cielo, y de la tierra, y de los demás elementos. Que es ella en sí una imagen clara, o por mejor decir, una como escuela de amor puro y verdadero, porque los demuestra a todos amistados entre sí y puestos en orden, y abrazados, como si dijésemos, unos con otros, y concertados con armonía grandísima. (81-83)

From this beginning, Luis does not follow Guevara in extolling the political and social benefits of a community ruled by rural values, but instead sets forth an inward morality in which human nature and the natural or (as he calls it) pastoral world are both informed by "el

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2 Horace n. pag.: "Beatvs ille, qui procul negotiis, / ut prisca gens mortalium, / paterna rura bubus exercet suis. / solutus omni faenore, / neque excitatur classico miles truci, / neque horret iratum mare, / forumque vitat et superba civium / potentiorum limina" (Epodon II, 1-8).

proprio gobernar de Cristo [...] y la fuerza eficaz de su espíritu. [...] Porque la gracia de Cristo es vida del alma, y salud de la voluntad” (88). Bending the philosophy of Epictetus the Stoic to his own Christian purpose, Luis therefore avers that, even as man is disposed to goodness with Christ as his shepherd, he is obliged to avail himself of his own free will in the pursuit of happiness. He states:

[P]or cuanto la buena suerte del hombre consiste en el buen uso de aquellas obras y cosas de que es señor enteramente, todas las cuales obras y cosas tiene el hombre dentro de sí mismo y debajo de su gobierno, sin respeto a fuerza exterior, por eso el regir y el apacentar al hombre es el hacer que use bien desto que es suyo y que tiene encerrado en sí mismo. Y así Dios con justa causa pone a Cristo, que es su pastor, en medio de las entrañas del hombre, para que, poderoso sobre ellas, guíe sus opiniones, sus juicios, sus apetitos y deseos al bien, con que se alimente y cobre siempre mayores fuerzas el alma, y se cumpla desta manera lo que el mismo Profeta dice: “que serán apacentados en todos los mejores pastos de su tierra propia,” esto es, en aquello que es pura y propiamente buena suerte y buena dicha del hombre. (94-95)

I have elsewhere discussed the analysis made in regard to Jorge de Montemayor's *Diana* (1559) by the priest and barber in their examination of Don Quixote's library, and the priest's suggestion that *La Diana's* faults could be put right were one to delete “todo aquello que trata de la sabia Felicia y de la agua encantada” (Cervantes, *Don Quijote* 1.6:92). These words do not remit, as is commonly supposed, to the problem of verisimilitude, but instead to the impropriety vis-à-vis Christian moral doctrine of the notion that the internal conflicts of human actors might be remedied by an external agent, here in the guise of the wisewoman Felicia and her marvelous elixir, which, we are told, “sabe desatar los ñudos que este peruerso del amor haze” (Montemayor 132r; Boruchoff, “Free Will” 130-32).

This supernatural solution was repudiated, albeit awkwardly, by Felicia herself in a long and explicitly didactic speech, replete with con-

ceits from homiletic literature on free will, in *Diana enamorada* (1564), Gaspar Gil Polo's sequel to Montemayor's novel:

[O]s veo contentos con la possessiõ de los bienes desseados. Pero vna cosa quiero aduertir, que vuestros passados tormentos, a vosotros y a quantos dellos tẽdrã noticia, han de seruir de liciõ, para quedar auisados de biuir con mas cordura, por escusar los inconueniẽtes en que tantos años os haueys hallado. Y aũque en los remedios que yo a todos os di, mostrẽ claramente mi saber, y publiquẽ mi nõbre, tuuiera por mejor que vosotros huuiessedes biuido con tanta discrecion, que no tuuierades necessidad de mis fauores. Porque mas estimara yo buestra salud que mi fama, y a vosotros os fuera mas conueniente dexar de caer en vuestros engaños y penas, que despues de caydos, ser con mi mano leuantados. [...] No tengays de hoy mas atreuimiento de abalançaros a semejantes trances, con esperanças de ser remediados como agora lo fuystes, que no teneytã razõ de estar confiados por la salud q[ue] a vosotros se os dio, como temerosos por los desastres que a muchos enamorados acontecieron. [...] Diran me los amadores, que no està en su mano dexar de ser vẽcidos d[e] cupido, y andar hechos sus esclauos. A mi me parece q[ue] quiẽ le sirue, se le obliga, y somete de propria voluntad: pues no hay animo que de su libertad no sea señor. Por dõde tengo por cierto que este Cupido (si algo es) sera el desenfrenado apetito, y porque deste tan ordinariamente queda vencida la razõ, se dize que los hombres del amor quedan vencidos.... [Y] en fin vna afficion, que por mas que quien la tiene procura de escusarse y defendella, ha de ser reprouada por los libres entendimientos, y desechada de las honestas voluntades. (147v-49r)<sup>3</sup>

The ideas of fatalism and passivity were also, and more subtly, addressed by interpolating the novel of *El Abencerraje* into later editions of *La Diana*, beginning with that published by Francisco Fernández de Córdoba in 1561 or 1562. Indeed, given that *El Abencerraje* is re-

3 This speech is strangely and unfortunately missing from subsequent editions of *Diana enamorada*.

cited to the various protagonists of *La Diana* as they await a remedy to their misfortune in love, the significance of Narváez's iconic statement—"quiero que ues que puede mas mi uirtud que tu mala fortuna" (*Abencerraje*, in Montemayor 124r)—could hardly be lost on the actors of Montemayor's novel, to say nothing of its readers as well (see Boruchoff, "*El Abencerraje*"). It is therefore not by chance that in both *La Diana* and *La Galatea* the only actors who take it upon themselves to work out a solution to their woes are Christian and noble. It is also no accident that, in both cases, introspection, reason, rhetoric, and will are the principal means of their redemption.

In *La Diana*, Felismena confronts her unfaithful lover, don Felis, with the damage occasioned by his actions, stating that, where once she was respected at home, she is now "desterrada de su tierra y de su libertad, por auer tu querido vsar de la tuya" (169r). Then citing the disorder and dislocation brought about by this betrayal, Felismena drives home the injustice of her plight by presenting Felis with a more unjust and clearly unacceptable proposal: "Ya no me queda mas que hazer, sino es sacrificar la uida a tu desamor, si te parece que deuo hazello y que tu no te as de acordar delo mucho que te he querido y quiero[;] la espada tienes en la mano, no quieras que otro tome en mi la vengança delo que te merezco" (169r-v). These words have their proper effect, not only upon the reader, but upon don Felis, whose heart, we are told, "se le cubrio, de ver las sin razones que con ella auia vsado" (169v). Don Felis is brought to confront his errors, yet we are robbed of a morally appropriate conclusion; for, rather than acting on his obligations, Felis passively drinks the potion delivered to him at this very moment by one of Felicia's nymphs. He is left not only carefree, but "tan sano delas heridas [...] que amor a causa dela señora Celia [Felismena's rival] le auia dado, que no sintio mas la pena que [...] le podian causar, que si nunca las uuiera tenido" (170r). As a result, although Felismena attains the outcome for which she has labored, her happiness does not derive, as it ought, from understanding and free will. To be sure, it is instead forgetfulness that resolves internal conflict in *La Diana*.<sup>4</sup>

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4 The casting of memory as the source of discontent, and of forgetfulness as its cure, is especially prominent in the story of Sireno. Soon after Montemayor's narrator explains that

In contrast, in Cervantes's *Galatea*, no such supernatural occurrence mars the one episode in which, instead of bemoaning the injustice of Fate and Fortune, an actor takes it upon herself to think out and enact a solution to her own predicament. I am referring, of course, to Rosaura, who, spurning honor and convention, chases after her lover, Grisaldo, so as to oblige him to respect his promise of marriage. With a series of verbs that connote the intensity of her thought and will, she concisely explains: "Considerando [...] que si mi remedio se dilataba había de dejar por fuerza en las manos del dolor la vida, determiné de aventurar a perder lo menos, que a mi parecer era la fama, por ganar lo más, que es a Grisaldo" (395). Following in the footsteps of Montemayor's Felismena, Rosaura calls to mind the disorder brought to her existence by Grisaldo's perfidy, and then demands that he reflect upon his deeds, so that he might repent and make amends:

Considera, ingrato y desamorado, que la que apenas en su casa y con sus criadas sabía mover el paso, agora por tu causa anda de valle en valle y de sierra en sierra con tanta soledad buscando tu compañía. [...] Considera, Grisaldo, que en nobleza no te debo nada, y que en riqueza no te soy desigual, y que te aventajo en la bondad del ánimo y en la firmeza de la fe. Cúmpleme, señor, la que me diste, si te precias de caballero y no te desprecias de cristiano. (384, 386)<sup>5</sup>

Like so many other of Cervantes's heroines, Rosaura argues her cause with an eloquence and command of logic patently superior to those of most men in Cervantes's fiction, only to end with a dramatic

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"la memoria de un buen estado causa soledad al que le ha perdido," Sireno sings: "Pasados contentamientos / Qué queréis? / Dexadme, no me canseis. // Memoria, . . . / dexadme, no me canseis" (155r-v).

<sup>5</sup> This is the only occasion in the whole of *La Galatea* where the word *cristiano* is used in a moral sense. It also appears several times in quick succession in Timbrio's account of his adventures at sea, but simply to designate those who are Christian by accident of birth, and thus distinct from their Muslim captors. There is nothing identifiably Christian in their actions. For example: "los mesmos turcos rogaban a los cristianos que iban al remo cautivos que invocasen y llamasen a sus santos y a su Cristo para que de tal desventura los librase" (496).

gesture in order to force the hand of her interlocutor. Having made her point, at least in the reader's eyes, she states: "Y porque claro conozcas y veas que la que perdió por ti su honestidad[,] y puso en detrimento su honra[,] tendrá en poco perder la vida, este agudo puñal que aquí traigo pondrá en efecto mi desesperado y honroso intento, y será testigo de la crueldad que en ese tu fementido pecho encierras" (389). Her lover's response is exactly what don Felis's was not: it is a lucid and willful expression of conscience, in conformity with the expectations of Christian moral philosophy. Snatching away the dagger with which Rosaura seemingly intended to end her life, Grisaldo humbly accedes to the truth of her words: "quiero que mi padre falte antes la palabra que por mí a Leopersia tiene dada, que faltar yo un punto a lo que conozco que te debo" (389).

Although the story of Rosaura and Grisaldo does not, in fact, end happily—due to Rosaura's abduction by another suitor—it nevertheless imparts an essential lesson on the need to set moral above social values, and thus offers a stark contrast to the experience of the other nobles and shepherds in Cervantes's novel. It is the ideal example against which common practice is to be measured. As well, by calling attention to the efficacy of reason and rhetoric in the attainment of what one not only desires, but deserves, it anticipates the more successful agency of Marcela and especially Dorotea in part one of *Don Quijote*.

Due to the continual intertwining of lives and loves in *La Galatea*, the uniqueness of Rosaura's example is difficult to miss, especially as the reader comes to comprehend it through Teolinda's eyes and commentary. Indeed, it is brought into focus by the disparity of Teolinda's experience, epitomized by her resignation to the dictates of Fortune, on one hand, and by conformity to those of society and honor, on the other. From her first words, Teolinda makes known her passivity, if not her conventionality, with a series of worn-out *topoi*, exclaiming: "¡Ay, tristes ojos, causadores de mi perdición, y en qué fuerte punto os alcé para tan gran caída! ¡Ay, Fortuna, enemiga de mi descanso, con cuánta velocidad me derribaste de la cumbre de mis contentos al abismo de la miseria en que me hallo!" (210). If, in conjunction with other complaints, such assertions leave no doubt as to the amorous cause of



Teolinda's despair, so, too, do they alert the discerning reader to the fact that she herself is greatly to blame; for she goes on to aver that her intellect and will are impotent to direct the course of her own existence. Thus putting herself at variance with Counter-Reformation doctrine, she asserts as a preface to her life story: "yo estoy bien cierta que sobrepujan tanto mis males a mi discreción cuanto de ellos es vendida toda mi habilidad, pues no tengo ninguna para saber remediarlos" (213). Teolinda then makes known her compliance with social conventions by means of an anecdote in which—in response to the heartbreak of Lidia, another shepherdess—she insists that she advised her: "Mejor harías de tener cuenta con tu honra y con lo que conviene al pasto de tus ovejas, y no entremeterte en estas burlerías de amor, pues no se saca de ellas, según veo, sino menoscabo de nuestras honras y sosiego" (217).

In what follows, Teolinda does not so much avoid the experience of honest love, but instead presumes to hide this love from her friends and family for the sake of honor, at one point telling her suitor, Artidoro, that "[e]n los estados de amor / nadie llega a ser perfeto, / sino el honesto y secreto" (239).<sup>6</sup> This concern for appearances costs Teolinda her happiness when—rather than confess her feelings for Artidoro to her sister, Leonarda, who has directly challenged her do so by saying "No sé, hermana mía, lo que piense de tu honestidad" (242)—she invents a socially expedient excuse, only to learn that Artidoro has forsaken her because of the hurt caused by her deceit. Although Teolinda's preoccupation with what others might think eventually cedes to her inward desires and considerations,<sup>7</sup> so that, as she rather too easily explains, "yo quedé tal que, sin acordarme de lo que a mi honra debía, propuse de desamparar la cara patria, amados padres y queridos hermanos, y dejar con la guardia de sí mismo al simple ganado mío" (248), this decision does not lead to action, but, on the contrary, only to a litany

6 These verses are glossed in the villancico that follows.

7 Before this change occurs, Teolinda makes known the contours of her obsession with honor, recounting, for example: "¡Cuántas veces, viendo que no le hallaba, quise con mi voz herir el aire, llamando el amado nombre de mi Artidoro, y decir: 'Ven, bien mío, que yo soy la verdadera Teolinda, que más que a sí te quiere y ama,' sino que el temor que de otro que de él fuesen mis palabras oídas, me hizo tener más silencio del que quisiera" (245).

of alternately despairing or hopeful pleas that Fortune might finally concede her wishes. This, of course, does not happen.

If the lives of *La Galatea's* nonpastoral actors end more happily, this is surely not due to their own efforts. One would, indeed, be hard pressed to find a more abulic pair of noblemen than Silerio and Timbrio, from the city of Jerez. (I am intentionally leaving out Nísida and Blanca because the story is that of two men who would willingly give up their lives and loves to honor their friendship.) Silerio and Timbrio are saved, not once, but on four separate occasions, by the miraculous intercession of Turkish invaders, a great storm at sea, Moorish corsairs, and, finally, a second tempest. In each case, a series of decidedly Christian references makes it obvious that this is not mere Fate or Fortune, but instead an act of divine Providence, as Timbrio indeed explains in concluding that “el Cielo [...] con tantas ventajas ha dado remedio a nuestras calamidades” (498).

It is not usual to think of Cervantes as a moralist, even in the broadest sense of the term. Yet, in his dissection of pastoral fiction in *La Galatea*, he continually points to how one ought to confront and combat the inner turmoil of life's misfortunes. And in this, free will and reason are indispensable. For, in the absence of Christian Providence, bad things do happen to good shepherds.

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