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### **Ironic Gender-Role Inversion as Poetic Justice in Marcelo Díaz Callecerrada's *Fábula de Endimión***

It is well known that Spanish Renaissance and Baroque literature in general, and poetry in particular, drew heavily on classical mythology as a source of allusive references for textual enrichment. These borrowings served the Spanish poetic community at court with a function similar to that of the original myths--to explain and reinforce the idea of a common origin and to provide a unifying bond for defining poets and their listener/readers as an exclusive community by requiring of their readers and practitioners familiarity with certain common texts. Within this context, one of the more popular subgenres that arose was the *fábula mitológica*, an extended, expanded and highly ornate retelling of an episode from classical mythology, most often based on passages from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. José María de Cossío's monumental 1952 work, *Fábulas mitológicas en España*, which remains the authoritative study of the phenomenon, catalogues and describes hundreds of these fables. Comparisons of these retold tales with earlier versions of the events often yield insight into the tastes and ideology of the latter period, or at least into those of the reteller.

In this essay, I will examine one of these poems, the 3260-line *Fábula de Endimión*, published in 1627 by Marcelo Díaz Callecerrada. Almost nothing is known about the poet. Lope de Vega includes him in his *Laurel de Apolo* in the section devoted to *Madrileños* (213), and Cayetano Rosell, in his notes to the *Laurel*, as having also authored "algunas comedias y otros papeles sueltos" (531). Lope also authored the *aprobación* to Díaz's poem and, according to Cossío, "parece dar a entender que era sacerdote, y había escrito alguna obra de carácter religioso" (389). Also, the poem itself is little known; in addition to its original publication, it has had only one other edition in the *Biblioteca de Autores Españoles* series, and critical attention has been (somewhat understandably) absent, except for the four pages Cossío devotes to it (388-393). A further obscuring factor is the poem's subject. Although the moon's affair with the shepherd Endymion is mentioned in several classical texts, there is no narrative account. One prior version had been published in Spanish by Gaspar Aguilar, who died in 1623, but Díaz Callecerrada's version owes little if anything to Aguilar's work. Cossío concludes that the poem's plot is "de invención del poeta" (390). This would appear to leave us without a prior text with which to compare the work.

There are, however, two sources for comparison. In 1617 el Conde de Villamediana had penned his *Fábula de Apolo y Dafne*, which, it can be argued, provided the structure

## A JOURNAL OF THE CÉFIRO GRADUATE STUDENT ORGANIZATION

for Díaz Callecerrada's poem. The chain of events in the Diana story are a mirror image of that of her brother Apollo in Villamediana's work. That, however, will not be the subject of the present study. Of more interest to my investigation as countertext are the traditional gender roles in the amatory poetic tradition.

Before the Italianizing revolution in Spanish poetry headed up by Juan Boscán and Garcilaso de la Vega, gender roles were defined along certain lines in the courtly love tradition. According to medieval misogynistic dogma, woman was morally weak (even evil according to many churchmen), and was unfaithful or inconstant, not to be trusted when she did bestow her favors on a lover. (Of course, unfaithfulness was a desirable trait when the object of the man's attention happened to be already married to someone else.) In the *cancioneros*, collections of poems written mostly in the fifteenth century, there was a softening of that particular version of misogyny, and the male poetic voice almost always directed his amorous complaint to an irresistibly beautiful woman who was disdainful toward his supplications. That treatment continued after the publication of Boscán's and Garcilaso's works in 1543 with a more Petrarchan bent, and the poetry was also heavily influenced by Baldassare Castiglione's *Il Cortegiano* (finished in 1518). Castiglione's treatise explained the natural, physiological process by which the woman's beauty emitted certain rays that entered through the man's eyes and caused a rise in temperature in the man's humors. The resulting condition in which these humors or fluids expanded and gave off distillations and created internal pressures was described in terms of disease. By this explanation, the responsibility for desire was shifted away from what is referred to today as the male gaze and onto the gazed-upon object itself, or rather, herself.

The poetic voice considered himself the innocent victim of the woman's beauty and complained bitterly when she refused to alleviate his suffering. He not only suffered when separated from her, but also when in her presence. One must conclude that the desired behavior for the beautiful woman was that she award him the favors necessary to stem the suffering which, left unchecked, would certainly result in his death. Because she had the power to alleviate his pain and chose not to do so, he attributed her motives to a heartless cruelty, describing himself as burning with passion as she was icily cold in her rejection.

As the poetic tradition expanded to include narrative love poems in addition to the lyrical *sonetos* and *canciones*, there was more opportunity to portray these women in another mode, having them demonstrate their cruelty through their actions rather than having the reader/listener be totally dependent on the highly subjective complaints of the poet. Of course, the narration was highly subjective as well, but by placing the focus of the reader/listener on the story rather than on the poetic voice, the practical effect was that of removing the subjective element from the reader/listener's awareness.

Classical mythology offered two figures who were a good fit with this pattern. Venus, the goddess of beauty, who was not averse to the bestowal of her favors on desirous males, embodied the unfulfilled male poetic desire. Born of the foam that resulted when the severed testicles of Uranus were thrown into the sea, Venus represented liberal sexuality. Her most often treated fables are those of her unfaithfulness with Mars to her husband Vulcan, and her dalliance with the beautiful but mortal Adonis. According to Lemprière, in addition to being the goddess of beauty, she was also “the mother of love, the queen of laughter, the mistress of the graces and of pleasure, and the patroness of courtizans” (711).

It was Diana, the beautiful huntress, portrayed as the icy and changeable moon goddess as well as the haughty and cruel protectress of virginity, who corresponded to the uncooperative object of desire most common. The goddess of the woodland and of the hunt on earth, as Luna or Selene she was the moon in the heavens and as Proserpina, queen of the underworld. Lemprière states that Diana “had such an aversion to marriage, that she obtained from her father the privilege of living in perpetual celibacy, and of presiding over the travails of women” (228). She presided over a band of nymphs and Oceanides who also rejected marriage. She is represented in art as being “taller by the head than her attendant nymphs, her face has something manly, her legs are bare, well shaped and strong...” (Lemprière 228).

Melvina McKendrick, writing about types of women in the comedia, discusses the *mujer esquiva*, “who shuns love and marriage” (ix) and who is usually brought around by the end of the play. The term is quite apt for the icy, haughty, and mutable Diana, and is used frequently by Díaz Callecerrada in his poem. A sub-type of the *mujer esquiva* is the *mujer varonil*, the manly woman, “‘masculine’ ... in her dress ... her acts, her speech or even her whole attitude of mind” (x). As a large and vigorous woman who engages in the hunt, who protects women’s virtue and who wields authority by virtue of her divinity, Diana qualifies as *varonil* as well. The idea of having the goddess of *esquivez* fall in love with an indifferent suitor and suffer the same pains that she has inflicted would satisfy a thirst for poetic justice among the reader/listeners saturated in the tradition. In this fable, Díaz Callecerrada, in order to change Diana’s role from *esquivadora* to *esquivada*, adds to her masculine qualities so that she becomes more *varón* than *varonil*.

The poem begins with a dream in which Diana verbally attacks Venus for her immorality, belittling Venus’s faint starlight by comparison with her own brilliant moonlight, and faulting Venus’s delicacy in any season but spring. She says of herself, however,

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Yo, que en vez de la cama regalada  
En soledades busco el duro suelo,  
De calor el estío fatigada  
Y en el invierno de pesado hielo;  
A duros infortunios enseñada,  
De extremo a extremo pasará en el cielo,  
Que triunfa del calor el hielo mío,  
Ni temo helada yo el rigor del frío (313-320)

boasting of her iciness in manly terms. Venus seeks to exact a just revenge by having Cupid wound Diana with one of his love-causing golden arrows while wounding Endymion with a hate-causing lead one. She would have Diana's nymphs mourn her converted "De honrada esquiva en vil enamorada" (408). The arrow finds its mark, and not yet knowing with whom she was in love,

Era de ver la Luna enamorada,  
Resuelta toda en llanto y en gemido,  
Cual si fuera mil tiempos enseñada  
En la amorosa escuela de Cupido;  
Amara los desdenes desdeñada,  
Adorara olvidada el fiero olvido,  
Dejara de querer si lo quisiera  
De su querer la causa verdadera. (753-760)

Venus's plan goes awry, however, as the other arrow cannot penetrate the fleece that Endymion wears, a gift from Apollo to protect him from Amor's arrows and from Diana. Although he is described in masculine terms—compared to the heroic warrior Memnon and the handsome huntsman Adonis—, the mention of his "dotes de belleza tan hermosos" (854), his status as the love object of an active suitor and the idea that his virtue is under the protection of a male moves Endymion toward the feminine pole of the opposition.

Venus and Cupid then try a love arrow, but this too fails and they decide to leave Diana "...en lóbregas y en mudas confusiones, / ... / Con dudosas y equívocas razones" (1034, 1036), unsure as to Endymion's attitude toward her. She, still puzzled as to who Endymion is, vows to match him: if he is inconstant, so will she be, and if he is not, then he will make her constant. She deifies him, as the male poetic voice has divinized the female object: "Y pues eres el dios de mis querer, / Quita y pon almas como tú quisieres" (1183-

1184). When she finally sees Endymion, she wishes he would treat her as she was accustomed to being treated:

Bien quisiera la Luna que empezara  
 Endimión y su pena le dijera;  
 Quisiera que Endimión amante hablara  
 Lo que Diana desdeñosa oyera;  
 Quisiera que al pastor Diana culpara,  
 Que a Diana el pastor disculpa diera;  
 Porque tratar así cosas humanas  
 Es avisado estilo de *Dianas*. (1225-1232)

However, because of a law that no one can love without having been wounded by Cupid, Diana remains frustrated. Although Endymion has an inclination, it is not love because it does not originate in his soul, and he is in a state of “confusa indiferencia” (1280) and can only offer “a tu pureza celestial respeto” (1328). Diana’s anger causes her to complain that he is “ingrato,” a term common to the disdained, and says that in opposite circumstances, she would be in touch with her feelings:

Si fueras tú, Endimión, rey en el cielo,  
 Y deste monte fuera yo pastora,  
 Fácil supiera yo si tu desvelo  
 Mi razón respetaba por señora;  
 Entonces fuera el reverente hielo  
 Familiar llama y fuego, mas ahora  
 No sé si el sacrificio soberano  
 Es divina ambición o amor humano. (1353-1360)

Endymion kneels and infuriates her. Not one to suffer in silence, she calls him “pastor grosero,” curses him and his flock and would have his *manso* not recognize him and even his dog bite him. She suspects the existence of another and *celos* rear their ugly head, but then she repents and finally resigns herself to the change of role:

Si eterna fuera, ¡oh amado! tu esquivaza,  
 Si duraren eternos tus desvíos,  
 Un retrato amaré de mi pureza

## A JOURNAL OF THE CÉFIRO GRADUATE STUDENT ORGANIZATION

Y un semejante de los hielos míos; (1441-1444)

She blesses him and asks for anything but indifference. Justice has been served:

Así la midió el hado justiciero  
Con la medida que midió primero. (1495-1496)

She has him sleep while she watches over him and his flock.

In the third canto of the poem, Diana travels to the realm of Morpheus, the god of sleep, where she confesses to the gods there that she has fallen:

Dioses, yo soy la diosa presumida;  
Dioses, mirad qué presto el desengaño  
Con blandas llamas del empíreo cielo  
Derribó mis alcázares de hielo (1901-1904)

and then tells them she has decided to “gozar su amor dormido” in order that he not look upon her dishonor. She obtains from the god a branch of a tree that causes “sueño blando” in lovers (similar to the action of today’s “rape pill”), carries it back and waves it in his face. It has the desired effect:

Ríndese al sueño el velador valiente,  
A dulce ociosidad, a grato olvido,  
Dando la cesación que le trasforma  
Materia libre para amante forma. (1999-2000)

The poet’s application to Endemyon of the word “materia,” which Aristotle equates with the feminine, and to his amante the word “forma,” the Aristotelian masculine, further reinforces the role reversal.

Diana executes the conventional Petrarchan dismemberment, describing piece by piece the beauty of her love object, metaphorizing *cejas* as *arcos iris* and *arcos triunfales* and *ojos* as *soles*. His *mejillas* are described as being the color of *rosas*, he sports a *frente de nieve*, and his hair is a *rubia corona*. His *boca* is *divina*, his *labio de coral*, and his breath, *nectárea*. These are the terms traditionally applied to the traits of the female beloved.

Diana then performs an apotheosis, calling him “amado dios” (2241), calls upon the night to close her dark curtain and then

...blandamente toca  
 El descuidado labio adormecido  
 De su pastor, y de su hermosa boca  
 Mide el clavel de púrpura encendido;  
 Quedó la varia como inmoble roca,  
 Alma constante el variador sentido,  
 Fijo norte la Luna se hizo queda,  
 Y centro firme la volataria rueda.(2273-2280)

In the act, Diana becomes the fixed point, becomes the constant one.

She falls asleep and Venus and Cupid see their chance to wound Endymion in his exposed state, but Cupid, who has some feelings of his own for Diana, radiates heat with his *celos*, raising the temperature of the drug and causing Endymion to waken and depart “Con sabia astucia y con honor prudente” (2349). The poet suddenly ends the *fábula* claiming not to know what happened afterwards.

In this work, Díaz Callecerrada takes revenge on Diana for embodying the frustration of the erotic desires of hundreds of poetic voices over a period of several hundred years. He achieves the poetic justice of having her suffer the same pains she has administered, admit the justice of her suffering, behave in ways she has despised, and lose her virginity as well as her dignity. Putting her in the man’s place so that she will experience the pain and frustration in its fullness requires that she occupy the masculine position of a binary opposition. He must feminize the male figure in order to accomplish the reversal. While far from being the best of Golden Age poetry—Cossío describes Díaz Callecerrada as lacking “verdadera vocación por la poesía” (393)—the work is of great interest for its manipulation of the gender conventions of the poetic tradition.

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