

Barefoot and Fallen: Dorotea, Athena, Cervantes, and Homer

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“Ésta, ya que no es Luscinda, no es persona humana,
sino divina.”

(Don Quijote de la Mancha 1: 28)

“Es todo milagro y misterio el discurso de mi vida.”

(Don Quijote de la Mancha 1: 30)

In the 1995 article “¿Cómo iban a terminar los amoríos de Dorotea y don Fernando?” Roberto M. Flores lays out a systematic devaluation of Dorotea, arguably Cervantes’s most compelling female character. Dorotea, whom Edward Dudley characterizes as “the first heroine of the modern novel” (225) is seen very differently by Flores. According to Flores, she is terribly short of the most prized attribute a female could possess in late-sixteenth-century Spain, namely, “la propia honestidad, la virtud y el recato interiores” (472). In his view, this fatal lack warrants a complete disavowal of any other positive qualities she may exhibit. “La juventud y la gran belleza física” (471)—he asserts—are the only traits she shares with the other female characters that meet at Juan Palomeque’s inn from chapters 32 to 46 of the first part of *Don Quijote*. Yet, as Anne J. Cruz and others have noted, “the long, intricately detailed development of Dorotea’s story [. . .] calls attention to the differences between other women’s lives and her own” (15). For Cruz, Dorotea is rightfully different from the other characters, but only insofar as she is an immensely layered, complex, and developed character. Flores, however, appears to be insensitive to this argument. According to him, Dorotea’s pretty face is the only common characteristic that binds her to Luscinda, Zoraida, and Doña Clara. So strong is Flores’s condemnation of Dorotea that he allows himself to indulge in a grisly sketch of her future after the departure from the inn. He imagines her

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raped by Don Fernando, abandoned, and then forcibly cloistered in a monastery by her parents because, as he reasons:

Si don Fernando faltó a su palabra una vez, y esto cuando él y toda la gente de la comarca tenían a Dorotea por “recatada, discreta y honesta”, ¿qué le va a impedir ahora volver a abusar de la labradora en el camino de regreso, y abandonarla después a que siga sus aventuras en el monte? (463)

Sexually assaulted early on by a powerful nobleman in the confines of her own home, Dorotea would be an easy and even legitimate target much later in the novel, somewhere along the road back home, according to Flores. Although he omits depicting crucial scenes such as how and when Dorotea’s parents find her, beaten and raped, and why they choose to commit her to a monastery, it appears that Flores has visualized the events and even some of her further “aventuras en el monte.”

Although this regrettably misogynistic piece serves more as an illustration of the conservatism and prudery so prevalent in traditional Siglo de Oro studies, it contains some useful observations that, I hope, will allow me to transition into the subject matter of my article. If, as Carolyn A. Nadeau has suggested in her insightful study on myth and magic in the first part of *Don Quijote*, we would do well in thinking of Cervantes as “nuestro español Ovidio” (85), I propose that we take a step further back in time to ancient Greece. Cervantes, “the creator of the Spanish metamorphosis of so many characters, such as a country gentleman changing into a knight-errant, or a prostitute into a princess, or a Moor into a Christian” (Nadeau 85), is also behind the transformation of a Homeric goddess into an exceptional *labradora rica*. The Cervantine appropriation of Homer is at the heart of the invention of Dorotea.

Like all commentators of the long series of events that have the inn as their setting, Flores draws attention to the special character of the place: “La venta está idealmente emplazada para que en ella sucedan toda clase de coincidencias y reuniones, tanto tristes como felices, de encuentros y soluciones, tanto imprevistos como arreglados. . .” (456). As readers will recall, the circumstances at that inn from chapters 32 to 47 are surprising in all respects. A short summary of the most salient points leading to the events taking place there is in order. Aiming to force Don Quijote to return home, the priest and barber from his village have tracked him down to a wild area in the Sierra Morena. On their way to meet him, they chance upon two unusual characters. First is Cardenio, a well-off gentleman who has become mad as a result of his frustrated love affair with a noble lady, Luscinda. A while later they meet Dorotea. The daughter of rich farmers, Dorotea appears before them dressed as a humble peasant boy. She is disguised to pursue a powerful nobleman, Don Fernando, who had forced her into a secret marriage, deflowered her, and then disappeared. Don Fernando, it turns out, has betrayed both Cardenio and Dorotea, since he has endeavored to marry Luscinda, the former’s fiancé. They all ignore the fact that Don Fernando has just kidnapped Luscinda from the monastery where she had sought refuge and is actually on the run. The priest, Car-

denio, and the barber promise to assist Dorotea, and she agrees to accompany them. She even volunteers to play the role of damsel in distress as princess Micomicona in an artful farce that they hope will persuade Don Quijote to follow them to a nearby inn from which they hope to take him back home. Once at the inn, after a few amusing incidents and the communal reading of the novella *El curioso impertinente*, an unimaginable coincidence takes place.¹ Fernando and Luscinda arrive at the inn with a few servants, all wearing black masks. This fortuitous arrival opens the way for a highly charged scene of recognition, supplication, and reconciliation in which Dorotea plays the leading role. She delivers two highly effective speeches that, with the support of the many bystanders, eventually manage to set things straight. From this point on, other remarkable guests arrive and join the party, bringing with them their own conflicts. All of them—Zoraida, Clara, and Don Luis—benefit greatly from Dorotea’s interventions on their behalf.

Discussing the uncanny encounter at the inn between the two pairs of lovers, Flores remarks on an often-unnoticed aspect. He stresses a singular point of view, that of the priest, for whom all the incidents at the inn are because of the intervention of Divine Providence: “El cura atribuye el arribo de don Quijote y de todo su grupo a la venta [. . .] a una ‘particular providencia del cielo’” (456). The priest’s words in Flores’s quote arise in the middle of the most alarming confrontation that takes place at this incredible place, the one between don Fernando, Dorotea, Cardenio, and Luscinda in chapter 36. It is when the priest makes a courageous effort to persuade Don Fernando to drop his aggressive stance against Cardenio that he addresses him thusly: “Que considerase”—he says—“que, no acaso, como parecía, sino con particular providencia del cielo, se habían todos juntado en lugar donde menos ninguno pensaba” (1: 445, ch. 36). The priest’s mediation takes place immediately after Dorotea pleads with Don Fernando for the second time in the chapter. Her speech this time is prompted by this curiously evocative scene:

A estas razones, puso Luscinda en Cardenio los ojos, y, habiendo comenzado a conocerle, primero por la voz, y asegurándose que él era con la vista, casi fuera de sentido y sin tener cuenta a ningún honesto respeto, le echó los brazos al cuello, y, juntando su rostro con el de Cardenio, le dijo:

-Vos sí, señor mío, sois el verdadero dueño desta vuestra cautiva, aunque más lo impida la contraria suerte, y, aunque más amenazas le hagan [a] esta vida que en la vuestra se sustenta.

Estraño espectáculo fue éste para don Fernando y para todos los circunstantes, admirándose de tan no visto suceso. Parecióle a Dorotea que don Fernando había perdido la color del rostro y que hacía ademán de querer vengarse de Cardenio, porque le vio encaminar la mano a ponella en la espada; y, así como lo pensó, con no vista presteza se abrazó con él por las rodillas, besándose las y teniéndole apretado, que no le dejaba mover, y, sin cesar un punto de sus lágrimas, le decía. (1: 444–45, ch. 36)

Readers of this passage see nothing special in it, except perhaps, additional evidence of Don Fernando’s volatile temperament and Dorotea’s resourcefulness and dramatic bent. Even Flores, whose insistence on highlighting the importance of

Divine Providence during the events would seem to indicate his awareness of the importance of the supernatural at this juncture, has only this to observe:

Aún después de que Dorotea hace su discurso y su amante parece darse por vencido cuando don Fernando ve a Luscinda en brazos de Cardenio, los celos lo enfurecen y está a punto de lanzarse contra su rival con la espada en la mano; y sólo el hecho de que Dorotea lo abrace por las piernas y le impida moverse previene este ataque. (464)

I would like to suggest that the priest's invocation of Divine Providence is but one hint among many that frame the depiction of Dorotea. Indeed, I would advise that we read Dorotea's actions above and her second speech to Don Fernando in light of the following fragment of book 1 of Homer's *Iliad*:

[175] “[. . .] There is no king here so hateful to me as you are, for you are ever quarrelsome and ill affected. What though you be brave? Was it not heaven that made you so? Go home, then, with your ships and comrades
[180] to lord it over the Myrmidons. I care neither for you nor for your anger; and thus will I do: since Phoebus Apollo is taking Chryseis from me, I shall send her with my ship and my followers, but I shall come to your tent and
[185] take your own prize Briseis, that you may learn how much more prestigious I am than you are, and that another may fear to set himself up as equal or comparable with me.” The son of Peleus felt grief [*akhos*], and his heart within his shaggy breast was divided
[190] whether to draw his sword, push the others aside, and kill the son of Atreus, or to restrain himself and check his anger. While he was thus in two minds, and was drawing his mighty sword from its scabbard, Athena came down
[200] from heaven (for Hera had sent her in the love she bore to them both), and seized the son of Peleus by his yellow hair, visible to him alone, for of the others no man could see her. Achilles turned in amaze, and by the fire that flashed from her eyes at once knew that she was
[205] Athena. “Why are you here,” said he, “daughter of aegis-bearing Zeus? To see the pride [*hubris*] of Agamemnon, son of Atreus? Let me tell you—and it shall surely be—
[210] he shall pay for this insolence with his life.” And Athena said, “I come from heaven, if you will hear me, to bid you stay your anger. Hera has sent me, who cares for both of you alike.
[215] Cease, then, this brawling, and do not draw your sword; rail at him if you will, and your railing will not be vain, for I tell you—and it shall surely be—that you shall hereafter receive gifts three times as splendid by reason of this present insult [*hubris*]. Hold, therefore, and obey.”
[220] “Goddess,” answered Achilles, “however angry a man may be, he must do as you two command him. This will be best, for the gods ever hear the prayers of him who has obeyed them.” He stayed his hand on the silver hilt of his sword,
[225] and thrust it back into the scabbard as Athena bade him. Then she went back to Olympus among the other gods [*daimones*], and to the house of aegis-bearing Zeus. But the son of Peleus again began railing at the son of Atreus, for he was still in a rage. (*Iliad*, bk. 1: 180–220)

In what amounts to a reworking of the rage of Achilles, the crucial event Western culture's foundational epic, Cervantes appears to have assigned the role of the

bright-eyed goddess, Athena, to the humble *labradora* Dorotea. Not only are these two female icons similar in many ways, they also are equally important in advancing the epic momentum of their respective stories.

Like Athena, Dorotea is the only character who is able to notice the lethal fury hidden behind the hesitation of the affronted lover. Like the Homeric Achaeans, the Manchegan and Andalusian members of Don Quijote's party are unable to perceive that "don Fernando había perdido la color del rostro y que hacía además de querer vengarse de Cardenio" (1: 444, ch. 36). That Dorotea can detect a change in Don Fernando's appearance and observe his hand move toward his sword is something only an almost supernatural being can accomplish. It is the likes of Hera and Athena who can see inside Achilles's heart and see that "he was thus in two minds, and was drawing his mighty sword from its scabbard" (*Iliad*, bk. 1: 190). As swift as the gray-eyed goddess, Dorotea leaps into action to hold back Don Fernando. With, shall I say, winged words, she manages to make him come to grips with himself. This is key. Both—the child of Zeus and the daughter of the *labrador rico*—intervene to physically restrain the slighted men. Moreover, they both employ dissuasion to provoke a change of heart in them. In Dorotea's case, it is entirely due to this twofold course of action that the tense confrontation at the inn does not end up in murder and chaos. Preventing an unsuitable violent resolution to the conflict, Athena as well as Dorotea ensure the continuity of the epic at a moment of nearly fatal crisis. The goddess, naturally, comes down from above, invisible to all, to hold back Achilles by pulling his hair. The *labradora* must act from below, seizing Don Fernando's knees to keep his legs together. This makes it impossible for him to adopt an aggressive fighting stance, and he cannot help but refrain from unsheathing his sword.

There are other similarities between Dorotea and Athena as presented in *The Iliad* during the rage of Achilles. Known as "Ophthalmitis," Athena is the goddess of eyesight, and her eyes shine in a characteristic fashion.² It is because of that trait that Achilles is able to recognize her: "Achilles turned in amaze, and by the fire that flashed from her eyes at once knew that she was Athena" (*Iliad*, bk. 1: 200). Dorotea's eyes, flooded with streams of tears, shine remarkably as well. Her actions and her speech are framed by heartfelt weeping:

Había en este entretanto vuelto Dorotea en sí, y había estado escuchando todas las razones que Luscinda dijo, por las cuales vino en conocimiento de quién ella era; que, viendo que don Fernando aún no la dejaba de los brazos, ni respondía a sus razones, esforzándose lo más que pudo, se levantó y se fue a hincar de rodillas a sus pies; y, derramando mucha cantidad de hermosas y lastimeras lágrimas, así le comenzó a decir. (1: 444, ch. 36)

That Dorotea's intercession at this decisive moment happens after the priest's invocation of Divine Providence is a dead giveaway. Fortune, or its most Christian cousin, Providence, was one of the most enduring identities of Athena who was often called "Pronoia" meaning "foresight" or "providence" in Greek.³ Those who have had the fortune of visiting the Palazzo Barberini in Rome will surely

remember Pietro da Cortona's fresco, known as "The Triumph of Divine Providence" (1633–39), in which the apotheosis of the Christian formulation appears standing on and surrounded by its Athenian predecessor.⁴ Indeed, a careful look at Cervantes's text reveals that his Dorotea is what I would call a barefoot Athena. It is not that she is an exact quote of the ancient Greeks' most powerful goddess but that she embodies Athena and can act as such in much the same way that Bacchus consorts with the drunken laborers in Velázquez's painting *Los borrachos* (1629). Cervantes's appropriation of a classical mythological figure enables Dorotea to act, as Dudley has asserted, as "the female protagonist of part 1 [of *Don Quijote* . . .] the only one who is equal to the many tasks of interlinking the multi-storied ontology of the text and providing a sufficiently mercurial persona to confront the unraveled psychic needs of Don Quixote, Cardenio, and Fernando" (252).

Moreover, the above is reasonable because, as Athena, Dorotea would have to be *kourotrophos*, that is, a "nurturer of young men" (Blundell 26). As Sue Blundell reminds us, Athena is often called on to assist all manner of wandering heroes: "Anyone who is anyone in the roll-call of heroes seems at some stage in his career to receive assistance from the warrior maiden" (27). The lucid madman whose task it was to bring back the fabled Golden Age would not be any less fortunate than Achilles, Odysseus, Perseus, or Hercules (Blundell 27). And yet, we must not forget that Dorotea is all this even as she is just Dorotea, the barefoot and fallen daughter of a rich farmer found in the middle of the Sierra Morena by a village priest, a humble barber, and a disturbed noble lover.⁵

Dorotea's hidden identity as Athena is apparent from the very moment she appears in the novel. As readers will remember, chapter 28 of the first part of *Don Quijote* starts with a reiteration of the Golden Age motif: "Felicísimos y venturosos fueron los tiempos donde se echó al mundo el audacísimo caballero don Quijote de la Mancha" (343).⁶ The reminder that Don Quijote's principal aim as a *caballero andante* is to restore a troubled present—"esta nuestra edad de hierro" (1: 169, ch. 11)—to unite it with a treasured, mythical past sets the scene for Dorotea's entrance. Indeed, as Salvador Jiménez-Fajardo has observed, that chapter 28 is the beginning of the fourth and last "subpart" of *Don Quijote*, part one, is relevant in and of itself. The ending of the previous chapter already contains Dorotea's voice, framed, as it were, by the presence of both the "editor" or fictional narrator of the novel and Cide Hamete Benengeli himself: "y, al tiempo que el cura se prevenía para decirle algunas razones de consuelo, 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" (1: 341, ch. 27).

Because of this, Jiménez-Fajardo rightfully claims that "[t]he result of this textual game is to create a striking funneling effect, whereby we are drawn to the scene before us as increasingly self-aware readers" (39). Thus, the resonance of that "[d]ichosa edad y siglos dichosos aquéllos a quien los antiguos pusieron nombre de dorados" (1: 169, ch. 11) ought not to go unnoticed. Clearly, it paves

the way for the intrusion of the classical imagination within the baroque context. That some kind of intervention is needed just then is obvious. At this point in the narrative the quixotic enterprise appears to be floundering. Don Quijote has left aside his epic inclinations to indulge in the sentimental lamentations of the *Peña Pobre* in imitation of *Amadís de Gaula*. He has abandoned what distinguishes the epic as such, namely questing, and has settled in a more pastoral mode while forcing a confrontation between his dutiful squire and the invented damsel of his dreams. For his part, Sancho is struggling with how best to deceive his master on the matter of Dulcinea's letter. Readers will recall that when Don Quijote chooses to remain in his version of the *Peña Pobre* he dispatches Sancho with a letter to Dulcinea del Toboso, an errand that cannot be fulfilled easily. Not only does Sancho fail to bring back a written reply from Dulcinea, he cannot, of course, come even close to delivering the message. To make matters worse, Sancho has forgotten to take the written text with him and, obviously, completely distorts it in his poor memory. Finally, the priest and the barber are closing in on their neighbor. It is their hope to forcibly return him to his village, if not to his senses. Even the narrator admits to the poor state of the narrative thread of the *historia*, which he describes in this fashion: "la cual, prosiguiendo su rastrillado, torcido y aspado hilo, cuenta que, así como el cura comenzó a prevenirse para consolar a Cardenio, lo impidió una voz que llegó a sus oídos, que, con tristes acentos, decía desta manera" (1: 343, ch. 28). The "twisted, reeled, and ravelled thread" of the narration (Cervantes, *History* 153) urgently needs someone's help to tie it all together in a seemly fashion.

Dorotea's voice, straddling as it does chapters 27 and 28, signals the arrival of assistance even as it intones a highly moving plaint:

-¡Ay Dios! ¿Si será posible que he ya hallado lugar que pueda servir de escondida sepultura a la carga pesada deste cuerpo, que tan contra mi voluntad sostengo? Sí será, si la soledad que prometen estas sierras no me miente. ¡Ay, desdichada, y cuán más agradable compañía harán estos riscos y malezas a mi intención, pues me darán lugar para que con quejas comunique mi desgracia al cielo, que no la de ningún hombre humano, pues no hay ninguno en la tierra de quien se pueda esperar consejo en las dudas, alivio en las quejas, ni remedio en los males! (1: 343, ch. 28)

Mired as she is in deep "moral and social isolation" (Dudley 268), she seems an unlikely heroine. As Dudley points out, "Her invocation of the Otherworld god in her lament indicates that she has no role in the world of everyday men" (268). Fortunately, the ones she soon meets there, in the middle of the Sierra Morena, are anything but everyday men. A small-town man of the cloth, an aristocratic madman, and a queerly bearded barber disguised as a squire form a bizarre trio. Readers should recall that the priest and the barber are dressed as women when they set out to rescue Don Quijote from the Sierra Morena. That they take off their outrageous outfits soon after they leave the inn cannot totally erase the effects of their peculiar performance of gender.⁷ Dorotea's enchanting voice moves her three listeners to spy on its owner. What they see is a perplexing and bewitching sight:

un mozo vestido o como labrador, al cual, por tener inclinado el rostro, a causa de que se lavaba los pies en el arroyo que por allí corría, no se le pudieron ver por entonces. Y ellos llegaron con tanto silencio que dél no fueron sentidos, ni él estaba a otra cosa atento que a lavarse los pies, que eran tales, que no parecían sino dos pedazos de blanco cristal que entre las otras piedras del arroyo se habían nacido. Suspendióles la blancura y belleza de los pies, pareciéndoles que no estaban hechos a pisar terrones, ni a andar tras el arado y los bueyes, como mostraba el hábito de su dueño. Y así, viendo que no habían sido sentidos, el cura, que iba delante, hizo señas a los otros dos que se agazapasen o escondiesen detrás de unos pedazos de peña que allí había, y así lo hicieron todos, mirando con atención lo que el mozo hacía. (1: 344, ch. 28)

Truly, as the priest later notes, nothing is what it seems to be. The divine feet of this “youth in the dress of a peasant [. . .], so fair that they looked like two pieces of shining crystal” (*Don Quixote* 1: 28) do not match his attire. Indeed, when he takes off his cap minutes later the viewers’ shock increases: “El mozo se quitó la montera, y, sacudiendo la cabeza a una y a otra parte, se comenzaron a descoger y desparcir unos cabellos, que pudieran los del sol tenerles envidia” (1: 344, ch. 28). It is no wonder that Cardenio tells the other two, “Ésta, ya que no es Luscinda, no es persona humana, sino divina” (1: 344, ch. 28). Made of crystal, alabaster, and gold, this animated statue ought to prompt the image of Greek and Roman models. The men’s subsequent realization that the youth is actually an extraordinarily beautiful young woman adds a measure of sauciness and complexity to the pastoral peep show. The question remains, however, as Dudley has also suggested: is this being a peasant boy, an Andalusian Narcissus, a water nymph, or a wild woman (231, 250)? One thing is certain. The gender ambiguity that features so prominently in the depiction of she who will soon reveal herself as an early modern Athena makes perfect sense. As Sarah B. Pomeroy explains, “Athena is a masculine woman; some might label her androgynous. [. . .] At times she disguises herself as a man to facilitate personal contact with her favorites” (4). For Athena as Dorotea to first come into view as a divine youth is simply natural.

This being said, though, one must bear in mind that there are great risks involved in seeing a goddess naked, like the stories of Acteon and Diana or Tiresias and Athena demonstrate. Fortunately the priest, the barber, and Cardenio do not see a full show.⁸ The apparition is all about Dorotea’s feet as first seen by the three men: “Suspendióles la blancura y belleza de los pies, pareciéndoles que no estaban hechos a pisar terrones, ni a andar tras el arado y los bueyes, como mostraba el hábito de su dueño” (1: 344, ch. 28). They are viewing something they cannot understand, partly because it does not make sense and partly because it does not belong to their world. No matter how lovely a farmer boy may be, he will still have the feet of a farmer, never those of a Petrarchean beauty or a Donatello bronze—and yet, they are in fact the feet of a goddess. That is, the feet of the goddess who invented the plough and first taught mankind to use oxen to till the fields. As Harry Thurston Peck explained over a century ago:

The sowing season was opened in Attica by three sacred services of ploughing. Of these, two were in honour of Athené as inventress of the plough, while the third took

place in honour of Demeter. It was Athené, also, who had taught men how to attach oxen to the yoke. (n.p.)

Appearances are deceiving. In this case, the peasant boy is not what he looks like, but not just because he happens to be a girl with lovely feet. This beautiful girl stands for the goddess who first crushed clods and followed the plough and the oxen walking on her eternally immaculate feet. Athena as Dorotea, the rich farmer's daughter, is understandable only by fathoming the seeming contradiction that the divine feet of the youth in peasant clothes present.

The above encounter leads to a narration in which Dorotea explains to her future friends who she is and why is she there. It is then that other elements in this classical appropriation become apparent. According to Dorotea, her life as the only daughter of wealthy farmers was uniquely fulfilling:

Y del mismo modo que yo era señora de sus ánimos, ansí lo era de su hacienda: por mí se recibían y despedían los criados; la razón y cuenta de lo que se sembraba y cogía pasaba por mi mano; los molinos de aceite, los lagares de vino, el número del ganado mayor y menor, el de las colmenas. Finalmente, de todo aquello que un tan rico labrador como mi padre puede tener y tiene, tenía yo la cuenta, y era la mayor-doma y señora, con tanta solicitud mía y con tanto gusto suyo, que buenamente no acertaré a encarecerlo. Los ratos que del día me quedaban, después de haber dado lo que convenía a los mayores, a capataces y a otros jornaleros, los entretenía en ejercicios que son a las doncellas tan lícitos como necesarios, como son los que ofrece la aguja y la almohadilla, y la rueca muchas veces; y si alguna, por recrear el ánimo, estos ejercicios dejaba, me acogía al entretenimiento de leer algún libro devoto, o a tocar una arpa, porque la experiencia me mostraba que la música compone los ánimos descompuestos y alivia los trabajos que nacen del espíritu. (1: 346–47, ch. 28)

Several details stand out in her account. She is an only child and the mistress of her father's estate. She is in charge of a vast agricultural enterprise in which the production of olive oil looms large. She is also highly skilled in handling the tools of an expert weaver, "needle, embroidery cushion, and spinning wheel" (*Don Quixote* 1: 28). These are some of the same realms over which Athena presides as goddess of the city, the protectress of civilized life, crafts, and agriculture. The olive tree that she originated is her tree and her gift to the Athenians.⁹ As the inventor of both spinning and weaving, it should be obvious by now that in the guise of Dorotea she is the one needed to restore the story's "rastrillado, torcido y aspado hilo" (1: 343, ch. 28). Once again reality and appearances conflict in this depiction. Dorotea, who seems to be simply the daughter of *el rico* Clenardo lives up to her name. As Susanne Lindgren Wofford observes, Dorotea's name evokes the word *thea*, Greek for "goddess" (407), and her full name means "gift of God," as Dudley explains (225). Indeed, just like Athena, Zeus's favorite daughter and the only one to be born directly from him, Dorotea is her father's gift to the land, which she manages with as good judgment as the goddess of farming.

However, if we read Dorotea as a barefoot Athena, we must expect her to live up to that essential attribute of the goddess, her wisdom. Athena is variously known for the following qualities, all variations on the theme of insight: *ambou-*

lia, *pronoia*, *apatouria*, *makhanitis*; meaning, respectively, “counselor,” “foresight,” “deceitful,” and “contriver of plans and devices.”¹⁰ And this is the area in which Dorotea excels. The title of chapter 30, “Que trata de la discreción de la hermosa Dorotea, con otras cosas de mucho gusto y pasatiempo” (1: 368), could very well be more extensive to include all her actions in the text. Her phenomenal interpretation as the African queen Micomicona, as well as her many interventions in favor of Cardenio, Sancho, Luscinda, Zoraida, doña Clara, and don Luis, surely could earn her the Homeric epithet *polymetis* (“of the many counsels”), which she would share with Athena. From chapter 28 to 46 she intercedes decisively no less than twenty-six times to save herself and others. As Dudley shrewdly observes:

Like the Sabia Felicia she will untangle the snarled threads of all their stories. In this capacity she becomes the female enchantress at the center of a web of deceptions that holds every one under enchantment. She is the female Percival who can ask the spell-breaking question that will release the entire kingdom. She must become the heroine of a new language and a new narrative. (268)

She does all this under the guise of Athena. “Los inauditos sucesos de la venta,” as the title of chapter 44 reads, are truly more unheard of than we had imagined. Just as the ancients resorted to the active involvement of gods and goddesses in their epics to tell

las astucias de Ulixes, la piedad de Eneas, la valentía de Aquiles, las desgracias de Héctor, las traiciones de Sinón, la amistad de Eurialio, la liberalidad de Alejandro, el valor de César, la clemencia y verdad de Trajano, la fidelidad de Zopiro, la prudencia de Catón; y, finalmente, todas aquellas acciones que pueden hacer perfecto a un varón ilustre, ahora poniéndolas en uno solo, ahora dividiéndolas en muchos. (1: 554, ch. 47)

Cervantes employs at least one divine being to move matters along. His bare-foot and fallen Athena allows him to recount “las astucias de Dorotea, la piedad de Zoraida, la valentía de don Quijote, la amistad de Sancho, las desgracias de Cardenio, las traiciones de don Fernando” among many other stories. And it is fitting that this be so, for, as we all know, since 1605, “la épica también puede escribirse en prosa como en verso” (1: 555, ch. 47).

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NOTES

1. Chief among those incidents is Don Quijote’s combat against Pandafilando de la Fosca Vista, that is, against the wineskins stored inside his sleeping quarters at the inn. As often observed, Don Quijote’s victory over the giant who has usurped Princess Micomicona’s African kingdom prefigures Don Fernando’s acceptance of the rightfulness of

Dorotea's case against him: "Venciste, hermosa Dorotea, venciste; porque no es posible tener ánimo para negar tantas verdades juntas" (1: 444, ch. 28).

2. The gray-eyed goddess rules matters regarding eyesight: Greek title: Πφθαλμιτις Οξυδερκης; transliteration: *ophthalmitis oxyderkís*; translation: "of the eyes sharp-sighted." Cf. Cult of Athena.

3. Athena is regarded as the "goddess of wise counsel and crafty planning": Greek title: Αμβουλια, Προνοια, Απατουρια, Μαχανιτις; transliteration: *amboulia, pronoia, apatouria, makhanitis*; translation: "counselor," "foresight," "deceitful," "contriver" (of plans and devices). Cf. Cult of Athena.

4. Cortona's fresco can be seen online in the Web Gallery of Art at <<http://www.wga.hu/frames-e.html?html/p/pietro/cortona/>>. "Divine Providence" (Lat., *Providentia*; Greek, *pronoia*). As *pronoia*, Athena would have been a humanistic equivalent of the Christian formulation, Divine Providence.

5. Myriam Yvonne Jehenson sheds some light on the matter I discuss. Dorotea is Athena while still remaining Dorotea as a result of Cervantes's conscious will to blur categories and destabilize distinctions that operate in the text (211). As she puts it, "In the midst of all this repetition and blurring, any conventional sense of distinction, cohesiveness, and 'meaning' seems irrelevant. The ludic world of *Don Quijote* fascinates and defies categorization. It simply *is*. It becomes a performance wherein anything can happen. This performance reaches its climax at the inn. Cervantes unites the characters of the Dorotea-Fernando/Luscinda-Cardenio incident and heightens the blurring of distinctions and of opposites through disguise and crossdressing" (213-14). Nowhere is this more apparent than in the case of Dorotea.

6. The reiteration of the Golden Age motif immediately points to the imminent mending of the Quixotic adventure. Questing is what Don Quijote does best and should continue doing, not just because it promises to restore an ideal past but because his epic in prose is a necessary balm for readers living in a perennial *edad de hierro*: "Felicísimos y venturosos fueron los tiempos donde se echó al mundo el audacísimo caballero don Quijote de la Mancha, pues por haber tenido tan honrosa determinación como fue el querer resucitar y volver al mundo la ya perdida y casi muerta orden de la andante caballería, gozamos ahora, 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; la cual, prosiguiendo su rastrillado, torcido y aspado hilo, cuenta que, así como el cura comenzó a prevenirse para consolar a Cardenio, lo impidió una voz que llegó a sus oídos, que, con tristes acentos, decía desta manera" (1: 343, ch. 28).

7. The beginning of chapter 27 shows the elaborate process by which the priest and the barber dress as women. The priest's conversion into a damsel in distress, indeed, the primitive Micomicona, is particularly detailed (see 1: 326, ch. 27). However, one must not overlook the sexually transgressive overtones also present in the barber's disguise. He is wearing the innkeeper's wife's *cola* on his face. Understandably, Juan Palomeque's wife makes a great fuss about this later: "No se hubo bien encerrado, cuando la huéspedeta arremetió al barbero, y, asiéndole de la barba, dijo: -Para mi santiguada, que no se ha aún de aprovechar más de mi rabo para su barba, y que me ha de volver mi cola; que anda lo de mi marido por esos suelos, que es vergüenza; digo, el peine, que solía yo colgar de mi buena cola" (1: 387, ch. 32). As was frequently used in burlesque poetry of the times, *cola* and *rabo* are vulgar names for "arse." The barber's usurpation of the innkeeper's wife's bottom is problematic in that Juan Palomeque's sexual organ, his "cosa" is sadly hanging low "por esos, suelos, que es vergüenza," and his trusty wife cannot hang it from her nice tail, as she obviously likes to do!

8. Jiménez-Fajardo writes that the priest, the barber, and Cardenio act like peeping toms in chapter 28: "Let me begin by suggesting that they assume immediately the attitude of voyeurs" (39). However, his emphasis on voyeurism from a heteronormative view-

point, a position that he also assigns to the reader, prevents him from seeing other issues that are equally at play. He has to disregard or erase any notion that Dorotea's gender ambiguity is in any way significant. Not only does this entail the elimination of any queer interpretation of the passage, it also forecloses a reading more attuned to the classics, that of Dorotea as the manifestation of Athena, a masculine goddess. Constance H. Rose, who does highlight the possibility of a queer subtext in the scene, chooses, however, not to pursue it: "Hay más de un toque de homosexualidad aquí de parte de estos espectadores, pero lo dejo sin examinar porque la figura que me interesa es el desconocido" (418). I would suggest that both readings are necessary here, since it is the goddess's masculine beauty and queer allure, as seen in the lovely youth, that first allows her identification as a supernatural being.

9. As Blundell points out, "Athena's feminine side is displayed most clearly in her supervision of one of the most characteristic of women occupations. As Athena Ergane (or 'Workwoman') she was worshipped as a goddess of handicrafts, and in particular as the inventor of spinning and weaving. [. . .] Both in literature and in the visual arts, Athena is most frequently represented as an armed warrior [. . .]. In many of her functions, however, Athena traverses and transcends the boundary between feminine and masculine roles. Her relationship to the olive tree features in the story of her successful bid to become patron deity of the city of Athens [. . .]. Athena created an olive tree [. . .] and ever afterwards she was regarded as the guardian of olive trees [. . .]. This myth ascribes to Athena a traditionally feminine connection with the fertility of the earth. But it also links the goddess to masculine modes of economic production: olive oil was one of Athens' principal exports. [. . .] Her defence of cities establishes Athena firmly as an urban deity, involved in many aspects of human technology and culture, both in female and male spheres of activity. Perhaps above all she should be seen as a superb manager" (26–27).

10. "The fondness for schemes and contrivances," asserts Blundell, "earns Athena her reputation for wisdom" (27). "She is a patroness of wisdom, considered a masculine quality by the Greeks" says Pomeroy (4). Thurston Peck explains this facet of the goddess best: "Speaking broadly, Athéné represents human wit and cleverness, and presides over the whole moral and intellectual side of human life. From her are derived all the productions of wisdom and understanding, every art and science, whether of war or of peace" (n.p.).

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