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Third Nature: Landscape And Ethics In The Early Modern Iberian World

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Abstract

How do the rituals of poetic language refashion and provision our creaturely needs for nourishment, shelter, and community at moments when these seem to overwhelm nature's capacities? What are the spaces most sensitive to the incursion of new structures for thinking and displaying the self upon traditional forms that are local, communal, and sacred? And how does pastoral—the courtly literature of poet-shepherds—employ stylized, figurative landscapes to inscribe an ethics for inhabiting the natural environment? The systematic exploration of the world in the early modern period (ca. 1500–1700 AD) transformed how the human condition and its place in nature were represented in the topographies, natural histories, and herbals that I argue constituted an early modern practice of ecology. In this project, I argue that pastoral literature takes part in this practice, a position that challenges conventional interpretations of its landscapes as idealized backdrops that retreat from political and environmental concerns. I propose instead that as a form of ecological thought (that is, as a resource for apprehending nature and its relationship to the human), pastoral expresses not a withdrawal but an engagement with nature. The persistent invocation of a “third” nature—against first (organic, intrinsic) or second (cultural, habitual) natures—in the pastoral of early modern Spain represents an awareness of how its characters remake and renew their relationships to each other and to their surroundings: their habits of care and rituals of attention are not empty forms but respond meaningfully to their passage through a range of natural and built environments. Not just green pastures but sheepwalks and forests, wastelands and walled gardens, ruined cities and barren shores are some of the landscapes that embody the shepherds' efforts to give voice to the complexity of desire, the fragility of memory, the pain of aging, the fluidity of gender, and the nature of community.

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THIRD NATURE: LANDSCAPE AND ETHICS IN THE EARLY MODERN IBERIAN WORLD

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*For Luisa, Elsa, and Mary
Muses all*

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ABSTRACT

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Steve Dolph

Sonia Velázquez

How do the rituals of poetic language refashion and provision our creaturely needs for nourishment, shelter, and community at moments when these seem to overwhelm nature's capacities? What are the spaces most sensitive to the incursion of new structures for thinking and displaying the self upon traditional forms that are local, communal, and sacred? And how does pastoral—the courtly literature of poet-shepherds—employ stylized, figurative landscapes to inscribe an ethics for inhabiting the natural environment? The systematic exploration of the world in the early modern period (ca. 1500–1700 AD) transformed how the human condition and its place in nature were represented in the topographies, natural histories, and herbals that I argue constituted an early modern practice of ecology. In this project, I argue that pastoral literature takes part in this practice, a position that challenges conventional interpretations of its landscapes as idealized backdrops that retreat from political and environmental concerns. I propose instead that as a form of ecological thought (that is, as a resource for apprehending nature and its relationship to the human), pastoral expresses not a withdrawal but an engagement with nature. The persistent invocation of a “third” nature—against first (organic, intrinsic) or second (cultural, habitual) natures—in the pastoral of early modern Spain represents an awareness of how its characters remake and renew their relationships to each other and to their surroundings: their habits of care and rituals of attention are not empty forms but respond meaningfully to their passage through a range of natural and built environments. Not just green pastures but sheepwalks and forests, wastelands and walled gardens, ruined cities and barren shores are some of the landscapes that embody the shepherds' efforts to give voice to the complexity of desire, the fragility of memory, the pain of aging, the fluidity of gender, and the nature of community.

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INTRODUCTION

UNA TERZA NATURA

The sixth and final book of Miguel de Cervantes's 1584 pastoral romance, *La Galatea*, opens with its shepherds on their way to the Valley of the Cypresses to attend a colleague's funeral. Marveling at the beauty of the surrounding landscape on the banks of the Tagus, the shepherd Timbrio remarks to a friend:

No poca maravilla me causa, Elicio, la incomparable belleza de esas frescas riberas y no sin razón, porque quien ha visto, como yo, las espaciosas del nombrado Betis y las que visten y adornan el famoso Ebro y al conocido Pisuerga, y en las apartadas tierras ha paseado las del santo Tíber y las amenas del Po, celebrado por la caída del atrevido mozo, sin dejar de haber rodeado las frescuras del apacible Sebeto, grande ocasión había de ser la que a maravilla me moviese a ver otras algunas. (2006, 541)

In typical pastoral fashion, Timbrio's enthusiastic comparison of the "incomparable" Tagus to the Betis, Ebro, Pisuerga, Tiber, Po, and Sebeto rivers confuses historical, literary, and material reality. Betis, for instance, is the pre-Roman name for the Guadalquivir; the Ebro and Pisuerga are actual rivers in the Spain of Cervantes, while the Tiber and Po are Italian; and the Sebeto is a mythical river immortalized in Jacopo de Sannazaro's 1504 pastoral novel, *Arcadia*, considered the first of its genre. In other words, Timbrio's description appears to flatten the ecological realities of the Tagus by folding it into a literary genealogy. The response of Elicio, the novel's protagonist, seems to reinforce this mythification:

No vas tan fuera de camino en lo que dices, según yo creo, discreto Timbrio, respondió Elicio, que con los ojos no veas la razón que de decirlo tienes; porque, sin duda, puedes creer que la amenidad y frescura de las riberas de este río hace[n] notoria y conocida ventaja a todas las que has nombrado, aunque entrase en ellas las del apartado Janto y del conocido Anfriso y el enamorado Alfeo. (541)

The Janto, Anfriso, and Alfeo are rivers of Greek antiquity, and thus even further removed from the historical reality these “shepherds” ostensibly inhabit. And yet the effect of this chain of toponyms is quite powerful, inasmuch as it absorbs the Tagus into a network of Mediterranean bucolic fictions linking Homer and Virgil to Garcilaso de la Vega, and in doing so authorizes the pastoral novel by Cervantes, a relative nobody. Elicio’s subsequent encomium to the surrounding countryside, loaded with anthropomorphic rhetoric, classical allusions, and natural sympathies would seem to amplify the essential literariness of the watershed ecology.

La tierra que lo abraza, vestida de mil verdes ornamentos, parece que hace fiesta y se alegra de poseer en sí un don tan raro y agradable; y el dorado río, como en ca[m]bio, en los abrazos de ella dulcemente entretejiéndose, forma como de industria mil entradas y salidas, que a cualquiera que las mira llenan el alma de placer maravilloso, de donde nace que, aunque los ojos tornen de nuevo muchas veces a mirarle, no por eso dejan de hallar en él cosas que le causen nuevo placer y nueva maravilla. Vuelve, pues, los ojos, valeroso Timbrio, y mira cuánto adornan sus riberas las muchas aldeas y ricas caserías que por ellas se ven fundadas. (541–542).

While the rhetorical strategies of Elicio’s response would seem to confirm Timbrio’s idealized vision of the landscape—in particular his repetition of the word *maravilla*—his final command that Timbrio *turn his eyes and see* the landscape, suddenly reveals an environment shaped not by mythology or literary history but by the material interactions between human communities and their environment. Elicio pivots farther still from classical authority when he begins to theorize the nature of the surrounding environment, suggesting that “la industria de sus moradores ha hecho tanto que la Naturaleza, incorporada con el Arte, es hecha artífice y connatural del Arte, y *de entrambas a dos se ha hecho una tercia Naturaleza*, a la cual no sabré dar nombre” (542;

emphasis added). This remarkable passage situates the conversation between these humble shepherds in one of the most important and longstanding metaphysical debates of the Renaissance regarding the relative power of nature and artifice to shape reality, while simultaneously engaging emergent concerns for humanity's impact on the environment.¹

This passage, it turns out, is a literal translation of a 1541 letter by the Italian humanist Jacopo Bonfadio in imitation of a similar letter by Pliny the Younger (Hunt 2000, 32ff). In *Greater Perfections: The Practice of Garden Theory*, John Dixon Hunt has argued that Bonfadio's letter owes an unacknowledged debt to Cicero's *De natura deorum*, which proposes, in describing the practice of agriculture, that "by means of our hands we try to create as it were a second nature within the natural world" (qtd. in Hunt 2000, 33). For Hunt, Bonfadio's embedding of *una terza natura* within the first and second natures of environment and agriculture represents a turning point in garden theory. "Gardens now take their place as a third nature in a scale or hierarchy of human intervention into the physical world: gardens become more sophisticated, more deliberate, and more complex in their mixture of culture and nature than agricultural land, which is a large part of Cicero's 'second nature'" (34). Hunt goes on to demonstrate how Bonfadio's concept of a "third nature" not only adds a novel axis to an ancient debate about nature and artifice, but also imbricates human perspective within the surrounding

¹ A note on terminology. Throughout this project, I attempt to use the term "Renaissance" only in specific reference to a socio-cultural phenomenon associated with the revival of classical literature in the arts. If the authors I am citing use the term to refer to the historical period roughly spanning the 15th to the 17th centuries, I will generally follow their wording for the sake of clarity, otherwise I employ the variants of the term "early modern." I use the term "baroque" only in reference to the poet Luis de Góngora, for whom the epithet is commonplace among modern scholars.

ecology, suggesting the fundamental importance of emerging theories of spatialization to how landscape is conceived in the Renaissance. Bonfadio's theorization of the nature of landscape is thus exemplary of new ways of thinking the relationship between human artifice and the natural that would have direct, material impacts on how communities impacted their environments. Elicio's speech deftly situates the landscapes of *La Galatea* within this quintessentially modern debate.

The uncanny correspondence between Bonfadio's modern garden theory and Elicio's praise of the Tagus watershed—which compels Timbrio to leave aside literary comparisons and *look at* the surrounding environment—likewise urges us, as readers, to approach representations of landscape in Cervantes's *La Galatea* and other pastorals as a confluence of classical and modern discourses on the natural world. Furthermore, the emphasis that these texts place on the human ecologies of landscape, and of its poet-shepherds as special observers of these spaces, suggest the relevance of other, perhaps more urgent, questions. How do the stories we tell—in the shape of poetry, theater, or the novel—condition the ways we engage the natural world? Can the figurative landscapes of these fictions reconcile our creaturely needs for nourishment, shelter, and community with the limits of nature's capacities? Can we, in short, provision from literary environments an ethics for inhabiting the social and material world? In this project, I argue that the proliferation of topographies, natural histories, and horticultural treatises that attended the systematic exploration of the world in the 16th and 17th centuries constitute an early modern practice of ecology that has yet to be properly acknowledged and analyzed. I contend, furthermore, that early modern pastoral—the courtly literature of

poet-shepherds—takes part in this practice, a claim that challenges conventional thinking of its landscapes as idealized backdrops that retreat from political and environmental concerns. I propose instead that as a form of ecological thought—that is, as a resource for apprehending nature and its relationship to the human—the pastoral expresses not a withdrawal, but an awareness of the responsiveness between environments and the lives of their inhabitants.

As a form of “nature writing” pastoral is frequently considered deficient: among scholars, its image of “nature” is taken for an ideological screen against the harshness of agricultural life, the brutalization of solitude and scarcity, and the material distance between real shepherds and the aristocrats who costume themselves in rusticity. This critique, while compelling, does not fully account for the ways that epistemological shifts in early modernity blurred the line between “nature” and “artifice,” a distinction central to the ancient problem of *mimesis*, or the representation of lived reality in literature and art. In fact, early modern landscapes that to our eyes seem hazy and denatured respond to an understanding of *mimesis* radically different from a standard that privileges “naturalism.” In this project, I argue that pastoral’s sustained interest in natural environments that appear constructed, and built environments that appear natural—and, moreover, in the sympathetic relationship between space and song—suggests that the pastoral, rather than a disavowal of nature, was in fact a laboratory for testing alternative

ways of representing space and the connectedness of its organic and inorganic occupants.²

This project seeks to illustrate some of the many ways that, in the literature of imperial Spain, the pastoral was a resource with which to rethink categories of subjectivity including sexuality, embodiment, and spirituality in conjunction with the patterns of the natural world. The persistent, if almost always implicit, invocation of a *third nature*—against first (organic, intrinsic) or second (cultural, habitual) natures—in pastoral works by Miguel de Cervantes, Lope de Vega, and Luis de Góngora describes the interplay between how characters approach their relationships to each other and how they engage their surroundings. Their habits of care, reverence for attention, and rituals of mourning are not hollow forms mechanically reproduced from classical literature; rather, they acquire personal and political significance in response to their passage through a range of natural and built environments. Not simply the enameled “green cabinets” scholarship has traditionally assigned to the pastoral, but interurban sheepwalks and protected forests, wastelands and walled gardens, remote settlements and barren shores are among the landscapes that administer the shepherds’ efforts to give voice to the turbulence of desire, the fluidity of gender, the pain of aging, and the fragility of memory.

² As Edward William Tayler has observed, “Although the popularity of the pastoral genre may in any age be used as a convenient measure of the intensity of man’s concern with the relation of the natural to the artificial, it was only during the early modern that writers began to use the eclogue to deal overtly with the philosophical problem of Nature and Art” (1964, 5).

POLITICS, POETICS, AND THE PASTORAL

Scholars of early modern pastoral literature commonly describe its representations of nature as highly formulaic, idealized evocations of a mythical Golden Age or Arcadia—a *locus amoenus* or “pleasant place” immune to the ravages of time. The typical Arcadian landscape is the oasis, bower, or pleasance: an artificial, idealized space that provides escape and comfort from the contingency and vice of urban existence, specifically life in the court or other highly artificial context. Among Hispanists, the reasons for this idealization are typically considered to be either aesthetic, philosophical, or ideological. The supposedly formulaic references to specific plants and animals like the elm, the beech, the honeybee, or the goat, or to features of the land like brooks and springs, are employed simply as mannerist imitations of the landscapes described by the first pastoral poets, Theocritus and Virgil, or of the mythological world of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*. These pastoral creatures and landscapes thus serve merely to establish a continuity between the early modern author and the literary authorities of antiquity. This conception of pastoral nature is neatly contained in the opening pages of Renato Poggioli’s seminal essay, *The Oaten Flute*, which states that the “bucolic dream has no other reality than that of imagination and art” (1975, 2).³ Formalist readings like Poggioli’s effectively deny any possible referentiality to representations of nature in early modern pastoral, and consider its environments to be essentially emblematic: they are

³ This is likewise the opinion of Marcelino Menéndez Pelayo in *Orígenes de la novela*, which insists that: “ninguna razón histórica justificaba la aparición del género bucólico: era un puro *dilettantismo* estético” (2008, 625). Cristina Castillo Martínez exemplifies the persistence of attitude in a recent essay on the pastoral romance, when she insists that the topography in Jorge Montemayor’s *La Diana* “nada tiene que ver con la realidad” (2010, n.p.).

static, conventional symbols appropriated either from the poetics of antiquity by way of the Italian Renaissance, or from the Scriptural tradition by way of Medieval scholasticism. Its representations of nature thus have everything to do with literary history and reproduce only the most superficial relationship to contemporary reality.

This classical formalist reading of the pastoral has, for the most part, given way to two historicist models. The first of these insists that its landscapes respond primarily to the Neoplatonist worldview of Renaissance humanists, specifically Erasmus, Juan Mal de Lara, and Antonio de Guevara, whose 1539 moralist tract, *Menosprecio de corte y alabanza de aldea*, presented an essential opposition between court and country life. For these scholars, the simplicity and proximity to the natural world promoted by Guevara and other moralists—thought to foster the Neoplatonic virtues of chastity, humility, and charity—found an exemplary vehicle in the Spanish *libros de pastores*, which effectively embodied these qualities in an essentialized, highly symbolic landscape populated by courteous “poet-shepherds.” This reading of the pastoral landscape was inaugurated by Américo Castro, who argued in *El pensamiento de Cervantes* that the Neoplatonic worldview was integral to the pastoral conception of nature: “[en] la relación con los demás, los afines se atraen con energía invencible, guiados fundamentalmente por el amor [neoplatónico]; los dispares, se estrellan trágicamente procurando armonías vedadas por la naturaleza, alta deidad” (1987, 171).⁴ Reflecting the Neoplatonic pursuit of the

⁴ More recently, Amadeu Solé-Leris, describing the poetics of the Iberian pastoral romance, writes that the “role of nature in Neoplatonic thinking reflects both the contrast between the sensible and the intelligible worlds, and the underlying continuity implied by the theory of emanations.” This tension is inscribed upon the topography of the *locus amoenus*, which becomes “the visible manifestation of the Idea (which exists in the

ideal harmony, the pastoral landscape in this reading is a kind of inner utopia, a symbolic manifestation of a supposedly universal longing for retreat to an age of innocence, either in the mythological past or in some vaguely conceived idyllic future.⁵

A second historicist tendency in Hispanic scholarship treats the pastoral as an ideological screen concealing unresolvable social and economic anxieties. In this view, the highly formalized representations of the pastoral landscape work either explicitly or implicitly to deflect, dissemble, or otherwise negate social conflict, whether in the territory of class, gender, or ethnicity. Juan Bautista Avallé-Arce's *La novela pastoril española*, considered a watershed text in pastoral scholarship, expanded upon Américo Castro's historical reading of the pastoral by considering Neoplatonism as a political as well as a philosophical ideology: "Desde muy temprano Castro percibió lo pastoril como hondamente encajado en la ideología del siglo XVI, y así comenzó por asociarlo con la divinización de la naturaleza, corriente en aquella época" (1959, 20). This apotheosis of nature produced an ideological imperative in the authors of pastoral romances: "Por imperativa necesidad artística e ideológica el mundo [pastoril] es una abstracción idealizante del mundo real" (62). The pastoral, at this point, becomes not a form of retreat so much as a form of evasion: its "idealized" landscapes are less an escapist manner of describing another reality than an encoded way of describing this one.

intelligible world) of a harmonious, beneficent nature, bathed in the bright light [...] of Beauty and Goodness irradiated by the Absolute" (1980, 29).

⁵ This attitude persists in Barbara Mujica's *Iberian Pastoral Characters*, which argues that the "pastoralist retreats into his inner self in an attempt to transcend the conflicts of the outside world—the 'real' world; the harmonious landscape is the objectivization of his subjective longing" (1986, 17–18).

Recent studies on the ideologies of Iberian pastoral focus squarely on the question of evasion. Rosilie Hernández-Pecoraro's *Bucolic Metaphors* sets the terms, considering the pastoral as a "mechanism through which the socio-historical environment, its experience and the ideologies that filter and order that experience for sixteenth and seventeenth-century subjects, is negotiated, represented, cleaned up, made palatable" (2006, 24). What the pastoral does, in this view, is "idealize existing social, political, and economic conditions, while intending to suppress their irresolvable contradictions—such as gender and class hierarchies, religious intolerance, and the destruction of natural habitats" (41). Most recently, Javier-Irigoyen García's *The Spanish Arcadia* argues that pastoral "serves to promote a homogeneous conception of national identity" that obviates class struggle "as well as the conflict between rural and urban spaces" (2014, 25–26). In these studies, the pastoral environment is treated as a mask, symptomatic of conflicts that have little or nothing to do with the natural world, constantly *apparent* but never really *present*. These generally negative readings of nature in Iberian pastoral literature insist that its representations of nature are always about something else—either literary culture, Neoplatonic ideals, or politics—but never about the natural environment itself. In this insistence that the pastoral invariably displaces, masks, or denatures the surrounding environment, its *actual* trees disappear into the forest of ideology, its representations of nature dismissed against thoroughly modern definitions of "representation" and "nature" that early modern pastoral literature cannot possibly fulfill.

PASTORAL ECOLOGIES

While formalist and historicist approaches continue to yield valuable insights on the reading habits, editorial climate, and political theory attending the pastoral literature of the early modern world, they have less to teach us about the ways that the pastoral stages questions of environmental ethics. Thus, a controlling thread of this study is that pastoral literature is not merely concerned with establishing a continuity with classical poets, with masquerading autobiographical dramas, or with allegorizing class, gender, or ethnic conflict, although these are certainly relevant motives. Instead, this project illustrates the diverse ways that early modern Iberian pastoral addresses concerns of humanity's place within the natural environment. In doing so, I am hoping to contribute a renewed debate on the place of natural and built environments in pastoral literature, both ancient and modern, initiated by English literary historians in the mid 1970s and expanded in recent decades by theorists working in the environmental humanities. A number of these scholars have begun to recognize what I call "pastoral ecology"—the forms and practices of attending to nature that traditionally have been associated with the pastoral, these days articulated in a broad range of textual and visual arts, political theories, and social movements. By and large, theoretical concerns have been overlooked in the recent studies of early modern Iberian pastoral, which are not fully situated within this larger, transdisciplinary interrogation of pastoral discourse. Meanwhile, the ecocritical debate on the potential for the pastoral to contribute to questions of environmental ethics frequently fails to account for the literature of imperial Spain, which not only indexed profound social, epistemological, and environmental crises, but also

directly influenced the development of the English pastorals that have become exemplary of the genre. This project attempts to bridge these disparate conversations by illustrating the forms of early modern ecological thinking represented by Spanish-language pastoral literature of the 16th and 17th centuries.

The central claim of this project is that environmental concerns in early 17th century Iberian pastoral literature take shape around a range of interdependent discourses both ancient and modern that share an interest in questions of ecology. Although a formalized concept of “ecology” did not begin to circulate until almost two centuries later, the emergence of new discourses on agriculture, land use, encyclopedism, and medicine, alongside the recovery through translation of natural philosophers from antiquity, indicate that early modern people already recognized a dynamic relationship between individual subjects, their bodies, and their environments. This interplay between the material environment and the human community is implicit, for example, in the topographical discourse of the *Relaciones geográficas*—sociological questionnaires distributed by the state bureaucracy of Philip II in the latter half of the 16th century that sought to simultaneously document both the physical and cultural topography of Spain and its transatlantic colonies. In diverse ways, the *Relaciones geográficas* evidence a complex, ecological understanding of topographical practice in the early modern period. At the same time, powerful cultural institutions like the Mesta, which managed transhumant livestock routes across the Iberian peninsula, shaped in both a legal and intellectual sense the understanding of the relationship between communities and the landscape on a local and national level. This project illustrates the presence of these

emergent discourses and of the forces of these socio-political institutions across a range of environments in early modern Iberian pastoral literature.

The insistence in this project on the social and ecological relevance of early modern pastoral builds upon a longstanding debate among literary historians. First published in 1935, William Empson's *Some Versions of Pastoral* argued that the poetics of pastoral literature was a "process of putting the complex into the simple" (1974, 22), where simplicity implied an intimacy to the natural world and to the world within. Empson argued that the pastoral's "poetic statements of human waste and limitation [...] attempt to reconcile some conflict between parts of society" or between parts of an individual meant to stand in for the whole of society (19). For Empson, then, the distinguishing feature of pastoral was its unique ability to address social and existential conflict by expressing an ethics of contact with the natural world. In *What is Pastoral?*, Paul Alpers extended the political implications of Empson's work. Against a long history of scholars who understood the natural world in the pastoral as a nostalgic vision of a lost paradise, Alpers insists that the "presence, emergence, and history of pastoral landscape, [...] is not a matter of nature poetry or of visionary or psychological projection but rather an interpretation, a selective emphasis determined by individual or cultural motives, of the central fiction that shepherds' lives represent human lives" (1997, 27). Thus, "*pastoral* landscapes are those of which the human centers are herdsmen or their equivalents" (28; emphasis in original). By "equivalents" Alpers understands culturally-specific subjects who personify social and physical vulnerability, their lives "determined by the actions of powerful men or by events over which they have no control" (24). In

their influential studies, Empson and Alpers establish an understanding of English pastoral as a politically-engaged literature.

Recent ecocritical work on the pastoral attempts to extend this notion of engagement to questions of environmental concern. By and large, when ecocriticism addresses pastoral, it has done so with reticence, theorizing a passage beyond its supposedly “idyllic” representations of nature into the ambivalent territory of the “post-pastoral.” Terry Gifford’s three-part description of the genre in *Pastoral* limits it, first, to an historical form where “idealized” descriptions of life in the country imply a movement of “retreat” from the city and a “return,” with knowledge acquired in nature (1999, 1–2); second, “any literature that describes the country with an implicit or explicit contrast to the urban,” and where a celebratory “delight in the natural is assumed” (2); and third, as a pejorative for work in which the gap between the “simplified” representation of nature and its “material reality” is considered “intolerable by the criteria of ecological concern” (2). This negative understanding of the ecological relevance of the pastoral is reiterated by Greg Garrard in *Ecocriticism*, which argues that as a transhistorical framework for engaging the natural world, pastoral literature implies a number of cultural assumptions and conventions, including the “spatial distinction” of the country and the city and the “temporal distinction” of past and present (2004, 35), resulting in “a vision of rural life so removed from the processes of labour and natural growth that [it constitutes] a persistent mystification of human ecology” (38). For these prominent ecocritical scholars, then, pastoral is mostly useful as a negative discourse, exemplary of the structures of thought that have historically imperiled humanity’s relationship to the natural world.

In response to this negative assessment of the pastoral, a number of recent studies have articulated what I have termed “pastoral ecology.” For instance, in *Ecocriticism and Early Modern English Literature: Green Pastures*, Todd Borlik argues that ecologically-conscious early modern texts can compel us to “attend more closely to certain fundamental biological conditions of life and cognitive features of the human mind” while offering “alternative modes of conceptualizing and engaging with the environment” (2011, 9). He insists that work in the pastoral mode is exemplary in this regard for its tendency to “satirize consumptive dispositions and inculcate temperance and stewardship—virtues that can be seen as akin to modern notions of sustainability” (12). Ken Hiltner’s *What Else Is Pastoral?*, meanwhile, argues that the pastoral, while sometimes a “figurative mode masking political controversies, is also frequently concerned with literal landscapes” under threat from “what can only be described as ‘modern’” ecological crises (2011, 4). Hiltner argues that the lack of abundant descriptions of nature in Renaissance pastoral can be explained by the general anxiety in the period toward representing “an environment wildly in flux” (5). Conceived as a theatrical “backdrop” to the central action in pastoral, “the endangered countryside makes its belated emergence into appearance even as it disappears” (7), thus “fostering an environmental consciousness in those to whom it appears” (8). Scholarship in the vein of Borlik and Hiltner insists on engaging early modern pastoral on its own terms, as an historically-situated literary practice that engages contemporary questions on art, nature, and ethics. Against the dominant strain of ecocritical work the pastoral, which tends to flatten the historicity of the genre by treating its Romantic and post-Romantic

instantiations as exemplary, these studies lay the groundwork for a reassessment of the place of pastoral discourse in the development of what today we call ecology.

FORESTS, PASTURES, GARDENS

Landscapes in the pastoral literature of imperial Spain are more than static backgrounds or rhetorical props; they surround and give presence to individuals who in turn fill the space and lend it value with their words. This intimacy finds expression in the concept of “dwelling,” which names our simultaneous inclusion, as biological entities, and exclusion, as creatures of language, relative the natural world.⁶ This relationship between language and landscape reflects fundamental human concerns—shelter and community, for instance—and the sense that the manner in which we conceive the space that surrounds us invariably determines how we imagine ourselves and our relationship to others. In this project, I demonstrate that the spaces of early modern Iberian pastoral take shape not simply around the classical *locus amoenus*, but historically and geographically specific landscape forms, including wilderness like *bosques* or *montes*, urban and rural commons like *dehesas* the *ejidos*, and the horticultural enclosures of the *huerto* and *jardin*. The chapters of this project describe the ways that these landscapes foster distinct forms of being in language and ways of inhabiting our bodies and our surroundings—an *ethos* in other words.

⁶ In *Forests*, Robert Pogue Harrison argues that language, or *logos*, is that which “opens a space of intelligibility within nature’s closure” (1992, 200). Attached to the Greek word *oikos*, or home, the word *ecology* (*oikos* + *logos*) “names far more than the science that studies ecosystems; it names the universal human manner of being in the world,” because, as humans, we dwell “not in nature but in the relation to nature” (201).

In the first chapter, “Fertility and Integrity of the Forest,” I examine how pastoral forests address the nature of these qualities in their biological, ethical, and economic aspects. In the chronicles and natural histories of the early modern period, forests were imagined as endlessly plentiful but troublesomely impenetrable bodies, so much so that the very idea of impenetrability came to be intimately associated with the forest. Not just landscapes but all sorts of bodies—human, political, and intellectual—defined by their imperviousness were frequently imagined as forests. I focus particularly on the quality of *espesura*, or thickness, which would describe not only the density, copiousness, and closure of the forest landscape, but also the bodies (of women, religious minorities, and indigenous cosmographies) that appeared most unruly and troublesome. This chapter explores the representation of the ecological aspects of *espesura* in natural histories like José de Acosta’s *Historia natural y moral de las Indias* alongside contemporary pastoral texts like Garcilaso de la Vega’s eclogues and Jorge de Montemayor’s *La Diana*, before turning to a sustained reading of the first “pastoral” episode from Part I of Miguel de Cervantes’s *Don Quixote*, where the impenetrability of the shepherdess Marcela is treated as a form of feminist resistance. Ultimately, I argue that in its representations of forests the pastoral of early modern Iberia challenged the emerging sense of the human body as a kind of wilderness available for exploitation and domestication, and the nation as a political body that, left untended, could be penetrated, disordered, and ultimately reclaimed by nature.

The second chapter, “Solitude and Society of the Commons,” describes the production of pastoral community in the context of a rural landscape structured around a

range of commons, or collectively-owned resources. Wastelands, irrigation networks, watermills, and public pastures are just a few of the commons employed in contemporary topographies and economic treatises to describe the lifeworlds of the Iberian Peninsula. I argue that the iconic transactions of objects, lyrics, and affections of the pastoral acquire meaning not simply from the bucolic poetics of antiquity, but from the ecological diversity and structural openness of the early modern commons. This chapter explores these questions through a sustained reading of Luis de Góngora's 1613 *silva* poem *Soledades* alongside the contemporary discourse of the commons in economic and agricultural treatises by Pedro de Valencia, and González de Cellorigo, and articulated most vividly by the *Relaciones geográficas* described above. In addition to documenting the range of agricultural landscapes and practices in 16th-century Iberia, the *Relaciones* evidence a sophisticated and widespread understanding among rural people of what modern theorists call "commoning." Embodied in marginal or threshold "solitudes" that stitch together the desolation of wilderness and the crowded urban sphere, pastoral commons in the *Soledades* facilitate otherwise inaccessible ways of acting and speaking. This chapter illustrates how the communal production and maintenance of these landscapes express an ethics of care and open exchange while making way for the forms of solitude experienced when passing from the security of the *oikos*, or household, to the contingency of the *civitas*, or the realm of politics.

In the third and final chapter, "Cultivation and Transformation of the Garden," I map out the intersection of spirituality, horticulture, and eroticism in the gardens of medieval and early modern Spain. A survey of the eroticized garden retreats in mystic

poetry by Fray Luis de León and Bernarda Ferreira de Lacerda; the infamous *huerto* of Melibea in Fernando de Rojas's *Celestina*; and the horticultural imagery in the *hortus conclusus* of the Song of Songs stages my analysis of the symbolic construction of the concept of "cultivation"—a practice that is both outward (practical, performative) and inward (spiritual, intellectual)—in Arabic agricultural treatises from the 11th to the 14th centuries. I then turn my attention to the specifically pastoral gardens and gardeners in Lope de Vega's pastoral ballad "Hortelano era Belardo" and his 1598 pastoral romance *Arcadia* in concert with Luis de Góngora's monumental *Fábula de Polifemo y Galatea*. Through a sustained reading of these texts, I argue that the pastoral adapts classical imagery that associates poetry with horticulture not as a reflexive gesture of literary *imitatio*, but as a sustained inquiry into the ways that imitation and ritual generate a practicable ethics. I read these concerns alongside the contemporary proliferation of herbals and horticultural treatises—most prominently Andrés de Laguna's 1555 translation of Dioscorides's *De materia medica*—which speak to the physical and psychic effects of plants and their arrangement on human bodies. Ultimately, I argue that pastoral gardens are not simply spaces of retreat or sensual delight but also of transformation, and as such they reconcile our creaturely needs (food, sex, sleep) with our transcendent desires (love, redemption, salvation).

This survey of the pastoral ecologies of the early modern Iberian world is not meant to be exhaustive. Practical concerns have forced me to exclude from this study a number of environments that are integral to a thorough representation of this world. The *cañada* or sheepwalk, for instance, is an important socio-ecological space that in the 15th

and 16th centuries transformed the face of the Iberian Peninsula, a process whose impact still visible in both its urban and rural topographies. I've also had to leave aside an exploration of waterways and seascapes, as well as caves and other subterranean spaces, which would have necessitated a thorough discussion of early modern cartography, astronomy, folk magic, medicine, and other discourses of the natural world that fall outside the confines of this project, which is principally concerned with individuals' and communities' engagement with the land. Although admittedly schematic, my hope is that I have managed to successfully trace the progressive human interventions upon the landscape—as well the human responses to this process—represented by the spaces of the forest, the pasture, and the garden in the pastoral, illuminating, if dimly, the multiplicity of natures that it contains.

CHAPTER 1. FERTILITY AND INTEGRITY OF THE FOREST

1. INTRODUCTION

Overview

What is the nature of fertility? Is a fertile body by definition plentiful, and ultimately legible, or can we imagine fertility in terms of closure—if by this we mean a body defined both by its integrity and its opacity? How would we manage, not to mention represent, bodies that are simultaneously copious and opaque? For this sort of fertility to be productive and not potentially destructive for human communities (and for the human bodies that they contain), must it be brought to bear, organized, made legible, domesticated, cleaned up, quieted? Must it be opened?

In the literature of early modern Spain, these are the questions addressed to the landscape of the forest. Responding to the names *bosque*, *monte*, and *selva*, the forest landscape occupied a complex and often contradictory place in the imperial Spanish imaginary. Layered over the medieval poetic idea of the forest as the space of monsters, and its classical sense as a refuge for the sacred, *bosques* in the early modern period came to be imagined as wonderfully fruitful but vexingly impenetrable bodies. By the early part of the 17th century, the concept of “impenetrability” itself would become intimately associated with the forest, so that not just landscapes but all sorts of bodies characterized by their imperviousness were frequently represented as woodlands. In both domestic and transatlantic chronicles, encyclopedia, and literary works, *espesura* or thickness would describe not only the copiousness and closure of forest landscapes (especially distant ones) but also the human bodies that—because of the gender, race, or religion they

encased—seemed most unruly and troublesome. In this chapter, I argue that representations of thick landscapes and thick bodies provided writers of imperial Spain a means to address persistent questions on the nature of fertility, in both its economic and ecological aspects, at a moment of perceived crisis in the relationships between human communities and woodland environments.⁷

Where ecopolitics met biopolitics, the *bosque espeso* became a central motif at the intersection of the imaginary of the land and the imaginary of the body. In what follows, I demonstrate the ways that “thick” forests provided a uniquely dynamic matrix through which to address some of the culture’s most powerful anxieties, including agricultural decline on the Iberian peninsula, the devastating effects (political, intellectual, and ecological) of the colonial project, and the racial and religious integrity of the Spanish nation. Central to these anxieties was the problem of *penetration* and the insistent aporia it made visible. Moral, medical, and agricultural discourses converged in natural histories around number of questions: By what means did noxious as well as nourishing elements find their way into bodies both physical and political, and how could these bodies be closed and yet remain productive? Could you make it your business (or mission, for that matter) to penetrate a foreign landscape and its political structures yet remain impervious to its culture, mythology, and language? And with the influx of so much physical and intellectual material from the Americas, with the proximity and intransigence of heretics, how could the physical, political, racial, and religious integrity

⁷ John Wing (2015, 19–29) notes that, while the Iberian peninsula suffered a long history of deforestation, the emergence of timber scarcity as a perceived widespread ecological crisis (rather than a local resource shortage) was intimately connected with the Hapsburg crown’s expanding state forestry bureaucracy.

of the Spanish empire and its people be maintained? In this context, the sense of “the forest” as both physical place and ideological structure—as a space that is simultaneously plentiful and impenetrable—would seem to hold an obvious appeal.

In the early part of the 16th century, narratives of the first colonizers of the Americas were a powerful force in the symbolic construction of the forest landscape. The writings of Christopher Columbus and Fernández de Oviedo, for example, describe with almost stupefied wonder the lushness and fertility of the endless stretches of wilderness they encountered.⁸ These descriptions were followed in the latter half of the century by natural histories of the American landscape written by explorers and missionaries. José de Acosta’s *Historia natural y moral de las Indias*, first published in 1590, offered a more disenchanting yet no less frustrated account of the American wilderness. Published a generation before Acosta’s account of the “New World,” Antonio de Torquemada’s posthumous *Jardín de flores curiosas*, a humanist treatise of the nature of “Nature” modeled on the medieval miscellany, offered readers traditional but by no means comforting images of wilderness as the refuge for supernatural phenomena, demons, and other curiosities. Parallel to these natural histories were a range of “pastoral” texts that likewise described treacherous incursions upon wilderness landscapes. Among these was Miguel de Cervantes’s *El ingenioso hidalgo Don Quixote de La Mancha*, whose narrative shuttles between encounters that take place upon the road, and those that take place in the spaces beyond.

⁸ For a practical survey of the earliest European writings on the American natural world, from an ethnobotanical perspective, see Pardo Tomás and López Terrada (1993).

Taken together, these texts exemplify an early modern discourse of wilderness that saturated the lexicon of the natural as well as the human worlds, and in doing so indicates the extent to which these spheres—the natural and the political, the ethical and the ecological—were conceived not as separate or distinct but as mutually constitutive epistemologies, precisely at the historical moment when they were supposed to be diverging. In this chapter, I demonstrate that well into the 17th century, the imbrication of “the human” and “the natural” in accounts of natural environments both distant and domestic, and of their forests in particular, was by no means antiquated or classicizing rhetoric, nor was it simply a mechanism to dehumanize or suppress racial, religious, or gendered “others”;⁹ rather, it indexes a persistent effort by a variety of authors, writing across the geographic and intellectual spectrum of imperial Spain, to give name to what today we would call “human ecology,” and the lingering sense—urgently needed today—that how we engage the natural world has ethical and political implications that we cannot afford to ignore.

Espesura

Espesura or thickness is the quality most often associated with the forest in early modern Spanish texts.¹⁰ We see it appear in connection to the word *bosque* in a variety of

⁹ Of course, the naturalization of the human all-too-often *was* weaponized in this way. For a thorough analysis of this ideology, see Mignolo (1995). But one need look no further than Bartolomé de Las Casas’s 1552 *Brevísima relación de la destrucción de las Indias* for a “first-hand” account of how colonial authorities deployed bad faith natural history and ethnography to justify ethnic and gender violence.

¹⁰ From the Corpus del Español, at corpusdelespanol.org. A proximity search of the adjectives associated with forests from the 1400s–1700s demonstrates that woodlands are

literary genres, from natural histories to miscellanies to picaresque novels, where it suggests closeness, copiousness, and impenetrability. In these texts, the forest is both opaque and fertile, abundant and unyielding. These contradictory qualities suggest a landscape that is simultaneously productive and intractable: in relation to the human world, it represents both *openness*, in the sense of its availability for harvest, and *closure*, that is to say, as an image of fullness or wholeness, a bulwark against breach, a body that resists fragmentation. In this way, the forest operates as an important medium for thinking about the nature of human fertility and the problem of integrity in the early modern period.

In Sebastián de Covarrubias's 1611 *Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española*, a fundamental etymological dictionary of premodern Spanish, the term “*espes(s)ura*” is defined as follows:

ESPESAR, condensar la cosa liquida, del verbo Lat. *spisso*. as. Espeso, lo que es condensado, que ni es solido, ni fluido. Espesso llamamos, al que no es limpio, por estar grasiento. Espesso es trigo en la haza quando nace junto, y no ralo ni esparcido. Espesso, el monte con mucha arboleda, y este modo de estar tal se llama espessura, y la poca limpieza del hombre, o la muger, o del lugar, llamamos espessura. (fol. 377v)

Covarrubias's definition combines the meanings of two Latin words: the verb *spisso*, meaning to thicken, and the adjective *spissus*, which describes objects that are crowded together, compact, or dense. The first indicates physical and chemical processes—condensation, distillation, coagulation—that affect the shape and aspect of things, and the second primarily to the arrangement of things in space but also in time:

overwhelmingly characterized by their “*espes(s)ura*,” followed distantly, though tantalizingly, by “*deleitoso*,” meaning delightful, or pleasing.

both arrows and kisses can come thickly. And *spissus* frequently signifies density in the intellectual sense of something that is complex, difficult, or opaque. But nowhere in the Latin rhizome for *espesura* do we find these words associated with hygiene, as they are in Covarrubias.

What is most striking about the last definition of *espesar* in the *Tesoro* is the lightness with which Covarrubias pivots from the image of a densely wooded mountain to an “unclean” person or place. In the early modern Spanish lexicon, the nature of landscapes and the nature of bodies are closely associated—in fact, barely distinguished—suggesting an almost effortless analogy between topography and physiology: thick spaces are to unclean bodies as clean bodies are to open or empty spaces. An example from *limpieza*, or cleanliness, confirms this analogy: “Muger limpia, muger aseada; casa limpia, casa barrida” (fol. 525v). Although neither *limpieza* nor *espesura* immediately register a connection between cleanliness and order, the image of a *mujer aseada*, one who is carefully “put together”—implying tidiness, self-discipline, and efficiency—suggests that for Covarrubias an unclean landscape, or an unclean body, is one that is somehow disordered.

In early modern Spain, to be a disordered or unruly person—and a woman, in particular—is to be like a forest: thick, difficult, complex, opaque. In this context, the ethical implications of *limpieza* and *espesura* extend beyond the human world into the imaginary of landscapes. When writers describe the *espesura* of a forest they aren’t simply commenting on the relative thickness of the vegetation or the difficulty of the terrain: *espesura*, despite its connotation of fullness and abundance, signifies a lack—of

discipline, decorum, and care. The curiously familiar relationship between plentitude and disorder, fertility and unruliness, thickness and carelessness, suggests a pervasive anxiety not just about the reproductive force of female bodies, but about how to represent the landscapes that seemed most closely analogous to those bodies. Specifically “literary” accounts of the forest tended to treat the question of penetration in the context of romance. Imagined as noxious and potentially lethal form of penetration through the eyes that could strike anybody and any moment, lovesickness was a central concern for writers of every stipe, from moralist translators of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, anonymous “memoirists” of the picaresque novel, to courtly poets and novelists of the pastoral.

Despite the misogynist tendency of early modern discourse on the female body, representations of the *espesura* of forests landscapes don’t use the analogy simply as an ideological justification for the domestication of wilderness or of “unruly” women. It would be overly simple, in other words, to treat “the forest” as a catchall for spaces or bodies that *need* disciplining. Notwithstanding the proliferation of wild men, wolves, and other monsters in literary representations of early modern forests, the central current in these descriptions is not a sense of threat but an uncertainty about the nature of fertility. Carried along by the force of this doubt was the question of *integrity*, both in the physical and the ethical sense of the term. For early modern writers whose cosmology placed human bodies at both the metaphysical and hermeneutic center of the universe, the representation of forests as simultaneously copious and closed does not necessarily imply a desire to control or contain “the other,” but rather an effort to comprehend the dynamic relationship between the self, the community, and the environment. This relationship is

exemplified by the representation of thick forests in Miguel de Cervantes's *Don Quixote*, represented as a space of refuge for a number of marginalized figures who engage directly with their environment as a means of reinscribing themselves upon alternative communities. In short, in the early modern period, the analogy between human body and forest landscape, in both literary and non-literary texts, is not transcendentalist allegory or Romantic nostalgia, but an engaged effort to comprehend the interconnected natures of the earthly environment and the human condition.

Penetration

This ambivalence is exemplified by two apparently divergent natural histories, which appeared twenty years apart at the end of the 16th century. The first, published posthumously in 1570, is the *Jardín de flores curiosas* a vast miscellany by the humanist scholar Antonio de Torquemada (b. 1507–d. 1569), who also penned a popular manual for scribes and a chivalric romance, *Don Olivante de Laura*, savaged, brutally, by Miguel de Cervantes in Part I of the *Quixote*. The *Jardín* itself is staged as a series of leisurely conversations between three friends on a rambling Spanish estate, on topics ranging from cosmography to cosmetics. This proto-encyclopedia is grounded in the citation of medieval and classical authorities, and its gaze, as the title suggests, is trained on aesthetics. It is, in a sense, a literary version of the “curiosity cabinets” popularized in the latter half of the 16th century—miniature domestic museums where the material objects of empire were collected, organized, and displayed. The second history, published in Latin in 1589 and quickly translated into multiple languages, is the *Historia natural y moral de las Indias*, a primary historical, ecological, and ethnographic account the

Americas by the Jesuit missionary José de Acosta (b. 1540–d. 1600). Acosta’s ostensibly firsthand account of the lifeways and environments of the Americas prefigures, rhetorically and thematically, the chronicles and ethnographies that became exemplary of “scientific” writing on the New World, culminating with Alexander von Humboldt’s massive documentation of his American travels at the turn of the 19th century.¹¹

It might be tempting to think of the passage from Torquemada’s armchair curiosities—sourced, primarily, in a classical education and an aristocrat’s library—to Acosta’s mostly eyewitness, politically inflected, code-switching ethnographic work, as a virtual hinge between “premodern” and “modern” epistemologies of nature. And yet the obvious structural and rhetorical differences between these works belie a shared language for describing bodies, environments and landscapes, one that implies that the relationship between the natural and human world is dynamic rather than mechanistic. In other words, both texts—one that clearly looks backward fondly to authorities of the past and another that, by privileging observation and testimony to subvert these same sources, heralds the discourses of nature to come—share a descriptive language that understands environmental phenomena and human agents as part of a single, complex ecosystem. Common vocabularies of landscapes like forests, which confuse the boundaries between aspects of the human and the non-human, are evidence of this shared attitude. Juxtaposing Torquemada and Acosta’s radically different encyclopedic projects can help us to tease out the linguistic and thus ideological roots of the discourse of nature in the

¹¹ On the genealogy of nature writing in the Americas, see, for example, O’Gorman (1961), Pratt (2007), and Wulf (2015).

early modern Atlantic world, one that is more sensitive to the relationships between human communities and their environments than is often assumed.

The fifth book of Antonio de Torquemada's *Jardín de flores curiosas*—whose reference to “curiosity” suggests the epistemological stance of its leisurely protagonists: detached, inquisitive observers—describes the people and topography of the world's northernmost regions, *las regiones septentrionales*. “Naturaleza,” Torquemada writes, “los cría en aquellas partes más robustos y fuertes; y para los tiempos rigurosos y ásperos tienen cuevas calientes debajo de tierra, adonde se meten; [...] *los montes y bosques son muchos y muy espesos*: adondequiera hallarán aparejo para hacer grandes fuegos, y así, tienen defensivos para ampararse del rigor del frío” (1982, 429; emphasis added). On the one hand, the thick forest serves the northern people as a resource against the harsh climate; the forest is a *locus* of security. At the same time, it is also a source of threat. The *Jardín* overflows with stories of strange animals emerging from “the thickness of the forest” to murder people or destroy communities. One of these stories, from the sixth book, exemplifies how Torquemada's idea of the forest operates along the dual axes of fertility and penetration. The story describes a strange incident that occurred in a town in Germany, “tan cerca de una montaña muy espesa de arboleda, que los árboles casi se entretejían por una parte con las casas; y fueron tantos los lobos que en aquella montaña se juntaron, y con tan rabiosa hambre, que *salían de la espesura y se venían cabe el lugar*” (465; emphasis added). So great was the threat that no one dared to venture alone into the wilderness, lest the wolves attack and literally tear them to pieces.

In this narrative, the forest that provides firewood and shelter can also threaten to overwhelm the community: the trees are so thick that they are on the verge of absorbing the houses at the farthest edge of the town. And it is from this density that the wolves emerge, laying siege to the town and its inhabitants, who fear they must abandon the community to be reclaimed by nature, as though the natural teleology of the thick forest landscape is desolation. But Torquemada's is a triumphant narrative, and the townspeople determine to penetrate the impenetrable:

y armándose muy bien, sin que ninguna cosa les quedase descubierta, y poniendo encima unas ropas negras para encubrir las armas [...] se metieron por la montaña adentro con sendos puñales en cada mano y con otros cuatro cada uno en la cinta para cuando perdiesen aquéllos, y iban poco apartados, para poderse socorrer cuando se viesen en necesidad. [...] Y tornando a salir otras tres o cuatro veces y metiéndose más adentro en la montaña, fue tan grande la mortandad que con este aviso hicieron en los lobos, que los que quedaban desaparecieron y se fueron a otras partes, y el pueblo quedó libre de aquel trabajo y peligro. (466)

Torquemada's attention to the details of the townspeople's weaponry is not incidental. The description of the daggers that they carry into the forest underscores the act of penetration symbolized by the revolt against the forest: the liberation of the town is a violent act of opening and dispersal that cleaves through the perpetual closure of the forest landscape—though its success depends, ironically, on the “thickness” of the community's military organization, where effectively each townsman must become a tree in a thick forest that will choke out the wolves. In the massacre of the wolves, the townspeople defend the integrity of their community and of their bodies, thus the earlier image of a dismembered victim followed by the careful description of the spiked armor of the soldiers, from the natural *espesura* of the forest by puncturing the bodies of the

wolves. In this story, the thickness of the forest, its *closure*, stands in contrast to its effects on human bodies and communities as a force of fragmentation and disorder.

In José de Acosta's *Historia natural y moral de las Indias*, the intense fertility of the American landscape is described in terms of its thickness. "En pastos excede la Nueva España," Acosta writes, "y así hay innumerables crías de caballos, vacas, ovejas y de lo demás. También es muy abundante de frutas y no menos de sementeras de todo grano; en efecto, es la tierra más proveída y abastada de Indias" (1987, 205). The American landscape is one defined by its copiousness and variety, and yet this overwhelming fertility belies a deficiency. "Con ser infinita tierra, tiene poca habitación, porque de suyo cría grandes y espesos arcabucos (que así llaman allá los bosques espesos), y en los llanos hay muchas ciénagas y pantanos" (206). The fertility that creates an abundance of livestock and produce also generates thick wilderness—a process of spontaneous restoration that is accelerated, Acosta hastens to remind us, by the relative scarcity of people: "Otra razón principal de su poca habitación es haber permanecido pocos de los indios naturales por la inconsideración y desorden de los primeros conquistadores y pobladores" (206).

In this description, Acosta connects the proliferation of swamps and thick forests—*arcabucos*, a Taíno word—with the decimation of the native population during the conquest of America: the "disorder" and "thoughtlessness" of colonization created the conditions for a disordered and stagnant landscape. For Acosta, the American landscape's thickness also signals its emptiness. Coupled with the region's "warm and humid" climate and natural copiousness, this emptiness generates the landscape's inhospitable,

even impenetrable, nature: “y así la tierra produce en extremo vicio infinidad de estas plantas silvestres y naturales, de donde viene a ser inhabitable y aun impenetrable la mayor parte de Indias, por bosques y montañas y arcabucos cerradísimos, que perpetuamente se han abierto” (281). In Jose de Acosta’s natural history, the American wilderness is ultimately defined by the proliferation of *closure*, a condition that serves as living evidence of the genocide of its indigenous population. Acosta’s otherwise incongruous commentary on the sloppiness of colonization works to underscore the relationship between the extreme closure of the landscape and its desolation. And the haunting final image of a continuously unfolding or “opening” closure further suggests that for the Jesuit naturalist the forest’s impenetrability is not simply material, but ontological.

In both Torquemada’s *Jardín* and Acosta’s *Historia natural*, “thickness” is not simply a natural state or a human construct, but something dynamic, a relationship of humans to other humans and to a landscape and its non-human inhabitants. Thickness is certainly a problem for the imperial imaginary of the land and the body, but not one that can or even *ought to* be worked out by clear-cutting or razing forests, or by domesticating the the feminine. Acosta even claims that the root problem is in fact the excess of coloniality itself. Both authors, though in different ways, indicate that any project that seeks to circumscribe the natural world will inevitably be forced to confront the limitations of Western knowledge and experience. And both suggest, though they never spell out, that attention to the patterns of nature can offer a way to see and engage the world otherwise. At the birth of the discourse of nature and “the natural world” in early

modernity, the quasi-encyclopedic projects undertaken by Antonio de Torquemada and José de Acosta, projects that would seem, on the surface, to attempt a totalizing epistemological “closure” of their subjects, in fact shy away from this impulse—one which we are accustomed to consider inherent to the imperial mind-set—in favor of descriptions and rhetorical strategies that are themselves “thick” with complexity.

Integrity

The relationship between the closed nature of the forest landscape and the open condition of the human body is a central issue in representations of *bosques* in early modern Spanish pastoral literature. In the pastoral, the difficult and even paradoxical concept of a wilderness landscape that is simultaneously closed and copious is filtered through two traditions. The first of these is the classical *topos* of the Golden Age, imagined as a prelapsarian era of innocence and bounty before vice and labor corrupted the human condition. The second is the mythological figure of the goddess Diana, whose dynamic nature as both a patron of virginity and midwifery combines with her affinity for hunting and wooded landscapes. Whereas in the first tradition the natural world is imagined as abundant and copious, yielding pliantly and generously to basic human needs for sustenance and shelter, in the second it is essentially chaste and unyielding and yet charged with the stewardship of human fertility. Representations of forests in early modern Spanish pastoral literature attempt to reconcile these two traditions through the concept of integrity.

Although the forests of early modern literary texts—and especially pastoral texts—bear little resemblance to naturalist accounts like those of Acosta’s, and none

whatsoever to what modern readers recognize as “realist” landscapes, this does not mean that literary representations of forests, mountains, or of wilderness in general, are bereft of interest as such. Whereas nearly every modern edition of a Renaissance Spanish pastoral text takes remarkable pains to emphasize the *lack* of interest that their authors showed for landscapes, this attitude should give readers pause. One has to wonder, if the authors of early modern Iberian pastoral were really so disinterested in landscapes, and in the forest especially, then why have their characters move from one landscape to another at crucial moments in the narrative? Why are specific trees, specific birds, and specific bodies of water repeatedly connected to specific characters or specific forms of interaction among people and between people and their surroundings? If tedium was the motive for intermittently changing the scenery, many other aspects of the pastoral, from its rigid conventionality to its repetitiveness, don’t betray such a concern. In the pastoral literature of early modern Iberia, the idea of “the forest” was a natural way to grapple with the problem of love, but for a culture increasingly invested in yet simultaneously dismayed by the penetration of foreign wilderness and the decimation of its own, it was also a way to address the nature of the forest itself.

The central focus of this chapter is to demonstrate the ways that the story of Marcela and Grisóstomo—the first pastoral episode of the 1605 *Quixote*—takes up these concerns but expands their political scope. Whereas in Sannazaro’s *Arcadia*, Garcilaso’s eclogues, and Montemayor’s *La Diana* the pastoral world encompasses the full extent of the textual landscape, in the *Quixote* the pastoral is contained to specific locations and sequences. I argue that the pastoral functions not in isolation but in contrast to (and in

contact with) other discourses, in particular to the ethic of chivalry. As such, many of the novel's readers have noted that it represents one among many literary and political structures that the *Quixote* juxtaposes and plays off each other. The myths of Diana and the Golden Age reappear in the pastoral episodes of the *Quixote* as conventions and rituals that individuals can choose to occupy. As in the pastoral texts that came before, in the *Quixote* these myths are touchstones in characters' efforts to reimagine themselves as autonomous subjects, as members of a community, and as bodies within an environment. Whereas most of her fellow "shepherds" (and most modern scholars, for that matter) read Marcela's identification with wilderness as a form of unruliness, even a symptom of widespread ecological death, her claims to the forest as an image of both integrity and fertility in fact connect her to an important tradition in early modern Spanish pastoral literature, one that employs pastoral ritual as a model for generating alternative ecologies.

Through the pastoral, early modern Spanish writers addressed the question of how to inhabit a landscape hostile to human culture. Moreover, the ongoing confrontation with the American landscape and its people, in conjunction with the growing sense of the human body as a kind of wilderness potentially available to domestication and the nation as a political body that could be penetrated and disordered, generated an urgent need for ways of reimagining our place alongside and even within the forest. In the pastoral, the traditional idea of the forest as an impenetrable space whose copiousness presented an ever-present threat to human communities was reinscribed to address the nature of love and the integrity of the individual. As such, the forest provided a useful analogue for the simultaneous impenetrability of human desire and the potential penetrability of human

bodies. In the early modern period, the problems of fertility and chastity did not exist in isolation from considerations of the environment, and the *bosques* of the pastoral literature of early modern Iberia were the ideal places for these concerns to meet.

In the pastoral, integrity often appears under the guise of chastity. The forest is the natural habitat of the chaste lovers that we encounter in the pastorals of Jacopo Sannazaro, in the eclogues of Garcilaso de la Vega (especially the second eclogue), and in Jorge de Montemayor's pastoral novel *La Diana*, widely recognized as the model for the Spanish pastoral literature that followed it. In these texts, the idea of the forest—and of wilderness generally—is expressed primarily through two traditional tropes. The first of these is the Golden Age, a utopian landscape that provides sustenance and shelter to the human community without compulsion by agriculture or politics. The second is the myth of Diana, the virgin goddess associated with the forest and hunting, but also the patron of pregnancy and childbirth. These myths express an image of nature and the wild that is both closed (not penetrated) and yet remarkably fertile. In their effort to grapple with the nature of wilderness, pastoral representations of forests throughout the sixteenth century look to these myths because they describe forms of fertility that do not necessarily link thickness with disorder or productivity with compulsion. When the shepherds of pastoral literature make their way into and through the forest landscape, their concerns frequently turn to how the integrity of desire (*libertad*) and the integrity of bodies (*castidad*, *limpieza*) may be reconciled with the needs and desires of the community, and, ultimately, with nature's ability to provide for these.

In contrast to the dominant tendency in early modern literature to treat the thickness of the forest as a physical, political, or even intellectual threat, in the pastoral we find an effort to reinscribe the forest landscape as a site where fertility and integrity can come to terms. This effort is colored by the pastoral's awareness of the fragility of human bodies and the contingency of our relationships. Its shepherds search the woods for something they know they may not find, and perhaps cannot. Pastoral forests thus represent the confrontation between integrity as an *ethos* and integrity as a socially constructed physical condition. And yet pastoral forests aren't simply an allegory for the potential to reimagine human bodies, but an image of actual wooded landscapes that its characters move through and inhabit. In the pastoral, the "open" closure of the forest is a way to reconsider how people and their communities interact with their environment. The thickness of the forest, rather than represent opacity and unruliness, comes to symbolize forms of physical and spiritual integrity unavailable (perhaps unimaginable) elsewhere. In this context, the artificiality of pastoral landscapes make apparent the structures of thought that give shape to the ways we imagine our own bodies and selves as autonomous yet vulnerable. Its artificiality enacts or dramatizes the ways that we imagine our bodies taking shape around a "person" that is both connected to yet disconnected from other persons and from the surrounding environment. In the pastoral, these concerns come together around the question of the nature of fertility and the problems it presents to desire for integrity.

2. PASTORAL FORESTS

Copious

In the context of early modern Iberia, perhaps the most important classical source for the image of wilderness as an endlessly fertile and yet ultimately closed landscape was the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid.¹² Here's the description of the Golden Age from Book 1 of the *Metamorphoses*:

Golden was that first age, which, with no one to compel, without a law, of its own will, kept faith and did the right. There was no fear of punishment, no threatening words were to be read on brazen tablets; no suppliant throng gazed fearfully upon its judge's face; but without defenders lived secure. Not yet had the pine-tree, felled on its native mountains, descended thence into the watery plain to visit other lands; men knew no shores except their own. Not yet were cities begirt with steep moats; there were no trumpets of straight, no horns of curving brass, no swords or helmets. There was no need at all of armed men, for nations, secure from war's alarms, passed the years in gentle ease. *The earth herself, without compulsion, untouched by hoe or plowshare, of herself gave all things needful.* And men, content with food which came with no one's seeking, gathered the arbute fruit, strawberries from the mountain-sides, cornel-cherries, berries hanging thick upon the prickly bramble, and acorns fallen from the spreading tree of Jove. Then spring was everlasting, and gentle zephyrs with warm breath played with the flowers that sprang unplanted. *Anon the earth, untilled, brought forth her stores of grain, and the fields, though unfallowed, grew white with the heavy, bearded wheat.* Streams of milk and streams of sweet nectar flowed, and yellow honey was distilled from the verdant oak. (1984, 8–9; emphasis added)

The two descriptions of the earth rendered in italics emphasize the inviolate yet productive character of the earth in the Golden Age: despite the absence of agriculture, the land is imagined as copious and endlessly fertile. In the first description, the central idea is expressed by the image of an earth uncompelled and untouched—*inmunis* and

¹² The *Metamorphoses* circulated widely in Spanish translations of varying quality during the 16th century, for instance by Trujillo (1550), Pérez Sigler (1580), and Bustamante (1595). For a thorough analysis of the importance of Ovid for early modern Iberian poetics, see De Armas (2010).

intacta in the Latin—which implies that agriculture is a form of compulsion and penetration (or fragmentation). In the Golden Age, the earth does not need to be compelled to bear fruit, but does so freely, while preserving its condition of closure.¹³

The myth of the Golden Age is famously employed by Don Quixote at the threshold of the first pastoral episode in the novel, whose representations of forests will be the focus of this chapter. In Part 1, Chapter XI, Don Quixote and Sancho are drawn into the intricate relationships of the pastoral world among a group of goatherds, where as will be demonstrated, the problematic thickness of the forest is made explicit in a scene where Don Quixote famously invokes the myth of the Golden Age. In contrast to a hasty meal of raw onions and stale bread recently shared by Don Quixote and Sancho as they flee from the violent encounter with the *vizcaíno*, the goatherds “tendiendo por el suelo unas pieles de ovejas, aderezaron con mucha priesa su rústica mesa y convidaron a los dos, con muestras de muy buena voluntad, con lo que tenían” (2004, 96). After the course of mutton, the goatherds “tendieron sobre las zaleas gran cantidad de bellotas avellanadas, y juntamente pusieron un medio queso, más duro que si fuera hecho de argamasa” (97). It is at this moment, inspired by the sight of the sweet acorns, that Don Quixote launches into his now-famous speech. He imagines that, “a nadie le era necesario, para alcanzar su ordinario sustento, tomar otro trabajo que alzar la mano y alcanzarle de las robustas encinas, que liberalmente les estaban convidando con su dulce y sazonado fruto” (97). Holm oaks, springs, rivers, beehives, and cork oaks freely offered themselves to the carefree inhabitants of the Golden Age, when “aún no se había atrevido

¹³ See Levin (1969) for the wider social and implications of this image.

la pesada reja del corvo arado a abrir ni visitar las entrañas piadosas de nuestra primera madre; que ella, sin ser forzada, ofrecía, por todas las partes de su fértil y espacioso seno, lo que pudiese hartar, sustentar y deleitar a los hijos que entonces la poseían” (97–98). As in Ovid and elsewhere, Don Quixote’s speech on the Golden Age presents an image of nature intact and uncompelled yet copious.¹⁴

Scholarly readings of this speech tend to condemn Don Quixote as hopelessly idealistic. Peter Dunn, for instance, sees Don Quixote as someone “seduced by [an] alluring [fantasy] of innocence” (1972, 4), while Michael McGaha infers a “desire to escape from freedom and the responsibility which it entails into the infantile security of instinctive behavior” (1977, 46). Rosilie Hernández Pecoraro’s reading is more generous toward Don Quixote, though less so toward the pastoral wilderness:

In the Golden Age speech the pastoral paradigm is finally negated. The Knight Errant's imagination allows for a world where the shepherdess as subject finds herself unencumbered by the demands of idealization, narcissism, and sublimation. In fact, it is exactly this difference what distinguishes in his vision the ‘true’ golden age from a much less innocent present state of affairs. I would argue, therefore, that despite the idealized virginal innocence ascribed to these damsels, we should not dismiss the potentially subversive import of Don Quixote's imagined idyll as a bastion for the feminine. (2006, 215)

As we will argue below, Don Quixote’s speech is not a negation, but an affirmation of an important pastoral imaginary of wilderness. These negative readings make sense: despite the elaborate ceremony with which Don Quixote presents himself and his squire at the table, he fails to see that the meal he’s just eaten didn’t simply fall from the trees, but was carefully prepared from the killing and cooking of the mutton, to

¹⁴ See Stagg (1985) for the sources of this image of a feminized and eroticized, infinitely copious Nature.

the collection of nuts and acorns, and presented to him with elaborate ceremony. Lost on him, in other words, is the fact that the foods he imagines pouring forth effortlessly from a copious wilderness are the products of carefully organized foraging, agricultural, and domestic practices.

Opaque

In Book 3 of the *Metamorphoses*, Ovid tells the story of the confrontation between the goddess Diana and Actaeon, the grandson of Cadmus. After a long morning hunt, Actaeon releases his companions from their labors and wanders alone into the forest:

There was a vale in that region, thick grown with pine and cypress with their sharp needles. 'Twas called Gargaphie, the sacred haunt of high-girt Diana. In its most secret nook there was a well-shaded grotto, wrought by no artist's hand. But Nature by her own cunning had imitated art; for she had shaped a native arch of the living rock and soft tufa. A sparkling spring with its slender stream babbled on one side and widened into a pool girt with grassy banks. Here the goddess of the wild woods, when weary with the chase, was wont to bathe her maiden limbs in the crystal water. (135–137)

This description brings together in a few lines the concepts of the sacred grove, natural artifice, and the virginity of the deity of the woods. The thick, closed nature of the forest is captured in the image of the pine and cypress trees—*Vallis erat piceis et acuta densa cupressu*—whose sharp needles at once gesture to the act of penetration that Actaeon is committing and to the penetration that his own body suffers as he ventures deeper into the grove. Yet at its center the grove opens into an arch that frames the pool, creating the conditions for the spectacle of Diana's bath. In the final line, the concepts of

wilderness and virginity are joined in the image of the nude body of Diana—*hic dea silvarum venatu fessa solebat virgineos artus liquido perfundere rore*.

When Actaeon sees Diana nude, she throws water in his face and he is suddenly transformed into a stag. As he flees in terror, he doubts which direction to turn: “Shall he go home to the royal palace, or shall he stay skulking in the woods? Shame blocks one course and fear the other” (139). It is in this moment of hesitation that his hunting dogs see him and chase him down: “They throng him on every side and, plunging their muzzles in his flesh, mangle their master under the deceiving form of the deer. Nor, as they say, till he had been done to death by many wounds, was the wrath of the quiver-bearing goddess appeased” (141–143). Actaeon’s punishment for penetrating the sanctity of Diana’s woods and for witnessing the sacred spectacle of her bath is to be torn limb from limb by his own hounds.¹⁵

In this scene, the forest, represented by the nude divinity whose sacred topography Actaeon has transgressed, is what cannot be seen, what is opaque. The moment that it is read by the human eye—which is to say, represented—it ceases to be wilderness. Actaeon’s transformation into a stag is a secondary effect of his true punishment, which is to be robbed of speech. As she flings the water at him, Diana curses Actaeon: “And as she poured the avenging drops upon his hair, she spoke these words foreboding his coming doom: ‘Now you are free to tell that you have seen me all unrobed—if you can tell’” (137). In losing the capacity for speech and having his hands

¹⁵ Miller’s translation of verse 250 in the Latin—*dilacerant falsi dominum sub imagine cervi*—around the verb “to mangle” does not quite capture the sense of the scene, which is a dismemberment.

transformed into hooves, Actaeon loses the ability to relate or represent what he has witnessed: it cannot be made legible and thus opened to others. The closure of Diana's woods is not simply a physical quality symbolized by the pines and cypresses, it is ontological. If Actaeon's clumsy, self-assured, and ultimately lethal penetration of Diana's grove represents our species's egocentric and ultimately catastrophic relationship of the forest throughout history, then the myth of Diana expresses humanity's fundamental inability to comprehend the forest not as a thing, but as an agent.

And yet, like the earth in the myth of the Golden Age that eventually, as time passes, succumbs to the blade of the plowshare, the sanctity and integrity of Diana's woods is also contingent. As Theresa Krier notes, "The valence that protected enclosures possess for [Diana] is a measure of her anxiety when their boundaries are threatened. Geographical boundaries are continuous with personal boundaries, and the transgression of the grove continuous with transgression of her selfhood—hence the blush, itself an unwilling exhibition of vulnerability" (1990, 64). While both myths describe a vision of nature that is both fertile and closed, they likewise recognize the contingency and fragility of this condition: time and transgression can transform these landscapes into a condition of openness. Whether this transformation is defined by compulsion and disorder, or if human communities can find alternative ways of imagining and engaging this closure, are central questions in early modern pastoral literature. Despite the golden haze that surrounds both of these myths, they do not index humanity's longing for another, simpler world, although this is how they are almost universally read. What they describe, rather, is a recognition on the part of authors that the interconnected and

interdependent fertility and frailty of the human body is mirrored in the landscapes of wilderness. This recognition will be activated in the early modern pastoral texts that push their shepherds through forest landscapes, spaces inhabited by feminine agents who embody the characteristics at the center of these foundational myths to the poetics of wilderness.

Chaste

The forest is the predominant landscape for two of the foundational pastoral texts of the early modern Iberian context: Jacopo Sannazaro's *Arcadia*, first published in Naples in 1504 and translated into Spanish in 1547, and Garcilaso de la Vega's three eclogues—arguably the most influential pastoral texts for the later works by Cervantes, Góngora, and Lope de Vega. In these texts, many aspects of forest come to be embodied in feminine shepherdesses, while not negating the shepherds' engagement with the material environment around them. Jacopo Sannazaro's *Arcadia* is bursting with forest landscapes. Its shepherds are constantly in motion from woods to pastures and back again. The songs and sports that structure the narrative of the *Arcadia* punctuate more prolonged moments of silence and physical engagement with the environment. In Chapter 5, for example, the company of shepherds come upon a powerful river that makes a deafening sound, before which they fall silent:

Since standing amid such hurly-burly we would have been able to take delight neither in conversation nor in singing, by easy stages we began to climb the not very difficult mountain, on which were growing perhaps a thousand cypresses and pines together, so huge and spreading that each one of itself would have been almost enough to resemble a whole grove. (1966, 57–58)

Soon the shepherds stop to rest, “quietly observing these things with attentive eye, not mindful of singing or anything else” (58). This scene of silent and reverent attention to a grove of cypress and pine—an image that both recalls and inverts the myth of Diana and Actaeon—is almost immediately followed by an eclogue that describes the shepherds’ efforts to achieve a condition of sympathy of the surrounding environment. In the fifth chapter and eclogue of Sannazaro’s *Arcadia*, the shepherds appear to be asking whether there is an ethical way for human communities to open the sacred grove of the forest.

The counterpoint to this question comes in Chapter 8, in which the shepherd Carino describes his childhood love of hunting with a feminine companion:

She being from her tender years dedicated to the service of Diana, and I in like wise born and brought up in the woods, we readily grew acquainted with the forests together, I with her and she with me; and as the Gods would have it, we found in ourselves so much conformity of manners that so great a love and a tenderness came to being between us that neither the one nor the other ever knew any pleasure or delight except as we shared it together. (77)

This intimacy is shattered when Carino falls in love with the shepherdess, a devotee of Diana, but at first refuses to admit it. When he can no longer tolerate her curiosity about the identity of his beloved, he tells her to gaze into a nearby pool: “She, like one most desirous of seeing it, innocently and without forethought lowering her eyes to the placid waters, saw her own self depicted in them” (81). The chaste relationship that the two shepherds had until then fostered comes apart in the spectacle of the body of this Diana figure. His desire to possess her as a love object and her curiosity to know the identity of that object are weighted more or less equally in the blame.

As in the myth of Diana and Actaeon, the innocence of the viewer is beside the point (in the *Metamorphosis*, Actaeon's intrusion of Diana's bath is described not as intentional peeping but as an unhappy accident). The act of seeing is a form of penetration that threatens the chaste relationship that these shepherds had maintained with each other and with their environment. The breach of the forest space represented by the spectacle of the Diana figure in Sannazaro's *Arcadia* speaks to the fragility of the closure and integrity of this landscape. When Carino confesses to seeing the shepherdess not as a hunting companion but as an object of desire and the potential site of fertility that would imply openness and availability, the integrity of her own desire for chastity comes under threat.

Garcilaso de la Vega's second eclogue stages a strikingly similar scene. Early in the poem, the shepherd Albanio describes his love for the shepherdess Camila, whose chastity and taste for hunting and forest landscapes make her a natural Diana figure: "en su verde niñez siendo ofrecida / por montes y por selvas a Diana, /ejercitaba allí su edad florida" (1969, lines 173–175). The subsequent description of their relationship—bird hunts, mountain hiking, reverence for the forest, and so on—closely follows Carino's in Sannazaro's *Arcadia*, but Garcilaso makes explicit the relationship between chastity, integrity, and the forest:

iba de un hora en otra la estrechez
 haciéndose mayor, acompañada
de un amor sano y lleno de pureza.
 ¿Qué montaña dejó de ser pisada
 de nuestros pies? ¿Qué bosque o selva umbrosa
 no fue de nuestra caza fatigada? (182–187; emphasis added).

In these lines, the juxtaposition of chaste love with the forest setting that is remarkably fertile—these lines preface a long description of the abundance of forest game—underscores the complex relationship between wilderness, fertility, and chastity at work in this poem.

A few stanzas on, Albanio describes in further detail the nature of their engagement with the forest environment: “nosotros, yendo fuera de camino, / buscábamos un valle, el más secreto / y de conversación menos vecino” (206–208). Like the traveling shepherds in Chapter 5 of Sannazaro’s *Arcadia* who fall silent before the spectacle of the surrounding environment, the wilderness incursions that Albanio describes in the second eclogue are characteristically silent. The relationship between Camila and Albanio starts to come apart when Camila and not the environment becomes the primary object of Albanio’s gaze: “El placer de miralla con terrible / y fiero desear sentí mezclarse, / que siempre me llevaba a lo imposible” (320–322). The unnamed impossible thing in the final verse is of course the possession of Camila’s body. Because the shepherdess is so closely associated with the forest environment, Albanio’s transgressive, indecorous gaze at Camila’s body arguably symbolizes an attitude of compulsion and control toward the forest itself. Albanio’s gaze is intolerable in this pastoral world because it betrays the *ethos* of the forest embodied in the figure of Diana. In other words, Albanio’s “terrible” desire to possess Camila suggests an analogous desire to disrupt the sanctity of the forest.

Garcilaso reinforces the analogy between the body of the shepherdess and the forest environment when Camila finally appears on the scene, tracking a deer she had wounded with her bow and lamenting her poor aim:

En el siniestro lado soterrada,
la flecha enherbolada iba mostrando,
las plumas blanqueando solas fuera,
y háceme que muera con buscalte. (725–728)

This picture of a wounded deer shot through with a poisoned arrow signals to the contemporary reader that the subtext of Camila's hunt is the fragility and open condition of the human body in love. But Camila nevertheless refuses to allow her own body to be opened or to be a spectacle. She invokes the nearby pool—"¿Sabes que me quitaste, fuente clara, / los ojos de la cara?" (746–747)—blaming it for the absence of her companion, but immediately restates her claims to chastity and integrity:

¡Dios ya quiera
que antes Camila muera que padezca
culpa por do merezca ser echada
de la selva sagrada de Diana! (749–752).

Camila justifies her disdain as an act of reverence to Diana. Absent from her claims to chastity are any moralist or theological demands of virginity conceived as a form of physical and spiritual purity. Instead, she imagines her chastity as form of intimacy with the surrounding environment, one that while exceedingly copious nevertheless exemplifies *limpieza*. When she finally confronts Albanio, her reproach is an ethical one: "¿Tú no violaste nuestra compañía, / quiriéndola torcer por el camino / que de la vida honesta se desvía?" (817–819). In Garcilaso's second eclogue, the forest landscape grounds and justifies Camila's claims to both physical and ethical integrity.

She looks to the forest because it is in the thickness and opacity of this landscape that she finds an image of the self she can claim as her own.

Coherent

Like Garcilaso's eclogues and Sannazaro's *Arcadia*, Jorge de Montemayor's pastoral novel treats forests as spaces that reproduce an ethical image of the self. But in Montemayor's *La Diana*, descriptions of the forest landscape are not contained to isolated encounters with thick groves that echo the virgin goddess's sanctuary. Rather, they encompass almost the entire narrative: in *La Diana*, landscapes that are *not* forests are the exception. When at various crossroads in the narrative the shepherds are delivered onto the relatively open spaces of fields, pastures, even cities, it's as though the reader is being given a chance to come up for air, so thick and numerous are the forests that otherwise surround the shepherds and that provide the setting for the novel's most electrifying and fascinating moments. As a group, *La Diana's* shepherd-pilgrims push through a variety of forests; they repeatedly find each other either emerging from or taking refuge at the edge of forests; their collective sanctuary is a small wood that offers shelter and comfort from the elements and their toil; and their pilgrimage at the center of the novel's narrative arc takes them to the very center of a forest. And because the forest is the primary landscape in a novel that is, after all, named after the deity that for the sixteenth-century authors of pastoral literature was most closely associated with

wilderness, it is arguable that the nature of forests was in fact a *central* concern for Montemayor as he wrote *La Diana*.¹⁶

The curious absence of the shepherdess Diana from most of the book further suggests that *La Diana* is indeed a *roman à clef*, but not in the sense that scholars of pastoral are accustomed to think. Arguably, for Montemayor “Diana” is in fact a pseudonym for “the forest”—imagined both as a topographical structure and a structure of thought that, given the generic constraints of pastoral, he could not name directly as a protagonist but that he nevertheless treats as such. In *La Diana*, Montemayor’s first interest is of course the nature of love and the question of chastity, but this does not preclude a parallel interest in the forest not as a metaphor but as a thing in itself. Of course, in the case of an early modern “book of shepherds,” the nature of early modern

¹⁶ In her edition of the novel, Asunción Rallo insists that Montemayor demonstrated little interest in landscape and employed scene changes simply to conform to generic conventions. In the opening scene of the novel, Sireno, returning from exile, stops at the foot of a beech tree and gazes across the landscape that once brought him so much comfort: “Arrimóse al pie de una haya, comenzó a tender sus ojos por la hermosa ribera hasta que llegó con ellos al lugar donde primero había visto la hermosura, gracia, honestidad de la pastora Diana, aquella en quien naturaleza sumó todas las perfecciones que por muchas partes había repartido” (1991, 111). In a footnote to this passage, Rallo, following Bruce Damiani, notes that the beech “es símbolo de la paz que caracteriza el ámbito pastoril, siendo elemento importante para la definición de la vida rural, simple y natural, en la tradición que la opone al mundo urbano, caracterizado por la vanidad y ambición” (111n13). For Rallo, the natural environment in *La Diana* is simply an emblem for “the pastoral environment” and not of interest in itself as a space that characters occupy with their bodies. But what should strike us instead is not the beech tree, which serves to frame the scene, but Sireno’s act of gazing. The *very first thing* that Montemayor chooses to describe in his pastoral novel, and in elaborate detail, is an act of gazing—not indecorously at a feminine companion but intensely, emotionally, with a deep sense of loss and vulnerability but also of connection and fullness—at *the earth*. The opening scene of Montemayor’s *La Diana* (and many more that follow), rather than exemplify the author’s attention to convention, in fact demonstrates his profound interest in landscape.

cosmology meant that “a thing in itself” necessarily read as “a thing in itself in relation to human beings.” But just as Montemayor would not have conceived of landscapes in isolation of human beings, neither would he have conceived of human relationships in isolation from the surrounding environment. For Montemayor and other authors of pastoral, to consider the nature of fertility and the problem of integrity was to consider the nature of the forest and the problem of its thickness.

Montemayor presents readers with a variety of ways of imagining and inhabiting forests because he really thought them worthy of our consideration. In the novel’s early going, Sireno’s memories of his now-defunct relationship with the shepherdess Diana recall scenes from Sannazaro and Garcilaso. “Pues cuántos días l’ half atendiéndome / en esta clara fuente, y yo buscándola / por aquel soto ’speso, y deshaciéndome” (1991, 133). The lovers’ encounter in the forest quickly becomes a full-on residence: “Después la flecha y arco apercibíamos / y otras veces la red, y ella siguéndome, / jamás sin caza ‘nuestr’ aldea volvíamos” (133). But this typical scene from Book 1 is just the first of many. Every one of the seven books of *La Diana* features a key scene or description that takes place either within or at the edge of a forest. In these scenes, the shepherds struggle to understand and reconcile themselves with the nature of lovesickness and with the problems it presents for their understanding of integrity.

In Book 2, for example, as the shepherds and their nymph guides make their way into a thick forest, the nymphs are attacked by three “savages”: “Y fue que, habiéndose alejado muy poco de adonde los pastores estaban, salieron de entre unas retamas altas, a mano derecha del bosque, tres salvajes, de extraña grandeza y fealdad” (185–186). The

assailants are quickly dispatched when Felismena, one of the novel's central protagonists, bursts from the forest, bow in hand, in a description so visually compelling that it's worth citing in its entirety:

Mas no tardó mucho que de entre la espesura del bosque, junto a la fuente donde cantaban, salió una pastora de tan grande hermosura y disposición que los que la vieron quedaron admirados. Su arco tenía colgado del brazo izquierdo, y una aljaba de saetas al hombro, en las manos un bastón de silvestre encina, en el cabo del cual había una muy larga punta de acero. Pues como así viese las tres ninfas, y la contienda entre los dos salvajes y los pastores, que ya no esperaban sino la muerte, poniendo con gran presteza una aguda saeta en su arco, con tan grandísima fuerza y destreza la despidió que al uno de los salvajes se la dejó escondida en el duro pecho; de manera que la de amor, que el corazón le traspasaba, perdió su fuerza y el salvaje la vida, a vueltas della. Y no fue perezosa en poner otra saeta en su arco ni menos diestra en tiralla, pues fue de manera que acabó con ella las pasiones enamoradas del segundo salvaje, como las del primero había acabado. Y queriendo tirar al tercero que en guarda de las tres ninfas estaba, no pudo tan presto hacedlo que él no se viniese a juntar con ella, queriéndole herir con su pesado alfanje. La hermosa pastora alzó el bastón y, como el golpe descargase sobre las barras de fino acero que tenía, el alfanje fue hecho dos pedazos, y la hermosa pastora le dio tan gran golpe con su bastón por encima de la cabeza que le hizo arrodillar, y apuntándole con la acerada punta a los ojos, con tan gran fuerza le apretó que por medio de los sesos se lo pasó a la otra parte; y el feroz salvaje, dando un espantable grito, cayó muerto en el suelo. (188–189)

The repeated references to bodily penetration in this scene, brought to bear by a woman whose demeanor and weaponry strongly recall the figure of Diana, suggests that what this scene stages is the confrontation between two ideas of what the forest represents. Both the savages and the Diana figure Felismena emerge from the thickness of forest as though they were its natural elements. The disorder and lasciviousness that the savages represent is quickly subjugated with decisive and ruthless force by this figure of chastity untroubled by her role as a deliverer of death. Whereas in the similar scene from Torquemada's *Jardín* the penetrative force is generated in the urban space, and by men, in Montemayor the forest itself is the source of the quelling, ordering force

represented, in the final instance, by Felismena's spear. As the shepherds embark on their pilgrimage, the forest is represented initially as a source of disorder but ultimately as a source of integrity. This reversal of the paradigm that Torquemada's *Jardín* shares with many other authors is carried along by the shepherds into the forest's depths, suggesting that their penetration of this landscape is not a violation, but something different.

The reorientation of the *espesura* of bosques toward the question of ethics is underscored in the opening lines of Book 3, where we read the following description:

Con muy gran contentamiento caminaban las hermosas ninfas con su compañía por medio de un espeso bosque, ya que el sol se quería poner salieron a un muy hermoso valle, por medio del cual iba un impetuoso arroyo, de una parte y otra adornado de muy espesos salces y alisos, entre los cuales había otros muchos géneros de árboles más pequeños que, enredándose a los mayores, entretejiéndose las doradas flores de los unos por entre las verdes ramas de los otros, daban con su vista gran contentamiento. (227)

Contentment and forest thickness come together here as a measure of the group's solidarity and camaraderie—of its integrity, in other words. The repetition of thickness in this description comes to represent, at the gateway to the various examples of lovesickness that follow, not disorder but order. The forest is an image of the bonds that hold this group together and that give each individual a sense of themselves. In Montemayor's *La Diana*, as in Sannazaro and Garcilaso before him, the thickness of the forest, while acknowledging its symbolic role as a source of the disorder associated with lovesickness, is ultimately an image for collective and individual integrity. It represents a way of being with others and imagining the self that does not rely on the paradigm of compulsion, discipline, and control we tend to find elsewhere. Because this paradigm also structures contemporary *topoi* of humanity's relationship to the earth, the

representations of human communities and human bodies in these pastoral texts would have translated with little effort into models for inhabiting the earth. Pastoral texts look to the myths of the Golden Age and the goddess Diana not only because they provided an erotic fantasy, but because they offered an alternative to ways of being with each other and with the earth.

3. THE COMPANY OF TREES

Attention

The degradation of the face of the “Caballero de la Triste Figura” begins in Chapter IX of the 1605 *Quixote*, during the battle with the *vizcaíno*. Favored by luck, the *vizcaíno* strikes first, splitting Don Quixote’s helmet and taking off his left ear. Enraged, Don Quixote strikes back, “acertándole de lleno sobre la almohada y sobre la cabeza, que, sin ser parte tan buena defensa, como si cayera sobre él una montaña, comenzó a echar sangre por las narices, y por la boca, y por los oídos” (2004, 89). The bloodied *vizcaíno* falls from his mule, defeated, and Don Quixote, after a short exchange with the other Basque travelers, is helped by Sancho back onto his horse, and, “sin despedirse ni hablar más con las del coche, se entró por un bosque que allí junto estaba” (91). The forest into which Don Quixote and Sancho retreat after the battle with the *vizcaíno* provides the setting for the confrontation between materialism and idealism played out in chapter X of the 1605 *Quixote*. This confrontation takes the form of a conflict between varying perceptions of manners of care for the body. As Don Quixote’s insanity comes into focus in chapters IX and X, it becomes clear that it’s not simply that he sees things that are not there (as in the windmills episode) but that his very sense of integrity—in

both the physical and ethical sense—is mediated through the chivalric discourse of the body. Distracted by thoughts of the *bálsamo de Fierabrás* and the *yelmo de Mambrino*, Don Quixote is unable to accept the surgery and ointment that Sancho offers. The physical wound is transformed into a social injury, becoming yet another pretext for the amplification of his knightly persona. Don Quixote, in other words, perverts the opportunity to be healed into a quest for invincibility.

The idea of the forest as a space of nourishment, communion, and healing—that is, as a privileged *locus* for negotiating questions of integrity and self-care—will take full shape in the subsequent chapters (XI–XIV), as Don Quixote and Sancho are drawn into the intricate relationships of the pastoral world, where, as we have seen, the problematic thickness of the forest is made explicit. The rituals of hospitality practiced by these goatherds, and exemplified by their table etiquette, reveal manners of courtesy belied by what the narrator describes as the “groseras ceremonias” (96) with which they welcome Don Quixote and Sancho to their “table.” The scene here is not simply one of basic sustenance—like Don Quixote and Sancho’s improvised meal of cheese and onion on a few scraps of bread—but of ritualized nourishment. The essential detail to reading this meal *as ritual* comes in the repeated use of the verb *tender* in reference to both the sheepskins and the acorns. The various physical connotations of this verb—to hang, to suspend, to spread—are connected by a more abstract use, *to prepare*, suggesting forethought, patience, and design. It is at this moment, inspired by the sight of the sweet acorns, that Don Quixote launches into his famous speech on the Golden Age.

The contrast between, on the one hand, the nostalgic vision of the natural world and the human condition that Don Quixote elaborates in his famous description of the mythical Golden Age, and, on the other, the ways that the goatherds interact with each other and with the physical world around them, is further emphasized in the final lines of the chapter, when Don Quixote again complains to Sancho about the pain of his ear. One of the goatherds, seeing the wound, “le dijo que no tuviese pena,” and gathering “algunas hojas de romero, de mucho que por allí había, las mascó y las mezcló con un poco de sal, y, aplicándoselas a la oreja, se la vendó muy bien, asegurándole que no había menester otra medicina, y así fue la verdad” (102). This striking display of spontaneous empathy, botanical expertise, and medical dexterity, combined to describe the long-deferred act of healing the wound inflicted by the *vizcaíno*—and immediately following a rustic though carefully orchestrated meal—sharply contradict Don Quixote’s sense that the rituals and ecology of healing and nourishment expressed by the myth of the Golden Age are a thing of the past.

The foraging *ethos* embodied by these goatherds—exemplified by the rituals of hospitality they employ to feed Don Quixote and the *techne* that informs the improvised rosemary salve used to cure his wounded ear—isn’t presented in opposition to the chivalric ideal (after all, Don Quixote imagines himself as a forager, too) but rather as a counterpoint the image of the body and of bodily care that Don Quixote seeks. Despite his obliviousness to the fact, Don Quixote’s Golden Age speech as a paradigm of fertility and integrity still has a place in the world. The attention that Sancho and the goatherds pay to Don Quixote’s creaturely needs (and to each other’s) demonstrate that the idea of

closure, represented by the myth of the Golden Age can still be recovered, though in a different form, where the humblest material of the earth (the rosemary) combines with human knowledge and technique to bring healing to Don Quixote's body.

That oppositional concepts of what the body does, how to care for it, and even what constitutes fragmentation and integrity are central to chapters IX–XI is illustrated by the recurrence of the image of Don Quixote's mangled ear and his resultant "deafness." This episode of the *Quixote* begins with the image of the *vizcaíno* pouring blood "por las narices, y por la boca, y por los oídos" (89), is followed by the discussion between Don Quixote and Sancho about how best to cure his wounded ear, and ends with the finally realized cure of that same ear. With this immediate physical need tended to, the situation transitions into one of extended listening, first to a burlesque love song, and then to the story of Marcela and Grisóstomo. Don Quixote, for his part, is an imperfect though attentive and enthusiastic listener, whose interruptions function as a sort of comic relief to an otherwise tragic story. Crucially, the story of Marcela and Grisóstomo itself concerns divergent and oppositional concepts of integrity and fertility, framed by a discussion of the potential for the pastoral to offer a means for negotiating the characters' relationship to each other and to their environment.

Disavowal

What does it mean—in the context of the *Quixote* and at the turn of the historical seventeenth century—for Marcela, the orphaned but otherwise eligible daughter of a *labrador rico*, to deny her suitors, take to the countryside, and live as a shepherdess in communion with wilderness? Does the intentionally "pastoral" disavowal of her

prescribed social role give structure to the use of this literary mode in the *Quixote*, and can Marcela's rhetorically marvelous self-defense guide our reading not only of other pastoral literature but of the discourse of shepherding in early modern Spain? The nature of Marcela's refusal, flight, and pastoral habits, what they reveal about her character (both in the literary and the ethical sense) and about the society from which she emerges, have been the subject of intense and almost continuous debate among *cervantistas* for over fifty years.¹⁷

Scholarship tends to distribute Marcela's qualities according to its reading of the pastoral. Critics that see in the pastoral an idealizing, purely literary discourse tend to describe Marcela as a naive, idealistic brat whose performance ultimately betrays the incompatibility of art and "reality." She is frequently compared to Don Quixote himself: one of numerous representations in the *Quixote* of individuals whose vision has been clouded by literature.¹⁸ Furthermore, Don Quixote's famous discourse on the Golden Age is frequently taken as emblematic of the mythical fantasy that Marcela hopes, in vain, to inhabit, and in her vanity provoking a social crisis.¹⁹ At their most severe, scholars see

¹⁷ And farther back still. Finello (2004, 187) tracks the polemic on Marcela's nature into the mid nineteenth century.

¹⁸ Harry Sieber argues that Marcela's "self-transformation" is a shift from "the pastoral reality of Pedro into a purely literary dimension outside time" (1974, 190–191). Dominick Finello suggest that she may be making the whole thing up (1994, 188). John Gabriele prefers to describe her as confused rather than dishonest: "Like Don Quijote," he writes, "Marcela confuses art and life and is driven by an innate desire to alter reality in order to achieve her personal objective" (2003, 508). See also O'Connor (2004, 369) and Hart and Rendell (1978, 296).

¹⁹ Charles Steele suggests that Marcela, like Don Quixote, is insane (1980, 12). Dominick Finello argues that Marcela is "una muchacha embebida en el idealismo" who strives vainly "to conform" to "the myth of the golden age and the fictional pastoral" (1994, 179). Michael McGaha argues that her withdrawal "is really a desire to escape from

Marcela's self-pastoral performance as an ethical failure with destructive effects not only to her person but to the pastoral *ethos* she claims to inhabit.²⁰ Among those critics who treat pastoral as an allegory or masquerade for political conflict, Marcela's behavior, and in particular her self-defense at Grisóstomo's funeral, is taken to represent an earnest expression of feminine self-determination.²¹ In any event, rarely among readers of the Marcela and Grisóstomo episode is the landscape of the *Quixote* treated as anything but a backdrop to human drama.²² This section demonstrates, in contrast, that the wilderness of the *bosque* where she, Sancho and Don Quixote seek refuge plays an important role as a world in itself, an activating and affecting *ethos* with its own internally coherent structure that, which at once is and *is not* the historical landscape of early seventeenth-century Spain.

The story of Marcela and Grisóstomo begins with the arrival to the goatherd camp of a young man, Pedro, bringing with him provisions and news of the death of Grisóstomo, a recently orphaned student whose expertise in “la ciencia de las estrellas”—

freedom and the responsibility which it entails into the infantile security of instinctive behavior.” (1977, 46).

²⁰ Alban Forcione describes this episode as Cervantes's “systematic derangement of pastoral” (1991, 61), in which Marcela's narcissism is manifested in “a self-reduction to a pure identity which presupposes the literal annihilation of much of the human world around her, her lack of any feeling for the other in the presence of the victim, and, of course, her abrupt flight and disappearance into the wilderness” (65–66). She disappears into the forest, he writes, “like a figment of a diseased imagination” (61).

²¹ See in particular Hernández-Pecoraro (2006).

²² In a rare example of a positive reading of Marcela's residence in the wilderness, John Gabriele insists that “it is imperative to note that the space she now occupies is a wide open space in the vast woods. This is public space, the traditionally designated domain of men, as opposed to domestic space, the closed-off and confining domain of women. [...] The open meadows, open woods, and mountains are her only options, spaces that she chooses to close off from the rest of the world of her own accord” (2003, 520).

the ability to predict by astrology what to plant and when to harvest—had made his family and friends enormously wealthy (104). But only a few months after returning from Salamanca, Grisóstomo suddenly appeared in public “vestido de pastor, con su cayado y pellico” (105), chasing after Marcela—also a wealthy orphan—who had fled her uncle’s house and the harassment of countless suitors, intending to live in the fields and tend her own flocks “con las demás zagalas del lugar” (107). With the beautiful Marcela out of the house, walking openly in the countryside, many other “ricos mancebos, hidalgos y labradores” (107) took up the shepherd’s cloak and flocked after her—a young woman whose virtue, honesty, and disdain for marriage had done “más daño en esta tierra que si por ella entrara la pestilencia” (108). In all respects, except her indifference, Marcela and Grisóstomo are a great match: both are young, handsome, intelligent, and wealthy. Their marriage would be mutually advantageous and potentially happy.

But Marcela’s disdain is framed in Pedro’s story less as a private insult than as a social threat—a “plague” that disrupts not just the reproductive economy of the family, but the wider network of production and exchange that supports village life. The potential suicides of her lovers, Grisóstomo in particular, are presented less as affective tragedies than as economic disasters. Thus the goatherd Pedro—the voice of public opinion—describes Grisóstomo’s transformation as a decline in productivity. His agricultural perspicacity and industriousness give way when he takes on the pastoral costume to a life of unproductive wandering and poetry: *otium* replaces *negotium* as Grisóstomo’s defining characteristic. Moreover, Grisóstomo’s scandalous request to be buried in the wilderness—“como si fuera moro,” according to Pedro (103)—is interpreted by the

village priests as profane, the stuff of “gentiles” (i.e. pagans). By requesting that his corpse be excluded from the networks and rituals of Catholicism, Grisóstomo extends his disavowal beyond the agricultural sphere into realm of the spirit: from Pedro we also learn that Ambrosio, the schoolmate charged with Grisóstomo’s final rites—with the care of his mortal remains, in other words—is determined to perform a funeral whose unorthodoxy borders on heresy. Grisóstomo’s love for Marcela and the way it rearranges his sense of self and community implies his self-exclusion from the religious and agricultural economies that govern life in the village. In this context, Pedro’s comparison of Marcela’s “coming out” as a shepherdess to a pestilential threat is apt: her unregulated circulation in the open spaces surrounding the village infects the male population with lovesickness, incapacitating them for work while all around them untended crops wither and unwatched livestock roam free.

Grisóstomo’s death and funeral arguably symbolize the threat of a widespread social and agricultural mortality, an image of the people declining into “barbarism” (paganism, Islam) and the landscape reverting to its natural state of wilderness.²³ Marcela’s refusal to participate in the patriarchal reproductive economy thrust upon her by village life is much more than an affront to the norms of feminine behavior of someone of her social class. Her disdain threatens to undermine the agricultural economy upon which broader social hierarchies are founded, and whose efficacy and ethical value are exemplified by the figure of Grisóstomo—youthful, learned, wealthy, devout, and productive—before he encountered Marcela in the pastoral wilderness. By framing the

²³ This is in fact the image of the lovesick world as represented in the “Song of Grisóstomo.”

story of Marcela and Grisóstomo as one of refusal—hers of marriage, his of agricultural productivity—Pedro creates an ethical opposition between pastoral ritual and agricultural reproduction. In this story, the rituals, costumes, and landscape of the pastoral become an emblem for this refusal: they symbolize disavowal and disease, and in Marcela’s case, fervent individuality and independence.²⁴ Wilderness—the space outside the ethical structures of village life—is the condition that makes this refusal possible. It is a space that is unproductive and sentimental in opposition to the practicality and productivity of the village, a space where the disease of pastoral passion is allowed to fester. The science that Don Quixote calls “astrología” (105)—that is, Grisóstomo’s understanding of the effects of solar and lunar cycles on the rhythms of rainfall and drought—we might, in our own historical moment, call ecology. What Grisóstomo brought back from Salamanca was a close familiarity with the relationship between organisms (in this case, barley, wheat, chickpeas, and olives) and their environment (the earth and the air in sympathy with the heavenly bodies), and the sense to make this knowledge produce wealth. Grisóstomo’s understanding of fertility is predicated on both the physical and intellectual acts of opening nature’s closure.

Reciprocity

This correspondence between practice and purpose closely aligns with the georgic (ultimately defined by *negotium*), a poetic mode that comprises much more than suggestions on best practices for agriculture, but rather implies a more basic relationship

²⁴ Marcela’s relative success in reinscribing the supposed misogyny of pastoral discourse is a central object of debate among feminist scholarship. See El Saffar (1984; 1993); Jehenson (1990); and Hernández-Pecoraro (2006).

between human communities and their environment. This is the sense in which we can speak of the georgic as an ecological *ethos*. Grisóstomo's adoption of the shepherd's cloak and crook in pursuit of Marcela is emblematic (for Pedro, at least) of his disavowal of the georgic *ethos* in favor of the pastoral. His eventual suicide arguably results of his inability to fully integrate this *ethos*: to the last—as exemplified by his final text, the “Canción desesperada”—he is unable to reconcile the image of nature Marcela embodies in his mind and his desire to make it productive. Crucially, he is unable to reconcile his inability to produce the kind language that would make Marcela into a commodity: despite having adopted pastoral costume and ritual, Grisóstomo's ultimate goal is to recuperate Marcela into the georgic world of the village economy of fertility. And it is *this* hypocrisy that Marcela feels compelled to call out when she crashes Grisóstomo's funeral.

Marcela insists that she hasn't come to desecrate the body or tarnish the ritual in any way, “sino a volver por mí misma y a dar a entender cuán fuera de razón van todos aquellos que de sus penas y de la muerte de Grisóstomo me culpan” (125). With this she begins a speech that is at once an eloquent defense of her indifference and a devastating take-down of the patriarchal economies of fertility and integrity from which she has fled. But this disavowal is not framed as an escape. Instead, she productively recovers an alternative *ethos*, one that is grounded in a pastoral understanding of communion and community. In her defense, Marcela proposes an alternative ecology to both Grisóstomo's georgic approach to nature in terms of productivity and his later misunderstood pastoralism predicated on compulsion or despair. Marcela instead

proposes a relationship to nature and to other people founded on respect and reciprocity. The forest wilderness provides Marcela not only with the rhetorical *topoi* for her self-defense, but with a way of life that fulfills the sense of integrity (*castidad*) and virtue (*limpieza*) she defiantly claims as her own.

Why should she submit by force to the desires of others, she asks, “obligada no más de que decís que me queréis bien?” (126). Why should she be cursed for her nature, which she was not free to choose? “Y así como la víbora no merece ser culpada por la ponzoña que tiene, puesto que con ella mata, por habérsela dado naturaleza, tampoco yo merezco ser reprendida por ser hermosa” (126). Why should she make herself a hypocrite and betray her sense of honesty, “por corresponder a la intención de aquel que, por solo su gusto, con todas sus fuerzas e industrias procura que la pierda?” (126). Marcela’s complaint employs the language of compulsion—submission, shame, forfeiture—to describe the nature of the economy of courtship and desire in which she has declined to participate. Within the larger frame of the pastoral episode, which includes Don Quixote’s speech on the Golden Age and Pedro’s description of the circumstances surrounding Grisóstomo’s death, courtship and desire are connected to ideas of agricultural productivity and compulsion.

Compelled by the structures of village life to reproduce a patriarchal economy of desire and representation in which her potential non-participation would be taken for a plague, Marcela opts instead for wilderness. “Yo nací libre,” she says, “y para poder vivir libre escogí la soledad de los campos: los árboles de estas montañas son mi compañía; las claras aguas de estos arroyos, mis espejos; con los árboles y con las aguas comunico mis

pensamientos y hermosura” (126).²⁵ Rather than blame her “crueldad” for Grisóstomo’s death, they should fault his “porfía”—his intransigence—toward her efforts to disabuse him of any hope: in the same spot where they are now digging his grave, “le dije yo que [mi intención] era vivir en perpetua soledad y de que sola la tierra gozase el fruto de mi recogimiento y los despojos de mi hermosura; y si él, con todo este desengaño, quiso porfiar contra la esperanza y navegar contra el viento, ¿qué mucho que se anegase en la mitad del golfo de su desatino?” (127)

In ridiculing Grisóstomo’s courtship, Marcela compares herself to elements of nature, first to a snake who shouldn’t be faulted for the venom it uses to kill its prey, and then to the wind, against which Grisóstomo was foolish to sail. But these metaphors, far from making Marcela’s apology complicit in a patriarchal ideology that conceives women as more earthly and “natural” than men, in fact scorn Grisóstomo and his fellow suitors for their inattention to the reality of their environment and the vulnerability of their own bodies. In this way, Grisóstomo’s courtly intransigence is compared to ecological pigheadedness. His dismissive treatment of her nature thus reflects a broader arrogance and recklessness in his treatment of others and of the world around him. In other words, Marcela may be disinclined to accept Grisóstomo as a companion precisely because of his skill in compelling the earth to produce wealth for his friends and family.

Stitched into Marcela’s self-defense is a critique of an *ethos* that treats women like natural objects (the land, animals, the elements) that can be compelled to submit to the desires of others. In defending herself against the charge that she murdered

²⁵ The terms of Marcela’s refusal connect her to the shepherdesses in Sannazaro and Garcilaso who flee from the representation foisted upon them by their lovers.

Grisóstomo, Marcela is also defending herself against the broader social mortality that his death symbolizes. The arrogance and intransigence of her suitors, and not her indifference and disavowal, is the cause of the perceived decay that is supposedly consuming village society. “Que si a Grisóstomo mató su impaciencia y arrojado deseo,” she asks, “¿por qué se ha de culpar mi honesto proceder y recato? *Si yo conservo mi limpieza con la compañía de los árboles, ¿por qué ha de querer que la pierda el que quiere que la tenga con los hombres?*” (127; emphasis added). As we have seen, the word *limpieza* in this period does not simply refer to hygiene or purity, but to physical and spiritual integrity. In this sense, Marcela would be insisting on her “limpieza” in response to the “pestilencia” she’s accused of both resembling and provoking.

Communion

Marcela’s refusal is not merely a negative discourse. In her speech, she presents an alternative *ethos*, based not on compulsion and productivity but on sympathy and reciprocity. To do so, she elaborates an image of the forest that reflects her sense of her body and spirit as ordered and well-tended. In doing so, she recovers not only a way of imagining her place in the environment, but the environment itself: *this* landscape—fertile and thick—is what I look like on the inside. Marcela describes her sense of liberty as the desire for the company of trees and clear waters: the trees will receive her thoughts and the waters will reflect the image of her beauty. Wilderness here is a space that responds to basic human needs that are both psychological (companionship) and phenomenological (her body in a sense “cobra realidad” in the waters—she seeks no representation, i.e. poetry, song, but that of her image in the waters). Furthermore, she

intends that “sola la tierra gozase el fruto de mi recogimiento y los despojos de mi hermosura” (127), in other words, that only the land will profit from the fruits of her body and her mind. Marcela’s expression of her understanding of fertility and of her intended relationship to her environment—the ecology she desires—can be read in several ways owing to the polysemy of the words she chooses.

The word “recogimiento” can refer simply to the “acción y efecto de recoger o recogerse” or to a space, a “casa de recogidas.” As a verb, *recoger* is remarkably thick, potentially signifying many different and potentially contradictory actions: to pick up, to bring (things or people) together, to harvest, to suffer, to benefit from, to gather up (hair, fabric, etc.), to secure, to save, to organize, to make sense of, to imprison, or to withdraw. Marcela’s *recogimiento* can therefore refer both to her withdrawal to the wilderness as a space of refuge (her seclusion, in other words), and to the practice of harvesting crops. In the latter sense, she imagines the land—and only the land—enjoying the *literal* fruits of her harvest as a shepherdess, but she is also suggesting that she intends the land to be alone in enjoying the pleasure of her withdrawal. In other words, no one but the land will participate in the ethical value of her removal from the economy of reproduction in which her only legitimate choices are marriage and religiously circumscribed chastity: Marcela refuses marriage to a man, but she’s not gonna marry Jesus either.

Spoils of war, mortal remains, and building debris all qualify as translations of “despojos.” In its verb form, “despojar” can also indicate to deprive, to extract, to dispossess, and, in the reflexive, to undress, so that Marcela may be indicating that only the land—that is, not men—will enjoy either the act of the dispossession or the material

spoils of her “hermosura.” If she is “opened,” in short, it won’t be by Grisóstomo and his ilk, but only by the land itself when it opens up to welcome her body to its last rest. At the same time, if we take “despojos” to signify “mortal remains” then its just as likely that Marcela is describing the decay of her corpse. In other words, she is imagining the way that the land will benefit from the return of her body to a cycle of ecological regeneration and decay. In contrast to Grisóstomo’s intention to “eternizar [Marcela] para que viviera en la memoria de las gentes” (118) as text, as representation, Marcela’s image of the future is one of spiritual communion, in which she alone determines the relationship that her body will assume with the surrounding environment. In its political sense, her intention is that only the land will enjoy the benefit of her withdrawal and the spoils of her beauty, while in its ecological sense, she intends that only the land will profit from the fruits of her harvest and the remains of her body. Marcela refuses to become a commodity in the patriarchal economy of reproduction and representation both in life and in death, a refusal that can arguably be read as the description of an intended relationship between her creaturely self and the surrounding environment—a pastoral ecology that links her and others to the land.

“Tienen mis deseos por término estas montañas,” Marcela concludes, “y si de aquí salen es a contemplar la hermosura del cielo, pasos con que camina el alma a su morada primera” (127–128). These final words can read as a strictly orthodox justification for her social refusal and withdrawal into the wilderness. Marcela sees herself as a spiritual recluse whose solitude in the mountains allows her closer access to God. In this sense, her seclusion would be directed toward an effacement of her material,

creaturely self in favor of her spirit. And yet, given the direct claims that Marcela has only just made with respect to her intended relationship to the land, the water, and the trees, these final words may also point to a desired ecology. It may be that in the mountains, caring for her goats, and speaking to the trees is where she feels closest to God. These activities, and the contemplation of the literal, material sky, comprise the steps (*pasos*) on a pilgrimage whose destination is not a sacred place in some far-off urban center, but into the center of where she is, in the wilderness: her desire is to find a real presence in nature, not transcendence but the recovery of herself and her environment from a culture that sees both as nothing more than commodities. Thus she begins her speech claiming that she intends only to refute the charge that she killed Grisóstomo, and to “volver por mí misma” (125).

In the first pastoral episode of the *Quixote*, Marcela’s claims to freedom and integrity are expressed as a desire for communion the forest landscape and community with her fellow shepherdesses. As such, they represent both her refusal to be compelled to reproduce the capitalistic image of fertility embodied by Grisóstomo and her desire for another way to make company with others that include organic and inorganic companions. At the same time, they express an alternative image of the forest as a space whose closure does not imply disorder but virtue: Marcela reimagines thickness as a good thing. In doing so, she reinscribes both the idea of wilderness and the idea of chastity. Her claim to the sanctity and integrity of her body and desires is not couched in a moralistic, Catholic idea of feminine virtue, one typically contained to interior spaces.

Rather, her sense of integrity is constructed around an image of the relationship between her body and her environment.

4. CONCLUSION: CERVANTES AND THE PASTORAL

Virtually all scholarship of the Marcela and Grisóstomo episode shares a negative view of the pastoral: either it is an illusion that the young “shepherds” follow with tragic results, or it is an inoperable, vacuous ideology that Cervantes—through the figure of Marcela—exposes as such.²⁶ At its most condescending, the scholarship questions the credibility of Marcela’s endeavor: are we seriously meant to believe that this *rich girl* is trudging around in the forest after a pack of goats?²⁷ Underlying this attitude is the sense that if Cervantes is spending so much effort creating this pastoral world, it must be to destroy it thoroughly and permanently.²⁸ Don Quixote’s discourse on the Golden Age is commonly taken as a transparent elaboration of the Arcadian myth, which early modern pastoral adopts to the letter as its *ethos*. Thus the idea of nature—and, more importantly, the idea of ecology—that subtends his speech is read not only as Cervantes’s actual

²⁶ See McGaha (1977); Fernández (1987); Finello (1994); Gabriele (2003); O’Connor (2004).

²⁷ For Finello and others, Marcela is ultimately a comic and “awkward” figure whose flight into the wilderness strains credibility (1994, 191). Finello maintains this assessment in a recent essay, which argues that “no le es enteramente posible manifestar que ella de verdad haya vivido ilusionadamente en las florestas por los impulsos de mujer desdeñosa de la literatura pastoril con que se había soñado, si no leído” (2004, 185). He describes her life in the countryside as “la dicha estancia imaginaria (o inventada) con las zagalas” (188). Charles Steele suggests that Marcela, like Don Quixote, is insane (1980, 12). He describes her implausibility as characteristic of the parody in this episode. Marcela is “doubtful as a living character, but clearly is a forceful representation of an idea” (5); she “represents distortion carried to the point of caricature” (10); she “cannot be taken altogether seriously” because “she exceeds the bounds of credibility” (12).

²⁸ See Poggioli (1959); Herrero (1978); Forcione (1991).

opinion, but as the model that Marcela naively and foolishly seeks to follow. But Don Quixote is nothing if not a bad reader—of people, of places, of texts—indeed, as Foucault has famously argued, his defining characteristic is his literalization of the world (2005, 51–55). Don Quixote is the embodiment of an archaic worldview that saw a natural correspondence between words and things, and it is therefore ill-advised to generalize his discourse. In fact, the early modern cult of nature was a far cry from the complacent nostalgia scholars find in Don Quixote’s speech, but rather the symptom of a complex epistemological shift involving numerous forms of imagining nature and our place in it.²⁹ We ought rather to see in Marcela and Grisóstomo themselves—in their combination of literary and practical relationships to the earth—the figures for the conflicted idea of nature in the early modern period.

What is at stake in our reading of Marcela and Grisóstomo is not simply the question of the place of pastoral in the *Quixote*, or in Cervantes’s work generally. These strictly literary concerns are certainly important: because Cervantes returns again and again to the pastoral as a structuring element not only of the landscape but of ways that characters imagine and inhabit that space, our sense of the symbolic construction of people and places in the *Quixote* and elsewhere in Cervantes’s work is intimately determined by the way that we understand the nature of pastoral discourse. If the proliferation of pastoral sentiment across La Mancha is really a kind of sickness that transforms its victims into brainless automatons, at least one critic has argued, then are Don Quixote and Sancho sallying forth across an infested landscape that prefigures our

²⁹ On Marcela’s neoplatonist spirituality as a form of evasion of the “real” world, see Poggioli (1959); McGaha (1977); O’Connor (2004); Poeta (2004).

own post-apocalyptic zombie nightmares?³⁰ Is the abundance of courtly shepherds and goatherds in the *Quixote* a “pastoralized” vision of Don Quixote’s project of reanimating knight errantry, only multiplied to the point where it becomes a kind of horror? The lunacy of Don Quixote’s solitary, masochistic quest is relatively easy to contain—a few friends and neighbors inhabiting the role is all it takes to bring him home—but what would it mean if droves of people, and young people especially, suddenly abandoned their everyday lives to live as “shepherds”? The pastoral, which describes not just individual itineraries but the formation of communities around certain highly codified practices that are often explicitly anti-capitalist and implicitly anti-Catholic, could potentially signify a much more insidious threat than an old *hidalgo*’s madcap adventures.

The scope for our reading of the pastoral in the *Quixote* exceeds the literary frame because this novel, perhaps more than any other piece of early modern literature, is commonly read these days as a handbook for ethical practice. We recognize in the *Quixote* the earthly contingencies that define our moral dilemmas: the nature of love, faith, and freedom are worked out on strictly human terms by people whose lives, like our own, are of little consequence outside their small circle of existence. The prominence and recurrence of the pastoral in the *Quixote* suggests its central role as a space in which questions of ethics and nature are brought forth and debated. A more constructive

³⁰ Fernández, echoing McGaha’s insistence on Marcela’s “inhumanity” (1977, 56), argues that if “Grisóstomo está muerto, estos fingidos pastores también lo están en cierta medida, pues su empecinamiento poco tiene que ver con la vida verdaderamente humana: son como muñecos mecánicos que repiten hasta la náusea los mismos gestos” (1987, 150).

approach to the pastoral in the *Quixote* would put aside the question of whether it is the object of parody and instead treat it as a literary mode whose continuing usefulness as a means for negotiating our own natures and for seeking an accommodation with the surrounding environment is repeatedly invoked. Is the pastoral—has it even been—an ethically valid recourse for engaging with nature? What would it mean for people to read pastoral as a resource for thinking and living? How would they act? How would they speak? What is the concept of nature that informs the symbolic construction of its landscapes, and how does this idea determine the way that its shepherds engage with the natural world and with each other? The story of Marcela and Grisóstomo, like other pastoral episodes in the *Quixote*, proposes these questions, and many others, but does not offer concrete answers. What's nevertheless apparent is that in the *Quixote* the pastoral functions as a privileged *locus* for the asking of such questions.

CHAPTER 2. SOLITUDE AND SOCIETY OF THE COMMONS

1. INTRODUCTION

Overview

What is the nature of community? In the practice of everyday life, how are its material and intellectual (or virtual) boundaries constructed and enforced but also interrogated by ritual acts of hospitality, celebration, and mourning? Can we consciously and deliberately, through the performance of these rituals, produce forms of porousness at the margins of these borderlands that not only open our individual community but make the concept itself more capacious, and can this openness foster a relationship to the surrounding environment that is collaborative rather than exploitative? Or is the very idea that the natural world could actively participate and negotiate its use by human agents itself a form of exploitation masquerading as ecological thought? How do we negotiate, in short, the simultaneous inclusion and exclusion implied by the very concept of the human community?

In recent decades, these questions have occupied social and political theorists interested in the relationships—economic, political, and cultural—between privatization, or enclosure, and the commons or commonwealth. Apparently spontaneous and decentralized manifestations of civil disobedience, such as the occupations of public spaces like the Puerta del Sol, in Madrid, and Tahrir Square, in Cairo, have brought to these questions a renewed sense of urgency, while their demands for a radically alternative understanding of the very nature of the commonwealth (circulated and to a significant extent *defined by* globalized networks of virtual media) have changed the

shape of the questions asked. No longer limited to the practical and disciplinary interests of anthropologists, sociologists, and political scientists, traditionally concerned primarily with the institutions of resource management, the nature and value of the commons is more and more (indeed, once again) a question for philosophy, and thus for the humanities.³¹

As the structures of global capitalism are increasingly recognized as the primary causes of climate change, whose devastating effects—resource scarcity, political instability, the obliteration of coastal cities, even whole nations, from rising sea levels—constitute a threat to the very survival of our species, theorists, activists and civilians alike are seeking a fundamentally different understanding of “economy.” One that moves beyond the concern for the circulation and accumulation of capital, and returns, in a sense, to an earlier understanding of the word, grounded in its Greek root, *oikonomia*, or household management, where the concept of the home is conceived both locally and globally. In this context, the concept of “commoning”—the mutually constitutive relations (material, affective, experiential) between human subjects and their environments—which implies an ethics and politics in opposition the forms of enclosure (physical, interpersonal, ecological, even spiritual) exemplified by capitalism, has emerged as a valuable resource with which to attend to our shared cultural histories and mythologies.

³¹ Peter Linebaugh defines the commons simply as “the theory that vests all property in the community and organizes labor for the common benefit of all” (2008, 6). For background on the role of media in recent social uprisings, see Castells (2015) and Howard and Hussain (2011).

We can locate the origins of the idea of the commons as an alternative ethic to the enclosures of capitalism at the origins of capitalism itself, specifically in the agricultural communities that constituted the primary source of material wealth of the Spanish empire. Against the pervasive idea, not exclusive to Hispanists, of imperial Spain as a culturally backward and highly stratified feudal state, a significant body of research, some of it dating back to the surveys and inquests that Spanish monarchs conducted on their own territories, attests to the presence and importance of a variety of cultural and material resources owned and managed collectively, and of the intellectual structures that these commons produced. As scholars of the early modern Iberian world, our sense of the place of the rural peasantry in the Spanish imaginary has been determined largely by studies of their representation in popular theater, specifically in the comedies of Lope de Vega. But alongside this sense of the rural peasant as a credulous chauvinist or reactionary simpleton who nevertheless embodies the virtues of loyalty, faith, and frugality, there existed a parallel discourse of the peasantry as architects of a complex economy of practices and spaces that exemplified what today we would call “commoning,” and which at the time was advocated by *arbitristas* like González de Cellorigo and Miguel Caxa de Leruela as a bulwark against the growing fiscal, demographic, and agricultural crises that came to define the collapse of imperial Spain. In other words, just as the figure of the rural peasant was paraded across the urban stage as a figure of ridicule, and just as moralists argued for a retreat to the “simpler” life of the countryside as a balm to the ills of the courtly milieu, an important group of intellectuals with access to the centers of power were advocating the economies and ecologies that

actually defined the rural landscape and its inhabitants as a crucial resource for reimagining and reorganizing the Spanish nation at a time of profound crisis.

It is in this context that the poet Luis de Góngora wrote his *magnum opus*, the exceptionally long and formally vertiginous twin-canto *silva* known as the *Soledades*. Claiming while simultaneously critiquing the structures and tropes of the pastoral, Góngora's *Soledades* tracks the progress of a shipwrecked pilgrim across a chain of landscapes that bear a striking resemblance to rural Andalucía without quite admitting localization. The pilgrim encounters communities of shepherds, stockmen, farmers, fishers, and hunters intimately engaged with their natural surroundings in ways that are technically sophisticated and historically specific. This is not, as many have argued, a gauzy vision of a utopian "golden age" but rather a torrent of painstakingly naturalistic descriptions, inflected with the discourses of Renaissance humanism (mythology, astrology, and so on), producing a literary world that both is and is not "realistic." Although undeniably remote, the landscapes that these rural communities inhabit are, in general, highly constructed spaces that impose an order on the natural world that is unequivocally human. Farmhouses, watermills, irrigation canals, crossroads, threshing grounds, and gardens are just a few of the numerous agricultural spaces through which the pilgrim passes, quietly attentive to the relationships between people and their places. A contemporary farmer, shepherd, or informed traveler would have recognized in many of these spaces the commons—*baldíos*, *acequias*, *ejidos*, and so on—that structured the landscapes of rural Iberia, and in the acts of preparing, gathering, and convening that take place there the shared practices and affects that today we call "commoning."

In this chapter, I argue that the eponymous “solitudes” of the *Soledades* are, in fact, these same commons, and that the poem inhabits the paradox of solitude in society to describe forms of taking shelter, keeping company, and engaging the natural world that resist the enclosures of incipient capitalism, whose devastating effects—expressed in the *Soledades* as the hideous economies of coloniality—were already painfully evident at the turn of the 17th century. The movement of the *Soledades* is not one of nostalgic retreat or aesthetic evasion of this political reality through the construction of an otherworldly utopia or pristine greenworld: the status of these landscapes as commons that were themselves commonplace in rural Iberia would have been apparent, as we will see, to anyone engaged with contemporary discourses of topography, horticulture, and ecology, as Góngora and his fellow humanists clearly were.

The pastoral functions, in this context, as a matrix that brings together classical and contemporary discourses of the natural world and its relationship to the human, that in fact interrogates the distinction between nature and culture, as John Beverley recognized early on in his watershed study, *Aspects of the Soledades*. The scholarship in this chapter owes a profound debt to that of Beverley and his predecessors, both modern and historical, but I depart significantly from Beverley’s reading in my assessment of the place of the pastoral in Góngora’s masterpiece. Whereas Beverley argues that the *Soledades* represent “an irradiation of the bucolic by an urban (and historical) intelligence” (1980, 78), as, in short, an historicizing of the pastoral, I understand the pastoral as always already political and ecological. In fact, the concept of *soledad* that Góngora employs in the *Soledades*, and whose ecological contours are crucial to making

sense of the world of the poem, is in fact a pastoral one, carefully elaborated by Spanish poets of the 16th and 17th centuries to describe forms of engagement with the natural world that are non-coercive and open. As I hope the following pages demonstrate, the landscapes of the *Soledades* are not a negation or transformation of the pastoral, but an engagement with ways of conceiving the dialectic of the social and the ecological that have always been uniquely pastoral.

Commons and Commoning

In the social sciences, the term “commons” traditionally refers to public or privately owned resources and spaces theoretically available for free use by anyone. Commons can be natural (landscapes, waterways, plants, animals, minerals, and so on) or cultural objects (mills, wells, or managed parkland), and constitute the shared wealth—the commonwealth—of a given community: villages, states, corporations, even the entirety of the planet’s inhabitants can share in the commons. Some commons, like the air, are considered inalienable, while others, like water, have suffered progressive forms of enclosure, exploitation, and privatization in the service of agriculture, urbanization, and energy production. Still others, like the Internet, appear by their very nature to resist enclosure, and even to produce a multiplicity of commons within themselves. Among anthropologists, sociologists, and political theorists, the commons have long been studied as models for sustainable resource management, local political organization, and radical forms of knowledge production, often in opposition or as alternatives to capitalist regimes.

Recently, more radical political and ecological scholarship has tended to critique the traditional paradigm of commons as specific resources or spaces, whether material or virtual, that are at least potentially vulnerable to mismanagement, degradation, and exhaustion, attempting instead to shift the use of the concept from a thing or network of things to an action. In *Commonwealth*, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri argue for the political importance of what they refer to in the singular as “the common” or “those results of social production that are necessary for social interaction and further production, such as knowledges, languages, codes, information, affects,” which do not “position humanity separate from nature, as either its exploiter or its custodian, but [focus] rather on the practices of interaction, care, and cohabitation in a common world” (2009, viii).³² In this context, “commoning” names the production of the affects, relationships, and ecologies that structure our shared experience of reality, against the forms of enclosure—the proliferation of surveillance technologies, for instance—that increasingly shape contemporary life (Kirwan et al 2016, 15).

In *Politics*, Book II, Aristotle famously argued that what is “common to the greatest number of owners receives the least attention; men care most for their private possessions, and for what they own in common less” (1932, 77). For Aristotle, the fundamental cupidity of human nature makes the commons socially impractical, even

³² Critics of this concept argue that the idea of “the common” continues to “position the subject of the commons—the commoner—as outside of the practices of mutual constitution through which commons are produced, rather than considering the practices as constitutive of both the space and the subject,” and thus refuses to “acknowledge the co-constitutive role of humans and non-humans in the production of the commons” (Kirwan et al 2016, 14).

dangerous to the welfare of the state.³³ He advocates instead for a system of strictly legislated private property, offered to the common good by virtue of an equally rigid moral education (85ff). This understanding of ethics and the role of the state in managing common resources grounds the theory of the “tragedy of the commons,” first put forth by Garret Hardin in an eponymous article published in the journal *Science*. Hardin imagines how a community of “rational” shepherds would approach a commonly-owned pasture, each individual “locked into a system that compels him to increase his herd without limit—in a world that is limited. Ruin is the destination toward which all men rush, each pursuing his own best interest in a society that believes in the freedom of the commons” (1968, 1244). Hardin’s bleak parable has by now been widely refuted, most famously by Elinor Ostrom, who argues in *Governing the Commons* that rather than presume that “individuals sharing a commons are inevitably caught in a trap from which they cannot escape,” numerous case studies, both historical and contemporary, demonstrate that the “capacity of individuals to extricate themselves from various types of dilemma situations varies from situation to situation” (1990, 10).

Ostrom’s work focused on water rights, and one of her central case studies examined the *huerta* irrigation system in Valencia, first formalized in 1435 but dating back probably hundreds of years before the re-colonization of that territory by the armies of Christian monarchs in the late middle ages (69). Ostrom’s groundbreaking research demonstrated the profound cultural resonance of Valencia’s *huerta* commons, whose

³³ It’s worth noting that Aristotle’s ideal republic is highly stratified, essentially patriarchal police state where women and children are considered the property of male citizens (1932, 85–95).

institutions structure not just the agricultural rhythms but the fundamental nature of rural life (71ff). While Ostrom's research transformed the understanding of the history of common resources in Western Europe, its assertion of the exceptionality of the case of Valencia, where irrigators, she argues, enjoyed a remarkable "degree of freedom to devise and change their own institutions" that "was not typical of the Castilian part of Spain, whose far more centralized institutions were the major influences on the evolution of Spanish national institutions" (81) is not borne out by the documentary evidence of early modern Castilian rural life, most importantly the *Relaciones histórico-geográficas de los pueblos de España* (commonly known as the *Relaciones topográficas*), a set of demographic, historical, and economic questionnaires distributed to Castilian towns and villages in the 1570s by the administration of Philip II.

As we will see in the following section, the *Relaciones topográficas* demonstrate the widespread recourse to and valuing of common property and resources among early modern Castilian people. In fact, the commons were a defining characteristic of the rural Iberian landscape, which comprised vast territories of wasteland or *tierras baldías* ostensibly reclaimed by the Christian monarchs' "reconquest" of the southern portion of the Peninsula. Yet the commons in early modern Spain were not just "empty" or "uncultivated" spaces, but also complex agricultural landscapes owned and managed publicly or collectively by towns, cities, and intermunicipal federations. The commons in early modern Spain also comprised local "urban" structures like mills, ovens, and wells, alongside resources like foraged wood and wild fruit, produce overlooked or discarded in harvest, and stubble growth left behind by the reapers. Between these spaces and

resources were various habits of sharing, recycling, and reclaiming the wealth of nature and agriculture that were integral to the structure of everyday life in the early modern world, and which, taken together, forcefully contradict Aristotle's claim that people care least for what they keep in common.

Common Ground

Noël Salomon's watershed study of the *Relaciones topográficas*, translated into the Spanish as *La vida rural castellana en tiempos de Felipe II*, demonstrates that the commons were central not just to the economy and ecology of early modern Spain, but to the structure of society itself. "El hecho evidente a fines del siglo XVI en Castilla la Nueva es la 'propiedad comunitaria', entonces en plena vida," Salomon argues. "A pesar de la amenaza que significan para ella los progresos de la agricultura y el retroceso de la ganadería, continúa siendo una pieza maestra de la vida rural, tanto desde el punto de vista psicológico, como desde el económico" (1973, 120). Salomon's research suggests that the commons in early modern Spain were not simply material resources or spaces that people "exploited," but ways of thinking the self in relationship to the community and the environment that fundamentally structured everyday life. In the pages ahead, I hope to track how the well-documented multiplicity of commons in early modern Spain translated to a corollary expression of "the common" or "commoning" in both the literature and lived experience of early modern Spain. El hilo narrativo de las *Soledades* no es más que un pretexto: el poeta lo aprovecha para entregarse a descripciones de la naturaleza, bodegones, retratos de personas y descripciones de animales. (15)

Michael Vassberg laments that few historians “have recognized the importance of the communitarian tradition in early modern rural Castile,” whose “economy and society were profoundly influenced by a complex system of public ownership of the soil and its fruits. Both arable agriculture and animal husbandry were affected, and the communitarian system played an important role in preserving the relatively open society that characterized late medieval and early modern Castile” (1984, 5). In early modern Spain, commons were everywhere, not just as institutionalized, strictly managed resources like the *huerta* canal systems studied by Elinor Ostrom, but as *montes, dehesas, cotos, ejidos, pozos, hornos, molinos* and numerous other landscapes and technologies that shaped the rural landscape and the lives of its inhabitants (Salomon 1973; Vassberg 1984). Vassberg’s research demonstrates the basic fluidity of the tenure of land, frequently subject to periodic shifts from “enclosed” space farmed for private profit to open-access pasture, threshing ground, even protected reclamation site (1984, 62ff). And, as Salomon shows through his reading of the *Relaciones topográficas*, the language of the commons was sufficiently variable and overlapping as to fundamentally blur, even undermine, the distinction between the private and the public sphere (1973, 127–130).

Spaces and objects moved into and out of the commons according to longstanding practices and rituals of fair use, grounded in the principle that natural resources, including the land itself, cannot be owned; only those things that individuals create by their work may be claimed as private property (Costa 1983, 11, 370ff), everything else would be potentially available through *usufruct*, the ancient concept of public access and sustainable use of even privately held property (Wall 2014, 7). Empty landscapes or

tierras baldías could thus be occupied and worked under the right of *presura*, or possession through use, while the *derrota de mieses* made available for common pasture the stubble growth left behind after the harvest of a field, whether that space was publicly or privately owned. And the communal gathering of fallen or forgotten fruits and grains, and the foraging of wild vegetables, firewood, and other spontaneous natural resources, even on private land, were protected under the traditions of the *rebusco* and *espiguelo* (Vassberg 1984, 11–13, 55). Given the remarkable mobility and transactions—both material and intellectual—between the wilderness, countryside, city, and transatlantic empire of early modern Spain, it's unlikely that the structures of thought that grounded the commons would have stayed put in the village; in fact, the very existence of the *Relaciones topográficas* and numerous other inquests, *arbitrios*, and cartographies of the Iberian interior demonstrate the keen interest in the 16th and 17th centuries for the commons of the rural periphery on the part of the urban center (Vassberg 1996, 6–7).³⁴

The spaces and practices that comprise the commons in rural Iberia exemplify the basic contingency of property rights in the early modern world, subject to continuous negotiation on interpersonal, municipal, even national levels. They also remind us that the relationships between individuals and the state were not simply governed by a specific set of legal codes passed down by the monarch, the church, the *cortes*, or the local councils, but operated as a dialectic between legislators, communities, and the surrounding environment. In other words, the responsiveness of the commons to periodic

³⁴ As Joaquín Costa's landmark study, *Colectivismo agrario en España*, demonstrated well over a century ago, the conflict between commoning and enclosure has been recognized as a *political*, and not merely *agricultural*, issue by Spanish intellectuals since the early 16th century.

shifts in climate, fertility, or demography allowed the environment, in collaboration with its inhabitants, a remarkable degree of agency in determining its own nature. The presence of the commons in early modern Spain thus indexes a lived relationship of practices and structures of thought that fits squarely within Hardt and Negri's concept of "the common," and which lends historical depth and geographic breadth to more recent articulations of "commoning" that in general place contemporary phenomena like the 15-M occupations of urban space. The *Relaciones topográficas* show us, in short, not only the extent to which land tenure, and thus society itself, functioned as a conversation between humans and the natural world, but also the long and intricate history of commoning in the cultural matrix of the Iberian world.

Commoning was an integral aspect of life to the society of imperial Spain and thus to the economies and ecologies characteristic of early modernity. The fundamental importance of the commons to the way people organized their lives in relationship to each other and their environment urges us to integrate the practices, rituals, and habits of commoning into the system of concepts—*limpieza de sangre*, *honra*, *sprezzatura*, and so on—that Hispanists have traditionally used to describe and interpret the lifeworlds of early modern Spain. Commoning also offers us an alternative to conventional readings of literary representations of the countryside, frequently dismissed either as highly formulaic imitations of classical and Italian models or as reinscriptions of the "menosprecio de campo, alabanza de aldea" *topos*. In scholarship on early modern Spain, social concepts are often—if not always consciously or explicitly—assigned exemplary spaces: thus *honra* is considered essentially theatrical, while *desengaño*, a picaresque

experience, belongs to the *hampa* or urban underworld, and the courtly milieu is the ideal context for feelings melancholy and romantic love. The same could be argued for commoning, which, the following pages will demonstrate, is expressed in the open common grounds—*baldíos*, *ejidos*, and so on—that both foster and exemplify the practices and ethics of hospitality, attention, and care of the pastoral world.

Solitude and Society

Concepts of solitude and society are intimately linked in the early modern ecological imaginary, and not simply as antonyms. The idea of *soledad*, as understood by Góngora and his contemporaries, does not necessarily imply desolation in the physical or spiritual senses that we associate with hermits, vagabonds, or the melancholy, and which are so familiar to us, these days, in the figures of Augustine of Hippo, Teresa of Ávila, Arthur Rimbaud, Henry David Thoreau, Annie Dillard, and their silver screen avatars (Resse Witherspoon as Cheryl Strayed, Emile Hirsch as Christopher McCandless, and so on). Solitudes also belong among those topographies where—Don Quixote explains to Don Diego de Miranda—the knight errant who “por los desiertos, por las soledades, por las encrucijadas, por las selvas y por los montes anda buscando peligrosas aventuras [...] sólo por alcanzar gloriosa fama y duradera” (2004, 678).³⁵ Though sparsely populated, these landscapes are not strictly speaking “empty,” as attested by Don Quixote’s numerous and frequently violent encounters with innkeepers, prostitutes, travelers, stockmen, soldiers, and galley slaves. What *soledades* contain, shelter, even foster, are

³⁵ A misleading—if not inaccurate—explanatory note to this passage in the 2004 Francisco Rico edition equates “soledades” with “bosques.”

forms of society that are itinerant, temporary, fluid, frequently *ad hoc*, and to a large extent autonomous. A scarcity of the infrastructures of the urban sphere implies a corollary absence of its political and ecclesiastical authority; instead, folks make do with what they have at hand. As the *Quixote* beautifully demonstrates again and again, these are spaces that nurture transitory, ambiguous, overtly performative, and intersectional ways of being in the world, of which the knight errant himself is just one of many examples.

Pilgrimage, a performance of itinerancy by nature temporary and transformative, and which relies not simply on charity but on networks of information and collaboration that bring together disparate geographies and cultural norms—and in doing so interrogates the social and political structures of the modern state—is perhaps the exemplary personality, or *persona*, of the solitudes. This is the figure that Luis de Góngora places at the forefront of the *Soledades*, the exceptionally long and, at the time, deliciously scandalous *silva* that survives in two cantos describing a shipwrecked aristocrat’s pilgrimage through the agricultural landscapes of early modern Spain. Góngora in fact establishes, from its first lines, an analogy between the itinerancy, nomadism, and errancy of the pilgrim and the poetics of the *Soledades* themselves:

Pasos de un peregrino son errante
 cuantos me dictó versos dulce Musa,
 en soledad confusa
 perdidos unos, otros inspirados. (2016, lines 1–4)

The standard reading of Góngora’s poetic *exordium* figures a hyperbaton in the first line, such that “errante” modifies the “peregrino” and “son” translates as the third

person plural of the copula verb *to be* in simple present.³⁶ In this reading, the inspired verses of the *Soledades* are, by analogy, the steps of an wandering pilgrim, lost a confused solitude. Another reading figures the poem—its structure astrophic, its meter and rhyme scheme irregular—as a “soledad confusa” that the reader navigates like a pilgrim lost in a textual wilderness.³⁷ Though unremarked by scholarship on the *Soledades*, this reading implicitly arranges the first line paratactically, such that “son errante” can describe a “wandering song” grammatically independent to the “Pasos de un peregrino.” These readings are not exclusive, but complementary, and, as Maurice Molho’s famously meticulous analysis of the *exordium* demonstrates, the integrity of the poetic concept “pasos = versos” depends on their simultaneity (Molho 1977, 39–82). In short, the notorious amphibiousness of Góngora’s poetics allows “son” to belong both to the pilgrim (*pasos*) and to the poetry (*versos*), such that both can be *perdidos* and

³⁶ Pellicer’s explication of the first verses: “Pasos dice que sonde un *peregrino* sus numeros, perdidos en la soledad los pasos, y en la soledad dictados los versos” (1630, col. 353). Salcedo Coronel: “PERDIDOS UNOS. Los passos del peregrino, y bien dize perdidos, aviendo dicho, confusa. OTROS INSPIRADOS. Los versos que le dictó la Musa. Digo, que fueron inspirados de su Musa en la confusa soledad, ó porque se hallava retirado quando escrivia este Poema, o porque le inspiró los versos para este asunto de la soledad” (Góngora 1636, fol. 2r). Jammes: “Son pasos de un peregrino errante todos estos versos que me dictó una dulce musa, perdidos en soledad confusa los unos (los pasos), inspirados los otros (los versos)” (Góngora 2016, 184–185).

³⁷ Molho: “La *silva* y la *selva* son, una y otra, la negación de toda estructura. Su relación es la de una forma métrica y una substancia poética congruente por su fundamental identidad” (1977, 49). Beverley, interpreting the *exordium*: “Proposición del poema, que será una *soledad confusa* (*soledad* espiritual del poeta/peregrino, cuyos *pasos* se pierden en la *soledad* o ‘selva’ de los *versos* que forman una *silva* poética)” (Góngora 2014, 71).

inspirados. In this way, what we can call a “poetics of pilgrimage” at once describes the act of reading, the text object, and the internal world of the *Soledades*.³⁸

But what, exactly, are the *soledades* that the pilgrim, as either protagonist or reader, encounters? In his compelling explication of the *exordium*, Molho, citing classical and contemporary uses of the term, insists that the poem establishes a strict equivalence between the landscapes *soledad* and *selva*, and from this, between the poetic form of the *silva* and the *Soledades*: “La perfecta acomodación de la forma a la substancia yace en el *concepto* que encierra el título: escribir en *silva*, o en *selva*, es escribir en *soledad*, y, más exactamente aún, en *soledad confusa*. En otros términos: por la mediación de *selva*, *soledad* se identifica con *silva*” (49; emphasis in original). And yet, despite Molho’s insistence, neither the *silva* nor the *soledades* of the *Soledades* embody a “negación de toda estructura” (49), nor does their “confusion” necessarily imply disorder. As we will see, in the world of the *Soledades* the term represents something closer to transgression, or inversion, a blurring of the material, ideological, even ontological boundaries of things at the margins of experience embodied by the performance of pilgrimage in landscapes of

³⁸ Most scholarship on this passage focuses, explicitly or not, on the indeterminate relationship between the adjectives “perdidos” and “inspirados” in the last line as the structural hinge of this passage. I think that the hinge is actually the word “son,” whose Janus-like ambiguity captures, in a single syllable, the entire poetics of the *Soledades* in that it allows the first line to simultaneously describe *both* the pilgrim *and* the poem. In other words, the grammatical ambiguity of the first line—its confusion—immediately suggests that we consider pilgrimage to be a sort of poetics or song-making, and for *poiesis* or the process of making to be a kind of pilgrimage. To imagine the poet as pilgrim—attentive, seeking, wandering—rather than as prophet or *vates*, and the poem as something that is constructed in the act of reading, stands in stark opposition to the dominant idea (at least among Hispanists) of the ethic of Renaissance poetics, which tends to think of the relationship between tradition, invention, and reception in terms of bellicose *aemulatio* rather than something more open and collaborative.

solitude. And as John Beverley's extended reading in *Aspects of the Soledades* amply demonstrates, the poem itself, far from devoid of structure, in fact expresses an almost encyclopedic archive of contemporary discourses on the rural landscape and its inhabitants within a recognizable narrative framed by carefully orchestrated temporal and spatial relationships.

As I hope to demonstrate, the "solitudes" of the *Soledades* are social because they are frequently spaces and experiences constructed in collaboration, whether with the natural world or in communion with groups of people whose lives are arranged in progressively intricate cultural networks. Nature, here, however, is conceived as a living biosphere of responsive agents, not as inert material or brute organisms. In the following pages, I address the social and topographical aspects of *soledad* frequently dismissed or simply ignored by recent scholarship, but which were central to how Góngora's contemporaries understood the poem and its landscapes, nowhere taken simply to be *selvas*—forests, in other words—but rather a vast ecology comprising not only woodlands but watersheds, fields, estuaries, even villages and castles. In numerous contemporary texts, the term *soledad* does not signify a particular landscape; rather, solitudes comprise a variety of spaces both "rural" and "urban"—a binary that the *Soledades* forcefully undermines at numerous crucial moments. In these texts, "solitude" names the mutual responsiveness between landscapes and their inhabitants, and the recognition, on the part of the latter, that this is, in fact, a *relationship* in the fullest sense of the word. This dialectic is expressed in the poem through the spaces and practices we now associate with theories of "commoning" but which, as we have seen, were already

recognized by Góngora's contemporaries as crucial aspects of a world built, to a significant extent, around a complex network of rural commons with undeniable material and intellectual importance to the urban center and its imperial economies. In this context, what we might call the "solitude of the pilgrim" names the process of coming to awareness of the ethics of commoning and participating in the ecologies in produces.

2. LANDSCAPES OF SOLITUDE

The Concept of Solitude

What is the concept of solitude in circulation at the time that Góngora writes the *Soledades*? Sebastián de Covarrubias, usually such warm company to the philologist, is curiously terse on the subject, offering just one word, the Latin *solitudo*, as definition for *soledad*. Lewis and Short's Latin dictionary immediately reveal the complexity of *solitudo*, which refers not only to deserted places (deserts or wilderness generally), but also to "being alone or solitary, loneliness, solitariness, solitude" ("Solitudo"). In other words, the term occupies three distinct aspects of desolation: first, *being* alone, in the physical sense; second, *feeling* alone, in the psychological sense; and finally, *unpopulated* spaces: deserts, wilderness, countryside, and so on. Following Robert Jammes, we can call the first two aspects "objective" and "subjective" solitudes (Góngora 2016, 59); the third aspect is topographic, and refers to any rural, or non-urban, space.

Despite early indications among Góngora's first and most intimate commentators that the title *Soledades* referred, at least partially, to the latter of these aspects, modern scholars have not fully attended to the topographic or spatial nature of the poem. When the topographic aspects of the concept have been investigated, it has tended to be in

service of locating the “real” or “authentic” geography of the *Soledades*, with less attention paid to how the specific topographies represented in the poem structure its meaning. Furthermore, given that Góngora’s *peregrino* is rarely alone in the poem, most critical attention has focused on the subjective sense of the term. In other words, we lack a clear sense of how the landscapes of the *Soledades*—shorelines, mountains, riverbanks, fields, estuaries, and so on—shape not only the pilgrim’s experience of the environments and people he encounters, but also our own encounter, as readers, with the world of the *Soledades*, with its communities and ecologies.

Julio Baena, for example, identifies three concepts of solitude operative for Góngora and his contemporaries: *soledad* as a “‘muralla protectora’ que solamente los sabios logran erigir”; another that is “cuidadosamente construida como *nostalgia*, como un *echar de menos*” (2011, 83; emphasis in original); and finally the aristocratic retreat, “una cosa concreta que se construye con trabajo y dinero” (86). Baena argues that what these *soledades* share is a constructedness recognized, amplified, and critiqued by Góngora: “La soledad, pues, es construida a la vez que repudiada, y produce en su proceso de construcción contradicciones insalvables, o solamente soportables a base de intensificar el proceso de construcción de una individualidad que se revela como imprescindible e ilusoria al mismo tiempo” (92). In a sense, Baena brackets out the objective aspects of *soledad* in favor of a solitude that is always constructed, always subjective. Though built for a variety of purposes, these solitudes all express a desire to create a sort of bulwark (against urbanity, abandonment, and politics) by strictly dividing nature from culture. Absent from Baena’s otherwise brilliant analysis are the *soledades*

that are not constructed as intellectual, emotional, or social retreats—what we might call solitudes of disavowal—but those that promote, produce, even embody, alternative forms of society. These are the topographic solitudes present in both the pre- and early modern lexicon: the landscapes, communities, and economies that proliferate across the *Soledades* but which have received little attention from scholarship.

While I agree with Baena's argument that all *soledades* are in some sense constructed—that there is no wilderness that is “untouched,” if only by discourse—what distinguishes Góngora's topographical solitudes from the three Baena identifies is its expression of the relationship between nature and culture, which is not oppositional but rather dialectical. As John Beverley writes, in the *Soledades* the traditionally conceived solitudes “serve as terms of a dynamic model, the poem itself, which invites the city to be more like the countryside, the countryside more like the city” (1980, 77–78). Although the solitudes of the philosopher, poet, and aristocrat are certainly present in the *Soledades*, this fourth, topographical form, which we can provisionally call “the solitude of the pilgrim,” is expressed through the narrative voice at moments when nature and culture come together to create a synthesis, a third-category space that embodies the propitious marriage of the natural, the cultural, and the political. Indeed, as I will argue, it is through the representation of these spaces, and the transactions of human and environmental agents in their construction—the practice of commoning, in other words—that Góngora approaches questions of ecological ethics.

Early Modern Solitudes

One of the earliest and most devastating salvos in the polemic surrounding the first circulation of the *Soledades* came from the poet Juan de Jáuregui, in an essay—a hatchet job, really—titled *Antídoto contra la pestilente poesía de Las Soledades, aplicado a su autor para defenderle de sí mismo*. This visceral censure found its antithesis in an essay now known as the *Examen del Antídoto*, by Francisco de Córdoba (Abad de Rute), a friend and defender of Góngora’s poetics. Jáuregui begins the *Antídoto* criticizing the “improperly” titled *Soledades*:

porque soledad es tanto como falta de compañía, i no se dirá estar solo el que tuviere otro consigo. Vm. introduce en su obra legiones de serranas i pastores, de entre los cuales nunca sale aquel pobre moço naufragante. Assí se muestra en cien ocasiones, como éstas: “Inundación hermosa / que la montaña hizo populosa / de sus aldeas todas.” “Parientes más cercanas / que sus vecinos pueblos, etc.” Donde avía tanta vezindad de pueblos, i toda aquella caterva de vaina, canta i zapatea hasta caer, ¿cómo diablos pudo llamarse *Soledad*? (Gates 1960, 86)

Jáuregui complains that such densely populated landscapes could not properly be called *soledades*. In his critique, Jáuregui limits himself to the objective aspect of solitude—*falta de compañía*—which the pilgrim, continuously surrounded by shepherds, villagers, and fishers, could never have experienced. Francisco de Córdoba responds sharply that Jáuregui shouldn’t pretend

que este nombre de “Solo” y “Soledad” le entendemos tan en calças y en jubón, que no tenga el pobre de puro solo, quien acuda a su defensa; pero muy de otra manera se entiende por acá, ora sea respeto del Peregrino, ora del lugar por donde se finge errando, porque de una y otra suerte le conviene a la obra el nombre de Soledades. (Artigas 1925, 402)

The Abad de Rute insists that “en nuestro vulgar Castellano” *soledad* refers not only to desolate people—“al desamparado, al desvalido, al que está fuera de su tierra sin

deudos, sin amigos, al que carece de las cosas amadas, o necessarias” (402)—in other words, someone suffering from “subjective” solitude, but to desolate landscapes: “los distantes del tráfigo, y negociación de las Ciudades an tenido siempre nombre, y an pasado plaça de Soledades, por más que los frecuente, y habite gente” (403).

Unfortunately, none of the many examples that Francisco de Córdoba provides for the topographical aspect of *soledad* are actually in Castilian. In fact, the term, in its various aspects, was in common use by the early 17th century.

Instances in the literature of late medieval and early modern Spain of the use of *soledad* to signify a subjective emotional or psychological state are multitude and well-documented. In fact, by following the use of this term in lyric poetry backward into literary history, as Karl Vossler does in his watershed study, *La poesía de soledad en España*, one can trace a tradition of thought that draws from Portuguese, Italian, Galician, and Castilian courtly poetry to produce a uniquely “modern” sense of erotic desolation in contrast to the “philosophic” or spiritual solitude in the works of Seneca and Cicero inherited by Petrarch and his imitators (1946, 11–59). Thus when at the end of the Act 6 of *La Celestina* the lovesick Calisto orders his page, Pármeneo, to accompany “a esta señora [Celestina] a su casa y vaya con ella tanto plazer y alegría quanta conmigo queda tristeza y soledad” (1995, 191), this early novel’s readers or listeners would recognize the irony of this line: namely, that *soledad* signifies here not only a feeling distinct from sadness (*tristeza*) but a physical presence-in-absence, in other words, a *nostalgia*.

Later readers would inevitably contrast Calisto's desolation with that of the narrative voice in Fray Luis de León's famous paean to solitude, known today simply as "Vida retirada," which begins:

¡Qué descansada vida
 la del que huye el mundanal ruido
 y sigue la escondida
 senda por donde han ido
 los pocos sabios que en el mundo han sido! (2001, lines 1–5)

The imagined retreat from the "mundanal ruido" echoes the sense of landscapes "distantes del tráfigo" from the Abad de Rute's defense of Góngora's topographical use of *soledad*. But a few lines later in this same poem, the concept of solitude is given a twist:

Vivir quiero conmigo,
 gozar quiero del bien que debo al cielo
 a solas, sin testigo,
 libre de amor, de celo,
 de odio, de esperanzas, de recelo. (36–40)

As the *Diccionario de autoridades* teaches us in the entry for "solo," the expression *a solas*, "vale en soledad, retiro, ò fuera del comercio. Suele decirse à sus solas, para dar mas energía à la expression quando se habla de alguno, que solo, y retirado está haciendo alguna cosa, ò hablando, ù discurriendo consigo solo" ("Solo"). Arguably, the use of *soledad* in Luis de León's "Vida retirada" is stripped of the noxious

aspect of lovesickness or desolation. This is a productive solitude that simultaneously implies a form of society—the process of learning to live with yourself and with the surrounding environment, imagined not as a passive resource to be exploited but as an active interlocutor.

Alongside these psychologically complex forms of *soledad* coexisted, perfectly naturally, the more prosaic aspect signifying rural countryside. This is the space that Antonio de Guevara refers to in his famous treatise *Menosprecio de corte y alabanza de aldea* (first published in 1539), when he argues that if “las afecciones y pasiones que cobró el cortesano en la corte lleva consigo a su casa, más le valiera nunca retraerse a ella, porque *en la soledad* son los vicios más poderosos y los hombres muy más flacos” (1984, 151; emphasis added). The opposition in this phrase is between two spaces: the court and the countryside, where *soledad* is a topography that, for Guevara and other mid-century moralists, could inspire vice to an equal or greater degree than the court.³⁹ For Guevara, in other words, there is an intimate and complex relationship between the space one inhabits and the effects of one’s habits. In short, for the reading public in early modern Spain, solitudes do not simply produce *soledad* in the sense of desolation, nor do they necessarily embody this feeling; what they do is produce effects (psychological, physiological, and political) on the individuals and communities that inhabit or simply

³⁹ References in modern scholarship to the “menosprecio de corte” commonplace in the mid-16th and early 17th centuries are themselves commonplace, and are rarely insightful. Overwhelmingly, Guevara’s nuanced and even contradictory text is thought to present a simple opposition between the nourishing countryside and the noxious court. In fact, Guevara recognizes in the *soledades* a real and present threat to one’s physical and spiritual health.

pass through them. It is to these effects that pastoral literature, including the *Soledades*, turns its attention when representing landscapes of solitude.

Pastoral Solitudes

In the pastoral literature of early modern Spain, *soledad* is employed frequently in objective, subjective, and topographical senses, often in the same work. The polysemy of *soledad* in early modernity—the easy shuttling it allowed between descriptions of physical spaces and states of feeling—suggests an intimacy between external, or physical, and internal, or psychological, topographies. Arguably, the flexibility of this term indexes a way of experiencing reality that does not strictly separate the self from the world. In other words, the fact that *soledad* neatly describes both physical and emotional “emptiness” suggests it was difficult, if not impossible, to think one without the other. As the following examples demonstrate, the early modern period did not see the subjective sense of *soledad* replace its objective or topographical senses.⁴⁰ Rather, their coexistence, even interdependence, in early modern pastoral, urges us to read its descriptions of the face of nature for affect, and the affections of its shepherds for concepts of ecology.

Garcilaso’s *Églogas* invoke the various aspects of *soledad* to describe spaces in affective terms and affects spatially. The shepherd Nemoroso begins his lament in *Égloga primera* addressing the *locus amoenus* of his former happiness, a landscape of crystalline waters, green fields, and singing birds. This space was so distant

del grave mal que siento,

⁴⁰ Vossler writes that “el término español ‘soledad’ se nos aparece como una nueva versión cultista, es decir, como una creación literaria, sugerida, al parecer, por la lírica galaico-portuguesa medieval” (11).

que de puro contento
 con vuestra soledad me recreaba,
 donde con dulce sueño reposaba,
 o con el pensamiento discurría
 por donde no hallaba
 sino memorias llenas d'alegría (1969, lines 246–252)

The concept “vuestra soledad [...] donde” indicates that solitude is operating in these lines in its various aspects simultaneously: it is both property *belonging to* the surrounding environment, implying an affective transaction between self and world, and a physical space *from which* the shepherd experienced himself as a subject in time, “por donde no hallaba / sino memorias llenas d'alegría.” The lyric subject describes *soledad* in these lines as a form of localization, a being-in-space. In other words, what these lines describe is not mere nostalgia, but the experience of space-time itself. Garcilaso elaborates in Nemoroso’s lament a phenomenology of *soledad* that does not clearly distinguish material space from the states of mind that structure our experience of spatiality.

The polysemic employment of *soledad* in these early lines of *Égloga primera* inevitably colors how we read the more “conventional” treatment of lovesickness a few verses later, when Nemoroso complains that

El cielo en mis dolores
 cargó la mano tanto,
 que a sempiterno llanto
 y a triste soledad me ha condenado;
 y lo que siento más es verme atado
 a la pesada vida y enojosa,
 solo, desamparado,
 ciego, sin lumbre, en cárcel tenebrosa. (288–295; emphasis added)

Is the shepherd here condemned to a sad desolation, or is it the *soledad* itself that is saddened? (The text allows both possibilities.) This might at first seem like an obvious point and in fact a rather basic reading, but if *soledad*, as critics have argued, necessarily implies desolation, the phrase *triste soledad* would be redundant, and, further, the famous description of the setting of Garcilaso's *Égloga tercera*—"Cerca del Tajo *en soledad amena* / de verdes sauces hay una espesura, / toda de yedra revestida y llena" (57–59; emphasis added)—would be nonsense. Solitudes can only be "pleasant" in a world where the affective transactions between individuals and their environment are not merely metaphoric, as they are for most of us today. In other words, descriptions of *soledad* like the ones above, repeatedly constructed as spaces—a dark prison in the first eclogue and a *locus amoenus* in the third—suggest a responsiveness between self and environment that exceeds literary convention.

The usefulness of *soledad* as a concept that contains not just topographies or emotions but rather the interplay between these—the sense that landscapes don't simply *evoke* but *embody* states of mind—is a consistent feature of the pastoral. Treating it merely as courtly affect or literary convention impoverishes the forms of ecology clearly present in early modern pastoral texts. The complex relationship between space and self suggested by the poetry of Fray Luis de León and Garcilaso de la Vega is made manifest in the pastoral of the early 17th-century Spain. Recall, for example, Marcela's ecologically-structured claims to freedom and integrity in *Don Quixote* I, XIV: "Yo nací libre, y para poder vivir libre escogí *la soledad de los campos*: los árboles de estas montañas son mi compañía; las claras aguas de estos arroyos, mis espejos; con los

árboles y con las aguas comunico mis pensamientos y hermosura” (2004, 126; emphasis added). In contrast to Grisóstomo’s extractive or exploitative relationship to the landscape, Marcela imagines her freedom and self-determination in terms of reciprocity that is ultimately expressed not as *solitude* but as *society*, as a form of communion between herself, her fellow shepherdesses, and the surrounding environment.⁴¹ This is the aspect of *soledad*, as a form of society with nature—with the natural world and its inhabitants not as objects but as agents—that, I will argue below, is operative in the *Soledades* of Cervantes’s favorite poet, Luis de Góngora.

The Four Solitudes

Dámaso Alonso’s first comments to his edition of the *Soledades*, in a “Note” set apart from the general introduction, almost as an epigraph, tell us the following:

Don Luis de Góngora, según la opinión más probable, se propuso escribir cuatro poemas con nombre genérico de *Soledades* y distribuirlos así: 1.º Soledad de los campos; 2.º Soledad de las riberas; 3.º Soledad de las selvas; y, 4.º, Soledad del yermo. Quedaron sin hacer la Soledad de las selvas y la del yermo, y sin acabar la de las riberas. A esta última fueron añadidos aún por el poeta, en época posterior, cuarenta y tres versos, a instancia de un amigo que le animaba a concluir la obra. (1982, 9)

Nowhere else in his profoundly influential body of commentary on the work of Luis de Góngora does Alonso place such emphasis on the landscapes of the *Soledades*. In fact, he never really follows up on this note, and the subsequent introduction to the poem, the canonical essay “Claridad y belleza de las *Soledades*,” repeatedly insists, for

⁴¹ See Chapter 1 for a full discussion of the ecological implications of Marcela’s speech.

example, that the “base real de la poesía de las *Soledades* es, por tanto, la naturaleza. Pero aquí termina la conexión con la realidad” (15).⁴²

But this insight about the structure of the poem—given pride of place and drawn from Góngora’s first and most intimate commentators—speaks volumes: over and above its revolutionary formal aspects, for Dámaso Alonso the *Soledades* is first of all poetry of the landscape. And because arguably only the first two parts of the *Soledades* were completed, it is a poem about two specific landscapes: *campo* (field or countryside), and *ribera* (shoreline or riverbank).⁴³ The few modern critics who have attended to the landscapes of the *Soledades* tend to seek out real-world geographies that correspond to the landscapes of the poem’s first and second cantos; John Beverley is alone in substantially theorizing the significance of the landscape to the poem and to the *peregrinaje* of its protagonist.

Dámaso Alonso’s note on the incomplete four-part structure of the *Soledades* follows the readings of its earliest commentators, Góngora’s personal friends, who had access not only to the first manuscript fragments in circulation, but to the poet himself. For example, in his *Anotaciones y defensas de la Primera Soledad*, Pedro Díaz de Rivas argues that in the first verse of the “Dedicatoria” the poet:

⁴² Robert Jammes, despite—or perhaps because of—his greater attention to the landscape of the *Soledades*, agrees: “Góngora fabrica con todos esos elementos sencillos y reales una campaña soñada, unos bosques idílicos y un mundo rústico mas cercano, al fin de cuentas, de la pastoral que de la realidad. (1987, 518)

⁴³ Whether or not the *Soledades* is an “incomplete” poem is still an open question. Recent editions are split: Jammes (Góngora 2016, 44ff.) supports the four-part structure theory, and Beverley (Góngora 2014, 56–61;), arguing for a two-part structure and a deliberate truncation of the second canto, dissents.

Dize que el argumento de su obra son los passos de un Peregrino en la Soledad. Éste pues es el firme tronco de la Fábula, en quien se apoyan las demás circunstancias della: a quien intituló *Soledades* por el lugar donde sucedieron. La primera obra se intitula la *Soledad de los campos*, y las personas que se introducen son pastores; la segunda la *Soledad de las riberas*; la tercera, la *Soledad de las selvas*, y la cuarta la *Soledad de el yermo*. Dio, pues, por título el lugar donde sucedía el cuento, a imitación de gravísimos Autores. [...] ¿Y quién dude se digan bien *Las Soledades* estos escritos, donde si viven algunos hombres viven entre sí distantes, sin gobierno político ni orden que haga ciudad o pueblo? Y bien que pueda acontecer, como pinta el Poeta en su *Primera Soledad*, que se junte de esta gente un gran concurso en algún sitio, eso es acaso, y no quita que el tal sitio se llame Soledad. Y assí los Poetas que alabaron la “vida solitaria” no entendieron de aquella en que vive un hombre tan solo que ni él pueda ver gente ni ésta pueda penetrar allá, sino en la que vive apartado de el tumulto popular. (Gates 1960, 86n4)⁴⁴

This reading of the poem is echoed, as we have seen, by Francisco de Córdoba in his *Examen del Antídoto* and, somewhat later, by Joseph Pellicer de Salas y Trovar in *Lecciones solemnes a las obras de Don Luis de Góngora*.⁴⁵ To the topographical distribution of the poem’s structure, Pellicer posits an allegorical significance, each part corresponding to an era of a man’s life—youth, adolescence, adulthood, and senescence. Whether or not this four-part projection is accurate, it’s clear that for Góngora’s first readers the *Soledades* were intimately concerned with its representation of landscapes of solitude, so much so that they insisted that the poem was in fact *named after* its setting. If nothing else, this prominent early interest in the landscapes of the *Soledades* suggests the need for further inquiry into the complex relationship between the objective, subjective, and topographical forms of solitude in the poem.

⁴⁴ Incredibly, there is no modern edition of the *Anotaciones*. See Romanos (1989) and Roses Lozano (1994, 55).

⁴⁵ Dating with specificity the early exchanges in the polemic surrounding the *Soledades* is difficult, and beyond the scope of our discussion. See Jammes’s detailed study of this issue in the Introduction and Appendix to his edition of the *Soledades* (2016, 43–47, 607ff.) and Roses Lozano (1994).

Modern commentary of the landscape of the *Soledades* begins with another exchange of *mala leche*, this one between J. P. Wickersham Crawford (University of Pennsylvania) and Leo Spitzer (Johns Hopkins). In a short “Varia” for *Hispanic Review*, Crawford—citing Góngora’s gestures to Columbus’s expeditions in the *Soledad primera* and the catching of tunny fish and seals in the *Soledad segunda*—argues that the poem’s setting is Ayamonte, on the Atlantic coast of Spain, and thus the Guadiana (not the Guadalquivir) is the river central to both parts of the poem (1939, 347). Spitzer’s response a year later in *Revista de filología hispánica* dismisses Crawford’s claims: “¡pero si el mismo poeta nos ha indicado ‘la escena’ de las *Soledades*!, al borde de la desembocadura de un río, que se vuelca en el océano, unos peñascos y una campiña que acogen al naufrago. ¡Ni más ni menos!” (1940, 85). He goes on to argue, following Alonso and prefiguring Jammes, that “reality” only appears in the *Soledades* “rechazada, transfigurada, recreada. La soledad es la que ha dictado las realidades que podemos entrever vagamente, no son las realidades las que han dictado las *Soledades*. El escenario de las *Soledades* no es Ayamonte, es el alma solitaria, la soledad del poeta” (85). In the introduction to his edition of the poem, Jammes pauses only momentarily to consider the question, concluding, with Spitzer, that the pilgrim’s “moral crisis” determines the nature and shape of the landscapes he encounters (Góngora 2016, 63–67). In Jammes’s view, the various landscapes of the *Soledades*—shorelines, mountains, fields, and so on—respond symbolically to the moral arc of the pilgrim’s progress through the poem and to literary convention, and thus their referentiality to real spaces in the world is merely incidental. Beverley tends to agree, arguing that the *Soledades* is a textual space where “language

creates a nature in order to escape from the alienating reason of its experience of the world. But this escape is also a way of creating a new order of perception, a freer and more harmonious mediation of perception and reality” (1980, 39).

What separates these two major scholars of the *Soledades* is that whereas for Jammes, following Alonso, the pilgrim’s moral/metaphysical escape into rural solitudes serves the aesthetic interests of the poem, for Beverly the pilgrim’s environment is ultimately political. He argues in *Aspects of the Soledades* that its landscapes represent “the simultaneous experience of multiple signs of space and history around the contemplative present of the pilgrim;” these are “scripturalized” landscapes “saturated by the self-memory of discourse as history, which seems compelled to render itself in the artificial form of an emblem or cluster of allusions” (1980, 76). For both Beverley and Jammes, the landscapes of the *Soledades* are a sort of virtual reality projected from the eyes of the pilgrim, wrapping itself around everything like a second skin, the crucial difference being that for Beverley both the pilgrim and the reader-as-pilgrim, situated within historical memory, are aware of the landscape’s virtuality, and thus its constructedness in discourse.⁴⁶

Shaping Solitude

Scholarship on the *Soledades* can be divided more or less into two groups: on the one hand, those, following Jáuregui, who ignore (deliberately or not) the topographical

⁴⁶ Writing more recently, William Egginton argues that rather than “promising the simple behind the veil of the complex, poetry that deploys this [minor] strategy [i.e. the *Soledades*] tends to reveal the idea of the simple as part of the complexity of language itself, and hence reality as inherently complex, imbued already with the relations constituting representation” (2010, 60).

aspects of solitude; and, on the other, those, following Díaz de Rivas and Francisco de Córdoba, who insist that the poem seeks to represent specific landscapes and the lives of their inhabitants. But like Beverley and Jammes, critics in this latter group generally assume, explicitly or not, that the pilgrim is the structural and hermeneutic center of the poem—that, in other words, the subjective or emotional aspect of *soledad* is the only one operative in the work, which, as Alonso insists, has little or nothing to do with “reality.” The landscapes of the *Soledades* are thus manifestations of the pilgrim’s interior desolation, and though they may echo contemporary topographies and economies, their relationship to these spaces and practices is at best nominal, and serve merely to frame the pilgrim’s progress: affective, spiritual, political, or otherwise. In short, practically all modern criticism assumes that the landscapes of the *Soledades* are nothing more than a screen onto which the aristocratic subject’s desire is projected.

Along these lines, Leo Spitzer, for example, writes that “Góngora transforms the *soledad* of nature into *soledad canora* or *sonora*; his poetry sings and rings of solitude. This solitude of nature gives rise to a twofold victory: nature is subdued both through the hunt and through poetry” (1988, 95). Mary Gaylord, meanwhile, argues that the *Soledades* “widens the breach between the song of the earth and the song of the self, revealing the ultimate irreconcilability of these two ingredients of the pastoral fiction of wholeness” (1982, 86). And, though writing from a much different theoretical landscape, Crystal Chemris continues this thread, arguing that the pilgrim’s “psychic disintegration is connected to a breakdown in the organic correspondence between man and the cosmos, a disintegration which lies at the foundation of modern existence” (2008, 85). These

images of a natural world subdued, fragmented, and in the process of disintegration suggests that the relationship between human communities and their environment in the *Soledades* is one of profound alienation—indeed, that the title of the poem refers to this ecological desolation.

And yet this sense of crisis does not preclude the fundamental relevance of the numerous (countless!) transactions between space and subject in the poem, exchanges that suggest a more dialectical relationship between the self and the surrounding environment. The concept of commoning can help us not only to make visible these transactions in the poem, but also to understand something of their place within a wider discourse of the commons in the early modern world. Indeed, to treat the literary landscapes of the *Soledades*, and other early modern pastoral, merely as sites for moral or aesthetic resource extraction, and not as something in themselves, is to perform a kind of violence against the world of the text that threatens to rehearse the forms of coloniality fueled by the “metales homicidas” so loathed by Góngora’s shepherds. As I hope the following extended close reading demonstrates, the landscapes of the *Soledades* are not mere set pieces or “emblems”; rather, these are real physical spaces that structure, and are structured by, forms of society resistant to the various enclosures and desolations of modernity.

3. LANDSCAPES OF COMMUNITY

Locating

As we have seen, one of Juan de Jáuregui’s first of many objections to the *Soledades* was its title. How the hell, he wondered, could Góngora pretend to title

Soledades a poem where “avía tanta vezindad de pueblos, i toda aquella caterva de vaina, canta i zapatea hasta caer” (Gates 1960, 86)? The landscapes of the *Soledades* are indeed crowded and full of bustle. Góngora’s pilgrim stumbles upon a world whose continuous transformations owe as much to the intervention of its human communities as to the flows and striations of the natural world. Farmhouses, irrigation canals, watermills, agricultural and fishing villages, as well as castles (and, presumably, their attendant extramural infrastructures) fill the landscape, giving it shape in both the physical and symbolic sense. Its crossroads and maritime vessels suggest economic and cultural connections to a larger world, while its ruins and rituals index the sediments of a long occupation. Swept up in its activities, and overwhelmed by its hospitalities, spectacles, and entertainments, the pilgrim does not have the occasion to experience desolation, much less to witness it in others. Indeed, the pilgrim is only physically alone for the first 89 lines of a poem that (not including the “Dedicatoria”) totals 2070, and the company he keeps is joyful in its labors, compassionate, and fully engaged with the messy business of everyday life: making food, making music, and making love. The pilgrim does not recoil from this world; rather, as he thankfully consumes the fruits of its soil, witnesses with quiet courtesy its various ceremonies, and makes sense of its movements and habits with the discourses of mythology, seafaring, ecology, and astronomy (to name just a few), he participates fully in its production.

It’s difficult to reconcile this situation with landscapes “distantes del tráfago, y negociación de las Ciudades,” as Francisco de Córdoba argues; emblematic of the solitude of “el alma solitaria,” as Spitzer insists; or representative of “the ultimate

irreconcilability” of humanity and the natural world, a “disintegration which lies at the foundation of modern existence,” as Mary Gaylord and Crystal Chemris suggest. Nor do I recognize a poetics that, as Alonso insists, “alude sin descanso a toda la hermosura de naturaleza y esquivá todas sus fealdades” (Góngora 1982, 21), in a landscape where the ocean “vomits up” sailors, where rivers “tyrannize” the fields, where a wolf is hunted down by a “torrente de armas y de perros,” where fireworks threaten to leave a village “campo [...] estéril de ceniza,” where a marriage bed is described as a “stockade,” and whose apocalyptic concluding falconry scenes take place under a sky blackened inauspiciously by a flock of ravens. Ugliness, violence, and mortality are as characteristic of this world as its hospitality and harmonies. In fact, they tend to go hand-in-hand. The landscapes of the *Soledades* do not express a disavowal of the “real” world or its contingencies, nor of the company of others in contemplative preparation for the afterlife. And while the *Soledad segunda* does feature the “constructed” solitudes of aristocratic retreat recognized by Julio Baena in the island garden and marble castle with its presumably private hunting grounds, their very localization at the waters edge makes their boundaries porous and thus open to transgression.

The landscapes of solitude that Góngora’s pilgrim encounters and inhabits throughout the *Soledades* tend to embody not the desolation of the individual or the alienation of the human community from its environment, but rather their mutual construction, transactions at once material and symbolic. Although undeniably rural, this world is fully political in the practices and institutions implicit in the shape of the landscape itself. Overwhelmingly, though not without exception, these express

longstanding structures and technologies for bringing nature and culture together that are conceived as participatory rather than coercive or exploitative—forms of commoning, in a word. Images of transformation by earth and fire and water make visible the sometimes violent production of the human world from the raw materials of nature, a world that, on a long enough timescale, nature inevitably reclaims. Trees become timber become ships become wreckage, ending as *ex-votos* to the rocks, “que aun se dejan las peñas / lisonjear de agradecidas señas” (32–33); a mountain stream becomes a powerful river, then a network of irrigation canals before it meets the ocean at an estuary, “adonde / su orgullo pierde y su memoria esconde” (210–211); torches that had illuminated the festivities the night before a wedding “murieron, y en sí mismos sepultados, / sus miembros, en cenizas desatados, / piedras son de su misma sepultura” (684–686). The ethic of this movement from natural to cultural and back again disrupts the potential teleology of the pilgrim’s progress through this landscape, from the rustic *alquería* in the mountains to the aristocratic seaside castle and its hunting grounds. Fluidity, transience, and ambivalence, rather than a sense of unequivocal “improvement” or “possession” define the progressive domestication of the landscape witnessed by the pilgrim in the *Soledades*. Its inhabitants are connected by a horizontal network of sometimes incomprehensible ecologies to which they respond with reverence, humility, and fear, but also with joy, and with the ever-present sense of the human as something integral rather than exceptional to this system.

The “solitude of the pilgrim” names the process of coming to awareness of this ethic and participating in the ecologies it produces. Although the pilgrim comprehends

the world he encounters with the rarefied structures and mythologies of Renaissance humanism, and the bodies that populate it with the language of courtly love, its historical, material, and intellectual reality is not effaced by this poetics, but coexists in the names of native plants, local architectures, and contemporary technologies: in the *Soledades*, the trees, the waters, even the stars simultaneously embody *both* their symbolic *and* their practical natures. Hardly exemplary by the standards of modernity, this feudal society nevertheless expresses forms of commoning of value to our own world and our own lives. In the following pages, I read three distinct moments in the *Soledad primera* where Góngora's errant pilgrim encounters the production of solitudes. All three take place within agricultural landscapes that are not only historically specific, but that represented various forms of commoning in early modern Spain. These, I argue, are the elusive "solitudes" of the *Soledades*, spaces that are peripheral not simply in the topographical sense, but also in the sense that they both produce and embody alternative ecologies that while not necessarily *unavailable* in the colonial and courtly spaces conspicuously absent from this world, are constructed in opposition to the enclosures—physical, political, cultural—that those spaces exemplify.

Preparing

Góngora's pilgrim first encounters other people at the end of the first day of the *Soledad primera*. After summitting the cliffs above the beach where he was washed ashore, he descends into the rising dusk toward a distant, flickering light imagined as a lantern hanging from the mast of a ship anchored in a gulf of shadows (lines 52–61).

Drawn to the barking of a guard dog that summons rather than repels him, the pilgrim realizes the light that from a distance seemed as small as a ruby is in fact a raging bonfire:

El can ya vigilante
 convoca, despidiendo al caminante,
 y la que desviada
 luz poca pareció, tanta es vecina,
 que yace en ella robusta encina,
 mariposa en cenizas desatada.
 Llegó pues el mancebo, y saludado,
 sin ambición, sin pompa de palabras,
 de los conductores fue de cabras,
 que a Vulcano tenían coronado. (84–93)

The pilgrim is greeted simply and sincerely by the group of goatherds encircling the fire, engulfing a thick oak, crumbling like a butterfly of ashes.⁴⁷ This nocturnal encounter is the stage for the famous encomium to rural life, which begins immediately in line 94 and runs through line 134; it is therefore important, for any reading of the encomium—and thus of the poem’s ideology of the country and the city—to have a clear picture of what exactly is happening at this moment.

Commentary on this scene tends to focus on the the recently shipwrecked pilgrim’s shifting or “confused” perceptions to the world around him: what is pictured from a distance in nautical language—*farol*, *ferro*, *golfo*, *puerto*—up close is revealed to be a simple, though exceptionally large, bonfire. The concept is structured by the metaphor of the moth to the flame, which recalls the initial sense of the fire as a ship’s lantern, toward which this insect would be attracted. A trace of the pilgrim’s first

⁴⁷ Pellicer (col. 382) and Salcedo Coronel (Góngora 1636, fols. 31v–32r) remind us that in classical literature “Vulcan” was often a metonym for fires, especially large ones.

perception thus lingers in the final image of a butterfly engulfed in flames.⁴⁸ This reading of the image of the bonfire as butterfly on fire works well to exemplify the confusion of perception that the dusk implies, but it breaks down, on the practical level, if we try to picture it. To be successful as a poetic concept as understood by Góngora and his contemporaries, the fire would have to actually *look like* a moth in flames. It would also have to look like an oak tree, because the narrator names it so, something difficult to imagine from a pile of nameless wood.

The metaphor of a thick oak transformed into fiery butterfly suggests not the carefully tended cooking fire one would expect from a group of goatherds in the wilderness, but rather an entire tree ablaze, its spreading branches resembling the wings of an insect as they are turned to ashes, evanescently into the darkness of the night sky. Thinking practically, why would these goatherds, whose resources, especially firewood, would necessarily be scarce, make a fire so large? It seems absurd to imagine these herdsmen, praised in the subsequent encomium for their economy, simplicity, and harmony with the natural world, burning an entire tree simply to keep warm on a cold night. The answer, I think, is that what the pilgrim stumbles upon is a kind of workshop—the naming of the “worship” of Vulcan strongly suggests as much—where the landscape itself is the raw material being forged into a tool for human use.⁴⁹ What we

⁴⁸ See the notes in the Jammes edition (2016, 208n61 and 214n89) and in Beverley’s (2014, 79). See also Beverley’s *Aspects* (1980, 20–22).

⁴⁹ Beverley writes in *Aspects* that the goatherds are “introduced as ‘worshipping’ Vulcan, the god of fire and the forge. Their community exists in harmony with the surrounding nature, but this harmony derives from the marriage of technique and nature, not from nature alone” (1980, 94).

are seeing here, in other words, is a radically distilled scene of fire clearing or *rozás* of common land.

Fire clearing of wooded or scrub lands—*monte bajo* or *baldío*—comprising portions of the commons was a widespread practice in early modern Castile, employed by both shepherds and farmers as an efficient means for opening much-needed lands for pasture and arable cultivation, although from carelessness or bad luck these *rozás*, which should have been strictly managed, often spread out of control, quickly becoming wildfires and damaging large tracts of woodland (Vassberg 1984, 38–40). Despite its potential and widely recognized threat to local ecologies, the *rozás* were an important means for bringing land into the common use, for producing commons from what was “empty” space or simply wilderness. It is therefore important, notwithstanding our environmentalist squeamishness, to consider the *rozás* as an integral, if not primary, form of commoning in early modern Spain. It responds to the material needs of agrarian communities to cultivate the land, while recognizing that in this gain there is a loss that is not merely potential or abstract, and openly acknowledged even by its advocates. Góngora’s powerful image of an *encina* or holm oak—since Virgil the quintessential icon of the potential harmony between nature and culture expressed by the pastoral—engulfed in flames while scattering the ashes that could nourish weak soil, evokes this ecological ambivalence.

The *alquería* or farmhouse that shelters the pilgrim on the first night of the *Soledades*, and whose architecture and ethic is so highly praised, occupies space at the borderline between the wilderness from which the pilgrim emerged and the world of

culture—fields, canals, mills, villages, castles, and so on—that will surround him for the rest of the poem. As John Beverley writes in *Aspects*, this space “foreshadows the prosperous community of the wedding village and the final secular and erotic apotheosis of Góngora's dialectical calculus in the *Soledad primera*” (1980, 35). The “dialectical calculus” between nature and culture, myth and history, that structures the *Soledades* arguably includes commoning and enclosure. The fire clearing of the holm oak, though possibly accidental, expresses a corollary attitude to that embodied by the iconic objects (the cup, the spoon, the tablecloth) that exemplify not only the goatherds’ relationship to each other and to the surrounding environment, but the poem’s relationship to the world, both literary and historical, it pretends to represent.⁵⁰ If these objects and their craftsmen symbolize the ethics of commoning—empathy, fair use, sustainability—so must the practices, like the *rozás*, that make their way of life possible.

While I agree with Beverley that the hospitality and simplicity of the *albergue* prefigures the forms of society the pilgrim encounters in the rural village, I disagree that these goatherds embody a more “natural” or “primitive” world, as he and others have argued. Rather, they inhabit—and, indeed, through the *rozás*, produce—a common space that, while geographically and ecologically liminal, is nevertheless integral to the

⁵⁰ Praise of the simplicity with which everyday objects can be manufactured, in contrast to the ostentation and waste of the urban world, is a consistent feature of classical pastoral discourse, and often extends into “apologies” on the part of the narrative voice for the rusticity of its expression in the poetry. But, as John Beverley points out early on in *Aspects*, one of the striking features of the *Soledades* is the inversion of this principle with respect to its poetics, which “seems more a language whose own concern with technique is bound up in the qualities of the simple objects of labor or consumption it is describing, objects which, like Góngora's images, are devices for *capturing* and *containing*” (1980, 2; emphasis in original).

material and intellectual conditions of the society at the urban center. This dialectic between center and periphery will be underscored when these *serranos*, or others like them, make their way *en masse* to the village, literally bearing on their shoulders the fruits of their labor for tables very much like the “cuadrado pino” where the pilgrim enjoys his first meal. It is in this topographical solitude, a *monte bajo* or *tierra baldía* in the process of becoming common pastureland, and in the company of goatherds, that Góngora’s pilgrim first encounters, not inchoate but microcosmic, the forms of society that will sustain him, both physically and psychologically, across the landscapes of the *Soledades*.

Gathering

The next morning, the pilgrim is led by one of the goatherds to a nearby overlook, where the motif of confused vision is once again evoked:

Llegó y, a vista tanta
obedeciendo la dudosa planta,
inmóvil se quedó sobre un lentisco,
verde balcón del agradable risco.
Si mucho poco mapa le despliega,
mucho es más lo que, nieblas desatando,
confunde el Sol y la distancia niega
Muda la admiración habla callando,
y ciega un río sigue que, luciente
de aquellos montes hijo,
con torcido discurso, aunque prolijo,
tiraniza los campos útilmente (190–201)

An agricultural landscape unfolds before the pilgrim’s eyes, which cannot fully grasp the vastness of the panorama, confused by the distance and the brightness of the sun. Dumbstruck with wonder, his dazzled vision follows the twisting path of a river,

bordered with orchards and work buildings, from its source in the surrounding mountains to its brackish end, “adonde / su orgullo pierde y su memoria esconde” (210–211).

Although framed by wonder, this image recognizes the simultaneous violence, beauty, utility, and impermanence of this agricultural world, a vision underscored by the goatherd’s subsequent description of a nearby castle or fortress, now reclaimed by the green earth:

Yacen ahora, y sus desnudas piedras
visten piadosas yedras,
que a ruinas y a estragos
sabe el tiempo hacer verdes halagos. (218–221)

Descending into the river valley, the pilgrim stumbles upon a group of *serranas* gathering in a field as they wait for their male counterparts:

inundación hermosa
que la montaña hizo populosa
de sus aldeas todas
a pastorales bodas. (263–266)

When he emerges from the holm oak into which he’d courteously retreated, the pilgrim is greeted by their elderly guardian, a “político serrano” who, recognizing the stains of misfortune on his ragged clothing, invites him to spend the night within the nearby “política alameda, / verde muro de aquel lugar pequeño / que, a pesar de esos fresnos, se divisa” (522–524), and to attend the wedding the following day. They follow the “escuadra montañesa” along a stream, on a path lined with aspen and black poplar, to a lush crossroads—“Centro apacible un círculo espacioso / a más caminos que una estrella rayos / hacía” (573–575)—that is fed by a crystalline spring:

Este pues centro era
meta umbrosa al vaquero convecino,

y delicioso término al distante,
 donde, aún cansado más que el caminante,
 concurría el camino. (580–584)

Though at first described, in elevated language, as a paradigmatic *locus amoenus*, the spring's ultimate shape is practically mundane: a public gathering place for local and regional stockmen to water themselves and presumably their animals as well. Like the river transformed into an estuary, dissolving into the ocean's aquamarine expanse, in this scene disparate, exhausted paths convene in a communal space sheltered by aspen.

Where roads come together, so do communities, and the aspen stand is soon overtaken by another group of women, “que parientas del novio aún más cercanas / que vecinos sus pueblos, de presentes / prevenidas, concurren a las bodas” (620–622). As night gathers, this intermingled group of female neighbors and relatives halts its conversations and, “cual de aves se caló turba canora / a robusto nogal que acequia lava / en cercado vecino” (633–635), descends quickly upon the village, “haciéndole atalayas del Ocaso / cuantos humeros cuenta la aldehuela” (640–641). Góngora's glancing invocation of a nearby *acequia* or irrigation canal recalls the progressive transformations of the watershed seen by the pilgrim from another overlook, the *lentisco* or mastic tree—“verde balcón del agradable risco” (192)—from which, at dawn, he first surveyed this same landscape now shrouded in darkness. The day ends with the sound of laurels, alders, and black poplars (the latter close relations of the aspen or white poplar) being cut down as decoration for the wedding:

Estos árboles pues ve la mañana
 mentir florestas y emular viales,
 cuantos muró de líquidos cristales
 agricultura urbana. (701–704)

The morning finds these trees, which sophisticated agriculture surrounded with crystalline waters (i.e., irrigation canals), imitate forests and emulate parkways.⁵¹ The stage is now set, so to speak, for the pastoral wedding ceremonies to take place the following day within a kind of simulacrum of the aspen stand from which its architecture was extracted. As in the first, panoramic view of the transactions between this countryside and its inhabitants, this final scene recognizes the ambivalence with which natural resources are transformed to human use, for practical or decorative purpose. The laurel “gime ofendido,” the green alder is left “desnudo de su frondosa pompa,” and the poplar, the iconic medium on which literary shepherds transcribe their love, will now bear witness to a ceremony where once private desires are brought forth into the public sphere—a symbolic transformation that implies its own kind violence beyond that committed to the tree as it was felled.

In the sequence that brings the pilgrim from his “verde balcón” to the “verde muro” of the aspen stand where the next day’s wedding will take place, he follows the labyrinthine course of a watershed from its source in the mountains as it is transformed

⁵¹ This, I am aware, is not the standard translation of this passage. Jammes’s version, which compares the wedding decorations to “los parques de las ciudades,” is hesitant, and heavy with caveats (Góngora 2016, 336–337). His doubt comes, in part, from the apparent use of “vial” as a noun, which is not attested in contemporary lexicons. (The BYU “Corpus del Español” confirms that this is still the case). But Góngora’s contemporaries didn’t seem to take issue with this use. Pellicer interprets it this way: “Estos arboles vio la siguiente Aurora, adornado las calles del aldea fingir florestas y selvas, y emular viales” (1630, col. 490). And Salcedo Coronel as: “Dize que estos arboles que los villanos cortaron para adornar las calles de su aldea, los vio la mañana mentir florestas, y emular los viales que ciñò de cristales líquidos la agricultura urbana” (Góngora 1644, fol. 147v). My version reads the last two verses as a dependent clause modifying “estos árboles,” interprets “urbana” as sophisticated or cultured, and pictures the city-like grid of irrigation canals as liquid walls, an undeniably gongorine image.

by topography and industry into a network of irrigation canals that feeds the village. As Elinor Ostrom's research demonstrates, irrigation systems of the sort represented in the *Soledades* were not merely elements of agricultural topography, but exemplified longstanding intercommunal practices, institutions, and structures of thought regarding land tenure and resource management that survive to this day in the *huertas* of Valencia (see the "Introduction" to this chapter). The gathering of the waters and wedding guests in the *Soledad primera* thus represents distinct but intimately related forms of commoning: the convening of distant people whose various occupations are represented by the procession of animals, both wild and domestic, and the progressive domestication of the luminous river, "de aquellos montes hijo, [que] con torcido discurso, aunque prolijo, tiraniza los campos útilmente" (199–201).

The commoning represented in the sequence comprising the second day of the *Soledad primera* is not simply economical or topographical, but ontological: the rural people gathering for the wedding don't just shape the land to their use, but they themselves, individually and collectively, are shaped by the surrounding environment. The way they move in groups, how they sing, how they dress, the mechanics of their bodies, these and other aspects of their subjectivity Góngora describes in terms that tend toward the natural and the technical, while the the landscape around them is both domesticated and humanized.⁵² All this in a wilderness that emulates the city and where

⁵² A brook, "de quejarse ronco," falls silent as a young woman scoops up water "por el arcaduz bello de una mano" (241, 245); songbirds are "cítaras de plumas" accompanying the chorus that the river, "para oílla / hace de blanca espuma / tantas orejas cuantas guijas lava" (556, 558–560); the *serranos* bear their loads in arcing formations like "grullas veleras / tal vez creciendo, tal menguando lunas / sus distantes extremos" (606–608),

urban structures are naturalized, a poetics that “invites the city to be more like the countryside, the countryside more like the city” (Beverley 1980, 77–78). While the *Soledades* certainly perpetuate, even abuse, a poetic tradition—a specifically courtly one—that privileges human beings as a hermeneutic matrix, the proliferation of hypallage in its descriptions align it with another that figures “the human” not as an image of exceptionality but as one shape among many that things may take, defined ultimately by their impermanence and vulnerability. The solitudes embodied in the watercourses—*grutas, fuentes, acequias*—of the *Soledad primera* bring together human communities and their environments in a participatory and transactional process of becoming otherwise, a dialectical movement that will achieve its fullest articulation in the marriage ceremonies, where this physical and ecological process becomes political.

Convening

The third morning of the *Soledad primera* brings the pilgrim and his elderly guide into “el populoso / lugarillo” (712–713), decorated with a tapestry “[que] tejió de verdes hojas la arboleda” (717), arches “que por las calles espaciosas / fabrican [...] rosas” (718–719), and “pénsiles jardines, / de tantos como víolas jazmines” (720–721). The pilgrim is introduced to the groom and the father of the bride, whose chaste beauty brings the memory of his beloved rushing back, threatening to overwhelm him, if not for the sudden arrival of a mass of villagers, following a procession of musicians, to lead the betrothed to their wedding:

while the *serranas* descend upon the town “cual de aves se caló turba canora / a robusto nogal que acequia lava / en cercado vecino” (633–635).

El lazo de ambos cuellos
 entre un lascivo enjambre iba de amores
 Himeneo añudando,
 mientras invocan su deidad la alterna
 de zagalejas cándidas voz tierna
 y de garzones este acento blando (761–766)

The choral exchange invokes Hymen, the god of marriage, to bless the wedding with good fortune and the couple with fertility and wealth. As the song ends, the wedding party returns to the village:

El dulce alterno canto
 a sus umbrales revocó felices
 los novios del vecino templo santo.
 Del yugo aún no domadas las cervices,
 novillos (breve término surcado)
 restituyen así el pendiente arado
 al que pajizo albergue los aguarda. (845–851)

After the guests are served a “prolija rústica comida” (856) of bread, apples, wine, and cheese finished with nuts, quince, and olives, an epithalamium is sung that echoes the themes of the earlier *hymenaios*. As the song ends,

[...] seguida
 la novia sale de villanas ciento
 a la verde florida palizada,
 cual nueva Fénix en flamantes plumas,
 matutinos del Sol rayos vestida,
 de cuanta surca el aire acompañada
 monarquía canora (945–951)

The bride emerges from the wedding feast like the phoenix, the mythological bird that is cyclically reborn from its own ashes, to watch the pastoral contests that will take place in the village *ejido*, the same space that had been decorated as a forest the night before.

Los árboles que el bosque habían fingido,

umbroso coliseo ya formando,
 despejan el ejido,
 olímpica palestra
 de valientes desnudos labradores. (958–962)

Góngora's comparison of the bride to the phoenix suggests that a transformation has occurred, that, in short, the wedding is over, and the contests are simply the celebration that concludes the ceremony. If this is the case, it means that at some point between when the betrothed were drawn from their thresholds by the "numeroso [...] de labradores / concurso impaciente" (755–756) and when the bride leaves the feast "de cuanta surca el aire acompañada / monarquía canora" (950–951), these two young villagers were married. Yet the only indication that a religious ceremony has taken place is the glancing reference to a "vecino templo santo" in verse 847.

What's just happened, exactly? The absence of a description of this temple is striking in a poem so fascinated with architecture, and where spatial relationships are frequently elaborated at length—where the perception of spatiality itself is, as we have seen, a central theme. Furthermore, the sequence of events starting with the procession and chorus, through the feast, and into the contests, is apparently uninterrupted. The chronotope of the third day of the *Soledad primera* does not allow for the intervention of a secular or religious authority, or a pause of any sort, for that matter. Indeed, the structure of the ceremony is very much like a work day, as suggested by the image of *novillos* or heifers plowing a small portion of a field. All this suggests that the wedding procession never left the village at all; that the wedding was in fact the community procession itself; that, ultimately, the "vecino templo santo" of this pagan ceremony was simply the *ejido*—multi-use commons typically situated at the "exits" of villages—

decorated as a forest the night before.* Given the prevailing economies and ecologies of this small agricultural world, it seems grossly incongruous that this “artificial forest”—whose physical and symbolic contours Góngora so meticulously describes—would function as superfluous decoration. Simply put, why would the villagers (and the poem) go to the effort to construct this “verde florida palizada” in the *ejido*, only to pull it apart the next day to make space for the contests, unless it served a *structural* purpose to the wedding ceremony?

For practical and symbolic reasons, a communal wedding like the one on the third day of the *Soledad primera* could only take place on common ground. The ceremony itself, which does not depend for legitimacy on the intervention of political or ecclesiastical authority, but is instead an open and participatory “bringing forth” of the betrothed into the material and affective economies of the public sphere, is itself a commons, and its rituals exemplary forms of commoning. Arguably, no space in the agricultural landscape of early modern Spain embodies the concept of the commons more than the *ejido*. Vassberg writes that the *ejido* “was not planted or cultivated, because it was reserved for use as a threshing floor, as a garbage dump, for loafing, and as a keeping-place for stray animals. Virtually every little village and town seems to have had its *ejido*, which was considered to be a necessary part of municipal life” (1984, 26–27). Whereas *dehesas*, *baldíos*, *montes*, and other topographies could be privatized or enclosed, *ejidos* were by definition commons, and thus to name this landscape explicitly, as Góngora does, was to invoke the commonwealth of a village or municipality.

Though technically an “urban” space—a kind of plaza, as Covarrubias suggests—the *ejido*’s liminal topography qualifies it as solitude. Like the *baldíos* and *acequias* that preceded it, this space does not embody an obvious ecology, as a plowed field, slaughterhouse, or fishery would. Rather, it is through this “threshold” landscape that the countryside and the village convene. Despite its proximity to the institutions and structures that define the village community, its ambivalent status and hybrid purpose make it an exemplary space for negotiating the nature of the community and of the individuals that comprise it. In other words, it is within this “vecino templo santo” that what it means to be a “vecino” is articulated and performed. It therefore makes sense for the *Soledades* to locate the communal ceremonies that reproduce village life in this mundane though essential feature of the rural landscape. In this context, the wedding ceremony, a thoroughly communal ritual, refuses to represent the transfer of wealth, in the form of the bride, from one man to another, or the subordination of individual desire to the collective will. Rather, it shows us one of the ways that communities, in collaboration with their environments, are continuously remade.

4. CONCLUSION: PILGRIMAGE AND THE PASTORAL

The concept of the commons at work in the early modern Spanish imaginary nestles squarely into the landscapes of the *Soledades*. Despite the poem’s frequent recourse to classical mythology as a descriptive mechanism, these are spaces that would have been recognizable to anyone familiar with the structures that gave shape of the rural world. Against the prevailing understanding of the poetics of the *Soledades* as one of continuous evasion of material and historical reality, Góngora names a series of spaces—

an *alquería*, an *acequia*, an *ejido*—that situate the reader within a specific time and geography at crucial moments in the narrative: immediately before the famous encomium to pastoral *mediocritas*, as the wedding preparations are finalized, and as its ceremonies are concluded. The apparent harmony and fellow-feeling that the pilgrim encounters in these landscapes is tempered by moments of intense violence, even death, expressed through images of ashen trees, bodies, and villages. In the *Soledades*, the material and cultural technologies of the human world (hospitality, irrigation, marriage, and so on) are not privileged from the natural; rather, everything is subject to the same process of conception, fruition, and extinction as everything else. Myth and ritual, science and superstition—hardly the province of either the commoners or the elite in any society—function in this world as recourses by which subjects make sense of their relationship to each other and to their surrounding environment. It is in this way that the *Soledades* present what today we call “commoning”: the habits and practices that bring forth a world in which “the human” and “the natural” are produced together. This is not a naive “back to nature” fantasy but a recognition of the fundamental imbrication of our ethical and material economies within the broader ecologies of the surrounding environment.

If the *Soledades* seem inadequate to us as “nature writing” it’s because the concept of “nature” in the early modern world—where the Cartesian idea of a rational, detached observer was still in its infancy—does not correspond exactly to our own. Or rather, it corresponds to a postmodern interrogation of the concept of “the natural” that remains at the fringes of conventional thought. Cybernetics, virtuality, queerness, the Anthropocene, and other concepts that undermine the nature/culture binary have recently

presented a forceful challenge to the centuries of arrogant empiricism that stand between post- and early modernity. In this context, Góngora's production of a distinctly city-like and frequently anthropomorphic rural landscape thickly populated with subjects whose bodies and communities are often conceived as machines or animals is not an effort to colonize the natural world with the discourses of civilization but rather to seek an alternative to the ethics of coloniality, one of correspondence between the rural and the urban, between nature and art.

Scholars have long recognized this effort at reconciliation in the poetics of the pastoral. Describing the work of Garcilaso in "The Pastoral Paradox of Natural Art," Elias Rivers writes that in his *Eclogues* "art neither exists entirely apart from nature, nor is it simply an object reducible to nature. [It] is art which orders and simplifies nature, rendering it intelligible" (1962, 144). Bruce Wardropper, echoing the language of William Empson in *Some Versions of Pastoral*, insists that what is innovative about Góngora's pastoral art in the *Soledades* is its movement beyond this hierarchical relation. "For Góngora," he argues, "Art cannot accomplish this reductive feat. For him, Nature remains inapprehensible, and Nature's complexity cannot be simplified" (1977, 51). In the *Soledades*, humanity's "yearning for the simple, for the simplistically natural, is [...] an immensely complex aspiration. The naked truth, sincerity, elementary beauty are ideals that can be achieved only if they are cultivated" (49). In a more recent, post-structuralist rendering of Empson's idea of the pastoral as the "process of putting the complex into the simple" (1974, 22), Bill Egginton argues that the poetics of the *Soledades* "in the opacity of their metaphoric density, deny the transparency of being in

order to express the world in its inherent complexity” (2010, 62). In other words, what Góngora does with and through the pastoral is to deny that there exists an external simplicity that the complexity of language can render intelligible: in the self-conscious artificiality of the pastoral vision of nature, art only *seems to* simplify nature. The *Soledades* is pastoral literature not just because it participates in the reinscription of classical motifs like the Horatian encomium to country life, but because it expresses—as we have seen in Garcilaso’s production of solitude in the *Églogas*—the inherent artificiality or constructedness of the natural world. In this way, Góngora’s poetics do not undermine “the pastoral fiction of wholeness” because in the pastoral “wholeness” or simplicity is always already a fiction.

In *Góngora’s Soledades and the Problem of Modernity*, Crystal Chemris argues that the perspectival oscillations, startling metaphors, and tentative scientific discourse of the *Soledades* reflect “the epistemic breach in which it was written” (2008, xvii), between the universe of similitudes or correspondences identified by Foucault with the Medieval *episteme* and the rationalism and empiricism of the Enlightenment. In this passage to modernity, subjects experience a “sense of uncertainty before the phenomenal world as well as a growing sense of isolation” (1). Chemris suggests that the *Soledades* exemplify the ontological crisis of early modernity not simply in its language, but in the figure of the pilgrim, whose “malaise, the estrangement between self and other, dovetails with the rise of the mechanistic worldview,” his “psychic disintegration [...] connected to a breakdown in the organic correspondence between man and the cosmos, a disintegration which lies at the foundation of modern existence” (85). In this view, the “solitude of the

pilgrim” would express a sense of profound alienation not only from the natural world, but from the human community itself. Echoing John Beverley’s sense of the *Soledades* as an “irradiation” of the pastoral, this desolation would correspond to Mary Gaylord’s sense of the poem as representative of the breakdown of the fictive “wholeness” of the pastoral world. But, as we have seen, the pilgrim’s relationship to the world around him is rather more participatory than estranged, while his manner of reading allows for the “practical” and “symbolic” natures of things to coexist, often in a single image. In this way, the solitude of the pilgrim seems less a “breach” than a bridge—suggesting not rupture but continuity—between medieval and early modern forms experiencing reality, one in which the discourse of the pastoral operates as a form of common ground shared by the present and the past.

CHAPTER 3. CULTIVATION AND TRANSFORMATION OF THE GARDEN

1. INTRODUCTION

Overview

What is the nature of spirituality? How do we orient our bodies and our attention toward the sacred, surround ourselves with a reified divine, and manufacture environments that manifest religious experience in the matrix of the everyday world? Can our terrestrial labors and habits produce simulacra of these spaces, such that we can inhabit, if only virtually and momentarily, the security of an existence apart from the contingencies of history? If so, how will these places be organized, isolated, and cultivated such as to act most efficaciously upon us, by providing a refuge for introspection, an inspiration for communion, or a model for devotional regeneration?

In the literature of early modern Iberia, these are questions addressed to the landscape of the garden. In doing so, they perpetuate a tradition, as old as Western mythology itself, that situates the *locus* of the sacred in an enclosed garden, exemplified in the Judeo-Christian tradition by the Garden of Eden and poetically in the *hortus conclusus* of the Song of Songs. At the same time, this literature engages antique and emergent forms of knowledge—acquired, preserved, and transmitted by a pan-Mediterranean network of scholars and practicing agronomists, that addressed gardens not as a place of reprieve from labor, but rather the embodiment of its ethical value, and whose complex ecologies demanded a rigorous practice of scholarly self-cultivation. In this chapter, I argue that poetic representations of gardens in the pastoral literature of early modern Iberia participate in this dual process, engaging at once both classical and

contemporary epistemologies of horticulture. These texts articulate a renewed sense of the value of poetic artifice through its ability to manufacture and nurture virtual selves to care for the virtual gardens of the literary world, and in doing so fosters (if paradoxically) a spiritual practice that engages with the natural world rather than turning from it.

Although a number of scholars—mostly historians of art—have attended with care to the history of garden architecture in early modern Iberia, less attention has been paid to the complex relationship of intellectual traditions that informed how gardens were conceived, managed, and inhabited. In other words, there persists a disjuncture between social and literary histories of gardens and horticultural theory that impoverishes both by inaccurately situating the meaning of literary works only among other literary works, rather than from the wealth of relevant information contained encyclopedia, manuals, and treatises that addresses the nature and purpose of gardens. This chapter thus illustrates the ways that literary representations of gardens in early modern Iberia responded to and reimagined not just poetic but actual, material gardens. Monastic cloisters, the walled orchards of the urban bourgeoisie, Arabic plantations, and royal promenades are just a few of the poetic and actual *loci* that embody the idea of the garden in early modern Iberia. Each of these places is informed by and comes to represent a broad spectrum of intellectual traditions with distinct ways of organizing knowledge about shaping and managing the natural world to respond to a variety of human needs. I focus on three of these—security, sensuality, and self-cultivation—which give rise to horticultural knowledge and practices that shape the environment to provide refuge, erotic inspiration, or models for ethical self-management.

After establishing the nature of the relationship between poetic gardens, horticultural theory, and spiritual practice in the literature of early modern Iberia, I move on to three examples from the turn of the 17th century that illustrate how poetics aligns with horticultural theory. I analyze moments in the lyric and epic poetry, as well as in the longer narrative projects of Luis de Góngora and Lope de Vega, where poetic practice is conceived as a form of horticulture. Specifically, I address the appearance of poet-gardeners in three works that dialogue with the Classical tradition of pastoral: the shepherd Belardo in the lyric poem “Hortelano era Belardo,” an early ballad by Lope de Vega; the cyclops Polifemo in Luis de Góngora’s *Fábula de Polifemo y Galatea*; and the courtier Anfriso, the protagonist of the novel *Arcadia*, also by Lope de Vega. I demonstrate how in these literary works the poet-gardeners not only function as stand-ins for the author but in a sense usurp the authorial voice of the text from the historical writer. I argue that, in various and sometimes divergent ways, the pastoral “heteronyms” of Belardo, Polifemo, and Anfriso articulate a poetics that is horticultural in ways that exceed literary convention. In the concluding section of this chapter, I argue that the hyper-conventionality of pastoral forms and self-aware artificiality of its environments opened up a path for these influential writers to reinscribe the poetic arts within a wider network of discourses on the natural world exemplified, for instance, by the horticultural treatise. For these writers, the pastoral was a mechanism for absorbing and reformulating *as poetry* the emergent epistemologies of the natural world by which these texts were organized, in this way reauthorizing poetry as legislative discourse of the ecologies of the human.

Garden, huerto, jardín

An iconic manufactured landscape, the garden is nonetheless more than a cluster of organic and inorganic objects distributed in space. Gardens are spaces in which humans organize and manipulate the natural world, certainly, but more importantly, *through which we manipulate ourselves*. Terry Comito, one of the first scholars to work on the meaning and function of medieval and Renaissance gardens writes that “even without any theological program, [medieval and Renaissance gardens] are felt to be not neutral or decorative backgrounds, but places whose potencies are communicated to, and realized in, human action of specific kinds” (1978, 51). Thus, in contrast to the forests and commons discussed in previous chapters, which I argued open individuals and communities to unaccustomed itineraries and identities, early modern Iberian gardens are places that not only organize space, but self-consciously organize human behavior into specific and deliberate patterns and symmetries. Indeed, gardens are the embodiment of the practice of management—both of the natural world and of human nature.

In his 1611 *Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española*, Sebastian de Covarrubias defines the “guerto” as follows:

GUERTO, es lugar, o en el campo, o la ciudad, o poblado en el qual se cria[n] arboles frutales y hortaliza, y el q[ue] tiene agua de pie, y esta en la ribera, ordinariamente llamamos guerta: los que son de flores y recreacion se llaman jardines. Dixose guerto del nombre La[t]ino hortus, ti, del verbo orior, oriris, por nacer respeto de que alli nacen, y se cria[n] las legu[m]bres, y las frutas: aspiratur tamen ut differat à dictione ortus, qua[n]do origen, aut natiuitate[m] significat. Despues de yo muerto, ni viña, ni guerto: ha se de ente[n]der este refran en razon delas cosas temporales, el cuydado de las quales queda a los viuos, pero no de

aquellas que pueden pertenecer al bien espiritual de las animas. De guerto se dixo ortelano. (fol. 455v)⁵³

Covarrubias's definition for "jardín" reiterates the distinction by purpose—*jardines* for recreation, *huertos* for production—but specifying that a *jardin* is a "huerto de recreacion de diuersas flores, y yeruas olorosas, con fuentes" (fol. 487r). In other words, for Covarrubias the *jardin* is a category of *huerta* designed for aesthetic rather than physical consumption. And while a *hortelano* is simply "el q[ue] tiene cuydado de labrar la tierra" (fol. 479v), the *jardinero* is a kind of artist, "el que tiene cuydado de adereçar el jardin, y cultivarle. Ay algunos tan primos que de yervas, y flores hazen ricos quadros, y en ellos esmaltan y pintan letras y armas" (fol. 487r). For Covarrubias then, *jardinería* is an art, while the *hortelano* is not even a craftsman, but rather a simple caretaker: a person who cares for the work of the land. In this context, it is worth considering why elite poets like Lope de Vega and Luis de Góngora, in their major pastoral works, align their poetics not with cultivation of a *jardín* but of a *huerto*.

While it could certainly be argued that this posture is a gesture at the pastoral "simplicity," or that they are pretending at an art that conceals its own artifice, in what follows, I argue that just the opposite is happening in the pastoral of these writers, which in fact flaunts its erudition, complexity, and artificiality. I demonstrate that their self-presentation as a *hortelano* allows these writers to align themselves with an early modern epistemology of horticulture in order to re-imagine the purpose of the literary arts in a changing world. As Alexander Samson writes, in the Renaissance, the "dignification of

⁵³ Isidore of Seville confirms this etymology: "A garden (*hortus*) is so called because something always 'springs up' (*oriri*) there, for in other land something will grow once a year, but a garden is never without produce" (2006, 355).

horticulture as a liberal art was connected to the increasing politicization of gardening and gardens. Gardens were frequently invoked in political discourse as a metaphor for the ideal republic; their harmonious unity of sense and smell, animal and plant life, contemplative and spiritual qualities, evoked nostalgia for a prelapsarian Eden, a golden age when every need was supplied by nature's spontaneous, natural abundance free from conflicts brought about by private property" (2012, 6). In the early modern world, horticultural theory was a discourse through which to reinscribe political, economic, and ecological relationships. In this context, the cottage garden "came to be seen as a site for self-improvement, a symbol of fruitful labour and the morally salutary effects of gardens" (7). As will be illustrated in this chapter, horticulture in the early modern world was assigned virtues usually reserved for more conventional spiritual practice. Indeed, in a number of examples of secular and religious literature the manufacture and habitation of everyday, material gardens would be closely associated with the cultivation of a spiritual self.

In *Gardens*, Robert Pogue Harrison recounts an ancient fable, collected by Hyginus in the first years of the modern era, which tells of the genesis of humanity, molded from clay by the goddess Cura. In a dispute over which of the gods will possess humanity, Saturn grants its spirit, after death, to Jupiter, and its body to Tellus (Earth), but "since Care first shaped this creature, she shall possess it as long as it lives. And because there is now a dispute among you as to its name, let it be called *homo*, for it is made out of *humus* (earth)" (2008, 6). Harrison summarizes the story's message in this way: "Until such time as Jupiter receives its spirit and Earth its body, the ensouled matter

of *homo* belongs to Cura, who ‘holds’ him for as long as he lives (*Cura teneat, quamdiu vixerit*)” (6). In *Security: Politics, Humanity, and the Philology of Care*, John T.

Hamilton elaborates on the lesson, arguing that it proposes that “human life—mortal life, one that lives in time and in time will pass away—falls directly under the governance of Care. This time-bound life of mankind, subject to contingency and impermanence, is a life with Cura, *cum cura*, fraught with disquiet, apprehension, and concern” (2013, 5). By overlaying Hamilton and Harrison’s theory of *care* as the characteristic element of our earthly humanity, Covarrubias’s definition of the *hortelano*—*el q[ue] tiene cuidado de labrar la tierra*—assumes a sharper focus. For Covarrubias, the *hortelano* is defined by care for the work of the earth. With the Cura myth in mind, we can think of the work of the *hortelano* as encompassing care of the environment but also a practice of *self-cultivation*. In this context, when Lope and Góngora claim the *hortelano* as the personification of their poetic practice—as opposed to the singer or the prophet—they do so not to insist on its coarseness or simplicity. Indeed, by situating poetics as *a practice of care*, that is to say of investment, attention, and pain rather than of virtuosity or divine inspiration, these poets work to ground poetic practice within the contingencies of horticultural labor. Furthermore, by situating the *huerto*, rather than the *jardín*, as a threshold to the sacred, this literature represents gardening—and, by association the practice of lyric poetry, as an early modern form of what today we call “spiritual ecology.”⁵⁴

⁵⁴ See Taylor (2007) on the relationship between gardening and spirituality as described by practitioners of “green Catholicism.”

“Hortus conclusus” and the Cultivation of the Self

What do gardens give us? Nourishment, of course, but also a taste for beauty. Among our oldest surviving myths that situate humanity’s place in the natural world, the garden appears as an image of a space that nourishes the physical, intellectual, and spiritual desires inherent to us. In the book of Genesis, we read how God “planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. / And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. / And a river went out of Eden to water the garden” (*KJV* 2.8–10). The plants in the Garden of Eden not only feed its inhabitants, but provide them with visual pleasures. Taste thus acquires an immediate duality, both physiological and aesthetic, that in turn, when humans, in short order, acquire carnal lust, assumes an erotic blush. In this way, gardens ultimately represent not the sublimation but the confluence of our physical and psychic demands, assuring that our need to feed our bodies, and to procreate, will be intimately associated with aesthetic concerns.

When humanity is evicted from this landscape and sent “forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken” (2.23), the garden acquires another aspect: a lost security, or carelessness, that the spontaneous fertility of the edenic garden provided. Because this specific garden is understood to be inaccessible, the human condition can thus be imagined as an attempt to recreate its sustaining capacities among the contingencies of the everyday world. Representations of gardens in the early modern period are thus distributed along parallel desires at reclamation: on the one hand, for the

edenic security of the retreat from labor, and on the other, for the apparent effortlessness of our first encounters with the desire for nature's nourishing beauty. Security and sensuality thus define two of the principal attractions of garden landscapes in the texts of the classical and Christian tradition that informed early modern thought. To achieve—or at least approach—these states, writers represent movements of retreat or transgression.

The *hortus conclusus* or enclosed garden becomes, in this way, an important symbol for representing the varieties of desires that press upon us, for seclusion and for intimacy, and which either reinforce or undermine our spiritual selves. It is thus we find gardens sprouting in literature as spaces for spiritual refuge in texts by Seneca and Petrarch; and as eroticized *loci* of connection between bodies human and divine in the mystic poetry of Luis de León and Bernarda Ferreira de Lacerda. In these early modern Spanish poets, this effort is imagined through distinctly ecological language—garden environments and the objects they contain place these subjects within a more immediate relationship to a desired holiness, and alert them to the close relationship between their physiology and their spirituality.

These spiritual-sensual experiences starkly contrast the practical or technical expertise advocated by a parallel tradition in the early modern imaginary of the garden, exemplified by horticultural treatises—texts that drew upon a diverse tradition of Roman, Arabic, and Christian knowledge about how gardens could be made to yield produce, while also recognizing that gardening also required a rigorous and sustained effort at self-cultivation. What these practical agricultural manuals share with the spiritual and erotic literature of the garden is the sense of the garden as an ideal space for a practice of self-

cultivation that is itself a form of spirituality. They also elaborate a distinct aspect of the *hortus conclusus* trope, neither security nor sexuality, but totality and enclosure: these texts pretend or at least attempt a completist, encyclopedic representation of horticultural theory, and are thus organized in a systemic movement to describe the full ecology of practical or experimental and scholarly knowledge. Indeed, the epistemological structure of these texts, which shuttle between observation (of soils, plants, and weather) and theorization (of authorities on astrology, natural sympathies, and ethics), suggest a horticultural practice that takes place as much in the library as in the field: learning to garden well means, to a significant extent, learning to read well.

From the 11th to the 14th centuries, Arabic philosophers, doctors, and practicing agronomists in al-Andalus produced a series of texts that laid out the foundation for what would become early modern horticultural theory in the Iberian world. Ibn Baṣṣāl's late 11th century *Book of Proposition and Demonstration* established a methodology and structure that would be repeated throughout medieval Spain and carried forward into the Christian tradition. Strongly inflected with astrology and humoral theory, Ibn Baṣṣāl's treatise progressed systematically through classifications of soils, water, fertilizers, and agricultural techniques. This systematic approach to horticultural pedagogy was picked up by scholars like Ibn al-ʿAwwām and Ibn Luyūn and transformed into a full-fledged practice and ethic of self-cultivation. The horticultural treatises by these later scholars emphasize a sense that gardening is not simply a process of transforming the natural world, but of training the self to recognize the fertility and toxicity in the patterns of nature, informed by a methodology of scholarship, travel, and memorization.

By the early part of the 16th century, in influential texts like Gabriel Alonso de Herrera's 1513 *Obra de agricultura*, gardening itself came to be seen as a moral "virtue," and indeed part of a larger moral and political economy of situating the self in relation to the natural world. Through this genealogy, we can recognize a distinctly ecological ethics in the royal agronomist Andrés de Laguna's preface to his famous 1555 Castilian translation of Dioscorides's *De materia medica*, when he suggests that he cannot see "sobre la haz de la tierra cosa, en que mas resplandezca el admirable opificio del Soberano, ni en que mas deuan recrearse los animos de los hombres, fatigados de las molestias y desfenturas d'aqueste suelo, que en la generation de las plantas: cuya variedad y hermosura engendra luego vna grand' admiration del Criador en nosotros" (Laguna 1555, fol. 3r). Laguna's suggestion that God's works (described as labor and not grace) and indeed our own, are best exemplified by the cultivation of plants rather than of charity toward others, stands in contrast to Antonio de Guevara's insistence in *Menosprecio de corte y alabanza de aldea* that the proximity to the natural world ought to urge us to prepare for death by reflecting on the transience of life. Thus in concluding the section on form and practice of early modern Iberian gardens, I demonstrate how the curiously encyclopedic and ethical forms of spirituality with which horticulture is imbued in these 16th century manuals not only builds upon a tradition already present in the early medieval period in al-Andalus, but is itself transformed into a totalizing poetics of the self and of the book by two iconic poets of the 17th century: Luis de Góngora and Lope de Vega.

Pastoral poetry and prose of the late 16th and early 17th centuries is replete with characters that act as stand-ins for the poets themselves. It is a strategy that builds upon Jacopo Sannazaro's *Arcadia*, in which the protagonist, Sincero, is widely recognized as a version of the author, and carried forward in the character of Albanio in Garcilaso de la Vega's eclogues. In this section, I focus on the literary personae in the pastoral poetry of Lope de Vega and Luis de Góngora. I argue that these characters are not simply pseudonyms, but are rather performative heteronyms: they do not so much *disguise* the authors' identity as *multiply* them.⁵⁵ Furthermore, by presenting these personae as gardeners of *huertos*, Lope and Góngora articulate a relationship between horticulture and literary culture that urges us to reassess the larger poetics of their pastoral works. Everyone knew who these figures referred to, and yet this referentiality was not perfectly congruous with the historical authors. Like masks worn slightly askew, the personae that Lope de Vega and Luis de Góngora assumed allowed them accomplish specific poetic gestures, and through these to comment about the nature of the literary arts.

2. FORM AND PRACTICE OF EARLY MODERN IBERIAN GARDENS

Security, Sensuality, Spirituality

In the classical and Christian imaginaries of the ideal garden that informed early modern thought, this space is frequently desired for its seclusion or enclosure—the garden as temporal, geographic, or architectural refuge from the contingencies of

⁵⁵ Víctor Sierra Matute (Penn) is at work on a dissertation that elaborates on the various discourses—including anatomy and theatricality—that situate the figure of the author in the early modern world. My recognition of these figures, and Belardo in particular, as heteronyms is deeply indebted to our ongoing conversations.

everyday life. In *Epistle XC*, on the Golden Age, the Younger Seneca describes the role of design in structuring the human condition: “With close-packed branches and with leaves heaped up and laid sloping they contrived a drainage for even the heaviest rains. Beneath such dwellings they lived, but they lived in peace [*sed securi*]” (1917, 401–403). These primitive Arcadian shelters established a relation of limited containment between human communities and the surrounding environment, a “security” that promoted the natural cycles of sleep and wakefulness while generating exemplary conditions from which to observe and attend to the natural world. In the Judeo-Christian tradition, the human condition likewise emerges from a secure garden, represented in Genesis as the atemporal Garden of Eden, though in this tradition, the “security” provided by this space is what precipitates the Fall. John T. Hamilton writes that it was “precisely their *carelessness* that causes them to fall out of paradise and fall into a life of concern. [...] Exiled from the Garden of Eden, they can begin to cultivate their own gardens and care for their own lives, tilling the *humus* that requires attention, devotion, and vigilance” (2013, 74). If security is the goal of the garden, it can only be limited and contingent—a security of the threshold—because gardens, like human lives, require constant care. Hamilton suggests that rather than “view mankind’s perennial longing for security as the history of a desire to evade time and its contingencies, there remains the possibility of a limited security, provided we remain careful” (73).

Petrarch picks up Seneca’s praise of this threshold relationship to the natural world in *De vita solitaria*, which begins with a catalogue of the toxicity of care and strife, against the therapeutic effects of leisure and solitude. Imagining the disquiet of the urban

feaster, Petrarch pictures someone “overpowered by all the glitter and odors, [...] still swollen with the excesses of the previous night” (1924, 114), while the table of the solitary man is a place where “pure joys dwell and whence foul pleasures are exiled, where temperance rules as queen, where the couch is chaste and untroubled, and conscience is a paradise” (116). This contemplative simplicity, exemplary of the *aurea mediocritas* or “golden mean,” operates for Petrarch as a kind of regenerative hiatus. It’s useful, he argues, “after the prosperous conclusion of [one’s] mental toil, [to have] easy access to the woods and fields, [...] and in the very interval of rest and recuperation prepare matter for the labor to come. It is [...] an active rest and a restful work” (157). The value of solitude here is less spatial than habitual; Petrarch insists that “it is not so much the solitary recesses and the silence that delight me as the leisure and freedom that dwell within them” (108). In *De vita solitaria*, the usefulness of solitude and leisure responds to a sense of the relationship between intellectual labor, physical health, and the patterns of ecological networks—a sort of premodern systems theory of the human condition that will become central to the early modern worldview.

The mystic poet Fray Luis de León, responsible for the translation of much of the classical pastoral canon into the vernacular, famously penned his own ode to country retreat that closely echoes the ethic of solitude, proportion, and introspection we see elsewhere. It begins:

¡Qué descansada vida
 la del que huye el mundanal ruido,
 y sigue la escondida
 senda, por donde han ido
 los pocos sabios que en el mundo han sido! (2001, lines 1–5)

Beyond physical and spiritual wellbeing, the *otium* and security of Fray Luis's ideal garden landscape promotes attention to the ecological rhythms of the surrounding environment:

¡Oh monte, oh fuente, oh río!
 ¡Oh, secreto seguro, deleitoso!
 Roto casi el navío,
 a vuestro almo reposo
 huyo de aqueste mar tempestuoso. (21–25)

The pastoral movement in this poem, while certainly a retreat from the “mortal cuidado,” or mortal cares, of the urban sphere, into the security of a “delicious” rural solitude, does not represent an escape from the material conditions that structure everyday life—or of the complex interactions between interiority and exteriority, appearance and substance—and that shape modern subjectivity. As in other inquiries both pre- and early modern into the nature and value of *otium*, in “La vida retirada” this garden landscape's quintessential merit is the space it makes for physical regeneration, self-reflection, and curious observation.

The poetic imbrication of security, spirituality, and the architecture of the garden space blooms majestically in the Portuguese nun Bernarda Ferreira de Lacerda's “Poema a la virgen, *hortus conclusus*,” where the Virgin Mary is described, in strikingly sensual terms, as:

Jardín cerrado, inundación de olores,
 fuente sellada, cristalina y pura.
 Inexpugnable torre, do segura
 de asaltos, goza el alma sus amores...
 ...Que es el jardín cerrado siempre verde,
 es siempre clara la guardada fuente,
 y propio de la torre la firmeza. (qtd. in Añón Feliú 1996, 22–23)

Here, and in many other sources that describe the Virgin as a *hortus conclusus*, the relationship to divinity is imagined in spatial terms, a security fortified not only by the surrounding walls but by the immediacy of the natural world.⁵⁶ Bernarda imagines contact with the green earth is a medium for the transcendent “delight” of divine love. In other words, this particular mystic vision of spirituality is avowedly ecological; it constructs a paradigm for communion with the divine around the image of a body with physical and emotional needs—to drink clean water, to experience the sensuality of the surrounding environment, to be sheltered from the elements and from physical harm. Naturally, this representation lends itself to a tropological reading, but the poem’s audience is likewise free—invited, arguably—to read it askew, to understand the immediacy of green spaces as thresholds to the holy.

Bernarda Ferreira de Lacerda’s voluptuous hymn to the Virgin Mary follows from a long tradition of Judeo-Christian poetics that connects sexual desire with gardens and horticulture. The most well-known of these sources is, of course, the *Song of Solomon*, known also as the *Song of Songs* or simply the *Canticles*. In the *Vulgate*, the singer’s beloved is described, like Bernarda’s Virgin, as a “hortus conclusus” and “fons signatus”:

hortus conclusus soror mea sponsa hortus conclusus fons signatus
 emissiones tuae paradus malorum punicorum cum pomorum fructibus cypri cum
 nardo
 nardus et crocus fistula et cinnamomum cum universis lignis Libani murra et aloe
 cum omnibus primis unguentis
 fons hortorum puteus aquarum viventium quae fluunt impetu de Libano. (*Vulgate*
 4.12–15)

⁵⁶ See Giamatti (1966, 48–67) and Comito (1978, 25–50) on the intellectual history of the cloister garden.

In the 1569 translation by Casiodoro de Reina, now known as the *Reina-Valera Antigua*, these verses are rendered as follows:

Huerto cerrado eres, mi hermana, esposa mía; Fuente cerrada, fuente sellada.
 Tus renuevos paraíso de granados, con frutos suaves, De cámporas y nardos,
 Nardo y azafrán, Caña aromática y canela, con todos los árboles de incienso;
 Mirra y áloes, con todas las principales especias.
 Fuente de huertos, Pozo de aguas vivas, Que corren del Líbano. (*RVA* 4.12–15).⁵⁷

In contrast to the relatively stilted, slightly comical, epithets the singer uses to praise his beloved in earlier verses—her teeth are “like a flock of sheep that are even shorn, which came up from the washing” (*KJV* 12.2)⁵⁸—the image of the enclosed garden of these later verses overflows with specific plants in horticulturally specific paired relationships. The singer’s pairing of *cypri* (cyprus) and *nardo* (spikenard), for instance, brings together in verse plants whose flowers yield aromatic oils, while the pairing of *fistula* (calamus) and *cinnamomum* (cinnamon) juxtaposes plants whose rhizomes and bark, respectively, yield spice powders. Arguably, the singer’s play in these verses relies on mutual expertise: the imagery at once evokes an erotic sensual field while appealing to an interlocutor’s own horticultural knowledge to make sense of the song as poetry. In the tradition of erotic poetry that springs from the Canticles, knowledge about the natural world stands in for knowledge about the female body.

⁵⁷ In the *King James Version* these verses are rendered thus: “A garden inclosed is my sister, my spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed. / Thy plants are an orchard of pomegranates, with pleasant fruits; camphire, with spikenard, / Spikenard and saffron; calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense; myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices: / A fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon.”

⁵⁸ In the *Vulgate*: “dentes tui sicut greges tonsarum quae ascenderunt de lavacro.”

Cultivation

Of course, before they can be enclosed, enjoyed, or transgressed, gardens have to be cultivated. The early modern history of the theory of horticulture on the Iberian peninsula is as diverse as its social and physical topography—a dizzying mosaic of Roman, Arabic, and Christian sources and practices informed by a range of social and environmental ecologies, as well as thick temporal layers of political ideologies: what gardens are for, who can work them, and by what means, are not simply questions of technique or economy, but speak to broader concerns—shaped not just by climate but by practices of social organization localized around shifting political entities—regarding the relationship of individuals, their bodies, and their communities to the material and immaterial world that surrounds them. In other words, a distinct social and environmental ethics is embedded within even the most practical of horticultural manuals, which universally (if only implicitly) situate the value of human knowledge, the organization of space, and temporal rhythms of farm labor within the sometimes visible but most often invisible matrix of relationships among the elements of the natural world.⁵⁹ Horticultural treatises thus encourage an approach to the natural world according to practices of attention, reflection, and accommodation, practices invested with the ethical and efficacious transformation not only of the garden, but of the gardener as well.

⁵⁹ See Bushnell (2003, 12–48). Rebecca Bushnell’s landmark study of early modern English horticultural manuals deftly illustrates the connection in these texts between cultivation of nature and cultivation of the self.

Early modern Iberian horticultural theory and practice is rooted in a number of surviving Arabic treatises, written in Andalusia between the 11th and the 14th centuries.⁶⁰ Foundational among these, in both style and content, was the *Kitāb al-qāṣd wa'l-bayān*, or *Book of Proposition and Demonstration*, compiled by Ibn Baṣṣāl sometime around the turn of the 12th century. An incomplete Castilian translation, produced about a century later, has also survived (Millás Vallicrosa 1948; Harvey 1975). Ibn Baṣṣāl establishes the poetics of medieval Arabic horticultural treatises, which progresses systematically according to a four-part structure: first describing the various kinds of soil; then the characteristics of water depending on their source; the virtues and hazards of a range of fertilizers; and finally the specific techniques (grafting, transplantation, irrigation, etc.) practiced by the gardener. Citing no authority but his own experience—gleaned, apparently, from years of travel throughout the Mediterranean—Ibn Baṣṣāl describes a remarkable range of species, practices, and relationships between plants and their physical environment (1955, 32). Observation and experimentation are thus, at least ostensibly, the methodological and epistemological principles of Ibn Baṣṣāl's treatise on agriculture, as well as its successors.

An intellectual genealogy that, if not originating, is at the very least exemplified by the horticultural theory of Ibn Baṣṣāl, is transformed by a work like Ibn al-ʿAwwām's

⁶⁰ John Harvey, historian of Andalusian garden theory, argues that, “Long before the expulsions (1492-1609) the Christians were learning from Arabic agricultural literature through translations into Latin and Castilian. Besides, many Christian Spaniards in Aragon, Andalusia, and Toledo were still bilingual. Continuity was preserved both on the scholarly and practical planes. Plants, once introduced, were likely to survive and were carried further into Europe by seeds, bulbs, cuttings or roots, to whatever places were climatically able to grow them. Many of the most important additions to European gardens made since Roman times arrived by way of Moorish Spain.” (1975, 10)

Kitāb al-filāḥa, composed sometime in the final years of the 12th century (1988, “Introducción” 18). A massive compendium of horticultural expertise sourced from an array of classical and contemporary sources, Ibn al-‘Awwām’s *Tratado de agricultura* also situates itself within Ibn Baṣṣāl’s tradition of observation and experimentation.⁶¹ This scholarly methodology wherein reading is verified by observation, which then feeds back upon further investigation, suggests the emergence of an encyclopedic form of agricultural theory and practice. Against Ibn Baṣṣāl’s (potentially disingenuous) insistence upon intellectual independence, in Ibn al-‘Awwām’s horticultural practice, the experimental training accumulated in the fields is complemented by an ability to discern reliable from erroneous information. Thus his very first citation is from Ibn Ḥajjāj’s late-11th-century treatise known among hispano-arabists as *El suficiente*, which insists that the gardener ignore “los dichos débiles del comun de las gentes, ni te cuides de lo que sienten los ignorantes y gente rústica, apoyándote en lo que afirman erróneamente; pues de su instruccion no sacarás utilidad” (2). In other words, gardeners should learn, first, to separate the wheat from the chaff, both in the material and in the abstract sense. Horticulture is thus imagined, first of all, as an hermeneutic practice, one in which reading nature and reading literature go hand-in-hand.

The horticultural practice of Ibn al-‘Awwām exemplified by the *Tratado de agricultura* is one in which two gardens—one material, the other intellectual—are cultivated simultaneously. The parallel depth of reading and experience illustrated by this

⁶¹ In the treatise’s Prologue, after listing dozens of sources from every corner of the Mediterranean, Ibn al-‘Awwām insists that, “Ninguna sentencia establezco en mi Obra que yo no haya probado por la experiencia repetidas veces” (10). Versions of this statement are repeated throughout the treatise.

monumental treatise urge the reader to consider their library—and, through the practice of research, their own minds—as a kind of garden to be cultivated. Again and again in the *Tratado de agricultura*, Ibn al-‘Awwām frames his discourse around not what is *given* by nature, but what the gardener must *decipher* about it. In this way, the treatise diverges from straightforward agronomy toward a manual of ethics, wherein horticulture is conceived, first, as a practice of self-cultivation. This turn is further suggested by the emphasis, throughout the Prologue, in the ethical, rather than practical, aspects of gardening. Thus before he tells us anything about gardening itself, Ibn al-‘Awwām insists that, “Debe considerarse la Agricultura como uno de los principales auxilios para lo que mira á las utilidades de la vida presente, y tambien para procurarnos las felicidades de la otra con el auxilio del Altísimo , por cuyo favor, mediante las sementeras y plantíos, se multiplican los alimentos” (1). Horticulture is thus linked to a transcendent self-management, confirmed by a series of examples that situate the value of farm labor within a broader sentimental education. Indeed, several examples conceive of this practice as thoroughly ecological, as when Ibn al-‘Awwām cites a proverb that suggests: “*la heredad dice á su dueño: hazme ver tu sombra, cultiva*” (4; emphasis in original). Ibn al-‘Awwām’s vastly influential horticultural theory,—its methodology reinscribed, as we will see below, by the most influential horticultural treatises of early modern Iberia—is thus conceived around corollary practices of cultivation of the earth and cultivation of the self, to the point where these are, if not indistinguishable, at the very least inseparable.

We find this mode translated into poetic form in one of Ibn al-‘Awwām’s immediate intellectual successors in al-Andalus, the philosopher and calligrapher Ibn

Luyūn. In 1348, the year before his death from the plague, Ibn Luyūn compiled another *Kitāb al-filāḥa*, sometimes known to hispano-arabists as the *Ur̥yūza agr̥icola*, a 1,365 verse poem written in *ray̥az*, which, according to the scholar Joaquina Eguaras Ibáñez—the poem’s Castilian translator—is “el más fácil metro para conseguir la retención memorística de los conocimientos que expone” (1988, 35). Ibn Luyūn’s prologue to his poem confirms that it is conceived as a mnemonic: “Dios ha puesto dentro de la Agricultura la mayor parte de los bienes necesarios para el sustento del hombre, y por tanto es muy grande su interés por las utilidades que encierra. Sobre esa ciencia he compuesto este tratado, en unos mil trescientos versos del metro *ray̥az*, y en él he recogido todo lo más aceptable y que generalmente se practica en el país de al-Andalus, a fin de que quien se interese en su estudio aprenda de una sola vez todo lo que un labrador puede llegar a saber a cabo de su vida” (198). The poem, then, is conceived and designed as a mnemonic for internalizing the wisdom of horticultural theory accumulated over almost 700 years of collective cultural experience. Furthermore, the poem’s title, which Eguaras Ibáñez translates as *Libro del principio de la belleza y fin de la sabiduría que trata de los fundamentos del arte de la agricultura*—suggesting that Ibn Luyūn’s purpose is aesthetic as well as practical—indicates that this is a horticultural compendium, a commonplace book even, with a specific kind of reading practice in mind, whose ends are not just the cultivation of gardens, but of the self as well.

The ethical virtues of garden work are still central to its conception centuries later, among the horticultural treatises published in the early part of the 16th century, and whose epistemologies would therefore have been most immediately available to the

authors under scrutiny in this project. Arguably the most influential among these early modern agricultural texts is Gabriel Alonso de Herrera's 1513 *Obra de agricultura*, like its Arabic predecessors a remarkable confluence of intellectual and practical experience gleaned from years of study as well as travel across the Iberian peninsula. Conceived in a period of agricultural crisis on the peninsula, and commissioned by the Archbishop of Toledo to address distinctly pedagogical concerns, Herrera's *Obra* is clearly oriented toward the revaluation and renovation of agricultural practice at a time when no one seemed to want to be a farmer.⁶² The Prologue to the *Obra* thus speaks of the value of farm work in more than simply practical terms. Against the physical and psychic vicissitudes of the work of merchants, "cargados de trabajos, de temores, ni seguros en mar, ni seguros en tierra, con tráfigos, con engaños, el más tiempo fuera de sus casas, desseando siempre el reposo y quietud de que su oficio es muy ageno, y así los más de los otros oficios," Herrera proclaims the farmer's life, "vida sancta, segura, llena de inocencia, agena de pecado," in an environment that "quita la ociosidad dañosa, en el campo no hay rencores ni enemistades, mas se conserva la salud por donde la vida más se alarga" (1970, 7). Herrera's is a project orchestrated in forceful opposition to the mercantilism that defined the economic catastrophe of imperial Spain, and as such invests the knowledge contained in his treatise, and the everyday practices they imply, as a kind of antidote to the cultural sickness personified by the anonymous "merchant" in the Prologue.

⁶² The social, economic, and political aspects of the agrarian crisis in Spain at the turn of the 16th century are well-documented. See Elliott (1989) and Casey (1999). In the context of the *Obra de Agricultura*, see especially Herrera (1970, xvii–xxxvii)

Despite being part of a broader pro-rural, anti-mercantilist agenda that includes some of the era's most popular accounts of life in the countryside—namely, Antonio de Guevara's literary *memento mori*, the *Menosprecio de corte y alabanza de aldea*, first published in 1539—the *Obra*'s Prologue nevertheless indexes the persistent, cross-cultural and transhistorical understanding of gardening as a practice of self-cultivation, one aligned with a long tradition that combines scholarly with practical learning to produce what we might call a hermeneutics of gardening. In other words, it is only partially true that the connections illustrated in the previous section between gardening and spirituality in early modern Spain is a specifically Christian ascetic phenomenon. Arguably, the early modern Iberian theory of horticulture—a pan-Mediterranean epistemology grounded in experimentation, travel, and textual analysis—situates *the reader*, and not the monk, as its personifying figure, and the encyclopedia, rather than folk wisdom or the sacred text, as its organizing principle. It is not difficult to imagine the appeal of this paradigm for elite literary writers of the Iberian baroque, eager to re-align the classical understanding of poet as *vates*, or prophet, according to contemporary political realities as well as emerging discourses of humanity's place in the natural world. When these poets imagine themselves, they often imagine not something transcendent, like an oracle or divine musician, but rather a humble, even ugly, gardener.

3. I'M NOT THERE: THE GARDENER PERSONAE OF LOPE AND GÓNGORA

Belardo

The figure of Belardo as shepherd-poet appeared early in Lope de Vega's work, and eventually became a stand-in for the poet in a variety of literary works, including

poems, plays, and pastoral ballads. Among the heteronyms that Lope deployed in his work, Belardo was not only the most common but also the one most closely associated with the “real-life” person, even after his death (Morley 1951). In his edition of Lope’s *Poesía selecta*, Antonio Carreñas organizes a cycle of early *romances* under the heading of “Romancero pastoril,” which appeared anonymously in the final years of the 16th century in collections like the *Flor de romances nuevos y canciones* and the *Flor de varios romances* and eventually collected in 1600 in Luis Sánchez’s *Romancero general* (Vega 2013, 163ff). This cycle of 10 poems describes in thinly veiled autobiography the turbulent and ultimately disastrous affair between Lope de Vega and Elena de Osorio, under the guise of their well-known “pastoral” pseudonyms, Belardo and Filis, concluding with Lope’s exile in Valencia with his young wife Isabel de Urbina, known in this lyric world as Belisa.

In most of these poems, Belardo is represented as a conventional literary shepherd: his body static, reclined under the shade of a tree, lamenting his solitude to the surrounding environment. In “El lastimado Belardo,” Lope describes simply how Belardo “con los celos de su ausencia, / a la hermosísima Filis / humildemente se queja” (Vega 2013, lines 2–4), building toward the romance’s refrain, in which Belardo promises,

daré mil quejas al aire
y ansina diré a las selvas:
‘!Ay triste mal de ausencia,
y quien podrá decir lo que me cuestas!’ (23–26; emphasis in original).

In “El tronco de ovas vestido” we find Belardo, “con llorosos ojos” (12) seated under an “álamo verde y blanco, / que entre espadañas y juncos / bañaba el agua del Tajo” (2–4). This lamentation takes a violent turn when he notices a pair of *tórtolas* or

turtledoves nesting above him, their domestic intimacy disrupting the enamelled perfection of his solitude, where,

al son del agua y las ramas
hería el céfiro manso
en las plateadas hojas,
tronco, punta, vides, árbol. (9–12)

Furious, Belardo hurls a stone at their nest, destroying it but only displacing the feathered lovers to a nearby pine.

Many of the poems in this “Romancero pastoril” evoke the past only vaguely. The protagonist appears instead ensnared in an eternal present represented by the stillness of the surrounding environment and the classical allusions that dominate the descriptive language. In contrast, “Hortelano era Belardo” (Vega 2013, 186) immediately situates Belardo in a more-concrete geography and temporality, implicit in his designation as “hortelano.” Calling the protagonist a gardener suggests quite a different relationship to the surrounding environment, both physically and epistemologically, than the generic “pastor” of the earlier poems in the cycle, that is developed and unfolded out across the 80 verses of “Hortelano era Belardo”. Moreover, it follows that this Belardo’s occupation informs a different attitude towards the physical and psychic effects of love on the body now grounded in a range of specific plants that address specific conditions, albeit those associated exclusively with women.

The poem begins with a quatrain that quickly situates the poetic speaker within historically specific labor practices:

Hortelano era Belardo
de las huertas de Valencia,
que los trabajos obligan

a lo que el hombre no piensa” (1–4).

Lope’s unexpected exile from the court and from Madrid following the libel trial against the family of Elena de Osorio—suggested by the “trabajos” alluded to here—force him to reconfigure his poetic persona, if only temporarily, around the figure of the *hortelano* or gardener. As we have seen in Chapter 2, already long before Lope’s time, the “huertas de Valencia” were a vast network of commons that required strictly regulated and localized social and environmental accommodations from both its human and nonhuman inhabitants. By placing the Belardo persona in this specific socio-environmental or ecological matrix, the poem situates him within the same epistemological framework that governs its everyday agricultural and social practices. In other words, the specificity of the opening lines of “Hortelano era Belardo” suggest that this is a poem not just about love, or about the female body, but about the practice of gardening itself.

The following seven quatrains of the poem confirm that Lope’s focus here is, if not strictly, then at least suggestively horticultural. In these seven quatrains, Lope outlines a horticultural practice organized according to the physiology of the female body, planting specific herbs and flowers that, according to contemporary medical knowledge, were supposed to produce specific effects on it. Thus Belardo plants,

El apio a las opiladas,
y a las preñadas almendras;
para melindrosas cardos,
y ortigas para las viejas (25–28).

In other words, Belardo, attentive to the variety of physical and psychic conditions of female bodies, fills his garden with: celery for menstruation; almonds for

pregnancy-related pain; thistle for anorexia; and nettle (to stimulate the sexual appetite, one imagines) for elderly women. This specificity and attention to detail, is a far cry from the supposedly empty conventionality of representations of nature in pastoral poetry.

As Miguel Ángel Teijeiro Fuentes has demonstrated in *Lope de Vega, Belardo, y su huerta*, the horticultural expertise described in this poem is an expression of a wide range of classical and contemporary sources, not only conventional wisdom, but popular translations of Pliny and Dioscorides's *De materia medica*, along with Alonso de Herrera's *Obra de agricultura*, and medieval agricultural treatises by Ibn al-'Awwām and Ibn Luyūn, texts where horticultural expertise overlaps with aesthetic concern, and thus which held a unique appeal for the period's literary expression (Teijeiro Fuentes 1993, 21). Teijeiro Fuentes argues that Lope's "Hortelano era Belardo" was written in the context where the forms of horticultural knowledge expressed by these writers bumped up fruitfully against proverbial and popular uses of plants both in and outside the home, a world where poetic and practical ideas about the natural world coexisted. He concludes:

El romance de Lope de Vega, "Hortelano era Belardo", propone la presencia de un conjunto de flores y plantas que se corresponden y adecúan con los diferentes estados y edades de la mujer. Lo que en una primera lectura surge como una mera anécdota sin mayor interés, adquiere sin embargo matices novedosos cuando a partir de la pregunta—"¿por qué esta flor o esa planta tienen relación con esa mujer y su estado?"—comenzamos a advertir la existencia de toda una tradición, en ocasiones coetánea al autor, en otras procedentes de fuentes antiquísimas pero revalorizadas en el Siglo de Oro, que está influyendo inevitablemente en el momento de su elección por Lope de Vega. (25).

Teijeiro Fuentes detailed analysis of all of the plants mentioned in this romance clearly demonstrate that, indeed, these natural objects express a convergence of many different forms of poetic, practical, and proverbial knowledge. His chapter on *apio* or

celery, for instance, describes how the idea of *apio* as a remedy for *opilación*—technically menstrual deficiency but idiomatically the evidence of an unexpected early pregnancy—draws from a multiplicity of sources, including not only popular literature like the theater and satiric poetry, but also Andrés de Laguna’s translation and commentary of Dioscorides’s *De materia medica*, Alonso de Herrera’s *Obra de agricultura*, the Marquesa de Pompadour’s *Afrodisa*, and Ibn al-Awaam’s *Libro de Agricultura*.

Despite the objectification implied by the image of a male *hortelano* tending to the physiological and psychological needs of feminine bodies with the plants in his garden, we are nevertheless presented in this poem with an alternative to conventional erotic discourse in courtly literature, where the feminine lover’s body is typically disassembled by the lover’s eye series of objects—lips as rose petals, teeth as pearls, and so on. In “Hortelano era Belardo,” erotic desire becomes earthly and embodied while still delicate, far away from the grotesque or lewdness of, say the *serranas* in *El libro de buen amor*. Moreover, the figure of Belardo as gardener-poet cultivates an approach to the contingencies of love that are not only ecological, in that they imply a triangular relation between environment and lovers, but also relatively egalitarian in their mundaneness and availability, as well as in their applicability to women at every stage of life, not just young adulthood. And, lest we forget, the suggested medical-erotic practices could be appropriated or subverted by women themselves at the moment of cultivating, harvesting, preparing, and consuming the products of this poetic garden. In other words, the localization of this poetic garden in the “huertas de Valencia” suggests that erotic ritual is

something that is negotiated between individual agents and their surrounding environments, rather than between an enamored subject and beloved object.

This inversion of authority extends to the poetic practice implied throughout the poem. Immediately following the miniature horticultural treatise elaborated in verses 9–32, Lope describes in further detail the production of the poetic garden he is undertaking in this poem:

De los vestidos que un tiempo
trujo de la Corte, de seda,
ha hecho para las aves
un espantajo de higuera” (33–36).

Lope dresses up the garden’s scarecrow with the trappings of the courtly world, now discarded in favor of alternative ways of cultivating poetic knowledge, gleaned from a heady compost of classical and contemporary horticultural knowledge. Some time later, he notices the scarecrow again:

Andando regando un día,
viole en medio de la higuera,
y riéndose de velle,
le dice desta manera:
“¡O ricos despojos
de mi edad primera,
y trofeos vivos
de esperanzas muertas!
¡Qué bien parecéis
de dentro y de fuera,
sobre que habéis dado
fin a mi tragedia!” (45–56)

Literally ridiculing this hollowed-out figure of the courtly poet, Lope de Vega in “Hortelano era Belardo” suggests that a more authentic erotic poetry is available in alternate ways of imagining and articulating how bodies respond to the discourse and

practice of love in collaboration with everyday plants and flowers. By filling this poetic garden with these same plants, a space watched over by the inert figure of the courtly poet, perhaps even the poet-as-shepherd, Lope presents the transformation of Belardo from generic “pastor” to specific “hortelano.” Belardo—throughout Lope’s work *the* personification of his poetics and literary practice—is presented in this poem not as a simple pastoral pseudonym, but rather as the name for the poet’s ability to shape-shift, to assume a multiplicity of forms, to transform the pastoral by incorporating new and renewed discourses of the natural world.

Polifemo

The representation of gardens as a *locus* of transformation and gardeners as agents of becoming takes on particularly vertiginous effects in Luis de Góngora’s early seventeenth-century poem, the *Fábula de Polifemo y Galatea*, sixty-three dense stanzas in *octava real* that describe the curiously voluptuous and menacing life of the cyclops on the island of Sicily, the lonely rituals of the shepherd, his tragic love for the sea nymph Galatea, his song to her from a rocky outcropping (while his sheep and goats graze nearby) while she is simultaneously being wooed by Acis, and Polifemo’s eventual murder of her lover, Acis, when his song is interrupted and he discovers them together, *post festum*. The *Polifemo* has long been read as a compendium of contemporary and classical sources, translated, amplified, imitated, and corrupted—*transformed*, in a word—by Góngora into a strange baroque pastoral.⁶³ But scholars have paid less

⁶³ This is essentially the thesis that drives Antonio Vilanova’s magisterial thesis on the Greek and Latin sources of the *Polifemo*. The poem that emerges from this study is less

attention to the way that metamorphosis operates within the poem, both structurally and thematically, to produce its distinct poetics. Nor has the cyclops himself been read for the ways that he acts as a *locus* or catalyst for these metamorphoses. Instead, scholars tend to emphasize his brutality, his myopic narcissism, his melancholia, his jealousy, or his destructive relationship with the natural world.⁶⁴ They focus in particular on his song, to their ears barbaric, violent, and discordant.⁶⁵ In this view, the cyclops is either a hideous barbarian or a hyperbolic parody of the courtly lover in the figure of the shepherd.

It makes sense to read Góngora's cyclops this way. After all, within the conventions of pastoral, Polyphemus is not exactly typical. Though his song to Galatea is played on rustic pipes, Polyphemus's flute is constructed of a hundred reeds, as opposed to the prototypical seven or nine.⁶⁶ And the song itself, rather than generate harmony with the natural world (as it ought to) generates chaos. Whereas the song that Tityrus sings in Virgil's first eclogue famously "teach[es] the woods to re-echo" his lover's name, in strophe XII of the *Polifemo*, which describes the nature of the cyclops's flute as well as the effects of its song, what we hear is dissonance:

an original work of individual poetic talent, in the Romantic sense, than an encyclopedia of the poetic "themes" of antiquity. See also Reyes (1995, 192).

⁶⁴ On brutality, see McCaw (1999); on myopia and narcissism, see Ancell (2011, 549) and Barnard (2002, 77); on melancholia and jealousy, see Barnard; on the destruction of nature, see Torres (2006, 36–40).

⁶⁵ Ruster's description of the song's effects is exemplary: "Music is traditionally held to express the inner being: thus Góngora's enumeration [sic] of the disturbances resulting from *Polifemo's* music achieves much more than a mere accretion of detail—it reveals that the Cyclops' outer, physical monstrosity mirrors the disorder and discord within him, offering us an acute contrast with the beneficent, even sacred properties associated with music, especially within the Orphic-Pythagorean tradition" (1991, 114).

⁶⁶ On the typical number of reeds in the shepherd's pipe, see West (1992, 111). The source most immediately relevant to our poem is Virgil's *Eclogue II*, verse 36, where the number is seven.

Cera y cáñamo unió (que no debiera)
 cien cañas, cuyo bárbaro ruido,
 de más ecos que unió cáñamo y cera
 albogues, duramente es repetido.
 La selva se confunde, el mar se altera,
 rompe Tritón su caracol torcido,
 sordo huye el bajel a vela y remo;
 ¡tal la música es de Polifemo! (2010, lines 89–96)

The disharmony that the cyclopean music produces is totalizing, troubling the natural, supernatural, and human worlds in quick succession. With the presence of the gods and man disrupted, all that remains in the wake of his song is empty, chaotic nature, evacuated of the order produced by divinity and culture. And yet the song's disordering is not casual or random: it specifically affects vessels of communication (the conch and the ship) and catalyzes the transformation of the natural world, "confusing" the woods and "altering" the seas. This is not simply a destructive act. It is, more precisely, a disruptive act with specifically transformative effects.

The sound the flute makes at the mouth of the cyclops is certainly monstrous and barbaric, but in the Latin sense of the epithets, respectively signifying unnatural and unintelligible events. The song does not fit comfortably within either natural, supernatural, or human spaces, and is therefore disruptive of the very distinction among them. And the flute itself, which, as the first verse of strophe XII tells us, "should not have been" made as it was, represents a violation of both form and function. In the monstrous proportion and disharmonious employment of its materials, it is a profane object, outside the sacred relation between the god Pan, who first made the *syrinx* from reeds bound in wax and hemp, and the natural world from which these materials took shape and gave song. It thus makes sense to focus on the profanity and monstrosity of the

song and the instrument. And yet it's important to recall that the *syrinx* itself was the byproduct of the attempted rape of the nymph Syrinx by Pan, thus complicating the supposed equivalence between its song and the harmony of nature. Arguably, the song of the shepherd's pipe always implies a kind of violence, one that, by "altering" nature, produces music.⁶⁷

This monstrosity extends to the cyclops's work-life, detailed in strophes XLIX and L. In these verses, the work of shepherding at first takes on industrial, even destructive qualities, as agriculture threatens to overwhelm the natural environment. And yet, in strophe L, where the cyclops describes his apiaries, he is returned to the complex, subtle, even sacred process of transforming pollen into honey and wax. In suggesting a counterpoint between the noxious effects on the natural world of large-scale sheep and cattle ranching and the delicate relation to nature sought by the beekeeper, these verses further complicate the place of the cyclops in the pastoral tradition. Góngora's cyclops is not quite a mountain, a deity, or a typical sheep herder, but takes qualities from all of these. In other words, he doesn't exactly belong to nature, nor to the human or supernatural worlds, but rather assumes forms and proportions of each. Góngora's Polyphemus arguably occupies an "in-between" space, disruptive of the natural order with his song but at the same time intimately connected, through his home, his body, and his work, to the exuberant transformations and transpositions of the environment surrounding him.

⁶⁷ On the transformation of Syrinx into the shepherd's flute, see *Metamorphoses*, Book I (1984, 34). As we will see below, the shepherd's flute quintessentially exemplifies the breakdown of the distinction between natural, supernatural, and cultural realms—thus its status as an emblem for poetry itself.

In strophe XLIX of the *Polifemo*, Góngora's cyclops simultaneously claims the humility of the shepherd while boasting wealth in numbers:

Pastor soy, mas tan rico de ganados,
 que los valles impido más vacíos,
 los cerros desaparezco levantados
 y los caudales seco de los ríos;
 no los que, de sus ubres desatados,
 o derivados de los ojos míos,
 leche corren y lágrimas; que iguales
 en número a mis bienes son mis males. (385–392)

The cyclopean shepherd's flocks choke valleys, level mountains, empty rivers. Tears stream from his "eyes" and rivers of milk flow from the "distended" udders of his herds. His "goods" he says in the final line, equal his misfortunes in number. This projection of wealth is so out of keeping with the natural order—so excessive—that it's tempting to hear it as *anti-pastoral*. At first, the abundance of wealth seems to be against nature, or artificial. And yet, within the cross-currents of Góngora's syntax, the catalogue of wealth actually *collapses* the distinction between the natural and artificial worlds.

The projection of excess in strophe XLIX works in two ways. First, metonymically: the hyperbolic "wealth" is his own, but the use of first person singular verbs (*impido*, *desaparezco*, *seco*) to describe the actions of the herd projects its effects onto himself. By metonymic transference, he himself, rather than the animals, becomes the destructive force in the strophe: ownership becomes agency. The herd is not merely something he possesses (in an economic sense), but rather becomes an extension of himself (in an ontological sense). What's being described in these lines is a kind of imperialistic subject formation. What this strophe does is first create a relation of sympathy—if not identity—between the herd and the shepherd, which it then employs,

through the polysemy of “desatados” and “derivados,” to collapse the distinctions not only between his body and that of the animals, but between the movement of the waters from the springs, through the valleys, into the bodies of the animals—where they are transformed—and out again, as either milk or tears. The final verse, which equates his “goods” with his “ills” further suggests that if in the first half of the strophe he becomes cause of his herd’s effects, extending himself monstrously into space, in the second half their effects—at first blush merely destructive—become part of a larger process of transformations in which the (grammatical) lines separating the self from the surrounding world become impossible to distinguish.

The unmistakable sorrow in strophe XLIX is attenuated in strophe L, in which Polyphemus describes his beehives. This shift from the large-scale space of sheep and cattle ranching to the small-scale world of beekeeping signifies not only a translation from the pastoral to the georgic traditions, but a further complication of the cyclops’s “in-between” nature.⁶⁸ Strophe L reads:

Sudando néctar, lambicando olores,
senos que ignora aun la golosa cabra,
corchos me guardan, más que abeja flores
liba inquieta, ingeniosa labra;
trancos me ofrecen árboles mayores,
cuyos enjambres, o el abril los abra,
o los desate el mayo, ámbar distilan

⁶⁸ Woolfson writes: “Though not tame or domestic animals, honeybees were kept very much in the territory of cultivated nature, for example in the grounds of the villa, country house, abbey or monastery. They formed a part both of untamed nature and of a human agricultural and economic order. They ruled over themselves and were self-sufficient and yet could be exploited by humans for honey, with its alimentary and medicinal properties, and wax, which combined practical and liturgical uses. Indeed for all these reasons bees were often classified as occupying an indeterminate position between tame and wild nature” (2013, 286).

y en ruecas de oro rayos del sol hilan. (393–400)

Distilling the scents of flowers, the cyclops's beehives, hidden from even the most voracious goat, sweat nectar. His countless bees work tirelessly, ingeniously, swarming in April and scattering in May, weaving rays of sunlight of golden spinning wheels. This strophe describes two distinct moments of ferment, both charged with erotic subtext. In the first verse, the word "lambicar" refers to distillation, from "alambique," an apparatus that according to the *Diccionario Real Academia Española* "sirve para destilar o separar de otras sustancias más fijas, por medio del calor, una sustancia volátil" ("Alambique"). The natural world, transformed by the technique of the beekeeper, produces an endless variety of human products (alcohol, perfumes, candle wax, rope, etc.). With erotically charged language (sudor, olor, senos, libar) Góngora's cyclops sings the process by which nature becomes culture. Fittingly, the honeybee—since antiquity considered emblematic of the potential for harmony between nature and artifice—takes a central position in the catalogue of the cyclops's wealth: to make Polyphemus a beekeeper is to connect him intimately with the process by which the phrase "natural artifice" takes meaning.

Together, strophes XLIX and L create a complex image for the kind of *techne* the cyclops employs in his work, one that brings together ecology, physiology, and chemistry. Because Góngora's Polyphemus is a stand-in for the poet, then what these verses describe is also a kind of ecopoetics. In the *Polifemo*, pastoral song ceases to be simply a lament for an idealized self or past world, and is transformed into a way of inscribing our relationship to our natural (and supernatural) environment. Góngora's

transformation of pastoral produces an overlap between horticulture and literary culture that promises to expand our conception of early modern poetics, foregrounding its engagement with questions regarding humanity's relationship to the natural world.

Anfriso

Lope de Vega's 1598 pastoral romance, the *Arcadia*, likewise works toward a transformation of its genre by embedding an author figure, Belardo, within the space of the text. But while Góngora's interrogation of the pastoral operates by grotesquely magnifying this persona, embodied in the cyclops Polyphemus, Lope refracts it by multiplying his avatars, now split into two shepherd personae, Belardo and Anfriso, both within the fiction and in the book's editorial apparatus of prologues and occasional poetry. By deploying and deforming the conventions of pastoral and of the 16th century book in this way, Lope blurs the distinctions between the internal fiction and the external reality that the *Arcadia* seems to allegorize (and ostensibly veils). Simultaneously, Lope invests the pastoral with an intense erudition, scattered across the text but concentrated in a strange, glossary-like "exposition" appended to the end of the book, which reorients its epistemologies away from mythology and sacred literature and toward encyclopedism and natural history. In this way, the pastoral that Lope de Vega cultivates in the *Arcadia* is closer in spirit to the kind of horticultural manual illustrated in the previous section than to the pastoral romances it ostensibly imitates. And because story embedded within the *Arcadia* describes a kind of sentimental, intellectual, and spiritual pilgrimage that arguably prefigures its own representation in the text object of the book, the novel's poetics suggests a paradoxical authenticity to the fiction. In other words, Lope's

encyclopedic pastoral novel—one whose totalizing epistemology exceeds the story proper and consumes the book object itself—suggests that the novel’s ultimate “fiction” is its real-life author, Félix Lope de Vega y Carpio.

Lope de Vega’s *Arcadia* is a fascinating specimen of early modern literature, both as pastoral romance and as material text. The *Arcadia*, whose full title is *Arcadia, prosas y versos*, was first published in 1598 and reissued more than twenty times in the author’s lifetime, making it far and away the most popular literary text of its time (Vega 2012, 97–98). In other words, Lope’s *Arcadia* wasn’t just a “best-seller”—it re-invented the category. On the one hand, the story it tells is a thoroughly orthodox instantiation of its genre: two “shepherds,” Anfriso and Belisarda, fall deeply but chastely in love, only to have their affair bludgeoned by jealousy, misunderstanding, and meddling relatives. It ends with Belisarda vengefully and unhappily married to an enemy of Anfriso, who, after consulting with a witch, decides he’s better off committing himself to the study of the liberal arts. As Lope himself suggests in the Prologue, the story is an encrypted version of an apparently real love affair gone awry, one that even his first readers would have associated with the ducal court of Alba del Tormes, where Lope served as unofficial poet laureate from 1592 to 1595, the last three years of an eight-year exile from the official court in Madrid (149). Lope’s rhetorical strategy of “dressing up” the principals agents of courtly scandal in the ostensibly coarse garb of shepherds is a standard device of the pastoral romance, and given the overwhelming success of the *Arcadia*’s immediate predecessor in Jorge de Montemayor’s *Diana*, a reliable avenue toward the book’s financial success and its author’s inauguration into a rarefied literary canon.

What this patently conventional storyline belies is a truly remarkable narrative structure comprising a dizzying array of mirrored and entangled plot lines and thematic arcs. The *Arcadia* also comprises hundreds of lyric poems in practically every metric form in use at the time—an encyclopedic array that is staggering even for an author as prolific as Lope, and almost unimaginable by today’s standards. The book’s external, or surface structure, meanwhile, is an outright act of defiance. Although the book opens with the period’s typical prefatory material of official approvals, price tag, and dedicatory sonnets intended to furnish the book with the trappings of legal and literary authority, it closes with a curious glossary, titled “Exposición de los nombres poéticos e históricos contenidos en este libro”—in effect, a gallery of literary and historical figures represented in the book, from Aurora, goddess of the dawn, to Zoilos, the Greek grammarian notoriously remembered as the first incompetent scholar of Homer. Lope writes that Zoilos died disgraced, and that his name is used in reference to envious detractors of literary works, sadly so abundant in the world, and not just from envy but because *stultorum infinitus est numerus* (723).⁶⁹ This Latin commonplace comes from the Vulgate, where in Ecclesiastes 1, verses 14 and 15, Solomon writes: “I have seen all things that are done under the sun, and behold all is vanity, and vexation of spirit. / The perverse are hard to be corrected, and the number of fools is infinite” (*KJV* Ecc. 1.14)

Scholarship on the *Arcadia* has done much to account for Lope’s various sources for this peculiar glossary, which include Carolus Stephanus’s *Dictionarium historicum ad*

⁶⁹ In an appendix to his edition, Sánchez Jiménez notes that he alphabetized the order of the glossary entries, apparently in an effort to “correct” the *princeps* edition (Vega 2012, 805). My arguments here and below suggest that this effort is misguided, and indeed that Lope intended, quite deliberately, to end the glossary with “Zoilos”

poeticum, from 1533, and Franz Titelman's 1540 *Compendium naturalis historiae*, early encyclopedias that would have been available to Lope as he gathered materials for the *Arcadia* during his tenure as the official poet at the ducal court of Alba del Tormes, from 1592 to 1595 (Morby 1967; Osuna 1968 and 1972). But the overall nature of this glossary, and its relevance to the novelistic project, have not been thoroughly addressed. In the introduction to the Cátedra edition, for example, Antonio Sánchez Jiménez describes the erudition of the *Arcadia* as ornamentation, and the glossary itself as a kind of pedantic vanity project (Vega 2012, 48–50). Maybe so, but the arc of this glossary, beginning with the dawn and ending with a defensive entry bemoaning the abundance of foolish haters in the world, and the encyclopedic, totalizing poetics that its presence implies, suggests that something more is at work, as though Lope hoped to preempt the intervention of latter-day Zoilos that 17th century Madrid produced in surplus. In which case, it could be productive to think of the glossary less as preemptive critical apparatus and more as an extension of the occasional poems, prologues, and portraits that in a sense “stage” the romance and justify its existence. Furthermore, the erudition it exhibits would be the material result of the scholarly education that the internal narrative advocates as an antidote to deceitful love. It is, in this way, a kind of post-script to the action in the romance proper. A story is embedded across the glossary, which does not so much illuminate the text as teach us how it should be read. In a sense, the glossary folds an ostensibly “objective” discourse—that of the glossary or encyclopedia—back into the fictional world of the romance, enclosing and obscuring its apparent transparency.

This cross-eyed gaze can likewise help us to reconsider the nature of the *Arcadia*'s apparently formulaic front matter. The title page to the 1598 *princeps* edition features an architectural scene topped by the escutcheon of Pedro Téllez Girón, to whom the book is dedicated (Figure 1). At the bottom of the page sits the nineteen-tower shield that Lope appropriated from the mythical hero Bernardo del Carpio. The scroll above the shield reads, "De Bernardo es el blasón, las desdichas mías son." Lope was the son of an embroiderer, his family immigrants to Madrid from the north, and definitely not related to the legendary Bernardo, who probably wasn't a real person anyway. Although Lope was mocked by Góngora for the flimsy pretension to social status represented by this image, I would argue that its placement at the front of a *roman à clef* which likewise features Belardo, his own pastoral persona, makes it a kind of *mise-en-abyme*, a fiction within a fiction. The radically counterfeit nature of this *blasón* at the outset of a story that calls out its own fictitiousness, underscores this point.

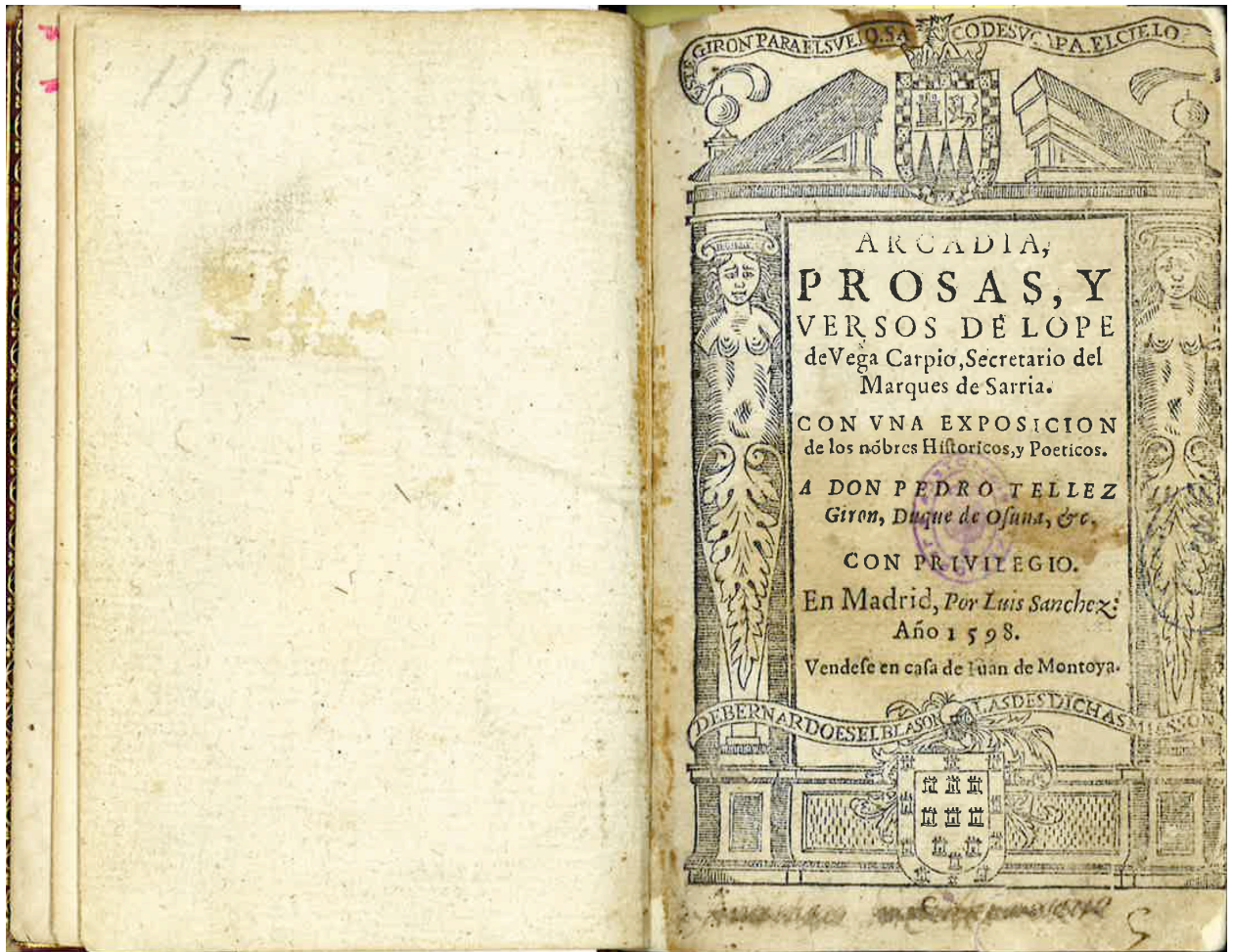


Figure 1. Title page from the 1598 *Arcadia*. Biblioteca Nacional

Lope begins the Prologue to the *Arcadia*, which pretends to be a conventional apology for the novel's pastoral rusticity but is in fact an argument for the fundamental inscrutability of human experience: "Estos rústicos pensamientos, aunque nacidos de ocasiones altas, pudieran darla para iguales discursos si, como yo fui testigo de ellos, alguno de los floridos ingenios de nuestro Tajo lo hubiera sido. Y si en esto, como en sus amores, fue desdichado su dueño, ser ajenos y no propios de no haber acertado me disculpe, que nadie puede hablar bien en pensamientos de otros" (149). With a forked tongue, the Prologue claims to recount an "eye witness" of courtly intrigue while

simultaneously denying the possibility of such a representation. The courtly setting, imagined in Lope's time, and perhaps our own as well, as the quintessential image of the disjuncture between appearance and reality, tends to reinforce this reading: nothing "real" happens at court, so how can its representation be, strictly speaking, "realistic"? The sense that we are entering a hall of mirrors blooms in full when we turn to the first occasional poem and find that it is written by one of the characters in the book, its protagonist, in fact:

Anfriso a Lope de Vega
 Belardo, que a mi tierra hayáis venido,
 y a ser uno también de mis pastores,
 grande ventura fue de mis amores,
 pues no los cubrirá tiempo ni olvido.
 Mis penas sé que habéis encarecido,
 pero corto quedáis, que son mayores;
 bien es verdad que las hará menores
 la causa por quien yo las he sufrido.
 No compiten las voces desconformes
 del sátiro con vos, ni sin aviso
 juzgue Midas el canto dulce solo;
 Tajo os escuche, y mi famoso Tormes.
 A Apolo llaman el pastor de Anfriso:
 si soy Anfriso yo, vos sois mi Apolo. (2012, 152)

The sonnet describes the intimate relationship between Anfriso and Belardo, Lope's personal avatar in the book, and echoes—through the subtle reference to Midas's poor judgment of a music contest between Pan and Apollo—the warning, from the end of the glossary, against slanderous, ignorant critique. (In fact, the explanation of the reference to Midas in this poem comes from the very same glossary.) Unless we assume, implausibly, that the references to slander at the extreme front and back of this book are coincidental, then we may admit that the author of this sonnet by "Anfriso" is in fact

Lope himself. Furthermore, because Anfriso, as protagonist, ends the narrative deciding to pursue the liberal arts that would have made writing this extremely erudite book possible, we can argue that Anfriso is in fact the author figure in this book. The dialogue between Belardo (the author of the Prologue) and Anfriso (the author of the first laudatory poem) with which the book begins would tend to confirm this reading. In this way, we can consider the fragmentation of Lope's personae in the *Arcadia* to be a kind of self-cultivation, and the book a garden where this takes place.

4. CONCLUSION: DIVERGENT ARCADIAS

How are the horticultural poetics in the early modern Iberian world articulated by the pastoral? This question is perhaps best answered by a negative example, in a text which begins by proclaiming its *anti-pastoral* status: *El ingenioso hidalgo Don Quixote de La Mancha*. The novel's Prologue begins with an apparently pastoral invocation: "Desocupado lector: sin juramento me podrás creer que quisiera que este libro, como hijo del entendimiento, fuera el más hermoso, el más gallardo y más discreto que pudiera imaginarse" (2004, 7). It then immediately veers away:

Pero no he podido yo contravenir al orden de naturaleza; que en ella cada cosa engendra su semejante. Y así, ¿qué podrá engendrar el estéril y mal cultivado ingenio mío, sino la historia de un hijo seco, avellanado, antojadizo y lleno de pensamientos varios y nunca imaginados de otro alguno, bien como quien se engendró en una cárcel, donde toda incomodidad tiene su asiento y donde todo triste ruido hace su habitación? El sosiego, el lugar apacible, la amenidad de los campos, la serenidad de los cielos, el murmurar de las fuentes, la quietud del espíritu son grande parte para que las musas más estériles se muestren fecundas y ofrezcan partos al mundo que le colmen de maravilla y de contento. (7)

Against the bucolic idylls that inspire beautiful fictions—the "rústicos pensamientos [...] nacidos de ocasiones altas" from the Prologue to Lope's *Arcadia*—

Cervantes justifies the Quixote's relative ugliness as a result of the trauma and grief in which it was engendered. It asks us to consider poverty, and the material conditions of hunger, enclosure, and pain, as useful resources in the production of literary works. It would seem, at the outset, that the pastoral of the *Quixote* is not a poetic technology for accessing beauty, as it is for Lope, but for comprehending its absence, even its banality.

And yet the pastoral remains useful to Cervantes in the *Quixote*. Unlike the chivalric romances in Don Quixote's library, which are almost universally submitted to the priest and the barber's inquisitorial bonfire in Part 1, Chapter 6, the pastoralia are mostly spared, notwithstanding the protests of Don Quixote's niece, who suggests, prophetically, that "habiendo sanado mi señor tío de la enfermedad caballeresca, leyendo éstos, se le antojase de hacerse pastor y andarse por los bosques y prados cantando y tañendo; y, lo que sería peor, hacerse poeta; que, según dicen, es enfermedad incurable y pegadiza" (2004, 66). Despite the priest's—and Cervantes's own—affection for pastoral romances, which he calls "libros de entendimiento, sin perjuicio de tercero," the *Arcadia* seems to be precisely the kind of book that the *Quixote* repudiates. Its bloated rhetoric and overdetermined, implausible narrative make it ripe for parody. It's by now a commonplace of scholarship that pastoral romances like the *Arcadia* are the raw material from which Cervantes "invented" the modern novel, and rightfully occupy a secondary status in the history of the book.

But what these two books share is perhaps more compelling than what differentiates them. Both share an ambivalent relationship to their predecessors, relying on their discursive authority while simultaneously inverting the rules of their genres. The

Quixote, for example, openly mocks the *ethos* of knight errantry while simultaneously dramatizing it as a force for social justice, if only in an accidental way. Both novels demonstrate—perhaps even flaunt—their status as text, a self-awareness that inevitably shapes how we read them, in a way similar to some of Shakespeare’s theatrical monologues on the performativity of reality, or the *mise-en-abyme* of his staged plays-within-plays. And, most importantly for our purposes, both recognize that literary works, and in fact all representations, produce meaning in ways that exceed their content—indeed that the medium is a kind a signifying container inflected upon the text. In other words, both the *Arcadia* and the *Quixote* are organized, in principle, not as stories or histories, songs or epistolaries, to be transmitted orally or circulated in manuscript, but as books—contingent objects in and of the publishing world: edited, censored, printed, and brought to market. As a novel, the *Arcadia*’s influence on the *Quixote* is arguably marginal, and probably not worth fussing over in this space, and yet its influence on the *Quixote*, as a text, *is* significant, and worthy of some consideration.

Such is the nature of the *Quixote*’s long shadow that we need not have read the book to be familiar with the satirical apparatus that Cervantes deploys in the Prologue, which is less about the novel itself than about the contingencies of publishing at a time when books like the *Arcadia* were considered paradigmatic. Cervantes complains that he wanted only to “dártela monda y desnuda, sin el ornato de prólogo, ni de la innumerabilidad y catálogo de los acostumbrados sonetos, epigramas y elogios que al principio de los libros suelen ponerse. Porque te sé decir que, aunque me costó algún trabajo componerla, ninguno tuvo por mayor que hacer esta prefación que vas leyendo”

(7–8). This “now” collapses the temporal distance between the act of composition and the act of consumption; it gropes outward from the text to ensnare the “real” world in a way analogous to the appearance of Part 1, the book we are now reading, in the opening chapters of Part 2, published in 1615, a moment when external reality seems to intrude upon the fictional landscape of the *Quixote*.

Cervantes escapes his predicament with the help of an anonymous friend who visits him unexpectedly and advises him to forego the citations, marginalia, and glossaries that the public has come to expect. As for the poems, just write them yourself, he says, and don’t worry about false attributions; no one gives a damn anyway! Cervantes does just as his friend suggests, and inserts a series of satirical poems, from Amadís of Gaul and Orlando Furioso to Don Quixote, from Galadín, Amadís’s squire, to Sancho Panza, even from Babieca, the warhorse of the legendary military leader Rodrigo Díaz de Vivar, commonly known as El Cid, or the Lord, to Rocinante, Don Quixote’s feeble, emaciated nag. The effect of all this, of course, is to trouble the borderline between the internal, ostensibly “true” history, and the external book with a supposedly transparent relationship to the reality in which we live, a gesture that is repeated throughout the *Quixote*. Cervantes’s first readers may have been amused, fascinated, or repelled by his ludic treatment of the conventions of the book, but they wouldn’t have been surprised; they’d already read the *Arcadia*, after all. Instead, they may well have recognized in the *Quixote*, as I do, a version of Lope’s arcadian project, albeit a divergent one.

The *Quixote* tends to internalize arcadian fictions, which are scattered throughout both the first and second parts, significantly as the stage for Don Quixote and Sancho’s

first encounter, early in Part 1, with what I call the “deep” wilderness of this imaginary Castile, when, fleeing the police, they stray from the highway into the forest, spend the night with a troupe of goatherds, and attend the funeral of a young man, Grisóstomo, who, suffering from the noxious effects of too much pastoral literature, has apparently committed suicide. At the far end of the story, in Part 2, Chapter 54, the pastoral plays structures the fortuitous encounter between Sancho Panza and the Morisco Ricote, who, defying the expulsion decree of 1609, has crossed back into Spain illegally with a group of pilgrims. The staging, “at the foot of a beech tree,” of Ricote’s description of the humiliation and terror of his family’s forced repatriation strongly recalls the opening scene of Virgil’s *Eclogues*, in which the dispossessed Meliboeus encounters a complacent Tityrus at the foot of a beech tree. The *Quixote* transforms the idea, activated by Lope and his predecessors, of Arcadia as a space or text that one can inhabit, into an *ethos* that travelers carry with them as they make their way through a ravaged landscape filthy with cruelty, injustice, and poverty.

CONCLUSION: HUMANISM, HUMANITIES, AND THE ENVIRONMENT

It's not the first time that the world seemed like it could collapse. The political upheavals that marked the early modern period (roughly 1500–1700 CE) produced widespread ambivalence toward the social and philosophical structures that for centuries gave shape to our sense of the human condition and its place in nature. As local, communal, and sacred forms of imagining the self and the world gave way to one that was increasingly mechanized and universal, the arts and sciences responded with a radically denatured image of the individual and the environment. The global climate crisis is a byproduct of this historical process, and addressing it demands more than a change in habits; it demands a profound transformation in the way we inhabit our bodies and our world. The impulse behind *Third Nature* is my belief that we can find resources for this transformation in the cultural artifacts of early modernity, when the worldview that brought us here was first an object of debate. Although not yet a fully-formed environmental history of the early modern Iberian world, this project is nevertheless fundamentally informed by the sense that irrevocable changes to the global landscape at the hands of the Spanish empire were matched by equally calamitous ones at home. Within a decade of the “discovery” of the Americas in 1492, vast swaths of the local Jewish and Arabic population were murdered or expelled, disrupting intercultural archives of knowledge on horticulture, nutrition, architecture, and sexuality. The same Counter-Reformation ideology responsible for these campaigns of ethnic cleansing promoted the suppression of so-called *brujas*, whose practices included augury, natural medicine, and midwifery. Heterodox rituals associated with agricultural cycles,

transhumance, and hygiene were likewise banned. Meanwhile, the horrors of transatlantic silver mining, sugarcane cultivation, and chattel slavery fostered local parallels in deforestation, urban migration, and poverty, as traditional Mediterranean economies quickly gave way to international capitalist networks.

Long understood simply as political or economic revolutions, these upheavals are starting to be reimagined along ecological axes, as recent scholarship in biopolitics, anthropology, and earth science upends longstanding distinctions between cultural events and environmental ones. In fact, a recent tendency in the earth sciences argues for dating the inception of the Anthropocene—the current ecological age, in which human activity is the dominant influence on climate and the environment—at 1610 CE, the historical moment when the death of millions of indigenous Americans first registers in the geological record. The potential correlation between the inception of the Anthropocene and the birth of modernity invites us to revisit with “green” eyes the cultural discourse of the relationship between human culture and the environment at the moment when they became indistinguishable. By attending to how the arts and sciences of the era responded to a changing sense of this relationship, we might in our own moment reclaim valuable resources for thinking and living in an uncertain world. Just as contemporary debates on the nature of the Anthropocene—and the nature of an ethical response—implicate not only geologists and climatologists but every person on Earth, the ecological changes in early modernity were not simply matters of interest to theologians or astronomers, but were clearly registered in the literature, plastic arts, and cosmographies of the period. Among these, art forms like the pastoral that were reinscribed in conjunction with

Renaissance humanism—an interdisciplinary practice that combined historiography and philosophy with emergent forms of scientific inquiry—with its persistent interest in the nature of Nature itself, can be a uniquely productive resource. Not only because the questions of nature and artifice that preoccupied Renaissance humanists have never been more urgent, but because the hybridity, formal openness, and remarkable curiosity of early modern humanistic thought are useful touchstones today, as the complexity of the Anthropocene forces us to abandon the security of our home departments and disciplinary boundaries. Underlying this project is the belief that the nature of our response to climate change, both as scholars and as creatures of our environment, demands models for the way forward informed by a clear sense of how we got here to begin with.

Although it predates the appearance of what we commonly recognize as “nature writing” by at least two hundred years, early modern pastoral literature is a form of ecological thought because it expresses the emerging sense of “nature” as cultural construct. Whereas a perpetual concern for ecocriticism—the study of the relationship between literature and the environment—has been the symbolic construction of concepts like “sustainability” and “wilderness” (often thought to aggravate the alienation of people from their environment), the presentist bibliographies that informed its early sense of what constitutes nature writing have often limited its theorizing of ecology to a primarily anglo-centric, post-Romantic mode. Recent studies by Carolyn Merchant (2003), Robert Watson (2006), Kenneth Hiltner (2011), Karen Raber (2013), and many others have done much to extend our sense of the forms that nature writing can take. In this project, I hope to join an interdisciplinary network of scholars working to historicize the relationship

between the human community and the non-human world. Environmental humanities is, in a sense, a return to the origins of humanism, when the practice of ecology assumed the capaciousness that much scholarship today attempts merely to theorize. This project—which combines literary analysis and critical theory with histories of science, environment, and art—gathers together the forms of early modern ecological thought that we might not immediately recognize as ecology, and in doing so seeks to expand our sense of what even the most remote practices can teach us about how to make our place in the world. In its best forms, environmental humanities does not simply connect writers, activists, and scholars across disciplines, but reconnects us to ways of being with each other and with nature that the passage of time has obscured from view.

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