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Special Issue: Reinventing Don Quixote in Cultural Production

Table of contents

Articles

Images of the Third Degree: Dulcinea and the Classics

Frederick A. de Armas, University of Chicago.....1

Don Polindo, Don Quixote, and Cervantes's Transformation of the Knight Errant to an Erring Knight

William Worden, University of Alabama.....29

“Do These Pants Make Me Look Fat?”: The Burgeoning of Sancho's *Panza*

Margaret Marek, Illinois College.....50

Lars and the Real Girl and the Quixotic in the 21st century

Ryan Prendergast, University of Rochester80

Women's Mental Health Advocacy in *Lars and the Real Girl* and the *Don Quixote* Connection

Bonnie L. Gasior, California State University, Long Beach.....103

La democratización del privilegio social en España y sus representaciones en *Don Quijote*

Xabier Granja Ibarreche, University of Alabama.....117

Reviews

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Juan Pablo Gil-Osle, Arizona State University.....140

Images of the Third Degree: Dulcinea and the Classics

Frederick A. de Armas
University of Chicago

As Don Quixote and Sancho slowly canter down the rustic plains of La Mancha, far from the bustling cities or even the castles and palaces of Spain, the reader marvels at their wide-ranging and pleasant conversation. Indeed, it has been argued that: “The loving, frequently irascible relationship between Quixote and Sancho is the greatness of the book, more even than the gusto of its representations of natural and social realities. What unites the Don and his squire is [. . .] their equally mutual if rather grumpy affection for each other” (Bloom 130). Their friendship is at its most pugnacious when Don Quixote decides to paint over reality, imagining what is not there, so as to create the appropriate setting for a chivalric adventure. As Ian Watt has noted, most episodes are based on a threefold structure: “a visual stimulus, a misinterpretation of the stimulus by Quixote in terms of his chivalric compulsions; a realistic correction by Sancho Panza...” (64). I will add that corrections may also come from other characters, “frenemies” of the knight or simple passers-by, such as Vivaldo, the Duke and Duchess, and Sansón Carrasco.

In Chapter 8, for example, the knight responds to a visual stimulus: “Look yonder, friend Sancho Panza, where you may discover more than thirty monstrous giants, with whom I intend to fight” (I, 8, 59).¹ As Don Quixote paints over the landscape with images from the romances of chivalry, his squire wishes to bring him back to quotidian reality. A careful reading of these passages suggests that the obstinate knight at times responds with an obscure, incongruous or unexpected allusion to a classical past. This is particularly curious since his most common responses have to

¹ I cite the English translation in the main text and include the Spanish in the notes. I include first the part, then the chapter and then the page number for both the English and the Spanish. And, although I cite from the Luis Andrés Murillo Spanish edition (1978), I have also consulted the edition by Francisco Rico (1999). “Porque ves allí, amigo Sancho Panza, donde se descubren treinta, o poco más desaforados gigantes, con quien pienso hacer batalla” (1978: I, 8, 129).

do with the chivalric rather than with the antique world which would seem far removed from his readings and imaginings.

As the wind moves the arms of the windmills' sails, Don Quixote exclaims, "Well, though you should move more arms than the giant Briareus, you shall pay for it" (I, 8, 59).² If Don Quixote wanted to evoke a fearful creature from myth, he could not have chosen better. Briareus was one of three most ancient of giants, born of Gaea and Uranus and of the guardians of the netherworld. It could be argued that in this and other cases the "author" is following the "friend's" advice in the Prologue. In other words, to substitute a generic term with a specific example (classical, biblical, or belonging to the fathers of the church) so as appear to have a more learned text: Goliath instead of giants; Cacus instead of thief.³ And this does happen throughout the novel, where the Innkeeper is called "as arrant a thief as Cacus" (I, 2, 29)⁴ and where in a biblical reference the knight turns to "that huge Philistine Goliath, who was seven cubits and a half high, which is a prodigious stature" (II, 1, 477).⁵

I would argue, instead, that the allusion to Briareus is by no means a facile interjection, but a carefully crafted one. It is a very precise, somewhat obscure and very fitting allusion. It also fits with the "epic" nature of the knight's quest.⁶ As Aeneas reaches the threshold to the netherworld, led by

² "Pues aunque mováis más brazos que los del gigante Briareo, me lo habéis de pagar" (1978: I, 8, 130).

³ This is of course one more "play" in the text since the Prologue was most certainly written after the 1605 novel and thus specific allusions were already included. The allusions in the 1615 text could have been inserted going back to the Prologue of Part One. For the six women cited in the Prologue and their presence in the novel see Carolyn Nadeau (2002).

⁴ "no menos ladrón que Caco" (1978: I, 2, 84).

⁵ "aquel filastezo de Golías, que tenía siete codos y medio de altura, que es una desmesurada grandeza" (1978: II, 1, 50).

⁶ One of the main arguments first used to canonize Cervantes' novel was that it was a work akin to the ancient epics of Homer and Virgil. In turning to Virgil here, the novel points to epic while the knight seems particularly well informed as to this genre. This critical perspective, although not a central one, has continued to this day. See, for example, Marasso (1954), McGaha (1980), Barnés Vázquez (2009), and De Armas (2010).

the Sybil, he encounters an immense and foreboding tree that drips with nightmarish visions.⁷ Among the monstrous creatures that seem to materialize in this space, is Briareus, one of the dreaded *Hecatoncheires* or *Centimanes* (hundred-handed). Although evoking Virgil, Don Quixote does not consider what he sees as phantom visions that cling to the leaves of the tree. He believes that he is confronted by an epic enemy in the plains of La Mancha. While the Virgilian hero is prevented from attacking these vain images of terror by the Sybil, the knight is warned by his squire. Aeneas holds back; Don Quixote moves forward. Sancho may be correcting his master, but he does not have the authority of the Sybil. Thus, Don Quixote's "classical" images are unleashed just after Sancho gives him the third degree—in other words, when Sancho pushes him too hard. Although anachronistic, I believe that the expression "third degree" is quite fitting for this moment. It emerged at the beginnings of the twentieth century as a euphemism for torture.⁸ Many early films portray a character given the third degree by the police. The device has been traced back to Edgar Allen Poe's story "Thou art the Man."⁹ And there is even a film by this name from 1926.¹⁰

⁷ "In the midst an elm, shadowy and vast, spreads her boughs and aged arms, the home which, men say, false Dreams hold in throngs, clinging under every leaf" (6.282-84).

⁸ The Wickersham Commission (1931) found that use of torture or the third degree was widespread in the United States. The term "third degree" is said to have been coined by Thomas Byrnes, a "notorious cop" at the beginning of the twentieth century (Alder 19-20).

⁹ It first appeared in *Godey's Magazine and Ladies' Book*. Philadelphia: November, 1844.

¹⁰ This is a poster in Spanish for the movie *The Third Degree*, directed by Michael Curtiz, 1926.



The Third Degree.

Directed by Michael Curtiz, performances by Dolores Costello Louise Dresser, Rockcliffe Fellowes and Jason Robards Sr., Warner Brothers, 1926.

Although not partaking of the mystery story or the noir films, I would argue that when others seek to shake the knight out of his beliefs, to give him the third degree, he knows how to answer his questioners. An almost disembodied classical image emerges to shield him. If in a typical ekphrasis, let's say the Homeric shield of Achilles, words seek to overwhelm an object that is so difficult to make textually present;¹¹ in *Don Quixote*, a kind of floating image from antiquity, perhaps an allusive ekphrasis, seeks to shield the knight from those that accost him and render them wordless.

In this essay, then, I will search for glimmers of a shielding classical image in moments when the knight is pressed to describe his ladylove,

¹¹ According to Murray Krieger, the student of rhetoric pursues “a language that can, in spite of its limits, recover the immediacy of a sightless vision [. . .] an original pre-fallen language of corporeal presence” (10); but reaches exasperation since “words cannot have capacity, cannot be capacious, because they have, literally, no space” (10).

turning to seven specific examples. Although in many cases he will succeed in stopping verbal aggression, he ends up forging images of Dulcinea that far from classical beauty may come to evoke the monstrous.

I. The Makings of Myth (I, 13)

Riding to Grisóstomo's funeral Don Quixote is quizzed on chivalry by Vivaldo: Must a knight have a lady? Isn't it blasphemous for a knight to call on his lady rather than on God right before a battle? As the debate heats up with examples and counterexamples, Vivaldo asks "to tell us the name, country, quality and beauty of your mistress" (I, 13, 92).¹² Given the third degree, Don Quixote is able to both answer and evade. Although admitting that Dulcinea's lineage is a modern one, he includes a catalogue of important families beginning with Roman ones, and continuing with those of different regions of Iberia. He begins with a negative that nonetheless impacts Dulcinea by association: "She is not of the ancient Roman Curtii, Caii and Scipios" (I, 13, 93).¹³ The very first of the *gens* invoked by the knight, the Curtius, was never considered a particularly important family, being of minor nobility. At the same time, the family acquired renown for a moment of valor related to a body of water that came to be called the *Lacus Curtius*. According to an early legend, when hostilities started between the Romans and the Sabines over the former's rape of many of their women, Mettius Curtius, the leader of the Sabines, became stuck in a marsh which was from then on called the *Lacus Curtius*. Cervantes actually refers to a second and later feat ascribed to Marcus Curtius: "What impelled Curtius to throw himself into the flaming gulf that opened itself in the midst of Rome?" (II, 8, 517).¹⁴ According to the sixth book of Livy's *Roman History*, when a chasm opened next to the Forum, the seers were asked what to do. The answer was to throw the Romans' most precious possession into the chasm. Marcus Curtius understood that this meant Roman valor, and thus, dressed in armor and riding his horse, he leapt into the chasm. It miraculously closed. What is crucial in these stories

¹² "el nombre, patria, calidad y hermosura de su dama" (1978: I, 13, 176).

¹³ "No es de los antiguos Curcios Gayos y Cipiones romanos" (1978: I, 13, 176).

¹⁴ "¿Quién impelió a Curcio a lanzarse en la profunda sima ardiente que apareció en la mitad de Roma?" (1978: II, 8, 96).

is not history, but legend. Curtius' valor became part of Rome's mythology. While his family was unimportant this mythical deed granted him an authority that was above history. If Curtius can acquire great fame through events that border on the fictional, then Dulcinea can also become famous in this manner. El Toboso may be a town of little renown and at times singled out for its *morisco* inhabitants. But Don Quixote, through the allusion to gens Curtius, suggests that it will become a place of mythical import. What will happen there is unknown, but that it will happen is thus prophesied by the knight.

II. Dulcinea in Elyssium (I, 13)

Not only does Vivaldo push the knight to reveal lineage, but also to defend the lady's beauty. Again, the knight is far from intimidated, as he asserts: "Her beauty more than human since in her all the impossible and chimerical attributes of beauty, which the poets ascribe to their mistresses are realized; for her hairs are of gold, her forehead the Elysian fields, her eyebrows rainbows, her eyes suns, her cheeks roses, her lips coral, her teeth, pearls..." (I, 13, 92).¹⁵ At first it may seem as if the knight is taking the easy road. He turns to Petrarch and his followers, to Clément Marot and Garcilaso de la Vega in order to praise Dulcinea as the ideal woman. Such a description was often vertical, starting from the top (the woman's golden hair) and proceeding downwards, and using apt metaphors and similes to praise each part of the body as a precious object.¹⁶

Don Quixote is utilizing a mode that seems more and more subjected to satire, as poets realize that the excessive uses of object dehumanize the woman and transform the trope into a risible exercise.¹⁷

¹⁵ "pues en ella se vienen a hacer verdaderos todos los imposibles y quiméricos atributos de belleza que los poetas dan a las damas: que sus cabellos son de oro, su frente campos eliseos, sus cejas arcos del cielo, sus ojos soles, sus mejillas rosas, sus labios corales, perlas sus dientes..." (1978: 1, 13, 176).

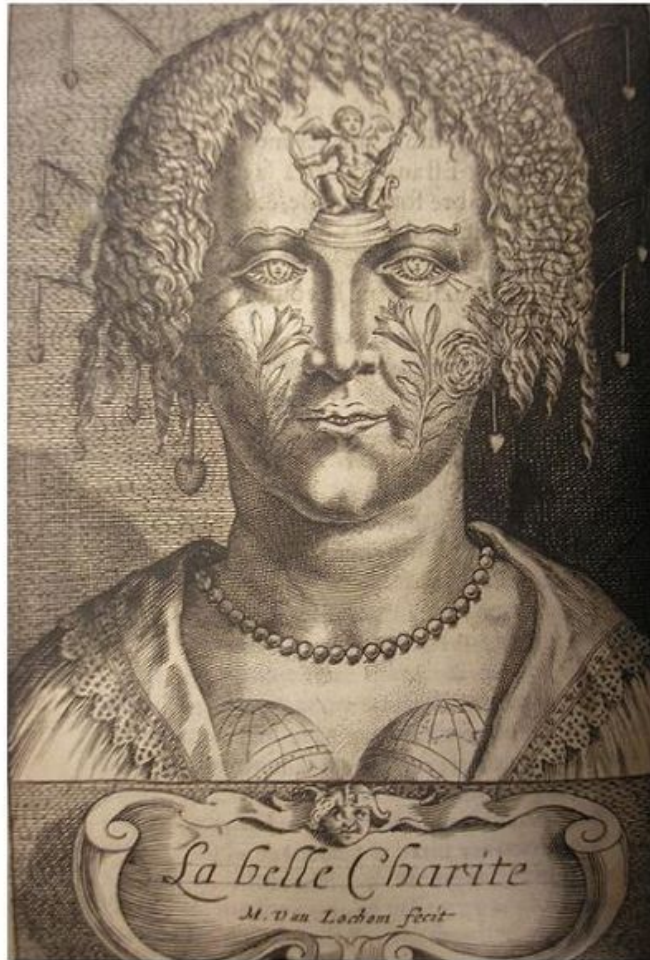
¹⁶ For Mayoral the key Renaissance texts on the matter are: "la descripción de Alcina del *Orlando furioso* y el soneto 157 de Petrarca, 'Quel sempre acerbo et honorato giorno'" (8).

¹⁷ Domínguez Matito studies stanza 20 of Garcilaso's *Eclogue* I, and Góngora's sonnet "De pura honestidad templo sagrado." Góngora would mock this style in

Shakespeare would actually deny the blazon or catalogue of women's parts writing in Sonnet 130: "My mistress's eyes are nothing like the sun." In the 1627 novel by Charles Sorel, *Le berger extravagant*, the crazed shepherd transforms his lady into a truly laughable accumulation of precious objects. The text is accompanied by an illustration of "La belle Charite," a truly grotesque representation of a woman constructed through countless objects.¹⁸

Fábula de Píramo y Tisbe (1618). Here the nose becomes "blanco almendruco" and her breasts "pechugas o pomos no maduros" (40).

¹⁸ "La belle Charite" frontispiece to *Le berger extravagant* by Charles Sorel, designed by M. Van Lochom, engraved by Crispin De Passe. "The pictorial parody of the ideal lady [. . .] shows the petrarchistic images literally depicted: roses and lilies in her cheeks, eyebrows as bows, lips as (sticks of) coral, breasts as (terrestrial) globes, etc. Even so, the attacks never seriously called in doubt the validity of the convention or its usefulness as a means of poetic expression" (Foster 57).



“La belle Charite”
frontispiece to *Le berger extravagant* by Charles Sorel,
designed by M. Van Lochem,
engraved by Crispin De Passe.

But such commonplaces hide two instances where Quixote puts up a classical defense against the third degree. The Petrarchan forehead of a woman is usually ivory white. Dulcinea’s forehead, however, resembles the

Elysian Fields. This paradise for the virtuous and the blessed where the inhabitants rested in pleasant fields devoid of architectures was described by Homer and Virgil and was a commonplace in the Renaissance. However, it was rarely (if at all) used as a metaphor for the forehead.¹⁹ This inventive moment, points not just to the classical era but to a number of Renaissance works which seek to envision the Elysian Fields. Dosso Dossi, for example, painted *Aeneas at the Entrance to the Elysian Fields* for the Duke of Ferrara around 1514.²⁰



Dosso Dossi. *Aeneas at the Entrance to the Elysian Fields*. c. 1514.

In the far left, Aeneas accompanied by the Cumaean Sybil enters this paradise. Pagan nudes recline throughout taking their leisure, conversing or even assuming amorous poses.²¹ By placing the Elysian Fields in the forehead or mind of Dulcinea, the knight may be reflecting his own mind.²² True, sensuous images may reflect his daydreaming about his beloved. More importantly, throughout the novel, he seeks to bring paradise to earth. In his first major speech the knight expresses his desire to

¹⁹ To commemorate Michelangelo's death, Alessandro Allori painted *Michelangelo in the Elysian Fields*, with classical artists on one side and modern ones on the other. Thus, he is seen as supreme and worthy of praise even in paradise (Pilliod 168).

²⁰ *Aeneas at the Entrance to the Elysian Fields*, by Dosso Dossi, c. 1514.

²¹ To commemorate Michelangelo's death, Allori painted Michelangelo in the Elysian Fields, with classical artists on one side and modern ones on the other. Thus, he is seen as supreme and worthy of praise even in paradise.

²² And in this place, Renaissance thinkers argued, were to be found all the great painters of antiquity—Apelles, of course being the supreme example. A poem by Nicholas Bourbon in praise of Holbein begins thusly: “One day Apelles wondered into the Elysian field / And Zeuxis and Parrhasius happened to be nearby” (String 116-18).

bring back the Golden Age of humankind.²³ Dulcinea thus echoes this desire. She becomes a state of mind, a yearned-for place. If the rest of the description is filled with commonplaces, this metaphor calls on the revivification of classical ideals.²⁴

It seems as if the knight has subtly triumphed over Vivaldo. First of all, he shows that a lineage forged in myth is more important than historical genealogies. Secondly, he sees in Dulcinea the fulfillment of a myth that impels his quest. Indeed, he hides a key classical image among commonplaces. But there is more. His whole speech begins by asserting that his lady actualizes all chimerical attributes of beauty. By evoking the chimera, Don Quixote is actually recalling a horrendous creature that appears along with Briareus as Aeneas and the Sybil seek to enter the underworld.²⁵ This monster has a lion's head, a tail that ends in a serpent's head, and a middle forged of a goat's body and head. Very much like the impossible attributes of a Petrarchan lady, the chimera is made of impossible parts that are put together. If one part of Dulcinea recalls the Elysian Fields, her figure as a whole may be nothing but a monster made up of disparate images that do not fit. The chimera arises out of Vivaldo's third degree, both protecting the knight and suggesting an anxious knight who is finding it impossible to create a beautiful woman out of his deranged imagination.

Arthur F. Kinney has argued that "What holds its various perspectives and elements of history and fiction together is the Don's willful act of the imagination" (272). I would add that in the case of Dulcinea, it is a mythical imagination at work. The mythical trumps the historical. The memory, even more than the imagination, is deployed

²³ The speech of the Golden Age the knight had already demonstrated his knowledge of classical minutiae when, on picking up an acorn, he begins his talk, acknowledging that it was a known foodstuff from that era.

²⁴ Lisa Rabin has shown, in many of these Petrarchan sonnets, the conquest of the lady is tied to the conquest of land and riches, thus becoming a metaphor for empire. Don Quixote must conquer and hold his ladylove since he is a knight that seeks to master a whole empire if not the whole world. Thus, he would paradoxically bring about peace and a new Golden Age.

²⁵ Avellaneda takes up the use of the chimera in chapter XIII of his 1614 continuation of Cervantes' novel.

against historical facts. Quixote hides a wealth of classical tales that serves as armor against those who would shake his forever fragile beliefs.

III. *Zeuxis and the Maidens* (I, 25-26)

In Sierra Morena, Don Quixote decides to do penance for his lady, much as he has read in books of chivalry. He tells Sancho that as his squire, he must then go and tell his beloved of the great suffering he is enduring. Long before this is to take place, the knight makes a mistake and reveals to Sancho the names of Dulcinea's parents, from which he gathers that Don Quixote is actually speaking of a peasant from his neighborhood named Aldonza Lorenzo. Delighted at this turn of events which he can fully understand and is not at all chivalric, Sancho begins to describe Aldonza. The knight is irked by Sancho's view of her as a manly woman whose voice is louder than any man's and whose ways are not at all those of a lady or even those of a peasant woman (I, 25, 201-2).²⁶ Furious at Sancho's third degree, Quixote claims that she is as he paints her in his own mind.²⁷ He claims that she surpasses the great women of antiquity: "Helen is not comparable to her nor is she excelled by Lucretia, or any other of the famous women of antiquity" (I, 25, 203).²⁸ Although this passage and what follows has already been commented in depth (De Armas, *Quixotic Frescoes* 170-188), I think it is important to review it, albeit briefly, in terms of the classical turn.

As we continue reading, we come to view yet another opposition since the knight does not know if he is to imitate Amadis, the faithful lover of Oriana in the chivalric romance, or Orlando the passionate lover of the not so faithful Angelica from Ariosto's *Orlando furioso*. It seems, then, that Don Quixote actually mentions four models for the ideal woman. This

²⁶ Carlos Mata Induráin asserts: "Así pues, Dulcinea se nos aparece aquí con su revés burlesco, Aldonza, formando un compuesto de perfección ideal y de carnal terrenalidad" (669).

²⁷ Javier Herrero asserts: "Don Quixote gives us a surprising insight into the workings of his mind, we hear him assert that he is aware that Dulcinea is in a certain way a creation of his will in order to make possible the world of adventure" (7).

²⁸ "y ni la llega Elena, ni la alcanza Lucrecia, ni otra de las famosas mujeres de las edades pretéritas" (1978: 1, 25, 314).

recalls the importance given by Cicero to the ability to imitate from a number of models. This principle is also found in classical art. From Pliny we learn that, when asked to paint the portrait of a beautiful woman for the temple of Juno in the city of Agrigento (in Sicily), the Greek painter Zeuxis chose five women as models. While Pliny does not specify the subject of the painting, Cicero in *De Inventione* asserts that Zeuxis was given his commission by the citizens from Croton. The Greek artist decides “to paint a picture of Helen so that the portrait though silent and lifeless might embody the surpassing beauty of womanhood” (Cicero II, 1, 167). Numerous paintings have sought to re-create this scene including François-André Vincent’s *Zeuxis choosing his Models for the Image of Helen from the Five Girls From Croton*.²⁹



François-André Vincent. *Zeuxis Choosing his Models for the Image of Helen from among the Girls of Croton*. 1789.

²⁹ *Zeuxis Choosing his Models for the Image of Helen from among the Girls of Croton*, by François-André Vincent (1789).

Furious at Sancho's third degree, the knight has come up with a series of images, the first being that of Helen. Instead of using five women of flesh and blood, to fashion his Dulcinea / Helen, Don Quixote takes four of them from art and literature, and adds a hidden model, Aldonza. Helen becomes that classical talisman that stops all discussion, "the face that launched a thousand ships / And burnt the topless towers of Ilium." (Marlowe 5.1.92-3). Don Quixote's allusion thus stops speculation on Aldonza by evoking the most famous of classical women. But in doing so, and hinting at five models for Dulcinea (two of which are from antiquity), he also brings up the notion of how to craft perfect beauty and how such an image may become monstrous.

Some versions of the Helen story even claim that she never went to Troy at all; that she was left in Egypt while the world became embroiled in war.³⁰ As an eidolon for war, Helen may well be an image of Dulcinea, her many parts reflecting the gruesome nature of warfare. As Renaissance artists began to study corpses and its parts, Zeuxis' image became even more apt.³¹ Harry Berger contends that Zeuxis' idea of imitation is based on the "principle of selective amputation" (238). Not only do we have a beauty made of others, but we intuit that the parts do not fit, that the knight has fashioned a disruptive figure, not far from Frankenstein's monster. Dulcinea may recall the most beautiful of women (Helen) and to a lesser extent, the most chaste of maidens (Lucretia), but in reality, she is a pagan eidolon and an icon of war.

³⁰ Matthew Gumpert explains: "The eidolon is the phantasm fashioned by the gods to provoke the Trojan War—a copy, that is, of the real Helen who, depending on the text and the particular version of the story may have spent the war in Egypt, or who may never have left Sparta at all" (12). More complete versions of the story can be located in Herodotus and in Euripides.

³¹ During the Renaissance Antonio Pollaiuolo may have been the first major artist to use dissection. We can almost see this in his *Battle of Naked Men* where it almost seems as if their skin has been peeled off. Leonardo and Michelangelo also used dissection. Harry Berger asserts: "Zeuxis metaphorically treats living women the same way the anatomist treats dead men (cadavers were normally—not always male)" (222).

IV. The Lost Eurydice (II, 8)

Let us recall that the knight had sent Sancho in an embassy to deliver a letter to her describing both his penance and his love. After having heard of Aldonza, Sancho realizes that he cannot find Dulcinea, since she does not exist. On his return, he evokes a lady who is closer to a peasant woman. Arthur F. Kinney explains: “When Sancho *lies* about Dulcinea on returning to the Don in Sierra Morena, he describes her in truthful terms—right down to her foul smell—and the Don in response *lies* about her perfection while asking Sancho to tell him the whole *truth*” (272). Truth and lies are so intermingled that the figure of Dulcinea becomes more and more disparate and monstrous. This conversation is taken up again in chapter 8 of Part Two as the pair journey to El Toboso, where the knight expects to find his lady’s palace. Don Quixote imagines the galleries and loggias of aristocratic architectures, with its gardens and iron grates. There, Dulcinea must be weaving tapestries. Sancho does not agree, and argues that she sieves or winnows wheat, and that she is covered in dust (II, 8, 515). Being pushed beyond his abilities to comprehend this kind of Dulcinea, the knight tells Sancho to remember some verses by Garcilaso: “our poet’s verses in which he describes the labours of those four nymphs, in their crystal mansions, when they raised their heads above the delightful Tagus, and seated themselves in the green meadow, to work those rich stuffs” (II, 8, 515).³² If Sancho did not see her thus, then enchanters must have transformed his vision.

Since Sancho has so pressed Don Quixote, it might be worth investigating the classical turn, what specific classical image or images serve as talismans to stop the squire. Don Quixote’s description of Garcilaso’s *Third Eclogue* is quite accurate. After one of the nymphs has discovered a pleasant spot on shore where the shade of trees can protect them from the sun, all four emerge from the river to enjoy the site. They carry with them their threads and tapestries, as each is weaving a different scene. All four are of tragic love affairs. Thus, these expansive lyrical verses, turn to death

³² “de nuestro poeta donde nos pinta las labores que hacían allá en sus moradas de cristal aquellas cuatro ninfas que del Tajo amado sacaron las cabezas y se sentaron a labrar en el prado verde aquellas ricas telas” (1978: II, 8, 94).

at every turn. And it is this classical turn that is used by the knight to both stop Sancho and subtly express his concern for the future of his love.³³ Perhaps the most poignant of the four tales is that of Orpheus, whose beloved, bitten by a snake, dies not long after they exchange vows of love. Even though Orpheus braves the underworld, he is not able to bring her to the light of day. Discussing the death of Eurydice in Garcilaso's poem, Mary Barnard calls it: "a drawing out of time to make the instant of dying a profound realm of its own, a passage of the beloved from life to colorless exile from the living; the gradual disappearance of the loved one from the lover's grasp" (319). In many ways, Don Quixote is beginning to experience the gradual disappearance of Dulcinea. He desperately needs to hear from her, sending Sancho to her. But the squire brings him only bad news, a Dulcinea that is not "true." The bright and brilliant colors which painted her in a Petrarchan manner are no longer with us. Now, the knight may be experiencing a strong foreboding that his search for his beloved will also end in disaster: that he will not be able to bring her out of El Toboso or disinter her from the depths of his tormented imagination.³⁴

³³ Filódoce weaves the myth of Eurydice; Dinámene draws the story of Apollo y Daphne; Climene envisions the tragic tale of Venus and Adonis; while Nise prefers to draw the present, the death of Elisa.

³⁴ Christian Gottlieb Kratzenstein's *Orpheus and Eurydice*, 1806, in the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen.



Christian Gottlieb Kratzenstein,
Orpheus and Eurydice, 1806,
in the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen.

V. Dulcinea Enchanted (II, 10)

Since there is no Dulcinea in Toboso, and the knight has ordered Sancho to bring her to him, the squire has to create an elaborate ruse. After all, he, like Don Quixote, has been subjected to the third degree. Is his invention, one based on the classics a way to mimic his master? Is he sufficiently clever to figure out Quixote's classical turn? Sancho points to three peasant women riding their donkeys as being Dulcinea and her two attendants. This episode is a masterful moment in which Cervantes creates a dramatic ekphrasis of Botticelli's *Primavera*. The three peasant women

replicate in a grotesque manner the three Graces dancing in the midst of the painting. The attention to detail in Cervantes' dramatic ekphrasis is quite striking. Sancho in his rustically exalted description of the peasants claims: "She and her damsels are one blaze of flaming gold; all strings of pearls and diamonds, all rubies, all cloth of tissue" (II, 10, 527).³⁵ The Spanish text emphasizes the brocade or rich design woven into the cloth of the imagined ladies, and as such it appears in the three Graces of Botticelli's painting. As for the pearls, diamonds and rubies, they appear in the jewels worn by the two Graces that face the spectator.

It is not my purpose here to describe the full ekphrasis and point to all the elements at play.³⁶ "Flowers and perfumes" point to Flora, goddess of flowers and springtime (II, 10, 510);³⁷ Zephyr, the west wind in the canvas becomes the wind that carries the three peasant ladies (II, 10, 530);³⁸ while portly Sancho is none other than the slender Mercury in the painting. As messenger of the gods, he is transformed into the squire. Indeed, at least three times in this chapter Sancho is described as messenger.

Mercury is known for his eloquence, and here he imparts some of that quality upon Sancho. But in spite of the squire's unusually poetic description and in spite of his ability to transform the quotidian into the extraordinary, Don Quixote does not react to the visual stimulus. Eric Auerbach considers this is a key episode, arguing that: "Don Quixote's ability to transform events to harmonize with his illusion breaks down before the crude vulgarity of the sight of the peasant women" (339). Whatever the reason, the knight cannot see. He has been pushed too far and he cannot shield himself from the third degree. He laments: "now some wicked enchanter persecutes me, spreading clouds or cataracts before my eyes" (II, 10, 529).³⁹ As his adventures continue, his ladylove will seem

³⁵ "Sus doncellas y ella toda son una ascua de oro, todo mazorcas de perlas, todas son diamantes, todas rubíes, todas telas de brocado" (1978: II, 10, 108).

³⁶ For a brief summary see De Armas ("Cervantes and Italian Renaissance Art" 52).

³⁷ "entre ámbares y flores" (1978: II, 10, 112).

³⁸ "they all fly like the wind" (II, 10, 530); "todas corren como el viento" (1978: II, 10, 111).

³⁹ "el maligno encantador me persigue, y ha puesto nubes y cataratas en mis ojos" (1978: II, 10, 110).

harder to attain or even visualize. The knight becomes more and more melancholic as he abandons hope that he will ever see his Dulcinea again.

VI. Dulcinea in the Underworld

Don Quixote does, however, see Dulcinea one final time. In chapter 22 of the second part, he experiences a dreadful adventure, the descent into the Cave of Montesinos. It all begins ominously. Tearing down brambles that impeded entrance to the cave, he witnessed “an infinite number of huge ravens” that flew away “and had he been as superstitious as he was Catholic, he would have taken it for an ill omen” (II, 22, 612).⁴⁰ The cave, as described by Cervantes, is accessed by a hole or chasm in the earth, and it is difficult to enter. Once inside, a visionary darkness envelops the adventurer. It is not surprising then that the title of chapter 23 warns “the greatness and impossibility of which make this adventure pass for apocryphal” (II, 23, 614).⁴¹ Inside, there are many figures that were once enchanted, waiting to be released. We need not discuss the many strange and grotesque happenings there. Only one group is important. Montesinos, the knight claims: “showed me three country wenches, who were dancing and capering like any kids about those charming fields” (II, 23, 620).⁴² The key words in Spanish are “saltando y brincando como cabras” (1978: II, 23, 221). Sancho had shown the knight three peasant women and named them as Dulcinea and her retinue. Now, the knight finds them in the cave, jumping like goats. The number three and the image of goats recall the chimera, a tripartite monster whose middle section is a goat. Don Quixote has returned with gusto to the classics, if only to take revenge on Sancho. Yes, the enchanted Dulcinea exists. He also seems to intuit that it is difficult to portray perfection from the depth of his deranged imagination. Indeed, as the prologue to Part One indicates, the book is but a whimsical

⁴⁰ “una infinidad de grandísimos cuervos y grajos [...] y si fuera él tan agorero como católico cristiano, lo tuviera a mala señal” (1978: II, 22, 209).

⁴¹ “cuya imposibilidad y grandeza hace que se tenga esta aventura por apócrifa” (1978: II, 23, 211).

⁴² “tres labradoras que por aquellos amenísimos campos iban saltando y brincando como cabras” (1978: II, 23, 220).

child of the author; and thus the author's characters can themselves only produce whimsical or even monstrous offspring.

VII. Veils and Sorrows (II, 32, 35)

When arriving at the Duke and Duchess's palace, Don Quixote begins to feel that he is finally being treated as a real knight—that there is hope. But little does he know that he is there for the aristocrats' amusement. Here he must answer the duchess's request for a verbal portrait of Dulcinea who is reputed to be “the fairest creature in the world and even in all La Mancha” (II, 32, 679)⁴³ The knight answers that such an endeavor must be left to the painters of old such as Apelles, Parrhasius and Timanthes; to the sculpting skills of Lysippus or to the rhetoric of Cicero and Demosthenes. The proliferation of classical artists and rhetoricians seems to no avail (or so it appears). As the conversation weaves back and forth between reality and the imagination, Quixote is more and more frustrated, no longer sure if there is a real Dulcinea. Seeking surer ground, he returns to the discussion he had with Sancho where he evoked Garcilaso's *Third Eclogue*. Curiously, the poem calls on two of the painters from antiquity that the knight had already mentioned: Apelles and Timanthes. The first is forever present in works of the period as the locus classicus. But why repeat the name of Timanthes? His most famous painting was the *Sacrifice of Iphigenia*. Here, he drew Agamemnon's daughter being taken to be sacrificed to the gods, and surrounded by those who mourned her fate, each expressing their sorrow. But such was the pain felt by her father, that the painter could not depict it. Thus, he covered Agamemnon's face with a veil.⁴⁴

⁴³ “la más bella criatura del orbe y aun de toda la Mancha” (1978: II, 32, 288). Notice how the duchess makes fun at the knight by equating the whole world with La Mancha, a little-known part of Spain.

⁴⁴ The fresco *The Sacrifice of Iphigenia* is perhaps based on C4th B.C. painting by Timanthes.



The Sacrifice of Ephigenia. C1st A.D.,
perhaps based on C4th B.C. painting by Timanthes.

As the knight recollects Dulcinea's enchantment, he repeatedly states that it is impossible to contemplate her visage. It is as if the enchanters have darkened the scene, or the dust from sieving wheat had obscured her countenance, or worse still, the knight's eyes had been clouded.⁴⁵ All three images suggest a kind of veil that covers Dulcinea. It is a veil akin to that conceived by Timanthes, one that makes the lady's great

⁴⁵ "el maligno encantador me persigue y ha puesto nubes y cataratas en mis ojos" (1978: II, 10, 110).

beauty invisible or phantasmal, and like the veil in the painting, it is associated with the greatest of sorrows. Timanthes' veil becomes the most apt response to the third degree and the sorrows of the knight. All can now be hidden.

Three chapters later, a series of chariots materialize in the night and surprise knight and squire. The penultimate carries Merlin, his head covered by a black veil, who asserts and prophesies that Dulcinea can be disenchanting, but only if Sancho Panza can sustain three thousand three hundred lashes by his own hand. As if continuing the motif of the veil, the last figure is a nymph "clad in a thousand veils of silver tissue, bespangled with numberless leaves of gold tinsel" (II, 35, 699).⁴⁶ These last words in the original read as "argentería de oro"—and we will return to them. As she removes her veil, she claims to be Dulcinea, hoping to be disenchanting. But this task is no longer assigned to Don Quixote, who loses protagonism. Sancho, not at all adept at discipline and suffering must do so. Thus, the knight is twice disappointed: he knows his squire will be incapable of such service, thus preserving Dulcinea's enchantment. And he no longer is the one to undo wrongs, thus being forced to become a passive figure.⁴⁷

We are left with a strangely new view of Dulcinea. First, her dress includes "hojas de argentería" and soon thereafter she is called the "argentada ninfa" (1978: II, 35, 315). The term nymph is preserved from Garcilaso's eclogue, but the adjective used does not belong to his poetry. It is true that he uses it once in his *Second Eclogue*.⁴⁸ However, it becomes a key term for the poetry of Góngora and his followers. In fact, it is used at the inception of his most famous poem, *Polifemo y Galatea*: "Donde espumoso el mar siciliano / el pie argenta de plata al Lilibeo" (vv. 25-26, 134). Here, a

⁴⁶ "vestida de mil velos de tela de plata, brillando por todos ellos infinitas hojas de argentería de oro" (1978: II, 35, 312).

⁴⁷ Agustín Redondo states: "Merlín desempeña un papel importante, desde este punto de vista. Es el que inspira indirectamente las predicciones de la primera parte y el que profetiza directamente en la segunda. Pero al desviar burlescamente la elección heroica en la persona de Sancho, va a provocar el derrumbamiento de las esperanzas del caballero quien no ha de conseguir ver a su dama desencantada. La trayectoria de don Quijote se invierte, pasando de la exaltación a la desilusión y al fracaso" (Redondo, *En busca del Quijote* 85).

⁴⁸ "El remo que descende en fuerza suma / mueve la blanca espuma como argento" (Garcilaso de la Vega 127, vv. 1498-99).

promontory named Lilibeo, on the eastern end of Sicily, is surrounded by the sea. Its blue color is transformed into silver / *argentum* as it strikes the foot of the hill. *Argentum*, as a neologism taken from the Latin, refers to silver. Góngora will use the verb repeatedly, while his follower, Villamediana is even more keen to utilize it. It was such a common mark for the new poetry's Latinized and precious style that, in his recipe on how to write Góngora's *Soledades* in one day, Quevedo tells his readers to use terms such as "palestra, liba, meta, argento, alterna, / si bien, disuelve, émulo, canoro" (1185). As Dulcinea moves to the court, then, she is taken over by the Duke and the Duchess and made to appear as part of the latest trends in poetry. Don Quixote becomes a mere spectator in these new and rather sadistic games played by the aristocrats. He can only envision her veiled, separated, almost invisible.

VIII. Holding the Hare

It is time to conclude with one final scene. Defeated by Sansón Carrasco in the beaches of Barcelona, the knight and his squire travel home. As they reach the village two events shake Don Quixote. First he hears two boys arguing (apparently over a cage of crickets), as one tells the other: "you shall never see it more while you live" (II, 73, 934).⁴⁹ Don Quixote takes this to be a perfect example of cledonomancy, the art by which words uttered by others should be applied to oneself.⁵⁰ Pedro Ciruelo and many others decried this method as a devilish superstition.⁵¹ Don Quixote, in spite of his own protestations, believes it: "the meaning is, I shall never see

⁴⁹ "no la has de ver en todos los días de tu vida" (1978: II, 73, 581).

⁵⁰ Cledonomancy may have originated with Pausinias who would ask the gods a question at the temple, then cover his ears, wait till he was outside, uncover them, and the first statement he would hear would be the gods' answer to his question.

⁵¹ "quando está el hombre con cuydado en algún negocio suyo y no sabe determinarse qué es lo que más le conviene hazer, acaesce que en aquella hora otro que passa por allí dize alguna palabra o haze alguna obra a otro propósito suyo y no pensando en el cuydado del otro. Viene el agorero vano y toma aquella palabra a su propósito y por ella se determina a lo que debe hazer, como si fuera palabra de Dios o de algún ángel que le quiso avisar de lo que devía hazer por la boca del otro hombre" (Ciruelo 93).

Dulcinea more” (II, 73, 934).⁵² Just then, a frightened hare comes running, pursued by hunting dogs. Don Quixote quickly interprets it, shouting twice “*Malum signum! Malum signum!*” (II, 73, 934; 1978: 73, 581). Steven Wagschal explains: “His rare use of Latin here combined with his unusually choppy syntax [. . .] sound oracular, harking back to a time when interpreting the symbolic meaning of animals was customary” (22). At a moment of desperation, he unwittingly reveals his knowledge of classical divination. In fact, he becomes the diviner, a kind of roman Augur. This flicker of ancient knowledge soon vanishes.

Sancho, seeking to mend the situation in Don Quixote’s favor, picks up the hare and hands it to the knight: “let us suppose now that this hare is Dulcinea del Toboso and these dogs that pursue her, those wicked enchanters who transformed her into a country-wench: she flies, I catch her, and put her into your worship’s hands, who have her in your arms and make much of her” (II, 73, 934).⁵³ We thus have a tender scene of love: the hare, symbol of Venus, the enchanted Dulcinea, now in Don Quixote’s arms.⁵⁴

⁵² “quiere significar que no tengo de ver más a Dulcinea?” (1978: II, 73, 581).

⁵³ “presupongamos que esta liebre es Dulcinea del Toboso y estos galgos que la persiguen son los malandrines encantadores que la transformaron en labradora; ella huye, yo la cojo y la pongo en poder de vuesa merced, que la tiene en sus brazos y la regala” (1978: II, 73, 581).

⁵⁴ In recent years, a number of critics have turned to this moment. Riley equates the hare with Dulcinea (161-74); Redondo relates it to the procession of the dead (*estantigua*) (*Otra manera de leer el Quijote* 101-19); and D’Onofrio points to “los sentimientos de debilidad y menoscabo de don Quijote vencido y melancólico” (229). Some have even argued that the hare is an image of the soul before death and is thus an image of the knight’s future: “Diego de Yepes acude a la anécdota de la liebre que busca refugio bajo las ancas de caballo de san Anselmo de Canterbury (1033-1109) para ilustrar un pasaje relativo al bien morir [. . .] Ahí empieza, en este san Anselmo de Canterbury, la comparación del peligro de la liebre con el del alma en el trance de la muerte, merodeada de demonios y en necesidad de amparo y socorro” (Layna Ranz 240-41). There are many other saints that grant refuge to the hare: “San Martín de Tours, san Marculfo, san Bernardo, san Anselmo, san Juan de la Cruz [. . .] santos que dan una orden para evitar el acoso a la liebre” (242).

Sancho hands back to Don Quixote a classical image of love. The squire no longer presses the knight to stop imagining. He is not giving him the third degree. Instead, he asks him to see the frightened animal for what it is and may be. There is a chance that the knight will react, that he will fight those that come to take away this frightened creature, his beloved. But such is not the case. The outcome is told in one cruelly sparse statement: “The hunters came up, and demanded their hare, and Don Quixote gave it them” (II, 73, 935).⁵⁵ The knight abandons the hare to the devilish hunters without even thinking. He is so consumed by his grief, that he cannot even consider redemption.

His new form of redemption soon becomes obvious: “They went on their way, and, at the entrance of their village, in a little meadow, they found the priest, and the bachelor Sampson Carrasco, reading their breviaries” (II, 73, 935).⁵⁶ This is the final and true sign. Don Quixote no longer gazes into the horizon searching for adventure. His many moments of exalted imaginings have come to naught. Maybe Dulcinea was a way to Elysium, a way to bring back the Golden Age of humankind; or maybe she was the beautiful but wanton Helen that led to war. Perhaps he could have saved her from the enchanters and brought her back to life as a new Eurydice. A corporeal woman she never was. But even if she were only a chimera, a whimsical creature of his imagination, filled with contradictions, she was his creation and he cared for her as much as he cherished his most exalted ideals.

Only Sancho, in the end, by having Don Quixote hold the hare in his hands, had sought to bring affection and corporality to an idea. But this was not even considered. Beauty, however alluring, majestic or monstrous, was no longer to be yearned for in this world. As the reader closes the book on the life of Don Quixote, only the breviaries of the knight’s “frenemies” remain open; only their prayers to contain the knight are the ones to be heard. Of the classical world, nothing remains—only our astonishment at how this gentleman from La Mancha, a reader of chivalric books, while

⁵⁵ “Llegaron los cazadores, pidieron su liebre, y dióselo don Quijote” (1978: II, 73, 582).

⁵⁶ “y a la entrada del pueblo toparon en un pradecillo rezando al cura y al bachiller Carrasco” (1978: II, 73, 582).

wanting to be a knight, carefully hid a remarkable knowledge of antiquity, exhibiting it as a weapon against those who innocently or maliciously would want him to desist; would not want him to look beyond a small village in La Mancha.

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Don Polindo, Don Quixote, and Cervantes's Transformation of the
Knight Errant to an Erring Knight

William Worden
University of Alabama

The most influential book of chivalry produced in Spain during the sixteenth century was undoubtedly Garci Rodríguez de Montalvo's version of *Amadís de Gaula* published in 1508. As Daniel Eisenberg explains: "It would be difficult to exaggerate the popularity of Montalvo's *Amadís* in sixteenth-century Spain. It had far and away the largest number of editions and copies printed, and has been, from its publication, the most widely read Spanish romance of chivalry, a distinction which it holds through the present day" (31). *Amadís de Gaula* was originally a medieval text that, as Montalvo notes in the prologue to his 1508 edition, he amended and then continued, writing both the fourth book of the original *Amadís* and then *Sergas de Esplandián* (published in 1510), a fifth book that recounts the adventures of Amadís's son. Deftly combining truth and fiction in the *Amadís* Prologue, Montalvo explains his efforts by first noting accurately that his work has consisted of "corrigiendo estos tres libros de Amadís, que por falta de los malos escritores o componedores muy corruptos y viciosos se léyan, y trasladando y enmendando el libro quarto con *Las Sergas de Esplandián*, su hijo," before quite inventively adding that *Esplandián* "por gran dicha pareció en una tumba de piedra que debaxo de la tierra, en una hermita cerca de Constantinopla, fue hallada y tráydo por un úngaro mercadero a estas partes de España, en letra y pargamino tan antiguo que con mucho trabajo se pudo leer por aquellos que la lengua sabían" (5). Even in his Prologue, then, Montalvo is already setting the stage for the fantastic tale that is to follow, one that is replete with exotic locales and extraordinary adventures.

The publication of *Amadís* and *Esplandián* sparked a boom in what Montalvo termed "hystorias fengidas."¹ Readers of the time were entranced by the texts and desirous of enjoying more chivalric tales. Moreover, before long other authors became interested in following the example offered by

¹ Montalvo writes of "las hystorias fengidas, en que se hallan las cosas admirables fuera de la orden de natura, que más por nombre de patrañas que de crónicas con mucha razón deven ser tenidas y llamadas" (Prologue 5).

Montalvo's *Esplandián*, and decided to write their own continuations of the adventures of the descendants of Amadís. As a result, between 1510 and 1551 eight other books of chivalry continuing the stories of the progeny of Amadís were published in Spain.² The other great family of sixteenth-century chivalric works began with the publication of *Palmerín de Olivia* in 1511, which was followed by *Primaleón* (1512) and *Platir* (1533) in Spain, and by *Palmerín de Inglaterra* in 1547 as well as several Portuguese and Italian continuations.³ The renown of these two families of chivalric works is evidenced in the first chapter of the first part of *Don Quixote*, where we learn that the work's protagonist "[t]uvo muchas veces competencia con el cura de su lugar –que era hombre docto, graduado en Cigüenza– sobre cuál había sido mejor caballero: Palmerín de Inglaterra o Amadís de Gaula" (I.1;38-9).⁴

Not every Spanish book of chivalry in the sixteenth century, of course, gained the fame or readership achieved by those that formed the *Amadís* and the *Palmerín* cycles. And even within those two families of works, later books were generally not as highly regarded by readers as earlier ones, with the notable exception of *Palmerín de Inglaterra*, a work that is greatly praised by the Priest during the investigation of Don Quixote's library.⁵ Referring to these two cycles in his study titled *Spanish and Portuguese Romances of Chivalry*, Henry Thomas writes:

² Continuations in the *Amadís* cycle after *Esplandián* include *Florisando* (1510); *Lisuarte de Grecia* by Feliciano de Silva (1514); *Lisuarte de Grecia* by Juan Díaz (1526); *Amadís de Grecia* (1530); *Florisel de Niquea* [Parts I and II] (1532); *Florisel de Niquea* [Part III; Part I of *Rogel de Grecia*] (1535); *Silves de la Selva* (1546); and *Florisel de Niquea* [Part IV; Part II of *Rogel de Grecia*] (1551) (Pellegrino and Coduras Bruna 152).

³ *Palmerín de Inglaterra* is the Spanish translation of the original Portuguese work titled *Palmeirim de Inglaterra*. Chapter 3 of Henry Thomas's study, titled "The *Palmerín* Romances," discusses the Spanish and Portuguese works in the cycle (84-118). Information on *Palmerín's* Italian continuations can be found at www.mambrino.it/spagnole/palmerin.php, a website that forms part of the *Progetto Mambruno* initiative that studies Italian books of chivalry in the sixteenth century.

⁴ All citations of *Don Quixote* refer to Francisco Rico's 1998 edition of the work.

⁵ With reference to *Palmerín de Inglaterra* the Priest exclaims: "esa palma de Inglaterra se guarde y se conserve como a cosa única, y se haga para ello otra caja como la que halló Alejandro en los despojos de Dario, que la diputó para guardar en ella las obras del poeta Homero" (I.5;81-2). Most readers agree that *Palmerín de Inglaterra* is the best work of that cycle.

The initial success which made such large families possible led to the formation of a few smaller groups, and the gradual accumulation of a number of isolated romances. All these are frank imitations, and like the later books of the *Amadis* and *Palmerin* series, they reproduce the most striking features of the original founders, with less success in copying their merits than in exaggerating their defects. (119)

One such “isolated romance,” an anonymous book of chivalry published in Toledo in 1526 titled *Historia del invencible cavallero don Polindo*, is the focus of the present essay. This rarely studied chivalric text recounts—over its one hundred and one chapters—the adventures of Don Polindo, son of King Paciano and Queen Polimira of Numidia, who throughout the work alternates between fighting numerous battles accompanied by his squire Lavinio and demonstrating his love for Belisia, Princess of Macedonia. As one would expect in a book of chivalry, its pages are filled with castles, enchanters, tournaments, love letters, magic of all kinds, and seemingly endless battles against giants, evil knights, and a variety of fantastic beasts. Though at several points in *Polindo* the narrator refers to a continuation of the work, there is no evidence that a sequel to the 1526 text was ever published.

Since its publication almost five centuries ago, *Polindo* has rarely been the subject of critical analysis, and the scant attention it has garnered by critics, as we will see, has been mostly negative. After briefly reviewing past critical estimations of the work, I’d like to offer some observations on the style employed by the work’s anonymous author and then compare aspects of Polindo’s adventures with those undertaken by Don Quixote. We are told in the first chapter of 1605 text that Cervantes’s protagonist “vino a perder el juicio” because his mind was filled with “la fantasía de todo aquello que leía en los libros, así de encantamientos como de pendencias, batallas, desafíos, heridas, requiebros, amores, tormentas y disparates imposibles” (I.1;39), all elements found in abundance in the work that recounts Don Polindo’s adventures. My purpose in these pages is not to claim that Cervantes definitely read *Polindo* and was influenced by it, but rather to use the 1526 text as an example of the kind of book of chivalry with which both Alonso Quijano and readers of *Don Quixote* were familiar as they approached Cervantes’s work. Comparing Don Polindo’s adventures with those of Don

Don Polindo, Don Quixote, and Cervantes's Transformation of
the Knight Errant to an Erring Knight

Quixote will help us better understand how Cervantes parodied the “hystorias fengidas” that so enchant Alonso Quijano. Those same readers of *Polindo* who saw the book's title character as a model knight errant would have also perceived the protagonist of Cervantes's chivalric work as his parodic inversion: an erring knight.

Polindo and Its (Few) Critics

Because the name Polindo is similar to Polendos, one of the sons of Palmerín de Olivia, for a long time critics (without actually bothering to read the 1526 text) thought that *Polindo* formed part of the *Palmerín* cycle.⁶ Moreover, up until the past thirty years, those few critics who did discuss the work did not treat it kindly. In his 1904 monograph on *Palmerín of England*, for example, William Edward Purser writes:

Don Polindo is one of the worst of its [sic] class. It has nothing to commend it, except that it contains a few strange words which might possibly interest the philologist. The style is very unequal. In places the author heaps up augmentatives, as Ferrer does in *Palmerín of England*; in others, the language is so inflated that, as life is short, I passed on without knowing what was meant. (438)

Purser goes on to complain about both the way the work is written and its content, asserting that in places “the style is homely” (438) and highlighting the ridiculous nature of several of Don Polindo's adventures.⁷ This negative view of the anonymous work's literary qualities is echoed in 1920 when Henry Thomas writes of *Polindo*: “It is devoid of merit, and the second part it promises has rightly remained unpublished” (144).

⁶ Marín Pina's article offers a detailed description of what she terms the “confusión crítica” that resulted from incorrectly considering *Polindo* to be part of the *Palmerín* family of works (88-91).

⁷ “Some of the incidents are outrageously absurd, as when an army is routed by more than ten thousand lions that rush out of a castle (f. 35. v.); the hero and a companion drive fifteen hundred knights out of the lists (f. 106); he raises a mace four men could hardly lift (f. 77); a giant is introduced thirty feet high and twelve broad (f. 139, v.); and so on” (Purser 438).

After centuries of being misunderstood, disparaged, and most often ignored, *Polindo* finally received some positive critical attention between 1989 and 2004 when the book of chivalry served as the subject of three major academic studies. In 1989 María Carmen Marín Pina, who consulted the copy of *Polindo* housed in the British Library,⁸ published an insightful article titled “La recreación de los modelos narrativos caballerescos en *La historia del invencible cavallero don Polindo* (Toledo, 1526).” This quite helpful study provides a detailed discussion of the history of the book’s incorrect inclusion as a part of the *Palmerín* cycle, presents an overview of the work’s plot, and offers some observations on the work’s narration. Marín Pina makes clear in her essay that *Polindo* was not widely read in the sixteenth century,⁹ but—unlike previous critics—does not dismiss the work’s quality entirely. Instead, she offers a more nuanced view of the anonymous author’s efforts, opining: “Evidentemente, la calidad de la obra no es ni mucho menos extraordinaria, pero tampoco es menor que la de otros libros del género que por las mismas fechas se publicaron para saciar una creciente demanda social” (97-8). In terms of a possible relationship between the anonymous work and *Don Quixote*, Marín Pina first explains that there is no concrete evidence that Cervantes knew *Polindo*, but also adds: “Es posible, sin embargo, que [Cervantes] pudiera tener noticia del mismo e incluso que lo hubiera leído” (88).

The second—and most important—step in making *Polindo* more known to modern readers occurred in 2003 with the release of Manuel Calderón Calderón’s edition of the work published by the Centro de Estudios Cervantinos as part of their “Libros de Rocinante” collection dedicated to producing modern editions of Spanish books of chivalry. The first subtitle

⁸ Copies of the original 1526 edition of *Polindo* can be found at the British Library, the Biblioteca José Mindlin in Río de Janeiro, the Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal, and the Newberry Library in Chicago (Suárez 97). *Polindo* first came to my attention when I came across the copy of it housed in the Newberry Library.

⁹ Of the book’s “escasa acogida” among early-modern readers after its 1526 publication, Marín Pina writes: “[s]u parca historia editorial lo corrobora plenamente, pues la obra no conoció ninguna otra reedición, así como tampoco la continuación tantas veces prometida, ni ninguna traducción a otro idioma como era usual en otros muchos libros del género. Su paso por el panorama caballeresco peninsular fue, pues, relativamente discreto y pocas veces se esgrimió su título entre los moralistas y críticos de la época” (88).

of the Introduction to this extremely useful edition is quite appropriately titled “Un libro mal conocido” (IX). The edition’s extensive introduction goes on to discuss various aspects of *Polindo* including its structure and plot; the possible intention of its author; the courtly culture depicted in the work; the social function of the knight errant; and the work’s narration, which shows influences of the idealistic “modelos y motivos narrativos” that pervade *Amadís* and *Palmerín* as well as the more realistic tendencies found in *Tirant lo Blanc* (XXXIII). Of the relationship between *Polindo* and *Don Quixote*, Calderón Calderón points out the following: both works have a character known as “Caballero de los Espejos;” like Don Polindo, Don Quixote insists that he is “hijo de sus obras;” *Polindo* has an underground episode that shares some similarities with Don Quixote’s adventure in the Cave of Montesinos and both works have an “aventura del cuerpo muerto;” both narrations weave episodes focusing on secondary characters into the main plot; and some words spoken by the Queen of Tesalia share a resemblance to “las palabras de Marcela en el *Quijote* I, 14” (XXXIV). After highlighting a number of errors made by the anonymous author,¹⁰ Calderón Calderón concludes that there are indeed a number of positive aspects of the work:

En suma, el *Polindo* es un libro de caballerías interesante por varias razones. En él influyen dos tradiciones: la amadisiana y la tirantiana; explota por primera vez en los libros de caballerías españoles la mitología como material novelesco; ofrece abundantes materiales sobre la cultura cortesana –entradas reales, hechos de armas, torneos e invenciones–, así como antecedentes de algunos motivos del *Quijote*; y combina el estilo retórico de las cartas de batalla y de amor con el coloquial y costumbrista de otros episodios. (XXXV)

The third of the recent critical works focused on the anonymous text is *Polindo: Guía de lectura*, written by Juan Luis Suárez and published in 2004 by the Centro de Estudios Cervantinos. This guide includes a detailed chapter

¹⁰ The editor notes: “Confunde a Bracidón no sólo con Bransidio (cap. 33), sino con Arbuto y Cecibón (cap. 34), lo cual es imposible porque Bracidón había muerto en el cap. 20. En los capítulos 34 y 35, Farmentes y el Conde de Osuna están presos, según el narrador, y muertos según don Polindo” (XV), and then continues pointing out several more textual incongruences.

by chapter summary of the work's plot, a dictionary of characters and places, a list of terms used in the work, *Polindo's* table of contents, and a bibliography. Since the very good work done by the three aforementioned critics between 1989 and 2004, no further studies on *Polindo* have been published. It is my hope that the observations in this essay might help spur others to undertake further research projects based on this often-ignored but quite interesting book of chivalry.

The Anonymous Author's Readings

In terms of texts that would have informed the writing of *Polindo*, it's quite clear that the work's author was intimately acquainted with the genre of books of chivalry. In this regard Marín Pina writes:

el libro toledano es una caja de resonancias, donde se escuchan orquestados los más variados ecos de la narrativa caballeresca anterior. El autor demuestra conocer las convenciones del género y haber asimilado los modelos narrativos amadisianos (*Amadís de Gaula*, *Las Sergas de Esplandián* y *Lisuarte de Grecia*) y palmerianos (*Palmerín de Olivia* y *Primalción*) en circulación. (94)

Beyond knowledge of previous chivalric works, the author was also most certainly familiar with Jorge de Manrique's "Coplas por la muerte de su padre" (written around 1476, published in 1494), and with *Cárcel de Amor* (published in 1492), the most widely read of the sentimental romances. Manrique's poem begins, of course, with these well-known verses: "Recuerde el alma dormida, / abive el seso e despierte, / contemplando / cómo se passa la vida, / cómo se viene la muerte, / tan callando" (147-8), and continues by noting that death comes to everyone: "a papas y emperadores / e perlados, / así los trata la muerte / como a los pobres pastores / de ganados" (157). When speaking to his friend Don Claribeo, who is the Prince of England, Don Polindo asks: "¿Pues si consideramos cómo esta vida tan callando se passa e la muerte se nos acerca? Un día, trayendo grandes galas e invenciones e otro día somos llamados de aquella cruel muerte que a nadie perdona" (183). As for *Cárcel de Amor*, in the first "Carta de Liriano a Laureola" the protagonist explains the process by which he has fallen in love, writing: "tu hermosura causó el afición, y el afición el deseo, y el deseo la pena, y la pena

el atrevimiento, y si porque lo hize te pareciere que merezco muerte, mándamela dar, que muy mejor es morir por tu causa que bevir sin tu esperança” (99), words that are echoed in the first “Carta del príncipe don Polindo a la princesa Belisia,” in which the knight errant writes: “tu fermosura causó mi afición y el afición, mi ossar. E si por lo fazer meresco pena, mándamela dar; que más quiero con la gloria morir que sin remedio vivir” (50). The anonymous author's readings clearly extended beyond chivalric works to both poetry and the sentimental romance. Let us now consider the ways in which Cervantes employs the style used in texts like *Polindo* in composing his burlesque version of a book of chivalry.

Mythological Sunrises

The protagonist of *Don Quixote*, a great reader of books of chivalry, has a refined sense of how chivalric works are composed. As he leaves home at the start of the second chapter Don Quixote imagines how his own chronicler will recount this very first of what he is sure will be many great adventures. Speaking to himself as he begins this first sally, the self-proclaimed knight errant composes in his mind what he envisions this chronicler will write, saying:

Apenas había el rubicundo Apolo tendido por la faz de la ancha y espaciosa tierra las doradas hebras de sus hermosos cabellos, y apenas los pequeños y pintados pajarillos con sus harpadas lenguas habían saludado con dulce y meliflua armonía la venida de la rosada aurora, que, dejando la blanda cama del celoso marido, por las puertas y balcones del manchego horizonte a los mortales se mostraba, cuando el famoso caballero don Quijote de la Mancha, dejando las ociosas plumas, subió sobre su famoso caballo Rocinante y comenzó a caminar por el antiguo y conocido campo de Montiel. (I.2;46-7)

It is instructive to consider here not just the action that is taking place, but also the way in which Don Quixote imagines it will be written. What is emphasized in the protagonist's rendering is not so much the concrete details of what happens—Don Quixote wakes up, mounts Rocinante, and commences his travels through La Mancha—but rather the mythological description of the sunrise that precedes these actions, complete with the god

of the sun, florid language, and singing birds. This kind of detailed depiction of day's first light is quite often found in books of chivalry, making Don Quixote's imagined opening of the chronicle of his adventures stylistically of a piece with the descriptions found in other chivalric texts.

The anonymous author of *Polindo* offers several examples of just the kind of prose that inspires Don Quixote's literary imagination here.¹¹ The first chapter of the 1526 text, for example, begins:

Cuando en aquel tiempo que más la fermosa Platona sus encorvados cuernos hinchendo e su linda redondez con aquella aureada color <que> a la escura tiniebla da claridad; e cuando aquel Apolo, padre del triste Faetón, el curso del cielo rodea estando en el gemíneo signo que a la natura humana cálida hace, con la fermosura del florido campo [...]. (5)

Similarly, Chapter 18 begins:

Cuando aquel lucido Febo la escuridad de la noche aumentando con sus claros rayos el universo alumbrava, se levantó de su lecho el noble don Polindo e vistiéndose de ricas ropas donde su continua divisa de la sierpe llevaba, <e> así se fue alegre al gran palacio donde el rey con sus altos hombres estava, que en Consejo quería entrar. (50)

Both of these chapter descriptions are the kind of prose that inspires Don Quixote as he begins his first sally.¹² Like Don Quixote, Cide Hamete

¹¹ Marín Pina notes four examples of *Polindo* chapters that begin with mythological sunrises. She also points out that the prolific Feliciano de Silva was one of the authors of chivalric texts who liked to begin chapters with “amaneceres mitológicos” (97). Other critics who have mentioned mythological sunrises in *Polindo* include Calderón Calderón (XXVI) and Martín Romero (109).

¹² Further examples of mythological sunrises in *Polindo* can be found at the start of Chapter 47: “Cuando los rayos del clarífico Febo la escura sombra de la noche del orbe mundano alcançavan; cuando las brutas animalias, cada una desperezándose del sueño, comunican cada una con su natural, las aves con su dulce canto alabando al que las crió ...” (136), and at the start of Chapter 68: “Como ya la hermosa Platona, que las noches con su resplandeciente claridad alumbrava, oviesse ya su redondo cuerno hasta la meitad crescido, que es en aquel tiempo que los

Don Polindo, Don Quixote, and Cervantes's Transformation of
the Knight Errant to an Erring Knight

Benengeli himself includes a detailed description of the sunrise in his narration. As the conversation between Sancho and the squire of the Knight of the Mirrors draws to a close in the 1615 text, the Moorish historian writes:

En esto, ya comenzaban a gorjear en los árboles mil suertes de pintados pajarillos, y en sus diversos y alegres cantos parecía que daban la norabuena y saludaban a la fresca aurora, que ya por las puertas y balcones del Oriente iba descubriendo la hermosura de su rostro, sacudiendo de sus cabellos un número infinito de líquidas perlas, en cuyo suave licor bañándose las yerbas, [...]. (II.14;740)

As narrators, both Alonso Quijano and Cide Hamete Benengeli follow in the stylistic tradition of previous chivalric writers like *Polindo's* anonymous author.

Castles and Giants

In Chapter 2 of the 1605 text the narration explains Don Quixote's way of understanding the world and its implications for his travels in La Mancha: "como a nuestro aventurero todo cuanto pensaba, veía o imaginaba le parecía ser hecho y pasar al modo de lo que había leído, luego que vio la venta se le representó que era un castillo." The text soon adds that there is even more going on in our protagonist's mind: "Fuése llegando a la venta que a él le parecía castillo, y a poco trecho della detuvo las riendas a Rocinante, esperando que algún enano se pusiese entre las almenas a dar señal con alguna trompeta de que llegaba caballero al castillo" (I.2;49). Though a reader could quite reasonably laugh at Don Quixote's fanciful imagination at this early stage of the novel, this episode, in fact, provides concrete evidence that what the protagonist thinks, sees, and imagines is indeed based on "lo que había leído." Consider what happens to Don Polindo, in a scene like many others found in chivalric works, as he goes in search of the evil giant Lergeso: "E no ovo mucho por el camino andado cuando a un hermoso castillo fue a dar. Y como le vio, dio más prisa a su caballo. E allegó donde una cerca estava. E luego un enano que a la puerta

enamorados sirven a sus señoras con estramados servicios; y cuando el amenguado Sol más a la Tierra dava calor ..." (177).

estava tañó muy fuerte un cuerno” (260). While seeing castles that are not castles, and anticipating horns and dwarfs where there are none, does give an indication of Don Quixote’s madness, the knight’s imaginings also show him to be an adept reader of books of chivalry.

Much like castles, giants are a fundamental presence in Don Quixote’s imagined existence. When Cervantes’s protagonist returns home badly injured after his first sally, his housekeeper immediately suspects what has happened, announcing: “¡Malditos, digo, sean otra vez y otras ciento estos libros de caballerías, que tal han parado a vuestra merced!” In explaining what has happened to him, the new knight errant explains “que todo era molimiento, por haber dado una gran caída con Rocinante, su caballo, combatiéndose con diez jayanes, los más desaforados y atrevidos que se pudieron fallar en gran parte de la tierra.” Upon hearing this, the Priest first quips: “¿Jayanes hay en la danza?” and then, like the housekeeper, comes to the conclusion that books of chivalry are to blame for his friend’s madness, adding “que yo los quemé mañana antes que llegue la noche” (I.5;76). Don Quixote, who knows from his readings that knights errant quite often prove their courage and their strength by battling giants, has his most famous adventure when he tilts at “treinta o cuarenta molinos de viento” that for him, as he insists to a doubtful Sancho, “son gigantes” (I.8;94-5). As is typical in a book of chivalry, giants appear in episode after episode throughout the 1526 work. Polindo’s father, King Paciano, is known as the Caballero del Jayán, and his son shows no hesitation in battling giants time and again. Suárez’s *Polindo: Guía de lectura* gives the names of eleven giants that appear in the work, in addition to the twelve Jayanes de Pasmaria, and two giantesses; in addition to these, the book also features numerous unnamed giants. Perhaps Polindo’s success in defeating giants is best portrayed in Chapter 66 when the narration describes a grand tournament that is about to take place; among the participants at the tournament: “vinieron del reino de Pasmaria doze jayanes de gran esfuerço. Y estos vinían por matar a don Polindo, aviendo oído la nombradía de su fama, que avía muerto muchos jayanes” (185). Knights like Don Polindo, and their many successes in battling giants, most certainly serve as models for Don Quixote. Cervantes’s protagonist is so sure that he, like Polindo, will slay numerous giants that he is not surprised when his enemies are transformed into windmills. His explanation to Sancho highlights his certainty that he would have vanquished his massive foes:

Don Polindo, Don Quixote, and Cervantes's Transformation of
the Knight Errant to an Erring Knight

“aquel sabio Frestón que me robó el aposento y los libros ha vuelto estos gigantes en molinos, por quitarme la gloria de su vencimiento” (I.8;96).

Fame and Love

In the first part of the novel after considering “cuán poco se gana y granjea de andar buscando estas aventuras que vuestra merced busca por estos desiertos y encrucijadas de caminos,” Sancho suggests to his master that it would be better “si fuésemos a servir algún emperador o a otro príncipe grande que [...] por fuerza nos ha de remunerar a cada cual según sus méritos.” Don Quixote agrees with Sancho, but explains that first:

es menester andar por el mundo, como en aprobación, buscando las aventuras, para que acabando algunas se cobre nombre y fama tal, que cuando se fuere a la corte de algún gran monarca ya sea el caballero conocido por sus obras, y que apenas le hayan visto entrar los muchachos por la puerta de la ciudad, cuando todos le sigan y rodeen dando voces, diciendo: «Este es el Caballero del Sol», o de la Sierpe, o de otra insignia alguna, debajo de la cual hubiere acabado grandes hazañas. (I.21;228-9)

Don Polindo himself is known throughout the 1526 work as the Caballero de la Sierpe,¹³ and the renown he achieves in *Polindo* is typical of that achieved by his counterparts in books of chivalry. Indeed, the way in which Don Polindo's feats become celebrated in the work dedicated to his adventures gives an indication of how Cervantes's protagonist would likewise expect his “nombre y fama” to spread throughout La Mancha and beyond. Don Polindo's exploits begin to attract notice in an early chapter after he slays a

¹³ Don Polindo is just one of several literary knights known as El Caballero de la Sierpe. In his extensively commented edition of *Don Quixote*, Diego Clemencín notes: “El Caballero de la *Sierpe* era Palmerín de Oliva, que tomó este nombre por la que mató en la montaña Artifaria, al ir a buscar el agua de la fuente que guardaba la Sierpe, y con la cual debía sanar y sanó su abuelo Primaleón, Rey de Macedonia (*Palmerín de Oliva*, cap. XX)” (1183). El Caballero de la Sierpe is also a name that appears in *Cirongilio de Tracia*, published in 1545.

cruel giant named Bransidio el Enojado, whose nephews he had already slain. Of the knight's success in defeating his enemies, the narrator explains:

Tanto volava por estas partes el esfuerço de don Polindo, y más por la muerte de Bransidio e sus dos sobrinos, que en todas aquellas partes no se hablava de otra cosa sino de don Polindo. (35)

When Don Polindo later visits the city of Paris, the Prince of France welcomes him by saying: “Bienaventurado cavallero, bien publicada está la fama de vuestra nobleza por el mundo” (82). In a later episode a squire who needs Don Polindo's help to free his master explains to the knight: “Señor, aqueste es el castillo donde mi señor está preso. Por esso, hazé tanto que vuestra bondad sea más loada; que la fama de vuestras obras más vuele por el mundo, dando testimonio de lo que, señor, ay en vós” (112). The fame of Don Polindo does indeed grow and news of his heroic actions spreads around the world. Near the end of *Polindo*, after the protagonist has killed the giant Lergeso and is on his way to Macedonia with other valiant knights, the narration explains: “Y por las provincias y reinos que ivan publicavan las extrañezas en armas del invencible don Polindo. Por lo cual esta gran fama por todo el mundo bolava” (262). The fame achieved by knights errant like Polindo is the kind that Don Quixote fully expects for himself as well when he begins his adventures and, in fact, later believes he has achieved as a result of his exploits. When he meets Don Álvaro Tarfe, a character who first appears in the false *Quixote*, Cervantes's protagonist takes pains to distinguish himself from Avellaneda's creation, explaining: “yo soy don Quijote de la Mancha, el mismo que dice la fama” (II.72;1207).

As for the presence of love in *Don Quixote*, in the very first chapter the work's protagonist cleans his armor, names his horse, names himself, and realizes that “no le faltaba otra cosa sino buscar una dama de quien enamorarse, porque el caballero andante sin amores era árbol sin hojas y sin fruto y cuerpo sin alma” (I.1;43). What is striking in *Polindo* is not simply how important love is as a motivator of action, but also how quickly knights fall in love. *Polindo*, like *Amadís de Gaula*, begins by describing how the protagonist's parents meet. Soon after the work begins, Polindo's father, King Paciano, meets Polimira, who soon will be his wife. The text in the very first chapter explains:

Don Polindo, Don Quixote, and Cervantes's Transformation of
the Knight Errant to an Erring Knight

En este comedio, vino la reina e consigo traía a la infanta Polimira, la cual era la más vella que jamás Paciano avía visto. Y como así la vio, en aquella ora no fue más en su libre libertad. Que en aquel punto fue preso del amor de la infanta Polimira, qu'él parte de sí mismo no era. (9)

Don Polindo himself is born in Chapter 6, grows up with the Hadas de la Clara Fuente—who have kidnapped him from his parents—and eventually returns to his parents' kingdom and is knighted by his father, who does not realize that Don Polindo is his son. Before long Polindo's identity is revealed to his parents, and the young knight begins fighting giants and evildoers. In Chapter 14 the protagonist meets Belisia, and the two fall madly in love at first sight. As for Belisia's feelings for Don Polindo: "Como le vido tan hermoso e tan gentil hombre, le pareció que una saeta le había traspasado el corazón." Don Polindo, for his part, is treated very well in the castle, "[m]as todo no le era nada para su querer sino mirar aquella en quien su vida pendía. E nunca su pensamiento de ella se apartava. Y con aquesto se esforçava él para querer tomar aquella aventura" (40). Not only does love blossom immediately for the young knight errant (as it had years earlier for his father), but his beloved will inspire him to do great deeds. When the protagonist defeats Claribeo, the Prince of England who is destined to become his good friend, Don Polindo says: "Lo que yo quiero que hagáis es que os vais a la corte del Rey de Macedonia e os presentéis a la princesa Belisia de parte del Cavallero de la Sierpe" (76). Don Quixote, then, is appropriately following chivalric custom when he decides to serve Dulcinea before embarking on his first sally and to use his love of her as inspiration for his valiant actions.

Enchantment and Disenchantment

Don Quixote is convinced that enchantment is as common in La Mancha as it is in the many books of chivalry he reads. Consider, for example, how his niece explains to him that his books have disappeared. She tells her uncle that the house was filled with smoke as the result of "un encantador que vino sobre una nube una noche, después del día que vuestra merced de aquí se partió, y, apeándose de una sierpe en que venía caballero, entró en el aposento" (I.7;90). Though this image of an enchanter arriving in a cloud while riding a serpent might seem unbelievable to the niece herself (who has

been instructed on what to say by the Priest and barber), it is not at all unusual to someone who has read many books of chivalry. Consider a dangerous moment in *Polindo* when Belisia's mother, the Queen of Macedonia, is about to be thrown into a fire and burned to death. At this moment a fairy

muy ligeramente cubriéndose de una nube, vino a aquel lugar donde los fuegos estaban. Y como la reina fuesse llegada, luego la hada hizo e obró de sus encantamentos e hizo aquella escuridad que ya os hemos contado. E como no pudiesen ver la hada, tomó a la reina e metióse a sí e a ella en una nube. E se tornó a su castillo. (51)

Fairies and enchanters abound in *Polindo*, and this sort of magical travel in clouds occurs repeatedly in the work as well.

The most famous enchanted item in Cervantes's novel is Don Quixote's *yelmo de Mambrino*, a magical piece of armor that protects its wearer from harm.¹⁴ Of the enchanted helmet, Don Quixote explains to Sancho their good fortune that "esta famosa pieza deste encantado yelmo por algún extraño accidente debió de venir a manos de quien no supo conocer ni estimar su valor" (I.221;226). In the case of Don Polindo, early in the 1526 text he is given an enchanted helmet by the fairies that raised him, one of whom says to him: "Señor cavallero, mis señoras las hadas vos ruegan que toméis este yelmo, que bien menester lo avréis" (33). The helmet immediately proves its worth in Don Polindo's very first encounter against a knight named Galicón, who during the fight "con gran saña que ovo, alçando su hacha le dio un muy fuerte golpe [a don Polindo] por cima del yelmo que lo aturdió. E cierto si el yelmo encantado no tuviera, aquí perdiera su vida don Polindo, que mal se sintió del golpe" (33). This is just the first time of many in the work that the enchanted helmet keeps Don Polindo from being

¹⁴ Clemencín explains the literary origin of the *yelmo de Mambrino*: "Yelmo encantado que ganó Reinaldos de Montalbán matando al Rey Mambrino que lo llevaba, y que usó después en varios combates, como los que tuvo con Gradaso (Garrido de Villena, *Orlando enamorado*, libro I, canto 4.º), con Roldán (Ib., canto 27) y con Dardinel (*Ariosto*, canto 18)" (1177).

killed.¹⁵ Cervantes's protagonist, a reader of works like *Polindo*, understands well how useful an enchanted helmet can be during combat.

Clearly one of the driving forces of Cervantes's 1615 text is Don Quixote's desire to disenchant the enchanted Dulcinea. As soon as Sancho whips himself three thousand three hundred times, as announced by Merlin, Dulcinea will be transformed from an ugly peasant girl back into the beautiful princess she was before she was enchanted. This notion of needing to disenchant someone is quite familiar to readers of chivalric works and, in fact, occurs a number of times in *Polindo*. The protagonist himself is responsible first for disenchanting King Naupilio of Macedonia, the father of Belisia and then, much later in the work, for disenchanting Belisia herself.¹⁶ Early in the 1526 text, after King Naupilio and others from his court have been enchanted by Loroës la Sabia, Don Polindo defeats a basilisk, three men, a giant snake, and various wild beasts in order to disenchant them all. As he arrives in Macedonia, after these great victories "todos venían por ver al cavallero que desencantó a su rey" (47). Many chapters later the giantess Obelia, in order to avenge the deaths of many giants killed by Don Polindo, announces with reference to the knight: "yo encantaré de tal manera a su señora, la princesa Belisia, que pase mucha pena" (210). True to her word, Obelia enchants Belisia, who becomes gravely ill. The question then becomes, of course, what steps must be taken to disenchant Belisia? In this regard, a fairy explains to Don Polindo: "sabed que el encantamiento es hecho por tal arte que hasta [que] quien lo hizo muera, no puede ser deshecho salvo por aventura que agora os contaré" (217). She then explains that to disenchant his beloved Don Polindo will need to travel to the Ínsula de Sernia, slay a giant that no other knight has defeated, and then kill

¹⁵ Other examples that demonstrate the magical power of the helmet to protect Don Polindo include the following: "Y el jayán le cargó de otro muy fiero golpe de encima del yelmo encantado que, si él encantado no fuera, mucho gran mal passara nuestro buen cavallero" (34); "Que cierto si no truxera el yelmo encantado, mucho mal passara nuestro cavallero" (73); "E dióle un golpe a don Polindo por cima del yelmo con tanta fuerça que, si el yelmo no fuera encantado, lo matara" (144).

¹⁶ In a different adventure Don Polindo also disenchants his squire Lavinio and his good friend Don Claribeo.

un muy fiero animal llamado Cerviferno. El cual es tan espantoso e fuerte que de un aullido mata un cavallero por esforçado que sea. Y este Cerviferno ni de día ni de noche duerme, mas antes vela. Y es tan fuerte el jayán que de fuera está que nunca cavallero á podido dentro entrar para con este Cerviferno provarse. (217)

If Don Polindo can do all this, he can find the golden apples that will disenchant Belisia. As he travels to undertake this great feat, the text explains: “E así por el camino en muchas cosas e varios pensamientos su ánimo ocupavan. Mayormente, en las cosas para desencantar su señora convenían” (249). Don Polindo succeeds in killing the giant and Cerviferno, and the golden apples he finds first cure him of his wounds,¹⁷ and then prove equally effective in disenchanting Belisia. We are told the happy conclusion to the adventure in Chapter 91: “E la princesa, como la [manzana dorada] tomase, començó de la comer. Y el rey e todos los cavalleros esperando estavan, mirando al rostro de la princesa por ver qué le aprovecharían. Y como la mirasen, les parecía qu’el rostro de muy hermosa e clara color se le tornava. Y así era la verdad” (280). Like the protagonist of the 1526 work, Don Quixote is ready to do what is needed to disenchant his beloved. In fact, compared to what Don Polindo must endure to disenchant Belisia, Sancho’s flogging most likely would seem to Don Quixote a small price to pay to return Dulcinea to her original beautiful self.

Use of Money

We have seen throughout this essay the many ways in which *Polindo* is exactly the kind of book of chivalry that inspires the transformation of Alonso Quijano to Don Quixote. Before concluding, I’d like to point out just one textual moment where *Polindo’s* author deviates from generic conventions. *Don Quixote’s* second paragraph explains that Cervantes’s protagonist “se daba a leer libros de caballerías, con tanta afición y gusto, que [...] vendió muchas hanegas de tierra de sembradura para comprar libros de

¹⁷ The knight “tomó una de aquellas mançanas e la comió. Y luego que la acabó de comer, fue de todas sus llagas guarido. ¡Quién os podría decir el plazer e alegría que tenía el noble don Polindo en ver cuán bien e cuán verdaderas le salían todas las cosas y palabras que las hadas le habían dicho!” (273).

caballerías en que leer” (I.1;37). While Alonso Quijano needs money in his world, things change once he becomes a knight errant. When the innkeeper in Chapter 3 asks Don Quixote “si traía dineros” to pay for his stay, “respondió don Quijote que no traía blanca, porque él nunca había leído en las historias de los caballeros andantes que ninguno los hubiese traído” (I.3;56). As we have seen in other contexts, Cervantes's protagonist is correct when referring to his readings: knights depicted in books of chivalry do not need to pay for goods or services.¹⁸ This established convention of the genre makes all the more curious the opening paragraph of *Polindo's* Chapter 48, which describes how four noble knights who are friends of Don Polindo—Don Felisandro, Don Narciso, Don Polimestro, and Don Pindamio—recover after a fierce battle with four evil knights:

Seis días estuvieron estos cavalleros en la casa del florastero, curándose de sus llagas. E al sétimo día, hallándose cada uno en despusición de caminar, pagando muy bien al florastero su albergamiento, <muy bien> tanto que se tuvo por muy satisfecho, e armándose de sus armas, se partieron camino de Constantinopla.
(139)

At this moment in the text *Polindo's* anonymous author quite surprisingly departs from literary convention and has the knights pay for their lodging. I call attention to this anomaly because in my reading of the work this is the only place where *Polindo* differs markedly from other books of chivalry. In terms of Cervantes's text, after hearing Don Quixote explain that he's never read of a knight errant with money, the innkeeper explains to him that “se engañaba” because he knows that “todos los caballeros andantes, de que

¹⁸ Daniel Eisenberg explains: “The knight never seeks money; indeed, money is so seldom mentioned, as Don Quixote correctly points out to Sancho, that it seems that the protagonists of the romances live in a primitive era, outside the money economy altogether. The only times we find money mentioned at all is in terms of a prize or reward (more often a valuable object), or as a tribute or tax demanded by an evil ruler (as, for example, in *Cirolingio de Tracia*, III, 10). The knight expects and receives hospitillity [sic] from those he meets along his way; similar to the modern Indian holy man, it was considered both a duty and an honor to provide for someone as valuable to society as the knight” (63).

tantos libros están llenos y atestados, llevaban bien herradas las bolsas” (I,3;56). On the one hand, the innkeeper’s desire to be paid explains his self-serving description of how knights do indeed carry money when, in fact, that is almost never the case in books of chivalry. On the other hand, perhaps the innkeeper’s words are inspired by this quite unusual chapter opening in *Polindo* in which the work’s author introduces money into the chivalric world.

Conclusion

Though not a widely read book of chivalry—either in the sixteenth century or in modern times—*Historia del invencible cavallero don Polindo* does include the kinds of fantastic adventures that made the genre so popular in Spain in the sixteenth century, with battles, giants, enchantments, lovers, and magic omnipresent in the work from start to finish. It must be said that the style of the anonymous author is at times repetitive, with seemingly endless battles, and other times illogical. Consider, for example, this description of fierce combat: “Y aquí se comienza la más cruda y áspera batalla que en el mundo podía ser” (145). So the battle is not only harsh, it is the harshest that is even possible in the world. Until, on the very next page we are told of a different combat, described as follows: “Y aquí se comienza la batalla muy más cruda y rezia que de antes” (146). On the other hand, at times the anonymous author’s prose conjures up fantastic images that are exactly why readers choose to read “hystorias fengidas.” The fierce Cerviferno on the Ínsula de Sernia, for example, is described as follows:

Ella era tan grande como un cavallo, y hechura tenía de serpiente. E el lomo, como de camaleón, salvo que unos burullones redondos como huessos de espinazos tenía. E de cada uno d’ellos una espina negra muy aguda [salía]. E tenía los enerizados e su cabeça, de hechura de tigre. E una muy larga nariz, que trompa de elefante significava. Y tenía unos muy agudos e muy grandes dientes. E tenía la cola de gamo. Tenía dos cuernos como de toro, muy agudos. Y las piernas tenía como de oso. E tenía en cada dedo una uña muy fuerte e su color d’ella era de serpiente. Y tenía el cuer<n>o duro. (272)

Or consider the following felicitous description of what happens in the reino de Ungría: “Y no tardó que vino un jayán, cavallero encima de un osso, e tras

Don Polindo, Don Quixote, and Cervantes's Transformation of
the Knight Errant to an Erring Knight

sí traía dos leones” (135). A giant, on a bear, followed by two lions! That sort of extraordinary happening helps explain the popularity of chivalric works both with Alonso Quijano and with the seventeenth-century readers of *Don Quixote*. José Manuel Lucía Megías writes that the genre of books of chivalry has been “uno de los géneros castellanos que más repercusión ha tenido en toda Europa, y que ha sido, en el fondo, el que ha hecho posible el nacimiento de la narrativa moderna” (par. 6). A careful reading of *Polindo* helps explain what is happening in the mind of Don Quixote, the protagonist of the work that marks the dawn of the “narrativa moderna,” and allows readers to understand more fully the difference between a knight errant and an erring knight.

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“Do These Pants Make Me Look Fat?": The Burgeoning of Sancho's *Panza*

Margaret Marek
Illinois College

Asking (or answering) the “Do these pants make me look fat?” question has never boded well, for anyone. And Sancho's size may not figure among the weightiest of the *Quijote's* ambiguities. However, since this special issue seeks to disgorge the ways in which don Quijote has been re-(en)visioned over the last four hundred-plus years, to this end it may prove gainful to track the growth of his squire.¹ Sancho Panza is characteristically painted—whether verbally or pictorially—in opposition to his master.² However, in the first published images of don Quijote and Sancho it is no easy matter to get the measure of Sancho's breadth.³ Whereas many have

¹ P. E. Russell explains this evolving perspective: “If one seeks to discover the cause of the change which came over readers' attitudes to *Don Quixote* at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and which subsists today, this, I suggest, will be found in the modern reader's ability (and desire) to identify with the knight and, perhaps, with Sancho Panza too” (323). For Rachel Schmidt, pictorial representations of the novel evolve accordingly: “The recirculation of certain sets of illustrations, both independently and in successive editions, from Gaspar Bouttats' burlesque to Gustave Doré's romantically sentimental ones, reflects market demand. For a variety of reasons, readers at certain times and places find certain images to be interesting, provocative, pleasurable, and sympathetic. Their taste, partially formed by the illustrations, also partially forms the illustrations by demanding through the publishing market images that respond to their own interests in the novel. The circulation of illustrations both creates and reinforces already existing interpretations” (12).

² For Ronald Paulson, “*Don Quixote* is constructed on a basic contrast, formal and thematic, between Quixote's long, attenuated, spiritualized (desiccated) body and Sancho's plump, undignified, and plebeian body; between Quixote's elevated discourse of chivalry and Sancho's demotic, proverbial discourse; and between Quixote's idealistic actions and their contrary physical consequences” (xii).

³ I concur with Anthony Cárdenas-Rotunno, who wonders “whether earlier images have affected subsequent images, and whether textual descriptions of Sancho, beyond his obvious paunch, have influenced iconic depictions of him” (25; n. 1). I do not attempt said study. Instead, I seek to flesh out the analysis surrounding Sancho's paunch, weighing it over time, by way of textual descriptions—including

argued for “hard” vs. “soft” readings of the *Quijote*,⁴ convention consistently assumes the softness of Sancho’s gut. Yet Cide Hamete Benengeli’s details remain remarkably thin. This essay will attempt to chart the height and weight of Sancho Panza, beginning with Cervantes’s original reckoning and following up with a survey of subsequent textual and pictorial renditions of the squire’s body, thereby adding to the bulk of Sancho’s corpus through the study of his swelling corpulence.⁵

For some, that Sancho is short and fat is nothing short of a big, fat lie. Critics do not agree that the squire necessarily embodies either characteristic—or if he does, to what extent and what these features entail. Citing José Manuel Lucía Megías, Miriam Elies calls attention to bloopers contained in the first edition: “Puede que la más asombrosa sea la relativa a las curvas de Sancho Panza. Aunque todas las ilustraciones muestran al leal escudero del hidalgo como un hombre gordo, Cervantes nunca lo describió como tal.”⁶ On the other hand, Anthony Cárdenas-Rotunno acknowledges that Sancho is unequivocally “rotund” (9), but argues convincingly that Cervantes does not attach negative significance to Sancho’s weight:

English translations—and images, to determine whether or how much its amplitude has increased.

⁴ For example, see Russell, Daniel Eisenberg, Frans De Bruyn, and James Parr. Schmidt sums up: “Literary historians have traced a rather sketchy and broken history of *Don Quixote*’s reception, centred around two poles: Cervantes’ contemporaries, who laughed heartily at what became the seventeenth-century equivalent of a best seller but failed to acknowledge any elevated literary qualities, and the German Romantics, who loudly proclaimed the madman to be a hero, a champion of the ideal, an individual alienated from a shallow world” (18).

⁵ This study owes a substantial debt to José Manuel Lucía Megías and to Schmidt. The former’s meticulous analysis of the early illustrators of the *Quijote* contains more than three hundred illustrations of the novel between Jacob Savery (1657) and Francis Hayman (1755). The latter painstakingly traces the canonization of the novel by means of its illustrations up through the nineteenth century.

⁶ Accompanying Elies’s account is a beguiling Getty image of a 21st-century Sancho Panza, part of a theatrical production performing aboard a train, who looms larger than life. In his left hand he holds an enormous loaf of bread; in his right, he gestures to his passenger audience:

www.lavanguardia.com/cultura/20160217/302237889421/curiosidades-el-quiote.html.

“Focusing on the terms *gordo*, *gordura*, and *rollizo* as they appear in the novel, we do not detect the disdain, derision, and negativism toward Don Quixote’s fat squire that he might face in today’s world” (25) and “no cacomorphobia is evident” (16).⁷ For Francisco Rico, neither does Sancho possess stubby legs: “Cervantes no da ninguna otra descripción del escudero, ni en ningún lugar del *Quijote* se dice que Sancho sea paticorto, como siempre se le ha pintado” (87; n. 18). In I.9⁸ Cide Hamete Benengeli’s translator uses the term *largo* (87), which then as now denotes length rather than width: “comúnmente en castellano se toma por un espacio muy extendido, como campo largo, carrera larga y por toda cosa en esta manera prolongada, como la lanza larga, espada larga; y en el hombre ser largo de cuerpo [...]” (Covarrubias 1169). If the illustration is verisimilar, Sancho’s legs may well be thick, but not short.⁹

Other critics conflate Sancho’s short, stout figure with that of his donkey: “There is a contrast not only in the two characters, the thin Don Quixote and the fat Sancho, but also between the skinny Rocinante and Sancho’s corpulent donkey” (Ignacio Arellano 68-69).¹⁰ Lest we consider this distortion as a byproduct of the present day, consider Juan Páez de Valenzuela’s description of a 1615 masquerade performed in Córdoba, in which Sancho “tuvo por mejor partido caminar en una burra poco menos redonda con su preñado que él iba en ella, con serlo tanto como una bola” (qtd. in R. M. Flores 7).¹¹ While the symmetry between protagonist and sidekick and their respective mounts seems only natural, even archetypal, the next task is to determine to what extent it is Cervantine.

With regard to Sancho, the narrator provides the following familiar, concrete observations in I.7: “En este tiempo solicitó don Quijote a un labrador vecino suyo, hombre de bien [...] pobre villano” (72). Rico glosses

⁷ See “The Mirth of Girth: Don Quixote’s Stout Squire” for a thorough examination of how Sancho’s fatness fits (or does not fit) into fat studies. I will use the inquiry of fat studies below to study the question of Sancho’s bloat over time.

⁸ All references to the *Quijote* are taken from Rico’s edition; I indicate the volume and chapter in the following way: I.9 is the ninth chapter of the first volume.

⁹ Additional examination of the portrait of don Quijote, Sancho, and the Basque man will follow.

¹⁰ Cárdenas-Rotunno also contends that, just as with Rocinante and don Quijote, Cervantes may deliberately link the body size of donkey and squire (14-15).

¹¹ This description originates with Juan Páez de Valenzuela y Castillejo; Flores cites Daniel Edward Quilter.

villano: “rústico, de baja condición social” (72; n. 15).¹² As a financial strategy, José Manuel Martín Morán applauds Sancho’s decision to follow don Quijote: “Sus bienes raíces son escasos: tal vez posea unas parcelas de siembra [...] que serían en cualquier caso insuficientes para el sustento de la familia, y de hecho ha de servir de jornalero a los labradores ricos de la zona y contentarse incluso con la comida solamente [...]” (375).¹³ The Panzas, then, may well face food insecurity.¹⁴ Given this economic hardship, Sancho’s sheer joy on finding the one hundred *escudos*, “tal golosina,” in the Sierra Morena in I.23 is unsurprising: “dijo por bien empleados los vuelos de la manta, el vomitar del brebaje, las bendiciones de las estacas, y las puñadas de arriero, la falta de las alforjas, el robo del gabán, y toda el hambre, sed y cansancio que había pasado en servicio de su buen señor [...]” (215-16). He has, as yet, been bestowed with no governorship, but there is at least minimal remuneration.

Robust biographical detail concerning Sancho is in short supply. The narrator categorizes him as intellectually slight or “de muy poca sal en la mollera” (72).¹⁵ Sancho’s simplicity in the shadow of don Quijote’s erudition heightens the contrast between the two. On a good day, even the knight’s friends and family are impressed by his intellectual prowess. As his niece

¹² Citing Ramón Menéndez Pidal, Rico goes on to distinguish between two uses of *escudero*, both to refer to the squire found in the books of chivalry (a young gentleman who intends to become knighted), and in the time of Cervantes, simply a servant who follows his master (72).

¹³ Alternatively, Raymond S. Willis conceives of Sancho as “a man of substance and property, a little farm at least. Poor he may have been, but not destitute, witness his donkey, his well-filled saddle bags and wine skin, when he finally set out. Especially observe his corpulent figure: starving men don’t grow fat” (214). Note that Willis takes Sancho’s weight for granted.

¹⁴ On various occasions food functions as a currency in the novel. For example, the narrator pays the *Morisco* translator, according to Edith Grossman’s conversions, in about fifty pounds of raisins and about three bushels of wheat (68; n. 7). Later, in II.50, Teresa and Sanchica give bacon and eggs to the duke’s page for delivering Sancho’s letter.

¹⁵ Rico notes that Sancho embodies the long tradition of the wise foolish literary sidekick, traces of whom we see in the books of chivalry (72). Below we will attempt to determine what bearing, if any, this characterization has on Sancho’s weight.

remarks in II.6, “si fuese menester en una necesidad podría subir en un púlpito e irse a predicar por esas calles [...]” (590). On a bad day his madness is ever the more dismaying, such as in the Sierra Morena, where the barber and the priest, “aunque ya sabían la locura de don Quijote y el género de ella, siempre que le oían se admiraban de nuevo” (253; I.26). While the Licentiate Pero Pérez—who earned his degree from Sigüenza, a second-tier institution—may be no great wit, don Quijote’s complex diagnosis also stumps the exceptional Salamancan degree candidate, don Lorenzo, who “oyéndole hablar don Quijote le tuvo por discreto y agudo” (680). At first the student vacillates in his weighty assessment of the knight’s discourse: “Hasta ahora [...] no os podré yo juzgar por loco” (682), but he ultimately asserts that don Quijote “es un entreverado loco, lleno de lúcidos intervalos” (684). The priest, don Quijote’s friend, disparages Sancho, “admirado de su simplicidad y de ver cuan encadados tenía en la fantasía los mismos disparates que su amo,” where he might instead empathize with the squire’s credulity (293). Don Quijote employs those considerable powers of persuasion on Sancho in full force:

En resolución, *tanto le dijo, tanto le persuadió y prometió*, que el pobre villano se determinó de salirse con él y servirle de escudero. Decíale *entre otras cosas* don Quijote que se dispusiese a ir con él de buena gana, porque tal vez le podía suceder aventura que ganase, en quitame allá esas pajas, alguna ínsula, y le dejase a él por gobernador de ella. *Con estas promesas y otras tales*, Sancho Panza, que así se llamaba el labrador, dejó su mujer e hijos. (72; emphasis added)

The un-monied and un-lettered Sancho, increasingly incentivized to reap the benefits of the promised *ínsula*, does not stand a chance.

This credulity originates not in youth, but in lack of preparation. He hasn’t read the texts. Sancho’s age is, in large measure, a matter of speculation. In II.22, in the washing of the beards incident, don Quijote angrily demands of the duke’s servants that “[v]uesas mercedes dejen al *mancebo* y vuélvase por donde vinieron [...]” (804; emphasis added). Covarrubias reserves this term for “el mozo que esté en la edad que en latín llamamos *adulescens*” (1231). Similarly, don Quijote intimates to Sansón Carrasco in II.2 that Sancho needs to mature, grow into his governorship: “y mientras fuere entrando en edad Sancho, con la experiencia que dan los años,

estará más idóneo y más hábil para ser gobernador que no está ahora” (570). Sancho’s protest, if childish, is well-founded: “Por Dios, señor [...] la isla que yo no gobernase con los años que tengo no la gobernaré con los años de Matusalén” (570). *Mancebo*, as Covarrubias goes on to note, “dijose del nombre *mancipium*, porque aún se está debajo del poder de su padre, como si fuese esclavo; y así el derecho llama emancipar el darle libertad [...]” (1231). In the present day, of course, *mancebo* can also refer simply to a servant or apprentice, and even Covarrubias’s definition suggests the squire’s role vis-à-vis his master. Later, attempting to appease his master and procure for himself a salary, a chastened Sancho appeals to his own *mocedad* in I.28: “Vuestra merced me perdone y se duela de mi *mocedad*, y advierta que sé poco” (771; emphasis added).¹⁶ Rico glosses this term as lack of experience (771; n. 24). Either way, in the next breath Sancho contradicts his own youth and lack of experience by claiming to have served as squire for more than twenty years.

It may be useful to consider Sancho’s age relative to that of other characters in the novel. In II.5 Teresa reminds her husband that their son, Sanchico, is fifteen and that their daughter, Mari Sancha, is fourteen.¹⁷ Moreover, she reveals that María has begun to express interest in marriage: “va dando barruntos que desea tanto tener marido como vos deseáis veros con gobierno” (583). While Sancho would have her marry a count, Teresa has set her eye on Lope Tocho, a suitable prospect from the village: “[C]on este, que es nuestro igual, estará bien casada” (584). Teresa Panza is of hardy stock. If she had married Sancho at a similar age, adding in time for an engagement, marriage, and pregnancy, she would likely have become a mother by the age of sixteen, which would make her about thirty-one. Regarding don Quijote, the narrator famously states from the beginning: “Frisaba la edad de nuestro hidalgo con los cincuenta años” (28). The present critic would argue that fifty falls comfortably into the brackets of middle age. Nevertheless, as Rico explains, “en una sociedad cuya esperanza de vida apenas llegaba a los treinta años, don Quijote era un anciano (28; n. 18). It is evident, regardless, that don Quijote is older than his squire. When discussing

¹⁶ For this reference to *mocedad* I am indebted to Flores (192).

¹⁷ There is a bit of a discrepancy. In II.13 Sancho tells Cecial Tomé, who plays the role of the squire to the Caballero del Bosque, that the Panzas have a fifteen-year-old daughter.

his own propensity to govern his potential vassals, Sancho tells the duke in II.33: “Eso de gobernarlos bien [...] no hay para qué encargármelo, porque yo soy caritativo de mío y tengo compasión de los pobres, y a quien cuece y amasa, no le hurtes hogaza; y para mi santiguada que no me han de echar dado falso; *soy perro viejo y entiendo todo tus, tus* [...]” (809; emphasis added).¹⁸ As Rico indicates, all of these expressions suggest that Sancho, despite his rookie status as a governor, is no babe in the woods (809-10; ns. 23-26).

Sancho indicates straight away, in I.7, that his donkey will accompany him in his travels: “asimismo pensaba llevar un asno que tenía muy bueno, porque él no estaba duecho a andar mucho a pie” (73). Sancho’s intention is wholly reasonable, but how do we account for his adamance? If not advanced age, what is it that would cause Sancho to have difficulty walking? Laziness? Lack of physical fitness? Below-average height? The first description of the squire in action reveals nothing more than the following: “Iba Sancho Panza sobre su jumento como un patriarca, con sus alforjas y su bota, y con mucho deseo de verse ya gobernador de la ínsula que su amo le había prometido” (73).¹⁹

Our best source of information about Sancho’s physique comes in I.9, in the drawings purchased by the narrator at the Toledan market: “Y debía de ser que tenía, a lo que mostraba la pintura, *la barriga grande, el talle corto y las zancas largas*, y por esto se le debió de poner nombre de ‘Panza’ y de ‘Zancas,’ que con estos dos sobrenombres le llama algunas veces la historia” (87; emphasis added). At the very least Sancho is overweight. He is also short. However, as we have seen, the narrator specifies that he is short-waisted, rather than short-legged. Although he exaggerates the prevalence of the *Zancas* nickname, which appears nowhere else in the text, the narrator insistently vouches for the artistic quality of the drawings: “Estaba en el primero cartapacio pintada muy al natural la batalla de don Quijote con el vizcaíno” (87).

¹⁸ This reference to Sancho’s charity will be additionally important further on, as we ascertain to what extent he may be considered a glutton.

¹⁹ Pat Rogers concurs that Sancho’s figure is slow to take shape: “Sancho only gradually emerges as the short and squat figure we associate with his character” (30-31). Likewise, for Cárdenas-Rotunno: “Given that most literary critics and artists consider fatness as essential to the character of Sancho, it is notable that Cervantes’s approach to and description of the squire exclude this condition” (12-13).

However, even here we learn more about Rocinante and the hired mule than we do about the stature of their respective riders. The mule is a lemon: “y la mula del vizcaíno tan al vivo, que estaba mostrando ser de alquiler a tiro de ballesta” (87) and Rocinante is emaciated: “estaba Rocinante maravillosamente pintado, tan largo y tendido, tan atenuado y flaco, con tanto espinazo, tan héptico confirmado, que mostraba bien al descubierto con cuánta advertencia y propiedad se le había puesto el nombre de ‘Rocinante’” (87). Of the donkey we are only told that the illustration depicts Sancho holding him by the halter. Description of the donkey is only scarcely more fleshed out elsewhere in the text. For example, in II.13 Sancho clarifies to Tomé Cecial: “Verdad es que no tengo rocín, pero tengo un asno que vale dos veces más que el caballo de mi amo [...]. A burla tendrá vuesa merced el valor de mi rucio; que rucio es el color de mi jumento” (639). Faint praise indeed. With regard to the donkey’s body, we learn even less. Sancho assiduously tends to his donkey’s needs.²⁰ In II. 9 he instructs his wife to double the donkey’s fare over the next three days, so that he will have enough strength for a second sally, but three days of extra rations, an extravagance which the Panzas can likely ill afford, should not cause the donkey to bulk up excessively. After the disastrous end of his governorship, the squire touchingly elegizes the donkey in II.53: “cuando yo me avenía con vos y no tenía otros pensamientos que los que me daban los cuidados de remendar vuestros aparejos y de sustentar vuestro *corpuezuelo*, dichas eran mis horas, mis días y mis años” (956; emphasis added). While Sancho’s use of the diminutive may, of course, simply express his obvious affection for the animal, it also stands to reason that the donkey is not exceptionally large.

While textual evidence definitively dispels the notion of Sancho’s fat ass, of his arse we have considerably more to weigh. On two occasions the narrator calls attention to the enormity of Sancho’s buttocks. In I.20, preceding the adventure with the fulling hammers, Sancho “echó al aire entrambas posaderas, que no eran muy pequeñas” (181). Later, in II.35, the duke’s servants, respectively playing the parts of Merlin and the enchanted Dulcinea, accuse Sancho of having “valientes posaderas” (824) and

²⁰ See Flores’s massive appendices of Sancho-related passages in the novel; Appendix 5 contains a listing of passages documenting Sancho’s love for his donkey, pp. 178-79.

“carnazas” (826). These buttocks add weight to the depiction of Sancho’s prominent belly. Covarrubias elaborates on the origin of Sancho’s surname: “Pança. Vocablo antiguo español, vale tanto como barriga o vientre que está lleno y levantado; puede ser de *pandus*, *a*, *um*, cosa corva, como lo es la barriga grande” (1341). Critics have made much of Sancho’s *panza*, connecting him to the carnivalesque.²¹ Gandalín, squire to Amadís de Gaula, purports to begrudge Sancho, albeit tongue in cheek: “Envidio a tu jumento y a tu nombre, / y a tus alforjas igualmente envidio, / que muestran tu cuerda providencia” (20). It is possible that Gandalín envies the squire’s Christian name, which as Covarrubias explains, harkens back to the Castilian monarchs (1427). Covarrubias also documents two proverbs, neither of which refer explicitly to don Quijote’s squire, but both of which nevertheless invoke him for readers in the present day: “Al buen callar llaman Sancho” (associated with the word *santo*, thereby reminding us of don Quijote’s continual reminders that Sancho talks too much)²² and “Allá va Sancho con su rocino,” which, in Covarrubias’ gloss, brings to mind Sancho’s singular devotion to his donkey: “[D]icen que este era un hombre gracioso que tenía una haca, y dondequiera que entraba la metía consigo; usamos deste proverbio cuando dos amigos andan siempre juntos” (1427). However, more than likely, Gandalín instead purports to covet Sancho’s surname, given that the sonnet associates Sancho and his belly with the saddlebags.

Conventional wisdom suggests that, given Sancho’s legendary appetite, coupled with his evident aversion to physical exertion, he must be fat. References to Sancho’s consumption abound in both volumes. It is easy to picture the hungry Sancho pining for the goat meat simmering in the herders’ cauldron in I.11; or the Sancho of I.23 entering the Sierra Morena who “Ni [...] llevaba otro cuidado [...] sino de satisfacer su estómago con los relieves que del despojo clerical habían quedado, y, así, iba [...] sacando de un costal y embaulando en su panza” (212); and the Sancho of II.16 who injudiciously fills his master’s helmet with curds; and most especially, the delighted Sancho at Camacho’s wedding. In II.35 the duke’s servant, playing

²¹ For just two examples, see Howard Mancing, p. 651 and Arellano, pp. 68-69. W. S. Hendrix notes that for Menéndez Pelayo and Rodríguez Marín, Sancho’s surname references the fiesta de Panza” (488).

²² For additional commentary on this proverb, see the “Al buen callar llaman Sancho” entry in the Centro Virtual Cervantes “Refranero multilingüe.”

the part of the enchanted Dulcinea, censures Sancho: “bestión indómito [...] saca de harón ese brío, que a sólo comer y más comer te inclina” (826). But right behind this Sancho is the hungry Sancho who goes without.²³

The attempt to control one’s own or another’s eating inevitably leads to increased focus on—and desire for—food. The narrative dedicates a hefty amount of space to Sancho’s food intake at the *ínsula*. For the sake of entertainment, though ostensibly in the name of health and because “los manjares pocos y delicados avivaban el genio” (938), Dr. Pedro Recio de Agüero exerts stringent control of Sancho’s eating that to the present-day reader presages television shows such as *The Biggest Loser*.²⁴ For Sancho, the doctor deems the fruit too damp, the veal too marinated, another dish too spicy, and so forth. Surely the three hens and two geese paradisaically ingested at Camacho’s wedding are subsequently offset by the stringent conditions imposed during the governorship of Barataria, which lead Sancho in II.51 to lament in his letter to don Quijote: “tengo más hambre que cuando andábamos los dos por las selvas y por los despoblados” (943). During the governorship Sancho himself associates hunger with gutlessness: “en efecto, no puedo pasar sin comer, y si es que hemos de estar prontos para estas batallas que nos amenazan, menester será estar bien mantenidos, porque tripas llevan corazón y no corazón tripas” (II.47; 904). And given Sancho’s timorousness throughout the novel, the notion may possibly bear some weight.

In II.53 Sancho leaves the *ínsula* to rejoin his master, packing only enough for the short journey, food that in the next chapter he immediately relinquishes as alms to a group of pilgrims, even before he recognizes among them his former neighbor Ricote: “y como él, según dice Cide Hamete Benengeli, era caritativo además, sacó de sus alforjas medio pan y medio queso, de que venía proveído” (960). Cárdenas-Rotunno notes that, despite

²³ Cárdenas-Rotunno emphasizes that Sancho’s food intake is not excessive: “A search in the novel for Sancho eating to surfeit yields nothing [...]. Satiating hunger, which is what Sancho does, is not gluttony” (12).

²⁴ As Maud Ellmann argues: “Because fat has burgeoned, rather than diminished, in response to this discursive explosion, it would seem logical to cut back on the diatribes. But that would endanger the vast economic interests invested in the war on fat, putting an army of dieticians, personal trainers, liposuctionists, stomach-staplers and talk-show pundits out of work” (59).

his master's occasional aspersions, Sancho does not commit the cardinal sin of gluttony (12). In the early modern period, as Ken Albala explains, gluttons were often depicted as fat, but being fat was not a sin. Beyond excessive eating, gluttony implied greed, eating in excess while others did without (170). Sancho, then, is no glutton.

As we have seen, based on the drawing in I.9, the narrator ascertains that the squire has “la barriga grande, el talle corto y las zancas largas [...]” (87). Thomas Shelton's contemporary rendering—the novel's first ever translation, published in 1612—erroneously endows Sancho with “a great belly, a short stature, and thick legs.”²⁵ On the surface it seems plausible to attribute both Sancho's weight gain and his shortness directly to Shelton. While “great belly” may not be more voluminous than “barriga grande,” it is nevertheless bolstered by the suggestion that Sancho's legs are also fat. English and Spanish readers alike have successively viewed the *Quijote* through humorous, satirical, romantic, and other lenses. Beginning with Shelton's 1612 translation, don Quijote leaves his mark on English letters.²⁶ As Susan Staves asserts: “No national literature assimilated the idea of *Don Quixote* more thoroughly than the English” (193). Shelton's translation, which enjoyed numerous reprints during the second half of the seventeenth

²⁵ Cárdenas-Rotunno analyzes the ways in which Sancho's fatness (but not his height) is configured in the English translations of Thomas Shelton (1612 and 1620), John Ormsby (1885), Edith Grossman (2003), and Thomas Lathrop (2007). Further discussion of English translations and their significance to Sancho's weight gain will be undertaken below.

²⁶ In fact, as Russell notes: “*Quixote* criticism in England starts, albeit in the form of deeds not words, in 1605 itself, when an English bookseller whom Sir Thomas Bodley had sent to Spain to buy books for him included the First Part among his purchases. It was put on the shelves of the Bodleian Library that same year” (314). Paulson documents a series of English firsts: “England took to *Don Quixote*, producing the first complete translation into another language (Shelton's in 1612), the first foreign reference to Quixote (George Wilkins 1606), the first critical edition of the Spanish text (Lord Carteret's, 1738), the first published commentary (John Bowle's, 1781), and the first biography and ‘portrait’ of Cervantes in the Carteret edition” (ix). See also Schmidt; Alexander Welsh; Lucía Megías; José Manuel Barrio Marco and María José Crespo Allué, eds., *La huella de Cervantes y del Quijote en la cultura anglosajona*; and J. A. G. Ardila, ed., *The Cervantean Heritage: Reception and Influence of Cervantes in Britain*.

and the first half of the eighteenth centuries, remained influential for subsequent translations into English (Rutherford, “Brevísima” 483). It is easy for the reader of the present day to critique the numerous errors contained in Shelton’s translation. However, Rutherford rightfully reminds us that “a principios del XVII Shelton disponía de muy pocos diccionarios, y que éstos eran rudimentarios y deficientes” (“Brevísima” 483). Weight gain, then, whether physical, literary, or pictorial, represents a complicated phenomenon. Further studies are needed.

In any event, in Peter Motteux’s translation (c. 1700), which rectifies some of these misconceptions regarding Sancho’s height, the squire is: “thick and short, paunch-bellied, and long-haunched” (I: 56).²⁷ Interesting is the choice of “long-haunched,” given that the haunch and the shank respectively denote the upper and lower portions of the leg. A close reading of the English translations reveals no progressive weight gain for Sancho over time.²⁸ For Smollett (1755), he is “a person of a short stature, swag belly, and long spindleshanks” (100).²⁹ This trend—specific reference to long shanks and a sizeable belly—remains generally consistent in the translations from here onward, though Raffel (1999) uses “long legs” (52).

Aside from the drawing found in the sheaf of papers purchased in Toledo by the narrator, the most substantial reference to Sancho’s physique is contained in II.45: “El traje, las barbas, *la gordura y la pequeñez* del nuevo gobernador tenía admirada a toda la gente” (888; emphasis added).³⁰ Shelton

²⁷ For discussion of Motteux’s translation, see Rutherford “Brevísima,” pp. 484-85; Paulson, p. x; and Barbara Alvarez and Justin Joque.

²⁸ For this study I have consulted the English translations of Robinson Smith (1910), J. M. Cohen (1950), Walter Starkie (1954), Edith Grossman (2003), James H. Montgomery (2006), and Thomas A. Lathrop (2015), in addition to the translations cited below. For a chronology and analysis of the English translations, see Alvarez and Joque.

²⁹ Rogers notes that Smollett reproduces the apposition of thin knight and fat squire in *Sir Launcelot Greaves* (1760-62). As Smollett describes Crabshaw: “His stature was below the middle size; he was thick, squat and brawny with a prominent belly” (qtd. in Rogers 31).

³⁰ The narrator again references Sancho’s infamous belly in II.49: “él se las tenía tiesas a todos, maguera tonto, bronco y rollizo” (917). Further evidence that Sancho is short appears in II.53: “Y al momento le trujeron dos paveses, que venían proveídos de ellos, y le pusieron encima de la camisa, sin dejarle tomar otro vestido,

(1620) refers to the “shortness” and “fatness” of the new governor; Motteux, the “short and thick shape” (II: 285); Smollett, the “corpulency, and diminutive stature” (875); Ormsby, “the fat, squat figure” (670); Watts, “the plumpness and smallness” (328); Raffel, Sancho’s “girth, and how very short he was” (594); Rutherford, the “corpulence and shortness” (*Ingenious Hidalgo* 786). Other translations feature variations on the above.³¹ While fascinating from the perspective of translation studies, these differences do not account for the theoretical thickening of Sancho’s middle.

To what, then, may we attribute Sancho’s growing waistline? Genetic factors naturally play a role. For W. S. Hendrix the comic type, one of Sancho’s progenitors, is identifiable “by his crass stupidity, his credulity, his superstition, his constant desire to satisfy his animal appetite, especially eating, drinking, and sleeping, his dialectic pronunciation of words, his repetition of silly nonsensical sayings (*necedades*), his cowardice, and his familiarity with his superiors” (489).³² This description fits Sancho to a T. However, even while genetics may predispose one to a given condition, both environmental factors and human behavior contribute heavily.

un pavés delante y otro detrás, y por unas concavidades que traían hechas le sacaron los brazos, y le liaron muy bien con unos cordeles, de modo que quedó emparedado y entablado, derecho como un huso, sin poder doblar las rodillas ni menearse un solo paso” (954). But this does not give us a lot to go on. Rico notes that “paveses” are “escudos grandes, que cubrían todo el cuerpo” (954; n. 12). In Covarrubias’s definition: “Pavés. Especie de escudo largo que ocultaba todo el cuerpo del soldado y recibía en él los golpes de los enemigos [...]. En Castilla se usaron los paveses hasta los tiempos de nuestros abuelos, y hoy día en las casas de los hidalgos se conservan y se guardan” (1350). While the *pavés* (presumably “one size fits most”) is designed to cover the whole body, the soldier would certainly need to be able to walk while carrying it. Sancho’s feet barely stick out from the bottom.

³¹ The Cervantes & Co. edition of Lathrop’s translation features Jack Davis’s comical, cartoon illustration of this illustration, in which a de-emphasized (unshaded and relegated to the background) and round-bellied Sancho and his donkey look on in astonishment, p. 67. This image is indexed in the digital archive on the *Proyecto Cervantes* site, Urbina, ed., under the “Imágenes” and “Iconografía del *Quijote*” tabs: www.cervantes.dh.tamu.edu/dqiDisplayInterface/displayMidImage.jsp?edition=499&image=2005NewarkCuesta-006.jpg.

³² Hendrix distinguishes two sorts of comic fool, “stupid” and “clever,” p. 489. Sancho inherits the traits of the former.

Moreover, it is not always possible to determine causation. In II.43, on the eve of Sancho’s governorship, don Quijote abrades him simultaneously for a cluster of undesired behaviors: “Dios te guíe, Sancho, y te gobierne en tu gobierno, y a mí me saque del escrúpulo que me queda que has de dar con toda la ínsula patas arriba, cosa que pudiera yo excusar con descubrir al duque quién eres, diciéndole que toda esa gordura y esa personilla que tienes no es otra cosa que un costal lleno de refranes y de malicias” (876). Corteguera similarly links Sancho’s “belly” with his “incurable peasant’s taste for proverbs” (267).³³ His overeating and his overuse of colloquial expressions evidence the selfsame affliction. Conversely, Maud Ellmann associates wordiness with hunger, in both literary and historical figures who have undergone self-starvation: “The less these starvers ate, the more they seemed to write, as if writing were an art of discarnation” (58).³⁴ If hunger inspires verbosity, it is no wonder that don Quijote so frequently feels the need to admonish Sancho to reduce his consumption of proverbs. In any case, Sancho arguably gets a full makeover to assume his new administrative responsibilities. He dons the gubernatorial regalia, rides in on a mule, and sharply curtails his food intake. However, like most dietary regimens, Pedro Recio’s will ultimately fail. Most dieters regain the weight.

Kathleen LeBesco and Jana Evans Braziel remind us that “corpulence is historically, culturally, and economically constructed” (7).³⁵ Changing attitudes towards fatness participate heavily in the re(en)visioning of Sancho. In the discourse of the twenty-first century, obesity is firmly couched in discussions of health: “The writers assume the same objectivist positions prevalent in the writing from the biomedical field that they champion. In so doing, they, like the researchers, assert their right to gaze upon, monitor, and judge the body of the fat person, even as their own bodily presence remains invisible and unseen by any critical gaze” (Elena Levy-

³³ Constitutionally, Sancho is unfit for high office. At the most, as a peasant, he might aspire to a village leadership position such as *alcalde* or *regidor* (Corteguera 264).

³⁴ She explicitly relates the wordiness of Proust to the waistline of his character, Baron de Charlus, and the span of *War and Peace* to its outcome, in which “the fat hero, Pierre Bezukhov, ultimately wins the girl” (64).

³⁵ Rogers’s example is apropos here: “More and more positives come to accrue to thinness: consider the tall and excessively thin Sherlock Holmes, who would have been a joke in Smollett. Some of the modern prejudices have begun to crystalize” (35).

Navarro, *The Culture of Obesity* 13). Christopher E. Forth and Ana Carden-Coyne note that: “[I]nsofar as health and well-being are often conceptualized through moral frameworks, personal character, too seems jeopardized by poor diet and faulty habits” (1).³⁶ For Levy-Navarro, “the early modern period is useful because it helps us interrogate our assumption that we are simply being objective when we think in terms of ‘health’” (*The Culture of Obesity* 28).³⁷ Ellmann concurs: “The deadly sins of greed, gluttony and sloth, once condemned as inimical to righteousness, are now reviled as injurious to health. In Anglo-American mass-culture, the doctor has usurped the role of the priest, replacing threats of fire and brimstone with those of heart-disease and diabetes” (59). To be sure, time—and with it, the pathologizing discourse of fat—marches on; both health and gluttony have presently been compounded: “[R]esearchers in Italy have proposed a way to measure the ecological impact of global food wastage due to excessive consumption. First, they estimated the net excess bodyweight of each country’s population—based on BMI and height data—and distributed its energy content among food groups according to national availability” (Matthew Prior).³⁸ Since Sancho Panza is neither gluttonous, nor in poor health, nor ecologically destructive, how did we get from there to here?

Albala notes that though Hippocrates and Galen write about obesity, medieval and early modern medical writers leave the topic largely untouched (169).³⁹ This relative lack of interest continues until the early seventeenth century, when French physician Gaspard Bachot’s *Erreurs populaires touchant*

³⁶ While acknowledging that fat studies offers a valuable tool, Cárdenas-Rotunno maintains that “today’s viewers, as well as today’s artists, often perceive Sancho’s depictions through a modern lens, and thus not see or understand the Sancho of his time [...]. The prescriptivism of Fat Studies probably hinders a literary examination of what girth meant to Cervantes” (9).

³⁷ See Levy-Navarro’s *The Culture of Obesity* for a comprehensive examination of fat characters in early modern England.

³⁸ Citing Mauro Serafini, lead author of a 2019 *Frontiers in Nutrition* study, Matthew Prior goes on to note that overeating accounts for an estimated 140 billion tons of annual food waste, compared to about 1.3 billion tons of direct food waste.

³⁹ Abala provides detailed discussion of fat in Europe from the medieval period through the eighteenth century. See also Lucia Dacome’s analysis of the increasing instances, shifting views of, and proposed remedies for corpulence in eighteenth-century English medical writings.

la médecine et regime de santé (1626) prescribes avoiding exercise and study, eating rich and fatty foods, drinking, and more sleep *for those who wish to gain weight* (Albala 172; emphasis added). As we have seen, Bachot’s proposed methods sharply diverge from Sancho’s lifestyle. German physician Johann Friedrich Held’s 1670 dissertation helpfully provides a specific guideline for determining obesity, which he defines as a waistline of thirty-six inches (Albala 175). This concrete detail, which does not reflect present-day standards, at best provides a nebulous point of reference with which to compare—to the extent that one can in an engraving or a painting—Sancho’s height and weight.

Levy-Navarro argues that “fat is involved with a number of the institutional changes that come with modernity itself: the growth of the (British) Empire, the rise of the nation-state, industrialization, the rise of consumer capitalism, to name just a few” (“Introduction” 2). Around this time, we get our first look at Sancho in *El capitán de carnaval*, an engraving published in Leipzig in 1614. In this depiction of a parade celebrated in Dessau appear (all labeled) a dwarf riding a pony; the priest carrying a model of a windmill; the barber carrying a large barrel; a homely “La Sin par Dulcinea del Toboso;” “El ingenioso hidalgo Don Quixote de la Mancha, Caballero de la triste figura,” lance and shield in hand, mounted on Rocinante; “Sancho Panza Scudiero,” also bearing a lance and shield, mounted on his donkey; and “La Linda Maritornes,” whose rendition is slightly more flattering than that of Dulcinea.⁴⁰ While the donkey is immediately recognizable as such, the other figures have need of their labels. Especially worthy of note, though their clothing is different, is the minimal contrast between the squire and his master; it is impossible to discern to what extent Sancho may meet Held’s qualification for obesity—or even whether he is significantly fatter than his master. Since then, in the words of Schmidt, “Don Quixote and Sancho Panza have undergone the curious transformation from characters in a novel to visual icons to an extent unparalleled in the history of Western literature” (xiii). The present study will look at a handful of early illustrations by Jacob Savery (1657), Charles Antoine Coypel (1731), John Vanderbank and William Hogarth (1738), and

⁴⁰ See A. G. Lo Ré, pp. 98-100; Andreas Bretschneider’s illustration also appears in Lucía Megías, p. 38.

Francis Hayman (1755).⁴¹ Soon thereafter the sheer number becomes unmanageable. As of 30 August 2019, the *Proyecto Cervantes* catalogues 54,408 illustrations from 1,128 editions of the novel ranging from Savery's up until those of Jack Davis, published in 2012 (Urbina). Merely viewing those images in their entirety seems a Sisyphean task (to say nothing of analyzing them), leaving aside the veritably infinite sea of depictions of don Quijote and Sancho, as well as images inspired by them.

The first illustrated *Quijote* originated in Dordrecht, Holland in 1657. This Dutch translation, which featured twenty-four illustrations and two frontispieces by Jacob Savery, changed the face of the novel's publication: "A partir de su difusión, será impensable una edición del *Quijote* sin estampas. Habrá que esperar al siglo XIX [...] para aparecer de nuevo ediciones sin ilustraciones" (Lucía Megías 41). Five years later, sixteen of Savery's images are reused in an edition printed in Brussels by Jan Mommaert; then, in 1672-1673, Hieronymus and Johannes Baptista Verdussen of Antwerp print an edition that includes the two frontispieces and thirty-two engravings, sixteen from the 1662 edition along with sixteen new ones engraved by Frederik Bouttats (Geoff West).⁴² Savery's illustration of Sancho's blanketing differentiates more sharply between don Quijote and his squire than does Bretschneider's (Lo Ré 100). The knight is seen behind a wall, mounted on Rocinante, visible from the head up. Bearing in mind the limits of ascertaining clear information with regard to body type from these seventeenth-century engravings, Sancho, whose form is rounded,⁴³ appears fatter here than in the *El capitán de carnaval*.

⁴¹ Like Vanderbank, Hogarth was commissioned to create illustrations for the Tonson edition of 1738. Lucía Megías discusses at length possible reasons that Vanderbank's were chosen over Hogarth's (225-40). Schmidt goes on to consider the nineteenth-century illustrations of Robert Smirke (1812), Tony Johannot (1836), and Gustave Doré (1863).

⁴² Lucía Megías elucidates the interconnectedness of the woodcuts appearing in early European illustrated editions of the *Quijote* in the Netherlands, Italy, France, Germany and England between 1657 and 1700 (55).

⁴³ West's blog includes this illustration as well as one each from the Brussels (1662) and the Antwerp (1672-1673) editions. They can also be found in Urbina (*Proyecto Cervantes*).

“Do These Pants Make Me Look Fat?”:
The Burgeoning of Sancho’s *Panza*

Perhaps unsurprisingly, in the seventeenth century fatness bore a certain social prestige, leading Held’s compatriot, physician Karl Christian Leisner, to caution in 1683 against the dangers posed by obesity, counteracting the ideal, common among the peasantry, that fat was desirable (Albala 177). Conversely, however, less than fifty years later, fatness comes to be esteemed among British gentlemen. Like Leisner, Thomas Short warns of the dangers inherent to obesity, despite its fashionable appeal (Albala 179). As Pat Rogers notes:

Clearly at the start of the eighteenth century fat could still be viewed as a sign of health, or sometimes of well-being generally [...]. It took a long time for the psychological and social assumptions surrounding body shape to change, and at first it was only the upper orders who consented to the change. They were sophisticated enough to have grasped that a heavy cargo of flesh could be no sure indication of good health, and rich enough to have to demonstrate to the world that they were all well fed. (32-33)

Short’s *A Discourse Concerning the Causes and Effects of Corpulency together with the Method for its Prevention and Cure* (1727) offers a series of remedies, such as “choosing to live in a clear, serene air, using exercise and labor, following a moderate and spare diet, and dedicating oneself to ‘all those Things which promote insensible Perspiration’ such as ‘the Use of Flannel Shirts,’ cold baths, ‘friction with a Flesh-Brush, Hair or hard Cloth,’ ‘Gentle Evacuations,’ and the ‘Smoking of Tobacco’” (Lucia Dacome 187). While it may not be of his choosing, Sancho nonetheless adheres to many of Short’s prescriptions. To be sure, the requisite perspiration results more from his labors under the open sky; his evacuations are not at all gentle; and—despite the Cuban cigar that would later bear his name—Sancho is not a smoker.

Around the same time as Short, fellow English physician George Cheyne writes about his own prodigious weight loss—of more than two hundred pounds, achieved by adopting a vegetarian diet—in *The English Malady* (1733) (Dacome 190). Cheyne, whose weight fluctuated widely, equates weight loss with virtuous behavior: “Associating the ‘putrefying and cadaverous’ state of his overgrown body with his addiction to excess, he

evoked a state of alimentary innocence and purity” (Dacome 189).⁴⁴ Interestingly in terms of the *Quijote*, Cheyne additionally posits corpulence as a mental disorder, suffered by the wealthy gentleman (189). Dr. Recio’s enforced abstinence and Sancho’s concurrent governing capabilities notwithstanding, don Quijote’s squire does not fit into this paradigm, either. By the eighteenth century, like nowadays, literature on nutrition and weight loss was contradictory, extreme, and wrong-headed, perhaps culminating in Malcolm Flemyng’s recommendation to ingest soap (Albala 180).⁴⁵ This remedy falls easily into Sancho’s purview: “In so far as the quality of soap was concerned, Flemyng preferred the Spanish soap from Alicant. But Castille soap could do. And Flemyng recommended a course of at least three months based on the daily ingestion of no more than four drachms of soap” (Dacome 188). Fortunately, however, Sancho’s use of soap does not extend beyond the washing of his beard at the sumptuous palace of the duke and duchess.

Court painter Charles-Antoine Coypel designed twenty-eight don Quijote tapestries for the Gobelins Manufactory between 1714 and 1751. These images were immensely popular, and they circulated in their own right. Schmidt perceives Coypel’s cartoons as a sort of intermediary. Like Bouttats, Coypel is interested in the *Quijote*’s burlesque elements. However:

The artist paid much attention to the episodes that took place among spectacle and luxury, such as Camacho’s wedding and the adventures in the palace of the Duke and Duchess. In addition to his depiction of elegant courtiers and courtesans, he endowed peasant girls with round, sweet faces, simple elegant dresses with low-cut bodices revealing perfect shoulders, and tresses falling in gentle curls or neat coils. Flourishes of drapery, plumage, or clothing are often echoed in swirls of clouds or foliage [...]. (38)

⁴⁴ Dacome notes that the fat physician became prevalent enough to become a type: “[giving] rise to the image of the physician who was too corpulent to walk and check patients” (189).

⁴⁵ As Dacome explains: “[Flemyng] maintained that corpulence consisted in an accumulation of fat rather than of blood. As such, it could be cured by soap [...]. As much as it helped to eliminate oil and fat from clothes [...] it could also wash away the unnecessary fat of the body” (188).

Indeed, Coypel’s tapestry, *L’Entrée de Sancho dans l’Île de Barataria*, depicts a fat Sancho in a gold robe and an elaborate plumed cap, borne in not by a mule, but on the shoulders of two of the Baratarians themselves. The black and white print of Coypel’s *Memorable Jugement de Sancho* depicts Sancho’s second case as judge, regarding the old men and the lent ten gold *escudos* from II.45. Sancho is seated on a throne, with the plaintiff and the defendant before him. Here his shortness seems to be highlighted, but the viewer has difficulty ascertaining his weight, given the flowing judicial robes.

Tonson published the first English illustrated edition, patronized by Lord Carteret and illustrated by John Vanderbank, in London in 1738. The Tonson edition is instrumental in the transformation of the *Quijote* from a popular work into a classical one (Schmidt 47).⁴⁶ The artist has been faulted for drawing don Quijote and Sancho in the English countryside in English dress (Paulson xi). However, Schmidt observes that Vanderbank’s illustrations are quite faithful to specific and identifiable passages from the text, and that in them the viewer can discern hints of the Romantic reading of the novel and of present-day psychological readings of don Quijote and Sancho (83). For the purposes of this study, Vanderbank’s figuring of Sancho seems appreciably larger than Coypel’s. For example, in *Don Quixote Asks the Galley Slaves about their Crimes*, which depicts the incident from I.22, Sancho is significantly fatter and shorter—and additionally, more childlike—than the prisoners. The latter, long and muscular, further underscore the size differential between Sancho and don Quijote, who—even wearing armor—is considerably narrower than they. Impressionistically, at least, in Vanderbank’s illustration of Sancho deciding the case of the alleged rape by the swineherd from II.45, the squire’s breadth and lack of height are simultaneously emphasized. As in Coypel’s illustration of a similar scene, Sancho is richly dressed in robes and a plumed cap. However, his robes hang open in front, revealing strained buttons on the waistcoat beneath. His shanks seem lengthened, yet his short stature is preserved. The figures standing around the dais, where Sancho rises from his throne, appear thin and elongated in comparison.

Although Hogarth’s six illustrations did not appear in the Tonson edition, they nevertheless circulated widely. Hogarth’s Sancho, like

⁴⁶ Lucía Megías, too, considers the Tonson edition to be a game-changer in boosting the spread of the *Quijote* in Europe (215).

Vanderbank's, is obviously fat.⁴⁷ Sancho seems to plateau between Vanderbank and Hayman, who represents, for Lucía Megías, a culmination in the pictorial renderings of the *Quijote* to date, in that they compromise between Vanderbank's neoclassical, didactic vision and Hogarth's satirical one, while retaining the theatricality of Coypel (249). Although he does not comment upon Sancho's belly, convenient to the present study is Lucía Megías's comparison of three British illustrations from II.71 that depict Sancho ostensibly carrying out the compulsory lashings required for the disenchantment of Dulcinea. In the first two, by Vanderbank and Hayman, don Quijote—believing Sancho to be dutifully administering his lashes—takes pity and interrupts him. In the meantime, of course, Sancho has instead been flogging the trees in the interest of self-preservation. In the third, by Smirke (1818), don Quijote counts the lashings from a distance (256-57; Figs. 301-303).⁴⁸ These three images offer the unimpeded view of Sancho's shirtless *panza* shining in the moonlight, and they reveal the prominent dimensions of said belly, which is further accentuated by the proximity of the thin don Quijote. The squire's most significant weight gain thus far seems to occur between Bretschneider and Savery (between 1614 and 1657) and between Coypel and Vanderbank (between 1731 and 1738). This second occurrence coincides with changed perspectives toward weight.

Rogers attributes these attitude shifts in the middle of the eighteenth century in part to the increased interest—predominant among wealthy men—in weighing oneself. At this time, public scales were available in Paris, and by 1760 in London, though physicians did not weigh their patients as a matter of course, even in the case of newborns (23-25). By the nineteenth century writers begin to classify bodies according to type, e.g., ectomorph vs. endomorph (Rogers 33). The advent of current preoccupation with weight and weight loss resides in the novel as a genre (especially the high Victorian

⁴⁷ See Lucía Megías for a side-by-side comparison of Vanderbank's, Hogarth's, and Antonio Carnicero's (Madrid, 1780) respective depictions of Sancho's frustrated banquet in *Barataria*, Figures 288-91 (238-41). See Urbina for these and other illustrations of this episode (*Proyecto Cervantes*).

⁴⁸ For Lucía Megías, Hayman's execution of Sancho's facial expression is superior to Vanderbank's. Furthermore, he notes that Smirke skillfully recasts the scene, setting Sancho as its protagonist. See Urbina for these and other illustrations of this episode (*Proyecto Cervantes*).

novel), where “bodies are much less often bundles of symptoms than they are boxes of psychological tricks, clusters of sensations, collections of desires, outlines of will and destiny” (Rogers 36). Romantic readers of the *Quijote*, then, might find themselves ever more attracted to such an exploration of Sancho.

By far the most well-known illustrator of the *Quijote* is Paul Gustave Doré, who created more than two hundred illustrations, published in Paris in 1863.⁴⁹ The engraving from I.7 that depicts the moment when don Quijote asks Sancho to be his squire is both revealing and indistinct. Don Quijote stands beside Sancho, his right hand around his neighbor’s shoulder, his left hand gesticulating wildly. Children and farm animals—including pigs, chickens, and the donkey—populate the scene. Sancho holds a yoke in his hands. Since both men are on their feet, side by side, the illustration is accommodating in perspective. Don Quijote’s shoulder is slightly taller than Sancho’s head. Furthermore, the knight’s shanks are significantly longer than Sancho’s. Sancho’s weight appears inconclusive. Don Quijote is taller and slenderer, but Sancho does not appear inordinately fat. However, a second illustration from the same chapter depicts don Quijote’s second sally, with the knight and squire respectively riding Rocinante and the donkey. Here, Sancho’s buttons are again strained, as in Vanderbank’s illustration. Sancho is rounder and thicker than his master, not only in the belly, but in the limbs, head, and neck. At this point in the narrative, Sancho would likely weigh his heaviest, as he has not undergone any of the deprivations to come. The two set out in high spirits. In a third example, an illustration from II.53, Sancho, about to leave Baratania, embraces his donkey. A heavysset Sancho is visible from the waist up; his donkey’s head appears next to a hay-filled manger. Tears stream from Sancho’s eyes onto the donkey’s muzzle. The image is emblematic. In the estimation of Schmidt: “Doré indulged his sympathy with Don Quixote to such an extent that the deluded fool appeared to be the hero of a chivalric romance rather than the protagonist of a parodic novel [...]. Only with Doré did the tears drown the laughter, for subsequent illustrators reincorporated burlesque and satirical elements in tension with the sentimental” (172). Perhaps this sympathy is a decisive factor behind the dramatic and widespread appeal of Doré’s exquisitely wrought illustrations, which are poignant and evocative rather than humorous—here I concede my

⁴⁹ See Urbina for Dore’s illustrations (*Projecto Cervantes*).

tremendous soft spot as a viewer for the illustrations of Doré, probably in part precisely for their sweeping, sentimental rendering of don Quijote. Lucía Megías rightly asserts that Doré’s don Quijote is not Cervantes’s don Quijote; or rather: “El de Doré [...] tampoco es el *Quijote*, el libro de caballerías, que imprimió a su costa Francisco de Robles en 1605, ni tampoco, como no podía ser de otro modo, el que se difundió por toda Europa a partir de este momento” (13). On the other hand, maybe he is. Maybe Cervantes’s don Quijote is Savery’s, is Hayman’s, is Doré’s, is my don Quijote, and one of the knight’s numerous virtues is his suppleness, his at once collective and individual appeal, such that readers continue to envision him.

To conclude, let us jump ahead nearly one hundred years—for even in today’s post-Romantic readings Sancho has yet to take off any weight—to consider Picasso’s ever-famous black line drawing on a white background originally made for the cover of *Les Lettres Françaises* on the three hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the publication of the first volume of the *Quijote*. Perhaps the most famous illustration of the two to date, the drawing portrays the knight mounted on Rocinante and the squire on his donkey. The Castilian sun shines overhead; windmills are set off in the distance. Sancho, shorter, rounder, and wider than his master, faces the viewer head-on, while don Quijote and Rocinante stand in profile, looking towards Sancho. The tall, long necked, and bearded don Quijote, wearing Mambrino’s helmet, wields his lance. At once simple and complex, the drawing—recognizable without description—bestows upon Sancho his characteristic *panza*.

The miniscule serving of images analyzed here, a mere drop in the bucket, represents individual, discrete readings or views of Sancho, and while a distinct temporal progression does not reveal itself, neither does the trend ever reverse itself, producing a smaller squire. Sancho does not readily fit into the various models of fatness outlined above. Yet the figure of Sancho increases in magnitude, so much so that influence of don Quijote and Sancho, “the original hero and sidekick duo, inspiring centuries of fictional partnerships,” reveals itself in the outlines of the tall, skinny C-3PO and the short, rounded R2-D2 (Ilan Stavans).⁵⁰ While the Romantic approach seems

⁵⁰ In this video the lightly penned, unassuming animations that accompany Ilan Stavans’s text depict a tall, thin don Quijote alongside a shorter, fatter Sancho, though the contrast between their respective physiques does not appear unduly

to overlap with a preliminary increase in Sancho’s BMI, evidence proves inconclusive. His amplitude may be in part a matter of perception. Adage insists that the camera adds ten pounds. As the photographer moves further away from the subject, the latter appears wider or fatter. In the same way, changing views of fat change viewings of Sancho. That *cervantistas* continue to think about him seems wholly unremarkable. However, that Elies can editorialize in a leading Catalan newspaper about the novel’s “*curiosidades*,” among which, apparently, figures the squire’s weight, suggests that everyday readers, too, continue to envision Sancho.⁵¹ As this study (which in many ways “*propone algo y no concluye nada*”) reveals, body size and weight gain—whether perceived or real, physical or figurative—result from the complex interplay of numerous innate and environmental factors; perhaps “*es menester esperar*” any potential changes to Sancho’s *panza* wrought by the next four hundred years of reader and viewership (68). Fat—like beauty—resides in the eye of the beholder.

emphasized. Stavans explicitly juxtaposes don Quijote and Sancho with George Lucas’s characters.

⁵¹ Willis attributes the enormity of Cervantes’s novel in no small part to Sancho: “Cervantes bequeathed to every modern novelist his central theme and preoccupation: the plight of the plain man, the man of human dimensions, who is a stranger to himself, an exile in his own land, an alien to his own times, trying to forge an authentic existence within these impossible circumstances” (227). However, at the same time, it is important to keep Russell’s emphasis in mind: “[E]arlier readers of the book cannot have thought of identifying themselves *con amore* with don Quijote or with Sancho; their clear-cut notions about insanity and folly, about the nature of laughter and the causes of the ridiculous ruled out any such thing” (323).

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Lars and the Real Girl and the Quixotic of the 21st Century

Ryan Prendergast
University of Rochester

In the middle of director Craig Gillespie's 2007 *Lars and the Real Girl* (LRG), a film about how a man takes a life-size, anatomically-correct silicone love doll named Bianca as his girlfriend and treats her as a *real* girl, the titular Lars reads a passage from *Don Quixote*. The selection is from the Manchegan knight's time in the Sierra Morena, where he performs acts of madness due to his love for the imagined, idealized Dulcinea, imitating famous knights from his beloved chivalric tales. The inclusion of this intertextual moment was apparently the idea of Ryan Gosling who plays Lars, and the scene both highlights the theme of the impossible male-constructed feminine ideal as well as establishes the subtext of *Don Quixote* in the film. This scene also signals an affinity with Cervantes's exploration of serious questions of reality and fantasy as well as the novel's interrogation of contemporary social structures and mores. The quixotic that we encounter in the film is a 21st-century sort, illustrating the protean nature of some of the novel's themes that lend themselves to creative reframing and suggestive recontextualizations.

Variously described as a romantic comedy, a dramedy, "Europeanesque-drollery" (Woodard), and "unnerving comedy" (French), the film defies facile categorization. Even though it contains comedic aspects, screenwriter Nancy Oliver pulls back from most of the obvious salacious humor about a man and what he does with his sex doll. She also avoids a parodic take on having a synthetic girlfriend that would present Lars as a solely risible, crazy character. Instead, the focus is on how Lars's love for Bianca transforms him, his family, and the entire town. The film thus offers an analogous, though much more limited, treatment of the Baroque topos of *ser vs. parecer*, which is reminiscent of Don Quixote's *locura*, especially as it relates to his imaginary beloved, Dulcinea del Toboso, and the clashes between reality and illusion that predominate in the novel. Lars and his relationship with Bianca mirror, stretch, and reinvent the quixotic themes related to both isolation and desire that are fundamental to Cervantes's protagonist and to the text. The film's approach to Lars and his synthetic girlfriend pushes beyond the taboo of sex dolls while offering a quixotic tale

for the 21st century, representing the effects of loneliness and love, while also resisting the strictures of a traditional romantic comedy.

It should be clear that *LRG* is not a direct imitation or even a conscious adaptation of *Don Quixote*, but like many cultural products, it has absorbed some of the core themes of the novel. Through the repetition, inversion, or transference of settings and some of the characters, *LRG* reframes Don Quixote and the quixotic in the Internet age, when one can meet a future partner on-line, or more recently, use a 3D printer to create a synthetic male companion (Devlin, *Turned On* 85).¹ It is, perhaps, more accurate to consider *LRG* a “re-accentuation” of the *Quixote*. In *The Dialogic Imagination*, Mikhail Bakhtin, referencing the novelistic image of Don Quixote, asserts that re-accentuated novelistic images take on “enormous heuristic significance, deepening and broadening our artistic and ideological understanding of them” and that these images can be “creatively transformed in different eras” (422). A recent collection of essays uses the Bakhtinian notion of re-accentuation as its unifying theme to explore the influence of Cervantes’s novel on a variety of cultural objects. In this volume, Tatevik Gyulamiryan explains that re-accentuation is “related to but not quite the same as, concepts such as re-writing, parody, imitation, and adaptation” (13).² She includes *Man of La Mancha*, which she designates as an example of an adaptation. Dale Wasserman’s *Quixote*, Sancho, and Dulcinea are “not re-accentuations of Cervantes’s protagonists.” The Don Quixote of the play and film is not a “character who tries to be *like* Cervantes’s Quixote, he *is* Don Quixote brought into a new genre” (15, italics are the author’s).

I include Gyulamiryan’s *Man of La Mancha* example because I see *LRG* as having absorbed some of its quixotic characteristics by way of the play and film rather than directly from the novel.³ Film scholar Dina Smith argues that *LRG* is a rewriting of *Don Quixote*, yet her understanding of the novel seems to be filtered through the lens of *Man of La Mancha*. Most notably

¹ Lars tells people that he met Bianca “on the Internet” to which his sister-in-law responds: “Everyone’s doing that these days” (00:16:37).

² This coincides, in part, with what Bruce Burningham argues in his reading of *Toy Story* and *Toy Story 2*, specifically that neither are renditions or imitations but might be best seen as emulations (79).

³ Burningham notes that *Toy Story* is a work that is a product of the absorption of *Don Quixote* into popular culture *through*, among other works, *Man of La Mancha* (78).

when she compares Lars to the knight, Smith asserts that “Quixote constructs [...] a romantic consort out of a farm girl/prostitute” (192). This reading of Aldonza/Dulcinea as a prostitute is clearly based on the amalgam of the two characters (plus Maritornes and the prostitutes from the inn) that Wasserman offers in his reconceptualization for the stage. Wasserman’s interpretation of the novel, which he describes as “a play about Miguel de Cervantes” rather than an adaptation of *Don Quixote*, allows him to break free of the need to compress an unwieldy novel into a logical dramatic and commercially viable structure (125-26). The playwright eschews the notion that he wrote an adaptation of the novel, thereby resisting Gyulamiryan’s classification of the play as such. However, one could argue that the merged Aldonza/Dulcinea of *Man of La Mancha* constitutes a “new” character, and as such might fall into the category of a re-accentuation of these characters, especially as the combined characters have little to do with Cervantes’s novelistic representations of the two. In *LRG*, Bianca, who is described as very religious, is also a sex doll, mirroring Wasserman’s combination of the idealized and chaste Dulcinea and the more worldly Aldonza into one character.

Gyulamiryan also proposes that conscious re-accentuations of *Don Quixote* occur when an author or producer “determines the most defining features” of the original characters and “creates new characters who embody those traits” (15). These re-accentuated characters, for example, can be dreamers, readers, adventurers, and lovers. It is this latter category that most readily points to Lars being a re-accentuated Quixote, as he falls in love with an “unsuited” beloved, “weaving a knotty love story” (15).⁴ The “unsuited” beloved in this instance is the love doll, Bianca, and their relationship begets the unconventional—and what some might argue as the kinky—love story that forms the basis of the film, seemingly couched as a kind of romantic comedy. However, *LRG* is about much more than a man who appears to be an agalmatophile, that is, an individual who is sexually attracted to a statue,

⁴ Gyulamiryan opines that the trait of “lover” is Quixote’s “most versatile feature, encompassing idealization, obsession, and blindness, as well as loyalty and commitment.” Moreover, the re-accentuated lovers “aspire to love and be loved by their partners” (18-19).

doll, or mannequin.⁵ Lars never once treats Bianca as the sexual object she is marketed to be, even as almost all the other characters initially see her as precisely that kind of girl. Moreover, the film is expressly focused on Lars's psychological and emotional development rather than on the specific romantic relationship.

Points of Contact/Inversions/Diversions

It is useful to establish some basic points of contact and transferences between *Don Quixote* and *LRG*, even if they are unwitting examples of the quixotic. First, the action of the film takes place in a nameless town (¿de cuyo nombre no quiero acordarme?) in what is likely the upper-Midwest of the United States (though filmed in Ontario, Canada). Much of the film develops over the course of the long winter, with several wide-angle shots of the frozen, unwelcoming, and essentially barren landscape to punctuate its starkness and to establish an environmental solitude that parallels Lars's emotional and psychological isolation. The winter landscape—on which one could easily envision a field of windmills—is an inversion of the estival plains of La Mancha, the dry, stark backdrop of many of Quixote's adventures. These ambient details parallel the wizened state of both Don Quixote's body and his dried-up brains, “del poco dormir y del mucho leer” (I, 1; 100).⁶ Physically though, Lars is nothing like the emaciated, *cinquentón*, Alonso Quijano/Don Quixote. He is 27 years old, well-fed and burly, though he does have a memorable moustache. Psychologically, while both Lars and Don Quixote can be considered delusional, Lars does not take on a new persona like Quijano/Quixote, and his delusion is strictly limited to treating Bianca as a human being. However, Lars does reveal that he wears a type of protective clothing: multiple layers of shirts and sweaters to avoid the pain

⁵ Some might recall the 1987 cliché-ridden romantic comedy *Mannequin* (20th Century Fox, director Michael Gottlieb's retelling of the Pygmalion myth, in which the male protagonist falls in love with an inanimate female mannequin. She comes to life only for him at first, but toward the end of the film she becomes and stays human. An actress replaces the mannequin in the scenes where she becomes human. She and her beloved marry in traditional romantic comedy fashion at the end of the film.

⁶ I use John J. Allen's *Cátedra* edition throughout. For direct quotes I cite volume, chapter, and page number.

of being touched by anyone. His hole-ridden sweaters are analogous to Quixote's suit of ramshackle armor, but Lars's is borne from the need to protect himself from the painful touch of others, a somatic manifestation of the emotional scars he appears to have developed over time.

We might be able to trace some connections between the description of Lars by Manohla Dargis of *The New York Times* as “a holy fool, and a martyr in waiting, a subject of mockery and a means of redemption” and some of the interpretations of Don Quixote as a kind of Christ-figure dating back at least to Miguel de Unamuno.⁷ There is also a sense of Christian community that undergirds both works. Like Don Quixote, Lars regularly attends services, and it is to the church that Lars's family members turn for help supporting Lars and who agree to go along with his delusional behavior about Bianca. In the novel, Don Quixote's niece and housekeeper, along with the Priest and Barber, attempt to either keep Don Quixote at home or bring him back once he has sallied forth. They, too, engage in a certain amount of playing along with the chivalric narratives that form the scaffolding of the knight's intricate fantasies, with the end goal of trying to cure him or to keep him out of harm's way. The housekeeper and niece convince Don Quixote that a wizard has sealed up his library (I, 8). The priest devises and casts the actors of the Micomicona adventure and with the help of the barber, Dorotea, and others execute both this adventure and the dramatic imprisoning of the knight in a cart in order to bring him home at the end of Part I. The novel's trope of “playing along with” Don Quixote often entails the need to follow a chivalric romance narrative, and it requires many of the characters to wear costumes or disguises. In *LRG*, however, the more theatrical or spectacular aspects of the novel, most notably associated with the Duke and Duchess's elaborate staging of adventures, are completely absent. Bianca is the spectacle, but only initially. The multiple clashes between fantasy and reality—most often resulting in physical injury—that Quixote and Sancho experience primarily in Part I, do not have a parallel in the film. Lars is not treated as a marginalized *loco*, and Bianca is quickly incorporated into the fabric of the town community. Viewers are drawn into

⁷ Hans Urs von Balthasar includes a discussion of Don Quixote in a broader discussion of what he calls holy fools. However, he avers that Don Quixote is not a Christ-figure (170).

a fictional world that is entirely verisimilar, even though one of the principal characters is a sex doll.

Reframing Madness and Lust

Beyond these similarities, inversions, and distinctive plot details, there are more complex parallels between the film and the *Quixote*, including the broader implications of the quixotic in *Lars and the Real Girl*. The title of the film continually reminds me of the chapter title that Carroll Johnson uses in *Madness and Lust*: “Dulcinea and the Real Women.” In the two chapters that bear this title, Johnson offers readings of how the knight responds to the *real* women he encounters throughout the novel, including Marcela, Dorotea, and Altisidora. He suggests that Quixote’s need to flee his home is motivated by a mid-life crisis and argues that the repressed desire he feels for his niece needs an acceptable outlet. Johnson suggests that Aldonza is Don Quixote’s “first, failed attempt to find an acceptable substitute for his niece” (86). He also emphasizes the role of Aldonza—real, but essentially unknown to him, though apparently known to Sancho—and that of Dulcinea—imagined or invented based on the poetic topos of the idealized, beautiful woman and the model of the damsels from chivalric tales.

However, the film’s approach to what is “real” is more complex because Bianca is a physical presence. Unlike both Dulcinea and Aldonza, who never appear in the novel, Bianca is palpable and many of the characters interact with her directly. This notion of what is real is highlighted early in the film when Lars’s brother, Gus (Paul Schneider), initially refuses to play along with Lars’s delusion, exclaiming: “Pretend that she’s real? I’m not doing that!” The town doctor and psychologist, Dagmar Berman (Patricia Clarkson), replies: “Of course she is. She’s right outside” (00:31:09). Unlike Don Quixote’s *locura*, Lars’s condition is diagnosed as a delusion by a trained mental health professional. The doctor draws up a treatment plan that includes weekly talk therapy sessions (presented to Lars as special treatments for Bianca) and the need to go along with how Lars perceives Bianca. But even this clinical diagnosis does not prevent other characters from using words like crazy, weirdo, insane, and sick to describe Lars. Johnson uses the term “delusional projection” to describe how Quixote sees inns as castles

and prostitutes as *doncellas* (89).⁸ Something similar happens with Lars, seeing and treating Bianca as a “real girl.”

Different from the Manchegan knight though, Lars is firmly rooted in the real world of his family, coworkers, and small town. Treating Bianca as human is his only apparent delusional manifestation, though he does appear to experience serious bouts of social anxiety. The significantly limited scope of Lars’s condition allows the film a more nuanced and less comical representation of Lars’s psychosis. In fact, when Dr. Berman speaks with Lars’s relatives for the first time, she emphatically states that sometimes “what we call mental illness isn’t always just an illness. It can be a communication; it can be a way to work something out” (00:30:38). While Lars’s brother only wants her to fix what is wrong, the doctor says that Bianca “is in town for a reason” and will be there until Lars does not need her anymore (00:31:23). As is appropriate for its 21st-century context and is necessary for its development, the film’s approach to Lars’s disorder is treated with more understanding than anything we see in the *Quixote* or especially at the end of Avellaneda’s apocryphal continuation, where Don Quixote is committed to an asylum. There is certainly a fear of how Lars will be derided, explicitly stated by Lars’s brother (“Everyone is gonna laugh at him”[00:31:35]), but the film pivots quickly away from the kind of mocking, cynical, and malicious laughter, played out most dramatically in the novel by the Duke and Duchess across a number of elaborate episodes in Part II.

The “lust” in *LRG* is seemingly more indirect than Johnson’s characterization of Quixote as “a man with sex on the brain” (76). Lars’s desire, if it can be categorized in these terms, is symbolized by and channeled through Bianca, a Real Doll, the name of an actual line of life-size love dolls available for customization and purchase via the Internet.⁹ Despite still being taboo in certain circles, topics such as adult films, their actors, frank

⁸ Sherry Velasco notes that Don Quixote undertakes a “conversion process” with a variety of the women in Part I (the prostitutes at the inn and Maritornes) changing them into beautiful and idealized versions. This includes how he “transforms the raw material of the *marimacho*” seen in Aldonza into the feminine Dulcinea (69).

⁹ Abyss Creations, LLC began manufacturing the Real Doll in 1996. These dolls are sold worldwide, and as of 2013, there were ten faces and three bodies available for the female dolls. Male dolls are also sold. <https://www.realdoll.com>.

discussions of sex toys, and even relationships with fictional or two-dimensional human partners have found their way into more mainstream discussions about sex, love, and the nature of intimacy. The film capitalizes on Bianca's primarily sexual ends as a Real Doll by fighting against the stereotype that most viewers and characters have: she symbolizes sex, even when she is "reading" to children, with little to no make-up on and dressed in frumpy attire. When Lars takes her to a party, his reason for buying Bianca is discussed by several attendees. A brief exchange between a woman and her boyfriend evokes what everyone is likely thinking. She asks: "Does he have sex with her?" and her boyfriend responds: "Babe, that's what she's for" (00:52:50). Lars's cubicle-mate, Kurt, and another man are also focused on the physical and sexual aspects of the doll with Kurt saying "she doesn't even know how hot she is" speaking about Bianca as if she were human. He immediately comments on how flexible she is—immediately objectifying her (00:54:12). While Lars treats her with respect and does not objectify her, Bianca initially symbolizes nothing but sex or a sexual proclivity that should be kept private. The fact that Lars can begin to reframe her identity in such a public context is where the film moves beyond the novel's representation of Dulcinea, whose existence and identity is constantly challenged or rewritten by a variety of characters, despite Don Quixote's best efforts to control the narrative about her. To an extent, Lars is successful where Don Quixote is not, since he eventually is able to get everyone to see Bianca as he does.

Don Quixote is a "reclusive, celibate bachelor," much like Lars (Johnson 89). Though both characters do maintain a few relationships, even if superficial, they appear to spend a fair amount of time alone. Lars goes to work every day, but at night he retreats to a spartan studio apartment attached to the garage, actively avoiding contact with his brother and sister-in-law who live in the family's house. Lars has some friends or acquaintances from church and work, yet his social circle is limited. We have no evidence of any love interest prior to the arrival of Bianca, just like there are few details about how Don Quixote has gotten to his fifties without being married. Lars seems to keep everyone at arm's length. We do know that his mother died giving birth to him and that his father retreated into himself after that, likely suffering from depression. Lars's brother admits to leaving home as soon as possible, probably to escape his father's dark mood. Deprived of typical familial bonds and the doting hand of his mother, Lars's emotional and

psychological isolation and apparent fear of intimacy manifest in physical pain when touched. He tells Dr. Berman that only Bianca's touch does not cause him pain, which may explain, in part, his ability to bond with a synthetic companion.

Lars's choice to make a sex doll his girlfriend, however, makes explicit a kind of desire based on a long tradition of the objectification and hyper-sexualization of women via pornography. Yet, the notion of having a love doll as something more than a sexual partner is not as uncommon as one might think. As Kate Devlin states: "The media like to paint sex doll owners as being very isolated men who are bad at social communication – probably, you know, stuck locked away in their basement or their bedroom with a sex doll [...] These people who own the dolls do so for a number of reasons [...] In fact, very few of them are driven by sex; a lot of it is [...] companionship" (quoted on *Hidden Brain* 34:00-34:41). In this sense, Lars seeing Bianca as a true companion whom he could marry is in line with Devlin's assertion; sexual desire is not the sole or even apparent motivation for Lars's purchase of the doll.¹⁰ In fact, if we take what we see on screen as the full extent of their relationship, Bianca is Lars's vehicle for engaging more with the world. As soon as she arrives, Lars begins interacting with his family more frequently, and he engages in more regular social behavior in general. He becomes more talkative and emotive as well. This is all due to the role Bianca plays in his life and how Lars begins to communicate with the people in his life. Don Quixote's apparent *raison d'être* is proving he is worthy of Dulcinea's favor, and this desire motivates him to sally forth, bringing him out into the world and engaging with people in ways he never could have imagined. He is a catalyst for change, even if that change is more disruptive and violent than anything Lars initiates. In the cases of both protagonists, their idealized beloveds are the impetus for the development of the storylines.

The Real Girls

The Real Dolls, as described to Lars by his colleague and cubicle-mate, Kurt, are made-to-order products: "Like if she'd weigh 125 pounds,

¹⁰ Ian Condry discusses a 2008 petition signed by several thousand Japanese citizens, calling for the legal right to marry two-dimensional anime characters (186-87).

then she weighs 125 pounds. You can customize everything; they got all different heads and parts. You can design your own woman [...] They're anatomically correct" (00:07:45-00:08:01). The ability to imagine one's ideal or "fantasy" woman and then make her a physical reality supersedes what Don Quixote undertakes to rhetorically create his beloved Dulcinea, moving beyond the purely imaginative and linguistic. Nevertheless, Don Quixote's idealization of Dulcinea, based on other chivalric tales and the Petrarchan poetic ideals of beauty, also focuses on some of the corporeal aspects that are customizable on the dolls Kurt has described. Don Quixote says:

pues en ella se vienen a hacer verdaderos todos los imposibles y quiméricos atributos de belleza que los poetas dan a sus damas: que sus cabellos son oro, su frente campos elíseos, sus cejas arcos del cielo, sus ojos soles, sus mejillas rosas, sus labios corales, perlas sus dientes, alabastro su cuello, mármol su pecho, marfil sus manos, su blancura nieve, y las partes que a la vista humana encubrió la honestidad son tales, según yo pienso y entiendo, que sólo la discreta consideración puede encarecerlas, y no compararlas. (I, 13; 186)

What Quixote has read demonstrates the active construction of his beloved even down to the kind of rhetorical dissection that happens when each part of the body is described separately. This kind of ekphrastic representation is essential as a model for the incorporeal Dulcinea's existence, if only for Don Quixote: "Y para concluir con todo, *yo imagino* que todo lo que digo es así, sin que sobre ni falte nada, y *píntola en mi imaginación como la deseo*, así en la belleza como en la principalidad" (I, 25; 312, emphasis added). In *LRG*, Kurt is decidedly more focused on the physical attributes of these dolls, as it is possible to customize their physical attributes. Kurt does admit that it is a kind of porn, tacitly recognizing that these dolls attempt to make corporeal (and attainable for the consumer with the money to purchase one) the overly-sexualized female bodies of heterosexual pornography marketed to men. This kind of adult film is the narrative-visual model on which the construction of the Real Dolls is based, giving rise to silicone realizations of male sexual fantasies and desire; these dolls are hyper-sexualized objects that

stand in for the real hyper-sexualized and objectified women they represent.¹¹ Lars does not seem even remotely interested in looking at the website, while Kurt is almost drooling over the possibilities.

After a jump cut to six weeks later, we see a large wooden crate being delivered to Lars's garage apartment. Viewers were not privy to Lars's "creation" and customizing of his doll, and the suspense builds slowly. Lars dresses up, changing his sweater several times. He primps in the mirror clearly excited to meet his doll, as if it were a first date after meeting on the Internet (which it is). However, when he initially describes his "visitor" to his family, he appears to be keenly aware of the preconceived notions and narratives of heterosexual male pornography and the taboos associated with a love doll. As such, he immediately and preemptively seeks to mitigate what Bianca symbolizes and to desexualize their relationship. He tells his brother and sister-in-law, Karin (Emily Mortimer), that because he and Bianca are young, single, and she is so religious they should not share a bed or a room (00:17:15). He goes on to offer more details about his visitor, among them that she was a missionary, who was raised by nuns and is now "on sabbatical to experience the world" (00:18:29-00:18:34). By emphasizing her purity (religious), selflessness (missionary), and apparent sexual naiveté (raised by nuns/experiencing the world for the first time), he creates an image for both the viewer and his family, and perhaps for himself. Bianca's first appearance immediately follows this verbal description, and the contrast is made more jarring by a jump cut to Lars and Bianca seated on the couch across from Gus and Karin. They are both mouth agape, speechless, and staring at Lars and his doll. Bianca is dressed in the stereotypically provocative attire of an exotic dancer or adult film actress (fishnet over a short shiny silver dress and knee-high boots), her look accentuated by a bit too much makeup, and with her full lips parted sensually. These visual details radically undermine Lars's initial innocent description of her life as a sheltered and innocent former missionary.

Lars goes on to offer more biographical information about Bianca, rounding out her narrative backstory. She is half-Danish and half-Brazilian

¹¹ In the DVD extras, we learn that the number of choices the Real Doll website offered when they were looking at possible Biancas: eight bodies, fourteen faces, five skin colors, five eye colors ("The Real Story of Lars and the Real Girl" [00:05:56]).

(00:20:59) and therefore does not speak much English, thus explaining her silence. He also shares that she uses a wheelchair that was stolen along with her luggage en route to meet Lars. With this information, Lars both cleverly justifies Bianca's inability to walk and explains why she only has the clothes on her back. When read together, many of Bianca's biographical details might seem more than coincidental, and they are. After meeting Bianca, Gus goes on the Real Doll website to get more information about the doll, and he and the viewer are presented with the backstories of a few other dolls available for purchase. Natasha was forced to strip for the Russian mob but has escaped and is looking for an "American male to love" (00:25:07). Midori is a successful business professional from Tokyo, but "unsatisfied as a woman" (00:25:17), and Tammy is a cowgirl who joined the rodeo but might be tamed by the "right cowboy" (00:25:25). Now, Bianca's half-Danish/half-Brazilian heritage, coupled with her religious upbringing, come into sharper focus.

It is logical to assume that Bianca's "biography" is, therefore, one of the multiple male fantasy narratives written by the company to market the dolls. What is striking and supremely quixotic is that Lars interprets Bianca's "life" literally, avoiding its sexual valence and erotic implications. In sharp contrast to the narratives that both objectify and overly sexualize these dolls, Lars reframes the inherited backstory to make it better fit his own, non-salacious, objectives. Here, he is like Don Quixote, whose chivalric idealization of women frequently removes them far from the sexual sphere (e.g., the prostitutes are *doncellas*). But if reading chivalric tales literally is a hallmark of Don Quixote's existence and the basis for the repeated clashes with the real world, Lars's "authorial" additions about the need for a wheelchair and Bianca's lost luggage are an attempt to fill holes in the fictional narrative, in order to make everything as *real* or believable to others as it already is to him. Unlike Cervantes's protagonist, Lars is successfully pulling Bianca out of the fantasy world to inhabit the real world, and he does so on his own terms.

Don Quixote also adds certain details to his own narrative to accommodate the various realities with which he clashes as he performs his role as a knight errant. Perhaps the best illustration of this tendency is the evil magician Frestón, invoked as Quixote's excuse when reality and fantasy clash or when he fails or is embarrassed. Having Frestón as an enemy helps him justify how or why his perception or understanding of reality differs from anyone else's. For example, he says to Sancho: "aquel sabio Frestón

que me robó el aposento y los libros ha vuelto estos gigantes en molinos, por quitarme la Gloria de su vencimiento” (I, 8; 146). Unlike Lars, however, he admits to Dulcinea being an invented idea or a literary convention akin to the contrived beloveds of many of the famous poets. Don Quixote tells Sancho that it is sufficient for him to believe that Dulcinea exists and that Aldonza has the characteristics he attributes to her:

No, por cierto, sino que las más se las fingen por dar sujeto a sus versos, y porque los tengan por enamorados y por hombre que tiene valor para serlo. Y así, bástame a mí pensar y creer que la buena de Aldonza Lorenzo es hermosa y honesta, y en lo del linaje importa poco, que no de ir a hacer información del para darle algún hábito, y yo me hago cuenta que es la más alta princesa del mundo. (I, 25; 312)

Aldonza being a farm girl and from Toboso, known for its inhabitants of Muslim heritage, is inconsequential to Quixote’s estimation of her, just as it has no bearing on his use of her as the *real* stand-in for his rhetorically conjured Dulcinea. In a similar fashion, the erotic conventions of Bianca’s own “lineage” (presumably determined by the company’s website) is only significant to Lars to the extent that it allows him to impose a distinct, less sexually explicit identity for his girlfriend because he imposes a different interpretation. He never admits to or recognizes Bianca’s origins as a silicone sex doll.

The disparity between the details offered by Lars about Bianca and Bianca’s appearance gesture toward the marked difference between the idealized, chaste, and patently beautiful descriptions of Dulcinea offered by Don Quixote in multiple moments. The characterizations are also connected to Sancho’s description of Aldonza Lorenzo from chapter 25 of the first volume, part of which includes him characterizing her as “nada melindrosa, porque tiene mucho de cortesana” (311), which surely plays with the double meaning of *cortesana*.¹² The episode when Don Quixote encounters the

¹² Based on Sancho’s description of Aldonza, Mary Gossy argues for the consideration of a *butch-femme* dynamic represented by Aldonza and Dulcinea, respectively. This dual nature occupying one subject position, or at least represented as such, is seen as much in the Aldonza/Dulcinea of *Man of La Mancha* as in Lars’s Bianca.

Toledan merchants and demands that they declare Dulcinea the most beautiful maiden in the world is also germane here (I, 4; 121). The merchants demand some form or proof, like a portrait, because otherwise she could be “tuerta de un ojo” (I, 4; 122). In this instance for Don Quixote, there is only one permitted narrative and perception of Dulcinea: his own. As he makes clear, “la importancia está en que sin verla lo habéis de creer” (I, 4; 121). Similarly, Lars is the one who establishes the parameters of Bianca’s identity and existence. The fact that Bianca is *real*, that is, corporeal (even if made of silicone) and physically present makes for a more verisimilar approach than anything Don Quixote can rhetorically create. No matter how firmly he believes his description of Dulcinea and vociferously attempts to impose his imagined reality on others, he is only using words, and we see that their effects on everyone else are limited.

Within the context of perception and belief, we can discern another coincidence between *LRG* and *Don Quixote* related to what Dulcinea/Bianca represents for Don Quixote/Lars—or at least what others might think these women symbolize. When Gus and Karin ask what appears to be the advisory council of the church Lars attends for help going along with his delusion, one of the men interjects: “She’s a golden calf!” to which another responds defensively: “He’s not worshipping her, they’re just dating.” (00:37:11). A similar situation takes place between Don Quixote and a traveler he encounters en route to the shepherd Grisóstomo’s funeral. This traveler, familiar with a number of chivalric tales, questions how knights errant, before undertaking some dangerous action, always commend themselves to their beloveds and not to God: “cuando se ven en ocasión de acometer una grande y peligrosa aventura, en que se vee manifiesto peligro de perder la vida [...] antes se encomiendan a sus damas, con tanta gana y devoción como si ellas fueran su Dios: cosa que me parece que huele algo a gentilidad” (I, 8; 184). The fear of Bianca being the object of Lars’s idolatry and the critique of perceived pagan behavior of knights errant in *Don Quixote* reveal the preoccupation with channeling devotion and desire inappropriately according to the Christian context established in both works. To elevate anything above God suggests a perversion of the Christian paradigm that undergirds Lars and Quixote’s identities. In clear contrast with most of Quixote’s family and friends, however, Lars’s church community and his family fully embrace his perception of Bianca as human, and they are able to

look beyond her inherent sexual identity, perhaps because she attends Sunday services with him.

Physically present and increasingly treated as more “real” throughout the film, Bianca differs from the imaginary Dulcinea and the real, but only described, Aldonza. Bianca takes on a life of her own, accepting invitations to model clothes in a shop window twice a week, volunteering to visit sick children at the hospital, and even being elected to the school board. It is, therefore, natural to infer that Bianca is the real girl from the title, given that Lars and many other characters treat her as if she were real and because she is a product called a Real Doll. However, *LRG* incorporates another important female character, Margo (Kelli Garner), who sings in the choir at church, is Lars’s co-worker, and who emerges as Bianca’s most serious rival for the title of “real girl.” In Margo’s first scene—notably before Lars even knows that Real Dolls exist—she says hello to Lars outside of church. He has just been given a flower by a parishioner so he can give it to someone he likes. Upon being greeted by Margo, Lars, supremely uncomfortable at the prospect of talking to her, flings the flower away, turns tail, and runs. Later, the secretary at work tells Lars that he should consider asking out the “new girl,” that is, Margo. Lars is silent and stone-faced at this suggestion. In another scene, Lars stares blankly at Margo when she proposes that they carpool to work.

Margo occupies the position of the traditional girl next door, a common figure in romantic comedy films. She is attractive, if considerably plainer than Bianca, and a bit awkward. Lars keeps his distance from the outgoing, kind, and quirky Margo, and this aloofness only increases when Bianca arrives on the scene. Margo is clearly interested in Lars, but when he announces he has a girlfriend, she turns her attention to someone else: another co-worker, Erik, who seems to be a placeholder for Lars. He is the opposite of Lars in terms of personality, and Margo is clearly trying to make Lars jealous when she introduces them. This seems to work because Lars squeezes Erik’s hand very hard when they shake hands, barely grunts a hello, and surveys him suspiciously. While Lars may not yet be prepared to actively pursue a relationship with Margo, he does show interest. Much like the tropes of a romantic comedy, his interest grows when he sees the “girl next door” with someone else. Lars sees Erik as a rival of sorts, and his crushing handshake is a display of strength and masculinity.

The way Lars forcefully throws the flower away when Margo greets him at the start of the film and how he freezes when the receptionist suggests that they date hint at Lars's interest in Margo, even if unconscious or repressed. In addition, his reactions make patent his arrested social-emotional development. The film carefully allows for Lars to become closer to Margo, with Lars comforting her when she breaks up with Erik. The timing of this is significant because it occurs as the distance between Lars and Bianca begins to increase. Bianca has a multitude of commitments that often do not include Lars, and they have begun to argue. It becomes apparent that Bianca has been Lars's way of rehearsing a dating relationship—of expanding his ability to be emotionally vulnerable and more socially engaged. Lars and Margo finally spend time together on a platonic date when Bianca is at a school board meeting. After a night of bowling and having a good time together, Lars makes clear to Margo at the end of the evening that he does not want to give her the wrong idea because he would never cheat on Bianca. Akin to the multiple instances of Don Quixote's chaste devotion to Dulcinea in the face of perceived temptation, Lars is ever loyal to his beloved, even if, as he reveals to Dr. Berman, Bianca has turned down his marriage proposal. Importantly, Margo reacts by saying she would never try to make Lars cheat on Bianca, making apparent that she and Lars share the same values. This scene ends with Lars shaking hands with Margo, seemingly without the pain that skin-to-skin contact usually causes him. Lars's therapy is having positive effects, and Margo is becoming someone with whom he can interact with relative ease.

Imitation and Difference

Lars and Don Quixote's actions manifest a need for performative imitation on each of their parts. In the case of *Don Quixote*, the knight's reliance on and attempt to recreate chivalric tales is evident from the earliest chapters. This mimetic desire reaches one of its peaks in the Sierra Morena when Quixote speaks extensively about his beliefs about Dulcinea, as well as his desire to imitate two other paragons of knight errantry. Don Quixote admits to Sancho: "quiero imitar a Amadís, haciendo aquí del desesperado, del sandio y del furioso, por imitar juntamente al valiente don Roldán" (I, 25; 303-04). Quixote's mimetic aspirations, based on stories of Amadís of Gaul and Orlando Furioso, form a part of his plan to do penance and to woo

Dulcinea by showing that he is willing to go crazy. He says to Sancho: “Loco soy, loco he de ser hasta tanto que tú vuelvas con la respuesta de una carta que contigo pienso enviar a mi señora Dulcinea; y si fuere tal cual a mi fe se le debe, acabarse ha mi sandez y mi penitencia; y si fuere al contrario, seré loco de veras, y siéndolo, no sentiré nada” (I, 25; 304). He admits to performing and imitating literary *locura*, and he entertains the possibility of truly going crazy in order to demonstrate his love for Dulcinea: “y ésa es la fineza de mi negocio; que volverse loco un caballero andante con causa, ni grado ni gracias: el toque está desatinar sin ocasión y dar a entender a mi dama que si en seco hago esto, ¿qué hiciera en mojado?” (I, 25; 304). The boundary between seeming crazy and being crazy has entirely disappeared for anyone who observes the knight’s actions, yet Don Quixote distinguishes between choosing to perform as if he were crazy and the palpable reality that indicates that he already might be *loco*.

Lars also displays a penchant for the mimetic in his relationship with Bianca, but, as we have seen, he tends to draw on the tropes of a standard romantic comedy or dating scenario. He brings Bianca to the woods and treehouse where he played as a child because she has been asking him all about his childhood. While in the woods, Lars seems to be performing the role of a courting suitor, serenading Bianca with Nat King Cole’s “L.O.V.E” and boasting about his physical prowess: “You should watch me chop wood, too. I’m really good at it.” (00:43:35). He takes on the role of the jealous boyfriend when Bianca is too busy with her other social obligations to spend time with him. They argue with each other, even when no one is present. We even come to find out that Lars has asked Bianca to marry him and that she has rejected the proposal. To the extent that a relationship with a love doll can be real, it seems to be so, insofar as Lars has imitated the ups and downs of a “typical” 21st-century relationship, from meeting on the Internet, to the honeymoon phase, the emotional intimacy, interpersonal complexity, and, ultimately, the conflict and decline of the relationship.

Within this context of imitation, the one direct intertextual moment of *Don Quixote* in the film, though brief, takes on more significance. Situated almost at the middle of the film’s two-hour run time, it is immediately preceded by a long shot of their home and the frozen terrain from which we jump cut to Lars reading aloud to Bianca from an English translation of the *Quixote*: “Y así, se entretenía paseándose por el pradecillo, escribiendo y grabando por las cortezas de los árboles y por la menuda arena muchos

versos, todos acomodados a su tristeza, y algunos en alabanza de Dulcinea” (I, 36; 319).¹³ This excerpt from Don Quixote’s time in the Sierra Morena is highly suggestive in terms of the themes of madness and love. Prior to his carving on trees and writing in the sand and in advance of Sancho’s departure to deliver a missive to Dulcinea, Don Quixote admits his plans to imitate Amadís and Orlando discussed above. Gosling’s choice of the section that Lars reads also situates us in the part of the novel where the Priest and Barber have crossed paths with Sancho, and he tells them all about Don Quixote’s letter (lost and poorly memorized) to Dulcinea and about his master’s “crazy” antics in the Sierra Morena. It is the section of the text where the Priest and Barber devise their plan to dress up and create a story that would enable them to bring Don Quixote home, in hope of curing him. That is, while Don Quixote is attempting to imitate his idols, the Priest and the Barber are also imitating and staging the chivalric tales that comprise Don Quixote’s reality. Lars’s reading from *Don Quixote* might be considered too “on the nose” for some, like the critic who states that he “could have done without the bit when Lars reads Bianca to sleep with *Don Quixote* – that self-consciousness poking through” (Hanks). However, this quick wink and nod to the attentive viewer is supremely Cervantine, and intertextuality is an undeniable aspect of the *Quixote*. That it is a moment focused on reading—and more specifically on reading aloud—highlights yet another thematic parallel with Cervantes’s novel. The metafictional nature of this reference to the novel is also one of the few moments when the viewer is potentially jostled out of this verisimilar world in which Bianca is essentially real for everyone. This scene also opens up evocative interpretational possibilities for the themes of madness, love, and fantasy, as I have been attempting to show. It is a pivotal moment in the film because it is not long after this that the relationship between Lars and Bianca begins to manifest more problems. As with Don Quixote, so with Lars, the imaginary world of the male-constructed feminine ideal proves unsustainable, ultimately provoking crises that threaten to overturn each

¹³ In an interview, director Craig Gillespie mentions that including this intertextual reference was Ryan Gosling’s idea (14:20). Interviewer J. Robert Davis mentions that the allusion is subtle (15:07) and sees Lars as akin to Don Quixote “fashioning his reality and other people coming alongside of that” (15:36). <http://www.erratamag.com/podcast/audio/Episode-006-Craig-Gillespie.mp3>.

hero's world. The crisis leads to each protagonists' ultimate renunciation of his fantasy and the existential consequences that this decision entails.

Endings

For Lars, Bianca has been a way to rehearse a relationship and functions as a bridge for his blossoming relationship with Margo. But for reality, sanity, and hence a form of order to be restored, in concert with the tropes of a romantic comedy, Bianca must ultimately go, an outcome foreshadowed by her apparent rejection of Lars's marriage proposal and their frequent arguments. The sudden development that moves this film more into the realm of drama is when Lars reveals that Bianca is very sick, precipitating a call to 911 and a visit to the hospital. After a rather short illness, Bianca dies in a poignant scene in which Lars kisses her goodbye, the first and only kiss they share on screen. An emotional funeral gathers all of Lars and Bianca's friends. The pastor reminds everyone in attendance of the transformative power Bianca had on the entire community ("She was a lesson in courage" [00:39:22]) and how much she loved Lars. Like any other member of the community, she is buried in the cemetery. The final scene is graveside, with Lars and Margo chatting and deciding to go for a walk instead of heading to the post-funeral gathering. The film moves rather quickly from Bianca's illness to her death, but the breakdown of her relationship with Lars has been building for some time. Lars appears to replace Bianca with Margo just as quickly, which may be disconcerting. However, this kind of "happy ending" points again to the pull of the romantic comedy model that, in part, undergirds the film. Not only that, the film cannot end with Lars married to a sex doll, because that would likely be too odd or risqué for many filmgoers. It seems that Lars decides that Bianca is sick and should die because he no longer needs her. Now, suddenly and surprisingly, he is delusion-free and able to hold hands with Margo without any discomfort. Lars is not "crazy" anymore. With hints that he and Margo will begin their romantic relationship, the couple can be inserted into a traditional heterosexual male-female relationship dynamic, the kind of fare appropriate for an American romantic comedy film. There is closure, but the film gets us to this ending rather precipitously.

Something similar could be said about how *Don Quixote* ends. Like Lars being "cured," the return of Don Quixote's *cordura* seems sudden; like

Bianca's, the knight's death, though anticipated still comes across as abrupt. While Cervantes provides us with plenty of evidence that depression has overcome Don Quixote after his defeat by Sansón/Knight of the White Moon, the move from depression to death can catch many readers by surprise, even though the prologue to Part II announces that Don Quixote will be dead at the end. Don Quixote's confession, drafting of a will, and complete renunciation of books of chivalry indicate his reinsertion into his life as Alonso Quijano. Don Quixote says: "Yo fui loco, y ya cuerdo; fui don Quijote de la Mancha, y soy agora, como he dicho, Alonso Quijano el Bueno" (II, 74; 575-76). The act of proclaiming that he is cured and that he is Alonso Quijano again, coupled with his religious confession and the drafting of his will represent an almost complete return to normal. Quijano, though still referred to as Don Quixote by the narrator after stating he is Alonso Quijano again, is at home, apparently mentally stable, and welcomed back into the bosom of the Church.

In a way similar to how Don Quixote determines and declares that he is cured of his *locura*, Lars determines the state of Bianca's health and when her life will end. Bianca's illness and death are entirely a product of Lars's narrative about her. When Lars's family demands that Dr. Berman explain how Bianca can be sick and dying, she replies: "I'm not letting it happen. It's Lars. It's always been Lars. He's making the decisions" (01:30:47). Both Don Quixote and Lars choose how their stories will progress and end, just as they decided the way their stories would begin. These choices reinsert the works into more familiar and, perhaps, acceptable paradigms for their respective contemporary audiences. The rebellious Don Quixote renounces his knightly identity and denounces the chivalric tales that fueled his desire to seek out adventures. By enacting the rituals of confession and drawing up a will, Alonso Quijano is reinserted into the narrative appropriate for a 17th-century hidalgo: at home, reconciled with the Church, and legally passing on his property. The disorder that Don Quixote has represented throughout the course of the novel is replaced by the order and stability signified by Alonso Quijano's end-of-life actions. In an analogous fashion, the ending of *LRG* pivots away from the quirky, kinky, and dramatic tropes that have been present since the start, and viewers are returned to the certainty of the romantic comedy framework.

Lars and the Real Girl moves across the boundaries of the romantic, the comedic, and the dramatic, and in that sense is very much like *Don*

Quixote, incorporating and blurring the lines between and among various genres in productive ways. The film is about love, but it is also about being different, the bonds of family and friendship, and how people respond to having an atypical person in their midst. In all these ways, *LRG* is punctuated by unwitting quixotic leitmotifs, alongside clear thematic affinities with the novel. Reading the film through the critical lens of *Don Quixote* reveals its multi-layered structure and demonstrates how these themes have both endured and morphed in critically fruitful ways over the centuries. Lars is not meant to be Don Quixote, but he shares with the Manchegan knight the ability to have us reflect on what determines identity as well as the transformative power and limits of the imagination. The inclusion of the excerpt from *Don Quixote* not only shows Ryan Gosling's interpretative intuition, but also provides viewers with a lens that adds depth and breadth to the film, dimensions often denied the romantic comedy genre. This quixotic optic creates the opportunity for critical interventions that link the plots of the film and the novel in revealing and productive ways.

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Women's Mental Health Advocacy in *Lars and the Real Girl* and the *Don Quixote* Connection

Bonnie L. Gasior
California State University, Long Beach

Given the depth and breadth of a now four-hundred-year-old *Don Quixote*, it is no surprise that Cervantes's acclaimed seventeenth-century Spanish masterpiece continues to shape the world's literary landscape to such an extent that few narrative expressions subsequent to it escape its influence. Harold Bloom's hyperbolic, nautical metaphor in *The Guardian*, for example, describes *Don Quixote's* anticipatory impact: "this great book contains within itself all the novels that have followed in its sublime wake." Furthermore, the novel has shown no signs of propagation fatigue, as it continues, in the words of Dale Shuger, to reflect, refract and refashion (3), especially in the 20th century and beyond. From prose works (Acker, Flaubert, Unamuno) to Broadway musicals (*Man of La Mancha*) to cartoons series ("The Adventures of Don Coyote and Sancho Panda"), *Don Quixote* transcends temporal, cultural, linguistic and artistic boundaries, and its progeny attests to the grandeur of what is arguably the first and most celebrated modern novel within the Hispanic tradition. Carlos Fuentes, for instance, praises *Don Quixote* in his review of Edith Grossman's translation in the *New York Times* for its accomplishment of a literary first in 1605, which stems from a spatial-temporal confluence as "a reflection of our presence in the world as problematic beings in an unending history, whose continuity depends on subjecting reality to the imagination." Don Quixote, both the text and the character, stands a metaphor for the human condition as well as figures as a byproduct of the boundless nature of the fertile mind, which as a result puts into perspective this special number of *Laberinto* devoted to "Reinventing Don Quixote in Cultural Production."

The ubiquity of *Don Quijote* substantiates its scholarly and mass appeal, which explains its effortless ability to inspire other, original works of art (Shuger 172), such as plays, musical performances, paintings, illustrations and other novels across time, cultures and languages. Within the global cinematographic tradition, scores of movies have been made about the novel—*The Man Who Killed Don Quijote* (2018); *The Ingenious Gentleman of La Mancha* (2015); *Lost in La Mancha* (2002); *Don Quijote calbaga de nuevo* (1973)—

and its topics therein (e.g. sanity, madness, friendship, love, comedy, tragedy).¹ In addition to these adaptations, countless other films, perhaps due to these universal themes inherent to the arts, either have or could be argued to have parallels with *Don Quixote*. As Barbara Simerka and Christopher Weimer affirm, such similarities serve to demonstrate how “certain tactics employed by Cervantes in his early modern bestselling novel nowadays characterize some of the most overtly postmodern aspects of popular contemporary films” (“Defying” 281). Numerous scholars, including Simerka and Weimer, as well as Bruce Burningham, have fleshed out these affinities.² Burningham, for example, cites the “intertextual dialogue” (“Walt Disney’s” 158) that seemingly transpires between Cervantes and Andrew Stanton, the screenwriter of *Toy Story* (1995), while Simerka and Weimer, by way of *Adaptation* (2002) and *Stranger Than Fiction* (2006), identify some common “epistemological instabilities” (“Duplicitous” 99) and a shared “reflexivity” (“Defying” 295). Indeed, postmodernity, in the broadest of senses, is the thread that weaves through and ultimately creates a seam between page and *pantalla*. In his article “The Literary Classics in Today’s Classroom: Don Quixote and Road Movies,” David Castillo makes a case for regarding road trip movies like *Easy Rider* (1969), *Thelma and Louise* (1991) and *The Motorcycle Diaries* (2004) as Don Quixote-friendly: “I would claim that these are all potentially “productive” explorations of the Cervantine classic insofar as they direct our attention to different, but equally significant, dimensions of the novel” (37). His rationale for integrating film into (and beyond) the literature classroom could apply, in fact, to any cinematic endeavor that, either directly or indirectly, engages with the *Quixote*.³

¹ See Abril Sánchez, Albrecht, and Burningham (“Crouching”) for additional film versions.

² Other noteworthy studies include those by Domínguez, Rodríguez-Romaguera, and Wade.

³ I teach at a “research-driven, teaching-intensive” institution and am keenly aware of the challenges inherent to teaching the novel in a few months, let alone incorporating outside material such as film. One way to approach this is to assign students a comparative research assignment, which forces them to read carefully and look for parallels beyond but also including the text, as Patricia Manning proposes: “In incorporating multimedia, not only does my class have plenty of time to dedicate to the Quijote, but students also interact more fruitfully with the text as a result of these comparisons to contemporary life” (65).

Lars and the Real Girl (2007), starring Ryan Gosling as the socially inhibited Lars Lindstrom, is a relevant cinematic feat that fits Castillo's bill. Despite the film's positive critical reception—including an 81% “Fresh” rating on Rotten Tomatoes—scholarly response has been limited to Tony Hughes-D'Aeth's psychoanalytic interpretation, Eunjung Kim's as well as Nicole Markotić's disability studies approaches and Claire Sisco King and Isaac West's queering of the film. Additionally, comparative studies between the movie and Cervantes's masterpiece remain unconsidered, despite several parallels, including settings in remote geographical locations (La Mancha and northern Wisconsin, respectively); townspeople who judge Lars's and Don Quixote's questionable state of mind (a case of “el qué dirán” versus *schadenfreude*); and objects of the protagonists' affection (Dulcinea and Bianca, respectively) that do not exist in the flesh. Lars himself is a sort of social misfit, like his Manchegan counterpart, whose motives, actions and *raison d'être* drive the plot yet often perplex those around him.

The Internet Movie Data Base (IMDb) describes the Hollywood production as one about “A delusional young man (who) strikes up an unconventional relationship with a doll he finds on the Internet” (“*Lars*”). The life-sized, bombshell human replica in question, Bianca, whose plump lips and doe eyes signal a willingness to please, are directly proportional to her anatomical correctness. While our societal expectations may lead us to obvious conclusions regarding Lars's decision to mail-order a prefabricated companion, we soon understand that Bianca is a sex doll in name only, as her physical contact with Lars is limited to subtle displays of affection and innocent handholding, which recall the notion of chastity her name implies.⁴ For Lars, Bianca is more of a security blanket and less an allusion to satin sheets: rather than fulfill a corporal need, she satisfies an emotional void that gradually, albeit comically and at times painfully, allows Lars to learn about relationships, including the one he has with his brother Gus and his wife, Karin, in order to eventually develop one of his own. Although never labeled with a disorder, Lars apparently suffers from some unnamed affliction—a condition located somewhere between autism, Asperger's and PTSD—and

⁴ Bianca, meaning “white” or “pure,” was raised by nuns in a convent, according to Lars. Due to their shared moral compass, Lars asks his sister-in-law, Karin, to allow Bianca to stay in his mother's old bedroom in the main house rather than with him in the guest quarters.

his past includes traumatic milestones such as losing his mother at birth, growing up with a despondent father who perhaps felt resentment toward his infant son, and being abandoned by the rebellious, egotist-turned-family-man-just-a-few-years-too-late Gus. Indeed, *Lars and the Real Girl* is about life, love, and community and pushes the boundaries of reality in ways that explore the heart and mind rather than the pleasures of the body.

Neither don Quixote nor Lars, notwithstanding their disparate cultural milieu and expectations, act in a way that society would deem "normal." Specifically, their inability to forge and sustain appropriate romantic relationships figures as a shared, defining characteristic. While Lars's interpersonal issues, particularly those with women, clearly stem from his turbulent childhood, the source of Don Quixote's remains debatable. Numerous critics have examined the psychological underpinnings of Don Quixote's motivations and limitations regarding carnal encounters. One could make the courtly love case, that Don Quixote, as an imitator of knight errantry, is destined to aspire to but never consummate a sexual relationship. Dulcinea, a figment of his imagination, therefore allows him to operate within a heterosexual economy without commitments, follow through or judgment. What other reasons might be preventing the eccentric Manchegan from marriage? Consider, for example, the ruminations of Daniel Eisenberg, which suggest a latent homosexuality:

He is near fifty, but is still a virgin, perhaps impotent with women. He has never been married, nor does marriage or reproduction interest him. Don Quijote prefers the all-male world of his beloved chivalric books, in which the adult knight is served by a boy squire [...]. Don Quijote cherishes the female ideal or archetype (Dulcinea), but real women do not interest him. (48)

Carroll Johnson, meanwhile, takes a psychoanalytic approach in his *Madness and Lust: A Psychoanalytical Approach to Don Quijote*, in which he targets don Quixote's live-in niece, who, he argues, incites his sexual frustration and a series of repressive displacement as the root of his inability to have sexual partners. Both of these theories relate to what James Parr has termed "the flight from the feminine" (17). Whatever the motive for his neurosis, Cervantes's protagonist's gynophobia is a critical goldmine for a twenty-first

century reader, in the same way that Lars's inhibitions inform gender and gender roles for a moviegoer counterpart.

Bianca becomes co-protagonist of Lars's story, much in the same way Dulcinea legitimizes Don Quixote's quest and whom Martha García refers to as "la meta, el objetivo, el objeto del deseo" (19). In recent years, scholars have turned their attention to female characters of the novel and felicitously reevaluated their impact within its pages, from their status as problematic presences to glaring absences. Ruth El Saffar, for example, argues that Cervantes parodies the sexual convention of damsels in distress (206), which shifts the focus, and agency, to women. This sort of approach, which challenges the notion of a "male-based reading" (207) and whereby sexual politics are often overlooked, provides insight into gender roles and how certain authors use storylines to subvert them. El Saffar rightly concludes that by reexamining Cervantes's female characters of the *Quixote* in what she might call a "female-based reading," we can reframe women's roles in that "the real power that belongs to the 'defenseless' women over whom the men ostensibly struggle" (217). Most critics would agree, then, that Cervantes views women in a favorable light, despite—and perhaps as a reaction to—the rigid social conventions that often restricted, subjugated and silenced them. Even as far back as 1926, in "*Woman in Don Quixote*,"⁵ Edith Cameron identifies thirty-seven salient female characters in the novel and concludes, after glossing each one, that Cervantes "has a democratic and reverent attitude toward womanhood" (157). Caroline Nadeau succinctly puts the critical verdict into perspective: "While Cervantes cannot fully break from the culturally established norms for women, he does attempt to open spaces for rethinking these social conventions" (20).

Bianca is therefore for Lars what Dulcinea is for Don Quixote: a means that enables and facilitates elusive sociability. Just as Lars gives life to (and depends on) Bianca to help forge a more publicly acceptable existence (which is not without irony), Don Quixote envisions Dulcinea to justify—not to mention validate—his anachronistic proclivity to knight errantry. These "women" have a profound effect on their male counterparts, and as

⁵ Cameron uses the Castilian spelling in her article.

the respective plots develop, we read about and bear witness to others functioning as catalysts in the lives of both.⁶

In *Lars and the Real Girl*, women—and their actions—drive the plot. They are life enriching if not sustaining agents, beginning with Bianca and extending to three other key female figures in the film: Lars's sister-in-law, Karin (Emily Mortimer); Lars's psychologist Dagmar (Patricia Clarkson); and Lars's co-worker and secret admirer, Margo (Kelli Garner). Several secondary, female characters offer countenance to Lars as the film progresses. These women's collective efforts, manifest as empowering words and enabling actions, stand in stark contrast to the intolerance of their incredulous male counterparts, who can only be critical of what they perceive as Lar's mental imbalance. The men's eventual cooperation comes not as a realization of their own misinterpretation and insensitivity but rather a reluctant indulgence to these same women who gradually help Lars overcome his emotionally stunted state by working with his delusion rather than against it. This article, as such, suggests a gender commentary continuum between *Don Quixote* and *Lars and the Real Girl*. While Cervantes hints that society (erroneously) understood women in the early modern Spanish period as problematic presences (Marcela), glaring absences (Dulcinea), or monstrosities (The Dutchess),⁷ *Lars and the Real Girl* underscores and promotes women's influence and authority as compulsory for a functioning, productive and healthy society. In their book *When Women Work Together*, Carolyn Duff and Barbara Cohen confirm that women recognize the value of cooperation (117) since success is only proportional to group harmony, which can only be attained by forging connections (36). In other words, while Cervantes's *Don Quixote* brings women's roles to light as an exercise in critical contemplation, Nancy Oliver and Craig Gillespie, the screenwriter and director, respectively, of *Lars and the Real Girl*, demonstrate that a community's welfare is a product of and many times ensured by women's compassion, empathy, connections and collaborations. Although Oliver and Cervantes present their female characters differently, both hint that a well-

⁶ While Bianca has a curative effect, Dulcinea's influence is more ambivalent. While the latter gives Don Quixote a purpose, her elusiveness also causes him great anguish.

⁷ Ruth El Saffar points out the shift from Part I to II, the latter of which shows that "women take on monstrously, overwhelming powerful roles" (219).

functioning society depends on the integrative and restorative powers of women.

Despite their portrayal in this film, Lars Lindstrom is terrified of women, and his gynophobia manifests in the opening scene. Lars stands before and stares out a window from the comfort of his quarters, and we, as spectators, assume he is bracing himself for a cold, winter day.⁸ Instead, however, we come to understand that Lars's fear is the outside world in general and his sister-in-law, Karin, in particular, who lives in the main house of the property she shares with Lars's brother. Just as Lars musters the courage to venture out, she intercepts him in his driveway. This represents her first of two attempts—the second of which results in a full-body tackle—to invite him to a meal as a way to nurture a relationship with her eye-contact-avoiding, incessantly fidgeting, and flight-prone relative. Karin initially represents a double threat to Lars as both a woman and a mother-to-be; she is a reminder of his own mother, her tragic death and his mother-less childhood. Soon, however, Karin—whose name evokes the adjective “caring”—proves to be Lars's greatest ally by accepting his choices and limitations, and educating the men around her as Lars recovers.⁹

The men of the movie, in contrast, brood over Lars's behavior. When Gus, Karin's husband and Lars's brother, exclaims, “He's out of his mind [...]. My little brother is totally insane,” referring to Lars's decision to order a blow-up doll and treat her as a real-life girlfriend, Karin first pacifies her disturbed husband, quickly disregards his hyperbolic comments and instead tolerates Lars's fantasy (“*Lars*”). Upon seeing Bianca's positive effect on Lars, she sees his happiness, as inexplicable as it may seem, as more important than adhering to arbitrary social codes. The fact that when Lars first brings Bianca to the main house one evening and asks to see Karin, although Gus has answered the door, demonstrates that Lars, too, realizes that in order to forge a romantic relationship with a woman, he must first cultivate platonic relationships with women.

⁸ Lars lives in the garage guesthouse on the property while Karin and Gus share the larger, adjacent main house the siblings inherited from their parents.

⁹ Alongside Karin, two other one-scene women in the film, a church parishioner and his office receptionist, attempt to bring Lars out of his shell early on by hinting at Margo's romantic availability.

Karin's underlying concern, however, prompts her to suggest that Bianca, not Lars, see a doctor. By focusing on Bianca in this way, she deflects any negative attention from Lars, who, as a result, serendipitously learns about ensuring the welfare of others as well as his own in a less threatening way. Dagmar, the physician/psychiatrist in question whose Scandinavian name coincidentally translates as "mother," shows no sign of incredulity or alarm upon meeting Lars and Bianca. Instead, she casually diagnoses Lars as having a delusion disorder and rationalizes his mental illness by calling it a "communication facilitator" ("*Lars*"). When Gus asks when Lars's delusions will stop—yet another instance of emerging male anxiety—the doctor replies straightforwardly, "as soon as he doesn't need it anymore" ("*Lars*"). Dagmar suggests they acquiesce to Lars's delusion as part of his recovery, which Gus does not hesitate to lament. Even a professional diagnosis cannot dissuade Gus from worrying that "Everyone is going to laugh at him" ("*Lars*"). His skepticism in conjunction with his reductionist attitude toward Bianca causes him to refer to her disparagingly as "a big, plastic thing" ("*Lars*"). As Gus worries about what people will think, Karin and Dagmar express more concern with what *Lars* is thinking. In Gus's defense, he does attempt to learn about his brother's affliction by reading books on the subject and performing online searches, but he does not engage Lars. While Karin and the other women confront Lars directly and intrepidly because they realize this is a human issue, Gus prefers to arrive at an arm's-length understanding through science. Gus' efforts, therefore, end up being more for his own peace of mind than his brother's benefit.

As the storyline develops, the locals grow accustomed to, yet not fully accepting of, Lars's interactions and outings with Bianca. At a certain holiday party, Bianca becomes the center of attention, both positive and negative. While female community members become more tolerant of her presence, as is the case when they complement her flattering outfit, the men can only huddle together and spew demeaning sexual slurs. The celebratory spirit and spirits incite them to refer to her as a "total babe" and "hot," and then, as if adding insult to injury, they ponder her flexibility as they fantasize from across the room ("*Lars*"). Up to this point, the film's men have figured as the antithesis of their female counterparts in terms of communication, acceptance and assistance. Their disparaging remarks, incredulous states, and cynical attitudes function to not only highlight their lack of sensitivity and empathy but also, by default, to underscore women's lenience and solidarity.

In a peripheral scene about halfway through the film, Lars tenderly reads to Bianca in her bedroom, and the most overt connection between novel and film materializes. Only a handful of words have screen time in a blink-and-you'll-miss-them moment, but the attentive viewer will recognize their deliberate and relevant nature, albeit fragmented and slightly out of order: "And so he solaced with himself with pacing up and down a little meadow [...] in praise of Dulcinea. But what distressed him greatly was not having another hermit there to confess him" ("*Lars*"). Some four hundred years after its publication, Lars Lindstrom chooses Book I, chapter 26, titled "In which the elegant deeds performed by an enamoured Don Quixote in the Sierra Morena Continue" from which to quote (1, 26; 205). This episode represents the fulcrum of Part I (of fifty-two total chapters), just as this scene halves the movie. Don Quixote's self-imposed penance signals a catalytic moment in his trajectory, just as Lars's lecture infers a change by association. In the second half of the movie, Lars's evolution grows increasingly palpable, and Bianca's purpose within his life shifts. While I do not claim this scene as pivotal to appreciating the film, the reference to Don Quixote and the allusion to his atonement does liken Lars's condition to psychological reparations he endures ("playing a lover") in order to become a better-functioning adult, and Bianca, like her literary counterpart, Dulcinea, will play opposite his role.

As the pair's relationship persists, a group of townswomen decides to help Lars in their own way by volunteering Bianca at a school and as a storefront mannequin at a mall. They tone down her hair and clothing and welcome her into their church group, as if she were a living being. By repurposing Bianca in this way—treating her as a functioning member of society who has other social relationships, a job and responsibilities—Lars learns that (romantic) relationships are complex and often fraught with adversity. The time they spent apart also exacerbates fissures in the relationship, including those that previously bonded Lars to his own fear, which he now is forced to confront. In order to reinforce Lars's sense of self, the women ensure that Bianca arrives home late, and Lars, as a result, disengages from her. Lars soon realizes that he, too, can and must function independently of his girlfriend and instead interact more with others. His insight coincides with increased encounters with co-worker Margo, a more suitable, real-life potential match for Lars. Margo, to whom the film likely owes its title, is never aggressive, overt or selfish in her pursuit of Lars. She

recognizes Lars's delicate emotional state and knows to respect it. Even at the moment the spectator realizes they will pair off, Margo remains a background character who observes and patiently waits, which is exactly what Lars needs; so in a sense, she, too, is instrumental in his recovery. Her perseverance ultimately allows Lars to acknowledge and accept, in his own time, the human bonds he yearned for but dreaded all his life due to circumstances beyond his control.

This scene in the film is a turning point and signals Lars's long-awaited catharsis thanks to the female characters' subtle, purposeful ingenuity as he unfastens the self-imposed shackles to Bianca. A group intervention they orchestrate ultimately destabilizes Lars's relationship and precipitates Bianca's departure. In an emotional scene, Lars takes Bianca to a lake—which recalls don Quixote's arrival on the beaches of Barcelona—to say goodbye. Lars's choice of locale is fitting since bodies of water in the Judeo-Christian tradition symbolize renewal, fecundity and growth.¹⁰ Lars's announcement of Bianca's "death" coincides with a friendly bowling outing with his co-worker/admirer, Margo, at which point he summarizes his girlfriend's purpose in the following way: "Bianca was a teacher; she was a lesson in courage" ("*Lars*"). I would alternatively argue that the principal female cast—Karin, Dagmar, and Margo—together imparted the lesson in question by working in tandem to provide life lessons for their on-and off-screen communities. Without ever saying a word, Bianca served as the foundation for the emotional support system Lars lacked all his life. While some might argue that Bianca figures no more than a symbol of the stereotypical, objectified, passive woman, I would instead underscore the ways she manages to effect change by uniting an entire community, to enable Lars, and to empower Margo, the unassuming "real girl" who has been standing in plain view the entire time.

Lars and the Real Girl and *Don Quixote* share several thematic similarities that could be developed in numerous critical directions, and I believe that the portrayal of the townswomen, both as individuals and a unit, allows the film's female cast, specifically when juxtaposed to the salient female characters in *Don Quixote*, to continue—if not cap—a dialogue about

¹⁰ J. E. Cirlot associates the lake with the "transition between life and death" and likens it to "a mirror, presenting an image of self-contemplation, consciousness and revelation" (175).

women's significant contributions and emerging societal roles as subjects. Although clinical studies have neither confirmed nor denied that men and women have similar empathic dispositions—questioning the belief that women, in fact, are superior to men in this aspect—Oliver and Gillespie's film hints that women, nevertheless, continue to be perceived culturally as better team players, perhaps because historically, that has been our societal default. Even the inanimate, wheelchair-bound Bianca, as Markotić points out, forms part of the small town, Midwest mental health literacy campaign, which ultimately ties into Lars's unconventional therapy: “the film also presents a town in need of overcoming its reactions to mental disability” (3). Contrastively, the men around Lars are depicted as puerile and close-minded, which prompts the women to throw down the gauntlet without hesitation. Furthermore, the aforementioned female ensemble of *Lars and the Real Girl* precipitates the protagonist's metaphorical rebirth, which without the power of a few determined, sympathetic women may have never occurred.¹¹ With these ideas in mind, the connection between *Don Quixote* and *Lars and the Real Girl* figures not only as a gender contemplation but also as an evolution. If Ruth El Saffar is correct in referring to women in *Don Quixote* as “what is left unsaid,” a reference to her eponymous article, then the female characters in *Lars and the Real Girl* have clearly picked up where Cervantes left off and are now speaking volumes.

¹¹ In contrast, *Don Quixote* is surrounded mostly by males (the priest, bachelor and barber) who misunderstand, belittle, tease and trick the (in)famous Manchegan, even when their intentions seem noble.

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La democratización del privilegio social en España y sus representaciones
en *Don Quijote*

Xabier Granja Ibarreche
University of Alabama

La nobleza española durante la edad moderna representa la culminación de diversos cambios culturales a lo largo de los siglos. Durante el medioevo la identidad masculina monástico-castrense tomó protagonismo entre los aristócratas, quienes estaban convencidos de que el combate físico era necesario para demostrar su poder. Para el siglo XVII un nuevo ideal cortesano urbano se arraiga en Europa, basado en obras de autores italianos que durante las últimas décadas del siglo XVI habían especificado comportamientos para hombres y mujeres basados en la medida y el autocontrol. Este arquetipo se fundamenta en estipulaciones clásicas sobre quién tiene acceso a la élite de la sociedad o la disparidad entre lo masculino y femenino y se propagan mediante tratados moralistas que encuentran una ávida audiencia lectora. Dichos textos reproducen el pensamiento clásico de dos maneras: por una parte, justifican la superioridad varonil estipulando acciones respetables para hombres honorables. Por otra parte, generan expectativas entre los varones educados de cultivar y exhibir autocontrol en todo momento. Durante el paso del siglo XVI al siglo XVII los requisitos de este ideal cortesano al que la aristocracia decide atenerse cambian progresivamente, lo que hace de esta identidad una más asequible a clases sociales inferiores.

Este desarrollo sociohistórico puede observarse en los textos de múltiples tratadistas, desde los más devotos a la religión cristiana como el vicario salmantino fray Martín de Córdoba, el arzobispo de Benevento Giovanni Della Casa, el monje benedictino Juan Benito Guardiola o el historiador franciscano Antonio de Guevara; hasta los que se interesaban más por la cultura cortesana aristocrática como el conde de Mantua Baldassare Castiglione, el humanista Lucas Gracián Dantisco o la condesa de Aranda Luisa de Padilla. El impacto de los cambios en las prácticas sociales españolas que identifican todos estos autores es tan profundamente influyente que Miguel de Cervantes los representó de múltiples formas en *Don Quijote de la Mancha* (1605). Como bien apunta Anthony J. Cascardi, el texto cervantino

es “a historically embedded work, as positioned within the large-scale transformation I have elsewhere described in terms of the social and historical conflict within early modern Spain between the 'old' and the 'new' [...] a newer, relatively less static (but also more prosaic) order controlled by the values of social class” (Cascardi 38). Esta conexión sociológica entre los cambios culturales aristocráticos y la literatura motiva este estudio, en el que ofrecemos un seguimiento cronológico de la democratización de los privilegios sociales aristocráticos en España.¹ Para ello, analizamos cómo progresa históricamente la concepción española de la nobleza y contrastamos este desarrollo con diferentes personajes que lo representan en la obra cervantina. En las próximas páginas se propone que los tratadistas áureos actualizan los ideales nobiliarios y subvierten las expectativas de lo que significa ser noble, sumergiendo a España en un proceso de globalización que adapta su realidad social a las alteraciones culturales de la Europa renacentista. A consecuencia de su representación paródica de diferentes niveles de la sociedad española, Cervantes impregna su texto con su interpretación de los requisitos necesarios para alcanzar el estatus aristocrático. Por ello, debemos considerar *Don Quijote de la Mancha* una ejemplar adaptación literaria de la progresiva democratización de los privilegios sociales que posibilita un acceso a la élite insólito para las clases inferiores.

Orígenes del privilegio nobiliario

Entre los marcadores aristocráticos más profundamente reglamentados desde la sociedad griega resaltan la virtud y el honor. Sócrates estableció relaciones entre el estatus social y los comportamientos racionales, espirituales o apetitivos; siendo los primeros los que otorgaban mayor prestigio debido a su enfoque en la verdad absoluta. Su discípulo Platón expande estos criterios al equilibrio entre extremos como cualidad necesaria para la vida honorable y establece que los soldados son los más predisuestos

¹ Se emplea aquí la definición del término ‘democratizar’ de la Real Academia Española, es decir, como una progresiva insistencia en alentar a todos los miembros de un grupo a participar en la toma de decisiones.

a la ascensión social-espiritual.² Aristóteles, quien estudió en la Academia de Atenas fundada por Platón, incorpora la idea de la complementariedad sexual natural y transforma la relación entre honor y virtud en una dicotomía sexual con su analogía de que el hombre es para la mujer lo que la forma es para la materia: él, por ser quien otorga forma a la materia, es superior a ella, quien tan solo posee esta última.³ Esta concepción de la desigualdad de género se ha utilizado a lo largo de los siglos para justificar la pertenencia del hombre a la élite política, convirtiéndose en un elemento intrínseco a la cultura hegemónica patriarcal que perpetúa la noción clásica de virtud y honor como privilegios sociales preestablecidos por antecedentes históricos. El sociólogo, antropólogo y filósofo francés Pierre Bourdieu denomina este fenómeno *doxa* en *The Field of Cultural Production* (1993): un elemento ideológico dado por hecho que se toma como realidad universal en una sociedad concreta.⁴ Esta organización social ha mantenido al hombre en el poder durante siglos debido a su constitución natural superior asumida como realidad inalienable.

El precursor a la visión renacentista española del derecho del hombre a los privilegios sociales que más se acerca al origen clásico se encuentra en el medievo. La influencia de la dicotomía aristotélica es palpable en el “Compendio de la fortuna” (1453) de fray Martín de Córdoba, quien afirmaba en el siglo XV que “el verdadero varón es el hombre austeramente fuerte y resistente, capaz de contenerse ante el mundo material y sensible,

² Eric Brown explora las conexiones entre honor y criterios sociales en “Plato’s Ethics and Politics in *The Republic*”.

³ Aristóteles reproduce esta idea de masculinidad superior en múltiples ocasiones a lo largo de sus obras, notablemente en *Ética Nicomachea*, *Generación de Animales* y *Política*.

⁴ La cultura, según Bourdieu, reproduce estructuras sociales en que las relaciones de poder legítimas se incrustan en los sistemas de clasificación empleados para describir la vida diaria. Al igual que Michel Foucault en *The Use of Pleasure* (1990), Bourdieu concibe la relación entre sexualidad y poder masculino como vínculo difuso, pero propone que este nexo se escuda tras modos de ver y describir el mundo generalmente aceptados e incontestables – *doxa*. Este concepto es similar al de cultura residual que Raymond Williams describe en “Individuals and Societies” para referirse a interpretaciones que los individuos hacen en sociedad y que perduran como conceptos absolutos estáticos residuales de la cultura dominante anterior por ser “interpretations which gained currency at a particular point in history, yet which have now virtually established themselves in our minds as absolutes” (65).

más propio de niños y mujeres” (56). A la masculinidad corporal y libre de deficiencias femeninas en un hombre se le añaden valores cristianos hacia finales de la edad media. José Fernando Martín identificó este cambio notando que “a la virilidad castrense de la resistencia al dolor, al cansancio, al hambre y a otras supuestas debilidades del cuerpo, el monasticismo añade la resistencia a las tentaciones de la carne; a la hombría de la fuerza física le suma la fuerza racional del hombre reflexivo y disciplinado; y al valor frente a enemigos de carne y hueso, el arrojo de enfrentarse al diablo” (83). La creciente organización de la población española en núcleos urbanos hace que mengüe la atención a la potencia física del guerrero en favor de un énfasis cultural inédito sobre el ejercicio constante del autocontrol y equilibrio en las interacciones entre urbanitas. En *The Civilizing Process* (1939), Norbert Elias detalla cómo la agresividad y el carácter combativo que enaltecía la masculinidad monástico-castrense ya no garantiza el acceso a beneficios sociales en la aristocracia moderna más sosegada del siglo XVII.⁵ Cervantes representa esta remodelación cultural de forma paródica mediante el hidalgo manchego que protagoniza su conocida novela. Sin embargo, mientras que la democratización del privilegio social es un proceso que se extiende del siglo XVI al XVII en España, *Don Quijote de la Mancha*, como una “novel whose overriding theme is the contrast between reality and its various renditions on the part of differently positioned characters” (Egginton 1055), recoge múltiples fases de esta evolución y las comprime en los pocos meses que dura el viaje del famoso caballero y su escudero. El anacronismo inherente a este solapamiento de diferentes versiones de la aristocracia añade una perspectiva sociológica al característico tono “escurridizo e irónico a la vez que solemne y ejemplar” (Williamson 795) de Cervantes con la que se enriquece su representación de estos cambios históricos en España.

⁵ Elias argumenta que “for centuries roughly the same rules, elementary by our standards, were repeated, obviously without producing firmly established habits. This now changes.” (79). Steven Pinker llega a una conclusión similar en *The Better Angels of Our Nature* (2011), donde afirma que el desarrollo histórico de estándares de comportamiento “inculcated an ethic of self-control that made continence and propriety second nature” (592).

Privilegio por nacimiento ilustre

El primer tratado que establece los parámetros de la identidad cortesana es *Il libro del Cortegiano* (1528) de Baldassare Castiglione. Altamente admirado en España por sus lectores como ejemplo de perfección a imitar y calificado por Carlos V como “uno de los mejores caballeros del mundo” (Burke 23), Castiglione confecciona una obra que se considera “punto de partida y referencia dialógica intertextual insoslayable [...] sobre las características y transformaciones del discurso cortesano” (Ferrer 23). *Il libro del Cortegiano* tiene un impacto profundo en la cultura española que aumenta durante décadas tras la traducción de Juan Boscán, *El cortesano* (1534).⁶ En el texto se reproducen elementos de la superioridad masculina aristotélica, apreciables en la alabanza de Gaspar a “Aristótil, siendo buen Cortesano” (477) o en la convicción de Ottaviano de que “si a Aristótil y a Platón les dieran este nombre de Cortesano perfeto, se holgaran mucho con él, porque se ve claramente en ellos que hicieron todo lo que pudiera haber hecho un hombre de corte muy escogido” (475). La influencia clásica es evidente cuando Gaspar arguye que “el hombre, como vos mismo sabéis ser opinión de muy grandes filósofos, es comparado a la forma, y la mujer a la materia, y por eso, así como la forma no solamente es más perfecta que la materia, pero aún le da el ser, así el hombre es mucho más perfeto que la mujer” (320). Pese a esta influencia clásica, Castiglione apoca la superioridad física natural aristotélica porque prefiere enaltecer la medida nobiliaria como marcador de privilegio social de la aristocracia renacentista.⁷

⁶ Todas las citas de *Il libro del Cortegiano* en este ensayo provienen de la traducción de Boscán, *El cortesano*.

⁷ El consenso cultural sobre el modelo cortesano no es absoluto. El franciscano Antonio de Guevara advierte en *Menosprecio de corte y alabanza de aldea* (1539) sobre los peligros que experimenta en las cortes de Isabel la Católica y Carlos I. Guevara devalúa el honor cortesano al recalcar “cuánta diferencia hay de los siglos pasados a los tiempos presentes [...] si escribimos que hay bondades y prosperidades hemos de mentir y si escribimos las verdades hanse de escandalizar” (45). A pesar de ello, la expansión de la nobleza cortesana a través de Europa es evidente: existen numerosas adaptaciones de *Il libro del Cortegiano* a través del continente, como por ejemplo *The Book of the Governor* (1531) de Sir Thomas Elyot, *Il Galateo* (1558) de Giovanni Della Casa, *El cortesano* (1561) de Luis Milán, *Dworzaniin polski* (1566) de Lukasz Gornicki, *The Ideal Senator* (1568) de Wawrzyniec Goslicki, *Galateo español*

El cortesano de Castiglione depende de su nacimiento noble, pues se le requiere “que este nuestro cortesano sea de buen linaje; porque mayor desproporción tienen los hechos ruines con los hombres generosos que con los baxos [...] porque la nobleza del linaje es casi una clara lámpara que alumbrá y hace que se vean las buenas y las malas obras [...] más la baxa sangre, no echando de sí ningún resplandor, hace que los hombres baxos carezcan del deseo de la honra y del temor de la deshonor” (76). *Il libro del Cortegiano* registra una depreciación del combate, fuerza y violencia como marcas de hombría superior, prefiriendo la inteligencia y estrategia para la batalla. Este prototipo nobiliario pondera el perfecto punto medio entre extremos: un aspecto equilibrado entre la suavidad femenina y el desaseo descuidado; un cuerpo ni alto ni bajo sino de altura moderada; una voz ni fina y mujeril ni adusta como la de hombre rústico, sino clara, sonora y de enunciación nítida. La medida altera el enfoque del elogio medieval: Castiglione exalta la habilidad combativa y la destreza en la caza en vez de la agresión o la corporalidad belicosa, las cuales considera necesarias porque “la caza y la montería [...] en ciertas cosas se parecen con la guerra, y sin duda son los pasatiempos que más convienen a señores y a hombres de la corte” (91). En esta España urbanizada gana importancia “el saber bien hablar y callar. La capacidad social de seducir a otros gana y destruye reinos” (Martín 233). Por eso para Castiglione predomina la importancia de demostrar constantemente la gracia natural propia que según él deriva de la armonía inherente al nacimiento noble. Aunque concede que no todos los aristócratas son aptos para perfeccionarla, el autor eleva al máximo grado de cortesanía la *sprezzatura* o habilidad para demostrar donaire con el que provocar admiración a los demás disimulando el esfuerzo requerido para cualquier actividad:

[N]os hemos de guardar con todas nuestras fuerzas usando en toda cosa un cierto desprecio o descuido, con el cual se encubra el arte y se muestre que todo lo que se hace y se dice, se viene hecho de suyo sin fatiga y casi sin habello pensado. Desto creo yo que nace harta

(1582) de Lucas Gracián Dantisco, *Corte na aldeia* (1619) de Francisco Rodrigues Lobo o *L'honnête homme* (1630) de Nicolas Faret y más. Para un análisis detallado de esta difusión, ver *The Fortunes of the Courtier: The European Reception of Castiglione's Cortegiano* (1996) de Peter Burke.

parte de la gracia: porque comúnmente suele haber dificultad en todas las cosas bien hechas y no comunes, y así en estas la facilidad trae gran maravilla. (97)

Esta *sprezzatura* que Boscán traduce como *descuido* genera una apariencia de facilidad innata, y favorece el fingimiento de espontaneidad y naturalidad para que el cortesano disfrute de una apariencia armoniosa congruente con su estatus noble. Como rasgo fundamental que diferencia y dota de identidad propia a la élite cortesana, la *sprezzatura* se instaura en el imaginario social como representación del privilegio aristocrático. Clara prueba de su impacto cultural son los duques que protagonizan múltiples capítulos de *Don Quijote de la Mancha*, pues encarnan esa constante necesidad de causar admiración mediante *sprezzatura* para establecerse como partícipes de la nobleza fingiendo una gracia natural que no está claro que posean. Desde su aparición resulta evidente cuán importante es para ellos proyectar una presencia fascinante, por lo que “derramaban pomos de aguas olorosas sobre don Quijote y sobre los duques, de todo lo cual se admiraba don Quijote” (II, 31; 683). Su adherencia a los principios de Castiglione se plasma claramente en la caza de jabalíes, durante la cual el duque defiende fervientemente que esta actividad es necesaria tanto para nobles como reyes y príncipes debido a que “la caza es una imagen de la guerra: hay en ella estratagemas, astucias, insidias para vencer a su salvo al enemigo” (II, 34; 709). Pese a su insistente uso de *sprezzatura*, la aparente gracia natural de los duques se hace añicos cuando la dueña Rodríguez confiesa a Don Quijote que esa gallardía y salud que aparenta la duquesa se la debe a “dos fuentes que tiene en las dos piernas, por donde ‘se desagua’ todo el mal humor de quien dicen los médicos que está llena” (II, 48; 789). Esta revelación es tan dañina para la duquesa, quien solo puede aparentar gracia fingiendo y ocultando su corrupción interna, que se ve obligada a castigarla inmediatamente. Dejando el aposento a oscuras ataca a su delatora “la pobre dueña [...] la asían de la garganta con dos manos tan fuertemente que no la dejaban gañir, y que otra persona con mucha presteza sin hablar palabra le alzaba las faldas y con una al parecer chinela le comenzó a dar tantos azotes [...] dejando molida a la dueña los callados verdugos” (II, 48; 790). En estas escenas, los duques demuestran ser conscientes de la importancia de la *sprezzatura* según el modelo de Castiglione para conservar su privilegio social, que Cervantes representa paródicamente.

Privilegio por trato agradable

Treinta años después de *Il libro del Cortegiano* Giovanni Della Casa escribe *Il Galateo* (1558), menos centrado en lo ideal y más orientado a los principios prácticos para la interacción social del día a día.⁸ *Il Galateo* enfatiza el punto medio entre extremos como Castiglione, basado en el mismo concepto clásico de *aurea mediocritas*. Sin embargo, Della Casa no concibe el estatus nobiliario como necesidad para garantizar la gracia natural sino tan solo como una predisposición hacia la virtud. En *Il Galateo*, lo imprescindible para alcanzar la gracia aristocrática es “ser educado, agradable y de buena disposición, lo cual, por otra parte, es virtud o algo muy parecido a la virtud” (142). Según el autor, realizar acciones honorables que le mantengan a uno en el buen camino de la virtud es un requisito para ingresar en la élite aristocrática, independientemente de haber nacido linajudo o no. Della Casa recalca que “nadie puede dudar de que a cualquiera que decida vivir, no en las soledades o en los yermos, sino en las ciudades y entre los hombres, no le vaya a resultar muy útil saber ser agradable y gentil en sus costumbres y sus maneras” (143). El comportamiento afectuoso y cautivador es *conditio sine qua non* para Della Casa, pues acentúa la posibilidad de alcanzar el privilegio social dada la frecuencia con que uno debe amoldarse a reglas y procederes urbanos durante las constantes interacciones en la corte.

Esta adaptabilidad amena proyecta apariencia de gracia en *Il Galateo*, por lo que el autor advierte de movimientos físicos o vicios a evitar al comer en la mesa para no resultar ofensivo, y critica “feas costumbres [que] deben rehuirse por ser molestas para el oído y para la vista” (145) y por desmerecer el caballero refinado y enfocado en agradar a los demás.⁹ Aunque Castiglione está motivado por mostrar una gracia virtuosa mientras que Della Casa busca ser mejor recibido en sociedad, huir de todo vicio inmoral representa el

⁸ Todas las citas de *Il Galateo* en este ensayo provienen de la edición en español de Anna Giordano y Cesáreo Calvo, *Galateo*.

⁹ Della Casa especifica que “estas costumbres y otras parecidas son desagradables y deben evitarse, pues pueden ofender algunos de los sentidos de aquellos con los que tratamos” (150).

principal consenso entre ambos. *Il Galateo* es, al fin y al cabo, una versión más pragmática de los principios abstractos de *Il libro del Cortegiano*, que guía al lector a modificar su comportamiento y adoptar pautas cortesanas aceptables en diversas situaciones. Al instruir a su audiencia sobre cómo afianzar su posición dentro de la élite y depreciar la gracia innata a la aristocracia, Della Casa siembra las semillas de la democratización del privilegio social. Su insistencia en que “tú, instruido por mí, puedas seguir el buen camino con tu alma a salvo y con loor y honra para tu honorable y noble familia” (Della Casa 142), anima a que cualquier persona aprenda las estrategias más efectivas para insertarse airoosamente en la clase alta. Della Casa reconoce la plausibilidad de lo que Castiglione considera imposible: una movilidad social entre clases que permite a la clase baja concebir la posibilidad hasta entonces impensable de formar parte de la élite y beneficiarse de los beneficios que ello implica.¹⁰

Este mismo ánimo educador da lugar al ascenso social de Sancho en la obra cervantina. Don Quijote identifica los vicios de su escudero y le aconseja cómo rectificar sus actitudes en pro del perfeccionamiento propio para insertarse en su gobierno de Barataria de la forma más apropiada posible. El énfasis en la corrección hacia los demás queda patente en el aviso de que “jamás te pongas a disputar de linajes, a lo menos comparándolos entre sí, pues, por fuerza en los que se comparan uno ha de ser el mejor, y del que abatieres serás aborrecido” (II, 43; 756).¹¹ Este consejo canaliza la advertencia similar de *Il Galateo* en cuanto a que “hay que guardarse cuidadosamente de hacer propuesta alguna que haga ruborizar o que ofenda a alguno de la compañía” (Della Casa 160). Sin embargo, Sancho tarda poco

¹⁰ El primo de Castiglione Ludovico da Canossa debate sobre este requisito en *Il libro del Cortegiano*, recalando la necesidad del nacimiento noble cuando Gaspar Pallavicino contempla la posibilidad de que un individuo de clase baja pueda convertirse en buen cortesano. Ludovico acepta que los sujetos innobles sean capaces de exhibir virtudes, pero el debate concluye con el consenso general de que “habiendo nosotros de formar un cortesano sin tacha, es necesario hacelle de buen linaje” (81).

¹¹ Don Quijote también retoma aquí la dicotomía de género establecida por Aristóteles al mencionar a su escudero que “si trujeres a tu mujer contigo [...] enséñala, doctrínala y desbástala de su natural rudeza, porque todo lo que suele adquirir un gobernador discreto, suele perder y derramar una mujer rústica y tonta” (II, 42; 753).

en arruinar su proyección de gracia natural, delatando su procedencia campesina inmediatamente tras llegar y confesar “que yo no tengo DON, ni en todo mi linaje le ha habido” (II, 45; 768). Sancho fracasa en su creación de una apariencia amena digna de la clase alta por su inhabilidad de ocultar sus vicios, lo que se aprecia en su enojo contra la dieta que le aplica el doctor Recio. Incapaz de dejar de satisfacer su gula, Sancho explota en rabia amenazando que “voto al sol que tome un garrote y que a garrotazos, comenzando por él, no me ha de quedar médico en toda la ínsula [...] que se me vaya Pedro Recio de aquí; si no, tomaré esta silla donde estoy sentado y se la estrellaré en la cabeza” (II, 47; 779). La imagen afable que Sancho a duras penas consigue sostener se destruye de manera imborrable una vez concluida la batalla de Barataria, tras la que clama “dejadme volver a mi antigua libertad; dejadme que vaya a buscar la vida pasada, para que me resucite de esta muerte presente. Yo no nací para ser gobernador [...] más quiero hartarme de gazpachos que estar sujeto a la miseria de un médico impertinente que me mate de hambre” (II, 54; 825). Pese a que Sancho soluciona varios juicios durante su gobierno con una perspicacia inesperada que atisba un futuro próspero como parte de la élite educada, su mala disposición y actitud hosca acaban por ser obstáculos insalvables, con lo que no consigue permanecer en posesión del privilegio social.

Privilegio a toda costa

Una vez validado el fingimiento como método para aparentar virtud, Castiglione dejó la puerta abierta a futuras reconsideraciones sobre quién tiene derecho o es capaz de acercarse más al ideal. Tras admitir Della Casa la posibilidad, pese a difícil, del ascenso a la élite de personas no nobles, Lucas Gracián Dantisco hace el modelo aristocrático aún más asequible dos décadas después de publicarse *Il Galateo*. Este reconocido humanista formó parte de una familia altamente respetada en la época: su padre Diego Gracián de Alderete fue secretario en la corte de Carlos V, Lucas lo fue de Felipe II e incluso su hermano Tomás tuvo este oficio bajo Felipe III, dejando patente la conexión de su linaje con la corona española.¹² Conocedor de las normas

¹² Varias conexiones entre la familia de Gracián Dantisco y la realeza se exploran en "Nuevos documentos para la biografía de Tomás Gracián Dantisco, censor de libros y comedias de Lope de Vega (I)" de Patricia Marín Cepeda.

de etiqueta de la élite, Gracián Dantisco ajusta en *Galateo español* (1582) las coordenadas proporcionadas por Della Casa a la sociedad española de finales del siglo XVI “traduciéndolas del *Galateo* Italiano, y añadiendo al propósito otros cuentos y cosas que yo he visto y oído” (Gracián 3).¹³ Gracián Dantisco acentúa la adaptabilidad de *Il Galateo* como objetivo principal y reconoce desde el primer momento que “para notar una mala costumbre o criança se suele decir como proverbio: no manda eso el *galateo*” (Gracián 4). A diferencia de la audiencia primariamente aristocrática que asumían Castiglione y Della Casa, Gracián Dantisco proclama orgullosamente que con su guía “hoy al ignorante hazes prudente / al más grosero tornas cortesano / pones en perfección al que no sabe” (Gracián 2). El autor democratiza el acceso a los privilegios nobiliarios a una nueva audiencia indocta que pese a no ser noble está dispuesta a identificar sus insuficiencias y esquivarlas para integrarse en la élite.

Gracián Dantisco establece su maestría al nivel de Della Casa exclamando “¿Quién corrige defectos sin enfado? Quién da gusto y placer con dulces cuentos / Gracián y *Galateo*” (3). Hecho esto, el autor revela su convicción de que lo que realmente otorga poder social es el dominio refinado de las expectativas culturales, y por ello escribe su libro “para la institución y buena criança de los mancebos” (98). Al referirse a estos mancebos como *cortesanos*, *caballeros* y *gentilhombres* Gracián Dantisco delata que no se dirige solamente a aquellos que están ya en la corte, sino a aquellos que quieren llegar a formar parte de ella.¹⁴ Es por esto que José Antonio Rico

¹³ Cabe mencionar que la primera traducción al español fue realizada por Domingo de Becerra en 1584. Pese a ser una versión más fiel al original italiano, como constata Shifra Armon, Becerra nunca consiguió igualar la popularidad de las numerosas ediciones que tuvo la adaptación de Gracián Dantisco. Sin embargo, la obra de Becerra proporciona un texto fecundo para su análisis lingüístico, por lo que “la falta de diccionarios especializados italo-españoles para el Cinquecento puede suplirse con la atenta lectura de versiones como la de Domingo de Becerra” (Morreale 253).

¹⁴ En su *Tratado de la nobleza, y de los títulos y ditados que oy día tienen los varones claros y grandes de España* (1591), Juan Benito Guardiola reafirma la relación entre estos términos como referentes de una identidad privilegiada de clase alta que ostenta patrones específicos de integración y diferenciación social. Guardiola reconoce que es “muy usado en Italia, Francia, Cataluña, y en otras partes, y aún también casi lo es ya en Castilla llamar gentilhomme a un caballero” (68) y también constata que

Ferrer determina que “frente a tratados centrados en la virtud y moral individuales desplegados en los contactos con los demás, o la gracia estetizante de la *sprezzatura*, Gracián Dantisco adapta el tratado de Giovanni Della Casa, dando mayor importancia a sostener una conversación agradable como llave para el éxito social” (35). Esta ascensión es el objetivo de *Galateo español*: observar las reglas cortesanas que garantizan la obtención de los privilegios de la élite, analizar cómo imitarlas a la perfección y enseñar a su audiencia hidalga e innoble cómo perfeccionarlas para mejorar su posición en la jerarquía social. Gracián Dantisco se autoriza a sí mismo como personificación del acceso a los beneficios que pretende propagar al confesar que “pasé yo por estas cosas y advertimientos tan mal y me hago maestro dellas” (15). Debido a su experiencia y aprendizaje, ofrece su libro como “advertimiento para que cuando [el lector] sea de edad se avise de lo que yo holgara me hubieran avisado” (15). Gracián Dantisco plantea una imitación de la perfección cortesana que prescinde del estatus noble como requisito, lo que convierte la movilidad social entre clases en el motor ideológico primario de *Galateo español*. En lugar de imitar el ideal abstracto de Castiglione por simple afán de perfeccionamiento, Gracián Dantisco reconoce el valor práctico de dominar sus estipulaciones y de emplearlas conscientemente para ganancia personal. *Galateo español* es aún más pragmático que *Il Galateo* porque instaura una ambición de refinamiento principalmente para aumentar el poder individual, democratizando el dominio de normas culturales con los privilegios sociales que conllevan para toda su audiencia.

La popularidad de este tratado impregna los discursos intelectuales de finales del XVI y principios del XVII, universalizando la asequibilidad del arquetipo cortesano y adscribiendo una maleabilidad insólita al tejido social español a puertas del siglo XVII. Cervantes fue uno entre muchos autores influidos por Gracián Dantisco, y la relación entre ambos presenta múltiples puntos de contacto. Por ejemplo, Becerra, el predecesor de Gracián Dantisco en la tarea de traducir el original de Della Casa, compartió cautiverio con Cervantes en Argel.¹⁵ Dos años después de la liberación de Cervantes, y tres

“llamamos caballeros a los nobles y principales hijosdalgo que tienen un estado y lugar eminente” (81).

¹⁵ Este y otros vínculos entre Cervantes y Becerra se exploran en “La traducción de Domingo Becerra del *Galateo* de Giovanni della Casa (Venecia, 1585)” de Cesáreo Calvo Rigual, así como las diferentes alteraciones lingüísticas en su traducción.

años antes de firmar la aprobación de *La Galatea* (1585), Gracián Dantisco ya enfatizaba en su *Galateo español* la necesidad de evitar arcaísmos a fin de facilitar la comprensión del lenguaje. Como bien indica Celina S. De Cortázar, el caballero manchego valida esta misma estipulación décadas después en *Don Quijote de la Mancha*, convencido de que "el lenguaje puro, el propio, el elegante y claro está en los discretos cortesanos" (II, 19; 603). Además, la estratagema que Basilio traza para casarse con Quiteria en este capítulo representa una prueba contundente de la renovada facilidad de ascenso social que Gracián Dantisco propone conseguir mediante el fingimiento. Al igual que los *arrivistes* a los que se dirige Gracián Dantisco – individuos con un afán de mejora rauda de su calidad de vida – Basilio busca no solo casarse con la mujer que ama sino también agenciarse los beneficios que su unión conlleva. Su potencial adelanto social se atisba cuando un estudiante explica a don Quijote que “algunos curiosos que tienen de memoria los linajes de todo el mundo quieren decir que el de la hermosa Quiteria se aventaja al de Camacho” (II, 19; 600), pretendiente que con su riqueza arrebató a Basilio su objetivo. Incapaz de competir con Camacho por su estatus económico y social inferior, Basilio finge suicidarse: pone un estoque en el suelo y “con ligero desenfado y determinado propósito se arrojó sobre él, y en un punto mostró la punta sangrienta a las espaldas” (II, 21; 617). A las puertas de la muerte, el labrador pide la última voluntad de verse casado con Quiteria antes de morir, tras lo cual ella enviudaría en pocos instantes y podría resumir la boda con Camacho. Astutamente, Basilio insiste a Quiteria que “confieses y digas que sin hacer fuerza a tu voluntad me la entregas y me la das como a tu legítimo esposo” (II, 21; 619), consciente de los requisitos del sacramento matrimonial. Efectuada la unión Basilio revela su engaño, y cuando todos proclaman el milagro de su resurrección él aclara orgullosamente que es su sagacidad la que le ha garantizado el amor y privilegio social deseados, proclamando “No milagro, milagro, sino industria, industria.” (II, 21; 619). En reflejo de la instrucción de *Galateo español*, Basilio analiza los métodos para ascender a la élite desde su clase labradora y fingiendo a la perfección lo que requiere este enredo amoroso, afianza el incremento de su posición social.

Privilegio por linaje y hazañas

Pocos años después, el *Tratado de la nobleza* (1591) de Guardiola corrobora el impacto que *Galateo español* tiene en España. La obra de Guardiola es “un texto que representa a la nobleza en su totalidad, tanto como entidad política como cultural” (Berrendero 120). Pese a declararse insuficientemente hábil para componer el volumen – en reflejo del *topos humilitatis* común en la época – el fraile benedictino detalla los nexos que observa entre la nobleza, la religión y el gobierno. Guardiola difiere de los tratadistas anteriores en nomenclatura: no se refiere a aquellos de nacimiento linajudo como cortesanos, sino que especifica las diferencias entre caballeros, hidalgos, gentilhombres, infanzones, duques, marqueses y otros. Su obra recopila información sobre el origen de la nobleza e identifica dos maneras principales de adquirir un estatus privilegiado: las letras, y las armas o insignias. Ambos métodos distan de fingir gracia natural mediante *sprezzatura* o aparentar una falsa cordialidad, sino que se basan en realizar acciones loables y honorables. El método de las letras manifiesta el aprecio de Guardiola por el estudio y la educación, convencido de que “toda ciencia en grande manera ilustra, pues que no solamente ennoblece interiormente, mas aún exteriormente. Ennoblece al entendimiento que lo alumbra y haze claro, y el alumbrado gobierna el cuerpo y lo rige con buenas y virtuosas costumbres” (23).¹⁶ De hecho, el autor especifica que la graduación doctoral otorga inmediatamente, al que hasta entonces había sido doctorando, el título y renombre de noble con los beneficios que ello conlleva. Aunque esta vía de ascensión social por medio del estudio es improbable – aunque no imposible – para la población mayoritariamente campesina y analfabeta en la época, *Tratado de la nobleza* confirma que los españoles de rango inferior aún tienen acceso a la élite.¹⁷ El segundo método, más habitual, consiste en que “el

¹⁶ En este aspecto Guardiola expone la misma convicción que Gracián Dantisco del poder de la instrucción, pues este último también insistía en que la “razón tiene poder, como señora y maestra, de mudar los malos usos” (Gracián 100).

¹⁷ En “La alfabetización en España: Un proceso cambiante de un mundo multiforme” Antonio Viñao atribuye esta escasez de educación a nivel nacional a la elección de la oralidad por parte de la iglesia como herramienta educativa. Entre otras ramificaciones, esto causa que “al prohibirse la lectura de la Biblia en lengua vulgar desde el siglo XVI hasta finales del XVIII y mostrarse reticente, por razones

príncipe concede la nobleza dando a aquel tal insignias y armas particulares [...] de aquí vino que los que avian hecho algunas hazañas y obras famosas en las peleas tomasen por armas el fin y remate de su buen y feliz y próspero successo, como blasón y memoria para todos sus descendientes, que con semejantes hechos quedasen honrados y ennoblecidos” (Guardiola 31). Como se ve, el texto enfatiza la resonancia del linaje, el cual mantiene ennoblecidas durante generaciones a familias cuyos antepasados realizaron acciones heroicas. La explicación de Guardiola de los procesos legales válidos para adquirir el estatus noble difiere notablemente de los tratadistas anteriores, quienes tan solo especificaban comportamientos para fingir una gracia aristocrática innata.

Tratado de la nobleza establece una excepción al acceso a los privilegios sociales aristocráticos: los reserva exclusivamente para los españoles cristianos. Si aquellos interesados en formar parte de la élite doctorándose tienen “algún resabio del judaysmo y no están bien conformados en la Religión Christiana, suelen ser poco amigos de los verdaderos nobles [...] si acaso se halla macula alguna de raza de Judíos en su linaje, lo reprochan como persona indigna de semejante officio” (Guardiola 9). La prohibición se extiende al método de las armas, pues “se puede prohibir a los que descenden de raza de Judíos o Moros que no tomen nombres y apellidos agenos, ni armas y insignias que nunca les pertenecieron, pues que todo esto resulta en vilipendio y afrenta de los linajes y solares a quienes competen tales armas y nombres” (Guardiola 38), en referencia a los cristianos viejos. El énfasis restrictivo a estos ‘linajes’ que menciona Guardiola es congruente con la búsqueda de virtud cristiana que caracteriza el contexto sociopolítico de la Inquisición y la culminación de sus tensiones en la expulsión morisca de 1609. Dada la perspectiva de que solo los españoles tienen acceso al linaje nobiliario, la especificación de que “la virtud es la esencia de la honra, y [...] sin virtud no puede haber honra” (1) implica una restricción del acceso al privilegio social a españoles estudiosos o heroicos. Esta concepción se refleja en la descripción de don Quijote sobre los cuatro linajes que considera posibles:

morales, a la alfabetización femenina, constituyó, comparativamente, un freno a la alfabetización” (11).

[U]nos que tuvieron principios humildes y se fueron estendiendo y dilatando hasta llegar a una suma grandeza; otros, que tuvieron principios grandes y los fueron conservando, y los conservan y mantienen en el ser que comenzaron; otros, que aunque tuvieron principios grandes, acabaron en punta como pirámide, habiendo diminuido y aniquilado su principio hasta parar en nonada, como lo es la punta de la pirámide, que respeto de su basa o asiento no es nada; otros hay, y estos son los más, que ni tuvieron principio bueno, ni razonable medio, y así tendrán el fin, sin nombre, como el linaje de la gente plebeya y ordinaria. (II, 6; 517)

El hidalgo manchego proporciona un análisis del tejido social de España a principios del siglo XVII, enfatizando la minoría aristocrática que disfruta de privilegio social frente a la mayoría plebeya que, sin estudios ni acciones heroicas, no puede ser parte de la élite. Sin embargo, estos requisitos se parodian en el personaje de Dulcinea. Su descripción inicial como “princesa y gran señora” (I, 1; 28) no oculta la realidad de que no es más que “una ‘moza labradora’” (I, 1; 27) llamada Aldonza Lorenzo, y don Quijote se ve obligado a justificar la calidad de su dama en un debate con Vivaldo:

No es de los antiguos Curcios, Gayos y Cipiones romanos; ni de los modernos Colonas y Ursinos; ni de los Moncadas y Requesenes de Cataluña; ni menos de los Rebellas y Villanovas de Valencia; Palafoxes, Nuzas, Rocabertis, Corellas, Lunas, Alagones, Urreas, Foces y Gurreas de Aragón; Cerdas, Manriques, Mendozas y Guzmanes de Castilla; Alencastros, Pallas y Meneses de Portugal; pero es de los del Toboso de la Mancha, linaje, aunque moderno, tal que puede dar generoso principio a las más ilustres familias de los venideros siglos. (I, 13; 104)

La descripción del linaje de Dulcinea deja claro que no pertenece a una familia ni estudiosa ni heredera de insignias obtenidas por actos heroicos de sus antepasados. Don Quijote construye la nobleza ilusoria de su dama en base a las grandezas que generará en el futuro, lo que contradice directamente los procesos legales que Guardiola identifica. Dado el tono paródico de la obra, el lector entiende que esta representación del linaje de Dulcinea es inválida. Lo irrisorio de su concepción se reitera más tarde cuando don

Quijote vuelve a justificar su alcurnia, protestando a Sancho “¿Piensas tú que las Amariles, las Filis, las Silvias, las Dianas, las Galateas, las Alidas y otras tales [...] fueron verdaderamente damas de carne y hueso, y de aquellos que las celebran y celebraron? No, por cierto, sino que las más se las fingen por dar sujeto a sus versos [...] lo del linaje, importa poco” (I, 25; 218). Esta representación de las convenciones de tratados como el de Guardiola con que se construye la supuesta nobleza de Dulcinea consigue el efecto paródico deseado porque tanto Cervantes como los lectores comprenden que la doncella idílica transgrede toda norma de acceso al privilegio social.

Privilegio inmerecido

Cuatro décadas después de *Tratado de la nobleza*, la condesa Luisa de Padilla, hija del capitán general Martín Padilla y Manrique, publica *Nobleza virtuosa* (1637). Este primer volumen de una colección de cuatro tratados busca purgar la depravación que la autora percibe en la aristocracia por medio de una fuerte influencia religiosa que alaba la castidad y virtud cristianas. Como Castiglione, Della Casa y Gracián Dantisco, Padilla se enfoca en el trato con otros aristócratas, hacia quienes exhorta a sus lectores “mostrad cortesía, y urbanidad con desahogo compuesto, y quedad aquí advertido para todos los tiempos [...] que no os particularizeys con ninguna, ni digays palabra (por disimulada que sea) indecente” (*Nobleza* 44). Ser placentero con personas superiores a uno en la jerarquía social es imprescindible para Padilla y por ello incita a sus lectores “buscad amigos de autoridad [...] os estará esto bien, siendo cierto, que por las compañías se da uno a conocer” (55).¹⁸ Sin embargo, la Condesa también alerta sobre las malas intenciones de algunos nobles, con quienes aconseja emplear cautela. En el tercer volumen de la colección, *Lágrimas de la nobleza* (1639), se subraya la “poca estimación que hacen de sus mujeres” (406) los nobles infieles, ambiciosos, soberbios y aduladores. A este tipo de pecador Padilla le advierte que su lascivia lo marca

¹⁸ En este aspecto, Padilla es tan consciente del valor de preservar la buena opinión de uno mismo en boca de otros como lo era Gracián Dantisco, quien proclamaba que “son amados los que saben solazar y decir bien sin agraviar a nadie; y son muy pocos los que esto saben hacer, porque han de estar advertidos de muchas cosas para no caer en desgracia” (Gracián 69).

como sacrílego por apostasía, “malicioso, nefario, impío, pérfido, torpe, inmundo, mentiroso, insensato y otros tales” (*Lágrimas* 440). La Condesa critica que los pecadores que ya han alcanzado el privilegio social no sufren consecuencias tangibles y lamenta que “solo en España ahorcando los que hurtan joyas de precio dejan de castigar el adulterio en quien roba la honra de muchos hombres de bien, más estimable joya que todas las del mundo, y esto no por faltar buenas leyes sino la ejecución de ellas” (*Lágrimas* 418). Su desprecio del adulterio muestra una cara más funesta de la *sprezzatura* con que un noble puede ocultar su falta de virtud.

Pese a mantener el mismo interés por la apariencia afable que sus predecesores, Padilla hace hincapié en ejercitar virtudes propias para granjearse la buena opinión de los demás. Convencida de que “si os conocen talento, os estimen en más” (*Nobleza* 45), la Condesa argumenta que evitar el vicio permite obtener, preservar y acrecentar el acceso al privilegio social de la élite. Sus advertencias sobre la inacción de España hacia estos nobles perniciosos se pronosticaban años antes en las quejas de don Quijote de que en el pasado “las doncellas y la honestidad andaban, como tengo dicho, por donde quiera, sola y señera, sin temor que la ajena desenvoltura y lascivo intento le menoscabasen” mientras que “agora, en estos nuestros detestables siglos, no está segura ninguna [...] porque por allí, por los resquicios, o por el aire, con el celo de la maldita solicitud, se les entra la amorosa pestilencia y les hace dar con todo su recogimiento al traste” (I, 11; 90). Cervantes representa la desilusión de su caballero andante más claramente con don Fernando. Este galán mujeriego seduce a Dorotea, quien recuerda cómo su admirador tomó “una imagen que en aquel aposento estaba, la puso por testigo de nuestro desposorio. Con palabras eficacísimas y juramentos extraordinarios me dio la palabra de ser mi marido [...] y, con esto, y con volverse a salir del aposento mi doncella, yo dejé de serlo y él acabó de ser traidor y fementido” (I, 28; 253-254). Tras este encuentro sexual y falsa promesa matrimonial el noble inmoral abandona a Dorotea, rehusando la responsabilidad que había aceptado. Su insensatez se agrava al obsesionarse luego por Luscinda, quien ya pertenece a Cardenio aún si no como esposa, al menos como prometida. Aunque el joven lascivo acaba por rectificar su conducta, admitiendo “Venciste, hermosa Dorotea, venciste; porque no es posible tener ánimo para negar tantas verdades juntas” (I, 36; 334), esto requiere varios capítulos de justificaciones y súplicas de la dama ultrajada, en representación de la desestimación de la mujer que Padilla denuncia. Esta

resolución materializa también la convicción de la Condesa de que “suele Dios quando los hombres faltan a lo que deben, despertar mugeres que suplan por ellos” (Padilla 8), pues de no ser por la insistencia de Dorotea no hay indicación en la trama de que Fernando fuera a rectificar su indebida minusvalía de la dama. Como vemos, la obra cervantina vaticina las infracciones que Padilla sancionará años después, una vez la democratización del acceso al privilegio social mediante la corrupción de la inicial *sprezzatura* y el fingimiento de gracia en nobles innobles adquiere predominio cultural en España, en lugar del ejercicio de las virtudes cristianas.

Conclusión

El seguimiento cronológico de los textos presentados aquí indica que entre los siglos XVI y XVII tiene lugar una democratización de los privilegios sociales arraigados en la aristocracia. Estos tratados constatan, a través de comentarios y advertencias a la élite, la existencia para finales del siglo XVII de “dos extremos morales que iban desde los que se aferraban a la ley de forma escrupulosa a los que se distinguían por su forma de vida disoluta o relajada” (Ortiz 354). Atrás queda la visión restrictiva del servicio militar y combativo que había perdurado desde el periodo clásico hasta el medievo. Lo mismo ocurre con la limitación de Castiglione del nacimiento linajudo una vez Della Casa lo devalúa y Gracián Dantisco acaba por desestimarlos para generaciones futuras. La mayor accesibilidad de los beneficios de la nobleza a individuos de cualquier clase social acelera el impacto del modelo cortesano que inicia Castiglione, transformando la esencia aristocrática medieval en una que se adapta a las reglas de etiqueta de la España moderna. En estos tratados la relevancia del estatus noble como requisito disminuye progresivamente mientras aumenta el énfasis en la habilidad de todo individuo para aprender y adoptar procedimientos virtuosos, al menos en apariencia.

La flexibilidad cada vez mayor que la aristocracia española acepta entre los siglos XVI y XVII y que facilita a más ciudadanos el acceso a la clase alta, así como el privilegio social que tal ascenso conlleva se recogen, como hemos visto, en *Don Quijote de la Mancha*. Diferentes personajes representan la evolución de la identidad aristocrática a lo largo de estos dos siglos. Tras décadas en las que diversos tratadistas animan a sus lectores a aprender pautas de comportamiento para obtener, mantener o perfeccionar rasgos que les

garanticen el estatus noble, Cervantes solapa estas diferencias cronológicas incluyéndolas en una sola obra que “bridges the gaps that open up between historical periods, all the while questioning, and exposing their differences” (Cruz 98). Los duques, Sancho, Basilio, Don Quijote, Dulcinea y Fernando son solo unos pocos ejemplos de cómo la obra cervantina representa la propagación gradual de los beneficios nobiliarios en el país. Este proceso de democratización del privilegio social sugiere que la España del XVII está inmersa en un proceso de globalización que la acerca cada vez más al colectivo internacional aristocrático europeo. Los españoles adoptan el aprendizaje de la identidad cortesana dominante como elemento intrínseco a su cultura, ya sea aprendiéndola de tratados moralistas o riéndose de su parodia, cortesía de Cervantes. El reconocimiento de esta conciencia generalizada de autosuperación accesible a todos, con los beneficios y perjuicios que conlleva, es inestimable para contextualizar las representaciones de la nobleza en la literatura aurea.

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Francisco Santos. *Día y noche de Madrid*. Ed. Enrique García Santo-Tomás. Letras Hispánicas 780. Madrid: Cátedra, 2017. pp. 364. ISBN: 978-84-376-3624-5

Enrique García Santo-Tomás has us accustomed to remarkably high scholarly productions that can be used both for teaching and for research, and more evidence of his know-how is this edition of the book *Día y noche en Madrid* (1663) by Francisco Santos (1623-98), one of the “novatores” or “costumbristas” from the second half of the seventeenth century. The current review is of an edition based on the 1663 princeps, but the book was published three more times during Santos’s life (1666, 1674, 1693). In the eighteenth century it was published four times, in addition to three more editions issued in France and Spain in the nineteenth century. The twentieth century produced three editions; the most remarkable being the 1976 edition by Milagros Navarro Pérez in the Instituto de Estudios Madrileños. Finally, García Santo-Tomás has published the first edition of the current century, which is a step forward in the scholarly work on Francisco Santos.

Concerning Madrid during Philipp IV’s reign, García Santo-Tomás has proven his work to be a steady guide for the recovery of somewhat neglected authors from this part of seventeenth-century culture, such as Salas Barbadillo and Francisco Santos; in addition with the culture of the material world in Madrid, one of the most important metropolises of the times. In this edition, aspects such as medicine, material culture, birthing, midwives, hungry children, storms, poverty, and plague, are all properly addressed. In addition, in the eighteen discourses that compose *Día y noche de Madrid*, García Santo-Tomás emphasizes aspects such as friendship among the vital anguish that percolates through the tribulations of the main characters Onofre, a Neapolitan, and his servant Juanillo, a Spanish rascal. Their movements develop against the backdrop of Madrid as body, where the bodies of the characters are subjected to all sorts of extreme tensions, both internal and external ones (p. 47). The traumatized body calls for medical attention, which in its turn opens the door to discourses about gender, reproduction, professions, nation, and etcetera (p. 51-63).

The bibliography section contains a tripartite list that reflects the carefully written footnotes of the text. The first part contains bibliography on the socioeconomic, cultural and historical context of *Día y noche de Madrid* (pp. 71-76). The second part addresses the novel of the seventeenth century

(pp. 76-79). Finally, the last section reflects on Francisco Santos and his *Día y noche de Madrid* (79-81). The latter is the scantest of the lists, which confirms the bleak attention that Santos's work has among academics (p. 20). In fact, there is no complete and modern edition of the seventeen works he penned between 1663 and 1697 (p. 19).

Día y noche de Madrid, as a fundamental work of Spanish prose in the 1660s, helps us to deepen our understanding of the long-term manifestations of Baroque aesthetics that no doubt started already in 1599 with the first part of *Guzmán de Alfarache*. At the same time, the publication of more critical editions of dismissed Baroque works, such as Francis Santos's, would help to re-insert Iberian cultural production into the on-going recovery of the Baroque as an academic category. Perhaps, in view of the contents of *Día y noche de Madrid*, the underuse of the category Baroque in Hispanisms and their literary criticism should be reconsidered; and an enticement to enter the international conversation (see the works by García-Santo Tomás, Yves Hersant, Gregg Lambert, Margaret Greer, David Castillo, Christopher D. Johnson, Emil Volek, Frédéric Conrod, Vincent Barletta, Hellen Hills, and John D. Lyons, among others) revalorizing and putting at the center of it the heritage of the Spanish language.

Juan Pablo Gil-Osle
Arizona State University