

## Bucolic Suicide: Suicidal Shepherds and Shepherdesses in Miguel de Cervantes's *La Galatea* and Gonzalo de Saavedra's *Los pastores del Betis*

**Benjamin J. Nelson**

University of South Carolina—Beaufort

Death is no stranger to the pastoral mode. Although spatially separated from the *negotium* of chaotic city life, a *locus amoenus* cannot escape from this omnipresent phenomenon. Even the Greek Theocritus, the supposed father of pastoral poetry, includes a shepherd's demise in the first idyll when Thyrsis sings "The Affliction of Daphnis," which tells of a shepherd who pines away from amorous rejection and eventually dies:

'Tis Thyrsis sings, of Etna, and a rare sweet voice hath he.  
Where were ye, Nymphs, when Daphnis pined? ye Nymphs, O where were ye?  
.....  
When Daphnis died the foxes wailed and the wolves they wailed full sore,  
The lion from the greenwood wept when Daphnis was no more.  
(15; idyll 1, vv. 64-65, 70-71)<sup>1</sup>

Later, in his *Eclogues*, Virgil borrows Theocritus's figure of Daphnis and presents the same emotional effect that his passing has had on the ones close to him. In the fifth eclogue, the shepherd Mopsus sings: "For Daphnis, cut off by a cruel death, the Nymphs wept . . . when, clasping her son's piteous corpse, his mother cried out on the cruelty of both gods and stars" (55).

Since Virgil, death has been ubiquitous and inescapable in the pastoral mode and, consequently, manifests itself in Iberia's literary output.<sup>2</sup> In *Don Quixote*, Cervantes presents one of the most well-known pastoral demises and, at the same time, one of the

---

<sup>1</sup> A curious enigma stemming from Daphnis's death is the cause of his amorous dejection. Although recognizing that other critics point to a nymph unnamed in the poem or to Theocritus's assumption that informed listeners/readers would have known the reason, Eva Anagnostou-Laoutides and David Konstan argue that Aphrodite is the one who does not reciprocate the shepherd's love.

<sup>2</sup> I am not insinuating that notable deaths do not exist in pastoral literature composed before Iberia's pastoral texts. The Italian Jacopo Sannazaro's *Arcadia*, for example, presents the sepulcher of Massilia, Ergasto's mother: "Y estando Selvaggio dispuesto a comenzar, volvió, no sé por qué, los ojos a una pequeña colina que tenía a su derecha, y vio el alto sepulcro donde los venerados huesos de Massilia resposaban en eterna quietud; Massilia, madre de Ergasto, que fue considerada por los pastores, mientras vivió, casi como otra Sibila" (172).

most fervently debated: Grisóstomo's. Despairing over his unrequited love for the supposedly cruel Marcela, Grisóstomo, an accomplished Salamanca graduate who feigns being a shepherd to pursue her, suddenly ends his life: "Pues sabed . . . que murió esta mañana aquel famoso pastor estudiante llamado Grisóstomo, y se murmura que ha muerto de amores de aquella endiablada moza de Marcela" (*El ingenioso hidalgo* 1: 161; bk. 1, ch. 12). What has baffled critics is whether Grisóstomo did die by his own hand or from natural causes brought on by a broken heart. Herman Iventosch argues that Grisóstomo committed suicide while Juan Bautista Avalle-Arce focuses more on Cervantes's portrayal of both possibilities. Consequently, Grisóstomo's passing may be forever shrouded in mystery.<sup>3</sup>

Instead of resolving this debate, my essay presents another largely neglected aspect of death in the Spanish *libros de pastores*: the dynamics of attempted suicide between shepherds and shepherdesses. Instead of looking at *Don Quixote*, I turn to Cervantes's 1585 *La Galatea* and to a less-known pastoral novel, Saavedra's 1633 *Los pastores del Betis*.<sup>4</sup> I argue that, in Cervantes's bucolic community, the herders who attempt suicide only do so with spectators present. With an audience, they transform themselves into actors who threaten their lives while their loved ones watch. Thus, due to the presence of others, one has to question the verisimilitude of their *performance* and their intention of carrying it through. In *Los pastores del Betis*, however, Saavedra presents a shepherd who sees via an enchanted mirror his love interest who rejected him. Without any audience around her, this despairing shepherdess contemplates committing suicide alone. Thus, the reader is left to decide if her suicide attempt is authentic or just the projected fantasy of her scorned lover.

Before the texts that are this essay's focus are discussed, one pertinent issue needs to be addressed: the prevalence of suicide in Renaissance Europe. As Avalle-Arce points out concerning Cervantes's portrayal of Grisóstomo's death as a possible suicide, post-Tridentine Catholicism associated suicide with the condemnation of one's soul (*Deslindes* 104).<sup>5</sup> Therefore, it seems strange that individuals, especially Spanish Catholics, were terminating their own lives or writing about the possibility. In his comprehensive study of the history of self-homicide in Europe, Georges Minois offers a probable explanation by equating the rise in the suicide rate during this period with the increased circulation of literature:

During the Renaissance, [the circulation of literature] broadened with the invention of printing. . . . [W]ritten culture opened its doors to a new stratum of burghers and minor nobility, both as readers and as writers. . . . Above all, drama reached an even broader public and worked to circulate the ideals of the elite among the illiterate. One of the most characteristic aspects of this change was a return to classical authors. Thanks to new editions and translations of Plutarch, Livy, Tacitus, and Pliny, the reading public regained contact with the heroic suicides of Greek and Roman history. . . . The idea of suicide

---

<sup>3</sup> For a more thorough discussion of what Avalle-Arce labels as Cervantes's "verdad problemática" (the portrayal of Grisóstomo's death as either suicide or from natural causes), see his chapter "Grisóstomo y Marcela (La verdad problemática)" in *Deslindes cervantinos* (97-119).

<sup>4</sup> In *La novela pastoril española*, Avalle-Arce indicates that *Los pastores del Betis*, albeit published posthumously, is the last known Spanish pastoral novel of the seventeenth century (222-25).

<sup>5</sup> In "Cervantes, Grisóstomo, Marcela, and Suicide," Avalle-Arce cites several important religious and political decrees against suicide issued during the early modern period.

penetrated surreptitiously into people's minds, and as the image of Lucretius, Cato, Brutus, and Seneca became more respectable, the shame and fear surrounding suicide began to dissipate. (63)<sup>6</sup>

This return to classical texts and the rise in the circulation of literature coincide with the popularity and spread of pastoral literature.<sup>7</sup> Additionally, Elizabeth G. Dickenson and James M. Boyden add to Minois's argument by including religion's dynamic stance on suicide either as condemnation (suicide as sin) or as an expedition to heaven (self-imposed martyrdom). The latter stance may be viewed as a *softened* stance toward suicide. Thus, although officially denounced by the Catholic Church, suicidal thoughts appeared in *los libros de pastores*.

Since its inception in Jorge de Montemayor's 1559 *Los siete libros de la Diana*, the Spanish pastoral novel presents death as one of its inherent characteristics.<sup>8</sup> With the courtier-turned-shepherdess Felismena's harrowing slaying of three brute savages and her timely rescuing of don Felis from three mysterious knights, *La Diana* mixes homicide with shepherds who long for death after being rejected amorously. Yet this suicidal desire never culminates in a shepherd taking his or her own life.<sup>9</sup> In her panoramic study of the Iberian

---

<sup>6</sup> Although Minois mentions only famous male suicides, models of classical female suicide also circulated during the Renaissance. For example, the suicide of Lucretia was presented in both textual and visual forms. According to Ron M. Brown, "[t]hough Lucretia's suicide was much discussed in the period of Early Christianity, no images of that period have been traced. It is with the advent of the Renaissance and an 'artistic' consideration for the beauty of the female body, and for the destructive outcome of her act (or positive in the birth of republic), that the image is popularized" (81).

<sup>7</sup> Although discussing Thomas More's 1516 *Utopia* instead of Spanish pastoral novels, Quentin Skinner states the literary appeal of a bucolic retreat: "One reason for supposing this to be a highly desirable state of affairs is that a life of *otium*, of freedom from public duty, is indispensable for the achievement of our highest ends and hence our greatest happiness. But a further reason derives from the fact that the alternative, the life of *negotium* as lived by courtiers, public servants and advisers to princes, is said to be inherently corrupt" (127).

<sup>8</sup> Before the publication of Cervantes's and Saavedra's respective texts, suicidal shepherds were not a novel concept in Spain's pastoral literature. Juan del Encina, for example, presents a suicidal shepherd in his *Égloga de Fileno, Zambardo y Cardonio*. Due to the presence of a suicide, J. P. Wickersham Crawford has labeled this eclogue as "the first tragedy of the Spanish theatre [that] occupies the same position in the drama as the *Cárcel de amor* of Diego de San Pedro in Spanish fiction" (34). The shepherd Fileno, who is distraught over his unreciprocated feelings for Zéfira, turns to his friend Zambardo for compassion and counsel. Noticing the physical manifestations of Fileno's suicidal thoughts on his countenance and behavior, Zambardo notes that he appears "flaco, amarillo, cuidadoso y escuro; / a lloros, sospiros, conforme dispuesto" (260; vv. 27-28). Fatigued by tending to his herd, Zambardo falls asleep, leaving Fileno alone with his *desperación*. Even with the advice of Cardonio, Fileno gives into suicide to end his suffering: "Que sola una cosa tan congoxado / me tiene y me pone el cuchillo en la mano" (277; vv. 493-94). Fileno succumbs to his desperation, leaving the other shepherds to mourn their loss. Pastoral literature composed after Encina's eclogues continued presenting shepherds and their suicidal thoughts. For more discussion on suicide in Encina's theater, see Ann E. Wiltrout.

<sup>9</sup> During the narration of her woeful tale, the villager Belisa believes that Arsenio, the father of her beloved Arsileo, committed suicide after murdering his own son by accident: "El desdichado padre que con estas palabras conoció ser homicida de Arsileo su hijo, dijo con una voz como de hombre desesperado: '¡Desdichado de mí, si eres mi hijo Arsileo, que en la voz no pareces otro!' Y como llegase a él y, con la luna que en el rostro le daba, le devisase bien y le hallase que había expirado, dijo: '¡Oh cruel Belisa, pues que el sin ventura hijo, por tu causa a mis manos ha sido muerto, no es justo que el desaventurado padre quede con la vida! Y sacando su misma espada, se dio por el corazón de manera que en un punto fue muerto'" (251-52).

pastoral novel, Barbara Louise Mujica explains this unfulfilled yet threatening phenomenon: "Although Montemayor's romance is replete with symbols of death, love is, above all, an affirmation of life. By dwelling on death, the shepherds intensify their pain, which heightens their awareness of their feelings—that is, of their sense of being alive" (119). Rosilie Hernández-Pecoraro adds that "bucolic bliss" results only from this reflection of misery, which is brought on by the amorous rejection of another" (85). Later, she adds that "[t]o the contrary, the lover's misery is, not without irony, a profitable endeavor. The greater the lover's distress, the more he confirms his perfect nature. The shepherd is most coherent, most 'whole' when he is able to project successfully his ideal self as an absolutely happy—because tormented—lover" (97). This reaffirming sense of life, however, becomes an insufficient explanation for later pastoral novels in which other shepherds start physically threatening to take their own lives.

Although death accompanies the Spanish pastoral novel since its inception with *La Diana*, homicide and natural deaths are its primary manifestations.<sup>10</sup> Cervantes's *La Galatea* continues this tradition with Lisandro's assassination of Carino in the first book and Meliso's burial and funeral effigies in the sixth book.<sup>11</sup> This same narrative, nevertheless, presents two unanticipated cases of attempted suicide: one female and one male. Offering a probable explanation for this sudden appearance of suicide attempts in a bucolic setting, Bruno Mario Damiani and Barbara Louise Mujica state that "[p]erhaps because the characters' passions seem stronger in *La Galatea* than in any other pastoral novel, the wish for death often leads to suicide attempts" (70).<sup>12</sup> With this intensity, Cervantes's *locus amoenus* becomes a nightmarish world with its violent mix of homicide, kidnappings, Turkish invasions on Iberian soil, and even attempts of suicide. In regards to these suicide attempts, what remains to be seen, however, is the verisimilitude of these performances and their overall effectiveness.

---

Only later does Belisa learn that the deaths of Arsenio and Arsileo were merely magical illusions conjured by the necromancer Alfeo: "... el diabólico Alfeo hizo a dos espíritus que tomase el uno la forma de mi padre Arsenio y el otro la mía, y que fuese el que tomó mi forma al concierto, y el que tomó la de mi padre viniese allí, y le tirase con una ballesta, fingiendo que era otro y que viniese él luego, como que lo había conocido, y se matase de pena de haber muerto a su hijo, a fin de que la pastora Belisa se diese la muerte viendo muerto a mi padre y a mí, o a lo menos hiciese lo que hizo" (317-18).

<sup>10</sup> For a panoramic presentation of violence within the Spanish pastoral canon, see Cristina Castillo Martínez.

<sup>11</sup> In their psychological and sociological analysis of the Lisandro-Carino episode, Sanford Shepard and Marcus Shepard argue that Cervantes, although in a bucolic setting, "informs us not only of the way in which good intentions turn bad, but suggests a metaphysical and psychological principle. Human nature has its dark and sinister side, independent of conscious motive, capable of interjecting itself when least expected, and carrying with it the possibility of profound human tragedy" (166).

<sup>12</sup> Damiani and Mujica further elaborate on this "death motif" and its effects upon *La Galatea's* narrative: "Thus, the death motif serves as a rhetorical ornament to the prose and poetry of the novel; it gives rise to opportunities for in-depth characterization, psychological verisimilitude and plot development, as well as for a multiplicity of points of view, as several characters react to the jarring presence of death. Moreover, the theme of death serves as a vehicle for the portrayal of human moods, as a means of enriching characterization in the pastoral quest for self-discovery, self-knowledge and humility. Cervantes plays upon the emotions of the reader with utmost skill by developing a vast compendium of rhetorical devices, of images and symbols of death; he thereby also effects a change in expressive technique significant in the history of the pastoral mode" (90-91).

The first suicide attempt occurs in the fourth book of *La Galatea*. Rosaura regrets having scorned her lover Grisaldo and confronts him after learning of his recent engagement to Leopersia. Upon realizing that reconciliation has become unattainable, Rosaura, “in a simultaneously sincere and manipulative act of desperation” (Hernández-Pecoraro 178), seeks a speedy resolution to her despair. With both Grisaldo and one of her friends present, Rosaura exclaims that she cannot live without him and attempts, but fails, to end her life:

... y en tal manera, que me dices que mañana te casas con Leopersia. Pero yo te certifico que antes que a ella lleves al tálamo me has de llevar a mí a la sepultura, ... [E]ste agudo puñal que aquí traigo pondrá en efecto mi desesperado y honroso intento, y será testigo de la crueldad que en ese tu fementido pecho encierras.

Y diciendo esto sacó del seno una desnuda daga, y con gran celeridad se iba a pasar el corazón con ella si con mayor presteza Grisaldo no le tuviera el brazo y la rebozada pastora su compañera no aguijara a abrazarse con ella. Gran rato estuvieron Grisaldo y la pastora primero que quitasen a Rosaura la daga de las manos. ... (388-89)

Grisaldo and her companion prevent her from committing suicide. Although Rosaura is unable to penetrate her flesh, she intercedes between her beloved and Leopersia. By merely using her hand to threaten to stab herself, the emotional theatric of this despairing woman is so powerful that it influences Grisaldo's heart and prompts him not to marry Leopersia. Rosaura's suicide attempt presents how a self-mortifying demonstration, although threatening the life of the originator, can produce a change in the intended audience. Not all of Cervantes's characters, however, are as fortuitous.

The second suicide attempt occurs in the sixth book. Galercio attempts suicide, not by a dagger to the heart, but rather by drowning himself, after having been scorned by the *desenamorada* Gelasia. Since this shepherdess proclaims herself as being an “enemiga mortal del amor y de todos los enamorados” (459), Galercio is already hard-pressed to convince her of a change of heart. Thus, in a desperate act, he attempts to drown himself while in the presence of other shepherds and the cruel shepherdess herself.<sup>13</sup> Similar to Rosaura's attempted suicide, Galercio's attempt is halted by the intervention of others. However, the object of his desire, Gelasia, refuses to participate. In fact, she spatially separates herself from the entire scene in order to witness her rejected lover's death. From an elevated position, Gelasia watches Galercio engage in a battle with his own life: “... alzaron los pastores los ojos y vieron encima de una pendiente roca que sobre el río caía una gallarda y dispuesta pastora, sentada sobre la misma peña, mirando con risueño semblante todo lo que los pastores hacían, la cual fue luego de todos conocida por la cruel Gelasia” (614). With these two scenes juxtaposed together, Gelasia's passivity and cold

---

<sup>13</sup> “... cuando vieron atravesar corriendo, por junto al lugar donde estaban, dos gallardos pastores, mostrando en la furia con que corrían que alguna cosa de importancia les forzaba a mover los pasos con tanta ligereza; y luego, en el mismo instante, oyeron unas dolorosas voces, como de personas que socorro pedían. ... [Y] apenas vieron el río, cuando se les ofreció a la vista la más extraña cosa que imaginar pudieran, porque vieron dos pastoras, al parecer, de gentil donaire, que tenían a un pastor asido de las faldas del pellico con toda la fuerza a ellas posible porque el triste no se ahogase, porque tenía ya el medio cuerpo en el río y la cabeza debajo del agua, forcejando con los pies por desasirse de las pastoras que su desesperado intento estorbaban, las cuales ya casi querían soltarle, no pudiendo vencer al tesón de su porfía con las débiles fuerzas suyas” (613).

indifference surpass the shock and horror of Galercio's attempted drowning. Unlike Rosaura, Galercio fails to stage a convincing theatric to demonstrate his love and, thus, cannot produce a desired response from Gelasia.<sup>14</sup>

Both Rosaura's and Galercio's respective suicide attempts are witnessed by two levels of spectators within the herding community. The primary level consists of the shepherds close to the suicidal shepherd who are either the cause of the suicide attempt or who prevent it. Spatially separated and powerless to assist, the shepherds who merely witness the attempted self-homicide make up the secondary level of spectators. In the case of Rosaura, the eponymous Galatea, Florisa, and Teolinda witness her failed suicidal attempt while the attendees of Meliso's funeral helplessly watch Galercio's.<sup>15</sup> Bypassing silent, solitary contemplation, these two shepherds' suicide attempts become a spectacle: a theatrical performance that threatens their flesh. Foucault points out how the spectacle of the scaffold emphasizes the theatrics of the corporeal body: "And, from the point of view of the law that imposes it, public torture and execution must be spectacular, it must be seen by all almost as its triumph" (*Discipline & Punish* 34). Applying this judicial performativity of wanton criminals to suicidal shepherds transforms them from desperate individuals into actors. As *victims* of unrequited love, they become martyrs who possess, as Evangelina Rodríguez Cuadros posits, the power to move their captive audience: "... el actor (un cuerpo) debe ser considerado no ya como un mero soporte ilustrador sino como creador y generador de significados. Ahora bien, desde los orígenes del teatro, el actor ha sido un cuerpo sometido a la mediación; por él y a través de él transitan los deseos y los rechazos, la catarsis particular y ceremonial de los espectadores" (68). As actors of their own despair and desperation, Rosaura and Galercio attempt—either successfully or not, respectfully—to convince their audience, especially the one whom they love, of the authenticity and importance of reciprocated love. When a suicidal shepherdess is stripped of an audience, the situation changes drastically.<sup>16</sup>

Nearly half a century after the publication of *La Galatea*, the posthumously-published *Los pastores del Betis* presents a shepherdess who contemplates suicide utterly alone.<sup>17</sup> Divided into five parts, this pastoral text narrates the adventures of Beliso, who is enamored with Diamantina, "cuyo nombre imita bien su condición" (34). In the fifth and final section, Beliso, after being rejected for the last time by his beloved, departs from his *locus amoenus* and encounters an elderly shepherd who inhabits a magical temple. Once inside, this venerable old man presents to Beliso a magical mirror and tells him: "... toma

---

<sup>14</sup> Although Galercio fails to convince Gelasia to reciprocate his love, Hernández-Pecoraro suggests that he serves as a didactic warning for the other shepherds about the dangers of love (107).

<sup>15</sup> "... en poco espacio se deshizo y dividió toda, quedando solos los del aldea de Aurelio, y con ellos Timbrio, Silerio, Nísida y Blanca, con los famosos pastores Elicio, Tirsi, Damón, Lauso, Erastro, Daranio, Arsindo y los cuatro lastimados, Orompo, Marsilio, Crisio y Orfenio, con las pastoras Galatea, [F]lorisa, Silveria y su amiga Belisa. . . . Juntos, pues, todos estos, el venerable Aurelio les dijo que sería bien partirse luego de aquel lugar para llegar a tiempo de pasar la siesta en el arroyo de las Palmas . . ." (591). The "arroyo de las Palmas" is the river in which Galercio attempts to drown himself.

<sup>16</sup> One may argue that Cervantes in *Don Quixote* denied Grisóstomo an audience during the moment of his alleged suicide, although this scholar textually preserves his desperation in his "Canción desesperada" and his final will and testament. The reader is denied, however, witnessing his death first hand.

<sup>17</sup> Avalué-Arce speculates that Saavedra composed his pastoral text before 1593, and was published by his son don Martín in 1633 (*La novela pastoril* 222).

aqueste espejo, donde podrás mirar con atención desde esta peña, lo que debes a los que habitan los valles de Sigura, y quedaos en paz, hasta que llegue el dichoso tiempo, que ni se me concede deciros cual será, ni detenerme más” (375-76). In this enchanted looking glass, instead of seeing his own reflection, Beliso catches glimpses of his pastoral home and friends, including his scornful Diamantina who is isolated from the others: “. . . a la fuente del [sic] robles vio que estaba en ella la bella serrana Diamantina llorando en la soledad, el olvido de su Pastor” (377). Due to Beliso’s absence, this dejected shepherdess, according to the mirror’s image, contemplates suicide with “un dorado cuchillo de un pequeño estuche” (378).<sup>18</sup> When Beliso realizes her precarious state, the mirror, the temple, and the elderly shepherd magically vanish, and Beliso finds himself seated at the same fountain with Diamantina. After recognizing his surroundings, Beliso rejoices for, as the mirror projects images from his homeland through magic, he understands that the vision of his beloved was merely an extension of this same enchantment: “había sido fantástica visión la de su dama” (378). However, instead of informing us of a possible reconciliation between Beliso and Diamantina, the narrator abruptly ends the tale: “. . . como yo fatigado de haberos dado cuenta sin descansar de aquesta pastoril historia, a la cual os prometo dar fin con brevedad, si ya no entendiese, que os ha cansado el escucharme atentos aquesta primera parte della” (378-79).<sup>19</sup>

Without providing his readers with a definite conclusion, Saavedra presents an intriguing and precarious situation concerning Beliso and the enchanted looking glass. Since everything seen in the mirror is merely a magical conjuration, the reader is left to determine what Beliso actually saw in its reflection. On the one hand, perhaps the magical temple may have built up his amorous expectations, and influenced what he saw. Upon approaching this edifice, Beliso first encounters a *celestial prophecy* written in a foreign, unknown tongue engraved on one of its columns. Skimming over the undecipherable characters, he soon discovers that he can magically read them. The first stanza of the poetic prophecy metonymically reminds him of his beloved Diamantina:

El que llegare a ver de aquesta casa  
los transparentes muros de *diamante*,  
o sea Pastor libre, o tierno amante  
de los que premia Amor con mano escasa (272; my emphasis)

By reading and seeing the temple’s diamond walls, Beliso could not have forgotten about his unrequited love for Diamantina. The last verse of this prophetic sonnet promises Beliso that “[s]e celebren las bodas deseadas” (272). Thus, due to the temple’s markings, Beliso may have believed that he and his beloved will be reconciled and later married. This expectation may have manipulated what he saw in the magical mirror and how he interpreted the vision of his *suicidal* shepherdess.

In addition to these carved writings, Lacan offers an interpretation of what Beliso gazes at in the looking glass with his definition of the “mirror stage”:

---

<sup>18</sup> Although Castillo Martínez mentions *Los pastores del Betis* in her study on violence in *los libros de pastores*, she does not mention this particular scene.

<sup>19</sup> No known second part has been published. Leaving a *libro de pastores* unfinished is not uncommon to the more well-known texts of the canon including *La Diana* and *La Galatea*.

The *mirror stage* is a drama whose internal thrust is precipitated from insufficiency to anticipation—and which manufactures for the subject, caught up in the lure of spatial identification, the succession of phantasies that extends from a fragmented body-image to a form of its totality that I shall call orthopaedic—and, lastly, to the assumption of the armour of an alienating identity, which will mark with its rigid structure the subject's entire mental development. (4; emphasis in the original)

Applying this notion to *Los pastores del Betis*, one can see how Beliso may be considered throughout the entire novel as being fragmented, since his other half, or rather, Diamantina, refuses to reciprocate his professed love. When he is spatially separated from her, Beliso projects his fantasies into the mirror, and stages her in a precarious state in which she silently dramatizes her love for him by threatening her own flesh due to his absence. Thus, Beliso projects his own desire and seeks to complete his already fragmented identity, since he bases how he sees himself on the reciprocated love of his shepherdess. Having a fantasized image of Diamantina contemplating suicide, this shepherd takes pleasure in her suffering and the martyrdom of her love for him.

Along similar lines to Lacan, Foucault offers another explanation concerning the enchanted looking glass. Discussing “utopias” in contrast to “heterotopias,” he states that utopias “are sites with no real place. They are sites that have a general relation of direct or inverted analogy with the real space of Society. They present society itself in a perfected form, or else society turned upside down, but in any case these utopias are fundamentally unreal spaces” (“Of Other Spaces” 24). By purposefully leaving his pastoral home, Beliso finds himself in a heterotopia, looking through an enchanted mirror and seeing his beloved in utopia, although in suicidal contemplation. Foucault continues to describe the juxtaposition between the “utopia” located in the mirror’s reflection and the gazer’s physical presence in the heterotopia: “The mirror is, after all, a utopia, since it is a placeless place. . . . But it is also a heterotopia in so far as the mirror does exist in reality, where it exerts a sort of counteraction on the position that I occupy. From the standpoint of the mirror I discover my absence from the place where I am since I see myself over there” (24). Thus, for Beliso, seeing himself not in the presence of his beloved creates a utopia in which Diamantina feels compelled to remove herself via suicide. In his eyes, Diamantina’s death affirms her love for him and makes his utopia complete.

Without knowing the fate of Beliso and Diamantina, the reader is left to speculate what will happen to these two *lovers*. If what Beliso saw through the mirror was merely an enchanted vision of his beloved, then we can assume that there is no possible reconciliation between them, since he saw only what he wanted to see due to his projected fantasy. Thus, Diamantina has not had a change of heart since his departure. The essential missing piece to Beliso’s already fragmented identity is still absent and threatens what will happen to him after the ending of the narrative. Without an established identity and requited love from his beloved shepherdess,<sup>20</sup> Beliso may despair, and, thus, be willing to threaten his own flesh in a performance to demonstrate his love with the hope of changing her diamond

---

<sup>20</sup> Having the protagonists not ending up together at the end is not atypical to *los libros de pastores*. In Lope de Vega’s 1598 *La Arcadia*, for example, Anfriso and Belisarda part ways, leading the former to leave the bucolic setting and head to Italy: “. . . por inhabitables montes tomó el camino de la bella Italia, confusa entonces y rebelada al tirano gobierno de los primeros Césares . . .” (221).



heart. By contemplating suicide himself, Beliso will have completely reversed what he had seen in the elderly man's mirror: from suicidal shepherdess to suicidal shepherd.

What further complicates our understanding of these suicidal shepherdesses (Rosaura in Cervantes's *La Galatea* and Diamantina in Saavedra's *Los pastores del Betis*) is that these texts were written solely by male authors. Some of them were at times, like their shepherd protagonists, distraught over their own personal experiences with unrequited love's sting. One of the best-known examples of this is Luis Gálvez de Montalvo. Francisco Rodríguez Marín posits that this pastoralist inserted his own frustrated love for doña Magdalena Girón, the first Duke of Osuna's sister, into the narrative of his 1582 *El pastor de Fílida*. He reimages doña Magdalena Girón as the eponymous character (39).<sup>21</sup> Although I am not suggesting that Cervantes and Saavedra composed their suicidal shepherdesses with a real-world woman in mind, these writers of pastoral texts were in a privileged position to project, like Beliso, their (perhaps fractured) fantasies upon these hapless shepherdesses.<sup>22</sup> Within the fictional construct of these male authors, these women pine away and contemplate suicide for their dismissive or absent male suitors.

Yet, what about the case of Cervantes's suicidal herdsmen (Galercio and Grisóstomo) and their supposedly heartless counterparts (Gelasia and Marcela, respectively)? As we have seen, when a shepherd attempts suicide (whether successfully or not), he emphasizes the shepherdess's cruel and *desenamorada* state. Galercio heightens Gelasia's cruelty as she passively watches from afar, and Grisóstomo's written legacy immortalizes Marcela's stone-cold demeanor. When a female herder attempts the same, however, she is portrayed as a desperate actress who threatens her body in an attempt to change her suitor's heart. As if correcting their prior mistake of rejecting their enamored admirers, these female herdsmen threaten to terminate their lives because dying seems a better choice than living without their beloved. Rosaura comes close to stabbing herself to deny Leopersia Grisaldo's hand and to win him back while Diamantina, if we believe what the mirror reveals is true, cannot foresee a future without her beloved Belsio. Since the authors of Spanish pastoral novels were unanimously male, the division between male and female suicide becomes pronounced since this dichotomy possesses different agendas when males or females threaten their own life.

As death is ubiquitous to the pastoral mode, suicide in the early modern period became more commonplace in *los libros de pastores* and decidedly divided between despairing shepherds and shepherdesses. At first, early Spanish pastoral novels like Montemayor's *La Diana* succeeded in preventing this growing menace from invading this genre but later failed by the time of the publication of Cervantes's *La Galatea*. Reflecting this growing morbidity, despairing herdsmen become actors who martyr their love, staging their suicidal desires and theatricalizing with their bodies in front of attentive audiences, especially in front of the ones who initiated their grief. With Saavedra's *Los pastores del Betis*, however, there is an intriguing transformation: either a suicidal shepherdess is stripped of an

---

<sup>21</sup> Continuing with Rodríguez Marín's idea, Avallé-Arce conjectures that: "En primer lugar, que la novela pastoril es el género a que acude Gálvez de Montalvo en trance de recrear su intimidad amorosa. Y en segundo, que estos amores son desgraciados, con lo que volvemos a una afirmación ya hecha: el amor feliz no tiene historia literaria" (*La novela pastoril* 145).

<sup>22</sup> For the portrayal of female characters by male authors within the Spanish pastoral novel, see Hernández-Pecoraro's and Begoña Souviron López's respective studies.

audience or a shepherd fantasizes about his scornful lover contemplating her own self-homicide to complete his own fragmented identity. Reconsidering the role and importance of this novel in the canon of pastoral literature provides a more complicated and even a disturbing understanding of suicide and the theatrics of suicide during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

### Works Cited

- Anagnostou-Laoutides, Eva, and David Konstan. "Daphnis and Aphrodite: A Love Affair in Theocritus *Idyll* 1." *American Journal of Philology* 129.4 (2008): 497-527. Print.
- Avalle-Arce, Juan Bautista. "Cervantes, Grisóstomo, Marcela, and Suicide." *PMLA* 89.5 (1974): 1115-16. Print.
- . *Deslindes cervantinos*. Madrid: Edhigar, 1961. Print.
- . *La novela pastoril española*. Madrid: Istmo, 1974. Print.
- Brown, Ron M. *The Art of Suicide*. London: Reaktion, 2001. Print.
- Castillo Martínez, Cristina. "La violencia en los libros de pastores." *Revista de literatura* 72.143 (2010): 55-68. Print.
- Cervantes Saavedra, Miguel de. *El ingenioso hidalgo don Quijote de la Mancha*. Ed. Luis Andrés Murillo. 2 vols. Madrid: Castalia, 1978. Print.
- . *La Galatea*. Ed. Francisco López Estrada and María Teresa López García-Berdoy. Madrid: Cátedra, 1995. Print.
- Crawford, J. P. Wickersham. *The Spanish Pastoral Drama*. Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1915. Print.
- Damiani, Bruno Mario, and Barbara Louise Mujica. *Et in Arcadia ego: Essays on Death in the Pastoral Novel*. Lanham: UP of America, 1990. Print.
- Dickenson, Elizabeth G., and James M. Boyden. "Ambivalence toward Suicide in Golden Age Spain." *From Sin to Insanity: Suicide in Early Modern Europe*. Ed. Jeffrey R. Watt. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2004. 100-15. Print.
- Encina, Juan. *Teatro completo*. Ed. Miguel Ángel Pérez Priego. Madrid: Cátedra, 1991. Print.
- Foucault, Michel. *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Trans. Alan Sheridan. New York: Vintage, 1995. Print.
- . "Of Other Spaces." Trans. Jay Miskowiec. *Diacritics* 16.1 (1986): 22-27. Print.
- Hernández-Pecoraro, Rosilie. *Bucolic Metaphors: History, Subjectivity, and Gender in the Early Modern Spanish Pastoral*. Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 2006. Print.
- Iventosch, Herman. "Cervantes and Courtly Love: The Grisóstomo-Marcela Episode of *Don Quixote*." *PMLA* 89.1 (1974): 64-76. Print.
- Lacan, Jacques. "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I." *Écrits: A Selection*. Trans. Alan Sheridan. New York: Norton, 1977. 1-7. Print.
- Lope de Vega, Félix. *La Arcadia*. Ed. Edwin S. Morby. Madrid: Castalia, 1975. Print.
- Minois, Georges. *History of Suicide: Voluntary Death in Western Culture*. Trans. Lydia G. Cochrane. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1999. Print.
- Montemayor, Jorge de. *La Diana*. Ed. Asunción Rallo. Madrid: Cátedra, 1999. Print.
- Mujica, Barbara Louise. *Iberian Pastoral Characters*. Washington, DC: Scripta Humanistica, 1986. Print.

- Rodríguez Cuadros, Evangelina. *La técnica del actor español en el Barroco: Hipótesis y documentos*. Madrid: Castalia, 1998. Print.
- Rodríguez Marín, Francisco. *La Fílida de Gálvez de Montalvo: Discursos leídos ante la Real Academia de la Historia en la recepción pública del excmo. señor don Francisco Rodríguez Marín el día 10 de abril de 1927*. Madrid: Tipografía de la "Revista de arch., bibl. y museos," 1927. Print.
- Saavedra, Gonzalo de. *Los pastores del Betis*. Trani, 1633. Print.
- Sannazaro, Jacopo. *Arcadia*. Trans. Julio Martínez Mesanza. Ed. Francesco Tateo. Madrid: Cátedra, 1993. Print.
- Shepard, Sanford, and Marucs Shepard. "Death in Arcadia: The Psychological Atmosphere of Cervantes' *Galatea*." *Cervantes and the Pastoral: Proceedings*. Ed. José J. Labrador Herraiz and Juan Fernández Jiménez. Erie: Behrend College; Cleveland: Cleveland State U, 1986. 157-68. Print.
- Skinner, Quentin. "Sir Thomas More's *Utopia* and the Language of Renaissance Humanism." *The Languages of Political Theory in Early-Modern Europe*. Ed. Anthony Pagden. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1987. 123-57. Print.
- Souviron López, Begoña. *La mujer en la ficción arcádica: Aproximación a la novela pastoril española*. Frankfurt: Vervuert; Madrid: Iberoamericana, 1997. Print.
- Theocritus. *The Greek Bucolic Poets*. Trans. J. M. Edmonds. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1991. Print.
- Virgil. *Eclogues, Georgics, Aeneid 1-6*. Trans. Henry Rushton Fairclough. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1999. Print.
- Wilttrout, Ann E. "Quien espera desespera: El suicidio en el teatro de Juan del Encina." *Hispanófila* 72 (1981): 1-11. Print.