
Dorotea, or The Narrators' Arts

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Everyone is the hero of his or her own novel, and his or her redemption is dependent on finding the right novel. The basic theme of art and life is thus infused into the ever-shifting configurations of love and personality.

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It will be no surprise to state that the 1605 Quijote contains intercalated narratives which many readers tend to consider as "pre-texts," works conceived earlier and then presented much in the same fashion as the reading of *El curioso impertinente*. Is each one indeed only a *corpus* waiting to be given life by the history of Don Quijote? Merely a tag-on? The tale of Grisóstomo and Marcela seems not to be because of the various voices in its piecemeal unfolding, and of course our hero intervenes at the end. But the tale of Ruy Pérez de Viedma and Zoraida, despite its contrived interruption; Eugenio's relation of Leandra's infatuation for the showy and boastful Vicente de la Rosa with whom she flees from her more reputable suitors; the ingenuous Doña Clara's apprehensive description to Dorotea of Don Luis's love for her and of his persistence; Cardenio's twice-begun tale of his love for Luscinda blighted by his own cowardice: it is easy to

consider these as separate creations brought forth by Cervantes at a particularly convenient point in the romance. And this view is probably appropriate for some or all of these.

But what of Dorotea's narrative? Does it stand alone or is it an integral part of the history? There is the claim that the tangled web of the four lovers, Dorotea and Fernando, Luscinda and Cardenio, is, despite the eventual implication of Don Quijote, "a complete and detachable *novela*" (Riley 80). On the other hand there is the belief that the quadrangular imbroglio "apenas puede considerarse como episodio" (Madariaga 68). These conflicting perceptions could be multiplied, but I propose that, as we read/hear Dorotea's explanation of how she came to be found dressed in man's garb and alone in the Sierra Morena, we must look at the context of her narrative, and more particularly the audience; in this manner we will become aware of what is the artful and "spontaneous" tale of a personal reality, a spur-of-the-moment but purposeful (mis)representation of sorts, grounded in the world of the *Quijote* and of the inhabitants of that unnamed *lugar*. More specifically, I believe that Dorotea provides an example of how its author/spinner may intentionally make a narrative something rather short of the truth while at the same time providing, within the flow of the tale, clues which the perceptive reader or listener may use to see things more "objectively." Francisco Márquez Villanueva has described this process: "Unas veces es la misma Dorotea quien dice sin decir, con perfecto cálculo, muchas cosas que la modestia y buenas apariencias la obligan a callar. Pero en muchos otros casos, con juego aún más refinado por parte de Cervantes, es ella quien se traiciona, quien nos dice a su pesar lo que desearía que pasase oculto, permitiéndonos el atisbo de su limitación humana, de sus pecadillos y debilidades, secreto no menos sabroso que el de sus perfecciones y virtudes" (1975 25–26). In the pages to follow I intend to show how Cervantes with his art or "juego aún más refinado" has prompted Dorotea with her art or "perfecto cálculo" to craft such a narrative completely aware of her audience.¹

¹ By now the reader may have suspected—correctly—that I subscribe to Gonzalo Torrente Ballester's principle of *realidad suficiente, credibilidad*, "la necesidad que experimenta el lector de [tener por verdadero] lo que narra o describe en tanto dura la lectura: no es menester una profundización excesiva para percatarse de que se trata de una actitud [lúdica]" (46), with appropriate stress on the final adjective. For further justification of my approach I also rely on Francisco Márquez Villanueva: "El cervantista no puede dar su primer paso sin estar muy percatado de hallarse ante una

Hers is, at first reading or listening, the familiar story of a very beautiful young woman pursued, seduced and ultimately abandoned by a lustful man of higher rank. The *pundonor* appears to figure importantly as reason for her energetic search for the raptor as well as for her flight from society. It would be most difficult to fight the temptation to feel sympathy and compassion for this abused creature. The circumstance of any narration is important, however, and must be kept in mind; in this instance the tale has an audience which could—did, I shall maintain—have its profound effect on the manner of its presentation.

Chapter 27, the last in the third of the original division into four parts, ends with the finishing of Cardenio's story to the priest and barber; the former is about to console him when "le suspendió una voz que llegó a sus oídos, que en lastimados acentos oyeron que decía lo que se dirá en la cuarta parte desta narración, que en este punto dio fin a la tercera el sabio y atentado historiador Cide Hamete Benengeli" (I: 27, 341).² The final paragraph of the chapter is thus given at least some distinction by its placement; a moment of suspense is then created when at the beginning of chapter 28 the text turns aside to give high praise for Don Quijote's "tan honrosa determinación" which allows the reader to enjoy now, "en esta nuestra edad, necesitada de alegres entretenimientos, no sólo de la dulzura de su verdadera historia, sino de los cuentos y episodios della, que, en parte, no son menos agradables y artificiosos y verdaderos que la misma historia" (I: 28, 343). These fulsome words and the emphases on truth, pleasure and literary artifice should put us on our guard³ just before we are allowed to hear those same "tristes acentos" (I: 28, 343).

tupida red de intenciones que, al cruzarse y recruzarse, anulándose acá y acentuándose allá, producen el milagro de una expresión, de una comunicación integral. El Cervantes de los buenos momentos levanta vastos tinglados de claves sutiles que se vuelven tanto más reveladoras por el hecho mismo de no ser explícitas, de estar allí para que sea el lector quien las desentraña con su comprensión humana y su sensibilidad poética, incorporándose por ese atajo a la esencia misma del proceso creador" (1967, 149).

² I use John J. Allen's two-volume edition of the *Quijote* (Madrid: Cátedra, 1988) and identify quotations, as here, by part/volume: chapter, page.

³ "La asección es contradictoria y paradójica: las historias y episodios—¿ficticios?, ya que se contraponen a la verdadera historia—son, sin embargo, *en parte*, tan verdaderos como ella. La *verdad* se logra mediante el *artificio* del arte de narrar y no porque lo narrado se origine en la realidad histórica. Lo inventado, como lo histórico, puede ser *verdad* a través del *artificio*, el cual nos vuelve *placentera y agradable* la fábula, por pre-

The three, we learn, hear a plaintive cry of helplessness and despair and then come forth to discover that the "boy" speaking is in fact Dorotea in disguise and alone in the wilds, unusual behavior which prods curiosity and begs explanation; as opposed to the idealized damsels of Don Quijote's *Edad de Oro* speech pronounced earlier, this lass appears "con toda su sexualidad a cuestras," to coin a phrase. The tale of her seduction-by-*clandestine marriage*⁴ and subsequent abandonment clearly seeks exculpation for her irregular enterprise. Her audience is these three men: the unkempt Cardenio, to be seen as a social cipher of sorts and one whose three reactions⁵ to her tale might substantiate suspicions of some stress if not mental imbalance; the barber, a silent presence and certainly not an imposing figure; and the priest Pero Pérez, who by his office might be expected to be understanding, forgiving, and charitable—a confessor, in short. We must forget for the moment how Cervantes characterizes him as a person, "the relatively well-read, unimagi-*native but improvisationally responsive meddler in Don Quijote's affairs*" with a "penchant for histrionics" (Weiger 95–96 and 100), and keep in mind who it is that Dorotea sees, a priest. I believe that it is principally to him that Dorotea describes the trouble she's seen and that from him she would have that exculpation and some assistance which might include advocacy as well, should he be convinced of her aggrieved innocence. Therefore—"ante todo, lista" (Madariaga 71)—she will embellish her story to emphasize the theme of victimization even though at times she does describe her pleasure at being courted and makes no pretense about her continuing awareness of Fernando's "lascivo apetito, que este nombre quiero dar a la voluntad que me mostraba . . ." (I: 28, 348–49).

sentarla con verosimilitud" (Percas de Ponseti I, 139–40). It is just this game of truth and art, a sort of autobiographical bait-and-switch, that I shall examine in an attempt to mine "la ilimitada riqueza del arte cervantino, gema de incontables facetas y que destella inéditos fulgores al cambiar, aun en grado mínimo, nuestro ángulo de visión" (Márquez Villanueva 1975, 25).

⁴ I find it impossible to accept Jehenson's parenthesis in this statement: "At the crucial moment she is seduced (raped?) not only by Don Fernando but by her own social desire . . ." (216).

⁵ "Cada interrupción le sirve a Cervantes para incorporar el relato a los oyentes de una manera vital" (Casalduero 142); they also very much remind us of the fact of an audience, of the context which includes Cardenio's tribulations.

To pass by Dorotea with mere mention of her as a "seduced farmer's daughter" (Close 36) is almost dismissive. She is more accurately characterized as appearing "as the injured, cast-off woman in distress, yet the fact of her being here in Sierra Morena means that she has the force to defend herself and the presence of mind to seek for herself the remedy of her suffering" (Murillo 90); her narrative "is direct, more honestly that of an introspective sentimental heroine and reveals the impulsive as well as the calculating and rationalist qualities that make up her 'discretion'" (Murillo 89–90). Márquez Villanueva also refers to these qualities, her "clara inteligencia, la fría capacidad analítica que no la abandonan en momentos de apuro ni aun en sus arrebatos de pasión, gracias a lo cual permanece siempre muy dueña de sí misma" (1967, 149)—and mistress of her words, I must add. Héctor Márquez writes that in her flight and disguises "se muestra muy adaptable" (116); "se puede afirmar que Dorotea no es solamente la más hermosa y sensual de las mujeres de la novela sino también la que muestra la mayor independencia y libertad de pensamiento" (117).

Salvador A. Fajardo has taken great pains to show how the opening of the Dorotea tableau (his word, and perhaps more meaningful that he suspected) is carefully infused with sensuality (stressed by Carroll B. Johnson [118–19]) which leads to voyeurism, but he has overlooked two details in the opening moments: that ending of chapter 27 and the beginning of chapter 28, and one important word in her lament. For the very reason that there is a thematic interruption of the flow of text in order to praise the caliber and veracity of the history before us, as well as a physical one, the dividing line between parts three and four and, in the 1605 printing, passing overleaf from folio 148 recto to verso, it might be easy to overlook the textual insistence that the three men hear Dorotea: for the priest "le suspendió una voz que llegó a sus oídos, que en lastimosos acentos oyeron" (I: 27, 341) and that then "una voz llegó a sus oídos" for all to hear the phrase "¡Ay, desdichada!" (I, 28: 343).⁶ Surely

⁶ Gayton rather enhances the attractiveness of the voice and the suspense imposed by the structure: the fourth reason adduced for the curate's silence at the end of Cardenio's tale is "another extraordinary pleasant voice, drew them all by the ears unto it. It was so ravishing a voice, that it was able to compose the troubled soule of Cardenio; who weary with the sad relation of his own Story, is now at leisure to heare this, which that it may gaine all its grace, the Author places us a roome off from the Musick,

the feminine singular in the self-reference would lead the men to expect to find a woman, this same *desdichada* in fact, a few steps away. To this extent, then, Dorotea is partially "unveiled" in one important, even decisive manner before the vestimentary uncovering with its erotic details. Thus, although "all the verbs describing the actions of the three men refer 1) to sight or emotions elicited by sight; 2) to hiding, or furtive behavior" (Fajardo 93), the initial stimulus for reaction and action must have been her heart-rending "¡Ay, desdichada!"⁷; to observe a *mozo* intensifies curiosity before the view of alabaster feet. In other words, voyeurism is prompted a moment or so before Fajardo's perception of the initial arousal: "It seems evident that the curate's and his companions' curiosity was aroused because they anticipated that such feet belied the appearance of their owner and that in fact they were looking at a woman" (93).

It is Pero Pérez's call which halts her attempt to rise up after she stumbles in her flight, her soft feet pained by the streamside pebbles, and it is he who asks to hear her reasons and offers aid: "Así que, señora mía, o señor mío, o lo que vos quisierdes ser, perded el sobresalto que nuestra vista os ha causado y contadnos vuestra buena o mala suerte; que en nosotros juntos, o en cada uno, hallaréis quien [could he mean himself alone?] os ayude a sentir vuestras desgracias" (I: 28, 345). Casaldüero comments: "A pesar del traje plebeyo, el Cura se dirige a ella llamándola señora; tan persuasiva ha sido la blancura contemplada" (141). I believe the text does allow us to presume some desire by the priest not only to calm but also to please this ambiguous creature: those who have witnessed the unveiling of this beauty (we are included, as Fajardo has shown) would feel a natural inclination to benevolence at the least. Edmund Gayton went a bit further: "Mr Curat [sic] had no Crosse-worke against this sight, it drove him not to his Pater-nosters, nor his Beads; but the most magnetick piece wrought vertyually upon him, and so strongly, that he could no longer be at so remote a distance, but was for a contactus, which is more naturall; and if matters hit right for a

and only in this Booke, gives us the echo and falling tunes; but in the next you shall have the fulnesse of the melody, the Beautie of the person, which he sufficiently invites us to, while he raises in us appetite, which will not be satisfied without tasting" (167-68).

⁷ Casaldüero misquotes the key word as "¡Ay desdicha!" (140); on the basis of my interpretation the adjective is rendered somewhat inexact in his later reference to "la sorprendente aparición de la mujer" (141).

contactus, which is more spirituall as to the Ecclesiastical Court; but *nos inter nos* very Carnall" (170 [misnumbered 180]-71).

Dorotea's rather lengthy answer states her obligation to satisfy the request "puesto que temo que la relación que os hiciere de mis desdichas [the priest's use of "desgracias" is confirmed immediately] os ha de causar, al par de la *compasión*, la pesadumbre, porque no habéis de hallar *remedio* para remediarlas ni *consuelo* para entretenerlas" (I: 28, 346, my emphases). Demurely she covers her feet and gathers her hair, and, "sin hacerse más de rogar . . . , se acomodó en el asiento de una piedra, y, puestos los tres alrededor della [at her feet?], haciéndose fuerza por detener algunas lágrimas que a los ojos se le venían, con voz reposada y clara comenzó la historia de su vida . . ." (I: 28, 346). Storyteller with modulated tones, audience entranced if not enchanted, and one of the three seems to promise succor: let the tale begin (more tears will flow at the appropriate moments, certain to maintain sympathy⁸).

Héctor P. Márquez maintains that Dorotea is in some danger: "Debe recordarse que el cura y el barbero andaban disfrazados también y que los acompañaba Cardenio, un loco de remate; de manera que formaban un grupo harto sospechoso" (121). We recall the gypsy Preciosa's advice to Cristina that "'de lo que te has de guardar, es de un hombre solo y a solas, y no de tantos juntos; porque antes el ser muchos quita el miedo y el recelo de ser ofendidas. . . . Verdad es que es bueno huir de las ocasiones; pero han de ser de las secretas, y no de las públicas'" (*La gitana* 107). Dorotea's recent experiences with her servant and later with her employer, both sexually charged encounters one-on-one requiring an energetic physical defense on the one hand and flight on the other, are proof of the aptness of the first piece of advice, and meeting several men here in the wilds of the Sierra Morena must certainly qualify as a most menacing *ocasión secreta*. Obviously she should have no great cause to trust this trio who confront her so suddenly, therefore we must ask ourselves what so quickly assures her of safety?

⁸ To defend presuming actions to accompany the words, I cite a priestly precedent of Cervantes's own time: "En este verso [of his fourth penitential psalm] David pone por obra lo que en el pasado dixo de si mismo. Allí afirmó que conocia su pecado, y le confessaua: y por mostrarlo en la obra, entra agora acusando[s]e delante de Dios, (y quizá dandose en los pechos golpes) [. . .]" (Vega fol 124v).

Has the priest indeed donned his disguise as an *escudero* to the barber's *doncella menesterosa*—"andaban disfrazados"? Sancho has led the two neighbors and Cardenio back to where he had left "las señales de las ramas para acertar el lugar donde había dejado a su señor; y, en reconociéndole, les dijo como aquella era la entrada, y que bien se podían vestir, si era que aquello hacía al caso para la libertad de su señor" (I: 27, 327). The history then informs us that they had told Sancho of their plan, but we need not wonder for long if they disguised themselves; to the contrary, the text seems to state that they did not: "les dijo [Sancho] que sería bien que él fuese delante a buscarle [Don Quijote] y darle la respuesta de su señora [Dulcinea]; que ya sería ella bastante a sacarle de aquel lugar, sin que ellos se pusiesen en tanto trabajo [which I take to be dressing as planned]. Parecióles bien lo que Sancho Panza decía, y así, determinaron de aguardarle, hasta que volviese con las nuevas del hallazgo de su amo" (I: 27, 328). The priest, then, is recognizable as such,⁹ and Dorotea therefore might well believe that she has every reason to feel secure.

Her story is well known, thus many of its details need no iteration, but we must review the tone and manner, and its internal and external contradictions. The narrative begins with what appears to be a prosaic socioeconomic placement of the principal characters: the pursuer the *segundón* of a duke, and Dorotea's family as untitled countryfolk, "gente llana, sin mezcla de alguna raza mal sonante, y, como suele decirse, cristianos viejos ranciosos; pero tan ricos, que su riqueza y magnífico trato les va poco a poco adquiriendo nombre de hidalgos, y aun de caballeros" (I: 28, 346); by virtue of her beauty Dorotea becomes the link. That she is a "take-charge" sort of woman is inferred from the description of her supervisory duties in the large farming establishment of her parents; "she describes herself as the model daughter of model parents, an 'executive' 'labradora en su rincón' and potential 'perfecta casada'" (Templin 49).

This is the background against which her personal, intimate character is to be portrayed—and it will be a portrait, not the real thing, this to be belied by the rhetorical flourishes and at least one forthright lie. We are to believe—the priest is to

⁹ As such he is portrayed, for example, by the artist Joseph Castillo and the engraver J. Joaquín Fabregat in the 1780 Real Academia Española edition of the *Quijote* (*Ilustraciones* n. p.).

believe—that she is the very model of a modern well-off demoi-selle. In her free moments—" 'Los ratos que del día me quedaban' " seems to connote infrequent moments of relaxation—" 'los entretenía en ejercicios que son a las doncellas tan lícitos como necesarios, como son los que ofrece la aguja y la almohadilla, la rueca muchas veces; y si alguna, por recrear el ánimo, estos ejercicios dejaba [even more infrequent, we must deduce], me acogía al entretenimiento de leer algún libro devoto, o tocar una arpa. . . .'"¹⁰ It is this sort of life which is offered " 'porque se advierta cuán sin culpa me he venido de aquel buen estado que he dicho al infelice en que ahora me hallo' " (I:28,347): forgive me, father, for I have fallen far.¹¹ It is proper to note here that, as Fajardo states it, "As she pursues her story, we notice that she describes herself not in terms of what she *is*, but in terms of how others see her, her parents in particular" (10), his emphasis); this is, I maintain, corollary to her desire to be seen in very particular terms by the one individual whom she perceives as her probable abetter.

Were we to go forward with an image of victimization in mind as a sexual calamity attends her, surely her plight were most sorrowful, but of course there are moments when even the careless reader may be caught up short about the frail innocence thus projected, as when, in her rationalist mode and firmly in the grasp of the heated and demanding Don Fernando, she ponders her immediate course of action, or reaction: " 'Sí, que no seré yo la primera que por vía de matrimonio haya subido de humilde a grande estado. . . . Pues si no hago ni mundo ni uso nuevo, bien es acudir a esta honra que la suerte me ofrece, puesto que en éste [the pronoun tends to reduce him to instrument or facilitator] no dure más la voluntad que me muestra de

¹⁰ "Dorotea correrá a ahogar entre las cuerdas de su arpa el interior desasosiego que aquellas pasmarotas de libros [of chivalry] nada devotos sólo podían atizar vanamente" (Márquez Villanueva 1975, 28).

¹¹ There is a decided echo of Juan Luis Vives here, from the opening chapters of the first book, "Instrucción de las vírgenes," of his *Libro llamado Instrucción de la mujer cristiana* in Juan Justiniano's 1528 translation from the Latin. I cite two examples: "Aprenderá, pues, la mochacha juntamente letras, hilar y labrar, que son ejercicios muy honestos" (I: 3, 22) and "Pero que lea buenos libros compuestos por santos varones, los cuales pusieron tanta diligencia en enseñar a los otros bien vivir como ellos vivieron, esto me paresce no sólo útil, mas aun necesario" (I: 4, 24). How better to impress a religious than to paraphrase these widely available and highly praised instructions?

cuanto dure el cumplimiento de su deseo, que, en fin, para con Dios seré su esposa" (I:28,351). Dame Fortune's forelock is resolutely grasped and, moments later, she is wed and bedded.¹² This somehow doesn't lie well with all that innocence initially portrayed: lion and lamb? The manner in which she fought off those other similarly inclined "suitors" one-on-one in a solitary countryside certainly undermines her self-proclamation as unknowing and helpless victim, as does the fact that it is she who states that her virginity will not be relinquished except in honor, to "el que fuere mi legítimo esposo" (I: 28, 350), a statement she makes in the Cretan labyrinth of that sprawling household which, she knows not how, Fernando has successfully penetrated.

Much of the reader's confusion about the real Dorotea is resolved in her impersonation of the Princess Micomicona, an acting part which would have been impossible without a thorough grounding in the role of the *doncella menesterosa* of the *libros de caballerías*. No, not much time was spent with books of devotion in that so well-protected bedchamber; as she is about to assume this role, she explains that she should have no problem, "que la dejasen el cargo de saber representar todo aquello que fuese menester para llevar adelante su intento, porque ella había leído muchos libros de caballerías y sabía bien el estilo que tenían las doncellas cuitadas cuando pedían sus dones a los andantes caballeros" (I: 29, 359). Perhaps she has already put such readings to use in her narrative, with the frocked Pero Pérez set in the role of the acquiescing knight-errant.

Those many books could as well have prepared her for the scene of Fernando's insistence. If the twentieth-century reader does not at the time of her narrative know how young women of Cervantes's era reacted to the *libros de caballerías*, an illustration comes soon. The carnally experienced Maritornes likes them for their tender and romantic interludes, "y más cuando cuentan que se está la otra señora debajo de unos naranjos abrazada con su caballero, y que les está una dueña haciéndoles la guarda, muerta de envidia y con mucho sobresalto." Moments later the innkeeper's young daughter tells the inquiring priest that she

¹² She omits any reference to a signed pledge of marriage, though we later learn from her that there is one, as she recalls to Fernando: "quieras o no quieras, yo soy tu esposa; . . . testigo será la firma que hiciste . . ." (I: 36, 443). Had there been no such "oversight" the theme of victimization might have been weakened.

prefers "las lamentaciones que los caballeros hacen cuando están ausentes de sus señoras; que en verdad que algunas veces me hacen llorar, de compasión que les tengo" (I: 32, 389); such a feeling goes beyond whatever innocence might be expected as she comments in response to Dorotea, who may well have earlier experienced the same feelings herself:

"Luego ¿bien las remediárades vos, señora doncella," dijo Dorotea, "si por vos lloraran?"

"No sé lo que me hiciera" respondió la moza; "sólo sé que hay algunas señoras de aquellas tan crueles, que las llaman sus caballeros tigres y leones y otras mil inmundicias. Y, ¡Jesús!, yo no sé qué gente es aquella tan desalmada y tan sin conciencia, que por no mirar a un hombre honrado [or noble?], le dejan que se muera, o que se vuelva loco. Yo no sé para qué es tanto melindre; si lo hacen de honradas, cásense con ellos, que ellos no desean otra cosa."

"Calla, niña," dijo la ventera, "que parece que sabes mucho destas cosas, y no está bien a las doncellas saber ni hablar tanto." (I: 32, 389)

To say that Dorotea "is unused to the language of love" (Fajardo 103) is to ignore the characteristics of the literature she has read, literature which might well have fueled her desires; as Casaldueño states it, "en los libros de caballerías se encuentran aquellos elementos, épico y amoroso, erótico o sentimental, que satisfacen las necesidades espirituales de la época" (153), though not, of course, the physical longings.¹³

The truth about her readings is repeated some few moments later: "No dejó de avisar el cura lo que había de hacer Dorotea, a lo que ella dijo que descuidasen, que todo se haría sin faltar punto, como lo pedían y pintaban los libros de caballerías" (I: 29, 360); obviously not a little time has been spent learning her part. Pero Pérez does not react or respond in any fashion to this revelation, does not point out the apparent inconsistencies in the young lady's choice of sparetime diversions; but of course we should not ask why and just accept the course of events, as we

¹³ Vives knew the danger well: "ya no se leen otros libros sino vulgares, do no hallaréis otra materia sino de armas y de amores, de los cuales libros soy cierto que no había de hablar de lo que se debería hacer dellos, si hablo con cristianos, y que es menester decir cuán gran peste es añadir alquitrán al fuego ardiendo. . . . Hágote saber que no es muy católico el pensamiento de la mujer que se ceba en pensar en las armas y fuerzas de brazos del varón" (I: 5, 29). Of course Dorotea in her narrative would cite only the texts which could help her cause.

must do as the curate later craftily intervenes on behalf of Ruy Pérez de Viedma: "Underlying all of this is a question so elementary that it is never asked: was this charade necessary?" (Weiger 100). The Micomicona *entremés* does have its reason, to return Don Quijote home by means of this "traza engañosa merced a la cual lo ficticio se le presenta [to Don Quijote] como una realidad que captan sus sentidos sin deformarla. Dorotea se ve obligada a inventar toda una fantástica e inverosímil historia, muy al estilo de los libros de caballerías, pero con una intencionada deformación humorística" (Riquer 93).

In fact we never learned what the priest thought of Dorotea's initial narrative. Chapter 29 begins with her final paragraph, a summation and a plea for assistance, no doubt accompanied by an innocent expression and shining eyes, perhaps a luminous and imploring look like that of Murillo's "Magdalena penitente": "Sólo os ruego (lo que con facilidad podréis y debéis hacer) que me aconsejéis dónde podré pasar la vida sin que me acabe el temor y sobresalto que tengo de ser hallada de los que me buscan; que aunque sé que el mucho amor que mis padres me tienen me asegura que seré dellos bien recibida, es tanta la vergüenza que me ocupa sólo al pensar que, no como ellos pensaban, tengo que parecer a su presencia, que tengo por mejor desterrarme para siempre de ser vista que no verles el rostro, con pensamiento que ellos miran el mío ajeno de la honestidad que de mí se debían de tener prometida" (I: 29, 356). She refers to herself as dishonored, but she is (sacramentally) wedded to Fernando. She has weepily portrayed her plight as victim, yet we know from her own words that she chose her course of action, doing so with a logic quite at odds with the heated confrontation of her actively importunate would-be lover. She pleads, but parenthetically points out her hearers—in effect, the curate's—duty to assist. She relies on her parents' loving forgiveness, yet chooses to remain abroad, ashamed of . . . what? On the one hand she states her apprehension about appearing but is assured that she will be welcome once again, on the other she will distance herself because she has lost her chastity, though this is condoned by sacrament invoked in the promise before the holy image. Given the conflictive nature of these final words, how are we then to interpret the narrator's description of her actions?: "Calló en diciendo esto, y el rostro se le cubrió de un color que mostró bien claro el sentimiento y vergüenza del alma. En las suyas sintieron los que escuchado la habían tanta lástima

como admiración [!] de su desgracia; y aunque luego quisiera el cura consolarla y aconsejarla, tomó primero la mano Cardenio . . ." (I: 29, 356), thus preventing our knowing what was the priest's immediate reaction. The advice comes later, after Cardenio has briefly explained his own part in all of this lovers' quadrangle, has pledged to do all in his new-found power to help her, insisting on the fact that he and Luscinda are married (presumably another secret betrothal) as are Dorotea and Fernando: the licentiate "les rogó, aconsejó y persuadió que se fuesen con él a su aldea, donde se podrían reparar de las cosas que les faltaban, y que allí daría orden como buscar a don Fernando, o como llevar Dorotea a sus padres, o hacer lo que más les pareciese conveniente" (I: 29, 358), hardly a clear statement of intent and resolve. Certainly as Princess Micomicona she prompted something more decisive from Don Quijote: "Vamos de aquí, en el nombre de Dios, a favorecer esta gran señora" (I: 29, 363).

We must not forget Cervantes, of course, who created all of this; his "nueva técnica" is also decidedly Dorotea's: "Consiste en poner un poco de todo: un poco de lo verdadero y lo histórico y otro poco de lo fantástico e imaginario, con lo cual da verosimilitud a lo fantástico e imaginario y pone maravilla en lo verdadero e histórico . . ." (Percas Ponseti I, 139–40). Her inventiveness and his is proven in her tale of the misfortunes of Micomicona: "Cardenio y el barbero se le pusieron al lado, deseados de ver cómo fingía su historia la discreta Dorotea" (I: 30, 369), whereupon our two artists weave a chivalric romance with this *técnica*: Dorotea in the style of any number of novelized *menesterosas*. By means of the same (perspectivistic?) narrative art did Dorotea capture the *admiración*, *lástima* and, most importantly, the *voluntad* of the priest (and of Cardenio too, now to be a forceful player in the amorous quaternity, the example of her strength and resolve displacing his cowardice). She has, then, succeeded in her purpose; but if one lie was needed, and no one caught her up in it, might there have been others?

We have been told that she is "una de las más regaladas hijas que padres jamás regalaron" (I: 28, 347) and that these parents, though *labradores*, are "tan ricos que su riqueza y magnífico trato les va poco a poco adquiriendo nombre de hidalgos, y aun de caballeros" (I: 28, 346). Such upward mobility would be perceived only amongst those of their own *estado*, in the medieval understanding of the term; to pretend to higher rank than is one's due incurs scorn—at least—from those already up the

social ladder, as Don Quijote hears later from Sancho: " 'Dicen los caballeros que no querrian que los hidalgos se opusiesen a ellos, especialmente aquellos hidalgos escuderiles que dan humo a los zapatos y toman los puntos de las medias negras con seda verde' " (II: 2, 43). That Dorotea considers herself worthy of higher ranking in society is a sentiment barely hidden in her phrase " 'quizá nace mi poca ventura de la que no tuvieron ellos en no haber nacido ilustres' "—in which case she would have been *socially* attractive for a noble marriage—or in the sentence which follows: " 'Bien es verdad que no son tan bajos que puedan afrentarse de su estado, ni tan altos que a mí me quiten la imaginación que tengo de que de su humildad viene mi desgracia' " (I: 28, 346, my emphasis: Cervantes's doubling of the personal pronoun may be meaningful and not merely stylistic). One perceives an envy of rank which may appear to be tantalizingly near but is in fact unreachable, at least by honorable means; the family may have the material trappings but certainly not the birthright.

Not only is she envious, she is vain; the envy will be eased by the liaison with the handsome *segundón* and by the acceptable consequent social elevation for which she hankers (keenly ironic that it is not the grandee *primogénito* she will wed) as surely as the considerable vanity was pleased by Don Fernando's attentions, and she is careful to note all that music, those letters and gifts. She identified his goal, however, and recognized that her denials had quickened " 'su lascivo apetito' " (I: 28, 348); as the center of control of the *hacienda*, she was also aware that all the servants had been bribed. Therefore, when he appears in that well-surrounded bedchamber, should we believe these claims?: " 'sin saber ni imaginar cómo, en medio destes recatos y prevenciones, y en la soledad deste silencio y encierro, me le hallé delante' ". or " 'Yo, pobrecilla, sola entre los míos, mal ejercitada en casos semejantes [except in book-induced dreamings?], comencé, no sé en qué modo, a tener por verdaderas tantas falsedades, pero no de suerte que me moviesen a compasión menos que buena sus lágrimas y suspiros' " (I: 28, 349, my emphases). I think not. To me all of this ignorance and/or innocence seems feigned, "fantástico e imaginario," part of the performance for an audience of one who might, imagining the scene thus described, forget for the moment that the woman speaking is also the *capataz* of a considerable household, the silence of which could have been broken by her cries or screams, had she

so chosen; the adoration and trust of her parents, upon explanation of the hubbub, would surely have led to forgiveness.

This is not to deny the accuracy of Ruth El Saffar's perception of Dorotea: "As a farmer's daughter [in the sense of *estado* as opposed to Close's emphasis on "seduced"], she has no social standing to support her claims of value; as a seduced woman, she has forfeited her right to a place of honor *in the world*. She is in no-man's land as her story begins—separated from her house and parents, dressed in her servant's clothing, and neither married nor maiden" (69, my emphasis, making the distinction *extra muros*). Indeed it is the search for a way out of the no-man's land, with the expected aid of a man, to find her woman's place, that is the reason for her artful self-description. Not that we are to think that she has always been so dependent: to be scorned after but one more night together, to be abandoned for another, thus is her vanity deeply wounded, her violent reaction barely controlled: " 'Llegó esta triste nueva [of Fernando's "marriage" to Luscinda] a mis oídos, y, en lugar de helármese el corazón en oílla, fue tanta la cólera y rabia que se encendió en él, que faltó poco para salirme por las calles dando voces' " (I: 29, 352). Nieto cautions us: "no nos engañemos con la aparente candidez de Dorotea. Su gesto no es el de una paloma herida, sino el de una leona humillada" (499). And Madariaga seems to recognize that the emotional, not the spiritual, is the seat of her swift anger: "Cuenta bien sus aventuras, con tal dominio del lenguaje y del argumento, que acaba por dar la impresión que sus desdichas no han podido herir muy hondo en su alma" (76).

When at last Don Fernando and Dorotea are about to be reconciled but he is reacting to Cardenio's proprietary embrace of Luscinda, she begs him " 'Tú tienes a tus pies a tu esposa, y la que quieres que lo sea está en los brazos de su marido. . . . Por quien Dios es te ruego, y por quién tú eres te suplico, que este tan notorio desengaño no sólo no acreciente tu ira, sino que la mengüe,' " (I: 36, 445) and that he show his breeding and take her as his legitimate wife. More pleadings and reasonings follow, voiced by all present, but it is Pero Pérez whose words finally convince Fernando: heaven has dictated that Luscinda shall be Cardenio's until death do them part. The priest asks this nobleman " 'que pusiese los ojos asimesmo en la beldad de Dorotea, y vería que pocas o ninguna se le podían igualar, cuanto más hacerle ventaja, y que juntase a su hermosura su humildad y el extremo del amor que le tenía, y, sobre todo, advirtiese que si

se preciaba de caballero y de cristiano, que no podía hacer otra cosa que cumplirle la palabra dada; y que, cumpliéndosela, cumpliría con Dios y satisfaría a las gentes discretas . . . ' " (I: 36, 445-46, my emphases). The promise to be her " 'legítimo esposo' " was fervently couched in the name of religion: " 'ves aquí te doy la mano de serlo tuyo, y sean testigos desta verdad los cielos, a quien ninguna cosa se asconde, y esta imagen de Nuestra Señora que aquí tienes' " (I: 28, 350); Pero Pérez obviously feels that Fernando must be reminded of this as well as of his gentlemanly honor. Had Dorotea the *discreta* not been able to fashion that calculated description of her quandary, perhaps our Manchegan licentiate would not have taken up her cause so willingly.

One might question how she will endure the inevitable barbs of the nobility who know her for an outsider, a *conversa* of a social rather than a religious sort, or how she will accept the role of a submissive helpmeet.¹⁴ One might indeed wonder how long-lasting will be the happy ending that has been achieved in great part by the curate's intervention, but at least for the moment in that magic *castiventa*, Dorotea has it all by virtue of her narrative art—and Cervantes's.

COLGATE UNIVERSITY

¹⁴ "Fictional device though it may be, Don Ferdinand's sudden turn of heart awaits the testing of time, and Dorothea knows it" (Church 39). Perhaps Ferrer-Chivite's comments on Dorotea's reaction to the licentiate's coaching for the role of Micomicona may point to a troubled connubial future: "A la información que el cura ofrece sobre el itinerario a seguir, tras quitarle la palabra a Dorotea, ésta le redarguye desmintiéndole: [Vuestra merced está engañado, señor mío], cuando no hay razón para no aceptar por buena esa información. Pero sí hay otra razón para entender esa desabrida refutación; Dorotea reacciona espontánea y naturalmente ante un personaje meticón, entrometido, claramente dispuesto a convertirse en señor de toda la trama, a no tolerar que nadie se le subordine, a regir la vida de los demás" (730, n. 6). Would not Don Fernando expect to direct the affairs of his household? Could Dorotea learn not to lead but to follow?

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REVIEWS

Nerlich, Michael, and Nicholas Spadaccini, eds. *Cervantes's "Exemplary Novels" and the Adventure of Writing. Hispanic Issues*, 6. Minneapolis: The Prisma Institute, 1989. 363 pp.

This collection of essays, which studies the *Novelas ejemplares* as "intense expressions of philosophical and literary-theoretical expression" (38), brings together a number of European critics and noted American scholars, along with several scholars new to the field, in order to "foreground the analytical, satirical, and dis-integrative features of Cervantes's tales" (346). The volume opens with a lucid exposition, written by Michael Nerlich, of the critical reception of the *novelas*. One of the major contributions of this essay is to remind us of the importance of Walter Pabst's contributions to Cervantine studies. They include his vision of the collection as a maze, the notion that action takes place in a chaotic space and that tranquility is achieved only in a return to the beginning. According to Pabst, the fairytale principle of improbability is destroyed by the last two stories, which form a frame of disillusionment. Nerlich points out that many contemporary critics have ignored or rejected Pabst even though he helped to free critics from neo-Aristotelian generic norms. While Nerlich accuses Forcione of attempting to "domesticate" Pabst's notion of the maze (35), Forcione, in the "Afterword," argues that the collection edited by Nerlich and Spadaccini does not aim at a comprehensive view of the tales in the spirit of Casaldauero or El Saffar. Forcione points out that the essays included tend to favor the satirical *novelas* and those that most clearly subvert the poetics of exemplarity through their religious, political or social criticism. The questions raised by this collection are thus central to the critical future of Cervantes's tales and should be of use to all students of the Spanish Golden Age.

The essay by Anthony Cascardi sets the stage by delving into the nature of exemplarity. This critic starts out by showing how Américo Castro presented a contradictory Cervantes: while the *Novelas ejemplares* illustrate moral truths that are universally valid, the "subjective irony and existential experimentalism" (50) of *Don Quixote*, Part I, show the breakdown of such a vision. For Cascardi, the answer is not to be found either in the hypothesis of the "two Cervantes" or in the division between novel and romance. This critic believes that the dualism is found within the constitution of the sub-